

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL

CYNGOR OGOFEYDD CYMREIG

Affiliated to the British Caving Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Penderyn Community Hall
March 8th 2009

Present

Bernie Woodley	Chairman	SWCC
Mike McCombe	Secretary	Newbury & District CC
Brendan Marris		
Elsie Little	Conservation Officer	
Maurice Febry		GCRG
Robin Weare	Treasurer	Hades CC
Joe Duxbury		Gloucester SS
Tony Wilson		Shropshire Mining Club & Scouts
Dave Linton		Welsh Mines Society
John Hine		FoDCCAG
Sue Mabbett	Training Officer	
Owen Clarke	Legal & Insurance Officer	CDG Welsh Section
Stuart France		Chelsea SS
Chris Cribbs		Cwmbran Caving Club

Apologies were received from Gary Evans, Barry Hill, Sue Corston, Rachel Smith, John Sutton and Idris Williams.

3. Minutes of the September General Meeting

It was noted that in 7d, all mine sites in the Forest of Dean have a permit system. The minutes were approved with this modification.

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

All of the anchors at Dinas Rock have now been removed.

5. Constitution Changes

The Chairman proposed three amendments to the Constitution, circulated in advance to member clubs:

Firstly, paragraph 5.2 from the section on "Membership", currently reads.....

5.2 An individual shall be considered an Associate Member of the Council if

- He is a member of the British Caving Association
He has declared on his British Caving Association membership form that his principal regional council is Cambrian Caving Council

This was proposed to read.....

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5.2 An individual shall be considered an Associate Member of the Council if

- The individual is a member of the British Caving Association
The individual has declared on their British Caving Association membership form that their principal regional council is Cambrian Caving Council

Secondly, paragraph 8.2 from the section on “Procedure and business for general meetings” currently reads.....

8.2 Each Full Member-Club or Officer shall give the Hon. Secretary at least six weeks' notice in writing of any notice of motion, constitutional amendments, proposal, or matter it (he) wishes to have placed on the agenda for the meeting.

It was proposed to change this to read.....

8.2 Each Full Member-Club or Officer shall give the Hon. Secretary at least six weeks' notice in writing of any notice of motion, constitutional amendments, proposal, or matter they wish to have placed on the agenda for the meeting.

Thirdly, paragraph 8.6 from the section on “Procedure and business for general meetings” currently reads.....

8.6 Each year, the Council shall hold at least two General Meetings, including the Annual General Meeting, in order to: -

- a. accepts the minutes of the previous general meeting, and considers matters arising there from,
- b. consider applications for associate membership,
- c. receive Reports from the Officers,
- d. considers the audited statement of the accounts, and decides on the annual subscription (at AGM only),
- e. consider amendments to the Constitution,
- f. consider other proposals,
- g. discuss matters of interest and concern,
- h. elects Officers for the ensuing year, and appoints an Hon. Auditor(at AGM only),
- i. decide the date of the next meeting,

It was proposed to change this to read.....

8.6 Each year, the Council shall hold an Annual General Meeting, in order to: -

- a. accept the minutes of the previous general meeting, and consider matters arising there from,
- b. consider applications for associate membership,
- c. receive Reports from the Officers,
- d. consider the audited statement of the accounts, and decide on the annual subscription,
- e. consider amendments to the Constitution,
- f. consider other proposals,
- g. discuss matters of interest and concern,
- h. elect Officers for the ensuing year, and appoint an Hon. Auditor,
- i. decide the date of the next meeting,

All three proposals were agreed without a vote.

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6. Applications for Membership

None had been received

7. Officers' Reports

7a Chairman's Report

[See written report below]

The officers of this council have been working most productively over the past year to the benefit of all underground explorers and societies in Wales, as is evident from their respective reports. In fact, enough work has been generated to require two committee meetings in addition to the general meetings, in order to facilitate forward progress. The constitutional obligation for two general meetings per year has unnecessarily complicated the proceedings for your committee and I believe, is superfluous during this particularly active period. Therefore, I am proposing that the constitution be amended from requiring two general meetings per year to just one, the AGM, in order to simplify the work of the committee. I strongly believe that the committee will continue to be as active into the future. This will come up for discussion later in the agenda.

Unfortunately, since the last general meeting, we have received the resignation of Dave Ludlam, our Equipment Officer. The committee appointed Andy Lewington to the post for the remainder of the term of office.

I have been able to attend all but one of the BCA council meetings over the past year, during which there have been lively debates regarding the proposed PYO resurgence guidance notes from the BCA training committee. The current situation is that the training committee have withdrawn the document.

