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ASF

AUSTRALIAN
SPELEOLOGICAL
FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER

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ASF NEWSLETTER

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AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION
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new south wales	HCG	Highland Caving Group
	ISS	Illawarra Speleological Society
	KSS	Kempsey Speleological Society
	NTUCSS	Newcastle Technical and University College Speleological Society
	NTaSS	Northern Tablelands Speleological Society
	OSS	Orange Speleological Society
	SSS	Sydney Speleological Society
	SUSS	Sydney University Speleological Society
	UNSWSS	University of New South Wales Speleological Soc.
northern territory	NTSS	Northern Territory Speleological Society
papua & new guinea	PMSS	Port Moresby Speleological Society
queensland	UQSS	University of Queensland Speleological Society
south australia	CEGSA	Cave Exploration Group of South Australia
victoria	SASS	Sub Aqua Speleological Society
	VCES	Victorian Cave Exploration Society
western australia	WASG	Western Australian Speleological Group

Whenever possible correspondence should be addressed directly to the appropriate officer. Subscriptions and subscriber address changes should be forwarded via the Treasurer. Contributions and advertisements must reach the Editor one month before the month of publication. Advertisement rates on application to Editor.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

★ Because of delays in printing and preparation for mailing the SEPTEMBER 1964 ASF Newsletter (Number 25) was not posted. For this we apologize. The missing number is being prepared for mailing at present, and will be circulated shortly.

★ MAY 31, 1965 is the deadline for material to be included in the ASF Handbook. Data not forwarded to the handbook editor by that date will be omitted.

★ HIGHLAND CAVING GROUP (New South Wales) were admitted to membership of the Federation at the Perth Conference. A previous application from this group was not accepted by the 1964 Committee Meeting. Membership of the DARWIN SPELEOLOGICAL GROUP, now disbanded, has lapsed. Further contact with the TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB was met by a reaffirmation of their decision to resign from Federation membership. TCC is Australia's most senior speleological group and was one of the first groups to support the idea of federation. Those who have worked to combine and co-ordinate the efforts of the various societies --and thus give meaning to "Australian speleology"--must feel that it is an understatement to express regret at the loss of TCC. The Federation hasn't just lost one of its best and most respected members; it has lost full Australian representation.

★ DAVID LOWRY, President of WASG, will be engaged in field work for his Ph. D. in the Western Australian portion of the Nullarbor Plain from July to November this year. He would like to hear from any cavers who will be in the area during this

period. David can be contacted by writing c/o WASG, Box S1349, G.P.O., Perth, W.A.

FIFTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Minutes of the business meeting held in conjunction with the Fifth Biennial Conference at Araluen, Western Australia, from December 31, 1964 to January 2, 1965, have been circulated to member societies.

Some items from the agenda, of interest to all members, follow:

■ Eleven of the seventeen member societies were represented, the six not represented being: DSG, KSS, NTaSS, NTSS, PMSS, and UQSS.

■ The Publications Officer's Report aroused discussion on the content of the Newsletter. General feeling suggested that it should focus upon general news of Australian speleology and of work done by members, with abstracts of significant papers. It was resolved that authors of papers to Federation conferences be asked to lodge a typescript copy so that abstracts can be published in the Newsletter where desirable.

■ The Librarian, in his report emphasised that with punch-card indexing members need only supply specific details of the subject in which they are interested, and appropriate references can be readily located and forwarded to them. This service is provided free to all members.

■ It was resolved that the ASF Handbook shall be published in a suitable cover and stapled. Punched copies, for loose-leaf binding will be made available if desired by those ordering.

■ Selection of an emblem for the

Federation was further discussed and it was decided that ideas and designs should be forwarded to the Vice-president, to be reported upon at the next meeting.

■ After thorough discussion, a modified version of the proposed constitutional amendment relating to election of the Executive Committee was submitted to the meeting and carried unanimously.

■ Following the addition of an appropriate clause to the constitution, Dr. B. P. Moore and Mr. J. N. Jennings were appointed as trustees of the Federation.

