



# inFormation..

PUBLISHED BY THE NEWCASTLE  
SPELEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

P.O. BOX 86  
BROADMEADOW.  
N.S.W.

inFormation No 5.

## TRIP REPORT.

### TRIP DATES:

"29th. Sept. 1st. and 2nd. October 1967.

### DISTRICT:

BARRINGTON CAVE.

### MEMBERS:

John SMYTHE	TL
Keith DAVEY	M
Kevin WOOD	M
Ted SAVAGE	M
Colleen SAVAGE	M
Ray JACKSON	M
Mavis SAVAGE	M
Mike LEYLAND	M
Mal LEYLAND	M
Pat LEYLAND	M

### PROSPECTIVES:

Sue MILLER	P
Carl BERMAN	P
Jeff GOVIER	P
Allan KAY	P
Brian TEARE	P

OBJECTIVES: To explore BARRINGTON CAVE as fully as possible. To test for future possibilities. Collect animal life inside the dark zone of the cave.

### TRIP:

28/9 From BROADMEADOW 9.00pm. to 10 mls. past turn-off to CURRICABARK. 11.50pm.

29/9 From Camp (I) to BARRINGTON CAMP. Start 8.36am. to 11.40am

2/10 From BARRINGTON CAMP 11.10am. to BROADMEADOW 5.00 pm.

CAVES VISITED: BARRINGTON CAVE.

ACCESS VIA: NEWCASTLE, HEXHAM, STROUD, GLOUCESTER, BARRINGTON, ROOKHURST, CONEAC, CURRICABARK TURN-OFF, CARTERS, GEALS, BARRINGTON CAMP.

VEHICLES: 5 LAND-ROVERS

### REFERENCE MAPS:

N.R.M.A.: LOWER NORTH COAST,  
LANDS DEPT: GLOUCESTER SHIRE.

LANDS DEPT: I:31680 PIGNA BARNEY 9234-III-N.

BARRINGTON OUTCROP=CAMP:

TYPE OF COUNTRY: Undulating hill country, steep in places.

WATER: A PERMINANT CREEK flows under the campsite. Water also flows in the creek below the cave. Water is also to be found in some small isolated pools in the cave for the filling of CARBIDE LAMPS.

WOOD: Not excellent, but enough if searched for.

NEAREST SHOP: either Gloucester or Barrington. Nearest Public Phone is 26 mls. toward Gloucester.

Nearest CIVILISATION: GEAL'S HOMESTEAD 4 mls.

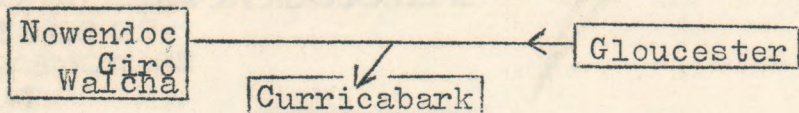
CAMPSITE: Flat open area, sheltered by surrounding hills. Ground tussocky with large rocks. Sleeping presents a problem, sufficient area can be found by lying between grass clumps.

LOCALS: GEALS, very good, we may camp on their property. Mr. UNDERWOOD, who owns the area of the camp is an unknown quantity.



ACCESS:

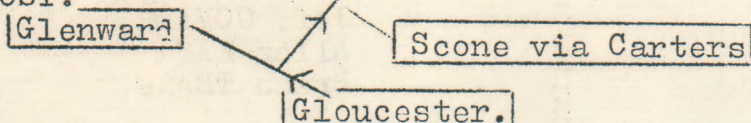
NEWCASTLE 0 mls.  
 GLOUCESTER 77 mls. tar sealed.  
 CURRICABARK TURN-OFF 88 mls. tar 10 mls. gravel 1 ml.



bridge 95 mls. gravel.  
 crossing 98 mls. gravel.  
 crossing 99 mls. gravel.  
 "Y" intersection 99 1/2 mls. took road straight ahead.  
 small crossing 101 mls. dirt.  
 small crossing 109 1/2 mls. with two small Weeping Willows.  
 "T" intersection 109 1/4 mls. made 90 deg. R.H. Turn.  
 following valley up watercourse.

road goes up ridge.  
 past Serpentine Belt 112 mls. dirt. road on upward climb.  
 1st. Gate (over ridge) 113 mls.

