

# SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB



## CLWB OGOFYDD DEHEUDIR CYMRU



News Sheet 3/2011  
September 2011

## Ogof Ffynnon Ddu 1 entrance is now ours!

**Success!** The Club now owns the land on which the entrance to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu 1 is situated. This means that access via this historically important entrance has been secured for cavers for the future.

Two simple sentences that summarise a hugely important event and a lot of work by many members. We decided to make it happen and now we have the reward.

As far as we are aware this is a 'first' in British caving; we can't think of another club that actually owns a cave entrance

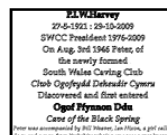
Two parcels of land have been purchased, an area around the entrance running up to the Penwyllt road, and another on the other side of the road extending our existing land holding to include Powell's Cave and the quarry above. In total this amounts to approx. 7 acres. For now we will continue to use our permissive route via the Pant and across the stile while we decide on how best to gain access in the future.

A big thank you to all members for being far-sighted enough to realise the opportunity presented to us; to Tony Baker and the Committee last year for some quick decision making; to the AGM for being crystal clear on funding; to Paul Meredith and this year's Committee for continuing encouragement; and our four trustees, Clark, Alison, John and Les for some nifty legwork with the paperwork.

Also to all those members who have provided advice and contacts when we've needed it and those who have contributed a donation or involved in fundraising.

A special mention to Chris and Andrew Toye and their mother Ruth who gave us first refusal on the land and the Countryside Council for Wales for a grant of £5000 towards the purchase.

*Fred Levett  
President*



## Commemorative Plaque

Our parcel of land has now been fenced, and on 3rd August a ceremony took place at the cave entrance to commemorate the

65th anniversary of the cave's discovery and first en-

try. An engraved plaque, in memory of our late President, Peter Harvey, has been placed, by the entrance.

The Toye family who have owned the cottage and land at Y Grithig for many years, were invited guests.



**Welcome to the latest edition of the SWCC News-sheet.** The emphasis of this autumn issue is pleasingly dedicated to the good news that SWCC is now the proud owner of the land within which sits the entrance to Wales' speleological treasure **Ogof Ffynnon Ddu 1**.

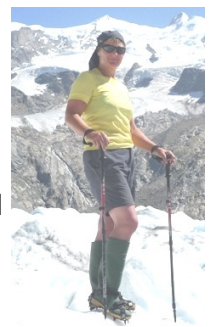
The process of the purchase has not been without trial and tribulation and it's not quite over yet—hence the forthcoming event everyone is looking forward to:



Take a look inside for details of next month's fund-raising weekend and make sure you don't miss out.

Also inside this issue:

- updates on club business
- Membership news and views
- stories of summer action and adventure from the expeditions of some of our intrepid members [and on this occasion your Editor is proud to be one of them, as the first woman, I do believe, to have ventured into Gorner Glacier Moulins!]



*Editor*





**8-9 OCTOBER 2011!**

**SWCC HEADQUARTERS!**

**SAT 9.00am - 12.00noon  
CHARITY CAR WASH.**

**SAT 14.00pm - 15.00pm INTER  
COTTAGE TUG OF WAR OVER  
THE 'PIT OF DEATH'**

**SAT 15.00pm - 17.00pm INTER  
CLUB STRETCHER TIME TRIAL**

**SAT 17.00pm - 19.00pm "MEGA  
AUCTION" OF ITEMS DONATED  
TO THE CAUSE**



**2 DAYS OF CONTINUOUS FUN**

**Attractions!**

**OFD MEMORABILIA - PRINTS - WRITTEN  
ACCOUNTS AND COLLECTIONS FROM  
55 YEARS OF CAVING HISTORY**

**BRIC A BRAC STAND SELLING ALL  
MANNER OF OBJECTS AND ARTICLES**

**PUBLICATIONS, BOOKS, POSTERS, TEE  
SHIRTS**

**Competitions!**

**ALL WEEKEND INDIVIDUAL CAVERS  
QUIZ WITH PRIZE FOR THE HIGHEST  
SCORE RETURNED**

**TICKET FOR PIG ROAST AND BAND ADULT £10**





### **Roll up Roll up for the Ogof-Festival!**

**Tickets are going fast** for the monster fund-raising weekend in aid of your favourite cave!  
You need to get your form and cheque in ASAP if you want to be sure of being fed!

The form can be accessed on [www.swcc.org.uk/events/ogof\\_fest.php](http://www.swcc.org.uk/events/ogof_fest.php) along with all details you need to know.

#### **WHEN:**

From 9.00am Saturday 8th October to 17.00pm Sunday 9th October 2011

#### **WHERE:**

At the Headquarters of the South Wales Caving Club  
1-10 Powell Street, Penwyllt, Near Abercrave, Powys, Wales SA9 1GQ

#### **PURPOSE:**

A monster event to secure the long term future of the country's finest cave!

