

BINOOMEA

The Newsletter of the Jenolan Caves Historical & Preservation Society.

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President's Column

February 2008 Binoomea

A Happy New Year to Everyone!

We have had a very interesting year in 2007, with the 35th Anniversary dinner, the launching of John Dunkley's book, "Jenolan Caves – Guides, Guests and Grottoes", and the other activities to which many have contributed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have participated in and contributed to the affairs of JCH&PS, sometimes under difficult circumstances, during 2007. I am particularly grateful for the work done by those in Office and the Committee.

To start off 2008, we will be contributing again to the "Historical Weekend" at Jenolan on the second weekend in February. This will be associated with our Annual General Meeting on Saturday 9th February. Jenny Whitby and Committee Members have lined up some interesting speakers and there will be much to enjoy. Caves House, through Dennis Winchester, will be facilitating procedures, so I encourage you to come along and participate, and help make the weekend a success.

The AGM will provide a good opportunity to influence the directions that JCH&PS will take, through discussion and the election of Office Bearers and Committee.

So, please come along, join in and make your presence felt!

See you at Jenolan!

Arthur Gray

2007 President Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society

WHAT DID YOU MISS ?????

At the November meeting, there was alot of discussion about planning for the February Historical weekend which you can read more about on the back page. It was also declared that due to our unsuccessful attempts to obtain the past membership records, that all memberships renewals are due. The membership year has always run 1/1-31/12. Please send your renewal memberships now. Barry Richard received a donation through the mail from a Mrs Letherbridge from Victoria. She had found an old book at a garage sale, and thought we may like it. It was a Harry Philips "Natures Masterpiece" (known as the long book due to it's size). David Cook spoke of his recent findings in the NSW State Library.

HAPPENINGS AT CAVES HOUSE.

Late last year, contractors commenced work on some major roof retiling, and taking advantage of the scaffolding whilst in place, the outside of Caves House is being repainted. Before you ask, don't worry, it will retain its traditional heritage colours!

The Government has already spent \$500,000 on repairs and maintenance to the buildings since taking control. Water and heating problems were fixed (which included a refurbishment of the boiler) along with some asbestos removal and fire compliance.



The roofing work is a major exercise, just have a look at the slope of the roof these guys have to work on. The roofing and repainting is costing \$1.4million and the work is expected to be finalised in the next few months.



Caves House under scaffolding. Photos by Jenny Whitby

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN ARTICLE FOR THE BINOOMEA?



You don't necessarily have to write the article, just tell me what you would like to read about. Articles, suggestions, letters to the editor, complaints, stories are welcome, and can be forwarded to the editor.

Contact details:
Jenny Whitby:
48 Park Street
Charlestown 2290
Ph (02) 49432265
or send your email to:
jwhitby@exemail.com.au



Jeno

Jenolan DVD's for sale

JCH&PS member David Cook has some videos of Jenolan for sale. The recent 2007 35th

anniversary dinner was captured on video. He also has one from the 1995 Historical Weekend, and a general Jenolan Caves video. If interested please contact David Cook on 0408-112223.

SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT

This month we have the spotlight on member Tina Benson-Inglis (nee Giles). Tina spent about 5 years as a youngster growing up at Jenolan Caves in the early 1950's, when her father worked as an electrician at Jenolan Caves. She gives us an insight into her childhood memories of living at Jenolan on the following pages.



Here is Tina aged 4 years old in Caves House.

A Journey through Time THE WHALAN FAMILY The Family of James & Charles in Australia Compiled by Fat Manfield

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME.

