

KARST NEWS

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The Newsletter of the Malaysian Karst Society

May 2010

For members only

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Members are encouraged to visit our MKS website regularly at www.mykarst.org for the latest updates and trips. The full list of the previous newsletters in colour can also be downloaded from the site.

MKS Committee 2009/2010

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Hymeir Kamarudin | President |
| Yong Shim Hian | Vice President |
| Chan Chee Meng | Secretary |
| Bernard Lee | Treasurer |
| Cheah Weng Hong | |
| Mohd. Tajuddin | |
| Liew Chin Chow | |
| Foon Hoong Seng | |
| Robert Percival | |

Committee Members

Message from the President

Dear Members,

MKS has many activities planned for 2010. We just had our trip to Gua Kandu successfully conducted with over 20 participants. Most were new members which helped to increase membership numbers. More will be planned.

The first Friends of Kinta Valley Limestone (FKVL) meeting was held in January 2010. To date, this loose coalition of NGOs is 7 strong and increasing. The NGOs agreeing to be part of FKVL includes WWF Malaysia and Sahabat Alam Malaysia. We hope to have a joint public statement prepared and published soon. A Facebook page has been created to garner support too. Search for the Malaysian Karst Society at Facebook.com.

Discussions were recently held with two prominent partners from the Government to join us in establishing the Cave and Karst Database. With their support and assistance, we hope to see this project move towards implementation in the near future.

MKS has also engaged with the Perak State Government on the preservation and proper management of two of the states most neglected heritage sites. These are the Tambun Rock Art and the Gua Naga Mas Fossil. The reaction from the state has been very encouraging and we hope to move forward in this project towards an acceptable solution. Our hope is these sites are secured and managed for future generations.

The projects that MKS have been embarking on and the organizing of trips all needs the help of volunteers. That is why MKS is in need of more members who not only want to show support but we hope some would come forward to contribute their time. At the moment MKS is relying on a very small group of members to function. Therefore, please spread the word around and encourage friends and relatives to be members of MKS and be as active as possible. MKS needs your help. I hope to see you at our next function or activity.

Thank you.

Hymeir Kamarudin, President

Fossil bones in Gua Naga Mas



A Survey of 6 mile Tunnel in Tambun on 19th Nov 2009

The MKS committee made a survey trip to 6 mile Tunnel in November to map the cave and check on the condition of the area. This cave is now under the management of Sunway and they are organizing guided tours through the cave. We wanted to verify that the cave and the surrounding area with its flora and fauna has not been disturbed.

Here is a report of the trip by **Cheah Weng Hong**.

Our group of nine cavers reached the entrance of Six Mile Tunnel at 10:20am. Luckily there was no rain that morning. If not, the survey might be cancelled. The last time I visited this area a couple of years ago there were no man-made structures. But now there are some. These simple buildings are there to cater to visitors' toilet and cleaning needs. To get to the actual tunnel entrance visitors have to cross a pond. A submerged narrow wooden bridge with a guiding rope has been erected to facilitate the visitors access the cave. To be on the safe side all of us wore lifejackets and helmets. One by one we walked gingerly across the shaky bridge as some sections had been eroded due to long submersion under the water



Admiring formations on the cave ceiling

A nice wang. A short walk along a trail found us facing a small pond. Other than some pesky mosquitoes there were no leeches. Maybe this could be due to the absence or lack of animals. Along the way we encountered some old cooking utensils such as wok and container. We were not sure whether these were left behind by ancient miners or recent visitors. The trail led us to a small waterfall. The fall may not be very enticing. But then there is another cave on the wall of the waterfall. The opening of this cave is rather small. Robert made an effort to get in and managed to explore some distance before turning back. After a short rest we decided to return to the main tunnel.

Six Mile Tunnel is actually a wet cave. A steady stream flows through the interior to the pond outside. The purpose of our group visit was to conduct a survey of the cave interior. This was done by Hymeir and Nadir while the rest of us explored the cave and observed its condition. Soon we were filled with chest-level high water. And it was really cold. As we continued to walk into the tunnel, the water level subsided to shin height. That was more comforting. All along the way we saw small animals such as cave spiders and cave scorpions on the wall. Bats were plentiful and flying around. A little while later we came across a waterfall within the tunnel. What an interesting sight! From here onwards we witnessed a lot of man-made rock piles stacked neatly at the sides as well as on upper ledges near the ceiling of the tunnel. These must be the residuals of mining activities done many years ago. Somewhere after the waterfall we came across a side tunnel. A few of us ventured in. It was narrow and we had to crawl all the way into this side tunnel. We were rewarded with the sight of white millipedes and more cave spiders.

