

# BULLETIN *of the*

## *Sydney*

## *University*

## *Speleological*



## *Society*



## NEWS HEADLINES

CAMOWEAL has had a cave rescue. Last week a Mr Armstead from Mt Isa had a fall in one of the Camoweal caves, and suffered a broken leg. Rescuers took 11 hours to get him out.

WORLD RECORD. The Gouffre Jean Bernard, already the world's deepest cave, is now deeper. Divers from the Speleo Club Vulcain, of Lyons, passed sump 2 in the system in the last week of February, and added another 40 m depth to the system, taking it to -1455 m.

USA. Friars Hole, an interesting-sounding and rather wet system in West Virginia, is now the third longest cave in the USA, with a surveyed length of 38 miles (61 km).

JENOLAN Recent trips to Spider Cave have found first Pirates Delight, and more recently Dingo Dig, flooded. We seem to have been fortunate in the past four years, in that dry weather has kept these more or less permanently open - any caver who got flooded in could have a long, long wait.

JUMARS The item in News Headlines (April) about Jumar safety-catch spring failures has triggered a response from Jeff Crass in this issue. It would appear, from such evidence as is available, that the letter reproduced here, from Paul Gorman, is unnecessarily alarmist - articles by Neil Montgomery and Donna Mcrowski in recent issues of Caving International (no 10) and NSS news present some more realistic recommendations, as well as a method of testing whether you have the new or modified spring. It is noteworthy that the rather more serious problem with the CMI ascender has not received any publicity in the USA - Yankee chauvinism lives on!

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DON'T FORGET THAT SUBS FROM PROSPECTIVE AND  
CORRESPONDING MEMBERS ARE OVERDUE : \$4.50

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COMING OF AGE IN NEW ZEALAND by Myregret Mead (An Arthropologist)

It is unlikely that such a small country of limited population could survive the various modifying forces inflicted upon it by Mr Bunsen and the torch bearers of Aussie Speleology. In fact the country has undergone some alteration as a result. Attitudes have been changed, people enlightened, women herded and cattle raped. It is surprising that the country is still the same. It is no longer as conservative and its people have come of age, for this reason I shall in future refer to this quaint Pacific backwater as OLD ZEALAND.

The first thing one notices as one or more arrives is that the country is a fully functioning car museum. This has been rectified. Our Christchurch contact contemplated buying a new car as a result of our visit, his old one blew up while driving us to the airport. Will Rowan Emberson ever get over our visit?

I'll bet the Motueka and Takaka Police won't. A quick day-trip down Harwoods Hole by "Blisters" McKinnon resulted in her bivouacking out overnight with Bryan and Ian. The loss of three people caused the odd panic button to be pushed and the possibility of a Police search had to be considered. When the verdict was "SAFE" the Motueka Police were notified:-

"Excuse me officer I'd like you to call-off the search and rescue instigated by the Nelson Police by phone yesterday because you were closed we had to ring that that is if the Takaka Police haven't called it off already. You see we went down Harwoods.....?"

"Could you say that again please, slowly?"

"Not Really !!"

So the best laid plans of stoats and weasels had to be delayed by a day and then it was up Mt Arthur - so we chased it up there. Arthur isn't a bad name for a mountain. It isn't as good as a city called Sydney so I think a little improvement is in order :- We went up Mt Fred for a weeks investigating indentations, plumbing pitches, sinking shafts, descending deep depressions dropping down darkness's depths exploring eerie excavations, climbing down crenulated cavities, pushing perforated pits and shooting Vietcong.

This is the paradox of our culture - we climb to the highest point on the landscape and then descend into its depths. ". . . . . I feel ill. ". . . . .

"Bryan what's Vertigo?" - "Agreen colour!"

The wit of the man could not be matched nor his taste in caves. Not even climbing the wrong mountain could surpass the rigours of Stwyfe of Bwyne.

