

# Pwll Du Cave Management Group

**Minutes of the meeting held at Salisbury Community Hall, Govilon on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018 commencing at 10:00am.**

## **Present**

Les Williams (LW)	Chair
Sue Mabbett (SM)	Permit secretary/access officer
Spencer Drew (SD)	Treasurer
Ali Garman (AG)	Draenen Diggers Rep
Josh White (JW)	Conservation officer
Tom Partridge (TP)	Gagendor CC Rep
Reuben Harding	OUCC
Thomas Kim Leung	OUCC
Chris Densham (CD)	OUCC rep and Trustee
Clive Owen	UBSS Rep
Chris Seal (CS)	Chelsea Speleo. Soc. rep
Frank Tully	Wessex CC
Peter Smith (PS)	Biological Recorder
Stuart France (SF)	Cambrian CC
Christina Byrne (CB)	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Vince Allkins (VA)	SWCC Rep

## **Apologies**

Rich Hill, Gagendor; Martin Hoff, SWCC; Steve King, SMCC; Dan Thorne, Permit Secretary; Charles Bailey, Trustee; Dave Glover, MCC; Andy Farrant, Geological Recorder rtd; Tom Williams, Brynmawr and Fixer Aids Officer; Judith Calford, MCC.

## **1. Opening Remarks**

SM welcomed everyone present and thanked them for coming. SM noted that she had booked the hall for 4 hours, and therefore this meeting would have to finish by 2.00pm; with that SM welcomed the new chairman, Les Williams (LW) and handed over to him.

Firstly in the interest transparency LW informed the meeting that he had just been elected the chairman of British Caving Association (BCA), however he had taken on this role to be an independent chair. He wished it to be known that he would not be representing BCA in any form and his role as BCA chair would have no influence on this role. LW wished to have recorded his thanks to his predecessor Mick Day, along with those present, it was confirmed these thanks had also been given at the last meeting.

## **2. Minutes from Previous Meeting (15 Oct 2017)**

SM had issued final minutes in Feb 2018 from meeting of 15 Oct 2017 after requesting corrections in December. On issuing final minutes SM had received request for an addition from PS and CS. After e-mail conversation, there is proposed additional sentence on page 5. This final version was presented for approval, 9 voted for and 4 abstained. The minutes were approved by the chairman.

## **3. Matters Arising From Minutes Not Covered In Agenda**

a) CS questioned the function of PDCMG committee, consisting of the officers and recorders, did the committee consult each other on PDCMG business. CS asked if the officers and recorders (PDCMG committee) discussed matters between meetings, and if SM circulated information to committee between meetings for discussion. SM stated that in correspondence and in attendance at meetings related Ogof

Draenen and Pwll Ddu she would not take decisions on behalf of PDCMG, any issues requiring a decision would be brought to the general meeting or an EGM. SM follows the requirements of the licence agreement and the PDCMG constitution in correspondence. SM reported that all committee members were included on e-mails sent out, committee members were contacted in response to matters. SM had not set up groups simply because she was not computer literate enough to do this however she did ensure e-mails went to all Club reps, committee members, trustees and organisations regularly attending meeting i.e. CCC and NRW. CS asked this as AF suggested in his resignation he was not consulted, SM had missed AF in one e-mail, but this e-mail sent to all Club reps had requested the information be forwarded to all Club members and therefore AF had received the information and SM had apologised for a single miss.

b) SM reported she had sent the condolence card to Jenny Potts, following death of Boyd Potts that was signed by those present at the last meeting.

c) SM reported she had sent the petition, signed by those present at the last meeting, for a Heart Defibrillator to be installed at Salisbury Hall, to the Salisbury Hall representative. SM had received a thank you and notice that a heart defibrillator had been purchased and was installed on the fence just outside the hall.

### **3 Officers Reports**

#### **a) Secretary**

SM had circulated her report prior to the meeting. SM commented that her time as secretary had mainly been taken up with dealing the new entrance on tram road a scheduled historic monument. SM reported the cavers present at the meeting in January to discuss the damage to the tramway by the new entrance were representing the various organisation. SM said this was not the intention as all cavers there stated the roles they held in the caving groups and organisations, none including herself claimed to be representing those organisations as no committee meetings or general meetings had been held prior to that meeting. SM would re-word her report accordingly. Cadw had invited any cavers who had expressed an interest in the issue.

SM had received notification from Charles Bailey, one of three trustees for PDCMG that he wished to stand down as trustee. Charles now lived in Derbyshire and was very busy work wise this led to decision to stand down. CS questioned that as PDCMG did not hold any land or property did we actually need to have trustees. SM reported trustees was term used by PDCMG according to our legal advice for the people nominated by PDCMG to be the licensees on the legal agreement with the landowner for managing access to Ogof Draenen. The current trustees (licensees) are Charles Bailey (CSS), Chris Densham (OUCC), and Tim Long (MCC).

CB had not indicated he wished to stand down with immediate effect therefore SM proposed (as we did to find a new chairman) that the PDCMG Club representatives between now and the next meeting try and identify a person willing to become a new trustee. Any nominations of willing volunteer to be a new trustee to be sent to the secretary for presentation at the next meeting. If more than one person was nominated then vote could take place at the next meeting. SM asked all everyone to consider when nominating a new trustee that we continue to represent across the PDCMG members.

#### **Action Point:**

**All Club reps** to discuss with their Clubs the need for PDCMG to find a new trustee and if possible nominate a Club member willing to become a new trustee.

