



Editorial Ramblings



So, it is only seven months until the **16th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management** on the West Coast, South Island, New Zealand!! The Organising Committee has put together a tremendous program for what will be exceptional conference. DO NOT MISS IT! The **Registration Form**, with full details, is inserted herein. Get yours in, quick!

Just a few words about flying in and out of New Zealand for the Conference. For those not attending the pre or post tours, you can either fly into Wellington, and thus connect to Westport. This is the best option. The other option is to fly into Christchurch, and connect to Hokitika, but this entails a car from Hokitika to Westport. Of course, those on either the pre or post tours will need fly into Christchurch, where the former starts and the latter concludes.

Speaking of Conferences, I am working on the now long-delayed *Proceedings* of the last ACKMA Conference at Chillagoe and Undara. Not all presenters have got their paper into me yet – well over twelve months since the event. I am not happy. Still, be very afraid, I know who you are....

I always thought that our former Treasurer, ACKMA Fellow Dennis Rebbechi, was a little chap, but the following photo seems to confirm it...!



Don't forget to regularly check out the ACKMA Web Site. All the substantive articles in the ACKMA Journal are placed on it within 10 days of the publication. Thereon you will also find the 16th Conference Registration Form, which you can readily download. Go to: <http://ackma.org/>

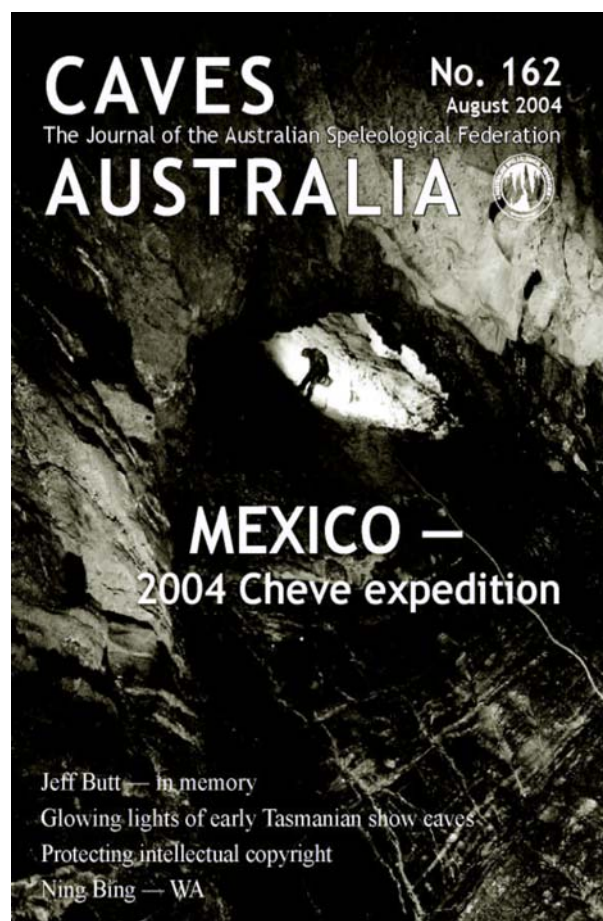
Members will recall that I reported on the Creswell Crags karst in England in this Journal last year (No. 52, September 2003: p 11-12). The following appeared in the English "Observer" on 15 June:

"An English cave has been described as the 'Sistine Chapel of the Ice Age' after the discovery of 80 engraved figures in its limestone ceiling. The discovery at Creswell Crags was announced on Tuesday. It comes a year after the initial discovery of 12 engraved figures, which were trumpeted as the earliest examples of prehistoric cave art in Britain.

"The new discoveries were made possible by the good natural light in April and June, rock art experts said. Creswell Crags - a Site of Special Scientific Interest - lies on the border of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. It comprises a gorge and many caves.

"The latest artwork, dated to be about 13,000 years old, was found in an opening in the rock known as Church Hole, in Nottinghamshire." See: <http://www.creswell-crags.org.uk/>

We have a name change! The ASF has changed the name of its quarterly journal from *Australian Caver* to *Caves Australia* - from the current edition (No. 162). Indeed, it is another bumper issue. Don't miss it!



