

'There's a horse up there in the bath with its throat cut!'

'....YE/H....I know!'

BULLETIN OF THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

*Lumen
in
Tenebris*

SUSS

SPECIAL NOTICE

The AUGUST GENERAL MEETING will no longer be held on August 5th, but INSTEAD on THURSDAY, AUGUST 12TH at EPH in Room 328, south-east corner of Quadrangle. This change is necessary because the former date clashes with a lecture to be given by the well known American speleo Brother Nicholas.

NOTICE TO ALL PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS



If there is a tick in this rhomboidal figure you are unfinancial and thus this will be the last Bulletin that you will receive. This will apply particularly to those prospectives who signed up in Orientation Week.

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SUSS -- The SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

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COMING ACTIVITIES

August 5 General Meeting postponed to August 12th.

Talk by the well known American speleo Brother Nicholas at 8.00pm in the Bankstown Municipal Library, Featherstone St., Bankstown (one block north of the station). Under the auspices of the Bankstown Conservation Society.

7-8 CLIEFDEN - Surveying in Taplow Haze + a general relax by the Belubula Murray Anderson 48.2685

12 General Meeting - 8.00pm in Room 328, S.E. corner of the Quadrangle. Slides and possibly some instruction in the use of the Forestry Compass from Ted Anderson.

14-15 JENOLAN (awaiting permit) - photography in Mammoth Cave.
John Dunkley 759.9956

19 SSS Wombeyan Seminar at 8.00pm in the Womens College, Sydney Univ.

21-22 JENOLAN (awaiting permit) - a trip to show several UQSS members around Jenolan. Denis Ward 644.2497

28-29 CLIEFDEN (tentative) - John Dunkley 759.9956

September 2 General Meeting - 8.00pm in Room 328, S.E. corner of the Quadrangle. Talks and slides on Mammoth Cave by Ted Anderson, John Dunkley and others. Maps will be displayed.

18-19 JENOLAN (tentative) - surveying or exploration. John Holliday
54.1922

October 2-4 YARRINGOBILLY - Jim Seabrook 74.6084

7 General Meeting

December/January 1972/73 ASF Ninth Biennial Conference in Sydney.

SEARCH AND RESCUE - Jim Seabrook is organising a joint University Clubs (SUSS, SUNC and SUBW) search and rescue callout system. There may be a form enclosed in this Bulletin, so if you are interested fill it in and get it back to Jim as soon as possible. Alternatively give it to John Holliday at the August 12th meeting. Forms will also be available at the meeting.

New Member - Keith Brister has been admitted to full membership of SUSS.

Credits for this issue - John Dunkley (typing); Murray, Lindy, Jack, Judith, Merlin and Kaiser Stuhl.

T R I P R E P O R T S

Jenolan"A working trip if ever" 5 - 6 June

Present : J.R. Dunkley, J. Seabrook, J. Holliday, J. Turner,
 E.G. Anderson, A.J. Pavey, B. Spillsbury, G. McGown,
 J. Turner, Jan Turner, I. (Spike) Milligan,
 D. Ward, C. Mathers

This would have to be the most incredible SUSS trip of the year, bar none (not even the Great North Cavern bash earlier this year was as memorable). It should answer some critics outside SUSS who have asked such important questions lately as " . . . and why the hell doesn't SUSS ever do anything, eh? . . . ".

By far the most remarkable tour de force of the weekend was the survey by a party under Jim Seabrook of the entire section from Ice Pick Lake via the bottom of Skull and Crossbones to Central River, IN ONE DAY!! While the 700 or so feet which this represents does not seem so remarkable for day's work, it is made more impressive when you remember the many short sights and awkward constrictions which make Mammoth surveying only slightly less circuitous and time consuming than a Grade 4 traverse of the lower intestinal tract. Not without reason is the pressure tube down to Ice Pick Lake called "Snakes Gut" !! The closure by John Holliday along the alternative route from Central River back to Central Lake completes our survey of this part of the cave.

