

PWLL DU CAVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held at the Lamb and Fox on Saturday 18th June 2011 commencing at 7.30pm.

Attendees:

Mick Day		Chairman
Fleur Loveridge	Oxford UCC/Red Rose CPC	Secretary
Spencer Drew	Morgannwg C.C.	Treasurer
Sue Mabbett	South Wales C.C.	Permit Secretary & Club Rep
Ben Lovett	Morgannwg C.C.	Conservation Officer & Club Rep
John Pybus	Oxford University C.C.	Survey Secretary
Rhian Kendall	Morgannwg C.C.	Biological Recorder
Chris Seal	Chelsea S.S.	Club Rep
Chris Densham	Oxford University C.C.	Club Rep
Ali Garman	Draenen Diggers	Club Rep
Tim Barter	Westminster S.G.	Club Rep
Mike Kelly	Gagendor	Club Rep
Peter Talling	University of Bristol S. S.	Club Rep
Elsie Little	Cambrian Caving Council	
Bernie Woodley	Cambrian Caving Council	
Stuart Reid	Countryside Council for Wales	

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Andy Farrant (Geological Recorder), Rich Bayfield (Bristol Exploration Club), Chris Crowley (Croydon CC), Chris Jones (Cardiff UCC), Les Williams (Wessex CC), Charles Bailey (Trustee), Owen Clarke (Cwmbran CC).

2a. Minutes of the last Meetings (20th November 2010)

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record by the Chair.

2b. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the Agenda

There were no matters arising which would not be covered later in the agenda.

3. Officers Reports

a) Secretary

The Secretary's report is attached with the minutes.

It was confirmed that two bat workers had now agreed to help with the Licence application for Drws Cefn.

There is a small issue with the gate sticking due to misalignment of the frame.

AG will fettle to improve the situation.

b) Treasurer

The Treasurer's report was circulated and is attached with the minutes. The Treasurer has been liaising with the CCC, who are covering administrative and insurance costs for the Group.

There is no expenditure outstanding.

The new gate was paid for by Elsie Little and claimed back directly from the CCC.

Last year it was suggested that the Group should aim to keep around £350 in hand in case of urgent expenses. Currently there is £250. While it is possible to claim some costs back from CCC, it was considered appropriate to aim to build up a small surplus so that costs can be met as they arise. It may then be possible to reclaim some of these later. It was proposed to ask Member Clubs for further donations towards the forthcoming works, namely the closure of Drws Cefn and Conservation Tape stocks (see also d below). The Treasurer proposed a sum of £20 and this was seconded by Sue Mabbett and unanimously agreed.

c) Permit Secretary/Access Officer

SM presented caver numbers for this year up to May. Last year there were a total of 355 caver visits compared to 350 in 2009. The figure may have been higher had it not been for the snow in December which substantially reduced numbers in this month. The visitor numbers are stable, although mainly due to Member Clubs with relatively few requests for keys.

One key was lost in the post for which the costs have subsequently been recouped from the club concerned.

SM has a very large stack of jiffy bags. Therefore it is requested that new key applications come with only the stamp for a large envelope and an address label (and no new jiffy bag). This information needs to be added to the website. **FL to ask Martin Laverty to do this.**

The new logbook pages have been put into the cave. Many thanks to Stuart Reid for organising these. Hopefully it will encourage the recording of the required information.

There was a long discussion about the location of the logbook. For the moment it will remain in the cave, but if a secure and waterproof location can be found close to the entrance this may be preferable in future.

SD will obtain a new supply of pencils for including with the logbook.

d) Conservation Officer

The planned conservation weekend did not happen due to lack of support. However, approximately 1km of conservation tape was laid on the day of the meeting. This included replacement of worn out and “trodden in” tape as well as some new locations. The area covered was the length of Gilwern Passage and a few adjacent passages.

The new orange tape was used. As this is thicker, it is more expensive (around £100 per km) and comes with a smaller length on a reel (25m). However it is better quality than the old red and white tape.

Currently there is a further 1km of tape in stock (out of 2km purchased by FL). It was suggested that some of this should be kept in a water tight contained at Cairn Junction.

