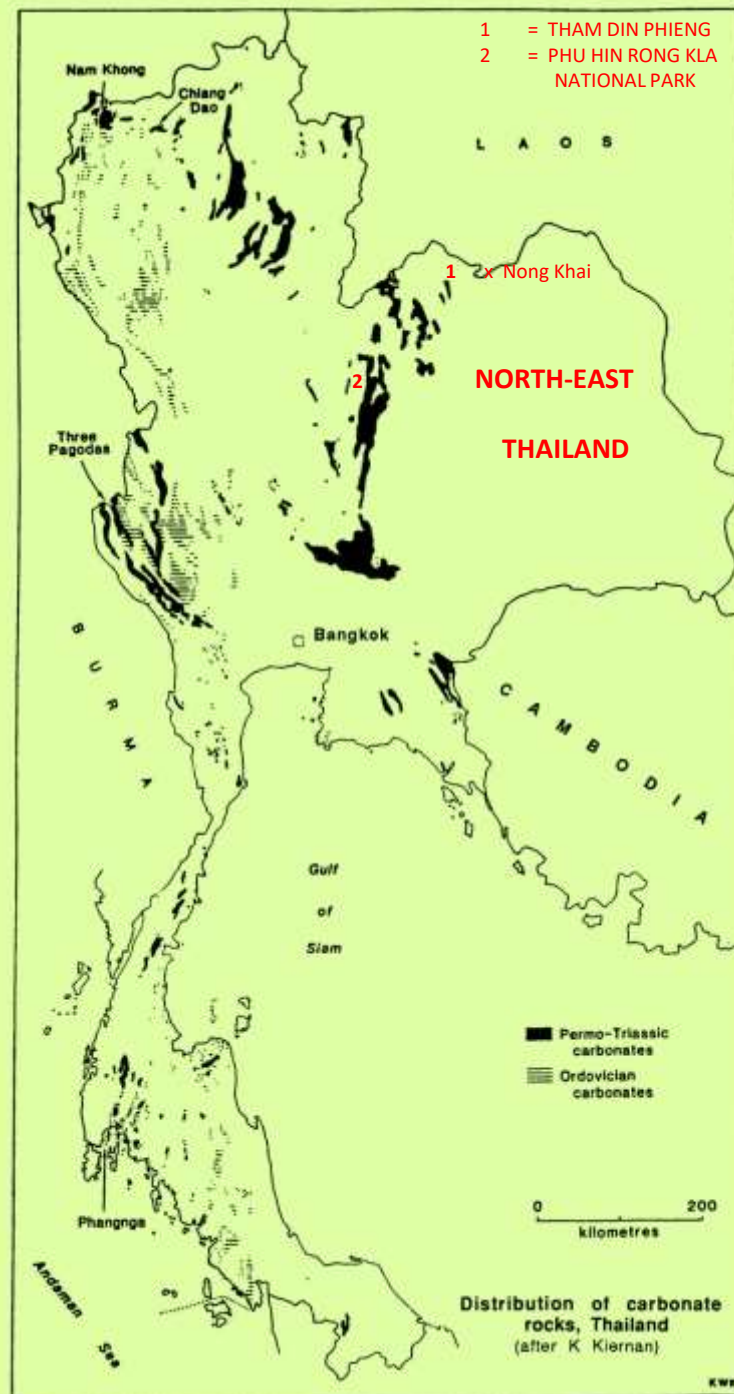


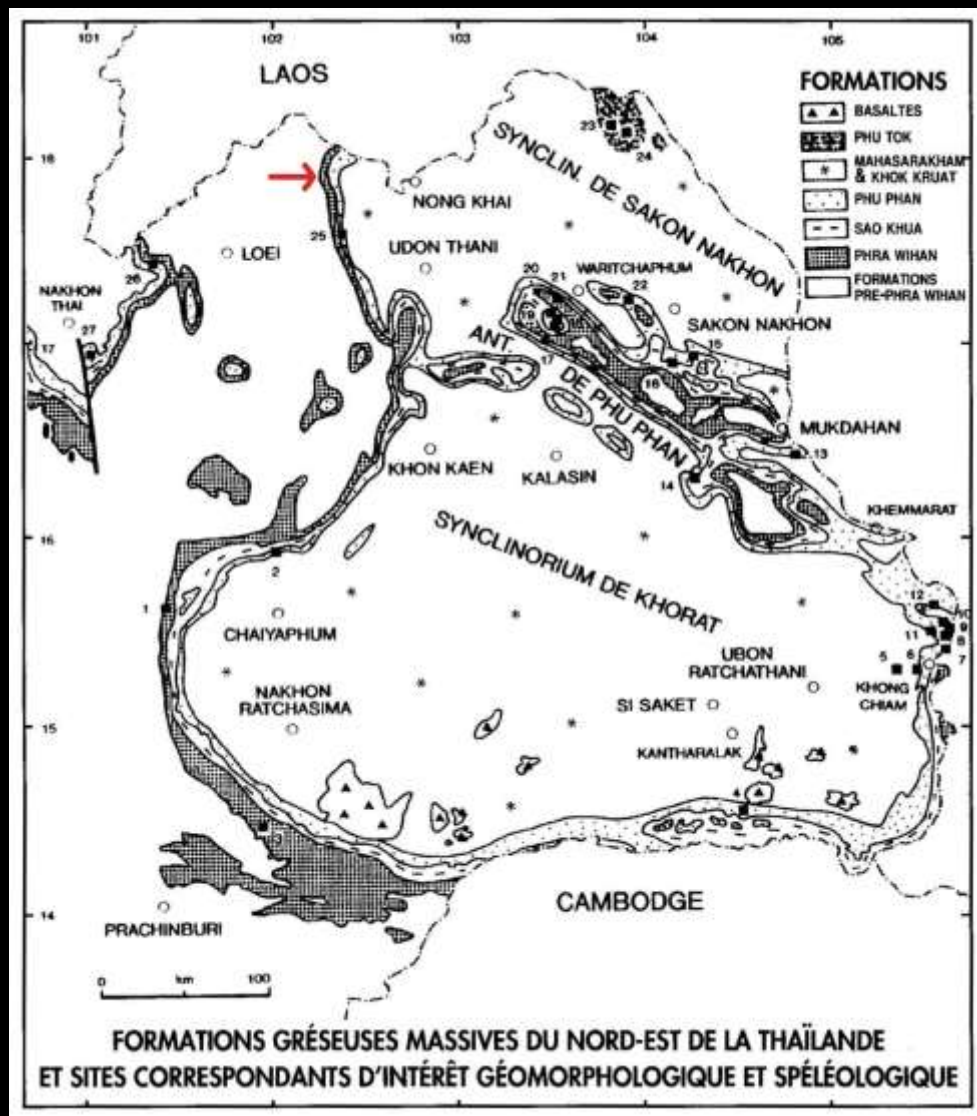
Tham Din Phieng, Thailand

An unusual maze cave in sandstone

John Dunkley









There are 200-300 Buddhist cave sites in Thailand, many used for tourism as well as religious visits. Nearly all caves in sandstones of the north-east are associated with a Buddhist temple.

