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## *Society*

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# Come Caving with SUSS!



FOUNDED 1948

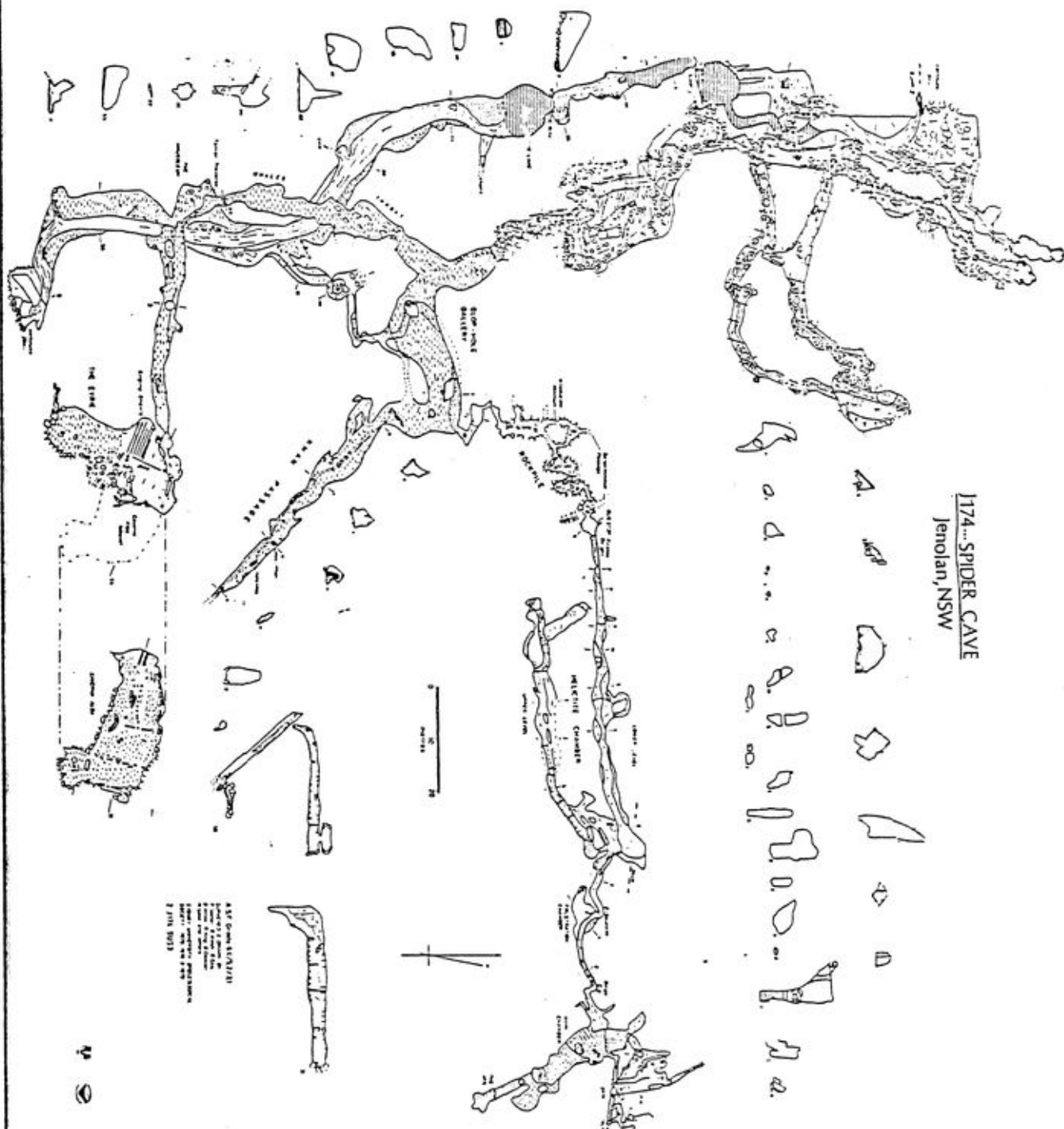
Caving is both a sport and a science.

As a sport, it is rarely matched by more mundane sports for excitement and interest. It involves the discovery and exploration of twisting passages and caverns, and observation of the strange and beautiful underground world. Caving is a demanding sport that can pit you against a tricky rockclimb, abseil, claustrophobic squeeze, or a variety of other challenges.

Imagine this..... There is a cavern, many millions of years old. Its age hangs in the dark and foreboding silence, until your lights enter it. You find yourself looking up into a giant cavern, one of the tallest in Jenolan. This is the first time any human has witnessed this sight. Upon further exploration you find tiny beds of crystal pyramids, some right side up, others standing on their points. Not far from here you crawl through a passage that ends in a sheer drop and you look out at what could be mistaken for a whale's throat. Imagine a room of angel's wings - so thin and pale that your lights shine through them, so contrived by nature to resonate and sing at the sound of your song. Along the way you have rested in a chamber that echoes with the chimes of hundreds of "glop holes" making eerie music, encountered hundreds of 'helictites' - curious formations that twist and curl - and a room of perfect white crystals, stalagmites and stalagtites. You stop along the way and drink from the clear waters of an almost mythical river called the "Hairy Diprotodon" - a name given to a river with the belief it would never be found - waters that have not seen light for thousands of metres, and will remain in darkness for many thousands more.

That is what we did.

We discovered Spider Cave at Jenolan a few years ago, a discovery that has been dubbed the most important in the last half century at Jenolan. If you would like to visit these places, just perhaps go where no-one has been, or even if you only wish to learn some new and filthy songs - join SUSS - the Sydney University Speleological Society, and come caving with us.



# CONTENTS

<u>Article</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Page</u>
Map of J174, Spider Cave, Jenolan		2
<b>THE SUSS GUIDE TO CAVING</b>		
About this bulletin	Patrick Larkin	4
Camping and Caving Paraphernalia	Kathy Handel	4
<b>KARST AREAS</b>		
Jenolan	Richard Mackay	5
Bungonia	Graeme Smith	6
Wombeyan	Patrick Larkin	6
Cliefden	Randall King	7
Abercrombie	Mike Lake	8
Upper Shoalhaven Karst Region (Bendethra, Big Hole, Cleatmore, Marble Arch and Wyanbene)	Graeme Smith	8
Coolleman Plain	Guy Cox	9
Yarrangobilly	Peter Winglee	10
Expedition Caving	Malcom Handel	11
A Fresher's Glossary	Patrick Larkin	13
<b>SOME REALLY SUSS PEOPLE</b>		
(Extracts from past SUSS Bulletins)	(Various)	19
<b>NEWS *** WHAT'S HAPPENING</b>		
		32
List of Committee Members		32
List of Trip Leaders		33
Acknowledgements		33
FUTURE EVENTS		34

# THE SUSS GUIDE TO CAVING

## ABOUT THIS BULLETIN

Patrick Larkin

### This Bulletin

This issue is a guide to the Sydney University Speleological Society ('SUSS') and to the caving undertaken by its members.