I have also attended a general meeting called by the BBNPA regarding Activities in the Waterfalls Area, which attracted over 50 interested parties. This was convened in order to explore issues surrounding the increase of use of this part of the National Park, primarily by gorge walkers led by various outdoor activity providers. One of the interesting ideas to come from the meeting was the need for a representative body or at least a spokesperson, to talk for and on behalf of the outdoor activity providers. It remains to be seen whether this will happen.

You will be pleased to learn that we will be starting today's proceedings with an additional item to the agenda as we are honoured to have with us a distinguished guest, an acknowledged expert in his field and consultant to the CCW. I am delighted to welcome a long standing friend of the Cambrian, Ray Woods; who will give us a presentation entitled "Gorges – The Last Wilderness?".

It just remains for me to say thank you to all the committee members for their tremendous work during this last year.

Bernie Woodley, March 2009.

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7b Secretary's Report

[See written report below]

From the start of this year, Sports Council Wales extended its "Self-Assurance Scheme" to include all sports receiving public funding in Wales. This has meant that a considerable amount of effort has had to be expended by the Cambrian Committee, particularly the Secretary and Treasurer, to ensure that our policies and governance mechanisms are documented to an acceptable level.

I have attended BCA Council meetings on behalf of CCC. (Our Chairman and C&A Officer also attend in other capacities). The most significant issue involving CCC has been in relation to the proposed guidance sheet on the use of the Porth yr Ogof Resurgence, which will doubtless be discussed elsewhere on the agenda!

The Council receives a slow trickle of enquiries and general correspondence from other organisations – perhaps on average about 1 per week. The most common query continues to be "How do we join?" from caving clubs, often concerned that they haven't paid a subscription for some time! An information page on this topic will soon be added to the website.

We also receive a number of requests from external organisations to add links to their websites from ours. We have no formal policy on this (yet) but have accepted one request from a BCA-sponsored site (trycaving.com) and have refused or ignored requests from numerous commercial bodies with various degrees of relevance to caving.

Mike McCombe
1st March 2009

7c Treasurer's Report

[See written report below]

As previewed in my report to the September General Meeting and agreed at that meeting the accounts have been prepared on a slightly different basis this year and take account of income and expenditure in the period to which it relates rather than at the time of receipt.

The balance of reserves at the start of the year have been restated to reflect this change with the £272 noted on the 2007 accounts as received in January 2008 but relating to 2007 excluded from this years income figures.

Allowing for the funding in respect of 2008 which we expect to receive from BCA during 2009 our expenditure exceeded our income by £32.36. This reduced the reserves to £5,486.00.

The Sports Council for Wales has continued its support with a £600 grant for 2009. This was less than I had requested but is in line with previous years. The SCW have drawn my attention to the Community Chest grants scheme through which individual member clubs can obtain grants for projects which could lead to an increase in membership. I brought this scheme to the attention of our members in the January edition of the newsletter. I see it as a potentially valuable source of funding and will be happy to assist clubs with applications.

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The BCA finance committee which comprises the BCA Treasurer and the Treasurers of the regional councils have agreed a document which seeks to formalise procedures for the funding of Regional Councils. Hopefully, this will be approved at the annual general meeting of the BCA.

Robin Weare
March 2009

As our BCA funding is reduced pro-rata according to the proportion of Associate Member clubs, the Treasurer was asked whether Associate Membership subscription needed to be increased. He replied that at present levels of funding from BCA, the loss of income from BCA was more than offset by the subscription income. It was agreed to leave the subscription for Associate Member clubs at £12.

7d Conservation & Access Officer's Report

[See written report below – various items have been moved to other parts of the minutes to align with the agenda]

For historic reasons much of my work appears at different parts of the agenda and I would ask that you bear with this or, better, that the secretary consider updating the agenda to give a clearer picture of the current realities of how we are represented.

The National Access Forum continues to work and to share the concerns of land managers, conservationists and recreational users of the countryside. Topics are very varied and frequently seem of little importance to cavers but the relationships, understanding and inter-activity relationships that are built up there are of importance to our national status.

The move towards obtaining access to the coast has been of most interest to us but I would again stress that it will not give permission to access underground, only the surface. We will still need to obtain the permissions of the landowners.

E Little
8th March 2009

Access at Little Neath River Cave is now operating normally but the boulder choke at Bridge Cave is still unstable. Care is recommended. The SSSI audit at Pant Mawr is almost complete.

