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## Binoomea, Issue 134, May 2008

Jenny Whitby

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# BINOOMEA

The Newsletter of the Jenolan Caves Historical & Preservation Society.  
ISSN 0310-7248.

Issue 134 May 2008

## PRESIDENTS COLUMN MAY 2008

A very big thank you to all who worked to make the February Historical Weekend and Annual General Meeting a roaring success!

The displays, talks and dinner were superb and the interest shown by members and the general public was very encouraging. The opportunity to meet and chat with many former associates of Jenolan who joined the weekend capped a very enjoyable weekend. Again I would like to thank the organisers, and the Trust and Caves House managements for their assistance.

At our May meeting we will be discussing events for the August get together, as well as next February's Historical Weekend. Please come along and join the discussion.

Don't forget we are holding May's meeting on the second Saturday, due to the SUSS dinner at Caves House on the first. On JCH&PS' behalf, I would like to extend our congratulations to SUSS on their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

I hope to see you at Jenolan on 10<sup>th</sup> May.



**Arthur Gray**  
2008 President  
Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society

## WHAT DID YOU MISS ???

A great weekend at Jenolan, read more on the following pages.

So keep the date 7<sup>th</sup> February 2009 free for next year's AGM Historical weekend at Jenolan.

## WILSON AND WIBURD RETURN.

By Richard Kennedy.

Well-known guides and cave explorers Jeremiah "Jerry" Wilson and James "Voss" Wiburd recently returned to Jenolan as part of the successful Jenolan Historical Weekend on February 9-10. The pair, played respectively by Jenolan guides Gordon Mills and David Hay, conducted tours of some of their discoveries over the course of the weekend.

Jerry, who served as the first Keeper of the Caves from 1867 until 1900, accompanied his visitors on an inspection of the Imperial and Chifley Caves, including the Shambles and Grecian Bend, which are not normally shown to the public. He also exhibited a mischievous sense of humour, seizing the opportunity to surprise more than one regular Imperial tour. Lurking around a corner near Ridleys Short Cut, he waited until the guide mentioned his discovery of the cave, before crying, "I did indeed!" surprising the guide as much as the tour.

Mr Wiburd, however, was far more restrained, as he led his tour through the River Cave, exiting at either the Orient or Temple of Baal Cave. His unparalleled knowledge of the caves was on show throughout the tour – "The Caves' Loving Guardian" was said to have known every rock, animal and plant on the Reserve during his time as Keeper between 1903 and 1932. Although pleased to show visitors through the caves he had discovered for them, his displeasure at both the opening of the Ribbon Cave and the construction of the Binoomea Cut was evident.

Both tours proved popular, and brought Jenolan's fascinating past to life for JCH&PS members and visitors alike. As another part of the weekend's proceedings, fascinating presentations were given by Dr Julia James on the surveying of the Jenolan tourist caves, and by Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith on the early photographers of Jenolan.

The weekend also saw the return to Jenolan of former guides Ron Newbould, Noel Rawlinson, Basil Ralston, Greg Plummer, John Poleson, as well as Bill Mark, who worked on the construction of the Binoomea Cut



David "Wiburd" Hay



Gordon "Jeremiah" Mills

## 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, and stories are welcome, and can be forwarded to the editor.

Please contact:

Jenny Whitby at: 48 Park Street  
Charlestown 2290 Ph (02) 49432265 or  
send your email to:  
[jwhitby@exemail.com.au](mailto:jwhitby@exemail.com.au)

Mailing address for JCH&PS correspondence  
(ie your membership chqs!)

JCH&PS Locked Bag Jenolan Caves 2790.

## AGM ELECTION RESULTS

Here are your office bearers for 2008, as voted by those present at the AGM.