PS asked questions related to the Bat survey completed to enable Cadw to progress with repairs to the Tramway. CD clarified that the bat report had been completed on behalf of Pwllddu Conservation Limited not PDCMG. At request of the Cadw representative, Amelia Pannett, CD had filled in the application for funds to complete the bat survey as directed by, to assist the landowner, Pwllddu Conservation Ltd (PCL). Cadw could not submit the application for its own funds, it had to be submitted by the landowner. PS asked



under what conditions the survey had been completed, as he had quoted for the survey, however an alternative provider had been selected. SM believed the company performing the survey had done to the requirements of the request for quote although she did not know the detail. As already discussed the PDCMG had no influence on the conditions of the Bat survey this was a matter between PCL and Cadw therefore LW called to halt any further discussion on matters that we could not affect.

CD then raised issue of Cambrian Caving Council (CCC) interactions on Ogof Draenen and the PDCMG, he considered there was unnecessary and counteractive interference. The BCA had, in accordance with their constitution, to respect the autonomy of cave access bodies, and determined it would not interfere with matters relating to access to Ogof Draenen and the PDCMG. CD believed that CCC did not respect autonomy of PDCMG to control access to Ogof Draenen. SF countered if CCC did not respect the autonomy of PDCMG it would be consulting the landowner directly. He reported there had been historical meetings for example in 2014. CD and others stated these were individual requests to try resolve specific issues. SF reported that the CCC committee had determined it wished to support managed access by other gates to Ogof Draenen, SF consider this an opinion of CCC not interference. SF also explained how CCC Newsletter was reviewed prior to publication.

AG commented that for example in the Newsletter from CCC, the national caving body for Wales seemed to be sniping at PDCMG, in its management of access to Ogof Draenen and trying to undermine PDCMG in its function.

AG believed that we needed as a group to improve the Ogof Draenen website to counter what he believed was the negative (sniping) reports in the Newsletter. SM reported that Tim Long (trustee) had taken over as webmaster for the website with the intention of making these improvements and include positive reports on items such as recent conservation work. AG said his son could help improve website as he was into website construction, SM would pass information on to TL.

From the discussion CD proposed SM write a letter on behalf of PDCMG to CCC emphasising CCC constitutional requirements with regard to respecting the autonomy and independence of cave access and conservation bodies, this includes PDCMG, and those bodies manage access and conservation of caves independently. This letter should be drafted and sent to Club reps and committee for comment, the final version being recirculated before final version sent to CCC.

This was voted on with 7 for and 3 abstentions.

**Action Point:**

**SM** to draft letter to CCC as outlined above, circulate letter for comment as described above then send final version to CCC.

SM then requested a review of Caving Clubs represented on PDCMG. SM held the following Club names as current members of PDCMG

Aberystwyth (Uni) CC, Brynmawr CC, BEC, Cardiff Hill Divers, Cardiff University CC, Chelsea Speleo Soc., Cwmbran CC, Draenen Diggers, Gagendor, Hereford CC, Morgannwg, OUCC, Shepton Mallet CC, SWCC, UBSS and Wessex.

On the website it also listed Orpheus with Boyd Potts so this needed to be removed, and Westminster SG. Those present could not think of any other current members. Membership is considered lapsed when Club has not attended meeting for a few years. Reference constitution check by CS. The use of e-mail group was discussed again, to aid sending out e-mails to all group members, committee members and trustees.

**Action Point:**

**SM** to contact Westminster SG to see if they wished to remain members.

**SM** to request Tim Long (trustee and current webmaster for PDCMG website) sets up a block e-mail for sending PDCMG Committee e-mails and PDCMG Clubs Reps. CS also believed it was unnecessary to bcc in e-mails sent by PDCMG secretary and those present did not disagree.

**b) Treasurer**

A copy of current accounts was circulated to those present, and a copy is appended to these minutes. SD reported that nothing much had happened since last meeting on finance. He had paid in 2 x £20 received at last meeting for keys.

SD requested that the meeting agreed to change for signatories on the PDCMG bank account from Fleur Loveridge, previous secretary to current secretary Sue Mabbett. Spencer reported that the bank account was set up to require two signatories to withdraw money, with this in mind he also suggested a third signatory was added to the account to cover in event of one signatory becoming unavailable. The group agreed this was a good idea and discussed which position on the PDCMG committee should be the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. The considered options were chairman, conservation officer and permit secretary after short discussion the group agreed the conservation officer should become the 3<sup>rd</sup> signatory.

The meeting agreed that the new signatories on the PDCMG bank account should be Sue Mabbett, secretary and Josh White, conservation officer these two would be added to the account with the treasurer as the three signatories for the account. The account will continue require 2 to sign cheques and approve withdrawal of funds from the account, therefore it will now be 2 out of 3. Fleur Loveridge would be removed as previous secretary.

SD raised question as to how the hall hire fees should be paid, the previous secretary had paid for hire of the hall in recent years, SD reported it was unfair to expect the secretary to cover this cost. Prior to the secretary paying there had been whip round of those present to pay any hall charges. SM questioned if there was sufficient funds in the account to meet this cost of £24. LW believed those present had already paid out for fuel costs and toll charge (for those crossing Severn Bridge) to attend this meeting and it was unfair to expect them to contribute more. On confirmation there were sufficient funds in the account I was agreed the hall fees, £24, should be paid for from the PDCMG account.

