

NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 December 2014

Editorial

It's been a while since the last CNCC newsletter, but better late than never. 2014 has been a busy year, and hopefully this will update you on some of the highlights. We have news relating to access, conservation, training, bolting, the CNCC website and possible future services this can offer, information for anyone keen to get involved with the CNCC, and news of some major changes that are being proposed to our constitution.

Next General Meeting:
Saturday 7th March 2015,
Hellifield Village Institute, Hellifield.

Keeping You Up To Date

Hopefully newsletters such as these will become more commonplace. We also keep our full member clubs up to date by email. Remember you can see recent news relating to access, conservation, training and other matters affecting northern caving on our website and also via our Facebook page and Twitter feed.

Your CNCC

Web: www.cncc.org.uk

Facebook:

[CouncilOfNorthernCavingClubs](https://www.facebook.com/CouncilOfNorthernCavingClubs)

Twitter: @cncc_uk

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Access: Johnny Latimer
access@cncc.org.uk

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webmaster@cncc.org.uk

Draft constitution to put to vote at 2015 AGM

Over the past nine months, a sub-group within the CNCC have been working to review our constitution. The current document was written some time ago, and, of course, things change and processes evolve. A number of new faces have joined us in the last few years, including full members, officers and committee. Furthermore, there has been an increased scrutiny in the workings of regional caving councils, and the CNCC has been no exception.

These factors have highlighted the need to amend the constitution to produce a document that better represents the way we work, or the way we should work, and which better serves the CNCC for the immediate future.

The contents of the constitution can be broadly divided into two areas:

First there are the core fundamentals; matters such as our structure, voting rights and who we represent. In due course it will be good to review these, and see if these are areas we wish to change.

The second category is the housekeeping parts of the constitution, which define how we function, our rules, regulations and day-to-day operational procedures.

The sub-group was tasked with reviewing the constitution, with a view to drafting an entirely new document with these 'housekeeping' areas totally overhauled. In most cases this has involved adding further clarification to support existing procedures, to help ensure that the CNCC is more transparent and democratic in the way we operate. In other cases, it has involved amending existing procedures or establishing new ones more suited to our current requirements.

The full draft document is available to download on the CNCC website (meetings page, AGM 2015), as two documents, one with annotations to highlight most of the major changes. All full member clubs are encouraged to come to the AGM on 7th March 2015, where you will have a vote on whether to accept this new document. Any questions: secretary@cncc.org.uk



Ingleborough Estate gets a new CNCC access agreement

For decades, access to the caves of Ingleborough Estate (including Gaping Gill, Newby Moss, Hurnell Moss and the Allotment areas) has been administered by the Estate directly. In the last few months, after extensive discussions with the Estate and their land agents (Ingham and Yorke), an agreement has been reached to transfer the issuing of permits for all these caves to the CNCC instead.

A new agreement, to commence early 2015, has been established and the exact details have now been finalised:

- One permit per day per entrance
- All permits available all year round
- Permits can be issued to BCA-member clubs or to named BCA-insured individual cavers (CIMs/DIMs)
- Permit application can come by email or letter (email generally preferred)
- Permits may be available at short notice
- If parking in Clapham please be sensitive to the residents and do not park or change outside houses: The village car park is preferred.

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We are delighted to welcome Geoff Whittaker as the interim Ingleborough Estate permit secretary. Geoff has done an outstanding job as Aygill permit secretary for the last few years, and also as a temporary Leck Fell permit secretary this year.

This agreement is great news for all cavers; permits will be available for all entrances, all year round, to all BCA-insured cavers, and can be obtained by email, supplying a few simple details. As with all permit applications, advanced booking is recommended to secure your permit, however, last minute applications can often be processed, if the permit secretary is available to do so.

This agreement addresses the wishes of Ingleborough Estate, thus helping to maintain excellent relations with an Estate who have been highly supportive of cavers for many years, and hopefully many more to come.

Thank you to Ingleborough Estate, Geoff, and our access officer, Johnny Latimer for their hard work. The handover is expected to be early January 2015, and until then permit requests are still being managed by Ingham and Yorke on behalf of the Estate. All permits issued prior to the handover will, of course, remain valid.