President: Arthur Gray  
Vice Presidents: David Cook  
Treasurer: Grant Commins  
Secretary: Scott Melton  
Membership Secretary: Scott Melton  
Editor: Jenny Whitby  
Research Officer/Curator: Kath Bellamy  
Committee: Richard Kennedy, June Heiron, Kath Bellamy, Ted Matthews, Rob Whyte & Sasa Kennedy.  
Trustees: Janet McFarlane, John Culley  
Patron: Hon Bob Debus

## CONGRATULATIONS.

Member Jenny Elkins married Gary Whyte on Feb 16 in the Hamilton Botanic Gardens. Several other JCH&PS members were involved, Jenny's children, Jamie, Ashleigh & Hayley Elkins all played a part in the big day. Hayley was bridesmaid and Jamie & Ashleigh gave her away. Jenny & Gary honeymooned in Tasmania, where they paid a visit to Mole Creek caves where they finally got to see glow-worms, which was a first for them both. In case you were wondering, there is no relation to JCRT casual guide Rob Whyte.

## NOTICED ANY CHANGES?

Thanks to Greg Middleton for his feedback and suggestions regarding the layout of Binoomea. Each page now has footer, and is also numbered. This will make it easier when your printer spits it out and it ends up all over the floor! It was also done for referencing purposes. Lastly, a wider margin is now in place for those who wish to bind their copies as well.

## SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT

This edition, we have the spotlight on some new members. The Hull family from Springwood, attended their first JCH&PS weekend in February. They have been to Jenolan previously, and love the place, so decided to join to learn more about Jenolan and it's history.

Here is Josephine's trip report.

It took a very long time to get to Jenolan Caves, I got there by car. We went in lots of caves, my favourite is the River Cave. I saw bats and the 'Four Sisters' that looked like 'Three Sisters' (we think it was in the River Cave as well). When you first looked at them, you could see three stalagmites, but when you moved to another spot you could see four. In the Devil's Coachhouse, we listened to the hooting owls on the Audio Thingamigs. We saw the owl's 'leftover' bones on the ground, where they did some archeology on them. I really enjoyed my stay and can't wait till mum and pa take me back.

Josephine Hull



Jakalin, Josephine & Paul in the Grand Arch.





# PHOTOS FROM AGM HISTORICAL WEEKEND - 9/10 FEBRUARY 08.



Mr Wiburd (David Hay) & Basil Ralston



Current & former guiding staff.



Gary Whitby at the JCH&PS display.



Janelle Dodson, Erle & Sandi Bartlett & Peter Dodson.



Noel Rawlinson, Ron Newbould & Basil Ralston.



A packed Kanangra Boyd room for the AGM.



Scott Melton at the dinner.



Lucy & Bill Mark

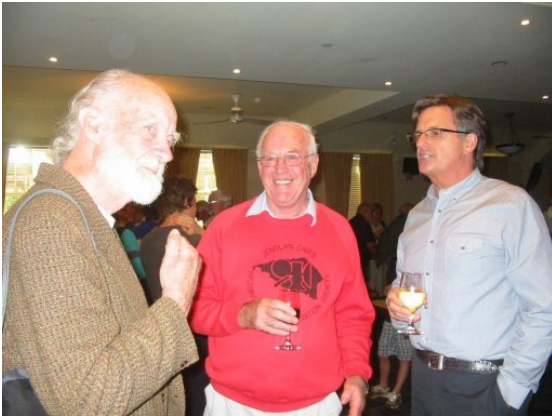




Casual guide & JCH&PS member Ted Taylor came across this collectable Shelley dish, in a Salvo's store. Neither the Salvo's or Ted realised that the item was such a find! Our Shelley expert David Cook estimates the piece is worth \$300!

Ted kindly donated it the piece to the JCH&PS Shelley collection. Here is Ted presenting the dish to Arthur Gray & David Cook at the AGM. The Caves House dish (front centre) on show .

A great variety of Jenolan collectables were on display to the public in the Magnolia Room in Caves House over the weekend. Many thanks to the members who assisted with organising, setting up, packing up and manning of the historical display



Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith, Arthur Gray & Dennis Winchester enjoy a chat & glass of wine after the meeting.

