

BULLETIN OF THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

*Lumen
in
Tenebris*

SUSS

MAY GENERAL MEETING

Thursday May 2 at 7pm.

Badham Room, Sydney University Union.

SUSS

FOUNDED 1948

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

FULL AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

If there is a mark in the square below, your membership has expired and this is the last newsletter you will receive unless you renew your membership **immediately** or sooner. (See within for membership fees for 1974.)



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.....Price 20¢

LIST OF FUTURE TRIPS

APRIL 10-15 EASTER

WYANBENE Tony Austin

COOLEMAN PLAINS Spike Milligan 6601508

APRIL 20-21 JENOLAN - Bruce Welch 991013

BUNGONIA Tony Austin

May 2 General Meeting. 7.00pm Badham Room.

MAY 11-12 COLONG Bruce Welch 991013

BUNGONIA Tony Austin

MAY 18-19 WOMBEYAN Dennis Ward 9092400

MAY SOMETIME JENOLAN Wyburds Lake Cave. Jim Seabrook.

JUNE 11-2 BUNGONIA Tony Austin

JUNE 6 General Meeting 7.30pm Badham Room.

JUNE SOMETIME JENOLAN Jim Seabrook.

JULY 4 General Meeting 7.30pm Badham Room.

JULY 13-14 BUNGONIA Rik Tunney.

JUNE=JULY=AUGUST SOMETIME

BARBARA DEW MEMORIAL LECTURE

SUSS ANNUAL DINNER

Members wishing to go on a trip should contact the trip leader as soon as possible. A trip fee of 30¢ applies for all trips.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The membership fees for 1974 have now been set. (See elsewhere in this bulletin. For ease of payment send monies direct to;

Tony Austin

Flat 4 47/51 Frederick St Ashfield

Changes of address for the bulletin should also be sent direct to Tony.

Overheard at AGM

"This isn't Democracy, this is Jimocracy."

SUSS Editorial address - PO Box 176 Fairy Meadow 2519.

SUSS Secretary's Report 1973-4

- Ian (Spike) Milligan

The secretary has two main duties - taking minutes at the meetings and attending to correspondence.

First of all I think it has been quite a good year for our 25th Anniversary year. Caving-wise, renewed interest has been shown in Bungonia and Wombeyan with continued work at Jenolan, Cooleman Plains and Cliefden.

Meetings during 1973 were generally well attended despite mixups with the Union over meeting rooms and dates. Guest speakers were Dr Julia James on "Speleochemistry at Bungonia" and Andrew Pavey with a slide illustrated report on the August expedition to the Central Highlands of New Guinea. We also paid a visit to University of New South Wales Speleological Society after one meeting to hear Warwick Counsell speak on Bungonia, Conservation and Speleogenesis. Warwick also dropped in at an occasional SUSS meeting with latest news of Bungonia and managed to flog some literature for the cause. He also induced many members to write to Mr J.G.Beale after the State Pollution Control Commission's handling of the Bungonia issue. The Society also sent letters to Mr Beale, Sir Robert Askin and Sir Roden Cutler and their stereotyped replies brought some amusement when read at the next meeting.

A good number of publications were received and these were passed on to the librarian. Apart from general internal and Australian Speleological Federation correspondence there was quite a lot concerning conservation issues, most notably the Lake Pedder Action Committee Bulletins.

Finally, I would like to thank Joy and Ludwig Rieder for holding the Committee Meetings in their home. No doubt its not easy having 6 or 7 bods around to all hours with a young family.

CHUDLEIGH CAVES

It appears that Chudleigh Caves (see S.U.S.S. Vol. 13 No. 11 Page 137) is Mole Creek Caves, famed for their wetness and depth.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR 01MAR73 TO 28FEB74

RECEIPTS

	\$
Membership - Full	115-60
- Associate	36-75
- Prospective	71-20
Trip Fees	22-70
Sale of badges and cards	9-60
Annual dinner	119-00
Payment from Special Fund for filing cabinet for library	29-00
Loan from Special Fund for purchase of rope	34-00
Birthday party	5-00
Bank interest	3-54
From N.Poulter	-56
From R.Murray	-10
From M.Listing for postage of membership card	-07
 TOTAL RECEIPTS	 447-12
Balance brought forward 01MAR73	75-80
	<hr/> \$522-92

