

UBSS CIRCULAR - MAY 1969.

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS - March 22nd., 1969.

Members resident abroad and others unable to attend the Jubilee Celebrations may be interested to hear that they were a great success. The afternoon was taken up with two excellent lectures - 'Caving - Cambrensis to Curl' by Jack Coleman and 'Excavations at Jerusalem' by Kathleen Kenyon.

About 120 people came to the dinner held later in the Senior Common Room of the University Senate House. There were some very entertaining speeches at this, particularly by Jim Hanwell (replying for the guests) who cracked the best joke of the evening. He brought with him a micro-filmed record of a secret dossier from the files of the 'Karst Police'. It concerned our president and read as follows:- "E.K. Tratman.... Date of birth - unknown.... Suggest Carbon 14 test."

Our thanks go to the sub-committee which organised the celebrations. Its members were Miss M. Hall, Dr. Tratman, Dr. O.C. Lloyd, Dr. R.J.G. Savage, and Mr. P.A. Standing.

G.B. CAVE RESCUE

Many members may have heard about the incident involving a party from a visiting club who, though not accompanied by a member of the host club, went down G.B. Cave and on their return found that they could not open the lock on the entrance door. After being there all night, they were missed and the fire brigade, not the M.R.O., was called. The club concerned subsequently wrote to us returning the two other keys, without the requisite tackle fees, and described the episode.

They went down the cave at about 2.30 p.m. on Sunday, unlocking the outer door and re-locking it after them. On returning they found that "the lock was jammed and the key would only turn three-quarters of the way". After trying various ways of prising off the lock, they eventually broke off the head of the key in it. They were rescued on Monday morning and returned the other two keys about a week later.

The 'jammed' lock was recovered about an hour after the B.B.C. broadcast about the incident, and was examined. The broken key was removed with the fingers and seen to be in good condition. The only thing wrong was that the broken key was that of the second gate in the Ladder Dig Series, and the lock was that of the entrance gate. The party had the correct key for the entrance with them, and later returned it unscathed. The B.B.C., Press, and fire brigade were promptly informed of the real cause of the incident and so were Bristol Waterworks.

To this party of the club involved is awarded the 'PUTTY MEDAL' of the ancient order of Nitwits. This is the highest award possible.

N.W. CL. RE. EASTER 1969.

The party had two primary objectives:- (1) To check on the flood levels of the Dec. 24th., 1968 flood, and (2) to do some water tracing.

(1) The recorded rainfall at Corkscrew Hill for Dec. 23rd. and 24th. was 99.9 mm., of which 67.5 mm. fell on Dec. 24th., distributed over a period of most of the day. (c.f. flash flood of August 1967 of 52.8 mm. in about two hours.)

Kilcorney flooded to about the 380 feet contour level, which put the cave mouth 15 - 20 feet under water.

Poulacapple Cullaun 5 entrance was covered but did not overflow the road. Cullaun 2 was 6 - 7 feet deep down the entrance passage. At entry point of the main stream the cave was full to the level of the lower part of the Upper Canyon. Year Passage was full to the roof where it joins the main cave, which was filled to at least 12 feet, below this. At the boulder fall a little way beyond the cave was full to the roof and here water had ponded back some way. Much of the rest of the cave was full to the roof, though there may have been places not quite filled. In Cullaun 1 the depth in the entrance passage was about 3 - 4 feet. From the Main Tributary onwards the cave was full to the roof all the way to the second vertical feature, the furthest point visited. In Cullaun Zero - 1 (Gaffer's Gulch) the pothole had filled up to about

2 feet above the roof of the out-going canyon passage. (Did any water then go down Gaffer's Gulch Old Streamway?)

Poulnagollum (Slieve Elva) S.W.E.T.C. Caving Club report that either 1967 or 1968 or both floods between them have opened up the head of the Long Gallery so that there is a through route. (Was Baker's Rift rejuvenated?) At the First Waterfall large sticks had come to rest across the top of the lower canyon. There were no signs of flooding at the level of the floor of Gunman's Cave where it joins Shaft Gallery. Just below Main Junction the flood was over 30 feet deep and nearly to the roof if not quite so.

