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THE JOURNAL OF
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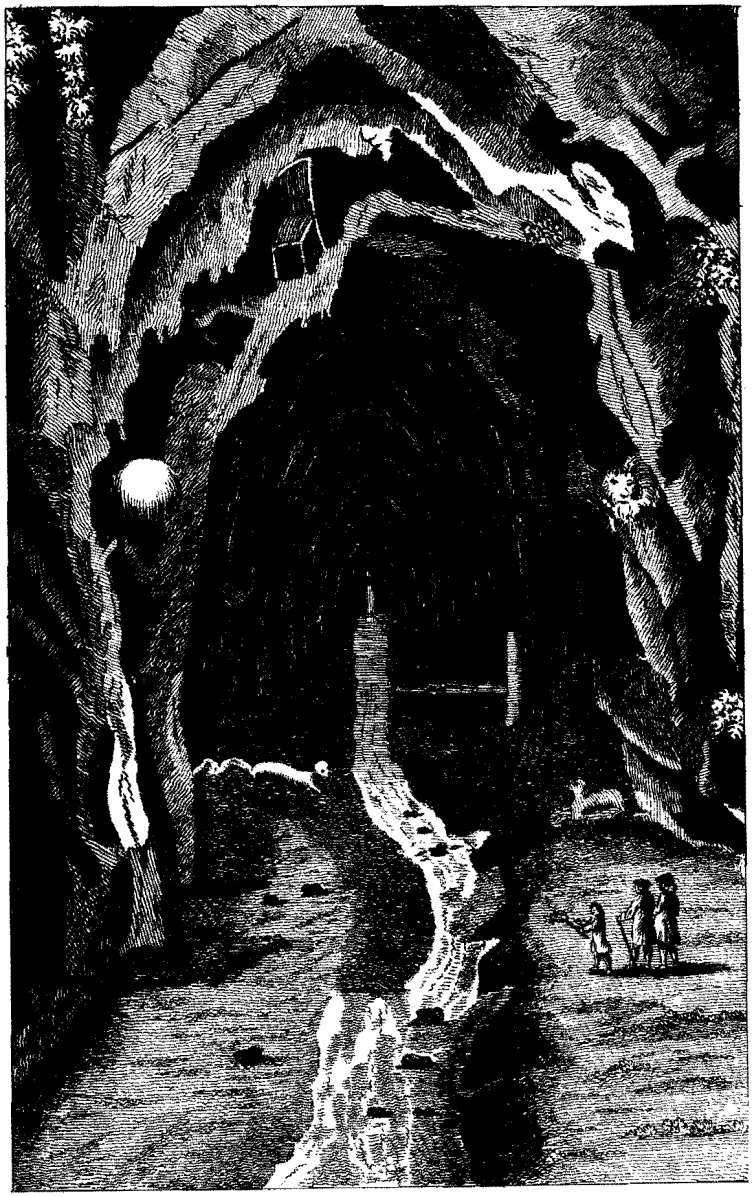

Pool's Hole Derbyshire.

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THE ASSOCIATION

The American Spelean History Association is chartered as a non-profit corporation for the study, dissemination and interpretation of spelean history and related purposes. All persons of high ethical and moral character who are interested in these goals are cordially invited to become members. Annual membership is $5.00; family membership $6.00; library subscriptions are $4.00.

THE COVER

A 1700 print of Poole's Cavern, Derbyshire, England, from Britannica Curiosa, Volume 3, opposite page 386, author unknown, and published in 1777. From the collection of William R. Halliday; originally contributed by Trevor Shaw of Great Britain.

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THE JOURNAL

The association publishes the Journal of Spelean History on a quarterly basis. Pertinent articles or reprints are welcomed. Manuscripts should be typed and double-spaced; submission of rough drafts for preliminary editing is encouraged. Illustrations require special handling and arrangements must be made with the editor in advance. Photos and illustrations will be returned upon request.

BACK ISSUES

Some back issues of the Journal are available of all volumes from Jack H. Speece, 711 East Atlantic Avenue, Altoona, Pa. 16602. W.R. Halliday has transferred his back issue library to Jack. All issues of Volumes 1 - 7:2 are available on Microfiche from Kraus Reprint Co., Rt. 100, Millwood, New York 10546.

