

A.S.F. Committee News

The N.S.W. Co-ordination Committee had a clean-up of the Bungonia Caves Reserve campsite at the Lookdown, the Grill Cave and Adam's Lookout on the week-end May 4-5, 1963.

Three member Societies (S.S.S., S.U.S.S. and U.N.S.W.S.S.) and two independant groups (Highlands Cave Group and Illawarra Spelco. Soc.) fielded about 50 persons and enthusiastically attacked the vast accumulations of rubbish and buried about 220 cubic feet of material from the Lookdown area alone. Many small campfires and 'bush shelters' were demolished and rubbish collected from Grill Cave and Adam's Lookout was buried.

Paul Symons, formerly of the W.A.S.G. and presently flitting around between N.S.W. and Vict. has been elected Convenor of the Cave Safety Committee but correspondence should, for the time being, be sent to A.S.F. Secretary Peter Matthews at 3, Holroyd Court, East St. Kilda, Vict.

The A.S.F. Conservation Committee (1962) report 'Caves and Conservation' was presented at the 4th Conference of the Federation held at Kempsey and additional copies of this report are available through the Convenor Elery Hamilton-Smith in Melbourne. This matter is one of prime importance to members of the Federation and because of this deserves special mention.

Space is limited in this Newsletter and consequently this article will be serialised, though I have not worked out just how many parts there will eventually be.

CAVES AND CONSERVATIONWhy conservation?

There are four primary arguments of interest to us in favour of conservation:

We have no moral right to destroy or disfigure and so take away from future generations what we enjoy,

Careless or deliberate disfigurement of a cave permanently mars its beauty,

Valuable scientific specimens and data may be destroyed unwittingly,

Ethically we should explore caves as we find them, not altering them in any way.

Any person, whether he be a caver, a property owner, a pseudo caver, a visitor or a guide entering a cave area and crossing the threshold of a cave can do irreparable damage either by quarrying, dumping of rubbish, destruction of formation, soiling of decoration, littering, un-necessarily marking, destruction of natural fauna and flora, treading un-necessary pathways, etc etc. Much of this damage will be unavoidable for many years to come but a little study of the problem tends to leave one with a strong conviction that speleos can do much to avert damage.

Surely, having adopted speleology as our interest we have a responsibility toward conservation and we must accept that measures are necessary to promote conservation of caves in Australia, and that we have a strong responsibility to plan and implement these measures.

The Avenues of conservation

The avenues mentioned will be discussed in more detail in the next issue but it is emphasised that these categories are not alternatives - the maximum number of different approaches is necessary and the only conservation programme that will succeed is a many faceted one. What are these categories? Legal protection; physical protection; concealment of location; cleaning and restoration; society membership policies; speleological practice, and Public education.

AROUND THE SOCIETIES

An influx of new members has added to U.N.S.W.S.S.'s strength and they have been active at Cliefden (with Orange S.S.), at Coolamon (with Canberra S.S.). At Coolamon exploration was in the vicinity of the Blue Waterhole but results were disappointing.

Canberra S.S. having a time with photography and surveying at Wee Jasper's Punchbowl and Dog Leg and at Yarrangobilly's Restoration Cave.

Cooranbong S.S. have disbanded, for the time being at least.

Cave Exploration Group (S.A.) have decided to withdraw their resignation from the Federation. Welcome back to the fold CEGSA. Recent trips of this group have been to Narinna Pound where exploration was concentrated on Squeeze Pot, Lake Cave and Saltbush Gorge Cave

the latter being located from vague directions, the Mt. Schank area which opens up new ground on every trip and excavations at Correll's Cave, Curramulka.

Port Moresby S.S. have spawned a Goroka (Eastern Highlands) branch, with several active members concentrating on the Chuave and Henganofi areas, the latter with its turbulent river passages and large 100' waterfall, and leech infested tunnels. The supplement to this issue provides preliminary details of a proposed joint British-Australian expedition to New Guinea commencing in June 1964 and lasting for some 3 - 4 months.

Sydney Uni.S.S. are also getting expedition minded and circulars have been sent to all member Societies advising of the expedition to the Mullarbor in January 1964 and calling for suggestions regarding the proposals for an intensive research programme on the expedition, and calling for applicants for the undertaking. Persons interested in joining the expedition should communicate directly with S.U.S.S. stating their specific interests. Further details will be forwarded to each intending participant as definite details are formulated. S.U.S.S. have requested official A.S.F. sponsorship for the expedition, but this has, necessarily, to have the approval of the member Societies and a Postal Vote on this matter will be taken shortly. Notwithstanding any formal approval or refusal I am certain that all member Societies will support this expedition so that it can be said to truly represent Australian Speleology, and not be solely the efforts of one Group.

THE GREEN INVADER

In 'Time', July 5, 1963 is mention that the famous caves at Lascaux in France have been closed because of the creeping in of the alga chlorobotrys, an alga that can live without light and one that feeds off microorganisms wafted into the cave.

