

**SOUTH WALES  
CAVING CLUB**

# **NEWSLETTER**



SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB  
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No. 75

NEWSLETTER

March 1974

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Cover photograph - Pant Mawr Pot - Clive Westlake

Editor's Address:

B. T. Jorgensen,  
Flat 4, 28 Uplands Crescent,  
Uplands,  
Swansea,  
Glam., SA2 0PB.



# ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN THE

## SWANSEA VALLEY

On the 6th December 1972 I attended a Public Local Inquiry at Ystradgynlais. This inquiry was to hear objections to the compulsory purchase order to acquire land for the purposes of improving the quality of the road between Tafarn-y-Garreg and Craig-y-Nos. The inquiry was called for by the Secretary of State for Wales to hear the objections of Mr. Watkins of Nant-y-Gwared Farm and Mr. Grinnell of Craig y Nos Bungalow. Other sections of land needed by the Council for their improvements had been acquired by negotiation with the owners. I was permitted to submit evidence on behalf of SWCC.

The scheme proposed by the County Council was to build a completely new road from the hospital to Tawe Bridge (north of the Gwyn Arms). Three-quarters of a mile of this road would have been completely straight and passed from Pen y bont, through the lower car park of Dan yr Ogof, and west of the Gwyn Arms. The road proposed was to have verges of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  metres wide. The effect on the valley many of us love so well, would have been disastrous. After discussing the scheme with many members and visitors, I placed an objection to the scheme as a whole on behalf of the South Wales Caving Club. I proposed that any dangerous bends be merely ironed out and that a new bridge be built to replace the Tawe Bridge. I also objected to the necessity for such wide verges. I alerted Whitbread Ales Limited to what was going on, and they sent their Assistant Estates Manager to hold a watching brief. It was amazing to hear that they had had no inkling as to what was going on until the day before the inquiry when I contacted them.

The Secretary of State has now made a decision on the matter and has accepted the findings of his Inspector. The Inspector's report is quite lengthy and so I am only putting in extracts from his conclusions.

### Inspector's Conclusions (an extract)

"The section of the A4067 with which the Order is concerned falls within the boundaries of Brecon Beacons National Park. It runs along a quiet and unspoilt valley of great natural beauty. Down this valley the Breconshire County Council proposes to build what is virtually a new highway, nearly  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles in length and over 47 ft. in width, of which nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile would be completely straight. There was nothing produced in evidence on behalf of the County Council to indicate the views of the Breconshire National Park Planning Committee on this scheme; nor indeed that any consideration at all had been given to the planning aspect of the matter. In my view, such a highway could not but irreparably mar the natural beauty of the area, which the creation of the National Park was designed to preserve and enhance; and the heavy traffic it would encourage could not but greatly detract from the enjoyment of the area by the public, which the creation of the National Park was designed to promote.

Furthermore, the scheme would take from one hill farmer alone approximately 2 acres out of his total of 17 acres of arable land, in addition to the valuable valley land taken or to be taken from other local land owners. The area, part of Upland Wales, is used primarily for pastoral farming, the secondary use of the land being for open air recreation. There would need to be overwhelmingly cogent reasons of a practical nature for permitting such a scheme to be implemented.

To sum up, I consider that the section of road under consideration could with advantage be improved. However, I find the County Council's scheme for improving it, or rather reconstructing it, impeccable though this may be from an engineering point of view, to be out of all proportion to what is necessary. It is wasteful of valuable farm land, it pays scant regard to the needs of and amenities enjoyed by individual land-owners and, if implemented, it would be detrimental to an area of outstanding natural beauty within the Brecon Beacons National Park. In my view, the requirements of road safety could be met by following broadly the alignment of the existing road, ironing out the worst of the bends, adopting an alignment akin to that suggested by the South Wales Caving Club past the Gwyn Arms, adjusting the worst of the gradients, widening the carriageway where it is essential to safety and adopting 6 feet rather than  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet as the normal width of grass verge. If these improvements necessitated some repositioning of water-mains, the cost thereof would no doubt be offset by the considerable savings resulting from the adoption of a scheme less ambitious than the present one. At all events, savings in the cost of repositioning water-mains should not be made at the expense of the people who live and work in the Tawe Valley, by taking more of their land; nor at the expense of those who visit the Valley for outdoor recreation, by constructing a road that would mar an area of outstanding natural beauty and interest. There would be an advantage if any further consideration that may be given to the improvement of, and the imposition of speed limits on, the section of road to which the Order relates, could be undertaken in close consultation with local authorities, amenity organisations and the Planning Committee of Brecon Beacons National Park."

The Inspector's report was concluded with the recommendation that the compulsory purchase order be not confirmed.

I think most members will be gratified by this news; however I feel that no thanks can be sufficient to the Watkins and Grinnell families since without their objections in the first place, I think that on technical grounds, we would have had no opportunity to submit our objections to the Council's scheme.

ROGER SMITH

## INSTANT CORNWALL

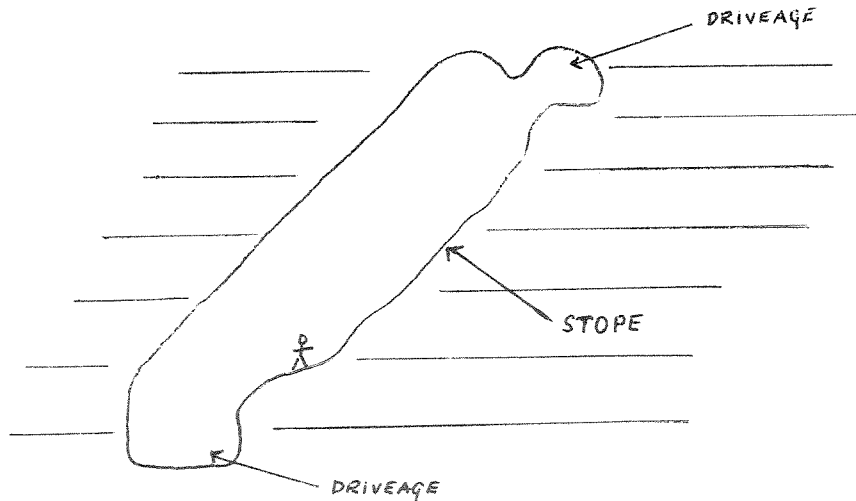
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Thursday evening, 6th September, saw the trusty rusty wagon, loaded with lamps and helmets, packets of Alpen, bribes and trinkets for the natives, speeding, via the Severn Bridge Service Area and a chip shop in Bridgewater, to the sunny South West. It was, in fact, the very foggy South West at midnight on Bodmin Moor, but despite this, we made good time, and arrived at Threemilestone near Truro at 12.30 a.m.

