

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Circular to Members.

CAVING

Mendip.

Manor Farm. Water now readily escapes through the lower end of the dig, but the good efforts by members this year may be largely wasted, if adequate shoring is not completed before the winter. Two sides of the dig are of a soft and rubbly nature, easily eroded.

G.B. Cave. It is intended to extend the "Ladder Sig" in search of further extensions.

Swildon's Hole. On May 4th members of the Society helped to complete the survey of Vicarage Passage.

The Pyrenees.

The area visited in August was that of Mont Perdu near the Ordessa national park. Geologically and geomorphologically it was very interesting. One pot, 450 ft. deep, was explored and surveyed; others were partially explored. The trip was revealing from the point of view of organizing foreign caving expeditions. For further information, see F. Nicholson, B.Sc., in his Sessional Meeting.

Irish Expedition.

The party which went to Clare this year at one time numbered 19. This must be a record. Much work was done, the main items being:- Doolin. The Arran View Passage was forced, so that there are now three ways into the cave and a choice of routes. The route taken by St. Catherine's III has been established. Cullaun Zero was extended 500 ft. Progress was stopped by a pitch, subsequent lack of time and a dearth of small people. The cave must be very close to the main passage of Cullaun I. Coolagh River Cave. The Poldonnough South route (spelling according to O.S. map) has been changed considerably by debris carried in by (presumably) the 1961 floods. In the Canal, where was formerly 3 ft. of head room, there is now only 8 ins. under low water conditions. The route is difficult to find, and is now a very poor escape route (except from this world). In case of flooding the main entrance would be safer. Poldubh System. This has proved more intricate than at first thought and manages to pose some interesting problems. Polcahircloggaun West One was tackled by be-neoprened fanatics who apparently enjoyed the cave. Well over 100 man hours were taken up in the surveying.

Many other items of research were carried out including intensive water sampling, which yielded interesting results.

Over the three weeks stay 88½ gallons of Guinness were consumed along with some 1360 sandwiches to soak it up.

South Wales.

A further visit has been made to the quarry at Llandybie to study the astounding mud formations there. A short camping visit was made to the Porth yr Ogor area. Particular attention was paid to the series of small (and rather treacherous) caves where the limestone outcrops from under the gritstone series. On April 21st members of the Society enjoyed a trip round Ogor Ffynnon Ddu.

Yorkshire.

An account of the Society's Easter trip to Yorkshire this year is published in this Circular. Next year the U.B.S.S. will again be making an expedition to Yorkshire and has obtained permission from Lord Shuttleworth to explore Lost John Cave, on Good Friday and Saturday. Members who would like to attend this meet should notify the Hon. Treasurer.

Derbyshire.

A meet was held at Buxton on the 22nd September, when six members visited Giant's Hole. Our hosts were the Eldon Pothole Club, and we went in the company of John Needham, who is visiting Bristol in October to address a Sessional Meeting on the subject of the Gouffre Berger.

Away Meets.

The Society proposes to hold away meets at fairly frequent intervals. Whenever possible notification of these will be made in the Circular to Members. The next meet will be on November 2nd at Ystradfellite in South Wales. Names to Hon. Treasurer, please.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Dr. Taylor's dig at Almondsbury has been brought to an abrupt end. The deep bone fissure has been filled in as part of a road development programme.

Other work has concentrated on Picken's Hole, which is still producing much interesting material. There are some indications of two entrances. One, higher, used by Hyaenas equals layer 3; the other, a lower one, used by Bears equals layer 5. The badgers have only disturbed layer 3.

The late H. St. George Gray.

The Somerset Archaeological Society is proposing to establish some form of memorial subscription to the S.A.S., and cheques are payable to the H. St. George Gray Fund.

PROCEEDINGS

Vol. 10, No. 1. is well advanced and it is hoped to have it ready by the end of October. Some papers have been left over to the next number, because of lack of space (cost limitations). Items for Vol. 10, No. 2 should reach the Editors by January 31st, 1964.

LIBRARY

Purchased out of War Damage Fund:- Abercromby. Bronze age pottery (2 vols.).

The periodicals have all been rehoused and a number of copies are found to be missing. If any members have copies which belong to the library, we would be grateful to see them back again. Also any spare copies would be welcome.

SESSIONAL MEETINGS

Nearly all the meetings have been arranged. The list is published with this Circular.

J.J.P. Clokie, Hon. Sec.  
23rd September, 1963.

U.B.S.C. Yorkshire Trip, Easter 1963. Exploration of Notts Pot.

This was a pleasant trip with good caving. The members of the party were Geoff Bond, Bernard and Joan Chapman, David Houston, Oliver Lloyd, Johnny and Rita Squire and John Worley. They stayed at the Ingleboro' Hotel at Ingleton, where at least the food was good.

By the morning of Good Friday, April 12th, half the party had arrived and set about getting permission to visit Notts Pot on Leck fell, sorting tackle and getting permission to cross the grouse moors from the Shooting Hut. In the afternoon all the tackle was taken down the cave, the first two pitches were laddered and the rest left in the Three Ways Chamber.

