

**Preamble**

The ~~Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct~~ Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct is ~~centred~~ centered on a dramatic karst landscape located in the north western ranges of the Snowy Mountains. Its history weaves through the natural, Indigenous and European histories of Australia and the broader international histories of speleological and touristic developments. This historical background has as its base historical information about the Precinct contained within the 1989 and 1992 Conservation Plans together with additional researched material. It is presented within a thematic framework based on the State Historical themes [SHI] and drawing on the Australian National Themes [ANT]. Those themes are explored within the specific development of the site in this section of the report. In the Contextual synthesis in Section 4.0 the role of the site within similar Show Cave and touristic developments is examined to further identify the place of the Precinct within the context of the State and National themes.

Relevant State Historical Themes

1. Aboriginal contact: may include sites of conflict, resistance, interaction [evidence of population movement]
3. Exploration
4. Pastoralism
6. Land tenure: Aboriginal and European: may include subdivisions, fences, survey marks etc
9. Environment: natural or modified and shaped
11. Migration
14. Communications
15. Utilities and technology
17. Labour
21. Government and administration: includes maladministration
24. Housing
26. Cultural Sites
32. Education
34. Events: may include monuments, sites of special significance and social value
35. Persons: may include individuals, families, dynasties, birthplace, place of residence, women's sites

Relevant Australian National Themes

Tracing the evolution of a continent's special environments.

Peopling the continent.[2.2, 2.5]

Developing local and regional economies.[3.3, 3.6, 3.10, 3.11, 3.15, 3.16, 3.21 and 3.22]

Building settlements.[4.2]

Educating [6.5, 6.6]

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## Governing [7.5]

### Developing cultural institutions and ways of life [8.1,8.3,8.5]

This historical overview is a reflection of the human values placed on nature, and the history of human activity that has impacted on nature within the Yarrangobilly Precinct.

## **2.1 Aboriginal Occupation**

### **2.1.1 Archaeological Evidence of Aboriginal Occupation within the Region**

The archaeological evidence of the Aboriginal occupation of the NSW southern highlands dates to the Pleistocene i.e. around 20,000 years ago, although most of the sites are dated to the last 4,000 years. At this time a zone of cold steppe grassland, with shrubs and stands of eucalypts in protected locations and tundra-like herbfields would have prevailed<sup>1</sup> with glaciated peaks and periglacial conditions down to at least 1000m above sea level [a.s.l.]

Cloggs Cave, a limestone cave in the foothills of the southern highlands in eastern Victoria near the Snowy River, shows intermittent occupation between 17,720 ± 840BP until 8,720 ± 230BP.<sup>2</sup> The early occupation cultural deposit is located within an inner chamber of the cave and comprises hearths and a small number of stone and bone tools. The cave was re-occupied only about 1,000 years ago and the cultural deposit is located at the mouth of the cave in contrast with the earlier evidence.

Birrigai (Flood et al 1987) is a granite rock shelter located higher up [about 730m a.s.l.] on the tablelands and ranges of the south eastern ranges. Occupation is dated from 21,000 ± 220BP until the early Holocene the cultural remains indicate a very low and perhaps constant rate of Aboriginal use. The site contains low densities of stone artefacts, one hearth and little charcoal. No faunal remains are present. The changing climate between the Pleistocene and Holocene does not appear to have altered this pattern of occupation. However, from 3,000 years to the time of European contact, there was a marked increase in the occupation of the site.

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<sup>1</sup> See Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999, p179; see also Johnson 1992, p21-25

<sup>2</sup> Flood 1980, p 254-275

<sup>3</sup> Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:179; see also Johnson 1992:21-25

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### 2.1.2 Moth Hunter Hypothesis

The Bogong Shelter, located at 1433m a.s.l. in the Bogong ranges to the north of and more elevated than the Yarrangobilly Caves, was first occupied around 1,000 years ago. Flood (et al 1987:23) Flood<sup>5</sup> argues that, although this site represents the earliest dated evidence for the Aboriginal exploitation of the Bogong moth aestivation period, this pattern of seasonal habitation of the alpine and sub alpine ranges may have commenced as early as 3,000 years ago. Flood (1980:176)<sup>6</sup> also found extensive evidence of Aboriginal occupations sites and ceremonial grounds on elevated open flats below the caves in the southern part of the Bogong Mountains, including Rings Creek, Perisher Gap and Big Plain all within 10-30 minutes walk from the moth caves (I'm not sure where some of these sites are but Perisher gap is a long way from Yarrangobilly in the south of the Park — there are two lots of Bogong mountains within KNP are we sure we are talking about the Bogongs near Yagby ie north??). Another, near the Yarrangobilly village Yarrangobilly Village she describes as a montane camp on route to the Bogong Mountains from the Tumut valley. It contained 31 stone artefacts including geometric microliths and Bondi Points suggesting a relatively recent occupation date [<4,000 years ago].

The ethnographic evidence indicates a summer seasonal migration to highland sites to take advantage of the Bogong moth migration and aestivation period and to undertake ceremony and other social gatherings. The Bogong moth, *Argotis infusa*, migrate to the highest peaks of the Snowy Mountains and Victorian Alps in summer, in their millions providing a ready source of protein. The moths are easy to harvest from dark ceilings and walls of caves/rock outcrops using sticks, fine net on poles and wooden containers. A stone pestle of river stone was then used to pound the cooked moths.

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<sup>5</sup> Flood et al 1987:23

<sup>6</sup> Flood 1980:176

Flood ~~argues-believes~~ (Flood 1995:240)<sup>7</sup> that other readily available food staples such as wallaby, daisy yam and possum, could not in themselves have supported such large gatherings of Aborigines in these higher areas. She also recognises (Flood 1988: 274 cited in Johnson 1992:29)<sup>8</sup> that the importance of moths 'was less that of a seasonal addition to the male diet than as an enabling mechanism for ceremonial life'.

### **2.1.3 Other Views on the importance of the Bogong Moths**

There have been a number of reviews (Bowdler 1981; Chapman 1977; Kamminga 1989) of Flood's moth-hunter hypothesis which suggest the importance of the moths in the seasonal diet of the Aboriginal occupants may have been overstated. Chapman (1997) ~~argues-makes the case~~ that the role of Bogong moths was not as a summer staple food, but rather a 'treat' food enjoyed by men during ceremonial occasions. Summer was a time of seasonal abundance and the use of moths in this season when a variety of food resources were available, contradicts Flood's suggestion that moths made up for a winter time of leanness. Flood ~~argues-states~~ that a number of tribal groups may have come together to maximise their richest food source. She notes tribal boundaries coincided with the crests of ranges, which coincided with the moth aestivation sites. Chapman ~~argues-says~~ that tribal territory could be expected to be centred on maximal resources and suggests the greater ecological diversity and availability of water is in the montane valleys.

Ethnographic accounts suggest a tribal sharing of resources in the moth areas ~~but they were~~ not a focus of tribal territory. ~~She-Chapman~~ suggests that the sharing of the resource, -even in tribal territory which fully enclosed moth sites, was related to ceremonial function rather than an exploitation of a staple element in a subsistence diet.

~~Bowdler (1981)~~ ~~Bowdler~~<sup>9</sup> ~~argues-says~~ that the moths were a ceremonial food enjoyed only by men [according to a number of references], and did not represent a staple food. They were subject to population fluctuations and migratory irregularity. Bowdler suggests a more likely staple was the yam daisy *Microseris. scapigera*. which formed part of a broad based diet. This suggestion has been refuted by others (~~cited in Johnson 1992:37~~)<sup>10</sup> who suggest it is not readily identifiable except when in flower and that in higher elevations they are more likely to produce woody tubers unsuitable for eating.

Kamminga et al<sup>11</sup> (~~1989~~) also notes the unreliability of the moth populations and migrations and the wide range of other foods available in the summer months. They suggest a broad spectrum

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<sup>7</sup> Flood 1995:240

<sup>8</sup> Flood 1988: 274 cited in Johnson 1992:29

<sup>9</sup> Bowdler 1981

<sup>10</sup> Bowdler cited in Johnson 1992:37

<sup>11</sup> Kamminga et al (1989)



strategy where the abundance and availability of a wide range of plant species, and, where political and social factors, were equally if not more important to the seasonal movement of the Aboriginal population in the uplands.

In a synthesis, Lournados<sup>12</sup> (1997:199; 237ff) ~~argues-states that~~ the upland evidence suggests an ephemeral Pleistocene occupation, followed by an increasing establishment and use of sites which resulted from marked changes in Aboriginal socio-demographic patterns beginning in the late Holocene. He ~~says that argues~~ in the eastern forests these patterns were generally associated with, but not necessarily determined by, ameliorating climate and a contraction of the forests. Although the forests expanded in the early Holocene there is minimal archaeological evidence of their use at this time. A drier climate about 3,000 years ago saw the contraction of forests which, coupled with Aboriginal firing practises could have facilitated the Aboriginal movement to and through these areas. In the last 2,500 years, with a more humid climate, the forests began to expand once more, however the Aboriginal occupation continued to increasingly expand against the climatic trend.

In other areas such as wetlands, the semi-arid Victorian mallee and parts of the coast and estuaries, the changing Aboriginal settlement pattern [in places approaching sedentism] suggests increases in Aboriginal populations, changes in population density and dispersal from this time.

At present dated/excavated archaeological evidence for the highlands region and the area of the Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct is minimal.

#### **2.1.4 Synthesis of Regional Occupation Occupation Finding Evidence**

Certainly small Aboriginal groups were occupying the highest parts of the region in the Pleistocene probably on a sporadic or seasonal basis. The Aboriginal occupation intensified in the later Holocene culminating in the large moth season gatherings in summer [November-January] after 1,000 years ago. There is ethnographic evidence of two such gatherings at Blowering, near Tumut and at Jindabyne. However late Holocene occupation of the highlands region would not have been restricted to these gatherings.

Other archaeological evidence for Aboriginal occupation is located around Yarrangobilly Village, below Fiery Range and along Rules Creek, at between 1300m a.s.l. to 960m a.s.l. These elevations are just beyond the aestivation range of the Bogong moth. There is a reported Aboriginal burial ground<sup>13</sup> comprising 12 oblong earth mounds marked out by stones, some of which may have been completely covered by stones at one time and a number of open camp

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<sup>12</sup> Lournados 1997:199; 237ff

<sup>13</sup> Rose 1966: 38

sites near the Yarrangobilly Village suggesting a relatively stable population and settlement. There are numerous open camp sites along the Rules Creek valley floor.

Flood 1980 and Spate 1989<sup>14</sup> find that apart from burials there is no evidence of Aboriginal occupation of the limestone caves of the area.

The caves and surrounds of the Coleman Plains higher up in the ranges, contain apparently richer occupation deposit including camps sites, burial sites and bora grounds, and, reportedly, painting sites<sup>15</sup> ~~(Cooke 1988)~~. There is an outcrop of chert, which had been quarried for use in stone tool manufacture located just above Blue Waterhole cave. According to Spate<sup>16</sup> ~~(1997:39)~~ 'Gunyahs' were marked on cadastral maps late in the post-contact period. Spate however, suggests the relationship between the Coleman Plain sites and adjacent areas may not have been adequately assessed and further investigation will yield more sites which may minimise the apparent differences in site densities and variety. Johnson et al<sup>17</sup> ~~(1992:42)~~ also suggest that the present distribution and density of sites relates more to site exposure and concentrated investigation than to ~~the an-Aboriginal~~ pattern of Aboriginal occupation.

<sup>14</sup> Flood 1980: 254; Spate 1989:11, 1997:35, 37ff.

<sup>15</sup> Cooke 1988

<sup>16</sup> Spate 1997:39

<sup>17</sup> Johnson et al 1992:42

## **2.2 Aboriginal Occupation of the Yarrangobilly Caves Area**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

The association of Aboriginal people with the area has yet to be fully understood.

European researchers and residents have found little evidence of Aboriginal occupancy, the assumption has been made that the area was only a transitory route, or used briefly at certain times of the year. Local Aboriginal people's occupation of the region was so disrupted by the influx of Europeans that much of their recent history and associations with places in the vicinity of Yarrangobilly is thought to have been substantially lost.

The Walgalu [also referred to as the Warrigals or Wulgals] people occupied the region on the western side of the Snowy Mountains between the Murray River and Tumut. They are part of the larger Wiradjuri tribal grouping. Summer migrations [November, December to January] into the foothills of the Alps, of groups usually resident along the river valleys, reportedly included groups from Eden, Bega, Braidwood and the Gippsland.

**DO WE HAVE A NAME FOR THE LOCAL TRIBE/S & LANGUAGE GROUP??**

### **2.2.2 Aboriginal Pre-History**

In the area of the Yarrangobilly Caves former Aboriginal occupation is demonstrated by a suite of open camp sites and a cave burial. These sites are within a days walk of a camp site and burial ground higher up around the old Yarrangobilly village Yarrangobilly Village. Aboriginal knowledge of some of these places is retained by members of the local Aboriginal community. Alice Williams and Phyllis Freeman (Tumut-Brungle LALC: pers.comm.)<sup>18</sup> have reported on women's sites along the ridges above Rules Creek. Vince Bulger has reported on important sites throughout the region.

The emerging pattern suggests Aboriginal occupation at these elevations may have been more complex and may not have been necessarily driven only by migrations to the upper moth caves. Foods available to the Aboriginal occupants in the Yarrangobilly area would have included native raspberry, —and other berries, native cherry which fruits in spring and autumn. Vegetable sources include daisy yam, bracken ferns, and other edible fern, native carrots, tubers from lily and orchids, grass and acacia seeds. In winter the valley would have provided ferns, tubers and small game such as lizards reptiles, possums and wallaby, and —fish and eels in the river. Movement up into the higher parts of the region in the height of summer could have taken advantage of — the of the summer grasses, tubers and yams, quail and kangaroos on the Long Plain, and moths in the mountains surrounding Long Plain.

<sup>18</sup> : pers.comm Alice Williams and Phyllis Freeman

Patterns of seasonal movement are generally suggested to involve movement along the river systems to their upper catchments but could also have involved established routes along ridge lines. In addition, Flood (1980:116)<sup>19</sup> describes the pass between Yarrangobilly and Kiandra as a possible link between the Tumut and the Murrumbidgee River systems so that movement may not have focussed solely on trips into the higher elevations but between river systems at lower elevations.

### **2.2.3 Aboriginal Archaeological Context of the 3.4.2 Local Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct**

Over 100 Aboriginal sites have been recorded within a 20km radius of the Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct. A number of these are located within the Jounama Pine Plantation about 8km to the north of the area. Geering (1981)<sup>20</sup> assessed these open sites on the basis of size and content as representing typical transient occupation of low intensity, which included stone tool maintenance.

A number of Aboriginal sites have previously been reported to be located within the Precinct. Most of the recorded information is by Stephen Riley, a former guide at the caves. It is known that a number of NPWS archaeologists and investigation officers have also inspected areas within the precinct. Flood's 1980 survey appears to have concentrated specifically on cave entrances and overhangs. Not all of the ~~reported sites~~ have been registered with the NPWS, nor ~~were~~ site forms completed for accession on the NPWS Register of Aboriginal Sites. ~~All available NPWS Site Forms are presented in Appendix XXXXX ??? confidential info? Probably not appropriate to include in appendix.~~

There has been only one comprehensive archaeological survey for Aboriginal sites within the precinct. Barber (1999) surveyed a straight line transect between the radio hut and the Rules Creek valley floor for the proposed installation of a Telstra cable. ~~He failed to relocate a known site on this route [see below]. He failed to relocate a known site on this route recorded in 1985 by Stephen Riley, a guide at Yarrangobilly Caves. Riley describes the site as an artefact scatter.~~

For a full description of the recorded archaeological sites located within the Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct See Section 3.2.2

<sup>19</sup> Flood 1980:116

<sup>20</sup> Geering 1981

## I THINK WE NEED A BIT IOF GENERAL EUROPEAN BACKGROUND TO THE AREA HERE

### 2.3 European Contact with Local Aborigines and Finding the Caves

The earliest known European explorers of the Southern Alps in the vicinity of Yarrangobilly were Hamilton Hume and William Hovell who crossed the Tumut River near Talbingo and travelled across the western foothills of the Alps in 1824. The early explorers recognised the grazing potential of the alpine country and squatters moved into the area in the early 1800s to exploit it mainly for its summer pastures.<sup>21</sup>

#### 2.32.1 The Caves

The Europeans who first came upon the caves were men who were in the area for unrelated reasons - using the valley as a route to some other place, searching for lost cattle or looking for an alternate feeding area.

A simple definition for the cave formations like those the early cattlemen found is, 'a natural underground cavity penetrable by human beings'.

The largest and most widespread caves including those at Yarrangobilly are generally karst<sup>22</sup> caves, which have formed as a result of solution by water of a relatively soluble rock. Limestone is the most common rock involved. More complete descriptions of the wide variety of features encompassed in the phrase 'caves and karst' are to be found in standard reference works on karst geomorphology.<sup>23</sup>

. . . The surface features and cave formations of limestone were first described by Cvijic in the Karst region of the Adriatic last [nineteenth] century. Karst (also used to be spelt Kaarst) . . . The name karst has become a comprehensive term applied to limestone areas where surface water is diverted underground and solution occurs. So 'karst' means 'like the Karst Plateau' in the country known more recently as Yugoslavia. . .<sup>24</sup>

The name most commonly associated with the earliest European discovery of the Yarrangobilly Caves is that of John Bowman. The year is usually accepted as 1834 although recent research

<sup>21</sup> Good RB 1992 *Kosciusko Heritage*:136

<sup>22</sup> 'Karst' is a generic term used for the characteristic terrain produced by such solution. It includes surface landforms such as small-scale solutional channels and sculpturing (collectively referred to as 'minor solution sculpture'), blind valleys, closed depressions (dolines) and springs, together with subsurface features (i.e. caves).

<sup>23</sup> A. G. Davey, ed., 'Report of the Australian Speleological Federation. National Heritage Assessment Study.', *Helictite*, 1984, 15(2): 3.

<sup>24</sup> A. D. Hardy, S. J. Hardy, J. Edwards, *Understanding Caves. A Geofocus Resource*. (Geofocus Resources Pty. Ltd., 1995.), p3.

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has revealed a survey map of the area dated July 1833<sup>25</sup> -. Anthony Bradley, son of the second caretaker of Yarrangobilly Caves, wrote in 1963 that the year of discovery was 1842.<sup>26</sup>

Another variation is that Bowman found the caves in 1836.<sup>27</sup>

### **2.32.21 John Bowman**

The factors common to the stories are that Bowman, a farmer or grazier, lived in the area. He ran cattle over a large area and on the significant occasion was looking for cattle that had strayed. Bowman, the cattle, or both, sought shelter from a thunderstorm.

During the storm Bowman found both the Glory Cave arch and some of his cattle. It has been said he was able to inspect one passage by natural light for nearly 100 feet.<sup>28</sup> 'In the winding corridor on the north he wrote on the walls.'<sup>29</sup>

Another variation is that Bowman found the caves in 1836.<sup>30</sup>

Also - If Murray [Terence Aubrey Murray of Yarralumla] did indeed cross the mountains from the Monaro earlier in the 1830s it cannot be said for certain that he did not find the entrance to the Yarrangobilly caves then, before Bowman. It is claimed in the Yarrangobilly area that Murray was the man to discover them, but nothing has been found to make a definite claim for Murray pre-dating Bowman.<sup>31</sup>

### **2.3.32 Murray and Mowle**

Again, there is more than one version of the next recorded visit. The first refers to March 1839, when Terence Aubrey Murray, the owner of Yarralumla Station on the Limestone Plains had spent a hazardous time looking for feed for his stock. The party consisted of Murray, his friend

<sup>25</sup> P. Dowling pers comm in submission to the Conservation Management Plan.

