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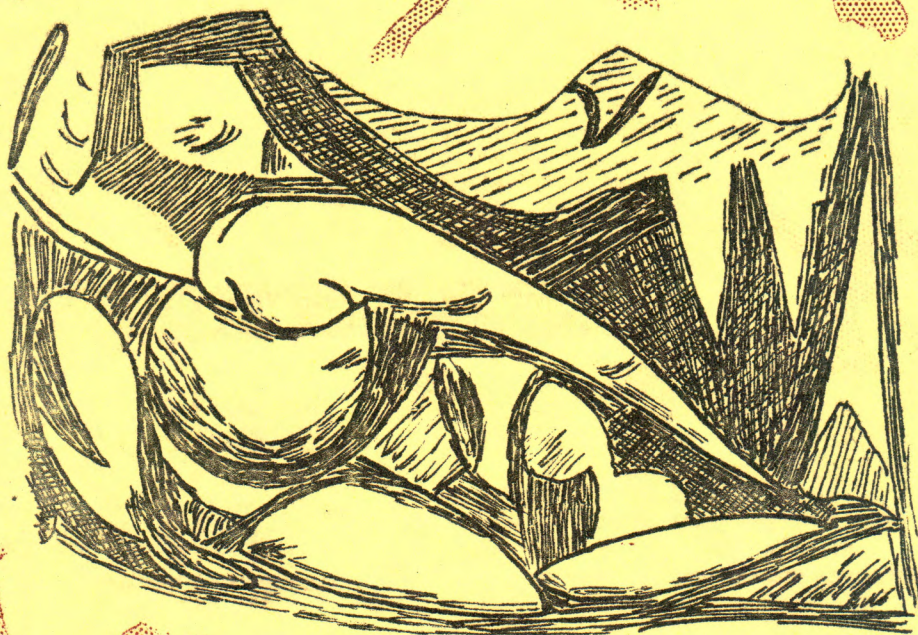
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QUEENSLAND

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Editorial

A FEW YEARS AGO, IN A CONVERSATION ABOUT SCOUTS, CONSERVATION AND SAFETY, A SENIOR COMMISSIONER REMARKED TO ME, QUITE SERIOUSLY, THAT PERHAPS OUR CAVES AREN'T DANGEROUS ENOUGH. I DON'T AGREE. TRUE, THERE IS NO MOSSDALE TO DROWN SIX AUSTRALIAN CAVERS. NO PIERRE ST MARTIN DOWN WHICH TO FALL FROM A HARNESS. INHERENTLY DANGEROUS CAVE SYSTEMS ARE PROBABLY RARER IN OUR RELATIVELY MILD CLIMATE AND SUBDUED RELIEF THAN THEY ARE IN EUROPE OR NORTH AMERICA. IT IS TRITE TO SAY THAT ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN, AND IN THE MOST UNEXPECTED PLACES AND TIMES. BEYOND ADOPTING SOUND PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND HAVING A WELL-OILED RESCUE SYSTEM, THERE IS LITTLE ONE CAN DO. YET THERE IS ONE CHARACTERISTIC OF MANY OF OUR CAVES THAT WE TEND TO TAKE FOR GRANTED. THEY ARE REMOTE. HOW MANY CAVES DO YOU KNOW THAT ARE JUST DOWN THE ROAD FROM A WARM, COZY PUB? OR JUST DOWN THE ROAD FOR THAT MATTER? THE DISTANCE TO MANY OF OUR CAVES IS BOTH ELUSIVE AND INSIDIOUS. IT IS AS EASY TO FALL, DROWN OR GET LOST ON THE SURFACE AS INSIDE.

MT ANNE IS SAID TO BE THE MOST EXPOSED MOUNTAIN IN AUSTRALIA. HEAVY SNOW CAN FALL AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR. AFTER THE A.S.F. CONFERENCE IN 1970, AN EXPLORATORY FIELD TRIP WILL TRY TO GET INTO DEEP CAVES SUGGESTED BY THE HUGE DOLINES ON THE FLANKS OF THE MOUNTAIN. T.C.C. RECONNAISSANCE TRIPS HAVE HAD TO CUT ACCESS PATHS THROUGH HORIZONTAL SCRUB AND ACROSS BUTTONGRASS MOORS TO A BASE CAMP. THE DOLOMITE HAS GIVEN RISE TO SOME INCREDIBLE COUNTRY - KNIFE EDGE RIDGES AND JAGGED PEAKS OF ROCK SEPARATED BY DEEP CHASMS AND POTHOLE, ALL OF IT COVERED IN A DENSE GROWTH OF MOUNTAIN SCRUB.