SIGNPOST:



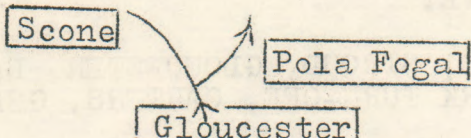
2nd. Gate 113 1/2 mls.  
 many sharp bends, but still two-wheel drive road.  
 small creek crossing 115 mls. Road to right leads up hill.  
 House.

creek crossing 115 1/2 mls.  
 3rd. Gate 116 mls.  
 a few small landslides on the side of the road.

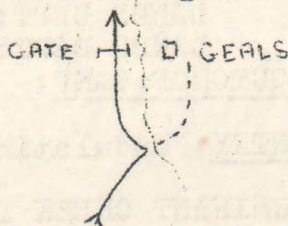
two creek crossings 117 mls.  
 4th. Gate 117 1/2 mls.

track becoming quite hilly.  
 turn-off to Carter's Homestead 117 3/4. 1/4 m. off road.  
 Intersection marked by 44 gall. drum Post-box. House, white,  
 brick const. Red roof.

SIGNPOST:



5th. Gate 120 mls.  
 6th. Gate, onto Geals prop 121 mls.  
 two watercourses, reasonably deep, but navigable by 2-W-Drive.  
 GEALS PROPERTY

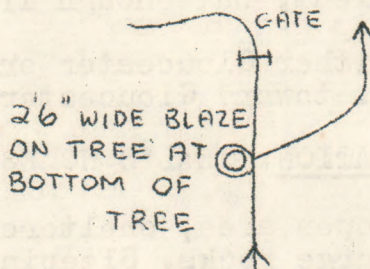


7th. Gate 121 3/4 mls.  
 small creek crossings.  
 8th. Gate 123 1/2 mls. followed by steep hill.  
 BLAZED TREE MARKING TURN-OFF. GATE ON TOP OF THE HILL BEFORE  
 THE ROAD TURNS UP A SLOPE TO THE LEFT. VERY STEEP.

TRAVEL NO FURTHER.