Sunday morning saw a gathering of members who ventured for a River walk. Pictured is (L-R) Irene Ralston, Basil Ralston, Stephanie Poulson, Lynne Poulson, John Poulson, Bill Mark, John & Lyn Williamson, Cecily Bonwick, John Bonwick .



"Thank you to those that were so kind to us at the weekend, and the current guides and the illustrious guides of yesterday who have done so much to make Jenolan what it is now, and I must single out my caving mate Ron Newbould of course. And we were all honoured by the presence of Julia James not only is she known and revered as a great speleologist all over the world she is a beautiful lady to meet we were proud to see our Barralong cave included on her survey. When I suggested doing the extended tour of the Lucas, River and Baal, everyone at home said don't be silly you could not do it at 87 and with little sight. Some of the people at Jenolan who knew me better gave me a chance, any way with the encouragement of some very nice people on the trip I am proud to say Yes I did it. Thanks to my lovely Irene who encouraged me to go when I was doubtful." - Basil Ralston.

Photos and text by photos by Jenny Whitby.

# CAVE PRESENTERS CONFERENCE - Cory Camilleri.

“Explore Jenolan Caves through the eyes of a tourist”

On day one John Dunkley opened the conference and started by introducing the theme for the week of the 12<sup>th</sup> Cave Presenters and Karst Conference 2008 held at Jenolan. John has visited 300-400 caves around the world and in his experience he has noted that tours are mainly the same throughout the western world. The content is as follows: rules, exploration, history, mites and tites. He questioned the relevance of informing visitors the difference between mites and tites, as surely everyone knows by now that stalactites go down and stalagmites go up.

Is this true? Are visitors well informed about such a simple cave facts? Some delegates disagreed. Most visitors to caves that were represented at the conference knew very little about caves at all. There certainly are many ways to approach the subject of essentials to include on a tour. John compared cave tours with his experience with the tour that he did while in Uzbekistan. Although the guide was passionate, knew when to stop talking and allowed enough time to take photos, there was too much factual information to begin to remember it all.

But isn't that human nature? Don't we only comprehend a much smaller percentage than what we receive? Of course we are more likely to remember something that is important to us. But the problem is every person on the tour will have some idea about what they want to be informed about. Sometimes they are happy to come away from a tour with the simple knowledge of the difference between and mite and a tite. Others want to know more such as geology or history, whether there is fish in the underground river or who made the caves.

John made a very important point about sight and hearing are the only senses that we have in a cave so we can be limited with the ability to engage an audience. On a lot of tours the visual aspect is the only sense that is given any recognition. You see something and the guide talks about it. So what is there to talk about if we don't mention the name of the formations that are frequently named appropriately for their time such as after politicians and other events in history? Sure, we can dwell on the intricacies of how some features are formed but that can also bore a lot of people. How about history then? Lets bombard the visitors with lots of dates and facts and figures in history and watch the eyes glaze over.

Cave experiences can be emotional so this is something that we can use to our advantage. Any subject can be made boring so here are some of the suggestions from John:

- Give up being a “guide”. Become a host.
- Don't talk at all! Caves overwhelm the senses. Let them soak it all in.
- Develop specialist history tours. In John's opinion, those older than 30 are more interested in history than geology. History is more than just dates and events. People don't remember dates. They don't remember the names of things. They remember something that touched their heart, something they could further ponder on, tell their children, friends or family about. Something that sticks in their mind as relevant to their own experience. We have an inclination to grasp onto the more romantic aspects. Myth and legend creeps into interpretation and becomes truth. The remoteness of many caves add to the mystique so it is important when presenting history as a social life of the past to ensure accuracy.
- Be an unconventional guide!
- Utilise new discoveries in your interpretation.
- Away with all the chicken wires!
- Away with all the conventional and trivial guide talk.

