

R. F. PARRY (1873-1948)

by

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It is from the work of Richard Frederick Parry that most of the artefacts and fossils surviving from Gough's Cave come. Given the importance of what he salvaged and the care with which he set out to record it, it is curious that so little should now be known of the man himself. This fact is all the more puzzling when one considers the amount of biographical material available on Herbert Balch, a local contemporary archaeologist with many of the same interests.

Richard F. Parry (known to family and friends as Fred) was born at Grimmer, Minsterly, Shropshire in 1873. He was the eldest of five children, having one brother and three sisters.

His father, also Richard, was Agent at Lydbury North, on the Earl of Powis's Walcot Estate. This was to be the profession that the younger Richard Parry was to follow.

Parry started work in the Estate Office at Powis Castle, later moving to the Office at Lydbury North. Parry's family believe that he may have worked for a while with an Estate Agent in Shrewsbury before going to Warminster where he was employed by the Marquess of Bath.

Some time before 1906 Richard Parry went on to manage Lord Bath's property in Cheddar, where his interests in archaeology developed. He joined the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society in 1926 and remained a member up to 1936. Part of his responsibility as Estate Bailiff in Cheddar was to supervise excavations in the 'Great Cave'. It is, however, clear that his involvement in archaeology extended a great deal further than just 'duty'. During his years at Cheddar he also dug at Chelm's Combe Shelter, Soldier's Hole, Cooper's Hole, and Sow's Hole. He collected flints on the Mendip Hills, many of which he donated to Wells Museum.

In 1940, Parry moved to Marldon, near Paignton in Devon, calling his house 'Mendip'. He joined the Torquay Natural History Society during the same year, resigning some time between December 1945 and October 1946.

In 1946, shortly after the death of his wife, Parry went to live with his sister, Isabel Lucy Parry, in Bishop's Castle. He died very suddenly on the 8th January 1948.

His sister Isabel was the closest relative to survive Richard Parry as he had no children. She died in 1979 at the age of 104.

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RICHARD FREDERICK PARRY: A PHOTOGRAPH BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN ABOUT 1930 ON BARTON HILL, NEAR STREET, SOMERSET

By courtesy of P. Hamar