

Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Cambrian Caving Council held online on Wednesday 15th March at 7:00 pm

Attendance

Adrian Fawcett (MLCMAC), Allan Richardson (SWCC), Stuart France (CSS), Roy Fellows (CMT), Edward Lockhart (NWCRO), Nick de Gare Pitt (Brynmawr), Dan Thorne (SMWCRT), Olly Burrows (PUG), Barry Hill (Hereford), John Hine (FoDCCAG), Jennie Lawrence (HADES), Steve Holding (SMT), Martin Lavery (Cave Registry), Ian Crossland (GSS).

1. Chairman's Welcome

Adrian Fawcett welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that 2022 had been a quiet year for the Council. We have also exited from Covid-19 controls, and it seems caving has returned much to the way that it was before.

2. Apologies for Absence

Mike Moore, Richard Hill.

3. Minutes of the 2022 AGM

a) Accuracy

Amended to show that Steve Holding was representing Shropshire Mines Trust (SMT)

b) Matters arising not included in the agenda

None

Proposed by Adrian Fawcett. Seconded by Stuart France. Passed nem con.

4. Applications for Membership

None

5. Officer's Reports

a) Chairman - Adrian Fawcett

The Chairman had nothing to add to his report given at the start of the meeting.

b) Secretary – Allan Richardson

As Cambrian Secretary, 2022 had been a quiet year with nothing exceptional to report here.

As I am also BCA Secretary, I have attended nearly all of its meetings over the past year. BCA has had no changes to its Executive in the past year. The BCA Treasurer's term of office ends this year. He is not standing again, so a new volunteer (from any caving region) is sought for this role.

The BCA is interested in getting its rope and equipment testing rig re-installed and working again. This is a large and heavy item requiring a certain level of commitment to undertake the project. The mobile rope testing rig, however, is much smaller in size and remains in use.

The CRoW issue still rumbles on in the background, but nothing is likely to change without a change of government.

I am willing to stand again for the position of Cambrian Secretary,

c) Treasurer – Mary Rogers

Our financial year ended on 31/12/2022 and the recently audited accounts show a decrease in funds of £237.96 leaving Cambrian's current bank balance standing at £6,203.37

All but one of the training 2022 courses resulted in a small profit, and income was also generated by the sale of Ogof Cnwc/OCAF keys. The main expenditure, as detailed in the audited accounts, were various items of equipment for training and for conservation/access. Many thanks to Richard Hill for providing financial spreadsheets for the seven very successful courses that he held, and to John Sheehy for help when needed, and to Ian Adams once again for his extremely prompt scrutinising of the formal accounts.

Comments from the floor:

Adrian Fawcett said we needed more information on turnover in the future.

Roy Fellows asked about opening an interest bearing account.

Stuart France explained that we had had some difficulty proving to the bank that we were a genuine organisation, but after much to-ing and fro-ing we seem to have achieved this.

Opening a new bank account for an organisation is now not easy, but Cambrian needs to look around over the next year for a better deal, in the meantime to try an open an interest bearing account. The Executive had agreed to investigate Deposit Accounts.

d) Conservation and Access Officer – Stuart France

This Conservation & Access Officer's Report is for the year March 2022 to February 2023.

COVID-19 is still widespread but in less dangerous forms, so during the past year a lot of normality has returned to life.

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES (NRW) appears to have persuaded the Welsh Government to end the contract-based CAL mine access scheme that had been in operation without complaint since 2015. NRW said they would offer an alternative permissive system, and then nothing happened for some months. So I contacted NRW and it appears they do want to proceed with a new system and they asked for an updated list of sites which has been supplied, so they now have the ball. It is no longer possible to negotiate one national access agreement because NRW has split itself up into regional units acting with a degree of autonomy, so we likely need three or more new regional agreements to replace the former national level agreement. These may have different T&Cs from one another and we may meet with different levels of cooperation and acceptance from NRW's regions.

