

## EDITORIAL

All the papers in this issue are concerned with Aveline's Hole, in Burrington Combe, Somerset. The history of the Society, especially at its foundation and during its early years, is closely bound to this cave and so it is fitting that, at long last, we are able to publish these substantial accounts of the discoveries made there.

That we have not done so earlier is due to a combination of two things: it is well known that much of the material concerned with this cave was destroyed during a bombing raid on Bristol in 1940, but that is only half the story. It is equally true that Aveline's Hole remaining in the file marked *unfinished business* for so long is due to the tragic early death of the main investigator, J. A. Davies, in 1930.

John Adlington Davies was at school in Bristol, at Merrywood School in Bedminster, at the start of the First World War and at the age of 16 went straight from his studies into the army. He was wounded twice and then gassed and as a result suffered poor health for the remainder of his life, until ultimately the effects killed him. After the war he entered Bristol University to read chemistry and he graduated in 1924. However, his health was always a handicap to his career and undoubtedly prevented him from progressing far.

He joined the Society at its inauguration in March 1919 and was elected to serve on its first committee. Here he showed that he possessed a flair for archaeology and he proceeded to take charge of the Society's work in Aveline's Hole, which commenced on June 14th that year. From 1921 until 1924 regular reports appeared in these *Proceedings*, with summary reports being written by Davies and specialist accounts by numerous others. However, in 1926 the Society, for reasons now unknown, decided to change their policy of publishing regular interim reports and to wait until work was concluded before printing results in detail (Hewer, 1927). That work did continue at this site is shown by the regular brief accounts in subsequent Secretaries' reports (Hinton, 1928, 1929; Adams, 1931) though by the last of those it seems clear that little was being achieved. This period coincides with the final deterioration in Davies' health; his final visit to Mendip was on New Year's Eve 1929 and he died on January 25th 1930, at the age of 31. The Society's loss was also a great loss to archaeology in general and to the prehistoric archaeology of South-western Britain in particular. Davies had acquired substantial knowledge of this, had written a number of articles and papers in addition to those on Aveline's Hole and had contributed a series of articles to the *Western Daily Press*, which were collected together and published as a small book under the title *Early Life in the West* (Davies, 1927).

With Davies' passing, it seems that there was nobody in the Society with the experience, the knowledge or the time to take on the task of producing the final report; Tratman may have been able to, but he was working in Singapore from 1929. Then, in 1940, came the destruction by fire. Though every effort was made to conserve and identify specimens retrieved from the debris of the museum, the loss of all documentation discouraged, until now, any attempt to produce such a report.

During the course of this work it has been noticed that the first five numbers of these *Proceedings* do not record their publication dates. Professor Donovan has investigated this matter and, mainly from internal evidence, he estimates that they are as follows:

Volume 1. part 1.	Probably 1920.
Volume 1. part 2.	Probably 1921, after September, possibly 1922.

Volume 1. part 3.	Probably 1923, after 16th March.
Volume 2. part 1.	Probably 1924, after 20th March.
Volume 2. part 2.	Probably 1925, after 19th March.

## REFERENCES

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