

## SECRETARIES' REPORT

MARCH 2007 – MARCH 2008

### Research

Gina Moseley, Pete Smart and Ben Morley have conducted field trips to the Turks, Caicos and Bahamas. Passage elevations were investigated in relation to sea levels, with particular interest paid to MIS 11. Speleothem samples were collected from both study sites and are currently undergoing uranium series dating.

Chris Binding has discovered apoprotreic engravings (“witch marks”) in Wookey Hole. These are currently the subject of further research by him and Linda Wilson.

Graham Mullan and Andy Farrant have submitted a paper to the Quarterly Journal of Engineering Geology and Hydrology (in press). It reported the findings of the radiolocation exercise carried out at Pen Park Hole, assisted by Brian Prewer of the MRO, on behalf of a telecommunication company who wanted to site a mast at the location.

### Caving

Again this has been another year with exceedingly high numbers of members joining at Fresh, perhaps less due to the hugging from Tree but more due to the squeeze machine made by Christian. Club trips have been very full, especially with the delightful company of OUCC for Bonfire Weekend last November. Other trips have included Mendips, South Wales, and Yorkshire. The summer just gone saw occurrence of the club caving trip to Closani, South West Romania. This was open to all members of the club and was attended by six students and one graduate.

Andrew Atkinson, Morven Stanley and Jon Telling joined the CUCC expedition to Austria (Loser Plateau) in the summer. There they helped to explore, survey and afterwards derig to the bottom of Razor Dance (part of Steinbruchenhöhle) which sumped at 622 m, with passages found leading off beyond sump towards another nearby cave system, Kaninchenhöhle. They also helped add to the 2.5 km of new cave found in the Tunnockschacht cave. A full expedition report is to be published soon by CUCC in *Speleology*.

In January 2008 Simon Flower, along with two others, went on a 10-day expedition to a plateau 3000-3400 m above sea level in the Yongsheng region of Yunnan Province, China. A number of caves and promising entrances were discovered at 3000m-3100m, which appear to be draining to the Yangtse (1280 m a.s.l.), a few km further west. One such cave is a well-developed stream passage, left at a wide open lead. Caves could not be pushed at this time owing to lack of equipment, but a return trip is planned for winter 2009.

To add to the already long list of exciting foreign trips, Jon Telling, Stan Walentek, Juliet Morse and Andrew Atkinson went to the Tatra Mountains of Poland last May. They are hosting a return visit by two of the Poles with whom they caved out there.

There have been no major breakthroughs on the digging front yet, though the faith remains strong. Jon Telling and his team are continuing to move boulders and scaffolding around in Tynings Great Swallet. There is still a distinct draught, however there are also distinctly lots more boulders. This has not been the best year for the Bat Passage dig, with a total distance of new passage found currently standing at 0 m. However, the water in the dig face does drain away, (which gives hope) and there are now 2 siphon pumps installed which will automatically start the siphons when the water level increases.

## Other

Last year saw the shutting down of most of the caves on Mendips in which P-anchors had been installed under the BCA scheme. Linda Wilson and Andrew Atkinson were heavily involved in sorting this out, along with Chris Binding. Thanks to Graham Mullan for additional help.

Since last year a significant proportion of our publication back numbers and early logbooks have been uploaded to the website, making it an ever more useful resource. This year also saw the exciting publication of the new Swildon's Hole book, of which the late Dave Irwin and Andy Farrant were both authors. It was published by WCC. The possible mammoth engraving in Gough's Cave, discovered by the Society in 2003 and published last year is now on display to the public. In further local news, Rods Pot and Bath Swallet were linked by Cheddar CC, providing a pleasant pull-through for anyone who likes mud.

*Laura Womack and James MacFarlane*

## MUSEUM REPORT 2008

It has been a busy year for the Museum, which has seen numerous visitors pass through our doors, including the Backwell Archaeological Trust who organised a visit of visit for their members, around 15 people came along, to see the human remains found at the site. They were most impressed by the amount of material which exists as they had only expected a few bones to have survived, for some reason. They spent over two hours in the Museum, listening to a brief, impromptu talk on the site from Graham and myself.

We have also opened our doors on two occasions to students from the Archaeology Department who needed access to the material on display for a project to choose and object, draw it and research its history, as Bristol City Museum no longer has any local prehistoric material on display. A most notable omission in a region museum. The availability of our Museum prevented the need for students to be bussed to Oxford.

Work has continued on the cataloguing of the library, and we were fortunate in being able to have the data professionally recovered, at a very reasonable price, following an unfortunate hard disk failure.

Work has started on the slide copying and archiving project, being led by Andrew Atkinson. We are very grateful to Simon Lee for his excellent work on a database which we will be able to use to input all the slide information. It is hoped that it will also be possible to use this for other museum objects as well. A prototype of the database has been produced and is now in the testing stage. Work on remounting the slides, prior to having them professionally scanned, will be starting soon, once the database has been tested. The work of inputting the slide information will proceed alongside the remounting. The database will be available online, on the Society's website.

This year saw the return to the Museum of the Shirehampton hand axe, which for a very long time been on loan to the National Museum of Wales. Apart from some of the Read's Cavern material on loan to Woodspring Museum, the hand axe represented our longest standing loan and it is nice to welcome this rather splendid object back home after so long.

Later in the year, we will be working again with the Department of Archaeology, providing access to certain parts of the collection to the students studying on the part-time degree course. Thanks to Andy Current for his advice on the management of this exercise.

*Christopher Hawkes, Museum Curator  
Linda Wilson, Project Co-ordinator*