



This extract from a Climbers' Club Journal contains only articles/photographs where the copyright now belongs to the Climbers' Club.

It is provided in electronic form for your personal use and cannot be used for commercial profit without seeking permission from the Climbers' Club.

© Copyright 2010

KYNDWR CLUB NOTES.

IN July last, a party of six members attempted thoroughly to explore a Yorkshire cavern situate in a remote part, and difficult of access, with all the paraphernalia of cave-hunting. Stump Cross is not a cross, nor is there anything in the shape of a building, beyond the wooden hut at the cavern, to show why so wild and barren a place should possess a name. It is about five miles west of Pateley Bridge, the terminus of the Nidderdale branch of the N.E. Railway, and the nearest station; but the road is all up hill. Bolton Abbey station was preferred for the sake of the beautiful drive through the valley of the Wharfe. It was, however, a less convenient road than had been calculated; and through one delay and another, the party did not arrive at the destined point until about 9 p.m. With no plan to work by, and no knowledge of the place beyond a slight introduction given by the quaint old guide, who briefly explained the main runs and then decamped, the party soon separated.

Bamforth and F. Wightman did little but try to secure photographs of some of the very beautiful cave scenery, work which was arduous enough by reason of the low and narrow passages through which the camera and gas cylinder had to be carried.

Puttrell and Croft had wandered off exploring in one direction, whilst Baker and B. Wightman were trying other openings. At one point, the two latter pushed down a pipe-like hole, which they continued to crawl through snake-like, till ultimately they found themselves confronted by a drop of some 10 or 12 feet, fortunately into the arms of Puttrell and Croft, who were in a lower cavern. Beyond many similar endeavours, little serious work was done, nor is it certain that any really new ground was covered. Roughly, one passage, known as the "Great Cavern," runs N.E. to S.W. for a length of about 600 or 700 feet; at the bottom of the entrance stairs.

is a smaller parallel passage, some 200 feet in length. Crossing the "Great Cavern," at different levels, are two passages, one called the "Middle Cavern" and the other the "Bottom Cavern." These passages run from S.E. to N.W., and each extends over a distance of about 400 feet.

The most striking thing about the series of caverns is the absence of very large chambers, the remarkable dryness and the extraordinary beauty of the stalactite decorations. One small cave, the access to which is an almost impossible squeeze, is very beautiful, and is known by the usual name of the "Fairy Palace." Perhaps the largest chamber is that which terminates the "Great Cavern" at the N.E. Some 40 feet long and perhaps 20 feet high, it contains beautiful curtain formations, one of which lit up by a candle behind the folds resembles a stained-glass window. These folds being struck give out pure notes upon which it is possible to play a tune. This place is known as "The Chapel." There is indication of a possible outlet into the open air at the far end. On the same gallery is a grotto, beautiful beyond description, containing a cluster of splendid white stalactites and stalagmites; one like a small bed with folds of drapery. At the foot is a pool of water, about an inch deep, with white stalagmites standing up like so many cones of sugar. This pool and the smaller one, which flows slightly, called "Jacob's Well," are the only water to be seen in the cavern.

Another magnificent sight is "the Bowling Alley." It is a low gallery in the "Upper Cavern," near the S.W. extremity, and is almost as full of stalactites, in regular order, reaching from floor to ceiling, as a plantation is of saplings. At one point in the "Great Cavern," one has to squeeze past a giant stalactite which has joined its companion stalagmite, and is some 6 or 8 feet high, and perhaps 3 feet in circumference—a really splendid piece of Nature's work. Merely to see all these things occupied us until three o'clock next morning, when we returned to the entrance, and drove over the bleak moorland road to our hotel at Burnsall, some two or three miles away, intending at some future time to pay a return visit. F. W.