#### **ATTRACTIONS:**

Pig Roast (with veggie options) - Live Band - Inter-Cottage Tug-of-War - Cave Rescue Stretcher Races – Quiz - Full Bar - Publications, memorabilia and Club Tee Shirts - Fun Orienteering - Caving Equipment stall from Starless River - Charity Car Wash - Breakfast available on Sunday morning

#### **AUCTION & RAFFLE:**

##### **Prizes include:**

**Cheddar Gorge and Caves** Family ticket (2 adults, 2 children). Face value £48

**Wookey Hole Caves** Family ticket (2 adults, 2 children). Face value £54

**Folly Farm, nr Tenby.** 2 entry tickets (adult or child). Face value £18

**Manor House Wildlife Park** 2 family tickets (2 adults, 2 children). Face value £35 each.

**Swansea Leisure Centre Waterpark.** Entry vouchers to value of £30

**Llangorse Activity Centre** gift vouchers (£25).

**National White Water Centre, Bala.** 2 x taster white water rafting sessions at total face value £64.

**Oakwood Theme Park** 2 standard tickets (ages 13+) (£39.90)

**Go Ape centre** 2 adult and 2 child tickets to any UK, face value £100

**Craggy Island** Taster climbing session £39.

**3 Animal backpacks** (1 man's, 1 woman's and 1 child's) donated by Animal. (c. £50)

**Pastel painting** of a rift passage in OFD by Welsh artist, David Bellamy, (£400)

**Osprey Mutant 38 backpack** donated by Osprey. (£90)

**Fenix HP-11** headlight donated by Caving Supplies. (£53.95)

**Petzl Tikkina2** (£19.50) and MDTE Exploration 40 tackle sack (£45) donated by Starless River.

**Timex Expedition watch donated by Timex.** (c. £25-£40)

**Firefly Slave Unit** (either Firefly 2 or 3) c. £34/£62.

**LED Co Ltd. P7 Torch** (£50)

**Aquapac.** 6 products from 2010 range.

**Overboard.** 1 item (probably a waterproof bag) c.£30

##### **PRICE:**

£10 adults £5 under 12's (normal hut fees apply, beds on first come first served basis, and lots of space for camping) - bring your friends.

**Contact Gary Vaughan [gary@dorsetland.co.uk](mailto:gary@dorsetland.co.uk) with any queries and especially with offers of help!**

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**A massive "THANK YOU" to all those who have donated**

**Visit [www.swcc.org.uk](http://www.swcc.org.uk) for website access to the above companies and organisations**

## From Finland to Wales...

Five of us are standing in a chamber we've never been to before. We want to get to a place we've only seen from above, by a route that has only been described to us, and one that's named the Labyrinth. It's our third day of caving, and I like to think that by this time our novices have shed their blind faith in the trip leader - me, that is. I want everyone to share the experience of pathfinding - or at least the experience of being completely disoriented. It probably helps that I'm not the most confident of subterranean navigators. When you have basically no idea what you're doing, even a simple task will feel like an adventure.

Thus far our caving vacation has certainly been interesting. After just barely managing to catch our flight we found

that some of our luggage wasn't so lucky. Fortunately people at the club have let us borrow their gear (or, in some cases, pointed us at some stuff that didn't seem to have an owner) so we haven't had to resort to really desperate measures. There are nine of us in Penwyllt: some of us sort of know our way around, three are here for the second time, two are first-timers and one has never done any caving before.

We've been doing surprisingly well so far. Coming from a country of flat granite, caves are an exotic environment for us. Any excursion underground is a thrilling adventure, and none of us could be really called a seasoned caver. What we lack in experience we make up for in other things - caution for some, enthusiasm for me and a couple of others. We've seen the Col-

umns, our photographers have taken half a million pictures, now it's time to explore.

"Go down. Keep turning left. Follow the water." The instructions for finding our way through the Labyrinth sound simple enough, but of course, nothing is ever that simple. For starters, there's practically no water, and at numerous junctions we have to choose if we want to go left or down. I've learned not to even try looking at the survey.

Navigating by feel of the cave and intuition is a new experience for me. I feel I know where I'm going. I'm discovering an entire new way of appreciating the cave around me. Even if this is just blind luck and over-complication, I'm enjoying myself immensely.

We don't get lost, not even a little. Not this time. Hopefully we will get many more opportunities.

Dare Talvitie

## Up the Aranzadi Wall

The vast chamber of La Verna in the Pierre Saint Martin is now a show-cave! Three local communities around Sainte-Engrâce have invested capital in local tourism. They have built a reception centre, offices and a car park in the village, opened up a track to the EDF tunnel to take 4x4 minibuses, constructed a new cabin with a toilet, provided a flat concrete path along the tunnel to take wheel-chairs, constructed a viewing platform, installed a spot-light and fitted subtle lighting around La Verna chamber. You can walk up to the entrance of the EDF tunnel on foot, or pay to ride up in a 'camionnette' and, for a fee, have guided tours of varying difficulty. Useful information about costs and booking a visit, can be found on the website

[www.laverna.fr](http://www.laverna.fr) (Click on the Union Jack for English)

The La Verna cavern was once the largest in the world and is still in the top ten for size. It is near the bottom of the Pierre Saint-Martin system that is 1342m deep and has over 50km of passages. The depth quoted is from SC3, the highest entrance, to the bottom of the Aziza-Parment pitch. This point is reached by climbing the Aranzadi wall in La Verna, following the Aranzadi gallery to the Meandre Martine, then traversing this to descend a series of wet pitches and passages terminating in an impassably tight rift at the bottom of the Aziza-Parment pitch.

