

An overview of the archaeology of Mendip caves and karst. Compiled and edited by Vince Simmonds.



Looking out to Blackdown, the highest point on Mendip, from Burrington Ham

Contents

	Page
Introduction	2
The geological landscape	4
The cave environment	5
Experiences within the cave environment	6
The use of caves	8
Some notable Mendip cavers and cave archaeologists	13
A chronological framework	16
A timeline for the archaeology of Mendip caves and karst:	17
Palaeolithic	17
Mesolithic	22
Neolithic into the Early Bronze Age	25
Bronze Age	29
Iron Age into the Roman/Romano-British	30
Saxon	33
Medieval	34
Post-medieval	34
Modern	34
Discussion	35
Descriptions of Mendip caves with a focus on the archaeological interest	37
Acknowledgements	64
Bibliography	65
Appendix	71

“The Mendip Hills are an important archaeological landscape, with an interrupted sequence of human activity stretching back 500 000 years” (Lewis, 2011).

Introduction

The Mendip Hills are a dominant topographic feature comprising a high steep-sided plateau that stretches from north-west to south-east diagonally across much of the northern region of Somerset (Green and Welch, 1965). The name Mendip is probably derived from the Celtic ‘mynydd’ meaning mountain or hill (Jamieson, 2015). The hills are formed predominately of limestone and located within this landscape are numerous caves and other karstic features.

Caves are ancient features that appear in many shapes and forms, and a number of them have been used as natural shelters for humans throughout time ranging from the Palaeolithic through to the modern era. They have provided an opportunity for a diverse range of other functions, be it domestic, economic, or ritual and funerary. Many of the caves are multi-period sites being used for different purposes at different times and this variety of use has resulted in some caves becoming filled with sediments over time. The materials brought in by human occupants have formed a stratified deposit that might include lithics, bones, pottery, evidence of metalworking, charcoal from hearths and food refuse. Archaeology is the study of peoples, past and present, through their material remains and the Mendip caves represent important archaeological resources given the often abundant and varied materials that have been deposited in them, in particular by prehistoric peoples. Some of the cave-based resources within the Mendip Hills are not only of national, but of wider European importance and have a major role in the story of the human occupation of Britain and the subsequent settlement of the land, helping us to better understand how people in the past lived.

This overview puts forwards some suggested reasons why caves might have been utilised, what occurred during this usage for a range of activities and a description of the evidence that has been found to support this is given. It draws on data from a number of sources including written works, online databases and other electronic media to build a timeline of the human use of Mendip caves, the information is presented in text and tables.

A brief introduction to some of the notable cavers and cave archaeologists involved in the excavation and exploration of Mendip caves is included; these provide a continuity of archaeological fieldwork from the 19th century through to the 21st century. There are many more fieldworkers and authors that have made important contributions, as reflected in the archaeological record that is currently available.

Using a variety of sources, a more detailed description of individual Mendip caves and other karst sites has been compiled. This focuses on the archaeological interest that caves and karstic features might contain and where there is archaeological potential for those sites not yet investigated; the listing is not exhaustive and it is intended that the data be updated as necessary, as and when more sites and information comes to light.

In the bibliography, as well as the usual listings of publications used, there are a number of links to a range of available information sources, there may well be others not accessed for the purposes of this overview.

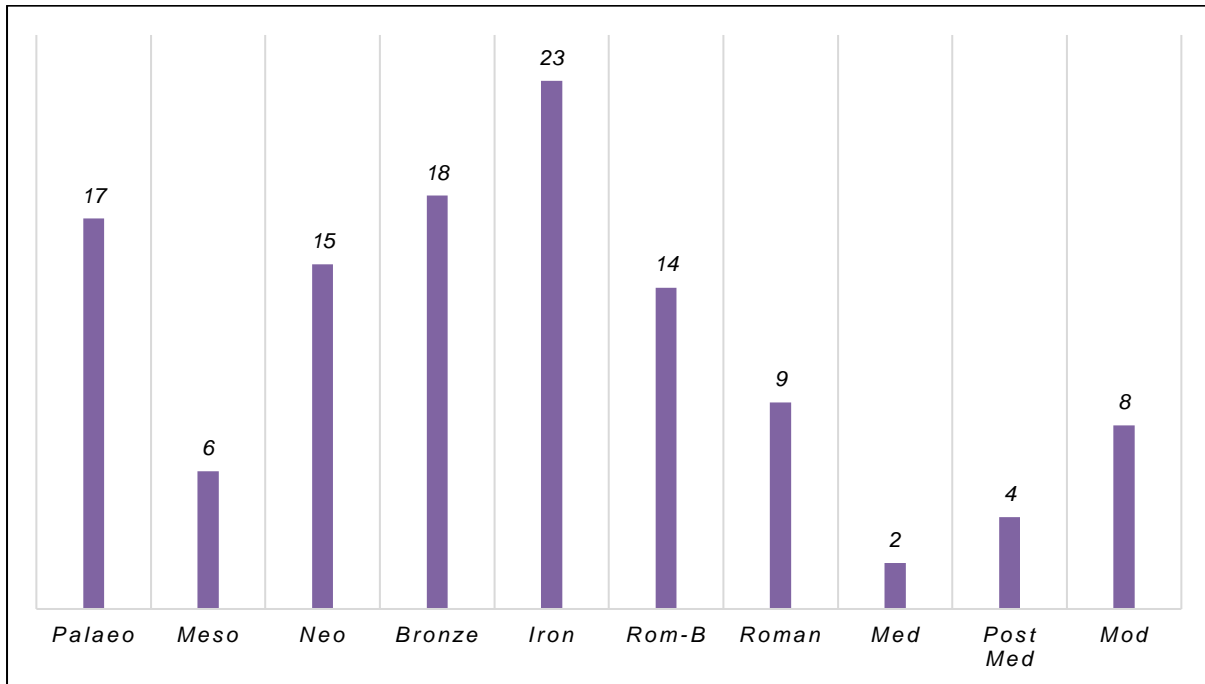


Chart 1. The record for human use of caves in the Mendip Hills.

The data from 93 caves has been analysed and used in the compilation of this overview. The records for the human use of these caves are presented in the chart above. It should be noted that while many caves may have a single record, there are other caves that have a record of multi-phased activities within them, although this usage is not necessarily continuous. It is unfortunate that, for one reason or another, much of the early artefactual evidence has been lost and, therefore is no longer available for any further interpretation.

The earliest records encompassing the Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic are noted at 17 sites, there is some question as to the record for the Lower Palaeolithic evidence from the lithic assemblage recovered from Westbury Quarry although the recent recognition of butchery marks on a deer bone might indicate hominid activity within the area around the cave (Macphail and Goldberg, 1999). There then appears a drop in usage in the Mesolithic with just 6 recorded sites. This is followed by a steady rise with 15 records for the Neolithic, 18 during the Bronze Age and apparently peaking in the Iron Age with 23 records. The record for the Roman (14) and Romano-British (9) may well be blurred with some potential misinterpretation of evidence. There is a reduction of use during the Medieval period with just 2 recorded sites with a slight rise in the Post-medieval to 4 records and ending with another small rise in the Modern period with 8 records.

The geological landscape.

The Mendip Hills reach a maximum elevation of 325 metres at Beacon Batch on Blackdown; and as a whole rise up to dominate the surrounding flat landscape (Schulting, 2005). With the exception of a small area of Silurian volcanic rocks, the Mendip Hills are made up of sedimentary rocks ranging in age from Late Devonian (approximately 385–359 million years old) to Mid Jurassic (about 161 million years ago), and are predominately of Carboniferous Limestone. The Mendip landscape is dominated by ‘karst’, a suite of landforms created by the action of water on limestone. The rainwater acts as a weak acid (sometimes termed ‘carbonic’ acid) that dissolves the limestone, creating a landscape in which much of the drainage is underground. Landforms that are typical of karst include dry valleys and gorges; closed depressions known as dolines or sinkholes; sinking streams; caves and large springs (BGS, 2014). The term ‘sinkhole’ encompasses a range of unrelated processes that result in ground collapse. Geologically, the term refers to a natural surface depression caused by the dissolution of soluble rocks at depth. Other more local names are often used; for example, the terms ‘shakehole’ or ‘swallow’ hole are common in northern England, while in the southwest of England the terms more commonly used are ‘swallet’ or ‘slocker’ (Farrant and Cooper, 2014). The carbonate rich water resurges at numerous springs around the base of the Mendip upland; a number of these springs are tufaceous, some of these deposits from the Mendip area have been radiocarbon dated to the Late Mesolithic period or earlier (SWARF, 2008, p 68). In recognition of the special qualities and features, the Mendip Hills have been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) although this designation is currently restricted to the western part of the hills.

Caves are a significant feature of the Mendip landscape, they are ancient landforms and appear in many forms and shapes, for the purposes of this overview they are defined as naturally created subterranean voids; they can be horizontal, vertical or a combination of both, and have been used or adapted by humans, or they could be natural trapping places that might contain evidence for human activity. The caves may be empty, or partially or wholly infilled with sediment, rock debris and/or water. Vertical fissures are usually related to cave systems where they can provide an access route to horizontal passages and/or chambers; fissures can also occur separately as unrelated features. In addition to the caves and fissures in the gorges, combs and exposed cliff faces of Mendip, rockshelters might also be found. A rockshelter can be defined as an area beneath a natural overhang or rock-face that might have been used by humans, often they are more open to the elements and daylight than caves, and the distinction between an open air locale and a rockshelter can often be blurred. An overhang can provide some of the properties of caves as well as those of an open air locale (Mlekuž, 2012). Platforms outside caves and rockshelters, as well as the areas of talus or scree and tipped material from previous excavations, can all contain archaeologically significant material (Andrews, 2011) and therefore, might warrant some further attention.



An active swallet (sinkhole) in Longwood valley in the Mendip Hills.

The cave environment.

Caves are dynamic environments; as habitats they have certain environmental properties that distinguish them from the surrounding landscape, they are cooler in summer and warmer in winter; the ambient temperature and humidity levels within British caves are reasonably constant with temperatures generally between 10°C and 13°C throughout the year (Bryant, 2011). In deeper caves, the limited penetration of daylight creates zones of twilight and darkness where shadows abound; caves can be perceived as unusual, liminal places in many societies and are often used for burial and ritual (Schulting, 2005). Caves, in particular those into which water entered, might have been regarded as gateways to the underworld or places that link to ancestors, perhaps seen as the beginning of a journey for the deceased. On the other hand, those caves and springs from which water emerges might have been thought of as a new beginning, a new life emerging beginning its life journey. Lewis (2000) suggests that a number of swallets were used for rituals involving the deposition of human remains during the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age on Mendip and, later suggests that there might be a link between swallets with artificial pits and monuments elsewhere in the landscape, both in terms of the material that is placed within them and of their spatial relationship within the landscape (Lewis, 2005). For example, the Priddy Circles are situated in an area where there are numerous natural sinkholes as described by Stanton (1986) and following an archaeological excavation carried out in 2013 (as yet unpublished) it would appear that some of these

sinkholes have been incorporated into the ditch construction of the monument and it is suggested that the sinkholes formed an integral part of the ditch.



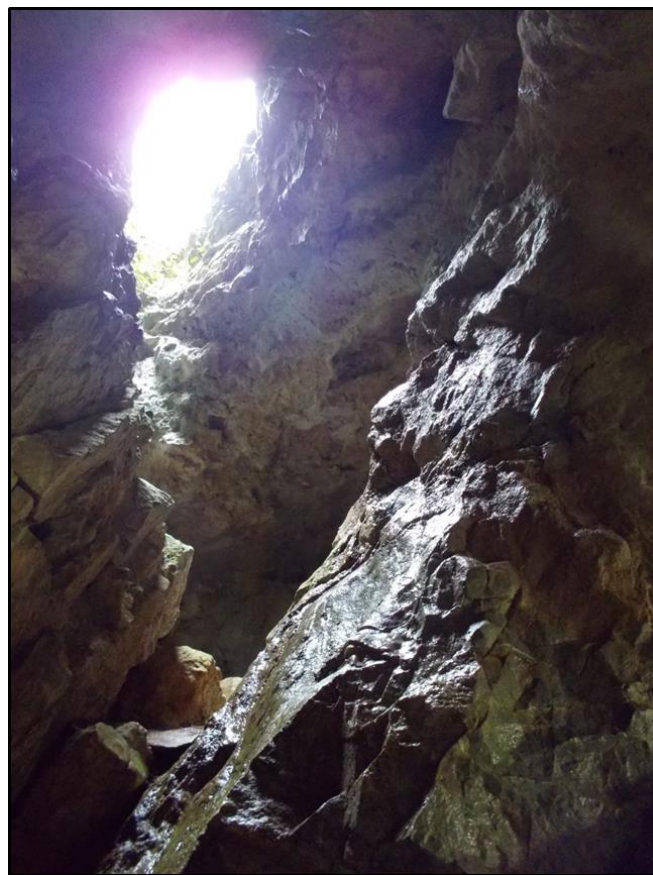
A sinkhole partially exposed in the ditch of Priddy Circle No. 1 during an archaeological excavation carried out in October 2013

Water is of fundamental practical and ideological significance. It can sustain life, it has reflective qualities acting as a mirror of life and, ultimately it can take life away (Pryor, 2003, p182) Rivers were being used for navigation; for the transportation of goods, both downstream and upstream; settlements initially would have been placed within close proximity of the river access, rivers might have marked boundaries. People are naturally curious and it seems likely that rivers would have been followed upstream to their sources, at springs or at resurgences. Mobile groups on hunting and gathering forays to the uplands following the animal herds the water might have been seen to enter the ground and disappear. Rivers are frequently found near prehistoric religious or ceremonial sites (Pryor, 2003). They are significant, symbolic features in the landscape, continually flowing in the same direction, permanent in living memory and in folklore. Could it be that caves, also permanent features within the landscape and, perhaps associated with rivers, where water enters the underworld and then, at some other place the water resurges, are regarded with the same significance it being thought that whatever enters will eventually return - refreshed, new.

Experiences within the cave environment.

The thoughts below are drawn from my own experiences as a modern western human who has been exploring caves for several decades using light sources designed for underground

exploration and wearing clothing fit for purpose. It is difficult, if not impossible to imagine what people from the past felt as they ventured into the subterranean world of caves; were they, at times just as curious, feeling an urge to explore the passages and chambers ahead and pushing ever deeper into the darkness. Were they intrigued by the shadows dancing in the flickering light of their tallow lamps? Anyone who has spent time looking at the art they created in some caves cannot help but be amazed at the animation and incredible movement captured in the figures that they created. Did the way that the experiences people felt while being in caves influence the way they created their art. Sadly, such dramatic cave art is not to be found in the caves of Mendip although a few examples of portable art have been recovered and a few scratch marks have been identified in Aveline's Hole that might be dated to the Mesolithic by association (Mullan and Wilson, 2004).



Inside Bracelet Cave sunlight enters from an upper entrance illuminating the rocks below.

Entry into the cave environment creates a range of differing experiences, both physical and psychological. In some caves there may be an eerie silence broken occasionally by the drip of water into a dark pool, a mist may be seen rising from an entrance, some caves have air movement within them and this might have its own sound and feel, whispering, fleeting; in other caves there might be a staleness of the air within, clammy, a sense of age. From experience, being alone in a cave highlights sounds and feelings, you can hear your own heartbeat, pounding, certainly after exertion and your imagination becomes heightened. In an

active cave with a stream flowing there is a gurgling, babbling sound, a movement of cool air drawn along by the water, where you stop, imagining that you have heard voices behind you or in the distance; then you come to realise, it is only the stream talking, whispering in the shadows. There is an echo of footsteps as pebbles and cobbles move under your feet; grinding, clanking, almost metallic. The effort of movement is enhanced as you progress; stretching, stooping, climbing, stumbling, faltering, at times you wonder if you will find the way; you get hot, sweaty, there is apprehension as you squeeze through the narrow passages, the rock is hard, cold, abrasive, unmoving and yet, it can be comforting and, at times, present itself as a canvas to be adorned. Then there are the natural formations, crystal white, reflecting and refracting light, glistening drips of water, there are shadowy shapes and figures hidden in the recesses of your lights range. In the total darkness of the cave around you are confined within the bubble of your light source, those you might be with are seen to be restricted in their own bubbles of light. At the end of your journey through the cave you emerge into wide open space, there is the sky, whether sunshine or stars, it is endless. There is often a dramatic change in temperature, the air that you breathe is different; there is relief, a feeling of satisfaction, freedom.

The use of caves.

It might well be that we in our western 21st century minds attach too much romanticism or mysticism to the way we believe ancient peoples regarded caves; they may well have been far more pragmatic than we give them credit for. That aside, there may be many reasons why people entered caves but, their use as a source of shelter is perhaps obvious, and the artefacts and human remains that have been recovered from numerous cave sites on Mendip and elsewhere have been interpreted as indicators for a range of functions that were practised within and around caves and karstic features.

During the Quaternary caves are known to have served as residencies for a variety of creatures including hyenas, bears, lions, smaller mammals, and birds. They also provided an opportunity for humans, not only for shelter but a diverse range of functions, be it domestic, economic, or ritual and funerary. Caves represent important archaeological resources given the often abundant and varied materials that have been deposited in them, in particular by prehistoric peoples (Manem, 2012). As caves become filled with sediments over time then any materials brought in by human occupants will become part of the stratified deposit and might include lithics, bones, pottery, charcoal from hearths and food refuse. The excavation of these deposits can reveal information regarding any past human occupancy and the environmental conditions at that particular time. Human populations might be thought to have a 'catchment' analogous to river or lake catchments; for example, where the remains found within the cave deposits are seen to be representative of the wider area that has been exploited by the human occupants, such as the hunting and gathering territory that surrounds the site. The nature of the territory around an archaeological site can provide important data that aids an interpretation of the record of economic activities preserved in seeds and bones (Roberts, 1989, 1998). Early prehistoric settlements associated with hunter-gatherer groups in general appear to be temporary, although a particular site might have been revisited on a regular, seasonal basis, and frequently made use of the natural rock shelters and caves. The

excavation of cave sediments most usually focuses on the identification of these activity areas, and sets out to establish whether occupation was regular, intermittent or even a one-off occurrence (Greene, 2011). For example, the animal assemblage recovered from Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet, although it had possibly been placed in a ritualistic context, might be seen to indicate a Late Neolithic settlement site nearby and the wider contacts of groups are indicated by the finds recovered of flint, beach shell and amber, the latter originating from the east coast, the flint coming from the Wessex area and shells from distant fossil beaches (Ellis, 1992). Table 1 below presents more details of caves where human remains have been recovered.

Site Name	Burials (minimum number of individuals)	¹⁴C date (uncalibrated) and/or inferred date
Aveline's Hole	21+ (16 adults, 5 juveniles)	9114 BP (BM-471); 9100 BP (OxA-800); 8860 BP (OxA-801); 8740 BP (OxA-1070) on human bone 9090 BP (Q-1458) on mixed bone sample; 8100 BP (GrN-5393) on stalagmite inside human skull; 9210 BP to 8890 BP (18 samples) (GrA-22421-GrA22605) on human bone
Badger Hole	3 (1 adult, 2 children)	Early Mesolithic and Medieval; 9060 BP (OxA-679); 9360 BP (OxA-1459) on human bone; 1380 BP (OxA-680) on human bone
Beaker Shelter	4+	Neolithic or Early Bronze Age
Bleadon Cavern	1+	Not dated
Bone Hole	18 (13 adult, 5 juvenile)	Not dated
Bracelet Cave	9+	Bronze Age or Romano-British
Bridged Pot Shelter	?1+	Neolithic or Early Bronze Age
Brimble Pit Swallet	?	Neolithic
Browne's Hole	1+	Not dated
Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet	30+	Early Bronze Age and Iron Age; 3790 BP (OxA-1559), 3760 BP (OxA-1560), 2145 BP (SRR-3450) on human bone 3870 BP (OxA-1561), 3245 BP (BM-731), 4340 BP (SRR-3452), 4130 BP

		(SRR-3449), 3615 BP (SRR-3451), 3605 BP (OxA-9862) on animal bone
Chelm's Shelter	Combe 5 (3 adults, 2 children)	Neolithic; 4680 BP (BM-2974) on hum Fan bone; 10,190 BP (BM-2318); 10,220 BP (BM-2431); 10,140 to 10,910 BP (OxA-1781 to 1785) on animal bone from layers below Holocene deposits
Cockle's Wood:		
Upper Cave	2	Neolithic
Lower Cave	2+ (adults)	Neolithic or Bronze Age
Cooper's Hole	1+	Not dated
Dinder Wood Shelter	1 (juvenile)	Not dated
Flint Jack's Cave	4	4430 BP (BM-2839) on human bone
Gough's Cave	5+ (4 adults, 1 child)	Late Upper Palaeolithic, Early Mesolithic and Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age; 12,570 BP (OxA-3414), 11,480 (OxA-2234), 11,820 (OxA-2795), 11,990 (OxA-2235), 11,700 (OxA-2236), 12,300 (OxA-2237), 12,380 (OxA-2796), 9100 BP (OxA-814), 9080 BP (BM-525), 2850 BP (OxA-1202) on human bone
Hansdown Swallet	1	Not dated
Hay Wood Rock Shelter	10+	Neolithic; 4674 to 5052 BP (OxA-5844, 19768, 19906-19917) on human bones
Hope Wood Hole (Cook's Hill Hole)	? 9 (7 adults 2 juvenile)	Bronze Age
Kid's Hole	1 (juvenile)	Not dated
Little Cave	1	Not dated
Long Hole (The Slitter)	1	Not dated
Outlook Cave	1+	Neolithic?

