

NEWSLETTER

Issue 9 March 2019

Editorial

What a busy six months it's been since newsletter 8! For the first time we had to expand to eight pages to cover all the content, and this issue is no different. Here you'll find news covering several conservation initiatives, some great news on access where potential risks have been nipped-in-the-bud and a long-term understanding has been met with Langcliffe Estate. The online booking system has been a great success over its first five months in full use. More anchors have been installed in some of our more esoteric potholes, and work continues to promote caving, the CNCC, and build relations with like-minded bodies. So much for slowing down over winter!

Matt Ewles (Editor)

Next AGM: 7th March 2020, 10am
Hellifield Village Institute, Hellifield.

Your CNCC

www.cncc.org.uk

 /CouncilOfNorthernCavingClubs

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CNCC AGM 2019

Our AGM on 9th March was attended by 17 voting clubs (more than half our total membership) and 36 people. A great turnout!

It was a productive meeting at which we adopted a new mission statement to aid our collaborations with external bodies and organisations (see below).

We also discussed our stance relating to various modernisation ideas for the British Caving Association, giving backing to all the ideas presented in the meeting agenda.

Finally, we discussed the recent modifications in Ease Gill Caverns, where someone has installed metal staples in County Pot and created footholds on the climbs just within Wretched Rabbit. A separate article on this is included later in this newsletter.

We have no new faces on the CNCC team this year, and the Training Officer position remains unfulfilled (our Chair will stand in for urgent matters only). Like many caving organisations, the CNCC struggles for volunteers to fill Committee and Officer roles.

All our meetings are friendly, informative, a good networking opportunity and a chance to put forward your ideas for what we could be doing to enhance northern caving. The number of new clubs that have got involved over the past decade has been relatively small. Our quorum isn't under any threat thanks to the commitment of about 15-20 of our long-standing members, but we would like to urge more clubs and individuals to get involved. Contact us for more information or have a look at our 'Get Involved' pages on our website.

Our new Mission Statement

We're proud to present our new mission statement, adopted at the 2019 AGM:

The CNCC is an open and welcoming organisation that represents caving and cavers in the north of England and Scotland.

As an exclusively volunteer-led organisation, we will:

- *Work to achieve the best possible access to caves.*
- *Establish beneficial relations with landowners and kindred organisations.*
- *Promote safe and responsible caving in parallel with cave and countryside conservation.*
- *Provide services and information to improve the accessibility of caving.*



The Northern Explorers' Forum is a day of lectures on northern exploration, to be held on Sunday 7th April in Clapham Village Hall. The list of speakers alone promises an interesting and educational day. Talks are advertised covering the core Dales areas including the Three Counties, Wharfedale, the Northern Dales, and across to the North York Moors too.

The day also provides an opportunity to share knowledge and techniques.

The CNCC is underwriting the costs, although ticket sales (£6) have been strong and the event is nearly sold out at the time of writing. Therefore, if you still haven't got your ticket you may want to act fast.

www.northernexplorersforum.org.uk

Caves of Scotland



Most people think of the CNCC as just representing northern England. However, we are also the BCA's Regional Caving Council for Scotland too (although thanks to the Land Reform Act, access issues in Scotland are uncommon and our assistance has been seldom required).

In December, many of the larger Scottish caves were added to the CNCC database. Just search for 'Scotland' on our website for a full list. To accompany this, Alan Jeffreys of the Grampian Speleological Group very kindly submitted descriptions for each of these caves, which have been compiled into a bespoke 'Caves of Scotland' guide, available to download on our website.

This document will be continuously evolving as more descriptions are added in due course, so (as with all CNCC cave descriptions and topos) always download the most recent version.

So how about putting a week in Scotland on your calendar? The Grampian Speleological Group hut in Elphin provides an excellent base for many of the larger caves.

Cave Descriptions

Descriptions for Robinsons' Pot and Hardrawkin Pot have been added to the CNCC website. Many thanks to two separate volunteers who submitted them. They can be downloaded, along with all our cave descriptions and topos, from our website.



Our cave descriptions continue to be extremely popular, and in only a 100-day period spanning Christmas 2018, there were >5500 description downloads and >9000 rigging topo downloads! If anyone would like to contribute a description please contact the Secretary.

