



Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks December 2022



THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)

The Central Ohio Grotto (COG) of the National Speleological Society meets at 7:00 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of most months at the Presbyterian Church on the Square in Worthington, Ohio. Please contact a grotto officer to confirm meeting time and place or better subscribe to the COG list server at cog@ontosystems.com by sending an email to cog@ontosystems.com with the subject "subscribe." The meeting site will be announced there and on the Grotto Facebook page.

Check out our Facebook group:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/centralohiogrotto/>

Check out our website:

<http://www.centralohiogrotto.com/>

Grotto Mailing Address:

C/O Pat Gibson, 4211 Caswell Rd
Johnstown, OH 43031 614-496-5345
Email: kd8ion@gmail.com

Grotto Membership Dues:

\$15 per individual or \$20 per family.

The C.O.G. Squeaks

The C.O.G. Squeaks is emailed to dues paying members and to grottoes with which the COG exchanges newsletters. Please send trip reports, caving articles, cave fiction, cave poetry, and cave photos to Mark Swelstad for publication: mswelstad@gmail.com

NSS organizations have permission to reprint material from the C.O.G. Squeaks so long as the author and Squeaks are given credit, unless otherwise stated.

COG Executive Committee:
Email: exec@centralohiogrotto.com

Chair:

Aaron Deal
chair@centralohiogrotto.com

Vice Chair:

Wendy Orlandi
vice-chair@centralohiogrotto.com

Treasurer:

Kevin Lorms
treasurer@centralohiogrotto.com

Secretary:

Bethany Widmayer
secretary@centralohiogrotto.com

Former Chair:

Kim Deal
Kim.Deal@gmail.com

Member-At-Large:

Fred Ball
ballassociates@yahoo.com

Member-At-Large:

Ana Scherschel
stoplookingatmefreak@msn.com



Upcoming COG Events:

See the Facebook events page for more information about these events or email a board member.

Note: All COG Monthly meetings (except December) are at the Worthington Presbyterian Church.

January 24	COG Monthly Meeting
January 26-29	Winter Adventure
February 28	COG Monthly Meeting
May 20-21	Open House - GSP
June 26-30	NSS Convention
July 14-16	Karst-O-Rama – GSP
August 4-6	Cave Capers – Indiana

CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO 5-YEAR MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

75 MEMBERS ON OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2027

Why

More members mean a larger pool of volunteers, leaders, and trip planners. Younger members mean that we can continue our grotto into the future.

How can you help?

If every current member brings in just 1 new member over the next 5 years, we will be close to meeting our goal.

Recommendations from active members is the best way to build a solid group of cavers. But showing up to a meeting or two isn't enough! We are looking for people committed to maintaining ACTIVE membership within the grotto.

Additional recruitment ideas (we NEED volunteers to make these happen!)

- Lead **trips** intentionally geared toward recruitment
- **Sponsor local events** or participate as vendors in events that get exposure
- Put together a **guest information packet**
- Teach **classes** at REI
- Hold **joint meetings** with related groups in the community
- Work with students who need **volunteer opportunities**
- Ask me about caving **stickers**

From the Chair – Aaron Deal

As 2022 comes to a close, I'd like to thank this year's executive committee, newsletter editor, GSP representative, article authors, and event organizers for your time and effort into making 2022 a successful year for the grotto. Looking back at the goals from the March Squeaks, I think we made great progress in all areas discussed. We had plenty of events that involved caving, hiking, kayaking, socializing, and more while offering them locally or with a drive. The membership grew to over 50 members as we strive for 75 members by our 75th anniversary. Additionally, 9 editions of the COG Squeaks were produced, so let's keep the positive momentum as we head into 2023.

I'd also like to welcome the new members of the executive committee (Suz, Andy, and Jennie) and look forward to working with everyone next year! We will be looking to fill the Membership chair and GSP representative, which are appointed by the executive committee. If you are interested in one of these positions or have questions, please reach out to chair@centralohiogrotto.com.

Moving into 2023, what should we strive to achieve? Send me your thoughts!

I hope everyone has a safe and fun holiday filled with friends and family. Happy holidays!

