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## Binoomea, Issue 128, November 2006

Jenny Whitby

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# BINOOMEA

The Newsletter of the Jenolan Caves Historical & Preservation Society.

Issue 128 November 2006

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## Editors Column November 2006

Well this is usually our President's column but Arthur is off on a great train journey travelling from Beijing to Moscow. He will be back for our meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November at which Scott Melton will be showing us his cave brochure and cave magnet collections, so do come along.

An update on the Nettle Cave is that it is still undergoing redevelopment and the walk from the Grand Arch to the Devil's Coachhouse is still closed off to the public. We anxiously wait to find out when the Cave will be ready for public inspections, so stay tuned.

Other happenings at Jenolan is that the NSW Government has control of Caves House. A 21 year lease (3 x 7yrs) for the running of Caves House in conjunction with commercial cave tours has now been put out for tender.

Jenolan has also been in the media again. Newspaper articles and TV footage appeared recently regarding the clay deposit studies declaring Jenolan's system as 340million years old, the world's oldest open cave system. Also an article appeared about some new discoveries at Jenolan. (remember you read about these first in Binoomea, they are in Rho Hole cave) These articles are reprinted in case you missed them.

Happy reading,

Jenny Whitby Editor  
Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society

## WHAT DID YOU MISS ?????

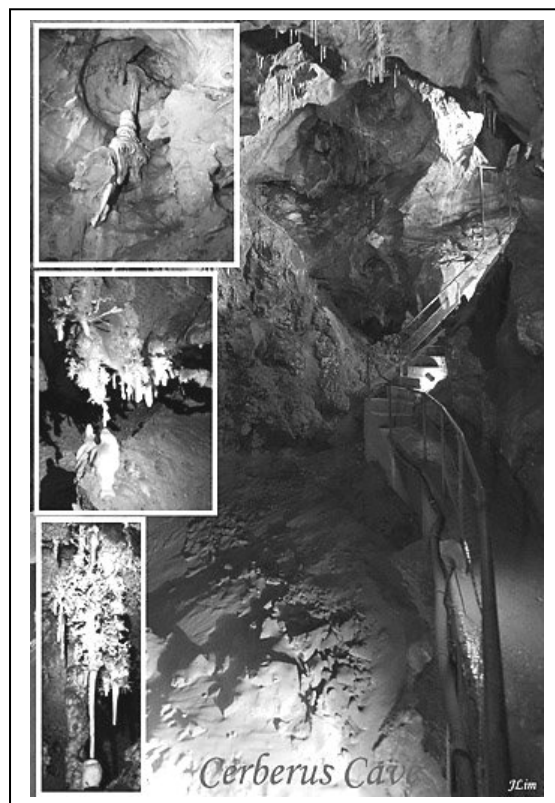
Well what a roll up we had at the last JCH&PS meeting. The Binoomea Cut was a hive of activity with a large group assembling outside on a cold winter's night at 6:30pm. If you weren't there you missed the "new tour" of the Temple of Baal. This includes evocative music, dramatic led lighting, and we even heard the original discovers talk ! Read the full story including all the technical electrical details in the following pages.

Afterwards Dennis Winchester from Caves House put on cheese & fruit platters and wine for the group in the Caves House guest lounge. Special thanks to Dennis for putting on the spread, and allowing us use of the room to hold the meeting. All up I believe there were 32 in attendance for the special JCH&PS tour. A variety of JCH&PS members were in attendance including guiding staff past and present, a previous Caves House staff member, plus a few cavers. There were a few unfamiliar faces, however by the end of the night, most had all met up and discovered old acquaintances, and met some new. The night was a great success, and thankyou to all who travelled to attend the event. At the meeting afterwards, we heard all about the Royal visit that happened that day at Jenolan. Our member & Jenolan guide Margaret Commins who did the tour for the royals has given us a full report to read. We print the story behind the relighting of the Temple of Baal written by Daniel Cove & Russell Commins, as published in the Australasian Cave Karst Management Association journal no 32 June 2006.