NRW has decided no longer to involve itself with 'managing' the Mynydd Llangattock caves although they still have a lease on the Craig y Cilau NNR land. The landowner, Beaufort Estate, understands perfectly well that Cambrian is now running the cave access instead of NRW's MLCMAC group. Cambrian has had one meeting in 2022 with the Beaufort land agents who are

tasked with coming back to us with an outline access agreement, and in the meanwhile they are content for us to manage cave access in our own way. Cambrian scrapped the NRW permit system as a first move. Henceforth keys will be issued on a long-term basis to bona fide caving clubs on payment of a small fee and they should use the caves in a responsible way consistent with the aims of the former permit-based system. There is also a day loan key scheme.

It is disappointing to note that NRW's corporate plan draft covering the remainder of this decade makes no mention of access or recreation whilst being long on greening itself and "making its voice heard". This implies NRW is becoming more evangelical than focused on delivering public goods. I have not attended any NAFW (National Access Forum Wales) meetings in the past year as these are just a platform for NRW to present itself, its ideas and its never-ending restructuring to its stakeholders rather than listen to stakeholders in the true spirit of a discussion forum. I do read the NAFW minutes and papers for meetings but have not noticed anything relevant to caving. These meetings have for some time been over Teams, but more recently they reverted to meeting in person three times a year in Bangor, Welshpool and Cardiff. If anyone would like to attend to represent caving there then please contact me, but understand that you are there to occupy a seat and listen to NRW, not to contribute let alone develop or discuss alternative ideas.

Cambrian applied to NRW for a grant to cover equipment costs to implement live river depth monitoring at DYO after receiving encouragement from NRW staff that grants up to £5K were possible. I wrote twice by email with no response, then followed it up twice by phone, again with no response, and then I contacted their general enquiry desk to explain the lack of response. NRW finally responded by saying they were too busy with existing projects to start a new one.

BCA CAVE ACCESS JUDICIAL REVIEW. The case ended about a year ago with a compromise where the Welsh Government would look again at statutory cave access following a written submission from BCA. WG did a review and decided on that basis to take no action to improve cave access due to lack of resources, now not being the right time, and so on. Thus our opposite numbers fulfilled their undertaking to the Court to carry out a review though nothing came of it and no decisions were made. Thus there is nothing new to challenge and thus our legal challenge has ended. Even though we never got to the stage of the Court deciding the scope of CROW nor achieving concessions from government by agreeing to end of the case by compromise, it remains that we took them to Court. This may bear upon NRW/WG's future disposition towards us because on the one hand they were bruised, but on the other it was not a knock-out contest either. They may feel both aggrieved and emboldened at the same time which is not a helpful combination nor conclusion.

CAVE ACCESS LTD. As noted already in my NRW discussion, the CAL mine scheme is not currently running, but we are in negotiation for a new scheme which is for all the original sites plus a few new ones in mid-Wales. Dave Tyson and I completed a survey of the Hendre Ddu slate mine east of Corris last November. This is well off the beaten track and worth a visit when formal access is restored. We also organised a surface and underground tour of the mine for local NRW staff which was well received. I recovered a caver counter from Bryneglwys which had been in there for well over a year just prior to the scheme ending. Not surprisingly, it is most visited on Saturday afternoons, but there are occasional Monday visits too that form a pattern: perhaps someone with a project. I recorded a couple of dozen groups in there over the course of a year which included the 3-month Covid lockdown at the start of 2021 when there were no recorded visitors.

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION. I attended the April council meeting in the absence of David Rose (away on expedition) to provide an update on how the CROW case had ended. I left it to Allan Richardson to represent Cambrian at BCA council and to report back on BCA's activities.

MLCMAC. Cambrian has taken over MLCMAC following NRW's exit. This gives it access to funds, banking and eventually a new website. Anyone willing and able to help with running MLCMAC will be very welcome to join - please get in touch. We held one committee meeting in the past year by Zoom, and had one physical meeting with the Beaufort Estate land agents. I am trying to standardize all the cave logbooks using pre-printed waterproof paper assembled into spiral bound books which seems to be lasting well. Tough waterproof pencils have also been deployed with these new books, and seem cave/caver-proof. To make it easier to obtain keys, Adrian Fawcett and I have now have a small stock of keys. Barry Burn is also to be issued with a set of day-loan keys. Malcolm Reid continues to act as the "key secretary" and he remains the primary contact for keys. We have spare locks and there are no plans to change any of the key types in the near future.

