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FRONT COVER: Resurrection Cave, Mt Etna, Queensland. **Photo:** Ross Anderson

INSIDE BACK COVER: Cave Guides' Workshop 2016. **PHOTO:** Steve Bourne

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EDITORIAL

Steve Bourne

This journal is largely a report of the Cave Guides' Workshop and ACKMA AGM held in Rockhampton in May 2016. I have endeavoured to provide a summary of the week's proceedings, complemented by excellent contributions from several who attended the Guides' Workshop. You will read plenty about the workshop and its content, and I was very pleased when John Pastorelli, of Ochre Interpretation, allowed me to reproduce one of his interpretation papers. I enjoyed the content of his paper, particularly as many of the key messages he puts forward in it are reiterated within the guides' reports.

The AGM had some great discussion on interpretation and supporting guides, and it was pleasing to see guides taking a lead role as well. It seemed that a group of staff across four sites had collaborated (conspired?) to visit multiple cave sites across three states - an approach I thoroughly endorse! Don't wait for it to happen - make it happen.

Apart from the Rockhampton reports and interpretation paper, Elizabeth Reed has provided a paper on a mystery photographer at Naracoorte Caves. Solving this mystery eluded Elery Hamilton-Smith for many years, and I am sure he would have enjoyed this read.

A major item of discussion at the AGM and committee meeting was the cost of the journal. It is our major expenditure for the year and production costs are exceeding income from membership. Of concern is the large number of non financial members. ACKMA cannot afford to carry the burden any longer, so if members are not financial after one journal into the new financial year, you won't receive another. Of course we all forget whether our membership is up to date. Those who are behind will receive a reminder with this journal or via email and I encourage you to keep your membership current. At last I have a nice collection of material for future journals with some real quality to be enjoyed. You will notice some changes with the look of the journal too. There is less white space, tabs on the top of the page are gone, margins slightly reduced, a smaller font and reduced line spacings. I trust that it is still readable (I need glasses anyway to read it!) and that members like the new look. The journal will be reduced to 28-32 pages, but with these refinements, will have only marginally less reading enjoyment.

Other small changes include not providing photo credits for all images. Readers can assume images within an article are the work of the author and images within editorial reports are my work. I received a good selection of images from Rockhampton which have improved the offering in this journal, especially two stunning images by Ross Anderson of Resurrection Cave at Rockhampton, one of which adorns the front cover.

I have managed to see quite a few caves since the March journal; Tasmania where I attended the Australasian Bat Society Conference and then visited caves from south to north across the island, Rockhampton of course, and quite a few sites across my local region assisting with cave cricket research. More of this in a future journal.

I look forward to receiving your feedback on this journal and articles for future editions.



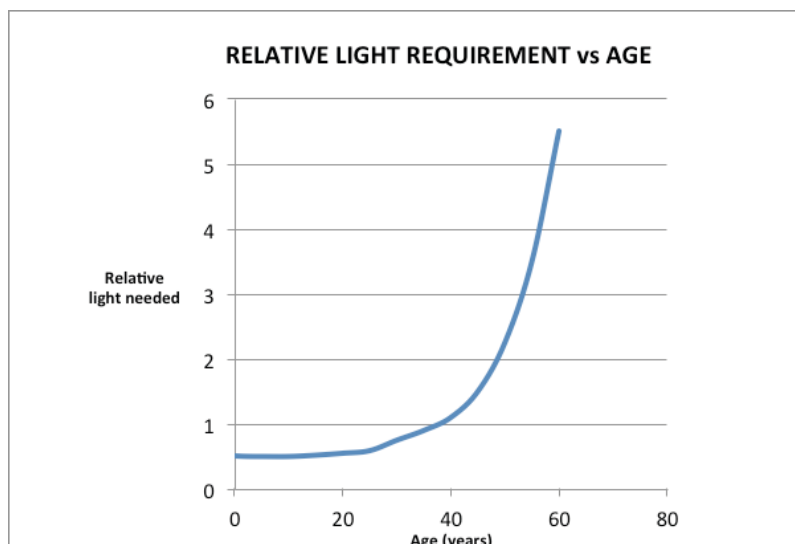
*Emmi Scherlies (left) and Perry Blasely-Hall catching cave crickets. Emmi is undertaking her PhD on the southern bentwing bats and Perry is looking at genetic variation across a geographic range in the cave cricket *Novatettix naracoortensis*. We had great success locating many crickets and expanding the current known range.*

ANDYSEZ 11¹ THE NEED FOR LIGHT

Just a note for all those lighting caves and guiding older ladies and gentlemen – such as myself through caves (some may well dispute my using the title 'gentleman' to include me?) – the need for more light increases very dramatically with age.

The following is derived from information that Neil Kell (former Yarrangobilly Caves manager) turned up many years ago. The graph below shows the relationship between age and the relative need for light. The need for light increases significantly with age about 40. Double the amount needed than that at age 20. By 60, three to four times more light is needed than at age 20 to carry out the same work or see the cave floor, steps etc.

¹Please note that there are ANDYSEZs with higher numbers and gaps below the higher numbers – confusion arising from miscommunications between Kent and I years ago. I will try and fill the gaps to avoid more confusion in the future. The ANDYSEZs are not time-dependant so this should not be an issue.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dale Calnin

It was an absolute thrill for me to attend the recent Guides' School and ACKMA AGM at Capricorn Caves in early May 2016.

To catch up with the ACKMA family is always a special time; the pleasure of renewing old friendships and the reward of fostering new acquaintances.

It was indeed a memorable time spent in which I have received nothing but praise and complimentary feedback and I have no doubt this journal will be packed with accolades from those who attended about the wonderful time experienced at Capricorn Caves

On behalf of ACKMA I would like to thank and congratulate Ann Augusteyn and her fabulous team for their warm and inviting hospitality on hosting such a delightful event.

To run a successful business operation you must have a great team and Ann certainly has something that is quite special. You can clearly see why they have been so successful in winning a number of tourism awards.

The Guides' School provided a couple of days of pure enjoyment and entertainment, together with the introduction of a number of new faces. Amidst the enthusiasm, fresh ideas and laughter, I found myself thinking on a number of occasions "Am I looking at the future of ACKMA?"

The week only got better as the weekend approached with the arrival of ACKMA members from various locations in

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful contribution, leadership and guidance of our past president Dan Cove. Likewise to our outgoing Treasurer Grant Gartrell and Executive Officer Dave Smith, who we thank for their tireless contributions over an extended period of time.

As for my election as the ACKMA President, I say it is an honour and a privilege. It is something that is certainly out of my comfort zone preferring normally to "sit at the back of the bus" and let someone else take on the responsibility. But after reflecting on the enormous contributions that others have made, I thought it was time to at least take my turn.

The good news is that Dan will remain on the committee in his new position of Executive Officer with Cath Loder who now takes on the important role of Treasurer.

I look forward to working with them and the rest of the committee as we continue to move ACKMA forward as an active and relevant organisation.

To finalise the good work achieved by the ACKMA committee in our business and administration systems, will make us stronger and allow us to focus more on the planning and management of Cave and Karst. The road ahead will provide many challenges as we continue to maintain our leadership position in advocating strong conservation values, building public support and awareness.

Our show cave operations face testing times and therefore it is important we work with our government departments and agencies to help influence positive change rather than passive reaction to it.

I am encouraged by the energy and passion shown at Capricorn Caves and therefore confident the next few years will be positive for our organisation.

I am looking forward very much to seeing you all again at our next ACKMA AGM at Te Anau, New Zealand in May 2017.



*L-R. Anita Eddison, Ian Edison, Ted Matthews, Dianne Vavryn, president Dale Calnin and Tom Shortt, during the Caves Guide's School.
Photo: Steve Bourne*

Australasia for the Annual General Meeting. It was fantastic to see a number of "old faces" we had not seen for a while, who remain very important to our organisation.

This was the first ACKMA gathering since the sad passing of our friend Elery Hamilton-Smith consequently there were a number of fitting tributes that flowed for 'the father of ACKMA' and to someone who made us so much richer for having known him.

At the Annual General Meeting we saw a changing of the guard in our Executive Committee with positions of President, Executive Officer and Treasurer all renewed.



*Ann Augusteyn addressing the Cave Guides' School. We all experienced the "Magic of Capricorn Caves".
Photo: Steve Bourne*

THE MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPHER AND THE UNKNOWN ENGRAVING: NEW INFORMATION ON THE FIRST PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE NARACOORTE CAVES.

Elizabeth Reed

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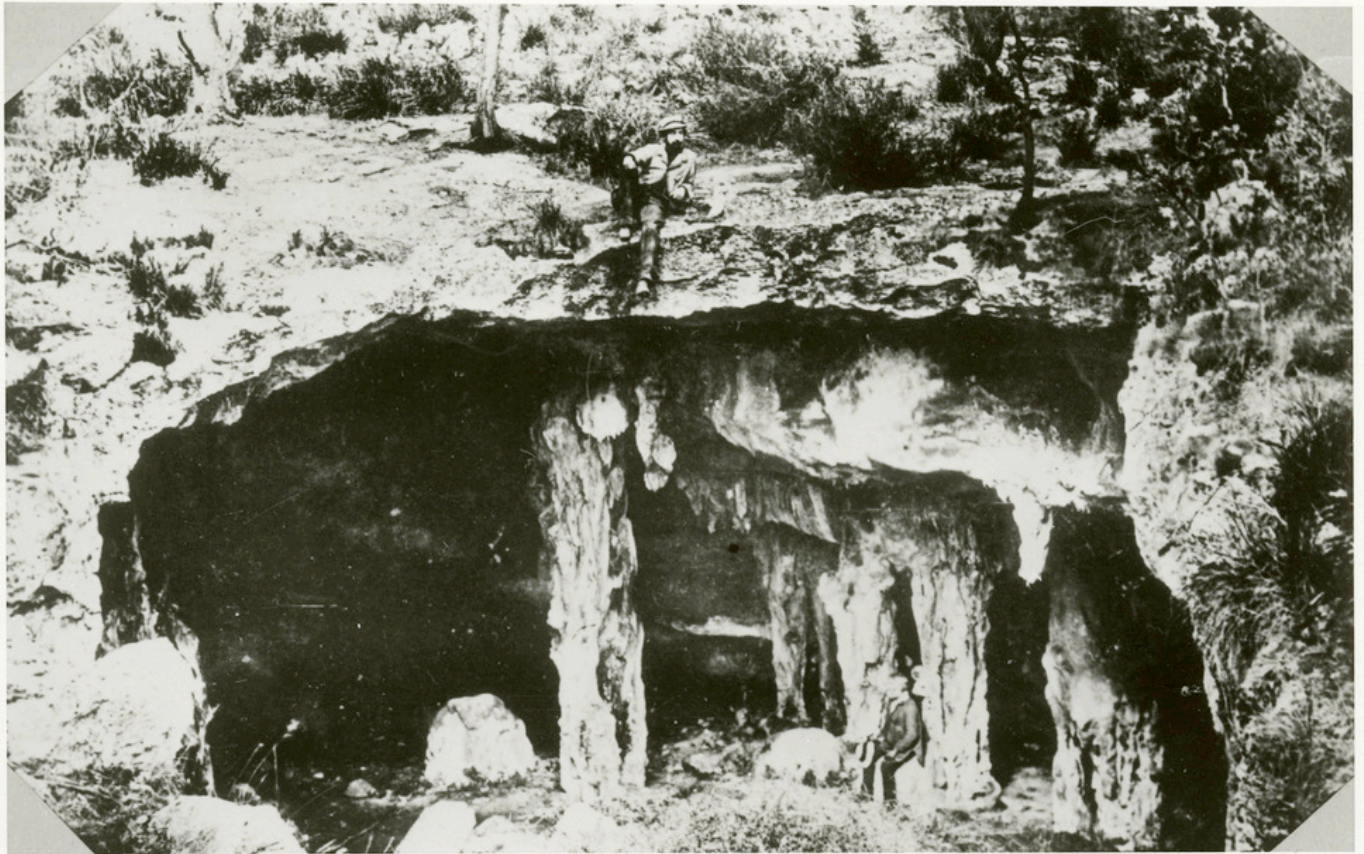


Figure 1. Blanche Cave, 1860, photographer Thomas Hannay. Julian Tenison-Woods figured (State Library of South Australia, B36858).

The 'early' photographers: 1860 to 1880

The caves of Naracoorte have been popular photographic subjects for well over a century (Hamilton-Smith, 1986, 1997a; Reed & Bourne, 2013). The work of several photographers was reproduced for tourist postcards and stereo-views (Hamilton-Smith, 1997a; Reed & Bourne, 2013). The most famous were produced by William Augustus Francis, whose images centred on reproducing popular scenes of cave decorations from the show caves. Earlier photographs, captured between 1860 and 1880, revealed the caves in a more 'natural' state prior to tourism development. During this time, three separate photographers produced images of Blanche Cave, namely Thomas Washbourne, Samuel White Sweet and a 'mystery' photographer.

