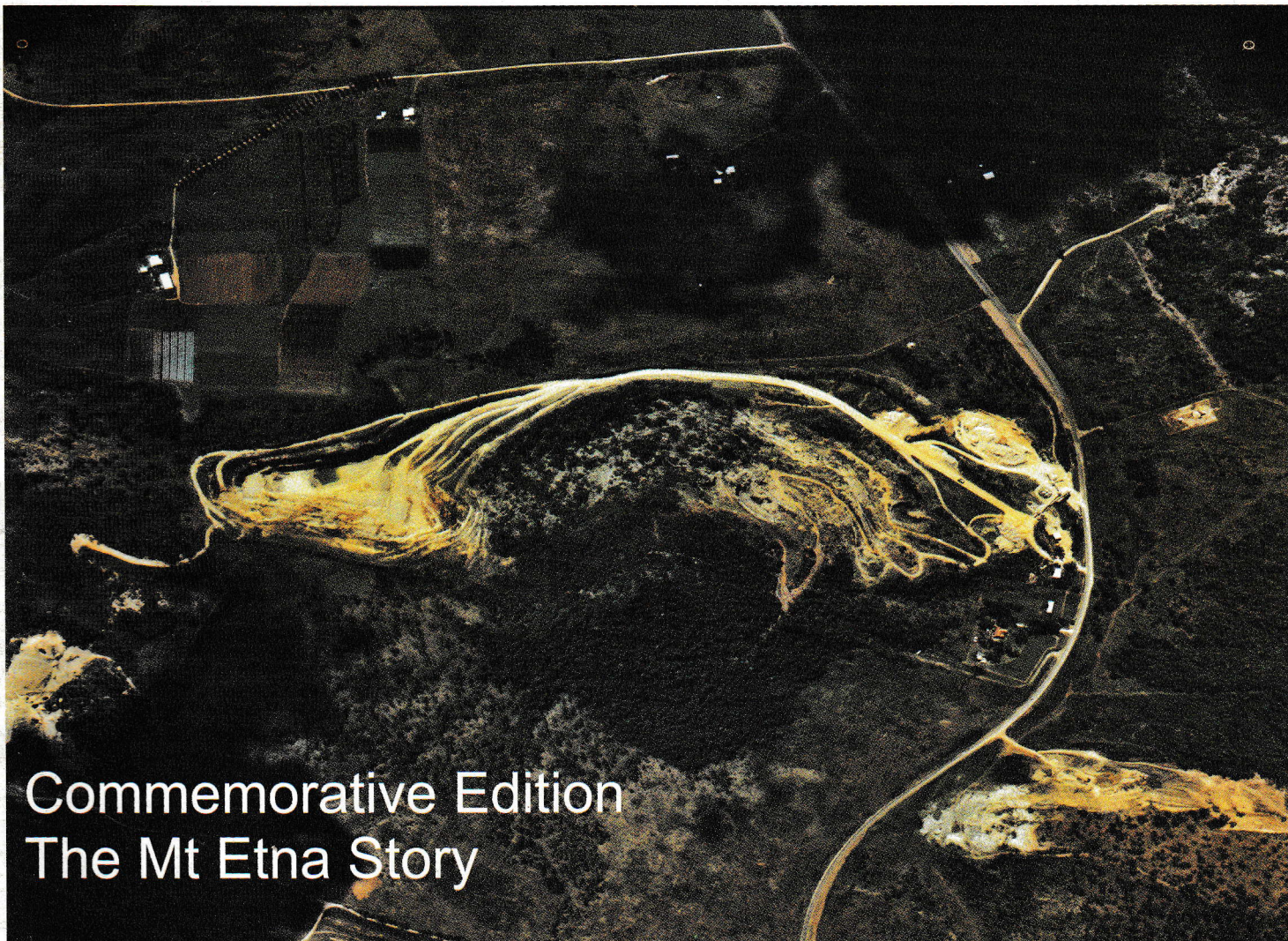


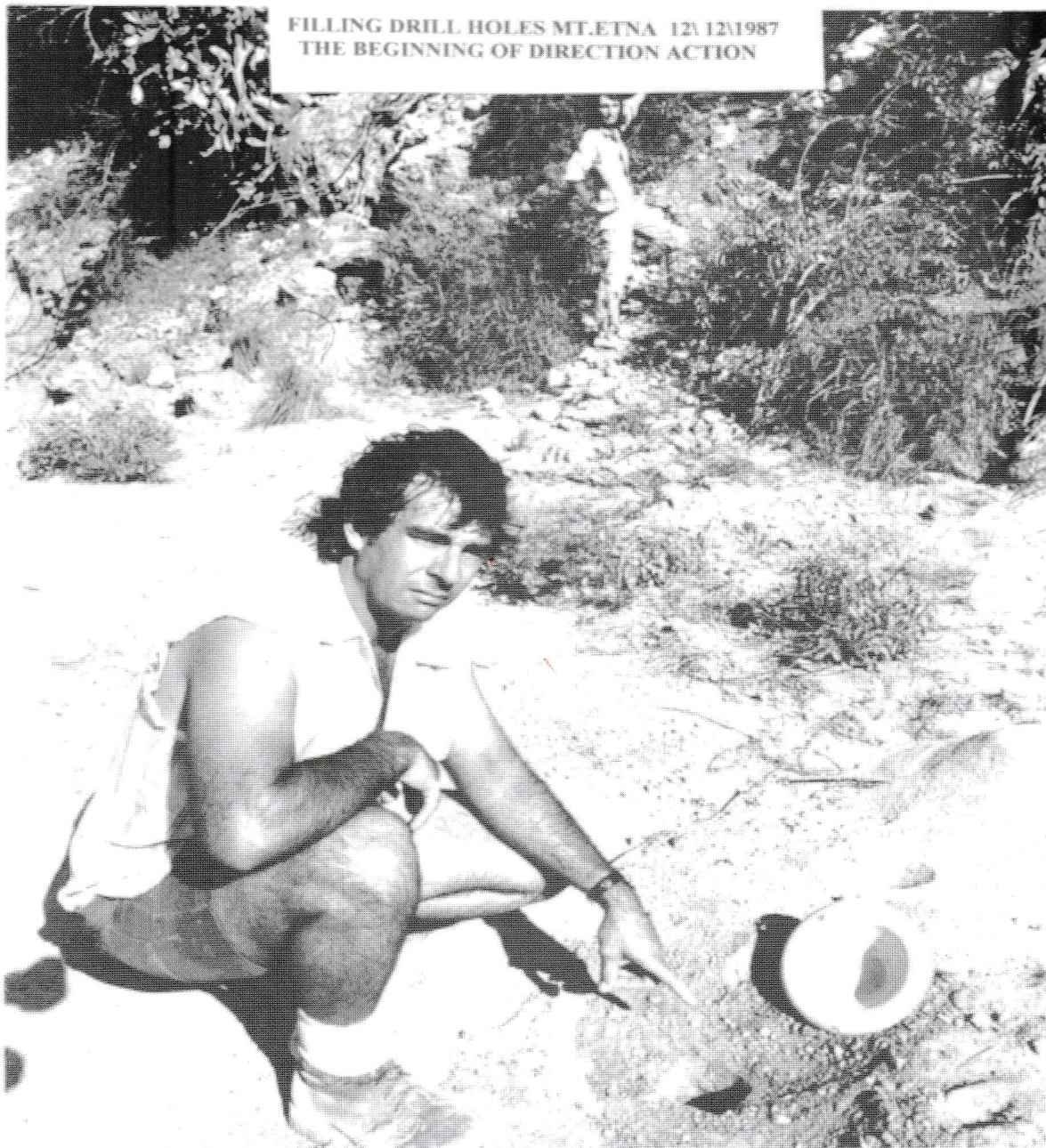
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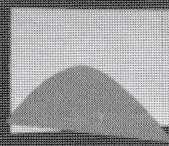


Commemorative Edition
The Mt Etna Story

FILLING DRILL HOLES MT.ETNA 12\12\1987
THE BEGINNING OF DIRECTION ACTION



MOUNT ETNA ACTION BOOK



TIME IS RUNNING OUT



AUSTRALIAN CAVER ISSUE No 151 – May 2000

Editor (this issue only)
Central Queensland Speleological
Society Inc

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*The views expressed in the Australian
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Contents

From the President	2
A Brief History	3
The Early History of Central Queensland Cement	4
Some Memories of the Mt Etna Campaign in the 1970's	5
Overview of the Campaign	7
Direct Action	13
The Legality of the Campaign	16
Comment by Norm Pershouse	17
Comment by Andrew Robson	18
The Reconciliation	19
Comment by Kerry Hamilton	20
Queensland Cement & Lime – Environmental Report	21
Records	22
Reconciliation Speech	23
CQSS Involvement	26

Photograph Acknowledgments

Front Cover –	Pre-mining – Supplied courtesy of the Queensland Museum Current Mining Aerial Photo – Supplied courtesy of Kershaw & Co
Inside Front Cover –	(Top) Direct Action – Filling Drill Holes - Morning Bulletin (Bottom left) Kerry Hamilton Blockade - Morning Bulletin (Bottom Right) Mt Etna Action Book - Blockade
Back Cover –	(Top) Rehabilitation Blast – Supplied courtesy of the Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton (Bottom Left) Tree Planting by Horticulturists and 2 nd generation CQSS members (Luke Berrill & Owen Kavanagh) (Bottom Right Top) Reconciliation Ceremony (from left to right) – Chris White, Manager Pacific Lime; Bill Townsend, Managing Director, QCL; Peter Berrill, CQSS President) Displaying NHT Grant Certificates (Bottom Right Bottom) – Newly erected Sign at Cammoo entrance
Inside Back Cover –	Composite of Reconciliation Ceremony

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Trog-Up 2000 including Speleosports and Caver's Dinner
(NSW)**

NSW Speleological Council Meeting – 14 October 2000

**2001: A Cave Odyssey – 23rd ASF Biennial Conference
28 December 2000 – 3 January 2001 at Bathurst NSW**

**Speleo Brazil 2001 – International Conference of Speleology
July 2001 at Brazilia, Brazil**

**Please note our new Editor from Issue 153 – Welcome to Geoff
Crossley**

From the President

Earlier on I had intended to make "From the President" a regular segment in the Australian Caver. However, in August 1998, I entered into reconciliation talks with the Cement Company over the Mt Etna dispute.

For the next 16 months, my life was totally consumed by the reconciliation and there was very little or no time for anything else including, at times, my family. My presidential duties had to wait. During that period I was carried and fully supported by a very hard working and devoted Executive. Without their support, I would not be President of ASF today.

During that period, they knew their responsibilities and the direction in which we were headed and continued down that path without my supervision. I would like to say a special "thank you", to those Executive members: Peter Dykes, Chris Riley, Angus Macoun, Heather Jefferies, Jill Rowling, Keven Cocks, Phil Lardner, Harry Nagle, Arthur Clarke and John Dunkley.

This edition of Australian Caver is a Mt Etna Special, edited by CQSS.

(I now change hats and speak as CQSS President)

We wanted to edit this edition to commemorate the campaign and in our own small way say "thank you" to all those many people who contributed and gave what they could, to help save the caves of Mt Etna, over the past 37 years. Because of the amount of copy, CQSS decided that this edition will consist entirely of material relating to Mt Etna. All other copy received will be forwarded on to the new editor.

In the beginning we had an idea of what we wanted to say and what message we wanted to convey. However, when we started researching and writing we soon found that one incident was related to many others and in depth explanations were needed for each event. We were always very aware of the great amount of documentation required to tell the Mt Etna Story/History, but now when we have attempted to do that, we realise that the task is too mammoth for an edition of the Australian Caver.

So, what we have attempted to do, is to give an overview of the campaign, and just as we did throughout the campaign, whatever statements we make are based on the truth and facts as we know them.

Due to old age, failing memories and perhaps just not wanting to recall certain events, some information may not be exactly correct. For that we beg your forgiveness.

Saturday, 27 November 1999 - was a day unprecedented in Australia's environmental history. It was the day that CQSS and QCL- Pacific Lime (previously CQ Cement, the name has been changed to hide and protect the guilty), reconciled the Mt Etna Campaign. It has been Australia's longest running conservation campaign involving every major conservation organisation in Australia but at the same time spearheaded by the caving movement.

The reconciliation followed 16 months of negotiations between CQSS and Pacific Lime. I was approached in July 1998, by the new Company Manager, Chris White, who said that they wanted to reconcile the issue. My report on those talks is in this issue. The reconciliation, if it went ahead, had to be right. But what was right? We had \$50,000 still held in security and had an obligation to see that it was spent responsibly.

So many people had been involved and many had contributed to the now \$50,000. The talks were held 'in confidence', involving myself and one other CQSS member, Noel Sands. I particularly chose Noel because of his long-term involvement and he held the position of CQSS treasurer. I wanted to do the right thing by everyone but soon found myself in an impossible situation.

Since the beginning, I had been in constant contact with CQSS solicitor Stephen Comino, asking and taking his advice. He saw the situation I was getting into and advised me that the money held in security had been given, knowing that it may be lost and "that I was under no obligation to anyone", to return that money. His instructions to me were to negotiate with the Company whatever outcome I saw as appropriate.

Throughout the 16 months and right up until the last day the reconciliation, was always under threat. There were those who didn't want to see Cammoo Caves, a 40 hectare, \$300,000 extension to the National Park, proceed. Hence the need for the talks to be held under wraps. I had to coordinate between the Company, the Landowner, CQSS, the Queensland Department of Environment and the Federal Department of Environment. There were real threats at every corner. All of the others involved were in a paid position, so this would be "a feather

in their caps". The politics took all of my energies to deal with. But what has been really disappointing is the criticism and backstabbing I received, from those who are supposed to be on our side.

As I said previously, the reconciliation had to be right and this placed me in a position of extreme responsibility. The talks consumed me for the period and some said that I had become obsessed with it. To those critics, of course I became obsessed, it was at times, the only way that I could find the energies to continue. The only way that I could find to make this reconciliation right, and on the day, Saturday 27 November 1999, I'm sure that all those who attended would agree, "it was right", in fact, it was "damn near perfect".

To share the day with CQSS, there were cavers and friends from Chillagoe, Mackay, Rockhampton, Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra. CQSS's Solicitor, Stephen Comino, his wife Penelope and daughter Maria were also there. There were also many supporters and staff from National Parks.

Some of the above comments have been personal and may seem to be giving myself "a pat on the back". I am not looking for any "mickey mouse badges", but I take this opportunity to answer my critics. Some of the comments were made behind my back by those who should know better. The day was great and it was a fitting end to a long and bitter dispute.

CQSS and Pacific Lime now share a position on the Mt Etna Caves National Park Advisory Committee. As a member of that Committee, I sit opposite Pacific Lime Manager, Chris White, advising on the future of a National Park, which is a direct result of the conflict.

In the beginning the first stage of the Park was a result of a financial contribution by CQSS and the now defunct University of Queensland Speleological Society and now the end has also been as a direct result of a financial contribution by CQSS.

Members of CQSS have every right to hold their heads high.

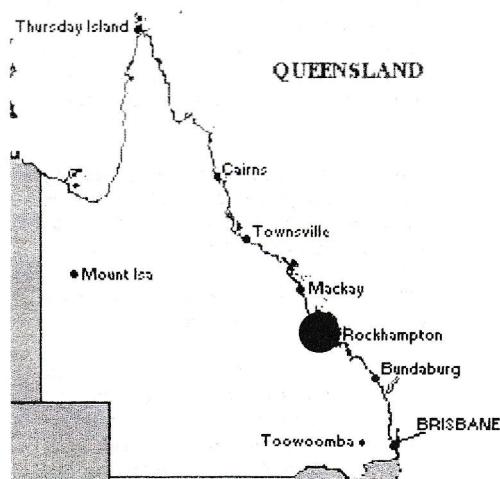
I hope you enjoy this edition of the Australian Caver, a Mt Etna Special.

