

Editorial

This edition kicks off with the second instalment of Steve Bourne's description of his trip to the caves of Vietnam and Laos. His description is vivid and, particularly, his photographs are spectacular. In the March edition next year, his caving journey will continue after he crosses the border into Laos.

There is, then, a tribute to a long standing and active ACKMA committee member, Ann Augusteyn.

In "Around the show caves", we have some articles from familiar places. Interestingly, we also have a contribution from the Cutta Cutta Caves in the Northern Territory.

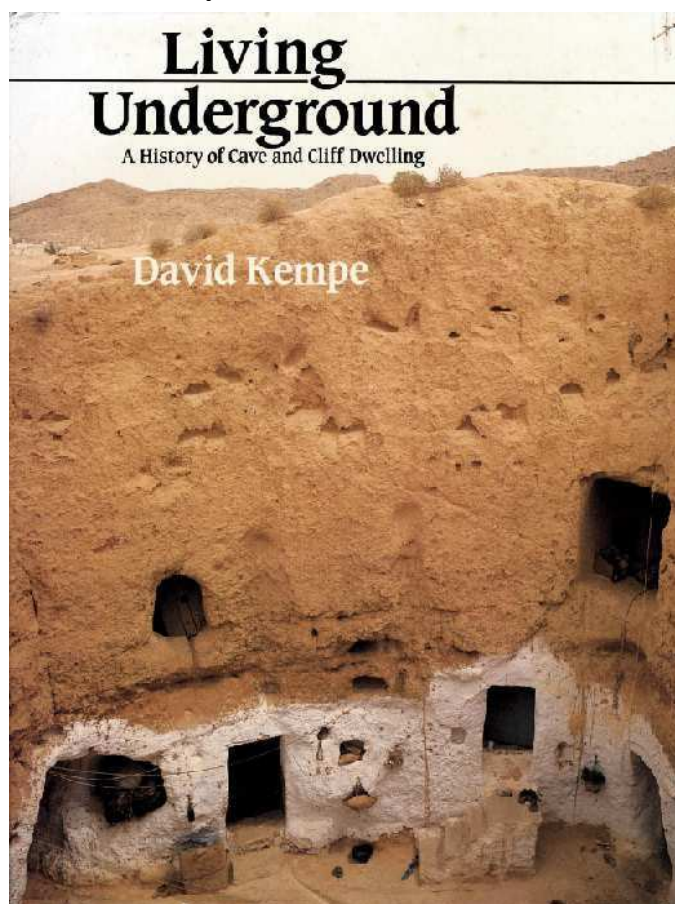
Our "Mystery shopper" article in this edition is unusual in two respects. First, it is written by a younger contributor than I have recollectd from my past reading of this journal over more than 20 years. It has been written by a young person who visited the show caves of Tasmania during the October School holidays. During those holidays, visits were undertaken to each of the four show caves in that state. This gives rise to a longer article than in the first two "Mystery shopper" contributions in past journals. The reflections on the three northern caves are entirely positive, while our reviewer found a visit to Hastings Caves a little disappointing for the reasons outlined in this review. In addition to comments about the guiding experienced, the reviewer's parent noticed what appeared to be a safety lapse which could have potential adverse consequences if not rectified.

We also have two pieces from John Brush on lava caves. The shorter of the two informs us of additional protection that has been provided to the lava caves and lava field at Harmans Valley in Victoria while his longer contribution, together with its fascinating suite of accompanying photographs, provides a comprehensive tourist guide for potential visitors to the lava cave fields of Northern California.

We also have a short piece from Professor Andy Baker on the impacts of drought on groundwater recharge and the consequential changes that arise to impact on Wellington Caves.

In the September edition, I noted that the Association had offered to provide a contribution to the costs of interpretive signage for the Moa Bone Point Cave and Moncks Cave near Christchurch. I indicated that I expected that an article dealing with the history of the caves, and their circumstances after the devastating Christchurch earthquake in 2011, could be expected in this edition of the Journal. Unfortunately, multifaceted negotiations need to be completed before the interpretive signage text can be finalised and the signs erected. As a consequence, publication of a story on the significance of these caves and on the installation of the proposed interpretive signage must be postponed to a later edition of this Journal.

I have included material concerning an advertisement that appeared in the newsletter of the US National Caves Association. The advertisement was for a house for sale in Arkansas. I am unaware of any Australian equivalents (the underground homes in the opal fields of Cooper Pedy in South Australia and White Cliffs in New South Wales pale in comparison!). Since my teenage years - a very, very long time ago - I have been fascinated by the adaptation of caves or cave-like spaces for human occupation (whether as dwellings or for some other human use purpose). One of my favourite cave related books is entitled *Living Underground*, authored by David Kempe - a volume first published in 1988. When I am short of contributions in a future journal (an event which I hope does not eventuate), I may well inflict a review of this volume on my readers!



Finally, but a matter of significance in the life of the Association, Nicholas McIntyre has been busy in his role as the convener of our 2019 Guides' School and Annual General Meeting - both to be held at Naracoorte in South Australia in May next year. The Guides' School will be conducted over three days commencing on Wednesday 15 May and will be followed by the ACKMA Annual General Meeting over the following weekend (with the formalities taking place on the Saturday morning). The centre pages of this edition set out information about both the Guides' School and the AGM weekend together with a registration form. A further, separate copy of this material will also be circulated, by email, in late January 2019.