There certainly can be some boring guides talking about unimportant or uninteresting stuff. There has to be a balance between information people expect to hear and want to hear. The idea is for a guide to be flexible to cater to what the visitors want. However, on any one tour there can be innumerable things a variety of people want. The skill of a good guide is to cater for all of them simultaneously.

## LOOK WHAT SHOWED UP!

January 2008. Caves House staff member Ed Power, who recently moved into Hill Flat no 2, (behind the JCH&PS museum) found this plaque stuffed up the top of a cupboard. No-one knows how long it has been there!

If anyone knows anything more about this plaque, where it was originally hung, when & why it was removed, we'd love to hear from you. It is now in the safe hands of JCH&PS.





# **JULIA JAMES SURVEY PROJECT AT JENOLAN CAVES**

## **Identifying and Locating Named Features in the Show Caves**

by Kath Bellamy

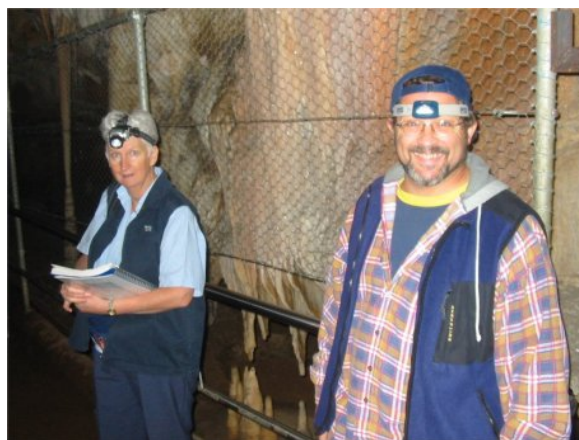
I had heard about Julia James and her team doing survey work at the Jenolan Caves. They work out of the cottage adjacent to JCHAPS on the Five Mile. My first contact with Julia was early last year when I happened to be in the guides' office on a Saturday morning. Rob Whyte and I were discussing the layout of the Nettle Cave when Julia showed us her new map of the Coach House. Rob and I then accompanied Julia into Chifley Cave to assist with a photographic experiment to do with her survey work. My involvement included locating the survey markers and holding lights etc. This led to my getting more interested in the project. We discussed the addition of the named features in the caves to the survey data. At the time I mentioned that I didn't know many of the features other than the popular ones such as the Broken Column etc. Rob Whyte commented that more information could be accessed than I realised and not to underestimate what resources were available. He was correct.

I commenced my research by reading all the Jenolan books I owned or could borrow, then searched on-line databases and archives. Kerry postcards were another source of names and more importantly, photographs. I compiled the information in spreadsheets and continue to add to those lists as new names appear. Of course, a valuable source of knowledge is the guiding staff both old and present day.

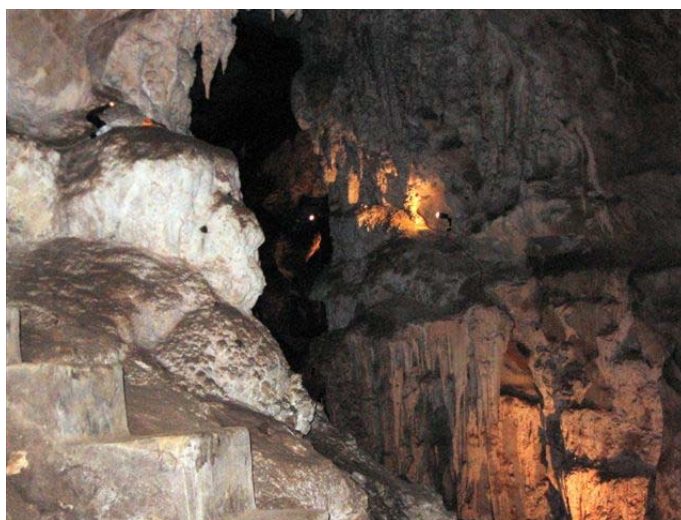
When Julia's team visit Jenolan I accompany Craig and we go looking for the features. He notes the location to reference points in the caves. This is an on-going project although we have 'completed' Lucas, Chifley, Imperial and Nettle. There are always new names coming to light. This happened recently on the JCHAPS weekend when Basil Ralston mentioned some in Baal which we had never heard before.

