

# CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER October 2009

## Editorial

Sorry, another late one – but, as last time, with the best of intentions. The delay has allowed the inclusion of feedback from Sunday's Pwll Ddu meeting and I'm grateful to the Pwll Ddu Secretary for providing it so promptly.

Please, everyone, note the availability of overseas expedition grants for teams which include Welsh cavers. Grants are regularly made for caving expeditions and they have been for substantial sums. It has to be well worth the effort of completing a form or two.

Robin Weare [e-mail](#)  
Newsletter Editor

## Peter Harvey (1921 – 2009)

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Peter Harvey on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

Peter was a founder member of SWCC, one of the original duo of cave explorers who first broke into Ogof Ffynnon Ddu and was a tireless caver and digger well into his later years. He served for many years as SWCC President.

As many of you will know he had been receiving treatment for some weeks following a stroke. I understand that Peter passed away peacefully.

Peter's funeral will take place at the Aberdare Crematorium at 10.00 am this Friday 6<sup>th</sup> of November. Janice Bell, Peter's honorary stepdaughter has said all are welcome. It's just off the Heads of the Valleys road between Merthyr and Hirwaun.

You'll find Peter's memoirs on the SWCC website [here](#)

## New Entrance to Ogof Draenen

A new entrance has recently been opened to Ogof Draenen. This has been carried out without the knowledge or permission of the landowner or the PDCMG in contravention of the access agreement and policy of the Group. Consequently there is currently no legal access to this entrance. Measures are being taken to secure the new entrance and in the meantime it is requested that cavers refrain from using the entrance in order not to disrupt discussions that are currently ongoing between the PDCMG, the landowner and the diggers. A further meeting of the PDCMG is provisionally scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> December to finalise these discussions. In the meantime cavers' cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Fleur Loveridge  
Secretary, PDCMG

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## **Fault Aven – OFD**

Where once upon a time it was accessible via everyone's favourite distance rigging device, the skyhook, this pitch has now had its bolting arrangements re-arranged so it can be rigged for SRT from below.

To rig it from below you need to take your SRT kit and an SRT rope of at least 20m, and:

- \* attach your SRT rope to the in situ loop of that familiar orange polyprop (a bit of tape round the end of your SRT rope rather than a big fat knot is advisable to help it run through smoothly)
- \* pull down on the other side of the loop to feed your SRT rope up the pitch and through the two points of attachment at the pitch head
- \* when the loop comes back down you will have a doubled SRT rope running the height of the pitch
- \* attach one end of the SRT rope to the bolt which is just off to the side at the bottom of the pitch, and prussik up the other side of the rope

There are now two proper 12mm bolts at the bottom of this pitch, enabling an SRT rope that has been rigged from below to be tied in a Y-hang.

The skyhook has been removed from the cupboard at Penwyllt and will no longer be issued, so there is no possibility of repeat 'near misses' involving the skyhook on this pitch.

Martin Hoff  
Fixed Aids Officer, SWCC

## **Change to access rules - Agen Allwedd and Craig a Ffynnon**

The MLCMAC meeting on 15th May decided that members of clubs holding annual keys may lead trips on behalf of guests. This means that the "50% club members" rule no longer applies to annual key clubs. When leading guest clubs, you are requested to make the party composition clear in the cave log book, and to make all guests aware of the rules governing access.

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### Changes at the PDCMG

The Pwll Ddu CMG met on the 4<sup>th</sup> July and one of its tasks was to elect a new Secretary as Ali Garman was standing down. Many thanks to Ali for his 4 years of service to the Group.

The vacant post has been filled by Fleur Loveridge and she can be contacted about all matters Ogof Draenen on [pdcmg\\_sec@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pdcmg_sec@hotmail.co.uk)

Other officers of the group remain unchanged, including Sue Mabbett as Permit Secretary. For access Sue may be contacted on [suemabbett@hotmail.com](mailto:suemabbett@hotmail.com)

Please note that access to the cave depends on maintaining good relations with the local landowners. It is therefore timely to remind cavers that access is conditional on using the logbook to record the date, destination, party members and associated clubs for each trip. The logbook has historically been located in the ammo can on the wall outside the Lamb and Fox. However, it has now been moved into the cave at Cairn Junction, so there is no excuse not to sign in. Please can cavers let the Secretary know if they encounter any problems with the logbook, such as running out of paper or pencils.

