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# SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 28

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APRIL 1959

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1. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Held at the Gwyn Arms, Easter Sunday 1959

Election of Officers and Committee for 1959.

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| President.                   | Dr.F.J. North. O.B.E.,D.Sc.,F.G.S.,M.S.A.,  |
| Vice-Presidents.             | Brig. E.A. Glennie. C.I.E.,D.S.O.<br>Mr. A.H. Hill.   |
| Hon. Members.                | T. Ashwell Morgan, Dr. A.J.R. Hudson, C. Powell,<br>Mr. and Mrs. J. Barrows, Mrs. G. Price. G. Platten. |
| Chairman.                    | Dr. E. Aslett.  |
| Hon. Secretary.              | D.W. Jenkins.   |
| Hon. Ass. Secretary.         | V. de Graaf.  |
| Hon. Treasurer.              | L.A. Hawes.   |
| Hon. Editor.                 | B. de Graaf.  |
| Hon. Records Officer.        | Mrs. A. Williams.   |
| Tackle Officer and<br>C.R.O. | G. Clissold.  |
| Cottage Warden.              | B. Fenn.  |
|                              | Committee. J. Barrows. W.H.Little. C.Jones.<br>Hon. Auditor. J.M. Davies.                               |

## 2. HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I first of all welcome all of you to this meeting and extend a special welcome to our visitors. To them I say, that all being well, this will be the last time that the headquarters will be reserved for members only.

The membership of the Club continues to increase and this year, thanks to the hard work of the Hon. Treasurer it now stands at 113 members including 12 joint memberships. There have been only three resignations.

This year has seen the retirement of our President, Dr. F.J. North from the National Museum of Wales. On behalf of the Club I would like to take this opportunity of wishing him well in his retirement and hoping that his association with the South Wales Caving Club will be a long and happy one.

Members will be pleased to know that a recent visitor to the Club was Sir John Hunt who enjoyed his trip into Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. We had hoped to take him into Dan-yr-Ogof, but permission was not granted.

As many of you will know the British Association for the Advancement of Science meets in Cardiff next year. I think that it would be in keeping with our aims to offer the facilities of the Club to the Association with a view to organising specialised trips during the period of the meeting.

Since this report was written a tragic accident took place in Peak Cavern in Derbyshire. I am sure that you would wish me on behalf of the Club to express our sympathy to the relatives of Neal Moss. We are a scattered Club, probably the most scattered in the country and when the news of a general call-out of cavers was made on Tuesday morning, March 24th. it seemed to me that the position of the Club to answer such a call was very weak indeed. It is an eventuality that we have not properly catered for and I feel that it must be one of the first duties of the new committee to examine this serious situation. They could evolve some system whereby at least a dozen S.W.C.C. cavers would be able to answer an outside appeal for help as a complete self-supporting rescue team.

To try and give some form of cohesion to this report I have found it necessary to divide it roughly into two parts. The first part deals with pure caving and the second with matters of importance connected with the Club.

The caving year started in no uncertain way with the Hon. Secretary knocking himself out in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. I take this opportunity of thanking all those who helped in any way. The Cave Rescue Organisation was put to the test and worked well, but I feel that I must mention the scandalous newspaper reports which appeared in the popular press and caused a great deal of unnecessary embarrassment to my wife and myself. If at any time there is another rescue then I appeal to all members not to give information to the reporters but to leave it to an official statement issued by an officer of the Club or the Rescue Warden in charge.

Efforts during the year have not been without reward. The extension to Boulder Chamber in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu proved to be disappointing but it did result in a most interesting trip with the Cave Divers. At this point I should like to mention

that two members of the Club are now actively following the sport of Cave Diving. They are Brian de Graaf and John Bevan, and we should do all that we can to encourage them. The attack on the unknown part of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu is now concentrated in Coronation Aven. So far about 1,000 ft. have been added but it seems that access is limited to the 'lean and hungry' type of caver.

Digs have taken place in several areas. Sink-y-Giedd was re-entered but I understand that it has now been filled with debris again. Cwmdwr Quarry Dig has also suffered at the hands of the weather and a great deal of work will be necessary to put it into a safe condition to start again. At present the most promising dig is the Hot Air Mine above Pwll Byfre. S.W.C.C. members have also been active in Agen Allwedd and in the exploration of the new cave of Ogof-y-darren in the same area. In view of the appalling weather conditions of the past year I feel that we have indeed been most fortunate to achieve what we have done.