Thomas Jeston Washbourne (1832 – 1905) of Geelong in Victoria, was an itinerant photographer who worked around Victoria and South Australia in the 1860s and 1870s. Well known for his stereo-views of landscapes, towns and settler life, he also made several studio portraits of Aboriginal people. His work is currently held in the State Library of Victoria, The National Portrait Gallery and various other Australian

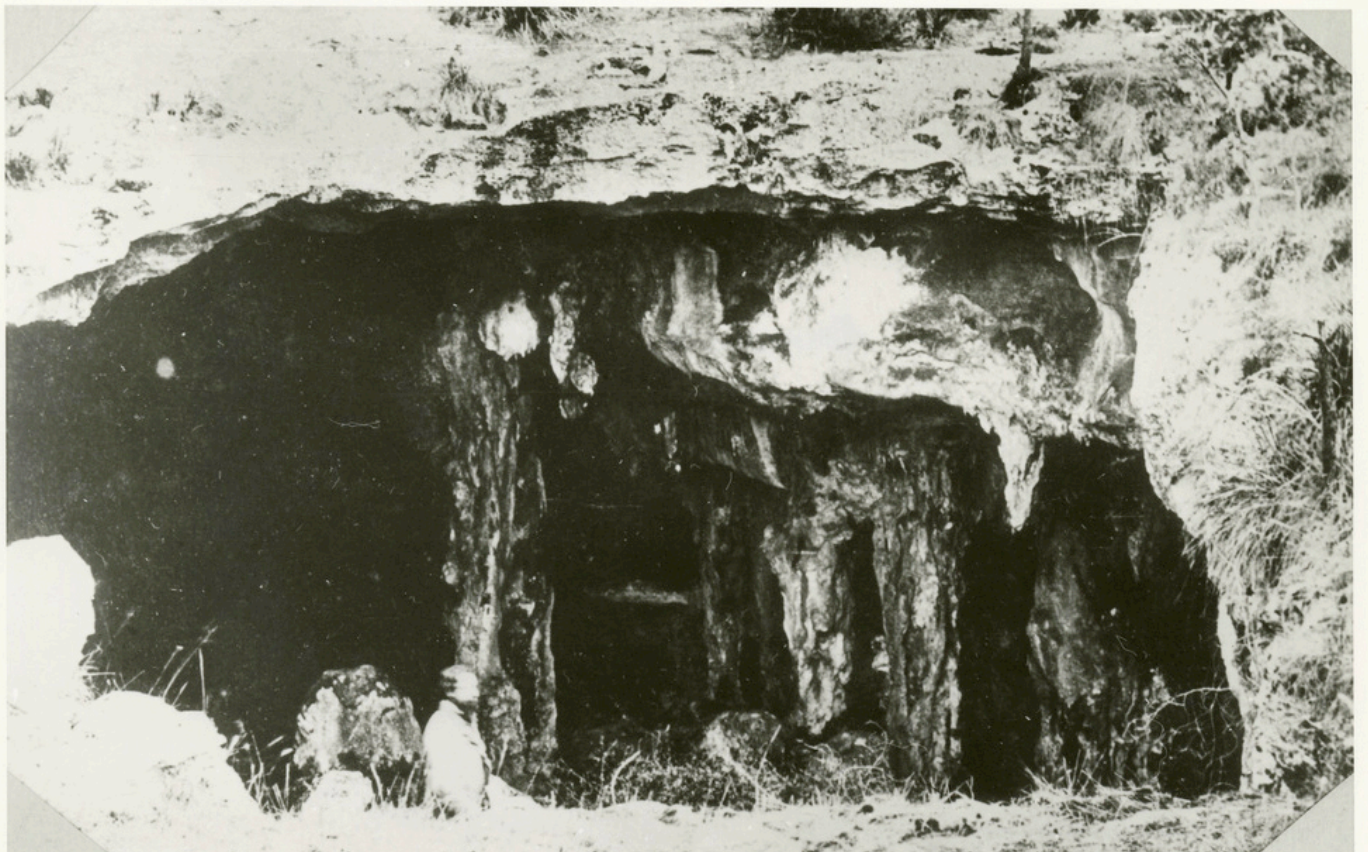
collections. In 1879 he took a series of five images of Blanche Cave (State Library of Victoria - H96.160/227, H96.160/228, H96.160/229, H96.160/230, H96.160/231). These provide rare insight into the appearance of the cave prior to heavy modification undertaken by William Reddan in the late 1880s and 1890s. The Washbourne photographs were later used as the basis for illustrations that appeared in books, journals and *The Naracoorte Herald* in 1889 and 1895 (Hamilton-Smith, 1997b; Reed & Bourne, 2013).

Captain Samuel White Sweet (1825-1886) was a sea captain and surveyor who upon retirement, opened a photographic studio in Adelaide and produced numerous landscapes and studies of Adelaide. He travelled around the state with his horse-drawn dark room in tow, and became the Colony of South Australia's leading documentary photographer during the 1870s (Sierp, 1976). He was one of the first to use the dry-plate (or gelatin) process, invented in 1871 (Sierp, 1976). This process allowed plates to be transported, exposed and processed at a subsequent date, which was ideal for a travelling photographer. Around 1880, Captain Sweet produced two images of Blanche Cave, likely made using the dry-plate



Above. **Figure 2.** Blanche Cave, 1860, photographer Thomas Hannay (State Library of South Australia, B36859).

Below. **Figure 3.** Blanche Cave, 1860, photographer Thomas Hannay. Julian Tenison-Woods figured (State Library of South Australia, B36860).



process. The photographs were taken adjacent to the second and third roof window entrances of the cave (State Library of South Australia - B 72111/143 and B72111/144). Sweet also produced an image of Umpherston's Sinkhole in Mount Gambier (State Library of South Australia - B7211/168).

However, the most singular early photographs of the Naracoorte Caves were also the first. In 1860 an unknown photographer recorded three images of Blanche Cave (Hamilton-Smith, 1986, 1997a; Reed & Bourne, 2013). They are significant as Reverend Julian Tenison-Woods is present in two of the images. There is also the strong likelihood that they were the first photographs taken in an Australian cave (Hamilton-Smith pers. comm. 2004).

In this paper, I outline information regarding the identity of the 'mystery' photographer, and provide some context for the 1860 Blanche Cave photographs. I also highlight a previously unrecorded engraving, derived from one of the 1860 images, and created in 1862 by one of the most renowned engravers of the time.

Australia's first cave photographs?

A series of three photographs, taken in 1860, depict different views of Blanche Cave at 'Mosquito Plains' (now known as Naracoorte). These images are part of the collection of the State Library of South Australia (catalogue numbers - B36858, B36859 and B36860). One photograph shows Reverend Julian Tenison-Woods reclining at the surface near the second roof window, with his leg draped casually over the lip of the entrance (Figure 1). Another shows a view looking down into the cave from the surface above the third roof window, with an unknown gentleman leaning against a large column (Figure 2). The third image captures a scene of the second roof window with a gentleman who looks to be Tenison-Woods, standing in the foreground (Figure 3).

The photographs provide important historical images of Tenison-Woods at a time when he was actively writing about the geological and palaeontological aspects of the cave; just three years after his original visit in 1857 (Reed & Bourne, 2013). Importantly, the photos were taken only two years prior to the publication of his book "Geological Observations in South

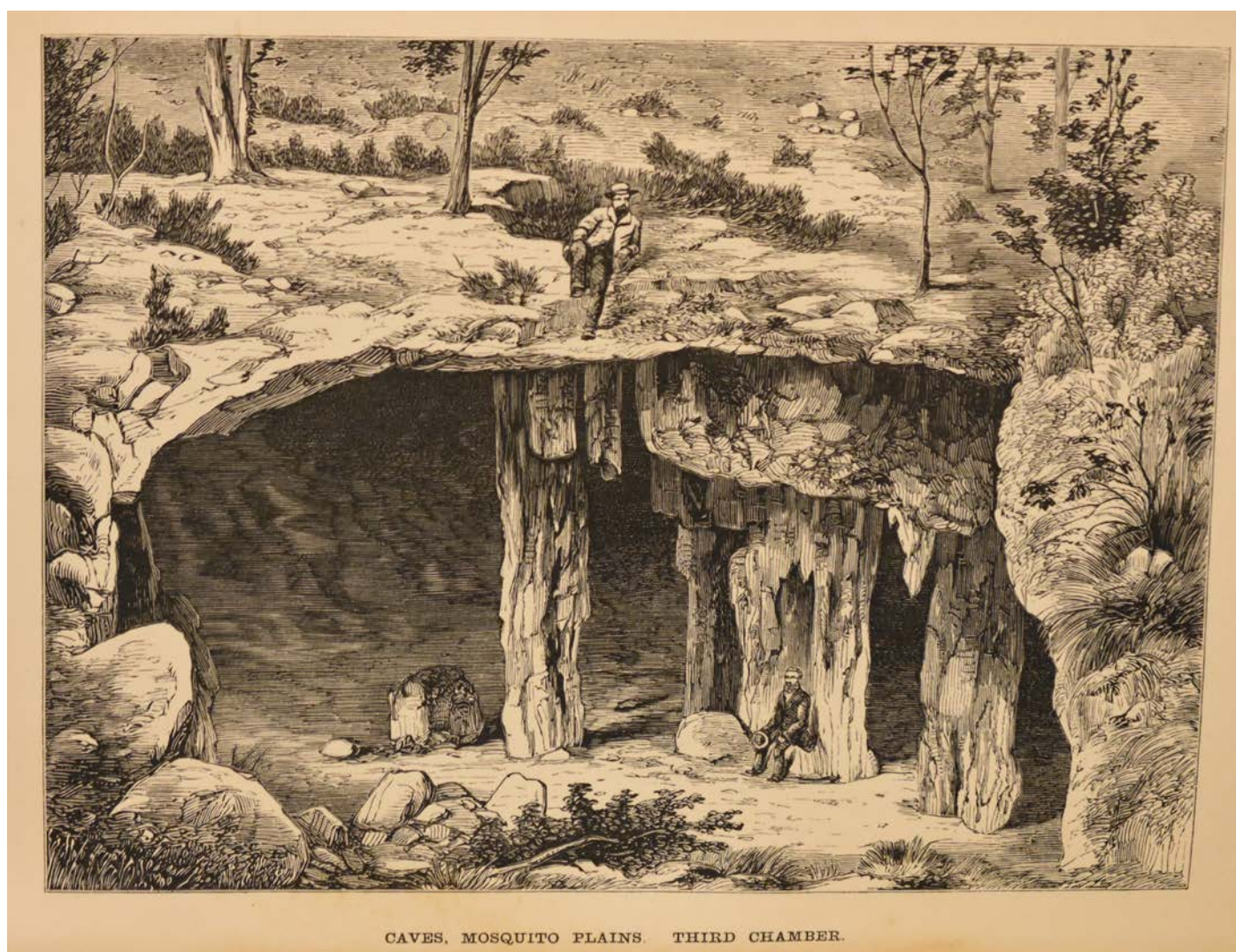


Figure 4. "Caves of Mosquito Plains Third Chamber", woodcut by Alexander Burkitt, photographed from a copy of Woods (1862).

¹ There are two of Burkitt's woodcuts presented in Woods (1862). The first is on the frontispiece, captioned "Caves, Mosquito Plains Third Chamber" (Figure 4). This image is actually from the second roof window entrance at the end of the first chamber as it is known today. Reed & Bourne (2013) indicated this was the third entrance, following other publications and the caption on the image, but on closer inspection it is the second. The other woodcut is shown on Page 325, with the caption "Caves, Mosquito Plains Second Chamber" (Figure 5). It is important to note that while the image shows part of what is now known as the second chamber, the entrance shown is the third roof window.

Australia: principally in the district South-East of Adelaide" (Woods, 1862). Hamilton-Smith (1997a) suggested the photographs were commissioned by Tenison-Woods to provide a reference for Alexander Burkitt to produce illustrations for Woods' 1862 book:

"The remarkable Father Julian Tenison Woods had three photographs taken of the Blanche Caves at Naracoorte in South Australia. These were then used as the basis of Burkitt's illustrations in Woods' 1862 monograph Geological Observations in South Australia. Although copies of the photographs exist, the location of any original prints is unknown, and the identity of the photographer similarly remains a mystery. It may have been Burkitt himself, or perhaps one of the itinerant photographers who toured rural areas at the time". Hamilton-Smith (1997a).

The commission of the photographs by Tenison-Woods, for the purpose of illustrating his book, may explain why he is posed so conspicuously in the images (Figures 1 & 3).

Elery Hamilton-Smith asserted that these photographs were the first to be taken in an Australian cave and emphasised many times that the photographer was unknown:

".....the unknown photographer who provided the pictures of Tenison-Woods at the caves was also the first to photograph an Australian cave" (Hamilton-Smith, pers. comm. 2004 from an unpublished manuscript).

Indeed, the collection records of the State Library confirm that there is no record of the photographer's identity. My recent research sheds new light on this mystery.

The 'mystery' photographer revealed

At least two artists produced works based on the 1860 photographs of the cave entrance. Alexander Burkitt combined elements from the photographs in his woodcuts, two of which featured in the 1862 book by Woods¹ (Figures 4 & 5). A later engraving faithfully reproduces the photo of Woods sitting on the edge of the cave entrance (Figure 6) and was published in *The Leader*, a weekly journal of news, politics, literature and art (Melbourne, Saturday, March 22, 1862, page 1 No. 325, Volume 10). The accompanying story, titled "The Mosquito Plains Caves", is a very entertaining account of a visit to Blanche Cave in 1862. The caption for the artwork reads: "Mosquito Plains Caves. From a photograph by Thomas Hannay, Maldon".