The permit application details on the CNCC website will be updated upon the handover. Therefore, especially during January 2015, please check the website immediately prior to sending any permit requests to ensure the most current procedure is followed.

New access details for Skirwith Cave, Ingleton

A new agreement has been established for Skirwith Cave. The details are on the CNCC website, but briefly, please write to Mr & Mrs Smith, Pemberton Farm, Tatterthorn Lane, Ingleton, Carnforth, LA6 3DS, with notice of the date of your anticipated visit and a contact telephone number in case of any problems. No need to include an SAE or to await/expect a reply. Please provide at least one week notice whenever possible.

New access details for Dow Cave, Wharfedale

Dow Cave is now subject to an agreement between the CNCC and the landowner. The agreement allows BCA-insured recreational cavers to have unrestricted access (no permit or prior permission required). However, the landowner has requested that commercial groups pay £1/head for access. Payment to be made to Mr J. Hagar, Barthorpe Lodge, Acklam, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 9RW. Full details are on the website.

CRoW and northern caving

Back in May, the CNCC Committee voted unanimously in favour of seeking clarification as to the applicability of the Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) act to caving, and agreed that we needed to take guidance from the BCA on such a national matter. With the imminent BCA referendum to decide whether the BCA should campaign to have caving recognised under CRoW, our access officer, Johnny Latimer, has spoken to three of the largest Estates who have caves on their CRoW land (Kay-Shuttleworth for Leck Fell, Whelprigg for Casterton and Ingleborough Estate) to keep them advised of the situation and make them aware of all possible implications of this ongoing vote.

Clearly the balance between maximising all opportunities for improved access, while maintaining landowner confidence and goodwill with the caving community is a difficult one to tread, especially where opinions are so mixed. We believe that while the BCA referendum and any possible subsequent actions are ongoing, the best we can do is keep landowners informed of the progression of this, while taking every opportunity to continue to improve access outside of the CRoW debate. The recent developments with Ingleborough Estate, the move towards more electronic permits, which are more easily available, and a current initiative to seek improved access in the Penyghent and Fountains Fell areas are all part of this plan. Contact: access@cncc.org.uk

Leck Fell permits

In January 2015, permit applications for Leck Fell will be returning to Jim Sloane. Thank you to Geoff Whittaker for looking after this area over the summer. As with Casterton Fell, Aygill, Excalibur, Bowland and the upcoming Ingleborough Estate system, Leck Fell permit enquiries and applications can now be done via email. The CNCC website will be updated with the change of permit application details at the exact point Jim resumes the role, so please check the website prior to sending any requests.

Resin anchor installation



As most of you will be aware, the BCA Equipment and Techniques Committee agreed to purchase a further 2000 anchors from Bolt Products for distribution to the various caving regions. These are now available, and the CNCC so far has issued 28 anchors for placement and maintenance work, including Magnetometer Pot. The final pitches of Birks Fell, and Washfold Pot are currently being addressed.

Loose anchors reported in Bull Pot (Kingsdale) and Alum Pot were tested using the Hydrajaws test equipment; all anchors passed the static load 10 kN test.



Meanwhile the Speleo Vercors team have been continuing to generate safety data for the use of resin-bonded anchors (P-bolts). Three anchors were installed high up in the Vercors in 2008, where they are exposed to extremes of temperatures, shifting from far-sub-zero at night to sweltering temperatures during the day, thus exceeding the worst case scenarios that they might be subjected to in the UK. All three anchors were tested and passed the 10 kN test. The aim of this experiment was to demonstrate the impact of these extremes of temperature (including sudden and frequent changes) on the resin/anchor/substrate bond. This helps to add to the portfolio of data already available, which includes tests on anchors installed in Yordas streambed to simulate underwater installation and freeze-thawing, as well as recent tests on the Bolt Product anchors at Ingleton quarry and Yordas gully). Lots more information is available on the Technical Group page of the CNCC website.

If you have any requests for anchor installation or if you wish to report a defective anchor please contact the CNCC Technical Group. Even better, if you are willing to undertake the anchor installation training and then assist with the placement of anchors in northern caves, please do get in touch with the training officer: training@cncc.org.uk

Conservation Projects

The CNCC have been involved in several conservation projects over recent months:

Providence Pot

The massive localised flood on the 20th of July 2014 washed away the protective revetment from the south side of the Providence Pot shaft exposing the inner lining and scoured out the streambed to the depth of around 1.5m but leaving it very narrow. Urgent restoration was needed. From the 11th to the 14th November, a party of volunteers, funded by the CNCC, stayed at Hag Dyke and carried out the necessary repairs.