<sup>26</sup> 'An original letter requested by Mr. Best, Director of the Tourist Bureau, in which the early history of Yarrangobilly is outlined, October 1963. Cited in Gary Bilson-Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves', *Helictite*, 1986, 24 (1/2): 31; Greg Middleton, An interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly, 19 August 1970, *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(4): 59-66 quoted in Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1/2): 35.

<sup>27</sup> G. Wilson, *Murray of Yarralumla*, (Oxford, Melbourne, 1968) cited in Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves', *Helictite*, 1986, Volume 24(1 & 2): 31-39.

<sup>28</sup> '150th anniversary of discovery of Yarrangobilly's magnificent Caves.', *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 18 December 1984.

<sup>29</sup> Anon, *Tumut Centenary Booklet of 1924*; 'Yarrangobilly Caves. Discovered 100 Years Ago.' *Cootamundra Herald*, January 1934 [day not cited], Graham and Watson, editors, *Tumut and District Sesquicentenary Book 1824-1974 Souvenir Programme*, (Tumut and Adelong Times, Tumut, 1974); L. Hoad, 'History of Yarrangobilly Caves and Upper Tumut Area.', *Tumut and Adelong Times*, Tuesday 4 August 1964; J. Bridle, *Talbingo. The Story of its History*, (Tumut and Adelong Times, Tumut, 1979); An interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly, with Greg Middleton, 19 August 1970, *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(4): 59-66; An interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves with Greg Middleton, 27 August 1970, *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 145-154; cited in Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves', *Helictite*, 1986, Volume 24 (1 & 2): 31-39.

<sup>30</sup> G. Wilson, *Murray of Yarralumla*, (Oxford, Melbourne, 1968) cited in Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves', *Helictite*, 1986, Volume 24(1 & 2): 31-39.

<sup>31</sup> G. Wilson, *Murray of Yarralumla*, (Oxford, Melbourne, 1968) cited in Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1 & 2): 31-39.

and 'superintendent' the teenage Stewart Mowle, overseer McNamara and two Aborigines known as Tommy and Harry.<sup>32</sup>

That part of their trek which is relevant to the Yarrangobilly Caves began when the party crossed the mountains towards the Murray River, travelling down the Long Plain across the head waters of the Murrumbidgee River to Yarrangobilly. There they camped on a rainy night on 16 March 1839. From there they rode down Mt. Talbingo to the Tumut River. Of the journey, Mowle wrote -

*The nature of the country itself, steep and rough mountains, completely wore out our horses, and we arrived at the Murrumbidgee again without one of them and carrying our saddles. The hounds were lost, we supposed they had starved, for there was no game upon which to feed them; a country afterwards abounding with kangaroos, consequent upon the poisoning of the native dogs.*

*As we were waiting at a pond . . . we were joined by a member of a tribe and I think we sent one of them on to Yarrawlumla [sic] for horses - in the meantime we continued our walking towards home and some of the blacks carried our saddles. The horses came and thus we finished our journey. . . .*<sup>33</sup>

The party was said to have collected specimens, which were later sent to the Mining Museum in Melbourne. Murray said there were signs of Europeans having been in the area prior to their visit.<sup>34</sup>

An alternate version is that the men visited there in 1840. Murray was described as an explorer or surveyor for the Victorian Government and Mowle as a surveyor. Again, they took away 'a packload of specimens of stalactites, stalagmites, and other formations and Aboriginal skulls to be displayed in the Melbourne Mining Museum, where they may be seen today.' This account also quotes Murray as saying there were signs that white people had been in the caves.<sup>35</sup>

A third variation is that Mowle took away a skull, which he kept 'beside his books for many years'.

In an interview conducted in 1970 Leo Hoad put the Murray/Mowle visit in the context of 'the big controversy' existing between N.S.W. and Victoria over which was the true branch of the Murray River.<sup>36</sup>

Surveyor Oliver Trickett wrote -

*. . . Mr. S. M. Mowle informs me that they [the caves] were explored by the late Sir Terence Aubrey Murray in 1839. It was a difficult place to reach in those days. Mr. Mowle relates that on one of their*

<sup>32</sup> Patricia Clark, *A Colonial Woman. The Life and Times of Mary Braidwood Mowle 1827-1857*, (Sydney 1986) p58.

<sup>33</sup> Patricia Clarke, *A Colonial Woman. The Life and Times of Mary Braidwood Mowle 1827-1857*, (Allen & Unwin, 1986.), pp58-59.

<sup>34</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, [August 1992], Vol 1, p12. Quote an unreferenced statement from the 1989 Arch Design Group Conservation Plan. See footnote 33.

<sup>35</sup> Arch Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, [October 1989], p12. Statement not referenced.

<sup>36</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 145.

trips they lost their horses, and had to call in the assistance of a tribe of blacks to carry their baggage; further, that many human bones were found during their explorations. . . .<sup>37</sup>

Another recorded visitor was squatter and explorer William Brodribb. In 1848 he took some of his sheep across the alps from his Monaro run at Myalla, south of Cooma. Although Brodribb knew the conditions would not be favourable, he set out with 1,000 maiden ewes, three men, three horses to carry supplies, cooking utensils, and blankets. After days of travelling, they reached the 'Port Phillip Gap', where they were engulfed in a snowstorm. Brodribb - . . . made up my mind to make a search with the guide to reach Yarrangobilly Gap and from there to a small cattle station down the western side of the mountains.

They finally reached the stock station and after a meal Brodribb returned to his men and stock. They retraced Brodribb's route and safely reached the stockman's hut at Yarrangobilly. From there they travelled on to Tumut.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> O. Trickett, *Guide to Yarrangobilly Caves*. New South Wales. (W. A. Gullick, Government Printer, 1917.), p8.

<sup>38</sup> W. A. Brodribb, *Recollections of an Australian Squatter, 1835-1883*, (First published Sydney 1883, facsimile edition Sydney ,1978.), pp60-64.



Figure 2.1 Oliver Trickett the Geological Surveyor for the Department of Mines from 1896 to 1919 who was given the responsibility of the protection of caves in New South Wales.

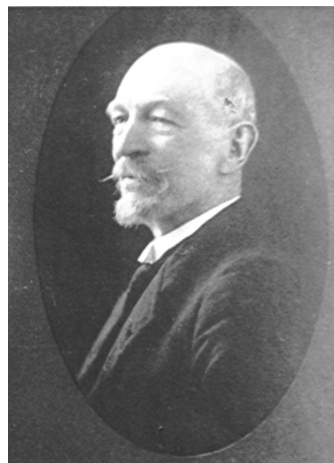


Figure 2.2 Visitors Number 1 Cottage on the left, the Caretakers Cottage in the center were constructed in 1888 with Jersey Cottage on the right constructed in 1890. The Murray and Bradley families are grouped in front of the cottages. [This photograph donated by Ms Marcia Cummins (nee Bradley) is held in the NPWS Photographic Collection at Yarrangobilly]

~~Figure 2.2 Visitors Number 1 Cottage on the left, the Caretakers Cottage in the center were constructed in~~

~~1888 with Jersey Cottage on the right constructed in 1890. The Murray and Bradley families are grouped in front of the cottages.~~

~~[This photograph donated by Ms Marcia Cummins (ne Bradley) is held in the NPWS Photographic Collection at Yarrangobilly]~~

### **Figure 2.12.3.4 Local Knowledge of the Caves**

The discovery of gold at Kiandra, 24 kilometres to the south of the caves area, brought miners and consequent settlement. The rush began in November 1859 and by April of the following year, the Kiandra field had a population of some 10,000 miners.

One form of recreation for the people there was to organise picnic parties on a Sunday and ride down to the caves. They used candles, or, to make a big flare, soaked softwood pieces in fat and lit them as a torch.<sup>39</sup> Placing this interest in caves within a colonial or state context, Wombeyan Caves and Jenolan Caves were opened to the public in 1865 and 1867 respectively. However those caves were also known locally before they were officially opened.

## **2.4 Nineteenth Century Visual Perceptions of Caves**

### **2.4.1 Australian Perceptions**

A paper published in 1997 by Elery Hamilton-Smith looked at nineteenth century perceptions of Australian caves as demonstrated in the work of sketchers, artists, engravers and photographers.<sup>40</sup>

Early sketches were done to compliment field maps and scientific descriptions of an area explored. (Later, photographs were used as illustrations in geological reports.) The paper gives particular praise to Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell for his work with the Wellington Caves - his accurate and detailed maps, sketches which illustrated various geological features, the beautifully rendered drawings and watercolours of the Cathedral Cave.

Both Mitchell's written reports and the associated images generated great interest, with his work widely published in at least the United Kingdom, North America, Germany and Italy. At the same time local publicity stimulated attention. Naturalist George Bennett commented on the way in which caves had become 'one of the colonial lions.'

<sup>39</sup> A. H. M. Bradley, 'Recollections of the Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1972, 16(6): 162.

<sup>40</sup> Elery Hamilton-Smith, 'Perceptions of Australian Caves in the 19th Century: The Visual Record.', *Helictite*, 35(1&2): 5-12.

Next artists were attracted to the caves, later joined by the engravers who became popular from the 1860s with the rise of popular magazines. The intention of the engraver was for a realistic image and this was often achieved with a reasonably high degree of accuracy.

The author of the paper speaks in praise of the early drawings and paintings not only for their beauty but because they present a record of the caves in pristine condition. Photographs started to become commonplace from the late 1880s. They appeared as cabinet prints, stereographs, lantern slides and occasional illustrations in books and magazines. Then, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there occurred what has been described as 'a veritable epidemic of picture postcards'. Also, by the 1890s caves were seen primarily as an attraction for the new tourist industry. The images of the caves were expected to advance this perception.

#### **2.4.2 Why an Interest in Caves?**

- Caves have always been objects of curiosity and fascination.
- Perhaps for some early artists it was a matter of finding diversity and interest in what they saw as the monotony of the Australian landscape.
- Some illustrators enjoyed the caves in their own right.
- One influence may have been the immense interest generated by Mitchell's work at Wellington.
- It has been argued elsewhere that artists were influenced by 'the new enlightenment with the growing understanding of the natural sciences.'
- It has also been argued that 19th century landscape painters were influenced by their recognition of the new geological science. For example - '... it seems clear that [Conrad] Martens had read Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, the book that revolutionised thought about the creation of the world.'

Figure 2.2 An 1886 engraving of Fish River Cave, the former name of Jenolan Caves.  
[The engraving is from 'Australian Pictures', 1886 reproduced from the cover of *Helictite* Volume 24 1&2]



Figure 2.2 An 1886 engraving of Fish River Cave, the former name of Jenolan Caves.  
(The engraving is from 'Australlian Pictures', 1886 reproduced from the cover of *Helictite* Volume 24 1&2)

### **2.4.3 Earliest Photographs of Yarrangobilly Caves**

The earliest known photograph of Yarrangobilly Caves is held in the Tumut Historical Society Collection. The photographer is unknown and the inscription not verified. The caption reads 'The Glory Arch entrance to the Yarrangobilly Caves Discovered by John Bowman in 1834. Photograph taken in 1866.' Bilton suggests the photograph 'may have been quite a technical achievement considering the first wet plate negatives were made just 15 years earlier'.<sup>41</sup>

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Figure 2.3 The earliest known photograph of Yarrangobilly Caves. Note the horses and men in the foreground. [Photograph reproduced courtesy of the Tumut Historical Society]  
Photographer Charles Kerry and a party visited the Jersey Cave in 1891 and claimed to have discovered the inner part, their experience reported by the *Illustrated Sydney News*<sup>42</sup>. Bradley disputed this in discussion with Middleton in 1985.<sup>43</sup>  
When Murray was appointed caretaker he engaged miners from Kiandra to make a way into the 'beautiful' part of the Cave.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Illustrated Sydney News*, 28 March, 11 and 25 April 1892.

<sup>43</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1984, 29(4): 59.

<sup>44</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

## **2.5 Show Caves in the Australian Context**

All of the major developments in the opening up and preservation of 'Show Caves' in Australia took place in the nineteenth century.

The first Government action towards the preservation of caves came in the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1862. A further Act in 1884 withdrew the two reserves containing Abercrombie from annual lease for the preservation of the caves. Also, under this Act and the Public Trust Act of 1897 Jenolan and Wombeyan Caves Reserves were set apart from any original conditional purchase or lease.<sup>45</sup> In 1891 a series of cave reserves were established over other parts of the limestone belt in NSW, probably, it has been suggested, as a result of new karst discoveries and the explosion of interest in Australian caves at this time.<sup>46</sup>

The earliest reserve in New South Wales made to protect a karst landscape was at Wombeyan in 1865 and a Keeper was appointed in 1868. An accommodation House was constructed at Wombeyan in 1889, which was destroyed by fire in May 1934. The next caves reserve was proclaimed for Jenolan Caves and the first Keeper appointed in 1867. Construction of Jenolan Caves House took place in 1887. Naracoorte Caves [NSW], which are now on the World Heritage List, were opened to the public in 1884 as was Queensland's Capricorn Caverns (also known as Olsen's Caves). Then in 1887 a guide was appointed at Yarrangobilly in the Snowy Mountains and it was opened to the public in the same year as Waitomo in New Zealand was opened. Abercrombie Caves were opened to the public and a caretaker appointed in 1888. In Western Australia Ngilgi Cave at Yallingup, Yanchep Cave and the Augusta Margaret River Caves were opened to the public in 1900, 1903 and 1904 respectively.

By contrast, it was not until 1919 that Yarrangobilly Caves were withdrawn from a license held by the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney. The aim was the preservation of the caves and the land became reserved from sale and exempted from license or lease. Two years later, an additional 1,300 acres surrounding the caves at Yarrangobilly were withdrawn. Finally, in 1931, the reserves were gazetted as areas for public recreation.<sup>47</sup>

The opening of Show Caves slowed dramatically after the turn of the century. In Australia in the 1920s speleology became somewhat dormant as a popular interest. In the 1920s only one cave group, the Kelly Hill Caves on Kangaroo Island in South Australia were opened [1926] to the public and in the 1930s [1931] Tanatanoolla Caves also in South Australia were opened. However, during the 1930s an increasing number of newspaper reports including scenic photographs and newspaper reports and diaries by keen bushwalkers such as O Glanfield, reawakened interest. Hastings Cave and its associated thermal pool in Tasmania were not

<sup>45</sup> W. Brennan, 'Experiences in Cave Management of the N.S.W. Department of Tourism', E. Hamilton-Smith ed., *Cave Management in Australia* (Australian Speleological Federation, 1976.), pp11-14.

<sup>46</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (October 1989), Appendix E.

<sup>47</sup> W. Brennan, 'Experiences in Cave Management of the N.S.W. Department of Tourism', E. Hamilton-Smith ed., *Cave Management in Australia* (Australian Speleological Federation, 1976.), pp11-14.



officially opened to the public until 1939. Many of the smaller show cave developments –now open to the public were only opened in the last ten years.

During the 1950's, and a number of speleology clubs were established in New South Wales, the first being the Sydney University Speleological Society, founded in 1948. During December 1953, Brian O'Brien of that Society became lost in the large and complex East Deep Creek Cave situated on the plateau above the Yarrangobilly Caves House precinct. He had entered a previously unknown section of the cave, and so his companion, from whom he had become separated, was unable to find him. The police were called in, but after a relatively quick examination of the cave, decided that he must have left the cave and become lost in the bush. The search then continued on the surface, but in due course, other speleologists arrived and they returned to a systematic search of the cave, and a group from Canberra located O'Brien, some three days after he had entered the cave.

This proved to be an important event in the story of Australian Speleology. It attracted attention to the challenge of the Yarrangobilly Caves, where the West Deep Creek system later proved to be the deepest on the Australian mainland. But more significantly, the incident led O'Brien to think more about the needs for cavers to develop a more effective organisational structure so that they might better respond to future needs for search and rescue or other emergencies. As a result, O'Brien (by then President of the Sydney University Speleological Society) together with Ben Nurse (president of the Sydney Speleological Society), circulated a proposal for the establishment of a national body. This led to the inauguration of the Australian Speleological Federation in 1956, and it has played an extremely important role in speleology ever since.

When Bruce Hoad retired in 1954, he was succeeded by Jim Butler, who, together with his wife Alice, soon became well known to and respected by speleologists. Jim Butler encouraged continuing exploration at Yarrangobilly, and during his 9 years of tenure, further caves were discovered and within 20 years, most had been surveyed and thoroughly documented. At the same time, this laid the foundation for ongoing research, largely led and inspired by the late Joe Jennings of the Australian National University.

## **2.6 Early Settlement and Cave Discoveries in the Yarrangobilly Area**

### **2.6.1 The Glory Hole Property**

Henry Harris, a ship's butcher, had made several trips to Australia. Then, in 1857 he decided to remain in New South Wales and his wife Harriet and their three children arrived in the colony in 1858. The discovery of gold attracted Harris and his family to Kiandra. They travelled to Twofold Bay by boat, then on to Kiandra by bullock dray<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Notes compiled by Phyllis Dowling and held at Yarrangobilly Caves.



In Kiandra Henry Harris established a butcher's shop and an associated slaughter yard. Because of the severe winters he looked for land to which he could transfer the stock during those harsh months.

Harris selected eighty acres of land (conditional purchase) below what would later be known as Yarrangobilly Caves. The property was called Glory Hole.

Consequently, in summer Harris ran his cattle on leases in the vicinity of Kiandra then moved them to Glory Hole for the winter. They ranged down the river as far as Lobb's Hole. Cattle were slaughtered as required and the meat taken to Kiandra by packhorse. If the snow was too deep for the horses, they were met by Kiandra men who took the meat back to the town, either on their backs or on a sled.

Originally the Harris family lived in a two room log cabin but their accommodation increased to five bedrooms, a lounge, dining room and kitchen. It was built with timber split on site. Other materials and furniture were brought in on ~~pack-horses~~ packhorses for the area was not otherwise accessible. Even a piano was transported on a big draught stallion.

Yards and gallows were built, also stables, a harness shed, hay shed and feed room. Ten acres were cleared and oats planted for winter fodder. Vegetables, fruit trees and flowers were planted. The Harris'es had fowls, milking cows and made their own butter of which any surplus was sold in Kiandra.

Initially, each summer the family returned to Kiandra so the children could attend school. When the eldest son, George, married he and his family followed a similar routine but then they converted the original log cabin hut to a school. Sgt. Major F. J. Cooke taught the children, moving seasonally with the family between Simpson's Diggings and Glory Hole.

In 1898 Henry Harris died from cellulitis after his feet became frost bitten riding to Yaouk and back in snow. Harriet Harris died in 1904. They were buried in a small private cemetery, together with two infant grandchildren (John and George Adam) and Thomas Arthur Rees, the eldest child of Christopher and Eliza Rees.<sup>49</sup>

The remainder of the family left Glory Hole in 1910. The house was used by prospectors and trappers until the 1930s by which time it was derelict. It was destroyed by a bushfire.<sup>50</sup>

## **2.6.2 Little Plain Buildings**

An investigation into a proposed helipad in the Little Plain area found an extensive and significant open Aboriginal camp site. The site is recorded as being approximately one kilometre square.