### Karst Areas

The first section of this Bulletin is an introduction to some of the cave areas visited by SUSS members. For a number of years (at least as long as I can remember) the same material has appeared in the annual New Members Bulletin. Some of this information has become outdated. With this in mind, and with due respect to the authors of the articles, I have made slight alterations. A few new sections have been added, particularly about caving areas which have received attention from members of SUSS in recent times.

### About SUSS

The second part of this bulletin contains some clippings of articles from previous bulletins. It is designed to give an idea of what we've been doing over the last few years, what happens on SUSS trips, and hopefully, to be amusing. It is my hope that the humour will not be lost as 'in-jokes' often are.

### Trips and Meetings

Finally, the last few pages contain names and telephone numbers of committee members and trip leaders and a list of coming events. New Members are encouraged to ring the people listed on those pages if they have any questions, to come to meetings and to go on trips. In the long run, the new members are the life-blood of the club.

SUSS trips are normally advertised in the bulletin and at the monthly meetings. All you have to do is contact the trip leader and get your name on the list. It is best to get in early as numbers are normally restricted in permit areas and some areas are very popular. Our meetings are held in the Common Room of the Holme Building (next to the footbridge on Parramatta Road) on the first Thursday each month at about 7.30 p.m. (which means don't be too surprised if no one else turns up until 8 p.m.!). It is also something of a SUSS tradition to have dinner at level 2 of the Wentworth Building at 6 pm.

## Camping and Caving Paraphernalia

Kathy Handel

The cavers' 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, but don't expect to wear them again in civilised places because caves have sharp rocks as well as mud. Expensive bushwalking boots are also badly treated in caves. Gardening gloves are used for abseiling and some cavers wear them all the time as protection against rough rock.

Guides at the tourist caves turn out the lights so tourists can "see" absolute darkness. 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 one 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. Also, you won't feel like wearing wet caving clothes and shoes around camp or into a cafe on the way home, so take spare dry clothing.

The most important items of camping gear are 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 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; can opener, billy-holder, jaffle-iron, soap and towel add some comfort; and a musical instrument or camera is very civilised; but a camping chair is just plain decadent.

Trips are organised at monthly meetings (unless otherwise stated this is the 1st Thursday of each month in the Common Room of the Holme Building) and trip leaders organise the sharing of transport and tents. Car drivers should take the usual precaution for country travelling, i.e. check tyres, include jack, spare tyre, tools etc., since most caves are away from civilisation and sometimes on bad roads.

There are always loquacious members at meetings only too willing to advise you on gear, and at last resort the club has a limited amount of gear for new members' use. Always ask your trip leader in advance if you want to borrow the club's gear.

## KARST AREAS

Jenolan  
Richard Mackay

Although it is probably better known as a popular tourist area, Jenolan contains a large number of caves that are only accessible to members of a recognised caving club. SUSS has been largely responsible for the majority of exploration and mapping work that has been done at Jenolan, and two books, "The Exploration and Speleography of Mammoth Cave" and "The Northern Limestone" have been produced by SUSS members.

Jenolan is located about 60 km from Mt. Victoria; it generally takes about 2-3 hours to drive to/from Sydney. All caving trips require a permit from the Department of Leisure Sport and Tourism.

The tourist caves at Jenolan are at the centre of two separate systems. The Northern System, which is the most extensive, contains a number of large caves. The best known of these is Mammoth Cave which is one of the most strenuous sporting caves in the country. Spider Cave, which was discovered by SUSS in 1975, has since been found to contain part of a large river, sections of which can also be seen in Mammoth and Imperial Caves. There are a number of other large caves in the Northern limestone, for example, Wiburd's Lake Cave and the grottiest of caves - Dwyer's. These possess excellent prospects for further extension. The Southern Limestone system appears to be less extensive, though the possibility of further discovery (and maybe even the fabled Southern Limestone Master Cave) is ever present.



Caving at Jenolan has something for every enthusiast, three separate underground river systems, numerous sporty sections and squeezes, as well as some of the best formation anywhere in N.S.W.

Bungonia  
Graeme Smith

I didn't think anyone needed to be told the location of Bungonia because everybody to whom I mention caving seems to answer "I tried that once - at Bungonia". In case you haven't been there yet, turn off the Hume Highway just south of Marulan, follow the signs to Bungonia and then the sign to Bungonia Lookdown. The area has been established and a ranger lives on site. Camping fees are \$2 a day and water, toilets and showers are available.

The area is a limestone plateau between Bungonia Creek and the Shoalhaven River. The caves are mostly vertical although several do not require much gear. 154 "caves" are tagged in the area and the description and maps may be found in the Bungonia Caves book. About 20 of these caves are worth visiting, some being well over 100m deep and containing several pitches up to 50m deep. The caves are usually dry however, they have the added problem of high levels of carbon dioxide in their lower regions. The symptoms of carbon dioxide "poisoning" are obvious and it is easy to avoid problems. Major caves include Odysseey, Argyle, Drum, Grille, Hogan's Hole-Fossil, Acoustic Pot, Hollands Hole, College and Putrid Pit.

Many SUSS members scoff at Bungonia as an area, however, it has several unique advantages:

- (1) There are several promising surface digs so you can legitimately not have to go caving.
- (2) The scenery at Bungonia Lookdown and Adams Lookout is magnificent so it's good walking country. A walk out to Tolwong mines or through the Gorge is a day well spent.
- (3) There are 3 excellent canyons at Bungonia. To traverse canyons is like exploring a world class cave without the roof. Lots of swimming and abseiling and then a pleasant stroll back up several hundred metres to the cars.
- (4) Most importantly, Bungonia offers the best vertical caves in N.S.W. This fact on its own makes the area a 'must'. It is particularly useful as a practise venue for anyone planning to visit Tasmania or New Zealand for the first time. And it is a mere three hours drive from Sydney.

Wombeyan  
Patrick Larkin

The Wombeyan Karst area is located about 60 kilometres west of Mitagong near the spur of the Great Dividing Range. The Wombeyan Caves Road leaves the Hume Highway about 6 kilometres south of Mitagong, and is sealed for the first 15 kilometres. The rest of the road is a very good dirt road which any car may traverse without fear of damage. There are spectacular views of the Wollondilli River Valley at a few points along the way.



On average, the caves of Wombeyan are smaller than, for example, Jenolan. However, the profuse decoration of the Wombeyan Caves makes this karst area one of the finest in New South Wales. Perhaps this is the most notable feature of Wombeyan: the consistency of its speleothems. There is scarcely a cave that is not worth a photograph.

Recent work at Wombeyan, particularly by members of the Sydney Speleological Society ("SSS") has shown that there is still new cave to be won. In the late 1970s, SSS members were exploring such extensive caves as Sigma and Tattered Shawl Caves, which are, even by Wombeyan standards, finely decorated. About 1982, SSS discovered Desperation Point Cave. SUSS has made smaller finds at Wombeyan in the last few years - notably Peter Patonai and I discovered a small ( 15 metres deep and 14 metres in plan ) cave in 1984, which we called Nova Cave.

