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Footnote: Keith Murray is now Assistant Editor of this Bull.

YARRANGOBILLY RESEARCH GROUP SYMPOSIUM REPORT

29/30 November, 1975

RANDALL KING

Held at the Australian National University, Canberra.

S.U.S.S. DELEGATES: Peter Winglee, Randall King, John Dunkley (also Y.R.G. members.)

Hosted by C.S.S. and N.U.C.C., the lecture room walls were filled with detailed maps of drainage, caves, geology, and general. It was obvious that much work had gone into the production of the seminar.

SESSION 1 (Saturday)

A. Surface Mapping - Andy Spate

Some major projects have been concerned with this section at Yarrangobilly. A miners dial/stadia traverse of the tourist area involving over 1000 stations has been completed and a map drawn. Other major events include a Teleometric traverse to enclose the limestone area, an 800 station contour map of the Eagles Nest Doline with 2m. contour intervals, and U.N.S.W.S.S. traverses between cave entrances, notably Y9-Y10, Y58-EDC

B. Geology - Bob Nicoll

The Yarrangobilly limestone is sandwiched between two shale formations and dipping westerly at 35-40°. Very little evidence of major faulting is apparent, although some minor displacements may have occurred (e.g. Y6 area). Age of the limestone and surrounding area is extrapolated both from fossils and recent datings of basalt cappings as 22-29 million years old.

C. Hydrology - Bob Nicoll

Maps were produced showing catchment areas of each stream and the proposed underground drainage.

Joe Jennings is undertaking a major study of the Deep Creek Area, whilst A. Pavey's water tracing results have brought further discussion on the pattern of water movement through the caves. As part of Joe's project, a parabolic weir to measure flow has been placed outside Y46, although there are some major problems with creek sedimentation.

Andrew Spate has attempted a comparison with the Cooleman Area.

D. Biology - Elery Hamilton-Smith

Elery reported that some encouraging identifications had been obtained despite a great lack of collecting by speleologists at Yarrangobilly. Currently biological work at Yagby is given over to an identification of the life present before further studies can be undertaken. Only one batch of bats has been banded at Yagby.

E. Botany

A detailed profile had been outlined of the forestation of the mountain plant communities, although a further study of their inter-relationships is required.

F. Status of Park Development - Dave Lambert (N.P.W.S. Ranger-Naturalist)

Gated:

- a) Y1-3
- b) East Eagles Nest
- c) East Deep Creek upper level
- d) Coppermine Cave
- e) Restoration Cave
- f) Janus Cave

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TRIP REPORT 8-9/5/76 JENOLAN NATURALLY

PRESENT : Peter Campbell, Randall King, Prue Kirby, Stewart McKinn (all SUSS) -reported to Mr Culley 9.30 a.m., saw UNSWSS departing for G.N.C. at 10.00. Left with rope and camera for photography of Frenchmans Cave (J18). Descended pitch to photograph SRT from this very photogenic if small pitch. Flash failed to work, so left cave whilst Randall and Stewart explored the rest of the cave which neither had entered previously. Yet another experimental ascending system was written off as a failure. Some photographs of the False Frenchmans entrance (J21) were taken, and my tripod leg broke.

Returned to Marrioth camp site at about 1p.m. and had lunch. Moving up North, Randall and Stewart went to Wiburds Bluff to obtain cave descriptions for 3 caves; 209, 210, 211 ? Prue and I commenced a survey of J79 Maiden Cave on Hennings Bluff. Traverse and plan detail as far as the cave was concerned were essentially finished this afternoon except for two well decorated passages. We returned to camp at about 5.30 p.m. Randall and Stewart had already arrived, having pushed the "Boomalacka Wee" (sic) passage in Wiburds Lake Cave (J58). They had also had a preliminary investigation of the connection between Little Canyon Cave (J59) and Serpentine Cave (J72).

