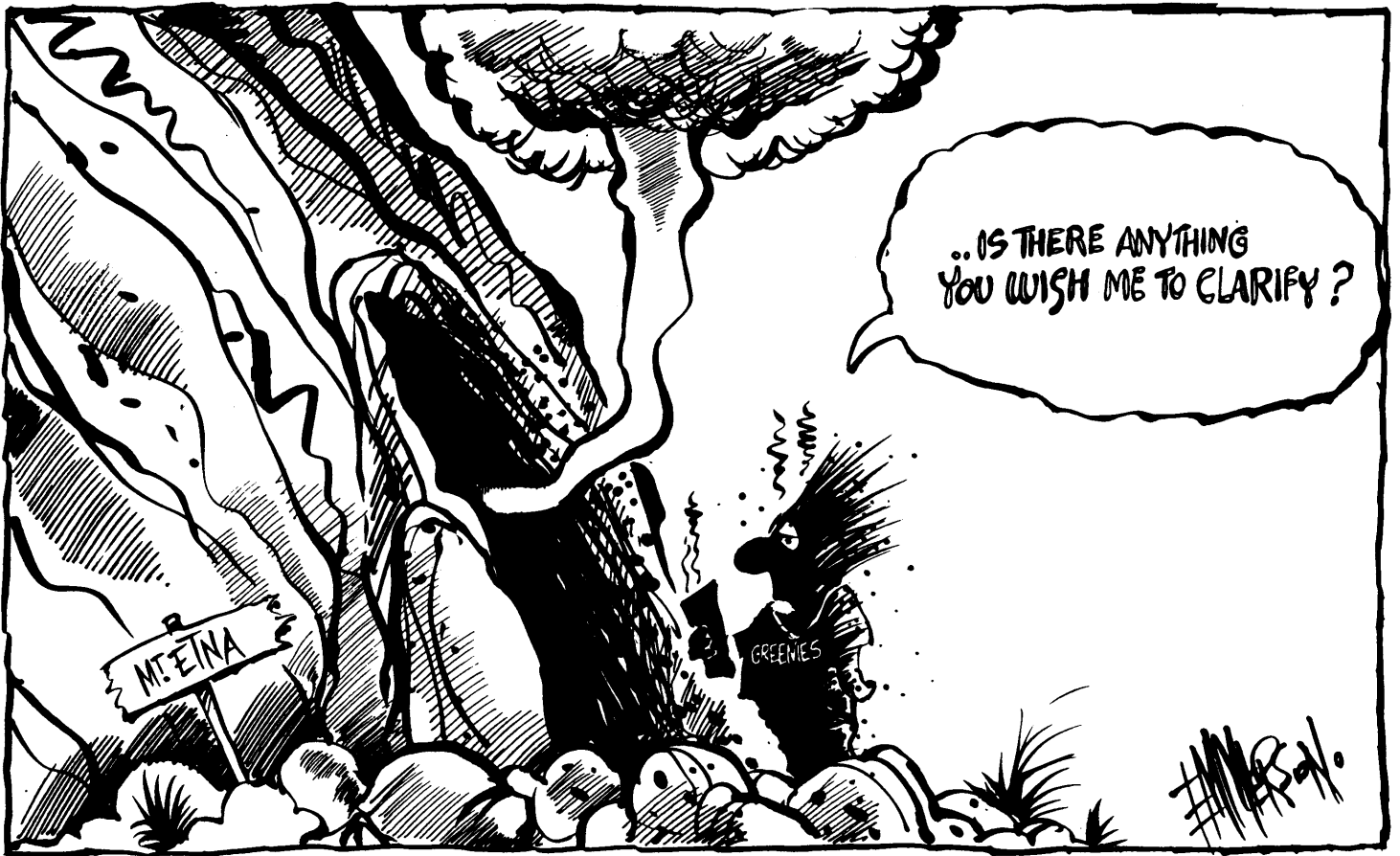


AUSTRALIAN CAVER

THE AUSTRALIAN
SPELEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

No.119

1989



AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION Inc.

