

AS F NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 24

JUNE 1964

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

PO BOX 198, BROADWAY, N.S.W., AUST.

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Annual subscription:
One shilling and sixpence

Registered in Australia
for transmission by post
as a periodical

THE ANNUAL REPORTS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THIS ISSUE SO THAT THE INFORMATION WHICH THEY CONTAIN WILL REACH SUBSCRIBERS WITHIN REASONABLE TIME BEFORE THE PERTH CONFERENCE. MATERIAL ORIGINALLY PLANNED FOR PUBLICATION IN THIS ISSUE, WHICH IS OF AN "UNDATED" NATURE, WILL NOW BE PUBLISHED IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE, NUMBER 26. AS USUAL, THE TREASURER'S REPORT WILL BE PRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In introducing this report of the Federation's activities for the year 1964, I am going to refrain from talking about details of work done, and rather discuss some of the general trends in speleological affairs, both here and overseas. However, perhaps two matters of the domestic affairs of the Federation can be highlighted at this point: the first is that we still have the ever-present problem of shortage of time on the part of the executive in getting jobs done, and we apologize for the late arrival of this year's newsletters. However, while the Federation is dependent, as it will be for many years, upon voluntary effort by busy people, we must

accept this, and ask only that people, willing to do their best, continue to offer themselves for executive positions. Perhaps the suggested enlargement of the Executive this year might help find an answer in spreading the work load over more shoulders.

The second is that a deal of work on the part of all concerned has been expended upon our projected handbook. It is to be hoped that this will become a reality in the new year--such a handbook will be a real milestone in the development of the Federation and should serve not only to make our Speleology better informed, but to set down for the first time an overall review of our caving areas.

Looking over to general trends, there appear to me to be three inseparably linked topics which are of central concern to all cavers, although certainly not yet at a crisis stage in Australia. These are the matters of conservation, of maintaining access to caves, and of our own public relations as a group. British cavers are now facing the problem of not only far too many cavers for a small number of caves, but of many of these caves being closed to cavers. Every month sees

a few more caves being closed in the United States. Most of these closings are not the result of any action by responsible speleologists, but by occasional cavers who do not observe the same standards as the speleo societies. Along with this, extensive vandalism and despoiling is occurring in caves all over the world, including Australia.

Although the closing of caves and much of the despoiling of caves cannot be blamed upon the actions of cavers, one is tempted to ask to what extent are these things due to the inaction of cavers? I would suggest that we do not only need to develop the highest possible standards in our caving activities, especially with regard to conservation, but that we must do more to convince the leaders of our community of the importance and value of our work and the importance of effective, properly planned conservation measures. Our voice should be much more heard in these matters. Now I know that many societies are establishing far better relationships within their own State, with landowners, scientific bodies, and others. But is enough being done?

At least one Australian society is proud to invite parliamentarians and senior public servants to its functions--this society has an effective voice in conservation and it is seen as being an important organization in its own community. Frankly, although I have rarely been to a speleo meeting which is not enjoyable, I have been to many hundreds which would certainly not create the right impression on the V.I.P's. of the State. Similarly, I have seen much behaviour on trips which, again, is great fun--but it is a great pity that the people concerned forget that they are not anonymous--they are identified as cave explorers. If their behaviour stamps them as irresponsible or objectionable, then speleology becomes

so labelled.

In other words, the future of speleology in this country depends not only on the work we do in caves, but also on the impression we get across to other people in the community--if we wish them to take us seriously, and we certainly will need to be taken seriously in the years to come--then we must look to our public relations now.

Having said that, let's look at another aspect. Every two years, in association with the Federation Conference, we have a tradition of conducting field trips. Some of these have done some good work, carrying out original exploration and using the special talents of people for other work such as mapping or geological study of major systems. Others have, let's face it, been nothing more than pleasant Cook's Tours of the area--fun, but rather time wasting. I can hear Conference organizers saying, "Well, that's what was wanted by the people who came. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear and you can't do real exploration with people who just want a nice picnic-like tour."

