

subsidence features of Moston Long Flash and Rostherne Mere, in the Cheshire salt karst. If these are worthy of mention then surely room could have been found for, for example, the gull caves of the Cotswolds or the Ryedale Windypits.

The production quality of the book seems to be to a reasonable standard, the text is clear and well laid out and the diagrams are both helpful and easy to understand and, most importantly, produced at a useful size. All of them have been redrawn specifically for this volume and having them in a standard format is a great aid to clarity. The photographs, too have reproduced well. One error noted here is that the survey of Longwood Swallet is credited to this Society when it was carried out by the Mendip Caving Group. As to be expected in a book of this size there are a number of typographical errors. These are not normally a serious problem except in the reference section and here the reviewer finds his own name spelt incorrectly and this Society's President's name is also wrongly given. Whilst this may be regarded as pure pique, it is this sort of error which casts doubt on the reliability of the section as a whole.

This book is an excellent summary of the state of knowledge of Britain's caves and karst features. It does not replace the old *Limestone and Caves* regional series produced by the B.C.R.A., except in that it is far more up to date than them, as it necessarily contains far less information. *Limestone and Caves of Wales*, for example is as long as this entire volume. In the same way, it will not be a substitute for the original papers on any given site, as far as serious research is concerned, although its reference section is a good starting point for further reading. It should be in every caving club library and on the shelf of every serious caver in the country. Sadly, at £125, it is unlikely to be so and given its very short print run it is not going to be found remaindered either. If you can afford it, buy it, in any event a copy will be available in the Society's library.

GEBAUER, H.D., MANSFIELD, R.E., CHABERT, C. and KUSCH, H. (1995). *Speleological Bibliography of South Asia*. Kathmandu, Armchair Adventure Press. 226 pp softback £30
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(Reviewed by Jennifer Brooks)

This publication is a thorough and comprehensive guide to the many varied books, articles and other references to any aspect of speleological interest in South Asia. It is divided into seven sections, covering South Asia generally, then Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tibet in detail. Each section has an introduction, with a general geographical/geological/speleological background. The bibliographies for each of the sections follow, alphabetically listed with a concise narrative report for each entry.

Each section is exhaustively cross referenced according to a number of topics (geoscience, mines and mining, biospeleology, archaeology, culture, troglodytes, speleohistory and miscellaneous)so it is possible to pursue items according to a particular area of interest. Thus the book is of value not only to those wanting to find new caving areas in South Asia, but also to academics wanting information on specialised biological, geological, archaeological and anthropological interests.

The bibliography also contains several short contributions on relevant areas of interest including man made temples, rock art and two ancient ascetics who meditated in caves and,

through writings about their lives by others, have added considerably to the lists of known and lost caves in Nepal and Tibet. Also included are a number of illustrations and ephemera which break up the text and lighten the 'serious' nature of the work (like the photo of the 'hippie gurlies' at Sigiriya – you will have to buy the book to find out !)

The bibliography is written in an accessible and interesting style, the annotations for each of the bibliographical items are succinct and provide enough basic and technical information to enable the reader to decide whether to pursue the reference. The short articles are interesting and readable even for non experts. The illustrations are clearly related to the text and aid understanding. This is quite an accomplishment, a bibliography is essentially a 'dry' kind of book, but it became somewhat irresistible, as I kept just opening it to find all kinds of interesting snippets.

Surveys are not included except for surveys of the caves at Lumshnong, Meghalaya, North East India. These include Krem Um Lawan, which, at 6380 m, is the longest cave in South East Asia.

Daniel Gebauer, the main author, has considerable knowledge and experience of the speleology of South Asia, having caved, travelled and worked extensively in the area. He has previously co-authored *Caves of India and Nepal* (1983, with Andre Abele) and has contributed widely to international literature on the speleology of South Asia. The bibliography has basically been developed on Daniel's laptop database, which accompanies him everywhere. The other major contributors, Ray Mansfield, Claude Chabert and Heinrich Kusch have all added considerably from their individual specialist areas to the information contained within the bibliography. There are also many other contributors and collaborators from around the world. The problems of compiling material from so many varied transnational sources has been approached with care and rigour. The introduction explains clearly the approach which has been adopted.

Considerable effort has gone in to the production of this bibliography and, considering it has probably been produced within a small budget, it is well presented. The compromise between cost and quality has been fairly adequately met. Unfortunately, the binding seems to be a victim of compromise, the review copy began to disintegrate after a brief perusal. There are also a few minor grammatical errors, none of which interfere with the reading of the content. A few of the scanned illustrations are not as clear as one would like but these really are minor criticisms.

This book represents thousands of hours of work, pages and pages of notes, meticulous attention to detail, the persistent ferreting out every last scrap of information about the caves of South Asia and chasing up obscure and obsolete references. As such, it was probably out of date the moment the manuscript was handed to the printers. It will however prove to be a valuable first point of reference to anyone particularly interested in speleology in South Asia. There is no other source so readily available, accessible and readable.