

Origins of Cave and Feature Names in the Jenolan Show Caves

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Abstract

As guides strove to acquaint visitors with the “exotic” cave environment, a tradition of giving features familiar names was established, and continues to the present day. It links us with the discoverers and early visitors. To the informed, names of caves and formations can take on a hieroglyphic character that can guide you through the history of the cave. Being aware of the feature names can give a glimpse of the discoverers, prompt interest in the adventures of early visitors and even recognise the work involved in making the caves accessible.

Introduction

In 2005, as part of the Survey Project, the authors started to work on names for the maps that were being produced. The *Jenolan Show Caves* are made up of “caves”, sections of a system that have been given specific names to facilitate them as cave tours (Figure 1). The naming project immediately expanded as some cave and feature names provided an historical and cultural record of the *Jenolan Show Caves*. The sources for this work were guidebooks, newspapers, tourist publications, postcards, and photographs. Valuable contributions also came from the oral history supplied by past and current guiding staff. The result is an important record of the tradition of naming at Jenolan from the discovery of the caves to the present.

History

The cave system itself was known by various names: *McKeon's Caves* (1856), *Binda Caves* (1867), *Fish River Caves* (1879) and finally on 19th August 1884 the name *Jenolan* was approved (Havard 1933). The first recorded descriptive names commenced with the discovery of the arches in 1838 (Ralston 1989). Samuel Cook (1889) suggested that an arch was named the *Devils Coach House* for reasons similar to those that created the nomenclature for the numerous Devils Pinches and Peaks for surface features around the world (Figure 2). Captain Cook gave the name Devils Basin to a har-