Official Quarterly Publication of the AMERICAN SPELEAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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CALL FOR 1977 AND 1978 NSS CONVENTION PAPERS

Last call for papers to be presented at the 1977 National Speleological Society convention's Spelean History Session, Alpena, Michigan, August 4, 1977. Send abstracts to Ernst Kastning, P.O. Box 13165, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711.

For the 1978 NSS Convention in New Braunfels, Texas (June 19-24), send abstracts no later than April 30, 1978 to Jeanne Gurnee, session chairman, 231 Irving Avenue, Closter, New Jersey 07624.

Book Notes

William R. Halliday

A Cave-Oriented "Wonders of the World" Book

Over the years, innumerable books describing and depicting variously selected Wonders of the World have come and gone. Some of them contain important spelean information, often in the form of clues to obscure articles and reports. For the average caver, however, perhaps the most satisfying is:

> Gibbs, Philip, et al. n.d. (ca 1920). Wonders of the World: a popular and authentic account of the marvels of nature and of men as they exist today. London (?), Odhams Press, 774 pages.

The editors of this somewhat juvenile book were unusually aware of caves, and their coverage of Australian caves is especially notable. However, their selection of material and photographs is sufficiently perceptive that it is of much broader interest. Notable salt stalactites, for example, are shown on page 443, in a cave in Israel.

Recently Chuck Coughlin, Secretary of the Cascade Grotto, indexed this book for its speleological material, as follows:

x Cave dwellers of North Africa
2 Rummel River Caves, Algeria
19 Lava caves, Mfumbiro, Africa
111 Cango Caves, South Africa
122 Cacahuamilpa Caves, Mexico
144, 151 Horseshoe Mesa Caves, Ariz.
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492-524 Caves of Australia
548 cave in Hochstetter Glacier, New Zealand
560 Dobsina Ice Cave, Czechoslovakia
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608 Fingal's Cave, Scotland
629 Blue Grotto, Italy
631 White Grotto, Italy
650-652 Postojna Caves, Jugoslavia
681 cave in Brigsdal Glacier, Nor.
682, 685 Torghatten Cave, Norway

Has anyone any information on the editors of this volume?

A further note on "The Wonders of the World, Comprising Man, Quadrupeds, Birds, Fishes, Trees, Plants, Mountains, Caves, Volcanoes, Rivers, Cities, Remarkable Edifices, Ruins, Antiquities, &c, &c. With several hundred illustrative embellishments," 544 p, date previously uncertain; Anonymous.

In Volume 7 #1 of the Journal of Spelean History (pages 27-28) I published a Book Note on the above title, discussing my encounters with two editions, the latter of which was 1877. The book is notable for its 24 pages on caves, as well as numerous illustrations, including Nahum Ward's account of Mammoth Cave, and map, plus the Scudder mummy. As I said in Vol. 7 #1, the cave section was clearly written by someone with an unusual interest in caves and knowledge thereof.

From Emily Davis Mobley's Catalog #1 (December, 1977) I bought item #148: Sears, Robert. The Wonders of the World, 1855, etc. It turned out to be a still earlier version, with the copyright listed as 1847, New York. Sears turns out to be the publisher and probably the compiler; pagination is the same as in the later versions. This edition contains interesting end-paper ads, several of which include testimonials by Edward Hitchcock, noted professor of Geology at Amherst and well-known for his interest in caves. Is anyone doing any research on Hitchcock as a speleologist?

(Ed. Note: Russ Gurnee has just finished a book, Discovery of Luray Caverns, which will soon be available at the caverns. Russ also wrote material on the period following the discovery and submitted it to the Journal of Spelean History. It was decided by the editor to print his article in its entirety because of its rare and colorful look into this famous cave's early commercial history.)

Luray Caverns, A Public-Relations Man's Dream

by Russell H. Gurnee

Luray Caverns, Page County, Virginia, was discovered by three men; Benton Stebbins and Andrew and William B. Campbell, on August 13, 1878. The search for the cave was prompted by the newspaper accounts of the success of Weyer's Cave in Virginia, and Grand Crystal Cave in Glasgow, Kentucky. The announcement of the cave to the rest of the country however was not until Major Alexander J. Brand, Jr. submitted a report to the New York Herald on October 19, 1878.