Picken's Hole	1	Neolithic: 4800 BP (OxA-5865) on human tooth
Read's Cavern (Keltic Cavern)	4+ (3 adults, 1 child)	Iron Age
Rowberrow Cavern	1+	Not dated
St. Cuthbert's Swallet	1	Late Iron Age 2023 BP (SUERC-50796)
Savory's Hole	1+	Not dated
Stoke Lane Slocker	2	Not dated
Sun Hole (Sheep Hole)	4+ (2 adults, 2 juveniles)	Palaeolithic and Neolithic or Early Bronze Age; 10,110 BP (Birm-819), 10,280 BP (Birm-820), 10,470 (Birm-821) on animal bone. 12,210 BP (OxA-535) on human bone; 12,378 BP (BM-524) on Ursus bone from underlying levels
Tom Tivey's Hole	1 (adult)	Neolithic or Bronze Age
Totty Pot	1+	Early Mesolithic and Neolithic; 8180 BP (BM-2973), 8245 BP (OxA-16457) on human bone; 4008 BP to 4706 BP (OxA-16,458 to 16,462) on human bone
Tynning's Great Swallet	3	Iron Age; 2254 BP (OxA-15350) on human bone
Ubley Hill Pot	4+	Not dated
Uphill Quarry Caves	7+	Middle Palaeolithic and Romano-British; 28080 (OxA-8408) on bone point from Uphill 8; 1710 BP (OxA-4022) on human bone from Uphill 2
White Cliff Cave	1+	Not dated

Data source: Chamberlain, A.T., 2014 accessed at <http://caveburial.ubss.org.uk>

'+' sign indicates that the estimate is a minimum number, normally calculated from the most frequently represented skeletal element

Table 1. Mendip cave sites where human remains have been found. These remains might be seen as evidence for the occupation, funerary or ritualistic use of cave sites by humans.

It is likely that some of the recovered material that has not been securely radiocarbon dated might be subject to a re-interpretation of the estimated dates, particularly those dated by association with other finds, i.e. pottery.



Herbert Ernest Balch (1869-1929) founded the [now] Wells and Mendip Museum in 1894. (image from www.wellsmuseum.org.uk/the-society)

Some notable Mendip cavers and cave archaeologists.

Many cavers and archaeologists have expressed an interest and affection for the archaeology of Mendip caves and karst, both in the past and at present, and hopefully the list will continue to grow into the future. Those named below are chosen because they represent a continuation of exploration, excavation and study of Mendip cave sites from the 19th century to the 21st century and much of their published works [together with other contributors] form the background for further research both now and in the future.

Professor Sir William Boyd Dawkins (1837–1929) was a British geologist and archaeologist. He was a member of the Geological Survey of Great Britain, Curator of the Manchester Museum and Professor of Geology at Owens College, Manchester. He is noted for his research on fossils and the antiquity of man. In 1859 he moved to Somerset to study classics with the vicar of Wookey. On hearing of the discovery of bones by local workmen he led excavations in the area of the Hyena Den at Wookey Hole Caves. He also excavated Aveline's Hole, expanding its entrance and naming it after his mentor William Talbot Aveline. His work led to the discovery of the first evidence for use by Palaeolithic man in the Caves of the Mendip Hills. Among a number of other publications covering a range of subjects, including Pleistocene mammals and discoveries at Creswell Crags in Derbyshire, his well-known book *Cave Hunting* was published in 1874.

Herbert Ernest Balch (1869–1958) was an English archaeologist, naturalist, caver and geologist who explored the Mendip Hills' underground labyrinths and pioneered many of the techniques used by modern cavers. Due to his success in later life there is now a street, Balch Road, named after him within the city of Wells. Balch was born in Wells, Somerset on 4 November 1869, and gained a scholarship to The Blue School in Wells. He left school at 14 and became messenger boy at Wells post office and then working his way up to postmaster. In 1894, Balch established the Wells Museum, which is now known as the Wells and Mendip Museum. Balch's fine collection of local artefacts and memorabilia still form the core of the museum's displays, which retains the best qualities of a private Victorian collection. He rose to become president of the Wells Natural History and Archaeological Society. Balch conducted excavations in conjunction with the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society such as Chelm's Combe Cave in Cheddar Gorge. The most famous site that Balch excavated was Wookey Hole Caves, where he led excavations of the entrance passage (1904–15), Witch's Kitchen and Hell's Ladder (1926-1927) and the Badger Hole (1938-1954). Balch was a member of caving clubs such as the Wessex Cave Club. He was a serious speleologist and often made ten-hour trips wearing cloth cap, old suit and tie. His publications include *The Netherworld of Mendip: Explorations in the Great Caverns of Somerset, Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Elsewhere*, 1907; *Wookey Hole; Its Caves and Cave Dwellers*, 1914; *The Caves of Mendip*, 1926; *Mendip-the Great Cave of Wookey Hole*, 1929; *Mendip-Cheddar, its Gorge and Caves*, 1935 and *Mendip: its swallets, caves and rock shelters* in 1937.

Ernest Kingsley Tratman (1899-1978) was a caver and archaeologist and a long-time member of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society. Not only was he involved in the exploration of a number of cave sites, e.g. Read's Cavern and Sun Hole, he also excavated at

open air sites such as Gorsey Bigbury and Priddy Circles. He published his fieldwork articles and reports extensively in the *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society* between 1922 and 1973. Tratman was involved in the archaeological excavation and interpretation of a number of sites ranging from the Palaeolithic to the Roman period. He was by profession a dentist and as such he took a particular interest in the identification and examination of teeth found during excavations. A bibliography of E.K. Tratman's considerable list of publications was compiled by R.J.G. Savage (1980) and published in the UBSS Proceedings and is available on the UBSS website at www.ubss.org.uk



Professor Tratman excavating at Wookey Hole in 1978.

(Image by courtesy of the CJ Hawkes collection)

Christopher John Hawkes (1930-2013) was an active member of the Wessex Cave Club, University of Bristol Spelaeological Society and Wells Natural History and Archaeological

Society. He was Curator of the UBSS Museum from 1982 to 2008 and was also Honorary Curator of Collections at the Wells and Mendip Museum where, at both sites, he was adept at putting researchers and collections in contact. He was involved in a number of important archaeological excavations at Hyena Den, Rhinoceros Hole and the fourth chamber of Wookey Hole, where he dug with E.K. Tratman and others, and Totty Pot in Cheddar; he also collected specimens from Westbury Quarry. In the 1980's he was involved with the excavations at Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet. Unfortunately, he did not put pen to paper often and his publication record reflects this, although he did co-author a number of reports in the *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society* including: Hawkes, C.J., Powers, R., and Tratman, E.K., 1970. *Decorated piece of rib bone from the Palaeolithic levels at Gough's Cave, Cheddar, Somerset*; Hawkes, C.J., Rogers, J.M., and Tratman, E.K., 1979. *Romano-British cemetery in the fourth chamber of Wookey Hole Cave, Somerset*; Colcutt, S.N., Carrant, A.P., and Hawkes, C.J., 1981. *A further report on the excavations at Sun Hole, Cheddar*; Audsley, A., Hawkes, C.J., Levitan, B.M., Moody, A.A.D., Moody, P.D., Smart, P.L., and Thomas, J.S., 1988. *Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet: Exploration, geomorphology, taphonomy and archaeology*; Hawkes, C.J., and Jacobi, R.M., 1993. *Archaeological Notes - Work at the Hyaena Den, Wookey Hole*; Colcutt, S.N., Carrant, A.P., Hawkes, C.J., Proctor, C.J., and Roe, D.A., 1996. *A report on the excavations at Rhinoceros Hole, Wookey*; Gardiner, P.J., Hawkes, C.J., Murray, E., and Schulting, R., 2010. *The Mesolithic- Neolithic human bone assemblage from Totty Pot*.



Chris Hawkes in Wookey Hole

(image by courtesy of the CJ Hawkes collection)

A chronological framework.

Below is a chronological framework for British archaeology as used by the *British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography*, a service that is provided by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) The periods for Ireland and Highland Scotland during the time of the Roman occupation of lowland Britain have been omitted as they are not relevant to a Mendip chronology (<http://www.biab.ac.uk/pages/chronology>).

PERIOD	ABBREV.	SPAN
Palaeolithic	Pal	500 000→10 000 BC
Lower Palaeolithic	LP	500 000→70 000 BC
Middle Palaeolithic	MP	70 000→35 000 BC
Upper Palaeolithic	UP	35 000→10 000 BC
<i>Early Upper Palaeolithic</i>		<i>35 000→20 000 BC</i>
<i>Last Glacial</i>		<i>23 000→15 000 BC</i>
<i>Late Upper Palaeolithic</i>		<i>15 000→10 000 BC</i>
Mesolithic	Meso	10 000→4000 BC
Early Mesolithic		10 000→8000 BC
Late Mesolithic		8000→4000 BC
Neolithic/Beaker	Neo	4000→2300 BC
Early Neolithic		4000→3400 BC
Middle Neolithic		
Late Neolithic		3400→2300 BC
Bronze Age	BA	2300→700 BC
Early Bronze Age	EBA	2300→1200 BC
Middle Bronze Age	MBA	
Late Bronze Age	LBA	1200→700 BC
Iron Age (lowland Britain)	IA	700 BC→AD 43
Early Iron Age	EIA	700→400 BC
Middle Iron Age	MIA	400→100 BC

Late Iron Age	LIA	100 BC→AD 43
Roman period	Rom	AD 43→450
Romano-British	RB	AD 43→450
Migration, Early Medieval, Early Christian	MEM	AD 450→1066
Medieval	Med	AD 1066→1547
Post-medieval/Industrial/recent		AD 1547→present
Post-medieval	post-med	AD 1547→present
Industrial	Ind	AD 1700→present
Modern	Mod	1901→present

The South Western Archaeological Research Framework (SWARF, 2008) however, refers to recent discoveries that indicate that the earliest hominin presence in Britain dates back to either c.680 000 BP or c.750 000 BP, a date of c.700 000 BP is therefore accepted as the beginning of the British Lower Palaeolithic. The key periods as defined in SWARF are as follows:

Lower Palaeolithic	700 000→250/200 000 BP
Middle Palaeolithic	250/200/000→40 000 BP
Upper Palaeolithic	40 000→10 000 BP
Early Mesolithic	10 000→8500 BP
Later Mesolithic	8500→5500 BP

Table 2. A chronological framework for British archaeology as used by the CBA.

A timeline for the archaeology of Mendip caves and karst.

The following timeline sets out to briefly review the record of the human use of Mendip caves and karstic features. The periods covered range from the Palaeolithic through to Modern cave usage; a more comprehensive description of individual caves can be found in the section headed ‘Descriptions of Mendip caves with a focus on archaeological interest’ at the end of this overview.

Palaeolithic:

Evidence for the Lower Palaeolithic period has not yet been positively identified at any Mendip cave site. The lithic collection recovered from Westbury cave has been described in

detail by Cook (1999) and he reaches the conclusion that the Westbury finds are probably not humanly manufactured artefacts, suggesting the material has been naturally modified. The recognition of butchery marks on a deer bone from the same site, however might indicate human intervention and evidence for hominid activity in the area (Macphail and Goldberg, 1999).

The earliest known records of human use of caves on Mendip are from the Middle Palaeolithic period which is represented at a number of cave sites; for example, at Rhinoceros Hole and Hyena Den in Wookey Hole, where Mousterian artefacts and a rich faunal record were recovered; in the lower of two caves exposed at Uphill quarry; and possibly at Picken's Hole located in Compton Bishop (Jacobi, 2000). Although the chert used at Uphill originated from the Cretaceous Lower Greensand there is a remarkable similarity of the artefacts from Uphill and Hyena Den and this might suggest the same group were actively using both sites, with Picken's Hole being utilised as an intermediary site (Jacobi, 2000). The Middle Palaeolithic artefacts recovered from Hyena Den including small bifaces and notched, denticulated flakes can indicate the potential activities that were occurring at the cave. There are many sharp un-retouched flakes and intuitively the lithics could be interpreted as well adapted to butchery and the working and repointing of wooden tools such as spears and digging sticks. There is also a fragment possibly from a scraper that has been broken into more than three parts by an early explorer of the cave. An abundance of bone charcoal might indicate the former existence of hearths. Jacobi (2000) suggests that the Middle Palaeolithic users of the cave were almost certainly Neanderthals.



Some of the stone assemblage recovered from Westbury Quarry Cave.

(Image by courtesy of the CJ Hawkes collection)

The Upper Palaeolithic archaeology of Britain can be divided into an Early Upper Palaeolithic phase prior to the Last Glacial Maximum at c.18,000 BP and a Late Upper Palaeolithic phase, characterised by bifacial and unifacial leaf points. On Mendip a number of leaf points have been recovered from cave sites, such as Soldier’s Hole in Cheddar and from Badger Hole at Wookey Hole. It is not known whether these leaf points were produced by the last Neanderthals or by the earliest anatomically modern humans or, possibly by both (SWARF, 2008, p 35-36). The appearance of the Aurignacian represents a radical departure from the preceding Mousterian toolmaking technology and the beginning of the time of anatomically Modern Humans (Papagianni and Morse, 2015). A partial lozenge-shaped bone or antler point recovered from Uphill Quarry represents the only clearly Aurignacian artefact from the British Isles. It has been dated to 31,730±250 BP (OxA-13716) although another bone or antler point from Hyena Den has been dated to 31,550±340 BP (OxA-13803). Pollen analyses of the Upper Palaeolithic deposits from Sun Hole, Cheddar and from Wookey Hole have indicated a cold environment, the Sun Hole deposits are thought to extend into Early Post-glacial levels (SWARF, 2008, p 28). Archaeological excavations carried out at Badger Hole have uncovered Early Upper Palaeolithic finds that include leaf points and other lithic tools, including scrapers, awls and saws; there are also Palaeolithic animal remains including mammoth, woolly rhinoceros and hyena.

One of the key features of Palaeolithic archaeology is the presence of a significant cave-based resource within the Mendip Hills that is of national importance (SWARF, 2008, p 23). In Burrington Combe, Aveline’s Hole was used by groups of hunters during the Late Upper Palaeolithic; and other cave sites that were utilised during this period include Chelm’s Combe Shelter, Flint Jack’s Cave in Cheddar and Savory’s Hole in Ebbor Gorge. More details of these sites are presented in Table 3.

Cave	Phase	Bone	Flint/Stone/Other
Aveline’s Hole	Late Upper Palaeolithic (Creswellian)	human? and animal	
Badger Hole	Early Upper Palaeolithic		flint scrapers, awls, saws and leaf points
Bracelet Cave	Upper Palaeolithic		2no. chert blades
Browne’s Hole	Upper Palaeolithic		flint blade and flakes
Chelm’s Combe Shelter	Late Palaeolithic	human	
Flint Jack’s Cave	Late Palaeolithic	human	flints (Cheddarian)
Gough’s Cave	Late Upper Palaeolithic	human and animal including worked	flint tools and

		ivory and antler	worked amber
Hutton Cave [Cavern]	Upper Palaeolithic	animal	flints?
Hyaena Den	Late Middle and Early Upper Palaeolithic	animal including 2no. bone arrowheads, also fish bones	flakes, scrapers and axes of flint and chert
Pickens Hole Cave	Upper Palaeolithic	human [teeth] and animal	flint flakes
Rhinoceros Hole	Middle Palaeolithic		hand-axe and thinning flakes
Savory's Hole	Late Upper Palaeolithic?	human? and animal	
Soldier's Hole	Late Palaeolithic?	animal including bone implements	Proto-Solutrean and Cheddarian flints, leaf points
Sun Hole	Upper Palaeolithic	animal	Cheddarian flints
Uphill Quarry Caves	Middle and Upper Palaeolithic (Aurignacian)	human? and animal including bone/antler point	Proto-Solutrean? flints and other flints
Westbury Quarry Caves	Lower Palaeolithic?	animal (Cromerian)	poor quality stone implements, 2no. bifacially worked

? denotes some uncertainty with regard to the record.

Table 3. Mendip caves where evidence for human usage during the Palaeolithic period has been found.

Britain then appears to have been abandoned during the Last Glacial Maximum and re-colonisation after the cold period seems to begin around 13,000 BP. This Late Upper Palaeolithic phase may have been staggered involving both pioneering and residential stages. The majority of find spots are identified by a presence of distinctive, abruptly modified (backed) lithic tool forms and these changed during the interstadial. In the first half of the interstadial they take the form of Cheddarian, Creswellian and shouldered points and they have been associated with those of the contemporary continental Magdalenian. This technology has been recorded in Mendip caves at Gough's Cave, Soldier's Hole and Sun Hole in Cheddar. The technologies in the second half of the interstadial are less easy to define, but the abruptly modified components include curve- and straight-backed blades and points and include 'penknife points'. Lithics that belong to the most recent part of the interstadial have been found at Aveline's Hole (SWARF, 2008, p 36). The artefact

assemblages from the cave sites have been analysed and an interpretation of the activities being performed in the caves can be made. Horse remains found at Gough's Cave have indicated intense carcass processing and usage during the Creswellian, with cut marks indicating meat filleting, removal of marrow and soft tissues, skinning and the removal of hooves and tendons. Tooth eruption data provide evidence of seasonality with the red deer at Gough's Cave being killed in winter or early spring, perhaps suggesting seasonal occupation and use of sites.

Cut marks and breakage of human bones, and their disposal among the remains of other species interpreted as food debris, suggest a high probability that cannibalism occurred (SWARF, 2008, p 37). Recent work by Bello et.al. (2015) at Gough's Cave regarding Upper Palaeolithic ritualistic cannibalism has shown there is considerable evidence for defleshing, disarticulation, chewing, crushing of spongy bone, and the cracking of bones to extract marrow. The presence of human tooth marks on many of the postcranial bones examined provides more evidence for cannibalism taking place within the cave site. A detailed reanalysis of the cranial remains show that these have been modified to make skull-cups. This practice at Gough's Cave has parallels with other Magdalenian sites in central and western Europe perhaps suggesting that cannibalism during the Magdalenian was part of a customary mortuary practice combining the processing and consumption of human bodies with ritual use of skull-cups.

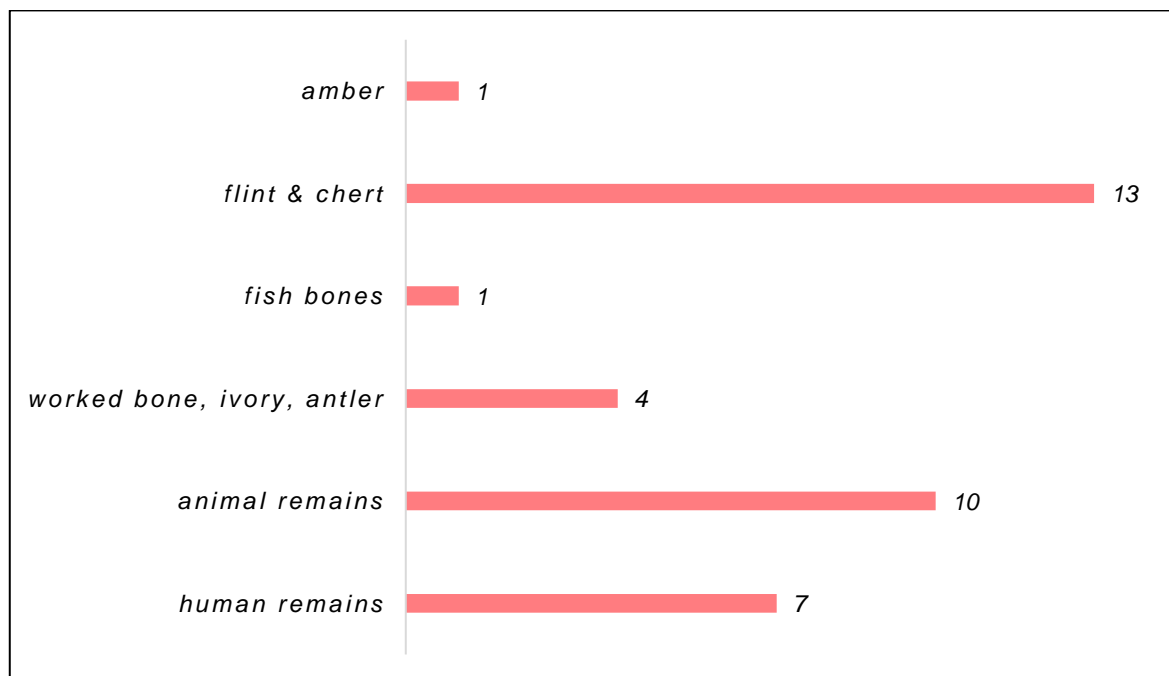


Chart 2. Artefactual evidence for the human use of cave sites during the Palaeolithic period from 16 recorded sites.

