

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER January 2010

Editorial

I'm delighted to see that all the Cave Rescue teams in the region have positive news to report. WBCRT have already had two successful call-outs in the area previously covered by GCRT and are clearly getting to grips with their expanded area. In formal recognition of their new responsibilities they decided on a new name at their recent AGM. We all welcome the South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team.

The recent GCRG skills training session received much positive comment and with their responsibilities extending well along the M4 corridor they have arranged a joint practice with SECRO in the Emmer Green mines near Reading.

Anyone who visits the [Cave Rescue Diary](#) page on the CCC website will be impressed by the NWCRO training schedule and I know that they are also working hard to improve their in house first aid skills.

Robin Weare [e-mail](#)
Newsletter Editor

Cambrian AGM – a reminder

The formal notices will be going out soon. This year the AGM is to be held at the GCRG Depot at Cinderford on Sunday 7th March. Satnav users will need to know that the postcode is GL14 2TT but that will only take you to the approximate area.

Look first at Google Maps where you will find the [GCRG Depot](#) next door to Cinderford Ambulance Station. Enter through a galvanised farm-type gate into a yard area. On the Google map, it's the premises with several caravans parked in an attached quarry area.

Anchors

Reports have been received of loose anchors in Pwll Dwfn and Pant Mawr. They have been followed up by our Equipment Officer, Andy Lewington, who has checked all anchors in both caves and found that whilst there was movement in a number of anchors it was all within safe limits.

Andy is in the process of inspecting all the anchors on the Cambrian Caving Council [list](#) and hopes to complete this by the end of March.

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER January 2010

Cambrian Membership: Time for Change?

Since the formation of BCA in 2006, clubs become full members of Cambrian by ticking the appropriate box on their BCA membership renewal forms. There is no additional subscription and each club is free to join as many Regional Caving Councils (RCCs) as it wishes. Instead of collecting subscription income directly from their members, RCCs receive financial support from BCA to cover their administrative expenses ("Core Funding") and can also get BCA funding for Conservation & Access and training events. This was intended to make life as easy as possible for clubs: only one subscription to manage and BCA acting as the "one-stop-shop".

Clubs which decide not to join BCA may join Cambrian directly as Associate Members and pay an annual subscription, currently £12. (BCA reduce the level of Core Funding pro-rata according to the proportion of Associate Member clubs).

In theory, the current structure saves us and the clubs a lot of work because all of the membership admin can be done by BCA. In reality, despite everyone's best efforts, the lack of direct contact with our member-clubs creates some difficulties that we have struggled to overcome. It leaves us never quite sure who our members are.

Our first area of difficulty relates to funding. Unlike the rest of the UK, caving in Wales continues to receive a useful amount of money via Sports Council Wales but ultimately from the Welsh Assembly Government for Cave Rescue (£2000 p.a.), Training and Development (£600 p.a.) and overseas expeditions (varies from year to year). This is of benefit to all UK cavers because it reduces Cambrian's demands on BCA.

One of the requirements imposed by WAG in return for receiving public money is that we have to provide basic membership statistics. This means not just the number of clubs, but the total number of caving club members. To demonstrate commitment to equality of opportunity for the sexes, we also have to provide sub-totals for the numbers of male and female cavers, both as adults and under-18s. We do not disclose figures for individual clubs.

Historically, BCA has not collected the data we need and we have had to ask clubs to provide the detail directly to us. The age and gender questions were added to the 2010 BCA renewal forms but, realistically, it's going to take a year or two to get a reasonably accurate set of figures. Meanwhile, I anticipate us having to continue to keep asking clubs for the same figures.

The ease with which a club can join RCCs leads to another problem: it's equally easy to overlook the boxes on the BCA renewal form and accidentally stop being a member. I won't name and shame (yet!) but these are often well-known clubs active in Wales.

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER January 2010

When it comes to organising our AGM, it is essential that we know exactly (a) who to invite and (b) who, on the day, is entitled to vote. Unfortunately, BCA's membership renewal process is in full-swing during February and March and it is simply not possible for them to tell us with certainty which clubs are, or are not, members of Cambrian at the time of our AGM. It is quite conceivable at some future AGM that a contentious motion is carried by the support of a club that it emerges later, was not entitled to vote.

