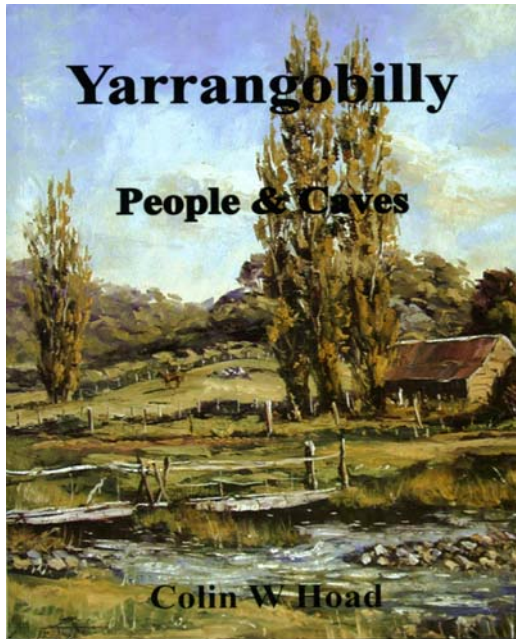


BOOK REVIEWS

YARRANGOBILLY: PEOPLE AND CAVES. Colin W. Hoad. 2004. 138 pp. Paperback – B5. ISBN 0 646 44128 0. Published by the author, 3/194 Wynyard St., Tumut, NSW 2720. Price: \$35.00 per copy (including postage within Australia). **Reviewed by Elery Hamilton-Smith.**



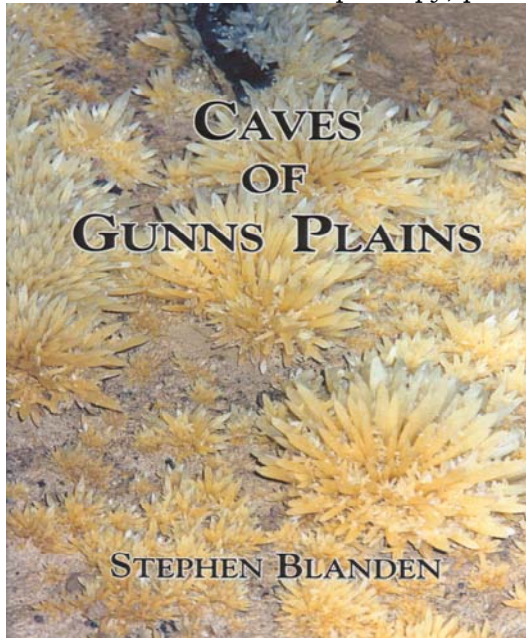
The very title captures the essential character of this book – the story of the Yarrangobilly Caves and that of the Hoad family are inextricably linked together. Walter Hoad was appointed Caretaker of the caves exactly one hundred years ago, and immediately commenced the further development of the caves reserve, building upon earlier work of the Murrays and Bradleys. His son Leo succeeded him as manager, and over the following 40 years established the distinctive quality of the reserve that persists to the present day. Then in turn Bruce Hoad took over for eight years. His retirement marked the end of the fifty years of the family's management of the reserve. Now his younger brother has documented the whole story

of Yarrangobilly up to that point in time, giving close attention to the contribution of many others – particularly the Murrays, Bradleys, Days and Dunns.

The Yarrangobilly families were not just cave managers: they were also amongst Australia's leading skiers and universally regarded as horsemen in a region where horses and the men who rode them remain a national icon. This is an intensely personal book, and radiates with the vitality of the Hoad family. At the same time, Colin has pursued balance and accuracy in his chronicle of the years. Opinions may differ on some points, but overall, the book demonstrates his quality of research in a way to which many professional historians might well aspire. The lovely paintings by Geoff Naylor, which feature on the cover and the multitude of photographs throughout, both add immensely to the joy of Colin's own contribution.

Several of the major caving areas of Australia have similar stories hidden away – but none have such a thorough documentation of the “people” perspective on their history. On the other hand, they often have a wonderful review, particularly covering the last 50 years of the “caving”. As Colin himself pointed out, that part of the Yarrangobilly story remains to be told. I am sure that can and will be done, but I doubt if any other area will ever attain a ‘people’ story of this quality. Colin deserves our most sincere congratulations and thanks for this book – it is an absolute joy.