Early start Friday morning saw us at John Lister's lodgings (John is a mining student at Cardiff, with a vacation job at Wheal Jane Tin Mine, who had arranged the trip) and by 9 a.m. we were at the mine, and going down the shaft.

The mine is worked on 12 levels but we only went down to the third level - haulage capacity in the mine is limited, with one shaft to the bottom, and another with skip haulage, to the sixth level, so we planned to leave the mine without mechanical assistance, by climbing up the stopes.

Our guide was Cliff Elson, the Training and Safety Officer at the mine, and we jollied along, having the sights pointed out. The lode worked in the part of the mine we visited is up to 30 or more feet thick in places (although not very pure - 100 tons of ore yields 1 - 1½ tons of tin concentrate) and is inclined at about 45°, so every now and then one comes to these big stope workings, something like this:-



The hanging wall is not very sound, being in shale, and falls away if too long a stope is excavated, so a lot of the orebody has to be left to hold the roof, so the stopes appear to be high rather than long. Also, as well as this problem of a loose hanging wall, the footwall is sometimes false, and there is more ore below this. Therefore, if too much of the roof falls, recovery of any ore below the footwall is hampered.

We climbed up from 3 Level to 2 Level, via an intermediate one and eventually, after various junctions and ventilation doors, found ourselves in old workings. When the mine (only restarted in the last few years) was being prospected, these old workings were used to a great extent for exploration. Eventually, we came to a place where daylight filtered down an old shaft, called Nangiles, which had been widened and renovated by the company at present working the mine. We climbed up the shaft a short way and left via an old adit. This had been exquisitely worked by the "old man" and the last few hundred feet to daylight had all been individually packed with deads - 184 years old and hardly a sign of deterioration. This adit came out about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the main pithead complex. We managed to con a lift back.

After the trip down the mine, a discussion with Cliff Elson revealed that he is a part-time guide at a place which works tailings from spoil heaps for tin and they have a lucrative sideline letting tourists look round. So we got an invite to this - Tolgus Tin Works, for the evening's entertainment - but more of this, dear reader, later.

The next several hours were spent in Penzance, trying to buy rope cheap-cheap at Ellis Brighams, and thence to Camborne. The attraction at Camborne is Holman Brothers (the drilling firm) factory, where they have a museum of their products. Well worth a visit - such noteworthy items as the actual drills used in the "1909 - 1910 South African overland stopping competition"! But mostly because Holmans were one of the principal makers of Cornish engines - as well as lots of models, photos etc, they have a 22" engine, which used to pump a china clay pit, actually in the building. This engine worked for almost exactly 100 years - built 1851, withdrawn from work 1952, and the cylinder is coupled to the factory's compressed air supply. If you ask them very nicely, they will work it for you! A most impressive sight.

Next stop was the Fast Pool Mine, between Camborne and Redruth. Here the National Trust owns two engines and their respective houses - a 30" 'whim' or winding engine, and a 90" pumping engine. Both very impressive, and a mere description here would do them an injustice. I can only recommend that one refers to literature by experts on the Cornish beam engine, or better still, visits these splendid specimens. Sufficient to say that at the first sight of a steam engine with a single cylinder, bore of 7 ft. 6 ins., stroke of 10 ft., housed in a purpose built granite building, 3 stories high, with a beam weighing 52 tons, the mind boggles! Anyway, over an hour was spent listening to the custodian of the 90" engine, who had in fact worked in the engine house when the mine was in operation.

Finally, we paid our visit to the Tolgus Tin Works - this works has been in existence for 200 years, producing tin from mine waste, and has now found that people will pay to see them doing it. I suspect that income derived from this latter operation exceeds that obtained from selling the tin concentrate! The actual operation of separating the concentrate from the rubbish can be followed by the visitor, as he is directed around the works, following little arrows and clutching a guide sheet in his hand - it's a bit vague as you don't follow the same route as the tin, but by crawling about under various things which do the separating, you get a fair idea of what is happening. Again, a description would only tend to confuse - to those sufficiently interested, a visit is recommended.

Tolgus Tin, incidentally, offers free parking, a reasonably priced cafeteria and a fairly tasteful collection of souvenirs for the tourists to buy. Also a mineral shop, with do-it-yourself gemstone kits etc. for sale, and a lot of lumps of lead, tin, pyrites etc. at 10p a lump. (There must be money in that!) Also you can buy your actual Froggy-caver carbide lamps!

Anyway, by 9 p.m., we had exhausted the delights of Tolgus Tin Works, so we piled into the old rust-bucket, pointed its nose towards Penwyllt, and arrived back in the early hours of Saturday, proving that, if Cornwall is close enough for a day, it's certainly close enough for a weekend.

BRUCE FOSTER

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# A Brief Outline of The Great Forest of Brecknock

With Special Reference to the Limestone  
Quarry at Penwyllt

In ancient times the Great Forest of Brecknock was a Royal Forest, and it extended over an area of wild mountain moorland of some 40,000 acres. Those who lived in the Forest had the right to graze their animals on the hills in exchange for a small annual sum for each animal. In addition, they were also entitled to take stone for their own use - free of charge! Through the ages the Forest was leased by the Crown to various people who in turn would 'farm' out the business of collecting dues to 'collectors'. These sometimes made extra money by allowing others from outside the Forest to graze their animals on Forest land at special rates. Following discontent with such practices by those living in the Forest, and the poor return from the land, the Crown decided to sell the land to boost its own resources; these last had been very much depleted by engagement in the Napoleonic wars. However, the sale was complicated by the existence of the rights of common held by the Commoners. The outcome was an Act of Enclosure in 1815. In effect, this Act enabled the Crown to sell part of the Forest to raise money to pay for the Act to be passed and also to compensate for the loss of tithes from the remaining land. In addition, the land remaining after such a sale was to be divided equally between the Crown and the Commoners. This Act had a number of faults in it and in an attempt to rectify these, another Act amending the 1815 Act was passed. This took place in 1818. Now the 1815 Act aimed at dividing up the portion of the Commoners' Allotment (as it was called) amongst the Commoners, according to the extent of the property they owned. This would have necessitated considerable expense in partitioning each share. The costs would have been borne by further sales of Forest land and would have exceeded its actual value. The 1818 Act was intended to permit the Commoners to have their share without partition. This was to cause considerable problems later. The Act also made provision for 10 limestone quarries in the Forest from which the Commoners and Crown could take stone. An award, dated 10 June 1819, was prepared as a result of the 1818 Act and allotted these "as and for public limestone quarries" to be used in common with his Majesty, his heirs and successors and those persons who had established their rights of common within the Forest. In the award, the Commissioners "do hereby further award and appoint the several parts or portions of land . . . . unto the surveyor or surveyors for the time being of the roads within the said district in trust for the purposes aforesaid". Amongst these were "for the repairs of the public and private roads within the said Forest!"

