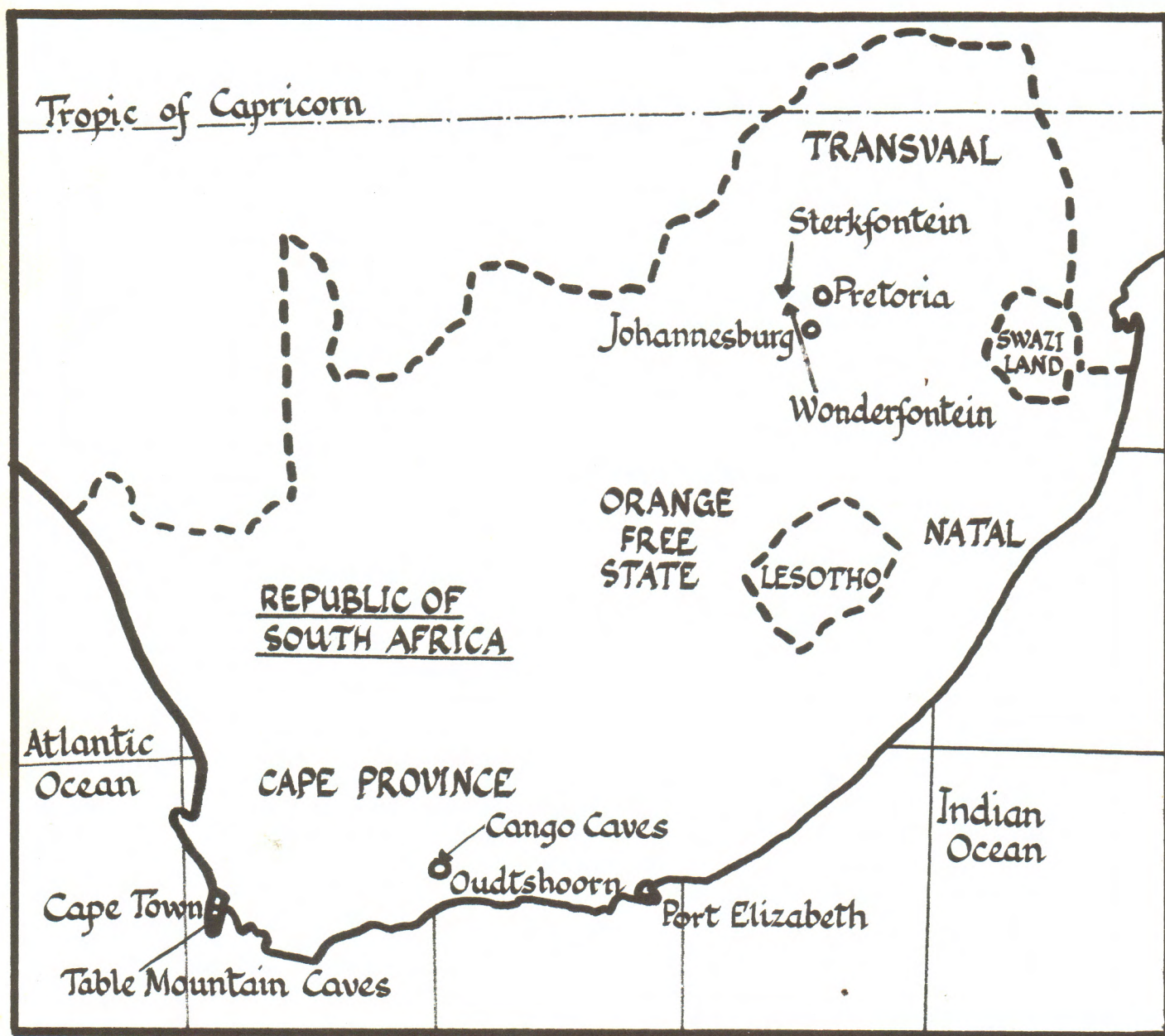


# ASF

## NEWSLETTER Spring, 1975 No. 69



Scale 1: 10,137,600

### ***In This Issue - SOUTH AFRICAN CAVES***

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION  
P.O. Box 388  
Broadway N.S.W. 2007

**50c**  
Recommended

### **THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY**

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# ASF NEWSLETTER

Number 69, Spring 1975

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## EDITORIAL.

Another editorial for yet another issue! Well, I've been sitting here at my desk, scratching my greying head and wondering what the hell to write about. I can't say that I'm overfond of writing editorials but they are an important part of any kind of responsible publication and therefore - must be written.

In most cases, editorials are used to draw the readers attention to noteworthy facts such as cave safety, conservation, ethics and so forth. Occasionally, one or two do tend to act as an outlet for a frustrated editor's feelings. Henceforth this typical example.

Firstly, I would like to say that I am proud to be a member of such a fine outstanding organisation as ASF. This might sound a bit corny but without the support and assistance that a number of other members have given me, I very much doubt that I could have achieved such a relatively high standard in such a short time. Although we have had some problems in regards to soliciting material for the first two issues, things are now looking much brighter. It is also pleasing to say that soliciting played a very minor role in the production of this issue. Secondly, the production of such a newsletter demands a fair amount of time in most cases and John Dunkley had it worked out as demanding 2 hours per page for the soliciting of material, editing and typing. This alone adds up to 32 hours for a 16 page edition. Admittedly, this doesn't sound long but on top of this, one must take into account the printing and eventual distribution. Since the introducing of the "deadline" date, you may have noticed that the newsletter has a slight tendency to appear after the date has expired. It is hoped that this will sort itself out with this issue. Lastly, I would like to thank those members who have been supplying me with material. It is also an opportune moment to thank those people who have written to me regarding the publication of the two other issues. Lastly, the printing is being carried out in Hobart and after the pleasing results of the Winter issue, it has been decided to continue this practise.

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DEADLINE DATE FOR SUMMER ISSUE - NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 25th. - HAPPY XMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

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# NOTICES & NEWS

## CLIEFDEN.

ASF members are reminded of the proposals on the damming of the Bellubula River at the point called the "Needles", just downstream of Cliefden and which would completely inundate all known major caves. The area has a long history, the limestone being the first recorded in Eastern Australia, and with families of the district having a history back to the mid 1800's. Also, it is an area of unequalled paleontological and geological interest, world renowned for its fossil records.

Owing to cuts in the budget, the Bathurst/Orange Growth Centre Corporation, the body responsible for the development of the area, has been severely hampered in its growth proposals. Nevertheless, it is important that those responsible be aware of the public interest in the Cliefden area. Thus, an ASF Committee on Cliefden has been formed, of which Ian Wood is Chairman. Its role is two-fold, namely:

- " (a) To publish a submission on behalf of the ASF N.S.W. Liason Council as soon as possible.
- (b) To co-ordinate any future conservation action necessary, and to research dam proposals and alternative sites."

A Symposium and Field Study is planned on the 8/9 November at Cliefden. The submission itself will cover all aspects of public interest in the area, and is expected to be produced early in 1976. This will be followed by a more substantive publication by UNSWSS.

Randall King.

## 7th. INTERNATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL CONGRESS - SHEFFIELD, ENGLAND.

September 1977

The first circular has just been released and it looks like being even better than any previous IUS Congress. You should start saving now for the great opportunity to meet fellow cavers from all over the world. Your money doesn't need to be in until January, 1977 but you should indicate a desire to attend, by May, 1976 (Forms should be available from ASF and clubs by the end of 1975). Basic timetable is - September 5-10, Pre-Congress Excursions & camps (best place to meet others), 11-16, Main Paper sessions on a wide variety of subjects ranging from academic to sporting, 17-26, Field Trip excursions of various lengths to main caving areas in England & Wales. Some post-Congress (18-21 September) symposia will deal with specific subjects with integrated discussions of submitted papers and field trips to relevant caves and/or areas. Prices are very uncertain in face of inflation but (hopefully) allowing for its effects the organisers quote Aust. \$35 for the Conference fees (add your London-Sydney air fare on top), roughly full board at \$10 a day. Think about it - a really great opportunity!

Andrew Pavey.