A cave that took three days to garden, the fruits of this labour to be reaped by Old Zealanders only, because not even us "mad Aussies" wish to visit it again. The unstable boulder pile at the entrance was cleared using a Laurendetector. These self-propelling, self-locating explosive devices operate by jumping up and down on a precarious rockpile until it falls down the funnel of the pitch. They have the advantage of being self regulating in intensity, duration and direction of force application and in some cases as in this situation they are re-useable.

Pitch 1 was cleared and thus named the Stoning. It was shortly followed by the most notable feature of the cave a 90m shaft called Biggus Dickus (it can be re-belayed).

at 25m). The joy of discovery ended shortly beyond this with a trip down the Caesar Augustus Memorial Sewer. A tight meandering rift through horribly friable rock impregnated with calcite or more massive limestone fragments which tended to rip Busy Buns to Shreds and shatter our depth dreams. Future exploration was generously left to the Old Zealanders.

Indeed they are old. We met most of them at the annual Nettlebed Jamboree. I think it is a good thing to get all the active cavers of one country involved in the exploration of a single cave system at one particular time each year. It has its problems especially when all wish to camp in the bowells of the earth at some time or other but at least communication between Old Zealand cavers exists at a personal level.

Nettlebed went off smoothly with us Aussies being chief entertainment. I'd never prussicked 50m up a waterfall without my carbide going out, before. Trust it to happen when I had 5 litres of petrol clipped to my belt. "If you see the flash its too late." Other entertainment came from Mark's swimming to make the PHOTOS look good and ... his rigging of pitches high in the roof above camp. You see this Nettlebed cave is supposed to go up, not down. In fine style as taught to him on Mt Fred, Mark kicks down all the loose rubble and rocks down the shaft so that he doesn't get sconed when he descends nor does he get the chop- Good Technique but not when the shaft ends desperately close to six sleeping cavers. We made a hurried trip down to camp to see if it still existed.

We didn't turn the cave into the Southern Hemispheres Deepest but the Old Zealanders did..Boring.... So was the rest of the trip etc.

That's all

Stephen Bunton

Waikikimookow Old Zealand.

PRESENT: S.Bunton Graeme Smith Bryan Cleaver S.U.S.S.

Ian Lutherborrow Janine McKinnon H.C.G.

Dirk Stoffels Mark Laurendet St.G.A.C.T.

NELSON, N.Z. 1981



## EQUIPMENT

As a follow up to last month's article on the problems of Jumars read on, and remember to be careful when using your ascenders, no matter what brand.

'Climbing' Magazine No.62 Sept-Oct 1980 P.38.

Dear Editor;

Certain 1979 Model Jumars ascenders appear to be potentially hazardous due to defective safety lever springs.

A pair returned because the safety levers failed to remain closed, were sent to the manufacturer for analysis. We have subsequently been advised that the problem was with the safety lever closure springs and might affect an unknown quantity of early 1979 (yellow) Model Jumars. This problem may not arise until after they have been in use.

1979 Model (yellow) Jumars should not be used until they have been returned to the place of purchase for inspection, correction, replacement parts, exchange or refund, depending on how the seller is equipped to handle the problem. The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission has been made aware of the potential danger, and, in cooperation with that agency, we request your assistance as a respected information source for the technical climbing community in making the climbing public aware of this potential hazard.