■ The following persons were elected to the Executive. President: Elery Hamilton-Smith (SASS); Officers for a two year term: Terry Bain (WASG), Bob Chapman (UNSWSS), John Noonan (SASS), Graham Wallis (UNSWSS). Officers for a one year term: Ted Anderson (SUSS), Peter Matthews (VCES), Ian Wood (UNSWSS). The particular positions which these officers hold is decided, after election, by the Executive itself. The officers, their positions, and addresses are listed inside the front cover of each issue of the Newsletter.

■ Pending consultation with the Society, CSS will act as host for the January 1966 Committee Meeting, which will be held in Canberra.

■ The two Victorian Societies will be hosts for the Sixth Biennial Conference in December 1966. The actual location of the Conference has yet to be decided.

■ A budget allowing for an expenditure of almost £100 was approved. The annual capitation fee was set at three shillings, including two shillings Newsletter subscription. It was decided that top priority must be given to stabilization of Newsletter production. This requires provision of reliable and

permanent facilities and part of the Newsletter subscription will be diverted into a capital fund for this purpose. Member societies were asked to consider the matter of raising money for the A.A.S.F. capital fund by means of slide nights, barbecues, et cetera.

CONSERVATION ACTION

The Federation will write to the Northern Territory Administration clarifying the need to preserve both the Kintore and Cutta Cutta Caves, and pointing out that effective conservation requires more than mere reservation--as planned by the Administration.

A report has been prepared by the ASF President, dealing with the need for conservation of caves in the Mt. Etna District, Queensland. This has been circulated to member societies, accompanied by a list of recommended actions. One of these is that all member societies or individual speleologists should write to the relevant authorities supporting the report. Further details can be obtained from your society secretary or ASF President. Apparently the Queensland Department of Primary Industries have taken some action to further the protection of these caves.

Although the situation with respect to the preservation of the Glass Cave at Wombeyan, N.S.W. does not look hopeful at this time, further information is being gathered with a view to preparation of a report and appropriate recommendations.

At the Perth Conference it was reported that the caves at Cliefden in N.S.W. had recently suffered further vandalism at the hands of a group of members from one member society. The Executive are to investigate the report and take appropriate action.

 THE FIFTH BIENNIAL

A.S.F. CONFERENCE

by The Editor

The fifth conference of the Federation was held in Perth; the Western Australian Speleological Group being the host society. The Conference and associated lectures were held at the Young Australia League camp at Araluen, 23 miles from the city and set in picturesque mountain scenery, while the Cave-man's Dinner and social activities were located nearer the city centre. The 40 odd persons present found the weather "b----- hot"; for those in the conference room temperatures up to 118°F (48°C) were experienced, for those in the swimming pool--considerably lower.

Highlights of the conference site would be: the swimming pool, the restaurant, major civil engineering reconstructions by a certain university group and others, a New Year's Eve party lasting till 6am for some--featuring yet another university group, Joe Jennings' 'Bombay Bloomers', beard growing competition and a number of interstate vehicles in various states of repair (disrepair?).

In a few words, the conference was a success. Even more successful was the field trips held in the Margaret River/Augusta region, some 150 to 200 miles from Perth (commonly known as the South-west). The common campsite was situated at the Forestry Commission hut at Boranup, where three rooms (i.e. boys, girls and mixed company) served a total of approximately thirty persons.

No major project had been designated for the conference; consequently tourist-type caving was the order of the day, only individuals

carrying out their specific projects such as insect collecting, bat banding, et cetera.

Major points of interest were:

1. Three types of caves: (a) Wet/clean, (b) wet/muddy, (c) dry (Uncommon).
2. The ravings of the easterners over the straw and helictite formations, including the famous 23 feet (7m.) long straw.
3. Signs in certain caves quoting: "No paddling or bathing allowed" to the chest-high-in-water wader, and "Watch out for trains" in a railway tunnel shaped passage.
4. Scrub bashing.
5. Trips to Augusta for free showers.
6. Loose sand and crumbly rock-piles in caves.
7. Swims in the Indian Ocean.
8. Trips to Cape Leeuwin: "...to see the sunset". ("Not with you mate, not with you!").
9. The 30 feet (9m.) long, water-filled squeeze in Easter Cave.
10. Abseiling demonstrations by SUSS female members, on the 150 feet (46m.) high Deepdene cliffs.
11. Bushfires.

