



**Surrey Mines conservation  
Photo: Lesley Eggleston**

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### **Welcome – Three New Member Clubs**

The following clubs were accepted as new members of CSCC at the recent Annual General Meeting:

- Brighton Explorers Club – website: <https://www.brightonexplorers.org>
  - Yorkshire SS – website: <https://www.yssuk.com/>
  - Cambridge UCC – website: <https://caving.soc.socf.net/index.html/>
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### **Annual General Meeting - Summary and Officers' Reports**

This is a summary of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May. The minutes of the meeting should be referenced as the only authoritative record. Minutes are stored at <https://csc.org.uk/wiki/documents/start> To read the full reports by officers, these will also be available on the same page. Some details have been omitted from the following notes.

## Chair's Report

I would like to thank all the officers for all the hard work they have put in this year. I don't feel that I have been as present as I should have been with a new job starting pretty much as I took on the role of Chair and disappearing to India on expedition for almost two months didn't help. So it was great to see the tasks picked up and carried forward.

I want to continue focusing on recruiting new, younger volunteers to CSCC. It is difficult but important for the continuation of an effective CSCC. Hopefully we'll be able to appoint some assistant officers at this meeting.

As a reminder, I'm proposing that each officer is shadowed by an assistant. This has the advantage of continuity. Much knowledge of past events, agreements and actions is in people's heads, all too easily lost if that person moves on. It also has the additional advantage of sharing the high work load some roles have. How the work is shared out between officer and assistant would be up to them. I would give the assistant one specific task and that is to jointly present the officer's report at meetings. This will gently ensure they are engaged with the role.

David Cooke

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## Webmaster's Report

In the past year I've updated, maintained and supported the various aspects of CSCC's IT. The webserver, website, access guide, calendar, email, mailing lists (Mailman, MailChimp), etc.

The new Harridge Woods access agreement requires a permit system similar to the one I wrote for the Charterhouse Caving Company. It has turned into more work than I was expecting but will be ready soon. It will be available at <https://hw-permits.csc.org.uk>.

Moving the website away from the BCA server to Krystal, the new Internet provider, continues. The delay was due to a replacement for the Mailman 2 mailing list software being evaluated. That has now been done. Work is ongoing.

It was pointed out to me that the CSCC's postal address did not appear anywhere on the website. That has now been fixed. It appears on an updated Contact Us page.

The general principle I aim to follow when developing the website is to enable updates to be done by others as well as the webmaster. Too many websites rely on just the webmaster for updates and then stagnate when the webmaster is overworked or loses enthusiasm. So, for example, I'm very pleased to have the Secretary posting the Minutes, the C&A Officer updating the Access Guide, the Comms. Officer posting news items and the Equipment Officer maintaining the anchor placement pages.

Any suggestions for improving the website or other aspects of IT are always welcome.

David Cooke

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## Conservation & Access Officer's Report

It has been a busy, and somewhat frustrating, year for C&A activities. The Longleat Access Agreement has taken many, many hours of work and significant progress has been made but it is still not in place. While taking significantly less effort, the Harridge Woods agreement has been signed off but isn't operational as it is awaiting the CSCC to finalise a permit web site.

### *Longleat*

A second draft of the Access Agreement was submitted to Longleat at the start of February. Their Land Agent decided to send the full agreement to Longleat's solicitors for review, rather than just the two clauses that were expected. Despite answering their solicitors' queries promptly, we are still awaiting the outcome of the legal review.

### *Lionel's Hole*

A report of a boulder movement in Lionel's Hole was received and a subsequent inspection took place. At the top of the Second Duck Bypass, where there is a T-junction, two large boulders had moved. There is a large triangular flake stood upright and a large squarer boulder on the floor in front of it. Formerly, these boulders created a low roof in this area but it is now possible to stand up. The "flake" boulder is securely wedged in its new position and can be passed with care. The squarer boulder has been "chocked" in place and is now unlikely to move further. The situation will be monitored to assess if any further work is required.

### *Harridge Woods*

The Harridge Wood Nature Reserve access agreement is ready to go but is still waiting for the CSCC to complete the work required to provide an online permit system.

