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<http://www.vulcanospeleology.org/>

The Commission on Volcanic Caves Newsletter has been published regularly since December 22, 1993. The Newsletter is available free of charge to all members of the commission, and to others who are interested in Volcanic caves.



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MISSION STATEMENT

The UIS Commission on Volcanic Caves encourages exploration and scientific investigation of volcanic caves, and hosts the International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology about every two years



COVER PHOTO

**P8 Cave, Krong No Volcanic
Geopark, Dak Nong Province,
Southern Vietnam**

by Takeshi Murase

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Editorial

Hello all and welcome to the UIS International Commission on Volcanic Caves 72nd Newsletter. Next month will see the biennial gathering of Volcanospeleologists, this time in Lava Beds National Park in the USA for the 18th Symposium on Vulcanospeleology. Unfortunately I cannot be there this time, and will miss you all, but I am very much looking forward to hearing about all the fun you will all be having. For the record I am more than happy to continue to act as editor for the commission, but I am equally happy to hand over to anyone who is keen to take on the job or to take on managing the email distribution list via the googlegroup.

The newsletter is only ever as good as the material submitted by the membership, and in this issue I am most grateful to Michael Laumans for his excellent article on the lava tubes of Vietnam. However, please do not be daunted by this, I am also delighted to publish smaller items of interest, such as the information on the Icelandic stamp provided by Martin Mills. If you have anything (and I mean anything) of interest about caves formed in volcanic rocks or by volcanic processes please do send me an email stating you have material for the newsletter. No article is too long, too short or too simple. I am also very happy to publish photographs on their own without supporting articles, especially for the front cover.

So, I hope you all enjoy the Symposium, and please put pen to paper about what you are up to or thinking about concerning Volcanic caves.

All the very best,

Ed Waters, 10th June 2018

Message from the Chairman

Hello everyone,

As I write this, the 18th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology, focussed on the Lava Beds National Monument in a remote area of northern California, is little more than a month away. The symposium base will be Winema Lodge, where the formal presentations will be held each morning, where most participants will be staying and where meals will be served. It should be a very convivial atmosphere. Every afternoon, a variety of caving and surface activities will be available. Mary Rose, the Symposium Convenor sure has put a lot of effort into pulling this all together.

At this stage, the Symposium is almost fully booked, so if you have not already registered, it may be too late to now do so. Mary had originally set a limit of 80 participants but, after a careful review of the Winema facilities in consultation with the owners, she has reduced the maximum to 55 participants. This will make it more comfortable for everyone.

The presentations at the ISV will be very interesting and will cover a broad range of scientific, management and lava cave exploration issues.

There will also be an announcement at Winema on the location of the 19th ISV, which will be held in July 2020.

The main feature in this issue is a brief report by Michael Laumanns on a joint project by Vietnamese, European and Japanese researchers and cave specialists to explore and document lava caves in the Dak Nong Province of southern Vietnam. Importantly, a geopark (the Krong No Volcanic Geopark) has been established in the area and local authorities are working towards its inclusion as a UNESCO global geopark.

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Michael's report and an earlier one by Tsutomu Honda (published three years ago in Issue 69 of this Newsletter) highlight the significance of this relatively unknown volcanic province. To date, few members of the Commission have had the opportunity of visiting the area. However, I am hopeful that this situation will change over the next few years.

Looking further south, in the last issue I mentioned I was becoming involved in a land use planning issue that had the potential to irreparably damage the geological and landscape values of the Harmans Valley lava flow in Victoria in southeast Australia. The flow contains some of the best known lava caves in Australia.

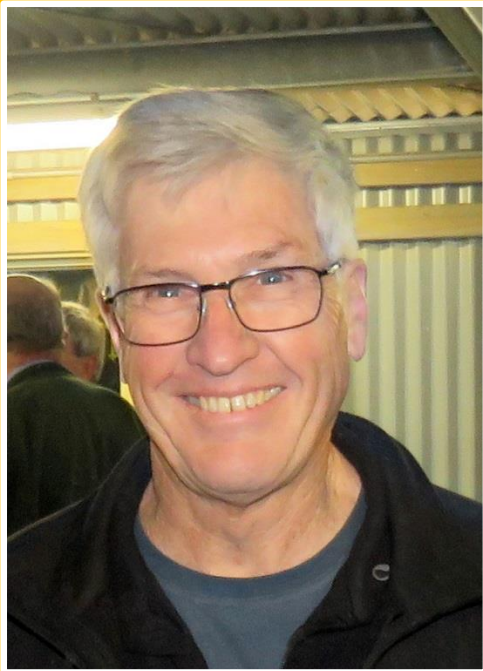
In March, a Planning Panel established by the Victorian State Government convened a public hearing so that interested parties could state their case. I made two presentations, one on behalf of the IUS Commission on Volcanic Caves and another on behalf of the Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association. In all, there were 18 presentations, as well as a field inspection, over the two days of the hearing.

