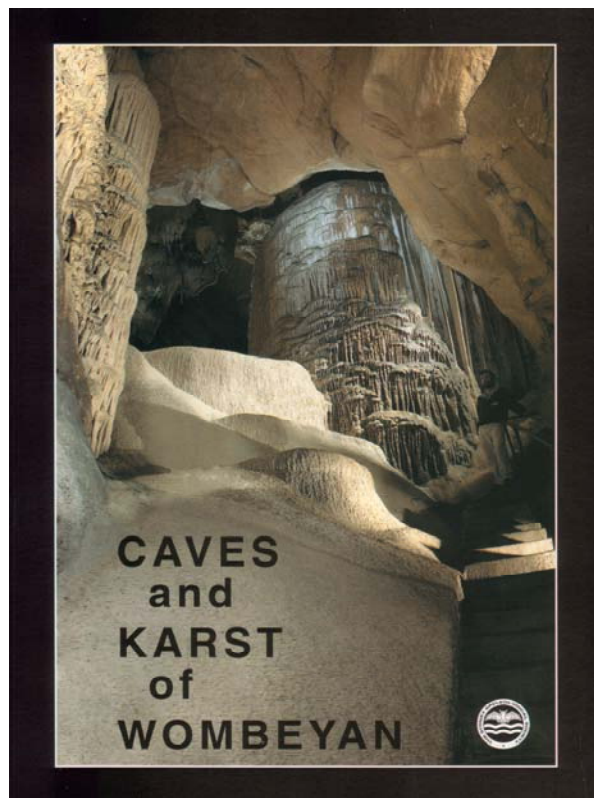


## BOOK REVIEWS

- Kent Henderson

**CAVES AND KARST OF WOMBEYAN.** Edited by Ross Ellis. Sydney Speleological Society Occasional Paper No. 13, 2004. 212 pp. Paperback – A4 size. ISBN 0-646 44063-2. Sydney Speleological Society, P. O. Box 198, Broadway. NSW. 2007.



This book has been published to celebrate the Sydney Speleological Society's recent 50th Anniversary (see the separate article herein), and is something of a follow up to SSS's Wombeyan Caves book (Occasional Paper No 8, 1982). The latest book is a monumental effort, with eighteen contributing authors, a number of which of also ACKMA members, including Ben Nurse, John & Glenda Wylie, Julia James, Armstrong Osborne, Jill Rowling, Russell Drysdale and Mia Thurgate.

The first chapter is an updated *History of the Wombeyan Caves Area*, which is extremely comprehensive, and details cave discoveries and events from 1863 till 2004. In Chapter Two, John and Glenda Wylie detail the *Guides at Wombeyan* over the years, while in Chapter Three Geoffrey McDonnell delves into the *History of Thomas Lambert Fox*, an early explorer at Wombeyan. Professor Julia James et al, in Chapter 4 discuss *The Magic of Marble* and gives a scientific and historical perspective on Wombeyan's geology, focusing on the current show caves.

**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAVES.** Edited by David C. Culver and William B. White. Elsevier Academic Press, Burlington, Massachusetts, USA. 2004. ISBN: 0-12-406061-7. 654 pp. Hardcover. Many colour plates, black & white images, and diagrams.

The just-released Encyclopedia of Caves is a self contained, beautifully illustrated work of wondrous quality. It includes one hundred and seven papers from karst scholars and researchers from across the globe. Australia is represented by Bill Humphreys (Diversity Patterns in Australia), Derek Fabel (Cosmogenic Isotope Dating) and Julia James, Annalisa Contos and Craig Barnes

In Chapter 5, Dr. Armstrong Osborne provides an extensive treatise on *The Geology and geomorphology of Wombeyan* which, expectedly, is wide-ranging and very readable. Jill Rowling briefly covers the fascinating topic of *Aragonite at Wombeyan* in Chapter Six, while in Chapter Seven Janece McDonald and Russell Drysdale comprehensively covers *Palaeoclimate Research in Wollondilly and Korrinda Caves*.

