

Augusta & Margaret River Caves and Region History



Brian Combley
CLINC
(Cavers Leeuwin Inc.)

Cape Leeuwin and Cape Naturaliste

- **Named visited and recorded by the the Dutch in 1622 and French in 1772.**
- **Mathew Flinders charted Cape Leeuwin in 1801.**
- **Augusta was the third settlement in W.A. in 1830 after Albany in 1826 & the Swan River Colony in 1829.**

Port Augusta

- **Used by whalers and sealers for fresh water before and after settlement.**
- **Some of the first residents**
 - **Captain John & Georgiana Molloy.**
 - **The Bussell brothers John & Alfred.**
 - **The Turner family.**
 - **The Allnutt family.**

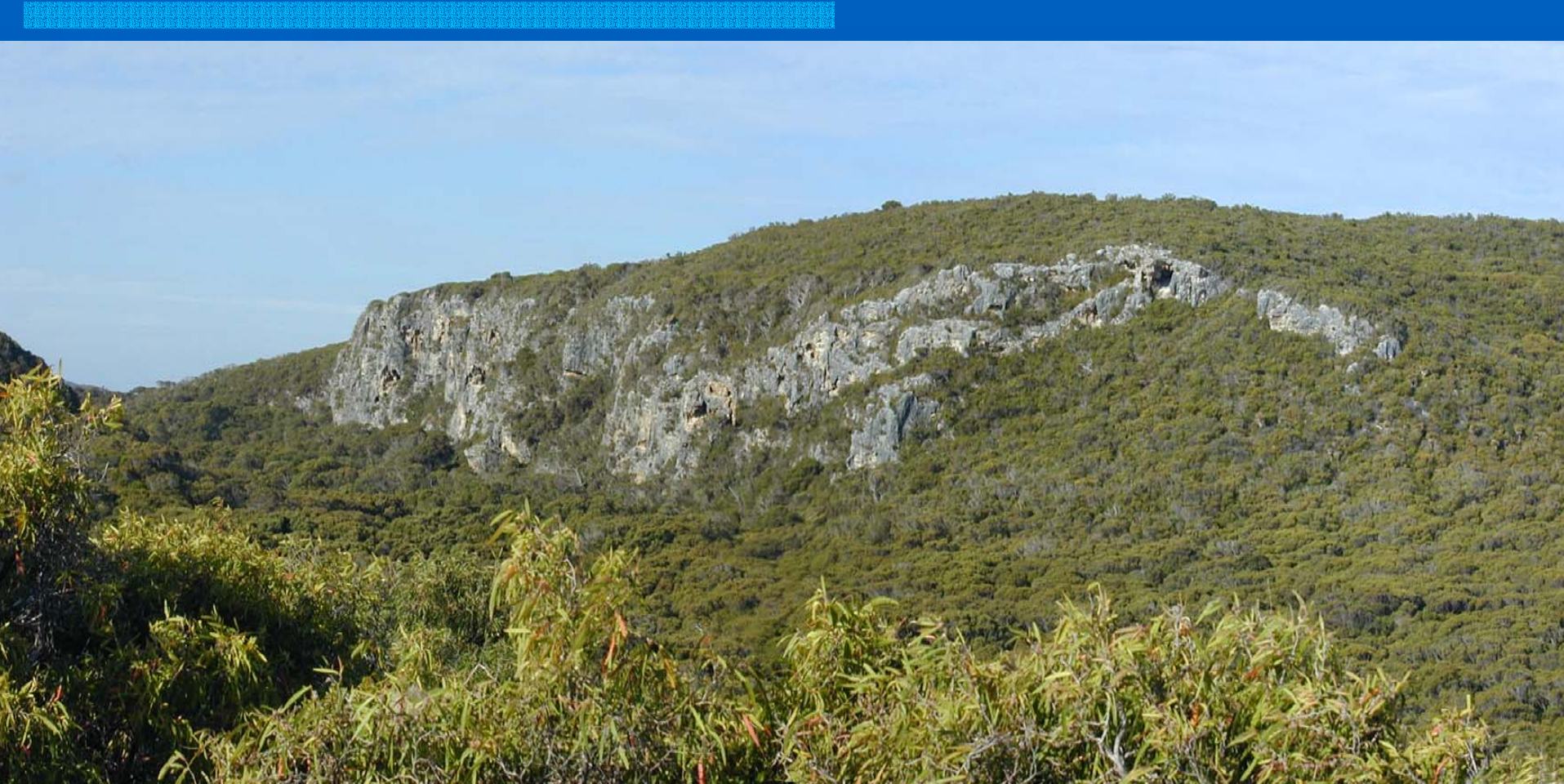
H. M. Ommanney reports cave 1840

- A surveyor based in the South West.
- On a trip from the new town of Busselton to the western edge of the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge, reported finding a cave.
- It is assumed it was one of the Yallingup caves, possibly Northcote Grotto or the Seven Sisters.

Deepdene Cliff's

- Deepdene cliffs were adjacent to the Turner property and were known of at the time. Some small caves exist in the cliff face
- Early mariners called in for fresh water near Deepdene it was visible from the ocean.

Ducalup or Deepdene on Turner Brook



Cave Discovered in Augusta 1848

- **Mr G Turner found two caves about 12 Kilometres North of Augusta.**
- **Caves were Old Kudardup and AU 10**
- **Caves explored by Edward Hester.**

Caves Reported in the “Inquirer”

- Reported in the Inquirer of November 1848 by Edward Hester.
- The find was attributed to Turner in the article.

Cave Pearls Old Kudardup

20/01/2003



Pillars described in the newspaper article

20/01/2003



Bussell's Moved to Wallcliffe

- Augusta found not to be suitable for farming.
- Bussell's moved to Ellensbrook in 1857 and later to Wallcliffe about 1865.
- House Cave discovered about this time (Wallcliffe).

House Cave later called Wallcliffe

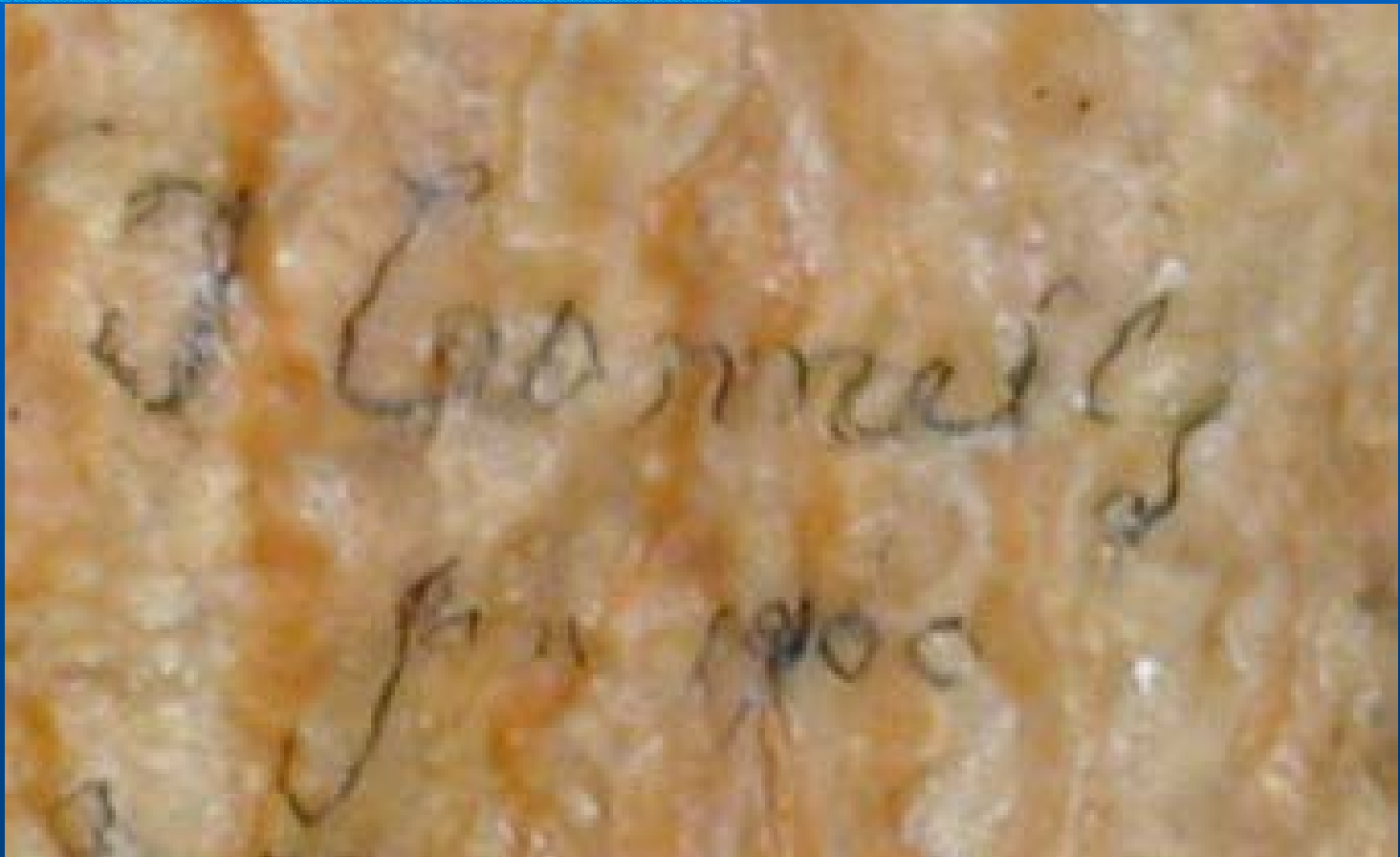
- **Visitors were encouraged by the Bussell's.**
- **Several reports are recorded in the West Australian newspaper of visits.**
- **Albert & Fanny Bussell's initials inscribed on the flow stone in Wallcliffe Cave.**

Early Graffiti

Albert and Fanny 1882



Tim Connelly



Warrawerrie or Blackboy Hollow

- **Discovered by John Bussell in the late 1860's.**
- **Bussell encouraged visitors.**
- **Enlarged opening and installed a ladder of sorts.**
- **Visitors accommodated at his house.**

Moondyne or Coronation Cave

- Discovered by Fred Grange in 1879.
- Used by Western Australia's only bush ranger "Moondyne Joe" or Joseph Bolitho Johns.
- Opened as a public cave on the coronation day of King George V.
- Was called Coronation Cave.

Lake Cave Doline

- In 1867 Fanny reported to her family the existence of the Lake Cave Doline found whilst searching for lost cattle.
- The family did not believe her as it could not be located again.

Mammoth Cave

- Reports of the cave in 1895.
- Tim Connelly credited with the first exploration.
- Mammoth was known as the “Dawn of Creation Cave”.
- The name was possibly because of fossils found in the cave.

