

Secretary's Report, 1959-1960

Meetings

A series of four tutorials was given in the first term by Dr. Tratman and Dr. Savage under the general heading, "An introduction to the Archæology of Western Europe". At the sessional meetings the attendance was better than it has been in recent years, and this may be due in part to the wider range of subjects covered by the speakers at these meetings.

Caving

On Mendip, most of the Society's effort has been concentrated in digging out the terminal choke at the bottom of the Gorge in G.B. A large amount of material has been removed and there are interesting and promising developments at this dig. Continued efforts to climb up to, and investigate various opening in the roof of the Gorge have been rewarded by the finding of a passage now known as "Whitsun Folly". This has been surveyed. Some work has also been done at Rhino Rift and at Manor Farm.

In July, 1959, a party again went to Co. Clare, Eire. The unusually dry weather that was experienced greatly assisted the discovery, exploration and survey that was carried out. The length of passages surveyed amounted to over three miles, which included the whole of Cullaun III, parts of the Main Cave of Pollnagollum and the new Sump Gallery leading off from Cottar's Gallery in the same cave. The survey of Poll-an-Ionain was completed including some extensions. Poll-Cahircloggaun West-1 was explored for the first time to its end and the branch leading back to Poll-Cahircloggaun West was partially explored. The end point reached is very close to Upper St. Brendan's rising. Cullaun III and Poll-an-Ionain are subjects of separate papers in this Proceedings. Further passages were found in St. Catharine's I and in the Doolin Cave.

Members have also caved in Devon and Derbyshire and South Wales. An away meet is planned for Easter 1960.

Archæology

Most of the year's archæological work has been carried out at the south circle of the Priddy circles. Excavations were made at the centre, through the bank on the southeast and the west side of the entrance. No dateable objects were found. At the entrance on the west side two stones were found and these had been thrown down in prehistoric times. It is now clear that there was an

earlier structure on the site before the bank and ditch structure. The earlier structure consisted of a free standing arrangement of stones without any bank or ditch and it had a different orientation from that of the later structure. At Knowle Hill trial excavations proved that the circle crowning the hill was not of prehistoric origin.

Some work was done at Gough's Old Cave, Cheddar, at the back of the outer chamber to locate deeper and perhaps undisturbed deposits. The work has exposed a deep rift several feet wide at least. The rift is filled with loose angular rubble with some sandy matrix and many boulders. The fill is contaminated by recent remains and may be a filling put in by Gough. So for the present it is a caving dig with the possibility of reaching the river some 30 ft. lower down.

Equipment

Caving ladders made by the 'resin method' have proved somewhat unreliable after prolonged use and they are now being replaced by ones made by the 'crimping method' which are easier to make and safer to use.

A new building, called "The Grandchild" has been erected against the chimney at the back of the hut. This is effectively heated by a radiator fed with hot water by a boiler at the back of the fire, and is used for the drying and storage of caving cloths.

Library

The library has continued to expand throughout the year. The Society is very grateful to Dr. D. C. Prowse for a gift of all the back numbers of "Antiquity" and of the Proceedings of our own society. The exchange list is still growing.

Proceedings

The cost of printing these is a very heavy charge on the funds of the society. Publication is only made possible because the University of Bristol and the Colston Research Society make very substantial grants towards the cost of publication. To both of these bodies the society is very grateful. Even so the cost to the society is very substantial and it had to find a sum of about £130. This is partly offset by sales and members are asked to remember this and to let the secretary have the names and addresses of possible subscribers.

Acknowledgements

The Society is grateful to the University of Bristol Union for a grant for general purposes during the year. The society also thanks those members who have contributed to various funds.

March, 1960

D. G. MEAD,
Hon. Secretary.