Scientists working with antiseptics are trying to save the highly treasured cave paintings, but as a precaution the caves are being photographed 'down to the last millimeter'. It is said that with these photographs any museum or community in the world could reconstruct Lascaux, but the originality will have gone.

BROTHER G. NICHOLAS, F.S.C.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Federation to welcome Brother Nicholas, F.S.C. to Australia. Bro. Nicholas, past President of the National Speleological Society (USA) is here on an insect ecology study of Australian caves and we wish him well with his researches. We hope that he will take back to the States with him a little of the 'down-under' speleological theme.

LIBRARIAN'S CORNER

HELICTITE - Vol.1, No.3, April 1963

This issue of Helictite is devoted almost entirely to one article, 'Geomorphology of the Dip Cave, Wee Jasper, N.S.W.' by J.N. Jennings, M.A. The article reviews the exploration and exploitation of the cave, and treats in detail the relationship between cave morphology and geological **structure**; factors concealing the formation of a cave, in the form of cave breakdown, secondary deposition and bat guano; evidence of origin and evolution present, such as the floors, roofs, channel grooves in the walls, current markings, inclinations of passages, cave breccia, and minor phreatic features; and sets out some ideas on the probable origin of the system. Three text figures are included.

Also included in this volume are two obituaries, a note on Bro. Nicholas' visit, two notes on fauna and an abstract on archaeology in Australia and Melanesia.

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Nutrition for cavers is covered in two publications: The Bulletin of the South African Speleological Association, 1960 (pt.2) and Spelunca Bulletin of the Comité National de Speleologie and Société Speleologique de France 2^e Année, No.4 (Oct.-Dec.'62).

This is a question of major importance in the planning of the dietary needs for long expeditions and also for the necessary balance of foodstuffs on the average trip, it is proposed that the subject be covered more fully in the next issue.

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VANDALISM A publication was recently returned to the Librarian mutilated. The volume, a soft covered publication was returned folded into four to fit into an envelope, and this thoughtlessness

has damaged the volume so that photostating of its pages is very difficult. This is nothing short of vandalism.

Would borrowers from the Library please ensure that material is returned in good order, or I am afraid I may have to withdraw lending privileges to such vandalistically-inclined types.

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USE OF LIBRARY

I am pleased to announce that S.S.S. has adopted the principal of classification of the A.S.F. Library Punch Card System. By doing this a much wider coverage of articles and journals, easy to locate is available to all members of A.S.F.. Any Society setting up a comprehensive cataloguing system and is considering a punch-card system is urged to contact me for details and initial classification. By standardizing on systems the scope of the lending system is greatly expanded.

G.R. WALLIS
A.S.F. Librarian

Other Publications or interest (Thank you, E.H-S.)

DEW, B. : 'Animal Life in Caves' Aust. Nat. Hist. (formerly Aust. Mus. Mag.) 15, 5, pps 158 - 161 (March '63)

A popular article on living fauna of Australian Caves.

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WAKEFIELD, N.A. : 'Sub-fossils from Mt. Hamilton, Victoria' Vict. Nat. 79, 11 pp 323 - 330 (March '63)

OLLIER, C.D. : 'The Mt. Hamilton Lava Caves' ibid. pp 331-336

These two papers describe the Mt. Hamilton cave and the bone material collected therefrom. The species represented fall into four groups: those likely to be still living in the area; those only likely to occur during a period of wet conditions; those known only from semi-desert conditions; and those extinct, at least on the mainland. Ollier's paper describes the cave in detail and publishes a map. This is of special interest, as few of our lava caves have been described at all, and this one has a total length of over 3,000 ft.

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WOMERSLEY, C. : 'Two new species of Acarina from Bat Guano from Australian Caves' Trans. Roy. Soc. Sth. Aust. 86, pp 147-

154 (March '63)

Two species of mites from Bat guano are described. The first Coproglyphus dewae, is entirely coprophilous, but it is suggested that the second, Neotrombidium gracilare is probably parasitic upon arthropods in its larval stages.

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CAWTHORN, P. : 'Discovery of subterranean freshwater fauna on the Eastern side of North-west Cape' W.A. Nat. 8, 6 pp 129-132 (January '63)

This paper records three of the four troglobite species from the North-west Cape from Kubura Well on the eastern side. Former collections have been made on the Western side of the peninsula. It is pointed out that the population here exhibits some points of difference from earlier collections.

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COOK, D.L. : 'The Fossil vertebrate fauna of Strong's Cave, Boranup, Western Australia' W.A. Nat. 8, 7 pp 153-162 (March '63)

Pleistocene remains collected from Strong's Cave are described and the significance of the deposit discussed. The author has located a number of extinct species from this locality, as well as both the Thylacine and the Tasmanian Devil.

ITEM OF INTEREST

CARL, Louis and PETIT, Joseph: 'Tefedest' George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London 1954

This book tells of the expedition of four Frenchmen to photograph, trace and reproduce prehistoric rock paintings and engravings in the desert mountains known as the Hoggar in the central Sahara. Outside Tamanrasset they investigated 'foggaras', subterranean streams, simple trenches in the sand, where every ten yards or so a chimney appeared. The tunnels drain water from a nearby water table and direct it toward the town sometimes several miles away. In these 'foggaras' live spiders, frogs, toads, geckos, insects, fish and whitish plants. There is a peculiar atmosphere of brackish, slimy odours, wet sand, and aquatic gurglings amplified by the arches in the 'foggaras' which run at a depth of over thirty feet.

