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BINOOMEA

The Newsletter of the Jenolan Caves Historical & Preservation Society.

Issue 131 August 2007

ISSN 0310-7248.

President's Column August 2007

Arthur Gray 2007 President

As you will see in the Binoomea Newsletter, we are approaching JCH & PS's 35th Anniversary, in July. To mark this milestone we are planning to hold a celebratory dinner in the Chisholm Room at Caves House on 11th August.

I attended the 25th and 30th Anniversary dinners and can thoroughly recommend them to all. I honestly can't remember whether we celebrated the 20th, although I was a member then. For reports on escapades at earlier dinners, you'll have to come along and ask some of the old timers!!

As an extra incentive, you are also invited to come on 11th August especially to pass ribald comments regarding our president, who will be celebrating his 67th birthday on this day.

So, our Anniversary Dinner is on Saturday 11th August. I do hope you can come, and make the evening a great success.



Happy Anniversary JCH&PS

WHAT DID YOU MISS?

The last meeting in May was held in the Magnolia Room at Caves House. There was discussion regarding the state of some of the plaques in the reserve, and efforts under way to repair or replace these. We are sourcing pricing, so stay tuned.

Kath Bellamy has also recently spent time in our archives photographing & cataloguing many items, and a CD has been done for our records. A copy will be kept offsite.

A lot of talk about the new book by John Dunkley and progress at that time (See next column) and also discussion regarding the Anniversary weekend.

Rob Whyte generously donated a laptop, which will be used for displays in the museum.

A NEW JENOLAN CAVES BOOK

The book is an updated revised version of the 60 page "Jenolan Caves As they were in the Nineteenth Century" written by JCH&PS member John Dunkley. It was first produced in 1986 and is a bit of a collector's item these days.

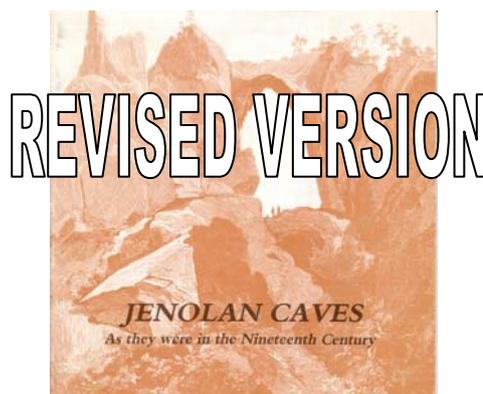
The revamped version has a new title, different front cover, many new photographs and new additional chapter. So even if you have the old book, you'll definitely want this one for your collection.

The book hopefully will be available (all going well) at the 35th anniversary weekend, and is being offered to members at a special price. As matters are still in finalisation stage, all we can tell you that the member's price will be under \$20. At this stage even the title is still up in the air!

If you are interested in purchasing a book, and can't get to Jenolan for the anniversary dinner, not to worry, just contact the editor Jenny Whitby (contact details page 2) and let her know that you want one, and we can arrange purchase for you.

We would love to see as many members at this Anniversary get together, so please check your diary and note this weekend as a special one not to be missed.

The picture shown is the 1986 book.



SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHER'S TOURS IN AUGUST

Rob Whyte will be running some sessions for tourists on how to take better photos on their tours. They will then be doing a Baal tour where at last check they will be able to bring tripods. Visitors will be able to enter a competition on the day although a prize is yet to be determined. Further details yet to be Announced but keep checking www.jenolancaves.org.au





Rob Whyte

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



You don't necessarily have to write the article, just tell me 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:

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Charlestown 2290 Ph (02) 49432265 or
send your email to:
jwhitby@exemail.com.au

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EDITOR'S EMAIL

**ADDRESS HAS
CHANGED TO:**

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please update your address books.



Gary & I are going caving for the month of July, to survey Australia's longest Cave "Bullita" in the NT, and then to explore more caves in The Kimberley's WA. We may not have much access to internet whilst away, so will respond to any emails when we return.

SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT – Rob Whyte.

This edition's featured member is known to many, as he wears many hats! Apart from being a casual guide at Jenolan, he is the creator of the unofficial Jenolan Caves Gateway website, (www.jenolan.com) and operates the yahoo Jenolan forum, which you can find details of how to join from that site. Here's his story.

My parents first took me to Jenolan for my 10th birthday. My thoughts of the mountains back then stopped around Katoomba and caves never really figured for me. We did do drives now and then to Bathurst and I would recall my parents pointing out the turnoff to Jenolan commenting about it being a winding road. On that day we did the Lucas and then the Orient after which I was hooked. One thing they did which made a big difference to me was purchasing a 1969 edition of Dunlop's guidebook (not sure why it was that edition on sale as I'm sure a more recent one had come out by then). Anyway returning home I pored over that book, not just the cave descriptions but also the history. From that point on school assignments were deliberately contrived to involve Jenolan and my parents were constantly pestered to take me back. When I got my drivers license it was a biannual trip with my friends.

