

NEWSLETTER

Issue 3 January 2016

Editorial

Welcome to the third in this series of newsletters. Once again we cover here all aspects of CNCC business, including a massive boost to conservation funding, increased access to a few of our less well visited (but excellent) caves, plus news on bolting and the ever-hot topic of CRow. A theme in the CNCC recently has been that of engagement; with clubs, individuals and other organisations, particularly to try to maximise potential for improved access and to ensure that the CNCC works to the benefit of as many cavers as possible. We are always keen to hear ideas on what more we can be doing to achieve this, and contact details for all Officers are shown below so you can get in touch.

I wish you all a very enjoyable year of caving and hope to see lots of you at Eurospeleo in August, if not before.

Matt Ewles (Editor)

Next AGM: Sat 5th March 2016, 10am
Hellifield Village Institute, Hellifield.

Your CNCC

www.cncc.org.uk

 /CouncilOfNorthernCavingClubs

 @cncc_uk

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Heritage Lottery funding secured!

Over the last several years the CNCC has supported its conservation volunteers in a tremendous amount of work to clean up caves across our region, with additional generous funding contributions from Natural England.

Unfortunately, this direct funding from Natural England is no longer available, therefore, last year our then Conservation Officer, Andrew Hinde, proposed that funding for local cave conservation should be sought through a project organised within the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership (IDLP) instead. To support this project a bid was made for Heritage Lottery funding.

The bid was for approximately £31000 worth of money and labour to assist with a number of conservation projects within the area covered by the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership. The success of this bid relied upon a generous contribution to this total from Natural England, for which we are most grateful. The CNCC have agreed to contribute £2000 to the total over four years. Thanks to quick action of the CNCC Officers and Committee over the months leading up to this newsletter, the bid has been successful and the funds secured.

By performing future conservation works through this new project we are making our money go much further, thanks to the contribution from Natural England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. For our £2000 investment we are actually getting £31000 worth of conservation works spread over four years, which will allow us to tackle some of the big clean-up and fencing tasks that have previously been too expensive for us to handle alone. There is a draft programme of works, but this is can be amended and added to meet the conservation needs of Northern Caves.



Individual caver representation

The CNCC Committee has just given support to some suggested changes to our constitution, ahead of a vote at the AGM. These changes would enable a representative for non-club cavers to serve on the CNCC Committee.

Currently, there are several cavers who often cave outside of a club and who get involved with the CNCC. The amendment, if accepted, would provide them a greater voice, and will continue the CNCC on a route towards greater integration with all groups of northern cavers. We are already working to extend our access agreements

to include DIM access, in much the same way as has been achieved for Ingleborough Estate, and further progress here is anticipated over the coming year.

Change of AGM date

Due to an accidental clash with Easter weekend on 26th March, the date of the CNCC AGM has changed to Saturday 5th March 2016 10am, Hellifield Village Institute. All are welcome and voting full member clubs are reminded to bring a letter signed by an official of your club to nominate your representative to deliver your vote. The agenda is available on the website now.

Robinsons' Pot

Robinsons' Pot has always had an interesting access issue, the entrance being right underneath Darnbrook farm. Historically there have only been a limited number of permits available each year (most recently increased to five) with allocation being made by drawing lots at the CNCC AGM.



We are pleased to report that for 2016 the number of permits available has increased to eight, to include the first Saturday of May to September, and the third Saturday of May, July and September (winter month permits are not issued as the cave is often inaccessible due to flooding or snow).

It is anticipated that this supply of permits

should meet with the demand and so there is no longer any need for the ballot; they will be issued on a first come first served basis.

Permit applications or enquiries about availability should be made to Ric Halliwell by post or email (see contact details on CNCC website). Ric still needs to provide monthly notification to the residents of Darnbrook Farm of what permits have been issued for the following month, so applications before the end of the month prior to your trip are required please.

Robinsons' Pot is often overlooked by many cavers. It is a fine trip with a great streamway and well worth a visit. Thanks to Ric for negotiating this with the National Trust and thanks to the tenants of Darnbrook House for their continued support of access.

Casterton Fell contact

Most of you will already be aware, but since the last newsletter, Alan Speight has stepped down as permit secretary for Casterton Fell, after several years in the role. In addition to this role, Alan has done a tremendous amount of work for the CNCC, having negotiated the permit-free access we now enjoy on Fountains Fell and in the Hull Pot area. Hannah Walker



has kindly stepped into the role and new contact details, as well as a new Google calendar showing availability of permits, can be found by searching for your Casterton Fell cave of interest on the CNCC website.

Longer access period for Birks Fell

Our Access Officer, Johnny Latimer, has been working with the National Trust to increase access to Birks Fell in Wharfedale. Access has been previously restricted to 14th April to 1st November only. For 2016 onwards access will be possible for ten months of the year, with only March and April out of bounds due to lambing. A permit must still be obtained via the usual route (contact Ric Halliwell as per details on CNCC website) and call at the farm on-route to the cave. This is another seldom visited Yorkshire classic cave that provides a true sense of journey and adventure, and is worthy of a position on any meets list!