No-one can fail to have noticed the continual year-on-year improvement in the efficiency of BCA membership administration, but it remains a huge and complicated process. In 2009, for example, it was not until June that we got first sight of the list of BCA member-clubs and their RCC affiliations. This contained a number of additions (who had had a right to attend and vote at the CCC AGM in March but hadn't been invited) and a number of omissions - some accidentally and some who'd stopped being BCA members.

However desirable the BCA "one-stop-shop" may be, in reality Cambrian needs to maintain a direct relationship with its member clubs and, I suggest, needs to modify its constitution so that we know at all times, who is a member and who is not. I suggest a slightly different structure of membership with current Associate Members becoming full non-BCA members and without changing how clubs pay, as follows:-

- Full member clubs renew their membership each January by returning a renewal form
- Full membership continues to be free for BCA member
BCA clubs.
- All Full members, whether BCA members or not, should be entitled to vote at General Meetings, provided they have renewed their membership for the current year.
- BCA member
membership form to the Secretary with proof of BCA membership. Non BCA clubs may join at a General Meeting and need to be proposed by an existing Full Member club.

I will shortly send out a simple e-mail form to confirm membership details and collect the data we need. Filling this in and returning it to me won't change anyone's membership status but it will help us stay in touch. Meanwhile, I will draft the corresponding changes to the constitution for discussion at the AGM.

Mike McCombe
Secretary, Cambrian Caving Council

Cave Rescue Fundraiser

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER January 2010

The WBCRT benefited from the Waitrose charity collection in Oct. 2009. Each month 4 local charities are chosen and customers place their token (1 for each £10 spent) into the charity box of their choice. The charities then each receive a share of £1000 depending on the number of tokens collected. The WBCRT share was £514 for which we are very grateful and a letter of thanks to Waitrose Abergavenny has been sent.

We hope to be able to benefit again in the future and Pete Hobson, who approached Waitrose initially, is keeping in touch with the manager. If there is a next time it will be under the banner of the South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team - the new name which was approved by the AGM and better reflects the team's area of operation.

We have also thanked Waitrose for their support in donating food for the Daren call out in December. The surplus (and there was lots!) unused non-perishable food has been used to stock the Whitewalls rescue store for future use.

Jopo,
Warden and Fundraising Officer WBCRT (S&MWCRT)

BCA Membership

Have you ever wondered what you get for your £16 BCA membership?

Many of you probably think (in common with a lot of people around the country) that it's just the insurance that comes with your green card. In reality it pays for all sorts of things such as: Eco-Anchors, training grants, the British Caving Library, representation to government on proposed access bills, as well as the Youth & Development initiative trying to bring more people into caving as a sport.

One of the things you may also not realise is that there are two types of BCA membership for individuals: a Club Individual Member (CIM) where the club agrees to do the majority of BCA's admin to reduce costs to the minimum, and a Direct Individual Member (DIM) where admin is done by a paid Membership Secretary. The other important distinction is that a DIM pays to receive BCA publications keeping them up to date about what is going on in the world of caving, whereas a CIM does not. Instead their club receives a copy and agrees to pass on the important information on BCA's behalf. Again the purpose of this is to reduce the costs of CIM membership to the absolute minimum possible.

A further option has been introduced for club cavers in 2010 – a CIM+ category with all the benefits of DIM membership but arranged through the Club. Speak to your club's membership co-ordinator for further information. Alternatively, if you are already a paid-up CIM for 2010 and would like to upgrade your membership to include BCA publications, please contact membership@british-caving.org.uk.

Damian Weare - Secretary, British Caving Association

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER January 2010

Access to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I

SWCC has recently negotiated with the landowners of the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I entrance and the adjacent land over a new route of access to the cave entrance. This will be of particular use to those walking down the hill from Penwyllt, as it saves having to walk all the way down to the road and back up through the garden of Y Grithig.

As you walk down the road from Penwyllt take the signposted footpath through the gate on the RHS (and past the bathtub). This path is known locally as 'The Pant'. Follow this down the hill as far as the wooden five-bar gate that is almost level with the cave entrance. Don't go through the gate but instead turn left and walk across the top of the dry-stone walling to the fence. Cross at the obvious point where the barbed wire has been removed and then follow the line of the fence down to the entrance. (*Do not attempt to cross the fence anywhere else.*)

Take care on the slope down towards the entrance, particularly in wet weather, as it's slippery.

