

RAWHITI CAVE, GOLDEN BAY, NEW ZEALAND

Jane Baird

Editor's note:

I was provided some brief notes from Jane Baird, one time owner of Rawhiti Cave, of developments undertaken by the Department of Conservation in the cave. Having not heard of this cave, I asked Jane for some further information and she referred me to ACKMA journal 14 (March 1994) in which a piece had been published titled Managing Rawhiti Cave. I don't have a copy of that issue (and I would think many members may not either) and Jane was kind enough to provide a photocopy of the article.

Jane was the owner of Rawhiti Cave for many years and her passion for the cave is evident in her writing. Jane took tours of the cave and controlled access, with what would appear to be a fierce determination. "So one of my biggest nightmares is vandals. Sometimes when all I really want to do is go home and have a beer after a tour, I have had to turn around and go back up the mountain as I have seen trespassers trying to hide from me." Jane also spent many hours cleaning the cave of rubbish left from former tours and would provide free tours if visitors spent an hour working alongside her.

THE NEW VIEWING PLATFORM

I think the Department of Conservation (DOC) has done a wonderful job and I always knew it would happen even if I wanted to see Rawhiti Cave remain natural.

In January 2011 DOC designed a short track and steps to a viewing platform inside Rawhiti Cave entrance. They worked with an engineer and planned to make a bench track in the earth on the left hand side of the cave entrance, turning to the right and then via stairs leading to a small viewing platform. DOC thought this will get people far enough into the cave to see the majority of the view and satisfy their curiosity. All the material was flown in by helicopter because of the steep terrain. The old track down the entrance used by Jane Baird and former tours has been fenced off. Over the last 11 years since we sold the cave, substantial damage has been done by visitors. The steps and platform have been put there to stop this.



Rawhiti Cave viewing platform