Surveying has been mainly in Porth-yr Ogof and we look forward to seeing the completed survey by David Hunt. Congratulations to John Alexander and his team on the excellent survey of Pant Mawr. Our thanks must go to Lewis Railton for his coloured copy of the survey of Tunnel Cave. In case any of you are wondering what has happened to all these surveys and the plans that were in the old Headquarters, I am asked by the Records Officer, Ann Williams, to say that some are being framed and others stored away until the Penwyllt Headquarters is ready.

Turning now to the second part of my report I must first of all on your behalf express our most grateful thanks to Les Hawes for his untiring efforts. The insurance of the Club has been completed. Les in his negotiations with the various parties concerned in the ownership of Dan-yr-Ogof and Tunnel Cave has shown the greatest patience. In dealing with such people as these patience is indeed a virtue.

By far the most important event of the year and one of the most important in the Club's history has been the acquisition of the Penwyllt Headquarters. At long last we have the opportunity of providing what may well turn out to be one of the finest caving headquarters in the country. To thank everyone concerned in this effort would be almost impossible but three persons stand out - Les for seeing us through the legal difficulties, Brian de Graaf for his excellent plans and administrative knowledge and Bill Little whose tireless energy is an example to us all. I appeal to all members to help in any way they can for after-all you can only get out of a Club what you are prepared to put into it. It is up to you - do not leave it to the few faithfuls. The Planning Committee will see to it that the Penwyllt Headquarters is turned into the finest possible but they do earnestly ask all members and visitors not to use it until it is ready. I feel that at this point I should make the following observations. It is my hope that this headquarters will be a splendid caving headquarters with the emphasis on the caving. We do not want to make it into a social club for arm-chair cavers. We most certainly do not want to become an isolated community up on the hillside and forget our important relationships with all our many friends in the valley.

Newsletters have appeared throughout the year and they have been of our customary high standard. Our thanks again to Brian for the new format. All his efforts would be in vain if it were not for the members who send in contributions.

On his behalf may I appeal for more literary efforts from you for the coming year.

The last part of this report concerns one of the most serious problems with which the Club has yet been faced. It has been becoming more and more apparent in the last few years. I refer to the loss of caving areas and caves. First of Llygad Lluchwr which is blocked for purely hypothetical reasons and then Dan-yr-Ogof and Tunnel Cave are suddenly closed to us to satisfy the whims of the owners. In the first weeks of this year came the news of the proposed reservoir at Nant Moch for the Neath-Port Talbot Scheme. As you will know the proposed catchwaters will affect Ogof Ffynnon Ddu and Pant Mawr, while the roads and pipes may well spoil one of the most beautiful areas, the Upper Neath Valley. Fortunately action has been possible and everything that can be done is being done. Most of this has been possible through the efforts of Ann Williams whom I should like to thank on your behalf. Now to complete this dismal picture, more disturbing news has reached me in the past few weeks. I have learnt that the limestone escarpment which contains Agen Allwedd and its associated caves may well be threatened with extinction by becoming the chief source of limestone for a proposed new steelworks. I am afraid that details are so far vague, but we will take all necessary action as and when we can. I have just been given to understand that the Nature Conservancy has an interest in the area and that the caves of the area may be safe. From all that I have said it would seem that National Parks may well be a paper dream to be torn up at the slightest desire of some Whitehall official or industrialist.

I am sure that you will all agree that the past year has been a strenuous one for the committee and by the look of it it is going to be even more hectic in the coming year. If I have forgotten to mention any particular person in this report then I hope that they will forgive me. Finally I wish to thank all the officers and committee members and especially Valerie de Graaf who has been a most wonderful Assistant Secretary.

D.W. Jenkins. Hon. Secretary  
1959.

#### 4. REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman and Members,

At the E.G.M. held on 23rd November 1958, the Hon. Secretary told members that the committee were considering setting up a special Planning Committee to deal with the problems which would arise when the New Headquarters had been purchased. Such a committee was eventually formed and held its first meeting on 15th February 1959, shortly after the completion of the contract.

It was decided that the first object of the committee should be the drawing up of an overall plan. A plan of the existing premises was made and a copy sent to each member of the committee for ideas and suggestions. There was plenty of general tidying up, stripping of walls etc., to keep every-one busy for the time being.