The first editorial, by James Gordon Bennett, accompanying the report seized upon the fact that admission was charged to enter the cave and he intimated that the discovery of the skeleton would result in an additional dollar charge to view these pitiful remains. From the subsequent news articles the interest in the caves all stressed the dollar value of the discovery. The extravagant descriptions of the beauty of the cave kept pace with the estimates of value and within a week of its national exposure, the cave was estimated to be worth fifty thousand dollars.

"Cave fever infected the townspeople," said Professor Jerome J. Collins, a scientific gentleman sent by James Gordon Bennett to sort out the fact from fancy about the cave descriptions, when he arrived at the cave to see for himself. The cave met and exceeded his expectations; his reports further predicted that this cave would have far-reaching effects on the town and its inhabitants. In his view, the bad things to come from the discovery would outweigh the good. He predicted that the town would lose its bucolic and friendly demeanor and be infested by "boarding house harpies." He further predicted the influx of opportunists and speculators would accompany the completion of the railroad.

The first speculation came from the stage operators who raised their prices to the tourists who came to New Market, over the Massenutten Ridge to visit the cave. Fortunately the visitor had a choice of hotels in Luray...either the Washington House or the Rust House. The competition did not seem to improve the service or conveniences very much as visitors complained of broken floor boards on the porch, and greasy chicken on the table. This did not prevent the increase in room rates, however; they were geared to the public interest in the cave.

When the Luray Cave and Hotel Company acquired the cave in May of 1881 they put their efforts in constructing the Luray Inn, a large Tudor-style building with all the improvements of the age; inside plumbing, gas lighting and competitive rates. The Shenandoah Valley Railroad (actually the parent corporation of the Hotel Company) put some of its best advertising men on the project of exploiting the cave in order to fill the hotel and provide the cave with paying customers.

To improve the cave experience, electric arc lights were installed in September of 1881. This system ran off a steam generator located near the railroad station and connected by one electric wire that ran to the entrance of the cave and then to thirteen lamps within the cave. The original circuit provided for the ground to complete the circuit, three and one half miles through the copper wire, three and one half miles back through the ground. This system obviously had its drawbacks, not the least of which included the hazard of electrocution. A second wire was soon added eliminating some of the problems. This was the first electric system to be used in a cave, and the inventors of the Thomson-Houston system touted the installation in their advertising.

Professor Samuel Zenas Ammen, a writer for the Baltimore Sun, and student of Sanskrit, wrote the first guide book for Luray Caverns. This twenty-four page booklet enjoyed a fine sale and encouraged more visitors to see the wonders of the cave. Immodestly, Professor Ammen commented about the skeletal remains, "this would not have happened to him if he had purchased a copy of Ammen's Guide."

The railroad promoters arranged for express trains to leave Washington at ten A.M., arrive in Luray at one-thirty P.M., "See the cave and return on the six-ten in the evening for Washington!". Thousands of people took this six-dollar bargain which included admission to the cave. An extra night, room and board at the Luray Inn, cost another three dollars.

The crass commercialism that Professor Collins had predicted was only partly realized. Journalists of the day enjoyed pricking the blemishes of the railroad company and puncturing the pomposity of the guides at the cave. Targets of the writers included the hoards of boot blacks and pickinnines that followed the carriages from the station to the cave and offered assistance in going through the cave. One New York Times writer in July of 1886 visited the cave and groused about the trip in near purple terms.

"To go into Luray Caverns properly you must be provided with a tin sconce shaped something like a Roman shield and holding two candles; you must encase your feet in rubbers, and be followed by a small but vigorous darky supposed to be gifted with superior subterranean powers, really capable only of spilling candle grease on your trousers and tripping you up at odd times, occasionally falling himself and rolling to the edge of unfathomable abyssesby way of varying the monotony. Sconce, rubbers and darky are furnished the tourist at low

rates, together with an oratorical guide who has memorized the entire dictionary and keeps fine torrents of language on tap for every descriptive emergency."

The writer is forced to concede that the trip in the cave was a remarable experience and he fell to the overblown and extravagant phrases that were popular at the time. However, he could not resist striking a mincing blow at the guides and the management.