Peter Berrill

A Brief History

- 400 Million BC:** Mt Etna originated in a warm coral sea - over eons of time limestone dissolved out to form the intricate cave system.
- 1856:** Archer family name Mount Etna after the famous volcano in Sicily.
- 1882:** Norwegian migrant John Olsen discovers Olsen's Cave. The caves on nearby Limestone Ridge discovered soon after.
- 1919:** Guano (bat droppings) mining commences in Johansen's Cave. A large colony of bats is destroyed in the process.
- 1920:** The importance of the area is recognised and granted *Public Recreation Reserve* status - the highest protection commonly used.
- 1942:** During World War Two a special commando unit, Z Force, under the command of Captain S. Carey, trained in the caves of Mt Etna.
- 1962:** Queensland Cement Limited (through its subsidiary Central Queensland Cement Pty Ltd) obtains leases on the mountain for limestone quarrying.
- 1965:** Bat Cleft discovered. Conservation campaign begins with proposal for Mount Etna National Park.
- 1966:** Quarrying of Mount Etna's eastern face begins.
- 1967:** Resurrection Cave is broken into by the cement company.
- 1968:** Quarrying near Bat Cleft causes high mortality of young resulting in some bats being forced to establish a short lived colony in a stormwater drain in Rockhampton. This alternative site was used in preference to all the other caves in the area. (This bat can only breed its young in special conditions.)
- 1969:** A condition of the mining leases - that operations are not to encroach within 66 feet of any known cave entrance - is breached by the company. The company is not penalised in any way.
- 1970:** The eastern quarry is abandoned and the western quarry opened.
- 1977:** Conservation movement approaches the Attorney General to test the legality of the mining leases. Access to the courts is refused and the *Public Recreation Reserve* status is rescinded.
- 1977:** Queensland Cement Limited and another company surrender some leases to allow the gazettal of a National Park on Limestone Ridge. These leases were not in the company's mining plan which was still confined to Mount Etna.
- 1980:** Mt Etna caves are included on the Register of the National Estate.
- 1982:** Queensland Cement Limited deliberately destroys the highly decorated Crystal Palace Cave.
- 1982:** The company has a barrier erected in Bat Cleft as part of an ill conceived 'experiment'. It is dismantled by conservationists upon discovering bats hitting the barrier, falling to the floor and being eaten alive by the millions of dung beetles. Monitoring of this scientific experiment is so lax that the removal of the barrier is not noticed for some months.
- 1987:** Twenty years after the campaign for Mount Etna commenced the Minister and Director of National Parks visit Bat Cleft at the invitation of local National Party MP Dennis Hinton.
- December 1987:** The conservation battle heats up when four conservationists fill in drill holes drilled by the cement company near the western quarry. Legal action against the four commences.
- January 1988:** The new Queensland Premier, Mr Ahern, visits Bat Cleft and announces that a part of Mount Etna, including Bat Cleft, would be declared a reserve. But the 'reserve' has almost no security, being under the veto of the Mines Department. A number of vital caves, including rare Ghost Bat sites, are also left out and face imminent destruction.
- February 1988:** The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) at its General Assembly votes overwhelmingly for protection of Mount Etna, its caves and wildlife. Of the 1,100 delegates, only the Queensland Government opposes the resolution.

LOCATION MAP



THE EARLY HISTORY OF CENTRAL QUEENSLAND CEMENT PTY LTD

Pacific Lime 29/3/2000

The following notes have been compiled for members of the Central Queensland Speleological Society for assistance with research into the early history of Central Queensland Cement Pty Ltd.

Information sources were company records, a document titled "Building a Plant - The Early History of CQ Cement" by W Hoskins. Company records and the recollections of various present and past Company staff, which should be treated as subjective material, unless supported from elsewhere.

1) Events Preceding The Formation Of Central Queensland Cement

The Central Queensland region is an area rich in natural resources and in the 1890's a strong push for a separate colony based on Rockhampton, almost succeeded.

In the 1950's a new organisation named the Capricornia New State Movement was formed with strong encouragement from the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce.

Members of these groups believed the wealth of Central Queensland was being siphoned off to the SE area of Queensland without adequate return to the Central Region.

Although resource rich, the Rockhampton region was in crisis with significant numbers of unemployed and it was felt by many at local and State level that a secondary industry such as a cement plant was essential.

Mineral (limestone) Leases in the Mt Etna region had been held since the 1930's by a Mr Donald L Fraser with other leases held by Mt. Morgan Ltd and Mr Berserker Pilkington.

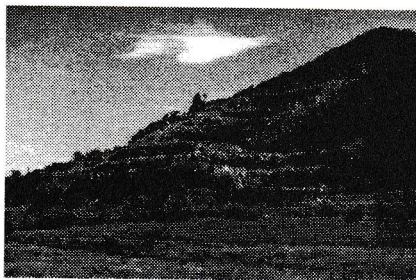
Mr Pilkington operated a quarry and lime burning operation on Limestone Ridge until closure in the mid 1960's.

It is believed that Mr Pilkington served his apprenticeship with Mt Morgan Ltd, as a mechanical Fitter and Turner in the steam driven power house and at the out-break of World War 1 joined the Royal Navy.

On discharge from the Navy at cessation of hostilities, Mr Pilkington married and returned to Australia to commence (for the times), the technically advanced lime burning operation, Pilkington and Co, at Mt Etna.

The ruins of the quarry and lime kilns are currently preserved within the Mt Etna Caves National Park as an example of lime burning operations of the era.

In 1957, a series of events occurred which forced a number of actions by Central Qld Cements' parent company Qld Cement Ltd.



In this year, the Nicklin Country Party/Liberal Party Coalition was voted into office and this Government was enthusiastic about development in Central Queensland.

At this stage, the push for a cement industry in the region commenced in earnest.

It is believed that Mr Pilkington, using locally sourced raw materials, manufactured small quantities of cement in his laboratory at Mt Etna and took the samples overseas for use during negotiations with a major international cement manufacturing company.

Mr Pilkington, also made approaches to Qld Cement Ltd, in a bid to form a partnership which ultimately proved futile.

From these events two (2) main contenders for the establishment of a cement industry in Central Qld emerged.

On 30 July 1959, Qld Cement Ltd incorporated a private company Hartley Investment Pty Ltd, with the intention to quietly acquire mining leases in the Glenmore area.

These lease applications were strongly opposed by a local family who would be affected by any mining operation and the Rockhampton City Council as the area was to be included in the future town plan.

Also formed was Limestone Leases Pty Ltd a company founded by Mr William R Thompson who had recently acquired limestone leases on Mt Etna.

Other significant shareholders were Berserker and Evelyn May Pilkington.

It was reported in the local press that this company had made application to the Qld. Government for a guarantee on bank loans for the establishment of a cement plant at Cammoo Siding on the SW side of Mt Etna and that this

application was favourably received by Government.

2) The Formation Of Central Queensland Cement Pty Ltd

On 19 October 1959, The Articles of Association of Hartley Investments Pty Ltd were rescinded and on the 20 October 1959, a resolution changing the company name to Central Queensland Cement Pty Ltd was passed by the Board of Qld Cement.

Ownership of the company was Qld Cement Ltd 75% and North Australian Cement Ltd 25%.

(NACL was approx. 40% owned by QCL).

3) Events Leading To The Establishment Of A Cement Plant

An announcement was made that Central Qld Cement planned to establish a distribution facility at Parkhurst just north of Rockhampton and to rail bulk cement from the QCL - Darra manufacturing site.

This decision was based on the company's research that the local market was too small for the economic establishment of a full cement plant and it was stated, that a limited manufacturing facility, (ie a grinding plant based on clinker railed from Darra), would be built when annual sales in the local region reached 17000 tonnes and a full plant considered when sales figures reached 25000 tonnes.

This announcement drew considerable criticism from the local business community who had an expectation that construction of a fully integrated cement plant was imminent.

The reaction of this group of influential people was to form the Central Queensland Cement Investigation Syndicate with Mayor Ald RBJ Pilbeam, elected Chairman.

This group continued the pressure for a cement plant in Rockhampton with a vigorous media campaign and representation to the State Government.

Co-incidental with this campaign, Limestone Leases Pty Ltd placed an advertisement in the local newspaper calling for expressions of interest for the establishment of a cement plant in Rockhampton.

4) The Building Of A Plant

In September 1960, Central Queensland Cement announced an immediate start on construction of a cement grinding and bagging plant at Parkhurst, using clinker railed from

Darra and when operational, construction of a full cement plant would begin. It is of interest that local cement sales had not yet reached 15000 tonnes.

Limestone Leases Pty Ltd were still attempting to establish their own operation with a new application (supported by the Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the District Development Association) to the State Government Industries Assistance Board for a Government Guarantee.

The application was refused by Cabinet.

Due to the previously mentioned objections to the Glenmore mineral leases and technical problems associated with the limestone (ie chemical composition) Central Queensland Cement decided to seek alternate mineral leases within economic distance of the proposed new plant.

In the early 1960's, the company embarked on a purchasing program to acquire existing mineral leases and title to strategic free hold land in the Mt Etna area with the following leases subsequently purchased.

Mineral Leases (Ref Att 1)

- Mineral lease 281 (current title ML 5765) purchased from Evelyn May Pilkington
- Mineral lease 307 (current title ML 5766) purchased from Berserker Pilkington

- Mineral lease 236 purchased from Berserker Pilkington
- Mineral lease 243 purchased from Berserker Pilkington
- Mineral lease 326 (current title ML 5767) purchased from William Ross Thompson
- Mineral lease 340 (current title ML 5768) purchased from William Ross Thompson

Construction of the new cement plant at Parkhurst and crushing and screening plant at Mt. Etna was completed during 1966.

Mining operations on the eastern slopes of Mt. Etna commenced mid year in preparation for commissioning of the cement plant in September 1966.

A vertical lime kiln and hydration plant was added to the Parkhurst operation in 1967.

From the out set conservationists protested against mining on Mt. Etna out of concern for the maternity site of the Little Bent Wing Bat and the potential destruction of various cave systems.

In November 1973 Central Queensland Cement surrendered mineral leases 236 and 243 to the Qld. Government to assist with formation of the Fitzroy Caves National Park and protection of the breeding site of the vulnerable Ghost Bat on Limestone Ridge.

On 18 October 1973, the company was granted mineral lease 899 (current title ML 5804) and as a consequence of the above mentioned environmental concerns, during 1974 moved the operation from the eastern benches on Mt Etna to the western side where mining has continued to the present time.

Although conservationists continued to express concern with the mining activities on Mt Etna the issue was relatively low key until the company revealed plans to mine through an area containing two (2) large cave systems known as Speaking Tube and Elephant Hole.

In 1987, for the first time in the long history of the dispute, conservationists carried their protest onto the mining leases with direct action against the company.

In an attempt to ease concerns relating to the most cavernous area on Mt Etna, Central Qld. Cement in November 1988, voluntarily surrendered to the Qld Government approx. 98% of ML 5767 (ex. ML 326) to protect the area. (Ref Att 2).

This strategy failed, as the conservation movement from across Australia, increased the vigor of their campaign and so began the most bitter phase of the long running dispute.

The remainder is recent history.

SOME MEMORIES OF THE MT ETNA CAMPAIGN IN THE 1970's Lex Brown – Past Conservation Secretary UQSS

Recording the history of the battle for the conservation of the Mt Etna cavernous region in central Queensland is important – not only from the perspective of cave conservation, but also from that of the growth of the green movement in Australia generally. Mt Etna has been one of the longest running conservation issues in this country. There are many organisations and individuals who contributed so much time and effort, and in so many different ways, to the conservation of this cavernous region. Their history needs to be properly recorded. This, unfortunately, is not that history. It is little more than a highly selective recall by one individual in one decade of that long effort: dulled by over 20 years since the events, without the time to undertake the necessary research, and prepared without access to the extensive and comprehensive documentation which had existed.

I apologise, in advance, where I have the facts or the sequencing wrong, and to those many people and events overlooked in this quick narrative,

particularly those people and organisations outside of the University of Queensland Speleological Society (UQSS). This is only part of the Mt Etna story of the 1970's.

Early UQSS activity in the conservation of Mt Etna is described in *Mt Etna Caves* (Spren 1970) in which Paul Caffyn documented the first UQSS trips and exploration, the emergence of a community education and conservation program and meetings with Mines Department officials and the company quarrying Mt Etna at that time - Central Queensland Cement.

In hindsight, that early UQSS approach fitted the rational approach of the times: provide scientific information to Government about the value of the caves, eschew too much publicity, particularly critical publicity, and government will respond appropriately.

Mike Bourke was highly active in conservation activities for Mt Etna over the turn of the decade. UQSS had to redirect its sparse conservation

resources in the early 1970's to the more immediate issue of the inundation of the Texas Caves west of Brisbane by an irrigation project and it is about this time that I took over as Conservation Secretary. That UQSS effort did manage to convince the Whitlam Government in August 1973 to cancel Federal funding for what was then the Pike Creek Dam (now Glen Lyon Dam) but, despite this, the Queensland Government proceeded with the dam construction and the Texas Caves were lost.

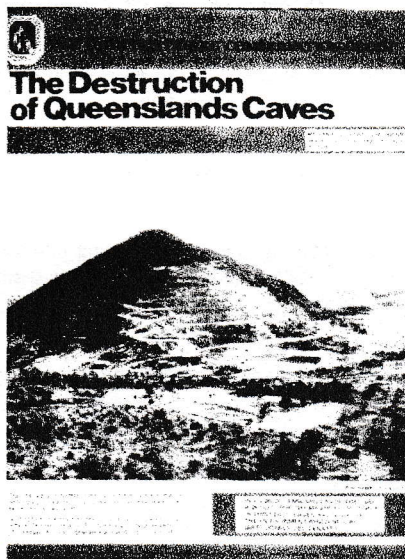
Letters of Support described CQC as "kicking over the chessboard because they are losing". "The Company has given itself the opportunity to be proven wrong and generations will mourn".

The Mt Etna region had never been forgotten by UQSS – Andrew Graham had been significantly involved – but UQSS conservation activity on Mt Etna was reinvigorated with the National Inquiry into the National Estate in 1972 when a major submission on the need for recognition and conservation of cavernous areas in Queensland was compiled and presented to the inquiry. National Estate Inquiry members visited Mt Etna and met with a wide range of the players in the issue.

UQSS conservation activity was directed extensively at parliamentary lobbying, letter writing and publicity through letters to the editor, through television news stories, submissions to ministers, and on-going discussion with government departments. I vividly recall a two-hour meeting that I had, together with the Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Geoff Moseley, and the Queensland Conservation Council, with the Queensland Minister for Mines, Ron Camm. The Minister was clearly bemused by any need to preserve caves or to protect bats, but commented that enough noise had been made by conservationists that he was prepared to give a longer interview to us than he had given to most members of the mining industry in his career. It taught me that, while letter writing, lobbying and publicity stunts may often appear to be futile, they are a critical dimension in the armoury of any small pressure group. I recall also that we managed to arrange for three State Government back-benchers to take the trouble to visit the Mt Etna area on their own behalf. Another such visit by state and federal politicians was organised by UQSS and CQSS and the National Trust about 1979.

Other steep learning curves included how shareholder's meetings were managed (staged might be the more appropriate term). I had purchased shares in the Central Queensland Cement parent company, Queensland Cement and Lime, in order to allow me to speak at shareholders' meetings on the Mt Etna issue. The Chair simply directed that I not be heard! Other activities included the construction of a cave model and its display at a South Queensland Conservation Council function and at the RNA Brisbane Exhibition over many years – raising both awareness and funds.

While it would have suffered from the sporadicity and scarce resources that beset all voluntary organisations, the level of intensity of the campaign should not be underestimated. Adrian Jeffries, who cut his conservation teeth in UQSS, writing in *Down Under* (14(2), 1975) records, for example, over 30 items of conservation activity in the first two months of that year: meetings with parliamentarians, press statements, green bans on the mining of the northern cavernous face of Mt Etna (organised by CQSS) extensive



television coverage and campaign meetings. We also formed *The Mt Etna Committee* in early 1975 to provide a front to the campaign – members were the Central Queensland Speleological Society, Capricorn Conservation Council, UQSS, Capricornia National Parks and Wildlife Association, the Australian Speleological Federation and the Queensland Conservation Council. Some more of the history is reported in Brown (1974).

The National Estate Inquiry produced little that was of direct benefit to the Mt Etna campaign, but indirectly it led to an increasing professionalism. It extended the campaign in several new directions – largely encouraged by the potential to tap into what was, at that time, significant levels of funding for voluntary organisations from the Federal Government.

There were four specific components to this – a legal challenge, Technical Assistance Grants and funding for a major planning study and planning report on the Mt Etna cavernous region.

