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Lumen in Tenebris

SUSS

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

CENTRO RICERCHE CARSICHE
«C. Seppenhofer»

34170 GORIZIA - Via RISTORI, 31
ITALIA

GORIZIA, li 2-2-1978

TO ALL THE CAVE GROUPES
Their seats

The Centro Ricerche Carsiche (Center of Carsic Reasurches) "C. Seppenhofer" was founded officially the 25th of November 1978 in Gorizia.

The Club that was entitled to Carlo Seppenhofer in honor of the first Gorizian speleologist, propones to develop and to approfondise the knowledge on the local carsism by the study, the reasurch and the collaboration with specialized Istitutes, and even the divulgation by projections of photo and films and pubblications, of the obtayned results.

The Centro Ricerche Carsiche "C. Seppenhofer" after the positive experience of the recent expedition in the abyss "E. Comici" on the M. Canin where we reached 750 meters of deepness, result that was obtayned even, for the collaboration, of some foreign and Italian speleological groups.

Our Club declares open any activity with other Cave Groupes.

The Centro Ricerche Carsiche "C. Seppenhofer" thanks anyone that will want to envy to us some collaboration proposes and possibly some speciallized bibliographical matereal (news, abstract, ecc.)

With our more cordial grutings.

CENTRO RICERCHE CARSICHE
«C. Seppenhofer»
GORIZIA
Laurizia Tavagnutti

(We print this exactly as received !)

EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

Listed below is the SUSS stockpile of assorted equipment. In general it serves to supply:

1. some equipment for freshers before they decide to get their own. If you are still in this category, don't forget to ask about the gear from the trip leader.

2. ladders and some dynamic rope for belaying

3. surveying equipment and

4. specialized miscellany eg a first aid kit and cave cleaning equipment.

The more this stockpile is used (properly) the greater is your return from the club.

Equipment list

6 Helmets (one cardboard)
2 Dolphin torches (B.Y.O. battery)
3 x 50' ladders and traces
4 x 30' ladders in various states of repair
3 x 11mm Kernmantle ropes 42m, 12m & 7m
1 x ex-climbing rope
3 very old and unfashionable ropes
Theodolite, stadia and tripod*
2 x Forestry compass and tripods (one *)
2 x Brunten compass
Swinto compass and clinemeter
1 x 30m fibreglass tape
Scaling pole (6 sections) 10m total length
35 plastic cups
4 plastic buckets
1 first aid kit (the airsplints are still unhoused)
1 miners lamp (to detect methane etc.)

*stored for the Speleological Research Council.

Peter Winglee

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR DEAD OLDHAM

Guy Cox

Most of us have discovered that lead-acid miners lamp batteries don't last for ever. In fact, if they are left flat they don't last very long at all. Do not despair - from your dead cell you can construct a battery system that is better than new (and not much more expensive).