Fountains Fell

The landowner has agreed to continue to allow permit-free access to the caves on their land on Fountain's Fell (Gingling Hole, Hammer and Strangle Pot) for a second year. All that is asked is to please call at Rainscar House before your trip to ask permission. Full details can be found on the CNCC website.

Winter flooding – Notts II and Shuttleworth Pot

After the exceptional floods of December, cavers are reminded to be particularly vigilant. Two particular incidents have been reported. Firstly, a number of slumps in Notts II have been reported, one of which is totally blocking inlet six and three quarters. Secondly, in Shuttleworth Pot (Witches II), there has been a serious collapse on the Divers Pitch due to the bottom of the pitch getting washed away by flood waters. The pitch now lands on a very unstable pile of boulders, with reports of hanging boulders being a considerable hazard around the bottom of the pitch. It is strongly recommended to avoid this if at all possible until movement settles.

Countryside Rights of Way update



Some time ago (May 2014) the CNCC Committee voted to support seeking clarification on whether CRoW applied to caving. The answer has been that, in the eyes of the relevant authorities (DEFRA), it does not. Since then, the BCA poll showed support for actions to try to change this position. There is actually a strong body of opinion that Parliament always intended the Act to apply to activities such as caving, and therefore BCA sees no need to seek change to the existing law. Instead, the BCA are campaigning to change DEFRA's interpretation of the CRoW Act and its application to caving. At the January 2016 CNCC Committee meeting, the BCA CRoW Liaison Officer, Tim

Allen, was present and provided an update on progress, and the Committee subsequently voted to support the campaign.

Further still, the Committee voted in favour of a suggested motion to appoint Tim as an Access Representative for the CNCC, with mandate to work with our Access Officer, Johnny Latimer, to bring about further improvements to access over the coming years. Not only does this include seeking permit-free access wherever possible and appropriate, but it also means seeing many existing agreements redefined to enable access to individual (non-club) BCA insured cavers.

It is great news that this is now three newsletters in a row where we have been able to bring positive news about cave access. The CNCC, now with Tim's help, are currently building relations with local access forums associated with the National Park and other relevant groups with similar access interests. We hope that such relations will open more doors, including helping us to build a dialogue with landowners, that can lead to greater access while maintaining the good landowner-caver relations we have always had.

Work continues, and we hope for further good news in future newsletters.

Ease Gill cleanup weekend



The Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club Conservation Officer would like to thank all those who turned for the Ease Gill cleanup on October 3rd this year. We managed to get masses of old digging gear removed and some very dodgy ropes. The Gour Hall team in particular were very tired by the time they surfaced having dragged loads of unwieldy gear through the crawls back to Mistral - Well done everybody! Some items of equipment were distributed as prizes to those concerned, donated by UK Caving/Natural England, to ease the suffering. The caves are now a little cleaner due to their effort so let's try to keep it that way especially us 'diggers' who fail to go back and clear our old gear. We were going to return weren't we?

Ray Duffy, RRCPC

Walling repair at Keld Head

For a number of years the roadside wall immediately above Keld Head resurgence was in a bad condition, in fact a 7m long section had collapsed. This had nothing to do with caver or diver passage to Keld Head, as the dedicated crossing point is some 10m away. A chance discussion with the farmer, Mr Coates, by one of the Northern Section CDG divers (whilst asking for dive permission) led to the section agreeing to assist with the wall repair.

Over a period of several months in 2015, Northern Section members removed stone

from the resurgence pool and some from within the cave to allow for a rebuild of the wall to commence. This involved collecting and shifting several tonnes of stone from the water to the bank. Once enough stone had been collected, then we decided that a professional dry-stone waller would be the best option for the rebuild, to attain a quality job.

At this juncture the Northern Section contacted the CNCC to see if they would assist with this project financially. Several quotes were obtained and the best price from a local waller was agreed at £380, of which the CNCC agreed to provide full funding. Northern Section members, assisted by Mr Coates and his tractor, then moved the stone up from the resurgence to the roadside, so that work could commence. This work was completed in around 3 days (June/July 2015), to a good standard. The Northern Section is grateful for the CNCC support on this conservation project, as is Mr Coates.

Emma Heron, CDG Northern Section

New stile at Bull Pot of the Witches



Following some changes to the fencing around Bull Pot of the Witches early in 2015, a new stile was required to enable easy access to the pothole. Works were undertaken and successfully completed by Ray Duffy, Sam Lieberman and Andrew Hinde in June.



