

SYMPOSIUM ON GEODIVERSITY, GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND GEOTOURISM

- Andy Spate



Cave sediments in small karstic cavity
revealed by quarrying at Yessabah.

The Linnean Society of New South Wales and the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water jointly hosted the above Symposium in the Sea Acres Nature Reserve Visitor Centre at Port Macquarie on the 6-10 September.

I guess about 60-70 people attended for all or part of the proceedings. ACKMA members were well to the fore and those that attended can be seen in the list of papers presented as shown in bold in Table 1.

Seven out of the 32 papers presented had ACKMA members as authors! So many Stephens!

The Symposium also had two, full-day excursions – the second featuring an all-too-brief visit to the Yessabah Nature Reserve – home to caves, bats, bugs, bones and a now defunct limestone quarry.

Armstrong Osborne and I, together with local NPWS Ranger Chelsea Marshall, told the gathering of the resources, conservation battles and so on of the site. Owing to illness – of which more later – I did not attend the other field trip.

After welcoming addresses the proceedings kicked off with the launch of the new booklet prepared by the DECCW's Karst and Geodiversity Unit *Guide to New South Wales Karst and Caves* reviewed in this edition of the ACKMA Journal

The papers were generally very good, kept to time and were relevant to the Symposium title. Some clearly missed the point as to what geodiversity and geotourism actually mean.

One or two speakers need to learn to look at and speak an audience – mumbling at the floor or to the waves on the field trips doesn't help. Table 1 lists all the papers presented. Of particular interest, other than the excellent ACKMA member's papers were:

- Bob Brown's (not that Bob B!) paper on the various websites that he and colleagues have prepared discussing and promoting various geosites – for free! I can recommend that you chase him up if you are wanting to promote your site professionally.
- Gavin Young's presentation of the importance of the Wee Jasper limestones as a National Heritage site for Australia. He recently nominated Wee Jasper with input from me on the karst values – rather too hastily put together on my part, unfortunately.
- John Pickett's paper had particular resonance with me. He told of a number of geoheritage projects – signs and sites – that had been established under his urgings – that have now been allowed to decay so that they are now an embarrassment. Although they are clearly not an embarrassment to the management authorities in that vandalised signs are allowed to remain for years...
- Armstrong Osborne's summing up paper as a finale to the Symposium. Many of the audience felt that he was too negative about what had been achieved in Australia – or that he was too optimistic about what had been achieved in Europe, for example, in promoting and utilising geoheritage for geotourism. I thought that Armstrong's prodding is just what is needed – but the bureaucratic inertia and narrow thing of many of our conservation agencies – aided and abetted by a too-pure (in many cases) green movement predicate against lateral thinking and working to promote interest in and understanding of geoheritage.



Former Yessabah limestone quarry.

I mentioned illness above – I travelled from Western Australia to Sydney and onto Toronto (near Newcastle) to attend various karst-related meetings and the Symposium and to work with Stephen Swabey. I managed to infect him with dreadful cold/flu – the fact that he was able to present our paper at all was a remarkable achievement! Sorry, Steve...

This Symposium was hopefully an inaugural one to be hosted by the Linnean Society and DECCW

in future years. The proceedings, under the skilled editorship of Mike Augee, will be published in 2011.

And I can fully recommend *Tommy's By The Beach – Seafood and Steak – Restaurant*, Flynn's Beach, Port Macquarie for a great meal when you visit Port Macquarie – don't miss the boardwalk at Sea Acres either!

TABLE 1. Papers presented at the Symposium

Papers presented by ACKMA members are in **bold**

Rob Barnes: Geology and landscape, people and resources – a perspective from within the Geological Survey of NSW.

***Stephen Meehan:* Geodiversity, Geoconservation and NSW parks.**

David Keith: Relationships between geodiversity and vegetation in south-eastern Australia.

Richard Hicks & Jeremy Black: DECCW remote sensed imagery resources – availability and potential application for geodiversity.

David Robson: Geophysics – a versatile method to explore geodiversity.

Glenn Atkinson: Mapping geodiversity using soil landscape maps.

Mitch Tulau: Coastal geoheritage of the mid North Coast, NSW.

David Och & Richard Hicks: Preservation of Rocky Beach, Port Macquarie NSW as a geoheritage reserve.

Lin Sutherland & Benjamin Cohen: Diversity within geodiversity, underpinning habitats.

Michael Bruce: Geodiversity of the southern Barrington Tops lava field: a study in petrology and geochemistry.

Angus Robinson: Australian geotourism – current challenges and future opportunities.

Carol Simpson: Geotourism in Australia – perspectives from the field.

Anne Felton: Marine geotourism development at the Sapphire Coast Marine Discovery Centre, Eden NSW.

Phil Smart: The Ulladulla rock platforms and their geological tourism potential.

Bob Brown: Geology to the masses: Geotours via the Web.

Simone Meakin: Geodiversity of the Lightning Ridge area and the importance of geotourism to the region's prosperity.

***Mike Augee:* Geotourism and geodiversity at Wellington Caves, central western NSW.**

***Dan Cove:* The essential role of interpretive guiding in ensuring understanding and conservation of geosites.**

***Monica Yeung & Alex Ritchie:* Is geotourism a threat to geoheritage?**

John Pickett: Down the track: a review of older geoheritage projects in NSW.

Haydn Washington: The 'Pagodas' of the Greater Blue Mountains, geoheritage just out of waiting.

***Stephen Swabey, Dingle Smith, Andy Spate & Dave Lambert:* Landforms are not static – geodiversity and geoheritage in a changing world.**

Michael Comfort: The Tasmanian Geoconservation Database.

Gary Howling, Ian Pulsford and Robert Dunn: Rocks, reserves and refugia – conserving Australia's national heritage through the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative.

Rob Dick: The NSW Reserve Establishment Plan 2008 – directions for building a diverse and resilient system of Parks and Reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

***Stephen Reilly:* A thematic assessment of the geodiversity of NSW.**

Rachel Sanderson & Jane Ambrose: The National Heritage List and Australia's geological heritage.

Kate O'Callaghan & Kirsty Douglas: A catalogue of Australia's fossil heritage.

Gavin Young: Wee Jasper–Lake Burrinjuck Fossil Fish Sites: nomination for National Heritage Listing.

Ian Percival: Palaeontological geoheritage in Australia: is the Paleopark concept the solution to combining preservation and education?

M. Brocx & Vic. Semeniuk: A tool-kit for use in assessing geoheritage values and in geoconservation: a case study using the Leschenault Peninsula and its leeward estuarine lagoon in south-western Australia.

***Armstrong Osborne:* Geoheritage conservation in NSW: lessons from the past and prospects for the future.**