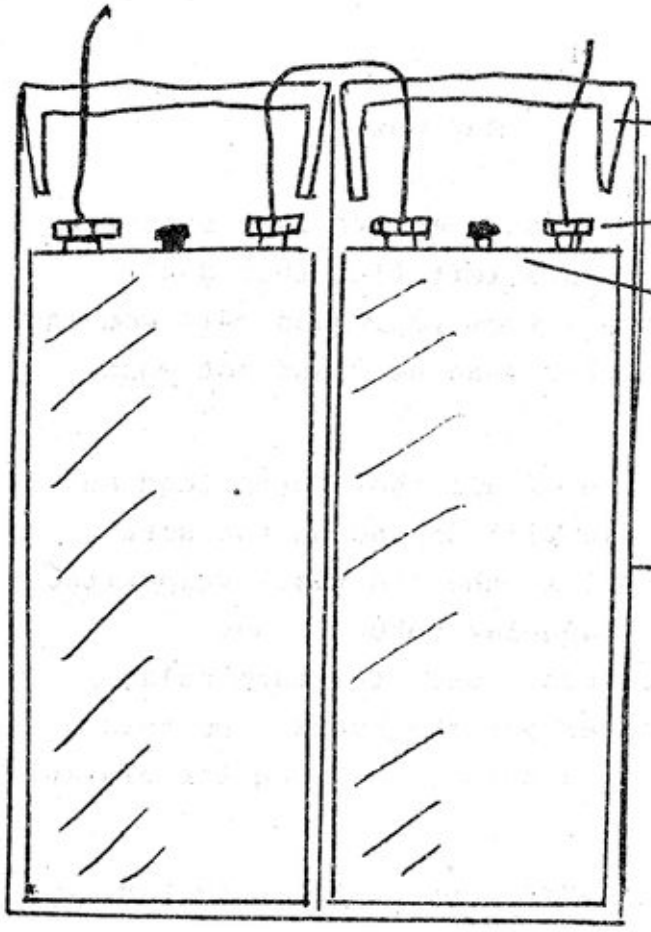
The first thing to do is to get rid of all that scrap lead and sulphuric acid inside. How you do this will depend on the sort of cell you have. The best sort of all is the old black vulcanite (hard rubber) Oldham. These have rectangular rubber bungs filling the tops of the cell compartments. Undo the terminals, chip out the sealing compound, and lever out the bungs. Do this somewhere where the acid cannot splash around ! Ditch the plates, and wash the bungs and cases very thoroughly.

Later plastic cells are more difficult, but I have sawn the top off a clear polycarbonate Oldham and fitted hinges and a catch. The case could not be made waterproof, though.

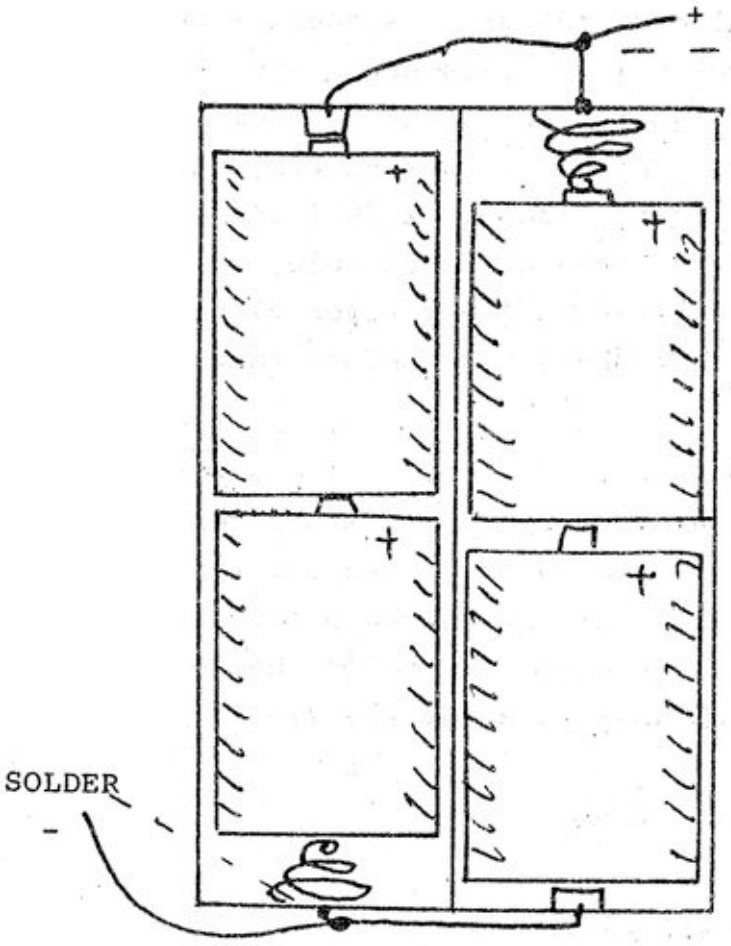
Having opened your cell, what do you put inside it? Best bet is to use British ex-government semi-sealed nicad cells. These come from English caving suppliers and cost 4 each, + postage. They are 20 amp-hour single cells (1.2 volts each) and one fits exactly into each half of an Oldham case. Connect them in series and you have 20 a.h. at 2.4 v. This is 48 watt-hours, which is probably a bit more than a standard Oldham. 2.5v 1 amp (20 hours light) and 0.75 amp (27h light) globes are available, but scarce - best to get them with the batteries. A 2.5 v torch globe should give about 80h light, but will probably blow before then.

