

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CIRCULAR TO MEMBERS

February - 1970

THE NATIONAL CAVING ASSOCIATION

Over the last year cavers throughout the country have been trying to establish a national caving body to act as a medium for communication with the non-caving world. During this time there has been much controversy concerning the principle of voting but otherwise the constitution of the new body has been approved.

At the last meeting of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs the voting principle was discussed and the minutes of this meeting are enclosed to show the C.S.C.C.'s position. The President feels that the Society should not be committed without informing all its members. Our thanks to O.C. Lloyd for providing the minutes and constitutions.

G.B. CAVE

After a query from the Charterhouse Caving Committee as to whether clubs affiliated to the C.C.C. were able to lead their own trips down G.B., the Society's insurance policy was checked and it was found that legally there was no necessity for any club to be accompanied by a leader from the U.B.S.S.. This frees the club from the often annoying task of finding a volunteer willing to lead a club round the cave and will remove some of the grumbling on Mendip about the complex access to G.B. Cave.

The gate to the blockhouse at the entrance which was destroyed in the July '68 flood has now been replaced and the gate on the Ladder Dig Series has been removed. The committee decided that the latter gate no longer served a useful purpose, especially as it had already caused one rescue due to a jammed lock.

MANOR FARM DIG

Work on the new entrance connection has been severely hampered by bad luck and very hard rock. Only six feet or so remain to be blasted before work can start again at the end of the dig, but old man limestone is just too much for old man I.C.I., explosive charges of up to 3lb having very little effect.

In the last few weeks a railway and truck have been installed in the bottom part of the dig to speed up the shifting of debris.

Adrian Wilkins.

LITTLE NEATH RIVER CAVE

This term several trips to LNRC have taken place. High water prevented penetration on two occasions.

One trip on the 7th. Feb. was to the high level series above the streamway, where some surveying was carried out, and some progress made at the terminal dig in the series. This dig has since been abandoned, as the survey data indicates that its direction shows it has little promise as a sump bypass.

The most recent trip turned rather sour. A party of five pushed the 3-D Maze (an enormous boulder choke) in Genesis Gallery and found approximately 1000 feet of new passage beyond. This is to be surveyed in the near future. The general trend of the new passage appears to head in the right direction as far as getting a bypass to Sump 2 open to non-divers is concerned. The present end of the passage is a promising site for a dig.

On returning to the main streamway the party found that, because of very heavy rain on the surface, the stream had risen considerably and Flood Entrance was impassable. Having sufficient food for 36 hours the party then stayed put until the water level dropped, in the early hours of the next morning. However, the South Wales Cave Rescue had organised a full scale rescue effort and the rescuers were met just as the party started to return from their waiting point. Rescuers and U.B.S.S. then made an exit uneventfully at about 6.00 a.m.

Adrian Wilkins.

PORTH-YR-OGOF

The society has now finished its surveying work in Porth-yr-ogof. The resulting survey and an account of the cave will be published in the next issue of Proceedings.

ARCHAEOLOGY

We have finally completed and filled in as much of Stokeleigh camp as we intend to excavate. The analysis of results is progressing well and a report on the work should appear in next year's Proceedings. There is still a great deal of work to be done on the site, as we have only concentrated on a small area and neither a section of the ramparts and ditches nor a detailed resistivity survey of the whole site have been attempted. However, we have gained much dating evidence and part of the plan of a wooden structure, with signs of several phases of occupation. We decided to abandon the site from lack of manpower for a large-scale survey and because the site was not threatened, and therefore of low priority.

At the moment the Society is helping the M5 Research Committee on an important Iron Age settlement site at Christon, near Banwell. Unfortunately time is very limited on this site, as it will be completely destroyed within the next couple of weeks by the earthworks for the M5 motorway. As a result every effort is being made to excavate the site as soon as possible. So far no buildings have been discovered but there is a large number of storage-pits averaging four feet across and three feet deep, filled with domestic rubbish. As usual work is frequently interrupted by atrocious weather conditions.

Members of the Society have also helped on other M5 sites recently. Next term we plan to start a detailed study of some of the Mediaeval pottery kilns at Ham Green, west of Bristol. Pottery from this centre has a very wide distribution and it is important for us to learn something of its manufacturing processes and to make a definitive study of the ware itself. We are hoping to have some support from other archaeological groups for this project and to borrow a Banjo towards the end of this term to survey as much of the site as possible.

Excavations at Hyena Den and Westbury Quarry continue when the weather permits it.

Marianne Last

CO. CLARE 1970

As usual a party will be going to North West Clare this summer. The dates are from July 10 to July the 24th, and accommodation will be at Keane's Hotel and in the disused hotel opposite which provided quite pleasant free accommodation last year. Amongst the tasks to be done are the completion of the E2 survey and maypoling operations in Poll-nagollum. Anyone contemplating joining the party please drop a line to the secretary.

A small party is also going to Clare at Easter for eight days from March 25th. with E.K. Tratman. This party will chiefly be water-tracing.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held in the Large Geography Lecture Theatre at 8.15 pm, on Monday March 2nd. Prof. E.K. Tratman will give a talk on the 5th. International Congress of Spelaeology at Stuttgart last summer.

MARIANNE LAST
DAVE WADDINGTON
Joint Hon. secs.