"There were two drawbacks to our enjoyment of this perfect scene. One was that the guide insisted at every turn upon reciting to us the scientific opinions of one Professor Ammen who wrote the guide book sold in this region for a quarter, and no doubt enjoys a royalty from the same. Professor Ammen must have given the guide an extensive lecture on every individual formation in the cave, and the guide must have taken it down like a phonograph, for whenever anyone of the party admired anything from a sixty-foot column to a fingerling stalagmite, the guide was ready to impart to us Professor Ammen's views on that particular formation in polysyllabled words of great majesty and depth. The second obstacle to our happiness was the small darky. First he embellished all of us in turn with drippings from his candle, then, having been kicked a respectful distance by Dick (ed. one of the party), worked Bunny (ed. his wife) into a state of hysterics by falling into a chasm which looked as though it might be a thousand feet deep, but was really only five, and contained a pool of water that broke the darky's fall. Having been fished out of the pool by the Major, (ed. another tourist) and solemnly admonished by the guide, he next claimed public attention by rolling down a staircase and knocking Dick's feet from under him, and on getting a scientific walloping, filled the cave with lugubrious echoes. Then he disappeared and failed to turn up, living or dead, until an elaborate search discovered him behind a column asleep, having dropped off on one of the eloquent occasions when we got Professor Ammen's second hand. Dick wanted to use the darky as a gag to throttle the guide and thus double secure peace at one stroke, but the Major gave the darky a dime for arnica, and Bunny said the guide was really the most scientific talker she had listened to for years-- he was so delightfully long-winded and incomprehensible-- so we had to bear with both of them through labyrinth after labyrinth of wonder and beauty, until the show was over and we had seen through and through the miracle of Luray."

The guides seemed to be easy targets, for in September 1887, another New York Times writer was at it again.

"Your guide is a tall lank specimen of undiscoverable age named Sam Smith. He has a fungus growth on the lip where the mustache is usually worn, and his familiarity with the name, peculiarities, and ancestry of every stalactite and stalagmite very shortly arouses the suspicion in you that he was raised in the cave. This is correct. Mr. Smith was originally a stalagmite himself. He was found in human shape, brought to life by a plaster composed of dollar bills and made

and made a guide. This is clearly evident to any student of cachinology from his jokes. There is a fallen stalactite in the cave, a huge, beautiful thing which lies like an immense white fallen tree across an abyss which, according to Professors Mudborer and Spygoggles of the Samsmithonian Institute, both of whom have felt of it, has lain there four thousand years and required seven millions of years to form. It is but a carbonated baby in oxidized swaddling clothes, however, compared with the age of Mr. Smith's jokes. Mr. Smith is quite familiar at long range with the "Midsummer Night's Dream" as written by Francis Bacon and Ignatius Donnally, and he has drawn largely upon it for nomenclature, having given Titania a large grotto for herself and planted Oberon and the fairies in locations rather cold and moist considering their light and airy costumes.... Mr. Smith has discovered a camel in the rock. It is a very rocky camel, as it has neither legs nor feet. Mr. Smith, upon being asked about this, says 'you have to meaure it to get the feet'. This is the proper place to laugh....When he sheds this witticism a low, hollow ripple of stony laughter echoes though the cavernous ways, the stalactites smile, the stalagmites grin, the mountain shakes its sides and a pendant rock drops and misses him narrowly."

The bootblacks were not to be ignored by the journalists. One editor of the Chestertown (Md.) Transcript in July of 1886 lets himself go with the dialect of the natives and in part says:

"They come upon a cave party like so many wolves upon so many lambs. "Lem me take de mud off dem shoes, boss."....Woe to the man who wears a pair of low-cut shoes, for the ambition of the bootblack is to fill the contract quick, and he will put as high a polish upon the stockings as he does the shoes....When the rush of business has fairly well subsided and shoes to be polished are no longer plentiful, these bootblacks circulate through the crowd and inspect carefully the feet of the visitors. If they find some benighted excursionist showing indications that he has failed to have himself polished up, they immediately begin to expostulate with him. They appeal to his reason, to his pride, to his benevolence, to all the nobler instincts that go to make the man. They work with him earnestly and faithfully, and will almost shed tears over him before they will give him up as a lost case."

Not all the local people were as enterprising; some of the services that might have been developed in the town were bypassed by the proximity of the railroad. The Page Courier, June 3, 1886 had a note regarding the economy of the town.

WOULDN'T A LAUNDRY PAY?

"There are gentlemen in Luray who send their linen all the way to Baltimore to be washed and 'done up'. What's the use of clamoring about home industries, when the Luray wash-woman is thus boycotted?"

