

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2010

Editorial

Having signed the cheque to pay for the Drwys Cefn gate and knowing that a previous Cambrian treasurer had signed the cheque to pay for the Draenen gate I was particularly irritated by their theft; especially as I knew that it would fall to me to sign the cheques for their replacements.

I do hope that whoever removed the gates will have the decency to make a donation to cover the replacement costs. A minimum of £600 would be appropriate.

I also hope that whoever did this will be convinced by his/her/their friends in the caving community of the futility and stupidity of such actions.

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

Ogof Draenen Access

Early in July both the gates at Ogof Draenen and Drws Cefn were stolen. This has been taken very seriously by both the PDCMG and the landowner and is currently the subject of a police investigation.

We are fortunate that, for the moment at least, access to the cave remains unchanged. This means that if you are a keyholder please continue to use the Draenen original entrance as usual and as per the existing access agreement and conditions. If you are not a permanent key holder please continue to contact Sue Mabbett for permissions as usual.

We also suggest you continue to take your key on your trips, so that if you do happen to meet the landowner you can show that you have permission to be there. Please do not use Drws Cefn or undertake through trips for which there is no permission. This will not help the access situation.

New gates will be installed shortly, which is another good reason to keep taking your key with you on trips to the cave. Updates will be provided about this situation as conditions change.

Fleur Loveridge
Secretary, PDCMG

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2010

South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team

Following a lot of hard work by the Trustee, Steve Walters, the formalities of winding up the Gwent Cave Rescue Team have now been completed and this has cleared the way for the change of the name of the former West Brecon team to be formally approved by the Charity Commissioners.

The annual Rescue Team fundraising event will take place as normal on Saturday 28th August at the SWCC headquarters, Penwyllt. Full details will follow later but there will be the traditional auction followed by food and music. If you have anything (ideally caving related but they'll sell anything) to donate for the auction, please contact one of the committee members via the [website](#). Keep an eye on the website as more details will follow soon. Please attend and take your cheque book to the auction.

SWCC Security

A few weekends ago some locals turned up in a car at SWCC in the early hours of Sunday morning, and the suspicion is that they were 'casing the joint'. They high-tailed it when approached by a member. In a further incident last weekend two men were spotted removing dressed stone from the station platform. The police were informed (with the car reg) and followed up.

We have been remarkably lucky over many years and (the theft of the WBCRT Land Rover aside) have had few problems with theft from cars or from the HQ, but it is perhaps time for increased vigilance.

Members and visitors are recommended not to leave valuables in cars outside Penwyllt. Also we would ask that the gate into the car park be closed at 10.30pm. If you arrive after this time you are *not* being shut out; please let yourself in and shut the gate after you.

We would also ask all those visiting Penwyllt to keep their eyes open. Any suspicious comings or goings should be reported in the first instance to a member or to the Duty Officer, but do not be shy of 'phoning the police should the circumstances suggest this is appropriate.

Tony Baker
Chairman, SWCC.

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2010

Agen Allwedd and Craig a Ffynnon Gates

There have been a couple of incidents in recent months involving the gates to Agen Allwedd and Craig-a-Ffynnon, so here is a brief reminder:

The **Agen Allwedd** gate can be opened from the inside when padlocked on the outside. Therefore the padlock should always be re-fastened as soon as the gate has been opened.

The **Craig-a-Ffynnon** gate padlock is attached to the gate via a special metal bar. The bar has two functions - to make it easier to operate the padlock, and to provide a "weak link" should the padlock seize up. The gate itself is considerably more indestructible than the part of the cave it is attached to! So please make sure the last person into / out of the cave knows how to re-fit the bar and lock.

Dams at Waun Fignen Felin

In May the BBNP constructed a series of dams at Waun Fignen Felin, the peat bog that feeds the Waun Fignen Felin sink, one of the two main sources of water flowing into Dan Yr Ogof.

This was done without consultation with any interested parties and was discovered by a walker who had immediate concerns as soon as he saw it. The barrage of dams had been constructed out of plastic, totally unsympathetic to the environment that they were placed in, and even to the untrained eye, you could see that they were totally unsuitable to do the job that they had been placed there for.