Aaron Deal

From the Editor:

If anyone is interested in taking over the newsletter or wants to learn about it please let Mark know. Thanks! mswelstad@gmail.com



Courtesy <https://parks.ky.gov>

January 26 - 29, 2023: Winter Adventure Weekend — Get back outside in eastern Kentucky at Carter Caves State Resort Park's weekend of hiking, canoeing, wild and commercial cave tours, kayaking, rappelling, winter survival, and other adventures. Participants will select from a list of trips that range from beginner to advanced skill levels. All of the trips and events are led by guides. To get familiar with the event you can see past event offerings, trip level descriptions and photos at www.winteradventureweekend.com. The website will be updated with 2023 information December 2023. Online Registration will start shortly after the website goes live. The minimum age to participate is 6 years-old. What kid doesn't want to technical tree climb, rappel rock formations and crawl in a cave?

Wendy Orlandi has rented a nearby cottage Friday - Sunday for a ladies only weekend. Contact her at 412 965 7870 or use fb messenger if you'd like to join the women of COG for WAW.

The Joe Gibson Memorial Award – Mark Swelstad

The Joe Gibson Memorial award was created in 2018 and is given to the Central Ohio Grotto member that best exemplifies the values of the Grotto, and the NSS. These values were held dearly by Joe Gibson, who served in every board position in the Grotto at one time or another, often holding multiple positions during leaner membership times. Most recently Joe was the Grotto treasurer before his untimely passing due to complications during heart surgery in 2017.

Joe was a friend to many of us; not merely an acquaintance we sometimes went caving with, but a TRUE friend, someone you could really talk to. He loved caves and caving, and was passionate about conservation, exploration, and landowner relations. He loved the social aspects of the Grotto as well and was always ready to have fun, often with his favorite bourbon, Makers Mark.

Anyone can nominate someone for the award, which is voted on by the board, and awarded at the Grotto Christmas party.

Past recipients are:

2018 – Patrick Gibson

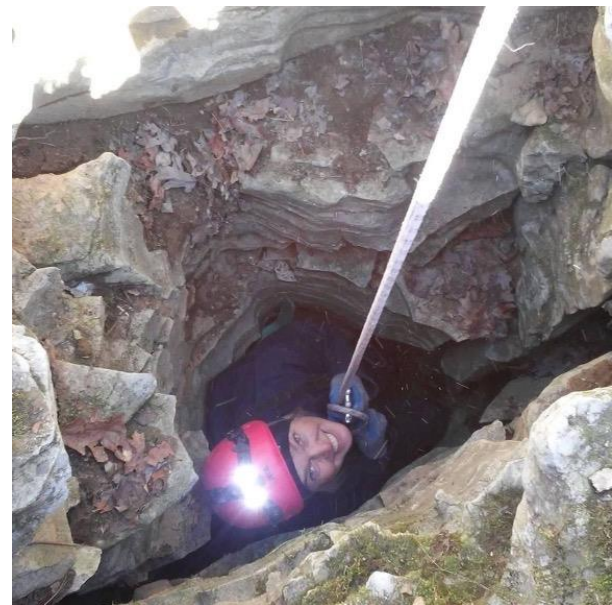
2019 – Dan Zubal

2020 – Kevin Lorms

2021 – Kim & Aaron Deal

2022 – Wendy Orlandi

This year, the award is being given to Wendy Orlandi. In 2022, Wendy served as Vice Chair and provided some of the best programming the Grotto has seen (not quite as good as lint cleaning but nobody is perfect!). She led countless cave trips for COG and GCG and organized or assisted on several non-caving trips for the group as well. She has encouraged members to submit trip reports and/or photographs and has developed several working relationships with members of other grottos. (Optional: Wendy was nominated for the award by Mark Swelstad and the board approved her nomination on November 22nd, 2022. Congratulations, Wendy!



Wendy Orlandi on rope – picture by Darryl Marsh

2022 Reflections - Wendy Orlandi

COG has had a wonderful year. We've had fantastic speakers from all over the US, some awesome events and, of course, amazing cave trips! However, Central Ohio Grotto is defined by much more than these things, our most valuable asset is and always will be our people. I'd like to thank our members **Jason Glancy**, **Kevin Lorms** and **Gary Bush** for presenting this year. As much as I've enjoyed the presentations from our remote guests, it's so nice to make a face-to-face connection and witness firsthand the breadth of knowledge and experience within our own grotto. In addition, I'd like to give **Dana Sutherland** a huge shout out for volunteering to teach an ENTIRE educational series on rigging! As vice chair, my responsibility is to seek out and schedule programming for COG. I'm happy to pursue speakers recommended by our membership and help plan or schedule events with our own members as well. If you have any ideas, let me know!

