

2.0 HISTORY

1887: 19 acres temporarily reserved (Allotment 22A of B, Parish of Buchan). Although this was formally reserved “for camping purposes”, it is clear from the records of the Mines Department that the real purpose was specifically to protect caves or associated natural features (since known as the Potholes Reserve or Wyatt Reserve)

1888: Visit to Spring Creek Cave (and other caves in the Buchan area) by James Stirling and J.H. Harvey

1889: Report on Buchan Caves by Government Geologist James Stirling

1897: Sale of land which subsequently projected into the eastern side of Buchan Caves Reserve (Allotment 21, Township of Buchan) to L.G. Quail

1900: Report of the proposed reservation of limestone caves in the Buchan district submitted to the Geological Survey by A.E. Kitson, recommending reservation for cave purposes of the unsold portion of township reserve (containing ‘Green Caves’ and ‘Dukes Caves’) undertaken in 1901) and an area of mining reserve along Cave Creek (containing ‘Spring Creek Caves’—undertaken in 1902)

1900: Reservation of approx 86 acres “For Public Purposes and for protection of the natural features” (Pyramids Reserve)

1900: Sale of land subsequently found to contain ‘Kitson Cave’ and ‘Summers Cave’ (Allotment 6A, Parish of Buchan) to Robert Duke

1901: Reservation of 10 acres “For Public Purposes and for protection of the natural features” (Slocombe’s Cave)

1901: 160 acres (containing Moon Cave, Foul Air Cave, and subsequently found to contain Federal Cave) temporarily reserved from sale ‘For Public Purposes and for the protection of the natural features’ following the earlier reservations in the Buchan area for similar purposes

1901: A further 10 acres were added to the 1887 reserve.

1902: Additional 119 acres (containing Spring Creek Cave and other features, and subsequently found to contain Fairy Cave) temporarily reserved west of the 1901 reservation

1902; Reservation of 2 acres “For Public Purposes and for protection of the natural features” (Dickson’s Caves)

1901: Regulations to protect caves from damage gazetted

c.1902: Frank Moon employed to search for further caves. Buchan Caves (c.1902–40), and undertook much exploration of caves at Buchan

1906: Moon Cave entered and explored by Frank Moon but little used for public tours following discovery of more impressive caves nearby (N.B. Moon appears to have been unaware that this cave was one of those entered by Stirling in 1889)

1906: Kitson Cave (located on private property close to Spring Creek) entered and explored by Frank Moon, then **photographed by Rev John Flynn**.

1906: Report published on the new caves at Buchan prepared by A.E. Kitson (employee of the Geological Survey of Victoria, 1899–1906), photographs taken, ‘proper survey’ of caves and ‘necessary work’ to make caves accessible recommended.

1907: Illustrated booklet entitled *Views of the Buchan Caves and Pyramids* published

1907: Fairy Cave entered and explored by Frank Moon, photographs taken by Bulmer (**Lakes Entrance**) and **MacDougall (South Buchan)**; Fairy Cave opened to the public

1907: Frederick J. Wilson employed as Supervisor, also often referred to as Manager (1907–21) following experience at Jenolan Caves, and was responsible for major early infrastructure in caves

1909: Road leading to Spring and Fairy Cave Creeks opened and gazetted, replacing an earlier track from the western end of Buchan township to Fairy Cave

1908: First guidebook to the Buchan Caves published: *Guide to the Gippsland Lakes and Buchan Caves*, with text by Frank Whitcombe, and photographs by N.J. Caire and Howard Bulmer.

1910: Wilson, accompanied by Moon and Constable Brown negotiate rock fall beyond Blackwood Chamber at the south end of Fairy Cave to discover Royal Cave

1913: Creation of an artificial entrance allows Royal Cave to be opened to the public, subsequent planting around entrance is amongst the earliest landscaping undertaken within the reserve

1913: Additional 396 acres (in three parcels, i.e. bisected by two road reserves) temporarily reserved to the north and west of the 1901 and 1902 reservations

1915: Additional 11 acres temporarily reserved (comprising the road reserves excluded from the 1913 reservation), enlarging the reserves of 1901, 1902, and 1913

1917: Federal Cave opened to the public

1918: Additional 34 acres (south and west of the confluence of the Spring Creek and Buchan River) temporarily reserved, enlarging the reserves of 1901, 1902, 1913, and 1915

1918: Committee of Management appointed (comprising six officers representing the Lands, Public Works, and Railway Departments); local control by Crown Lands Bailiff acting as curator, Frank Moon appointed to this position.