Many of the formations have more than one name and others are obscure and difficult to locate. In August 2007 during the JCHAPS 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend, myself and some society members toured Nettle Cave. Robert Cook videoed this trip as we searched for the 'Lady with a Bonnet' in the Sculptors studio. Among others who came on the tour were David Cook and John & Jeanette Dunkley. We searched for the elusive 'Lady' and came up with some possibilities. It was not until I was able to identify the feature in an old stereo view that I could return to Nettle and positively locate the formation. The feature was obvious when viewed from the original pathway. The new Nettle paths have changed the aspect. This is apparent in the other show caves also. Descriptions given in books such as Fosters 1890 guide are from where the visitors are viewing the cave at that time. Cave tours have changed.

This project is most interesting and hopefully will provide a resource for guides as well as adding to the survey database. I think cave enthusiasts will enjoy finding the features too.



Lady in the Bonnet - Nettle cave



Gigantic Women's face-- Chifley Cave.

## JCH&PS HISTORICAL WEEKEND PRESENTATIONS.

We were honoured to have two key speakers at the recent historical weekend. Elery Hamilton-Smith & Julia James both gave excellent presentations on matters relating to Jenolan.

Elery gave us an insight into the photographic history of Jenolan Caves, with his presentation titled “Click go the Cameras.” Elery stated that during the period 1860-1914, Jenolan Caves probably provided the greatest number of photographic images of any Australian Locality. These included stereographs, lantern slides, cabinet prints, postcards, brochures, porcelain and china souvenirs, and almost all other modes of presentation.

His presentation focused on the professionals who did so much to tell the public about Jenolan (and other caves).

Many know of photographers Kerry, Cooke, Phillips, and Hurley, all names we recognise, but Elery spoke of numerous others, and their photographic work. Also he looked at the specialised publishers who were responsible for the lantern slides and stereographs.

There were some rare images of Jenolan from his personal collection, the oldest probably some of the stereographs and lantern slides by Henry King. They are at least as early as the late 1860s, although most are from 1880-1900.



Elery Hamilton-Smith viewing a stereophoto.

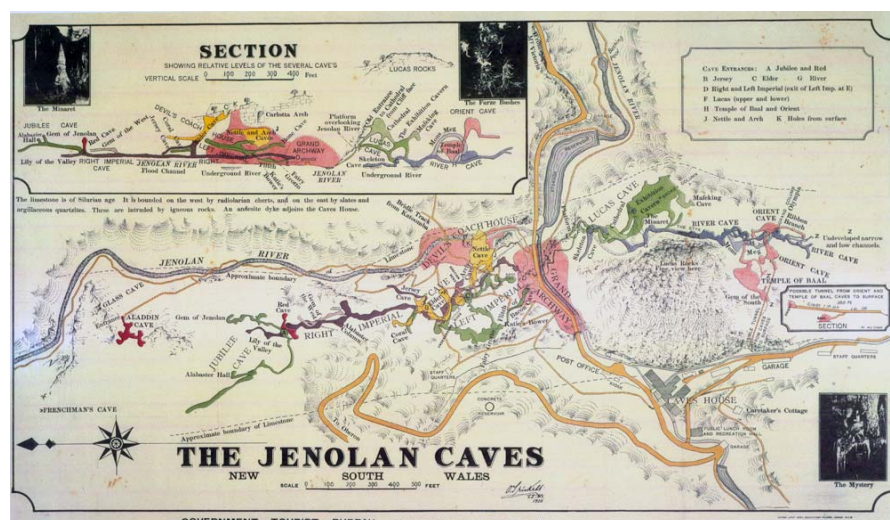


Julia's presentation was on the history of the mapping at Jenolan. She is presently working on the first complete survey of the show cave system since Oliver Trickett in 1925. Her project's aim is to eventually complete a 3D model of the caves. It will use 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, and will be cut into glass using a laser! Her presentation gave an insight into the survey of the show caves presently being undertaken, and also some comparisons to earlier surveys.

