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BULLETIN of the Sydney University Speleological Society

Lumen in Tenebris

SUSS

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Box 35, Holme Building, University of Sydney, N.S.W. 2006

Words of Wisdom from your Secretary.

This is a new column I have decided to write in which I will attempt to inform members of speleo activities both at home and abroad. Also in it I will list publications received from other clubs giving a brief summary of their contents.

1. ASF Newsletter

- I am now in possession of all the club's back issues of the ASF newsletter and these will be circulated to entitled members at the June meeting.

- Any members who are not present who are entitled to them will have them mailed to them by the end of June.

- If you feel you are entitled to them (i.e. a full financial member) [send a stamped self-addressed envelope to receive your full financial member - ed] please contact me by mail at the club's address and I will try and sort it out.

- Issue £95 of the ASF newsletter is on the way to you by mail at present.

If you have any articles you wish published in the ASF newsletter, you can either forward them to me or the editor of the ASF newsletter.

2. Speleosports

This fun-packed event will be held at Macquarie University on the 4th and 5th of September so make sure you keep these dates free. Further details will appear in next month's Bull.

3. SUSS Bull

I must congratulate certain members on the quality of articles they have written for the last few Bulls. Keep up the good work and keep those articles coming.

Ian Mann

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Financial Statement 1 March 1981 to 28 February 1982.

Opening balance A/c 901-001		324-85
RECEIPTS		
Membership: Full	204-00	
Family)		
Corresp.)	9-50	
Prosp.	35-00	
	248-50	248-50
Sales of stock (Badges etc.)		11-50
Interest on A/c 901-001		5-50
Petty cash deposit		7-00
Loan to society		44-00
		316-50
PAYMENTS		
Bulletin		333-15
Dinner		39-70
A.S.F. affiliation fees		136-50
Orientation week expenses		26-47
Transfer		30-00
Cheque book(Stamp duty)		5-00
Helectite subscription		8-00
Dinner for guest speaker		4-00
		582-82

Note: Initial account balance is previous (1/3/81) bank statement figure of $354-30 less $29-45 of previously unpresented cheques from year 1980/81.

SUMMARY: Opening Balance 1/3/81		354-30
less previously unpresented cheques		29-45
		324-85
plus receipts		316-50
		641-35
less payments		582-82
		58-53
Bank balance 28/2/82		79-53
less unpresented cheque(No888453)		21-00
		58-53

IAN CARPENTER EQUIPMENT FUND

Opening balance A/c 903-904 at 1/3/81			80-13
plus Receipts:	Trip fees	11-50	
	Bank interest	3-25	
	Caving Equipment	78-50	
		93-25	93-25
			173-38
Balance of A/c at 28/2/82			173-38
(No pay ments)			

B.R.Welch,Treasurer.

I have examined the books and vouchers of the society for the period 1 March 1981 to 28 February 1982. Having regard to the explanation given, I am of the opiniont that the statement is a correct record of the Society's transactions as contained in the books.

A.C.A

Incoming Treasurer's Report

Most of the items on last years balance sheet are self explanatory. However the point does need to be made that membership fees (even allowing for the absence of Orientation Week memberships which were banked late), do not cover A.S.F. dues and bulletin costs. If the club is to continue as a profitable venture then more money is needed, either from increased membership fees or more sales - or both.

Richard Mackay.

Use and Maintenance of Lead-Acid Batteries

Introduction

These instructions are designed to answer the many questions that are asked so that owners can maintain their lamps in good working order. Many of the suggestions below, bear in mind common situations which most frequently occur.

Description of Lamp

A lead-acid lamp consists of a 4 volt two-cell accumulator, connected by a heavy duty cable to a helmet mounted headset. The burning duration of a new lamp is 12 hours approx. per full charge.

Topping Up Procedure

Lamps and batteries are usually supplied in a charged and filled condition, unless otherwise stated. The battery is designed to contain only a very small amount of free electrolyte (Sulphuric Acid S.G. 1.26 at 60 degrees F or 15 degrees C) most of which is absorbed by the porous plates and the absorbent separators of the cells. The battery has two breather vents which are designed to allow the battery to vent whilst charging, and are constructed on the unspillable inkwell principle so that acid does not spill when the battery is lying on its side. Leakage may occur in transit due to continual shaking, and before putting the lamp into service or after every 75 hours approx. of use, the following procedure should be carried out:

Lay the battery flat on its back with the filler plug uppermost, unscrew the plug and remove the gasket. This is best done with the correct tool, (a short pair of slim-nosed pliers can be used in an emergency) which when engaged with the filler plug holes will easily unscrew the plug. The gasket can be pulled out by gripping with a pair of pliers the small pip which stands proud in the middle. The lamp is designed to be charged with the filler plug in place.

To obtain the correct level of electrolyte add only very small doses of distilled water, when the battery is fully charged. This is best done with a proper topping up syringe. (An eye dropper or medical type syringe can be used in an emergency.) After each dose stand the battery upright, then holding the top of the battery tilt 10 degrees towards yourself with the filler holes facing you.(Exide batteries lean 30 degrees away.) The cell plates are covered and the correct level obtained when the electrolyte is visible and slightly below the filler holes, when held in the described tilted position.

It is worth noting that the acid content of the electrolyte will remain the same even though the visible level of electrolyte has dropped through use. Only distilled water is evaporated off during charging and discharging, and therefore only distilled water should be used for topping up.

After topping up blot the outer faces of the cell completely dry, and also dry the rubber filler plug gasket and the filler plug. Any liquid on these faces could cause leakage, and a discharge between the cells when the battery is not vertical. Replace the filler plug and screw home firmly, but without excessive force.

