

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER April 2007

EDITORIAL

Although I met Frank Baguley only a few times I was an avid collector of The Red Dragon and I know that he put an immense amount into Welsh caving over an extended period. When I heard the sad news of his passing I found myself thinking about the contributions of so many from previous generations which have been, perhaps, forgotten in the mists of time. Where would we be without the efforts of those who actually found the caves we all enjoy so much?

Robin Weare newslettereditor@cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

THE LATE FRANK BAGULEY (1915 – 2007)

Sadly, Frank Baguley died on 10th March 2007 at Ty Mawr nursing home, Abercrave, after a long illness.

He was born in Aberdare, the son of a dentist. It was there that he began his professional career as a school dentist. He served in the war in the Army Dental Corps rising to the rank of Major, but perhaps more importantly meeting his wife, Ella, while stationed in Scotland. The couple returned to Aberdare where Frank resumed his civilian dental career and they brought up their son, Douglas.

Frank was always involved in sport; hill walking, canoeing, swimming, water polo, cycling. He was for a while a Diving Judge for the Welsh Amateur Swimming Association.

In 1963 he joined South Wales Caving Club and developed a lifetime passion for the underground. He took part in both club expeditions to Balinka Pit in Jugoslavia. It was Frank who developed much of the winch equipment that led to the success of the venture, bottoming the pit from where the remains of partisans were retrieved.

On an even sadder note it was Frank who identified the victims of the Aberfan disaster from their dental records.

In later life, when an accident in a cave caused him mobility problems, he continued to serve caving as secretary of the Cambrian Caving Council, as a contributor to the Cambrian Cave Registry, as secretary of the National Caving Association (now BCA) and representative of the caving world to many outside organisations where he was very well respected. He was presented with an award for his service by the Welsh Sports Council.

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RHINO RIFT HANGER TESTS

The saga continues..... the latest news I have is that further testing in the Mendips has identified bolt failure in Hunters Hole, Thrupe Lane Swallet and at the ladder dig in GB Cave. The anchors at Swildons Twenty passed a test on 14th April.

It is worth noting that similar axial pull tests have been conducted in both Derbyshire and Yorkshire without a single anchor failing the test. In Derbyshire alone, this amounts to over 215 anchors as at late 2006. So far the problem seems to be confined to Mendip, though the reasons for this have yet to be isolated and demonstrated to a reasonable standard of proof. Further work is planned to be conducted across the whole of Mendip in response to these events.

The BCA Equipment Committee plans to meet, hopefully during May, to discuss the results of the findings and what else should be done, including possible reassurance work in other regions.

Developments will be reported on the BCA website.

CAVE ECOSYSTEM PROJECT

Andy Lewington is working on a cave ecosystem project that will be freely available on the CCC website. The intention is to provide information to allow cavers to be able to identify many of the organisms that live in the Welsh caves and understand the relationships between them. Hopefully it will be of use/interest to both sporting cavers and those involved in the Local Cave Leader scheme, raising their awareness and in turn, their groups.

He writes "To reduce the extent to which I am relying on others I intend to do what I can, and then seek help to fill in gaps or on bits I am not sure about, I will also need help towards the end from more knowledgeable people to check what I have produced. So at a later date I may request help when I can be more specific on what help I need. I am hoping to have completed it sometime this summer."

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

A new constitution was approved at the AGM on 11th March 2007. Minutes of the meeting and a copy of the constitution have been distributed to all member clubs and can also be found on the website.

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TRAINING

Cambrian Caving Council will be holding a vertical skills workshop dealing with ladder and lifeline, intro to SRT, intro to SRT rigging and SRT rescue practice.

Workshops will be surface based at Llangorse or Trewern OEC depending on the weather on Saturday 26th May and Sunday 27th May with possibilities of underground sessions on the Sunday depending on numbers. The workshops will be run by CIC's or aspirant CIC's. Cost will be £10/head to cover expenses.

To reserve your place contact the Training Officer, Richard Hill, on 07876193745 or e-mail rickahill@yahoo.com

ACCESS to PENWYLLT

Penwyllt Quarry is to reopen for 12 months, and this started on Monday 5th March with blasting in the lower of the quarry cuts.

Tarmac has won the contract to supply stone for lining the trench for the new gas pipeline between Swansea and Brecon. Steps have been taken to re-commission the quarry, installing a mobile crusher, weighbridge (the sale will be by weight) and workers huts etc.

The work will be complete in 12 months after which Tarmac (presumably Hobbs Holdings) will accept a voluntary prohibition order; restore the quarry (guided by a consultant ex CCW) and hand the lease back to Hobbs. The idea is that about two thirds of the stone that could have been taken before the planning permission expired in 2042 will be extracted. The quarry are limited to the present depth in the lower bench AOD 340m. The BBNP [Brecon Beacons National Park] have been consulted over this, although CCW [Countryside Council for Wales] have not.

