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PRESS RELEASE

Head Guide from the 1960s returns to the cave

18th March 2007

HEAD GUIDE - 1

On Tuesday 20th March, Kents Cavern is welcoming back members of staff from the last forty years to see how the visitor facilities have changed. Those visiting worked at the attraction in the 1960s and 1970s when Torquay was enjoying its heyday.

Guest of honour will be Tom Pickersgill, head guide between 1964 and the mid 1980s. Tom will be celebrating his 95th birthday in April this year. He worked for the late Leslie Powe. Leslie Powe is the grandfather of Nick Powe, 5th generation owner and managing director of the attraction today.

Mr Pickersgill says ***“I remember Nick as a young boy. He was always accompanying me around the caves with visitors, tugging at my green guide’s coat if he thought I’d missed something out!”***

Staff who worked with Mr Pickersgill are joining him on Tuesday. This includes the company’s current head gardener, Roy Levy. Roy joined the company in the late 1970s and continues to win awards for the gardens at the caves today.

More follows

HEAD GUIDE - 2

Rolls will be reversed when Nick Powe takes Mr Pickersgill back into the caves on Tuesday. Tom is looking forward to memories of his 20 years guiding coming flooding back. ***“We could have well over 70 people on a tour in the 70s and 80s. Every one was always amazed by what they saw and would listen to our every word. Tours were back to back in those days but we always managed to get everyone to enjoy the famous Kents Cavern ‘black out’! I’m so pleased to see that tours are still guided – it’s the guide who makes the visit so enjoyable.”***

The event has been organised by Mrs Betty Hallam, Leslie Powe’s daughter, who says: ***“I remember when the Entrance Hall was built. My brother John and I, (Nick’s father), were photographed by father sitting on the roof of the newly constructed shop and waiting room in February 1939. That photo is on display at the caves. I’m so pleased to have been able to gather so many of Tom’s work colleagues together. Hearing all the memories and stories from people who worked with my father at the caves is very special to me.”***

Nick Powe added ***“Taking Mr Pickersgill and his colleagues around the caves will be a great opportunity to add to our knowledge about the remarkable social history of the caves. I’ll have to be alert though; Mr Pickersgill may be nearly 95 but he certainly won’t let me miss anything out!”***

NOTES TO NEWS/PICTURE DESK

- 1) The event is taking place between 10am and 1pm on Tuesday 20th March. For further information and to arrange an interview , photography and filming at Kents Cavern, please contact Nick Powe or James Hull on (01803) 215136 or e-mail: caves@kents-cavern.co.uk

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