

This is my first year (and so first BCA AGM) as CHECC Chair, so I don't exactly have much reference upon which to base this, but in my opinion this has been a good year for CHECC. We have continued to work both independently and with the BCA Youth and Development working group to assist student caving where we can.

The most important progress has been in the formation of new university clubs. There was much talk last Hidden Earth (and online) about the lack of a caving club in many universities, with a couple of particularly sore omissions (Lancaster, Swansea). Luckily, some determined and self-motivated souls heard this injustice and decided to do something about it, and I'm happy to say that Lancaster University Speleological Society is now back up and running with help from across the caving community. This CHECC also saw the most clubs attending ever, with some keen new cavers from Harper Adams also joining the fun. There is also an ongoing effort to start a student club in Birmingham, which can always use help from the community, so if you or any other cavers you know are in the Birmingham area (especially students!) please get in touch.

As mentioned above, many clubs travelled up to the Dales for our annual CHECC Forum in November, with 278 attendees, including an Irish contingent. A good time was had by all despite the cold camping weather, and various workshops were run by volunteer trainers in everything from basic SRT to cave leadership skills. An entertaining itinerary of talks (some impromptu) and caving games marked the Saturday night, with competitions and prizes (sponsored by UKC) on the Sunday morning. Ultimate Student Caving Club this year was Nottingham University Caving Club (NUCC), with a strong showing in the competitions and the popular vote. The regional Northern and Southern CHECC events continued in this vein, with training in surveying, rescue, and more, as well as students from different universities caving together and having a good time. An auction at Northern CHECC raised over £300 for the Berger online project. We are still looking for venues for CHECC in the Peak District and South Wales, so please let us know of any suggestions.

We have also been working on updating the BCA's guidance for higher education caving clubs. This hadn't been done since the NCA days, and was tucked away in a back corner of the BCA website. The advice contained within was mostly still sound, so this was not a huge job, and the new guidelines are almost ready to be published subject to the approval of BCA exec. These will hopefully be put up on the newly refurbished CHECC website, alongside a more informal 'student caving wiki', with advice given by contributors.

We've also been working to combat the recurring problem of funding for student clubs. BCA Y&D has a budget, and so has been able to fund some kit for LUSS, which has been very helpful. We have also been working with Phil Rowsell to set up an annual kit grant for struggling clubs. Not all universities have the same level of sports funding, and this can be quite limiting to the smaller clubs, so being able to help out in this way would be ideal.

David Botcherby  
CHECC Chair