The King sold his allotment immediately following the Enclosure Act, and his successors in title are known as "Crown Grantees". Such is the wording of the Act that both Commoners and Crown Grantees have rights in all the limestone

allotments. It is of interest to record that the so called 'Commoners' do not regard themselves as 'Commoners' in the sense that the term is usually interpreted, but rather as Allotment holders. However, when it became necessary to register Common rights under the 1965 Common Registration Act, they were advised to register their common rights. In an attempt to get their rights as Allotment holders recognised, their solicitors have registered objections to anyone claiming common rights over the Great Forest. There has always been considerable division of opinion as to whether the Allotment holders are freeholders in severalty and this point has never been established in the courts.

In the 1818 Act the mineral rights over the whole Forest were reserved to the King and these were sold separately. Doubt has existed in the past as to whether or not these rights included the limestone allotments. In 1823, a Mr. Christie made a tramway from the Drym colliery, through the Penwyllt limestone allotment and up to Castell Ddu, Sennybridge. He had purchased the Crown Allotment and also the mineral rights over the Great Forest. He proceeded to exploit the Penwyllt quarry to make lime, using coal from the colliery. No one objected to this exploitation as it was of great public advantage at the time. Mr. Christie became bankrupt and the tramway fell into new ownership. In 1828 the new owners entered an agreement with the Marquis of Camden, William Watkins, William Bowell and David Jeffreys. In this agreement they let the limekilns, the tramway etc., together with some 70 acres of land from which limestone could be obtained at Penwyllt. In 1834, the ownership of the tramway passed to Mr. Joseph Claypon, and he renewed the lease to the parties mentioned above. Mr. Claypon died in 1859, and his trustees sold the tramway with all appurtenances to a Mr. Edwards. After selling such portions of the tramway as was required by the Neath and Brecon Railway, he conveyed the rest of it to a Mr. John Dickson in 1863. In 1875 his affairs went into liquidation, and in the bills of sale of that year, under lot 4, occurred the following paragraphs:

"The property is partly bounded on the north by a piece of land allotted for the use of the Commoners of the Great Forest, for the purpose of quarrying limestone, and the Commoners' rights in respect of this lot over the allotment will be included in the sale."

"A portion of this lot lies between the Commoners' Allotment and the Penwyllt Railway station, and from the nature of the ground, access from the Allotment to the station is at the control of the proprietor of this lot."

On the map included in the particulars of sale, the Commoners' Allotment is shown together with the limekilns upon it, and the tramway lines leading up to these from the railway.

In 1878, the Commoners of the Great Forest took action against Dickson. In the High Court, they obtained an injunction which prevented Dickson continuing in possession of part of the allotment No. 5 (as it is described in the 1819 award), and from working the quarry. The plaintiffs agreed to waive their claim in respect of profits.

In 1886 the Commoners took action against the owners of the quarry adjoining their allotment. It was claimed that they had gone over their boundary by some 30yds. They obtained a court order for a perpetual injunction restraining the defendant, David Jeffrey Powell, from getting limestone or other minerals from Allotment No. 5 for the purpose of sale or otherwise than he was entitled to get the same as a Commoner of the Great Forest. It was also agreed that the defendant nor his heirs or assigns should not enclose the site of the tramway or prevent the plaintiffs or any of the Commoners from free use of the same or any other part of the Allotment.

In his authoritative work on the Great Forest, John Lloyd puts forward the reasons why he believed that the quarry must always remain idle. Firstly he states that the Allotment Holders are not empowered to unite with the Crown Grantees in working the quarries as a joint concern, or in leasing the quarries to third parties. Secondly, that to have a profitable trade, or even to pay expenses and no more, there must be a power conferred upon the Allotment Holders and the Crown Grantees jointly to sell the surplus limestone worked, and especially the surplus lime above and beyond that which they require for their own use. He points out that a considerable trade could be carried on in limestone for the repair of the roads in the Western part of the country; but that this for similar reasons is found to be impracticable.

In 1903, an attempt was made to get parliamentary sanction for the working of the quarries without success.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

|                                |                        |              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Great Forest of Brecknock Acts | 55 George III Cap CXI  | 11 July 1815 |
|                                | 58 George III Cap XCIX | 10 July 1818 |

Public Award dated 10 June 1819 resulting from the above.

(Originals held : 1. Court of Exchequer - Westminster  
2. Office of the Auditor of Land Revenue  
3. Clerk of the Peace for the County of Brecknock)

N.B. According to 58 George III Cap XCIX section XVII, the award may be inspected at all reasonable times by members of the public on payment of one shilling at (3) above.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (Contd.)

Extract from the Acts and Award can be found in "The Great Forest of Brecknock" by John Lloyd and published by him in 1904.

The Great Forest of Brecknock - Professor William Rees published by Brecon Museum in 1966.

(This is a short appraisal of the subject and is no substitute for the classic work by John Lloyd).

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The Great Forest and SWCC

I believe that the Commoners' Allotment remained idle up till the war years ('39 - '45). At this time some sort of agreement seems to have been forged although I have been unable to trace any other than hearsay. Apparently permission was allowed for the quarry to be worked in the National interest. However, after the war, the operator, Mr. Morris, carried on in a small way. In about 1965 Hobbs came to the area and purchased the premises from Morris. I understand that at that time royalties were being paid to the Fenwyllt Silica Brick Company. It did not take long for Hobbs to become aware of the problem over the Allotment and payment of royalties ceased. Several exchanges took place between the Area Manager, Mr. Mundy, and Club Members. It became plain that the Company intended to continue quarrying unless stopped. Within the Club there was a division of opinion as to the best action to take; some felt that it was essential to remove Hobbs before the company got a grip on the area whilst others felt that it was better to live in peaceful coexistence, and that the quarry was at least providing some employment in an area where this was in short supply at the time.

On 28 October 1969, a mortgage was taken by Hobbs Quarries to purchase the area known as Twyn-y-Ffald and Fenwyllt Quarries. This was for the freehold. On the map this area is shown. Penwyllt Quarries is the area shaped like a triangle adjoining the Commoners' Allotment. Twyn-y-Ffald is the area around Ty Mawr. Within the last few years the Company has also bought the stretch of railway line and station as shown on the plan. They also took over

responsibility for the bridge over the railway which is closest to the Allotment. Now the access to the Club as laid out in its title deeds is over this bridge. The Company built plant over part of our right of way and encouraged us to use the crossing over the railway where we cross today. Attempts to legalise this right of way have met with little response from the Company. In fact the vehicle access over the bridge has now been blocked by a large boulder placed there by the Manager. They claim that the bridge is unsafe for vehicles yet examination shows this to be unlikely. Correspondence with our solicitors is continuing on this matter.

