

CALCITE

29



at 8.00pm.

EDITORIAL

A club newsletter can only reflect the activities of the club, and of late, HCG hasn't been doing much. This is not to say there's nothing much we could do, but because of the usual lack of enthusiasm from members and because the membership has waned over the last year or so.

HCG has the legacy of trying to continue a long tradition, a tradition we sometimes forget has been one of ups and downs, and of a continued change of membership. The tradition of HCG is rather, the parameters we've acted under - the returns to neglected areas and projects, the renewals of interest and effort, involving newer members in old areas, etc.

There has always been in HCG a tendency to keep the organisation loose, and not to lose touch with the real outdoors, while trying at the same time to be a serious speleological group. To this latter aim, our publications could well be made our *raison d'être*, but they are not. Our publishing has seen its own ups and downs, but the club has gone on. Yet, this evidence of the history of HCG is still a part of the club, as is the history itself. It's a pity that in speleology so much knowledge of areas is so often and so easily lost with old members.

With this in mind, I've included as part of this issue, extracts from reports of several trips to Cooleman Plain in 1966 and 1967 when, along with CSS and SUSS, HCG was heavily involved there.

Chris Dunne

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MY COLLABORATORS

Evalt Crabb and Rik Tunney.

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NSW SPELEO COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council was held in Goulburn on Saturday, 28 April.

A report on Sydney Speleo Society, and various Committee reports were given. The status of the Council's Committees was reviewed, with a couple of new Convenors being elected. Amongst them was Peter Dykes to the convenorship of the Cave Numbering and Nomenclature Committee, formerly held by Ross Ellis of SSS.

Plans for the Mini-Conference on 25-26 August are going ahead.

The proposed Constitution was discussed and a Special Meeting is to be held in Sydney to discuss the Draft.

The report from the Cave Rescue Practise weekend indicates that ASF isn't covering the bulk of active cavers in NSW. Meanwhile Ian Bogg and Andrew Pavey are conducting a membership survey of cavers and clubs.

Discussion of a Council Cave Access Policy resulted in the formation of an Access Committee, which incorporates the former NPWS Committee. Interestingly, this committee has several members, including Peter Dykes, to cover different portions of NSW.

Chris Dunne

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A NEW NATIONAL PARK

The following extract is from "Parks & Wildlife News 1(2)":

Set in the south-eastern coastal ranges, inland from Batemans Bay, Deua National Park boasts spectacular gorges in the upper reaches of the Deua River.

Particularly interesting are the limestone caves and karst areas, which have been responsible for the formation of the impressive Big Hole in the Berlang area of the park, and the nearby Marble Arch. The steep-sided Big Hole drops 90 metres past clinging tree-ferns, that successfully manage to thrive despite their precarious positions.

Running in a north-south direction through the park, a limestone belt provides the material for the Cleatmore, Bendethra and Wyanbene Caves.

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TRIP REPORTS

TUGLOW

18-19 November 1978

Present: Stephen Jamsek, David King, Peter Mulligan, Rik Tunney;
Neil & Wayne Crabb, Norman Nooyen (sunbaking party).

This trip was organised on the Thursday evening when Steve announced that he was available with his Suzuki 4WD, and David rang to find out if there was a trip on. Fortunately, we already had a permit.

We gathered at Evalt's place on Friday evening and attempted to print "Calcite". Unfortunately, we were delayed by using some new technology in the form of paper plates for the multilith, and when its earth failed and it started shocking us, we decided to leave.

Peter, Steve, Neil and Norman left in the Suzuki, and about 90 mins later, Rik, David and Wayne left in the Torana, towing its portable tent. After catching up to the Suzuki at Jenolan, we drove on together to the spur just above the Kowmung.

On Saturday morning, after less than 6 hrs sleep, we set off in the Suzuki to the cave, while the kids went off swimming. A visit was made to the far upstream end of the cave and I was able to relocate a number of the station markers from the original UNSWSS survey. These will come in handy next year. On the way out we met an ISS party who were camped near the doline.

At the Kowmung ford on the way back to camp, we met a caving party from Lithgow on motor-cycles. We gave a lift back to Boss Mtn to one who had injured his ankles when his bike fell on him as he tried to push it across the river. Then we had a picnic lunch by the river and a refreshing swim.