BCA AGM 2019

The Annual General Meeting of the British Caving Association will be in our region this year: **Sunday 9th June, 10:30am, Horton-in-Ribblesdale village hall.**

The following posts are up for election:

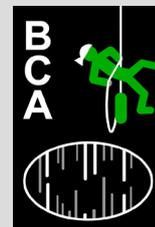
- Secretary
- Conservation & Access
- Treasurer
- Publications & Information
- Two Club Representatives
- Two Individual Member Representatives

Nominations, plus items for the agenda, must reach the Acting BCA Secretary no later than midnight on Saturday, 13th April 2019. The agenda will be published on the BCA website by the end of April.

BCA Group Members (i.e. BCA member clubs and constituent bodies) have a vote in the 'House of Groups'. Each Group may send one voting delegate who must bring with them a signed letter giving them the authority to represent that group.

Individual Members (CIMs and DIMs) may also vote in the 'House of Individuals' and should bring their membership card to enable their vote.

It would be great to see a strong northern participation!



River Ribble Webcam



A new webcam has been installed in Horton-in-Ribblesdale to monitor the river levels. You can find a link via the cave information page of the CNCC website. Hopefully this will be a useful resource for estimating water levels in The Dales (and to look back over the past several hours to see if it is rising or falling) before committing to travelling or heading underground.

Three Counties Interpretation Boards

As reported in our last newsletter, our Access Officer, Tim Allen has been working towards the installation of interpretation boards for the Three Counties System at Bull Pot Farm, Leck Fell and Kingsdale. This is a part-CNCC funded initiative, and has been a lengthy endeavour, involving gaining National Park and landowner support, plus of course putting together the content of the boards.

Tim's work finally came to fruition on 17th December, when the first board was installed at Bull Pot Farm. This stunning board serves to educate all passers-by

about the 'Jewel of the National Park' underneath their feet as they stroll across the fell. It serves to stimulate interest and awareness of caving and what a fascinating pursuit this can be.

The CNCC would like to thank Tim for his hard work in making this happen, and we wish him success in getting further boards installed at Leck Fell and Kingsdale.



CNCC Display

The CNCC is currently putting together a display intended for events such as Hidden Earth, CHECC and other relevant occasions. The display will feature pop-up banners, and a bespoke display board demonstrating some of our recent work across our region. Come and say hello to us at Hidden Earth in September (date/location to be confirmed, but planning is firmly underway).

Caving and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Association



The CNCC has been working hard over recent years to improve our engagement with other organisations and to promote caving as widely as possible.

In November, our Access Officer, Tim Allen, was invited to give a presentation to the annual Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) staff forum. Some 140 members of staff attended, plus VIP guest Dame Fiona Reynolds OBE, former Director General of the National Trust.

As well as showing some great photos of one of the special qualities that make up our National Park, it was an opportunity

to highlight some of the caving resources available to the authority from the CNCC and the wider caving community.

The talk also explained the growth of the cave networks across the area. Particular focus was given to the Three Counties System and the Gaping Gill Systems, as well as looking at future prospects under Kingsdale, Chapel-le-Dale and Great Whernside. One of the key points raised was that we will never find another Ingleborough within the National Park, but we may yet discover another cave network to rival the Three Counties system.

Ongoing efforts to improve interpretation, and education of the non-caving public on the caves beneath their feet was also touched upon. This was noted in a very complementary 'thank you' letter from David Butterworth, Chief Executive of the YDNPA, who commented;

"I could see the heads nodding and sighs of agreement behind me when you were extolling the virtues of more marketing of this special quality so that more people are aware of what is actually there and that they too can come and enjoy it at whatever the level of their experience."

We are very pleased to be able to engage with the National Park and look forward to further strengthening our relationship on behalf of the caving community.

We are grateful to Tony Waltham who supplied copies of his wonderful maps from the Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales books and to all the photographers who allowed use of their images especially Mark Burkey and Frank Pearson.



Not all cavers across the northern regions will have heard of CavefestUK, so over to them to introduce themselves:

"CavefestUK are fast becoming the No.1 cave festival organisation team in the country. The reason for this is our open approach to caving. We take pride in providing events for cavers that they actually want. Family friendly campsites with a

warm welcomes, fantastic social atmospheres, various activities and adventures to take part in, and the perfect opportunity for cavers to enjoy everything about their sport. By focusing on the active side of caving, along with the social side of things, we are able to create an event that appeals to everyone."

Neil Jackson, Founder/Chairman, CavefestUK

CavefestUK are non-profit making and exclusively volunteer-run.

Since starting in 2017, their events have run in the Mendips and South Wales, hence they may have stayed off the radar of some northern cavers. For 2019, it will run again

in Crickhowell on the August bank holiday weekend; a great chance to explore some of the magnificent caves of South Wales.