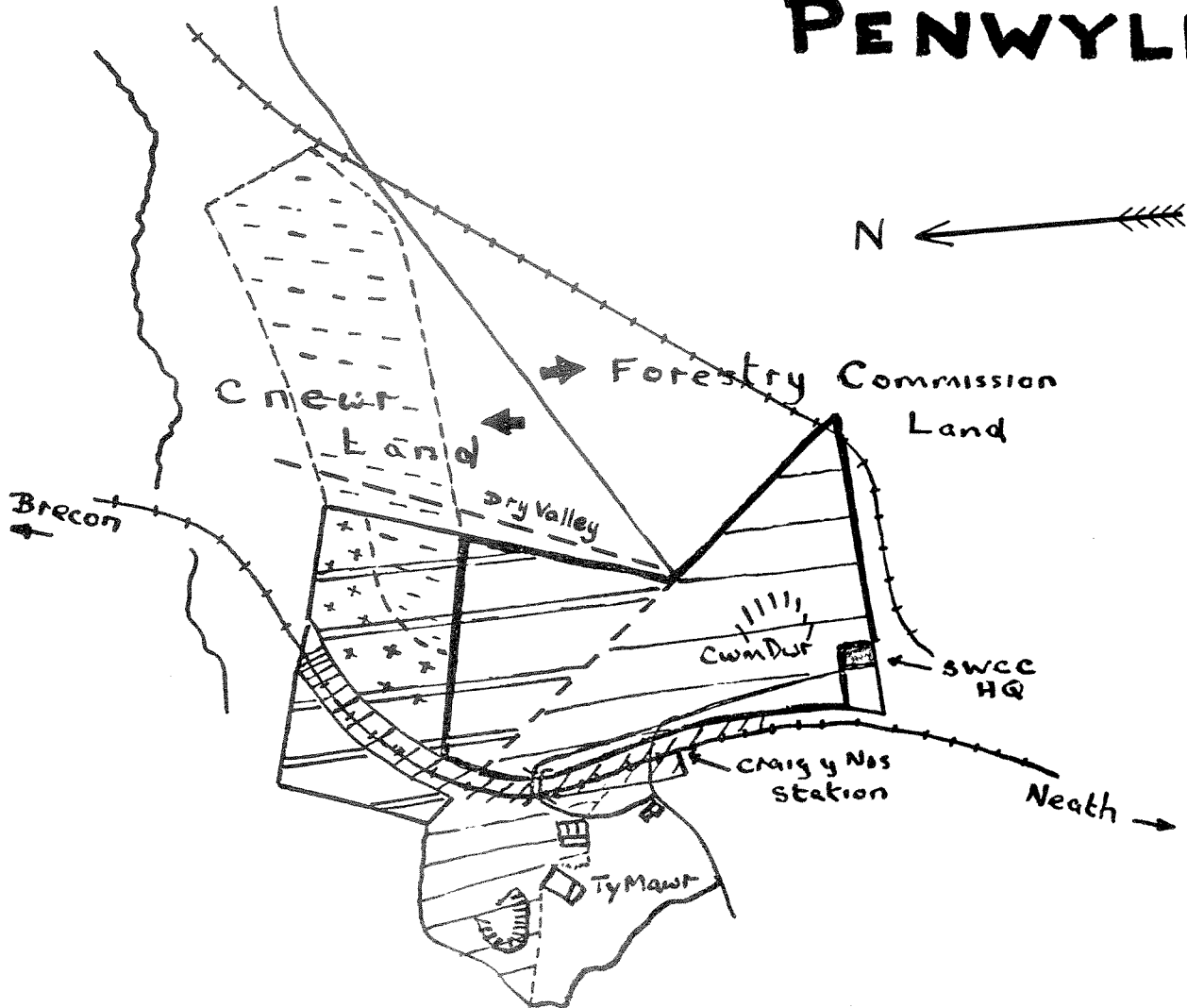
The Club registered its claim to Common Rights in the Allotment together with a number of others (the whereabouts of these will be the subject of another article). These rights exist because the Club is a 'Crown Grantee', and the land on which they are built is part of what was the Crown Allotment of the Great Forest of Brecknock. We are therefore entitled to enter the Allotment to take stone needed for our own needs. Our access is across the bridge mentioned above. It would be advantageous for members to exercise this right periodically, but it is essential to keep scrupulously to within the area to which we are entitled; the map should be a useful guide. We are permitted to use the Cwm Dwr area by courtesy of the quarry company so please bear this in mind.

There are certain other factors concerning the Quarry which at present need not concern this article, but I'll be pleased to talk about them to those interested.






ROGER SMITH

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# PENWYLLT



## Key

-  quarrying proposals submitted April '73
-  quarrying proposals submitted Sept '73
-  Commoners Allotment
-  Land owned by Hobbs
-  Planning permission given 1947

## The Quarrying Problem

### At Penwyllt

The Sunday Times published an item on the threat to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu in August. Mr. Mundy, Area Manager for Hobbs (Quarries) took exception to it together with others printed in the local press.

