

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB



**CLWB OGOFYDD
DEHEUDIR CYMRU**

HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to South Wales Caving Club (SWCC).

SWCC was formed in 1946 and is now one of the largest caving clubs in the UK.

There is a wide, and diverse, range of caving interests, expertise and abilities within SWCC and the Club encourages members to take advantage of this in pursuing their own particular interests. If you are a new member please don't be afraid to ask to join a trip.

In addition to an informal meets programme the Club runs regular trips to the continent.

The Club owns a very large, and well appointed, HQ at 1-10 Powell Street, Penwyllt, Powys as well as extensive land around the HQ.

There are members at the HQ most weekends and especially on the monthly Committee weekends - see the web site for details.

This Handbook, and the associated documents, describe the framework within which SWCC is administered and run.

The purpose of this Handbook is provide a comprehensive guide to new and standing Members about SWCC, and its activities, and to act as a top level point of reference for all other Club related documents including:

- [SWCC Constitution](#)
- SWCC Policy Document
- [SWCC Rules](#)
- [SWCC Duty Officer's Handbook](#)
- [SWCC Mid-Week Visiting Group Manual](#)
- SWCC Estate Manual

- Cave Access and Key Information
- List of Annual Permit Holders

How to become a member of SWCC

Becoming a member of SWCC is very straight forward. Simply complete a provisional application form and send it with the correct remittance to the Assistant Secretary

Application Forms for both Provisional and Full Membership are available in the lobby at the HQ, on the SWCC web site or from the Assistant Secretary.

The classes of membership are specified in the SWCC Constitution, as are details of the admission process.

CONTACTING OTHER SWCC MEMBERS

A list of Members and their contact details is available to full members on request from the Assistant Secretary.

Attention is drawn to Club Rule 3.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH SWCC

Communications

The SWCC runs an active web site, www.swcc.org.uk. This is used to ensure cost effective and timely communications of news, events and diary dates.

Members are strongly encouraged to access the web site for the latest information about the Club and its activities.

Publications

SWCC produces periodic written publications. These essentially comprise a record of the Club's achievements, discoveries, trip reports and other caving related articles, all written by Members.

Sales

SWCC has various items such as surveys, t-shirts, mugs etc. for sale as listed in the lobby. If you wish to purchase any of then please see the Duty Officer or contact the Publications Officer.

Safety

SWCC is committed to providing a safe environment for all those using the HQ.

During your stay we request that Members, Guests and Visitors:

- Exercise due caution at all times
- Do not leave personal belongings unattended at any time

Full details relating to domestic services and cottage maintenance information are in the **SWCC Estate Manual**.

Personal Property

SWCC accepts no responsibility for loss of, or damage to, personal property including cars parked outside the HQ.

Damage to Club Property

All damage to, or loss of, Club property should be reported to the Duty Officer or a member of the Committee.

Members, Guests, and Visitors may be held responsible for damage caused.