UQSS lobbying of the Federal Government led to the first Mt Etna legal challenge. In 1975, legal aid was sought, and obtained, to seek counsel's opinion of the quarrying on Mt Etna, and this lead eventually to a challenge to the legitimacy of mining on the Mt Etna Reserve. The basis of the challenge was that both Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge were gazetted as Reserves (R444 in 1920 over Mt Etna and R272 in 1934 over Limestone Ridge) and these reserves were, as the 1934 gazettal stated ... *permanently reserved and set aside for recreational purposes*. The challenge argued that the granting of mining leases over such reserves were illegal acts. The challenge was complicated by the absence of legal standing of the public – it is up to the State's Attorney General, not members of the public, to test the law in such issues. What we had to do was for me, personally, and the Queensland Conservation Council, as joint plaintiffs, to seek the granting of

the Attorney General's *fiat*. This meant his agreeing to allow the legal action to proceed in his name (even though all court representation and all legal costs remained with the plaintiffs). The request for fiat was lodged in December of 1975 yet it was not until June of 1977 that the Attorney General (Bill Lickiss) replied ... *I am not satisfied that the action is one in which I should intervene. In the circumstances, I decline to lend my name to those proceedings...*

The circumstances, some 19 months on in the legal challenge, were primarily that six days earlier (18 June 1977) the Government Gazette recorded that the Recreation Reserve over Mt Etna was now revoked!

This effectively neutered the challenge because QC advice was that there could now be little chance of success along the lines originally sought – while the potential illegality remained, the original leases could simply be revoked and replaced with new leases over the same area. While not successful in itself, there is little doubt that the legal challenge maintained, on the mining company and on the Queensland Government, another pressure point in the long conservation campaign.

The legal challenge provides evidence, in Australia, of the complex procedures that have to be adopted for third parties to obtain legal standing in conservation and related matters – and this Mt Etna example was later included in an Australian Law Reform report on such standing.

Federal funding was also obtained for an economic analysis of the production of cement by Central Queensland Cement using limestone quarried at Mt Etna – UQSS prepared the application and the grant was provided to the Capricorn Conservation Council. That study showed how inefficient the small Central Queensland Cement cement plant at Rockhampton was, being set up primarily to maintain the State Government-supported monopoly by Queensland Cement & Lime and Northern Australian Cement in cement production in Queensland. There was no effective competition between the three firms. Rather than Central Queensland Cement being an efficient producer, the study showed that there would be no economic justification for the continued mining of Mt Etna when production from the large scale Gladstone clinker plant commenced.

Another funded study was the employment of a geologist to test the availability of alternative deposits of limestone within the Central Queensland region. The latter proved particularly useful in attempting to counter arguments that conservation of the Mt Etna Caves would lead to a loss of jobs from Central Queensland.

I can't recall the amounts of the grants, but certainly the funds provided for these two consultancies and the legal challenge were very significant for a small speleological society to obtain in pursuance of its conservation activities in the 1970's.

There was a partial win in March 1975 when 30 hectares of mining lease on Limestone Ridge were surrendered by Central Queensland Cement – and this area was eventually included in the Fitzroy Caves National Park. While this has to be seen as a victory for conservation, for some it was hollow. There had been, throughout the first half of the 1970's, a large amount of horse trading as to which areas in the Mt Etna cavernous region could be protected, and which could be written off in return.

Certainly Government was significantly involved in this trading, as was the mining company, but there were also some mixed messages from conservation organisations. Concerns for employment, for compromise, for *balanced development*, insufficient knowledge, and some parochialism at times suggested that Mt Etna itself could be fully quarried as long as Limestone Ridge was protected – a division that was fully exploited by Government. In exchange for Limestone Ridge leases, a much larger part of the cavernous area east of Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge (termed area 30D) was also reserved for the company for mining! These divisions were relatively short lived – with a coherent view put forward for comprehensive protection of the cavernous region including the Mt Etna north face – supported, for example, by the extremely successful Bat Cleft visits organised by CQSS. I recall extensive discussion with the Central Queensland Speleological Society and the Capricornia Conservation Council and others regarding tactics for publicity, for confrontation and for consultations.

There was a lot of "publishing" done in those days, with Mt Etna and Texas caves bumper stickers, Bat Certificates (for a small amount one could become a guardian for a little bent-winged bat in Bat Cleft – all formalised with personalised certificates – I cannot recall who initiated this great idea – was it Andrew Graham?) brochures on cave conservation, and the two Mt Etna books. We even needed a "Conservation Treasurer" in those days... Simon Jolly noted in one report that assets came to \$8,860, and it seemed to him that UQSS was really a thinly disguised publishing company, the caving being only a front. A new *Save Mt Etna Caves* brochure was also put out by UQSS in 1979, organised by Glen Pure – Glen had been immensely active, managing the Mt Etna campaign as Conservation Secretary for UQSS over much of the last half of the 1970's.



Further lobbying in Canberra led to another major grant – I think this time of about \$10,000 – by which UQSS was able to hire the services of two consultants (Elery Hamilton-Smith and Randell Champion) to undertake a planning study on the future of Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge as part of a caves conservation reserve. This resulted in August 1975 in the publication of the second Mt Etna Caves book *Mt Etna & The Caves*, this one a planning study and future conservation and management plan.

While all this was going on, the constant process of letter writing to the newspapers, media attention through television in particular and involvement of Government departments and parliamentarians was always present.

Meticulous files of every letter sent and received, of every press clipping and of every interview, of any ministerial statement and every consultancy were maintained in the Mt Etna files – at least a half metre of documentation. It would make critical reading for any historian of a conservation movement. Glen Pure had already left Brisbane and I left for an extended period overseas in December of 1981 and had spent considerable time working with a fledgling conservation group at Griffith University, who I would hope would take over the Brisbane end of the Mt Etna campaign – anxious to ensure the contribution to the campaign – now strongly lead by CQSS – would not lose momentum.. Unfortunately the whereabouts and continuing existence of the files remains unknown. Perhaps this article might lead someone to recognize what is gathering dust in their garage!

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THE BATTLE TO SAVE MOUNT ETNA CAVES

The following has been extracted from a thesis paper by Inga Ellis entitled

**"MT ETNA - THE BLASTED TRUTH
A historical study of the Mt Etna dispute"**

It represents a factual summary of the dispute. CQSS wish to acknowledge their gratitude to Inga for the unbiased representation of this protracted dispute.

The Early History

Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge were declared Recreation Reserves - R444 and R272 respectively - on 21.2.1920. A Recreation Reserve is Crown Land set aside for public recreation under the jurisdiction of a trustee. The trustee for R444 and R272 was the Department of Lands. As crown land the entire area was available for mineral leasing and with exception of a tiny part or R444, that occurred.

Mining for the removal of bat guano from Olsen's and Johannsens Caves was first recorded in 1892. It continued in the Limestone Ridge area until World War II. A proposal to begin extensive guano mining on Mt Etna was refused by the Government in 1958, "presumably because the proposed operation would have meant destruction of the cave in question". The first known limestone-mining lease covering Mt Etna was ML200 applied for on 11.11.1925. There was an immediate reaction.

On 12th November, 1925 Rockhampton's afternoon newspaper of the time, *The Evening News*, raised concerns that mining would have an adverse effect on the picturesque mountain. Other leases east of Mt Etna and including Limestone Ridge were applied for on 21st November, 1925 but never taken up.

In December 1969, probably as a result of constant lobbying by the UQSS, the Government increased the size of R272 by approx 80%. If it was intended as an act of appeasement then the Government would have been disappointed. The UQSS remained sceptical stating "The gazettal of the areas as Recreational Reserves does not appear to endow any protection to the caves from petty vandalism or mining". Their scepticism was well founded. Both Limestone Ridge (R272) and Mt Etna (R444) were declared Recreation Reserves in 1920. Mining had caused irreversible damage to both areas and was now threatening to destroy Mt Etna entirely.

In 1958 a group calling itself the Brisbane Cave Group were the first known speleologists to visit Mt Etna. They continued to make intermittent visits until they disbanded and were replaced by the UQSS which made its first visit to The Caves area in 1962. A program of exploration and documentation of caves on Limestone Ridge and Mt Etna was begun. After the discovery of Bat Cleft and its large colony of Little Bent-Winged bats in December 1962, the UQSS immediately began seeking ways to ensure that Mt Etna's caves would not be destroyed. It enlisted the help of the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) and other State speleological societies. This action shows that right from the outset of its northern visit the UQSS made a commitment to try to save the caves which contained such an important fauna habitat. At the time it was not realised that the Little Bent-winged bats used Bat Cleft as their annual breeding site and had been doing so for thousands of years.

Quarrying by a private operator had already caused extensive damage to some caves on Limestone Ridge. Then, in 1963, Mt Morgan Ltd, which at that time owned ML 306 on Limestone Ridge, caused considerable damage to

Johannsen's Caves by blasting and quarrying. Johannsen's Caves were known to be used as a breeding site by the Ghost Bat. The help of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Division of wildlife Research, the Queensland Museum and the DPI was sought by the UQSS in ensuring that this second important fauna habitat would also be preserved.

Following the presentation, at an ASF conference in Perth during December 1964-January 1965, of a paper on the need to save the caves, the UQSS was successful in having mining operations near Johannsen's Caves stopped. When the UQSS became aware, in March 1965, that CQC had let a contract to the firm of Noyes Bros.Ltd to prepare quarrying equipment and ancillary installations on Mt. Etna, it engaged a Rockhampton solicitor to protest the proposed mining and to suggest alternative limestone deposits. The solicitor found his hands were tied because the last date for objections to an "Application for Exemption" by CQC May 19th, 1965 - referred to an attempt by CQC to protect itself from a repetition of so-called "claim jumping" and had nothing to do with objections to the mining lease. The UQSS then wrote to the Courier Mail. The letter was published on May 8th and attracted a response from CQC General Manager, Mr. D Woodcroft, who denied caves would be destroyed by quarrying.

With the help of the West Australian Speleological Group and the Rockhampton Field Naturalists Club, the UQSS continued to lobby government Ministers to leave Mt Etna in its natural state.

By Easter of 1966 twenty caves had been discovered and Bat Cleft had been explored.

Dr Peter Dwyer, M.Sc. Ph.D, a lecturer in zoology at Queensland University specialising in the study of bats, recognised that Bat Cleft was a breeding cave for the Little Bent-wing bats. When UQSS returned in August 1966 they were confronted with "Trespasses Prohibited" signs - a signal from CQC that it did not take kindly to its blasting and quarrying operations being questioned. On their next visit during Easter 1967 the UQSS party was "dismayed to find the majestic cone of Mt Etna irreversibly scarred by the new quarry. Two bench levels had been gouged out and a third begun". Blasting had partially destroyed a cave wall. When the UQSS entered through a small aperture they found three large, highly decorated chambers. Some of the adornments were described as being "comparable to those found in Jenolan Caves". As it was Easter Sunday the name "Resurrection Cave" was given to the cave. Appeals for help were sent to the Governor of Queensland, the Hon. Sir Allan James Mansfield and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF).

The Mayor of Rockhampton, Mr Rex Pilbeam was advised of the latest important discovery. At the request of a group of private citizens interested in caving he called a public meeting which was held in July 1967. It resulted in the formation of the CQSS, which survives to the present time and contended against CQC and its parent company QCL in a determined but grossly unequal battle to save Mt. Etna and its caves for future generations of people and native fauna and flora, and to preserve a unique and unmatched aspect of Australia's ecological past. Initially, a group of five people approached the Mayor with a request for a public meeting. They were joined by others who shared a common interest in caving, but who, more importantly, became aware of the value of The Caves district to the nation as a valuable natural history site. Membership of CQSS has varied between 15 and 30 and is currently about 25.

The Society is affiliated with the ASF and abides by the parent organisation's code of ethics.

IN THE DEPTHS OF BAT CLEFT

No. 155 is with The Queensland Government, 22 km north of Rockhampton, just off the Bruce Highway.

In November each year, 250,000 bats swarm from hundreds of kilometres at a critical juncture, and descend into Bat Cleft, one of the 48 caves on the cone. Shortly after arriving, the little bent-winged bats give birth to their tiny helpless young, and in the ensuing months suckle them until they are capable of feeding for themselves. Each night the mother bats emerging into a quarter of an ounce (15 grams) each, send up the deep resonance of Bat Cleft and out into the warm night air to feed. The bats are determined to rid their bodies of an extra one third of weight each night. Late in February, new born Bat Cleft for the last time in return, next November, they start the cycle again, as they have done for thousands of years.

This is the story of Bat Cleft. Sadly, the Cleft and the other caves on Mt. Etna are threatened by industrial mining which is expanding on the mountain today.

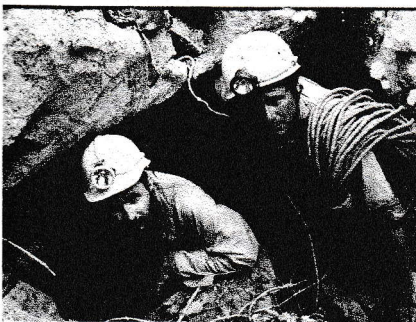


Bats swarming up the deep entrance of Bat Cleft at dusk to start their nightly feeding flight. The inset shows an artist's impression of the Cleft.

During the dispute its opponents often poured scorn on the CQSS.

QCL's Board of Directors took its decision on a "no comment" policy because it considered the Company was being subjected to attack by... "a very small group of people not representative of the public . . . not representative of anybody" and it did not wish to lend credibility to the CQSS arguments. Mr Town derided statements by CQSS and the Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC) on the grounds that "they don't know what they are talking about and have not the ability to give informed opinions". In fact, both CCC and CQSS were very well informed. Their knowledge has accumulated over a long period both from personal contact with and by studying the reports of, a long list of scientists trained in a multiplicity of disciplines. Almost all members of the UQSS were scientists. Their fields of study extended over geology, specialising in the surveying and meteorology of caves; agronomy, specialising in cave biology and conservation; science, specialising in entomology and zoology. Other scientists contributed their knowledge of rainforest ecology, specialising in tree species and habitat types, bats, fossil corals, Australian cave fauna, the presence of ticks in Australian caves and the problems of nature conservation.

The image of cavers expressed during the dispute, and promoted by CQC, tended toward that of a few selfish people wanting to keep their cavernous playground. Their code of ethics belies that. All the efforts of the UQSS and the CQSS were, and are directed toward discovery, exploration, documentation and preservation.



The amount of discovery, exploration and documentation achieved plus their history of constantly seeking ways to preserve the Limestone Ridge and Mt Etna Caves proves their

unswerving commitment of the UQSS and the CQSS to the ASF charter. CQC's opposition to the presence of CQSS members on Mt Etna made their continued exploration of the caves more difficult. Company access roads were avoided by obtaining permission from a local farmer, Mr Norm Pershouse, to traverse part of his property. Speleological groups were the only people given the right to cross the Pershouse farm. As all visiting scientists were escorted by UQSS or CQSS members, they too were accorded the same privilege as were visitors on guided tours conducted by the CQSS. At no time did Mr Pershouse withdraw permission to cross his property from the speleological groups because, he said, they had never caused him any trouble.

As the UQSS intensified its campaign against mining in 1969, a new organisation was formed called the Queensland Cave Conservation Committee (QCCC). It was made up of people not connected with the University except for one representative - who were knowledgeable in the areas of caves and conservation generally. It was led by noted poet and author Judith Wright-McKinney. One of its first acts was to write directly to the Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen who, like his Departmental Ministers, ignored pleas to save Mt Etna. To help raise funds, the Committee devised and sold "Guardianship Certificates". After the July 1969 meeting with Mr Sherrington the CQSS noted that a cave had been damaged. In August, as blasting operations continued to advance round the base of the mountain below Bat Cleft, it was found that CQC was continuing to be in breach of its agreement with the Mines Department and rock falls had occurred in one cave. Another round of notifications went out to Government Departments.

A meeting was arranged with the under Secretary of the Mines Department and the Senior Mines Inspector following which maps, photographs and a written account of the damage were sent to the Department. There appears to be no record of the outcome, but as quarrying and blasting continued unabated it must be assumed that the Mines Department adopted its by now familiar stance and did nothing. The CQC was asked to address the UQSS but declined on

the grounds that "no useful purpose would be served."

Neither would the company grant the courtesy of an interview to the UQSS. Secure in the knowledge that it had the full support of the Mines Department, CQC had no qualms about being so contemptuous of the UQSS.

Meanwhile Dr Peter Dwyer had continued his studies of Bat Cleft and its inhabitants. He found that the proximity of blasting to the cavern in 1968 and 1969 had disturbed the bats causing high mortality of new-born bats. At the same time it was discovered that a small number of Little Bent-wings had taken up residence in a storm-water tunnel in Rockhampton. Speaking in Parliament on 6.3.1975 the Minister for Mines Mr. R E Camm, stated that the presence of a small nursery (varying from 250 to 700 young) showed that the bats could adapt to conditions other than those pertaining to Bat Cleft. The implication was that Bat Cleft was therefore not essential to the large colony normally found there during the breeding season. Dr Dwyer refuted Mr Camm's statement.