The most important revelation from this article is the identification of the original photographer as Mr. Thomas Hannay of Maldon, Victoria. However, tracking down the correct Mr. Hannay has not been straight forward. Two gentlemen sharing the same name lived in Maldon at the time the photographs were taken and they were father and son. Thus, it is not precisely clear exactly which of the two was the photographer responsible for the Blanche Cave photographs. It is tempting to speculate that it may well have been Thomas Hannay Senior, as the junior Hannay was very prominent in the Maldon community as a marksman yet there is no mention linking him to photography.

Charles Thomas Hannay (known as Thomas Hannay) was born in 1805 and passed away in Maldon on 6th of December 1883, aged 78. He was formerly of Barwhirran, Wigtownshire, Scotland. News of his passing appeared in several papers including *The Mount Alexander Mail*, Friday 7th December 1883:

"Great regret was expressed at Maldon yesterday when it became known that Mr Thomas Hannay, father of the well-known marksman, had died at half-past two o'clock in that morning. The deceased had not been in the best of health lately, and the cause of death is attributed to breaking up of the constitution. Mr Hannay was a very old and respected resident of Maldon, and he leaves behind him a great number of friends, who lament his demise."

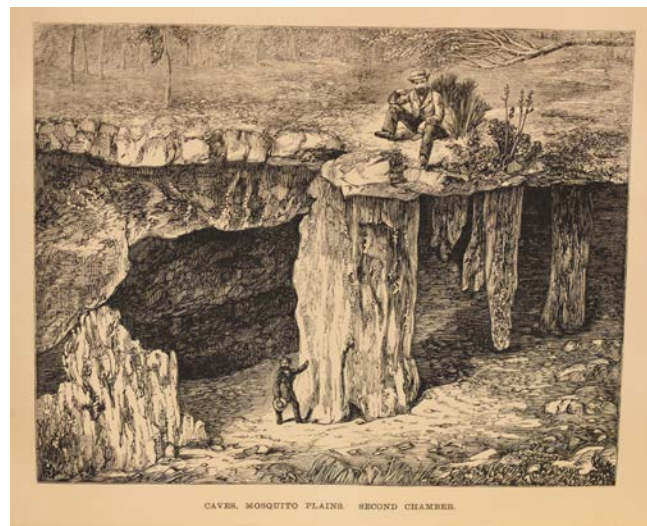


Figure 5. "Caves of Mosquito Plains Second Chamber", woodcut by Alexander Burkitt, photographed from a copy of Woods (1862).

His son, Thomas Hannay, was born in 1834 and became well known in Maldon. He served as a Councillor, Justice of the Peace, member of the Board of Management for Maldon Hospital (1872-1873), and later as a Magistrate for the Maldon District (from 1882). Renowned as an expert marksman and a member of the successful 'Maldon Rifles', he won many prizes for shooting. The following appeared in *The Age* in 1878 with regard to a contest between the Maldon Rifles and Southern Rifles:

"The return match between these corps was fired at Maldon on Good Friday, the first of the rub having taken place at Castlemaine as far back as July, 1876, when the Southern were victorious by fourteen points. On that occasion the weapons used were the old Enfield rifles. The conditions of this one were Martini-Henry rifles, 400, 500 and 600 yards, one sighter and seven rounds each. At an early stage of the match it was very apparent that the visitors were completely overmatched, Hannay's score of 96 points, with a miss at 600 yards, is simply magnificent."

The Age (Melbourne), Tuesday 23rd of April 1878, page 4.

Thomas Hannay passed away in Melbourne on September 22nd 1897 after a long illness. He remained fairly active until just days before his death

"The death of Mr. Thomas Hannay, J.P., superintendent of the Immigrants' Home, Royal Park, took place on Wednesday at the institution, over which the deceased had had control for the past five and a half years. Mr. Hannay was well known at Maldon for over a period of 30 years, where he occupied the position of councillor. Probably his career as a prominent member of the volunteer force 20 years back will be well remembered, his skill as a marksman enabling him to win many valuable prizes. For the past seven months Mr. Hannay had suffered from a painful illness, but until a few days back was enabled to perform his duties. He then was compelled to take to his bed, and was attended up to the time of his death by Dr. Louis Henry. The remains of deceased will be removed to Maldon to-day for interment."

The Age (Melbourne), Friday 24th of September 1897, page 6.

The photographer known as Thomas Hannay was particularly active around Portland and regional Victoria in the late 1850s. He recorded images of important properties and businesses in the district and nearly 100 of his photographs are curated as part of the State Library of Victoria's photographic collection. Many of these relate to rural localities around Victoria,



Figure 6. *The Leader: a weekly journal of news, politics, literature and art*
(Melbourne, Saturday, March 22, 1862, page 1 No. 325, Volume 10).

including some particularly interesting images of local Aboriginal people. Hannay appears also to have been a keen photographer of horses, and several images depict draught horses proudly displayed by their owners.

Hannay was considered to be an amateur photographer, and may have also been known as H. H. Hannah who exhibited photographs in Geelong in 1857 (Design & Art Australia Online www.daaao.org.au). He caused a stir in 1859 when his photographs were chosen for publication in *The Portland Chronicle* over those of the district's professional photographer John Richardson, who was fresh from studying at the Royal Academy in London.

A tale of two artists...

This story does not end with the identification of Thomas Hannay (Senior or Junior) as the 1860 photographer. The 1862 engraving is itself a new source of information, and appears to be a previously unrecorded work. It was not listed in Hamilton-Smith (1997b), and I have not seen any mention of it elsewhere. The signatures of two artists are apparent on the engraving. The single word 'CALVERT' appears at the bottom centre and the initials 'NC' on the far left. After comparison with signatures from multiple artworks, I have found the identity of these artists. The central signature is that of renowned engraver Samuel Calvert and the initials belong to the well-known artist Nicholas Chevalier.

Calvert and Chevalier were contemporaries, who produced work for the same periodicals. Many examples exist in Australian collections of engravings produced by Samuel Calvert from drawings and paintings by Nicholas Chevalier. It would appear then, that Chevalier produced a drawing or painting from Hannay's 1860 photograph, and this was used by Calvert to create a wood engraving. The presence of both signatures suggests some element of collaboration between the two artists. Work by Calvert and Chevalier was exhibited in Melbourne in 1873 as part of an exhibition of wood engravings published in Victoria. Interestingly, a piece by Robert Bruce called Stalactite Caves was also exhibited. It represents another image of Blanche Cave and appeared in *The Illustrated Australian News* in 1869 (Reed & Bourne, 2013).

Samuel Calvert was born in Brixton, England on November 21, 1828 and was the son of renowned engraver Edward Calvert. He was surrounded by art from a young age and his father taught him painting, engraving and etching. He left London in 1848 for South Australia, arriving in November and gaining employment at a printers on King William Street in Adelaide. By 1850, Calvert had set up a studio and was producing illustrations for *The Monthly Almanac* and *Illustrated Commentator*, of which he was co-proprietor (Darragh, 1992).

He moved to Melbourne in 1852 and continued as a wood-engraver, creating illustrations for several periodicals in partnership with his brother William. Calvert later had success tendering for the engraving and printing of Victorian postage stamps, but a subsequent legal battle to receive payment for these and his effort to fund the project by selling the stamps to raise funds, saw him convicted of fraud and narrowly escaping a prison sentence. He declared bankruptcy in 1858 (Darragh, 1992). At the time of completing the engraving of Blanche Cave in 1862, Calvert was once again completing commissioned work for periodicals including *The Leader*. He was renowned for being a prolific worker, publishing in nearly all of the Melbourne papers. Over the next 20 years he maintained his excellent reputation as an artist, and throughout his career produced work that was exhibited in Australia and London. He was also an accomplished painter and was active in the Victorian Academy of Arts until 1887 (Darragh, 1992). He died in Berkshire, England on the 1st of January 1913.

Nicholas Chevalier was born on the 9th of May 1828 in St Petersburg, Russia. He studied painting and architecture in Switzerland, Germany and Italy before moving to London in 1851 where he enjoyed success as a painter, lithographer, illustrator and designer (Tipping, 1969). In 1852 he became well-known for designing the setting for the Koh-i-noor diamond (now featured in the Queen Mother's Crown), and a fountain for Queen Victoria (Tipping, 1969). Chevalier was sent to Melbourne by his father in 1855 to join his brother in attending to their family's business interests. He worked as a painter and illustrator, producing work for *Melbourne Punch* and *The*

Illustrated Australian News. In 1864, an oil painting by Chevalier titled *The Buffalo Ranges* was selected as the best piece in an exhibition of Victorian painters and was purchased by the New National Gallery of Victoria for £200 (Tipping, 1969). It was the first Australian painting added to the collection. Chevalier was also the first to introduce chromolithography to Australia, with a selection of 12 of his works published in 1865.

Biographers note that Nicholas Chevalier was a charming, handsome man, whose personality was probably more influential than his art (Tipping, 1969). He spoke six languages and was also an accomplished violinist. Upon returning from travels in New Zealand during 1865-1867, he joined the Duke of Edinburgh and party in Tasmania in 1868 and impressed all with his illustrations. He again joined the royal party the following year, sailing to London via the East and Pacific islands, producing over 100 artistic works for Queen Victoria (Tipping, 1969). Once back in London he spent many happy years completing royal commissions and produced various scenes from his travels. He maintained ties with Australia as adviser to the National Gallery of New South Wales. Chevalier died in London on 15 March 1902.

The mystery continues

The discovery of Calvert's 1862 Blanche Cave engraving has highlighted synergies between several important artists who were active during the 1850s and 1860s in Victoria and South Australia. Further research will hopefully reveal which of the Messrs. Thomas Hannay is the photographer responsible for the 1860 Blanche Cave photographs, commissioned by Julian Tenison-Woods. Hannay's images are significant not only as the first photographs of Naracoorte Caves and likely of an Australian cave, but also for their association with important figures such as Tenison-Woods, Samuel Calvert and Nicholas Chevalier.

The scientific and humanitarian contribution of Tenison-Woods to the South East of South Australia is immense and widely recognised. The artists Thomas Washbourne, Samuel White Sweet, Samuel Calvert, Nicholas Chevalier and Thomas Hannay also left behind an important legacy, and one for which we owe a debt of gratitude for their insightful documentation of early life in the colonies.

Acknowledgements

I dedicate this paper to the late Elery Hamilton-Smith, who fueled my interest in the history of Naracoorte Caves. I remember many wonderful discussions with Elery regarding Tenison-Woods and various aspects of cave history. Elery would have enjoyed the new discoveries revealed in this paper. Thanks also to the National Library of Australia for Trove, which is nirvana for the history obsessed.

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CAVES GUIDES WORKSHOP AND ACKMA AGM: MAY 2016 ROCKHAMPTON, QUEENSLAND

Steve Bourne

Ann Augusteyn, owner of the only privately owned show cave in Australia, welcomed a group of about 40 to the Caves Guides' School. This was an outstanding attendance made up of mostly cave guides, but also some ACKMA members who came early for the AGM and participated in most of the workshop.

Andy Spate announced at the start of the workshop that Capricorn Caves is the best show cave operation in Australia. I asked Andy later what Capricorn Caves has and does for him to rate it as Australia's best. He pointed out Capricorn Caves has won tourism awards at every level; regional, state and national awards, so is highly rated by the tourism industry. Ann's team comprises a good balance of long term experienced staff and a great group of young enthusiastic guides. Well trained staff and a low staff turnover creates a "family" which delivers great experiences, working towards a common goal of making every visitor's time at Capricorn as enjoyable as possible. The third reason Andy gave is the attention to detail. In each cabin, the welcome pack is extensive and truly makes you feel like the business cares about you. I quietly observed how staff greeted visitors (guests), delivered tours and the all important maintenance. Each visitor was greeted with a smile and hello each time their path crossed with a staff member. And as the business is privately owned, it is not constrained by bureaucracy with capital works and operational matters. It has been a 25 year journey to develop the site to where it is, but clearly investment has been carefully considered and targeted to achieve the best results. By the end of the week, I had to agree with Andy - Capricorn Caves is doing a whole lot of things really, really well.

All guides introduced themselves and in their responses to Ann's question, "What do you hope to get out of the workshop", we heard a variety of objectives. Experience ranged from Barry Richard's half century of guiding and Andy Spate's even longer association with caves (since 1953) to some with less than 12 month's experience. The level of passion was high, a strong desire to learn, meet new people and leave the workshop a better guide.

Andy Spate provided a tribute to Elery Hamilton Smith and his role in establishing ACKMA and his work to improve the quality of cave guiding, followed by a minute's silence. Many of the younger guides had never met Elery and some had not heard of him, and the spare copies of ACKMA journal no. 100, the Elery tribute edition were quickly snapped up. The real work then got underway to develop the "Cave Guide's Toolbox".

Cathie Plowman and John Pastorelli led an activity which took guides out of their comfort zone, exploring new techniques and developing the toolbox. Pairs of guides led each other on short tours of the area outside the lodge, without sight and then without sight or sound. I was partnered with Mark Essenhugh, who works for Savannah Guides as a trainer. I quickly learnt that Mark is an expert interpreter who squeezed a green ant onto my tongue and followed that up by placing kangaroo dung in my hands and squeezing them while I was "blind". It was good fun, and also a great reminder that a cave tour can be much more if all senses are used.

John used his sporting background to great effect, encouraging guides to do the "one percenters", a favourite term of sporting coaches to incrementally improve your performance.