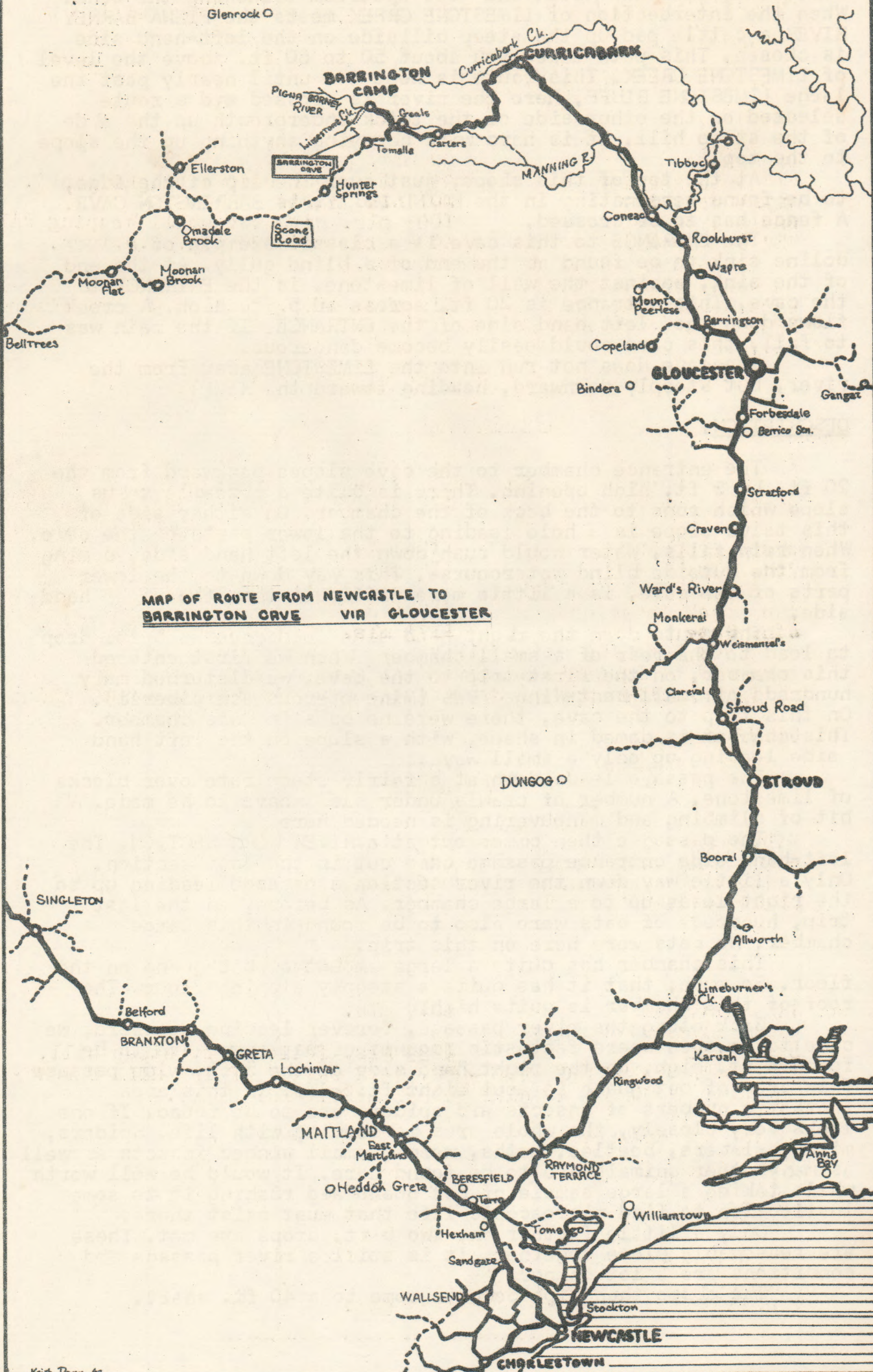
MAKE A TURN TO THE  
 LEFT. TRACK VERY  
 INDISTINCT.

Creek crossing 1'3" deep.  
 past Serpentine Belt.  
 BARRINGTON BASE CAMP. 125 1/2 mls.





# BARRINGTON CAVE



MAP OF ROUTE FROM NEWCASTLE TO BARRINGTON CAVE VIA GLOUCESTER



BARRINGTON BASE CAMP TO CAVE:

The EASIEST route to the cave leads from the BASE CAMP immediatly over the RIVER and goes upstream following the bank. When the intersection of LIMESTONE CREEK meets the PIGNA BARNEY RIVER a cattle pad up the steep hillside on the left-hand side is chosen. This path takes you about 50 to 80 ft. above the level of LIMESTONE CREEK. This route is kept too until nearly past the large LIMESTONE BLUFF. Here the river is crossed and a route selected on the other side of the thick undergrowth up the side of the steep hill. It is hard work carrying anything up the slope to the top.

At the top of this slope, just over the lip of the edge, to be found terminating in the BLIND GULLY, is BARRINGTON CAVE. A fence has to be crossed.

The ENTRANCE to this cave is a classic example of a doline sink to be found at the end of a blind gully. At the end of the sink, against the wall of limestone, is the ENTRANCE to the cave. This entrance is 20 ft. across and 5 ft. high. A creek flows down the left hand side of the ENTRANCE. If the rain was to fall, this cave could easily become dangerous.

The cave does not run into the LIMESTONE away from the river, but steeply downward, heading toward the RIVER.