## JCH&PS RAFFLE.

Now we have a real collector's item as the latest prize in our raffle. The print being raffled is a composite of several colour photographs taken in the Pool of Cerberus Cave by JCH&PS member Jimmy Lim. It is approx. 50cm x 68cm. It is currently on display in the Guide's office at Jenolan.

"The photos were taken using the lighting installed in the chamber supplemented occasionally by battery powered dichroic lamps having the same colour temperature as the existing lighting. Jimmy used a Nikon D70 6.1 mega pixel digital camera. The main photo was taken at a setting of 400 ISO using a 10.5mm focal length fisheye lens with 1/3 sec.exposure at f/2.8. The image was rectified using Nikon Capture software to reduce fisheye distortion. The composite was created using Photoshop 7. The reason I chose the cave is that it has beautiful decorations & a lit pool of water."



Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5, and this raffle will be run over several months, and drawn at the AGM in February 2007. If you want a chance to add this fantastic item to your collection, send your money to JCH&PS today.



## REMINDERS.

Remember that our headquarters for archives at Cottage 17 has a security system. If you are planning a visit, please ensure you call the guides office first, and make arrangements for access.

And don't forget to advise JCH&PS your new address if you move.

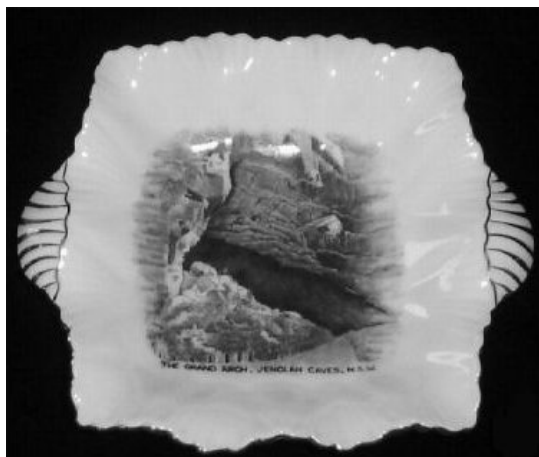
### ARE YOU A JENOLAN SHELLEY COLLECTOR ?

Of late there has been some ridiculous prices paid on ebay for Jenolan Shelley. There are a few known collectors with very deep pockets who are prepared to pay big bucks, so be careful you don't get into a bidding war with them. When two people start trying to out bid each other, it just ends up being a competition between the wallets, and not necessarily a true indication the market value. One item, a Grand Arch Pin Dish sold for \$410 to a well-known overseas collector. At least we know this item is going to a good home, and I'm sure the vendor is ecstatic at the price they got.

If you are interested in Jenolan Shelley ware, then go along to the Shelley China Fair being held at Mittagong RSL.

Dates: Friday 20th Oct, 7.30PM to 9PM – cocktail & preview  
\$12.50 (must be pre-booked (02) 4751 4277)  
Saturday 21st Oct, 10AM to 5PM - \$5  
Sunday 22nd Oct, 10AM to 3PM - \$5

JCH&PS Vice President David Cook states it should be worthwhile for those interested in Jenolan Caves Shelley. There will be a showcase devoted mainly to souvenir ware with one whole shelf of Jenolan Caves china. In addition there will be sales tables. Thanks to David for advising us of this Fair.



Jenolan Pin Dish that sold for \$410-00- Picture from ebay.

## SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT

This month's spotlight is focussed on member **Jimmy Lim**, the photographer of our latest raffle prize. Here's his story:

"I grew up in the Cameron Highlands in Malaysia. I migrated to Australia in 1982. At that time I was working as an architectural draughtsman. In Australia I retrained as an electronics technician and joined Telstra, where I have now worked for some 21 years. I also possess Australian trade qualifications in wood turning. I have always been artistically inclined. When in Australia I joined the Bankstown Lapidary Club which taught me the craft of jewellery making, using natural minerals, cut & polished stones, silver and enamelling. I am also a keen collector of fossils & minerals but my main hobby is enamelling. I enter State and National Lapidary competitions and have twice won the National Overall Championship Trophy.

Most of my life I have had an interest in photography, generally concentrating on natural objects. I was drawn to the colours and shapes of the caves and enjoy exploiting the various lighting effects. The reason I chose this cave is that it has beautiful decorations & a lit pool of water.