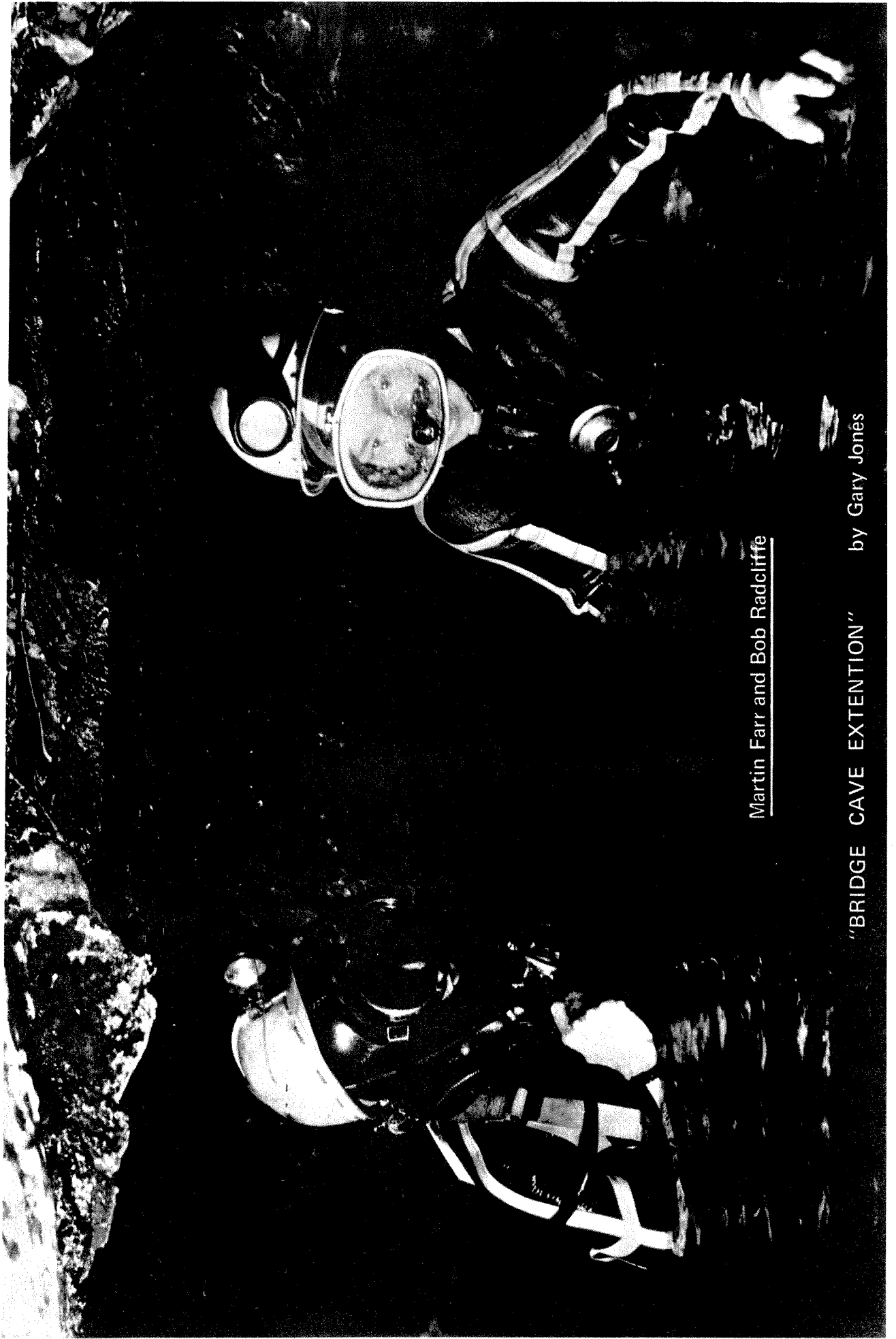
The position at present is outlined on the map accompanying the last article, which shows the Commoners' Allotment and planning permission applied for in April 1973, together with a supplementary application made in September 1973. I understand that the Nature Conservancy are opposed to attempts to quarry Cnewr land but feel unable to oppose further development in the Commoners' Allotment. The Club and Cambrian Council have expressed the view (through me) that no further permission at all should be granted without a Nature Reserve agreement protecting the Cwm Dwr area and the land behind the Club owned by Hobbs. There seemed to be a case for quarrying away the Northern part of the Allotment and the present quarry floor to the level of the railway track, provided that the Company ceased activities in the Penwyllt area afterwards. However, there has been no intimation that such an agreement would be necessary by the Company, and even if it was it seems likely that the total removal of the allotment would produce an offensive scar as seen from Dan yr Ogof.

The Breconshire County Council will have to make a decision on the matter. As the developments proposed are outside the development plan for the area, the Secretary of State for Wales may eventually have to make a decision on the matter following a public inquiry. Meanwhile, it seems that unless Breconshire County Council exert their rights within the Commoners' Allotments - and I have made sure that they have the facts as I understand them - quarrying of limestone will continue by Hobbs, even though they do not own the allotment and by its very nature may not lease it. If they are stopped, the land behind the Club and Cwm Dwr is likely to be threatened by quarrying as planning permission for this exists already. The Company have advised me that they will not hesitate to excavate a big hole in Cwm Dwr and work a northward face if they don't get any further planning permission. The height of such a face would be at least 60 ft. - anything smaller would not be economical.

Would they or won't they? - that is the question.

ROGER SMITH

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Martin Farr and Bob Radcliffe

“BRIDGE CAVE EXTENTION” by Gary Jones



## CLUB NOTES

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1. We welcome the following new members:

Geoffrey R. Bovingdon, 38 Normandy House, Cedar Road, Enfield, EN2 OPE

G. Alan Jackson, 21 Merridene, London, N21 1RD

John Lister, 178 Albany Road, Cardiff

Stephen J. Woolford, Goetre Farm, Ystradfellte, Aberdare, Glam.

2. John Lister has been added to the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu leaders' list.

3. Congratulations are due to the following members:

Mick and Judy Day, on the birth of their second daughter, Ceinwen

Roger and Liz Flaherty on the birth of their daughter, Eleanor

Bruce and Jane Foster on the birth of their daughter, Bethan

Clive and Clare Jones on the birth of their daughter, Annwen

Gerry and Jenny Wolff on the birth of their daughter

Chas and Liz Jay on the birth of their daughter

Apologies are offered to those members whose babies are forgotten.

Congratulations to Ron Egan on his recent marriage.

4. The following members have sent their address changes:

Ginny Brooks, 11 Marlborough Road, Exeter

Alan and Joan Coase, Thornbridge Hall, Great Longstone, near Bakewell,  
Derbyshire

Mike and Viv Coburn, Flat 4, 12 Norna Crescent, Kelburn, Wellington,  
New Zealand

Gareth J. Davies, Air Traffic Control, Newcastle Airport,  
Newcastle upon Tyne

Ron Egan, 7 Dunstone Close, Ossett, Yorkshire

Gareth H. Jones, Bethlehem Royal Hospital, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 3BX

Gary K. Jones, 23 Mesidian Place, Clifton, Bristol

CLUB NOTES (Contd.)

Ted and Darrien Mason, 33 Broadleys Avenue, Henleaze, Bristol, BS9 4LY

Carl Ryan, c/o The Flat, The Police Station, Clydach, Swansea

Denise Samuel, 4 Brent Court, Church Road, Hanwell, London W7 3BZ  
and during term time: 8 Broad Street, Staple Hill, Bristol

John Harvey, 20 Wakefield Close, Standish, near Wigan, Lancs.

Bill and Maggie Harris, 48 March Hywel, Cilfrew, Neath, Glam.

