

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

# ***CALCITE***

## ***25***



JULY 1978

The newsletter of the  
Highland Caving Group  
PO Box 154  
Liverpool 2170  
Ph. 6072142

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E D I T O R I A L

Welcome again readers to the pages of "Calcite". "Calcite" has been the newsletter of HCG for over a decade, the history and past editors of which have escaped me.

I have now inherited the task of editing the new "Calcite", a task of which I am proud. However, from past experience as a newsletter editor, I have realised a disproportionate amount of work is required in this position, the bulk of which entails the writing of the newsletter oneself. I am not going to write this newsletter. I don't intend to do any more work on the newsletter than is necessary. So if you want a good newsletter, if you want your material included, then send it to me on time, and we'll all live happily ever after.

HCG still produces the "Journal" when there is sufficient finished work to warrant it. "Calcite" is the newsletter and as such contains items of interest and trip reports which document the foundations upon which the finished work is built.

This issue reflects the current interests of the members of the club. We have articles concerned with conservation - in particular Wyanbene Cave, which I feel is one of the best caves in NSW. We have trip reports regarding Tuglow, the management of which is a concern to the members of the club and should concern all cavers. We have reports from Mudgee, an old HCG stamping ground and an area of immense interest to geomorphologists. All in all this "Calcite" reflects the inspirations and endeavours of the club members and illustrates how well the club is going.

Good caving HCG and good documentation.

Stephen Bunton

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They Also Served

(Those who assisted in the production of this newsletter.)

Evalt Crabb, Chris Dunne, Rik Tunney.

On the Gating of Phoenix Cave (B60), Bungonia, NSW.

Phoenix Cave was dug from the surface by members of HCG in April 1974. After breaking through, the cave was explored for 100m of passage to a depth of 30m. The passage was generally small and awkward. Progress was stopped by a squeeze (later found to be 15m long) and high levels of CO<sub>2</sub>. Members noted a remarkable display of etched fossils throughout the cave.

It was decided not to publish the discovery of the cave in the hope of restricting traffic. In 1974 members of StGACT were shown the cave, and being small succeeded in getting through the squeeze and discovering a further 340m of cave to a depth of 70m. News of the discovery soon got around despite efforts not to have the location revealed.

MUSIG visited the cave shortly afterwards and noted a remarkable fossil to which they returned the following weekend with a palaeontologist (R. Wilson pers. comm.). However, in the interim the fossil had been removed. No-one has yet claimed responsibility for its removal.

During the survey of the cave a silverfish was collected (Smith 1976) and this has since been found to be a new species which is found in a number of caves at Bungonia. It has not been found outside of Bungonia Caves. Initially there was a large population of this silverfish in B60. Also a large number of cave-cricket was noted in the twilight zone. Such large numbers are unusual at Bungonia and early in 1977 Glenn Campbell (UNSW) began a long-term study of the ecology of these crickets.

In August 1976 Steve Bunton began a faunal survey, hoping to relate cave species to their derivations from surface species. This study is still under way. It was noted however, that there had been a steady decline in the variety and numbers of animals encountered. After the cave was closed for six months the numbers were again high. It was presumed that the faunal demise was simply due to the increasing use of the cave.

We wrote to the Bungonia Caves Trust for permission to gate the cave. This was granted and in March 1978 a gate was installed. It is hoped that this cave will be respected as a faunal



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sanctuary, and that it will be entered only for necessary scientific work. We have lost some of the fossils but many others remain and there are excellent sediment banks, beautiful helictites, and I believe the fauna may reestablish itself if left undisturbed for some years.

A key to the gate is held by HCG. Another has been left with the Ranger, however this is not for general use as it is for emergency use only. I would like to ask all cavers to take a part in this exercise in cave faunal protection, by not entering the cave and by reporting any damage to the gate to HCG.

### References

Smith 1976 - "A New Cave Dwelling Silverfish from Bungonia."  
HCG Journal No. 1 p. 17

Graeme Smith

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### Trip Report

#### MUDGE

8-10 October 1977

Members present: Bob Kitchen, Bruce Waddington, Chris Roberts

After a minor accident in Hurstville, we proceeded to Mudgee. Limestone outcrops appear along the road from Ilford on.

The first place visited was Limestone Creek. We found "Eastwood" property and introduced ourselves to Mr Skinner, the owner. He recalled people coming in about ten years ago looking for caves (probably our club) and was very friendly. He told us about a paddock where he was fencing which is "hollow". He was digging a post hole with a crowbar when it almost dissappeared. If it were not for the knob on top of the bar he would have lost it. The limestone in this paddock is apparently below the surface and is not obvious. We attempted to find this paddock but took the wrong track. You can drive all the way to the paddock (4X4). It is the paddock with the "lane" (two parallel fences) coming down from the tree line.