Todd Dennis extensively covers *Wombeyan Hydrology* in Chapter Eight. In Chapter Nine Mia Thurgate dilates on *Wombeyan Cave Fauna*, while Cindy Mann follows up in Chapter Ten with *Microbial Life*.

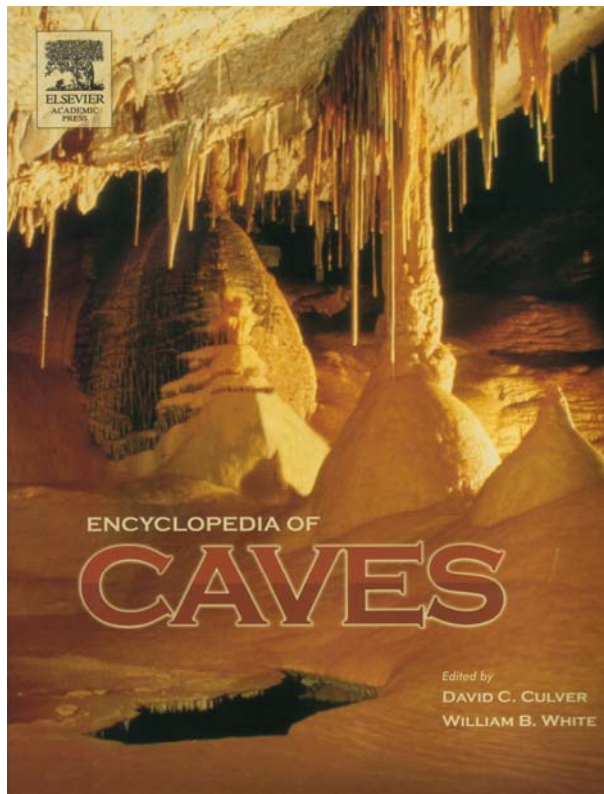
Clearly, the book seeks to cover virtually every conceivable aspect of Wombeyan – and to my mind it eminently succeeds! In Chapter Eleven, Rodney Falconer deals with *Plants in the Wombeyan Caves Reserve* (which concludes with a comprehensive listing of species), and in Chapter Twelve Ted Edwards deals with *Butterflies and Moths*.

Chapter Thirteen finishes the book with John and Glenda Wylie providing a complete *Annotated Listing* of all known caves at Wombeyan, followed by a thorough index of the whole work. The book features a full colour cover, over seventy colour photographs, plus many black and white images, maps and diagrams. What can one say? – if one has but only a minor interest in Wombeyan, this book is an absolute must. It is as good as it gets! – the result of many, many years of comprehensive research; and it is very readable, to boot! Get it!

### ORDERING DETAILS

Cheque or money order made out to the Sydney Speleological Society and posted to Ross Ellis, 11 Arkana Street, Teleopa, NSW 2117. On receiving the payment in full Ross will package and post the article. Please ensure a note is included indicating what you are requesting, and that the person's mailing address is included. Cost: \$53.50 + \$9.00 for postage and packaging, = \$62.50, until the end of 2004 (It then becomes \$59.50+ \$9.00 for postage & packaging).

(Nullarbor Caves, Australia). As an American publication, contributors are weighed from that area of world, but nonetheless a great many non-American participants are included – for example Boris Sket of Slovenia, an attendee at the recent *Limestone Coast 2004 Workshop* in Naracoorte, has two papers included.