There were 13 volunteers on the first day, 12 on the second, 8 on the third and 5 on the last day to clear the site. All the equipment and personal gear was driven up to Hag Dyke on the morning of the first day whilst the volunteers walked up from Kettlewell.

The first day and a half was spent widening, straightening and deepening the streambed to get the water away from the shaft. This in itself should help to protect it in the future from all but the worst floods. We then began building a mortared wall which was linked to the existing shaft lining by heavy duty galvanised steel straps.

At the end of day three this was 95% complete. We will go back for a day next spring to finish off, as the work was limited by the supply of mortar. The sand and cement was dry-mixed at Hag Dyke, put into plastic drums and ferried over the fell by Polaris and then sledged down the hillside to the cave. This was the most tiring job and sheer exhaustion in the end prevented completing the job on the third day. All equipment was removed from site on the last day and taken back to Colt Park.



With the exception of a forty year old all the other volunteers were in their sixties and some in their seventies - an incredible effort!! Those present were Tim Sullivan, Dave Brook,

Andy Farrow, Dave Matthews, Alan Speight, John (Lugger) Thorp, Edward Easton, Pete Monk, Tony (Bog) Brown, Ian Cross, Kevin Dixon, Andy Walsh and Ged Benn. Fred Rattray, because of injury, acted as chief cook and provided the team with breakfast, lunch and evening meal - an excellent job which freed the rest of us to concentrate on work. Andrew Hinde arranged for materials to be delivered to site and provided transport on the first and last days. Because of injury he couldn't help with the heavy work but he and Kay Easton, after helping to get tools down to the site, took the sign up to Dow Cave to warn any potential through-trippers.

I would like to thank Clive Swann of the Scout Association for the use of Hag Dyke and Norman Close who transported the sand and cement up to Hag Dyke.

Lastly I would like to thank the whole team who worked to their limits to do this job.

Report by Ged Benn

Low Eglin's Hole, Nidderdale



After years of being blocked, Black Sheep Diggers, with support from the CNCC and Natural England have, in August 2014, re-opened Low Eglin's Hole. The project involved installation of a new entrance hatch and surrounding fencing, and establishment of an agreement with the landowner for visiting cavers. The procedure for arranging access is:

- Call Mr Challis at Hazel Close Farm (01423 755602) to request permission and arrange a time to collect the key
- Call at the farm to collect the key
- Park at the grass layby at SE 097736 (first bend after the How Stean Gorge turnoff)
- Walk up the road and climb over the first



metal gate on the left. Bear right across the field towards two fenced-off areas. The closest has a stile and is Low Eglin's Hole.

- Return the key to the farm.

A report on the work can be found in Descent 240, some photos are on the Northern Boggarts website (northernboggarts.org.uk), and a video is also available on YouTube.

Daimler Hole and Homeshaw Cave, Bruntscar, Chapel-le-Dale

In September 2014, CNCC volunteers, funded by the CNCC and Natural England, assisted with re-opening of the entrance to Homeshaw Cave and Daimler Hole. This involved the removal of a large quantity of rusty fencing and other unpleasantities from the entrances, plus two cars from each (including the famous Daimler). The oil sump of the Daimler was cleaned and mounted above the entrance to preserve the story of how this cave came by its name. Some photos of this work can be found on the Northern Boggarts website.

If you have a suggested project for the CNCC conservation group, or if you would like to become a volunteer please contact the Conservation Officer: conservation@cncc.org.uk

Marble Steps

Following reports from various groups of a sheep having fallen down the Marble Steps entrance, there was concern that this could cause a health hazard. Andrew Farrow went to assess the situation, and on 4-5th November 2014, returned with several of the Little Green Men (Tony Brown, Pete Monk and Dave Matthews) to remove the offending dead sheep. This was successfully accomplished thanks to a number of bags, some strong stomachs and a pulley system. Thank you to all involved for making this classic Yorkshire trip rather more enjoyable than it otherwise would have been!