And in the interests of public relations:

"The Luray Cave and Hotel Company with characteristic liberality and courtesy, have determined to open free to the citizens of Luray, the caverns on Friday and Saturday. The cave will be illuminated as usual. Tickets may be had Wednesday and Thursday upon application to the Superintendant, Mr. Armstrong."

One of the proposals made by the advertising men of the Valley Railroad, was to stimulate business in the waning time of the season by providing dedications of some of the formations in the cave. The Double Column, one of the outstanding features of the cave had already been dedicated to the Professors Baird and Henry of the Smithsonian Institute. This proved to be successful and drew a large group to the dedication. On October 7, 1886, a dedication took place in the cave honoring Dr. Joseph Leidy, the eminent Philadelphia scientist. A special train brought more than thirty well known people to the Inn, and a ceremony was held at the base of one of the largest formations in the cave:

"After reading the dedication, Dr. Hunt concluded his remarks in these words. 'From now on these objects will be known as the Leidy Column and the Leidy Stalactite.' Miss Addie Leidy, the charming seventeen-year-old daughter of Dr. Leidy, then performed the usual ceremony of breaking a bottle of lime water from the cave over the column, henceforth to be known in her father's name."

This ridiculous act was then followed by some moving words by Dr. Leidy. Looking back, nearly a hundred years, it is possible that this formation represents more of a monument to Dr. Leidy than the scientific reports and discoveries he made during his career as an anatomist, parasitologist and paleontologist. He is best known to medical students as the first to identify the human parasite Trichinella spiralis as a pork parasite.

The prosperity of the 1880's was reflected in the visitors to the cave. It was part of the mini "Grand Tour" of the upper crust to include a visit to Luray Caverns and to stay at the Luray Inn as "the" place to go. On June 21, 1888, the Page Courier wryly reported on the visit of one of the scions of the day:

THE RICHEST MAN IN AMERICA VISITS LURAY

"Jay Gould, of New York, noted since the death of Vanderbilt as the richest man in America, and said to be worth $250,000,000, visited Luray last Thursday, and drove through the town on Friday to the Caverns as modestly as though he hadn't been worth a cent.

"Two hundred and fifty million dollars! Did you ever think how much money that is?

"Counting the distance from the depot to the Caverns, one and a half miles, and the width of the road forty-five feet, Gould in his trip out there could have spread the way, every inch of it, with dollar

bills one hundred and twenty deep.

"And then his income, estimating his fortune at what he is said to be worth at six per cent interest, would have made his earnings for the eighteen hours he remained in Luray more than sixty thousand dollars, less the twenty-five cents he gave Sam Smith the guide who showed him through the cave."

The Jay Gould incident pointed up the flamboyant times of the late 1880's. Every town in the valley had a boom area where the lots and lands were carved out of the farm land and properties were speculated on the promise of continued prosperity. Unfortunately the growth was unreal and premature for cracks began to appear in the speculation. The Shenandoah Valley Railroad, never fully financed and capitalized, began to default. This loss of confidence caused notes to be called and a run on the local bank. The Valley Land and Improvement Company, holding company for the Luray Inn, owed $81,000 to the D.F. Kagey Company and they were unable to meet the call.

On November 5th, 1891, the Luray Inn mysteriously caught fire and was completely destroyed. There were no lives lost, some of the furniture was saved, but the pride of the Valley was gone, never to be rebuilt. The building was insured for $90,000 and as this was distributed among twenty-seven insurance companies, the money was collected.

Local hotels, long overshadowed by the Luray Inn, now took over the continuing, but diminishing tourist trade. The Mansion Inn and the Hotel Lawrence had a brief spurt of prosperity, but the nation-wide depression of 1893 caused the tourist trade to dry to a trickle. The boom and bust theory of economics had proved itself in practical application.

Through all of the tribulations of an economic nature, the Luray Caverns never closed. The unusual profusion of the formations and the foresight of the discoverers in providing protection of the cave permitted the true value of the cave to continue in its ability to bring enjoyment to visitors of every generation. Fortunately, Professor Collins' negative and pessimistic prediction was not to affect the long term success of the cave.

