

Secretaries' Report, 1964-1965

Meetings

Five sessional meetings and one tutorial were held during the year. Attendances ranged from poor to average. On the other hand, a symposium on "The Age of the Clare Caves" was well attended and there were numerous speakers.

Caving

On Broadfield Down a small new cave near Butcombe was explored by the Society. It has a 70-ft. ladder pitch. A report appears elsewhere. In G.B. Cave energetic digging has been carried out in the Ladder Dig. The passage is widening out but the end of the choke is not in sight. At Manor Farm Swallet a depth of 45 ft. has been reached and substantial shoring has been placed in position. The foul air problem has been overcome by the development of a natural draught.

In Swildon's Hole a series of avens above the Swildon's Four streamway was explored by our members in conjunction with the Severn Valley Caving Club, and a survey has been produced by the Society. Some of our members have taken an interest in cave diving and have explored some of the further reaches of Swildon's Hole and Stoke Lane Stocker.

The usual expedition to Co. Clare was held in July. Many small points were cleared up. Several thousand feet of new cave passage were discovered and surveyed in Poll-Cahercloggaun West-1 and in Cullaun 3. The risk of drowning from flooding is very real in the latter cave especially in the terminal portion, which turns west towards St. Brendan's Well. A very comprehensive range of water samples was taken from swallets and caves and analysed for calcium carbonate content. The results in general confirm those of the previous year.

Several members visited the Karst areas of Czechoslovakia as members of a British party accompanying the President, who headed the delegation.

Away trips have been held to Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, South Wales and, nearer home, to the Forest of Dean.

Archæology

At Picken's Hole work progressed steadily through the summer months. In August Mr. A. M. ApSimon directed a month's continuous digging at the site. Volunteers from outside the Society also assisted.

Two more 10-ft. squares were opened up at the Charterhouse site, but failed to locate a building known to be present though a further length of corridor of the building was found. Samian ware was found as well as a

number of pieces of lead indicating that the building was associated with the smelting of that metal in Roman times.

The University has allocated another room for use by the Society and has paid for its reconditioning as an archaeological preparation room. This is a very valuable addition to the Society's facilities. Some new cases have been purchased out of the War Damage Fund and they have been installed in the Museum, where some of the exhibitions are being rearranged. Show-cases have been put in the corridor and work is in progress to set up a geological exhibition in them.

Library

The Library has expanded noticeably over the past year. Several rare sets of British caving journals have been completed. We can justifiably pride ourselves on having the most comprehensive collection of Mendip caving literature in the country. Our librarian, in partnership with two others, has recently completed a Mendip Cave Bibliography covering the period from 1900 to 1963. This is due to be published by the Cave Research Group of Great Britain.

Field Headquarters

The women's quarters have had Calor gas heating installed. A shower bath has been constructed behind the hut. A motor-cycle park is under construction.

Tackle and Equipment

The Society is grateful for donations received towards the cost of 200 ft. of new ladder, which has been constructed by Bernard Chapman. The Society has recently started construction of some ultra-lightweight tackle using stainless steel wires, which should materially prolong the life of the tackle.

Publications

Proceedings, Vol. 10, No. 2, appeared in November, 1964, and contained several important articles. Sales have remained at about the same level as in the previous year. In November a monograph was published on the Doolin-St. Catherine's Cave, Co. Clare.

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F. K. HANNA, I. J. STANDING,

Joint Hon. Secretaries