

Chair's Report

The big news is that the access agreement with Longleat for the Cheddar Gorge Caves has finally been signed. It has taken an extraordinary amount of work by the C&A Officer and he is to be commended. It has taken many years. The commitment, tenacity, patience and dogged determination has been extraordinary. Work to implement the agreement continues at a pace. Recreational trips should start soon.

I'd like to highlight the BCA Rep. report. The CSCC has long been against certificates to go caving. It's good to see the work the BCA and CHECC has recently done with the University clubs to fight for that cause.

The CSCC has a long term structural problem. It has virtually no income other than from BCA which means it is slowly bleeding money spent on non-claimable items. I would like to discuss and receive feedback on charging CSCC members a small annual fee. This is something that Caving Wales / Ogofa Cymru (formerly known as Cambrian Caving Council) has recently introduced.

David Cooke
November 2025

Treasurer's Report Nov 2025

Proposed New Clubs

BathSpeleo – Founded in 2022, BCA club, ~30 members.

2025 Spending and Accounts Since Aug 2025

BCA claim received in full. Payments received for Keys. £188 paid for padlocks and keys to meet Cheddar/ Longleat Access Agreement.

2026 Predicted Spending

The BCA Treasurer has been working hard to ensure the BCA accounts balance going forward, so has been asking for predicted spends/forecasts for future years. We are not bound by this prediction it just helps with budgeting.

Based on input from the other CSCC officers, this is what I predict for 2026, to be reclaimed from the BCA in 2027.

Spending Category	A: 100% Confident Spend	B: 50% Chance Spend	C: 10% Chance Spend	Notes / Justification
1. Admin	£200	£100	£100	Travel, Web Server
2. Training & Equipment	£	£250	£250	Ad-Hoc training, none planned
3. Anchors	£50	£150	£200	Resin, Drill Bits etc
4. Routine C&A (<£750)	£200	£300	£225	Harridge Wood, General C&A
5. C&A Projects (>£750)	£2000	£1500	£1500	Home Close/StockHill
TOTAL	£2450	£2300	£2275	

Tom Harrison Nov 2025

Conservation & Access Report - CSCC Meeting 10th November 2025

Please find below the Conservation & Access Officer's Report. This covers the period since the last meeting in August 2025.

Longleat

The Access Agreement was finally signed by all parties on the 26th September 2025.

We have now started the work necessary to implement the agreement. The tasks achieved to date are:-

- All entitled clubs have been emailed and asked to nominate Wardens.
 - All clubs have responded with the exception of the MNRC, ACG, Cerberus and Wessex.
- New padlocks have been ordered, received and installed.
 - A spare set of keys have been placed in the MCR store.
- A range of online facilities have been created, including:-
 - A User Agreement / Permit system
 - A Trip Reporting system
 - A booking calendar
- A safety inspection trip was conducted to Spider Hole to ensure:-
 - All bolts appear secure
 - All walling and cementing is in good condition
 - There have been no rock falls or other significant movements
- The Reservoir Hole style, over the fence in the Bristol Waterworks enclosure, was reconstructed (the old one having been removed when the fencing was replaced).



- A number of Warden Training sessions have been completed:-
 - Reservoir Hole – 5 wardens
 - Spider Hole – 6 wardens
 - Gough's Cave – 4 wardens
- More Warden Training sessions are planned over the coming weeks.
- Warden sign-off assessments have been scheduled.
 - There should be at least 2 fully assessed and approved Wardens by the time of the CSCC meeting.
- The first Digging Proposal has been submitted to Longleat, under the terms of the agreement.
- Compliance and Agreement Review Meetings have been scheduled with Longleat.
- The first recreational trips should take place very shortly.

The main outstanding actions are:-

- Complete the Warden Training
- Complete the Warden assessments
- Construct an online Warden Register and share with Longleat
- Trial-run the Access Procedure with some actual trips
- Update the CSCC Access Guide to reflect the new agreement and procedures

Stock Hill Mine Cave



The Stock Hill Mine Cave digging team have confirmed they have completed their exploration of the cave and are happy for the CSCC to take over access. To this end, a standard CSCC padlock has been installed and the CSCC Access Guide has been updated to reflect the change. Those wishing to visit the cave may wish to wait for the description and survey to be published in the upcoming Mendip Underground 6.

Wookey Hole



The electron ladder on the 4th rift climb, on the dry route to Wookey 24, has broken. It was in a poor condition with a lot of visible corrosion. It has been replaced by a new one kindly donated by the Wessex Cave Club.

Stainsby's Shaft



Several reports were received that the Stainsby's Shaft lid had been broken into. The gate was repaired immediately by the MCG and I inspected it a few days later. The repair is excellent and there is no further work required.

Timber Hole



A report was received of an insecure entrance to a mine shaft beside the footpath leading along Velvet Bottom. This was believed to be Timber Hole and inspection visit was conducted. Timber Hole was located; the lid was found to be in good condition and secured with the standard CSCC padlock. The footpath was followed all the way to Black Rock Gate and no other entrances, insecure or not, were found.

