

## SECRETARIES' REPORT MARCH 1986-MARCH 1987

### *Research*

Work on the Beaker site at Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet is continuing. Chris Hawkes and Bruce Levitan have now completed the detailed survey of the bone chambers, whilst Peter Smart has carried out uranium series dating on some of the deposits. The newly discovered lower chambers explored by Peter and Alison Moody are still to be surveyed.

Phil Chapman was scientific advisor for a BBC film on the cave life of Borneo which was shown on television in February. Following last summer's expedition in Madagascar, he is now to lead a major conservation project there in 1987. Funded by a Swiss organization, the Cordana Foundation, it will provide data for the establishment of a national park. A film is also to be made, directed by Phil Chapman and funded by the National Geographic Society.

During the summer of 1986 Peter Smart and others spent one month on Andros Island in the Bahamas examining the groundwater flow and geochemistry of Blue Holes. The project is supported by Shell and the Bahamian Department of Public Works. In 1987 a uranium series dating programme on submerged speleothems will be initiated to define a glacio-eustatic sea level rise.

Dr Smart is also completing a project on the electron spin resonance dating of speleothems. Ages well beyond the uranium series limit of 150,000 years have been obtained from caves in both Yorkshire and the Mendips. Tim Atkinson has also been active in the dating field, and has recently received a NERC grant to investigate the important problem of detrital contamination in impure calcites. Furthermore, Dr Atkinson has produced a second dating of the last interglacial 'hippo' fauna at Eastern Torrs Quarry Cave, Devon, supporting the previous date of 120,000 years old.

At Bristol University, Steve Hobbs is examining the recharge to, and storage of, the saturated diffuse zone of the Mendip Carboniferous Limestone aquifer. This is supported by Wessex Water Authority and Bristol Waterworks Company and includes extensive underground instrumentation at Mangle Hole, Banwell Stalactite Cave, Banwell Spring and several wells in the area.

Investigation, by members of the Society and others, of the prehistoric occupation of the caves at Cheddar has continued.

### *Expeditions and Cave Visits*

The main U.B.S.S. expedition of 1986, to the western Taurus mountains in Turkey, took place in August and September. Two separate areas were visited, the hydrology studied, and caves recorded.

At Easter 1986, three members spent two weeks in the Jura mountains of France, where they completed many of the classic trips. In Britain, the usual Yorkshire visit at Easter was followed by a number of day and weekend visits to South Wales, the increase in the latter being partly due to the acquisition of an access permit for Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. Enthusiastic freshers joining the Society in October resulted in an increase in the time spent on Mendip, even though several of the caves were closed for nearly six months due to problems with the Nature Conservancy Council.

### *Headquarters*

In Bristol, the Society's library continues to expand. The museum has been used by research students from other universities on a number of occasions; its reorganization is still in progress. The hut at Burrington has had a major facelift, with new water and gas fittings, rebuilt bunks and fireplace and a new coat of paint. Thanks for this go to Charles Self and especially to Paul Harvey for all their time and effort.

### *Meetings*

Only three sessional meetings were held during the year, the first of these being in May when Bruce Levitan gave us an insight into the exciting findings at Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet. At the second meeting, in November, Rob Palmer outlined some of the scientific aspects of the work carried out by the 1986 summer expedition to the Bahamas. In February, Phil Chapman gave a beautifully illustrated talk on the 1986 Madagascar expedition and on his plans for 1987. The Society was also host for the China Caves slide show which visited Bristol in October.

### *Editorial*

It will be seen that significant changes have been made in the layout of *Proceedings*. Advantage has been taken of progress in paper technology and economics to print all pages on the same coated paper. This enables photographic illustrations to be placed in the text where they are most relevant. At the same time the width of the printed surface has been increased slightly to give better appearance, to allow larger illustrations, and to save paper. All this has been done at the start of a new volume but librarians will be glad to see that the overall page size is unaltered. The printer has also been changed, to eliminate the quality problems experienced lately.

Now that the Secretaries' Report contains information about the relevant activities of individual members, all such news will be welcomed by the editor. In the last two issues only the information known to us in Bristol has been included, and to any whose achievements were left out we apologize.

### *Other News*

Professor Savage's book, *Mammal evolution an illustrated guide*, was published by the British Museum (Natural History) in 1986, and Dr Marjorie Sweeting was joint editor of *New directions in karst*. Trevor Shaw's historical introduction in the American book, *Cave minerals of the world*, was published also in German and Italian.

At the Symposium on the Thermal Waters of Bath, held at the Royal Society, Dr W. I. Stanton spoke on the hydrogeological aspects and the source of the water. Steve Hobbs lectured to the 9th International Speleological Congress in Barcelona on the classification of carbonate aquifers. Peter Smart made the opening address at the National Water Well Association conference on problems of limestone terrains, held in Kentucky. He also gave a summer course on karst hydrology at the Western Kentucky University Center for Cave and Karst Studies. Arthur ApSimon organized the session on human cultural adaptation in late Pleistocene and early Holocene times at the World Archaeological Congress held at Southampton in September 1986, and delivered three papers there.

The death, on 29 September 1986, of Peter Foster Bird has been noted with regret. A member of the Society since the 1940s, he took a particular interest in bats and entomology. He was Curator of Natural History at the

City Museum, Bristol, from 1951 until his retirement due to ill health in 1975.

### *Acknowledgements*

A grant of £500 has been received from the Geologists' Association for the publication of *Proceedings*. Longleat Enterprises provided £100 towards the publication of papers on caves at Cheddar. An anonymous donor gave £100 for *Proceedings*, and we also received substantial donations from the Castle Cary Press, the Krainik Gallery of Falls Church (Virginia), Period Bookbinders of Bath, Erwood & Morris Ltd. (builders) of Bath, Chrisbel Baillie, D. J. Irwin, Jean Shaw, R. G. J. Williams and P. Wilton. We are also grateful for assistance from the Oliver Lloyd Memorial Fund. Ray Mansfield made important gifts to the library.

The University of Bristol again made a grant towards the cost of publishing *Proceedings*. A grant from the Students' Union assisted the running of the Society and enabled it to buy tackle. Money from the Tratman Fund was used to support expeditions abroad.

The Oliver Lloyd Memorial Trust Fund has been set up, to assist funding of *Proceedings*, this being something that Oliver used to do out of his own pocket while he was alive. Many members, and others, have given most generously to this fund.

For all this we are grateful; without it research and publication could not continue at the present level.

S. L. Hobbs and J. S. Oates