We walked several kilomerers over this property and found nothing of note. One small dolomite outcrop 20m high had many

small holes in loose rock but none were goers. The strange thing about this outcrop was the chicken wire placed over the holes, apparently to keep out foxes.

Mr Skinner allowed us to camp on his other property by the Cudgegong River. He will have to move out eventually as the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission has taken over all the land in the area for the Windamere Dam.

The second day we stopped at a house about 3Km towards Mudgee from Clarkson's. The lady there had lived in the area all her life and told us of caves on the Clarkson's property, and on another "The mailbox" on the next property towards Mudgee. She had never been allowed to go near the caves. People seemed to be afraid of them.

#### Apple Tree Flat.

The Clarksons still own the property and are very friendly to cavers. Mr Clarkson told us where to find the caves. A long walk is required, right to the top of the mountain. The way up follows a creek and veres right. The last right fork leads to the "lemon tree". We found Lemon Tree Pot and used rope and descender to enter as the logs were pretty rotten. We only had time to have a brief look around. The cave is very old and dead with little decoration. A lot of vandalism has been caused and two dead sheep are in the entrance. Mr Clarkson said no-one had been up there for about three years but years ago he used to get three to four car loads of people each week-end. Mr Clarkson's mother, who lives on the property, knows the area exceptionally well and said that this was the only area on their property with caves. The limestone is similar to outcrops at Bungonia.

On the last day we drove back to Cudgegong and took the road to Rylstone. Many outcrops appear along the road but we did not stop to look. A dirt road to a quarry goes off on the right to Kandos. We drove off a side road down onto the creek and Bruce found what looked like an old tourist cave at the base of an outcrop at creek level. A large iron gate, steps, handrail and old power lines were still there. The cave was full of water and it would appear that this was not a tourist cave but an old pumping station for the original quarry. A side passage went for 30m but we were stopped by water.

Chris Roberts

Wyanbene - Mining Exploration Licence

Occidental Minerals Corporation of Australia have recently applied for an exploration licence, under the Mining Act 1973, for a square of 4Km sides, the southern edge of which is centered on Wyanbene Trig Station. This trig station is immediately south of Wyanbene Cave entrance and the area of the licence thus covers the cave entrance and most of the limestone outcrop.

On enquiring I found that the licence had been given in respect of Group 1 minerals. The grouping of minerals under the Mining Act is:

- Group 1. Elemental Minerals (Metallics).
- Group 2. Elemental Minerals (Non-Metallics).
- Group 3. Semi-precious Stones.
- Group 4. Hard Rock Minerals.
- Group 5. Clay Minerals.
- Group 6. Diamond.

Limestone is in Group 2 and thus is not directly affected by the licence. The licence does, however, allow exploratory work and this may damage the amenity of the area. There is a need to keep a watch on further developments in the area.

Peter Dykes

(I was at Wyanbene on the 1-2 April and the place was crawling with Bureau of Mineral Resources trucks. -Ed.)

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Update your address list.

B. Cubit	21 Park St	Coledale	2513	042-746767(W)
C. Dunne	5794733	X30	(W)	
J. Mares	042-671966	(H)		
P. Mulligan	6049073	(H)		
R. Tunney	9238416	(W)		
K. Taylor	1/2 Rosebank St	Glebe	2037	3572811(W)
S. Jamsek	3 Rose St	Smithfield West	2164	6048343(H)

Trip ReportMUDGE

22-23 April 1978

Members present: Evalt Crabb, Chris Dunne, Peter Dykes,  
Rik Tunney, Richard Osbourne (visitor).

The two cars met on Saturday morning on the Mudgee Road near Lithgow. While Evalt waited for the sugar to dissolve on his grapefruit, the rest of us investigated an old railway cutting and a tunnel that goes under the highway. Sugar dissolved and Evalt grapefruited, we set off to Capertee to buy breakfast for those who hadn't brought any food (without mentioning any names, eh Peter). A small limestone outcrop and cave near the highway near Ilford were visited.

The main aim of the trip was to visit limestone outcrops which are to be submerged by the Windamere Dam. Accordingly, after stopping at the Cudgegong pub and talking to the locals, we crossed Cudgegong Creek in the LR and examined an outcrop on the east side of the Cudgegong River, near its junction with Cudgegong Creek.

