

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Penderyn
Community Hall
March 9th 2014**

Present

Bernie Woodley	Chairman/ Conservation Officer	SWCC
Mike McCombe	Secretary	
Sue Goodhead	Assistant Secretary	
Brendan Marris	Cave Registrar	Dudley CC
Malcolm Stewart		CDG
Dan Thorne		Gagendor
Lisa Boore		Gagendor
Richard Hill		Gagendor
Robin Weare	Treasurer	Hades CC
Stuart France		Chelsea SS
Vince Alkins	Equipment Officer	Wealden Cave & Mine Society
Mat Terry		Grwp Ogofeydd Garimpeiros
John Hine		FoDCCAG
Michael Leahy		UCET
Barry Hill	Webmaster	Hereford CC
John Stevens		Chelsea SS
Paul Taylor		FoDCCAG
Ian Adams		UCET
Dave Linton		Welsh Mines Society
Dave Tyson		Wirral Caving Group
Peter Claughton	Observer	NAMHO
Martyn Farr		CDG

The meeting was quorate according to the number of voting members present.

1. Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and asked for a minute's silence in memory of Elsie Little.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Owen Clarke, Rhys Williams, Simon Lowe, Steve Tomalin (GSS) and Morgannwg Caving Club,

3. Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting

- a) The minutes of the 2013 AGM were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. Robin proposed and John H. seconded the motion. No objections.
- b) Matters arising – John H. – Cwmystwyth Mines are now in private hands but there were currently no access problems. Question about the Ceredigion mines, Peter C. replied that there would be a meeting towards the end of March. Question about Clydach Gorge (John S.) would be answered later in meeting.

4. Applications for Membership

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The Secretary reported that there had been one new application for membership from Frome Caving Group who are BCA members – all in favour.

5. Officers' Reports

5a Chairman's Report

This has been a particularly sad year with the tragic loss of Elsie, our C & A officer of many years standing. The tragedy was compounded by the circumstances of her death, which caused many difficulties. The caving world suffered a major setback due to the impossibility of any sort of handover of current knowledge of work in progress. It has been a difficult and time-consuming task, involving a lot of detective work to catch up with where she was on several projects.

The latest news from the Welsh Government at the National Access Forum meeting on 4th March, regarding the review of access to the countryside is that the minister (John Griffiths AM) is still deliberating and due to the continuing slippage of the publication of the proposed green paper, he is not now giving a timetable for the review. It is probable that the green paper consultation will be split into three sections with different publication dates. Provision of allotments and urban green spaces will be first, general access to the countryside second, followed by access to inland water. I am one of the members of the green paper working group for the National Access Forum but we have not met since I was able to join, the minister has not asked anything of us as yet. The Cambrian will let all member clubs know when the relevant green paper is coming out, hopefully in advance of it, so that everyone will be able to respond to the Welsh Government and to us with their views on the consultation.

An agreement to access ex-Forestry Commission underground sites is still progressing, albeit at a glacial rate. The amalgamation of the Forestry Commission, the Environment Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales has both slowed and complicated the negotiations. Coupled with this is the need for the Cambrian to avoid being saddled with liabilities and the fact that the FC and now the NRW consult with their solicitors at every stage. The solicitors typically take two to three months to respond, it is very frustrating. On a more positive note, the land agent I am dealing with is being helpful and I have been assured by NRW officers that their intent is to allow us access. I would like to express my thanks to members of the Welsh Mines Society and Adit Now for their help. I have made sure that the NRW are aware of the NAMHO conference in July at Bangor University and have asked for their help to ensure the agreement is in place by then.

