

BULLETIN OF THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

*Lumen
in
Tenebris*

SUSS

GENERAL MEETING

PNGCEG EXPEDITION TO CAVES OF THE
CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF NEW GUINEA

Slide talk by Andrew Pavey (UNSWSS) on
this exciting trip.

DON'T MISS IT

Badhan Room, The Old Union, at 7pm
Thursday, September 7, 1973

Box 35, The Union,
University of Sydney,
N.S.W. 2006.

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F O R T H C O M I N G A C T I V I T I E S

September

7 GENERAL MEETING in the Badham Room, The Old Union, Sydney University, commencing at 7pm.

* GUEST SPEAKER : Andrew Pavey (UNSWSS) who will give a talk, *
 * illustrated with slides, of the August expedition of the Papua and *
 * New Guinea Cave Exploration Group, to some unexplored cave areas *
 * of the Central Highlands. This should be a tremendous talk on a *
 **very exciting cave area, so don't miss it. *

9-10 Possible trip to Jenolan - enquire at next meeting

15-16 CLIEFDEN Keith Oliver 6231768

22-23 WOMBEYAN Denis Ward 6442497
 General exploration, some surveying. Definitely limited to 12 starters. Please see Denis as soon as possible if interested.

29-30- CLIEFDEN Denis Ward 6442497
 October 1 Good restful trip to idyllic Cliefden with as much or as little caving as you want.

29-30- YARRANGOBILLY Keith Oliver 6231768
 October 1 Not a SUSS trip but there will possibly be some SUSS people going so if interested give Keith a ring.

October 5 GENERAL MEETING in the Badham Room the Old Union

13-14 TUGLOW Jim Seabrook 765084
 Gating trip with plenty of time for inspection of the cave by workers

20 Meeting in Canberra to discuss future speleological work at Yarrangobilly. Someone from SUSS may be going, if interested, please enquire at next meeting

13-14 CLIEFDEN Keith Oliver 6231768

27-28 CLIEFDEN Keith Oliver 6231768

November JENOLAN Bruce Welch 991013
 10-11 Mammoth Cave - attempt to follow up waterfall passage in northern section of the cave. Possibility of big discoveries here.

10-11 CLIEFDEN Keith Oliver 6231768

N O T E: There will be no General Meeting in November

The Cliefden trips led by Keith Oliver are not SUSS trips but we have received an invitation to come so if interested you are welcome to give Keith a ring

WOOLOMIN 30-6-73 to 1-7-73.

When Spike Milligan's proposed Timor trip fell through (owing to lack of starters) the writer and Kris Dietrich (ex-U.N.E. Mountaineering Club) decided to investigate an area of limestone near Woolomin, about 40 kilometres north of Timor. The limestone is found on a peak known locally as Black Jack Mountain, which is situated 5 kilometres west of Woolomin and 30 kilometres south east of Tamworth. This peak rises to an elevation of almost 1000 metres, with a local relief of about 300m. The massive blue-grey Devonian limestone outcrops in a series of lenses extending from a spur on the south-east side of Black Jack Mt. to the broad alluvial flats in the valleys to the north-west, a distance of about 3 kilometres. The strike runs in a north-westerly direction; bedding is not visible in the limestone, but dark coloured mudstones near the most southerly outcrop dip almost vertically. The lenses are up to 40m. in thickness, interbedded with volcanics.

The owners of the property reported that a mattock had been lost down a hole in limestone near an ephemeral stream about 500m. north of the mountain. Investigation revealed that two narrow lens-shaped holes extended downwards from a grike for a distance of about 6m., joining halfway down. At the bottom was a small chamber, almost entirely filled with breakdown. The mattock was retrieved with difficulty, since the squeeze was even more awkward coming back. About 20m. closer to the creek, the removal of some stinging nettles exposed a similar vertical fissure, about 3m. deep. At the bottom, this joint-fissure joins a small horizontal passage, floored with sandy material. As the entrance is on the floodplain of the creek, it probably functions as an inflow under conditions of peak runoff. The removal of some rocks would permit entry to the horizontal passage, but in view of the limestone's limited extent the prospects for substantial cave development are not promising.

Geoffrey Francis.

* Further limestone outcrops (not investigated) could be seen to the south, on the other side of Copes Creek.

