

THE JENOLAN CAVES EXCURSION

THE EARLY YEARS

The First Years 1959-1967

The first excursion from Normanhurst Boys' High School to Jenolan Caves took place in November 1959, the second year of the school's existence. The excursion was suggested by a boy in class IA, and the idea was taken up enthusiastically by the class's Roll Patron, Mr Dicker, who went ahead and organised and conducted the excursion. This was a two day excursion. An account of this excursion was printed in the 1960 School Magazine and may be read here.

In December 1960, a second excursion took place, led again by Mr Dicker. This was a three day excursion. An account from the 1961 School Magazine may be read here.

There was no excursion in 1961. In 1962 the excursion was revived, and ran in all the years from 1961 to 1967 inclusive, each time led by Mr Dicker. The School Magazines do not contain reports for any of these excursions, except for one of them. It is printed in the 1963 Magazine and may be found here.

The School has no photos from any of the excursions from 1959 to 1967. If anyone reading this has some photos the School would love to hear from you. Please contact the School Principal.

The Excursion dies and is revived

At the end of 1967 Mr Dicker left the School. There were no excursions in 1968, 1969, 1970 or 1971.

In 1972 a sixth form student suggested that the excursion be revived. This idea was taken up by Mr McMurtrie and from 1972 to 1990 inclusive, Mr McMurtrie ran the Jenolan Caves excursion.

The Period from 1972 to 1990

The 1972 excursion was for three days, but the excursions from 1973 to 1981 were all for four days. In general they all followed much the same pattern: a visit to St Matthew's at Windsor, an inspection of the old Zig Zag railway line, a tour of the Power Station at Wallerawang, and the first night spent in Bathurst, involving a drive around Mt Panorama, and dinner at a restaurant. All this led up to the breathtaking drive to Jenolan Caves where the boys would spend three of the four days.

In 1982 the excursion was extended to include a visit to Dubbo, where the boys visited the zoo and the historic gaol. Dubbo remained part of the excursion until 1987. Usually the trip to and from Dubbo was via Orange, but in 1982 it was via Mudgee and Gulgong. In 1984 the party visited Forbes as well as Dubbo.

In 1988 the focus returned to Bathurst. In 1989 and 1990 the boys spent the first two nights in Cowra, where they visited the Japanese Garden and War Cemetery, and the Historic Train Collection.

In the years from 1972 to 1990 what took place at Jenolan Caves was always much the same. The boys stayed in Caves House. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were in the Grand Dining Room. Full school uniform with blazer was always worn for dinner, and occasionally for lunch as well. There would be a cave inspection in the morning and after dinner in the evening. The afternoons were free time, and usually involved exploring the whole area.

Since 1972 the excursion has taken place every year. Usually there was one excursion each year, but there were five years when the excursion went in two or three separate divisions. These years were 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1990.

Reports for some of the excursions may be read in the school magazine for the following years: 1979, 1984, 1985, 1987 and 1988.

In November 1981 a special Year Eleven excursion was conducted. This was to mark (a little prematurely) twenty five years of visits to the Caves. A report from the 1982 School Magazine may be read in the school magazine.