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Editorial.

FOR THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER PUBLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED FROM THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUB, CANBERRA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, KEMPSEY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, METROPOLITAN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, SYDNEY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

WITHIN MOST OF THESE PUBLICATIONS, THE EDITOR OF THE 'DOWN UNDER ALL OVER' COLUMN FOUND GREAT DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING INFORMATION WHICH WOULD ENTERTAIN OR EDUCATE OTHER SOCIETIES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA, ALTHOUGH IT WAS QUITE APPARENT THAT A GREAT DEAL OF ACTIVITY HAD TAKEN PLACE.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THIS IS MAINLY DUE TO THE PERPETUAL PROBLEM FACING EDITORS, THAT OF FINDING ENOUGH COPY. HOWEVER WE WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST CLUB EDITORS TO KEEP THE FEDERATION AND ITS AIMS IN MIND WHEN PRODUCING THEIR JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES AND INSTEAD OF RESTRICTING PUBLICATIONS TO PURELY LOCAL MATTERS, THEY MIGHT OCCASIONALLY TRY TO CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING OF INTEREST TO OTHER MEMBERS OF FEDERATION SOCIETIES. THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO WAYS THIS COULD BE DONE. FIRSTLY BY PRODUCING AN OCCASIONAL ARTICLE OF SPECIAL INTEREST SUCH AS REVIEWS OF CURRENT WORK IN PARTICULAR CAVES OR CAVING AREAS OR BETTER STILL, BY FOREWARDING INTERESTING ARTICLES DIRECTLY TO THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR WHERE THEY WILL RECEIVE WIDER CIRCULATION.

THE POLICY OF THE NEW ZEALAND SOCIETIES IS TO BE APPLAUDED IN THAT MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE TO THE LOCAL SOCIETY ARE PLACED IN A SECONDARY POSITION TO MATTERS WHICH GENUINELY CONTRIBUTE TO SPELEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE AND SPORT. THIS MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL IN AUSTRALIA BUT A REQUEST TO KEEP THE FEDERATION FLOURISHING SHOULD NOT GO UNHEEDED.

NOTICES

NEW SOUTH WALES CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the New South Wales Co-ordination Committee will be held at the home of the convener, Ian Wood on Saturday, 7th. October, 1967 at 2 P.M. Agenda for the meeting will be distributed to N.S.W. society secretaries and will discuss applications for membership from several groups as well as cave closures at Bungonia.

A.S.F. COMMITTEE MEETING

The bi-annual committee meeting of the Federation will be held during the long week-end January, 1968. The Orange Speleological Society will host the meeting which will be held in the Orange Technical College. Inquiries can be forewarded to the secretary of the Federation at this stage.

CONSERVATION OF MOUNT ETNA CAVES AND DISTRICT, CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

From information supplied by R.K. Headland, Univ. of Q'land Speleo. Society
condensed by J.R. Dunkley

Mt. Etna is an isolated peak with limestone outcropping over the northern face, rising nearly 1000 feet out of the almost flat countryside, 15 miles north of Rockhampton, Central Queensland. Exploration by the University of Queensland Speleological Society has located about 25 caves, including 5 or 6 exceeding 1000 feet in length.

Historical

Caves in the Rockhampton area have been known since late last century. Olsens Caves, about 3 miles from Mt. Etna, have been an attraction for many years while Cammo Park Caves have recently provided nearby competition for the tourist dollar. In the 1920's, two areas, including Mt. Etna and nearby Johanssen's Cave and Limestone Peak were gazetted as Recreation Reserves, R444 and R272. However, in the past decade or so, four mining leases, Nos. 281, 307, 326 and 340 have been granted to Central Queensland Cement Co. on the mountain, and two, Nos. 236 and 243 on the ridge containing Limestone Peak. This ridge also contains lease No. 306 of Mt. Morgan Pty. Ltd. The caves have at times also been mined for guano, used as a munitions dump and for commando training during the last war. In late 1965, the Central Q'ld Cement Co. began large-scale quarrying which now endangers the caves.

Economic Aspects

A cement factory near Rockhampton will be a very important factor in the economic development of Central Queensland. Previous supplies of cement from Brisbane and Townsville were subjected to high freight charges, but now the Company has capitalised heavily in a factory at Parkhurst, seven miles north of Rockhampton. There are several limestone outcrops convenient to the factory (Connah 1958), including estimated reserves of 33,000,000 tons in Limestone Peak. This is believed to be much less cavernicolous and thus presumably safer to work. The economic advantages of Mt. Etna appear to be the enormous reserves and the readily accessible vertical faces.

