

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER April 2012

Cambrian Caving Conference

The conference will be held at Penderyn Community Centre CF44 9JN on Saturday 26th May 2012. [Location Map](#)

The programme has now been finalised and there will also be underground workshops on the Sunday which will follow up the Photography and Cave Life sessions at the main conference. Places on these workshops are limited and will be allocated on a first come basis. When you book your conference place please mention which workshop you'd like to attend.

We are particularly grateful to the British Caving Association and the Sports Council for Wales for their financial support. This has allowed us to charge only £5 to attend. There is no additional charge for the Sunday sessions.

You can reserve your place by e-mailing [Mike McCombe](#)

Morning Programme

- 09:30 Arrive and register
- 10:00 Introduction - CCC Chairman
- 10:10 Emergency First Aid & Self Rescue – Gary Evans
What to keep in your personal emergency bag, how and when to use it. The choice between a slow exit with a minor casualty and a rescue call out. How to assist a minor casualty to make their own way out of the cave. The causes of UK cave rescues and how to avoid one.
- 11:00 Cave Life – Andy Lewington
Bats and other creatures - the underground life of Welsh caves. What to look for, how to avoid disturbing what you find and basic identification skills.
- 12:00 Access & Conservation – Bernie Woodley
The reason for access rules, conservation techniques. Current hot topics.
- 13:00 Lunch break
Hot drinks will be available. Bring your own packed lunch.

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Afternoon Programme

- 13:30 Basic Underground Photography – Brendan Marris
- How to move on from taking snaps to taking photographs. Compare the effect of the use of various basic techniques and then learn how to use them. This session will cover the following topics: Selecting suitable cameras for underground use; Flash v LED illumination; Lighting techniques; Composition; Using Raw files; Image processing.
- 14:30 Basic Surveying Techniques – John Stevens
- Learn to do it the old fashioned way with the use of compass, clinometer and tape measure. Record the results and turn them into a survey.
- 15:30 The Geological Context of Welsh Caves – Alan Bowring
- The geology of the national park – with an emphasis on the Carboniferous period and the Carboniferous Limestone and associated rock sequences in particular.
- 16:30 Closing remarks - CCC Chairman

Mynnydd Llangattock Cave Access

Clubs are reminded that annual and single-use permits for access to Agen Allwedd and Ogof Craig a Ffynnon are restricted to use for their own club trips, groups being comprised of at least 50% of their own members.

In case additional clarification is required, the following uses are explicitly not permitted:

1. Loan of an annual club key to groups from other clubs who do not have an access permit in their own name. A reciprocal rights agreement between two clubs does not extend to use of the other club's access permit.
2. Commercial trips led by members of such permit holding clubs. Local Cave Leader certification for a cave does not give access rights. All commercial use must be approved directly by CCW (not the MLCMAC permit secretary) in advance of the trip.

Bona-fide caving clubs are welcome to apply to MLCMAC for an annual permit and club key to Agen Allwedd and/or Craig a Ffynnon. Although there is no set number of trips per year to qualify for an annual permit, some evidence of regular trips over several previous years is expected.

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Mynnydd Llangattock Bats

The bat count for Aggy this winter was approximately 630, which is well up on previous years. The number for Cnwc / Busman's was 126, which also shows a similar increase.

Ogof Nant Rhin

The rockfall in the lower entrance has been cleared and the cave is now open.

Llanelly Quarry Pot

The debris has been cleared from the entrance and the cave is now open.

Dan yr Ogof - The Rising Ladder

The ladder at The Rising has now been replaced with a new stainless steel model. A traverse line has also been installed to assist a safe take off at the top of the ladder.

South Wales SRT Topos

There are more pitches in South Wales than most of us realise. Adrian Fawcett has put his topo collection online. He describes the project as a work in progress but it already includes Pant Mawr Pot, Pwll Dwfn, Llanelly Quarry Pot, the Pont Gam entrance to Ogof Nant Rhin, Ogof Garn y Bica, Blaen Onnau Quarry Pot, the Imaginary Menagerie pitches in Ogof Carno, Pwll Swnd and Big Bang Pitch in Ogof Draenen. Visit this [Link](#)

Overseas Expedition Grants

The WSA Overseas Expedition Grant Panel has recently announced the grant allocation for 2011/12. The total this year has dropped to £9000 from £10000 last year. Of the nine applications supported two were from caving, receiving a total of £2,500. It was reported that there were fewer applications this year.