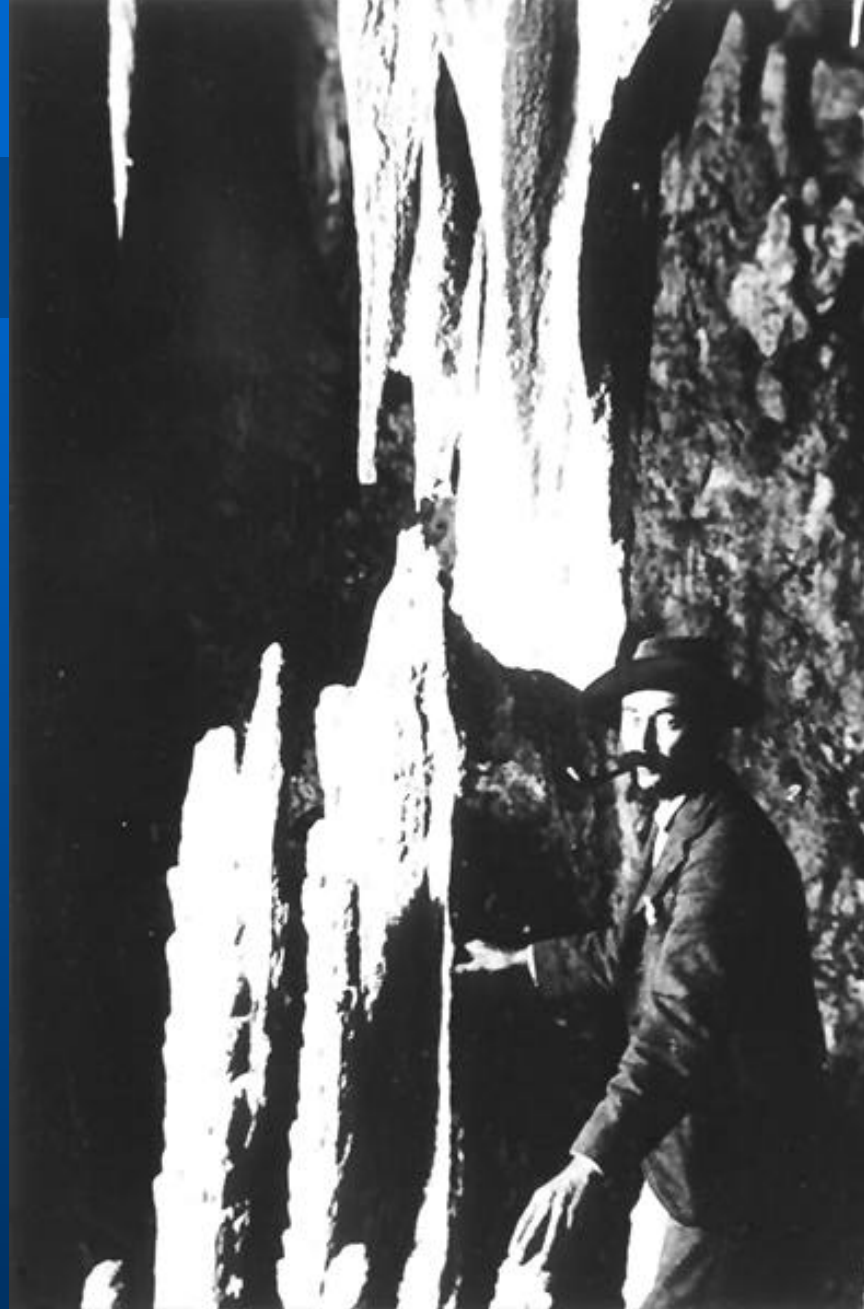
Mammoth Cave Early 1900's

Photo thanks to
Rauleigh Webb



Tim Connelly

Photo thanks to
Rauleigh Webb



Yallingup Cave

- **Discovered in 1899 by Edward Dawson when searching for lost horses.**
- **Explored by Dawson and two friends Seymore and Curtis.**

Yallingup or Ngilgi Cave

- **First tours conducted 1900.**
- **Edward (Ned) Dawson became the sole guide at Yallingup for the next 37 Years.**

Tim Connelly rediscovers Lake Cave Doline

- **Tim Connelly, C. Price Conigrave and Wm. A. Nelson relocated the Lake Doline and found the Lake Cave entrance.**
- **They lowered themselves down into the doline to explore in November 1897, the cave was named “Queen of the Earth” by Connelly.**

Lake Cave Doline





Suspended Table Lake Cave





Connelly also explored other caves

- **Museum, Calgardup, Bride's and Golgotha caves were probably first explored by Connelly.**
- **Connelly passed away in 1933.**

Report Commissioned 1900

- From the Chief Inspector of Lands
- To the Undersecretary of Lands
- Completed by Mr C. Erskine May
- Re the caves in the Margaret River Region.
- After pressure from a local resident Mr Brockman.

Perth 26th of February 1900

Chief Inspector of Lands

- **Mr C Erskine May prepared the report after visiting the caves of the region.**
- **Reported that vandals were already at work defacing these marvellous and beautiful geological features.**

Description of the Report

- **A report on the proposed management of the caves on the Leeuwin Ridge.**

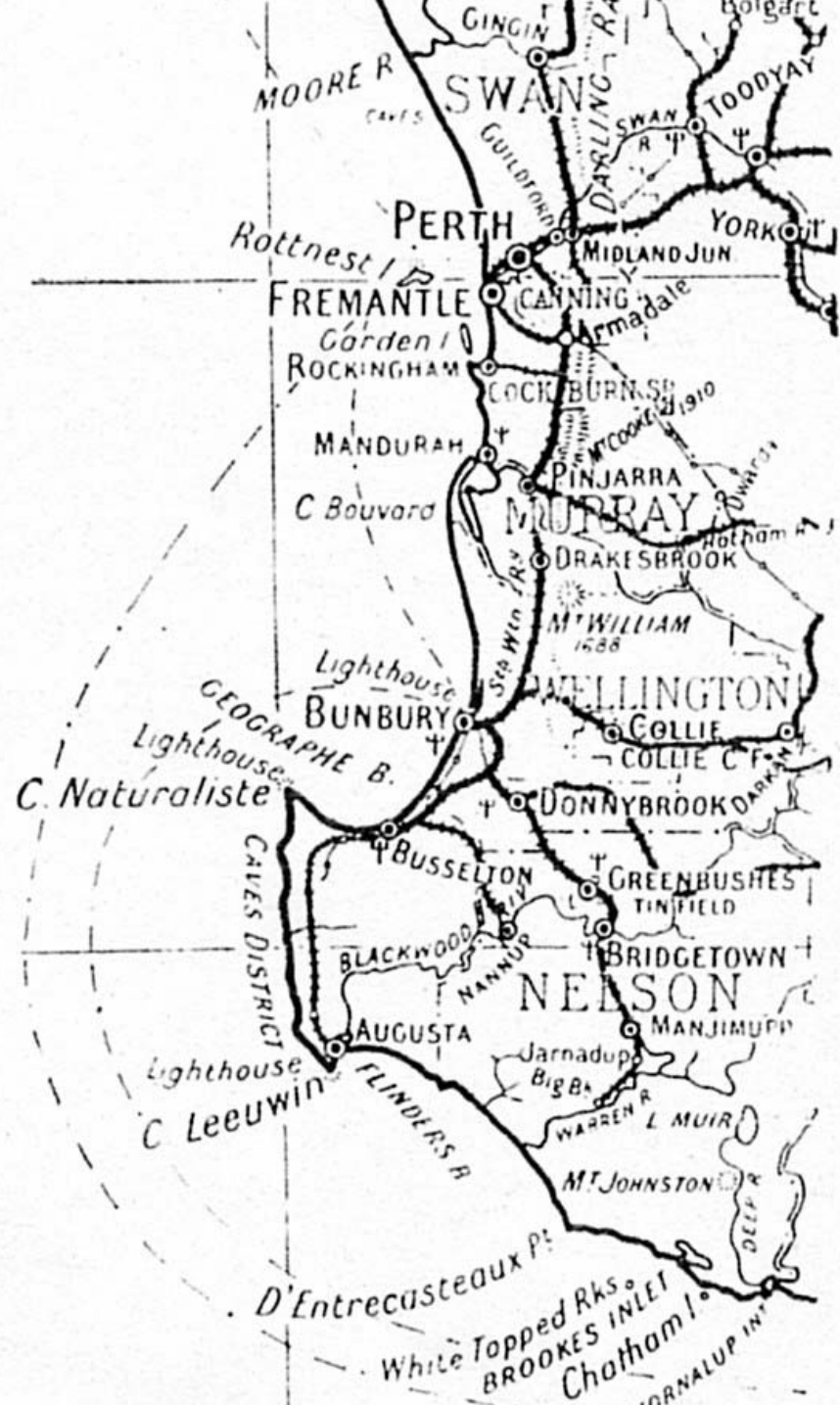
Some details of the report

- It is interesting that conservation was recommended in 1900 due to damage being done to these caves.
- I will dwell on some of the detail of this report.

How to Save the Caves.

- Road from Busselton must be upgraded.
- A hospice for accommodation will be needed.
- Entrances ought to be guarded by iron gates.
- A caretaker should be appointed.