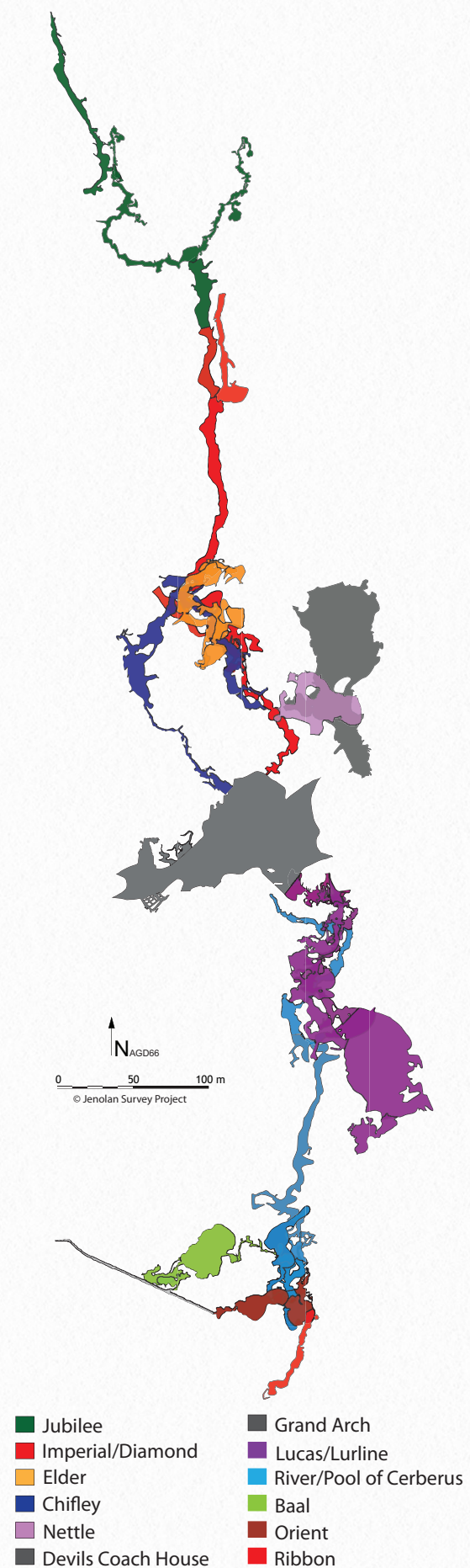
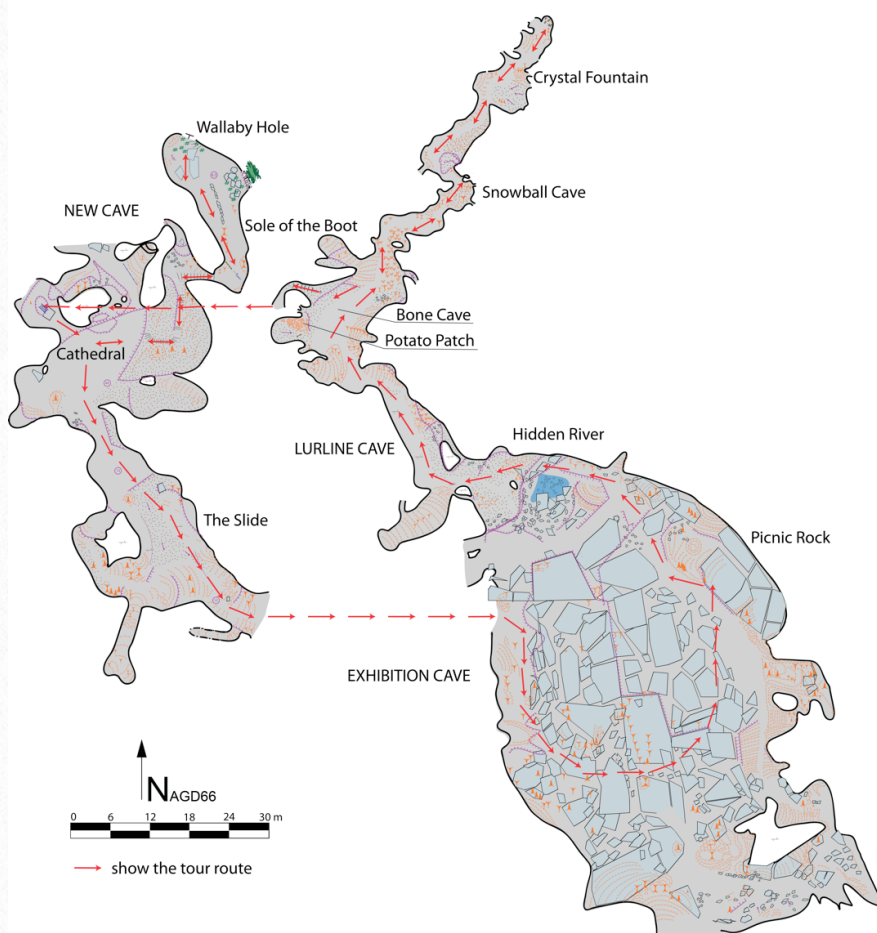


FIGURE 1. Overall map of the Jenolan Show Caves

FIGURE 2. *Devils Coach House*.FIGURE 3. *The New Cave tour*.

bour because of its gloomy appearance, being surrounded by savage rocks. For a brief period, the *Devils Coach House* was renamed *Easter Cave*, although the name never became popular.

By the 1860's names had been established for the *New Cave* (Ralston 1989). Visitors began their tour to this cave (Figure 3) by hiking through the bush to *Wallaby Hole*, entering the cave through the *Sole of the Boot* to reach the *Cathedral*. They had to negotiate *The Slide* by sitting on a bag and descending further into the cave. In the *Exhibition Cave* they climbed over rocks, lunched on *Picnic Rock* and drank water from the *Hidden River*. In *Lurline Cave* those familiar with William Wallace's opera *Lurline*, first performed in 1860, could see "...the coral bowers and cells to which Rudolph was transported" (Cook 1889). In an area of *Bone Cave* called *Irish Corner*, there was an interesting formation known as the *Potato Patch*, and further along *Bone Cave* were *Snowball Cave* and *Crystal Fountain*. Returning to *Irish Corner*, visitors were astonished to find they had to ascend a wire ladder to return to *Cathedral* and thence the cave entrance. Although this route is not used today, many of these names are still in use in the Lucas tours.

