

CLOSURE OF TWLL DU ENTRANCE TO OGOF DRAENEN

STATEMENT BY THE CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL ON 30TH NOVEMBER 2017

Cadw, which is the statutory historic environment body in Wales, Gwent Police and caving organisations have been in discussions over the past week regarding the closure of the new Twll Du entrance into Ogof Draenen by means of a "community resolution" as Cadw and Gwent Police both describe the process.

Cadw states: "the hole that was excavated to open up the new caving access has been dug through, and therefore caused damage to, a nationally protected Scheduled Monument (MM189 – Garnddyrys (site of) and adjacent tramway). The forge and tramway is a nationally protected monument, protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979, as amended by the Historic Environment (Wales) Act, 2016. It is an offence under the legislation to cause damage or disturbance to a Scheduled Monument without Scheduled Monument Consent from Cadw. No consent was sought, or granted, for the hole to be opened."

Cadw says that their priority "is that the hole is securely sealed and stabilised as soon as possible to ensure that no further damage occurs to the fragile tramway remains. If the hole continues to be used as an entrance into the caving system it is likely that more damage will be done to the protected monument through erosion to the tramway surface around the hole, and potentially further digging."

Cadw added that "any methodology for sealing the hole will need Scheduled Monument Consent from Cadw and so no work that physically alters the tramway should be undertaken until consent has been discussed and agreed."

This is a very delicate situation and it will take some time to agree on a plan. Consultations are needed with others such as Natural Resources Wales, the County Council, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, the landowner company and the Pwll Du Cave Management Group.

The Cambrian Caving Council and the British Caving Association are asking cavers not to use or visit this entrance. We are also calling for restraint from making any remarks in any place which might encourage anyone to use or seek out this cave entrance. Important lessons need to be learned in the light of these developments and we look forward to working constructively and collectively with Cadw, and with all the other interested parties, to resolve this and have a positive future relationship.