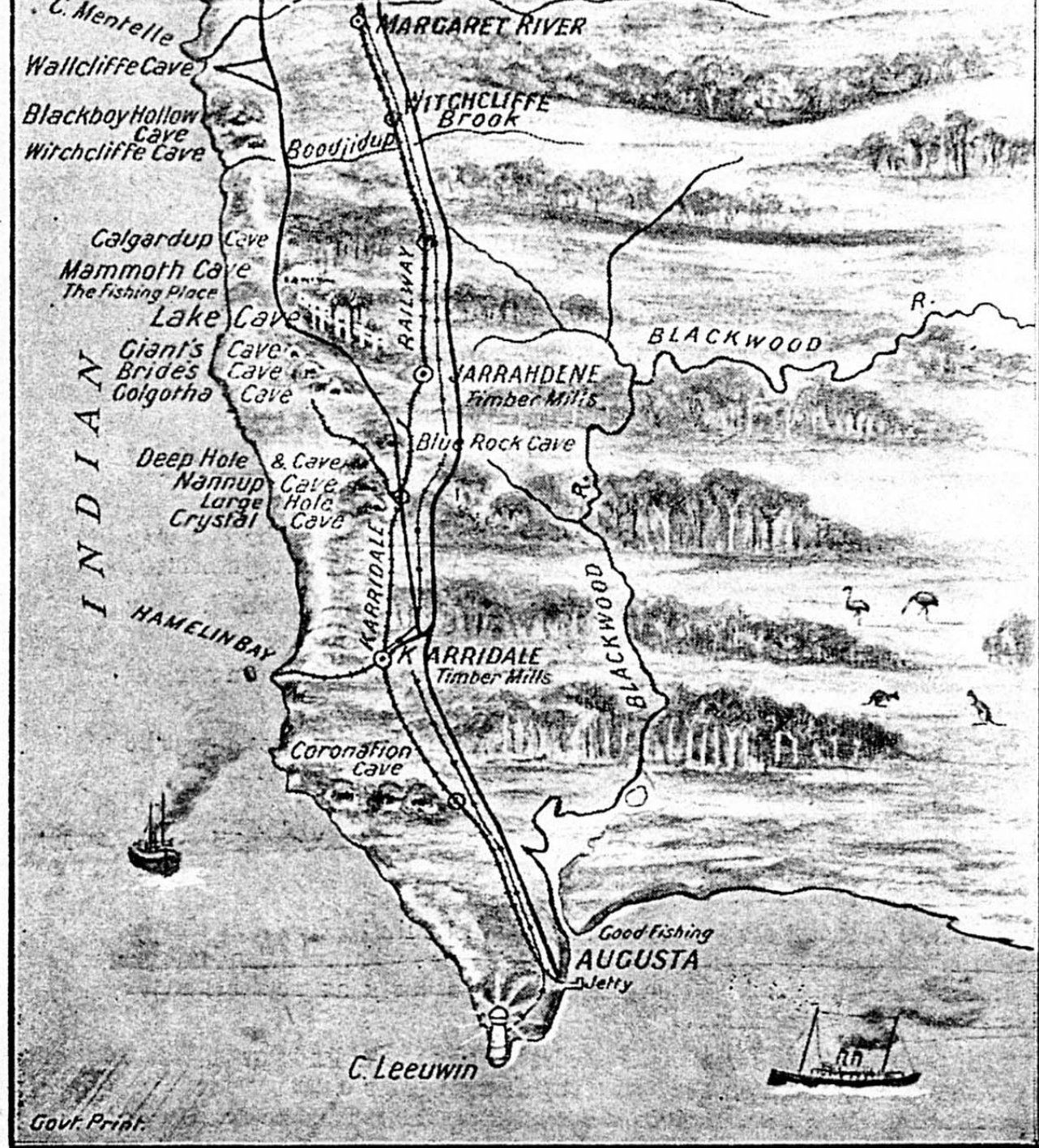
Where the Caves Are



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Where the Caves Are

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C. Erskine May described the
region as:

“A Gem of a Holiday Place”

A Gem of a Holiday Place

- Some of the features of the region.
- Cape Leeuwin.
- Hardy Inlet and the Blackwood River.
- Flinders Bay.
- Margaret River.
- Leeuwin Light House.

Cape Leeuwin



Blackwood River Hardy Inlet and Molloy Island



Flinders Bay



Mouth of the Margaret River



Leeuwin Light House & Historic Water Wheel



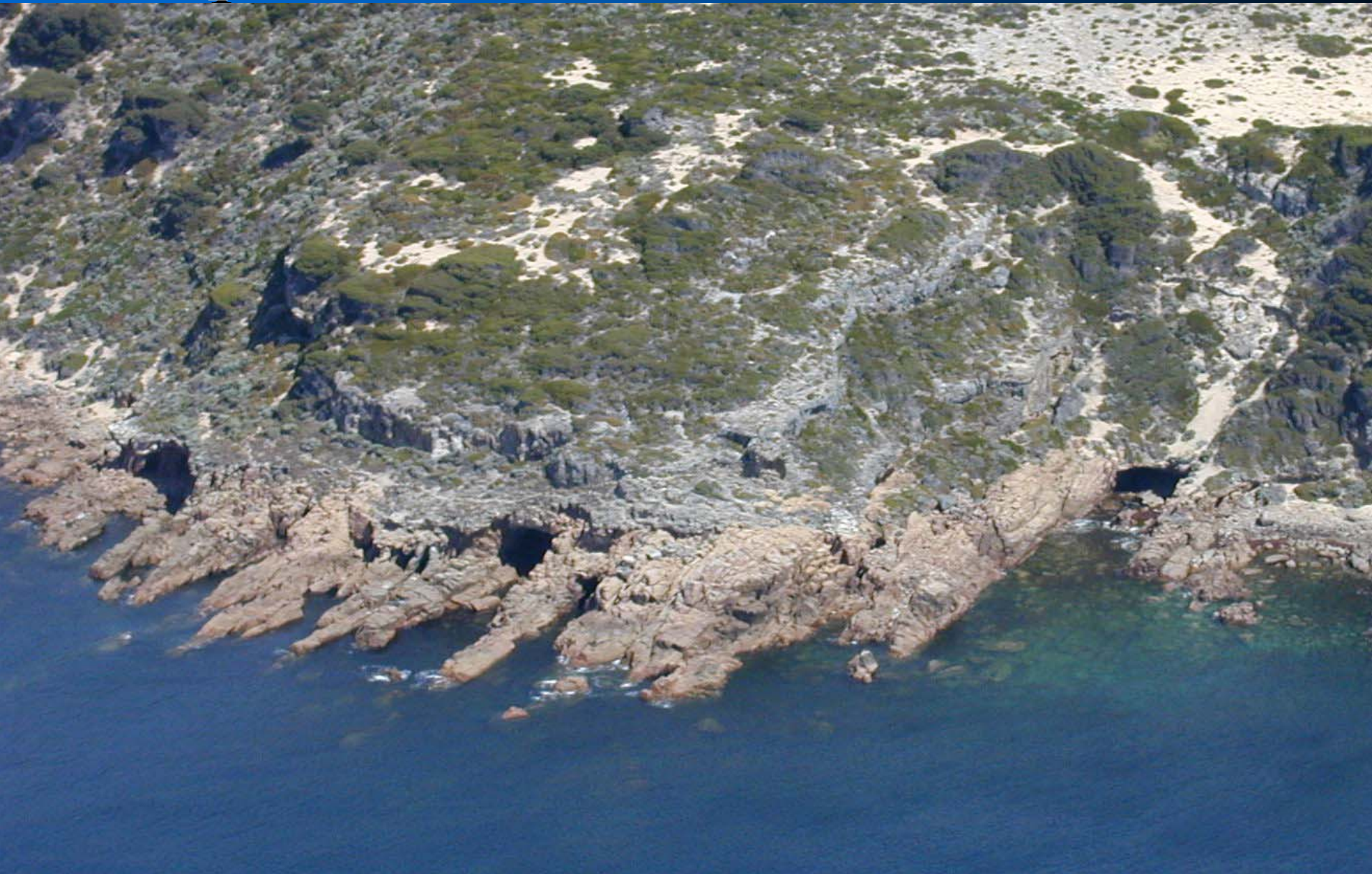
Other Features of the Ridge

- **Cape Naturaliste.**
- **Bunkers Bay.**
- **Canal Rocks.**
- **Sugar Loaf Rock.**

Cape Naturaliste, Bunkers Bay



Cape Naturaliste, Sea Caves



Canal Rocks



On with the History

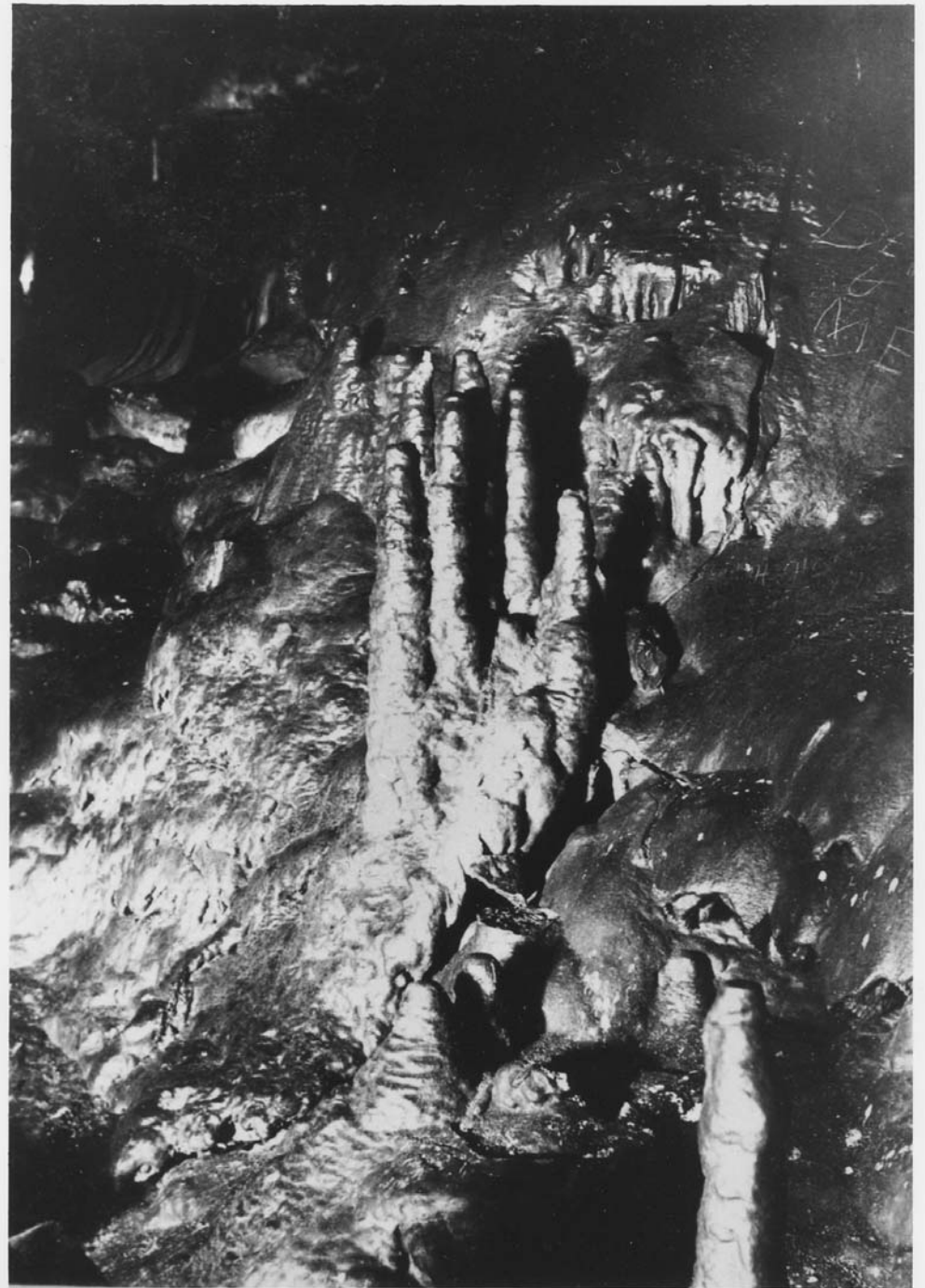
Cave Discoveries

C. E. May specifically mentioned

- **Wallcliffe.**
- **Blackboy Hollow.**
- **Calgadup (Calgardup).**
- **Boodjidup (Witchcliffe).**
- **Nindup (Giants).**
- **Deepdene.**
- **Crystal (Recommended Closing Off).**

