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# BULLETIN *of the*

## *Sydney*

## *University*

## *Speleological*



## *Society*

SPECIAL FRESHERS ISSUE, CONTAINS:-

NOTES ON OFT-VISITED CAVING AREAS

INFORMATION OF YOUR CAVING NEEDS

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The caver's uniform is a helmet, workboots and overalls, usually worn over a T-shirt and shorts with a jumper in cold or wet caves. If you don't have overalls and boots then old jeans, a jumper and sandshoes will suffice, with a belt to hold the jumper down, but don't expect to wear them again in civilized places because caves have sharp rocks as well as mud. Expensive bushwalking boots are also maltreated in caves. Gardening gloves are used for abseiling and some cavers wear them all the time as protection against rough rock.

Guides at tourist caves turn out the lights so the tourists can "see" absolute darkness - well, so that the caver doesn't see absolute darkness he/she/it needs to carry a strong, long-lasting light. The most popular light source is a lead-acid battery belted to the waist, with a cord to a lamp that fits on the helmet. A fully charged battery can last up to 12 hours on high beam or 15 hours on low beam. The carbide lamp is a common, cheaper alternative, but pollutes the atmosphere. If you do not wish to commit yourself to this outlay to begin with, then the best light is a strong torch, such as a Dolphin, with a strong strap - the flimsy plastic strap attached to the torch by yielding metal clips is not reliable. Regulations also require two emergency lights, such as a small torch and a candle and matches, to be carried.

Caves have a bad habit of locating themselves in places with cold nights, so take warm clothes and an oilskin or parka for rain. You also won't feel like wearing wet caving clothes and shoes around camp or into a cafe on the way home, so take spares.

The most important items of camping gear are a sleeping bag and toilet paper. Other essentials are billies, plates, cutlery, mug, matches, first aid kit and money for travelling expenses. Food, a tent and groundsheet are often shared. In some areas, such as Bungonia, water containers are necessary as there is no handy water supply. Since cars are usually parked at the camp, luxuries are not forbidden: an airbed or sleeping-mat is especially useful in cold weather; canopener, billy holder, jaffle-iron, soap and towel add some comfort; and a musical instrument or camera is very civilized; but a camping chair is just plain decadent.

Trips are organized at monthly meetings, and tripleaders arrange for cars and tents to be shared. Car drivers should take the usual precautions for country travelling ie check tyres, include jack, spanners etc, since most caves are away from civilization and sometimes on bad roads.

There are always loquacious members at meetings only too willing to advise you on gear, and as a last resort, camping shops hire out many items.



2.13



Yarrangobilly (Yagby, for short) is located in the Kosiusko National Park about 70 kilometres south of Tumut and it provides a stimulating venue for extended caving trips, particularly during the vacations, since there is an opportunity to undertake worthwhile projects with cavers of many societies.

The Yarrangobilly outcrop is a narrow band of Silurian limestone running approximately north-south for a distance of some 13 km. and varying from 0.5 to 2.0 km. in width. Like Jenolan this limestone has a steep dip, although here it is to the west. Rising to the east of the limestone, the Yarrangobilly River crosses the outcrop near its northern boundary and then turns southwards giving this area a 200+ m gorge. All the caves here, bar a few small relics, are located to the east of this gorge and the main caves are found on the plateau or down the limestone cliffs.

Younger granites and porphory completely surround the limestone and gives rise to many westwardly flowing streams that, on striking the limestone, form large blind valleys and dolines that mark the beginning of each cave system. The water eventually resurges into the Yarrangobilly River in a fairly complex hydrological pattern but is basically a series of lateral cave systems, with an abundance of water and sumps.

Yarrangobilly has an abundance of well decorated caves, among them are the tourist caves which have very dense and delicate formation of a high standard. Eagles Nest is the main undeveloped cave, being the deepest (174m) and the seventh longest on the Australian mainland. This system has three parts: East (Y2) and West Eagles Nest (Y1) and the Eyrie (Y3). It contains huge caverns, rockpiles and deep stream canyons and has good formation. This system is an excellent example of stream piracy in which the creek has moved progressively eastwards. There is, however, little possibility any significant depth increase as the level of Deepest Dig is estimated to be approximately that of its resurgence, Hollin Cave (Y46).

About 1km north of Eagles Nest are the Deep Creeks, East, West and North. Each of these is fed by a separate creek and has an active stream with plenty of crisp mountain water. Of these East D.C. is the most substantial being the third deepest cave (139m) on the mainland. The main entrance, Y5, has a rockpile chamber giving way to an active streambed crawl and huge roof pendants with deep scallops on the walls. Further in, on a higher level there is more formation in the 'Donkey Tail Room'.