The CNCC have learned that the CavefestUK organisers are exploring the possibility of running a northern event, although one of the limiting factors for them is their knowledge of northern caving.

We have contacted them to say that we look forward to supporting the establishment of a successful northern event. This is very early days but hopefully more news will be forthcoming. No doubt the support of northern clubs to get a few caves rigged and to lead some trips will be welcomed.

Full details at: www.cavefestuk.co.uk

Access

Barbondale

Last autumn the CNCC received reports of some access problems in the Crystal Cave, Dog Holes and Barking Gill area of Barbondale. The gamekeeper had been attempting to keep all visitors away from this area, even though it is mostly access land defined under the CRoW Act.

It was also noted that this area is often used by school groups for gorge scrambling.

Our investigations revealed that this area is also the breeding area for a local shooting syndicate with shoots taking place each week in September and October.

The shoot is run as a business and so the gamekeeper is very keen to ensure it runs smoothly. Specifically, shooting takes place each Thursday during this period and the gamekeeper wishes that the birds are not disturbed or dispersed on this day or the day beforehand.

There should be no reason to restrict access to the caves in the area if cavers can keep away from the feeding grounds up on the open hillside. Access to both Crystal Cave and Dog Hole can be made either by ducking through the culvert under the road or by going through the gate and keeping close to the wall until the gill is reached,

and following up the gill, rather than taking a route across the open fell.

While cavers have as much right to cross the land, we suggest that to help avoid any potential conflicts, it may possibly be best to avoid the shoot area on Wednesdays and Thursdays of September and October if it is possible to arrange your plans for an alternative day or month.

If cavers can be more aware of the needs of the shoot between the end August and the beginning of November then good relations with the other fell users should be maintained for the future.

The Online Booking System

On the 1st November, the CNCC fully launched the online booking system, after a year of development and testing (covered in the previous three newsletters). This system replaced permits for the caves of Ingleborough Estate.

Getting started with the online booking system is simple. Just go to our website and click 'cave booking' in the top corner. You'll need to register as a user by entering some simple details and you'll then receive an email with a temporary password.

You can then log in using your email address and password, search for the cave entrance you wish to book (or search availability by date), pick an available entrance and date and confirm your booking. The system works on one booking per cave entrance per day.

Most people should find the system intuitive and simple.

Bookings can be made right up until last minute. We imagine a lot of people making bookings in the days (or hours) ahead of their trip, taking advantage of the enhanced flexibility this system allows versus the previous permit approach.

The system is fully integrated with the CNCC website and is compatible with mobile devices.

Booking is a requirement for achieving landowner consented access to caves within the system. Please book responsibly and only what you need. We also encourage you to use the system out of courtesy to your fellow cavers, to help spread underground traffic and allow us to all enjoy caving without encountering congestion particularly on vertical potholes.

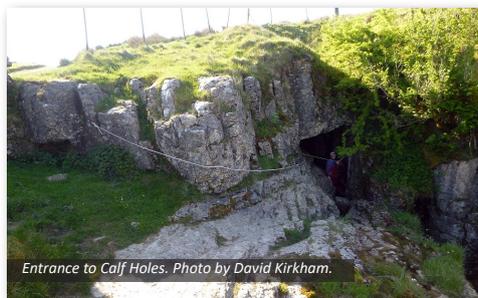
If you experience any issues using the system, you can always contact the system administrator, Geoff Whittaker (just email booking@cncc.org.uk) and he will be able to help you with any issues.

Work is now ongoing to see other areas such as Leck and Casterton Fells brought on board with the online booking system, thus improving the availability and ease of landowner consented access to the caves of the Three Counties System.

The system has fared well over the first five months of live use, with >200 registrations >300 individual cave bookings made, suggesting cavers really are using the system. Thank you for your cooperation!



Access at High Birkwith



Following the sale of High Birkwith Farm, we received reports in December 2018 of a few access issues in the area. The nature of these issues was unclear, and so the CNCC took the initial steps of alerting cavers of possible problems.

Initial contact was made with the new owners, but they were busy with the move, so discussions needed to wait. Our Access Officer, Tim Allen, called by the farm just before Christmas and discussed various aspects of caving and presented a copy of Caves and Karst Science.

A further meeting was arranged to discuss specifics of access once the owners had settled in. On 20th February, Andrew Hinde (CNCC Chair) and Alan Speight (YSS) headed up to a meeting at High Birkwith.