Supplement to the A.S.F. Newsletter, No. 20, July 1963. Inserted
by the Port Moresby Speleological Society, P.O. Box 2, Konedobu,
PAPUA

Unfortunately many commitments have not allowed me to present details of the current progress with the plans for an expedition to caving areas within New Guinea. I must firstly thank A.S.F. for allowing me space here, to put to wide circulation the preliminary details on the proposed expedition and to call for applications.

Those of you who were at the Kempsey Conference may remember me saying that I consider New Guinea to be one of the most promising and underdeveloped caving regions of the world, and that a fully fledged expedition is the only thing that would rapidly develop some of the areas. The plan initially was to run the expedition for a period of approximately a month and for numbers to be limited to about 24. Recent developments have, however, modified this initial proposal and plans have been considerably altered.

Members of the British '62 Gouffre Berger Expedition are working out details for a British Overseas Caving Expedition to New Guinea lasting some 3 - 4 months commencing June '64, and details are at present being collated. The British Plan is to send some 12 persons to the Territory and beside being well experienced cavers each will be a specialist in his own field, Geologists, Surveyor, etc. This Society has made several recommendations to the organizers as to the areas that showed the most promise and also advising re topography, climate, transport difficulties, labour etc and it is the strong feeling at this stage that the expedition will come off as planned, though there are still numerous plans to be discussed.

I have suggested to the British that the expedition could cover the following localities: Chuave (Eastern Highlands), Porgera (Western Highlands) and the Star Mountains (spraddling the Sepik, Western Districts and stretching into West Irian). These areas will provide challenging caving and there is every possibility that really deep caves will be found. Probing into the Chuave area has so far turned up more than seven shafts of over 100' depth in 25 known caves, of which few have been completely explored. This work in 4 major and 4 minor trips with a shortage of man power and gear and also being restricted to the lower altitudes is not an inconsiderable feat. Exploration still needs to be done in the area of Mt. Elimbari at over 9,000 ft.

Supplement to A.S.F. Newsletter no. 20, July 1963

Because of the great distances separating team members there will be a mammoth amount of organising necessary and with this in mind I have set aside a portion of the supplement which should be completed by member Societies and intending participants. These forms should be returned to me as soon as possible preferably before September 1, 1963.

An important point at this stage is the matter of the duration of the expedition and the financial angle. The British team which will make up the bulk of the members is a strong one, each being well versed in prolonged and difficult caving and each highly qualified in some field of speleological endeavour. I feel that we should not let the team weaken by the influx of casual cavers, even if such are prepared to accept the high financial outlay and have time available. The expedition will last for about 3 months and will certainly dampen the enthusiasm of those who would not be available for the whole duration. There is a possibility that the expedition will be working in several areas and this may make it possible to accept persons who are only able to spend a short time here. As far as possible there will be very careful selection of all applicants and for this purpose I will in time be seeking advice from leaders of your group. Because of the nature of the programme envisaged persons will be selected more for their aptitude and special traits than for their ability to pay.

An important feature of the expedition will be the extensive use of air transport for the movement of people and supplies and maybe even air drops into remote localities. Because of this feature the costs will be astronomically high, though possible sponsorship and grants could reduce the amount of personal expenditure. Naturally enough, though, if there is financial backing to the expedition the calibre of persons participating will need to be high, and so the giddy circle turns.

A comprehensive circular on the expedition is currently being prepared and this will be available to Societies and to individual applicants. In the interests of economy I would appreciate your co-operation in not sending in an application unless there is a distinct possibility that you will be available to attend. There are many issues to be mentioned in this preliminary bulletin, but I am certain that they will, in time,

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resolve themselves and the expedition will kick off and turn out successfully.

There is little more that can be said at this stage, except that we should all try to make the expedition a success in some way. Societies are requested to complete the pro-forma Part 1, (contd. over)

Part 1 Society form

Name of Society:

Address:

Will your Society be able to assist with equipment?

To what extent?

Are you prepared to assist with organising?

In what way can you help?

.....

Part 2 personal application

Full Name:

Postal Address:

Age:

Member of (Society):

Special Qualifications:

Time and duration available:

Brief Resume of caving experience:

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and intending participants Part 2. Please forward forms when completed to: The Secretary, Port Moresby Speleological Society, P.O. Box 2, Konedobu, Papua.

Gordon a.Bain
President

Can you offer any advice regarding the planning of the expedition?

Signed:
Offic. Office:

.....
Can you assist with the organisation of the expedition?
In what way?

Will your Society be able to assist with equipment, or will you be able to make some general gear available?
To what extent?

Can you offer any advice regarding the planning of the expedition?

Signed:

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P.O. box 198, Broadway, N.S.W., Aust.

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