

CONFERENCE MAGIC!

True stories (!?) from the 15th ACKMA Conference

- Kent Henderson

ACKMA President, Peter Chandler,
welcomes delegates to the 15th Conference



Wow! Wasn't it a wonderful family gathering!! If you put together about eighty family members (otherwise known as 'delegates' – I think I mentioned that word more than once...) superb organization, wondrous Chillagoe, and staggering Undara, the result is pretty much a foregone conclusion! And so it proved!! One could quickly run out of superlatives to describe the 15th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management! As with most attendees, I arrived in Cairns on the day before it all began (Sunday 4 May). Many gathered that evening for a catch up drink and meal at Mondo's Restaurant at the Cairns Hilton. Very pleasant!

Day One – Monday 5 May

We gathered at Cairns Railway Station at 9am to join our bus to Chillagoe. Old home week continued for many as we piled on board, and wound our way inland. Of the delegates, twenty-three were first timers, but as usual we had them quickly initiated into the ways of ACKMA!



L to R: Neil Collison, Keith Vanderstaay,
and Geoff Schurr – Conference 2003

En route we first stopped at the Golden Pride Mango Winery, for a tour and a tippie. It was good stuff, with our President, Peter Chandler, making the first of many speeches of thanks. He got quite good at it as the Conference unfolded, too! Earlier, we had stopped at the Mareeba Heritage Centre for morning tea, and later at coffee plantation, prior to arriving in Chillagoe late afternoon. Lunch en route was at the Railway Hotel in Almaden, and several commented that there was no way delegates would eat their way through the voluminous and magnificent spread placed before us. They did! And it proved typical of quality and size of the meals we were to experience for the rest of the Conference. Being an old hand at these biennial jaunts, I went on a diet for a few weeks prior to the event, knowing full well I would easily recover my weight. I did.... Sigh...

The evening saw the Official Opening of the Conference in the Chillagoe town hall, where all paper sessions were held. We had welcoming addresses from Peter Chandler, our Convenor Lana Little, and the Mayor of Mareeba Shire, Cr. Mick Borzi. The Keynote Address was delivered by noted resident Chillagoe geologist, Dr. John Nethery, entitled *New evidence and constraints on the age of the Chillagoe karst*. It was a superb oration, and a few days later John lead many delegates on a field trip to highlight the Chillagoe geology on the ground. After a barbecue dinner, many delegates adjourned to sample the delights of the Post Office Hotel (not for the last time!), which was conveniently directly opposite the Conference Hall.

Day Two – Tuesday 6 May

Day Two saw us get down to serious conferencing. The morning consisted of the first full paper session, entitled "Focus on Asia". We were delighted to have with us a goodly number of delegates from Samcheok City in Korea, which was the site of the 2002 Korean International Cave Expo. First up, the Deputy Mayor of Samchoek delivered an excellent audio visual paper on the Expo, followed by a wonderful presentation by Professor Kyung Sik Woo entitled *The Scientific Meaning of 2002 Samcheok International Cave Expo* – an account of a wonderful worldwide junket collecting material for the Expo. While the rest of the Korean delegation headed back to Cairns the following day, Professor Woo remained for the entire conference, and his input throughout was greatly appreciated.

After morning tea, we were favoured with a presentation by Professor Dave Gillieson on the *Karst of Okinawa and Kikai, Japan: geomorphology and management*. Again, wonderful stuff! To top off a great first morning in Chillagoe, Andy Spate chimed in with *Would we go again? ACKMA and the 2002 International Cave Expo*. As members will be aware, Andy organized the ACKMA booth of the Cave Expo, giving Australian and New Zealand caves and karst

tremendous international exposure. While lauding Andy's efforts thereat, this work at this Conference was tremendous too. He was in charge of all the technical aspects of the audio-visual presentations of delegates. While Andy intermittently pulled his hair out, it pretty much went smoothly, despite the occasional hiccup!