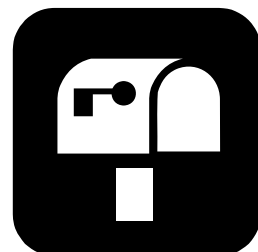
Thanks to Jimmy for donating the great raffle prize.

Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve Draft Management Plan is out for public comment. It can be viewed at [www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/jenolan\\_draft.pdf](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/jenolan_draft.pdf) The document is 163 pages long, so think twice before hitting the print button. If you wish to comment on the plan by sending a submission you can do so, but it must be received by 1 December 2006. For further details see the website.

### CONTACT DETAILS: JCH&PS Locked Bag Jenolan Caves 2790

#### DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN ARTICLE FOR THE BINOOMEA?

You don't necessarily have to write the article, just tell us what you would like to read about. Articles, suggestions, letters to the editor, complaints, stories are welcome and can be forwarded to the editor. Please contact: Jenny Whitby at: 48 Park Street Charlestown 2290 or send your email to: [jwhitby@inet.net.au](mailto:jwhitby@inet.net.au) or Phone (02) 49432265



## A SPECIAL WEEKEND AT JENOLAN CAVES 14/15 OCTOBER 2006.

2nd October 2006 is the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of declaration of Jenolan Caves as a reserve. The actual date falls on a holiday weekend and the beginning of school holidays making it difficult to run any special events. However to mark the occasion the following activities will occur during the weekend 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> October 2006:-

- 'John Lucas' will join several Lucas Cave Tours and tell his own story.
- 'John Lucas' will be in the valley and Caves House throughout the weekend
- The entertainers "Collector" Duo will hold a concert at 4:00pm in the Cathedral (Usual concert arrangements and price will apply).
- Historic cars will be on display on Sunday
- Visitors to Oberon for the "Tree Change" promotional weekend will get a free Lucas, Chifley, Imperial tour from noon on Sunday.
- Oberon rate payers and residence will get free tour of Lucas, Chifley, Imperial from noon on Sunday.



John Lucas. 1818-1902

Caves House guests staying from 15<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006 get second night accommodation free (Room only Sunday to Thursday) and cave tour deal (buy one get one free of equal value)

### WHO WAS JOHN LUCAS?

Extracted from "John Lucas" A paper prepared by Noel Rawlinson read before JCH&PS on 8/5/1978.

John Lucas was born at Kingston between Campbelltown and Newtown on 24/6/1818, and was one of six children of John and Mary Lucas. He was educated in Sydney and at the age of 16 he was apprenticed as a carpenter. He married Ann Sammons on 4/1/1841 at Singleton. About 1848 he returned to Camperdown where he was an innkeeper. He then went back to the building trade as a builder and contractor and was very successful. During this time he apparently became involved in civil matters and in 1858 he was appointed a magistrate and sat regularly in the Central Police Court. He was approached to stand for parliament and after several defeats he was elected to the Legislative Assembly for Canterbury on 4/2/1860 and re-elected again on 7/12/1864 for Hartley. He was one of the first to have land set aside for parks and reserves in every country town in New South Wales. He was a heavy writer of pamphlets and a compulsive correspondent of the Empire and Sydney Morning Herald newspapers. In 1861-2-3 Lucas visited the Binda Caves on three occasions and compiled a report which was published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 5/6/1863. It tells about the journey from Bowenfel's and visits to the Nettle, Arch and New Cave. During the next 3 years he was able to convince the Minister for Lands that the area needed protection, and the minister submitted a minute recommending that portion of the crown lands at the Fish River Caves be reserved from sale until surveyed for public purposes. This was done and gazetted on 2/10/1866. (Thus the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend). In 1875-77 he was Secretary for the Mines, this was just before Dept of Mines took over control of the caves reserve. On 25/9/1878 P.F Adams Surveyor General wrote that "The New Cave I would suggest, be called the Lucas Cave in recognition of the interest taken by Mr J. Lucas, in bringing these caves under public notice"

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### ROYALTY VISIT JENOLAN. – Report by Margaret Commins.