N.S.S. Beginnings In Montana

by Basil Hritsco

At the most, there were only one or two NSS members in Montana in the year of our Lord, 1950, when I became a member of the Society. I remember a Fred McAdams, Great Falls telephone repair foreman, who accompanied me on my third caving trip to Beans Hole, west of

Augusta. On the other hand, my memory may be faulty and I just may have been the first NSS-er in that state.

My caving activity actually began in 1949 at Lewis and Clark Caverns, then as now a Montana State Park. I asked the head ranger where I could collect some cave formations....I had just become a rockhound (tsk, tsk). "Go and find yourself a cave somewhere," he recommended. When asked if there were any other caves around, he told me about Lick Creek Cave, south of Great Falls, and also gave me the address of the NSS. I promptly joined in order to get caving information so I might collectthose formations. Tsk, tsk again. I promptly learned.

Now I was ready to go caving, so badly I hunted about for a partner in desparation. None of my farmer-friends near home would go with me, and the caves were 120 miles or more away. So, for my first caving trip, I checked in at the employment office and found two young fellows who were willing to hire out for an "odd job" for two dollars apiece. I'll bet they still talk about that really odd job they had back in '49.

The three of us searched for and found Flint Cave only about 13 miles east of Great Falls. It was of no particular interest at that time except many names and dates, including one of a famed train robber of years gone by. This was one cave where names on the walls was of some benefit to the visitors.

For my second trip, two early-day cavers journeyed all the way to Montana from Long Island (New York), and I joined them for another trip to Flint Cave. This time the trip was much more interesting as we followed an air current to an unknown room filled with large carrot stalactites. A large rock in a crawlway had to be removed to facilitate the connection to the apparently virgin room. Who were the other two guys? "Floormop" and "Carbide" Wrisley, at one time famous names in the NSS. The wonders of Montana caves got around early in the history of the Society.

My third caving trip was also with my Long Island friends, this time to Lick Creek Cave. I had learned that this cave possibly has the longest history of any cave in Montana. It goes back to an Indian legend telling of a cave they used in order to pass through the mountain. Around the turn of the century Lick Cave became popular with touring parties of sightseers from Great Falls. A Mr. Matthews, former manager of radio station KFBB, told me how his father had found the "Lost Passage", resplendent with deep pits and other glorious horrors, with a strong draft of air at the entrance. Later, two youths were found trapped in the passage without lights and the Forest Service dynamited the passage closed. Mr. Matthews made many a fruitless trip to the cave searching for the lost passage. The Forest Service denies any knowledge of the blasting incident, but I myself found a dynamite fuse there.

Lick Creek Cave is the one with an unstable room 600 by 540 feet where one of our party just missed a huge rockfall. Pools of water were still covered by a thick new layer of rock dust.

Then, as now, Montana was a caver's paradise - for more reasons than one. Some day I'll write the JSH of the abyss of Beans Hole...and

Mr. Bean's granddaughter!

Famous Travellers To Staffa

by Eric M. Macintyre
Reprinted from "Scottish Field," June, 1975

The recent decision by Caledonian MacBrayne to terminate the summer sailings of the steamer 'King George V' closes another chapter in the history of travel to the island of Staffa. This makes it seem an appropriate moment to pause and consider the peculiar fascination which this natural wonder has exerted over the centuries, and to look at some impressions and accounts left behind by famous visitors of yesteryear.

The attention of the outside world was first drawn to Staffa, and more particularly to its famed Fingal's Cave, by that intrepid voyager Thomas Pennant, who, in 1774, published Sir Joseph Bank's account of his 'discovery' of the island while enroute for Iceland two years previously.

Banks was so moved by its wonder and beauty that he mused: "Compared to this what are the cathedrals and palaces built by men! mere models or playthings, imitations as his works will always be when compared to those of nature." Johnson and Boswell may have read this ecstatic description before its eventual publication and before setting out for the Highlands, but on their own famous tour were prevented by heavy seas from seeing how well it accorded with the reality on Staffa.

In a vain effort to console them for this, Maclean and Inchkenneth told them that locals who had seen both the caves and formations [land forms] at Ardtun, Mull and on Staffa thought the latter to be inferior. This only drew the acidic reply from Boswell that "if so, there must have been wondrous puffing about Staffa."

However, the strictures of the first two great Highland travel-agents did not discourage others from visiting the island and its famous cavern, and the usual method in the early days of travel to Staffa was to reach it after an overland trip through Mull and a short boat trip from Torliosk or Ulva, Scotland.