We dined at Caves House to celebrate Prue's Birthday, and visited the Lucas Cave for a "tourist". This cave would benefit from high pressure water cleaning. We went to the second of the J.C.H.A.P.S. meeting to hear most of Noel Rawlinson's paper entitled "Lucas : Conservationist or Vandal" which pointed out the damage done to the known caves at that time, throws light on how prone to exaggeration (or mis-estimation) the early visitors/explorers were. For example, the Gorge area of the Northern limestone had its bluffs described, not as the 200 feet high that they are, but 2,000 feet high. One can see that caving and the ego were as inextricably intertwined last century as they are today, even if the expression was different then. Upon return to the camp at about 11.00p.m., the UNSWSS people were again met and it was learnt that they had surveyed Mudist Colonies and connected it to G.N.C. in several other places, all non-digging extensions were pushed. Water levels in Northern Marrioth Cave J13 were reported to be at normal levels. On Sunday at approx 9.30a.m. survey of J79 was continued, being finished at 1.30p.m. Developed long sections and cross-sections were done, and the well decorated sections surveyed at a lower grade (ASF43). Despite care I damaged (fortunately, not obviously) a speleothem in doing so. One wonders whether I should have entered the section(s) to survey at all. My justification (?) is the hope that since visitors who have the map (to be published in "Caves of Jenolan. 2: The Northern Limestone") will know that the section does go any further, and will not enter it, so that my clumsiness will be the last. A surface traverse to the junction of Hennings Creek and McKeowns Creek showed that the lake was 2 metres above this level. When water tracing was in April, the lake was another 3 metres above that again. This has set a few aspiring hydrologists postulating.

We returned to Serpentine Bluff where McKeowns Hole (J68), Diggins Diggins (J37), Little Canyon Cave and Serpentine Cave descriptions were obtained. Randall and I met at the Serpentine/Little Canyon Cave connection. I surveyed by estimation a short passage leading to Randall, who then surveyed the rest of the connection to Little Canyon Cave by

BIG HOLE S.R.T. AND WYANBENE WANDERINGS

Randall King.

Trip 20-21 March, 1976.

Party; Cathy Merchant, Peter and Steve Niewendyk and others (S.S.S.)
Randall King (S.U.S.S.)

Having on previous occasions travelled more than a thousand miles to and from Wyanbene without ever getting across the Shoalhaven, it was decided to again try and brave the elements and venture Southwards. Except this time there was one major difference--Pete's new 4WD Toyota--with air-conditioning....aircraft seats....two way radio.....

The trip was a success. We were met at the entrance by COMPTON.

estimation. A stream passage was shown on his map at the bottom of a 5 metre riff leading from the connecting passage. This is probably an intermediate point in the stream between where it sinks in Lower Serpentine Cave, and where it is seen again in Little Canyon Cave, and should be confirmed by anyone who is at Jenolan during the next flood. The estimated map connection fitted to within 2-3m at each end onto the composite J72/J59 map (surveyed to approx. ASFM43) at 1:200. The survey will appear in "The Caves of Jenolan. 2: The Northern Limestone." It should be pointed out that an experience of magnificent, if small scale stream passages is incomplete without a visit to J72. For anyone wishing to continue surveying in J79, should the lake be down, the location of the lower tip of the shawl on the wall above the lake in the main chamber is $dN = -7.11m$, $dE = -17.23m$ and $dA = -19.32m$. The location of the junction of Hennings Creek and McKewens Creek is $dA = -18.01m$.

We returned to camp at 5.00p.m. and left by 5.30 p.m. We were unable to sign off at the Guides Office because of our late departure. Stewart told us that UNSWSS had been enthusiastic to do some digging of Spider Cave (J174). They were unable to find the entrance to do some digging from Randall's description. This is not a reflection on their ability, but rather shows that attempts to camouflage the entrance and its own innate unobtrusiveness are positive factors in the conservation of this cave and show the value of taking the trouble to reach the cave by an indirect path thus not leaving an expressway to give its entrance away.