The answer to this surely lies in the preliminary organization of the field trips. If these have a decent objective and a decent plan laid out well in advance by which people can really get cracking at some work, then the people will be attracted who can do a worthwhile job. Can someone organize a few really top-level expeditions over the next few Conferences which will present a real challenge and get jobs done which otherwise will remain untouched? I warn you (and I feel sure the SUSS members who organized the last Nullarbor party are right with me in this) that you will need to be prepared to do much hard work for a year before the trip and a year (or more) afterwards,

but the results will be worthwhile in terms of their contribution to speleological knowledge.

On the other hand, perhaps there is the dissenting view that such major expeditions as I am visualizing will only work if privately organized. Can we give this whole matter an airing in Perth, with a view to better post-Conference field trips? I have clearly stated my own bias--that we need more real exploration and less touring--perhaps the Conference will disagree with me, but at least it is worth discussion.

--Elery Hamilton-Smith

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership. Since last year, three further societies have been admitted to the Federation, making the present total 17 member societies. Twelve of these are financial and have paid subscriptions for a total of 414 individual members, eight being Newsletter subscriptions only. The societies unfinancial at this date (7 XI 64) are NTaSS, NTSS, NTUCSS, PMSS, and VCES; their total membership from the only available figures being about 90, making a total Federation membership of about 500.

This is an increase of approximately 20% on last year. Several societies have shown minor decreases in membership, others minor increases, and two have shown substantial increases (one, an increase of 34 members or 60%, and the other, 17 members or 50%). A major factor in the Federation's increase has been the return of CEGSA with its 63 members.

Two non-member societies are paying subscriptions for 14 Newsletters, and TCC have not been included in the above figures as I have heard that they have confirmed

their resignation. (They are, however, willing to co-operate in the production of the Handbook.)

Secretarial Expenses. Since the Melbourne meeting expenses have been:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Spent</u>
Postage	£5. 0. 0	£4. 6. 5
Stationery	3. 0. 0	1. 10. 0

(Stationery does not include duplicating paper.)

The filing box, for which £5 was allowed, is at present under construction.

The Federation. Just a few brief observations that come to mind after two years as ASF Secretary. Maybe I'm biased, but these are some of the reasons why I am biased. Consider the following:

1. ASF has much to offer, but this is not served up on a plate--it has to be asked for.

2. The Prime and immediately obvious facility ASF offers is communication between cavers. This means between cavers in Australia and between Australian and overseas cavers, and includes reports of trips and expeditions, reports on technical and scientific findings, new ideas, the general welfare of caving, and correspondence in general. Communication is the major factor in the progress of Australian speleology.

3. The means ASF provides for this communication are:

(a) Australian and overseas address lists (the second edition of the overseas list will be published shortly).

(b) The Newsletter.

(c) The biennial conferences.

(d) The Library.

4. A very well stocked library is

available and publications on any speleo subject may be borrowed, without cost, merely by writing to the Librarian.

5. Subjects of immediate interest and concern to cavers are examined by ASF subcommittees and reports are published. So far, reports/recommendations have been issued on: the Constitution, ethics, terminology, surveying and conservation. Present committees are working on safety and bat research; another is looking after the co-ordination of NSW societies. The Speleo Handbook will be a further step towards the dissemination of practical knowledge.

6. ASF is a national body capable of representing Australian speleologists whenever the need arises.

7. Not all cavers are interested in the welfare of speleology as such--their main concern is the enjoyment of caving whenever they feel like it. I would direct their attention to the remarks of the President in his report regarding the state of caving overseas. Concrete examples may be found in issues of "Northern Caving" (UK) and "NSS News" (USA) available from the library.

8. The cost of running ASF is less than the cost of a packet of cigarettes per year from each caver.

In view of the above points it is obvious to me that ASF is worth the money, and the effort by the office-bearers. What do you think?

