

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETYCIRCULAR TO MEMBERS
(1968, No.1 April)ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's A.G.M. was held on Monday, 4th. March, in the Geography Lecture theatre.

The following Officers were elected:

President : Dr. E.K. Tratman, O.B.E., M.D.S., F.S.A.

Vice Presidents : H. Taylor, M.B., Ch.B.
B.A. Crook, M.B., Ch.B.
Desmond T. Donovan, D.Sc., Ph.D.

Hon Treasurer : O.C. Lloyd, M.D.

Joint Hon. Secretaries : S.M. Joyce.
P. Matthiesson.

Student Treasurer : N. Collings.

Committee : Mr. D. Ingle-Smith, M. Sc.
R.I.J. Iredale, (member in charge of tackle)
R.J. Taylor, (Hut warden)
P. Richards, (member in charge of photography)
P.A. Standing, (Librarian)
A. Waller, (Curator)

Also appointed as an Officer of the Society was Miss E. Henton (P.R.O.)

The President's address was given on the Arawak Indians.

SECRETARIES' REPORTSessional Meetings.

Five sessional meetings were again held this year and attendance at these was exceptionally good. This was due to the choice of lectures of wide interest and some hard work from the PRO.

Caving.

The annual expedition to Ireland, although one of the smallest ever, found an estimated 300m. of passage in EP. in Follnagollum and surveyed an equivalent amount in Doolin.

Another expedition, numbering 11, visited Czechoslovakia in August with the object of investigating sumps in the Slovakian Karst. Although many sumps were dived, all results were negative.

As reported in last year's Proceedings (11,2) the INEC continued to yield considerable lengths of new passage, most of it between sumps 2 and 6. Attempts to find a high level route to bypass the sumps have so far proved fruitless.

At Manor Farm the new shaft was blasted to a depth of 1m. without success. A small cross-rift at this depth was then followed for 6m. before being abandoned.

Divers at Wooky hole have succeeded in clearing the 500ft. of loose line and a certain amount of progress has since been made.

From October to January, general caving has been severely restricted due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic.

Archaeology.

A fortnight's excavation at Stokeleigh Camp in the Summer yielded a lot of information and a miniature iron currency bar. Excavations will be continued here and have also been begun at the Hyena Den, Wooky Hole where Pleistocene remains have been found.

Field Headquarters.

After prolonged trouble with the wind generator it was decided to buy a petrol generator. This is now in the process of being installed and the hut completely rewired.

Proceedings.

The last volume (11,2) was the largest yet produced and

U. B. S. S. CIRCULAR

sales have reached a record figure of £276. Much credit for this must go to the Librarian's sales drive.

Caves of North-West Clare.

This book has finally been accepted for publication and should be available in January 1969.

Acknowledgements.

We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the grants towards the cost of Proceedings from the University of Bristol, the Colston Research Society and to the University of Bristol Union for their grant towards the running of the Society. We also wish to express our gratitude for the generous donations towards the cost of Proceedings.

M.G.Norton
S.M.Joyce

TREASURER'S REPORT

There had not been any significant alteration in the number of subscribing members, which stood at 77, Ex-University and 21 Elected members. This should bring in £157. 10. Od., and the increase above this to £172 in the current year was due to the payment of arrears. The University Union increased their grant from £65 to £85, the excess going mainly to ladder making. Sales of publications had reached the record figure of £276 (last year it was £174). This is partly the cumulative effect of a series of good publications but mainly it is due to the untiring efforts of our librarian Peter Standing.

The full cost of Proceedings was more than that shown, the difference being made up by certain specific donations. The cost of Sessional Meetings had more than doubled, because of the high expenses charged by some of our visitors. The cost of Tools and Equipment had been high for two years running, now, mainly due to the construction of light-weight ladders. The excavations at Stokelough Camp had balanced themselves out with the help of a special grant from the University Union. After transferring various sums from the Income and Expenditure account to the Capital Funds on the Balance Sheet only a small excess of income remained.

Of these capital funds one was new, namely the Jubilee Proceedings Fund. The £51 put into this came from the excess of income over expenditure on the current Proceedings account. The purpose of this is to help pay for the Jubilee Number of Proceedings, which, since it will be published in the spring of 1969, instead of in the autumn, will come at a time when funds are not normally high. The Society's investments remain as before.

O.C.Lloyd

EASTER MEET IN YORKSHIRE.

This year we were greeted with unusually fine weather in Yorkshire, for we sun most of the time and no rain. The party consisted of Sue and Mike Norton, Martin Joyce, Nick Collings, Bob Taylor, Oliver Lloyd, Maire Unwin and John, Mick Watson and his right hand man Tony Slater, and Phil Collett. Mick Watson is now Chairman of the Bradford P.C., and with a little influence the party found accommodation at Brackenbottom.

On Saturday 13th. of April, 1968 the party, augmented by some junior members of the Bradford P.C. descended Bull Pot, Kingsdale, four of us reaching the very bottom. As it was so dry we laddered the wet third pitch, which is shorter than the dry one. As an encore we visited the Kingsdale Master Cave, which is greatly over-rated. First there is about 400 yd. of high-level phreatic tunnel with mud and water. The Master Cave is reached by a 20ft. ladder descent at the downstream sump. From there it is a spacious and handsome flood passage until the tributary from Swinsto-Simpson's is reached, but after that it is a wet or gravelly crawl to the Rowten sump. There are no decorations worth mentioning.

