

## Dear BCA Member Club,

*Please distribute the following as widely as possible (electronic version available at :*

The Council of Northern Caving Clubs has a long-standing agreement with the landowners of Casterton Fell that gives generous access arrangements to all BCA Member Clubs. Unfortunately on Saturday, 18th August, a day when none of the 5 available permits had been issued, the land agents visited the lane at Bull Pot Farm and to their amazement there were large numbers of cavers turning up and parking and a long procession then going caving on the fell. There are even two clubs with reports of their trips on the internet!

Unfortunately this is becoming a regular occurrence and, despite a number of requests to clubs over the last couple of years to respect the agreement, it seems many are not. Indeed, only 4 permits were issued for the whole of August and 5 have been issued for September. All this comes at a time when the whole access agreement is under review and pirating only serves to make negotiations that bit harder. The immediate result in the case above is that the CNCC Access Officer has been summoned to the Estate Office to explain what is being done to ensure improved compliance among cavers. We can only hope that it does not escalate any further in the longer term.

The various access agreements negotiated by Regions are based on the understanding that they will be respected. If necessary, BCA will take appropriate action against any Member or Members who act against the best interests of British cavers. We would, therefore, request that Clubs adhere to all access agreements, up-to-date details of which are available on the various Regional websites, or from the Regional Conservation & Access Officers.

Permits for Casterton Fell are readily available for any BCA Member Club by contacting Alan Speight by e-mail at: [alanmavisspeight@btinternet.com](mailto:alanmavisspeight@btinternet.com) or by post at: 8b, Springfield, Bentham, Lancaster LA2 7BA. Although ideally clubs will arrange their trips well in advance, last-minute permits are sometimes available, so please contact Alan and ask rather than just going caving.

BCA Executive (on behalf of BCA Council)

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