

CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL NEWSLETTER July 2007

EDITORIAL

This edition comes a bit earlier than usual as I'm off to the Henne Morte on Friday. I know other trips leave the same weekend and I wish everyone success in their objectives, rather better weather that we've been having lately, and a safe return.

Robin Weare newslettereditor@cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

GWENT CAVE RESCUE

On the 26th June, a meeting was held by Gwent Cave Rescue as the executive of GCRT were becoming seriously concerned about the team's viability.

- We have recently undertaken an honest appraisal of the current state of the team, in terms of its administration, training, and effectiveness on a rescue.
- We have particular concerns around current manpower, the trends, and possibilities for recruitment.
- We are also aware of the growing responsibilities on the team, in terms of 'professional' standards of kit, procedure and training management, and our abilities (due to manpower) in these areas.

Manpower is declining rather than increasing and GCRT continuing to tick over due to the determination of the few - but that's all.

Following the discussion, it was agreed that the Team would continue for another year after which a new review would be made (with the possibility of a six month review at the AGM) but changes would be made to try to increase the number of people it has to draw on for both training events and administration work, if there was no change from the current situation then the future of the Team would be revisited.

Anyone who wishes to be added to the GCRT call out list should contact the Hon Secretary, Paul Nuttall at paul@paulmattew.freeseve.co.uk

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SCW FUNDING

Sports Council Wales continue to be our largest source of funding at £600 per annum. This has to be spent on "Development" of the sport - access, training events and projects. This is in addition to the £2000 per year that SCW provides in grants to the Welsh Cave Rescue Teams.

To give us a better ability to plan ahead, we're about to enter into a four year agreement with SCW which allows us to roll expenditure over from year to year. In return for their support, we need to do two things:

- Publicly acknowledge their sponsorship with "Supported by Sports Council Wales" notes on any publicity material, news items etc.
- Provide them with accounts and statistics to allow them to demonstrate to the ultimate providers of the money (the Welsh Assembly Government) that it is being spent sensibly to develop sport in Wales.

As part of the statistics-gathering exercise, I will shortly be contacting clubs to ask for additional detail about numbers of members. Whilst this may seem to be a thirst for irrelevant data, it really is an important part of retaining our largest source of funds. Given that Sport England has now withdrawn financial support for Caving and other non-competitive sports, we have good reason to be grateful that SCW take a more enlightened view!

Mike McCombe treasurer@cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP

There are eight or nine member clubs who forgot to tick the "CCC" box on their BCA forms and who will need to be contacted to get them to opt-in to Cambrian membership. It's disappointing that most of these are clubs which had to be chased up last year. Some even have members on the CCC Committee!

As a separate issue, the annual subscription for Associate Member Clubs is £12 and one or two haven't paid yet. I gather that the Treasurer will be grateful to receive their money.

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SMOKING IN CAVING CLUB PREMISES

A plethora of legislation has recently been enacted that either has, or will shortly, come into force across Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England.

Certain detailed aspects of this legislation are not entirely clear, and will only become clearer as the legislation beds down and cases are resolved in the courts. In the areas both of property definition and its usage from time to time there are some grey areas! However, the general ethos and objectives of all of this legislation is to make it quite clear that in enclosed spaces (buildings, tents, etc) where the general public have legitimate access, or where people are expected to carry out work (other than exclusively on their own and in their own premises) smoking is no longer acceptable in law. It also becomes an offence not to have on display clear notices, indicating to all who enter such premises that smoking is prohibited by law.

In my view, there is absolutely no doubt that the intention of the Governments and their legislators is to make it an offence for smokers to be able to inflict their smoke upon others in all such places where they otherwise have a natural right to go or be, or where they have to be in connection with "work". I do therefore suggest to all those who own, or have any part in the running of a club hut, cottage, tackle store, or whatever that they seek to comply with this legislation as quickly as they are able. This does not just mean passing a resolution at the next committee meeting, but also making sure that signage is in place in the premises.

The 'grey areas' are to do with how you regard the property (hostel or self-catering accommodation), who uses it and for what (work?). I suggest that most people would think of 'self-catering accommodation' as places that are used by private family units, or groups of close-friends for holidays in the sun/the snow or the countryside. Whereas they think of hostels as places where individuals and small groups casually drop in, but essentially where people do not know each other.

The Building Regulations (and other recent buildings-related legislation) would quite clearly place club-huts in the "hostel" category, but if you insist that your club-hut is merely "self-catering accommodation" then you might just have the odd legal leg to stand on, but I cannot possibly recommend this!

If, on the other hand, you are a very small club with only a tiny number of members, all of whom are good and regular friends and you do not invite other clubs, or non-members to come along and stay with you then you will most probably be quite in order to regard your premises as a sort of small-family self-catering unit, and thus not covered by this legislation. It would though, in my

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personal view, be preferable for you to ban smoking by mutual agreement, just as is frequently the arrangement in many domestic properties (homes).

If your interpretation of the law leads you to decide that your 'premise' will be a no-smoking premise as covered by this legislation then signage is mandatory: signs can be home-made, but they need comply with the following criteria:-

- a. They need to be not less than A5 (vertical) in format;
- b. they need to show the internationally accepted no-smoking sign (a red circle of min.70mm dia.) with a diagonal red line clearly crossing a black smoking cigarette, displayed above the words (in black) "It is against the law to smoke in these premises", all on a white background; and
- c. one of these signs needs to be displayed upon or adjacent to each and every entrance to the premise (building).