Finally came university and joining the University of NSW Speleological Society (UNSWSS). My first trip was into Mammoth with past guide and UNSWSS member Anthony Hardy and his past flatmate Ian Chalson. It was mid winter and a light snow fell when we surfaced. That was the first trip of many, not just to Jenolan but all over the state. I had a wonderful time exploring and had the pleasure of actually discovering quite large caves at Wee Jasper and Cliefden. Alas a big discovery eluded me at Jenolan.

Some time in the early 90's I started documenting the old graffiti in the caves at Jenolan. It was a thorough project where we mapped the caves if a suitable map didn't exist, marked on those maps where the graffiti was and what it said as well as photographing it. Most of this was in the Elder - in fact for a while I was in that cave every weekend it seemed. This was before the Plughole tours. Many of the guides would offer suggestions of other pieces of graffiti to check which meant I had to learn all the locality names at Jenolan. For completeness I developed a good grasp on the history of the place because I wanted to know something of the people who had left this graffiti. Eventually Nigel Scanlan, senior guide at the time, suggested given my knowledge I should become a casual guide - that was back around 1995. Since then I have been guiding when needed.

About that time I started work at Qantas in their IT section and for a while looked after IT systems in the airports. For a brief time I was working Monday to Friday in Cairns then would fly down to Sydney, work Jenolan on the weekend, then fly back Monday morning - what a commute! These days I'm still looking after Qantas IT systems but employed by IBM to do it.

Along the way I've sort of been guilty of introducing two guides to Jenolan. The first is Dr Dan Catchpole. Dan was another member of UNSWSS who saw me having such a good time at Jenolan that he too eventually threw his hat in the ring to be a guide. The other is Capt Geoff Molesworth. I met Geoff on a tour of the Orient and a little later we found we both worked for Qantas, Geoff as one of Qantas' captains. In Geoff's words, flying for Qantas was pretty good but what he'd always wanted to do since he was at school was be a guide at Jenolan - so I helped him realise that dream.

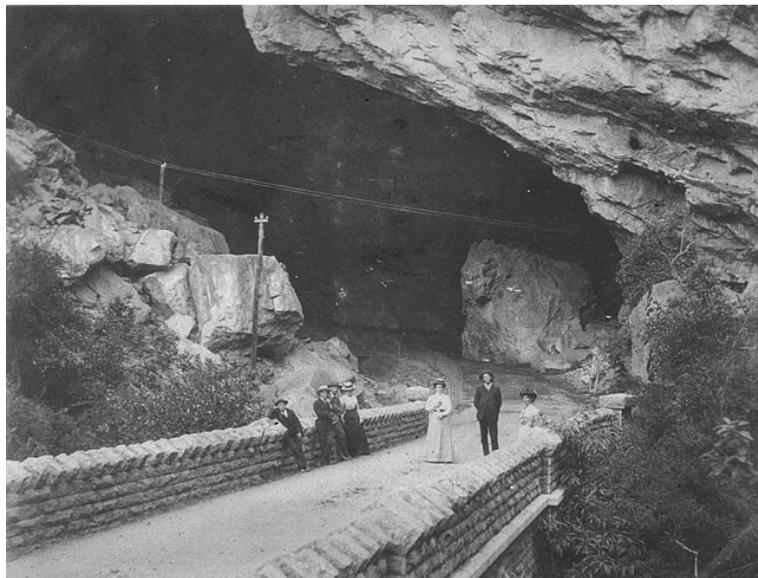
de Burgh's Bridge Jenolan. - Jenny Whitby.

With the spotlight on Sydney Harbour Bridge earlier this year, for the 75th anniversary of its opening, I thought it was an appropriate time for an article on Jenolan's Limestone Bridge, and to reprint the text from a JCH&PS leaflet from 1996.

Did you know that the Jenolan bridge, also known as the de Burgh's bridge, and has links to its more famous countersake? The chief engineer of the Public Works Department E M De Burgh, who signed the plans for Jenolan's limestone bridge, was a member of the Sydney Harbour Bridge Advisory Board!

A bit more about the man behind the bridge.

The following biography is from *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8, by J M Antill., printed by Melbourne University Press 1981.



This early photo taken of the bridge and some visitors was taken by Rev A P Campbell (c1900)



DE BURGH, ERNEST MACARTNEY (1863-1929)

Civil engineer, was born on 18 January 1863 at Sandymount, Dublin, Ireland, youngest son of Rev. William de Burgh, and his wife Janette, née Macartney. He was educated at Rathmines School and the Royal College of Science for Ireland, and for a time was engaged on railway construction in Ireland.