1919: Additional 8 acres (known as the Police Paddock) temporarily reserved, enlarging the reserves of 1901, 1902, 1913, 1915, and 1918

1919: Engine and generator installed to provide power for electric lighting of the caves, candles and magnesium ribbon used previously but results of new lighting unsatisfactory

1919: Suggestion by Frank Moon that tree planting (using imported species) be undertaken in the reserve

1921: Retirement of Frederick Wilson

1922: New 10 horsepower engine and dynamo installed to provide power for electric lighting of caves

1924: Teahouse (of iron) constructed near power house, but difficulty in obtaining tenders for operation

1925: Kiosk (fitted with tables, shelves, and cupboards) constructed

1925: Caretaker's cottage (Caves House) constructed, approximately 100 cypress trees to be planted as a hedge around cottage

1926: Francis James Hansford employed (1926–42, 1946–48), applied unsuccessfully for position of curator following Frank Moon's retirement (1940); In 1930 had married Fairy Moon (daughter of Frank Moon) (check) The wedding was celebrated in Fairy Cave.

1926–27: Sunday opening of caves commenced

1927: New 32 horsepower engine installed funded by a supplementary parliamentary vote of £1250

1928: Exit tunnel from Royal Cave completed

1928–29: Improved floodlights and some coloured lights installed in Fairy and Royal Caves, advice provided by George Waters, electrical and mechanical engineer with the Public Works Department and a member of the Buchan Caves Committee of Management

1929: Steel stairway installed in Royal Cave

1929: Committee of Management decides to establish camping area (following local criticism) and otherwise improve the entrance to the reserve, purchase of small triangle of land at the entrance by the Crown following realignment of road consequent on construction of the new bridge (i.e in the current location) over the Buchan River

1929: Hugh Linaker invited to visit Buchan re tree planting and his resultant plan in same year stipulated mixed plantings of deciduous exotics and evergreen native trees, especially eucalypts. He also designed an avenue of alternating exotic and native trees along the length of the main access road through the reserve. Recommended the planting of exotics such as poplars, planes, ash, maples, conifers, and native trees and shrubs including gums, wattles, and Norfolk Island hibiscus.

1929: Report by PWD engineer C.V. Vaughan on road through reserve, at that date gravel with fords over the creeks (except for one culvert utilising 3 feet diameter concrete pipes), all susceptible to the effects of heavy rain and floods; four bridges and one culvert recommended along with resurfacing of road

1930: Camping ground of 5 acres permanently reserved on the south bank of the Buchan River (stretching from the new road bridge to the confluence of Spring Creek), at this date camping in main Buchan Caves Reserve was not permitted

1930: Eric Woodgate, electrician employed casually since c.1924, employed full time as 'electrical wireman' (1930–42, 1946–51), employed casually until c.1970, applied unsuccessfully for position of curator following Frank Moon's retirement (1940); married Queenie Moon (daughter of Frank Moon)

1931: Several bridges constructed for roadway within reserve

1938: Considerable new development at main Buchan Caves Reserve including entrance archway, tennis court, swimming pool, kiosk/camper's lounge, kitchen, laundry, new camping ground, toilet and shower block, playground, and new entrance to Fairy Cave

1938: Revocation of all previous reserves and simultaneous reinstatement as a reserve comprising 863 acres in nine discrete parcels (including the main Buchan Caves Reserve of 724 acres); Buchan Caves National Park officially named and **formally** opened (3rd Dec. 1938); new Committee of Management appointed; new regulations 'for the Care, Protection, and Management of the Caves' gazetted

1939: *Tourists' Resorts Development Act* 1938 (No. 4609) creates a Tourists' Resorts (Loan) Fund, used to fund additional electric lighting plant (through the Local Government Branch of the Public Works Department); new 50 horsepower engine purchased to supply power to the camping area, swimming pool, and Caves House, and for pumping,

1940: **Albert** Sandford appointed curator following retirement of Frank Moon

1942: Caves closed due to wartime conditions; Committee of Management disbanded; Sandford **enlisted in RAAF**; caves and other assets placed in the custody of Lands Inspector at Buchan, A.E. Davey, who acted as caretaker

1946: Caves reopened to the public; new Advisory Committee (consisting of departmental officers) established; G.A. Weston appointed manager (1946–56).

1947: Revocation of 10 acres contained within the main Buchan Caves Reserve; reinstated 1976

1948–52: Road through reserve formed and sealed with bitumen

1955: Report by Percy Trevaskis on existing trees and suggested new tree plantings (including enhanced coloured foliage effects and shade trees for camping areas), involvement by Trevaskis until the late 1950s continues Linaker's design themes

1958: Spring Creek camping ground developed

1964: Additional camping in the 80 acre North Arm gully

1970–71: Fairy and Royal Caves wired for reticulated mains 240 volt power (supplied by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria)

1973: Alan Costigan appointed full time supervisor (1973–86) for Buchan Caves Reserve (ending responsibility of the local Lands Inspector held since 1946)

1979: Sewerage treatment plant installed and commissioned

1990: Parts of both Royal and Fairy Caves progressively relit using 12-volt **dichroic** lights

1991: Two cabins erected (fulfilling an intention of the 1938 schedule of works)

2002: Visitor centre refurbished and new interpretation centre added