

Secretary's Report, 1957-1958

It is a pleasure to report that the decrease in student membership that was evident in the 1956-7 period has been reversed, and a considerable increase in numbers in the present academic year has enabled the Society to continue and extend its work both on Mendip and in the Bristol area.

Meetings.

Sessional meetings have been held as usual: the number present at each being about 40. Four tutorial classes on local Prehistory were given by the President in the Society's rooms and were fairly well attended.

Caving.

On Mendip the Society has made no new discoveries but increased activity has led to the re-opening of old digs, and fresh attempts to extend our knowledge of known cave systems. In G.B. Cave digging has continued in the East Passage. A considerable amount of work has been done in the Main Gorge to locate and enter high-level passages using a maypole. In Rhino Rift recent work has improved the conditions by removing the restriction close to the working face. This dig shows more promise than it has for some time. Work on the choked cave passage of Trat's Crack has been restarted, while at Manor Farm swallet the shaft has been deepened and timbered to a depth of nearly 25 ft., through compact clay, stones, and mud. Rock walls have appeared on two sides and show signs of water action. A new survey of Longwood Swallet and August Hole system is under way.

A party of the Society returned to County Clare in July, 1957. Faunarooska, Pol-an-Ionian, Pollballiny, a considerable portion of Branch Passage Gallery in Pollnagollum, and certain lesser caves were surveyed. Some reports appear in this issue. A party will be going to Clare next summer to continue the work there.

Away meets have also been held in Devon and South Wales.

Archaeology.

Apart from the major work, which has been continued, on the Priddy Circles, the Society held a month's camp to start the excavation of the Roman Temple on Brean Down. It is hoped to conclude this excavation in July-August, 1958. A preliminary report appears in this issue. Dr. Taylor has continued the excavation of Bos Swallet. It has, unfortunately,

been proved that the well-marked Beaker age hearth there is in fact part of a miners' spoil heap. The site from which the miners dug this material has so far not been located, but, if any deposit remains, it must be close by. A trial excavation at the back of the first chamber of Gough's Old Cave has shown traces of a hearth, which is probably of Romano-British date. Further work at this cave is in progress.

Library.

Mr. G. Witts reports that the library continues to expand by purchases and gifts. Among the donors we thank our Vice-President, Prof. L. S. Palmer, for a copy of his new book *Man's Journey Through Time*.

Museum.

Further additions to the contents have been made and fresh exhibits mounted. Cataloguing has made some progress.

Photography.

Many slides of 2×2 in. size have been added to the collection. We wish to thank all those who have contributed to the collection, and especially our Vice-President, Dr. H. Taylor, for his gift of scores of slides, all carefully catalogued. These are mainly of archaeological interest.

Field Headquarters.

Sundry repairs and improvements have been made to the field headquarters at a considerable cost, which has been met entirely out of the Hut Levy. We are grateful to ex-student members who installed electricity in the hut.

Acknowledgements.

The Society is very grateful to the University and the Colston Research Society for their grants, which have both been substantially increased, towards the cost of publishing our *Proceedings* annually. Without these grants annual publication would be impossible to finance out of our own resources. The Society also acknowledges with thanks the annual grant from the University Union.

B. R. COLLINGRIDGE,
Hon. Secretary.