

FIELD WORK.

By L. Y. BAKER.

Under this heading is given a general account of the various expeditions made, and the work carried out, other than that mentioned or described fully in other papers of this number. Throughout the session Saturday and week-end parties have constantly been arranged at Burrington, and camps held at Easter and in August, and for shorter periods at Whitsun and Christmas. The frequency of the visits has made it possible to carry out a good deal of prospecting work, without materially affecting the amount of time spent at the three caves which at present provide the chief work of the Society. In addition to this, several expeditions have been made to other caves in the Mendips, and places of general interest.

The work begun last session at the Swallets, close to Tynning's Farm, has been continued, though an opening has not yet been effected. About 8 tons of material consisting, chiefly of plant remains and gravel brought down by the stream, have been removed from the larger of the two active swallets. A water worn rift has been disclosed, and the passage of the water from here on seems to be only between boulders, but as this rift appeared to be gradually narrowing it was considered expedient to begin excavations at the foot of a low cliff in the same depression, but a few yards away. From this spot the noise of the water, which may again be heard through a fissure in the rocks, seems possibly to indicate a passage of greater dimensions. The work has been started here, but up till now not enough has been done to make it possible to form an opinion as to the final result.

A certain amount of work has been done at the other active swallet, which will probably repay further excavation. It has been decided, however, to confine the work to the first swallet until a more definite state of affairs is reached, and to fall back on the latter place if the entrance here proves impracticable. If an entrance is made it will probably be a difficult one on account of the number of sinkings which have taken place. But the evidence pointing to a cave system of considerable size is sufficient to justify a good deal of excavation.

From time to time Burrington Combe has been examined with the object of finding fresh openings. More excavation has been done at the shaft 200 yards above Aveline's Hole. The removal of another 6 tons of material has exposed a prolongation of the rift Northwards. but this is very narrow, and would not repay further work.

Work has been done at two places on the same level as Foxes' Hole at about 100 yards, and 150 yards, respectively, further down the Combe. At the first spot 6 tons of material have been removed, and a trench of an average width of 3 feet dug up to the rock face. The entrance which has been exposed is smaller than had been anticipated. At the other spot 4 tons have been excavated. Neither of these places is very promising.

About 20 feet above "swallet C" is a rift running parallel with the road, and sloping towards it at an angle of about 30 degrees from the vertical. It is about 3 feet wide at the top, and can be descended for 25 feet. At this point its slope shews signs of becoming less steep, but this is not certain, as the rift becomes choked with earth, stones and humus, and is too narrow for further progress. This rift can be traced from near the top of the Combe to the East Twin Brook Valley, and communicates at one point with swallet C.

In addition to the three tumuli in the field East of Tynning's Farm, **which** were described in the last issue of these Proceedings, another has been noticed, similar to the two basin-shaped ones. A trial trench has been dug in the centre of the ring-shaped tumulus on the ground between the arms of **Longwood**, but nothing has been found. The ground enclosed by this tumulus is level, and slightly lower **than** that outside its circumference, and very little excavation needed to be done in the centre in order to reach the solid rock.

Several small caves in Cheddar Gorge have been visited, but none were found to extend far. One cave situated about 300 feet **above the road**, and 50 yards lower down than the "Great Rift" cave, **penetrates** about 30 feet. A badger's skull was found inside, and a piece of pottery at the entrance.

During the Easter Camp, an expedition was made to the "Coral Cave" at Compton Bishop, and on the return journey

a stop was made at a small cave broken into by one of the ochre pits just North of Axbridge. This cave contains a very fine little stalactitic grotto.

In January and February 1922, some excavations at Banwell Pond, in connection with water supply, disclosed a black band, apparently of mediæval date. Some timbering was found, which is possibly part of the mill race which then existed. On the side near the Church, at a depth of 8-10 feet, two pieces of pottery were found, together with straw, charcoal, wood and a bone fragment. No finds of any importance were made.

On another occasion permission was obtained to visit Walton Bone Cave, which was dug out by Professor Reynolds in 1906. This is situated in a quarry at Walton-in-Gordano. To the right of this cave are two other holes which would possibly repay excavation.

On September 13th, 1921, a cycling party visited the excavations by the Somerset Archæological Society at the Lake Village, Meare, and had the opportunity of examining the remains which had been found during the summer. The party then visited the Museum at Glastonbury, and cycled home via Wells, where the remains from Wookey Hole were seen.

Owing to the kindness of Mr. H. E. Balch, F.S.A., five separate parties have visited Swildon's Hole during this session.

On September 8th, 1921, a survey was made of the main water channel in the newly discovered portions, which were found to proceed roughly in the direction of Cheddar, and not of Wookey Hole, as had been anticipated.

On November 12th, 1921, a party accompanied Mr. Balch on a photographic expedition. On this occasion Mr. E. K. Tratman discovered a new chamber of exquisite beauty, rivalling the beauty of the now famous "Barnes' Loop," and, in the opinion of some, even surpassing it. This chamber is partly over the main water passage, the floor being about 6½ feet above it.

On March 3rd, 1922, another visit was made, the party being underground for 17½ hours. One of the most interesting pheno-

mena to be seen in the newly explored parts of the cave is the contorted strata, which are extremely well shewn on account of the uneven wearing of the rocks by the stream.

A number of visits have been paid to the excavations for the new Avonmouth Road, at Sea Mills. Considerable quantities of Roman pottery, tiles, etc., have been unearthed here, and a little is now in the Society's Museum for comparative purposes. In addition, just where the embankment for the bridge over the River Trym commences on the South side of that river, some walling has been uncovered, which may prove to be part of a Roman Villa. The outline of one room can be traced, as well as a longer piece of walling. These lie in the actual bed of the road, and it is hoped that somebody will undertake excavation work here before it is too late.