Keith Farrish, 1J Lismore Terrace, Mill of Mains, Dundee, Angus, DD4 9SE

5. The Annual General Meeting will be held in the large Common Room at the Club headquarters, Penwyllt, beginning at 5.00 p.m. on Easter Sunday, April 14th, 1974.  
Members are reminded that during the Easter period, the use of the headquarters is restricted to members and their close family only.
6. Members will be sorry to hear that Mrs Burton from Kershaw Terrace, Penwyllt, had to go into hospital at the beginning of December. She is still in hospital.
7. Members will also be sorry to hear that John Bevan recently had to undergo major surgery at the Good Hope Hospital, Birmingham. I am sure that all members join me in wishing John a speedy return to good health.
8. There has been a rock fall recently near the large entrance to Porth yr Ogof. As you look at the cave entrance from outside the left hand vertical bank is very unstable in places.
9. Westminster Speleological Group recently lost their appeal against the order of closure served on their headquarters, Caerllwyn House Hirwaun. They can now have only limited use of it for other than domestic purposes.
10. 1974 is cave conservation year in Wales. What are you going to do for this cause?
11. Congratulations to Dr. J. T. Jefferson and David W. Jenkins on being appointed to the newly formed Brecon Beacons National Park Committee with effect from 1st April, 1974.
12. Gas warning in mines: On September 11th, 1973, three cavers were overcome by carbon monoxide in the Founterabbey Level, Via Gellia, Derbyshire. Earlier in the year visitors to this level had found no traces of carbon monoxide. One caver was able to get out to raise the alarm and the other two were found to be unconscious and very close to death.
13. Brynmawr Caving Club are placing a reel of telephone cable in the main chamber of Agen Allwedd. This is for use in the event of a cave rescue. Cavers are asked not to tamper with it.

## Notes From The Cambrian

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### Caving Council

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1. The Cambrian Cave Registry list of sites of speleological interest has now been produced and is available by post for 15p from Alan Ashwell, 'Cuilcagh', Stanyeld Road, Church Stretton, Salop. (Money with order please.) Or it may be obtained from the Club HQ for 10p. It does not include mines.

The Registry still needs assistants. Anyone interested in helping with Registry work should contact Alan Ashwell, 'Cuilcagh', Stanyeld Road, Church Stretton, Salop. In particular, Registrars are needed for the Gower, West Wales and North Wales.

2. A list of caving films is available. It has been compiled by the National Caving Association. Copies may be obtained from the HQ.
3. Ogor Dydd Byraf: 'Following a meeting between Tarmac and the Nature Conservancy, Tarmac are going to restrict access to those with a definite scientific project and in any case to a maximum of 12 named persons. Would those interested in scientific projects in the cave please contact Alan Hawkins, Grove Cottage, Grove Road, Great Mollington, Chester, as soon as possible. Technical support in the way of expert advice and possible laboratory facilities can most likely be arranged. (N.B. The cave is on Tarmac's land and they have every legal right to restrict access as they see fit, although the decision will not go unchallenged.)'
4. Roger Smith, Conservation Officer for our Club and the Cambrian Caving Council writes: 'A new area of forestation on Pant Mawr extends South of Pwll Pant Mawr and Careg Lem, to Maen Gweddian. For access please contact Mr. Emmerson, Economic Forestry (Wales) Ltd., Forestry House, Brewery Road, Carmarthen, tel. Carmarthen 5373 or 6098.'
5. The Forestry Commission South Wales Conservancy (Mon., Glam., Carm., Brecs. and Pems.) write: 'Much land is held in lease and may have restricted rights such as sporting or minerals, but access on foot can usually be arranged by application to the local officer located under 'Forestry Commission' in the telephone directory.'

The Conservator has also asked for the following to be published:

- (a) Cavers should make themselves known to the local forester and comply with his wishes.

NOTES FROM THE CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL (Contd.)

- (b) Vehicular access arrangements can only be made with the Conservancy Office, by the Cambrian Caving Council on the behalf of any club. (i.e. through Roger Smith at present.)
- (c) Any archeological finds must be reported to the Commission as it has special responsibilities to the National Museum of Wales, lessors and the local Planning Authority.
- (d) Special permission is required for digging and the use of explosives.
- (e) No fires should be lit on Forestry Commission property and any seen should be reported to the local foresters.

N.B. Note that the keys to the gates leading on to Pant Mawr from either the Penwyllt end or the Cwm Pwll-y-Rhyd end are held at the cave rescue depot at the HQ. They are for use in emergency only. Access on to Cnewr Estate by vehicles must be negotiated with D. Lloyd, Abersenni, tel. Sennybridge 207.

- 6. Reg Hainsworth is now a Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. This Membership was given for services rendered to cave rescue.

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REVIEW - GEOLOGY EXPLAINED IN SOUTH WALES

T. R. OWEN

£3.50 - David & Charles

The author sets out to "awaken an interest" in the subject of geology in the layman whilst providing a useful source of information for a student of the area. The author could well be successful in the former aim but I fear that his coverage of the region is at times too general with occasional points of excessive detail for the latter aim to be fulfilled.

We find the region divided up, chapter by chapter, into areas of particular interest: the chapters most useful to local cavers might be those covering Gower, The Swansea Valley, the Vale of Neath, and possibly those in the Vale of Glamorgan and the Carmarthenshire mining area. Taking the Swansea Valley

chapter as an example of the author's work, we find an opening section giving a general account of the topography of the valley and the surrounding hills, going on to describe the glaciation of the valley. The next section describes the valley south of Abercraf with digressions to mention the industrial history of the area and to describe the development of drainage in the area. The final section devoted to "our" area, is but 50% Geology with the inevitable mention of Madame Patti, the Morgan Brothers, and Eileen, besides reference to the filming activities at Penwyllt. The significant content of this chapter could have been condensed into a few pages.

Despite these criticisms, the book would be a good starting point for any member wishing to begin a study of the geology of South Wales; as it relates well to our main interests. However, most people would soon want to move on to meatier things.

BOB HALL

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OFFICERS' REPORTS

FOR 1973

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HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1973 - 1974

During the past twelve months there appears to have been a marked decrease in caving activities by our members. This is sad to note and it is to be hoped that this low ebb in the club life will soon be dispelled. Members have however visited other caving areas in Britain, Eire, and Belgium.

There has been a considerable amount of cave diving with extensions in several caves, notably Agen Allwedd, Ogof Ffynnon Ddu and Dan yr Ogof. Digging has been spasmodic with some new passages gained in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu and other caves.

There have been sixteen new members and five lapsed members have rejoined. Against this, six members have allowed their membership to lapse and two have resigned. This makes the total membership 241, at the end of January 1974.

In August 1973, Marjory Railton died suddenly and we were sorry to hear this.

Four members have been nominated as leaders for Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I and several guest leaders for other clubs have been appointed for Dan yr Ogof, Tunnel Cave and Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I.