In summary, work done over the weekend included:

- Gr. 4 survey Ice Pick Lake to Central River
- Gr. 4 survey Overflow downstream of North West Passage
- Gr. 4 survey Cant Get Lost section
- Gr. 2 - 3 survey and sketching Naked Lady Chamber
- minor surveying and sketching in North West Passage, Middle Bit Conglomerate Cavern, Sand Passage and part of Railway Tunnel.
- astro azimuth on Entrance Cavern

(all the above locations are in Mammoth Cave)

Saturday got off to a relatively early start with parties heading rapidly towards Northern Section. John Dunkley and Grahame McGown surveyed the last 220' of the Overflow downstream between North West Passage and to a point where Central River siphons. This proved to be god-awful slow. There is a gut scraping piece of sharp bedrock sticking out only 20' into this section which took some time to squeeze past. We found that on the way out we could negotiate an

alternative squeeze over pebbles in the floor. The whole section down to Central River is a narrow tube with pebbles and small rocks on the floor, and almost never more than 2' high. We were not in the least surprised that it had not been entered from the time of its original discovery in 1961 by SUSS and a trip by SSS early this year. Further in, the gravel gives way to mud in a small rocky chamber and a little further downstream, Central River bubbles up between bedrock. There are several routes, all exceedingly muddy, which follow the river for 60' from the first mud chamber to a similar sized mud chamber containing a deep pool through which the river siphons. A small tributary stream flows in at the end of this pool, and there seems to be some possibility, admittedly a remote one, of further exploration in a downstream direction. After seeing this tributary for myself, I am inclined to the view of Erik Halbert (SSS) that it is the same one which as a trickle intermittently in wet weather feeds the dry Siphon from Waterfall Passage. On the way out we (Grahame) had a quick look up a side passage (another narrow tube, even smaller) which appears to function as a drain for water which in flood times courses down the Bypass.