An early night let us get up early on Sunday and leave to take Peter to a bag-pipe practice. On Sunday afternoon we all met again at Evalt's for tea and the AGM.

Rik Tunney

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COOLEMAN PLAIN

13-16 April (Easter) 1979

Present: Graeme Smith (TL, BSc., DS and E-CB), Chris Dunne and his incredible performing VW; the suave and sophisticated Rik Tunney, Janine (McSalmon) McKinnon; Bruce Waddington and Linda; Ed Costa and Colin Barton (Sat & Sun only).

The aim of this trip was to combine with SUSS for a look at many of the caves at Coolleman, and to spend much time on slow trips where we would concentrate heavily on photography.

Friday 13th: ...lived up to its reputation. Chris and I met Cathy Handel (SUSS) at Rules Point, and drove in to Blue Water Holes.

A leisurely stroll back to camp ensured we didn't have time to look at any more caves before tea, though some SUSS people spent the evening pushing Frustration (CP10) and New Year (CP9) Caves. Rik and Janine escorted Col and Ed back to the highway.

Again there was an evening of singing and frivolity accompanied by Cathy Handel on guitar.

Monday 16th: The fourth and final day was also fine and sunny, so Rik and Chris (nursing an old Jaunter war wound) decided to enjoy the sights above ground, while Janine and I tackled the downstream end of Frustration Cave. Heading down to the 'terminal sump', we found it was only an awkward duck, with well over 10cm of air-space. I decided to turn back, however my male ego was cunningly manipulated to make me attempt the duck. Once on the other side, I set about removing several rock obstructions with the aid of a lump-hammer I just happened to be holding. This was quite difficult in the confined space but eventually I broke through (literally) into 'new cave' (ooh, aah!). Yes, a whole 20m of new passage to yet another sump. Janine came through the duck, but left her light behind and we spent 78secs exploring our big discovery. This consisted of about 15m of streamway with 5m of muddy inlet on the right. At least it was big enough to stand up in.....No? Would you believe, 'stoop'? The downstream end terminated in a sump about 80-100cm deep, and by pushing my body through till I could begin to feel it rise again, I would estimate it as less than 3m, possibly less than 2m, through. However, without two lights and any courage, I decided to make a strategic pike.

On the way out through the previously vandalised area, Janine took a wrong turn and became well and truly stuck. Fortunately I could by-pass her and with the aid of the lump-hammer, I still just happened to be carrying, removed the offending projection and we returned to camp.

The trip home to Sydney was quite unspectacular.

Graeme Smith

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HCG AT COOLEMAN - 1966-67

Back around 1966-67, HCG was quite active at Cooleman; in fact we were, along with CSS and SUSS, in on most of the big discoveries there. Unfortunately, our activity there was only partially reported and the following extracts can only tell part of the story. They also go to show just how much knowledge fails to be passed on within speleology, despite our attempts to be authoritative and to document caves and caving - so often, so much is rediscovered by new generations of cavers. These extracts are from trip reports printed in previous issues of "Calcite", numbers 10, 11, 12 and 14.

Chris succeeded in destroying a rim on his vehicle. Rik and Janine, Bruce and Linda arrived later, after Rik and his vehicle had been assaulted by a truck and then its driver. A total of 2 out of 4 damaged vehicles owned by club members - not bad!

That afternoon we entered Right Cooleman Cave (CP2) and slowly traversed through to Cooleman Cave (CP1) taking photographs, and for myself, looking at the cave for the first time. A couple of cave-cricketes were seen, as well as a number of small ground beetles (Tenebrionids?).

Later in the afternoon I went with some other SUSS members to New Year Cave (CP9). While two of them went upstream, I tried to push the very young downstream lead (coming off section 17 of the map in "Helectite" 15(1)). I only made about 10m progress before my courage yielded to 'better judgement' as it was very tight and I was unsure if I could retreat.

That evening we sat around the fire discussing such world shattering phenomena as the 'Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle' and the ethics of long underwear.