DESCRIPTION:

The entrance chamber to the cave slopes backward from the 20 ft. by 5 ft. high opening. There is quite a sizeable talus slope which runs to the back of the chamber. On either side of this talus slope is a hole leading to the lower parts of the cave. When rain falls, water would rush down the left hand side, coming from the outside blind watercourse. This way down to the lower parts of the cave, is a little more difficult than the right hand side.

The route down the right hand side leads over a 5 ft. drop to lead to the rear of a small chamber. When we first entered this chamber, on the first trip to the cave, we disturbed many hundreds of Small Bent-Winged Bats (*Mineopterus schreibersi*). On this trip to the cave, there were no bats in this chamber. This chamber is domed in shape, with a slope on the left hand side leading up only a small way.

The passage leads down at a fairly steep rate over blocks of limestone. A number of crawls under slabs have to be made. A bit of climbing and manouvering is needed here.

The passage then comes out at a RIVER WORN SECTION. The left-hand side entrance passage came out in the last section. Only a little way down the river section a passage leading up to the right leads up to a large chamber. As before, on the last trip, hundreds of bats were also to be found in this large chamber. No bats were here on this trip.

This chamber has quite a large amount of bat guano on the floor. So much, that it has quite a steeply sloping floor. The roof of this chamber is quite high.

Back along the river passage, forever leading downward, we came to an area where fantastic amounts of bat guano are to be found 6 ft. high, on the right hand side of the 5 ft. wide passage. This area of bat guano is about eight ft. wide. In this area fantastic numbers of insects and spiders are to be found. If one looks very closely, the whole area is teeming with life. Spiders, mites, slaters, beetles, moths, worms, small winged insects as well as many other animals are to be found here. It would be well worth while taking a large sample of bat guano and rushing it to some institution to find microscopic life that must exist there.

Only a little further on, two 5 ft. drops are met. These are reasonably close together. It is still a river passage and conditions are a lot damper.

The slope then dips down to come to a 40 ft. shaft.



This is a classic ladder climb, requiring a thirty foot ladder at least. Even then when the bottom is reached, you have to swing onto a ledge. Underneath, is a further 8 ft. drop. It pays to have a sling attached to the ladder by a karabineer, so that the ladder can be pulled across to the ledge when the next caver comes down.

The passage continues on from this ledge. When the rain falls, water in this well must build up and overflow down this passage. The tunnel is still typically a river passage. On the floor of this cave a few small pools are to be found where one can fill his Carbide Lamp.

The PASSAGE leads to a hole which is extremely muddy. When we came down the passage to the hole, literally hundreds and hundreds of bats of Small Bent-Winged Bats flew towards us. They came from the small serpentine mud-hole passage. This proves that another cavern exists on the other side of the narrow squeeze. This passage is extremely muddy and all three cavers that tried to squeeze through became stuck. Keith Dawey, the largest of the three, was stuck for half an hour.

This is the end of the cave, as far as we can go at the present time. I think that it could be dug out and pushed on to the next chamber which must exist. The bats must come from somewhere.

Since it is the beginning of October, when the Small Bent-wing Bats head for their nesting sites, we are going to cease our activities in this part of the cave, as this may be a nesting colony. Due to the distance from the surface, the fact that the passage is small, conditions here are very controlled. This could be just right for a bat nursery. From information gained from articles written by Peter Dwyer K.S.S., it could be very dangerous to tamper with the opening, as it could change the critical conditions needed for breeding.

Due to the steepness of the Limestone Bedding, and the slope of the cave itself, it seems that there are not many possibilities for extensions. In some areas the roof is very high, with small nooks and crannies high in the ceiling. Passages may lead out from these. Side extensions only exist if they are dug out.

#### POSSIBILITIES OF OTHER CAVES IN THE AREA:

The limestone bluff is quite large and the area of limestone is quite extensive. While we did not do any surface trogging, the area could certainly do with some. While walking down the other side of Limestone Creek we could pick out Wall Caves in the Bluff. Up the side of the hill, leading to the cave a great number of sinks are to be found, These are definitely worth investigating.