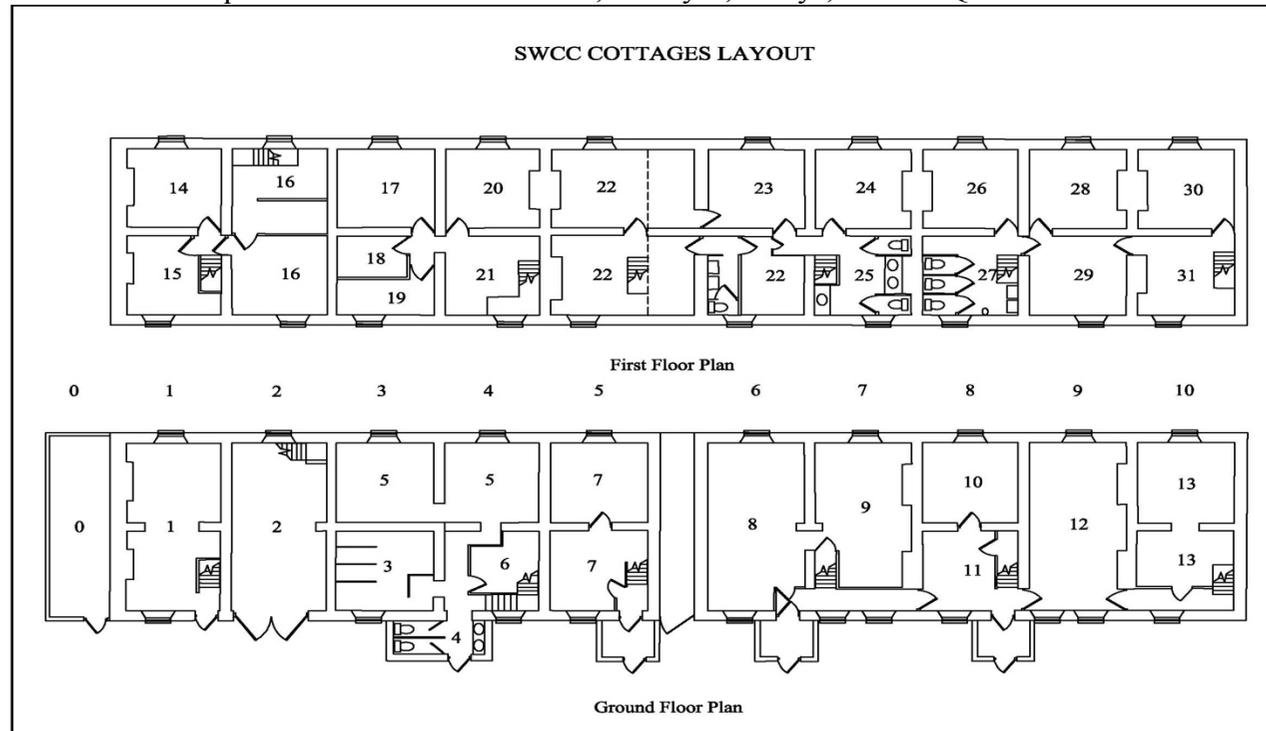
Fire

In the event of a fire, or the fire alarm system sounding, Members, Guests and Visitors are requested to:

- Leave the building without delay via the nearest marked *Fire Exit*
- Proceed to the assembly point at the water and power point in the gardens opposite the car park Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- Ensure that the emergency services are called

THE SWCC COTTAGES

SWCC Headquarters at 1-10 Powell Street, Penwyllt, Powys, SA9 1GQ Tel. 01639 730613



- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 0 Digging Stores | 8 Main Kitchen | 16 SMWCRT Rescue Store | 24 Ladies' Dormitory (Members) |
| 1 Workshop | 9 Dining Room | 17 Mixed Dormitory | 25 Ladies' Toilets and Washing |
| 2 SMWCRT Rescue Garage | 10 Small Common Room | 18 Archive Room | 26 Gents' Dormitories (Members) |
| 3 Ladies' Changing Room/Shower | 11 Telephone and Notice Boards | 19 Tackle Store | 27 Mixed Toilets and Washing |
| 4 Toilets and Washing Area | 12 Long Common Room | 20 Drying Room | 28 Gents' Dormitory (Members) |
| 5 Gents' Changing Room/Shower | 13 Library | 21 Locker Room | 29 Mixed Dormitory |
| 6 Boiler Room and Dry Storage | 14 Building Stores | 22 Family Quarters (Members) | 30 Mixed Dormitory (Members) |
| 7 Family Quarters | 15 Printing and Document Store | 23 Ladies' Dormitory | 31 Mixed Dormitory |

STAYING AT SWCC HQ, PENWYLLT

Introduction

SWCC is NO SMOKING throughout its premises

To help ensure the efficient running of the Club, SWCC operates a Duty Officer system and it is a Club Rule that Members who use the HQ should act as Duty Officers.

The Duty Officer is responsible for the running of the HQ during his/her period of duty - see [SWCC Duty Officer's Manual](#), a copy of which is held in the lobby and is also available in the members section of the web site.

When there is no Duty Officer Members, Guests and Visitors should refer to the [SWCC Mid-week Visiting Group Manual](#), a copy of which is held in the lobby and is also available in the members section of the web site.

Staying at the SWCC HQ Mid-week

Members, and other groups by arrangement, may stay at the HQ mid-week. Those staying at the HQ mid-week should refer to the [SWCC Mid-week Visiting Group Manual](#), a copy of which is held in the lobby and is also available in the members section of the web site.

Signing In

All Members, Guests and Visitors using the HQ are asked to sign in on arrival using the Visitors' book in the lobby.

Payment

Those staying overnight at the club are required to pay Hut fees. These should be paid to the Duty Officer in accordance with the current rates and charging arrangements as displayed on the wall in the lobby at the HQ.

Sleeping Arrangements

Members, Guests and Visitors are welcome to sleep at the HQ in accordance with the following arrangements:

Cottage No.3 Rear	Mixed
Cottage No.5 Front and Rear	Family - Members only
Cottage No.6	Women only
Cottage No.7	Women - Members only
Cottages Nos.8, 9 & 10 Rear	Members only
Cottages Nos.8 & 9 Rear	Men - Members only
Cottages Nos.9 & 10 Front	Mixed

Use of the Kitchen

Members, Guests and Visitors are welcome to use the large, and fully equipped, communal kitchen at the HQ.

Please be considerate of other users and endeavour to keep the kitchen clean and tidy at all times. In particular, please remember to do all of your own washing up, empty the bins when full, and also use the recycling bins provided.