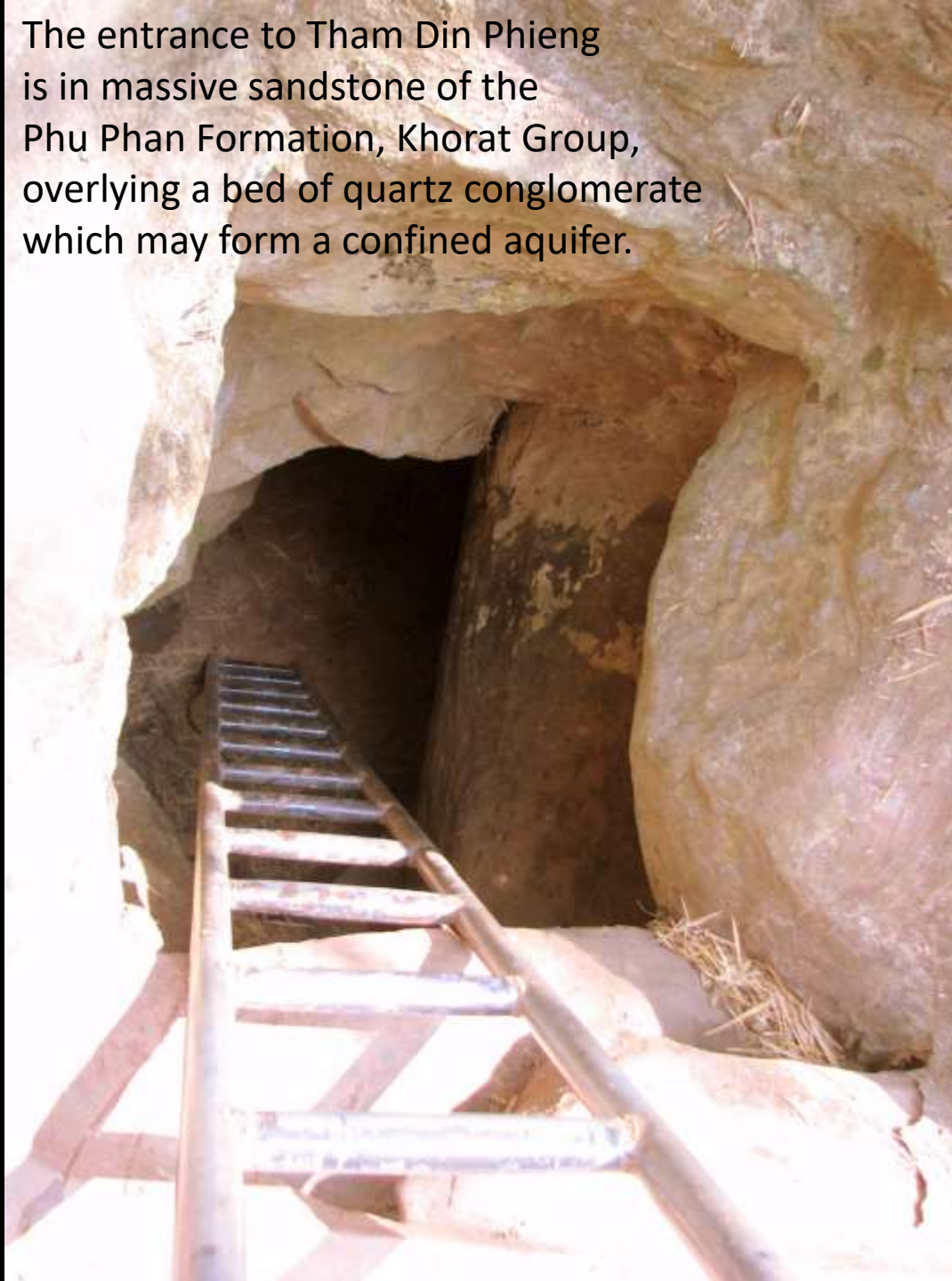


Buddhist monks seek donations of food in the early morning






The entrance to Tham Din Phieng is in massive sandstone of the Phu Phan Formation, Khorat Group, overlying a bed of quartz conglomerate which may form a confined aquifer.



