

Secretary's Report, 1965-1966

Meetings

At the beginning of the year an agreement was made to hold joint sessional meetings with the Department of Classics, the lectures on these occasions to be on archæological subjects. Two of these were held and were well attended. This system of holding joint lectures with the Department of Classics seems to have increased attendances at archæological lectures and the system is to be continued next year.

In June the Society was host to a party of spelæologists from Czechoslovakia. One of our guests, Dr. Lobski, gave a lecture on "The Caves of Czechoslovakia" and also showed films about them. This meeting was very well attended. Only one other lecture on caving was given during the year.

Caving

Work is going on in an attempt to stabilize the concrete pipes at the entrance to Manor Farm Swallet. These have been seriously undermined by the stream, but this has also done some useful work in washing away fill. Any permanent solution to the annual cycle of digging out what has fallen in during the winter must include channelling of the stream to the bottom of the dig. This was completed in March by using 9-in. and 6-in. glazed pipes; the stream can now flow to the bottom of the dig without eroding the fill and an overflow channel has been made to take the water away while digging is actually in progress.

In G.B. Cave the Ladder Dig Extension has been dug for over 25 ft. from the Helictite Chamber. The actual breakthrough did not take place during the period covered by this report but was on May 9th, 1966. About 1000 ft. have been found after four years of digging. An interim report appears in this issue of *Proceedings*.

In the past year some of our members, who are also members of the Cave Diving Group, have been extending the streamways of Stoke Lane Slocker (Stoke St. Michael) and Swildon's Hole as far as Stoke Lane VIII and Swildon's XII.

Eire was visited again last summer and even though much surface work was done, long lengths of passage were discovered. Cullaun 1 yielded a further 2,000 ft. mainly running north towards Cullaun Zero-1, and in the Aran View tributary of the Doolin Cave a further 1,300 ft. of passage running towards a subsidiary swallet was explored for the first time. A passage was

forced into Lower St. Catherine's 2 and 900 ft. of passage discovered. The surface work was directed to determining the age of the Clare caves.

In June a visit was made to Britain by members of the Czech National Institute of Spelæology in return for the British party's visit of last year. The U.B.S.S. acted as hosts and the President showed the visitors round the caving areas of Mendip and also took them over to Eire, where the party was joined by J. C. Coleman and P. W. Williams, and Poulmagollum was explored. The visitors enjoyed their stay immensely and the sea at Doolin Strand and Fanore was a great attraction. The party brought with them an exhibition illustrating spelæology in their country and this has been given to the Society but may be borrowed by any interested parties. It has already been shown in various parts of the country.

Library

This has continued to expand under the expert care of the librarian. Several sets of rare publications have been completed during the year. Unfortunately, in the latter part of the year a steady loss of rare books began and so the committee has reluctantly decided that the library must be kept locked. Several members besides the librarian hold keys and can give access to the library to readers.

Field Headquarters

The battery connected to the wind-driven generator has been replaced by a 125 amp-hour set of Ni-Fe type batteries. The generator itself has been repaired and fitted up again. It is hoped that a more reliable source of lighting will be with us for some time. The lock on the main hut door has been changed as a means of checking the unauthorized use of tackle that was beginning to take place.

Tackle and Equipment

The construction of lightweight tackle has been in progress throughout the year. 360 ft. of new nylon life-line has been purchased.

Photography

Many slides have been added to the Society's collection during the year as well as prints. Cataloguing these is progressing steadily and the back-log is gradually disappearing.

Archæology

The new cases bought last year for the museum have been installed and exhibitions have been arranged in them. A fairly extensive reorganization of the exhibits in the museum is making slow but steady progress. Help on Thursday evenings during term time would be welcome as with more help the process of reorganization can be speeded up.

At Picken's Hole in August volunteers under the direction of Mr. A. M. ApSimon spent most of two weeks getting to the bottom of the deposits outside the cave. Unfortunately, there was no inter-glacial deposit found beneath the cemented breccia formed, probably, during Würm 1. There is still much to be done at this site.

Further excavations were made at the entrance to Gorsey Bigbury and a report on this appears in this issue of *Proceedings*.

Metric System

In view of the decisions come to by higher authorities that Britain will turn over to the metric system it has been decided that this system shall be employed in all new work by this Society. There will obviously be a considerable time lag in bringing this decision into force and there will be a considerable overlap between the English and metric systems of measurements.

Proceedings

Volume 10, No. 3, was published in December 1965. It was the biggest and most expensive issue that the Society has ever produced. The outstanding paper was the report on "The Roman Temple on Brean Down, Somerset" by Mr. A. M. ApSimon towards the cost of which the Society received a grant of £40 from the Council for British Archaeology.

Sales have shown a gratifying rise, and the sale of back numbers and offprints has been better than in any previous year. Because of this increase in sales it was not necessary to draw on the capital of the Printed Publications Fund for this issue.

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M. G. NORTON,
Hon. Secretary