

The Caves of Saraburi

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Martin Ellis

00. Unknown Amphoe

Tham Chalawan SB0027

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Phra Kaeo SB0094

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Le Pha In SB0096

Dunkley (1995)

01. Amphoe Muang Saraburi

Tham Buddha Susokong Wimarn Kaeo SB0017

Na Phra Lan

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Wat Phra Phutthachai SB0061

47P 0710300 1599100

Ban Phra Phuttachai, Ban Nong Pla Lai

Length: 50m

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Russi SB0062

47P 0710300 1599100

Ban Phra Phuttachai, Ban Nong Pla Lai

Length: 10m

Dunkley (1995)

02. Amphoe Kaeng Khoi

Tham Lumphini Suan Hin/Tham Mathat

SB0019

Tham Lumphini Suan Hin Main Entrance

47P 0731706 1611876

Alt.: 245 m

Tham Mathat Entrance

47P 0731727 1611946

Alt.: 244 m

Tham Lumphini Upper Entrance

47P 0732209 1611771

Alt.: 275 m

Tham Lumphini Suan Hin Stream Entrance

47P 0732234 1611692

Alt.: 253 m

Wat Tham Phra Phothisat, Ban Nam Phu

Length: 2,019m VR: 56m

The Caves of Saraburi

This cave and the three following caves described are all in the same monastery complex to the east of Saraburi town. Take the H2 from Saraburi towards Nakhon Ratchasima. After going through Kaeng Khoi and after passing a large cement works on your left take the U turn bridge and head back the way you came. Then take the first road on the left which goes for a couple of kilometres, past some shops, to a crossroads. Turn left and follow the road east past a monastery (with a cave) at the foot of an isolated hill. The road then trends south and ends at the Wat Tham Phra Phothisat monastery where there is an unusual round temple, the usual temple dogs and lots of monkeys.

The limestone in which the caves are formed is of Early Permian age. Recent studies have placed the limestones at Wat Tham Phra Phothisat in the Phu Phe Formation of the Saraburi Group. The Saraburi Group also contains several other younger limestone units which are exposed to the north and east of Wat Tham Phra Phothisat. These limestones are the southernmost outcrop of Upper Paleozoic carbonates which extend for at least 400 km northwards into Laos. In this area the limestones are exposed as a chain of hills, ridges and mounds to create a classic 'tower karst' scenery. This cave has four entrances and is the longest known cave in the province. Tham Mathat is reached by a good concrete path and steps leading up the hill from the monastery. It has an unlocked gate and a steel ladder down into the cave. The main entrance to Tham Lumphini Suan Hin is not signed and the path up to the entrance is slightly overgrown. This is because some foreigners had to be rescued from the cave a few years ago and access is not encouraged. From the temple follow the main path to Tham Phra Phothisat and Tham Mathat. At a tree with a signpost turn right and cross the stream. Look for a gully after the stream and a path which leads steeply up to the main entrance. The sink entrances are at the other side of the hill and are best reached through the cave.

Tham Mathat is a large fossil passage about 600 m long that ends in a choke. This choke is close to the end of the fossil passage in Tham Lumphini Suan Hin and a connection may be possible. From the steel entrance ladder there are a couple more wooden ladders up and down allowing progress along a boulder filled rift passage to a junction after about 50 m. Daylight is visible to the right and can be reached by scrambling through the boulders to reach the Tham Lumphini Suan Hin main entrance. From this junction going left leads under a boulder and up a wooden ladder and then a fixed chain to a sub-horizontal phreatic passage which ascends gradually. Towards the end a decrepit wooden ladder doesn't help a climb down and then you soon reach the end of the cave where there is a shrine. The air is fresh throughout, but gets noticeably warmer and steamy towards the end. The cave does not have much wildlife, just a few bats and crickets were seen.

Tham Lumphini Suan Hin is a large and impressive stream passage. In the wet season swimming is required in places, but in the dry season it is possible to traverse the cave and keep your feet dry. At the upper end of the cave there is a dry entrance or the stream can be followed through a very wet and unpleasant section to the stream sink. Care should be taken if the cave is explored in the wet season as the cave floods. As well as the rescue mentioned above another group of cavers is known to have had to sit out a flood in this cave.

Tham Lumphini Suan Hin was surveyed by Dean Smart and Phil Oakley in 1998. In December 2003 Tham Mathat was surveyed by the SMCC and linked to Tham Lumphini Suan Hin, though this link had been suspected by Smart.