### *Goatchurch Cavern*

A report was received that arrows had been chalked onto the walls of Goatchurch Cavern. In order to prevent the potential for proliferation, they were promptly removed. Many thanks to the MCG for arranging this.

### *Pressure Washers*

The Wealden Cave and Mine Society have borrowed the CSCC pressure washers, along with a supply of pigtail risers and conservation tape for a clean-up project. We look forward to receiving a report of their achievements in due course.

### *Thrupe Lane Swallet*

A very large boulder appears to be on the move in Butt's Chamber. The boulder sits on the slope between Upper and Lower Butt's chamber and has the potential of blocking access to Bridge Rift and the route into the cave from Perseverance Pot. An inspection visit was due to take place before the AGM meeting.

## CSCC Access Guide

Many updates have been made to the CSCC Access Guide including:-

- Updating the goodwill fees for Eastwater, North Hill Swallet and Sludge Pit to £2.
- Updating the bat season closure date for the Fairy Cave Quarry caves.
- Revising the parking location for Welsh's Green Swallet.
- Updating the Loxton Cave \ Loxton Quarry Cave access information.

### *Singing River Mine*

The Singing River Mine access agreement has been in place since October 2023 and is running smoothly. Visitor number are as follows:-

<b>Year</b>	<b>Trips</b>	<b>No Cavers</b>	<b>Notes</b>
2023	8	37	Started in Oct
2024	11	72	
2025	4	27	Year to date
Totals	23	136	

### *Wookey Hole Cave*

The access agreement with Wookey has run without issue over the past three months, having been started in December 2022. Visitor numbers are as follows:-

<b>Year</b>	<b>Trips</b>	<b>No Cavers</b>	<b>Notes</b>
2022	3	18	Started in Dec
2023	39	190	
2024	28	153	
2025	10	57	Year to date
Totals	80	418	

### *Future Priorities*

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

1. Agree a formal access agreement for the Caves of Cheddar Gorge
2. Arrange and complete the training of Wardens for the Cheddar Caves
3. Finalise the access arrangements (on-line facilities) for Harridge Woods
4. Discuss and agree the required Cow Hole entrance work with the landowner

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

Wayne Starsmore  
C&A Officer, CSCC

## Report of the CSCC Representative to the BCA

BCA is working well under its new executive. Rostam Namaghi as chair runs meetings in a focused and forward-looking manner, and is putting a lot of thought into how to take the organization forward. Aiden Kuhlmann, is an efficient secretary, with minutes and agendas appearing in a timely manner. Chris Bolton is proving to be an excellent treasurer with a solid grasp of the finances. Zac Woodford as Publications and Information Officer is working on an update to the guidelines for university and college clubs.

This year's AGM will be a hybrid one and I'll reserve judgment on how that works until afterwards, but my experience of hybrid meetings hasn't been positive so far.

The migration of BCA's membership system to an external provider, JustGo, has proved successful, and the feedback so far has been positive. Katie Eavis worked hard to ensure a smooth transition.

In the coming year, we can expect much discussion within BCA about the possibility of converting the organization into a company limited by guarantee. I think this is a sensible idea in principle, but as ever, the devil is in the detail and a lot of work will be involved.

I have attended all Council meetings on CSCC's behalf in the past year and have submitted a report to each one, even though this isn't obligatory, but I think it's a good opportunity to keep BCA informed of the work CSCC does, particularly regarding access. I have attended all CSCC Meetings (I think!) and have given most of my reports in writing. In addition, I volunteered for a Business Risk Exercise being conducted by Chris Bolton as treasurer on the level of reserves being held by BCA, which involved looking in detail at the work BCA does and the risks it runs, plus the steps taken to mitigate these risks. I felt that my background meant I could offer thoughts and a business perspective, which is what I have done.

I am very keen to follow up Cookie's idea of officer 'shadowing' and would very much welcome someone to work with me in this way as that I can begin a phased handover of responsibility. The job is not onerous. \*

As ever, if you have any questions or issues relating to BCA, please contact me and I'll do my best to respond/help where I can.