Blasting will be on weekdays, however stone will be moved on Saturday morning as well.

So as you come up the Penwyllt road **watch out for quarry lorries** trundling down (especially at the steep narrow section)

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THEFTS FROM AGEN ALLWEDD

The Mynnydd Llangattock Management Committee has asked that everyone be informed that it is no longer safe to leave belongings by the Aggy log book. Incidents in November and March saw the gate sprung open and belongings stolen. During the March incident a key was stolen. A group of muddy youths were spotted in the area and they, or whoever was responsible, now have easy access to the cave.

CRICKHOWELL POLICE / WHITEWALLS PARKING

The police staff in Crickhowell have been investigating car parking at Whitewalls once again after a complaint made by Mr Alan Thomas, a neighbour. This is despite the collapse of the Regina V Stevens parking case in Brecon Magistrates Court in 2005 and the Crown Prosecution Case having to pay costs. Let's hope the CPS are more wily about going another round with CSS than the new police officers seem to be. None of these policemen have been in Crickhowell for much more than a year and the most senior of them only a couple of months.

CSS's position is that parking at Whitewalls is legal for anyone making use of our premises. If any of our neighbours attempt to come into the cottage they should be turned away, and if they threaten any driver with parking tickets or being towed away, or otherwise make anyone feel threatened or unsafe, then the police can be telephoned immediately and a harassment complaint lodged. Will all cavers please keep us informed of any developments.

Stuart France

Hon. Sec. CSS

01874 730016 - ring me and leave your number if necessary as I will need to talk to you personally.

CCTV at GCRG DEPOT

After several recent instances of damage at the GCRG Depot, the Committee has taken the decision to install a CCTV system with 24hr recording. They will not be registering with the Data Protection Registrar at present as there will be no filming of public areas.

Please be aware that you will be 'on camera' when visiting the Depot in the future.

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER April 2007

POLLUTION AT NEW DUN MINE – A SOLUTION?

Many will be aware of the long standing pollution problem in New Dun Mine in the Forest of Dean. Apparently some long time ago, local industry used the shaft as a dumping ground for their waste products. It seems that there may now be an answer to the large pool of sludge.

Aided and guided by RFDC members, a group of students from the University of Gloucestershire recently visited the mine to take samples and an extract from their preliminary report appears below. Sounds interesting.....

Back in the laboratory, we wanted to find out whether bioremediation could be employed to clean up the organic component of the waste. Bioremediation involves the harnessing of microbes to break down contaminants into carbon dioxide and water. The method is used routinely in the remediation of contaminated land, as well as on disasters such as the Exxon Valdez and the Sea Empress.

For our experiments, microcosms were setup with samples that had been collected previously. These were simple microcosms; 25 grams of the tarry sludge in a flask. To these, one or a combination, of: plant food (N:P:K), mushroom compost, a liquid medium especially formulated to encourage bacterial growth, a bacterial culture and water, were added. The microcosms were then incubated, and then were sampled after 4 weeks and then again after 12 weeks. AL Control, a commercial analytical chemistry lab in Cheshire, kindly agreed to do all the analysis free of charge, as they too were interested to see whether the sludge could be bioremediated.

The analysis of an initial sample of the nasty, tarry stuff oozing from the heap of waste and making its way down various tunnels (including the one leading to a major water body) showed it to be weathered petroleum and oil. It was found to consist of 30% aromatic compounds, many of which were polyaromatic hydrocarbons. There was also a high percentage of resins and asphaltenes.

In the best-performing microcosms, by the end of the experiment (after 12 weeks) the petroleum hydrocarbons had decreased by 57, and the resins and asphaltenes by 37% and 10% respectively. These results are really encouraging, as these are amongst the nastiest components of the oil. All of the results, for that matter, are encouraging, as so much of the sludge has been biodegraded in just 12 weeks.

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CAMBRIAN CAVE REGISTRY

The planned launch date for the live version of the Registry on a website probably hosted by BCA is 31st May 2007. Look out for a link from the Cambrian Caving Council website.

2007 DIARY

May 5th	Start of Otter Hole season
May 6th	OFD Columns Open Day
May 11th	GCRG Annual General meeting
May 26/27th	Cambrian Caving Council Vertical Skills Workshop
May 27th	OFD Columns Open Day
June 3rd	GCRG Rescue Practice
July 7th	WBCRT Rescue Practice
Aug 26th	OFD Columns Open Day
Sept 1st	WBCRT Rescue Practice
Sept 8th	GCRG/WBCRT Joint Rescue Practice
Sept 9 th	Cambrian Caving Council General Meeting
Nov 3rd	GCRT/WBCRT Joint Rescue Practice