

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Reports for 20th March 2021 Committee Meeting

Chairman's Report

I would like to thank the two officers who are standing down at this AGM for all the years of very productive work they have done on behalf of all cavers with an interest in our region.

Tim Allen (Access) and Ben Wright (Treasurer) will be available to assist any new applicants to settle in. The workload has decreased significantly in recent months and is quite manageable and even interesting for those with an interest in "giving something back to caving".

I look forward to a resumption of caving and socialising in the Dales as the summer unfolds. Caving , like everything else, will have to adapt to changing conditions in what I hope will be a different and better post pandemic world. I also want to pay tribute to all the cavers who have behaved in an exemplary way throughout this year of changing lockdowns and restrictions. The Dales communities have had no need to complain about caving activities. In fact, many local people have been assisted and thanked the caving community for their help and consideration.

I am submitting my reports from this year below.

Chairman's Report for June 2020 Committee Meeting

Covid 19 Response Firstly I would like to thank Northern Cavers for their exemplary behaviour during the first two stages of Covid Lockdown. We have had no complaints from any landowners or local communities and some gratifying expressions of support where we have been invited to help. I would also like to encourage our member clubs to take advantage of any funding available via CNCC to assist in the restart of club caving activities when appropriate to do so. Whether this is equipment, training, refresher courses or Hut re-commissioning expenses. Many clubs with property have received grants from local authorities but not all. Please continue to point your club members to the CNCC website for up-to-date information on cave access and general Covid-19 advice.

Gary has done a great job keeping our website updated at this important period. I should also thank Matt Ewles and Jane Allen for keeping our social media platforms appealing and relevant with useful and timely information.

Access. I am sure you will all be aware of the immense amount of work done by Tim Allen to ensure our return to caving activities in a safe and responsible way. His report below shows that this has been virtually a full time job during the transition out of lockdown. The resumption of the cave booking system is a tribute to the trust he enjoys from the big estates and landowners (which has been hard-won over many years). This has required hours and hours of planning, correspondence and farm gate chats. Thanks also to Geoff for sorting out the new and existing bookings. While the Dales honey pot sites have been inundated with visitors (some of whom let themselves down with ignorant behaviour) it has not affected the high regard with which cavers are now held by many landowners who have benefited from our assistance over recent years. Stories in Stone The cave conservation project has been put on hold. It is hoped that a further extension will be negotiated with HLF.

Chairman's Report for October 2020 Committee Meeting

I have little of consequence to report without stealing content from our hard working Officers reporting below. One thing I would like to double up on is the vote of thanks to Geoff for the fantastic service he has given to CNCC in the area of permits secretary and the on line booking system.

The Fairy Holes Cave Agreement is in place for this year. Since lock down was eased in July I contacted the landowner to suggest that permits could now be issued with a new maximum number of 6. I have had no response, but I suggest that we carry on issuing permits as normal in the meantime. As the new landowner "beds in " with the needs of cavers(for access to his site) I am bearing in mind when the appropriate moment might be to ask for a relaxation of restrictions on access. I would like to see a "Derbyshire Key" fitted on the entrance to avoid posting padlock keys around the country.

There are a few minor changes in landownership in the 3 Peaks area which will need negotiations over a couple of lesser known gems when the new owner/ occupiers settle in.

I am pleased to hear of a few privateers who have been getting on with Cave Conservation projects in the Dales in recent months. Anyone who has an idea for a project is encouraged to talk to our Conservation Officer who can usually offer financial or logistical support.

Chairman's Report for January 2021 Committee Meeting

Stories in Stone Project

This project has now completed after 5 years of incredible effort by CNCC conservation volunteers.

One hundred and fourteen individual cavers took part in 28 different conservation projects around the Ingleborough Dales.

The Heritage Lottery Fund were very complimentary about the success of our project which exceeded expectations in nearly all areas.

The final claim from SIS has allowed us to purchase an 18V Makita sds+ drill and an 18V angle grinder (both with 2 batteries each). These have both been out on site at Knacker Trapper Hole where they proved very adequate for the task. They will be added to the CNCC equipment audit. These items will also be available to individuals and groups who have suitable training in their safe use.

Covid 19 Updates

I would like to thank our PR team for keeping the CNCC advice up to date and in line with Government statements over the last 10 months. It has been a complex issue which has aroused a few conflicts in an area which is personal and emotive. It has been a very difficult task which all the CNCC officers have contributed to positively. I feel that we struck the right balance of personal responsibility and community cohesion.