To the north, the next main system is Coppermine (Y12), which is the resurgence of Y8, Y9, Y10 and Y45. Coppermine Cave is at river level and one has to wade through the stream passage before the decorated parts are reached .

SUSS has had a long history of exploration here starting in March 1950 but now most work is done within the Yarrangobilly Research Group. This was formed to stimulate and co-ordinate speleological work in this area and comprises mainly of cavers from Canberra and Sydney. Although most of the work on the documentation of the caves has been completed there is still a need for manpower on joint trips to help with hydrological, geological and biological research being undertaken by the YRG. No special expertise is required on such trips and they provide an opportunity to broaden one's knowledge of the many aspects of speleology as well as seeing a very attractive area in comfort (the YRG has the use of Cotterill's Cottage for camping).

Like all N.P.W.S. controlled areas a permit is required for entry and the caves are gated. Since SUSS does not currently have its own project there, trips are usually conducted in conjunction with other societies so that it is best to watch out for these trips and to let your interest be known so that more trips will be organized.

And now a word from our sponsors.....

LET THE WORLD KNOW YOU BELONG TO SUSS!!!!

You too can have your very own CAR STICKER for a mere \$1.  
A METAL BADGE also costs \$1 - wear it to "heavy" meetings - we don't guarantee a chest to pin it on.  
CLOTH BADGES for 50¢ add a tasteful touch to your trogsuit.

SUSS's most famous international best-seller at only \$5 is

The Caves of Jenolan  
2: The Northern Limestone

You can impress your friends by leaving it lying in a conspicuous place and nonchalantly mentioning that you may make a significant contribution to Part 3. Part 1, The Exploration and Speleogeography of Mammoth Cave, Jenolan  
is unavailable.

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## CLIEFDEN

Cliefden Caves are located 20 miles S.E. of Blayney, past Bathurst, on the banks of the Belubula River. The limestone here was the first discovered in N.S.W. and the caves were well known in the early 1800s.

Trips to Cliefden are notoriously luxurious. Cavers have the use of a shearers house with fridge, electricity and a warm fireplace in the winter. Many an inspired trip has foundered within the realms of the house! The caves, being in private property, have controlled access, so numbers are limited on these trips.

Cliefden Caves undoubtedly have some of the most magnificent decorations of any cave in N.S.W. Cliefden Main, the major cave, contains the Helictite Wall, rivalling the helictites in Orient Cave, Jenolan. Most major caves are gated, and contain numerous speleothems.

SUSS's major project at Cliefden is the surveying of Taplow Maze. Every trip discovers new cave, and of course, this has to be surveyed! This has been continuing for 4 or 5 years and a reasonable map is developing.

Conservation issues loom on the horizon for the Cliefden area. The Bathurst Orange growth area plans include a dam on the Belubula River. One of the proposed sitings would completely inundate the caves and surrounding area.

The immediate area around these caves is located in gently undulating farm country and is a geologists paradise par excellence. Trilobite Hill has had many trilobite fossils taken from it.

So for a trip away in the country for a quiet gentleman's weekend, Cliefden is definitely recommended.

Randall King.

EXPEDITION CAVING (including New Guinea and New Zealand).

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Malcolm Handel

To discover vast new caverns and descend the inky depths of unknown shafts is a dream which cavers find difficult to realise in the well explored caves of N.S.W. Going further afield to places like New Guinea and New Zealand has become the accepted practise of those speleos who have become addicted to their own adrenalin. Thus we have seen the advent of expedition style caving, requiring intense organization.

Some of the first expeditions involving Australian cavers were in the 1960s when visits to the Nullabor Plain yielded some of Australia's longest caves. Mullamullang was found in the 1960s - at seven miles it was Australia's longest cave at that time.

Tasmania contains Australia's deepest and wettest caves. Although most Tassie trips are hardly of the expedition class, there are some areas, such as the remote Gordon River, which have seen highly organized miniexpeditions by various caving groups.

Exploration for deep caves in the mountains of New Zealand's South Island has become a regular feature for some of Sydney's vertical cavers. Nearly all of N.Z.'s deepest caves have been found in the last ten years. Exploration of N.Z.'s deepest cave (Harwood's Hole, 1170 feet deep) in the early 60s involved some SUSS cavers. As recently as January 1977 two new deep caves were found and explored on Mt. Owen, (Tralfamadore, 720 feet deep and Tuff ble-tor Pot, 650' deep) by a miniexpedition of Sydney cavers from various societies. The beautiful scenery and spectacular caving have made N.Z. very popular with the jet-set cavers.