MEMBER SOCIETIES & ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

MEMBER SOCIETIES:

ACT

Canberra Speleological Society Inc.	18 Arabana St. Aranda	2614
Capital Territory Caving Group	P.O.Box 638 Woden	2606
National University Caving Group	C/-Sports Union A.N.U.	2600

NSW

Baptist Caving Association	90 Parkes St. Helensburg	2508
Blue Mountains Speleo Club	P.O.Box 37 Glenbrook	2773
Endeavour Caving & Recreational Club	P.O.Box 63 Miranda	2228
Highland Caving Group	P.O.Box 154 Liverpool	2170
Hills Speleology Club Ltd.	P.O.Box 750 Castle Hill	2154
Illawarra Speleological Society	P.O.Box 94 Unanderra	2526
Kempsey Speleological Society	27 River St. Kempsey	2440
Macquarie University Caving Group	C/-Sports Assoc. Macq. Uni	2109
Metropolitan Speleological Society	P.O.Box 2376 Nth. Parramatta	2151
Newcastle & Hunter Valley Speleological Society	P.O.Box 15 Broadmeadow	2292
N.S.W. Inst. of Technology Speleological Society	c/- The Union P.O.Box 123 Broadway	2007
Orange Speleological Society	P.O.Box 752 Orange	2800
RAN Caving Association	c/- 30 Douglas Ave Nth Epping	2121
Sydney University Speleological Society	Box 35 The Union Sydney University	2006
Uni Of NSW Speleological Society	Box 17 The Union Uni of NSW Kensington	2033

QUEENSLAND:

Central Queensland Speleological Society	P.O.Box 538 Rockhampton	4700
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SOUTH AUSTRALIA:

Cave Exploration Group South Australia Inc.	P.O.Box 144 Rundle Mall Adelaide	5001
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TASMANIA:

Northern Caverneers	P.O.Box 315 Launceston	7009
Southern Caving Society	P.O.Box 416 Sandy Bay	7005

VICTORIA:

Victorian Speleological Association Inc.	G.P.O.Box 5425, cc Melbourne	3001
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WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

Speleological Research Group Western Australia	P.O.Box 120 Nedlands	6009
Western Australia Speleological Group	P.O.Box. 67 Nedlands	6009

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS:

Central West Caving Group	P.O.Box 1338 Orange	2800
Avondale Speleological Society	c/- 20 Avondale Rd Corranbong	2265
Campbelltown Caving & Outdoor Group	P.O.Box 281 Campbelltown	2560
Chillagoe Caving Club	P.O.Box 92 Cairns	4870
Cave Rescue Squad of NSW	P.O.Box 122 Bankstown	2200
Nth Queensland Speleological Association	1 Boden Edge-Hill	4870
PNG Cave Exploration Group	c/-G. Francis P.O.Box 1824 Port Moresby	
Scout Caving Group (Sth. Aust)	c/-44 Fullarton Rd Norwood	5067
Sydney Speleological Society	P.O.Box 198 Broadway	2007
Tasmanian Cave & Karst Research Group	P.O.Box 338 Sandy Bay	7005
Rover Speleological Society of NSW	12 Cobar Pl. Cartwright	2168
Scout Assoc. of Aust. (NSW Branch)	"The Bunyan" 5 Rodgers Ave. Haberfield	2045
Snowy Mountains Speleological Society	c/-Mobil Service Stn. Snowy Mtns Hwy. Adaminaby	2630
Flinders Uni. Speleological Society	c/-Flinders Uni. Bedford Park	5042
Warrimoo Christian Caving Assoc	c/-13 The Mall Warrimoo	2774

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EDITORIAL

As you may have noticed the 'Australian Caver' has changed slightly in its format. This is as a result of the budgetary restraints decided on at the 33rd A.S.F.Inc. council meeting held at Tropicon during Jan. 1989 (\$3000.00 to produce 4 issues).

