

The Hazy Gates Celtic Trio visits and tries the acoustics in Careys Cave



WEE JASPER NATURALLY – AN ANCIENT SEASCAPE

– Andy Spate

The above is the slogan that floated a weekend at Wee Jasper, New South Wales, aimed at promoting local attractions.

Although this community activity did not have a direct contact with ACKMA we were heavily involved and were upfront and in people's noses. It was an attempt by the Wee Jasper valley community (about 65 men, women and children) to boost the local economy.

So ACKMA members Neil and Geoff Kell and Andy Spate flung our shoulders to the grindstone, our noses to the ground and our ears to the ground to support this endeavour. These positions may explain why I am so stiff as I write this?



Part of the attentive Bentwing Bat flyout audience outside Church Cave, Wee Jasper



The Hazy Gates Celtic Trio plays on – in Careys Cave

So what did we do? Geoff had a special cave tour and a folk music concert in Careys Cave; Andy conducted karst walks, Bentwing Bat flyout viewings at the Church Cave maternity site and provided displays for the Community Hall.

Neil, Geoff and I spent two days relighting the 'Workshop Chamber' and entranceway with LEDs and quartz halogen dichroic – and in the end, candles as a lightning storm took the power out near the end of the concert!



Discovering Australian Caves and Cathie Plowman's Mole Creek posters on display at the *Wee Jasper Naturally* Weekend



A full complement of about 80 enjoyed the concert after a splendid afternoon tea provided by Suzanne (the Wee Jasper community is pretty good at sustaining the inner man and woman!).

The special cave tour consisted of a slide show and a lecture followed by a more detailed Careys Cave visit than is normally enjoyed by the casual visitor.

The bat flyouts were very popular with about 50 visitors being mesmerised each night by the tens of thousands of bats flying from Church Cave. Dinner was provided in the nearby Community Hall before the flyouts.

The bats behaved impeccably – as did the visitors! Also in the Hall were an art exhibition, displays by NSW Fisheries, on the Hume and Hovell Walking Track, rural interests and, a big display of the ACKMA posters (supplemented by other

cave and karst posters). Cathie Plowman's Mole Creek posters provided a link between rural activities and karst conservation concerns.

In a corner in the back of the Hall we had the 'Bat Theatre' with continuous DVD viewings on bats – largely from Bat Conservation International.

There were leaflets, posters and books available – free and for sale. And ads for ACKMA, ASF and local caving clubs. Geoff's bat cut outs and colouring sheets were available for the kids.

Other outside activities planned included fishing competitions, fly-casting schools and horse rides but the drought put paid to these.

But Ian and Helen Cathles conducted their Devonian Fish Fossil Walks and I took three walks around Punchbowl Hill talking about landscape evolution and the importance of caves and karst.

A great weekend – I expected more people but the Wee Jasper community seems happy with the result.

One of the reasons for writing this note is to remind ACKMA members that we have a great collection of posters – largely produced for the 2002 CaveExpo in Korea.

These are available for any community events such as the *Wee Jasper Naturally* weekend – all you have to do is pay the postage to and from my home in Hall.

The only person to have used this posters is Jay Anderson a couple of times in Western Australia. Seems a pity And I also have heaps of cave DVDs for you to borrow.