David Judson, BCA Legal & Insurance Officer

DYO WARDEN PERMITS

Warden permits for DYO are now overdue for renewal. Forms are available via the website (<http://dyo.org.uk>) or by post from Tony Baker at 26 Constable Way, College Town, Camberley, Surrey, GU47 0FE. Thanks in part to funding from CCC, there is no charge for renewals.

FUNDING TO ACCESS GROUPS

The BCA Finance Committee has formally agreed my proposal that CCC should be able to provide financial support to Access Controlling Bodies (e.g. DYOCAC, FoDCCAG...). This would cover items such as administrative costs and insurance but not travel expenses. Without wishing to open the flood gates, I'd be happy to hear from access bodies needing support. Funding is also available for conservation and access work.

Mike McCombe treasurer@cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk

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TUNNEL CAVE AIRLOCK

During 2006 the DYOCAC successfully negotiated limited access between Tunnel Cave and Cathedral Cave subject to certain conditions. One of the conditions is the requirement for an airlock at the junction of the two caves. The DYOCAC have committed to building this using our own funds and volunteers. We have been helped with a £100 donation from the SWCC, the donation of the inner door from the Showcave Management and we are seeking further donations to cover our costs.

By the 21st December 2006, building materials had been delivered to the DYO premises and then transported up to Cathedral Cave by the Showcave staff. The following day, Mike McCombe, Jon Jones, Keith Goodhead and Bernie Woodley moved the materials to the end of Cathedral Cave.

On 30th December, an enthusiastic team comprising of; Vince Allkins, Pete Cardy, Kit Cracknell, Gareth Davies, Sue & Keith Goodhead, Jon Jones, Paul Quill and Bernie Woodley, hauled the materials up into Tunnel Cave. Building was scheduled to commence as soon as the door sizes were agreed.

By the end of January a good start had been made on the internal wall by Vince, Pete and Bernie. The ducting required for extending the fan housing through the airlock had been ordered and made. A flange for attaching the ducting to the fan housing had been made by Tony Donovan.

February saw us reaching and passing lintel level on the internal wall and we were now having help from Mike McCombe and Mick Day when they were available. Initial discussions on the rules of access took place.

During March, progress continued. We reached the point where staging was required and quickly passed that to almost reach the roof of the passage. A second flange for attaching the fan ducting to and through the internal wall had been made by Pete.

On 3rd April, the internal wall was completed to the cave roof and the internal door was fitted. A hole was cut in the wall for the fan ducting and the second flange was fitted. Further discussions regarding the access rules had concluded in a final draft being prepared.

In May, the draft access rules were approved by the DYOCAC.

During June the walls were rendered and in July the fan ducting was fitted and the finishing touches were made to the airlock by Bernie.

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The final work outstanding is to cut out and fit another caver gate into the main showcave entrance. We hope that this will be finished soon.

The full details of the access conditions and rules will appear on our website shortly.

I would like to thank all those people involved so far, particularly the volunteers who are not part of the DY0 committee or even wardens.

Bernie Woodley

SRT SAFETY WARNING

The CNCC Technical Group has issued the following warning. It concerns the use of the following permanent anchors, Eco anchors, Lyon safety bolt, Fixe 'glue in', Petzl Collinox & Bat'inox.

In certain locations it has been necessary to locate the anchor placement low or at ground level. This is due to the geological constraints of the entrance, cave passage or pitch head. e.g. Rowten Pot entrance pitch, Cow Pot entrance pitch, Juniper Gulf entrance pitch at the north end, Pillar Holes.

When an anchor is clipped into at ground level, and progression to the entrance drop is made by keeping low, it is possible for the attachment karabiner to become detached from the anchor. Anchors that have been placed below waist height on traverses may produce a similar result.

When using anchors placed in rock at ground level or anchors that have not been placed correctly on traverses e.g. too low and the wrong alignment certain extra precautions need to be observed.

1. Always clip up and through the anchor so that the karabiner gate is on the outside
2. While maneuvering, watch the attachment karabiner.
3. Always have captive karabiners on cow tails/safety loops
4. If possible, ensure that you have two safety devices connected. (due to the embedment depth of the Eco anchor it may not be possible to insert two karabiners and a rope. An alternative may be to tie the rope directly into the anchor and clip the rope loop).
5. Consider using screwgate or twist gate karabiners on safety loops/Cow tails.
6. When belaying/top roping etc. where there is a necessity to move around, it may be desirable to tie into the anchor.
7. If rigged, clip into the rope and not the anchor.

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CAMBRIAN CAVE REGISTRY

Gary Evans tells me that he's edging nearer to a formal launch. We now know that it will appear online at www.undergroundwales.org.uk and we are grateful to Martyn Farr for permission to use the name (which is the name of one of his books). The site will initially contain all caves data, but will also have mines data for Wales added at a later date.

Gary has completed the huge task of data entry to the access database and Dave Cook is in the process of converting it to a web based SQL database. I know that Gary is grateful for Dave's efforts and also to Les Williams who was a great help with the domain purchase and initial set-up work.

2007 DIARY

Aug 26th	OFD Columns Open Day
Sept 1st	WBCRT Rescue Practice
Sept 8th	GCRG/WBCRT Joint Rescue Practice
Sept 9 th	Cambrian Caving Council General Meeting
Sept 21st – 23 rd	Hidden Earth 2007
Nov 3rd	GCRT/WBCRT Joint Rescue Practice