Tham Din Phieng





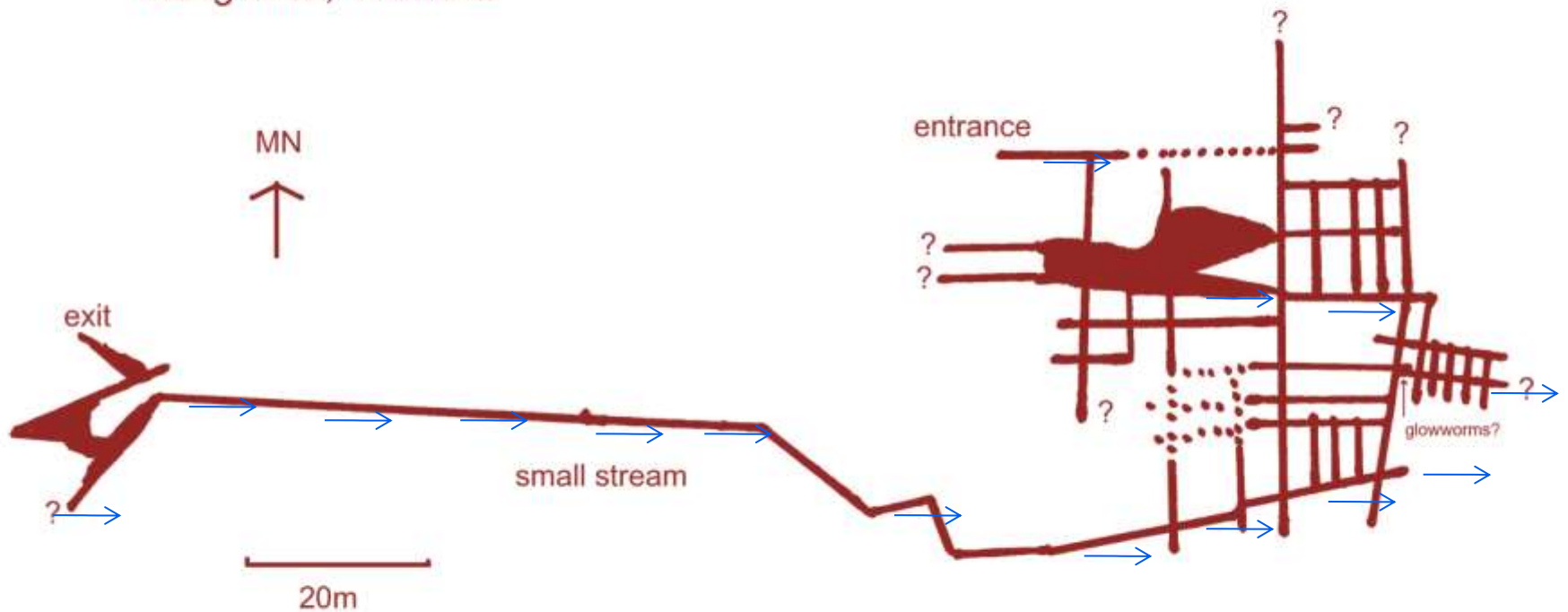
The cave has formed in a very hard bed of quartz conglomerate sandstone, confined beneath a much more resistant & impervious massive sandstone, apparently with a small amount of calcite in the matrix, solution of which served to loosen less soluble material



Characteristic epiphreatic passages 2-3m high & 1-2m wide with cross passages at 4–5m intervals.

Very little residue on cave floor suggests wet season flooding probably occurs to the roof.