On 21 March 1885 de Burgh arrived in Melbourne in the Orient and on 30 April joined the New South Wales Department of Public Works. He was engaged for two years on survey work for Sydney's southern outfall sewer and in 1887 was sent to construct bridges over the Murrumbidgee and Snowy rivers. In 1891 he became supervising bridge engineer and in 1901-03 engineer for bridges; he superintended the construction of those over the Darling, Murray, Murrumbidgee, Hunter, Macleay & Tweed rivers. On 1 July 1903 de Burgh became acting principal assistant engineer for rivers, water-supply and drainage and

was a member of the Sydney Harbour Bridge Advisory Board. Confirmed in his position next year, he was sent to England and France to study dam construction and water-supply. On his return he was given special responsibility for the construction of Cataract Dam for the Sydney water-supply and served on the royal commission to report upon the project. In 1910-13 he represented the State government at engineers' conferences leading to the River Murray Waters Act. He was associated with L. A. Wade in the design and construction of Burrinjuck Dam and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme.



The Bridge. Photographer and date unknown.

On 16 April 1909 de Burgh became chief engineer for harbours and water-supply, and in 1911-13 was also a member of the committee of management of Cockatoo Island Dockyard. On 26 February 1913 he was appointed chief engineer for water-supply and sewerage, and was responsible for the design and construction of the Cordeaux, Avon and Nepean dams (Sydney water-supply), the Chichester scheme for Newcastle and the Umberumberka scheme for Broken Hill. In 1921-25 he was a member of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee and prepared the original plans for Canberra's water-supply. C. S. Daley recalled that although he was often 'a drastic critic in expression, at the same time he possessed that characteristic Irish wit and humour that removed the sting but left the logic. He was adept at dealing with politicians, and it was a delight to hear him giving advice, in a racy manner, to the ministers'.

De Burgh was a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London, and twice won the Telford premium. He was regarded as one of the ablest civil engineers in Australia when he retired on 22 November 1927. His last year in office had been marred by illness, and he died of tuberculosis at his home at Vaucluse on 4 April 1929 and was cremated with Anglican rites. He was survived by his wife Constance Mary, née Yeo, whom he married at All Saints Church, Woollahra, on 20 March 1888, and by two sons and a daughter. De Burgh's Bridge over the Lane Cove River, Sydney, is named after him.

JENOLAN'S Limestone Bridge 1896-1996.

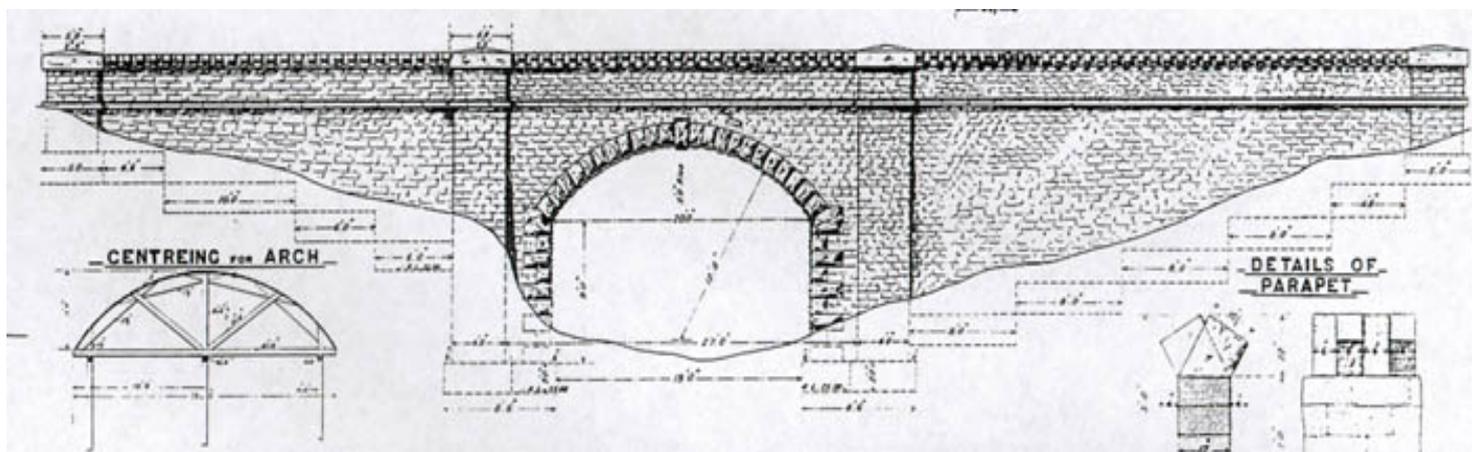
A reprint of text from JCH&PS 1996 leaflet by Joan Edwards.