The future

Caving makes a significant contribution to the Dales economy. I hope that when the current restrictions are over we will see a resurgence in club and individual caving once again. I encourage everyone to make use of club huts when available and attend the club meets. Clubs have had a generous financial assistance during the lock down. We now need a boost in participation from club members and individual cavers when the time comes. Refresher SRT training courses will be available to anyone who needs one to give them the confidence to return to caving safely after a long lay off. Check the CNCC website for details.

Andrew Hinde - CNCC Chairman

Secretary's Report

This year I have dealt with a small number minor administrative issues which required committee communication, but otherwise have continued to keep appropriate records and help ensure these meetings are as productive as possible.

This year was my first as Secretary, and what a unique year it has been. At the last AGM we were all joking that we should be keeping 2m apart, and a year later it seems a distant memory that so many people could be indoors without a mask! The CNCC has adapted by using Zoom, which has enabled the committee to continue with our regularly scheduled meetings. Although lacking the usual social opportunities, these have allowed the CNCC to continue coordinating what work we have been able to carry out this year.

The January meeting was held on a Thursday evening, and was rather successful. I have tentatively put in dates for the coming year on Thursday evenings also, as this format enables representatives and officers to attend without a lengthy commute and without using up a good chunk of a Saturday, something that benefits us all even outside a pandemic. I will be open to feedback on this when the dates are discussed during the meeting. Due to the much more inclusive nature of the AGM, I have planned for this to take place in Hellifield as per usual.

Otherwise, outside of 1 or 2 minor administrative issues requiring committee communication, I have continued organising meetings and preparing documents as usual, and I intend to continue to do so for another year.

Josh Young - CNCC Secretary

Treasurer's Report

For all concerned, 2020 has been a difficult year. Caving activities in our area have been substantially reduced by the pandemic, which is mirrored in the CNCC's finances. In 2020 expenditure was less than half of what it was the previous year, with a much reduced number of transactions. Having said that, we were still able to fund conservation projects at Sell Gill, Nidd Head Rising, Aven Pot, Aygll Cavern and Alum Pot. The CNCC was also able to purchase several new pieces of equipment, including a new drill and angle grinder. All of the expenditure in 2020 should be claimed back from either the BCA or from Stories in Stone.

As with previous years, much of our funding in 2020 came from Stories in Stone. Unfortunately this funding source is now finished, so we will not be able to claim from it in the future, however we can now claim for almost all of our expenditure from the BCA, so hopefully this won't be an issue.

Overall the CNCC made a profit of £1513.85, but much of this was due to the funding of the trailer in 2019 coming to us in 2020. This small profit may cause of some issues with the FCA to do with tax, but I will contact them to see if anything is due.

As usual, Ric and Pat Halliwell of the CPC did a fine job of checking the accounts and their letter of approval is attached.

Income and Expenditure

Balance (Savings and current accounts) on 01/01/2020: £14,838.00

Income

Interest on savings:	£11.97
Funding for Trailer from SIS:	£3600.00
Funding for materials for Sell Gill and Ingleborough dig clean-up from SIS:	£979.38
PayPal test payment:	£0.01
BCA funding from 2019:	£1,153.49
Total Income (not including transfers from savings account):	£5,744.85

Expenditure

Sell Gill materials:	£88.20
Sell Gill mileage:	£160.86
Alum Pot mileage:	£81.00
Ingleborough dig clean-up materials:	£891.18
Nidd Head Rising gate:	£100.00
Aven Pot lid:	£58.80
Aygill Cavern entrance repair:	£55.14
CHECC prize:	£20.00
Stationary:	£31.12
CNCC newsletter:	£41.00
Room booking:	£58.00
Zoom licence:	£28.78
Website and mail hosting:	£70.20
SRT barn hire for Feb 2021 training event:	£100.00
Bolting resin:	£238.75

Bolting drill bits:	£106.02
Trailer tyres (funded by SIS):	£1440.00
Drill (funded by SIS):	£399.99
Angle grinder (funded by SIS):	£249.99
Total Expenditure:	£4,219.03
Profit/Loss	£1,525.82
Balance (Savings and current accounts) on 31/12/2020:	£16,363.82

Ben Wright - CNCC Treasurer

Craven Pothole Club Ltd.