More metal or plastic stakes are also required to help hold the tape up in areas of mud and prevent it from being trodden in to the ground.

Carrying out conservation work ahead of the meeting appeared to make recruitment of volunteers easier and this would be carried out again ahead of future meetings.

It may be possible to obtain financial support for conservation projects from the CCW as well as the CCC. It would be required to price up specific projects (eg retaping Megadrive) in order of priority. **Stuart Reid to work out possible funding routes. BL to make records of recent taping and a list of priorities with estimated materials required and their costs.** It will be important to retain a catalogue of what work has been done to support future funding requests and provide feedback to funders.

e) Survey Secretary

The Survey Secretary reported that no further data had been submitted since the last meeting. The data pool continues to be served from the OUCC website. There was briefly a period earlier in the year when the site was down, but this was subsequently rectified.

f) Survey Recorder

The Survey Recorder was unable to attend but had circulated a report (attached). It was not clear what progress had been made towards a publically available survey, however it was suggested that the Therion conversion could be a first step in this direction. This progress was welcomed. **CS to speak to JS about the details.**

g) Biological Recorder

The Biological Recorder reported that most of her records were now incorporated into the paper included in the recent special issue of Caves and Karst Science. New records were also provided from the logbook pages recently removed from the cave.

There was however disappointment that some observations were being made (or had been made in the past) without being passed on to the Biological Recorder. All cavers are encouraged to contact RH with any observations or other information which they may hold. It is possible that further observations are contained within the G5 survey notes and MK will speak to JS about this information.

A request had been made by Prof. Tim Guilford from Oxford University to carry out a study on the behaviour of the cave's bat population using ultrasonic loggers. Such techniques have been successfully used in the peak district and it is hoped that they could help to determine whether sporadic swarming is going on. The Group unanimously agreed to support the proposed project.

h) Geological Recorder.

The Geological Recorder was unable to attend but had previously circulated a report (attached).

The authors and contributors for the C&KS special issue were congratulated on an excellent publication.

It was suggested that it may be appropriate to hold a BCRA field meeting on Pwll Ddu and its environs. **EL to discuss with RH and AF.**

4. Election of Officers/Recorders

a) Secretary

FL agreed to stand again for a further term and was elected unopposed.

b) Treasurer

SD agreed to stand again for a further term and was elected unopposed.

c) Permit Secretary

SM agreed to stand again for a further term and was elected unopposed.

d) Conservation Officer

BL agreed to stand again for a further term and was elected unopposed.

e) Survey Secretary

JP agreed to stand again for a further term and was elected unopposed.

f) Survey Recorder

JS was nominated by CSS and seconded by Gagendor. JS was elected unopposed.

g) Biological Recorder

RH agreed to stand again for a further term and was elected unopposed.

h) Geological Recorder

AF had indicated he was willing to stand again in his report and was elected unopposed.

At this point EL suggested that the Group should have a fixed aids officer. Their job would be to take responsibility for the fixed aids installed by the Group and ensure discharge of the Group's duty of care. While in the past the Group has not installed or taken responsibility for fixed aids it has recently installed handlines, traverse ropes and a ladder. It was agreed to co-opt Ali Garman to undertake this role on a non constitutional basis. He will **produce a list of fixed aids and an inspection programme**. The **Code of Conduct will then require updating**.

5. Other Group Business

a) Balcony Pitch

Many thanks to AG and Malcolm Stewart for installing the new ladder. This is hung from the Eco-hangers on the right hand side of the passage as you approach the top of the pitch. The life line from the old ladder has also been moved across to the new ladder.

The old ladder still needs to be removed and a cordless angle grinder will be required to dismantle it.

b) Bat Access

The report produced by Peter Smith for the CCW concludes that while bat access at the main entrance is not required or a priority, it would be desirable in the long term. In the short term it was agreed that other conservation work, including re-taping, would have greater priority.

Claims of separate roosts which could be affected by the present of the gate would need to be substantiated by the appropriate data. However, it does appear

that there is a draught exiting from the hillside regardless of the presence of the gate.

c) Constitutional Changes

The previously circulated proposed constitutional changes were voted on as follows¹:

Clause 4.4

There was concern regarding the differences between posts active for many years and those created more recently. There was also concern regarding whether there was a constitutional need for two survey positions.