After considerable local outcry and protests to the CCW and Environment Agency a site meeting with all concerned parties and an engineering advisor was convened at the site. The dams were immediately condemned, as they would have surely failed in heavy rain, and the BBNP instructed to make safe the site. The main part of the dams have now been removed, although very unprofessionally, having only been sawn off just above the ground, leaving the plastic still buried in the peat bog. The removal of the main part of the dams has revealed bales of waste sheep wool wrapped in plastic, left in the stream channels in the peat bog. This is undoubtedly contaminating the water flowing into DYO.

Brendan Marris
Secretary, DYOCMC

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2010

Sadie & Phoebe fit and well

The rescue of two Springer Spaniels on 15/16 June by SMWCRT was well reported in the Western Mail at the time and a follow up article on 12th July told the world that they had fully recovered from their 36 hour ordeal. There is a full report with pictures on the [SMWCRT website](#) and a link to the Western Mail report which has yet more pictures.

Sandra and Jason Wynne, the owners of the two Spaniels, and their family and friends are due to undertake a sponsored walk in August to raise money for the Rescue Team. For information on how to sponsor Sandra and Jason send an e-mail to: lisa.jones@mediawales.co.uk

Daren Cilau

Thanks to Adrian Fawcett for providing a summary of the log book for 2009. It shows visits by 56 parties, 212 cavers which is well down on other recent years (2008 was 73 parties, 272 cavers) despite an increase in through trips to/from Ogof Cnwc.

2009 League Table Update

It is likely that some of the through trips from Cnwc will have also been recorded in the Daren log book. Subject to that the figures for 2009 were:

1. OFD – Top Entrance	1727 cavers	477 parties
2. OFD I	599 cavers	135 parties
3. Dan yr Ogof	388 cavers	100 parties
4. Ogof Draenen	352 cavers	117 parties
5. Agen Allwedd	340 cavers	104 parties
6. Cwmdwr	260 cavers	68 parties
7. Daren Cilau	212 cavers	56 parties
8. Craig a Ffynnon	194 cavers	54 parties
9. Otter Hole	161 cavers	36 parties
10. Ogof Cnwc	102 cavers	27 parties

Ogof Carno

It is reported that Welsh Water has fixed the drainage problems that were affecting the entrance to Carno Adit. Of course, this is unconnected with the flooding potential of the cave itself.

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2010

Film Premiere - Otter Hole 40 years On

There was a very special trip into Otter Hole in May which was well reported in the local press both before and after the event and on the way to the cave there was an interview with BBC Radio Gloucester. The party's exit was celebrated with a bottle of Champagne.

A full report on the trip itself will appear in the next issue of Descent but the background is that back in 1970 Dave Parker, or "Sparky" as he is known to his friends, met up with George Gardiner and Cyril Fitzpatrick in the Piercefield Arms in St. Arvans. Although they were not cavers their "out of hours activities" on the banks of the River Wye below Chepstow Racecourse gave them an intimate knowledge of the area. When Dave asked them if they knew about any interesting holes that might be cave related they were only too pleased to show him some.

One of those was the site that we all now know as the entrance to Otter Hole. The events that followed from that initial visit are well documented and there cannot be many cavers who have not either been to the cave, seen pictures of the fantastic formations or the film made by Sid Perou.

Although Dave made a number of trips into the cave in those early years the last was in 1984 and he did not go into the Upper Series and see the formations. In late 2009 Dave asked fellow caver and long standing friend Paul Taylor about the possibility of organising a trip so that he could go and see them. Dave was 73 in April 2010 and a film was made of the occasion. It shows Dave visiting the cave before the trip and meeting up with George Gardiner and then the trip itself.

The event planned for [October 11th at the Palace Cinema Cinderford in the Forest of Dean](#) is to be the first full showing of the film and is an opportunity to come and meet Dave and some of the others who were involved in those early days as well as those who were very privileged to have accompanied Dave when he made his return in May. A 12.5 hr trip at the age of 73 is not bad in anybody's book.

Please support the event as it will be raising money for the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group. The ticket price should be around £5.00 / head (TBC) and could you please let Paul Taylor know at chairman@gcrg.org.uk if you plan to attend.