Miscellaneous

A few minor tasks have been completed. These included:-

- The GB padlock lock barrel was flushed and lubricated following a report by a group that they could not get the key to insert fully.
- A problem with the Longwood \ August padlock was reported to CCC Ltd, who have addressed the issue.
- The CSCC Access Guide entry for Priddy Green Sink has been updated to state the lid has the standard CSCC padlock.
- I have collected the "Grunter Phone" radio location equipment from Brian Prewer. If anyone wants to know how this equipment works or has a radio location project then please get in touch.

Future Priorities

In the coming months I will be concentrating on the following priorities:-

- 1) Arrange and complete the training of Wardens for the Cheddar Caves
- 2) Finalise the access arrangements (on-line facilities) for Harridge Woods
- 3) Submit a funding request to BCA for:-
 - a. Modifications to the Stock Hill Mine Cave lid
 - b. A new lid for Home Close

If anyone has anything else they would like progressing then please let me know.

Wayne Starsmore
C&A Officer
CSCC

Equipment Officers Report

The Gladman's and Lolly Pot in Eastwater Cavern anchors have been installed. Gladman's only has one anchor on the main hang. With good rigging practice this can be rigged safely using the two anchors further back. The remains of the original spit is probably removable and it is the aim to do so in the future.

Anchors have been placed on Jet pitch in Charterhouse, with the original spit being removed and the placement reused. An anchor has already been added to the rope climb before the pitch. The original anchor is a through bolt unfortunately, so it has been left to form a double anchor. Thanks to Matty and Bex Reeves for assistance.

Wayne has submitted a request for anchors in Spider. I would recommend that it is approved without further checks as the submitter is Wayne. Through anchors are very difficult to remove, I intend to do some practice on the surface with Matty before attempting it underground.

Name of Cave: Spider Hole

Area: Cheddar Gorge

Approx Number of Anchors: 3

Purpose of Anchors: The three existing anchors at the head of Nut pitch are showing excessive corrosion and ideally should be replaced. They appear to be galvanised 8mm through-bolts.

Suggested positions for anchors: Ideally the existing anchors should be removed and the holes re-used for the new anchors. If this is not possible then the new anchors should be placed as close as possible to the existing ones.

Justification for Request: The existing anchors are positioned well but are aging badly.

Person Requesting the anchors: Wayne Starsmore (CSCC C&A Officer)

Date of Request: 27/10/2025

Note: All of the other anchors in the cave, which would be used for access rather than hauling, are Stainless Steel and appear sound.

Andrew Atkinson

Nov. 2025

CSCC BCA REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

The next BCA Meeting isn't until 25th November 2025, so at the moment there isn't a huge amount to report, however I would like to flag up an area where BCA has been doing some very valuable work behind the scenes for student clubs.

Against a backdrop of growing concern amongst both universities and students' unions about health and safety, an outfit with the cringe-worthy name of 'Organised Fun' has touted their services to a group of SUs, including Bristol, who are concerned about the risks posed by outdoor activities.

BCA has met the organisation and has taken a very strong line that there are no qualifications applicable to recreational caving. To quote from a recent email from Isaac Neale, BCA's Youth & Development Officer, to student clubs in the context of an upcoming 'focus group' meeting between Organised Fun and representatives of various outdoor societies:

"Formalised qualification and leadership systems are unsuitable and undesirable for the recreational caving we do and implementing one would not make recreational caving safer. What makes people safer cavers is getting more caving done and gaining more experience. When an organisation such as an SU does force a system of qualifications to be used what we actually see is people going caving less, as there is now a barrier to entry. This then gives them less experience, makes them less safe, and often is coupled with the club dying as they rarely go on trips. On the flip side to that, it is also why student cavers going on expeditions can be so good, as it imparts an awful lot of experience in a short period of time!

"Looking at the incident rate, caving now is safer than ever before. It has become especially safer over the last twenty years. "Silly Season" isn't a thing anymore. CHECC deserves a mention here. The rise and development of CHECC correlates with the decline of student incidents. CHECC has provided some very high quality training, and getting the wider community together to witness each other's practices allows them to both knowledge share and self-police."

Any representatives of student groups can, I believe, rely on BCA to take a strong and sensible line on this particular potential threat to student caving as no one wants to see a threat of the need for formal qualifications creeping into recreational caving. It is in all our interests to resist any move in this direction as much as possible and it is reassuring to see the work our national body is doing to protect our interests in this regard. And for those who are at times tempted to wonder why we have a national body at all, my own view is that this is very much why it is in all our interests to do what we can to maintain a strong national body. Thanks are also due to CHECC for the work they do to support student caving.

When I have the agenda and papers for the BCA meeting, I'll forward them around the officials email list.

Linda Wilson
Joshitha Shivkumar
BCA Representative(s)
13.11.25

Webmaster's Report

The website seems to be running well on its new server. The new mailing list software still needs to be turned on which I'll do as soon as possible.

I've kept the front page up to date with the current news and event, linking through to the items the Comms Officer posts. The Newsletters page had slipped behind a bit but is now up to date as well.

The Equipment Officer has done some work on restructuring and adding more information to his pages. I encourage the other officers to review their sections.

David Cooke
November 2025