

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

MARCH 1996 – MARCH 1997

### Archaeology

In the field, work continues in the Hyaena Den and more members were involved last summer with the ongoing Wye Valley Caves Project. The re-evaluation of the Bos Swallet site has been completed and will be published during the coming year. The re-cataloguing and conservation of the Museum collection continues apace and plans are being formulated to allow the transfer of the catalogue to a suitable computer database. An increasing number of researchers have made use of the collection within the past year. We are grateful to Mr David Dawson of the Somerset County Museum Service for allowing Miss Lesley-Ann Kerr to work with us as Curatorial Advisor.

### Research

P.L. Smart was a member of the Hidden Valley '96 expedition to Mulu; some 10 km of cave was explored in an area not revisited since the original Royal Geological Society trip. Caves were entered where they were intersected by floors of surface depressions and showed extensive sediment fills which, where unexcavated, precluded exploration. Samples were taken to continue the palaeomagnetism dating programme.

A small grant from NERC allowed Andy Farrant, as post-doctoral research assistant, to undertake dating at Wookey Hole. This gave the first intercomparison of base level lowering history for adjacent sites. The work demonstrated that previous ideas regarding importance of scarp retreat in the progressive development of resurgences from west to east on the south flank of Mendip could not be supported, as the caves show parallel chronologies.

Dating and palaeoclimate studies of speleothems continue with Mark Roberts demonstrating that sub-annual resolution is attainable in trace element records from Holocene speleothems from Sutherland. Work continues using modern samples and the historic climate record to calibrate the climate signal responsible for the variations.

Charlie Self has been documenting the Gull Caves of the Cotswolds and intends to produce a comprehensive description of these sites. This work has also yielded a further exposure of the High Level Drift deposit.

### Caving

There have been many successful away trips to Yorkshire, Derbyshire and South Wales. Little new exploration has been achieved, however. None of the Society's digs on Mendip have yielded any new passage during the past year.

Tony Boycott has paid a third visit to India, with Andy Tyler and others, and is now returning. Another 15 kilometres of new passage have been logged during this trip. The caves of Krem Um Lawan, Krem Um Shor and Kot Sati have been linked and extended to create a system of over 15 km in length and 200 metres in depth.

The usual trip was made to County Clare in the summer. A second trip was also made at New Year. This was a training meet for undergraduate members and was supported by grants from the Tratman Fund.

### Meetings

Yet again these have been rather thin on the ground. However one meeting that is anticipated is on the fiftieth anniversary of the Society's first trip to County Clare for which a celebration dinner is being held in 1998.

### Acknowledgements

The University of Bristol, through the Tratman Fund, have supported the production of *Proceedings* and travel abroad. The University Union grant has assisted in the day to day running of the Society and especially in the support of the regular caving meets. The Oliver Lloyd Memorial Fund Trustees have also assisted in the production of *Proceedings*. To all of the above we are grateful.

*J.F.A. Morse*