The artefactual evidence presented above shows that flints and/or chert was recovered at 13 of the 16 recorded sites representing an 81.25% probability of being found in caves utilised

during this period on Mendip; animal bone was recorded at 10 sites (62.50%); human remains at 7 sites (43.75%); worked bone, ivory and/or antler at 4 sites (25%) with fish bones and worked amber being recovered at 1 site apiece (6.25% each).

There is, at present, little evidence for Upper Palaeolithic art in Britain although evidence in the South West is keenly being sought. There has been some suggested portable art found where a few groups of incisions, of unknown significance, exist on an awl made from the tibia of a hare, along with a length of rib bone and possible fragments of mammoth ivory found in Gough's Cave.

The Late Glacial archaeological record for Britain was probably interrupted by a short period of abandonment during the extreme cold of the Younger Dryas c.12,800 – 11,500 BP, with humans reappearing around 10,200 BP and as yet a human presence in the South West has yet to be identified (SWARF, 2008, p 36-37).

The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic both fall within the Quaternary period; which is further divided into the Pleistocene and Holocene epochs. The Late Upper Palaeolithic to Early Mesolithic transition at c. 10 000 BP broadly marks the beginning of the Holocene (SWARF, 2008, p 23-24).

Mesolithic:

Typically, the Mesolithic in Britain has been divided into two phases: the Early Mesolithic c.10,000 BP→8500 BP and the Late Mesolithic c.8500→6000 BP. It has recently been suggested that the non-uniform nature of the Early Mesolithic, in lithic terms, is not represented by a single, monolithic assemblage type. The Early Mesolithic is characterised by “broad blade assemblages” featuring obliquely blunted points. These Early Mesolithic lithics are succeeded by “narrow blade assemblages” featuring relatively small microlith forms such as needle points and scalene triangles of the Late Mesolithic, this new technology might suggest that different hunting strategies were being adopted. Although microliths dominate the majority of Late Mesolithic assemblages in the South West region other tool types were also significant, including scrapers, burins, awls, and flint axes/adzes and axe/adze re-sharpening flakes.

There is poor preservation of palaeoenvironmental evidence, such as pollen, for Mendip meaning that it has been difficult to reconstruct the local environment in the Mesolithic period, although animal bone that has been recovered from various cave sites can aid interpretation (Jacobi, 1982) where species type may have a preference for a particular habitat.

The cave site of Aveline's Hole in Burrington represents one of the most important Early Mesolithic burial sites in Europe (Lewis, 2011) furthermore the burials found at Aveline's Hole suggest that this was a site with a recognised and specialised function. It may be that the site was widely known, and was being used by more than one group; possibly it was regarded as a place of pilgrimage. The evidence suggests that Aveline's Hole had an extended but discontinuous human usage, firstly by groups of hunters during the Late Upper Palaeolithic

and then later as a sepulchral cave in the early part of the Mesolithic. The cave became sealed sometime during the Mesolithic, although it may have remained open, albeit temporarily, after the most recent human bones had been deposited (Jacobi, 2005). It is worth considering that during the periods of occupation a stream might well have been flowing into Aveline’s Hole giving the cave a much different perspective than it has today. A series of scratched markings have been interpreted as cave art and given that the cave was in regular use at this time the marks are suggested to be of Mesolithic age by association (Mullan and Wilson, 2004).



The entrance to Aveline’s Hole in Burrington Combe.

The most complete Mesolithic human skeleton in Britain is the “Cheddar Man”. It was discovered in 1903 by workmen who were clearing out debris in order to widen the entrance to Gough’s Cave. The remains have been dated to 8700→7750 cal BC (BM-525) (Stringer, 1986) and it has been suggested that the burial found at Gough’s New Cave has some association with those human remains found at Aveline’s Hole (Ellis, 1992).

Cave	Date	Bone	Flint/Stone/Other
Aveline’s Hole	9114±110BP to 8860±100 BP	human burials and animal including barbed harpoon head	flint assemblage, [a series of scratched

		of antler, perforated sea shell and incised teeth	markings have been interpreted as cave art and to be possibly Mesolithic age]
Badger Hole	c.7000BC	human burial	
Chelm's Combe Shelter	no date available	human and animal	
Gough's Cave	8700→7750 cal BC	human burial	
Hay Wood Cave	no date available	possible human?	microliths and other flints
Savory's Hole	LUP or Meso?	human and animal including split long bones suggested to be either LUP or Meso in date?	
Totty Pot	7450→7040 cal BC	human burials and animal remains	microlithic flint assemblage

? denotes some uncertainty with regard to the record.

Table 4. Mendip caves with evidence for human usage during the Mesolithic period.

Human bone was recovered from Totty Pot following the cave's discovery by Chris Hawkes while out on a family outing in 1960, and in the subsequent excavations by Hawkes, geologist Willie Stanton and other members of the Wessex Cave Club between 1960 and 1965. The name 'Totty Pot' originates from Chris Hawkes' daughter's inability to pronounce correctly the word 'potty' and that the said potty was then utilised as an excavation tool in the first tentative dig at the site. An estimated minimum number of four individuals were recovered, including a child, and a radiocarbon date of 7450→7040 cal BC (BM-2973) places at least one individual in the Late Mesolithic (Schulting *et. al.*, 2010) although little of the bone now survives. A later archaeological excavation by the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society around the entrance area in 1998 suggests that there was no human occupation evidence and the flint debitage that has been recovered is likely to have been the result of re-sharpening hunting tools, and the finished tools being hunting losses (SWARF, 2008, p 51). Further AMS dating confirms the Mesolithic date for the same individual, however five other individuals were dated to the Neolithic spanning much of the period ranging from 3630-3370 cal BC to 3340-3000 cal BC (Schulting, *et.al.*, 2010).

Other Mendip cave sites that were being used during the Mesolithic period include Chelm's Combe Shelter also in the Cheddar area; Badger Hole at Wookey Hole and Hay Wood Cave in Hutton, near Weston-Super-Mare, interestingly this site was much closer to the coastline and it is possible that this site was being used in conjunction with the exploitation of the

coastal resource, although there is no current evidence from the cave to support this. For more details, refer to Table 4 above.

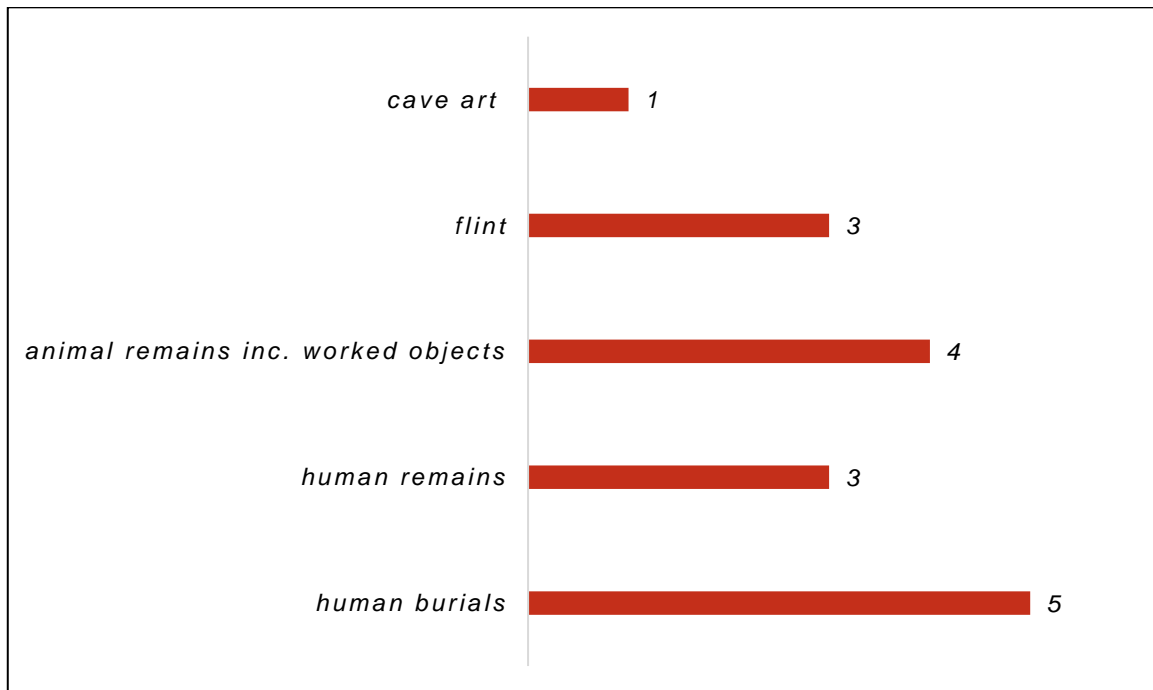


Chart 3. Artefactual evidence for the human use of cave site during the Mesolithic period from 7 recorded sites.

The artefactual evidence shows that human burials were recorded at 5 of the 7 sites representing a 71.43% probability of being found in caves utilised during the Mesolithic period; animal remains including worked object were recorded at 4 sites (57.14%); human remains were recovered at 3 sites (42.86%); flint was also recovered from 3 sites (42.86%) and cave art has been found at just 1 site (14.29%). The main evidence for the use of caves during the Mesolithic period is dominated by human burials and remains, followed by animal remains some in the form of worked objects then worked flints.

Neolithic into the Early Bronze Age:

The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age both fall within the middle of the Holocene geological period. During the course of the Neolithic there was substantial coastal change that resulted in the inundation and burial by marine and intertidal deposits of large areas of former coastline. The sea level rise may also have had a significant effect on Holocene river valley environments as the rising sea levels reduced river gradients, leading to alterations in river bed-forms (SWARF, 2008, p 63-64). This loss of land might have caused some groups to become displaced and, therefore inducing a greater mobility of people. Some of these groups might have moved towards the perceived drier, upland areas.

It is largely during the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age that the Mendip uplands become a monumental and ceremonial landscape used for ritual and burial. Bradley (1998) suggests

that ritual is a special form of communication, perhaps with the ancestors and it is clear that caves as special features in the landscape were often associated with ritualistic practices including the deposition of human remains during the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age on Mendip (Lewis, 2000). A comparison between caves and chambered tombs has been suggested by a number of authors.

Evidence for use of Mendip cave sites during the Neolithic period has been found at a number locations including: Totty Pot, Chelm's Combe Shelter, Soldier's Hole and Sun Hole in the Cheddar area; Bridged Pot Shelter, Little Shelter and Outlook Cave in Ebbor Gorge; Bos Swallet in Burrington; at Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet; Brimble Pit Swallet near Westbury Quarry; Nettlebridge Cave; Rowberrow Cavern and Tom Tivey's Hole in Asham Woods; more details are presented in Table 5 below.

Cave	Bone	Pottery	Flint	Axe
Beaker Shelter	human, faunal	Beaker		
Bone Hole	human, faunal	Beaker, other		
Bos Swallet	burnt animal bones	Beaker	leaf shaped arrowhead	
Bridged Pot Shelter		Beaker	knife	greenstone
Brimble Pit Swallet	human, domestic	Grooved Ware	barbed and tanged and petit tranchet arrowheads, retouched flakes	greenstone
Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet	Human, faunal including antler and bone points	Grooved Ware, Beaker	flints including flint dagger and "sponge finger stones"	
Chelm's Combe	human, faunal, bone points (2), polished bone pin	Windmill Hill, Beaker	scrapers	
Cockle's Wood	human, faunal	Grooved Ware, Beaker	scraper,	
Hay Wood	human, faunal	pot sherds?	flints?	
Little Shelter	human?		flints?	
Outlook Cave	human, faunal	finger nail decorated pot, black ware	leaf-shaped arrowhead	millstone grit, polished (2)
Rowberrow Cavern	faunal, partly-polished bone	Beaker, Ebbsfleet	knives, lozenge arrowhead, scrapers, borers, piercers, flakes	
Soldier's Hole		Grooved Ware	knives, scraper, saw	polished flint
Sun Hole	human? bone points and pin	Grooved Ware, Beaker	flint implements (3), scrapers, knives, point, borer, barbed and	

			tanged and leaf-shaped arrowheads, hammerstone	
Tom Tivey's Hole	human, domestic, bone points	Windmill Hill	barbed and tanged and leaf-shaped arrowheads	
Totty Pot		Windmill Hill, Beaker	barbed and tanged arrowhead	
White Woman's Hole		Grooved Ware?		

? denotes where no further information is available.

Table 5. Bone, pottery, flint and axe finds as indicators of human usage of Mendip caves and swallets throughout the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods. The transition from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age is long and there is a noticeable crossover of finds attributed to both periods. Those dates estimated from associated finds such as pottery might be subject to re-interpretation.

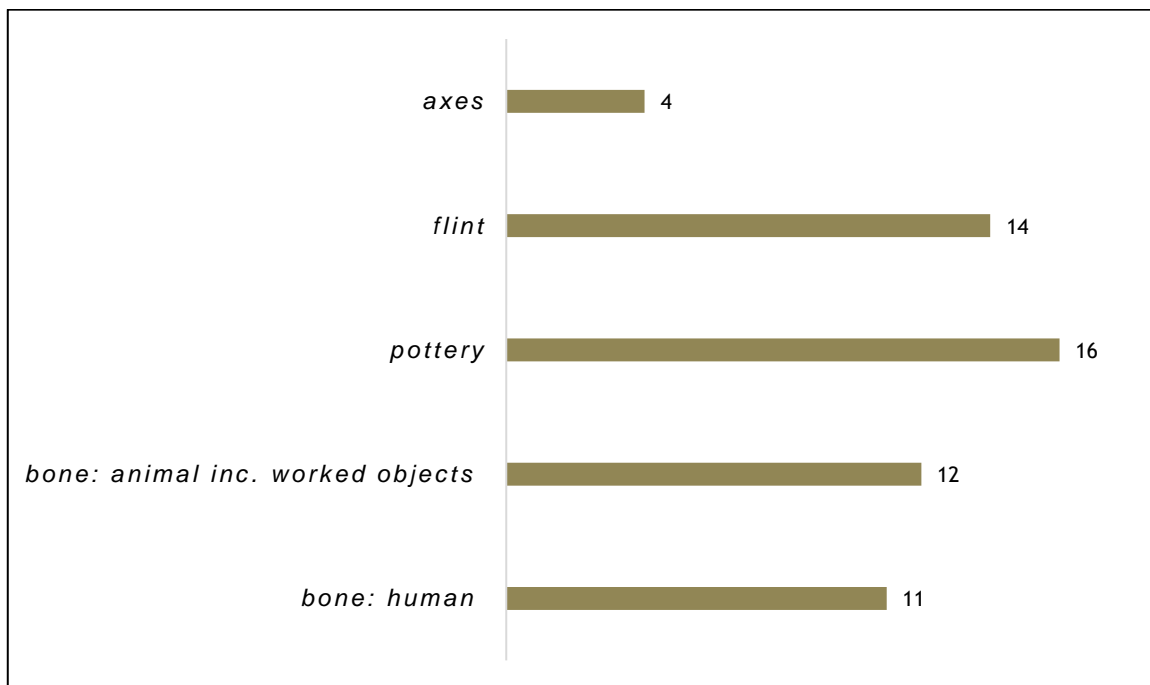


Chart 4. Artefactual evidence for the human use of caves during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods from 17 recorded sites.

The artefactual evidence presented above shows that pottery now becomes the predominant artefact recovered from cave sites being recorded at 16 of the 17 sites used during the Neolithic/Early Bronze Age representing a 94.12% probability of being found. Flint was recovered from 14 sites (83.35%); animal bone at 12 sites (70.59%); human bone at 11 sites (64.71%) and axes were found at 4 sites (23.53%).

Throughout the Neolithic caves and rockshelters on Mendip were being used, at times, for a variety of purposes not only for burial and ritual but also domestic activities. During the Early Neolithic caves appear to have been used almost entirely for burial, whereas in the Later Neolithic there is a change and a wider range of usage is apparent (Lewis, 2005) such as special deposition and/or hoarding. A number of examples of these practices have been found; for example, at Bridged Pot Shelter where a greenstone axe and flint knife were recovered; also at Outlook Cave where excavation revealed amongst other artefacts an unpolished millstone grit axe and two polished axes; at Soldier's Hole a partly polished axehead made of flint was recovered. An almost complete beaker recovered from Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet might suggest that people were deliberately lowering themselves into confined, deep, dark shafts and depositing human remains, pottery, fine flint and stone items (Lewis, 2011).

Cave assemblages, both incidental accumulations and deliberate deposits, from sites such as Rowberrow Cavern, Sun Hole, Bone Hole, Bos Swallet, Brimble Pit Swallet and Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet give an indication of the range of animals present in the 3rd millennium BC landscape. In addition to domesticates: cattle, pig and sheep; wild species such as red and roe deer, wolf, boar and aurochs were present (Lewis, 2005, cited in SWARF, 2008, p 89). One of the latest occurrences of aurochs in southern Britain comes from a skeleton that was recovered from Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet and it has been radiocarbon dated to 1620-1430 cal BC (BM-731) (Burleigh and Clutton-Brock, 1977 cited in SWARF, 2008, p 90).



Neolithic polished axehead from Brimble Pit Swallet

(Photograph by D. Mullin in Lewis, 2000)

Bronze Age:

There have been archaeological investigations at a number of the caves in Ebbor Gorge revealing evidence for Bronze Age cave usage, for example, at Beaker Shelter, Bracelet Cave and at Bridged Pot Shelter; and Bronze Age flints and pottery have been found in the Cheddar area in caves such as Chelm's Combe, Soldier's Hole, Sun Hole and Gough's Cave; although there is nothing to suggest that these caves were occupied for any length of time (SWARF, 2008, p 118). There a number of other Mendip caves with evidence of Bronze Age use including Bone Hole, also in Cheddar; at Cockles Wood Shelter and Nettlebridge Cave in the Nettlebridge area; Bos Swallet at Burrington; at Benter Cavelet, Ashwick; Brimble Pit Swallet, Westbury; Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet; Rowberrow Cavern; Tom Tivey's Hole and, possibly at Ewe Cave, Rodney Stoke. Some further details of the evidence found at these sites are presented in Table 6 below.

Cave	Bone	Pottery	Metal	Other
Beaker Shelter		Beaker (Late Neo/EBA)		
Benter Cavelet	human			
Bone Hole		Beaker (Late Neo/EBA)		
Bos Swallet		Beaker (Late Neo/EBA), MBA		burnt material including flint
Bracelet Cave	human?		gold bracelet	
Bridged Pot		Late Neo/EBA		
Brimble Pit Swallet	human?	Late Neo/EBA		
Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet	human?	Late Neo/EBA		
Chelm's Combe Shelter		Late Neo/EBA	LBA socketed spearhead	
Cockles Wood Shelter	human?	Late Neo/EBA		
Ewe Cave		BA		
Nettlebridge Cave	human?	Late Neo/EBA		
Rowberrow Cavern		Late Neo/EBA		flints
Tom Tivey's Hole			gold bracelet	barbed and tanged arrowhead
Totty Pot		EBA/MBA		barbed and tanged arrowhead

Key: Late Neo-Late Neolithic; EBA-Early Bronze Age; MBA-Middle Bronze Age; LBA-Late Bronze Age

? denotes where information is unclear.

Table 6. Bone, pottery, metal and other finds as evidence associated with human usage of Mendip caves and swallets throughout the Bronze Age period. The transition from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age is long and there is a noticeable crossover of finds attributed to both periods. Those dates estimated from associated finds such as pottery might be subject to re-interpretation.