The A465 dualling through the Clydach Gorge goes to a public enquiry starting on the 18th March. The Cambrian have been involved in the planning process of this project from the outset. Cavers have acted as consultants and supplied reports to Costains, which have been taken into account and the contractor's plans have changed as a result. Costains now know exactly where the caves are and have taken steps to avoid breaking into them. In particular Waterfall Cave and Ogof Capel will be bridged over by concrete slabs to avoid any damage. The possibility of breaking into an unknown void has also been taken into account and if it happens, one or more of the consultants will be called in for their opinion. It is important to realise that the contractors do not want to break into anything, known or unknown, that will stop their work or injure an employee, just as much as we want to protect the caves and Costains have been very

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co-operative. I would like to thank John Gunn, Peter Smith and John Stevens for the considerable amount of work they have carried out.

The Cambrian CC has applied to Welsh Water for a license to access Ogof Carno again. It will be another drawn out process involving another team of solicitors but I am hopeful that an approach from the Cambrian and the long period of access without any trouble, prior to the present restriction, may prove to be successful.

The NRW are carrying out an Outdoor Recreation Survey as part of a three-year cycle to understand the outdoor recreational habits of the public. They do this by contacting randomly selected people by telephone and arranging a telephone interview. This interview process will continue through the current year with preliminary results published in April next year. This is another chance for cavers to express their views, so please do not hang up if you are selected to respond.

Finally, for several reasons, I do not believe it right that I should continue in two roles on the Cambrian Caving Council. Given the present circumstances, I am standing down as chair but will stand for C & A if nominated; there is a lot of work that I would like to get finished.

I would like to personally thank all members of the Council for their support, help and hard work over the past few years. They have been a wonderful team to work with. Thank you.

Bernie Woodley

4th March 2014

Questions.

DYO - would be addressed later in the meeting.

Hospital Cave –access lost as Landowner took solicitor’s advice to deny access. Despite a request for details from landowner none were given and she refused any offers to meet.

5b Secretary's Report

The past year has been a very busy one. I have generated and received copious amounts of e-mail and even sent and received a few letters. However, almost all of the activities in which I have been involved as Secretary will be better covered in other Officers’ reports.

As promised at last year’s AGM, this has been my final year on the CCC Committee. After eight years, it’s time for a change and I’m sure Cambrian will benefit from a fresh injection of energy and some new ideas. I’m very grateful to everyone for their support, especially all those club secretaries who dug out the membership stats I needed to give Sport Wales and to my colleagues on the CCC Committee who’ve tolerated my occasional bouts of grumpiness. I, at least, have had a lot of fun and wish you all success in the future.

Mike McCombe

March 2014

Mike will continue to finish the Overseas Expedition Grant request to SWA as he is trying to sort out the timings for awards which are currently awarded after the leaving date for expeditions. He will not continue with this in the future.

There were no questions.

5c Treasurer's Report

The accounts for the year ended 31st December 2013 are attached. They show a surplus of £252.61 and reserves increased to £5,970.75.

Expenditure in the year, recoverable through the funding arrangement with BCA, paid for the materials used in the Hard Rock Café clean up project, for graffiti cleaning at the Doward and for the administrative expenses of the access controlling bodies as well as our own.

The Sports Council for Wales has continued to support us with grants of £600 for training and £2,000 for Cave Rescue. They also directly contribute financial assistance for expeditions.

Using the SCW grants we were able to contribute to the cave rescue teams and fund SRT training events in North and South Wales.

Robin Weare January 2014

As there was an underspend in the training grant last year there will be an overspend this year to balance it. The SCW grant will happen again this year.

There were no questions.

5d Conservation & Access Officer's Report

[See under Chairman's Report]

5e Training Officer's Report

The last year CCC have put on a few training events with mixed response. We had a well attended SRT workshop in April. For the first time in several years this was based in North Wales. The first day was spent above ground and the second day was spent in Cwmorthin mine.

A surface walk happened in September when Alan Bowring from BBNPA led a small group of enthusiastic learners over the fells above Dan yr Ogof. The weather was atrocious but the information was great and we managed to watch small walls of water rush down the mountain streams towards various sinks.

Next year another SRT workshop, a photography workshop and a surveying workshop are planned.

Thanks to all those who give up their time freely to help run these days.

