

An Escape from Cave Politicians

By Paul Nelson

A visiting spelunker from California

A day trip to Borenore Caves was scheduled for ASF conference attendees not interested in cave politics, i.e. the ASF meeting held on 2 January 2001. Borenore Caves is located near Orange, NSW and is managed by the Jenolan Caves Trust. The property consists of several caves and an old limestone quarry. There is a small parking lot and picnic area, but no camping facilities, and you must bring water. We were joined by Mia Thurgate, Karst Resource Manager, who gave us some history of the site, and how it was transferred to the Jenolan Trust in 1997. She mentioned the difficulty of managing the property as there is no on-site staff and limited funds.

Mia led the group on an approximately 3 km walk to Tunnel Cave (BN-25).. A Bent Wing Bat colony resides in the cave, and it is closed during months of bat hibernation. The cave is formed a small stream cutting about 250 meters through the hillside, and exits at the other end. Even during the middle of Summer, a small stream was flowing, and there was a pond of water in the cave. The still water reflected the ceiling perfectly causing Brett Wakeman to step into the water by mistake. Brett's mistake was my opportunity to take some pictures. The cave exits on the other side of the hill, and an easy through trip is possible. Nearby is also Verandah Cave, which I did not visit because I was unable to locate it. No doubt it is under heaps of blackberry bushes and guarded by tiger snakes. The short walk has some interesting scenery with the limestone karst visible. I was a little disappointed that I wasn't able to see any kangaroos. (Roos are still strange animals to me, and at home I can't see them in the wild. However, California does have the kangaroo rat, very small, endangered, and hard to find.)

After lunch, the group went to Arch Cave, which has been formed by Boree Creek undercutting the cliff through the small ravine. No lights are required, and during our visit the water level was low. When a still pool forms, nice reflections can be seen showing nice scalloping of the ceiling. There are some nice spots to take some pictures, and enjoy a cool spot away from the hot afternoon sun. I used the opportunity to further practice my cave photography skills.

The group board the bus and returned to the ASF conference for the Caver's dinner and socializing.

In summary, Borenore Caves is a nice diversion if you're in the Orange area, and you have friends or family that have never been into a cave before. The access is easy, no gate keys are required, and a newbie to caving will have fun. Just be sure to bring water.



Arthur Clarke

Kath Rowsell, Marie Choi, Bruce Waddington, Andy Spate, Ian Collette, June MacLucas and others at the Art Show Opening.