

Eulogy for Lloyd

The ASF President Stan Flavel asked me On behalf of all of ASF members, to pass on our condolences to Dorothy and all those close to Lloyd.

How do you condense 86 years of achievements into a few minutes?

Lloyd Robinson was born in Alstonville, northern NSW, in 1927 to Victor and Viola (Audrey) Robinson.

In 1936 the family moved to Marulan and about age 12 Lloyd had his first caving experience using candles and a reel of cotton at Bungonia.

In the early 1940's Lloyd moved to Wollongong where he completed his schooling and then started an electrical apprenticeship with the Mt Keria Colliery.

His interest in caving was further inspired by a returning WW2 commando who joined the mines and told tales of caves on East Timor.

During the 1950s, Wollongong Speleological Society was formed to give them some standing when approaching landowners, and to help in dealing with the police.

Using Paddy Pallin's maps, a party of six canoed the Wollondilly River in the early 1950s (before the construction of the Warragamba Dam), stopping to trek overland to the Colong Caves –

In late 1954 Lloyd and Russel Brands re found the Big Hole and later descended it using wire ladder made especially for the purpose.

In June 1955 Bob Potts and Lloyd went halves in a short wheelbase, soft top Landrover. They overhauled it with enthusiasm then in July 1955 set off in search of Lasseter's Gold Reef - the long way via Mt Isa and Camooweal caves.

In October 1955 they launched a canoe into the Murray River in one of the highest river levels recorded and paddled downstream for almost three months. They reached the ocean at Goolwa on 6th January 1956.

Between October 1957 and mid 1958 Lloyd was in Western Australia examining the caves of the Nullarbor, Jurien Bay and exploring Augusta Jewel Cave, Easter Cave and other major WA caves.

Also in 1958, Lloyd was invited to take part in Phil Playford's expedition to identify and investigate the wreck of the Dutch East Indian Zuytdorp, which was wrecked off the West Australian coast near Geraldton in 1712.

Lloyd's function on the expedition was to investigate any caves in the vicinity for survivor occupation, (it was evident that there were some survivors of the wreck) as well as looking after some resupply logistics.

in the late 50s and 60s Lloyd rediscovered the caves at Bendethera with a packhorse event that cost £40. Lloyd had a plate camera with an electronic flash that weighed 14lb (approximately 6.4 kg). The first day they trekked to "Alpine homestead", the next day into the vacant Bendethera homestead. The owner, Rankin who was in his 90's lived in Moruya. Unfortunately the horses could not walk through the thickets going to the cave so they had to hike up. Lloyd was sick with the flu and sat under a tree above a 5-6m rock near the efflux to get some sleep, whilst Jim Gould said it was this way and away they went, up the hill. When he woke, Lloyd looked up and behold, he saw a faint arrow marked in the tree, and then another faint arrow and becoming interested he went up the range straight up to BD-1 entrance. Luckily he knew the description of the entrance. He shouted to the others and it took them about an hour for them to reach Lloyd.

In the 1970s Lloyd led many trips into the Gunbarrel aven to ascertain the height with dry cleaning bags filled with various gases.

During the late 1970;s and 1980s Lloyd and Dave Dicker led numerous successful expeditionary caving trips to the Kimberly -.

During the late 1990s and early 2000's Lloyd undertook several trips to the Nullarbor on ISS expeditions.

From 1995 to 2012 Lloyd and Dorothy were engaged in the annual Bullita expeditions that were originally arranged by Canberra Speleological Society.

Lloyd's other passion was photography and he combined that with caving and taught many of us how to take photos in caves using slide film.

And sometime in all this exploration Lloyd found the love of his life, Dorothy while in Western Australia. Dorothy accompanied Lloyd on many a caving expedition, conference and photographic convention in various cities around Australia. They have three children Linda Robert and Gail and a few grandchildren to boot.

His contribution to speleology in Australia and to the ASF is exceptional. Lloyd was the ASF Safety Officer from 1966 to 1976, an ASF Vice President from mid 1977 to end 1978 and the ASF President for 7 years from January 1986 until 1993. He was the Convenor of the Awards Commission until late 2012 and always attended the biennial conferences and ASF Council meetings.

A comment from John Dunkley

"we can say that Lloyd was Chair of the Awards Commission during all of his term as President, from early 1986 to early 1993, then from 1998 or 1999 to 2012. Twenty years in all. It is also worth mentioning that it was Lloyd who got the ASF system organised to be modelled on the Australian awards system".

Lloyd received a Certificate of Merit in December 1982 for the exploration and documentation of the caves of Western Australian, for contributions to cave management and tourism, and for contributions to cave safety.

He received a Fellow of the Federation in 1995

"in recognition of outstanding service to the Federation and to Australian caving and speleology for his distinguished service as president of the Federation from 1986 to 1992, the longest continuous term of any previous incumbent. During this time he presided over a major restructuring to improve the executive and increase the responsiveness of the Federation.

Apart from his term as president, Lloyd has served on various ASF Commissions and Committees to which he contributed both hard work and wisdom.

I had the privilege, as have many Australian cavers, of caving with him and learning from him for many years but especially so for 2 weeks during his last expedition to Bullita in July 2012. Lloyd not knowing that it would be his last time caving enjoyed himself immensely at 85 years young and surprising the 30 year old Bullita rangers with his agility, ability, photographic skills and storytelling abilities!

There is so much more to tell but they will become campfire yarns in the places that Lloyd has taken us to in the past, or those that some of the group here may wish to share over the next few minutes or hours!

Thank you Lloyd for your enthusiasm, friendship, sense of humour, caving knowledge, research and scientific studies and photographic mentoring over the years in ISS.

Thank you to Lloyd's family for allowing us to share him now and again.

May you have many wondrous adventures wherever you are Lloyd, as we celebrate a great Australian explorer's life.