

EDITORIAL

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This is the first Issue of the 33rd Volume of *Cave and Karst Science* that we have edited. All but two of those volumes comprised three issues. Volumes 32 and 35 included special “double” issues – 32(1) and 32(2+3); 35(1+2) and 35(3), giving 94 printed “magazines” and a conceptual grand total of 96 issues. During the *circa* 33 years of our editorship, beginning in 1994, we have introduced some innovations (e.g. the *Forum* section, Feature articles and, most recently, the Photo Feature) but, overall, the underlying submission, review and response procedures have remained broadly the same. This long-established approach is an anomaly – and perhaps we are heading towards being an anachronism – among the international peer-review journals because our contributors (and reviewers) receive a “personal – commonly bespoke – service” from the editors, rather than interacting with an electronic submission system. We have always considered that “*This was a Good Thing*” (Sellar and Yeatman, 1930), but we leave contributors to decide whether it *remains* a good thing. No doubt, when we step down, the new editor(s) will create a more “streamlined” system. Nevertheless, for the present Volume at least, we continue to look forward to receiving emails from contributors and potential contributors.

Cave and Karst Science differs from many academic journals in two other ways. Firstly, we welcome submissions from potential contributors who are not part of the mainstream academic structure. Such individuals (or, in some cases, teams) include, for example, cavers who have an interest in aspects of the cave- and/or karst-related sciences but lack opportunities to study them as part of their day-to-day employment. They might not have the confidence to present their ideas, let alone the background skills routinely applied to – and required for – academic publishing. Our view is that we should be approachable and should offer guidance and editorial help; we neither expect nor insist upon either a regimented academic approach or adherence to a strict and formulaic format.

Secondly, many – possibly most – journals have a relatively narrow focus and, arguably, a readership that is targeted and transfused specifically with material linked closely to that focus. That is, of course, perfectly logical and understandable – but how many separate topic-specific journals would be required to offer distinct, tailored, outlets covering all potential facets of “*cave- and karst-related knowledge*”? Instead, we welcome contributions containing information, thoughts and ideas from every academic discipline – artistic as well as scientific or technological – and *potentially* from areas of knowledge and expertise that are not considered academic at all. This admits-to, and allows for, recognition that there must be areas of possible interest that do not at first glance appear linked to caves or karst. Hence, we remain flexible and prepared to consider submissions reflecting thoughts developed outside the academic box, as normally perceived. For example, many cavers might be interested in reading details of explorations carried out during an expedition, or even about logistical issues related to setting-up that expedition, and its safe, successful and productive progress and completion. Even if scientific work formed part of the expedition, it would not necessarily interest readers who were not part of the research team, whereas the non-academic but no-less important aspects could be of great and lasting value. A rather different example might be that someone intrigued by references to caves (or karst) in poetry (e.g. in W H Auden’s classic 1948 poem, “*In Praise of Limestone*”, written in Ischia but perhaps also harking back to his native Yorkshire), might be inspired to offer a *Feature* based around a single poem or comparing different approaches. Equally, such karst-related stimuli might be awaiting analysis within other forms of artistic expression.

Whereas broad requirements for each defined type of *CaKS* publication are described for reference on the inner front cover of every Issue of the Journal, and *via* a page on the BCRA website [<https://bcra.org.uk/pub/candks/guidelines.html>], we have added a tabulated rationalization of the information as part of the *Forum* section on Page 45.

Moving to the Contents of this Issue, we are pleased to note that these include 3 papers and 1 report, relating to an eclectic variety of topics, and an equally cosmopolitan spread of overseas research areas. This situation is unusual because (without mounting a laborious trawl through the archives) neither Editor can recall a routine (rather than thematic) *Cave and Karst Science* Issue that didn’t include at least one Paper or Report based upon research or exploration in the British Isles. This view might reflect imperfect editorial memories rather than actuality. In their order of appearance within the Issue, the contents include:

- **Uttam Saikia** and a multi-national team of co-authors present a consideration of the available information (anecdotal as well as physical) relating to the presence of mammalian species other than bats in the caves of Meghalaya. Some of the physical evidence is ancient as well as equivocal but, even so, it is clear that whereas the remains of some species probably reflect accidental (e.g. flood-related) entry to the caves, other species choose to venture underground for a variety of purposes. Photographic illustrations underscore the scientific discussion, and additional photographs are provided within a supplementary on-line appendix. An image related to the topic appears on the Front Cover of the Issue.
- Following the untimely death of Dave Gill early in 2024, several of his former colleagues helped the editors to ensure publication of material already submitted, for eventual inclusion in *CaKS* Issue 51(3). Subsequently, **Martin Laverty** continued to work with various colleagues to compile four additional *CaKS* submissions. One of these appeared in Issue 52(2), and two more in Issue 52(3). The current Issue contains the final submission of the four – this one under Martin’s sole authorship – comprising “*Geonotes*”, which describe and discuss aspects of the caves and karst of southwestern Sarawak. Supplementary on-line information was presented with the Issue 52(2) Paper, and this information is re-referenced in the current Issue.
- In marked contrast with the Paper described above, which has only one author, the third submission in this Issue is a Report, provided by **Georgios Lazaridis** and twenty-four (yes, 24) other authors. It deals with the context, findings and outcomes of the “*Sulfur Caves–Epirus 2025 Speleological Expedition*”, which took place within the Vikos–Aos UNESCO Global Geopark in northern Greece, close to the border with Albania. In addition to describing the local geological and geomorphological setting, and discussing the specific nature and morphologies of the caves explored during the expedition, the authors comment briefly upon broader issues of sulphuric acid speleogenesis (SAS), with references to work in other regions. A selection of images captured during the expedition forms the collage on the Issue’s Back Cover.
- The final Paper, authored by **Liviu Valenas** and three colleagues, relates to features termed “*water pits*”, developed within quartzitic sandstones in northeastern Thailand. Discussions include their morphology, hydrochemistry and potential mode(s) of genesis. Whereas some of these pits share various characteristics with other, previously described, types of dissolution pits, evidence and consideration of possible interpretations suggest that those discussed here represent a unique landform type.

The remainder of the Issue is occupied by a relatively short *Forum* section that includes a reminder about the various options for *Cave and Karst Science* submissions (alluded to above), two book reviews, and another in the occasional “*Notes for Authors*” series.

Reference:

Sellar, W C and Yeatman, R J, 1930. *1066 and All That: A Memorable History of England, Comprising All the Parts You Can Remember, Including 103 Good Things, 5 Bad Kings and 2 Genuine Dates*. [Methuen Publishing.] 172pp.