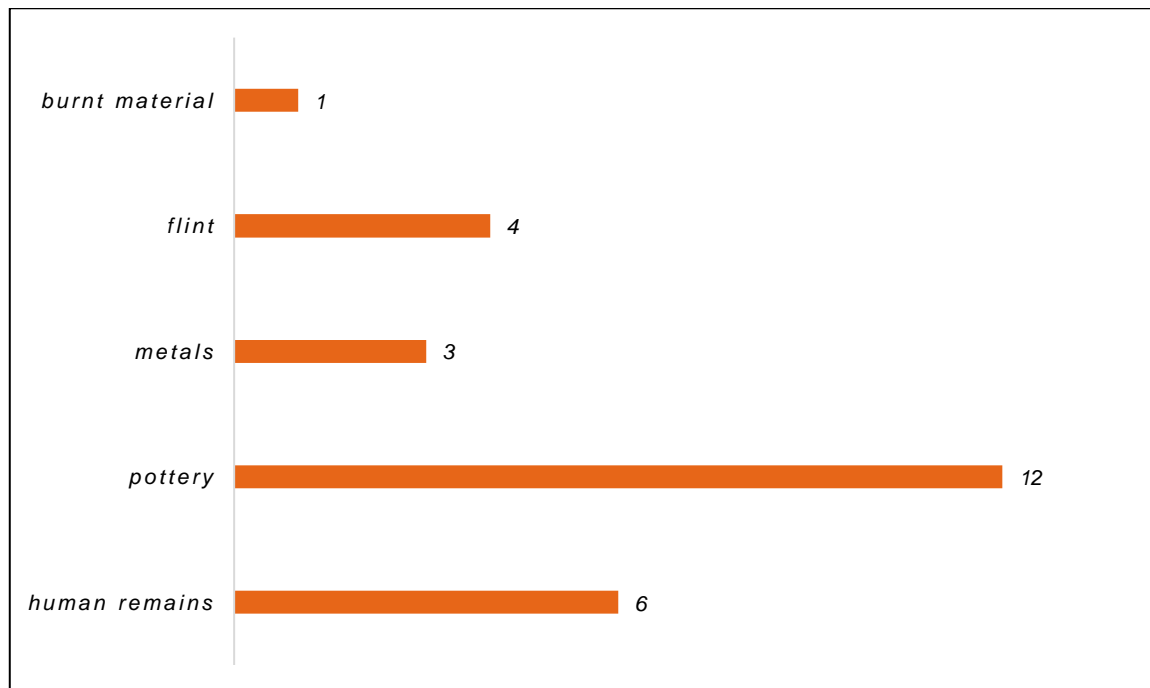


Chart 5. Artefactual evidence for the human use of cave during the Bronze Age period from 15 recorded sites.

The artefactual evidence presented above shows that pottery again predominates the record being found at 12 of the 15 sites utilised during the Bronze Age representing an 80% probability of recovery. Human remains were recorded at 6 sites (40%); flint at 4 sites (26.67%); metals at 3 sites (40%) and burnt material at 1 site (6.67%).

Iron Age into the Roman/Romano-British:

In the later prehistoric and moving towards the Roman occupation the Mendip uplands become a more industrial landscape as people become more involved in the quest for precious metals, such as iron, lead, manganese and silver. Some of these changes are noted in the evidence recovered from cave sites.

The most enduring symbols of later prehistoric occupation and settlement are the hillforts. These monuments only reflect part of the settlement history and along with enclosed and unenclosed settlements (Jamieson, 2015) there is evidence that several Mendip caves were also occupied or used in this period. Wookey Hole is of particular importance and finds there suggest that a range of activities were occurring there including possible metalworking, and perhaps occupation took place. There was also activity or occupation at Read's Cavern; Iron

Age material was recovered from Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet, Rowberrow Cavern, Chelm's Combe and Saye's Hole. Much of the evidence for the use of Mendip caves comes primarily in the form of human remains and there is evidence that metalworking was occurring; for example, at Rowberrow Cavern, where the evidence for Iron Age activity is extensive and includes pottery, metalwork and possibly iron smelting (Bryant, 2011). Although it is evident that some Mendip caves were being used for settlement, it is also apparent that some uses of these liminal places were still explicitly ritualistic in nature (SWARF, 2008, p 133).

A number of other caves have also produced evidence of use during the Iron Age, for example, at Bone Hole, Cooper's Hole, Gough's Old Cave, Soldier's Hole, Sow's Hole and Sun Hole in Cheddar. Activity was also apparent at Browne's Hole and Fairy Cave in Stoke St. Michael; College Wood Rock Shelter, Stratton on the Fosse; Cook's Hill Hole, Ebbor Gorge; Ham Hole, Croscombe; Hay Wood Cave, Hutton; Whitcombe's Hole in Burrington; and at Tom Tivey's Hole in Asham Wood. Further details regarding the use of Mendip cave sites in the Iron Age period are presented in Table 7 below.

Cave	Bone	Pottery	Metal	Other
Bone Hole	human, 12 skulls recorded	IA		
Browne's Hole		IA		undiagnostic flint
Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet	human, 28 individuals of IA/RB date			
Chelm's Combe Shelter			part of furnace and associated slag	hearth
College Wood Rock Shelter		IA		
Cook's Hill Hole	human			
Cooper's Hole		IA		
Fairy Cave		IA		
Gough's Old Cave		IA		quern stone, hearth
Gough's Cave	pierced bone	IA	bronze ring?	
Great Oone's Hole		IA		
Ham Hole		IA		
Hay Wood Cave	human and animal	IA		
Pig's Hole and Sow's Hole		IA		
Read's Cavern	human and animal	LIA	fragments of iron and bronze	clay, craft objects, hearth
Rowberrow Cavern		IA	furnace and slag, fragments of metalwork, evidence of iron	hearth

			smelting	
St. Cuthbert's Swallet	human			glass beads
Saye's Hole		LIA	fragments/broken pieces of iron and bronze	craft objects, hearth
Soldier's Hole		EIA		
Tom Tivey's Hole		IA		
Sun Hole		EIA & LIA		
Whitcombe's Hole	animal	EIA		
Wookey Hole	human and animal	IA	extensive metalwork assemblage including iron and bronze objects	craft objects, hearth

Key: IA Iron Age; EIA Early Iron Age; LIA Late Iron Age; RB Romano-British
 ? denotes where information is unclear.

Table 7. Bone, pottery, metal and other finds as evidence for human usage of Mendip caves and swallets associated with the Iron Age period. Those dates estimated from associated finds such as pottery might be subject to re-interpretation.

Some of the most important evidence has been recovered during archaeological excavations at Wookey Hole Cave where, between 1911 and 1927, Balch recorded up to 2 metres of stratified deposits, mostly of Iron Age and Romano-British date (Balch and Troup, 1911; Balch 1913;). Finds included a Roman Republican silver denarius issued by Marcia (124BC), pottery dating from the Iron Age to later Romano-British, vessels, iron and copper alloy artefacts and a sequence of Roman coins ranging from issues of Vespasian to Valentinian II (69AD –392AD). Further work by Balch in 1926-7 produced further finds, mainly of Romano-British date (Balch 1928). Investigation of the river bed within the cave by divers in 1947-9 recovered Romano-British pottery, associated with human remains. A silt bank in the previously unexplored fourth chamber, known as "Holy Hole", was investigated in 1973-6 and recovered the remains of at least 28 individuals, accompanied by Romano-British pottery, coins and metalwork of 3rd – 4th century date (Corney, 2013). This range of finds might be seen to represent a continuing period of use of the cave at Wookey Hole; there are also a number of known features in the wider landscape particularly in the area of Hole Ground to the east of the cave where there is evidence for an extensive late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement (Corney, 2013). Many of the burials had been disturbed by subsequent scouring but did include partially articulated remains including legs and feet with iron hobnails suggesting burial with shoes, a typical late Roman practice (Hawkes, Rogers and Tratman 1978; Branigan & Dearne 1992). A reappraisal of the surviving material from all of the previous investigations at Wookey Hole Cave by Branigan and Dearne (1990) recognised evidence for metalworking and the production of stone spindle whorls (Corney, 2013). In 1908, 17 feet of sediment was removed to reveal ‘an original swallet in the bottom of the valley’ at the St. Cuthbert's lead works. Near the base of the deposit was the skeleton of a woman ‘with plaited tresses of hair intact’ and four decorated glass beads of Celtic type (Robin Taviner, 2014, *pers comms*), the remains have recently been radiocarbon dated to 2023 BP (Chamberlain, *et.al.* 2014).

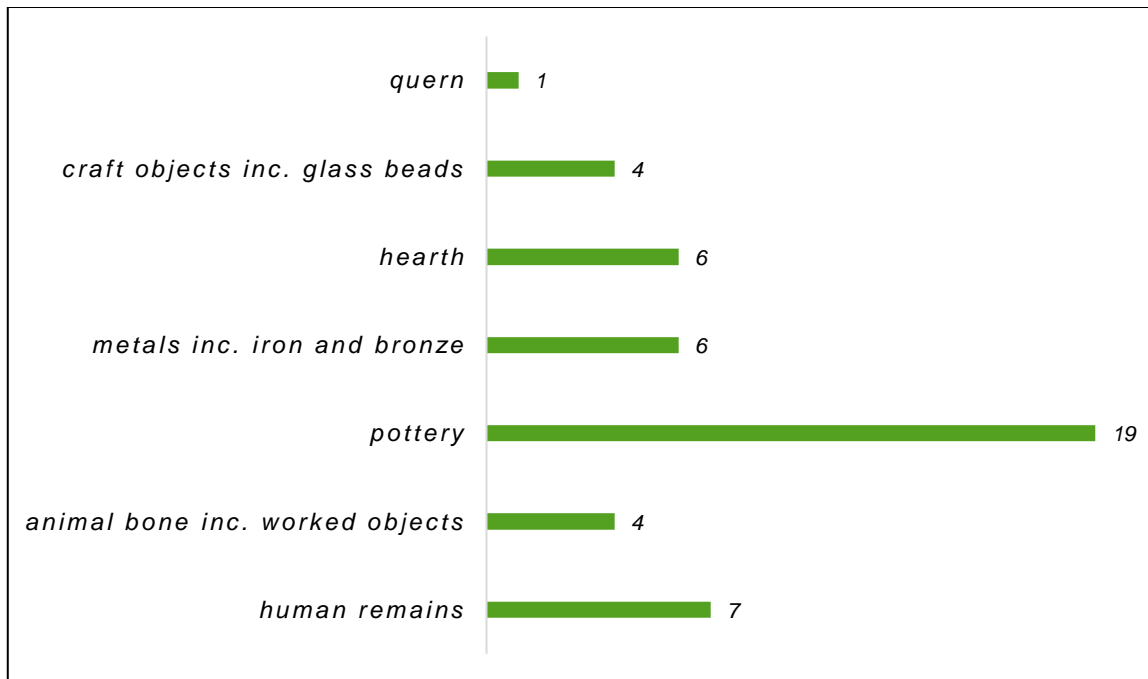


Chart 6. Artefactual evidence for the human use of caves during the Iron Age period from 23 recorded sites. Some of the human remains are suggested to be Romano-British in date (1 site).

The artefactual evidence presented above shows that pottery predominates the archaeological record with 19 of the 23 sites recovering pottery, this represents an 82.61% probability. The pottery that has been recorded ranges in date from the Early Iron Age to the Late Iron Age. Human remains were recorded at 7 sites (30.43%); metals including iron and bronze at 6 sites (20.09%); hearths were also recorded at 6 sites (20.09%); animal bone including worked objects at 4 sites (17.39%); craft objects including glass beads at 4 sites (17.39%) and a quern stone at 1 site (4.35%). The evidence presented above indicates a wider range of activities occurring in caves during the Iron Age including domestic, craft work and metal industry.

Evidence of the later Roman and Romano-British cave use has been found at Bracelet Cave and Hope Wood Hole in Ebbor Gorge; Chelm's Combe Shelter, Gough's Old Cave, Soldier's Hole and Sun Hole in Cheddar; Swildon's Hole and St Cuthbert's Swallet in Priddy; Dinder Wood Shelter; Picken's Hole Cave and Scragg's Hole on Crook Peak, Compton Bishop; Wookey Hole Cave and Hyena Den, Wookey Hole; Browne's Hole, Stoke St. Michael; College Wood Rock Shelter, Stratton on the Fosse; Hay Wood Cave, Hutton, White Woman's Hole and Tom Tivey's Hole at Asham Wood.

Saxon:

The evidence of cave use during the 'Dark Ages' is limited to a possible Saxon iron pin that has been recorded as being found at White Woman's Hole in Asham Wood.

Medieval:

During excavations carried out in the Asham Wood area, some 12th to 14th century potsherds came mainly from beyond the limits of the roof overhang indicating there was casual Medieval cave use at Tom Tivey's Hole (Barrett, 1966). Similar material has also been recovered from White Woman's Hole (Barrett *et.al.*, 1972) in the same locality.

Post-medieval:

There is evidence of Post-medieval cave usage at Nancy Camel's Hole at Croscombe where Post-medieval remains were recovered and interpreted as evidence of the alleged occupation of the cave by Nancy Camel c.1780 (ADS, 2014); and at Tom Tivey's Hole, Asham Wood where some 17th century pottery and a gold stud were found. It has also been suggested that the human skeletons discovered in the first chamber of Ubley Hill Pot might be those of miners, the victims of a murderous encounter (Smith, 1975). This would indicate that these remains can probably be dated post-1700.

There are apotropaic (ritual protection) marks in Goatchurch Cavern possibly dating from the period 1550 to 1750. Sometimes these marks are referred to as 'witch marks' (Binding and Wilson, 2004). These type of markings have also been reported at Wookey Hole and Long Hole (Binding and Wilson, 2010).

Modern:

There is evidence for modern cave use at Cook's Hill Hole, Ebbor Gorge; Denny's Hole, Compton Bishop; Dinder Wood Shelter; Hillgrove Swallet; Foxes Hole, Burrington, Great Oone's Hole, Cheddar and Tom Tivey's Hole in Asham Wood. In the majority of cases these caves were being utilised by members of the Home Guard during the WWII conflict, at a number of the sites the evidence is limited and poorly preserved.

The tradition of cave-aged [Cheddar] cheese is said to have been started in the 16th century and still continues to this day at some cave sites such as Wookey Hole and Gough's Cave. The constant temperature (c.11^oC) and humidity (c.100%) in these caves is ideal for the storage of cheeses, the high humidity preventing weight loss during ageing.

The Mendip Hills are home to a wide range of outdoor sports and leisure activities and the hills are recognised as being a centre for caving and cave diving. There are a number of locally based caving clubs that organise trips and some provide accommodation, as well as independent local cavers that continue to discover new caves and passages. These activities are not confined to specific caves, although some are more popular than others, but are generally more widespread and dependent on the particular interests of those participating in the activity.

The Show Caves at Wookey Hole and Cheddar were opened to a public audience in the 19th century and have been major tourist attractions in the area ever since appealing to large numbers of visitors throughout the year and these sites are continually being adapted and

altered to meet these needs, perhaps at times to the detriment of the asset they represent, in the quest for economic returns.

Discussion:

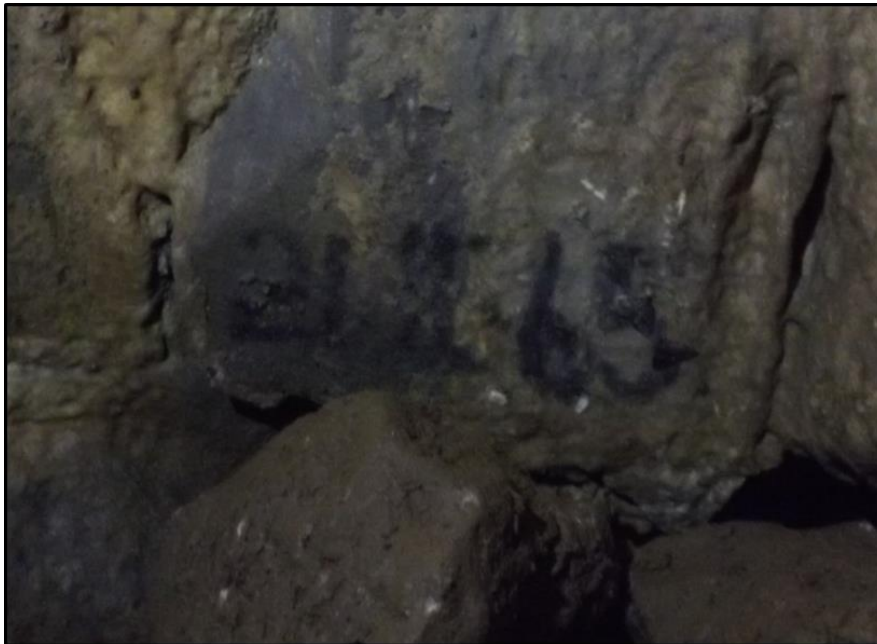
Caves are a permanent natural feature of the Mendip karstic landscape and there appears to have been a continuity of use of these sites, this is particularly evident from the Palaeolithic to the Iron Age involving not only habitation, shelter and activities associated with occupation and industry, but also as sites for ceremony, ritual and burial. There are some caves, like Wookey Hole and Gough's Cave that have long records of use for extended periods. Later the use of caves as places of occupation, industry and ritual does seem to decline somewhat after the Romano-British period. That is not to say that caves were no longer being used, but that the uses of caves was now different, becoming more sporadic. Now in modern times it is the use of caves for leisure activities and as tourist attractions that are beginning to be the predominate use of caves.

A number of commentators have remarked on the poor records made by those that excavated caves in the past, this might well be the case but it should be tempered with the fact that the majority of Mendip caves were opened up by the intrepid endeavour of these cave explorers. It should also be borne in mind that much of the interest in cave sites was for purely speleological reasons rather than archaeological and this has led to the loss of a number of artefacts and it is true today that many caves are still explored with a focus on cave discovery. The 19th and 20th century antiquarians and explorers were men and women of their time and it is sometimes all too easy to criticise them with 21st century hindsight. Some have left a useful record of their activities that forms the background of any study of the archaeology of Mendip, not only documented but the caves as well; and of course Wells and Mendip Museum with the collections and library providing plenty of information and opportunities for research. The exploration of Mendip caves is an ongoing dynamic process, and over a period of several decades the modern actions of local cavers and caving groups involved in the exploration of sites, both old and new, has been widespread across Mendip. The evidence of their actions might be thought to eventually become the 'archaeology of cave use' for future generations to study.

It should, however be recognised that stratified cave deposits are a valuable and very important archaeological resource (Ellis, 1992) and it is recommended that advice is sought on the best methods to manage and protect the deposits and the information contained within them, particularly when excavating at new surface sites.

With regard the current material that has been collected and stored in museums there is scope to increase the use and improve the targeting of scientific dating utilising a number of techniques. For example, the use of radiocarbon dating on faunal and human bone assemblages is of key importance to the understanding of Late Glacial environmental change through faunal fluctuations (SWARF, 2008, p282). Stable isotopes and laser ablation could also be used to reinvestigate the old collections of human remains, for instance on the material collected from Badger Hole and Gough's Cave (SWARF, 2008, p283). Lithic

assemblages can be analysed to evaluate the presence or absence of chronologically diagnostic artefacts from different periods; the same strategy might be applied to collections of pottery while they still exist or remain accessible.



Modern graffiti in Bone Hole or is it an historical record for the future?

Mineral extraction and quarrying has long affected the Mendip landscape, where a number of cave and karst sites have been lost to quarrying, unfortunately some of these have not been recorded and others only partially or poorly recorded. By contrast many sites have been discovered during the course of mineral extraction and, in some cases, landowners have permitted their recording for prosperity. Many of the ochre mines at the western end of the Mendip Hills have intersected a number of natural caves and cavern features; the same can be said of numerous lead and ore mines and many of these sites can be visited by those equipped to do so. It should be noted that the mines of Mendip have an archaeology and history of their own but does not form a part of this overview.



Looking east over Cheddar Gorge. There are numerous caves, fissures and rock shelters to be found in this locality and many of them have evidence for human usage.

Descriptions of Mendip caves with a focus on the archaeological interest.

The following descriptions outline the archaeological significance of Mendip caves and karst rather than being a guide to the caves, although some sites of palaeontological interest have been included. It should be noted that archaeology is concerned with the study of people, past and present, through their material remains; palaeontology is the study ancient life-forms of which remains or other evidence are found in sedimentary rocks, and which are described as fossils (Black, 1970, 1988). These descriptions have been compiled using the available archaeological, archived and historic documented evidence and information from a variety of sources, as well as personal field research. This is not intended as a definitive listing as more sites with an archaeological potential are being discovered and recorded and the database is intended to be updated periodically. It is hoped the resource can be used as a starting point for those that might wish to access it. The caves are arranged by name in alphabetical order.

