

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL SPELAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY CIRCULAR

CIRCULAR TO MEMBERS

May 1970

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's A.G.M. was held on Monday, 2nd. 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 : Dr. H.Taylor, M.B., Ch.B.
Dr. B.A.Crook, M.B., Ch.B.
Dr. D.T.Donovan, D.Sc., Ph.D.

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

Joint Hon. Secretaries : Marianne Last.
D.Waddington.

Student Treasurer : J.D.Walford.

Committee : A.Boycott (Hut Warden)
R.A.Churcher (Member in charge of Photography)
R.T.F.Marsh (Member in charge of Tackle)
B.Ottway (Curator)
M.G.Roberts (Sales of publications)
S.Trudgill, B.Sc.

The President's address was given on the Fifth International Congress of Speleology which was held at Stuttgart during the summer of 1969.

TREASURER'S REPORT (See enclosed Balance Sheet)

In presenting Accounts for the year ended 31.1.70, Dr. Oliver Lloyd said that subscriptions were now received from 79 ex-University and 20 elected Members, of whom only two had defaulted. Adding to these five Honorary Members gives us a total of 104 Members, not counting those who are at present members of the University. These do not subscribe. There appeared to be a balance of £29 on the I. & E. Account, but this was almost wholly taken up by some of the special funds shown on the Balance Sheet, such as the Manor Farm Account, which was overspent, and the G.B. Fund, on account of the new door. The consequence has been that our "cushion" in the Income & Expenditure Account, as shown at the end of the Balance Sheet, had been reduced from a comfortable £50 to a mere £1.11.0. This meant that we must be particularly careful in the coming year to guard against overspending.

There had been a slight drop in investment income, because we had sold all our 5% and 5½% National Development Bonds and had bought in their place 7% British Savings Bonds, which will give us a higher rate of interest. £100 had not been re-invested, so that we could pay our bills.

Our Sales of Publications had reached a record total of £300.13.4., partly because of an accumulation of good saleable publications over the years, but mainly due to the energy of our Librarian, Peter Standing. Dr. Lloyd also paid tribute to the work done by Nick Collings as Student Treasurer.

PROCEEDINGS

A copy of the accounts for the year accompanies this circular. Only a relatively few members were present at the A.G.M. to hear the Treasurer's explanation of the accounts. Proceedings cost a large sum and explanations of how this money is found are necessary.

The total cost, including £100 for offprints, was £862. There is a University payment, which does not go through the books of the society, of £125, leaving £727 to be found by the society. There are certain funds that can only be spent on Proceedings.

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Cost to society of Vol. 12(1) of Proceedings £727

Specific Income

	£	
Donations	110	
Jubilee Fund for Proc. 12(1)	71	
Colston Research Fund Grant	80	
Printed Publications Fund. Interest	17	
" " " Capital	50	
	<hr/>	328
Add		
Sales (including Offprints £105)	300	
Allocation from Members' subs.	75	
	<hr/>	375
Deficit	24	24
(Made up from other sources, e.g. members' subs. over and above the £75.)		<hr/> <u>£727.</u>

Subscriptions represent the only general source of income from which funds can be allocated for Proceedings. The present allocation is 15/- per subscribing member. This rate of allocation was not raised when the subscriptions were raised about 6 years ago. In return for this £75 the Proceedings account has to provide for a free copy to each Honorary member and each subscribing member (about 110 copies in 1969). Proceedings account is charged with the provision of copies at half published price to all student members who wish to have a copy. The Proceedings account is also charged with the provision of copies for the Library for exchange purposes (about 60 copies in 1969). This is a normal and proper practise but it is difficult to devise entries to show this in the accounts.

Thus the public and members get a copy of Proceedings at a subsidised rate, the subsidies being derived mainly from grants but also to a fair extent from the Printed Publications Fund, our own fund.

E.K.Tratman.

IRELAND Co. CLARE - Easter 1970.

