

## THE HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF PLEISTOCENE DISCOVERIES AT GOUGH'S CAVE, CHEDDAR, SOMERSET

by

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### ABSTRACT

Finds have been made in Gough's (New) Cave for over a century. Many were accidental intrusions into the routine development of the Cave's tourist potentials. Documentation is correspondingly piecemeal, and has generated numerous ambiguities. Of international importance are discoveries made during excavations in the entrance area of the Cave between 1927 and 1931.

### DISCOVERIES BEFORE 1927

Members of the Geologists' Association of London may have made the first finds in Gough's Cave. On the morning of Friday the 20th August 1880 the Society's Bristol excursion visited Cheddar, Wookey Hole, and Wells. Their first stop was to see over the 'Cheddar cave' – presumably Gough's Old Cave, since Cox's is specified as visited later that morning. In a cave 'next door [to Gough's Old Cave] . . . which [had] not yet received a name . . . [they] found the cave-earth still remaining, and a short search brought to light numerous imbedded bones' (Sollas, 1881).

In 1892 the Wells Journal (28th January), describing the discovery of the 'Fonts' during the small hours of the 16th, records the removal of some 400-500 tons of sediment (FIG. 1). From this had been collected 'a large quantity of bones and teeth of extinct animals, besides a lot of flint knives and bone instruments'. Mr Gough, we are further told, 'set great value' on these discoveries.

Of the archaeological finds made up to June 1899 we are, surprisingly, told nothing in the write-up of a visit by the Bath Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club (Martin, 1900). Instead stress is laid on the 'frugality' of their lunch. Various local finds made by Gough had been on display since at least 1888 (Dawkins, 1889).

The first surviving chipped flints preserved as from 'Gough's New Cave', the present show cave, are some lent by Montague Porch early in 1903 to what is now the Woodspring Museum. The date of their discovery is not known. They were purchased in 1920 and published by J. A. Davies in 1926. Some (J. A. Davies, 1926, fig. 2, nos. 2 and 3) are clearly of types to be expected from a Lateglacial context. There is also a pointed bone.

About Christmas 1903 blasting on the right margin of a small fissure opening off the northern side of the 'Vestibule' to the cave (FIG. 1) 'disturbed' the skeleton of a young adult male. He is now exhibited as 'Cheddar Man' (Jex-Blake, 1904; Gray, 1904; H. N. Davies, 1904, 1905, and 1910; Baker, 1904). Death was attributed variously to starvation, rock-fall, or drowning. However, the reported original disposition of various

skeletal parts together with the observed positions of those truncated stumps allowed to remain protruding from the sediment profile have favoured interpretation of this find as a contracted inhumation (Gray, 1904; Garrod, 1926; Donovan, 1955; Tratman, 1968 and 1975). Radiocarbon dating has shown him to be of very early Flandrian date (Barker, Burleigh and Meeks, 1971; Burleigh, in preparation).

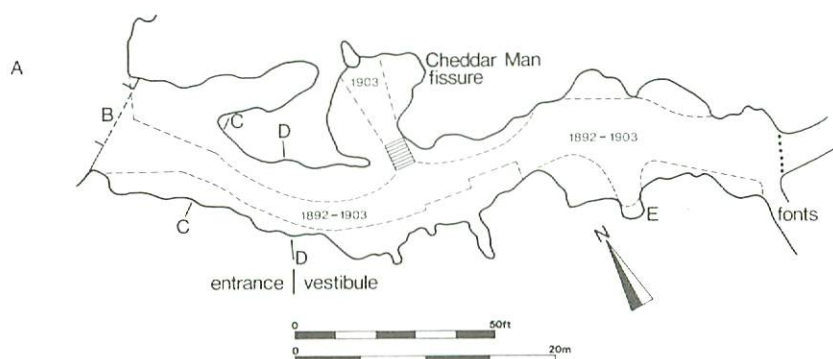


FIG. 1 — PLAN OF 'OUTER' PART OF GOUGH'S CAVE SHOWING OUTLINE OF GOUGH'S EXCAVATION (BASED ON DONOVAN, 1955)

- A : APPROXIMATE POSITION OF PRESENT (1985) TURNSTILES
- B : INNER EDGE OF PRESENT (1985) 'BRIDGE' AND APPROXIMATE LINE OF ENTRANCE ARCH
- C-C : FORMER POSITION OF 'IRON GATES'
- D-D : PRESENT (1985) 'GRILLE GATE'
- F : POSITION SHOWN IN PLATE 2

Other 'finds' made at this time were fossils of horse and chipped flints (H. N. Davies, 1904, p. 343-6). Any stratigraphic relationships were lost at the moment of discovery (Gray, 1904, p. 3). No contemporary, or near contemporary, account identifies any certain 'grave-goods'. The chipped flints from Gough's Cave were correctly compared on technological as well as typological grounds to artifacts of Lateglacial age from Kent's Cavern at Torquay, and the Torbryan Caves (Gray, 1904; H. N. Davies, 1904, 1905, and 1910).

