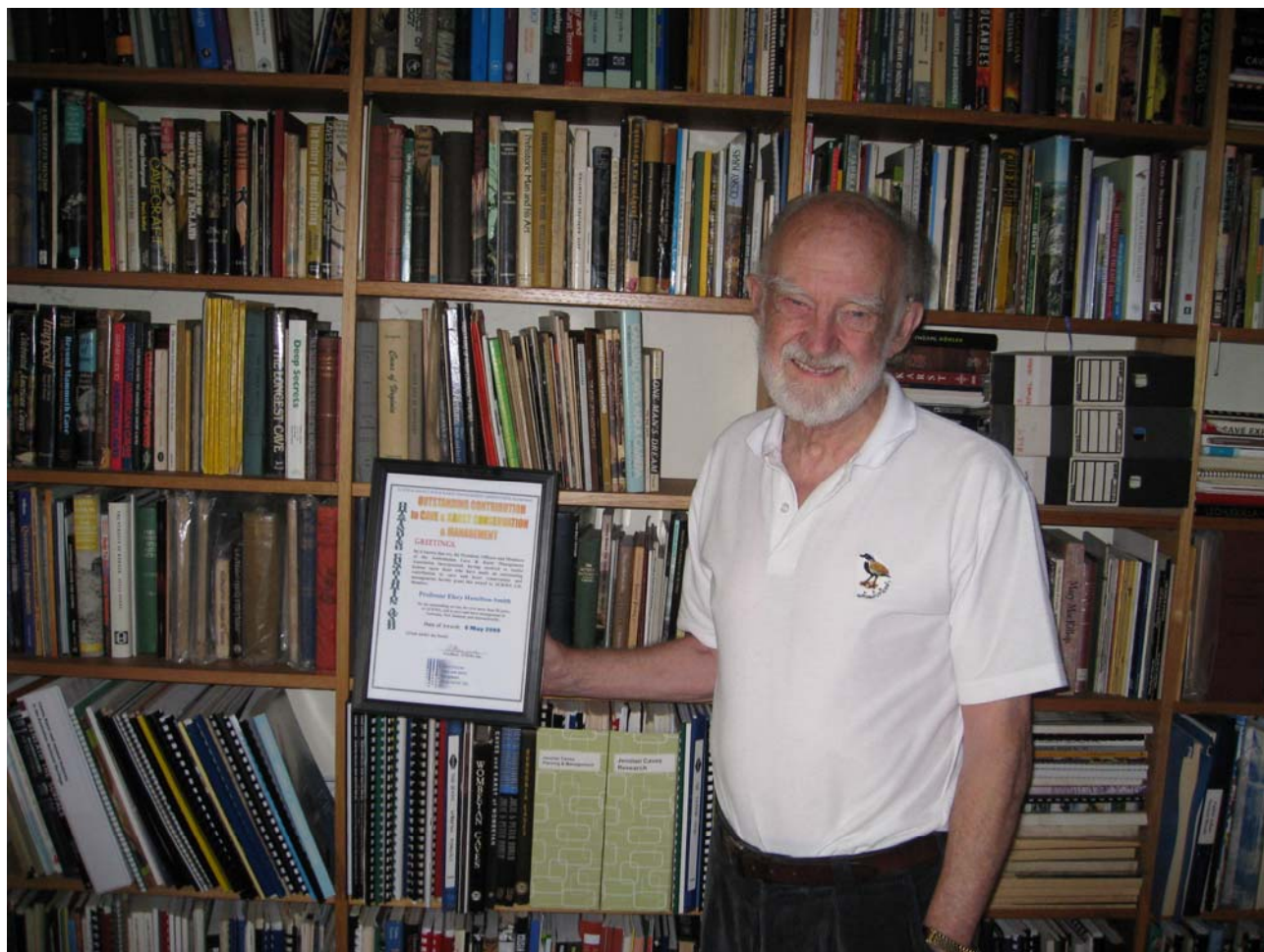


Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith, pictured in the library of his Melbourne home, after receiving ACKMA's Outstanding Contribution to Cave & Karst Conservation and Management Award.



OUR FATHER 'RETIRES'

- Kent Henderson et al

Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith recently posted the following 'Announcement' on the ACKMA Email List:

THE ANNOUNCEMENT!

I have resigned from the Chairmanship of the IUCN Task Force on Caves and Karst after about 10 years in the chair. Also, having reached my 80th year, it is high time to hand over and get some fresh leadership.