We have continued our membership of the Cave Research Group of Great Britain, now the British Cave Research Association, and the Cambrian Caving Council. In order that members may obtain access to caves in Yorkshire, we have taken up associate membership of the Council of Northern Caving Clubs. Frank Baguley and Roger Smith have represented the Club on the Agen Allwedd Cave Management Committee.

We receive information from these bodies and this is displayed on the noticeboard at the headquarters. The Cambrian Cave Registry has produced a list of cave sites in Wales, together with their national grid references.

Arrangements are going ahead for a Club dinner on March 16th and we have been invited to send representatives to one other club dinner.

We have arranged reciprocal use of club huts with the Cave and Crag Club.

The duty officer system is still in use but more volunteers are needed. Some members are not so conscientious as others when they are duty officer and so to some extent the system has fallen down a little. This has not been helped by some members who, for example, fail to sign for keys, leave dirty pans and dishes for others to clear up, etc. Several keys to cave gates have gone missing only to turn up again several weeks later. This causes extra work in trying to trace them. Also some members have been lax in making the headquarters secure when they are last to leave.

The Committee has worked well together and thanks are due to its members for support in my work. In general the Committee meetings have been well attended. Thanks are also due to many members for their help, in particular to Gary Jones who has been my assistant secretary and to Jem Rowland who has collated and arranged the typing of the material in the recently re-introduced news-sheets. Those members who have been duty officer are also thanked.

I have enjoyed my term of office as secretary and would like to express thanks to all members who have helped me in any way whilst I have been secretary. I now feel that it is time for me to retire as secretary, and make way for another member to hold this office.

MARY GALPIN

HON. SECRETARY

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#### CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT

This last year has been a busy one on the conservation front although I can appreciate that members have had little return in written form for the trust they have placed in me. I have tried to make amends in the present newsletter to put the matter right, although I'm afraid that a lot must remain unsaid.

I have tried to persuade the NCA to hold a National Cave Conservation Year in 1974. This has proved more difficult than I had imagined it would be. A casual mention of the idea to Bill Halliday in the USA brought an enthusiastic response, and I understand that NSS are holding a conservation year in 1974. They seem to have persuaded the International Speleological Union to declare 1975 as International Cave Conservation Year. There has been support from members of Cambrian Council for a Welsh Cave Conservation Year in 1974 and in a circular to Cambrian Clubs I have asked to be notified of projects which Clubs would be willing to undertake. The sort of things I had in mind were litter clearing in as many caves as possible in Wales, the finalisation of new cave surveys, the creating and building up of cave conservation funds within clubs and to generally make cavers more aware of their responsibilities towards their adopted environment. Obviously, such a plan will result in only a fraction of



what really needs to be done actually being done in 1974. However, if International Cave Conservation Year becomes a reality, the Cambrian Clubs will have a flying start by 1975, I hope! A lot is spoken about cave conservation by serious minded cavers; here is an opportunity for the grass roots caver to show that he really cares about caves. I feel very strongly that some of the other regions have little conception of the urgency of the problem. I believe that serious threats to some of our caves will come within the next two years, and that it's essential that cavers themselves show some responsibility towards conservation within caves as well as outside them. This report is getting more like a sermon, so I'll close by expressing my grateful thanks to those who have helped me by discussing my problems with me and taking an interest generally in the conservation work underway. The task is an impossible one for one person unless he is continually looking at it from different viewpoints. These can only come from argument and discussion. All comments favourable and unfavourable will again be welcome if you renew my licence.

ROGER SMITH

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WARDEN'S REPORT 1973 - 1974

This year has been one of great hopes and great disappointments - every past cottage warden must have felt the same.

Prior to the "working month", little progress was made bar four days hard work with many helpers repairing leaks in our water main and tracing the course of the pipe network. However, during this epic "working month" the major building work required to renovate the front kitchen was commenced and important work done elsewhere on the cottages viz: Ladies bedroom, bathroom etc., overflow room ceiling; outside paintwork; floor of No. 9 front bedroom, ceiling No. 9 back bedroom.

In subsequent weeks most members have fallen into their old ways - dirt has accumulated, few people have assisted building projects and progress has been sporadic. However, the overflow room is now habitable, the dustmen now call - subject to fuel for the dustcart being available - and the washing up area and men's shower are, I hope, more hygienic. The continuous solo efforts of Laurie in the Shower/Changing complex must not go unrecorded and I owe Laurie a special mention for the help, advice and materials provided during the year.

I or my successor will leave plans for next year which must include decisions on both the use of downstairs number 10 and the problem of pointing the outside stonework. A discussion on these matters at the A.G.M. would prove most helpful.

BOB HALL

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EDITOR'S REPORT 1973

I am pleased to report that 1973 was a fairly successful year as far as the Newsletter was concerned.

I received a reasonable flow of articles for each issue and the amount of photographs submitted has increased considerably during the last few months.

But before we start congratulating ourselves I would like to add that the variety and quantity of articles and photographs received by no means reflects activity on behalf of all our members. Considering we have a membership of well over 200, the actual persons contributing to the Newsletter are very limited. Why not make 1974 the year that you wrote an article.

As you are well aware Mike Coburn, who did all of the printing, left for New Zealand's sunnier shores during November, and I am grateful that we have found an able replacement for him in one of our recent new members - Alan Jackson.

During the latter part of the year, we decided to reinstate the newsheet under the control of Jem Rowlands. It was felt that the newsheet would fill a useful gap between successive issues of the Newsletter. Please make use of the facility for advertising week-and meets, gear for sale, summer holiday activities etc. etc.

I would like to end this report by thanking all those members who contributed, for their efforts.

B. T. JORGENSEN

RECORD OFFICER'S REPORT

During the past year the records have been moved to Bruce Foster's house at Abercraff. This is a development which I feel offers the considerable advantage of making the records readily available to any member when caving in the area.

There has been greater use made of the records during the past year, a trend which I hope will continue.

We continue to exchange journals with:- Bradford Pothole Club, Gotham Caving Group, Croyden Caving Club, Verband Osterevchisher Holentrovoscher, Societe Suisse de Speleologie, Verband der Deutschen Hohlen, Wessex Caving Club, Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club, Hereford Caving Club, B.A.C.R.A., U.B.S.S., Westminster Caving Club, Red Rose Caving Club, Gloucester Speleological Society, New Zealand Spel. Sec., Grampian Spel. Sec., Craven Pothole Club, S.W.E.T.C.C., Cwmbbran Caving Club. We also receive copies of:- Descent, Axbridge Caving Club and Spelleologica Eailiana (Unione Spelleologica Bolognese).

Unfortunately, due to other committments, I have been unable to make a complete list of all the publications we have and I cannot see it as being feasible to record every individual article, due to the number of publications we have. Any offers of help in this task would be appreciated.