Case for Conservation

a. Aesthetics; Caves are uncommon in Queensland, and in the warm dry climate seldom contain decoration as attractive as that found in the caves of the cooler more humid southern states. However, Quarrymans or Resurrection Cave (E22) contains an array of actively forming stalactites, stalagmites, helictites, straws, flowstone and gourds, as fine as any at Jenolan.

Other fine decorations are found in the Main Cave (E1) and in Huntsman's Cave - Carn Dum (E15-E16). E22 is threatened not only by blasting, but also by dessication, as it leads off the Quarry itself and was in fact broken into during Quarrying operations.

b. Geomorphology; The caves seem to be developed vertically rather than horizontally, unlike those at Chillagoe which are superficially similar environment. Further examination is warranted. Parts of the surface of Mt. Etna are also made up of remarkably deep (4-5 feet), sharp Lapiez.

c. Biology; These caves are a breeding colony for the bent-winged bat, Miniopterus schreibersii and for Macroderma gigas. Very little study has been made, either of these or of other smaller fauna in the caves.

d. Economic; There is some evidence to suggest that M. schreibersii, an important insect predator, helps control such pests as moths which, being nocturnal, are not preyed on by birds. In view of the local importance of agricultural and grazing industries, more work on this hypothesis should be carried out.

e. Tourism and Recreation; Tourists are well catered for in the nearby Olsen's Caves and Cammoo Park Caves, but provision for future demand would be desirable. In addition, the caves are used for recreation purposed not only by speleologists, but by naturalists, boy scouts, and others in the Rockhamptom district.

Present Situation

The necessity for utilization of Mt. Etna for cement production is mitigated by the known availability of other limestone deposits at a greater distance from the factory. From the company's point of view, the advantages of using Mt. Etna appear to outweigh the argument for conservation.

Representations have been made to the Queensland Government by the University of Queensland Speleological Society and the Australian Speleological Federation, stressing the relative attractive alternatives.

The minister for Mines and Main Roads replied on 9th. October, 1967 to the A.S.F. representations. His main points were that the matter had been considered previously and that there were many caves beyond the bounds of the present leases. Nevertheless, for what they are worth, one or two concessions were made. A barrier of not less than one chain is to be left between mine workings and the entrance to any cave known to contain a colony of M. gigas, and mine workings are not to be extended in such a way that they could intersect any passage of a cave known to contain M. gigas. In addition, the leaseholder is required to inform the Inspector of Mines, Rockhampton, of the discovery of any previously unknown major caves on the lease.

The inadequacy of these measures is obvious. There appears to be little more that can be done about the eastern face of Mt. Etna.

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ing Club.

: Heybob 7 : pp65-68; 9 : pp87-90

Brisbane SUNDAY MAIL : 30-6-67 and 6-8-67

CANBERRA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Trips to Rosedale, Wee Jasper, Cooleman, Wyanbene, Abercrombie and Bungonia

Rosedale

A brief trip to Rosedale Cave by four members of the society to take photographs.

Wee Jasper

Exploration work in holes on Punchbowl Hill. One hole shows promise. Other trips introduced Senior Scouts to caving in the Punchbowl Cave and a photographic trip into the Dogleg Cave in which the greater portion of the trip was spent in digging out the dry sumps and bailing out the wet ones.

Wyanbene

A tourist trip through the old tourist section and through to Cleo's Bath and the Helictite Chamber.

Abercrombie

Exploration in the Albany Cave and other caves. Several hundred unbanded bats were observed in the long tunnel off the main archway.

Cooleman

A trip to Murray Cave in June found that an attempt had been made to open the sump (unsuccessfully) using explosives. Explosives appeared to have been used on the surface around the Blue Waterholes. An unsuccessful attempt was made to reach holes high in Clarke's Gorge. A small cave was found near Harris' Hut. One other trip to Cooleman was cancelled due to a heavy snow-fall.

Bungonia

Trips down the Drum. Argyll Pot (B31) and B7. None of these caves contained carbon di-oxide, which was unusual, especially the Drum and B7. The descent of B7 is the first since its discovery several years ago. The cave proved to have a horizontal passage of only several hundred feet after the initial entrance pitch.