The Position of Secretary. Due to the pressure of neglected work over the past two years I will not be available for nomination as Secretary again next year. I have certainly enjoyed doing the job and would like to continue, but unfortunately I will not be able to do so. However I have already been dubbed to produce the Handbook and would

be glad to be elected to the proposed extended executive committee for this purpose.

Now comes the question of a new Secretary. If anyone would like to get his teeth into a worthwhile job for the Federation and the 499 other cavers then I strongly recommend that he (or she) make sure he is nominated for this position. It will certainly take a good amount of spare time (Make no mistake about that. An Assistant Secretary could well be used to advantage.) but it is just as certainly well worth the effort.

--Peter Matthews

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Cataloguing. The number of journals in the library now numbers 235 under 37 titles; this does not include the Australian newsletters, which number approximately 60. Also there are 39 separate reprints.

Punch card indexing has been progressing at a steady pace, the number of individual references numbering 460. Still only a limited number of foreign publications have been indexed or translated in any way.

No further groups have indicated their interest in the adoption of the overall system of indexing as used by the Federation. It should be urged that any society setting up a comprehensive index system should investigate the advantages of the punch card type of indexing.

To avoid any possible misconception, the system used by the Federation is actually an Edge Notch System, not a true Punch Card System. Punch Card refers to automatic data processing as used by a machine of the I.B.M. type. The system used by the Federation uses cards with a series of notches along the

edge, the notches indicating a coding and facilitating the sorting, which is done by hand.

Usage of the Library. Since the beginning of 1964, 5 loans have been made from the library; this is 3 less than the previous year. Returns have again been prompt, though one Victorian borrower has been very reticent about two publications he has had since February 1963. One was returned early in October last and the second is still outstanding. Attempts to persuade the miscreant by removal of privileges and fining have been to no avail. Much doubt is held as to the success that would ensue the claim for fine money.

Budget. Postage for the year has been almost negligible, due to certain factors. Only 6/- of the 16/- set aside for the purchase of snap binders for Australian newsletters was used.

Expenditure

Postage	2s. 3	
Binders	6s. 0	<u>8s. 3</u>

Receipts

Postal notes	<u>4s. 0</u>
Balance (Debit)	<u>4s. 3</u>

I suggest that the amount outstanding be set aside, as it would be too costly to worry about.

Suggested requirements for 1965:

Postage	£1. 0. 0	
Binder	1. 0. 0	<u>£2. 0. 0</u>

Allowance for postage is in case present arrangements alter and the binder is a second one for the punch card system index.

--Graham R. Wallis

NSW CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE REPORT

This report outlines briefly the activities of the Committee during the period January to November 1964.

It was obvious from the Federation Committee meeting at Melbourne in January, that a heavy programme had been placed upon the Co-ordination Committee. This programme consisted of conservation, and search and rescue problems, relations with bodies controlling caving areas, the ASF Handbook and a detailed investigation into the eligibility of the Highland Caving Group as a prospective member of ASF. A meeting was convened in February to discuss the agenda suggested by the Melbourne Committee meeting.

I can now report that a successful conservation operation was carried out at Yarrangobilly. The Restoration Cave is now gated and much of the damaged formation has been cleaned. This is the subject of a more complete report.

Circulars, designed to induce discussion relating to the organization of a NSW-wide search and rescue committee and the relaxation of conditions imposed upon societies caving at Yarrangobilly, were distributed to all NSW societies and in the case of the S&R to other interested bodies. The results of these are yet to be analysed, however SSS have modernized their system of member notification in a S&R alarm. This system has been adopted by two other societies.

Following a gentle hint from Melbourne, the committee compiled a suggested list of areas for each NSW society to investigate with regard to the ASF Handbook. The completeness of this coverage will be evident at the 1964-5 Conference.