At the next meeting a basic plan was determined. Cottage No 5. is occupied and this forms a natural division. There is no dividing wall in the mission hall in cottage No. 9., and the large room so formed is the obvious place for a common room. From this it quickly becomes apparent that cottages

(cont. pg.9.)

## Report of the Hon. Treasurer

Mr. Chairman and Members,

I've noticed that the first figure people look for is the one representing the profit (or the loss) for the year. If you can tear your eyes away from the rather staggering figure at the bottom of the first Account I'll briefly run through the results - comparing them with last year - and try to explain this position away.

Dealing first with the Statement of Income & Expenditure, the Cottage Expenses show a decrease of some £32 over last year. Expenditure on coal is considerably lower (due to the running down of stock) and no further beds had to be bought this year. On the other hand the electricity and calor gas bills increased considerably. This increase in the normal running costs is reflected in the increased income from Cottage Fees (up by £13) which breaks yet another record. Bed-nights for the year totalled 1,137 compared to last year 1,020.

General Expenses are also down. The increased income from Subscriptions - about £20 - is the result of last year's half-a-crown increase. Further sales of the 10th Anniversary Publication realised just over £6 and we are now very near the "break-even" point with our expenses of publication.

This brings us down to the gross surplus for the year which, on the face of it, looks surprisingly high. However, if you follow this figure down into the Net Revenue Account you will see that £85 went into the New HQ Fund to help meet the cost of the Penyllt property and £45 represents special donations following my appeal for funds for developing the new HQ. The remaining surplus is just a bit higher than those of previous years and this is due very largely to funds raised to buy much-needed Club Tackle and Rescue Equipment not being taken up.

Moving on to the Balance Sheet, you will see that the purchase of the Penyllt property has left a balance of £61 on the New HQ Fund, out of which we still have to meet our own legal costs. Any balance finally remaining will be put into the Development Fund.

In connection with the Development Fund, I would like to renew my thanks and those of the Chairman and Committee to those of you who have given such wonderful support to this venture. At the time of preparing this Report, donations totalling £68 have been received. This amount, added to our current income, should enable us to make a good start on work at the new HQ although to give you some idea of what we have to meet, my estimate of the cost of work to be done is in the region of £300.

Thanks to the co-operation of members throughout the year, the Cottage Fees outstanding amount only to £8. 17s. 6d., an exceedingly small percentage of the total amount collectable. All the previous year's Fees have been settled.

The overall position shown by the Balance Sheet is a good one and the Club is entering the first phase of the new HQ development in a sound position. To continue in this position, however, we must provide for income roughly on the same level as last year and the Committee has supported my recommendation that the Subscription rates and Cottage Fees remain unchanged for the current year.

Notwithstanding the fact that they must know by now that they're not going to make a fortune out of this Treasurer, my fellow Club Officers and Members of the Committee have given me the utmost support during the year and for this I am most grateful. It makes my job that much easier.

Les.Hawes.            Hon.Treasurer.  
29th March, 1959.

"Money comes like earth dug up with a needle;  
It goes like sand washed away by a flood"

- Chinese proverb.

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#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subs. for the current year became due at Easter. They are at the same rate as last year, viz., 15/- Full Members. 7/6d. Junior Members and 20/- Joint Members.

If you have'nt paid yours yet please send it without further delay to the Hon. Treasurer. This is a very heavy year for expenditure with Tackle to be bought and masses of fittings, materials etc. for the new HQ so please help to keep our bills paid by sending your Sub. and Cottage Fees promptly.

#### HQ DEVELOPMENT FUND

The appeal for donations has to date (15th April, 1959) realised £91. Most of this has already been spent so if you intend making a donation and have'nt yet got round to filling in that cheque .... now's your chance !!

#### TENTH ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION

The Hon. Secretary has now only about fifteen copies left. Why wait ten years for the next one ??            Members send 3/6d. Non-Members 7/6d. to secure copies of this Publication.

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB

Statement of Income & Expenditure  
For the Year ended 28th February, 1959.