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Forest Fawr Geopark Festival

Every year Fforest Fawr Geopark celebrates its spectacular natural and cultural heritage in a 16 day Geopark Festival. This year's festival runs from Saturday 26th May to Sunday 10th June and includes two dozen walks and talks.

Those of particular potential interest to cavers might be the ones which traverse ground underlain by limestone and the twrch sandstone where karstic features are present – thus '**Faults, Folds & Firebricks** (29th May), **Cairns & Ferns** etc (1st June), **Karst & Conifers** (7th June), **Limelights** etc (8th June)

The Geopark extends across the whole of the western half of the Brecon Beacons National Park and includes the limestone belt from Pontsticill west through Penderyn, Ystradfellte and Penwyllt to the far west of the Black Mountain.

Much of this landscape will be featured in '**The Geopark from the air: archaeology, industry and landscape**', a talk to be given by Toby Driver of RCAHMW in Brecon on 7th June and there are walks exploring the geology and botany of the likes of Cefn Cil-sanws, Allt Rhongyr at Penwyllt, Bwa Maen at Pontneddfechan and Cadair Fawr - with archaeology thrown in too, on occasion.

The full programme can be viewed [here](#) or you can phone Geopark Development Officer, Alan Bowring on 01874 620415 for more information.

Eurospeleo Magazine

FSE is to produce a free multilingual speleological online magazine and they have put out a request for articles. Guidance for contributors is [here](#).

Ogof Cnwc (Prices Dig)

Permanent loan keys are available to bona-fide caving clubs on payment of a £10 deposit. Contact Stuart France at Chelsea SS using the link on the [CSS website](#)

BCA Publication

Download BCA's new publication: [Thunderstorm and Flash Flood at Long Churn Caves \(~1.5Mb\)](#)

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Dan Yr Ogof Goes Carbon Neutral

The Morgan Brothers used the cave water to power a small hydro plant to light the caves for tourists in the 1930's. This was the first time hydro power had ever been used to light a cave.

During the Second World War this power was put to a very different use when armed soldiers regularly inspected the caves to check on the ammunition dump stored within, along with art treasures from all over Britain.

The Morgan Bros ancient water turbine is still occasionally used today, but its main use nowadays is to show students this engineering relic from the past. However, plans are afoot to make The National Showcaves Centre for Wales completely self sufficient in its energy needs by installing a "Cross flow" hydro turbine that will generate over 75KW of "pollution free" energy. Ashford Price, Chairman of the Showcaves, and his son James have been working on this proposal for over three years.

Mr. Price said "The complex uses vast amounts of electricity, and as we absorb this power we create a staggering 185 tonnes of carbon a year. Also, the cost of electricity has spiralled, and is now costing us over £1000 a week. In the future there is only one direction energy costs are going to go, and that is upwards, hence, we needed to do something to remain competitive.

As the caves are both a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and a National Nature Reserve (NNR) we wanted to find a way of eliminating our 'carbon footprint', and after extensive research modern day hydro turbines again appeared to provide the answer for our future energy needs.

Hydro power is such a beautifully simple method of making power. We extract water near the cave mouth, then put it in to a turbine 200 yards downstream, and then return the water to the river. The result is pollution free energy! When we submitted this project to the Countryside Council for Wales, and the Environmental Agency they were very supportive, and helpful. All the feasibility studies indicated that we had enough water to make the scheme financially practical over a 10 year period. Barclays Bank immediately offered a loan to the Company for the year long construction work. This work will involve laying pipe work, building a new turbine house, and installing hydro generators.

It is an interesting point that despite investigating the latest modern day methods used to create electricity, we discovered that over 80 years ago my ancestors still chose the most sustainable form of power for the caves, even in today's multi-choice self-sufficiency world!

When this project is completed it will make Dan Yr Ogof Caves the first self sufficient 'zero carbon' business in Welsh tourism and one of the largest private hydro generators in Wales".

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Diary

May 3 rd	GCRG AGM	GCRG Depot, Cinderford
May 6 th	Columns Open Day	OFD
May 12 th	SMWCRT Training Day	Mid Wales
May 19 th	North Wales CRO Training Day & AGM	Plas y Brenin
May 26 th	Cambrian Caving Conference	Penderyn Community Centre
June 3 rd	Columns Open Day	OFD
June 9 th	British Caving Association AGM	Alvechurch
June 16 th	Pwll Ddu CMG meeting	TBA
June 16/17 th	Welsh Mines Society Field Meet	Britannia Mine, Snowdonia

Cambrian Caving Council Officers

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