CS asked if PDCMG had liability insurance, and did that liability insurance cover Trustees, Committee (Officers and Recorders), and the Landowner. SD confirmed the group did have liability insurance through BCA, this was standard for cave access controlling bodies. SF reported CCC paid for the liability insurance. LW corrected this to the BCA funds paid for liability insurance, the BCA funds were paid to the regional bodies CCC who in turn met the cost of insurance. CS requested SD to check the liability insurance does cover Trustees, Committee (Officers and Recorders), as well as the Landowner, and the extent of that insurance, following previous reports from SF suggested that members of PDCMG were personally liable in event of court case to contest right of access to the cave through the additionally entrances created since landowners agreement e.g. Drws Cefn.

**Action Point:** SD to check liability insurance cover for PDCMG, trustees, officers, recorders and Club representatives.

**c) Permit Secretary**

The permit secretary had provided a summary of trips into Draenen as recorded in the log book, this is copied below.

Trips Recorded in Ogof Draenen October 17 to April 18								
	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	Total =
Parties	5	2	8	8	6	4	3	36
Persons	16	7	28	36	27	20	8	142

SM reported there had been a lack of log book sheets to fill in for a short period in last six months. This led to trips being record on the log book folder. News that sheets had run out came to SM as DT's contact



details had not been available which delayed replacement, however DT had sourced new stock of waterproof paper and new log sheets were now in place.

SM reported she had also received a more detailed report of the trips which follow normal protocol this more detailed is not circulated to the meeting, but this would be passed the landowner, Pwlllddu Conservation Ltd as per licence agreement. CS asked if these detailed records included individual names. SM reported this did include name of first (legible name) of a person in each group. SM (as permit secretary) had many years ago avoided using term leader and noted it was first legible name as historically mud and water had obliterated all or part of some names. In alignment with current data protection requirements did those filling in the log book aware the data was held? It was requested that the information passed to the landowner did not include individual names.

Also it was asked if it was clear from the access conditions that names were recorded and held.

Others present believed that this should be acceptable to hold the names (for a specified period) and that if cavers did not wish to have their names recorded that they could chose not to enter the cave. Names were useful in event of wishing to track down when something happened (e.g. damage, movement of rocks, padlocks going missing). Also useful for complete history of the cave and its exploration.

#### **Action points**

SM to ask the landowner if he was willing to accept the cave usage records from the log book without individual names.

#### **d) Conservation Officer**

The report from JW had been previously circulated. The group thanked JW for all his hard work in setting up the conservation days; the achievements made by those attending those days were great with lots of re-taping and items cleared.

SF reported more sightings of mould to JW. SM commented that she believed any conservation minded caver on seeing such issues, (mould and rubbish) should clear it up at time of observation. SF reported he did not have the materials required to clear up the mould at the time he saw it. The general principle that those cavers observing an issue should if possible clear it up, and not expect the conservation officer to do everything, was accepted.

JW reported he had seen a lot of rubbish and mould near Snowball including small bits of green plastic that seem to be used as route markers.

AG asked the group that with more entrances is there a perception of more conservation damage occurring in the cave, i.e. had the rate of damage increased? JW could not answer that as he had only been in the role just over 2 years. LW commented AG could look for himself. Generally it was believed the rate of damage was increasing, with increased signs of activity. CS said it was not possible to know whether extra damage was related to extra entrances. LW commented that although the extent and rate damage in Ogof Draenen could not be accurately measured, historically in over caves in the UK damage has occurred with passages being made larger, formations damaged to gain access. So damage does occur over time and unfortunately there has been and will continue to be one off events causing significant damage.

The question is how we should respond at the moment, JW and those who helped him had been doing everything they could in terms of replacing tapes, upgrading taping.

SM suggested fixed point photography at key locations. It was recognised at the last meeting the Snowball had been moved and photos proved this. SF summarised the discovery of passages around the Snowball, by Nig Rogers and Mark Withers, such as Lucky 13 and Station 13 passage in the early days of discovery. The short cut to Snowball had been dug by AG and others within two weeks of the NR and MW discoveries. As this was close to time the original discovery no data had been published to make others aware and AG was following a draught and was surprised to pop out into passage that other cavers had found already.

Back to how best to aid conservation of the cave now and how to manage a record of the status of the cave. It was suggested that we needed to identify suitable fixed point locations, these should not just be by formations but included things such as sand banks, mud banks, etc. We also needed to obtain photographs taken in the cave since its discovery to provide an on-going record. The group should try to obtain this information for the next meeting to discuss / review. Some cave photographers who had taken photos

during the major exploration period were mentioned, JW would try to contact them directly, e.g. Clive Westlake.

**Action Points**

**JW** to write a request for photos and suggestions for future fixed points for on-going monitoring.

**SM** to send that request to PDCMG Club representatives.

Big Beauty Camp Letter

Tim Guildford had sent a letter to PDCMG, via SM and JW for discussion under Conservation Officers report. SM circulated this letter to all those present, a copy is appended to these minutes.

Everyone present was given time to read the letter. This letter summarised the state the Big Beauty Camp had been left in, with all equipment, and materials safely and discretely stowed away in kit bags and Daren drums. The state of the camp as reported by SF to the last meeting and caver's forum had been created by others, one assumes in an attempt to mar the reputation of the OUCC diggers.

