



**NEWSLETTER**

**November 2025**



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See [BritishCarbonGroup](https://www.britishcarbongroup.org) for further details

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## Editorial

### Samantha Wilkinson, Secretary of the British Carbon Group

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This issue of the BCG newsletter features a number of events from around Europe that have taken place over the summer months. These include the World Carbon Conference in France, outreach event at Plymouth University and INGSIM in Vienna. The British Carbon Group committee has also changed at our AGM held in May. We now have Alex Theodosiou from the University of Manchester as our Chair. We are so grateful to our previous Chair Prof. Geoff Fowler from Imperial College London for his service to the committee. He will stay on the committee as an ordinary member. We also welcomed some new committee members, and if anyone has interest in how the committee works, our purpose and how to get involved then please do get in touch! It is also worth noting the massive announcement in the nuclear graphite field of the ENLIGHT project (<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/about/news/new-13m-nuclear-programme-to-boost-uk-energy-security-through-sustainable-graphite-innovation/>) which is a multi-year programme supporting innovation in carbon science. Finally, please save the date for the next BCG AGM which will be again in Manchester on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

## Carbon 2025

Alex Theodosiou represented the BCG at the annual World Carbon Conference in St Malo, France. This was a very successful and well attended conference, bringing together over 600 carbon scientists from around the World, with guest speakers covering a broad range of carbon related topics.

Alex presented his talk “Investigating Graphite Oxidation via Real-time Offgas Analysis” and also chaired the meeting of the European Carbon Association (ECA), with Gareth Neighbour representing the BCG. It was a particular pleasure to award the ECA prize to former BCG committee member, Prof Chris Ewels for his significant contribution to

the European

carbon science community, in particular his dedication to the organisation of the very popular Nanotec Conference, aimed at promoting the research of young Carbon researchers. Chris shared the prize with another worthy winner, Diego Carzorla-Amoros, from the University of Alicante.

Next year’s world carbon conference will be held in Charleston, USA, and please read below for information on the Brian Kelly Award.



[www.carbon2026.org](http://www.carbon2026.org)

## Brian Kelly Award

This annual award was established in 1996 by the British Carbon Group in memory of Brian Kelly, a leading authority on graphite physics (note that Brian’s book, “The Physics of Graphite”, is available for download from the BCG website).

The award is intended as a travel grant for students and early career researchers with up to ten years postdoctoral experience to attend the annual World Conference on Carbon – Carbon 2026 this year. Anyone living or working at the time of that conference, in the country where the conference is held is not eligible. As a consequence, applications will not be accepted from the USA on this occasion.

The award is made upon the basis of an appraisal of three documents:

- (1) your abstract as submitted to the conference
- (2) a short CV (with the date of the award of PhD if applicable)

(3) a commentary provided normally by the candidate's supervisor or close colleague.

Self-nomination is permitted. The Award Committee of the British Carbon Group will determine the successful applicant. Last year we received no applications, so we strongly encourage all eligible individuals to apply

**The closing date for applications is midnight on 1st May 2026.**

The award is £1,500 and is presented at the time of the conference with a certificate. It is a condition of the award that the winner attends the conference and presents their paper either orally or as a poster.

Applications may be transferred electronically to the Chair of The Brian Kelly Award Committee, Cristina Valles, at [cristina.valles@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:cristina.valles@manchester.ac.uk)

## INGSM 2025



The 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Nuclear Graphite Specialists' Meeting was held at the end of September in Vienna, Austria. Presentations and a few posters covered all aspects of nuclear graphite manufacture, deployment and decommissioning, in all relevant sciences and engineering were shared. Attendees also enjoyed an evening tour of the Schönbrunn Palace on the outskirts of the city, followed by a dinner and classical music concert with Opera singers. Next year's 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the conference will be held in Osaka, Japan hosted by ToyoTanso & JAEA (<https://ingsm26.toyotanso.co.jp/>).



## Shaping the Future of Nuclear Energy Together with Graphite

**Tentative Schedule: October 19 (Mon) – 23 (Fri), 2026**  
**Venue: Grand Front Osaka**

## New Insights into the Growth and Coalescence of Carbonaceous Mesophase colloquium

The British Carbon Group was pleased to host an invited Colloquium by Prof. Ke Shen on New Insights into the Growth and Coalescence of Carbonaceous Mesophase. This event took place at the Henry Royce Hub building at the University of Manchester this October. Many thanks again to Prof. Shen for his interesting talk and discussions shared over refreshments.



## Inspiring the Next Generation: From Pencils to Power Plants

This July, the University of Plymouth welcomed A-level Chemistry teachers from across the Southwest for a dynamic CPD event designed to bridge the gap between school science and cutting-edge materials research. With generous support from the British Carbon Group and the Royal Society of Chemistry (Peninsula Local Section), the event showcased how simple classroom demonstrations — like comparing the conductivity of different pencil leads — can lead to discussions about nuclear-grade graphite and its role in carbon-based energy futures.

Teachers took part in hands-on experiments, toured the university's state-of-the-art analytical labs, and explored how structure–property relationships underpin both everyday materials and advanced reactor design.



“The graphite conductivity workshop was fantastic — simple enough to take straight into the classroom but deeply connected to real-world applications like nuclear energy. It gave us fresh tools to inspire students to see chemistry as something alive, important, and full of opportunity.”



As part of the workshop, participants explored carbon allotropes, used SEM and XRF to analyse materials, and even isolated a few-layer graphene using the Nobel Prize-winning Scotch Tape Method. The day concluded with a strong emphasis on inclusion, accessibility, and linking curriculum to current research — with all materials made available for teachers to adapt and reuse.

