

## SECRETARIES' REPORT, 1976

The past year has seen much activity in the Society, arousing new interests and reviving old ones.

To begin with, a general look at the caving scene reveals a very promising year. On Mendip two attempts were made to pass sump 12A in Swildon's Hole. Both were unsuccessful. Digging is well underway in G.B. Cave, Bat Passage. The prospects look good. In other areas of England and Wales the society has not been idle. Regular trips have been made to Yorkshire with some good caves being done as well as some cave diving. Activity in South Wales included an underwater survey of sumps in the Hepste valley caves.

As usual members visited Co. Clare at Easter and in July. A survey of Upper Callaun 2 was made and more work done in Pollballiny. Digging at surface sites was continued. During 1976 the society's parties have been larger than in 1975 and this bodes good for 1977.

In the 1975 report little mention was made on continental caving. In 1975 Steve Perry and Bob Churcher were among a party doing varied exploration in Greece, Italy and Switzerland, while Charlie Self was on a trip to Gouffre Berger. In 1976 Bob Churcher has visited France on caving expeditions. Some of our members took part in a very successful mountaineering expedition to the Himalayas, where numerous peaks of over 6,000m were climbed. Some for the first time.

Three sessional meetings were held. The lectures were very interesting.

Continued improvements in the library are being made. Interest in photography has revived and the darkroom has been renovated. J. R. Russell has continued his work on improving the displays in the museum. A start has been made with the construction of 150m of wire rope ladders. New climbing ropes have been purchased.

A new archaeological dig has been started at Great Oone's Hole, Cheddar Gorge. The permission of the owners to carry out this excavation is on the condition that access to the site must not be up from the road through the gorge.

An outstanding event of the year was the Centenary of the University of Bristol. On the 'Open Day' the society staged an exhibition of its varied activities. This attracted much favourable attention. The society, it should be noted, has been in existence for 57 years of the life of the University. Parts of the exhibition are being remounted in the society's rooms.

Along with other caving societies and clubs we have had to deal with the problem of insurance. The cost of obtaining the minimum cover necessary involves a charge of over 50p per year per individual member. This large increase in the cost of insurance has made it necessary to raise the subscription paid by ex-student and other 'outside' members.

The late date of publication of the 1976 Proceedings was largely due to the late delivery of scripts promised for early in the year and actually some were delivered in July. For the first time in a caving journal colour has been used to illustrate an archaeological report.

Finally our thanks are due to the University of Bristol for grants towards the cost of publishing Proceedings and to the Students' Union for grants for general purposes and for travelling allowances. The Union grant covers capital expenditure on tackle and other equipment used in caving and archaeology.

C. A. GREENALL

A. G. WOODS

*Hon. Secretaries.*