I'd also like to recognize all our members who led grotto trips in 2022. **Kim and Aaron Deal** as well as **David Long** led local hiking and kayaking trips. These kinds of trips are beautiful for building and reinforcing camaraderie within our group. I hope to see more of these in the upcoming year. **Jason Glancy** focused on improving member vertical skills through practice and in-cave experience on his Kees/Bowden trip and Frog Days of Summer. **Patrick Gibson** wowed us with his incredible organizational talent for housing MANY cavers in OPULENT style while visiting a COG favorite with his aptly named trips, Sloasidents' and Sloansgiving. Cave trips, beginning to advanced, are the lifeblood of a thriving grotto. At one time, COG strove to have at least one grotto trip a month and we're not that far off from meeting that goal once again. Volunteering for scout trips is a great way to learn new cave routes and will prepare you to lead your own trips some day. You might also consider hosting your own workplace or neighborhood trip at GSP. Volunteers will lead for you and can help with other organizational details. Both **Mark Swelstad** and **Patrick Gibson**

have introduced new members to COG in this manner. Let me know if you'd like to host or learn to lead trips in Rockcastle County and I will get you connected with someone from COG or GCG that can show you the ropes.

It takes many hands to carry out the business of Central Ohio Grotto. In addition to the work of the executive committee which is recorded each month by the lovely and dependable **Bethany Widmeyer**, a tireless **Mark Swelstad** spends hours making sure our newsletter, COG Squeaks, is full of caving adventures and looks on point! I know he is very grateful for the submissions you all send him each month. My appreciation also goes to the MANY members involved in representing COG so well at GSP's Open House including those in leadership such as **Kevin Lorms** and **Ana Scherschel** for coordination, **Patrick Gibson** for parking, and **Fred Ball** for cave tours. **Jamie Thompson** has been steadfast in his leadership of the kitchen for years, which may seem thankless, but does not go unnoticed. Speaking of GSP, **Dan Zubal** has been our COG representative on the GSP committee for quite some time and has been faithful in his communication between the two executive committees. Finally, I'm grateful for **Andy Schofield**, **Jennie Hawkey** and **Kim Deal** for serving on the election committee this year and ensuring everything ran smoothly.

As you can see, there are so many opportunities for leadership and participation within Central Ohio Grotto. I can truly say I've met some of the most loyal, caring people I've EVER known in this organization and am truly honored to serve its members. It pleases me when others feel the same way, too. If you are looking for ways to get more active, please reach out and I can help you get more involved in your area of interest. As we soon say goodbye to 2022, I will remember the good times, but I'm also looking forward with anticipation to an even greater 2023 for COG!

New Members

Please join me in welcoming our newest members to COG!

Charles Fletcher
Eli Underwood
Elliot Grossman
Jillian Dyer

All of our new members are also members of the NSS. Charles has been attending our Sloan's events and lives and works in Columbus at the Ohio State University. Elliot is a veterinary radiologist and also works for the Ohio State University. He attended his first Sloan's trip over Sloansgiving weekend. We enjoyed getting to know both gentlemen very much and can attest they have delightful and witty personalities. Eli Underwood is from Springfield, Ohio and first heard of Central Ohio Grotto at Old Timer's Reunion. Jillian Dyer (and her dog, Fox) is a longtime friend of COG, so isn't really new, but has renewed her membership recently. She's attended both kayaking and caving trips with COG in the last year.

COG membership has been steadily increasing during 2022. Note that inviting friends to COG sponsored cave trips, networking during caving events and reaching out to friends who enjoy adventure as much as you do are great opportunities to bring fresh new faces to our grotto with whom we can share our love of all things karst!

Speleo Who – Andy Schofield

Tell us a bit about yourself?

When I was younger, I spent a lot of time outside primarily due to my involvement in the Boy Scouts, attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. During my early to mid-20s I took occasional backpacking or camping trips but it wasn't until my late 20s I was introduced to rock climbing and began spending significant time outdoors again. Since then, I've picked up several new outdoor related hobbies including caving and rappelling.

