



Reviews for:-

Jenolan Caves-the Complete Guide

By Mark Hallinan

Published by Critical Concepts Pty Ltd, Brisbane, 2013
Hardback, 268 pp, images, diagrams, endpapers.

Jenolan Caves – The Complete Guide: Mark Hallinan

Reviewed by **Andy Spate. Optimal Karst Management**

Linda – your dad has done you proud!¹ Mark Hallinan has produced a wonderful guide to the Jenolan Caves.

This book ranks with *Beneath the Surface: A natural history of Australian caves* (Brian Finlayson and Ely Hamilton-Smith, 2003, (eds.), University of New South Wales Press) as one of the two “best” books on Australian caves. *Jenolan Caves* wins hands down on a tourism-orientated rather than scientific approach. Each has its place. However, the science in Hallinan’s book is remarkably well done.

This profusely illustrated guide to the world-famous Jenolan Caves is a remarkable book on many fronts. Conceived as a project to fill a “gap-year” it clearly grew into a much grander concept. Its 268 pages includes early 20th century coloured maps of the Jenolan Caves (by Oliver Trickett, 1925, front endpaper) and the Blue Mountains (Oliver Trickett, 1909, rear endpaper); seven major chapters; several appendices, about 130 comprehensive endnotes and a fine index. The latter often seems to be lacking in many modern books ... The book is unashamedly a guidebook rather than a scientific treatise. However, the scientific aspects are described and illustrated in simple terms with excellent diagrams.

When I say profusely illustrated I mean it! At almost every page has an excellent photograph, map, diagram or other illustration either on it – or opposite. Many are in colour except, of course, historical black and whites – of which there are many. It is printed in China on very high quality paper.

The chapters are as follows:

- Chapter 1. Introducing Jenolan Caves;
- Chapter 2. Hidden in the Mountains;
- Chapter 3. Caves – Rock, Water and Time;
- Chapter 4. Cave Formations – Speleothems;
- Chapter 5. Experiencing the Caves over Time;
- Chapter 6. The Show Caves of Jenolan; and
- Chapter 7. The Jenolan Surrounds.

The chapter contents are self-explanatory except perhaps for Chapters 2, 5 and 7. Chapter 2 deals with matters of geography (location, access, geology, climate, vegetation, etc.). Chapter 5 encompasses man’s involvement from 45,000 years ago through to 1788 and beyond to 2010. Chapter 7 looks at the extinct megafauna, plant communities, vertebrates and invertebrates found at Jenolan.

The appendices cover the Gundungurra dreamtime story, cave chemistry and dating of Jenolan Caves – an eclectic collection! There are suggestions for further reading and both a prologue and a postscript. As can be seen Mark Hallinan’s book covers the entire Jenolan scene. It is the most comprehensive book on any Australian cave system yet published but is largely confined to the show caves with only a few lines devoted to a few of the “wild” caves that are used for adventure tours. This may well be a deliberate approach. The discussions on geology and the development of speleothems are more than adequate but there are only a few pages on the development of the cave system - perhaps because it is too complex and there has been no real synthesis of this for Jenolan as yet. I have three minor

¹ Mark has dedicated his book to his daughter, Linda, in the following words: “in recognition of the fact that each of us are only guardians of this planet until it is our turn to hand over to those who come after us. My generation is proud of the efforts of those who looked after Jenolan Caves before us. I only hope that your generation will be just as proud.”



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quibbles. Firstly, the book gives the impression that there are “nursery” (maternity) caves for the Eastern bent-wing bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*) at Jenolan. If one or more are at Jenolan they have not yet been identified. One cave in the southern limestone maybe a so-called “staging cave” utilised by bats *en route* to a maternity cave; a cave off the Devils Coach house may be another. My second quibble is that of the strange capitalisations in Appendix 2: Cave Chemistry, for example “... Water, Carbon Dioxide and solid Calcium Carbonate.” Thirdly, there could well have been mention of the various forest bats as well as the two cave-dependent species.

These personal nit-pickings aside, the book is to be thoroughly recommended to those interested in Jenolan Caves – and, indeed, to the wider community interested in caves and other natural phenomena in Australia and elsewhere. In addition, it will be of interest to those interested in matters historical ranging from 45,000 years ago to the present. It is available in a remarkable variety of formats ranging from the handsome hard-covered version (RRP \$64.95) to a CD (RRP \$24.95) and as an ebook from Amazon, Apple and Google! There is also a 36 page souvenir picture book of the most stunning sights of caves - *Jenolan Caves- The Best of the Best* (RRP \$19.95). They are available from Critical Concepts Press, PO Box 8166, Woolloongabba, QLD 4102; selected bookshops, at Jenolan obviously and at sales@jenolancavescompleteguide.com.au. See jenolancavescompleteguide.com.au for more details.