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5 February 2021

CNCC Accounts 2020

Dear Ben

We have checked the bank statements, claims and receipts, summaries of payments made and received and after raising a small number of minor queries on layout, which you have resolved entirely to our satisfaction, we are happy to state that all monies expended have been accurately accounted for and detailed in your report. Similarly all income has been correctly recorded and the bank statements are in full agreement with the records of all transactions.

With all best wishes

PC Halliwell

RA Halliwell

Dr RA Halliwell, Craven Pothole Club
Mrs PC Halliwell, Hon Librarian Craven Pothole Club

Conservation Officer's Report

As with so many things, conservation work has been hit by Covid with the Dales and the surround population centres being hit by various degrees of lockdown causing a cancellation of working parties for most of the year.

Before lockdown put paid to any Conservation projects, a group of volunteers over the course of three days stabilised the collapsed entrance to Knacker Trapper Pot, installing a plastic tube. With the temporary easing of lockdown in late summer, a group repaired the wall around Alum Pot, and Andrew Hinde has repaired the stile at Long Churns. In October a small group repaired the wall around Yordas Cave and cleaned graffiti at the cave entrance.

There is an increasing list of jobs in the pipeline, so hopefully we will have a busy and productive year ahead.

We are grateful to the Stories In Stone project, which has now finished, for giving so much help to conservation projects in the last few years.

I'd like to remind everyone of the UK Cave Conservation Emergency Fund which can give loans for emergency conservation work, so that the work can proceed while money is being raised. Application to access the Fund should be made to the Northern Representative (currently, ne). New volunteers are always welcome, for weekend or weekday working parties. No specific skills are necessary, but if you have them, we will do our best to make use of them. On the job training is given as needed. Occasionally there may be the opportunity to attend a training course. Tools will be provided, but you are responsible for providing your own protective clothing - stout footwear, preferably with steel toe caps, stout gloves, weatherproof clothing, helmet. You will also need to provide your own packed lunch and hot drinks.

If you'd like to be placed on the mailing list to be informed of future projects, please contact the Conservation Officer on conservation@cncc.org.uk, or use the link on the CNCC website.

Kay Easton - CNCC Conservation Officer

Access Officer's Report

Greetings to all at CNCC, northern cavers and beyond.

At last year's AGM I reported how we'd had a great year for access across the region with the extension of the booking system to Leck and Casterton Fells and the removal of the last big closed season. I also stated, "I'm up for another year, but share the view that a regular turnover of officers is probably good for any organisation." I am conscious that I shouldn't become part of the CNCC furniture and that, together with some unpleasant business over the recent BCA involvement in the Three Counties traverse, has brought me to the decision that I will not stand this year. I apologise, particularly to Andrew, for the rather late change of course. I hope someone else will step up to the mark very quickly and I will be happy to offer assistance to the new officer as requested.

Who would have thought when we attended the last AGM together in Hellifield, that the year would be dominated by the effects of the virus? In fact, mostly my role this year has been offering advice to cavers in our region. Many thanks to Matt Ewles who largely took over this role as the year progressed. I pay tribute to the lives that have been lost to covid amongst our caving friends and colleagues.

Of course some limited caving has taken place across the region throughout the year and I was pleased to note that no concerns were being reported from landowners or the local communities. We must all be worried about our clubs and the bounce back to normal caving activities especially for the hardest hit student clubs. At least the barriers to participation thrown up by access issues has been greatly improved for those who do return to caving.

The AGM should remember the good work of Geoff Whittaker who stood down from his role as a permit secretary and administrator of the online system in October.

The CRoW campaign which CNCC has supported since the very start has reached an interesting stage. A Judicial Review of the Welsh Government brought by David Rose and backed financially by the BCA may bring some clarity at last. The JR was turned down twice by the courts for not being justiciable but that was overturned on appeal. Finally, we hope, the substantive case of whether CRoW applies to caving will now be heard in a court.

The loss of access at Birkwith is a sign of how vulnerable even long standing access arrangements are to changes in ownership. Our advice is not to make any more approaches until after the pandemic is over. This will be a job for the next access officer to contend with. There is to be a meeting with the NP in the week running up to the AGM so I shall be informing them of the issue at that stage.

For information I include two issues I have recently highlighted to BCA C&A, copied from my correspondence to them.

