

PWLL DU CAVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Salisbury Hall, Govilon, on Saturday 8th June 2013 commencing at 7.30pm.

Attendees:

Phil Rowsell		(stand-in) Chairman
Fleur Loveridge	Oxford UCC/Red Rose CPC	Secretary
Sue Mabbett	South Wales C.C.	Permit Secretary & Club Rep
Henry Patton	Aberystwyth C.C.	Club Rep & Acting Conservation Officer
Ali Garman	Draenen Diggers	Club Rep & Fixed Aids Officer
Owen Clarke	Cwmbran Caving Club	Club Rep
Chris Densham	Oxford U. C. C.	Club Rep
Peter Talling	University Bristol S.S.	Club Rep
Rich Hill	Gagendor	Club Rep
Chris Seal	Chelsea S.S.	Club Rep
Bernie Woodley	Cambrian Caving Council	
Chris Gibbs	Cwmbran Caving Club	
Stuart France	Chelsea S.S.	

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Spencer Drew (Treasurer), Elsie Little (CCC), John Pybus (Survey Secretary), Andy Farrant (Geological Recorder), Rhian Kendall (Biological Recorder), Morgannwg CC and Mick Day (Chair).

2a. Minutes of the last Meetings (17th November 2012)

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record by the Chair. (Proposed CD, seconded SM).

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.

Given the recent spate of padlock problems it was requested that member clubs keep a record or at least knowledge of where their keys are.

SM to look into marking the keys in future.

While there has been a spate of Gate problems in South Wales recently, the incidents at Ogof Draenen were thought to be unrelated.

After some initial progress, further works with respect to Drws Cefn have again stalled.

b) Treasurer

The treasurer sent his apologies but provided copies of the accounts:

Recently £270 has been spent on replacement padlocks which will need to be added to these. To cover these unforeseen additional expenses, clubs are requested to make further donations (at least £20 suggested). In parallel the Treasurer is to seek reimbursement via CCC if possible.

Future expenditure on conservation tape may be required as our stocks are currently low (but see also d below).

c) Permit Secretary/Access Officer

The Permit Secretary presented the caver data for 2012:

Trips Recorded in Ogof Draenen Nov 2011 to Oct 2012

	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Apr-12	May-12	Jun-12
Parties	13	6	6	10	6	7
Persons	42	22	14	36	22	25

	Jul-12	Aug-12	Sep-12	Oct-12	Nov-11	Dec-11
Parties	5	1	2	7	8	6
Persons	20	2	12	29	30	18

Total = 272

Generally caver numbers remain steady with most trips being carried out by the “usual suspects” from the member clubs.

A few “joke” entries were recorded in the logbook, including by Paul Shea and Chris Bradley.

The recent rescue (see 5 below) was also recorded in the logbook.

d) Conservation Officer (Acting)

Recently all major routes have been inspected and re-taped as necessary. Less commonly visited spots such as Out of the Blue will require re-taping at some point.

Post meeting note: Last meeting it was agreed that a further 1km would be purchased, subsequent to research about funding. However, it has subsequently also been determined that 1)CCC have tape in stock and 2)CCC would like the PDCMG to trial use of a new tape, recently used in Reservoir Hole. For discussion at the next meeting.

Mould spots have, however, been regularly observed in the cave. These are mostly associated with obvious lunch spots. It was noted that the access conditions request cavers to eat over a plastic bag.

e) Survey Secretary

The Survey Secretary sent the following report:

"It's been another quiet year as Survey Sec. I have not received any submissions with new discoveries, and I've not made any particular efforts to chase data or further sort the data that is there. If desired by the committee, I would be happy

to stand for another year when I will have more time available to look at survey data than during this last year."

f) Survey Recorder

There was no report from the Survey Recorder.

g) Biological Recorder

The Biological Recorder sent her apologies, but also her willingness to continue in the role.