Also coming up for ASF is their Conference at Dover, Tasmania (2-8 January). Should be great! In something of a coup, the Conference was to be officially opened by the Governor of Tasmania, Hon Richard Butler, who was to then also "Book Launch" the new tome on Tasmanian cave tourism history by Dr. Nic Haygarth and Arthur Clarke. However, given the Governor has resigned, the matter is now clearly 'up in the air'. Hopefully, the new Governor will keep the appointment...

Speaking of Arthur Clarke, members will recall (reported in past ACKMA Journals) his trip to Madagascar to assist with filming a documentary. *Madagascar Mystery* has already won several prestigious awards in Europe including Best Environmental Film. An English commentary version has just been produced and is being distributed worldwide via National Geographic in Canada. Hopefully, it will hit Australia and New Zealand soon.

Good news from Yanchep Caves in Western Australia. By the end of this year, a permanent artificial recharge system will come on line, serving seven caves. Two groundwater bores are being drilled, which will deliver about 3.4 million kilolitres of water per year via a four kilometre underground pipe. This action follows trials over two years in Crystal and Cabaret Caves. The constant recharging will certainly be positive for the much endangered styofauna of the area. Hopefully, the foreshadowed show cave refurbishment of Crystal Cave will be in the 'pipeline' too....

Stephanie Finn, Buchan Caves Manager, with
ACKMA Karst Science Officer, Ian Houshold
– ACKMA AGM Weekend 2004.



Things are bubbling at Buchan Caves in Victoria! Buchan has recently received NEAP Accreditation (I think the second cave area so blessed, after Naracoorte) as an eco-tourism site. Good stuff! The *Princess Royal Chamber* in Royal Cave is now re-lit, and hopefully funds for further lighting work will materialize. Buchan has also received a \$15,000 grant under the Victorian Heritage Program – most of which will be used for tree planting in the Caves Reserve.

Additionally, on 1 August the Australian Radiation Laboratory inserted radon monitors in the Buchan Show Caves. The monitoring will last for three months. Buchan will soon have a new full colour tourist book. It may be out prior to Christmas, but certainly by next Easter. Modesty forbids me to

mention the name of the author. Finally, warmest congratulations to Buchan Caves Administration Officer, Leanne Hodge! She recently received a *Parks Victoria* Regional Award for "Excellence in Service". Well done, Leanne!

Speaking of books, Wombeyan Caves Guide (since 1984!) and ACKMA member, Ken Fleming, is working on a new book on Wombeyan, with the assistance of the Sydney Speleological Society (specifically ACKMA member John Wylie). The book will evidently be entitled *Caves and Karst of Wombeyan*. A publication date has not yet been announced, but watch this space...

Some North Queensland news. Lana Little advises that: "Chillagoe was pleased to welcome another visiting ACKMA Fellow recently, when Neil Kell was contracted by QPWS to develop a lighting plan for Donna Cave. Donna Cave has been electrically lit since 1975 – shortly after mains power was supplied to the township of Chillagoe. Other infrastructure – handrails, steps, etc – is even older.

"Consequently, the time had come for a serious review of the infrastructure re-development needs of the cave, and it was considered wise to look at the options for upgrading the lighting at the same time. Neil has left us with comprehensive information concerning our power supply options, and a detailed lighting plan, which can be referred to during any funded phase of re-development."

An article – entitled 'Time Tunnel' – appeared in the 2 August 2004 issue of *Time Magazine*. It features extensive text and photos, discusses Aboriginal cave cultural sites and refers to the new art cave site found by Ian Houshold and others eighteen months ago in a karst area of southern Tasmania – the subject of going geomorphic, hydrological and cave exploration studies over the past few months. The issue also includes an excellent article on Riversleigh entitled 'Secrets of the Bones'.

Great news from Jenolan Caves! On 16 June the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve was officially listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register, providing additional on-going protection to the reserve.

While on Jenolan, a new newsletter, with the catchy title *Broadkarst News* (wish I'd thought of it!), is now being published quarterly by the Department of Strategic Environmental Services of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust. Two issues have come out thus far, which are excellent.

