



JOHN DUNKLEY AM

Andy Spate

John Dunkley, known to many ACKMA members, has been a prominent figure in Australian speleology for more than five decades. He was a leading light in the first five cave tourism and management conferences hosted, or co-hosted, by the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF). He was granted the honour of a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2013 Australia Day list, for "Significant service to the exploration, science and conservation of caves".

He joins the late Don Matts (OAM) who gained his honour in 1993 for service to speleology and to the Cave Rescue group of the Volunteer Rescue Association of NSW and Elery Hamilton-Smith (AM, 2001) as Australian speleologists who have received Australian Honours. Elery's honour was for service to conservation and the environment, particularly in the areas of national park, wilderness, cave and karst management, to the development of leisure and recreation activities, and to the community as a contributor to social policy development and through programmes dealing with youth issues.

John was one of the driving forces behind the nomination by ASF and the Institute of Australian Geographers of Joe Jennings for an Australian honour. Unfortunately Joe died a few months before the decision process. As John has stated "It would have been fitting if he'd been the first speleologist to obtain that national recognition".

John has been the force behind many expeditions in Australia and Asia exploring and documenting caves, visiting over 500 caves in his career. He is the author, or co-author, of a number of books, expedition reports,

conference papers and so on dating back to his seminal 1967 *Caves of the Nullarbor*.

Internationally, he was ASF's delegate to the International Union of Speleology (UIS) for four terms between 1969 and 1993. He has been president of ASF on two occasions (1983-1986 and 2002-2005); vice president in 1981, 2000-01 and subsequently from 2005 to the present. He was made a Life Member of ASF in 2007. He has been a director of the ASF Karst Conservation Fund since 2001 – this is a Registered Environmental Fund.

He has occupied presidential, vice presidential, secretary, treasurer and committee positions in ASF, Sydney University Speleological Society, Canberra Speleological Society and the Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society amongst other cave-oriented bodies.

Like many of us of a 'certain age' his thirst for the subterranean world was fed by books such as Norbert Casteret's *Ten Years Under the Earth* (still beside my bed!), Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*.

I am sure that all ACKMA members will join with me in congratulating John for this well-deserved recognition which, after all, is also recognition that caves and karst are a part of the fabric of the Australian environment and society.



Above left. John Dunkley with Highland Caving Group President Ian Luthorborrow surveying a sandstone cave in Frenchs Forest/Sydney.

Above right. Cavemania 2005 conference convener Stephen Bunton introduces John Dunkley talking on "Early maps of Tuglow, The Bracewell Collection."