Post-cards issued as early as 1904 (PLATE 1) show a disorganized 'Cheddar Man' framed by his discoverers, Arthur and William Gough, and fronted by a medley of chipped flints, some perhaps found in the fissure, others possibly from the 'Vestibule' (H. N. Davies, 1904, p. 339) or 'Entrance' where, by this time, further discoveries had been made (J. A. Davies, n.d. 6, p. 109-111).

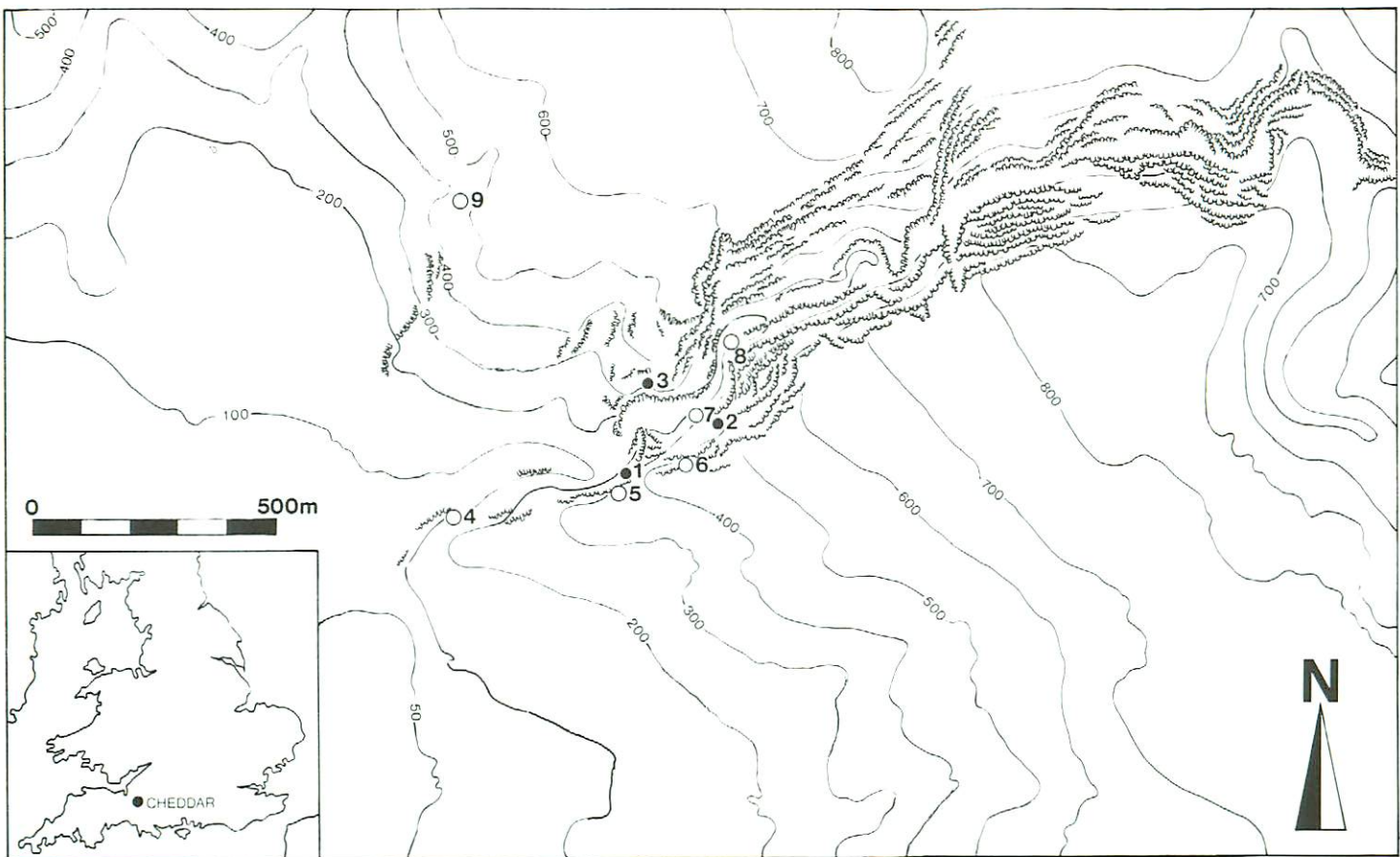




FIG. 2 (OPPOSITE) — PLEISTOCENE-AGE FIND-SPOTS EAST OF CHEDDAR.  
 SOLID DOTS: FIND-SPOTS WITH EVIDENCE FOR HUMAN USAGE IN  
 PLEISTOCENE TIME  
 OPEN DOTS: FIND-SPOTS WITH NO EVIDENCE, OR ONLY AMBIGUOUS  
 EVIDENCE, FOR SUCH USE

