

# CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL *CYNGOR OGOFEYDD CYMREIG*

Affiliated to the British Caving Association

Minutes of the General Meeting held at GCRG Depot, Cinderford  
September 14<sup>th</sup> 2008

## Present

Bernie Woodley	Chairman	SWCC
Barry Hill	Webmaster	Hereford CC
Mike McCombe	Secretary	Newbury & District CC
Maurice Febry		FoDCCAG / Gloucester SS
Robin Weare	Treasurer	Hades CC
Paul Taylor		GCRG / FoDCCAG
Andy Lewington	Assistant Equipment Officer	Gagendor

Apologies were received from Gary Evans, John Hine, Elsie Little, Dave Ludlum, Sue Mabbett and Idris Williams.

## 3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Richard Preece (CCW) had contacted the Secretary to point out that the statement that "Agreement was received from the Duke of Beaufort" s Estate for control of access to Ogof Craig a Ffynnon to be transferred to MLCMAC" is incorrect. Responsibility for the management of Craig a Ffynnon rests with CCW, with advice being provided by MLCMAC. It was agreed to amend the draft AGM minutes to reflect this. The AGM minutes were otherwise accepted as a true record.

## 4. Matters Arising from the minutes of the Annual General Meeting

It was agreed that mine access issues should be added to future agenda and that the Welsh Mines Society representative should be invited to report future meetings

## 5. Applications for Membership

None had been received

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## 6. Officers' Reports

### *6a Chairman's Report*

[See written report below]

#### Chairman's Report Sep. 2008

A number of significant advances have been made since the last general meeting and I commend the work of the respective members to you and extend my personal thanks.

A most significant event has been the launch of the Cave Registry on the web thanks to the tremendous work carried out by Gary and helped by Barry and Cookie. This is still very much a work in progress but the foundations have been well and truly laid and can now be built on.

Since the last meeting a prodigious amount of work has been carried out by Robin and Mike in particular, who have put together a set of policies (which will be presented for your approval shortly) and completed the SCW's Self Assurance forms. I know it has been an onerous task and the effort far outweighs the immediate reward. The workload should be significantly less in the following years and we must hope that the grant will be increased in the future and justify the man-hours put into the application. We must also hope that the next Olympic games does not adversely affect any grant monies for cavers.

A training program has been initiated by Sue and an SRT training event has already been organised. I would like to see further training provided to cover surveying and geology for cavers providing there are sufficient funds and agreement at a future meeting.

This has been a fruitful six months and long may this progression continue.

### *6b Secretary's Report*

[See written report below]

Significant amounts of time have been spent in the preparation of documentation needed to satisfy Sports Council Wales' "Self-Assurance" scheme, which is now mandatory for all UK sporting bodies receiving grants. This has resulted in the drafting of policies for "Conflict of Interests", "Code of Conduct" and "Whistleblowing", circulated to the Committee for comment (none received) and needing formal adoption at this meeting. Other policies regarded by SCW as mandatory are Child Protection (we have already adopted BCA's policy), Equity (BCA have one in preparation) and Anti-Doping (which I will continue to argue is not applicable).

I have also drafted Role Descriptions for the Council's officers, needed for SCW. I suggest it should be for the Committee to approve and vary these as needs demand. The great majority of documentation, policies

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and procedures requested by SCW I will argue are not relevant to an organisation of the size and scope of CCC.

The Sports Safety Grant application documentation has been sent to all three Welsh Cave Rescue Teams, with a closing date of 30<sup>th</sup> September. No response or acknowledgement has been received from North Wales.

M J McCombe  
Secretary  
11<sup>th</sup> September, 2008

## *6c Treasurer's Report*

[See written report below]

I was appointed Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting and since that date have arranged for the mandate on the main bank account to be changed to reflect the new officers; this change was approved at the committee meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July. The committee also approved changes to the mandate on the savings account and I have arranged for the relevant documentation to be available for completion at the general meeting.

The 2007 accounts have been recast into the form required by SCW and submitted to them. This has resulted in the payment of the second half of the 2008 grant on May 30<sup>th</sup>.

The balance on the current account is £1,060.42, the main expenditure having been a payment of £269.39 to the DYOCAC towards the cost of materials for the Tunnel Cave airlock. This will be reclaimed from the BCA.

I attended a meeting with the other Regional Treasurers and the BCA Treasurer on 26<sup>th</sup> July and we agreed revisions to a draft document setting out the basis on which Regional Councils would be funded by BCA. The revised draft has not yet been issued. Broadly this will be the whole of administrative expenditure and, without prior authorisation, up to £500 annually for Conservation and Access.

There was some discussion as to whether the insurance costs we reimburse to our access controlling bodies should be excluded from that £500. The question remained unresolved with the BCA Treasurer undertaking to discuss the feasibility of the BCA either directly reimbursing or not imposing those charges.