Upstream along the Pigna Barney River, some more large deposits of Limestone are to be found. This area was investigated in 1956 by Ken Angel (then a member of N.T.U.C.S.S.) and although no caves were found, he stated that the area showed great promise.

In Limestone Creek itself, immediately to the left of the Limestone Bluff, a rather large EFLUX is to be found. The whole area of limestone is rather extensively collapsed and the entrance to a cave might be rather difficult to find. A lot of work would be needed here.

Due to the steepness of the cave itself, and the large drop, when the bottom of the passage is reached, it must be not far from the river level. Due to the water which flows in volume from the efflux, and the small trickle which flows into the top of the cave, I would say that they do not link. Only further work would verify this.

Other caves must exist in the area, but it will take work to find them. The whole area shows great promise.

#### FURTHER WORK:

It would be well worth while mapping a side elevation of the cave and comparing it with the side elevation of the surface of the hill. They must come very close in places.



An altimeter taken to the bottom of the cave will tell us just how far we are above the level of the river at the present time.

Flourescene put into the creek at the top after rain might show us where the water flows into Limestone Creek far below.

A rather large sample be taken of the batguano and sent to an instatution to see what microscopic life lives in the cave.

Samples taken of the moulds that are growing on bat guano.

Aerial photographs taken of the area to see if a nyother large sinks are to be found in the area.

Catching and banding of bats to help with the plotting of their migration routes in northern New South Wales.

Mapping a plan of the cave to see where it lies in relation to the large limestone bluff.

Take temperature and humidity tests along the whole length of the cave. Carbon dioxide tests could also be made in the deeper parts of the cave.

#### ANIMALS TO BE FOUND IN THE DARK ZONE OF THE CAVE:

There is more animal life in this cave than any other cave I have visited. This may be due to the large numbers of bats which roost here. The small stream carrying particles of animal and vegetable life supports other insect life which do not live on the bat guano. This feature adds to the number of different species able to be carried in this particular cave.

The most common insects were the small white mites, barely visible to the eye. They covered the bat guano in countless numbers, maybe dozens to the square inch.

Spiders of two different species were to be found on the walls of the cave.

Tinctid Moths, with their feathery feelers, sat on small clumps of guano and limestone. They were very delicate in appearance.

Beetles wandered over the floor of the cave, searching for scraps of decaying food.

Blow-flies buzzed round the chambers of the cave. These were not common, but the noise of their flying was loud.

Two species of small winged-insects were found sitting on rock surfaces. One was brown in colour, the other was black.

A longish brown-insect was found running through the bat guano. These were reasonably common. It was much like an earwig in form.

Earthworms also were to be found in the bat guano and under rocks lying on the floor of the cave.

One beetle larvae was found, one centipede was seen, and a strange, large-palped spider-lloking animal was captured deep in the cave.

Slaters were also exceptionally common. They were very pale in colour compared with the slaters found outside the cave.

Two animals were to be found living on the bats. These were the Wingless Flies (Nycterbiidea) and the Crab-louse (Spinturnix).

Many more microscopic forms must also exist here as well as a number of larger forms which I must have missed.

These specimens will be sent to the Adelaide Museum where they will be added to the collection of Australian Cave Life. A further report on the classification will appear when the material becomes available.

#### ANECDOTE:

After leaving Newcastle at 6.00 pm. (daylight-wasting of three hours 9.00 pm.) we drove to Gloucester at an average speed of 60 m.p.h. Our party arrived at Gloucester at 11.00 pm. Our intrepid group decided to save time by continuing to drive into the night, headed toward Barrington Cave. The area suggested to sleep was "Jeff's Tree Flat".

Unfortunately due to clouded memories and the complete lack of road maps we blundered into the night. Kevin Wood led,



and we followed, choking in a thick cloud of dust. It was a pity that we made such good progress. We were on the wrong road. As someone commented, "these things happen".