The earliest road access to Jenolan was by Cambridge's Zig Zag, still in use and known as the Two Mile. This remarkable engineering feat was completed in 1879 linking the caves with Oberon and the rail at Tarana. Unfortunately the plans were lost last century (*editors note; that is the 20th century*) but the hairpin bends and the steep grade still exist for us to marvel at the achievement of Cambridge and his men with hand tools. Later the road from Hampton reached the "turnaround" – the wider section of road just up from the Coachhouse and the stone parapet. Here, the horse drawn vehicles halted, their passengers alighted and picked their way down the path, across the rocky creek bed and through the rough Grand Arch, to reach the early Caves House run by Lucinda and Jeremiah Wilson.

Access became much easier with the construction of the limestone bridge in 1896. Like all the earlier engineering constructions at Jenolan, the bridge was designed by the Public Works Department of the Colony of New South Wales. Locally, it is known as the "de Burgh bridge" as the plans were signed by the famous bridge designer, E.M. de Burgh. However, it is highly unlikely that de Burgh designed the bridge himself but was drawn up by lesser known engineers in the department as it is a simple plan, of the style built in Britain and elsewhere for more than one hundred years. All plans were signed by the Chief Engineer, the position de Burgh held at the time.

Credit is due to those who constructed the bridge. Limestone is a very hard rock, difficult to cut. Wander under the bridge along the path from the Devil's Coachhouse to the Blue Lake. Look carefully and you will be able to see where a large rock has been incorporated into the bridge instead of removing it and cutting it into blocks. It can be identified by the absence of mortar. The rock has been chipped to resemble the joints which would have been there. When the Pinnacles were blasted as a safety measure in the 1950's, some fell on the bridge and damaged the parapet. As you walk across the bridge you can identify the replacement rocks of granite, not local limestone, as different lichens grow on granite. Those parapet rocks heavily encrusted with lichens are the replacements. Interestingly, the report of the Public Works Department, as reported in the Legislative Council Papers for 1896, does not list the bridge among those constructed during the year but does note that 1,693.00.4 was spent on the road through the Grand Arch. Research indicates that the road costs were so high because of the difficulty in removing large rocks and constructing iron girders supports for the road.

While the bridge itself may not be an engineering feat, its significance to the development of Jenolan cannot be overestimated. Vehicular access across the Jenolan River and through Grand Arch, made the journey much easier, especially as motor transport developed. The bridge is a key factor in the social history and development of Jenolan as a premier tourist destination.



Original plans of the bridge.



PARAPETS.

From Latin: "parare" to guard "pectus" breast, i.e., breast-high battlements in balconies, platforms, and bridges. Parapets are used on bridges and other [highway](#) structures (such as [retaining walls](#)) to prevent [vehicles](#), and other users such as [pedestrians](#), cyclists and horse riders, from falling where there is a vertical or near-vertical drop.

Here we see a photo taken in 1948 showing the parapets, however the subjects are more interested in the Carlotta Arch, or the Nettle Cave maybe?

JENOLAN'S WEEKEND OF INDULGENCE - Tony Spira.

Just thought I'd write a bit of a report about the "Indulgence Weekend" just passed. (1-3 June 2007) I hope it is repeated next year. Even as a migraine sufferer it was well worth the risk getting into some of those chocolate delights. That's where it all started for me when I only had 20 minutes or so after picking up the Jubilee tickets to the start of the cave tour.

Scotty and I made a quick dash to Caves House to see all the fair on offer and there on arrival you were promptly told, "You just must have one of those hot chocolates near the chocolate fountain". And what a devilish hot chocolate it was! The Alpaca clothes & other chocolate stalls looked great but time was getting away from us.

It's a bit hard to describe the 3 1/2 hour Jubilee tour in a few words. Just pure indulgence as Rob wanted it, and so it was. We had 11 in the tour and we didn't miss much, except I mistook it for Fairy Bower, for the Aviary as I had 3 years ago. Must remember the little fat column to the left. This cave is "Helectite Heaven" and now we know there is nothing mystical about the formation of these oddities. The profuse cave decorations became likened to food in this cave in particular as Rob pointed out. Coconut & Feijoa were the main culprits followed by probably chocolate, cream, pudding & ice cream. Where does the Feijoa come from one might ask?! Well it started in Alabaster Hall and Rob was the expert by a long, long shot. Weren't you Rob! Totally indulgent. Well, we should have exited the cave 20 minutes ago but I insisted going down to the river so down we went. Who was getting bored? Who realized it was over 3 hours? No-one! Alas the Lilly of the Valley and that 'Greek' side trip will have to wait for a four hour Jubilee next year.

So, we made our way back to Caves house for a pre-dinner drink and a few cheese & bickies. More indulgence! The locally produced wine, both red & white was excellent. I wouldn't have thought the Oberon district could do it. Dinner was superb. My favourites were the antipasto, (that little pie was divine) and those wicked chocolate deserts. One was smoother than flowstone in the Orient. The migraine would have to wait and to this second has not surfaced!

