



The 13th Caves Guides Conference (at Wellington Caves) has come and gone, and was most successful. A full report is herein. Of course, the next big event to capture our attention is the **19th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management**. The 19th ACKMA Conference will be held at Ulverstone, Tasmania from **SUNDAY 8 MAY 2011 to FRIDAY 13 MAY 2011**. Only about eight months to go! It will be fabulous!! Full Details and the Booking Form are inserted in this Journal! **SEE YOU THERE!!**

Not long after our Mulu trip in April I was in Mt. Isa in Western Queensland on business, and visited adjacent karst locations – resulting in the article herein. Recently, I was in Broken Hill in Western New South Wales, similarly. The latter's area is largely karst-free but both cities are, of course, significant mining centres. What intrigued me a little about both were local street names.

Mt. Isa had a:

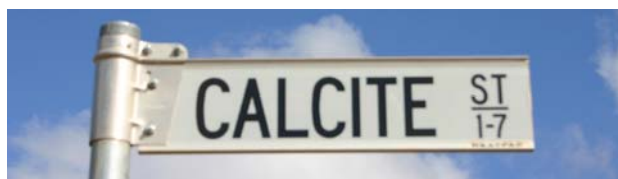


and (not unsurprisingly, I suppose) a:



The vast majority of streets in Broken Hill are named for chemicals or ores and their ilk, with such scintillating titles as: Sulfide Street, Chloride Street, Oxide Street...

But Broken Hill also has a:



and a:



And finally, for the ultimate in alliteration, Broken Hill has:



Lots of ACKMA people are junketing overseas before the year is out. Andy Spate, Dan Cove, Peter Austen, Barry Richard and myself are all attending the International Show Caves Association (ISCA) Congress in Slovakia in late October. Jenolan is bidding for the next Congress (2014). Fingers crossed...

Lisa King is attending the European Global Geoparks Conference on Lesbos Island, Greece, in October and taking a UNESCO course on Evaluating Earth Heritage Management. She has promised a full 'exposé' for the next (December) Journal!

Some great news from Bungonia Caves in New South Wales came through in mid June. The caves have, finally, been gazetted by the NSW Government with full protection, i.e.: against mining. Excellent news indeed. However, as Andy Spate pointed out, this protection does not necessarily extend to the Bungonia karst area catchments and hydrological connections.

The following article appeared on various on-line news services on 1 June:

*Downpours caused by Tropical Storm Agatha have created a giant sinkhole in Guatemala City, while throughout Guatemala officials have reported 120 dead and at least 53 missing. The sinkhole, which formed in the northern part of the capital city, swallowed up a space larger than the area of a street intersection, CNN reported on Monday. Residents told CNN that a three-storey building and a house fell into the hole.*

*This sinkhole is a result of the geology of the region (limestone, cave systems, etc.) and poor urban planning where areas are artificially leveled and poorly compacted before being built upon. With a large storm, erosion occurs, and after time, a sinkhole such as this one can develop. Residents said a poor sewage drainage system underground was to blame for the*

*sinkhole. A similar hole opened up nearby last year, they told CNN. Flooding and landslides from Agatha have killed at least 144 people and left thousands homeless across Central America, officials say.*

Of course, a significant part of Central America from the Yucatan in Mexico down through Guatemala, is karst. Living on limestone has its hazards... The largest karst area in Australia with significant urban development upon it is around northern Perth, Western Australia. There has certainly been sinkhole collapse there, though not (yet...) on the scale of instances in Central America and elsewhere.



Great news from British Columbia, Canada. Paul Griffiths reported on 28 May that:

*...the motion to introduce 'Bill M206 Cave Protection Act, 2010' was made today in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia (the 'House').*

*The motion was enthusiastically approved by members on both sides of the House. The bill was then read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House.*

*Your messages of support meant a great deal to MLA Fraser who introduced the bill as a non-partisan initiative. He reportedly received support from cave experts from as far away as Australia, as well as support from the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Committee. Mr. Fraser will no doubt look forward to continued support as the bill progresses to a second reading and perhaps even further.*

*I would once again like to thank everyone for sending your messages of support. The British Columbia's cave resources will surely benefit from this legislative initiative – no matter the outcome.*

The following article, of which I quote the opening two paragraphs, was posted through the *Reuters* news agency on 28 July:

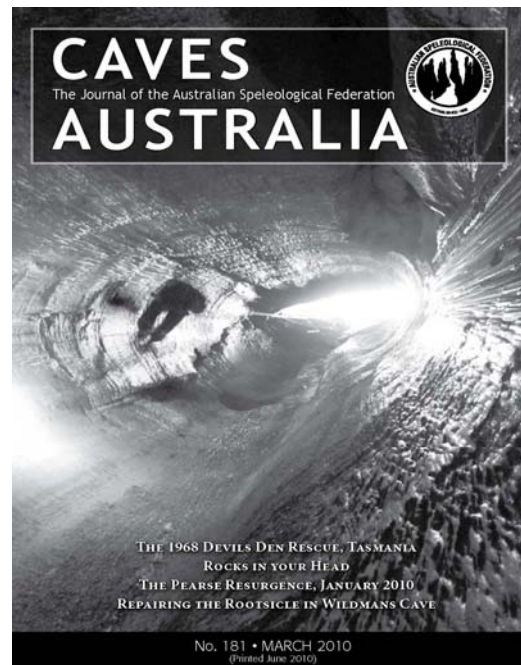
*Staff at the Jenolan Caves west of Sydney have added a new out-of-this-world attraction – a tour in the Star Trek language Klingon.*