A number of small doline-like depressions and a quarry were noted, as well as a number of outcrops with minor karren. The limestone graded to dolomite in places. There was no evidence of cave development and the relief is only about 30m.

After lunch the call of the wineries was felt and so we visited a number of wineries in a growing state of inebriation. The return to Cudgegong was made with the LR swaying under the combined efforts of the bought booze and its boozed driver(s).

Sunday's aim was to look at the access to Blue Rocks. An outcrop on the northern side of the Rylstone road near Limestone Point was visited and there was much argument as to whether the rock lensed or was faulted. Further driving through excellent scenery brought us to the Blue Rocks area, but we were unable to drive in as the local stud cattle were on heat and could not be disturbed while doing whatever cattle do while on heat.

On the way out to the highway access routes to Coco Creek were viewed from the top of a large hill.

Rik Tunney

Trip ReportTUGLOW

6-7 May 1978

Present: Evalt Crabb, Peter Grudnof, Rik Tunney,  
Bruce Waddington, Peter Mulligan.

Camp was made on the spur above the Kowmung River. Evalt had not visited the cave since 1963, so after enticing him in with statements like "It's a lot easier these days." and "Piker" we took the opportunity to discuss the changes which have occurred in the last fifteen years.

The cave is now a lot muddier, and limestone surfaces have been polished by use. To Evalt's memory the cave is consequently a lot harder. (but is this just a sign of advancing incapacity?)

The downstream section was visited and Tricketts Corridor was relocated, making us the umpteenth party to enter it. There had been much less degradation of this area, presumably due to its relative inaccessibility.

On Sunday we set off in Peter's landcruiser along the road to Mt Werong to look at the scenery. This was followed by a discussion with the Ranger, John Child, on the conservation of the area.

Rik Tunney

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Trip ReportTUGLOW

17-18 June 1978

Present: Evalt Crabbe, Peter Dykes, Rik Tunney, Bruce Waddington.

The aim of the trip was to take a photograph, for publication in the Journal, of the broken shawl just upstream of the lower waterfall.

The two vehicles, Torana and Land-Rover (how's that for incompatibility?) rendezvoused at Oberon on Saturday afternoon and from there we drove together to "Jaunter". It was intended to spend the night on one of the huts on the property, but no-one was at home. With visions of having to camp out, without tents, in the cold, rainy conditions, we set off to find accommodation.

After a few kilometers we came upon the Arnold family returning from town and we were able to obtain permission to stay at the hut down on Tuglow Flat. Little more happened that night, except for the demise of both a few bottles of wine and the charging system on the Torana.

On Sunday morning we set off in the LR, across the semi-flooded Tuglow River and over Tuglow Mountain to the caves. The cave was entered, photographed and exited with little difficulty. Evalt tried out his new Blue Star sit harness and re-discovered abseiling after some years abstinence. Peter was unable to use his Oldham Weat after an attempt the previous night to light up the hut (12V car battery into 3V globes works well - for a little while), however he coped.

After leaving the cave a little of the surface was examined and we then returned to Tuglow Flat. As the Torana had only a little electricity left the trip back was made on side-lights - tailgating the LR.

Rik Tunney

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Field Day

KELLYS FALLS

2 July 1978

Present: Evalt Crabb, Chris Dunne, Peter Mulligan, Rik Tunney.  
Stephen Jamsek (Visitor)

The aim of the activity was to teach Stephen to abseil for a trip to Bungonia. The weather was foul and the activity was nearly called off. However we persevered with a few 15m abseils until the rain forced us home.

Rik Tunney

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TRIP LISTJuly

- 15-16 BUNGONIA  
Digging in B54. Vertical caving in Acoustic Pot.
- 16 GENERAL MEETING  
Guide Hall, Memorial Ave., Liverpool. 7.00pm.
- 29-30 MUDGEE

August

- 12-13 WYANBENE
- 20 GENERAL MEETING
- 26-27 WEE JASPER

September

- 9-10 TUGLOW
- 16-17 JAUNTER
- 17 GENERAL MEETING
- 23 NSW SPELEOLOGICAL COUNCIL MEETING

October

- 30Sep-20Oct COOLEMAN PLAINS
- 14-15 TUGLOW
- 15 GENERAL MEETING
- 22 The Earth's Birthday Party.  
(Born 9am 23Oct 4004BC. Happy birthday!)
- 28-29 MUDGEE

November

- 11-12 JAUNTER
- 18-19 TUGLOW
- 19 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

December

- 2 NSW SPELEOLOGICAL COUNCIL
- 17 HCG XMAS PARTY

January

- 1-5 WACON Perth