 SAFETY NOTES

Used extensively in the United States of America is a "brake bar" attachment to karabiners used in abseiling (or rapelling as it is known there). The use of a brake bar affords an extremely safe and comfortable descent, there being no need to carry the rope over the shoulder and across the back. Further information and references on this subject can be obtained from the ASF Library, or by writing to the Editor.

DOWN UNDER, ALL OVER

It seems the Nullarbor Plain has received more than its share of visitors during the past few months. While many of us sweltered in high humidity during the Perth Conference field trips, Moe Jennings (CSS), his son Guy and Ted Anderson (SUSS) worked the northern part of the Plain in a Landrover.

Not to be outdone, several car loads of SUSS members zig-zagged across the Plain on their way back from the Conference, visiting several new caves, (not to mention waving to the Transcontinental on its way to Adelaide). Once again, another SUSS first is claimed: First vehicle to be driven into an Australian cave. Bill Crowle is currently screening a slide showing his VW about 100 feet (30m.) underground, in Madura Cave.

Bob Chapman and Boyd Pratt of UNSWSS also spent several weeks on the Nullarbor, following up possible cave finds shown on air photo tracings. This was a successful trip also, except for 5 blown tyres, a 30 mile (48km.) walk for a new starter motor and a week of chicken-pox for Bob.

To top the list, members of ISS under Bob Richardson's leadership have just returned from the Nullarbor very much the wiser, but without any new cave finds.

If the deviations from the road by all the parties returning from the Conference are included, there has been quite a formidable tally of spelecs on the Plain since Christmas.

Extracts from society newsletters (this column depends entirely upon the supply of material):

In South Australia: CEGSA has a new (?) duplicating machine, which is for hire. Latest caving trips were to Bangor and Buckalowie, Mt.

Gambier and Avenue Range. A new cave discovery at the latter appears promising.

"Stop Press", SSS's less formal publication, reports that the Society has been successful again at Bungonia (N.S.W.) in breaking into a deep cave known as B15. Entry was greatly enhanced by the use of a petrol driven jack-hammer and a genuine, imported Egyptian shadoof.

Latest news from UNSWSS tells of their entry into the field of cave diving, which resulted in blue bodies, skinned knuckles, but no new cave discoveries.

KSS, the society which produces large quantities of printed material in the form of "Trog" apparently have strong leg muscles as all their trips are reported to involve much walking in the mountains behind Kempsey. Together with NTUCSS they seem to discover lots and lots of caves.

According to "The Very Latest" CSS have visited Wyanbene twice lately, with photography and surveying both on the caving programme. At Wombeyan they have visited Bullio Cave and caught a banded bat in Basin Cave. Other trips have been to Cooleman, Cliefden and Abercrombie. Another interesting item from CSS is the news that a party of divers exploring the underground river in Kubla Khan Cave, Mole Creek, Tasmania, have penetrated distances of 1685 feet (514m.). Led by Peter Smithies, the party is believed to have set an Australian cave diving record.

"SUSS" (the newsletter, not the society) reports activity at Jenolan where a party, including a member of UQSS (who goes by the name of H. S. Cusec), has discovered substantial extensions to Wiburd's Lake Cave.

 ABSTRACTS AND REVIEWS

Some Technical Aids for Cave Exploration. Cave Research Group Gt. Britain, Pubn. 11, (Nov. 1962).

An excellent booklet dealing with the design, construction, and use of a wide variety of caving equipment. Covers making of ladders, various self-lifeline devices, scaling equipment, (including poles, the "uppet" and the "sky-hook"), neoprene exposure suits, a magnetic position-finding device, and technical data on synthetic ropes.

The method advocated in the fixing of ladder rungs is that of pressed metal ferrules each side of the rung, and a useful technique is fully described. Of particular interest is the "sky-hook" an ingenious device which would allow the rigging of a ladder on a vertical pitch from below at any time after the original ascent.