Our Convenor, Lana Little, prays to Mick Chalker that all will be well (it was!) – Conference 2003

After an expansive lunch, it was off on our first field trip, to inspect the Donna and Trezkinn tourist caves. I had seen them ten years previously during the Post Conference Study Tour following the 10th ACKMA Conference at Rockhampton, so my memory of them was slightly fuzzy. The first thing that struck me was the excellent above ground infrastructure that had been put in place in the interim. The tracking up to Trezkinn Cave was particularly excellent, as were the platform structures at the cave entrance. The view down from the Donna/Trezkinn tower back towards Chillagoe is stunning stuff! All three show caves at Chillagoe are surprisingly different, both in terms of internal infrastructure and cave "type". Trezkinn contains a host of fine decorations, which are not nearly as abundant in Donna Cave. Both have seen little in the way of internal upgrading in the past ten years, and while what exists is adequate, given the appropriate funding much could be achieved. Trezkinn is largely a self-guiding experience, with back-lit interpretive panels placed at intervals during its largely circuitous route, while Donna is a bigger, "drier" cave, with a particular feature being its many false floors. It is fascinating that both caves exist in the same tower quite close to each other, and yet are

quite different in many ways. Our field excursion also included an excellent karst walk to *Balancing Rock*, an interesting feature in itself.

The late afternoon saw us back in the Town Hall for a poster session. On offer for viewing and discussion was an excellent array, which included *Lava Tube Formation* (Ken Grimes); *Management of Thermokarst Landforms and processes at Marine Plain, Princess Elizabeth Island, East Antarctica* (Kevin Kiernan, Anne McConnell & Eric Colhoun); *The Isthmus of Auckland with its extinct volcanoes as a memorial note to the life interest of Les Kermode* (Derek Mason); *The ecology of the guanophilic arthropods in Bat Cave, Naracoorte* (Tim Moulds); *Graffiti at Loch Ard Gorge, Port Campbell National Park, Victoria* (Nicholas White); *Underworld Rafting, Metro Cave, New Zealand and Metro Cave, West Coast, South Island, New Zealand* (Geoff Schurr); plus six posters from Andy Spate used at the International Cave Expo in Korea: *World Heritage Areas: The Significance of Australian Cave and Karst*, *Soft Rock Caves: Caves in sand dunes*, *Discovering Caves in Australia: Helping understanding - education and caves*, *When you go down an Australian cave you might see*, *The Nullarbor: Caves under the desert*, and *The Tropics*. A further two posters 'joined the wall' later when we got to Undara. These were *Undara – How it Happened & Some of its Special Features that beg protection for all time* (Ann Atkinson); and *Undara Volcanic National Park – Public Safety & Protection of its Special Features* (Ann Atkinson and Colin O'Keefe)

After the Poster Session it was then off to dinner. During our time at Chillagoe, we dined successively (and VERY well) at virtually every eatery in Chillagoe. Lana Little skillfully arranged for ACKMA's largess to be spread across the Chillagoe community. Wonderful stuff! Of course, as is to be expected, the Post Office Hotel saw a late night gathering of many.



Lana Little ascends the steps to Trezkinn Cave

The ACKMA Committee met that evening, so sadly its members missed out on much of goings-on. The gossip the next morning was of Nick White's conversion to 'cave diving'. It was reliably reported that Nick, in staggering back to his accommodation, managed to accidentally find himself falling into a large ornamental pool. As we all know, there is nothing more ornamental than a wet Nick White!

Day Three – Wednesday 7 May

After breakfast, we were immediately bused off to our new field excursion, this time to the third (and final) show cave at Chillagoe, the Royal Arch Cave. This cave is a bit further out from central Chillagoe, and resides in its own huge tower. While fully developed for tourists, it is unlit, and is thus toured with supplied hand-held lighting. Royal Arch is a huge, robust cave, with a number of daylight chambers dotted through it. The guide of my sub-group was the redoubtable Danny Chew, Chillagoe's Ranger-in-Charge, who did much of the on-site interpretation for us during our Chillagoe sojourn – to the acclaim of us all. Danny was particularly keen to point out the recent new flooring and infrastructure in the *Picnic Chamber* in the cave, which evoked much interest.



