

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO CNCC AGM 2024

JUNE 2023 REPORT

High Birkwith Access.

I understand that a meeting between YDNP staff and the Landowner was scheduled for last week. I have not been informed of the outcome as yet.

Overground-Underground: Ingleborough Caving Project

This is a cave archaeology project under the umbrella of the "Our Common Cause" based on Ingleborough Common. OCC commissioned Uni of Central Lancs to undertake a review of all existing archaeological material from Ingleborough and design a methodology for centralising documents and finds. The project is lead by Rick Peterson and he is keen to work alongside CNCC members with an interest in cave archaeology.

OCTOBER 2023 REPORT

Yorkshire Dales National Park

I was able to join the YDNP Ranger Service for a day last month to help celebrate the conclusion of the 3 Peaks footpath restoration project on Ingleborough. I was able to chat to the Director of Park Services on our descent of Ingleborough where we discussed Caving and CRoW , the value of caving to the local economy and the conservation volunteering cavers provide. It was "pushing at an open door" but, none the less, it was reassuring to see how well -respected caving is within the National Park. I also had a debrief on the YDNP / High Birkwith negotiations. Basically, no change and none anticipated.

Hidden Earth

I attended Hidden Earth Conference at Portishead last month. It was really well attended with a strong contingent of Northern Cavers. The hours I spent on the CNCC stand were very interesting.

I learned about what engages cavers from across the country to come caving in the Dales and the services they really appreciate from the CNCC. The top two services were the resin bonded anchor scheme and the CNCC website (in particular the route descriptions and topos). We had 2 bound volumes on the table and everyone was asking where they could get a copy for their club hut or library. The point is that these are an active document "on line" with regular updates rather than a definitive book. There is nothing to stop people downloading anything they need for personal use.

Most of the UK exploration successes covered in the lecture halls seemed to be in the CNCC region including Scotland. A proud moment for all the northern teams who came to support their presenters.

Photo Exhibition.

The Dales Caving Photo Exhibition has completed its run at the Folly in Settle and has attracted a lot of critical acclaim. The next major exhibition will be the art gallery above the Old Sawmill Café in Clapham. This will begin in March 2024.

Fairy Holes Access

The CNCC licence agreement has eventually been signed by both parties for this year. There was a change of Land Agents mid -year which slowed the process.

BCA council rep

I have attended 3 council meetings this year and there is little to report. Many posts remain vacant.

I will hopefully conclude the proposal to raise the level of annual non project spend to £3000 at the next meeting. It currently stands at £1500 (our current expenditure already exceeds this limit)

JAN 2024 REPORT

CNCC Photo Exhibition

I have been approached by the Curator of the Folly Museum in Settle for a return of the CNCC Caving Photo Collection for display in the summer of 2024. This will be part of a History of Geology Exhibition which will examine how work at Victoria Cave and other local sites informed the development of Geological and Karst Geomorphological Theory. It is hoped that the centre piece will be an original copy of Smith's Geological Map of Great Britain.

New to Caving Initiatives

I would like to thank the CNCC Member Clubs who have taken on the responsibility of leading events to introduce newcomers who want to try caving. The project is gathering momentum after the inaugural event with Craven Pothole Club. Hopefully those who find this a rewarding experience will go on to join clubs and engage in further training with the Instructed Caving Sector and CNCC courses.

Cave Archaeology Exhibition

The Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes will be having an exhibition in Summer 2024 to celebrate the Cave Archaeology of the Ingleborough Area. This is part of the "Our Common Cause" HLF funded project.

The project officer contacted me ask if they could borrow the Mesolithic bone assemblage that Local cave explorers have recovered from dig sites in recent years. This is work by leading experts in the field, who are also local cavers. John Thorpe and Tom Lord are working with Local Authorities and Universities to ensure that the value of caves is understood and that cave explorers are a vital part of the conservation of this material.

The CNCC is the "go to" first port of call for anyone who discovers archaeological artifacts or bones in caves. See the CNCC "Do you Dig Caves" leaflet on the Website.