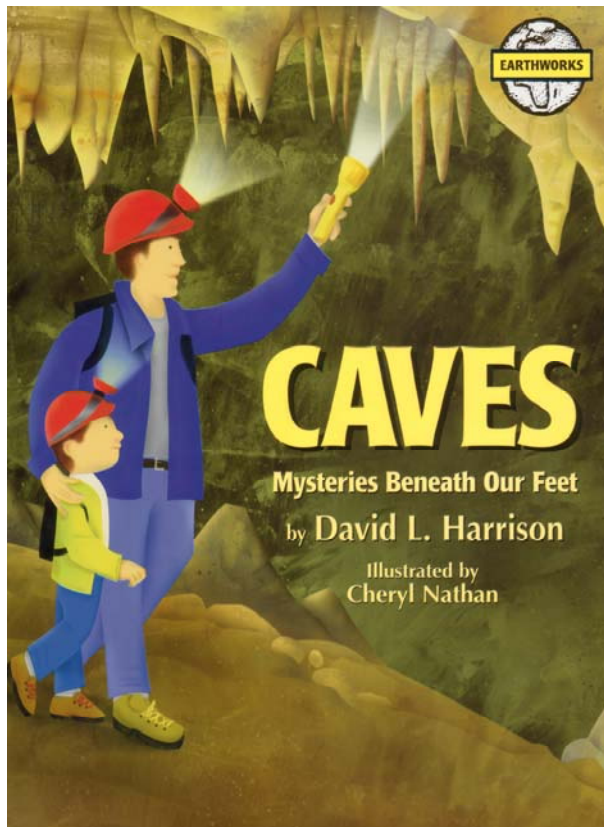
The work is divided into fifteen general subject areas, with a number of papers under each, viz: Types of Caves, Cave Features, Hydrology and Hydrogeology, Speleothems and Other Cave Deposits, Cave Ages and Paleoclimate,

Exceptional Caves, Biology of Particular Organisms in Caves, Ecology, Cave Invasion, Biogeography and Diversity, Evolution and Adaptation in Caves, Exploration of Caves, Contemporary Use of Caves, Historical Use of Caves, and Ground Water Contamination and Land Use Hazards in Cave Regions. Articles are alphabetically listed, each ended with a bibliography, and cross referenced to related articles in volume. The Encyclopedia concludes with an extensive glossary of terms, and index.

Clearly, it is not possible to review over one hundred papers except in the most general terms. The papers I thus far read are excellent, as one would fully expect. Of course, it is a reference work, not a bedtime read. Still, while covering much, I would the volume absolutely comprehensive, but to be fair that would require a work of many, many volumes. Without doubt, *Encyclopedia of Caves* is a 'must have' in the library of any cave-interested person, particularly cave managers. At \$Aust 165.00, it is not cheap – but such is usually the case with a limited print run academic work.

Order from Elsevier Australia Customer Service. Email: <service@elsevier.com.au> Telephone: 1800 263 951. Website: <www.elsevier.com.au>

**CAVES – Mysteries Beneath our Feet.** Text by David L. Harrison; illustrations by Cheryl Nathan. 2001. ISBN: 1-56397-915-2. 32 pp, plus cover. Full Colour. Boyds Mill Press, Honesdale, Pennsylvania, USA.



I picked this children's book up recently in a local bookshop. It is the first quality kid's picture book on caves I have seen, and it is a very good one. It is targeted at primary children, and tells a nice story of the discovery of a cave – and in doing so relates, in simple but accurate terms, cave and speleothem development, cave life, and the importance of cave preservation.

To quote: "If we touch a stalactite we may change the way it grows forever. If we step on a cricket, we may upset the balance of life. It is up to us to protect our caves and all the creatures that live there."

In short, I can highly recommend this book to all cave managers involved in dealing with school children (as many are, and all should be!). In my view, it could be very usefully used as an introductory 'read' to kids at programs run at places such as Naracoorte, Waitomo, and elsewhere.

The cover price is \$US15.95, and I paid \$Aust 29.95 for my copy – not particularly cheap, but in the price range of most quality children's books my (school teacher) wife tells me.

To order, go to:  
<<http://www.boydsmillpress.com/Othermat.tpl>>, do a search for 'Caves', and you can order online.