"A Journey through Time" The Whalan Family, The Family of James & Charles Whalan in Australia. Published by Fay Manfield 1993. The author has done a lot of research on her ancestors, which is not just of interest to relatives. It includes several pages about Jenolan Caves, and the Whalan involvement. There are still a few copies left, so if anyone would like to purchase one contact the author Fay Manfield. 68 Kinniard Street Ashgrove Qld 4060. Phone (07) 33666419. Cost is \$25 + \$7 postage. (mention you are from the Historcial Society)

ROOF TRIVIA

The finial is an architectural device, typically carved in stone and employed to decoratively emphasize the apex of a gable, or any of various distinctive ornaments at the top, end, or corner of a building or structure. (source wikipedia)

The existing ones on Caves House will need to have mold made of them, so that replicas can be made as part of the reroofing project.



Finial on Caves House.



Membership fees now due. Send to: JCH&PS, Locked Bag, Jenolan Caves NSW 2790 Single membership \$20pa, Family \$20 + \$5pa per additional family member, Students \$5pa till 18yrs, Pensioners \$5pa. 5 year membership 4 times the annual rate (get 1 year free)

THE MYSTERIOUS JOSEPH ROWE. by Elery Hamilton-Smith

Joseph Rowe is best known for his photographs of the Jenolan Caves. But there is much more not known about him than is known.

The first references to him that I have found appeared in the 1880s. It seems that he was already resident in McKeown's Valley, but so far there is nothing that tells us when he arrived at Jenolan, nor where he came from. I once saw a suggestion that he formerly had operated a photographic studio in Sydney – but no photographic historian has found any hard evidence to support that. It seems he became a friend and helper to Jeremiah Wilson in the 1880s, both acting as cook in Wilson's Accommodation House and occasionally assisting with tours or other hospitality.

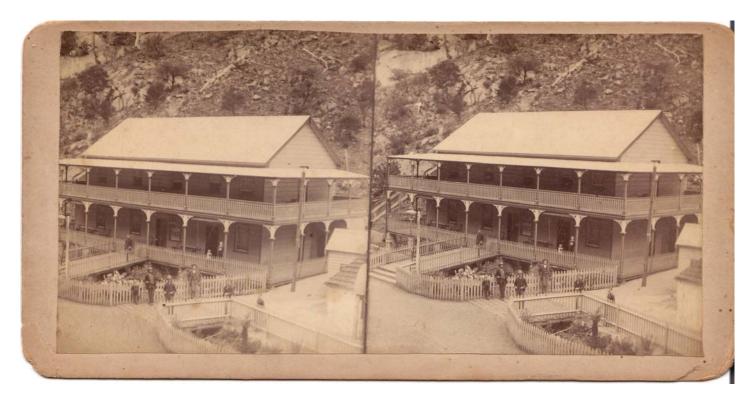
A press story (*Illustrated Sydney News*, 28 Nov 1889, p. 21) tells of a free-ranging visitor who lowered himself into Frenchmans Cave on a knotted rope but then discovered that the rope was not long enough to escape from the cave. He managed to attract the notice of some walkers, who reported the problem. Rowe went to the cave immediately and alone, rescued him and took him back to the house and got on with cooking the dinner.

Rowe also appears in a wonderful photograph that apparently celebrates an important event of some kind with Wiburd, Bailey, Edwards and Rowe all in a particularly happy and excited state. Regrettably, the owner (in the US) is both in dementia and terminally ill and unable to find the photograph. We are trying to ensure that after his death there will be an opportunity for someone to prepare an inventory and assessment of the collection and this one will again be located.

Rowe's own photographs are generally of excellent quality, both artistically and technically. My own collection includes over 50 stereographs all of which were apparently taken in the late 1880s or early 1890s with none that can be identified as being since 1895. Only one has a serial number (334) and that suggests I have many more to still locate!