The entrance to Donna Cave, Chillagoe

After lunch, it was into the 4th Paper Session, "Far Flung Place", chaired by Professor Kyung Sik Woo. First up we were favoured by a stunning presentation from James Baichtal entitled *Evolving Karst Management on the Tongass – What Twelve Years of Implementation and Development have Taught*. Jim is from Alaska, and the massive karsts he described and showed us revealed a large number of management problems, to say the least. Fascinating stuff. Then followed another memorable paper by Paul Griffiths & Tim Stokes: *Karst Inventories and Management in Coastal Temperate Rainforests of British Columbia: Two Years On*. It was presented by Paul, who seemingly takes it in turns with Tim Stokes in attending ACKMA Conferences. Paul first attended in 1999 at Mt Gambier, while Tim was at our previous Conference at Wombeyan in 2001. He was followed by Nicholas & Susan White's interesting offering: *Karst Features in Pleistocene Dune Limestones, San Salvador & New Providence*

Islands, The Bahamas, presented by Nick in his inimitable style.

After morning tea, Deborah Carden took over to chair the 5th Paper Session on "Biodiversity", and she introduced the enchanting Claire Baker, whose paper *Australian Glowworms – Managing an important biological resource*, was a delight, and presented with irrepressible enthusiasm. Be sure to check out Claire's wonderful web site at <www.zen.uq.edu.au/entomology/glowworm>, it is truly excellent!

Next up was Stefan Eberhard's offering (delivered by Robyn McBeath) entitled: *Environmental hydrology and stygofauna in the Jewel Cave karst system, southwestern Australia*. Stefan's recent research at Jewel Cave has been outstanding, and the results in terms of the local hydrology were somewhat surprising. A must read when the Conference Proceedings are published!

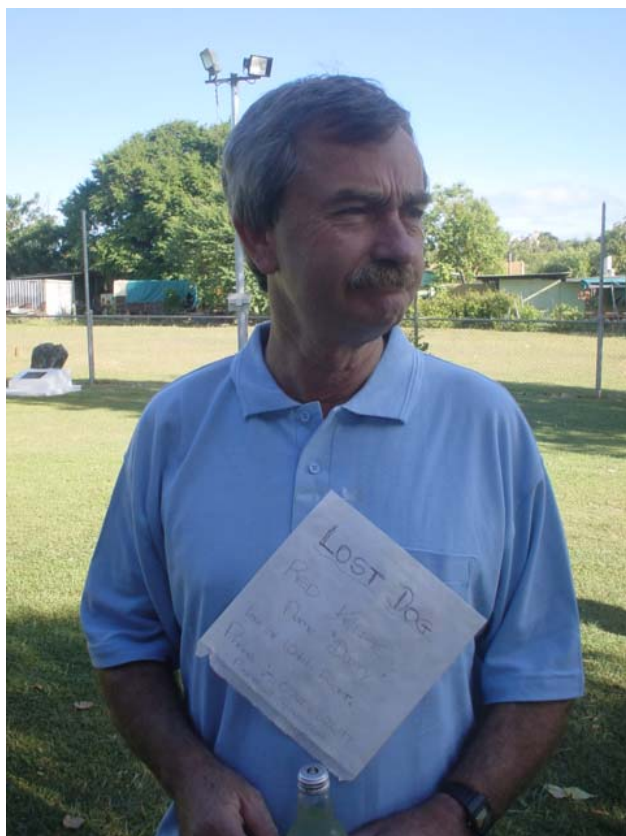
In the early evening, we were favoured by an unscheduled slide show by Brian Clark on the Gulung Mulu National Park in Sarawak, which he is now managing. It was a riveting exposition, delivered in the well-known Clark style. A vintage performance, indeed! Nobody left hall unimpressed with Mulu, and with a burning desire to visit the area! The evening again saw another wonderful dinner, and more revelry in the Post Office Hotel!

Day Four – Thursday 8 May

The morning saw delegates split into two groups, with the smaller one going serious caving for the day in the "Queenslander" tower. It's an outstanding wild cave, but having 'been there, done that' ten years previously, lent my knee pads to Geoff Schurr, and joined the balance of delegates on a full day "heritage tour" of the Chillagoe/Mungana area. It was lead in part by Dr. John Nethery, who very ably showed us *in situ* the geological features he's mentioned in his earlier address, and in part by Danny Chew, who enthusiastically guided us over the karst and heritage of the wider area.