Charging

A battery in good condition will give up to 12 hours approx. continuous light using a 4 volt 1 amp main beam bulb. For each 1 hour of use on main beam the battery is drained of 1 amp hour approx.

Old lamps giving less than 12 hours continuous light see note at foot of charging section. If the battery is completely discharged it must be recharged immediately. It is very important that the battery input current does not exceed 1 amp. Charging voltage should not exceed 5-6 volts.

Constant Current Chargers. If using a 1 amp fixed output constant current charger, the lamp will require recharging for 12 hours + 20% for full charge. If the lamp has been used for a short period, and the battery only partly discharged, then recharge for 20% longer than the time the lamp was used.

Standard Battery Chargers. If using a standard battery charger which gives an output of less than 1 amp (these are the most common variety of mining lamp chargers) the charging time will have to be increased in proportion i.e. 12 amp hour capacity divided by the average charging rate (as shown by the ammeter) + 20% = charging time for full charge. If the lamp has been used for a short period, and the battery only partly discharged, then time used divided by the average charging rate + 20% = charging time.

Car Battery Chargers. A car battery charger can be used to recharge the battery. If charging one lamp select the lowest possible charge rate setting i.e. 6 volts with a 6v/12v charger. 12 volts will suffice if there is no choice Introduce a variable resistance on the output side of the charger in either of the wires which connects to the battery. (A piece of electric fire element can be used as a variable resistance. The number of turns through which the current is made to flow determines the amount of resistance. Around 2" or less is usually adequate.) It is most important that the current does not exceed 1 amp. Up to three lamps can be charged together in this way connected together in a series. (Series = positive connection on one battery linked to the negative connection on the next battery, and so on, with the positive battery charger wire connected to the positive end of the batteries connected in series, and the negative charger output wire connected to the negative end of the batteries connected

in series.) The 12 volt setting can be used, probably without any resistance required. Should the charging current exceed 1 amp a resistance must be introduced as outlined above. Whilst experimenting with a variable resist- ance circuit it is advisable to bridge the fuses on the batteries which will blow immediately if shorted out.

IMPORTANT. If you have no understanding of electricity and you find the above suggestions confusing, purchase a properly designed charger for the lamp. No special knowledge is required for the use of these battery chargers, which are designed to be operated with the minimum of fuss.

All Oldham and MSA caplamps can be charged through the headset, which avoids the necessity of removing the battery cover each time a charge is required. A special adaptor is available for this purpose, (the adaptor is built in to the special chargers) and can be used in conjunction with any suitable charger.

To maintain maximum burning duration discharge and recharge every 2-3 weeks, preferably immediately before use. This is not necessary if the lamp is in regular daily or weekly use. Each time a lead-acid battery is allowed to stand in a discharged state, or the electrolyte level is neglected, the burning time will be permanently reduced.

With old lamps where the burning time has dropped from 12 hours approx to 6 hours approx. the charging times shown for partly discharged batteries may have to be doubled to achieve a full charge. The maximum charging time for an old lamp from full discharge should not exceed the charging time for a new lamp giving 12 hours approx. burning duration. If an old lamp is giving a burning time in the region of 8 to 10 hours then a 50% longer charging time may be necessary to achieve full charge.

Maintenance

Battery. To remove the battery lid, first remove the wax seal from the locking clamp and screw. Then, using the special slotted screwdriver, remove the slotted screw. (In emergency the clamp and screw can be cut into with a hack saw, and a normal screwdriver used in the sawcut.) The battery lid can then be removed, which will reveal the battery terminals and the fuse. Check the wires for corrosion or fraying, and make sure that the screw connections are tight. Check that the fuse is not blown, and replace with the correct fuse if necessary Check that the cable is held tightly by the cable lock. The breather vents situated either side of the filler plug will occasionally require cleaning. Any blockage must be removed before charging. A piece of wire can be used, taking care that whatever is causing the blockage is not pushed further into the vent hole. Charging the battery with blocked vents may cause excess pressure build up, and acid may leak from the top of the battery, resulting in irrepairable damage.

Cable. The cable is of a spirally wound short lay type to permit maximum flexibility. If snagged sharply during use the wires are most

unlikely to snap. For this reason it is important not to substitute cheap mains flex which may not be spirally wound, and could easily break internally if it is snagged, resulting in light failure. The cable should regularly be inspected for cuts or any other damage, and replaced if found to be faulty. Particular attention should be paid to the point where the cable enters the headset, the point where the cable passes over the edge of the helmet, and the point where it enters the battery lid. Never carry a lamp by its cable.

Headset. To dismantle the headpiece, remove the wax seal covering the locking pin, and unscrew the locking pin with the special key. (In emergency the locking pin can be cut with a small hacksaw.) The bezel can then be unscrewed and the glass and reflector removed. The bulbs, screws and contacts are then exposed, and can be checked for tightness. Reflectors fitted to some later caplamps allow the main bulb to be focused. The position to which the bulb is screwed determines the focus. To avoid corrosion cover the screws and switch contacts with a little light grease. If the headset leaks water and the cause is not obvious, replace the cable noeprene gland which should sit neatly under- neath the metal cable grip, where the cable enters the headset. This is the prime cause of leakage into the headset. Severe electrolytic corrosion of the switch contacts will occur if water is allowed to remain inside the headset.

Common Faults

Flood ing. The battery becomes warm from the body and may flood if immersed in cold water. The air inside the battery contracts and may suck water in through the breather vents. Should flooding occur the excess electrolyte can be syringed off, and subsequently replaced when topping up is required at a later date. This will avoid the possibility of electrolytic dilution. Little can be done to remedy flooding with dirty or muddy water or any other liquid, and this situation should be avoided. Oldham type "T" batteries are particularly susceptible to flooding through the large topping up/breather vents. These can be blocked by inserting a bic biro end plug with a pinhole in the centre. The plugs must be removed before charging.

