

# ASF AWARDS 2005

## John Dunkley

Every two years the ASF announces awards to individuals who have made a significant contribution to any field of speleology. The 2005 Awards were announced at the CaveMania Conference Dinner at Dover.

Nominations were received by the Chairman of the Awards Commission, Lloyd Robinson, and considered by a selection committee chaired by the President of the day (John Dunkley) and including at least two other past Presidents.

The selection committee is very much dependent on clubs and individuals to nominate worthy recipients. The process is competitive: this year 17 nominations were received from clubs and several individuals, and nine awards were made. Within each category the recipients are listed alphabetically in no particular order of merit. A full list of award winners from 1972 to 1999 appears in *Australian Caver* 152, with updates in *Australian Caver* 154 (which also has a lengthy article on Edie Smith and the award named after her) and 158.

## EDIE SMITH AWARD

Instituted in 1972, the Edie Smith Award commemorates one of Australia's pioneering cavers and the first woman President of an Australian speleological society. It recognises outstanding achievement over a long period of time. In 2005 we celebrate two people who have made outstanding contributions to Australian speleology as well as putting Australia on the world caving map.

## ARTHUR CLARKE

The Award recognises Arthur's outstanding achievement in numerous aspects of speleology, including exploration, surveying, meticulous documentation, publication, photography and biospeleological research.

Arthur is a real speleological polymath. After starting caving in the 1960s with UQSS and VSA, he helped found the Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group, was founding President of Southern Tasmanian Caverneers, and was a former Vice-President of ASF and Executive Member of ACKMA. An indefatigable explorer, his feats include numerous hard exploratory and surveying trips in the Ida Bay (especially Exit Cave), Hastings and nearby karsts particularly. He is Tasmanian Coordinator for the ASF Karst Index Database, a veteran of major international expeditions to China and Madagascar where expertise in both caving and scientific research was essential, and is an internationally recognised authority on some obscure cave biota, some of which bear his name in accordance with scientific practice. Having spent 15 years exploring and documenting the Ida Bay karst, Arthur played a leading role in working towards World Heritage listing for Exit Cave and subsequent closure of Benders Quarry and later in opposing exploration licences at Mt Cripps. Arthur is joint author of a forthcoming book

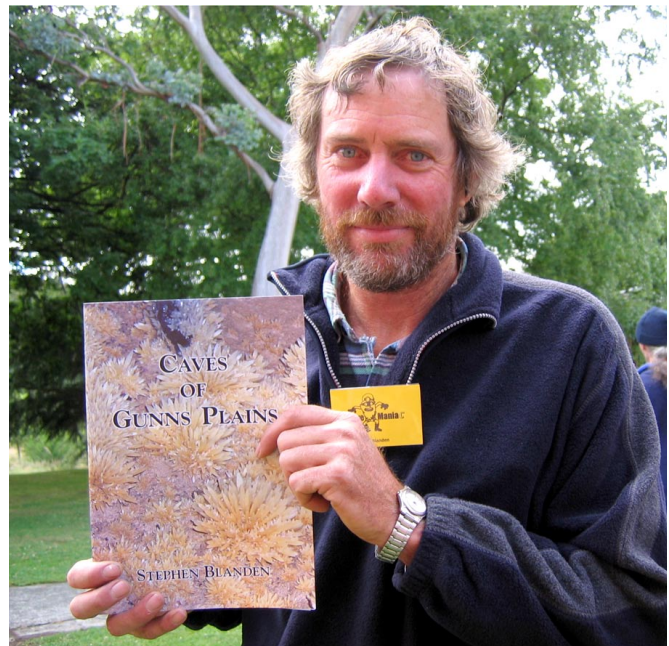


PHOTO: JODIE RUTLEDGE

ASF Merit Certificate recipient Steve Blanden and his book.

on the history of cave tourism in Tasmania. He is also a manufacturer of prize-winning fruit wines that were sampled by many Conference attendees. A resident of both Hobart and Dover (where he moved to be close to the caves!), Arthur has been an unfailingly generous host to numerous visiting cavers from interstate and overseas. Somewhere among all this, Arthur finds time to pursue MSc studies in biospeleology and to advise the Tasmanian government on related issues.

## AL WARILD

The Award is given for outstanding achievement in exploration and surveying of the world's deepest caves, for development of technical equipment and techniques, and for being a flag-bearer for Australian caving throughout the world.