Since I helped with the English translations, I was given a free guided trip up the Aranzadi wall as an 'Accompagnateur' to a group of local hill walkers. The 80m. free climb has a fixed 11mm. rope in place with three bolt changes. The paying members of the group were provided with strong waterproof overalls, sit-harnesses, cow's tails, ascenders and Petzl descenders. (It was interesting to note that they did not use 'Stop' Petzls. These were deemed to be too dangerous in case of panic as it was natural to grab the handle and thus lose control.) My ancient 'rack' and 'poignee' were a considerable source of interest!

The climb was made with each of us having an elastic band around our wrist that was looped into an ascender. The ascender then ran up the rope as we climbed using hands and feet. We were told not to pull on the rope and to keep as close together as possible to avoid

stone-falls. I followed the last man of the group, with Michel behind me. The climb was fairly easy with only one or two sections having delicate holds. We followed the vertical line of a small water channel that ran down the face. Generally we kept to the right of this, but I found that the best holds were often in the water. The bolt changes were at small ledges and the last section was up a steep muddy slope where I just ran my cow's tails along the rope, using it as a hand-line. Needless to say, with La Verna illuminated below, the view was quite exciting!

We gathered at the top and, after shouting to the group that included our wives, on the viewing platform, walked into the Aranzadi Gallery. This was mainly dry, but we climbed down to a small stream further in where there were some good formations. We continued as far as the Meandre Martine and stopped for a snack. I went a short way along the meander. It seemed fairly easy to traverse on jagged holds until I came to what looked like a short pitch, where I turned back. My old friend Michel Lauga, who had arranged my trip, had provided me with a huge lunch, so the time occupied with eating was longer than expected! Cedric, our guide eventually called for a return and we were soon at the top of the Aranzadi wall again.

Our guide checked that everyone had their descenders ready and then Michel started down first, followed by me. He stopped on the first bolt change to help the others and I continued down on my own. The muddy 11mm. rope was a bit tight for my rack, so my descent was not rapid, but safe! At the bottom, I waited under an overhang as the others came down, with the occasional stone ahead of them.

From the bottom of the pitch, we scrambled down to the pebble beach at the bottom of La Verna to see the initials of the first explorers and also to look for the rare insects that live there. Eventually we climbed up the rocky slope, back to the viewing platform, with Michel and me at the rear. Cedric's idea of returning to the platform 'doucement' certainly had me 'au bout de soufflé' at the top! An easy walk along the EDF tunnel, with the wind behind us, led us back into the hot sunshine. Thus ended a most enjoyable caving trip.

John Gillett



## Vercors Summer 2011

For two weeks in the summer a crowd of SWCC members and friends were to be found at Camping Les Eymes, Meaudre, in the Vercors. As well as the usual suspects from SWCC, we were joined by French caving friends of Tony and Denise Knibbs, from their local club. Plenty of caving was done as well as some cycling, canyoning, walking and general tourism, despite weather that was changeable and, at times, decidedly cool. Trips included a traverse of the Trou Qui Souffle – Saints de Glace system, which is conveniently located just a few minutes' walk from the campsite. A particular highlight was the Cuves de Sassenage, which you may know as the resurgence for the Gouffre Berger. With permission from the showcave we were able to explore almost to the far end of this fine system in an eight-hour trip. Several groups visited the Grotte de Gournier, and enjoyed its impressive fossil upper series and superb sporting streamway. Other caves visited included Gour Fumant, Grotte de Bournillon, Scialet de Toboggan, Grotte Roche, l'Antre de Venus and Grotte Favot. Newsletter articles on most of these trips will follow in due course. Non-caving diversions included the Fête de Bleu, a festival in celebration of the local blue cheese that took over the entire village for a weekend, and cycling up the legendary Alpe D'Huez, just a few days after cycling's elite had battled their way up on one of the latter stages of the Tour de France. As ever a big thanks to Fearless Leader Gary Vaughan, to Denise Knibbs for handling the local liaison, and a special mention to Miri and Velma for travelling all the way from Finland to take part.

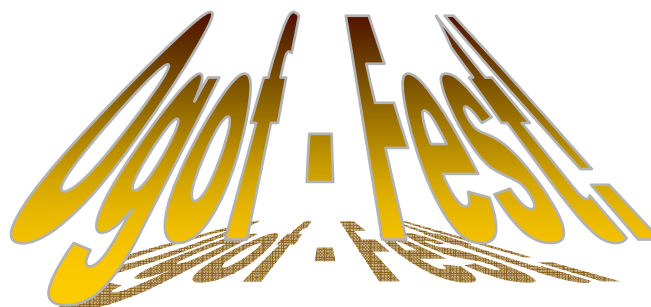
Tony Baker



Allan Richardson, Miri Pihlaja and Denise Knibbs in Grotte de Bournillon, by Tony Baker.