Votes for: 2 (CSS, WSG); Votes against: 4 (Secretary, OUCC, MCC, UBSS); Abstentions: 3 (DD, SWCC, Treasurer).

The amendment was not passed.

Clause 5.1

Votes for: 9 (All present an eligible to vote).

The amendment was passed.

New clause ai

Votes for: 9 (All present an eligible to vote).

The amendment was passed.

New clause aii

Withdrawn followings discussions amongst those present.

Clause 6.2

Votes for: 8 (WSG, OUCC, MCC, UBSS, DD, SWCC, Secretary, Treasurer); Abstentions: 1 (CSS).

The amendment was passed.

It was noted that although there would only be a constitutional requirement for one meeting per year, it was anticipated that there would normally be two as dictated by the amount of business being conducted by the Group.

New clause bi

Votes for: 8 (WSG, OUCC, MCC, UBSS, DD, SWCC, Secretary, Treasurer); Abstentions: 1 (CSS).

The amendment was passed.

However, it was noted that the intention was to use the same meeting order, but to only use those agenda items that were relevant for the meeting called.

New clause bii

Votes for: 9 (All present an eligible to vote).

The amendment was passed.

¹ Note: Gagendor had left the meeting at this point and therefore did not cast any votes.

It was agreed to insert the clause between 6.2 and 6.3 such it is clear that the notice requirement for meetings applies. However, subsequent inspection of the constitution indicates that EGMs would not have been raised at this point in the document and the original proposal, to follow the above clause, has been adopted.

New clause c

Votes for: 9 (All present an eligible to vote).

The amendment was passed.

Clause 6.12

Votes for: 9 (All present an eligible to vote).

The amendment was passed.

6. Applications for membership

None received.

7. Applications to become keyholders

None received.

8. AOB

None.

Meetings closed at 10.24pm

Next meeting in November 2011 at a date to be agreed.

PWLL DU CAVE MANAGEMENT GROUP.

Biennial General Meeting 18th June 2011

Secretary's Report

Gates

The replacement gate was installed on the 27th November, one week following the last meeting. Many thanks to Ali Garman for giving up his caving trip that day to do the work. I am pleased to report that there has been no further problems in this respect.

There had been a couple of anecdotal reports earlier in the summer about the new gate sticking. However, this has been checked on a number of occasions and appears to be functioning correctly.

Drws Cefn

Since the last meeting both myself and Stuart Reid have been trying without success to find a new bat worker to assist us with the Licence application. However, it now looks like a way forward may be established and I hope to be able to bring further details to the meeting.

As before, clubs are kindly asked to remind their members that access/egress via Drws Cefn is contrary to our License agreement with the landowners.

Special Issue of Caves and Karst Science

Well done to Andy Farrant, Lou Maurice et al for the fantastic issue of C&KS that has recently come out regarding Ogof Draenen.

Balcony Pitch Ladder (Item 5a)

I would like to personally extend my thanks to Ali Garman and Malcolm Stewart from the Draenen Diggers for installing the replacement ladder at balcony pitch.

Bat Access (Item 5b)

On the 6th and 7th February, Peter Smith (assisted by John Stevens) carried out a bat survey of Siambre Ddu and Ogof Draenen as part of a commission for the CCW. As part of this, they met with Ali Garman and Stuart Reid (CCW) at the Ogof Draenen entrance to discuss bat access there. This was a response to concerns regarding restrictions to bat access that may result from the use of a solid gate. Two options to improve bat access were considered:

1. Install a smaller than ideal slot in the gate, possibly 9" x 4", with a shield on the inside to prevent access to the handle. This option would require removal of the gate to allow the modifications to be made. This is likely to be the cheapest option.
2. Construct a small shaft to connect to a section of the cave within a few metres of the entrance. Some kind of pillar box entrance would be required as well as

landscaping. Although possible, this is a significant piece of engineering, with an accompanying cost.

It was agreed that these options would be reviewed in the light of the final survey report with the intention of carrying out works as recommended in that report. In the interim the issue was also raised as a last minute item at the CCC AGM on 6th March, but without a recommendation from the report I was reluctant to commit to works which could prove to be inappropriate or even counterproductive.