PETER FRANCIS

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EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT 1973/1974

Last year seemed to be relatively low in caving activity but for a few of the more energetic members. There seemed to be little drain on the club's tackle resources and there were no large digging projects as there have been in previous years, also no equipment was loaned out for expeditions. One area of continued activity was in Rescue Practices, which has used a fair amount of club tackle to good purpose and in conjunction with Bob Hall and Pete Harvey we have rationalized the equipment in the Rescue trailer and we now have a working telephone system, which in my opinion is not too soon.

### Damage & Losses to Equipment

There have been very few losses this year apart from some rawl bolts and the odd ladder tether; certainly the more secure tackle stores has helped in this. A number of the nylon ropes have been withdrawn as their condition had deteriorated beyond safety. They will be replaced with Polypropylene rope. There seems to be a lack of digging equipment at the club since the beginning of the year. I don't regard these articles as being lost or stolen but lying temporarily abandoned somewhere underground waiting for a renewed bout of enthusiasm. I would appeal to members, if when they leave a dig and it looks as if it could be a protracted length of time before they return, would they please make an effort to bring out the digging equipment with them.

### Gates

New locking devices have been fitted to the Cwm Dwr gate which seem to be working very effectively. Ogof Ffynnon Ddu II gate has given problems during the past year and I hope that this year will see a new gate on Ogof Ffynnon Ddu II top entrance with a similar locking device to Cwm Dwr and a new padlock as the original has worn almost beyond repair.

One major project which needs to be carried out in 1974 will be the recapping of Tunnel Top entrance. I hope to enlist the help of some of the clubs civil engineers to give a hand on this project.

### Purchases

There were no major purchases this year although 300 metres of rope will show up on this year's accounts. Some Cloggers were acquired for Rescue and these have been suitably encribed and placed in Rescue. Small amounts of incidental tackle have been bought, e.g. nife cell bulbs etc. Several useful pieces of equipment have been donated to the club - Pete Ogden before going to Africa gave us his Surveying Tape. We have acquired a 250v mega, a fly press, a foot guillotine, a long length of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter wire rope, and also purchased from the G.P.O. Scrap Divison a number of small hand tools, e.g. wheel brace, pliers etc. We have also acquired welding equipment.

### Fixed Aids

No new fixed aids have been added this year although some of the old ones have needed repair, mainly the traverse wires in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I and the Chain Ladders in Dan Yr Ogof. I would like to reiterate on what I said last year; that should people using particular caves or fixed aids regularly find the aids damaged, there is the wherewithal at the club to repair it - please help.

There is the emergence in both Ogof Ffynnon Ddu and Dan Yr Ogof of foreign fixed aids, e.g. hand lines in odd corners, of dubious safety. These have probably been put in by non S.W.C.C. members, and I would ask members not to rely on them. Some of them have already been removed.

### Manufacture & Repair of General Equipment

Very little equipment has been manufactured in the last year. All the existing club ladders have been treated with lanolin and white spirit and all the club cells have been fitted with metal vent tops. I am hoping that we will

get down to making new ladders in the coming year, materials and labour being available.

Conclusion

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me during the year, and though things do not seem to be moving as fast as I would like, we are not at a complete standstill.

PETE CARDY

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RESCUE OFFICER'S REPORT

The past year, except for the tragic death of a boy soldier in Porth yr Ogof, has been one without major incident. The exit lake at Porth yr Ogof has claimed a number of victims since the war. I think I am right when I put the number of drownings at six. This figure does not include the diving accident in another part of the cave. There seems to be little we can do about this except encourage the maintenance of danger signs and discourage people leading parties of novices through this pool. There is a convenient exit nearby which allows a through trip of the cave without swimming the pool.

The following is a list of incidents reported to me during the year in South Wales:-

|                |                     |  |
|----------------|---------------------|--|
| 8th May 1973   |                     | 2 sheep rescued by F. Baguley and Gwent Team.  |
| 8th June 1973  | Ogof Cynnes         | Member of Cardiff University Party stuck. Gwent Team assisted him out.               |
| 15th July 1973 | Ogof Ffynnon Ddu II | Party from Barts Hosp. overdue.  |
| 19th July 1973 | Porth yr Ogof       | Army Cadet drowned in exit lake.   |
| 16th Jan. 1974 | Ogof Ffynnon Ddu II | Abortive search for Swansea University Party who had already surfaced and gone home. |

As a rule the burden of false alarms and searches falls on the local cavers and in a number of cases, time and money is lost. A case could be made for making a flat charge, say £10, for a Police call-out, as I believe is the case in some other areas.

During the year the Club organised four Rescue Practices. I think more members could make an effort to attend these. All caving members should try and attend once or twice a year, instead of the same few attending all of them.

The Committee have now appointed a Cave Rescue Sub-committee. This will dissolve at each A.G.M. but it is intended to re-appoint the Sub-committee every year.

With regard to equipment, we urgently need help in constructing new stretchers. Will anybody interested please contact me. The work on the aerial rope-way is proceeding and it is hoped that this coming year will see a full-scale practice across the traverses to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu III.

In conclusion, I would ask all caving members to be prepared for a call-out at all times. Don't let the non-occurrence of accidents in our area lull us into a false security, "accidents are bound to occur". Always have a lamp, sling, karabiner and emergency rations at hand.

P.I.W.H.

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## FROM THE LOG BOOK

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12.1.74 White Lady Cave. Sump dived. Inlet passage discovered by John Parker, which he passed and explored. Some new passages found and a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins. squeeze, leading to the continuation of an upstream passage, which was not passed. Total length of passage beyond sump does not exceed 500'. Entry to the extension via a dive of about 230'. The passage is fairly muddy with an awkward bedding section at the far end, passage height at this point about 12".

M. FARR

19.1.74 Bridge Cave Inlet Sump. The 4th sump had previously been dived for just over 100' to a tight constriction. By removing the pressure guage from the air bottle and diving without fins the squeeze was reached and enlarged with a hammer. 10' - 15' beyond the passage came to air and a tight bedding passage led off upstream. This was followed for about 40' - 50' to a waterfall; falling from the left, because of the exposure of the waterfall a retreat was made.

M. FARR

20.1.74 Rhandirmwyn. After a couple of months of hard digging by various members the upper boat level has now been entered. The level is about 6' high with 4' 6" of water and is entered through a 1' 6" high slit. Unfortunately, after about 100' of very cold water the level is timbered and the roof supports come down to water level. A great deal of shovelling is still required to lower the water level further.

C. FAIRBURN

2.2.74 A bat was seen in the passage from Bagpipe Chamber to Bhowani Junction!

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