<sup>49</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), pp33-34.

<sup>50</sup> Notes compiled by Phyllis Dowling and held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

Little Plain was originally freehold property, originally owned by Harris. One version is that the area was owned by Albier Harris who constructed the buildings (no relation to Harris's of Glory Hole)<sup>51</sup>.

Another version is that Robert Harris originally built a store there<sup>50</sup> in the late nineteenth century<sup>52</sup>. Other unsubstantiated information indicates that Robert's brother, Henry Jr, also had it at one time<sup>53</sup>

Oliver Harris was there in 1897 and it was he who eventually sold it to Mrs Day who owned it until it was purchased by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service<sup>51 53</sup>.

It is possible that members of the Chave family lived there at one period, but they never owned it<sup>54</sup>.

~~Little Plain was also used as a way station for Glory Hole and the caves. Buildings were said to have been constructed on the plain for this purpose, one of them being a store operated by the Harris family in the late nineteenth century.~~<sup>55</sup> **DATE** c1860-1910??

### **2.6.3 The Marshall Brothers Find the Entrance to the Jersey Cave**

The Marshall brothers from Rankin Springs are credited with discovering the entrance to the Jersey Cave in 1862. It has been said that their discovery followed the sighting of what appeared to be smoke issuing from the ground.<sup>56</sup> Although Leo Hoad in an interview in 1985 referred to the 'brothers', he went on to speak only of 'Marshall', a teamster who would do hauling and graze his bullocks in Kiandra in the summer. Hoad also referred to Marshall's wife who rode side saddle and drove the loose bullocks. Hoad did not believe the brothers went beyond the point at which they could have looked down into the hole.<sup>57</sup>

### **2.6.4 James Murray**

James Murray, (also known as Merry) a sawmiller, arrived in Kiandra about 1870. Leo Hoad recalled that Murray had been a ship's carpenter and was a pit sawyer. He had been a man of great expectations, but drank a lot. Murray had lived in and around the area for a long time<sup>58</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Bruce Hoad pers comm in submission to the Conservation Management Plan.

<sup>52</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (October 1989), Primary Precinct Feature Review: Structures

<sup>53</sup> Phylliss Dowling pers comm in submission to the Conservation Management Plan

<sup>54</sup> Phylliss Dowling pers comm in submission to the Conservation Management Plan

<sup>55</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Conservation Plan*, (October 1989), Primary Precinct Feature Review: Structures.

<sup>56</sup> 150th anniversary of discovery of Yarrangobilly's magnificent Caves.'

<sup>57</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 148.

<sup>58</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 146.

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Hoad wrote in 1974 that Murray had also for some time operated a productive gold mining claim at Reedy Creek (Batlow) and had worked on different buildings around the district.<sup>59</sup> At one stage a man had employed Murray by the name of Gibbs. One of Gibb's properties was defined as

*... that country known as Yarrangobilly which had a rough and tumble wooden fence right from the head of the Murrumbidgee along the range right down overlooking Lobbs Hole. Lobbs Hole in those days was known as South Yarrangobilly. That's where he [Gibbs] had one of his headquarters, and he had another where his manager lived, up at what we call Michelago Flats, where you see peaks as you look to the north. There was a big swamp over there and that country was known as North Yarrangobilly. But all the country that ran into below the caves there, all the fall, that was all known as the north paddock. There was a big wire fence above six feet high; what on earth they wanted to make it so high for in those days for; just ordinary plain wires. It ran in there, just at that bend above the big cliff, above the Castle Cave; well the fence ran in there and that used to divide the north and south paddocks.*<sup>60</sup>

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Murray established a sawmill at the Eight Mile (eight miles from Kiandra) and for many years supplied the inhabitants of Kiandra with timber for their houses.<sup>61</sup> Later he would saw most of the timber for the early cottages in the ~~caves precinct~~ [Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct](#).<sup>62</sup>

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### 2.6.5 Guided Tours in the 1870s

In about 1875 Murray, 'seeing a means of livelihood', began organising regular tours to the caves each Sunday, providing horses, saddles, etc. He also acted as guide. The caves known at the time, his grandson recalled, were the Old Glory-Hole Caverns, North and South.<sup>63</sup>

## 2.7 Control of the Caves Area during the Nineteenth Century

Until 1879 the Yarrangobilly Caves area was the responsibility of the Lands Department, but in that year control passed to the Department of Mines. The Superintendent of Caves was responsible for the inspection and preservation of the known cave sites.

The first official inspection of the caves was made on 6 December 1886 by the Geological Surveyor William Anderson. In his report dated 3 January 1887, Anderson commenced by describing the routes to the caves -

*The caves are situated on the Yarrangobilly Creek, a tributary of the Tumut River, in the county of Buccleuch, and lie about 40 miles to the south of Tumut, and 12 miles to the north of Kiandra.*

<sup>59</sup> Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1/2): 37, 38.

<sup>60</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of the Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 146.

<sup>61</sup> A. H. M. Bradley, 'Recollections of the Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1972, 16(6): 162.

<sup>62</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 146.

<sup>63</sup> A. H. M. Bradley, 'Recollections of the Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.' *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1972, 16(6): 162.

There are two principal routes to the caves - one by Gundagai and Tumut, and the other by Queanbeyan, Cooma, and Kiandra.

By the former route a coach runs as far as Tumut, and from this point to the foot of Mount Talbingo, a distance of about 20 miles, there is a fairly good buggy-road, although some parts of it are a little rough. It is extremely difficult to take a buggy up Mount Talbingo the ascent being 2,080 ft. with a distance of 3 miles, and the present track being very bad; but this difficulty having been surmounted, there is a passable bush-track to Mr. Gibbs' station, within 8 miles of the caves. These last 8 miles can only be performed on horseback or on foot, and in wet weather many of the sidings are very dangerous. This route from Tumut passes through a very mountainous and picturesque country, and some of the views obtained from points of vantage, such as the top of Mount Talbingo, are very fine, while on striking the Yarrangobilly Creek a splendid view is obtained of the limestone cliffs and the great arch which forms the entrance of the two principal caves. [The Glory Hole Caves and the Yarrangobilly or Copper-mine Cave.]

The second route is by Queanbeyan, Cooma, and Kiandra, all of which are connected by coach. For 8 miles from Kiandra there is a buggy-road across the Kiandra Plain, but from here a bridle-track has to be followed which goes to a selection within half a mile of the caves. At various points on this route glimpses can be obtained of the Snowy Mountains, which, even within a fortnight of midsummer were dotted over with patches of snow. By the former route visitors could drive to the foot of Mount Talbingo, within 20 miles of the caves, while by the latter route they could drive to within 4 or 5 miles of them.

The Yarrangobilly Creek has a general course from N. to S. . . .<sup>64</sup>

Anderson noted the damage done by visitors who had broken off stalactites and disfigured those remaining by pencilling their names on them. He recommended two means of stopping this, the first action was either to put an iron gate across the mouth of the Great Arch or a gate across the entrance to each cave. He preferred the former. The second action was to appoint a guide and keeper who would show people through the caves and ensure no damage was done.<sup>65</sup>

Anderson concluded by discussing a potential site for accommodation and a suitable caretaker and guide -

With regard to the site for an accommodation house and a horse-paddock, there can be no difficulty about these. Little over a 1/4 of a mile down the Yarrangobilly Creek, where it takes a bend to the east, there is a piece of good land which would be very suitable both for the site of an accommodation house and a paddock of almost any size. This land is bounded on the west and south by the Yarrangobilly Creek, and on the east by what is called the Warm Spring, which at this point is a strong flowing creek, the waters of which are tepid. A path could easily be made up the side of the creek from the accommodation house here to the caves. The only spot nearer the caves than this where there is sufficient level ground for a house is within a few hundred yards of the caves, but here there would be no water except what was carried up from the creek, 300 ft. below.

<sup>64</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1886, Appendix K.

<sup>65</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1886, Appendix K.

With reference to the appointment of a keeper to the caves, I have to state that while I was at the caves I met Mr. James Murray, of Kiandra, who knows the caves well, and seems otherwise well fitted to fill the post of caretaker and guide of the Yarrangobilly Caves.<sup>66</sup>

When the position of Superintendent of Caves with the Department of Mines was abolished in 1896, Oliver Trickett was given the responsibility of the limestone caves, in addition to his existing work as Geological Survey Draftsman.<sup>67</sup>

## **2.8 James Murray, Caretaker 1887-1895**

### **2.8.1 Setting Up the Establishment: 1887**

In 1887 the Mines Department appointed James Murray caretaker.<sup>68</sup> In addition to Murray's wage he retained any profit from accommodating guests.<sup>69</sup> It is said he performed his role well in stopping people from writing names in the caves.<sup>70</sup>

The Department was optimistic when in 1888 it reported that -

... an accommodation and Keeper's Cottage, having been just erected, it is expected there will be a large increase in the number of visitors this season, a great number of people having signified their intension [sic] of visiting the caves when accommodation was provided for them.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1886, Appendix K.

<sup>67</sup> Gregory J. Middleton, Oliver Trickett. Doyen of Australia's Cave Surveyors 1847-1934, Sydney Speleological Society in association with the Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society, 1992.) p24.

<sup>68</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1887, p142.

<sup>69</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society, 1985, 29(8): 146.

<sup>70</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society, 1985, 29(8): 146.

<sup>71</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1888, p202.

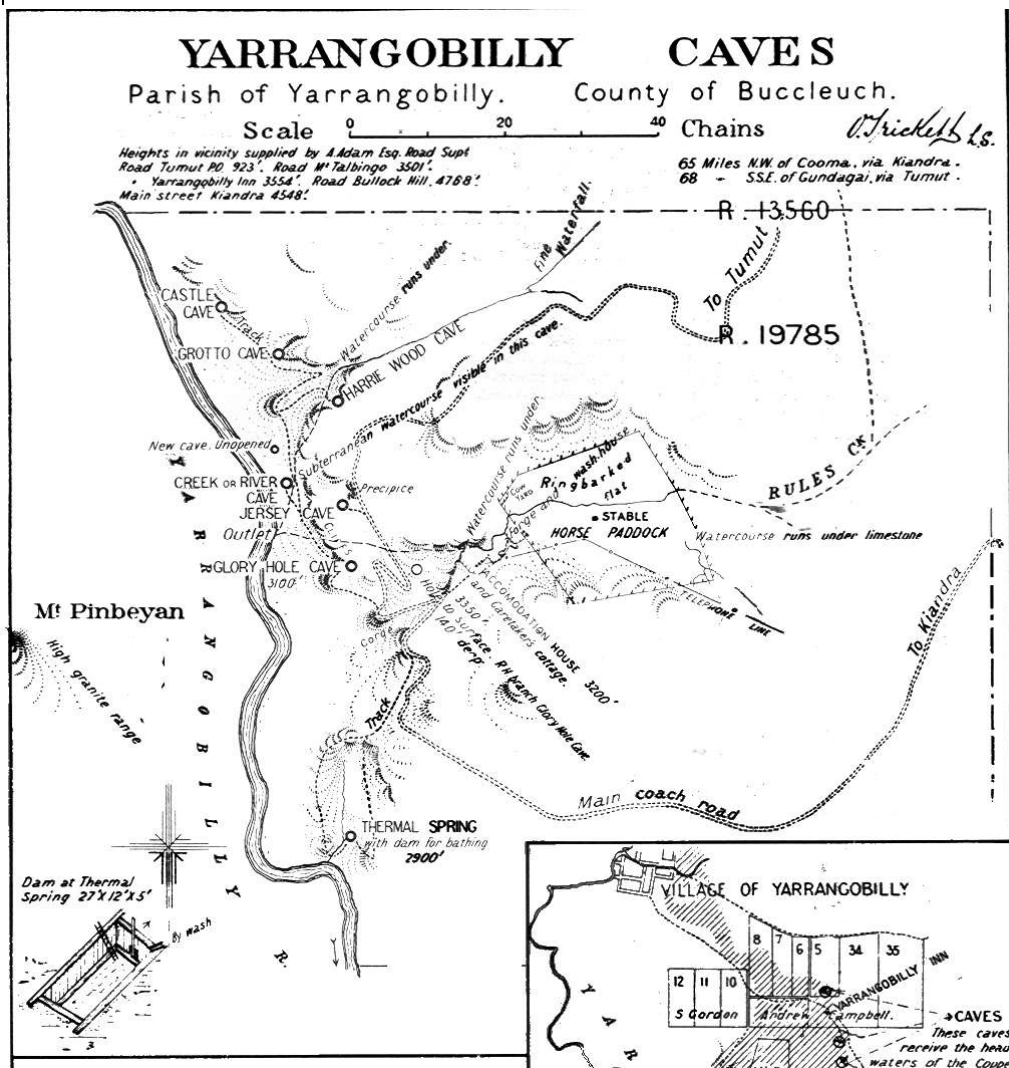


Figure 2.4 Detail of Trickett's survey maps evidently drawn c.1889 before Jersey Cottage was constructed in 1890. The annotated survey shows the Rules Creek Basin including reference to only the accommodation house and the caretakers cottage [constructed in 1888] and showing the size and extent of the horse paddock

James Murray died in October 1895 as the result of an accident. (For complimentary remarks about Murray see Appendix C.)

Figure 2.4 Rules Creek Basin Plan

### **2.8.2 Two Cottages: 1888**

Although earlier Conservation Plans have dated one cottage, using photographic evidence, as built in 1884, it seems likely both cottages were constructed in 1888 [See figure 2.2]. Also, at

odds with the earlier note that Murray had sawn much of the timber for the cottages, it has been stated that the Cumberland Sawmill supplied the building materials.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps there was an association between Murray and the sawmill.

### 2.8.3 Third Cottage: 1890

Tenders were called for another cottage to be built in 1890 to provide additional visitor accommodation.<sup>73</sup> This third cottage was of the same design as the earlier two and again materials came from the Cumberland saw mill. It was later called 'Jersey Cottage'.

A. H. M. Bradley implied the cottage was built in preparation for the governor's visit.<sup>74</sup>

Trickett's plan of the area in 1897 showed the three cottages, side by side, facing north-west. From north-west to north-east they were identified as - the Visitors "Jersey", Caretaker, and Visitors "No. 1". Trickett recorded a paling fence, horse rail, gate and double gate. A garden to the south-east was fenced but areas designated flower garden and vegetable garden appear not to have been fenced. A second plan shows the horse paddock, stable and a cow yard.<sup>75</sup>

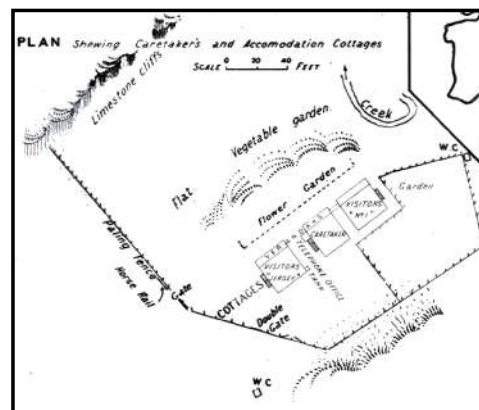


Figure 2.5 The 1897 survey map of the caves by Oliver Trickett which is the earliest published survey. [From *Helictite* 24 (1/2):33 1986 "Yarrangobilly".]

<sup>72</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), 4.9. 1888 Caretaker's Cottage Site.

<sup>73</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1890*, p309.

<sup>74</sup> A. H. M. Bradley, 'Recollections of the Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1972, 16(6): 162-164.

<sup>75</sup> Plans reproduced with article - Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1/2): 33.



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Fig 2.5

In 1903 Jersey Cottage and the Kitchen building were relocated to function as a dining room and kitchen elsewhere on the site. It was then used for a variety of functions until it was demolished in 1972.<sup>76</sup>

#### **2.8.4 Changes in 1890**

A telephone office, at which telegrams could be dispatched and collected, was established at Yarrangobilly Caves and connected on 30 June 1890. A telegraph and telephone office was opened later in the year. Yarrangobilly Village, along the main Tumut to Kiandra road, did not receive a telephone until 14 February 1905. In the judgement of Bilton, this was 'a very early date to have such a sophisticated means of communication in such an isolated area.'<sup>77</sup> It suggests the conviction or influence of someone such as Trickett, in promoting the tourist potential of the area and may also have reflected the social standing of some of the guests. Obviously it would have been a significant factor in arranging accommodation - and this was pointed out in the annual report for that year<sup>78</sup>. Trickett's survey plan from 1897 showed the Telephone Office between the Jersey Cottage and that of the caretaker.<sup>79</sup> See Figure 2.5 (Bruce Hoad has suggested the link occurred because Murray was either unable to operate Morse or else did not understand it.)<sup>80</sup>

A water closet was erected to the east of the three cottages it was built to service. The closet remained intact (with minor location changes) until it was removed in 1903.<sup>81</sup> Trickett's survey plan from 1897 showed a second water closet to the south of the double gate.<sup>82</sup>

In 1890 tenders were called for the erection of another cottage for visitor accommodation.<sup>83</sup>

At an undefined period, areas around the caves were surveyed to determine the best grade for a road.<sup>84</sup>

#### **2.8.5 Lime Kilns at Yarrangobilly**

In 1985 A. H. M. Bradley, in an interview with Greg Middleton, referred to the Chalet at Kiandra. Previously it had been the courthouse, built about 1890. The lime for the building was burnt at Yarrangobilly. When asked if the kilns were there still he replied -

<sup>76</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), 4.9. 1888 Caretaker's Cottage Site.

<sup>77</sup> Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1/2): 36.

<sup>78</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1890*, p309.

<sup>79</sup> Plans reproduced with article - Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1/2): 33.

<sup>80</sup> Bruce Hoad, group discussion, Stakeholders Meeting, Yarrangobilly Caves, 9 February 2000.

<sup>81</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), Primary Precinct Feature Review: Structures.

<sup>82</sup> Plans reproduced with article - Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1/2): 33.

<sup>83</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1890*, p309.

<sup>84</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p18.

Yes; do you know where the old stable used to be? From the office its about 150 yards along the road in the back of the hill. They excavated a hole and built the kilns. The big stable was alongside. I built my own house there before I was married.<sup>85</sup>

### 2.8.6 The Jersey Cave

Jack Gibbs, presumably the son of Gibbs for whom Murray had worked, was stationed 'up there' [presumably at the 'South Yarrangobilly' property] for about two years. He was visited by a New Zealand friend suffering from tuberculosis. The friend, Dickson, was an artist and was said to have painted all the cliffs. In 1884 the two men found what would later be known as the Jersey Cave. Leo Hoad recalled finding the names and date there when he was wiring the cave. He spoke with Jack Gibbs who told him they had found a lot of caves. 'They did nothing else but explore caves in those early days.'<sup>86</sup>

The names of Gibbs and Dickson, with the year 1884, are written on a stalactite near the larger shawl formation known as the Lady Jersey Shawl.<sup>87</sup>

On 4 March 1891 a group of tourists led by John Campbell of Yarrangobilly, rediscovered the Jersey Cave. Bilton argues that it was this 'discovery' which featured prominently in the future development of the caves.<sup>88</sup>

When Murray was appointed caretaker he engaged miners from Kiandra to make a way into the 'beautiful' part of the Cave.

