



## EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

Once again I must commence this discourse on a very sad note. We have recently suffered the death of two outstanding cave people. It is with deep regret I advise of the death of, firstly, long time Jenolan Caves guide Bill Buckley, who died on Thursday morning, 10 January, in his sleep. Bill was 83 years old, and he had been a casual guide at Jenolan for approximately 30 years. His contributions to Jenolan over the years were enormous, and he set a high benchmark in cave guiding and interpretation. The other death is that of one of doyens of both ACKMA and cave research in New Zealand, Les Kermode. I knew both personally, as did many ACKMA members. I will not dwell further on their passing here – suitable eulogies to both are located elsewhere in this Journal – other than to extend my deep sympathy to the family of each, in which I know I am joined by the ACKMA Committee and all members.

The ACKMA **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** is upon us!! A flier/registration form is inserted in this Journal, along with the Agenda, Committee Nomination Form, and minutes of the last AGM. I look forward to see all members who can possibly make it at the AGM weekend. It will be wonderful! Don't miss it!!

By the time you read this Journal, Andy Spate will have officially retired from the New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service! He was counting the days!! A "farewell" function was scheduled is Saturday 23 February, which I will be attending, and I shall report all in the next (June) Journal! Aside from looking at several consultancies, Andy is busily getting ACKMA's contribution to the Korean Cave Expo organized. So, he will be around to haunt us, and many karst locales, for many years to come!

At Newdegate Cave (Hastings, Tasmania), the re-lighting project continues happily. ACKMA Fellow Neil Kell, who is overseeing the project, went home to New South Wales for Christmas, but re-started work on 11 February – with the holiday period out of the way. Hastings Manager, Keith Vanderstaay, advises

me that they had a very busy January with a record number of visitors to Newdegate Cave (at least since 1994, with accurate records going only back that far). I will be in Hobart on business in the first week of March, and aside from doing a spot of caving with Arthur Clarke, I plan to call in and see the new Hastings Visitor's Centre and what Neil has been up to underground. I'll inflict my impressions upon you in the June Journal.

Recent news from the USA advises that the next National Cave and Karst Management Symposium will be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Gainesville, Florida from 13 – 18 October 2003. Any ACKMA member planning to travel to America next year would certainly be most welcome. Taking their cue from ACKMA, the just-released Proceedings for the 1999 USA National Cave and Karst Management Symposium is now available on CD (as well as hard copy). The CD costs \$US 8.50 plus postage. Order can be made on-line from the NSS Bookstore: <http://www.caves.org/service/bookstore/>



A View of the Codrington Wind Farm

**An ode to Feral Cats  
- or why park managers love them...**



Speaking of CD ROMs, regrettably the Hard Copy Proceedings and updated ACKMA CD ROM are further delayed, due to a very few papers not to hand. I should name the miscreants, but I'll be beneficent! (but don't press your luck...). An order form for both WILL be circulated with the June ACKMA Journal. There is a chance I may have copies at our AGM at Yarrangobilly in May.

In New Zealand, the inimitable John Ash has done again! Black Water Rafting booked out a local cinema just before Christmas, and about 300 local souls attend a showing of the (then) new movie *Lord of the Rings*. John invited the whole of Waitomo! Four bus loads and an array of cars left the village to attend.

The movie was preceded by drinks (of course!) and nibbles, plus a speech by John Ash (is the Pope a Catholic!). I will be in New Zealand for the last two weeks of March, but I will have little time for cave things. However, I will be staying one night with our illustrious President at Waitomo, and I also plan to visit the Kawiti Glowworm Cave - a small tourist operation near the Bay of Islands area north of Auckland. Again, I'll let you know in the next Journal....

In February I had occasion to be in Western Victoria for a few days on business, and called in to see the new Codrington Wind Farm (the first in Victoria, commissioned June 2001), which is on the coast (almost) between Port Fairy and Portland. It is also on karst. The dune limestone in the immediate wind farm area *appears* deeply overlaid, but the farm itself is only a few hundred metres south of a fair number of known caves. While there is much, environmentally, to recommend wind farms, I had concerns about the local geology! The farm has 14 turbines, which cost \$33 Million, with a capacity of 18.2 mw. The farmer on whose land wind farm is half situated (it runs over two adjoining properties) is running regular tours - one of which I took. She was unaware the coastal areas of her property were on karst (cars?), and had no idea caves existed on the adjoining property. However she assured me all the appropriate geology tests were done. Hmmm. The base of each wind tower evidently consists of about 100 tonnes of concrete. Reminds me of that highway in the Kosciusko National Park in New South Wales that collapsed into a cave a few years back. The geology was probably done there too.... See: <http://www.pacifichydro.com.au/codrington.htm> and for the tours: <http://www.myportfairy.com/windfarmtours/>

I had a note from ACKMA member Richard Watson recently. Richard is the Manager of the Marble Arch Caves in Northern Ireland. He enclosed an interesting *Geoparks Pack*, noting his caves were now inscribed for their geological heritage (the only European Caves thus far so inscribed). Wonderful stuff!

In early November, I had a brief stay in Queensland and visited our Immediate Past Treasurer & ACKMA Fellow Dennis Rebbechi at his Gold Coast home. A pleasant BBQ and evening ensued! He sends his regards to all ACKMA members!

An interesting article appeared in the December 2001 edition of the *Cave Conservationisi* - the newsletter of the NSS Conservation/Management Section (USA). It relates that the two main Internet auction sites (Ebay and Yahoo) have added "speleothems, stalactites and stalagmites" to their prohibited sales list. Excellent news, and I'm sure we even forgive them their tautology!

And finally, it is barely 12 months to the 15th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management, to be held at Chillagoe & Undara, North Queensland, on 5-12 May 2002. **NOT TO BE MISSED!!** The Conference Program and Registration Form will be inserted in the next (June) Journal.