The stunning view from the Trezkinn Cave entrance platform – Conference 2003



Our first port of call was the old Red Dome Gold Mine site. This open cut mine is now something of a lake, and was fascinating, all the more so for John Nethery's interpretation. We also visited the old Mungana township site, largely long-since vanished and had a close encounter with a local python, which Danny Chew expertly handled (others weren't so keen...). We lunched at the Archways area at Mungana in a wonderful karst glade, viewed local aboriginal rock paintings, and then walked through the Archways themselves, located within stunning tower karst. Then it was back to Chillagoe to visit the fascinating old Smelter Site, now part of the National Park. It a thoroughly enjoyable, and educational, day. Many thanks John and Danny!



Dianne Vavryn and Derek Mason tango in the Post Office Hotel, Chillagoe – Conference 2003

During our Mungana march, I seemed to be shadowed up various paths by Derek Mason, who at one stage managed to position himself on a relic "thunder box" discarded next to the track. Derek is great raconteur, and came at with some priceless gems, such as "I have a little gin in my cabin", and don't forget to "knock me up the morning". Just one of the many priceless members of the ACKMA family!

Our last night in Chillagoe, after expansive *al fresco* spit roast dinner (roast pig – it was wonderful!), saw many again resplendent in the Post Office Hotel, where Steve Bourne was slotted to take on a 'local' in a beer-drinking contest. Alas, the reputation of ACKMA was seriously besmirched when our Vice President piked out. Sigh... Still, he had many psuedo-substitutes, and a substantial number of delegates certainly looked somewhat worse for wear the following day... The beer-drinking contest was simply replaced by, well, beer drinking, plus interminable pool games, and some very doubtful karaoke!

Day Five – Friday 9 May

The morning consisted of two great paper sessions. Indeed, they all were! The range and quality of the papers presented throughout the Conference was absolutely outstanding. The 6th paper session, "Lava and the Tropics", was chaired by Professor David Gillieson. We were to be favoured first up with a paper by Ann Atkinson, but her arrival had been delayed, so her offering was deferred until we got to Undara. In its place, an Andy Spate paper slated for later presentation was moved forward. This was: Bushfires and karst in southern New South Wales – 2001/2002 and 2002/2003. Andy had already written extensively on this subject in the last ACKMA Journal, and it was most educative to view many visuals on the effects of the fire on karst, and listen to his explanations of them.

Back on "theme", Andy was followed by the truly excellent *Groundwater Movement and Management in Tube-fed Lavas*, presented by Dr. Kevin Kiernan and Greg Middleton, and proved a tremendous introduction to what was to come at Undara. This was followed by Penny Davidson's *Managing and interpreting tropical caves: Feeling how different caves are*. Again, a superb presentation, and given its interest, I have published it elsewhere in the Journal. It will, of course, also appear in the Conference Proceedings in due course.

After Morning Tea, the 7th Paper Session, "Effects and Developments" was held, chaired by Dr. Ruth Lyons. Two papers were delivered, the first by Dr. Neville Michie. *The use of monuments in caves* inspired a great deal of subsequent discussion. The second offering came from Stephen Swabey and Martin Roest (presented by the former) and was: *Chromated copper arsenate treated timber in caves*. This was a superb paper, one of the best (of a great many) at the Conference and again, it prompted much discussion, and without doubt its conclusions will be influential in future infrastructure decisions across Australasian show caves, and in surface situations.

Co-conference Convenor, Val Speedie,
at Trezkin Cave – Conference 2003



L to R: Ruth Lyons, Claire Baker and Robert Ellis at
the Picnic Chamber, Royal Arch Cave, Chillagoe



After lunch, it was into the bus for a rather long four-hour drive to Undara. We arrived after dark, and subsequent to settling into their various digs, delegates enjoyed an excellent steak dinner, in preparation for the delights of Undara that were to follow...