The Devils Hand Wallcliffe Cave from the May Report

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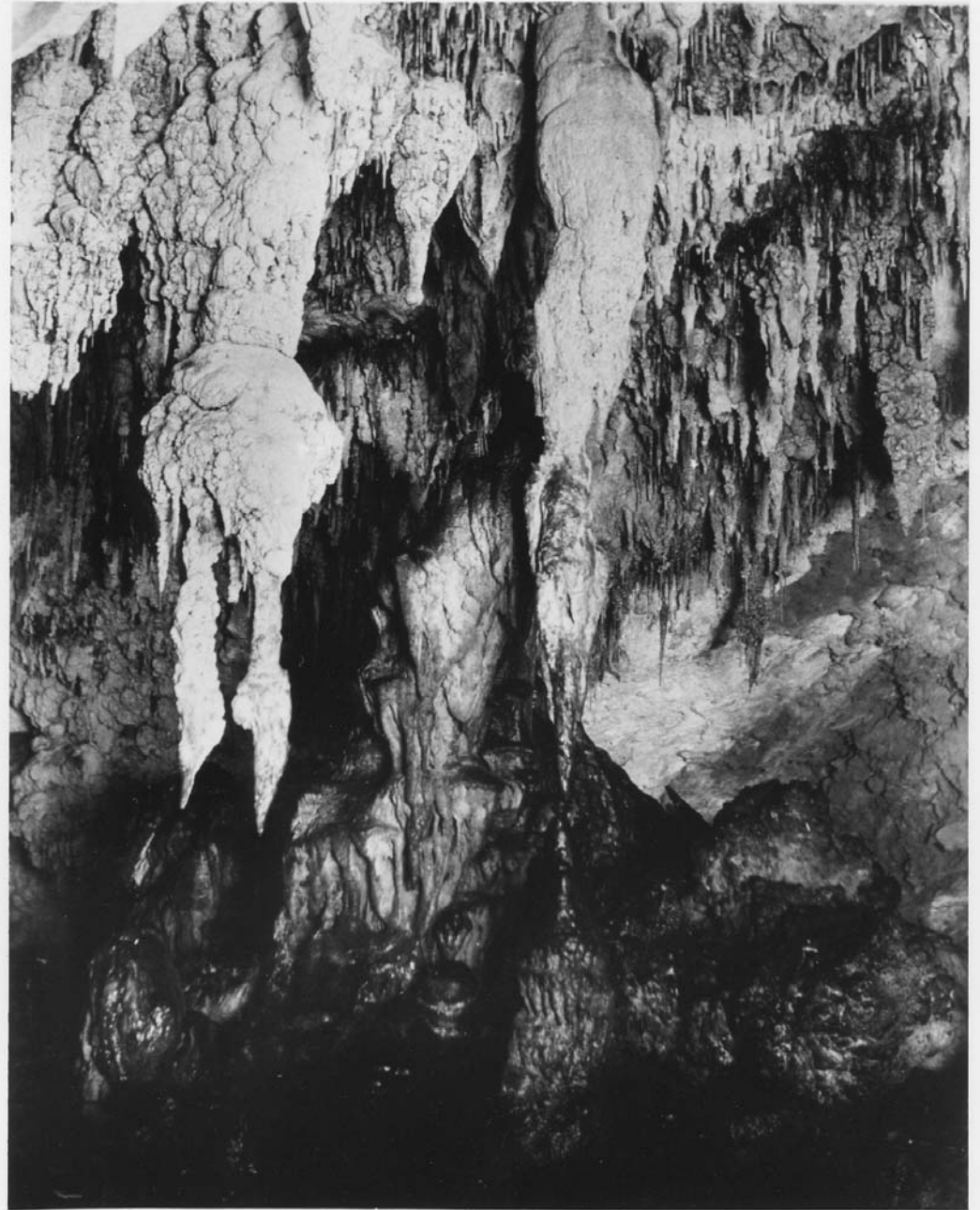
The Devils Hand Wallcliffe Cave

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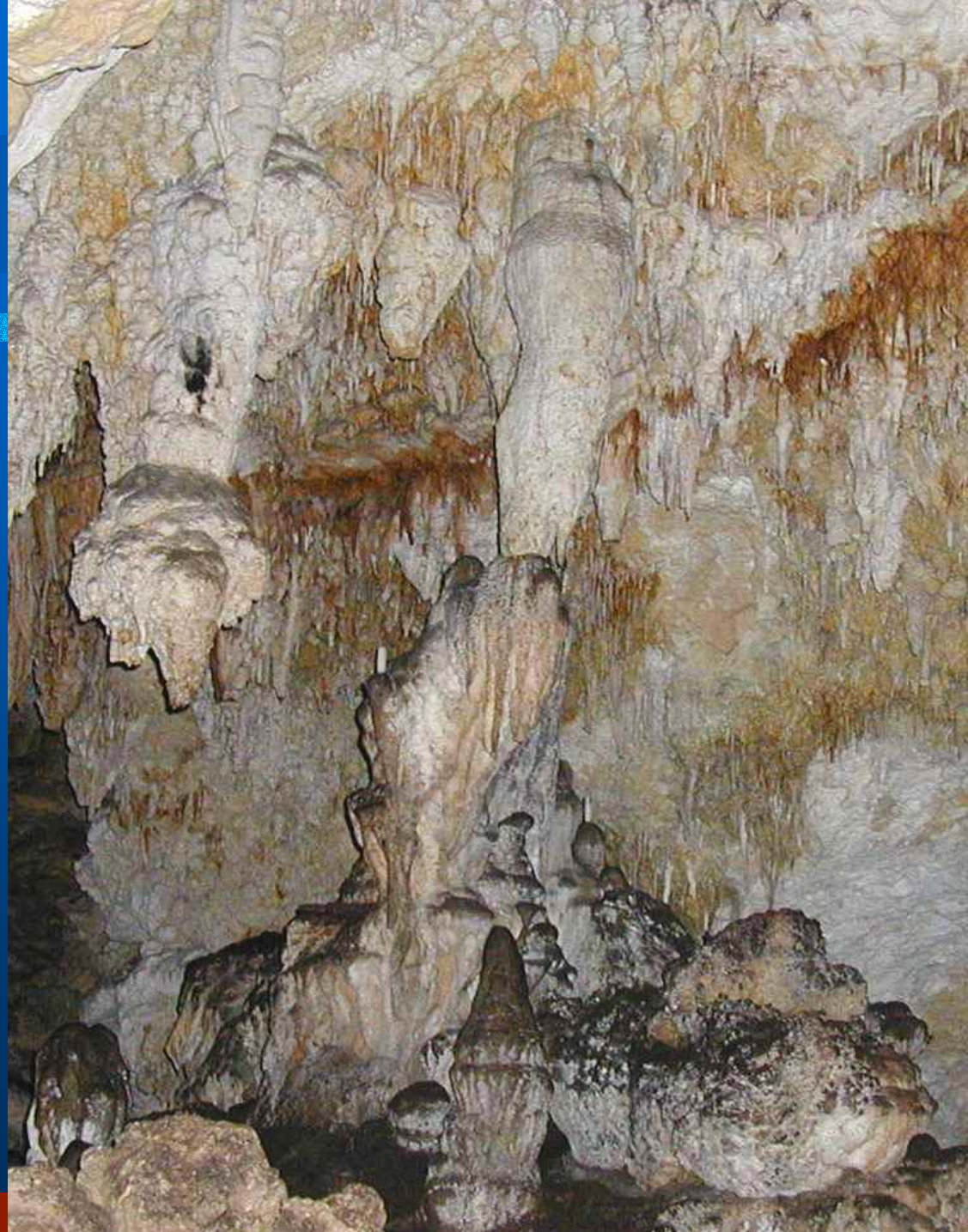
The Poultry Show circa 1900 from the May Report

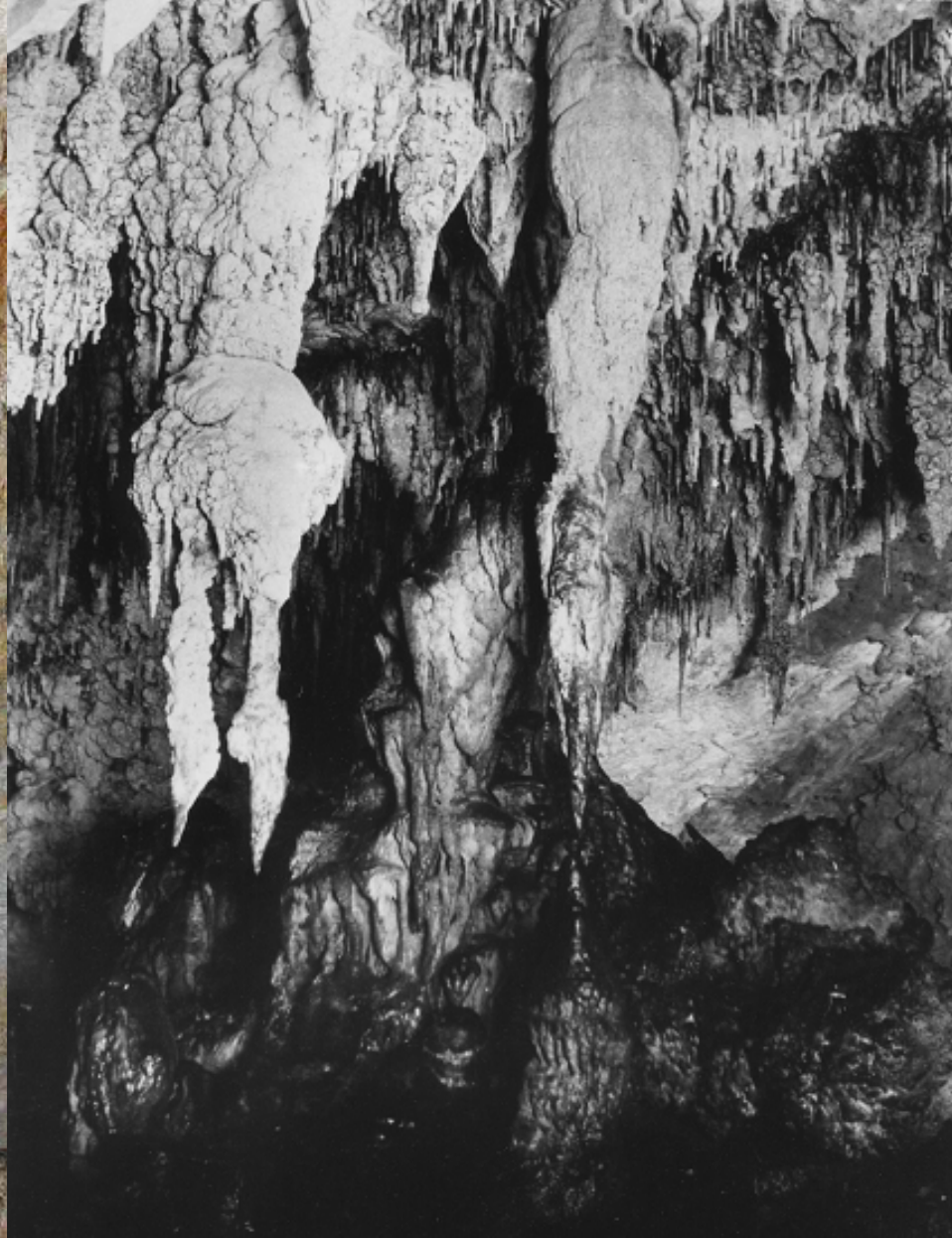
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The Poultry Show now