Harvey Lomas and Michel Bernard in Grotte Favot, by Tony Baker



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**PCW**





Chris Jones by Martin Groves



Martin Groves by Jules Carter

**During** the first week of August Tony Donovan and I headed over to Doolin, Ireland in search of new Green Holes.

The trip was a bit spur of the moment but was the perfect opportunity to give a newly developed mini-rebreather a real test. The aim was relatively simple, Tony would, in a controlled manner, throw me into the Atlantic, he would then read a book.

The objective was an underwater search of cliffs for new caves. The extra bottom times which the rebreather allows meant that dives could be up to three hours long; fortunately Tony had a pretty hefty novel! After a mile long carry along

ankle-twisting limestone pavement Tony efficiently dropped me into the water.

Dive one could not have started much better, at a depth of ten meters I landed straight on an arch entrance. Result! Wriggling under the low arch for a meter or two excitement rapidly turned to disappointment when a tiny tube proved the only way on. Disappointment then turned to excitement, or maybe fear may be a better word, when a large conger poked his head out of the hole and headed towards me. Backing out of the constriction proved rather entertaining but the looming face of the eel focused the mind. Never having used a rebreather in the sea before it came as a bit of a shock how, due to the lack of bubbles, sea life is willing to approach you.

Some two hours later I surfaced to worsening sea conditions. Luckily Tony, as he did on numerous occasions during the week, came to the rescue using some old SWCC rope as a throw line, although I did have to shout quite loudly to get him away from his novel.

Numerous other dives were made at various locations throughout the week but unfortunately no new Green Holes were found, but if you don't look then you'll never know as 'caves are where you find em'.

The new rebreather worked a treat with numerous dives in excess of two hours and proved pretty streamline in low spots, so fortunately the conger eel missed out on a potentially tasty snack.

A rather entertaining week and thanks to Tony for his portering efforts, luckily, enough bottom time was achieved for him to finish his book.



Tony Donovan by Martin Groves

## Can't get enough of the cold

During the last two weeks of August four club members together with three gullible youngsters headed off to the

Gorner Glacier, Switzerland to explore ice caves. The glacier contains numerous sink holes, called moulins, in which water plunges into the heart of the glacier. The expedition was a recce trip which we knew would involve quite a steep learning curve. Rigging would be based upon regular SRT techniques, however bolts would be replaced with ice-screws. Fortunately Gareth and I had frozen a few buckets of ice and practiced placing them before leaving the UK, so what could possibly go wrong?!

The carry in was a bit of a mission requiring several trips. The day time temperatures were far too high to allow any safe exploration so alarm clocks were set for midnight and all caving took place during the early hours of the morning. Needless to say we rigged in a very defensive manner as a serious accident would almost certainly be fatal.

As the trip went on the moulins got bigger and deeper culminating in what became known as the 'monster'. The twenty meter diameter gaping hole with a stream thundering into it was the most exciting and intimidating place I've ever rigged. Jules, Gareth and Sam deserve a medal for finding it as we did not expect a moulin there.

It was dropped to a depth of around eighty meters and a couple of hundred meters in length. Not a huge system but these caves are a bit like Mike Tyson, short but they pack one hell of a punch.

A brilliant two weeks were had by all, thanks to Gareth Davies for doing a huge amount of the organising and the club for letting us use the DistoX and also for donating some rope which has now come to rest in the bowels of the glacier!

Needless to say a full report will appear in the Newsletter.

Martin Groves

## In search of Green Holes

Martin Groves



## Tresviso 2011

A team of 15 including 5 SWCC members (Phil Walker, Al Braybrooke, Maxine Bateman, James Collings and Duncan Hornby) have just returned from another expedition to the Andara region of the Picos de Europa, Northern Spain. This year the team was concentrating on some promising climbs, "The Teeth of Satan", in the furthest reaches of the Cueva del Nacimiento cave. The climbs had originally been scaled by a team of SWCC cavers in 1986/7 but had been left with a few possible leads heading into the mountain and towards the deeper cave up on the mountain.

As the cave has hardly been visited in the intervening years, 4 days were spent re-rigging, placing various throughbolts and replacing the 70's polyprop used on most climbs. A number of underground camps were conducted, in order to concentrate on the climbs at the back-end.

The climbs proved to be fairly intimidating, a testament to some gnarly SWCC 80's cavers, but after some hard work by Al and Phil Rowsell (BEC) the climbs were re-rigged and the previous limit reached. (A collection of authentic SWCC equipment was found at the top of one of the climbs-50m of climbing rope, 2 tackle bags marked SWCC 87 and a full bolting kit; any takers?)

A number of days were lost trying to fathom out the survey against the actual cave but the main sites were investigated and assessed for future climbs. In particular the final chamber, "Death Race 2000" was reached on the final day and proved to be rather impressive at approx. 40m across (the biggest chamber in the cave) with 2 avens entering and the draught appearing to come down one of the avens. A lack of time and people meant the aven was not scaled, but with such a good prospect the cave has been left rigged for an attempt next year. Reaching the end will now take hours, not days!