You the reader can assist in various ways:

- (1)first & foremost write articles or send reports of things you or your club have been up to.
- (2)ensure your club secretary sends an updated address list to me each year.
- (3)ensure your club pays all capitation fees on time. (See page 12 in this issue for current fees).

Finally a small personal comment for you to think about. The 'Australian Caver' is not a scientific journal but rather a way for cavers to communicate ideas & news from one side of this vast country to the other. However it can only be as successful as you the reader make it. To attempt to achieve this during the ensuing year the 'Newsletter Commission' will be approaching various people in all states to edit an issue of 'Australian Caver'. If you are interested in assisting in this idea please contact me.

Ian Mann
Convenor Newsletter Commission.

DEADLINES FOR FUTURE ISSUES:

No. 120 : end May 1989

No. 121 : end August 1989

All articles, reports, tests, photos and reviews are welcome for publication and should be sent to Ian Mann, 28 Stephen Street, LAWSON NSW 2783.
(phone 047 59 1890)

The opinions expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of A.S.F. Inc. or the Newsletter Commission.

33rd ASF COUNCIL MEETING - December 1988

All but two Member clubs were represented at the ASF Council meeting at Lake Tinaroo in FNQ. About half of our Associate clubs were represented.

The meeting, spanning two days (27 & 31 December), straddled the papers, seminars and general carry-on of the 'Tropicon' Conference. Only complaint I've heard: a few workshops etc. are needed to balance the papers sessions. A well-run conference, with particular thanks to Chris and Jan Parr, and other members of Chillagoe Caving Club.

We must be getting somewhere: in recent years more of our 20 odd officers are presenting pre-written reports. Reports aside, two of the main themes for the meeting were a need to review ASF structure, and conservation. Mt Etna featured large in the conservation department - but more on that later.

Co-convenorships seem to be the flavour of the month: Cave Safety, Conservation and Structure & Organisation all now feature expanded convenorships.

Following the resignation of Terry O'Leary, Ann McLaren and Ian Lutherborrow were appointed co-convenors of the Cave Safety Commission. Ann's 'Safety Guidelines' were adopted by HCG (their own club) in 1988. Since 'Tropicon' they have been circulated to all clubs for comment.

Reflecting its bigger workload the Conservation Commission has been expanded to four co-convenors. Arthur Clarke (Hobart) and Craig Hardy (Rockhampton) join Pat Larkin (Sydney) and Rauleigh Webb (Perth). This will lend more weight to conservation work by Craig (Mt Etna) and Arthur (Mole Creek and Exit Cave). However, co-convenors are not restricted to any particular area or state.

On the computer front: While the Documentation Commission's work continues, the Geodesy Karst project has been put back a year. The Microcomputer ad hoc Committee was terminated: ASF is just not in a position to purchase a PC. Newsletter editing and the ASF address list will remain on private computers! Ken Grimes' offer to disband the Survey & Mapping Commission was not taken up. Aside from Peter Matthews' 'downloading to micro' of the Karst Database, Ken's is the only major area of microcomputer use.

The Cave Tourism & Management Commission, which effectively spawned the ACMA, has been renamed Cave & Karst Management. John Dunkley was confirmed as convenor. Elery Hamilton-Smith is now fully involved with the 'spin-off' Australasian Cave Management Association (ACMA) with whom the Federation is to take out reciprocal affiliation. Following Jenolan, no consultancies are expected for the time-being, so it was possible to transfer \$1200 from the Commission's account to the Mt Etna campaign funds.

Three major matters helped to accelerate the much needed review of ASF's structure and organisation: the Jenolan controversy, the formation of the Tasmanian Speleological Federation, and the relationship between Capitation Fees and the escalating cost of 'Australian Caver'.

Controversy over the way various ASF officers contributed to the Jenolan Caves Reserve Draft Plan of Management process lead to proposals for tightening up of the functioning of the Executive and delegating more authority to it between Council meetings. (One question the competence of the ASF Council when only four out of some 20 odd representatives turned up to the meeting with the Minutes of last January's meeting!)