KEMPSEY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND
NEWCASTLE UNIV. SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Temagog

Even though floods are disrupting caving, Kss has managed to investigate an area of limestone in the Temagog area. One small cave has been opened up. Ropework was required on two 30 foot drops from the initial chamber. The cave ends at present in a narrow fissure so that attempts will be made to widen the opening. Water in the cave disappears down this fissure.

Windy Gap

One trip was made to Windy Gap to look for a black marble outcrop sighted several years ago. The marble outcrop was located and investigated but no caves. However a cave was opened up on the return journey near Bellbird Corner

Willi Willi

Several members made a one day trip to Willi Willi to look over the main Bat Cave and several other caves. A check was also made on the efflux at the bottom of the hill. This was bulldozed in 1966. (See ASF NEWSLETTER No. 33, Sept. 66). Most of the loose rubble left in the efflux has been washed out but the opening is still too small to enter.

A check on three caves found recently by Newcastle University Speleo's was made and two more caves found in the immediate vicinity. One cave is well decorated.

METROPOLITAN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND
UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Trips to Jenolan, Marble Arch, Wyanbene, Bungonia and Walli.

Jenolan

Three trips to Jenolan saw photography in the Red Cave and two trips to the Alladin Cave for restoration work on formations. A bucket chain was organised from McKeown's Creek to the cave but water supplies in the cave proved adequate for the work required. Considerable amounts of rubbish were removed also. Visits were made to the Mammoth Cave and Frenchman's cave as well.

Marble Arch

Surface exploration was the main purpose of this trip. Several areas around the arch were investigated but no new caves were located. specimens of millipedes, spiders and moths were collected from one cave in the Gorge.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUB

This is the first time the Newsletter has reported news from this club. At present they are not members of the Federation. Like all new clubs they are very active. They produce a magazine SPELEOGRAFFITI which is published monthly.

The August edition reports that during the last year the club has undertaken 27 trips with a total time of 150 hours underground. Areas visited were Wee Jasper, Wyanbene, London Bridge, Cheitmore, Kybean and Bunyan.

During the past three months there have been trips to Wee Jasper, Cheitmore, Wyanbene and Bungonia.

SYDNEY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The past three months have seen considerable activity within S.S.S. with approximately twenty trips being held to eight areas. Of these trips more than half were contributed by Bungonia and Wombeyan, where exploration and mapping respectively are holding members interest. Several trips have been made to places seldom frequented by S.S.S. such as; Rosebrook and Paddy's river; such trips being essentially to gain a working knowledge of the areas.

Bungonia

As usual this area has received most attention from the society both in terms of total trips and number of people attending these trips.

Activity in this area is on two main fronts, the Efflux and the Plateau.

The Efflux continues to offer a challenge to a dedicated band. Recent progress has been concerned with making the excavation safer by the removal of dangerously situated rocks. A further barrow bench has been begun in order to lower the water level in the pool even further.

On the main plateau important work has begun in the excavation of several previously blocked sinkholes.

The sinkhole, B51 and connecting cave, B16, has received many digging trips with enthusiasm waxing and waning with the diameter of the air space. The final trip to this system was on 25th. June when the cave was declared officially dead after reaching a three inch hole in bedrock. Work has now transferred to an adjacent sink, B22.

Wombeyan

Mapping is in progress at Wombeyan both above and below ground. The New Glass Cave and Basin Cave, have both been surveyed to C.R.G. 4 and other caves are scheduled for survey.

Topographical surveys continue over most of the area; the most recent addition being a map of the Mares Forest Creek Gorge. This is a long term project of the society.

Jenolan

A refresher and familiarisation trip was conducted in the J41 cave. Mammoth Cave; The saga of the mammoth mapping continues with a C.R.G. 5 of the sand passage. Radio Direction Finding work was also carried out in the furthest reaches of the Mammoth Cave with rather mixed results.

Yarrangobilly

The society has been asked to use its Radio Direction Finding Equipment in one of the tourist caves at Yarrangobilly. One trip, the main purpose being discussions with the Ranger, was held. Photography and exploration in the Restoration Cave, Eagles Nest and Deep Creek cave systems completed the trip.

Walli

Further radio communication and insect collecting work has been carried out at Walli. Due to the fairly accurate maps of the Piano and Bone Caves, previously prepared, these caves were well suited to act as the basis for cave location experiments.

The technique of ground resistivity measurements using Gossen "Geohm" earth testers was applied showing that much future work will be required before this method is perfected.

Cheitmore

A recent trip to this area has noted the existence of several colonies of bats in the caves there. Four banded bats were captured and their band numbers sent to the CSIRO Wildlife Division for identification.

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