

Editorial

Tim Moore

Triskaidekaphobia, the irrational fear of the number 13, had its genesis (deliberate bad joke, word use) in the total of those present at the Last Supper and its coincident compounding of the 13th day of the month being a Friday, coinciding with the day of the crucifixion, holds no fear for me as I write this, my 13th (and final) editorial for this Journal!

I have enjoyed the just more than three years that I have had the pleasure of curating this publication for distribution to members of ACKMA. That time has seen change for our Journal and, much more dramatically, change in our world - the latter arising from COVID-19 and its dramatic impact not only on the now omnipresent risk to human health, but also the necessity for closure of caves and the, now, gradual and constraining terms of emergence from lockdown of tourist cave activities.

In Australasia, the main locale of our membership, the geography of being two island nations has spared us much of the brutal impact falling elsewhere. It is my hope that Christian Bom, your new editor, who will take over from me for the preparation of the September 2021 edition of the Journal, will be able to bring better tidings from caves and caving in the not-too-distant future.

There have also been changes with this Journal itself - all of them to some extent are electronic. The most basic was the shift to a full electronic journal being distributed and archived solely online.

Whilst I enjoyed the mental stimulation of coming to grips with the Microsoft Publisher software for my first edition (June 2018) and the necessity, subsequently, to engage with resizing electronic images for publication (seeking to reduce file sizes for downloading whilst avoiding, not always completely successfully, causing pixellation and loss of image clarity), with this edition that also changes.

This change arises as a result of contracting with Hansen Print in Naracoorte, the firm which has, over recent years, produced and distributed the print copies of this Journal. As reported to the recent AGM, layout and image insertion will no longer be the province of the editor. The editor's tasks will be confined to checking and correcting the spelling and grammar of contributions; selecting image locations and their captions; and keeping the information on the inside front cover up to date.

COVID-19 has also changed the balance of the material submitted for publication. For the foreseeable future, further opportunities for vicarious exploration of extramural caves (such as those in Vietnam or Madagascar or those elsewhere in the world about which others such as John Brush, Andy Spate, Kent Henderson or Greg Middleton have written (and me to write my own pieces about my cave related wanderings in France) await the opening of borders. Those opportunities, we all hope, will arise again and be reported in future Journal editions.

However, also out of the gloom and darkness can come light. The ACKMA data logger project (about which

Andy Baker, Andy Spate and Dave Gillieson have written over the past few Journals and with the data to which Rauleigh Webb has devoted considerable effort to making electronically usefully accessible) provides a welcome contribution of positivity in these otherwise gloomy times.

The changing of the guard in the editorship of this Journal provides me with an opportunity to thank, generally, all those who have submitted pieces for publication, and I do so.

Although it is invidious to do so, I feel I must offer some special thanks to stalwart and regular contributors (without meaning, by non inclusion in what follows, that I am any less grateful to those who have contributed and who are not specifically named).

First, I express my gratitude to Andy Spate, my friend of now some 30 years. I described, in my first editorial (for the June 2018 edition), my first encounter of him at Yarrangobilly. I wrote:

My first memory of him is at a conference I attended of NPWS managers at Caves House at Yarrangobilly Caves. The (then much younger) Mister Spate had been assigned to uncomplicated aspects of the catering operation, namely the making of a tossed salad to feed some 15 or so people. I stumbled across Andy in the kitchen, shaking a large green garbage bag and looking as though he was infected and doing the St Vitus Dance. When I shyly enquired what he was doing, he informed me that he had concluded the most efficient way to make this high volume tossed salad was to put all the ingredients in the garbage bag; pour a bottle of white vinegar and 1/4 of a bottle of olive oil in; close the neck of the bag firmly shut; and shake the whole arrangement vigorously. I instantly detected a kindred spirit!

Throughout my 13 editions, he has been an anchoring contributor with his regular Andysez pieces and other contributions. He has also provided encouragement and support throughout my tenure.

From an editorial production perspective, I thank Tony Culberg and his wife, Pat, for their proof reading and checking assistance. Whilst Tony and I have had our occasional linguistic and grammatical differences (his objection to the use of the word "whilst" being one of them and here incorporated, teasingly, to infuriate him), I will miss our edition to edition 7.30 am chats and regular email exchanges. I am sure that the friendship that has developed will continue (and I hope to catch up with Tony and Pat when they visit Sydney next December).