## PIERRE ST. MARTIN STILL WORLDS DEEPEST CAVE.

In August, Entrance M3 was connected to the PSM system and it became 1271 metres deep. Then, another cave elsewhere in France, thought to be Gouffre Leon Bernard, was connected to the resurgence giving a total depth of 1310 metres. An English team found another entrance to PSM which now makes it 1332 metres deep. The potential still exists for another 500 metres or so if a connection can be made to nearby Arphiclia Cave or the PSM resurgence.

Andrew Pavey.

## UQSS ADVISE THAT:-

On the conservation front, the scene is disastrous as usual. The Pike Creek Dam is being built and it is reportedly proposed to start flooding the area in July of 1976. Please remember that N.S.W has half shares in the project and do some 'stirring' accordingly. All the info you need is the "case against Pike Creek Dam".

The latest Queensland government move in respect of Mt. Etna, was to arrange relinquishment of the laws on Limestone Ridge; while simultaneously removing all protective provisions on the caves on the Mt. Etna leases, which are being extended without the right of appeal. The caverous area is less protected now than it was before, and the promised "National Park" for Limestone Ridge has not eventuated. The vital maternity site of Bat Cleft is now earmarked for destruction!



## NOTICES &amp; NEWS Cont;

## SUSS &amp; SSS PLAY TAG AT JENOLAN, N.S.W. - A TAGGING RECORD?

During a recent tagging weekend at Jenolan, 49 items of speleological interest, nearly all of them caves, were tagged. Can this be an Australian record? The Presidents of both SUSS (Randall King), and SSS (Ben Nurse), followed by their lackeys, bashed their way up and down the hill-sides of Jenolan to bring the numbering there to J200. I suspect that this might be a record also (the number of caves I mean). By the time that you read this, we hope to pass the 250 mark - anyone for some surveying?

Bruce R. Welch.

OVERSEAS CONFERENCES.

## "BARADLA 150" CAVE CONSERVATION CONFERENCE, BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, AUGUST 1975.

This Conference was held to celebrate the 150th. Anniversary of the first exploration of the Baradla Cave at Aggtelek in north-east Hungary. It is the premier tourist cave of Hungary and has over 25km of surveyed passage. The main theme of the Conference was cave conservation although quite a few of the papers seemed to bear little or no resemblance to the theme at all. Far too many papers were scheduled and it was as well for the organisers that the Russians were not allowed to attend. All who were present were "invited" due to red tape problems and we were surprised to find that aside from two Australians (us), the Western World was represented only by four from the UK and two from the US. Luckily for us, English was a dominant official language and understood by many from the Eastern bloc countries as well. The largest delegation (23) were from East Germany. The busy Conference sessions were held in the mornings whilst afternoons and evenings were field tours and social visits. Budapest is lucky in having half a dozen caves in the Buda Hills (in the city) and the Hungarian SS have developed one as a show cave and are currently working on another. A banquet was held in the Water Resources Institute (in a cave naturally!) and a short talk by the director revealed that one of their major activities is compiling a contour map of the water table land for about half the country, and that mining operations have reduced it in one area by 128km! With regards to cave conservation their problems seem almost identical to our and quite a lot of research and concern is associated with "lamp flora" (the green mosses that grow near lights left continuously on). Their relations with the "Government" seem to be better than ours but "officials" throughout the world seem to be much the same. For field visits, our major activities centred on the Aggtelek karst where we stayed at the "Hotel Stalactite" and did the 7km long tour of Baradla Cave. This is a very interesting cave - not only does one branch run well under Czechoslovakia (where it is developed as a tourist cave) but it runs through a long ridge and about 1km at each end have been developed as separate tourist caves. The decoration is fair and doesn't match Postojna but the whole system is considerably longer. At 25km it is the longest cave in Hungary. Field visits also took in the Bukk mountain plateau where hard digging has resulted in a number of tight, sharp 100m plus systems. We enjoyed excellent hospitality and "shielding" from red tape from the local cavers and really appreciated the problems of visiting Eastern bloc countries later when we tried to take up a casual invitation to visit East Germany on the way home. Sadly, the only way to do anything, is to be organised. So, if you get an "invitation" to go to a conference in Eastern Europe, take it up - it's a really wonderful experience.

Andrew Pavey.

## BRITISH CAVE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, MANCHESTER, ENGLAND.

BCRA holds an annual conference fairly similar to ASF's Biennial Conference but it is only a week-end affair. This year it was at Manchester in the English Midlands, a little south of Yorkshire, the largest caving area in Britain. The Conference was well attended with five Australians being present along with several hundred English cavers. We were particularly impressed by the outward signs of good organisation. There was a large exhibition area where photo competition entries were displayed plus a series of stalls where individual clubs had set up exhibits of cave maps, photos, notes on discoveries etc, plus a number of equipment suppliers who were actively selling equipment and loads of books. The talks were mainly aimed at cavers and ranged from new techniques (stereo photography) through recent discoveries (adding 200m to PSM) and expeditions (Spain, Norway, Jamaica). The speakers were all remarkably lucid and had well-prepared overhead projector transparencies or colour slides and the chairman kept a fairly tight rein on timing so things ran pretty smoothly. The abstracts were all published well before the Conference, so you had a good idea of what to expect. BCRA itself, had sandwiches and cups of tea on sale in the foyer and reasonable tea and lunch breaks gave a good opportunity for circulating, talking and buying "goodies". In the evening, an uninspired University College dinner was followed by a showing of the Castleguard film for the first time in Britain and it was a very impressive film indeed. The conservation forum the next day, revealed to some extent (as it always does) the hidden political bickering which is so

Cont. Page 4



## NOTICES &amp; NEWS Cont;

much more intense than it ever was in Australia. All in all, we were impressed with the smooth presentation which obviously resulted from much 'behind the scenes' activity and it certainly gives ASF something to aim for.

Andrew Pavey.

## INTENDED TASSIE TOUR BY SUSS/MUSIG.

A party of approximately ten bods are planning to "invade" Tassie in May/June, 1976. The objective of the trip will be mainly to have a gander at Australia's premier caves, do some surveying and practice for the 1976 Australia/New Zealand/British New Guinea Expedition. Objective areas are:- Mole Creek (5 days), Ida Bay (5 days) and the Junee-Florentine (10 days) approximately. Any local cavers interested in joining the party at any stage are more than welcome.

Randall King.

## NEWSLETTER CORRESPONDENCE.

As I mentioned in the editorial, response to my request for material is starting to bear fruit and I would like to apologise to those people whose articles do not appear in this issue. Yes, I do have a couple left over! They will be published in the Summer issue. Keep writing as the next issue could make 20 pages.

Laurie Moody.

# DOWN UNDER ALL OVER...

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE SOCIETIES.

- BMSC** : News from this club is rather belated but anything is better than nothing. A trip was held to Bat Cave, Alice Springs in July '73 and Ken Pickering recommends a visit if you're ever out that way. In late September '73, a party visited Wyanbene apparently led by Garry McNamara. This same area also received a visit from a large party (16) in mid-May '73. In March '74, a party visited Jenolan and in mid-April, Abercrombie, where some survey work was carried out. Bungonia and Wyanbene were also visited about this time by members. June saw trips to Jenolan where J41 was inspected and Copperhania, where exploration was carried out. Abercrombie was trogged in July and September/August, saw a trip to Cliefden, which also received another visit in December.
- CEGSA** : Have been fairly active with trips to Town Cave (Yorke Peninsula) being visited in July, Greys Hut Cave (Flinders Ranges) in August and Blackberry Cave (Naracoorte) also in August. There are also proposed trips to Yorke Peninsula and Naracoorte being laid down for November. Dot Peisley also advises that the membership has increased but many members are members in name only. (You wouldn't be the only club with this problem. Ed.)
- CQSS** : Great to hear from you lot! Apparently you have been fairly busy in the Limestone Ridge, Mt. Etna and Karst Glen areas. In August, Johannesons was visited mainly to continue work on a new species of tick, whose host is the Macroderma gigas bat. There has also been a good deal of mapping being done and published in "The Explorer" and it seems like R. Lorrany has been a very busy person.
- KSS** : Reports that there has been nearly two months of inactivity but trips are proposed to Moore Creek, near Tamworth, and/or Ashford near Inverell. Texas also looks a possibility.
- LSC** : Has been fairly quiet with occasional trips to Mole Creek. No other news has reached me at time of editing.
- MSS** : Brian Pepper reports that a trip was made to Bungonia in mid-June. Drum Cave was entered by use of SRT. Report of foul air was found to be erroneous. Argyle Pot was descended using ladders and SRT. Sump noted to be covered with thick film of dust. Ladders with top belay found to be very inefficient and a nuisance. Late in July, a trip was conducted to J79 where a dig was continued. Entered new cave on the Saturday morning. Cave has well decorated passages including a straw 1.485m in length. Large sump entered but bottom not reached. Water level noted to drop 13cm in one day. Mid-August saw another visit to J79. Water in the sump had dropped 6m since the last trip enabling exploration of the bottom. A small hole was enlarged allowing entry into a lower small chamber which was full of water. Survey of the cave was carried out together with a surface survey which showed its relationship to Hennings J76. Further exploration work is still to be carried out.