We were advised of the formation of the Tasmanian Speleological Federation. TCC advised its resignation from ASF, and SCS foreshadowed theirs early in 1989. Both clubs are now unfinancial, see mainland matters and arguments as of little relevance to themselves, and as small clubs they find Capitation Fees a burden.

This last complaint has also been expressed in other quarters. In response, it was decided to slash by half the budget for 'Australian Caver'. This is to be achieved by cutting production costs and some quality, but upping content. The present high cost and admittedly mundane contents of 'Australian Caver'

are not seen as value for money.

This cost saving, of up to \$3000 in 1989, will allow a discount of \$6 for Capitation Fees paid before 30 June; the same deal is foreshadowed for 1990. The massive cut in fees is hoped to woo back some of our 'defectors' and also those clubs who've previously complained the Capitation Fee was prohibitively high.

A further incentive here is the shift into high gear of the review by the Structure & Organisation ad hoc Committee, now co-convened by Derek Hobbs and Lloyd Mill. The matter of TCC and SCS defection and the formation of a low budget Tasmanian Speleo Federation is one of the first matters to be pursued by this committee.

To balance these losses two new clubs were accepted as 'participating' Associates: OTC Caving & Canyoning Club (OTCCC), and University of New England Mountaineering Club (UNEMC). Also, Individual Membership is to be more vigorously promoted: all you non-members can write to the ASF Secretary now! Members of ASF Associate clubs should note that they are not ASF members - send \$10.50 and your application to: PO Box 388, Broadway, NSW 2007. Both Individual Membership and the Capitation Fee is \$5.50 cheaper in 1989!!!

All clubs were requested to supply an up-to-date, dated copy of their Constitution to the ASF Secretary forthwith.

An appeal by geologist Anne Atkinson lead to a strongly-worded resolution re conservation of Bayliss Cave in the Undara Lava Field some 250km SW of Cairns. Bayliss is considered one of the richest biospeleological sites in Australia, and even on a world scale.

Central Queensland Speleo Society (CQSS) tabled a report on their efforts to save Mt Etna. The 'fight' took a new turn in early November when the company, Central Queensland Cement (CQC), attempted to destroy Speaking Tube - an important over-wintering site for the endangered Ghost Bat (world pop. about 3000). The entrance area was blasted and hundreds of tonnes of crushed limestone poured in. It would be possible to 'rehabilitate/resurrect' the cave and it is hoped to pursue this in 1989. Many participants at Tropicon called in at Rockhampton on their way home.

Chris Dunne - ASF Secretary

ON BELAY

By now most of you should have been (or been told about) a letter sent to all clubs from the Safety Commission inviting input to a proposed revision of the ASF Safety Guidelines.

For those members not affiliated with a club (and those who are "mushroomed" by their Executive), at the recent Tropicon Conference Ian Lutherborrow and myself (both Highland Caving Group officers) were appointed as Co-convenors of the Safety Commission following Terry O'Leary's resignation.

Our first (and most important) job will be the revision of the Guidelines. Another project this year will be the commencement of a regular feature in 'Australian Caver' regarding safety issues. It is intended that this will be a type of 'forum' for cavers to express their views on anything to do with safety, new techniques, inventions, reports of accidents, debate, etc. It was very apparent from 'AC No. 118' that you DO have a voice and you ARE interested, so here's your chance! Please drop me a line whenever you have something to say along these lines. Write to me personally at PO Box 549, Ingleburn, 2565, and I'll edit and maybe attach a few comments.

If nobody writes in, then we'll dig up interesting articles or cajole interesting people to write interesting articles - all safety-related, of course!

And by the way, the name of the column will be - what else? - "On Belay" !!

Ann McLaren-Co-Convenor, ASF Safety Commission

A. S. F. AWARDS

During the Caver's Dinner on the night of 30 December 1988 at the Tropicon biennial conference the following A.S.F. Inc. awards were announced.

Edie Smith Award

DR. JULIA M. JAMES

For distinguished contribution to the standing of Australian speleology, within Australia and overseas, in both the sporting and scientific fields. Among numerous achievements, the recipient was one of the pioneers of vertical caving and cave chemistry, has led major caving expeditions to New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Mexico and Australia, has produced a succession of first-class publications and has inspired numerous fellow cavers and colleagues.