Day Six – Saturday 10 May

After our bush breakfast (yummy stuff, too!), we faced a full day visit to the staggering Undara Lava Tubes, under the capable leadership of Val and Tony Speedie, et al. My group was headed by Tony Speedie, who spent the day imparting, in very

amusing style, a large number of “true stories” about the history of Undara, and much else. Naturally, we believed EVERY word he said!!! Indeed, “true stories” very smartly became a catch phrase for the rest of the Conference! Over the day we visited the massive Barker’s cave, Road Cave, and The Archways. Wonderful stuff!! They are all magnificent – similar, of course, but all different. I was particularly impressed with infrastructure that had been put in place since my visit ten years ago. What is ever greater are the savannah guides –their breath of knowledge, and skills, in imparting in an entertaining, educative, and meaningful experience, is exceptional. Oh, that every ‘cave’ guide was as good as them (of course, many are!). One group (not mine, sadly...) was particularly fortunate in having Ann Atkinson, the world’s foremost expert on Undara, with them on their tour. Still, all members had an opportunity to chat with Ann over the next few days.



Delegates stretch out at a Conference Session in the
Chillagoe Town Hall – Conference 2003

After dinner that evening, came the ACKMA Annual General Meeting was held. The various Officers’ Reports were adopted, and our Treasurer, Dr. Grant Gartrell, told us we were in reasonable financial shape. Treasurer’s are never happy, of course, and while he recommended fees not be increased this year he foreshadowed an increase next year. He did move that fees for overseas (not New Zealand) members increase by \$10 if they elected to receive their Journals by airmail, and this was passed. In me having finally gotten around to producing appropriate certificates for existing Fellows of ACKMA, these were presented to those present, to much applause.

We then elected the Officers of the Association for the next twelve months, and as nominations did not exceed vacancies (sigh...) those nominated were declared elected. The new Committee met briefly after the AGM and allocated portfolios (see the Officer’s Page at the rear of the Journal).

We then had an excellent audio-visual presentation from Deborah Carden, Mary Trayes, and Geoff Schurr on the upcoming 16th ACKMA Conference on the West Coast, South Island, New Zealand in April

2005. Clearly, it will be a stunner! NOT to be missed. The meeting considered the submission of Mole Creek Caves to host next year's AGM thereat, and this was approved. Similar, the submission from Buchan Caves to host the 17th ACKMA Conference thereat in 2007 was also unanimously endorsed. The next item was the most pleasant – to elect Life Members and Fellows. I've reported on that separately elsewhere in the Journal. Overall, it was other very good AGM.



Derek Mason makes excellent use of a 'thunderbox' during a field excursion – Conference 2003

Day Seven – Sunday 11 May

The final day of the Conference started with two paper sessions in the morning. The 8th Paper Session, "Living with Karst", was chaired by Peter Chandler. First up was Ann Atkinson's deferred paper *Undara Volcano, North Queensland, Australia: Some geological wonders in its lava field – their management, past, present and future*. And it was superb. The breath of her knowledge of Undara is truly incredible.



Jay Anderson delivers her paper – Conference 2003

Jay Anderson, the inaugural recipient of funded conference attendance from the ACKMA Life Member's Fund, followed Ann. Her paper, *Limestone & Development – Living with Karst in Western Australia*. Her paper was wonderfully presented, and engendered many questions. Next up was Elerly Hamilton-Smith's *Karst and the Biodiversity Context*, presented by Dave Gillieson. Sadly, due to ill health (he has happily now recovered), Elerly was unable to attend the Conference – the first he has missed. The quality of his paper was, as expected, tremendous, and it is published elsewhere in this Journal, as will also be in the Conference Proceedings.

Moving on in this marathon session, we were next favoured with Stephen Swabey's offering: Sediment budget for the Gardners Gut Cave, Waitomo, New Zealand. Perhaps it was slightly technical for some, but it was excellently presented and educative. The final paper in this session came from Jennifer Dyring, Ian Houshold and Rolan Eberhard (presented by Jenny and Ian), entitled: *An Overview of Cross-tenure Management of Karst in Tasmania*. Again, a great paper, which clearly set out the multitude of karst issues still facing Tasmania.