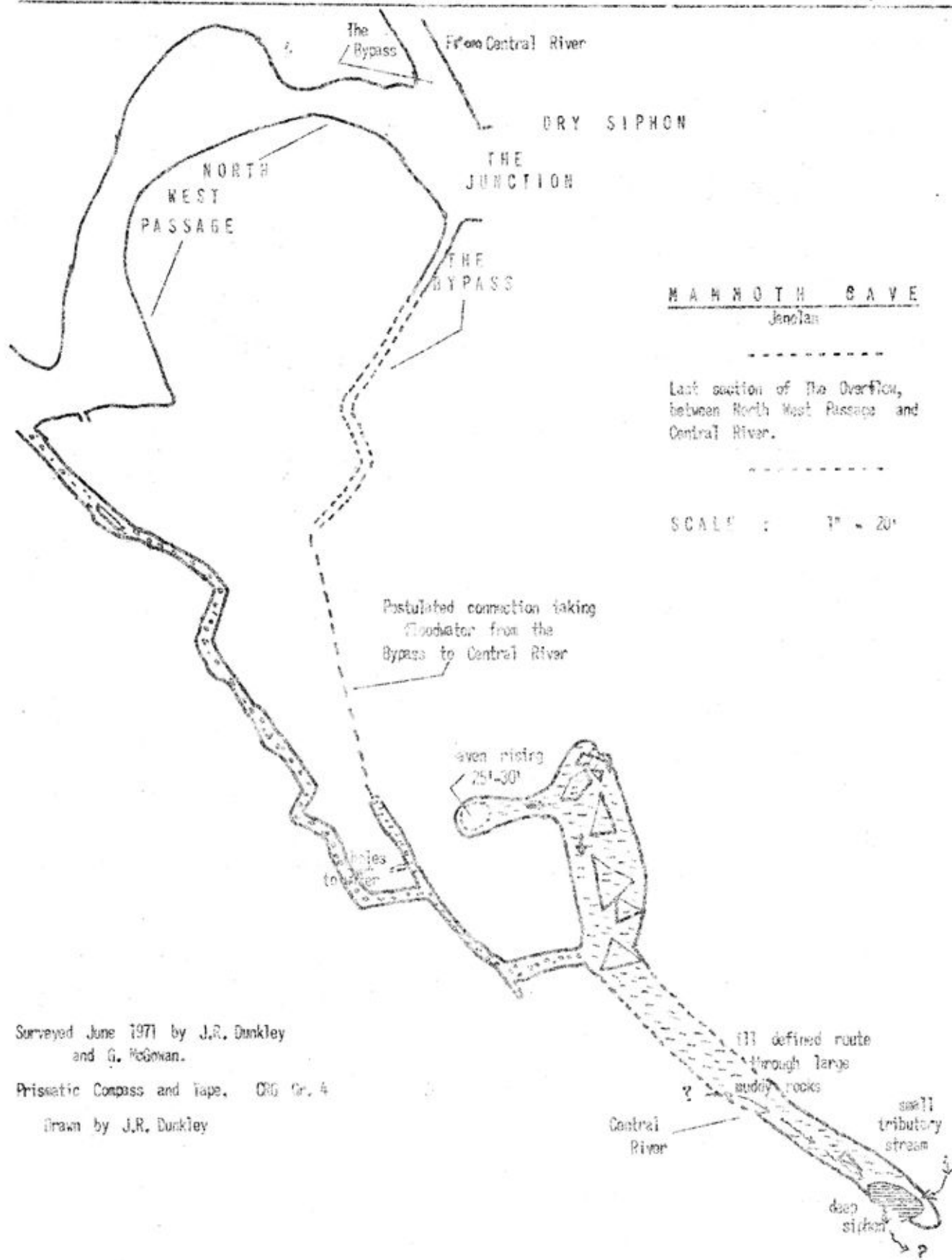
While all this was going on, Hohn Holliday and Andrew Pavay put a survey through Cant Get Lost section (see map in the last SUSS Bulletin). Some further exploration was carried out and Andrew reports that the rockpile in a more or less southerly direction can be followed with increasing muddy difficulty for a fair way. John is interested in the possibilities of a high even as yet unclimbed in the same area. Another trip or two will be organized to exhaust the exploration in here.

Jim Seabrook arrived on Sunday to begin his Mammoth task. While his party traversed back from Ice Pick Lake, John Dunkley led a party up into Naked Lady Chamber and on to Hell Hole, thus completing the round trip from the Railway Tunnel to Ice Pick Lake and back via Hell Hole.

Ted Anderson and Andrew spent several freezing hours after dark on Sunday finishing sighting for an astro azimuth fix on the Entrance to Mammoth Cave. I understand that we will soon know the latitude and longitude of Mammoth to a fraction of an inch. Some further calculations remain to be done on this project before we will be in a position to publish the results. In principle, we will then place the cave on the National Grid.

I would like to thank all members who participated in this weekend, and assure them that there are any number of similar jobs remaining to be done if anyone is interested.

- John Dunkley



Surveyed June 1971 by J.R. Dunkley
and G. McGowan.

Prismatic Compass and Tape. CRG Gr. 4

Drawn by J.R. Dunkley

Postscript on Cant Get Lost Section

Acting on a bit of memory work of Ted Anderson's, sloughing in minute books and old newsletters by Ludwig Muenzenrieder has turned up ample evidence that it was SUSS who originally discovered Cant Get Lost Section in 1961.

On the weekend of 22-23/7/61, there was a SUSS trip to Jenolan, one of the aims of which was further exploration of the Great North Cavern and the North Tunnel. A New Zealand caver became so badly jammed in a crevice that the alarm had to be raised and help sent for. Fortunately, he managed to extricate himself and beyond a few recriminations at the next General Meeting about safety, nothing more happened, and the location was forgotten.