- |                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1: GOUGH'S (NEW) CAVE | 6: GREAT OONE'S HOLE       |
| 2: SOLDIER'S HOLE     | 7: COOPER'S HOLE           |
| 3: SUN HOLE           | 8: SUGAR LOAF ROCK FISSURE |
| 4: FLINT JACK'S CAVE  | 9: CHELM'S COMBE SHELTER   |
| 5: GOUGH'S OLD CAVE   |                            |

Drawn by P. Howard

The 'Museum' at the entrance to Gough's Cave housed items not just from this and Gough's Old Cave (H. N. Davies, 1904, p. 337) but also from 'various places in the Gorge' (FIG. 2). These, Balch (1935, p. 30) tells us, were 'not precisely labelled'. It was because of the confusion within this exhibition that bones of such 'exotic' animals as lion, hyaena, rhinoceros and elk—more likely collected from Great Oone's Hole (Taylor, 1928, p. 81 footnote 24) or the fissure behind Sugar Loaf Rock explored by R. C. Gough in 1881-2 (Parry, 1931b, p. 49; Weston Mercury, 18th Feb. 1882)—were incorporated into early faunal lists for Gough's Cave (H. N. Davies, 1904, p. 337; Seligman and Parsons, 1914, p. 241; J. A. Davies, 1926, p. 262-3).

A photograph in the *Homeland Handy Guide to Cheddar* (Snell, 1907) shows a jumble of ancient and modern items, some of the latter perhaps originating from closer to Omdurman than to Cheddar! 'Cheddar Man' was passed off as the oldest human skeleton ever discovered — untrue even for Britain. The bones were said to be those of a young man adapted to a diet of roots and grain, but incapable of standing upright (Grey, 1914).

Formal description and more lengthy chronological assessment of this partial skeleton were provided by Parsons (1914) and then by Seligman and Parsons (1914). In large part the contextual data incorporated were derived verbatim from H. N. Davies's (1904) paper of which they were, at least at the beginning of their study, unaware. Additional historical information about the cave provided as background is in part erroneous — but has, in turn, been scrupulously reproduced since. The archaeological component is, however, valuable for providing line-drawings of chipped flints not illustrated by Davies, and for its notice of a partial 'bâton de commandement' made from reindeer antler — the first to be published from the British Isles.

This bâton was 'said' (p. 262) to have been found 'in association' with 'Cheddar Man' or in his 'immediate proximity' (p. 243). These remarks were accepted as fact by Parry (1928) and Gray (in Parry, 1929b) who further specified its date of discovery as 1903. Both statements have since been widely repeated (cf. Clay, 1929, p. 345; Dobson, 1931, p. 25; Parry, 1931b, p. 49; and Kendrick and Hawkes, 1932, p. 41). Its history cannot now be verified. It seems curious, however, as Donovan has pointed out (1955, p. 92), that had this artifact been discovered near or with 'Cheddar Man' and as early as 1903, it should have escaped remark for a decade. Particularly so when we have evidence for visits to the Cave not just by Gray and H. N. Davies (several times) but also on a number of occasions by Balch and Boyd Dawkins. Though much damaged, the nature of this object

and its relevance for confirming human use of Gough's Cave in Palaeolithic times (and, by wishful thinking, also the age of the skeleton) would not have been lost on any of these observers. Indeed Dawkins had figured bâtons from French Late Palaeolithic sites alongside their more modern functional equivalents in his book *Early Man in Britain* (1880). The unfortunate likening by Seligman and Parsons (1914, p. 245) of this baton fragment to 'a portion of the left femur of a half-grown lad' has led to the inevitable misunderstanding that it was *made* of human bone (cf. Gray in Parry, 1929b, p. 113; Balch, 1935, p. 50; Donovan, 1955, p. 92; and Tratman, 1968, p. 8).

Seligman and Parsons illustrate for the first time (1914, fig. 2) the artificially pointed distal fragment of a wild horse metapodial. Its physical condition suggests this to be of Late Palaeolithic date. Iron-age discoveries were mentioned and figured by Bulleid and Gray (1917) in their second volume on Glastonbury.

Dorothy Garrod was unable to examine the Gough's material and relied, for the synopsis in her book *The Upper Palaeolithic Age in Britain* (1926, p. 90-97), on Seligman and Parson's account. Her statement (p. 95) that the pointed bone fragment published in 1914 was decorated with 'fine parallel incisions' is a misunderstanding of the conventions used by its illustrator.

