

EDITORIAL

Steve Bourne

This is possibly the best balanced journal I have had the pleasure of producing. It covers a range of topics. I have read the proposals and nomination documents for the Chillagoe - Mitchell-Palmer karst area and in this issue we have a great summary article by David Gillieson. The issue of listing a site for its heritage values, whether that is world, national, state or local, always raises plenty of discussion. I understand the proposal for this section of northern Queensland is no different. I have been to Chillagoe twice and learnt a lot more about the area from David's article, which was first published in the *North Queensland Naturalist*. I am grateful the editors of this journal gave ACKMA permission to reproduce it in our journal.

Calthemites - what are they? You all know what they are and have all seen many of them, but possibly never had a name for them. Garry K. Smith's study of calthemites provides some great material for cave guides to share with visitors. It is also a nice little science lesson in the chemistry of limestone and concrete secondary deposits. That gives a clue to what calthemites are - read on!

Kent Henderson provides two reports of caves in the Philippines. (I had to check multiple sources for the correct spelling of Philippines, my computer auto correct insisted it is one 'l' and two 'p's and I was sure it was the other way around. One for the computer.) One showcases some very good management, the other somewhat less so.

I was contacted some months ago by Tim Moore, Justice in the NSW Environment Court and good friend of Andy Spate. Tim has been a long term ACKMA member, over 25 years, and said he had never contributed to the journal. He has provided an article on the Blue Grotto on the island of Capri, I imagine a site few ACKMA members have visited. I am sure there are many other long term members yet to produce their first ACKMA article. I will be pleased to receive yours!!

ACKMA Journal 103 introduced a new format with some changes including smaller font and line spacings. As stated in this journal, it places approximately 20% more text on each page, but is barely noticeable. I didn't receive howls of protest (zero feedback) that the font was too small and difficult to read, so will continue with this format.

Intrepid traveller Greg Middleton featured in an airlines magazine titled *"Highlife"*, with a story regarding his caving in the lava tubes of Mauritius. It was a good feature of Greg's work when, in 1998 while working for the Department of the Environment, Mauritius, he spent 5 months exploring, photographing and surveying 140 caves with a total passage length of over 16.5km. Nice work if you can get it!

The 17th International Congress of Speleology is rapidly approaching, I bet very rapidly for the organisers. The second circular is available on the conference website, see details



Capricorn caves owner Ann Augusteyn recently caught up with ACKMA life member Chester Shaw at Capricorn. I assume Chester was escaping the cold, wet Tasmanian winter.

below. One issue that is being worked on very seriously is minimising the risk of introducing the White-nose Syndrome fungus into Australasia. As members would be aware, this fungus has had a devastating effect on cave-dwelling bat species in the USA and Canada over the past decade. Some field trips, such as the one Liz Reed and I are running to Naracoorte, will provide all equipment. We will still have strict decontamination regimes for boots and other equipment brought into the country. I ask all cave managers to make themselves aware of the risk and the protocols being put in place by the conference organisers, and consider what other measures may be necessary for their cave site.

Also in 2017 is the ACKMA AGM, to be held during the first week of May at Te Anau. The program will be slightly extended rather than the usual weekend AGM format with some elements specifically for cave guides. Next year is shaping up as a big year for those interested in caves so start planning (and saving now).

On a sad note, the caving world lost Ken Grimes in a tragic accident on his farm. Many thoughts were shared on the ACKMA email list, all reflecting that Ken had a wealth of knowledge on cave and karst matters, and was always generous with his time in sharing this. I look with sadness at my emails I had been sending back and forth to Ken on an issue, knowing that no more responses will be coming. The December journal will contain an obituary and tribute articles to Ken.

17th International Congress of Speleology Registration is now open Early-bird registration rates open until 31 January 2017

The congress will be a once in a lifetime event for Australian and New Zealand cavers as this event is unlikely to be held in the Australasian region again in our lifetimes. The congress will provide tremendous opportunities for local cavers to meet with international cavers, hear their presentations and make invaluable connections for visiting caves in other countries. With less than five months until early-bird registration closes, it's time to talk to your speleological colleagues about the many benefits of attending the 17th ICS. Full details at www.speleo2017.com