Any sightings of dead or sick bats should be reported to the Conservation Officer as soon as possible. Do not handle the bat!

Visitors to Ogof Capel are now being electronically counted and keys held by CSS at Whitewalls, E Little, B Woodley, A Millett and T Donovan. It was agreed that EL should replace the padlock, re-issuing keys to above keyholders.

AP – EL

A logbook will also be placed inside the cave to record visits. The Webmaster will be asked to update the access procedure on the website.

AP – BH

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7e Training Officer's Report

[See written report below]

In this year I have organised a SRT Training course for cavers in the Cambrian Region. The SRT training in November at Llangorse Multi Activity Centre was very popular and I had to refuse some applicants. I would like to thank the CICs who instructed on this course. I am planning another course for 2009 but as yet I have not yet set a date. The course had a lot of applicants at beginners level (which surprised me) this was a mixture of complete SRT novices with shiny new kit to those who had done some SRT but realised the instruction they had received so far led them being tangled in the proverbial knots. To aid the running of this SRT course and future events we purchased three SRT kits to ensure those taking part in the course are adequately equipped.

I am still intending to organise some general caving talks to encourage new people to join us and take part in the sport of caving, I have run out of time for 2008 / 2009 year. 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. Other members of the CCC committee do attend the BCA council meetings where the UK training officer reports so we do remain in contact. Although if anyone wishes to volunteer to attend these training meetings to represent CCC please let me know.

Sue Mabbett
28 Feb 2009

It was agreed that "club" caving is generally under-represented at BCA Training Committee meetings. SM will find out when the next meeting will be and liaise with the Chairman so that a suitable representative can attend on her behalf.

AP - SM

7f Equipment Officer's Report

No report was available

7g Legal & Insurance Officer's Report

[See written report below]

As in previous years there has been no call for my services from the membership of CCC, or any call from the BCA Insurance Officer for assistance in carrying out his duties. Once again I have nothing to report.

While I have no objection to continuing in this sinecure post, it would appear that it could benefit from a more active caver than an 82 year old occupying the position.

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Owen Clarke, 6/3/09

7h Cave Registrar's Report

[See written report below]

Following the uploading of the Registry to the Internet last year, good feedback and suggestions of additions and corrections have been coming through over the last 8 months. Suggested changes have been implemented and the remainder of the work planned for the Caves side of the Registry has been completed, with the missing sites added and enhancements to some existing sites made. It is planned to update this Version 2 to the internet, replacing Version 1 around the time of the Cambrian Caving Council AGM. The next piece of work for the Caves Registry is :

1. Improving the entries for the Caves of Northern Outcrop East – as these had very limited descriptions on the original hard copy registry
2. Updating the Bibliography for the whole database. This will involve looking at key books and journals and recording entries for individual caves on the registry to update it from where it ran out in the 1980's. This will be a major task for the large caves which have a huge number of entries in many publications. Only Dan-yr-Ogof has had this kind of attention so far, though I did add most guide book entries for many sites.
3. Further research to ensure that the more obscure sites aren't missing.
4. Inclusion of improved details of available surveys.

The work on the Mines Registry has started with the entries now made for 579 Welsh Mines. Bearing in mind it took me 5 years to do the 1500 Caves entries and 2 years to do the 579 Mine entries, then consider there must be well over 10,000 Mines in Wales, it gives an idea of the scale of the job.

I believe that the work on the Mines Database is the priority now and that further work on the Caves Registry can be undertaken a little later, as it is pretty thorough in it's present state.

I have been the Cave Registrar now for 6 years and feel that it is time for someone new to take over. The work that needs to be focussed on for the next couple of years is certainly the research and entries for the Mines Database and so, someone with an interest in Mines would be better placed to do this work. I will be very happy to undertake a thorough hand over and to pass on all the Mines paperwork and research documents I have that are ready for entry.

I am extremely pleased with what we have been able to achieve with the Registry during the last 6 years. It has been a long and time consuming process, but it has been well worth the wait. I would like to thank everyone who helped me throughout the process and look forward to seeing the next set of developments for both the Mines and Cave Registry.

Gary Evans, February, 2009

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Dave Linton offered the assistance of WMS with the “Mines” aspects of the registry.

