

## EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

I am absolutely delighted to advise that ACKMA member **Anne Atkinson** became a **Member of the Order of Australia** (AM) in the Australia Day Honour List on 26 January, "for service to geology through pioneering field work on the origin of the Undara volcanic system in North Queensland, for bringing national and international attention to these unique natural features, and for her sustained efforts towards establishing their effective protection". Warmest congratulations, Anne, from all ACKMA members!!

In mid April, six karst luminaries will be heading to **Christmas Island** in the Indian Ocean to work with ACKMA member Paul Meek, of *Parks Australia*. Aside from generally assessing the island's karst, they will also be advising on potential tourist cave development. Andy Spate and Rauleigh Webb will be looking at general management issues, Bill Humphries (WA Museum) and Stefan Eberhard at the island's bio-speleology, and Dan O'Toole (a mining engineer, ex-VSA member) and Ken Grimes will be looking at the karst geology and karst stability issues. Ken Grimes has promised an anecdotal article on the visit in a future ACKMA Journal.

**Sydney University Speleological Society** is celebrating its **50th birthday** at Caves House, Jenolan Caves on the 1st, 2nd, & 3rd May. SUSS has entirely booked out Caves House for the event. Activities include wild cave trips, some tourist cave trips, the presentation of the Spider Cave map (after 20 years of surveying it), slide and photographic presentations, and a Saturday night function with several keynote speakers. In addition, SUSS's Tuglow Caves book is expected to be finished after 10 years in preparation and will be launched during the weekend. It will include the first publication of a complete Tuglow Map. All are welcome to attend the weekend, and inquiries can be directed to any SUSS member or the Jenolan Caves Guides Office.

The Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust has recently advertised for a **new Manager for Jenolan Caves**, following Andrew Fletcher's appointment to permanent duties in the Trust Office at Bathurst. Interviews were held in late February, with an appointment due to be finalized in March. I will advise the name of successful applicant in the June ACKMA Journal.

Recently, **Johansen's Cave at Rockhampton**, Queensland, has received management attention. As many will know, this cave is a major habitat for the endangered Ghost Bat. Local QNPWS ranger, Graham Russell (until recently stationed at Chillagoe), accompanied by ACKMA members Joe and Dianne Vavryn, visited the cave to assess its gating. The purpose of the trip was to see if there was a better place to put the inner gate. The gate on the cave's second crawl gets vandalized every year and this year vandals have removed it completely. A new gate position further into the cave is now being considered, and hopefully will eventuate.

The **4th Karst Studies Seminar** held recently at Mole Creek Caves, Tasmania (see article herein) was a great success, with over 25 attendees. This was less than at previous Seminars at Buchan (1992), Wombeyan (1994), and Naracoorte (1996), but the tyranny (and cost) of crossing Bass Strait was doubtless the cause of the smaller numbers. Many excellent papers were presented, and our sincere thanks goes to Henry and Rosie Shannon for their excellent organization.

A bit of extra **Tassie News**. Ian Houshold has received a tenure in his role at PW&H Karst Officer. Stefan Eberhard, after fulfilling a contract at Cape Range in WA, was until recently back in Tasmania under contract to do further research in Exit Cave.

The **5th Karst Studies Seminar** will be held at Wellington Caves, New South Wales, from 4 -7 February, 2000. The organizing committee is Dave Gillieson (convenor), Ernst Holland, Armstrong Osborne and Kent Henderson. The plan is to have paper sessions in the mornings followed by afternoon and evening excursions to the karsts and caves of Wellington, Cliefden, Borenore and other delights. We are hoping for support from the Wellington Shire Council and the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust. There will be a post-seminar two day excursion to Jenolan for those interested. Further details will be announced in this journal and on the ACKMA and Ozcavers email networks in due course.

**Abercrombie Caves** in NSW continues to be a cultural hub in that State. Recently, a major exhibition of June McLucas' cave art was held there, with great success, having been officially opened by our own Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith. On 22 March, the Kowmung Music Festival will be holding one of its seasons' recitals in the Arch Cave, with a program of excellent classical music. It starts at 2.30pm, and if you are planning to be in the area, call in!

A few "long knives" are out in the **Augusta-Margaret River karst area** in Western Australia at the present time. The merits or otherwise of matter is not one for editorial comment herein, more especially as ACKMA has several members associated with both the Augusta-Margaret River Tourist Association (AMRTA) and the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). Nonetheless, one hopes that the issues will be resolved amicably, with the primary consideration being the best interests of the karst resource. The matters involved have to some extent been played out in the local press. Located adjacent hereto are a number of press articles which, to extent that one is prepared to believe the 4th estate, lay out the views of both "sides" in the debate.

The **Naracoorte ACKMA Conference Organizing Committee** is holding its second meeting at Hamilton on Sunday 8 March. It will probably be passed by the time members receive this Journal,

but details of deliberations will subsequently appear on the Naracoorte Conference Home Pages on the Internet, posted to the ACKMA list, and in the June Journal.

**Waitomo Caves** is full of interest at the moment, especially in view of the foreshadowed re-opening of Ruakuri Cave (see John Ash's article herein). Quite a few New Zealand ACKMA luminaries are flying over the ACKMA General Meeting at Jenolan in June. Great stuff! And speaking of the said meeting, the **1998 ACKMA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

will be held at Jenolan Caves, NSW, on the June Queens Birthday Weekend. The Agenda, associated documentation, and Committee Nomination Forms are inserted in this Journal. Hope to see as many members as possible present!

The next issue of the ACKMA Journal (June) will be the **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**. In addition to the usual features, it will contain a number of retrospective and historically reflective articles and, just perhaps, a full colour cover.... Don't miss it!!