It is clear from the comments made by the SCW when considering our accounts that the current basis of accounting, whilst straightforward to the extent that accounts are prepared to reflect cash received and spent, is confusing in that it fails to recognise income and expenditure in the year to which it relates. A clear example of this is the BCA funding which is both in advance and in arrear. Our accounts have reflected the cash received, showing £550 as income in both 2005 and 2006. The true position was that we had been overpaid by £237.02 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006.

This could, and does, confuse SCW and cause them to believe that their training grant is actually being used to subsidise our other activities. I wish to avoid this problem in the future and propose to do so by changing the basis on which our accounts are prepared to reflect as income money which is owing to but not received by the Council at the year end and as expenditure money which is owed but unpaid at that date.

The result will be that future accounts are prepared on a more commonly used basis of accounting (the accruals basis) which will more accurately reflect the actual transactions of the year.

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I would stress that there is nothing technically or factually wrong with past accounts. They have clearly indicated the basis on which they have been prepared and accurately reflect the Council's transactions on that basis.

I propose to adopt the accruals basis of accounting for the current year and thereafter and will seek the approval of the meeting to do so.

Robin Weare

The meeting agreed to the Treasurer's proposal to prepare accounts on an accruals basis.

### *6d Conservation & Access Officer's Report*

[See written report below]

Firstly my apologies for absence. At the time I expect to be somewhere around West Yellowstone.

Also apologies but my report covers several different sections on the agenda, as usual and is brief, due to time constraints.

The generality of access work has been simply plodding on slowly. My thanks go to those of our number who act as deputies from time to time. Dena Proctor is keeping an eye on the matter of wear and tear on gorges for us. David Judson will be flying the flag with the CCW summer conference for us ( he is most up-to-speed with all national matters and the legal side of it all).And Gary Jones continues to act for us at Castlemartin.

As regards Castlemartin, he can arrange trips for us as he has done the military familiarisation exercise. There is a further liaison meeting due in October.

Meetings with the BBNP have been amicable but unspectacular. Relationships are fine there.

CCC are engaged in carrying out surveys of the condition of several of our cave SSSIs. The CCW have a duty to report on these regularly but lack the expertise to really do it. Consequently a number of cavers have assisted and will assist in doing it just as has been happening all round Britain. We continue to work hand in glove with CCW having the welfare of the same environment in mind.

Porth Yr Ogof has exercised us somewhat recently as there has been a heated discussion within the caving world as to how to best ensure, if possible, that the total of fatalities does not rise! The discussions have brought to the surface many constructive thoughts and will soon be resolved.

As regards Access to the Coast, the legislation process plods on. In Wales we will soon have a fairly complete round the coast path, but there is a chance that we may not have quite such wide access rights as in England. We fight onward with other OP groups to attempt to obtain free access over a coastal strip rather than a linear route only. I am hopeful!

### *6e Training Officer's Report*

[See written report below]

Since taking over this post last March I agreed to organise a SRT Training course for cavers in the Cambrian Region. The SRT training event will take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> November at Llangorse Multi Activity Centre (where our last SRT course was held in May 2007). I would like to thank the CICs on the committee for offering their assistance on this course. I am also contacting other CICs in Wales to find additional help, as

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some committee members are unavailable on this weekend. The details of the event have been forwarded to the Newsletter editor. I also intend to advertise the event at caving club cottages in South Wales.

To aid the running of this SRT course and future events we are purchasing three SRT kits to ensure those taking part in the course are adequately equipped.

I also intend to organise some general caving talks to encourage new people to join us and take part in the sport of caving, does anyone at this meeting have suggestions for location for this event.

Nationally within the UK structure I am unable to attend Training committee meetings as they are held on Mondays in Stafford, although I have sent my apologies and do receive copies of the minutes.

Sue Mabbett  
05 Sept 2008

Robin agreed to organise flyers to publicise the event.

## *6f Equipment Officer's Report*

[See written report below]

As usual little to report, but I finally made it to Dinas Rock to chop the errant P-hanger(s). So, a couple of weeks ago, on a wet and windy evening I turned up with a borrowed, re-chargeable angle grinder. Starting at the top of the slab I soon found a very loose anchor, only to run out of battery power after just 1 and a half cuts. I hammered the offending anchor to make it as obviously unusable as possible. I continued to carefully check all the other anchors and found them all to be within the BCA recommended parameters. (There may be some confusion here as we, Andy and I, have never thought about removing all the anchors, only those found to be outside BCA specs. This can be confirmed from earlier minutes – March 08 (item 4 and 7f); Nov 07 (item7); . Some clarification may be required from this meeting.) Since the attempt to “remove” the loose P I have been unable to get back to finish the job, and more recently Gary informs me that another anchor is in fact loose, somewhat surprising after my careful checks, may have been the water in my eyes!! So I will get back just as soon as I can, with a fully charged battery, and spare! To finish the first anchor and find, and dispatch, the other one.