### ~~engaged miners~~ 2.8.7 Bradley's Role in Setting Up the Jersey Cave

In seems that while there was an awareness of the beauty of the Jersey Cave there was a need for someone who understood underground mining to become involved. Murray recommended that Henry/Harry Bradley, a mining expert employed at the alluvial goldfields at Burrangong near Young, be invited to Yarrangobilly. (His son recalled that he was known as 'Ballarat Harry' because he had served his apprenticeship in the mines at Ballarat.) Bradley and a second man made a passage into the cave and erected a steel ladder at the big drop making the rest of the cave accessible in a limited way.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Br

<sup>86</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly

<sup>87</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Prec*

<sup>88</sup> Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Helictite*, 1

<sup>89</sup> A. H. M. Bradley, 'Recollections of the Early History of Yarran  
Interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly.'

Figure 2.6 The  
Murray and  
Bradley families  
(enlarged detail  
from Figure 2.2.  
[photograph  
from theNPWS  
Yarrangobilly  
Photograph  
Collection]).

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age 41

Fig 2-6

### **2.8.8 The Discovery of Additional Caves**

A. H. M. Bradley, in an interview with Greg Middleton, recounted some of the joys, and perhaps other emotions, for his grandfather in exploring a cave, in this instance a deep crevice in the South Glory Cave -

... about 1894 or 1895 ... my grandfather [Murray] explored it. He was always wanting to explore it so he had a crabwinch brought to Yarrangobilly. It was a thing weighing a hundred weight or more ... and a piece of rope about 100 feet long. It took about three men to carry the cursed thing. Anyhow, with my father and my brother and the old man - he was an old man at that time - we scrambled up the side of the rocks, up to the entrance ... We cut a gum tree down and put it across there so the rope was secure. We threw the end of it down the hole. The old grandad he shinned down - he was a sailor in his younger days - to the bottom. But when he wanted to come back after he'd seen all he wanted, he couldn't get out of it. He was there for 24 hours in the hole. He was there all night and well into the next day. We had to send him down some blankets on a rope. We built a sort of platform over the hole and my old dad, who was most powerfully built, lifted him hand over hand out of the hole. We could only bring him up inches at a time; the only good purpose the winch served was to take up the slack. All the old chap knew when he was down there was that there was a strong draught.<sup>90</sup>

Five caves were 'discovered' in 1892. First the Jersey Cave - 'unsurpassed for the richness and variety of its dripstone formations' - then four others. The four were found by keeper Murray

<sup>90</sup> Greg Middleton, 'A second interview with Anthony Bradley on Yarrangobilly.', *The Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 29(5): 81-83.

together with Elphick and Bradley<sup>91</sup> and subsequently named the Castle, Harrie Wood, River and Grotto Caves.

By 1892, with news of the new caves, the number of visitors just on doubled, from 352 in 1891 to 746 in 1892.<sup>92</sup> A complimentary factor was slightly easier access. Two new branch roads had been made during 1891-1892. One connected with the main Tumut-Kiandra road on the Tumut side of the caves; the other connected with the same road on the Kiandra side.<sup>93</sup> A result of the increase in visitors was the need for the keeper to have a second person as a guide during the summer time.<sup>94</sup> The additional assistance was provided each year from then on, for three or four months.

H. M. Bradley, in recalling the work he did, building and repairing stone walls and pathways to the caves, said that following the first opening of the various caves, improvements were carried out by several different workmen.<sup>95</sup>

## 2.9 A Vice-Regal Visit: 1892

There has been conjecture as to whether the new Governor of the colony of New South Wales had previously planned a visit to Yarrangobilly Caves or if the discovery of a new cave prompted the tour either for his benefit or to promote the caves. He and his entourage visited on Friday 8 January 1892 and 'with a vice-regal flourish put Yarrangobilly Caves firmly on the map'. Preparations for the visit, as recalled by A. H. M. Bradley, were substantial. A cottage was built and a short section of the road constructed from near the Jillabenan Cave to 'the top turn of the



Figure 2.7 Lord Jersey , the Earl of Jersey 1905. [photograph from the Yarrangobilly Photographic Collection]

<sup>91</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1891, p280.

<sup>92</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1891, p280; Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1892, p175.

<sup>93</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1892, p175.

<sup>94</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1893, p133.

<sup>95</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(4): 60.



Zig-Zag where it is now'. The road, made in a hurry, was eleven feet wide. From there the party walked half a mile to the house.<sup>96</sup>

The Member of Parliament for the Tumut District, E. G. Brown, transported the Governor. Brown, A. H. M. Bradley recalled, 'was noted as a class driver of four-in-hand of very fine horses'. Those in the second coach, driven by Arthur O'Neill, included Premier Dibbs and Treasurer John See. The cavalcade was said to have comprised seven to eight hundred people.<sup>97</sup> En route they camped a night at Kiandra.

It seems the party had an unpleasant night with the overnight temperature falling to 5 below freezing point. Blankets were scarce. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that -

*The Governor started at 8 o'clock from Kiandra, followed by the rest of the party, and after a picturesque drive the Caves were reached about 11 o'clock. As soon as possible a start was made for the caves, and the older Yarrangobilly Caves which have been known for past years were visited. As the accommodation was scarce, the party picnicked in informal fashion on the green around the cave house. After lunch, Lady Jersey, together with the Countess of Galloway and Lord Jersey, made a thorough inspection of the newly discovered Jersey Caves. Many beautiful sights are to be seen here, and both Lord and Lady Jersey expressed themselves highly delighted with the novelty of the scene. The caves are easy of access, and no inconvenience was experienced by the ladies. Both branches of the cave, which extends for some 600 feet into the mountain, were visited. Later in the afternoon Lord Jersey paid a visit to the hot springs, about a mile from the cave, and a bath was indulged in at this pleasant spot. The spring is a favourite resort for those visiting the caves, and its waters are said to have a beneficial influence in cases of rheumatism and kindred disorders.*<sup>98</sup>

The Governor's escort to Yarrangobilly consisted of twenty-six of the Queanbeyan Mounted Australian Lancers. Then a squad of Mounted Police took over, six from Tumut and Gundagai and six from Cooma.<sup>99</sup> An Inspector George Stutchbury was in charge of the police and Light Horse escort, which may have numbered thirty.<sup>100</sup>

The party followed the Governor's conveyance to the end of the road. There was no place for the vehicles to turn, so they had to be man-handled for the return journey.<sup>101</sup>

The Lancers had six bell military tents, which they left behind and which were Bradley senior's family home until a house was built in 1892.<sup>102</sup> Subsequently Lord Jersey recommended further accommodation to be built.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>96</sup> A. H. M. Bradley, 'Recollections of the Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1972, 16(6): 163.

<sup>97</sup> Architecture Design Group, [Yarrangobilly-Caves-PrecinctYarrangobilly Caves House Precinct](#) Conservation Plan. (October 1989), p12.

<sup>98</sup> 'The Governor's Tour.', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January 1892.

<sup>99</sup> 'Vice Regal Tour to Yarrangobilly. The Excursion Reviewed.', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 January 1892.

<sup>100</sup> Architecture Design Group, [Yarrangobilly-Caves-PrecinctYarrangobilly Caves House Precinct](#) Conservation Plan. (October 1989), p12.

<sup>101</sup> A. H. M. Bradley, 'Recollections of the Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1972, 16(6): 163; Architecture Design Group, [Yarrangobilly-Caves-PrecinctYarrangobilly Caves House Precinct](#) Conservation Plan. (October 1989), p12.

<sup>102</sup> A. H. M. Bradley, 'Recollections of the Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1972, 16(6): 163.

### 2.9.1 Road Access

When the Governor came to visit in 1892, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported -

There is no need to say much about the short drive from Kiandra to the Caves, except that the road is very bad, and in some places dangerous. The Yarrangobilly Cave-house is situated at the bottom of a very deep gully, and in order to reach it a new road has been recently made around the side of the mountain. It is a razor-back path, just wide enough for one vehicle, with the mountain on side on one hand and a yawning precipice on the other. The least accident, the shying of a horse, would send a vehicle and its occupants to certain destruction. Naturally, people come down this road with some care, and yet the Governor's carriage nearly met with an accident which might have had fatal results. Those who saw the occurrence state that two wheels of the vehicle were right over the side to the precipice, and it was only by the exercise of great skill that Mr. Brown, who was driving, prevented a catastrophe.<sup>104</sup>



Figure 2.8 A photograph from the *Illustrated Sydney News* showing members of the Governors party, possibly even the Governor leaving Kiandra. [Photograph from undated copies of pages in the Yarrangobilly Photographic Collection titled *A Buggy Ride from Gundagai to Cooma, and How we discovered the 'Jersey Cave': The Record of a Weekly Trip*]

<sup>103</sup> Historical Data Sheets N.P.W.S., held at Yarrangobilly Caves, 1989.

<sup>104</sup> "Vice-Regal Tour to Yarrangobilly. The Excursion Reviewed.", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 January 1892, n.p.n.



When the Bradleys moved to Yarrangobilly in 1892, after the visit of the Governor, they were there for two years before they could get their cart down to the valley.<sup>105</sup>

The limitations of the accommodation were also noted by the *Sydney Morning Herald* -

*The scanty Cave-house accomodation only served to shelter the Governor and the Ministerial party, and the remainder of the visitors had to picnic on the green outside. It was a pleasanter camp than on the previous night, for if the accommodation was rough the weather, in this secluded valley, was mild and pleasant, and sleeping under canvas involved no hardship. The Caves themselves, which were inspected during the day, are too big to be dealt with here.*<sup>106</sup>

## **2.10 Early Potential, Promotion and Protection of the Caves**

### **2.10.1 The Observations of a Travel Writer**

During 1894/1895 a series of articles appeared in the *Australian Star* written by the anonymous Sylvanus Urban. The constant title was 'Pleasure Resorts of New South Wales.' and five of the articles related to the Yarrangobilly Caves, giving both directions on how to get there and detailed descriptions of the caves.

Of the branch road to the Cave House, Urban warned that if a vehicle was used, care was required -

*... for the road, which is only a few feet in width, is cut in the side of the mountain, having a precipitous wall of rock on one side, and a deep, yawning gulf on the other. Perhaps this spice of danger imparts additional zest to the trip, and there is a sense of relief when the Cave House, situated at the bottom of the narrow valley through which the Yarrangobilly River noisily flows, is approached.*

<sup>105</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(4): 59.

<sup>106</sup> Vice-Regal Tour to Yarrangobilly. The Excursion Reviewed.', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 January 1892, n.p.n.

For the traveller there were two routes. The first was to travel from Cooma, via Kiandra (65 miles), or from Gundagai via Tumut (68 miles).

The mail coach left Cooma for Kiandra every Tuesday and Saturday after the arrival of the mail train from Sydney. There was a night stop-over at Adaminaby, then the following morning the journey continued to Kiandra. The coach fare from Cooma to Kiandra was - single journey, 20s; return 40s. The caves, 14 miles distant, could be reached the same day (it did not say by what means). It was necessary to spend two and a half days at the Yarrangobilly Caves, if the next mail coach from Kiandra to Cooma was to be taken for the return journey.

If the journey began from Gundagai the fare was 7s 6d single and 15s return. Again, a coach left for Tumut (21 miles) upon the arrival of the mail train. The mail coach travelled on from Tumut to the caves, every Friday at noon 'arriving the next day'. It returned at noon each Monday to take the travellers back to Tumut. The charge for the double journey was 30s.

The report stated that the caves could be seen 'in a couple of days' so a week was sufficient for the trip to and from Sydney. It was also noted that the keeper, Mr. James Murray, should be notified about a proposed visit at least two days before the arrival of the traveller.<sup>107</sup>

Sylvanus Urban observed that -

Once within the Cave House all the risks and fatigue of the journey become speedily forgotten, and nothing is thought of but the subterranean marvels, which in their stupendous magnificence surpass those at Jenolan. Although discovered between 40 and 50 years ago they are comparatively little known, although the extension of the railway system to Cooma in one direction and to Gundagai in another has made them more accessible than formerly. For those who can spare a few days during the summer months, and do not mind roughing it a little, a visit to the caves will prove a source of pleasure of the richest character. The accommodation at the Cave House, although plain and limited, will be found equal to all reasonable requirements, and enable the visitor to start, refreshed and full of expectation, on his journey of exploration through the vast chambers and winding passages formed by the hands of Nature in the heart of the solid limestone.

... those who have not visited the caves may form some idea of the vastness of their approaches and chambers from the photographs taken by Mr. C. H. Kerry, of Sydney ...<sup>108</sup>

... A good meal can always be obtained at the Cave House both before and after the visit, the duration of which can always be fixed beforehand.<sup>109</sup>

Then there is practical advice for the inexperienced traveller –

<sup>107</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, February 16, 1895, p8.

<sup>108</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, February 9, 1895, p8.

<sup>109</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, February 23, 1895, p8.

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A visit to the caves is rendered more pleasant if the tourist takes the precaution to provide himself with some old clothing and soft cap, as this will enable him to venture into apertures which would otherwise deter him. Going into a cave is much like descending into a mine; it is ruin to good clothes.<sup>110</sup>

Sylvanus Urban maintained that none of the caves in Europe and America, that annually attracted crowds of 'expectant' visitors were as rich in varied and beautiful formations as those at Yarrangobilly, but they were almost unknown outside New South Wales. Had it not been for the visit of the Earl and Countess of Jersey they would have been little more than a name in the colony itself, although railway and coaching facilities had brought them within a few hours' reach of the metropolis.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, February 23, 1895, p8.

<sup>111</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, March 2, 1895, p7.

He argued that -

*Practically no country in the world is so rich in picturesque and interesting cave systems, and if these were scientifically explored and their general character made more widely known they would aid in attracting crowds of visitors to these shores.*<sup>112</sup>

His descriptions of the caves certainly enhanced the possibility.

Urban was an Englishman, John Plummer who, during his years in Sydney, worked as journalist and editor, lectured and published on technical education and applied arts, and worked as a drawing master. He contributed to major American, British and Australian newspapers on subjects ranging from the beauty of nature to 'the blight' of socialism. He wrote numerous guidebooks, many for Thomas Cook & Son.<sup>113</sup>

### 2.10.2 Potential as a Resort and Health Spa

Oliver Trickett recognised the potential of Yarrangobilly as a tourist resort from an early stage. In his 1897 report to the Mines Department outlining vandalism in the Coppermine Cave he concluded:

*It is not unreasonable to suppose that the impressive scenery, the number and extent of the caves and the cool climate in this locality will render it in the future one of the most popular resorts of tourists in the colony.*<sup>114</sup>

During the nineteenth century, mountain resorts were especially popular for their health giving properties, the clear air and the isolation from potential infections. They were recommended to recuperate from or avoid contact with tuberculosis. They continued to be popular after the influenza epidemic after the First World War. People patronised mountain resorts to get away from the illness in the city.

The 1921 pamphlet distributed by the NSW Government Tourist Bureau promoted the potential of Yarrangobilly to become a 'luxurious spa'.

*The Thermal Bathing Pool, where swimming and diving carnivals may be held, is now coming into its own, not only by reason of its all-year-round 80 deg. temperature affording a delightful swim at any hour of the season, but the marvellous healing properties, which will one day transform Yarrangobilly to a luxurious spa.*<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, March 2, 1895, p7.

<sup>113</sup> Ken Stewart, 'John Plummer.', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 11, pp248-249.

<sup>114</sup> NSW Mines Report 1897, Appendix 33 'Mutilation of the Copper Mines Cave at Yarrangobilly'

<sup>115</sup> NSW Government Tourist Bureau, *Yarrangobilly Caves In the Wild Talbingo Ranges The Wonder Caverns of the Southern Alps*, William Applegate Guillick, Government Printer, 1921.

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### 2.10.3 Where the Visitors Came From

The Visitors' Book indicates that during the 1890s people came from nearby - Kiandra, Tumut, Gundagai, Cooma, Adaminaby and from distant places - Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and New Zealand. People travelled on horseback, by train and coach, in sulkies, buggies, on bicycles and walked by a variety of routes across the mountains.<sup>116</sup> It seems that any complaints usually concerned the state of the roads, the lack of facilities for horses and the fact that visitors often had to 'shakedown' if too many people arrived.<sup>117</sup>

One interesting observation included in the annual report for 1889 referred to a slight decrease in the number of visitors to Jenolan Caves, compared with that of the previous year. W. S. Leigh, the Superintendent of Caves, thought that perhaps it could be explained by the fact that a number of people were attracted to two of the other colonies because of exhibitions there. Of the visitors to Jenolan the local people made up a very small minority whereas at most of the other caves they made up the greater proportion of visitors.<sup>118</sup>

A rather surprising comment included in the Annual Report for 1900 was that because of the severe winter there were only six visitors to the Yarrangobilly Caves during the six months from May to October.<sup>119</sup>

### 2.10.4 Rail Based Tourism

Government involvement with tourism in Australia is thought to have begun at the Centennial Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888.

*The Exhibition attracted so many thousands of interstate and overseas visitors that the Victorian Railway Department opened an 'Inquiry Office' at Spencer Street Station for those who wanted to see more of the State. This was so successful it was retained and became the forerunner of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau....*

*In New South Wales official tourism started with the curiously named 'Intelligence Department'. This body was responsible for providing general promotional and informational role for the government and provided a government tourist bureau.<sup>120</sup>*

The railway networks expanded during the 1870s and 1880s focussed on the capital cities in the various states and employing a variety of gauge lines. Nonetheless the main lines tended to be a consistent gauge within each State and there was a spirit of competitiveness between States. The expansion of the rail network made day trips an option for all classes and they were

<sup>116</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p26.

<sup>117</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p26.

<sup>118</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1889*, p252.

<sup>119</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines New South Wales for the year 1900*, p198.

<sup>120</sup> *Richardson JI 1999, p76*

encouraged to enjoy the simplicity of rural life by excursion fares and the promotion of destinations and round trip routes.

*The mountains viewed from the city in south eastern Australia have been a cultural source of inspiration and magnetic attraction for visiting city dwellers.... 'Trips to the country were considered essential to the good health of urban people.'*<sup>121</sup>

The lower classes are particularly associated with group travel and day trips. However, the upper classes had superior mobility and were able to travel to more distant places and to have comparatively exclusive experiences of nature.

Along the south eastern crescent of Australia day trips by rail from Sydney and Melbourne only accessed the relatively sanitised 'bush' which was the surrounding farmlands interspersed with rainforests and the accessible slopes of the Blue Mountains and the Dandenongs. However access to the wilderness which was further away in places like the Snowy Mountains required at least a day trip each way and connection with local services. It was recommended that a week be allowed to experience the Yarrangobilly Caves.

*Texts from the railways referred to this type of bush [wilderness] with words such as grandeur and vastness occurring more often although in writing of this wilderness the texts frequently contained humanising and/or scientific elements.*

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*'Its tree clad ranges and detached mountains, ruggedly crowned with battlement, cupola or minaret have a grandeur and fascination entirely of their own.'*<sup>122</sup>

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The supremacy of the railways as a means of inland travel during the early twentieth century also coincided with the declaration of National Parks in the period 1900-1910 and in 1920-1930 which reflected an enthusiasm for nature and recreation. Nature study was promoted within primary schools. The interest in nature and the ability of the railway system to deliver people to otherwise isolated places meant that bushwalking boomed in the interwar period.

*Hikers saw themselves as being different from ordinary tourists. Their magazines contained literary extracts and quotes from Marsfield, Whitman and Dickens.*<sup>123</sup>

They were interested in many achievements and conquest of mountains as well as experiencing the authentic 'bush'.