A party of four spent a week in Clare staying at Keane's Hotel. The deepest and largest pothole in Clare was explored. It is at least 122 feet deep and 200 feet across. The townland is Kilsneleo and the exploration date April 1st. Most of it can be free-climbed. Don't be misled by the date and Townland.

Poulcraveen was examined. It turns out to be the one unequivocal pre-glacial cave.

Both these sites give much food for thought on their genesis.

The water trace run for Cullaun 5 was unsuccessful.

The weather was cold and generally dry. No grass was growing for the cattle. On April 1st., appropriately, the whole of Lisdoonvarna was under a blanket of snow.

S.W.E.T.C. Caving Club was there in force. They succeeded in forcing an entrance to Poldonough North at the swallet and got right through to the main Coolagh River Cave. There were several tight squeezes. This Poldonough North swallet has not been observed to fill right up and so cascade passage may afford an escape route from the bottom of the cave to the swallet. We shall look forward to seeing an account of this passage.

E.K.T.

YORKSHIRE - Easter 1970.

Once again the society struggled up to the Yorkshire Dales to assert its potholing prowess. This year the party was larger than usual, and consisted of the following (for the benefit of them as likes to see their names in print):

Dave Waddington, Carol Thomas, Alison Smith, Mick Roberts, Mick Watson, Pete Kaye, Pete Standing, Pete Godfrey, Colin Burbidge, Tony Boycott, Marianne Last, Oliver Lloyd, Chris Gilmore, Eve Wheeler, Maire Unwin, John Trendall, Bob Taylor, Frank Taylor, Adrian Wilkins, Julian Walford and also John, Andy and Bill from Burnley Caving Club.

Unlike last year, the group concentrated on exchange trips, rather than dividing into separate parties for separate pots. On the Friday we all went over to Casterton Fell for a Lancaster - Easgill exchange. This complex and splendid system took its toll with many people suffering from various stages of heat exhaustion in the dry and muddy Lancaster main passage.

Saturday saw us in Kingsdale for a Swinsto Hole - Kingsdale Master cave exchange. This is a very fine trip and was enjoyed by every one, although Dave contracted housemaid's knee in Philosopher's crawl.

The 'Hards' (?) had their day on Sunday when they successfully attempted to bottom Juniper Gulf on the Allotment. After a little trouble finding the Gulf four of

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the party of seven reached the sump. Meanwhile Mick Watson led a party of seven through Dowber Gill Passage from Providence Pot to Dow Cave. This is a very enjoyable sporting passage although the traverses on the route we followed didn't deserve their reputation.

On Monday the few who were left failed to bottom Alum Pot in very high water conditions, but later had the dubious satisfaction of watching the rescue of another party who also failed!

As usual, the weekend was made by several nights in the Crown (despite a misunderstanding with the landlord on the first night), and by the joyous appearance of Mick Watson and Pete Kaye as ex-student members.

Marianne Last..

LITTLE NEATH RIVER CAVE

The enthusiasm generated by the discovery of the 'Old World Passage' in February led to a mammoth trip to the whole Genesis Gallery area. The wet aven near the head of Genesis Gallery was found to enter a varied inlet series of rifts and avens about 500 feet long and leading to a point probably 100 feet below the surface of the moor. The series ended in a tight sump and several choked avens.

The re-surveying of the main streamway has now been completed except for the entrance series.

MANOR FARM

Work on the connection of the shafts still continues. Four feet of vertical rift remains to be enlarged. Our continuing thanks go to Mr Jeffries of Manor Farm for bearing with us despite several shattered windows.

HILL COTTAGE

This property, which includes the land behind (north) the hut, has been transferred to the University of Bristol. The principal object of the transfer was to safeguard the interests of the U.B.S.S. in the area. The transfer could not be made to the society because it is not a corporate body and so cannot hold land.

HYENA DEN (Wookey Hole)

This site has provided a fresh disappointment. A man-made trampled layer has been found below what had been thought to be undisturbed material. How much, if any, undisturbed material may be present in the area of excavation is as yet uncertain. It is unlikely now to be worthwhile pursuing the excavations beyond the present area unless a rich undisturbed zone is reached before rock bottom. The latter is probably not more than 1 metre deeper than the present level of the trench.