Writing on 9.4.1975, he said that the small number of lactating females could not be taken to mean that the tunnel site would be suitable for the entire female colony of 100,000 bats. As the great majority of Little Bent-wings did not abandon Bat Cleft but persisted in using it in spite of continued blast disturbance, it supported the opinion that 'Bat Cleft is critical to the survival' of the species in Central Queensland.

Dr Dwyer went on to say, that the tunnel was so situated that summer flooding of the Fitzroy River would drown the bats and their young and prevent further colonisation in the tunnel. He concluded that the storm-water tunnel "is quite inappropriate in design and function to ensure long term stability or survival of a breeding population".

In 1970, CQC moved its quarrying operations to the western side of the mountain. Responding to continued pressure by the UQSS and the CQSS to have Limestone Ridge and Mt Etna declared National Parks, the Mines Department asked CQC to relinquish its leases on Limestone Ridge.

Overview of the Campaign

It gave up 2 leases on condition that the Mt Etna leases would be renewed and restrictions imposed by the initial agreement lifted.

Early in 1979, CQC increased its activities in the western quarry and Glenn Pure, Vice President ASF and Conservation Secretary UQSS, increased the scale of the protest by seeking support Australia-wide, other states had taken steps to protect their caves, he said. Only the Queensland Government had failed in its duty to protect the most densely cavernous area in Australia. He claimed the Government was deliberately avoiding any publicity because its actions in allowing continued mining could not stand up to public examination. The Mines Department's own geologists had reported that there were other limestone deposits available. Conservationists saw the Mt Larcom - Gladstone project as an opportunity for mining at Mt. Etna, to be phased out. Clinker from Gladstone could be railed to Parkhurst - approximately one-fifth of the distance to the Bulwer Island plant - thereby reducing costs and ensuring continued employment for CQC employees.

An explanation was demanded from the Government as to why it continued to allow mining on Mt Etna. While the Government did not respond to the demand, it is clear from close scrutiny of events from 1962 that its every action was part of a long conspiratorial association with QCL.

SAVE MT ETNA FROM

QCL

Queensland Corruption & Lying

Blockade Sticker

For its part, QCL was also refusing to answer to criticism because its Directors had decided on a "no comment policy" but had not made the decision public. It was not until much later when The Morning Bulletin was unable to elicit answers to its questions that CQC Manager, Mr Brown, disclosed the reason for his lack of response.

Mr Pure's next move was to try to influence QCL shareholders to reject mining on Mt Etna. He was

unsuccessful. At a meeting in March 1979, they approved a \$98,000,000 scheme for mining at Bracewell and a clinker plant at Fisherman's Landing but did not object when an ASF amendment to cease mining at Mt Etna was ruled out of order by Mr Elphinstone. Undaunted, the ASF, the UQSS and the CQSS continued their protests. Two CQSS members went to Brisbane. They spoke with interested groups and organisations and, supported by a colour movie of the emergence flight of the Little Bent-winged bats, backed up an Australia wide protest aimed at the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau by speleological groups affiliated with the ASF.

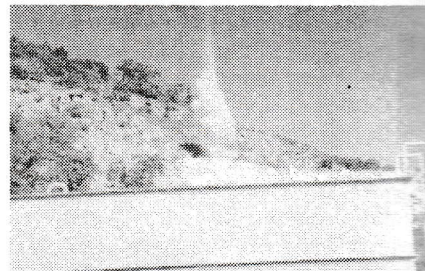
The Labour opposition came out in support of saving the caves. Shadow Minister for National Parks, Nev Warburton, launched a new ASF brochure outlining why the caves should be preserved. The Minister for National Parks, Mr Newbery, under questioning from Mr. Warburton, had claimed that "significant new findings of (Ghost) bats on Cape York" meant that the species was not endangered. In fact, the numbers there are small as only an estimated 1000 Ghost bats are thought to exist in 4 colonies in Queensland.

There are insufficient numbers to warrant removal of the "vulnerable" tag applied by the IUCN. While it was pleasing to discover a new colony, it was misleading of the Minister to claim that the Ghost bat was no longer a threatened species and that "it was Widespread throughout Australia" when for many years it has been considered extinct south of the Tropic of Capricorn.

As 1979 drew to a close and another generation of Little Bent-wings hung suspended in Bat Cleft, interest in seeing the nightly spectacle of the emergence flight increased. The CQSS had begun conducting interested people up to the cavern's mouth in 1973/74.

By the 1975/76 breeding season the tours were better organised. Because of the difficult terrain and the safety factors involved, the numbers were limited to 15 people a night. Each had to wear suitable shoes and carry a torch. They were accompanied by two experienced climbers and cavers. At first the tours averaged 3

evenings a week. Later, so many people wanted to make the climb that tours operated every evening from December to the first week in February. Photographs and brochures left with the Information Centre at the Capricorn Spire, the RACQ and the Youth Hostel helped boost the numbers.



Vandalistic Act by CQC - Destruction of the Ghost Bat Aven in Speaking Tube

CONCLUSION

The final destruction of Speaking Tube Cave brought wide condemnation from conservation and other bodies. Queensland Conservation Council Coordinator, Ms Liz Bourne, called it "probably the most wanton environmental vandalism ever witnessed in Australia". Craig Hardy laid the blame on Premier Ahern who had the power to stop mining but failed to do so. The reason was the Governments Purchasing Policy on cement. The Sunshine Coast Council said it was concerned at what CQC had done at Mt Etna. It was investigating if the company's products were being used in its Works programs and what alternative sources were available. The Morning Bulletin reported that 'Company employees had worked through the weekend drilling for the blasts'. The Courier Mail called CQC's action "Inexcusable". According to Craig Hardy the blasts were directed at the most sensitive part of the cave and away from the company's 'normal mining operations'. Mr Hardy also said his contacts in the National Party had reported that Martin Tenni, Minister for Mines, had "recommended swift action to remove Mt Etna as an issue well before the State election" due in December 1989, and the "rapid destruction of the cave appeared to confirm (the) reports. If the reports were true Mr Tenni's fears were well founded. Mike Ahern was deposed as Premier to be succeeded by Russell Cooper who led the National Party to a convincing defeat at the election.

CQC Manager, Mr Town was asked for a response to the public perception that the destruction of Speaking Tube Cave had gone ahead with undue haste. He denied any intention to "rush" the demolition and stated he had previously made known his Company's "desperate need of the stone that was in that particular area of our quarry because of its high purity".

A month later, during discussion with Norm Pershouse, the farmer said the stone dislodged by the Speaking Tube blast was still there - untouched. In October, while checking a point made in the discussion, Mr Pershouse was asked if the limestone blasted, when Speaking Tube Cave was demolished, had been removed.

His reply was "not a pebble". Mr Pershouse said CQC did not adhere to the conditions of their agreement on blasting when Speaking Tube Cave was destroyed but the family had been notified of the four blasting times. He also said that, in all the years of residence near Mt. Etna since December 1957 - he had never known the company to blast on week-ends or Public Holidays before. Asked if there had been a relaxation of the pressures on him and his family since the CQSS withdrew its opposition, Mr. Pershouse said the whole unpleasant affair had "split the district right down the middle" and that the hostility between supporters and opponents of CQC will be felt for a long time to come.

The backwash following the end of litigation in the dispute washed over politics and politicians around the country. There was an immediate announcement that 'green candidates would be fielded in at least five seats for the forthcoming State election in December 1989 with preferences directed away from the National Party.

The Eighth International Bat Research Conference was held in Sydney in July 1989. Species Survival Chairman of the IUCN, professor P A Racey, told how scientists around the world were appalled at the destruction of Speaking Tube Cave. He had written to Premier Ahern asking the Govt. to protect Mt. Etna by declaring it a National Park. He had also asked what was being done to find out exactly how many

Ghost bats there are in Queensland and he wanted an assurance that there would be no further 'Government-condoned vandalism' of the mountain.

During the same week that speaking Tube Cave was destroyed, an international Environmental Law conference was held in Sydney. High Court judge Justice John Toohey was outspoken in his criticism of the way in which the courts presently deal with environmental matters. The importance placed by common law on property interests had tended to overshadow the interest of the public at large in the protection of the environment. Procedures should be readily available to enable environmental issues fairly to be litigated."



Pat Larkin serving a "Stop Work" Court Order

Craig Hardy was asked why, when the CQSS had been adjudged as being of 'insufficient standing to sue CQC, one of the major conservation bodies such as the QCC the ACF or the WPSQ did not take over the litigation. Presumably those organisations would have had more funds available than did the CQSS. In his reply Mr. Hardy said that in the case of prosecution under the Fauna Conservation Act the NPWS with the guidance of the Attorney General would have been the appropriate plaintiff. In the absence of any action from that quarter the 'closest person to the action will be granted standing'. Because it had raised a few thousand dollars to help fund its campaign over many years the CQSS was treated as an opposing company, which could have been considered to have a pecuniary interest in the case, and therefore were closest to the action. The QCC, ACF and WPSQ on the other hand, were not directly involved in fund-raising ventures to save Mt Etna and so had no pecuniary interest at all. However, it is doubtful if any of those bodies, alone or even combined, could

have raised the extraordinarily extravagant costs \$75,000 - imposed on the CQSS.

In her analysis of the legal aspects of the dispute Maria Comino, solicitor for the CQSS, said the Court took the view that the CQSS was "probably no better than a \$2 company", so it would not be fair to CQC, if they won the case and could not recover their legal costs. Although the CQSS argued that it was "almost a penniless public interest group", the Court treated the Society as a company and applied Company Law, ie that each litigant, in the event of losing the case, must provide sufficient surety to cover the costs of the winning party.

The fact that legislation existed covering the preservation of endangered species was of no assistance to the CQSS. Justice de Jersey, one of the judges who had found against the CQSS on the issue of standing in the Queensland Full Court - "the society's interest was plainly insufficient" - also arbitrated on the security for costs application by CQC. Again, his verdict went against the CQSS. In imposing the burden of another \$45,000 security for costs - in addition to the \$30,000 already put up - on the Society, Justice de Jersey found that in the past the Society had been able to "find money when required".

An important feature of the case was that CQC was acting as a private landowner concerning land, on which it was, in fact, only a leaseholder. In doing so the company excluded "all manner of scientists, bat scientists and medical researchers alike" which "guaranteed the fund of information supporting the public interest remained small." The company ignored the findings of bona fide scientists and the IUCN. The report presented by its consultant scientist covered only weeks of research (and was based mainly on the work of other scientists) whereas other scientists had been studying the area's bats for up to 20 years. The "rights of a private leaseholder, even though prima facie a law breaker, prevailed over trespassers representing the public interest." As the law stood at present it "allowed no scope for a value judgement on who had committed the more serious offence".



Maria Comino concluded her analysis by saying that in Queensland, "the law is a long way from recognising the possibility that responsibilities

may attach to the ownership of land requiring protection of its native inhabitants. In short, it is a long way from giving real recognition and protection to non-material, non-proprietary and non-pecuniary interests that were the subject of this action".

Nicola Paine, of the Specialist Legal Service for the Environmental Defenders Office in Sydney, explained what might have happened if the dispute had occurred in NSW where a special Land and Environment Court has been established. She said it was unlikely that NSW would have acted in the same way as the Supreme Court in Brisbane when it imposed an 'impossible security for costs' order. The NSW Court recognises genuine claims by Public Interest groups and an impecunious group such as the CQSS would not be asked for security for costs. When seeking interim injunctions the NSW Court would be unlikely to ask for security for damages. Another important feature of the NSW Land and Environment Court is that where a Public Interest group has a genuine claim and loses the case, it need not necessarily be asked to pay the costs of the winning party.

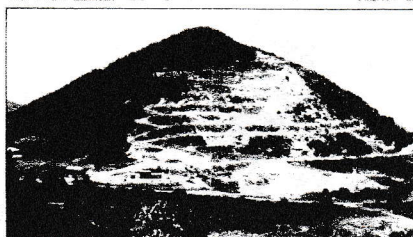
NSW also has an Environmental Planning and Assessment Act under which the public may become involved in certain kinds of planning and development decisions. If the Act is breached, anyone can sue - which does away with the problem of "standing." It will be seen therefore, that if litigation in the Mt Etna dispute had been conducted in NSW the outcome may well have been very different.

The story of the Mt Etna dispute is a shameful episode in Queensland's history. It is an indictment of the National Party Government which held power - in coalition with the Liberal Party and in its own right - during all the years the dispute was building up: ie from the time mining commenced in 1966 until the final climactic blast which destroyed Speaking Tube

Cave in 1989. It is also an indictment of corporate behaviour in Queensland under the National Party Government. The Central Queensland Cement Company, with the blessing of its parent company Queensland Cement Ltd., did everything it could to ensure that the significance of Mt Etna to Australia's Natural History Heritage, would never be made known to the general public. Even while TV cameras were filming scenes of the final blasting of Speaking Tube cave, Company vehicles tried to block news coverage of the event by driving back and forth whenever the cameras were moved.

AN AREA OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: The following information is intended to provide a general overview of the significance of the Mt Etna area to the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF). The ACF is a national conservation organisation which has been active in the protection of the Mt Etna area since its formation in 1971. The ACF has been instrumental in the establishment of the Mt Etna National Park and the Mt Etna National Reserve. The ACF has also been instrumental in the establishment of the Mt Etna National Heritage Area. The ACF has been instrumental in the establishment of the Mt Etna National Park and the Mt Etna National Reserve. The ACF has also been instrumental in the establishment of the Mt Etna National Heritage Area.



• MT ETNA. Its southern slopes (right) contain all the cave systems which are currently threatened by limestone mining.

That the company was not successful is due entirely to the efforts of the UQSS and the CQSS with support from State and national conservation bodies, speleological groups and members of the public. What it was successful in doing was to irreversibly uglify and damage the mountain and its vegetation and to impose, over many years, continuous stress (sometimes resulting in death) on its cave-dwelling inhabitants. The company, by its code of silence in the 1970's and most of the 1960's, showed its disdain for the opinions of those who, no matter how well qualified to do so, dared to question its activities. Thus the course of the dispute was set on its inevitable path by the breakdown of communication between the company and the speleologists. When Mr. Town reversed the 'no comment' decision he often resorted to derogatory comments about the company's critics. To their credit the UQSS, and particularly the CQSS, which bore the brunt of his attacks, never indulged in the same kind of public personal attack on Mr. Town or any of the company's employees. CQC

failed to ensure that the entire cave system was identified, explored and documented before it began blasting and quarrying. It consistently ignored the research and advice of scientists, naturalists and conservationists recognised as being among the world's best.

The company's association with the government of the day is an example of corporate-government cronyism, and should never be allowed to be repeated. A succession of Cabinet Ministers deliberately denied the public information concerning its total support for QCL and CQC. There was the revocation of the Recreation Reserve status of Mt Etna, to overcome a proposed challenge to the legality of allowing mining on Recreation Reserves; the lifting of the agreement not to mine within certain areas of known caves; the intention to renew mining leases for long periods in spite of years of lobbying by concerned public interest and conservation groups; the humiliating treatment handed out to the Parliamentary Ombudsman; the refusal, for some twenty years, of Government Ministers and Department heads to visit the scene and the Government Purchasing Policy on cement.

The Government often claimed it was trying to encourage businesses to come to Queensland to help relieve the State's unemployment problem. A South Australian firm, Sunstate Cement, was "discouraged... giving QCL a free run." Opposing Sunstate's penetration of the Queensland cement market. QCL claimed it went ahead with its \$112,000,000 Gladstone project because the Queensland Government promised "exclusive access to the Queensland market".

In addition there was the deceit of the Mines Department in trying to have Johannsen's Caves on Limestone Ridge renamed Mt. Etna Caves and its incompetence in refusing to act against CQC for repeated breaches of the agreement not to mine within a certain distance of known caves. ***There was also the refusal, or the inability, of the NPWS to act in any responsible way to prevent escalation of the dispute and to defend its own Government legislation, the Fauna Conservation Act.***

NPWS does not recognise the term "endangered" and there is no list of Species so labelled in Queensland. Although, it is now trying to save the last known colony of hairy-nosed wombats in the country, it allowed the population to dwindle to 80 before attempting a rescue operation.