### 1927-1931

The major archaeological excavation at Gough's, between November 1927 and January 1931 and supervised by R. F. Parry, was a spin-off of the need to cater for an increasing number of visitors. Access through the 'Entrance' into the 'Vestibule' was along a narrow artificial 'trench' (FIG 3) during whose digging out many of the early finds were probably made (Parry 1928, p. 735). On both sides this trench was bounded by banks of undug sediment standing to a height of up to between four and four and a half feet (Gough, 1928; Parry, 1928, p. 735; 1929b, p. 102). These banks can be seen in H. N. Davies's plan of 1904 (p. 335, fig. I). Over four short winter seasons and as far in as the 'Cheddar Man Fissure', these two banks were cut back to the cave walls. A further length of sediment was cleared from the north side of the 'Cave' beyond this (FIG. 3). Where possible digging was extended to bedrock, documenting a sediment profile which, when intact, had been locally over fourteen feet thick (Parry, 1929a, p. 35). Over part of the entrance area these 'ribbon-like' excavations against the north and south walls of the cave were linked by investigations of sediment remaining beneath the pathway along Gough's trench.

Parry excavated in six inch spits numbered from top to base. These were contoured to the natural dip visible *within* the sediments as they entered the cave, not measured from their 1927 surface as suggested by Tratman (1976, p. 123). The sediment within spits 16 to 1 was described by Parry as a 'cave-earth' richer in clay in its upper part and with an increasing sand content and marked lamination in its lower. This overlaid an older fill (spit 17 downwards) with abundant water-worn cobbles of limestone and sandstone. This was termed 'gravel' by Parry (1928; 1929a; and 1929b). The rock-floor was reached along the sides of the cave at a depth equivalent



to spits 24 or 25 (Parry, 1928) but was rather deeper nearer its mid-line (1929a, p. 35). The sediment sequence, its interpretation and the implications this has for the taphonomy of the various fossil items within it are discussed by Collcutt elsewhere in this volume.

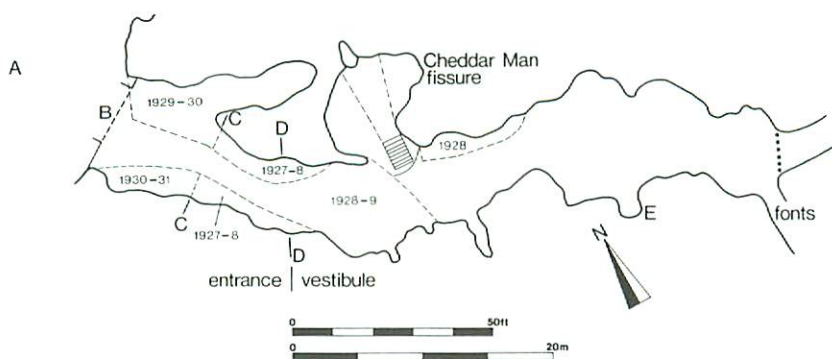


FIG. 3 — PLAN OF 'OUTER' PART OF GOUGH'S CAVE SHOWING AREAS INVESTIGATED BY R. F. PARRY IN 1927-1931 (BASED ON DONOVAN, 1955)  
For key see FIG. 1

A daily record of all finds was kept (1929b, p. 102) and these were attributed spit numbers marked on them in pencil. Parry (1928, p. 735; 1929a, p. 32-33) tells us that from his records 'it [was] possible to refer any specimen to both its horizontal and vertical position in the deposits'. A remark by Keith and Cooper (in Parry, 1929b, p. 118), could be taken to imply that the distance into the cave of objects was measured from a datum line at its mouth. No records of any such measurements, however, can now be traced. Perhaps the information was contained in, or transferred to, the 'catalogue' (Tratman, 1976, p. 123) seen by Kenneth Oakley in the 1950s. The existence of this 'catalogue' or 'old register' was communicated by Oakley to Tratman late in October 1974, too late perhaps to be mentioned in the latter's 1975 review article on Gough's Cave. Its present loss is a serious one for British Palaeolithic studies. (The correspondence between K. P. Oakley and E. K. Tratman is preserved in the B.M. (N.H.) Department of Palaeontology and the U.B.S.S. archives.)

Artifacts and faunal specimens were collected from as deep as spit 25, the sediment filling crevices in the rock-floor of the cave. Items recovered from spits deeper than 16 were believed drawn downwards by preferential drainage along the foot of the cave-walls, since no artifacts were found in equivalent spits which, nearer the centre of the cave, were excavated into the older 'gravel' infill (Parry, 1931b, p. 47; and Colcutt in this volume).

Parry recorded what, from his published statistics, must have been the largest collection of chipped flints (over 7,000) to be recovered from any British cave or rock-shelter location used in Lateglacial times. That portion found during the winter of 1927-8 was described in great detail by J. A. Davies (in Parry, 1929b), a report supplemented by some hundred

technically highly accurate line-drawings. His early death explains the lack of equivalent treatment for finds made in subsequent seasons. These have, however, been included in two more general studies, one (Bohmers, 1956) of the north-west European, the other of the British Upper Palaeolithic (Campbell, 1977).