I am happy to stand as training officer again but would welcome any new ideas or people to help run days.

Richard Hill March 2014

Richard also attends BCA training committee for CCC. There is a move to create training and workshops at National level too.

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Comment from Robin that he saw that the SRT course was heavily oversubscribed – Rich replied that there would be another one hopefully in the Autumn and there had been requests for one in N. Wales too.

5f Equipment Officer's Report

"P" Hangers.

Having taken on the role in August 2013 the BCA resin bonded eco hanger scheme seems to have dominated my time in this role.

Currently, there are 5 trained installers within the Cambrian region.
2 in the Forest of Dean, 2 in North Wales and myself here in South Wales.

I have attended an instructors' course for installing these hangers and can now train up people within our region.

Gethin Thomas, one of our North Wales installers has been continuing with his bolt testing program in substrates other than limestone. An update from Gethin.

We completed a second round of tests (this time to destruction) on a variety of bolts, although in only small numbers (2 or 3 of each type). You can find a full write up here: http://www.train4underground.co.uk/?page_id=140

I'd be very keen to do some follow up work on this with the Peco hanger, and would suggest the lower grade steel would be appropriate for the tests given that the observed failure of the other resin bolts we've tested have been within the resin bond.

I'm also really keen to do some more work with the Petzl Goujon anchor as these appeared to be the better of all the bolts we tested, although it has been suggested this is at odds with Lyon/Petzls thoughts.

In order to tackle concerns relating to possible chlorine stress corrosion of these hangers the CCC has decided to install only the higher 316 grade stainless steel type. Indeed the BCA will now follow suit and only provide this grade of hangers. Due to supply difficulties I only have a limited supply of the 316 grade hangers but I am now able to obtain the resin direct from the manufacturer.

I have recently carried out a "P" hanger installation in OFD, have a request for a "P" hanger install in or at the entrance at 3 additional sites in the south of the region. There is a reported defective hanger on the top of the steps at Pant Mawr Pot. Due to the weather conditions and a lack of availability of assistance this is still outstanding. However with improving weather I intend to rectify this asap.

I do not intend to festoon our caves with shiny new eco hangers but would like to promote this nationally approved scheme by way of making cavers aware of the availability of bolt placements where needed, of course bearing in mind conservation and cooperation with all concerned.

The fixed ladder up to the entrance to Ogof Capel has been repaired and securely fixed to the rock face.

Not sure if this has previously been included in CCC reports but cavers have been made aware of the shortcoming relating to the Bowline on the Bight knot slipping

specifically with unequal loading, i.e. “Y” hangs not rigged to take an equal load, pendulum swings or clipping in a cowstail on 1 loop only.

BCA fixed aids policy Draft B. This is still a “work in progress document”.

Vince Allkins 7/2/2014.

Question – Who are the N.Wales installers? Response – Gethin Thomas & Dewi Lloyd

5g Legal & Insurance Officer’s Report

No report received

5h Cave Registrar’s Report

Cambrian Cave Registry

Over the last 12 months there have been 12,909 page views. This is a small increase over the previous 12 months.

The number of records in the registry continues to grow. Over the last 12 months 170 new records have been added to the database following a focus on missing entries for the Gower. Sourcing and uploading photos of entrances continues, although now at a slower pace as the missing sites are now spread more thinly.

Current records held are 1965, an increase of 170

Records with photos are 959, an increase of 105

I would like to thank those people who have supplied data for entries or made suggestions for corrections. A rapport has been built up with Alan Bowring of the BBNP who has proved very helpful with suggestions, fieldwork and useful information.