Next morning it was 9:30 sharp at Ted's place to hear William from SUSS to talk about and show audio visuals of recent exploration of upstream Barralong. That diving in the mud & blue water was absolutely amazing. It looked like damn hard work to. More indulgence! Is Basil right when he says there might be another Orient somewhere there? There is over 50 years of exploration there to find out.

Then it was off to do the Nettle on my own. After 44 years gazing at those mysterious stairs it didn't disappoint. For those who may think, "Oh, this cave is open to the light - it can't be as good", you are completely wrong! The shapes, light, colours & shadows are amazing. It's like an artist's studio with superb photographic potential. Compact digitals without a tripod & strong flash will struggle. Old film SLR's & digital SLR's will do best. AND, who can tell me where the BLUE shadows & colouring come from? There's no lights and it can't come from the sky or can it. It's an amazing cave and I can't wait to go back. Well done Jenolan! Anyone for a bit more Indulgence? Same time next year (or earlier). See you there!



Which ones are the chocolates, which ones are oolites from Barralong Cave?



ADVENTURES ON THE ROAD TO JENOLAN - Cory Camillieri

This article was posted on the yahoo group list on 15 June 2007.

There is never a dull moment driving to Jenolan. Such as doing a maintenance/plughole shift and leaving home before the sun has risen and watching the sunrise over the valleys on the way. Or the Sunsets in the evening and nearly swerving off the road to catch a glimpse of the incredible colour.

However, the last few times have been more than just scenery. During the long weekend when the central coast was battling floods and people being swept off the road, Jenolan's 'Five mile' had a landslip right where the fence is to 'catch' falling rocks. These were not just rocks, but boulders and enough to get the RTA to close the road and also being too diligent and also notifying motorists from the Great Western Highway that it was closed, forgetting to mention that the diversion through Oberon was still possible. Well, I suppose we expect chaos during the long weekend.

Today we had more excitement on the roads into Jenolan. There was a Winter Wonderland! As yesterday there was a freeze over even in Katoomba I was preparing for the same today. This time it was the more gentle and picturesque snow! Along Jenolan Caves Road for my morning drive in were flurries and then the real stuff. It was very beautiful as a lot had settled on the vegetation mostly near the Pine Forest. There was a little on the road but not enough to get in a panic about. The panic was saved for the '2 mile' where there was enough snow on the road when cars drove through they didn't get down to the road. The deepest part was right near Barry's Cabins and it was closed for most of the day. The five mile was just rain by the afternoon and by the time I drove home it was just pouring rain. Hmm, I wonder what the road will be like tomorrow. Just another tale in the ever surprising and interesting Jenolan Caves.

On just another note of interest: adventures in the ticket office: There are now large cumbersome machines on the bench in preparation for our new tickets for the "Jenolan Pass" which is probably where "magic happens here". I had the fortune today of sitting in the chair and Sue noticed a dog outside. We discussed this and decided the best thing was to shoo the dog. Some visitors in the ticket office ready to hand me their money thought I said to "shoot the dog".

Another posting again from Cory a few days later. 19th June 2007.

Jenolan enthusiasts, you must come back to the caves now! While the water has not been kind to those who live on the East Coast, it certainly has been kind to Jenolan. There are things that are flowing once more after a time. I have only been hanging around Jenolan for under 3 years and there are many new puddles, drips, boy pees, and Rivers flowing. It is all very exciting and the visitors must think that us guides are nuts as we are very chuffed at the favourable presence of the ever missed H₂O. Here is an update of what we saw over the weekend: North Side :Crystal Cities filled, a waterfall in Lower Katie's as heard from Lucinda, puddle to the left of the track at Chifley exit (opp bat skeleton), a puddle on the other side of the track, pouring through the rest of the exit. South Side: Lucas was going off! Huge splashing drips on the alter in the Cathedral, I got copped at the back of the neck on the stairs going down the slide, at the exhibition chamber it was a chorus of drips.

It was wonderful to listen to especially after the Cello performance. The best thing is to light up the Proscenium first as the light looks fantastic with all the drips. Between the proscenium and Mafeking it is really coming down. There was a pouring on the handrail. A shawl in 'action' on the stairs to Mafeking. At the top, the basins are filling up. Not just the one with the green copper stain but the others as well! I have never seen this! Howick Falls are running. One of the best spots was at the Jewel Casket (between Maf and Pink and White's) there was a waterfall. I have never seen this in a cave! A waterfall! Very exciting. The Jewel Casket full. Around the next bend was very funny as there was a pressure spot and we all got peed on! When I arrived onto the Pink and White platform I said to my group that if they passed through the last section without being dripped on, then they could dodge bullets! A lot were already wearing raincoats as it was raining outside and they needed them to cross the bridge. I told them that they were lucky to see the River Styx all murky, but they didn't really think so. There was a large puddle in Lurline and I found the puddle in the floor of the Bone cave when I splashed in it. Hey, it was dark! River Lethe was raging and the Styx had risen to the bottom step. There was another pressure point at Cleopatra's Needle. I was told that it was about 1m high. Baal, not surprising was dripping just about everywhere. Behind the Persian Chamber it sounded like there was a waterfall but it was secretly gushing in another chamber. The crystal basin filled a little ways.

