

During 2019 the work to stabilise the cave in the cliffs above Rock-a-Nore and the size of the crane involved caused comment. Diplock's Hand-Book of 1846 mentions 'Robinson Crusoe's caves on the East Cliffs as being 'accessible at all times'. These are the caves that were inhabited by an Irish family named Butler, 'where far above the busy din of life, surrounded with animals of various kinds, without investment, knowing nothing of rent, rates or taxes, they have fixed for themselves a local habitation'.

He goes on to talk about 'St Leonards Caves on the West Cliff beyond St Leonards Church can be viewed for a small fee ... and are worthy of inspection; they are of a considerable extent, contain several very neat apartments, and are inhabited by a family who get their living from showing the caves for a small fee. The principal and original excavation leads to a reservoir of water 300 feet under the cliffs, which supplies St Leonards'. Baines adds in his 'Burton's St Leonards' that these were excavated by William Smith, whose family lived in them. "Smith was a milkman and on his tradesman's card announced " Milk from the Cow at the door".

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We now have a team of 3 people working on indexing archives and the illustrations here are from some of the material we have processed. We are still working on the David Padgham collection and recent donations include a ledger and maintenance record from, we think, Watneys for their pubs supplied and managed from the Hastings depot.

1927
guide



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