Some names became enshrined with the advent of guidebooks; "English visitors see in this stalagmite the features of Lord Salisbury" (Trickett 1905). According to the 1924 *Orient* guidebook, visitors "...one and all will recognise uncanny imitations..." and decorations seem "...veiled in a film of suggestion where more is meant than meets the eye and depends to a certain extent upon the imagination" (Havard 1924). At present the *Orient* contains 134 named features, by far the most of any cave at Jenolan (Figure 4). Many of the features have been renamed over time, with some features like the *Dome of St Pauls* renamed as many as 5 times (so far), to give a total of 206 names for the *Orient* alone. There are only 119 of the 206 names on the figure; it was not possible to fit any more on!

The reasons for names and name changes for caves, parts of caves and features are multitude, and the following outlines just a few examples.

The imagination of guides and tourists

From the very beginning, cave guides and tourists used names to describe formations, in part to make the strange

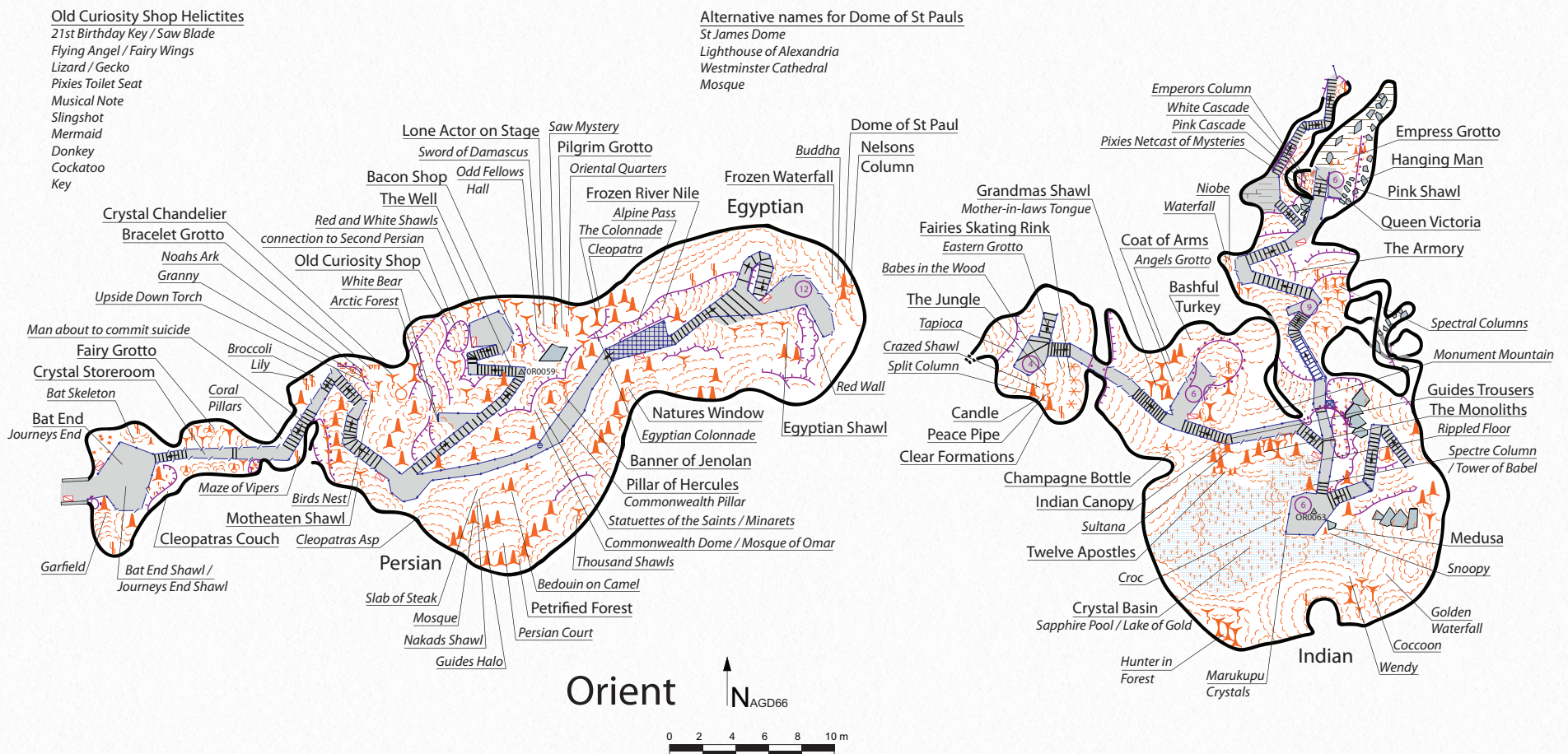


FIGURE 4. Map of Orient.



FIGURE 5. The Minaret.

