

SOME RECOLLECTIONS of ELERY

Greg Middleton

I believe I first met Elery Hamilton-Smith at the 7th A.S.F. Conference at Goolwa, South Australia on 26 December 1968. Of course I knew of him before that but as a caver with SSS based in Sydney I hadn't had a chance to meet him. I met Grant Gartrell, Henry Shannon and Mike Burke at the same time – it was a most interesting and informative conference.

I believe I next ran into Elery at a meeting of ASF's NSW Coordination Committee held at Bob Hawkins' place in Sydney on 30 March 1969. Elery was very active in the running of the Federation at that time.

YARRANGOBILLY

In December 1969 I was fortunate to get a vacation job as a guide at Yarrangobilly Caves. One of the tasks we 'Seasonal Rangers' were asked to do was put together a display in Leo Hoad's former house, which had been designated as the 'Visitor Centre' (which it continues to be in 2015). Going through the files I came across letters Elery had written in 1966-67 to the former Ranger-in-Charge, Don Roy, offering to help set up displays for visitors. Accordingly I drafted a formal letter to go through official channels, taking up the offer but I must have thought I knew Elery well enough by that time to send him a personal letter, giving a few more details of what I had in mind. I even went so far as to invite him to visit if he had the time. In typical Elery fashion he found the time, arriving on 2 January. He provided preserved specimens of fauna collected at Yarrangobilly and photographs of others, as well as information on all material that had been collected at the caves – and collected some more while he was there. How many others in his position would have so readily lent a hand?

Writing to the Kosciusko National Park Superintendent following his visit, Elery noted he had "suggested to Mr Heilbron [the then Ranger-in-Charge] that the Grotto Cave should continue to be locked. This cave has the most prolific fauna of any cave I have yet visited in the area and would lend itself to use for research purposes. Accordingly, its preservation and protection from littering or pollution of any kind is most desirable, even though it has little other interest or value." This worthwhile suggestion was taken seriously and the Grotto Cave continues to be set aside for biological research, over 45 years later.

In a follow-up letter on 12 January 1970, Elery provided more weta photos – pointing out that they should be displayed with the animal upside-down, not just because that was how they were when the photos were

taken, but because that is how visitors are most likely to see them. In a PS he added: "Am hard at work at present on a paper on insects of Mount Etna as the Queensland Conservation Committee is about to publish a booklet on the area. It is tough writing such a paper when there is so little material. I find my one day of collecting in one cave had produced about one third of the known material; SSS stop-overs [Gleniss Wellings] in one cave en route to Chillagoe has produced another third and all the rest of the collecting, the remaining one third!"

Our correspondence continued after that; I sent him cave invertebrates I collected at Yarrangobilly and subsequently at Tuglow and Colong – he responded with identifications.

I continued to work at Yarrangobilly during university holidays and was involved in the conversion of the Glory Hole Cave to the country's first self-guided cave. Elery followed these developments with interest and on 6 March 1971 he visited Yarrangobilly with his wife, Jean, her sister, Roy Skinner, Chief Guide at Hastings Caves, Tasmania, and his wife, Pam, to inspect the new installations (which included tape recorded interpretative messages, though there were lots of problems with these). On 7 March I conducted Elery and party through the River Cave and Elery collected a number of beetles and other insects. On 10-11 April I was caving with Elery and Joe Jennings at Cooleman Plain. On 12 April, Elery and Jean were back at the Glory Hole Cave which had by then opened to the public. On 13 April, we visited Tricketts Cave where Elery again collected insects.

AUSTRALIAN SPELEO ABSTRACTS

In July 1970 I wrote to Elery, floating the idea of Australian Speleo Abstracts – and asking him would he contribute biospeleological material. He responded immediately and enthusiastically supporting the idea. "I would be glad to help if it does go ahead. I am a little pessimistic about the response, but feel it would be invaluable. Will give any help I can and it would be relatively easy to do biospeleo abstracts for you". Elery's input and support had significant influence on the format and content of the publication. True to his word, Elery contributed biospeleological abstracts for the next ten years, to all the regular issues of the publication. Publication of ASA by SSS, supported by ASF, was agreed to at the Hobart ASF Conference in December 1970.

ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM, MULU, MALAYSIA, MAY 2001

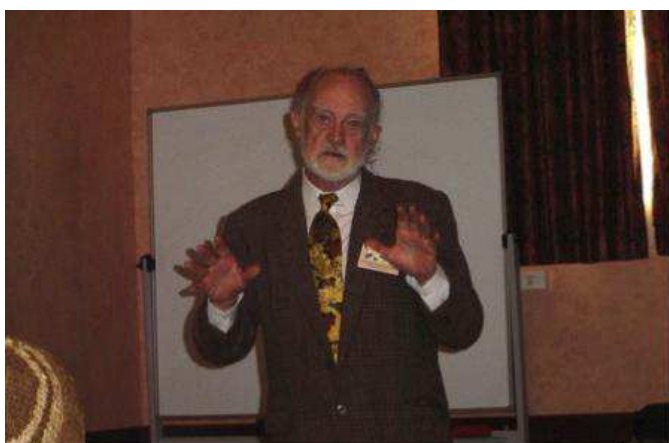
Through his influence in IUCN Elery was able to pull together a one-off Asia-Pacific Forum on Karst Ecosystems and World Heritage at Gunung Mulu National Park, Sarawak 26-30 May 2001. I was fortunate enough to score an invitation. The meeting brought together 70 leaders in karst management and assessment from the region and was successful in significantly raising the profile of karst as an important element for World Heritage protection in the region.



*Elery making a presentation at the 2001 Mulu Forum
Photo: Greg Middleton*

LIMESTONE COAST 2004

In October 2004 Elery was instrumental in organising the closing workshop of IGCP 448 on Global Karst Correlation and the First International Workshop on RAMSAR Subterranean Wetlands at Naracoorte Caves. In his address to the meeting he emphasised the value and importance of World Heritage as a mechanism for protection and management.



*Elery addressing the "Limestone Coast 2004" conference
on World Heritage.
Photo: Greg Middleton*

KARST MANAGEMENT COURSE

Elery did an amazing job of setting up a specialist Karst Management course at Charles Sturt University. I enrolled in it in 2004, initially as a Graduate Diploma but later converted this to a Masters. Elery took a personal interest in the students enrolled in the course and was always very encouraging. Most of the work was done by "distance education" so there was very little face-to-face lecturing, except at residential schools. I attended one of these at Wombeyan in 2005; Ken Grimes did most of the field work but Elery delivered a few lectures and ran some workshops. Throughout the course Elery was always available to assist students and on a number of occasions he made publications available to me from his personal library which, for karst-related material, was probably unparalleled in the Southern Hemisphere.

Unfortunately the course did not attract the level of support Elery had hoped to gain from the South-East Asia region and the courses gradually shut down from about 2008. I was fortunate to be able to complete the Masters Course and secure the degree in 2009, the only student, I believe, to do so. Elery was not pleased when my absence in Madagascar prevented my attendance in person at the graduation ceremony.



*Elery lecturing, Wombeyan Caves, September 2005
Photo: Greg Middleton*

Joyita AGAIN IN TROUBLE

Australian Associated Press-Rouer

SUVA, January 8.

70-ton diesel-engined trading vessel Joyita, 1955 was found adrift in the Pacific without a crew, and is in trouble again.

increase the buoyancy of the Joyita in preparation for an effort to refloat her. The Kadavulevu will leave Levuka to arrive at Horseshoe Reef at first light tomorrow.

The present danger is that the Joyita may slip off the reef into deep water during the night and sink.

When she was recently refitted her owners removed insulation cork which had previously given her buoyancy, preventing her sinking on her ill-fated voyage in 1955.

Rescue Of Ship's Crew

SYDNEY, Jan. 8.—The French naval repair ship Vulcan had taken off 27 members of the crew of the freighter San Antonio, which has been aground since Sunday on a reef off the north-west coast of New Caledonia.

Messages received in Sydney by the ship's agents, John Manners and Co Ltd, have not yet made it clear whether the captain, four officers and four other crew members have also been taken off.

These messages said the ship was breaking up and had been written off by Lloyd's of London as a total loss.

The San Antonio (3,702 tons) met heavy seas and ran aground in a cyclone.

SCRAP IRON

She was on her way from NZ to Japan with a load of scrap iron.

A message from the San Antonio, relayed by Nou-

mea Radio at 11.30 a.m., said the ship was a total wreck and was breaking up.

Two Die In S.A. Accidents

A 66-year-old man was fatally injured in a suburban road accident late last night, and the death was also reported yesterday of a young motor cyclist on Kangaroo Island on Monday night.

The man, Alfred Bolland, of Athol avenue, Blair Athol, was struck by a car on Prospect road, Prospect Extension.

He was taken to the Royal Adelaide Hospital in a St. John ambulance, but was dead on arrival.

The driver of the car was Joseph Lyon, 20, brick-layer, of Tyne avenue, Kilburn.

Constables J. H. Phillips, M. Schulse, and J. L. McCall, are preparing a report for the City Coroner (Mr T. E. Cleland).

Found On Road

The motor cyclist, Robert George Pitt, 17, of Kingscote, was found dead beside his damaged machine in Murray street, Kingscote.

Police said that while riding home the rear tyre blew out and Pitt was apparently thrown to the roadway and sustained severe head injuries.

His body was found by a motorist.