Linda Wilson  
BCA Representative

*\* Since the AGM a volunteer has been identified to shadow the role of BCA Representative and their appointment awaits approval.*

## Treasurer's Report 2024

2024's Accounts appear below. These have only just been sent over to our new scrutineer for checking.

### *Notes from the accounts:*

Last year's BCA claim for core expenditure was paid in full.

Wayne Starsmore's C&A travel related expenses were kindly donated to the CSCC.

For Expenditure, a missing payment for resin from 2022 was paid, as well as further resin purchased in 2024. Other expenses as listed.

### *Finance Group Meeting:*

I met with the BCA treasurer recently, as well as with the other regional treasurers. The CSCC claim for £187.81 for 2024 was approved at that meeting, subject to the accounts being scrutinised.

The DCA claim was approved at £3831.12

The CNCC claim was approved at £6572.00

The DCUC claim was approved at £335.66

The CW/OC claim was approved at £1411.55

Total BCA Income for 2024 was £140,953

Total Expenditure was £146,723

Charitable Donations came to £15,004

The BCA loss for the year was £20,773

Total Reserves of the BCA including creditors and accruals due within 1 year - £143,757

### *Spending*

So far in 2025, £220 has been spent on costs towards the Event at the end of May. Our spending is going to be well below the budget I proposed to the BCA last year. For planning purposes, please let me know of any potential CSCC spending in the short to medium term.

Tom Harrison  
Treasurer, CSCC

## CSCC Accounts Summary 2024

### Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

		<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
		£	£
<b>Income</b>			
Subs		30.00	30.00
Donations	note 1	74.75	-
Net Interest		2.28	1.46
BCA Funding	note 2	836.00	5,188.00
 Sundry		-	-
Somerset Community Fund Grant for Maine's Barn		-	2,000.00
Gate Sale		-	100.00
Key Sales		30.75	40.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>973.78</b>	<b>7,359.46</b>
 <b>Expenditure</b>	note 3	<b>Core</b>	
Officer Travel Expenses		74.75	74.75
Web Server		23.07	23.07
Resin		64.99	64.99
C&A – Harridge Wood		25.00	25.00
 2022 Photography Course		-	50.00
Singing River Gate		-	800.00
Maillons		-	36.00
Maine's Barn Renovation		-	1,984.50
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>187.81</b>	<b>187.81</b>
 <b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>		<b>785.97</b>	<b>4,488.96</b>

**Statement of Funds Available as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	£	£
<b>Balance brought forward from previous year</b>		
Current account	4,654.17	206.67
Reserve account	147.42	105.96
Cash	-	-
	<b>4,801.59</b>	<b>312.63</b>
 <b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>		
 <b>Balance carried forward to next year</b>	<b>5,587.56</b>	<b>4,801.59</b>
 <b>At 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>		
Current account	5,427.11	4,654.17
Reserve account	160.45	147.42
Cash	-	-
<b>Funds Available</b>	<b>5,587.56</b>	<b>4,801.59</b>

**Notes**

1. Donated officer travel expenses £74.75.
2. Prior year's BCA claim paid in full.
3. Core expenditure is claimable from BCA. The 2024 claim will be £187.81.

At the year end, membership was 40 clubs of which 39 were also BCA members.

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### Equipment Officer's Report

The anchor at the top of the ladder in GB has been replaced and on a separate trip anchors have been placed on the Devil's Elbow end drop as the stal that was been used is becoming worn out.

Also an anchor on the fourth pitch of Rhino Rift has been removed. Lots of the old dangerous rope had been remove. As well as the back-up natural not been the best, the rope was breakable by pulling on it. The pitch needs a spit replacing, however this could not be done on the trip as my short drill bit was broken. A new one has been purchased and a return trip to complete the work will be undertaken. There is currently a hanger in the spit.

Thanks to Matty Dredge for his help with these.

Longwood Valley Sink has many pitches and traverses. One of the traverses has been partially anchored with IC anchors, the remaining will be undertaken in the future.

Thanks To Haydon Sanders for help with these.

Both Matty and Haydon are now trained to place anchors.

We are now down to the last few IC anchors, so I have contacted CNCC and asked for a batch of 30.