The PDCMG would also like to reiterate that the car park of the Lamb and Fox is for patrons only, so could cavers please use the upper car park unless they have permission of the landlord or are drinking in the pub (which is actively encouraged). Since Brian's illness last year, he and Carole have moved to the other side of the bar. However Meirion and Cheryl are doing sterling work keeping cavers fed and watered and Cheryl does an excellent curry with half and half these days, with a good range of bottled ales too. If you are anticipating a long trip you can even pre-order your meals the night before, a superb service. You can also camp by the pub to save driving home after your ales but please ask behind the bar first.

Another important topic of discussion at the July meeting was the proposal to re-open the currently blocked second entrance. This specific issue was discussed and a majority were not in favour. However, it became clear that a wider review of the group's entrance(s) policy was required. Consequently the PDCMG initiated a consultation of the caving community and then held an Extraordinary General Meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009.

This meeting was attended by eleven member Clubs Representatives, the Cambrian Caving Council, the Group Trustees and a number of individual observers. Voting was carried out by the eleven member clubs (on a one club one vote basis) plus two executive officers (the Secretary and Treasurer) who are not also Club Representatives.

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A wide consultation about the PDCMG entrance(s) policy had been ongoing since the last meeting in July and feedback had been received via correspondence to the Group Officers, via UKcaving.com, via Descent and importantly from the consultations carried out within the member clubs. The majority of the Group and external parties including a number of non member clubs and individuals expressed a preference for Ogof Draenen remaining a single entrance cave.

However, it was also clear that there is support for digging with the intention of entering significant sections of unexplored cave passage and that those locations should be assessed on their merits and tested against the Group Conservation Policy.

Consequently the entrance(s) policy was revised to reflect this consensus and agreed by a vote of 10 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention (one Officer had had to leave by this point). A fuller report on the consultation and the full text of the new policy will be available on the PDCMG website ([www.pdcmg.org.uk](http://www.pdcmg.org.uk)) shortly.

The meeting also discussed the survey policy of the Group and it was unanimously agreed that John Stevens would be co-opted into the Group as Survey Recorder (along similar lines as the Geological Recorder and Biological Recorder).

John Pybus, the existing Survey Officer, will continue to manage the existing grade 2 data pool as long as this is deemed necessary, although it is anticipated that at some point this will be transferred to the new Survey Recorder.

A working party has been set up to revise the current survey policy in line with the new arrangements.

The code of conduct for access to Ogof Draenen will also be revised to reflect the new arrangements. It is therefore timely to remind cavers that as a condition of access they must inform the PDCMG and the new Survey Recorder of any discoveries they make in the cave and also make appropriate arrangements for surveying those finds. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

Full minutes of the meeting, including the wording of any changes to policy and the code of conduct will also be available on the PDCMG website as soon as these have been compiled.

Fleur Loveridge  
Secretary, PDCMG

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## **Changing at SWCC**

As most of you will be aware, anyone collecting cave keys and visiting Ogof Ffynnon Ddu is welcome to use the SWCC's changing rooms and showers. Both male and female facilities have been comprehensively refurbished in the last few years, thanks to the efforts of our dedicated cottage working team and to the considerable financial outlay incurred by the club.

All we ask in return for offering cavers somewhere warm and dry to change (and a hot shower, if you wish) is a modest donation of 50p per head.

We do, however, get a little miffed when a club turn up in numbers for a day visit to OFD and decline to pay the 50p/head on the grounds that 'we won't be using the changing rooms', only to return from their trip and all pile into those changing rooms.