The owners emphasised that they are extremely happy for people to continue visiting the caves on their land, and they have no desire to prevent access; nor do they wish to be bothered by people asking permission for access.

However, they do have concerns about parking of vehicles on their land. Despite efforts by Andrew and Alan to encourage an alternative, the owners were clear that a parking charge will be levied for anyone wanting to park on their land in future. This fee will be £10 for cars and £15 for minibuses, paid into an honesty box using an envelope (to be provided by the visitor) labelled with the vehicle registration.

This fee is for parking, and not for access to the caves, and that the high magnitude of the fee is intended to try to encourage car sharing. They do not anticipate any profit from this and money raised will be used to maintain the track. Cavers are very welcome indeed to park elsewhere and approach the caves on their land on-foot, no permission or fee required.

We should emphasise that we are only passing on the specifications of the landowner. This is not a CNCC agreement, nor was it a negotiation; the owners were very clear on their requirements.

We are pleased that access to the caves of High Birkwith (including Calf Holes and Browgill, Birkwith Cave, Old Ing and Dismal Hill) remains open, with no requirement to ask permission first. This is not something that should not be taken for granted as they are not on CRoW access land.

Unfortunately however, parking for free on High Birkwith land is no more.

We advise cavers intending to park at High Birkwith to go prepared with the correct cash and an envelope; and of course, to car share where possible to reduce the cost per person and the number of vehicles turning up on the land. Avoid bothering the owners wherever possible.

Alternatively, parking can be sourced elsewhere (there are several options nearby) and a longer walk can be taken to reach the caves. We urge cavers choosing this option to park responsibly and avoid blocking any tracks or gates.

Langcliffe Hall Estate



The CNCC's 1970s permit based access agreement with Langcliffe Hall Estate (for Penyghent Pot and Dale Head Pot) endured for over 40 years. However, in early 2018 the CNCC withdrew, citing an inability to establish dialogue with the landowner, CRoW, and the tax-exempt heritage status of the land.

Withdrawing from the 1970 agreement must have helped to encourage dialogue, as soon after, our Access Officer, Tim Allen, was able to set up a meeting with estate representatives. After lengthy discussions, the outline of a sensible arrangement was reached. We termed this a 'Memorandum of Understanding' (MoU) rather than the traditional 'access agreement'.

This MoU addresses the concerns of the estate regarding caver access, while giving effectively open access to the caves on CRoW 'access land' across the estate such as Dale Head Pot and Penyghent Pot. It also clarifies that other caves on private land within the estate are unrestricted, providing they are accessed by existing permissive routes.

A short statement on landowner indemnity was produced and included by agreement between the landowner, the BCA and the BCA insurers. Other conditions state what we already aspire to do as a responsible Regional Caving Council.

This simple understanding satisfies the needs of a major landowner whilst giving cavers the freedoms they desire. We hope cavers will respect the land and the caves and abide by the guidance laid down in the countryside and cave conservation codes.

The CNCC look forward to a future where such sensible negotiations will benefit all who wish to cave in our region.

Slab Pot, Casterton

In an attempt to stop flooding under the disused railway bridge from Wanders Lane into Casterton village, the Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club, plus many other cavers from the area, opened up this pothole and dug down and along all through the hot summer of 2018.



Newly covered entrance at Slab Pot. Photo by Ray Duffy.

Although the team did not find the hoped-for downstream passage to the resurgence, they did create a massive void into which the flood water could flow before reaching the dip under the bridge.

Since the work was undertaken, with the consent of the Parish and County Councils, the road has not so far flooded even in the worst rain. The whole Casterton community was enthusiastic and interested in the work we did, and many visitors were given a full run-down of the project as they walked past us. When the cave had been 'pushed' to a conclusion it was capped with concrete lintels allowing the water to flow into the cave whilst stabilising the stream bed.

Report by Ray Duffy (President RRCPC)

Crackpot Cave, Swaledale

Crackpot cave in Swaledale is frequently visited by outdoor groups, children and experienced cavers alike. It boasts a fine river passage and generous displays of stal.

Sadly, time and traffic has taken a toll, and Rowan Worsman reported to the January CNCC Committee meeting that many of the stal are badly splattered with mud. Not one to take a back seat on such things, Rowan came to the meeting with a comprehensive plan and landowner consent to perform a cleanup. Efforts are now ongoing to put together a conservation team in the next few months. We hope to have a full report in a future newsletter.