The group was asked "What does a good guide do and have?" The collective responses in brief were: Drawing on experience,



A moment of reflection: Andy Spate and the 100th edition of the ACKMA journal- the Elery edition - after delivering his tribute to Elery Hamilton-Smith

knowledge, "parking technology", welcome people, be a host, understanding, include whole family, silence and darkness, "just imagine", experience, use other senses, dealing with people not numbers, party tricks, enthusiasm, passion, use your "guide face", be the best you can possibly be, be open to new information,

Some work was undertaken around the questions, *Are guides meeting the expectations of visitors? How do I determine what the visitor's expectations are?*

This led to a very interesting activity defining the types of visitors to show caves, and then in groups, looking at what makes a "wow" or "grrr" tour. Each group then presented either their good or poor "tour" as a short skit. This resulted in some hilarious presentations and some very useful discussion. The activity could easily be delivered as part of a training program at a cave site. For me, it really had guides thinking about how they go about their work and targeting their tour for their



No wonder it is challenging to deliver a cave tour to satisfy everyone within the group. These are the group types and reasons for visiting caves identified in the workshop

group. Of course the challenge remains that each group is invariably a mixture of visitors.

David Morgans' presentation *Experience is Everything!* gave guides an overview of Australian tourism with a particular focus on Queensland. He showed the challenge for domestic tourism is huge as the holiday experience for Australians has changed quite markedly over the past six years. One of the drivers for this has been the value of the A\$ which has made outbound travel very affordable. This flows on to travellers gathering what David termed "transformative experiences" and the desire for "bragging rights". In thinking about his presentation, I realised that I probably fit the bracket of an Australian who takes overseas holidays with a lesser focus on visiting Australian attractions.

The challenge David put forward was to provide the experiences that people are after. A unique opportunity for Australia is Aboriginal stories woven into interpretation to enrich the offering at visitor attractions.

Three options were offered for the last session of the day; adventure caving, the Geo Tour or Cathedral Cave Tour. Most joined the Geo Tour. This tour is offered daily at Capricorn Caves and is usually a small group, not the 30 we had. Katherine was our guide who had the unenviable job of delivering the tour, quite a challenge to a group of fellow guides and a few ACKMA members thrown in as well. The tour starts with a presentation of geology of the region placing the Capricorn karst in context, with a screen presentation and hands on examples of fossils included in the local limestone. After the classroom session, the tour visits part of the cave and climbs the karst for spectacular 360° views of the landscape. We had a bonus with Scott Hocknull, palaeontologist with the Queensland Museum, on site. Scott met us in Colosseum Cave where he has an excavation site. He started the work at Capricorn in 2004 and has published several papers on his findings at Capricorn and nearby Mount Etna. The deposit is owl and ghost bat accumulated and incredibly rich. Owls have basically undertaken a biological survey over several hundred thousand years. I was also fascinated that Komodo Dragons are



How good would it be to see Komodo Dragons back in Australia? Some years ago I hosted a ranger from Komodo who gave me this image. It is a favourite.

Pastorelli delivered the keynote address in the Cathedral Cave, another excellent presentation. Ann then gave the group the "sound and light" experience that is delivered as a part of the regular tour. It is very, very good.

Day two and Cathie and John led the group through a series of activities, once again working on developing the guide's toolbox. who will ever forget Cathy Buhck's "People are chocolate" presentation? Chocolate has not been the same since.

I took the opportunity for a short interview with David Morgans, to ask his thoughts on caves as visitor experiences and how these are viewed by the travelling public. David's role is Director, Destination Experience Development, Queensland Tourism, and has the clear insight into this subject in Queensland, and Australia.

Steve: You have seen the passion amongst those who work in caves. Is there a passion for caves in those driving tourism industry in Queensland?

David: Caves are not high up in the tourism experiences in Queensland with the wealth of natural experience the state has. Jenolan Caves is a major experience in New South Wales, caves are a big thing in Western Australia, but not in Queensland. That said, Capricorn is a hero experience for the Rockhampton area and actively promoted by Queensland Tourism. The reason that Capricorn has such a high profile is because of the work of



Katherine Herring delivering the Geo Tour

really an Australian species. I have a long held desire to visit Komodo to see the dragons - maybe we should reintroduce them to Australia!

The tour is a good product offering increasing the diversity of experiences available at Capricorn and could be readily developed at other show caves. I am not sure about the tour name. Although it encapsulates the tour content, it may or may not help sell the tour to visitors.

After dinner, Ann Augusteyn took us on a tour of Cathedral Cave. The new lighting of the karst is sensational. John



*Scott Hocknull showing fossils to Lisa Brooks and Regina Roach (partially obscured) in Colosseum Cave
Photo: Ann Augusteyn*



*Tim Davidson admiring the shawls in Resurrection Cave. Many of the Capricorn Caves' team, including Ann Augusteyn, were able to visit this cave for the first time over the weekend.
Photo: Ross Anderson*

Ann and that it is privately owned. The privately owned cave allows for more innovation and generates passion amongst the staff. The level of autonomy that privately operated caves such as Capricorn has creates opportunities.

Governments shouldn't run what are essentially business enterprises. There is a concerted effort here though with National Park working hard with Queensland Tourism across three major visitor sites within National Parks to develop a stronger business model. They do have constraints that private businesses don't have which limits just how far they develop.

Steve: How do the travelling public view caves and what do you think are their expectations when they visit a cave?

David: For many people a cave visit is Jenolan and then when they see another cave offering it may stimulate their curiosity. A cave experience is about accessible adventure for many people, that sense of mystery. Caves are not the whole thing though, it's the package; the staff, the facilities, the family atmosphere. Capricorn Caves has a great family atmosphere. A lot of what you get in tourism nowadays is commodified.

Steve: Have cave tours that you have been on met your expectations? How could caves improve their standing in the tourism industry?

David: One cave tour does not make a holiday experience and one operator does not make a destination experience. Need to have a collective of businesses that can work together. One risk is that a poor experience in one cave may prevent someone from visiting the next cave they come across because of the experience that did not meet expectations. Cave operations work together and take on similar philosophy, maybe caves in

Australia should all take on the GUEST philosophy, it could be really powerful. Maybe this is something ACKMA could drive.

Food for thought. See Regina Roach's report from the workshop elsewhere in this journal for a discussion on the GUEST philosophy.

Friday was the cross over day; the Guides' School over and ACKMA weekend officially starting that evening. Some went to Keppel Island, some did a karst walk and others went caving. I

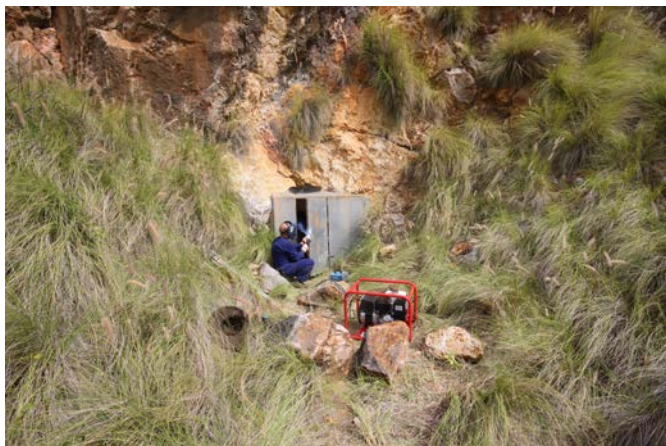


John Augusteyn at the entrance to Johannsens Cave



joined the caving group and visited Resurrection and Main Cave on Mount Etna and Johannsens Cave across the road. Noel Sands led the trip into Resurrection Cave and provided the history behind the discovery of the cave during mining operations and the long battle to save the caves of Mount Etna. Some of the actions of the mining company, such as deliberately blowing up a cave used by ghost bats, are deplorable, but thanks to the determination of conservationists, at least some caves have been preserved. Resurrection Cave is well decorated, much more so than other caves in the area, with the damage from blasting clearly evident. Pieces of very large stalactites and sections of roof were dislodged and strewn across the cave floor. The cave had been recently accessed illegally but the only damage I observed was to the gate. Cameron James spent the day repairing it while we enjoyed our caving. Main Cave required far more energy and climbing and is quite a sporting cave.

Some of the cave dwelling fauna at Capricorn.



Cameron James repairing the gate on Resurrection Cave, Mt Etna



the cave was totally emptied by the miners. I visited this cave again on Sunday with John Augusteyn, who provided excellent information on the cave's history and current management. Johannsens Cave has had a tough history and I hope current management strategies will work to conserve the cave as important bat habitat.

The (somewhat depleted) ACKMA committee met Friday afternoon in preparation for Sunday's AGM, prior to the dinner at the Great Western Hotel.

Some energetic souls did the karst walk at 6.30am on Saturday morning before we gathered at The Lodge for the morning's talks. John Augusteyn's presentation on Monitoring Central Queensland bats was excellent, although painted a fairly grim picture for the Ghost Bats. Only 50 individuals remain the Capricorn area which is a significant decline from the 400 that John Toop recorded about 30 years ago. This decline is worrying and confusing, because Scott Hocknull's work shows that the species has been a long resident in the area for several hundred thousand years, surviving large shifts in climate and being seemingly unaffected despite massive faunal turnover. Of course the difference between changes in the past and now is us - humans in the landscape and all of the issues we have brought.

Scott Hocknull then presented his 3D photogrammetry work. Many are doing this kind of work around Australia, but as usual, Scott is taking to the highest level. His vision to make museum collections accessible to all through the digital

Johannsens Cave is one of those caves that are a nightmare for the management agency. Multiple entrances, impossible to prevent access, breeding and roosting cave of the Ghost Bat and other species, and popular with the local community, many of whom would appear to have little regard for the cave's special values based on the amount of graffiti and rubbish observed. We had a good example of this when a father and his two daughters walked out of the cave in bare feet as we arrived.

This may paint a rather negative picture of the cave, but Queensland Parks has taken a number of measures such as preventing vehicle access to the cave and installing signage closing the cave during important periods for the bats. The most serious damage to the cave was done 100 years ago when guano miners used burning sulphur to gas the bats and remove them by the wheel barrow load. It appears from descriptions that many of these may have been Ghost Bats. The guano was several metres deep judging by the lines of the cave walls and



ACKMA members in Colosseum Cave with Scott Hocknull

medium, virtual cave tours and augmented reality really are at the cutting edge of technology.

ACKMA members were then shown the solar-powered LED lighting system and Scott's palaeontological site in two groups as the guides had been previously. It was excellent to get a second look at the cave, having largely missed the cave tours when I last visited in 2008. Mid afternoon we set off to Byfield National Park, visiting Lake Mary and volcanic plugs along the way. The destination was our dinner site at the Ferns Hideaway Restaurant. The late afternoon was only slightly spoiled by light rain, but it meant the evening festivities got underway a little earlier than planned. I admit to being concerned when I saw the restaurant with a small stage and microphone. Oh no, a

karaoke evening?! Far from it. Our host John Martens and his sidekick guitarist Mark were outstanding entertainment, playing non stop for over four hours of requests thrown at them from the floor. Their repertoire was extraordinary, and I will long remember Mark's guitar work with the Eagle's hit *Hotel California*.

The one and a half hour drive home gave most a chance to rest up for a little more socialising back at Capricorn, but it appeared most were a little weary by this time, or getting a good night's sleep prior to the AGM.

Sunday morning AGM? Who had that good idea? Despite the 8.00 am start, there was a good turn out and some really good discussion. A key item is the journal that you are now reading. It is costing more to produce than the membership fees we are receiving. Not a good business model, certainly for long term sustainability. We explored several options, including increasing the fee for a hard copy to cover printing costs (certainly a good idea in a user pay landscape), reducing the number of pages, seeking to reduce postage costs and putting more text on each page. In the end, membership fees were held at the current level and I am making changes to reduce costs in other ways.

The elections were held and the new committee is:

President	Dale Calnin
Australia Vice President	John Brush
NZ Vice President	Neil Collinson
Treasurer	Cath Loder
Executive Officer	Dan Cove
Committee members	Ann Augusteyn, Scott Melton, Tim Moulds
Publications Officer	Steve Bourne
Webmaster	Rauleigh Webb



Laura Dawson and Lucy Collinson with John and Mark, who provided excellent entertainment at "The Ferns"

Photo: Ann Augusteyn

Grant Gartrell has been indicating for several years he would like to step down as treasurer and at last he has been relieved of his duties. Grant took over from Dennis Rebecchi as treasurer in about 1996 (neither Dennis or Grant are quite sure). It is remarkable that ACKMA has only had, until now, two treasurers for the whole of its existence. I wonder if Cath knew it is a 20 year term for this role when she accepted it?!



Above. Some interpretation is still in place at Cammoo. This panel features bats and the story of the long battle between cavers and miners on Mt Etna



The meeting also considered where next year's AGM would be held. ACKMA made the decision several years ago to hold consecutive AGMs when the International Speleological Congress was held in Australia in 2017, to get our conferences out of step with the Australian Speleological Federation conferences. Prior to the meeting, Neil Collinson had proposed that Te Anau host the meeting. The brief presentation compiled by Neil, daughter Lucy and Laura Dawson certainly had me salivating at the prospect of a trip to the south of New

Zealand's South Island. More information appears in this journal on this meeting.

