

ANOTHER TRIP TO SOUTH KOREA

- Andy Spate

Andy Spate, on his knees,
During a previous trip to Korea.



Neil Kell and I recently had about a month in Korea talking to various agencies, local governments, and architectural, engineering and lighting businesses about re-lighting of three caves and the possible development of another. The trip started well with Neil and I dining with Andrew Finch and David Head of Weidmüller Pty Ltd who have been supply LED lighting technology to Jenolan and Wombeyan (Wollondilly Cave, Temple of Baal, etc). They supplied us with four LED units that we were able to experiment with in Korea (and Bermuda).

LED lighting technology is changing minute by minute and whilst the PAR 38, dichroic halogen and other systems are going to be with us for a while yet. The main drawbacks to LED seem to be colour temperature (many people find them too white/blue – but this is easily adjustable), perhaps focussing, lack of strong shadows and, perhaps most importantly, the rate at which the technology is changing. It is only 10 weeks since we saw David

and Andrew and they now tell us they can offer us double the light output at the same price. Anyway – back to Korea. Once we arrived we were whisked off to Gossigul where we spend several days going back and forth documenting ideas and faults and, in my case, falling down the 'Gateway to Success' which I recommended be improved in 2001, 2003 and 2005.

Then off to Seongnugul (the cave with a thousand spellings!) – much the same but without the falling down. Back to Seoul and off to Jeju where we re-visited the splendid lava tube Manjanggal again.

Very fruitful discussions here with Mr Lee Lk Heun, CEO of SAEM Lighting Co Ltd, and a number of his colleagues (all of whom appeared to be called Mr Leel!). Mr Lee has recently provided wonderful lighting for a wonderfully rehabilitated streamway through the centre of Seoul.

Back to the mainland and a couple of nights in a tiny village – the only two inhabitants with any English were named Neil and Andy! Here we investigated and reported on the show cave potential of Baekryonggul (another cave of multiple spellings). Our recommendation – don't! If you must use it as a very low-key adventure cave with very limited infrastructure and lighting.



Andy Spate at Korean Cave Expo

SOME AMERICAN SHOW CAVE STATISTICS

These are taken from a handout from the National Caves Association Conference 2006. Where there were multiple prices or times at any one cave I have taken the largest figure so the average prices and times are over-estimated. It may well be that the longer times relate to 'adventure tours'. The prices are in Australian dollars at today's rate (13/11/06) \$A1.00 = \$US0.767.

Adults: Average \$A15.81 (\$, number of sites = 87, price range \$A5.21-37.81.

Children: Average \$A9.13, number of sites = 85, price range \$A3.26-37.81.

Tour times: 64 minutes, number of sites = 89, time range 20-270 minutes.