Saturday 14th: Chris, Rik, Janine, Ian (SUSS) and myself wandered downriver to White Fish Cave (CP18) where we again 'wasted' much time expressing our photographic talents. We even convinced Rik to get wet up to the chest. On the return to camp, I took a quick look into Barbers Cave (CP14-17) with Ian, where we met Bruce and Linda. I used up the remaining exposures on the film and returned to camp.

While Rik and Janine drove out to Tantangra Dam to meet Ed and Colin, Chris, Ian and I walked along the road to Coolamine Homestead and then down the next valley to CP34 and Devils Hole (CP5), and also tried to find Cliff Cave (CP4). We eventually found CP4, but darkness was rapidly closing in, so we didn't stop to look.

Much drinking of beverages and singing of songs took place around the campfire that night.

Sunday 15th: The day dawned crisp and cold - so cold, my wet-suit had frozen solid and could not be used till later (a good excuse for a late start). Rik, Janine, Ed, Colin, Chris, myself and Ian went to River Cave (CP6) to take photos and splash around. This is always good fun - if you have a wet-suit; Col, Ed and Ian valued their singing voices and made an early exit. The remainder swam upstream, then returned to dive the first downstream sump. On a mud-bank near the upstream sump were observed several isopods, and an adult opiloid (Holonuncia sp.). Also an unoccupied stragly spider web. Worm activity was intense (Lumbricids).

At the downstream sump area I played Harry Butler, finding a flat-worm and many mayfly larvae, while Chris and Janine tried diving to look at the start of the second sump. Janine filled her wet-suit with rocks as ballast and made a determined but unsuccessful attempt, due to poor visibility.

Returning to the sunlight we changed and headed cross-country to Murray Cave (CP3), where more photography ensued (boo's and moans and cries of 'boring' from subjects and flash-holders alike!).

1-3 January 1966

Preparation for this trip began some time before the weekend, with checking of gear, practice dives, etc. and most travelled down on Friday night to Blue Water Holes.

With sleeping bodies draped around the camp, Evalt Crabb and Bob Russell went for a short walk around the Clown Cave and Frustration Cave area. Methodically working back toward the river (and lunch) they stumbled across a tiny hole in the ground, and promptly earmarked it for attention.

Then began the ultimate in circus acts. It was decided to carry out preliminary exploration in the River Cave. As only one LR was available, Ev Crabb and Bob Russell set out on foot, intending to guide the walkers and the vehicle, which were to approach from different directions. However the walking party did not go far enough, and gave up. Likewise, an unsuitable route was chosen for the vehicle, so that party gave up. Meanwhile upstream, Ev Crabb standing at the entrance of River Cave, declared that he couldn't find the cave, so he gave up. The remaining party at camp decided that Evalt and Bob were lost, so a small party went out to search, leaving a few minutes before the "lost" party returned. Diving was abandoned for that day.

Saturday evening - Sunday morning was spent in a visit to Left Cooleman Cave; a dive of about 3m into the efflux; and excavation of the new cave - "New Year Cave". In the latter cave, a few hundred feet of passage was explored, with ceilings up to 8m, and a running stream encountered. Exploration etc. is by no means complete.

Finally on Sunday morning, we were ready for a dive. With Joe Jennings leading the way, we drove by an easy route to River Cave. Here the party divided, some going into River Cave for familiarization, while the remainder started setting up ladders, dinghies, etc. in the recently discovered Glop Pot.

In River Cave, a short siphon was forced (downstream end), proving the connection previously assumed through an impossible squeeze. The Glop Pot, consisting of a drop of approx. 15m to water, with a 12m horizontal extension half-way down, also dropping into water, was assumed to connect to River Cave, as the two entrances are only 60m apart. John Allan and Bob Smith elected to dive in the first shaft, with John taking first turn in the water. Slowly he worked down the walls, feeling for a gap, until he was 8m down. This was not pushed any further as the water was absolutely opaque; originally thought to be due to cavers stirring mud in River Cave, it is now suggested, due to dirt falling during the excavation of the cave. As John and Bob returned to the surface, Alan Moule and Denis Robinson prepared to dive in the other extension. Here, Alan dived first, descending without finding a horizontal extension, finally touching a sloping floor at 18-20m. No further diving was attempted, so the very cold (despite wet suits), very tired cavers deflated the dinghies and withdrew the ladders, and headed back to camp.

