

## *A “mystery shopper” makes a visit to Wellington Caves*

The last weekend in June 2018 found me in Dubbo NSW with a group of relatives gathered together from Adelaide, Darwin, NSW and Qld to celebrate the 70th birthdays of the families' twins. It seemed everyone wanted to visit the Wellington Caves. As the supposed Cave Expert, they wanted my opinion. This was because the male twin is somewhat disabled and uses a walker. I seemed to remember that the Phosphate Mine Cave was wheelchair friendly. One of the party phoned the Caves and was very pleased with the courtesy of the person and the assurances that they would certainly look after our man.

I intended to visit the Cathedral Cave at noon while others would accompany our birthday boy on the 11 am Phosphate Mine Tour. Two of the ladies accompanied me on party shopping duties before we travelled to the Caves. I was surprised at the number of tourists wandering around on a sporting Saturday, especially as most would have decided against stopping as they passed the massive Saturday Markets at Geurie. I was in trouble for not stopping to allow my passengers to browse. We enjoyed the Interpretative Centre before lining up at the gate with a number of other people for our tour.

As expected, the Phosphate Mine guide would take us on the Cathedral Tour once all the visitors on that tour had passed us waiting patiently at the gate. Naturally our man was last, sitting on his walker being pushed by a relative. The look on his face brought happiness to our hearts.

At the entrance to the Cathedral Cave, the Guide introduced us to a volunteer casual guide about 16 years of age who was learning the ropes and would conduct the tour. My heart sank, but I maintained the smile on my ugly face for the benefit of the relative, who was a bit reluctantly accompanying me. We descended into the cave and the young guide asked if anyone had been through caves before. I was surprised that only a couple of hands were raised. I never admit that I am a member of ACKMA because it tends to affect the way the tour is conducted.

The young man who shall remain nameless, was excellent as was the Senior Guide who only reminded

him of a couple of things he had forgotten. As the visitors were mostly first timers and just general tourists, he kept the information simple but covered it and the questions adequately. He left such things as  $\text{CaCO}_3$  and chemical reactions well alone, while concisely explaining the process. He did include a few dragons etc which I thought appropriate considering the nature of the visitors.

All the visitors made a point of thanking the young guide and had obviously enjoyed the tour. Wellington Caves are what they are and to me the tour was designed to show off the best features and give the visitors good information without overloading them. I was impressed. A few days later on our round trip we called into Borenore Caves but that is another story that has been covered by Kent Henderson in Journal #110.



**Above and left**  
from our “mystery  
shopper”.

**Right** from Ian  
Eddison (sent for  
“Around the show  
caves” - see later  
article)

