

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER January 2007

EDITORIAL

This is the first newsletter for several years and it is hoped to produce future editions quarterly.

The plan is to use this forum as a means to disseminate information to all bodies with an interest in caving in Wales and the Marches. To do this will require regular input from Clubs, Cave Management Committees and individuals as well as from the CCC committee.

It is being distributed by e-mail to what I think are the correct addresses. Apologies if I've got it wrong. If I have, will you please forward it to the correct person in your club and ask them to send their e-mail address and any future contributions to me.

Robin Weare newslettereditor@cambridgancavingcouncil.org.uk

INSURANCE

Those clubs which sent details of their membership to the BCA Membership Administrator (Glenn Jones) during December will have now received their 2007 insurance cards. Clubs that have sent in their details during January will receive their cards in early February. For any clubs which haven't made contact with him his e-mail is: membership@british-caving.org.uk

It is important that clubs caving primarily in Wales indicate (on the Club Proforma) that the Cambrian Caving Council is the RCC of choice.

I understand that it was agreed at the recent BCA council meeting that (subject to confirmation by the BCA Insurance Manager - currently in Mulu) the 'Student' category of membership should be extended to apply to all members under 18 years of age (this is £8.00 for the full caver insurance element of 'Club Individual Members') – this applies to membership for 2007 and will be retrospective for anybody who has already paid for 2007. It was recommended that clubs with members under 18 years of age should adopt an appropriate (club worded) version of the BCA Child Protection Policy.

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BCA's MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Clubs might like to be aware of two aspects of the membership drive. The first is the web-site www.trycaving.co.uk – if you are keen to get new members, signing up to this web site may help individuals to find out about your club. This might be particularly important as BCA intends to have a presence this year at the National Outdoor Show – there will be an artificial cave (used by YHA last year) that is expected to attract a lot of visitors – anybody expressing interest in joining a caving club will be directed to those clubs signed up to the 'trycaving' web site.

CCC MEMBERSHIP

In 2005 only 19 of the previous 48 CCC member clubs managed to affiliate. After considerable effort the figures we now have 30 affiliated clubs.

Of the list of clubs that used to be members but are no longer, the majority never were NCA members. When CCC stopped collecting subscriptions in 2005, there was no mechanism to transfer the non-NCA clubs into the new structure and we simply lost touch with them. Some, we believe, no longer exist. CCC is keen to encourage all caving clubs active in Wales to join - preferably via BCA but, if they feel unable to do so, by becoming Associate Members.

We found a significant number of BCA member clubs who thought they were affiliated to CCC but were not on the list supplied by BCA. Most expressed surprise when it was suggested that their membership had lapsed. Given all the other challenges faced by BCA in 2006, it is understandable that the accurate tracking of regional council affiliations was not top-priority. The lesson for CCC is that we need to maintain a direct relationship with our member clubs and this newsletter is one important part of that initiative.

We have contacted all previous CCC member clubs several times in the last two years to remind them how easy it is to affiliate to CCC at no further cost. All previous members of CCC were sent an e-mail and invited to the September 2006 General Meeting. Unfortunately some have changed e-mail addresses and won't have received it. We hope in the future to find up-to-date e-mail contacts for these clubs.

We gain some of our funding from the Sports Council for Wales and as the amount is partly dependent upon membership numbers we need clubs to affiliate. Please do this when you renew your BCA membership in 2007 or affiliate directly by contacting Ian Healey secretary@CambrianCavingCouncil.org.uk

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2007 DIARY

Mar 4 th	Gloucester CRG Rescue Practice
Mar 11 th	Cambrian Caving Council AGM
Apr 8 th	OFD Columns Open Day
May 6 th	OFD Columns Open Day
June 3 rd	Gloucester CRG Rescue Practice

RHINO RIFT HANGER TESTS

The CSCC issued the following on 16th January 2007:

Following a number of comments posted on various caving forums in recent weeks, the CSCC Bolting Coordinator paid a visit to Rhino Rift on Jan 15. ALL of the P hangers on Pitches 1, 2 & 3 were carefully inspected and then tested with a Hydrajaws pull tester. ALL of P hangers held a sustained 6kN pull for 2 minutes.