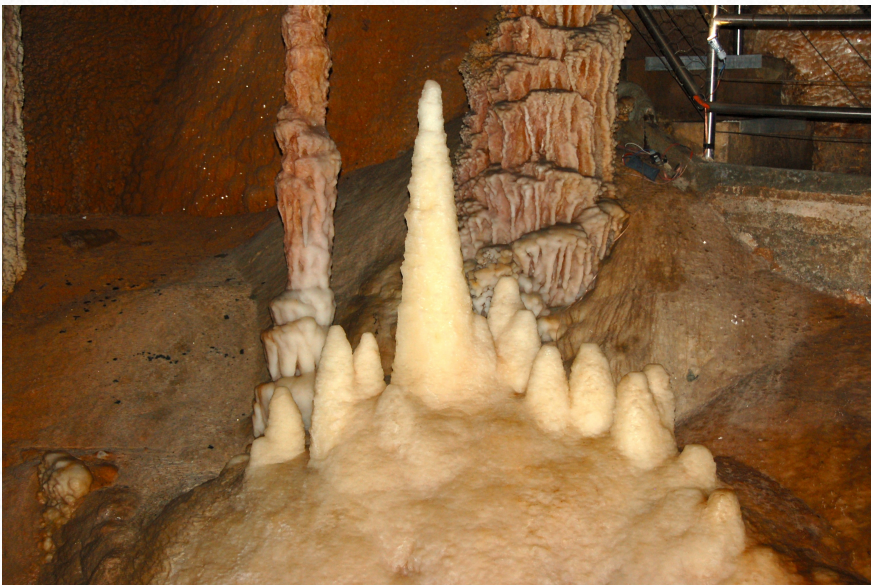
more familiar. It is a tradition that has continued and evolved. For example, renamed by young visitors, the *Unicorns Horn* has become *ET's Finger* and *The Minaret* has become *Ice Cream Cone* (Figure 5). The things that prompt a person to choose names are usually explained by culture, history and, sometimes, even profession. For example, a medical person is probably responsible for describing the helictites in the *Dragon's Throat* as *Diphtheria Symptoms*.

The beautiful and small

There are many sparkling calcite crystal decorations at Jenolan, such as stalactites, stalagmites, flowstones and helictites, that have been named but some of the most intriguing formations are obscure. Old publications and photographs have en-



FIGURE 6. Old Curiosity Shop – there are 13 helictites named here (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 7. *Twelve Apostles.*

abled identification of these treasures. Among one mass of tangled helictites, named *The Battlefield*, is the minute *Leaping Stag*. Along with the *Staghorns* in Jubilee and *The Diminutive Horse Head* in Chifley, these represent some of the smallest examples of named features at Jenolan.