Repairs to Hurnell Moss track

The two winch meets at Gaping Gill each year are splendid events, where the public are provided the opportunity to be taken down into the magnificent Gaping Gill Main Chamber on the confort of a winch.

These meets are run by the Bradford Pothole Club and Craven Pothole Club. There can be few events that promote caving to the wider public (and get them hands-on involved) than these.

The meets involve an encampment of cavers at Gaping Gill for the duration, and of course a lot of heavy equipment which is brought up by tractors on a track coming up via Hurnell Moss.

Naturally this track can look a little worse for wear by the end of the year. Restoration of the track after the Craven Pothole Club winchmeet in August is usually a lengthy job, however last year for the first time a mechanical digger was booked. The job was done in only five hours, with ruts being squashed flat and drainage ditches being cut. It was a revelation that should help expedite future remedial works

Ingleborough Cleanups

Recent discussions with Ingleborough Estate have identified that they would like all abandoned digs to be recorded and safely covered with a long-term solution (i.e. not rotten wood).

During a walk across the Ingleborough Fells, one of the Estate trustees encountered the 'Thyme' dig on Hurnell Moss. The large excavations, above-ground scaffold constructions and surface dumping of dig spoil did not impress him very much.



Thyme dig site



Thyme dig site

This is of course very unfortunate timing given the current sensitivities of Ingleborough Estate on these matters. The CNCC is currently discussing options and consulting with various parties on how to make this dig safe and tidy.

Not a million miles away, over near P5 shakehole, lies a horror of a shakehole. This time not an abandoned dig, but full with several tonnes of rusty scrap metal of unknown origin. Work is planned to clear this up for the Estate using the new CNCC capstan winch (reported elsewhere).

Finally, coming down the hill a little, Smeagol Pot is an abandoned dig in the Clapham Bottoms area of Ingleborough. On 21st October 2018, in abysmal conditions, 17 volunteers from the Craven and Bradford Pothole Clubs got to work, capping the dig and restoring the surface and transporting the debris down to the Gaping Gill track for removal.

If you or your club knows of, or has, an abandoned dig; or even an active dig that on reflection might not be quite up to scratch for tidiness or safety, we urge you to take action. The CNCC can help in many cases, but proactivity by individuals and clubs is also extremely welcome.



Capping at Smeagol Pot



Smeagol Pot capped



Volunteer team

Modifications in Caves

Many of you will have heard about the metal staples installed in Kingsdale Master Cave last year. These caused quite a stir on the UKCaving forum, with mixed reactions. They came to the attention of the CNCC partly because they were confirmed not to be stainless steel, and liable to rust, leaving rust streaks down the cave wall. This was not desirable in one of the finest sections of Master Cave in the north of England!



Staples installed in Kingsdale Master Cave. Photo by Adele Ward.

The decision was taken at the October CNCC Committee meeting that we should approve removal of these on conservation grounds. In early 2019, the staples were sawn off at base and covered in resin. In time they should camouflage into the cave walls, and most cavers taking the route through the Master Cave at water level should not even notice this.

This matter brought to question what role the CNCC should play in these situations, particularly where less clear-cut conservation arguments for removal might exist.

In early 2019, news came through of a new installation on a climb in the Upper Trident route through County Pot. These staples were stainless steel, so the same remit to approve removal as the ones in Kingsdale Master Cave did not exist. These staples were soon cut off by persons unknown, but not flush to the rock, thus leaving protruding metal spikes. Shortly after this it was reported two permanent footholds had been blasted out of the climbs near Wretched Rabbit entrance.