PAYMENTS

Publications - Stationery	75-76
- Postage	23-23
- Duplicating	12-13
ASF subscription	67-50
Secretarial	10-00
Annual dinner	145-16
Birthday party	15-75
Hire of orientation week stalls	71-00
Dyeline Copies	20-50
Swaging	-75
Cloth badges	15-00
Filing Cabinet for library	29-00
Hampton fees	2-50
Tape repair	2-00
 TOTAL PAYMENTS	 450-28
Balance carried forward 28FEB74	72-64
	<hr/> \$522-92

K.C.Brister

Hon. Treasurer.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

"I have examined the Books, Accounts and Vouchers submitted for Audit of the Society's activities for the year ended 28th February, 1974. In my opinion the above statement is a correct record for the year then ended, and as shown by the Books and records so submitted, and subject to the following :-

- "1. My report for the year ended 28th February, 1973 suggested that Gestetner Prop. Ltd., be written to asking for a cheque for \$22-98 which was a credit due to your Society. I can see no reference to this during the current year, either by a cheque received, or a deduction from more supplies.
- "2. Minute Book has not been submitted for perusal.
- "3. Your Record of Receipts and Payments would be better signed by your President and Treasurer at Meetings of Committee as no receipt book/s have been included for Audit, nor has receipts for annual dinner for total \$119-00 been entered in such Book."

Edgell Hunt A.A.S.A.

76 Rosebery Rd. Killara. 28MAR74.

At the AGM the Treasurer, K.Brister explained the significance of the Auditor's comments.

ERRATUM

On the opposite page "Hire of orientation week stalls " should read \$31-00

NEW ADDRESS

Denis Ward
7 Hardie St.,
Neutral Bay 2009
Phone 9092400

The following article appeared in "Descent" No 22 AUG/SEP 1972 and was reprinted in NARGUN Vol6 No6 Feb 1974. The author is very experienced in caving in Britain and his comments are supported by the Wessex Cave Club. With the recent influx of large numbers of prospectives to our society, his comments are most pertinent.

"A NEW APPROACH TO THE TRAINING OF NOVICES IN CAVING"

-Fred Davies.

"It is absolutely essential that novices and inexperienced cavers should be accompanied by highly competent experts who will lead the party and ensure its safety." How many times have we heard such sentiments expressed? I have myself made such statements, but over the past five or six years I began to have some doubts as to the accuracy of these statements. What basis have we for such ideas? Are they perhaps to be classed with Euclid's axioms? I decided in order to straighten my ideas on the subject that I must adopt a more scientific attitude, viz: observation-hypothesis-experiment-more observation-finally arriving at a theory agreeing with present observation. So, I turned to the reports of the Mendip Rescue Organisation secretary and analysed them in the way shown in the following table.

.....	
Total number of incidents	75
No of incidents involving unaccompanied novices	1
No of incidents involving novices accompanied by experienced cavers	13

Notes on Table

- a) These figures come from the M.R.O. annual reports for the period 1956-71
- b) An 'incident' is an event in which assistance has been rendered to a person (or persons) underground. No account has been taken of false alarms.
- c) They include incidents outside Mendip which were attended by the MRO.
- d) The Sandhurst general search of 1960 has not been included. This was a search of the majority of the known caves on Mendip for two Sandhurst Cadets who were overdue from a supposed caving week-end on Mendip. The search was called off when it was found that the two cadets had in fact gone AWOL to Jersey.
- e) Prior to 1960 the term 'novice' did not appear in any accident report. However I have counted the Wallington affair of 1958 as an accident to a novice.
- f) I cannot give definitions of 'novice' or 'experienced caver' as used in these tables. I have accepted the wording of the MRO report. Similarly I have accepted the term 'on first trip' when this has been used in the report.

This table completes the first stage - the observation of the actual number of accidents. We can now draw some deductions from these figures and on this empirical evidence I will then try to define a 'safe' caving party.