Sunday night was spent in general exploration and photography in Right Cooleman Cave, a further 2m being traversed in the upward extension directly above the squeeze through to Main Cooleman Cave. However, it appears certain that a scaling pole will be necessary for further progress.

30 January 1966

This trip was intended as a follow-up to the previous diving trip on the New Year weekend. It was decided to explore the downstream end of River Cave first. After the diving gear had been carried in, John Allen, Peter Newton and Alan Moule dived through the first siphon, which John had connected previously. From here the cave continues in a northerly direction for about 60m until a pool about 1½m deep is reached. John dived here, finding a horizontal siphon about 5m long, which led to a new extension of the cave. Alan followed through on the safety rope and waited while John continued on with the only light, to find that the cave continued straight for about 15m, then makes an S-bend. But owing to the shortage of light he didn't go any further. It was then decided to return to the surface to warm up and have lunch, three hours having been spent in the cave.

In the afternoon the exploration was resumed upstream. This time John dived to a depth of about 5m, and for a distance of 12m before surfacing in a deep pool, in a large cavern with a low, sloping ceiling. Compass readings taken here indicate that the cave is heading towards Glop Pot.

On the way back, Alan dived through a small, low side extension for a distance of about 3m, finding that the cave branched off in similar passages in a possible three directions. At this stage, those in the water were feeling rather cold, so after taking some photos, the equipment was dragged out of the cave and all concerned headed back to camp.

On Saturday night about 50mls of rain fell, so it was decided to leave Cooleman.

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Easter 1966

Sleet and snow welcomed the party to Cooleman, and this, with the overnight driving, restricted the activity on Friday to setting up camp and short visits to New Year Cave and Right Coleman Cave.

Early on Saturday, a large party, which included MSS and CSS members, went to River Cave to Attempt further diving in the downstream area. Simultaneously, the remainder of the party tackled New Year Cave.

In River Cave, the assistance of many members was appreciated in transporting the gear through the muddy clefts to the downstream siphon, where Bob Smith, Alan Moule, John Allen and Peter Newton undertook the dive, while a few others tackled the "duckunder". Some five and a half hours later the party withdrew from the cave, cold as.....! after extending the river passage approx. 120m through three siphons. This river passage appears to terminate in a huge rock-fall in a northwesterly direction from the entrance. It is not yet known if it is possible to negotiate beyond this rock-fall.

The party from NewYear Cave reported business as usual: narrow, muddy, running streams, unstable rock-falls, and "we're close to Frustration Cave".

On Sunday, it was decided to investigate an efflux in the gorge, downstream of the waterfall, following a rough description from a CSS member of the location and volume of water flow. This time the gear had to be carried on foot, causing a slight drop-off in the number of volunteer sherpas. The remainder of the party visited Fish Cave, Barbers Cave and others.

Downstream, the efflux was located. It was ascertained that diving was possible and that the water flow-rate was sufficient to warrant close attention. John Allen and Peter Newton undertook the dive, supported by the remainder of the party who had declared the water even colder than that in River Cave. After about three hours preparation, diving and withdrawal, the divers emerged reporting that after a tough upstream swim through a siphon, they had broken into a dry cave with particularly fine decoration. Although the stream continued, the air consumption over the weekend dictated a stop to diving, as they were close to safety limits.

Following discussion with Neil Anderson (CSS), it was decided to call the new discovery the Easter Cave, in the hope that it would rival the WA effort.

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23-25 April 1966

The idea of this trip was a follow-up to the Easter trip, when we found the Easter Cave through the efflux that CSS pointed out to us. The efflux is about 4km downstream, in the gorge, about 200m from the waterfall.

We contacted Neil Anderson (CSS) during the previous week to ask for any assistance they could offer. He replied, saying that CSS would be glad to assist us.

We all met at Cooleman on Saturday morning, and after making and discussing plans, set off down the gorge, each of us carrying about 22kg of diving and caving gear.

On reaching the efflux Alan Moule, John Allen and Bob Smith climbed into their gear and proceeded into the cave. First under the duck-under was Bob, followed by Alan, then John. After reaching the end of the 5m duckunder, we swam along the river passage to the next chamber, where the cave goes into a dry section beside the river passage.

