

## SECRETARIES' REPORT

MARCH 2006 – MARCH 2007

### Research

Pete Smart, Trish Beddows *et al.* published a GSA special paper titled 'Cave development on the Caribbean coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, Quintana Roo, Mexico'. [GSA Special Paper 404, 105-128, 2006]. This is one of the first papers on cave geomorphology based almost wholly on cave diving observations. Gina Moseley continues to work on speleothems collected from the Yucatan by Pete Smart. The preliminary U-series dating is now complete and work on stable isotopes for a palaeoclimate record is about to begin. A Leverhulme grant has also been awarded for U/Pb dating of older (>400 ka cave carbonates) and the development of laser methods for population of isochrons applicable to dating of dirty speleothems in cave entrance archaeological sequences.

Graham Mullan and Linda Wilson have continued with their research into the Palaeolithic cave art of France. They were invited to visit the Grotte Chauvet in the Ardeche region, an extremely rare privilege in itself and during the same week they were also able to visit the Reseau Clastres in the Pyrenees, as the sumps were drained again this summer for only the fifth time since the cave was discovered in 1970. Their discovery of a possible engraving of a mammoth in Gough's Cave, Cheddar was published this year in *Proceedings*, so their work continues to bear fruit closer to home as well.

### Caving

Fresh this year was highly successful, most likely because of the huge number of hugs inflicted by Tree upon passers by. Freshers' Weekend, Bonfire Night and many other highly successful trips to Mendip ran to make use of the luxurious changes that have been made to the hut. This year UBSS has performed some reconnaissance in the Forest of Dean to see what caves it has to offer. Other destinations have included Yorkshire and South Wales, where Kayleigh Gilkes decided to appraise the standard of cave rescue earlier this year.

Tony Boycott as a member of the 2007 *Caving in the Abode of the Clouds* expedition surveyed nearly 16 km of new cave and helped connect two caves to make the third longest cave system in India (the Krem Um Thloo - Krem Syrang Labbit system at 18 km) despite being dogged by bad weather, threats from the local mining community and injuries.

Andrew Atkinson has been to Houping, China where a team of 6 mapped 8 km of cave. He also reminded the secretary that "now that he has somebody willing to go more than once" the Tynning's dig has been reinvigorated with the return of Jon Telling to Bristol, although Christian agrees to return provided that a certain rock-jettisoning buffoon doesn't also return there at the same time.

### Website

A restricted access area has been set up allowing members to add news articles, events and quotations to the site, along with an online trip registration form using a web interface. Our literature search has been expanded to include the Southern Ireland Bibliography alongside the existing Caves of County Clare bibliography and of course, our very own *Proceedings*. Graham

Mullan has put in not inconsiderable effort adding in the content so that we have a full listing of *Proceedings* online now, with abstracts for the more recent volumes, via the newly written web interface. The Society continues to host Trinity College's Irish caves database and has expanded it by making it searchable via a clickable Google map interface. Online copies of Society Newsletters dating back to 1985 have been added to the site as PDFs. Google search has been added to the site, Google maps added to the Find UBSS section and we have started the hall of fame/shame, by putting the annual dinner awards online. Lastly, literally hundreds of photos have been added over the past year.

#### Other

Jon Brown has continued to add to the number of books on the library catalogue, which has now grown considerably. The library and museum now houses two computers, which will shortly be networked together. A scanner and a printer have also been installed. Thanks to Chris Pepper for donating the printer and for helping instal the second computer and to Linda's firm, Wards solicitors, for donating the scanner.

*Laura Womack and Christian Chourot*