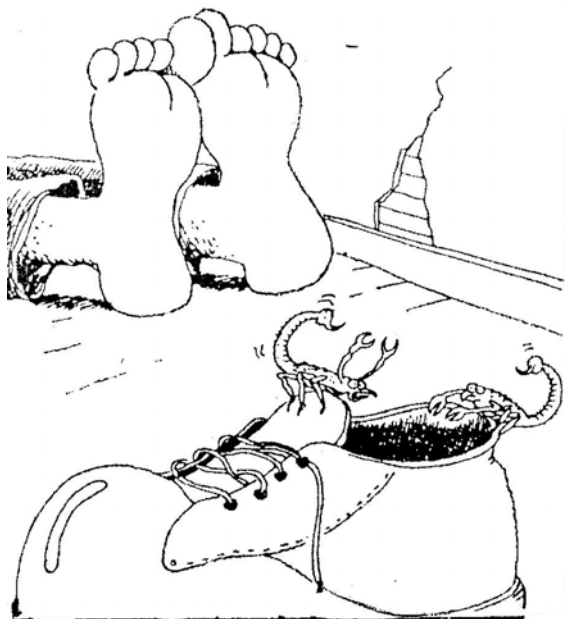




# Editorial Ramblings



*"There I was! Asleep in this little cave, when suddenly I was attacked by this hideous thing with five heads!"*

The Conference cometh!! – and very quickly!! The **15th ACKMA Conference** at Chillagoe and Undara is only four months away!! Our Conference Convenor, Lana Little, advises bookings have been very brisk already.

Again, I exhort intending attendees to book very soon – particularly in terms of accommodation, or in the end you will be fighting for places on the Chillagoe Creek bed! For many, unless you have already booked, the Conference Registration Form et al is re-inserted in this Journal. Also within the inserts is a detailed map of central Chillagoe, which shows the location of the various accommodation options, the Town Hall (where paper sessions will be held), and everywhere else.

As will be noted, Chillagoe isn't big – you will not have to walk too much! Lastly, the Final Conference Program is printed elsewhere in this Journal. See you there!!!

Another Wedding! I am delighted to advise that ACKMA's Information Officer (Australia), and recently-moved-on Yarrangobilly Caves Manager, Jo Ingarfield, became Mrs. Jo Vincent at her wedding to Jason Vincent on 2 November. Warmest congratulations, and best wishes, Jo and Jason! The obligatory photo is adjacent!



*The happy Mr. & Mrs. Vincent on their wedding day!  
Photo: Jo Caldwell*

In mid November, Neil Kell and Andy Spate drove to Wellington Caves, central New South Wales, where Neil started work on quoting to re-light and re-develop the Cathedral Cave. Hopefully, this project will see funding and occurrence in the not-to-distant future..... Neil's name has been coupled with several other cave lighting projects in the pipeline – watch this space!

As usual, Elery Hamilton-Smith has been globe trotting. After his annual trip to Europe for teaching, he left Australia again in mid October for a month in Burma, where the IUCN had been invited by the Burmese Government to undertake an assessment of its extensive karst areas. This was the first scientific assessment since 1938! Amongst other karst wonders, Burma contains the world's biggest karst valley, which is about 75 miles long and over one mile deep! Elery's trip report is herein.

I am pleased to report that the Buchan Caves Visitor Centre has finally been completed, and will be officially opened in early December. I shall be attending, all being well, and will report upon the event in the March Journal.

I am less pleased to report that, due to significant cost overruns on the Buchan Visitor Centre, the re-lighting of Royal Cave at been delayed. Hopefully (?) funding for this will materialize in the next financial year....

Mia is back! ACKMA's Immediate Past Australian Vice-President, Mia Thurgate, has been back in Australia for a few months, following her long stay overseas touring in Spain, and a fair bit of the USA and Mexico. She has taken a temporary position with a science/environmental communication company and has started studying for a Graduate Diploma in Science Communication. And she already made a splash – having been elected President for the Queensland branch of *Australian Science Communicators*. She tells me she will ensure that cave issues are kept in the forefront of the public eye (as she would!) Great stuff!