# CAVING IN PERU.

BEV. RILEY  
by ANDREW PAVEY

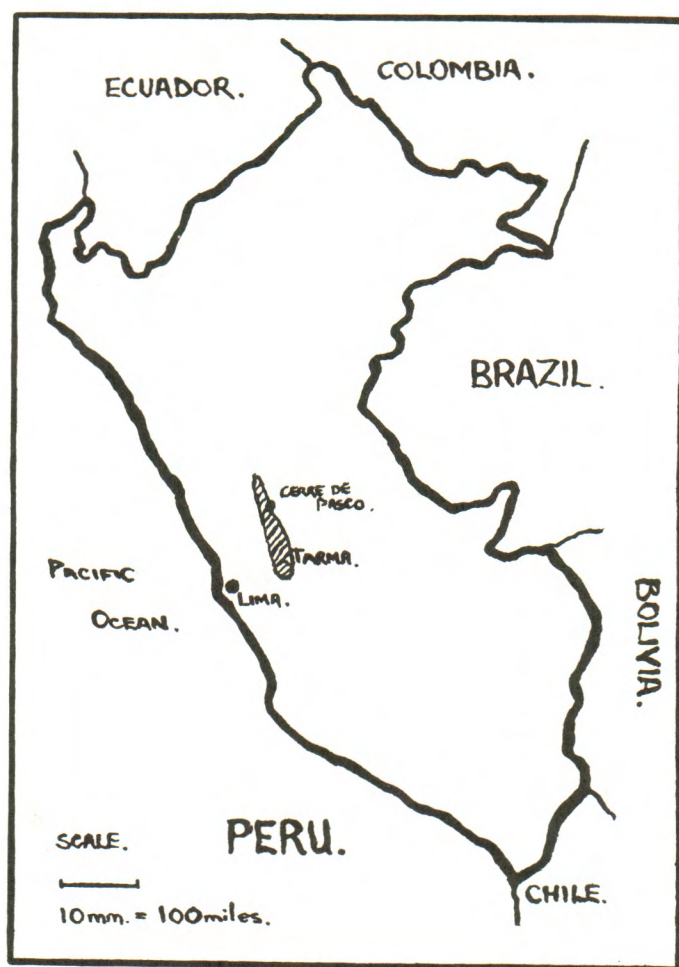
"The floor of the cave is a heaving mass of guano, containing hand-sized cockroaches, six-inch millepedes, spiders and other pleasant insects, who live off the table droppings of the birds. After a few photographs and surveying the cave, we shook off several passengers and left tropical caves for the next party" (Coward, 1973)

## TROPICAL CAVES . . .

And we were the next party.... "charming" we thought as we read those juicy lines by Julian Coward, whilst sitting in our sleazy hotel room in Tringo Maria, and outside the rain tumbled down. Negotiations with the hotel clerk (not easy in broken Spanish!) elicited several exciting titbits: the cave was 10km away, the cave was two hours walk away, we could take a boat. At first we opted for the former and decided a walk might be pleasant, but a comment that the road was thigh deep in mud called for a change of plan. The boat was a genuine Amazon basin dug-out, powered by a small outboard and we seemed to be the only ones not sheltering under an obviously inadequate sheet of plastic. It was still raining as the pilot taxied across into mid-river and we discovered the joys of canoeing on flooded Amazonian tributaries. Half an hour upstream past jungle and paddock, we alighted at a beer stand and once more entered into the strange half-world of uttering broken Spanish sentences and hoping to recognise more than one word in the staccato reply. We concluded that the cave was, "up the road near a bridge" and decided that a walk might be worth another try. The locals returned to their beer. It was still raining.

We found the "Cueva de las Lechuzas" fairly easily. It was in fact an obvious (and I do mean obvious) 30m high, 20m wide entrance about 30m up a jungle covered cliff face which disappeared into the mist above. Below and to the right, a dark, mud-laden stream 3m wide and of unknown depth issued silently from a huge grey cliff face.

The cave itself was equally impressive with a shaft of light extending backwards into it for over 200m. It was typically 20m high and 30m wide with an undulating floor, at first covered with only mud and moss but further in grading to millions of nut husks and associated organic detritus and the whole mass alive with cockroaches, spiders, beetles and particularly large millepedes. Occasional clusters of albino plants up to 1.5m high stood under huge organ pipe clusters giving an intense impression of an evil underground forest. Overhead, hideous squawking was set up by the guacharo (steatornio) birds which seem to be responsible for not only the masses of organic matter but also quite remarkable piles of guano. Our progress, not un-naturally, was slow. Not only did we have to wave the torch carefully around our feet to remove the living carpet from our immediate vicinity but we also had to be wary of dive-bombing attacks from the birds. We ventured some 220m in this fashion, to a 15m high flowstone wall which blocked the main passage. The climb was easy for about 12m but the final move was a bit too "hairy" to be attempted so far from home and with some considerable relief, we moved out of the cave taking photographs and shaking off passengers. Outside it was still raining! The whole area seemed (through the clouds) to be tall limestone ridges covered with dripping jungle and with all that rain, there must be some quite sizable caves around, judging from this one example.





## CAVING IN PERU Cont;

We did learn of one other nearby cave (Cueva de las Pavas (turkeys) but another report suggested it was only a rocky overhang and not really a cave at all! We moved on, with no regrets, leaving tropical caving to the next party.

## AND HIGH ALTITUDE CAVES.

Luckily biological life is sparse in caves at higher altitudes. To reach Palcamayo on Peru's alti-plano, you take a bus or a train for a really incredible trip over a 4,800m pass and from this point on, the whole area seems to be limestone. We toured the area by bus and train and estimated the limestone outcrop at 50km x 300km, stretching to Tingo Maria along the spine of the Andes from Tavja thru Cerre de Pasco. The limestone varied from fairly massive through to quite weak, thinly bedded rocks. We saw little direct evidence of caves throughout this area but there were many dry valleys and the water must go somewhere.

Very little speleological work has been done in the area despite its relative proximity (150km) to Lima (Peru's capital), as there are very few (if any) local cavers. The only known caves of any size are near the small town of Palcamayo which is north of Tarma in the Department of Tarma. These caves have been visited by three expeditions that we know of: A Peruvian Expedition lead by a well-known climber which achieved little, a Polish party which reached the end of the large resurgence cave known as Huagapo and a British party from Imperial College who mapped the cave, descended La Sima de Milpo (in the hill behind Huagapo) to 407m and also mapped half a dozen other caves in the surrounding area. The latter expedition generated the best available literature on the area (Bowser, 1973 & Coward, 1973).

We visited the area in May, 1975 and camped right outside the cave entrance, just opposite the house of Modesto Castro, who is the "official guide" to the cave. In a long, rambling conversation during the evening, Modesto revealed himself as a really keen speleo held back only by lack of equipment and lack of companions. We looked through the fascinating scrapbook on the caves and he showed us a rough sketch of the area on which he has marked many caves which he knows of. We estimated the number as greater than 50 within 5km of the house and he claimed several were so large that he had ventured only 50m into them before turning back for lack of support. Whilst one could take this with a grain of salt, he certainly did lead the British to La Sima de Milpo, which is currently deepest in South America and second deepest in the Southern Hemisphere. The area has good potential, as the highest limestone is at least 5,500m and the resurgence at Huagapo is at 3,572m although in the immediate vicinity of Huagapo, the proved water connection from Anta-Cocha Cave to Huagapo gives 668m of depth and at least 7kms of length, although a physical connection is unlikely. All the hills in the area are steep and grassy with small rock outcrops or fields dotted over them so surface prospecting and travel is relatively easy once you adjust to the altitude. The area is well-served with roads and is well-populated and the locals seem keen to show cavers holes which they have found.