1.Changes to the Landowner Indemnity insurance offering. This has occurred without BCA noticing and it is still not clear when these changes took place or what is actually insured at present. In 2016 together with Nick Williams, then BCA insurance manager, and the insurers we agreed a statement which indemnified landowners from the action of all visitors whose intention is

to visit the cave on their land. This was partly reconfirmed in wording which formed part of an access arrangement with a major landowner in 2018. A similar enquiry to the insurers a few months ago produced a response which suggested this was no longer the case and earlier advice (2018) may have been given in error.

This is significant for us in the north as, based on the original BCA statement, we have regularly advised landowners, both verbally and in writing, that they do not need to worry about their insurance liability policies as BCA has it covered. The current situation is that discussions are taking place to try to put things back to how we understood them to be, but after a month or two of correspondence this is still unresolved. It does place us in a potentially difficult situation and going forward the implications for access are significant.

Two questions usually come up when this issue is aired. Why are BCA offering to insure landowners when they had their own PLI? Landowners always ask about their liability when arranging access to caves on their land. They do not know if their own insurance specifically covers cavers. They don't want to go to the trouble of asking their insurers or to get a specific clause in their own insurance to cover it. If there is any doubt or concern the landowners easiest answer is just to say no. Far, far better to be able to say you do not need to worry we have got this covered for you. Secondly, why are BCA insuring against all cavers and not just BCA members? One could argue that is their role as representative body for caving and that they are obliged in the constitution to make access as open as possible to all responsible cavers. But the main reason is that you cannot expect a landowner to be able to tell the difference between a BCA member and non-member and landowners do not want to be trying to police cavers themselves.

2. Criminalizing trespass. You'll know that BCA did respond to the government consultation on this. A petition also did the rounds last year objecting to this manifesto promise and likely misuse of any legislation against outdoor interests. The petition did receive well over 100,000 signatures, enough to force a parliamentary debate on the issue. Unfortunately, all such debates were cancelled due to covid restrictions. I'm not sure how many of you are going to trust the government assurances on this, certainly not other outdoor organisations. I note that several organisations with outdoor interests wrote to the various government departments in January expressing grave concerns and alarm again over the proposals of the Police Powers and Protection Bill. Those concerned include the Ramblers, Open Space, BMC, BC, etc. I'm pretty sure BCA should be joining them.

Finally, some may remember that the beginning of my association with CNCC was challenging to all concerned, including for myself. However, over the last few years the organisation has changed considerably and, it seems, is well respected by cavers from across the land. This has been due to a change in attitude and considerable efforts by all the officers, co-opts, committee members and their clubs. The officer team and committee members have worked harmoniously for the good of caving and cavers in the north and long may it continue. I step down on excellent terms with the organisation. Good luck for the future to all of you.

Tim Allen - CNCC Access Officer

Training Officer's Report

Obviously not the year that anyone wanted and we have been unable to run any workshops. However a "framework" for providing training has been agreed by the committee, which will enable us to run a full training programme once the situation allows.

A couple of "Return to SRT" workshops were planned for February. All available places were booked within a couple of days. Unfortunately these had to be cancelled.

Putting these workshops on the website was a great test for the IT system. We had a few "issues" with the online payment side, however once these were sorted, it worked flawlessly.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Gary for developing a simple effective system for hosting and booking training workshops online. The IT system will be a major factor in helping to provide a successful training programme.

I am currently looking at options for providing some outdoor "Return to SRT" workshops from the 29 March.

I have attended a few BCA training committee "Zoom" meetings. In summary, the BCA are looking at fairly significant changes to the structure of training committee. This has obviously caused a few "heated" meetings over the proposals. These proposals are still ongoing.

Here's to a more productive 2021.

Ian Patrick - CNCC Training Officer

BCA E&T Representative's Report - Mark Richards

I took up the post of E&T rep for the CNCC on 17/10/20. Therefore, my report starts from this date.

1.0

C19 and Equipment

The E&T received some information in February 2021

The following article and paper were brought to our attention and given the BCA has published advice about clubs quarantining communal tackle (<https://british-caving.org.uk/coronavirus-and-caving/>). We think it is probably worth BCA giving an update.