BCA E&T meeting coming up in November, at this stage I should be able to attend.

Dave Ludlam

There was some discussion about whether it had been decided to remove all of the anchors at Dinas Rock, or just the loose ones. It was agreed that all of the anchors should be removed

## *6g Legal & Insurance Officer's Report*

No report had been received and the Legal & Insurance Officer was not present.

## *6h Cave Registrar's Report*

[See written report below]

<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
Obtain a copy of the existing Registry for reference.	Complete
Gather together existing electronic data from studies of Caves in Wales – e.g. Black Mountain Project, OFD Reserve Study, WSG Ystradfellte report.	Complete
Obtain, catalogue and store all CCC publications from Sue Mabbett, Frank Baguely and Elsie Little, thereby creating a reference work to aid Registry research and to hold the CCC Library in one place.	Complete
Create a suitable Database system for hosting the new Registry	Complete

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Transfer the existing hard copy Registry to the Database	Complete
Add additional data and correct errors from the data gathered and the library collected.	Complete
Conduct further research using personal Caving library, Caving Club Libraries and other publications from South and North Wales. Additional data to be entered into Database.	80% Complete
Continue to develop Registry, adding in further information on each site, such as descriptions, history, surveys, photographs.	2009
Conduct Field work in areas that have not been carefully searched previously.	2009
Ensure that the completed Registry Database is readily available electronic and hard copy formats. Devise means of running as a Web accessed database, so that data set is protected and to prevent the difficulties of having multiple versions.	Complete
Add in Mines of Wales to the database	2009 / 2010

As can be seen from progress against the original Action list that was devised, good progress has been made this year. The majority of the entry has been completed for caves and the Internet Search Tool for the Registry is up and running. There is a fault with the search page at present, and I have been asking Dave Cooke to resolve the problem, but this hasn't been completed yet.

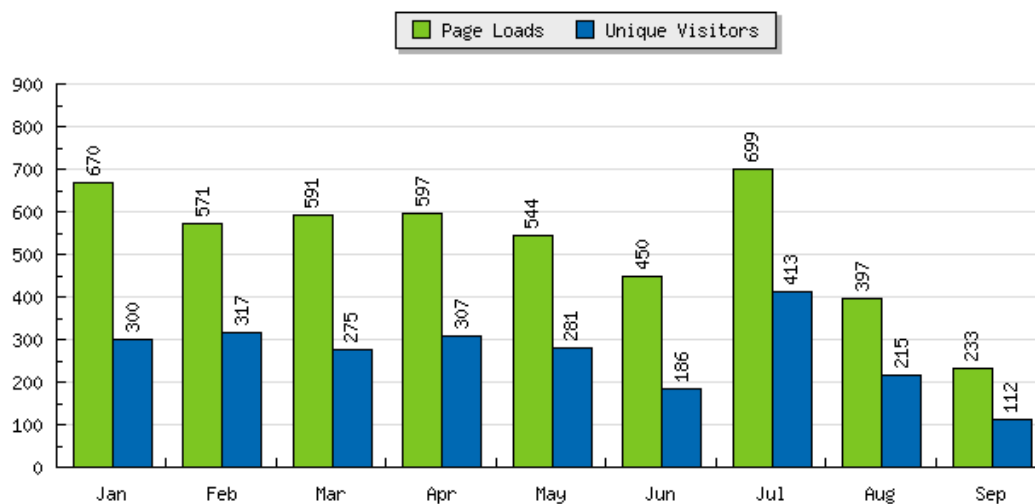
I intend to complete the additional cave entries this year and start on mines next year.

Gary Evans, September 2008

### *6i Webmaster's Report*

[See written report below]

No problems with CCC website, I have been updating latest news as I receive information from various people, and the website as a whole receives about 500 hits a month.



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Cave Registry page has been experiencing problems on its homepage, but is still working. I have tried to e-mail Dave Cooke about this, but so far I have had no response and the registry is still the same. I have put a message on the CCC registry page explaining that this registry is still working although it looks as if it isn't.

Barry Hill

It was agreed that Barry would add links to member clubs' websites where possible.

### *6j Newsletter Editor's Report*

[See written report below]

Newsletters appeared as scheduled on April 30<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>. The e-mail addresses I hold for Grosvenor & North Wales Caving Clubs failed to work and I have been unable to obtain replacement addresses. If anyone has contacts in these clubs I'd be grateful for some help.

I anticipate similar problems with the Oxford and Cardiff University clubs when I try to distribute the next edition. I'll automatically check to see whether their websites have been updated but, once again, if anyone can help.....