Coolagh River. This time it only produced a flood deep enough to cover the road at Cregg Lodge, but not the coping stones of the bridge.

Poulomega. The entrance was completely submerged and some water may have overflowed onto the road.

Doolin Cave System. St. Catherine's 1 had been completely submerged and there was some evidence, though not conclusive, that it had overflowed down to St. Catherine's 2. Doolin Road Sink had overflowed and flooded the road which was consequently impassable. A lot of this water flowed to the shakehole near swallet D7a. In this area it was joined by a large quantity of water from swallet D4. Local information is that there was so much water that it continued as a surface river along its old course directly down to the Aille but this was not verified by personal observation. At Fisherstreet water had overflowed the road and flooded several of the houses.

Obviously the above provides food for thought as to what happened within the caves and in particular in certain passages.

(2) Water tracing. A combination of results from 1968 and 1969 has now firmly placed the resurgence of Poulnagree at a site called Lacknaiska in Td. Oughdarra. Poulomega may come out here too, indeed it probably does. The area floods. The resurgence is decidedly complicated and will take a long series of tests to unravel. The waters can be traced S.W. towards Pollsallagh (Dirty Hole) and there is little doubt that this is where they finally rise under the sea. Local information is that in flood times great volumes of dirty brown water resurge just off the coast - so much so that a dome of water is formed.

The lower resurgence tested last year was again negative after a week for both Poulnagree and Poulomega. It is undoubtedly a cave water rising, as there is a lot of fine shale debris in the stream bed. A working hypothesis for this rising is that it comes from Duggan's Well stream and perhaps the next one east. A further hypothesis is that either Pollsallagh or Pollcraveen is the resurgence of the Coolagh River Cave water. The geological evidence points to the latter rather than the former.

From the above and other information obtained on this Easter trip a strenuous programme of caving, surveying and water tracing for the July expedition (July 10th. - 24th.) can be evolved. The possibility of new accessible smaller caves to be explored is certainly on the cards.

E.K.T.

CLARE: July 10th. - 24th. 1969.

McCarthy's cottage has been booked from the 10th - 24th. July. Alternative accommodation can be arranged in the rooms of the 'Tourist Office' opposite Keane's Hotel in Lisdoonvarna if annoyances become too great at McCarthy's. If you intend to join, please inform Dr. E.K. Tratman. Hotel bookings should be made as soon as possible, but Keane's Hotel is already booked up.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Work has been restarted at Stokeleigh Camp and Hyena Den, Wookey. Most weekends will see parties at one or both of these sites. We plan to dig at Stokeleigh (note that the filling in has now been completed) every Saturday, starting at 10 a.m., or as early as we can make it.

The construction of the M5 north of Bristol is imminent and plans are being made for rescue digs at known sites along its length, and for a certain number of people to check the road-building operations once they start. Most of the excavation work will probably be done during the summer vacation, but there will also be a great deal of work to be done

during the term. If you are prepared to help in any way, contact Peter Fowler in the Extra-Mural department, or Marianne Last (Hon. Sec.) who will do it for you.

It is probable that the M.O.P.B.W. will be running a rescue dig during the summer at the Hunter's Lodge Henge. If not this summer it will be next year. Further information on request from Dr. E.K. Tratman.

Next term the Extra-mural Department of the University of Bristol in conjunction with the U.B.S.S. is arranging a course of 10 lectures under the title of "The Prehistory of the Bristol Region". The lectures will be on Thursdays starting on Oct. 2nd. and ending on the 4th. Dec. The time will be 5.30 - 7.00 p.m. There will be a fee for the course but ordinarily there would be no charge for student members. The lecturers will be Dr. E.K. Tratman and Mr. Peter Fowler. The place, provisionally, is the Geography Lecture theatre. These lectures will not clash with the programme of sessional meetings.