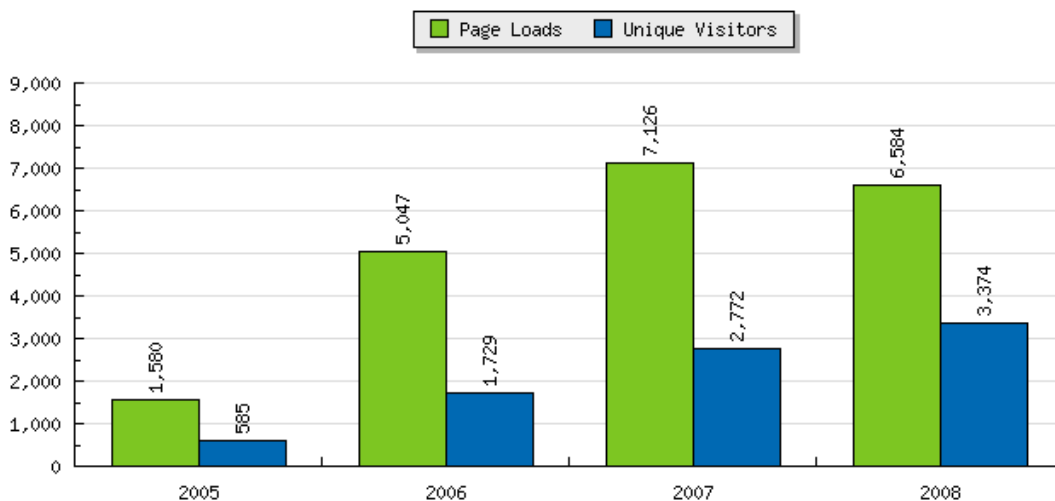
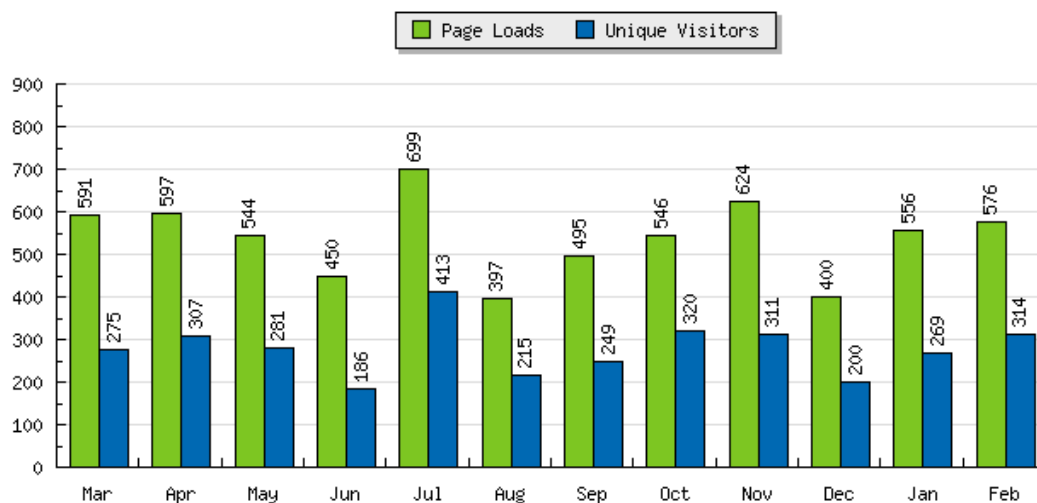
7i Webmaster's Report

[See written report below]

The Cambrian Website has been running well with no recorded down time over the past year, visitor numbers are slightly up on last year due to having the Cambrian cave registry on-line. I have also updated the links to our ‘Member Clubs’ as requested at a previous meeting plus I have been making the Newsletters available on-line as soon as I receive them from Robin.

The BCA are in the process of moving our website to a new hosting server, once this is done we will then have the option of a ‘password protected area’. This could be of use for distributing documents, meeting minutes, etc. for our officers to have access to only.

2008-09 CCC Website Statistics



The Cambrian Cave Registry website is now running fine after we experienced a few problems in the autumn of 2008, after it's initial launch the website visitors has settled down to a steady stream, but remember these statistics can't be relied upon as they are only counting people linking from our