*Currently a self-guided audio tour at the caves in the Blue Mountains is offered in eight languages, but staff came up with the idea of adding the fictional language Klingon as the caves did once feature in the popular TV series.*

Yes, well... This matter hit the media whilst a significant number of Jenolan guides were away at Wellington Caves attending the 13th Cave Guides Conference – maybe conveniently – as certainly staff remaining on duty were, reportedly, 'run off their feet' answering phone queries after the 'news' hit the airwaves. Any publicity is good, they say, don't they? Hmm... A full article expounding the virtues of 'Klingon at Jenolan' is elsewhere herein.

Speaking of Jenolan, it is amazing what cave managers will do to be together. Recently, Dan Cove, Manager of Jenolan, was on leave, and took off for a holiday in New Zealand. Who should be on the same flight but George Bradford, Manager of Yarrangobilly Caves!

The most talkative of all cave managers, as we know, is Nick Heath, of Kelly Hill Cave. Nick was at the recent Guides Conference, and Chris George, the Wellington Manager, was want to comment on Nick's verbosity (the lack of it really!). But that's okay, Nick knows how to run a cave – the old fibre-optic lighting having largely 'gone to God', Kelly Hill Cave will be re-lit in LEDs by September, probably about the time members are reading this Journal!



The latest edition of ASF's *Caves Australia* is out, containing, as usual, an array of excellent articles. Given it was the March 2010 Edition (printed in June...) – hopefully they will catch up soon. But I can certainly sympathize, clearly I am aware of the vagaries of putting out a 'cave magazine'...



Ken Fleming (left) receives 'The Key to the Caves' from fellow Wombeyan Guide, Lawrie Dunn. Acting Wombeyan Manager, Geoff Lang, looks on.  
Photo: Lawrie Dunn.



It is not often (if ever!) one serves fifty years in any job, certainly as a cave guide! ACKMA member Ken Fleming has just celebrated fifty years as a guide at Wombeyan Caves – an amazing achievement. Warmest congratulations Ken! Not surprisingly, Wombeyan staff recently held a function to celebrate the event, which was reported in the *Goulburn Post* (19 July 2010), and which I quote in full:

*The Wombeyan Caves are a magical underground world, but for Ken Fleming they have also become his home. Mr Fleming has worked at the caves for 50 years, starting as a guide on May 16, 1960 under Superintendent Clyde Stiff.*

*'It is a very magical underground world but it has to be seen to be believed. It is not just a hole in the ground,' Mr Fleming said. .*

*He has worked in a variety of roles over the five decades, from permanent to casual, and it is estimated he has conducted over 6000 cave tours and entertained over 114,000 visitors.*

*Over the years, his tasks included guided cave inspections, maintenance of the various facilities in the reserve, construction of walking tracks to the caves, fencing, painting and tree planting. Of course many of tasks were undertaken without the machinery and other modern conveniences available today.*

*'One of my first jobs was taking bags of gravel, which were loaded on a pack horse, and walking along the cave tracks to spread the gravel,' Mr Fleming said.*

*On June 26, 2010 Mr Fleming celebrated 50 years of employment at Wombeyan Caves with past and present staff, family and colleagues joining in the celebrations.*

*He received some special mementos and glowing tributes from his present and former colleagues, including the key to the caves from Lawrie Dunn,*

*and responded with his own thoughts and memories of life and work at the caves.*

*'I grew up locally near Wombeyan on a property and when I got engaged I looked around for local employment and was lucky to get the job (at the caves),' Mr Fleming said. 'As a young chap you go in there at 21 and it's something you don't even think about (reaching a 50 year milestone).'*

*Fifty years of dedication and commitment to the caves and its people have rewarded Mr Fleming with a lifetime of treasured memories and experiences. And for now he is still working at the site.*

*'I'm still working there part time but I know sooner or later I will have to give that up,' he said.*

*'I work as a tour guide there (at the caves) most weeks and I'm very grateful as an older member of staff that management allow me to show people this wonderful underground world.'*



Ken Fleming emerges from yet another tour underground.

And so to a bit of housekeeping... Inserted in this Journal, in addition to the Flier of Booking Form for the 19<sup>th</sup> ACKMA Conference at Ulverstonne next May, is the new ACKMA CD Rom. It contains the Proceedings all past ACKMS Conferences up to the last one (the 18<sup>th</sup>, at Margaret River), and much more. Given that the Margaret River Conference made a modest profit, the ACKMA Committee resolved that the new CD Rom be distributed gratis to all members. It is an incredible resource. Enjoy!

Also inserted herein in the 'Call for Applications' Flier for an award under the ACKMA Life Members Fund. If any member is aware of a person who fit the criteria to receive funded attendance to the next ACKMA Conference – pass it on! I can supply electronic copy of the form on request.

And finally, a word about the next (December 2010) Journal. It will be a 'Special Cave Lighting Edition'. There will be a significant number of articles on many aspects of cave lighting, old and new, written by such lighting luminaries (!) as David Head, Dave Rowling, Neil Kell, et al. Lots of colour too! It should be nice!!