Victorian Railways owned and operated several chalets in the snowfields of north eastern Victoria the best known being 'the Chalet' at Mount Buffalo. Their close association with tourism promotion is likely to have encouraged the railways within New South Wales to take a similarly pro-active role in tourist promotion and co-operation with the Government Tourist Bureau. By

<sup>121</sup> Newton J. *Journal of Australian Studies* 'Domesticating the Bush', 1996, Volume 40 p68

<sup>122</sup> Newton J. 1996, p76

<sup>123</sup> Newton J. 1996, p77

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their travel promotions the railways were significant image makers in the promotion of domestic tourism.

By the 1920s the NSW Government Tourist Bureau were producing brochures for Yarrangobilly Caves 'The Wonder Caves of the Southern Alps' which included a separate leaflet with 'Motor and Train Fares'. [See Appendix D] A major section of the leaflet is given over to a description of the routes to the place. The assumption is made that the visitor will take the train from Sydney to either Tumut or to Cooma and the scenic wilderness experience begins from those towns. In the 1920s visiting Yarrangobilly by car was still the exception and arrival by a combination of rail trip and motor coach was the norm.

#### **2.10.5 Fishing**

Trout were introduced into the rivers of south-eastern New South Wales in 1897, and flourished. Yarrangobilly provided a particularly popular fishing spot as the Caves Hotel was in close proximity to the River. Excellent publicity was provided by John Gale, proprietor of the *Queanbeyan Observer*, particularly in reporting on his 1903 excursion to the region. This account mentioned that one of the visitors had caught 19 fish in a single day. In later years Leo Hoad also did what he could to promote trout fishing, including photographs of fish and fishing in his series of postcards and brochures of the attractions of Yarrangobilly.

Although local residents had long fished at many sites, the Hotel led to Yarrangobilly being widely recognised and commonly visited by anglers from Sydney and Canberra, many of whom were professional men of high social status. See Sections 2.15.1 and Section 3.4.8.

#### **2.10.56 Mutilation of the Copper Mine Cave**

(This is Cave actually outside the Precinct as defined for the CMP but was a seminal feature in the early operations of Yarrangobilly as Show Caves )

In 1897 the Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Agriculture reported damage done to the Copper Mine Cave -

*Axes, crowbars, chisels and cartridges have been used to demolish or remove the beautiful formations in this part of the cave.*

*Nothing appears to have been too large to destroy, for in one place the remains of a fine column over 6 inches in diameter, are lying on the floor. Fragments of semi-transparent "shawls" lie among the debris of broken stalactites, stalagmites and crystals of calcite. To secure the last-named, appears to have been the main object of the miscreants, who have destroyed as much as they could get access to, for the crystals have been carefully chiseled out. There can, however, have been no object other than destruction in breaking the "shawls", which come away in pieces, and have no beauty when removed.*

The cave is still worth preserving, for the portion damaged probably represents a very small part of the attractive chambers which may be found in the future along the underground water way.

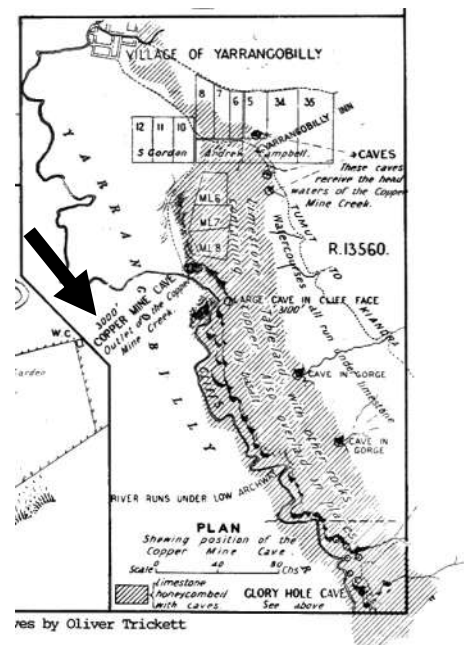
It is important that the destruction of any of the caves at Yarrangobilly should be prevented...<sup>124</sup>

Early in 1899 police examined the cave but the culprit/s was not identified. To protect the cave from further vandalism the entrance to its terminal chamber was closed.<sup>125</sup>

A reference to Oliver Trickett's 1905 guide to Yarrangobilly Caves quoted elsewhere states –

'Brief mention is also made of the River and Copper Mine Cave ('temporarily closed', page 6 - 'with iron bars set in cement', page 28).<sup>126</sup>

Figure 2.9 Extract from the survey plans presented by Trickett in his 1897 report to the Department of Mines, showing the location of the Coppermine Cave in relation to Yarrangobilly Village. [From Helictite 24 (1/2):33 1986 'Yarrangobilly']



<sup>124</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1897, p203.

<sup>125</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1899, p212.

<sup>126</sup> Gregory J. Middleton, Oliver Trickett. Doyen of Australia's Cave Surveyors 1847-1934, (Sydney Speleological Society in association with the Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society, 1992.), p80.



#### **Fig 2.9 2.10.67 Cave Protection**

Urban also wrote of the difficulty faced at Yarrangobilly, as at Jenolan and Wombeyan caves, of preventing visitors from breaking the stalactites. Wire netting had been used in a number of places in an attempt to prevent this.<sup>127</sup>

The writer drew the attention of the reader to the fact that the Minister for Mines and Agriculture had framed a code of regulations for the management of the caves. This specified that no person could enter the caves without the keeper, and anyone who damaged the caves or the surrounding vegetation would be prosecuted. This also applied to anyone who shot or trapped birds or animals on any part of the public reserve.<sup>128</sup>

## **2.11 Henry Bradley, Keeper 1896-1904**

### **2.11.1 A New Keeper: 1896**

Murray's son-in-law, Henry/Harry Bradley, who was living with Murray, was appointed keeper after two of the senior guides at Jenolan declined the position. Bradley's appointment dated from 1 January 1896.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, February 23, 1895, p8.

<sup>128</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, February 16, 1895, p8.

<sup>129</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1895*, p187.

A number of projects which underpinned later expansion of the Show Cave operation were undertaken during the next few years -

- Work was carried out in the Castle, Harrie Wood, Easter and River caves by a blacksmith, Pollack, from Wombeyan Caves.

- Oliver Trickett began surveying the caves area.

- 1897: The thermal spring was excavated and timbered for a bathing place. (See below.) Bradley was commended for the way in which the work had been done. At the time it was noted that the waters of the spring were said to have curative properties.<sup>130</sup>

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- 1897: Trout were released into the Yarrangobilly River for the Fisheries Department. A. H. M. Bradley thought they were 'the first trout that were liberated in southern waters'.<sup>131</sup> He and Hoad also release trout into the Murrumbidgee River.<sup>132</sup>

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- 1897: A wash house was constructed west of the existing Visitors Centre to serve the accommodation cottages. Again, Bradley was commended for the way the work had been done.<sup>133</sup> It was shown on Oliver Trickett's 1897 survey plan.<sup>134</sup>

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- By 1897 a stable had been built of timber from the Cumberland Sawmill. It was sited by Rules Creek in the centre of the horse paddock, north-east of the cottages.<sup>135</sup>

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- 1897: A forge was built on a site some distance to the north of the accommodation area. It produced much of the railings and other ironmongery features, which still exist in some caves. Once more Bradley was commended for the manner in which the work had been done.<sup>136</sup> The forge was removed during the period 1930s-50s.<sup>137</sup> It is noted on Oliver Trickett's 1897 survey plan.<sup>138</sup>

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- 1898: A bathing shed was built near the thermal spring.<sup>139</sup>

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- 1898: A large number of fruit trees were planted.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1897, p202.

<sup>131</sup> O. Trickett, *Guide to Yarrangobilly Caves, New South Wales*, 2nd edition, (W. A. Gullick, Government Printer, 1917, p12; Greg Middleton, 'A Second Interview with Anthony Bradley on Yarrangobilly.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(5): 82.

<sup>132</sup> Greg Middleton, 'A Second Interview with Anthony Bradley on Yarrangobilly.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(5): 83.

<sup>133</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1897, p202.

<sup>134</sup> Plans reproduced with article - Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1/2): 33.

<sup>135</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), Primary Precinct Feature Review: Structures.

<sup>136</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1897, p202.

<sup>137</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), p25.

<sup>138</sup> Plans reproduced with article - Gary Bilton, 'Early History of Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Helictite*, 1986, 24(1/2): 33.

<sup>139</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1898, p192.

<sup>140</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1898, p192.

- 1899: Additions were made to the caretaker's quarters 'by the erection of a structure containing three rooms'.<sup>141</sup>
- 1900: A 40 acre paddock fence was erected in which the caretaker could keep sheep to supply fresh meat for visitors.<sup>142</sup>
- 1900: In answer to an enquiry, the caretaker stated that he kept a good stock of stores for campers.<sup>143</sup>

## Yarrangobilly Caves.

THESE Caves are situated 65 miles north-west of Cooma Railway Station, 700 Kiandra: 47 miles south-south-east of Tumut Railway Station. Mail coaches travel between Tumut and Cooma, 700 the Caves, but vehicles are generally hired by intending visitors. The Railway Commissioners offer special rates for the return trip. A Postal-receiving and Telegraph Office, and a comfortable Accommodation House, have been provided for the convenience of the public at the Caves, added to which there is a natural tepid bath at the thermal spring. Splendid fishing is provided by the rainbow trout which have been liberated in the Yarrangobilly River. The known Caves comprise:—

The Glory Hole - -  
Caverns.  
The Jersey Cave.  
The Harrie Wood - -  
Cave.  
The Castle Cave.  
The River Cave.  
The Grotto Cave (un-  
opened).  
The Copper Mine Cave  
(temporarily closed).



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opened).  
The Copper Mine Cave



Figure 2.10 An early postcard of the Yarrangobilly Caves House complex. The photograph was taken c.1903-4 showing the 1901 Caves House, the relocated Jersey Cottage and Kitchen building and the two cottages in the foreground in their original locations. [Photograph from the NPWS Yarrangobilly Photographic

• 1899: Additions were made to the caretaker's quarters 'by the erection of a structure containing three rooms'.<sup>144</sup>

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The Copper Mine Cave  
(temporarily closed).



<sup>144</sup> Annual Repoi

<sup>145</sup> Annual Repoi

<sup>146</sup> Annual Repoi

Figure

2.10

### **2.11.2 Constructing Pathways and Walls**

A. H. M. Bradley has reminisced about the work he did building and repairing stone walls and pathways to the caves. Following the first opening of the various caves improvements were carried out by several different workmen.<sup>147</sup>

Middleton has written of A. H. M. Bradley, that apart from helping in the discovery of a number of caves, his most lasting contribution to Yarrangobilly was the construction of the pathways to the Glory Hole, Harrie Wood and Castle Caves and the massive dry-stone walls which still support them. This work was done largely during the winters of 1907-1908.<sup>148</sup>

### **2.11.3 Plans for an Accommodation House: 1901**

In 1899, with growing pressure placed on the cottages, it was decided that a specially designed accommodation house should be built. Designed by the Government Architect, it opened in 1902.

Constructed of timber, the Caves House had a central entrance, with a wide verandah facing the road. The sixteen bedrooms were placed along an east-west corridor and the sitting room and dining room were placed at either end of the building. All rooms were accessed either from the verandah or from an internal passage.<sup>149</sup>

### **2.11.4 Infrastructure Review**

The decision to build a new Caves House required the whole infrastructure network to be reviewed. Until 1899, water had been drawn from Rules Creek. This was not considered appropriate because of a sporadic water supply, the location of the grazing paddock or paddocks and other problems. The decision was made to build a water supply dam. Consequently water was piped to the new building from a dam on Rules' Creek.<sup>150</sup>

The Annual Report for 1900 stated that water would be laid on, and piping and cement had been sent to the site.<sup>151</sup>

Figure 2.12 A c.1906 view of Caves House as constructed in 1901 with additions in line to the east being the 1898 Jersey Cottage and the 1897 Kitchen building relocated to this site in 1903, and the new Caretakers Cottage built 1906. The rear building may have been the meat house or laundry. [Photograph reproduced from the NPWS Yarrangobilly Photographic Collection].

<sup>147</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(4): 60.

<sup>148</sup> Greg Middleton, 'Obituary - A. H. M. Bradley', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1972, 16(6): 158.

<sup>149</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p18.

<sup>150</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (October 1989), pp25-26.

<sup>151</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1900*, p198.

Figure 2.11 and 2.12





Figure 2.11 An example of the stone paths constructed to access the cave entrances. [Historic photograph (not dated) reproduced from the [NPWS Yarrangobilly Photographic Collection](#)]



Figure 2.12 A c.1906 view of the Caves House as constructed in 1901 with additions in line with the original building. The east wing being the 1898 Yarrangobilly Cottage and the 1897 Yarrangobilly Cottage building relocated to its present site in 1903, and the new Yarrangobilly Cottagers Cottage built in 1903. The rear building may have been the meat house or laundry. [Photograph reproduced from the [NPWS Yarrangobilly Photographic Collection](#)]



### 2.11.5 The Period 1901-1903

In 1901 The bath at the thermal spring was improved<sup>152</sup> and an iron ladder was placed in the Glory Hole Cave.<sup>153</sup> Also, in 1901 two 'fine chambers' were found, one in the Jersey Cave and the other in the Castle Cave.<sup>154</sup> In 1902 a postal receiving office was added to the telephone office in about May<sup>155</sup> and the first instalment of furniture for the Caves House arrived<sup>156</sup> with additional furniture arriving in October 1903.<sup>157</sup>

In 1902, the year in which the first instalment of furniture was going to the new Caves House, this was the return of visitors to caves, which were then the responsibility of the Department of Mines was -

<u>Abercrombie Caves</u>	<u>638</u>
<u>Bindithera Caves</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Bungonia Caves</u>	<u>437</u>
<u>Jenolan Caves</u>	<u>3,478 (who paid 9,910 visits)</u>
<u>Welling Caves</u>	<u>1,496</u>
<u>Wombeyan Caves</u>	<u>386 (who paid 662 visits)</u>
<u>Yarrangobilly Caves</u>	<u>731 (who paid 1,603 visits)<sup>158</sup></u>

### 2.11.6 Relocation of Jersey Cottage: 1903

In 1903, the Jersey Cottage and Kitchen was removed and re-erected near the new accommodation house.<sup>159</sup> It was positioned adjacent and to the east of the Caves House, and linked to it by a covered way. Jersey Cottage was then used as a kitchen adjunct to Caves House.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1901, p176.

<sup>153</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1901, p176.

<sup>154</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1901, p176.

<sup>155</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1902, p129.

<sup>156</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1902, p129.

<sup>157</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1903, p136.

<sup>158</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1902, p129.

<sup>159</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1903, p136.

<sup>160</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan, (August 1992), p39.

### **2.11.7 Relocation of the Original Caretaker's Cottage**

The third cottage, the original caretaker's cottage, was relocated to the north east in the vicinity of the present BBQ shelter and used by the Bradley family as a Caretaker's cottage. It was later used by Mr. Jack Dunn and his family.<sup>161</sup>

(For details of a visit to the Caves in 1903 see Appendix E.)

## **2.12 Walter Hoad, Caretaker and Lessee 1904 - 1925**

### **2.12.1 New Caretaker/Lessee of Caves House: 1904**

It is assumed that Bradley ceased to be associated with the ~~Caves Precinct~~Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct because of policy changes rather than because of any dissatisfaction with his work there.

In 1904 applications were sought for the position of caretaker and lessee of Caves House. By then the accommodation consisted of four cottages and the Caves House of sixteen single bedrooms, two bathrooms and a lounge. Seventy applicants responded and Walter Hoad, a stone mason by profession,<sup>162</sup> was the successful applicant.

Hoad established a large orchard and vegetable garden and the grazing area known as the Caves Reserve. This included all the limestone outcrops from Yan's Crossing to a point just below the thermal pool. The area was fenced by the Hoad and Day families.<sup>163</sup> Mrs. Day was Walter Hoad's daughter.

Leo Hoad and a person by the name of McIntyre were engaged by the Mines Department in 1904 at £2/2/- per week to carry out cave development work. Leo later calculated that he had spent eleven and a half years of his life making concrete paths and steps in the Jersey Cave - the cave he loved the most.<sup>164</sup>

Hoad recalled that he had made all the steps in the Jersey, the Jillabenan and Harrie Wood caves and explained that he had gained much valuable information on mapping the caves from geologist Oliver Trickett. Trickett had also taught him to make the steps at a 66 degree angle, which was the average man's angle of step.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>161</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p30.

<sup>162</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves,' *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 153.

<sup>163</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p34.

<sup>164</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p36.

<sup>165</sup> '150th anniversary of discovery of Yarrangobilly's magnificent Caves.', *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 18 December 1984.



Figure 2.13 A view of the Thermal Pool showing swimmers including a the figure second from the right identified as Gertrude Day, nee Hoad. [Reproduced courtesy of the Tumut Historical Society]

[Figure 2.13](#)

### **2.12.2 The Car Comes to Yarrangobilly Caves**

The first entry in the Visitors' Book by the owner of a car was recorded in 1906 -

Jan 4th 1906. H. R. Dixon. "Woniara" Wolseley Rd Pty. Piper, Sydney. with first motor car to visit this part and reach the Caves. 4 cyl. "Gladiator".

W. Forstrom Elizabeth Street Sydney. passenger.

Bernard Latham "Missouri" Cooper St Double Bay Sydney. Chauffeur.<sup>166</sup>



<sup>166</sup>Visitor's Book. T.H.S. quoted in Mr. Gommie, Yarrangobilly Caves NSW, p.60.

[Figure 2.14 A Fly fisherman's camp at Yarrangobilly showing an early motor car drawn up near the tent.](#)  
[\[Photograph from the NPWS Yarrangobilly PhotographicHoad Collection\]](#)

Figure 2.14 A Fly fisherman's camp at Yarrangobilly showing an early motor car drawn up near the tent. [Photograph from the NPWS Yarrangobilly Photographic Collection]

Figure 2.14

### **2.12.3 Discovery of the Jillabenan Cave: 1910**

There is dispute over who discovered the Jillabenan Cave, officially the year was 1910. The official Department of Mines report credits Hoad with the discovery of the Jillabenan Cave in 1910. However, in a later interview of Bradley by Middleton, Bradley claimed he discovered the cave. Middleton interviewed both A. H. M. Bradley and Leo Hoad about the circumstances of naming it.<sup>167</sup>

Trickett said of the Jillabenan: 'There is very little in the caves, which have been termed The Wonderland of New South Wales' to surpass the loveliness of this cavern'. He then quoted a poem on the beauty of nature's colours.<sup>168</sup>

### **2.12.4 New Two Storey Wing, 1913-1917**

The popularity of the caves created a need for more accommodation. Work commenced in 1913 but, because of the first World War, progress was slow and it was not until 1917 that the new wing was finished.

<sup>167</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(4): 63; Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 152.

<sup>168</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1910*, quoted in: Gregory J. Middleton, *Oliver Trickett. Doyen of Australia's Cave Surveyors 1847-1934*, (Sydney Speleological Society in association with the Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society, 1992.), p68.



The two-storey building was constructed at right angles to the earlier building, requiring excavation into the hill slope behind. It was built of timber (using Cumberland Sawmill timber and Australian cedar detailing<sup>169</sup>) with two floors of accommodation - twenty bedrooms - and shared bathrooms. On both ground and first floors, there were two large bedroom suites.