The rest of the day was spent doing what cavers should be doing, looking at caves. I visited Johannsens Cave again with John Augusteyn as guide, and a visit to Cammoo Caves. This is now closed with the old visitor centre mostly stripped but still with some interpretation in place. The same pink paint used for navigational aids that was in Johannsens was in Cammoo, a caving weekend by some novice locals perhaps. During John Augusteyn's talk on Saturday, I had noticed that Gigas Cave, a ghost bat site as the name suggests, seemed to be quite close to the Lodge where the majority of people were staying. Early Sunday morning I located the cave, but of course didn't enter. I asked John about it and he kindly offered to show our group this cave on Sunday afternoon. No ghost bats, but a few *Hipposideros* as well as bones of rock wallaby pitfall victims.

Sunday night was the farewell dinner and the opportunity to thank the Capricorn Caves' team for their efforts. It was a superbly organised event which is well summed up by the guides who have provided their thoughts for this journal. During the week we had been upholding the ACKMA tradition of raising funds for a local worthy cause. In this case, the recipient was the local primary school, who after donations were collected and items sold, received just under \$500. The largest input came from Kent Henderson, who despite feeling most unwell for the duration of the meeting, was not going to be beaten for a framed print of the ACKMA delegates at the meeting. The photo was taken the morning before and hastily printed and framed by Ann. Kent paid \$90 (I think) for the picture, a most generous donation.



*Above. Andy Spate with Kent Henderson and his auction win
Below. President Dale Calnin thanking Ann Augusteyn for the excellent week*

CAPRICORN CAVES 2016: CAVES GUIDES' SCHOOL and ACKMA AGM

Various Contributors

FROM THE EDITOR

The Cave Guides' School was a particularly energetic two days. It was the most interactive workshop that I have had the opportunity to participate and observe in the nine guides' workshops I have attended to since 1997. A report appears elsewhere in this journal, with the following provided by those who attended. I suggest their contributions clearly show the value of their participation. Well done to Ann Augusteyn and her team for hosting this, and to John Pastorelli, Cathie Plowman and David Morgans whose professional leadership made it the success it was.

Jodie Anderson
Wellington Caves Complex Manager

If I take any message away from the 2016 ACKMA Cave Guides' School and AGM it is that people are the most important element in the interpretation, preservation and protection of caves and karst environments and at the core of this is the need for training and development of people.



The training delivered by John Pastorelli and Cathie Plowman was an energetic experience that awakened the senses and provided invaluable tools to interpret not just caves but absolutely anything (transferable skills). It had us up and interacting with each and the environment in new and exciting ways. Like children exploring the world we used touch, smell, sight, sounds, imagination and more to interpret the world around us, opening up an exciting array of tools of which we could use to craft engaging talks and experiences for guests.

Armed with an amazing array of tools we also learnt processes for developing the all-important message. For example: the 60 second plunge, which is essentially 60 seconds of idea diarrhoea captured on paper. The content is then funnelled down through a process of "so what?" until you are left with a message. The 60 second plunge simplifies the overwhelming process of communicating content & facts and turns it into an engaging story with meaning.

There were so many valuable lessons learnt and tools added to the tool box, but the three that really stuck for me are:

- Developing a message is a simple process which gives meaning to interpretation.
- As guides we should "stretch" ourselves to delivering 1% different each time. Doing this will drive continual improvement and innovation.
- Teaching the art of interpretation and filling up the tool box of guides is paramount. "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day, teach a man to fish and he will eat for a life time". Just providing content & facts; is to "give a man a fish", providing guides with the tools of interpretation is "teaching a man to fish..." which allows



*L-R. Roslyn Hognio, Teagan Symons, Nicola Beckett, Raygan Davis, and Jodie Anderson prepare for abseiling
Photo: Nicola Beckett*

them to use their knowledge and content to create engaging, meaningful and memorable interpretation.

The energetic workshops of Cathie and John, were balanced with the passionate and engaging presentations from David Morgans from Tourism and Events Queensland. David provided insight into the importance for organisations, business and individuals in developing, delivering and embedding their brand, vision, mission and promise to their guests in all aspects of their operations.

At the core, changing the attitudes and perspective of how we view our guests (instead of visitors) and our role as their hosts (not just guides). For me learning from David could not come at



*Capricorn Caves' guide Katherine Herring leading a group
Photo: Steve Bourne*

a more pivotal time as I start the process of rebranding and developing the Wellington Caves Complex.

We now all have a great opportunity to use the momentum generated from attending Guides' School and the ACKMA AGM and set out some simple actions of how you we will implement and use our new found tools, knowledge and connections.

"Knowledge is not power, knowledge is only potential power. True power comes from action." Anthony Robbins.

When I return to work, here are just a few ways I intend to take action:

- Schedule a team gathering and deliver aspects of the guides' school and share what I learnt from the experience with my team
- Ensure sufficient budget is allocated to training and development in next year's and subsequent years' budgets
- Use the process of discovering "the message" when creating an interpretation plan for Wellington Caves
- Follow up on the connections made at the conference

To continue the conversation and momentum going there will be a Facebook group created for all those who attended. As well as being a place where we can connect post Guides' School and AGM it will be a space where we can share our thoughts, ideas and ways in which we have used our new tools/knowledge to enhance our guests' experience. I would encourage others to share the actions they are going to take after attending the Guides' School and ACKMA AGM.



*Jodie Anderson and Luke Parnell atop the Capricorn karst
Photo: Steve Bourne*

I could write about all the amazing tours, field trips and experiences we shared from abseiling, caving, croc farms, dinners and dancing but at the end of the day what made it one of the best experiences I've had, is the people. I come away with new friends, a feeling of connectedness in being a part of the ACKMA family and a thirst and hunger to do more and get more involved.

I say a big thank you to Ann, Amanda and all of the team at Capricorn Caves for providing us with such an exceptional experience. The level of care, organisation, efficiency and team work did not go unnoticed. From having our names on our doors, providing basket of things we may have forgotten to delivering fantastic tours and experiences. We will not forget how you made us feel!

The exceptional experience we had is testament to Ann's investment in the training, development and wellbeing of her team. Her return on investment can be seen in the loyalty and

longevity of staff, their passion and love for their jobs and the success of the business.

"If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients" Richard Branson

"Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don't want to." Richard Branson.

I truly do believe we are in such a privileged position to be able to provide people with the opportunity to discover and connect with caves and the natural environment. The skills and knowledge that were given to us at the Guides' School and ACKMA AGM will ensure we are able to deliver experiences that create lasting emotional connections with caves, which will lead to the preservation and protection of caves and karst areas. I would encourage, other managers and guides to attended future ACKMA events and invest in the training and development of their staff. It all starts with people!

"Through interpretation understanding, through understanding appreciation; through appreciation, protection." Freeman Tilden

Lawrie Dunn Wombeyan Caves

The first impression I had on arriving at the Capricorn Caves' reception area was that it was neat and tidy all things having a place, this in turn making me keen to meet the staff and I was not disappointed, being greeted by enthusiastic members of the Capricorn team all doing their part to make our stay as pleasant as possible. It is obvious that management has a good grip on making this place work right. Everything from accommodation to meals and activities was well planned and to my knowledge, had no hick ups. The time spent in the lodge recreation room must have been engaging as I don't recall catching anyone sleeping. John, David and Cathie seriously delivered a lot of thought provoking stuff. In fact, I am still processing some of it. Having been a guide since 1990 maybe you can fall into a rut and not notice it. In any case it is well worth having a good look at yourself, you never know what new ideas or different ways you may discover. The public is changing in what it wants from a tour and we need to keep up with the times or be left behind, I



*Barry Richard taking a photo of L-R: Regina Roach, Scott Melton, Judy Christiansen, Christian... and Brittney Butler during role play exercise
Photo: Steve Bourne*

came to Capricorn for an injection of enthusiasm to deliver on tour, to try and understand just what it is that the modern visitor wants from a tour. Still sorting through it all but now I go armed with a fully loaded toolbox and hopefully I will be a better guide for having spent time with quality trainers. This trip to Capricorn Caves was a great chance to catch up with some old friends, make some new ones and spend some time at a cave system I have not been to before. I thank Ann and all her staff for a wonderful stay at Capricorn Caves.

PS Being one of the Lord's more relaxed creations, the only thing I have taken from my Capricorn show bag so far is the stubbie holder. Guess I have some reading to do!

Heidi Vandermere Capricorn Caves

I didn't really know what to expect from ACKMA or how much involvement I would have in it. My main aim was to get the opportunity to learn something new about guiding techniques and expand my knowledge.



The first day we had 'hands on' activities with a partner we were unfamiliar with. We were put into situations that are out of the ordinary and were having to come up with a solution on the spot. I found this to be quite challenging but also very rewarding in the sense of the different practices that makes a tour memorable.

The main challenge for me was having to demonstrate what I knew in front of people who potentially knew a lot more than me! The activities got people talking and a sense of trust was formed with the partner and I think this had a big impact on me and how we need to make a relationship with our guests – not just talk at them.

Throughout the week we met people from all over Australia and New Zealand, and we shared different experiences and spoke of the similarities in the work we do. One of the highlights was learning about the different places people work and seeing the

different fields they work in. One that truly stands out was Scott Hocknull's presentation about fossils, megafauna and the transformation of the environment through climate change. I also thoroughly enjoyed John Augusteyn's presentation on the local bats of Capricorn Caves.

The main thing I am taking away from the experience over the week is having my enthusiasm and passion back! We work in an amazing environment and we can never stop learning about the different features in our caves, and to be able to educate guests and tell them the stories that we know is a very special thing.

Manuwai Wells Kawiti Family Glow worm Caves, NZ

Open up ur mind...let ur fantasies unwind...in this darkness which u know u cannot fight ...the darkness of the music of the night...as Andrew Lloyd Webber's music filled the air and warm candlelight glowed gently against majestic formations of the Capricorn Caves I was immediately transported to treasured memories of seeing the *Phantom of the Opera* many years ago with my family.



Cave guiding for me is about making connections. We connect to our caves in New Zealand through our love for grandparents (Founders of the Kawiti Family Glow worm Cave Tours), our environment, and our memories. That love in turn allows us to share and connect with our visitors - encouraging them to love as well. Capricorn Caves did an excellent job of connecting with us - through education, fun, history, music, atmosphere and memories #ourgoal TePaihere Martin and I were lucky enough to be attending 2016 Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association (ACKMA) two day Cave Guides' School in Rockhampton, Brisbane. Being able to discuss interpretative techniques with other guides and experience such different personalities, surroundings, wildlife and landscape was truly incredible. We were amazed to see a bat flying around in the caves and to learn about microbats and how the caves in the area can house up to 1800 microbats per cubic metre! Wow! One of the Capricorn guides even spoke about a carpet python



The Capricorn Caves team. L-R. Ann Augusteyn, Scott Hopkins, Lynda McCorquodale, Lucas Zielke, Judy Christenson, Christian Bom, Robert Augusteyn, Jayden Bond, Heidi Vandermere, Amanda Hinton, Jordan Wheeler, Katherine Herring, Darren Papendorf, Courteney Blamires, Chennoa Wells, Loryus Chappel, Charlotte Riley.

that ate a rock wallaby a few weeks ago and couldn't move for days until it was digested. The Karst Limestone Geo Discovery walk at sunset was another stunning feature, absolutely breathtaking (literally and figuratively hee hee). I would call it a cliff climb but our Aussie counterparts would probably call it a walk to the supermarket.

We thoroughly enjoyed the guide tool box exercises with Cathie Plowman and John Pastorelli and loved listening to David Morgans speak about hosting, reputation economies and branding. As a manager, I found the presentations, group work, discussions and feedback, invaluable, rich, revealing and insightful. I would encourage more managers to take the opportunity to attend, listen and participate.

Overall, reconnecting with our ACKMA family and adding new faces and names to our list of caving friends from across the ditch was the highlight of the week. Andy, Scott, all of our ACKMA buddies, we loved seeing you all again. Thank you to Ann and Capricorn Caves, everybody really, for welcoming us and making it such a memorable experience, Arohanui.



*L-R. Manuwai Wells, Raygan Davis, Tim Davidson, Roslyn Hogno and Andy Spate during role play exercise. "The Google family"- see Regina Roach's story below
Photo: Steve Bourne*

Ann Augusteyn Capricorn Caves Owner and Manager

What a wonderful gathering of over 60 members of the ACKMA family from Te Anau to Kawiti Caves across the ditch to Chillagoe, Tasmania, Kangaroo Island and Margaret River Caves and many more between. Add to this the large number of local supporters who attended various functions and workshops.



*Andy Spate with Ann Augusteyn
Photo: Steve Bourne*

It was a privilege to host the ACKMA AGM and Cave Guides' School, which was so inspirational and stimulating thanks to the keynote speakers, John Pastorelli and David Morgans. They were such contrasting presenters in their delivery but totally engaging with the support of Cathie Plowman weaving her magical facilitation. We continued to be spellbound with Scott's front line technology producing images of the caves never seen before thanks also to Rochelle and Jon. Then just to add to the wonder of the moment a thylacine tooth and a ghost bat jaw discovered on the cave floor and excavated rocks respectively. Finally John Augusteyn's report on bats of Central Queensland left us with sober thoughts.

I think every cave should host an ACKMA event; the impact on the staff goes beyond anything that can be achieved on site. It was so good to see the mixing of everyone from different sites and different professional levels. It has reignited the passion of the Capricorn Cave guides and presents a huge problem that they all want to join ACKMA and come to Te Anau!