OGOF CAPEL. Nick de Gare Pitt has kindly agreed to act as the warden for Ogof Capel where there were 10 trips in 2022 involving 28 people. The logbook has been changed to the new type. The key is still the same pattern, and a list of key holders and leaders is posted on the Cambrian website for anyone wanting to arrange a trip in there.

OCAF. There has been a serious rock-fall at the entrance last year most of which landed on the quarry floor but some of the roof by the gate came down blocking off the drainage of water from around the gate. This has been dug out to stop it ponding up, and the unwanted water now drains away to the quarry floor. The lock is now the same pattern as for Ogof Cnwc. There have been some issues with the padlock sticking which have been resolved with the new drainage, also some petty vandalism concerning the padlock. The old curved metal locking bar on the inside of the gate has been changed to a similar one but with a "Derbyshire bolt" at the opposite end to the padlock. This enables any entrapped cavers (due to lock failure etc) to escape by removing two nuts with spanners provided next to the logbook. John Sheehy is now the warden.

OGOF CNWC. As noted above, this now has the same key as OCAF. New style logbook installed. Nothing unusual to report. Stuart France is the warden.

DAREN CILAU. A new-style logbook will be installed at the Big Chamber. Nothing unusual to report. Adrian Fawcett is the warden.

AGEN ALLWEDD. New style logbook. Nothing unusual to report. In March to October 2022 there were 67 groups and 219 cavers. John Stevens and Barry Burn are joint wardens, also covering EGLWYS FAEN. In lieu of a logbook, it has a 'caver group counter' in the inner chamber. The cave was visited on 34 dates in 2020, 74 dates in 2021, and 123 dates in January to October 2022. The steel ladder and steel cable beside it have been inspected by me. A knotted nylon rope has also appeared next to the ladder and the whole arrangement is satisfactory.

OFD. The "duty officer" system at SWCC has ended, so instead you now need to apply in advance for a code to open a key safe to get a cave key for a particular date. See SWCC website. The ticket board call-out system also has ended and a phone app to replace this is in development for anyone not making their own call-out arrangements. Footfall at the cave is back to normal, i.e. high.

DYO. The £5 per visit charge system for cavers towards conservation and access generally appears to be working well. There is a proposal, supported by the landowner, to install a permanent water depth gauge at Pot Sump to reflect the water level in the large lake where the river can rise to the roof and prevent access or egress. The current idea is to send hourly readings over the cave rescue phone cable to the outside and thence by radio to SWCC and eventually to a live webpage. Rescue sees this as useful not only because water levels and trends become available to view but also it tests the phone line continuously providing reassurance that it will work when needed for a rescue.

OGOF DRAENEN. I attended the 6-monthly PDCMG meeting in June along with an EGM in October at which the group adopted a new policy to 'consider other entrances'. They have not actually considered anything other than stating that a written proposal from any member club which wishes to propose additional entrances is required before the group 'considers' any entrances besides the original one. No member club has yet proposed the adoption of any new entrances so the effect is that the various additional entrances are now the status quo.

There has been no progress with Grade 5 survey publication or its coverage. One of the main contributors to this survey in the past, Arthur Millet, has sadly passed away recently, and he will be remembered for his tenacity, endeavours and oft times good humour. There is no progress with bat surveys which would best be carried out via the Nunnery Entrance and Drws Cefn which lead to the areas most popular with bats. There has been no progress with restructuring PDCMG as a limited company so it can sign a contract for access as a legal entity rather than relying on personal trustees as at present.

PDCMG's letters to the landowning company go unanswered. Mrs Lewis took over as a director from the late Mr Brian Lewis in 2020. Mrs Jones became a director when Mr Peter Jones resigned in March 2022. In terms of "persons with significant control" of the company, the two current directors declare they own "25% to 50%" of the company shares each. There are 2 shares in issue, so that is one each. The company has no employees and has a net worth of £6198 after subtracting long-term debt from long-term assets such as their land purchase (i.e. £2459 from £8657).