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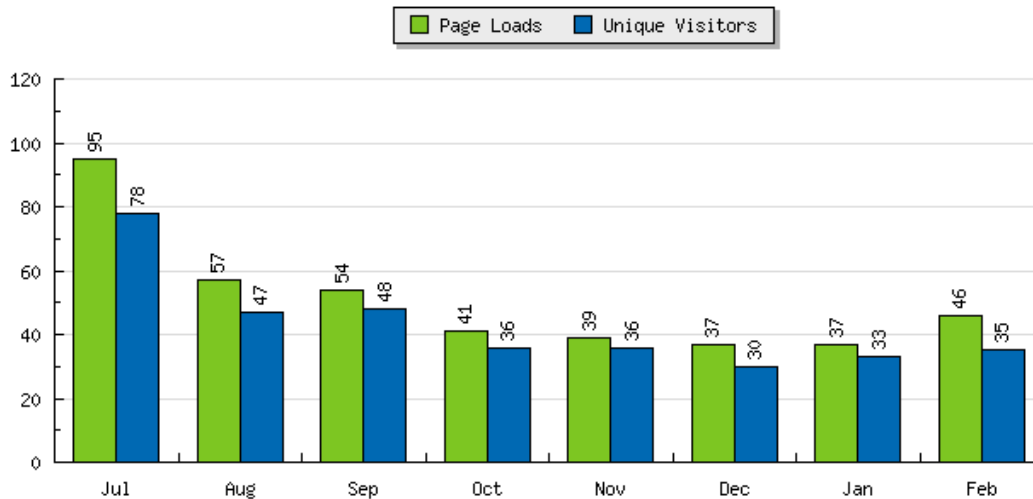
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CCC website to the Cave Registry. Once they are in the registry, I do not know what or how many caves they look at, plus I cannot count anyone who goes direct. Although when the BCA eventually move our website to the new hosting servers, I should be able to get better statistics for the 'Cave Registry'.

2008-09 Cave Registry Statistics.



I am willing to continue as Webmaster for another year unless anyone else wants to take the job on.

Barry Hill
CCC Webmaster

7j Newsletter Editor's Report

[See written report below]

Newsletters were produced and distributed quarterly as planned during 2008/09 and copies have been placed on the CCC website.
Robin Weare

March 2009

8 Other Cambrian Representatives' Reports

8a OFD Management Committee

[See written report below]

There is an interest in underground climate monitoring which CCW propose to develop further. Weather station data exchange between SWCC and CCW is happening and a slight discrepancy in rainfall figures is being looked into. The weather station is active and is part of a national network, the data (historic only) is available, and the web link will be published.

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A 3D laser scan of OFD entrance series and Big Chamber was carried out in June 2008 and the data is on the SWCC computer. Column Hall was scanned in November but no data had been received by the time of the December meeting.

The eminent Sedimentologist, Dr Trevor Ford, has been consulted about the cave features now named Buoma Patterns by Owen Clarke. He considered the report of them and the pictures, which he complimented as being most clear. He reported that there was a feature known as the Buoma Sequence but that this did not have a bearing on these particular cave features. He and a colleague currently in the University both came to the conclusion that these are what are known as Interference Ripple Markings which are the result of the water flow that caused them bouncing off the sides of the passage rather than having a "direct" flow. His advice is that they are extremely common and not special so as to merit protection or conservation measures.

There has been a spate of vandalism on the reserve. The CCW has a dedicated Police Officer who is happy to follow up Vehicle numbers etc.

There have been some repairs to the access track where it goes past the quarry but the track near the club is suffering from sheet wash erosion, leading to gully formation. A project to create some form of culvert to divert the water away from the track was approved and is scheduled for the next working week (May 2009).

8b Sports Council for Wales & Welsh Sports Association

SM reported that she had recently attended the WSA Outdoor Pursuits Group meeting and that she and MMc had attended the WSA AGM and SCW Open event. It was noted that SCW have become very focussed on improving competitive performance and the promotion of sport to under-18s and that as a result, Caving receives very little of SCW's attention or resources.

8c Brecon Beacons National Park / ARAG

It was noted that ARAG no longer exists and this item should be deleted from the agenda for future meetings.

8d FoDCCAG

[See written report below]

We still hold our annual meeting with the Forestry Commission and have renewed our access agreement. In conjunction with the Forestry Commission we are updating our Access Agreement, Management Licence and Dig Registration Forms.

The permit system is running OK (generally). We are assisting Forestry Commission/local cavers where required on cave-related projects.

Bat counting has been slow this year due to illness amongst the main contributors but most Forestry Commission railway tunnels have been completed by the Gloucestershire Bat Group.

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M Feby
9th March 2009

8e Mynydd Llangattock CMC [From the Conservation Officer's Report]

I have received no feedback on what the situation is with Mynydd Llangatwg CMC and assume this to mean all is proceeding well there. In times of difficulty, the news tends to speed fast back to the centre!