For me the take home message is that cave guides are the future of ACKMA with collaboration and guidance from senior managers, who embody the knowledge and experience of cave conservation. As David Morgans wrote *"Guides are the heart and soul of the tourism industry because this is where the industry can make a real connection to people."* and it is people's appreciation and love of caves that will ensure their preservation. Exciting technical innovations will reinforce the connection that caves embody the story of the earth. I believe that it is ACKMA's responsibility and mission to harness this energy and go forward, guides and managers, together.

We would like to acknowledge the support of ACKMA over the many years. A sincere thanks is extended to our inspirational presenters John Pastorelli, David Morgans, Cathie Plowman, Scott Hocknull and John Augusteyn. Our caving trips would not have been possible without the leadership of Noel Sands, Clive Kavanagh, Cameron James and Dianne Vavryn. Lastly a huge thank you to the Capricorn Caves staff for all the preliminary preparations for showcasing our property, organising the conference, the catering (thanks Darren - the meals were fantastic) and to Amanda for such a huge effort in seamlessly coordinating the school and AGM. Finally a thank you to everyone for coming and making it such a memorable experience for all of us.



*L-R. Cathie Plowman, David Morgans, John Pastorelli, Ann Augusteyn.
Photo: Steve Bourne*

**Regina Roach
Yarrangobilly Caves**

The Caves Guides' School 2016 was held at Capricorn Caves, Queensland, and attendees were immersed in a mixture of caves, coral, culture, crocodiles, cattle, country and caving amongst other experiences. Before the Cave Guides' School commenced, attendees selected from a range of free activities, which included a Cathedral Cave tour, adventure caving and abseiling courtesy of Ann Augusteyn and her enthusiastic crew. Or one could do nothing and just enjoy the warmth of the Capricorn Coast and Rockhampton. "Rocky" to the locals. Rocky is different. Where else do you see giant statues of bulls lining the road leading into the city centre?



The first evening was an informal dinner at The Caves pub. Yes, there is a small town called "The Caves" near Capricorn Caves. The visiting guides came from near and far; Capricorn Caves, Chillagoe, Yarrangobilly, Bairnsdale, Jenolan, Wombeyan, Buchan, Wellington, Kangaroo Island, Te Anau, Kawiti and Naracoorte. The first morning after an early breakfast we met our presenters, Cathie Plowman, John Pastorelli and David Morgans. Then it was the usual "Who's who at the Zoo?" (introductions). The first session was with Andy Spate who led our contemplation of Elery Hamilton-Smith as "Elery the founder of professional cave guiding in Australia."

I was bracing myself for the endless discussions regarding speleothems but it didn't happen, and it never happened during the sessions. A Cave Guides' School where one doesn't talk about speleothems - now that has to be an absolute first! Cathie and John introduced us to "The Guides' Toolbox". "What's the issue?" I pondered. I always take a torch and key on a cave tour. "Who needs tools?" Instead, John commenced his presentation with the word "kesen". It's a Japanese word meaning "little steps". His advice to improve your interpretation was to change one thing at a time on your tour. Change by small steps will enhance your guiding and the visitor experience. Try something different every tour, that is, in small steps. Most people communicate through talk but the guide needs to heighten their visitors' experiences by communicating with them in different



David Morgans presenting his talk with an appropriate backdrop
Photo: Steve Bourne

ways. Like through their senses, e.g. "feel the breeze", "smell the cave", "feel the sharpness of this rock" etc.

We learnt that the guide's goal is to create a positive cave experience for the people. "People want experiences rather than just looking" that's what the research tells us, "and this experience originates from emotional connections". This is where the guide must have 'tools' in the toolbox hence "The Guides' Toolbox". Another light bulb moment for me.

We then shared our tool box experiences with role plays. The dysfunctional "Google family" was hilarious with Ros Hogno as the out of control child, Raygan Davis (Mrs Google) who just knew everything and was trying to constantly organize everyone while holding the crying baby, and Tim Davidson, her partner, attempting to engage with the guide, Tepaihere Martin who just prattled on and on and on while domestic mayhem escalated. As guides I think we identified strongly with this scenario having witnessed this scenario on tours.

These activities transitioned into David Morgan's theme, "What defines a memorable, engaging and inspirational visitor experience?" David explored the concept that visitors should be treated as guests and the number one goal of any organization is to have the happiest guest. The treatment a guest receives relates to a business's core values and the expectation of the tour is set at booking time. David's philosophy to ensure the guest experience exceeded their expectations was by using the acronym GUEST.

- G Greeting – give a kindly greeting to everyone
- U Understanding – listen first, then react
- E Efficiency – Be efficient
- S Special treatment – Give extra, special treatment to all guests
- T Thankfulness - Always thank the guest

David reminded us of the old saying, "A person will not remember what you said, or what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel."



Scott Hocknull speaking at his palaeontological site in Colosseum Cave, Capricorn
Photo: Steve Bourne

Then it was doing time. We chose from the options available; A Geotour of Discovery, adventure caving or abseiling. I chose adventure caving as I wanted to see how this was conducted at this location. Keagan led our group of five people through squeezes...well, the people who could fit through... under rocks, into a cavern - where one had to find ones way out, and through

passage ways until we found Scott Hocknull's palaeontological site. Capricorn Caves is a great adventure caving site as any tour can be adjusted to fit the guests' abilities.

After dinner at Capricorn Caves the keynote address was given by John in the Cathedral Cave. Ann Augusteyn guided us through the cave showcasing the newly installed lights. Then some people celebrated well into the night beside and in the pool.

The next day Cathie, John and David expanded upon their key messages. We concluded the indoor sessions with a Q & A panel session which resolved with the intent to develop a Guides' private Facebook page where guides could communicate with each other. Ros Hogno and Jodie Anderson are to create and manage the page.

After lunch it was into the vehicles for a short trip to Mt Jim Crow, a volcanic plug, where we received interpretation of the local environment. This Capricorn Caves country was beginning to make better sense to me. Into the vehicles again and onto Kemp Beach for another walk, this one with choices. Either along the beach to check out the shells and sand (ex coral) or up to the lookout to "spot the turtles". I think the locals were kidding us about those turtles. *"They look like brown rocks"* they said. When one ascended to the lookout and surveyed the scene below there were hundreds of brown rocks! However three audacious people took up the challenge, *"You won't have time to walk around the 2.5 km loop track in twenty minutes before the*



The volcanic plug of Mt Jim Crow
Photo: Steve Bourne

bus leaves." Result. Three people returned via the loop track with time to spare for a short walk along the beach.

Emu Park was our next destination where we viewed the new ANZAC memorial and interpretation panels. It was great. Sculptured memorials in relief with their vivid images of a past time, and panels linking closely the local enlistees and nursing staff to world events. Then onto the Koorana Crocodile Farm where we had - you guessed it - "crocodile". It was a dinner with a difference. We ordered our meal and received crocodile entrees. Then outside to check out the big breeding crocs from behind the safety of wire fences. Then back to the table for the main meal. Then it was outside again to another part of the farm where we enjoyed ourselves spot-lighting the crocs by identifying their presence by their red eyes, or watching the females fight over territory. The breeding season was soon to start. Then back inside for dessert (non crocodile). For those who wished....a pat and photo with a baby croc - it was 2 feet long and had its jaws taped shut. Then you could send the



Brittney Butler overlooking the bay at Kemps Beach
Photo: Steve Bourne

photo to your friends and say, *"This is what we did at the Cave Guides' School."*

The next day was our "free day" with options for organised activities:

- Option 1 Caving in the Mt Etna National Park with Noel Sands and Clive Kavanagh. Caves visited were Resurrection and Inner Johanssens - "Inner Joeys" to the locals.
- Option 2 Capricorn Cave tour options - Geotour of Discovery, abseiling or Cathedral cave.
- Option 3 A day at Great Keppel Island - coral, coast, catamaran, coffee

I chose caving at Mt Etna and had the best time. I learnt all about guano mining, saw the old relics, bats, revegetation sites, some modern pink cave markings!! I was reminded of the battle to save these caves, bats and archaeological deposits of extinct animals. We saw the results of the blasting which broke a huge stalactite which half buried itself when it fell.

The final night's dinner was advertised in the program as *"Dinner and bull ride at the Great Western Hotel."* If Rockhampton is located on the east coast of Queensland then how can one have a Great WESTERN Hotel? I never did sort that out.

"Yeah, yeah", I thought, *"they would have a mechanical bull up here in cattle country"*. But no, I was wrong. The hotel had an indoor arena where the local lads practised their rodeoing skills and where rodeos are held. We watched as they unloaded the cattle, penned the bulls in the chutes and tried to ride out the



Matt Cooper successfully negotiated 8 seconds on this beast
Photo: Steve Bourne

mandatory eight seconds. Sometimes the clowns practised their skills to protect the riders. I think the bulls can count to eight because they stopped bucking after this time interval. We viewed these happenings as we ate out dinner. It was another dinner with a difference.

My impressions of the 2016 Caves Guides School at Rockhampton could mostly be summed up with words beginning with the letter 'C'. Cheery Capricorn Caves crew, challenging caving, carboniferous country, crusty coral, cringe worthy crocodiles, cattle country culture, cavernous Cathedral Cave, and chatty creative camaraderie.

Roslyn Hogno Yarrangobilly Caves

Thank you Capricorn Caves for hosting the 2016 ACKMA Guides' School! If I have come away with a single key message, it would be that it all starts with the people. Capricorn Caves is an excellent example of just that. An incredible team of people who are genuinely passionate about their jobs, their local environment and the interpretation of educating their guests on a daily basis. Each staff member who I met at Capricorn showed an incredible amount of enthusiasm and love the entire week. Thank you Ann and your team for your warm hospitality and kindness, your efforts did not go unnoticed.



Thank you John, Cathie and David for your energetic and informative talks and training. You had us all thinking outside the box and taught us valuable ways on how to use our own existing skills and knowledge, to deliver exciting and memorable experiences for our guests. What a jam-packed week of activities, tours and trips! From abseiling, to crocodile farms, to snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef, we experienced the best of Capricorn Caves and Rockhampton as a whole!

I left with a bunch of new friends, new experiences and a "toolbox" full of knowledge to take with me back to Yarrangobilly Caves, where I soon hope to have the privilege to deliver my own educational and memorable experiences for guests! Thank you to everyone whom I met during the short week away, I have left the ACKMA Guides' School feeling inspired and confident that I someday will have the honour and privilege of working as a guide in this incredible community and industry.

From the Editor

Prior to the Capricorn Caves Guides' Workshop, Cathie and John asked guides to respond providing what they use in their toolbox. Scott kindly provided me with his response. In many years working at Australia's busiest show cave system, Scott has developed a great set of skills for working with visitors.

Scott Melton Jenolan Caves

Knowledge

Knowledge of your subject matter is one of the key tools that I use on my tour. Given the amount of university/TAFE study I have done, the study trips overseas, a guide exchange overseas as well as attendance at events such as the Guides' School, coupled with a lifelong love of caves, I have developed what I consider to be an excellent knowledge of caves. I believe this knowledge shows on my tours – one of my favourite visitor



*"Use your imagination", just what is Scott Melton showing Judy Christenson?
Photo: Steve Bourne*

comments remains *"This is the third trip I have done through the Lucas Cave but you are the first guide who was interesting enough to listen to"*.

Anyone can parrot learn a tour but a visitor will soon pick up if you are doing this or do not have a good understanding of your subject matter. If you are truly passionate about caves, expand your knowledge by research or other means and do as many cave tours in as many places as you can. This will not only expand your own knowledge base but will allow you to learn different techniques from fellow guides. Perhaps this can be best summed up – "Never stop learning".

Only the other day I had a group of gents on my Chifley Cave tour who were from Pakistan. They were most impressed that I knew that the highest cave entrance (in elevation above sea level) in the world is in Pakistan! How many people also know that Mt Everest is partly limestone....!!!

Empathy

Empathise with your visitors. Take time if possible to learn a little bit about them; where they are from, are they enjoying their holiday in Australia and so on. Even if you only talk to a visitor once on an individual basis, they will appreciate it.

Having said that, I am sure there is still the odd tour where someone will come out of the cave and you think to yourself "Were they on my tour".

Having said that, do not focus too much attention on one or two people on the tour, to the detriment of the rest of your visitors. The people subject to the extra attention may start to feel uncomfortable and the rest of the group will start to feel ignored. Years ago I was conducting a tour and a visitor asked to join my tour as she felt she was receiving too much attention from the guide on her tour.

Use the Kids

One of the first things I was told when starting my training was "Include the kids on the tour as well". This will make them feel important; hopefully foster an understanding about the magical world that they are in and the parents will be appreciative that you are not ignoring their kids. One of my favourite experiences on an Imperial Cave tour was having a four year old leading 40 visitors through the cave carrying my torch, which had started the tour screaming and kicking, not wanting to go in the cave at all! Of course, don't ignore the adults to focus solely on the kids either.

When I used to run the interview process for new guides, one of my favourite questions that I would ask a potential candidate was “How would you deal with an enthusiastic but precocious eight year old on your tour who wants to be the centre of attention”. My favourite answer – “Well I would implement the process of facilitation to ensure that the child was fully included in all aspects of the tour...”