With these flints was an important group of assumed contemporary bone, antler and ivory items. These included a second bâton of reindeer antler (Gray, in Parry 1929b) and a sliver which refitted that published by Seligman and Parsons (Parry, 1929a, p. 35). The bâton and a pointed proximal tibia of mountain hare with groups of notches cut into the three natural borders of the bone (Parry, 1931b, fig. 2.2) have been the subjects of separate studies (Clay, 1929; Tratman, 1976 and 1977).

Human fossils, some of the very few from a secure British context of this age, were described by Dr N. C. Cooper and Sir Arthur Keith. The large mammal fauna together with a small collection of bird bones was identified by Dorothea M. A. Bate. From mammal bones collected at this time it has been possible to obtain the first group of radiocarbon dates of demonstrable relevance to the Late-Palaeolithic usage of a British cave-site (Burleigh, in preparation). The fossils, humanly modified and unmodified, collected during this major excavation, their identification and probable chronology, their taphonomy and their potential interrelationships, are to be discussed in future papers in *Proceedings*.

The majority of fossil items recovered at this time are of Lateglacial age, and it is upon these that ongoing study is focused. Parry's work, however, also confirmed later use of the cave. Thus several chipped flints ('microliths') and a perforated shell bead (Parry, 1929b) were most probably dropped very early in the Holocene. Pottery, a bronze toe-ring, and a variety of small objects in bone and red deer antler (Gray, in Parry 1929b and 1931b) were discarded in Iron-age and Roman times.

Short formal accounts of these excavations were published in the *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* (Parry, 1929b and 1931b). Interim reports appeared in four consecutive *Annual Reports* of the Mendip Nature Research Committee (Balch, 1928, 1930 and 1931; and Parry, 1929a). Parry also wrote a short article for *Nature* (1928), and read a paper on his work at Cheddar, including Gough's, at the British Association meeting in Bristol during September 1930 (Parry, 1931a). Notices appeared in the *Morning Post* (31st January 1928) and in a letter from J. A. Davies to *The Times* (6th August 1928). Davies (1928) also contributed a note on the excavation to the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society's *Proceedings*. A brief anonymous account of the first winter's work appeared in *Antiquity* (Anon., 1928).

### 1934-1938

During the 1930s further major improvements were made to the visitor potential of the caves. The Cave Man Restaurant was opened in June 1934. Its construction involved removal of over 2,000 cubic yards of scree





PLATE 1 — GOUGH'S CAVE: THE 'CHEDDAR MAN' WITH DISCOVERERS AS SHOWN ON A POSTCARD OF 1904. ARTHUR GOUGH (LEFT) AND WILLIAM GOUGH (RIGHT) ARE STANDING ON THE CREST OF THE SCREE RIDGE ACROSS THE CAVE MOUTH. THE ENTRANCE ARCH IS VISIBLE BEHIND. IN FRONT IS A MEDLEY OF CHIPPED FLINTS.