At 11.50 pm. we stopped near a creek and camped for the night. We were not sure where we were to go in the morning to correct ourselves. After partaking of refreshments, or as we affectionately call it, "supper", we tumbled into our sleeping bags. Some did not partake, accusing us of trying to force them to climb out of bed early in the morning to wander in the foggy dew.

Most of the members of our party awoke at 6.00 am. (RECORD) but did not leave soon after. Upon hearing the pro's and con's of early morning creek washing, we had breakfast. Some ate well, others just ate.

Everybody packed their Land-Rovers and set out at the early hour of 8.36 am.

After driving back along our route of last night for ten miles, we came across the Curricabark Turn-off. We turned right and headed towards Geal's Homestead. This was to be the last stopping place before the camp area.

While driving on the Geal's property, we met the elder of the two brothers. (We saw the younger on the last trip). On horse-back, he held the reins of a frisky mare with two sugarbags draped over her back, full of hay. He told us not to get too close, as the mare had just been broken in. She certainly was frisky. Mr. Geal informed us that the property on which the caves were to be found, belonged to a Mr. Underwood. If he didn't let us camp on his property, we were quite welcome to camp on Geal's. We thanked him for his helpfulness.

While on this trip we had been leaving conspicuous signs to let Ted Hayes or Jeff Longworth (supposedly following us) know where we had gone. This sign consisted of six beer cans. It was strange how easily these beer cans could be collected from the members for the purpose of sign construction.

Reached Barrington Camp at 11.40 am. and set up camp. We had dinner and discussed what we were going to attempt for the rest of the day. At first the majority favoured instant sleep, but as time went on a couple, then a few, decided to have a trip up to the cave. This was to be purely a sight seeing trip.

Started out for the cave. Members of the first party were John Smythe (T.L.), Keith Davey, Ted Savage, Mike Leyland, Mal Leyland, Ray Jackson, Allan Kay, Jeff Govier, Carl Berman and Brian Teare.

Walked to the entrance of the cave. (Much easier said than done.) When half-way to the cave took a bearing of the large limestone outcrop, it was 210 deg.

The trip took only an hour, with the final walk up the hill being the "killer". While climbing up the hill some unpracticed rock-rolling took place. Members down the slope took an unusually active interest in the proceedings above.

Reached the cave at 2.50 pm. The cave is to be found at the end of a blind gully. Here is a sink 100 ft. by 200 ft. At the bottom of this sink, up against the limestone wall, the entrance to the cave is to be found.

Entered the cave at 3.00 pm. and went out at 4.50 pm. The cave itself is relatively easy going, until the last steep sections are met.

Inside the cave we found hundreds of bats. Even more than on the first trip to the cave. It was estimated that 800 + bats were there. They were Small Bent-Wing Bats (*Myotis schreibersi*). It was unusual that they were deeper in the cave than last time.

While the rest of the party ventured to the lower sections of the cave, Keith Davey and Carl Berman collected insect life in the river section near the cavern off-shoot. Bat guano was very thick; insects and spiders were in abundance.

The others forced themselves further than Trevor Berman had ventured last trip to the cave. The river passage ends in a muddy hole. This hole is very narrow, but it does not stop.

After spending a small amount of time in this area the party went back, picking up the animal collectors on the way, and headed out for the surface.



Keith had collected two species of spiders, Tineid moths, beetles, slaters, Spinturnix, Nycterbiidae and a slender brown insect much like an earwig.

We came to the surface of the cave at 4.50 pm. and walked back to camp in the fading sunlight. When we arrived there we had tea and sat round till 11.00 pm. when we all went to bed.

Next morning enthusiasm was not as high as it could have been. Members noped and lazed around camp till 2.00 pm. when another party set out for the cave.

Keith Davey was going back into the cave again to collect the specimens that he had collected yesterday. The bottle in which they had been stored had burst in the morning sun, spilling its contents.

