

specifically mention the omission of material on cave biology and on water chemistry. Fortunately, for the latter topic readers can turn to page 121 of this volume.

In all, the three main authors and their various helpers have produced an excellent account of the cave which brings credit to both them and to the Wessex Cave Club. Niggles, a few: one wonders at the inclusion of the very similar Fig. 1.149 and Fig. 2.64, both photos of Sump XII and seemingly taken moments apart; your reviewer did not like the layout of the foot (side?) notes in chapter one; the method of crediting photos is inconsistent and there is a missed reference, to Atkinson and Waltham for Fig. 3.13.

The long gestation of this book was noted above, was it worth the wait? It most certainly was, this book will be mandatory reading for anyone with an interest in Mendip caves in particular and British caving in general. But then that should hardly be surprising to us, given that two of the main authors are UBSS members!

Graham Mullan

REFERENCES

Wilson, L.J. 2007. Obituary: Dave ("Wig") Irwin. *University of Bristol Speleological Society Newsletter*. Third Series 6. 9-10.

Cave Art: A guide to the decorated Ice Age Caves of Europe. by Paul G. Bahn. 2007. Frances Lincoln Ltd. London. SB 224 pp. Price £14.99 ISBN 978 0 7112 2655 5.

This is the first guide book of this nature since *The Caves of France and Northern Spain* by Ann and Gale Sieveking was published in 1962.

Bahn deals only with caves currently open to the public, which avoids irritation for the reader by not listing sites that remain tantalisingly out of reach. His task must have been made much harder in the final stages of production by a series of landowner deaths in the Dordogne, affecting sites such as Bernifal and St. Cirq. The former remains open, but for the latter, the future is, as yet, unknown. M. Yvon Pemendant of Bernifal and M. Palusano of St. Cirq are huge losses to those who know and love those sites. On a personal level, I will miss both of them, particularly M. Pemendant, who gave up many, many hours of his time in facilitating visits for myself and indeed other UBSS members to the sites he owned. For anyone who wishes to take their interest in the subject further, there are other caves can be visited, but that is an area which, entirely reasonably, is not within the scope of this book.

On a practical level, the book is small enough to fit into a large pocket, so it can be carried without the need for a rucksack, which is a huge bonus in caves which, for conservation reasons, often do not allow bags inside. The book is robust, with a good binding that looks like it will stand being carried around without falling apart at the least provocation, and the front and back flaps are fold-outs which can be used as page markers for handy reference. Lovely, thoughtful design.

Visually, the book is superb. Nearly every page has colour illustrations, all beautifully photographed and presented, picking out at least one feature of interest from each site, often the most striking. If no photograph is available, a line drawing is used instead.

The first 32 pages comprise an introduction and maps. Bahn provides a concise and admirably uncontentious overview of a subject which is well known for inspiring strong emotions and conflicting views. Some will dispute his remarks about the possible age of the paintings in Chauvet Cave, but while the argument does still persist, it is reasonable to mention

it, which is what he has done, but without further comment or expansion, which I believe to be the correct approach, given the size of the book and its scope. The reader who knows nothing of the subject will find here enough to inform and guide their visits and specialists will still find something of interest as well, I'm sure.

The remainder of the book comprises a guide to 25 sites in France, 13 in Spain and 2 in England, starting, as is only fitting, with Church Hole and Robin Hood's Cave in the limestone valley of Creswell Crags in Nottinghamshire. Here, in 2003, Paul Bahn, Paul Pettitt and Sergio Ripoll made the first discovery of cave art in Britain. Alistair Pike, who subsequently became a UBSS member, was involved in the dating work, which was able to prove that some of the figures were at least 12,000 years old. Bahn gives a estimate of between 20 and thirty definite or probable figures, for Church Hole. There is an excellently clear photograph of one of the Church Hole figures, here described as a bison. To me, this also serves as an illustration that there is by no means universal agreement on the interpretation. I have commented that in my view, this figure more closely resembles an auroch, particularly in the placement of the horns, the shape of the head and the line of the back. I have heard this view from several others in this field. However, as the photograph is clear and well-presented, it enables the reader to make their own comparisons and draw their own conclusions. They can also visit the site and see the original.

The guide provides comprehensive information for each site. Address, contact details, nearest city/town, nearest airport, nearest car rental, nearest train station, nearest bus route, nearest taxi or private car hire, restaurants in the vicinity and hotels in the vicinity. Bahn then presents further information about the site itself: opening times, admissions prices, storage facilities, whether a group has to be of a sufficient size for the cave to open, whether reservations can be made, the language of the tour, length of tour, whether toilets, café's and WC facilities are available, distances to be walked, level of fitness needed equipment required, conditions inside the cave and whether photography is allowed (mostly not). It is difficult to think of anything a visitor might need to know which is not presented here, clearly, concisely and accurately. Naturally, details will change over time, but hopefully the book will prove sufficiently popular to allow for the appearance of later editions with reasonable regularity.

This excellent guide is a long overdue addition to the bookshelf (and pocket) of anyone with an interest in this fascinating subject and will finally stop me having to cobble together information from a wide variety of sources for the various UBSS members who regularly ask for help when planning trips of this nature. In itself, this proves that the book does indeed fill a niche!

Linda Wilson

Mammoths: Giants of the Ice Age. by Adrian Lister and Paul Bahn. 2007. Frances Lincoln Ltd. London. HB 192 pp. Price £19.99 ISBN 978 0 7112 2801 6.

This is a revised and updated edition of a book first published in 1994. It includes much new information from research and new finds at sites across the northern hemisphere. The book is divided into five sections: *origins*, *mammoths unearthed*, *the natural history of mammoths*, *mammoths and human culture* and *extinction*. Each section gives a succinct overview of that part of the mammoth story.

The first section tells the story of the evolution of the mammoth and sets the scene for the second, which gives an overview of the evidence that we have from excavation and other finds of mammoth remains. More is known about this particular creature than about almost any