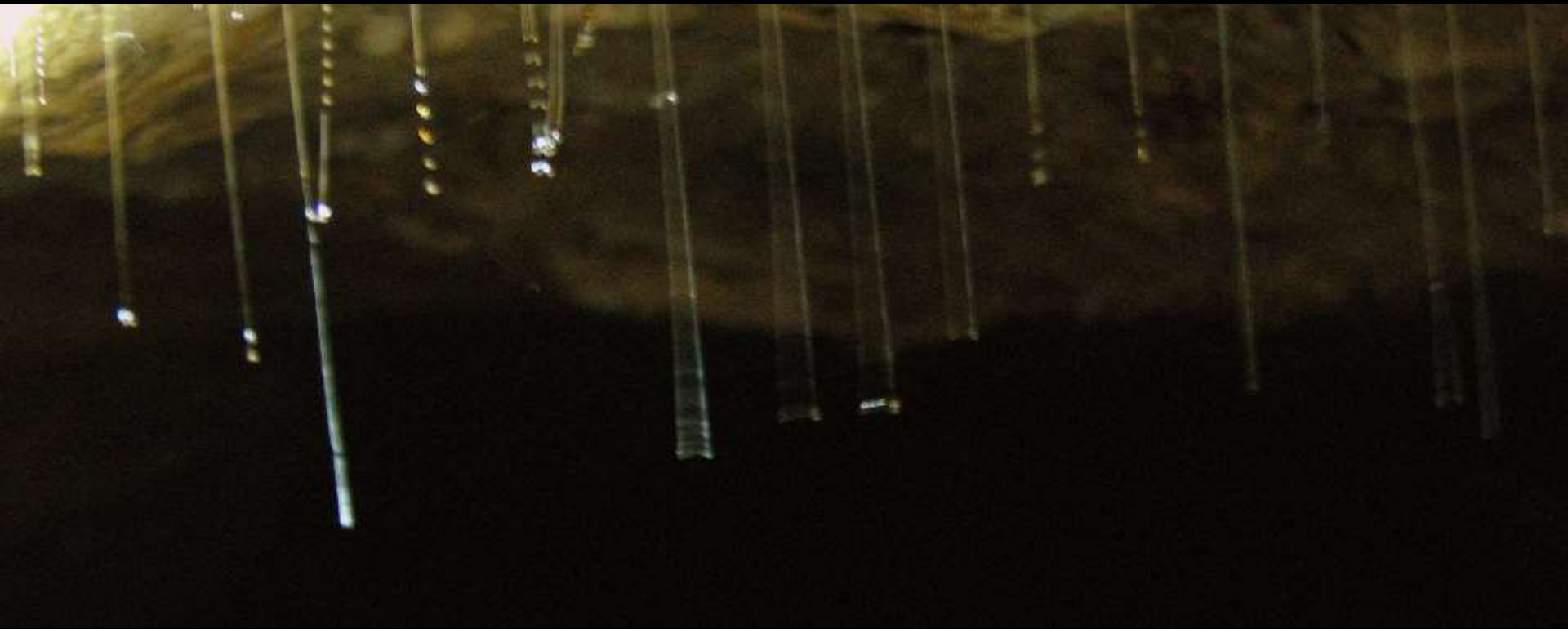
THAM DIN PHIENG
Nong Khai, Thailand



Suunto & Disto
12/2/2011
J. Dunkley

Like most caves associated with a Buddhist temple, Tham Din Phieng is electrically lit and attracts mostly local Thai tourists, with proceeds going to the temple, which has benefited greatly in recent years.