Andrew Atkinson, Equipment Officer

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### Training Officer's Report

No training conducted. One request received, however they already had supported agreed, I'm not sure what support was wanted? I offered to support where else I could but nothing else received. I do not wish to continue as Training Officer; although I would like to continue with the organising of this Cave the Sun event to take it through to completion.

#### *Cave the Sun Update:*

Planning progressing well, most elements are now in place. The village hall has been booked and the cup designs agreed, with a supplier found. Cobbs of Cheddar have pencilled in the hog roast at £8.50 a head, and we will be purchasing desserts at £1 a head from Costco on the day. David Cooke is currently looking into an alternative for the hog roast, which may come in cheaper.

For the day activities, no one has emailed to take part in the cave the sun element, and thus it is currently likely this will be cancelled. MCRA has agreed to put an activity in the afternoon and a Facebook event has been set up, this looks to be more popular with people responding either going or interested.

Current tasks are to create the playlist and to complete a risk assessment, both of these lie with Dave Keegan. As part of the risk assessment, we would need to identify who is going who is first aid qualified.

Dave King has agreed to run the bar and has got the agreements for purchasing drinks. We do not know however how many people to expect, which is a problem for how much to order.

*Cave the Sun Finances:*

Already paid: £220 (village Hall)

Needs approving: £310 (250 cups for sale), Hog roast (£8.50\* no. of people). Volunteers expected to require 5\* meals (2 general and 3 bar staff), and 6\* mugs; cost of £50

To be claimed on expenses: drinks from bar sales (tbc), desserts (£200), cleaning supplies/sundries (Max £100)

Expected income. Ticket sales @ £15pp (reduced due to change with cups no longer included in ticket price), cup sales @ £2 per cup, bar profits (to be split between cave rescue and CSCC, split tbc in conjunction with overall profit.

*Cave the Sun Issues:*

The current issue is the lack of people who have signed up, currently we have sold 4 tickets. Whilst I appreciate this could be due to it being a future date, it would be useful to get an understanding of whether we're expecting lots of people to come, or why there has been a lack of sign ups? The current decision required is on whether to order food/drinks working on the assumption that there will be x number of people turn up, or to cancel elements due to lack of assured numbers.

A huge thank you to the volunteers who have been supporting the organising, and for the club reps for helping with pushing the information out.

Dave Keegan  
CSCC Training Officer

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Communication Officer's report

I have continued to put out a newsletter every three months. I have changed the publication dates to postdate CSCC meetings as this allows prompt dissemination of matters discussed and agreed by Council. My thanks to Cookie for stepping in for one of the issues in 2024. Regular channels for communications are as follows:

- CSCC newsletter
- CSCC Club Rep email list.
- CSCC email subscribers by MailChimp
- CSCC Facebook page
- UKCaving website

Peter Burgess  
CSCC Communications Officer

## Other matters discussed

### *Shadowing*

The Chair stated that in the coming year he would like to push the 'Officer Shadowing'. The objective is not only to get overlap and continuity but also to get new blood into the CSCC committee.

Could all CSCC members ask their clubs for volunteers. In addition, it is proposed that the assistants develop a report with the officer for each meeting.

And in this connection, Matty Dredge was formally proposed as Assistant Equipment and Techniques Volunteer.

Matty Dredge - proposed Andrew Atkinson, Seconded Graham Mullan, Vote passed Unanimous

### *Mileage Expenses Rate*

Dave Cooke stated that the BCA mileage expenses rate has changed to 0.45 p/mile recently, we claim our expenses from BCA. I propose that we change our rate to match BCA.

It is proposed that from the 1 Jan 2025 the CSCC mileage expenses rate shall be equal to the BCA mileage expenses rate, this will continue into the future.

Proposed Dave Cooke, Seconded Tom Harrison, Vote passed Nem Con.

