

Secretary's Report, 1962-1963

Meetings

Eight sessional meetings were held during the course of the year. Attendance at these varied from 20 to 60, which is an improvement on the previous year. The attendance at meetings after the New Year was very adversely affected by the bad weather. No tutorials were held this year.

Caving

On Mendip, work at the bottom of G.B. Cave has been continued. A point has been reached where this dig is close to, but lower down than, the end of the Ladder Dig. This causes much speculation as to the possibilities of further progress. Last summer a great deal of progress was made at Manor Farm dig. Concrete pipes, supported on concrete blocks, now serve to keep silt from filling up the dig. Members have also dug in Swildons II and the dig in the West Twin Brook valley continues. Since the New Year, the weather conditions have severely curtailed caving operations.

The usual expedition was made to County Clare in July. The surveys of Cullaun I and Poulomega were completed, and one of the Fergus River Cave begun. A dig in one of the swallets below Ballynalackan Castle proved abortive.

Away trips have been made to Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Devon and South Wales, but a further trip to Yorkshire over the New Year had to be called off.

Archæology

Work has been concentrated on the two Pleistocene sites of Picken's Hole and the Almondsbury Bone Fissure. At the former the area of excavation has been expanded and the deposits proved to extend much further. Bad weather has severely hampered the work at this site, but it is hoped to make more rapid progress during the coming summer.

Subscriptions

Following the suggestion made at the Annual General Meeting in 1962 that the subscriptions payable by outside members, including ex-student members, should be raised, the Committee, after investigating the advantages, if any, of such action, decided against it. This decision was announced at the Annual General Meeting in March, 1963, and was accepted.

Tackle and Equipment

The Society has constructed 170 ft. of wire-rope ladder. Some of this replaced worn-out equipment. The Society now has 350 ft. of ladder in good

condition. The wind-driven electricity generator has given a lot of trouble during the year. The winter weather finally ruined the propeller and a new one will have to be fitted. The redecoration, by members, of the Society's rooms in the University has commenced.

Museum

Work continues on washing, preserving and cataloguing the finds from Picken's Hole. The lack of museum space presents difficulties as regards displaying finds and for the general work of examining and storing the items found.

Library

The expansion of the Library continues, and a new catalogue of books and periodicals is being prepared. The list of foreign exchanges has been increased.

Photography

The Society has been kindly given the late Mr. J. H. Savory's collection of plate negatives of the Mendip Caves. It is intended that prints of these shall be made. Considerable additions have been made to the collection of 2 × 2 in. lantern slides and an album collection of Irish cave photographs has been started.

Field Headquarters

The kitchen has been redecorated and improved by the use of a washable covering on the walls. A radiator supplied by the boiler at the back of the fire keeps the tool shed dry.

Proceedings

The last issue, Vol. 9, No. 3, was one of the largest the Society has ever produced. It was also by far the most costly. It is gratifying to note that sales are increasing. Printing costs are steadily increasing and future numbers will have to be smaller on account of this. The increase has been of the order of 20 per cent in the past few years.

Acknowledgements

The cost of publishing the Society's Proceedings is heavy and the Society acknowledges with gratitude the grants from the University of Bristol, the Colston Research Society and the Bord Fáilte Éireann and the many donations from members towards this cost during the past year. The Annual Grant from the Union for the general running expenses of the Society is also gratefully acknowledged.

T. J. HILL,
Hon. Secretary.