Last month, the Planning Panel's report on the hearing was released and its recommendations are largely in line with what speleological, research and environmental interests had been seeking. Welcome news, indeed. However that is not the end of the story.

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The next step under the relevant State Government legislation is for the recommendations to be formally considered by the designated planning authority, which in this case is the Southern Grampians Shire Council. Council will be considering the recommendations on 12 June. It is not legally obliged to accept all, or even any, of the panel's recommendations but if it does not, the state Planning Minister has the power to intervene. Stay tuned.

In the meantime, I look forward to seeing many of you at the Lava Beds Symposium next month.



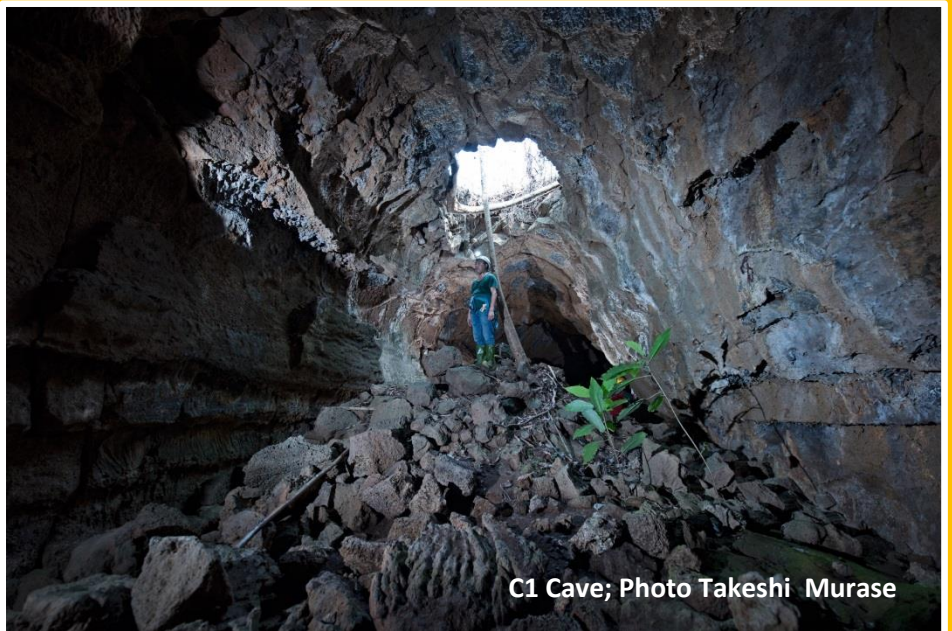
John Brush
Chairman

IUS Commission on Volcanic Caves

2018 Cave Mapping Project to Krong No Volcanic Geopark, Dak Nong Province, Southern Vietnam

by Michael Laumanns

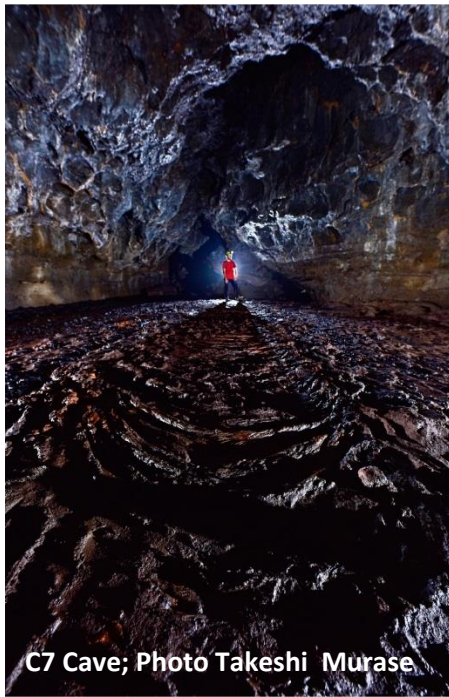
The most significant lava caves of SE Asia are currently known from southern Vietnam. Beside some smaller pyroclastic products in Dong Nai province (Laumanns 2014), the most striking investigations so far were conducted between 2007 and 2015 by the Geological Museum of Vietnam and the NPO Volcano-Speleological Society of Japan in Dak Nong province, Krong No district, around Chu B'luk volcano. Until 2015 nine caves were mapped with a total of 4,834 m of passages.