Duncan—Dragon's Lair

Duncan and Maxine spent a few days investigating a few leads near the entrance series, discovering around 100m of new passage and a finely decorated chamber ("The Dragon's Lair"). In addition a draughting shaft on the surface, approx. 100m above the climbs, continues to be worked on, through a combination of capping and levitation above a tight 40-60m shaft. In

theory this would drop into an area close to the Teeth of Satan and depending on the tightness could provide a quicker route to the backend.

A return trip is planned for the summer 2012, but a larger team is needed and hopefully this can be drawn from the ranks of SWCC.

A fuller report will be published in the Newsletter.

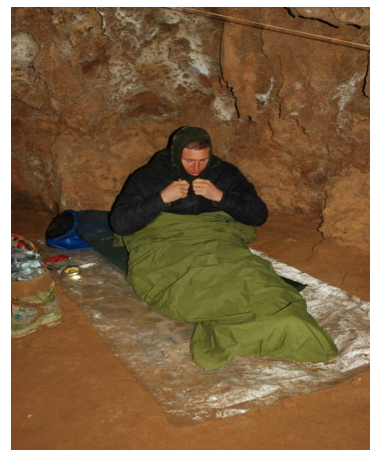
## Cueva del Agua, Picos de Europa, Spain

The mission was simple, enter Cueva del Agua, go as far the cavern known as the Consort Hall, retrieve the remaining tackle bags left by the retreating advance party and de-rig only pitches that were ascended during our exit. Our party was 5 strong and was Maxine Bateman, James Collings, Duncan Hornby, Martin Trerise and Simon Woolhead. Martin and Simon were Nottingham University Caving Club members, whilst the rest were SWCC members. Phil Rowsell and Alan Braybrooke had set up camp in Consort Hall so they could push possible leads deep within the system. During their exit they needed people to help extract camping and caving kit that had been taken in over several previous trips. I estimated we would be in and out with 6 hours but when we finally exited after 10 hours with every muscle in my body screaming I knew it had been one hell of trip!

The entrance to Cueva del Agua is a winding 50 minute walk from Tresviso to the bottom of a spectacular gorge. Its entrance has been dammed to capture the resurgence and channel it into a canal that feeds a hydro power station downstream. This means there is a small lake to cross before one is in the cave proper. The lake is cold and about 20 meters wide so swimming in full kit would have been a miserable start to the day. Fortunately Phil Walker had acquired a dingy from a niece. Printed in bold writing on the base was the maximum weight limit of 55Kg, of which none of us in full SRT kit could achieve, so we sent Maxine over first! She survived and established a guide line and we all came over 1 by 1.

The cave is clean washed with striking scalloping on all surfaces and initially is easy going with a bit of crawling. We reached the main river, crossed at a guideline, headed upstream for a short length then left the stream way via a wet crawl. This part

*Continued...*



Alan—Consort Hall

Phil Walker



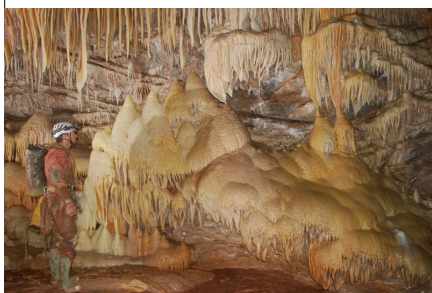
of the system has some unusual rock formations where the rock looks alien and corroded away by acid which makes for treacherous walking. We entered the cavern "black hole" which had an ominous feel to it, it is also the largest cavern entered so far. We cross this and begin to head up wards, all still highly scalloped and clean washed rock. Eventually we met a phreatic passage marked by a formation that can only be described as a "fried egg" that marks the way on with a short steep climb. At the top of the fried egg passage the character of the cave changes dramatically. The passage is very large and a fine layer of mud coats much of the rock. This part of the cave has the look and feel of OFD II.

We had been pushing hard to get to this section of the cave and the less fit of the group (me) started to complain as I would not be able to sustain the rate of travel, we were also at the bottom of "The Ramp", a 75m incline rigged with a hand line. The ramp, whilst looking large and disappearing upwards into the murky depths sounds difficult, it is actually an easy and speedy climb, especially if using a hand jammer off a harness. At the top of the ramp James confidently strolls off in the wrong direction but quickly realises his mistake, we need to still keep going up! The passages here are large, sandy and we see superb stalactites and flow stone formations. Eventually we pop out into Boulder Hall a *huge* cavern with a mountain of car size boulders to climb up. At the top we enter a small chamber with loads of stalactites to walk between. I think this is amazing but it's nothing compared to what we see later.

Here we climb up through the stalactites where a small gap with a strong draught leads to a section of the cave named Brian Baru's place. We travel along this passage passing fine flow stone formations and eventually arrive at the top of the largest pitch (20m) that will need passing. It's an awkward pitch head which requires one to



Alan—Beasts ramp



Brian Baru's Place

lean out to the rope with nothing more than a toe hold on a small stalagmite stump. We all get down and continue onwards. The passage is large with impressive stalactite formations. We eventually arrive at the "Hole in the wall". The way on appears blocked except for a body size hole with an amazing draught. Sticking your face in front of it is akin to sticking your head out of the car window travelling at speed. I have never experienced anything like it. The way on is through the hole but you cannot keep your eyes open as the sand particles blast you in the face. The hole is mercifully short with a short pitch soon after it.