Certificate of Merit

GRAHAM PILKINGTON

For leadership, documentation and surveying of caves in South Australia and the Nullarbor and for services to the Cave Exploration Group South Australia Inc.

MEMBERS of CENTRAL QUEENSLAND SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC.

For sustained and dedicated contribution to the exploration, documentation and particularly conservation of caves at Mount Etna with great personal sacrifice of some individual members.

PAUL ANTHONY WILSON

For dedicated inspiration and leadership eventuating in the formation of the Chillagoe Caving Club and for initiating a systematic set of records of caves in the Chillagoe area.

MILES CLIFFORD PIERCE

For sustained and dedicated service to exploration, surveying and documentation of caves in Victoria and for numerous administration positions within the Victorian Speleological Association Inc. and the Australian Speleological Federation Inc.

Now is the time to start thinking about who to nominate for any of the three ASF Inc. awards for the XVIII biennial conference to be held in Western Australia in a little under two years time.

L. Robinson
Convenor Awards Commission.

NOTICES AND NEWS

A notice has been received from John Watson of the W.A. Department of Conservation and Land Management with regard to Pannikin Plains Cave in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve. Following freak weather conditions on 2 December 1988 the entrance to the cave is now extremely dangerous and unstable and will remain so for some years. As a result the department has prohibited all entry to this cave until further notice. This incident serves as a reminder to cavers that freak weather conditions do occur in the Nullarbor area and that sink holes or dolines may become rapidly flooded following localised rainfall.

\$20,000 CAN SAVE THE GHOST BAT.

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 Mt Etna after the famous volcano on Sicily.

1882: Norwegian immigrant 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 II 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 Mt Etna National Park.

1966: Quarrying of Mt 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 storm water 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 on the company's mining plan which was still confined to Mt Etna.

1980: Mt Etna caves are included in 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. This cave is the ancestral breeding site for 80% of Australia's (and the world's) population of the Little Bent Winged Bat, *Miniopterus australis*.

1985: After long arguments and herculean efforts, Adelaide Brighton Cement opens a large clinker grinding plant in Brisbane. Having spent three years smuggling cement powder into Queensland by trucks, ABC now opens a Queensland subsidiary named Sunstate Cement. Sunstate now employ a large vessel to ship clinker from the ABC

kiln at Birkenhead in South Australia. Sunstate (with its new, efficient plant) can ship clinker several thousand kilometres, more cheaply than can QCL with its old, inefficient plant in Central Queensland. By 1988, Queensland Cement and Lime have lost 30% of its total market to this interloper, although it held a monopoly in Queensland for 62 years. This is in spite of the Queensland Government granting a monopoly agreement to QCL for the supply of all cement products for Government owned or funded projects within the state. This monopoly is granted because the Queensland Government, through its state owned insurance arm (Suncorp), is the second largest shareholder in QCL.

1987: Twenty years after the campaign for Mt 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 Mt 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 Mt Etna, its caves and wildlife. Of the 1,100 delegates, only the Queensland Government opposes the resolution.

April 1988: In response to continued destruction around Speaking Tube and Elephant Hole caves, conservationists commence a 'sit-in'. Despite extensive searches by police, armed security guards and cement workers, the conservationists evade capture for 46 days.

April 1988: Conservationists in Brisbane arrange a share buying scheme to attempt to gain access for 200 concerned conservationists to the QCL Annual General Meeting. 200 single share transfers are lodged with the company, which continues to stall for six months.

April 1988: More drill-holes are filled by unidentified persons. In response, the company commences construction of over three kilometres of person-proof barbed-wire fencing, designed to surround the mountain.

April 1988: Conservationists write to over 3,500 engineers, architects, and hardware stores in south-east Queensland, calling for a total boycott of QCL products. For the first time in over sixty years, total cement sales (tonnages) from the QCL factories declines.