Lee Knight's fauna survey continues. He has now sampled all the streams within the cave, apart from those in War of the Worlds which will be tackled in the autumn. One aspect of the survey is the incredibly large number of individuals found to be living in the groundwater in the cave. A fuller report is expected to appear in Descent soon.

It was suggested that the Group write a letter of appreciation to Lee for his hard work.

h) Geological Recorder.

The Geological Recorder was unable to attend. However, he reported that he and Chris Smith have recently obtained some new U-series and U-Pb dates for the cave. The full data is currently being worked up, but the early indications are that the upper levels of the cave are significantly old. A full report is expected in due course as the research is completed and published. In the meantime requests for suggestions of locations of stal deposits in the upper parts of the cave that could be sampled without damage are made.

i) Fixed Aids Officer

An annual inspection of the fixed aids was carried out on the 8th June. Some minor corrosion was reported, but nothing untoward and no significant deterioration since last inspection. The next things to be replaced will be the ropes (these were installed in April 2010) as they are three years old and will definitely need changing within 5 years of installation.

It was noted that Bob Mehew has a scheme for providing free rope for hand-lines etc (ie non-SRT) provided that the rope can be subsequently returned to the BCA for testing.

4. Election of Officers/Recorders

It was agreed that in absence of our usual Chairman, and in light of the constitutional requirement for the presence of the Chairman to permit a quorum, that the election of the Officers would be deferred until the November meeting. Proposed AG, seconded CS. 8 votes for, no votes against, 1 abstention.

It was also agreed that if November becomes the official bi-ennial meetings that proposals should be brought to that meeting to change the constitution to provide for voting rights of the Biological and Geological Recorders.

5. Other Group Business

a) Rescue Callout

Recently there was a potentially very serious rescue callout in Ogof Draenen. A report is provided by Ali Garman below:

Two cavers attempting to make a clockwise round-trip in Ogof Draenen on Wednesday 1st May but were unable to find their way through the second choke in Beyond a Choke streamway. Unfortunately, this meant that they were tired, overdue and, worse, one of the pair was diabetic and starting to suffer from a lack of insulin.

South & Mid Wales CRT was called out at 35 minutes past midnight, when the pair were two-and-a-half hours overdue. The fitter of the two cavers left his companion to make a callout and en route aided the search team enormously by sticking his mobile phone through the bat hole in the capped second entrance and updating the team on the situation.

By the time the rescuers reached the caver, who was found in an exposure bag just beyond the choke, he was extremely hyperglycaemic but was brought to the surface safely at 5:35am, about half an hour ahead of his companion in the company of a second team.

It was also noted that the SWCC key was used during the rescue callout (for speed and convenience given its locations with one of the rescue party). However, this has been “misplaced” during the course of those events.

b) Scaffold Maintenance

The final (horizontal) scaffolding bar in the entrance series shaft is now detached completely. While this does not provide a significant reduction in structural integrity, it will need replacing.

6. Applications for membership

None received.

7. Applications to become keyholders

Since Shepton Mallet CC's request to become a key holder again they have now had the key twice and are trying to make regular trips. The Permit Secretary is proposing that the Group consider their request at the November meeting.

8. AOB

There was a vote of thanks for the stand in chairman.

Meeting closed at 8.27pm

Next meeting, which will be the deferred biennial constitutional meeting, to be held on 23rd November 2013.

Secretary's Report

Padlock Problems

As everyone is aware, twice in February and once in the build-up to Easter the padlock on the gate was removed by persons unknown and replaced with a different lock. In each case we were rapidly able to rectify the situation, usually within a week, sometimes quicker. However, there were still a couple of wasted trips for some visiting cavers and some amended trips for members of the Group committee. As there have been no signs of forced entry it sadly appears that these deliberately disruptive acts have been carried out by a caver with access to the key. The relevant windows when the locks were switched were:

17th – 20th February

25th Feb – 1st March

9th March – 29th March

Thankfully since then there have been no more problems. However, we have still lost three locks each of which costs the Group £90. Therefore this has entailed additional unforeseen costs of £270 which will ultimately either have to be recouped from the member clubs, or if we are lucky via the BCA through CCC. The mounting costs led us to consider changing the lock/key combination in case the lock switching had been carried out by someone who had copied a key (although this theoretically shouldn't be possible, this is what the £90 is for after all). However, in the end this has not been required. However, should this happen again then this is something the Group should seriously consider and perhaps we can discuss some more during the meeting. Sue reported that:

“The cost of new padlock with different setting is same as simple replacement padlock i.e. £90, the cost of each key is £6.50 and when we fitted this lock I purchased 25 keys initially to cover clubs with permanent keys and keys to send out to occasional visitors. Total cost for new padlock nominal £252.50 using same quantities”. It is also possible to change the existing lock to the new settings, but it is clearly worth us continuing to maintain a spare.

We should also potentially discuss whether all clubs should instigate some stricter procedures for signing out keys. It pains me to suggest this, in an ideal world I would support access being as open as possible for everyone. However, we cannot escape the fact that the lock switching does appear to have been carried out by someone with access to a key one way or another. Therefore it would help to have greater knowledge of where/with whom club keys are residing and when they are taken out for trips.

Reluctantly, as the costs and disruption mounted it was also considered appropriate to inform the police of the activity, which I did in early April. They have been investigating, but I have not heard anything further so far.

Lost Key

In mid April Peter Jones reported that he had found a key to the cave on his drive. The only people we know to have lost a key is Gagendor, but the found key did not match the lost one. I will be returning the lost key to Sue's pool this weekend.

Access and Commercial Caving

Following consultation with the Group I submitted a response to this BCA request on 17th February this year. For the record of the minutes, this is the response I supplied to the BCA Secretary:

Dear Damian,

Thank you for canvassing the views of the PDCMG on the topic of "access and commercial caving", including the definition of "commercial caving". You rightly identify the need to balance the needs for training (and introducing new cavers to the sport) with the wishes of landowners and the need for conservation.

As an body charged with managing the access to and conservation of Ogof Draenen we would first like to highlight our policy with respect to that cave. This topic was raised at one of our recent committee meetings (16th June 2012), the minutes from which state:

"The commercial use of the cave was discussed. It was concluded that the current policy is clear: commercial use is not permitted. "

This policy comes about from the wishes of our landowner and it is the unanimous view of the Group that the landowner's position is the first priority with respect to commercial caving. It could also be argued, and it has successfully, that Ogof Draenen is not a suitable cave for novices in terms of either difficulty or conservation risk.

However, this brings us on to the issue of defining commercial caving. After all it can include many more things than paid groups of novices. The following categories have been suggested by members of the group:

Instructional commercial caving. This would mostly comprise commercial taster sessions for children or adults, mainly run in places such as Porth yr Ogof, Goatchurch, Long Churns etc. This would not be suitable for a cave such as Ogof Draenen.

Training related commercial caving. This would cover competent cavers who would require a guide (analogous to a mountain guide), potential CIC candidates gaining experience towards their qualification, advanced training for cavers (eg SRT, rigging or other skills), and the need for research organisations such as the BGS to have qualified "escorts" for "health and safety" purposes.

There is a strong feeling within the Group that commercial caving should not be the subject to an outright ban. There is also a consensus that instructional commercial caving is not suitable for many caves. However, there is a feeling amongst many that training related caving should not fall under the "commercial caving" definition and thus suffer from the same restrictions with respect to access as instructional commercial caving.

We believe that if the BCA does develop a policy about commercial caving then it needs to serve and promote caving. While this may consider what sorts of activity

may be considered in different locations, it will be for the access management bodies such as ourselves to discuss any policy with landowners and assist if required with an appropriate agreement. In our case the landowner is of the view that he does not want to see money made from the cave and that is the overriding factor. However, in other cases it may be possible to negotiate greater access for training related commercial caving with the help of a BCA policy.

