

Stephen Spurling III and Goat Island

It is no surprise that the remarkably ubiquitous Stephen Spurling III photographed the Goat Island cave. His record of the Tasmanian environment is a very significant heritage, covering many key regions of Tasmania as they were during the early years of the twentieth century. There are two postcard reproductions in my own collection:

In horizontal format:

Picturesque Tasmania /Cave on Goat Island / near Ulverstone, Tas.

Depicts the view looking out from the cave, but is taken far enough back into cave to show the irregular cave walls very clearly.

Published by W.A. Skinner, an Ulverstone Stationer, as No. 93 in his *Wynphotoprint* Series. There are 2 versions, one being in Black and White Collotype, and the other with the view looking out nicely hand-colored.

One copy is a bit of an ambiguous item. It has a postmarked 2d. postage stamp, but that was obviously added by a later collector as the postmark does not flow over onto the card and there is no address. The letter which covers the whole of the back includes the statement “. . . camped by myself for... three days and nights in a fairly lonely spot. I keep my ears open eyes also a stick in my hand when asleep as a chap got floored off his horse with a waddy only a few yards from the hut last week." The other has a genuine Ulverstone postmark of 29 December of 1906.

In vertical format:

From Cave, Goat Island / Ulverstone, Tasmania

This is a quite different image, which shows little of the cave walls. Christine Burgess tells me that the first publication of this image was by *The Weekly Courier* on 15 April 1905, p 22. It was published again in the same paper on 10 June 1909, p 17.

Again, I have two versions, both colored, published by Spurling himself, one as No. 38A, and the other simply labeled as being from No.6 Series, and posted with an indistinct postmark on 21 August 1906.

Ross Ellis has a further black and white half-tone card, from Spurling's North West Coast Series. It shows the same vertical image but has a white border. The title, *From Cave, Goat Island, near Ulverstone* is printed in the border, and also appears indistinctly on the photograph itself together with the serial number 309. .

Ross also has still another image, again vertical but a totally different image, on The Rose Series *P12306 Goat Island Cave, Ulverstone, Tas* (Published by the Rose Stereograph Co. /Armadale, Victoria)