

# AN INTERESTING LITTLE SEA CAVE

- Kent Henderson

One of the problems of being 'into caves', and living in Geelong, is that the former is about as geographically removed from the latter as one can get.... almost. Geelong and District does possess a fair amount of young limestone, and two massive cement quarries, but happily what little karst there is far removed from the mining operators.

Recently, in reading Davey and White (1986), I noticed reference to two sea caves located in the Cumberland River area, south of Lorne in the Otway Ranges....a mere hours drive away.... Within minutes (...well, days...) I was in my car, and off, and before long, after following a group of locals who knew all about it, I was at the entrance of Cumberland River Cave.

The cave is in dune limestone, overlaid with sandstone, which observation suggests is continuous from the spur to the right of the nearby Cumberland River. The entrance is narrow, and the cave is "delightfully" floored with empty (I checked....) Fosters cans, intermingled with rounded pebbles of varying sizes, and silt. Actually, the rubbish in the cave was not that bad, and given what I understand is wide local knowledge of its location, damage appears relatively light... although clearly I have

no historical reference on which to base my observations.

The entrance opens into a single chamber approx. 25m long, 12m wide and 6m high. It contains some reasonable decoration, with tiered flowstone on several wall sections, and a quite ample stalactite (not quite a column) at the end of the entrance passage. Of greatest interest, however, was a sizeable bat colony, which my count put at about 30-40. They all looked to be the same species, but then, all bats look the same to me.... Davey & White suggest occasional bats in the cave, but clearly ongoing monitoring would be useful. While on a coastal reserve, access is regrettably uncontrolled. The only positive mitigating factor is that the cave is removed from normal tourist tracks, and is itself somewhat concealed. Thus, specific local knowledge is largely necessary to locate the entrance. On the down side, it appears more than a few possess this knowledge.

Also indicated in the general area is a second, larger cave, known as Ramsdens Cave. Davey & White describe it as "a very large, unusual and geomorphologically interesting sea cave... of national significance". I suggest I might just browse around further, and let you know....

## REFERENCE:

Davey, A.G. & White, S. Victorian Caves and Karst. Strategies for Management and Catalogue (A report to the Caves Classification Committee, Victoria). Applied Resource Management, Canberra, 1986.