Now that the rain has subsided a little the water has drained a little but it is nice to see a lot will remain for a while and the forecast is only more of what we have had last week so I predict more exciting discoveries in the caves. In fact there is a chance of more snow so it could be another adventurous drive to JC.



Editor: If anyone out there has any photos of the rockfall I would love to print it in the next newsletter. Keep an eye out for any unusual happenings when you are at Jenolan, I like to report unusual conditions to our wider membership.

Following on from Kath Bellamy's article last edition, we now have Part 2 of the article reprinted from the Blue Mountains Echo.

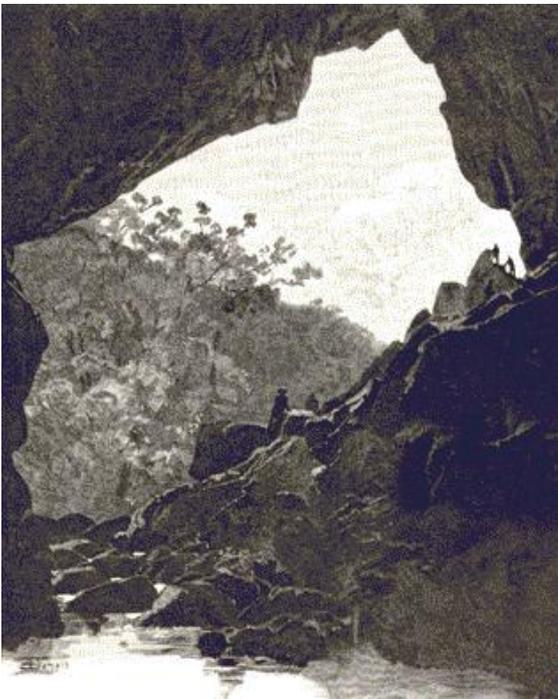
AT JENOLAN CAVES. A GLIMPSE OF THE UNDER WORLD

The rosy sunlight played hide and go-seek amidst the moist grasses that clothe the hillsides in the Caves house recess, disclosing the manifold and unceasing motion of microscopic insect life. On the red gravelled footpath, small groups of humanity basked idly in the warm glow, waiting for the Cavemen and the necessary ticket of admission to the Caves.

Man runs the universe on the ticket system. A bit of pasteboard is the "vade mecum" to a penny tram section and in the near future, under a well worked astronomic Trust, one will have to get his ticket punched to witness a solar eclipse or the transit of Venus.

Time "'ung 'eavy on the 'ands" of the Miss Gibbs chorus crowd, but one of the males, wearing a Norfolk jacket, a New York hair cut and a pair of cheap sandshoes, explained the approaching wonders to the well-powdered, heavily chatelained damsels of the vocal ensemble. HE HAD BEEN THERE BEFORE. In dimensions, most things were 'quiet' in shape, 'lovely' and the 'funny little chalk things' were given the superlative adjective 'bosker'.

But now came a trinity of cave dwellers in dusty dark blue uniform frayed with the attrition of pre-historic rock. Taciturn men they were, men that had assimilated the silence of the ages and the secret knowledge of the laboratory of Nature. They carried the keys of the under world and moved as do the populace of the geologic cities, with certainty but without haste. "This way to the Lucas Cave" said one very quietly, and the gay light comedy girls in dainty kid and velvet slippers came to heel in semi repressed merriment. The second guide spoke, "Those for the Right Imperial follow me" and a large number formed into a queue and went off into the Grand Arch to rhythmic crunching of gravel. Only eight were left, one lady being of the party. The guide was even more laconic than his comrades. He merely said: "Left Imperial" and went ahead of his charge apparently unconscious of the fact that a pet fox terrier was making frantic efforts to eat him commencing at the heel of his boots.