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OFFICE BEARERS 1974

Jim Seabrook	President
Ludwig Rieder	V.President.
Ian Milligan	Secretary
Rik Tunney	Editor
Tony Austin	Treasurer
Denis Ward	Librarian
Terry Fardouly	Safety Officer
Colin Mathers	Committee Member
Brendon Hyde	Committee Member
Glenda Mackay	Committee Member
Roger Lyle	Equipment Officer

Members of Committee for Remote and Inaccessible Places -

Ron Murray
Norm Poulter
Henry Shannon
John Dunkley

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FEES FOR 1974

Full Membership	\$4-50 per year
Associate Membership	\$4-50 per year
Prospective Membership	\$1-00 for first 6 months
	\$1-50 for subsequent 6 monthly periods.
Subscription to Bulletin	\$2-50 per year
Trip Fee	\$0-30

Membership fees for Full and Associate members are now due.

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NEW ADDRESS

The Seabrooks (Jim and Thea)
12/15 Bank St
MEADOWBANK

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On the statistical evidence available a novice is safer caving with other novices. This is further reinforced when you consider that of the three fatalities in this period, two occurred in the class of accompanied novices. The third fatality was not to a novice at all. It can be argued that these statistics are only to be expected since there are not many novices 'starting on their own'. On this point I would beg to differ, although I do not have the exact details of the numbers involved. I personally know many novices who would fall into this class, but since they do not have accidents they are unnoticed by the general run of cavers.

I would now like to hypothesise upon the cause of this apparently unreasonable deduction. In my opinion the main cause is the mental attitude of the novice himself. With the great 'highly qualified' superman leader in the party he is tempted to relinquish all responsibility for his safety to the leader. This is a fatal attitude. Every person going underground should know, and very strongly feel, responsible for his safety. Secondly, there must also be a tendency for a novice in a party of experienced cavers not to tell the leader that he is feeling tired. This is because to do so would, so the novice feels, appear 'chicken' in the eyes of the leader and the other experienced members of the party. So, the novice if he is tired will tend to try and soldier on until a combination of his weariness and inexperience could cause an accident.

At this point I would like to mention the type of equipment used by a novice. No technical equipment can make up for a deficiency in personal ability, but ability can make up for a lack of equipment. I have therefore in the past few years opposed the lending of helmets etc. to novices. Novices who have been issued with equipment tend to end up with the helmet falling over their eyes and a lamp whose workings they do not know, but, because they have this equipment they think that they are safe. Instead of all this equipment which they do not understand I would recommend a torch they DO understand, an old beret on their heads, and caution in their hearts. This will really ensure that they come safely out of the cave.

So, I have come to the conclusion that a party of between three and six persons, all of nearly equal ability, using equipment with which they are familiar, is less likely to get into difficulties. Even in those incidents in the MRO reports where the word novice was not used, I feel that a great spread of ability through the party was often implied, and that it was the weak link of the party which cracked.

All of this theorising leads to the real problem. What does one do about the keen novice eager to start caving? I suggest that it first requires that a group of novices be found, say four. They are then advised to get together, armed with such torches as they may think suitable, any old clothing that they may have, and are advised to visit such caves as Goatchurch, East Twin or Loxton. Without the presence of a 'supercaver' these visits will be full of adventure, far more adventure than being taken to Swildons. (A supercaver sitting by ON THE SURFACE is a good move.)

After this start they will either want no more, and it has cost them nothing so far, or else they will be eager for more. After discussions with

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an experienced caver on helmets, lamps, and so on, they should be keen to equip themselves properly. Their activities could now extend to : Upper Swildons, Upper Eastwater, Nine Barrows, Rods Pot and the like, ALWAYS finding their own way. I have never found people who have always had to find their own way getting lost. The immediate response of people 'lost' has usually been "I had been brought this way a couple of times before and I thought that I knew the way".