Robin Weare

## 7 Other Cambrian Representatives' Reports

### *7a OFD Management Committee*

[See written report below]

I was on holiday and so unable to attend the June meeting but have been informed by the Secretary that nothing of significance occurred.

Robin Weare

### *7b Sports Council for Wales & Welsh Sports Association*

Mike reported that he and Sue had both attended the SCW Open Day and WSA AGM. He noted that all of SCW's resources seemed to be focused on initiatives to promote sport to the under-18s and on improving competition performance, particularly for the Olympic sports. As neither of these are relevant to caving, it seemed difficult to know how to engage. The Mountaineering representative identified the same issue, though their sport is more open to the under-18s. It was not clear whether the Outdoor Pursuits Group still exists.

### *7c Brecon Beacons National Park / ARAG*

Nothing to report.

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### *7d FoDCCAG*

Paul and Maurice provided a verbal report to the meeting. There had been liaison with Forestry Commission and Crown Agents on two caving projects – one entrance issue and one mine. Both of these had been satisfactorily resolved.

Bat monitoring had shown very large numbers of Lesser Horseshoe bats. Work is ongoing to coordinate conservation activities. Mine sites which are hibernation sites now have a permit scheme. One railway tunnel needs work to ensure that there is no disturbance of the hibernation site. Gloucester Bat Group are now BCA members (and presumably will become Cambrian members in due course).

### *7e Mynydd Llangattock CMC*

No report

### *7f Dan yr Ogof CAC*

[See written report below]

Following an incident in mid-March in which two experienced cavers were trapped in the cave for 24 hours by flood water, the showcave management have launched an initiative to install upgraded survival and communications facilities in the cave. (Note: this is not a DYOCAC project, although a number of cavers have given assistance). Intended to be complete within a couple of months, work has been greatly delayed by poor weather.

To date, all of the costs have been borne by the showcave company although it is likely that in due course the ongoing running costs will somehow have to met by cavers.

Meanwhile, showcave staff, with the support of DYOCAC, have been limiting the numbers of visiting cavers to a maximum of 8 per day, except in dry weather.

Mike McCombe

### *7g Pwll Ddu CMG*

No report was provided, however Mike reported that he had been contacted by the landowner who had caught and photographed two cavers attempting to re-open the capped second entrance to Ogof Draenen. This had been passed on to PDCMG who had identified the two involved and dealt with them. The entrance capping remains intact.

### *7h Porth yr Ogof CAG / WASAG*

Mike reported that, as requested at the Committee meeting in July, he had written to BCA's Chairman and Training Officer expressing the Committee's view that the Porth yr Ogof resurgence should not be used. The BCA Training Committee's draft guidance for the use of the resurgence by led parties continues to be discussed in BCA.

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### *7i Castlemartin Range*

No report

### *7j CCW Wales Access Forum*

It was believed that this group no longer exists and it was agreed to delete it from future agendas.

### *7k National Access Forum*

No report

### *7l Cave Rescue Organisations*

Paul provided a verbal report. Gwent CRT and GCRG had had no major incidents though there had been some “near-misses” in Otter Hole. A speaking tube will be installed at the sump. WBCRT had recently dealt with several mid-week incidents and there was concern about the potential strain on resources if the trend continues.

Mike reported that he had sent out invitations to the three Welsh teams to bid for the Sports Safety Grant, with a closing date of 30<sup>th</sup> September. A bid had already been received from Gwent and one was known to be being prepared by WBCRT. No acknowledgement had been received from North Wales so a paper copy of the documents were posted, recorded delivery, to the Chairman though Royal Mail failed to deliver. It was agreed that no further steps would be made to chase NWCRO and that we take their lack of response as a “no-bid”.

### 8 CCC Spending on Projects

Other than the SRT training event (see above), there had been no project-related expenditure. GCRG’s planned training day in Wales had been cancelled so there would be no request for a donation from CCC.

### 9 BCA Matters

Nothing to report (see Porth yr Ogof item above).

### 10 Policy documents

**Role Descriptions:** It was agreed that the word “audited” should be deleted from the “Treasurer” section. Change “caves” to “underground sites” throughout. Responsibility for the periodic inspection of CCC fixed aids to be added to the Equipment Officer role description.

**Code of Conduct:** change “Articles of Association and Management Regulations” in para (1) to “Constitution” and change “Chief Executive” to “Chairman” in para (4).

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**Whistleblowing Policy:** in para (2), change “contact the Chairman...” to “contact the Chairman or Secretary...”

**Conflicts of Interest Policy:** no changes.

It was agreed to adopt all four documents, as amended above.

## 11 Any other business

Andy reported that he'd been asked whether CCC would allow the Cave Life website to be expanded to cover other UK caving regions. There were no objections.

## 12 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to hold the AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2009 and that Mike should contact Dave Ludlum to see if Storey Arms could be used as the venue.

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