Blocked Vents. See battery maintenance.

Acid Leakage. If severe leakage of acid has occurred i.e. obvious loss of acid by a filler plug being too loose etc. the level will have to be topped up with neat acid. For correct SG see topping up procedure. This does not apply where the electrolytic level has dropped through normal use and only needs topping up with distilled water.

Light Failure. Should the lamp fail to light first check the fuse then the bulbs. If one bulb lights check the switch connections and the bulb which doesn't light up. If the lamp still fails to light check that the lamp has been charged and that the cable is continuous.

Useful Information

Oldham and MSA headsets come with through the headset charging facility. The positive charging contact is the pip on the underside of the head. The negative charging contact is the cap clip. The switch/key mechanism in the back of the headset must be turned 180 degrees before any current will flow through the headset from the cap clip/negative contact.

Points to remember

1. Top up the battery regularly with distilled water. DON'T overfill.

2. Never leave the battery standing discharged.

(Courtesy of Caving Supplies, 19 London Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, En and Phill Hill.)

Nullarbor Trip Report
Part Two

Day Thirteen

Sheringa Beach had started to look like a real good place to stay the night before, when I found an abalone sitting on a rock out of water. It must have been because the water was too crowded for it. When we went snorkelling it was the easiest pickings anyone had ever seen. 12 of the largest and juiciest abs were selected from dozens of holes in 1-4 ft of water and six fish (? species) were speared.

In the afternoon we charged up the Cruiser's battery again (same story) and headed down to Coffin Bay National Park. Arrived late, set up camp and sat down to a feast of crab, abalone, fish and flagon port.

Day Fourteen

Coffin Bay Nat. Pk. is one of the more beautiful places in S.A. It covers the peninsula which closes off a large complex bay from the sea. The campsite was deserted but for us. Away from it led a track signposted "Sandy track - 4WD vehicles only". Ivan decided that wherever it went was worth looking at. This narrow track led north across the sandhills, past other sheltered beaches and shallow coves. The track finally ran onto a beach and disappeared. (We later learned that it continued along the beach and again turned inland.)

After returning along the track (with a little difficulty) a few possible diving sites were investigated, but it was too windy. It was then declared lunchtime as nobody had brought a watch. Back at camp it turned out to be 6 p.m.

Day Fifteen

First on the agenda was a backtrack to Mt Greenly on a slightly wild goose chase after some "little stone shoes" that Cheryl had heard about. Eventually we found the right place. The girls went crazy. Cheryl pulled out a folding front end loader and went about collecting six or seven tonnes of the things. They appear to be some sort of fossilized tuber. (Dissenters can think up a better theory). Then on to Port Lincoln.

Here, due to laziness, bad communication and poor delegation of authority, we got stuck with a rather expensive ticket to travel/camp along a section of coast now set up as a tourist trap known as Whaler's Way. It's fairly scenic but such poor value for money and so

over-signposted that your enjoyment is spoilt. Don't go there.

Day Sixteen

Went down to Lincoln Nat. Pk. It's popular, but uncommercial (ugh! what a word) and a welcome relief from Whaler's Way. The March flies are a pest though. The afternoon was spent in shell collecting and unproductive snorkelling.

Day Seventeen

This was also spent in Lincoln Nat. Pk., mainly on a rough 4WD track out to Memory Cove. Memory Cove is a nice place but the diving was disappointing, especially as we had passed a number of sure-fire winning locations.

After we headed back through Port Lincoln and up the coast to Cowell. The food here here is not crash-hot, but the pub is great, friendly, with really poisonous pepperoni on sale over the bar. Roy was most disappointed when we left at 11 pm just as business was picking up.)

Day Eighteen

The morning saw us travelling up the coast from Whyalla to Port Augusta and down devious routes to the Baroosa Valley. Lunch at the Barossa Reservoir Whispering Wall gave us plenty of time for a leisurely trip to Nurioopta, where we made camp.

Because the stock of palatable food was running low, we splurged on a night out. It was a good decision. A night of good food finished with us smoking cigars and drinking neat scotch at 2 am.

Day Nineteen

Preventing a hangover by drinking Adelaide water is particularly nauseating (it's a lovely shade of brown!) but effective nonetheless. It enabled us to start into the wineries right on opening time in the morning. Here's the run-down:-

Wolf Blass: expensive, good wines, but the place was like a funeral parlour. Tollana: not bad. Penfolds: cheap, but nothing much high quality. Kaiser Stuhl: good - some bargain port. Hardy's: the bloke serving was half-urinated (we had to edit it - ed), surely, and stank like a wombat. Yalumba: interesting range but my palate was beginning to tire. Orlando: here everything started to taste the same so we shot through to Adelaide.

In Adelaide there was just time to watch the shops shut and have a wander through the art gallery. The camping ground that night proudly claimed to be the biggest in S.A. or Australia or something. It was still a hole.

Day Twenty

A day of driving in the old style. Boring. Headed east to Swan Hill. Had a swim there.

Day Twenty One

Got further east to Wangaratta and Rutherglen, where we did over a few more wineries. This time it was Brown's and Chamber's. They're both great places each in its own way.

In the evening Ivan and Roy found that they were still remembered in the camping ground from last time. Roy decided to spread his fame still further by playing every Ian Drury song in the pub jukebox twice. Nothing happened.

Day Twenty Two

Drove up the Hume Highway (very exciting). After juggling the gear at Ivan's place a bit, we turned up at Ian Mann's Christmas party. A good night was had by most.