EXCAVATIONS AT GOUGH'S CAVE

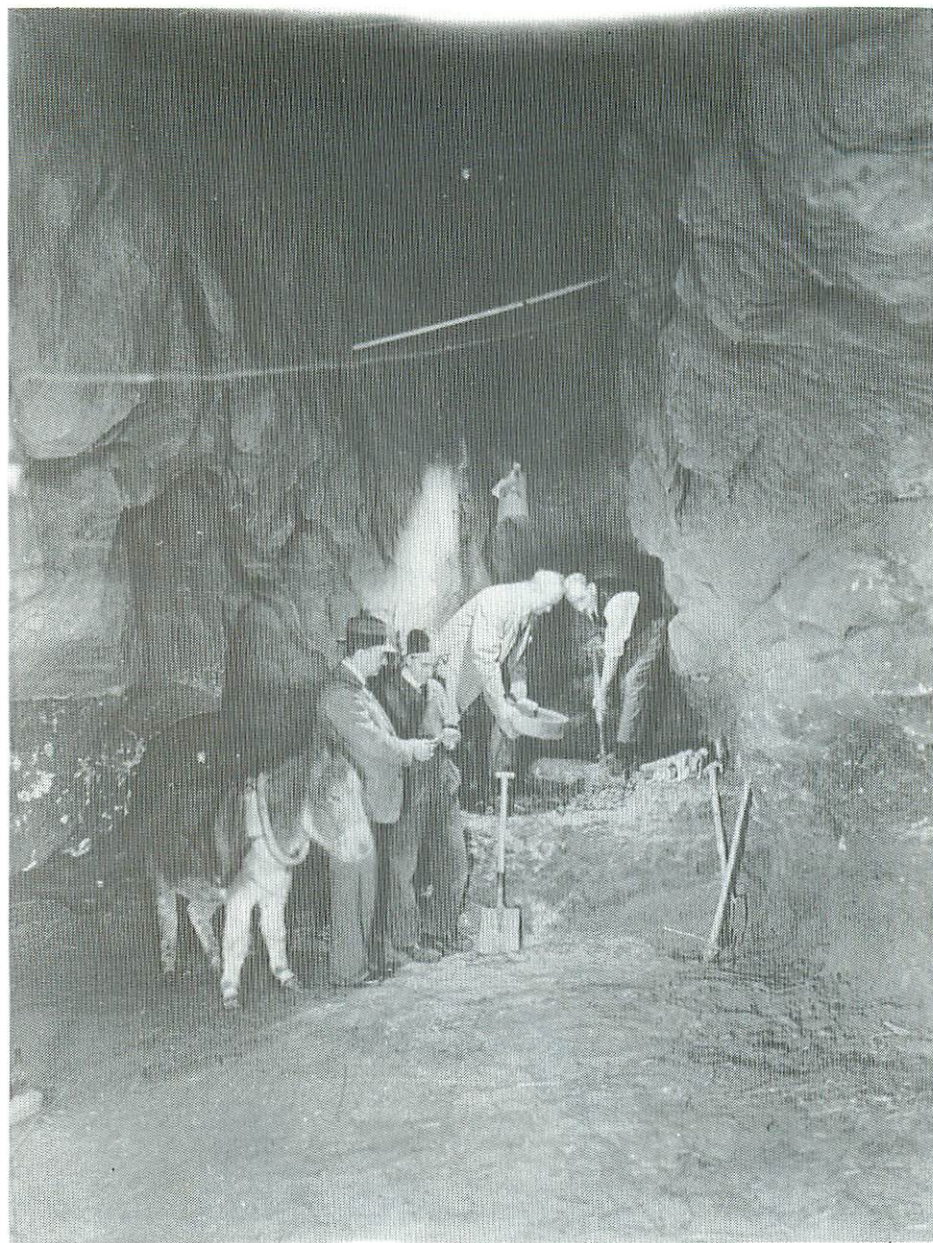


PLATE 2 — GOUGH'S CAVE: DIGGING IN EARLY 1935 TOWARDS THE REAR OF THE 'OUTER' CAVE — POINT E IN FIGS. 1, 3 AND 4. IN FRONT TO THE LEFT, T. B. GILL; TO THE RIGHT, A. V. PAINTER; 'EXCAVATORS' BEHIND NOT CERTAINLY IDENTIFIED. NOTE BOARS' TUSKS.

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'apron' from the base of the cliffs to the south of the cave entrance, and extending up into the 'Slitter'. Roman and Bronze-age items were recovered from this (Weymouth, 1934; Anon., 1934). Further discoveries, including human bones most probably of later prehistoric date, were made at the cliff foot and south of the cave entrance in 1968 (Tratman *et al.*, 1972).

In 1934 and 1935 the near-continuous banks of undug sediment flanking the path into the cave, beyond the point where Parry's work had ceased and up to the 'Fonts', were removed down to path level (FIG. 4). Brief press notices (frequently rendered ambiguous by concurrent reporting of finds made in enlarging the up-Gorge car-parks), a pair of photographs, and a brief correspondence between Parry and Bate over the identification of a wild-cat mandible, are our only contemporary sources of information. Most useful are articles in the Bristol Evening World (1st February) and the Sunday Pictorial (3rd February 1935). These describe the finding of later prehistoric artifacts and boars' tusks, as well as reindeer and bear bones (the latter probably including the mandible shown in Balch, 1935, pl. 10 no. 1) in a rift just before the 'Fonts' (FIG. 4 and PLATE 2).

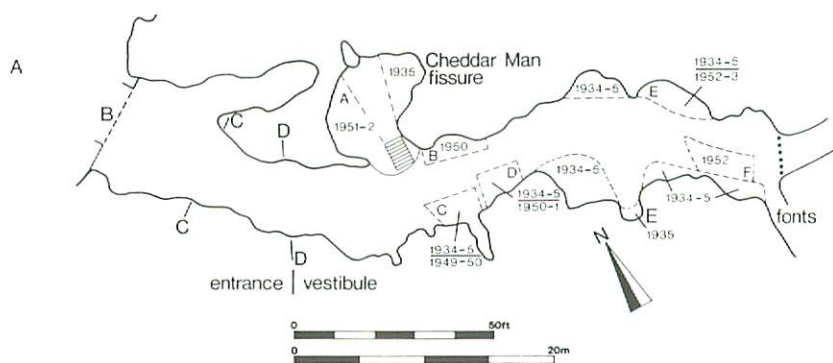


FIG. 4 — PLAN OF 'OUTER' PART OF GOUGH'S CAVE SHOWING AREAS EXCAVATED AFTER 1931 (BASED ON DONOVAN, 1955, WITH SOME ALTERATIONS).

For key see FIG. 1

Those remnants of 'Cheddar Man' left in place (H. N. Davies, 1904, figs. 4 and 5; Seligman and Parsons, 1914, pl. XXIII fig. I) were removed late in 1935. The skeleton, perhaps now even more partial after some three decades of frequently rather chaotic exhibition, was reassembled by M. Rix then of University College, Oxford. The result is shown in a plate (no. 15) added to the second edition (1947) of Balch's *Mendip: Cheddar, its Gorge and Caves*. Jacquetta Hawkes (1951, p. 150) compared his laying out to that of Lenin.