All questions are valid

This section would tie in with knowledge as mentioned above. If you are a trained guide, whether you have 1 year or 40 years of experience, you will more than likely have more knowledge than the majority of your visitors. They will be entering an environment that will quite possibly be foreign to them with little understanding of the processes that have created that environment. Treat all questions as valid, no matter how strange they may seem to you as the guide.

If a visitor asks a question that might seem a little strange, if you can, try and think about what the visitor was really trying to ask and rephrase the question and then provide an answer along those lines. For example, one question I am sure we have all been asked is “How many undiscovered caves are there”. I reply along the lines of “It is the cave divers who are making the biggest discoveries here at Jenolan as they are going down into the water filled sections of the cave system”. This allows me to deflect the potentially embarrassing question that the visitor asked and also opens up a whole new subject that visitors are fascinated with. This then becomes a win/win/win for the visitor who asked the question; your group as a whole and of course yourself.

Of course, we all have our perennial favourite questions, other than the one mentioned above, such as:-

- Do wombats fly like ordinary bats?
- Were the handrails and steps here when the cave was discovered?
- Is the water tidal? and
- How heavy does the cave weigh?

Words

When answering a question or delivering your commentary, don't answer with words that will further confuse your visitors or use slang/abbreviations that are familiar to you but may as well be another language to them. While words such as epikarst, phreatic and vadose may be familiar to you, they will not be to your visitors. If you use such words, ensure that you explain them in terms that your visitors will understand. Try and learn a few basic words in other languages if you can.

An Emphasis on Syntax and Pronunciation

In the 2003 movie “View from the Top”, starring Mike Meyers and Gwyneth Paltrow, Mike Meyers delivers a classic one liner “*you placed the wrong emphasis on the wrong syllable*”.

- **Emphasis** - A prominence given in reading or speaking to one or more words or syllables
- **Syntax** - The arrangement of words and phrases to create well formed sentences
- **Pronunciation** - The way in which a word or name is pronounced

While we normally would not give it a second thought, the way we use emphasis, arrange our words and also pronounce these words can deliver a much more professional tour for our visitors. Speak clearly with well rounded speech. Even just a simple two second pause will emphasise a point that you are trying to make.

Perception

Your perception of the group, at an early point in the tour, will allow you to make suitable adjustments to your commentary to suit the needs of the group. It would be pointless delivering a geologically focussed tour suitable for a group of university students to a group of year three kids!

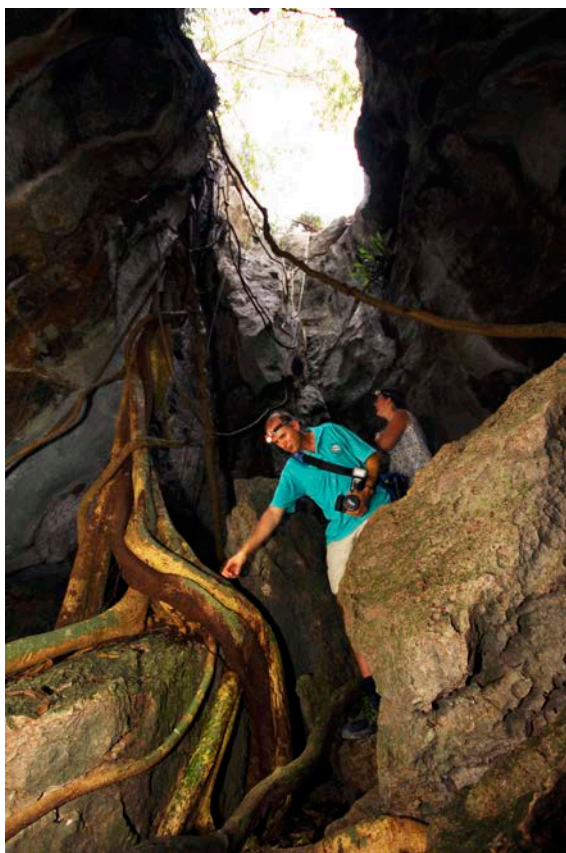
Be prepared to constantly change your delivery, even as your tour is progressing. You may detect a hint of restlessness amongst your group so give consideration to even shortening your commentary. Just because you know all the facts does not mean you have to give all of the facts to the group.

A salient piece of advice I was given when I first started training as a guide in the early 1990s was to deliver more commentary in the early parts of the tour as the majority of visitors will be more attentive than at the end. All visitors will reach the saturation point at some stage of the tour if you deliver too much.

Other Tools

Of course, the above tools all have one thing in common and that is that they are not “physical” tools; that are not tools that you can hold in your hand. Some examples of physical tools that you may use on a tour include:-

- Torch - Not only for safety if the lights go out but they are of course great for pointing out features as well as illuminating crystal.
- Cigarette Lighter - Great for lighting the candles in an emergency or demonstrating candlelight.
- Remote Control - Vital on certain tours at Jenolan Caves; and finally...
- Cave Key - As Effie used to say on the TV show Fast Forward “*How Embarrassment*” if you get to the entrance of the cave and you have forgotten your cave key...!!!



Ross and Jay Anderson
Photo: Steve Bourne

RICH CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES: ENSURING YOUR BUSINESS REMAINS STRONG, SUSTAINABLE and OPTIMISED for GROWTH

John Pastorelli

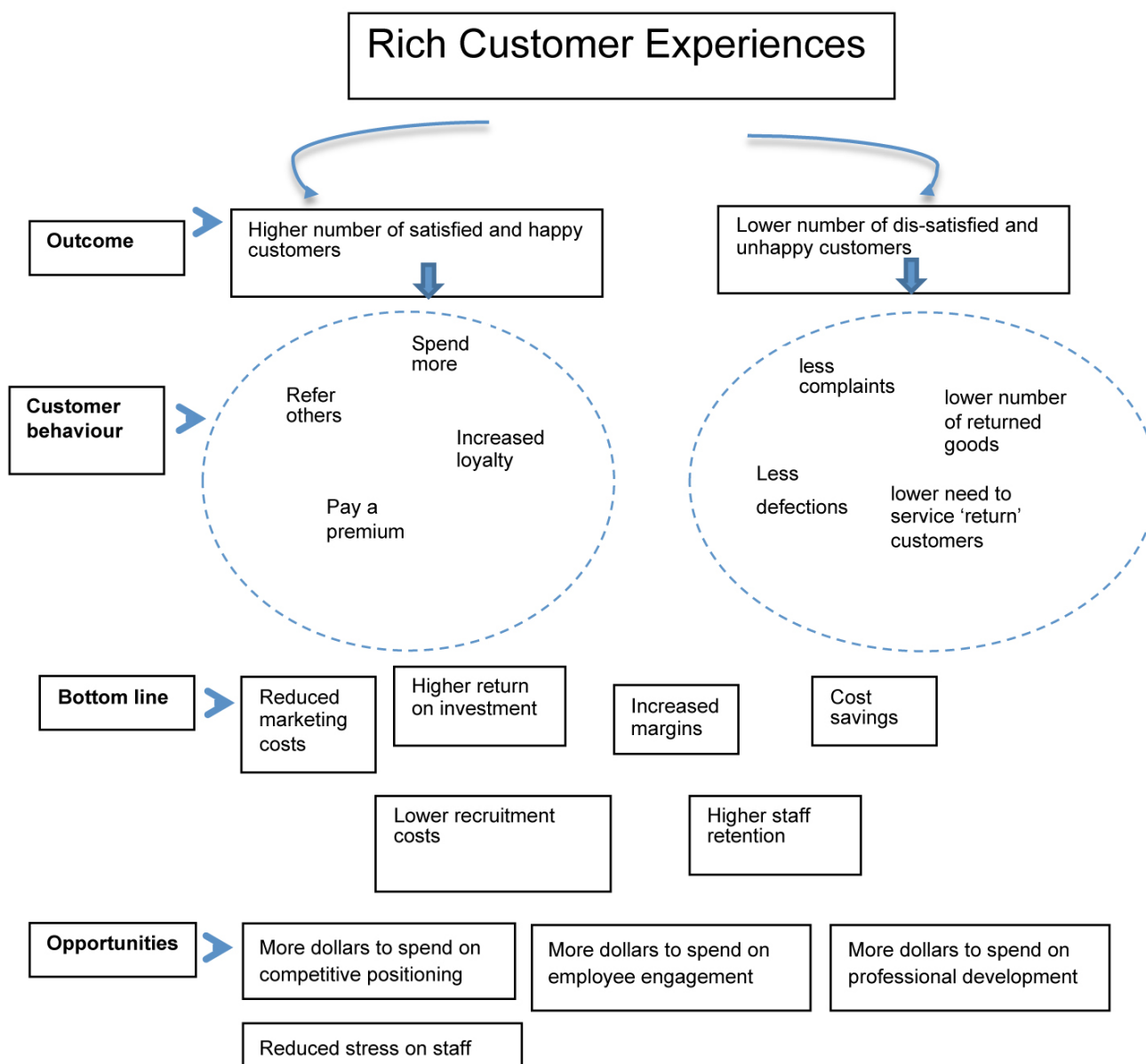
A business that does not deliver positive experiences for its customer faces an uphill climb to better its bottom line. It's that simple. But the solution is also simple.

The value of customer experiences

High quality customer service typically leads to increased levels of engagement and loyalty by customers, higher purchase rates, and increased word of mouth recommendations. Satisfied customers can also have a positive influence on business employees who in response gain an elevated sense of job satisfaction.

Research from the Harvard Business Review (2014) found customers who received the best experiences spend 140% more compared to those who received the poorest experience, and were almost twice as likely to remain loyal one year later than those receiving poor service.

Rich customer experiences are a must – they are what keep a business sustainable and optimised for growth.



Poor service leads to missed revenue

Figures presented by customer experience strategy, design and research company “Fifth Quadrant”, found that organisations without a Customer Experience strategy, churn customers and have higher costs. ‘Nine in 10 Australians switch to a competitor because of a poor experience and eight in 10 actively advise friends and family to avoid companies that have provided a poor service.’ www.arnnet.com.au/. Australians are also prepared to ‘pay 14% more for good, consistent customer experience.

Within the New Zealand banking sector, poor customer experiences contributed to an adverse impact to annual profits of between 8% and 12% (<http://www.ctmaworld.com/Blog/Index.htm>).

Investment in customer service goes beyond just a brand and a ‘smiles’ program

A common activity undertaken by business to improve their level of customer service is to invest in improving brand image, logos and brand identity. The temptation is to then sit back considering this to be enough. But logos, brand image and identity can only take a business so far – they are good for attracting people but what can make or break a business is the service when people arrive at the ‘front counter’ at the moment of truth.

Ken Irons (Market Leader) stated that up to 70% of a consumer’s brand experience is through the interactions they have with employees. A related example is of a UK Retailer who achieved a 9% increase in monthly sales just through a 1% increase in employee commitment (enterprise IG case history for CLF UK, 8 July 2004).

How an employee treats customers has amplified consequences in today’s world of instant and global communications where:

- your competition is but one click away
- your social accountability is exposed to a much wider audience
- your business behaviour no longer remains the focus of conversation within small groups of connected people but rather is voiced through the mega-phones of the WWW.

Going beyond a branding and image exercise, business might implement a ‘smiles program’ in an attempt to improve its customer service. While a good initiative, these programs are also not enough, especially if they are based on misleading mottos such as ‘the customer is always right’ or are directives implemented ‘by management’ with little employee engagement.

Customer experiences without meaningful employee engagement equals trouble

Any customer service initiative that does not have meaningful employee engagement has the potential to create a disengaged and disenfranchised culture that would rather snip and gossip than serve customers.

Such cultures can also reap financial and operational havoc through:

- Poor productivity and missing targets
- Poor product and service quality causing additional investment of resources
- Poor customer experiences leading to a lack of return business and negative exposure

- Lack of commitment to their job or on-going development causing increased operational stress through needing to replace positions and roles

To keep customers, the service they experience has to be more than ‘it wasn’t bad’ ... it needs to be shockingly good – it needs to delight and create positive affirmations and memory associations. And it needs to be consistent and reliable across different touch points at different times ... a service that customers can trust and rely on.

The customer service ambassador

Customer service can sometimes be seen as just ‘serving a customer’, almost as if it was a one-dimensional activity that ‘just needs to be done’. To such businesses customers represent inconvenience rather than value, and such attitudes can be a major failing of these businesses.

Too often there is a lot of rhetoric around improving customer experiences with minimal supporting behaviour. For example, employees might be asked to deliver great customer service and yet, behind the scenes, these same employees are being subject to restructures and / or deprived of resources to achieve just that.

The service role has far more responsibilities than that of a one-dimensional smiling face – it includes problem-spotting and problem-solving, listening, observing, resourcefulness, empathy, and value creation.

Given their influence over customer experiences, the role of service line employees is better seen as brand ambassadors rather than as ‘just’ customer service officers or clerks or service assistants. They represent the brand and the effort of everyone in that business.

Customer service is about doing something of value for your customer in a way that customers want it done and that also takes consideration of how best you can deliver this. It is the behavior of your business that matters to customers – what you do and how you do it.

An example of the importance of getting to know your customer and how they want to be treated was discussed in the Harvard Business Review (July-August 2014) and involved the fashion business Eileen Fisher. This business came to realise that the high-touch approach that worked well with their 50-something customers did not go so well for their 40-something customers who preferred a more transactional and distant type relationship.