If any ACKMA member would like to receive *Broadkarst News* he/she is welcome to contact its Editor: Stephen Meehan, Senior Environment Manager, Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, Locked Bag, Jenolan Caves. NSW. 2790, or email him at: Stephen_Meehan@jenolancaves.org.au

In other Jenolan news, a Draft Plan of Management has now been prepared. It will soon be placed on public exhibition for three months.

And it keeps getting better....! As I mentioned in my last Editorial, The Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust

has received four million dollars from the NSW State Government towards the rejuvenation of the Abercrombie, Borenore, Jenolan and Wombeyan Karst Conservation Reserves.

The funding will facilitate the upgrading/replacement of existing infrastructure, and planning for major projects has recently started. The focus in 2004/05 will be given to:

At all Reserves:

- General signage upgrade

At Jenolan:

- General walking track upgrade
- Replacement of handrails and lighting upgrade in various caves
- Refurbishment of accommodation facilities

At Wombeyan:

- Development and/or upgrading of Show Caves

At Borenore:

- Provision of boundary fencing and general infrastructure upgrade

Wombeyan has evidently been allocated about \$750,000 of the funding over time. Mick Chalker plans to finish off the re-lighting of Fig Tree Cave, followed by re-lighting the wonderful Korrunga cave, and finally the massive project that will be Wollondilly Cave. It is expected all will be done over the next news years, with the project to start very soon. As Junction Cave is already re-lit, the entire show cave system at Wombeyan will be state-of-the-art. Absolutely wonderful stuff!

Recently noted on E-bay:

"This is a ONCE IN A LIFETIME CHANCE to own one of the most unique properties in the United States. Situated approximately 50 miles S.W. of Nashville, TN, this property has been treasured by people from all over the world and now it can be YOURS! This asset will be a wonderful addition to your portfolio, whether you want to use it totally for personal use or as a business enterprise. The POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS.

Below are just some of the amenities of this rare offering: *Approximately 500 acres of combination gently rolling terrain and wooded areas. *Creeks

*2 year round streams. *Abundant spring water from an underground aquifer. *Unique stone house with indoor waterfall!!! *3 other old farmhouses - great for staff or cabins *1 double-wide mobile home, only 10 years old *3 storey historical building (used to be Ruskin College) approx. 14,000sf EACH FLOOR! In great disrepair but could be restored to original grandeur. There is so much history behind this building. Many books and papers have been written about this unique property which was home to the Ruskin Colony & College back in the 1800s. *Olympic-size swimming pool with large pool house *Outdoor pavilion for numerous activities *Archery Range *Clay Target shooting from a Five Stand setup *50', 4 sided climbing tower *Rifle Range *Ropes Course *Softball field *Outdoor stage *Zip line which glides from the climbing tower over green fields to lower land 400 feet away *Sand Volleyball *Only 4 miles from local airport and approx. 50 miles from Nashville Airport, and more! *5 Natural caves with 2 being mapped by the Nashville Grotto Club. They are in amazing in beauty and presently suitable for tours to the public. The two largest caves are Ruskin Cave and Jewel Cave (well known in the area and easily searchable on the internet). Ruskin Cave was first opened to the public in 1924. The mouth of the cave is massive and can fit 3 semi-trucks abreast at the entrance. The size of this cave makes it usable for anything from an underground ballroom to hosting numerous other venues such as music, theatre, receptions, etc. This cave also contains a deep reservoir with sightless fish and an underground waterfall. Protected artefacts have been found hundreds of feet back into the cave. There is presently seating built in making the useful possibilities endless. The other large cave is Jewell Cave, known for its beautiful formations and sparkling colours as the pictures depict."

I understand Andy Spate has already put in an offer...

And finally, from the *Melbourne Age* (7/7/04): "Eight Athletes have completed the world's first underground marathon in Madrid. To avoid trains, the race took place at night - all runners had to buy an underground ticket. "It was mainly the damp heat and dull lighting that got to us," said one of the runners. "But it was worth it". Many cavers and cave guides would sympathise....