OGOF GOFAN / CASTLEMARTIN RANGE WEST

Cambrian's access scheme has been used only lightly in 2022. Anyone wanting to visit should obtain a landowner permit through me about 2 weeks in advance as the site is a tank firing range on which training schedules can change at short notice resulting in loss of public access to the coast path and thus the cave. Also call the Range's answerphone on 01646 662367 on the day before your visit to confirm that the coast path route to the cave is still open. This link also provides the firing schedule:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/castlemartin-firing-notice--2/>

Access to Range West to explore for new caves is a different access system. During Covid anyone self-certifying they had read the site rules and Health And Safety documentation online was accepted for an annual permit. That has reverted, following instances of the T&Cs being broken, to the old system where people have to attend an H&S briefing meeting in person to get an annual permit. This paper is presented at the guard house to obtain a day badge which is worn while you are walking the range.

POTENTIAL NAME CHANGE FOR CCC. I still have the domain name 'caving.wales' and suggest that we consider again a change of name which is more modern in style (in line with the kayaking, hockey, swimming and other national bodies) as it more clearly communicates what Cambrian does and implicitly suggests that it is the national representative body for caving in Wales. The present rather verbose name that harks back to the medieval boundary politics of the Marcher Lords confuses many non-cavers and so Cambrian is often thought of by them as simply another caving club and then is treated as sub-national in scope.

Stuart added an update to his original written report:-

There is an ongoing problem with NRW for access to Draethen Lead Mines. Cambrian was initially involved with a bat survey to underpin any new agreement but realised that NRW simply wanted a free bat survey and nothing else. At this point Cambrian walked away, the matter being unresolved. Cambrian are still awaiting a proposal by the Beaufort Estate for a new access agreement. There has been no action on the proposed name change of Cambrian Caving Council to Caving Wales.

e) Training Officer – Richard Hill

The last year has seen a return to normality with a variety of workshops. There have been several SRT workshops run by a variety of CICs with a broad range of novices to SRT rescues techniques being taught. There are two further workshops in March and April this year. Both are nearly full but please get in touch if you are interested in joining in. There is another cave photography workshop in April this year run by Mark Burkey (one space remains) and similarly a CSG workshop being run by Tarquin also in April. Cave geology walks have been really well received by those that have attended but seem hard to fill. I am discussing this with BBNPA geology expert Alan Bowring to see how to resolve this. I am happy to stand again.

Comments from the floor:

A good range of training has been provided and it has been well received.

f) Equipment and Techniques Officer – Vince Allkins

No report received.

g) Cave Registrar – Martin Laverty

This has been a quiet year for reports of major cave finds: the most active diggers and surveyors appearing to have formed omertàs and preferring their work left cloaked in obscurity (albeit sometime barred by well-engineered, tell-tale, surface portals to their secret worlds). This would seem to be an unwelcome return to the old Craig a Ffynnon/Tardiadd Rhymney attitude induced by the more recent debacles around Draenen and Dan yr Ogof and the ill-advised attitudes to caves and cavers emanating from Cadw and NRW. I hope for a mellowing of attitudes which will allow the Registry to be the full and accurate record which I aspire to maintain.

Nevertheless, there have been reports of new finds from Pembrokeshire, Vale of Glamorgan, and around Merthyr from my regular correspondents, as well as several welcome new ones, and it would be wrong not to mention indirect reports of inadvertent breakthroughs by road engineers in the course of their work. Increased online access to old journals has also revealed holes in (or, rather, not in) the Register which I have endeavoured to fill (or, rather, illuminate).

The mapping software was updated during the year (resulting in the appearance of a Ukrainian flag in the credits). The menu system was modified too, not least because some providers of maps and overlays withdrew their offerings and had to be replaced. Our webmaster found and removed the limitation on disc space for the Registry: a welcome change which allows for increased photographic coverage, and the prospect of, for example, surveys displayed in a 'slippy map tile' overlay.