The bungs fit over the cells, and the wires can be led through the terminal holes and sealed in with Silastic. I did not seal the bungs themselves in mine, since the cells must be removed every 10 cycles or so to top up with water. Even so, the case is nearly watertight. Any water that enters can be drained afterward by removing the filler-plug in the case; the cells themselves are completely watertight. Biggest advantages of the final cell over a standard Oldhan are:

(a) indefinite life even if left flat;



FITTING SEMI-SEALED NICADS IN AN OLDHAM CASE.



CONVERTING C-CELL HOLDER TO SERIES-PARALLEL WIRING

(b) fast charging (12 hours at 2 amps for full charge);
(c) cells cannot leak or take in water.
The cells can be charged in situ, but if charging through the headpiece make sure that you have got the polarity right. Over-charging should be avoided.

The other alternative is C or D-cell type nicads. These are easily obtainable but not as good in the price-performance stakes. They are totally sealed, but the makers advise against getting them wet. The main advantage of these is that your converted battery will also work on standard C or D cells. D cells will fit in an Oldham case, but not with standard holders, so you will have to make your own connections. MUSIG have made some very effective batteries of this type. I chose to use C size cells and commercial holders (Spelean have these). 4 cell or 6 cell types will fit. These holders are intended to take cells in series, but can be adapted to give two banks in parallel, as shown in the diagram. 6 cells will then give 3.6v (Oldham globes will do); 4 cells 2.5 v. The two holders (one in each compartment) are then again put in parallel.

C-size nicads cost around $3.25 each, for 1.2 a.h. 12 will thus cost $40 for only 17.2 watt-hours. You can of course use fewer cells and still get useful life from a torch globe or small Oldhan globe. D-size come in 1.2 a.h. form at around $3.50 each, or in 4 a.h. form for $8 - $10; the latter are perhaps better value, but $100 is a lot of money, even for 58 watt-hours.

The disadvantage with these systems is that since the cells are in parallel they must be removed for charging. Charging rates are slow, and commercial constant-current chargers (which are definitely advisable) only take 4 cells at a time. The main advantage is that ordinary cells can be used in place of the nicads when charging facilities are not available.

SOUTH- EAST ASIAN KARST & THE BATU CAVES.

Stephen Bunton.

During my summer holidays I spent just over one week travelling overland between Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Bangkok, Thailand. During this time I was able to discover something about the way of life in the cities and types of land use in the surrounding country-side.

Throughout the lenth of this trek we noticed an abundance of isolated limestone pinnacles some several hundred metres across and rising 300-500m vertically out of what was otherwise a nearly flat plane. The limestone was jungle covered and a lush green colour in comparison to the drab colour of ripening rice crops. These outcrops were most visible in Thailand where the surrounding land was cleared for rice cultivation. The main land use in Malaysia was rubber growing and visibility was somewhat limited by the dense plantation agriculture.

Around the major population centres the main land use was tin mining and since this cleared the jungle vegetation we could again view the karst. At Ipoh a large town in the north of Malaysia many tin miners had built their wooden bungalows into the overhanging caves at the base of the outcrops.

Near Kuala Lumpur one such outcrop has been known for over 100yrs and it contains a Hindu temple which is the site of one of the most beserk festivals I'd ever heard of. Thaipusam is a festival, held in February, of purification and penance where devoted hindus carry huge semi-circular frames decorated as peacocks, called Kavadi,up to the temple.