One of the sportiest caves at Wombeyan is Glass Cave, which has a few nice climbs and a squeeze. It was thought to end in a deep lake at the bottom of the final chamber. However, in 1985, members of the Cave Diving Association dived this lake to a depth of more than 30 metres, and discovered a number of extensive water-filled side passages, more than doubling the total length of the cave. A number of years ago, Julia James of SSS proved by dye tracing that there is a water connection between Glass Cave and nearby River Cave, but that this connection only occurs after very heavy rain. This suggests that there may be an undiscovered dry passage between the water filled sections of these caves which takes water only after substantial rainfall.

On the other side of the Wombeyan Reserve, the Mares Forest Creek / Bullio / Bouverie Caves stream flows through a beautiful passageway. Downstream, in Mares Forest Creek and Bullio Caves, the passage is large with smoothly carved walls, rim pools and lakes. As one travels upstream in Bullio Cave, the passage cross section diminishes, until there are duck-unders and finally the river sumps. In Bouverie Cave the passage is a nightmare - small and in foul air. The stream above Bouverie Cave is Wombeyan's 'Woolly Rhinoserosus'. Though there are a number of extensive high-level caves above where the stream ought to be, no connections to lower levels containing the stream have been found. The stream carries a large volume of water and has never been known to run low, even in the driest years. Yet, despite repeated investigations, the above ground source of the water remains a mystery.

#### Cliefden Randall King

Cliefden Caves are located 35km 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 known in the early 1800s.

Trips to Cliefden are notoriously luxurious. Cavers have the use of a house with fridge, electricity and a warm fireplace in the winter. Many an inspired trip has floundered 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 decoration of any cave in N.S.W. Cliefden Main, the major cave, contains the Helictite Hall, rivalling the helictites in Orient Cave, Jenolan. Most major caves are gated and contain numerous speleothems.

SUSS's major project at Cliefden was the surveying of Taplow Maze. Every trip for a number of years discovered new cave, and of course, that had to be surveyed! This project had been worked for 4 or 5 years and a reasonable map developed. However, little work has been done in the last few years. Volunteers to restart this moribund project would be welcome.

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

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

#### Abercrombie Caves Mike Lake

Abercrombie Caves are in a 44 hectare reserve located 75 kilometres south of Bathurst and 15 kilometres south of the nearest hotel at Trunkey. Camping facilities include barbecues, hot showers and power points for caravans (although cavers would never be so decadent as to "camp" in such a manner).

Even though I am loathe to admit it, the Grand Arch at Abercrombie surpasses in size and beauty the Arch at Jenolan. It measures 221 metres long, about 60 metres wide, and in places, over 30 metres high. It is one of the greatest natural tunnels in the world. Within this Arch is the Hall of Terpsichore which includes an old dancing stage from the gold rush days.

There are around seventy-five undeveloped caves at Abercrombie; Bushranger Cave was allegedly used as a hide-away by the notorious Ben Hall and Jack P. Piesley.

SUSS trips to Abercrombie are usually arranged in collaboration with MSS (Metropolitan Speleological Society). Abercrombie is a fine alternative to Jenolan Caves and well deserves a visit.

#### Upper Shoalhaven Karst Region Graeme Smith

The caving region is located in the Deua National park some 30 km south of Braidwood and consists of five district cave areas. With the exception of Bendethra, all are reached by travelling south along the Krawarree road which parallels the Shoalhaven River. Access to Bendethra is something of a 4-wheel drive epic and not often visited by SUSS. The main cave at Bendethra is relatively large (about 200m of horizontal passage) while the remainder are mostly vertical and require tackle. Windlass Pit is 61m deep.

Access to the other 4 areas involves crossing the Shoalhaven. Previously it was possible to cross at Emu Flat property to get to Big Hole, Marble Arch and Cleatmore. The ford was quite deep and tales of water washing over the bonnet were not uncommon. Recently the farmer solved this problem by closing the road entirely. The walk from the river to Big Hole takes about 1 hour, Cleatmore 2 hours and Marble Arch 2 hours.

### Big Hole

Big Hole, as the name implies, is a big hole and nothing more. Located near the top of a hill this 110m deep hole is well worth a visit. The basically free-hanging 90m pitch is tiring but not technically difficult (unless you have to pass a knot) and the view from the bottom inspiring. This "cave" is usually attempted by SRT enthusiasts keen to practise their techniques.

### Cleatmore

Cleatmore (or is it Cheitmore?) is further north and down in the Deua valley. These caves are generally small and not worth more than a casual visit. The largest cave (CH2) has a 100 or so metres of reasonable passage and is reported to contain a bat colony. A small resurgence is active, even in times of extreme drought.

### Marble Arch

At one stage on its journey to the Deua, the water of the Reedy Creek travels along a narrow band of marble and has formed a number of caves in this area, including the large, walkthrough, Marble Arch. This area is well worth the walk for the gorge and arch alone. It also has two or three interesting caves worth poking into. The more enthusiastic can even get wet and muddy. Marble Arch Cave has four main entrances and about 90m of passage (mostly large). Moodang Cave has 4 entrances and about 140m of passage. With the current drought it can be negotiated for most of this distance although one is bound to get very wet. The resurgence (MA4) is located a few metres up the wall of the gorge and is quite tight and wet - obviously worth doing.

### Wyanbene

Finally we have the Wyanbene Cave area. Access is via a ford across the Shoalhaven at Gundillion and a drive along 8 km of road to the cave entrance. In wet weather the road and river crossing can be quite impassable to 2-wheel drive vehicle and it is easier to camp at the river and walk. Several small caves are reported to exist but I've never found them. Wyanbene Cave has about 1,900m of passage and is entered at the resurgence end. The cave is wet by N.S.W. standards and trips into the cave can extend for several hours, so dress accordingly. It is basically horizontal but there are a few short climbs and ladder pitches. The cave is well decorated and boasts a magnificent aven - "the Gunbarrel" - which rises more than 100 metres up into the roof. There are several large chambers, the finest of which is Caesar's Hall. A wade or two through the Diarrhoea Pits eventually leads to the terminal sump aptly named Frustration Lake. It is best to consider this magnificent cave as one for people who know they like caving and not for those who like to keep their feet dry.

### Cooleman Plain

Guy Cox

Cooleman tends to be the '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. Cooleman Plain is only about 50 km from Canberra as the crow flies; about 100 km by the shortest route (the rough Brindabella Road (dirt), a steep four-wheel drive track); or about 200 km from Canberra by sealed road, with about 30 km 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 Cooleman - Right Cooleman system and Murray Cave, both dry and much trogged. These are the largest and best-known caves at Cooleman, but these are not what give the Plain its special attraction.