However, Mia hopes to return overseas again in the next 12-18 months. We wish her well!! Eventually, she hopes to return professionally to caves and karst. An article on her visit to Mammoth Cave in the U. S. A. is herein.

Early in September I drove over to Adelaide on business, and in returning to Melbourne I called in at Mt. Compass, south-east of Adelaide, to visit our Treasurer, Dr. Grant Gartrell. Aside from enjoying some delicious blueberry muffins, and completing some ACKMA administrvia, Grant took me off to the nearby Sellick's Hill karst for a brief surface look.

In particular, Grant showed me the entrances of two caves which he, and helpers, have long been pushing, in the hope of breaking into substantial caverns. The air flows out of both are continually encouraging. A photo of Grant testing the air flow from one cave is below. For those interested in the unhappy history of Sellick's Hill, see ACKMA Journal 34, pp 28-33.



At Waitomo Caves in New Zealand, Bevan Jenkins has left his job as Caves and Karst Resource Officer at the Glowworm Cave to work for *Environment Waikato*.

Ephraim Emery is the new Glowworm Cave Caves and Karst Resource Officer, and hopefully we'll see him at our Chillagoe/Undara Conference. We wish both Bevan and Ephraim well!

The Annual General Meeting of the Waitomo Museum of Caves was held in October. The Chairman, Glen Bailey, in his report, outlined the Museum Society's achievements during the past year. The new audio-visual show is almost complete and this will complete the redevelopment of the museum displays at a cost of almost \$400,000.

As Peter Dimond states in the Presidential utterances at the start of this Journal, the Museum staged a pleasant ceremony on Saturday 19 October to receive a grant for \$43,000 from the Minister of Tourism, the Hon Mark Burton, to complete the new multimedia show. About forty people attended and were served afternoon tea following the presentation.

Further to my review of the Proceedings of the USA's 14th National Cave & Karst Management

Symposium (NCKMS), I've received advice from US ACKMA member, Cheryl Jones, that the Proceedings are also available on CD Rom. Both the CDRom (\$US 8.50) and Hard Copy (\$US16.50) can be ordered from the NSS Bookstore – [www.caves.org](http://www.caves.org)

Cheryl also advises that the Proceedings of the 2001 NCKMS – “Desert Caves and Karst, A Diverse Environment” are nearly ready to go to print, and both hard and CD copies should be available by November. The 2003 NCKMS – “Protecting the Aquifer in Karst Regions” will be in Gainesville, Florida: 12 – 17 October (<http://www.nckms.com/>).

Cheryl writes: “Florida contains the largest concentration of springs in the world with 33 first magnitude springs and over 600 lesser magnitude springs throughout the state. The springs, and their cave systems, are home to over 40 species of cave adapted life and are crucial wintering habitats for the endangered Florida Manatee.

“As windows into Florida's karst aquifer, the springs provide an important gauge of the health of our water supply. Only thinly protected by the overlying soils and sediments, Florida's aquifer is particularly susceptible to the effects of the exploding population of the State.

“The 2003 Cave and Karst Management Symposium will bring special focus on the problems and solutions of managing the aquifer within karst areas. We look forward to this opportunity to share information aimed not only at the management of karst aquifers, but many other areas of the world's cave and karst”.

It's “**President's Award**” time again! Every two years, an Ad Hoc Committee of two (the President and Prof. Elery Hamilton-Smith), bestow the “President's Award” for the best paper or article published in the ACKMA Journal during the preceding two years. They will undoubtedly be conferring early in the New Year, and the announcement will be made at the Conference Dinner at Undara next May. The winner receives a framed certificate, and a prize.