On Easter Sunday we walked up to Gaping Gill from Clapham and did an exchange trip from Disappointment Pot to Bar Pot. It may perhaps be considered rash to expect no inconvenience from other parties in such a popular cave on a bank-holiday week-end, and it is no wonder that a party from the Orpheus came to inconvenience us by coming down on our ladder without leave and keeping us waiting 1½ hours for our tackle at Bar Pot. But it was not anticipated that we should meet a party of four from Briarsfield, who had been camping at the bottom of Bar Aven since Thursday, which is illegal, who had made a filthy mess of the place and had finished by lighting a bonfire, filling the system with acrid smoke.

Yorkshire Cont.

Gaping Gill Main Chamber has lost none of its charm: a vast sprawl-filled antrum with daylight filtering in at the top. The New-Hensler's Passage connecting Bar Pot with Disappointment Pot is a low, tight, muddy crawl, very much like parts of Carlsark Cavern. Disappointment Pot has five fine ladder pitches and a lot of crawly narrow rift passages. Between the 1st. pitch and the entrance this is so tight and windy that our largest and most calcified member had considerable difficulty in getting through it. However, the recollection that there is no alternative is a great spur to achievement. Our time was 5 hours and 20 minutes, including two detours.

That evening we called on Dr. Farrer, who owns the cave, and reported the Briarsfield party. He is promising to take action if necessary with the help of the Police.

On Easter Monday, most of our party went to Ingleborough Cave, where the Bradford P.C. have a dig at the end of the Far Series. Martin Joyce and Gary Filkington descended Hunt Pot - twice, owing to the loss of a tackle bag in a pool at the bottom of the first pitch. Oliver Lloyd, Maire Unwin and John, after ascertaining that the entrance to Penyghent Pot had not moved, ascended Penyghent, and gathered blossoms from the early purple saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*), which was in full bloom on the topmost limestone cliff. At the very top there was still some snow.

Once more therefore we are thinking, wouldn't it be nice to do another Penyghent Pot trip. All we have to do is to train up a good cadre of 6 to 8 members in ladder technique.

O.C.Lloyd

Ireland, Clare. March 1968

A small party spent 10 days in Clare. The main object was to test certain hypotheses as to underground water courses. Firstly the Coolagh River into Doolin at the reputedly very large tributary downstream from the Fisher Street Pot. A closer examination of the inlet made it appear unlikely that this was where the Coolagh River could perhaps come in. Twelve ounces of fluorescein and 250gm. pyranine (conc.) were put into Polladonough. No colour was seen in Doolin and none found on the charcoal detectors (length of trial seven days). Vigo Cave to a stream south of the hill - 250 gm. of pyranine (conc.) were used but charcoal bags in the stream were still negative after seven days.

While in the area much information was ferreted out about the record flood of Aug. 9th. 1967 when the R.M.I. Sandhurst party was trapped in Pollomega. This really was a flash flood of record proportions and Sandhurst were very lucky to be in the one cave from which the water could be diverted by digging surface channels. A short paper will appear in the next issue of Proceedings on this flood with complete details of complete flooding of many of the caves. Those of us who can recall the 1961 'Record Flood' will have a mental picture of the state of things at Gregg Lodge swallet (A6). In 1967 the water was at least 12 ft. deeper.

Poulnagollum (Slieve Elva). Access across the land owned by Mr. Cosgrove of Caher Bullog is not now permitted. However access is possible via the adjacent land. Details from the Hon. Sec.

Ireland, Clare. July 12th. to 26th.

The effects of the flood of Aug. 9th. 67, and a smaller one on Aug. 17th., in the caves need to be investigated further. Passages may have been either blocked still more or re-opened. It is certainly within the bounds of possibility that there is now an open way between St. Catherine's 2 and Doolin Dry Tributary. If, as it may well have been, Branch Passage Gallery in Poulnagollum was full up then perhaps it has cleared a way on from the Extension. There are many other kindred problems.

Accommodation : either at Macarthy's cottage or at Keane's Hotel. Another cottage is also available for booking in the Pollballiny Faunarooska area.

Archaeology.

The work at the Hyena Den, Wookey Hole, has made good progress. Most of the debris clearing has been done and undisturbed deposits have been reached. Only one layer in this produces finds. The fauna so far identified includes bear, hyena, rhinoceros, mammoth, a carnivore about

U. B. S. S. CIRCULAR

the size of a dog and perhaps badger, (Pleistocene not modern). Horse has also been found but only in disturbed material. The only artifact so far is part of a small blade of flint, indeterminate in character.

Trobriand Islands Papua.

A letter from Cliff Cllier describes briefly his investigations of some of the caves in the former coral reefs. These reefs have been up-lifted and the caves have formed since the uplift and they are probably even younger than those of Clare. There are many human bones deposited in these caves originally in funerary urns or clam shells but all of these have been stolen. Many of the skulls have holes in them. Various explanations have been offered for these but the idea of trepanning seems to be most unlikely for 'if so it was universally unsuccessful'. The dead are buried and later dug up and the bones put into the caves. Some of the more, to us, revolting customs about burial and exhumation have been described by a German anthropologist in a book on "The Trobriand Islanders". It is not a book for those with squeamish tummies.

E.K.T.

Wanted - Back Nos. of Proceedings.

Volume 7, Nos. 1 and 3 are now both out of print. Copies of these as well as Volumes 1 to 5 are required and members having copies for sale or gift are asked to contact the Librarian as soon as possible.

For Sale - Mendip Mapped.

Mendip Mapped (from the Ashweck Court Rolls) - copied and deciphered from the original by J.N. Savory March 1913. Size - 35cms. by 43cms. Price -5/- all proceeds to the UBSS. library. Would cost a couple of pounds from a second-hand bookshop.

Hon. Secretaries: S.M. Joyce
P. Mattheison