## A PROPOSED EXPEDITION, 1977.

We are currently considering a one month expedition to this area in Peru in August, 1977. Due to customs hassles etc., it would be a small (say) six man group carrying a few hundred metres of rope and all equipment with them, camping in the field and possibly hiring a car for transport (although there are many buses). Total cost would be \$12-1500 (excursion air fare via Easter Island is cheap and food is very cheap in Peru) and we will continue to IUS Conference in England thereafter. If anyone is interested you can contact me via UNSWSS (see inside front cover) for more details.

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DID YOU HEAR . . . . .

about the angry inchworm? He was told to convert to the metric system.

about the kitten that fell into a Xerox and became a copy cat?

about the dog that went to the flea circus and stole the show?

. . . . . just thought I'd ask! Things are tough!



# SOUTH AFRICAN CAVES

by Albert Goede

FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CAVE BIOLOGY AND CAVE PALAEOLOGY.

OUTDSHOORN, SOUTH AFRICA - AUGUST 4-6, 1975.

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending this symposium - the first to be held specifically on cave biology and cave palaeontology. In retrospect, one wonders if South Africa was the right place for the occasion as I was one of only four international delegates to attend. The main reason for the poor international attendance is probably the high cost of air fares - even from Europe and North America. The cost from Australia is prohibitive. It costs a lot more to make a return trip by air to South Africa than it does to Europe. In my case, the trip was made possible by the University of Tasmania's grant towards conference expenses resulting from the fact that I was presenting a joint paper with Dr. Peter Murray on the bone caves near Montagu in North-West Tasmania. The fact that the number of contributors was limited, did have the advantage that each speaker could hold forth for up to an hour with ample time for discussion afterwards. It also made for a relaxed atmosphere. The papers presented were generally of a high standard and covered a great variety of topics.

The symposium was well attended by South African cavers - mostly from Cape Town but with a significant contingent from Johannesburg. The occasion coincided with the 21st Anniversary of organised speleology in South Africa which began with the founding of SASA (South African Speleological Association) in 1954. Unfortunately, South Africa now has two 'national' speleological bodies. CROSA (Cave Research Organisation of South Africa) is centred on Johannesburg and has branches in other parts of Transvaal, while SASA is centred on Cape Town and has most of its membership in the Cape Province, although they also have a branch in Johannesburg. The symposium provided a meeting ground for cavers from both bodies and discussions were held with the aim of creating a truly national caving federation. Dave Hawke of CEGSA, who is at present in Johannesburg studying for a higher degree, attended the discussions as an adviser. If the structure of the national body turns out to show a marked resemblance to that of ASF, it will not be altogether accidental!

The conference opened on Monday morning with a paper by Dr. Margaret Marker, on the "Cango Caves System" which was read in her absence by David Hawke. David had quite an interesting time trying to answer questions to a paper he hadn't written. At half past eleven the official opening began, with an address by the Hon. Senator J.P. van der Speij, the Minister of National Education, in front of a large captive audience of Oudtshoorn's secondary school population. The four international delegates, including yours truly, found themselves seated on the stage with the local dignitaries while trying to hide behind miniature flags of their respective countries. Apart from Australia, the countries represented were the United States, Switzerland and (would you believe?) Holland. The Minister showed himself to be well informed on the subject of speleology and in true South African fashion changed several times from fluent English to fluent Afrikaans. Politicians in South Africa tend to be a cut above their Australian counterparts as they are required to speak at least two languages fluently. He was followed by the Lord Mayor of Oudtshoorn, who proudly announced the discovery made two days earlier of a significant extension of the Cango Caves system. This is known as Cango 3 and its discovery received national coverage in the press and on TV the following day. Several other speakers followed.

The official opening over, we made our way to the nearby Riempe Hotel as guests at a Civic Luncheon given by the Municipality of Oudtshoorn. Naturally, this was an occasion for further speeches - a pastime at which South Africans seem to excel. Eating and drinking is another popular pursuit and considering the quality and quantity of food and drink available, I don't blame them. As Brother Nicholas Sullivan (the US delegate) remarked, "I have been eating my way through South Africa".

Then back to the symposium centre where Dr. John Grindley gave a paper on the fauna of the Cape Peninsula Caves. It is an interesting fact that the most cave-adapted and unusual cave fauna in South Africa is found in caves which are not even developed in limestone but occur in sandstone caves of the Cape Range near Cape Town. Although not particularly extensive, they are true caves and are at least in part formed by solution processes. That evening there were no official functions and we used the opportunity to move from the municipal camping ground to the SASA hut which is a rather palatial old farmhouse made available to cavers by the municipality. It is located not far from the Cango Caves and from the back porch, we had a splendid view of the Grootswartberge (mountains) to the north.

The next day began with a paper read on behalf of Dr. H. Kessler on the "Health giving properties of caves". Some interesting points were made:

Continued on Page 8



SOUTH AFRICAN CAVES Cont;

- (1) Breathing cave air relieves congestion because of the water loss from mucus membranes.
- (2) The calcium and magnesium content of the cave air has a beneficial effect.
- (3) Cave air has a lower bacterial content.
- (4) Breathing rate is increased by a high content of carbon dioxide.
- (5) Cave atmosphere has a low content of dust, fibres and pollen.
- (6) Low pH value of cave air has a bactericidal effect.

The paper generated some lively discussion. Strong criticisms were made by Brother Nicholas. He cited the example of Mammoth Cave which had been used as a sanatorium for TB patients in the 19th Century - the patients died!

Next, Dr. Hilary Deacon, an archaeologist from the University of Stellenbosch, discussed cave deposits in the Congo area. The sites he has been excavating are limestone shelter caves and he has made some interesting discoveries of sequences going right back to early last glacial times. Further work is still in progress.

This paper was followed by one given by Dr. C. Deeelman. She spoke about the distribution of cave spiders in Europe. The actual collecting is a family affair as they head for remote parts of Europe for several weeks each summer. The Dutch winters provide an excellent opportunity to study the material collected during the summer. Some very interesting facts were presented on the distribution of cave species and their relationships (both taxonomic and geographical) to the surface fauna.

In the early afternoon, Dr. Pierre Strinati talked about the cave fauna of a caving area in Sao Paulo, Brazil. We then left by bus for Highgate Ostrich Farm where a young but expert guide initiated us into the gentle art of ostrich farming. One of the delegates was taken for a ride by an ostrich (he even volunteered, poor fellow) and established a new record for remaining on the bird's back. It's quite simple - he didn't know how to get off! Four jockeys riding ostriches gave an example of the local equivalent of the Melbourne Cup - strictly for the birds. We returned to the farm for the barbecue (braaivleis) - a real South African treat and a good opportunity to try out some excellent South African wines.

Wednesday was the last day of paper sessions. Brother Nicholas discussed the recent discoveries of petroglyphs in caves of the Rio Camuy Valley of Puerto Rico. An excellent collection of slides left us with a vivid impression of the area and its caves.

Dr. Celia Young presented a paper on histoplasmosis - a disease that is quite significant in the caves of the Transvaal where some serious cases have been reported. The greatest danger lies in getting a heavy dose when remaining underground for a long time on a first cave visit. Symptoms of the disease are similar to TB and may last for several months. Some light-hearted exchanges followed when cavers from Cape Province enquired about the risk of visiting Transvaal cavers introducing the disease into caves in Cape Province where it has not been recorded.

I was the last contributor in the morning session and gave our joint paper on the bone caves of the Montagu area. An interesting discussion followed as South Africans are well aware of the world significance of their own Australopithecine bone caves in the Transvaal. While our Montagu bone deposits are unlikely to be more than 100,000 years old, some of the South African deposits are at least two and possibly as much as three million years old.