I thank my regular correspondents, but regret to note that NRW are not amongst them, having failed to follow up their apparent interest last year, despite several approaches from me. I welcome the fact that several new people reported finds this year, but am sad to say that Cris Ebbs, the producer of the Caves of North Wales section of the CCR website, submitted his final updates in November.

I am happy to continue as Registrar but would welcome assistants who might like to cover their own areas (not least, North Wales), suggest changes (big or small), or might even aspire to replace me.

Comments from the floor:

Jennie Lawrence asked about the new discoveries. Martin replied that it was up to the discoverers to report any finds. This is an ongoing problem in South Wales.

h) Webmaster – John Sheehy

A relatively quiet year on the website, with changes being made throughout the year to publicise training courses, geological walks and other newsworthy events. I have also co-ordinated mailshots to member clubs using the Cambrian account to bring the availability of training courses to member clubs' attention. I'm currently working on expanding the MLCMAC page to formally adopt the access restriction pages that are currently hosted on the CSS website.

I am willing to continue in the role.

i) Newsletter Editor

No newsletters had been produced in the last year.

j) Recreational Mine Exploration Officer – Roy Fellows

Roy reported that he was unhappy with the title "Mines Advisor" he would prefer "Recreational Mine Exploration Officer". In the many years that I held the position of Legal and Insurance Officer I only had one inquiry, that being opinion on the drafting of an access agreement. Since the abolition of that office and the creation of the new position I have had two inquiries already in that short time frame.

The first was from a consultant preparing a Risk Assessment for Network Rail relative to work scheduled on a section of between Bow Street village to just north of Llandre in central Wales. He had my contact details from the CCC website. I was able to help with information on mines in the area.

The second was me being contacted by a diver who is a user of Cambrian Slate Mine Glyn Ceriog. He reported an earth bank about 2 metres high appearing which made it very difficult to access the mine while carrying heavy equipment. I visited the site and found it as described, but made contact with the son of the landowner who is a Mr Dave Hinton who owns a sawmill at Oswestry. I was assured that it was part of recent forestry work and not in any way intended to block access to the mine to which his father had no objection. This is useful as up to this time most people were unaware of the sites ownership.

6. Reports from other groups

a) FODCCAG

John Hine reported to the meeting that we continue to have good relations with Forest Enterprise, we are liaising with and guiding local Bat Groups for Bat counts. We also have been given the chance to buy the land Wet Sink is located on. A limited Company has been formed, the land will cost £50 plus our legal fees of c£2000, we are hoping the BCA can assist with the costs.

b) Welsh Mines Society

c) NWCRO

Edward Lockhart gave a verbal report to the meeting. There have been five incidents during 2022, three of these were on Croesor - Rhosydd through trips, starting in January on New Years Day, two were overdue within one hour of each other, but made their way out ok. One was more serious and involved an overnight rescue, the issue was a team of mixed ability and exhaustion, there has also a dog rescue and the team was put on standby for a missing person search.

Other matters, over the past two years, the team have been mapping the mine and cave entrances of North Wales, so far there are about five thousand accurate records of entrances. The aim is to assist rescue controllers via a private map they can access online, to allow for better search planning and assisting other teams.

We are running training sessions and core skills workshops and working with other teams as the opportunity arises.

Cavers and mine explorers from all over North Wales are getting involved.

d) SMWCRT

Dan Thorne, SMWCRT Chairman, reported that in 2022 the team was involved in eight Rescue incidents, a decrease of one on the previous year. The rescues for this year are listed below starting on the fifth day of the New Year – and it turned out to be a busy first week!

