

# ***CALCITE***

## ***27***



NOVEMBER 1978

The newsletter of the

Highland Caving Group

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EDITORIAL-

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rik Tunney for instigating and producing the last issue of "Calcite". He acknowledged the fact that the Editor was away (caving), and that that issue was only to bridge a communications gap in the Club during that time period. He took the opportunity to boast how active we were, and that we were all going places. Well?

I don't know whether I admire his tenacity in persisting with producing it or his luck in being able to. Firstly, upon my return, I received nothing with which to produce an October edition, then I am told there isn't even a meeting. The next meeting is the A.G.M. in November, so this edition is aimed at that deadline.

I would like to comment on the omission of several G.M.'s from our yearly schedule. I believe the Club should meet every month. It is these meetings that provide the forum for organising trips, enthusing and involving other and younger members.

As for the lack of material for publication, it certainly doesn't reflect the image of an active club. I'm only the Editor, you are the readers and cotributors....what you read is what you submit. Nothing!

It suits me to publish very little, I'm busy enough as it is without doing "Calcite".

Stephen Buntton

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EDITORS REPORT-

Despite being an unwilling volunteer throughout the last year, I have managed with considerable help to produce three "Calcite" issues. "Calcite" now operates as a communications medium within and outside the Club.

The most significant developement in this regard is Rik's innovation, "Briefings".

I take this opportunity to make it known I will not stand for this position in the coming year.

Stephen Buntton

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THEY ALSO SERVED-

Evalt Crabb, Chris Dunne, Rik Tunney.

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TRIP REPORT- TUGALONG

Some time ago while looking at the Blue Mountains Tourist Map (pub: Lands Dept. Ed.) I noticed a Limestone Ck marked as a tributary of the Wollondilly River some kilometres upstream of Goodmans Ford. It was also shown on the "Mittagong" 1:63360 map.

A short trip was made to look at the area. The turn-off from the Hume Hwy is to Canyonleigh, opposite the Illawarra Hwy junction, and the road to Tugalong is well formed and well sign-posted. The property was not entered and it is intended to write to the owner.

The road goes past the headwaters of Limestone Ck and the local relief is about 400m. No limestone was seen from the road and consequently its precise location was not determined.

This area may be the one referred to as "Canyonleigh" by NSWITSS.

Rik Tunney

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TRIP REPORT- BUNGONIA?

Present: Bryan Cleaver, Gerry Hopkins, "Wylie".

Yet again the great potential of B54 was not sufficient to draw healthy diggers away from their social commitments. Gerry, his dog and myself had to make do with impersonating cavers (ie. going to Bungonia and doing no caving). A most enjoyable weekend was had looking at old mine workings in the vicinity of "Brisbane Meadow".

On Saturday we visited two of the workings. About 3km east along the road from "Carne" to the flying-fox is a bridle trail leading off to the right. The first mine visited was 500m along this trail. It was worked by L. O'Neill and J. Carmichael for gold and silver during the period 1938-39, with the ore running at ldwt. to 1oz.2dwt. of gold per ton. Although now collapsed, the remnants of three shafts, originally 17,13 and 3.3m deep, and an adit are still visible. Some large, although fractured, quartz crystals were found, along with some arsenic bearing minerals, scorodite and weathered arsenopyrite.

The Tolwong workings were visited next. A steep foot-track leads down from the charred remains of the flying-fox to the chimney stacks on the eastern side of the Shoalhaven River. From the chimneys the track to the mines continues along the northern side of the steep-walled valley which contains Tolwong Ck. The dry mines can be entered safely, provided one keeps watch for loose rocks hanging from the ceiling and walls.



Although the mines are not flooded, and only 50m long, they contain excellent examples of arsenopyrite. In several places the ore is of such high grade, that when struck with a gepick (similar to a tooth pick. Ed.) the mine is immediately filled with a strong odour of garlic which is a characteristic of most arsenic-bearing minerals.

The deposit was discovered by John Siverwright in 1904, and in 1907 developement commenced with the formation of the Tolwong Mineral Co. (NSW). By 1910 most of the machinery had been installed and serious mining had commenced, but did not last long. Problems encountered in the smelting of the ore caused the liquidation of the company in June 1912.

On Sunday we visited a cobalt mine to the southeast of "Brisbane Meadow". Apart from some good views and an interesting wooden gate of excellent craftsmanship, little was seen.

The weekend was a most refreshing change from caving and even removed our feelings of disappointment at not digging B54.