Vallibhotama (1989), Dunkley (1995), Ellis (2005)

Tham Phra Phothisat

47Q 0731786 1612062 Alt.: 260m

Wat Tham Phra Phothisat, Ban Nam Phu

Length: 150m VR: 3m

The Caves of Saraburi

This cave is a gated shrine, though we found it to be unlocked. A well maintained and signposted (in Thai) path leads from the monastery up the hill to the cave. The cave is famous for the 7th or 8th Century bas-relief carvings from the Dvaravati period which are up on the left as you come through the cave entrance. Below the carvings there is a large shrine and much of the cave has been floored with concrete. The passage to the left leads to a choke, while to the right the passage ends just after a small shaft entrance.

The abbot of the monastery showed us a book in Thai and English on the archaeology of the cave, but unfortunately we didn't note down the details.

Dunkley (1995), Munier (1998), Ellis (2005)

Tham Sa Ngat Chedi

ถ้ำสังคฆเจดีย์

47Q 0731637 1611801 Alt.: 245m

Wat Tham Phra Phothisat, Ban Nam Phu

Length: 30m

To find Tham Sa-Ngat Chedi start by following the path to towards Tham Lumphini Suan Hin from the monastery past the resurgence and stream. At an area with a couple of huts a path contours up the hill to the cave entrance. This is a small gated shrine cave to the south of Tham Lumphini Suan Hin to which we couldn't obtain access. It didn't appear to continue beyond the shrine.

Ellis (2005)

Tham Lumphini Resurgence

47Q 0731695 1611932 Alt.: 193m

Wat Tham Phra Phothisat, Ban Nam Phu

Tham Lek SB0020

47P 0731000 1612000

Wat Tham Phra Phothisat, Ban Nam Phu

Length: 8m

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Russi SB0021

47P 0713000 1611000

Wat Tham Phra Phothisat, Ban Nam Phu

Length: 5m

Dunkley (1995)

Cave SB0023

47P 0719785 1615035

Wat Tham Phra Phothisat, Ban Nam Phu

Dunkley (1995)

The Caves of Saraburi

Khao Tham Cave 1 **SB0029**

47P 0730000 1615100
Khao Tham Ban Phak Santhani

Dunkley (1995)

Khao Tham Cave 2

47P 0730000 1615100
Khao Tham Ban Phak Santhani

Cave **SB0024**

47P 0724398 1614985
Khao Man

Dunkley (1995)

Cave **SB0025**

47P 0727989 1615018
Ban Thai

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Sua **SB0030**

47P 0718200 1606700
Khao Tham Sua, Ban Na Di

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Phra That Charoen Tham **SB0028**

47P 0713300 1612400
Wat Tham Phra That Charoen Tham, Ban Phra Phutthabat Noi

Dunkley (1995)

Cave **SB0048**

47P 0713558 1622265
Ban Nong Chan, Ban Phra Phutthabat Noi

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Wat Phrabat Noi **SB0087**

47P 0711795 1618561
Wat Phrabat Noi, Ban Phra Phutthabat Noi

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Tao **SB0031**

47P 0711731 1625938
Ban Tham Tao, Ban Nong Chan

Dunkley (1995)

The Caves of Saraburi

- Cave** **SB0049**
47P 0726142 1620534
Ban Nong Chan

Dunkley (1995)
- Cave** **SB0082**
47P 0709936 1625922
Ban Nong Chan

Dunkley (1995)
- Cave** **SB0083**
47P 0709936 1625922
Ban Nong Chan

Dunkley (1995)
- Cave** **SB0085**
47P 0711731 1625938
Ban Nong Chan

Dunkley (1995)
- Cave** **SB0086**
47P 0711731 1625938
Ban Nong Chan
Length: 20m

Dunkley (1995)
- Tham Khao Nikhom Thap Kwang** **SB0032**
47P 0729716 1622412
Ban Hin Lap, Ban Thap Kwang

Dunkley (1995)
- Cave** **SB0045**
47P 0726176 1616876
Khao Phra, Ban Thap Kwang

Dunkley (1995)
- Cave** **SB0046**
47P 0726176 1616846
Ban Thap Kwang

Dunkley (1995)
- Cave** **SB0047**
47P 0726176 1616846

The Caves of Saraburi

Ban Thap Kwang

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Rat Kai Yi Sip **SB0091**
47P 0724381 1616829
Ban Thap Kwang

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Nakhon Luang **SB0092**
47P 0724381 1616829
Ban Thap Kwang

Dunkley (1995)

Cave **SB0093**
47P 0724381 1616829
Ban Thap Kwang

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Phra **SB0063**
47P 0716635 1621608
Khao Yai, Ban Tha Sabok

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Pha Mi 1 **SB0039**
47P 0722501 1626034
Ban Tha Sabok