Reprinted from "News from the Underworld. (Jenolan Caves newsletter).

To our delight, Her Royal Highness, the Sheikha of Abu Dhabi and her 4 princess daughters recently visited Jenolan Caves. The royal party arrived at the Caves in limousines, accompanied by their attendants. Margaret Commins, one of our very experienced female cave guides, led them on a private, Extended Orient tour. For Her Royal Highness, who is an enthusiastic walker, this vigorous tour provided a smorgasbord of everything that Jenolan has to offer - history, fabulous underground rock formations of every kind, the underground river and healthy physical activity. The Extended Orient tour starts with a walk through the Binoomea Cut, through the whole Orient Cave, down an historic staircase into the Mud Tunnels of the River Cave, past the Pool of Reflections, into the Exhibition Chamber of the Lucas cave and out into the Grand Arch.

After overcoming a few initial butterflies, Margaret chatted with Her Royal Highness and answered many questions as they moved through Jenolan's fabulous chambers and passages. After the tour, the whole entourage enjoyed a private lunch at our elegant Chisholm's Restaurant in Caves House, where a special menu had been prepared. Helicopters took the Royal party away. They had such an enjoyable time that we hope to see them again sometime for Adventure Caving - the princesses were very interested!"



The ruler of Abu Dhabi is HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, elected as President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 3rd November, 2004. Encompassing 200 islands, rolling sand dunes and striking desert scrub, Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven Emirates and the Federal capital of the UAE. It occupies an area of 26,000 square miles (roughly twice the size of Belgium). It stretches south to the oases of Liwa where some of the world's largest sand dunes can be found, and east to the ancient oasis of Al Ain. This makes Abu Dhabi the largest, as well as the most populated (close to 800,000), of all the emirates.



## We Should Remember Them. Part 2.

By Kath Bellamy.

Continuing from the last newsletter, here is more of Kath's interesting research on our "Jenolan family" members who served for our country, and would have been remembered at the Pool of Remembrance in the River Cave.

### Grandchildren of Charles Whalan

**No. 167 Trooper George Waddell Armstrong.** "B" Squadron, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse.

Enlisted at Bathurst and served in the Boer War. His parents were **Gertrude Whalan** (daughter of Charles) and **John Armstrong** of Edith.

**Alfred Samuel Whalan** (son of Charles Whalan) was among the first group to enter the Imperial Cave on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1879. Alfred Whalan and Agatha Josephine Wilson were married in 1874 and had ten children, eight sons and two daughters. Agatha died in 1904. Four of their sons enlisted in the AIF in the Great War. Only one returned to Australia.

**No: 255 Private Alfred Harper Whalan MM** 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Enlisted 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1914. His occupation was a miner.

He embarked on board A5 HMAT Omrah from Brisbane on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1914.

He was awarded the Military Medal for his actions on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> August 1916 at Pozieres. **He was killed in action on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916** "somewhere in France, exact place unknown". Alfred Whalan is remembered with honour on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial.

**No: 1336 Private Glyndwr Montague Whalan** 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Enlisted 8<sup>th</sup> March 1915. His occupation was a farmer.

He embarked on board A40 HMAT Ceramic from Sydney on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1915

**He was killed in action at Hill 60 on Gallipoli on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1915.**

Glyndwr Whalan is remembered with honour on the Lone Pine Memorial.

**No: 351 Gunner Wilson Royal Whalan** 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion Enlisted 8<sup>th</sup> March 1915.

His occupation was a railway porter.

He embarked on board A40 HMAT Ceramic from Sydney on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1915.

He returned to Australia on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1919.



Embroidered postcard from 1917.  
From Kath Bellamy collection.

**No: 477 Corporal Richard Percy Whalan** 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Australian Machine Gun Corps Enlisted 13<sup>th</sup> May 1916. His occupation was a tram conductor. He embarked on board A38 HMAT Ulysses from Melbourne on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1916

**He was killed in action at Hervilly in France on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1918.**

Richard Whalan is remembered with honour in the Roisel Communal Cemetery.