Persons using the kitchen facilities but who are not liable to pay hut fees are asked to leave a payment as indicated in one of the shower boxes, or pay the Duty Officer before leaving.

Use of the Changing Rooms, Showers and Charging Facilities

Members, Guests and Visitors are welcome to use the changing rooms, showers and charging facilities.

Please do not leave personal items in the changing rooms.

Persons using the changing rooms, showers or charging facilities but who are not liable to pay hut fees are asked to leave a payment as indicated in one of the shower boxes, or pay the Duty Officer before leaving.

Use of the Drying Room and Hot Water

Members, Guests and Visitors are welcome to use the drying room at the HQ.

The drying room is operated by pressing the push button outside the door near the stairs. It is timed to switch off after two hours.

To help us to keep our energy costs and hut fees to a minimum, dripping items should not be put into the drying room but should be allowed to drain for a while either outside or in the changing rooms.

Use of the Library

Members are welcome to use the Library at the HQ and may borrow books. To help us keep track of our books those borrowing and returning them are asked to use the library log book.

Guests and Visitors are welcome to use the Library if accompanied by a Member but may not borrow books.

DUTY OFFICERS

The role of the Duty Officer is to:

- Act as 'mine host' for Members, Guests and Visitors for the duration
- Supervise and ensure the smooth running of the HQ over the weekend, including the collection and banking of hut fees and other monies
- Administer access to cave keys and ensure proper use of destination board
- Initiate Cave Rescue procedures in the event of a party being overdue or an incident reported

A guide to assist the Duty Officer is provided in the [SWCC Duty Officer's Manual](#), a copy of which is held in the Lobby.

Signing up for Duty Officer

To sign up for Duty Officer please either:

- [Use the SWCC web site](#)
- Contact the SWCC Duty Officer Liaison Officer

Duty Officer Keys

When acting as Duty Officer, a Member will need to make arrangements to obtain a set of Duty Officer keys for the weekend.

These are obtainable from one or other of the following Club Members who live locally:

- Lel Davies and Iain Miller Tel. 01639 730771
- Mick and Judy Day Tel. 01639 730125
- Simon and Annie Amatt Tel. 01639 730336

Please note that the Duty Officer master key sets do not include a Library key. The Duty Officer may ask for a Library key for the weekend at the same time as the Duty Officer keys.

CAVING

SWCC is committed to encouraging safe and responsible caving. As part of that commitment SWCC operates a destination board system which is based in the lobby at the HQ.

All Members, Guests and Visitors are strongly 'encouraged' to use the destination board system.

The destination board is monitored by the Duty Officer and all Members during the weekend until 17.00 on Sundays.

CAVE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND CAVE KEYS

Summary of Access Arrangements to Caves Administered by SWCC

	Cave	Permit/Leader	Maximum Party Size	Key	Checks
1	Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I, II & Cwm Dwr	Permit required	6 including leader	Yes	Clubs with Annual Permits. Membership cards may be necessary. Others MUST present a Permit
2	Pant Mawr Pot	Open access to bona fide cavers, Permit required	No limit		Permit in key cupboard to be filled in
3	Tunnel Top	Open access to bona fide cavers	No limit	Yes	None. Cavers wishing to exit as a through trip must have a Dan-yr-Ogof Warden with them
4	Pwll Dwfn and Cwm Dwr II	Open access to bona fide cavers	No limit	Yes	
5	Gents' Dig	Open access to bona fide cavers	No limit	Combination lock	Number on Duty Officer large key ring
6	Tooth Cave	Open access to bona fide cavers with insurance	No limit	Yes	
7	Llethryd Swallet	Open access to bona fide cavers with insurance	No limit	Yes	Access managed by SWCC. Cave currently blocked. No access

1. Ogof Ffynnon Ddu

Access Procedures

1. These Access Procedures apply to all parts of and all entrances to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.
2. The Permit Secretary administers access to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu acting on behalf of the landowners, Natural Resources Wales and the South Wales Caving Club, via the OFD Cave Management Committee. The entire cave is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a large part of it is a National Nature Reserve. Access to the cave is subject to the obligations placed upon the landowners by its special status.
3. Entrances to the cave are gated and permits for entry are obtained from the Permit Secretary by following the procedures set out here. Conservation of the cave and its flora and fauna is a priority and cavers are expected to act responsibly and adhere to the entry conditions and rules.
4. Access is available to members of bona fide caving clubs who have read, and are prepared to abide by, the Conditions of Entry and Rules published by the Cave Management Committee. Bona fide caving clubs are defined as those affiliated to the British Caving Association or another appropriate national or international body.
5. Applications for permits must be made by an officer of the club and be received by the Permit Secretary at least two weeks prior to the proposed caving trip. Applications may be made either by email to ofdaccess@hotmail.co.uk or by post, in which case a stamped addressed envelope would be appreciated.
6. The maximum permitted party size is 6 people, including the leader, and individual parties must remain separated in the cave. A permit covers a single party of up to 6 people. If more than 6 people from the applying club will be in the cave at the same time then multiple permits must be requested.
7. Permit holders may obtain keys to the cave from SWCC headquarters at weekends or, during the week, from recognised key holders.
8. The Permit Secretary shall have absolute discretion in interpreting these conditions and may refuse a permit, in which case the applicant will be informed of the reason for refusal. The applicant may appeal, in writing, to NRW and SWCC or directly to the secretary of the OFD Cave Management Committee, for consideration at its next meeting.
9. There is a facility for Annual Permits to be issued to clubs that have demonstrated a regular and conscientious interest in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. Applications for Annual Permits should be made to the Permit Secretary for discussion at the next meeting of the OFD Cave Management Committee. Clubs who have a rapid