A spokesman for NPWS in Rockhampton was asked what is the use of having a Fauna Conservation Act legislated for and passed into Queensland law by the State Parliament if companies such as CQC could disregard it with impunity. According to the spokesman the answer is simple - the Act is subject to interpretation by the Supreme Court. It seems then, that a Government Department which could reasonably be expected to be responsible for enforcing Government legislation, can ignore that responsibility and allow concerned members of the public to push themselves to the point of bankruptcy trying to prevent what the Act says should not occur.

Equally important is the establishment of an Environmental Court, with appropriate legislation and suitably trained judges aware that most 'green' issues are contested initially by groups of local people who perceive a need for restraint, alteration to, or abandonment of proposed Government or corporate actions. Judgement in such issues should

surely be based on the evidence presented and not on the amount of money a group of individuals, united by their cause, can provide. The question should be asked: Have the Queensland judges taken any steps to ensure that future environmental litigation will be treated in a way which allows all litigants equal access to judicial considerations and that the kind of unjust treatment meted out to the CQSS will not occur again because of inadequate legislation? Justice should not equal dollars.

Another area for concern is the declining standard of journalism in our society. Journalists and reporters today seem to have taken over the role of political parties in opposition. On every issue they often seem more intent on dismembering the proponents rather than presenting all sides and allowing the public to exercise its intelligence.

An example was the occasion of a major environmental policy launched by the Prime Minister at Wentworth near the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers in N.S.W. Instead of emphasising that the Federal Government intended at last to seriously address the problems of soil erosion and salt levels in the Murray River basin, the reporter downgraded the issue to one approaching gimmickry by describing the attendance of State Premiers and leading politicians as

"getting in on the green act." Sarcasm, innuendo and covert criticism should have no place in the presentation of news and current events. Sensationalism should be abandoned in favour of accurate presentation of facts as they occur. Only then will the true nature of acts of governments, political parties, public bodies and individuals be able to be objectively considered by the people most affected - the general public. Journalists should adhere more strictly to the rules of good journalism - accuracy and impartiality.

The final irony in the dispute was the announcement that NPWS had begun public tours to Bat Cleft using the CQSS criteria of a maximum of 15 people on each tour, good walking shoes and a torch each. The Department has improved the track up to the cavern but the tours are not free. The cost for a single adult is \$5, for families \$15 and for children \$2.50. "They (the public) love it."

There is still no official recognition of the work of the UQSS and the CQSS, nor any suggestion that funds raised from the tours should go to reimburse the CQSS for the tens of thousands of dollars it cost the Society to have Bat Cleft preserved and to engage in litigation that was rightfully the responsibility of the same Department now reaping the profits - the NPWS.

DIRECT ACTION

The Blockade - Peter Berrill

The Direct Action part of the campaign began on December 12 1987 with the filling of drill holes directly below Speaking Tube cave on the western side of Mt Etna. This was not merely a "knee jerk" reaction. Planning for direct action and a blockade began as early as 1985. At that time the campaign was in its 23 year. All attempts to try to stop the mining had failed.

Since the first objections to the granting of the leases in 1962 there had been constant media campaigns, lobbying and meetings with politicians, ministers and mining company managers and directors. There even had been a legal challenge by the University of Queensland Speleological Society (UQSS) but all this had proven fruitless. We were unaware of their actual mining plan but it was evident from the operation that if they were to expand the western quarry they would have to quarry the cavernous face.

The question was, "how were we going to stop them"?

CQSS membership was strong and we were all positive and committed. It was agreed that somehow we had to make the world listen and take notice that when we said that no more caves should be destroyed, we were serious. The Conservation Secretary at this time was Craig Hardy, the eternal optimist. He was well connected with the National Conservation Movement and well aware of 'people power'.



The conservation movement was still on a high following its success at Franklin River. A few key members started discussing the possibility of direct action and considering the past it was decided that this was our final course of action. But it had to be well planned.

From here CQSS was restructured. We rewrote our constitution and became incorporated. We ensured that all of our meetings were correctly minuted. All media comments had to be true and factual based on the information as we knew it at the time. Not all of the members were aware of the Direct Action Plan.

To assist us with the planning we asked Bob Brown, who was then director of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, who were recently successful at the Franklin River, to come to Rockhampton and assist us in the planning of a blockade at Mt Etna and he agreed. He informed us that we also needed a legal adviser.

The success of this planning for the time being, revolved around secrecy, trust and knowledge of caves. It just so happened that we were familiar and friendly with (I can't recall how it came about) a certain, for want of a better definition, an apprentice Solicitor from the Sydney University Speleological Society by the name of Patrick Larkin. We wondered if he would be interested?. He was.



Both Bob and Pat came to Rockhampton and during a number of long consecutive nights with CQSS members talks were had relating to blockades.

Bob told us of the actions at Franklin River and of the treatment dished out to the blockaders, of the legal actions following, of the costs and logistics of such a blockade and especially the funding.

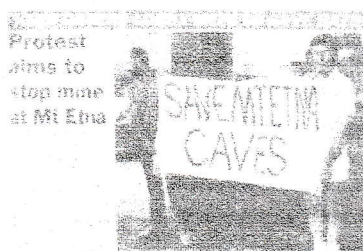
To a group of conservative cavers at Rockhampton this was all quite frightening. At this point we had no idea how we would do it but we were committed and decided to go ahead.

Of course the whole point of a blockade is to gain massive media attention enabling the facts to be conveyed and forcing a decision. While Craig organised the media and politics, a few others planned the blockade. This was to be in the form of a "sit in" in the caves.

Directly following the launch of the media campaign Rockhampton was to be visited by a politician (I think it could have been the newly elected QLD Premier Mike Ahern following the successful overthrow of Joe Bjelke-Petersen).

The visit was to occur on a Saturday morning in the business area of Rockhampton. We found out the route of the motorcade and we would be waiting.

Our first public protest of this part of the campaign occurred on Saturday morning the 3rd October 1987.



Three nervous cavers, Noel Sands, Clive Kavanagh and Peter Berrill stood on a street corner holding a simple sign "SAVE MT ETNA CAVES" and when the motorcade came past we pointed it at them!. Needless to say, we were shaking in our boots, but from here on 'we were veterans'.

For the next few months the media was intense and had the desired effect of highlighting the issue but there was no change of plan by the Company or the Government. They were going up the cavernous face despite our protests. We had to do more.

Then on 11th December 1987 just prior to their Christmas break they put down a series of drill holes just below "Speaking Tube" cave on the cavernous face. This provided us with the opportunity that we had wanted, an excuse to commence "direct-action" for the next stage of the planned campaign.

The next day Saturday 12 December CQSS members invited the media to accompany them onto Mt. Etna and film and photograph them filling in the drill holes. It had the desired effect.

Throughout December and January the media was intense to say the least. Lobbying of the Government was also intense and we were informed that the Premier was coming to Rockhampton in Late January to make an announcement.

Meanwhile, back at "sit in" planning headquarters things were well under way. Our first problem was who was going to support us and where was the money to pay for it coming from.

"Eternal Optimist" had convinced us that once the direct action was underway support and money would follow. He had been in touch with a number of organisations such as the Rainforest Information Centre at Lismore who pledged their support. There is a number of people who are willing to carry out blockades.

They have purposely arranged their lives so they have no address or place of residence, no assets or belongings etc, so when they are caught, apprehended or find the courts or the

company can do very little to them because they have nothing to loose.

While all the media was going on, a few of us had decided which caves would be the most appropriate for the sit-in. At this stage and for weeks to come only three people knew of the planned sit-in. Two caves were chosen. Speaking Tube for it's location and Illium as a back up cave.

Fortunately Speaking Tube has a high level section that few were aware of and this section was difficult to locate from the inside. This section also had it's own entrance. Speaking Tube was to be loaded with enough food, water etc for two people to stay underground for four weeks continuous and Illium for two weeks.

Everything had been thought of, water, food, lighting, bedding, toiletries, recreation, communication and medical. With what we had, I think that open heart surgery may have even been possible. Whatever was needed was thought of and stored underground. They had no need to come out for a least four weeks.

Loading the caves was a mammoth task. After careful calculation and throwing extra in just to be sure all of the supplies were sealed in a variety of containers and carried onto the mountain. The water was stored in 4 litre plastic fruit juice containers and these were purchased new. Between the two caves we had stored 120, 4 litre containers of water. The food was arranged in meals from breakfast through to supper. These were sealed in new 10 litre paint drums. I can recall buying a least 24 of these. Other items were stored in a all sorts of containers.

For Speaking Tube, it was safe to place the stores on the floor of the cave, but in Illium there was no where out of sight. Illium was once used by a large colony of bats and has hugh guano deposits. The stores for this cave was buried in the guano.

The day had arrived for the Qld Premier to make his announcement.

With a great entourage of politicians, bureaucrats, mining company officials and media of every description, he ascended Mt Etna to make his announcement at Bat Cleft cave. With lavished expressionable waves of his hands he made his announcement, *that Mt Etna for all intents and purposes is now included in a special purposes reserve and the caves and Bat Cleft are protected for all time.* This reserve had been as a result of discussions between the mining company and the Government. Neither the caving movement or any conservation group had been invited to participate in the agreement.

When we investigated the conditions and rules of the reserve, we found that it was administered by the Mines Department. **What a joke.**

We had managed to load the caves ready for the sit-in by the Premiers visit. Dissatisfied with his announcement we made our own.

That the "D & O Special Purposes Reserve", as it was known, was a joke and unacceptable to us and that if the Company set one foot on the cavernous face of Mt Etna that we would call a blockade and were prepared to site in the caves until a proper resolution was found.

The reply from Company Manager, Robin Town was, "that if they were silly enough to sit in the caves while we carried out our lawful mining operations, then let them do so". When asked by the media if they would cease operation for fear of injuring the protesters he said "NO". He further said that he was sure that the protesters were all bluff. How wrong he was.



Greenies estimated at 20,000

Firm: No blasting if caves entered

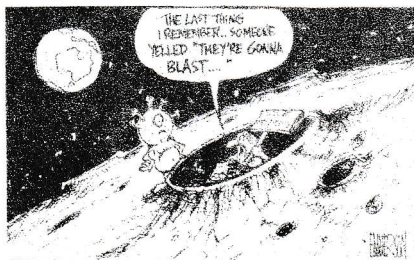
The Company had an agreement with Norm Pershouse, the farmer whose property adjoins the mining leases that before blasting he would be given plenty of notice. On occasions, they had blasted while Norm was in his fields and a number of times he had close calls with fly-rock. This would give us plenty of warning before they blasted. We were all prepared for the sit-in. Caves were prepared with supplies. Two CQSS members were on standby and the supporters in the south were also on standby. The two CQSS members who were to be first underground also had arranged their lives so the Company or the law couldn't harm them. We estimated that it would be a least a week before the southern blockaders could get here. With this in mind, Andrew March and Peter Wone had their bags packed and were waiting. Andrew's bag contained 7 pair underpants, 7 handkerchiefs and 70 metres of dental floss and he was *fired up*.

The Company was aware of the close association between Norm and CQSS and come the morning of the blast they gave him very little notice. However, he knew that timing was important and he immediately phoned me. I phoned the others and told them that I would pick them and Craig up and we would proceed to Mt Etna.

We dropped them off in a gully on the highway side of Mt Etna where they were to follow it onto Etna and make their way to Illium. Under cover of night they were then to proceed to Speaking Tube. The company had arranged the media to be present for their first working day of the New Year and also to be present to witness them calling our bluff.

After we had dropped Andrew and Peter off, we drove around to the crushing plant where all was gathered.

We drove up to the Manager, Robin Town and in front of the media with cameras rolling informed him that we had just put two people onto Etna and by now they would be in the caves. Without allowing him to reply, we said that if they blasted they would probably be committing murder and with that we quickly drove away. We went over to Norm's place where we watched and prayed.



Some hours later they removed the charges from the drill holes.

Thus began the blockade of Mt Etna.

The southerners arrived and money and support poured in. The following two years which encompassed the blockade and legal action was very bitter and changed some our lives for ever.

The rest of the story will just have to wait.

The following prose, written by Judith Wright, was taken from the Publication Mt Etna & The Caves – A Plan for Action (Elery Hamilton-Smith & Randall Champion)

I thought I saw a Mountain Peak
Where I could roam in peace.
I looked again and found it was
Another Mining Lease.

I thought I saw a splendid Cave
With stalactites bedecked.
I looked again and saw it was
Completely flat and wrecked.

I thought I saw a Roadside Sign
"Come see our Grand Attraction!"
I looked again and found it was
A Bulldozer in Action.

I thought I saw a Flock of Bats
That were extremely rare.
Alas, it was a Scientist
Who wept and tore his hair.

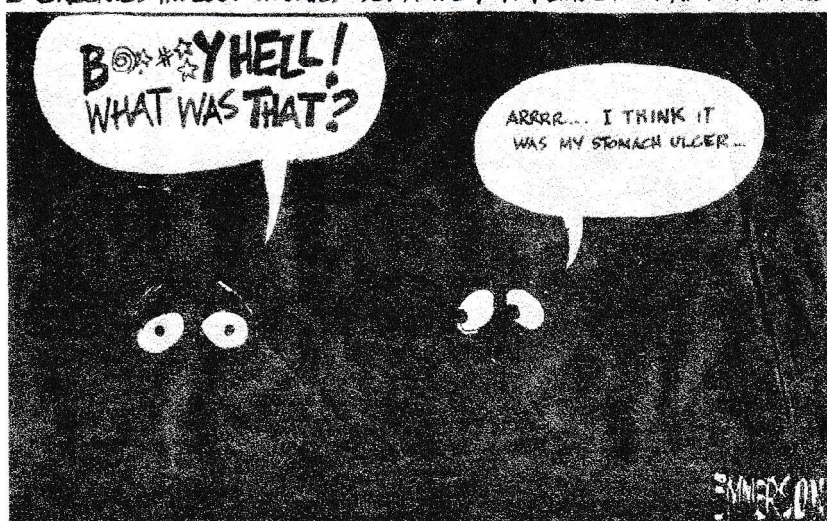
I thought I saw a Tourist State
Where happy thousands went.
I looked again and saw it was
Paved wholly with cement.



**"Alas, it was a Scientist
Who wept and tore his hair"**

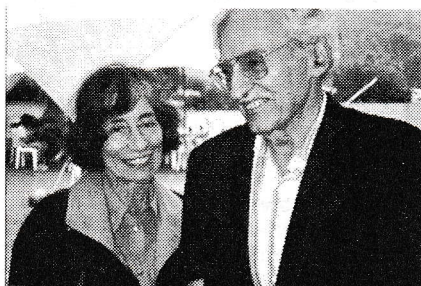
John Toop – Zoologist, Ghost Bat
Researcher – National Parks
Rockhampton.

2 GREENIES HIDEOUT IN CAVES SET ASIDE FOR DEMOLITION AT MT. ETNA...



The Legal and Personal Costs of Litigating for the Bats

Stephen Comino A.M. – Solicitor for CQSS



Penelope & Stephen Comino

The resolution of the conflict between CQSS and Central Queensland Cement Pty Ltd ("CQC") in 1999 culminating in the historic celebrations in the hand over of Cammoo Caves to National Parks, was a huge reversal of the goals and aspirations of the warring parties.

The conflict related to Section 54 of the Fauna Conservation Act which Act provided "A person shall not take or keep fauna of any kind unless he is the holder of a permit issued under the Act." "Take" was defined in the Act to include "disturb or destroy", and "fauna" was defined to include the "nest" of the mammal. Don Henry the then Director of the Wild Life Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) proposed that WPSQ should be the protagonist to take action against CQC for its breach of the Act.

WPSQ could not demonstrate to its lawyers that it had a special interest as to give it "locus standi" to sue for relief.

On the other hand, CQSS ("the Society") with its specific interest in speleology, its objects including the encouragement of cave conservation and the exploration and documentation of caves, carrying out conducted tours and raising funds by the sale of memorabilia relating to Mt Etna and its caves - was more likely to be able to demonstrate that the Society had the special interest so as to give it the necessary "standing" to be able to sue.

Once legal proceedings were commenced CQSS faced a spate of court actions against CQSS, individual members Edna Allison, Craig Hardy, Mark Godson, Peter Berrill, and Don Henry.

These resulted in injunctions being granted restraining the parties from entry to Mt Etna, with costs orders against them.

The pressure engendered by CQC against those individuals was enormous.

Allegations of contempt of Court by CQSS individuals were made, and Court orders sought to impose fines.