Abbreviations used:

Axbridge Caving Group - ACG

Mendip Caving Group - MCG

Mendip Nature Research Committee - MNRC

Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society - SANHS

Sidcot School Speleological Society - SSSS

University of Bristol Speleological Society - UBSS

Wessex Cave Club – WCC

Aveline's Hole, Burrington Combe. ST 4761 5867. UP, Meso

From its entrance situated at road level, a large phreatic passage slopes down to a choke. The entrance was opened in 1797 by two men chasing a rabbit, who found a number of human skeletons, some encased in tufa, extended on the cave floor (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The cave has been explored on a number occasions since its discovery in 1797, including by Buckland in 1829 and by Boyd Dawkins, who named the cave after his teacher and colleague, in 1860 and 1864. Extensive excavations were undertaken by the University of Bristol Speleological Society in 1914 and between 1919 and 1933. The earliest living phase was Late Upper Palaeolithic (Creswellian) when the site is suggested to have been used for the dismemberment of horse and red deer, among other activities; later the cave was used during the Mesolithic for multiple burials (Pastscape, 2014). The published reports of the latter campaigns, however, are far from ideal and the associated archive and finds held by UBSS were largely destroyed during the war. The discovery of the human remains was a notable feature of investigations from 1797 onwards, when it was reported that "a number of human skeletons were found lying promiscuously". In 1805, "near 50 perfect skeletons lying parallel to each other" were discovered. Four radiocarbon dates have been obtained on human remains from Aveline's Hole, ranging from 9114±110BP to 8860±100 BP, suggesting that the human remains wholly represent formal burials of Mesolithic date. The grave goods appear mainly to be some perforated sea shells, although a group of pig and red deer incisors, some perforated (presumably for suspension) were present. One horse incisor had its root

"decorated" with a series of parallel incisions. One skeleton had part of a child's skull placed on its shoulder, while 2 skeletons found in 1924 bore slight traces of red ochre. Aveline's Hole represents the only such site in the whole of the British Mesolithic, and the number of inhumations underlines the wider, European, significance of the site. Other finds have included quantities of animal bones, flints, and a barbed harpoon head of antler. The cave was unused between the Mesolithic and rediscovery in 1797 (ADS, 2014). In 2003, an engraving, suggested to be of Mesolithic date was found on the wall some 30m into the cave (Gray *et al.*, 2013) this area of the cave has subsequently been gated for protection.

Badger Hole, Wookey Hole. ST 5324 4795. Early UP, Meso, RB

Located on the east side of the Wookey Hole ravine, about 20m above the present valley floor, and approximately 11m below the plateau above Hyena Den. A large cave mouth 10m wide x 3m high, forming a sheltered, well-lit entrance area, with a modern retaining wall at the front. Two short passages lead back into a chamber 6m high, at the back of which is an opening to the plateau above (currently blocked, 2014). Under the opening is a cone of deposit (talus). The cave was first discovered in 1938, and excavated over a number of years by Herbert E. Balch (MNRC, 1938-54). Its interior deposits proved to have been extensively disturbed by badgers. Excavations uncovered Early Upper Palaeolithic finds including leaf points and lithic tools, and evidence for a Mesolithic burial c.7000BC. The cave served as a burial place in the late Roman period. Undisturbed deposits may survive at the back of the cave, on the walls and under excavation spoil at the mouth. In the upper 60cm a 3rd C AD Roman coin was found together with hundreds of fragments of Romano-British pottery. 30cm lower down Aurignacian flint implements including knives and a lance head were revealed, associated with Pleistocene animal remains. Further excavations occurred in 1958 (C McBurney) and 1968 (J Campbell). A number of Palaeolithic flints have been found, including scrapers, awls, saws and leaf points; Palaeolithic animal remains, including mammoth, woolly rhinoceros and hyena; and a quantity of Roman finds including pottery, coins, and a bronze fibula. A number of iron objects including nails may be quite recent. Human remains recovered from Badger Hole had been regarded as belonging to the Early Upper Palaeolithic. However, direct accelerator dating of the human bones have produced dates ranging from circa 9000 years BP and 1500 BP (ADS, 2014).

Banwell Bone Cave, Banwell. ST 3822 5881. Pleistocene

Also known as Banwell Bone Cavern and The Bone House, this cave is justly famous for its rich deposit of Pleistocene animal bones discovered in the early 19th century, many of which can still be seen in situ. The cave was accidentally discovered in September 1824 by miners intending to drive a horizontal tunnel into Banwell Stalactite Cave. The earth floor of the cave was found to be littered with animal bones, including bear, reindeer, bison and wolf. William Beard, carried out a major excavation of the bone material in the cave, removing the most interesting specimens and stacking the remainder around Bone Chamber. Further details can be found on the Banwell Caves official website (www.banwellcaves.org).

Beaker Shelter, Ebbor Gorge. ST 5262 4866. Neo, EBA

A short cave with three entrances that have been formed along calcite veins. MNRC (H.E. Balch) excavated the larger passage in 1931; and the smaller tunnel was opened in 1951. A Beaker deposit (Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age) possibly a ritual burial was associated with a perfect floor of small limestone flagstones overlying barren thermoclastic scree (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Jackson (in Cullingford, 1962) states that the discoveries were made in 1953, while Barrington and Stanton attribute the Beaker finds to 1931 and refer to further work being carried out in 1951. Finds included a skeleton and the remains of three other individuals. The Beaker sherd and bones are in Wookey Hole Museum (ADS, 2014).

Balch (1931, 26) describes a tiny archway with room for 2 persons to sit comfortably occurs close to the top of the cliff. Excavation of the top 18 inches revealed 8 flint scrapers and deer bone fragments. Below was a perfect floor of limestone flagstones covering a femur with associated foot and ankle bones. There was also a Neolithic arrowhead and 3 more scrapers. Floor was excavated for a further 6 feet but nothing else was found. There were also lots of rounded nodules which proved to be pure translucent calcite.

Benter Cavelet, Ashwick. ST 6454 4885. EBA

The cave comprises a short, but roomy shelter formed in Dolomitic Conglomerate. This is possibly the site excavated by the Abbot of Downside, c.1920, when early Bronze Age remains were found (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Bleadon Cave, Bleadon. ST 3409 5665. Palaeo?

A cave discovered during the 19th century in a quarry at Bleadon. The cave was later destroyed by quarrying. Pleistocene animal remains were found and human remains have been referred to by one source, though this has not been confirmed (ADS, 2014). MCRA (2014) give an alternative name Bleadon Bone Cave for this site, and has 11 other cave sites recorded in this quarry.

Bleadon Cavern, Bleadon. ST 3608 5813. Undated

The cave was discovered during mining operations in the early 19th century then lost; it was reopened in 1970 and offers much that is of a geological and archaeological interest (MCRA, 2014). Human remains have been recovered from the site but are undated. The cave is currently gated. The cave has been interpreted as a 'big cat den' and some remains dated to c.250,000 BP.

Bone Hole, Cheddar Gorge. ST 4804 5470. EBA, IA

A miniature gorge formed by roof removal leads into a roomy entrance chamber that ends in a boulder choke. A scree slope with archaeological remains of Beaker to Iron Age, leads down into set of vertical rifts at right angles, locally well decorated. The lowest rift is passed

by an exposed traverse, and has unstable walls that degenerate downwards into a massive boulder ruckle. Stalagmite for souvenirs was quarried from the cave in the 19th C and human and animal bones were found and sold or dispersed (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). William Long and William Boyd Dawkins carried out an archaeological excavation in the chamber and recovered 12 human skulls along with bones of wolf, boar, deer and oxen (Rob Taviner, 2014, *pers comms*)



Looking out from the Bone Hole rift, September 2014.

Mendip Caving Group dug into the lower series 1967-75, and sank two shafts into the bone beds in the floor of the entrance chamber. The National Trust SMR monument record suggests work to have ended in 1978, whereas the Project Record gives 1975 as the date of termination. A published final report for the site is still awaited from Mendip Caving Group (ADS, 2014). In a series of unsystematic digs, they found human and animal bones, Wessex/Middle Rhine Beaker, and other pottery of various ages. Faunal remains included bear, horse, wolf, boar and auroch (Lewis, 2005).

Bos Swallet, Burrington. ST 4709 5837. Neo, BA

A large natural depression excavated in 1954 by pupils of Sidcot School, initially purely as a cave dig, and only subsequently as an archaeological excavation. Further archaeological excavations were undertaken in 1956-8 by Dr H. Taylor on behalf of the University of Bristol Speleological Society. These identified two main phases of activity, one associated with

Beaker pottery; the other suggested being Middle Bronze Age. Some artefacts such as a leaf shaped arrowhead hint at occasional use in the Early Neolithic. The Beaker phase was associated with sherds from around 20 vessels, plus flints (flakes, cores, scrapers, knives etc.) and a few flakes of chert, plus a small collection of burnt animal bones. Other burnt material was interpreted as representing a hearth. The later phase of activity comprised a pit plus black ash and heat-fractured stones. These features were compared with burnt mounds, the pit representing the trough, and thus interpreted as a boiling site. The suggested Middle Bronze Age date is derived from the main period to which burnt mounds appear to belong, rather than any direct dating evidence (ADS, 2014).

Bracelet Cave, Ebbor Gorge (also known as Hope Wood Cave).

ST 5228 4833. UP, Mid-Late BA, RB

Some fragmentary human bones were found in a small rift cave during excavation in November 1955. The rock shelter extends back about 4m into the cliff face. Bones of at least 9 individuals were found that were associated with Romano-British pottery of 1st to 2nd C (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Branigan and Dearne, however argue that there is no evidence to support this dating and suggest that the Bronze Age is more appropriate; they make no mention of the pottery. Two chert blades have been described as Upper Palaeolithic, having been found in a "typical Pleistocene red earth deposit" although a later date may be equally plausible. The cave's name relates to the discovery of a later Bronze Age gold bracelet in December 1955 but the precise circumstances of its discovery are uncertain. An Inquest Jury decided that the bracelet was not treasure trove, and the bracelet was subsequently retained by the then landowner, the late Wing Commander G.W. Hodgkinson. A replica is at Wookey Hole Museum. Presumably it is this bracelet which suggested to Branigan and Dearne a Bronze Age date for the human remains? (ADS, 2014).

Bridged Pot Shelter, Ebbor Gorge. ST 5260 4866. Neo, EBA

A roomy shelter with a perforated rock bridge spanning entrance; excavated by MNRC (H.E. Balch) between 1926 and 1929. In the upper c.120cm were Neolithic and Beaker remains. At a depth c.180cm was a hoard of 11 flints, probably Neolithic (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Bridged Pot Shelter and Bridged Pot Hole below, are the same site.

Bridged Pot Hole, Ebbor Gorge. ST 5258 4868. Neo, BA

A small rock shelter near the head of Ebbor Gorge consists of a funnel-shaped dissolution hole some 2.5m – 3m in diameter, partially roofed and open on the downhill west side. Discovered and partially excavated by H.E. Balch in 1926 who found a few fragments of hand-made black pottery, a decorated fragment possibly of a beaker, a polished greenstone axe, a flint knife and a number of flakes. In a niche in the rock a deposit of 11 leaf-shaped bifacial spearheads and a group of levelling flakes were found. Late Pleistocene bones also found (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Some of the pottery is suggested by Lewis (2005) to be Beaker.

Brimble Pit Swallet, Westbury Hill (also known as Westbury Hill Swallet, Frog Hole). ST 5081 5075. Neo, EBA



The entrance to Brimble Pit Swallet in September 2014.

A swallet comprising two vertical shafts in the limestone. Poorly recorded exploration occurred in 1957 and again in 1991-2; the latter speleological rather than archaeological. There are two entrance shafts - northern and southern (ADS, 2014). The northern shaft was excavated in 1957, but no records exist of any archaeological discoveries. However, subsequent re-exploration led to the recovery of a Neolithic polished greenstone axehead, apparently showing no signs of use or damage, at a depth of 10 metres, below the point where the northern and southern shafts meet. The southern shaft was more fully explored to a depth of 8 metres in 1991-2, primarily for speleological purposes, but much archaeological material was recovered. The finds comprised over 200 pieces of flint, animal bones, human bone and 42 sherds of Grooved Ware. The human remains comprised an adult male skull plus several small rib and radius fragments. The Grooved Ware sherds represent two vessels; the sherds had a very fresh appearance and their edges were un-abraded. The flints included a barbed and tanged arrowhead, a petit tranchet derivative arrowhead and 4 retouched flakes. The animal bones present represented domestic dog, domesticated pig, sheep or goat and cattle, aurochs and red deer. Some showed evidence of butchery, but there was little sign of gnawing by carnivores. The presence of the axehead, pottery and human remains in particular is suggested to represent at least one episode of deliberate and formal deposition of selected items in the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (Pastscape, 2014).

Brownes' Hole, Stoke St. Michael. ST 6693 4757. UP, IA, Rom

The cave is located in the right bank of a small valley north of Stoke St Michael. A large entrance passage leads to a complex of small chambers and a second passage to the north entrance. It was excavated 1947-50 by L.M. Browne of Frome and Iron Age and Roman pottery plus Roman coins were found in deposits in the entrance and main passage, along with fragmentary human and animal remains. Although these may not have been in situ, they may instead have become redeposited in the cave along with the alluvial material which contained them. An Upper Palaeolithic flint blade and seven prehistoric flint flakes were also found further inside the cave. The finds are in Frome Museum. Branigan and Dearne note the presence of Neolithic and Bronze Age material but give no details. Presumably they are referring to the undated flint flakes? (ADS, 2014)

Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet, Charterhouse. ST 4936 5458. Neo, BA, IA

Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet was first excavated between 1972-6 when only half of the deposits filling the shaft were excavated, the other half being preserved for future archaeological investigation (Barrington and Stanton, 1977) there was another phase of excavation between 1983-6. The cave comprises a large vertical shaft which has a side passage near the top. It is situated on the west side of a small dry valley. The excavations have revealed a stratified sequence of deposits ranging from the Neolithic through to the Roman periods. The finds included an almost complete Beaker plus a few sherds from another, a miniature pottery vessel of probable Early Bronze Age date, two possible Grooved Ware sherds (though they may also be Bronze Age barrel urn), several "sponge finger" stones of slate, two large quartzite hammerstones or pounders, a bone pin, an antler spatula, and a collection of flints including a dagger, scrapers and knives. Human bones of possible Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date, some of which feature cut-marks and a collection of Iron Age and Romano-British inhumations were found in the side chamber near the top of the swallet. Also present among the animal bones were remains of aurochs, which represent the latest known survival of this species in Britain (ADS, 2014).

Chelm's Combe Shelter, Cheddar. ST 4634 5447. LP to RB

A rock shelter and slitter, apparently in an overhanging cliff now destroyed by quarrying (ADS, 2014). MNRC and SANHS excavated there in 1925-26, finding late Palaeolithic to Romano-British remains including an engraved bone and a bone whistle, described as ritualistic or bird decoy, of the earlier date (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Also found were Romano-British pottery, early 4th century coins and a brooch; Iron Age pottery and traces of a smelting furnace; Neolithic and Beaker pottery. Also present was a deposit containing Pleistocene faunal remains. A stone cist found near the shelter "lower down the combe" contained the remains of several individuals, described as Neolithic. A range of finds in Wells Museum and the University of Bristol Speleological Society Museum include a small Late Bronze Age socketed spearhead found in the slitter, plus 25 Roman coins found while quarrying " between Tutter's Hill (Milkway) and the foot of Chelm's Combe" (ADS, 2014).

Chert Shelter, Ebbor Gorge. ST 5286 4901

Some undisturbed cave sediments may be of archaeological interest (MCRA, 2014).

Cockles Wood Rock Shelter. ST 6461 4853. Late Neo/EBA

Associated with Nettlebridge Cave. A rock shelter and cave at Cockles Wood, south west of Nettlebridge. They are situated on different levels of the same slope. The rock shelter, the uppermost of the two, was excavated in 1905 by the Reverend DB Hicks. No detailed report was published, but two inhumations and some coarse potsherds with finger nail decoration are in Wells Museum. Excavations in the cave in 1947-50 by the Downside Archaeological Society produced sherds of Grooved Ware and Beakers, plus two flint scrapers. Some scattered human bones and animal remains were also found (ADS, 2014).

College Wood Rock Shelter. ST 6462 4950. IA, RB

A rock shelter on the steep hillside of College Wood was excavated in the 1940s by the Reverend A Watkin. Pottery described as Iron Age was found, along with "considerable signs of Romano-British occupation" and a quantity of flints (ADS, 2014)

Cook's Hill Hole, Ebbor Gorge (also known as Hope Wood Hole, see below). ST 5216 4845. IA, Mod

A narrow c.4m shaft leads down into a small chamber with tufaceous formations. An excessively tight tube connects to second entrance. An Iron Age skeleton was unearthed by WSG when they dug open the cave in 1950 (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Some disturbance in this cave may be due to war time activity when the cave is thought to have been used for an auxiliary unit that, following an invasion a group of seven men would prepare in secret, go into hiding and from this base they would harass German lines (ADS, 2014).

Cooper's Hole, Cheddar. ST 4682 5402. IA

Situated in Cheddar Gorge, on the east side of the road, c.200m up from Gough's Cave, a low archway at road level, partly hard surfaced and used as car parking area (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The front of the cave has been quarried back, and the interior contains substantial quantities of debris deposited during an episode of flooding in the late 1960s. Excavation in 1931-2 by R.F. Parry (SANHS) recovered Iron Age pottery from the cave and from the area of the car park immediately to the south, as well as the remains of domesticated and wild animals. One sheep bone with a hole bored through the middle was described as a "bobbin". A female inhumation was also found in the car park area. In 1966 these finds were on display at the museum at Gough's Cave. Excavations were also undertaken by the University of Bristol Speleological Society in the late 1930s, and by several cavers subsequently, primarily in the belief that Cooper's Hole may have led to a much larger cave system, although no evidence to support this idea has ever been found. In 1998 the cave was investigated by Channel 4's Time Team. A flint implement and a deposit of animal bones, the

latter below the stalagmite layer and thus potentially of very early age, perhaps Palaeolithic, had been found during cave exploration in the 1950s. Waterlogging prevented re-investigation of this deposit. A few sheep bones were found elsewhere within the cave system and these have been suggested to be probably Prehistoric on the basis of probable cut marks made by a flint tool. A trench was also dug in the car park in front of the present cave entrance, but could not be taken down as far as the postulated Palaeolithic levels for safety reasons (ADS, 2014).

Cross Spring, Cross. ST 4159 5469. BA

Also known as Cross Well and South Marsh Water Works, this 7m deep well in Dolomitic Conglomerate, was sunk on the site of a large natural spring in 1898. A gold bracelet dated to the Bronze Age was discovered here which has been taken as evidence of ritual deposition. It is now on display in the British Museum (MCRA, 2014).

Denny's Hole, Compton Bishop (also known as Phelps' Hole).

ST 3967 5497. Mod

The entrance, located on the southeast ridge of Crook Peak, is an overgrown pit that leads steeply down into the main chamber, from which two passages lead to a second chamber. The cave was used by the Home Guard during World War II (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

A surprising lack of archaeological material suggests that the cave must have been breached only recently. Catcott referred to the cave as Dennis's Hole, believed to derive from a nearby, but now vanished, shrine to St. Dennis (Rob Taviner, 2014, *pers comms*).

Dinder Wood Shelter, Dinder. ST 5884 4541. RB, Mod

In cliff at the head of a wooded ravine called Dinder Wood. Rock shelter partly filled with c. 1.5m³ of concrete, forming part of the remains of a WWII anti-tank line (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Excavations in 1933 by H.E. Balch encountered a black layer thick with charcoal and ashes that contained quantities of Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds, fragments of iron slag, and animal bones. A Neolithic flint axe has also, apparently been recovered from the cave or from its immediate vicinity (ADS, 2014).

Ewe Cave, Little Stoke Wood, Rodney Stoke. ST 4886 5040. BA

A small rock shelter in the woodland, where some Bronze Age pottery has reputedly been found (Simmonds, *pers log*).

Fairy Cave, Stoke St. Michael. ST 6565 4775. IA

The cave is located in a cliff just outside Fairy Cave Quarry near Stoke St Michael. It forms part of a complicated system of passages in the quarry area which converge on St Dunstan's Well, located a short distance to the north west. Iron Age potsherds were found at Fairy Cave

in 1888, according to one source, and in 1929 according to two other sources. There are some potsherds in Taunton Museum (ADS, 2014).



Ewe Cave, Rodney Stoke photographed November 2012

Flint Crevice, Axbridge. ST 4312 5502. Neo

A narrow crevice excavated in 1954 by ACG who found 20 worked flints, reputed to be Neolithic (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). No further information is available.

Flint Jack's Cave, Cheddar (also known as Flint Jack's Hole).

ST 4632 5381. LP

Cheddar Gorge, on the east side c.15m above road, 150m down from Cox's Cave. A fairly roomy rock shelter, from which Late Palaeolithic (Cheddarian) flints and human remains were excavated by R. Pavey, c.1893 (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). These are now located at the British Museum and Woodspring Museum, Weston-Super-Mare (MCRA, 2014).