It was during the removal of these remaining elements that the only fossil certainly to be closely associated with the skeleton was recovered — a lower canine of wild cat. This came from 'the earth in one of the vertebra[e]' (correspondence between Parry and Bate, November 1935,



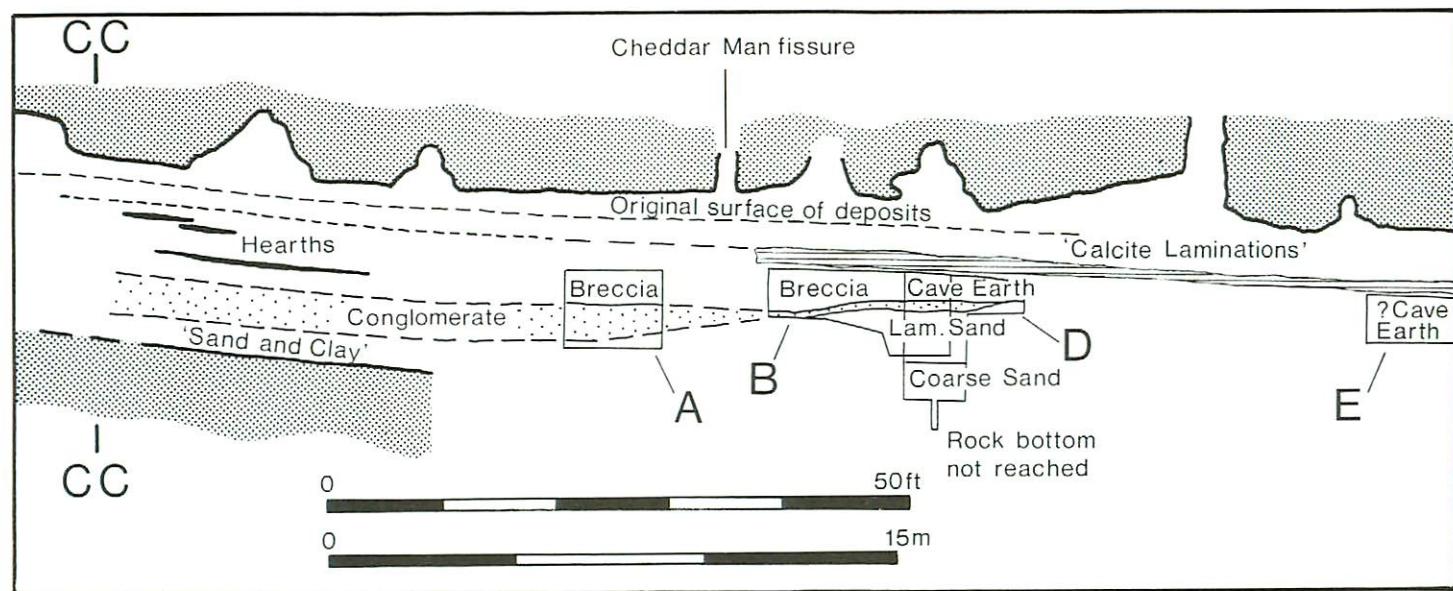


FIG. 5 — RECONSTRUCTED LONGITUDINAL PROFILE OF SEDIMENTS IN 'OUTER' PART OF GOUGH'S CAVE (BASED ON DONOVAN, 1955, WITH SLIGHT SIMPLIFICATION)  
The sites are lettered as in FIG. 4

Drawn by R. Parkin

B.M. (N.H.) Archives). Nothing is known of the history of a red deer mandible (Balch, 1935, pl. 10 no. 2) said to have been found 'above' Cheddar Man (Oakley *et al.*, 1971, p. 23).

Routine trenching in the cave in 1938 produced two shells, now probably lost, fragments of large-mammal limb-bone and a piece of 'pointed' antler (correspondence between T. B. Gill and Bate, May 1938: B.M. (N.H.) Archives).

### 1949-1953

Between 1949 and 1953 six small excavations (FIG. 4, A-F) were undertaken by the cave management. These were directed by the then head-guide A. V. Painter but recorded and brought to publication by Donovan (1955).

Excavation F (1952), just before the 'Fonts', was in an area of the cave most probably inaccessible to its Palaeolithic occupants (Tratman, 1975, p. 7-8). No Lateglacial age artefacts or fauna were recorded from excavation E (1952-3) and D (1950-1), although charcoal specks were observed at point D in sediments argued laterally equivalent to this portion of Parry's 'cave-earth'. In excavations C (1949-50), B (1950), and A (1951-2) this equivalent took the form of a 'breccia' unit (Donovan, 1955).

