

SECRETARIES' REPORT MARCH 1988-MARCH 1989

Research

At Bristol University Steve Hobbs has been awarded a Ph.D. for his thesis concerning recharge, flow and storage in the saturated zone of the Mendip Carboniferous Limestone aquifer. Meanwhile Alan Edwards has started a 3 year study on the hydrogeological aspects of waste disposal on the Carboniferous and Devonian Limestones in England and Wales. An overview of the state of waste disposal and the incidence of pollution is being compiled with a view to distinguishing the nature and mobility of pollutants within these aquifers. The work is supported by NERC and by a CASE award with ARC.

Chris Proctor is studying cave development associated with sea level changes at Berry Head (Devon) and is carrying out a multi-disciplinary project in Kent's Cavern which includes surveying the cave, examining the sediment deposits, and ESR dating of speleothems. Work on Sally's Rift, a gull cave in the Bath area, is being continued by Charlie Self who has made a very detailed study of the site, showing a complex multi-stage evolution for the cave.

Dr P. L. Smart and Fiona Whitaker had another successful field season in the Bahamas. Supported by Steve Hobbs, they obtained long discharge/conductivity records for a Blue Hole and a tidal creek, which, combined with long-term tidal measurements, enable detailed assessments to be made concerning the freshwater lens under Andros Island. Work supported by NERC has also allowed a 30 000 year sea level record to be deduced from uranium series dating of speleothems.

Caving

At the end of May 1988 members went to County Clare and re-investigated sites in the high Burren area. Work started by Oliver Lloyd in the Smithy complex of Doolin Cave continued and should be completed this year.

There is renewed interest in the G.B. dig with hopes to install a new, more efficient pumping system. Work also continues on the Tynning's Great Swallet dig, with about 8 m of hard-won passage in the last year.

During August 1988 eight members visited the Jura region of France, subsidized by the Tratman Fund. In the two weeks spent there quite a large amount of caving was carried out, many caves visited in previous years being further explored.

The upsurge of student interest has continued with numerous trips to Mendip and South Wales and with more Yorkshire visits than recently.

Meetings

At the first meeting of the new term a talk on cave diving in the Bahamas was given by Chris Howes who demonstrated once more his ability to take great underwater photographs. This was followed in November by Andy Buchan's talk on cave paintings in France. The final lecture, in February, was given to a capacity audience by Chris Smart; it concerned caving in China and some of its pitfalls. This was followed by a video of the expedition. Attendance at meetings this year has been very high, due to the good standard of talks, and because they were well organized and publicized. Our thanks for this are gratefully extended to Bob Williams.

Other News

Chris Howes's book on the development of underground photography, *To Photograph Darkness*, has been accepted by a publisher for issue in 1989. He also won 1st place in the slide and cave life sections of the BCRA Photo Salon. Many conferences have been attended including a symposium of cave tourism in Yugoslavia at which Dr T. R. Shaw's paper contrasted its development at Wookey Hole and Cheddar. Dr P. L. Smart was on the organizing committee of the 2nd International Conference on Electron Spin Resonance, held in Munich, at which he also presented a paper. Steve Hobbs attended the 21st International Association of Hydrologists Conference in China, where he presented results from some of his Mendip work.

It is with regret that we report the death of Mick Seavers while climbing in the Alps.

Acknowledgements

The University of Bristol 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 and for attendance at conferences directly concerned with karst research.

The Oliver Lloyd Memorial Fund has made a contribution towards publication of *Proceedings*, sponsoring the Doolin Cave paper, and further donations to the Fund will be gratefully accepted. Once again publication has been greatly aided by the generosity of many. Sponsorship has increased this year and we are indebted to Cheddar Showcaves (Longleat Estate) for Ruth Charles's paper on Gough's Cave; a Mendip engineering company for Chris Howes on Tratman's underground ciné films; J. W. Ward & Son, solicitors of Bristol, for Graham Mullan on Northumberland sandstone caves; and Wookey Hole Caves for Dr Stanton on Charterhouse Warren Farm Cave and Bos Swallet. Trevor Shaw has again made a sizeable contribution, this time towards the cost of the colour plates of 'Lobsterbacks'. Other substantial donations have been made by Bob Williams, Jean Shaw, Period Bookbinders of Bath, David Irwin, and Mr K. G. J. Malpas of Australia.

On behalf of the Society, the Secretaries would like to thank all those concerned.

S. L. Hobbs and P. G. Turner