turnover of members (such as University caving clubs) are not normally granted annual permits.

10. The South Wales Caving Club is normally granted automatically an annual permit for the cave within the NNR, in recognition of its location and special role in relation to the NNR.
11. Access to the Columns area is restricted in the interests of conservation. Parties may visit the Columns only when a NRW Voluntary Cave Warden is present. Wardens will normally be available for visits to the Columns between noon and 3pm on the Sundays of Easter, May Day, Spring and August Bank Holidays, and New Year's Day. These dates should be publicised by the Secretary who also draws up a rota of Wardens. Parties wishing to visit the Columns at these times do not need to make any prior arrangements but should make themselves known to a Warden by 10 am on the day. Parties must ensure that they have their own leaders; Wardens do not act as leaders for visiting parties.
12. The 'Entry Conditions and Rules', below, must accompany all permits issued.

Entry conditions and rules

These Entry Conditions and Rules apply to all parts of and all entrances to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

When the SWCC HQ is open, the destination board in cottage no. 8 lobby area must be used. A key-ticket, which includes the name of

each person entering the cave, must be completed for rescue purposes. When the SWCC HQ is closed parties must make other arrangements for rescue. Note that the HQ is usually closed by 5pm on Sundays.

For reasons of cave conservation and adequate supervision of less-experienced cavers, the maximum permitted party size is 6 including the leader. Parties must not join up underground and should deliberately maintain separation from other parties.

The leader is responsible for the conduct and safety of the party AND for the provision of the equipment necessary to complete the trip. The leader must draw attention to the conditions relating to the use of any fixed equipment within the cave, which are displayed on the board in SWCC HQ. (A copy of these will be given to mid-week users).

ONLY electric lighting is to be used. Carbide MUST NOT be taken into the cave.

This permit is for ENTRY ONLY. Camping, digging and the use of explosives, dye tracing and other research projects require special permission, for which application is to be made to the OFD Cave Management Committee.

Conservation of the cave is very important and those who enter the cave are responsible for its welfare. Some areas are taped off for conservation reasons. Marker tapes must not be crossed or moved, under any circumstances other than in extreme emergency. Observe all tapes and route markings in the cave. If there is no tape, proceed only if there is a clearly defined path. If in doubt, STOP.

No litter whatsoever is to be left either inside or outside the cave.

Smoking is prohibited throughout the cave.

The gates are to be locked at all times except when entering or leaving the cave.

Cavers enter at their own risk. Many sections of the cave are arduous. For safety reasons, adequate experience and suitable clothing and equipment are required throughout the cave and especially in the further reaches of the cave and in the stream way.

It is recommended that novices should not be taken into the OFD II Stream way.

Installations, apparatus and equipment must not be damaged. If accidental damage occurs this should be reported immediately on return via the whiteboard in SWCC cottage no. 8 and by email to the Permit Secretary.

Access to the land surface of the NNR and of much of the remainder of the SSSI is unrestricted but visitors are asked to help protect the wildlife and natural beauty and avoid disturbance to grazing animals.

Failure to observe these conditions may result in the refusal of any future application to the OFD Cave Management Committee for entry to any part of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

These Entry Conditions and Rules may be revised from time to time by the OFDCMC.

Columns Access

Access to the Columns area is restricted, in the interests of conservation. All parties visiting the Columns must be accompanied

by a Warden. Wardens will normally be available to accompany parties on the Sundays of the Easter, May Day, Spring and August Bank Holidays. Exceptionally, visits also occur on New Year's Day, whichever that day is. These dates are publicised by the OFD Cave Management Committee (OFDCMC) (on the main Club notice board and in the caving press), which also draws up a rota of Wardens. This latter list is also on the Club notice board. Parties wishing to visit the Columns at these times do not need to make any prior arrangement but should make themselves known to one of the Wardens on duty before 10.00 on the day in question.

