

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Published 26.11.77 by the Society, University Rd., Bristol, BS8 1SP

EDITORIAL

For two years the U.B.S.S. has been without a newsletter. The Proceedings published annually gives a fine account of the major work of the Society, but it was felt that there was a lack of communications on a day to day basis. The purpose of this newsletter is to try to keep members informed about what is happening within the Society, what we have done and what we are planning to do. It is also hoped that student members that joined at the Faffy Squash, who have only come caving once or never at all, can be encouraged to join in the Society's activities and caving trips, if they know what is going on. After all it is not always easy for people to get down to the Spelaeo Rooms at lunch times, even if they know where it is.

Also included in the newsletter will be a number of articles by members of general interest. This issue has had to be prepared in a hurry, so as to make sure that news of the meeting on December 6th reached members in good time. Some articles have therefore been held over, others abridged.

Duncan Braidwood, Editor.

DIARY OF EVENTS

1977

- December 4th, Rescue Practice in Lamb Leer. Meet Spelaeo Rooms 10 am.
- December 6th, Sessional Meeting, 8.15 pm. "Prehistoric Flint Implements" by Dr. Derek Roe. A film demonstrating flint flaking will be shown.
- December 8th, Committee Meeting, 5.15 pm.
- December 10 - 11th, G.B. Cavern dig.

1978

- January 13 - 15th, Mendip week end. A chance for the freshers who missed the October meets. List will be posted up on the 12th.
- January 27 - 29th, Yorkshire week end. Accommodation for 12 at Green Close. Minibus. List up on 16th.
- February 1st, Sessional Meeting 8.15 pm., "Caving in Iran", by Martyn Farr.
- February 15th, Paul Esser Memorial Lecture, Tyndall Theatre, Physics Dept., 8.15 pm., "The West Face of Changabang", by Joe Tasker.
- February 17 - 19th, Derbyshire week end, High Peak (Orpheus) 12 people Minibus. List up 6th.
- March 8th, Annual General and Sessional Meeting, 8.15 pm. "The Old Iron Mines of Dean", by Ian Standing.
- March 17 - 19th, Yorkshire week end. 12 at Brackenbottom. Minibus. List up 6th.

All Sessional Meetings are in the Geography Lecture Theatre.

K. Hopkins and D. Braidwood.

FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

Members who got browned off by last year's charade, when it took three successive meetings to get a quorum, will view Further Amendments to Constitution with dismay. Nevertheless these are necessary because our insurance premium depends on how many members we have at a given time. The time we have chosen is January 31st, when the Treasurer closes his books and goes to Audit. It is easy with subscribing members, but we need new rules to say when a student is or is not a member. Basically he becomes a member when he pays his Union Levy. When this becomes renewable in October of the following year the Treasurer sends a reminder to his old address. If he doesn't pay up by December 31st then he ceases to be a member.

Up till now ex-student members have been given twelve months in which they may write to the Hon. Secretaries and say that they wish to continue their membership by becoming a subscribing member. This will no longer be possible, since after five months by the new rule they will have ceased to be a member. It has therefore become necessary to shorten this period of grace from 12 to 5 months. Student members need not feel agrieved, since the subscribing membership fee of £3 is now the same for both outside and ex-university members. Only, if they do not avail themselves of the 5 month grace period, they will have to apply for outside membership, which is rather more complicated and is not granted automatically.

The Constitutional Amendments passed by Committee on 10.11.77, which have already been approved by Union Council and which will be put to the A.G.M. on 8.3.78 are as follows:

SUBSCRIPTIONS 6. a. after 3.(a) add the words "shall pay the Union Levy but."

g. add the following paragraph. "Union Levy is due at the beginning of the Autumn Term. If any Student Member fails to pay the Union Levy by December 31st of the year in which it became due, then that membership shall be terminated, unless that Member has applied for Ex-Student Membership under rule 5.c."

ELECTION OF MEMBERS 5. c. Delete the words "within twelve months of the expiration of their membership" and replace with the words "before December 31st of the year in which their membership expires."

It ought not to be necessary to urge members to attend the A.G.M. on 8.3.78, since we shall have an Ex-Secretary, Ian Standing, telling us all about the Forest of Dean Iron Mines. But nevertheless, if in doubt, please allow your interest in the welfare of the Society to tip the balance in favour of your attendance.

Oliver. 13.11.77

REPORTS OF U.B.S.S. ACTIVITIES

Ireland, October 1977. The main event was measuring the length of C6, an heroic undertaking by Charlie Self and Julian Walford, using ten metres of washing line and 20 ft. of ladder. The entrance is a flat out crawl in water, but rapidly transforms into a deep and narrow canyon. An exciting pitch, particularly during wet weather, leads to another canyon, a winding passage 3.5 m. high but so narrow that crab walking is necessary and even crawling in the water, for 990 m. There is some fine "bloody guts" flowstone 130 m. beyond the pitch and a tiny inlet at 190 m. There is a fallen block wedged in the roof at 460 m. and two more tiny inlets at 760 and 780 m. The cave character changes 700 m. after the pitch, with the roof gradually lowering to make a hands and knees crawl. After 830 m. the passage divides into two and shows "braiding". Eventually the cave becomes a flat out crawl narrowed by mud banks.

Yorkshire, October 28 - 30th. A stormy week end, with a long journey home in the teeth of the gale, reaching Bristol at 5 am. The party of ten stayed at Brackenbottom and did a Swinsto - Kingsdale exchange trip on the Saturday, a trip notable only for the fact that a ladder was left on "Serious Climb" and had to be retrieved on the following day. On Sunday Ireby was visited. D.I.B.

Yorkshire, November 18 - 20th. On Saturday the party divided into three. One did Pippikin, another County Pot to Easter Grotto and Gypsum Caverns, while the third did Lancaster Hole to County Pot. Failing to find Green Close the party kipped down at Clapdale, but were disturbed by a rescue call out. We drove to the lay-by above the Hill Inn and after a rapid change into cold and wet wet suits we had an eventful drive over the moors in a C.R.O. land-rover. A quarter of a mile walk in nasty conditions brought us to Mere Gill entrance. We then discovered that two parties of three were missing; the cave was in flood. Some of us joined the first party of the C.R.O. and we found the first group at the bottom of the second (65 ft.) pitch. The conditions on this pitch were less than perfect with an estimated 50 gals./ sec. going down. With the first group we all left the cave and a second group of rescuers reached the bottom of the third (90 ft.) pitch. They were quite cold by this time. Conditions on the surface were not pleasant either, with very cold winds and occasional snow. One member of the second party when he reached the surface had to be given hot air and was put on a stretcher and sent to hospital by 10 o'clock in the morning. The other two members of the group were in a surprisingly good condition. We left the area soon after mid-day and after a late breakfast at Bernie's made an early start back to Bristol. Much of the journey was concerned with trying to keep the driver awake.

Thorley Sweetman

The Vessfed Octopush Tournament, 13.11.77. Since there are a number of divers in the U.B.S.S. not unskilled in this underwater hockey game, we entered a team and had three matches, of which we won two and narrowly lost the third to the Univ. of Bristol team. We shall be challenging the latter again in the New Year!

Oliver. 13.11.77