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## The British Carbon Group Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the 2025 AGM held during the meeting The Core Challenge: Research into Carbon Treatment & Recycling at the Royce Hub Building, University of Manchester on May 14th, 2025.

### Present

Geoff Fowler (Chairman), Samantha Wilkinson (Hon Secretary), committee members Peter Minshall, Sergey Mikhailovsky, Richard Harris and Alex Theodosiou, and 15 BCG members.

Apologies for Absence: Natalia Martsinovich (Hon Treasurer), and Katie Jones

### Minutes of the Last AGM

Held during the meeting Carbon Science and Technology: Early Career Researchers Meeting at the Royce Hub Building, University of Manchester on June 4th, 2024., issued with the notice of the AGM with the Spring 2025 Newsletter (see website). These were accepted as a true record. [Proposed: Geoff Fowler, seconded: Peter Minshall, accepted nem. con.]

### Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

## Chairman's Report

This is my final report as chairman of the BCG after serving in this role for nearly 8 years. The committee membership has changed significantly in this period. The current committee is a young and dynamic group, with a number of new recruits. We meet regularly (monthly) via MS Teams. Nevertheless, the current committee is always looking to strengthen the membership and widen the subject expertise to ensure that all aspects of carbon materials science are represented. We would welcome any approaches from BCG members who would like to help support the Carbon community and join the Committee. Please see the BCG web site (<https://britishcarbon.wordpress.com/>) for more details of our ongoing activities and contact details.

The committee started the process of updating and refreshing the group's digital presence which includes creation and launch of a BCG LinkedIn page, a new logo for the group and a redesigned web site being rolled out during 2025. These changes have been led by the Group's web editor, a recent recruit to the committee.

The group continues to run in-person events and to make awards and offer bursaries.

4th June 2024 we ran our "Carbon Science and Technology: Early Career Researchers Meeting" in the Royce Hub Building at the University of Manchester. The meeting opened with an Ubbelohde Lecture from Prof Rahul Raveendran Nair, entitled: "Graphene-Based Smart Membranes for Clean Water and Beyond". There were over 50 attendees, 10 presentations and 12 posters. Prizes were awarded for the best poster presentations, with Nathalie Edwards being the recipient of the poster prize for her work on graphite decommissioning.

The Group administers the Roger Taylor award, a bursary to attend the World Conference in Carbon, but no applications were received in 2024.

The Group has also awards travel bursaries from its own funds and on behalf of the IOP with two annual deadlines, details are available on the BCG web site.

The NanoteC24 meeting, was run at the University of Nantes in France, Sussex from 27th – 30th August 2024. This was a free meeting and was attended by over 80 researchers.

The Group continues to issue a bi-annual Newsletter (typically Spring and Autumn) which is well received by the membership of the group. The Editor is always looking for information and interesting carbon-related articles to print.

## Treasurer's Report

Geoff Fowler presented the Treasurer's report.

This report is for the financial year from 01/01/24 to 31/12/24. On 31/12/24 the balance on the BCG current account was £5367.04, and on the savings account held by the RSC we had £92,009.07. This makes £ 97,376.11 in total. The balance brought forward from the previous year was £97,953.64, thus our balance has reduced by £577.53.

This large balance is thanks to the Carbon 2022 conference bringing a larger than expected profit in 2022. The income last year was primarily from the interest of £4,509.07 paid on the savings account, plus the RSC annual grant of £611.

The expenditure last year was £5,697.60, which included £3000 sponsorship for the NanoteC conference, £2000 AGM 2024 costs (catering, poster prize and committee members' travel), one conference bursary of £500, and website costs below £200.

The current surplus will be used to subsidise future meetings and support the activities of the Group. In particular, £20,000 is ring-fenced for the Brian Kelly fund, to use for the Brian Kelly award for early-career researchers to attend the annual World Carbon Conference. This award is open to early-career researchers of any country, except the country where the conference is held (France this year). No award was made last year, because there were no applicants.

I'd like to note that applications are still accepted for a BCG conference bursary; information can be found on the BCG page and on the RSC and IOP web sites.

The BCG is different from other interest groups in that it is affiliated to RSC, IOP and SCI. We receive an annual grant from the RSC. The bank account is held by the RSC, to which the BCG is financially accountable.

According to the RSC rules this year, accounts with turnover of less than £10,000 per year do not need external audited. Therefore, there was no external audit for last year, but the accounts were audited by the RSC in February 2025.

## To Receive Notice of the Representatives of the Sponsoring Bodies

The following will be notified to the sponsoring bodies as representative for 2025:

RSC	Sergey Mikhalovsky
IOP	Samantha Wilkinson
SCI	Geoff Fowler

## Election of Officers and Committee Members

Nomination to elect Alex Theodosiou as Chairman had been received [Proposed Samantha Wilkinson, Seconded Peter Minshall]. There being no further nominations these were appointed to this position without dissent.

Nominations have been received for ordinary committee members: Richard Harris [Proposed Geoff Fowler, Seconded Samantha Wilkinson]; and Yuanting Gao (University of Swansea) [Proposed Alex Theodosiou, Seconded Samantha Wilkinson]. These were appointed to these positions without dissent as there were existing vacancies on the committee.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.30 pm.

## Contact to the Group

The BCG welcomes feedback from its members, so please get in touch with us if you attended one of our events and it sparked an idea, you have been involved in a particularly interesting project or have any other thoughts which might be of interest to the rest of the group!



Please submit any thoughts to [samantha.wilkinson@uknnl.com](mailto:samantha.wilkinson@uknnl.com)

## Items for the next newsletter – Submit an Article

We'd like to hear what you're doing, what you think of the British Carbon Group, any ideas you may have for networking opportunities or anything else you think would be of interest to the rest of the Group. We plan to publish the next Newsletter in Spring 2026.

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