

MILL CREEK SWALLET ADVENTURE TOUR

Sasa Kennedy



*Sasa Kennedy in East Creek Cave
Photo: Ted Matthews*

rain. There is an array of stunning fossils here, with forms easily seen. The rock itself is also very interesting, with streaks of pink through the dark grey limestone. This is an ideal spot to squeeze in a little bit of interpretation, as it is one of few spaces large enough to accommodate a full tour group.

After this comes a series of low, rocky crawls broken up with small chambers and a challenging chimney leading to the lowest level of the cave. The crawls are long enough and low enough to provide a buzz for most adventure cave participants. The chimney, as a free



*Jenny Emerson and Anne Musser in Mill Swallet Cave
Photo: Sasa Kennedy*

On Sunday 4 May, prior to the start of the Guides Workshop, a cheery group of Yarrangobilly guides and other adventurous types from Jenolan and Wombeyan headed off to check out Yarrangobilly's proposed new intermediate level adventure tour, Mill Creek Swallet, ably led by George Bradford.

The tour began with a scenic stroll along the track which leads to Harrie Woods Cave, before turning off down a gully to Mill Creek Swallet. Although we took a gully path into the cave, it is proposed that the adventure tour groups will abseil in from the pathway above. The abseil looks from below to be fairly straightforward, finishing with a descent into the cave entrance – plenty of fun for tour participants to be had entering the dark cave by the light of their headlamps. For those abseiling early in the group there is plenty to interest them in this twilight section of the cave as they await the rest of the party.

After the entrance is a beautiful series of water carved descents leading to the middle level of the cave. This stepped passageway must look amazing after heavy

climb, might prove too much for many at this level, so George has wisely decided to present this as a ladder ascent/descent. For adventure visitors cave ladders can add a new dimension to the experience, being a very popular aspect of the Mammoth Cave Tour at Jenolan.

The trip into the cave ends at a small sump, another chamber with stunning rock colouring and fossils.

From here we returned, as the adventure cavers will, to the entrance of the cave, made our way back along the gully and up the Castle Cave Track to the main walkway.

This tour will be a valuable addition to the Yarrangobilly visitor experience, providing an extension activity to entice longer stays. It will be quite a challenge for guides and adventure participants alike. For the guides the challenge will be managing the group with few large gathering places in the cave, tiring crawls and quite a lengthy walk in and out. For the participants the crawls will provide a physical challenge and the chimney a mental challenge. They should be well pleased with themselves when they complete the trip!