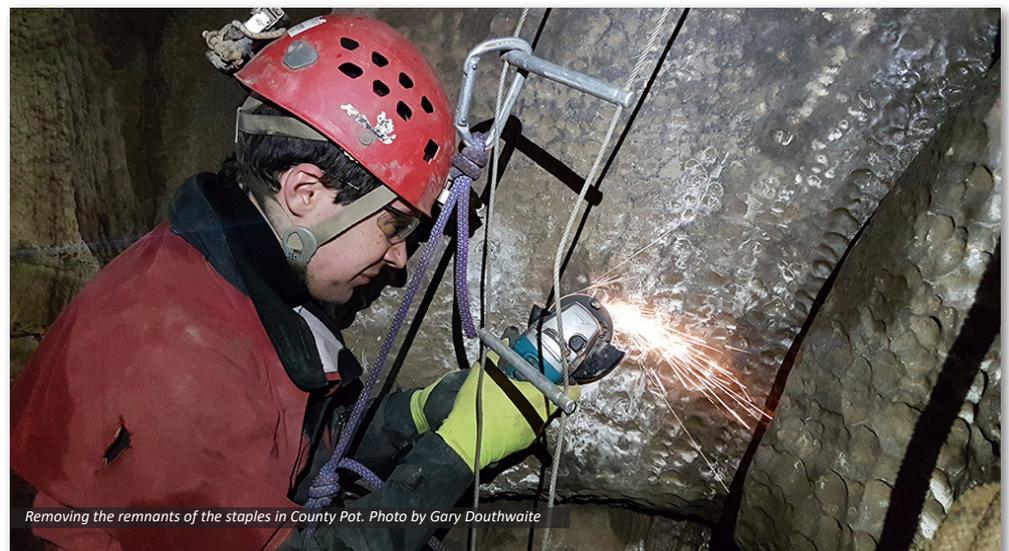
In both locations, stainless steel resin bonded anchors installed under the BCA scheme are available to enable a safe descent for anyone unable to undertake them as free-climbs.

These modifications were discussed at the CNCC AGM on 9th March. We emphasised the importance of us not attributing blame or making assumptions about the person(s) responsible or their motives. The consensus was however that the CNCC should take a proactive role in these matters, evaluating each situation on a case-by-case basis.

A proposal was unanimously accepted that the CNCC should make safe the remnants of the Trident climb staples and evaluate the damage in Wretched Rabbit for the possibility of restoration. Immediately after the meeting, a CNCC team set off to County Pot. The six staple remnants were easily located, each protruding from the wall by 2-5cm and rather sharp where they had been cut off by persons unknown.

Using a battery powered angle grinder, the metal remnants were cut off flush at wall level and then hammered as flat as possible. They were covered with a small amount of resin. The repairs are discrete, and we expect that once caver traffic has rubbed them smooth and transferred a little 'cave filth' onto them, they should blend in nicely to the surrounding wall and few people will even notice them.

The team then headed to Wretched Rabbit. One hole has been drilled once to remove a sizable chunk of rock (about the volume of a football) half way up the top climb just 15m inside the entrance. Another smaller chunk had been removed by means of at least three converging drilled holes three climbs lower. In both cases the damage was to a smooth water-worn rock surface, thus exaggerating its visual impact.



Removing the remnants of the staples in County Pot. Photo by Gary Douthwaite

The team quickly established that the lower damage was beyond repair. Some resin was used to fill in the remnant drill holes.

On the upper section where the damage is more obvious and extensive, some time was spent rounding up the fragments to assess the possibility of repairing the wall with resin, but it quickly became clear that the result of this would look worse than leaving it be.

Instead, a small amount of masonry work was performed to smooth off the obvious drilled hole running down the back of the foothold, to make it look more 'natural'. In time, we hope that caver traffic will smooth this off and help it blend in a little more with the surrounding smooth walls.

We would like to appeal to the individual(s) who made these modifications (or anyone considering other such projects), to please consider your actions carefully. These caves are for everyone to enjoy and share. Unilateral and irreversible action, particularly where simple or less damaging alternatives exist, risks upsetting other cavers.

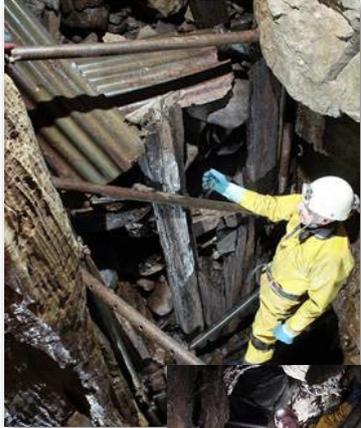
Clearly modification to caves happens often; and for many different reasons. This may vary from new exploration, safety (e.g. dealing with a hazardous block), anchor installation (which has had its fair share of controversy over the years too). We have all 'modified' a cave simply in the act of passing through it.

In this case however, the damage has been particularly emotive because it has occurred despite anchors already being in place (providing a safe alternative without damage), and it was undertaken unilaterally in such a well-loved cave system enjoyed by hundreds of people each year.

If you are reading this and thinking of making any such modifications elsewhere, we urge you to get in touch with the CNCC Officers to discuss your plans. In many cases, a solution may be possible avoiding damage, or which can be agreed by democratic consensus rather than through taking unilateral action.

