

# REDHOUSE LANE SWALLET

Forest of Dean weekend

---

Date : 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Present : Duncan Jones, Rob Santus, Darren Jarvis, Dan Jackson. The Redhouse team.

Weather : Warm and sunny

This weekend had been quite long in the planning process, with Darren being the driver, the original plan was to do the fairly recently opened up connection in Wet Sink (Slaughter Stream Cave) and undertake the quite lengthy round trip.

Everything was going to plan, dates sorted, permit sorted (I know, shameful, but needs must), accommodation was booked and then, someone mentioned Redhouse, we debated our options. Can we? Having a man on the ground, or rather under it was most helpful, Dan has to some extent been involved in exploration in Redhouse and even featured on a recent Descent cover (304). The scene was set.

Of course, Redhouse is known for being a tad damp and if it was too wet we could fall back on the Wet Sink option, we had a plan.

Time passed and Alex decided to undertake some silly pastime, bouldering, whereupon he ruptured a tendon which put him well and truly out of action. A friend of Alex's also bailed out, leaving just the four of us.

Dan, being based down that part of the world these days, had no travelling to do, Rob drove me down there on Friday, in the afternoon and Daz arrived at some point in the evening at a different accommodation place. A quick visit to Yat Rock, then we got booked in at the Saracens in Symonds Yat, followed by an evening stroll along the Wye, all very nice!

Saturday dawned and a nice breakfast was consumed before the long drive over to English Bicknor, all of ten minutes, where we headed down a narrow lane and rounded a corner to be greeted with a number of cars and cavers. A quick hello and the Redhouse team (Tim, Ian etc) headed off for yet another long trip surveying and maybe digging, after leaving us with a rather large tackle sack - only fair we assist given their kindness in allowing us a visit! We followed a while after and enjoyed the relatively short and flat walk to the cave.



Concrete rings, a few fixed ladders, a climb down, all nice and easy. Suddenly, the cave reveals its true character. It's low, crawly, flat-out, wiggly, crawly, low, occasionally damp (although nowhere near as bad as it could be, a long dry spell had been our friend here!) You get the idea.

This continues for quite some distance, I don't even recall how long it took. Rob performed brilliantly, carting the heavy tackle sack all the way through and onwards to a notable junction. I assisted Rob by carrying all of his water bottles – something that is most definitely needed in this cave. Think I might have had it considerably easier!

After a final wiggly bit, the breakthrough, you suddenly pop out in big stuff. And lots of it too. We ploughed onwards, along big bouldery passages for quite some distance. I would say, this reminded me of Ogof Draenen, big bouldery passages, up and down, very warm.

After quite some time we reached a significant junction; straight ahead was Cryogenic Causeway, which was an option that we didn't take, to the left, Pissimism and Mines of Moira and to the right the Wicked Pitch and extensive passages beyond. It was also significant for Rob as that's where he got to leave the large tackle sack full of climbing gear.

We headed right but not having the time or equipment meant the pitch and pretties would wait for another day. We quickly hung a left, as we passed the team performing some equipment calibration, into “Off To See The Wizard” which was a very nice stretch of passage culminating not long after at the curious but pretty Gobstopper Chamber. The very loose marl choke was briefly attacked but we soon backtracked.

Back at the junction we headed straight across (left as you come in) which headed into Pissimism and the pretty Mines of Moira.

What can I say, we didn't see the White Forest but we saw cryogenic calcite, cracked mud floors, drip pits, flowstone, gypsum and probably other stuff I've forgotten. We crawled, boulder-hopped, traversed, stepped very carefully, wriggled, climbed – a bit of everything.

On the way out we stopped in the breakthrough chamber and shifted some rocks from what I believe is Stretcher Hole, a work-in-progress connection to the original cave that will allow a marginally easier (stretcher compatible) connection.

All that remained was the long ~~trudge~~ crawl out. Mostly without issue apart from a minor route finding issue. All out, we headed off and the four of us regrouped a bit later at the Saracens beer terrace overlooking the Wye, for beer, then food. A fine way to unwind after a great caving trip.





Thanks to Dan for being our guide and extra thanks to the Redhouse-team for allowing us a tourist trip in this fine cave.

The day after, full of breakfast, three of us headed to the Speech House area for a woodland walk around the sculpture trail and a nip in to the arboretum. A gentle end to a cracking weekend.

*Duncan Jones*

*Before and after photos – Darren Jarvis*

*Other photos – Duncan Jones*



*A [Black Rose Caving Club](#) trip report.*