



CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL CYNGOR OGOFEYDD CYMREIG

Affiliated to the British Caving Association

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Fleur Loveridge
Secretary PDCMG
c/o Wren Cottage
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1st June 2014

Dear Fleur

It was stated at your November 2013 meeting that PDCMG planned to close the Drws Cefn entrance to Ogof Draenen in the summer of 2014. As of a week or two ago this had not yet been carried out. The view of the Cambrian Caving Council executive is that Drws Cefn should remain open and that a new access agreement for its use should be negotiated with the landowning company.

There has been an open entrance at Drws Cefn since the 1990s when this land was in the ownership of the Coal Authority. The connection to Ogof Draenen was made in the summer of 2009 which is about 10 years from the purchase by the present landowning company who, until the connection was made and attendant publicity, seemed to be unaware of this natural cave entrance on the mountain. Other than for a few months in 2010, when it was gated by the explorers and with local cavers' assistance, Drws Cefn has remained open at the surface for at least 15 years without any public safety or cave conservation concerns arising. The gate referred to above was taken over by PDCMG in 2010 and then removed a few months later by persons unknown. It was never replaced, leaving free access ever since into or out of the main cave, but for a sheet of corrugated iron placed to keep livestock away.

The case promoted by PDCMG in 2009 for closing Drws Cefn was based entirely on cave conservation risks. But in the five years since then no conservation problem has arisen despite Drws Cefn being a viable route. Indeed had this extra entrance been adopted and understood it could have played a beneficial role in underground safety incidents during the past five years, and could easily do so again in the future.

May we remind you that there was a serious diabetes incident where a rescue was initiated by means of using a mobile phone at the blocked Nunnery entrance after the victim became unable to return to the original entrance. If such cases ended with a fatality or serious but avoidable bodily harm arising near an entrance which had been deliberately blocked (so as to place cave conservation above safety) there could be major legal repercussions as well as a tragedy.

