

Secretary's Report, 1937-1944.

The activities of the Society, like those of so many others, have necessarily had to be curtailed somewhat during the past few years owing to wartime restrictions.

We have suffered from the loss of active members and have had largely to neglect some branches of our work, by reason of lack of time, manpower, and transport facilities, but after a period of readjustment the Society has settled down to the new conditions, and is still very active.

During the years 1940-43 we were glad to see a number of our friends from King's College, London, taking an interest in the Society, and in 1941 and 1942 two of their members served on the Committee.

Caving and Excavations

1937. SANDPIT HOLE, Near Priddy. A passage in the West side of the swallet was opened and pursued for a horizontal distance of 10 ft. Choke prevented further progress.
1938. MENDIP LODGE. A cave site was reported to the Society in the yard of Mendip Lodge. An underground water system which had been excavated out of a rift in the limestone was investigated, but no trace of any cave was found.
1939. LAMB LEER was investigated by Professor Palmer and other members with the Geophysical Megger's Earth Tester. The existence of a further large chamber, besides the Main Chamber, was demonstrated and its dimensions roughly plotted, but no access was gained.
1940. G.B. CAVE. Discovered. (See separate article.)
PRIDHAMSLEIGH CAVES, Near Buckfast, were visited by a party of members, who camped in the area for several days.
EAST TWIN SWALLET. Further excavations carried out. (See separate article.)
1941. G.B. CAVE surveyed.
BATH HOLE. Work was commenced on a depression in the swallet in which the bath is situated. This hole had been noticed to have sunk several feet during the last year or two, and it was hoped that by sinking a shaft the cave system into which the bath stream flowed might be entered. An excavation about 15 ft. in depth was made, but no signs of a cave encountered.

1943. EAST TWIN SWALLET surveyed.

1944. In March of this year a new cave system was entered after a successful dig had been carried out in a dry swallet close to the Society's bath.

The new cave is of rather a different character from others in the Burrington area, and contains several large vertical avens, one of which is over 60 ft. in height, and makes one of the best rope ladder climbs in Mendip. In it also are some very fine formations, including two remarkable white curtains, about 6 ft. long, in which run bands of colour.

The cave has been penetrated to a depth of about 200 ft. and work is in progress on the mud choke at the bottom.

A full account of the cave will appear in the next issue of *Proceedings* when the task of surveying and photographing it has been completed.

Frequent descents of Mendip Caves, including Swildon's Hole and Eastwater Swallet, were made, and parties were taken down the local caves during Union Week festivities. In 1941 more than fifty people were present at the Society's Union Week outing.

Archæological Excavations

1938. ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE, CHARTERHOUSE.

Following the excavation of Gorsey Bigbury the question whether or not an inner ditch might exist at the Roman Amphitheatre, Charterhouse, was revived. A trial trench from the centre towards the ramparts failed, however, to provide any evidence of such a ditch.

1939. PRESUMED LONG BARROW, DOLEBURY WARREN. (*See U.B.S.S., Proc. No. I, Vol. 5, 1938, p. 86.*)

The possible Long Barrow reported by Dr. H. Taylor to exist on Dolebury Warren was tested. Trial trenches across it gave no evidence to substantiate the view that it had been a barrow.

1940. BURRINGTON CAMP.

A preliminary investigation and rough survey of the camp on Burrington Link was made by members of the Society during the summer of 1940, and plans for future excavations agreed upon. Unfortunately the war situation at the time led to postponement of this scheme.

CORSTON CIST.

A beaker burial at Corston was investigated by the Society and a full account of this appears elsewhere.

1942. **ROMAN COFFIN, BATH.** (See separate article.)

British Spelæological Association Conferences

1938. Several members attended the B.S.A. conference at Giggleswick. The Society's film of Lamb Leer, part of which is in colour, was shown, and expeditions were made down various caves.
1939. The B.S.A. conference at Swansea was attended, and numerous descents of the South Wales Caves were made.

Headquarters

During 1942 many improvements were made in the camp at Burrington. The bath was enlarged, and completely rebuilt. A large fireplace was installed in the hut, and the hut itself repainted inside and out.

Museum

The Society sustained a great loss when the Museum and Library were totally destroyed by fire during an enemy air-attack in November, 1940. Much material was subsequently salvaged, and a complete account of this is given elsewhere in this issue.

By the kindness of the Vice-Chancellor the Society was able to take over another room at the University, which has been suitably furnished and is now used as a Library and Committee Room.

Library

The Library has been re-catalogued, and all members are requested to return any books which may still be in their possession.

We wish to thank the following for gifts to the library: Dr. F. S. Wallis; Dr. and Mrs. Welch; Bristol Naturalists' Society; Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society; Torquay Natural History Society; Liverpool Geological Society; Irish Naturalists's Society.

In addition to those mentioned above, the Society has been engaged in activities of a rather different nature.

The discovery of G.B. CAVE caused widespread public interest, and several articles were written on the subject for the press. An

illustrated feature appeared in *The Illustrated London News*, and an article on the cave was published in *Nature*. In addition, a number of lectures were delivered, and a talk given in the B.B.C.'s feature "The World Goes By." A B.B.C. recording was also made down the cave itself.

In the summer of 1943 the Society received a request that a party of climbers might be sent to N. Wales to search for the body of a school-boy who had been lost in the mountains the previous summer. Two members accompanied by Professor R. J. Brocklehurst, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, undertook the task, but without success.

We should like to acknowledge with gratitude financial aid from the Colston Research Society, and also to thank the Bursar for auditing the accounts of the Society each year.

We are certain that all those connected with the Society will be glad to know that word has come from Professor E. K. Tratman, who was in Singapore at the time of its capture by the Japanese, that he is safe and well.

R. A. J. PEARCE,
Hon. Secretary.