TRIP REPORT 15/5/76 Canberra-Wombeyan - Mittagong - Canberra round trip. PRESENT: Peter, James and David Campbell (the last 2 visitors).

Like a concerned mother, anxious to meet her son's latest girlfriend, to assess suitability, I thought I should have a look at Wombeyan whilst in the region. This was not a legitimate trip speleologically, since it was viewed in the main from the bounds of the tourist frameworks. I should point out that this report is aimed only at those people who know nothing of Wombeyan, since the contents will be revelations only to those. Access from Canberra via Goulbourn and Taralga is excellent with only 8km of windy dirt road, and only 20 km of dirt road all in all. The road from Mittagong has 40km of windy dirt road and I do not recommend it for typical caver's vehicles. The trip is exceedingly scenic and the Wombeyan Valley is very similar to Jenolan, except that it has a surface river flowing before the arch (also similar to D.C.H.). My investigation of the river below the arch from the end of the track to Junction Cave showed that the river, like that near North Wiburds Bluff sinks and rises in the gravel, having a stretch of dry creek bed that is some 300-400 m long. Bluffs rise on either side of this creek but the limestone ends shortly downstream of the steep dry creek bed that enters from near the Junction Cave entrance. A large expanse of limestone on the opposite side of the Wombeyan River extends along a side tributary. A guide told me that there was about 100 acres of limestone. Most of the area is timbered or consists of low scrub with some grassy slopes. Little obvious evidence of speleological activity can be seen. I believe that the area, according

...cont...

Wyanbene (cont)

The descent of the Big Hole by SRT on Saturday by Steve and Pete and myself on a new roll of Marlow proved the value of having the margin of safety of a 12mm rope. Before the situation could be remedied a ledge abraded through the first sheathe of the rope while prussiking. However the descent and ascent were successful and quite exhilarating, although the problem of having rocks peeling off from the walls of the Hole and bombarding those below is quite hairy and requires close attention

to one of the guiding staff, is unsuitable for digging. We visited 2 tourist caves, and I noticed some aluminium tags nearby, on smaller entrances, and on a rock some distance from an entrance. These must have been concerned with surveying, because what looked like a number stamped on them was not particularly legible. Fig Tree Cave is a cavernous system with a dry upper level, and an excellent lower river level. The path is well placed in the river section section to display it to the public who unfortunately do not appreciate such features. The cave joins the arch which is exit. The other cave, Junction Cave, is also a very attractive one and contains the finest shawl it has been by privilege to see. There is a river section not unlike Horseshoe Cavern (J13) in flood.

The lighting in the tourist caves is quite good, with some considerable thought put into its installation; particularly in Fig Tree Cave. The tourist handout tells me that a Mr Clive Stiff is responsible for this. However, the old methods of cables going across flowstone and cemented masonry nail anchoring are still employed. A limestone pool has been patched up with cement in a crude fashion although colour-matched to the flowstone it patches. The practise of coin throwing has not been discouraged and the green stain lesson of Jenolan been obviously ignored. The policy of lights on for a minimum of time means there is no mess. The Guides of Jenolan would do well to learn this unsavory lesson. The attitude of Guides is more positive anti-touch, but party sizes are still too large, and the warning still is not strong enough, often being given without background rationale. On the surface, one is confronted by vast numbers of signs and sufficient bins, that the area is relatively free of litter. The use of cans rather than deposit bottles as at Jenolan means that cans are to be found in the bush.

The Wombeyan river would be a pleasant little brook except that it froths around sticks and in back waters, contains papers and smells of sewerage. In short, it is polluted, which is doubly sad since it flows directly into Fig Tree Cave.