Rift Pot, Masongill

Following reports of the shoring down the entrance of Rift Pot at Masongill showing serious deterioration, our Access Officer, Tim Allen, has undertaken four trips to address the issue. New shoring has been installed which should greatly improve the safety and stability. Further work is planned to see surface fencing installed around the entrance shakehole.



Rift pot entrance before (above) and after (right) the repair works.



Southerscales Pond

A report on a slightly unconventional project for cavers, by Andrew Hinde;

A call came last year from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for volunteers to clear all the soft rush from the overgrown pond on Southerscales Nature Reserve, Chapel-le-Dale. The requirements were for people with experience and fortitude for working up to their waist in freezing cold, filthy mud and water. "I know just the people you're looking for" I said.

This was a Stories in Stone project which provided aquatic wildlife with a luxurious refurbished home in this rare and desirable location where water is reluctant to stay on the surface of the ground. The vegetation removed from the pond was stacked alongside the fence so that invertebrates and amphibians could crawl back into the water.



Volunteers working on Southerscales pond

The work, performed on 21st November 2018, coincided with the first snow of the winter. The fear throughout the day was that someone would drag a plug out of the bottom of the pond and all the water would gurgle down into Hardrawkin Pot!

This was a very hard physical day on the fell, for which some of us suffered later.

Andrew Hinde, CNCC Chair

Got an idea for a conservation project?

Of course, we encourage all clubs and individuals to organise your own conservation initiatives. If however the conservation job is a bit more than you can safely handle, please report it through the conservation section of our website or email conservation@cncc.org.uk. This might include cleanup works inside caves, at entrances, or surface works such as shakehole cleanup, stock-proofing, fence, footpath and walling repairs. We can either undertake the work through our conservation volunteers or provide materials and funds for your own group to tackle the project. Write a report with a few pictures and we will publish it in an upcoming issue of this newsletter.

Training

CNCC Capstan Winch



Training in progress. Photo by Andrew Hinde.

The CNCC now owns a petrol capstan winch thanks to the Stories in Stone Project. This device is most useful at hauling large heavy objects out of shakeholes or shafts as part of conservation projects, but of course some training is needed for safe use.

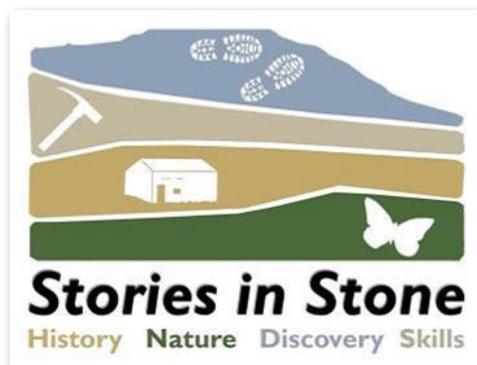
A CNCC-funded training course was organised for Monday 25th February at Colt Park, Chapel le Dale. The course was very popular and the six places were very quickly taken, with each participant from a different club (some people are already on the waiting list for a later session).

The winch is available to any cavers for

use in conservation works above ground (provided they have a trained person in charge of the usage). Our thanks to Andrew Hinde for organising this training.

The winch is soon to be deployed to clear out a shakehole near P5 on Ingleborough.

This purchase is part of Stories in Stone, a scheme of conservation and community projects concentrated on the Ingleborough area. The scheme was developed by the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership, led by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Paperless Surveying Course

The first Cave Surveying Group paperless surveying training course in spring 2018 was a great success (see Newsletter 8) so we are pleased to say that the course will run again on 30/31st March 2019.

As before, the scope of the course is to introduce people with no experience of paperless surveying to the equipment and techniques needed to produce a map of a cave. By the end of the weekend, candidates should be able to use a DistoX, PocketTopo and Therion to produce simple maps and be armed with the knowledge to further develop these skills.

The course will be at How Stean Gorge again, where the onsite training cave and great facilities make it an ideal venue. The CNCC will be sponsoring the event by covering the costs of the venue.

All 10 places for the course this March were taken within a month of it being advertised! However, Nick Bairstow, the organiser, has asked that anyone interested in a future course get in touch:

Email: csgetheriontraining@gmail.com

New Resin Identified



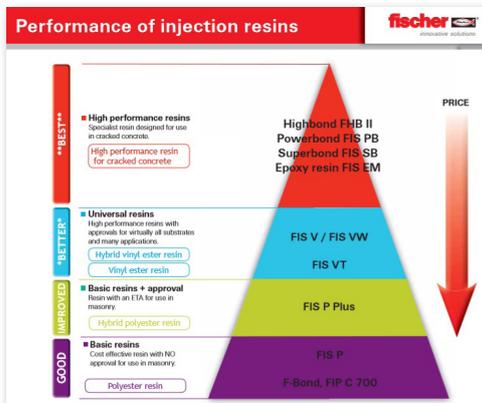
Most of you will be aware that there is a function on the CNCC website to report loose anchors. All reports submitted are kept by our Anchor Coordinator, Simon Wilson, who uses these to help identify areas where action may be needed.

