

## Fourth Report on the Excavation of Rowberrow Cavern.

BY HERBERT TAYLOR, M.B., CH.B.

Work at Rowberrow Cavern has been hindered greatly by the persistent rain of last summer, the only convenient sorting-platform being in a very exposed position. Only about 8 tons of material have been excavated and examined; this formed a part of the first five feet, the gravels below the cemented floor being left undisturbed so far as possible.

A definite occupation level was found lying immediately upon the Cemented Floor. It was separated by two or three inches of reddish earth from the Black Band, was of a grey colour, and about an inch in thickness. It contained one or two flint implements of Neolithic type, charcoal, and burnt bones of animals; the latter were always too fragmentary for identification. This hearth was only distinguishable in two small areas; a part was cemented by lime-salts to the Cemented Floor, but this occurred only towards the summits of bosses, *i.e.*, in sites where stalagmite-deposit probably continued later than elsewhere.

### FINDS.

#### HUMAN BONES.

The only human fragment discovered was a molar, (probably an upper wisdom with its roots fused). It lay in the fifth foot, in association with the pika jaw to be mentioned below, but also with four flint fragments, one a part of a microlith of geometric (Tardenoisian?) type, and one a rolled chip of flint.

#### ANIMAL BONES.

The more important only are described, though fairly large numbers of the bones of domestic animals continue to be found.

*Cervus* (Sp.). A very much mineralized phalanx was obtained from a rabbit burrow below the cemented floor.

*Sorex araneus*, Linn. (Common Shrew). A left mandibular ramus. This may be recent.

*Ochotona spelæa*, Owen (Pika). Part of a right mandibular ramus with the incisor, p.4, m.1 and m.2 in place.

*Apodemus flavicollis*, Melchior. A left mandibular ramus, with incisor, m.1 and m.2 in place; length 16.6 mms.

*Lemmus lemmus*, Linn. (Common Lemming). A fragmentary right ramus with part of the incisor, and the m.l. in place.

*Microtus arvalis* or *agrestis* (Vole). A right m.l.

The Pika and Lemming are definitely Pleistocene, the field mouse and vole most probably so.

These five<sup>1</sup> were discovered in the 5th foot, above the general level of the Cemented Floor; unfortunately that layer is discontinuous, and disturbance in the area in question has involved the gravels below. Elsewhere, wherever there is no such disturbance, no Pleistocene remains have been found; and in all probability these are to be referred to the gravels. They are not rolled, and are therefore later than the date of deposit of the gravels. A waterworn chip of flint was found in close association with the Pika, such that it must have formed part of a gravel deposit.

*Fragments of Antler.* (Red Deer and Reindeer, the latter may be water-rolled).

*Horse.* Stalagmite-coated teeth and mandibular fragments.

Batrachian bones are very numerous in the upper part of some stalagmite bosses, but are very fragmentary.

#### ARTIFACTS.

##### *Flint Implements.*

Two triangular microliths and a fragment of a third, similar to those figured in the last Report, have been obtained, and several small fragments of worked flint which may be classed as microliths, though doubtfully.

Of larger implements, a good side-scraper and a small lance-head (?) may be mentioned. Both are of Neolithic types.

Flint chips are found to occur only in the extreme surface of the Cemented Floor, or in about the upper 6-ins. of bosses where its total thickness is 18-ins. or more. The only trace of flint which may be earlier is the tiny chip from the centre, not cortex, of a nodule, which appears to be "human," and is very much rolled. Although found in the 5th foot, its condition indicates that it once formed part of a gravel. It lay in association with the unrolled Pleistocene rodent jaws already mentioned. Since flint does not occur naturally on the high lands of Mendip, it is clear evidence of man's presence there when the upper gravels of Rowberrow Cavern were being deposited; and these were evidently earlier than certain Pleistocene rodents.

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<sup>1</sup> Kindly identified by M. A. C. Hinton, Esq.

*Bone Implements.*

Several fragments which seem to have been utilized, have been found.

*Pottery.*

A few more sherds of Romano-British and Early Iron Age pottery have occurred.

Several fragments resemble rather the pottery found in neighbouring barrows belonging to the Bronze Age, and may be domestic pottery of that period. One has an incised herring-bone decoration, and is of a very soft reddish material about  $\frac{3}{8}$ -in. thick.

*Coins.*

Four more coins have been identified.<sup>2</sup> Two are of Tetricus I, one is of Victorinus, and one of Tetricus II. The latter shows, reverse, Spes advancing and holding a flower. These are the same three Emperors as before: the narrow range of time (268—273 A.D.) is remarkable, although of course such coins continued in use until a much later date.

## FURTHER CONCLUSIONS.

1. A definite Neolithic or Bronze Age hearth has been discovered.
2. The gravels below the Cemented Floor were deposited and had become dry before the end of the Pleistocene period.
3. Man was present upon the Mendip plateau during the deposition of the upper of these gravels.

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<sup>2</sup> Kindly identified by Harold Mattingly, M.A.

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