TASMANIA HAS HAD MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF SERIOUS CAVING ACCIDENTS IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS. IN THIS NEWSLETTER IS AN ACCOUNT OF A SERIOUS BUT LITTLE-PUBLICIZED MISHAP AT MAYDENA. THE NEXT ISSUE WILL INCLUDE A REPORT ON THE MT FAULKNER INCIDENT, AND A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE HEART RENDING SEARCH FOR JOHN BOYLE WILL BE GIVEN IN MARCH 1970. THE DEATH OF JOHN BOYLE SOMEWHERE ON MT ANNE OR THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY IS AS MUCH A CAVING FATALITY AS IF IT HAD HAPPENED UNDERGROUND. THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO HIS DISAPPEARANCE ARE AS MUCH A HAZARD IN CAVING AS ANY ROCKFALL, FLASH FLOOD OR EQUIPMENT FAILURE.

O B I T U A R Y - Norm Hocknell

One of the quietest and most consistently hard-working members of the Cave Exploration Group (South Australia) passed away in December 1968. Norm Hocknell had been a member for many years and had done an excellent job updating the Group's records and library and his passing will be mourned by all.

CONSERVATION ACTION

QUEENSLAND

UQSS announces the formation early in 1969 of the Queensland Cave Conservation Committee. As well as a UQSS representative, the Committee consists of the renowned Australian poet, Judith Wright McKinney, and also Mr A. Cadell, a psychologist at the University of Queensland. Technical advice is being given by Dr Peter Dwyer and Dr Len Webb. Formation of the QCCC reflects a shift in conservation action back to Mt Etna, where evidence is accumulating that blasting from the quarry is killing off the bat colony. A 'bat certificate' giving guardianship to "Miniopterus australia number.." and signed by Judith Wright for the QCCCC has been produced. Several have been circulated to ASF member societies and the support of cavers throughout Australia is sought. A lousy 40c. will buy you one of these certificates to hang on your wall, and will go towards the not inconsiderable cost involved in fighting conservation battles these days.

VICTORIA

In its Annual Report, the Victorian Speleological draws some attention to several conservation issues in that State which have escaped notice on a national scale until recently, perhaps because of the overwhelming amount of publicity given to Mt Etna, Colong and Texas.

An application has been made for an Extractive Industries License for the East Buchan area. VSA has lodged an official objection, but private talks with the applicants suggest that Mabel Cave at least will be saved.

Concern has been expressed for the Lower Glenelg National Park, which proposal may affect the future of many caves near the Victoria - South Australia border. The park boundaries appear to leave only a narrow corridor on both sides of the river. Alienated land beyond will be developed as pine forest or for agriculture. Support is being sought from other interested bodies.

VSA has started sampling water in Moon Cave at Buchan and testing for pollution by reduction of methylene blue. First results, based on a relatively high water flow, were negative. Further tests will be run when the water flow is lower. The project is significant because the site of the new toilet block in the reserve may cause further contamination.

CAVE ACCIDENT AND RESCUE, MAYDENA, TASMANIA

by Albert Goede
President, TCC

The cave in which the accident occurred was discovered about two years ago by Mr and Mrs Michael White, aged in their thirties. Both are employees of Australian Newsprint Mills in whose forest concession the cave is located, in dense, wet forest about a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the nearest timber road and six miles west of the town of Maydena. A small stream flows into the entrance which is located at the base of a large cliff.

Mr and Mrs White, who had not had any previous caving experience, entered the cave on the afternoon of Thursday, March 6, 1969, in the company of Michael Flint who claimed caving and rockclimbing experience, although none of the Tasmanian caverneers knew him. Armed with manilla rope and a bulky home made rope ladder they went down several short steep drops before coming to a shaft estimated to be 100' deep. The rope ladder was fixed and Flint descended but found it was not long enough to reach bottom. On the way out as the party ascended a steep talus slope, Michael White dislodged a keystone, bringing down a considerable amount of debris. A ribbed aluminium safety helmet which he was wearing was severely damaged and undoubtedly saved his life but he was knocked unconscious and his wife was in severe pain. Flint escaped injury and went for help, calling Maydena from a car radio. The manager of A.N.M.'s timber operations Don Frankombe rushed to the cave with some men, then returned to Maydena to alert police search and rescue while the man began the difficult task of cutting a track to the cave with chain saws.