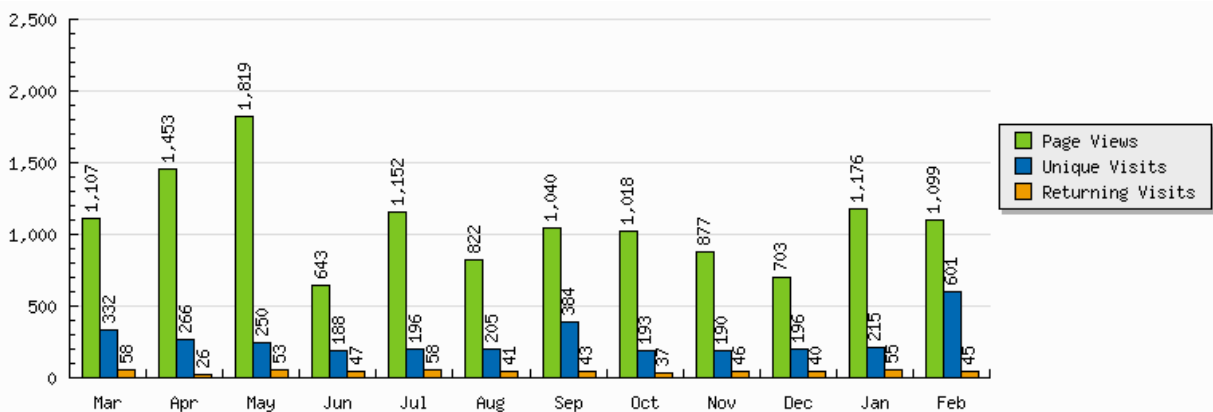
Brendan Marris Cambrian Cave Registrar 4th March 2014

No pertinent questions as the next report addressed these.

5i Webmaster’s Report

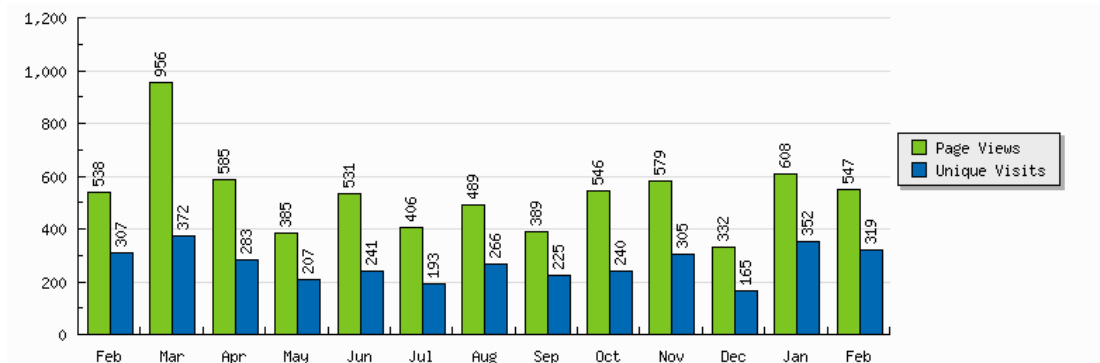
The CCC Website is now attracting over 500 page loads per month, with ‘Cave Access’ and ‘Latest News’ being the most popular pages, closely followed by ‘Newsletters’. Visitor numbers are also up on last year (Feb 2012 – Feb 2013 attracted 5935 page views with 3173 visits) whilst (Feb 2013 – Feb 2014 attracted 6891 page views with 3475 visits).

No downtime of the website has been reported, and the website has been regularly updated with either latest news or with the latest Newsletter. During 2013 the website was moved from Fasthosts to the BCA’s own mini server with no downtime reported.



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Below are the pageloads and visits to the CCC website from February 2013 to February 2014



Again I am willing to continue as Webmaster for the CCC, but will not stand in the way of anyone else wishing to take on this position.

Barry Hill 4th March 2014

Questions – (Stuart France) Could the website be more promotional rather than factual so that the Sports Council or ministers who might need to know what caving is about could be informed?

Bernie replied that in a meeting with the NRW they showed a complete lack of understanding of the sport and were very grateful for the copy of Speleology which was handed over. It was well received and the need to promote caving on the website was a good idea to take on board.