As from now, the chair will be handed over to Mrs Jay Anderson of Western Australia. Jay is a long experienced and particularly active speleologist; a very significant conservation activist over the last 15 years. She also has a post-graduate qualification in karst management.

I will remain as a member of the task force, at least for the next four years, partly to deal with a number of unfinished projects. I will always be glad to hear from old friends and expect to see many of you in various places.

Most importantly, I must say that it has been a most happy, rewarding and satisfying final stage of

my caving. It all started with my first caving trip on 4-6 June 1954. From that trip onwards, caving became my central life interest which led me to caving and doing cave-related things across over 50 countries!

The Task Force has indeed accomplished a great deal in many countries. BUT, that is simply because I have enjoyed immense support and assistance from very many people. You have helped me to sort out my ideas, to share expertise all around the world, and to keep the task force focused upon action more than just words! I owe a great debt to you all. Please accept my thanks which come with a real sense of personal humility and a real recognition of just how much you have contributed.

So I 'retire' with the great sense of a good life. I now hope the next 80 years will be as good as the last 80!

With love and thanks,

Elery.

As all members will be well aware, Elery is a national (and international!) karst treasure! His 'retirement' leaves a gaping hole but, happily, I have no doubt he will be around for advice for many years yet. I suspect Elery's idea of retirement is cutting down from working 70 hours a week to 60 hours per week. Indeed, he is off to China again in June! Of course, Elery is quite literally the *Father of ACKMA*, and the debt we owe him is enormous. Most happily his health, which has recently been indifferent, is currently fine. Unfortunately, to his

great disappointment (and to ours) he was not able to make our recent Conference at Margaret River.

Nonetheless, he was not forgotten – just the opposite! A highlight at our 2009 Annual General Meeting was the awarding to Elery of ACKMA's *Outstanding Contribution to Cave & Karst Conservation and Management Award*. Our president, Steve Bourne, read out the following citation, which was greeted with a sustained standing ovation.

CITATION

Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith, AM, DAppSci



Outstanding Contribution to Cave & Karst Conservation and Management

The conservation of karst landscapes and seascapes owe a great debt to the pioneering conservation leadership and scientific work of Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith. Karst, with its associated caves, unusual landforms, disappearing rivers, strange biodiversity, and rich sub-fossil and fossil deposits are very special places.

Elery's 60 year commitment to karst conservation activism commenced in 1948; he commenced cave exploration in 1954, and his first published work on the subject of cave policy was produced in 1962. At the same time he was educated as a sociologist and this has been a persistent basis for both his professional career and his commitment to conservation.

Professor Hamilton-Smith commenced his formal involvement with IUCN in 1962, when he assisted with the development of a publication, and later, in the 1980's when he worked with the Species Survival Commission Chiroptera working group. It was in 1995 that he accepted the IUCN Task Force leadership role.

His outstanding success in this role has been in part due to his extensive professional (personal) karst conservation management network and the networks that he helped to establish and maintain during his career. Elery Hamilton-Smith has an outstanding ability for networking and building collaborative partnerships and professional organisations and this

was demonstrated very early. He was a founding member of both the Australian Speleological Federation (1956) and the International Union of Speleology (1965).

In 1987 he was also a founding member of an important international organization, the Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association.

All of these organisations are currently very active, with the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) membership at 700 and ACKMA, which is now recognised as one of the premier cave organisations of the world, including over 250 members and representatives from every continent except Antarctica.

In conjunction with building organisations and societies, he also inspired professional interaction between speleologists and scientists, and provided personal leadership in the field of karst science and cave management. He initiated (for example) international staff exchange programs between Croatia and China.

In 1973, he instigated the inaugural bi-annual Australian Conference on cave management, the first of many. His first paper on karst conservation was published in 1962; a proposed Australian policy statement. Subsequently he has published some 300 book chapters, professional papers and reports. He

has prepared comprehensive summary papers on aspects of karst management, biology of Chiroptera, conservation of subterranean fauna, nature-based tourism, environment policies and practice in the cement industry, research methods, and restoration practice.

In 1997, he collaborated with three other editors and many other experts to produce IUCN's outstanding global guide to karst management titled Guidelines for Cave and Karst Protection. In 2003, he co-edited a major Australian karst text titled Beneath the Surface: A Natural History of Australian Caves. With such contributions, there was increasing recognition of his great depth of knowledge and expertise on karst and karst management.