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>£. s. d.</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>£. s. d.</u>
<u>Cottage Expenses</u>			
Electricity	5. 17. 6.		
Coal	1. 10. 0.		
Calor Gas	14. 8. 6.		
Paraffin	9. 3.		
New Cutlery	2. 5. 6.		
Repairs & Misc. Expend.	6. 3. 9.		
	30. 14. 6.	Cottage Fees	107. 2. 6.
<u>General Expenses</u>			
Club Tackle	4. 10. 8.		
Printing, Stationery &c.	7. 7. 2.		
Insurances	6. 15. 0.		
Newsletters & Circulars	19. 4. 1.	<u>Annual</u> Subscriptions	87. 15. 2.
Gen. Postages	10. 4. 6.		
CRG Sub. 1959	1. 5. 0.		
Cheque Books & Bank Charges	1. 9. 0.	Donations	1. 8. 6. 89. 3. 8.
	50. 15. 5.	<u>Tenth Anniversary</u> <u>Publication : Sales</u>	6. 9. 0.
		<u>New HQ Development Fund:</u> Donations	45. 0. 0.
<u>Gross Surplus for the Year</u>	171. 8. 5.	<u>Interest on</u> <u>Deposit Account</u>	5. 3. 2.
	<u>£252. 18. 4.</u>		<u>£252. 18. 4.</u>

Net Revenue & Appropriation Account

	<u>£. s. d.</u>		<u>£. s. d.</u>
Transfers to New HQ Fund	85. 3. 2.	Balance at 1st March	43. 6. 7.
Transfers to New HQ Development Fund	45. 0. 0.	Gross Surplus for Year	171. 8. 5.
Balance carried forward	84. 11. 10.		
	<u>£214. 15. 0.</u>		<u>£214. 15. 0.</u>





(cont. from pg. 4.)

9.

6 - 10 should form the main living and sleeping quarters, and that cottages 1 - 4 should be the dirty end containing changing and drying rooms, tackle and building stores and so on.

It was not so easy to decide on the details of lay-out of the living quarters. Several ideas were considered and at last a lay-out was agreed upon. Plans of the proposed alterations were submitted for Building By-law Approval. This has now been granted and work can soon begin in earnest. A copy of the plan can be seen in the present H.Q.

The committee have decided that the cottages shall not be used before the alterations are completed as we want to make a completely fresh start, beginning as we mean to go on. The alterations will entail a considerable amount of hard work, details of which will be put up from time to time in the cottage. We will welcome all offers of help.

V. de Graaf.

## 5. CLUB NEWS

### Gerard Platten.

This year the South Wales Caving Club welcomes a new Honorary Member, Gerard Platten, and it is with great pleasure that I write this short appreciation of him.

As far as South Wales is concerned his name is associated with the early days of exploration in Dan-yr-Ogof and the Dragon Group of cavers which he formed. In those happy days of exploration before the last war the centre of operation was at the Gwyn Arms and it was from such enthusiastic beginnings that our Club grew. When the Club was formed in 1946 Gerard gave all the equipment that he then possessed to the Club and he became the Club's first Editor.

Most cavers will know him through his publication of the "British Caver" which now totals some thirty-one volumes. These books contain a wealth of caving information especially on South Wales. His own records of cave exploration are most comprehensive and anyone who has written to him asking for information has been helped in every way possible.

We hope that his Honorary Membership will be a long and happy one.

D.W. Jenkins.

### NEW MEMBERS.

We welcome the following new members:-

Ruth Barrows, "Y Grithyg", Penry-Cae, Swansea Valley.

R.T. Hylton, Green Close House, Clapham, Lancaster.

P.D. Guest, 34, Streetly Cresc., Park View Rd., Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield.

L.T. Galpin, 173, Silkmore Lane, Stafford.

## O.F.D. LEADERS.

The following members have been elected to the O.F.D. leaders list:-

Mrs. A. Williams, S.C.L. Phillips, A. Howells.

## 6. NOTE ON OGOF-Y-DARREN

I am afraid the description in the last Newsletter of Ogof-y-Darren must have seemed to have come very much out of the blue and to have lacked much essential preliminary information. There was almost no mention even of where the cave is. That description was, in fact, a copy of a letter I wrote to the Secretary, and in it I assumed and therefore omitted several facts which he knew already, but which have never been published in the Newsletter.

As a complete account, the description should have started thus:

Ogof-y-Darren is a recently discovered cave in the old quarries on the Llangattock escarpment above Crickhowell. It is to the left of the old tramway which curves round the mountainside from Bryn-Mawr to the quarries; just before the end of the tarmac section of the tramway is a Lime-kiln 200 yards above the road; the cave is just above the Lime-kiln. It is therefore about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile along the tramway from Eglwys Faen. N.G.R. 206153.