### *Forthcoming events*

31 May 2025 CSCC – Chase the Sun  
21 June 2025 Thrupe Lane Swallet boulder stabilisation  
27-29 June 2025 NAMHO North Wales  
28 June 2025 Wessex Challenge, run by the Bristol EC.  
26-28 Sept 2025 Hidden Earth, Llangollen  
Sat 11 Oct 2025 BCRA Cave Science Symposium, Bristol

### *Proposed Future meeting Dates*

Monday 18 August 2025 19:00 GM Zoom  
Monday 10 Nov 2025 19:00 GM Zoom  
Monday 02 Feb 2026 23:59 Notification to members of AGM, [This is the notification.](#)  
Monday 9 Feb 2026 19:00 GM Zoom  
Friday 13 March 2026 23:59 Deadline for AGM nominations  
Friday 13 March 2026 19:00 Deadline for AGM constitutional amendments  
Tuesday 1 April 2026 23:59 Notification to members of AGM nominations  
Friday 8 May 2026 19:00 AGM Zoom

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### Shadowing the Equipment Officer

Having answered the call by the CSCC for assistance, I have taken up the role as Deputy Equipment Officer.

So far I have worked with Andrew Atkinson to replace a worn anchor at Ladder Dig in G.B. installed two anchors at Devils Elbow in G.B. for a pull through abseil and installed one anchor at the head of the 4th pitch at Rhino Rift, with a second to be installed in due time. Our work in Rhino Rift also included removal of unsafe gear left behind (see photo).

The equipment officer had also worked with Haydon Sanders to replace multiple anchors in Longwood Valley Sink, with more to come.

Projects in the pipeline include work in Eastwater, so if you know of any anchor which could do with getting sorted, put in a request on the CSCC website.

It is great to be in a position to be able to contribute towards the upkeep of the caving environment, so I would urge others to consider some of the other Deputy roles which are yet to be filled.

Matty Dredge



## News in Brief

Flange Swallet, a place in Burrington Combe where the West Twin Brook stream sinks below a small rockface, was dug out by mechanical digger in April. This was not an attempt to open up a new cave, but was done to ensure that in the event of heavy rainfall, excessive floodwater does not make its way onto the road with all the resulting damage it might cause. A similar hole has been cleared near East Twin Swallet for the same reason. Source: UBSS newsletter March 2025.

Little Crapnell Swallet – bad air reported here, in mid-April, not far from the entrance.

Quarter Way Up Hole, Fairy Cave Quarry – an interim report on the discovery of a woolly rhinoceros skull earlier this year has been published in *Cave and Karst Science*, Vol.52, No.1, (2025) 32 – 34. <https://bcra.org.uk/pub/docs/downloads.html?f=cks154032.f> The remains have been dated to around 40-50,000 years ago.

Easegill Open House. Although out of area, readers may be interested in attending ten days of caving based at Bullpot Farm, from 20-30 June. The details below are from the CHECC Facebook page.

We'd love to invite you to Easegill Open House – a 10 day caving festival at Bullpot Farm, running for the first time, in June this year!

The idea is similar to the Winch meets at Gaping Gill, where loads of fun and classic routes are rigged across the system and cavers are encouraged to come up and celebrate Easegill caves. The permits and hut have been booked out exclusively for the event, and camping is also available. There are brilliant chefs preparing hearty post-caving meals every night which everyone is welcome to opt into for the cost of £5/meal and a cavers' bar running.

As it's the first time we're attempting something like this, to try to manage numbers and vehicles, we've made booking ahead essential (even for members). As always with big events at the Farm, parking space is limited, so we'd urge you to consider lift sharing.

So, if you are free for one or more days and want to be part of something very special and new in caving, sign up now:

<https://forms.gle/8MB9XSJtM4RQmwWH9>

If you think you could also contribute to the smooth running of the event, all volunteers will get free hut fees and evening meals for the days they volunteer.

Some of the jobs are:

- Rig an Easegill classic on Friday 20th June
- Cook a tasty meal for 50+ cavers (not single handedly, unless you'd rather!)
- Manage the call outs for the day
- Run the bar for a night
- Derig on Monday 30th June

If you think you can volunteer: <https://forms.gle/92xMqpHFyaprQ33q7>

Longwood Main Sink clearance. Water flowing down Longwood Valley on Mendip in flood conditions has in the past caused damage as far downstream as Cheddar Gorge, and on one occasion ripped up the road edge so severely that the road was closed for four months.