Sincerely,

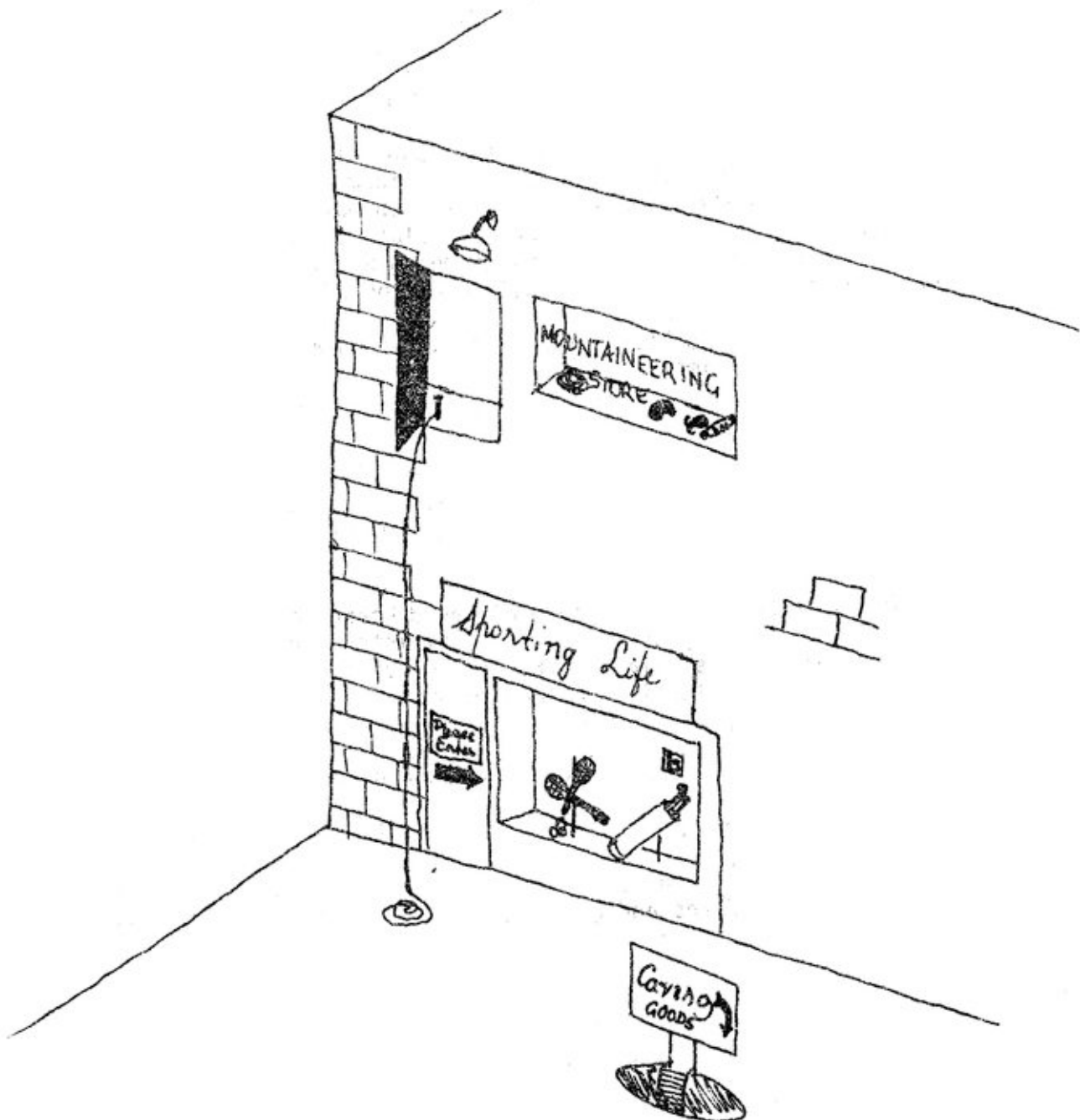
Paul F. Gorman Jr.  
Retail Operations  
Eastern Mountain Sports,  
PETERBOROUGH NORTH

The CMI figure eight descender is presently being investigated in Sydney (in conjunction with a distributor). The aluminium alloy used seems not to be of sufficient hardness, wearing in use very easily, and comparisons are being made with other brands of the same configuration. A CMI descender used in Tasmania for the February caving trip was worn in half, other users (notably scouting groups) have returned their CMI's with similar wear problems.



Yet another warning, Sticht Belay Plates have come under suspicion, failures occurring as the alumium alloy used may be too soft. Users are warned to constantly check them. Investigations are being made by members of the New Zealand Alpine Club. So you budding "hard men" rock climbers in the club check your gear before you do your birdman impressions.

JEFF CRASS.



THE CAVE ARTISTS '81

## LOW BATTERY INDICATOR

by Michael Lake

Have you ever been caving and, without warning, your lead acid light konks out hours from the exit?