CQC sought to have the legal proceedings issued against it, struck out, on the grounds

- (a) that the injunction sought by the Society was invalid because of alleged irregularity by the Society in not filing material to verify that the Committee had resolved to institute proceedings after receiving legal advice; and
- (b) that the Mining Wardens Court, not the Supreme Court had substantive jurisdiction to hear and determine if CQC had committed any breach of the Fauna Conservation Act.

The Full Court of the Supreme Court decided that the Supreme Court did have jurisdiction to hear the matter of alleged breach of the Fauna Conservation Act, and that the proceedings were valid. Mr. Justice Derrington and Mr. Justice Thomas held that the evidence raised a serious question to be tried as to whether CQC's proposed mining would infringe the Fauna Conservation Act by disturbing or damaging the nest of ghost bats.

Mr. Justice Derrington and Mr. Justice de Jersey held that the Society did not have the special interest it needed to give it standing to sue. The Society obtained special leave of the High Court, to appeal against that decision of the Full Court of Queensland. When the hearing of the appeal commenced before the High Court, CQC's lawyers indicated that CQC was prepared to give an undertaking not to engage in any activity that might damage the caves pending the outcome of the trial (which was fixed for 13th June, 1989).

The High Court rescinded the order granting leave to appeal. Just over 2 weeks before the trial, CQC applied for a further order for security for costs against the Society (orders for security for costs had been made previously and the Society had paid 2 sums of \$15,000 into Court - to be available to CQC in the event that the Society failed in its case against CQC and was ordered to pay costs.

The Society was ordered to pay a further \$45,000.00 into court.

CQC had also applied for an order against the Society for security for damages which was to be heard on the same morning as the application for security of costs. However, the CQC applied (successfully) to the Court and adjourned the damages application.

Despite a public fund raising campaign the Society was unable to raise the further sum of \$45,000.00, and CQC applied to the Court to dismiss the application for want of prosecution and obtained an order for payment of its costs of the proceedings by the Society. Four days later CQC blasted Speaking Tube Cave, a roosting site for the ghost bat area.

LEGAL COSTS ISSUES

At the time of CQC seeking the order for security for costs CQC presented an assessment that CQC's costs of a 10 day trial would exceed \$90,000. On 14th June 1990 CQC's solicitors delivered Bills of Costs of Taxation for payment of CQC's costs by the Society as follows:-

(i) costs of action	\$202,989
(ii) costs of motion	\$ 5,042
(iii) costs of security for costs	\$ 3,833
(iv) costs of Summons	
inspection of cave	\$ 12,201
Total	\$213,085

Although the Bills of Costs were filed in the Supreme Court and appointments made to tax the Bill for 14th May, 1990, the Taxing Officer declined to proceed with the Taxation of the Bills until the estimated Court taxation fees of \$16,000 were paid, in view of the Society's notification to the Taxing Officer that the Society had no prospects of paying any of the costs sought against it.

The Taxation of costs never proceeded.

From May 1990, (the time of the appointment to tax the above Bills of Costs, until March 1998 there was no communication between CQC's solicitors and the Society's solicitors. In March 1998 CQC's then solicitors Minter Ellison (successors to Morris Fletcher & Cross) wrote saying that CQC was willing to consider consenting to an Order that the moneys paid into Court with interest be paid out of Court to the Speleological Society for the purpose of dedicating the moneys towards an environmental research project that might be supported by the relevant funds.

Later on 9th September, 1998 CQC's solicitor sought to initiate discussions with the Society's solicitors about a potential project to which monies could be dedicated, saying that other environmental groups needed to be consulted not just CQSS.

In the writer's view, this was a studied attempt to diminish CQSS's and Peter Berrill's roles as the only party to the dispute. Peter Berrill quite properly refused to entertain the involvement of other groups.

Protracted discussions then took place between CQC's then manager, Chris White and Peter Berrill, culminating in Peter Berrill instructing the writer to inform CQC's solicitors in September 1998 that agreement had been reached for the application of the moneys paid into Court, for an agreed conservation purpose and that the Society, and the individuals subjected to court injunctions would be released from all claims and costs.

On 22nd September, 1999 the Mt Etna Settlement Deed was entered into between CQC (in liquidation), CQSS, Edna Allison, Mark Godson, Craig Hardy, Peter Berrill and D.J. Henry.

Under the Deed, CQC agreed to pay \$65,000 to the Department of Natural Resources to assist in the purchase of land from WJ & E Trenaman (Cammoo Caves).

The Society agreed to release the moneys paid into Court to be applied -

- (a) as to \$14,000 to Henry Shannon (a major donor on whose behalf Peter Berrill made special representation to CQC);
- (b) balance to CQC to reimburse CQC for its payment of moneys to DNR

Mutual Releases were executed between CQC, CQSS, E. Allison, M. Godson, C. Hardy, P. Berrill and D.J. Henry.

The signing of the Mt Etna Settlement Deed (after 9 years had elapsed from the time of delivery of bills of costs of more than \$200,000 against the Society), is a major tribute to the single mindedness and, the great negotiation skills of Peter Berrill.

Without Peter Berrill's singular capacity to organize and provide leadership for CQSS in the way in which he did, the ultimate triumph over the adversity of the 1989 Court proceedings would not have been achieved.

The Camp Site

Norm Pershouse

In 1957, I bought a run down farm house on the north west side of Mt Etna. There I farmed by myself until the end of 1958 when I married my wife, Doreen. From that day on, we worked the farm together. Doreen was a local girl, but I was new to the area. We both loved the farm and the beauty of Mt Etna.

In about 1962, we had the good fortune to meet a group of Cavers from UQSS. We formed a very good relationship with these people and we invited them to camp on our property whenever they came up caving. Over the next few years, CQSS became very involved in a campaign to stop mining on Mt Etna.

Through mutual agreement, I gave CQSS permission to build a rock block BBQ, a pit toilet and a shower on the camp-site. CQSS maintain the right to who can or can not camp there. I must say I am very proud and honoured to have known and made friends with these people.

Members of the CQSS conducted bat cleft tours via the camp-site for quite some time. This in turn infuriated CQ Cement and they asked me to stop these people coming through our property. My reply was, "when they stopped mining Mt Etna, there would be no need to come this way".

This must have upset them, for I received a visit from the Livingstone Shire Health Inspector. He said he had complaints from CQ Cement that the 'Low Life' that were camping here, were running around nude and doing their 'business' over logs and on rocks. When he inspected the camp-site, he was so impressed, he said I would hear no more about this, and wished me well.

During the blockade, there were many stressful times but I prefer to remember the lighter times. There were many humorous instances, two of which stick in my mind.

There was one particular member of the blockade who was sure-footed in jumping over rocks, up the mountain, dodging those who were trying to capture him. This fellow, our family called "Spider-man". The day came when the 'enemy' had him cornered and jumped behind a bush.

The second-in-charge of CQ Cement yelled, "He's mine!", and jumped and wrapped his arms around the bush at the same time yelling, "I got you, you bastard." To his dismay, he found

himself hugging a six foot prickly pear tree that was growing in this bush.

On another occasion, I had a furious CQ Cement Manager, Robin Town, come to me and demand that I shift the person sitting in a chair on the edge of the scrub watching everything his men were doing. This he said was very upsetting to his men and could cause an accident. When I told him there was no one over there, he called me a liar and demanded that I go over there with him and have this person shifted. When we got there, my heart sank, there was this bloke sitting there watching over the works. This bloke never moved and I thought to myself, this fellow is either asleep or dead. As I got closer, I could see, he was the best-dressed dummy that I have ever seen! The look on Robin Town's face, made my day. He had been made a fool of!



The Dummy that fooled the Dummy!

Our family would like to think that in some small way that this humble camp-site had a hand in saving Mt Etna. This all came about from years before becoming friends with UQSS and CQSS. May they have many caving years left in them.



Norm & Doreen Pershouse

RUBBER, IRONY AND OTHER CAVING RELATED MATTERS

*How is this for a little irony to top off
the recent news about the Mt Etna
Reconciliation*



Andrew Robson

Sit comfortably while we recollect a little history....

A long time ago in a galaxy far away (Brisbane 1975), a report was commissioned by UQSS. The authors of the report, Metwally & Ware (sp?) of Griffith University examined the state of the then current Australian cement manufacturing industry, and in part concluded that the best and most economic outcome for cement users in Queensland would be for QCL to:

- close the cement works at Parkhurst in Rockhampton (thereby ceasing limestone mining at Mt Etna);
- close the cement works at Darra in Brisbane (thereby ceasing coral dredging in Moreton Bay);
- close the cement works at Calcifer near Townsville (thereby ceasing limestone mining at Fanning River and other places which I can't remember at this time of night);
- commence mining limestone at the very large scale and non-cavernous Bracewell (or is it Land's End?) deposit (I think that is the name but I am sure that someone will correct me if I am wrong);
- installing a single integrated cement manufacturing plant using a world-scale dry process kiln (around 2 million tonnes per annum) at Fisherman's Landing near Gladstone;
- install cement grinding and bagging facilities at major markets such as Brisbane to convert clinker into cement;
- using coastal shipping and rail freight to distribute cement powder to batching plants around Queensland.

At the time of its release, the report was heavily criticised by a large number of industry participants and government

identities for a large number of reasons which I do not need to go into here. Now for a quiz, how many of these recommendations were carried out?

Answer:

After a false start when QCL installed a 1 million tonne per annum semi-wet process kiln at Fisherman's Landing, (the kiln has now been mothballed and last year was replaced by a new 2 million tonnes per annum dry process kiln - they are much more fuel efficient and emit less nasties than wet or semi-wet kilns), every one of these recommendations has now been carried out!

When I heard the news about the reconciliation, I went out to Darra to get some photographs of the cement works. Very little remains at Darra, since most of the plant has been levelled, and is now being converted to a housing estate and an industrial park. Within a year, even the bagging plant will be relocated to Bulwer Island near the mouth of the Brisbane River, where clinker from Adelaide, overseas and Fisherman's Landing is already ground and converted to cement powder.

Now for the rubber and the irony!

QCL have recently carried trials of burning old car and truck tyres in the new dry process kiln, and have burnt a large number (many tonnes) of tyres of all sizes.

I have heard that those trials were successful and that QCL can burn tyres without problems to the operation of the kiln or the quality of the product. The calorific value of old tyres is very similar to that of coal, and the kiln temperatures are high enough to melt the steel reinforcing wires within the tyres. Clinker production requires the addition of a certain quantity of iron into the blend during the calcination process.

But I can hear people asking, "Can't the same tyres be used as fuel in more normal types of power generation plant to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels"? The answer is basically no!

Most coal burning power stations fire coal at around 1100 degrees celsius. This sort of temperature is not hot enough to melt the steel reinforcing wires in the carcasses of tyres.

The only way most coal fired power stations can burn old tyres is to grind those tyres into a fine powder, mix them with finely ground coal and burn them in the boilers to raise steam, and then use magnetic collection systems to remove the steel particles from the ash stream.

The added technical complexity, and additional capital cost, means that most

thermal generators have little desire or ability to burn old tyres.

But a dry process kiln such as the one at QCL burns at around 1400 - 1500 degrees celsius, with a much longer residence time. These conditions are quite suitable to ensure total melting of the steel fraction and its incorporation into the cement clinker blend.

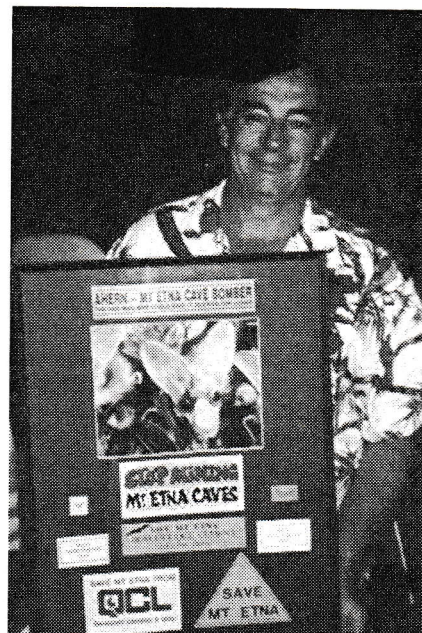
It therefore appears that QCL's new dry process kiln could conceivably provide an environmentally sound solution to the problem of disposing of the more than 2 million old car and truck tyres collected every year in Queensland.

Isn't it ironic, don't you think!

On a more serious note, all praise is due to Peter Berrill for leading the fight long after most people had given Mt Etna, Limestone Ridge and the bats (remember them) up as a lost joke. Peter maintained the struggle, at great personal and financial cost to himself and to his family and we all owe him a huge debt.

Many people in Rockhampton, around Australia and overseas contributed a great deal of time, effort, money, resources, blood, sweat and tears over the past 37 years, and each and every one of them deserves our gratitude, but it was Peter who brought the process to a successful conclusion.

Thanks Pete.



Peter Berrill receiving a Memorabilia Presentation
Photo: Andrew Robson

REPORT - MT ETNA RECONCILIATION

Peter Berrill

In July of 1998 CQSS Solicitors received a letter from Pacific Lime's (the new company name replacing Central Qld Cement) solicitor's stating that they wished to settle the matter of outstanding cost and the monies held in security, now totalling some \$50,000. At the same time I received a phone call from the new mine manager requesting a meeting regarding the above. My first reaction was "here we go again".

At the same time he invited CQSS on an inspection tour of Resurrection Cave. This is one of the most highly decorated caves on Mt Etna and is closed under the control of Pacific Lime. Considering that CQSS had closed the books on the campaign some years back, I almost told them to go to hell. However, we had not seen Resurrection for about ten years, so I thought that we will see the cave first and then tell them, to go to hell. I had never meet the new mine Manager, Chris White, and on the day of the caving trip he accompanied us.

We spoke of the Solicitor's letter and he asked me to make a time for a meeting. Immediately I sensed that he was different and that we should listen. The letter stated that they would release the money only if it was spent on a cave related conservation issue of our choosing. Seemed to be half reasonable, so I started making a list in my mind. The most important one that sprang to mind was somewhat politically controversial (nothing new to me), so I decided that for the time being I would keep this under wraps. CQSS treasurer and close caving friend Noel Sands was the only person I involved.

The day of the meeting:

The meeting took place at Pacific Lime's office and present were myself, Noel Sands, Mine Manager Chris White and Qld Cement and

Lime's Corporate Communications Manager, Anne Gambling. Prior to the meeting Noel asked me what I had in mind and I wasn't game to tell him because it was, I thought way over the top. I told him that we would take the talks as they come.

Surprisingly, Chris and Anne are quite young, in their early thirties for Mine Management, or is it that I am just getting old especially when it comes to the Etna issue. Anyway, Chris appeared to be a little nervous and who can blame him, having to reconcile this issue and being confronted by an old long-haired aggressive greenie caver who after 30 years of the campaign, is really p...ed off. Chris is a Kiwi and has an environmental background and straight away, I sensed an aura of honesty and sincerity. This Mine Manager was different. They wanted to know some of the history and what happened during the Direct Action. There are some amazing stories and when we told them how we were treated they were physically shocked. We spoke of a number of issues that we could spend the money on and all the while I was softening him up for the big one. Well here goes - I want to purchase Cammoo Caves for inclusion in Mt Etna Caves National Park. The importance of Cammoo's inclusion had been recognised in the draft Management Plan of 1993. We have been trying to acquire Cammoo for some years but there was a political problem.

Chris asked, how much, and I had no bloody idea, so I just pulled a figure out of the air, \$200,000. I had negotiated for the return of Henry Shannon's money and after this we had \$35000 left. We chatted for some time about the issue in general and the importance of Cammoo. It would provide a southern access to the National Park away from Johannsens Cave, which is presently used by the Ghost Bats for eight months of the year. This would enhance the survival of the Ghost Bat. Previous to this I had been lobbying the new Minister for Environment on the Cammoo acquisition and felt that they would also contribute funds.

Chris then told me that he would round out the figure to \$100,000. As well, all of the outstanding court costs (\$250,000) and writs against all individuals and organisations would be cleared. This was just the beginning from here, in brief, I obtained a grant of \$100,000 from the Natural Heritage Trust, Environment Australia, Biodiversity Group. That's another long story.

The Queensland Department of Environment came to the party, with \$100,000 making the total \$300,000. We not only purchased Cammoo but I also negotiated with Pacific Lime for the hand-over of another parcel of land between Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge known as Pilkingtons Quarry.

The deal is done.

Cement giant calls truce in bat-cave battle



SPELEOLOGIST Peter Berrill, left, and Pacific Lime Company Manager, Chris White explore the Bat Cave System yesterday. Photo: Courtesy of Courier Mail

Historic caves deal

By RENEE MICKELBURGH

YEARS ago they were on opposite sides of the picket line — yesterday they became business partners.