In the afternoon, Dr. John Grindley discussed some aspects of the biology of Speleogriphus, a cave adapted crustacean which has been found in several caves of the Cape Peninsula. This animal is so unlike any other known crustacean that it had to be included in a new order. It is a distant relative of the Tasmanian mountain shrimp (Anaspides tasmaniae) which also has a habit of occurring in caves.

The final lecture of the symposium was given by Dr. H.C. Woodhouse and was entitled "Art on the Rocks". His talk was a background to an extensive collection of superb slides showing stone age cave paintings of the Bushmen in South Africa and Rhodesia. In its dynamic expression and choice of colours, the paintings are reminiscent of the late Pleistocene cave art of Western Europe - so well preserved in the caves of Southern France and Spain. Dr. Woodhouse found it difficult to stop when his time ran out but nobody really minded.

That night, the symposium was concluded by a dinner in the Congo Caves restaurant to celebrate the 21st birthday of the South African Speleological Association. Another night of many speeches and much eating and drinking in good South African style. The overseas delegates were pleasantly surprised to receive a full set of souvenirs of Congo Caves including sets of colour slides. Personal presentations were made by the Lady Mayoress of Oudtshoorn.

The following morning, we made a trip through Congo Caves which I have already described elsewhere (Speleo Spiel, No. 106, pp 3-4). Most of the delegates including myself, then elected to travel back to Cape Town by Congo Cave bus with an overnight stop in a luxury motel at Wilderness, located in a rainforest area on the south coast. This region provided a startling contrast with the semi-arid country of the Oudtshoorn area.



SOUTH AFRICAN CAVES Cont;

After our arrival in Cape Town on Friday night, the final event was a reception given by the Lord Mayor of Cape Town. Once again the international delegates were the target of the news media-newspapers and television. Obviously, speleology has a better public image in South Africa than in Australia.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the hospitality and friendliness of South Africans in general and cavers in particular. My personal thanks especially to Jose Burman (President) and Stan Walker (Vice-president) of SASA and also to Dave Hawke, Francis Stewart, Peter Breedt and Imans Kavalieris.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

As quite a number of cavers will most probably be unable to get their hands on a copy of Speleo Spiel No. 106, the Editor (ASF) has obtained permission from the Editor (TCC) to reproduce this interesting article entitled "Some South African Caves" by Albert Goede - read on.

SOME SOUTH AFRICAN CAVES

"I arrived in Johannesburg on Thursday, 31st July, and was met at the airport by two Australian cavers. One was Dave Hawke, a member of CEGSA, who is spending a year in South Africa studying for a higher degree (M. Sc.) at the University of Witwatersrand - the topic of his study concerns the evolution of some caves in the Transvaal. The other was Imans Kavalieris - a former caving companion of Noel White and a brother of Laimonis ("Kav"), who is well-known to many of the Tasmanian cavers. Imans is working as a geologist with the Geological Survey and is stationed at Pretoria, a city to the north of Johannesburg. I was taken to the University and introduced to most of the staff in the Geography Department including Dr. Margaret Marker - a karst geomorphologist who has been studying the caves in the Transvaal.

In the afternoon, I attended a lecture on Dr. Marker's favourite topic - caves of the Transvaal - and then visited the palaeontological museum where work is being done on extracting bones from some of South Africa's well-known cave bone breccias from such famous sites as Sterkfontein, Swartkrans and Kromdraai, which contain remains of Australopithecines - the South African Apeman who lived between 1 and 3 million years ago. These very old cave fills have become almost as hard as the original rock and the bones are extremely difficult to extract. Our bone deposits at Montagu are very young by comparison - almost certainly less than 100,000 years old.

The following day - Friday - we started the long drive to Oudtshoorn in East Cape Province, a distance of some 1,700 kms. Apart from myself, the party included Dave Hawke and Frances Niven - a staff member from Wits University with an interest in studying cave climates. We arrived at Oudtshoorn at lunchtime on Sunday and after finding somewhere to stay, went to Congo Cave for a tourist trip. The cave attracts a large number of tourists and surface facilities are excellent with a modern restaurant and other amenities including a large carpark and beautifully landscaped gardens. The cave is quite large and extensive and including a new discovery, made the previous day, is several kilometres long. It includes a large chambers and impressive formations but lacking the variety of colour found in the best of our own Mole Creek caves. Also, in the tourist cave at least, most of the formation is dead. Another curious feature is that since the formations were formed, a large quantity of aggressive water has filled up and flowed through the cave partly dissolving the formations. This rare phenomenon has given rise to some unusual sculpture. The guided tour is a mixture of good and bad. Quite a lot of coloured lights are used - not always to advantage. As we arrived a little late, we missed out on the beginning of the tour where a dummy of the original explorer (Van Zijl) is shown sliding down a rope into the entrance chamber. In fact, we arrived just in time to see all the lights turned out and to listen to a recorded rendition of the South African National Anthem. The reason for this piece of patriotism was the fact that it had been written by a native of Oudtshoorn. His one-time residence in the town has been turned into a national shrine.

At the far end of the tourist cave an interesting option was offered to the younger and more enterprising tourists in the form of a self-guided tour through a squeeze and a series of crawls, climbs and slides. Of course I had to be in it! The whole route was over very highly polished flowstone and remarkably clean. Even so, it didn't improve the good trousers that I was wearing!

On Thursday, following the conference, I had another opportunity to see Congo Cave. This time I was in a caving party and suitably equipped to see Congo 2 - the extension that was found during Roy Skinner's visit to South Africa three years earlier. At the same time, some of the hardy types made a quick visit to Congo 3 - discovered the previous Saturday. As this entailed a long, wet and muddy crawl through a stream passage (with continuous pumping to keep the water down to a level where it is just possible to keep your nose above the water), I decided to opt out of being a hardy type! Besides, what do you do with wet and muddy clothes when you have to travel round with everything in a single suitcase?

Congo 2 was certainly worth a visit. It had originally been difficult to get into but mining operations by the Oudtshoorn Tourist Authority under the energetic leadership of the town clerk, Mike Schultz, had turned squeezes into very comfortable passages by quarrying away four feet of solid flowstone from the floor. Unlike the formations in the tourist cave, those in Congo 2 had not been affected by resolution processes and were alive, wet and sparkling. Really outstanding features are the spectacular and abundant helictites and also the large calcite crystals growing in some of the pools. A surprising feature



SOUTH AFRICAN CAVES Cont;

was the occurrence of numerous bat skeletons scattered throughout the extension. Many of them were cemented into the flowstone floors. Numerous photographs were taken and a TV reporter from one of the national stations tried to take some movie film. In all, it was a very worthwhile visit.

Saturday morning saw me several hundred miles away in the suburbs of Cape Town, struggling up a mountain near Kalk Bay behind Pieter Breedts - a member of SASA and by profession, an officer in the South African Navy. Although the climb to Boomslang Cave was only 1500 feet, I soon discovered that Pieter was a good deal fitter than I was. The cave we were going to visit is one of quite a number in the Table Mountain Range that runs from Cape Town south to the Cape of Good Hope. The peculiar thing about these caves, is that they are not in limestone. The rock is a hard sandstone and looks more like a quartzite. Not the sort of rock you would expect to be soluble in water but there are in fact solution features on the surface - poorly developed karren and solution pans. And, as I discovered in Boomslang Cave, the caves are true solution caves - not just widened fissures. Although most of the caves are not large, they are well-known for their cave fauna which includes quite a few cave adapted species. Whilst there, I collected some cave crickets for Aola Richards. I also discovered that the cave is one of the most polluted that I have seen. It is littered with empty beer and wine bottles, tins, wrappers and even rotting meat and other foodscraps. Broken glass is a major hazard. The fact that the cave is so close to the suburbs of Cape Town has obvious disadvantages. Name writing is another favourite occupation of the local yokels.

Although some local cavers are becoming concerned about the state of the caves in the Table Mountain Range, they have not so far done very much about it. A redeeming feature of the cave is that it goes straight through the mountain and the opposite entrance offers spectacular views of Simonstown and False Bay.