Your answer is probably yes.

Often one doesn't really know how many hours of light remain after a full day's caving. The following device will give a visual indication of impending battery failure by flashing a red light emitting diode.

### Circuit Operation

At the heart of the device is a monolithic oscillator, an LM 3909, specifically designed by National Semiconductor to flash L.E.D.'s (see circuit diagram). By using the timing capacitor for voltage boost it delivers pulses of 2 or more volts to the L.E.D. while operating on a supply of 1 to 5 volts (see National Semiconductor application note on LM 3909, January 1975). Consequently it is ideally suited for operation from a 4 volt lead acid battery. The 1 K resistor is to increase the flash rate to a few Hz. The 2 transistors and potential divider form a circuit that senses the declining battery voltage and turns on power to the LM 3909 when the battery voltage is below a certain value determined by the value of resistor R 3. By changing R 3 the number of hours warning of impending battery failure can be adjusted.

The value of R 3 is best determined experimentally to give the desired warning time.

### Installation

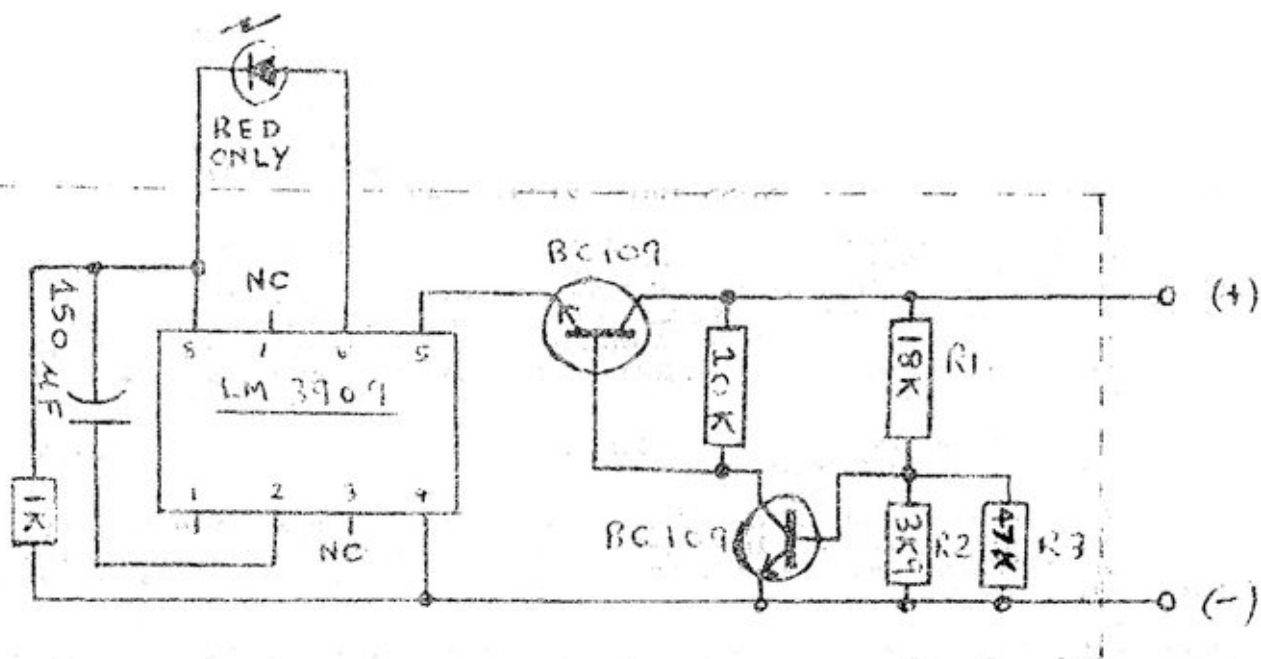
Steel topped M.S.A. batteries are more suited for the device as there is considerable room for circuitry. (I've also managed to fit in a L.C.D. clock in my battery and there is still room for a small compass).