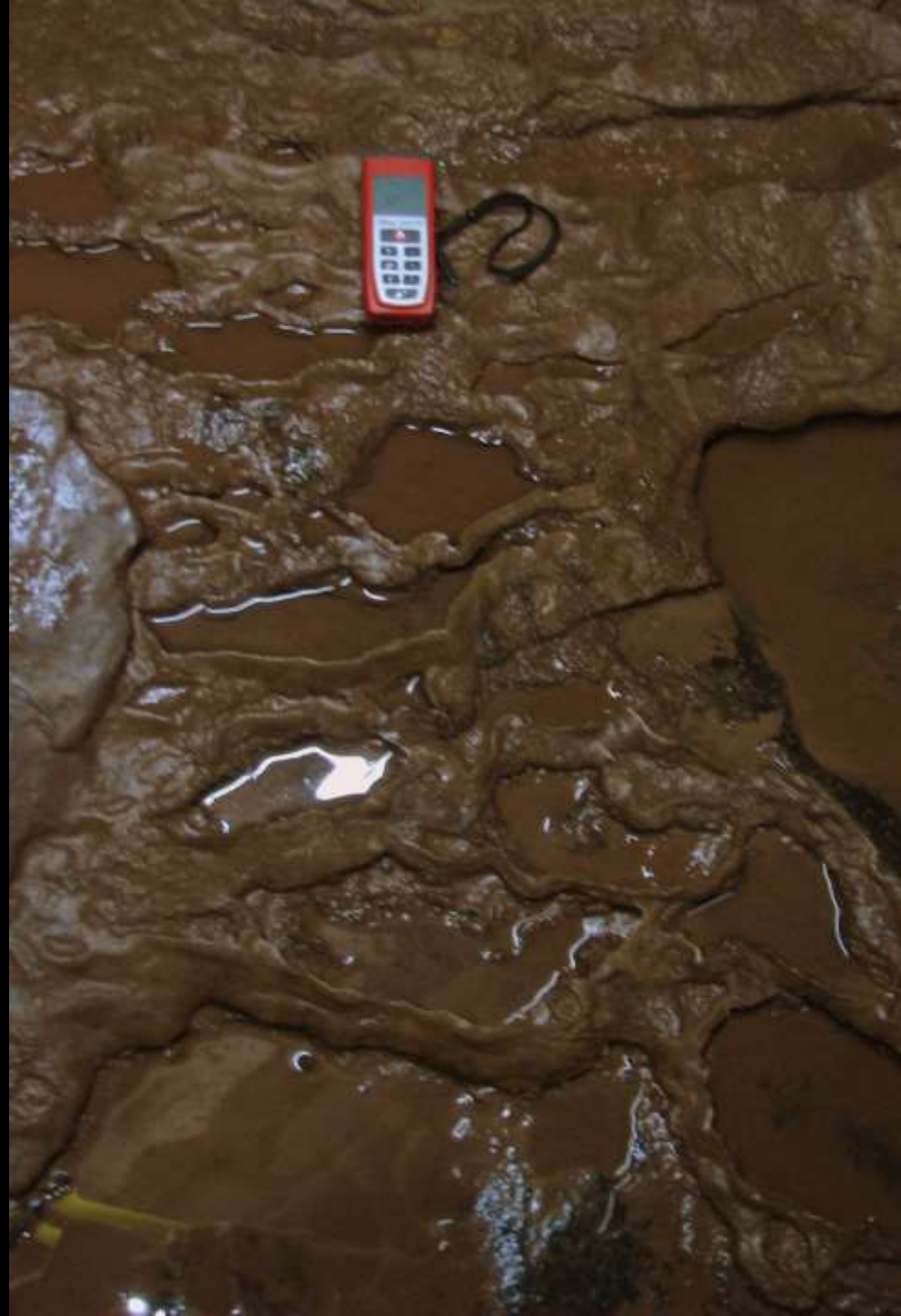


Glowworm-like fauna, at head height above small flowing stream near electric light, possibly related to *arachnocampa* sp.



Very difficult to focus!

Small rimstone pools in the bed of a second, separate stream passage, suggesting that dissolution of the quartz sandstone matrix is enhanced by the presence of a small proportion of calcitic cementing agent



แผนผังเส้นทางเขาสงวาทในถ้ำดงเพยง



แผนผังภายใน ถ้ำลาพันห้อง โขยสังเขป

Schematic map at the cave entrance suggesting over 1km of passages - a thorough survey is needed.
This map underestimates the length of cave in the western section (chambers 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8).