CAVES OF GUNNS PLAINS. Stephen Blanden. 2004. 95 pp. Paperback – A4. ISBN 0-9752026-0-X. Published by (and available from) the Author, 1395 Main Road, Gunns Plains, Tasmania. 7315. Price: \$40 per copy, postage included. **Reviewed by Kent Henderson.**

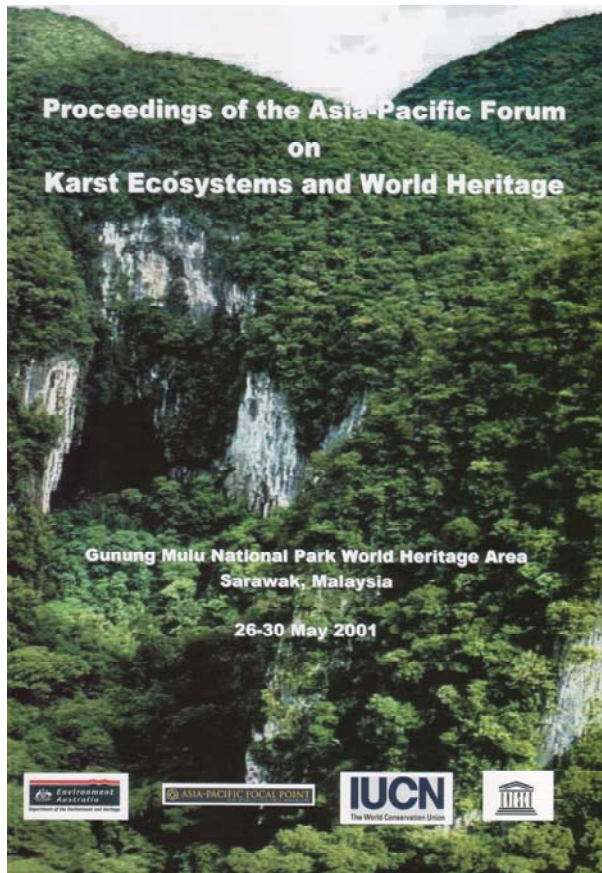


ACKMA Member Steve Blanden's new book Gunns Plains is very well put together. It is primarily an index to documented caves in the area (150), but it does contain much else of interest, including a general history of the Gunns Plains area, the geological background, a section on the caves themselves, as well as comprehensive cave descriptions. It also includes a large number of maps, and many colour photos, as well as full colour cover.

The book is an excellent compendium of the area, though by design a reference work, rather than bedtime reading.

This publication is a limited edition of only 150 copies – each numbered and signed by the author. As of January, over half were sold. Clearly, those many desiring a copy will need to act very quickly to avoid disappointment. Call Steve on (03) 6429 1192.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ASIA PACIFIC FORUM ON KARST ECOSYSTEMS AND WORLD HERITAGE – Gunung Mulu National Park World Heritage Area, Sarawak, Malaysia: 26-30 May 2001. Edited by Tim Wong, Ely Hamilton-Smith, Stuart Chape and Hans Friederich. 2001. ISBN: 0-642-548-307. 88pp, plus colour cover. UNESCO/IUCN. **Reviewed by Kent Henderson.**



Mia Thurgate handed out copies of this just-published volume at the recent Limestone Coast 2004 Workshop at Naracoorte. The Forum brought together nearly seventy people involved karst management and karst research from across the Asia Pacific and from wider a field. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a strategy to identify and recognised the most karst areas in the Asia Pacific Region. A number of Australians (most ACKMA members) attended, including Ely Hamilton-Smith, Mia Thurgate, Brian Clark, and Greg Middleton.

The volume includes an excellent Executive Summary of the outcomes of the meeting. Principal Chapters deal with World Heritage Inscription and Karst; Karst Biodiversity in World Heritage Areas, Examples of Karst Landforms in the Asia-Pacific Region; Issues in the Maintenance of Integrity and Adequate Protection of Karst Values; Setting Priorities and World Heritage Inscription of Karst Areas in the Asia-Pacific Region; together with a number of Case Studies – including a Brian Clark paper on Naracoorte Caves in South Australia. The work also contains many useful annexes and maps.

In total, it is a very useful document, an excellent read, and should be in every cave and karst manager's library. For inquiries concerning gaining a copy, email Mia Thurgate <mia.thurgate@deh.gov.au>

IGCP 448 – WORLD CORRELATION OF KARST ECOSYSTEMS – NEWSLETTER. 2004. Edited by Tang Danning. ISBN: 7-5633-3954-X/P. 130pp. Colour cover, plus many colour plates. Guangxi Normal University Press, Guilin, China. **Reviewed by Kent Henderson.**



This 'Newsletter' is a volume of over fifty papers delivered at IGCP 448 prior to the Limestone Coast 2004 Workshop, together with news and reports from a large number IGCP 448 working groups around the world.