Andy Spate. Optimal Karst Management. Sept 2014

Andy Spate has been involved in cave and karst research for more than 50 years. He is the author or co-author of more than 130 papers and reports dealing with cave and karst science, and management, as well as developing and training cave guides and others involved in the management and interpretation of these rich resources.

Jenolan Caves – The Complete Guide: Mark Hallinan

A review by Angus M Robinson, Chair, Geotourism Forum of Ecotourism Australia Ltd.

It is not often that a guide book is written that so comprehensively and richly describes the geographical character, along with the natural and cultural heritage, of such an iconic Geotourism location. Mark Hallinan, an electrical engineer by vocation, and a champion of Jenolan Caves has produced a publication which fulsomely achieves this objective.

As pointed out in the book’s prologue, Jenolan Caves is regularly described as one of the most spectacular limestone cave systems in the world, a fact that positioned Jenolan Caves in the 1920s as an iconic Australian destination for visitors in the same way that Uluru is now featured in global tourism. In defining its place in geotourism, the natural heritage of Jenolan Caves is a celebration of its geodiversity, biodiversity, and its cultural heritage that extends over 45,000 years through its significance to Australian aborigines, and post 1788, for its European occupiers and developers. The guide book keeps faith with this aspiration as its various chapters diligently document information in all of these areas. Commencing with defining its place within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Listed Area, the book continues with a detailed explanation of the geology and geomorphological processes that have led to the complex group of cave formations. These are celebrated in extensive illustrations and photographic detail.

In a well-illustrated chapter detailing the flora and fauna, the guide book discovers and explores the rich variety of biodiversity found both within the cave systems and in the surrounding areas. ‘Experiencing the Caves Over Time’ is a chapter of the book that covers in considerable detail the discovery of the cave system by Europeans in 1836. Firstly named the Fish River Caves, the system



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was renamed as the Binda Caves until finally adopting its geographic designation in the 1880s. The history of the early tourism development of Jenolan Caves and the heritage Jenolan Caves House is comprehensively covered, as is building of the caves' infrastructure including the electrical and lighting systems, the explanation of which falls within the author's area of professional expertise. In concluding, the author reminds the reader that 'Jenolan Caves is a positive treasure trove of natural wonders and awe-inspiring sights' causing us all to 'ponder our own place in the cosmos'. He leaves us with a potent conservation message, that Jenolan Caves 'offers us one more gem - hope for the future'.

'The Complete Guide' delivers on its promise of better appreciating the value of sustainable tourism of which geotourism is a key component.

Angus Robinson, Sept 2014

Angus Robinson is both Chair of the Geotourism Forum of Ecotourism Australia and a geotourism grouping of the Geological Society of Australia. He currently specialises in ecotourism and geotourism as a tour operator. In earlier years he has worked at Taronga Zoo and at Sydney's former Earth Exchange museum in executive roles.

Jenolan Caves – The Complete Guide: Mark Hallinan

A comment by Dr David Branagan

I was privileged to read Mark Hallinan's *Jenolan Caves* during its preparation and was sure it would be a 'winner'.

The published book proved that my feeling was right. Mark's volume is truly a 'Complete Guide'. It deals with the history of Jenolan, the pioneers and later researchers who delved deep into Jenolan's subterranean mysteries and explains both the regional and local geology in text and figures.

The reproductions of the fine colour photographs, many by the author, together with those by Jimmy Lim and Chris Comb, enhance a clear and interesting text. The endpapers, prepared by the doyen of Guides, Surveyor Oliver Trickett at different times, in earlier days, supplement the illustrations within the various chapters.

The book ends with two interesting Appendices: (1) Gundungurra Dreamtime Story, about one of the two Aboriginal custodian groups; and (2) Cave Chemistry. There is recommended 'Further Reading' and numerous informative Endnotes.

An examination of this book shows it needs no further recommendation!

David Branagan, Sept 2014.

David Branagan is an Affiliate, School of Geosciences, University of Sydney, and a Foundation Member of Sydney University Speleological Society in the late 1940s.