

## INTRODUCING JENOLAN CAVES

Jenolan Caves are situated some 120 km. West of Sydney. It is generally believed that they were discovered in approximately 1838 by cattlemen while tracking a bushranger called McKeown. However, this appears to be untrue. The caves soon became well-known, and the Whalan family, who are said to have been responsible for the discovery, often served as guides for people wishing to visit the caves. The area was proclaimed as a public reserve in 1866, thus placed under government control, and in 1867, Jeremiah Wilson was appointed as the first "keeper".

Until this time, the caves had generally been known as the Fish River Caves ; then at about the time of Wilson's appointment, the Binda Caves, and finally, in 1884, were formally re-named the Jenolan Caves. The change of name was implemented because both the Fish River and Mt. Bindo (not Binda) were some distance from the caves, and actually in a quite different watershed. The name Jenolan was used because this was the name of the parish (in a cadastral, not ecclesiastic, sense) in which the caves were situated. There is also a Mount Jenolan nearby - the name is said to mean 'high mountain' in the aboriginal language of the region - and following the re-naming of the caves, the major waterway draining the caves area has also been named the Jenolan River.

In 1880, experiments were carried out to test the use of electric lighting in the caves, and in 1887, lights were installed in the Imperial Cave and progressively in other caves. Thus, Jenolan became one of the first cave systems in the world to be electrically lit.

In 1903, J.C. Wiburd was appointed as caretaker, and remained in this office until 1932. He was an enthusiastic advocate for Jenolan, and shared in the discovery of a number of further caves. He was thus present throughout the heyday of the picture postcard, and appears in photographs by both Kerry & Hurley (see below) and some of these were used for postcards (e.g., 3.7). (Trickett, 1890 et seq., Havard 1936, Dunlop 1952)

Jenolan is characterised by three large arches, namely the Grand Arch through which all visitors drive on arrival at the caves, the Devil's Coach House and Carlotta Arch. All appear on postcards. The other striking feature to the visitor is the abundant and particularly beautiful decoration of the caves, which again features on the cards.

Jenolan has captured the imagination of the Australian public ever since its first discovery. To this day, it remains Australia's best-known and most-visited caves resort. It provided by far the greatest number of postcards of any one area. Interestingly, although known for so long and so often visited, new discoveries are still being made.

One of the difficulties in examining the postcards is the remarkable range of 'cave' names which are found on the cards. In fact, most of these are but sectors of the one very large and complex cave. Separate names were accorded to different parts of this system as each part was discovered, and specific chambers within each sector were

often given a distinctive name, often in order to commemorate some person who had shown an interest in the caves.

To try and give some picture of the inter-relationship of these names, there are :

- three major arches open to daylight - Grand Arch, Devil's Coach House (a name said to have been first used by Whalan after his pursuit of the bushranger McKeown) and Carlotta Arch (said to be named after the daughter of surveyor P.F. Adams).
- a complex of cave passages located both between the Grand Arch and the Devil's Coach House and to the North of the Coach House. The two major cave tours within this complex were called respectively the Right Imperial Cave (now Imperial) and the Left Imperial Cave (now Chifley Cave, named in 1952 after J.B. Chifley, Prime Minister of Australia, whose electorate included the Jenolan area). The name Imperial was first used by Jeremiah Wilson, and is assumed to refer to the splendour of the cave. This series also included the Elder Cave, Jubilee Cave (named for Queen Victoria's Jubilee), Red Cave, Jersey Cave (named for the then Governor), Crystal Cave, Coral Cave, Wilkinson Cave (Wilkinson was the Government Geological Surveyor), Marguerite Cave (various spellings, after the wife of Lt.-Col. Cracknell, who was responsible for the installation of electric lighting in the caves), Madonna Cave (also called Lady Carrington, after the wife of a Governor, or Helena Cave after the wife of an early photographer named Hart), Shawl Cave, Selina Cave (named for Selina Webb, daughter of Edmund Webb, a member of parliament from Bathurst and a friend of both Wilson and Wiburd), Nellie's Grotto, Katie's Bower (Katie was Selina Webb's sister), Fairy Grotto, the Confectioner's Shop, the Showroom, Architect's studio and Lucinda Cave (named for the wife of Jeremiah Wilson).
- One also finds the Nettle and Arch Caves within this complex, but they are probably best described as upper level sectors of the Devil's Coach House.
- a complex of caves located on the opposite side of the Grand Arch. This includes the Lucas Cave (John Lucas was a member of Parliament who was instrumental in the preservation of the Caves; also known as the New Cave), Orient Cave, Temple of Baal, River Cave, Skeleton Cave, Ribbon Cave, Bone Cave, Mafeking Cave (discovered at the time of the famous relief of the Mafeking Siege in the South African war), Exhibition Cave, Lurline Cave, the Cathedral, Mons Meg Branch (named for the resemblance of a fallen rock to a cannon of the same name at Edinburgh Castle, Scotland) , and Snowball Cave.
- The Aladdin Cave, which is one of the many quite separate caves, was one of the early caves shown to the public, but has been closed for many years. This and many others are located along McKeown's Valley, upstream from the Devil's Coach House.