Above all, Cooleman 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-diveable sump. The Clown, Frustration, New-Year, Zed Cave system is even more choice - tight, sharp passage often half full of water and seeming ten times real length. Any Yorkshireman would be instantly reminded of Wharfedale.

Because of its distance from Sydney trips to Cooleman tend to be long weekend affairs (though not always on official holiday weekends!). There is a long tradition of Easter Cooleman trips, always worth attending.

#### Yarrangobilly Peter Winglee

Yarrangobilly (Yagby, for short) is located in the Kosciusko 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 13km and varying from 0.5 to 2 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 200m plus 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 porphyry 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: West Eagles Nest (Y1), East Eagles Nest (Y2) 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 of 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 Deep Creek 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 stream-bed 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 Yarangobilly Research Group. This was formed to stimulate and co-ordinate speleological work in this area and comprises mainly 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 NPWS 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 interest be known so that more trips will be organised.

#### Expedition Caving Malcom Handel

Drizzling rain eases, the steamy warmth of the tropics seeps through the undergrowth. We strain with laden packs to lift our feet from the mud that sucks at each footstep. Up ahead, a New Guinea native, bush knife in hand, expertly slices the vines and bamboo. Uri Pogoba squeals excitedly and we move forward to where he stands at the edge of a deep shaft. Instantly the mood changes as packs are taken off, throwing rocks sought, and people clamber around the rim of the hole for a better look. A rock is dropped ... one ... two .. three seconds before a thud is heard. That's 150 feet deep, the same size as the deepest underground pitch back home in N.S.W. Quickly a rope is produced and tied off to a tree - there's no lack of anchor points around here. As the caver descends into the murk the onlookers wait for the answer. Does it go? Or is this just another shaft blocked with debris?

Expedition caving is undoubtedly the most exciting and unpredictable aspect of speleology. For those of us who live in Sydney the potential for new discoveries on home territory is rather limited. There are certainly some good discoveries to be made at Jenolan, Bungonia, Yarangobilly and the other well-visited areas, but such discoveries are hard won, and not likely to make any impact on the world caving scene. To satisfy the fundamental urge, present in most cavers, to go where no other has gone before, to descend pitches of uncertain depth or to swim an underground river that flows into the unknown, he or she must take part in an expedition to distant parts.

Some of the first expeditions undertaken by SUSS members were to the Nullabor Plain in the early '60s. Aerial photographs were used to spot entrances and as a result many new caves were found in the flat, almost featureless, desert. This included Mullamullang which, at 6 miles was the longest cave in Australia at that time. There is still potential for finding long caves on the Nullabor, especially for cave divers, who recently made the world's longest underground dive of over 8 kilometres in a water-filled passage that is still going.

Interest in Tasmanian Caves has always been strong, and although it is not necessary to mount a real expedition to go there, I mention it here because of its remoteness from Sydney. Various individuals from SUSS have made contributions to exploration in Tasmania, and the smallest state now boasts the longest, deepest and wettest caves in Australia.

(Ed: See trip report of the latest SUSS Tasmania trip in the next bulletin)

The South Island of New Zealand is the land of the so-called mini-expedition. There are three areas of special interest: Takaka Hill, Mt. Arthur and Mt. Owen. Over the years these areas have yielded some of the world's greatest sporting caves. At Takaka Hill there is Harwood's Hole, with its 180m entrance pitch followed by a kilometre of streamway to the Starlight Cave exit, which must rank as one of the best through-trips in the world. Nearby is Greenlink Cave, which has 16 pitches, mostly in waterfalls, down to the first sump at a depth of 270m, beyond which exploration is still continuing. At Mt. Owen and Mt. Arthur many of the caves are in the alpine heath above the treeline. The rope, tackle, food and camping equipment must all be carried in, and good organisation is at a premium. Fortunately cavers have usually two major finds. A Mt. Owen trip in 1977 found and explored 14 new caves in a period of ten days. One of them was 700ft deep, another was 650ft, and anything under 100ft was considered too insignificant to be called a cave.

At Mt. Arthur, exploration has traditionally taken place in high altitude areas, which is not surprising as vertical cavers are continually searching for the 'deepest cave'. This has produced caves like Gorgoroth and Blackbird, both in the order of 300m deep. More recently some trogs with inverted thinking have started exploring at the foot of Mt Arthur. Exploring caves from the bottom and climbing up inside them has become all the vogue. Nettlebed, which had been explored from the bottom up during several expeditions over the last couple of years, became the deepest cave in the Southern Hemisphere

As climbers have aspired to go to the Himalayas, Australian cavers have aspired to go on expeditions to Papua New Guinea. Most Australian efforts have centred on the Muller Range in the Southern Highlands. Four full-scale expeditions have gone into this area. Caving in New Guinea requires, as well as caving skills, the ability to carry a heavy pack all day, through wet and muddy conditions, and to remain cheerful about it.

Why do we keep going back to New Guinea? It is because there are vast amounts of limestone still unexplored, because New Guinea already contains the second deepest (Bibima) and longest (Atea Kanada) caves in the Southern Hemisphere, because there are dolines which could swallow up the whole Central Business District of Sydney and cave rivers with volumes of water greater than anywhere else in the world. Much of the exploration has been done by Australian and New Zealand cavers, but British, French and Spanish cavers have also found it worthwhile to trek halfway around the globe for a couple of months' caving there. The best account of why we go there, and what we have found, is in the published report of the 1978 Australasian expedition, Caves & Karst of the Muller Range.



Cavers Helmet



Spelean OH  
Caving

SUSS BULL 25(3):12



Premier Carbide Cap Lamp



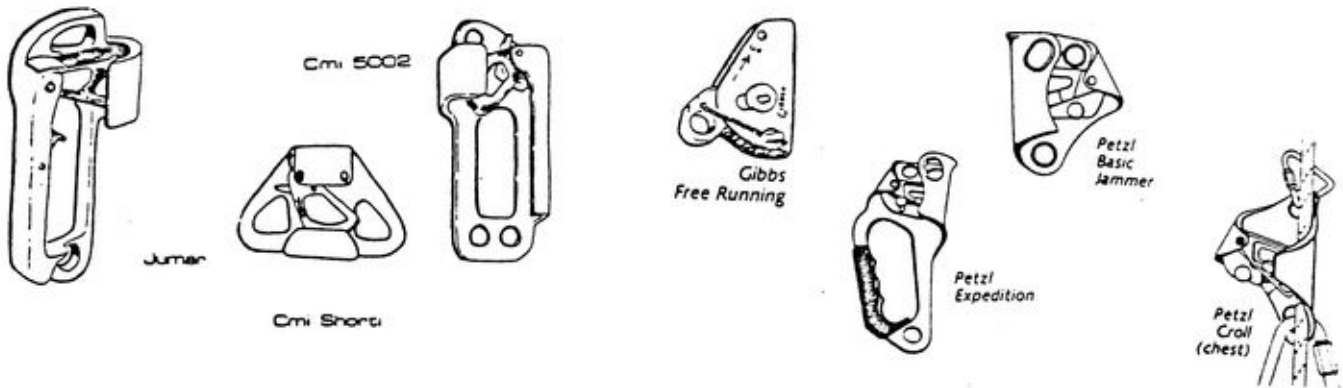
# A Fresher's Glossary

Patrick Larkin

This glossary is designed for those people who find themselves faced with an entirely new jargon. For this reason, I have avoided overly technical definitions where possible. Furthermore, I have included only those terms that are commonly used in SUSS. It is my hope that the purists will not be too harsh in their criticism.