The journey to the end of the tunnel was a bit tedious. The tunnel floor was littered with rocks and that made walking quite a chore. Because of this a good pair of trekking shoes is recommended. Eventually we reached the end of the tunnel. The tunnel actually opens up into a

Hymeir and Nadir finally completed the survey. We made our way out of the tunnel at around 2pm. It took us a mere half an hour to exit the tunnel. But it took us 2 hours earlier to get in as we spent a lot of time studying the animals and admiring the formations along the way. By now the water level was higher even though there was no noticeable rain. Initially the water level at the entrance was at chest height but now it was at my chin level. Imagine if it is raining and the water level must be way higher and it is definitely a risk for folks to venture into this tunnel.



The other end of the cave from inside the wang

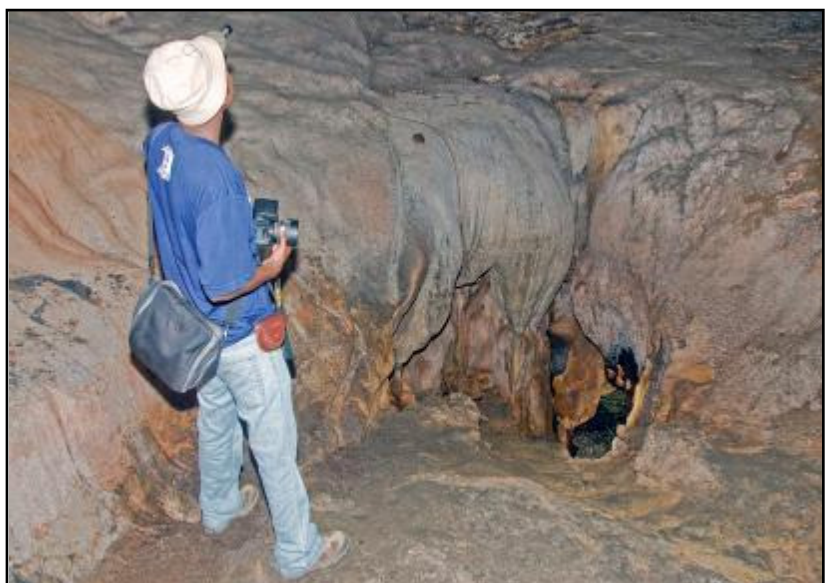
Wearing a Lifejacket may not be helpful either as in some areas the roof of the tunnel is rather low and would have been completely filled with water if there is a heavy downpour in a short time. Overall, the tunnel and its internal valley are still very much in pristine conditions although we did recover some human leftovers such as plastic water bottles and candy wrappers. It would be a good idea if those who organized future trips for visitors refrain from giving out water bottles and candies to avoid potential littering in the cave.

Recce to Gunung Masoorat

- by **Bernard Lee**

Gunung Masoorat is a small hill located to the left of the north bound lane of the PLUS highway south of the Tasek Cement factory beside the railway track. To the west is the Gunung Lang recreational park.

A deep undercut on the south western side of the hill is home to an extensive cave system with multiple entrances and many chambers, estimated about 100m wide and 40m deep in some places. One gets the impression that the hillside is precariously supported by a few strategically placed columns!



Formation in Masoorat

Many unfilled archaeological excavation pits litter part of the cave. More geological features are seen rather than speleothems. A small sinkhole leads to a clear water filled lower chamber fed by dripping water.

The cave is easily accessible, leading to a lot of graffiti. In one chamber on a ledge are 4 miniature heads of human figures, finely crafted in cement and painted, crudely decapitated at the neck and placed in a row. They appear to be similar to the "Datuk" figurines commonly seen at roadside shrines. No prayer paraphernalia are seen around these heads except an old rusty camping gas canister. Evidence of small shrines are seen elsewhere in the cave.

Cave fauna seen include bats and a cave toad. Another unexplored opening is seen on the northeastern side of the hill.

**More
pictures
of the
cave**



Cave News

Historic discovery by NZ cavers

By Andrew Board - The Nelson Mail April 13th, 2010

The discovery of the country's first kilometre-deep cave, south of Nelson, has been hailed as the biggest piece of news in the history of New Zealand caving. The team of three cavers has made the connection between two known caves in the Ellis Basin, on Mt Arthur. Its discovery gives New Zealand its first recorded cave deeper than 1000 metres and could rocket it into the top 10 of deepest caves in the world, said expedition leader Kieran McKay, of Waitomo.