Marianne Last.

FRESH FIELDS AND PASTURES NEW

A new caving area has been discovered in N.W. Clare. It is in a similar position to that of the Slieve Elva area, the streamlets running off the shale ledge and on reaching the limestone disappearing down a series of swallets. However, the area had been overlooked for some reason until the Easter 1969 visit of the U.B.S.S. with E.K.T., M.D.N. and S.T. It is just to the east of the townland of Ballynyimpossible and west of the village of Kilspeleo, which is on the south side of the north edge of the Burren.

Geomorphologically speaking the caver starts on streams on the hillside; two of our former members, Pete Brown and Heather Hope, observed these streams. The streams are dark black with a white froth on the surface. The old Irishman, Sean O'Lamb first saw the cave when his wife fell down c. 1703. Professor E.K. Pratman (N.O.A.H.) said that this was due to a remarkable flood. Professor Pratman is aged 428 ± 2 years, a date given by the Guinness 14 method.

The new caves are, from north to south:- Poll-y-thene, a very thin bedding plane crawl; Poll-y-styrene, an expanded cave that gets larger as it goes down, and Poll-o-gise, a very small cave.

The exact position is being kept secret until after our expedition in July, when we hope to make more startling discoveries. It lies partly on Clare sheets 6a and 1b and it may be that the rumoured fourth cave, Pollnatrudwillin, will turn out to be the longest.

S.T., M.N.

YORKSHIRE WEEKEND - EASTER '69.

A party of exceptional size descended on Horton in Ribblesdale this year. Our abode for the weekend was a palatial cottage belonging to the Craven Pothole Club with the unique distinction of being right next to the Crown Hotel. Despite this we did a good selection of trips.

On the Saturday nine of us went down Marble Steps Pot and had an enjoyable, if somewhat slow, trip. Most of us were quite impressed with this pot, especially with the entrance shaft and the Big Pitch, which is a very good 90 feet of free-hanging ladder. Meanwhile nine of the rest of the party bottomed Alum Pot via the Long Churn, returning wetly through upper Long Churn.

The following day saw six of us bouncing up the Pen-y-ghent track in the 'Questing Beast' in search of Pen-y-ghent Pot. The White Rose Pothole Club had bottomed it the previous day, leaving all the tackle in place for us to recover (or else?). This was duly done in about 8½ hours, with three members of the W.R.P.C. accompanying us (didn't they trust us with their tackle?). The four of us who had not been there before decided, on looking back, that it was a very good pot indeed and well worth the strenuous effort involved.

Other members of the party amused themselves by 'sight-seeing' at Malham and by walking over Ingleborough, while C.C.L. made his annual pilgrimage to the upper slopes of Pen-y-ghent in search of the purple saxifrage.

On the Monday morning some very stiff speleos joined some of the others for a pleasant little through-trip from Calf Holes to Brow Gill Cave, taking about three-quarters of an hour. Meanwhile four of

those still fit descended Ireby Fell Cavern.

Throughout the weekend the weather was perfect with a hot sun and clear skies, and much walking and sunbathing (not to mention drinking) was done. C.J.G. and Jeem did the 3 Peaks Walk in 8½ hours.

Those present were: Oliver Lloyd, Mic Watson, Chris Gilmore, Moira Unwin, John Trendall, Jeem Iredale, Gavin Parry, Colin Burbidge, Alison Smith, Gregg W, Les, Pete Mathieson, Chris Lock, Carol Thomas, Marianne Last, John Swale, Bob Taylor, Frank Taylor, Dave Waddington, Janet Lucas, Julie Lucas and Richard Lucas.

R.J.T.

G.B. SURVEY.

Copies of the new G.B. Cave Survey, which was published in the Jubilee Proceedings, are available separately from the Librarian.

Price:- Folded 4/-
 Unfolded 4/- P & P . . . 1/-

DAVE WADDINGTON.
MARIANNE LAST
(Joint Hon. Secs)