At 5.35pm police contacted rescue co-ordinators Brian Collin (TCC) and Dave Elliott (SCS). Public Relations Officer Doug Turner was alerted and went to police HQ radioroom. A TCC rescue team comprising Albert Goede with Sid Corbett, Peter Helman, Bill Hodge, Bill Peterson, Rodney Hughes and Brian Collin rendezvoused at police HQ at 6.50pm, to find that an SCS team with Frank Brown, Barry James and others had already left. TCC left in police cars at 7.15 but returned for some portable radios and finally left at 7.45. They met a ST Johns Ambulance man at the end of the road. Food, sleeping bags, lights, blood plasma and transfusion equipment were carried to the cave mouth, which was reached at 9.45 just as Mrs White was brought to the surface by earlier rescuers. Michael White was brought up at 10.45 and transferred to a Neil Robinson stretcher after examination by a doctor. This was not suitable to the rough terrain and it was a back-breaking task carrying it to the road, which was reached about midnight under the glaring lights of TV cameras. Rescuers recuperated at Don Frankombe's house in Maydena (many having missed dinner) and made it back to Hobart at 3am.

Michael White suffered head injuries, broken collar bone and broken ribs, while Mrs White had a double fracture of the tibia. Both recovered fully after a period in hospital.

P.S. The report above was written from the point of view of the TCC team and may have overlooked one or two minor details.

 DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

NEW SOUTH WALES

KSS & NUSS KSS has supplemented trips to Windy Gap and elsewhere with some rock-hunting expeditions to Bago, near Wauchope, to Carrai in search of gold instead of caves, and to Willi Willi Copper Mine. But the Macleay Valley is not the exclusive preserve of Kempsey SS, nor it would seem is the Hunter Valley open only to Newcastle Uni SS. KSS and NUSS have joined forces not only in speleological endeavour at Windy Gap and Mt Pleasant, but have helped each other discover the fossiliferous sites and viniferous delights near Cessnock and Pokolbin.

HCG The Group has amalgamated with the Wanderers Caving Group in Canberra, thereby infusing some urgently needed life. A good but regrettably rare example of the policy of the A.S.F. in encouraging unaffiliated clubs to join an existing member society. So HCG now has a Southern Division and quarterly meetings are held during caving excursions. In August HCG organized a most successful field demonstration of a new rescue stretcher which seems well suited to cave rescue. The event attracted 29 observers from 6 societies in N.S.W. The technical details of the stretcher appear in "Calcite" issue for late 1969. The same issue describes some recent experiments and makes recommendations concerning ladder harnesses.

NUCC National University CC is seeing a new renaissance this year, with plenty of trips and some scientific work under way. Yarrangobilly has seen the most trips and best results and an account of this will be presented in a later Newsletter. Trips have also gone to Cheitmore, Wee Jasper, Mt Fairy and elsewhere.

OSS The Club Newsletter "Descent" has stabilized in quality and now appears fairly regularly every quarter. There seems to be plenty of activity with most trips going to Cliefden. The September issue has a good leader on relationships between scouts and speleo "... the decision we must reach is to limit the number of scouts (going caving) to those only undergoing a recognized Speleo Scout Proficiency Badge and those who are genuinely interested in obtaining the same."

SSS Although slightly down on figures for the previous year, the Society's membership and caving activities as chronicled in the Yearbook for 1968-9 record an excellent year, with 47 trips to 12 areas. Perhaps the most significant achievements were the concentrated assault on Church Creek and the active part played in the 'Save Colong' Campaign. Ross Ellis has been 'dobb'd in' as Editor of "Stop Press". Between 1965 and 1968 Ross had raised an insignificant broadsheet to the present first rate monthly newsletter with possibly the highest standards of editing and production of any regular club newsletter. The July "Stop Press" features some guidelines for historical research on caving areas. Although only an outline aimed at new members and thus limited in scope, this serves to illuminate an aspect of speleology so far rather neglected.

Bendithera

With some trepidation, this area was reached at Easter by large parties from ISS, SSS and SUSS. Access doesn't seem to have improved, with the result that reports again wax at some length on the non-speleological side-shows. Even so, five or six new small caves up to 50'-60' long were found. On a further joint trip with SSS, the South Pacific Divers found an air space in Water Cave Dd4, with a promising looking passage leading off. Muddy water conditions dictated against further exploration on this trip.