With a little extra work and planning, this area could easily be exceptional, but I wonder whether the staff has the motivation when I heard one member describing with enthusiasm the process of obtaining marble blocks for building from the quarry on the reserve to a tourist and not mentioning the eyesore which will add to the damage and the damnation of our Era, which is clearly visible from the road to Taralga. I also wonder what the Tourist Department attitudes are when its bread and butter is caves, and it prints in the pamphlet "Limestone and marble are widely used as a building stone and for industrial purposes." without offering an interpretation.

TRIP REPORT: Jenolan.

May 11th.

PRESENT: G. Francis; P. Winglee.

When one is faced with the prospect of exams, what better way to study than to go to Jenolan.

This trip was basically a spur of the moment surface photography trip, since we didn't have a permit. We arrived at Jenolan at 10.30 and strolled to the Devil's Coach House laden with camera gear like typical tourists. After clambering over rocks to get a good angle we ambled up the valley. The walk up was uneventful as Geoff geomorphologised aloud being his first trip back in several years. He was surprised to see Henning's Creek flowing even though we now expect it to do so. While he was a guide at Jenolan (1969-70) it was usually dry. By the size of its alluvial fan, this creek must have had a substantial flow in a bygone era. We continued up to photograph the Big Rift on Wiburds Bluff and as the sun began to slowly set in the West we started the trek back.

There is perhaps, no better sign of a great man than that his memorial is his own work. Olegas Truchanas was such a person, and his book contains his work. In 1958 he completed the first journey down the mighty Gordon River-alone in a kayak. From that time he would combine his talents as an accomplished bushman canoeist and photographer to become one of the few experts on South-West Tasmania and to relentlessly try to make people aware of its wild beauty. Thus it was a great tragedy that the Hobart bushfires of 1967 destroyed almost all of his precious photographs--not just because of the great time and effort needed to replace them, but rather that the Southwest was being threatened and his photographs were needed to show the public what was at stake.

In January 1972 Olegas Truchanas died while trying to replace these photographs.

The selection presented in this book covers topics such as the mountains, lakes, towns and the endemic flora as well as fourteen plates on the original Lake Pedder. All that can be said is that they are superb photos of unique and irreplaceable scenery; to add any more of a description would require a lithographic press to reproduce his work. There is a biography by Max Angus and a preface by Norman Laird. The book itself was produced by a small group of people working over three years to fulfill Truchanas' dream of publishing his work for others to see.

Although the rugged nature of the Southwest has been its protection and its attraction it has also left this area open for destruction. How can a business manager sitting in his air-conditioned office high above Martin Place or O'Connell Street fully appreciate this part of our national heritage? His experience of the effects of environmental degradation may consist of having to breathe the unpleasant city air as he walks between the parking station, after a slow drive in his air-conditioned car, and his air-conditioned office. Then, sitting back, gazing at his 20th story view he may regret that it isn't what it used to be because another office block is obstructing his view or that the worsening brown haze on the horizon has made it slightly more depressing.

It has been the exclusiveness of the wilderness experience that has contributed a great deal to its demise. Even so, the loss of wilderness and peaceful leisure (among other things) reflects an increasing tendency towards "capital" intensive leisure i.e. people need to acquire more goods to make their now reduced leisure time more concentrated with "fun". Yet Norman Laird poses a more frightening question--What can a person do even if he does realise the damage that is being done to the environment?

"Looking back at the tragedy (Lake Pedder), one is inclined to agree with J.K. Galbraith's satirical comment that the wiping out of an environment is not so much a failure of the economic system as an integral part of it."

At a recommended retail price of \$22.50 the book will no doubt have a limited market, but even if you only stop off at the C.B.M. Bookshop and just browse through the pages of glorious colour and eerie monochrome plates as well as reading the text the time will be well spent.

Extracts and some photos were also published in the National Times Magazine, March 29 1976.

Peter Winglee.

Neil to tidy up some geological work for the pending Montgomery and James paper on Odyssey Cave. S.S.S. is planning to install bolts on the top of one or two of the pitches in the cave where belay points are scarce, and this would be a distinct advantage. The cave was then exited.