Anyone who potholes regularly in The Dales will have noted that some anchors show a slight wobble. This isn't necessarily an immediate danger (the force to extract anchors with a few mm of wobble can still be very substantial), but it is something we are monitoring.

It was hoped that the more efficient design of the IC anchor (compared to the earlier P-anchors) and their need for a smaller hole (12mm rather than 16mm), combined with the use of Fischer FIS V resin would mean the end of loose anchors. However, despite this, some IC anchors have come loose.

Simon has concluded that the main factor causing anchors to come loose was probably resin shrinkage. All of the various resins used in the past by the CNCC and the BCA have been polyester or vinyl-ester resins that are known to have significant shrinkage. Simon has been looking to see if there is a suitable alternative.

Fischer FIS EM is a pure epoxy resin which Fischer state to be high-performance with very low shrinkage. This seemed to be a very good candidate for a new resin.



As performance increases so does the price. However, the epoxy resin has a much longer working time which, when installing multiple anchors, will economise on resin and nozzle usage. The former FIS V remains useable in the nozzle for only ~15 minutes whereas the FIS EM resin is useable for 2 hours which is enough time to move to

another site and install another anchor without changing nozzle or piping through surplus resin to waste.

The IC anchor was designed with vinyl-ester resin (e.g. FIS V) in mind and has the optimum strength with that resin. The extra strength of the FIS EM epoxy resin is not desirable but can be accepted. The FIS EM is approved for use in diamond-drilled holes, in water-filled holes and underwater. It also has a longer shelf life than the vinyl-ester resins; up to three years.

Overall, the extra cost of the resin will be offset by the economy provided by the increased working time meaning less wastage and the longer shelf life.

The change of resin will be straightforward because the new resin uses the same guns and nozzles.

Simon has load-tested three IC anchors using the new FIS EM epoxy resin and all three anchors pulled out cleanly leaving a reusable hole. The peak loads were 40.00 kN, 39.17 kN and 39.01 kN which is about 10% greater than the characteristic load using the former FIS V resin.

Fischer approves FIS EM resin for use in overhead positions which tells us that it should not run out of the hole. It does not tell us if it will support the weight of an anchor. Simon has placed one IC anchor in an upwards hole and it did not fall out to any amount discernible with the naked eye. Installers will have to be wary about overhead installations until we have established that they are sound in all situations.

After reviewing this information, the CNCC Committee officially designated this resin fit for use, and installers will be trying it out over the coming months. We hope that this will end the issue of loose anchors, ensuring that today's placements will serve cavers for many years to come.

Many thanks to Simon for his excellent work investigating this.

Jockey Hole and Quaking Pot

Since the last newsletter, IC anchors have been installed at Jockey Hole and Quaking Pot by Simon Wilson and Sam Allshorn respectively, and topos for both have been published on the CNCC website.

Jockey Hole, located on the Ingleborough Allotment is a frequently overlooked open shaft dropping to significant depth, with daylight visible all the way down. It lies on the same joint as nearby Rift Pot and provides a splendid descent, passable in most weather conditions.

Quaking Pot needs little introduction; perhaps the most famous tight pothole in the Yorkshire Dales. Any caver intent on mastering the squeezes to reach Gormenghast (once an active dig astonishingly) is

sure of an interesting experience. At least the new anchors mean the integrity of the belays is one less thing to worry about!

Interested in Becoming an Installer?

Our anchors must be installed by approved and trained installers, in accordance with BCA anchor policy. If you are interested in becoming an installer please take time to read the 'Fixed Aids' section on our website, and then get in touch with the Secretary (secretary@cncc.org.uk). We do ask that all potential installers have a plan for what caves they wish to fit anchors to and are willing to make a commitment to fulfil this project (and ideally more) in return for the time taken to provide the training. The CNCC will supply the anchors and cover reasonable materials costs.

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 and a representative for non-club cavers 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 you are interested in standing for the Committee, please contact our Secretary for more information.

Find more information at: www.cncc.org.uk/getinvolved