On Saturday four hours were spent underground. It was very wet and had been snowing. Last winter's snow was found at the bottom of the entrance pitch. The Centre Series was tackled. Here the first pitch of 70 ft. was relatively dry, but at the foot of it the party met all the water from the entrance streamway. The next series of short pitches were so wet that it was deemed advisable to pull out and try another route (there are three). They next tackled the Left Hand Series, descending the first pitch of 50 ft., which was rather wet, and laddering the second.

On Easter Sunday this second pitch was descended (90 ft.). It is a very fine and rather complex pothole, fairly dry, ending in a shallow pool below an arch. The third pitch of 30 ft. is close by and reaches the main streamway just below a sump. On the opposite side of the stream passage (right) is the lower end of the Centre Series, which was explored up to the foot of its last ladder pitch. Our party went downstream to the fourth pitch, laddered it and went on as far as the head of the fifth. Here they turned back for lack of time. A four and a half hour trip.

Tackle required. It is difficult to get exact information from the available literature about the tackle needed in this cave. Myers (1952) in "Underground Adventure" is exasperatingly discursive and repetitive; Thornber (1959) read alongside of the survey given in "Underground Adventure" is incomprehensible. The tackle used by our party was as follows:

First Pitch. 20 ft. rope belay to a stake, 50 ft. ladder, 60 ft. life line. There is a stake already there but it needs reinforcing. A member of the surface party returned each day at 4 p.m. to life-line up the party in the cave.

Second Pitch. It is best to traverse over the waterfall, enter a short ox-bow on the left and hang the ladder from a natural eye-hole on the right at the far end. This gives a dry descent. 2 ft. belay, 16 ft. ladder, line for tackle bags.

Centre Series, First Pitch. 5 ft. belay over crack to right of pothole, 70 ft. ladder, 160 ft. double life-line on pulley. Descend to a ledge on far side of hole. Beneath is a drop of another 20 ft. to a blind pot, which should be avoided. Over the ledge is the floor of the main pothole and the water from the entrance is here met. Second, 3rd and 4th Pitches can be done on one ladder of 40 ft. with 30 ft. belay far out to left. Life-line essential under these wet conditions. The original explorers descended on ropes; it must have been very dry. Last pitch not explored.

Left Hand Series, First Pitch. 10 ft. belay on left, 50 ft. ladder, 100 ft. double life-line on pulley slung high up on left side over ladder. Life-lining from further up the passage causes the line to get jammed in the crack. Second Pitch. 30 ft. belay right round arch over head of pitch. This is the "bucket" with a hole in it described by Myers. 90 ft. ladder descends past ledge near foot to pool. 120 ft. life-line. A man was left at the head of this pitch. Third Pitch. 10 ft. belay to flake high on left. 30 ft. ladder, 60 ft. life-line which we took on to the next pitch,

Fourth Pitch. Traverse over waterfall to large stalagmite boss on right. 10 ft. belay over stalagmite flows which meet in the middle of the passage just beyond. 30 ft. ladder just clears waterfall. 60 ft. life-line.

Tackle requirements for the last two pitches would probably be: Fifth Pitch, 59 ft. Long belay, 70 ft. ladder, life-line. Sixth (last) Pitch, 16 ft. Long belay, 12 ft. ladder.

References. Myers, J.O. (1952) in "Underground Adventure", 1st Ed. p. 63. Thornber, N. (1959) "Pennine Underground", Dalesman, p. 140.

O.C.L. 16.4.63

### SESSIONAL MEETINGS.

October 1963 - March 1964.

Mondy at 8.15 p.m. in the Geography Lecture Theatre

University of Bristol.

Entrance: University Road.

- Oct. 14th "Recent Excavations of Sub-Roman and Saxon Sites in Somerset."  
Mr. P.A. Rahtz (University of Birmingham)
- Oct. 28th. "The Gouffre Berger"  
Mr. J.K. Needham
- Nov. 11th. Archaeological Subject. (Title not yet known).
- Nov. 25th. "The Geomorphology of the Caves of County Clare."  
Mr. Paul Williams B.Sc. (University of Cambridge)
- Jan. 13th. Film Evening. Arnhem Land. Caribou Hunters.  
Long House People. Prairie.  
(Subject to the films being available).
- Jan. 27th. "The Antiquities of Lansdown, Bath"  
Mr. John Gardner M.A., F.S.A.
- Feb. 17th. "The Pyrennees Expedition, U.B.S.S."  
Mr. F.H. Nicholson B.Sc.
- March 2nd. Annual General Meeting and Presidential Address.
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Informal meetings in Society's Rooms, Monday at 8.15 p.m.

1. Geology for cavers. Mr. D. Ingle Smith.  
Oct. 21st, Nov. 4th, Nov. 18th, Dec. 2nd.
2. Archaeology for beginners. Dr. E.K. Tratman.  
Dec. 9th, 1963. Jan. 20th, Jan. 27th, Feb. 3rd, 1964.

These are open to members and friends and any others interested.