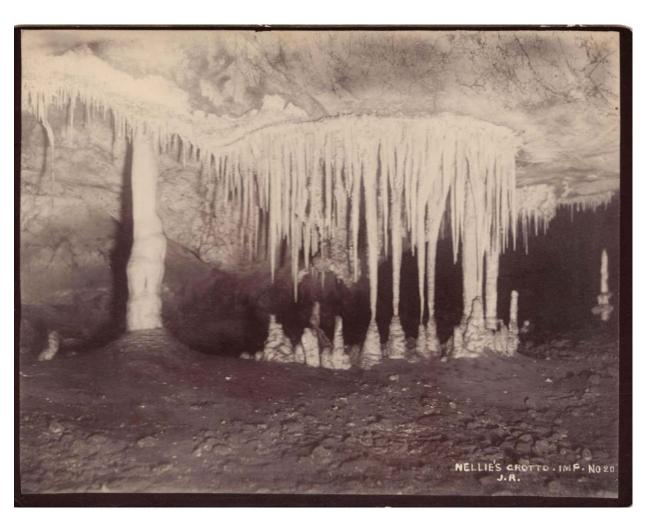
The other Rowe photographs that I have are a series of eight sepia prints on 6" x 8" paper mounted on dark brown cabinet mounts. The titles are neatly printed on the negative and so appear in white on the print. They are in superb condition, and the printing process was clearly managed to absolute perfection. Without a doubt, they are the finest original photographs of Jenolan that I have ever seen. They are in fact a further mystery – however did Rowe develop the very high level of expertise required to achieve such perfection?

Dan Catchpoole has discovered that Rowe is buried at Lowther Park Cemetery which is nearby. His tombstone tells us that he died on the 31st Dec 1902 and was then aged 51.



A Joseph Rowe Stereo Photograph of Caves House.

Next edition more on Rowe's Cottage.



Another of Joseph Rowe's cabinet photographs, note his initial in photo title.

STEREO PHOTOGRAPHS - sourced from the internet

Stereoscopes, also known as stereopticons or stereo viewers, were popular forms of entertainment in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The first patented stereoscope was invented by Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1838. Wheatstone had experimented with simple stereoscopic drawings in 1832, several years before photography was invented. Later, the two principles were combined to form the stereoscope. The first commercial stereoscopes were produced by the French Duboscq & Soleil. These early stereoscopes and stereo photographs were exhibited at the first World exhibition in the Crystal Palace, 1851, and left a deep impression on Queen Victoria. Partly due to the Royal interest the success of the stereoscope was launched. At the end of the 19th Century, the stereoscope was the television of that era. "No home withouth a stereoscope" became a most popular slogan.

How it works:

A stereoscope is composed of two pictures mounted next to each other, and a set of lenses to view the pictures through. Stereo photographs were taken with a camera mounted on a tripod with a sliding bar. Once the first picture was taken and a new photographic plate was inserted, the camera was moved about 7 cm along the bar (approximately adult eye spacing). Then, the second picture was taken, so each picture is taken from a slightly different viewpoint that corresponds closely to the spacing of the eyes. When observing the pictures through a special viewer, the pair of two-dimensional pictures merge together into a single three-dimensional photograph.

We can see a 3D picture through a stereoscope for the same reason a building appears three-dimensional. The right and left eyes see a slightly different version of the same scene, and taken together, we get an illusion of depth. This phenomenon had been known for quite some time, ever since the ancient Greek mathematician Euclid discovered the principles of binocular vision.

Stereoscopes continued to be widespread until the 1930s. Then stereoscope production declined, likely due to the new interest in motion pictures. However, the stereoscope continues to offer viewers something that no ordinary photograph or movie can offer, namely a sense of depth and image realism. A descendant of the stereoscope, the Viewmaster, is still a popular children's toy today.

Information sourced from the following internet sites: http://courses.ncssm.edu/GALLERY/collections/toys/html/exhibit01.htm http://users.telenet.be/thomasweynants/stereoscope.html



Member David Cook has found this article in the NSW State Library.

Extract from: "THE ILLUSTRATED SYDNEY NEWS" Nov 28 1889 pp. 20-21

"OUR HOLIDAY RESORTS: AN ARTIST'S WANDERING IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS (Continued from last issue)AT THE JENOLAN CAVES.