Peter Smith's report was issued on the 15th March and I received a copy from the CCW on 21st March. A copy has been circulated ahead of this meeting. The report, drawing on this year's survey data and all previous observations, found with respect to bat usage in the area of Big Bang Pitch that:

"It is clear that lesser horseshoe bats do currently have access to this area and are not in fact excluded by the present gate. Where their access point is located is unknown."

"Given the new information on bat presence, I recommend that alterations to create bat access at the entrance are not strictly required. However, as a matter of standard policy, when cave entrances are gated bat access should normally be provided either at or near the entrance being gated."

Consequently it is clear that we are not currently inhibiting bat access through the presence of the gate. Although not considered by Peter Smith's report to be a priority, it would be beneficial to enhance access in the future. This is a matter for discussion by the Group.

Constitution (Item 5c)

Proposed constitutional changes are attached. Following the last meeting I contacted Peter Jones about the meeting frequency and his response stated that *"I believe that both Brian and myself are happy with the way the cave is operated at the moment and if reducing the number of meetings to once a year is better for yourselves then I don't think there is a problem."* Therefore if we want to, then this is a viable option.

Treasurer's Report

Pwll Du Cave Management Group						
Income And Expenditure Account For the Year Ended 31st May 2011						
		Period ending 31/05/11		Period ending 31/05/10		
		£	£	£	£	
Income:						
Donations:						
	S Drew		0.00		50.00	
	F Loveridge		0.00		30.00	
	SWCC		0.00		20.00	
	OUCC		20.00		20.00	
	Cwmbran CC		0.00		30.00	
	UBSS		0.00		30.00	
	Gagendor		0.00		20.00	
	Hades CC		0.00		20.00	
	CSS		0.00		20.00	
	WCC		0.00		20.00	
	Croydon CC		0.00		20.00	
	BEC		0.00		30.00	
	MCC		0.00		25.00	
	Brynmawr CC		20.00		0.00	
	Hereford CC		20.00		0.00	
	CUCC		20.00		0.00	
	Orpheus CC		20.00		0.00	
	Draenen Diggers		20.00		0.00	
	Draenen Diggers		48.52		0.00	
	Aberystwyth CC		20.00		0.00	
	Refund From CCC (Insurance)		50.00		50.00	
	Refund From CCC (Hall hire)		0.00		60.00	
	Refund From CCC (Administration costs)		0.00		23.80	
	Refund From CCC (Locks replacement)		127.08		0.00	
	Bank Interest:		0.00		0.08	
			<u>365.60</u>		<u>468.88</u>	
Expenditure:						
	Blaenavon Hall Hire		0.00		(90.00)	
	Administration costs		0.00		(23.80)	
	New lock and Keys		(127.08)		(336.57)	
	New safety equipment (Draenen)		(129.88)		0.00	
	New Ladder Installation costs (Draenen)		(48.52)		0.00	
	BCA Insurance		(50.00)		(50.00)	
			<u>(355.48)</u>		<u>(500.37)</u>	
	Deficit of Income Over Expenditure		<u>10.12</u>		<u>(31.49)</u>	
Notes to the above for the year ending 31st May 2011						
			2011		2010	
The closing balance actually requests the following:						
	Balance in c Current A/c:		251.83		325.51	
	Balance in F Reserve A/c:		0.10		0.10	
	Outstanding cheques uncleared		0.00		-83.80	
	Total Funds		<u>251.93</u>		<u>241.81</u>	
I will try and reclaim as much expenditure as I can from CCC in the coming year.						
I have no other items to report.						
Spencer Drew ACA BSc						
Treasurer						
(Spencer.Drew@Ntlworld.com)						

Permit Secretary's Report

Trips Recorded in Ogof Draenen Nov 2010 to May 2011

	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11
Parties	8	7	4	9	5	0
Persons	31	29	12	37	21	0

	Jul-11	Aug-11	Sep-11	Oct-11	Nov-10	Dec-10
Parties	0	0	0	0	15	5
Persons	0	0	0	0	58	23

Trips Recorded in Ogof Draenen Jan 10 to 31 Dec10

	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10	May-10	Jun-10
Parties	5	10	15	4	14	6
Persons	16	23	50	9	36	22

	Jul-10	Aug-10	Sep-10	Oct-10	Nov-10	Dec-10
Parties	12	4	7	9	15	5
Persons	41	13	26	38	58	23

Survey Recorder's Report

Surveying Report for PDCMG - June 2011

By John Stevens

It has been a quiet year with no data being received, even though some finds have been made. I managed to extend the survey in some areas with the discovery of some passage.

