

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

MARCH 1998 – MARCH 1999

It is with great sadness that we have to report the deaths of Professor Bob Savage, our President from 1977 to 1990, and Miss Molly Hall, who had been a member of the Society since the early 1930's. Full obituaries have already appeared in *Proceedings*.

### Archaeology

During 1998 the Museum collections have been used by a number of people; by students from the Archaeology Department at Bristol studying variously Mesolithic, Neolithic and Iron Age (Bury Hill Fort) material; by two researchers from the University of Wales studying Hyaena material and by a mature student from Filton writing a paper on the Tynings Farm Barrows.

Roger Jacobi and Andy Carrant spent a useful day checking and re-identifying the Banwell cave material. They have also been involved, with the Curator and others in meetings regarding a management plan for that site.

The President, the Curator, Roger Jacobi and Andy Carrant attended an all-day seminar called to discuss future archaeological projects on Mendip.

Heather Jackson has been studying the materials used for tool-making by the Neanderthal inhabitants of Pontnewydd Cave, North Wales, at the National Museum of Wales.

### Research

Augusto Auler is working on the speleogenesis and geochronology of the Campo Forma karst, Bahia, Brazil. This is currently a very arid area, but has extensive non-active speleothem and surface tufas, and large caves in Quaternary limestones suggesting that it was much wetter in the past. Alice Jones is working on land use change and water quality in Mendip springs in conjunction with the Environment Agency and Bristol Water PLC, looking specifically at nitrate and hardness changes. David Richards is developing an intercalibration of uranium series and radiocarbon ages using high precision analyses on Bahamian speleothems. Pete Smart is working on trace element variations in speleothems as an indicator of paleorainfall.

Charlie Self's work with the International Union of Speleology (U.I.S.) genetic mineralogy working group has resulted in a number of papers, published by the Society and in America, and is successfully bringing an understanding of Russian methodology in this field to the West.

### Caving

The society has had an active year with renewed interest in caving, especially from an enthusiastic intake of student members. Nationally, trips have been taking place regularly to Mendip, Yorkshire, South Wales and Devon. Further afield, cave diving exploration in Poul-na-gree, Co. Clare, Ireland, has continued on from the work published in *Proceedings* last year.

Work has also started in Ireland on revising the cave descriptions and scientific accounts for inclusion in a revised book on that area.

There have been foreign trips to the Dordogne Region of France over the New Year period and more recently a visit to some of the caves and canyons of Majorca. The Society has also been represented by Tony Boycott on expeditions to the Indian subcontinent.

#### Acknowledgements

The Society continues to be grateful to those bodies who support its activities with grant aid. These include the Tratman Fund of the University of Bristol for assistance with publishing *Proceedings* and with foreign travel, The Oliver Lloyd Memorial Fund who have recently paid for some much-needed binding in the Library and the University of Bristol Union for assistance in the day to day running of the Society.

*T. Williams*

#### LIBRARY REPORT 1999 - 2000

The Library has continued to grow by exchanges with proceedings and donations. Thanks are due to John Crickmay & Pat Cronin for donations of journals, manuscripts and books.

#### *New additions*

Mendip Underground, 4th edition, 1999. Dave Irwin and Tony Jarratt

*Tony Boycott  
Librarian*