Once all had read the letter, LW suggested that any further discussions would not be of benefit to anyone as who had strewn the camps equipment and materials could not be proven; however he suggested that SM write to Tim to thank him for the letter, that set the record straight on how OUCC had left the camp and those present accepted that for reasons given in the letter the camp equipment and materials had not been left strewn in the cave passage as found by those on the conservation days. Those present agreed further discussion would not be beneficial and that SM should write to Tim as outlined by LW.

e) **Survey Secretary**

No report had been received from John Stevens. CS had not heard from JS (for info JS is a Chelsea Speleo Soc. Member, CS is CSS rep.) SM was sure she now had correct e-mail address and she had not received any bounces recently.

f) **Biological Recorder**

The report from PS had been circulated, a copy attached to this minutes. There was a correction to the report that Pwllddu Conservation Ltd(PCL) had commissioned the Bat Survey to assess the new entrance in the Tramway, Twll Ddu, not PDCMG. *(Post meeting note this confusion arose as PS asked to supply quote to Chris Densham PDCMG, PS not aware CD acting on behalf of PCL)* PS had not received any biological reports since Oct 2017. PS stated would be interested in receiving a copy of the bat survey report and asked if SM could forward the copy she had seen. SM reported it was not her report and was unsure of the true ownership of the report. After short discussion it was decided that SM would ask Cadw for a copy of the report.

**Action Point:**

**SM** to write to Cadw to request a copy of the bat survey report.

g) **Geological Recorder**

A short report from the Geological Recorder had been circulated, a copy attached to these minutes.

AF had resigned as Geological recorder, the meeting requested SM write to Andy and thank him for the work he had done as Geological recorder.

AF had questioned the need for a Geological Recorder, those present needed time to consider this suggestion and review with their Clubs. It was agreed to review at the next meeting, with any nominations to fulfil the role until the next PDCMG elections.

**Action Points**

**SM** to write to Andy Farrant and thank him for his work as Geological Recorder

**All Club Reps:** Review need for Geological Recorder and if possible nominate another Geologist to fulfil the role of Geological Recorder.



#### **h) Fixed Aids Officer**

Tom Williams had sent his apologies for the meeting. SM reported that TW had received a spreadsheet detailing the fixed aids and record of the inspections completed from AG. SM had not circulated as report as too extensive. AG (previous fixed aids officer) on behalf of TW then summarised current situation for fixed aids.

- i. All inspections were up to date and the next extensions were due in Oct 2018.
- ii. From the completed inspections completed there was slight movement in 1 Eco hanger and TW with Vince Allkins (CCC Equipment Officer) would work together to replace this.
- iii. In Oct some ropes would require replacing as part of the 3 year cycle.
- iv. The life line rope on the Balcony pitch had been moved from the current recognised fixed aid (Daren style ladder) to the original fixed ladder. This line had been attached to fixing by original ladder that it could not be easily moved.

On item iv, this rope was due for replacement in Oct as part of 3 year cycle so it was suggested that this rope was left there and the new rope installed in the correct location with the current ladder. The original ladder was from Mendip and lost 2 rungs in the early days but had been sound since. JW reported another rung had recently gone on him when he was descending this ladder. After short discussion it was agreed the rope should be removed and the original ladder taken down and put beyond possible use; even if it was not taken out of the cave at this time.

The discussion then moved to how do cavers identify which are the maintained / inspected fixed aids in the cave as there is nothing to distinguish the 2 ladders on balcony pitch or a rope in place for exploration only. It was suggested that a list of the recognised fixed aids is posted on the website and a laminated list of the recognised fixed aids placed in the log book at Cairn junction. In Oct when the next inspection was due it was recommend dog tags are placed on the 'official fixed aids' as is currently done in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (OFD) in the Swansea valley. All those present believed this was a good idea as it limited liabilities associated with other aids in the cave.

#### **Action Points**

**TW** to forward list of Fixed Aids to SM, for forwarding to Tim Long to place on the website

**TW** to generate a laminated sheet detailing all recognised fixed aids in Ogof Draenen and arrange for that list to be placed in the log book.

**TW** at next inspection occurrence if possible assuming obtained dog tags to place dog tags onto each recognised fixed aid.

#### **4 Election of Officers / Recorders**

Although N/A for this meeting as the two yearly elections had been held last October, SM wished the group to clarify when the next two yearly election should occur as the elections that occurred in Oct 2017 were postponed from a meeting that was due to take place in June 2017. There was some discussion on the matter however the constitution refers to elections taking place in June therefore it was agreed by those present that the next election of Officers and Recorders will take place in **June 2019**.

#### **5 Other Group Business**

No one seemed sure what this item was supposed to cover that 'Any Other Business' did not cover. It was agreed to cover everything under AOB and remove this item from future agendas.

#### **6 Applications for Membership**

Neither SM nor DT had received any applications for membership.

#### **7 Applications to Become Key Holders**

Neither SM nor DT had received any applications to become a key holder.

## 8 Any Other Business

### a. Drws Cefn

SM, as reported above, had spent her time in the last six months managing and dealing with the new Twll Ddu entrance and the damage to the scheduled monument caused by this new entrance. SM believed we should now get back to trying progress with actions on Drws Cefn that this group, PDCMG had voted to close 10 years ago. PS reported that he had commented on CD's draft bat grille presented at the last meeting as an outline sketch.

SM asked / proposed that PS, with his expert knowledge of the requirements for any bat grille to be placed over an entrance, created a design for a suitable bat grille on Drws Cefn. PS stated he would not be willing to design a bat grille that did not permit entry through it by cavers.