At the ground floor, facing the road and the main approach was a large drawing room, panelled with decorative timber work. The new building was physically linked to the existing Caves House by a covered way - which also gave access to the drawing room at ground level - and a staircase built in timber in a similar style to the main buildings.<sup>170</sup>

The new building was designed by the Government Architects Branch. The Government Architect was the former Sydney City Corporation architect George McRae, and the architect for the building was Assistant Government Architect, G.M. Blair.<sup>171</sup> The 1992 Conservation Plan observed -

*The new building, although nominally Federation in style, was an exciting and asymmetrical composition in the romantic mode. The building was superbly suited aesthetically to its site, and functionally to its brief to provide tourist accommodation at the Caves.<sup>172</sup> Also -*

*The steep ribbed roof and the simple aesthetic of weatherboarding and multi-paned windows lent the new building a suitably alpine feeling. Being designed under the direction of the then Government Architect, George McRae, the style followed was a free and asymmetric deviation of the newly fashionable Federal style.<sup>173</sup>*

The building functioned as an accommodation wing until September 1966 when the entire complex was closed to the public.

<sup>169</sup> Architecture Design Group, Yarrangobilly-Caves-Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan. (October 1989), Primary Precinct Feature Review: Two-storey Accommodation Section.

<sup>170</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan, (August 1992), pp20, 42.

<sup>171</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan, (August 1992), pp20, 43.

<sup>172</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan, (August 1992), p43.

<sup>173</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan, (August 1992), p20.



Figure 2.15 The Two Storey Wing of Caves House under construction c.1912-13.  
[Photograph from the [NPWS Yarrangobilly PhotographicHoad](#) Collection]



Figure 2.16 A photograph taken during the 1920s showing the Two Storey Wing completed before the verandah depth along the front of the 1901 Caves House building was increased to 11'6". [Photograph from the [NPWS Yarrangobilly PhotographicHoad](#) Collection]



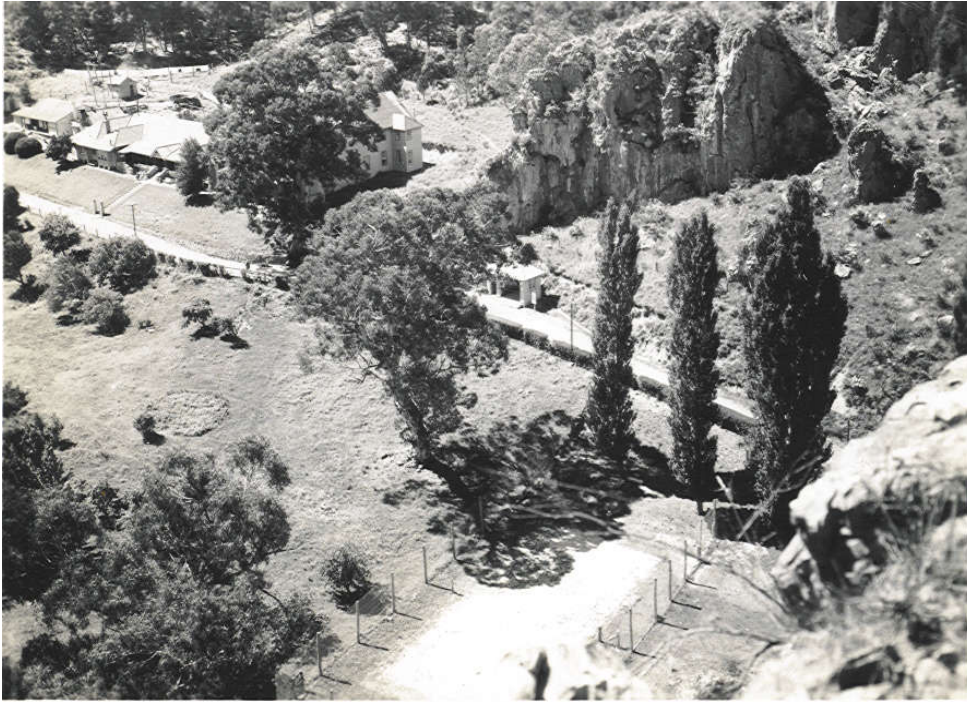


Figure 2.17 A view looking down on the Caves House complex in the late 1930s with the bar and lounge building east of the 1901 Caves House, a tennis court in the area of the current car park for the Self Guiding Cave and the Ticket Office in the middle ground that was constructed in 1926. [Photograph from the [NPWS Yarrangobilly PhotographicHoad](#) Collection]

**Figures 2.15 and 2.16**

**Figure 2.17**

### **2.12.5 Subsequent Alterations to the Caves House Complex**

A number of changes have been made to the Caves House complex since the completion of the 1913-1917 accommodation building. The changes in the form of additions and alterations were mainly to accommodate greater numbers of visitors and to accommodate the increased number of guides and caretaking workers who were consequently required on the site. A lounge and staff sitting room were added to the eastern end of the 1901 building<sup>174</sup> around 1938. In 1937 a basement was constructed and used as a kiosk for some time (under the two storey section).<sup>175</sup> In the two storey wing in 1937 a corridor was converted into a bathroom. This supported a modified two roomed suite arrangement (two storey section- honeymoon suite)<sup>176</sup> and showers

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<sup>174</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p43.

<sup>175</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), p28.

<sup>176</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), p28.

were installed in the lower level bathrooms.<sup>177</sup> In 1938 a bar lounge were built by W. W. Beavan, for Mrs. Gertrude Day, the Caves House lessee when she acquired the Liquor Licence, then held by the Rules Point Guest House. It had been the original hotel licence at Yarrangobilly Village.<sup>178</sup> In 1972 NPWS removed the smaller buildings east of the main complex<sup>179</sup> and in 1982 changes were made to the eastern end of the building to convert the dining room into a Visitors Information Centre and to provide new toilets for use by tourists.<sup>180</sup>

### **2.12.6 Caretaker/Guide Cottage: 1913**

A four-roomed cottage was constructed in the home paddock in 1913. Two additional bedrooms were added in 1924 when, after the construction of a new caretakers cottage (now the Visitors Centre), it became a guides cottage. The building was demolished in 1972. In 1992 there were remnants of the cottage garden including trees on the site.<sup>181</sup>

### **2.12.7 Tennis Courts: c.1913**

A tennis court was built to the north of the garage for use by guests and was in use until at least 1922. A second one, possibly built at the same time, was to the north-west of the Caves House group [below the exit from the current Self Guiding Cave] and was removed in the late 1920s.<sup>182</sup>

The 1989 Conservation Plan noted that the tennis courts were built at a time when recreational facilities were placed in government-run accommodation complexes. The Plan quotes the Kosciuszko Hotel as an example. It was provided with tennis courts and a golf course. Children's swings and a see saw located east of the garage [date of construction unknown] were removed in 1983/84.

Yarrangobilly Caves was also to have a 6-hole golf course on the valley floor in 1922. Equipment was purchased but the course was never built.<sup>183</sup>

<sup>177</sup> Architecture Design Group, [Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct](#) [Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct](#) Conservation Plan. (October 1989), p28.

<sup>178</sup> '150th anniversary of discovery of Yarrangobilly's magnificent Caves.', *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 18 December 1984.

<sup>179</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p43. There is some conflicting evidence in the 1989 adg CMPp 5 which states that the Precinct was closed in 1982 by inference for demolition works.

<sup>180</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p42.

<sup>181</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p45.

<sup>182</sup> Architecture Design Group, [Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct](#) [Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct](#) Conservation Plan. (October 1989), pp28, 29.

<sup>183</sup> Architecture Design Group, [Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct](#) [Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct](#) Conservation Plan. (October 1989), p28.



Figure 2.18 The site of the 1919 Caretaker's Cottage which had previously been used ~~for semi-permanent tents as a camp site for the builders of the two storey wing.~~ [Undated photograph from the [NPWS Yarrangobilly Photographic Hoad](#) Collection]



Figure 2.19 The 1919 Caretakers Cottage constructed on the site of the builder's camping area. [c.1919 photograph from the [NPWS Yarrangobilly PhotographicHoad](#) Collection]

Figure 2.19 The 1919 Caretakers Cottage constructed on the former camping area. [c.1919 photograph from the NPWS Yarrangobilly Photographic Collection]

Figure 2.18 & 2.19

### **2.12.8 Garage: 1913**

The first car had arrived in 1906 and seven years later garage facilities were built in 1913 to the east of the accommodation area, close to the boundary of the horse paddock. An area was flattened to allow for the garage and movement areas. The building was erected in what has

been described as 'a pseudo Tudor style to match the construction style of Caves House'. A new connecting road was built. The garage was demolished in 1972 and a NPWS depot south of Caves House on the plateau replaced it.<sup>184</sup>

### 2.12.9 Caretaker's Cottage: 1919

The Visitors' Information Office was originally the caretaker's cottage built in 1919. It was used for a variety of purposes until the 1970s when the verandah was enclosed and it became a management office and information centre. In 1990 it was modified internally to allow for display and office space.<sup>185</sup>

For an unknown period the northern head office of the Kosciusko National Park was based in the building.<sup>186</sup> See Figures 2.18 and 2.19 for the 1919 cottage and site.



Figure 2.20 A view of the Caves House area looking west showing the former garage (centre right) the caretakers cottage to the left of the child and what may be the generator shed or the original Forge building the Fowl House on the far right. [Hand coloured photograph from the NPWS Yarrangobilly Photographic Collection]

<sup>184</sup> Architecture Design Group, Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan. (October 1989), pp3, 28.

<sup>185</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan, (August 1992), pp46, 47.

<sup>186</sup> Architecture Design Group, Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan. (October 1989), Primary Precinct Feature Review: Structures.

Figure 2.20



## 2.13 The Thermal Pool

### 2.13.1 Thermal Pool: 1894

The thermal spring was enclosed during 1894-95. Dressing sheds were also provided. Because of the special nature of this feature, the Department of Mines analysed the water flow and water quality, the results of which were noted in the annual reports for the Department of Mines.<sup>187</sup>

In 1964 Leo Hoad spoke with the *Tumut and Adelong Times* about the Yarrangobilly Caves. He said of the thermal pool -

*The water in the thermal pool at the caves is at a constant 82 degrees, which means that this artesian water comes from a depth of 1,800 feet. Taking 60 degrees as the temperature of ordinary water, this estimate is reached by adding one degree as the ~~temperative~~temperature for every 90 feet down.*

*The flow of the thermal water is not affected by droughts and has been of great benefits during droughts in the past. No one knows where the water comes from, but has been liberated by earth movement. It is continually making clay and often the holes from where it is flowing become plugged up with clay and it seeks a new outlet. There is a constant flow of 35,000 gallons an hour.*

*The first swimming pool established with the thermal water at the Caves was in 1894, the walls of the pool being of wooden slats, plugged at the back. However, crayfish which bred in the water, used to eat holes in the clay at the back of the wooden sides.*<sup>188</sup>

Figure 2.21 The earliest known photograph of the Thermal Pool (undated) with a small pool enclosure and a slab sided dressing shed. [Photograph courtesy of the Tumut Historical Society]



<sup>187</sup> Architecture Design Group, [Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct](#) [Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct](#) Conservation Plan. (October 1989), Primary Precinct Feature Review: Thermal Pool.

<sup>188</sup> "150 anniversary of discovery of Yarrangobilly's magnificent Caves.", *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 18 December 1984.

Figure

2.21

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### **2.13.2 Thermal Pool: 1916 – c.1942**

In 1964, Leo Hoad spoke with the *Tumut and Adelong Times*. The paper reported that -

... the original cement pool, as it then existed, was built by him in 1916. On two occasions avalanches of the slatey, overhanging soil filled up the pool and it was a major task to sluice it out again.<sup>189</sup>

A road to the pool was planned for 1930, then 1938, then post war, but nothing was done. The road was to slope gently from the ticket office, with a one-way tunnel and lights.

### **2.14 Government Tourist Bureau Managers c.1920-22**

When the war ended and business once again flourished the Government Tourist Bureau decided to separate responsibility for the caves from that of Caves House. Leo Hoad became the new Caretaker for Caves c.1922 and Walter Hoad and his family moved to the village at Yarrangobilly.<sup>190</sup>

For two years Caves House was run for the Government Tourist Bureau by managers, one of whom was McDade or McDoad from Sydney and the other was A. G. Hogan from Tumut.

It was not successful. The two men had had little experience in the hospitality business and they were unable to maintain the profits the Tourist Bureau expected.<sup>191</sup>

Bruce Hoad has argued that each manager failed because they had no local resources. The Hoad family ran stock as a source of meat, had a substantial vegetable garden and the sons operated the mail service from Tumut to Yarrangobilly Caves. Members of the family worked in the laundry, as house maid and as waitresses. Consequently they were able to make it a viable business. But each of the managers got everything from government stores in Sydney, in addition to which there was the cost of labour.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> "150 anniversary of discovery of Yarrangobilly's magnificent Caves.", *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 18 December 1984.

<sup>190</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p37.

<sup>191</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p39.

<sup>192</sup> Bruce Hoad, group discussion, Stakeholders Meeting, Yarrangobilly Caves, 9 February 2000.

## **2.15 Gertrude Day, Lessee of Caves House 1920s-1956 and Leo Hoad Caretaker Of Caves c.1922-1947**

### **2.15.1 Changes in Management**

There are several versions of the next management stage.

- In 1922 Walter Hoad took over the lease of Caves House in partnership with his daughter, Mrs. Gertrude Day.<sup>193</sup>
- Walter Hoad held the lease until 1925 when it was taken over by his daughter, Mrs. G. I. Day.<sup>194</sup> (Leo retired in 1947 and his son Bruce took over.<sup>195</sup> Leo was engaged in an advisory capacity until the family left to live in Tumut in 1954.<sup>196</sup>)
- Mrs. Day and her husband George and their family conducted the Caves House very successfully until 1956, when Mr. Day died.<sup>197</sup>

Many years later, Leo Hoad recalled that his sister had wanted the Caves House lease but the Director of the Tourist Bureau, Cormack, would not let her have it. When Cormack was removed from his position the temporary replacement, a man by the name of Saunders, was more sympathetic. As soon as the lease was up - about 1928 - it was given to her. At first the Tourist Bureau paid an amount per guest, later it paid an amount determined by the Bureau.<sup>198</sup>

Whichever 'facts' are correct the emphasis should be placed on the skills and ability of Gertrude Day.

Commins summarised her ability in the following way -

*Mrs. Day was an astute business woman and with her family once again Yarrangobilly Caves was the place to spend the summer season. People came long distances in large and small groups, clubs or official parties, to enjoy the mountain scenery and fresh air. They came on foot, bicycle, train, coach or horseback and went away to sing the praises of the limestone formations and the pleasure they had derived from the company of friendly people.<sup>199</sup>*

Many came to enjoy the nearby snowfields and the fishing in the high mountain streams. A long standing joke was that a doctor was not needed at the Caves as there was always one in the

<sup>193</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p39.

<sup>194</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly-Caves-Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), p14; Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p28.

<sup>195</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p42.

<sup>196</sup> *Yarrangobilly Caves History*, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>197</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p39.

<sup>198</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 153.

<sup>199</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p39.

area enjoying a fishing trip.<sup>200</sup> (See also Section 2.10.5 Fishing and Section 3.4.8 Walking and Cave Access Tracks)

Leo Hoad recalled that during his sister's lease there were often eighty or ninety visitors a night, sometimes up to one hundred and twenty. He recalled thirty-three bedrooms, 'counting the back rooms'.<sup>201</sup>

Bruce Hoad has argued for several elements which he believed were important to Gertrude Day's success. She owned two properties in her own right on which she ran cattle which provided meat for the Caves House. Her sons had a vegetable plot there and her husband a big vegetable garden on the site of what is now the Rangers House.<sup>202</sup>

### 2.15.2 How Yarrangobilly Used To Be

In April 1989 members of the Tumut and District Historical Society organised an excursion to Yarrangobilly Caves.

During lunch, Bruce Hoad described the area as it once was –

*resembling a mini-village, with enough families for a small school, with its own orchard and vegetable garden, a butcher's shop, stockyards, stables, a busy quest house, post office and for recreation, tennis courts and deck quoits on the hotel verandah as well as the thermal pool.*

[The school was a subsidised school. To obtain the subsidy, two or more families had to employ a teacher (usually a young woman) and provide her with lodgings and a place to teach. The young woman who came to them was six weeks out of her training.]

After lunch, the group visited the accommodation buildings –

*The first room visited was the old 'smoke room'. This was exclusively the gentlemen's domain, where wealthy graziers would gather after dinner to tell tall tales of 'the one that got away', while smoking their cigars and drinking their port after Mrs Zilla –Cooke's licence was transferred from the Rules Point Guest House. (The Rules Point Hotel became a guest house after the licence was transferred in 1939. The licence originally came from the Yarrangobilly Hotel and was bought by Mrs Ida Harris in 1916 for £100.) in 1939 to the Caves House.*

*Hanging on the wall of the smoke room are a pair of old Kiandra skis. These have sharp, pointed ends which, in the days before ski lifts, skiers found useful aids in walking up steep slopes.*

*The ladies used to gather to chat and write letters in the 'blue room'. This once was quite luxurious with a lovely tapestry hanging on the wall, and is in the new double storey section, built between 1912-17. Here the members climbed the lovely old Oregon staircase to the upstairs quest rooms, one of which*

<sup>200</sup> M. Commins, Yarrangobilly Caves NSW, p39.

<sup>201</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Leo Hoad on Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(8): 153.

<sup>202</sup> Bruce Hoad, group discussion, Stakeholders Meeting, Yarrangobilly Caves, 9 February 2000.

was the honeymoon suite a front room with its own private balcony and a beautiful view, which also overlooked the old ticket office, above which a bell once hung in a cleft of a rock, and which was rung to call up guests when a caves tour was about to start.

Also visited on the other end of the building was the large dining room and bar. Beyond this was the old laundry and staff area, which has since been pulled down due to disrepair, which is hardly surprising since it was comprised of the very earliest accommodation cottages which were moved up to the site for those purposes when the present caves house was constructed in 1902.<sup>203</sup>

Bruce Hoad has also spoken of the sense of community he experienced there. For instance there were tennis competitions with Yarrangobilly Village and other places and monthly dances at the village. 'It was a way of life, we knew nothing else and we became addicted to it. When we [Bruce and Col] had been away to the war we couldn't get back quickly enough.'<sup>204</sup>

### **2.15.3 The Yarrangobilly Caves Ticket Office: 1926**

Built in 1926, the ticket office was the gathering point for guests visiting the caves. The signal that a tour was about to begin was the ringing of the bell suspended on the cliff above the building.

The building was modified at an unknown time to provide toilet facilities. Suggestions were made in 1976 that additional toilets be added, but this was not done. Presently (February 2000) the building is a toilet block with some storage room.<sup>205</sup>

### **2.15.4 Bruce Hoad Remembers the 1950s**

In the 1950s Col Hoad had a small kiosk under the south [new] wing of Caves House. Cards and booklets were exceedingly popular and he also sold drinks and lollies and ice cream.

Pioneer buses were mentioned in the Visitors Book and Bruce has confirmed that they came routinely - 20 later 25 seaters. -There were three buses per week and they stayed two nights - Monday-Tuesday, Wednesday-Thursday, Friday-Saturday. Each bus passenger was worth £5 revenue including extras. Further confirmation of regular bus tours to the Caves was provided by Alice Butler, wife of Jim Butler, Caves Manager 1954-1964, who stated that prior to 1954 Jim drove for Pioneer Tours for seven years and often conducted tours to Yarrangobilly Caves.