After morning tea, in was onto the 9th (and final) Paper Session, "Climate, Development & Discovery", chaired by Brian Clark. The first was *Victoria Fossil Cave – Making it a Cave once again*, presented Steve Bourne (and written with George Bradford). The work done in this "world heritage" cave has been exceptional, and clearly set out by Steve. Neville Michie followed (co-authored with Stefan Eberhard, Robyn McBeath, and Peter Bell) with *Carbon dioxide and climate in Jewel Cave*. Profusely illustrated, the paper developed a topic not uncommon in many caves, and it invoked numerous questions. The final paper of the Conference was *The caves at Ravine (re)discovered*, by Andy and Jess Spate (presented by the former). Again, it was a fascinating piece, describing how the recent fires in Southern New South Wales had effectively made the *rediscovery* of the Ravine caves and associated karst features possible.

After lunch, delegates were split into three groups. The largest group went to see a working dog demonstration on a neighbouring cattle station, which was reportedly excellent.



Tony Speedie, with hand outstretched, leads a lava cave tour – Conference 2003

At the ACKMA Annual General Meeting
– Conference 2003



Two smaller groups went “caving” respectively to Darcy Cave and Atkinson’s Cave. I joined the former, under the effervescent leadership of Val Speedie (see knew a few “true stories” too, like her husband!). The latter trip had the added pleasure of Ann Atkinson joining it (after whom the cave was named, of course). These two undeveloped lava tubes are not open to the public, but it is possible one or both will be in the future. The issues involved evoked considerable discussion in both groups. Late in the afternoon all three groups converged on the Kalkani Crater, near Undara Lava Lodge, to walk to the summit. The views from the top were stunning!

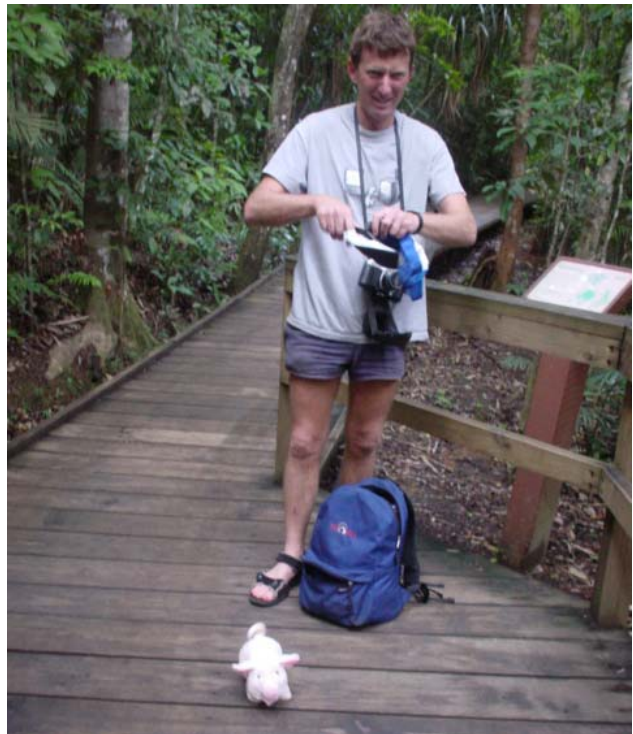


Brian Clark wearing his ‘Conference Dinner Award’
– Conference 2003

Kevin Kiernan with his ‘Pig Award’ seriously amused
Carol Ramsey – Conference 2003



Kevin Kiernan and his pig ‘take the air’
– Conference 2003



Our final evening saw the formal Conference Dinner, always a highlight. This time around, yours truly acted as Master of Ceremonies. The Conference Dinner is traditionally dress affair. I, as usual, wore my dinner suit, and also as usual, I was definitely over dressed! I did warn several delegates beforehand of the necessity of wearing their conference name badge to the dinner, but sadly(!?) many didn’t, and were promptly fined to the benefit of the ACKMA Life Member’s Fund! After dinner we were favoured by an audio-visual presentation and address from Professor Julia James, the immediate Past President of the International Union of Speleology, entitled: *The Benefits of Internationalism in Speleology*. It was a hoot, and engendered a great deal of levity amongst the delegates. Thanks Julia!

Delegates listen to the Conference
'Closing Ceremony' at Undara.



The final act of the Conference was, of course, the presentation of the Conference Awards. Just so I can share the blame, the *ad hoc* Awards Committee this year consisted of the Robyn McBeath, Rauleigh Webb, Dave Gillieson, and myself.

The following were the lucky recipients.....!