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.04.21251127v1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-56007908>

In a nutshell, researchers from various UK universities have concluded that:

- "it seems unlikely that sports equipment is a major cause for transmission of SARS-CoV-2"
- "infection control measures in sport may be better directed towards areas other than reducing the sharing of sports equipment"

- “The recoverable SARS-CoV-2 viral load reduces exponentially with mean viral load of all materials less than 1% of the original inoculum after 1 minute.”
- “Retrievable virus dropped significantly for all materials tested using the high dose inoculum with mean recovery of virus falling to 0.74% at 1 minute, 0.39% at 15 minutes and 0.003% at 90 minutes.”

In terms of how relevant this is to caving, their tests included steel (as a control) and nylon (tennis ball), along with a bunch of other bits of equipment.

Action

It was suggested by E&T that the BCA should update their guidance with a link to the study along with the quotes above. E&T do not take the view that they are BCA should be attempting any interpretation of the results. However, highlighting this to members and clubs would be a good move.

I agreed to the above proposal on behalf of the CNCC

2.0

As a result of the CNCC meeting in Jan 2021, I held a 1.2.1 conversation with a CNCC co-opted officer who had some thoughts on the future for anchor installation, and we conclude the following:

- 1: The current BCA anchor policy (2013) ideally needs a full review by BCA
- 2: A move by BCA so local councils can approve their own anchor installers not the BCA
- 3: Make anchor installation open to more people in a region if required but under strict guidance from that region.
- 4: BCA need to have a more dedicated and detailed area on the BCA web site where to upload all current information.
- 5: BCA need to be more proactive in producing more information and guidance which is up-to date and kept up to date. This will also allow consistency across all regions and give all regions access to the same information as and when they require.
 - List of installers across the UK
 - Anchor training syllabus
 - Anchor installation document

- Updates on resin
- Any other relevant to anchor installation
- Changes as and when they occur

Action

I have made contact with Mark Sims the E&T convenor, and we have had some email correspondence regarding the points listed. We need to arrange a call between the 2 of us in order to move forward.

3.0

IC Resin Anchors

At the CNCC meeting held on 17/10/2020 Point 6 of the minutes discussed the following :

JY obtained quotes for the production of more IC anchors: 650 for £5.60 each, or 1300 for £5.50 each (excluding VAT). BW said that this would be a large proportion of our funds, but perhaps we should suggest the BCA buys a batch so that the anchors can be used throughout the country. ME agreed, we have 447 unused anchors and are running out of caves that need them.

Action: JY/MR to put forward a proposal to the BCA E&T committee that the BCA purchase a batch of IC anchors to allow them to be installed throughout the UK.

Below is a proposal to BCA Council from the E&T committee:

The E&T committee propose that BCA make a purchase of one batch of 650 IC anchors for use by all regional councils.

At the BCA council meeting

The BCA Treasurer HJJ commented that the cost of the proposal had been built into his budget, which had just been approved by Council.

The Chair PJR opened discussion and Mark Sims (E and T Convener) pointed out difficulties in supply when asked about timescales, which AH (CNCC) gave a generous offer to solve this problem, where stock held by CNCC , could be given to other regional councils in the short term with the CNCC stock replenished when these new anchors were manufactured. This offer was subject to the agreement of the other CNCC officers. The Chair thanked AH for this, and said it was fantastic to see cooperation happening between the Regional Councils. That's how the BCA can work helping each other and thanks for that.

Summary - The BCA committee were in favour of a proposal that the BCA purchase a batch of IC anchors for use by all regions and Lima Engineering were asked to manufacture the batch.

The CNCC have said they will distribute IC anchors in numbered batches of 25 to any RCC that requested them, with the proviso that they will be replaced when the new manufactured batch are available.

Note the BCA committee were in favour of adopting Fischer FIS EM Plus 390 S resin under the scheme based on test results and on data provided by Fischer, due to favourable strength and shrinkage properties. Stopping the use of Fischer FIS V 360 S was not considered necessary, particularly in the absence of tests of the EM Plus in rock types other than limestone.

4.0

SRT Competency in view of Anchor Installers across the regions

The E and T committee received contact off one regional club suggesting that SRT competency was not required in their area in order to be an approved anchor installer.

Current guidance states

"Regional Councils shall take responsibility for the training of persons who will be authorized to place designated anchors on their behalf. The delivery of training and assessment will be undertaken by individuals authorized by the appropriate Regional Council, who are already authorised to place anchors under the scheme. The Regional Council will pay particular attention to the ability of the proposed trainer to not only instruct candidates to install anchors but also to assess the candidates' competence for judging the location of new anchors **and their SRT ability to safely install anchors on location.**

The E and T are suggesting the following paragraph change to the guidance and this will go the BCA council at their next meeting.