20/01/2003



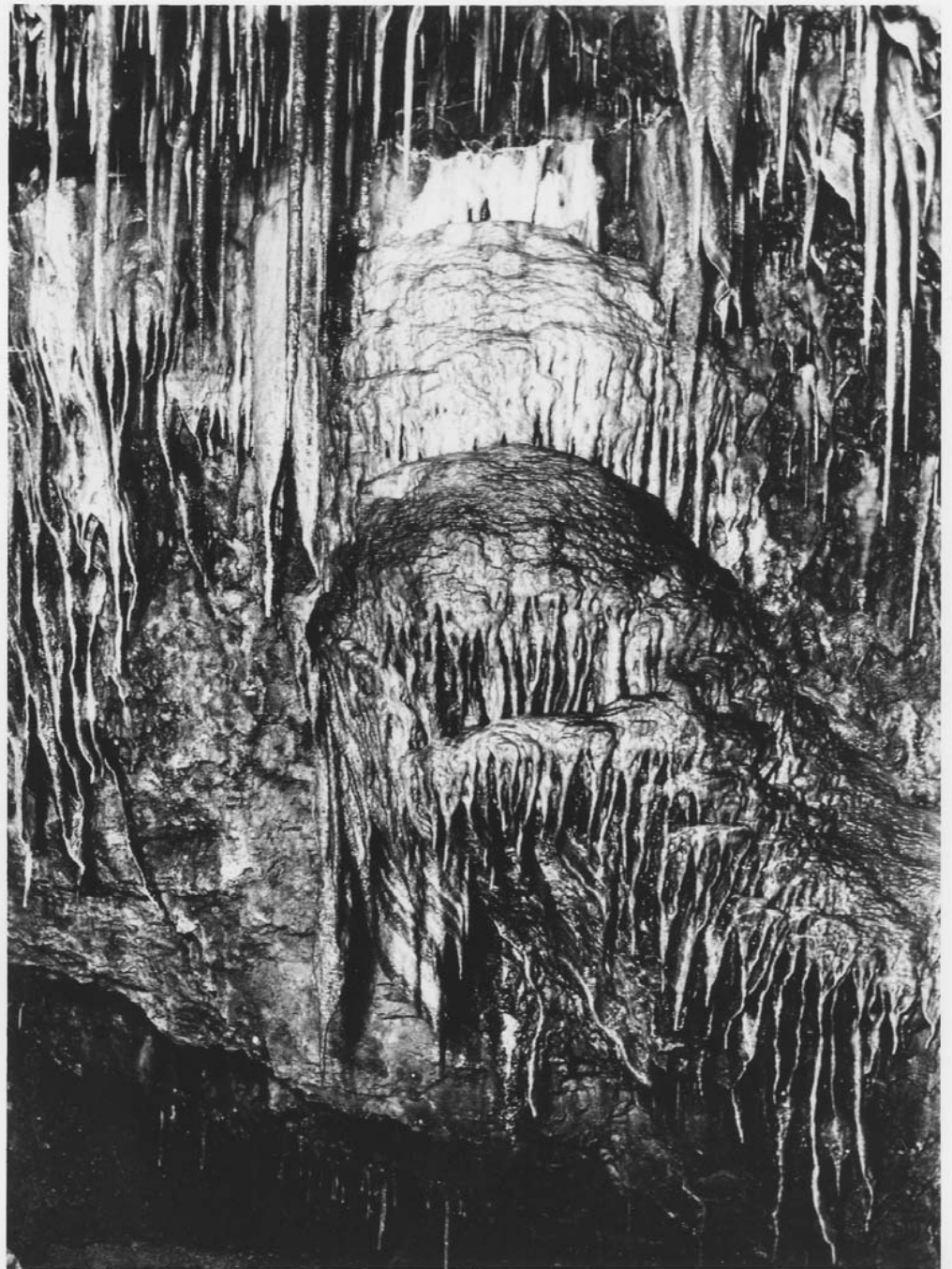


Warrawerrie or Blackboy Hollow

- **Discovered by John Bussell 1880's.**
- **Bussell's installed a ladder and enlarged the opening.**
- **A comment was made in the report that this was done to allow the Aldermen to visit.**

Queens Crown Blackboy Hollow from the May Report

20/01/2003

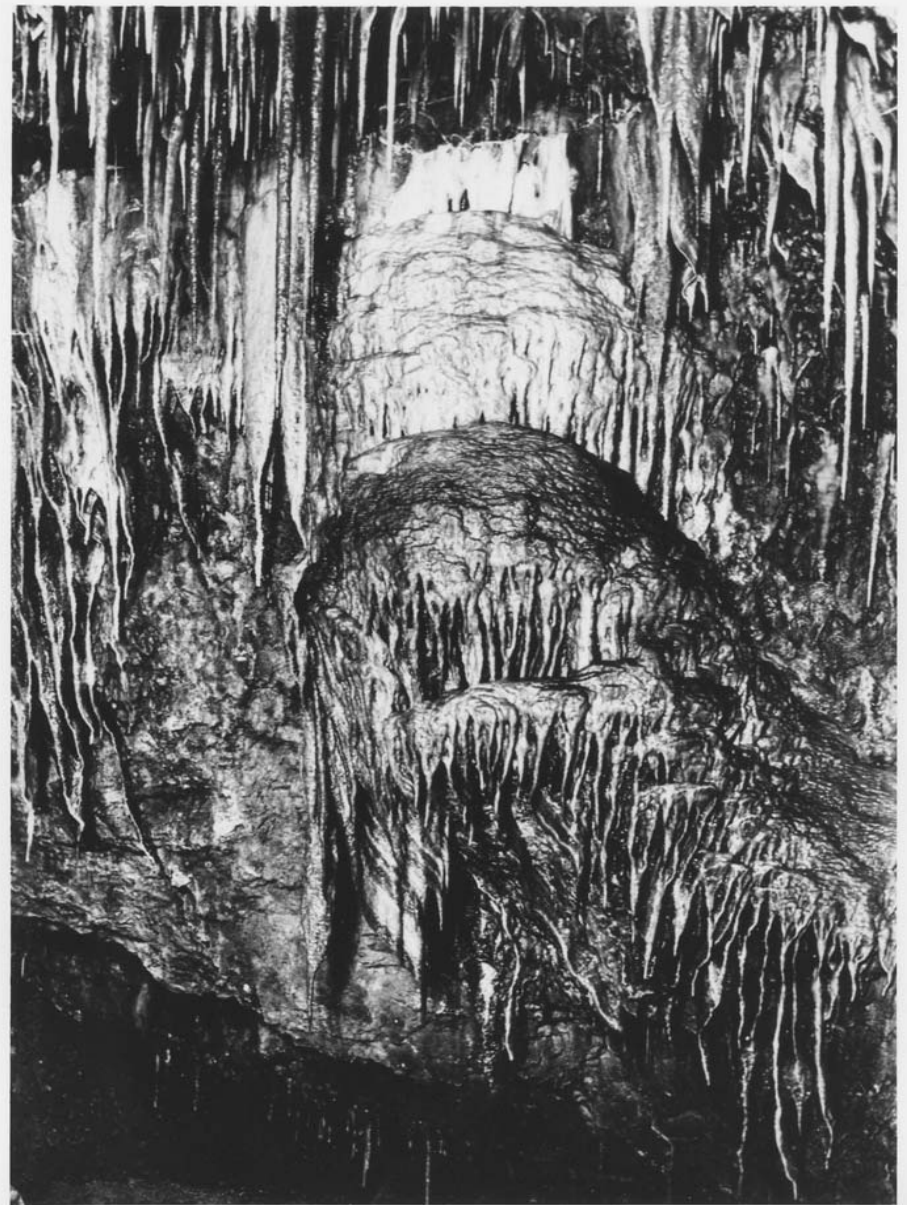


Queens Crown Blackboy Hollow

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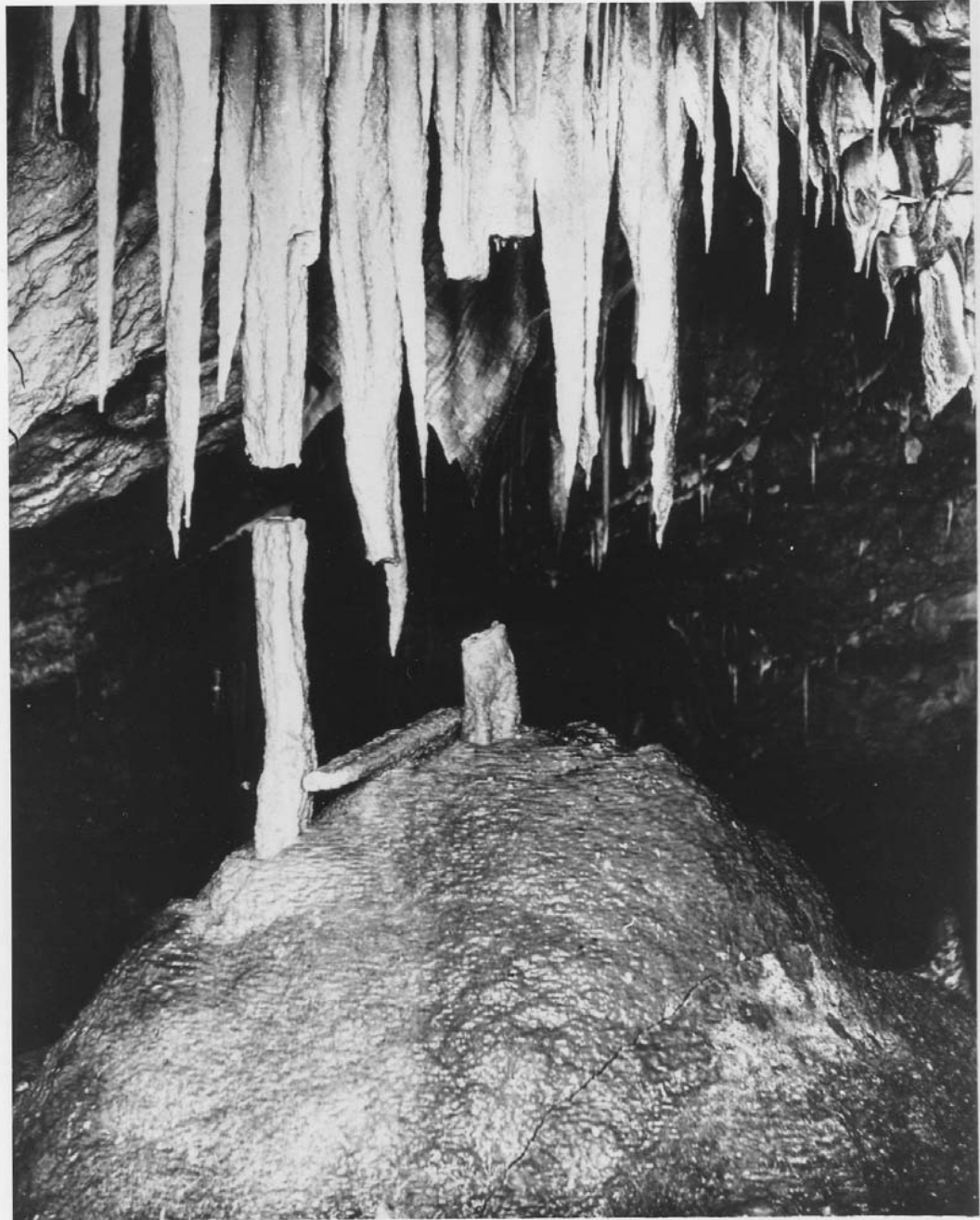
Cave