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ATTENTION ALL FULL AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

A new supply of cloth badges is now available at 50c. each. Get them at any General meeting or send a stamped self-addressed envelope & money to:

The Treasurer,
Box 35,
The Union, etc.

Also still available in limited quantities are metal badges at 75c. each and membership cards at 5c. each.

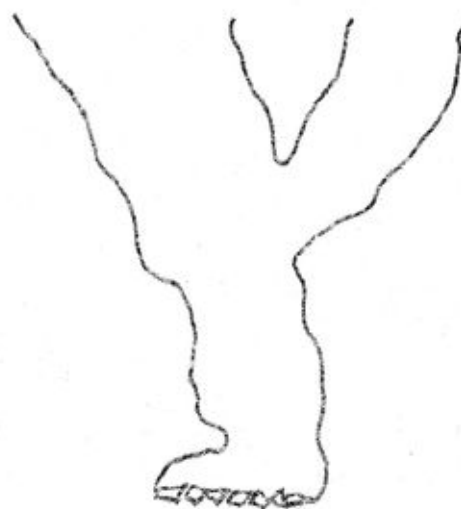
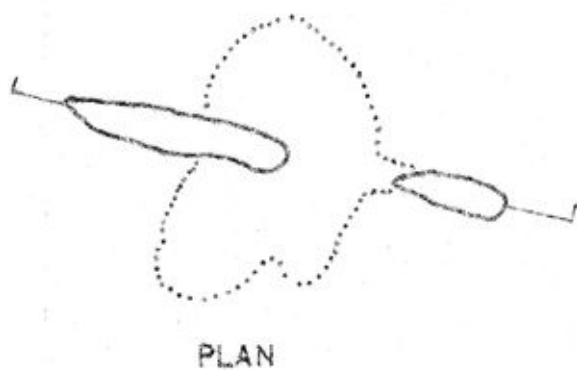
*Note interstate cheques have to have 8c. duty paid on them so please include this.

Some uses for cloth badges:-

- *sew them on your overalls, parka, etc.
- *stick one on your car
- *many other uses.

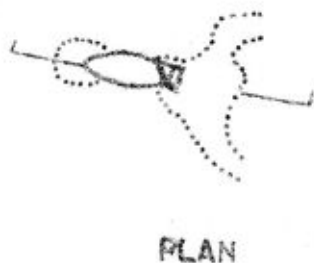
TWO SMALL CAVES
NEAR WOOLOMIN

NO.1 CAVE



L. SECTION

NO.2 CAVE



L. SECTION



SCALE 0 1 2 3 METRES

Surveyed 1/6/73 by

K. Dietrich G. Francis

Grade 2

CARE OF ROPE

Have you ever looked down a deep pit without seeing the bottom, and then looked up at the seemingly ever-so-small rope by which your very life is suspended. Many of us have had our moments of doubt no matter what type of rope or system used.

With a little care rope work can be very safe, as far as the rope itself is concerned-if a few basic rules on the care of rope are adhered to.

1. Never walk or step on a rope.
2. Ropes should never be dragged along the ground. Sand and dirt can work its way into the rope, doing internal damage not visible from the outside.
3. Do not allow rope to run over sharp edges.
4. Try to keep the rope dry, but if you cannot, dry it before storing it.
5. Remove all tight knots after using.
6. Do not leave a rope under tension for extended periods of time.
7. Never use your rope as a car tow rope, once used as such, it must remain as a car tow rope.
8. Check a rope very carefully after it has held a fall. Examine the rope immediately after it has been hit by a fallen rock.
9. Examine the rope at regular intervals. If bad wear or puffs of fibres are observed at any points along the line retire the rope.
10. Never store rope in direct sunlight.
11. Oils, spirits, petrol and lacquer thinners must be kept away from rope, especially nylon.

Jim Huckins
Foresight
Vol. VIII No. 5 p10

GAUNO MINING AND CAVES IN MEXICO

By our Mexican Correspondent. A Blunt.

One of the caves inspected is about 80 miles from Tampico, including 20 miles up a mountain of the worst dirt and mud road/track that you could imagine. The cave is in a valley but the road stops at the top of the mountain necessitating a 5 mile walk with rain beginning as soon as we got out of the car.