Professionally I am a software developer in the ecommerce space. I also help organize a local security conference called Hackers Teaching Hackers (HTH). Prior to 2020 I organized and participated in monthly meetup groups but since then I've focused mainly on organizing larger events like HTH and ComFest.



Andy Schofield – picture by Kevin Lorms

How did you first get into caving?

I was introduced to caving by Joel Rannebarger and got a quick taste of caving at Carter Caves during summer 2021. We were lucky to be there on the 75th anniversary (pretty sure it was 75 but could've been another milestone) of the park acquiring two caves and the show cave tickets were \$0.75 each for the anniversary caves. We also explored two small wild caves, Horn Hollow and Laurel Cave. My first longer cave trip was to Sinks of the Roundstone with Kevin, Ana, Jaclyn, and Joel in October 2021.

What are some of your other interests?

Rock climbing is my main interest outside of caving, I travel to the New River Gorge frequently to climb. I also spent time learning Single Rope Technique this year which while used in vertical caves, I primarily learned with the goal of participating in Bridge Day 2022. Bridge Day was an awesome experience and I encourage everyone with an interest in vertical to consider participating.

What are some of your favorite caving experiences?

My favorite experiences in caves are getting to see new and interesting formations. I think formations are some of the most interesting things you can find in a cave. Exploring new (to me) areas is also fun even if someone has been there before. Project caving is also something I've started to pursue and that leads to the potential that you would be the first one ever in a cave.

What guided your decision to join COG?

I like to support groups that support my interests, so it seemed like a no brainer to join COG. I am part of New River Alliance of Climbers (NRAC), American Alpine Club (AAC), Access Fund/Ohio Climbers Coalition (OCC), National Speleological Society (NSS), and Central Ohio Grotto (COG). Climbing has seen a huge surge in popularity recently and while this is great it has created a number of access issues and sometimes caused issues with landowners. This is very similar to what cavers face in trying to get access to caves on private property.

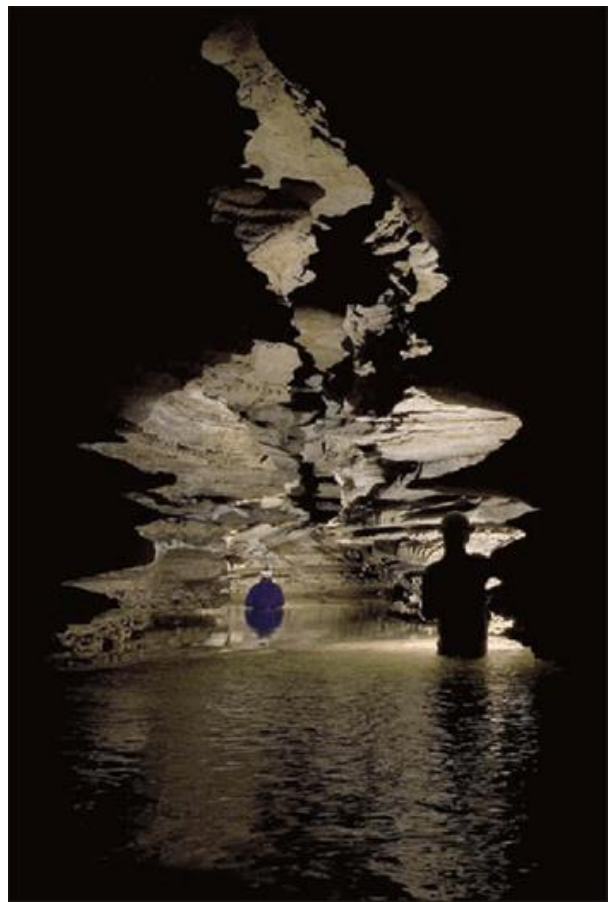
What are you looking forward to learning or participating in as a member of COG?

I think there are many underground skills I still have to learn and get better at. Project caving comes to mind, and specifically surveying is something I'm looking forward to learning more about. I also look forward to the Sloans trips that Patrick has been planning, they have been awesome trips and it's great to see so much of the grotto there!