- 'The Arachnophobia Award' (a large, hairy, fake spider) were to Geoff and Sue Schurr, timid (!) Kiwis who cringed at anything creepy crawly they encountered during the Conference!
- Obviously, Nick White received the 'Cave Diving Award' (a Chillagoe *Nude Couples* Calendar) for his previously described efforts early in the Conference.
- Derek Mason who, aside from doubtful efforts as a raconteur, had a habit on field trips of putting rocks in peoples' pockets, received the 'Rock Bottom Award', which was, of course, a rock.
- Jonathan Woods was the proud (?) recipient of the 'Lava Tongue Award' (a packet of hot beef jerkey). The Editorial Committee, I'm certain, wouldn't let me publish why he got this award, but use your imagination!
- Steve Bourne gained the 'Bush Esky Award' (a beer glass turned into a candle) for his consistent efforts in leading late night pub sessions, and other not publishable things!
- The other 'drinking' award went to Brett Dalzell. His 'Tropical Re-Hydration Award' (a 'beer' tee shirt) was justly merited, as Brett probably contributed to the profits of all hotels visited more than any other single delegate!
- The delightful Robert Gani, head guide at Mulu Caves, received the 'Come Back Again Award' (a boomerang) and we all hope to see him at future conferences.
- Canadian delegate Carol Ramsey, was a delight, and she attained the 'Finding the Bone Award'. Carol spent a good deal of time looking for animals on field trips (alive or dead!). She received, naturally, a small toy koala.

- Brian Clark, always well known for speaking out and up, received the 'Karst Entrepreneur Award', because you can only go so far on bullshit! The plastic plaque he received expounded this 'virtue'.
- Our other Canadian Delegate, Paul Griffiths, was honoured with the 'Instant Power Board Award' (A Chillagoe Screen Saver CD). His presence at the Conference was definitely 'electric'!
- Mary Trayes, she who would be both king and queen, won the 'Ruler Award' (an Undara ruler!). Mary is never backward in coming forward, and while she has a lot to say, it usually good stuff, too!
- Professor Woo, our Korean Delegate, won the 'Two Minute Noodle Award' – says something about our food, I think....!
- The final accolade was the 'Gluttony Award'. This high honour, which was most deserved, went to Kevin Kiernan, the culmination of his many Conferences of over indulgence. His award was a large, battery-operated toy pig, which walked, snorted at intervals, and wagged its tail. Well, was it a hit! I'm certain Kevin has been through ten sets of batteries already. It subsequently appeared everywhere, on tables, on boardwalks, on the bus back to Cairns...

Day Eight – Monday 12 May

Sadly, after a tremendous family gathering, the Conference was over. All things must pass. After a brief closing ceremony by our new President, Robyn McBeath, it was on the bus back to Cairns for most delegates, while some headed off on the Post Conference Caving Trip to Broken River (see Andy Spate's report herein). On the way back to Cairns we stopped to view the Mt. Hypipamee Crater and Lake Barrine, and during a lunch stop over in Atherton a number of us visited the 'Crystal Caves' (again, separate mention is made elsewhere in this Journal).

THANKS

It only remains to record our thanks to a huge number of people who made the Conference such a stunning success. The major thanks go to our three co-convenors, Lana Little, Val Speedie and Dave Gillieson. There efforts were unspeakably wonderful.

Lana Little, Dave Gillieson, and Val Speedie provide the following list of people, whom we thank most sincerely for their contributions in many the 15th ACKMA Conference, which was such a wonderful family gathering for all who attended:

Our Major sponsors: Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Undara Experience and Mareeba Shire council, and other sponsors: Osborne Mine. ACKMA folk – Andy Spate, Kent Henderson, Gerry Collins, Grant Gartrell; and our after-dinner speaker Julia James.

Accommodation and meal providers: Joe and Nan Boardman and helpers (Railway Hotel, Almaden);

John and Donna Burton (Post Office Hotel); Michael Teague and family (Chillagoe Caves Lodge); Gary and Carolyn Bondeson (Chillagoe Cabins); Ray and Rebecca Neary (Chillagoe Hotel-Motel); Peter and Rae Windhaus, and Debbie and Lionel (Chillagoe Tourist Village – also supplied transport at Chillagoe); John and Marlene Wellman (Chillagoe Bush Camp and Eco-Lodge); Chillagoe P&C Association; Ms Robbie Moylan (pig dinner organiser).