An increasing number felt compelled to take the long and difficult journey, for quite apart from its obvious natural interest and beauty, Fingal's Cave attracted the traveller's attention due to the wide European interest in James Macpherson and his supposed publication in the 1760's of original Ossianic manuscripts.

Whatever their authenticity, these works undoubtedly drew many to Staffa, as its image fitted in well with the myth of it being the stronghold of Ossian's progenitors.

This legend gained rapid momentum with the boom in visits to Staffa after Banks revealed its existence to the world, and he may, in fact, have been the purveyor of much of the supposition, as well as first naming the cavern Fingal's Cave.

An interesting account which combined an acute awareness of the myths connected with Staffa and the cold reasoning of the scientist was that of the French naturalist Barthelemy Faujas De Saint-Fond, who made his visit in 1784 and published a record of it in 1799.

He met the two families then living on the island as herdsmen, and their wretched condition led him to recount an amusing, though perhaps aprocryphal, tale how Banks had caught lice on Staffa only to be blamed by the then sole inhabitant for bringing them in himself when he ought to have left them behind in London.

The young boatmen who took Faujas to the island loved "everything that reminds them of Ossian," and they sang his words while rowing. He did not, however, become too intoxicated with such myth and legend and he faithfully measured the dimensions of Fingal's Cave as well as recording full details of persons and livestock then on the island.

There was, he discerned, an "ancient but fabulous tradition" about the cave being the palace of Ossian's father, and he found it "not at all surprising that tradition should have made it the abode of a hero."

In conclusion, he quoted Troil, Bishop of Linkoeping, who had accompanied Banks and who felt that "we are forced to acknowledge that this piece of architecture, executed by nature, far surpasses that of the Louvre, that of St. Peter of Rome, and even what remains to us of Palmyra and Paestum, and all that the genius, the taste, and the luxury of the Greeks could invent."

Of course, the romantic attitude to Staffa and Fingal's Cave reached its apogee in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1800, John Leyden, friend of Sir Walter Scott, visited the "rough bounds" of the Highlands with two foreign students, and they landed on Staffa.

He found the "Cave of Fingal, termed in Gaelic An-ua-vine, or the melodious cave, grand almost beyond imagination." The columns [of basalt] on the island could be seen as "rows of seats on which a powerful imagination may easily conceive an august assembly of sea-gods seated."

The cave of nymphs in Homer's Odyssey could never equal this. Leyden was so impressed by the spectacle and melody of a piper playing a pibroch inside the cavern that the "sound of the bagpipe, almost

drowned by the roaring of the waves and the echo of the cave, exceeded in grandeur and wildness any union of sounds I ever heard."

Thirty years later another visitor to Staffa was to be moved by its beauty to compose a celebrated overture, and thus to give it a musical fame all of its own.

THIS physical beauty and sernity had excited the artist from the beginning of visits to Staffa and Banks' engravers led the way in this regard with numerous illustrations. Another who tried to meet Keats' injunction that the essence of the island could only be captured"by a first rate drawing" was W.H. Watts who accompanied Garnett on his visit of 1798.

A boat was held steady for him in the heavy swell around the island while he made his sketches, and they were later reproduced in the published account of the tour. Garnett himself found the island "grand beyond conception" and the famous cave one of the "most magnificent sights the eye ever beheld." Their guide told them it was generally thought to be the work of Fion-mac-Cool, but that he personally felt it was the result of the efforts of St. Columba! At all events, further artistic efforts were made by William Daniell, R.A., in his 'Illustrations of the Island of Staffa' published in 1818. and, perhaps most spectacularly, by the great J.W.M. Turner.

He only came to the island on a duty mission to do some illustrations for Scott's poems, and though he painted an oil of 'Staffa', he unfortunately seems to have left no further record of the impression that it made upon him.

It is almost inconceivable that Staffa could so excite the romantic imagination without Sir Walter Scott visiting it, and, in fact, he made two trips to the island, in 1810 and 1814. To celebrate the occasion the boatmen performed a mock ceremony of consecrating a rock in Fingal's Cave 'Clachan-an-Bairdh' or the poet's stone and this was duly done with a pibroch being played and whiskey drunk.