Bryan Cleaver

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EXPEDITION REPORT-

ATEA 78

During July to August, 48 cavers from 5 nations were involved in an attempt to discover whether Atea Kanada was the deepest cave in the world. The ATEA 78 Speleological Expedition to the Muller Range was organised in the main by Australian cavers. From HCG both Graeme Smith and Stephen Bunton attended.

Graeme seized the opportunity to further his knowledge of cave biology and played a prominent part in the scientific program devised by the expedition. Steve viewed such a trip as an opportunity to broaden his outlook on cave geomorphology and to satisfy his lust for good, deep, sporting, wet caves.

Both cavers enjoyed themselves immensely and feel that they gained worthwhile experience. A full expedition report will be published as a separate volume.

S.B.

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ADDRESS LISTINGS-

Changes-

B. Cubit 21 Park St Coledale 2513

C. Dunne ph 579-4733 xl5 (W)

P. Mulligan ph 604-9073 (H)

R. Tunney ph 29-7923 (W)

Additions- K.Taylor 1/2 Rosebank St Glebe  
ph 357-2811 (W)

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TRIP REPORT-

COOLEMAN PLAINS

30th September - 2nd October

Present: Bruce Clews, Chris Dunne, Neil & Wayne Crabb, Peter Dykes, Mike Finger & daughter, Gerry & Jenny Hopkins, Rik Tunney (M's), Tony & Cathy Austin, Michael Lake (SUSS).

The aim of this trip was to do some caving in the snow and to photograph any ice formations that we hoped we would find in the caves. However, it had rained the preceeding week and the only snow that was left was in isolated patches on the hills. The snow-melt had made the ground quite damp.

The four vehicles: Peter's Land Rover, Gerry's Monaro, Tony's Subaru 4WD and Rik's Torana, met at Tantangara Dam on the Saturday morning. From there to the airfield was good driving, but we were a little worried as we approached the swamp just past the airfield. The Subaru bottomed and had to be pushed out, but the rest of the cars managed alright. The next hazard was the long, straight stretch past Pocket Saddle. This was negotiated with much pushing and cursing. At one point both 4WDs were both bogged, which caused much merriment amongst the 2WD drivers. From here the vehicles had little trouble and we made camp near Spencer's Hut, being unwilling to drive down the hill to Caves Ck.

On Saturday afternoon a party set off in the hot sun to have a look in the vicinity of Murray Cave. While they were there they found Caves Ck in flood and started a dig near the Right-Branch resurgence.

On Sunday one party set off for the Goodradigbee River; another returned to the dig, while a third visited Z-Cave and nearby caves. Caves Ck was very high with the water at 1m deep over the normally dry fords.

Monday morning was spent packing up and the campsite was left at 11.30. A few bogs later we reached the airfield and the good road. Then followed the traditional hassle of long-weekend traffic. A trip to Cooleman is not lightly undertaken. It doesn't seem far on the map, but it is a long trip. As an example, the return from Cooleman to Dee Why took the Torana 11½ hrs, including stops. The Land Rover was about 2 hrs behind the Torana by Liverpool. These long times spent travelling take a lot out of the driver.

Rik Tunney

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TRIP REPORT-ATEA '78

June - September 1978

If I were to give a day-by-day, blow-by-blow description of the expedition as in a standard trip report, then you would probably have decided not to read it already, so with a view to retaining my audience I'll concern myself with overall results and impressions.

The expedition did not discover the deepest cave in the world as we had optimistically hoped. However, we did find the longest cave in the southern hemisphere, and the Asian-Pacific region. The cave, Atea Kanada is located in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Access from Harage was by foot involving a walk of between one and three days depending on the individual. I, like the majority took three days and enjoyed the "walk". Steve, who did it in  $1\frac{1}{2}$  days, claimed he never got to walk on the ground, as he was either above it on logs or below it in knee-deep mud.

Our home away from home was called Atea Gana Anda, and was located 20 mins walk from the cave entrance. It was quite luxurious for a holiday camp, with two large bedrooms, a dining-room, kitchen, drying-room, storeroom, showers and of course a well patronized bog. It was prepared by the advance party with the help of 12 local chappies in June, and supplies were air-dropped at Geroro (4 hrs walk away) and shuttled by helicopter to base-camp. These chappies, local Duna tribesmen, were paid the princely sum of about \$A 2.50 a day, which would make them very rich by local standards. For this they kept us supplied with firewood and more significantly, they could light fires with wet wood, they carried water, cut and maintained tracks, shuttled gear back and forth between far and distant camps and a million other things. Without them the expedition would have been far less interesting and less of a success, besides which, they owned the cave.