**COG goes to Grayson Gunner Cave -
Janeen Sharpshair/Wendy Orlandi**

Harry Goepel or Janeen Sharpshair from the Greater Cincinnati Grotto will give a presentation of Grayson Gunner Cave during the April 2023 meeting. We will follow the presentation in the short week or two after the April meeting with a COG trip to GGC with Harry and Janeen as our guides. The actual date is still to be determined, but it's expected to take place the last weekend

of April or the beginning of May. Wet suits will be required, so we want all those interested to have the necessary time to prepare for this unique underground experience. COG has a small wetsuit collection for loan that will be available first come, first served assuming the sizes we have on hand work for you. We do hope to acquire more before the trip takes place, and are asking all our grotto members to keep an eye on their local thrift stores to help grow our equipment library. There should be ample room to move in a wetsuit used for caving, so be sure to snag the biggest suits you can!



*Robert Coomer (Photographer) - Entrenched canyon in Grayson Gunner Cave in Wayne County, Kentucky
Retrieved from [ResearchGate](#), copyright permission granted by the artist.*

Janeen Sharpshair agreed to a Q and A to help us prepare. Thanks Janeen!

Q: What is Grayson Gunner Cave like, can you describe the trip for us?

A: GGC is a wet, horizontal cave. We'll start in the water and swimming will be required. Crawling, walking, swimming and scrambling over rimstone dams will all be in play on the first leg of the trip. Then, the group will climb out of the water and move to dry passage where we will remain in wetsuits. Look forward to crawling, climbing and borehole walking during this segment. Eventually, we will come to another belly crawl in water and then climb back out to the main passage to complete our round trip.

Q: How long does the trip take and how strenuous?

A: The trip will take about 4-6 hours. Difficulty is somewhere between moderate to difficult. You **must** be able to swim and be comfortable in water. If you can't swim and aren't comfortable in wet passage, this is **NOT** the trip for you.

Q: Where is Grayson Gunner Cave?

A: GGC is in Wayne County, Kentucky. Please note: GGC is on private property. The landowners value their privacy, and the cave should not be visited without prior contact and approval from the owners.

Q: How do we prepare for a wet cave trip?

Everyone is different, but some combination of wetsuit and other coldgear will be required. Harry wears a shortie with long underwear, while I wear a full wetsuit and then put on a second layer when out of water and in the dry passage (i.e. long underwear over wetsuit). Wool socks, boots, and knee pads are important. I also wear regular gardening gloves.

Q: Does GCG ever flood?

A: Being spring, water could be higher and a bit sporty, but GCG rarely floods. The water flow can be fast enough that it will take your knee pads off. We will contact the landowner in the days leading up to the trip to gauge water flow. If we determine it's unsafe in any way, we will reschedule.

Editor: Some additional photos from Rob Coomer will be featured in our next issue! They're AMAZING!

COG Shopping List

COG is in the process of adding wetsuits to our equipment library. We are planning a wet trip in the Spring and would like everyone to prepare for it ahead of time.

Buying Tips:

- Buy second hand. They can be found for as little as 5 bucks.
- Buy big. You will need room to flex your cave moves.
- Buy thick, 3-5 mm will be warmer if you tend to run cold.
- Buy ANYTHING. Farmer John's, shorties, it's all good!
- Buy extra. I'd like to build a library, so donate an extra if you find a good deal!



Sloansgiving

By: Tera Williamson

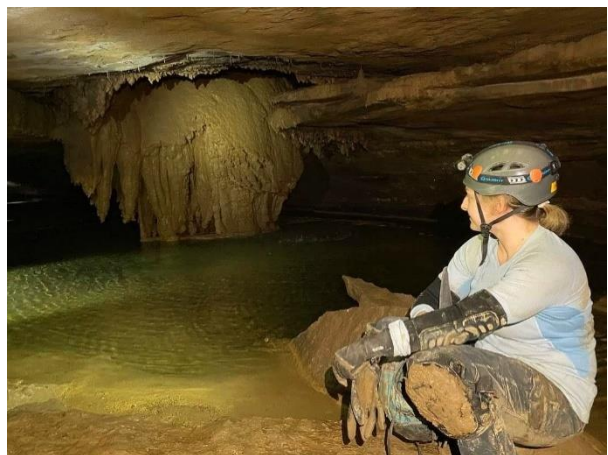
A couple years ago during a KOR weekend I agreed to go on a Sloans Valley Cave trip with another Grotto. This ended up being a 10 plus hour semi strenuous trip and was challenging in all areas, as well as made me question my caving abilities. During and after this trip I told myself I had no interest in visiting Sloans Valley Cave ever again. Here we were a couple years later, and I signed up for the 2nd Annual Sloansgiving event that took place the weekend before Thanksgiving. At the time of signing up, I wasn't 100% sure if I was actually going to cave or just take it easy and relax over this weekend.