As following the vote 10 years ago Wessex had reported they would have voted the opposite way a few months later, other Clubs may have also changed their minds and voted differently so it was time to possibly reconsider the options to enable progress on Drws Cefn to be made. Therefore SM suggested that PS came up with a design that contained a gate which could enable cavers to enter. The design from PS could be discussed at the next meeting. Discussions could then begin on the use of the gate and under what conditions entry may be made through that gate. Although an EGM maybe required for final decision.

PS also noted that he could not obtain approval of the design by NRW between and the next meeting, SM and those present recognised this and obtaining official approval from NRW would take longer, however SM was sure that with PS's expert knowledge the design would probably be accepted following submission to NRW. SM asked PS to take into consideration the visibility of any design as Drws Cefn could be seen from the public footpath and an obvious gate may lead to curious member of public trying to enter the system ill equipped.

CS requested we set a notification period before any decision agreed upon was implemented. This was to enable members of PDCMG to take action they thought necessary to avoid any possibly liability claims. A time period of 1 month notification was proposed and agreed.

#### Action Point

PS to bring to the next meeting a design for a bat grille to include gate for cavers for Drws Cefn to the next meeting.

### b. The Nunnery

Since the last meeting the wider caving community had become aware that the Nunnery had been re-opened. This re-opening had been confirmed and SM had officially reported this to the land owner, PCL earlier this year.

SF was asked when he became aware of the Nunnery being re-opened and he reported he was aware it had been re-opened about 2 years ago. He declined to comment further on why he had not reported to PDCMG or if he had any idea who re-opened this entrance; although LW did comment, in support of SF, that regional council officers often has to keep information confidential to ensure they continued to receive information from cavers on new finds. LW was aware of this need from his work in the Mendip caving area. The entrance was currently covered with a mesh and some astroturf but there was space to let bats in and out. SF reported he had seen about 0 bats in the immediate area.

It was agreed SM should discuss the matter with the landowner, PCL so they can consider any liabilities associated with this entrance, previously the land owner had requested the entrance to be closed as its position on a very steep slope may cause public safety issue and potential liability issues. SF reported that as this was on CROW land in his opinion the landowner has no liabilities associated with this entrance.

#### Action Point

SM to discuss with the landowner, PCL, Nunnery and any wishes they may have.

## 9. Date of Next Meeting

After reviewing diaries 18<sup>th</sup> Nov or 25<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018 were proposed. The date selected would depend of LW diary, LW and SM to confirm which date selected when minutes sent out.



Nov 2018



## PDCMG Secretary's Report Jun 2018

After the last PDCMG meeting in October, I arranged to meet with the Pwllddu landowner to discuss the potential rights associated with the Pwllddu land being an Urban Common land; by time of this meeting I was also able to confirm that there is a new entrance on land owned by Pwllddu Conservation Ltd land. This was the new entrance about which news was just breaking at our last meeting. At this meeting the land owner confirmed that Pwllddu is part of an urban common but in his opinion and knowledge of urban common land rights this does not give additional rights to the public such as to dig holes or enter underground passage. The new entrance was identified as being on the Tramway which is part of a Garnddyrys Forge and Hills Tramroad historic scheduled monument.

The fact the new entrance is present on the Garnddyrys Forge and Hills Tramroad led the matter being reported to Cadw. The representative from Cadw confirmed the new entrance is within the boundary of historic scheduled monument. The police were informed as this new entrance constituted illegal damage to a historic scheduled monument.

The news of the entrance was disseminated to the various government bodies including Natural Resources Wales, Brecon Beacons National Parks, County Councils, Police by Cadw and in the caving world via various websites and publications. Cadw wishing to obtain an agreed community resolution to repair the damage to the Tramway, called a meeting of interested parties on 10<sup>th</sup> January. This meeting included representatives from all those bodies mentioned above, and from the caving world it included Chris Densham (trustee PDCMG), Stuart France (Conservation Officer CCC), Allan Richardson (Secretary CCC), Chris Howes (Descent), Robin Weare (BCA treasurer) and myself (Secretary PDCMG) these cavers we invited by Cadw as they had been in communication with Cadw over the new entrance. This meeting commenced at the new entrance which was now an open entrance compared to October when it was still very much disguised as mound of earth. The objective of the meeting was to enable Cadw to present the legal status of historic monuments and the legal protection for this historic monument. The legal status was confirmed by the police officer present at the meeting and other bodies.

At this meeting I did ask if permission had been sought would this entrance be permitted, the answer was a resounding no, due to damage it could cause to the Tramway. I also asked if the entrance which was a convenient location for access could be kept open as a new entrance again due to damage to tramway and its location on public footpath the answer was no. Immediately after this meeting I did send out an e-mail to PDCMG Club members, trustees, officers and recorders on the outcome of that meeting. The following weekend I met up with Allan Richardson (CCC Secretary) and we wrote a joint statement from the secretaries on the status of the new entrance, asking for all cavers not to access Ogof Draenen by the new entrance as this would cause further damage to the historic monument which is legally protected.