... Now, before we go any further, and in order to give you a 'grip' of the sort of country which you are about to explore with us, we wish to relate a few little adventures which have happened at various times to those who have lived at Jenolan, and who have assisted in discovering the caves.

Some years ago there was a youth employed about the Caves House whose name was Skeen - a tall lad who had outgrown his strength, but who was by no means deterred by this fact from pottering about the pits or holes in which the neighbourhood abounds. Some of these have never yet been fathomed, and most of then are supposed to communicate with the underground river. Skeen used to help the cook and do odd jobs about the place, and one fine morning that functionary desired him to cut some wood for the fire. He disappeared and hour after hour passed without his making any sign. The cook began to get anxious, and when one of the habitués of Jenolan, named Joe Rowe, appeared, he told him of Skeen's absence. Having his suspicions that something was wrong Rowe questioned him as to whether he had noticed how the missing youth had been lately employed, and was told that he had been fixing up some rope. That was sufficient to confirm his views, and he started out towards one of the nearest pits from which it had been the custom to obtain specimens of stalactites. His dog, running on in front, stopped at the mouth of this hole, looking down, and to Rowe's horror he saw Skeen's hat laying on the edge, and what was more, a beam of wood across the opening to which a rope was attached. "Are you down there Skeen?" he sang out, little expecting any answer, but a faint voice came up to him. "I am! For God's sake don't touch the rope!"



Now the usual way of descending into those unknown depths is by means of a knotted rope, and with such Skeen had provided himself. Fastening it to the beam which he placed across the mouth, the adventurous youth had lowered himself until his hands gripped the knot at the extreme end. Then he looked down, surprised he had not reached the bottom, and found himself dangling over a horrid blackness of uncalculated depth. It must have been an awful moment, so dreadful indeed that he was seized with a fright which took all strength and heart and pluck out of him. He had just sense enough to get the best foothold in the side that he was able to find, but to pull himself once more back to the comparative safety of the rope he found impossible. And there he hung, for what length of time it is impossible to say - although there are some who state it as five hours! - until he was discovered by Rowe.

On hearing his voice, the rescuer sped back to the Cave House, and obtained assistance and another rope. A loop was tied in this, and lowered down, and through it Skeen passed one of his legs. He was hauled to the top, was seized by willing hands just in time to prevent his falling back fainting into the hole, and when laid once more upon terra firma became unconscious. He was supported home, and shortly afterwards recovered entirely from the effects of his fright. It is said that his arms swelled terribly, and that he suffered great pain. . . .



FRENCHMANS CAVE J18 & J25.- Jenny Whitby.

J.J Foster (1890) in his book The Jenolan Caves wrote "This cave was discovered in 1878, and gained its title from a Frenchman who was the first to enter it." To date no further light can be shed on who he was.

Some excerpts from Foster's description of the cave are: "A stout tree truck is placed across the entrance, to which is fastened a wire rope ladder, 80 feet long, loose at the bottom and swinging in the darkness below, and which turns, twists, and sways to and fro by the weight of the person upon it" "Persons of a nervous temperament ought not to attempt this descent, the motion of the ladder being so very oscillatory that it is liable to cause dizziness." He also gives a warning about the route through the cave. "great care should be taken about the candles, as owing to the want of space it would be very easy to set oneself on fire and very difficult afterwards to extinguish!" ... "A good amount of danger and great fatigue is occasioned by going through this cave."

Photo looking up to the entrances of Frenchmans Cave. Note the cavers, one on the left hand side of the lower entrance hole (at about 8 o'clock looking in), and another descending the rope, modern day style. As you can see, a very brave sole would have entered the way Skeen & Rowe did.