The morning sunlight penetrated the inner recesses of the Grand Arch with a vague luminosity disclosing the long queue bound for the Right Imperial winding up the narrow path and disappearing into an ironbound aperture near the dome of the Cavern. The ferocious terrier, growling with well feigned rage, continued to masticate the heel of his stoical master, who turned to the left pathway, mounted some slippery concrete steps, opened a strong iron gate and allowed his little party to get into a narrow gallery. He then closed the gate and the primeval "darkness that lay upon the face of the waters" rustled her ebon wings in the glacial atmosphere. Since the first elemental transmutation hurled matter into space, the spirit of night has refuged here in fancied security, but the command "Let there be light" had to be obeyed and the carrying out of the Divine order was entrusted to the puny hand of man. Touching a button, the pilot caused tiny electric bulbs to sparkle into life and the corridors were agleam with light. The impressiveness of the unknown has peculiar influence upon humanity. To some, nature's silence is sacred and the sublime stillness of subterranean nature is not to be broken. To others, its very sacredness is oppressive and carries an awe restrained desire to break it. This feeling is often productive of incongruous remarks, malapropos jokes and absurd analogies which bring mirthless laughter to the perpetrators and discomfort to the more sensitive.

Engraving from Picturesque Atlas of Australasia 1886.

The guides are the high priests of the Cave temples. Long and close observation and loving study of the wonders bowelled in the hills make them particularly sentient to the sacrilege of the profane. Such a guide, in the person of Mr. Wiburd, conducted our party through the mazes of the Left Imperial Cave. He flashed a powerful magnesian light upon the long narrow chamber named "The Vestry" with its many tinted browns; then he turned his searching light upon the "Architects Studio" with its heavily moulded ceiling worked in patterns of such irregular beauty as to constrain a whisper of admiration from the visitors. The three compartments of "The Studio" contain specimens of calcareous growth of rare beauty and unique grotesqueness. Then he passed through 50 feet of a miniature tunnel which brought most of the party to their knees, and stood erect in what is known as the "Bone Cave", where are deposited many bones covered in a limey substance. "The Shambles" is the adjoining chamber. Here the caprice of percolation has hung great stalactites shaped like the quarterings of slaughtered cattle. "The Lady Carrington" Cave is the most imposing chamber of the "Left" series, but its spaciousness holds some of the most delicate ornamentation. Minnie's Grotto is a dainty recess in which hang a profusion of opal-ascent pendants of great purity, and is charming contrast to the weighty masses of the roof adornment. The "Wilkinson" Cave holds the wonderful glisten of the "Crystal Rock", the deep sea like floor of the Coral Grotto and the wintry beauty of the "Snow Drift".

Up to this time we have been a good, observant and highly appreciative party. Slowly but surely, the guide book simplicity of monotone adopted by our lecturer warms into the pleasant freedom of colloquialism and we are seeing and hearing things from the expert standpoint. The fanciful flights of imaginative literature blend with the more detailed exposition of the carbonated glory that seems to belong to the realms of fantasy. “Come this way – but only four at a time,” says our guide. Four of us stand in semi-darkness and watch the forms of our companions recede along a narrow path. The bright gleam of the magnesium light throws out the wonder-eyed features of our friends as they squat down and peer through a rock crevice. We can hear the subdued but intense “Oh!” and the whispers of delight and admiration.

Soon it is our turn to use the exclamation of surprised wonder. Within the cleft is a small cavern containing myriads of crystal forms, the stalagmites looking like a petrified city of Lilliput. The “Lucinda” Cave is of great size and lofty and is remarkable for its shining brilliancy under the search light. It contains cascade like formations and suspended sheets of transparent crystal, draped in artistic convulsions. When the light is thrown upon these wonderful mineral fabrics a regular pattern in red, brown and salmon tints is seen worked with geometric precision into the texture. To lovers of minute delicacy, the “Jewelled Casket” presents a sight that could be enjoyed for hours. It is a treasure house of precious stones and has to be viewed from a semi-prone position, but notwithstanding the discomfort of having to stoop to conquer its shy secrecy, visitors are loath to leave its gorgeous eastern glory. The “Mystery” is the next wonder that strikes the eye. It is a large white protuberance projecting from the side. It juts its white bulk eight feet over the cave and grows outward, upward and downward. Gravity is ignored in its curvate formation, hence its name. Passing onto “Katie’s Bower” we come to the fluted column known as “Pompey’s Pillar” a monster stalagmite beautifully tinted. Steps now provide means of descent into the rather awesome obscurity of Katie’s Bower, but our guide directs the soft brilliancy of the magnesium light upon a scene that baffles description.

We are looking down upon a scene such as was never attempted by the hand of man. Opacity fades into radiant transparency. Every change of position brings variation of colour and novelty of shape and shade. Drapings of fleecy curtains hang their rich folds over something too sacred for mortal vision on the one hand, and alabaster Baldaquins stand out upon the other, waiting to shelter the attendant gnomes when the ceremonials of the Court of Pluto are being solemnized.

The limitations of the human eye become wonderfully apparent in such surroundings. Here and there goes the escort beam with revealing power and momentary glimpses of effulgent grace present themselves. Architectural design follows no cramping law in these filtered edifices. Gothic rudeness blends with Corinthian gracefulness in a long corridor which leads to the sunlit world once more. Two hours have passed, but without adding much to the antiquity of a region in which Father Time would dwindle into a mewling infant in the arms of his nurse, Dame Nature.