A much more serious type of expedition is required for caving in Papua New Guinea. Transport outside and within P.N.G. needs to be highly organized and the comforts of Western living are noticeably absent. Expeditions to the Highlands have included the Star Mountains, Hindenburg Range, Muller Range and the Chimbu district. The islands of New Britain and New Ireland have also seen caving expeditions. The potential for world class caves in P.N.G. is recognized internationally. It already boasts the Southern Hemisphere's deepest cave (Bibima) and longest cave (Selminum Tem) and the world's largest and most exciting river caves.

The local caving fraternity has concentrated mainly on the Muller Range in the Western Highlands. In 1973 an Australasian expedition made the first major trip to the area, and located many caves in the tropical rain-forest including two over 1000 feet deep. A smaller expedition in 1976 found a safe entrance into the huge river cave Kanada Atea which had been first seen by the 1973 expedition. Five kilometers of this exciting cave were explored and mapped, and yet this is thought to be only the tip of an iceberg. In July and August of this year a strong expedition will return to the Kanada Atea in order to fully explore what may prove to be the world's most exciting river cave. A high state of organization is paramount since base camp will be three days march from the nearest road and village through some of the world's roughest terrain.

Cavers from SUSS have played an active role in each of the P.N.G. expeditions and there is no doubt that expeditions in search of the world's deepest cave will keep the keen vertical fanatics busy for many years to come.

Malcolm Handel.

#### SEA CAVES

Bruce R. Welch

Sydney's coastline contains many sea caves, ranging in size from the large St Michaels Sea Cave at Avalon, to caves which are very small. Of course many sea caves are below the level of the sea.

Sea caves are formed by erosion of the cliff face, usually at a weak point such as an igneous dyke or a fault. The chemical action of the sea water, combined with the extreme hydrolic force of the breaking waves and the abrasive action of the rock particles carried by the waves, soon (geologically speaking) enlarge these weak points and a cave is formed.

The size and shape of the sea cave is controlled by the nature of the weak point (ie the size of the dyke), the type of rock, and the nature of the bedding.

The cave that is the subject of the freshers field day is St Michaels Sea Cave. This cave was formed when the sea level was some 10 metres higher than it is now, and the cave follows a dyke about 0.75 metres wide in a westerly direction. If you look up at the roof near the entrance this dyke can easily be seen. At the back of the cave the size of the passage corresponds exactly with the width of this dyke, however near the entrance of the cave the passage has been widened considerably. This was caused by the erosive action of the sea, further enlarge-

ment has occurred by breakdown of the roof. This breakdown can be seen near the entrance of the cave and conceals the true floor of the cave.

The other set of caves that will be visited is The Ovens, Platform Cave in particular. Platform cave is developed along a fault which can be seen to extend all the way up the cliff. Evidence of a previous sea level can be seen inside where there is a "platform" on either side of the cave.

Sea caving is an ideal sport for the summer, and exploration can usually be combined with a swim (intentional or not), but beware - sea caves can be dangerous. Be careful not to get trapped in a cave by the rising tide!

WYANBENE and adjacent areas.

Tony Austin.

Wyanbene lies approximately 50 kilometres south of Braidwood in the Southern Tablelands. The area is a cavers delight for there are actually four separate areas offering a range of attractions from long, wet crawls to breath-taking vertical descents. Like so many of the caving areas in New South Wales the surrounding scenery is magnificent, currently a harmony of natural bush and developed farmland.

Wyanbene is unusual in that there is only one major cave known yet it is a respectable 1,900m in length (thus ranking 6th in N.S.W.) with a depth of 112m. It contains an example of nearly every form of challenge that makes caving such an interesting activity, from long, low crawls through a stream to caverns so massive that the strongest lights cannot encompass all walls. A trip to the very end is an experience that should not be missed for only by so doing will names such as Diarrhoea Pit acquire full meaning.

Marble Arch caves lie about 5 kilometres to the north of Wyanbene on the same side of the Shoalhaven River. Although the caves here are nowhere as large as Wyanbene they still have plenty to offer the intrepid speleo. Reedy Creek has eroded a large, spectacular arch and subsequently redirected its flow so that it now flows through a tightly meandering stream passage to one side of the arch. Most of the caves in this area are either directly connected to this arch or are relicts from the time prior to its formation. One of the caves offers an excellent opportunity to become closely acquainted with the local Bat population.