## A

- Abseil** (Verb) To descend a pitch on a rope.
- Aragonite** A crystalline form of limestone formed under higher pressure than calcite.
- Ascender** A device for ascending ropes ( prusiking ). Examples include CMI, Petzl and Gibbs ascenders.



Various Ascenders.

- Aven** A hole in the roof of a cave.

## B

- Belay** (Verb) to guard against falling. When laddering, this is usually done by attaching a rope to the person on the ladder.
- Bolt** A cylindrical bar of metal. Bolts are driven into rock and used as tie off points for abseil ropes when natural anchors are unavailable.



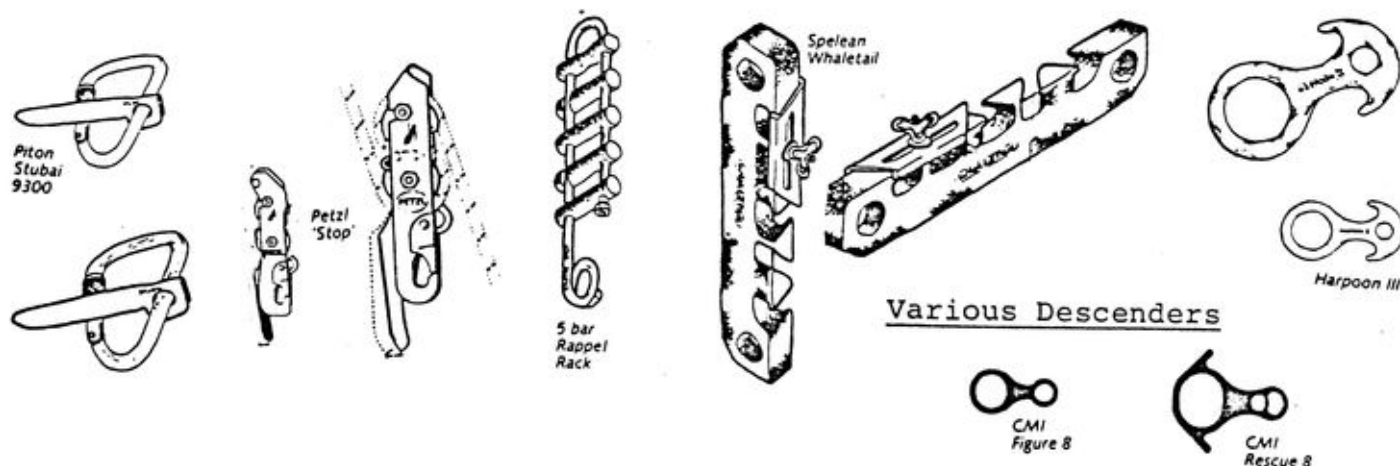
- Bottom Belay** Descenders are designed to stop or slow when the rope on which you are abseiling is pulled taught from below. This technique enables an out of control descent to be substantially stopped by a person standing at the bottom of a pitch.

# C

Calcite	A crystalline form of limestone
Calcite rafts	Flat crystals that float on the surface of cave lakes and other still bodies of water.
Canyoning	The sport of negotiating a canyon. It may involve a large number of abseil pitches near or in water-falls.
Cave Coral	Small, often ubiquitous, coral-like formations.
Chimney	1. (Verb) to climb between two rock faces taking advantage of the friction offered by the faces - eg. with feet against one wall and back against the other. 2. (Noun) a piece of cave passage which obliges the caver to chimney - eg. an aven. 3. (Noun) the flew above a fireplace.
CMI	An American firm that makes ascenders and other equipment.
Crab	1. A karabiner 2. A saltwater crustacean with six legs and nasty nippers.

# D

Descender	A device used for descending a rope (abseiling). Examples include whaletails, rappel racks, harpoons and pitons.
-----------	--



Dig	(Noun) A piece of cave passage constricted by sand, mud or earth, from which cavers excavate the sand, mud or earth in the hope of discovering new cave passage beyond the constriction.
Double-roping	Abseiling on two strands of rope. This technique is often used when Canyoning to facilitate rope retrieval from the bottom of a pitch after the party has descended.
Draining	"Pseudo caving" in man-made drains. Only VERY twisted souls partake of this 'sport'.

## F

### Flowstone

A cave formation formed by the deposition of dissolved limestone from flowing water. Flowstone often takes on the shape of a frozen cascade of water.

### Formations

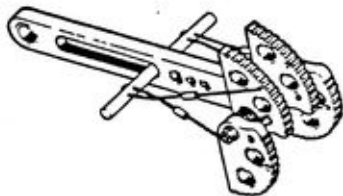
There are two main families of formations. Firstly there are the mineral formations or 'decorations' which include all formations created by the deposition of dissolved limestone. Examples of this class include flowstone, stalagmites, shawls, straws and helictites. Such formations are said to be 'active' if they are still growing - that is, if minerals are still being deposited on them. The second main class of formations are the mud formations created by the action of dripping or slowly flowing water. A prominent example of a mud formation is a glop-hole.

### Foul Air

When the proportion of oxygen in the atmosphere of a cave is less than the normal proportion of oxygen in free atmosphere, the air is said to be 'foul'. Normal foul air contains an increased proportion of Carbon Dioxide. There are certain physiological responses to an increase in CO<sub>2</sub>, including slightly raised heartbeat, rapid breath and a warm tingling skin that may become slightly pinkish. These should alert the experienced caver to the presence of foul air before danger arises. See also STINK DAMP.

### Friend

A device used by rock climbers as protection against a fall by the lead climber. It is inserted into a crack in rock. It will then jam in the crack if weight is put on it.



Friends



## G

### Glop-Hole

A hole in the mud formed by dripping water. Glop-holes may be up to a few feet deep. A drop of water makes a 'glop' noise as it falls into the hole. The pitch of the 'glop' depends on the radius and depth of the hole.

### Gour (or Rim) Pool

At the edge of a pool of water, calcite may be deposited. A Rim pool is formed when a thin wall forms around the pool. This formation is still called a rim pool whether or not the water from which it formed remains.

### Guano

The excrement of bats.

## H

### Hairy Diprotodon

One of Jenolan's 'mythical creatures' until 1979, now the course of the Jenolan Underground River in Spider Cave. See also WOOLY RHINOSCEROUS and SOUTHERN LIMESTONE MASTER CAVE.

