

SECRETARIES' REPORT

MARCH 2004 – MARCH 2005

Research

There have been several foreign trips in the last year. Linda Wilson and Graham Mullan have continued their study of Franco-Cantabrian cave art. Their latest tour took in those Pyrenean caves containing Magdalenian age clay sculpture, including Montespan, Bedhaillac and Le Tuc D'Audoubert. They have now turned their attention to searching U.K. caves and have discovered and reported on probable Mesolithic engravings in Aveline's Hole. News of this discovery was reported as far west as the Winnipeg "Sun" and as far east as the daily newspapers of the United Arab Emirates.

Caving

This year has been a great success; we have had a high intake of very keen new members. There have been several hut weekends, a weekend in Wales and two in Yorkshire. The annual bonfire night kept up with tradition by being a great success. There have also been frequent evening trips and weekly vertical training in the University Union. However, the number of events does not seem to be enough for these enthusiastic new members and as several of them are intending to join the committee, we can look forward to a particularly busy next year.

Andrew Atkinson and Juliet Morse went to Matienzo in Spain and contributed discoveries and photography to a long term project running there. They were also the only UK members of the Nandan Expedition to China, where despite a cold snap, 10 km of cave was discovered and surveyed. Andrew also went with Simon Flower and Peter Talling to Yunnan in China to search for the world's deepest cave. However, although they ended up doing much high altitude walking only small caves were found.

Back in this country, Charlie Self and Tony Boycott completed their survey of landslip caves in the Middle Cotswolds. They have now begun work on the third and final part of their project, the Northern Cotswolds.

Museum

Work has continued on the collections and we have had numerous visitors, including several from the Archaeology Department of Bristol University. to look at various sites. The much travelled Aveline's Hole material has returned to the Museum amid a blaze of publicity, and we hope that there will be another paper for *Proceedings* before too long (see this issue, Ed.). In addition Dr. Roger Jacobi has done some further sampling on the Sun Hole material.

The Society made a robust submission in response to the consultation on the Palmer Committee report from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport regarding holdings of human remains. Originally this report was concerned with remains from Australian Aborigine, Maori, and American Indian sites and their return to their country of origin. The Committee then appeared to extend their remit to cover all human material held in museums, churches, hospitals, etc. The possibility was raised of the setting up of a licensing authority and an advisory board, all of which would have no doubt have entailed considerable expense

and the report did not discriminate between relatively recent material and that of extreme antiquity, as in the UBSS collection. It is hoped that the government will not adopt such a heavy handed approach. Our collections contain nothing under several hundred years old and there is no way of knowing their religious convictions. We shall continue to treat all our skeletal material with respect, be they mammoth, man, or mouse.

Library

The Library continues to grow, through exchanges as well as through purchases. Progress has been made towards the replacement of many of the old boxes in the stack room. We are grateful to John and Rita Squires and to Alan Gray for donations of journals, books and photographs.

Other

The Society's website has been updated. The new site can be found at www.ubss.org.uk This site will be kept up to date: it can be used to find out about future events as well as containing a wide variety of information about the Society and its activities. Finally we wish to thank the University of Bristol Union, the Tratman Fund of the University of Bristol and the Trustees of the Oliver Lloyd Memorial Fund for their generous grants towards the Society's activities.

Sally White