Canomodine

OSS visited this area which is traditionally held to be more or less 'trogged out'. A quite respectable new cave requiring a ladder was found and mapped and two other promising holes noted.

Church Creek

The continuing story of the 'Save Colong' campaign, which centres on the Church Creek Caves, was covered in the last Newsletter. During the 'Cave-In', three more entrances to CCl-2-3 were found, together with a smoke vent, and a vertical hole about 25' deep was 'rediscovered'. Some new caves numbered CCl2-CCl9 have been found near CCl0 by SSS. A few of these look quite promising but need digging. Norton Cave (CCl2-13-14) was surveyed, an eel was found in CC4, and assorted bones on CCl6 and CCl9.

Euchareena

Bud Frank (CSS) and OSS have looked at this area between Orange and Wellington. The largest cave, Bradeys Cave, is extensively vandalized and there are several 20'-30' depressions nearby, so more caves are likely.

Hollanders River

BMSC had an abortive trip in 1968, defeated by snow. Two trips have arrived in 1969. Limestone outcrops along the river for about one mile above and below the junction with Budthingeroo Creek. In places bluffs of limestone up to 40' high occur and some of these have been undercut 6'-8' by the stream. An area of large sinkholes was found and there are two creeks going underground. In all, six caves have been found but all are blocked after 30'-40' by earth or gravel.

Jenolan

SSS continued exploration of a region of Mammoth Cave often overlooked despite its proximity to the entrance. A few small chambers were found in this area near Central Lake, reached via the Skull and Crossbones. Towards the northern end of the limestone, a small cave was entered after removing some rocks near the foot of Wiburds Lake Cave bluff. In August, never the most comfortable month at Jenolan (unless you stay at Caves House) some real masochists from SSS attacked the worst of them all, J41. Despite the fact that it was raining outside, and had for a while, the dig in J41 was dry and fairly good progress was made, about 70' being added to the cave, and it's still going. SUSS has also visited Jenolan and work has continued on the dig in Mammoth which at one stage more or less filled up with sediments following a flood.

Macleay Valley

A joint NUSS - KSS party inspected a new discovery at Windy Gap, KS12, and had trouble getting through the "half-way squeeze", never mind the end, where prospects look good. Some of the party were busy checking out small openings near the entrance to KS12 without notable success. River Cave and Crystal were also explored. As well, a KSS surface bush-bash turned up a few small caves and an unsuspected outcrop of limestone whose potential was left for another visit.

Noel White has written an excellent precis on the prospects at Mt Pleasant, stressing again the difficulties KSS has with rugged hill country, lantana scrub and access generally (see "TROG" for March, April and June 1969). Several recent discoveries by KSS and NUSS supplement the 7 or 8 caves already known and the extent of the limestone augurs well for the future.

Several KSS trips have gone to Kunderang where surface exploration has revealed 3 promising holes following an undergrowth fire. UQSS managed to reach down to Willi Willi at Easter but nothing world shattering reported.

Threadneedle Creek valley has been examined but so far little limestone has been located and no caves. Further exploration is warranted as more limestone is suspected, but the area is typically back-breaking in the extreme and no doubt there will not be any starters on such a trip until time again dims the memory.

Willi

Some small samples collected in Deep Hole (Wal7) by BMSC have been analyzed and found to be gypsum. They are growing vertically out of a mud-shale floor for about 0.15" - 1.20". SSS explored and mapped a new extension to a cave downstream of Piano Cave. Some stream tracing experiments were carried out in Licking Hole Creek.

Wyanbene

Visited recently by UNSWSS, SSS, NSA, MSS and sundry others, this is an increasingly popular locality, with one of the best camping sites in N.S.W. Using a Wild RDS Tacheometer and a MOM 10-second theodolite, UNSWSS is well under way with a topographic survey of the area, including 20' contours. Both Wyanbene Cave and Ridge Mine Pot were reported to have unusually high water levels at Easter.

Yarrangobilly

Another large party from SSS attacked the area on June long weekend. Water tracing experiments were continued and are now complete and awaiting publication. Ice formations were noted in Y10, the first sighting in that locality. The main news from Yarrangobilly, however, is a series of major discoveries by NUCC. Space unfortunately precludes an account of these in this issue but Mike Webb of NUCC is now preparing an outline of recent work and this will be published in the A.S.F. Newsletter for March 1970.