At every excavation site the sediment profile had been truncated down to path level during previous development of the show-cave. What remained was removed in six inch spits, numbered top to base, and measured from what was *estimated* to have been the original floor-level at that point.

Spits 27-18 were equivalent to the older, archaeologically sterile, fill (Parry's 'gravel') now termed the 'conglomerate' (Donovan, 1955, p. 89 Table). Spits 17-10 corresponded to a 'cave-earth/breccia' unit. Artifacts and faunal items of Lateglacial age were recovered from this. Above was a void (Donovan, 1955; correspondence between Donovan and E. M. M. Alexander, B.M. Archive). These 'key holes' allowed Donovan (1955, p. 84, fig. 16) to reconstruct a longitudinal sediment profile for the cave. This is reproduced here in slightly simplified form (FIG. 5).

The only finds from excavation A were fox bones (Donovan pers. comm.). Chipped flints and large mammal bone were recovered from the 'cave-earth/breccia' unit of excavations C and B sited opposite each other on the southern and northern sides of the 'Vestibule' and just beyond the opening of the 'Cheddar Man Fissure'. Identifiable fauna from spits 17 to 10 included horse, red deer, man, wolf, and bear. Although much of this bone has been heavily chewed, cut-marks confirm that individuals of the first two species had previously passed through human hands. Spits 11 and 9 also contained marine shells (Donovan, 1955, p. 102 footnote). It is from these two excavations that samples for pollen analysis (Leroi-Gourhan in this volume) and sediment studies (Collcutt in this volume) were collected.

An unshaped amber 'stone' was found in the autumn of 1950 in spit 12 of excavation B (Tratman, 1952 and 1953; ?Beck, 1965). From spit 14



of one of these excavations came a fragmentary adult right parietal (Stringer in this volume). There are also a shell of native sting-winkle (*Ocenebra erinacea* L.) identified from spit 11 and a broken mussel shell from what must have been a higher sediment remnant levelled in as spit 9.

### 1957 TO DATE

Up until the winter of 1957-8 a talus ridge still passed unbroken across the mouth of Gough's Cave (PLATE 1 opposite p. 96). Visitors climbed a broad flight of steps up its outside and then walked down its angle of rest into the cave. It is shown schematically on H. N. Davies's largely hypothetical longitudinal section of the cave published in 1904 (fig. 2). Its original height is said to have been about that of the 'bridge' over the present entrance (Tratman, 1975, p. 7). However, sediment traces on the cliff walls near the entrance show that locally at least it was once higher. In PLATE 1 Arthur and William Gough must be standing on its 1904 summit. The entrance arch of the cave visible behind gives an idea of relative heights.

Over the winter of 1957-8 this ridge was breached and the present level walkway created. The 'Iron Gates' which had appeared on plans by Parry (1929b and 1931b) and Donovan (1955) were removed. Sections were drawn by Donovan (in Tratman *et al.*, 1972). Three chipped flints including a perforator, some horse and fox teeth, also hare bones, were found in the final stages of this excavation just inside the old gates (letter from E. K. Tratman to C. B. M. McBurney, U.B.S.S. Archives).

The laying of the present concrete path early in 1959 involved a lowering of the then cave-floor by two feet over the area from the former position of the 'Iron Gates' almost to the 'Fonts' (correspondence between G. Robertson and Tratman, U.B.S.S. Archives). This operation removed portions of intact Lateglacial sediment on both sides of the 'Entrance' and 'Vestibule'. During January and February human fossils (Stringer in this volume) and large mammal bone, together with chipped flints, were recovered on the cave's northern side from along the 'lip' of the 'Cheddar Man Fissure' to just beyond it going into the cave (information in the U.B.S.S. 'slip catalogue'). In March further finds were made in clearing a sediment remnant from the South Wall of the 'Vestibule' close to where excavations had taken place in 1949-50 (site C). Only rediscovered in 1968 after storage, these consisted of large mammal bone, a further human fossil and a remarkable 'scored' rib-bone (Hawkes *et al.*, 1970; Stringer in this volume). The evidence used to pin-point this find-spot is, however, tenuous.

The last find to be made in Gough's, and oddly one of the more tantalizing, is recorded only as an addition to the late Professor Tratman's copy of the catalogue of the museum which he and Gerald Robertson, the then Manager at Cheddar Caves, had made in the 1950s (U.B.S.S. Archives). Tratman (p. 11) notes:

Scallop shell – now lost (1975) – found by visitor in cave earth in small recess near entrance. Unstratified but almost certainly from the Pleistocene levels.

## GENERAL

Much has been collected from Gough's Cave. Over the hundred years' span during which these finds were made the detail and accuracy with which they were recorded have varied greatly. Many published sources are inevitably repetitions of what has gone before. Frequently too, the contextual data translated from source to source is of doubtful accuracy. Written sources allow a first intuitive 'sift' of the potential data available to us. In most cases, however, it is the subsequent curation history of each of these discoveries that has determined its significance to our understanding of the cave.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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