5j Newsletter Editor's Report

Firstly, apologies that I am unable to make it to the meeting in person.

I agreed to take on the editor's role in the summer of 2013 and I am happy to continue in post. Since that time have produced two issues of the newsletter (October 2013 and January 2014). For the time being, the aim is to continue producing four issues a year (January, April, July, October) and I am sticking with the general format and layout handed over to me by Robin Weare when he relinquished the role.

The newsletter will typically be issued in the final week of the month, so material for publication needs to be with me by at least the 24th of those months. Please send me notices, news or stories you would like me to include.

Rhys Williams
Newsletter Editor, Cambrian CC
6/3/2014

Robin expressed his thanks for Rhys' efforts. He made a plea for more content well before the date for printing not at the last minute. There was also a plea for folk in N.Wales to produce information for the newsletter. Not intended to be a S. Wales product but something for the whole Cambrian Region.

6 Other Cambrian Representatives' Reports

6a FoDCCAG

Verbal Report by John H. & Paul

FC and BCA annual permits have been renewed. Progress is slow in negotiations with the Lydney Park Estate. Direct contact is still needed for access to Clearwell Mines. Bixhead Stone Mine – the quarry is now a working environment so access has been withdrawn. Robin Hood Iron Mine still has no access due to state of shaft. Water levels have been exceptionally high in the FoD. Deputy Gaveler has been in post for 2 years – still feeling his way and group trying to support him as best they can. The unique agreement with the FC is a “two way thing”. There is no problem with access to keys and tracks. After an incident members now leave a little tag in car to show they are members of FoDCCAG. These are produced annually by the FC along with the permit.

Question – (Stuart F.) Couldn't FC England & NRW agree to have same parameters? Response was that the Welsh version was much longer and had to go through solicitors whilst in the Forest of Dean the good relationship with the Deputy Gaveler meant that discussions were on an individual not a corporate level.

6b Welsh Mines Society Report

Verbal Report by Dave L. (Secretary can request a copy by email)

NAMHO Conference is on. Grosvenor Caving Club have offered to lead trips into Milwr Tunnel for attendees at the Conference.

Cambrian Mines Trust – company limited by guarantee and is also a charity. There are no access restrictions for Cwmystwyth mines. They are the access body for other mines in the area; there is further information on their website and also in the next CMT newsletter. President G. Hall died in July 2013 and his papers will be retained for research – there will be a write up in the on line newsletter next month which the CCC newsletter Editor is welcome to use in the CCC newsletter, it is available online.

Welsh Mines Access Control Body – set up by Miles Moulding (Go Below) with access control to Cwmorthin & Wrysgan. CMT have concerns about the similar name and the confusion relating to the misleading name.

Ian A. – Miles M. wanted to keep open access but was finding it difficult due to vandalism so he has placed a combination lock on Cwmorthin. Access may become an issue in the future if he seeks to expand his interests.

There was some discussion about the issue of MM and why there was the vandalism and graffiti – was it a personal issue?

Stuart F. liked the idea of buying land and making it a charitable trust to avoid liability – he expanded on this theme.

Roy Fellows had been offered help in the past by CCC but having been contacted had yet to reply.

6c NWCRO

No report received. Ian A. gave a light - hearted account of a couple of rescue practices that had been held.

6d SMWCRT

No report received so verbal report by Dan T.

One major incident this last year. Lack of voice in the Cave link would need some adjustments in thinking. The new Landrover had arrived and the old one will be advertised on E bay.

Training events are advertised on the website and N. Wales are welcome to join in; every 2 years the team has a practice in Mid Wales which might be of more interest.

6e GCRG

Verbal report by Paul

Group have very good working relationship with Police and Fire & Rescue Service. Cave Links tests have taken place and worked well in Mendip, FoD and S.Wales.

6f OFD Management Committee Report

It was necessary to close top entrance for a short period in January 2013 in order to deal with unstable rocks in the entrance series. The work was completed and the entrance reopened as planned.