The area is much like Jenolan Caves and the cave we looked at was very large. We walked right through it and at one stage got lost. It was very hot and because of the altitude and general atmosphere of the cave we felt quite giddy. It is a shame that they will ruin the beauty of this cave once they start mining the gauno. It was still populated by bats and eerie to hear them squeaking and flapping their wings about us in the dark. The gauno looks like rich brown soil and only the fresh droppings have an odour. We took a large number of samples and in some places it was estimated to be up to 20 feet thick. One cavern was so large that our torch could only just reach the roof and not the far wall until we had walked half the length of the cave. I estimated that we had walked about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile inside the cave. When we got back out it was still raining but luckily, we met a peon (peasant) farmer and hired some horses to ride back to the car. It was very rough on the poor horses because they kept falling on the slippery rocks, but we finally got to the top and a Mexican farmer asked us to dinner in his mud hut where the whole family (about 8) slept, ate and lived in a single room with mud floor.

cont...

the food was great and all the chooks, pigs and dogs were also inside keeping dry.

With all the rain the road had turned to mud and we pushed and shoved the van for miles getting covered in mud in the process, but it was certainly worth it.

On another occasion after visiting a cave within a matter of 2 days, 4 people came to see us, all saying that they were the rightful owners of the Gauno Cave. The trouble was that they all had papers saying they had titles to the caves. Well, we didn't know what the hell to do or who to believe so we contacted a Mexico legal firm and asked them to sort it out. Apparently what happened was that the caves are owned by the Mexican Government. and when the fine print on the titles was studied carefully they were only applications for the Title and the owners who thought they were paying taxes on the land were actually only paying application fees and in this way the Mexican Government got 5 times the money it would have if they gave the titles to one person. This seems hard to believe until you realise that all 5 applicants are peon farmers and none of them can read or write.

On another occasion one poor man we had with us saw his first bat hanging down from the roof with which he let out a long and great scream and actually fainted, we had to carry him back to the entrance and he refused to come back in with us. This cave contains some very large rooms fully populated by bats and the noise was so great from their squeaking and flapping that you couldn't hear a person standing next to you. The sonar system of these bats must be remarkable indeed because even when they were flying all around us they never touched us, unless we made some sudden movement.

Finally a brief note about the climate in this part of the world: It is highly variable and can be unbearably hot and humid for two days with even the slightest physical movement making you sweat, and then a day later, so cold that a sweater is necessary and heaters have to be used.

The Editor,
SUSS Bulletin.

Dear Sir,

In reference to your article "Handbook of Cave Types", (August 1973), what about the Seabrook Type, Class I and Class II (pissed and sober respectively). I am sure all your readers will agree this is a type on its own, completely indescribable in terms of other Types. The omission of this Type is a serious dereliction of editorial responsibility which should be remedied immediately!

Yours sincerely,
Colin Mathers.

Note from Editor.

Due to the above letter the next issue will carry a classification of the Seabrook Type which was erroneously omitted.

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DEATH OF DIVERS IN CAVE - MT. GAMBIER.

Four Sydney scuba divers, have now been reported as having drowned near Mt. Gambier, 300mls. south of Adelaide after an extensive search. The divers, among a party of , failed to surface at their prearranged time. When the 4 didn't surface, 5 companions notified locals and police. All 9 divers had explored the cave the day before, Sunday, and made further dives early in the morning and midday.

After police rescuers arrived members of the Mt. Gambier Aqualung Club and the police aqualung squad from Adelaide in Mt. Gambier that night.

Bob Smith, one of the missing divers, has visited the cave several times in the past 2 years.

The gigantic underground cave, one of the best-known in the Mt. Gambier region, has a tiny entrance widening into a huge water-filled cavern that appears to be bottomless.

This is believed to be the second fatal mass drowning in Mt. Gambier underwater holes and caves for at Christmas 3 people drowned in a small sinkhole near the town. However in the last four years 3 others have drowned: one 18 months ago and two in April 1969.

"This isn't many when you consider the number of dives made", says Mr. Gertners, member of Mt. Gambier's volunteer and honorary Sinkhole Rescue Squad.

Ref. "The Australian" 29th. May 1973

2nd. June 1973.

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INTERVIEW OF VALLERIE TAYLOR by Phil Davis

The interview commenced with a clipping from "Inner Space", by Valerie and Ron Taylor, which is to be shown on Channel 9 in the future. The film showed divers entering a 1m. dia. hole in a padlock. They used ladders with 0.3m. wide rungs, and no belay rope. The cave was cone-shaped with the hole in the centre of the roof and 5m. above the level. The cavern has not been bottomed. It was found by a horse who broke a hoof through the surface of a mudpan.