May 1988: Four conservationists are fined over \$5,000 for allegedly filling in drill-holes. Extensive publicity results.

June 1988: In the face of continuing publicity, and the effects of the consumer boycott, QCL management approach conservationists for a meeting. Present are representatives from the Australian Speleological Federation Inc, Australian Conservation Foundation, Queensland Conservation Council, and the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. The company agrees to consider a scientific report to be prepared by conservationists, and promises to refrain from further damaging any caves until this report is handed over in October 1988. For their part, the conservationists agree to lift the consumer boycott of QCL products, and to encourage the cave-sitters to move.

September 1988: A copy of a long term National Parks study of the Mt Etna Ghost Bats is obtained by conservationists. This report confirms all the arguments about the importance of Mt Etna. It appears that both the Mines Department and the mining company have been regularly given updates of this report, whilst the National Parks Department has publicly denied its existence.

October 1988: A report, prepared by leading Australian scientists, is formally submitted to the mining company. Two weeks later, Mr Jim Anderson, the General

Manager of QCL, telephones to say that his company has no choice but to mine Speaking Tube and Elephant Hole caves.

October 1988: Conservationists write to all 3000 shareholders in QCL, asking for their assistance to influence the board of directors. Many shareholders offer proxies for the AGM.

October 31 1988: On the day of the QCL Annual General Meeting, a Special Extraordinary Meeting is held to change the Articles of Association of the company, in order to limit the minimum share holding parcel to 100 shares. Conservationists have foreseen this move, and obtained proxies for over 70,000 shares, thereby legally gaining access to both meetings. A motion is formally moved to wind up the company, in light of its continued poor performance, and low dividend policy. This motion is lost overwhelmingly, but extensive media coverage ensues. The 200 shares are then sold in a single parcel on the sharemarket, and proceeds donated to the Mt Etna Fund.

November 1988: Under cover of darkness, the company loads 1,300 kg of explosives around the entrance of Speaking Tube. At 9:30 am on 2 November, the charges are let off. The resulting air burst moves a farm house (1km to the north) 100mm on its stumps. Since the charges were incorrectly laid, jackhammers are now used to remove all loose rock around the entrances of both caves. On 4 November, the inner passages of Elephant Hole are destroyed by explosives. In attempting to make both caves as inhospitable as possible to bats, burning oil drums and flaming logs are dropped down shafts. Smaller charges are laid deep inside both caves. Many smaller insectivorous bats are blasted to pieces, but no Ghost Bats appear injured.

November 3, 1988: The second blockade of Speaking Tube commences, and will last until December. Conservationists hide deep inside several caves, supplied with provisions for weeks if necessary. The mining company had finished its barbed wire fence, leaving only one gate for miners to enter the quarry. Every day for several weeks, police are called to remove protesters who have chained themselves to this gate; each time, the company directs the police not to arrest the conservationists. At night, hired guards, with dogs and pistols, attempt to keep conservationists off the mountain. Nightly games of hide and seek result. Generators and huge arc lights bathe the mountain in light, while conservationists regularly fire off distress flares to prove that they are still on the mountain. Another eight conservationists are arrested, and charged with illegally being on a mine site (Vagrancy, Gaming, and Other Offences Act). Groups of conservationists ring the mountain, conducting psychological warfare with spotlights and loudhailers.

November 1988: In an attempt to remove blockaders, the miners and police lower ropes to use in abseiling into the caves. Somehow these ropes are tied tight from below, making an abseil impossible. Frustrated in their attempts, the miners lower high-frequency car burglar alarms into the caves. One caver is forced to evacuate the cave, with bleeding ears. He does manage to smuggle out one of the sirens, which is then shown to the media. No charges are laid. The next day, another caver is also forced out with damaged ears. He manages to evade capture completely.

December 1988: Having completely removed all loose rock, and all vegetation for 100 metres around Speaking Tube and Elephant Hole, the Company now spends four days plugging the entrances with several hundred tonnes of crushed limestone. This work commences without the company checking that all caves are empty of conservationists. During this phase the company maintains a 24 hour guard upon the mountain, comprising:

- 6 off-duty policemen
- 8 hired Wormald Security guards with sidearms and 2 guard dogs
- 24 cement factory workers on overtime.