My Memories of Living at Jenolan Caves as a child- 1948-1953. By Tina Benson-Inglis (Giles)

My Name is Tina Benson-Inglis (Giles) I have two elder sisters Marion who worked for Kodak in Sydney, my sister Elizabeth, 2 years older than me. Our parents Arthur & Elizabeth Giles, came from Sydney to fulfill our father's passion. Arthur Horace Giles, my father, was a member of Sydney Grand Masonic Lodge and friend of Dr Clive Evatt who was an ardent cave explorer of that time. My father was also and Electrical Engineer, henceforth it was a perfect opportunity for him to join the Staff of NSW Tourist Bureau at Jenolan Caves. He had no fear, born 1900 and served in English Cavalry then WW2. I guess Jenolan made a wonderful playground for him. Dad had spent many voluntary hours maintaining electrical lighting in caves after the war. My mother Elizabeth didn't settle into the lifestyle with ease.



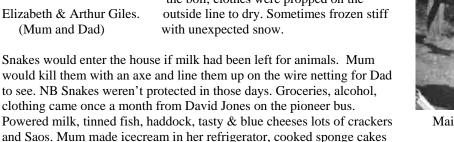
My parents with Mrs Gills (back right) and Gill & Giles children.



Elizabeth & Arthur Giles. (Mum and Dad)

Our father owned a Morris 8 Utility (pictured) which was the only vehicle at Jenolan. He became taxi, ambulance driver, grocer and everything else when required at times of emergency. We owned an electric Kelvinator Refrigerator which one of 6 in Australia. This became a tourist attraction as people continually knocked on the door to view how it worked. NB: Our house is now known as Hydro Cottage and sometimes guides accommodation. If you have been to Hydro House you may have seen the McWilliams & Penfold Sweet sherry bottles he planted whilst my Grandfather planted the bulbs and did the rockeries. We held classical musical night in that small garden and verandah.

Bath time was in a large tin tub in front of the kitchen fire. Huge logs were gathered and dragged down the hill to be cut for wood and sometimes if too long would be pushed into the fireplace. Firewood was placed under the copper to bring water to the boil, clothes were propped on the





Mailboxes on caves Road. Back: Mum, Matrion, Front: Elizabeth & Tina.



and sewed our dresses on the treadle sewing machine.

The Giles house in 1949.



In 2003

Oberon was visited frequently at night by Dad for his lodge meetings. It was the nearest town for Doctor, Dentist and fresh produce. We would all be car sick going around the hairpin bends. The dog would jump out of the ute and wait up the next stop till we arrived. Dad always stopped to retop the engine with water so it wouldn't boil and get furious with visitors who wouldn't take his advice, consequently breaking down along the way.

We ate watercress from the creek which ran between the Blue Lake and hydro dam. Saturday night we had dinner in the Caves House. Served by the waitresses with their black long sleeved dresses, crisp starched white aprons and caps. Walter the Maitre' D served us raspberry and lemonade drinks. Mum and Dad enjoyed their wine. Dad was very strict with our table manners and we had to sit up very straight. That is still hard for me to sit still. We were taught to speak to the tourist, wave to the buses and smile. (Well tourism kept Jenolan alive.).......

When walking in the bush, walking up to the Post Office from our home we always were told when blasting was taking place. A lot of gelignite was used cut through rocks when putting in pipes. Dad became a guide. He loved the River Cave, along with the Orient and Imperial. His younger offsider was an Italian Bruno who evidently climbed like a monkey. (Now called abseiling) They managed to place lights, ladders, in wonderful places. Dad was told many years later much of his lighting was unused as no one could reach the areas to replace bulbs.

There were 3 other families who lived a Jenolan. The Huntington family lived at the Pig Farm which was where the Camping Grounds are now. We ate the white dripping on our dampers Mum baked. The Pork supplied the Guest House. The Richards & the English Gill family lived on the top road, we lived in the house near the Hydro Electric Works. We all met at each others homes sharing birthday parties etc. Dad had to ensure the pumps and everything were working 24 hours a day as this was the supply for the Guest House not to mention our little house which even had electric heaters.