Plans for another supporting film are also underway and whilst this will not quite be a London Leicester Square Red Carpet Premiere it will be worth bringing your camera as it is going to be a very special event. Arrive around 19.15hrs for the film to start at approximately 19.45 hrs

Paul Taylor

I've seen the rushes and can say that the film is likely to be very good indeed. Add to that Descent 2 as the probably second feature and we have the makings of a brilliant evening. I'll certainly be there myself [Editor]

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2010

Hidden Earth

There has been no South Wales Round-up at Hidden Earth over the last few years, and our Registrar, Brendan Marris, plans to do one this year if there is no one else wanting to take up the challenge!

If anyone has information on progress of digs or discoveries that they feel should be included, he would be grateful if they would contact him. [e-mail](#)

He will be pulling together a presentation over the next few weeks

Party time at The Stump

The last edition of Descent included an article on the renovation of The Stump by the Wealden CMS and I don't intend to repeat that here. In case anyone doesn't know the building known as "The Stump" sits opposite the SWCC headquarters at Penwyllt; part of it has been occupied for many years by Swindon SS but the remainder of the building has remained unoccupied since it ceased to be used as the Penwyllt Inn.

After a lot of work the cottage now consists of a club room, kitchen, and drying / store room with charging facilities downstairs, with two bunkrooms and two shower rooms / WCs upstairs. There is capacity for twenty people. The view from the front windows is absolutely stunning, when not obscured by low cloud, that is!

With their renovation work completed the Wealden members decided to throw a celebratory party which was attended by members and their families, a few local residents, people who had lived in the Stump when it was occupied and a group of ladies from the local history society who wanted to have a look at the place post-restoration. Plenty of SWCC and Swindon SS members also turned up.

For the opening ceremony a mock-up of the engraved stone plaque over the fireplace had been prepared and fastened to the wall outside, with a curtain and a ribbon to be cut and after the official opening the spit roast was ready and served up - the food was eaten fairly quickly but as one of the roasts wasn't quite done and went back on the fire there was a second course. The beer flowed, people mingled, there was music too and the festivities continued until well after midnight. .

"The Stump" will be for the use of WCMS and invited guests, which means that unfortunately bookings from other clubs cannot be taken. However, anyone staying at South Wales Caving Club just across the field is welcome to pop over to say hello whenever WCMS are in residence.

To see a series of photographs of the Stump before, during and after the renovation work and even a few of the party itself visit the WCMS [website](#)

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2010

Radon Monitoring in Llangattock Caves

The MLCMAC has decided that winter and summer radon measurements will be made at Hard Rock Café and Restaurant at the End of the Universe in Daren Cilau, these being locations where cavers spend a disproportionately large amount of time. The information obtained will complement the readings obtained from Agen Allwedd and Eglwys Faen over 6 months in 2008 and previously.

Cave Rescue Training

It is good to hear of so many joint exercises. Hard on the heels of the GCRG/SECRO exercise at the Emmer Green Mines near Reading where the two teams share responsibility came a joint SMWCRT/NWCRO exercise in Bwlchglas mine, Ceredigion and now a joint event based at the Huglith Mine in Shropshire has been organised by MCRO for September with both GCRG & NWCRO invited to attend.

Ceredigion Mine Sites Directory & Map

A [website](#) dealing with the heritage of the Ceredigion uplands includes pages describing each mine site in the area plus an online map showing locations and a photo gallery showing surface features of each of the mines.

Agen Allwedd Keys

The Agen Allwedd permit secretary, Malcolm Reid, is in the process of verifying the list of clubs who hold annual keys. Under the terms of access for the cave, every club with an annual key should be issued with an annual permit. However the contact list of annual key holding clubs was lost when the permit secretary changed two years ago. If your club does have an annual Aggy key and you have not recently confirmed to Malcolm that you still have it, please will you get in touch with him [e-mail](#)

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2010

Diary

Aug 28 th	SMWCRT Fundraising Auction	SWCC
Aug 29 th	OFD Columns Open day	
Sept 4/5	MCRO/GCRG/NWCRO Joint Training	Huglith Mine, Shropshire
Sept 18 th	SMWCRT Rescue Practice	Ogof Draenen
Sept 25/6 th	Hidden Earth	Leek
Oct 9/10	Welsh Mines Society Autumn Conference	Machynlleth
Oct 11 th	Premiere of "Otter Hole 40 years on"	Palace Cinema, Cinderford
Oct 15 th	MLCMAC Meeting	

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 currently vacant
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](#)

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL
NEWSLETTER July 2010