On my way to Somerset Kentucky for the Sloansgiving event I made a stop at both the Cumberland Falls and Natural Arch and did some sightseeing and snapped a few pictures. After exploring the surrounding area for a while, I arrived at the rental house later that evening and was welcomed with some familiar faces and many new faces over the course of the evening. That night we gathered together to discuss cave trips that were planned for the following morning into Sloans.

There were a handful of different options available for Sloans that were being led by different leaders. As the discussion continued throughout the night about how easy or technical, they planned trips were going to be and talking with the different trip leaders, I chose to go on Jamie Thompson's trip as he advertised it as easy casual trip. His trip entered Sloans through the Garbage Pit entrance and exited Sloans through the Great Rock Sinks entrance. Another perk to Jamie's trip was that it had some passage that is only available when Lake Cumberland water level is low. This experience into Sloans was a more semi casual and enjoyable caving trip compared to my last, and I am looking forward to my next trip into Sloans Valley Cave. Overall, the weekend was fun with both old and new caver friends who gathered together for a Friendsgiving celebration with lots of yummy foods.



#1 Garbage Pit Entrance (Photo Credit: Jennie Hawkey)



#2 Jennie admiring the formations. ((Photo Credit: Jennie Hawkey)



#4 Cumberland Falls (Photo Credit: Tera Williamson)



#3 Jamie's crew after exiting the Great Rock Sinks entrance. (Photo Credit: Suz Gagnon)



Sloansgiving Spread – Photo by Suz Gagnon



#5 Cumberland River (Photo Credit: Tera Williamson)



#6 Natural Arch (Photo Credit: Tera Williamson)

Sloansgiving - Aaron Collier

What's better than a two-night stay at Sloan's Mansion? How about a four-hour trip in Sloan's Cave led by Patrick Gibson. Members of our group included Patrick, Andy Schofield, Kevin Lorms, Shawn Darnell and myself. My friend, Shawn, is an avid outdoorsman, but this was first wild cave trip.

The land surrounding Garbage Pit Entrance had changed noticeably from our last visit in February. New property owners have been busy putting up fencing, and as a result the purchase for parking is a bit smaller. As we descended down the ladder into Garbage Pit the air blowing out of Sloan's was surprisingly warm. Upon entering the cave, my glasses fogged up, giving me the classic Mr. McGoo look.

Patrick advised us that the trip required a substantial amount of crawling and his words did not disappoint. It seemed like we were on our

hands and knees about forty percent of the time. Points of interest included The Music Room, Grand Central Station and a side trip to Keyhole. Patrick did a great job pacing the trip and keeping us on course with his map reading skills.

Keyhole was one of the last but most memorable spots. Patrick led the way. I had some concerns about getting through the hole, but Shawn went before me. This only ratcheted my anxiety. He's a big man and getting stuck could be disastrous! Shawn's attempt was a success and at that point my fears were allayed. I would like the experience to threading a needle.

We ended our journey through Scowling Tom's passage. In sum, the experience offered really nice formations, waterfalls and huge crawfish. As we exited, I felt a sense of collegiality and satisfaction.



Success! Photo by Andy Schofield



Pushing through the keyhole – photo by Andy Schofield



What a crew. Patrick, Kevin, Andy, Aaron and Shawn. Photo Credit Kevin Lorms



Kevin peeking through the Keyhole – Photo by Andy Schofield



Shawn coming out of the Keyhole – Photo by Andy Schofield



Tight squeeze! Photo by Andy Schofield



Now that's a big one! Photo by Andy Schofield



While soaking in the hot tub Saturday afternoon/evening we saw hundreds of birds, mostly vultures, above us. The picture does no justice to the moment. The sun caught their feathers in such a way that they seemed to glow like the embers of a fire. Photo by Andy Schofield



Taking a well-deserved break – photo by Andy Schofield



The foyer was lovely, but it needed something a little extra... Photo by Andy Schofield