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Post Office Box 198, Broadway, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Publications Officer: Keith H. Clouten,
Australasian Missionary College,
Cooranbong, N. S. W.

DEAD, DYING, or DEFUNCT ?

Early in November, the Publication Officer forwarded to the secretary of every A.S.F. speleological society a circular appealling for just a little information on their society's activities during 1962. A minority of societies assisted by forwarding the material required, and I wish to record my appreciation for this. There are, fortunately, some societies which can always be relied upon for regular news bulletins to the Publications Officer, and if this Newsletter is any success at all, it is entirely due to the cooperation of these few old faithfuls.

The majority of societies have, quite frankly, not cooperated. They are generally the societies that offer plenty of criticism, and talk at length of the decline and failure of the A.S.F.. Some of these societies have made promises of cooperation, but they have failed to carry them out. Appeals have been to some of them through the medium of this Newsletter, by duplicated circulars, and by letters.--all to no avail.

If anyone wants to employ a speleo to obtain blood from a stalactite, I'm willing to offer my services.

AROUND THE SOCIETIES in 1962

Port Moresby Speleological Society - no report.

Northern Territory Speleological Society. - no report.

Brisbane Cave Group - no report.

Kempsey Speleological Society.

Kempsey has enjoyed a good, though a busy year. With a present membership of 24, of which 15 are on the "achive" list, the society has been able to visit all of their local caving areas during the year, except the system at Yamagog (which presents some danger hazards) and Stockyard Creek (too far for a one-day trip). The society is fortunate in that most of its caving areas are accessible for one-day trips from Kempsey.

Kempsey's most active member during the year has been Peter Dwyer, a senior student at New England University who has been keeping tag on the bats, of which there are lots in the Macleay district. Another member, John Lindsay, has spent a good deal of time mapping the areas of limestone and associated rocks. Other members have been assisting these people of course.

Rumour has it that Kempsey is conducting some sort of a speleological convention later this month.

Newcastle University College Speleological Society - no report.

Cooranbong Speleological Association

The society at Cooranbong reports a bad year as far as activity is concerned. Membership is healthy - 25 are financial at present - but there have been few starters for trips. Earlier in the year, the society constructed a heavy iron grille to be placed at the entrance of the southern extensions of Colong Caves. The grille was carried to Colong, but installation is yet to be carried out. The purpose of the grille is to keep out illegal visitors. The Tourist Department has granted permission for the gate to be placed there, and keys will be made available to interested A.S.F. societies.

Orange Speleological Society - no report.

Sydney Speleological Society - no report.

Sydney University Speleological Society.

SUSS reports a membership this year of 51 Full Member, plus Prospective and Corresponding Members. Visits have been made to numerious cave systems during 1962, but chiefly Jenolan, Wombeyan, and Yarrangobilly. At Yarrangobilly, a SUSS member discovered a new cave in April, now called the Restoration Cave. At Jenolan, the very complicated survey of the lower level Mammoth cave has been carried on, and future plans are for a continuation of this survey.

University of N.S.W. Speleological Society

Twenty-five is the present financial membership of the Society at Kensington, but the secretary reports that there has been less activity than in previous years. During 1962, parties visited Wee Jasper, Cooleman, Tuglow, Bungonia and Jenolan, some of these a number of times.

At Cooleman, the society claims the discovery of a cave which it has subsequently mapped and named the Black Range Cave. Main project for the year has been the survey and mapping of B.31 at Bungonia, and the small-scale mapping of the surface details. As far as future plans are concerned, the society plans to make a movie at Wombeyan. Other projects will await the new year.

Victorian Cave Exploration Society.

V.C.E.S. claims 36 members on the books, and about two thirds of these are regarded as active. The past year has seen a large number of trips to East Buchan, where new extensions to the Trop-Dip were found. In the Gillingall area near Buchan, members hoped to explore caves, but were unable to gain permission from the owners of the property. One trip was conducted to Naracoorte.

In the way of projects, a Laddermaking Sub-committee was formed during the year. Three test strips of ladder were made, and then tested. The highest breaking strain was obtained from a test strip made with apoxy resin in the rung and a small nail inserted through the wire. A section of thirty feet is in the process of being made.

V.C.E.S. also participated recently in two training runs for the

newly formed Victorian Search and Rescue Organization. One took place at Buchan and on this occasion, the group were fortunate to have with them two members of the Victorian Police Search and Rescue who showed how to use a Neil Robertson stretcher in rescuing an injured person from a cave. A trial search and rescue was organized to test out the system of contacting members and to see how difficult it was to remove an injured person from a cave. This trial took place at Labertouche.

Sub-Aqua Speleological Society - no report.

Tasmanian Caverneering Club - no report

University of Queensland Speleological Society

Though not yet affiliated with the A.S.F., the society at Queensland University have had an encouraging year. Membership has reached 20, and these are reported to be enthusiastic. All members of the society are undergraduates, mainly Science students.

During the year, trips have been conducted to Riverton, Viator (Texas area), and Rockhampton. In the Rockhampton district, the society has been concerned about the activities of limestone mining companies, and another trip to this area is planned to attempt mapping in order to show the extent of damage caused by blasting.

In the way of projects, construction of aluminium ladders using apoxy resin has been successful; there has been some insect collection; and the survey of attitudes of speleos toward caves and caving will be reported on at the A.S.F. Conference.

Canberra Speleological Society.

In the A.C.T., the society has approximately 40 members and interested persons, of which quite a number have been active again this year. Major caves visited have been Yarrangobilly and Wee Jasper. In the Dogleg Cave at Wee Jasper, some members recently laid a cable to the lake chamber which is at the end of a 700 ft. crawl. This cave is subject to sudden and unexpected flooding, and the cable is connected by wiring to a series of floats so that society members are able to establish the presence, even the depth, of water in the further reaches of the system without actual investigation.