On Saturday night, I was back in Johannesburg after an uneventful flight from Cape Town. Having enjoyed the hospitality of Francis Stewart, another SASA caver and his family, where I stayed for the night - I went out with Imans Kavalieris to see two Transvaal caves. The first was a wild cave at Wonderfontein to the south-west of the city. It was a dry cave with a complex network of passages in almost flat-lying dolomite. Its outstanding characteristics seem to be a general lack of decoration and cave life (other than bats). Imans knew the cave well as he and Francis had been mapping it. It was just as well, for I was soon completely dis-oriented in this two dimensional maze where one passage looks much like the other.

After lunch, we visited Sterkfontein Cave - famous for its bone deposits. As a tourist cave, it was very badly developed. Until recently, tourists had to go through it with carbide lamps and candles. The cave lighting is of about the same standard as the average underground municipal public toilet. Our native guide explained in Afrikaans and bad English, the weird and wonderful things that can be seen by imaginative people. You shouldn't really have to go underground in Africa to see an elephant's behind! Not a single word was said about the bone deposits which have made the cave famous. An interesting feature of the cave is that it goes down to water-table. In the shallow water on the edge of an extensive pool, we could see small blind shrimps swimming around.

Afterwards, we made a quick visit to the small museum where some fanciful re-constructions of the Ape-man's way of life can be seen. Then, back to Johannesburg. A few hours later and I was leaving the country at 37,000 feet, jam-packed in a Boeing 747 and regretting that I couldn't have spent more time in this fascinating and interesting country."

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## BUMAKA ISLAND.

Bumaka Island, which is in the Cunningham group off the northern Australian coast, apparently has a grisly nickname - the Island of the Dead! Scattered throughout the island are a number of caves which coast-dwelling Aborigines have used for several hundreds of years as catacombs in which to place their dead. Skulls and bones of thousands of Aborigines are piled in layers on rock shelves in the caves. They have been placed there after exposure has rotted the flesh from their bodies and many are decorated with red and yellow ochre.

Most of these burial caves are decorated with paintings and carvings. Scenes depicted are mostly of hunting and mythology. However, some of the more recent ones show pearling luggers and Malay seamen and also Japanese divers. On the mainland, there are several stands of trees with nest-like platforms woven among their branches. These are the "grave-yards" where the Aborigines leave their dead to decay, prior to placing them in the caves of Bumaka Island.

If anyone can add more to this article, the Editor would be pleased to hear from you!



# WHO'S WHO....

on the SPELEO SCENE?

## 6. albert goede

Commenced his caving career in 1954 by joining TCC and was one of two Tasmanian delegates to attend the inaugural meeting of ASF. He also took part in the Nullarbor expedition which followed. In 1958, Albert was elected an honorary life member of TCC and over the years he has held many positions. He is currently President, an office which he has held during eight of the last ten years. He also edited Speleo Spiel for the first seven years of its existence. He is interested in both sporting and scientific aspects of caving. On the exploration side, Albert has been involved in major discoveries in Exit, Kubla Khan and Khazad-dum and the exploration of new areas such as Precipitous Bluff and the Cracroft. Scientifically, he is interested in biology, hydrology, geomorphology and sediments of caves and has published a number of papers. Albert was born in Holland in 1935 and came to Australia in 1951. He graduated from the Uni. of Tas. with B.Sc. (Honours) in 1964 and was awarded his M.Sc. degree in 1973. At present, he is lecturing in geography at the Uni. of Tas. He is married with three children. His wife, Therese, is also keen caver and shares an interest in the collecting of cave fauna.

## 7. norman poulter

Norm joined HCG in 1965, cutting his photographic teeth at Bungonia and Cliefden. In 1969, he joined SUSS. In 1971, Norm spent 7 months with TCC and was involved in early discoveries in Khazad-dum. In late '71, he was awarded the Leather Medal by CEGSA for fracturing a rib during a rockfall in Sellicks Hill Cave, south of Adelaide. He settled in Western Australia in 1972 where he is currently employed by the Electron Microscopy Centre, University of WA. Refined photographic techniques in Exit, Kubla Khan (Tas), Crystal, Mullamullang (WA). Scooped the photographic competition at the 9th ASF Conference and lately expounds the advantages of the Diprotodon poulter, Pentax cameras and Ektachrome film. Currently member SUSS, TCC, SRGWA and WASG. He is also Safety Officer of SRGWA and a member of the SUSS Remote and In-accessible Places Sub-Committee. Norm was born in November, 1944 and is (still) unmarried.

## 8. mike bourke

Mike was born in Brisbane in 1948. An agronomist by profession. Joined UQSS in 1967 and became "serious" about caving after a number of trips to Tasmania that same year. Caved all over Queensland before coming to Papua/New Guinea in 1970. In Australia, main interests were conservation and biology, but in P/NG spends most of his time exploring and producing Niugini Caver. Was secretary of UQSS at one stage and editor of Down Under. Has led expedition to Camooweal as well as one to New Britain (Ora) and one to New Ireland (Lelet Plateau). Mike has also participated in two others. Finally, Mike is married.

## 9. kevan wilde

Kevan was born in Birmingham, England in 1946. Formerly a policeman for many years until he and the police parted ways. He is now a geological assistant/full time caver. Commenced caving in 1970 in Tasmania but has done most of his caving in the highlands of New Guinea, where he is the "local" speleo "heavy". Bottomed Bibima in '72 on the record breaking trip. Main interests are exploration, cave art and writing long articles. He was one of the organisers of the '73 trip to the Muller Range; a member of the '75 British expedition to P/NG; and a starter for the '76 trip to the Mullers. Kevan is married with a son.

(Editors note:) Owing to the popularity of this series, which has proved far more successful than I dared hope, several more caving identities are featured overleaf. Keep the ball rolling and let's hear from more of you lazy blighters. Lem.



## 10. jim farnworth

Another Pommie caver who was born in Blackburn in 1946. Jim started caving in Lancashire in 1962 and has been going strong ever since. Prior to coming to New Guinea, Jim went on annual expeditions to Spain, France, Bulgaria, Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia. In '71, a brief trip to Yugoslavia got extended to India, South-East Asia, Australia and Papua/New Guinea. Has caved around the New Guinea Islands and was a member of the '75 New Ireland Lelet Expedition. By trade, Jim is a fitter and turner.

## 11. fred parker

Born in Meerut, India in 1941, Fred has been in Papua/New Guinea as a "kiap" (patrol officer) since 1963. He has caved all over the country as his job took him to various stations. His main interest is biology and has a number of papers behind him and two books in planning stages. Particular biological interests are snakes, lizards and frogs. Fred has also published papers on all the areas that he has caved in. He is married with two children.