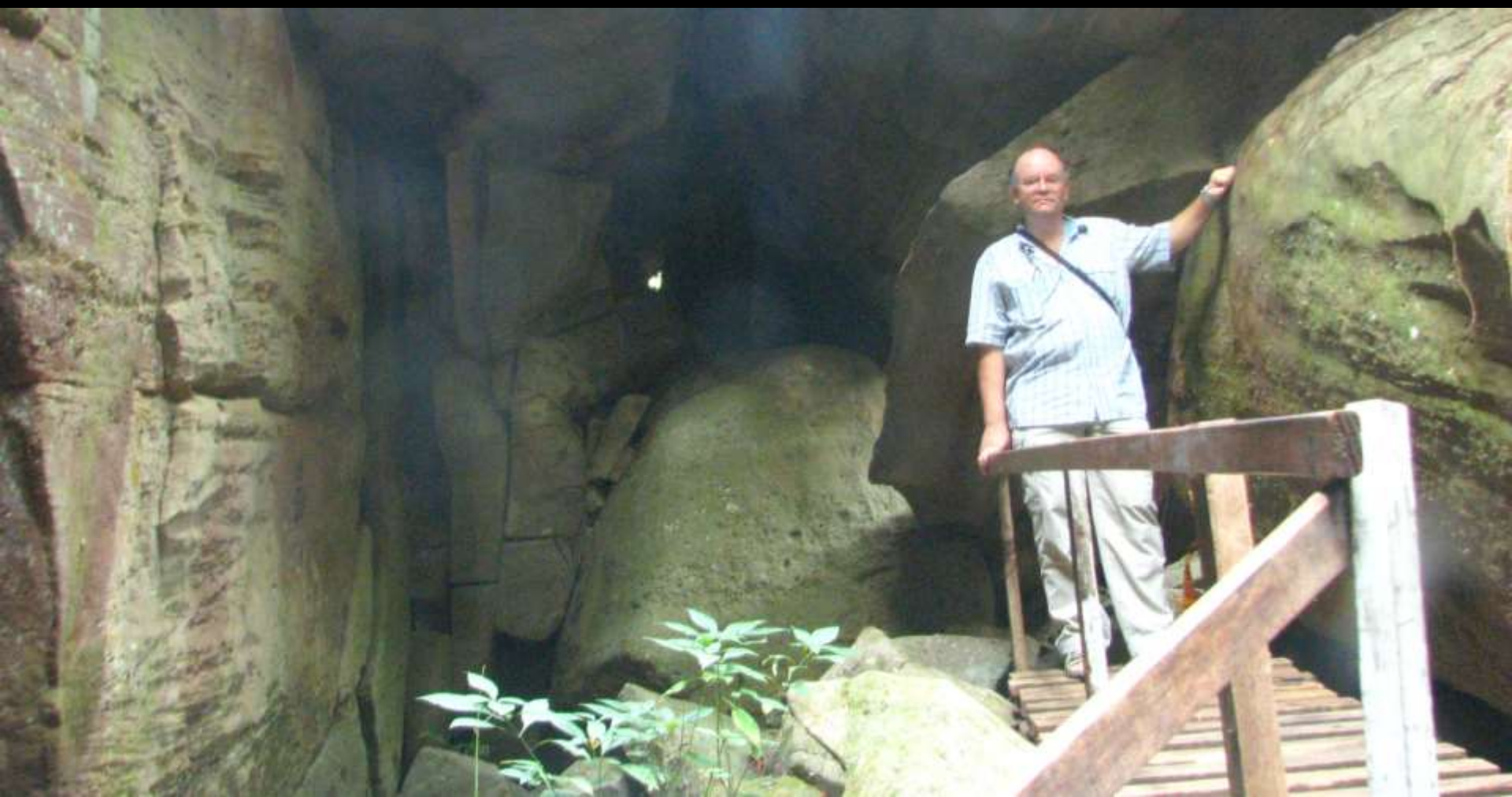
Phu Hin Rong Kla National Park, elevation 1,100m
Kluftkarren-like fissures in quartz –conglomerate sandstone

| 100 m | 100m |



Laan Hin Taek, Phu Hin Rong Kla National Park, el. 1,100m.
The crevasses are 6-10m deep