The name is taken from a section of cliff called Darren on the O.S. map, and therefore has no connection with the place or the name of Y Darren near Ystradfellte.

The site was suggested for digging by one Vic Howells of the B.N.S.C.C. who have done most of the work there. Hence the original name of Vic's Dig.

As a postscript it should be mentioned that a further visit has now been made by the B.N.S.C.C.; they explored all three side passages none of which went for more than 100 ft. before closing down into humanly impossible dimensions. As a result of this, it may now well be a long time before anyone thinks it worth while again entering what is probably the dirtiest, most exasperating and slowest of Welsh caves.

S.C.L. Phillips.

Hon. Secretary.....D.W. Jenkins, Dinmore, Dyffryn Road, Llandrindod Wells, Rads.  
 Hon. Treasurer.....L.A. Hawes, 4, Connaught Road, Fleet, Hants.  
 Hon. Editor.....B. de Graaf, 5, Tai-north, Pennorth, Brecon.  
 C.R.O. & Tackle.....G. Clissold, The Meend, Staunton, Nr. Coleford, Glos.  
 Manager.

## 7. OGOF FFYNNON DDU LEADER'S LIST

Dr. E. Aslett, T.B. Clinic, Courtland Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil, Glam.  
 T. Andrews, 135, Danson Road, Bexley, Kent.  
 T.K. Ball, Bronderi, Peniel Green, Llansamlet, Swansea.  
 R.L.B. Bennett, 13, Glanmor Park Road, Sketty, Swansea.  
 J. Bevan, 21, Bevan Crescent, Blackwood, Mon.  
 Miss M.M. Boughton, 21, Coniston Avenue, Sheldon, Birmingham 26.  
 W.E. Clarke, 6, Glynderwen Crescent, Derwen Fawr, Sketty, Swansea.  
 G. Clissold, The Meend, Staunton, nr. Coleford, Glos.  
 T. Davies, 38, Crompton Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 21.  
 B. da Graaf, 5, Tai-north, Pennorth, Brecon.  
 N. Dilly, 15, Glaseston Road, Stamford Hill, London N.16.  
 G.C. Evans 95 A. Dover Road, Wanstead, London E. 12.  
 B.W. Fenn, 113 Sherwood Road, Hall Green, Birmingham 28.  
 R. Gregory, Sophia, Westminster Crescent, Cyncoed, Cardiff.  
 J.M. Hartwel, 116, Maes-y-dre, Glynneath, Glam.  
 P.I.W. Harvey, Llandough Castle, Nr. Cowbridge, Glam.  
 W.G. Harris, Glen View, 17, Ford Road, Velindre, Port Talbot, Glam.  
 L.A. Hawes, 4, Connaught Road, Fleet, Hants.  
 D. Hunt, 19, Spring Street, Cadoxton, Barry, Glam.  
 A. Howells, Iscoed, Lando Road, Pembrey, Carms.  
 E.G. Inson, 19, White Barn Road, Llanishen, Cardiff.  
 D.W. Jenkins, Dinmore, Dyffryn Road, Llandrindod Wells, Rads.  
 A. Jones, Victoria House, High Street, Glynneath, Glam.  
 J.C. Jones, Victoria House, High Street, Glynneath, Glam.  
 E. Little, 29, Wrekin Road, Sutton Coldfield, Warcs.  
 F. Morgan, 33, Dunraven Road, Sketty, Swansea.  
 D. Kemp, 17, Becmead Avenue, London. S.W. 16.  
 H.J. Kerr, 46, Barlow Road, Levenshulme, Manchester 19,  
 S.C.L. Phillips, Coolgreany, Malpas, Newport, Mon.  
 J.K. Platt, 18, Chartley Road, Erdington, Birmingham 23.  
 C.L. Railton, 12, Chester Road North, Sutton Coldfield, Warcs.  
 T.N. Round, 25, Shaftsbury Road, Wednesbury, Staffs.  
 G. Sanders, 44, Down Street, Clydach, Swansea.  
 R. Smith, 98, Stanwell Road, Penarth, Glam.  
 G.O. Thomas, 6, Villiers Road, Ammanford, Carms.  
 A. Williams, Mrs, 207, Cathedral Road, Cardiff.  
 K.W.L. Worthington, 3, Ashbrook Close, Denton, Nr. Manchester.