## Harness

Usually made of tape, a harness is used to firmly connect a person to his SRT equipment, so that there is no danger of falling.



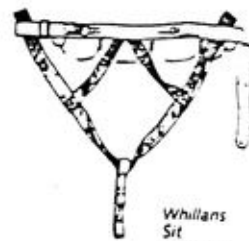
Spelean Sit Harness



Troll Freestyle



Petzl Harness Vercors



Whillans Sit Harness

## Harpoon

A type of descender

## Helictite

A thin, twisting and sometimes branching formation.

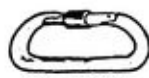
## Hydrology

The study underground water.

## K



Big 'D'



Small 'D'



Snaplink



Normal



Wide Mouth



Delta

## Karabiners

## Karabiner

The name for a family of devices having many uses in SRT. These devices are made of steel or alloy, come in various shapes including triangular and 'D' shaped.

## Karst

The limestone landscape of the Karst in Yugoslavia has leant its name as a generic term to describe limestone landscapes generally.

## L

## Ladder

(Noun) A wire caving ladder  
(Verb) To ascend or descend a ladder.

## M

## Marble

Metamorphised limestone.

## Mini-Rack

A descender. A miniature version of the rappel rack.

## O

## Order of the Wombat

An award given to fools who participate in the most difficult and often hopeless digs ( eg. at the bottom of Dwyer's Cave, Jenolan ).

## P

## Petzl

A French Company that manufactures caving equipment.

## Phreatic

(Adjective) Used to describe a passage formed below the water table.

Pitch                    A vertical drop in a cave.

Prusik                  (Verb) To ascend a pitch on a rope

## R

Rapell                  The American Word for 'Abseil'

Rapell rack            A type of descender

Resurgence            Where an underground river re-emerges from underground.  
See also SINK.

Rockpile              A pile of boulders that may or may not be negotiable.

## S

Scaling Poles          Typically a set of pipes which may be bolted together lengthways. These are carried into a cave, bolted together, raised upwards, and used as a climbing aid by attaching a cave ladder to the upper most pole. The poles are supported by guy ropes attached to the top pole.

Shawl                  A type of formation. Shawls are formed by calcite deposited from a trickle of water, often running along a roof, wall or stalagmite. The water runs along the lower edge of the shawl. The shawl grows as thin layers of new material are deposited along its low edge. This accounts for the main descriptive characteristic of shawls, that is that they are thin, blade-like structures.

Shortie                An ascender made by CMI

Sink                    The place where a river goes underground.

Skiing                 What SUSS people do in winter. It comes in two varieties, real (or downhill) and bogus (or cross-country). I am loathe to admit that a good number of SUSS people are not as enlightened as I, and favour the cross-country variety.

Solution tube          A roughly cylindrical cave passage formed when water dissolves away the limestone.

Southern Limestone Master Cave  
The hypothetical (mythical?) cave carrying the main southern stream between the sink near Paradox Cave and Baralong Cave in the Southern Limestone at Jenolan.

Speleology            The study of caves and karst.

Speleothem            A generic term for mineral formations in caves.

Squeeze                A very narrow piece of cave passage

SRT                    Single Rope Techniques. The techniques used to ascend and descend a single rope.

stalagmite	Calcite laden water dripping onto the floor builds this formation from the floor up.
Stalagtite	Calcite laden water dripping from the roof builds this formation from the roof down. The same dripping water may lead to the development of a stalagmite beneath a stalagtite. If these two formations grow so much that they join, the resulting formation is called a coloumn.
Stink Damp	A dangerous and rare form of foul air known to exist on occasions at the bottom of Grille Cave, Bungonia. It contains a diminished proportion of oxygen, but unlike normal foul air, there is no corresponding increase in Carbon Dioxide. Thus the physiological responses experienced in normal foul air will be absent in Stink Damp.
Straw	A straw-shaped formation
Sump	A cave passage containing a river where the roof drops below the natural water level.

## T

Trog	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Verb) A passage is said to have been 'trogged' if it has been previously explored.</li> <li>2. (Verb) A person is said to be 'trogged-up' if he/she is dressed for caving.</li> <li>3. (Noun) A caver.</li> </ol>
Troglobite	An animal that lives its entire life in a cave and is never found outside the cave environment.
Troglophile	An animal that lives its entire life in a cave. Other individuals of these species may be found outside the cave.
Trogloxene	An animal dependant on the external environment that regularly returns to the cave. (eg. bats)

## W

Woolly Rhinoscerous	The hypothetical course of the Jenolan Underground River between the sink ( Watersend Cave ) and its appearance as Lower River in Mammoth Cave. One of Jenolan's "mythical creatures".
Whaletail	A type of descender.

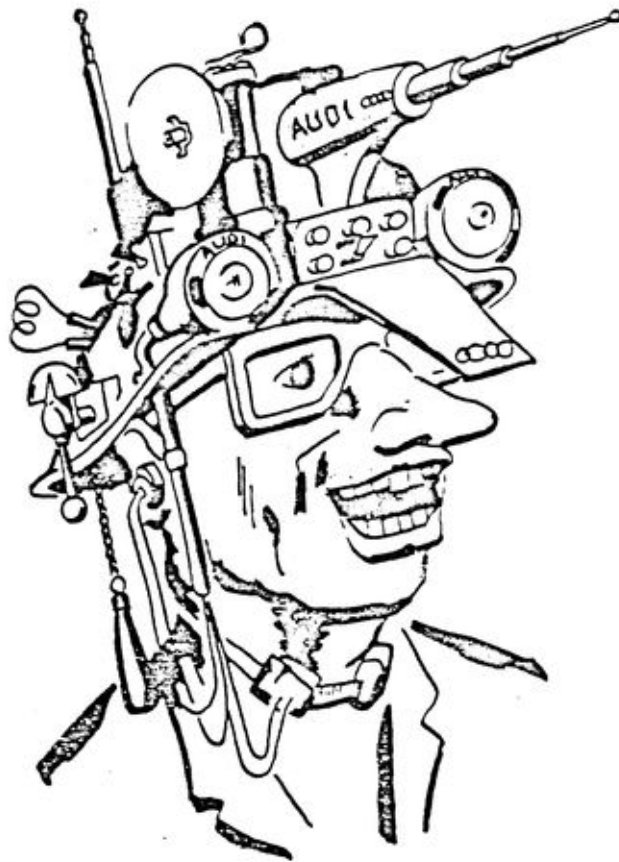
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### STOP PRESS

After much concerted effort Rolf Adams has reached the pinnacle of his illustrious draining career. Recently he became the first person to pass the S-bend at the bottom of a North Sydney toilet. The owner is suing for serious alarm and affront.



## SOME REALLY SUSS PEOPLE



Mike Lake modelling his new solar powered caving light.

One of the best things about SUSS is the people in the club. Why it is that damp, dark, muddy, slimy holes in the ground full of bat guano only succeed in attracting strange people is a mystery to me. So, if you're a little bit strange, join SUSS, where it is quite likely that you won't be strange by our standards.