It would also be useful if any BCA policy could clarify how Scout or school caving which is not commercial (ie no money is changing hands, pupils taken by an individual teacher etc) should fit into things. Here, with reference to the above distinction it seems sensible that the most important issues is whether the cavers being guided by a Scout leader or teacher are novices or more experienced and receiving training.

However, we would like to stress at this point that it is not a unanimous view of the Group that the BCA should develop a policy on commercial caving. This is because of the overlapping nature of the potential categories of commercial caving and the "can of worms" which you described within your original request.

Finally we would like to mention the issues of liability and the need to stress the requirements for any commercial bodies to take appropriate responsibility in law, particularly with respect to the use of fixed aids. Access management bodies (and landowners) do not wish to become unnecessarily involved in such issues.

Yours, on behalf of the PDCMG,

Fleur Loveridge, Hon. Sec.

To which I received this response:

Hi Fleur

Thanks for your time on this - very helpful indeed.

Damian

I have not heard anything further about this topic from the BCA since, however it will undoubtedly be a topic of discussion at the BCA AGM next weekend which I plan to attend.

Drws Cefn

Refer to text of minutes.

Pwll Du Adventure Centre

In better news the Pwll Du Adventure Centre, which is located above the cave is now open for business again. Peter and Ann Jones, who live in the adjacent farm and are also landowners for Ogof Draenen, have recently finished renovating the Centre. I had a sneak preview tour as the finishing touches were being put to the modernisation and the facilities look great. The Centre sleeps 24 in two double and 20 single bunks, and is designed to suit large groups or extended families. In the main the Centre will be let for sole use, but last minute bunk by bunk accommodation may also be booked. At £17 per person per night the

rates are above a normal caving club weekend, but the facilities and situation would well suit special events. It is located in a beautiful situation and is very convenient for both Draenen and the Lamb and Fox Inn. Further details may be found at <http://www.pwllduadventurecentre.co.uk/>.

APPROVED

Treasurer's Report

Pwll Du Cave Management Group								
Income And Expenditure Account For the Year Ended 31st May 2013								
			Period ending		Period ending		Period ending	
			31/05/13		31/05/12		31/05/11	
			£	£	£	£	£	£
Income:								
Donations:								
	S Drew		0.00		0.00		0.00	
	F Loveridge		0.00		223.68		0.00	
	SWCC		0.00		70.00		0.00	
	OUCG		0.00		20.00		20.00	
	UBSS		0.00		20.00		0.00	
	CSS (Key)		20.00		0.00		0.00	
	Cwmbran CC (Key)		20.00		0.00		0.00	
	Devon SS (key)		20.00		0.00		0.00	
	Gagendor (lost key replacement)		20.00		0.00		0.00	
	Deven SS (Replace broken key)		20.00		0.00		0.00	
	York Un CC (deposit claimed)		10.00		0.00		0.00	
	Brynmawr CC		0.00		0.00		20.00	
	Hereford CC		0.00		0.00		20.00	
	CUCC		0.00		0.00		20.00	
	Orpheus CC		0.00		0.00		20.00	
	Draenen Diggers		0.00		0.00		20.00	
	Draenen Diggers		0.00		0.00		48.52	
	Aberystwyth CC		0.00		0.00		20.00	
	WSG		0.00		60.00		0.00	
	Refund From CCC (Insurance)		50.00		50.00		50.00	
	Refund From CCC (Hall hire)		0.00		0.00		0.00	
	Refund From CCC (Administration costs)		0.00		0.00		0.00	
	Refund From CCC (Locks replacement)		0.00		0.00		127.08	
	Bank Interest:		0.00		0.00		0.00	
			160.00		443.68		365.60	
Expenditure:								
	Llanelly Hall Hire	(28.00)		0.00		0.00		
	Administration costs	0.00		0.00		0.00		
	New lock and Keys	(62.40)		0.00		(127.08)		
	New safety equipment (Draenen)	0.00		0.00		(129.88)		
	New Ladder Installation costs (Draenen)	0.00		0.00		(48.52)		
	BCA Insurance	(50.00)		(50.00)		(50.00)		
	Glo-tape	0.00		(223.68)		0.00		
			(140.40)		(273.68)		(355.48)	
	Deficit of Income Over Expenditure		19.60		170.00		10.12	
Notes to the above for the year ending 31st May 2013								
			2013		2012		2011	
The closing balance actually requests the following:								
	Balance in current A/c		441.43		421.83		251.83	
	Balance in Reserve A/c		0.10		0.10		0.10	
	Outstanding cheques uncleared		0.00		0.00		0.00	
	Total Funds		441.53		421.93		251.93	
As usual I will try and reclaim as much expenditure as I can from CCC in the coming year.								
I have been emailed a forthcoming expense of £270 for replacement padlock and keys. This expenditure will reduce our funds to below £200. Could the group discuss a possible £10 or £20 donation from each key holder to cover the replacement costs of the key and the postage etc.								
I am happy to stand for treasurer again and I am sorry for my lack of attendance today.								
Spencer Drew ACA DipPFS BSc Treasurer (Spencer.Drew@Ntlworld.com)								