Ambience of the environment

George Rawson (1883) wrote of a visit to *Fish River Caves* that “...one is bought into a silent and reverent attitude...”, hence it is no surprise that many names of religious significance were used. There is an *Organ Loft* and *Pulpit* in the Grand Archway, a *Sanctuary* in Nettle, a *Cathedral* and *Bishop* in Lucas, *Twelve Apostles* in Orient (Figure 7), with Imperial and Chifley both having a *Vestry*. Biblical names include *Elijah’s Retreat*, *Tower of Babel* and *Lots Wife*.

FIGURE 8. *Pink and White Terraces.*FIGURE 9. *Long Tom.*

Historical events

Historical events have also played a part, particularly in re-naming features. *The Terraces* in Exhibition Chamber became the *Pink and White Terraces* (Figure 8) in remembrance of those in New Zealand destroyed by the 1886 eruption of Mount Tarawera (Cook 1889).

Mafeking was besieged during the Boer War for 217 days, from October 1899 to May 1900. The relief of Mafeking by the British from the Boer coincided with the discovery of a high level passage in the *Exhibition Chamber*, hence its name and the names of some features in it (Figure 9).

Currently, there is a proposal to commemorate the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee with a named dome and arch in Jubilee and Imperial respectively.

Honouring Australian dignitaries

In 1878 the *New Cave* was named *Lucas* after John Lucas, M.L.A; “In consequence of the great interest I displayed, and by the publication of my paper, which first drew the attention of the public to them, the Surveyor-General and other high officials made an official visit, and named the largest cavern The Lucas Cave” (Rawlinson 1976). One formation was named *Judge Windeyer’s Couch* “...because it is said that the learned judge sat on it when he visited the caves” (Cook



FIGURE 10. Plaque commemorating the naming of Chifley Cave.

1889). In 1952, the *Left Branch of Imperial* was renamed *Chifley Cave* in honour of J.B. (Ben) Chifley (Figure 10), who represented in the Federal Parliament the region that included Jenolan. The name change attracted some criticism; “The gesture, however well intentioned, will not give much pleasure to Mr. Chifley’s admirers for the sake of the memory of a highly regarded man, I hope some more tactful Chief Secretary changes the ludicrous name of Chifley Cave back to what it was before” (Sunday Herald 1952).

After Ladies

In Lucas, *Queen Victoria* is unmistakable as she looks out over the *Royal Chamber* (Figure 11). Other ladies also featured throughout Jenolan, with *Lady Cecilia Carrington*, *Queen Esther* and *Margarita Cracknell* having chambers, as do *Selina* and *Lucinda*. *Katie* and *Edie* have their bowers and *Matilda* has a retreat, while *Josephine*, *Nellie*, *Ethel* and *Min-*



FIGURE 11. *Queen Victoria*.