OBITUARIES

It is with regret that the deaths of two notable caving personalities are recorded

M. Jean Corbel was killed recently in a car accident in Spain. In his lifetime he published many papers and his book "Les Karsts du Nord-Ouest de L'Europe" is very well known. Many of the views he put forward in his papers and books were controversial and these views stimulated thought about the problems he discussed. Perhaps this stimulus to others will in the end have been the most important contribution to the world of caving that M. Corbel has made. To his work Corbel brought great energy and enthusiasm. He will be hard to replace. We extend our sincere sympathy to his wife and children in the great loss they have sustained.

Mr. Gerard Platten died on March 20th. 1970. His main associations were with the M.N.R.C. to whom he was a wonderfully generous friend. On this and other aspects of Mr Platten's career Mr. H.W.W. Ashworth has written at length in M.N.R.C. N1 57, Spring 1970. Gerard Platten was a great individualist and at times a controversial figure in the caving world. His greatest achievement has undoubtedly been the publication, twice annually, of 'The British Caver'. The last issue was number 53 and it was published only a few months ago. Mr. Platten was himself editor, compiler and printer of this valuable journal and it reflects very great credit on his enduring enthusiasm.

E.K. Tratman.

REVIEWS

Pioneer under the Mendips - Herbert Ernest Balch of Wells. A short biography by W.I. Stanton. Published by the Wessex Cave Club and available from T.E. Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, BERKS; price 12/- .
123 pps., 34 plates.

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This publication is the most ambitious yet produced by our neighbour the Wessex Cave Club. It has an attractive offset litho, quarto format and the Author, Willie Stanton, has done an excellent job in writing a text that is both lively and readable. There are many delightful anecdotes and also numerous references to the early days of the U.B.S.S. anyone who has caved on Mendip will certainly find this biography of great interest. After reading it I felt that Balch was almost an old friend.

P.A. Standing.

'The Mendip Hills in Prehistoric and Roman Times'

This is the latest publication produced by the Bristol Archaeological Research Group. It runs to 36 pages including 6 pages of line drawings with maps on pages 1 and 4 of the cover. It is an attractive looking publication.

This is a useful and well thought out guide intended for the general public but the specialist will find it useful particularly in the first chapter, in which new data is included, on 'The Upper Palaeolithic' by John B. Campbell.

Chapter 2 is by Leslie Grinsell and covers briefly the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze ages. This is a very brief summary but it does draw attention to some of the more important sites. For the Iron Age, Chapter 3, Peter Fowler contributes from his store of knowledge but there is, perhaps, too much emphasis on the sites with which he is at present involved to the neglect of others. The final chapter is by David Elkington on the Roman period. The account is very largely devoted to lead mining, centred, so it seems, on the Charterhouse area. One wonders if this really was the centre and if so where are the Roman mines?

The brief tabular gazetteer, pp. 31-33, is valuable. It is surprising to see '!' against several sites for the Paleolithic, and to include Brean Down Sand Cliff, the most carefully recorded Mendip site covering all periods, as, on map 1, of being only Bronze age is a blunder. It is also surprising, on map 2, to find in a Research Group Publication a total omission of research work over the past 10 years on the Roman road system for Mendip.

The guide is excellent value at its price of 25n (5/-) and one hopes that it will be a financial success.

E.K. Tratman.

LECTURE

There will be a lecture on "Caves and Caving in Tasmania" given by Mr. Albert Goede of the University of Tasmania, at 8.15 pm. on Monday, 11th. May. It will be given in the Geography Dept. Lecture Theatre.

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ANNUAL DINNER

This year's Annual Dinner will be held in the STAR HOTEL, Wells, at 8.00 pm. on SATURDAY, JUNE 13th. The price will be 28/- per head; all cheques payable to D. WADDINGTON.

Replies and cheques to the Hon. Secs by the end of May, please.

Dave Waddington
Marianne Last
(Joint Hon. Secs)