Fixed Aid's Report

Ogof Draenen Fixed Aids - 08/06/2013										
Pwll Du Cave Management Group										
								Inspection 08/06/13 - FL & CD	Inspection 09/06/12 - AG	
No.	Location	Identification	Specification	PPE	Installed By	Installation Date	Inspection Due	Rigging Comments	Inspection Comments	Inspection Comments
1	Entrance Climb	1st backup Eco hanger furthest from pitch head	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	08/06/2014	Un-used	OK	OK
2		Middle Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	08/06/2014	Rope tied directly into Eco hanger	Hanger rotates very slightly. Loaded perpendicularly so not a concern	Hanger rotates slight. Loaded perpendicularly so not a concern
3		Main hang Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	08/06/2014		Resin does not completely fill the hole flush to the surface	Resin does not completely fill the hole flush to the surface
4		MR for 3rd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	08/06/2014		Some minimal surface corrosion	Some minimal surface corrosion
5		Traverse and knotted handline	11mm Edelrid Superstatic	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	09/06/2014		OK	OK
6	Indiana Highway	1st Eco hanger from Indian Highway end	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2014	Tied directly into Eco hanger	OK	OK
7		2nd Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	08/06/2014		OK	OK
8		MR for 2nd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	08/06/2014		OK - slight surface corrosion	OK
9		3rd Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	08/06/2014		OK	OK
10		MR for 3rd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	08/06/2014		OK - slight surface corrosion	OK
11		4th Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	08/06/2014	Tied directly to Eco hanger	OK	OK
12		Traverse line	11mm Edelrid Superstatic	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	09/06/2014		OK	OK
13	Balcony Pitch	Left hand Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2014		OK	OK
14		MR for Left Eco hanger	12mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	08/06/2014		OK - slight surface corrosion	OK
15		Right hand Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	08/06/2014		OK	OK
16		MR for Right Eco hanger	10mm Delta MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	08/06/2014		OK - slight surface corrosion	OK
17		MR for Left of ladder	10mm Long Open MR	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	08/06/2014		OK - slight surface corrosion	OK
18		MR for Right of ladder	10mm Long Open MR	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	08/06/2014		OK - slight surface corrosion	OK
19		MR for lifeline	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	08/06/2014	Linked into Delta MR	OK - slight surface corrosion	OK
20		Looped ladder lifeline	11mm Edelrid Superstatic	Yes	AG & MS	24/04/2010	08/06/2014	Runs through 10mm MR	OK	OK
21		Stainless Steel Ladder	Daren style ladder	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	08/06/2014	Lifeline is the PPE	OK	OK
22		Chain for rigging ladder	10mm Zinc Plated chain	??	AG & MS	22/05/2011	09/06/2014		OK - slight surface corrosion	OK