The next few pages contain a few clippings from past SUSS bulletins to illustrate my point:

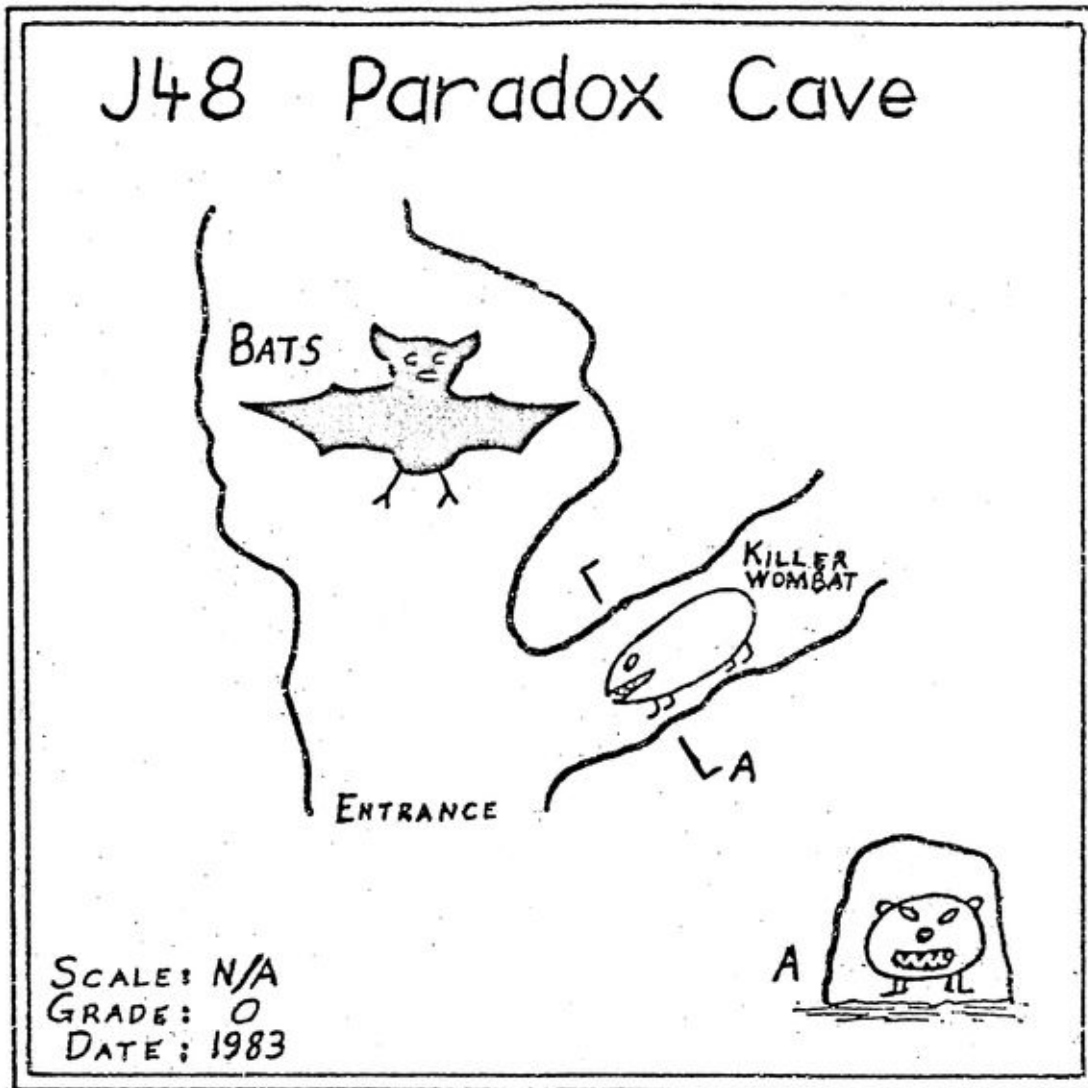
### From the Archives

"The fact that we are a society of intellectuals reveals itself in society politics. The issues are of such triviality as to lend the whole an air of harmless farce, and only the near-sighted inject purpose into the charivari."

SUSS Journal Vol.6(1) May 1960

Oh Richard!

This map was drawn by no less an authority than a former President of SUSS. It just goes to show what a few years in SUSS and an Engineering degree can do to a once stable and mature person:



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ROLF-FLAVOURED TRIP REPORTS

Rolf Adams is definitely one of the strange people referred to in the introduction to this section. Rolf delights in trying to fit himself into the smallest spaces he can find. It is rumoured that Rolf enjoys grovelling in North Sydney drains when he can't have limestone. Rolf likes wearing odd socks. Rolf also has consistently written good quality and humorous trip reports. I, for one, look forward to Rolf's Tasmania-flavoured report whenever it appears. Extracted from SUSS bulletin 24(3) is a typical Rolf trip report:

SUSS BULL 25(3):20

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## Trip Report : Wombeyan 17-18th August 1984

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### Saturday 17th

The car containing Mark Thompson, Darrel Mackender, Brian Davis and Rolf Adams zoomed along the road linking Wombeyan with the Hume Highway in what was definitely closer to one hour than 45 minutes. Then at 10.15am it was time to rouse the sleeping beauties of Warren Cole, David McNichol and Peter Wade. Off then to Tattered Shawl Cave, not without cavelike diversions on the way.

Tattered Shawl Cave is along the main track, over the creek, up the hill, over the top, keep to the left, stay on the slope, over a wire fence, under a rock. It is also 10 metres from Sigma Cave. This cave is full of formations, very few of them still active (most of them sit in the dark every day doing nothing at all). The most prominent feature of the cave is a 20m ladder pitch guarded at the bottom by a 5m purple shawl which no longer seems to be tattered. A few small leads are worth exploring by the mud enthusiasts, the best of these starting with a 3m ladder pitch between a mud-rock wall and flowstone wall. This is in fact a simple chimney, but such actions would quickly ruin the flowstone. A thin windy passage leads to a room full of niceities including large black helictites. A sharp right hand bend (of the cave) brings one to a small climb out through which a strong breeze can be felt. The prime suspect is a small hole leading off and down from the top of the climb, an unpersonable connection to the top level of the cave being most probable.

### Sunday 18th

Glass Cave was today's destination lying up the road, past the old Quarry, park at a gate on the left, down the road, look at the marble quarry, up the hill, stay with the cables, see a black hose and follow it down the opposite hillside until a monster of a hole in the ground grabs your feet and pulls you under. These seven people, however, thought it was at the top of the hill. Much time was wasted, a lot of it being involved in visiting tagged and untagged holes.

In the process of putting one end of a ladder down a small hole in the limestone, Brian decided to feed the vertical shaft an open metal box containing camera, mandarins and other items. He himself became the cave's next meal. Although the opening at the bottom of the cave could fit a few people comfortably it was only visited by one person at a time. The obviously marble walls of the 12m shaft had a few old formations as well as one or two sharp flakes. Out of the cave came an undamaged camera and the contingent of mandarins, none of which had survived.