One feels the utter inadequacy of attempting to describe the product of millions of years after a walk of one hundred minutes. The door swings open and we emerge into the eucalyptus laden atmosphere to meet, upon the footpath, the returning parties from the other caves. There is a subdued air about the mixed crowd. The affluent merchant, the scientist, the small tradesman, the philosopher and the chorus girl walk together, and, for the time, ships and compass and crucible, sand and sugar, books, and wisdom, limelight and lights, are lost in the contemplation of the immensity and grandeur of natural forces. On the face of the great cliff a magician’s hand has written the lesson of Aesop’s fable: “Thou art the fly that sittest upon the chariot wheel of Nature saying ‘ See what a dust I raise’ .”

Another engraving from the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia 1886.

Some definitions:

- “vade mecum”..... a useful handbook for reference.
- “ung ‘eavy on their ‘ands”..... the chorus girls were getting impatient
- Norfolk jacket..... Pleated man’s jacket with a waistband
- Chatelained.....Carrying their various items
- Bosker.....maybe “pretty good”?
- Attrition.....rubbing / wearing out
- Taciturn.....skilled
- Ebon.....”dark”?
- Transmutation.....changing into a different form
- Incongruous.....unsuitable
- Malapropos.....out of place / unsuitable
- Sentient.....aware
- Calcareous.....chalky / limy
- Caprice.....whim
- Baldaquins.....canopies
- Court of Pluto.....Greek god of the underworld
- Effulgent.....giving off brilliant light
- Mewling.....crying
- Crucible.....melting pot

You are cordially invited to attend the 35th Anniversary Dinner and gathering of JCH&PS members on 11 August 2007



Denis Winchester from Caves House is offering JCH&PS members a fantastic accommodation special so please all come along. \$30 for 2 nights accommodation, an absolute bargain!

What will be happening?

There will be some special JCH&PS tours conducted over the weekend

The Post Office Museum has recently had some new displays, check it out whilst at Jenolan.

Come see the New Self guided Nettle Cave. We will even have our own special guided tour.

Pre dinner wine & cheese included at Caves House, attended by Jeremiah Wilson.

The highlight will be the anniversary dinner on Saturday night

And all going well the launch of the new Jenolan book will happen.

Accommodation is to be booked direct with Caves House, on 1300- 763311 then option 2 to book. Remember to mention it's for the JCH&PS anniversary to get this special package. (you must be a JCH&PS member to get this rate). Dinner is to be paid for separately at Jenolan, and cost is \$45pp for a three course meal.

If you are attending the dinner, could you please advise Jenny Whitby or post the slip below, so we can reserve sufficient seating in Caves House for our function, and also so we can have name cards/tags available for everyone. (email: jwhitby@exemail.com.au)

If your membership has lapsed, please complete the membership form overleaf, and bring it with you or post to: JCH&PS, Locked Bag Jenolan Caves 2790

Yes. I will be attending the anniversary dinner at Caves House on 11/8/2007. (send no money, pay on the night for the dinner- accommodation to be prebooked direct with Caves House))

Names of those attending:

Please return to either Jenny Whitby or JCH&PS. (contact details pg 2)

JENOLAN CAVES HISTORICAL AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM



Single Membership: \$20 per year.
 Family Membership: \$20 per year for the first adult and \$5 for each additional of the same immediate family living at the same address.
 Student Membership \$5 per year until the age of 18 years, upon which evidence of full time study must be produced to remain for this rate.
 Pensioner: \$5 per year
 5 year membership Available at 4 times the annual rate.
 (ie single \$20pa x 4 + \$80. Saving \$20)

Please make your remittance payable to Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society (or JCH&PS) and forward together with the form below to

The Membership Secretary
 JCH&PS, Locked Bag, Jenolan Caves NSW 2790

	New membership
	Renewal of membership for 200_
	Renewal of 5 year membership 200_ to 20__
	Change of address

SURNAME _____ First Names 1. _____

ADDRESS _____ 2. _____

_____ Postcode _____

PHONE (H) _____ Mobile _____

EMAIL _____

I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIEV THE NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY: YES / NO

NAMES OF CHILDREN AND/OR FULL TIME STUDENTS IN MEMBERSHIP

_____ DOB _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____ SIGNATURE _____

We are interested to know why you decided to join JCH&PS, especially if you have any relatives that worked here in the past. Please include brief summary.



The next meeting will be held AT Jenolan Caves on
SATURDAY 11th AUGUST 2007 Celebrating our 35TH ANNIVERSARY.

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE 2ND SATURDAY OF FEBRUARY, AUGUST AND NOVEMBER. THE MAY MEETING IS BOUGHT FORWARD TO THE FIRST SATURDAY, DUE TO MOTHERS DAY.