Foxes Hole, Burrington Combe. ST 4823 5822. Mod

Small double entrance leads to two phreatic chambers connected by a small passage. The second chamber was used by the Home Guard in WWII, and had concrete steps and board walling installed. The cave has been reputed to have been the hiding place of John Plumley, Lord of the Manor of Locking, c. 1686 after the Monmouth Rebellion. Recent research,

however has shown that it was a William, not John, Plumley who was actually Lord of the Manor. He was dragged from his sick bed and sent to Ilchester gaol accused of letting escapees of the rebellion take his horses; he later died in gaol (Rob Taviner, 2014, *pers comms*). Boyd-Dawkins found sparse Pleistocene remains in the first chamber, UBSS found the deposit barren in a short dig in 1919 (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Goatchurch Cavern, Burrington Combe. ST 4758 5823. Pleistocene

Archaeological excavations by William Beard c. 1830, William Boyd-Dawkins c. 1860 and UBSS 1923-25, proved a Pleistocene fauna, including bear, horse, mammoth, and hyena and cave lion (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The cave contains some examples of ritual protection marks, possibly Post-medieval in date (Binding and Wilson, 2004).

Gough's Cave, Cheddar Gorge. ST 4670 5391. UP, Meso, IA, post-med

Show cave in Cheddar Gorge dug open by Richard Cox Gough and his sons in 1890-1898 and opened to the public (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The cave has produced one of the largest assemblages of archaeological material dating from the Late Glacial period, as well as significant finds of later date including the Mesolithic skeleton known as 'Cheddar Man'. The cave entrance had been in use previously as a cart shed and a gambler's den. Between 1890 and 1898 much sediment was removed, along with animal remains plus flint and bone artefacts. In 1903, blasting near the entrance resulted in the discovery of 'Cheddar Man'; the early excavation accounts are far from ideal but the bones seem to have represented a contracted inhumation. Recently obtained radiocarbon dates place the skeleton in the early Mesolithic period. Further excavations have occurred intermittently throughout the 20th century, mainly in response to needs to improve public access and presentation of the caves. These have produced a considerable quantity of disarticulated human and animal remains, with evidence for cut marks on both; fragments of mammoth ivory marked with linear incisions taken to represent some form of notation; part of a spearhead of mammoth ivory; an antler "baton de commandment"; and a worked piece of amber. The bulk of these finds seem to relate to use of the cave in the Late Glacial period, circa 13000 to 12000 radiocarbon years BP. The animal bones in particular point to both human and carnivore occupation. A number of flints, the 'Cheddar Man' skeletal remains and other items point to some Mesolithic activity in the cave, while other finds highlight episodes of use throughout the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods (ADS, 2014) representing extensive periods of human activity at the cave.

Gough's Cave in Cheddar is just one of a number of sites internationally involved in the current research into the Ancient Human Occupation of Britain (AHOB) being funded by the Leverhulme Trust and with contributions by a wide range of academics. The project sets out to investigate ancient humans from Paleolithic and Mesolithic northern Europe and a number of significant discoveries have been forthcoming including the evidence found that suggests cannibalism occurring at Gough's Cave. There is a link to the AHOB website in the bibliography at the end of this overview where up to date information and other data can be accessed.

Recent work by Bello et.al. (2015) at Gough's Cave regarding Upper Palaeolithic ritualistic cannibalism has shown there is considerable evidence for defleshing, disarticulation, chewing, crushing of spongy bone, and the cracking of bones to extract marrow. The presence of human tooth marks on many of the postcranial bones examined provides more evidence for cannibalism taking place within the cave site. A detailed reanalysis of the cranial remains show that these have been modified to make skull-cups. This practice at Gough's Cave has parallels with other Magdalenian sites in central and western Europe perhaps suggesting that cannibalism during the Magdalenian was part of a customary mortuary practice combining the processing and consumption of human bodies with ritual use of skull-cups.

Gough's Old Cave, Cheddar Gorge. ST 4668 5388. IA, RB

The cave was shown to the public before 1837, and was fully opened c. 1875-1880 by R.C. Gough, who ran a little museum at the entrance and blasted into the final grottoes. It was abandoned as a commercial operation c.1900, after the discovery of Gough's Cave. An excavation by UBSS at the entrance to the cave between 1954-1961 discovered early Iron Age and Romano-British hearths overlying tufaceous stal resting on barren muddy thermoclastic scree of Cheddarian or earlier date (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Great Oone's Hole, Cheddar Gorge. ST 4680 5392. IA, Mod

There are some fake cave paintings in the main gallery and floor deposits near the entrance might well have contained important remain but these were ransacked by souvenir hunter's c.1850-1900, these same vandals also removed the stalactites. The UBSS began an archaeological dig at the entrance in 1976 (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Bryant (2011) mentions a few stray finds from this cave and no record of excavation. An Iron Age assemblage consists of a few sherds of pottery.

There were some remains of Home Guard usage during WWII but these are no longer obvious (Graham Mullan, *pers comm*).

Gully Cave, Ebbor Gorge. ST 5255 4854

Palaeontological work conducted by Royal Holloway College, London. Radiocarbon dates of the finds to date range from 10,000-13,500 years ago and include lemming, arctic fox and reindeer. No human remains have been recovered to date, but the presence of Auroch bones together with a long bone displaying signs of burning and fracturing to extract marrow, are strongly indicative of human occupation (MCRA, 2014)

Ham Hole, Crocombe (also known as Ham Woods Cave, Badger Hole, Ham Wood Shelter). ST 6022 4503. IA

A roomy phreatic tunnel formed in Liassic conglomerate. A partial excavation by SMCC and MNRC between 1952-58 revealed some early Iron Age pottery (Barrington and Stanton, 1977)

A visit to the site by the author in 2016 reveals that any sediments containing further archaeological potential have been largely removed by local cave diggers. There is an enormous potential for archaeological and palaeontological research within the Ham Woods area and this has, unfortunately been badly impacted by indiscriminate cave excavations by local cave diggers.

Hansdown Swallet, Maesbury, Shepton Mallet. ST 6003 4712. Undated

An active sink, the cave is a complex of tight rifts; now filled in. Human remains of an unknown age were found in 1954 (MCRA, 2014).

Hawk's Nest Cave, Ebbor Gorge (also known as Hawk's Eyrie Cave.

ST 5287 4899. No data

A short cave with two entrances, that was partly excavated by H.E. Balch c.1900 who found a large number of small animal bones, the debris from a hawk's eyrie above (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Substantial areas of undisturbed sediment on the floor of this cave may be of archaeological value (ADS, 2014).

Hay Wood Cave, Hutton (same as Hay Wood Rock Shelter). ST 3399 5822. Meso, IA, Rom?

A small cave in a steep hillside situated on the north-facing slope of the Western Mendips at Hutton. Excavations by the Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society began in 1957 and continued until 1962. The majority of finds came from a much disturbed "mound" within the cave, and included a quantity of Mesolithic microliths, plus a number of other flints which could be Mesolithic or later. Sherds of Iron Age and Roman pottery were also present. Around 560 identifiable fragments of human bone were present, including at least 8 skulls, one of which was crushed beneath a large rock. Animal bone fragments numbered several hundred, the majority of the larger bones being sheep or goat. The human remains are interpreted as representing burials of Iron Age or possibly Roman date, although there had been considerable disturbance to the cave deposits, including burrowing by animals. It is by no means clear that any of the skulls represent complete bodies, for example. Branigan and Dearne suggest that at least one of the skulls may considerably pre-date the Iron Age. At the same time, they question the attribution of some of the potsherds. The finds and excavation archive are in Axbridge Museum (ADS, 204).

(Hay Wood Rock Shelter) Chapman excavated a trial trench in 1957, Palmer excavated the site until 1962 and Davies completed the excavation in 1971. Palmer's original notes have been lost, but unpublished interim & MSS reports survive. Complete Caves of Mendip (Barrington & Stanton 1977) gives the NGR ST 3399 5822 for this site (ADS, 2014).

Hidden Cave, Ebbor Gorge. ST 525 485. No data

Described as a 'short, unremarkable hole' (Barrington & Stanton 1977, p.95) this cave is to be found behind brambles at the foot of the lowest cliff on left bank, opposite Tower Rock c.5m north of Step Hole. Some undisturbed cave sediments may be of possible archaeological value (ADS, 2014).

High Rift Cave, Ebbor Gorge. ST 525 486. No data

'In Ebbor Gorge and reached by a 30 feet rock climb up left bank, 30 yards up-gorge of the bottom of the big rock scree slope... a rift narrowing inwards with tufa'. (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). There are some undisturbed cave sediments in the floor that might be of archaeological value (ADS, 2014).

Hope Wood Hole, Ebbor Gorge (also known as Cook's Hill Hole, see above). ST 5216 4844. BA, RB

A rock shelter excavated in 1950, animal bones and an iron axe head of unknown date were found. Further excavations in 1951 revealed a crouched human burial and a few sherds of pottery including a Middle Bronze Age cinerary urn and a late Bronze Age urn of Deverel Rimbury type. Above the level of the burial some Romano-British pottery was found. Subsequent examination of the surrounding areas revealed flint flakes and scrapers (ADS, 2014).

Hunter's Lodge Inn Sink, Priddy. ST 5494 5012. Pleistocene

Pleistocene bones of reindeer and bison have been recovered and are on display in the main bar of the Hunters' Lodge Inn (MCRA, 2014).

Hutton Cave [Cavern]. ST 3609 5813. Pleistocene, UP(?), Modern

A cave or two [bone] caves situated close together, first discovered by ochre miners c.1756. The Rev. David Williams removed a considerable deposit of Pleistocene animal remains some 70 years later. Flints of Palaeolithic date [Aurignacian?] have been attributed to the site but their provenance is not secure (Pastscape, 2014). MCRA (2014) give the grid reference as ST 3605 5816, with the central pit ST 3604 5818. There is a further reference (Pastscape, 2014) of another cave at ST 3615 5813 discovered in c.1650 (probably the cave described by Catcott in 1757, see below) at the west end of which a series of caverns were cleared of Pleistocene animal remains. The cave was subsequently filled and became known as the 'Lost Cave of Hutton'. It would seem that the 1650 entry is not the same as the Catcott cave – it is

derived from Knight's (Seaboard of Mendip) erroneous account of the Beard-Williams excavation in Bleadon Cavern. He confuses the site with the bone deposits found in a quarry close to the village (this site also needs further investigation). Thus the 1650 date given in Knight for the discovery of Hutton Cavern - 1 should be discounted. Balch too, totally confuses the situation in that to his knowledge there was only one bone site in the area and that in a local quarry. Balch compounds the problem by merging the bone finds from both Bleadon Cavern and that from the quarry which he calls Bleadon Cave (Irwin and Richards, 1998).

Recent discoveries by ACG have thrown more light on the caves historic past.

The Lost Cave of Hutton was entered by the Reverent Catcott in 1757, who unearthed many bones of 'African Animals' and it is likely to be one of the caves that Catcott based his '*Treatise on the Deluge*' on. The cave was 'lost' and opened up again by the Vicar of Bleadon David Williams in 1828 who proceeded to dig up more bones, but the cave was lost once again. The ACG started their search in the early 1970s in a promising location finding a few small cave entrances in an area pock-marked by mines. After a concerted effort over a number of years in 2014 ACG suggest the possible rediscovery of the 'Lost Cave' (Alan Gray, *pers comms*). This is still the subject of some debate and the outcome not yet determined.



The initials 'DW' at Hutton, image taken October 2014.

Rutter (1829) gives a good account of the types of bones recovered from Hutton Cavern but there is no mention of any flint implements. From Rutter's description it would appear that Catcott only made one visit into the cave, when a subsequent visit was planned the cave had already fallen in and was inaccessible. 70 years later Williams with William Beard (of Banwell Cave fame) sank a number of shafts in an effort to relocate the cave. It is in a correspondence between Williams and the Rev. Mr. Patteson at Shaftesbury that the details of the rediscovery of the cave with a list of the species of bones found is given.

In an interesting footnote Rutter queries the relationship of the caves at Hutton, Uphill and Banwell based on the animal remains discovered and suggests that "those in Banwell Cave belong to a later era".

The graffiti found in 'DW' Passage might be considered to be part of the archaeological record.

Hutton Cavern - 2. ST 3605 5816.

A bone fissure recorded by Catcott in 1757 and 1768 and located about 40m west of Hutton Cavern. A miner described finding the head of a strange animal, '*about 3 or 4 feet long: 14 inches broad at the top or hind part and 3 inches at the snout shaped like a crocodile*'. The skull apparently had four tusks, two on each jaw and with large teeth, which Catcott associated with a hippopotamus. The miner hid the skull in a nearby wood. The cave and the skull are now lost (MCRA, 2014).

Hutton Hill Hole. ST 3424 5814.

A dig on Hutton Hill. A small muddy chamber with phreatic tube leading off, there were some bones recovered and identified as Arctic Hare. Discovered by Bracknell & District 1994 (MCRA, 2014)

Hyaena Den, Wookey Hole. ST 5322 4794. MP, UP, Rom

The cave comprises a wide low arch on the east side of the Wookey Hole ravine, at the rear of the roomy entrance chamber are a roof opening and passages extending north and south (Jacobi and Hawkes, 1993). The cave was originally discovered c.1852 by workmen while cutting a water channel for the nearby mills. At the time several hundred Roman coins, mainly silver, in a broken pot was found and distributed amongst the workmen. They also discovered a "bone bed" featuring remains of woolly rhinoceros, hyaena and other Pleistocene mammals (Tratman, *et al.*, 1971). Some human skeletal material was also claimed to have been found, but this has never been confirmed. William Boyd Dawkins undertook excavations from 1859 until at least 1874, uncovering further animal remains as well as Palaeolithic flint and chert implements, this representing an early demonstration of the contemporaneity of extinct fauna and human activity. Further digging occurred intermittently throughout the later 19th century and beyond. The University of Bristol Speleological Society excavated at the cave between 1966 and 1970, encountering mainly disturbed deposits, but no artefacts. Trenching by the British Museum in 1992 located some

undisturbed deposits, with finds including the debris from Middle Palaeolithic tool manufacture, further animal remains, and a substantial deposit of Pleistocene fish remains; the largest deposit known from a British cave site (ADS, 2014).

Ivy Cave, Ebbor Gorge. ST 526 487. No data

'A wide, low arch, earth-filled, on ledge near top of left bank cliff, 30 yards south of the Narrows' (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). There is a considerable depth of sediment in the entrance to this cave. Although the ledge is narrow, about 2m wide it may support some archaeological stratification (ADS, 2014).

Kid's Cave (Hole), Ebbor Gorge. ST 5259 4862. Undated

Partially excavated by MNRC in 1907 and 1912 (Barrington and Stanton, 1977) when an infant burial was found and all around were a large number of goat bones (ADS, 2014).

Ladies Cave, Ebbor Gorge. ST 524 486. No data

The site is situated on the 'right bank, at the foot of cliff near north-west corner of a large scree slope and c.7m south of Lords Cave; a small arch with an earth floor' (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The sediments that remain there are suggested to be of some potential archaeological value (ADS, 2014).

Lion Cave, Ebbor Gorge (also known as Lion Shelter). ST 5258 4871. Undated

A wide low shelter in solid rock, partly excavated by MNRC c.1910, only one bone attributed to cave lion was found. The Prehistoric Society excavated a trench in the entrance in 1958, revealing barren thermoclastic scree resting on basal silty clay (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Little Shelter, Ebbor Gorge. ST 5246 4862. Neo

Small shelter with an attic, cleaned out by the MNRC in 1907 and 1922 when human bones and flints apparently of Neolithic age were found (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

'At a depth of 1 foot, a broken perforated Bronze Age sandstone axe or hammer was found alongside fragments of human bone; then nothing more until a depth of 3ft 6 inches when a human skull was found with some flints'. The finds were sent to Professor Sir Arthur Keith of the Royal College of Surgeons. He reported fragments of skull from a male, 45 years old plus bones of a middle-aged woman and a juvenile. Other female bones so probably more than one adult, also recovered were a number of various animal bones. Mr. Reginald Smith of the British Museum examined the axe/hammer and pronounced it Bronze Age, not Neolithic (Balch, 1922, 21)

Long Hole, Cheddar Gorge (also known as Roman Cave). ST 4668 5387. No data

The cave is an old upper level Gough's Cave. The floor deposits in the entrance passages were ransacked by souvenir hunter's c.1850-1900 and much Romano-British material was found and dispersed. UBSS dug some trial trenches between 1960 and 1961 but found the upper hopelessly disturbed and the lower layers to be barren (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Some human remains have been recovered from the cave but are undated. Ritual protection marks have been recorded in the cave, they are suggested to be Post-medieval in date (Binding and Wilson, 2010).

Lords Cave, Ebbor Gorge. ST 524 486. No data

This cave is situated on the right bank, at foot of cliff near north-west corner of a large scree slope and c.7m north of Ladies Cave. A short earth-choked tunnel (Barrington and Stanton, 1977), it is thought that the sediments within this cave are unexplored and could be of some potential archaeological value (ADS, 2014).

Mells River Sink, Wadbury Valley. ST 7351 4878.

WCC excavated the cave in 1975-77, discovering bones of rhinoceros, reindeer and horse, along with a 1st century A.D. brooch (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Nancy Camel's Hole, Croscombe. ST 6015 4417. Post-med

The cave entrance has been excavated and Post-medieval remains were recovered. The finds have been interpreted as evidence of the alleged occupation of the cave by one Nancy Camel c.1780 (ADS, 2014).

Nedge Hill Hole, Green Ore. ST 6430 4712

Also known as Nedge Hole. MNRC excavated the cave archaeologically in 1912 and 1934 but found only some pottery and a handful of bones. The cave was lost forever in 1971 when the farmer levelled the field (Savory, 1989, 51-54).

Nettlebridge Cave, Nettlebridge. ST 6463 4852. Undated

A rock shelter and cave at Cockles Wood, south west of Nettlebridge, associated with Cockles Wood Rock Shelter. They are situated on different levels of the same slope. The rock shelter, the uppermost of the two sites was excavated in 1905 by the Reverend D.B. Hicks. No detailed report was published, but the finds comprising two inhumations and some coarse potsherds with finger nail decoration were given to Wells Museum. Excavations in the cave between 1947 and 1950 by the Downside Archaeological Society produced sherds of Grooved Ware and Beakers, plus two flint scrapers; some scattered human bones and animal remains were also found. These finds are in Taunton Museum (ADS, 2014).

Nipper's Hole, Ebbor Gorge. ST 528 491. No data

This site is situated in Ebbor Gorge, high on right bank of upper valley where it splits into west and east tributaries, and slightly up the west tributary, in a small cliff in the wood. A shallow arch with low descending creep at back was apparently dug by persons unknown, possibly about 1950' (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). It is probable that some of the undisturbed deposits retain an archaeological potential, particularly around the entrance of this cave (ADS, 2014).

Outlook Cave, Ebbor Gorge. ST 5246 4865. Neo

Artificially widened entrance leads to small chamber with low level extension. An excavation by MNRC in 1907 revealed human and animal remains of Neolithic and later date, and possibly Late Pleistocene human and animal bones below a stalagmite floor (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Peacock Tube, Ebbor Gorge. ST 524 484. No data

This site is situated 'in wood 100 yards up valley from Primrose Valley junction, 50 feet up right bank in cliff of Dolomitic conglomerate. Small descending tube, earth choked' (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Floor deposits remain undisturbed (ADS, 2014).

Pearl Mine, Sandford Hill. ST 4285 5916.

ACG Log Book No.2, p.42 (1968) records that there were a number of bones in this cave, however when members visited the mine to retrieve some of the skulls from the entrance shaft someone unknown had already beaten them to it.

Picken's Hole, Crook Peak. ST 396 550. Paleo, RB?

A very small cave and a more extensive rock shelter following the escarpment on each side. It has been partly excavated and was found to contain Pleistocene animal remains (25-37,000 BP). There was evidence of Upper Palaeolithic occupation roughly radiocarbon dated to 35-30,000 BC, including human teeth and flint flakes have been found here. These are the oldest human remains on found on Mendip. It was excavated by Tratman and ApSimon of University of Bristol Speleological Society 1961-67 (ADS, 2014). It has been suggested that the upper layers contained Romano-British Pottery, but it seems there is some confusion in the literature with the nearby Scragg's Hole and there are, in fact, no Romano-British artefacts at Picken's Hole (graham Mullan, *pers comm*).

Pig's Hole, Cheddar. ST 4770 5454. No data

A rock shelter located at the foot of the cliff on the southern side of Cheddar Gorge. It is one of two, the other known as Sow's Hole. There has been uncertainty in the past as to which is which. It has been decided, rather arbitrarily, that the larger of the two, located at ST 47705454, should be known as Pig's Hole (ADS, 2014). The cave is currently being excavated for speleological exploration rather than archaeological and it is unclear whether any artefacts have been recovered or remain undisturbed (Simmonds, 2014, *per obs.*).

