

# NEW ZEALAND NEWS

- Dave Smith

## GLOWWORM CAVE, WAITOMO

The new facilities building opens on 3 December with a 5.30 am ceremony. Canon Rua Anderson from the Ruapuha Uekaha Hapu Trust will oversee the opening. The scissor-wielding celebrities will be Walter Anderson, Greg Martin, and Tourism Holdings Ltd's CEO Dennis Pickup. The new building is in use at the moment and is a vast improvement. An expanded souvenir shop and café are in the new building, with the old building converted to a ticket office. The deck built around the redwoods and the shingle-cladding combine to great effect. Particularly remarkable is the almost universal acclaim that the building has received from the locals.

On a more serious note, this is one of the biggest investments made in the Waitomo area for a long time, and certainly the most serious commitment shown by any of the Glowworm Cave Licensees. Congratulations to Tourism Holdings Ltd on such a positive move.

## MUSEUM

The big revamp here is getting ready to start. The Museum has fundraised about \$200,000 of the \$350,000 odd required and is starting to prepare and let contracts for the display works. The first of these should be getting underway in January.

## NEW ZEALAND SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The New Zealand Speleological Society held its fiftieth anniversary celebrations in Waitomo recently. Over 200 people attended including the second, fourth and fifth members of the Society! A wonderful chance to catch up, and for older cavers to meet younger and vice versa. The Speleo Society has also just held its AGM in Greymouth. The new President is Jon Terry from Christchurch.

## CAVE DEVELOPMENTS AT WAITOMO

The Ruakuri Cave development has received "resource consents" (essentially a New Zealand style environmental clearance) to proceed. This attaches a number of conditions to the way in which the development proceeds. Kamutu Cave, better known as *The Pink Gumboot tour*, was a very popular school group trip. It has recently closed down in a saga encompassing trespass notices and midnight structure removals. Derek Mason is passing the Mason's Glowworm Cave and Dry Cave to Black Water Rafting. BWR's current plans are to develop a more traditional product (no wetsuits, come as you are) with a two-cave tour focussing on historic, cultural and environmental interpretation.

## ODDS AND ENDS

The movie "Lord of the Rings" is currently being filmed in New Zealand. It has just been revealed that one of the main filming locations for this mega-budget show is the wonderfully scenic glacio-karst of Mount Owen, near Nelson.

The Waitomo Catchment Trust recently celebrated the completion of the 1992-99 catchment scheme with a well attended evening of reflection and looking at future challenges.

A Department of Conservation cave fauna survey around New Zealand is turning up some interesting results and almost certainly some new species. Waitomo, the West Coast, and Northland have been looked at so far.

A remarkable new cave underneath Auckland City is 9km long so far and growing. It is formed in both volcanic rocks and Waitemata Group sediments. The discovery of this cave has electrified the current caving scene. Auckland University cavers recently visited the site and found some interesting wood deposits for study.