We decided to explore the dry section, so left our scuba gear and proceeded along the chamber. The cave at this point goes in three different directions. We followed them all, as far as they went, finding some unusual and beautiful decorations.

Some time later, when we had covered all the possibilities, we swam out of the cave shivering, and decided to come back the next day to follow the river passage further. After a meal around the fire we started up the gorge to camp, leaving all the diving gear at the efflux to dry out.

Sunday morning at 10, found us back at the efflux. This time Alan

decided that the fire was warmer than the water in the cave, so we persuaded Neil to come in with Allen's gear. Neil had never used Scuba in a cave before but followed under the duckunder like an expert. We then moved on to where we left the river passage the previous day.

The river passage went on about 70m around corners where we had to wrestle with our gear. Finally we came to the next syphon. John then took the lead and with Neil & Bob on the safety line. He followed it about 10m, turned left 90° and went a further 5m, where the passage narrowed down to about 1m wide with the water and trout coming through at a good rate.

We then decided that was as far as we could go with our present equipment so we came out of the cave once again shivering and proceeded to lug all the gear up the gorge back to camp.

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Easter 1967

Traditionally, Easter was spent at Cooleman Plain. An enormous doline was investigated and access was gained into about 10m of mud passage. Although this showed good potential, we were not yet wet and dirty enough to push on. Due to the drought condition, we were able to extend New Year cave by a couple of hundred feet.. An impression was gained that the downstream section ran back along the ridge, under the upstream passage, i.e. away from the river. A survey would be desirable in this area.

A little time was spent in surface exploration high above the Main and Right Cooleman caves; 3 caves were entered, a fourth found but not entered as the undergrowth-clearing fire filled the entrance with smoke.

As usual, we extended Main Cooleman by 3m.

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Trip Report - STUART TOWN

16 June 1979

Present: Peter Dykes (Currently exiled to Dubbo)

At 11.30 on Saturday morning, after doing the week's shopping, I decided to drive down and have a look at the Stuart Town area.

I arrived there at around 1.00 and, after making enquiries, was directed to the owner of the property on which is the limestone.

After seeking permission to look over the area, I examined the limestone south of the road into the farm. I found -

St. 1 UCL This had been previously marked by a pile of rocks. Shaft about 10m deep narrowing at the bottom, some bone deposits. Located south of road on south-east extremity of limestone near the top of a hill.

The rest of the outcrop was examined without much luck. I had a quick surface trog of the area but found nothing interesting. The limestone outcrops over an area of about 2Km square and it was only possible to briefly look at a very small portion of this.

I left around 3.00 and drove back to Stuart Town for a beer and then on to Dubbo.

On passing through Geurie I decided to look for the limestone mentioned in the Speleo Handbook (p. 148). As I had previously looked around the southern side of the town, I decided to look at the northern side.

About 2Km out of Geurie, limestone was observed from the side of the road, about 500m off. As it was getting late and I had friends coming over, I decided to leave it for the moment and drop back one afternoon after work. The outcrop did not appear to have much relief and prospects look to be very limited.

I finally got back to Dubbo around 5.00 after an enjoyable afternoons drive.

= p. dykes

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TRIP LIST

JUL

7 - 8 WEE JASPER TL graeme smith
 14 - 15 MUDGE - Coco Creek and Buckaroo
 TL ev crabb
 15 HCG MEETING Guide Hall 8.00 pm
 28 - 29 BUNGONIA TL ev crabb

AUG

4 - 5 WELLINGTON TL peter dykes
 25 - 26 MINI CON Macquarie University
 27 - 29 KEMPSEY TL rik tunney

SEP

8 - 9 SKI TO COOLEMAN TL rik tunney
 14 CUSS DINNER Macquarie University
 15 - 16 CRG PRACTICE - Walli
 16 HCG MEETING Guide Hall 8.00 pm

OCT

29Sep-1 SKI TO COOLEMAN TL rik tunney
 27 NSW SPELEO COUNCIL

NOV

18 HCG AGM Guide Hall 8.00pm
 24 - 25 CRG PRACTICE