West Australian Speleological Group - no report

Darwin Speleological Group

Though not a Federated society, this small group has been active, and a report of the Katherine Cave appears elsewhere in this Newsletter.

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JOURNAL REVIEW

"HELECTITE" - Journal of Australasian Cave Research. Edited by Edward A. Lane and Aola M. Richards.

This new journal, appearing in October of this year, is devoted wholly to speleological subjects of a research nature, and from within the sources of Australasia. It boasts a wide variety of subjects such as "the scientific study of caves, and their contents, to the history of caves and cave areas and the technical aspects of cave study and exploration", as well as other fringe subjects. The editorship lies in the hands of two people and the journal has no affiliation with any speleological organization.

The printing is a high quality lithograph printing with a photo reproduction on art paper for the cover. Subscription is £1 per annum for four issues. The articles in this first issue are of high standard and should they continue to be so the journal is assured of a rosy future.

The contents of the first issue are two articles and two abstracts. Aola Richards' article - "Cave Animals and their Environment" - gives a very complete treatment of the fauna found in caves, the meteorological conditions affecting these animals and the various changes which take place through time. Space is also devoted to consideration of possible origins of these animals.

The article on "Observation on Caves - particularly those of South Australia - 1862", by Edward A. Lane is principally a dissertation on a book published in 1862 on geological observations in the Adelaide area by a Rev. Wood. Mention is made of such things as cave origin theories, The Deluge, and its affect on caves and cave life, etc.. Altogether it is an interesting sideline to the theories of origin held by early naturalists.

The two abstracts are on entomological subjects, e.g. beetles and arachnids.

R. Wallis

A.S.F. LIBRARY ABSTRACTS

ITALIAN CAVES

Italian Speleo. Revue. (Text in Italian). Series 3a. Vol. III, 1959-60.

List of articles.

UNUSUAL CAVE DEPOSIT

(This abstract of an article by D. M. McGill in the N.S.S. NEWS of Jan. 1962, pp. 5-7, was omitted from the series of abstracts in the September A.S.F. Newsletter due to lack of space).

A description of oolithic concretions from Hostermann Pit, Penn. Preliminary tests of hardness and specific gravity indicated opal or other siliceous material, while the surface reacted with acid only slowly and with difficulty. However, on being broken open, the pebbles revealed air pockets accounting for the low specific gravity and were found to be composed of finely laminated calcite. The highly polished outer surface was much harder and more resistant to acid than is usual for calcite.

CAVE AREAS NEAR DARWIN, N.T.

(This is a portion of an article prepared by Bill Walsh of the newly formed Darwin Speleological Group).

Fenton

The limestone is this area near the Douglas Limestone, very pure in parts, cherty in others, and dolomitic to varying degrees. The beds are very thick and they dip to the south-west at 5 to 10 degrees. Local warping within these dip tolerances seem usual and their effect on the location of caves is being studied by the group.

Dry valleys, dolines and water sinks occur in bewildering confusion. Open cave entrances are, however, not so easily found. We are in the difficult position of first having to explore our areas as there are virtually no local inhabitants.

Two very minor caves have been visited by the Group and no less than four lost caves are at large (two of them have been lost by us). Blocked or almost blocked (just temptingly, but impossibly small) entrance are common and a few half-hearted attempts at clearing them have been made.

All that is needed in this area is time, a few more searches and we should find something.

Douglas River Crossing Area

Two small and apparently related caves (the Dingo Hole and the Quicksand Cave) are known in this area. The caves occur in the bank of the river and are right on the watertable. The passages are low with not much headroom above the water and some unpleasant floor materials with all the properties of a quicksand. A completely flooded pothole (the Homestead Hole) exists in the bed of the river, and another similar hole has been reported to us. No proper cave searches have been conducted in this area yet, and I am afraid that we may not be able to make one during this field season.

Douglas Gorge

The most delectable reports, but we have been unable to check them yet.

Darwin - Blyth Area

Caves occur in hematite. Two such caves are known to the Group. The Hardy's Creek Cave is insignificant as a cave but very interesting if one is prepared to try and trace the genesis of these caves. The Ochre Cave at Blyth is much bigger but is almost inaccessible. We do hope, however, to get there before the Wet. This cave is at present in use by the local aboriginal tribe. Ceremonial objects are reported to be hidden in the cave and passages have been walled off by the tribesmen. Obviously we must respect their privacy and leave their walls alone. Even while observing these restrictions, we should be able to learn a lot.

Katherine

Although the caves are numerous we think they are the job of the N.T.S.S. based at Katherine. The Sixteen Mile we have, however, made an exception of. This has been the most talked-about cave, so some concrete facts should be welcome.

The cave is incompletely explored and incompletely mapped. Some conclusions may be drawn, though.

The structural geology seems to have had little effect on the siting of the cave passages and it has been suggested that the pattern of the cave was set by drainage patterns developed on the Tertiary sandstones which once overlaid the limestone. The caves were probably formed by phreatic agencies, the main inflow points being the beds of streams which cut through the sandstone allowing an escape of water into the limestone.

The original cave has been modified on elevation to the vadose zone, and a number of the original phreatic passages have become filled with consolidated sediments and flowstone.

(There follows a very long and detailed - but interesting - description of the various sections of this cave, but space will not permit its publication here.)

A CORRECTION

A note received from the Secretary of the British Speleological Association informs us of three errors made in the announcement made in our March issue of the death of Mr. Simpson. His name was Eli, he was Honorary RECORDER of the B.S.A., and his last active caving trip was in 1958. We regret these errors.