This expertise and his professional responsibilities led him to world-wide travel, initially as a policy and planning consultant and later as an academic. It helped him establish a world-wide network of speleological contacts and membership of major national speleological societies.

He has visited cave areas in some 65 countries and often undertaken original exploration and research or advised on management of protected areas. Specifically, he has advised on karst management in Australia, New Zealand, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Slovenia, and has undertaken strategic planning for nature conservation in China and Papua New Guinea.

He has also carried out research and provided management advice on karst history, biodiversity, ecology, earth sciences, visitor management and rock art.

It was through such international networks and experience, that he was able to influence the Ramsar International Convention on a critical karst issue. His subsequent expert paper, with Andy Spate, led to Ramsar formally recognising subterranean wetland ecosystems.

Professor Hamilton-Smith's expertise was invested in new generations of managers. He established and led a graduate course in Cave and Karst Management at Charles Sturt University in New South Wales, and he taught advanced and outstanding students at the International Centre of Excellence, University of Wageningen, Netherlands.

His educational and capacity building work included supervising or examining PhD students at a number of universities worldwide and he provided short-term training programs in Thailand, Slovenia, Vietnam, Indonesia, China, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America.

Professor Hamilton-Smith is the former Chair of the WCPA Task Force on Caves and karst. He has successfully undertaken this coordination and expert advisory role on behalf of approximately 100 members for the last 12 years. His task force work culminates some 46 years involvement with IUCN. During that time he has steadily helped to build recognition and respect for karst and its associated

biodiversity as an outstanding natural phenomenon of Earth.

As Task Force Leader, he has convened or was keynote speaker at many specialised symposia and he published some 100 reviews of relevant texts. Many of these landscapes are now recognised as World Heritage and Professor Hamilton-Smith has actively assisted IUCN with the process of nomination, evaluation and management of such sites.

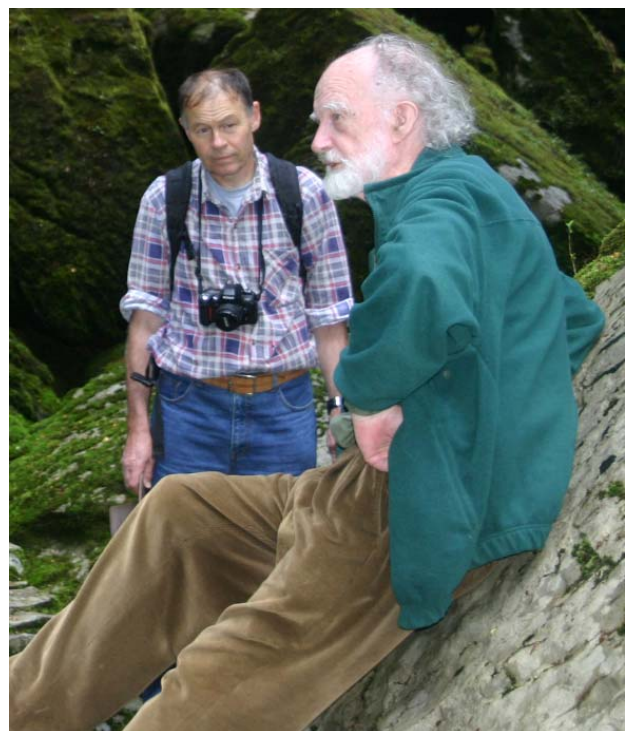
In recognition for his outstanding contribution to karst science and conservation, he has been recognised and received many awards by organisations.

His outstanding work has been recognised by an Australian Honour, the Member of the Order of Australia award. He has also received an Honorary Doctorate (DAppSci); he has been made an Honorary Life Member of ACKMA and ASF; and he is an Honorary Member of the National Speleological Society of the United States of America.

Moved: Andy Spate
Seconded: Steve Bourne

Carried by standing ovation
– ACKMA Annual General Meeting,
Margaret River, Western Australia, 6 May 2009.

Upon my return to Melbourne from the Conference, one of my first tasks was to call on Elery at his home and, on behalf of the ACKMA Committee and all members, present him with this citation, and a framed certificate. I think it is fair to say that Elery was a bit pleased! Long may he be there for us all!



Elery (right) with Ian Millar
– 16th ACKMA Conference, New Zealand, 2005.