Mrs. Taylor believes that insufficient safety precautions were taken. If divers go too deep they become affected by nitrogen narcosis and this produces symptoms of drunkenness. This takes place at about 60m.

When asked why people do this Mrs. Taylor replied that she did not know. She does not do this usually, but has been into "Sunshine Shaft" where she was most frightened and did not venture out of sight of the entrance.

Mrs. Taylor was then asked whether she thought the caves should be closed. She did not think so. It was quite, entering a world which has been dead for centuries. Common sense should prevail and it appeared to be a matter of experience. None of the local divers had experienced any difficulty. Perhaps it should be compulsory to take a local guide. The problem is that young people have a tendency to try to outdo each other and to egg each other on.

Reviewed by Rik Tunney.

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MULLAMULLANG CAVE TRIP, May 1965 (a previously unpublished report)

Present: John Dunkley, Bill Crowle, Dick ("Mad Dog") Heffernan

Left Sydney 10.30am Saturday May 15, 1965 in Bill's VW, driving almost non-stop to Mildura, camping under the bridge across the Murray River (not recommended) midnight.

Next day a quick 595 miles Mildura to Ceduna.

Monday 17th, brief stop for provisions in Ceduna and petrol at Penong. Camped in sandhills at Eucla, W.A. about 6.30pm.

Tuesday 18th up before dawn, inspected ruins of telegraph station, had a swim at the beach, left about 8am. Bugged suspension on a cattle grid at high speed while eating peanut butter sandwiches at 70mph. Rest of day at Madura fixing it. Left after dinner, arrived Mullamullang 7pm, immediately entered cave and established the first underground camp in the cave at midnight, at White Lake (1.6 miles in).

Wednesday 19th - left base at 11am, found section discovered by WASG at Easter without any trouble and entered with rope. Beyond, the passage is even larger than in the first 2 miles, and a feeble frog lamp did not light the walls or roof. Reached limit of WASG exploration, a huge junction hall perhaps 300ft across. Taking left branch we passed a succession of small lakes, the passage cross-section being smaller than before. At 4pm, 3 miles from the entrance, we reached a very large rockfall extending out of the roof right down into a lake. John started pushing up through the huge boulders. After several blind leads in unstable areas, the roof suddenly vanished upwards beyond a huge pile of rocks as large as small houses. Bill and Dick, who had been poking around elsewhere, soon joined up and we made our way to the top of the rockfall, above which a very high roof was just visible. About half an hour was spent in exploration here and there but no leads onwards discovered. We retruned to some holes in the wall of the main passage discovered by Dick, concentrating on one branch which gave promise of bypassing the rockfall. The crawl narrowed and the rocks became larger until we could go no further without clearing a path. Other leads were noted but time was against us and we left them for another day, or year. By 8pm we were back at the Junction, and Bill spent some little time paddling around a shallow lake in the right hand branch. The lake seemed very extensive and we began making all sorts of wild hypotheses about the extent of water beneath the Nullarbor. The other major discovery in this section was the incredibly fine gypsum hairs, finer than human hair, flowing across a rock and over two feet long. The left branch also contained extensive earth beds of gypsum flowers. Time beat us again, however, although many unexplored leads remained, and we returned to base camp at midnight, to take a very late dinner.

Thursday 20th - After a late rise we reached the surface about 3pm, packed and drove straight into Madura where we camped on top of the escarpment and obtained some good shots of the road on the Roe Plain.

Friday 21st - Dick left us to hitch back to Sydney, which was reached some days later after some eventful rides. Bill and John went on to Perth where the expedition was climaxed by a cop who stopped Bill on the outskirts for speeding. The appearance of the car and its inhabitants was sufficient for him to forget it.

(note: this trip report should have been published in 1965 but we forgot. It is interesting as being one of the earliest trips from the east using a small party and private cars)

BUNCONIA CAVES TRIP REPORT

8-6-73 to 11-6-73.

Members: Terry Fardouly (T.L.), Colin Mathers, Andrew Smith, Anne Simpson, Leslie Hodges, Peter Woolf and Ernie Lacey.

Saturday. 9-6-73.

B22 Acoustic Pot.

Entered at 10.00am. After abseiling down the 106ft. pitch we pottered around down at the junction having a general look at the digs. On the way out, at the top of the pitch, a 24-legged Arthropod was observed and its classification is being looked into.