"Regional Councils shall take responsibility for the training of persons who will be authorized to place designated anchors on their behalf. The delivery of training and assessment will be undertaken by individuals authorized by the appropriate Regional Council, who are already authorised to place anchors under the scheme. The Regional Council will pay particular attention to the ability of the proposed trainer to not only instruct candidates to install anchors but also to assess the candidate's competence for judging the location of new anchors **and their ability to safely install anchors on location.**"

Anchor Coordinator's Report - Alan Speight

It is hard to believe I have been doing this job for over a year when I reported that we had purchased two loose anchor pullers for £150 each (this was an estimate and did not cover additional equipment such as a spanner for each) - So just to say CNCC have finally received an invoice and paid £220 for each including repairs and modifications.

Once covid restrictions allowed almost all outstanding CNCC approved installations have been completed apart from Pay Sank & Get Down Shep Pot. All defective anchor reports have been completed apart from Diccan Pot; so many thanks to our installers for the fantastic work they have done.

Behind the scenes Gary has been developing a new Anchor records site and updated the Topos on the CNCC web site. There is much more to do. Some of the topos do not show every installed CNCC anchor (don't ask me why) Lost John's battleaxe traverse is one that springs to mind. - So all past installations need a careful looking over

Any questions then please get back to me.

PR and Communications Officer's Report - Matt Ewles

The co-opted role of PR and Communications Officer was created in June last year to provide dedicated resource for ensuring the work of the CNCC, and caving in general is promoted. This is something I always tried to do as CNCC Secretary, however, the workload of managing both roles was demanding and the two are definitely far better split where resourcing allows.

Keeping a flow of positive news has been challenging over the last year for obvious reasons, but the job has been made easier thanks to some excellent efforts from our Officers and volunteers.

The CNCC has taken a proactive role in issuing guidance to cavers on what they legally can, and cannot do with respect to going caving during the pandemic. Tim Allen started doing this as Access Officer at the start of the first lockdown and kept it updated as we moved out of lockdown, and I picked it up from there. All advice has been Officer-reviewed prior to issue, and has taken a proactive attitude to being able to go caving to support mental and physical wellbeing, while always remaining compliant with the legal requirements and urging the need for additional precautions. The advice was supported and welcomed by the vast majority.

Keeping the news feed up to date is a major part of the role. This has included a number of conservation, anchor, training and access-related stories as well as safety notifications, rigging topo/description changes and summaries of Committee meetings. These can all be seen on our website, and have been shared via all usual media platforms including Facebook, UK Caving and Twitter.

Our webmaster, Gary, has created a mailing list which individual cavers can sign up to, which currently has nearly 200 people signed up. This allows us to communicate directly with interested individuals, and perhaps with an audience that might not use social media platforms as regularly. Four emails have been sent out (typically one per month) with general updates and news.

I have put together an article about getting involved in caving, and linked this with the story of the conservation work that was undertaken in Crackpot Cave, a popular novice cave, a few years ago. To accompany this, myself and Gary went up last year and took some good quality photos of the newly cleaned formations. The Visitor magazine should be featuring this short article in their 2021 issue under the 'out and about' section listing things to do in the Yorkshire Dales.

Working with Gary, we have compiled a new 'media' section on the CNCC website:

www.cncc.org.uk/about/media

This contains lots of FAQs about caving, a list of useful links, and a media gallery currently of 12 excellent photos which we have permission to make available, royalty-free, to anyone for downloading for the purposes of promoting caving, subject to appropriate crediting. These photos have been chosen as some of the best in terms of showing off northern caving, being bright, colourful, interesting and eye-catching. This section should be useful for anyone putting together any kind of media to promote caving (e.g. articles, news stories, club posters/leaflets/websites etc). I would like to thank the photographers who have allowed their images to be used; Mark Burkey, Clive Westlake and Gary Douthwaite.

Similarly, I have been working with Mark Burkey, who has access to a printer for quality photos at A3 or even A2 size. He has very kindly given CNCC access to his photo gallery in Flickr. From this, and from other photographers, I have selected several shots which will work very well for general promotion of caving to a non-caving audience. Mark has kindly agreed to print these and mount them, and I plan to get them framed for distribution to venues across our region where they can be displayed to showcase caving once restrictions ease. The cost of this should hopefully be fairly modest and should be reclaimable from BCA under Publications and Information. I will be collecting these in April once we are allowed to travel, and if anyone has contacts in any local public venues that might be amenable to displaying an excellent framed caving photo (pubs, cafes, information centres, attractions) I would very much appreciate hearing from you.