The most important flood defence in the Longwood Valley is Main Sink in the stream bed just south of the Longwood entrance blockhouse. To help ensure the water continues to disappear underground here even in the wettest of conditions, the Charterhouse Caving Company Ltd

(CCC Ltd) periodically arranges to clear the accumulation of rocks, silt and wood debris that accumulates in the bottom of the sink. This problem has been particularly acute since ash die-back has afflicted the valley.

This year the sink clearance took place on 9th May 2025.



*Longwood sink in April during a Charterhouse/SWT inspection visit. Photo: Peter Burgess*



## DNA from Fishmonger's Swallet, South Gloucestershire, helps map evolution of fever-causing bacteria

Research on a human jawbone found in Fishmonger's Swallet, Gloucestershire, has contributed ancient DNA to ground-breaking research into bacteria. The jawbone is now in the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society's museum.

This was one of four samples from across the UK, ranging from 2,300 to 600 years ago, that helped researchers at the Francis Crick Institute and UCL in London use ancient DNA to pinpoint the evolution and spread of *Borrelia recurrentis*, a type of bacteria that causes relapsing fever.

Fishmonger's Swallet, which featured on a Time Team dig in 2000, has yielded an astonishing amount of material from the Iron Age, including people and dogs radiocarbon dated to the late pre-Roman Iron Age between 200BC to 35BC.



*Richard Madgwick (left), Jack Randall (middle) and Jessica Peto (right) in Bone Idle Chamber, Fishmongers Swallet.*

[The research is published in the academic journal Science.](#)

Until now it was not known when *B. recurrentis* made the jump from ticks to lice and what impact this had on disease transmission and severity in humans.

Researchers concluded that the evolution of *B. recurrentis*

highlights that a combination of genetic and environmental changes can help pathogens spread and infect populations more easily. This transition may have coincided with changes in human lifestyles, like living closer together and the beginning of the wool trade.

Museum curator Linda Wilson said: "Our museum is an amazing treasure trove of ancient material that punches well above its weight in its contribution to research. Our collection supports cutting-edge scientific studies like this one, and by preserving and making this material available we enable scientists to deepen our understanding the past. Fishmonger's Swallet is a fascinating site that has by no means given up all its secrets. Only two weeks ago, we were working there with members of the Hades Caving Club and archaeologists affiliated with Amgueddfa Cymru/Museum Wales, recovering more material for future research."

[The Francis Crick Institute provides further information here.](#)

## Mine Conservation Work in Surrey

Wayne Starsmore, CSCC Conservation and Access Officer, regularly reminds everyone that there are a couple of pressure washers available for any stal cleaning jobs that need attention.

The ancient stone quarries near Merstham, Surrey, have been explored by cavers on a regular basis since the 1960s, and although, for me, their principal value is archaeological, there are some very well decorated sections which are almost cave-like. If nothing else, the formations are a useful feature which allows those being introduced to caving to appreciate first-hand the nature of calcite deposits and the importance of conservation.

Some areas are frequently visited being part of a popular “approved route” for led groups of youngsters. Even before such groups were escorted into the mines, this was a popular route to go to see the “pretties” and get filthy in a muddy section close by. All this activity has resulted in a degree of trampling with mud spreading over what had once been a modest calcite flow with dumpy low boss stalagmites set into it. Despite taping by various people over the years, this had not prevented visitors straying off the path and depositing more mud. The old tatty nature of some of the taping gave the impression that nobody really cared any more.

With the decorated area very slowly deteriorating, it seemed a good idea to borrow the jet washers and have a go at improving matters as soon as a collection could be arranged. The equipment was picked up from the Wessex hut on the last day of February and brought to the south-east. It was a month later that a team of Wealden members met on a sunny Sunday ready to have a go at cleaning our first section. The aims were various: could we easily use the water in a large static puddle as a viable source of clean water, how much water would we have to use, would the stal actually look much different after cleaning, how long would it take? Answers to these questions would help us plan future sessions.