The Kavadi may weigh as much as 27kg and yet they are supported by hooks dug into bare flesh. The devotees start the day by cleansing themselves in a nearby river, they are then rubbed down with ash. Holy men drive them into a trance and then apply the hooks with lime. Some have huge spikes driven thru their cheeks and tongue. These jokers then walk to the cave and climb the 272 stairsto the temple where other holy men remove the hooks. When they snap out of their trance their are no scars or blood to remind them of their ordeal.

Our tour guide said that last year he and a couple of his mates carried this meatball suspended from a long pole by four big hooks driven through his back. The temple stairs are steep but not so steep I'd want to be carried. After this they are free to go on sinning for another year.

The Batu Cave was quite big and impressive though rather grotty,it really looked as though a million people did visit it each year on the day of Thaipusam. The Hindu Temple did nothing to enhance its beauty, nor did the trinket stalls inside. But worst of all was the vandalism in the form of chinese graffiti on the walls.

The outcrop which contains the temple and cave is being quarried to provide cement for the construction of Kuala Lumpur's concrete metropolis. SB

TV REVIEW - The Cave People. The World Around Us Series ATN 7

Square-EYES Bunton

This was all about a recently discovered tribe in the Phillipines. It showed nothing of the caves they sheltered in. Good eh!

TRIP REPORT - Cooleman - April 13-17 1979

Present: Guy Cox, Bruce & Paula Welch, Tony White, Peter Winglee, Marie Ann Lee Chris Dunne, Ian Mann, Graeme Smith, Mike Lake, Cathy Handel, Rick ~~Tongue~~ Tunnfy, Christina Fitzgerald

We all arrived at Blue Water Holes campsite at various times on Friday morning after travelling down overnight. The trip down was uneventful for all except Rick Tongue who took on a truck with his new Subaru which left a slight indentation in the car's R send.

By lunch time camp had been set up and it was decided to partake in a bit of caving. For ease of operation it was decided to split into smaller groups depending upon everyone's interests.

During the passing of the week-end numerous caves were visited, some bushwalking partaken and generally a relaxing and social time had by all.

The following caves were visited by members of the party at various times during the week-end.

Cooleman Cave: Visited on Friday afternoon by all members providing an introduction to the caves of the area for the freshers and a chance of some photography for the camera freaks present (the right Cooleman especially).

White Fish Cave: The entrance was dry and the pool low. This again provided some photography practice for those with cameras and also presented a beautiful walk through the gorges for the others.

Baba Cave was visited by some on the return from White Fish mainly as a change in route, rather than return via the creek.

Zed Cave was relatively dry but still no way on could be found at the end despite various attempts by members.

New Year Cave: This was pushed on two occasions, firstly by Cathy, Tony, Graeme and Mike and on the second by Bruce Welch, Guy and Mike. On this latter trip Mike pushed downstream, where no continuation could be found and Bruce and Guy pushed upstream where the passage was followed above the "duck" eventually encountering running water. The passage was followed for an estimated total distance of 400m, most of which necessitated a flat out wet crawl. This is much further than shown on the published survey. A further trip to survey this passage will be organised as soon as possible.

Frustration Cave: was also pushed on two occasions. Firstly upstream by Tony White to a short sump (presumably the upper limit of the survey) which was dived to an air bell. The sump beyond was not attempted. Tony then proceeded downstream past a duck (which appears to be the limit of survey) but stopped at a wet squeeze, which had been reached on a previous SUSS trip.

Secondly Graeme and Jeneane (from HCG) succeeded in passing the squeeze to approximately 15 metres of a much larger passage ending in a sump which seemed diveable but was not attempted.

Murray Cave: Here the sump was found to be full but an effort was made by various members to push the smaller side passages with no success.