During my recent visit to Hobart (see the article by Arthur Clarke and myself elsewhere herein), I was delighted to spend an evening in the company of ACKMA Fellow, and former Australian Vice President, Dr. Kevin Kiernan. Upon arriving at his front door, Kevin rather gleefully advised me that he had that day resigned as Senior Geomorphologist with Tasmania's Forest Practice Board.

Kevin has sometimes criticized in the past as “working for the devil”, but the truth is that his efforts, “inside the tent” as it were, have had innumerable positive outcomes for karst in Tasmania. I can ready state that without his efforts, the karst heritage of Tasmania would be very substantially the poorer today. As to his future, who knows? He is looking at an overseas trip or two, he wants to again take up “activism”, and we may well see him more involved in ACKMA once again (watch this space....!).

Kevin will definitely be at our Chillagoe/Undara Conference, which is excellent news! Of course, in me having been a “thorn in his side” for many years, he used our most recent meeting to extract his revenge (doubtlessly on behalf of a great many others...!) as the photo below attests. Fortunately, he took pity on me, and I lived, so to remain the bane of many ACKMA lives for some time yet...!



*Dr. Kevin Kiernan (Left) with Kent Henderson*

Members will find inserted in this Journal the **Nomination Form** for the next ACKMA Committee, which will be elected at the Annual General Meeting to be held during the Chillagoe/Undara Conference next May.

It is inserted now to give members plenty of time to nominate, as the next Journal will not be posted until late March 2003 (see below) – quite close to the Conference. To repeat my oft-used exhortation, all members should strongly consider putting themselves forward for office. If you think you have something to contribute (and you all have!), nominate!

Speaking of the March Journal, you will note the **closing date for copy is 28 February** – a few weeks later than usual. This is because my family and I will be in India for all of February, where I hope to visit (amongst many other places!) the Ajanta and Ellora Caves east of Bombay. If I get there you'll hear about it in the March Journal – of course! Thus, the next Journal will not be posted until late March, rather than at the start of the month as would normally be the case.

I would strenuously ask that all contributors PLEASE adhere to the 28 February closing date for copy – no date extensions! The main inserts in the March Journal will be the Agenda and accompanying documentation for 2003 ACKMA Annual General Meeting.

I have just prepared and published the “**ACKMA Gazetter**”. This circa 110 page document contains a complete index to the ACKMA Journal to the present – chronologically, alphabetically, and by author; a complete index to the all Conference Proceedings – chronologically, alphabetically, and by author; all book reviews in the Journals – chronologically,

alphabetically, and by reviewer; and finally, a list of significant events in Australasian Cave & Karst Management since the founding of ACKMA in 1987.

It is not exactly bedtime reading, but I trust a very good reference work for researchers. I have only printed 15 copies. First in, best dressed. I've struck a nominal price of \$10 per copy (including postage). Australian Orders to me, and New Zealand Orders to Peter Chandler; in both cases – your cheque payable to *ACKMA Inc.*

Speaking of publications, we still have a few copies available of the recently-published hard copy **Proceedings of the 14th Australasian Conference on Cave & Karst Management** (Wombeyan Caves, New South Wales, May 2001). I suggest those of you who have not ordered get in quick – it will NOT be re-printed. I have again inserted the Order Form on Page 2 of this Journal. Unfortunately, the CD Rom version is further delayed, but it WILL definitely be available by the 15th Conference at Chillagoe/Undara this coming May.

And finally, during Andy Spate's recent trips to Wellington Caves in central New South Wales, he met Gretchen Hood, Wellington Council's new Tourism Services Manager, and thus overall “supremo” of Wellington Caves – the “boss” if you will, of Caves Manager, Dave Hearn.

Andy was mightily impressed, and evidentially Gretchen is a definitely starter at our Chillagoe/Undara Conference next May – so many will also have the pleasure of meeting her then. Hopefully, she'll have Dave Hearn with her as well!

*Gretchen Hood, Wellington Council's new Tourism Services Manager, assisting with a survey in Cathedral Cave as a precursor to the development of new lighting proposals. Photo: Andy Spate.*