Cleitmore (Cheitmore) lies a few kilometres to the north of Marble Arch and again is well worth a visit by budding masochists. The access road is only interesting in dry weather but becomes down right fascinating after heavy rain. What few caves there are are difficult to find and rather disappointing after the effort required. The scenery is beautiful and the walks alone should be adequate recompense.

The Big Hole is the mark of the 'heavy' speleo for it consists of a magnificent hole some 50m in width reaching a depth of 113m. The descent can be done as a complete free-fall (preferably assisted by a rope unless you are a super-heavy). Very interesting..... This pitch has often been used by cavers in preparation for expeditions to the deep caves of Tasmania, New Zealand and more recently New Guinea.

From the above it can be seen that the area will richly reward even the most casual visitor and the rewards for more serious attention are beyond the imagination. The area is a definite must for 1978.

## COOLEMAN PLAIN

by Guy Cox

Coolleman tends to be a 'poor relation' to nearby Yarrangobilly, particularly since both are in the Kosciusko National Park, and the same access conditions apply. It is, however, a distinct and unique area in its own right. Coolleman plain is only about 50km from Canberra as the crow flies; about 100km by the shortest route (the rough Brindabella Road (dirt) and a steep four-wheel-drive track), or about 200 km from Canberra by sealed road, with about 30km of dirt and a slightly easier track. In other words, it is quite remote!

The area is dominated by the Blue Waterholes, a huge rising from which a river flows through spectacular gorges to join the Goodradigbee. Downstream is the much-visited Barber Cave, a through-trip tributary to the main stream. Up the dry valley above the Waterholes are the Coolleman-Right Coolleman system and Murray Cave, both dry and much trogged. These are the largest and best known caves at Coolleman, but these are not what give the Plain its special attraction.

Above all Coolleman is a region of active stream caves. Barber is one such, but the stream is small. The aptly-named Wet Cave, above Murray, is more typical - a large, very wet stream passage with even a free-divable sump. The Clown-Frustration-New Year-Zed Cave system is even more choice - tight, sharp passages often half full of water and seeming ten times their real length. Any York-shireman would be instantly reminded of Wharfedale.

Because of its distance from Sydney trips to Coolleman tend to be long weekend affairs (though not always on official holiday weekends!) I go there quite often as I am carrying out a research project there - anyone interested who can spare the odd Friday and/or Monday should get in touch.

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## BUNGONIA

Steve Bunton

### The Caves

Bungonia is one on NSW's most popular sporting and recreational caving areas. There are 154 known caves in the area, 121 of which are documented in a publication by Sydney Speleological Society which acts as a guide to the area. (This is not a sales promotion - we can lend you copies of the book - don't buy it!) These caves stand high on a limestone plateau above the Shoalhaven River and Bungonia Creek. Two consequences of this are firstly fine views from several lookouts in the area and secondly 5 of the deepest potholes in the Australian mainland located here. The fact that there are so many caves though, provides great variability and visitors can experience caves of all types and sizes, many ideally suited to the novice; some suited to the more experienced. It is an ideal practice ground despite the fact that the caves lack the beautiful decorations that abound in other areas.

### Location and Accessibility

You can drive to your campsite which is right amongst the caves. Follow the Hume south to Marulan; 5 km past Marulan take the South Marulan turnoff on the left. 10 metres later take the turnoff to Bungonia township for 10 km. At Bungonia take the Bungonia Lookdown road, which is on your left, for 8 km. The caves are near the Lookdown; total driving time is 3 hours.

### What to Bring

1. There is no water at Bungonia. You must bring your own. About 4 litres per person for a weekend is sufficient (so long as, like Steve, you don't wash ! - Ed.) Water containers can be filled at Marulan Service Station.
2. Caving gear, of course. (Specialised gear will be brought by the Club)
3. Yourself !

### CLIEFDEN TRIP REPORT - 7/8 January, '78.

Participants: Many from MUSIG, R. and C. King.

This was a MUSIG trip, however being a member of this society yours truly attended. The Island Cave was visited on Saturday and a cave description was compiled for the Cliefden records. Only a small cave but with some interesting squeezes. Some familiarisation was then carried out again in Taplow Maze - a preliminary to further surveying. Anyone who has spent time in Taplow Maze understands the necessity of familiarisation. The maps from my last surveying trip were also checked.