Cleanups at Cove Hole, Katnot Cave and Yordas

CNCC assisted Duncan Jones by transporting away rubbish that he had removed from Cove Hole. Reports of graffiti in Katnot Cave were investigated, and at CNCC suggestion, the Bradford Pothole Club Committee is considering a proposal to undertake cleanup works. Also, Hugh Parker and his team removed the rotting log from the Yordas upper entrance to ensure that it didn't fall into the streamway; they took the opportunity also to remove an unstable rock.

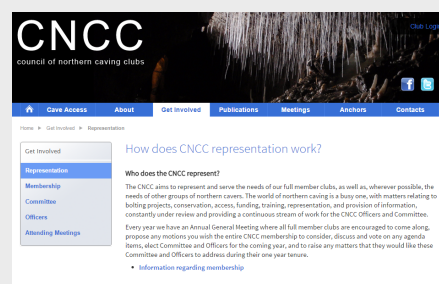
Interested in conservation?

Anyone wanting support or advice for a cave conservation project, or who would be willing to join a group undertaking conservation work, please get in touch (we have already had an expression of interest from Liverpool University Potholing Club for which we are most grateful). In particular, we hope to set up a second team of conservation volunteers working at weekends, to accommodate people who would like to volunteer but who are not available during the week. If anyone is interested, please get in touch.

Kay Easton, CNCC Conservation Officer
(conservation@cncc.org.uk)

Website changes

The CNCC website now hosts a 'get involved' section which should tell you everything you need to know about how the CNCC works and how you or your club can get involved. There is information for clubs interested in becoming a full member, and those standing for the Committee, or individuals interested in taking an Officer role. The anchors section of the website has also been redesigned to reflect the involvement of two groups in resin anchor installation and testing, the CNCC Technical Group and the IC anchor group. Caves which are fitted with the new IC anchors now include this information on the webpage.



www.cncc.org.uk/getinvolved

New combined rigging guide published



Glenn Jones and I have now published the book *Northern Caving*. This is one publication that combines, and will replace, the two previous CNCC rigging guides (which are now mostly out of print). *Northern Caving* is the culmination of 23 years working on the anchor replacement program and also covers SRT equipment and techniques, rigging techniques and rescue and a wealth of other caver related training information. The modest cost of the publication (£15) will help us to try and recoup

some of the personal finance that we have put into the scheme over the 23 years; however CNCC will also receive a percentage of the ongoing profits from the publication.

This is available to buy from Bernies and Inglesport.

Of the original rigging guides no copies of number 2 remain, however, a few copies of number 1 are still available. These may be of interest to anyone owning number 2 and who wants to complete the set. As a Christmas offer, this is now available at a reduced price of £7.50 plus £1 p&p and can be purchased from the CNCC Treasurer, Pete Bann (treasurer@cncc.org.uk).

Les Sykes, CNCC Technical Group

New ropes at Fall Pot and Stake Pot in Ease Gill

Over the summer of this year, Graham Coates has kindly undertaken works to replace the rather tatty and greasy in-situ ropes in Ease Gill at Fall Pot (including the greasy climb and over-the-edge routes) and Stake Pot, with new CNCC-funded ropes. These efforts are certainly appreciated by the editor of this newsletter who once spent the best part of half an hour trying to descend the over-the-edge route of Fall Pot on his trusty rack, failing dismally to feed the stiff, mud-encrusted ropes between the bars and resorting to a protracted (and embarrassing) reverse prussic. Enjoy!

Advanced SRT and rescue workshops

Our Training Officer Dan Irving has organised for February some workshops aimed at providing free of charge advanced SRT, rigging and rescue training for full member clubs of the CNCC. These events are being held at the Yorkshire Subterranean Society facility at Helwith Bridge. There were 12 places available in total (with two places on offer per club) and all have now been allocated. We hope that more will be organised later in the year. If you or your club has any training needs that you feel the CNCC can assist with then please get in touch.

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 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 your club is already a full member and you are interested in standing for the Committee, please contact our Secretary for more information.

You can get lots more information on the CNCC website as well as signing up online to become a member club:

www.cncc.org.uk/getinvolved

Contact: secretary@cncc.org.uk

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On the 13th-20th August 2016, the European Speleological Federation meeting ('Eurospeleo') is coming to the Yorkshire Dales. The event, which is jointly organised by the BCA, and the Hidden Earth team, will be a week-long festival of caving, hosted at the Dalesbridge Centre near Austwick. The anticipated 1000+ attendees will be able to enjoy lectures, photo and art salons, excursions, entertainment (and of course a bar). The Gaping Gill winch will be running exclusively for congress delegates, and some of the finest caves on the Yorkshire Dales will be rigged to allow them to be enjoyed free from tacklesacks. More events are being organised on an almost weekly basis. At the time of writing this newsletter the discounted rate for attendance at the event (£70 for the full week) is still available, with very cheap onsite camping. Come and join the party and tell all your caving companions to do the same!

See www.eurospeleo.uk for tickets and more details.

Also keep an eye on the Facebook page for updates: facebook.com/eurospeleo2016