RELICS 8,000 YEARS OLD

From A Staff Reporter
By Portable Radio From Eucla
CEDUNA, Jan. 8.

The oldest signs of human life on the Australian continent may be unearthed on the Nullarbor Plain when finds by the Nullarbor caves expedition are followed up.

Indications of aboriginal life on the plain at least 8,000 years ago were found yesterday in the Koonalda caves, 64 miles east of Eucla.

Late last week, Dr. A. Gallus discovered an old aboriginal fireplace in the cave, about 200 ft. below the surface.

Dr. Gallus continued digging on the site this week and discovered five levels of aboriginal activity, the lowest one at least 8,000 years old.

Lack of time prevented Dr. Gallus from digging further, but 20 members of the expedition who will stay on the plain for another week may do further work on the spot.

The oldest known aboriginal skull in Australia found at Keller, near Melbourne, is about 10,000 years old.

Some native tools from an earlier period have been found but cannot be accurately dated.

Dr. Gallus said today he hoped that implements of an even greater age — perhaps 15,000 years old — might be found by digging to bedrock at the site of the Koonalda fireplace.

He discovered a variety of stone tools at the site, including chippers and scrapers and hand axes, some of them unfinished.

Dr. Gallus said the aborigines had obviously used the cave as a quarry and the fireplace as a site for making their implements.

Handprints

Another discovery was made by the expedition at the Aburakurrie cave, about 40 miles north of Eucla.

Explorers found handprints in red ochre of the same type as those in the Murawidnie cave near Nullarbor homestead.

Today 42 members of expedition will begin their homeward journey with a short "Cook's Tour" of some of the better known Nullarbor caves.

They are scheduled to arrive in Adelaide on Sunday.

MATTRESSES REMADE
Same Day Service
Le Cornu's, M9427 (5 lines)
(Adv.)

Writes of—

TYRANTS AND KINGS

The clash of Roundhead and Cavalier in England's struggle for civil liberties in the 17th century, and the salient facts which distinguished this typical English Revolution from all others, are a favorite theme of the second volume of Winston Churchill's "The History of the English-Speaking People" which will begin in "The Advertiser" on Saturday.

Other far-reaching events of the 16th and 17th centuries are the adoption of the Protestant faith by England and Scotland, the lively period of sea expansion, including the defeat of the Spanish Armada under Elizabeth, and the discovery and settlement of the new Continent of America.

The Reformation, the Continental Renaissance and the Restoration of the Monarchy all belong to this period, which Churchill has called "The New World" under his general title of "A History of the English Speaking People."

CROMWELL

Much of Sir Winston Churchill's own style and personality permeates his writing as, for instance, his comment when Cromwell smote the Scots at Dunbar.

"Both sides confidently appealed to Jehovah; and the Most High, finding so little to choose between them in faith and zeal, must have allowed purely military factors to prevail."

Saturday's instalment in "The Advertiser" begins with the accession of Henry VIII and that monarch's frantic search for a wife who would bear him a male heir.

ON OTHER PAGES

	Page
Amusements	14
Cables in Brief	4
Country Section	6
Crossword	6
Finance	8
Index Classified Ads.	22
Letters to The Editor	4
Postal	14
Racing	12
Radio Programmes	22
Shipping	9
Social	11
Sporting	13, 15
To Correspondents	15
Vox	4
Weather Map	9
TODAY'S FEATURES:	
Building	10
Garden	10
Home Section	10
Handyman	10
Marian March	11

Stranded When Police Take "Stolen" Car

A farmer's suspicions led to a rabbiting party being stranded in the scrub 10 miles from Strathalbyn on Monday after police had removed their car.

The car belonged to Mr. John Fabri, of Gilbert street, city, who was accompanied by two other men and two boys, aged 14 and 12.

The men went into the scrub, with ferrets and left the boys in the front seat of the car.

A local farmer became

Ask for LIMA, the latest Fruit Drink by HALL'S.
(Adv.)

suspicious when he saw the boys in the car and phoned the Strathalbyn police.

The boys left the car before the police arrived.

As they could not find anyone in the area, the police believed the car had been abandoned and drove it to Strathalbyn police station.

Early in the afternoon the party returned and, as they could not find the car, phoned the Strathalbyn police from a farmhouse.

On giving the car's registration number, the police told the owner that his car was at the station and the party were driven

to Strathalbyn by the farmer.

Meanwhile, in Adelaide, police were calling at Mr. Fabri's home to check the ownership of the car and whether it had been reported stolen.

The father of one of the boys saw the police at the house and was told only that they were calling in connection with Mr. Fabri's car.

Fearing that the party had been involved in an accident, the boy's father went to police headquarters.

A phone call to the Strathalbyn police ended the "comedy of errors."

Elery on the Nullarbor, Jan. 1957 - interestingly captioned