Priddy Circle No 1, Priddy. ST 5393 5252 (circle centre). Undated

During archaeological investigation and other works carried out by AC Archaeology 2013-2014 (report unpublished) two natural sinkholes within the external ditch were noted and recorded with the MCRA. The southerly sinkhole [ST 5393 5249] was revealed when a trench through the ditch was excavated to investigate a geophysical anomaly in 2013; it was backfilled on completion of the archaeological investigation. The western sinkhole [ST 5386 5256] was a natural occurrence following a very wet winter in 2014 (Simmonds, *pers obs.*).

Pride Evans Hole, Cheddar. ST 4681 5406

The cave is said to have been inhabited by Pride Evans and his family, Pride Evans was the Welsh keeper of the Cheddar Pound c.1810 (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). It has been excavated for archaeological remains and a hoard of Roman coins was found (UBSS Proc. 5, 1, 87-89).

Primrose Shelter, Ebbor Gorge (also known as Pulpit Hole). ST 5251 4867. Pleistocene

A shallow shelter, a trench was excavated by E.J. Mason for Wookey Hole Caves in 1959 when a small late Pleistocene deposit with flints was revealed (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Rabbit Hole, Ebbor Gorge. ST 525 486. No data

'At the foot of cliff, half-way up north edge of great scree slope, in wood; a descending tube, earth-choked'. (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The cave remains undisturbed and may have some potential archaeological value (ADS, 2014).

Read's Cavern, Burrington (also known as Keltic or Celtic Cavern).

ST 4682 5844. IA, Roman

R.F. Read discovered the cave in 1919 and it was later excavated by Professors Tratman and Palmer for the UBSS between 1919 and 1925, and again in 1929. In the area of the Main Chamber a number of artefacts were recovered and interpreted as evidence of Early Iron Age occupation (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The material discovered relating to use of the cave during Iron Age included pottery, antler cheek-pieces, bronze fittings for chariot wheels, part of a bronze bracelet, stone spindle whorls and some iron shackles. Some human remains and a quantity of animal bones were also discovered. The sole find of definite Roman date, a coin of Magnentius, is regarded by Branigan and Dearne as "an accidental contamination of the site" (ADS, 2014).

Painted gridlines and numbers on the rear wall and several boulders in the Main Chamber were drawn in connection with archaeological excavation by UBSS in the 1920s. Much Pre-Roman Iron Age material was recovered, including some human remains. Further work by UBSS in 2010, suggests that the cave may have been used for ritual purposes. A brooch,

found within a charcoal rich Iron Age deposit, is continental and has been dated to the La Tene period (450-20 BC) (UBSS Proc. 25, 2, 165-186).

Rhinoceros Hole, Wookey Hole. ST 5324 4791. MP

Located on the east side of the Wookey Hole ravine; c.16m above present valley floor and c.15m below the plateau; a collapsed rock shelter with two short passages. Partial excavations c.1900 and during the 1970's; the finds recovered from silts and sands included a Middle Palaeolithic hand-axe and thinning flakes. The overlying deposits contained mid-Last Glacial fauna believed to have been contemporary. Dates from stalagmitic flowstone may document human activity to c. 100,000 to 40,000 BP (ADS, 2014).

Rowberrow Cavern, Rowberrow. ST 4596 5802. Neo, BA, IA, RB

A large archway in Dolomitic Conglomerate rapidly closes down with a side passage on the left. Archaeological excavation by UBSS between 1921 and 1926 revealed Neolithic, Bronze Age, early Iron Age and Romano-British habitation (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The Upper Palaeolithic appears to be represented by a few flint implements and possibly some animal remains; microliths and a core indicate some Mesolithic activity. The Neolithic/Early Bronze Age was represented by a range of flint implements including knives, as well as some Beaker potsherds. Iron Age finds included pottery, a light blue bead, and traces of iron smelting. Romano-British finds included potsherds, a number of coins (some possibly "British imitations", i.e. counterfeit), and a few pieces of copper alloy and of lead. Some bone objects are suggested by Branigan and Dearne to be Iron Age, while some human skeletal fragments are suggested to be pre-Roman. Some at least of the faunal assemblage may have been contemporary with the Iron Age and Roman use of the cave (ADS, 2014).

St. Cuthbert's Swallet, Priddy. ST 5428 5049. LIA

One of the most complicated cave systems on Mendip, the entrance being located to the west of St Cuthbert's Leadworks. Human remains and a glass bead, the latter possibly Romano-British, reportedly found within the cave (ADS, 2014). Further research has revealed that in 1908, 17 feet of sediment were removed to reveal 'an original swallet in the bottom of the valley' at the St. Cuthbert's lead works. Near the base of the deposit was the skeleton of a woman 'with plaited tresses of hair intact' and four decorated glass beads of Celtic type (Robin Taviner, 2014, *pers comms*), the remains have recently been radiocarbon dated to 2023 BP (Chamberlain, *et.al.*, 2014). The remains were not in the cave but were nearby in the valley floor.

St. Dunstan's Well Cave, Stoke St. Michael. ST 6588 4789

Clay pipe pieces and medieval pottery found in the entrance passage. Presence of a nearby abandoned village (Fernhill) suggested a Black Death burial pit. However, no one would bury

plague victims directly above a water supply and well known holy well, it is likely that the village declined for economic reasons (Price, G. Fairy Cave Quarry, p10).

Savory's Hole, Ebbor Gorge. ST 5286 4881. Late UP or Meso?

Located in the upper valley of Ebbor Gorge, 2m above the valley floor and 56m below the main plateau and facing east. It consists of a low shelter, c.4m long and 5m wide, with a roof c.1.5m high at the entrance rising to c.2m towards the back of the cave. The cave was partially excavated 1913, 1919 and 1958. The excavations revealed human bones, possibly burials, of uncertain age which overlay several feet of thermoclastic scree resting on a stalagmite floor. Split long bones of large mammals indicate Late Upper Palaeolithic or Mesolithic activity (ADS, 2014). Although the cave interior is now largely excavated, considerable quantities of deposit survive in the talus which extends 7m either side of the cave entrance and a similar distance towards the valley bottom. The monument therefore includes the cave and all surviving deposits stretching from the cave entrance in an arc of radius 7m (English Heritage)

Saye's Hole, Cheddar. ST 4663 5389. IA

A large arched chamber at the bottom of the Gorge was used as a tearoom in the 19th and 20th centuries. There has been limited excavation at the site. There are two phases of Iron Age activity recorded, separated by a layer of flood debris that would indicate a period of inundation of the cave. Historically known as the Hall or Cheddar Hall. Additional deposits were said to have been destroyed during the construction of the tourist office building c.1990.

The assemblages are not extensive, but apparently Iron Age including LIA pottery, fragments of iron and bronze objects and some craft items (Bryant, 2011).

Scragg's Hole, Compton Bishop. ST 3964 5496. RB

A short but roomy cave. Excavations in the 1920s found Roman pottery and coins, Iron Age material, Neolithic pottery and flints, including a partly polished flint axe, plus Palaeolithic flints and animal remains (ADS, 2014). Further archaeological excavations were carried out by SSSS between 1943 and 1945, 1948-49 and 1953 and by the ACG in 1951 and 1961-62. A deposit of earth and stones c.2m thick, disturbed by burrowing animals, with a basal Romano-British occupation layer among large rock, resting directly on barren thermoclastic scree. Probably the roof collapsed, opening the cave to the exterior, early in Roman times (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Smoky Shelter, Ebbor Gorge. ST 525 484. No data

This site is situated at 'Ebbor Gorge, at foot of right bank cliff under Tower Rock. Shallow, wide, shelter, walls smoked by fires' (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Close to the footpath

through the gorge, this rock shelter appears to have some depth stratification of potential archaeological value on its floor (ADS, 2014).

Soldier's Hole, Cheddar Gorge. ST 4687 5400. Palaeo, Neo, IA, RB

Comprises a large archway with small side passage. Archaeological excavations by SANHS were carried out between 1927 and 1929. In the floor debris, up to 3m thick, a superficial layer with Romano-British, early Iron Age and Neolithic artefacts overlay a layer with only fox and hare bones, beneath which a layer with Cheddarian flints and bone implements rested on a layer that contained Proto-Solutrean flints associated with a lion, hyena, wolf, bear, mammoth, reindeer, elk, bison fauna (Barrington and Stanton, 1977).

Sow's Hole, Cheddar. ST 4784 5455. IA

Rock shelter located at the foot of the cliff on the southern side of Cheddar Gorge. It is one of two, the other known as Pig's Hole. There has been uncertainty in the past as to which is which. It has been decided, rather arbitrarily, that the smaller of the two, located at ST 4784 5455 should be known as Sow's Hole. Excavations in 1930 apparently recovered Iron Age potsherds (ADS, 2014).

Stoke Lane Slocker, Stoke St. Michael. ST 6686 4743. Undated

A large cave at Stoke St. Michael from which human and animal remains have been recovered. According to an Ordnance Survey field investigator, finds from the cave are in Shepton Mallet Museum. Smith (1975) suggests that the remains are of no great antiquity and that the charcoal deposit [or at least some of it] was burned paper or newspaper. This is presumably the same cave as that referred to by Branigan and Dearne as the Stoke Lane Quarry Caves (they give no more precise locational information and this statement is most likely incorrect). According to them, the caves are "now destroyed and little recorded". They note no Romano-British material from the cave(s), but refer to a reconstructed Samian vessel in Wells Museum which is provenanced from this locale (ADS, 2014).

Sun Hole, Cheddar Gorge (also known as Sheep's Hole). ST 4673 5408. Palaeo, Neo, BA, IA, RB

A roomy entrance passage contracts and rises to a boulder choke. Basal thermoclastic scree was overlain by a Late Pleistocene deposit with a few Cheddarian flints, followed by a well-developed late Neolithic-Beaker occupation layer and traces of temporary early Iron Age and Romano-British habitation (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). UBSS excavated the entrance archway, following earlier treasure seekers, 1926-28 and 1951-54 that recovered Roman coins, a shale bracelet fragment, and pottery; some Iron Age potsherds; Bronze Age flints and pottery; Neolithic potsherds and a pottery spoon, a leaf-shaped arrowhead, and some human

remains associated with a hearth of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date. A Pleistocene deposit contained animal remains and a few flints of Palaeolithic or Mesolithic date.

A radiocarbon date has confirmed the Upper Palaeolithic date of at least some of the faunal remains. Most of the finds are in the museum of the University of Bristol Speleological Society (ADS, 2014).

Supra Scragg's Hole, Compton Bishop (also known as Southall's Hole).

ST 3966 5496.

Situated in a low crag 10yds SW of Denny's Hole and hidden in dense scrub. Entrance faces SE and is 5ft wide and 2ft high and a bedrock rock rises to meet the roof 8ft inside. The cave was discovered by Sidcot School SS in 1930 who found a human jaw after an initial superficial dig. Further excavation cleaned out the cave to reveal the remains of six human skeletons examined by Dr. N. Cooper (MCRA, 2014).

Swildon's Hole, Priddy. ST 5311 5130. RB

Romano-British material found in a swallet at Priddy. According to the Ordnance Survey, Wells Museum has two items provenanced to Swildon's Hole, a Romano-British coarse ware pot and half a saddle quern, however no further details of the circumstances are known. Branigan and Dearne suggest that the finds were secondary deposits carried into the swallet by water action, and were probably derived from a nearby Roman settlement site (ADS, 2014) most likely from Blacklands.

Tom Tivey's Hole, Asham Wood (Leighton Hanging). ST 7051 4447.

Neo to Recent

A short but roomy cave that was excavated by the MNRC between 1959 and 1963 when deposits indicating casual occupation from Neolithic to Recent times were found resting on a tufaceous soil with a late Pleistocene rodent fauna; that in turn overlay barren thermoclastic scree. The last occupant is said to have been Tom Tivey of Chantry, hiding from the Bow Street Runners and Leighton Boys in the 19th C (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). The Neolithic material included pottery, a bone awl and a leaf-shaped arrowhead; Bronze Age items included a barbed and tanged arrowhead, and a gold bracelet. Roman finds comprised mainly pottery (though the final report raises the possibility that some may be 10th century AD or later). Iron Age sherds were also present. The lowest deposit, described as "late Pleistocene", contained some animal bones but no artefacts. Some 17th century pottery and a gold stud occurred in the uppermost layer (ADS, 2014).

Totty Pot, Cheddar Gorge. ST 4825 5357. Meso, Neo, BA

The cave is located about 5km east of Cheddar, on the plateau that forms the top of Mendip, at approximately 245m OD, where the covered entrance shaft is about 4m deep and 0.75m wide with short passages leading east and west at bottom. WCC dug into the cave in 1961 for

speleological reasons this resulted in the loss of a number of artefacts during the early exploration (Nick Hawkes, 2014, *pers comms*). WCC went on to carry out an archaeological dig in Mesolithic and later deposits in 1964 (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). Further excavation by the University of Bristol Speleological Society around the entrance area in 1998 suggests that there was no human occupation evidence and the flint debitage is likely to have been the result of re-sharpening hunting tools, and the finished tools being hunting losses (SWARF, 2008, p 51). The assemblage of human and animal bone, including both wild and domestic species, as well as a small microlithic flint assemblage, a barbed and tanged arrowhead, along with sherds of Beaker and Early to Middle Bronze Age pottery. A radiocarbon date indicates at least one Mesolithic human, dating to 7450→7050 cal BC, further AMS dating confirms the Mesolithic date for the same individual, however five other individuals date to the Neolithic spanning much of the period ranging from 3630-3370 cal BC to 3340-3000 cal BC (Schulting, *et.al*, 2010).

Tyning's Great Swallet, Charterhouse-on-Mendip. ST 4765 5610. Neo, IA

A large doline located within the GB Gruffy SSSI. It was first investigated by the UBSS in the 1920's (MCRA, 2014). During further exploration of the site in 2004 a quantity of bone, both human and animal, and a single worked flint were recovered. The human remains found at the site have been dated to the Iron Age; the flint thumb scraper has been identified as probably Late Neolithic in date (Mullan and Boycott, 2004).

Ubley Hill Pot, Ubley. ST 5160 5693. Undated

Abundant human and animal bones were found by MCG in 1960 when they dug into the cave (Barrington and Stanton, 1977). It has been suggested that the bones might be those of miners, the victims of a murderous encounter (Smith, 1975).

Uphill Quarry Caves, Uphill. ST 316 584. Pleistocene, Palaeo

Various exposures revealing Pleistocene faunal remains and possible Proto-Solutrean flints (Barrington and Stanton, 1977) discovered during quarrying from the early 19th century onwards. The quarry is now disused and derelict and only 3 of 13 recorded caves survive. The first to be recorded, Uphill 1 (Williams' Cave), was discovered in 1826 and contained a variety of Pleistocene faunal remains, few of which survive today. The cave was quarried away in 1863. Uphill 2 was discovered c.1826 also, and finds included Roman pottery and a hoard of almost 200 Roman coins in a pot that were dated to Valentinian and Gratian (AD 364-383), a late 4th century hoard in 1846 and totalled 129 coins; animal remains of uncertain date were also found. Again, the cave has been quarried away. Uphill 3 (Pooley's Cave) was discovered in 1863 and was apparently rich in animal remains, and also contained at least 6 human skulls and numerous other human bones plus a sherd of "rude unbaked pottery" and charcoal. It has been suggested that this was primarily a disturbed Neolithic deposit. Again, the cave was later quarried away. Little is known about Uphill 4 and 5. Uphill 6 was discovered in 1881, when a human skull was discovered, along with fragments of charcoal. Uphill 7 and 8 were discovered in 1898. Finds included predominantly Pleistocene faunal

remains, samples of which are extant in several museum collections. Uphill 8 also yielded a collection of Middle and Upper Palaeolithic flints. Like 6, both 7 and 8 were quarried away. Uphill 9 and 10 were explored in 1899-1901, and finds included Roman pottery, animal bones, hammerstones and "pot boilers". Uphill 11-13 are extant, but there is no record of any finds from them (ADS, 2014).

Westbury Quarry Caves, Westbury-sub-Mendip. ST 508 503.

Pleistocene, Palaeo

The remains of a largely destroyed cave containing Middle Pleistocene fauna (circa 450,000 BC) and some of the earliest potential evidence for human presence in Britain were found in the face of the limestone quarry at Westbury in 1969, and were subsequently subjected to rigorous investigation over a number of years, including the Natural History Museum from 1976 to 1984 (Andrews *et al*, 1999). The deposits examined at the site appear to divide into two basic units - an upper group, apparently formed in a cave environment, and a lower group of water laid deposits probably washed in from outside. The deposits were found in a large fissure in the carboniferous limestone, the fissure having probably formed part of a cavern system. The artefacts are few in number and poor in quality, but at least two are bi-facially worked (ADS, 2014). The cave system was not thought to have been habitable and the likely explanation for the presence of the flints is that they were transported into the cave by natural processes, indeed there is a question whether the flints were artefacts at all but were the result of natural modification (Cook, 1999). The validity of the extensive and varied faunal assemblage, however is not in question and includes a number of species recorded from Britain for the first time (ADS, 2014). From the faunal assemblage the recognition of butchery cut marks on a deer bone found in the main chamber might be interpreted as indicating human intervention and evidence for hominid activity (Macphail and Goldberg, 1999).



The Westbury Quarry Cave deposits.

(Image by courtesy of the CJ Hawkes collection)

White Woman's Hole, Asham Wood. ST 7033 4433.

Neo, IA, Rom, RB, Saxon

A long tunnel-like cave with its main entrance in a cliff located high up on the north bank of Asham Wood ravine. A smaller second entrance is located above the ravine. Romano-British coin counterfeiting material was discovered in 1971 within the cave and at its entrance. It comprised around 200 coins, flans and rods, plus Roman pottery, possible Neolithic and Iron Age sherds, a Saxon iron pin and later material. The deposits proved to have been considerably disturbed by unrecorded excavations and animal disturbance. Recorded excavations occurred in 1950 and 1965-70. Finds and archive from the latter are in Bristol City Museum and the UBSS museum (ADS, 2014).

White Cliff Cave, Wavering Down, Compton Bishop. ST 4089 5550

Undated

A phreatic tunnel slopes down from pit at top of cliff to artificially widened second entrance at foot of cliff (MCRA, 2014). An inhumation of uncertain date was found in the cave (ADS, 2014). Further excavation c.1994 revealed a farthing dated 1694 and a number of bones and pot sherds (MCRA, 2014).

Whitcombe's Hole, Burrington Combe. ST 4763 5827. IA, Roman?

Small passage ending in choke, excavated by Boyd-Dawkins c. 1860 (Barrington and Stanton, 1977) that retrieved animal remains plus potsherds and an "angle iron". They regarded the pottery as Roman and suggested that the "angle iron" resembled a Roman coffin binding. However, Branigan and Dearn have recently questioned the Roman date of any of the finds from the cave, suggesting that the pottery is more likely to be Iron Age. The "angle iron", whatever it may have been, is now lost. Finds are in Taunton Museum (ADS, 2014). An archaeological investigation in 2011 recovered 19th and 20th century glass, a number of small mammal and bird bones and a single worked flint flake (Simmonds, 2011).

Wookey Hole Cave, Wookey Hole. ST 5319 4801. IA, Rom, RB, Post-med

Wookey Hole Cave represents the upper course of the River Axe, and has been extensively developed in the 19th and 20th centuries as a show cave. Originally, the cave comprised a small entrance way and a tunnel circa 85 metres in length, which led to four chambers. Three of these are partly occupied by the River Axe. The fourth is submerged, but was examined in the 1970s.



Digging in Wookey Hole, 1978.

(Image by courtesy of the CJ Hawkes collection)

The cave has been excavated on a number of occasions. Casual finds were made by Buckland during visits in the 1820s. William Boyd Dawkins conducted an investigation of sorts in the later 19th century. HE Balch intermittently undertook excavations during the first half of the 20th century, and some minor excavation has occurred as recently as the 1970s. The bulk of finds belong to the Iron Age and Roman periods. The finds included a Roman Republican denarius of Marcia c. 124BC, pottery from early Iron Age, iron weapons and tools, bronze ornaments and Roman coins from Vespasian to Valentinian II. Investigation of the river bed

within the cave by divers in 1947-49 produced Romano-British bowls and pewter vessels, part of an 11th – 12th C cooking pot, and two late 17th C glass bottles. A large number of human bones were found associated with Romano-British material. A silt bank in the previously inaccessible fourth chamber, known as “Holy Hole”, was excavated over short periods from 1973 to 1977. The remains of at least ten individuals were found accompanied by Romano-British pottery and 2nd – 3rd C AD ornaments. It has been suggested that the burials here, and in other parts of the cave, have a ritual element, as they were almost entirely of young people and apparently not complete skeletons. The caves might represent a significant element in a pattern of Iron Age and Romano-British cave usage which involves various sites within the Mendip Hills area. The finds suggest that Romano-British occupation began c. 2nd C and continuing to the 4th C AD. The occupation appears to be domestic as the pottery includes cooking and eating vessels. Animal bones were discovered along with simple bone jewellery and tools (ADS, 2014). Balch (1914) recorded decorated pottery from Brittany, bone and antler weaving implements, brooches, earrings, a possible sacrificial dagger and coins, including a Roman one dating from 120 B.C. Other Roman finds recorded in the vicinity include a lead tablet discovered during the reign of Henry VIII which proclaimed the victory of Ostorius Scapula over the indigenous Cangi in the 1st century A.D. Included among the animal bones, he found human remains with the marrow extracted, which he cited as evidence of cannibalism within the cave.