Buses were permitted to negotiate the dirt road until the matter of insurance became important. Consequently the buses no longer came.

Prices and people at the Cave House were up-market and there were occasions when tuxedos were worn for dinner. Bruce believed this was probably so for the earlier period also. (A

<sup>203</sup> Yarrangobilly revisited.' *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 16 May 1989.

<sup>204</sup> Bruce Hoad, group discussion, Stakeholders Meeting, Yarrangobilly Caves, 9 February 2000.

<sup>205</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p48.

investigation of the Visitors Book would give some indication, there are certainly a number of members of parliament - MLA, MLC - whose names appear there.)

The bar was in the present alcove, offering such items as free squab in aspic on toast – for the drinkers. <sup>206</sup>

The 'moll' of a gangster working on the Snowy used to travel by hire car and set up at the Caves House. She sent the car for him as needed. One day he 'felt frisky' so handed his revolver to Bruce Hoad who put it on the bar shelf.

On one occasion a brawl caused a broken chair and head. She said 'Best fight in years' and put down £10 for drinks all round.

Other women set up there with weekend visits from Snowy men.

**Bruce Hoad observed, while looking at a school photo that many of the 'less bright' did well later.** <sup>207</sup> **2.15.5 Jim and Alice Butler: 1954-1964**

Ralph Butler (known as Jim) commenced work for the Tourist Bureau on 3 May 1954. Jim and Alice Butler maintained the operation of the caves under considerable difficulties and helped shape the relationship between speleological groups and land managers. During their time at the caves Jim and Alice had two sons, Frank born in 1954 at Cooma Hospital and Roderick born in 1956 in Sydney.

"The Tourist Bureau made improvements to the Caretakers Cottage for us, installed a Rayburn Stove with hot water supply (what a luxury), glassed in the verandah, new guttering and outside painting.

We had mail and bread, etc delivered three times a week and we went to shop once a month in Tumut. We had a milking cow for fresh milk, otherwise it was good old Sunshine tin milk. The fruit trees in the orchard opposite the Hotel kept us in jam and preserves, plus blackberries and gooseberries. The pantry was always well stocked. Fowls for eggs and the table, a couple of "porkies" fattened for ham and bacon. In summer Jim and Alan (Edmundson) kept a few hogget in the hill paddock, Jim would kill, skin and dress them – and yes, we did use the Cave Cooler to set the carcass overnight.

There was a Nissan hut behind the Staff Quarters of the Hotel, one half housed the Hotel laundry and Jim had his office at the other side, plus the skis, stocks and boots which were hired out to the public in the winter season, so it was early starts and late finish, drying the gear and waxing skis, so the unpaid labourer came in handy as well as being mother to two young wandering boys.

<sup>206</sup> Bruce Hoad, during conversation, Stakeholders Meeting, Yarrangobilly Caves, 9 February 2000.

<sup>207</sup> Bruce Hoad, during conversation, Stakeholders Meeting, Yarrangobilly Caves, 9 February 2000.

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As Jim had a very good knowledge of electricity it was useful for repairing the main power lines when heavy snow falls would bring them down, plus rewiring in the Caves and replacing those hard to get to globes. At one time Jim went to Wombeyan Caves for two weeks, assisting in rewiring the Caves. He also did most of the electrical repairs in the Yarrangobilly Hotel.<sup>208</sup>

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### **2.15.56 Lease Relinquished: 1956**

Gertrude Day relinquished the lease in 1956. With her departure, interest in the area as a tourist resort was greatly reduced and there was a general deterioration of the Yarrangobilly Caves House and the precinct generally. (An analysis of the tourist industry might indicate if there were other factors which contributed to the decline.)

When the Days left they took a number of items with them because they had put a quantity of furniture, etc., into the Caves House. Consequently it became 'something of a shell'.<sup>209</sup>

### **2.16 The Johnsons: Lessees of Caves House 1956-60**

The replacement lessees, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were considered unsatisfactory and were evicted in May 1960. It has been suggested they had neither the expertise nor the money to finance and run it properly.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>208</sup> Alice Butler – Extract from letter dated 30 December 1997 addressed to Mr Alan Turner, Park Ranger at Yarrangobilly Caves

<sup>209</sup> Bruce Hoad, group discussion, Stakeholders Meeting, Yarrangobilly Caves, 9 February 2000.

<sup>210</sup> Bruce Hoad, group discussion, Stakeholders Meeting, Yarrangobilly Caves, 9 February 2000.



## **2.17 1960s-1990s**

### **2.17.1 The Palfreys 1960 - 1966**

Harvey Palfrey and his wife held a series of Permissive Occupancies from September 1960 to October 1966. Palfrey also held the liquor licence at Kiandra Chalet.<sup>211</sup>

The bar trade was not sufficient to maintain profits and the hotel licence was abandoned or withdrawn in mid-1964. The Palfreys wished to remain at the Caves House (Mrs. Palfrey requested a 20 year lease in 1965) but the decline of the building was such that it was seen as no longer viable as a guest house.

The situation at Yarrangobilly Caves did not improve. There was uncertainty about the future of the Caves and limited finance available to carry out essential maintenance.<sup>212</sup>

In 1962 a proposal was formulated for a new hotel/motel complex for the caves area with a complimentary ski resort within 30 miles, but the participants withdrew.

Very little had changed when, in 1963, the Kosciusko State Park Trust took control.

### **2.17.2 Administration of the ~~Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct~~Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct into the Twentieth Century**

The Yarrangobilly Caves area had been the responsibility of the Lands Department until 1879 when the Department of Mines took over the responsibility and most of the early development work took place during the next twenty eight years while they administered the site. On 1st July 1907 control of the caves was transferred from the Mines Department to the Intelligence Department<sup>213</sup> within which the New South Wales Government Tourist Bureau was responsible for administering the caves.

The Caves Reserve passed to the Kosciusko State Park Trust in 1944 but continued to be administered by the Department of Tourist Activities.<sup>214</sup> However, the 1930s Depression had caused the NSW Government to rely more on lessees to maintain the facilities. By the early 1960s the derelict state of the Caves House complex was such that it was seen as no longer viable as a guesthouse. Additional problems for the viability of the enterprise were the poor state of the Kiandra-Talbingo road and a series of disputes, extensions, delays and problems with the lessees tenure and a lack of interest in redeveloping the resort.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>211</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>212</sup> Sheets: History of Yarrangobilly Caves, A.S. 12, p2. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>213</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1907, p174.

<sup>214</sup> Architecture Design Group, ~~Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct~~Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan. (October 1989), p14; Freeman, Collett & Partners, Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan, (August 1992), p4.

<sup>215</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

The Trust applied for a grant to redevelop the area as a tourist attraction and received the £20,000 in May 1963. The £20,000 was spent on increasing and improving staff accommodation and the construction of modern amenity blocks in the camping area and the thermal pool.<sup>216</sup>

Despite the grant, the offer of a 45-year lease over Caves House and extensive promotion of the area as a prime tourist area, there were no expressions of interest.<sup>217</sup>

In 1963 The Kosciusko State Park Trust assumed control over the land. It constructed and staffed a Ranger Station, with the rangers replacing the caretaker and guides previously employed by the Tourist Bureau. In 1967 control of the area was transferred to the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service who assumed control of the caves and Caves House as part of Kosciusko National Park.<sup>218</sup>

### **2.17.3 Yarrangobilly Place of Detention**

It was obvious that any restoration work would require a large labour force over a period of time. The use of heavy equipment and modern machinery was restricted because of the delicate formation of the caves and the nature of the terrain. The cost of employing such a large labour force was beyond the means of not only the Trust but the Government also. It was then, in 1964, that the idea of using prison labour was discussed.<sup>219</sup>

Early in 1966 the Department of Tourist Activities advised that it could no longer promote the Caves House as 'acceptable resort accommodation'. Later in that year the Caves House and the caves were closed to the public.

The circumstances which brought it about have been noted as the derelict state of the building, the poor state of the Kiandra-Talbingo road, a series of disputes, extensions, delays and problems with the Palfrey's tenure and a lack of interest in redeveloping the resort.<sup>220</sup>

The Caves were closed in 1966 to a strong public outcry and prison workers were used to restore and improve the resort. The Yarrangobilly Place of Detention was gazetted on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1967. The programme had begun in March with sixteen prisoners and three officers supervised by the Chief Ranger and Park Engineer. The prisoners travelled from Cooma by bus each Monday morning spent the working days at Caves House and returned on Friday

<sup>216</sup> Sheets: History of Yarrangobilly Caves, A.S. 12, p3. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>217</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>218</sup> Sheets: History of Yarrangobilly Caves, A.S. 12, p3. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>219</sup> Sheets: History of Yarrangobilly Caves, A.S. 12, p3. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>220</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

afternoon.<sup>221</sup> Carl Lewis was the State Minister for Corrective Services and became the Minister for National Parks and Wildlife in 1967 when the caves program started.<sup>222</sup>

There was a strong reaction to the closure of the caves because in 1966 some six thousand people had inspected them. One response was to point out that closing the resort anticipated its forced closure as a result of deteriorating power and water services and the increasingly unsafe conditions in the caves.<sup>223</sup>

In 1968 the Jersey and Jillabenan Caves and the Thermal Pool were re-opened to the public, but work was still required on the Glory Caves. Prison workers were used to develop the Glory Hole as a self-guiding cave and to complete the renovations on the other three 'show' caves.

#### **2.17.4 The Glory Hole Cave - Planning Australia's First Self-Guided Cave**

The idea of a self-guided cave came from the Kosciusko National Park staff in 1968. It has been suggested there were two reasons for the idea.

1. It enabled the caves to handle an ever-increasing number of visitors without employing extra staff.
2. It meant that visitors would be able to see at least one cave if they were short of time or arrived after the normal tours were books out.

It also meant visitors could move at their own pace, pause as they wished to and take photographs as they desired.

A tunnel from the cave had been contemplated over the years and was discussed again as the means of increasing the number of people who could visit the cave. The Sydney Speleological Society carried out a detailed survey of the proposed site. The tunnel was created in 1969. It was essential to have 'through' trips if the cave was to operate on a self-guiding basis.<sup>224</sup>

#### **2.17.5 Reopening the Caves:**

In 1968 the Jersey and Jillabenan Caves were re-opened to the public, but work was still required on the Glory Caves. Prison workers were used to develop the Glory Hole as a self-guiding cave and to complete the renovations on the other three 'show' caves. Public use of the area was restricted to day use.<sup>225</sup>

<sup>221</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>222</sup> Pers comm Gary Bilton, September 2000.

<sup>223</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>224</sup> G. J. Middleton, Former Assistant Interpretation Officer, National Parks & Wildlife Service of N.S.W., 'Glory Hole Cave, Yarrangobilly : Australia's First Self-Guided Cave.', E. Hamilton-Smith ed., *Cave Management in Australia*, pp25-35.

<sup>225</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), p16.

The caves area was officially reopened on 3rd November 1973 and the Department of Corrective Services vacated Caves House in 1974. Approximately \$70,000 had been spent on the restoration programme. This included renovating the Caves House, rewiring the caves, repairing tracks and other general repairs.<sup>226</sup>

#### **2.17.6 Demolition of Buildings**

In order to reduce maintenance costs associated with redundant structures by 1978 NPWS had demolished the schoolhouse, freezer room, Nissen hut, garage, the workshop, blacksmith's shop, and kitchen, stables and harness room, feed storage shed, cottage behind the caretaker's cottage. Again in 1982 NPWS closed the Precinct for a short time and upgraded the hydro-electric system with the purchase of and purchased two new diesel generators.<sup>227</sup>

#### **2.17.7 Developments in Interpretation at Yarrangobilly Caves: 1970**

The skills of informing the public had become more sophisticated when, in 1970, G. J. Middleton, Assistant Interpretation Officer, National Parks and Wildlife Service, wrote of the function of interpretation at Yarrangobilly Caves. The National Parks and Wildlife Service had taken responsibility for the ~~Caves Precinct~~ Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct three years earlier.

'As yet this term [interpretation]', wrote Middleton, 'remains a somewhat esoteric one in Australia - at least in the way it is applied by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, so perhaps a formal definition is in order. The following is that proposed by a prominent American exponent of the art, Freeman Tilden (1967):

*An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.*

Middleton went on to say -

*Interpretation does not seek to instill information; rather does it aim at arousing an interest in, or bringing about an awareness of, in the case of national parks, our natural heritage and its conservation.*

He suggested that -

*The caves are most readily interpreted in terms of the local geology and the geomorphological processes responsible for their development but historical and biological factors are not overlooked and special features such as the Thermal Pool are included.*

The term 'Ranger' had replaced the former term 'Guide'. -

<sup>226</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

<sup>227</sup> Pers comm Gary Bilton, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2000.

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The Ranger conducting a party of visitors through a cave is far more than just a guide - as well as showing the cave he must attempt to explain it and try to arouse interest among his 'audience'.

Middleton went on to discuss 'less personal interpretive media' - signs, displays and publications. As well, there were future plans for improved displays in the visitors' centre.

Within this context Middleton also referred to the Glory Hole Cave redevelopment to permit self-guided tours. This was believed to be the first of its kind in Australia, though self-guided caves were in operation in America.

A plan contemplated for some time in the future was to arrange for special caving tours for more adventurous visitors -

Visitors would be required to carry their own lights (probably miners lamps) and wear hats, which might be supplied by the Service. Such tours would give visitors an insight into caves 'au naturel' and, depending on the cave, something of an underground 'wilderness experience'.<sup>228</sup>

And thus, the manner of visiting the caves would turn full circle.

### **The idea of using prison workers to restore and improve the resort eventuated. The Yarrangobilly Place of 2.17.8 Future Use for the Caves House**

A use for the Caves House had been of concern for some years. Neither commercial groups nor the Youth Hostels Association were interested in the building. It had become increasingly derelict and the cost of repairing and repainting the building was substantial. It was suggested that this be done by prisoners, the Youth Hostels Association, Police Boys Club or the Scouts. The use of the Caves area for a Jamboree was suggested, but rejected.

Discussions continued. Some favoured the complete removal of the complex, others argued for the retention of all the buildings. Park staff stressed the need for improved visitor facilities and staff accommodation. The 'tumultuous history of plans for Caves House' led to a call for the preparation of an overall development plan for the Rules Creek Valley, in which consideration of the future of Caves House and other buildings would be integrated with plans for parking and vehicular/pedestrian access.

That call was made in 1975, but the planning did not occur. Successive sub-district Senior Rangers have prepared quite detailed plans for the floor of Rules Creek Valley and the Caves Development Area, but no plan to cover the entire limestone karst area and its catchment has previously been attempted. In the meantime parts of the single storey section of the Caves

<sup>228</sup> G. J. Middleton, 'Current Developments in Interpretation at Yarrangobilly Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speological Society*, 1970, 14(11): 259-262.

House have been redeveloped for visitor facilities and staff accommodation, while a number of out-buildings have been demolished.<sup>229</sup>

#### **2.17.9 Current Use**

Public use of the area is currently still restricted to day use. The single storey Caves House building has recently been restored and re-painted, various infra-structure has been upgraded and/or its replacement is in process, the 1919 Caretakers Cottage is used as a Visitors Centre and Cave Tours are conducted by NPWS staff. The Thermal Pool is a local bathing facility and together with the picnic grounds and bush tracks is popular with visitors.



Figure 2.22 Caves House as it is today [Photograph by Sheppard February 2000].

<sup>229</sup> Yarrangobilly Caves History, General. Held at Yarrangobilly Caves.

Figure 2.22

## 2.18 Infrastructure Development

### 2.18.1 Lighting in the Caves before Electricity

This was the way A. H. M. Bradley explained it -

... Yes, you carried a candle stick - with a spring like a carriage lamp. You undid it in the middle, turned it upside down, put the candle in, put the spring in and then put the base on. The spring was an ordinary piece of wire in a spiral 1 1/2" in diameter to push the candle up all the time. The top had a cap on it with a 1/2" hole for the flame to come through. As the candle burnt away it kept coming up because the spring was tapered to about 1/2" at the end, and the spring was quite strong. Sometimes people would be a bit inquisitive, then bang! They'd get quite a scare.<sup>230</sup>

Figure 2.23 A group of early tourists in formal evening wear in the Caves. Note what appears to be the candle holding apparatus in their hands [See Below] and the tour guide off to the right. The hand rails are infilled with wire netting. [Historic Photograph held in the Yarrangobilly from the Hoad Photographic Collection]



<sup>230</sup> Greg Middleton, 'An Interview with Anthony Harris Mobsby Bradley on Yarrangobilly', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1985, 29(4): 65.



Figure

2.23

### **2.18.2 Hydro-Electric System**

During the years 1900-1920 Walter and Leo Hoad promoted the idea of hydro-electricity as the power source for the area.<sup>231</sup>

In 1920, to light the Caves House and for street lighting, a Delco electric light plant of 3 1/2 kilowatts was installed behind Caves House together with a battery set and a Delco kerosene generator. The building was opposite the 1897 stables site.<sup>232</sup>

By May 1926 a 32 kVA hydro electric plant had been installed together with transmission lines and transformers for four caves, two of which were completed by December 1926. The system was augmented by the existing Delco kerosene generator.<sup>233</sup>

Figure 2.24 A c.1920s photograph of the dam made for the hydro system. [Photograph courtesy of Mr Clarrie Dunn]



Figure 2.24

<sup>231</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p35.

<sup>232</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p22.

<sup>233</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p35.

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### **2.18.3 Wiring the Caves: 1926**

In 1926 the electric wiring of the caves commenced. Originally the work was supervised by a person by the name of Swan, an engineer from Jenolan Caves. Later the installations were done by Leo Hoad and Jack Dunn.

Jack Dunn commenced work as a guide and worker in 1919 and retired in 1957. He has been described as 'a conscientious and loyal worker. He will be remembered for his small size and his ability to get the lights well concealed in the caves to create the best effects and also for his stone wall construction.'<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> M. Commins, *Yarrangobilly Caves NSW*, p42.

#### 2.18.4 More Power

When a larger dam was built at a higher altitude on Rules Creek in 1956 the potential for greater hydro power production was achieved.<sup>235</sup> One source says the original Delco generator was retained until 1975. In 1926 a ~~There is reference to a building~~ was constructed to serve the diesel and hydro systems. This building is still in use ~~in the 1950s which is probably the existing building.~~<sup>236</sup>

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In 1975 a larger, perhaps second hand, 60 kVA hydro electric system was installed in a new generator building situated at Rules Creek east of the Caves House group.<sup>237</sup> In 1982 a pair of 75 kVA, Rushton and Volvo diesel generators were installed.<sup>238</sup>

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In August 1985 the *Tumut and Adelong Times* reported that an upgrade of the hydro plant had been commissioned. The commissioning was announced by the Kosciusko National Park superintendent and the work was to be done in consultation with Tamar Designs of Launceston, Tasmania, a firm specialising in small hydro electric design.<sup>239</sup>

The 1992 Conservation Plan noted that 'The unique one-off hydro electric system is of high significance because of the considerable technical achievement involved in its development and operation.'<sup>240</sup>

In 1964 Leo Hoad recalled 1925 -

*Mr. Hoad said that the plant was installed by himself after tremendous opposition from the Directors of the Government Tourist Bureau, who claimed there was not sufficient water to drive the turbines. After persistent efforts on his part, the Public Works Department finally requested him to take readings of the creek flow. Fortunately this occurred in a wet year and the Bureau later accepted the idea of installing a hydro electric generating plant to provide electricity for the Caves. There had been arguments with the Department's Water Engineer on the amount of fall and water pressure.*

*In 1925 the plant was in the blue print stage; and Mr. Hoad started on construction in October and had it completed the following May. It was officially opened in 1927. The plant has been in constant operation for forty years and therefore Leo Hoad facetiously claims 'he had started the Snowy Scheme.'*<sup>241</sup>

<sup>235</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p36.