More stomping passage and then we reach the sump which has now become a duck. As people pass through it you can hear the draught speed up and create a roaring sound with the water surface forming ripples. Soon after this we pass up through the bottom of what must have been a pool. The walls are encrusted with crystals, it's like being inside a giant geode!

We carry on and ascend a pitch where we meet the retreating campers. Phil is pleased to see so many of us as it means all the bags will be returned to the surface. A bit of banter and we are off as we are not far from Consort Hall. The campers had dragged the bags to the top of the pitch so there was no need to enter the campsite. James begins de-rigging and Martin gets given the "Death bag". A black tackle bag that seems to have the densest known substance in the universe in it. I for one am grateful that he appears to relish the challenge of dragging the "Death bag" out...

We return to the surface via the same route. The sump and the hole in the wall required team cooperation getting the bags through but every thing goes as planned. James speedily de-rigs any pitches we ascended. We eventually surface 10 hours after we entered the system and I'm absolutely knackered. It's a good opportunity to wash the mud off our kit in the river and then we start the soul destroying, punishing and brutal ascent out of the gorge. We are each carrying our kit and a tackle bag. Simon encourages me by saying he will be glacial in walking up the gorge. I turn my back for a few seconds, he's gone and I never see him again until back at Tresviso. I struggle up the gorge, James is suffering even more with the wet heavy rope, night descends and we are still climbing out of the gorge. Eventually we get to a concrete track and I know we are not far. Another NUCC member comes to help and Maxine turns up to give James and I the encouragement we need to get to Tresviso.

I arrive at our bunkhouse a broken man, although thankfully not broken enough to stop me sinking 5 bottles of beer later that evening as we celebrate a successful trip!

Duncan Hornby





## Local news

Tony Donovan, Sam Harrison, & Les Wookey have resurrected an old dig in a small quarry North of Merthyr just above the A470. This was last dug by Roy Morgan some 10 years ago; at the time he widened the 7 inch crack that looked into a 10ft high rift.

The enticing thing about this site is the clearly heard, but not seen, stream running in the rift. The rift also possesses a strong out draft in summer which reverses in the winter. A dye trace in the past has shown positive in only one spring amongst many in the area this is on the opposite side of the A470 and situated approximately 70 meters lower than the rift being widened; unfortunately this spring is impenetrable.

After a year's plus break from caving Roy has rejoined the team and work has progressed rapidly. The current length of the rift has now been extended by 15 meters, although it has not widened at all. The tunnel has widened to a point, making it sufficiently roomy to work in and the digging easy.

Tony Donovan, Roy Morgan, and Les Wookey have also conducted a number of digging trips to **18th hole** on Pant Mawr. The geology of the location, presenting a band of thick compacted shale, makes the going hard.

Adding to complexities of this dig is the fact that the land on which it is sited has now changed hands. Renegotiations with the new land owners is currently underway to establish access to this dig.

Tony Donovan

**Ogof Ffynnon Ddu bottom entrance** can no longer be accessed via Y Grithig yard; the only routes in are now as follows:

**Walking from SWCC:** Head down the road past the houses, take the footpath via a gate that is signposted on the right. Follow the footpath down through a wooden gate and onwards to the site of a previous gate. Turn left and walk along the dry stone walling, cross the wire fence where there is no barbed wire; this is at a point that is just above the cave entrance.

*Warning: the bank here is slippery.*

**From the lay-by:** Walk down the lane as previously but continue onwards past Y Grithig then taking a footpath on the right. Ensure the gate is shut behind you, horses reside here. Follow the path to the site of a previous gate and turn right along the dry stone walling, as above. [If the wooden gate is reached you've gone too far]

Scaffolding can be an essential commodity in the discovery and extension of cave passage, ensuring safe progress and preventing future collapse. Many meters of scaffold pole provided by SWCC have been utilised for such shuttering; below is an indicative list of where it lies beneath the breadth of Wales:-

CAVE	COMMENT
Cwmavon Quarry Cave extension,	New current length 100 meters; work on-going.
Ogof Pig Melin	100+ meters; work on-going
Prices Dig to Busman's Holiday in Daren Cillau	Now provides an emergency entrance in case of a serious accident as well as a classic through trip.
Ogof Gelynnen to Ogof Capel including the shuttering of the boulder choke in Ogof Capel	Length 835 meters
The Shuttering of the old and new entrances of Ogof Fawr	Length 1.6 km
Entrance of Ogof Cader Fawr	Length 210 meters
Entrance shaft of Pwll Tinker	Length 25 meters.
Ogof Igam Ogam dry entrance	550 meters depth 30 meters
Ogof O Flaen-y-Waun original entrance	Length 180 meters.
18th hole project	On-going
Entrance shaft of Ogof Cull	Length 30 meters
Crowbar Hole entrance shaft and 2nd shaft	Length 60 meters, depth 15 meters
Lost Valley Sink	Depth 10 meters
Lost Valley Pot	Depth 8 meters
Ogof Carreg Cadno	Length 50 meters
Chas Jays old Dig	Currently on-going depth 4 meters
Steel Drum dig	Depth 35 meters
Baby Sitters Dig	Depth 20+ meters
Entrance shaft of Twll Gwynt Oer	Length 60 meters.
Ogof Yr Dinion	Length 260 meters, along with the new entrance Zach's dig added to the length.
Ogof Ffynnon Ddu top and bottom entrances	Current length over 50 km and depth 308 meters
Entrance shaft of Cwm Dwr Quarry Cave.	With concrete pipes originally over 900 meters long before the connection with Ogof Ffynnon Ddu
Cwm Dwr Two	Length 370 meters
Entrance shaft of Criarth Sink	Length 210 meters
Tunnel cave top entrance	To enable through trips; length 2135 meters
Waen Fignen Felin Sink	Depth 30+ meters
Ogof Dewi Sant	Length 20 meters
Rusty Horseshoe dig	Length 30 meters
Ogof No Ogof	Length 50 meters
Ogof Carreg Lem	Length 350 meters
Ogof Twyn Tal Draenen	Length 195 meters
Ogof Gwynt Yr Eira	Length 460 meters, depth 71 meters.
Entrance shaft of Llygad Lluchwr 2	Length 310 meters