Addendum

Day Twenty Three

This is really a separate trip but it may as well go here. In the depths of poor judgement induced by intoxicating beverages, a large number of people convinced themselves that they wanted to do Claustral Canyon on the Sunday after Ian's party. The next morning, however, enthusiasm was on the wane and people were dropping out like flies. In the end only five unfortunates dragged themselves along. They were myself, Ivan Desailly, Ian Mann, Phill Hill and Geoff Innes.

It was a sorry looking bunch that trudged down to Claustral that morning. Most of us felt like death on a stick until we went off the first jump into the water. Then the world brightened up a bit and life seemed worth living again.

After that, it was over the jumps, through the swims, and down the abseils in the darkest part of the canyon. It is still one of the classic canyoning trips even if it no longer seems as safe as it used to.

Ross Newbery

Down In a Brave New Cave World

I won't say it was either the most bizarre or the most dangerous assignment of my career. I mean my weekend at the Jenolan Caves as a tag-along in an outing of the Sydney University Speleological Society (SUSS).

It was nowhere near so bizarre, for example, as my survey of massage parlours, myself as a human guinea pig, to establish whether or not they were legit; and it wasn't as dangerous as the Rhodesian civil war - in particular one night driving through a terrorist-occupied tribal trustland in a jeep without landmine proofing, driven by a crazed, drunken, hopelessly lost South African mercenary. But this was far and away my most exhausting assignment. Age, of course, was part of it. I was panting along behind "speleos", as they call themselves, who had been born about the time I graduated from their university.

The fact that we had all risen an hour before dawn in Sydney to reach the caves by mid-morning didn't seem to bother them. Nor that we spent ten hours under- ground with nothing more than a slab of chocolate to nibble. Nor that much of that was crawling on hands and knees or slithering on elbows and stomach.

That was what was so baffling: Paul, Guy, Richard, Judy, Virginia, John, John, Graham, Ian and Grant - they were all such nice, cheerful, well-scrubbed, apparently normal boys and girls. Why then did they engage in this foul and unnatural practice?

If God had intended us to squeeze down passageways as wide as a waste-paper basket, arms above heads and on our backs, groping for leverage with elbows and buttocks and heels on damp, cold stone, He would have made us with double- jointed vertebrae like a snake.

As I worked my way into a "squeeze" called Pirate's Delight (you only get through wth a sunken chest, get it?) the saying about being as mad as a snake seemed particularly apt.

Caving with speleos was a shock. I had trooped through tourist caves. I was prepared for a lack of concrete walkways and handrails and electric light. I was glad I wouldn't be a part of a flock of gawkers oohing and aahing as a guide droned through a litany of delights.

In my mind's eye I saw us scrambling about rather as I might around a rocky headland. I hadn't bargained with wriggling into holes which any self-respect- ing wombat would have sniffed at with disdain.

Sydney University speleos believe in throwing new members in the deep end. This was the first outing of the academic year. Though I didn't know it when we set out, the SUSS executive had decided on the so-called Spider Cave, the toughest, what they call the most "sporting" of the dozen-odd caves they explore at Jenolan.

One veteran member had found it in 1975. Year by year they've pushed further in finding new passageways, caverns, and part of an underground river that also runs through the famous Mammoth Cave.

Speleos are cheerfully resigned to everyone thinking they're daft to spend whole days pottering about underground, as indeed they are. Dressing to go means a secondhand boiler suit, bovver boots and a miner's helmet with a battery pack worn on the belt.

They call that "trogging up" after the small creatures that supposedly inhabit the Middle Earth. Getting out of caving gear is "detrogging".

Comely female cavers are indistinguishable from the males in trog gear. They're also every bit as capable. Underground there's no place for chatting up, hanky- panky or feminist rhetoric. You're all in it together. Rather like the Israeli Army.

Underground no-one's daunted by darkness or silence. They laugh and make cave jokes. Example: insisting that plughole-sized passages are freeways. "You could take a granny through there in a wheelchair," says one. "Only if you cut her up into very small pieces first," another replies.

Everyone's very careful. High-spirited horseplay is out. If a caver breaks a leg the only way out through the squeezes is to pump him/her full of morphine and drag the body out on a rope.

Once they reach the Spider's very bowels the speleos split up to potter about. They enthuse over glop-holes, calcite and mud formations, stalictites, staligmites and helictites (horizontal), crystalline shawls, rim pools, "straws", flows, crytal beds and segments of underground river.

They're very conservation minded, defining pathways with white markers and cats-eye reflectors so you don't mess everything up. And they bring with them scaling ladders, all in pieces and terribly heavy, to explore upper reaches in the hope of hidden passageways.

Speleos are so laid back in their natural habitat and so reassuring to the novice that I didn't have a moment's fear of burial alive under millions of tons of rock.

Even so, gratitude flooded through me for the earth's surface when we crawled out to a starlit sky, and I was able once more to stand upright.

Next day they all went off to look at another cave but I knew by

then that I'd already gone far beyond the call of duty. Bruised and bone-weary I crawled under a shady gum-tree and read a book until they returned. Charming they were, but I'd taken a solemn vow that I'd never go caving again.

NB: An edited version of this article by Chris Ashton was published in the Sunday Telegraph

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Trip Report - Jenolan
6th and 7th March 1982

This was the annual 'freshers' trip to Jenolan (meaning that only half of the normal Jenolan group were allowed to go). As well we were aiding Chris Ashton (of Sunday Telegraph fame) in his investigations preparatory to presenting speleos to his vast horde of readers. The aims of the trip were to explore some avens above Glophole Gallery in Spider (using the dreaded scaling poles) and looking around Alladdin Bluff. I was also interested in trying to find J168/J170.

