

## SOUTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND ROUND UP

Neil Collinson

### **Cavern Cave (aka the Dragon Cave) Greymouth – West Coast**

Some participants from the 2005 ACKMA conference will recall visiting this cave which was inside the boundary of the Solid Energy Spring Creek mining operations. At the time of the conference the caves tubing operation by Wild West Adventures was operational. Subsequently this operation closed down and access was restricted due to proximity of mining operations. Mary Traves reports that on behalf of NZ cavers Solid Energy was approached in late 2013 via the Greymouth Solid Energy Community Consultative Group about access to the caves. This was done because the Spring Creek Mine has been ‘moth-balled’ for time being and sufficient time has elapsed also for any subsidence due to the mining nearby in 2010 to have settled. Solid Energy’s Environmental Manager has approved local cavers’ access, taking their own responsibility for cave conditions (rock fall, water levels etc) as they would at any time when caving.

However before cave tours can resume it would appear that the onus is now on the operator to commission a full engineering assessment before commercial use can resume. When, and if, cave tours will resume is not known at this time.

**Charlestown** - Geoff Shurr (Norwest Adventures) operation now has a new base, and with excellent facilities including a café, opened in December 2013. Geoff’s team has not yet had time for an official opening of the base as it’s been too busy over the summer peak.

The Nile River Rain Forest Train continues to be the prime mover of visitors up the valley to the caves which are situated in Paparoa National Park.

**Te Anau Glowworm Caves** - A busy summer which has been much kinder weather wise with fewer days affecting by flooding. The programme of a biannual geotechnical inspection was completed in prior to the summer season and this partnership with OPUS has resulted in a number of improvements to our monitoring. This has included the addition of kinematic analysis of potential rock failure modes. We are also investigating an upgrade to real time monitoring using Linear Variable Differential Transformers accessed remotely via a web browser. This work is part of a continuous improvement program and adds a new level of technology to the current visual monitoring based around glass slides and sliding rod devices which still rely on guide’s observations.



*Above. ACKMA conference 2005 at Nile River Caves, Charlestone, New Zealand  
Photo: Steve Bourne*

*Left. Caves entrance walk way, Te Anau Glowworm Caves, affected by receding flood waters December 2013. For the previous 12 hours the rushing water had filled this section of caves to the ceiling and tours were suspended.*

*Photo: Neil Collinson*