Conservationists are undeterred, and manage to inspect and confirm that the roosting site in Speaking Tube is undamaged.

December 6, 1988: With the company convinced that all entrances to Speaking Tube are indeed blocked, the conservationists publically lift the blockade. A watching post is manned 24 hours a day. Quarrying ceases for the Christmas holidays.

January 1989: A film crew from 'Hinch at Seven' is smuggled into Speaking Tube. A reputable expert confirms that the removal of the limestone stockpile from the entrance chamber is a simple matter. On 23 and 24 January 'Hinch at Seven' runs the Etna story, publicising for the first time the extent of the 'donations' made by QCL to the Queensland Government at the time of granting the original leases in the mid

'70s. It is alleged in Parliament that QCL has given two donations of \$100,000 each to the Government at the time it was negotiating its monopoly agreement. The Federal and State Governments launch a witchhunt to identify the source of the leak. QCL have admitted to donations in excess of \$10,000 in those years, however we feel that the only way the matter can be cleared up is for full disclosure of all donations to political parties by the company since 1974.

January 1989: The company is observed to be cementing over the cave entrances of Speaking Tube. On 27 January a restraining order is obtained from the Qld Supreme Court, pending hearing of a full case in several months time. At 2.30 pm this order is served on the mine foreman, who has already loaded explosives into the blastholes. After much argument work ceases. The injunction lapses on 31 January. In the court the judge adjourns his decision until Friday 3 February. The company promises to delay further destruction until that date. Meanwhile, conservationists continue to prepare for a full Supreme Court case, charging the company with various offences under Fauna Conservation laws. Senator Richardson (LAB) refuses to assist with Federal funding for a court case - no reason is given.

February 3, 10.30 am: In the Supreme Court of Rockhampton, Justice Demack refuses to grant a further restraining injunction, noting that there is no triable issue. In his judgement, he notes that conservationists have no proprietary right to the caves, their contents, or the bats within. A further case would therefore have no standing, since conservationists would suffer no pecuniary loss following destruction of the caves.

It is expected that the company will not commence final destruction of Speaking Tube until expiry of the ten day appeal period on 13 February 1989. The sole remaining legal avenue to conservationists is now an Appeal to the Full Bench of the Supreme Court, likely to cost \$20,000.

MONEY IS NEEDED URGENTLY.

FORECASTS

In spite of the company's claims that it has a thirty year mining plan for Mt Etna, the Manager of the Rockhampton subsidiary (Central Queensland Cement), Mr Robin Town, refuses to guarantee employment to his staff for more than two years.

In 1991, the Government-granted monopoly will expire. Sunstate Cement, with its acknowledged superior products, will then be able to tender for all contracts in Queensland. QCL sales will continue to decline. As one of the requirements demanded by the Qld Government before allowing Sunstate to enter the Queensland market, Sunstate is committed to constructing a fully functioning cement plant in Queensland before 1992. The company has weekly planning meetings for this project. Such is the current state of cement manufacturing technology, Sunstate will build a new kiln of at least one million tonnes per annum capacity. Cement kilns cannot be run at less than 100% of design capacity output, so Sunstate must sell all it produces, and will then seize 60% of the total Queensland market (currently 1.6 million tonnes p.a.).

From 1982 to 1992, therefore, QCL will lose at least 60% of its market share. The total Queensland market has only averaged 0.75% growth, per annum, over the last 25 years, so a 60% market loss is almost a 55% revenue reduction.

QCL is like a dinosaur looking for extinction.

We will keep you posted.....

PLEASE SEND MONEY to the Mount Etna Committee
P.O. Box 538
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

or call Craig Hardy (w) 079 - 27 4400
(h) 079 - 27 9016
(fax) 079 - 22 2976

A. Robson

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION Inc.

OFFICERS

Please write direct to the Officer concerned

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