

Report for the Year 1926-1927.

This year the Society's work has been attended with results quite as good as in previous years, but it happens that in the case of all the cave excavations a stage has been reached where it would be premature to issue a detailed report. Rather than publish inconclusive *interim* reports it has been decided to include brief accounts of the work done in the caves in this number of Proceedings, and only to print in detail the results of work which has been concluded.

AVELINE'S HOLE.

Over ten tons of material has been removed from inside the cave and excavation outside is still proceeding. A new portion of the cave has been disclosed on the north side at a distance of sixty feet from datum; the floor of this part of the cave is at a depth of twenty-four feet below the stalagmite shelf; it consists of a space between the north wall and the deposit in the floor, and opens into a rift running parallel with the main cave. Numerous human and animal bones, flints, and a perforated shell bead were found in the disturbed earth where the entrance was made, sixty-four feet from datum. Many bones had fallen into the new part of the cave, and were also found lying on ledges under the floor of the main cave, which was seen to consist of a jammed mass of boulders.

The remains are still typical of the cave and include such animals as Lynx, Giant Deer and Pika. A report on the human bones will be issued later.

ROWBERROW CAVERN.

Excavation has been pushed vigorously ahead at Rowberrow Cavern (about one half of the Society's working parties having been so employed). In addition, with the help of the grant kindly made last year by the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund, we have hired labour as often as the necessary supervision and (in the case of material of archaeological value) sorting power were available, viz.: on 16 days. As a rule four men were employed.

The work falls under two headings:—

1. The Second Clay and Stones Layer:—the greater part of this Neolithic and Bronze Age deposit has been removed and sorted; its contents will be described in the next report.

2. The exploratory pit:—occupying almost the whole width of the cave, the pit has reached a maximum depth of 22 feet. Traces only of Upper Palæolithic occupation were found in the Pleistocene rubble or gravel, and the boulder deposit beneath yielded nothing. Below the boulders was a continuous layer of crystalline stalagmite varying from one to nearly six feet in thickness; it lay upon a mass of limestone blocks separated by red clay. A few blocks of conglomerate and many pebbles derived therefrom were found in the upper three feet of this mass, but few or none below. Whether we are dealing with the virgin limestone below the conglomerate, greatly fissured and broken up, or merely with a pile of large boulders such as occurs at Read's Cavern, it is not yet possible to say. Both the Crystalline Stalagmite and the Red Clay were barren.

SUN HOLE, CHEDDAR.

Permission to excavate this cave having been given by the owner, Lord Long, work was begun in April, 1926. The cave was first surveyed on a squared plan basis and excavations carried out in six-inch layers until a definite stratification became recognisable.

Part of the superficial deposits had been recently disturbed, some of the Pleistocene level being exposed.

The superficial deposits, three feet thick in places, have been excavated for a distance of twelve feet inwards from the entrance, and also outwards a distance of nine to twelve feet on the entrance platform. The remains comprise Romano-British pottery, and, from the last foot of the top layers, beaker and neolithic pottery, with several bone and numerous flint implements.

Below the upper earth and stone layers lies a more or less continuous band of breccia covering rubbles of Pleistocene age as proved by the rodent remains—which so far have only been dug to a depth of three feet over one small area.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Athay, the tenant of the land, for the willing assistance he has given on every possible occasion.

WYE VALLEY CAVES.

Work at King Arthur's Cave has been carried on at camps in September and March, and also at some week-ends.

The area outside the entrance is still being dug and five definite horizons are now recognisable. Below the surface layer of humus is a hearth, some eighteen inches in thickness, in which are found numbers

of pygmy flints and scaled blades ; there is also a large series of hone-stones and polishers.

The next layer is a band of yellow rubble containing a few fragments of long bones and a number of Pleistocene rodents.

Thirdly, there is a second hearth containing flints of an Aurignacian facies and numerous bones of large species of deer.

Fourthly, there is a thin layer of a greyish colour in which fragments of mammoth teeth have been found ; sufficient of this has not yet been dug for any opinion to be expressed as to its significance, but it has been provisionally termed the "mammoth layer."

Lastly, there is a thick deposit of reddish clay of unknown depth. So far only a few bone fragments have been found in this.

Excavation is still in progress, and it is hoped that by next year a full report may be issued on the horizons mentioned above and upon the deeper strata of the cave.

LIBRARY.

Many books have been added to the library by presentation, exchange and purchase ; our thanks are due to Dom. E. Horne, Miss D. A. E. Garrod, Miss M. Pollard, Miss M. Thorburn, Messrs. W. H. Ackland, S. B. Adams, H. E. Balch, M. C. Burkitt, R. C. C. Clay, A. W. Coysh, O. G. S. Crawford, J. A. Davies, Cyril Fox, L. S. Lee, J. Maury, L. S. Palmer, J. Richter, R. A. Smith, W. J. Sollas, E. K. Tratman ; Dr. Wolf ; The Gloucester Museum ; The British Museum (Nat. Hist.) ; The Field Nat. Hist. Museum, Chicago ; Bristol Naturalists' Soc., and the Royal Anthropological Institute.

We are deeply indebted to the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for allowing us to retain the balance of the £100 grant they gave us last year for the excavation of Rowberrow Cavern, and for a further grant of £30 for work at Bury Hill Camp, an account of which appears in this number.

Our thanks are due to the Colston Research Committee for another grant of £40 for continuing the activities of the Society, and to the Guild of Undergraduate for a grant of £30. The Finance Committee of the University has generously given us an annual grant of £15 towards the cost of publication of these Proceedings.

T. F. HEWER, *Hon. Secretary.*