Anyone who thinks that asking 50p to get changed out of the Penwyllt weather is extortionate is, of course, welcome to get changed in the car park, in the Cwm Dwr quarry or anywhere else. (The money you've saved could then be used, for example, to purchase precisely 1/5th of a pint of beer in the nearby Gwyn Arms.) If, though, you use our changing rooms please respect the custom and practice and put your 50p in the box. Many thanks and happy caving...

(Note: if you are staying at Penwyllt the changing rooms and showers are included in your hut fees – outstanding value-for-money!)

Tony Baker  
Chairman, SWCC

## **About Cement**

It was with considerable pleasure that I spotted the appearance of one of our local digging teams in this august publication. The appearance, indeed, of a photograph of one of the members of that team (who has asked not to be identified) legs akimbo at the top of the shaft which one day may become Cowshill Cave in the Forest of Dean.

This is the latest dig by the Chepstow Diggers team who apparently managed to blag no less than 42 tons of their product from Hanson Cement.

Jan Karvik is quoted as saying "unfortunately it's slow work; except for a mixer it is all done by hand, with a bucket full and a group of caving volunteers working up to 20m below the surface in an unstable and hostile environment. Not only do we have to contend with unstable rocks, but the whole entrance system lies under a cow pond, which in the early days of the dig made things most unpleasant."

You've just got to be impressed.....

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## Overseas Expedition Grants

The Sports Council for Wales has delegated responsibility to the Welsh Sports Association's Outdoor Pursuits Group for the assessment of applications and day to day administration of Grant Aid to support overseas expeditions. The current application season is upon us and applications for grants towards the cost of your 2010 expedition must be in by 31<sup>st</sup> December.

**If you are eligible an application is well worth the effort. Cavers have often received a very substantial contribution of up to 50% of the cost of travel, additional equipment and safety equipment.**

Successful applications have in the past traditionally come from mountaineering, caving, cave diving, canoeing and paragliding. But the Outdoor Pursuits Group of the Welsh Sports Association is happy to consider applications from other outdoor activities, providing the expedition is ground breaking and likely to enhance the development of that activity. All applications will be considered on merit, and after consultation with the appropriate National Governing Body.

### Eligibility

Priority will be given to Welsh based expeditions where the majority of members are Welsh. Only Welsh team members will be eligible for funding and must qualify on the grounds of birth, parentage or be permanently resident in Wales for two or more years.

### Amount of Grant

Grant will normally be limited to a contribution of up to 50% towards the estimated cost of travel, U.K and abroad, essential additional equipment and safety equipment.

### How to Apply

Applications for grant-aid to support the expedition must be made on the appropriate application form in advance of the proposed expedition date. Applications must be received by 31 December, prior to the financial year (1 April – 31 March) in which the expedition is planned to take place.

Enquiries and applications should be sent to:

Paul Dancey  
Welsh Sports Association  
Institute of Sport  
Sophia Gardens  
Cardiff  
CF11 9SW  
E-mail: [paul.dancey@welshsports.org.uk](mailto:paul.dancey@welshsports.org.uk)  
Tel: 0845 846 0020  
Fax: 0845 846 0014

And you can download an application form and the guidelines by clicking [here](#)

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## Diary

December 6 <sup>th</sup>	GCRG Rescue Practice
December 12 <sup>th</sup>	WBCRT Rescue Practice
December 31 <sup>st</sup>	Closing date for applications for SCW Overseas Expedition Grants
January 1 <sup>st</sup>	OFD Columns Open Day

## Cambrian Caving Council Officers

**Chair** Bernie Woodley [e-mail](#)  
**Secretary** Mike McCombe [e-mail](#)  
**Treasurer** Robin Weare [e-mail](#)  
**Conservation Officer** Elsie Little [e-mail](#)  
**Training Officer** Sue Mabbett [e-mail](#)  
**Equipment Officer** Andy Lewington [e-mail](#)  
**Legal & Insurance Officer** Owen Clarke [e-mail](#)  
**Registrar** Brendan Marris [e-mail](#)  
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