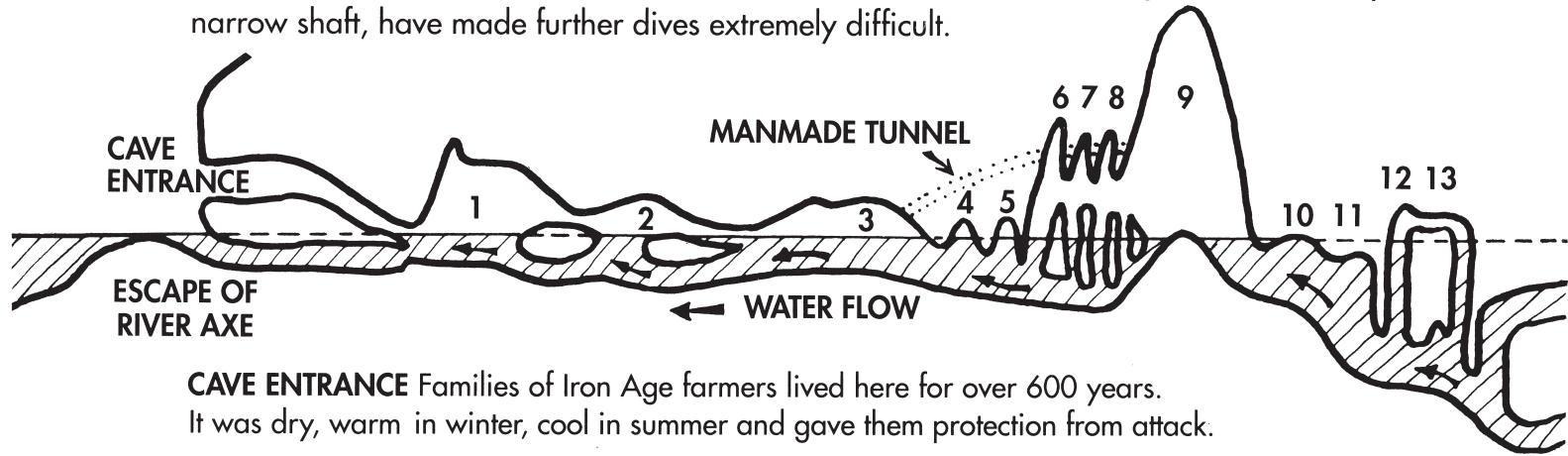


# WOOKEY HOLE CAVES

The tour of the Great Caves at Wookey Hole is an underground walk of 0.5 kilometre. Cave divers have explored nearly ten times as far, discovering new caverns and passageways. However, after Chamber 25, water depths of over 60 metres together with a very narrow shaft, have made further dives extremely difficult.



**CAVE ENTRANCE** Families of Iron Age farmers lived here for over 600 years. It was dry, warm in winter, cool in summer and gave them protection from attack.

**CHAMBER 1 'THE WITCH'S KITCHEN'** This cave contains some impressive stalagmites including The Giant, The Beehive, The Witch and St. Michael's Mount. Most of the rock formations in the caves are stalagmites because the water here usually drips too quickly to form stalactites.

**CHAMBER 2 'THE GREAT HALL'** This cave has a range of different colours on its ceiling and walls. The roof is the height of the nave in Wells Cathedral.

**CHAMBER 3 'THE WITCH'S PARLOUR'** A very broad cave with a low ceiling, probably formed by flood waters swirling in a violent whirlpool.

**CHAMBER 4 (Flooded)** This cave was used by the Iron Age people as a burial chamber. They would have been able to wade through from Chamber 3 as the water level was lower at that time.

**CHAMBERS 5 AND 6 (Flooded)**

**MANMADE TUNNEL** In 1974, a tunnel was blasted through the rock from Chamber 3 to the valley outside the caves. This amazing feat of engineering opened up Chambers 7, 8 and 9 to the public and created a circular tour.

**CHAMBER 9** A magnificent cavern, 30 metres from floor to ceiling, used as a base for divers exploring further into the caves.

**RIVER AXE** The River Axe has run through these caves for thousands of years. It has changed its course many times carving out the caves and passageways we see today.

## Questions

1. Name three of the stalagmites that can be seen in 'The Witch's Kitchen'.
2. Which chamber is used by divers as a base for cave exploration?
3. How was Chamber 3 probably formed?
4. For the Iron Age farmers, what were the advantages of living in the cave entrance?
5. Give two reasons why cave divers have found it difficult to explore further into the cave system.
6. Most of the rock formations in the caves are stalagmites, not stalactites. Why?
7. Describe your underground walk through Wookey Hole Caves.