

Read's Grotto and Tynning's Farm Swallett.

BY C. B. PERRY.

In 1920 work was commenced at the larger of the two active swallets near Tynnings Farm on the Mendip plateau, south of Blackdown; 500 yards east of the Farm and about 200 yards south of the Roman road.¹ This work was continued in 1921-1922, when some work was also done at the smaller eastern swallet.²

Excavation at these two swallets has been continued during the past year, with most gratifying results. On July 29th, 1923, after about 2 tons of material had been removed from under one of the rock faces at the eastern swallet a narrow water worn rift was revealed. This rift, which has been formed by erosion of a joint in the lime-stone, was entered for some distance, when it widened into a small chamber. From the south end of this a narrow rift opened which was made passable after some work. This opens out slightly, to terminate in a tunnel, 18 inches wide and 10 feet long, which opens into a traversing rift formed by erosion of a joint at right angles to the entrance rift. Straight on is a passage going up, and here are met the first calcite formations in the shape of a group of pencils and a stalagmite flow. Above this is a chamber which turns to the left and again to the left, rising all the way, and forming a moderate sized horse-shoe shaped chamber. The roof of this bristles with pencils, many being erratic, and several curtains, including a large veined one. The most striking feature of the chamber, however, is the large number of "sceptre" stalagmites similar to those found in Wookey Hole; in fact so thick are these formations that it is only with difficulty that the chamber is negotiated without damaging them. This chamber, known after its discoverer as Baker's Temple (Plate IV.) is about 25 feet across, with an average height of about 4 feet. At the end of this chamber a vertical drop leads into the eastern half of the traversing rift mentioned above. This circuit is called Davies' Loop. The western half of the traversing rift apparently ends blindly. It has been decided with general consent to call this cave Read's Grotto, after its actual discoverer. Since the discovery several parties have visited the cave, which has been photographed and surveyed. The entrance has also been enlarged, but, so far, efforts to find a way on have proved fruitless. Baker's Temple does

¹ *Proc.*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 96.

² *Proc.*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 151.

not appear to be a water-worn chamber, but rather to have been formed by the collapse of the roof of an older chamber below, its floor and roof having been originally two adjacent strata.

On August 5th, 1923 excavations at the main swallet exposed a promising entrance between boulders. On the following day this was enlarged and the cave-system broken into. A narrow rift runs in a northerly direction, and opens out at a miniature pot-hole. From here the rift continues, and after about 6 hours work it was widened, and access gained, after negotiating two pot-holes, to a fairly easy passage, which terminates in a 20 foot drop, from here a broad passage leads west, and then turns south, following the line of the original passage, and ending in a very small water way through a vein of spar. It is hoped to enlarge this passage, which should, from the general signs of the cave, soon widen out again.

Our thanks are due to the farmer, Mr. Wride, of Lower Farm, for permission to dig at these swallets.

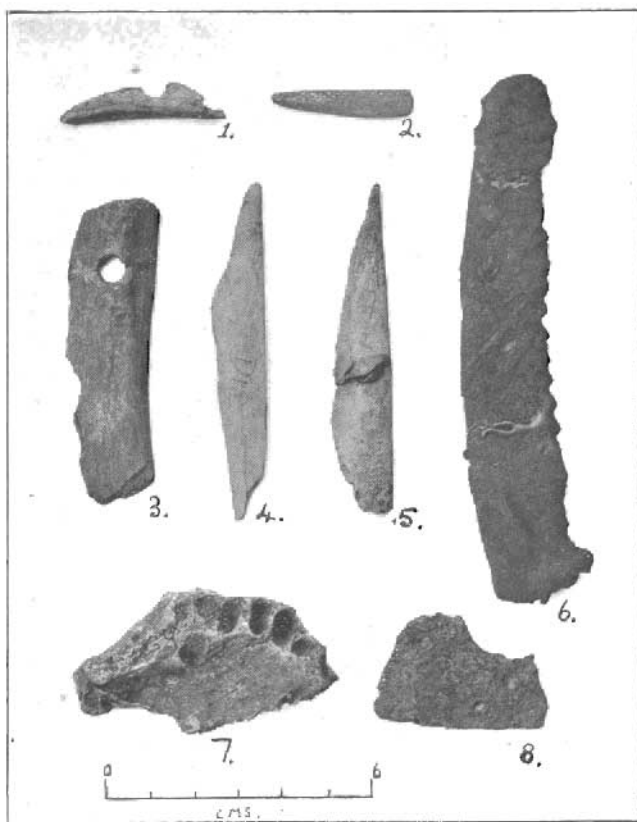
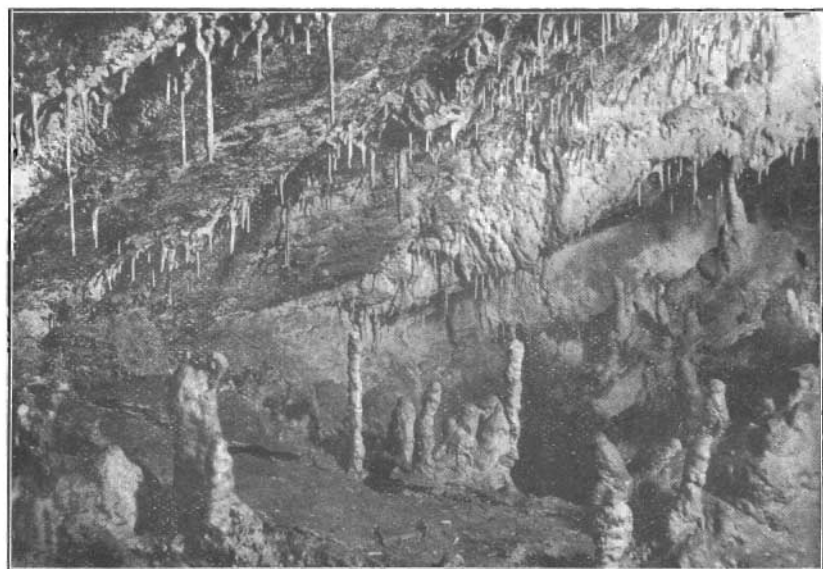


PLATE III.



READ'S GROTTTO ; BAKER'S TEMPLE.
PLATE IV.