QCL Pacific Lime, the Central Queensland Speleological Society and the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency have bought the Cammoo Caves and donated them to the Mt Etna Caves National Park.

The move will enhance the survival of the endangered ghost bat and is a far cry from the situation in the late '80s when QCL's limestone mining at Mt Etna threatened the habitats of the bats.

The situation led to blockades and legal action.

But yesterday the former adversaries focused on the area's future.

CQ Speleological Society



□ QCL Pacific Lime's Chris White and CQ Speleological Society president Peter Berrill made a historic move with the Environmental Protection Agency yesterday. Picture by PETER SAVILL. 0306/32

president Peter Berrill said he "never dreamed" of the reconciliation.

"We currently live in a business climate where companies have to be responsible

for their impact on the surrounding environment and communities," he said.

"This initiative demonstrates that companies can work with environmentally

conscious groups, like our own, to achieve a common end where no-one loses."

Pacific Lime company manager Chris White said the move signified an end to conflict between the company and community groups.

"While the company believed what they were doing (then) was right and legal, time has shown that further consultation with concerned groups may have alleviated years of confrontation."

The move was announced by State Environment Minister Rod Welford yesterday. He said the addition of 35ha of land, including Cammoo Caves, to the Mt Etna Caves National Park would have important benefits for both conservation and the community.

□ PAGE 6: Thumbs Up.

Angel or Ogre?

Kerry Hamilton

The Central Queensland Speleological Society has had something less than an angelic public image these past thirty years that isn't to say that we didn't have our support base obviously we did or this wonderful turn of events we celebrate today would not have occurred and the Mt. Etna Caves National Park would be a hole in the ground.

But this delightful outcome, this refreshing turn around was not brought about by some Dick Smithian magnanimous gesture or by a sweeping move by a people's government anxious to score a few votes; no this was done by you and I, yes, the "little people" that we hear less and less of in these days of big and bigger government.

Can you imagine how it felt to be able to visualise today's occasion thirty-two years ago and needing to stand patiently by watching priceless natural assets squandered while we waited for public opinion to change as we knew it would? It had been changing rapidly all around the world, people were realising that the "dig it up- chop it down" mentality was a short-sighted approach with dire consequences for their children.

And so we waited, and waited some more. And while all this waiting was going on we pulled out our hair, we squabbled among ourselves, we fought vicious battles in "Letters to Editors", around the country, we hauled various "issues" before the courts even to the Holiest of Holies we went, the High court of Australia. And it hurt, a lot. But what hurt most of all was the alienation, the being set apart from friends, from employers, from promotion and from family in many cases.

Being cursed with foresight had costs that our merry band of young bucks (and fawns) could not foresee. Yes, we had sage old elders too and it seems in hindsight, that they were well aware of what those costs might be, but simply knew there were no free lunches. For their patience, with us and advice to us, we are forever grateful.

Speaking of such things, lets go right back now, to a time when rank commercialism was under control, a time when folk gave more than lip service to their beliefs, to when the Olsen family were proudly showing off their caves to townspeople, who'd travel by buggy the bumpy two hours from Rockhampton. Yes, it seems that in the 1800's there was a greater appreciation of the wonders of nature. Else, why would our great grandparents have sought the highest protection then available to place Mt Etna and its caves under the Recreation reserve that secured the mountain until the granting of leases to mine in 1962?

"There is a tide in the affairs of men", seems to have been a truth evident even in Shakespeare's time, now we too have seen a most providential turning to the point where we see the two protagonists in the "Mt Etna Issue" coming together in a spirit of reconciliation and understanding. No society remains static in its perceptions; we all come to see that some of our treasured beliefs don't stand up to continued scrutiny. We have in this hand-over today, proof that slow social change, though painful in the getting, is inevitable and unstoppable. Truth has won the day and healed the soul.

The following is an Extract from the QCL's 1999 Environmental Report



PETER President, Australian Speleological Federation and resident of Mt Etna's neighbouring suburb, The Caves

When QCL approached our group and the local community some 18 months ago for reconciliation on the issue of the Mt Etna Caves, it took me by surprise. Thirty years, passionately protecting the bats to conserve their habitat has meant thirty years at loggerheads with mine management. But, we now agree. The past is the past and to preserve the integrity of the caves and the existing bat population, we need to look to the future and the rehabilitation of the area. That means, I need to trust in the honesty of the people involved, like the mine manager. I feel I can now do that, something I had never experienced before from the company. Negotiations have been open, frank and directed towards the future.

Personally, it is a great relief now to be working together and put the funds provided by Central Queensland Speleological Society from the Mt Etna Campaign legal action, and the contribution from QCL to a good cause. I appreciate QCL's commitment to the rehabilitation of the limestone quarry with the vision and passion of the staff and the community working together as a team. QCL has been diligent in involving all parties. Though I am mindful of the three decades of damage to the bats and the caves and how the environment has suffered. Now it's time for the company to finish up its operations and vacate Mt Etna. The irony is that the Mt Etna Caves National Park is a direct result of the campaign. The first stage of the National Park was by way of a part purchase by CQSS and now the final stage is a direct result of financial contributions from both CQSS and QCL. QCL's attitude to the environment and towards the community has changed. All of us have to be responsible for sustainability.

I've nothing against QCL as a manufacturer and I acknowledge that raw materials are necessary to provide the products to build our homes, schools and roads but we need to be consciously aware that a balance needs to be maintained.

The 1998 Environment Report acknowledged some of the more unfortunate environmental legacies of our past – including the Mt Etna dispute. But the process of acknowledgment and of putting ones' past behind will only be accepted if all efforts have been made to address outstanding concerns. From a restoration perspective, therefore, it is important to report that rehabilitation of the Mt Etna site is continuing with significant effort being put into native tree planting by local experts and additional rehabilitation blasting – undertaken in consultation with the local speleological society members – which creates a more natural rock-slope appearance.

The 1998 report also indicated that monies ordered by the Court to cover QCL subsidiary Central Queensland Cement's (CQC's) cost in defending an action commenced at the time of the Mt Etna dispute by the Central Queensland Speleological Society (CQSS), were still being held in trust despite CQC's rights to recover the monies. In an agreement between CQSS and CQC, these monies, along with additional funds from QCL group company, Pacific Lime, and additional State and Commonwealth funding, have allowed the State to purchase Cammoo Caves, effectively increasing the size of Mt Etna National Park by ten percent.

The Park, which includes a series of limestone caves that host public caving tours, currently closes for several months each year during the bats' breeding season. As a result of the land acquisition, Cammoo Caves will be incorporated into the Mt Etna National Park, forming a gateway to the Park providing additional visitor resources and reducing visitor pressure in more sensitive areas such as Johannsens Cave – a vital maternity cave for the Ghost Bat.

RECORDS OF THE MT ETNA CAMPAIGN

Peter Berrill

In his article in this edition Lex Brown makes reference to the unknown whereabouts of the meticulous records of the UQSS

Don't despair, Lex because CQSS hold all of the records of UQSS.

I think it was early in the 1990's when we were approached by a past UQSS member (I can't recall who it was, but it may have been Ken Grimes just prior to his move to Victoria) inquiring if we would accept the UQSS records. They were mailed to Rockhampton and were stored in my workshop. Upon arrival we only briefly inspected them and some months later I noticed that they were gathering dust and were being invaded by vermin that frequents upholstery workshops.

CQSS decided to closely inspect them and we were amazed at what was contained in those boxes.

Lex was right, *Meticulous files of every letter sent and received, of every press clipping and of every interview, of every ministerial statement and every consultancy*, but he was wrong in his "at least a half metre of documentation", statement because there was more, in fact there was at least three or four removalist type boxes full of UQSS records. There were also reels of film of news items and others issues relating to Mt Etna, numerous photographs, a map cupboard containing not only maps on Queensland caves but of other areas in Australia that they had visited and much documentation on many areas.

Realising the historical importance of the records it was decided that they had to be stored properly.

The University of Central Queensland has in their Library a section called "The CQ Collection" which is an archival repository for the Central Queensland area. They were approached and agreed to accept the records. They have catalogued the records and returned any material

that was of no consequence to the Mt Etna campaign. This material is now housed with ASF library.

Because of the importance of the records to Australia's environmental history CQSS have them stored under strict contractual arrangements with the University. They are under lock and key and can only be accessed by CQSS executive members following a certain process.

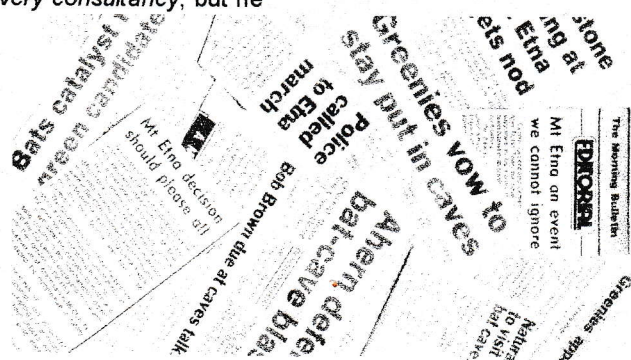
The future of the records:

Still to come are the records of the legal action held with CQSS solicitor Stephen Comino in Brisbane.

I have discussed with Stephen their future and of how CQSS are going to store them. Stephen is also keen that they are stored appropriately and that for the time being access is restricted.

The problem we are going to have is with storage of the enormous volume yet to come from Cominos'.

We have been informed by the University that they may not have space available.



CQSS and others within ASF have discussed the future of the Mt Etna records and consider the following to be most appropriate. Once we have the legal records from the solicitor it is appropriate that they are restricted access.

Their historical value is without a doubt. The Mt Etna Campaign is now an

important part of Australia's conservation and legal environmental history.

This history has to be recorded factually and properly and CQSS are going to see that happens.

Our idea is that we hope to tie the records in with the ASF's Environmental Trust Fund, (when ASF receives registration) with some kind of research sub fund. Until then CQSS will control access and see that the records are safe.



MT ETNA RECONCILIATION SPEECH

Peter Berrill

This speech was presented at the Reconciliation Ceremony, 27 November 1999, as the finale to the Mt Etna Campaign

As President of the Central Queensland Speleological Society I thank you all for coming to this very special event, and it is a special event because today CQSS, QCL and Pacific Lime, reconcile the Mt Etna Campaign. Today we officially lay to rest Australia's longest running conservation campaign and in order to do this there are some things which, just have to be said. They have to be said because this is the only way that the 'die hard' supporters will be able to 'leave it alone'. So I ask you all to bear with me for the last minutes of the campaign.

Considering the bitterness of the past, two years ago, if someone would have suggested that we would be here today we would have dismissed them as being crazy.

For the past 37 years the two groups have opposed each other over the use of the caves of Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge.

One wanting to mine them and the other wanting to preserve them. The campaign has been costly for both sides and neither side has claimed victory. The caves and the surrounding environment have suffered considerably. The campaign has been dormant since 1989 and recently the management of QCL has had a change of attitude toward their environmental responsibilities.

So here we are, bitter enemies of the past, socialising and meeting for a common cause. CQSS and Pacific Lime are to be members of a committee to advise on Mt Etna Caves National Park.

I really do have to pinch myself to see if this is happening and ask how in hell did we end up here.

There is only one thing in this world that is certain and that is change.

The die hard members of CQSS knew if they stayed to the end, then in today's changing environmental world that some good must come. For them the end was when the statue of limitations took effect in relation to the monies held in security as a result of the legal action.

When first approached about reconciliation we were very suspicious but we had an obligation to listen. After 37 years of destroying caves, they say that they have had a change in attitude and now want to make up for the past.

We had received a Solicitor's letter outlining a proposal but when Noel Sands and myself attended that first meeting, we really didn't know what to expect. So we attended with our usual stubborn attitude.



The long and short of it has been the purchase of Cammoo Caves for inclusion in Mt Etna Caves National Park to further enhance the survival of the vulnerable Ghost Bat. The inclusion of Cammoo will also provide for a number of advantages in relation to the park management.

This was achieved by a three-way funding package. Pacific Lime would release the monies held in security, returning an amount to a particular donor, and then rounding out the amount to \$100,000. CQSS received a \$100,000 grant from Environment Australia and the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, also contributed \$100,000.

The agreement not only included Cammoo caves but a parcel of land opposite Mt Etna, a commitment to rehabilitation and discussions regarding a number of other issues.

In addition all outstanding legal action, writs and costs against CQSS and its supporters have been dropped. We are convinced of and accept their change in attitude and are happy to be a part of it.

The above is a rosy ending to a long and bitter dispute. However, like the dispute the reconciliation path was also long and difficult. It has taken sixteen months of negotiation between many parties.

As it is in all of life, personalities play a major roll. Personalities were responsible for some of the bitterness and the wanton destruction during the campaign. However, they have also been responsible for the amicable reconciliation.

From my perspective it has been the personality of Company Manager, Chris White, that has had a major bearing on the outcome. From our first meeting I sensed that he and consequently the company were sincere. This was a little hard to deal with at first considering the past and the fact that the talks were being held in strict confidence and I could at the early stage only involve one other CQSS member. A question was always in the back of my mind, 'what if we were being conned?'

Chris White



During the 16 months of reconciliation, I have come to know and trust Chris in relation to all of our discussions. I have been wary and there have been times when I was really fearful but my trust in Chris is now proven.

I am unaware of his job description in relation to the reconciliation but he is a big part of the reason why we are here today and I congratulate him for that.

QCL's change in attitude towards the environment has come as a big surprise. But, really it shouldn't be because this is what we, the caving movement and the conservation movement in general, have been campaigning for, for the past thirty years.

Reconciliation Speech

We have been trying to get mining companies to be aware of the importance of the environment and of their responsibilities towards it when mining.

QCL's change in attitude is very welcome and as I said previously, we are pleased to be a part of it. We believe that they are now leading the way in environmental responsibilities and can only hope that other companies will follow.

The 37 year campaign has had many twists and turns and ups and downs. When you look at Mt Etna it is obvious from the scars that there has been much destruction. Caves have been lost and the fauna and flora in general has suffered.

But looking on the positive side there have been many gains over the years. The campaign has enabled us to highlight the importance of caves and karst and the National Park is a direct result of the mining.

If there had not been an issue here then maybe we would not have what we have today. The legal action has set precedence, which has resulted in a number of positive outcomes in other karst areas of Australia.

The campaign has shown that the caving movement under the banner of the Australian Speleological Federation is serious about protecting the caves and karst of Australia and are a force to be reckoned with.

Over the years there have been many supporters from all areas of the community. Hundreds, maybe thousands of individuals and groups all doing what they could for the cause. Every major conservation organisation in Australia, has at some time been involved.

The first to lodge objections to the granting of mining leases were a local group known as the Capricorn Field Naturalist Society and the University of Queensland Speleological Society. Many of these groups no longer exist and some of the individuals have passed on.

However, minuscule their contribution may have seemed at the time it laid the foundation for this day. We cannot thank them all individually but between us we know who they are and we do thank them sincerely.

Over the years there have been some supporters that have been there from almost the beginning and some of them are here today. There are a few supporters who because of their outstanding

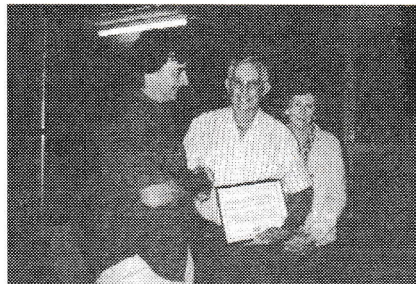
contributions do rate a special mention.

At the top of the old faithfuls list are Norm and Doreen Pershouse. Norm and Doreen were there from the beginning to welcome the first cavers as they still welcome us today. They own a small property that adjoins the mining leases and they have always allowed us to access Mt Etna for caving through their property. During the blockade this access was invaluable. Unfortunately for them, their support for us came at a price.

They were on the receiving end of some of those bitter personalities and were even alienated by friends and the local community. I can give many examples of outrageous persecution that they have been subject to over the years but that's not why we are here.

Needless to say Norm and Doreen never once even considered withdrawing their support. We are indebted to them for their efforts. They have received Honorary Life Membership of CQSS and an Award of Distinction from the Australian Speleological Federation. Small reward for such an outstanding effort.

Norm and Doreen on behalf of all supporters, I again thank you.



In 1971, John Toop joined the University of Queensland Speleological Society and became involved in the Mt Etna dispute.

In 1975, he received a National Government grant to study the Ghost Bat at Mt Etna and moved to Rockhampton, where he was employed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. He also became a member of CQSS.

