

A TRIBUTE TO LES KERMODE

- John Ash

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FRONT COVER:

Centre: Dr. Grant Gartrell (left) & Brian
Clark at Brian's "Farewell" function.

Top Background Photo:

A view towards the Naracoorte
Caves restaurant building.

Bottom Background Photo:

A scene in Cathedral Cave, Naracoorte

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10 May 2002

It is with deep regret that I advise of the death of Les Kermode. Les died on Sunday 27 January from a heart attack whilst leading a group up Rangitoto on one of his vulcanology tours. His funeral was held on the following Thursday.

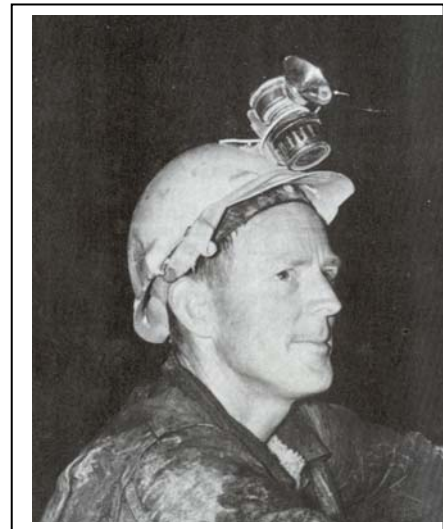
Les's caving story began in January 1950 when with his brother, they cycled in tandem from Auckland to (the) Waitomo tourist caves, where they photographed without flash, tripod or permission. His first trip with New Zealand Speleological Society (NZSS) members was in May 1953 he visit to Karamu Cave.(west of Hamilton). In April 1959 the Auckland Speleo Group was formed as a separate unit of NZSS, and Les was elected president -- a position he held until 1967. He remained a key member of NZSS thereafter.

In March 1962 Les became NZSS Bulletin editor, serving in that position for many years. Professionally, Les was employed as an Officer with NZ Geological Survey, and was involved with field projects in both economic and industrial geology - such as town and country planning, gas pipelines, mineral industries; and in the production of maps and handbooks for special purposes.

He graduated BA from Auckland University College in 1959, and also spent eight years as a primary school teacher. Les was keen tramper and snow climber (an expert at igloo building), took part in any outdoor sport of observational science.

His artistic interests included both classical and pop music, and he also painted watercolour landscapes.

One of Les's greatest loves was lava caves, and he took a special interest in those around Auckland - regularly guiding student groups and others to and through them. Les was an active member of ACKMA and attended several Conferences - the last at Mt. Gamber, South Australia, in 1999. He will be greatly missed, and I am certain all ACKMA members join with me in extending sincere sympathies to his family.



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