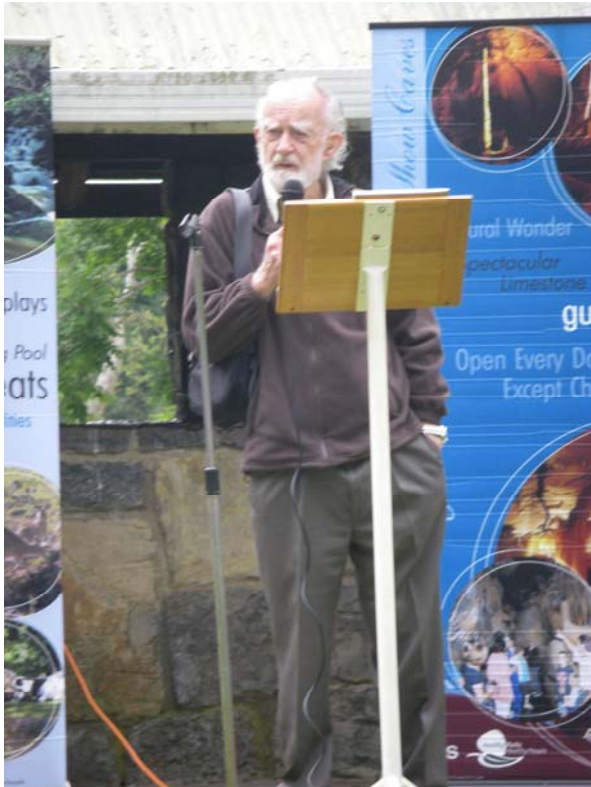


The disappearing 'Entrance Archway' to the Buchan Caves Reserve.



ROYAL CAVE CENTENARY AT BUCHAN

– Dale Calnin



Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith address the gathering at the Royal Cave Centenary.

Parks Victoria hosted a family day at the Buchan Caves Reserve on Sunday 7 November to mark the centenary of the discovery of Royal Cave. The cave discovered on the 8 November 1910 when Fredrick Wilson, accompanied by Frank Moon and Constable Brown, pushed through a rockfall beyond 'Blackwood Chamber' at the south end of Fairy Cave. The cave was not opened to the public until its man-made entrance tunnel was completed in 1913.

An estimated crowd of six hundred people attended the event, which included free inspections of the caves. The keynote speaker was Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith who spoke in particular about Fredrick Wilson's part in the discovery of Royal Cave. Fredrick Wilson was the first Caves supervisor of the Buchan Caves Reserve. He described him as 'a very shy man, a very reticent and retiring man – but also a visionary with great sensitivity to the natural world'. Wilson was appointed to develop the caves

at Buchan for tourism in accordance with what was then accepted as best cave management practice. He was responsible for erection of protective wire netting fences and handrails in the caves and he initiated the idea of gardens in the Caves Reserve, which remain a key draw card for visitors to this day.

Other festivities included a historic photo displays erected by the local community, heritage walks, children's activities and a special appearance by *Parks Victoria* mascot, 'Ranger Roo'.

The morning after the centenary, staff awoke to the sight of the *Entrance Archway* to the Caves Reserve which had collapsed during the night. Fortunately, no one was injured in the collapse. The hardwood in the structure (which was only re-built about ten years ago) was rotten. The supporting pillars appeared not to have been damaged, but further assessments will be needed, as will what (if anything) replaces the former structure.



Ranger-in-charge Dale Calnin with *Park Victoria*'s 'Ranger Roo'. The Editor understands Dale is on the right, but also that opinions do vary.