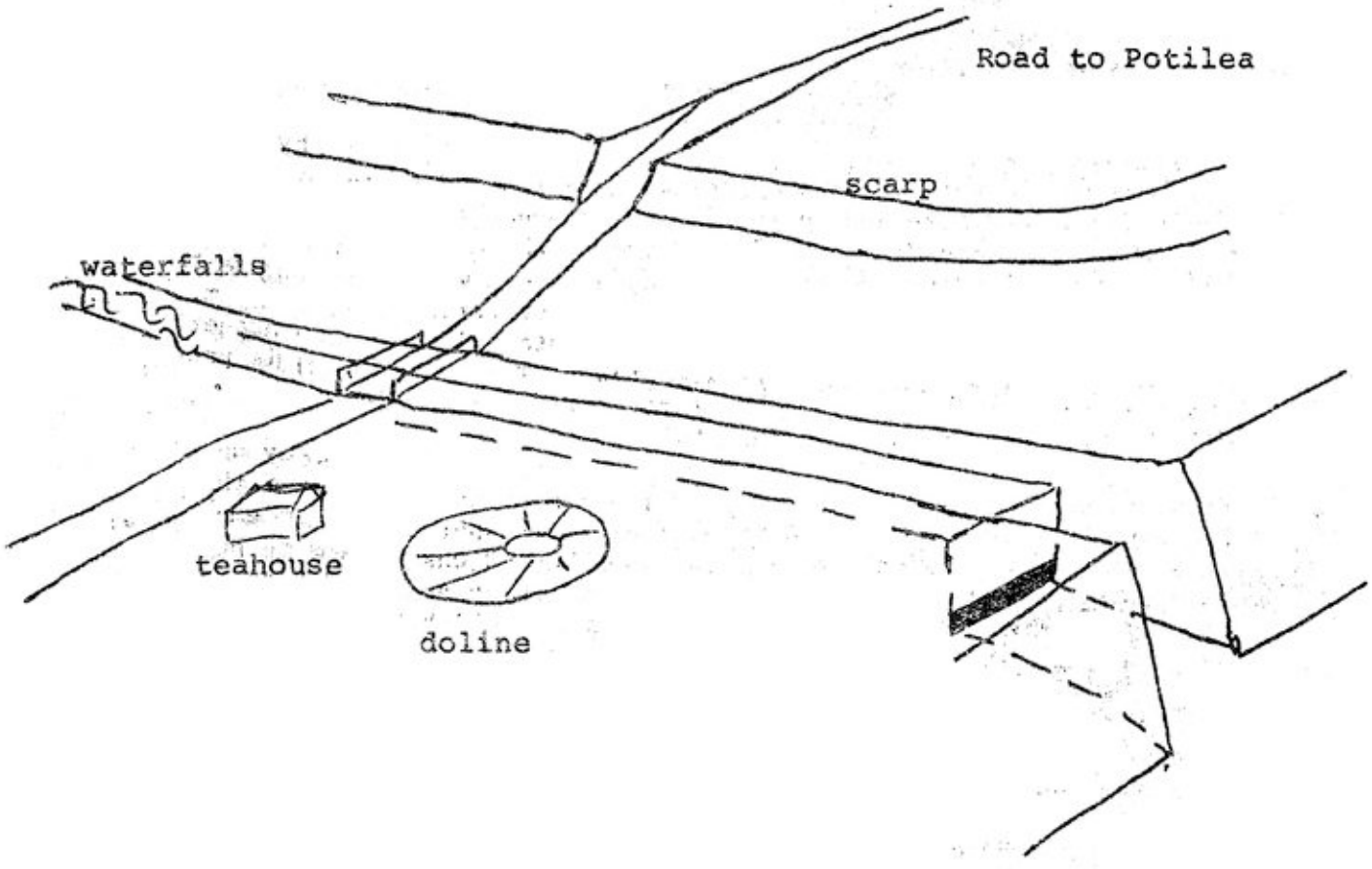
River Cave: The entrance passage was dry but muddy with the river flowing strongly in the river passage. Only those members with wet suits proceeded upstream to the sump complex where a search around the air-bells revealed no way on. Downstream all members proceeded to the sump complex where those with wet suits dived and proceeded to the second sump. One party investigated the possibility of free-diving this second sump but it was deemed impracticable.