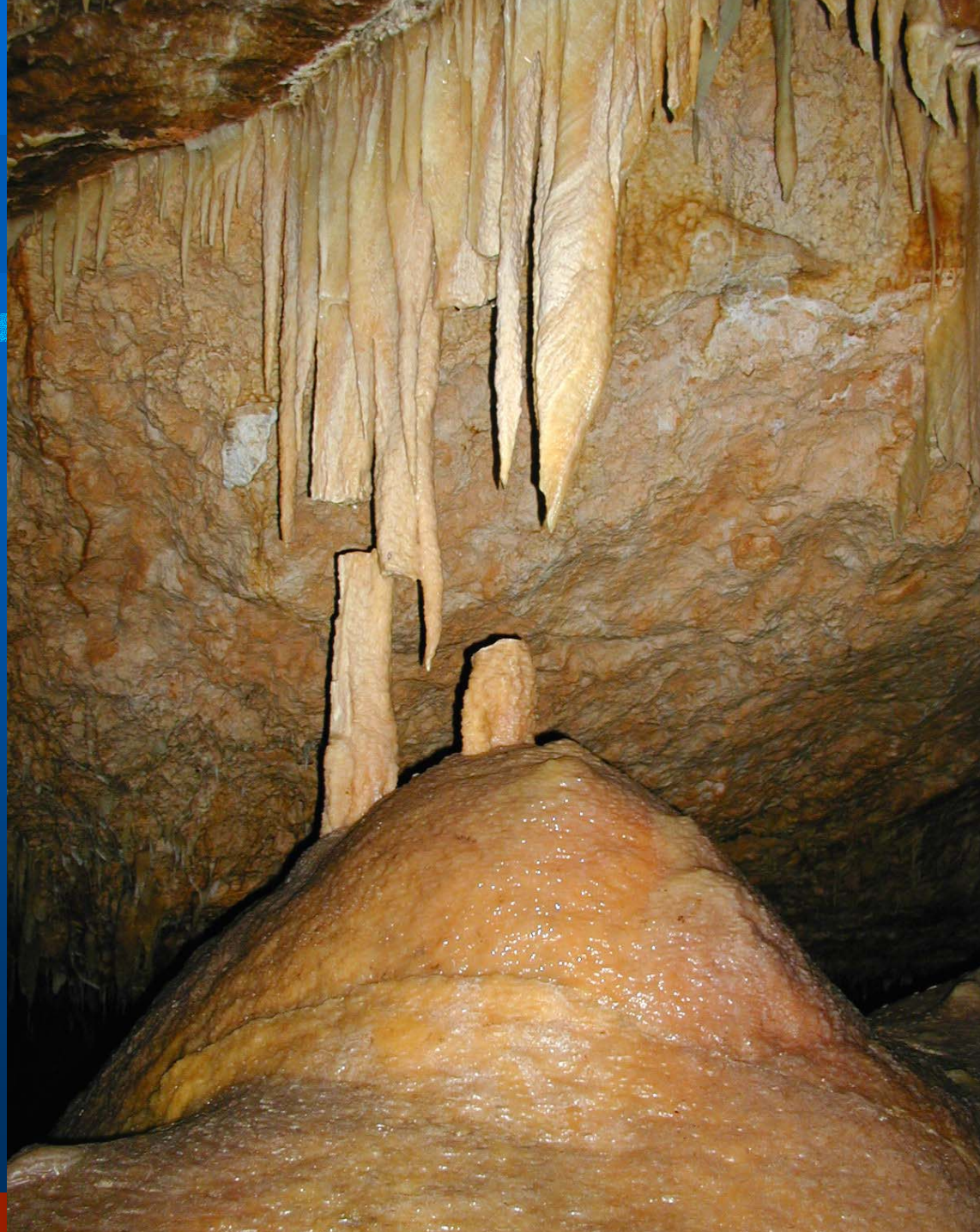
The Broken Column 1900

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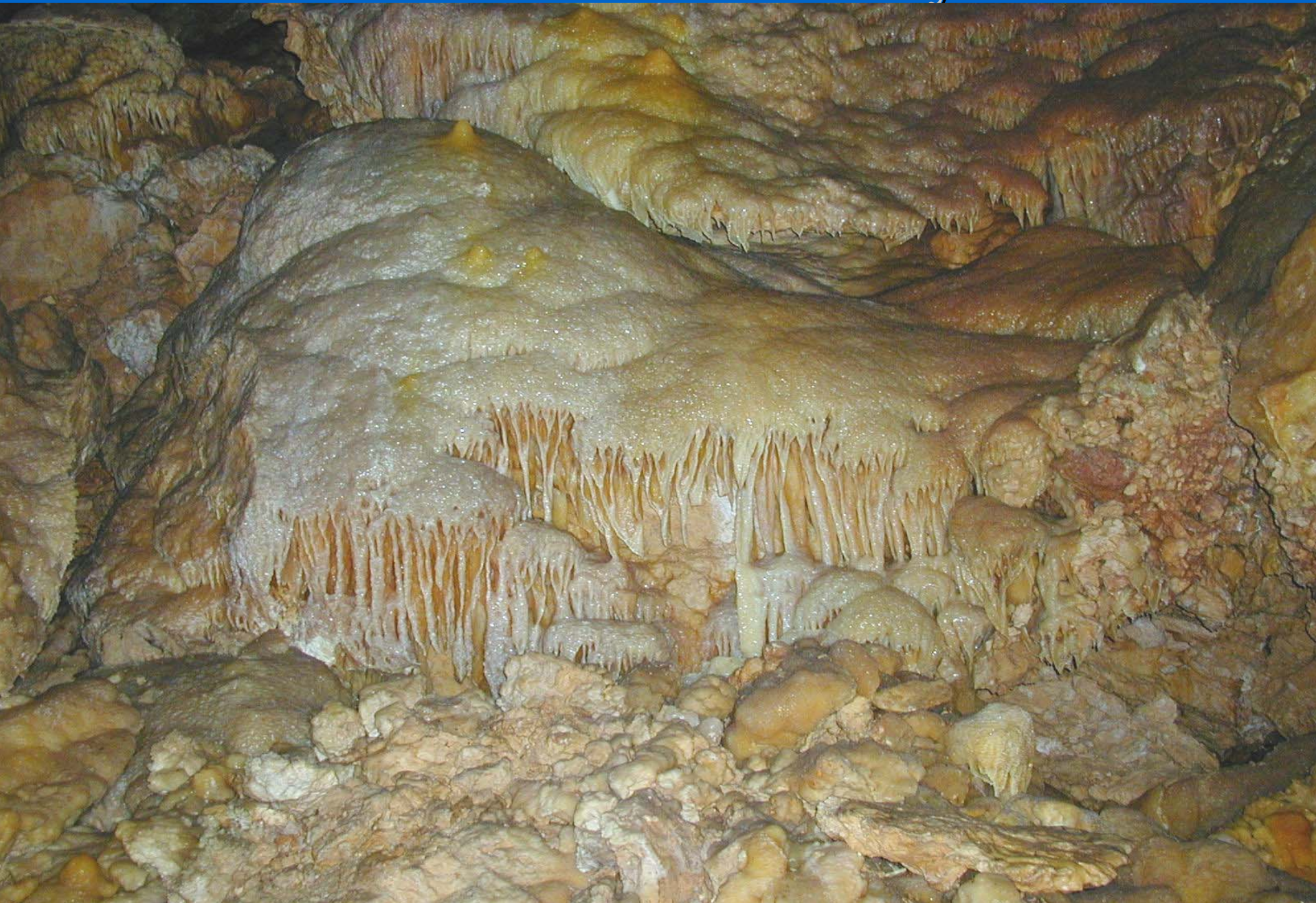


The Broken Column

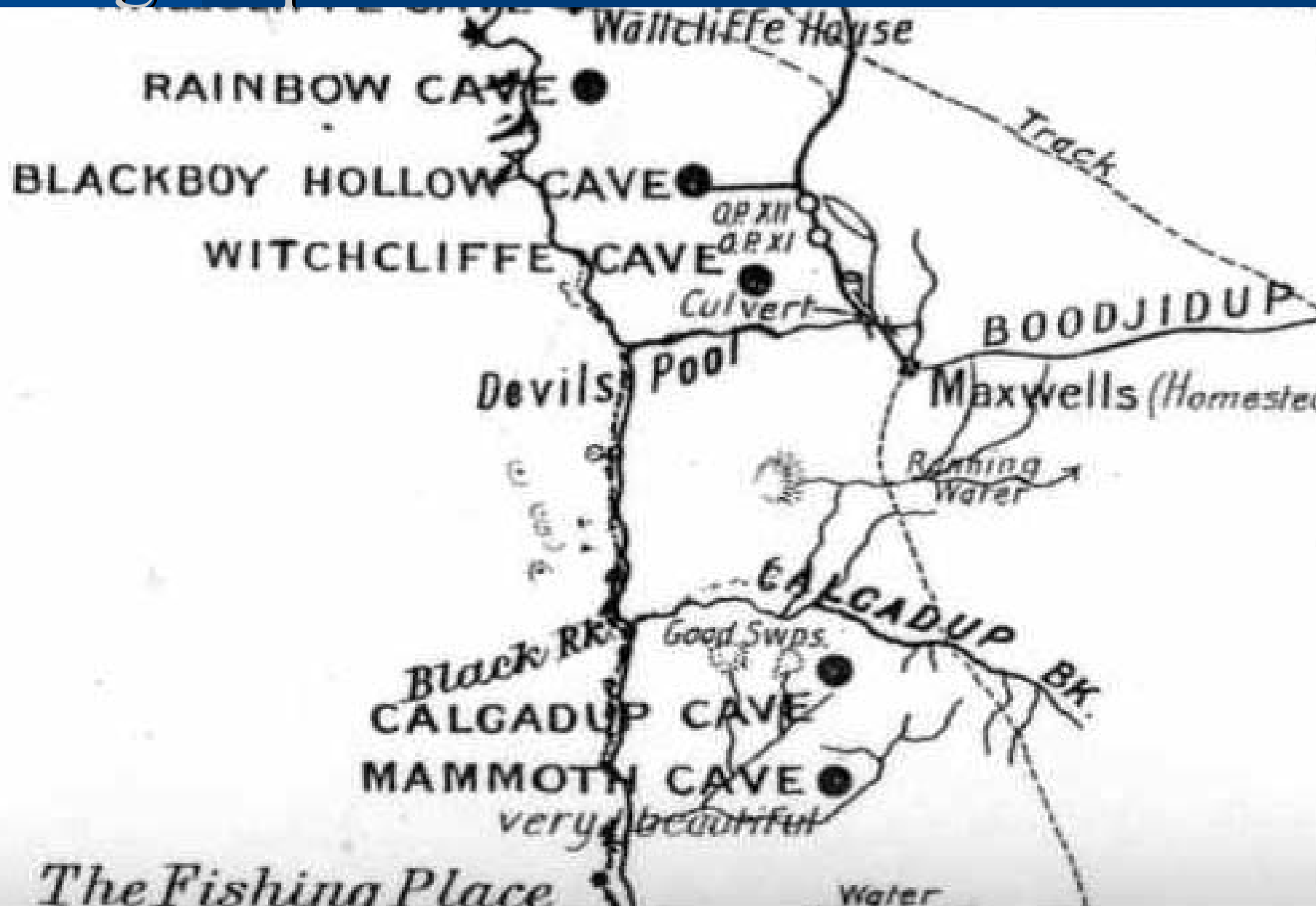
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Karri Tree Formation Blackboy Hollow