Saturday

After the normal exchange of pleasantries with the guides we headed off to Spider carrying about 5 tonnes of scaling pole pieces. While most of the party started off, Guy and I went up to False Frenchman's Cave to remove the ladder from the entrance (as requested by John Culley). With the others carrying the hardware, there was no real problem in catching up with them although we were hoping they might have at least all gotten through Dingo Dig before our arrival. Unfortunately, they were slower than we had hoped and so I ended up dragging about 5 kilos of steel through the rest of the cave.

We eventually reached Glop-Hole Gallery and gratefully dumped the scaling poles. Contrary to popular expectation, the scaling poles were not that bad to take into Spider, although if they had been marginally longer, Pirates Delight may have proved challenging. As this was a first Spider trip for many (what innocence) we then had a quick, general cave tour. After Guy returned from escorting one of the freshers back out (the squeezes were too much for him), the scaling pole group started work looking at the avens above Glop-Hole. They explored 3 avens, none of which went anywhere in particular. The avens pushed were above Khan Passage, above the Tomb of the Unknown Cave Mann, and near the entrance to the Whales Throat. The first two just finished in dead-ends but the Whales Throat one went up about 30m and ended in loose, inpenetratable rock-pile.

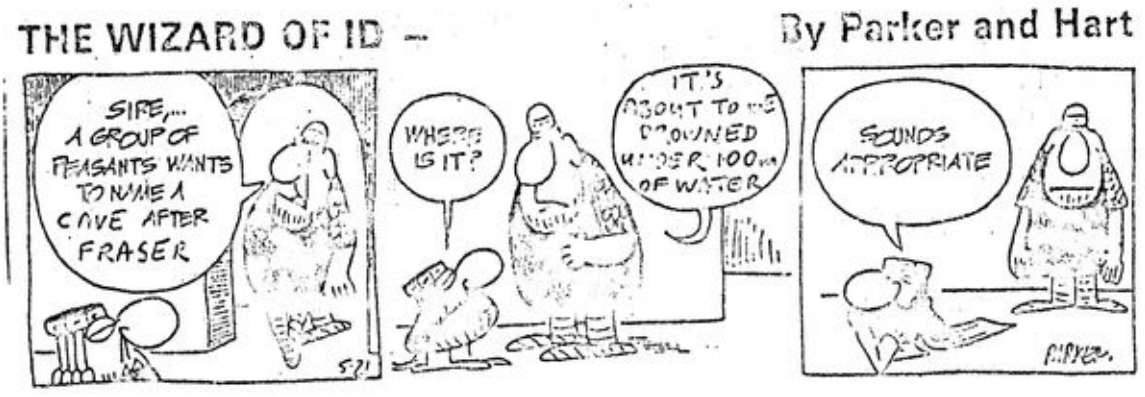
While Guy, Phillip and Judy were doing this, the rest of us went on a general cave tour and exploration. We eventually ended up in the Eyrie where Grant and I pushed past the Human Glop-Hole into tight rock-pile. The base level of this rock pile shows signs of being frequently covered in pools of water. Although we only managed to push in about 10m, there is still some hope in this area. The squeeze that must be negotiated to get into the rockpile is most sporting, particularly on the way out. Having to push up a tight, upwards sloping and rough gap between some boulders proved to be quite invigorating and Grant only took about 15 minutes to negotiate the 1m long squeeze. We thought of leaving him there but that would have polluted the cave.

After posing for press photographs we all left (leaving the hardware behind) after a fairly normal Spider trip. Chris seemed to be fairly impressed, see his trip report elsewhere in this bulletin.

Sunday

Strangely, no one felt like doing Spider again the next day and so we decided to explore around Alladdin Bluff. On the way we spent about an hour looking in the area which was about to be turned into wallaby enclosure. This is directly above Alladdin Bluff but nothing of interest was found (sounds like the Southern Limestone). We then went down to Aladdin cave itself to push the lower rockpile. After some difficulty with the gate, we went in but boredom soon overcame me and Grant end I came back out to continue the Quest for the Holy Grail (i.e. looking for J168 and J170). Once again this search proved unsuccessful (but I found them on the next trip by following the instructions in the Jenolan Book and ignoring Mike Lake). Early in the afternoon, we headed back to the cars and picked up Chris who had not really wanted to go caving that day (or ever again?).

Paul Greenfield



Three Holes Trip Report...
(Wyanbene - Big Hole - Argyle).
8th,9th & 10th May 1982.

At 6.30am on Saturday morning 9 of us met in Braidwood Park - Mike Lake, Francis Chee, Mark Hunter, Maria Hunter, John Kaye, John Mellon, Guy McKanna, Scott Tarleton, and Judy Clarke - where most of the group spent the night in the pagoda. After hiding Mike's sleeping bag in the roof we drove to the camping site near the Big Hole. Most of us chose to spend the day in Wyanbene Main Cave, while Mike and Guy went to explore Marble Arch (and look after the universe). We had a successful trip through Wyanbene Cave along with several other groups of cavers - quite a crowd. The water level was fairly low and we could avoid getting wet above the waist. We visited the Gunbarrel Aven then went on to Caesar's Palace. Most of us continued to Frustration Lake, after amusing attempts at climbing up slippery mud slopes to the applause of another group. We successfully reached the lake, then returned out of the cave - slowly, due to a traffic jam of 10 other cavers in front of us.

The usual chatter and laughter around the campfire followed, with Mike Lake providing the entertainment (as of lately) and then a frosty night.

