

KARSTAWAY PROCEEDINGS

Editorial

These proceedings have taken some time to put together after the January 2009 Karstaway Conference in Sale, Victoria. Our apologies for this delay. Our thanks to the authors who have patiently submitted material and then waited for further progress.

The papers included in this volume are those for which complete papers have been provided to the editors. Those which were not provided in complete form, are represented by their abstracts. Some papers have figures and illustrations; others have not. Other activities such as the Trivia Quiz, Photographic Competition and Awards are also included after the papers and workshops.

Although some papers represent material that has been subsequently published elsewhere, this volume is produced to represent the range of material presented to the 80+ people who attended the conference. Several workshops have also been written up. The volume is illustrated with photos taken during the conference.

We especially thank Marg James for her patience. We also thank Marg's and Alice White's meticulous attention to detail when doing the proof reading; an onerous task at the best of times.

Susan White & Glenn Baddeley.

Editors.

Preface

We present the proceedings of Karstaway Conference, the 27th biennial conference of the Australian Speleological Federation, held in January 2009 at Sale in Victoria. These proceedings have taken some time to produce; but as any half decent winemaker knows, it's better to take the time to let everything happen as it should, rather than to rush it and not do it properly.

We chose to locate Karstaway near the well known classic "hard limestones" of East Gippsland, although Victoria also has extensive cave and karst areas in the west of the state. The best known cave and karst area in Gippsland is undoubtedly around the small town of Buchan, but the enormous popularity of this region with summer tourists made it necessary to hold the conference a little further away, and in a larger population centre with appropriate conference facilities. Hence Sale, which is still within easy reach of the main karst areas. Any closer to the limestone and we would all have been elbowed aside by the holiday visitors who flock to visit our celebrated tourist caves.

Nearly ninety people attended Karstaway, representing every Australian state and a host of different organisations and caving environments. Like all ASF conferences it offered opportunities for groups and individuals all over the country to showcase their special projects, large and small, and for our technical wizards to demonstrate unimaginable uses for old and new technology. And of course we got to hear about all those wonderful discoveries made by determined and hard working speleos who had been too busy caving to write about what they'd been doing.

ASF is older than many of the cavers who are its members. Yet there are still old cavers around who joined at its very beginning, so we have not yet lost contact with our earliest foundations. At each conference we move on a little, acknowledging our earlier achievements and building on them as new generations discover the lure of the unknown, and the challenges and pleasures of sharing what they do and find with other like minded characters.

We all appreciate the chance to share, compare, learn and be amazed by the things that are happening outside our own little patch, and we enjoy meeting with other speleos from other places who are doing things differently to the way we do at home, wherever home may be.

Isn't that what conferences should be all about?!

Margaret James

Karstaway Conference Committee Convenor