Various members also made the trek to the Goodridiggby Falls which they say was well worthwhile. Others followed the road back to Coolamine Homestead (interesting and well worth a visit) and then proceeded across country locating various caves concluding with Cliff Cave and generally getting to know the local topography. These caves will possibly be visited next trip.

Socially the trip also proved a success with wine and ale flowing freely around the campfire, lively discussions easy to come by, and culminating in a jovial and bawdy sing-song led by Cathy and her musical guitar.

All in all I would say that the trip was a resounding succes for all concerned both caving wise and relaxing wise.

IAN MANN
Editor-in-Chief



TRIP REPORT: THE HARPAN RIVER CAVE NEPAL 5.1.79

Although the main aim of my trip to Asia was to go trekking Nepal, and during a 5 week stay in Nepal I did manage two treks to Everest and Annapurna, I also managed to do some caving.

Guided by the information supplied by Pavey (1976)* and our own expertise at extracting information from local authorities, other tourists and local inhabitants we set forth in the afternoon to locate and explore the Heppan River cave. Al Worrild (UNSWSS) had his bike light and 9mm climbing rope, Neil Mickson (SSS) had 1 penlight, Julia James (SSS) carried a stomach upset and "the kitty" to pay the entrance fee to view the sink of Harpan Kohla and me -, I was to figure later in the story; I carried a specimen bottle to collect Nicoletico's (Silverfish) for G. Smith, since they are known to exist in this cave.

After posing for "the photo" overlooking the chunterous insurgence entrance we wtnt off to find the doline entrance. Again this drew a crowd of spectators who informed us that several other groups had explored this cave recently. The cave was hot, humid and dirty and since we weren't equipped with overalls, we did not descend. One local boy knew of another "better" entrance. This was the now dry resurgence and we all entered the cave here. By this time Julia was feeling really crook and Neil escorted her out and back to the hotel.

This left Al and I to explore the cave with 1 penlight powered by batteries made in India. Before the batteries died we made a hurried search for some silverfish without luck. Al then caved solo to the insurgence entrance and returned.

The cave is quite unique in that it was formed during a period of rejuvenation of streams flowing across a plane of glacial outwash debris that is the Pokhone Valley. The alluvial fill is cemented with what must be Calcareous fill because it is soluble but the whole cave can be said to be formed in Conglomerate. It is not a pretty sight to behold as the picture of the canyon leads one to believe.

Stephen Bunton

*ref: Pavey A.J. 1976 "The Caves of Nepal" ASF Newsletter No.7105

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Chris Dunne, 114 Woodlands Road, Taren Point. 525-8469

Contact the above for details of short-notice trips most weekends - or persuade them to organize one !

F U T U R E E V E N T S

Thursday JUNE 7. SUSS Meeting. Common Room, Holme Building (Old Union), 7.30pm

Sunday JUNE 10. FIELD DAY at Wahroonga Rocks (Meet at end of Cliff Avenue, Wahroonga) 10am start. Special SRT Training day (instruction provided & gear lent) Also, try out the NEW CMI 5000 ascender.

