

THE OUTWORLDERS!!

- Kent Henderson

We were delighted to welcome to the Wombeyan Conference five international visitors (excluding the Kiwis, of course!). Firstly (in no particular order), we had Tom Rea and Kriste Lindberg from the United States. We already knew Tom well from the previous Conference at Mt. Gambier, and it was great to have him back. Tom is one of America's most eminent cave personages. He has previously served as President (and every other officer) in the USA National Speleological Society, has written several books on caves and caving, and is currently a member of the NSS Special Publications Committee. And wasn't Kriste a delight? – she made instant friends with everyone she met. She is current President of the Indiana Karst Conservancy – National Speleological Society, and is particularly interested in cave and karst education, and cooperation between various government and non-government agencies. Both Tom and Kriste swear they will be back in two year's time for Chillagoe/Undara, and promise to bring most of America with them!!

Our other North American visitor was Tim Stokes, from Vancouver Island, British Columbia. He is an associate of our good friend Paul Griffiths, who attended the last Conference (I think they are taking it in turns!). Tim runs a small geo-science consulting business on Vancouver Island that provides a variety of services to both the resource and urban development sectors. Over the past six years he has assisted the British Columbia

Ministry of Forests in developing inventory and management guidelines for its vast forested karst landscapes.

From The Philippines, we were most happy to welcome Gil Madronero, our first-ever delegate from that country. Gil, a caver extraordinaire, works for his country's Soil and Water Conservation Foundation in Rajah Sikatuna National Park (a karst area) in Bohol (near Cebu City), where he is coordinator for the protected area. His interests include cave and karst management, eco-tourism, park design, and community-based natural resource management.

And finally, but by no means least, we were honoured by the presence of Professor Dr. Soo Jin Kim, Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Seoul National University, South Korea. Professor Kim is one of his country's top academics and scientists. His main interest is environmental mineralogy, and his research activities are concentrated on the conservation of natural and historical monuments. His paper – *Origin of Speleothems in a lava cave from Jela Island, Korea* – was fascinating, very well presented, and definitely a Conference highlight.

We are most grateful to all these delegates for attending and for contributing so much to the success of the Conference, and trust we'll see all of them back in two years time, with all their friends!!