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Pha Mi 2 **SB0040**
47P 0722501 1626034
Ban Tha Sabok

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Phra **SB0041**
47P 0722501 1626034
Ban Tha Sabok

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Tao **SB0042**
47P 0724296 1626050
Ban Tha Sabok

Dunkley (1995)

The Caves of Saraburi

Tham Sa Ad SB0043
47P 0722501 1626034
Ban Tha Sabok

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Sunyataram SB0044
Wat Tham Sunyataram
Length: 3,000m

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Mi SB0057
47P 0725860 1617044
Wat Thep Pitek, Ban Sap Son

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Nam Yoi SB0048
47P 0729768 1616879
Wat Thep Pitek, Ban Sap Son

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Bo Pla

Tham Sam Khao

Tham Thep Prathan

06. Amphoe Ban Mo

Tham Sena SB0060
47P 0685245 1616316
Wat Tham Sena

Dunkley (1995)

09. Amphoe Phra Phutthabat

Tham Sa Nguan SB0072
Wat Tham Sa Nguan

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Kop Kap SB0008

The Caves of Saraburi

47P 0695607 1622114

Khao Phlong, Ban Khao Wong

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Narai **SB0075**

47P 0695607 1622114

Wat Tham Narai, Ban Khao Wong

Length: 50m

Dunkley (1995)

Spring

Ban Nong Khonthi, Ban Khun Khon

Tham Krabok **SB0009**

47P 0695577 1625802

Wat Tham Krabok, Ban Kun Khon

Length: 90m

The wat is very well known for the treatment of drug addiction and became a camp for tens of thousands of Lao Hmong refugees.

Dunkley (1995), Buckley (2002)

Tham Maha Sanuk **SB0007**

47P 0690207 1623916

Ban Nong Khonthi, Ban Khun Khon

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Prathun **SB0002**

47P 0693811 1622100

Ban Nong Khonthi, Ban Khun Khon

Length: 40m

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Wiman Chak **SB0004**

Ban Nong Khonthi, Ban Khun Khon

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Lokaten **SB0077**

47P 0690207 1623916

Wat Kalaya, Ban Nong Khonthi, Ban Khun Khon

Dunkley (1995)

Bo Phran Lang Nua

The Caves of Saraburi

Wat Phra Phutthabat

Tham Kinnon SB0003
Phra Phutthabat
Length: 75m VR: 12m

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Rakong SB0005
Phra Phutthabat

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Phra That SB0006
Phra Phutthabat

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Thep Nimit Than Thong Daeng
Wat Phu Kham Ban Phot, Ban Phu Kham Chanv

Tham Singkhon SB0078
47P 0690207 1623916
Wat Kalaya, Ban Nong Khonthi, Ban Khun Khon

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Russi SB0079
47P 0690207 1623916
Wat Kalaya, Ban Nong Khonthi, Ban Khun Khon

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Ho Yaan SB0071
Wat Tham Ho Yaan, Nam Nong Chan

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Kuha SB0001
Wat Tham Kuha, Ban Nong Tham

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Khao Prathun SB0010
47P 0697327 1631349
Ban Phu Sang

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Narai SB0016
47P 0699151 1627675
Khao Wong, Ban Saphan Khao

The Caves of Saraburi

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Thep Satit SB0074
Wat Tham Thep Satit

Dunkley (1995)

Cave SB0073

Dunkley (1995)

Cave SB0081

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Yo SB0076
47P 0690207 1623916
Ban Nong Khonthi, Ban Khun Khon

Dunkley (1995)

11. Amphoe Muak Lek

Tham Saphan Hin SB0034
47P 0731546 1618740
Ban Saphan Hin
Length: 10m

Dunkley (1995)

Cave SB0035
47P 0731546 1618740
Ban Saphan Hin
Length: 10m

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Yai SB0036
47P 0731546 1618740
Ban Saphan Hin

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Yot SB.11004
47P 0731546 1618740
Ban Saphan Hin
COT SB37

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Dao Khao Kaeo SB0038

The Caves of Saraburi

Khao Kaeo, Ban Phaya Klang
Length: 450m

This is a well known cave in the area and is sign posted with the blue tourist information signs. There is a large wat at the base of the hill and 150 steps lead up to the gated entrance. Inside the entrance the cave is a 7m wide and 5m high subhorizontal phreatic passage that soon reaches a large shrine. It is necessary to remove your footwear to cross the tiled area. The passage continues with the same dimensions with some large formations and a few small shrines. After 200m the cave closes down. A small draughting passage on the left can be crawled through into a large chamber. To the right the cave continues for around 100m to where it closes down. To the right leads to another very large shrine and a large collapse entrance. There are a couple of short passages off this chamber. Concrete steps lead up the breakdown to the exit. This impressive cave is well worth a visit.