Access to the Columns was restricted in 1978 following a number of incidents of damage to the floor causing loss of water, graffiti on mud formations, and frequent cases of cavers (particularly photographers) crossing the tapes and risking damage to the formations themselves. In one case a photographer placed a lighted candle behind each column! The Columns and adjacent floor are particularly vulnerable because, being formed from limekiln seepage they are much more fragile than conventional calcite formations.

3. Pant Mawr Pot

Access to Pant Mawr Pot is available to any bona-fide caver. The Owner's sole stipulations are that:

1. The cave should be approached from Penwyllt unless an Annual Permit states otherwise.

2. The Duty Officer's permission should be obtained, a Permit signed and the destination board at SWCC HQ used.
3. No key is required for Pant Mawr Pot but note that a ladder and life line or SRT equipment are required for entry.

There are no special rules.

4. Tunnel Cave (Cathedral)

Access to Tunnel Cave is via the gated top entrance, controlled by SWCC. Access is available to all bona-fide cavers. The key is available from SWCC.

Cavers wishing to enter or exit (doing a through trip) via the show cave are required to be in possession of a valid Dan-yr-Ogof (DYO) Permit obtainable from the Secretary of the DYO Cave Advisory Committee (DYO CAC).

Keys are required for the airlock that separates Tunnel and Cathedral Caves. These may be collected from DYO management.

Exits through the show cave cannot be made whilst there is a wedding or other social function in progress. Times of these may be obtained from the DYO management.

Parking and changing arrangements are as for DYO.

5. Pwll Dwfn and Cwm Dwr II

Access to these caves is available to any bona-fide caver.

The key for Cwm Dwr II is available from the SWCC HQ.

There is no key for Pwll Dwfn, but note that SRT equipment is required for entry.

6. Gents Dig

Access is via a combination lock.

7. Tooth Cave

Access is via a key held at the SWCC HQ. Park carefully in the private lay-by at Llethryd Bridge.

8. Llethryd Swallet

Cavers are asked to call first at Llethryd Barns to get instructions as to parking and route to the cave.

Summary of Access Arrangements to Caves NOT Administered by SWCC

	Cave	Permit/Leader	Maximum Party Size	Key	Checks
9	Dan-yr-Ogof	Warden required	As advised by the warden		Contact Secretary, DYO CAC for up to date information
10	Tunnel Cave (Bottom Entrance)	Warden required. Show cave open hours only	As advised by the warden	Yes	Contact Secretary, DYO CAC for up to date information
11	Agen Allwedd	Key for SWCC Members only. Keys kept by Lel Davies and Pete Hobson	8	Yes	Fill in log book inside cave entrance
12	Ogof Craig a Ffynnon	Key for SWCC Members only. Keys kept by Lel Davies and Pete Hobson	8	Yes	
13	Mendip Caves	Various		Yes	

9. Dan-Yr-Ogof

Access to Dan-yr-Ogof (DYO) is administered by the DYO Cave Advisory Committee and parties interested in entering this cave should contact the Secretary of the DYO Cave Advisory Committee (DYO CAC).

Cars should be parked up at the top, near to the offices and an identification mark, such as an SWCC membership card, should be placed in the windscreen so that cavers' cars can be recognised by DYO staff.

10. Tunnel Cave (Bottom Entrance)

As for Dan-yr-Ogof.

11. Agen Allwedd

Access is controlled through a Permit and key system. SWCC holds an Annual Permit and a key is held by both Lel Davis and also Peter Hobson. These keys are strictly for use by SWCC Full Members and contact details for both Lel and Pete are on the SWCC address list.

A minimum party size of 4 is suggested, and a maximum of 8. The destination board should be used.

12. Ogof Craig a Ffynnon

Access is controlled through a Permit and key system.

SWCC has an Annual Permit and a key is held by both Lel Davies and also Pete Hobson. These keys are strictly for use by SWCC Full

Members and contact details for both Lel and Pete are on the SWCC address list.

A minimum party size of 4 is suggested, and a maximum of 8. The destination board should be used.

13. Mendip Caves

Through its affiliation with the Council for Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC) SWCC holds a key for the gated Mendip caves. This key is ONLY available for use by SWCC Full Members.

FIXED AIDS

WARNING TO ALL CAVERS

**THE MEMBERS OF SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB
CAN ACCEPT NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY LOSS OR
INJURY CAUSED TO ANY CAVER USING A FIXED AID
IN ANY CAVE ADMINISTERED BY THE CLUB**

Your attention is drawn to the following:

1. The granting of access to caves by SWCC, on behalf of the Owners, is conditional upon acceptance of all the points covered in this notice.
2. In the lobby of the SWCC HQ, above the destination board, is a list of Fixed Aids in the caves in the area. These are the ONLY fixed aids approved and maintained by SWCC, and are recognisable by the presence of a metal disc stamped 'SWCC', which is attached to each approved Fixed Aid.
3. All other aids within the caves are unauthorised. You are strongly advised not to use them, as they are mostly of uncertain age and origin. You are also asked not to leave ropes etc. in place, where they may be used by other cavers.
4. Approved Fixed Aids are inspected by SWCC's Fixed Aids Officer on a regular basis, who then signs the sheet above the destination board accordingly. The Fixed Aids Officer is appointed annually by the SWCC Committee, and while he or she will usually be an experienced caver, they do not

necessarily possess any scientific, engineering or other qualifications.