Glyndwr and his brother Wilson enlisted on the same day. Both sailed on A40 HMAT (His Majesty's Australian Transport) Ceramic on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1915.

(It is a co-incidence that my grandfather, who served with the 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion, sailed on Ceramic that same day. K.Bellamy.)

The Whalan family was again bereaved in World War 2.

**NX13274 Cpl. Glyndwr Oswald Whalan** 2/4th Battalion.

His residence was "Woodlands" at Edith. He was 28 years old and a farmer. His parents were Richard and Florence Whalan; his wife was Enid Whalan.

**Glyndwr Whalan was killed at Aitape in New Guinea on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1945.** He is buried in the Lae War Cemetery and his name appears on the Oberon Roll of Honour.

List of servicemen from the Jenolan Caves locality who enlisted during the Second World War:

6016 **Flight Sgt. Henry Edward Barnes** R STN Canberra

N78961 **Staff Sgt. Thomas William Clark** Aust. Army Canteens Service LHQ

N273951 **Private Stanley Joseph Collits** 31 Garrison Battalion

N195592 **Gunner Victor Harcourt Ebberton** 231 Aust. Light Anti Aircraft Battery

0242 **Flight Lieutenant William Linton Ravenscroft** NSW Air Training Corps

N440152 **Private Leonard George Wilcox** AEME TNG Centre

If anyone else has further information relating to Jenolan's war connections, please contact the editor

"They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning we will remember them. Lest we forget."





Last newsletter we asked if anyone knew about the photograph taken of a group of visitors at official opening of the Orient Cave on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1917. Included in this party was a uniformed soldier with only one arm, being **No.588 Private William Jackson VC**, 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion. In the report in the Lithgow Mercury on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1918, it was mentioned that Pte. Jackson was a guest at Caves House and spent Christmas at Jenolan.

Well we had no responses, so your editor did a little research and come up with this as a possibility.

My guess is that maybe Private William Jackson VC, may have attended the Orient opening because of his "hero status". Jackson remained in England until 4 May 1917, until he was invalided back to Australia along with 992 returning servicemen aboard A 32. H.M.A.T. "Themistocles", arriving in Sydney on 5 July 1917. To date Jackson remains the youngest Australian to be awarded a Victoria Cross. His Victoria Cross was the first won by an Australian on the Western Front"



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Article from The Australian Monday 7 August 2006.



Pottering about: Geologist Armstrong Osborne, right, and guide Ted Matthews, left, in the Jenolan Caves, west of Sydney. Picture: Alan Pryke.

## Caves' secret lay in lumps of clay

John Stapleton  
Leigh Dayton

IT was good clay — the kind you could use for patching up leaks in sewers and water pipes.

In fact, that is exactly what workers at NSW's Jenolan Caves used to do with the lumps of the tan-and-white material they found scattered around the site, little knowing its geological significance.

It took researchers hunting for minerals in the overlooked clay to unlock its secret — it was 340 million years old.

That means the popular tourist site, in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, has the world's oldest known open caves, beating the Dead Sea Scroll caves by more than 240 million years.

"Even in geological terms, 340 million years is a very long time," University of Sydney geologist Armstrong Osborne said.

Until 20 years ago, most scientists thought the Jenolan Caves were only a few thousand years old. More recent estimates put them at between 90 million and 100 million years old, similar in age to the limestone caves near Qumran, in the Israeli-occupied territory of the West Bank, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.

"Those of us who thought they were really old couldn't find any evidence," Dr Osborne said as he revealed the path he took

in establishing when the caves were formed.

The proof came thanks to a meeting with Horst Zwingmann of CSIRO Petroleum Resources at the Australian Museum in Sydney.

Dr Zwingmann told him how he had devised a way to help companies find oil after realising reserves were more likely to be present in areas containing minerals of a certain age.

He had developed a technique to date minerals and it was this method that was applied to the clay found in the Jenolan Caves.

The project began at the Australian Museum, where researchers Ross Pogson and David Colchester used X-ray and electron microscope technology to identify minerals in the clay suitable for testing.