QUEENSLAND

UQSS The formation early in 1969 is announced of the Queensland Cave Conservation Committee (see "CONSERVATION ACTION", page 2)
The phenomenal renaissance of UQSS has not faltered and "Down Under", now registered as a periodical, has appeared regularly with 20 pages or more of most interesting material on northern caves.

Mt Etna

A new discovery has been named Illium Cave, Bat Cleft and Winding Staircase Cave have been mapped to Grade 4 and two others to Grade 3. A connection was found from Belt Cave to Jolly Rodger, extensions to Elephant Hole and a theodolite surface survey are other activities recently. Aerial photographs of the mountain were taken from a specially chartered plane. The scar of quarrying has expanded and most of the east face is now being worked and Resurrection Cave entrance has been bulldozed in. There is some evidence that the breeding bent wing bats in Bat Cleft are failing to raise their young. All in all, plenty of fuel for the conservation fire.

New areas explored ...

Raglan (between Rockhampton and Gladstone) - several caves. Promising.

Gore - no caves found, but a lot of quarrying. Little prospect here.

Broken River (Pandanus Creek Station) (160 miles from Hughenden) - A number of small caves discovered and larger ones reported by geologists suggest good potential, but access is rather difficult.

West Kimberly (Linadell Station, Western Australia) - some keen members of the Society hired a vehicle in Kununurra to visit this area. A small cave 250' long entered in a strike ridge of thin Cambrian Headleys Limestone. Six Taphozous were found, together with some aboriginal drawings.

... and on home ground ...

Texas - Fruitless cave search in the Beelie area near Texas

Chillagoe - one member went caving with the Chillagoe Caving Club.

Bauers Mountain - Collecting trip to Holy Jump for ticks, bones & minerals.

OTHER STATES

Material for "DOWN UNDER, ALL OVER" from Victoria, South Aistralia and Tasmania is being held over to the next issue. The Editor wishes to apologise for this postponement, especially in view of the fact that there is ample published information received from the Sovieties concerned, for which he is grateful. As for Western Australia, no newsletters for 1969 are in the Editor's possession.

AUSTRALIAN CAVERS ABROAD

Past President of BMSC, Grahame Nelson recently took part in an expedition which located the efflux of the Rio Camuy in Puerto Rico (Sydney cavers will remember the graphic descriptions of this system given on the last Australian visit of Bro. Nicholas). The efflux was 10 miles further downstream from its previously assumed location, which leaves a lot of cave still awaiting discovery.

In April, former SUSS President John Dunkley explored some of the sandstone caves of Cape Peninsula, South Africa, which are said to be the largest of their kind in the world. He has also looked at the well-known Cango Caves in Cape Province, and at the Sterkfontein Caves near Johannesburg, where the first remains of australopithecus were discovered about 40 years ago. In Rhodesia he had a very brief inspection of the Sinoia Cave National Park north of Salisbury. Also a caving trip to the large lava caves on Mt Suswa in the Rift Valley of Kenya with the CaveExploration Group of East Africa.

Tom Wigley (CEGSA) has been active in Mexico, where he has bottomed the 2006' deep Sotano San Agustin. The entrance to this impressive cave is something like 280' high and over 100' wide, situated in a doline a mile long, 1000' to 2000' wide and 700' deep. In the immediate vicinity of this there are 4 other deep caves leading down from a karst plateau 5500'-7000' high: Rio Iglesia, 1755'; Carlata, 600' and continuing; Cueva San Agustin 600' and continuing; and an unnamed dry pit continuing beyond a known 600'. Tom has also done a lot of caving in the Canadian Rockies, and has reports of a cave which actually passes under the Columbia Glacier, a sink which gives way to possibly the biggest karst aquifer in the world, and fossil cave shafts high on the slopes of mountains which seem to have been cut in half by glaciers.

A B S T R A C T

Middleton, G.J., A CASE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF COLONG CAVES RESERVE, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA. Stud. Speleol. 2, 1 (1969) : 1 - 11.

This paper, an excellent and succinct statement of the Colong dispute was mentioned by the author in his progress report in the A.S.F. Newsletter for June 1969. The historical, geographical and geological background is explained, details of the mining proposal are discussed, the Church Creek Caves are described, and possible future developments outlined. Well illustrated with 2 maps and 7 photographs.

C O N T E N T S

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September 1969

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