In April, Cadw were surprised (as was I when I received copies as I had been present with CCC representatives in January when support had been given to Cadw to resolve the issue) to receive e-mails and then later a letter from CCC stating they were withdrawing support to repair the damage to the Tramway and return the Tramway to its original condition as this would require closure of the cave entrance. I circulated the letter and Cadw's reply separately by e-mail. In May I was invited (as PDCMG officer) to a meeting by Cadw to discuss the latest resolution to repair the tramway, which I attended. At this meeting the dangerous state of this new entrance was discussed, the danger it presented to members of the public using the public footpath and the landowner liability in event of member of public (or animal dog, sheep) falling down the hole. Decision was made to erect a fence to protect the public; there was discussion on closing the public footpath due to the instability created by the new entrance at edge of tramway however after some discussion this was decided not to be necessary at the moment. The outcome of bat survey was summarized and the options to repair the damage to the Tramway were discussed.

#### Other Activities since October 2018:

My sincere thanks are given to Richard Hill who took and then wrote up the minutes of the last meeting. I finalized these and circulated for comment correction, which identified a few typos / grammar errors but no errors in content, so I then circulated final minutes.

Due to all the time required for resolution of the new entrance and damage to the Tramway I have not progressed with any follow up on the bat grille for Drws Cefn, the bat survey completed for the new entrance included a survey of Drws Cefn which confirmed Drws Cefn is now used by bats.

When I took over the role in October I sent out e-mails to all club reps to confirm contact e-mails for the Club Reps which are members of PDCMG, I removed from the list anyone who is not a Club rep, officer, recorder, trustee or regular attendee as associated body e.g. NRW or CCC. This stood me in good stead for the new GDPR regulation, I have sent e-mail notification to all those on my e-mail list confirm I only use their contact details of PDCMG business and asked those contacted to let me know if they wish to be removed from the list. As a group we need to consider do we need a Privacy Policy.

Sue Mabbett  
05 Jun 2018



## Pwll Du Cave Management Group

### Income And Expenditure Account For the Year Ended 31st May 2018

	Year ending 31/05/18		Year ending 31/05/17	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Income:</b>				
Donations:				
MCC		0.00		100.00
Oucc		0.00		50.00
F Loveridge		24.00		36.00
Hereford CC		0.00		25.00
UBSS		0.00		40.00
Shepton Mallet CC		0.00		20.00
Cardiff Hill Divers (Key)		20.00		0.00
York Caving Club (key)		20.00		0.00
		50.00		50.00
Refund From CCC (Insurance)		0.00		0.00
Bank Interest:		<u>114.00</u>		<u>321.00</u>
<b>Expenditure:</b>				
BCA Insurance	(50.00)		(50.00)	
Meeting Hall Hire	(24.00)		(36.00)	
Wall Ties (Conservation)	(38.00)		0.00	
Log Book Paper	(45.54)		0.00	
Administration costs	0.00		0.00	
		(157.54)		(86.00)
		<u>(43.54)</u>		<u>235.00</u>

**(Deficit) of Income Over Expenditure**

#### Notes to the above for the year ending 31st May 2018

	2018	2017
The closing balance actually requests the following:		
Balance in current A/c	662.61	622.61
Balance in Reserve A/c	0.10	0.10
Outstanding cheques	-83.54	0.00
Total Funds	<u>579.17</u>	<u>622.71</u>

On behalf of the group I would state that any donations will be gratefully received.  
The only other item to confirm is the BCA Access Controlling Body registration has been obtained again.

Spencer Drew ACA DipPFS BSc  
Treasurer  
(Spencer.Drew@Ntlworld.com)

# Conservation Officer Report

June 2018

It's been a busy couple of months to report on, with many successful conservation trips into Ogof Draenen, where we have achieved many jobs. I would like to start by saying a big thank you to everyone who has helped volunteer and completed several tasks.

After the last meeting the first goal was to remove all the un-needed equipment and any rubbish from the cave. The campsites within the cave were the key sites to improve. The Big Beauty Junction camp was first cleared by a group of volunteers helping the community. Then soon after the War of the Worlds and Dollimore series camps were cleared, only leaving a couple of items that have recently since been removed.

At the beginning of the year I ran two conservation days to relay conservation tape in some of the key passageways in the system. One team headed off to Midwinters chambers, the tape had recently been damaged, so it was relayed to help protect the gypsum crystal formations. The second team went to Gilwern Passage to lay raised tape and the third team headed to Yellow Van to clear up the area and to remove any rubbish.

A second day trip a couple of weeks later visited Forever changed passage to lay raised tape in the highly vulnerable passageway, however we ran out of tape for the last 20 meters. Both days were a success and well documented. In total over the two days, about 300 stainless steel pegs were placed and more than 1.5km of tape laid. The first day was filmed by Andy and Antonia Freem documenting the project, secondly, I did a write up on the website Darkness Below; as well, two articles in the Descent.

Notable points to make are that Snowball has been re-taped, but I am not too happy with my work so will review it next time I get a chance; also, the Grotto in the dogleg series has been taped. Sadly, there had been some notable conservation issues in the system since the last meeting, for example someone had recently dropped what looked like a muesli bar in Last Sandwich, Stuart France reported it to me and on my last visit I have tried to remove it to the best of my ability, but whoever dropped it made a real excellent job of it.

Below you will find my to do list, with all the completed jobs as well. You will see some photos taken from the conservation days and if you wish to see the film here is the web address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIJBWUVVlio>

Finally, I recently received news that Cambrian Council had allocated £250 for Draenen to pay for supplies inside the system, which needs spending before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

To receive the money, we must:

- 1) The project has to be costed and agreed in advance with CCC because finance is limited.
- 2) The CCC money has to be spent on materials for use inside the cave for conservation purposes.
- 3) The CCC Treasurer will reimburse costs on submission of valid receipts within the agreed grant period.