During the morning, Jeff Kovier and Allan Kay had captured a small Red-Naped Snake (*Brachysoma diadema*). This is a small front fanged snake which is harmless to man. Occurs in south-eastern Australia. This specimen was 13 inches long.

The second party to the cave consisted of Ted Savage (P.L) Mike Leyland, Mal Leyland, Keith Davey, Brian Teare and Carl Berman. We took still photographic equipment and collecting gear.

The party entered the cave at 3.35. Before venturing below we took a number of photographs of the entrance. On going underground, the party immediately went to the area where Keith had collected the insect and spider specimens yesterday. While he caught all that he had caught yesterday (with the exception of Spinturnix and Nycterbiidae,) he also captured some very small white insects, two small winged-insects, earthworms, a large-palped spider-like animal and a beetle larvae.

The area was alive with small animal life. It would be definitely worth while taking massive areas of soil and bat guano and searching for microscopic life.

Ted, Mike and Mal went ahead to set up a ladder in the large 40 ft. deep and 10 ft. across vertical pothole. This is of classis shape and is a good side-on ladder climb. As the thirty foot ladder is not quite long enough to reach the bottom, the first person has to swing himself onto a ledge. Rather interesting sport.

By the time that the ladder had been set up, Keith and Carl had arrived. The four elder and more experienced members climbed down into the pothole.

At the bottom, from the ledge, a passage to the left was taken which led the party down further into the cave. Hundreds and hundreds of disturbed bats zoomed up and down the passage in blind panic. You could not look up as you moved down the passage due to the current of wheeling bats. They were exceptionally dense in numbers.

At the end of this passage, a drop into a muddy section confronted the party. Keith had a go to try and crack it. What Keith hadn't been told was that both Ted and John had been stuck in this same squeeze yesterday. In he went, forcing himself right down into the narrow, muddy hole. Around a serpentineous corner and still tighter grew the hole.

Keith then decided he just wasn't going to get in much further. Now he tried to get out. The mud held him like glue. There were no footholds, and there were no handholds. He just couldn't move. Ted Savage had to come down with a sling to give Keith something to pull against. With all his strength, he hauled himself from the muddy passage after being stuck for over half an hour. Ted then told him about their effort yesterday while Mal set up the still camera to record a photograph of what a muddy caver should look like. It was a pity about Keith's brand new overalls.

Time was getting short and carbide was nearly spent. Mal and Keith refilled their Carbide Lamps with Carbide and all the party filled up with water. Mal took a few last photographs and the group walked back to the ladder pitch.

Ted went up first, followed by Mike, the Keith. Mal then slung all the photographic gear up. Mal followed. At the top, we rolled up the ladder and commenced climbing up to the surface. Carl's Carbide Lamp was growing dim at this stage.



We walked out into the cold night air at 6.52 pm. Now we were going to have to walk back to the camp, over a mile away, in the darkness.

Carbide lamps grew dimmer; torches were now being used. Luckily we had been along this track about five times and knew the way in the dark. It was quite tricky walking along cattle trails half-way up a steep hill with the river far below in the inky blackness.

After an hour and a half we finally stumbled into camp. We were worn out and almost lightless. Another half an hour and we would have had to have a search party out after us.

All members had an early night, and we didn't rise till late in the morning.

During the last day, while the second party had been in the cave, John Smythe and the rest of the boys killed a large six foot long Black Snake.

Next morning we packed up our vehicles, cleaned up the camping area, and prepared to leave for Newcastle. We left at 11.10 am. for home.

While passing the Gloucester Showground we saw three Helicopters parked on the ground. They were part of the search party out looking for the Mirage Jet that had been lost earlier in the week in the Gloucester area.

The area in which the plane went down is Sub-tropical Rain-Forest. To search by Helicopter was nearly fruitless, as the foliage would only cover over where the plane went down. In this same area, a plane was lost for twenty years, before being discovered by a property owner.

After five minutes, the three helicopters took off. They were headed back for Williamtown Air Base.



And what makes you think your a natural born caver?