E Little
8th March 2009

8f Dan yr Ogof CAC [See written report below]

DYOCAC has now settled down to "business as usual" after the rescue incident in March 2008. One of the consequences has been the setting up of an "entrapment camp" in Wigmore Hall, including tents, clothing, food and cooking equipment, sufficient to keep a dozen cavers in relative comfort for several days. There is also an improved phone system and 110V mains supply. Commissioning the communications system has suffered a number of unforeseeable delays but is now due to complete before Easter. Whilst the set-up costs have been borne by the cave owner, it has been necessary to adopt the camp as a "fixed aid" for its ongoing maintenance.

There are currently 86 DYOC Wardens. Permits are due for renewal in June 2009.

Mike McCombe
1st March 2009

8g Pwll Ddu CMG [From the Conservation Officer's Report]

As regards Pwll Ddu I do have some concerns. The scheduled meetings of the group have failed to be called despite a couple of very serious incidents and concerns from the owners. Although these difficulties were resolved my concern is that the way in which cavers maintain a disciplined and acceptable approach to activities is through consensus and the lack of meetings through which they can legitimately raise their concerns can lead slowly towards anarchy.

E Little
8th March 2009

The Secretary was asked to write to Ali Garman and formally request that a PDCMG meeting is organised.

AP - MM

8h Porth yr Ogof CAG / WASAG [From the Conservation Officer's Report]

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In the Waterfalls area there have been meetings and discussion of problems which are going to lead to the updating of the NP's plan for the area. More particularly, there has been a move by the BCA Training Officer to publish a document advising on how to exit more safely through the resurgence [at Porth yr Ogof]. This has been the subject of much dispute and currently BCA has not supported him in this. We really need to consider it in this venue and to ensure that the officers of CCC are representing your opinions.

I am grateful to David Judson for representing us at a NP day looking at the situation of wear and tear on the Gorge area. He is fully versed in the National overview and a considerable support at such events as he also understands where the Welsh view differs from that held more widely.

E Little
8th March 2009

EL reported that since the last General Meeting, the Secretary had written to BCA Training Officer and BCA Chairman stating this Council's firm resolve not to endorse any document which might appear to encourage or condone the use of the resurgence at Porth yr Ogof. BCA Training Officer had subsequently withdrawn the draft guidance document, pending further discussions with the National Park Authority. The AGM unanimously supported Council's position and asked the Secretary to re-iterate this to BCA. It was also agreed that Council should request the Training Panel not to include PYO Resurgence in instructors' permitted sites.

AP - MM

8i Castlemartin Range
[From the Conservation Officer's Report]

There has been no movement onwards as regards Castlemartin. Relationships remain friendly with the officer now in charge but access is no freer. I await documentation from Gary Jones as regards the bats on the range but he failed to arrive at the most recent range meeting (a confusion of days) and I suspect has simply forgotten to pass the material to the centre.

E Little
8th March 2009

8j Welsh Mines Society

[See separate report attached]

8l Cave Rescue Organisations

GCRG

Another quiet year with plenty of safe caving. There was a good rescue practice recently at Miss Grace's Lane, with two more planned for Doddwell Hill Stone Mine and Otter Hole.

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pp Paul Taylor

GCRT

A rescue incident in Agen Allwedd had resulted in a number of organisational changes in the team. The committee now contains many new members, with the ability to call on the old members for advice and support when necessary.

NWCRT

It was noted that we had not had contact with the North Wales team since the last meeting and there was some concern about whether NWCRT is still operational. Members with contacts in North Wales were asked to investigate. [*Post meeting note: NWCRT have confirmed that they are active and provided new contact details.*]

9 CCC Spending on Projects

It was agreed that all of the relevant activities had been covered elsewhere in the meeting.

10 BCA Matters

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

11 Election of Officers

The following were proposed and seconded by members present and elected unopposed:-

Chairman	Bernie Woodley
Secretary	Mike McCombe
Treasurer	Robin Weare
Training Officer	Sue Mabbett
Conservation Officer	Elsie Little
Equipment Officer	Andy Lewington (previously co-opted on resignation of Dave Ludlum)
Legal & Insurance	Owen Clarke
Cave Registrar	Brendan Marris (succeeds Gary Evans who had resigned)
Webmaster	Barry Hill

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12 Welsh National Caving Library

Owen reported that he had recently disposed of much of the material that had been occupying space in his garage as it did not appear to have much historical importance. Members identified several other items which it was felt were more significant and it was agreed that these should in due course be held in the BCA National Archive.

13 Any other business

None

12 Date of Next Meeting

The 2010 AGM will be held at the GCRG Depot on 7th March.