Al started caving in the 1960s, with a Wee Jasper trip in 1968 and trips to Bungonia over the next six years. He started 'real' SRT in Tasmania in 1975, then joined expeditions to New Zealand in 1976 and began alpine cave prospecting in Nettlebed Cave in 1982/83. Interest in Mexico began in 1977, and Papua - New Guinea in 1978. Al has also made numerous return trips to Mexico including the first exploration of a -1,000 m+ cave by an Australian expedition. Eventually he was sufficiently well-known as a vertical caver to be found a place on expeditions to remote high limestone mountains in often obscure countries, from Patagonia to Georgia, Vietnam and Slovenia. Al developed and pioneered a number of techniques for exploration of deep caves, including solo exploits, and has bottomed 16 caves greater than 1,000 m

deep throughout the world, including solos to -1,122 m in Gouffre Berger, -1,535 m in Réseau Jean Bernard, -1,159 m in Gouffre de las Bracas du Thurugne, -1,149 m in Pozo del Jitu, and -1,180 m in Sistema Arañonera. We understand that he has since outgrown solo exploits! However the challenge continues, as he has shown by joining recent expeditions to Voronia Cave in Abkhazia where he set a new world depth record (see *Australian Caver* 161 & 163), that drew attention from the mainstream press. Finally, Al is the author of *Vertical*, the world's bible of vertical caving.

### ASF AWARD OF DISTINCTION

The ASF Award of Distinction recognises excellence in several fields of speleology. This is the first time this award has been given “for excellence and achievement in cave exploration and documentation”. This award is given jointly to John and Glenda Wylie, particularly for exceptional achievement in exploration, documentation and publication of caves at Wombeyan, NSW, as exemplified in the recently published Wombeyan book. Although best known for their exploits at Wombeyan, John and Glenda have been active cavers for over 25 years, starting with Venturer Scouts and including exploration and documentation in Mt Cripps (Tas), Lord Howe Island, Macleay Valley, Billys Creek (NSW) and in Thailand. John and Glenda are individual members of ASF and members of SSS.

### ASF CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

#### *Stephen Blanden*

Stephen is a member of Savage River Caving Club and the award celebrates his tremendous enthusiasm and tireless efforts in the discovery, surveying and documentation of caves and karst features in northern Tasmania, especially Mt Cripps, Gunns Plains and Mole Creek, culminating in the recent self-publication of *Caves of Gunns Plains*.

#### *Louise Coleborn*

A member of Blue Mountains Speleological Club for 29 years, Louise has held virtually every office except that of President. She was ASF delegate for 10 years, a key surveyor of the complex Taplow Maze at Cliefden and is currently

doing a thorough documentation of Aboriginal cave sites in New South Wales.

#### *Rob Foulds*

Rob is a member of both WASG (of which he was President in 1996/97) and SRGWA. A self-taught enthusiast, Rob became interested in subterranean fauna, particularly spiders in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste area, and now volunteers about 160 hours a year at Yanchep, conducting a systematic study of cave biota, and ecological work on hydrology, variations in groundwater levels and its effect on cave animals.

#### *Penny Janson*

Penny is a member of Rover Speleological Society, of which she has been a leading organiser for many years. She was a key mover in developing the club's training program and for 14 years as a member of the club she ran Guide and Ranger Guide weekend camps typically for 20 – 30 girls at a time, introducing young people to safe and ethical caving.

#### *John Kersey*

John began caving in Queensland in 1969 and discovered Queenslander, the state's longest cave. He founded and for 20 years or so has run a small, mainly family-oriented group from Townsville and Charters Towers. The group discovered, tagged and documented especially the Broken River area over many years. In the process he developed excellent relations with the landowner to improve knowledge of the area among speleologists.

#### *Bob Kershaw*

Bob is a member of Illawarra Speleological Society, noted as an insatiable explorer and a dedicated and meticulous planner and recorder. Bob made major contributions to organisation of expeditions to South-east NSW, the Nullarbor and Gregory National Park (NT), and is the Operations Manager for the Gregory Expeditions and a mainstay of the survey of Bullita Cave, Australia's longest. Bob is also a sometime trainer in caving and abseiling for the Scouting Association and a highly regarded authority on search and rescue throughout the State Emergency Service. ■