

Secretaries' Report, 1963-1964

Meetings

One more meeting than usual was held during the course of the year, making a total of nine. The attendances were generally poor ranging from 13 to 45. The extra meeting was a talk by M. Michel Siffre on his experiences in the cave of Scarasson. At this meeting there was an attendance of 154. Sessional meetings are expensive to run and the poor attendance at some of them may mean that there will be fewer meetings next year.

A twin series of informal talks were given on "Geology for Cavers" by Mr. D. Ingle Smith and on "Archæology for Beginners" by Dr. E. K. Tratman. These were quite well attended.

Caving

During last "Union Week" a sustained dig at Manor Farm Swallet reached a depth of 40 ft. Examination of the swallet over the past winter months has confirmed the success of the concrete pipes as a shaft and the water is now getting away readily at the bottom. Work will be resumed as soon as the stream is small enough.

In G.B. Cave the lowest portion was surveyed and included various digs. The survey and report was published in the last issue of *Proceedings*. More recently digging has been commenced at the end of "The Ladder Dig" with so far promising results. The passage is big but choked.

Much work was done in Eire last summer. The party at one time numbered 19. The use of Neoprene wet suits enabled much work to be done which had previously been not only unpleasant but well-nigh impossible because of the cold, wet conditions. In the Doolin Cave System the Arran View passage was forced through to the surface at the swallet and now provides a third route into the cave. Cullaun Zero was extended for 500 ft. Surveying was done, especially in Cahir Cloggaun West-1, but the main effort was directed towards an intensive series of water sampling and water testing. This provided interesting results, some of which are published in this issue of *Proceedings*.

For the first time in recent years a caving expedition to the Continent was run. Eleven members, together with four members of the South Wales Caving Club, visited the Mont Perdu Massif in the Pyrenees, on the Franco-Spanish border. Geologically and geomorphologically the area was very interesting and considerable information was collected. One pothole was discovered and explored to a depth of 450 ft. in several ladder pitches.

Other potholes were explored. Some water sampling was done, particularly of snow melt waters.

Caving trips were made to various places in South Wales including Llandybie, to study the mud formations in the nearby caves, Glyntawe, where some water sampling was done, and to Ystradfellte. Trips were also made to Yorkshire, Derbyshire and the Forest of Dean, where some attention was paid to caves which might have been inhabited by man.

Archæology

Dr. Taylor's excavation of the Pleistocene site at Almondsbury was brought to an abrupt end by local roadworks. Fortunately nearly all the archæological material in the bone fissure had been dug out. At Picken's Hole, Mendip, another Pleistocene site, work was continued through the season. There is now evidence for the existence of two entrances: the higher one being used by hyænas and the lower one by bears, layers 3 and 5 respectively of the interim report on p. 112.

Tackle and Equipment

Once again the wind generator has continued to give trouble and has had to be overhauled and parts replaced. Ladders have been checked and numbered.

Museum

Work has continued on washing, preserving and cataloguing the finds from Picken's Hole, and an exhibit has been prepared.

Library

Many additions have been made to the library. Five new publication exchanges have been arranged. The periodicals have been sorted out and rehoused. A gift from Mr. J. C. Coleman of many papers on Irish Archæology has considerably enlarged this section of the library. A list of periodicals available is published in this issue.

Photography

The slide collections have been sorted out and rehoused. Printing from the negatives of the late Mr. J. H. Savory's collection is progressing. Unfortunately it has been found that quite a number of these negatives have deteriorated badly in storage before they were received by the Society.

Field Headquarters

A heating system is being installed in the Women's Quarters. A slight modification of the system in the Men's Quarters after the severe frost damage of 1962-63 has improved the efficiency of the system greatly.

Proceedings

Volume 10, No. 1, was published in October 1963 and contained several important articles. Sales have remained at about the same level as the previous year. If more subscribers could be obtained it would be possible to print larger issues.

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