

Dec 64

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CIRCULAR TO MEMBERS

Pickens Hole

The account which appeared in the newspapers in October about this dig was rather misleading, and Dr. E.K. Tratman was able to put the record straight, when he addressed the Society at a meeting on 19.10.64. The Society had spent three seasons on the site so far. The director of the excavation has been our member Mr. A.M. Apsimon, who, with helpers, spent three weeks this summer excavating the site. Dr. Tratman stated that the Society was greatly indebted to Mr. Apsimon and it was on his notes that much of what he was going to say was based. This hole was a hyena den. In layer 3, which is a deposit containing somewhat weathered limestone fragments, were found the remains of animals the hyena had eaten. Being a thorough eater, he chewed everything and didn't leave much, often only the teeth. The remains are of horse, woolly rhinoceros, cave lion, mammoth, reindeer, red fox, arctic fox, and, of course, hyena, since he had no scruples about eating his own kind.

Now some of these animals belong to a temperate climate, and some to a cold. Examples of the former are red deer and of the latter reindeer, woolly rhinoceros and mammoth. Red deer and reindeer do not usually run together, but these deposits are very compressed, and the relationship between one and the other has not been fully worked out. But in any case the deposit takes us well back into the second maximum of the Würm period, say, 14 to 20,000 B.C.

Soldier's Hole, with its Solutrean implements is later. The nearest equivalent at Pickens Hole is perhaps layer 3, containing two human teeth, some unworked flint and a hammer stone. These come from layer 3, where it is not expected to find signs of human occupation. Brean Down deposits were developed much more quickly, because it is on the North side of Crook Peak ridge, where deposits collect more slowly. Dr. Sutcliffe has found an even longer sequence in Devon, claiming to have gone back to the Riss glaciation, which has fauna like Würm.

Next year we hope to go below layer 6 and find something from the Riss- Würm interglaciation.

The Age of the Caves of N.W. Clare

A symposium held in the Geography Dept. on Saturday, 12th. Dec. at 2.30 P.M., enabled members to put forward some new information on the caves of North West Clare. Speakers included Dr. Tratman and Messrs. Ingle Smith, Nicholson, High and Perratt. The importance of limestone solution and the glacial chronology of the area, were discussed. The controversial question of the age of the Cullaun Caves was considered with reference to other caves in the area. Contributions were made by Mr. B.R. Collinridge, particularly on Pollnagolum, and by Drs. Sweeting and Warwick. The symposium which continued after a break for tea, until 6.00 P.M. provided an excellent opportunity for a thorough review of this aspect of the Societies work.

Dates of Interest to Members

Change of date. "The Buried Karst of Derbyshire" by Dr. Trevor Ford, has been changed to 25th. January.

Irish Trip The dates of this this year have been arranged to be from 14th. to 31st. of July 1965.

Yugoslavia The President will be driving to Yugoslavia in order to attend the International Symposium of Spelaeology. There is still room for one in the party. Dates to be given later.

New Years Party This will be held, as usual, in our field headquarters, on December 31st.

Council of Southern Caving Clubs A meeting to consider the formation of a Council of Southern Caving Clubs, whose purpose would be to negotiate with the Council of Northern Caving Clubs over matters of mutual importance, will be held in the Geography lecture theatre on 9th. of January. Members are invited to attend.

Easter Trip Dr. O.C.Lloyd will be holding a trip to Yorkshire this Easter. Dates to be given later, or on application to Dr.Lloyd.

Addresses of Members

The Secretary would be pleased to receive the addresses of the following members

B.Chapman
P.Seaborne
C.Glass

with whom contact has been lost.

Cowsh Aven Series, Swildons Hole.

During October and November of this year 480 feet of new passage were discovered in Swildons Hole, extending the Cowsh Aven Series, one of the avens above the Swildons LV streamway. Since water testing at the Priddy Green Sink showed that the stream flows into Swildons four via Cowsh Aven, some efforts had been made to link the two, starting from both ends. Priddy Green sink had been dug and reached a depth of 100 feet. In 1962 the S.M.C.C. and M.N.R.C. explored the Cowsh Aven series as far as they could push it, to a height of 135 feet above the Streamway. The exploration took place over a number of visits and maypoles were used for most of the ascents. Cowsh Aven turned out to be 27 feet high with a short passage leading to the two avens - the Great Aven and Wrights Aven. The Great Aven was maypoled to a substantial ledge at about 43 feet, - in actual fact an easy climb, and then a further 40 feet through a small hole and thence to the foot of a further Aven, Maines Aven. Here the original exploration stopped. In 1964 the S.V.C.C. free climbed an alternative route to the top of Maines Aven, and at the top found a passage leading for 100 feet, through a constriction, Ken's Crawl to a vertical descent. This turned out to be 50 feet deep, and led to further drops of 32 feet and 12 feet, whence a descending passage led to a drop into a streamway. This was not passed, but hopes were high that this was beyond Sump LV or even Sump VI! On the next visit a U.B.S.S. team set out to survey the new passage and to explore beyond the drop into the streamway. Owing however, to a miscalculation in tackle, the mysterious streamway was not entered but the survey showed us that we had, in fact, regained the Swildons LV streamway a few feet upstream from Cowsh Aven. The moral: it is easy to turn through 360 degrees when climbing a number of vertical ascents.

Library

The following books have been added to the library :-

Caves of Derbyshire. by Trevor Ford.
Caves of Mendip (3rd. ed.) Nicholas Barrington.
Bristol and its adjoining Counties. Brit. Ass.
Log of the Wookey Hole Divers. F.G. Balcombe.
National Monuments of Ireland. Comm. of Public Works.
Catalogue of Neolithic & Bronze Age Implements. Devizes Mus.
and many periodicals.

Museum

This is now suffering extensive alteration, prior to moving into our new room.

Signed I.J.Standing
F.K.Hanna

Joint Hon. Sec.