As previously stated the data has been re-collated and converted from survex into Therion to give a better 3D model of the system. The terrain and google maps have been added to this model. With the size of the area problems arise with aligning the 3 different coordinate systems for an accurate model. But after a bit of work, nearly all passages are now 'underground'. Cliffs do not come out very well in the terrain data.

'Flagging' of sections of the system are being done for various uses. i.e., survey, discovery, grade, distribution. This is still underway but has been stopped while I work on the Llangattock caves. The data structure was found to be too top heavy and a re-organisation was needed so that it could meet the more varied needs that I would require from it. To this end, I started looking at a smaller data set of Agen Allwedd.

With input from Andy Atkinson, I have this structured in a much more understandable way. This has also shown what extra needs to be added to the Dreanen set, but at present I will continue with the Agen Allwedd set to a point where the result can be published / released.

A grade 2/3 data set has also been fully constructed but will need similar re-organisation before release, so it is compatible with the other data sets.

A Bat Dot Survey was again collected this year after a gap of 6 years. The general results give a flat population which is rather disappointing, as other roosts have increased by 100% or more over a similar period. The dot distribution charts of the counts reveal some interesting facts. Unfortunately two archives were not fully available before Peter Smith finished his report on the entrance series roosts, so it is still missing some figures. Even with this oversight, it is clear there are several discrete roosts making use of Dreanen. Each discrete roost may have one or more entrances associated with it, and the identification, preservation or improvement of these access points needs to be a high priority.

We only really have counts for the Megadrive/Canyon roost, with less complete counts on the Lamb & Fox/Raiders Roost and Big Bang/Pen y Galchen Roost. These last two roosts have shown a catastrophic decline since early counts and sightings were done. This coincides with the draught and access being cut with the solid gate being installed. More work is needed to examine the 2 or 3 other roosts to see if these numbers are up or down to find out if it is an external reason (lack of good summer roost?) or lack of good access that is causing the stagnation in numbers. Again I am working on the Llangatock results as a test set and database.

Geological Recorder's Report

PDCMG Geological Recorders Report - June 2011

In case any of you missed it, the latest issue of Cave and Karst Science (Vol 38(1), published April 2011) was a Special Issue on Ogof Draenen, with papers on the geology, geomorphology and hydrogeology of the system, together with a paper on the bats and a report of the exploration. This represents a huge amount of effort by many people, mostly in their spare time, so I would like to give a big thank-you to all involved. Special mention must go to all the authors, including Lou Maurice, Tim Guilford, Ben Lovett, Mike Simms and Rhian Kendall, but also to both John Gunn and Dave Lowe who saw it through to production, and to those kind enough to supply photographs or other data. Many others helped indirectly on surveying trips or recording observations, so thanks to you too. I have received quite a bit of positive feedback, including some 'fan mail' from Prof Tim Atkinson at UCL.

This special issue will set the scene for any future research in the system. With any luck it will encourage others to work in the cave as there is plenty more scope for further research, not just on the geology or hydrogeology, but also on the biology, speleothem chemistry and geochronology of the system and its implications for palaeoclimate research. I also hope this special issue will be of interest to local landowners as well as the wider caving fraternity, and should go some way to emphasise the special nature of Ogof Draenen. Perhaps more importantly, it provides published data which may help get the system statutory protection as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. If anyone would like a copy of any of the papers or reports, please

get in touch with either myself, Lou or Rhian. The contents list and abstracts are listed at the end of this report and PDF's are available from the BCRA website at <http://bcra.org.uk/pub/candks/> for those with online access.