After the October Committee meeting, I worked with Rob Watson on a CHECC Northern Caving Guide he had written and was looking for feedback on. He had done a splendid job with this. I was able to help improve this and make it more 'CNCC' by inclusion of some conservation notices, harmonisation with key CNCC messages and cave descriptions, and input on the choice of caves. This is a splendid resource, and Rob has made an excellent job at formatting this on the CHECC website:

<https://checc.org/student-caving-trip-options-in-the-yorkshire-dales/>

I am currently writing a piece about caving for the 'Friends of the North York Moors' magazine which is distributed to National Park staff and other subscribers.

There are plenty of other good PR stories in the making at the moment, including the excellent work of several of our anchor installers who have systematically inspected and in many cases replaced all loose anchors that have been reported over the past four years. This is a stunning ongoing effort and will make a brilliant news story once work is complete after lockdown. There will also be some news on training opportunities soon too, again, once these are able to happen, and news of the new CNCC website which Gary is developing.

Therefore, there is plenty going on and lots of light at the end of the tunnel. I can't wait to see as many of you as possible out and about caving again later this year.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to Tim who is stepping down as Access Officer this AGM. He has done so much for northern caving, both inside and outside of the CNCC, as Access Officer and BCA representative, as well as setting a high bar in terms of publicising and promoting caving in our region, a bar I shall be unable to leap over. Without his enthusiasm and efforts we would not have made the huge strides forward in access we have enjoyed over recent years. It has been a pleasure working with him over the last several years and I really hope that Tim stays involved in the CNCC in a non-Officer capacity.

Webmaster Report – March 2021

Cave Booking Site

Since January, I have been working on updating the back-end services for CNCC. The booking system has been re-written to bring it up to date with current standards for security, code, and design. It now has a more streamlined look and more of a focus has been made for mobile devices (60% of users access the site on a phone). As bookings are low at the moment it seemed like the ideal opportunity to do it. The bookings site also now has a new location at <https://bookings.cncc.org.uk> to keep it separate from the main website in preparation for its re-development. All old links will re-direct. There have been no reported issues yet, just a few ideas and positive feedback which is great.

Anchor Records

Following discussions with Alan Speight, the anchor co-ordinator, I agreed to help look after the record-keeping for anchors (as I am also an installer). Data had been kept on a Google spreadsheet and due to the increased number of installers now editing it, it had become quite difficult to manage and keep accurate. The result is that I have now developed a bespoke anchor data record site to make the job easier for everyone. The new site holds all the anchor record data but also interacts with the public site to organise and manage reports of problem anchors so installers can be assigned to go and inspect the reported issue. It's in its early days but feedback from installers has been mostly positive with some good suggestions for improvement.

Data is now on the CNCC server (rather than Google) and I think it will make the job of record keeping, data security and transparency far better now and for future people involved in anchor admin.

Timeline

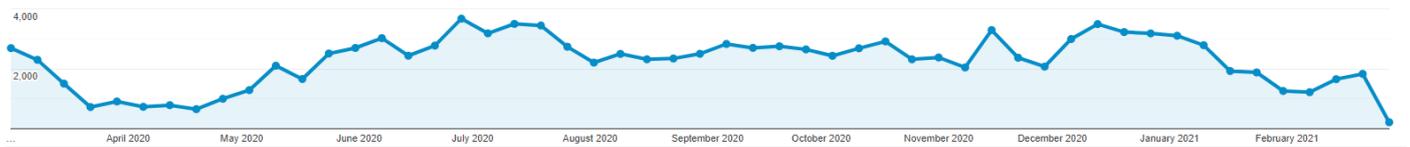
The timeline of CNCC history has been updated. It now includes a detailed history of every year back to 1963.

New Public Website

Development of the new site has begun, and it should be online in the next few months. It is quite a big task, but the current site has existed in its current form for quite several years and it's starting to look a bit tired. The new site will reflect changes in technology and the way people prefer to access information to keep CNCC leading the way in its online services.