Date	Location	Details
05/01/22 – 06/01/22	Dog Rescue Pontycymer	SMWCRT were contacted by owner of dog via MREW. Her son had been walking the dog and it got lost in a hole at about 2pm on Monday 03/01/2022. Contact was made with the owner by phone on Wednesday evening. SMWCRT agreed to attend at 9am on Thursday morning. A team of 3 walked up to the entrance of the Mine Level (collapsed) guided by the son. We deployed the pole camera but had no sign of the dog. We were then joined by members of the Fell & Moorland Terrier Club who had apparently been digging the previous day. They resumed digging. SMWCRT made a decision to stand down and as we started to leave, the dog (Bert) came back to the surface to be retrieved. 3 TM deployed, 3 on Standby.
08/01/22	Ogof Daren Cilau	2 Males who were inexperienced cavers were lost when visiting Daren Cilau and attempting a through trip from the main entrance to Ogof Cnwc. They failed to find their route in the area of Busman's Holiday and started to return to the main entrance. They became tired and cold and were moving very slowly. The missing cavers were found in the entrance series and were both extremely tired. One was mildly hypothermic and took some time to rewarm on return to base. Their clothing was not suitable for this trip. Other agencies involved-DP Police. 31 TM deployed, 7 on Standby.
09/01/22	Ogof Clogwyn	The casualty dislocated his hip whilst climbing up into the

		<p>entrance of Ogof Clogwyn. He was stabilised by colleagues and then was attended by a small group of SMWCRT Team members. A (Welsh Ambulance) WAST Paramedic was guided to site to assist, a SMWCRT Advanced First Aider was also en route. Longtown MRT carried the casualty to a waiting Ambulance.</p> <p>7 TM deployed, 5 on Standby.</p>
18/01/22 - 20/01/22	Dog Rescue Nantygwyddon _ Tonypandy Mt.	<p>A dog fell down a rift, it could be seen by using a camera on a drain rod but it was not possible to reach him as the rift was very narrow. The availability of team members during the day was limited, hence digging commenced late afternoon and continued until nearly midnight. After 2 days digging there would have been a meeting to discuss ongoing process but dog was released just after the Team left on the second day by Drain Rod employees. Fire and Rescue & USAR involved.</p> <p>17 TM deployed.</p>
21/05/22 - 22/05/22	Ogof Ffynnon Ddu	<p>One Male and one Female entered OFD1 at 11:30. They were seen in OFD1 at 12:30. They couldn't find the climb up out of the Maypole Inlet canyon, so they retreated to exit out of Cwm Dwr. Subsequently they were unable to find the route out, so correctly chose to sit at Piccadilly. They were met by a Southampton University trip doing Top Entrance -> OFD1 and escorted out of Cwm Dwr just as our 3 search teams were going underground.</p> <p>21 TM deployed.</p>
22/05/22	Dog Rescue Ogof Gam / Agen Allwedd	<p>Duffy (female Cockapoo/Labradoodle weighing approx 7kg) entered a small rift near Agen Allwedd and became trapped. With appropriate help the dog was rescued successfully. No real problems except that our pole camera was out of action, but an alternative access route was found. USAR did not attend but their camera equipment was available for use.</p> <p>15 TM deployed, 2 on Standby</p>
17/09/22	Cwm Dwr 2 (OFD)	<p>2 Males were trapped behind fallen boulder as they were passing through a restricted space. The rock fell from the ceiling and two cavers were trapped on the wrong side of it, unable to pass by. The rock was reduced in size using plugs and feathers and the cavers were released.</p> <p>12 TM deployed, 2 on Standby.</p>
26/12/22 - 28/12/22	Dog fell down slip rift by Varteg (near Blaenavon)	<p>Longtown MRT, together with Fire & Rescue, had already been on site and retrieved one of two dogs that had entered the hole, however were unable to reach the second dog, hence transferred the incident to SMWCRT. Next morning a team of 6 attended the site. The hole was a typical slip rift, less than 30cm wide between solid rock walls, with no line of sight to the bottom. The dog could not be seen and only very occasionally be very faintly heard. A small team member was lowered into the hole by rope but the rift was found to be too narrow to descend safely. An inspection camera was then lowered, but the dog still could not be seen. The search was called off for the day due to severe weather conditions. A team</p>

	<p>of 5 returned the following day to continue with the Fire and Rescue service. A drain company had also been on site but still no visual of the dog. 2 SMWCRT team members attempted another descent of the rift. Still no visible or audible sign of the dog so unfortunately a decision was made to stand the team down. The dog owner was informed that unfortunately there was nothing more SMWCRT could do, so after 45 hours the incident was closed. The dog's owner was told to get back in touch if they saw their dog over the next few days. The owner was grateful for efforts made by all agencies involved. 11 TM deployed.</p>
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BCRC now ask Teams to record their training hours as well as Rescue incidents on their new platform and I regularly update this site as Rescues occur. In 2021 we totalled 2070 training hours; in 2022 we totalled 2351.

