

EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

The **2000 ACKMA AGM at Buchan Caves** is all but upon us. The program was published in the last two Journals, but it is reprinted herein, just in case you missed it!! Please get any final registrations in the Dennis Rebbechi as soon as possible, but no later than 13 June. We do need to know numbers for catering purposes, particularly as most of the catering is being kindly donated by *Parks Victoria*. All members are urged to attend the AGM weekend if at all humanly possible.

Victoria possesses a relatively-new cave-related organisation, *Cave Rescue Victoria*, which became incorporated in Victoria on 11 April 2000. It will be meeting on 7 June to develop its organisational framework, looking at such issues as training, call-out procedures, equipment, and several others. Interested ACKMA members can readily contact Mark Somers at: marksomers@adventuretagalongtours.com.au

It is now less than about 12 months to the **14th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management** at Wombeyan Caves in NSW. Published in this Journal is the draft program for the Conference, which looks wonderful, to say the least!! Put the Conference dates in your diary now!! A full booking form will be inserted in the September Journal.

The Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust is considering the (re?) introduction of a community support group, provisionally named "The Friends of Jenolan". One imagines, if formed, it may operate along the lines of the successful "Friends of Buchan Caves" in Victoria. One proposal is for the Jenolan Caves Historical and Preservation Society to become part of this new body. Speaking of Jenolan Caves, in early April it won the Major Tourist Attraction category in the 2000 *Blue Mountains Awards for Excellence in Tourism* and were runners up in the Adventure Tourism category.

A wedding is announced! Two of the nicest people one could meet, Mole Creek Caves manager, Chester Shaw, and Kay Pettifor, will tie the knot at St. Mary's Church, Hagley (near Deloraine, Tasmania) on 9 September. I understand several ACKMA people will be present to witness the joyful event, and I am certain all members will join with me in wishing them both every happiness.

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The **8th Cave Guides Gabfest** at Wombeyan Caves was a great success, I am reliably informed, even if numbers attending were a bit down. A full report is elsewhere in the Journal. The 9th event, in 2002, is planned for Naracoorte Caves.

Moving to New Zealand, Waitomo Museum of Caves manager, Peter Dimond, advises that the Museum is about to upgrade all its displays in two stages. The first stage involves the displays and the second, a new audio-visual show. The existing displays are up to twenty years old and are starting to show their age. The content of the displays will be similar to the existing displays, and will

be presented in new cases with professionally designed lighting. Sounds like great stuff!!

Still in New Zealand, Kate Banbury advises that she has resigned and will finish at Waitomo's Glowworm Cave on the 30 June. She says: "At least I have had some impact as they are employing another Karst Resources Officer as it is now considered a core part of the business! I am off to do the overseas thing. First, I am visiting Dave and Betty Gill in Sarawak, then on to China, Mongolia and Russia and Poland. From there I'll do a wander around Europe and see where life leads me. But I am sure the cave world is not totally rid of me and my face will pop up somewhere down the track!" Indeed, no doubt the irrepressible Kate will pop up again, and I am certain all ACKMA members will join in wishing her bon voyage and every success in the future, wherever it may take her.

Things are astir in Queensland. Cameron James, the local QPWS District Ranger, advises that the site known as Cammoo Caves is now the main entrance to Mt Etna Caves National Park. An initial introductory meeting of the fledgling Mt Etna Caves National Park Management Advisory Committee was held recently. Attendees thus far include QPWS staff, Central Queensland Speleological Society (CQSS), University of Central Queensland, the regional tourism organisation and Pacific Lime. The committee will be extended for the next meeting (scheduled late May or June) to include some absentees and a few extras – representing, at least, the local community, the Darumbal people (native title claimants), Dianne Vavryn as herself, and Anne Augusteyn (Olsens Capricorn Caverns).

At the next meeting it is expected that QPWS will table options, for the purposes of discussion, for the "redevelopment" or remodelling of the Cammoo site to:

- (a) fulfill the obligations of the NHT grant and general purposes of the acquisition, which is to remove visitation pressure from
Johanssen Cave and thus protect the Ghost bat;
- (b) provide improved public access into the park and recreational caves all year round in a simplified, yet organised, manner;
- (c) consider options for educational and/or research potentials at the site;
- (d) consider simple car parking and day use facility (toilets, shady trees, table);
- (e) consider potential walking track system to caves and other nearby 'sites' of interest.

Cameron expects CQSS to present a proposal, as well, to generate discussion and give the group something from which to move forward. Thus, the committee is destined to work towards developing a workable future the Cammoo site as the long-term entry point to the Park. An article will appear in the next (September) Journal further detailing plans for the area.

One of the several organisations with which ACKMA is cross-affiliated is the USA's National Speleological Conservation and Management Section. In the latest edition of its "The Cave Conservationist", it reports the formation of the Cave Conservation Email List. To join, simply email to conservation@caves.org and in the body of the email type SUBSCRIBE. Put nothing in the subject line. Australasia now also has a Cave Conservation List, run by ACKMA Fellow, Rauleigh Webb. To join this list, you can subscribe (or unsubscribe) from the home page

at <http://listmaster.iinet.net.au/list/cavecons> Finally, of course, any financial ACKMA member can join our own ACKMA email list. You can subscribe at: <http://wasg.iinet.net.au/form-ackma.html>

Mention was made in the last Journal of the strong possibility of Mulu Caves gaining World Heritage status. Given political difficulties, which it may be unhelpful to detail here (so I wont), this eventually is currently in doubt. Fingers crossed that I can report some more positive news in September Journal. That said, the Sarawak Development Institute, together with the Sarawak Tourism Board, has organised the Mulu World Heritage Conference on 20 – 21 June 2000, at Royal Mulu Resort, Sarawak, Malaysia. The objectives of the conference are to exchange ideas and information on maximising the benefits of World Cultural and Natural Heritage sites, their preservation, promotion and management; examine issues and challenges the tourism industry faces in developing and promoting World Heritage properties or sites; and to recommend global strategies and approaches to achieve a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage Listing. Given the short notice, one doubts if any ACKMA members (other

than Dave Gill, perhaps) will get to it – aside from the fact it falls a few days after our AGM at Buchan. Details are at: <http://www.sdi.com.my/sdi/file/news.html>

Rauleigh Webb has recently come up with a new definition for insanity: “Despite drilling into two caves over ten metres in height near or beneath the proposed Christmas Island launch facility, the Federal Minister for the Environment has given the go ahead for the Christmas Island Space port”. Perhaps the Minister really wants an underground facility? If so, of course, he is quite likely to get it! Sigh...

And finally, a wonderful colour advertisement on Naracoorte Caves appeared in the Reader’s Digest (Spring, 1999), clearly placed by some well-meaning South Australian Government publicity department. It featured a very nice photo of the Fossil Chamber in Victoria Fossil Cave, under the caption: “How do you keep archaeologists occupied for 300 years?” Yes, well.... Of course, if one discovered human remains..., but then it would probably be an anthropologists dream...!!

A KARST MANAGER’S LAMENT