The next morning Richard McNeall, Grant Elliott, Phillip Cole and Mike Garben arrived and we set off for the Big Hole. We rigged it from the usual tree and under the observation of impressed tourists the four above people, along with Guy, Mark and Judy, descended into the cold depths of the Hole where we were attacked by a baby brown snake and stoned by the tourists, in general we admired the impressive size of the place. We tested our various SRT rigs by racing up the rope. The Frog system proved superior (in time, if not effort), due mainly to its simplicity, although Guy's no hands rope-run was very impressive. Richard was converted back to the frog system when his rope walk failed to perform properly, much to my amusement, and he completed the ascent in the fast fastest time (11 mins) on his second start. The whole undertaking took us most of the day and afterwards we returned to camp for tea. The rest of the group had visited Marble Arch. That evening 8 of us - Richard, Grant, Phil, Mike Garben, Guy, Judy, Scott and John Mellon - headed off to Bungonia via various routes (including getting geographically embarrassed and waylaid by invisible peacocks) and spent the rest of the night there.

On Monday morning John and Scott explored various caves, including B4-5 and B72, while the rest of us took a 7 hour SRT trip down Argyle. As we entered we met Al Warild (who the hell's this Al Warild guy?) who had just finished a solo trip. He then went on the solo

Odyssey and B4-5 extension. We have a long way to reach this level of expertise, but we were still quite pleased by the way we handled our Argyle trip. We descended all the pitches and reached one of the sumps, then prussiked out without any problems. We enjoyed our trip, agreeing that it was good practice for Tasmania.

We survived the journey home despite 180 degree uncontrolled turns on the Bungonia road (it seems as though travelling on the roads with Richard McNeall is much more risky than SRT) after a good active three days' caving.

Judy Clarke

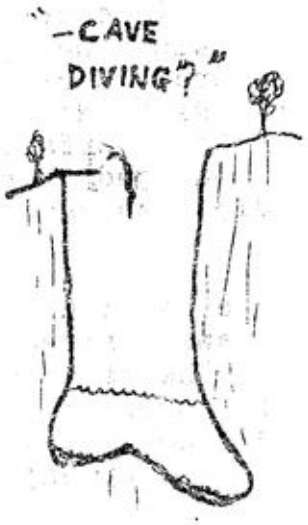
Addendum.

While everyone was off wallowing in Wyanbene Main Cave, Mike Lake and myself separate from the main Wyanbene and Big Hole areas. The area has quite a few small caves, all very tight, upstream from a small but interesting arch which opens into a canyon cut into the limestone. A small resurgence, MA-4, flows into this canyon. This cave seems to be one of the main caves in the area and runs parallel to the canyon. It is primarily a very narrow, serpentinious, vadose cave. The area is definitely worth a sightseeing visit.

Mike and I then headed for Cheitmore (also Cleitmore) caves but were waylaid, (not by nymphs) but by a strange hole in the side of "quartzite" hill. This hole was approximately 12' deep by 3' wide and was cut into the side of the definitely non-limestone hill. The hole very much resembled a smaller version of the Big Hole. This hole also had two large tree ferns at its entrance which faced north. A small depression was also nearby. This hole is worth further investigation and probably digging.

While on the other side of the valley, below Granite Cliffs, were what appeared to be numerous dolines, they were not in limestone. These features also deserve further investigation - and will undoubtedly be followed up on our next Wyanbene trip.

Guy McKanna



Jenolan Trip Report - 15th/16th May

Present: Mike Lake (T.L.), Guy McKanna, Judy Clarke, Richard McNeall, Mike Garben, Mark Hunter, Anne Grey, Nick Melhuish, Rosemary Thwaites, Bruce Stewart, Phillip Strickland, Tony White (yes, he is still around).

After we had all arrived at Jenolan, Tony, Anne, Nick, Rosemary and Phillip headed off to Twiddly-om-Pom. Central Lake was quite dry as was Central River though the Dry Siphon was quite wet. No other significant observations were made. They returned to the surface within 6 1/2 hours.

In the meantime Judy, Richard and Mike Garben went into Spider to explore some holes in the roof of Glophole Gallery. However these all turned out to be dead ends, mainly leading into inpenetrable rockpile. They then took the scaling poles through the sump for work there on the next trip, then they headed out.

Meanwhile Mike Lake, Mark, Bruce and myself ventured into J168 to dig. A very narrow slot amongst boulders was found and approximately 20 feet of open space could be seen below it. However the slot was too narrow to negotiate so we dug nearby. Many large rocks were removed but these filled the chamberette we were digging in and will have to be removed next trip. Prospects are very good in this cave; J169 was connected vocally with it, as was a very tight hole 3m S.E. of J169.

A late night for some meant another late start on Sunday. This did not really matter as little caving was done by most people on Sunday - either they were tired after Saturday's caving or are just getting old and decrepit. Tony, Anne, Nick, Rosemary and Phillip went for a walk down the Jenolan River - on the surface! The two Mikes, Rich and Bruce (Judy had to go home) managed to remove two buckets of dirt from the Heffalump Trap. This dig also has good prospects, even if its diggers don't.

Such decadence was too much for me, so I headed off into Mammoth to pay a visit to Great North Cavern (and visited North West Passage - it is too beautiful to resist) to view the geomorphology along the way so as to solve a few hydrological problems - though that wet Dry Siphon only made things worse. I had also been wanting to solo G.N.C. for quite a while. This proved to be a very enjoyable and beneficial 4 hours - to end a relaxing weekend.

Guy McKanna

Yet Another Danae Brook Trip Report...