There was also a SUSS trip to Mammoth on 25/11/62, although according to our records it went to Lower River and not to Northerb Section of the cave. Nevertheless, this is the date which appears in the main chamber of Cant Get Lost, along with the date 22/7/61. The evidence is strengthened by the existence off the main chamber of an exceedingly dangerous tube in which one of our members became stuck earlier this year. A thoughtful early explorer had placed a skull and crossbones near it (see SUSS Bull. 11 (1) : 9, May 1971)

The evidence is good enough for me. SUSS can claim discovery of this section, as with nearly all of Mammoth.

- John Dunkley

REVIEW -- "Holes Under the Nullarbor" by John Cannemolla,
Australian Outdoors July 1971, pp.10-13.

"Will the huge, grim caverns of the Nullarbor ever become a tourist attraction to rank with other wonders of our vast island? Nobody can say at this time, but the potential of the caverns with their seemingly inexhaustible water in an arid region excites the imagination"

This is a harmless piece of popular armchair tourism illustrating well enough the materialistic Australian penchant for labelling our natural assets as worthless unless they can "be used". While extolling the benefits, real and imagined, of underground water to a few graziers, the author overlooks the fact that Weebubbie and Koonalda Caves have been grossly disfigured by the sinking of bores through the roof and the installation of pumping equipment. Rapidly increasing transcontinental road traffic and the proximity of several deep caves to the Eyre Hwy will lead inexorably to tourist invasion of the Nullarbor Caves. Yet it is only 10 to 15 yrs since a major expedition carrying water and all provisions was required to systematically explore the region!

"Remote and little known, the Nullarbor caves are among the great natural wonders of the Australian scene! When are we going to use them?"

John Dunkley

TRIP REPORTS cont.Jenolan - July 3-4th"Wiburd's Survey"

Present: Jim Seabrook(TL), Jeff Turner, Jan Turner, Col Mathers, 'Spike' Milligan, Rick Tunney (M's), Keith Brister, Brian Spilsbury, Georgina Shanks, Steve ?, Maurice Wilson (P's), Jackie Franklin, Keith Maxwell, Stuart Graham (V's).

On Saturday three parties set out to survey Wiburd's Lake Cave. The main party was to put a grade 5 traverse through the large passages of the cave and continue west along the passage that leads off from the top of a large mud-slope. The other two parties under Jeff and Brian were to explore and map the entrance section and the eastern section respectively to grade 4.

The cave is very complicated, parts of it resembling a three dimensional maze. Complications arose when the nightmare of speleo surveying reared its head --- I speak of the closed traverse of which there were many. Fortunately they all gave fairly good closures. This trip report is hampered by the lack of nomenclature for Wiburd's. The cave appears to exist on two main levels, the lower level having two streams that flow into the lake region, although these streams are usually dry. A new extension was found off the western passage. It is a 15' wide, 70' high rift with a rockpile occupying the lower 2/3rds. There are several clusters of 3" long aragonite crystals plus other formation, and it is one of the few sections of Wiburd's where there are cave formations. The cave is much more extensive than previously thought, the E-W distance being in the order of 1800ft. In all over 3000ft of passage was mapped with some still remaining to be done.

That night saw a well earned campfire with many stirring walkers and speleo songs of the past being trotted out. The success of the evening was largely due to the appearance of two YMCA ramblers who managed to inject much life into the campfire. Stuart and Keith were most entertaining with their acts. In all this was one of the most lively and enjoyable SUSS campfires I have ever attended. It also proves that we can still have a sing-song type campfire of the type that seemed to have disappeared with the old Alchie group 4 years ago. (The old Bazza image, ay! ed.) What is disgraceful is that this required the active stirring of bushwalker types to get it started. I can remember back to when SUSS used to throw far better turns than the bushies. Why can't we still do this?

Sunday involved the addition of wall detail to the high grade survey.

