

An Underground Stream

A swimming pool fed by a spring

The spring water which feeds this pool flows out of Dukes Cave, first recorded by James Stirling, a geological surveyor, in 1889. The cave is named after an early settler, Robert Duke, whose house was on the site now occupied by the house of the Ranger in Charge, 150 metres east of here.

The cave system

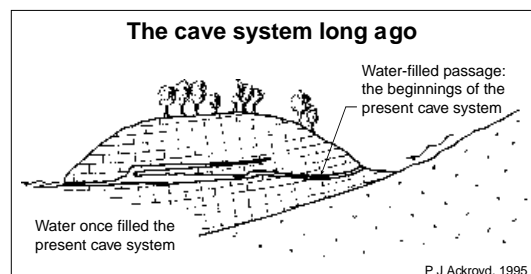
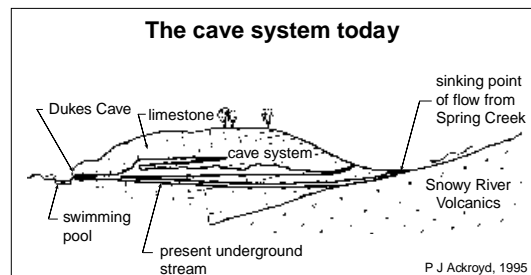
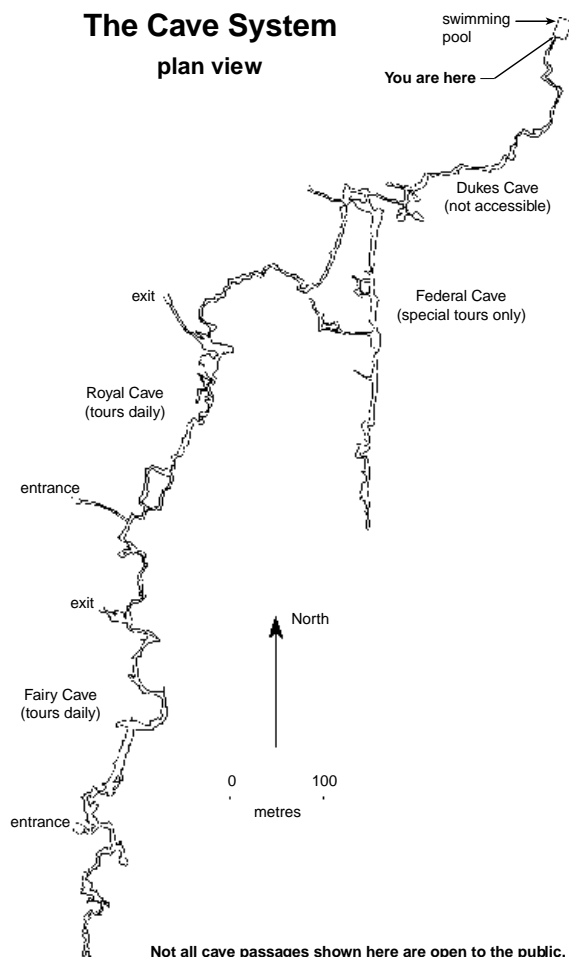
Dukes Cave was explored by Stirling until he reached a massive pile of fallen rock which prevented further progress. This barrier was penetrated by members of the Victorian Speleological Association in 1974 and Dukes Cave was found to connect to the main cave system, which includes Fairy and Royal Caves.

Underground streams

The cave system was once a long, water-filled passage in the limestone. As the adjacent valley cut down more deeply, the underground stream formed a new passage below the older level. Now we see water in the caves only when the creeks are high.

How do caves form?

When rain falls it picks up carbon dioxide gas from the air and soil to form a very weak acid. Limestone is one of the few rocks that can be dissolved by such a weak acid. Over many thousands of years the weakly acidic water can form underground passages in the limestone. Evidence of these underground passages can be seen by walking 500 metres to the bridge at the start of the Spring Creek Walk. There, if you look carefully, you can usually see less water on the downstream side of the bridge than is flowing on the upstream side. Some of the stream sinks through the bed of the creek into an underground passage.



This information sign was erected by the Friends of Buchan Caves, Buchan, Victoria 3885, with the assistance of a Projects Grant provided by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Sign designed and written by Peter Ackroyd. Reviewed by John Webb.



The Friends of Buchan Caves (Inc) is a volunteer group which has as its main aim the preservation of caves and the flora and fauna found in them. The Friends donate their time and skills to the carrying out of cave conservation, cave interpretation and revegetation projects.

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