The problems with the access road and discharge from the quarry continue. Meetings have been held with Tarmac and discussions are ongoing.

Conservation work in the Columns area has been completed and other projects have been authorised. Graffiti has been cleaned and the damage arising from footprints repaired.

Fixed aids have all been checked during the year and replaced as necessary. Most of the nuts on stainless steel bolts have been changed and upgraded. Robin pleased that Vince had been able to install "P" hangers

Robin Weare January 2014

6g Dan yr Ogof Cave Advisory Panel Report

Although the name had changed to "Panel" not much else had altered with regards to the process for going into DY0. There is to be a greater emphasis on conservation rather than digging, the panel of 6 will be appointed by the Showcave owner rather than having representatives of various bodies. NRW is there as an observer. New website thanks to Brendan. The gate on the entrance has changed – 1 padlock and 1 key and it can be opened from inside the cave without a key.

Mike McCombe March 2014

Comments – a series of observations about videos on You Tube were made by Stuart. Further comments on this subject were aired by a number of attendees and the discussion extended to the caving forum where unrestrained views did not necessarily do caving any good. It was suggested that self-restraint needed to be shown when posting in the public domain.

6h PDCMG Report

Last meeting was business as usual. There is a continuing problem of padlocks going missing and there are plans to block Drws Cefn entrance later this summer. Peter Smith, a professional ecologist is a new committee member.

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John S. - No reaction to PD changing their rescue policy as a result of the last rescue (diabetic)? It might lead to problems if an easy exit is not available for rescue purposes. Mobile phone works at 2nd entrance (Nunnery). Is preservation more important than conservation?

6i Mynydd Llangatwg Cave Management / Advisory Committee

Report by John Stevens – clean-up & rubbish removal is going well in Daren.

Craig a Ffynnon – not examined after the floods this year.

Heads of the Valley Dualling – Peter Smith has completed his Bat survey and report has gone to Costains, general survey also completed. Concern was been expressed about access to Ogof Capel so photos have been taken and will be repeated at the end of the project. John and others have worked with Costains and taken part in their training so they are able to go straight on site if anything opens up during works. Markers for photo stations have been put in for 3 or 4 years time as a reference.

(Robin) All photos and surveys are available on the WAG website. He will give Barry the link to put on the CCC website – thanks to John for all his efforts.

(Stuart) Rockfalls in Daren and Craig a Ffynnon are a reminder that care needs to be taken in a changing world. In Aggy, tools (probably a disc cutter) were used to gain access, graffiti was left in mud and the log book was inappropriately filled in. Hopefully it was a “one off”. Need to show how access is enabled on the CCC website. Key lost 5 years ago but doesn't appear to have had an effect.

(Ian) If cavers don't belong to a bona fide club then access is very difficult, keys and permits cannot be obtained. CCC need to be aware of this problem. Such people need to be “brought into the fold” so that they are aware of the dangers and protocol associated with going underground.

(Paul) Miss Grace's Lane gate was vandalised but since a notice was put up to give access information there has been no problem – this notice is replaced annually.

7 BCA Matters

Robin reported that cash flow was very slow still. Bolting expenditure can be reclaimed from BCA but it does take time. Robin has taken over on BCA Council from Mike as CCC Rep. as from the BCA AGM - he is very impressed by the work done behind the scenes in the BCA.

8 Election of Officers

The following officers were elected to serve until the next AGM:-

Chairman	Robin Weare	P. Paul Taylor	S. Dave
Linton			
(E)	Martyn Farr	P. John Stevens	S. Ian Adams
Secretary	Sue Goodhead	P. Robin Weare	S. Vince
Allkins			