Dave Rothery meanwhile sprayed all the wasps nests in the house with insecticide. Whether it was these wasps or another parasite, the Cliefden trip resulted in numerous trips to the hospital for myself and Cheryl. Some insect bites became very badly infected during the next week and yours truly spent a sunny afternoon with an intravenous antibiotic drip and various assorted needles in my arm. Beware the unwary at Cliefden. Some fine gastropod fossil specimens were also found on fossil hill.

Randall King.

# LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESIDENT	Guy Cox	180 Short St, Balmain 692-3176 (w)
VICE PRESIDENT	Kieth Murray	1/73 Burns Bay Rd, Lane Cove 42-4460
CORRO. SECRETARY	Malcolm Handel	65 Links Ave, Concord 73-2028
MINUTES SEC.	Geoff Innes	4 Warburton St, Gympie 525-4871
EDITOR	Bruce Welch	14 Palmer St, Woolloomooloo 692-3492 (w)
TREASURER	Kathy Handel	50 Wiley St, Waverly 662-0111 x645 (w)
EQUIPMENT OFF.	Randall King	34/130 Burns Bay Rd, Lane Cove 439-0033 x259 (w)
SAFETY OFFICER	Tony Austin	7/1-3 Bellvue Ave, Lakemba 750-7785
LIBRARIAN	Paul Greenfield	32 Leopold St, Croyden Park 797-6975

ALL OF THE ABOVE ARE ALSO TRIP LEADERS. Other Trip Leaders include:-

Peter Campbell	Peter Campbell	5 Marion St, Strathfield 76-8855
	Peter Winglee	73 First Ave, Five Dock 713-9182

## THE WONDERS OF JENOLAN



## S.U.S.S. FIELD DAY

SUNDAY MARCH 5TH

SEA CAVING - bring your swimmers.

Meet at Avalon Police Station (just off the main road at the edge of the car park - see map)

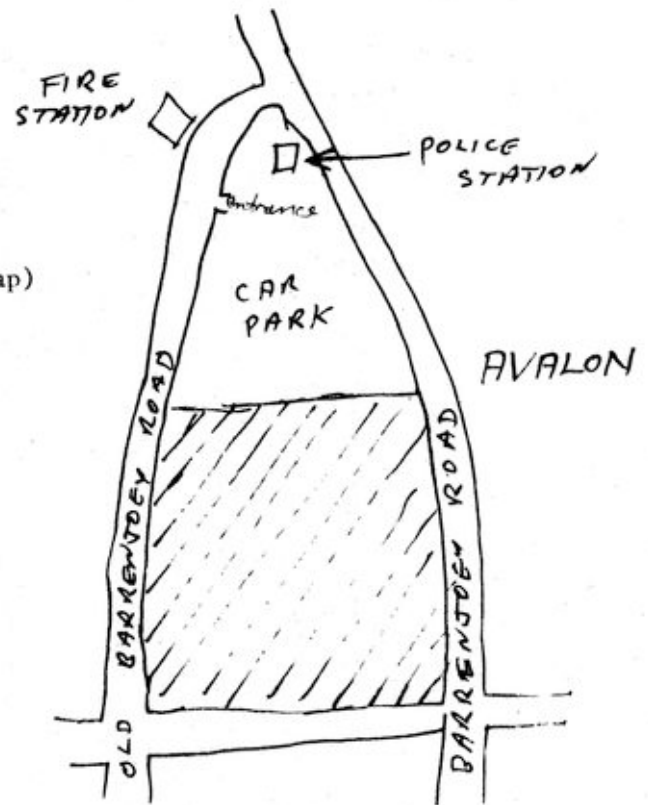
at 11 AM OR at the York Street Entrance to Wynyard Station (opposite Wynyard Park) at 10 AM. Those requiring transport contact Peter Winglee 713-9182.

SUNDAY NIGHT - 5.30PM there will be a

BARBEQUE at 180 Short Street, Balmain at Guy Cox's place. BYOG & meat.

There will (no doubt) be a draining trip afterwards for the more intrepid.

ALL WELCOME !!!