Terrifying thoughts still remain with me of the Bush Fires. We would be surrounded by fire, Dad would be firefighting and even had to put our water tank on his ute. On several occasions we would sit at the creek clutching our dolls till Dad came to collect us. I still do not visit Jenolan during summer months.



Giles & Gills children with billycart.



The 1950 Christmas party.

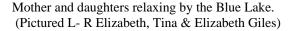
Our schooling was done by Mum through Blackfriars
Correspondence. NB The school didn't exist. Fortunately we left
Jenolan in time for Primary School. My sister Elizabeth
(Worthington) later became University medalled student, School
teacher, Director of Early Childhood Education at Canberra.
Interesting to know that country schooling doesn't restrict your
education. Christmas parties for the children were wonderful.
Presents, large balloons, clown and of course Santa Claus. I used to
sing near the Christmas Tree for the visitors. The tree with the
largest angel you could imagine was on the ground floor through the
double doors which were so huge when I was 4 years.



In the yard 1949.

Caves House in 1948

I would not trade these years of my life for any other. What a wonderful Experience this was for me to have shared, such a wonderful early chapter of my life. I now live in an ultra modern apartment overlooking the Pacific Ocean, in an Australian city. Have 4 wonderful children, marvellous husband Robert, & loads of beautiful memories.





CAROLS 2007 – by Jenny Whitby.

Once again the Carols event took place at Jenolan. Having never seen it for myself, I decided it was time to go. I even took the family and some members of my caving club (Illawarra Speleological Society) to help out on the day. Our hot pink special volunteers shirts made us easy to spot. We assisted by doing a variety of jobs, primarily we were part of the Westmead Children's Hospital team fundraising group and helped out by selling raffle tickets, glowsticks, candles, handing out programs, selling merchandising, and also were general gofors.

This year a Jenolan Christmas Festival was staged during the day in the main precinct area. There were stalls set up opposite the ticket office from local vendors.



There was a Children's Hospital merchandising tent selling Bandage Bear items, a make a wish tree, various fundraising activities, and also there were numerous buskers around the caves. All the busking monies raised going to the hospital. Some of the buskers were professional entertainers. One being The Paganini Duo, who normally do cello concerts in the Cathedral Cave throughout the year and people pay good money to witness that, and here they were for free! There was also soiree dinner at Caves House, and an auction at the conclusion of the evening concert of donated items which included some international airfares, and loads of other great items.

Now to the concert itself. Benita Collings (from playschool) was the compere again, and she did a great job. Congratulations goes to the Jenolan Guides, who took on the production of the event. It is the second year they have run it themselves, and it is a big job. Many staff were involved in the production, not all on stage either. Guides assisted with backstage managing, wardrobe assistants, musical arranging, & even managing road closures and traffic. I even spotted electrician Dave Rowling (electrician/maintenance) fixing a little girl's chair! Guides Domino Houlbrook-Cove & Geoff Molesworth both gave stunning performances on stage, as did all of the other performers. And Santa Claus was there too. Funnily he bore a resemblance to casual guide John Taylor, who seemed to disappear just before Santa arrived, which seemed suspicious!

Over 1000 tickets were sold to the two concerts, the evening one being the most popular with over 700 people in the Grand Arch. Yours truly got to be the inner Bandage Bear at the Matinee concert, which was great fun. Guides Graham Cummings & Charles Degotardi played Bandage Bear & St George's Dragon respectively at the evening concert.



Over \$11000 was raised from the event (excluding ticket sales) which all went to Westmead Children's Hospital. Thanks go to all involved, it was a great event, and an event that everyone should get themselves along to see.









Photos: Evening Carols Crowd - Photo by Rob Whyte
Santa & Benita Collings - Photo by Rob Whyte
Rob (Elf) Whyte. Is this the latest in guides uniforms? -Photo by Jenny Whitby
Bandaged Bear - Photo by Gary Whitby
The Performers - Photo by Rob Whyte
Jenolan Staff member Dave Rowling fixing a little girl's chair- photo by Jenny Whitby

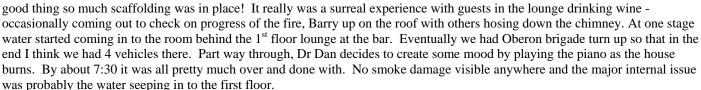
MORE HAPPENINGS AT CAVES HOUSE.

