



# Editorial Ramblings

Erosion – God’s way to move minerals closer to the miners.



I'll start my Ramblings on this occasion with a few congratulations. ACKMA Members will be delighted know that Professor Richard MacKay, Chair of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, has been recognised with the award of Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2003 Australian Queen's Birthday honours list.

Richard's role with the Trust is not specifically identified in the citation, but then, it is only one of a multitude of such responsibilities that he has exercised over the years. A very richly merited award.

On 16 May, three well-known cave guides graduated with the Charles Sturt University *Certificate in Karst Management*. Warmest congratulations go to Scott Melton (Jenolan Caves), Claire Cooney (Wellington Caves) and Stuart Bremner (Abercrombie Caves).



At CSU graduation ceremony in Albury, New South Wales. L to R: Scott Melton, Claire Cooney and Stuart Bremner. Photo: Claire Cooney.

...and great news for our erstwhile Treasurer, Dr. Grant Gartrell – he became a grandfather on 26 June, with the birth of Nicholas to dad Steve, and mum Holly. Warmest congratulations to all! The obligatory photo of the dotting Grant is below!



Members will recall that in my last *Ramblings* I 'waxed lyrical' about the appointment of ACKMA Life Member, Kevin Wilde, as the new Director of the Waitomo Museum of Caves. An excellent article also concurrently appeared in the *Waitomo News* on the same subject, which I reprint adjacent hereto.

Still on things Kiwi, Phil Lyons has been appointed to the position of Senior Guide at Te Anau Glowworm Caves on New Zealand's South Island. Phil has previously been Assistant Senior Guide for the last two years, having worked at the caves for the last four years. Good luck Phil! Te Anau is expecting a visit from Claire Baker (ACKMA member, glowworm expert, and skilled Conference reveler!) later in August to check out its glowworms. Claire will undoubtedly keep Te Anau Caves Manager, Neil Collinson, on his toes! Neil is visiting Waitomo in early September, to see the new AV and displays at the museum as well as catch up with his ACKMA colleagues. Kevan Wilde will keep him in line, no doubt!??!



Dianne Vavryn (left) with Robyn McBeath  
– Conference 2003

The ACKMA 'sick list' continues unfortunately. Happily, Elery Hamilton-Smith and Stephanie Finn have recovered (see an article by the latter elsewhere herein), but now ACKMA Fellow Dianne Vavryn is 'in the wars'. On 10th July, Dianne slipped near the back entrance to her home in Rockhampton, and fell

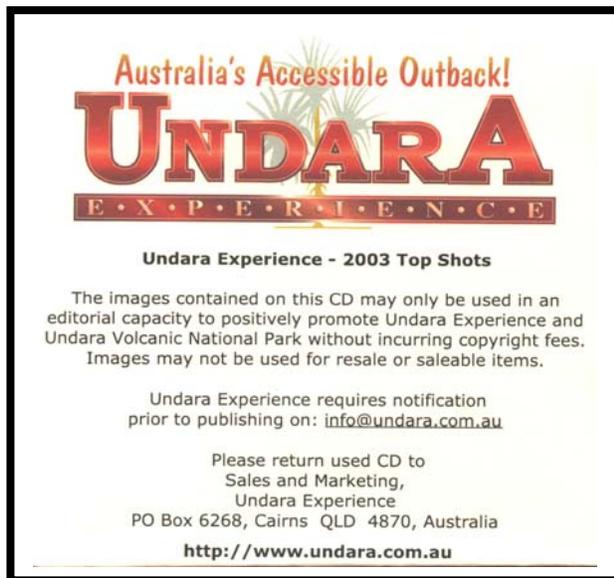
three metres to the ground. After two trips to hospital, it was discovered she had two broken vertebrae, and a broken sternum. Understandably, she has been in a great deal of pain, but she is on the mend.

Dianne, I know, has greatly appreciated the many members who have emailed and phoned her with their best wishes. I am certain all ACKMA members join with me in wishing her a speedy and full recovery. Being indefatigable, despite her current infirmities, Dianne has sub-edited this Journal edition, as her and her Husband, Joe, have done for some years. Thanks yet again, Di!

The organisation for our next (16th) Conference in New Zealand continues apace! The Organising Committee is meeting regularly, and our Conference Convenor, Phil Wood, will be briefly in Melbourne in mid September on business, and Elery and I will be meeting with him for discussions (if Elery is in the country then – always axiomatic!).

Doubtlessly avid readers of this Journal will have noticed the Draft Conference Program in the last Journal. The Organising Committee is also planning to run an 'Alternative Program' for 'accompanying persons' (non cave-interested partners and other sundry odd bods). The draft of this program is published herein...

I recently received a copy of the just-released Undara Experience promotional CD ROM. It is excellent, to say the least. Other Australasian cave locations could very usefully emulate the Undara example. One would certainly start by getting a copy of the Undara CD. An image of its cover is below...



Some of you (though probably not many..!?) may have noticed some 'date confusion' in the last Journal concerning the **ACKMA Annual General Meeting Weekend at Mole Creek Caves, Tasmania**, next year. The correct dates are **Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 May 2004**. See YOU there!!

Speaking of Mole Creek Caves, Nell Kell has recently returned home to New South Wales from Tasmania, where he advised on new lighting for Marakoopa and King Solomons Caves. An article by Cathie Plowman on this, plus the Cave Presenters Workshop and ACKMA Annual General Meeting thereat next year, is elsewhere in this Journal.

An important international conference is happening in South Australia (10-16 October) next year. This is "OTWAY BASIN 2004".