.....of yet another Danae Brook trip. On Saturday 24th April, on the Long Weekend, SUSS was in Danae again. Each of us had a reason for going this time. Mike Lake had a score to settle with the canyon. He also wanted to beat his record minimum time of 25 hours. All of us wanted to improve on the time of the last party's trip. Guy McKanna was there because he knew the way and also, I think, in order to be able to say that he's done the canyon three times in six months, which is almost as silly as going to Spider 20+ times. Judy Clarke and Grant Elliott, having missed out on the last (somewhat problematic) trip, were determined to do the canyon at all costs. All four had in mind getting some wet abseiling and long, cold day knowhow for Tasmania in December. I went because something was nagging me that I had to go to see this exceptional, long, 10 pitch canyon, acclaimed for its unusual beauty and its difficulty. A difficult canyon (or cave) has joys of its own that an easy one does not have. Usually you fully realize these afterwards when the pain has stopped, but in Danae they are with you all the way.

Luckily there was no rain during the week before but it was quite cold when we arrived in Dance Floor Cave at Kanangra Walls on Friday night. However we were glad to know that it can be much colder than it was at that time of year in the mountains. Naturally we made sure we were well-equipped with warm clothing, lighting and food (which naturally I overdid in quantity and quality) bearing in mind how easy it is to be benighted, especially in the short days of April, and how much more efficiently one can operate in bad conditions when one is warm and well-fed. We felt that these were two important things learned from the problems of last trip.

We set off walking from Kanangra at 7.30 am, carrying 3 standard length ropes and packs. Ideally we could have started earlier, but it was O.K. Guy led us into the scrub off a fire trail after at least an hour's walk and managed to come out at the same small, unobvious dead tree at the top of a spur that he had on his first trip with Mark Hunter. He was to perform a similar navigational freak later in the day. We then dropped to the creek and considered whether we'd go on as it was rather cold. Walking in the creek numbed my feet, despite wool socks. We decided to go to the start of the canyon, then decide.

Walking towards the start, you can see the creek, benign and level, suddenly drop off into space. The first little pitch brought us onto a platform where we admired the long cascade over the purple/grey quartzite and green ferns and moss. This disappeared into a long, wide slot with a fierce sound. You can also look down the canyon, narrow and steeply dropping, formed in this blocky rock unlike

the curvacious, brown, sandstone canyons. Between the walls you can see along the valley as far as Craft's Walls, sunlit in contrast to the dark pit of the canyon.

The high, grey cloud didn't threaten rain and the creek level was reasonably low, so we decided to continue. I wore a pile jacket, woollens and waterproofs, Judy had piles [sorry that should be "pile" - ed.] and waterproofs but had bare legs, Grant was in pile and woollens but without and adequate waterproof jacket (so useful for keeping the heat in the pile) and Mike had a full wetsuit including extra vest and booties. We all had helmets except Guy, who was wearing his new, home-made Cordura caving suit.

The next pitch dropped into a small, dry, cave-like pit, where you could see the continuation of the fall, thundering in its slot at the back of the pit. It was cold, but I was very hot due to my clothing. The next pitch was over a chockstone into a canyon, no more than six feet wide, extending back under the stone. One drops onto another chockstone, swinging back to reach it, and down some more over a pool which is fed by the same fall, coming out of its slot after a long, mysterious downwards trip. One swims across this pool or bridges part of the way and is hauled by someone holding the ends of the abseiling ropes. This is how we managed to minimize wetness and cold on most of the pitches.

Close by is the beginning of Danae's classic pitch. It must be the best canyon pitch of all time. Standing on a rock above it, you can see a swirling, churning ribbon of water winding down a chute and disappearing. Mike dubbed it the "washing machine". One backs down this chute then drops into the fall, which is a huge, free-falling, icy-cold shower, quite long and with a wall of bright green ferns waving in the turbulence behind it. All you can hear is the thunder on your helmet. I screamed with delight and stopped in mid-pitch to savour it. The pitch opens into a square, intersection with a fair bit of daylight coming in. Danae Brook proceeds on and is intersected by two, tiny, joint-controlled creeks, making the silhouette of the sky a clear cross shape. Pulling down the ropes is energetic and hard on cold, wet hands.

The next pitch has two options, the dry way off a tree at the end of a long platform, or the wet way into a long, deep, narrow slot with a fall at the back of it. Seeing as the water level was reasonable we took the slot. It must be about 120' long and dark and deep. One bridges and is hauled out of the long pool at the bottom. All the rigging in Danae is quite easy, as there are other parties' slings to guide you, but it must be done wisely, especially if there is more than one possibility.

For the next pitch one rigs a piece of tape across a slippery ledge with water cascading over it to a piton belay. The rigger must not be rash, especially in high water. We were now out of the steep, vertically walled section but it was still narrow. On this pitch, you bridge trickily to avoid the diagonally falling stream, then step onto a sloping slippery log, not behind it, as some have done. It is hard

not to get wet in the large pool at the end of the log.

The next pitch is small, off old flat-style pitons, and involves an awkward climb around the pool at the bottom. The next pitch is similarly small, involving a little bridging. The next, now the ninth, is off a chock, easy and dry. Somewhere in this last section is a short pool where you must swim. If you've managed to get away with being only half-soaked/half-damp up till this, you now become completely saturated and weighed down with dripping clothes. The last pitch is Spring Creek style - a large, slippery, ledgy wall with a waterfall in the middle, dropping to a small pool, surrounded by trees and boulders. The water disappears here and is not met again till later. Here we removed all our abseiling gear and wet clothing and had something to eat. It was only 2.15 pm, good time! Others have had to spend the night at this spot. The pitches, all one on top of each other, had been done without hitches, hold ups or rope jams. Everyone took turns at descending first and last, and at hauling and coiling ropes. The pitches are not frustratingly difficult but would provide some problems for the beginner, the unconfident or the uncoordinated.