Mount the components on a piece of bread board making sure that they sit as low as possible. The transistors are best laid flat. With a scalpel or similar instrument remove any undesired copper strip and after soldering in the components cut back any protruding wires as far as possible.

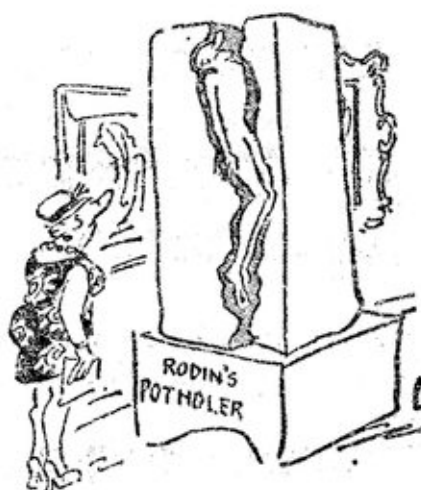
Test the circuit on your battery during a discharge and, if satisfied, finally cover the entire circuitry in araldite leaving some long wires out for the L.E.D. and battery contacts.

Mount the L.E.D in a hole drilled in the top of the metal case, connect all the wires and good luck!





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## BOOK REVIEW

### AUSTRALIAN CAVES AND CAVING

Ross Ellis/ SSS (1980) \$6.95

ISBN 0908240 15 5

Western Colour Print P/L

A4, 96 pages colour/B+W

Just Before Easter I was browsing through some recent publications at our local newsagent when I spied the above title. At first I took it to be a reprint of the 1972 Periwinkle book of the same name by Wolfgang Kahrau. Such was not the case.

From reading this new publication, one gains the impression that the Sydney Speleological Society is the only society (of note) in the whole of Australia, indeed, no other club or society has been named anywhere in the scant and sketchy text. For a publication that has been released nationwide, this appears snobbish - at least the author or publisher could have inserted a short note containing the ASF address so that interested persons could get in touch with that body for information about the society nearest them. A real bit of courtesy would have been to publish the entire ASF membership list - there was no lack of space on the first page, or throughout the book, to do this.

Quite apart from the title, some of the text is almost a word for word 'lift' from the Periwinkle/Kahrau book. Is an infringement of copyright involved?

As for content, the SSS publication offers far less information than its Periwinkle namesake. One piece of information (from page 1) that I would like explained is how SSS can manage "weekend visits to areas such as Chillagoe, The Kimberleys and the Franklin River." Maybe that is why a photo of a nurse with a smile appears midway through the book.

Any publication is supposed to educate to some extent - some do this better than others. The SSS publication does not educate very well. The page titled 'Techniques' contained text telling the reader how one learns techniques necessary to caving (safely?) by attending club field days. One can only assume from the scenes depicted over the page under the title of 'Ladder Drops' that SSS field days teach:

- 1 Rigging ladder traces over flakes so that they may slip during use causing a jerk that could overstrain wires etc., or throw the climber off the ladder
- 2 Rigging a ladder so that the 'head' gets torn apart. (extremely bad practise, easily overcome by inserting a karabiner)
- 3 That the belayer should be anchored with plenty of slack rope  
or as the tear-drop insert shows
- 4 That the climber should have a reasonable amount of slack so they will fall further if they are unlucky enough to come adrift of the ladder.

It is generally accepted that gloves are a necessity when using SRT, but the dominant photograph on the page dealing with the subject shows the user with bare hands while the glove of the user in the lower photograph is indistinct. No mention is made of gloves in the text - nor the fact that special ropes are needed.

If you set out to transmit information about a specialised sport to a gullible and technically ignorant public, it should be done properly by publishing scenes (and text) that depict the correct methods - not the most deadly.

The photograph and text relating to 'Bats' contradict each other. The text reads: "Bats are protected mammals and should not be disturbed. You are actually a visitor in their home and should not disturb them in any way."

The photograph above this caption shows 3 visitors in Bat Cave, Naracoorte, surrounded by hundreds of obviously disturbed bats. It could be argued that the bats were leaving the cave for the evening meal, but neither the text nor the picture suggest this.

