

EDITORIAL

First an apology. In the last Journal (No.40), we accidentally printed the Arthur Clarke article on the "Proposal of Quarry Limestone in Mt. Cripps Karst, Tasmania" that appeared in the previous Journal (No. 39). This was a printer's error, but that said neither I, nor our sub-editor, Dianne Vavryn, picked it up. I wonder how many members did...?!? We sincerely apologize to Arthur, and the correct article, duly updated further, appears herein.

The **14th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management** (*Karst Management into the Third Millennium*) approaches!! To be held between 29 April and 5 May 2001, it is not to be missed under any circumstances!! Our Conference Convenor, Mick Chalker, advises that registrations are coming in steadily. Please note again that **the closing date for Registration (without penalty) is 1 February 2001** – only 4-6 weeks away!!! Get organised, quickly!! A further copy of the Program and Registration Form is again inserted in this Journal edition.

The **Post Conference Study Tours** are also well advanced in planning. Details of the tour to Cooleman/Yarrangobilly (organizer: Andy Spate) are herein, and details of that to Jenolan/Abercrombie (organizer: Ernie Holland) will appear in the next (March) Journal. Remember, there are only ten places on each tour – first in, best dressed!!

Warmest congratulations are in order. Firstly, to Chester and Kay Shaw on their marriage – on 9 September in St. Mary's Church, Hagley, Tasmania. I am advised it was a wonderful day! I was invited to attend, but very unfortunately I couldn't make it. However, a number of other ACKMA members were present. A photo of the blushing bridegroom, with bride (the reverse of that normally expected, I am reliably informed!) is opposite!

Secondly, warmest best wishes go to Mia Thurgate upon her appointment as Karst Resources Manager of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust (JCRT), in succession to Ernst Holland. Ernie is a hard act to follow, but I am certain Mia will do a fantastic job! We await with interest to see if an appointment will be made to Mia's old position as the JCRT's Karst Resources Officer, and if so who.....

The big news of the quarter is the \$600,000 funding awarded to Buchan Caves for its long-overdue upgrade! – the lead article herein!! In other Buchan news, a successful guide exchange was recently held with Naracoorte caves. Buchan Guide George Bradford (an ACKMA member) exchanged with Veronica Pfitzner from Naracoorte. The exchange was reportedly very successful at both ends.

We have, or have recently had, ACKMA members flitting about internationally. Elery Hamilton-Smith is recently back from Slovenia. Just back from China are Brian Clark, Nick White and Arthur Clarke, who represented ACKMA at the annual meeting of the International Show Caves Association. All had a great time, and many important contacts were made. As foreshadowed in my last Editorial, Arthur continued on to do some serious caving in Southern China. Related articles are herein.

Speaking of Conferences, Elery Hamilton-Smith and a number of ACKMA members attended the **Limestone Quarrying and Conservation Workshop** at Bathurst (6 - 9 November). Largely organised by Elery, it brought together miners (coming from most States) and karst conservationists. Andy Spate advises me it was "the best three days at any conference he has ever attended". Big statement! – and fleshed out more in this edition's *Andysez*, elsewhere herein. ACKMA Fellow, and Australia's *resident cave lighting expert*, Neil Kell, attended the Cave Lighting Conference in Budapest, Hungary, in November, to present his paper: "Cave Lighting - A Designer's Perspective". I'll endeavour to publish his paper, or at least a report from Neil, in the next Journal (March 2000).

The underground upgrading of Jenolan Caves, NSW, continues. Manager Steve Reilly reports that the Lucas Cave re-vamp is on track (to use a pun). Most of the cave now possesses new stainless steel railing, and this will be completed before Christmas. A full re-lighting of the cave will occur during 2001. Of course, the Chifley and Imperial Caves have already been re-lit. Other recent work includes the water cleaning of Orient Cave. After the Lucas Cave is completed, the focus will move to the upgrading of the Pool of Cerberus Cave, and finishing the partly re-lit River Cave. That will only leave the Jubilee, Orient and Temple of Baal Caves for further attention.

The feasibility, and various options, for a self-guided cave/tour at Jenolan are still being considered by the JCRT. My views (which I know are shared by many others) concerning using the Nettle & Arch Caves (former adjoining Jenolan Show Caves) for this purpose are well known, and unnecessary to repeat here (though I just did, I suppose!). The "Expressions of Interest", called for by the JCRT for constructing an aerial gondola into Jenolan, have closed. I understand there were several "expressions" and discussions are currently occurring with interested parties.

The New Zealand scene bubbles along. The full upgrade of the Waitomo Museum of Caves is now complete – see the article herein. It has now been confirmed that I will be in New Zealand for about five days in early March, and I expect to be able to spend a couple of days at Waitomo. No, I'm not giving exact dates, to avoid having the roads into town blocked off....!!

In recent news from Wee Jasper, NSW, a slippage of a large-ish rock out of sediments at the entrance to Carey's Cave has caused its temporary closure. A geo-tech expert has inspected it and he foresees no difficulty in remedial work. Carey's Cave is expected to be re-opened in time for the Christmas season.

Speaking of Wee Jasper Caves, mention was made in the last Journal of the accident suffered by Geoff Kell, Manager of Carey's Cave. Happily, Geoff is now back on both legs, with the occasional use of a crutch, and should be fully fit within six months. The following *advertisement* comes from an unnamed operative in the area:

"Cave Managers!! Looking around for something exciting to spend that spare cash on? Introducing the *Bat Luge* - this is not a plaster karst! Next time public demand forces your guides to conduct cave tours with a broken

leg why not utilise one of these handy appliances developed at Carey's Cave, Wee Jasper! Stairodynamically designed, this stylish accoutrement is constructed of sturdy 150 mm PVC pipe cut and moulded by discerning craftsmen, sumptuously lined with foam rubber and elegantly secured with some old sash-cord. The *Bat Luge* may be quickly attached, allowing your guide to traverse stairs on his buttocks without (hopefully) further damage to the offending limb. The astute cave administrator will also immediately recognise the great potential for increased entertainment value for the visiting public. Guaranteed to spice up the

most boring of cave tours! Available in white....customised artwork on application. Not recommended for cave tours involving more than 1000 steps."

By way of an editorial note, the person in adjacent photo showing the *Bat Luge* in operation in Carey's Cave does look suspiciously like Geoff Kell....!! Incidentally, those attending the next ACKMA Conference will have the opportunity of inspecting Carey's Cave, and meeting Geoff Kell (and just maybe, the *bat luge* too!!).

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The ACKMA Committee has decided to institute an Award for the best paper or article published in the ACKMA Journal. It will be awarded on a biennial rota, with the announcement and presentation made at each Conference. The Journal Editor will be ineligible, and the sole judge will be Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith. The first award will be made at the Wombeyan ACKMA Conference next year. The prize will be a Skocjanske Poster (a medal-winning poster), donated by the judge, plus a certificate. All articles/papers that have appeared in the Journal from the Naracoorte Conference to the Wombeyan Conference will be considered for the award.