Training

The two CNCC first aid courses, free to any BCA-member caver, were delivered as planned on 18th October and 1st November this year. The courses were popular, with the October date being fully booked and November almost full. Feedback from both courses was very positive and there have been requests to run more during 2015, which we will certainly aim to do. The feedback also indicated that some cavers would prefer a two day course so



that more time could be spend on practical scenarios. We have discussed this with the training providers and they are prepared to accommodate this. Details of dates for the 2015 course(s) will be circulated and posted on the CNCC website (and on our Facebook page and Twitter feed) as soon as they are confirmed.

Are there any other training needs you feel that the CNCC could help with? If so, please do get in touch with our Training Officer: training@cncc.org.uk

Treasurer needed!

Our Treasurer, Glenn Jones, has announced that after many years of looking after the CNCC's finances he will be standing down at the 2015 AGM. We are therefore looking for a new candidate to stand for this position. If you feel you might be interested, please get in touch with Glenn, and he will be happy to answer any questions - treasurer@cncc.org.uk



CNCC website: Member login

I'm sure that for most of you the new CNCC website, developed by our webmaster Gary Douthwaite, will not have gone unnoticed. This has been up and running for well over a year and feedback has been good.

The next phase of development of the website is to create a members area where all full members can log in, update their contact details, review all emails the club has received from the CNCC, and be kept up to date with the recent news and any ongoing debates. This has now been developed, and is undergoing testing, and will hopefully be rolled out to all full member clubs in 2015.

If you responded to the request for beta testers earlier in the year then you should get called upon for your help in the coming months, with more services being added as required. Any suggestions are always welcome - contact webmaster@cncc.org.uk.

Electronic permits

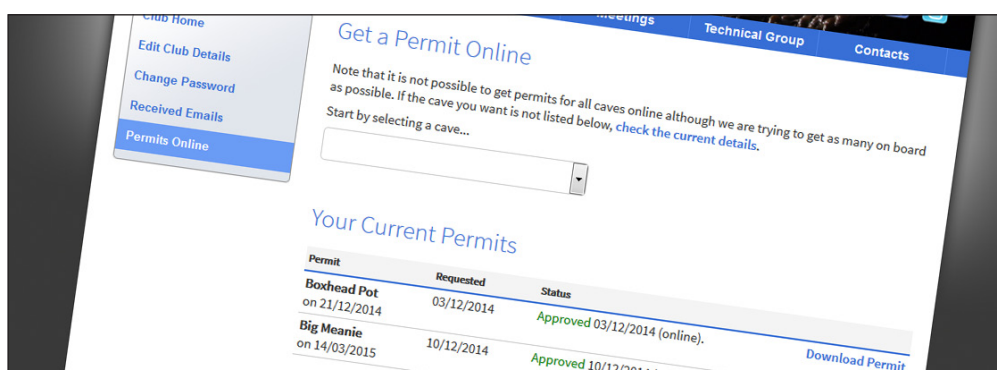
Over the past few years, most of the major CNCC permits have moved to allow applications by email (including Leck, Casterton, Aygill, Barbondale, Excalibur, and soon Ingleborough), meaning permits can often be easily obtained, sometimes at short notice. Only those areas where the landowners re-

quest an advanced list of issued permits can this not be implemented, such as Fountains Fell and Birks Fell.

The next step in this process is to make it possible to see an online diary of permit availability and for the application process itself to become automated. We've all been in situations where our planned trip has been rained off, or where a change of plan while having breakfast has been desirable. Maybe you've fancied doing Lancaster Hole, Lost John's or Bar Pot, but you haven't got a permit? We acknowledge that this lack of last-minute flexibility is inconvenient.

We are currently looking into a possible resolution to this situation. Our webmaster is developing a bespoke prototype system that will include online permit diaries and online permit applications. This will even allow all CNCC full member clubs to apply for some permits via their club's login, and obtain one for immediate use. Rolling the latter out to all clubs, and possibly even DIMs/CIMs (for Ingleborough Estate) will require complex software, but this is all being considered.

Clearly, the software behind such a system is challenging, and this isn't going to work for every area, but it is something we are working towards (see image below). Testing will commence in 2015 and we'll be keeping you updated in future newsletters.



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 in the future, 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 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.

Contact: secretary@cncc.org.uk