As a result of the research, he had documented all the scientific information on the caves and bats of Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge.

During the Blockade and the preparation for legal action this information was seen to be vital. Unfortunately, the document belonged to the Department of Environment and he was ordered by

the Minister to hand all information over to him. Being an employee of National Parks and a member of CQSS, he was caught between 'the devil and the deep blue sea'. He was damned if did and damned if he didn't. He returned that document to the Minister however, on the way back a copy fell off the back of the truck!

There has been no greater supporter of the campaign or of CQSS than John. Over the years, he has been under enormous pressure. He was ordered to resign from CQSS and to disassociate himself with its members. There were even times when some members of CQSS doubted his alliance. In the face of Ministerial reprimands and the threat of a disciplinary transfer, his support has been unwavering.

He has always placed the conservation of the caves of Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge ahead of his career. Today, still in the presence of controversy, he has supported us in the reconciliation.

In January of this year, he received an Award in the form of a Certificate of Merit from the Australian Speleological Federation for his contributions.

John, the members of CQSS, greatly admire and respect you and humbly say 'thanks mate.'



During the legal action, CQSS had lodged \$30,000 with the Courts as ordered for security of costs. This money had been given to CQSS by generous groups and individuals and we had a responsibility to them to see that this money was not lost.

During that dormant period after 1989 our supporters dissipated and membership of CQSS dropped alarmingly. Because of the money still held in security we had to keep CQSS alive. Three members dedicated themselves to this task.

They did whatever they had to, to keep a high profile and they have completed the task admirably. As President of CQSS, I pay special tribute to two very special Speleo's, Noel Sands and Clive Kavanagh.

Fellas, this day has been long coming but we have made it.



Noel, Peter and Clive

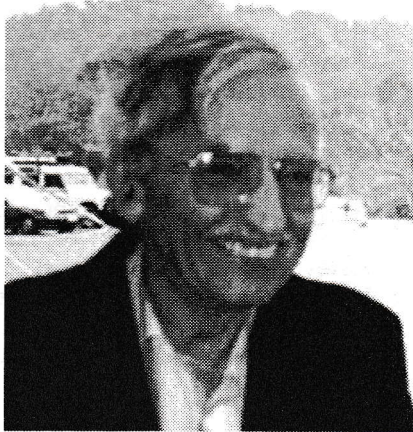
Finally, I would like to thank our Solicitor Stephen Comino, who is also here today. He was thrown into this dispute when he agreed to act on our behalf in 1989. Like all of the dispute, the legal action was also nasty and he and his business were subject to that bitter personality. He was ridiculed and defamed. But, like all of our supporters, he was true.

Legal action was discontinued in June 1989, and during the ten years since then I have contacted him regularly to consider the monies held in security.

Throughout our association, he has always been respectful, honest, open and considerate. At no time was he ever to busy to talk to me.

I think Mt Etna became a part of him as it has to many. I have been conversing with him for the past ten years, but today is the first time that I have met him personally.

Stephen it has been a pleasure, your a wonderful person and a great environmentalist, thank you.



Stephen Comino

I don't think that there will be or there has been a conservation campaign as long or hard as this. Over the 37 years, we have exploited every avenue of protest. The Legal Action even went as far as the High Court of Australia.

The financial cost for both sides has been astronomical and for many it has come at a price.

It has been responsible for the building and the destruction of friendships, families, marriages, businesses and careers. Now, with a strange twist of fate, we have finally had enough and come together.

What has happened is now an important part of Australia's environmental history. What we have achieved here today, is the way forward, especially for the environment. Attitudes have now changed and will continue to change.

The campaign has played an important role in those changing attitudes especially towards caves and bats.

Mt Etna has been a lesson in how a conservation conflict should not be settled.

In the beginning there has to be more talk and a greater understanding of the delicate nature of our environment in general. If this planet is to survive, we have to protect our biodiversity and be sustainable in all that we do.

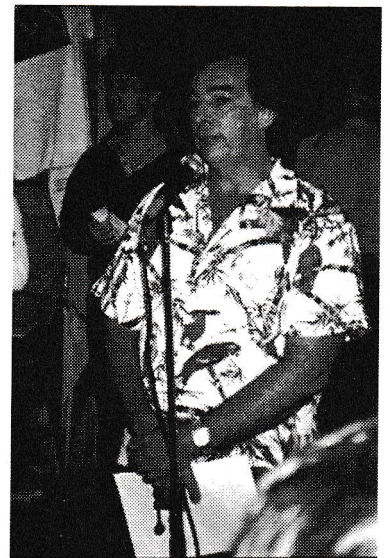
Now it's time to officially close the Mt Etna Campaign.

There have been many, many, many supporters, but without a doubt it has been the caving movement of Australia and especially CQSS that has always carried this issue forward.

For that reason, I believe, it is only appropriate, for myself as President of the Central Queensland Speleological Society and as President of the Australian Speleological Federation to make the final comment of the campaign

And people that comment is:

THE END



Acknowledgement to the local Newspaper, The Morning Bulletin for the Newspaper Clipping and Cartoons.



This Edition would not have been possible without Debbie Roberts.

Overview of Central Queensland Speleological Society's involvement in Mt Etna Caves National Park

The Central Queensland Speleological Society (CQSS) was established in 1967 for reasons of sport caving. CQSS was closely aligned with its sister organisation in Brisbane the University of Queensland Speleological Society (UQSS). UQSS and a local Conservation organisation were the first to lodge objections to the granting of mining leases at Mt Etna.

UQSS represented the caving movement in the campaign. However in the early 1970's it's membership was declining and it became clear that CQSS would have to take over the roll of spear heading the Mt Etna campaign.

This it did for the next thirty or so years.

Central Queensland Cement (CQC) held leases covering both Mt Etna and Limestone Ridge. The only form of protection that would prevent mining was National Park status. CQSS's agenda was to stop the mining and have the area declared a National Park. The first obstacle was to get CQC to surrender their leases over Limestone Ridge. This was achieved in two ways. Firstly by locating and recording as many caves as possible. Caves are a scarce resource in Queensland and they are important not only for their recreation value but, for habitat sites for a number of bat species.

Many caves were soon mapped and recorded and a book was printed called Mt Etna Caves. This was printed by UQSS. The University of Queensland Speleological Society (UQSS) had encouraged the establishment of CQSS so that it could carry on the campaign in the face a dwindling UQSS membership. The book contained information on the caves and documentation on all relevant information on the fauna and flora of the area following scientific research.

Adjacent to Limestone Ridge there is a parcel of land known as the 80 acres which is entirely covered by a rare vegetation type. It was recognised that the land was invaluable for inclusion in a future National Park. An approach was made to the landowner with the view of purchase. CQSS and UQSS struck a deal with the landowner to purchase the 80 acres and then donate it to the Queensland Government so that it could be included in a future National Park covering Limestone Ridge. The purchase was made and with the information contained within the Mt Etna Caves book. CQSS & UQSS were successful in lobbying the Government to pressure CQC to surrender their leases over Limestone Ridge. In 1976 the first stage of the National Park was gazetted covering the 80 acres and Limestone Ridge.

The conservation campaign continued with CQSS pursuing every avenue available to stop the mining of Mt. Etna's caves. In 1974 CQC had ceased work on the Eastern quarry because of the danger of mining cavernous limestone and commenced work on the western quarry. 1987 saw the campaign entering it's 20th year and still the mining continued. CQSS decided to bring the issue to a head and launched the Direct Action campaign. As a consequence of this a Special Purposes Reserve was declared over the area of Mt Etna containing the majority of the cave systems. However, this Reserve was administered by the Mines Department, and they could continue to mine the area.

The next phase of the campaign was Legal Action. This culminated in CQSS abandoning the legal action because of mounting costs that they were unable to meet.

By this time however, the campaign had achieved it's objective in generating enormous publicity in regards to the mining and destruction of caves and the associated fauna and flora. This pressured CQC into restructuring it's mining plan and surrendering

it's leases over the greater portion of Mt Etna which contained the majority of the cave systems. The National Park was then extended to take in this area of Mt Etna.

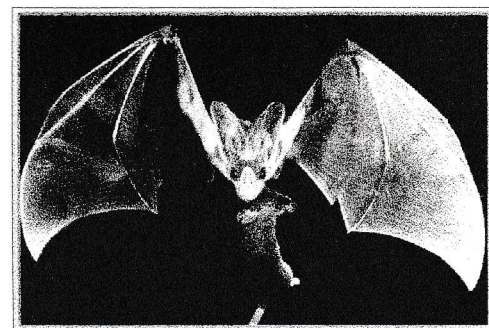
The reconciliation process of recent months has seen the purchase of Cammoo Caves by three parties namely Pacific Lime, CQSS by way of a National Heritage Trust (NHT) Reserve Systems grant of \$ 100,000, and the Qld Environmental Protection Agency.

Cammoo Caves has been included in the National Park to further enhance the survival of the vulnerable Ghost Bat.

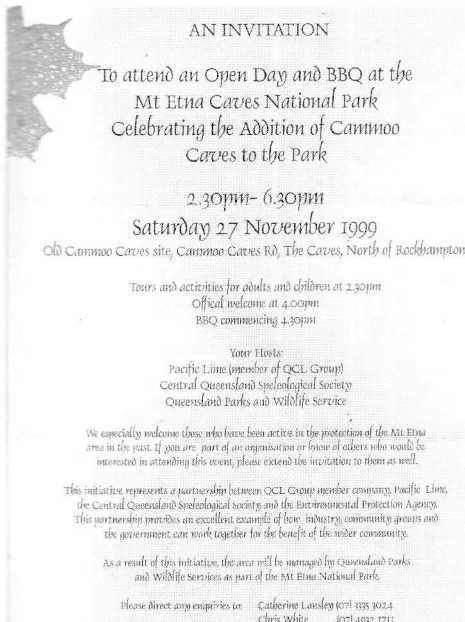
Because CQSS was instrumental in obtaining the grant, they are to be included in a committee to assist National Parks in the management of the Park.

Mt Etna Caves National Park is a direct result of the campaign and of the continual long-term efforts of UQSS and CQSS. In the beginning CQSS were a party to the first stage of the National Park by way of a part purchase and today thirty years on, the final stage of the National Park is also a direct result of a financial contribution by CQSS.

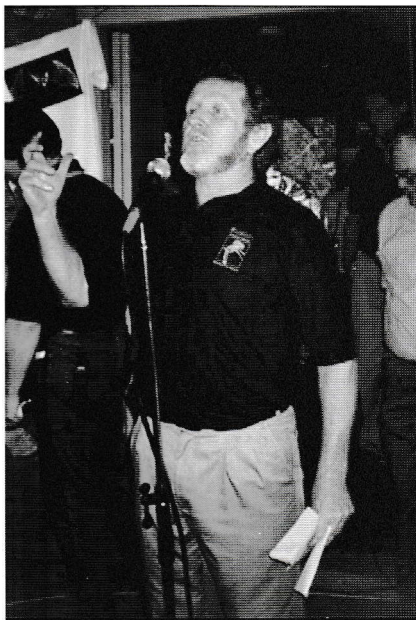
Peter Berrill
President CQSS



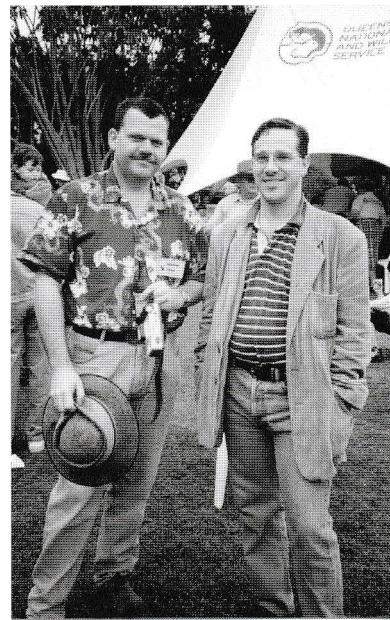
Ghost Bat



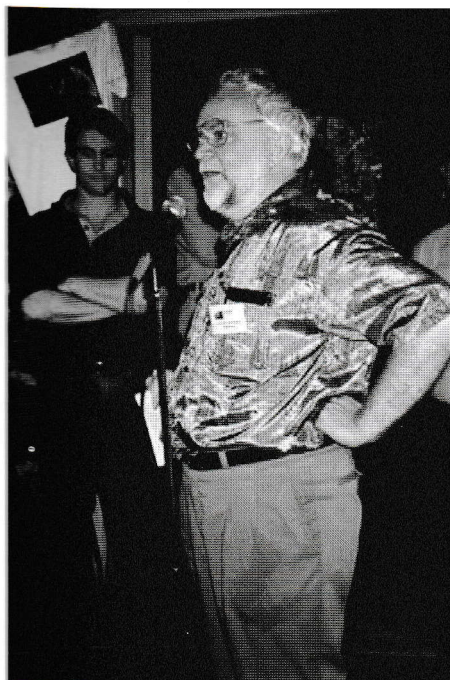
Invitation to the Reconciliation Celebration



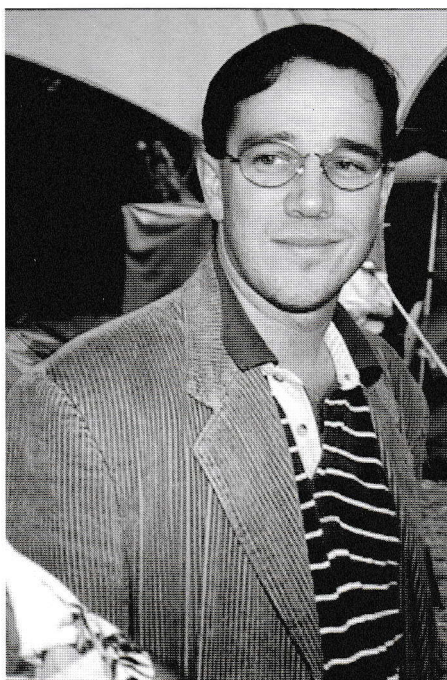
John McCabe



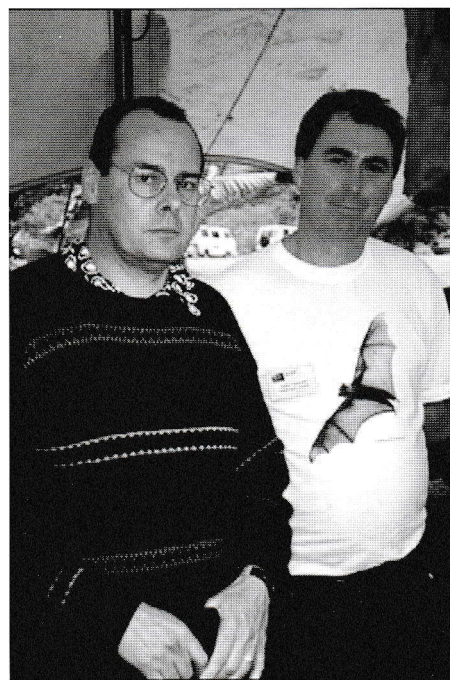
Andrew Robson & Patrick Larkin



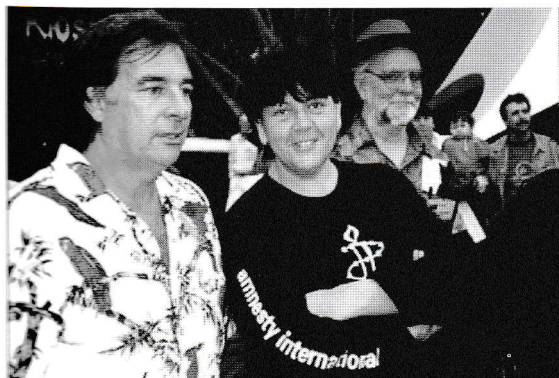
John Dunkley



Patrick Larkin



Stephen Keim & Keir Vaughan-Taylor



Peter Berrill, Nori Hardy & John Dunkley



(Right) Representatives from The Caves State School



Mt Etna Caves National Park SHOW CAVES TEMPORARILY CLOSED

As the result of a joint venture between Pacific Lime, Central Queensland Speleological Society, Environment Australia and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services.

Cammoo Caves has been purchased and included in Mt Etna Caves National Park.

The Cammoo Caves tourist operation has been closed, and park management is being reviewed. The review includes recreational use of Chandelier Cave and Flogged Horse Cave.

For this reason, these show caves have been closed temporarily while their future use is determined. While they are closed the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is rehabilitating the caves and improving safety.