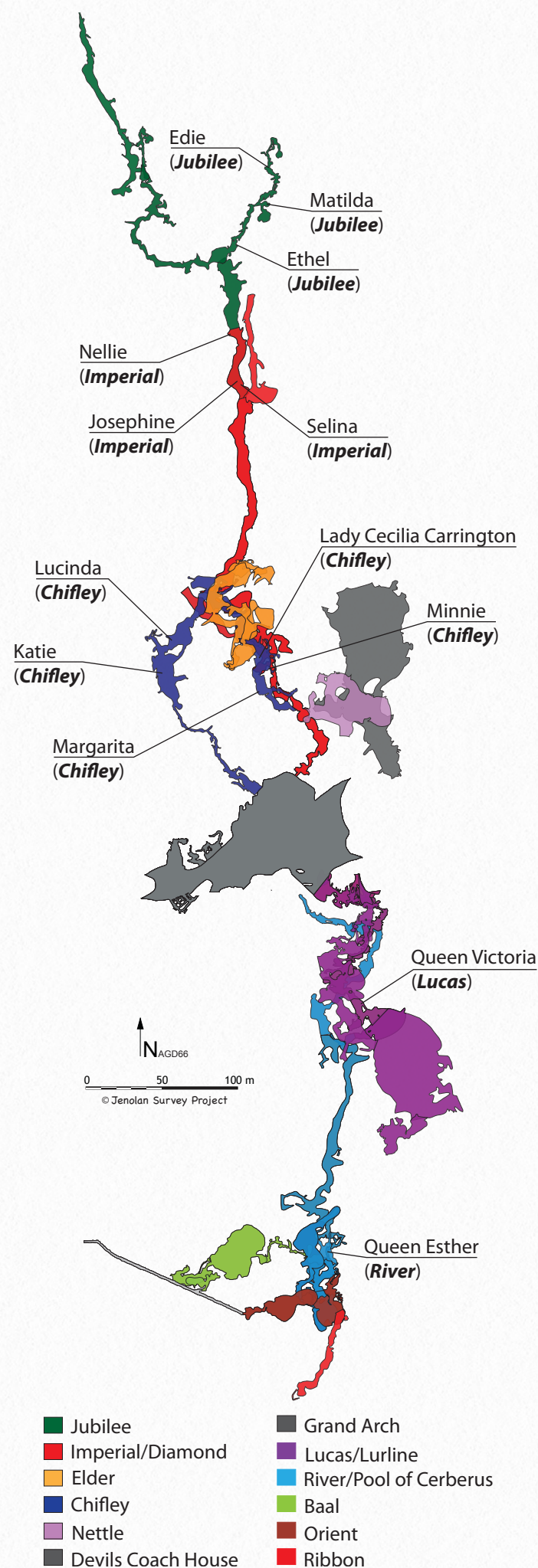


FIGURE 12. Features named after the ladies.

nie merited grottos (Figure 12).

Cave incidents

Jeremiah Wilson, exploring *Jubilee* in 1893, described the dreadful experience of having his candle go out and believing he had no matches. Fortunately he found some in his pocket, but he ensured the event was not forgotten by naming the place where he was at the time *Wilson's Despair*. In *Imperial*, *Ridley's Short Cut* was named after a "...a visitor who stepped back to allow a lady to pass and fell through (to a cave below)..." (Leeder 1994). The guides describe the incident as a "...rambling visitor who strayed from the fold, put a foot in the wrong place, and descended fifty five feet without the benefit of the rope. He landed on a coil of netting and bounced off" (Ralston 1989).

The influence of lighting

Different lighting can influence what can be recognised in the caves. Scenes lit by flickering candles, and at times augmented by magnesium lamps, delighted early visitors. However, the *Stooping Lady* could "...be seen only by candle light, the magnesium flare being too penetrating for this particular effect" (Foster 1890). *Harry Potter's Scar* was visible in the *Exhibition Chamber* until the lighting system was recently upgraded. The new lighting did however result in a perfect representation of a *Terra Cotta Warrior* appearing in shadow on the wall over the *River Styx* in River cave.

Man-made objects

There is an iron *Jacobs Ladder* in River while a previous wire *Jacobs Ladder* was used for the descent to the Imperial River prior to the concrete stairs being completed in September 1900. Near the *Pool of Reflections* a memorial block to *Bertha*, a cement mixer buried beneath it, commemorates the hard work involved in constructing paths in the caves. The proposed *Trickett's Tunnel* was eventually named the *Binnoomea Cut* when it was completed in 1954 (Figure 13).

In this discussion the evolution of names in the *Jenolan Show Caves* has been illustrated with selected examples; the Excel spreadsheets for the Survey now contain more than a thousand names. The *Jenolan Show Caves* can be thought of as the "Caves of a Thousand Names".



FIGURE 13. Plaque commemorating the opening of Binnoomea Cut.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the valuable contributions from the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society, the Jenolan Cave Guides and the many caver helpers, Jenolan Caves Survey Project for use of the maps, and Al Warild and Julia James for drafting the figures. Photos: C.Barnes (Figures 2,5,7-11,); J.Lim (Figure 6), K.Bellamy (Figure 13).

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Video

http://nswsc.caves.org.au/trogalong/video/Jenolan_showcave_names.avi