A small number of hangers did exhibit 1 or 2 mm of twist movement. This is acceptable. No hangers exhibited any obvious signs of outward movement which is not acceptable.

Given these findings the CSCC will not be conducting any remedial bolting in Rhino Rift. If you still harbour concerns about the security of the bolts, or your ability to rig them adequately, then please stay out of the cave.

FOREST OF DEAN

It was confirmed at a recent meeting with the Deputy Gaveler that the FODCCAG agreement with the Forestry Commission, requires ALL participants to have at least £2m liability insurance.

TRAINING

Richard Hill is in the process of organising a training event which it is hoped will happen over a weekend at the end of May. Keep your diaries free and contact Richard trainingofficer@cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk for more details

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GRANTS, AND HOW TO APPLY FOR THEM

One of the most important functions of CCC is to allocate financial support for caving in Wales and the Marches. We are fortunate in Wales that, in addition to the funding available from BCA, we have the continuing financial support of Sports Council Wales to develop the sport and provide an important contribution towards the cost of cave rescue. To keep these funds flowing, it is very important that we can demonstrate that the money is being put to good use!

Funds are readily available for **Conservation & Access** work costing up to £100 per event - for example, padlock replacement. Larger projects are able to be supported from BCA's Cave Conservation Fund, though the decision-making process may take a little longer. In either case, please contact Elsie Little or Bernie Woodley in the first instance.

We are keen to support **Training** events – the principal purpose of the Sports Council Development Grant. BCA are also able to support us through the Training Grant scheme. In addition to CCC Training events, funding is also available other organisers of caving-related training. There are, however, a few points to note:

- We would prefer to sponsor an event, rather than subsidise individual attendees.
- Wherever possible, events should be open to all Cambrian member clubs.
- We cannot use funds from BCA to subsidise attendees who are not BCA members.
- Please talk to us as early as possible before the event. We have difficulties in providing retrospective donations!

Please contact Richard Hill about training events.

If you have ideas for a **project** that might be of benefit to other cavers, grant funding may be available from a number of different sources. The development of the Cambrian Cave Registry, for example, has been funded by Sports Council Wales. Scientific projects may also be eligible for grants from BCRA's research fund. In the first instance, please contact me.

The SCW Safety Grant provides £2000 of support (total) to the three Welsh **cave rescue** teams – the allocation being decided by the CCC Committee. The rules and process are somewhat complex but are, I'm sure, understood by the fundraising secretaries of the three CROs.

Mike McCombe

THE BICKFEST

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In celebration of the late David Bick's distinguished, highly individual, and influential contribution to British mining history, the Welsh Mines Society is arranging a two-day meeting on September 29th and 30th, 2007.

On the Saturday there will be a one-day indoor conference at the Mellington Hall Hotel, Church Stoke, Powys SY15 6HX, on the border of South Shropshire and Montgomeryshire (Powys). On the Sunday there will be a walk, led by members of the Society, to the Bryntail and Pen-y-clun mines, near Llanidloes. At the latter site the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust has been instrumental in arranging for comprehensive repair work to the 19th century engine-house, which should be completed by the time of our visit.

The title of the conference will be: **'The Lode of History'**.

For more information see the Welsh Mines Society website www.welshmines.org

CWMYSTWYTH

A very important (abandoned) lead mine in mid Wales, known to those Welsh cavers who dare venture into mines, has been progressively griddled - note NOT gated, over the last couple of years, by Wardle Armstrong, as Crown Mineral Agents, on behalf of the Crown Estates.

A year ago, the Crown Estates agreed to a meeting with the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust, to discuss possible future management of the site, once the work has been completed.

Unfortunately, some grills have been replaced, in some cases more than once, due to vandalism. Thus, at this rate, the work will never be completed & no meeting will take place. A recent request to the Crown Estates has been sent, requesting such a meeting, so please be patient & await the results. There is always the possibility that if vandalism continues, more permanent action may be taken.

CAMBRIAN CAVE REGISTRY

After a lot of hard work it should be going live around the date of the Cambrian AGM. Watch our website www.cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk for the appearance of a link.