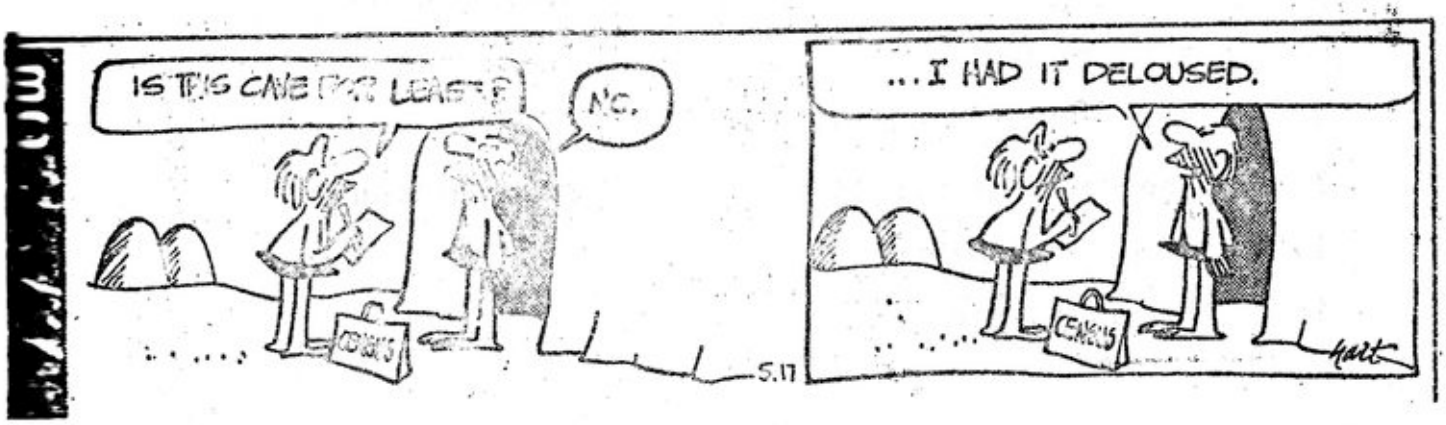
16-18 JUNE - JENOLAN. Main object is digging & pushing of Spider Cave with the hope of breaking through to the Jenolan Underground River. Also tagging in the Southern Limestone. Contact Bruce Welch - 61.7479 (W)

Tuesday JUNE 26. SUSS Committee Meeting. Bruce Welchs' place - 21 Thompson Streeet, Marrickville 7.3-pm

Thursday JULY 4. SUSS General Meeting. Common Room, Holme Building (Old Union) 7.30pm.

25-26 AUGUST - SPELEOSPORTS - at Macquarie University. Free BBQ afterwards (so the rumour goes) More details later. (Note, members thinking of participating would be well advised to practice draining, climbing endless ropes and carrying raw eggs caving!!)

Friday SEPTEMBER 14. CUSS Dinner (Combined Universities Speleological Societies + any other hangers-on) Price about $8 - a good meal is guaranteed (by Editor) and members should practice bun-throwing for the ritual bombardment of the guest speaker (and anyone else who gets in the way).



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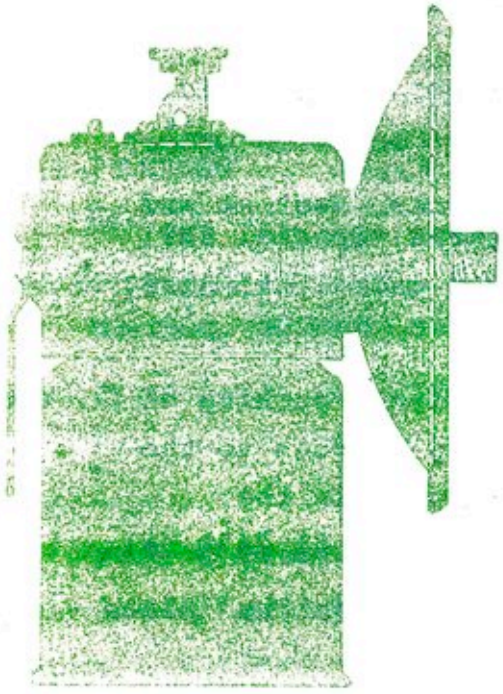

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