

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETYCIRCULAR TO MEMBERS

(1966, No. 4 12th December)

CAVINGManor Farm

First of all, many thanks to everyone who sent something towards the cost of the new shaft- the response was very good. Due to the money being available, we have been able to hire a rock drill and the resulting speed of descent has been about four times that obtained previously. The drill itself is a Kango Rotary Hammer with a 13" bit. Its speed varies with the rock, but it never takes longer than 5 mins. to drill a 12" shot-hole (compared with 45 mins. for a 6" hole using a hand drill- not to mention the aching wrist and chipped knuckles!). As a result we blow 4-6 holes at a time, tamped efficiently in contrast to the inefficient bangs using inadequately tamped plaster or shallow shot-holes.

Our first try-out with the drill was over the August Bank Holiday, when the few members remaining around Bristol, helped by the occasional older member down for a quiet weekend at the Hut, managed to increase the depth from 11 to 18 ft. The digging routine was so new as to be very enjoyable and added incentive was provided by a strong draught that came out of a joint in the floor.

However the cave kept its secrets and a fortnight later we returned, armed with the Kango and with some experience this time. The experience paid off as we went down nearly 7 ft. in two days and made the depth 24-25 ft. By now the joint was widening, (we preferred to call it a rift!) and the draught still issued from it. At this depth we started using a ladder to climb back to the surface, as it was becoming a strain on the nerves to chimney some 25 ft. above a det wired to nearly a pound of combustible materials!

By this time it was becoming difficult to clear away the fumes and even flapping for 15 mins. with a 30 ft. length of fire hose left enough fumes to give the digger a nasty headache. Also the draught began to work against us, as instead of delivering fresh air it tended to emit a steady stream of fumes for some time, and one just had to put up with it.

The next occasion on which we had the drill was the first weekend of October. The rift in the floor soon turned out to be a cross-rift extending upstream to the right (facing down-valley) and downstream to the left; for as far as could be seen (4-5 ft.) it got no wider than 4". The draught was hardly noticeable now, so we carried on downwards. Late on the Sunday afternoon there was great excitement when the drill went through to a space in the floor out of which came another of those draughts which hold the promise of great things to come- the Manor Farm Main Drain at last? Unfortunately this particular Main Drain turned out to be a 4"x4" channel running down valley. It went on for some way, as water poured would gurgle away quite happily until out of earshot. After this little anticlimax we did one more bang and left the depth at 28'6".

Since then all the drills for hire have been out, so we've been unable to improve on that depth. One day was spent, however, on blowing out the 4" rift so as to get a good look at it. We managed to get some 6 ft. into it, but as it still showed no sign of widening, it's unlikely to be worth following. However, we have reserved the drill (as far as one can reserve it) for the week of Dec 28th to Jan 4th or 5th. On the assumption that we get it, and that we achieve the same rate as before, we should reach -45 ft. and a breakthrough (even allowing a day off for the New Year's Party).

U.B.S.S. CIRCULARG.B.Cave

The new Series was gated during September by Trat, Mike Norton and Sue Lewis. It turned out to be rather a sporty trip due to the handicap of around 30lbs of gate, 40lbs of cement, plus buckets, shovels etc.!

Since the breakthrough, very little work has been done in the way of digging and the only progress made over the position at the time of the Proceedings article was in passing the tight terminal rift. This was done by the Gloucester Speleological Society's 'Squeeze Champion'-it turned out to be blocked in both directions as expected. A dig in the final chamber of Bat Passage has been started and will probably be the one to be continued with.

Having finished his detailed geomorphological study of August-Longwood Swallet, Tim Atkinson has been studying the Ladder Dig Series and all this will be included in the paper for next year's Proc.

ARCHAEOLOGY

M.G.N.

Museum

The renovation and rearrangement of exhibits continues slowly, and an exhibit of the Olveston Bone Fissure is being prepared. The punched-card catalogue is being gradually extended, though this can only proceed slowly due to a shortage of equipment. Preservation of bone and pottery from the Society's excavation has continued as usual, and it is hoped that in future-when another battery charger is forthcoming-iron objects will also be able to be preserved.

Attendance by members on Thursday evenings has been better this term than previously.

Excavations

Three excavations have been carried out this term.

Stokeleigh Camp (NGR ST 559733)

Limited exploratory excavation has been carried out on this site, within the area of the camp on the west side close to the ramparts. Little evidence of structure has been forthcoming but a certain amount of pottery, iron work and animal bone have been discovered. The pottery mostly dates to Iron Age A, but some pieces date to Iron Age B. The animal bone comes from a considerable variety of beasts, sheen, goat, horse, pig, deer and ox. Of the Iron objects found one is of particular interest being in the form of a small bar of metal pinched in at the end. Derek Allen, an authority on pre-Roman coinage, suggests that it might be a native currency bar.

Due to the rather erratic turn out of diggers not as much has been achieved as was hoped, however the site has proved to be worth further more complete investigation. It is hoped that the excavation will be reopened next spring.