e) GCRG

f) OFDCAG

Allan Richardson, Secretary OFDCAG, reported that the new permit and key issuing system is now fully in operation. The numbers visiting the cave have returned to their normal high level. NRW, whilst no longer directly involved in management, still attend the group's twice yearly meetings.

g) DYOCAG

h) PDCMG

i) CMT

j) SC&MC

k) MLCMAC – See 5(d) above

l) Ogot Marros

Philip Knight provided an update on access, incidents and other matters regarding Ogot Marros. for the year to 03/03/2023. Please note information about the cave is in the public domain on the website ogotmarros.uk

The 1st boulder choke (breakthrough point in the entrance passage) has become dangerously mobile and has blocked access. A visiting party exploring in the company of the digging team experienced major movement and settlement on their way out, though fortunately a safe exit was made by all. Several weeks later, a high grade survey being undertaken at this time was halted when it was found that the boulder movement had migrated upwards to the very top of the choke and the way through was blocked.

Subsequent trips were made by the digging team core and it was found that the problem was bigger than initially thought. More gear was ferried in when time and funds allowed and consolidation work started whilst the surveying moved to the original breakthrough area where some minor discovery's were made. We are nearly at the stage where we can finally push the boulder choke

again, but previous trips witnessed some very troubling rumbles that have yet to be identified. What we thought was a stable wall in fact turned out to be mobile and is collapsing into the breakthrough point. Its removal is unthinkable and we are therefore left with scaffold work to carry out. We will update the Council when this has been stabilised and the cave can be open for bona fide cavers. The landowner is fully up to date and supportive with all events, actions and policies over the years and he and his family are still very excited with what is happening. Support from the local community and as far away as Pembroke dock has been reported by the landowner.

7. BCA Matters

Reported under 5(b) and 5(d) above.

8. Election of CCC Officers and co-option of Newsletter Editor and Webmaster

Chairman, Adrian Fawcett, Proposed Allan Richardson Seconded Jennie Lawrence, Elected.

Secretary, Allan Richardson, Proposed Adrian Fawcett Seconded Stuart France, Elected.

Treasurer, Mary Rogers, Proposed Stuart France, Seconded Adrian Fawcett, Elected.

C&A, Stuart France, Proposed Adrian Fawcett, Seconded Roy Fellows, Elected.

E&T, Vince Allkins, Proposed Stuart France, Seconded Adrian Fawcett, Elected.

Training, Richard Hill, Proposed Dan Thorne, Seconded Jennie Lawrence, Elected.

Recreational Mines Exploration Officer, Roy Fellows, Proposed Olly Burrows, Seconded Steve Holding, Elected.

Cave Registrar, Martin Laverty, Proposed Stuart France, Seconded Adrian Fawcett, Elected.

P&I, John Sheehy, Proposed Stuart France, Seconded Allan Richardson, Elected.

9. AOB

1) Rename the “Mines Advisor” post as “Recreational Mine Exploration Officer”. This will be formally voted on at the next AGM.

2) Create one elected P&I Officer role to combine the former co-opted positions of Newsletter Editor and Webmaster. This will be voted on formally at the next AGM.

3) Name change from “Cambrian Caving Council) to “Caving Wales” this will be formally proposed and voted on at the 2024 AGM. We need to get the support of Shropshire and the Forest of Dean areas, and have a discussion of other possible names e.g. Caving in Wales and the Borders, Underground Wales etc.

4) Vince Allkins has said that this would be his last year as E&T Officer. Dan Thorne said he may be willing to stand as E&T Officer next year.

10. Date and Location of the next CCC Annual General Meeting

The AGM must be held in March each year. The meeting format, venue, date and time can be decided later. Possible dates are 9th March if by video or alternatively 13th March if in person.