By using this new route you will reduce the traffic through the garden at Y Grithig as well as saving yourself a few minutes. SWCC asks that all cavers act with respect for both landowners when visiting the cave; we have long had a good relationship with them and would like this to continue. Your co-operation is appreciated.

Cave Life Website

The Cave Life of Wales website has received good feedback and came to the attention of Graham Proudlove, BCRA Biological Recorder. A decision was made to follow the same format and produce cave life websites for the other caving regions in the UK.

Andy Lewington has now completed the Devon site and is currently working on the Mendip site. This expansion would not have been possible without the work and support of local cavers, in particular Devon cavers Lee Knight and Chris Proctor. The site can be visited at www.cavelife.org.uk or by following the link on the CCC home page.

Tunnel Cave

The inner leaf of the gate to the Top entrance to Tunnel Cave is loose and is only held on by the handle.

Cavers are requested to be aware and take care when opening and closing the gate. It will be repaired when a vehicle and equipment can get up the hill.

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER January 2010

BBC Initiative to promote adventure sport

BBC One and BBC Learning are about to launch a campaign which aims to inspire thousands of individuals and families to experience high-adrenaline challenges and adventures. The campaign involves three parts:

“**DropZone**” is a new travel adventure series hosted by Steve Jones which will run for six weeks on BBC One, targeted for the 8-9pm slot on Wednesdays (start date to be confirmed).

The programmes will also promote the BBC’s “**Thrillseeker**” website which will enable viewers to

1. Search for adventure near them, using a comprehensive database of partner activities across the UK.
2. Access the **DropZone A to Z Glossary** for an extensive list of activities, links and information. Activities will be tiered according to their perceived level of difficulty –
Green = Easy
Blue = Adventurous
Red = Adrenaline Rush
Black = Extreme
3. Enter the **AdventureZone** – crammed with downloadable goodies and ideas

At the end of the DropZone series, the campaign will continue on “**Countryfile**” (BBC One, Sunday 7-8pm).

Caving clubs are invited to become partners in the campaign by organising activities up to the end of June 2010 for inclusion on the Thrillseeker database. The database entries can also include links back to club websites, providing viewers access to further promotional material.

Activities can form part of an existing portfolio or can be run on an ad-hoc or continuous basis. All the BBC asks is that:

- Adventure and fun is a key element
- Partners register their activities on the ThrillSeeker database
- Events meet the BBC’s key criteria - e.g. they are free (or run at cost recovery),
- Partners oversee all child protection and health and safety requirements and
- They provide the BBC with basic evaluation e.g. numbers of attendees.

The BBC will also provide partners with DropZone pocket guides, downloadable activity sheets and Empty-belly e-posters to help partners promote the events.

This is a great opportunity for clubs to raise their profile and attract an influx of new novice members. If you think you might be interested in running an event, please contact Mike McCombe (secretary@cambridgencavingcouncil.org.uk or 01291 652957) for further details.

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER January 2010

Diary

February 18 th	NWCRO Rescue Practice, Plas y Brenin
February 20 th	S&MWCRT Joint Rescue Practice with SWSARA
March 6 th	BCRA Cave Science Symposium, Bristol
March 7 th	Cambrian Caving Council Annual General Meeting, Cinderford
March 7 th	Joint GCRG/SECRO Rescue Practice, Emmer Green Mines
March 18 th	NWCRO Rescue Practice, Plas y Brenin
March 20 th	BCA Annual General Meeting, Alvechurch
April 4 th	OFD Columns Open Day
April 15 th	NWCRO Rescue Practice, Plas y Brenin
April 24 th	NWCRO Rescue Practice, Underground venue TBC
May 2 nd	OFD Columns Open Day

Cambrian Caving Council Officers

Chair Bernie Woodley [e-mail](#)
Secretary Mike McCombe [e-mail](#)
Treasurer Robin Weare [e-mail](#)
Conservation Officer Elsie Little [e-mail](#)
Training Officer Sue Mabbett [e-mail](#)
Equipment Officer Andy Lewington [e-mail](#)
Legal & Insurance Officer Owen Clarke [e-mail](#)
Registrar Brendan Marris [e-mail](#)
Webmaster Barry Hill [e-mail](#)
Newsletter Editor Robin Weare [e-mail](#)