The Convener has since the Melbourne meeting investigated the activities of the Highland Caving Group. A separate report has been prepared, the essence of which is a recommendation that the Group be admitted to ASF membership, should

they again apply at the next conference.

As the Perth Conference draws nearer, the necessity of co-ordinating transport facilities both to utilize the available private transport and also to establish accurate arrival dates at Adelaide and Perth, becomes a reality. A meeting has been convened for November 26, to finalize this phase of the Conference.

I wish to convey my gratitude to the society delegates for their co-operation, co-ordination, attendance at meetings and the maintenance of a continuous flow of correspondence both of an informative and critical nature. My thanks also extends to the individuals who used the Committee throughout the past term.

--Ian D. Wood

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER'S REPORT

Notwithstanding the inevitable effect of several concurrent changes in the administration and publication of the newsletter, I feel that this year has seen some substantial achievements. Unfortunately the change of Publications Officer, (and, of course, location), change of format, and installation of automatic addressing, combined with an unpredicted lack of time on the part of the editor, making it necessary to modify the year's plans and programme. Thus there was an overall delay in circulation and, mainly because of difficulties with the G.P.O. over the change of format, the March issue had to be "hand" distributed.

On the brighter side, the year's achievements included:

1. The change to quarto format with printed title and standardization of basic content and layout. (Due to an error in duplication--

beyond the control of the editor--the printed title sheet had to be omitted from the June issue.) With the new format, the opportunity for improving the quality of paper was taken.

2. "Elliott" automatic addressing was introduced and an improved wrapping technique was employed.

3. A card index of subscribers was begun and this is linked by code numbering to the addressing stencils. This should improve administrative efficiency, particularly in respect to the high rate of turnover of subscribers and address changing which occurs each year.

Circulation. This year, circulation was considerably increased. An average total of 630 copies per issue were distributed. (This has confirmed the belief that automatic addressing would become a virtual necessity.)

Costs. Expenditure on this year's four issues of the newsletter is not complete at this time, as preparation and mailing costs on all but the March issue have not been paid. However if an estimate of these is included and the value of materials to be carried forward to 1965 is subtracted, the estimated total expenditure on the newsletter in 1964 is £57. 10. 6, being the total of £16. 13. 1, the initial cost of setting up the addressing system and the new format, and £40. 17. 5 for materials, addressing and postage, (i.e. the running costs.). Thus the actual running costs for the circulation of 630 works out at 15.6 pence each per annum, or--if the cost of unpaid copies on exchange, etcetera, is distributed over the 506 paying (?) subscribers--this figure becomes 19.4 pence each per annum.

Budget Estimates, 1965. Costs for next year assuming a circulation of 630 per issue, with a total of 38 pages (19 sheets) for the 4 issues

(based on the minimum bulk quantity of paper which can be obtained with a discount) are:

Materials	£24. 6. 0	
Addressing	9. 18. 0	
Postage	12. 7. 0	<u>£46. 11. 0</u>

For comparison, if the number of pages is reduced to 32 (4 sheets per issue) the total cost becomes £44. 1. 0. The fact that has to be faced is that about 50% of the total cost is of a quasi-fixed nature, dependent upon the circulation only and not the size of the newsletter.

Future Policy. In my opinion, now that the general form of the newsletter has been established, there are two matters of basic policy requiring further attention. The first is that, as far as possible, the editorial policy with respect to content, the technical aspects of layout, addressing and wrapping, and the administrative systems should be stabilized. (Stability is not to be confused with stagnation!) The second is that, to sustain this stability and ensure some sort of continuity, the newsletter needs a permanent financial and material foundation. With these matters in mind I will now attempt to communicate some practical ideas as well as some general thoughts for the future.

1. Obviously--if the newsletter is to achieve its objective of providing threefold communication, for individuals, societies, and internationally--its content must be balanced to cater for each of these responsibilities. In planning the layout of the new format--while this year's plans and programme were foiled to some extent--an attempt was made to satisfy these requirements by establishing basic categories for the publication of all material. It is hoped that these will comprise the permanent form of the new format.