This conference will be centered on Naracoorte and Mt Gambier. It will include the final meeting of UNESCO-sponsored International Geological Correlation Program and a workshop on RAMSAR Subterranean Wetlands. The conference will focus on the *World Correlation of Karst Geology and its Relevant Ecosystems*.

An organizing Committee, chaired by Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith, is meeting in Melbourne on 29 August, and full details on the Conference will soon be published on both the ACKMA Web site, and in the December ACKMA Journal.



Many a photo of ACKMA's premier hat enthusiast, Rauleigh Webb, has been taken. The photo, above, of our Australian Vice President, Steve Bourne, shows that he is not easily outdone either!

And finally... After my write-up in the last Journal concerning the "cave for rent" in the Blue Mountains, it could only get better, couldn't it? No such luck, I'm afraid...

The following 'gem' appeared in the May edition of the Qantas Airways magazine. Again, I am certain (!) you will all immediately dash off to Tuscany. Sigh...

**IT'S MAY  
SO IT  
MUST BE...  
TUSCANY**

**DEEPER  
UNDERGROUND**  
WHERE CAVE  
WOMEN  
GET PAMPERED

Reopened after a renovation – and just in time for those pre-summer beauty treatments – the Thermal Grotta in Monsummano Terme, Tuscany, is a series of naturally heated underground caves housing a luxury, natural spa.

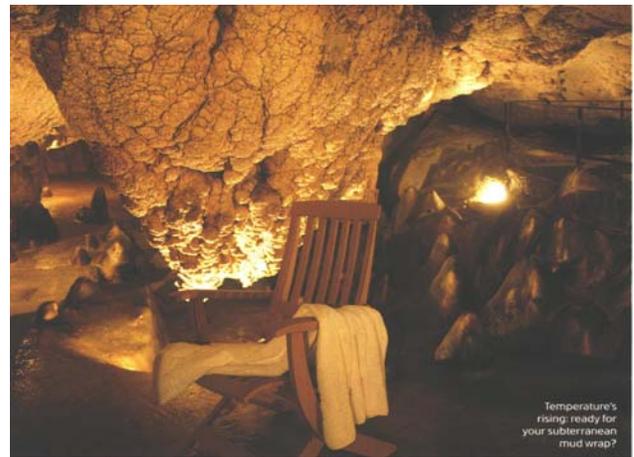
Each stalactite and stalagmite-adorned cave is named after a chapter from Dante's *Inferno*, corresponding to its unique climate. You start in cool *Paradiso*, things warm up in *Purgatory*, and the steam rages in *Inferno*. There's even *Limbo*, complete with its own underground lake, if you're not sure what to do next.

It may be based on Dante's scorching vision of the afterlife, but the treatments – which include thermal mud wraps, great for cellulite sufferers – are far from hellish. The natural steam baths and curative thermal

waters, which are said to ease arthritis, have been attracting spa pilgrims since the grotta was first opened in the 18th century. (Things have moved on – these days, you get brushed-cotton robes.) Come on in, the waters are lovely. ■ Angelina Villa-Clarke

The Grottas are part of the Grotta Giusti Hotel, a member of Great Hotels of the World ([www.ghotw.com](http://www.ghotw.com)). Via Grotta Giusti, Monsummano Terme, near Pisa, Italy. Tel: +39 0572 90771 [www.grottagiustispa.com](http://www.grottagiustispa.com)

**HOW TO GET THERE**  
British Airways flies to Pisa, 55 kilometres from Monsummano Terme, from London Gatwick. Visit [ba.com](http://ba.com)



Temperature's rising: ready for your subterranean mud wrap?

**COMING EVENTS**

In particular, this list covers events of special interest to researchers and managers. If you are interested in any listed events, contact Elery Hamilton-Smith on: <[elery@alphalink.com.au](mailto:elery@alphalink.com.au)>.

**2003**

Sept 8-17	World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa
Oct 1-4	Karst Waters Institute Interdisciplinary Workshop on Epikarst, Shepherdstown, West Virginia
Oct 3-5	Hidden Earth 2003, BCRA Conference, Worcestershire, UK
Oct 13-18	Caves and Karst Management Symposium, Gainesville, Florida, USA.

**AND LOOKING AHEAD:**

2004: Jan 24-25	ASF Council Meeting
2004: Apr 14-16	Australasian Bat Conference, Toowoomba, Queensland
<b>2004: May 23-28</b>	<b>Cave Presenters Workshop, Mole Creek, Tasmania</b>
<b>2004: May 29-30</b>	<b>ACKMA annual general meeting weekend, Mole Creek, Tasmania</b>
2004: Sept	International Conference of Vulcanology, Azores
2004: Sept 13-18	Trans-Karst: first International meeting of the Vietnamese-Belgian Karst Project, Hanoi
<b>2004: October 10-16.</b>	<b>OTWAY 2004: International Conference at Naracoorte and Mt Gambier; will include the final meeting of ICGP 448 and a workshop on RAMSAR Subterranean Wetlands.</b>
2005: Jan 2-8	"CaveMania" ASF Conference, Dover, Tasmania
<b>2005: Apr. 10-17</b>	<b>16th ACKMA Conference, Westport, New Zealand</b>
2005: Mid-year	14th International Congress of Speleology, Athens, Greece
2006: Autumn	<b>ACKMA annual general meeting weekend</b>
2007: January	ASF Conference, South Australia, celebrating 50 years of the Federation.
<b>2007: Autumn</b>	<b>17th ACKMA Conference, Buchan, Victoria</b> N.B. This conference will be part of the celebration to mark the centenary of the discovery of Fairy Caves