Over the weeks the Atea grew in length from the 4km known in 1976 to 30.5km. Basically it was a complex pattern of almost parallel streamways up to 6km long, each. For the most part each was very muddy, and in places, so deep and gluggy you would have to try and swim in 30cm of water overlying the mud. The nature of the cave was reflected in the names- Imperial Mud Standard, Glop Drop, Ooze Cruise, Yikebo (Duna for muddy water, but quickly corrupted to Yicky Poo) and Monty Python's Dry High-Level Bypass, which was a low wet duck, very muddy and right on the main passage.

Yet, to say Atea was all bad news would be unjust. At the end of Ugwapugwa Streamway was a phreatic maze with compacted gypsum flowers. In the Austral Series was a beautifully decorated semi-abandoned streamway with magnificent pool encrustations, known as Rafting Ground, with calcite rafts centimetres thick in places. There was of course the infamous Ship Canal, 800m of swimming involving three low points where as little as 10mm of rain outside, would raise the level of the water and trap the people beyond. Fortunately rain was reasonably predictable and one was fairly safe if they obeyed the 4pm curfew imposed on the ducks. This was the main hope for depth, but the river soon disappeared down an impassable sump region- The Penstock, and all attempts to bypass it failed. In this part of the cave the passages were clean and finely sculptured. The Ship Canal was a beautiful, yet awesome caving trip.

I went to Atea as a biologist and the cave was a paradise for cave-adapted beasties; we found eyeless beetles, spiders, centipedes, millipedes and slaters. Also, there were crabs and other non-adapted animals. I've spent the last month and a half just sorting and labeling the 2000+ specimens in order to send them to the appropriate specialists.

As people got sick of the 3 to 4 hrs required to get through the cave to areas of exploration, enthusiasm waned - 10-15 hrs in mud is a bit much. So, more attention was paid to the far and distant camps at other areas on the Muller, usually about half a days walk from Atea. The resurgence of the Atea proved impossible to crack, despite a two week effort by a small party. Another group looked for higher stream sinks of the Atea and Utina Rivers, and also looked for shafts on Dorege Po. At camp Horatio, they descended shaft after shaft and only looked like breaking the 300m on the last day when they were forced back by a flash flood.

Probably the most successful Far and Distant Camp was at Mamo, an area of doline Karst about 300m higher than Atea Gana Anda. Camp was established in the mouth of a cave - it was ideal; what with water only a few paces back in the cave and no long walk to the cave entrance - you couldn't ask for more.

This would be the most spectacular cave I think I've ever seen. The upper levels were dry and the gypsum flakes were so thick they looked like snow. There were a couple of beautiful pitches and the lower levels were superb, clean, washed streamways and dry ox-bows. There was never more than a few metres of swimming, though one often had to wade. And the most impressive of all was a huge chamber 400m long, 1-200m wide and 100m high - Bloody Impressive!

It was unfortunate that this cave had to show its ugly face for a period when, with 64mm of rain in an afternoon, a flash flood ripped through and trapped three cavers who had to battle for 4 hrs to get out of the water and onto a ledge where they were found the next morning by a rescue party after the water had ceased to flow.

In all, the cave had 8km of passage to a depth of 173m - all of it impressive.

The expedition was an experience I would never have forgiven myself for missing. Caving in a truly wild region of the world, relying on the help of a very proud local people, was something that stays in your mind for years. Looking back: the slippery logs, the mud, the rain, the leaches, the fleas and midges, fifty days of fish and rice, the hastily brewed sultana wine, the hills, the dense vegetation, the language barrier and all the other hardships and laughs, just helped to reinforce the sense of achievement I felt. Atea 78 will not be forgotten, as just another caving trip, by those who participated.

Graeme Smith

P.S. Start saving your pennies to buy the Expedition Report, where all will be revealed.

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TRIP LIST-December

2-3	Tuglow	Rik Tunney	982-1947
2	NSW Speleo Council Meeting		
16-17	Tuglow	Rik Tunney	982-1947
17	HCG Christmas Party		
23	Leave for Perth		

January

1-5	WACCON Perth		
27-29	Cooleman Plains	Chris Dunne	525-8469

February

10-11	Jaunter	Peter Dykes	524-8723
17-18	Tuglow	Rik Tunney	982-1947
18	General Meeting	7.30	Liverpool Guide Hall

March

10-11	NSW CRG	Rescue Weekend	Bungonia
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