Other help at Chillagoe: John Nethery (keynote address, lead-up journal article, and heritage tour); Len and Dawn Brown (assisting with many meals, general clean-up); the Little Brothers – Tony, Mike and Ron (gear and preparation for pig dinner, site management Mungana lunch); Jim Butler (head pig spitter); Don Cockburn (site management, Mungana lunch); Mick Moylan (wild cave guide, pig fetcher); Chillagoe State School (support and welcome); QPWS Rangers – Danny Chew (heritage tour, administration, general support), Dale Debel (wild cave guide), Mick Cockburn (wild cave guide, post-

conference caving trip camp et-up and support), Tony Cockburn (set up and clean up).

At Undara – Colin O'Keefe, guides Kay Stephens, Ray Langford, and Tony Speedie, also thanks to James Newman and Merv Shaw of QPWS, plus Undara Experience staff. At the *working dog show*: Tom and Christine Saunders. Post-conference trip: CQSS members – Peter and Luke Berrill, Noel and Aaron Sands, Clive Kavanagh and Grant Farrell; John and Roslyn Kersey and family; Mick Cockburn.

Others who assisted: Les Battle (Whitecar Coaches), Brian Bodger (bus driver), Cathy James of QPWS – Atherton (conference logo), and James Cook University accounts personnel Pauline Holmes and Julie Brandt (who set up the Conference Credit Card facility).

The ACKMA Committee, and all delegates, sincerely thank them all. I hope to see everyone at the next *family gathering* (aka 16th Conference!) in New Zealand in two years time!

THE 'OUTWORLDERS'

- Kent Henderson

Andy Spate, Greg Martin & Ian Millar
with the Koreans



We were delighted to have a number of overseas delegates at the 15th Conference, which I'll mention in no particular order. From Canada we were blessed with Paul Griffiths and Carol Ramsey. Paul, from British Columbia, was making his second visit to an ACKMA Conference. He specializes in karst management issues in coastal temperate rainforest settings and has operated his own consulting firm (Cave Management Services) since 1977. Paul was also employed for 18 years by Canadian Pacific Forest Products Limited in the fields of environmental and industrial hygiene management. In addition, we had the delightful Carol Ramsey from Canada!

Jim Baitchel, who was accompanied by his mother Bessie and wife Karen, is a Forest geologist in the Tongass National Forest, South Eastern Alaska, and is responsible for management of its cave and karst resources. His paper at the Conference was considered one of the most outstanding delivered.

Professor Kyung Sik Woo is from Cave Research Institute of Korea, Department of Geology, at Kangwon National University, Korea. He is a cave geologist working on the genesis of speleothems in limestone caves. He made a great impress on delegates with his good nature and sense of fun, as well as in delivering an outstanding paper.

Robert Gani is the Senior Guide at Gunung Mulu National Park, Sarawak. He has been employed as a Park Guide for 12 years, and was promoted to Senior Guide in 2002. He holds the Lincoln University Diploma in Park Management. A naturally quiet man, Robert was initially a bit overwhelmed by ACKMA, it being his first visit away from his home area. However, we has him into the swing of things by the time the Conference was over!

Oh, and then there was Brian Clark, past ACKMA President, past Manager of Naracoorte Caves, now Manager of Mulu Caves, etc, etc.... I suppose he's 'International' now, and I'd better mention him. Consider yourself mentioned, Brian!



The international Delegates – L to R: Brian Clarke(!), Robert Gani, Professor Woo, Paul Griffiths, Carol Ramsey, and Jim Baitchel.

THE CONFERENCE PHOTOS

Just so you can prove you were there! Normally, we only take one 'official' Conference Photo (which is on the front over), but this time we took shots of groups, so one could better sort out the faces (not necessarily a good idea!). Not every delegate actually made it into 'their' shot (but we tried!)... The results follow.....



The Queenslanders



The New Zealanders



The South Australians



The New South Wales lot



The Tasmanians



The Western Australians



The Victorians