Jim Seabrook

Jenolan - 24-25th July"Exploration in Can't Get Lost Section"

Present: John Holliday(TL), Murray Anderson, Ludwig Muenzenreider, Jim Seabrook, Chris Cosgrove, Jeff Turner, Jan Turner (H's), Phil Tommer(P), Brian Fisher(V), Brian Barnett(SUMC), Roger Curtis, Gaz Bryant, John Mendum, Neil Fisher, John Riley (all CSS).

cont. next page

The weekend, amazingly one on which it didn't rain, saw three speleo clubs encamped at Mammoth Flats. Five CSS lads came as guests of SUSS, and a small SSS party was also present. Thus Mammoth Cave took a pretty heavy tugging.

A promising early start on Saturday morning was spoilt by a few stragglers but by 11am fifteen bods were in the cave and herding for Can't Get Lost Section. Eventually all 15 got there vehemently cursing the 80ft belly crawl at its entrance, and the vertical squeeze at the top of the mudslope above the Bypass. A few observations on the way -- Central Lake was dry; Central R was low particularly at the second crossing; and the dry siphon still had 6-8" of water. The stream from Waterfall Passage was still flowing as well as ever, but it appeared to me that the water it was supplying to Central R was not enough to make up for the difference in the flow in that river between its second and first crossings.

It is now known that Can't Get Lost was originally a SUSS discovery (J.R. Dunkley p.44 of this issue), but because records from that period are lost it is not known if any exploration was done at the time. Main purpose of this trip was to put Brian Barnett up the 60ft shaft (map SUSS Bull. 11 (3): 33) 'discovered' by Andrew Pavey and myself in early June. Rock-climbing the shaft is a much better proposition to lugging a scaling pole in. Hopefully (very!) the shaft will lead to a way over the rockpile blocking the end of Can't Get Lost and down into the as of yet undiscovered mid-section of the Railway Tunnel (map SUSS Bull 11 (3): 34). Anyway belayed by Jim and laden with hardware, Brian attacked the shaft in a narrow chimney which offered little protection. Two pegs were put in but after approx. only 10ft of climbing there were no more cracks. He left the others to try a free climb but found the limestone a little too slippery for comfort. Thus out came the bolting gear. However, really a hand drill is needed and only one bolt hole was put in before time ran out. Brian intends to try again on one of the August Jenolan trips, perhaps using bat-hooks in preference to bolting the way up.

Whilst the climb was progressing the Canberra lads explored the rift passage off to the west. They went down a 20ft drop on slings and eventually came to a further drop (approx 15ft) with a gravel floor at the bottom. Lack of rope prevented further exploration but the lead appears quite promising. Perhaps they were looking into the NW Passage, or perhaps there is something quite new down the drop.

Several bods also explored towards the end of the rockpile. They claim that it chokes up with mud, but I feel that further attempts to push the rockpile could still lead to something.

Brian attracted quite an audience whilst on the climb, so to get a few people active a quick trip to the Great North Cavern was mooted. Myself, Roger, Neil, John H., and John R. set out but unfortunately Roger had to drop out at the 100% Friction Squeeze. The rest were later able to report that Triangle Passage, Half Moon Passage and the Formation Squeeze are still in excellent curse-producing shape. All four of us ceremoniously left our biological mark in the Cavern.

By 8pm everyone was out of the cave in time to enjoy a relaxing campfire (relaxing for all but two that is!).

On Sunday four bods including John Taylor of VSA (at Jenolan with SSS) returned to Can't Get Lost to retrieve gear. Others went to Wiburds Lake Cave

to continue the survey -- apparently several bits missed previously were mapped. The main parts of the cave have now been mapped and now surveying is mainly in small passages etc. The boys who visited the GNC on Saturday plus Roger and Gaz, all feeling somewhat clapped out in the knee joints, set out to visit the Sthn Limestone. However we got bamboozled on the fire trails and went to Kanangra instead.

At 4.30 that afternoon we were invaded. Some 60 little nippers on a science excursion from Vaucluse High School thundered through the campsite asking multitudes of questions on the way. They headed up the valley, but unfortunately failed to spring Chris who was 'resting' in the scrub on the way back from Wiburri's.

At about 6.00 it was up and off for home, stopping only for the now almost traditional pies and hamburgers at the Hampton Esso cafe.

