

SECRETARIES' REPORT MARCH 1987—MARCH 1988

Research

Work by Dr P. L. Smart and Fiona Whitaker on groundwater geochemistry and hydrology in North and South Andros in the Bahamas, supported by a grant from Shell, continues at the University of Bristol. The 1987 summer expedition to the area included diving in Blue Holes to 97½ m using helium rebreathers, the first time this equipment has been used underground. Oxford Scientific made a film there for National Geographic on Smart's work on speleothem dating of low sea levels in the Bahamas.

Phil Chapman led another expedition to Madagascar to examine the cave and forest flora and fauna of a limestone massif in the north of the island. A 55 minute film made there for National Geographic Explorer will be shown in America and Europe to launch a project which aims to establish a national park there.

At the University of East Anglia Dr Tim Atkinson is continuing his work on uranium series dating and has made some progress with the problem of dating calcites that have detrital contamination. He is also carrying out dye tracing of the unsaturated zone above White Scar Cave in Yorkshire, in conjunction with Leeds University. Results from this have indicated some very long residence times, confirming earlier work by Pete Smart, Hans Friederich and by Tim himself that the unsaturated zone is an important storage zone in karst aquifers.

At Bristol University Steve Hobbs has finished field work associated with his doctorate research into recharge and storage of the saturated diffuse zone of the Mendip limestone aquifer.

Caving

At Easter 1987 members of the Society went to County Clare, Ireland, and extended passages previously found in the Green Holes of Doolin Harbour. This was followed by a visit at Whitsun, and another in December by different members which identified the S3a resurgence and started a survey of the Tomeens. One member was present on the Lancaster University expedition to the Picos de Europa, Spain, where further extensions to Cueva del Agua were made. Others took part in exploration of Chinese caves. Members also visited caves in France and Germany.

Trips to Mendip have increased dramatically this year, as a large number of active and enthusiastic students joined the Society in 1987. These visits have been supplemented by those to South Wales, which are increasing in popularity, whilst ones to Yorkshire have declined.

Meetings

The first sessional meeting of the new term was held in October. At a well attended lecture Vince Russett described some of the archaeological remains that have been found in the Cheddar area. This was followed in December by Marco Paganuzzi's slide show of caving in the Picos de Europa (Spain) from 1984 to 1987. The well illustrated talk gave us an insight into the reasons why the area has become so popular in recent years. In February, Dr Jill Cook, head of the Quaternary Section of the British Museum, described some of the cut-marks found on bones in archaeological deposits and detailed experiments carried out to differentiate between natural and human emplaced marks. Special reference was made to Gough's Cave and



FIG. 1—THE OLD GROTTTO, SWILDON'S HOLE, 13 AUGUST 1921. FROM EXTREME LEFT, H. E. BALCH, REGINALD BALCH, E. K. TRATMAN (WITH ARTHUR MAIN ON HIS LEFT); SEATED IN THE FRONT (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) ARE THE REV. WILLIAM QUINN (VICAR OF PRIDDY), SIMMONS, AND HOLLY; THE BACK ROW INCLUDES THE VICAR'S WIFE AND FAMILY, AND ANOTHER U.B.S.S. MEMBER. FROM ONE OF THE SAVORY NEGATIVES IN THE SOCIETY'S COLLECTION

Photograph by J. H. Savory; copyright U.B.S.S.

to the interpretation of these by the popular press as 'cannibals at Cheddar'. Phil Chapman spoke after the AGM about his work in the Madagascar karst, described above.

Photographic

Chris Howes, F.R.P.S., has made prints and copy negatives from the 94 glass plate negatives of photographs taken by Harry Savory in the period 1912 to 1928, which were given to the Society in 1962 (see FIG. 1). Prints can be ordered from the sales manager.

Other News

Major Bob Churcher was made M.B.E. in one of the 1987 Honours Lists, whilst John Whicher has been appointed to the Chair of Chemical Pathology at Leeds. Ray Mansfield received the Tratman Award at the B.C.R.A. annual conference, for producing *Current Titles in Speleology*. Chris Howes, the photographer on the 1987 Andros Project, won first prize at the 8th Spanish International, and 2nd and 3rd prizes at the 1st Irish Speleological Photographic Contests. His book, *Cave photography. A practical guide*, has been published. Mendip news includes the election of Linda Wilson as chairman of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs, and the issue of a revised edition of *Mendip underground* by Dave Irwin (and Knibbs). Lectures by members at national and international level have been too numerous to list individually but they included those given at the summer course on karst hydrology in the Mammoth Cave field centre of Western Kentucky University.

We regret to report the deaths of Marjorie Crook and Deri Walton, whose obituaries appear in this issue, and also of Francis Henry Hulbert. Hulbert had been a member since about 1924 and named his first house 'Rowberrow' after the cave the U.B.S.S. was excavating at that time.

Acknowledgements

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 in support of expeditions abroad.

The Oliver Lloyd Memorial Fund, set up in 1987, has made a contribution towards publication. Further donations to this fund will be gratefully accepted and will go some way towards keeping our memory of Oliver alive.

Once again publication at the present scale has been made possible only by the generosity also of companies and private individuals. Wookey Hole Caves Ltd. sponsored the paper on Martel's visit to Mendip. Anonymous donors provided a total of £400, and we have also received substantial donations from the Longleat Estate, Hurley House (Garages) Ltd. of Bristol, David Irwin, Jean Shaw and Marjorie Sweeting.

On behalf of all members of the Society, the secretaries would like to thank those concerned for these grants and donations.

S. L. Hobbs and J. S. Oates