After the last pitch we set off down the huge boulder pile, under which the water must flow. This is a very steeply-sloping, wide chute full of huge boulders. Huge, quartzite walls, unbroken and vertical, tower each side of it. It is all in shadow, but for the view at the far bottom end of the reemerging creek and benign bush. Standing at the top of the boulder pile is like standing at the top of a huge, bumpy, sharply-plunging slippery dip. Human figures are miniscule in this huge chasm, which is grander than any part of the canyon itself or than anything I've ever seen. (Pardon the liberal use of poetic licence.)

We picked our way slowly down the jumbled boulder garden. It is a tortuous route and involves some awkward downclimbing. Lower down, one can look back up and see quartzite pinnacles between the towering walls. (I'm not sure if it is all really quartzite; it is however some sort of metamorphisized (?) sediment) At the end of all this is a little hand over hand pitch, which involves getting half-wet and doing some acrobatics. Then one comes out into an ordinary creek bash, leaving the walls and boulders behind. The creek bash in the wide, windy creek is relatively easy but a little slow at times. To the right is the back of Thurat Spires and all around are huge, steep spurs and quartzite cliffs. Many creeks come in from both sides. There was a little sun. It was strange leaving the cold, dark, wet, treeless world behind for the mild sunlight.

We reached Kanangra Creek and the bottom of the spur to Kilpatrick's Causeway at 5.00 pm, as it started to get dark. We were prepared for this, all we had wanted was to get out of the creek in the daylight. The rest was easy. It was a long, slow, scungy, trackless, ridge bash, carrying packs and wet ropes and being rather tired. We stopped often on the spur in the mountain holly, and watched the stars brightening and the silhouettes of the mountains that dropped as we climbed. We walked with the help of 2 penlite torches. Guy

performed one of his navigational ~~freaks~~ ability again when he came out at the same pass onto Kilpatrick's Causeway as he had on the trip before. He was heartily congratulated.

We went quickly in the dark on the track along the causeway and the plateau, enthused with being almost back and with the day's success. We looked back over the dark Thurat Spires, and I was glad that I'd finally found out what was behind them. We had a good meal and a sound sleep in the Dance Floor Cave, quite pleased with ourselves. In the morning there were 80 cars at Kanangra Walls and a phenomenonal traffic jam at Jenolan. After what we had done, all this seemed pretty trite.

Danae is not easy. It is long, cold and technical. Some have said it was awesome; I didn't find it frightening. It was too perfect to intimidate. Danae is tailor-made for the lover of natural beauty, who is also a keen outdoors sportswoman/man. One feels privileged to have been able to visit it.

Kristin Young

RACE TO SAVE SCOUT IN CAVERN

From FRANK CROOK in New York

RESCUE workers toiled in growing desperation today to free a Scout leader trapped for two days in a cave.

JAMMED IN TUNNEL

Sergeant Donald Weltner, a New Jersey state trooper, became wedged in the cave 7m underground while leading scouts into a series of limestone caverns about 70km from New York on Sunday.

His own two sons were members of the expedition.

Rescuers tried to drag Weltner free without success. They then tried tunnelling and today used explosives in a new bid to free him.

But rescuers believe their operation is futile and Weltner is "ready" dead.

"We will go on the premise that we still have a chance of rescuing him," said Colonel Clinton Pagano of the New Jersey State Police.

"But there seems to be no sign of life."

Weltner is jammed into a V-shaped cone-like crevass that has rentered his chest and shoulders immobile.

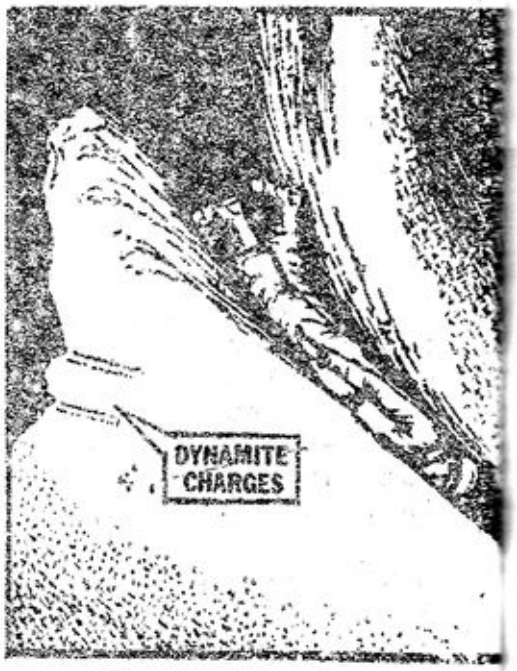
His legs protrude from the crevass, but the rest of his body is out of sight.

Rescuers today packed sleeping bags and blankets around the motionless scout leader before setting off a small dynamite charge to blow away part of one ledge.

They were able to inch toward a second ledge and use a hydraulic lift to chisel away the rock that was pinning him.

The only hope for Weltner's survival was that hypothermia — exposure to extreme cold — was responsible for the lack of sign of life.

Weltner called to his rescuers at one stage that he had almost been dragged free



How Sgt Weltner is trapped.

Future Events

June

Thursday 3rd	General Meeting. Common Room, Holme Building 7:30pm
5th-6th	Climbing Mt Victoria. Contact Phil Cole. 525 2496
12th-14th	- Yarrangobilly. Contact Ian Mann. 631 4321 - skiing (or walking!). Contact Kristin Young. 90 6867 - skiing (or ???). Contact Guy McKanna. 997 3758
19th-20th	Bendethra. Contact Guy McKanna. 997 3758
26th-27th	Jenolan (really?). Guy McKanna. 997 3758

July

Nothing definite yet, but it should be pretty and white, so a few skiing trips could be expected and perhaps even some caving for those who wish to get dirty as well as cold. The previously mentioned Govetts' Leap trip has been postponed pending Mike Lake's recovery (no, it wasn't anything to do with his driving).

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Lumen in Tenebris

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