One of the major hydrological questions being investigated at Bungonia is how and where does the water cross the 150m. thick, relatively impervious shale band from the Grill cave/Drum cave sumps in the Lower Limestone to reemerge in Odyssey cave and, eventually, the Efflux in the Upper Limestone, as proven by water tracing (James 1973). It has also been suggested that a resistant limestone band in the Lower Limestone running between the caves of B.4,5,15,21,41,119,120,121 and the Bungonia Lookdown road has acted as a major structural influence in forcing water movement and structural development to run along a NE/SW line on this side of the road (Bunton, 1976) particularly as evidenced by the B4/5 Extension and water tracing.

A key cave in the development of both of these theories is B11. A direct line connection from Grill to Odyssey passes close to the area of the cave, and it is from here that it appears that the SW migration of cave water from the "Eastern Cave Series" ends. Most importantly, it is also situated close to the limestone/shale interface. B11 itself is of the order of 30m. or so deep and descends vertically. The partly collapsed doline entertains a catchment area of only 1000 sq.m. or so, and the limestone immediately surrounding this is heavily fractured and broken up. It is hoped by McCann, Hixon and Ruxton of S.S.S. who are working on a difficult dig at the bottom, that a sump or extension might be found lower down.

My conclusion is that the relatively small catchment (although it is admitted that much erosion or capture may have taken place) and the heavily phreatic nature of the cave would make the chances of any great development small. But I would nevertheless wish to be proven wrong in this regard. During our inspection of the cave, the effort required to pass an extremely tight bedding-plane squeeze precluded Neil and I from seeing the dig (i.e. we slacked), so no comment can be passed on this.

On Sunday, Mt. Ayre Spur was battled with a trip to the Shoalhaven River junction for some lilo-ing and guitar playing. Neil also checked out some geology in the Gorge en route. A visit to this most beautiful area is to be recommended on Bungonia trips.

Footnote: Neil Montgomery has extended an invitation to anyone who passes through to Taree area to stop in and see him there. Further information from me.

REFERENCES:

1. "Water tracing at Bungonia" Julia James. J.S.S.S. 17(3):57
2. "Why a B4/5 Extension" Steven Bunton. H.C.G. Jnl. No.1, Jan. 1976

YARRANGOBILLY SYMPOSIUM REPORT (cont.)

G. Cave Management Plan- Graham Worboys (N.P.W.S.)

The National Parks and Wildlife Service are working on standardizing a cave policy for Nature Reserves and National Parks in N.S.W. through Graham Worboys. This includes a cave grading system using both cave area and singular cave criteria. The plan is hoped to be finished in 1976, and the preliminary plan was outlined by G. Worboys.

During the evening a BBQ and slideshow were held at J. Dunkley's new house. John has been naive enough to offer accommodation to SUSS cavers passing through Canberra.

SESSION TWO+ Sunday- Will be printed in the next bulletin (Asst. Ed.)

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COMING ACTIVITIES

(metaphorically speaking, of course)

24-25 July Wyanbene/see Jasper. Contact Keith Murray
ph. 6659946

26 July. Committee Meeting. G. Cox's place.

26-30 July. Jenolan. Contact Peter Campbell.
ph. 768855

5 August. Monthly meeting. Manning House. 7.30p.m. start.

7 August. U.N.S.W.S.S. Seminar. No other details.

14-15 August. Jenolan. Contact P. Winglee.
ph. 839182

18 August. Barbara Dew Memorial Lecture.
Br. Nicholas is the speaker. Be there.
Stephen Roberts L.T. (Sydney Uni.)

28-29 August. Jenolan. This is an U.N.S.W.S.S. trip, so
contact Steve Wheatley.

18 September. U.N.S.W.S.S. BBQ. Everyone is invited but no
other details are available.

13-14 November. Jenolan. See Bruce Welch. Ph. 929 6432.

Sometime in December. There is an A.S.F. Conference. See
your A.S.F. Newsletter.