C1 Cave; Photo Takeshi Murase

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A Japanese follow-up expedition in 2017, not yet published, yielded 6 new caves with 1,941 m of passages. C7 Cave (1,067 m long), C3+C4 (968 m, segmented), C8 (791 m), P20 (568 m), P1-P2-P3 (531 m, segmented), and P11 (498 m, segmented) were mapped by the Japanese teams. This brilliant work was subject of a report (Honda et al. 2015), and an article in the UIS Volcanic Caves Commission Newsletter (Honda & Tachihara 2015).



C7 Cave; Photo Takeshi Murase



P8 Cave; Photo Takeshi Murase

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Most recently, the Krong No Volcanic Geopark was established by the Dak Nong authorities. An application for enrolment in the network of UNESCO Geoparks is planned for 2018.



The Geopark registered about 50 lava caves and, strived to obtain a complete documentation of all the lava caves for the UNESCO application. They consulted the Vietnam Institute of Geosciences and Mineral Resources (VIGMR) who tasked the author to assemble a team to finish off the surveying work in the Geopark. The work was successfully conducted in March/April 2018 with participants from the Netherlands, Japan and Germany. An 11-headed team, consisting of staff from the Geopark, the provincial authorities, VIGMR and the Vietnamese army, supported the expedition.

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Altogether 32 sites were visited during the 2018 fieldwork and 3 km of cave passages were mapped. Out of the 32 sites mapped, seven were caves not known before and one previously known cave was extended. The total of caves known in the Geopark now stands at 49 (66, if all cave segments would be counted separately) and the length of all known underground galleries of the “Krong No Lava Cave System” is 10.1 km. Although the lava field only measures 15x15 km, it has by far the most important cluster of lava caves of SE Asia (and apparently also including China), with its longest pyroduct (C7). Together with the small Chu B’Luk volcano (inactive), supposedly being the main emitting source of the pāhoehoe lava, and archaeological research done (La The Phuc et al. 2017), this warrants a UNESCO application.

C7 Cave; Photo Takeshi Murase



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The 2018 project, supported by the European Speleological Federation and Scurion, had two phases:

The first phase took place in the NW area of the lava field around the Dray Sap resort close to a number of scenic waterfalls which are a well-known tourist destination. The large lava caves, previously explored by the Japanese between 2013-2015, were made accessible by a concrete trail, much facilitating access to the caves as the area is generally covered by a dense thicket of thorny shrub. This made location of new caves a serious issue and the help of the Vietnamese army (who cut trails into the thicket) was essential. Most of the new caves in the Dray Sap area are relatively narrow and only exceptionally have walking size. Longest cave surveyed was B14 at 250 m (segmented).

After that the team moved to the town of Dak Mâm (pronounced “Dak Mom”) in the S of the lava field. From here, daytrips with motorbikes were conducted to the extensive lava field around Chu B’Luk volcano. The area differs significantly from the NW part of the lava field as it is intensively used for agriculture. At the time of our visit all the farmland was harvested off already and the lava field resembled an open landscape with many small trails where roof collapses could easily be spotted. However, the heat of over 35 degrees Celsius at the turn from the dry to the wet season added some extra challenge. The new caves explored were generally of larger size compared to the new caves surveyed in the NW. Longest cave mapped was T8-T9 Cave at 322 m. There are still extensive areas in the southern part of the lava field that were so far not systematically checked for caves.

During the 2018 project biospeleological investigations were made in the visited caves. These were the first investigations of its kind in the Geopark. First identifications by specialists indicate two or three new species of spiders from the Krong No caves.

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Geopark Display; Photo Michael Laumanns



Archaeological Excavations
in C6 Cave;
Photo Michael Laumanns

VOLCANOSPELEOPHILATELY

By Martin Mills



Those of us who have been fortunate to visit and descend þrihnukakigur may be interested to know that the Iceland Post Office (Pósturinn) on 26th April 2018 issued a postage stamp depicting a view from the bottom of the shaft. The technical details are Designer: Oscar Bjarnason; Printer: Cartor Security Printing; size: 35 x 25.87mm; Printing Process: offset litho. Price: ISK 285. It would appear that this is part of a series of tourist stamps of which this is number #VI and the

first day cover also includes a 50g value depicting kayaking [kajaferdir]. Many may not be sure about the accompanying text from the Icelandic Post Office which also has no mention of conservation, etc.