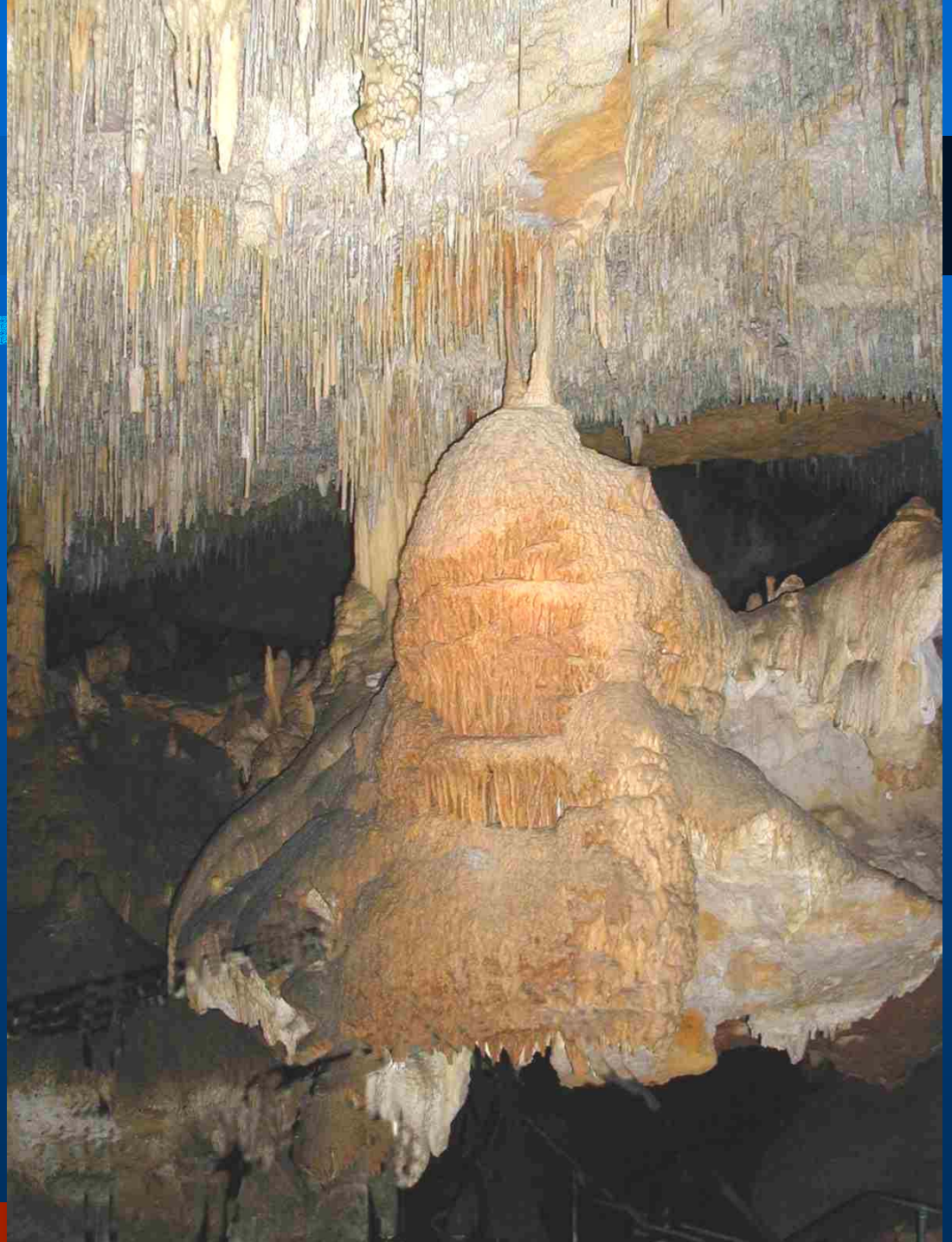


Calgadup Cave



Suspended Dome Calgardup

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Spear in the mud at Calgardup



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Devils Pool and Witchcliffe Cave

Devils Pool was a permanent source of water on the track up to Bunbury & Perth so it was not long before the Witchcliffe cave was discovered.