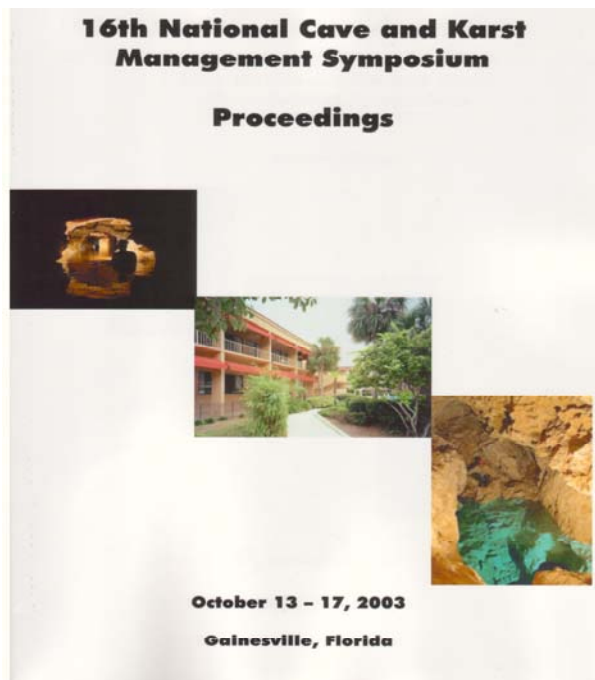
The entire volume is in English. The large range of contributions include *Evolving Karst Management on the Tongass* (in British Columbia) by Canadian ACKMA member Jim Baichtal, and *A Groundwater Geochemical and Isotopic Transect through Mullamullang Cave, Nullarbor Plain, Western Australia*, by H. Turin.

Of particular interest to me was the range and quality of the colour plates in the book – with a number of extremely interesting photos.

Most papers are relatively brief, though some are of length. In short, the volume is a snapshot, and more, of efforts by many in correlating karst ecosystems worldwide, and well worth having in any library.

To obtain a copy, email Professor Yuan Daoxin <dxyuan@karst.edu.cn>

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 16TH NATIONAL CAVE AND KARST MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM (NCKMS), Gainesville, Florida, U. S. A. 13-17 Oct 2003. Rea, Thomas (Ed.) 2004. Published by the Conference Steering Committee. Available from the NSS Bookshop <<http://www.caves.org>> or from the *Speleobooks* website < <http://www.speleobooks.com/>>.
Reviewed by Elery Hamilton-Smith.



Some of the early papers in this collection support my long-held view that the US probably has some of the best and some of the worst of everything. There are some excellent and optimistic papers, including Dale Pate on Carlsbad, Bill Elliott on Missouri bats, and some nice stories of partnerships in cave management by Louise Hose, Penny Boston and our good friend Kristie Lindberg. But Bill Halliday and Jay Swofford describe the history of Oregon Caves as a show place. It is an almost unbelievable chronicle of

disaster and neglect, yet the Park Service continues to 'show' the cave. Even when I visited back in the late 1960s, I felt the best thing they could do would be to close it down and throw away the key! So, in a way it is a cheering document – full of good news, but also with the bad news which enables virtually anyone else in the world to say “....at least, we have never been as bad as that!”

Then there is really a lot we can learn from it. Julian Lewis returns to describe his continuing work in monitoring of cave fauna as a basis for better environmental management. Indeed several other authors also make the point that we can only get quality management if we have quality research. There is no question that they do have quality research – whereas much of the so-called research in Australia consists of relatively superficial projects to try and solve problems, rather than focussing on enhancing our basic knowledge of how karst systems really operate.

Then there are new questions emerging. A paper on contamination of karst waters by mercury and its impact upon the aquatic fauna is the first such paper I have seen. Two authors report on early work in using DNA analysis to identify bacteria in cave soils and to commence to unravel their role in cave genesis. Perhaps this is why I have been interested in caves for so long – there are always new questions!

So, it is a truly satisfying report. Congratulations to all those responsible.

COMING EVENTS

In particular, this list covers events of special interest to researchers and managers. If you are interested in any listed events, contact Elery Hamilton-Smith on:<elery@alphalink.com.au>.

2005: Mar 29-April	CAVEPS: 10th Conference on Australasian Vertebrate Evolution, Palaeontology and Systematics, Naracoorte, S. Aust.
2005: Apr. 10-17	16th ACKMA Conference, Westport, New Zealand
2005: Apr. 24-29	Natural and Anthropogenic hazards in Karst Areas, Vienna..
2005: Aug 21-28	14th International Congress of Speleology, Athens, Greece
2005: Sept 14-19	Water Resources and Environment in Karst, Belgrade (Serbia) and Kotor (Montenegro)
2005: Oct ?	3rd Symposium on Cave Archaeology & Palaeontology, Athens
2005: Oct 31- Nov 4	National Cave and Karst Management Symposium, Albany, NY

And Looking Ahead:

2006 Autumn	ACKMA Annual General Meeting Weekend
2007: January	ASF Conference, South Australia, celebrating 50 years of the Federation.
2007: Autumn	17th ACKMA Conference, Buchan, Victoria N.B. This conference will be part of the celebration to mark the centenary of the discovery of Fairy Cave.

Several other meetings are in the pipeline right now – so if you are travelling and want to know of any opportunities prior to the next issue of the Journal, let me know.