<sup>236</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), Primary Precinct Feature Review: Structures.

<sup>237</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), pp35, 36.

<sup>238</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), between pages 15 and 16 and pers comm G Bilton 10/9/00.

<sup>239</sup> 'Yarrangobilly Caves Upgraded Hydro Plant Just Commissioned.', *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 27 August 1985.

<sup>240</sup> Freeman, Collett & Partners, *Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*, (August 1992), p73.

<sup>241</sup> Leo Hoad, 'History of the Yarrangobilly Caves and Upper Tumut Area.', *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 4 August 1964.

### **2.18.5 The Sewerage System**

The 1989 Conservation plan noted that the multiple bay tank system connected to Caves House 'represents an unusual and technically accomplished early method of sewage treatment'. It is thought to be part of the infrastructure installed in conjunction with the construction of the 1912-17 two-storey wing. A 1920s Government Tourist Bureau pamphlet describes Yarrangobilly Caves House as having 'the latest system of septic tank sewerage' connected. [See Appendix D p2]

The original system has not been upgraded extensively, except where new structures have been built or modified. Drainage (stormwater) fixtures are evident throughout the precinct and the remains of fixtures dating to 1901 can be found.<sup>242</sup>

## **2.19 Promoting the Yarrangobilly Caves in the Twentieth Century**

### **2.19.1 Promoting the Yarrangobilly Caves in 1911**

This is how the caves were presented to the public by the Immigration and Tourist Bureau in 1911 -

*The beautiful Yarrangobilly Caves, further to the south, are ordinarily included in the itinerary of a round trip through the Mount Kosciusko district. The caverns are a marvellous fairyland of stalactitic and stalagmitic formations of myriad shapes and hues, with festoons of delicate rock draperies of tints ranging from the deepest chocolate through apricot and yellow to the most stainless white, underground rivers, and weird shapes that glint uncannily from the inky gloom of perpetual night. The sensations attending an exploration of this underworld are absolutely unique in tourists' experience. Both on the mountains and at the Caves accommodation of the first class is always available.*<sup>243</sup>

### **2.19.2 Promoting the Caves in 1917**

An article appeared in *Our Quarterly Magazine* in May 1917 and provides a contrast with the directions for travelling as told by Sylvanus Urban.

Whilst Tumut (322 miles from Sydney) was 47 miles from the Caves and Cooma (266 miles from Sydney) was, by the shortest route 65 miles from the Caves, most travellers, it was said, made a round tour, starting either from Cooma or Tumut, and include in their itinerary a run to Mount Kosciuszko.

The article used terms like 'the wild Talbingo and Cumberland Ranges', 'sylvan scenes of the fertile Tumut Valley' and 'picturesque, undulating meadows'. Then there were 'the famous

<sup>242</sup> Architecture Design Group, *Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct Conservation Plan*. (October 1989), p22.

<sup>243</sup> Issued by the Immigration and Tourist Bureau, *Tours in New South Wales Australia*, (William Applegate Gullick, Government Printer, 1912.) n.p.n.

Caves of Yarrangobilly (3,200 feet). The headings were 'Highest Settlement in Australia', 'Groves of Beautiful Exotics', 'Great Healing Properties' and 'The Wondrous Stalagmites'.

The reader was told that an unusual feature of the stay was the natural tepid bath from a spring which gushes out of the mountain side, with an average temperature of about 80 degrees (Fahr). It was described as a bath 28ft. x 14ft. x 5ft. deep 'and tourists and residents attest to the great healing properties of the water in certain cases.

The trout-laden waters of the Yarrangobilly and Murrumbidgee Rivers were praised.

The accommodation -

*The accommodation house for visitors is pleasantly situated on a grassy expanse sheltered by densely-wooded limestone cliffs rising 200 feet sheer. It is just a comfortable tourist headquarters, and the visitor to it will find his needs attended to and a wholesome homely meal set before him. The tariff is 8s. per day . . .*

A photograph of King Solomon's Temple accompanied the article and this is the prose that described it -

*Its [the Castle Cave] crowning glory is the formation of King Solomon's Temple, a piece of transcendent splendour. From gracefully-rounded snowy ledges, rendered luminous by myriads of crystals, hang gorgeous orange-tinted shawls, all of which form an imposing canopy over grottoes of rare beauty.*<sup>244</sup>

### **2.19.3 Trickett's Opinion of the Castle Cave: c.1919**

Beside a plan of the Yarrangobilly limestone which Trickett was preparing for Carne & Jones' 1919 publication *The Limestone Deposits of New South Wales*, he wrote -

*The Castle Cave contains what is probably the finest specimen of limestone drip to be found anywhere in any cave in the world. Named King Solomon's Temple - 17' across - varied in colour from the purest white to a rich fawn.*<sup>245</sup>

### **2.19.4 Oliver Trickett, Photographer**

Trickett's biographer draws attention to his photographic skills, noting that his photographs were used in the second edition of the Jenolan guidebook. He also had a personal business publishing photographic postcards. [See Figure 2.10]

The author quotes Elery Hamilton-Smith as suggesting that although Trickett had many opportunities to take photographs, he was probably prohibited, because of his position, from

<sup>244</sup> Specially written for *Our Quarterly Magazine*, May 1917, pp5-8.

<sup>245</sup> Quoted in Gregory J. Middleton, *Oliver Trickett. Doyen of Australia's Cave Surveyors 1847-1934*, (Sydney Speleological Society in association with the Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society, 1992.), p85.

publishing his photographs himself, so a professional photographer called Charles Kerry who also had a special interest in caves did it for him. Some which appear to be his work have either no identification or only 'O.T.' on them. One series of cards produced in about 1910 were of Yarrangobilly, all from photographic prints.<sup>246</sup>

### **2.19.5 The Role of Charles Kerry, Photographer**

The role of the photographer in promoting the area was significant. As Sylvanus Urban said -

*... those who have not visited the caves may form some idea of the vastness of their approaches and chambers from the photographs taken by Mr. C. H. Kerry, of Sydney ...*<sup>247</sup>

Elery Hamilton-Smith, in exploring the subject of promotion through photographs, notes that at least 1500 different postcard scenes of Jenolan were produced during the 'golden age years' between 1902 and 1912. He argues that the way the photographer saw the caves was an influence in shaping the visitors' perception of them. Kerry, he explains, provided the photographs for one of the first ever 'coffee table' books on caves, Samuel Cook's 1889 *The Jenolan Caves : An Excursion in Australian Wonderland*.

Hamilton-Smith writes -

*He valued the natural world in an untouched, pristine state, and so he presented the caves as grand, beautiful, mysterious and above all, untouched. . .*

Kerry was also a close friend of Oliver Trickett consequently he was able to enter and photograph many caves immediately after their discovery.<sup>248</sup>

Many features within the caves were named by Charles Kerry at the request of Mr Murray, the caretaker at the time.

### **2.19.6 Touring in 1920**

The accommodation advertisements found in Victorian Journals of the 1920s and 30s typically reassured clients that they would experience the same real world comforts that they had at home in terms of food and bathroom facilities. The grand guest houses offered tennis, croquet walks and surroundings symbolic of the guests imaginings of a comparative European experience. The smaller guest houses targeted guests by offering reasonable tariffs and good food. The bush or mountain location of the holiday and proximity to bush sites and panoramic scenery were taken for granted.<sup>249</sup>

<sup>246</sup> Gregory J. Middleton, *Oliver Trickett. Doyen of Australia's Cave Surveyors 1847-1934*, (Sydney Speleological Society in association with the Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society, 1992.), p103.

<sup>247</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Pleasure Resorts Of New South Wales. The Yarrangobilly Caves.', *The Australian Star*, Saturday evening, February 9, 1895, p8.

<sup>248</sup> Elery Hamilton-Smith, 'Seeing Australian Caves.', *Journal of The Sydney Speleological Society*, 1990, 34(3): 49.

<sup>249</sup> Newton J. 1996, p74.

Yarrangobilly sits somewhere in between the grand guest house and the smaller operation. While the surroundings were grand with recognised potential as a future spa or health resort, the accommodation was not as grand as that found in larger establishments like Jenolan and the Hydro Majestic Hotel.

Yarrangobilly Caves House provided typical accommodation of the period. Apart from the specially designed 1901 Caves House building and the 1912-17 two storey accommodation wing it had grown in an ad hoc way with the relocation and re-use of existing buildings including the caretakers cottages and with the construction of rooms and amenity buildings as required.

It was quite usual for nineteenth century hotels to have many more rooms than bedrooms and in this respect prior to the demolitions that took place in the 1970s and 1980s Caves House was typical. Most bedrooms at the time...were for sleeping in only and were not much bigger than a bed and a wardrobe.<sup>250</sup>

*In those days before television there was little reason to actually sit around in a room; if you wanted to read you went to the library or the reading room, if you wanted to write there would be a writing room, parlours were for socialising, lounges were for tea and sandwiches in between main meal times when you went to the dining room, and the smoking room was for ...well...smoking. Bathrooms were still down the hall; in the Grand the male bathroom was in the north corner and the ladies' bathroom was in the south corner at the rear of the hotel on each floor... gender division was typical...and led to duplication of rooms in turn, so that there would be one writing room for men and another for ladies, a smoking room for men and a drawing room for the ladies and so on.*<sup>251</sup>

The New South Wales Government Tourist Bureau published *The Tourist*, releasing its first issue in January 1920. (It was published during at least late 1920 and early 1921 but it is not known if it was a short-lived venture or if the Mitchell Library holds only limited issues.)

The editorial in January 1920 pointed out that 'civilised countries not hamstrung by the war' were concentrating special effort on making their tourist attractions widely known. This was also true of Australia and New Zealand who were promoting travel within and to their borders. It also applied to the Tourist Bureau. Illustrated literature and tourist maps were being added to and ten thousand display cards, descriptions of the State's innumerable holiday resorts, were ready for exhibition in trams.

The advertisement on page 2 set the scene: 'See Australia First. Why Go Elsewhere for Health and Holiday?'

The ideas and plans of the bureau included popularising the accommodation houses at Yarrangobilly and Wombeyan Caves. The page devoted to the Yarrangobilly Caves described the journey, the caves and other attractions -

<sup>250</sup> Richardson JI, 1998, p59.

<sup>251</sup> Richardson JI 1998 quotes C.J Spicer, *Duchess: The Story of the Windsor Hotel*, 1993



The attractions of this splendid pleasure resort are not confined to the Caves alone. There is an up-to-date, Government-controlled hostelry, charmingly situated on a wooded slope flanked by bold bluffs of limestone. There is ample water supply, and every modern comfort. A tennis court provides recreation for lovers of the game, whilst opportunities for pleasant walks are provided by well graded and sheltered paths.

There is, further, a cemented swimming bath some 30 feet square, through which a never failing stream of clear, pellucid water passes. The water has a temperature of 82 degrees, and tourists and residents attest to its curative properties. Last year's drought and the cormorants . . . The recent freshes should encourage the trout from the deeper pools to make their way up stream.

For climate and scenery the environment of Yarrangobilly Caves leaves little to be desired.<sup>252</sup>

The second issue was not available for researching, but the Caves are referred to again in the third issue, promoting Oliver Trickett's models of limestone caverns created from his surveys. The models, constructed strictly to scale, also showed the various tracks and stairways associated with the caverns. One model from Yarrangobilly - the Jersey Cave - was on exhibition at the Mining Museum in George Street North.<sup>253</sup>

Caves were also featured in the 1921 Special Overseas issue. Whilst the Jenolan Caves had the greatest coverage, within a column on other cave systems, three paragraphs and a photograph described the Yarrangobilly Caves. It mentioned the journey to the caves, trout fishing, tennis, bathing in the thermal spring, motoring on excellent tourist roads and the excellent accommodation. The visit was described as the "Wonder Caverns of the Southern Alps."<sup>254</sup>

A 1921 NSW Government Tourist Bureau brochure which substantially reflects the promotion provided in early issues of *The Tourist* is provided in Appendix A.

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## **2.19.7 Recognising Recreational Opportunities**

G. J. Middleton, biographer of Oliver Trickett, recounts a visit made by Trickett to a particular cave in 1897. Overcoming difficulties to reach the cave, Trickett then descended 500 feet and took a photograph. Middleton observes that 'despite the vertical nature of this cave, he foresaw the possibility of future development'. Middleton's observation in response to Trickett's opinion was 'Ordinary tourists in those days would suffer conditions only 'adventure' tourists would accept today [1991]'<sup>255</sup>

<sup>252</sup> *The Tourist*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 5 January 1920, p6.

<sup>253</sup> *The Tourist*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 5 March 1921, p6; Gregory J. Middleton, *Oliver Trickett. Doyen of Australia's Cave Surveyors 1847-1934*, (Sydney Speleological Society in association with the Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society, 1992.), pp112, 113.

<sup>254</sup> *The Tourist*, Special Overseas Number, 1921, p9.

<sup>255</sup> Gregory J. Middleton, *Oliver Trickett. Doyen of Australia's Cave Surveyors 1847-1934*. (Sydney Speleological Society in association with the Jenolan Caves Historical & Preservation Society, 1992.) p28.

Perhaps this change is reflected in a statement in the annual report of the Department of Mines for 1902 -

*Owing to the growing importance of the caves as a means of recreation for the public, many conveniences are required . . . The caves are, however, being gradually rendered easy of access and inspection.*<sup>256</sup>

This would have pleased Trickett who observed in 1897 -

*. . . it is not unreasonable to suppose that the impressive scenery, the number and extent of the caves, and the cool climate of this locality, will render it in future one of the most popular resorts of tourists in the Colony.*<sup>257</sup>

Speaking of the caves generally (Abercrombie, Bungonia, Jenolan, Wellington, Wombeyan and Yarrangobilly) the annual report for 1905 gave information about the promotion of the caves -

*An endeavour has been made to advertise the caves by the issue of 5000 broad-sheets and 5000 leaflets, illustrated by views, which have been admirably produced by the Government Printer.*

*The first edition of the Jenolan Caves Guide has been sold out; this gratifying result has led to the publication of a second edition.*

*For the first time a Guide to the Yarrangobilly Caves has been published.*

*These booklets are profusely illustrated, and their general get-up reflects credit on the Government Printer.*

*A Guide to the Wombeyan Caves is in the press*

*The Intelligence Department is arranging for the distribution of leaflets etc., having for their object the advertisement of the caves as pleasure resorts.*<sup>258</sup>

(In 1898 *Notes on the Limestone Caves of New South Wales*, with plans, by Oliver Trickett, Licensed Surveyor, had been published. Some or all of the contents was extracted from the annual report for that year.)

The emphasis on what the public expected is the most likely explanation for the comment in the report of the following year, concerning the advice on catering given to Yarrangobilly Caves House and to Wombeyan -

*A teacher from the cookery classes of the Technical College was sent to the Caves during December to give hints on better catering for visitors.*<sup>259</sup>

<sup>256</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1902, p129.

<sup>257</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1897, p304.

<sup>258</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1905, p158.

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That was also the year in which the Intelligence Department arranged tourist trips to New South Wales caves. 'This endeavour to popularise the Caves is appreciated by the public'.<sup>260</sup>

But it was not only the Australian population or the people of New South Wales who were to be encouraged to visit the caves. A 1911 publication entitled *Tours in New South Wales, Australia*, issued by the Immigration and Tourist Bureau and which included the caves, stated -

*For Information about New South Wales, Australia,*

*Its Resources,*

*Its Prospects for the Settler,*

*Its Wonderful Tourist Attractions.*

*Apply to*

*The Agent-General for New South Wales,*

*125 Cannon-street, London, E.C., England;*

*The British Consul, Chicago, U.S.A.;*

*The Commercial Commissioner for New South Wales*

*in the East, Kobe, Japan;*

*The Director, Immigration and Tourist Bureau,*

*Sydney, New South Wales.*

### **2.19.8 Jenolan Caves - A Handbook for Caves Guiding Staff**

With the emphasis placed on providing the visitor with an experience both pleasurable and free of unpleasantities, in 1967 a handbook was prepared to assist guides at limestone caves in New South Wales, and at Jenolan in particular. The author was B. T. Dunlop who had been a secondary school science master, a casual guide at Jenolan, Yarrangobilly and Abercrombie Caves and later conducted research in the Jenolan Caves. Dunlop had also visited caves in other states and overseas.

The guide provided information about limestone caves and Jenolan in particular, but also contained hints on guiding. It indicated the way in which the emphasis was now firmly placed on satisfying the members of the public.

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<sup>259</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1906*, p173.

<sup>260</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Mines, New South Wales for the year 1906*, p173.

... Guiding is an art; a simple one certainly but something in which there are degrees of skill and which can be improved by thought and practice ...

For the occasion the guide is the executive officer of a Government Department pleased to have its customers and anxious to please them. Ideally he should be:

Careful in dress and carriage, looking the part;

Pleasantly spoken and mannered;

Courteous and helpful to his party;

Interested in the cave and able to present it with competence and even enthusiasm;

Just a normal Australian grown-up, in fact.

With the cave before him and the party automatically interested in such scenery, the stage is set for a pleasant trip and he should have no difficulty in satisfying both his party and his Department.

#### **2.19.9 Comparison of Visitor Attraction**

The extracts from publications which have been quoted in this historical report, give some indication of the language and images used in selling the caves. These ranged from the matter-of-fact remarks of Sylvanus Urban, through to a vocabulary of 'wild', 'sylvan' and 'picturesque'. All differ from a 1893 article promoting limestone caves, which carried the heading 'Watch out for the helictites!'<sup>261</sup>

Additional research would be required to analyse the various caves in the State to understand differences in their appeal to the public and the consequent attendance figures.

Two advantages of Jenolan Caves has been proximity to Sydney and an association with the Blue Mountains. This is an area, which has been promoted by the use of romantic illusion together with the 'selling' of health. Nearby were the visually attractive houses and gardens of wealthy or important people and finally, there was the promise of great pleasure or fun in a weekend away.

#### **2.19.10 Cave Management Style**

In 1973 R. K. Skinner contrasted the philosophies towards tourist caves operated by the National Parks Service and those operated by private enterprise in the USA. National Parks caves had to be kept as natural as possible and emphasis in presentation had to be placed on the interpretation of a natural feature. Interpretative programmes were conducted daily or at

<sup>261</sup> The Open Road, April 1893, p22. CHECK DATE

night and there was an illustrated lecture presentation concerning aspects of the underground and surface ecology.

By contrast, the private cave operators had complete autonomy. Their presentation, Skinner assessed, ranged from garish vulgarity to moderate good taste.

Management of the caves at Yarrangobilly generally reflects the philosophy of the USA National Parks Service. However, because of low levels of funding over the years the presentation of the caves has had to be structured around low cost options, such as the Self Guiding Cave and guided tours, rather than in situ interpretation and day and night interpretation.

#### **2.19.11 – Development of Speleology**

Brian O'Brien lost in East Deep Creek Cave in December 1953. This was not only a significant event in itself but played a crucial role in the evolution of Australian speleology.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Elery Hamilton Smith (pers comm)