Attention can also be drawn to the ropes data, which shows nylon as least desirable for caving purposes, although the best for rock-climbing. Terylene, ulstron, or polythene are recommended, although the latter has less tensile strength. --E.H-S.

Speleo Digest 1961, Pittsburgh Grotto, National Speleological Soc.

The '61 edition of this weighty publication arrived in Australia last year and some of the more interesting papers include:

- Ground water tracing (reprinted from SSS Communications),
- Caves in igneous rocks,
- Some notes on stalagmite shape,
- Meteorology in Martens Cave,
- A consideration of the effect of hot-cold cycles on caves,
- Cave Paleontology,
- Current aspects of U.S. bat rabies problem,

'Bad air' caves,

- A combination rappel and prusik device,
- Building a wet suit,
- Nutrition in caves.

In addition to the above and other general papers, there are several hundred pages of cave reports, reports of special studies, techniques, equipment, and speleo-humour. --E.H-S.

PRATT, B. T. 1964. The Origin of Bungonia Caves. J. Mining & Geol. Soc. Univ. of N.S.W., 2 : 44-51.

Two distinct series of caves are distinguished at Bungonia reflecting two different geomorphological environments. These are correlated with the erosional cycle and the Cainozoic history of eastern Australia. Rejuvenation, following the Kosciusko Uplift, is considered to be the most significant factor in the formation of the caves.

The title is somewhat grandiose in that the author has only used information observed in two deep caves. It may be better named: "The Origin of the Drum Cave and Argyll Pot, Bungonia".

--Official abstract.

WILLIAMS and MASON WILLIAMS, 1963. Hazards of Using Explosives. Trans. C.R.G., VI (2) : 69-78.

The effects of the various fumes which may be produced during the use of explosives are discussed, and a case described in which brief exposure to nitrogen dioxide fumes produced through lack of proper tamping of a charge led to serious illness. The onset of symptoms of nitrogen dioxide poisoning may not take place for 12-36 hours after exposure, but low concentrations can cause serious illness or death.

--E.H-S.

LOVELOCK, J. 1963. Life and Death Underground. Bell, London, U.K.

Interesting, but journalistic. Primarily devoted to description and discussion of cave accidents, but with insufficient detail to be of real value to cavers. A chapter on the British Expedition to the Gouffre Berger is also included--it is to be hoped this chapter does not do justice to the expedition.

EDITORIAL

As usual, the advent of a conference brings changes in the executive officers of the Federation. By reading through the list of officers elected it is apparent that although many of the same names appear, a reshuffle of positions has taken place. This I feel speaks highly of the responsibility these people feel towards the Federation. Virtually all these officers are persons who have very limited time to devote to the operation of the Federation, being not only involved in their normal day to day work but carrying out research or study as well. The fact that they are willing to add to their overworked programmes the extra duties that the A.S.F. imposes upon them is commendable, for it shows vision on the part of these people, the vision of the necessity to promote and maintain a national speleological body. This necessity is not only for the advancement of research or conservation, but to present a rounded programme for all the people who participate in the many facets of the speleological way of life. It is up to these people to respond to the offer which is placed before them, for it is obvious the A.S.F. needs you--you need the A.S.F.

This year three people are engaged in publication of the Newsletter: Ted Anderson (SUSS) laying

out and typing, Bob Chapman (UNSWSS) printing and mailing, and myself (UNSWSS) editing.

To every member we wish a successful caving year.

--Ian D. Wood.

ADVERTISEMENTS

WANTED to beg, buy or steal: SUSS, Vol. 2(1), 3(2), 5(1), 6(1), (3); TCC Bull. Vol.1, Nos. 1,2,3; SSS Communications Vol. 1; Carne and Jones. --Hamilton-Smith, 17 Helwig Ave., Montmorency, Vic.

CAVE PHOTOGRAPHERS

OFTEN LEAVE BEHIND

A LESS BEAUTIFUL PICTURE
THAN THE ONE THEY TAKE AWAY
ON FILM.

Remove expended flashbulbs
and other debris from the cave