John Holliday

CONSERVATION

The Lake Pedder Letters

Following are the transcripts of SUSS's protest letter to the Tasmanian Premier, Mr A. Bethune, and Mr Bethune's reply:

The Hon. A. Bethune,
Premier of Tasmania.

8/6/71

Dear Sir,

This Society at its May general meeting unanimously carried a motion declaring its full support for the Lake Pedder Action Committee in its fight to preserve Lake Pedder National Park. The Society supports the Action Committee for the following two reasons:

1. We feel that Lake Pedder is a scenic gem really worth preserving in its present natural state. Many of us spend our annual vacations caving and bush-walking in Tasmania, and south-west Tasmania in particular, and thus have first hand experience of the beauty of the region. Whilst it is conceded that the new lake will not be ugly, we feel that it will unnecessarily 'drown' an area having unique scenic appeal which will then be lost to posterity. We cannot understand why the alternative pumping scheme has not been implemented. Lake Pedder is worth the extra cost of this scheme. We thus urge you to take all possible steps to preserve Lake Pedder National Park before it is too late.

2. We see the Gordon River Scheme with its planned flooding of Lake Pedder, as perhaps the first step in the encroachment by the Hydro Electric Commission on the whole south-west wilderness area. Coming from an industrialised State where already too many wilderness areas have been despoiled in the dubious name of economic growth, we are genuinely alarmed at the prospect of the H.E.C. damming such rivers as the Lower Gordon, Franklin, Olga, Davey and Weld. And this appears all too likely. The H.E.C. apparently has investigation camps in parts of the south-west, and seems to have a power in Tasmania beyond that which one would normally expect such a body to possess.

With skilful management the south-west could become a major tourist

asset to Tasmania, providing far greater benefits than any hydro electric scheme ever could. The south-west is beautiful as it is. It certainly does not need dams and artificial lakes to attract visitors.

In conclusion may we once again urge you to save Lake Pedder National Park.

Yours faithfully,
J. Seabrook
(Secretary)

The Secretary,
S.U.S.S.

22/6/71

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of the 8th instant and in reply I wish to point out that the whole question of the construction of the Gordon River Power project and consequent flooding of Lake Pedder was given careful thought and thorough investigation in 1967, when the matter was brought to Parliament by the Labour (sic) Government.

The Government which was then in opposition, and a Committee of the Legislative Council gave much time to considering all aspects of the project. In the light of all factors involved, Parliament finally approved the scheme and an agreement was signed with the Federal Government which secured substantial bridging finance during the construction period.

Construction has now proceeded to a stage where an alternative that would obviate the necessity to flood Lake Pedder would involve a loss of over \$11 million, in addition to the loss of essential generating capacity. It must also be borne in mind that a new lake will be created, easy of access and with its own beauty, to attract many visitors.

While I can appreciate the viewpoint of those who would like to keep the natural beauty of this area unaltered, the development of the State, and the preservation of employment opportunities in Tasmania for our own people, make the construction of power generating plants a necessity, and hydro-electric power provides by far the most economic and dependable form of power generation.

Yours sincerely,
Angus Bethune
(Premier)

Mr Bethune's deftly phrased reply is, apart from the introductory lines, exactly the same as the reply the Mountaineering Club received to its protest letter. Whilst the two letters give only a partial and generalised outline of the Lake Pedder debate, it is still interesting to note the intransigence of the Tasmanian government despite the great support the Save Lake Pedder campaign is receiving. Latest news from Tassie is that power prices have risen 17%, that pressure has been brought to bear on the press and thus the campaign is receiving little publicity, and that what was originally to be a one night slide show on the south-west by famous bushwalker Olegas Truchanov was still filling the town hall to capacity on the 6th night.

Help support the Save Lake Pedder Campaign by buying a Lake Pedder postcard from John Holliday (20¢ minimum), and by sending protest letters to Mr Bethune and to Mr P.R. Howsen, the Federal Minister for the Environment.