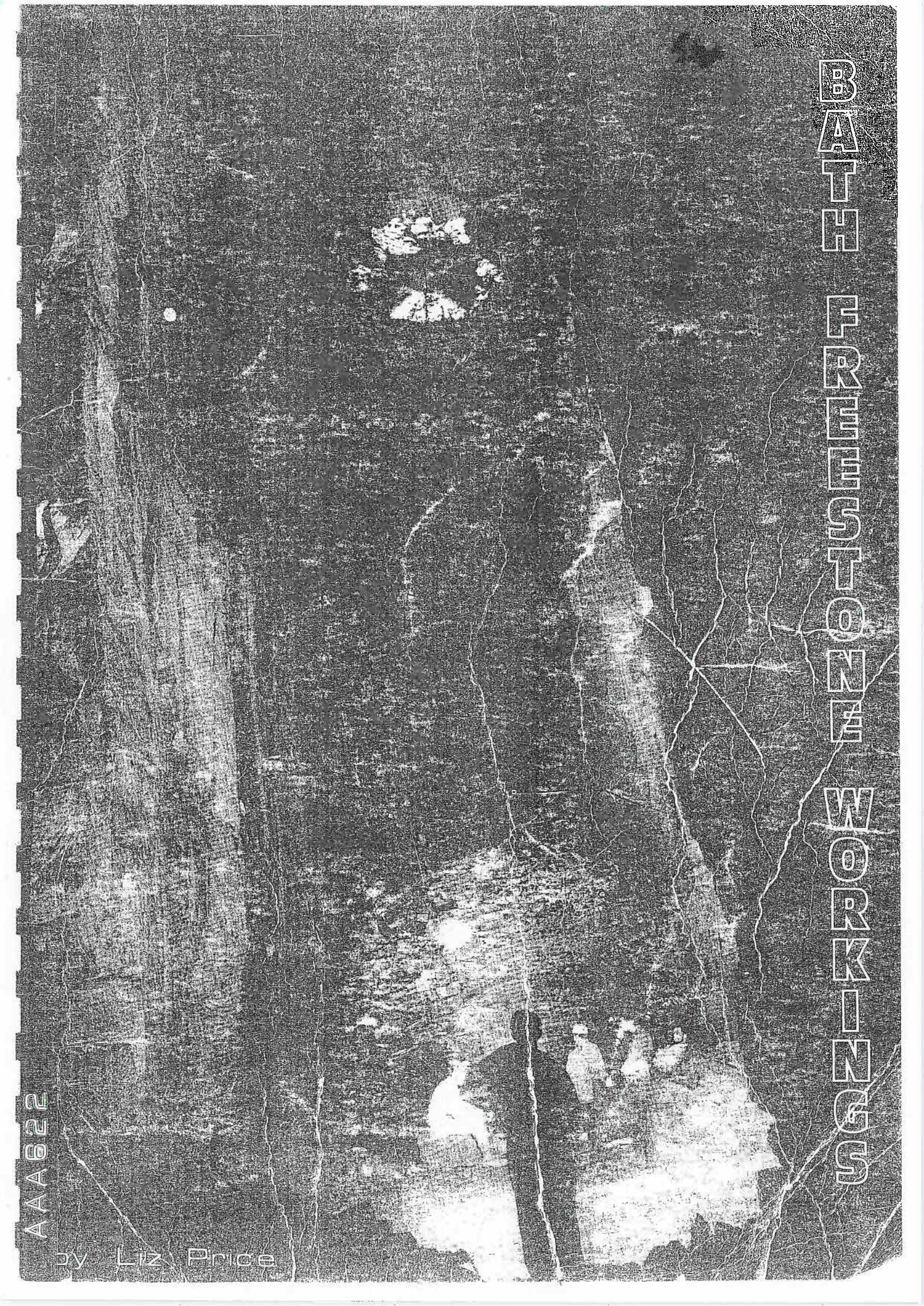


BATH FREESTONE WORKINGS

AAA622

by Liz Price





"Have you thoroughly explored it?"  
said the wizard, who knew that  
caves up in the mountains were  
seldom unoccupied.

"Yes, yes," they said, though  
everybody knew they could not  
have been long about it; they had  
come back too quick.

"It isn't all that big, and it  
doesn't go far back." That of  
course is the dangerous part about  
caves: you don't know how far  
back they go, sometimes, or where  
a passage behind may lead to, or  
what is waiting for you inside.

*The Hobbit*

*J.R.R. Tolkien.*

This applies equally to the Bath quarries, and it should be noted that they can be dangerous places, with loose rock, rotting stemples and props, and containing an intricate maze of passages. If any sites are visited the permission of the landowner should be sought, and remember: "take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints".

\* \* \* \* \*

Front cover: The Cathedral in Box.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

There are many stone workings in Bath and the surrounding area, both open cast and underground. The stone sought is Bath stone, part of the Great Oolite series. However Bath stone is a vague term, covering a group of stones quarried within an area ten miles across, from the west of Bath at one side to Corsham on the other, and a quality which varies a great deal, according to the bed being worked and the location of the quarry.

If one plots a course between Odd Down, Bradford on Avon, Gustard, Corsham, Yatton Keynell, Colerne, Box and back to Bath, this encompasses the area from which the stone was quarried.

This publication is not meant as a guide to the underground workings as is a cavers' guide, but is an attempt to cover all the workings in the area, by their location and giving a brief history of each. No mention has been made of the flora and fauna as this is quite a detailed subject. One important point to note is that the term "quarry" is used for both open and underground workings, and that the term "mine" is foreign as far as Bath stone is concerned.

\* \* \* \* \*

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