He found the "cavern at Staffa and indeed the island itself, 'dont on parle en histore', one of the few 'lions' which completely maintain an extended reputation." He also noticed, as many others have done, the loud report which the Atlantic waves give on entering the five small caves in the north-east of the island, a noise which the minister in the "New Statistical Account of Scotland" (1845) described as "resembling the distant discharge of heavy ordnance." Scott was deeply moved by Staffa and his second visit to Fingal's Cave left him unsure "whether I was not more affected by this second, than by the first view of it."

He returned to Abbotsford and completed his dramatic poem, "The Lord of the Isles," with its obvious allusion to Staffa:

"And welter'd in that wondrous dome.
Where, as to shame the temples deck'd

By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seem'd would raise
A Minister to her Maker's Praise."

BY THE time of Scott's visits to Staffa changes were taking place in the common mode of travel to the island, and the "Statistical Account" and "The Steamboat Companion" (1820) provide evidence of this. Regular sailings were begun from Glasgow and Oban and visitors often spent two days exploring Staffa and its mysteries.

This was made possible by the new arrangement whereby the steamboat left them on the island, then small boats took them to the Ulva inn for the night, whence the next day they could either return to Staffa and re-embark or go overland to Tobermory or Salen where the steamboats also called.

In 1818, however, the poet Keats was almost put off going to Staffa by the seven guinea boat fare asked of him at Oban. The problem for him was that "Staffa is fashionable and therefore everyone concerned with it either in this town or the Island are what you call up (well to do) - 'tis like paying sixpence for an apple at the playhouse." He finally managed to negociate a cheaper deal that involved the older overland journey through Mull and he caught a cold en route.

The famous cave, however, lived up to all expectations and "for solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest cathedral." What he did not find pleasing was the commercial nature of the "common and fashionable mode" of visiting Staffa that the steamboat had begun and:

"So for ever will I leave
Such a taint and soon unweave
All the magic of the place.
'Tis now free to stupid face,
To cutters and to fashion boats,
To cravats and to petticoats.
The great sea shall war it down,
For its fame shall not be blown
At each farthing quadrille dance."

On a visit in 1853, Tennyson was also to feel like this and found Staffa "as interesting as it could be with 40 people chattering and 40 minutes to see it in."

It is fitting to end our look at celebrated visits to Staffa with that of Felix Mendelsshon in 1829, for quite apart from the immortal music which arose as a result, his trip highlights the natural hazards which every traveller has faced in venturing to the island and its environs. He came to Scotland in 1829 with his friend Karl Klingemann and in touring the Highlands found the bagpipes and folk music "dreadful and dishonest."

The trip to Staffa was made despite heavy seas and, unlike so many

before and since, they were fortunately able to effect a landing. But as Klingemann recorded, the "ladies went down like flies, and here and there a gentleman did the same; I wish my companion Felix had not been among them, but he gets on better with the sea as an artist than his stomach does." However, he was much impressed with the cave and found it "like the interior of a gigantic organ for the winds and tumultous waves to play on." He carried the ideas for his overture "The Hebrides," better known as "Fingal's Cave," with him for three years before finally committing it to posterity.

The haunting beauty of Staffa and the cave had so affected him that, even then, he was a little displeased with the central section as it "smelt more of counter-point than blubber, sea gulls and salted cod."

Whatever the future of travel to Staffa, it is clear that many famous persons in the past have found their visit an invigorating experience. Moreover, such has been its magnetic force that some who never even saw it have felt compelled to write about it. In 1816, for example, a Frenchman named Picquenot published in Paris the grand sounding "Vues pittoresques de l'Ile de Staffa et de la Grotte de Fingal aux Iles Hebrides," and there is no evidence that he ever made a trip to gather his material for it.

Similarly, the great Scottish humanist George Buchanan made a tantalizingly brief reference to the island in his "History of Scotland," published in the sixteenth century, and it was not until Banks that the world at large learnt anything of its beauty and mystery.

Since that time, many have tried to capture its magic in words, music and paintings, but we are still, thankfully, no nearer a final answer to the question posed by William Wordsworth on his 1833 visit: "Ye shadowy Beings, that have rights and claims in every cell of Fingal's mystic Grot, where are ye?"

[Drawing below done during Banks' 1772 visit to Staffa. Reproduced in: Thomas Pennant: A Tour in Scotland, with a voyage to the Hebrides, London, 1774.]