Ritual protection marks have been recorded at the cave and these are suggested to be Post-medieval in date (Binding and Wilson, 2010).

Acknowledgements

My gratitude goes to Rob Taviner for his input and feedback and for taking the time to proof read the original paper, to Nick Hawkes and Mrs Elizabeth Hawkes for their constructive comments and allowing the use of images from the CJ Hawkes collection. Thanks also to the Mendip Cave Registry and Archive (MCRA) for allowing me to publish and disseminate the paper on their website: www.mcra.org.uk The MCRA is a constantly expanding resource of data for cavers and those interested in the subterranean world. The information collated relates primarily to caves and mines within the area of Somerset, Bath, Bristol and Wiltshire. The website provides access to electronic versions of the Cave Registry, Bibliography and a growing collection of material in the Archive that includes photographs, films and logbooks thereby providing a valuable source of information for researchers.

Bibliography

All photographic images were taken by Vince Simmonds unless otherwise stated.

Andrew, D. Introductions to Heritage Assets: Caves, Fissures and Rockshelters. English Heritage. May 2011

Andrews, P., Cook, J., Currant, A. and Stringer, C. 1999. Westbury Cave: The Natural History Museum Excavations 1976-1984. Published for CHERUB, the Centre for Human

Evolutionary Research at the University of Bristol by the Western Academic & Specialist Press Ltd., Bristol, UK

Balch, H.E. 1913 Further excavations at the late Celtic and Romano-British cave-dwelling at Wookey Hole, Somerset. *Archaeologia* **64**, 337-46

Balch, H.E. 1914. Wookey Hole; It's Caves and Cave Dwellers

Balch, H.E. 1922. *Mendip Nature Research Committee Report*

Balch, H.E. 1928 Excavations at Wookey Hole and other Mendip caves. *Antiquaries Journal* **8** (1928), 193-210, 193-7

Balch, H.E. 1931. *Mendip Nature Research Committee Report*

Balch, H.E., and Troup, R.D.R. 1911 A late Celtic and Romano-British cave-dwelling at Wookey-Hole, near Wells, Somerset. *Archaeologia* **62** (1911), 565-92

Barrett, J.H., ApSimon, A.R., Boon, G.C. 1972. *Tom Tivey's Hole rock shelter, near Leighton, Somerset. Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society*, 11(1), 61-69

Barrett, J.H., 1966. *A Roman Counterfeiter's Den, Part 1, White Woman's Hole, near Leighton, Somerset. Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society*, 13(1), 9-24.

Barrington, N. and Stanton, W. Mendip: The Complete Caves and a view of the hills: 3rd revised edition 1977. Cheddar Valley Press

Bello, S.M., Saladié, P., Cáceres, I., Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. and Parfitt, S.A. Upper Palaeolithic ritualistic cannibalism at Gough's Cave (Somerset, UK): The human remains from head to toe. *Journal of Human Evolution* **82** (2015) 170-189

Binding, C.J. and Wilson, L.J. 2004. Ritual protection marks in Goatchurch Cavern, Burrington Combe, North Somerset. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society*, 23 (2), 119-133

Binding, C.J. and Wilson, L.J. 2010. Ritual protection marks in Wookey Hole and Long Hole, Somerset. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society*, 25 (1), 47-73

Black, R.M. 1970, 1988. *The Elements of Palaeontology: 2nd Edition*. Cambridge University Press

Bradley, R. 1998. *The Significance of Monuments: On the shaping of human experience in Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe*. Routledge

- Branigan, K. and Dearne, M.J. 1990 The Romano-British finds from Wookey Hole: a reappraisal. *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeology and Natural History Society* **134** (1990), 57-80.
- Branigan, K. and Dearne, M.J. 1992 *Romano-British Cavemen: Cave Use in Roman Britain*. Oxbow Monograph 19.
- Bryant, A. Iron Age Cave Use on Mendip: A Re-Evaluation in Lewis, J. (edited by). 2011. *The Archaeology of Mendip: 500,000 Years of Continuity and Change*, 139-158. Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK
- Burleigh, R. and Clutton-Brock, J. 1977. A radiocarbon date for *Bos primigenius* from Charterhouse Warren Farm, Mendip. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society*, 14(3), 255-257
- Butler, C. 2005. Prehistoric Flintwork. Reprinted in 2008 by Tempus Publishing.
- Chamberlain, A.T., University of Manchester compiled database, 2014. Gazetteer of Caves, Fissures and Rockshelters in England and Wales Containing Human Remains. The first version of this document was compiled and produced by Andrew T. Chamberlain, Jim Williams and Erika Strenski in 1999 and hosted on the website of the University of Sheffield, where it was updated in 2001. Currently (2014) hosted by UBSS at <http://caveburial.ubss.org.uk>
- Cook, J. 1999. 'Description and analysis of the flint finds from Westbury Cave' in Andrews, P. *et al* (eds) *Westbury Cave: The Natural History Museums Excavations, 1976-1984*. Bristol, Western Academic & Specialist. 211-274
- Corney, M. *Hole Ground, Wookey Hole, Somerset: Appraisal of heritage assets and the potential for interpretation*. AC archaeology Ltd. client report ACW554/1/0, October 2013. Unpublished.
- Chapman, J. 2011. *The Story of Banwell Caves*
- Davies, J.A. 1926. Notes on Upper Palaeolithic Implements from some Mendip Caves. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society* **14** (3), 197-232
- Ellis, P. 1992. *Mendip Hills: An Archaeological Survey of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*. English Heritage and Somerset County Council
- Farrant, A. and Cooper, T. 2014. A Hole Lot of Trouble in *Geoscientist: The Fellowship Magazine of the Geological Society of London*. Vol. 24, No. 6, July 2014, 12-17
- Gray, A., Taviner, R. and Witcombe, R. *Mendip Underground: A Caver's Guide* 5th Edition 2013. MCRA, Mendip Cave Registry & Archive
- Green, G.W. and Welch, F.B.A. 1965. *Geology of the Country around Wells and Cheddar (Explanations of One-inch Geological Sheet 280, New Series)*. HMSO, London

Hawkes, C.J., Rogers, J. & Tratman, E.K. 1978. Romano-British Cemetery in the Fourth Chamber of Wookey Hole Cave, Somerset. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society* **15** (1), 23-52

Irwin, D and Richards, N. 1998. The Bleadon and Hutton Caverns. *Belfry Bulletin*, Vol. 50, no.496. 1998/1999

Jacobi, R.M. 2000. The Late Pleistocene Archaeology of Somerset, available at http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/archives/hes/downloads/HES_150_Years_Chapter_8.pdf
Accessed 21/07/2014

Jacobi, R.M. 1982. Ice-age Cave-dwellers, 12,000-4000 BC. In Aston, M. and Burrow, I. (eds) 1982. *The Archaeology of Somerset: A Review to 1500 AD*. Somerset County Council, 11-13

Jacobi, R.M. 2005. Some observations on the lithic artefacts from Aveline's Hole, Burrington Combe, North Somerset. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*, **23** (3), 267-295

Jacobi, R.M. and Hawkes, C.J. 1993. Archaeological Notes: Work at the Hyaena Den, Wookey Hole. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*, **19** (3), 369-371

Jamieson, E. 2015. The Historic Landscape of the Mendip Hills. Historic England

Lewis, J. 1998. The Everton flint collection in Wells Museum. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*, **21** (2) 141-148

Lewis, J. 2000. Upwards at 45 degrees: the use of vertical caves during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age on Mendip, Somerset. *Capra* **2**, available at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~capra/2/upwards.html> Accessed online July 2014

Lewis, J. and Mullin, D. 2000. The Middle Down Drove Project: Field Walking, Test Pitting and Excavation Cheddar, Somerset, 1997-9. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*, **22** (2) 203-223

Lewis, J. 2005. Monuments, Ritual and Regionality: The Neolithic of Northern Somerset. British Archaeological Reports No. 401. Archaeopress, Oxford

Lewis, J. (edited by). 2011. The Archaeology of Mendip: 500,000 Years of Continuity and Change. Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK

Lewis, J. 2011. On Top of the World: Mesolithic and Neolithic use of the Mendip Hills in Lewis, J. (edited by). The Archaeology of Mendip: 500,000 Years of Continuity and Change, 93-118. Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK

- Macphail, R.I. and Goldberg, P. 1999. 'The soil micromorphological investigation of Westbury Cave' in Andrews, P. *et al* (eds) *Westbury Cave: The Natural History Museums Excavations, 1976-1984*. Bristol, Western Academic & Specialist. 59-86
- Manem, S. The Bronze Age use of caves in France: reinterpreting their functions and the spatial logic of their deposits through the chaîne opératoire concept in Bergsvik, K.A. and Skeates, R. (edited by). 2012. *Caves in Context: The Cultural Significance of Caves and Rockshelters in Europe*, 138-152. Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK
- Mlekuž, D. Notes from the underground: caves and people in the Mesolithic and Neolithic Karst in Bergsvik, K.A. and Skeates, R. (edited by). 2012. *Caves in Context: The Cultural Significance of Caves and Rockshelters in Europe*, 199-211. Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK
- Mullan, G.J. and Boycott, A. 2004. Archaeological note: skeletal material recovered from Tynning's Great Swallet, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Somerset. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*, 23 (2), 135-140
- Mullan, G.J. and Wilson, L.J. 2004. A possible Mesolithic engraving in Aveline's Hole, Burrington Combe, North Somerset. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*, 23 (2), 75-85
- National Museum of Ireland. 2014. *Advice to the public on the archaeological potential of caves*. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, National Museum of Ireland, Dublin. www.museum.ie
- Papagianni, D. and Morse, M.A. 2015. *The Neanderthals Rediscovered: How modern science is rewriting their story*. Revised and updated. Thames and Hudson.
- Pryor, F. 2003. *Britain BC*. Harper Collins Publishing/Harper Perennial (2004)
- Roberts, N. 1989 [updated 1998]. *The Holocene: An Environmental History*. Second Edition. Blackwell Publishing
- Rutter, John. 1829. *Delineations of the North Western Division of the County of Somerset, and of its Antediluvian Bone Caverns, with a Geological Sketch of the District (Reprint)* Lightning Source UK Ltd. Milton Keynes
- Savory, J. (Ed.) 1989. *A Man Deep in Mendip: The Caving Diaries of Harry Savory 1910-1921*. Alan Sutton Publishing, Gloucester
- Schulting, R.J. 2005. '...pursuing a rabbit in Burrington Combe': New Research on the Early Mesolithic Burial Cave of Aveline's Hole. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*, 23(3), 171-265
- Schulting, R.J., Gardiner, P.J., Hawkes, C.J. and Murray, E. 2010. The Mesolithic and Neolithic Human Bone Assemblage from Totty Pot, Cheddar, Somerset. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*. 25(1), 75-95

Simmonds, V.J. 2011. An archaeological investigation of Whitcombe's Hole, Burrington Combe: a summary of the 2011 fieldwork. *Published in the Belfry Bulletin, The Journal of the Bristol Exploration Club*, December 2011, Number 542, Volume 58, Issue 5.

Smith, D.I. 1975 (editor, assisted by Drew, D.P.) Limestones and Caves of the Mendip Hills. British Cave Research Association. David & Charles, Newton Abbot

Stanton, W.I. 1986. Natural Sinkholes Affecting the Priddy Circles, Mendip. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*. 17(3), 355-358

Stringer, C.B. 1986. The hominid remains from Gough's Cave. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society*. 17(2), 145-152

Tratman, E.K., Donovan, D.T. and Campbell, J.B. 1971. The Hyaena Den (Wookey Hole), Mendip Hills, Somerset. *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society* 12 (3), 245-279

Webster, C.J. (edited by). 2008. The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework (SWARF) Resource Assessment and Research Agenda, Somerset County Council. Somerset Heritage Services, Taunton

Websites

<http://www.ahobproject.org> Ancient Human Occupation of Britain Project.

Accessed online 4th October 2014

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archsearch> Accessed online April, May 2014

www.banwellcaves.org

<http://www.biab.ac.uk/pages/chronology> Accessed online 25th June 2014

<http://caveburial.ubss.org.uk> Accessed online 5th September 2014

www.bgs.ac.uk/mendips/geology/geology.html Accessed online June 2014

www.heritagegateway.org.uk

www.ubss.org.uk Accessed online 9th September 2014

www.pastscape.org.uk Accessed online May 2014

<http://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/kevin.greene/wintro/> Accessed online 27th March 2011

www.wellsmuseum.org.uk Accessed online 12th November 2014

www.mcra.org.uk Accessed online November, December 2014

Appendix:

The table below provides further information, where available, on the caves of Mendip with an archaeological interest including National Grid Reference (NGR), Historic Environment Records (HER), Scheduled Monument Records (SMR), etc.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>NGR</i>	<i>HER</i>	<i>Record type</i>	<i>Record No</i>
Avelines Hole	Burrington	ST 4761 5867	-	NATINV	194278
Backwell Cave	Backwell	ST 4924 6801	-	NATINV	194850
Badger Hole	Wookey Hole	ST 5234 4795	24354	NATINV	197049
Beaker Shelter	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5262 4866	-	NATINV	197154
Benter Cavelet	Ashwick	ST 6454 4885	-	EHNMR	1323997
Bleadon Cave	Bleadon	ST 3409 5665	-	-	-
Bleadon Cavern	Bleadon	ST 3608 5813	-	-	-
Bone Hole	Cheddar	ST 4804 5470	-	EHNMR	1216756
Bos Swallet	Burrington	ST 4709 5837	-	NATINV	194299
Bracelet Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5228 4833	24334	NATINV	197104
Bridged Pot Shelter	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5260 4866	-	EHNMR	634922
Bridged Pot Hole	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5258 4868	24332	EHNMR	634922
Brimble Pit Swallet	Westbury	ST 5081 5075	-	NATINV	1344055

Browne's Hole	Stoke St. Michael	ST 6693 4757	-	NATINV	200187
Charterhouse Warren	Charterhouse	ST 4936 5458	-	NATINV	194741
Chelm's Combe Shelter	Cheddar	ST 4634 5447	-	NATINV	194566
Chert Shelter	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5286 4901	-	-	-
Cockles Wood Rock Shelter	Nettlebridge	ST 6461 4853	-	EHNMR	635030
College Wood Rock Shelter	Stratton on the Fosse	ST 6462 4950	-	EHNMR	635033
Cook's Hill Hole	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5216 4845	-	EHNMR	634928
Cooper's Hole	Cheddar	ST 4682 5402	-	NATINV	194578
Cross Spring	Cross	ST 4159 5469	-	-	-
Denny's Hole	Compton Bishop	ST 3967 5497	-	SMR/MNA	160366
Dinder Wood Shelter	Dinder	ST 5884 4541	-	NATINV	196837
Ewe Cave	Rodney Stoke	ST 4886 5040	-	-	-
Fairy Cave	Stoke St. Michael	ST 6565 4775	-	NATINV	200210
Flint Crevice	Axbridge	ST 4312 5502	-	EHNMR	634790
Flint Jack's Cave	Cheddar	ST 4632 5381	-	NATINV	194627
Foxes Hole	Burrington	ST 4823 5822	-	NATINV	194400
Goatchurch Cavern	Burrington	ST 4758 5823	-	EHNMR	634062
Gough's Cave	Cheddar	ST 4670 5391	-	NATINV	194593
Gough's Old Cave	Cheddar	ST 4668 5388	-	NATINV	1157275
Great Oone's Hole	Cheddar	ST 4680 5392	-	EHNMR	634874
Ham Hole	Croscombe	ST 6022 4503	-	EHNMR	1324157
Hansdown Swallet	Maesbury	ST 6003 4712	-	-	-
Hawks Nest Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5287 4899	-	SMR/MNA	136907
Hay Wood Cave	Hutton	ST 3399 5822	-	NATINV	192543
Hidden Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 525 485	-	SMR/MNA	139283
High Rift Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 525 486	-	SMR/MNA	138625
Hillgrove Swallet	Hillgrove	ST	-	-	-
Hope Wood Hole	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5216 4844	24335	NATINV	197107
Hunters Lodge Inn Sink	Priddy	ST 5494 5012	-	-	-
Hutton Cave	Hutton	ST 3609 5813	-	-	-
Hutton Cavern 2	Hutton	ST 3605 5816	-	-	-
Hutton Hill Hole	Hutton	ST 3424 5814	-	-	-
Hyena Den	Wookey Hole	ST 5322 4794	24330	NATINV	197056
Ivy Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 526 487	-	SMR/MNA	138911
Kid's Cave[Hole]	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5259 4862	17603	EHNMR	1216540
Ladies' Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 524 486	-	SMR/MNA	139786
Lion Cave [Shelter]	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5258 4871	-	NATINV	1165181
Little Shelter	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5246 4862	-	NATINV	1159392
Long Hole	Cheddar	ST 4668 5387	-	EHNMR	634864
Lord's Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 524 486	-	SMR/MNA	138462
Nancy Camel's Hole	Croscombe	ST 6015 4417	-	EHNMR	1324288
Nedge Hill Hole	Green Ore	ST 6430 4712	-	-	-
Nettlebridge Cave	Nettlebridge	ST 6463 4852	-	NATINV	200244

Nipper's Hole Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 528 491	-	SMR/MNA	138224
Outlook Cave	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5246 4865	-	NATINV	197089
Peacock Tube	Ebbor Gorge	ST 524 484	-	SMR/MNA	139355
Pearl Mine	Sandford Hill	ST 4285 5916	-	-	-
Pickens Hole Cave	Crook Peak	ST 396 550	-	SMR/MNA	160360
Pigs Hole	Cheddar	ST 4770 5454	-	NATINV	194569
Priddy Circle No.1	Priddy	ST 5393 5252	-	-	-
Pride Evans Hole	Cheddar	ST 4681 5406	-	-	-
Primrose Shelter	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5251 4867	-	EHNMR	634932
Rabbit Hole	Ebbor Gorge	ST 525 486	-	SMR/MNA	136791
Read's Cavern	Burrington	ST 4682 5844	-	NATINV	194407
Rhinoceros Hole	Wookey Hole	ST 5324 4791	24451	NATINV	197123
Rowberrow Cavern	Rowberrow	ST 4596 5802	-	SOMHER	10767
St Cuthbert's Swallet	Priddy	ST 5428 5049	-	NATINV	1165176
Savory's Hole	Ebbor Gorge	ST 5286 4881	25360	NATINV	197148
Saye's Hole	Cheddar	ST 4663 5389	-	NATINV	618600
Scragg's Hole	Compton Bishop	ST 3964 5496	-	EHNMR	634669
Smoky Shelter	Ebbor Gorge	ST 525 484	-	SMR/MNA	137892
Soldier's Hole	Cheddar	ST 4687 5400	-	NATINV	194602
Sow's Hole	Cheddar	ST 4784 5455	-	NATINV	1159211
Stoke Lane Slocker	Stoke St. Michael	ST 6686 4743	-	NATINV	200184
Sun Hole	Cheddar	ST 4673 5408	-	NATINV	194596
Swildon's Hole	Priddy	ST 5311 5130	-	NATINV	197728
Tom Tivey's Hole	Asham Wood	ST 7051 4447	-	NATINV	202928
Totty Pot	Cheddar	ST 4825 5357	-	NATINV	194572
Tynning's Great Swallet	Charterhouse	ST 4765 5610	-	-	-
Ubley Hill Pot	Ubley	ST 5160 5693	-	NATINV	1165175
Uphill Quarry Caves	Uphill	ST 316 584	-	NATINV	192504
Westbury Quarry Caves	Westbury	ST 508 503	-	NATINV	197827
White Cliff Cave	Compton Bishop	ST 4089 5550	-	-	-
White Woman's Hole	Asham Wood	ST 7033 4433	-	NATINV	202949
Whitcombe's Hole	Burrington	ST 4763 5827	-	NATINV	194282
Wookey Hole Cave	Wookey Hole	ST 5319 4801	24355	NATINV	197048

[published: 18/12/2014; updated: 03/08/2016]