To end; the next jobs to consider in the system that needs completing is taping in Dollimores. Some side passages have not yet been taped and some key formations have minimal taping. Also, the round trip, like at the Haggis Basher needs re-taping. Two large project that need working on over the coming months. Other ideas that have been suggested requiring money are for polite signs to be placed in key areas if agreed upon. Currently I have used all my supplies of tape and pegs, so I will need more before any more taping work is to be carried out.

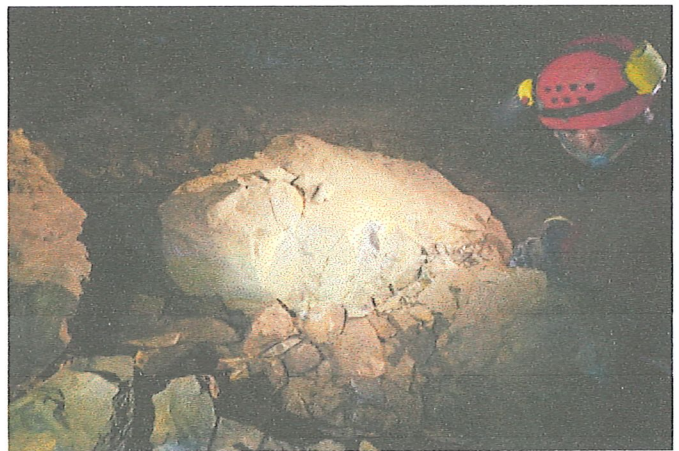
Many Thanks,

Josh White

Before



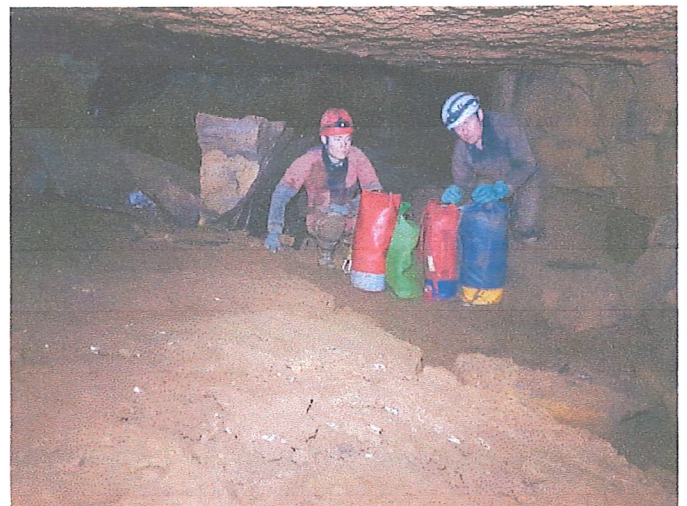
After



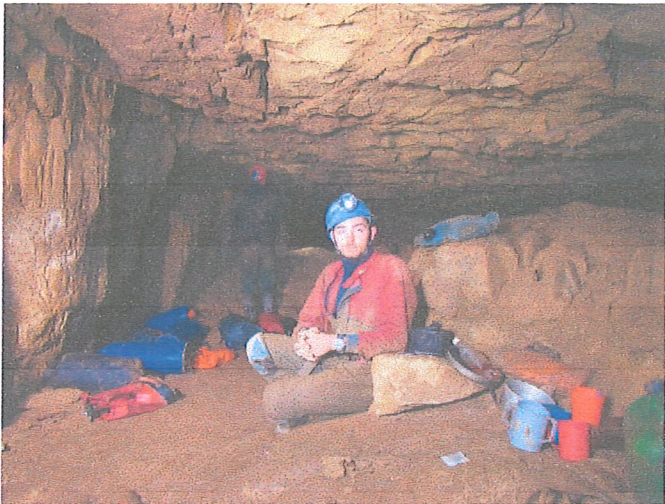
Pic 1 & 2: Big Beauty Junction



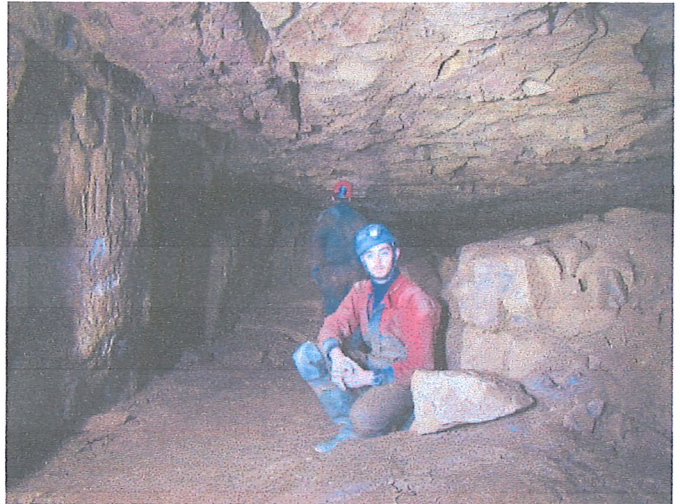
Pic 2 & 4: War of the Worlds







Pic 5 & 6: Dollimores Camp



Pic 7: Equipment and rubbish removed from

Pic 8: Taping in Gilwern



Pic 9: Taping in Forever Changed

Pic 10: Taping in Forever Changed at the Guardian



## Conservation to do list for Draenen

Job Number	Job name	Priority	Done	Information
1	Re-tape Gilwern Passage	1	Done	
4	Re-tape Snowball	1	Done	
9	Procdue a project outline	1	Done	
17	Re-taping midwinters Chambers	1	Done	
15	Taping MS&D side passages	1		Tapping Clique and Screaming Like A Stuck Pig. Not tapped at all. 80 pegs and four rolls at drinking spot.
8	Oragnise Conservation weekend	2	Done	
13	Write camp report for descent	2	Done	x2 and darkness below
18	Re-taping Nunnery	2	Done	
21	Taping Haggis Basher	2		
3	Camp removal Big Beauty Junction	3	Done	
11	Camp removal War of the Worlds	3	Done	
12	Camp removal Luck of Draw	3	Done	
16	Re-taping for forever changed	3	Done	Last 20 meters to do
10	Reporting mechanism	3		
20	Camp removed in Tea Junction	4	Done	
19	Clearing up Yellow Van dig area	5	Done	
5	Removal of rubbish in MS&D	6		Out of the Blue'. Started
7	Review conservation assess doc.	6		
2	Monitoring Program	7		
6	Video production with Andy Freem	8	Done	
22	Last sandwich fungus removal	3	done	Tried my best



Sue Mabbet  
PDCMG Secretary

4<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Dear Sue,

### **Big Beauty Camp**

I am writing to thank members of the PDCMG, and especially the Conservation Officer, for organising and executing (with help from cavers and friends from some member clubs) the clear-out of my old exploration camp at Big Beauty, and others, in Ogof Draenen. I apologise for not doing this sooner myself, but because of family circumstances recently caving at this level has not really been a priority, or even possible.

I also want to set the record straight, however, about the state of this camp as we left it, and the circumstances under which this was misreported to the PDCMG and more widely to the caving community. I understand that the CCC Conservation and Access Officer reported it to the PDCMG at its last meeting because he had received a complaint about the state it had been left in, an issue that he had also publicised on the UK Caving forum. His post on the Forum was accompanied by a photograph apparently given to him showing numerous items, some perishable, laid out on the rocks at the camp. This photograph has subsequently been removed by the Forum's moderators presumably because of the numerous offensive and sexist posts that followed its posting, but I have been passed a copy by one reader. It shows a series of items rather neatly arranged as if for the photograph, conspicuously displaying the name on a carrymat of one female camp user together with rather personal items. For the record, and contrary to the innuendo and offensive comments on the UK Caving Forum, these personal prescription items were for the treatment of a female caver's medical condition of the pelvis (I understand that these items were mentioned by the CCC Conservation officer at the last PDCMG meeting). In addition, five tea-light candles were also alight in the photograph, clearly the work of the photographer not the camp owners.