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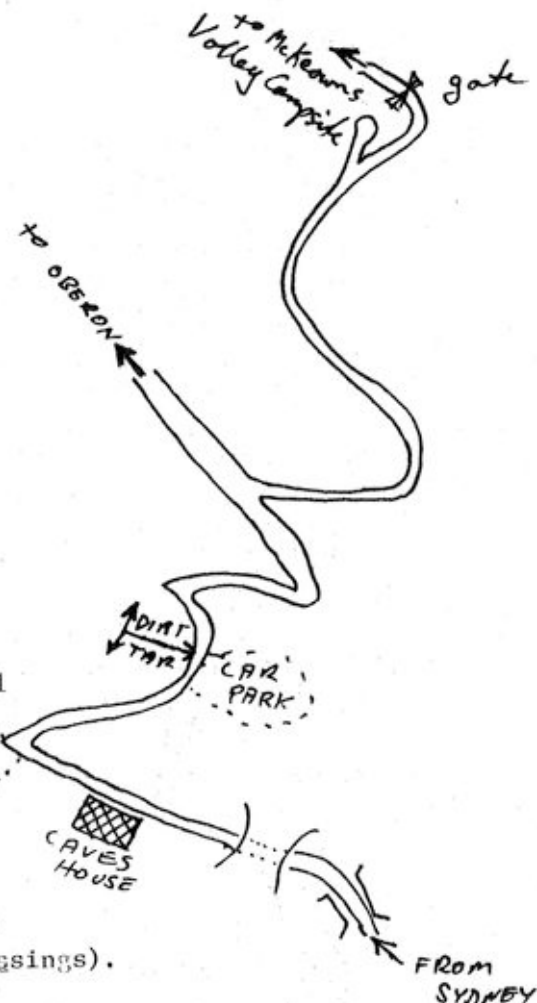
## JENOLAN CAVES FIELD TRIP

WEEKEND 18-19 MARCH 1978

Contact Guy Cox (692-3176 w) if you wish to go on this trip.....

The trip is to Jenolan Caves (not the Tourist Caves). Travel to Jenolan Caves from Sydney; after passing through the Grand Arch keep on towards Oberon. After a short time the road will become dirt (see map). About 0.5km up the hill there will be a road leading off to the RIGHT (marked "Private Road") - turn right here (the other road continues on up the hill to Oberon). This "Private Road" climbs steeply & passes several houses - take care not to drive up one of these houses driveways. Continue on through a gate and down a steep hill, then continue to the end of the road (through 4 dry creek crossings).

REMEMBER - ENTRY TO THIS AREA IS BY SPECIAL PERMIT - YOU MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE TRIP LEADER IF YOU WISH TO GO TO JENOLAN.



# CAVE RESCUE PRACTICE

Name .....Society/Group .....

Address .....Phone .....

Do you want a horizontal or vertical rescue(please tick)      HORIZONTAL

   VERTICAL

If you have ticked "VERTICAL" please answer the following questions:-

Are you willing to accept the responsibility for the safety of the patient in a vertical lift? .....

Do you consider yourself competent to SRT a 30m pitch? .....

Special Requests/Comments

F U T U R E      E V E N T S

- FEB 27- 3MAR78    Orientation week - A stall will be manned,  
if you can help, please contact Guy Cox.
- FEB27            FILMS+++ Carslaw Theatre 10 2-3pm. Some of the  
Monday           best caving films in the world will be shown.  
Those of you who missed the Castlegard Film  
last year - be shure you see it this year.
- MAR 1            More films - Carslaw theatre 10 12-1pm.  
Wednesday       If you saw the films on Monday - see them again.
- MAR 2            SUSS MEETING - 7.30 pm in the Gladys Marks room  
Thursday          Manning House (above Manning Bar)..  
Lots of slides, cheese & biscuits. Come along  
and arrange for the field trips.
- MAR 5            SUSS FIELD DAY - Sea caving - bring your  
Sunday           swimmers. Meet at Avalon Police Station (just  
off the main road at the edge of a car park) 11.00am  
OR at the York Street Entrance to Wynyard  
Station (opposite Wynyard Park) at 10.00am.  
Those requiring transport contact Peter  
Winglee 713-9182.
- \*\*\*\*\* A B-B-Q will be held after at Guy Cox's  
place (180 Short Street, Balmain) starting at  
5.30pm - BYOG & meat
- MAR 11-12       CAVE RESCUE WEEKEND - all welcome - BUNGONIA,  
Try your hand at cave rescue & have a good time  
Starts 8-00am on Saturday. Contact Bruce  
Welch (692-3492 (w)
- MAR 18-19       SPECIAL SUSS TRIP - Cave Conservation work  
at Jenolan Caves - maximum of 25 on this trip  
so get your name in early (By the way, Jenolan  
is the best cave area in N.S.W.) Contact Guy  
Cox (692-3176 w) - or arrange it at the meeting.
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# SUSS

BULLETIN  
of the

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY  
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BOX 35, THE UNION,  
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY,  
N.S.W., 2006.

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