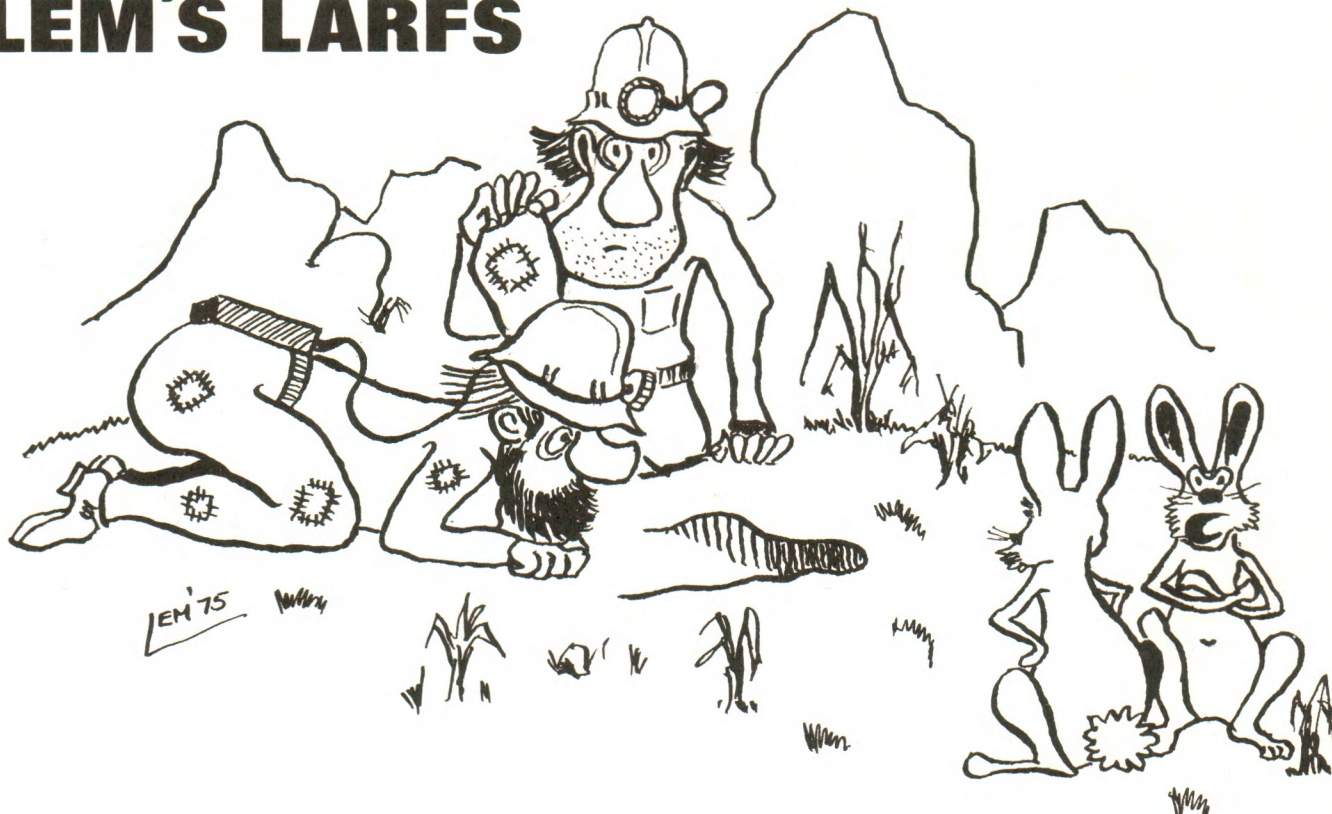
## 12. hal gallasch

Hal was born in Adelaide in 1943. An agronomist by profession, he is based in New Britain. Started caving with CEGSA in 1961 and continued all over Papua/New Guinea after coming north in 1965. He is interested in exploration, documentation, cave art and archaeology. Also has a wide range of other interests such as anthropology, marine biology and mineralogy. Hal is married with two children.

Meet more Australian/New Guinea cavers in the next issue of ASF Newsletter and find out - WHO'S WHO?

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## LEM'S LARFS



"If it's not bloody shooters - it's bloody cavers! You can't have any privacy these days!"



# THE GREATEST SHOW UNDER THE EARTH

by DENNIS BURKE

This took place at Naracoorte during the second yearly Caveland Festival. Down Naracoorte way, there are some Caves and the local festival is now named around them, although it used to be an autumn festival before that.

CEGSA, aware of certain interest in the Caves and the forthcoming Festival, decided to take the courageous step of making the occasion memorable by screening a show of caving films in the Blanche Cave. Blanche has three large chambers, in a line. The first of these was used way back into the last century as a meeting and picknicking area for the district and was set up wonderfully well for this with some permanent seating. You enter the cave through a small entrance, down a narrow section of stairway and then drop about 3 metres more down a grand wide and, in fact, graceful concrete stairway to the floor level. Only then do you notice, by going back into the gloom, that the entrance is perched on top of a monstrous column. About 80 metres ahead, there is another huge column and it was up at the roof, at that point, where we hung our big screen (4 x 3m). In front of the screen, there was a big natural stage. Power is laid on of course, and the Curator detailed the Assistant Curator to give the first chamber (app. 150m x 25m x 7m high) a good thorough hosing out. It gets this treatment from year to year on special occasions and loses the possum smell and looks bright and clean.

We brought in enough seating for 500 and arranged two consecutive screenings on the evening of Thursday, 20th March, 1975. The programme for the GREATEST SHOW UNDER THE EARTH was four films, "Spelunking", which was then followed by an ABC segment from Weekend Magazine on the Naracoorte Fossil Cave, then "Paderac" and finally to the mournful organ, "Siphon 1122".

This allowed for a little patter from the public address system rigged on the natural stage, whilst the films were being changed. The Mayor spoke and so did the Chairman of the Caveland Festival at the second sessions and Miss Caveland was there too.

We should have been ready for it of course, but the uninvited visitors arrived and added colour. A possum here and a possum there plus a few furry bats which circled the screen ever so gracefully. I suppose it was the novelty which kept them interested.

Afterwards, the Kiosk proprietors welcomed everyone for hot tea and sandwiches on the house, which was a very nice touch. So we turned off the projector, and the screen was hauled down, the lights turned off, the PA system carted away and darkness fell again in Blanche. All that was left was the small matter of the entry for the Guinness Book of Records.

## THE GREAT VICTORIA CAVE GIVE-AWAY

by Dennis Burke

After a pleasant Naracoorte weekend, 31 August - 1 September, 1974, it was evident that there was an embarrassing excess of rock debris to be disposed of from the tunneling works in Victoria Cave. Talks betwixt G. Gartrell, Dot Peisley, M. Meth and various Burkes instigated a quaint ploy that "Visitors" remove rock.

Then, on the 8th September, the idea was put to the Curator who agreed and further offered the loan of two of his cleanest trash cans. CEGSA Committee, in an historic move, also bravely agreed, provided the action was carried out "discreetly". At that time, we were not to know that the give-away would be a sell-out on the first weekend.

A brochure was printed explaining the ins and outs of the cave and Moriarty Plastics of Adelaide made the 0.004 side welded polythene bags 20cm x 23cm. Members Sherriff, Meth, Rivett and Burke did some of the bagging, but it was mostly by visitors Tricia Hogan, Kerry Munn, Linda Stacey and Mrs. Mary Burke with her children, Kate, Jonathon and Alex (Foghorn). All in all, it was a somewhat labour intensive operation but "bags" of fun nevertheless.

The passageway where the bags were packed, just north of the bone sieve, is to be known henceforth as Baggit Place. (There's tonnes and tonnes more of the stuff.)



THE GREAT VICTORIA CAVE GIVE-AWAY Cont;

The ploy pleased the Victoria Cave visitors on the long weekend 12 - 14th October. 1100 bags were stowed in two 20 gallon bins by the bone sieve in the Underground Fossil Museum. At the close of the guide's address, the lids were whipped off and a lucky dip began in earnest. From the reaction of the very first party, it was clear that everyone did want their own piece of historical rock. More interesting still, dumping was anticipated but surprisingly, none was seen either in the cave or elsewhere.

Editors Note: Dennis has advised me that he has about 100 empty bags in stamped envelopes so if anyone is interested, contact me and you too can be a proud owner.

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DOWN UNDER ALL OVER Cont;