All present thoroughly enjoyed both presentations, and learned a lot. We thank both Julia & Elery for such interesting insights into Jenolan. Down the track, we hope to be able to bring you more detailed information relating from these presentations.

Trickett's map of Jenolan, recently reprinted by the Sydney Speleological Society, and currently for sale in the “Things Jenolan” shop.

Julia James ready to embark on another survey trip.





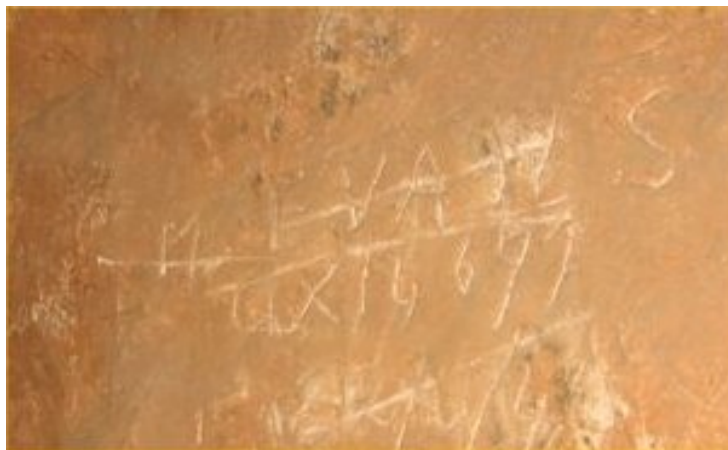
## "I WONDER WHO THEY WERE?"

by Kath Bellamy

This is something I have said at times while touring caves at Jenolan. Of course I am referring to names and initials written on parts of the caves. **Graffiti:** something we deplore today which defaces and ruins much of our natural and built landscape. This practice was recognised as damaging the cave environment by John Lucas and others but only after Mr Lucas had left his mark for posterity. The effort to stem the practice is evident in the Grand Arch and its success is shown by the absence of obvious names in the Orient, Ribbon, Baal, River and Cerberus.

Lucas, Imperial (Left and Right) and Elder caves are decorated with graffiti. Much of this is of great historical significance. The names of early explorers, visitors and especially dates are valuable pieces of information. Along with these treasures are many names of 'ordinary' visitors, the cave tourists. We may have wondered about "RW" in the Exhibition Chamber and "Dinky" who seems to have accompanied the Whiteleys into Elder in July 1949.

In the Chifley Cave (Left Imperial) is the area known as Flitch of Bacon which is situated close to the exit into the Grand Arch. This area has numerous names on the walls including those of Jeremiah Wilson and Voss Wiburd. Recently I was photographing some of this graffiti and noticed a serviceman's name and Queensland enlistment number from 1941. I decided to do some research to see who he was, how he may have come to visit Jenolan and importantly, what happened to him. Here is the story I found about Sergeant Mervyn Evans (known as Bill) who visited Left Imperial Cave on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1941 and wrote his name on the wall.



**QX14699 Mervyn Evans** was born to George and Daisy Evans on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1916 at Bundaberg Qld. He enlisted in the Australian Army at Kelvin Grove, Qld. on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1940. He served with the 2/26<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

Letters written by him to his sister between 1941 and January 1942 are held in the Australian War Memorial Archives. In these letters up to August 1941, he describes pre-embarkation training and living conditions in army camps including Bathurst.