Google Analytics (1 Mar 2020 to 28 Feb 2021)

Pageviews:



Top countries: UK: 79.8%, US: 8.6%, China: 2.1%, Canada: 0.6%, France: 0.6%, India: 0.5%, Australia: 0.5%, Germany: 0.5%, Ireland: 0.4%

Gender: 68.72% male, 31.28% female

Age:	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	12.1%	25.78%	17.29%	18.39%	14.11%	12.34%

Facebook

As of 15 March 2021 we have 1181 page likes (+24 since January Committee report) and 1294 followers (+34 since January report).

Performance of recent Facebook posts (original content only, not shared posts, some omitted):

Published	Subject	Reach (people)	Clicks	Reactions & Comments
22/02/2021	Rockfall in Notts	344	21	23
16/02/2021	New CNCC timeline online	365	22	9
10/02/2021	Booking system revamp	328	22	27
26/01/2021	Knacker Trapper Hole work complete	391	36	35
14/01/2021	Anchor installations update	1450	219	88
09/01/2021	Simpsons / Swinsto Warning	601	277	177

Twitter

As at 15 March 2021 we have 459 followers (+2 since January report). 258 tweets have been made by CNCC.

Instagram

As at 15 March 2021 we have 288 followers (+33 since January report).

Online Booking System

- To date, there are **655 registered users** and **1942 individual bookings** have been made. This number includes **1617 approved bookings** and **324 cancelled bookings**.
- **118** made a positive statement that they are NOT BCA members.
- **454** said they are members of a club.
- Of the users who specified gender there are **96 female (14.8%)** , **473 male (72.9%)** and **0 other (0%)**.
- The average age is **47.6** with the **youngest 18** and **oldest 80**.

New registrations:



Total bookings:



Bookings count by month:



Media Download Statistics (to 15 March 2021)

	Total	Average / month	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Publications	8188	256	215	171	162	119	68	81
Topos	63911	2204	2481	2090	2280	1285	989	931
Cave descriptions	52327	1804	2539	1756	2345	1247	1178	619

Media Downloads (top 5 for six months to 15 March 2021)

Topos	Descriptions
Lost Johns' Cave - 414 (3.9%)	Alum Pot and Long Churn Caves - 519 (5.2%)
Alum Pot - 355 (3.4%)	Little Hull Pot - 489 (4.9%)
Jingling Pot - 307 (2.9%)	Ease Gill Cavern - 477 (4.7%)
Yordas Pot and Cave - 302 (2.9%)	The Leck Fell Master Cave System - 461 (4.6%)
Growling Hole - 291 (2.8%)	Caves of Scotland - 433 (4.3%)

Meets Secretary's Report - Tony Brown (Bowland)

Nothing to report since the last CNCC meeting - only one booking for Bowland in the last 12 months.

Meets Secretary's Report - Ric Halliwell (Birks Fell, Fairy Holes etc.)

General

This is my 32nd year as permit issuer and there have been no changes this year regarding access agreements relating to Birks Fell, Robinsons Pot, Ludwell Fairy Holes and Mongo Gill. As a consequence of the Corona Virus problems I received very few requests for access.

Birks Fell

I issued only 6 permits for 2020 and I suspect many of them were not used. I have issued 1 permit so far for 2021

Robinson's Pot

The new access agreement which commenced in 2015 raised the number of available permits from 5 to 8 permits per year on fixed dates in response to the increased demand I had stressed to National Trust. (See CNCC website for details). I only issued 5 out of the 8 potential permits but the farmer was happy for groups to use the permits at the end of lockdown. At the time of writing this report I have so far issued only 1 of the available 8 permits. I urge clubs to apply for the 7 remaining permits.

Ludwell Fairy Holes

This is the 8th year of access to this cave. I issued a total of 7 out of the available 12 permits last year taken up by 5 clubs. I have received only 1 request for the available 2021 permits. Permit holders are now asked to confirm with the gamekeeper, 2 days before the date that they will be using their permit so that he remembers to open the bottom gate on the track. I have also asked each permit holder to pass the keys on to the next permit holder to save postage costs for CNCC. Thanks to Andrew Hinde for all his efforts in continuing to negotiate this agreement.

Mongo Gill

The access agreement is up for renewal and I hope to discuss the removal of the need for a permit. However discussion was refused last year because of other pressures on the Stump Cross company and I suspect the same will be true this year when lockdown eases. They have said they are happy to continue with the current outdated agreement.