Dr Zwingmann then applied his technique — a variation of radioactive dating — to the minerals that had crystallised when a previously unknown volcano spewed ash into the caves. The technique showed the crystals were formed 340 million years ago.

"This study shows how industry-located research techniques can also be used to solve more general geological mysteries," Dr Zwingmann said.

He and his colleagues have published the findings in the latest issue of the *Australian Journal of Earth Sciences*.

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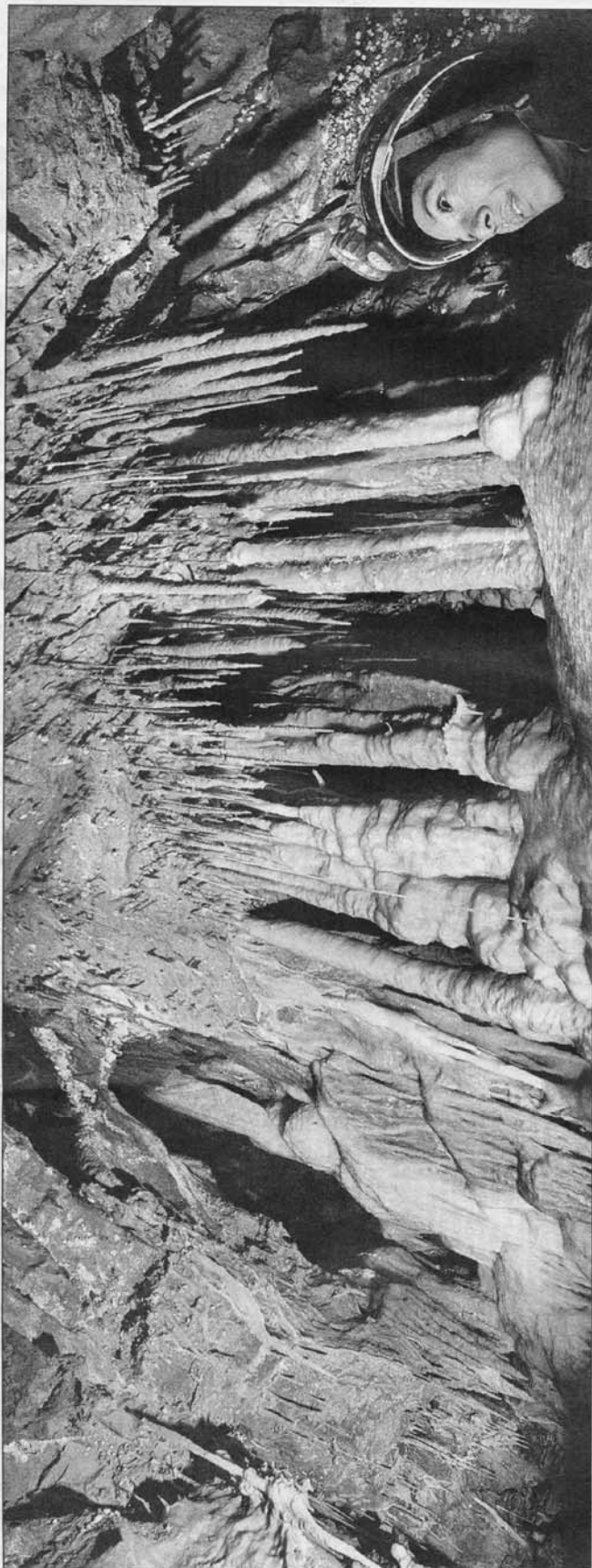
### SPELEO STUFF.

Another Sydney University Speleological Society dive trip is planned for Barralong on 15/16 October 2006.

The last trip in September divers were able to photograph, and survey Captain Cooks Cavern and make a start on the dig past Captain Cooks Cavern on the back side of the rock pile heading towards the show caves. To get any more done it will need some very heavy rocks moved. There was talk that some leads would need scaling poles. Now hauling dive gear and scaling poles then diving with scaling poles would be interesting! This October trip will concentrate on the Blue Tongue dig in Barralong and diving Upstream Barralong.