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	Dave Tyson	P. Ian Adams	S. Dan
Thorne (E)			
Treasurer	Ian Adams	P. Dave Tyson	S. John
Stevens (E)			
Conservation & Access Officer	Bernie Woodley	P. Robin Weare	
S. Dave Linton			
	Stuart France	P. Martyn Farr	S.
Dan Thorne (E)			
Training Officer	Richard Hill	P. Dan Thorne	S.
Brendan Marris			
Equipment Officer	Vince Allkins	P. Richard Hill	S. Paul
Taylor (E)			
	Mat Terry	P. Martyn Farr	S. Dave
Tyson			
Legal & Insurance Officer	Fraser Stephens	P. John Stevens	S.
Martyn Farr (E)			
(Fraser was not present but had provided a statement to be read out by John S.)			
	Owen Clarke	P. Robin Weare	S. Dave
Linton			
Cave Registrar	Brendan Marris	P. Barry Hill	S.
Richard Hill			
Webmaster	Barry Hill	P. Richard Hill	S. Dan
Thorne			
It was then stated that this appointment was a decision for the post AGM Committee meeting not the AGM itself.			
Newsletter Editor	currently Rhys Williams but this was not discussed at the AGM.		

9 Any other business

John H. – Tipper Truck in Lower Balls Green Quarry damaged by people (from Railway Preservation Society) who had travelled a long distance.

Peter C. – Leader was a Mining History enthusiast. It was an aggressive act where they stripped out the parts they wanted and what was left underground couldn't be removed due to a collapse. Contact was made with the Railway Trust and the response was that the group had not been given permission to remove the parts.

Paul T. – wanted to do a training exercise at this site and had to work hard to ensure that the landowner was happy with cavers being given access.

John H. – Does CCC condemn this action? Unanimously agreed. John H. will tell Chris Howes so that an article can appear in Descent.

Difficult balance because information is put in the public domain so that people know that there are interesting things to see but this can lead to vandalism. Pictures have been put on the Internet by those from the Narrow Gauge Railway Soc. as they posed with their "trophies"!

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Dan T. – How does one become an Ogof Capel Leader? – Ask the CCC Committee.

Paul T. – FoD Caving Symposium will be 27th – 29th June 2014 at Dean Field Study Centre - information at www.forest2014.symposium.co.uk the link will be displayed on CCC website. The land round Otter Hole has been sold, bought by a Japanese company who are only interested in the house. The land is back up for sale but FoD have made a decision not to approach the Japanese company. Cavers have crossed the land since 1970, in 1974 there was an agreement with the race course but this is no longer operative.

Thanks were expressed to Bernie, Robin & Mike for their work with CCC.

10 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to hold next year's AGM on Sunday 15th March 2015 at Betws y Coed Memorial Hall (Venue tbc) at 12.00.

The meeting closed at 12:50.

Revised Draft

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Cambrian Caving Council
Accounts
Year Ended 31st December 2013

Income & Expenditure Account

Subscriptions	24.00
Bank Interest	29.16
Training events	100.00
Donations	20.00
BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee	379.45
BCA Funding - Conservation & Access	236.32
Core Expenses	347.31
	583.63
SCW Grant	600.00
SCW Safety Grant	2000.00
Total Income	<u>£ 3,736.24</u>
Travel & Accommodation	322.45
Postage & Stationery	25.86
Conservation & Access	236.32
Equipment & Techniques	379.45
Training Events	519.55
Grants to Cave Rescue Organisations	2000.00
Total Expenditure	<u>£ 3,483.63</u>
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>£ 252.61</u>

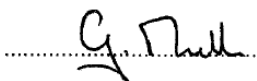
Balance Sheet

Debtor – British Caving Association	583.63
Bank Reserve Account	3917.50
Bank Current Account	1469.62
Net Assets	<u>£ 5,970.75</u>
Reserves at 31st December 2012	5718.14
Excess of Income over Expenditure	252.61
Reserves at 31st December 2013	<u>£ 5,970.75</u>


..... Robin Weare Honorary Treasurer

Honorary Scrutineer's Report

I have examined the above Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December 2013 and the Balance Sheet as at that date. In my opinion they are in accordance with the Council's accounting records and explanations provided.


..... G.J. Mullan