A business will experience different connections and relationships with different customers – and it is up to the business to know what this is - e.g. some customers will enjoy an intimate relationship, some a flirting type relationship and for others it might just be a virtual distant relationship.

Another example is the famous motorcycle, fashion and accessories company Harley-Davidson who has a team of employees who spend an average 280 days a year on the road with customers not to sell Harleys but to develop intimacy.

Collaboration

Think schools of fish, pods of dolphins or pods of orcas who work together for the benefit of the collective, and this reflects a key quality of collaboration. Individuals and work teams working together for their individual benefit and for that of the wider business.

Collaboration includes individuals and teams:

- Working together

A disengaged and disenfranchised culture would rather snip and gossip than serve customers.

To some businesses customers represent inconvenience rather than value.

*The service role has far more responsibilities than the one-dimensional smiling face.
The role of service line employees are better seen as brand ambassadors rather than as 'just' customer service officers or clerks or service assistants.*

Empowered employees equals value

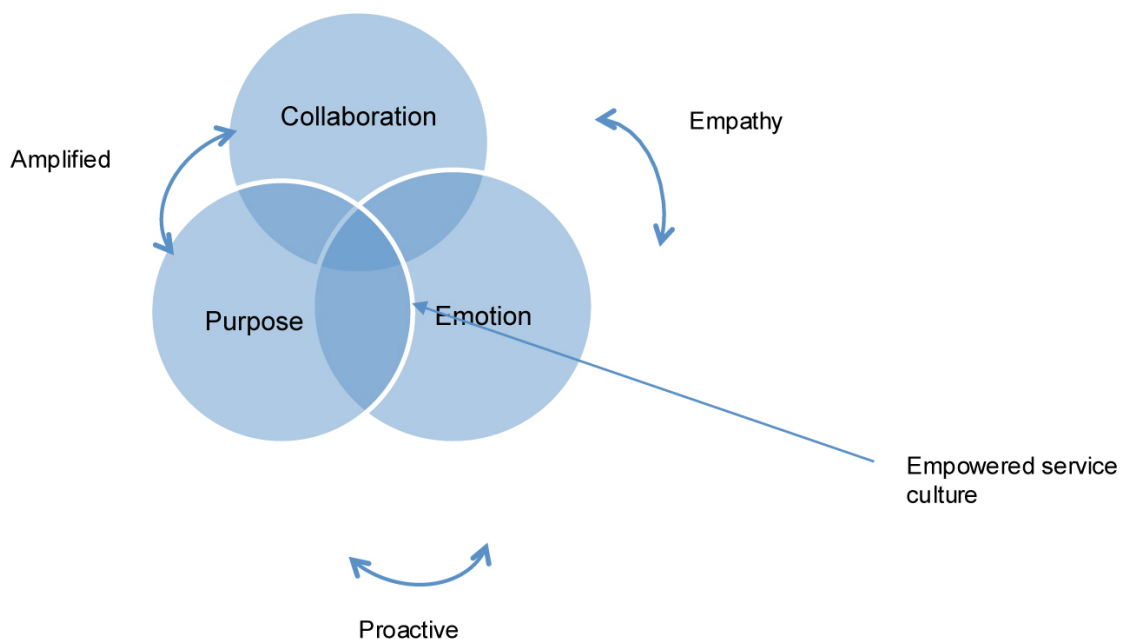
Generating value for a business is the ultimate aim of an employee, but not at the expense of receiving something meaningful in return. The more an employee feels engaged with the purpose and activity of a business the greater the potential that they generate value for that business.

	<u>behaviour</u>		<u>value</u>	<u>value to business</u>	
↑	Contributors	ramped up energy	x10	Value Generators	↑ empowered
	Advocates		x8	Collaborators	
	Spruikers		x6	Promoter	
↑	Supporters	energy in favour	x4	Passive team player	
	Mechanicals		x2	Going through the motions	
	Spectators		x1	Disengaged	
↓	Whiners	energy against	-	Dissenters	↓ disempowered
	Adversaries		-	Blame culture	
	Saboteurs		-	Rebellious	

Rich customer experiences represent a solid, strong and sustainable business. Within this white paper such positive experiences take us well up into the top third of the green zone.

Elements in crafting a culture that creates rich customer experiences

Distilling the above discussion into a simple model that captures the essence of an empowered service culture focuses around 3 key words – emotion, purpose and collaboration.



- Supporting each other
- Learning from each other
- Rewarding and coaching each other

Robert Safian (2014 – fast company)

By having people working as collaborative units, business is better able to avoid duplication of effort, leverage strengths, focus these strengths on key priorities, and behave with agility.

Coupled with purpose this collaborative effort amplifies the value generating ability of your business.

Emotion

What keeps us in a relationship are the positive emotive connections we develop and experience and that we almost crave. And relationships are where things are at when focusing on customers – as reflected in often touted phrases such as ‘customer churn’, ‘return business’ and ‘lifelong value’.

Emotion and collaboration = empathy

But this talk needs to be backed up with relevant behaviour ... with a behaviour that respects the customer and demonstrates empathy for their concerns and needs. A business that ensures their experiences have an emotive ingredient, have an understanding of their needs and wants, and engages with employees heads into the upper third of the above model ... a zone of higher ratings and repeat business.

Generally the more positive the emotion amongst individuals the more likely they are to be happy, content and productive. Conversely, negative emotions can bring about adverse and disruptive energy.

Emotion also connects to the sense of meaning people gain from their work, which in turn can have a strong influence on motivation and how employees deliver customer experiences. For example, employees are increasingly motivated by factors beyond financial remuneration such as contributing to social and environmental good, or by improving their ‘work-life’ balance which might include having increased flexibility for family commitments.

Purpose

Lacking any sense of purpose when delivering customer service can lead to frustration, a service experience that lacks relevancy and one that falls short of the potential to add value to all parties involved.

Purpose is being clear on the type of experiences provided within the organisation and the why a business is providing these. In the words of Friedrich Nietzsche *“He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how”*. In a similar vein Jeff Bezos (CEO of Amazon) said:... *“we are stubborn on vision. We are flexible on details”*.

Being clear on purpose is so important for a business. In a world of rampant change the most stable businesses are those where purpose acts as their ballast.

The following quotes from the magazine Fast Company provide testimonial to the importance of purpose:

“Not long ago, I gave a talk to a group of pharma executives in which I emphasised the generosity and clarity of their purpose: to help improve and extend people’s lives. A CEO came up to me afterward to thank me, admitting that mission often gets forgotten in the quest for sales growth and other financial metrics. Yet there’s no reason that mission and monetary results have to be at odds. In an era of rapid change, companies that operate with a sense of purpose have a competitive edge. Businesses as diverse as Chipotle, PepsiCo, and AgLocal are changing our economy by envisioning a better future.”

Proactive employees are best placed to deliver rich customer experiences

Within this same context of change is the increasingly ineffective value of annual performance reviews and corresponding disproportionate efforts around distant goal setting. In today’s world and even more so in tomorrow’s, business needs to make continuous and informed improvements that reflect the continuous state of change that is influencing customer behaviour.

Often positions, roles and titles are restructured to be more customer-centric but decision making pathways remain as before – so in effect nothing has changed.

Likewise, there needs to be consideration around the decision making ability of employees. Often positions, roles and titles are restructured to be more customer-centric but decision making pathways remain as before – so in effect nothing has changed.

To improve the effectiveness of a customer-centric business there also needs to be an improvement in the effectiveness with how critical decisions are made and restrictions around decision making. An empowered employee who can make critical decisions when delivering customer experiences bodes well for positive outcomes. And helps them generate as personalized a service as possible for their customers.

Employees need to be inspired by their interactions with customers so that they have the attitude of being present with each and every customer. They need to have much shorter ‘feedback loops’. And they need to be included in communications about decisions made in other areas of the business. For example, if the marketing team is planning on campaigns to generate increased customer activity, then involving service personnel will maximise their preparedness in delivering positive experiences for these customers, reduce the potential for causing stress and foster an energised collaborative spirit.

A significant danger is the existence of a bureaucratic structure which is afraid to relax their hold on the ability of employees to work in real-time. Within such structures the effectiveness of employees can be akin to licking stamps. It can be a demotivating, ineffective use of talent and leave a sour taste in the experiences being delivered for customers.

Case Studies

The Physio Co (Australia)

The Physio Co has a simple vision - *to help oldies stay mobile, safe and happy*. And they do this every day for thousands of Australian aged care residents through physiotherapy treatments, assessments, care plans, chronic pain management & education.

Together with the simplicity of its vision is its power. The Physio Co has consistently been in the top 50 places to work but in 2014 achieved the big number 1, when it was voted the best place to work in Australia by the Business Review Weekly.

It has also been recognised for excellence in customer service in two successive years. In receiving these awards I’d ask the question whether there is a correlation between an empowered service culture and the excellence in customer service. And after reading the following from their website I’d say ‘yes’.

“Culture is a huge deal at The Physio Co. We love our team, love our resi’s and do everything we can to keep residents, facility staff, families and our team members loving their work and their lives.”

Little wonder that with such a culture it delivers excellent customer service.

***Purpose helps a business know what to focus on as much as what to avoid and treat as distractions.
Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do. Steve Jobs***

What Physio does well

- It places a high value on the emotive elements of their workplace
- It values their employees and the importance of a strong and positive culture
- It helps people love the work they do
- It loves their customers and have a commitment to their well being

Waving hello when saying goodbye

Within many indigenous cultures there is no word for goodbye. They believe that you will always meet again because your relationship continues infinitum. This white paper promotes this same philosophy with respect to customers. You cannot end a relationship with customers. They will always have some memory of their experience with you and this memory determines whether this on-going relationship will be positive or negative.

A 'parting hello' from this white paper is the message that rich customer experiences of the kind that builds loyal advocates requires a service culture empowered to seek out value opportunities. A culture in which the decisions of individual employees contribute to the collective benefit of themselves, business and customer. A culture that takes responsibility for its actions and does not engage in subvert, passive aggressive or even overtly aggressive forms of protest toward the business. A culture that is proud to be part of a story that seeks to create positive experiences for its customers.

And like good stories, a positive experience lives on ... remembering that a relationship never ends.

***Within a bureaucratic structure the effectiveness of employees can be akin to licking stamps.
It can be a demotivating and ineffective use of talent, and can leave a sour taste in the experiences being delivered for customers.***

John Pastorelli

My passion is working with businesses to enrich and enhance their service culture so as to deliver better value for both the customer and business.

I love this focus area as it brings into play conversational skills, customer service principles and creative thinking. It also promotes the importance of fostering rich and meaningful relationships to ensure a business remains strong, sustainable and optimised for growth.

I've been fortunate to work on a range of exciting projects and learn from a number of very clever people. These projects included being a member of the original start-up team for BridgeClimb where my responsibility was to help craft the 'on the steel' experience and build the team of Climb Leaders that would deliver this experience.

I have worked throughout Australia with all levels of government departments, private enterprises including multinationals, multicultural and Indigenous communities, regional towns and communities, and not for profit groups. I've also facilitated training workshops in New Zealand, Scotland and Greece.

From the Editor

John kindly provided me this article to publish. I have known John for over 15 years and he is always generous with his time and knowledge. John's style is very engaging with a focus on giving the visitor the best experience, not the 'scientific interpretation' that ACKMA pushes to increase understanding, awareness and passion for caves and karst. They are not mutually exclusive - they are complementary. We should not lose sight of giving people a good time as we educate them (and collect their money to operate our cave sites!). His website has lots of great resources for stimulate discussion. See www.johnpastorelli.com.au



*Cathie Plowman, David Morgans, John Pastorelli
and Ann Augusteyn, Capricorn Caves May 2016
Photo: Steve Bourne*

TE ANAU - FIORDLAND 2017 ACKMA AGM

Neil Collinson

This is a completely new location for an ACKMA event – Fiordland - Te Wahi Pounamu World Heritage Area.

Combine the AGM weekend with a visit to an iconic region of New Zealand. Te Anau is gateway to Fiordland the starting point for day tours to Milford or Doubtful Sound. The AGM will be based in the township of Te Anau and a number of field trips will be scheduled to occur over an extended weekend programme, providing a range of caving options. These will include Te Anau Glowworm Caves, Aurora Caves, Luxmore alpine caves area, St Peters Cave and Clifden Caves. The Glowworm Caves is the only developed show cave experience. Access to other caves can be challenging due to the terrain and weather and as such some of the caving options will become day trip expeditions requiring a good level of physical fitness and ability to tramp a few kilometres in bush, uphill on unformed routes. The caves routes will not be technical but will be colder than Australia. A real highlight in most caves will be water, with underground rivers and streams active in the larger cave systems. To maximise participation, access to caves will include boat, jet boat and helicopter options and this will also allow for various combinations of budget and fitness levels. A nature guide workshop will also be scheduled, and will provide a unique networking opportunity in Fiordland.

This workshop will be of shorter duration than previous guide schools and will be integrated as part of the extended AGM program rather than standalone event. There will also be alternative options to caving for those that want to experience Milford or Doubtful Sound, however these are also easily bolted onto a visit to Te Anau pre or post ACKMA activity, and accommodation (full range of options) will also be available at a single site. There are multiple easy transport options to Te Anau from Queenstown International Airport (2 hours' drive from Te Anau).

Full details for this meeting will be in the next issue



Left. Luxmore alpine area

Above. Light streaming through a cave entrance at Te Anau

Below. Aurora Cave