Five Brush tailed Rock Wallabies were recently spotted observing 5 cavers from Illawarra Speleological Society, as they exited Frenchman's Cave. They were inside the wallaby enclosure (the wallabies that is) but only about 20 metres from the cavers. Gary Whitby states that is unusual to see the wallabies, especially so many together so close. Rarely do the speleos see them at all, however on this day they also saw a lyrebird near the cave, and a juvenile Peregrine Falcon flying from its nest in The Roost Cave.

# Huge wonderland found under Jenolan Caves



**Awe-struck by the beauty:** Caver Felisse Fraser of the Sydney University team surveys a highly decorated area called the Rotunda at the furthest limit of exploration

Pictures: Alan Pryke

**John Stapleton  
James Madden**

DISCOVERING a hidden tunnel that leads to a massive previously unknown cavern is about as good as it gets for a caver.

And when this happens under the nose of millions of tourists at the most trodden-through set of caves in Australia, the Jenolan Caves, it is even more exciting.

Hundreds of metres of spectacular caves have been found by an intrepid team from the Sydney University Speleological Society, the first significant find at the cave system for almost 40 years.

They are hard to reach, but worth the uncomfortable journey. Purple-tinged flowstones and rare red-coloured stalactites and stalagmites paint a vivid underground portrait.

The floors are covered with light-reflecting crystals. Unusually patterned bands of gravity-defying helictites line the walls.

Intricate multi-tiered domes and crystallised streams also form part of the newly discovered network, which is too difficult to access to form part of a future tourist track.

Millions of tourists and thousands of explorers have picked over the cave system since it was discovered in the 1830s, when they were used as a hideout by an escaped convict.

One of the world's leading experts on limestone caves, Dr Armstrong Osborne of Sydney University, said the find filled in significant gaps in the knowledge of the cave system.

"Jenolan is one of the world's most complicated cave systems," he said. "These passages form an important connection between the parts that are used as the show caves, and

other parts which are only seen by explorers and specialised caving clubs.

"What is significant is that it is extremely well decorated, with some very fragile mineral deposits and formations. There's some remarkable crystal pools — the floor is covered with calcite crystals which make the floors sparkle. It is very fragile. You cannot walk on it."

Felisse Fraser, who visited the caves for the first time in July, said she was awe-struck by the beauty of the underground chambers. "It was unbelievable. There was a real sense that you were standing in a sacred spot, witnessing history," Ms Fraser said. And although she dared not touch any of the crystals, she said she couldn't help admiring the sparkling features growing from the cave's roof, floor and walls. "Every woman loves a bit of bling-bling, and it's everywhere. It's gorgeous."

Jenolan Caves Trust spokesman Grant Commins said caving experts were astounded by the find.

"The experts all comment on the astonishing beauty of the caves," he said. "It is very impressive crystal, exceptionally good quality decoration."

"It is very exciting in 2006 to go to a place where no human being has ever trod before."

President of the Sydney University Speleological Society Keir Vaughan-Taylor said the discovery of the new cave system was an "archetypal discovery".

"They pulled a piece of rock out and there was this passageway," he said. "We still don't know where the passageways will lead. There is still much more to find. These caves take you back with how spectacular they are. It goes to show that not all has been found in this world, not by a long way."

Jenolan Caves Trust spokesman Grant Commins said caving experts were astounded by the find.

"The experts all comment on the astonishing beauty of the caves," he said. "It is very impressive crystal, exceptionally good quality decoration."

"It is very exciting in 2006 to go to a place where no human being has ever trod before."



**Major discovery:** Team members in the Rotunda

Article from The Weekend Australian, 16-17 September 2006. Editor's comments: The spelling of the decorated chamber is incorrect in the report. It is actually spelt Rhotunda, and they also spelt Felise's names wrong.



The next meeting will be held on **SATURDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2006 at Jenolan.** Meeting held at the JCH&PS archives Cottage 17, Five Mile Hill, Jenolan starts around 7pm. Come along to hear all about Scott Melton's Cave magnet & brochure collection. Our AGM is the following meeting, in February 2007

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SATURDAY OF FEBRUARY, AUGUST AND NOVEMBER. THE MAY MEETING IS THE FIRST SATURDAY, DUE TO MOTHERS DAY.