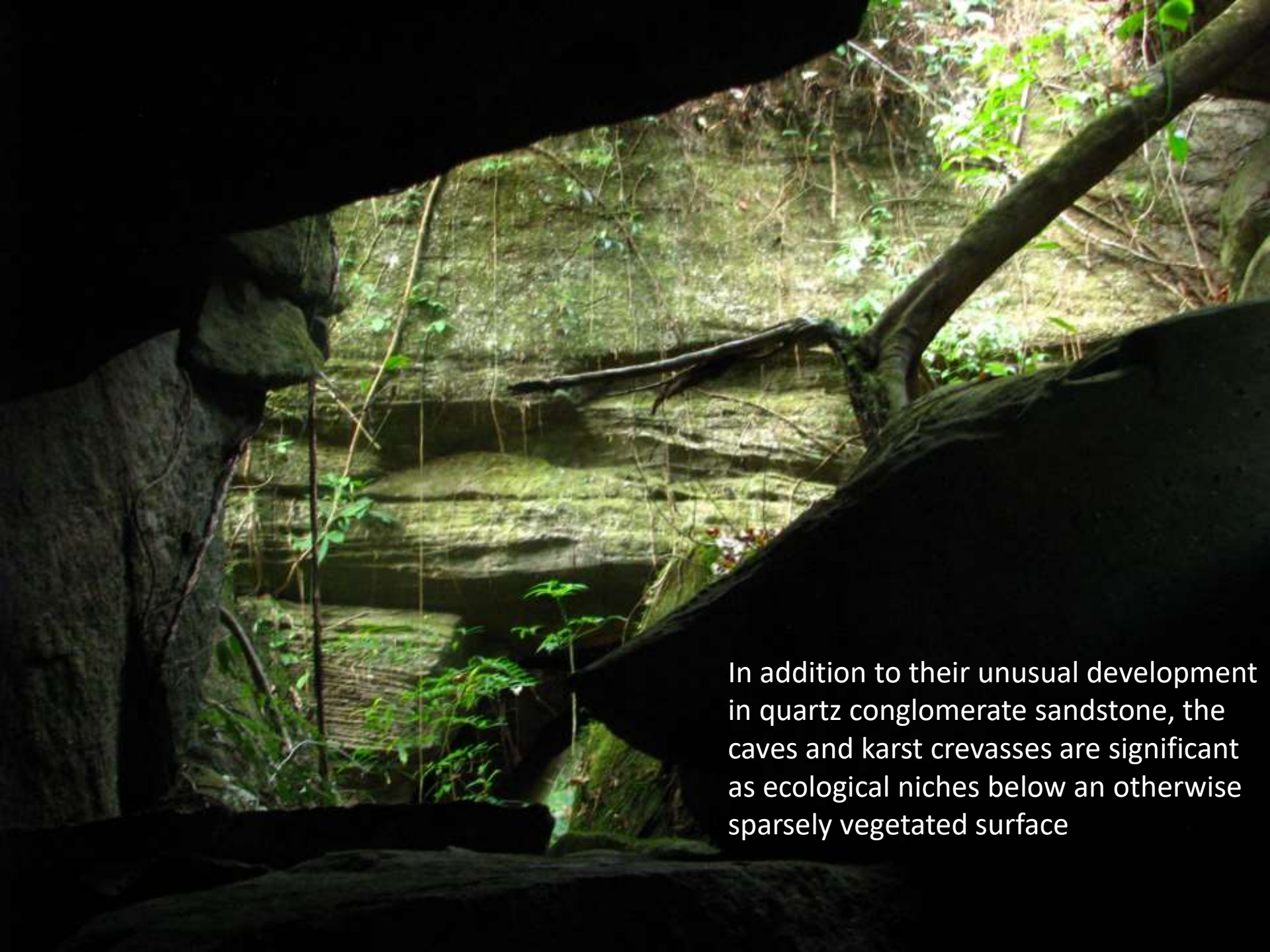


Phu Hin Rong Kla was the last outpost of the Communist insurgency until the mid-1980s. This Air Raid Shelter Cave, the largest of 4 caves, sheltered up to 500 people during bombing raids.



Quartz conglomerate sandstone in the wall of Air Raid Shelter Cave,
probably in the Phu Phan Formation, Khorat Group, Phu Hin Rong Kla National Park





In addition to their unusual development in quartz conglomerate sandstone, the caves and karst crevasses are significant as ecological niches below an otherwise sparsely vegetated surface

Anyone know of similar caves in Australia?

Many thanks to Terry Bolger & Martin Ellis for first drawing Tham Din Phieng to my attention, to Martin for driving me to Phu Hin Rong Kla, & to Jeanette for helping with the PowerPoint.