The photographs of Cliefden's Murder Cave were murdered by the surrounding colour scheme.

Although, top marks must go to SSS for distribution, as the publication has been reported from several parts

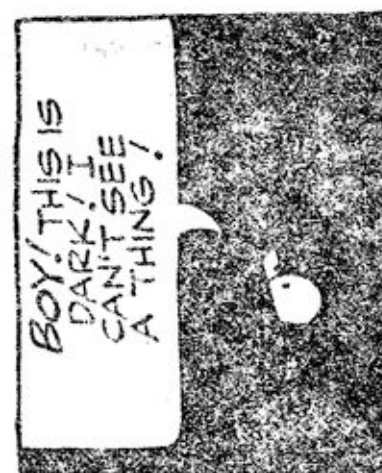
of Australia. For a supposedly national publication, the text is heavily biased towards SSS with NSW and Queensland getting the lion's share of photographic coverage, rating 106 pictures between them while Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory are dismissed with 7 (collectively). Tasmania and Western Australia fare a bit better with 14 and 17 pictures respectively, due no doubt to SSS's weekend tripping, mentioned earlier.

In short, a publication poorly presented and laid out, lacking useful information. The many superb photographs have been downgraded by format and the inclusion of pictures of poor quality.

At \$6.95 a copy, the publication seems over-priced but no doubt SSS will be laughing all the way to the bank.

N. Poulter

from Skinnii



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NEW ELECTIONS TO THE REMOTE & INACCESSIBLE PLACES  
SUBCOMMITTEE: Bryan Cleaver, Helen Turton, Geoff Innes.

FUTURE EVENTS

JULY

Thursday 2nd. SUSS General Meeting. Slide show of the recent  
stupendous Tasmanian trip. Common Room, Holme Bldg.,  
7.30 pm.

4th - 5th. Jenolan. Spider Cave, Heffalump Trap, J 168,  
J 170. Contact: Paul Greenfield x 797 6975

17th - 19th Skiing in the Snowies. Contact Ian Mann, 631 4321

Monday 27th. SUSS Committee Meeting, Guy Cox's place,  
180 Short Strett, Balmain.

AUGUST

Thursday 6th. SUSS General Meeting. A speaker will talk on  
Mexico. Common Room, Holme Building, 7.30 pm

16th - 22nd Yarrangobilly. Contact Mike Lake, 524 5229

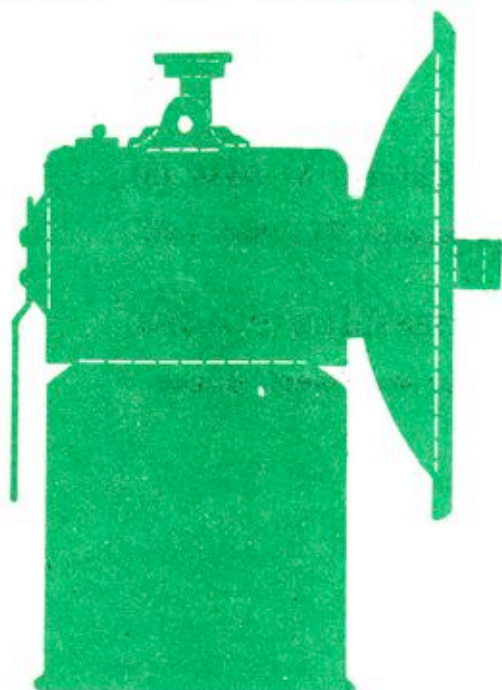
Monday 24th. SUSS Committee Meeting. Place to be announced.

SEPTEMBER

Thursady 3d. SUSS General Meeting. Slides of Ian Manns recent  
expensive trip to the Kimberleys. Common Room, Holme  
Bldg., 7.30.

21st - for 5 months. Caving in South Wales and Yorkshire. Guy Cox





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JUNE 1981

# SUSS

BULLETIN  
of the

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY  
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BOX 35, HOLME BUILDING,  
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N.S.W. 2006

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