Dunkley (1995)

Cave **SB0050**
47P 0736933 1618792
Muak Lek

Dunkley (1995)

Cave **SB0051**
47P 0736933 1618792
Muak Lek

Dunkley (1995)

Cave **SB0052**
47P 0736933 1618792
Muak Lek

Dunkley (1995)

Cave **SB0053**
47P 0736933 1618792
Muak Lek

Dunkley (1995)

Cave **SB0054**
47P 0736933 1618792
Muak Lek

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Song Phi Nong **SB0055**
47P 0735138 1618775
Muak Lek
Length: 85m

Dunkley (1995)

The Caves of Saraburi

Tham Sam Phi Nong SB0056
47P 0735155 1616930
Muak Lek

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Luk Tho SB0088
47P 0735138 1618775
Muak Lek

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Sokothao SB0059
47P 0729751 1618723
Ban Sap Son

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Nattana SB0089
47P 0727903 1624240
Ban Khwao

Dunkley (1995)

Cave SB0090
47P 0727903 1624240
Ban Khwao

Dunkley (1995)

13. Amphoe Chaloe Phra Kiat

Tham Si Wilai SB0011
47P 0701700 1624600
Wat Tham Si Wilai, Ban Na Phra Lan

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Kuha Sisatchanalai SB0012
47P 0699151 1627675
Wat Tham Si Wilai, Ban Na Phra Lan

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Narok SB0013
47P 0699151 1627675
Wat Tham Si Wilai, Ban Na Phra Lan

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Tien SB0014

The Caves of Saraburi

47P 0699151 1627675

Wat Tham Si Wilai, Ban Na Phra Lan

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Maklua **SB0015**

47P 0699151 1627675

Wat Tham Si Wilai, Ban Na Phra Lan

Dunkley (1995)

Tham Benchakhiri **SB0080**

47P 0706315 1629580

Wat Tham Benchakhirir, Khao Khieo

Length: 10m

Dunkley (1995)

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Index

Bo Phran Lang Nua.....	8	Tham Phra Kaeo.....	1
Khao Tham Cave 1.....	3	Tham Phra Phothisat.....	2
Khao Tham Cave 2.....	4	Tham Phra That.....	9
Tham Benchakhiri.....	13	Tham Phra That Charoen Tham.....	4
Tham Bo Pla.....	7	Tham Prathun.....	8
Tham Buddha Susokong Wimam Kaeo.....	1	Tham Rakong.....	9
Tham Chalawan.....	1	Tham Rat Kai Yi Sip.....	6
Tham Dao Khao Kaeo.....	10	Tham Russi.....	1, 3, 9
Tham Ho Yaan.....	9	Tham Sa Ad.....	6
Tham Khao Nikhom Thap Kwang.....	5	Tham Sa Ngat Chedi.....	3
Tham Khao Prathun.....	9	Tham Sa Nguan.....	7
Tham Kinnon.....	8	Tham Sam Khao.....	7
Tham Kop Kap.....	7	Tham Sam Phi Nong.....	11
Tham Krabok.....	8	Tham Saphan Hin.....	10
Tham Kuha.....	9	Tham Sena.....	7
Tham Kuha Sisatchanalai.....	12	Tham Si Wilai.....	12
Tham Le Pha In.....	1	Tham Singkhon.....	9
Tham Lek.....	3	Tham Sokothao.....	12
Tham Lokaten.....	8	Tham Song Phi Nong.....	11
Tham Luk Tho.....	12	Tham Sua.....	4
Tham Lumphini Resurgence.....	3	Tham Sunyataram.....	7
Tham Lumphini Suan Hin/Tham Mathat.....	1	Tham Tao.....	4, 6
Tham Maha Sanuk.....	8	Tham Thep Nimit Than Thong Daeng.....	9
Tham Maklua.....	13	Tham Thep Prathan.....	7
Tham Mi.....	7	Tham Thep Satit.....	10
Tham Nakhon Luang.....	6	Tham Tien.....	12
Tham Nam Yoi.....	7	Tham Wat Phra Phutthachai.....	1
Tham Narai.....	8, 9	Tham Wat Phrabat Noi.....	4
Tham Narok.....	12	Tham Wiman Chak.....	8
Tham Nattana.....	12	Tham Yai.....	10
Tham Pha Mi 1.....	6	Tham Yo.....	10
Tham Pha Mi 2.....	6	Tham Yot.....	10
Tham Phra.....	6		