Binogar (NGR ST 611496)

This site is situated in the garden of a house in Binogar, and consists of a shallow pit containing much abraded Romano-British pottery, some flints, and some beads. The site is very much disturbed. Close to the site runs a track which is conjectured to be a Roman road.

Pickin's Hole (NGR ST 396350)

This site has been continued, and the entrance passage is in the process of being explored. Deposits of hyaena and bear are only overlain by badger spoil, and are very numerous. The floor of the entrance passage has been polished by the feet of the hyaenas. Work on this site will continue throughout the winter, weather permitting.

ARCHAEOLOGY :cont.,Survey Work

It is hoped that surveys will be carried out on the following sites; Coombe Hill, Clifton Camp, and Burwalls Camp.

As always much help is needed in all branches of archaeological work in the Society. Details will always be found on the notice board in the main room.

W.J.Haldane.

SESSIONAL MEETINGS

The attendances of some of these has been so poor that the usefulness of their continuation in 1967-1968 is seriously in question. To jog your memory the list for next term is repeated.

Monday Jan.17th. The Valley of the Assassins , Mr. P. Willey,M.A.

Monday Feb.13th. Dan-yr-Ogof , Mr.W.H.Little.

Monday Mar.6th. A.G.M.
Carnac and Round About Dr. E.K.Tratman.

IRELAND

There is to be a short trip probably from Jan. 8th to the 15th inclusive. Accommodation is expected to be at Keene's Hotel, Lisdoonvarna, at approx. 22/- per day.

The party is expected to leave on the 8th and arrive at Dublin (via Holyhead) on the 9th. A car is to be hired and the costs shared. If there are enough persons interested, a second division may travel via Fishguard -Rosslare and take a car.

The present party consists of F.H.Nicholson +1, F.K.Hanna, E.K.Tratman, C.High, and possibly D.H.P.Thompson. Anyone else interested should contact E.K.T. at once.

E.K.Tratman.

U.B.S.S. Trip to Ireland, 1967

As our President, who has led Irish Trips since 1951, will be away during June to Sept. 1967, Dr. Lloyd has offered to lead the Society's annual trip to Ireland. It is hoped to leave Bristol on Friday, 14th July, and stay at (or camp near) Ballynalacken Castle, leaving Ireland Friday, 28th July and staying at the South Wales Caving Club H.Q. for the 29th and 30th, reaching Bristol on the night of the 30th.

It would be a great help if one or two of our members with motor transport were able to come, too, so as to make it possible for a reasonable number of undergraduates to come.

O.C.Lloyd.

FUTURE AWAY TRIPSEaster in Yorkshire

The Society plans to make its annual trip at Easter, beginning on the evening of Thursday, 23rd March, 1967. Clapham will be our centre, some staying at the New Inn (B&B-25/-), others camping. Please make your own arrangements regarding Hotel accommodation, but write to Dr. Lloyd to say that you are coming. As Easter occurs before the close season for grouse nesting we hope to get a trip to Lancaster-Hole and Basegill. Other suggestions, the harder the better, are welcome.

O.C.Lloyd.

Czechoslovakia 1967

A small party of U.B.S.S. members will be visiting either the Tatra mountains or the South Slovakian Karst in Eastern Czechoslovakia next August. There are still three vacancies on the expedition and members of suitable experience and fitness should apply to P.A.Standing.

P.A.Standing.

NOTES AND NEWS

It is hoped to hold a dinner this year on Saturday, 4th March. Unfortunately, arrangements have not yet been worked out, so will anybody likely to be coming please drop M.G.Norton a postcard and details will be forwarded when worked out.

Offprints for all the articles in this year's Proceedings will soon be available at 3/- each.

We're hoping to see a lot of you at the New Year's Party as usual, so come along and be merry!

There have been many additions to the Society's infants in the last few months; Nigel and Ann Wallace produced a baby girl during the Summer, Mike and Gwyneth Statham- a boy, Gareth- and Ian and Dianne Standing- a girl, Victoria. Soon to bear fruit is the partnership of Dave Savage and his wife Alwen.

Tim Hill and Pat Corry are now married and live in Cardiff.

The great celebratory bonfire of Nov. 5th turned out to be rather a flop, as it failed to ignite even with the help of petrol, Essolube and member's beery breath! That is why there is about a year's supply of firewood stacked in the Hut compound.

The U.B.S.S. party to Agen Allwedd suitably impressed the local clubs with their fitness by doing the Inner and Outer Circles as well as a visit to Turkey Sump in 5½ hours.

Peter Johnson has managed to get a publisher for his book - "History of Mendip Caving" - in the West Country firm of David and Charles. It is expected to appear in the Spring.

BOOK REVIEW

Climbing Blind by Collette Richard - Hodder and Stoughton

This book described the adventures of a blind French girl while climbing and caving, first on the Chamonix Massif, and then with Norbert Casteret in the Pyrenees. The story is told competently, but is perhaps slightly marred by rather irrelevant moralising into Christianity and other topics. The book certainly has the merit of being on a novel subject and is worth reading, but will probably appeal to the general reader rather than to the experienced Climber or Caver.

P.J.Johnson.

Hon Secretaries

M.G.Norton

T.C.Atkinson.