

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER April 2009

Editorial

This is a bit earlier than usual and so a bit shorter. My excuse is that I'll be off on holiday in a few hours and don't return until the middle of May. I'd offer my particular apologies to those who are about to send contributions.

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

Slaughter Stream Cave (Wet Sink)

A collapse of the choke in the entrance series has led to the closure of the cave. The route is completely blocked and the cave will remain closed to visiting parties until the collapse is cleared and effective re-engineering completed. Visit the RFDCC website <http://www.rfdcc.org.uk/> for updates.

Crescent Cave

I tried to visit Crescent a few weeks ago and discovered the entrance shaft to be filled with rubble. Enquiries of Brynmawr Caving Club elicited a reply from their Secretary, Paul Nuttall, which suggested that it might not be as bad as I thought.

"We did put a wooden 'lid' in the shaft so it could be it's just filled to the lid, which was a fairly normal occurrence.

You may well be the first to have a look at the cave for a long time.

The 'lid' was about 3-4ft below the drop into the scaffolding but I'm not sure where that scaffolding 'started' - it was everywhere.

The first pitch has/had a standard electron ladder which is probably calcified by now

The remaining pitches had purpose built heavy duty rungs and links.

On ALL pitches I would insist on lifelines cos we have no idea on the current status of the ladders."

We did dig a little way, but stopped when we reached the scaffolding. If you do visit and manage to dig your way through please note the advice about lifelining.

Croes Bleddyn Swallet

The entrance has totally collapsed and the cave is inaccessible. I hear that there are no current plans to reopen it.

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Cambrian Cave Registry

The Registry was uploaded to the Internet last year and there has since been good feedback and suggestions of additions and corrections coming through. Suggested changes have been processed and the remainder of the work planned for the Caves side of the Registry has been completed. It is planned to update this Version 2 to the internet, replacing Version 1, within the next few months. To visit the site click [here](#)

Caver visits to Cambrian Caves

Which are the most visited caves in the Cambrian region? Who knows? My own guess is that Porth yr Ogof, Eglwys Faen and Ogof Clogwyn would be the first three in the list but the majority of their visitors will not be regular cavers.

I've attempted to obtain statistics for 2008 in respect of those larger caves with log books. I don't have details from every cave and some of those I do have include estimates but 2008 seems to have been a busy year:

Otter Hole, which is open only in the summer months and operates a strict leader only system of pre booked trips had a total of 131 visitors in 24 parties.

Ogof Craig a Ffynnon was visited by 232 cavers in 59 parties. This represents a considerable increase over recent years with only 30 trips recorded in 2006 and another 30 in 2007.

Daren Cilau numbers are also up this year with 272 caver trips reported against 244 in 2007 and 204 in 2006. This may not represent a true increase as it is thought that some through trips starting in Ogof Cnwc are being recorded at both ends.

There were 84 trips recorded in the **Ogof Draenen** log book, a total of 321 cavers.

Agan Allwedd recorded 104 trips by 340 cavers. I don't have caver figures for 2007 but can say that the bats were up. The 2008 bat count was 391, compared with 373 in 2007

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu of course easily topped the rest with a total 2507 cavers in 666 parties – that is the highest recorded total since 1999. **Cwmdwr** attracted 317 cavers in 76 trips. There were 141 trips into **OFD I** by a total of 500 cavers and **Top entrance** attracted 1690 cavers in 449 parties.

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The final positions for 2008 in the premier league of Cambrian caves were

1. OFD – Top Entrance	1690 cavers	449 parties
2. OFD I	500 cavers	141 parties
3. Agen Allwedd	340 cavers	104 parties
4. Ogof Draenen	321 cavers	81 parties
5. Cwmdwr	317 cavers	76 parties
6. Daren Cilau	272 cavers	n/k
7. Craig a Ffynnon	232 cavers	59 parties
8. Otter Hole	131 cavers	24 parties

Obscure Cambrian Caves – Herbert’s Quarry

So, why not give OFD a rest some time? Within easy travelling distance of Penwyllt are two connected caves **Ogof Pasg & Ogof Foel Fawr** located in and near Herbert’s Quarry.

Neither entrance is particularly easy to find, and it must be said that the changing spot must be high on my list of coldest and windiest in Britain; but maybe I chose a bad day for my visit.

The initial reward for finding an entrance proved to be relief from the howling gale but we subsequently found fine formations in both caves and thoroughly enjoyed the trip. The connection is a bit tight but access is available from either end and the caves are shortish so don’t be put off by that.

The entire trip involves only a couple of hours of caving so to complete a good day out visit **Llygad Llŵchwr** only a few miles away and finish off at the tea shop in Carreg Cennan Castle where they do a fine toasted teacake and even provide torches for anyone who wants to visit their own small cave.

Constitution

The amendments to the Cambrian Caving Council constitution set out in the last newsletter and in the AGM agenda were considered at the AGM and passed unanimously.

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How to Join the Cambrian Caving Council

Our Secretary regularly receives enquiries about joining Cambrian and he has issued the following guidance:

Full membership is open to clubs which are members of the British Caving Association (BCA). There is no subscription charge. The easiest way of joining is for the club to include Cambrian in its list of affiliated regional councils on the BCA membership renewal form. Alternatively, contact our secretary and ask to be added to the list of members.

Clubs which are not members of BCA may apply for Associate membership if they have an established interest in the caves or mines of Wales or the Forest of Dean.

Applications for Associate membership must be sponsored by a full member club and should be made in writing to our secretary, enclosing a copy of the club's constitution. The application will be decided the Council's next General Meeting, at which the applicant and sponsor should be represented.

Associate member clubs pay an annual subscription, currently £12, reviewed at the AGM.

Direct Individual Members of BCA may apply to become individual Associate members of Cambrian by contacting our secretary and asking to be added to the list of members.

There is no subscription charge for individual associate membership.

Only full member clubs are eligible to vote at General Meetings.

Cambrian Caving Council Officers

Following the annual general meeting held on 8th March 2009 the Cambrian Caving Council officers are now:

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

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Community Chest Grants

You may recall that I mentioned these in the last newsletter. I make no apology for returning to the subject as it seems to me to be easy money for any club seeking to spread the word and start a membership drive.

This is a National Lottery funded grant aid scheme administered in our region by Sports Council Wales. It is designed to encourage more people to become more physically active more often. The maximum grant is £1,000 in any 12 month period.

Further enquiry has established that grants could well be available to fund equipment hired for the use in the "try caving" scheme by potential new members as well as other connected expenditure.

A contact at SCW has promised to advise on completing the forms in the optimum manner but only if the approach is through me so if your club is interested and would like some help contact me when I return from holiday.

The fill-in element of the form is 5 pages and the only real 'governance' requirement for caving is that the club is affiliated to CCC and has a bank account. I gather that an address in Wales would be a likely requirement but that does not limit it to clubs with accommodation.

You can download a leaflet [here](#), or get an application pack [here](#).

Diary

April 12 th	OFD Columns Open Day
April 17-19 th	BCRA Cave Technology Symposium, SWCC
May 3 rd	OFD Columns Open Day
May 24 th	OFD Columns Open Day
June 19-22 nd	NAMHO Conference, Matlock
Sept 25-27 th	Hidden Earth, Churchill School