5. Any Fixed Aid should always be carefully inspected before use, regardless of whether or not it has recently been checked by SWCC.
6. The use of additional safety measures, such as lifelines or 'cows tails', is strongly recommended wherever possible.
7. It is the responsibility of all Leaders taking parties into the caves to ensure that all members of their party have read and understood this notice.

ACCESS AND DIGGING ON SWCC LAND

Some of the land owned by SWCC is rented to local farmers. Under the terms of the agreements SWCC are able to continue caving activities on the land including digging, scientific work and so forth, provided we do not cause disruption or other detriment to the farming activities.

To ensure that we keep to our side of these legal agreements, all digging etc. must conform to these conditions.

1. Please apply to the Committee before starting any dig or similar project or using vehicles on the land. This also helps the Committee in case there are any queries from our tenant. Permission will normally be freely given for projects that conform to these guidelines.
2. Digs must be left tidy and safe after each visit and not be a risk to livestock or people.
3. Damage to land should be minimal and made good (i.e. digs and spoil heaps).
4. Lambing: it is specifically mentioned in the agreement that there shall be no disruption during the lambing season (normally between mid March and mid May). Anything other than very low-key activity should be avoided at this time, and it's best to defer any project entirely until lambing is over. Obviously blasting, use of vehicles or machinery, visits by large groups etc., must not be done.
5. Vehicles must only be used when genuinely required to carry equipment, damage to land must be avoided, and in

particular if the ground is soft or wet, then their use must be postponed until conditions are more suitable.

CAVE RESCUE IN SOUTH AND MID WALES

Cave Rescue in the South Wales area is provided by the South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team (SMWCRT).

The team has a base at the SWCC HQ and provides a volunteer Cave Rescue service across the region.

SWCC is a keen supporter of this vital service and encourages all Members to become involved in what ever capacity they are able - it is not all about hauling ropes.

Full details of the SMWCRT, how to get involved, practice programme etc. are available on its web site www.smwcr.org

RESCUE CALLOUT INSTRUCTIONS

Whilst staying at the HQ you may be required to alert the Cave Rescue team to attend an incident in one of 4 ways:

- You are part of party that gets into difficulties and are despatched to call for assistance
- A party becomes overdue on the destination board
- A caver returns to HQ to seek assistance for an injured party member underground
- You receive a telephone call on the SWCC payphone seeking assistance

Actions

Seek the assistance of a South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team (SMWCRT) Warden immediately.

The Wardens are trained to deal with a multitude of potential scenarios and will be able best to judge the appropriate response.

Check firstly to see if there is a SMWCRT Warden at the HQ and if not, call one using the Warden list next to the telephone in the lobby area. It is important that you call the Wardens' numbers on the list in order, until you contact one, as they are listed in this order to provide the quickest possible response.

Cave Rescue action **MUST NOT** be undertaken unless instructed by a Warden who will inform the Police first to arrange insurance.

Considerations

- A party is deemed overdue when ONE HOUR has passed since their 'ticket time' or, if not using the destination board system, their notified return time. However, if you are concerned about the party or weather conditions, do not hesitate to call a Warden sooner. It should never be more than 1 hour
- In the hour before callout, check if the party may have surfaced but not removed the ticket. Is their vehicle at the HQ? Has a key been returned? Has anyone seen them (in the cave or out)?
- If it is late on Sunday afternoon, you may wish to ask people to delay leaving in case they are needed

OTHER USEFUL LOCAL INFORMATION

Cave information

SWCC HQ at Penwyllt Tel. 01639 730613

Dan-yr-Ogof

Tony Baker (CAC Wardens' Sec.) Tel. 07770 646045

Brendan Marris (CAC Secretary) Tel. 07736 497883

Dan yr Ogof Management Tel. 01639 730693

Medical

Doctor Boladz and Partners

Abercraf Health Centre

Tel. 01639 730225

Pubs

The Copper Beech Hotel

133 Heol Tawe, Abercraf, Swansea, SA9 1XS

Tel. 01639 730269

<http://copperbeech-inn-and-restaurant.wales/>

The Abercraf Inn

145 Heol Tawe, Abercraf, Swansea, SA9 1XS

Tel. 01639 731002

<http://www.abercrafeinn.co.uk/>

The Pen-y-Cae Inn
Brecon Road , Pen-y-Cae, Swansea, SA9 1FA
Tel. 01639 730100
<http://penycaeinn.com/>

The Ancient Briton
Brecon Road, Pen-y-Cae, Swansea, SA9 1YY
Tel. 01639 730273
<http://ancientbriton.co.uk/>

The Gwyn Arms
Pen-y-Cae, Swansea, SA9 1GP
Tel. 01639 730310

RECIPROCAL ACCOMMODATION RIGHTS

Through reciprocal rights agreements SWCC Full Members may stay at other caving club huts, paying Members' rates only.