Devils Pool



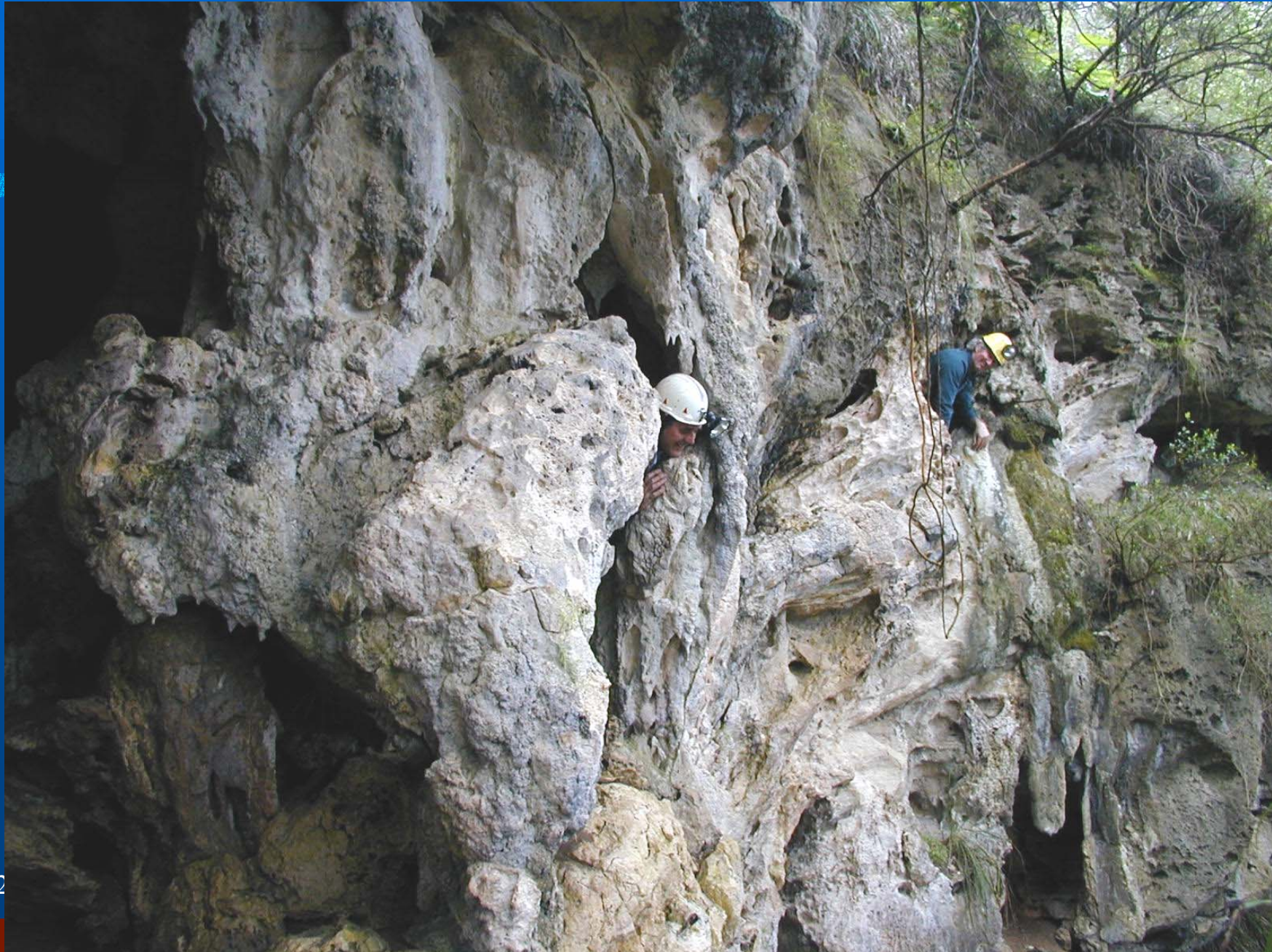
Devils Pool from Witchcliffe Cave



Witchcliffe Cave Entrance



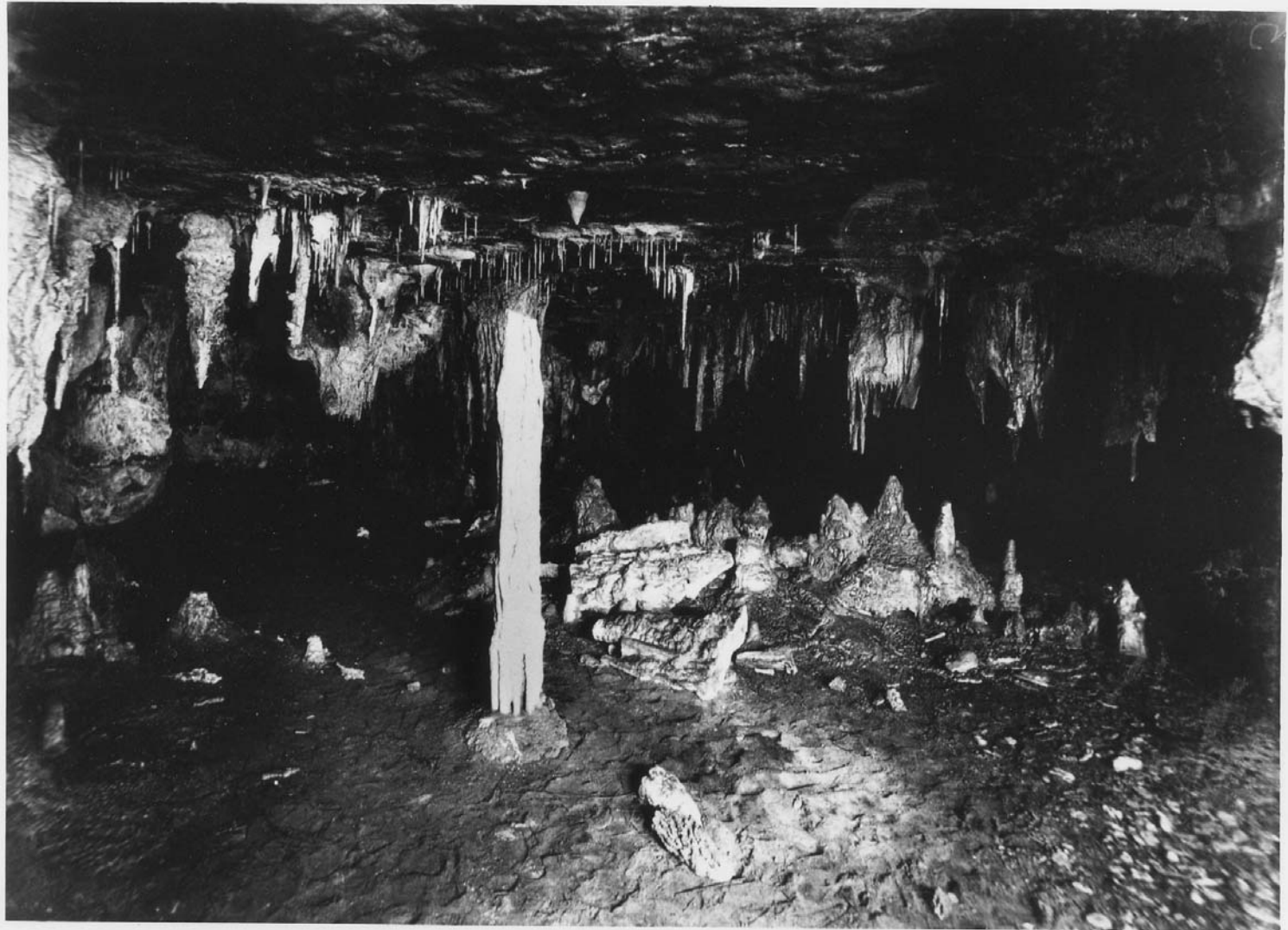
Witchcliffe Cave & CLINC



Star Chamber



Lots Wife



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Lots Wife

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Pipes of a Cathedral Organ



The Mob Inside CLINC at Witchcliffe



An aerial photograph of a landscape featuring a prominent, light-colored cliff face. The cliff is situated in the middle ground, separating a dense, dark green forest in the foreground from a vast, open, and relatively flat landscape in the background. The foreground forest is thick and covers a significant portion of the lower half of the image. The background landscape is a mix of light brown and green, suggesting a combination of scrubland and grassy areas. A winding road or path is visible on the left side of the image, curving through the landscape. The sky is a pale blue, and the overall scene is captured from a high vantage point, providing a wide view of the terrain.

Deepdene Cliffs

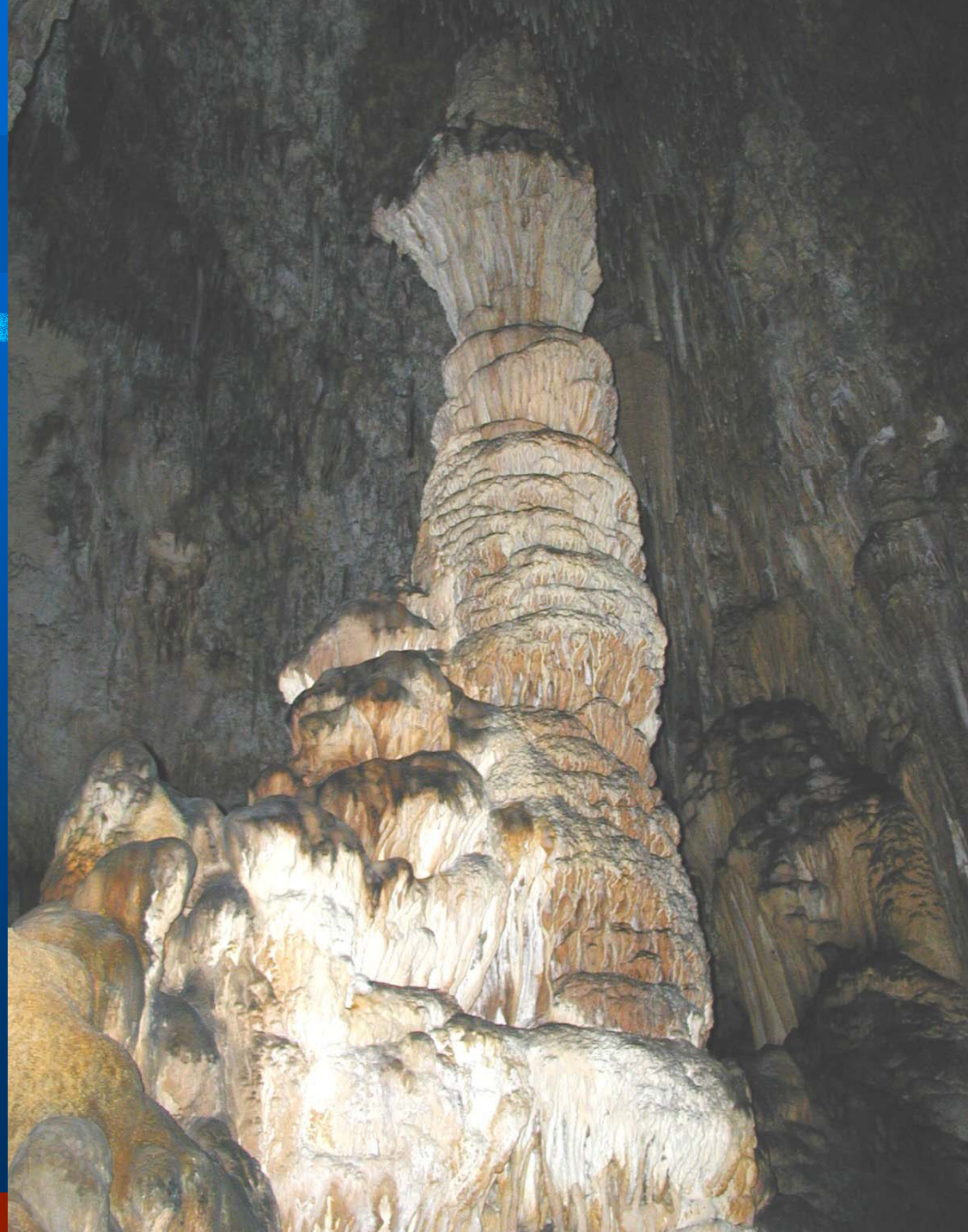
Deepdene



Crystal Pillar

Deepdene Cave

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Column Deepdene

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Cavers Leeuwin Inc



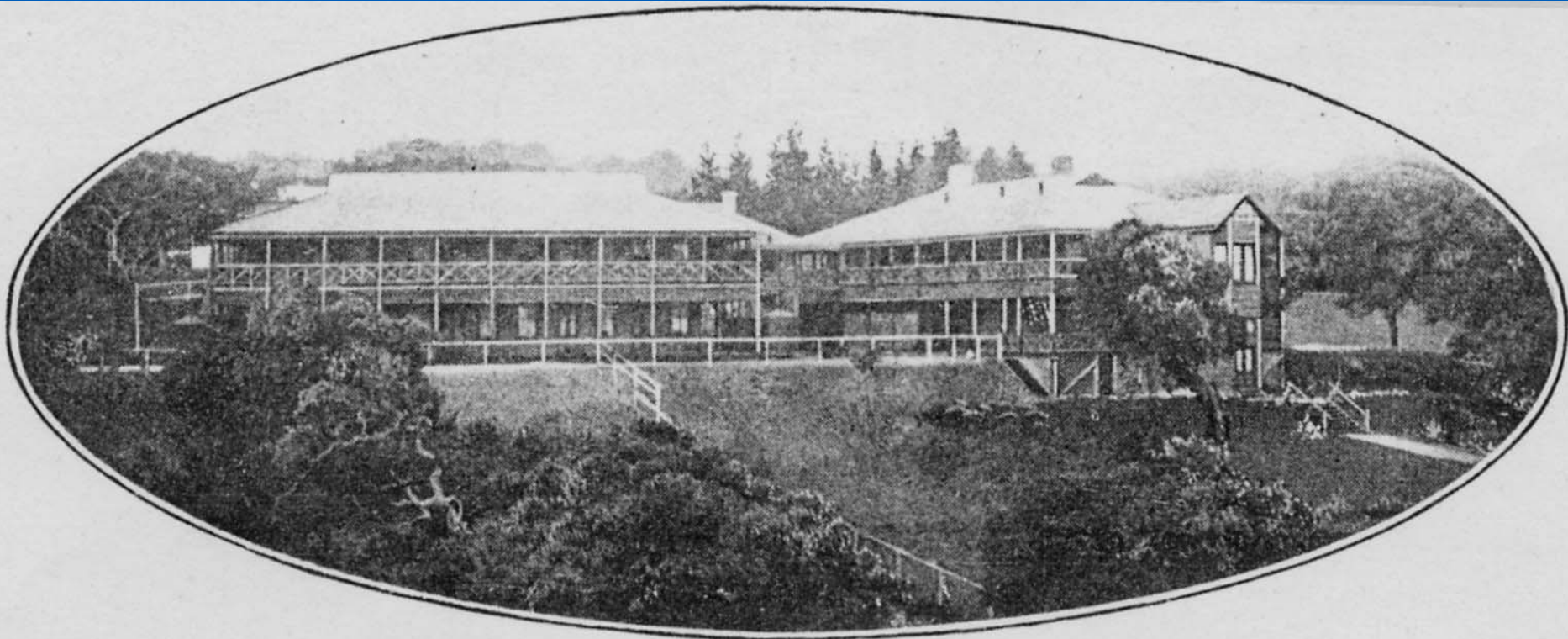
Connelly Appointed as Guide

- **As a result of the C. E. May report Tim Connelly was appointed as a guide and caretaker on a salary of \$100 (Fifty Pounds) per annum.**
- **Gates and Locks were installed.**
- **Magnesium Flares and Blackboy Torches were no longer used.**
- **Cave's Board formed.**

Strong's Cave

- Recorded by Marmaduke Terry in a survey in 1900.
- Many other caves in the area recorded around this time.
- Terry married Filumina Bussell on St Valentines day 1900 about the time he was completing his survey.

Cave House was built in 1903



CAVE HOUSE, YALLINGUP.

Cave House in the 20's



Cave House, Yallingup.

Cave House



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Cave House Burns Down

- In 1935 a disastrous fire swept through Cave House.

Cave House Reconstructed



Cave House Today



Bride's Cave Descent

20/01/2003



Jewel Cave

- **Solution Pipe found by William Ellis in 1908 but not entered, called Windy Hole.**
- **Discovered by Cliff Spackman, Mr & Mrs Jack Burrows, Harley Webster and Tony Tapper in 1957.**
- **Jewel Cave will be covered in a specific presentation by Lloyd Robinson who first explored it in 1958 with Lex Bastian and Cliff Spackman.**

Jewel Cave



Jewel Cave

Jewel Cave



The History from the 1920's on is well recorded in SRG and WASG documentation.

Even today Witchcliffe Cave is not locked and is being used as a camp site. Many other caves still remain unlocked.

Thanks to Jeff Murray of DOLA

- Without Jeff's assistance much of the material used would not have been found or confirmed to be accurate.
- Copies of the Ommannney and May reports will be included with the conference notes.