Following the publication of the special issue, Mike Simms and I will present a poster on the development of Ogof Draenen and its implications for landscape development, (based on Mikes paper) at the forthcoming Climate Change - the Karst Record Conference (KR6) to be held in Birmingham later this month. As part of this, we will discuss the latest U-series speleothem dates which suggest the upper parts of the cave are older than c. 400 ka. I have also submitted a proposal to the National Isotope Geoscience Laboratory (NIGL) to get some more of the speleothem samples than Mike and I collected back in 1997 dated.

Other than that, I am not aware of any other work being undertaken in the cave. If anyone has any proposals than I'm more than happy to advise. I am happy to stand again in this capacity, although I have family and other work commitments which mean I don't get chance to get down to South Wales as often as I would like.

Andy Farrant

PDCMG Geological Recorder; June 2011.

Abstracts: [Cave and Karst Science Vol 38\(1\)](#), published April 2011.

Proposed PDCMG Constitutional Changes

Compiled by Fleur Loveridge, Hon Secretary for consideration at the Biennial General meeting on 18th June 2011

Clause Number *	Proposed Changes	Comments
4.4	Insert the following posts into the list of Officers of the Group: "Survey Secretary, Survey Recorder, Biological Recorder, Geological Recorder"	At the 14 th June 2003 meeting it was agreed to add Survey Secretary, Biological Recorder and Geological Recorder to this clause which defines the Group Officers. However, this change was never implemented in the constitution. The July 2010 meeting agreed that this change should now be formally implemented.
5.1	Final sentence modified to: "An officer of the Cambrian Caving Council and representative of the Countryside Council for Wales shall also be a non-voting members of the Group"	To include the CCW within the Group Membership as discussed at the July 2010 meeting.
New -ai	Additional clause to follow clause 5.6. Subsequent numbering to be amended. "All outgoing Officers shall stand down prior to the election of the Officers at the Biennial General Meetings. Voting during elections of the Officers shall only be carried out by the Club Representatives. "	To provide clarification on the procedure for election of Officers.
New - aii	To follow on from above "Where a Club Representative is standing for election as a particular Officer then they shall not vote in the election of that Officer. "	To decide whether that club should still vote through their representative when that representative is a candidate for election.
6.2	Delete and replace clause with: "General Group meetings shall normally be held on an annual basis, usually in June. Biennial General meetings shall be held every two years in accordance with the constitutional period."	Moving from biannual to annual meetings was suggested and agreed at the 18 th November 2007 meeting but was never formally included as a constitutional change. Provision remains for additional meetings as required (refer to clause 6.4). An additional clause is now also proposed pertaining to provision for extraordinary meetings.
New - bi	Additional clause to follow clause	There is currently no provision in

	<p>6.4. Subsequent numbering to be amended.</p> <p>“An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called to discuss specific issues of importance to the Group. Extraordinary Meetings shall be exempt from Clause [insert number].”</p>	<p>the constitution for extraordinary meetings. It would be sensible for such meetings to be exempt from the proposed new clause referring to the order of business at meetings.</p>
New - bii	<p>To follow the above:</p> <p>“An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be called if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -requested by the Group Executive (Chairman, Hon Secretary and Treasurer), or -requested by at least six Members of the Group in writing, or - agreed by the Group at a previous meeting” 	
New - c	<p>Additional clause to follow clause 6.8. Subsequent numbering to be amended.</p> <p>“The order of business at Group General and Biennial meetings shall be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Apologies 2.Minutes of previous meeting and any matters arising from them 3. Officers Reports 4.Election of Officers (every other year) 5. Other Group Business 6. New Member Clubs (as required) 7. New keyholders (as required)” 	<p>Proposed order of business based on review of previously agreed Group minutes which largely conform to this agenda.</p>
6.12	<p>Sentence to be inserted:</p> <p>“Individual club representatives may be substituted by their club in order to ensure attendance, however proxy voting for absent officers or absent clubs is not permitted.”</p>	<p>At the July 2010 meeting it was agreed that proxy voting is also to be clarified, i.e. that clubs send a representative to the meeting who may be substituted by that club, but officers cannot vote in absentia via a proxy</p>

*refers to existing clause numbers unless otherwise stated