It only takes a momentary scrutiny of the photograph to realise that this cannot be how the owners of the material left the camp, since perishable material such as cardboard and a chocolate bar showed no signs of decay (quite apart from the staged arrangement and the lit candles). Indeed, this strongly implies that the items must have been removed from their protective packaging (they had been stored in sealed drums) not long before the photograph was taken. The simplest interpretation is that the items were in fact removed, laid out on the rocks (and later strewn about the rocks since this is how the caver who cleared the camp found them), and photographed by the same person(s). I understand that the protective drums (and accompanying tacklebag) in which these items were left stored by us were missing from the camp, I presume stolen. It is not certain of course – the ransacking of the camp and stealing of the drum(s) and bag could have occurred on a separate occasion and been perpetrated by different people, just close in time to the photograph. But we can be absolutely certain that the camp was not left like this by myself or other members of OUCC (indeed, the last report I have received about the camp from





**The photo posted on the Forum by Stuart France.** Note neat arrangement, the name on the carrymat obviously displayed, the lit candles (otherwise new), and the lack of decay or mould on the playing card pack or the chocolate role. The fact that the lighter worked, and is not apparently rusty, also shows that until the photograph it must have been stored inside a drum (along with all the other perishable items).

# **Biological Recorder Report**

June 2018

I have not received any biological records since the last meeting.

I understand that Cadw working with PDCMG commissioned a winter bat survey focussed on the area within Ogof Draenen in the vicinity of the new entrance known as Twll Du, to be carried out in February or early March 2018. (I know the survey specification since I was asked to tender for the work, though I was beaten on price, so was not instructed to do the survey.) I see from Sue Mabbett's report that the bat survey was completed and that it included the Drws Cefn area. However, I have not as yet seen the report nor any summary of the results.

Peter Smith

06 June 2018

## **Geological recorders report.**

I have not had any enquires or requests for geological information in the past few months. It has become increasingly clear to me that my role as geological recorder on the PDCMG is pretty much redundant, and even when there are issues that may have a geological angle, then I am not consulted.

Secondly, with the increasing demands of my job, other commitments with BCRA and family life, I am also finding hard to find the time to drive to South Wales for meetings, let alone caving. For these reasons, I have taken the decision to step down from the PDCMG with immediate effect.

I am still happy to provide geological advice to interested cavers but for anything official, then it is probably best done via my role at the geological survey. NRW have good contacts through Rhian and others at the BGS Cardiff office.

Perhaps in future when I have more time, then I may be able to consider re-joining the committee.

Best wishes to all.

Andy Farrant