Whilst having lunch a writer from a Goulburn paper had a talk with us but didn't seem to be interested in what we were doing there.

B3.

At 5.30pm. we entered B3 (a vertical system 120ft. deep & 20ft. horizontally) and after fumbling around the boulder choke we continued on. This cave incorporates some good chimneys and climbs all of which needed no equipment to negotiate with some experience. It ends at a possible half-completed dig and also a very tight aven above it. A multitude of fossilized coral is to be found in this area also. Exitted at 6.30pm.

Sunday 10-6-73.

Due to forgetfulness on my part most of the morning was spent re-charging my car's battery after leaving the lights on too long that night.

B4-5. Fossil-Hogans Hole.

Entering at 10.30am., and after the two short scruffy ladder pitches had been tackled, half an hour was spent digging out the 'Suckunder'. Continued along Fossil section to King's-X-Hairy Traverse junction. Here we met 4 Goulburn cavers (using a clothesline for belaying for psychological purposes!) to negotiate the Hairy Traverse. At King's-X we also met Phil Crisp (SUSS) who was going to B4-5 Extension. Climbed out of Fossil at 3.30pm.

However when we went to retrieve our ladders from Hogan's Hole we found some very unprepared cavers (yobbs) around the top of the ladders and one halfway down. Finally came out at 4.00pm.

B23.

This cave has recently, i.e. since the "Bunconia Caves" book was published, been pushed through an unstable boulder choke (this fact was reported to SUSS by Tony Austin (SUSS) who was stopped by foul air at the top of the bedding plane squeeze.)

The way passes through the boulder choke vertically by a series of squeezes and a chimney to a relatively large chamber. From this point a bedding plane slopes down for about 12ft. at an average of 2ft. high. By moving down feet first a sloping hollow is entered which is found to lead to a small tightening passage (with a loose rock floor).

With some grunting and groaning, due to the presence of carbon dioxide the bedding plane was left and the cave was left at 6.00pm.

That night we were visited by some people who had to Bunconia as a break from rockclimbing near the Wellondilly River.

cont..

Bungonia Trip Report (cont.)Monday II-6-73.

Col., Leslie and Pete set off to walk through Bungonia Gorge while the rest of us went to have a look at the smaller caves of the area. B47 (Hairnet Cave) & B48 (Mossy Cave) were visited & B46 (Skull Cave) was looked for. After giving some tourists a quick verbal rundown on the caves we went looking for more caves. Came across B14-18 (Steam Pipe-Camberra Hole) which we all thought should have some form of warning about the depths of these two caves.

B56, which was next entered, by a 10ft. chimney leads to a slightly boulder choke sloping bedding plane. (the top of which is the extent of

the map in "Bungonia Book".) Even though I did not go further the following was observed. The bedding plane squeeze of about 5m. in length has two possible passages. A direct route leads to a larger part of the squeeze which could have a passage going from it. The other possibility is on left 10ft. down the squeeze which seems to be able to be followed 20ft. to an area with a lower floor & some dead(?) formation. Some passage was observed to lead off behind a 2ft. high stalagmite. A trip is now being planned for some time next term to explore this cave more fully.

Arrived at camp site at 4.00pm. in time to see the others return from the gorge, and left for Sydney at 4.30pm. unaware of the increasing amount of traffic waiting to engulf us.

Terry Fardouly.

TUGLOW GATING TRIP

The Tuglow gating trip, previously scheduled for the weekend of September 22-23, has been put off to October 13-14 because the welder was unable to make it. At the suggestion of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Australian Speleological Federation's member societies around the Sydney area are getting together to put a gate on this cave, which has been deteriorating rapidly in recent years.

About 3 or 4 bods from each of the 5 or 6 societies in question will be needed to get the job done and there should be plenty of time for both a trip through the cave, which is about 4000ft long, and a Saturday night social session and campfire.

Further details, hopefully, at the next SUSS Meeting.

THE NEW GUINEA EXPEDITION

SUSS is represented on the 27-member expedition to the caves of the Central Highlands of New Guinea by Ms Beverly Riley. No word has leaked out at the time of typing this (21 August) about how well the trip went.

Andrew Pavey will provide the entertainment at the next SUSS meeting with an illustrated account of the expedition, SO DON'T MISS IT.