

Conference Sidelight -

CRYSTAL 'CAVE'

- Kent Henderson

Delegates in Crystal 'Cave'



Kevin Kiernan, obviously *delighted*, in Crystal 'Cave'

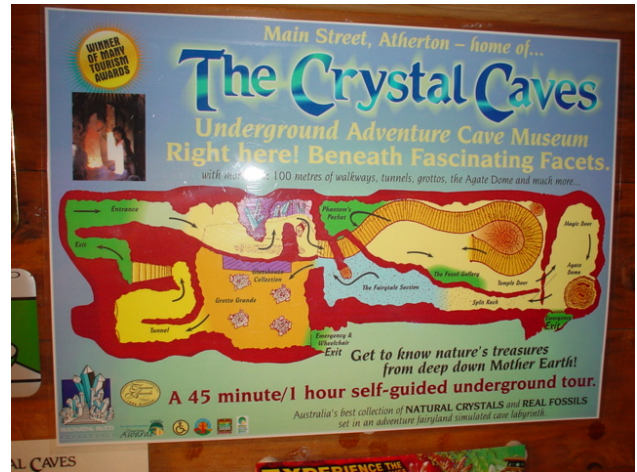


During our return trip to Cairns after the 15th Conference, we stopped for lunch at the town of Atherton, wherein several of us visited 'Crystal Cave'. I did publish a press report on this 'cave' some light years ago in ACKMA Journal No. 20 (September 1995), and it was interesting (I think...) to visit them in person.

Crystal Cave is a pseudo-cave constructed of painted polystyrene walls at the back of a shop selling rock

crystals. It claims to hold the biggest and best and best crystal rock collection in Australia, and certainly I couldn't refute it. The owner, Rene Boissevain, set it up some years ago as a fantasyland cave, and he certainly succeeded. It is full of fake (being the operative word) speleothems, with rock crystals from around the world set into the walls as you go through. To give a 'cave effect', visitors are required to don helmets and lights (they are supplied), and some 'passages' require stooping.... It has 'fascinating' 'chambers' such as *The Fairytale*, *The Magic Temple*, and *The Phantom's Pocket* - I'm sure you get the picture. Naturally, when one finally emerges from the 'cave' - surprise, surprise - one enters an extensive tourist trap, with just about very conceivable cave crystal available for purchase.

Most of our group (not all of us braved the 'trip') were unimpressed. Kevin Kiernan constantly muttered 'appalling'... While from our perspective it was, to be fair it is an enterprising local tourist attraction, and on that basis, well.... Still, I don't know that I'd recommend you spend the \$9.00 entrance fee next time you're in Atherton.



A diagram of Crystal 'Cave'



The Crystal 'cave' car, parked outside....