The team, comprising Sophie Hodson, Liam Wright, Josh Johnson-Pryke, Lesley Eggleston and myself, carried the two Pelicases containing the washers and spare batteries, two collapsible buckets and a large plastic water container through the low awkward passages, over some roof-



falls and on to the decorated section of the mine. Here, we set up a workable system to clean the area of floor nearest to the large puddle. We used one washer to pump water from the puddle into the large container, which was then used to fill the buckets. We could not pump directly out of the container as the filter on the end of the suction pipe would not fit through the container spout. Even so, the system worked well.

*Peter and Josh washing the calcite floor. Photo: Lesley Eggleston*



The washers are quite “thirsty” so we were kept on our toes. The grime came off well, although the clayey nature of the mud does make it cling more than usual.

When we finished this area of the floor, we had exposed more calcite and also showed how grout from motorway stabilisation work in 1972/73 had flowed in discreet channels through the calcited area. Some calcite has started to grow on top of this, making an interesting choice on what to clean and what to leave. I think we made the right decision to leave the floor as close as practical to how it might have appeared immediately after the grouting operation.

Some of the old red tape around the washed area had become lightly cemented to the floor and was in danger of becoming fully incorporated into it. We gently lifted it: at the speed with which calcite has accumulated, the odd linear shadow left on the floor will probably have disappeared in another 30 years – I doubt I will be around to see this, and even if I am, I doubt I will have the stamina to go and look!

This first session demonstrated that we have a viable means to clean further sections of the mine, although the one large puddle is the only practical source of water in this area. This will mean carrying the water container to and fro through a decorated roof-fall to the other decorated section which will make that job slightly more of a challenge. With the exceptionally dry spring it is likely there is now not enough water in the puddle to make good use of it, so further work may have to be delayed until later in the year. Once we have been to check the state of the puddle we can make the decision to either finish the work soon, or delay it and return the washers for someone else to use.

A stock of CSCC pigtail riser pins has been passed to WCMS for renewing the “taping” here – we can probably get on with that now as our next task, should further cleaning be delayed.

The work carried out here will, we hope, contribute to a better awareness of how to look after vulnerable calcite formations and the new taping, no longer lying on the floor, will probably do a better job of keeping dirty boots off the protected areas.

Many thanks to Wayne and members of WCMS for all their help with the first stage in the project.

*Photo: Sophie and Liam filling the water container from the puddle. Photo: Lesley Eggleston*



Peter Burgess, Wealden Cave and Mine Society

## Hidden Earth 2025, 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> September - update



Hidden Earth will again, as in 2024, be held at the Llangollen Pavilion, in Wales, on the weekend 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> September. Please put the date in your calendar and come to the UK's premiere national caving event. There will be something for everyone to enjoy as you meet your fellow cavers from around the UK and beyond.

You can now submit your lectures, film presentation or workshop for Hidden Earth 2025!

We wouldn't have an event if we didn't have lots of exciting lectures so we encourage all cavers to submit a talk, film or workshop. You can submit your abstract online and the earlier ones will get the best slots.

It doesn't have to be about exploration or something new, any interesting cave or mine related topic is always great to have!

Submit online now: <https://hidden.earth/lectures/>

The Hidden Earth 2025 video salon is also now open for entries.

The salon is an opportunity for film-makers, from novice to advanced, to have their work seen and for videos at all levels, low to high budget, small to large production, to have a platform and be appreciated by an informed audience.

Enter your video here: <https://hidden.earth/salons/video/>

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**BCRA Science Symposium, Saturday 11 October 2025**

**BCRA Cave Science Symposium, AGM & Field Trips  
11th/12th October 2025**



**School of Geographical Sciences  
University of Bristol  
Field Trips including Pen Park Hole, Bristol**

The 2025 BCRA Cave & Karst Science Symposium and AGM will take place on Saturday 11 October 2025 at the University of Bristol. Street address: School of Geographical Sciences, University Road, Bristol, BS8 1SS.

This will be hosted by David Richards, Fiona Whitaker and Linda Wilson.

As details become available they will appear on the [BCRA website](#).

This will be a live event but, hopefully, will also be streamed.

A call for papers will be circulated shortly with details to follow of field trips/workshops on Sunday 12 October.

BCRA's Annual General Meeting will also take place on Saturday 11 October 2025 immediately prior to the lunch break.

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