



year. They consist of four separate levels of which only the first (the lower) and third are visited. The shapes and colour of the various lava strata are unusual and full of interest. Rock stairways and narrow passages lead to a large gallery known as El Refugio which was the main hide-out for the local population when pirates attacked the island.

**Yehudi Menuhin (1970s)
Brian Eno (1980s)**

Directly below is an auditorium used as a theatre for concerts by small ensembles from time to time. In the mid 1970s the famous classical musician/conductor Yehudi Menuhin tuned up his violin during a private visit to the caves whilst on holiday on the island. He was accompanied by his sister Hepzibah who said afterwards that the acoustics were perfect throughout the hall. British artist Brian Eno exhibited specially composed video installations in several parts of the cave over a two week period in 1989.



**Eco System Research
*by Horst Wilkens**

Professor Horst Wilkens of Hamburg University has conducted studies of two Lanzarote eco systems, Jameos del Agua and the Atlantida Tunnel. He was been combining holidays with natural history research on the island since

A concert hall in the interior of the Green Caves which has been the scenario for a rehearsal by world famous violinist Yehudi Menuhin in the 1970s as well as a video installation by artist composer Brian Eno in the 1980s. Performances also take place in this theatre during the Lanzarote Audio Visual Festival directed by Ildefonso Aguilar and the annual Canarias Festival of Classical Music

PRIME INSURANCE COMPANY

**GENERAL INSURANCES
FOR ALL YOUR NEEDS**

Contact Emily Simkins
Avenida Islas Canarias - C.C. Los Charcos Local 7
Opposite post office - Costa Teguise
Tel: 928 59 06 23 Fax: 928 34 64 92 - mobile: 696 779 836
primeinsurance@arrakis.es

**ASESORIA EUROPA
BEN E. SIMKINS**

*At last Telefónica has
installed our phone!!*

Tel: 928 83 41 07 - Fax: 928 52 43 83
Mobile: 660 309 797
e-mail simkins@arrakis.es



1973, his work focusing on the evolution of cave dwelling animals and speciation processes. His knowledge of Lanzarote's fauna and flora acquired over three decades form the basis for a nature guide recently published,

(Details of the work follow this excerpt).

In the chapters devoted to the Green Caves, Wilkens writes,

'A particularly large caved-in area lies slightly hidden north of the road leading to the Cueva de los Verdes. It reveals the enormous size of the lava tunnel, as well as giving an impression of the thickness and layering of the tunnel ceiling. The accumulations of rubble at the base of the tunnel are overgrown by the plants typical of the lava field. This site is a breeding area for rock dove, kestrel and barn owl.'

'Situated closer to the shore is the collapsed area that forms the entrance to Cueva de los Verdes tourist centre. This section of the tunnel is famous for its clear examples of the typical galleries, as well as the multitude of geological phenomena relating to its origination.'

Ends 50mts Below Sea Level

'For the most part the Atlantida lava tunnel is dusty dry. Closer to the coast, however, it falls below groundwater level.

Here, two *jameos*, *Jameo Grande* and *Jameo Chico* (both appear in the map) lie closely together, leading directly into the flooded part of the tunnel which forms part of Jameos del Agua Tourist Centre. Beyond, the Atlantida Tunnel is completely submerged in seawater extending to a length of 1,400 mts and at its end lies 50 mts below sea level. As has been discovered by cave divers, it ends blind, and is only connected with the sea through tiny openings.'

* *Lanzarote, Blind Crabs, Hoopoes and Volcanoes* by Horst Wilkens is on sale at the Cabildo Tourist Centres or at: Ulrike.Srecker@tiscali.de

Visits in the 1800s

Although the caves only opened to the public at the beginning of the 1960s they had already been visited by natural historians for well over 100 years. These intrepid travellers carried lanterns and used ropes to gain access to the various galleries. In her work, *Tenerife and Her Six Satellites*, (London, 1887), English author Olivia Stone quotes the following description of the interior by German scientist Herr von Fritsch following a visit earlier in the century. (See sketch page 31).

'Cavities lead into the high vaulted subterranean galleries of the great Cueva de los Verdes.

These galleries are piled one above the other like storeys. Where even the roofs of these natural tunnels (they are masses of lava, usually as much as a metre in thickness) are broken it is possible to climb up from one gallery to another or else to descend from one to another by rope.'

'In most places the height of the galleries exceeds 10 metres and their breadth in the middle is about 8 metres. In some places the roof is very low, or the side walls almost meet, making it very difficult, if not impossible, to proceed, as is the case on the lowest level. The side walls either rise straight up to the vaulted roof or else resemble a staircase turned upside down.'

'In many places regular tables of lava may be seen on the floor of the cave, at a little distance from the wall. They lie in rows, elsewhere the floor is formed by slabs or covered by pieces of slag, or with great lumps that have fallen from the roof. The natural tunnels are formed with a marvellous regularity for long distances. In one place we walked along almost straight galleries for six and eight hundred paces, rather more than a kilometre. The cave is **incontestably the largest lava grotto that is known.**' (Lancelot italics, Ed).



PRIVATE SECURITY FIRM

Established 1983

Registered Policy No. 2762

***Welcome to our world of security
at the market leader on Lanzarote***

Monitored
Police
Response
via Central
Receiver

Installation of comprehensive security systems - CCTV and Hidden Cameras
Safes - Fireproofing - Fireproof Doors - Steel-Plated Doors
Laminated car windows for sunlight protection

FERLANZA: C/Aragon No. 28 Arrecife -Tels: 928 815 155 928 824 860 902 365 823 Fax: 928 813 416
Park on Via Medular - past clinic under construction, second building on left in C/ Aragon, a one way street.