The gruelling journey to link up several caves in the area ended on the last day of the season for the cavers and using the last few metres of their one kilometre worth of rope. While the trio endured beaten bodies, squeezing through tiny holes for up to 30 metres at a time and temperatures as low as two degrees Celsius during the 10-day mission, Mr McKay said it had been generations of cavers who laid the foundation that had led to the momentous occasion. "We finished the project but it was started in the 1960s by cavers who first explored the area and the groundwork that they laid has really helped us. Hundreds of cavers and thousands of hours have been involved in this discovery," he said.

The system went from 775m to 1026m with the discovery and is now one of the top 80 deepest caves in the world. The system is 33.4km long – making it the second longest cave in New Zealand after the Bulmer Cavern on Mt Owen, which is 66km – and comes after extensive work was completed during a nine-person expedition to the area in late January, Mr McKay said.



150 Miles Long and Still Counting - Jewel Cave National Monument Passes a Milestone

by Jim Burnett in National Parks Traveler March 15th, 2010

The second longest cave in the world just got a little larger—at least in terms of the number of miles of surveyed passages. Volunteer cavers have recently mapped new areas at Jewel Cave National Monument which pushed the total known length of the South Dakota cave past the 150-mile mark.

Park officials recently announced the results of recent exploration in Jewel Cave: On February 27th, three groups of volunteer cavers from South Dakota, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, and Utah explored and mapped 3,032.65 feet of passages, bringing the cave's total surveyed length to 150.12 miles. Jewel Cave remains the second longest cave in the world, following Kentucky's Mammoth Cave, which is more than 367 miles in length. Being the first known human to see a section of cave is an exciting idea, but it's also hard work.

This is not a project for those who are inclined to ask, "Are we there yet?"—or anyone who is uncomfortable in tight quarters. Due to its size and complexity, exploring Jewel Cave takes both physical and mental endurance. Experienced cavers travel long distances over slippery rocks, straddle wide crevices, climb over house-sized boulders, and worm their way through tight passages to reach areas that have not yet been explored. During the weekend's survey effort, one group travelled more than five hours into the southeastern portion of the cave before reaching the "leads" that they had come to the park to explore. These cavers were the first people to ever enter these areas, where they found a mixture of crawls and large passages, some of them beautifully decorated with delicate speleothems (cave formations). After creating a detailed map of more than 1,600 feet of the cave, the group emerged on the surface after spending over 20 hours underground.

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See us online at
www.mykarst.org

Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Executive Committee of the Society.

COMING TRIPS

Gunung Masoorat Cave 30th May 2010

Challenge Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Meet at: Gunung Lang Park building at 9am

Gunung Masoorat is a small hill located to the left of the north bound lane of the PLUS highway south of the Tasek Cement factory beside the railway track. To the west is the Gunung Lang recreational park.

A deep undercut on the south western side of the hill is home to an extensive cave system with multiple entrances and many chambers, estimated about 100m wide and 40m deep in some places. One gets the impression that the hillside is precariously supported by a few strategically placed columns!

Call Bernard at 017-5659313 to confirm

Trip to the Lenggong archaeological site July 2010

We are planning a trip to the Lenggong archaeological site in northern Perak to visit the caves and hills in the area. This is the area where the bones of Perak Man and also ancient artefacts were found. We will also visit the archaeological museum there. The trip is planned for sometime in July. Details will be posted in the MKS website(www.mykarst.org) once it is finalised.

Membership Application / Renewal Form

Membership renewal: You are only required to fill in fields indicated by an asterisk (*), unless there is (are) change(s).

Name (*) _____

IC / Passport _____ Membership No (*) _____

Address _____

Post code _____

Tel (O) _____ Tel (H) _____

Tel (H/P) _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

APPLICATION RENEWAL Signature(*) _____

Payment: Cash / Cheque / Bank In (RHB A/C: 2-58066-00001593)

Ordinary Member - subscription RM30.00 per annum (Malaysian citizens / voting member)

Associate Member - subscription RM 20.00 per annum (non-Malaysian citizens / non-voting member)

Life Member - RM500.00 (one single payment)

Mail this page to MKS or fax it to 05-253 5507. Please make cheques payable to Persatuan Karst Malaysia.