Now comes the period at which real instruction is useful to novices: The use of tackle, handling of lifelines, etc. Personally, I like Lamb Leer for this, for it is the only Mendip pitch with enough space at the top for three or four novices to watch the lifeline man handling the rope. With the knowledge of how to tackle vertical pitches, such caves as Cuckoo Cleaves, Sludge Pit, Pine Tree Pot and Hunters Hole can be tackled, so that it is now a competent party that tries Eastwater or Swildons and should not cause congestion at the pitches of these overcrowded caves. Perhaps a trip through a sump with an experienced caver, and a party of novices are novices no longer, at the expense of perhaps only two underground trips by the experienced caver who is their mentor.

The safety of novices can be further ensured by deliberately removing all extraneous pressures to go caving. This means the removal of the attitude summed up in the phrase 'taken caving'. I am willing to 'go caving' (implying an equal responsibility for our own safety) with anyone. I will not 'take' (implying ~~safety~~ is my responsibility) anyone. Equally as bad for introducing outside pressures or motives for going caving are all badge schemes, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards given for caving. If the visit to the cave is not in itself sufficient reward then it is to make prostitutes of our caves.

These ideas have been slowly developing in my mind over several years. I would now like to describe four examples which I feel are indicative that these ideas are correct and valid.

First, when I was working in Flintshire I was approached by a small group from the scout troop at Street who wanted to do some caving. I went to Goatchurch with them, and then said, "When you have done this on your own five times I will show you another cave." In due course we visited Upper Swildons together then: "When you have done this five times on your own I will show you how to use ladders." Later I visited Swildons Sump 1 with them. At a later date I received an enthusiastic letter describing how, in a total of three trips, they had gradually found their way through Paradise Regained and so ultimately to Swildons IV. The sense of achievement obtained came through very vividly in the letter.

Secondly, in 1960 the Somerset Scout Association was upset by some bad press. I agreed to organise a 'training scheme for cave leaders'. Altogether over fifty people must have attended such courses by now. I know only one of these who is now a really active caver, and he has enunciated the principle: "If they apply to go on a course, then it is evidence that they are not the best type." I have become strongly conscious that you cannot train, or make, initiative in a person. And what initiative training is it if the trainee is accompanied by an expert?

Thirdly, over the past five years Charterhouse School, Surrey, has made regular visits to Mendip as an 'Adventure Week-end'. On each occasion these boys, armed with their own torches, have been shown the entrance of Goatchurch,

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split into fours and told to get on with it. Out of over 100 boys on this type of venture there has never been anyone lost, never a bang on the head hard enough to raise a lump, and only once was I asked into a cave by them - to help a big built lad out of a squeeze.

Fourthly, while camping at Burrington with some boys from Millfield School we visited Rod's Pot. They knew how to handle lifelines, so when they started making visits to the bottom of the 50ft pot (climbing but held by a top rope) I went out of the cave. When they had not returned some three hours later I became worried, changed and walked back to Rod's Pot to find them just emerging from the entrance. They had suffered several bad cases of 'Lights Out' (they were using carbides) and had resorted to lowering lit lamps down the shaft on a lifeline. The important point is that they safely extracted themselves and had such a sense of achievement over this that it is still fixed in their memories as 'the best day's caving' several years later. They had learnt to rely on themselves.

Lastly, it is worth remembering that one of the school clubs affiliated to the Wessex Cave Club, Sidcot School Speleological Society, is a club which is run entirely by the pupils of the school without any master in charge. The training of novices is based on similar lines to that outlined in this article; namely, groups of pupils exploring caves for themselves, but under the overall control and guidance of older pupils at the school. The result is that since caving started at Sidcot in the 1920s, the Sidcot School SS has not been responsible for any MRO call outs, and any problems that have occurred have been dealt with by members of the school. In addition the society's ex-members include one of the founder members of the Wessex and a great many of the club's present active cavers.

So, to ensure that caving continues as we know it, please first help to remove all false reasons for caving. Let us go caving because we enjoy it and not because it will build up our characters. Secondly when you meet that bunch of schoolboys with bicycle lamps in their hands, do not be scathing about idiots causing accidents. That group is far more likely to produce the new Ford, Boon, Wooding or Brooks Brothers of the future than any spineless bunch of novices who have been told to go caving because it is 'character building' with the officious certificate holder proudly leading the way.

The above article certainly raises some interesting points. Views and comments on the subject will be welcomed. ..Ed.