A note of thanks is extended to Tony Donovan for providing this information

**\*\*\*SWCC is in the process of providing scaffolding for use by members\*\*\***

**A Log Sheet** to record scaffolding use is to be put on the wall in Digging Stores (Cottage 0). Please could members fill this in when removing, or returning, scaffolding.

The form includes a box to state "*Dig Site*". It is recognised that diggers may not want to disclose the exact location of a dig so a statement of the general area will suffice.

Piers Hallihan, Equipment Officer





## Updated OFD1 Access Rules

**OFD1 Leaders are reminded that access via the Y Grithig is no longer available; the old path behind the cottage now has a shiny new fence blocking it.**

### Call of Duty: A DO's Tale

For some time now the Committee has been actively calling for improved sign-up by members to the Duty Officer's rota; a necessary request of support towards the smooth running of the club. However volunteers have not been fighting each other for the weekend slots, in fact a dearth of DOs has led to a debate on how best to encourage participation - from the carrot angle, offering reduced responsibility, more free time - to the stick, with threats of 'name and shame' and enforced DO duties.

Having been a member of SWCC for a number of years it is with reddening cheeks and a sheepish demeanour that I now stand up and disclose the fact that over those years I have not made the biggest of efforts to undertake the role of DO. Why? Lots of reasons (that should probably read as excuses) such as "when I'm at the club I want to cave not stay in the hut..." "I rarely stay over-night..." "I haven't got a clue who's who or what's required of me..."

The Committee has spent a lot of time trying to engage with the membership to encourage DO sign-up, so armed with the recently drafted 'Idiot's Guide to DOing' I found myself taking on the role, and at the same time testing out the idiot's guide.

The main duties of the DO consist of making sure details of caving trips are listed, correct keys are handed over in return (if appropriate); trip tickets are filed and keys replaced on cavers' return; and hut fees are collected and accounted for. A few other run of the mill queries may be encountered like what to do when toilet rolls run out or which beds guests should sleep on. All the answers are in the new guide.



Now from my past experiences of being on-call or the one in charge I seem to attract unexpected events. During my time working in A&E my reputation preceded me and colleagues were known to swap shifts depending on whether or not they were in the mood for the major incidents, motorway pile ups and complicated casualties that my name on the rota always seemed to attract. So with slight trepidation I expected the unexpected during my duty weekend.

Unexpected event #1: Water seemed to be running out. How can that be when the rain outside is torrential?? There was a blockage, I was informed, 15 minutes walk away up a boggy hill. Shovel in hand, Toby in tow (to show the way), and with thanks extended to Paul Graham who ventured out into the wind and rain with me to shift the obstructive gravel at the bottom of the water tank, problem solved.

Unexpected event #2: External door jammed open; key stuck; main door still open - DO can't leave the premises! Brute force followed by a phone call to a local for advice, then a bit more brute force - result. Door jammed shut; key removed; other door locked; SWCC secure; DO duty over.

My assessment of the duty? I admit it was actually an enjoyable experience and there is plenty of comprehensive information in the new guide, and abundant support available from regular members at the club and those who live locally should anything untoward rear its head. In fact, I'm thinking I might even do it again soon.



**If you haven't signed up yet for a DO stint, do it now. You can access the list on-line via [www.swcc.org.uk](http://www.swcc.org.uk) or apply for sign-up by email to: [dutyofficer@swcc.org.uk](mailto:dutyofficer@swcc.org.uk)**

*Krysia Groves, photos by Toby Dryden*

### A new user-friendly Duty Officer guide is on its way!

An updated and user-friendly instruction manual for Duty Officers is in preparation and will soon be available on the Club website and as a copy in the Duty Officer's cupboard. Hopefully all those little, and some not so little, questions about money, keys, opening up and closing down will be answered, and the worry will be taken out of being on duty.

Many duty weekends are now being shared so you can cave one day, rest/socialise the other, while still 'on duty', supporting each other in the role.

### The SWCC Caving Bursary Scheme

SWCC has many enthusiasts who have their own caving projects and skills to contribute to, and enrich the Club.