- MUSIG** : Inform us that a visit was made to the Wellington area in July and a number of small caves were inspected. That same month also saw a trip to Jenolan where some surveying, photography and exploration work was done in Mammoth Cave.
- NC** : A vague report has filtered through that a trip was held to Kubla Khan recently but apart from this, other activities are unknown at present.
- PNGCEG** : According to Niugini Caver (Mike Bourke), two members completed a recon. trip of the Finem Tel area for the British Expedition in June and in mid-September a 26 man party moved in. The deepest cave explored was Agin Tem at 180m. The longest was Selminum Tem, in which 13km has so far been surveyed. In Central Province, several trips to Jaravere were made in May/June and a re-survey of the Old Cave has been commenced by Michael Pound. At East New Britain in June, a threesome revisited Obungeram Cave and established a depth of 102m, making it the deepest cave so far in this region. The Eastern Highlands have been fairly quiet with Kevan Wilde out of the area at present. Several trips have taken place in the Manus area with Metdrohorki Cave being pushed to 500m. A report on the New Ireland Expedition appears in the last issue (No. 68).
- SCS** : Ron Mann informs me that things have been fairly quiet. Exit has received a visit from members and some photography was carried out in Welcome Stranger in the Florentine Valley early in November. I also learnt that the next issue of Southern Caver is devoted entirely to Precipitous Bluff, photos and all!
- SSS** : In August, Bob Holland led a trip to Fanning River, QLD to have a look at the limestone. Apart from the main cave, three others were visited. A further trip to this area is envisaged in the near future. September saw a trip to Wombeyan with some surveying and photography being done in Tattered Shawl Cave. Members also visited Bungonia in July, where Odyssey Cave received a going over. This same cave was trogged again in August when some clean-up work was carried out. Jenolan was also on the venue for this same month and a number of caves were visited. A dig was conducted in 'B84 at the end of August where it was discovered that someone had put a tracing chemical into the water.
- SUSS** : Report that they have been fairly active too, with trips to Jenolan in June and July. The June trip proved to be quite an experience as heavy rain and floodwaters turned the road into a regular 'horror stretch'. On the first July trip, Spider Cave, which has only recently been discovered, was visited for further exploration. Twin Shafts also received a visit from members, along with Wiburds Lake Cave. Later this same month, the doline entrance to Elder Cave was surveyed as was also the Elder Cave Sinkhole.
- TCC** : Have also been busy mostly in the Hastings and Junee-Florentine areas. In October, a party led by Max Jeffries and Laurie Moody located a number of deep shafts beside a massive landslide below Wherrett's Lookout in the Junee area. Despite some hopeful trips, so far little has been found. One of the shafts choked off at 55 metres but the area could still turn up a major find. Survey work is still continuing in Beginners Luck Cave in the Florentine area and this is being done by Albert Goede and Peter Murray. Tony Culberg has been busy conducting school groups through a number of caves over the last few months. A newcomer, 16 year old Bill Nicholson accompanied experienced members on a recent descent of Midnight Hole which is 203 metres deep. Therese Goede has been very busy at the Junee Homestead and renovations have turned it into a home from home.
- UQSS** : Following on from the conference field trips, more activity has gone on at Windy Gap, particularly in the new extension of Queensland Cave. At Texas, a new cave has been found on Viator Hill (Rabscuttle Hole). At Rockhampton, surveys of Prometheus? Cave and Carn Duin have reached the drawing up stage. UQSS members produced the backbone of the 1975 New Ireland Expedition. Most time was spent on the Lelet Plateau. Notable caves found were:- a simple



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DOWN UNDER ALL OVER Cont;

- UQSS Cont; : shaft 80m deep, another at Lowat Kurnaeri 100m deep, one at Niuggalau 300m plus and 68m deep, and one at Karainesoborunda? which had a total passage length of 450m. (Spelling of place names is quite possibly incorrect as I had a job to read the writing. Ed) We are hoping for better results in the 100km<sup>2</sup> of plateau of 1200m plus depth potential that remains to be checked. One of the resurgences was looked at and proved to be enterable. It discharges a river of 60 cusecs 12 cubic metres per second approximately.
- VSA : Have mainly been concerned with the preparation of a review on fossil sites in Victoria and a lot of time has been spent on this one. At the end of August, Gray Wilson and Brian Franz spent several days in the Upper Buchan area exploring. One small cave was located and duly investigated.

No information has been received from the following clubs at the time of typing (mid-November):- BSA, CCC, CSS, ESA, HCG, ISS, NSWITSS, NUCC, OSS, PSG, SRGWA, UNSWSS, and WASG. I hope to hear from your reps. prior to the next issue.

ESA have advised me of a change of address:- 7 Alabama Avenue, BEXLEY. 2207. Thankyou.

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## BOOK REVIEW.

SPECIAL ISSUE ON AUSTRALIAN CAVES by Albert Goede.

Australian Natural History - June 1975, Vol. 18, No.6 (Published quarterly by Australian Museum, Sydney).

The whole issue of this journal is devoted to various aspects of Australian speleology with contributions from nine different authors. Most of them are well-known to Australian cavers. The articles are well illustrated with high quality reproductions of colour and black and white photographs. The front cover is graced by a colour photograph of the Grand Fissure in Exit Cave taken by Andrew Pavey. Ted Lane, a co-editor of Helictite, discusses the early history of the discovery and exploitation of limestone and caves in NSW. His article is illustrated with reproductions of four historical paintings and photographs. The history of exploration of Australian caves is described by Andrew Pavey and Neil Montgomery. Mention is made of most of the outstanding cave systems found in various Australian states and a brief outline is given of the development of organised speleology since its inception in 1946.

Mineral decorations (nature's cave art) are discussed by Julia James. She lists the more common minerals that make up cave decorations and gives an indication of the wealth of different forms that may be found and the way in which some of them originate. A good selection of photographs is included.

The formation and development of Australia's caves is covered by Joe Jennings, who is well qualified to discuss the subject after 20 odd years of detailed cave studies in various parts of Australia. The paper is mainly concerned with the evolution of limestone caves but a brief mention is also made of lava caves. Rod Wells, well-known to South Australians especially, as the man in charge of the excavation of the very rich late Pleistocene bone deposits in Victoria Cave, discusses briefly the origin of the more spectacular extinct marsupials whose remains have so far been found, such as the giant browsing kangaroo Procoptodon and the enigmatic marsupial lion Thylacoleo. One illustration shows the first reconstruction ever to be published of the marsupial lion's strong, heavily clawed front feet. Some preliminary age determinations of the deposit are also given.

The story of speleochronology, the dating of caves and cave features, is told by Cliff Ollier who goes on to mention some of the recent advances that have been made in this field. Limestone formations in New Zealand and elsewhere have been used to determine the climatic history of the localities where they occur. The dating of cave formations has made considerable progress with the development of the thorium-uranium method of dating.

Sandra Bowdler, a research worker at the Australian National University, points out the importance of Australian caves to the study of archaeology. Caves mentioned include Kenniff Cave (Qld.), Komalda (SA.), Cloggs (Vic.), and Cave Bay Cave on Hunter Island, off the Tasmanian coast. A section of the deposits at the last site is illustrated.

Ecosystems underground are the subject of a contribution by John Harris, who is well-known for his work on the Carrai Bat Cave near Kempsey in NSW. Bats figure prominently in his paper but a number of other cave dwellers are also mentioned and illustrated.

A final article by John Dunkley and Ludwig Reider, deals with conservation problems on the Australian cave scene and is appropriately entitled, "The Heavy Hand of Modern Man". Subjects covered include the problems arising from the growth of tourism, inundation by dam construction and waste disposal. A very classical photograph of Earls Cave in South Australia, should serve as a warning to us all.

Copies of the journal are available at \$1.33 each (postage included) from the Secretary, Australian Museum, P.O. Box A285, Sydney South, New South Wales, 2001.

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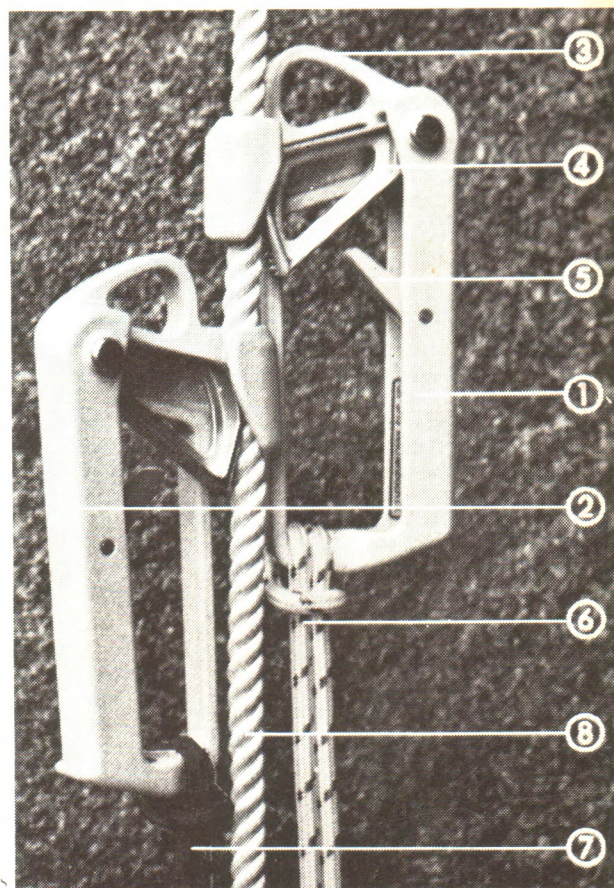


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