Whilst individuals, usually up to 6, can turn up on spec., it is better, and politer, to make a booking in advance through the respective hut wardens. For latest contact details, please check their web sites.

Mendip - [Mendip Caving Group](#)

NGR ST 5147 5605

Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse on Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol, BS40 7XW

On B3134 between Hunters Lodge and Burrington Combe

30 beds, electricity, gas cooking, showers

<http://www.mendipcavinggroup.org.uk/>

Mendip - [Bristol Exploration Club](#)

NGR ST 5421 5047

The Belfry, Wells Road, Priddy, Wells, BA5 1AU

www.bec-cave.org.uk

Mendip - [Wessex Cave Club](#)

NGR ST 5425 5057

Upper Pitts, Eastwater Lane, Priddy, Somerset, BA5 3AX

Tel: 01749 672310

Electricity, gas cooking, showers

<http://wessex-cave-club.org>

North Wales - [Cave and Crag Club](#)

NGR SH 5694 4080

Pant Ifan, nr. Tremadoc: Follow track from Prenteg, off A498

20 beds, electricity, gas cooking

www.caveandcrag.co.uk

Yorkshire - [Craven Pothole Club](#)

NGR SD 8050 7261

Ivy Cottage, Hawes Road, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, BD24 0HF

Next door to The Crown Inn

<http://cravenpotholeclub.org>

Yorkshire - [Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club](#)

NGR SD 6628.8142

Bull Pot Farm, High Casterton, via Carnforth, LA6 2JP

NE of Kirkby Lonsdale off A65(T)

Advance booking is necessary. Electricity, gas cooking, showers

www.rrcpc.org.uk

Yorkshire - [Yorkshire Subterranean Society](#)

Old School House, Austwick Road, Helwith Bridge BD24 0EH

www.yssuk.com

Derbyshire - [Orpheus](#)

www.orpheuscavingclub.org.uk

Derbyshire - [Cave and Crag Club](#)

NGR SK 1320 5558

rear of The George, Alstonefield, nr. Ashbourne, DE6 2FX

20 beds, electricity, gas cooking

www.caveandcrag.co.uk

SWCC HISTORY

In common with several other limestone regions, the earliest documented accounts of cave exploration in Wales stemmed from the work of 18th century archaeologists - notably Buckland, Boyd, Dawkins and Rutter. In particular, the obvious open caves along the coast of the Gower Peninsula attracted early attention. Here, Paviland Cave with its famous 'Red Lady' skeleton (in fact, male) of the Aurignacian period, found by Buckland in 1823, is probably the best known. Minchin Hole, Culver Hole, Bacon Hole and Cathole Cave have all provided interest for early diggers on the Gower.

The Morgan brothers of Abercraf carried out the first recorded cave exploration in the Swansea Valley when they penetrated the river entrance of Dan-yr-Ogof in 1912, found the climb up into the present show cave and reached the Third Lake. It was not until 1936, when cavers from Yorkshire and Somerset arrived on the scene, that speleology took firm root in Wales.

The names of Ernest Roberts and Gerard Platten are prominent in the early explorations during which members of the Mendip Exploration Society, Wessex Cave Club and Yorkshire Ramblers Club declared their interest in Welsh caves by forming the 'Dragon Group'. This long connection between the Mendip clubs and SWCC is acknowledged in the fact that SWCC has reciprocal rights with these clubs (see later).

The Lakes in Dan-yr-Ogof were finally conquered in 1937 and this year also marked the discovery of Pant Mawr Pot to the East of the Club. Will's Hole and Ogof Fawr were found in 1938 and Pwll Swnd in 1939. Incidentally, the name A. H. Hill, the first Secretary of SWCC, is associated with both the latter discoveries. Another

founder Member, E. J. Mason, commenced archaeological excavation in Ogof-yr-Esgyrn, above Dan-yr-Ogof, in 1938. Dan-yr-Ogof was opened as a show cave in August 1939, only to be closed in 1941. The outbreak of World War II rather slowed down the pace of work in South Wales; however, by the end of 1942 serious attention was being given to the rising of Ffynnon Ddu and the sinks at Pwll Byfre and Sinc-y-Giedd.