It is at this time he visited Jenolan. From August 1941 to January 1942 he describes his voyage, living conditions, local conditions in Malaya, entertainment, local people, importance of mail and Australian Comforts Fund reading room and clubs. He describes attitudes towards the RAAF who are known as "Blue Orchids" and assessment of the Japanese advance in Malaya.

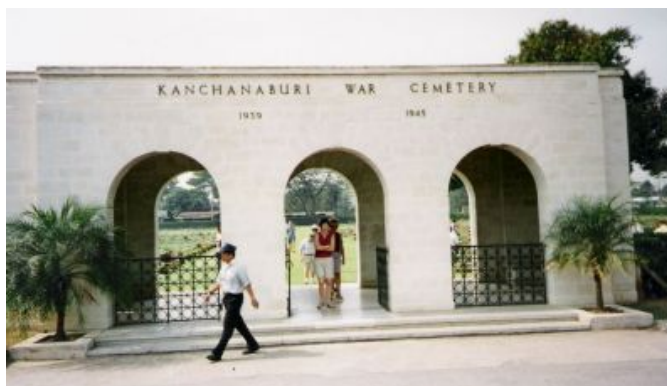
Singapore fell to the Japanese and at 8.30pm on February 15 1942 the order to cease fire was given. The Australian troops became Prisoners of War. The Japanese practice was to use prisoners for labour. Work parties or Forces were dispatched from Singapore to various destinations. The Burma Thailand Railway construction area included the Kanchanburi camp which is 50 kilometres north of Nong Pladuk. Many prisoners were brought here after the railway was completed at the end of 1943.

Mervyn Evans died of illness on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1943 aged 27 at Kanchanaburi. He is buried in the war cemetery there and his name is on panel 53 at the Australian War Memorial.



Members of 2/26 at Bathurst station, onroute for overseas deployment.

The plaque at the cemetery in Thailand reads: “In honoured remembrance of the fortitude and sacrifice of that valiant company who perished while building the railway from Thailand to Burma during their long captivity. Those who have no known grave are commemorated by name at Rangoon, Singapore and Hong Kong and their comrades rest in the three war cemeteries of Kanchanburi, Chungkai and Thanbyuzayat.”



In August 1956 Sir Edward (Weary) Dunlop made a pilgrimage back to Kanchanaburi and Chungkai and wandered along the lines of gravestones of ‘friends who rested in the quietness and beauty’. The sight of their names, of the mountains rising ever higher above the Kwai Noi River, of ‘the jungle grown thick and green to hide the scars of camps where living and dead skeletons used to be so plentiful’, filled him with a dragging sadness. Mateship was recognition of the importance of another human being’s existence.

A POW said ‘I don’t think any man would have done it on his own. One man carried me back. I don’t remember quite how it happened, must have been after I had the cholera. I fell or something and he carried me home on his back – and he wouldn’t have been a well man himself. That was mateship, but you didn’t think anything of it.’ ‘It’s difficult to explain, that feeling. Even in Bathurst you wouldn’t let the Battalion down, you wouldn’t let your mates down.’

Maybe Mervyn visited Jenolan with some of his mates from Bathurst.



\*\*\*\*\*

On the JCHAPS weekend in February I went into Chifley Cave with Gordon Mills (Jeremiah). I wanted to check some details of the graffiti in the Flitch of Bacon and I mentioned to Gordon about my research on Sergeant Evans. Gordon told me about his great uncle who became a POW at the same time. He was:

**NX20156 Corporal Russell Wilfred James** AASC No.1 Coy. 22<sup>nd</sup> Brigade. He was born in Bathurst on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1901 to Alfred and Matilda James. He enlisted at Paddington on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1940. He was one of over 2000 Allied prisoners of war held in Sandakan POW camp in North Borneo, having been transferred there from Singapore as a part of B Force. The 1494 POWs that made up B Force were transported from Changi on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1942 on board the tramp ship Ubi Maru, arriving in Sandakan Harbour on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1942. B Force was put to work constructing air fields in North Borneo.