This year's Committee has decided to set up a scheme to promote the many aspects of caving, like expeditions, digging discovery, scientific work, cave-related artistic and literary activities, or indeed any other project that promotes the sport and with which a club member might need financial help.

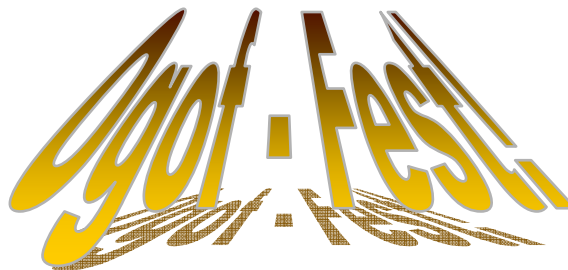
Any member can apply for a bursary at any time. A simple application form, downloadable from the club website and available in the DO's cupboard, will help you through the information required. Complete the form then send it to the treasurer; the Committee will use the information at the next meeting to make a decision on whether to support the project and if so, with how much money.

The idea is to show the whole Club just how much and what variety of cave projects actually go on and to encourage new ideas, so part of the scheme is for the recipients to provide the newssheet or newsletter with an article or short summary report on the project's progress.

More detailed information and the application form will be available on the notice board and on the Club website, or you can email the treasurer on [treasurer@swcc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@swcc.org.uk)

It has been drawn to attention that commercial caving may have been undertaken in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

Attention is now drawn to the fact that commercial caving is **not permitted** in OFD...and may well be punishable by death...**Be warned!!!**



*A reminder that on Ogof-Fest weekend access to the kitchens will be extremely limited, if allowed at all [details to be confirmed in due course]*

*This is to enable preparation and delivery of the festive food.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Also, please note that parking will not be available on site.*





### **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

**Joining SWCC with Full Membership we welcome:**

**Lesley Markie**

**Welcomed to the Club as Provisionals are:**

**Amanda Davies**

**Richard Frost**

**Taina Nyman – all the way from Finland.**

**David Pegg**

**Michael Smith**

**Susan Stevens (Mrs Ben Stevens)**

**Nicola Stock**

**Jo White**

**Welcomed back to SWCC is Bernard John who has rejoined the club after quite a few years away!**

### **Provisional Members Weekend coming soon...**

December 3rd and 4th are the dates for your diary.

For further details: [www.swcc.org.uk](http://www.swcc.org.uk)

### **CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS...**

Congratulations to Rachel Stuart (Jones) and husband Tom on the birth of baby Freya who was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

Congratulations also to the proud Grandparents Gary and Liz Jones.

Congratulations to Lizzy Das Neves (Wire) on her recent marriage to Matt on 21<sup>st</sup> May



To Alan Braybrooke and new wife Rach who tied the knot in July;



To Caitrin Pursell ( nee Richardson) who was married to Will on 6<sup>th</sup> August

## FINAL CALL



Stay up to date  
with caving news  
on  
[www.swcc.org.uk](http://www.swcc.org.uk)

A huge note of thanks to all who respond to my pleas for newssheet contributions—your articles and pictures make the newssheet what it is and helps keep members in touch; not everyone is able to frequent Pen-wyllt for a catch-up.

However, as the items for inclusion flood in, the newssheet grows in size, as does the cost of publishing it. You can help keep these costs down, saving the Club money, and ensure continued future editions of the newssheet by agreeing to receive it by email, not snail-mail. Let me know your preference

### **Annual SWCC Newsletter**

**A call is going out for articles for the 2011-12 Newsletter which is scheduled for publication in February 2012.**

With reference to either of the above please contact me on:

[editor@swcc.org.uk](mailto:editor@swcc.org.uk)



Ogof-Fest is an opportunity for club members and friends of SWCC to give something towards the purchase of the cave. This in turn will provide a sense of having contributed to the cause, engaging one and all in the project and not simply those who are best placed financially.

Uniquely Ogof-Fest will enable members and friends to give in many different ways. You can give your time by helping to organise and run the event, you can give unwanted items for raffle or auction or bric-a-brac, you can give simply by turning up and having a great time, buying food and drink and perhaps snapping up a bargain in the process. Either way, Ogof-Fest is an opportunity to support caving in a very marked and specific way.

Thanking you in advance for your support!

Gary Vaughan

\*\*\*\*\*

**If you are bored with your old books, DVDs and ornaments. Or your children and pets disappear under a mountain of clutter. Maybe your shelves are bending under the strain of excess books and CDs?**

**Then fear not! A solution is at hand:**

**SWCC will be holding an auction and bric-a-brac sale as part of Ogof-Fest on 8-9 October. We need any suitable items of bric-a-brac (no junk please) that can be auctioned and raffled.**

**Please dust off anything suitable you have lying around at home (sadly we are not allowed to sell your old man) and bring it with you at the weekend! We are looking for any items we can sell to help raise money - toys, games, ornaments, DVDs, CDs, books, clothes...**

**All donations will be gratefully received.**

**Please contact Claire Vivian on  
[c.l.vivian@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:c.l.vivian@swansea.ac.uk)**