One aspect of the service which the newsletter should provide seems to have been neglected in the past. There has been no provision for communication by individuals. By publication of brief letters, providing or requesting information on general speleological topics which are of interest to all readers, the individual is afforded a valuable service and at the same time interesting, useful and current information on a variety of subjects is circulated to all subscribers.

While discussing material, another matter which I would like to raise is that, in view of the prime objective of the newsletter, I feel we should in future try to adopt a policy of publishing less Federation business, so that there is more room for the useful and informative speleological material. And I don't believe that there is a lack of this type of material!

2. On technical aspects: it may be possible to find a less time consuming method of wrapping the newsletter for mailing. Cost of the present system is only about 2/- per 100, but it has the disadvantage of being particularly laborious.

3. I've heard persons from a variety of member societies say that they would prefer not to subscribe to the Federation newsletter. Whether the content is technical or non-technical, business or general information, they are just not interested. Perhaps this matter could be subjected to further inquiry, but it would appear that some of the time and effort expended on the newsletter is being wasted on needless circulation. Therefore I suggest that the present system of a compulsory newsletter subscription included in the capitation fee, be changed so that subscription to the newsletter is entirely voluntary and open to all interested persons. The mechanics of a new system to

achieve this are closely linked with the subject of point 4 and are discussed there.

4. As the newsletter grows and circulation increases, the need for order and efficiency in its administrative systems will become even more apparent than it is at present. So that these systems can be properly established now, and maintained in future, I submit that control over, and responsibility for, all these aspects of the publication should be entirely in the hands of one person only: the Publications Officer. To expedite the compilation of the annual address list of subscribers, a "renewal of subscription" form could be included in every fourth issue of the newsletter. These, along with the actual subscription, would be returned directly to the P.O., making it relatively easy to compile the year's address list by rearrangement of the card index of subscribers. The obviously objectionable business of mailing small sums of money could be eliminated if, as at present, society secretaries collected subscriptions and mailed them in bulk to the P.O. New subscriptions should be arranged by written application and in the majority of cases they too could be forwarded in bulk by society secretaries at the beginning of the year. Efficiency with respect to address changes would be improved if notification was made direct to the P.O., preferably by returning an old mailing wrapper with the new address attached.

5. Again with continuity of publication in mind, I feel it would be advantageous to set the newsletter on a more solid foundation by building up some form of financial reserve and improving the material assets. This would probably have to be done according to a fairly long-range plan and there is no doubt more than one way of doing it, but the time to consider the

matter is now. Naturally, publication of the newsletter requires a certain amount of equipment, and a variety of materials are necessary for proper maintenance of administrative systems. These things have always been left to the ingenuity of the particular P.O. in office at any time and although he usually manages to provide his own equipment or make arrangements for the free use of someone else's, this system is hardly satisfactory from any point of view. And, of course, when there is a change of P.O. the equipment or arrangements, administrative systems, correspondence files, and so forth are lost, so that the new P.O. has to start from scratch. Therefore the present system should not be considered to be a permanent answer to the problem.

Finally, I regret that I would prefer not to stand for re-election as P.O. next year. I anticipate that my studies will consume even more time next year and, additionally, I will be concerned with the publication of the results of the Nullarbor Expedition 1963-4, which cannot be postponed any longer.

I extend my sincere thanks to everyone for their assistance and patience in 1964.

--Edward G. Anderson

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Perth Conference. Unless there are any serious objections the opening day of the Conference will be changed to Thursday, December 31, 1964 to allow more travelling time for spel-eos from the eastern states.

Details of the Conference arrangements and an application form were included in the March newsletter, which can be obtained from society secretaries. If you will be attending the Conference, it is most important that you provide Terry Bain (Box S1349, GPO, Perth) with details of your intentions immediately.