

Editorial

This edition carries news of two longstanding Association life members. First, the news concerning one is conveyed with sadness, being a valedictory for one of our founding members, Chester Shaw. Andy's tribute to Chester appears later (although Andy has yet to explain to me how you can visit 0.8 of a cave!).

I first met Chester when I travelled to the Mole Creek Caves with Andy to act as an unpaid field assistant for his survey of Kubla Khan (having, as noted in the June 2019 edition, foisted myself on the survey as a condition of my releasing of Andy to the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service for this purpose).

Chester's enthusiasm for caves, and particularly his cave world in the Mole Creek karst area, was evident from the few short conversations I had with him on that occasion. I subsequently met him several times when taking my wife and, separately, my older children to the tourist caves at Mole Creek and to explore Croesus Cave. His enthusiasm remained undiminished. His loss is a sad one for our Association.

On a far brighter note, we also celebrate the recognition of our President in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours list. Andy has been recognised for his service to cave and karst conservation, not only in Australia but also internationally, by being made a Member of the Order of Australia. The notification to him of his award expressly noted (and recognises) the role he plays in our Association. The conferring of the AM upon him not only recognises his significant contribution over many decades, but also adds lustre to our Association.

As I noted in my report to the AGM, my ability to produce a quality Journal across the four editions since I became editor has been made possible, in no small part, because of contributions from Andy Spate, John Brush and Steve Bourne. That assistance continues for this edition, with significant contributions from each of John and Andy. In this edition, John writes about his travels in Laos and recent developments at Cotter Cave in the ACT.

In addition, we have an article from Mary Traves concerning Tantanoola Dolomite and I have written about the visits which my family and I made, in December 2018, to four World Heritage Neolithic sites on the island of Malta. Finally, we have several short pieces reported in the "Around the show caves" section.

The digital future of the Journal

First discussed as a probability by a meeting of the ACKMA Committee in Margaret River in 2018, a decision was made at the recent committee meeting in Naracoorte, that, in light of increased production costs and slowly declining numbers of those wanting to receive a printed copy of the Journal, the Journal will cease print production and become an entirely digital publication with the June 2020 edition.

For my own part, having remained a print subscriber since the introduction of the digital option, and not having read any digital edition until I became your editor, I had not realised the dramatic qualitative improvement in my reading experience until I read my own-produced, first full-colour, digital edition. Seeing the images in colour was revelatory! Although my epiphany came about solely because of the necessity of the role I had agreed to undertake, having found the signpost to Damascus, there was no doubt in my mind that digital is the only way to go for the future.

However, rather than effecting this change abruptly, your committee considered it was appropriate to give a year's notice of the fact that this change will take place. Although there will be, undoubtedly, some nostalgia for those (like me) who have remained print edition subscribers, the time has come when we must embrace the (brave and not-so-new) digital world for our publication.

Back copies of the Journal

At the recent AGM in Naracoorte, Steve Bourne and I completed the final element of his handover of the editorship of this Journal to me. This comprised my relieving him of the boxes of accumulated back copies he held, dating back over the period since the publication of Steve's first Journal.

Prior to handing over the four or five boxes of past editions, Steve gave those attending the AGM the opportunity to forage amongst the back copies to retrieve those which they might wish to take with them. Although this resulted in my load being considerably lightened, I was still left with a substantial number of back copies across an eclectic range of Journal editions. They have now been brought back to Sydney. I will be compiling a list of back copies that I now have in storage in my Chambers. I propose to publish a list of them in the September 2019 Journal and will make them available, on a "first in, first served", postage-free basis (either as individual copies or in sets) to those members who are interested to receive them.

The 2019 Guides' School and AGM at Naracoorte

A survey was taken from those participating in the Guides' School and material concerning the results will be in the September. For this edition, Mark Delane provides a Shakespearean summary of the two events!

The 2020 Conference and AGM venue

It is now confirmed that the 2020 ACKMA Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held at Jenolan between 2 and 8 May next year. Scott Melton gave a presentation on this to the Naracoorte AGM and several slides from his PowerPoint presentation are later reproduced. Further information will appear in forthcoming Journals.