

## SECRETARIES' REPORT MARCH 1989-MARCH 1990

### *Caving*

During 1989 the establishment of a keen body of student cavers has resulted in sporting trips to most areas of the country. Further afield there have been a number of Society expeditions. In April a group went to County Clare to continue the long-standing work of the Society. During the Summer a 6 man reconnaissance expedition visited the Totes Gebirge in Austria and a larger expedition is planned to return to the area in 1990.

Members also visited Yugoslavia and the International Speleological Congress, where Charlie Self was able to establish productive links with a group of Russian cavers and scientists.

On Mendip digging has resumed at GB and also at nearby Tynings Great Swallet.

### *Meetings*

May 1989 saw John Hooper fascinate an enthusiastic audience with a talk about the lives of bats. In November we were once more lucky enough to receive a superbly illustrated talk by Chris Howes, this year on the history of flash photography. This was followed by an account of an Australian expedition to Christmas Island given by Dr. Guy Fox from Sydney. In December Mark Lumley gave a talk on the Black Holes expedition to Mexico, and finally in February Dick Willis spoke on caving in the Far East. Attendance at these meetings has continued to be very good, thanks primarily to the high standard of presentations.

### *Retirements*

This year has seen the retirement of two of the Society's most important officers. Professor Bob Savage stepped down as president after 13 years of hard work, and Trevor Shaw retired as editor of *Proceedings*, having produced four very professional issues. We thank them both for their services to the Society and wish them well for the future. The presidential mantle was passed to Professor John Thornes, while on the short term Dr. Peter Smart has taken over the responsibility for *Proceedings*.

### *Research*

At Bristol University Alan Edwards continues his hydrogeological work on the impact of quarrying, in particular on the Mendips, funded by NERC and ARC. Chris Proctor is working on the sediment and archaeological sequences in Mendip and South Devon Caves. Paleoclimatic work is being undertaken by Angus Tillotson who is using stable isotopes and fluid inclusions in speleothems to

investigate Quaternary variations in temperature and precipitation.

The summer of 1989 saw an ambitious 9 man field season principally on the island of Grand Bahama, undertaking geochemical, hydrological and hydrogeological work, as well as extending the collection of speleothem from the Blue Holes. David Richards is involved in dating of this speleothem using alpha- and mass-spectrometric Uranium Series techniques in order to construct a Quaternary sea-level curve. Fiona Whitaker continues research into hydrological and geochemical aspects of carbonate diagenesis, with support from Shell and Amoco. Dr P.L. Smart, while being actively involved in many of these research projects, has also expanded his research interests to the field of paleokarst, as well as continuing work on the geomorphological evolution of karst surfaces in China and the Bahamas.

Charlie Self continues his work on the Gull caves of the Claverton Gorge, near Bath, and presented this work at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Pseudokarst Symposium in Czechoslovakia. In collaboration with Russian scientists he has also been investigating cave mineralogy in the caves of Capp-Coutunn.

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