Fires are no stranger to Jenolan. 1n 1895, a fire destroyed the original accommodation buildings built by Jeremiah Wilson. On December 1, 2007, there was an incident,that may well have lead to a very serious situation at Jenolan, had it not been for the prompt action of many staff. Here is the story from an eyewitness.

Oliver Tricket (aka David Hay in historical themed tour mode) was delivering one of his historical talks in Caves House following a themed day of tours. As we walked up the road Caves House resembled a steam train all fired up and ready to leave the station. Thick yellow smoke was billowing out of the chimney. When we got there they had an enormous fire raging in the fireplace. Drinks and cheese intervened but a short time later management came down to announce the first floor was filling with smoke.

At this point things started getting a bit more interesting. Initially it was a case of putting out the fire in the fireplace. As this was going on a couple drinking their wine sitting opposite were remarking that it appeared the chimney was actually on fire and that they had witnessed the same thing at Thredbo which led to the lodge burning down. Very large embers/chunks of material aglow were falling down the chimney. Outside an examination of the chimney showed increasing heat haze and then large embers shooting out - bearing in mind a large part of the roof was protected by no more than synthetic canvas. (due to roof work being done)

Barry Richard disappears up the hill to return with the fire tanker. The pace started to pick up now with an assault being made on the chimney -



It also should be noted that while guests did carry on drinking etc, Caves House and Senior Trust Staff were quickly supervising implementation of standing procedures to ensure the protection and possible evacuation of all guests, staff and business records. Those present in official capacities as fire fighters and / or Trust Staff responded professionally and in accordance with standing instructions. Historically this is significant and it could easily have been a tale of the end of Caves House. Special thanks to Jenolan staff Gordon Mills, Scott Melton, Dan Catchpoole, Wayne Foster, Grant Commins, Melanie Coid, Barry Richard, Ford Burton & Wayne Glendenning in Caves House and the Oberon Fire Brigade for their efforts (ed: plus anyone else who assisted but whose name is not mentioned!)

The Jenolan Caves Bush Fire brigade in action.

Photos by Rob Whyte.





Jenolan Caves Historical & Preservation Society weekend being held 9/10 February 2008.

Dennis Winchester from Caves House, is again offering super-duper rates for JCH&PS members. (So bring along your membership fees!)

Traditional rooms will be made available at the rate of \$50 per room for one or two nights.

The Gatehouse the nightly rate of \$30 will also cover a 2 night stay. 10% discount of all other regular room rates.

A great weekend is planned for members to coincide with our Annual General Meeting, which will be held Saturday night.

Activities planned for the weekend include:

Historical Themed Cave Tours by guides Gordon Mills & David Hay for members (one Sat, one Sun)

Historical display of JCH&PS items in the Magnolia Room Caves House, with a special feature of Shelleyware.

Cheese & Wine in Caves House after Historical tours for members

Special presentation by Julia James on her Show Caves survey project & History of Mapping Jenolan

Special Presentation by Elery Hamilton- Smith on Photographers of yesteryear at Jenolan

Opportunity to meet with fellow members, and be part of planning the year ahead for JCH&PS.

So come along and enjoy a weekend at Jenolan. To book phone Caves House on 02 63593911 (option 1) and mention JCH&PS Historical Weekend to receive the special rates.





The next meeting (our AGM) will be held on **SATURDAY 9February 2008 at Jenolan.**

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE $2^{\rm ND}$ SATURDAY OF FEBRUARY, AUGUST AND NOVEMBER. THE MAY MEETING IS THE FIRST SATURDAY, DUE TO MOTHER'S DAY.