Two significant events occurred in 1946: firstly, the South Wales Caving Club was formed at Easter and secondly, Ogof Ffynnon Ddu was entered by Peter Harvey and Ian Nixon (both founder Members of SWCC) in the August.

Work on Ogof Ffynnon Ddu continued for twenty years, culminating in a series of breakthroughs in 1966/67; the dive through to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu II, the connection to Cwm Dwr Cave (discovered in 1963), the digging of Top Entrance and the extension into Ogof Ffynnon Ddu III. The first survey of the 'complete' Ogof Ffynnon Ddu system was published by the Club in 1970. It has subsequently been updated several times and is presently undergoing the next one.

Following the re-opening of the Dan-yr-Ogof Show Cave in 1964, the Long Crawl was finally passed by Club Members at Easter 1966, leading to the entry into Dan-yr-Ogof II and then, in September of the same year, Dan-yr-Ogof III was discovered. The next ten years produced further extensions, notably in the Far North and in Mazeways. These achievements tend to overshadow the entry into Tunnel Cave by Club Members in 1953. Again Club Members were prominent in producing the first Dan-yr-Ogof survey and in subsequent updates.

Club expeditions have taken place to France, Italy, Spain, China and notably the Balinka Expeditions to Yugoslavia in 1964 and 1966. As a result of this the Club and four expedition members were awarded medals in recognition of the assistance rendered in recovering the bodies of WWII partisans from the very deep shaft, and serve to refute the words of the caving song '*And from our native valleys we seldom care to roam*'. Today it is quite likely that you will find SWCC Members in France or Spain as well as more exotic locations such as Belize, Canada the Philippines or China.

The Club's enthusiasm for local exploration continues unabated. Although major finds are proving elusive, Members can be seen setting off for digs on many weekends. Recent discoveries include Cwm Dwr II (first discovered in 1938 during quarrying operations and lost until 1991) and the latest extensions at Twyn Tal Draenen and Pwll Porth De, both in the Dan-yr-Ogof catchment area. Additionally, Members have in recent years been involved in the exploration of Ogof Draenen in the Llangatwg area.

The Club's first HQ was a detached cottage at Pen-y-Bont, beside the Llynfell stream from Dan-yr-Ogof. Thoughts of higher things accompanied a move up to the more spacious premises in Powell Street at Penwyllt, purchased for the huge sum (then) of £200 in 1959. Since then the accommodation has been steadily maintained and improved, largely through the collective efforts of Working Week. SWCC also owns the property known as 'The Stump', which comprises Wern House, currently leased to Swindon Speleological Society, and The Penwyllt Inn, currently leased to Wealden Cave and Mine Society.

In 1999, with the aid of donations from Members and a 50% grant from the Countryside Council for Wales, the Club successfully bid for and purchased about 65 acres of land over the cave system together with about 2500 acres of mineral rights in the immediate vicinity of Penwyllt, ensuring the security of the system.

In July 2011 SWCC was delighted to announce the purchase of some seven acres of land including the entrance to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I.

At the end of 2010 the Club had been approached by the Toyne family, who had owned the cottage and land at Y Grithig for many years and they explained that they had reluctantly decided to sell the property. They asked if the Club were interested in buying a parcel of land to include not just OFD I but also Powell's Cave and other sites of speleological interest.

A site meeting was held to discuss potential boundaries, and it was clear that this was a one-off opportunity to secure permanent access to, and conservation of, one of the UK's most important caves. However, the sum of money involved represented a significant outlay for a Club with limited reserves and it was essential that the Committee consulted with the wider membership before proceeding. The Members recognized the unique nature of the opportunity and were overwhelmingly in favour of the purchase.

SWCC was fortunate and grateful to secure a grant from the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), amounting to 25% of the purchase price. A significant proportion of the balance came via donations from individual SWCC Members, and generous sponsors who contributed to the Ogof Fest party and auction in the autumn of 2011.

In the words of Fred Levett the President at the time: “*Ogof Ffynnon Ddu 1 entrance is now ours! Success! As of today 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.*”

Traditionally the SWCC Annual General Meeting is held on the Saturday preceding the Early May Bank Holiday Monday. This is an important date in the Club's calendar and Members are encouraged to attend as the weekend is made into an 'event'.

Today SWCC has roughly 300 Members of all ages, from all walks of life, and from many parts of the country, together with a few from Europe and further abroad.

The Club plays a key role in administering access to the local major caves and acts as host to thousands of visiting cavers each year.

SWCC is proud of its history and confident of its future.

Penwyllt 2016

SWCC LAND

SWCC is a significant landowner around Penwyllt. This ownership includes: the gardens opposite 1-10 Powell Street, the Penwyllt Inn and Wern House and associated gardens, and other land as shown enclosed within the red lines on the map below.