Corporal James, aged 44, died as a prisoner of the Japanese on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1945. He is commemorated on Panel 21 of the Labuan Memorial and Panel 82 at the Australian War Memorial.

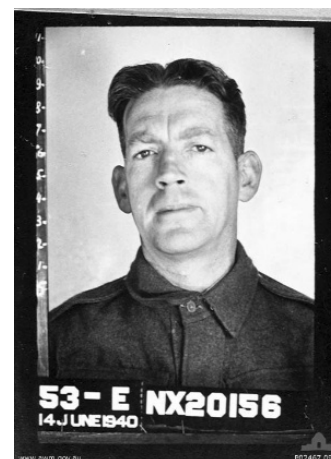
References:

AWM Archives.

Getting on with it; 2/30<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF.

One Man’s War; Stan Arneil.

Weary, The Life of Sir Edward Dunlop; Sue Ebury.



Corporal R W James.



## ALL ABOARD TRAIN BUFFS!

The Caves Express is back (well, part of it!). It's running on May 24th & 25th. \$45 to \$75 return depending on where you get on board.

See [www.heritageexpress.com.au](http://www.heritageexpress.com.au) and go to green steam excitement section or phone 02 93791110

Relive the 'Honeymoon Express' of the famed 1930s *Caves Express* to the Blue Mountains on a fabulous steam day out to **KATOOMBA**.

Authentic *Caves Express* locos **3526** and **3642** will take us on a journey back to the heydays of steam with a stirring ascent of the Blue Mountains from Penrith. It's a great family steam experience from Penrith and Springwood - and, with speedy vintage diesel haulage between the city and Penrith, a convenient and economical day out from Sydney Central, Strathfield and Westmead.



Bring a picnic, enjoy lunch in Katoomba's cafés or restaurants, go for a bushwalk, experience the revitalised 'Scenic World' - or (with an add-on fare) travel on by steam from Katoomba to the Mt Victoria Great Train Festival (tickets for steam shuttles between Katoomba and Mt Victoria will be available at Katoomba station on both days).

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Basil Ralston has recently made available by download his book titled "Why do I do it"

Use this link to access the PDF file. <http://www.mediafire.com/?04ynj1tmmnx>

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## WEED BUSTING AT JENOLAN!



Lithgow Oberon Landcare Association with the National Parks & Wildlife Service & Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust will be running an inaugural weekend weeding session on 10th & 11th May 2008, which happens to coincide with our next meeting.

- Accommodation, tools and training are provided.
- Bunk style accommodation with self-contained cooking facilities courtesy of Jenolan Caves Trust
- BBQ dinner and 'getting to know Jenolan Reserve' activities for volunteers are funded by the local Landcare Association
- All tools, chemicals and PPE will be provided for the work. There will be bush regeneration contractor staff to assist with training.

To register contact: Michaela Jones Oberon Ranger National Parks and Wildlife Service.  
Phone: 6336 1972 Email: [Michaela.jones@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Michaela.jones@environment.nsw.gov.au)



**CHANGE IN MEETING DATE DUE TO SUSS 60<sup>TH</sup>.**  
**THE NEXT JCH&PS MEETING WILL BE HELD ON**  
**SATURDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2008**  
ONE WEEK LATER THAN NORMAL  
COME ALONG AND HELP PLAN THE AUGUST JCH&PS WEEKEND

**9/10 August 2008.** Special JCH&PS weekend again. (Caves House accommodation specials details soon)

**8 November 2008.** Normal meeting Saturday night.

**February 7<sup>th</sup> 2009 AGM HISTORICAL WEEKEND 2009.**

(One week earlier than normal due to Valentine's Day) Big annual get together for members, JCH&PS rates at Caves House, AGM Dinner, and more ! Put this date in your calendar now, so not to miss it!