Two pm, and the find of Glass Cave came within 20 minutes of simultaneity. Glass Cave has an enormous entrance from which 3 large passages lead off. The first of these to be visited officially comes under the name of Bat Extension. Although only 3 bats were encountered (one of them being mummified and stuck to the roof), the bat residue on the floor was between 10cm and 50cm deep for most of the cave. It is suspected that either a large number of bats has gone away for a holiday or the 2 live bats seen have very active bowels. A respectable length of formation-bearing passage was passed through, most of it on foot. The sections that did call out for crawlers were very pleasant on the knees due to the cushioning provided by the bat shit. Strangely enough the nail-biters in the party were far

from thankful.

The second of the initial three passages is a large steeply-sloping streamway of the past which after a few squeezes and difficult climbs leads to a lake with small calcite rafts. On the way a handline is essential, some of the drops bearing close resemblance to short pitches. An obvious flowstone climb to the right leads to a very well decorated cavern, delighting those with cameras. The third of the initial passages is the upstream extension of this streamway which like the first region visited has been given a carpetted floor by the bats.

The day has ended. Everyone goes home.

Rolf Adams.  
SUSS BULL 2+(3)

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QUOTES OF MIKE LAKE

"John Laws knows more about Physics than I do."

"Even I watch Sons and Daughters"

"Downhill Skiing [ !@~#\$ Bulgarian Cave Snail %^\*@! ] all over caving."

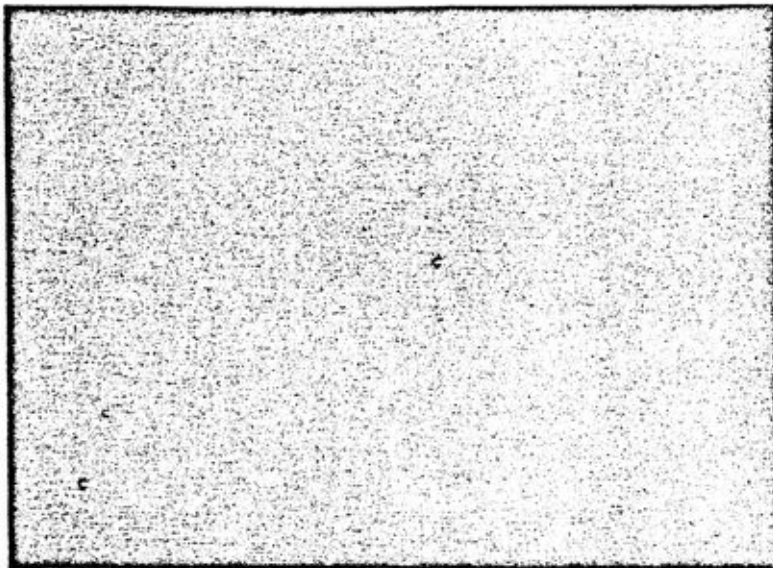


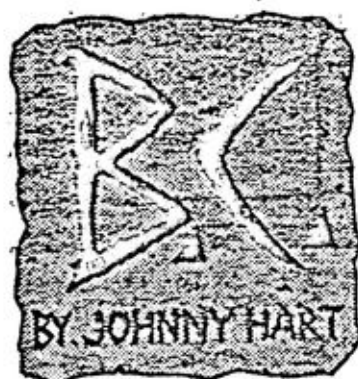
Photo of Kubla Khan (Tas.) taken using Mike Lake's patented solar powered camera flash.

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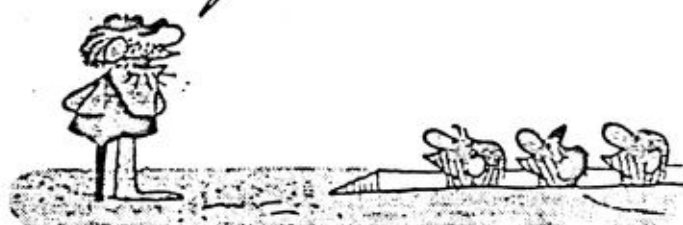
SPELEO-SPORTS

Each year, Macquarie University plays host to the "Speleo-Sports". This is a competition consisting of abseiling, prusiking, climbing, squeezing, grovelling through mud-filled trenches and other like good family activities. Each year in living memory, ( well, at least as long as I can recall ) SUSS has won, demonstrating the technical and atheletic capabilities of its cavers. SUSS bulletin 24(2) had this to say:

SUSS BULL 25(3):22



ALL RIGHT, MEN! THIS YEAR  
WE'RE GOING ALL THE WAY!



I HAVE DEVISED A  
MATHEMATICAL  
METHOD OF WINNING  
THE SPELED SPORTS



THE SPORT ITSELF, IS A  
PREDICTABLE PROGRESSION  
OF LOGICAL CALCULATIONS,



BASED ON EXPONENTIAL  
FORMULAS, ..ALGEBRAIC  
EQUASIONS AND...



HERE COMES THE  
SUSS TEAM  
CAPTAIN.



GOOD LUCK

..THANKS



WE'RE DEAD





Caving Safety  
(Extracted from 'SPAR' 46, July 1975)

Every caver is surely aware that no aspect of caving deserves more attention than that of underground safety. This is true for a number of reasons, e.g. if caving accidents are allowed to mount, caving as a sport will decline in public favour, caving societies will dissolve, and then that what would all we weirdos do for congenial company? Furthermore, careless caving is bad for the caves themselves - blood spilled in caves is unsightly and makes them slippery for cavers to negotiate. Finally, and perhaps most worthy of note, certain caves are so constructed as to make recovery of accident victims virtually impossible. If sufficient safety precautions are not taken, such caves will become packed solid with bodies and will thus be rendered impassable for explorers. It is therefore in the caver's own interests to pay heed to the dictums expounded in this article.

First, we will consider a few personal rules for personal safety:

1. Never go into a flooded cave. You will be unable to keep your carbide lamp burning under water and will surely become lost.
2. Never enter a cave during an earthquake. Blocks of stone may fall from the roof and in doing so may tear your clothing. This may cause you to catch cold when you leave the cave.
3. Always use a rope when you absail. This point cannot be stressed too strongly.
4. Stay away from caves that are known to be inhabited by cave bears, dragons, sabre-toothed tigers, pterodactyls and bunyips. Some scientists feel these animals may be dangerous.
5. Showing off in a cave is frowned upon. No matter how skilled you may be walking on your hands on the Hairy Traverse in B4-5 (Bungonia), it is extremely unsafe. The rock here is rough and you may scrape your palms most painfully.
6. Be choosy about your caving companions. If you have just stolen your mate's girlfriend, or if your flatmate has taken to dropping pellets in your coffee and standing beside your bed at night with a meat cleaver in his hand, it is best not to take these persons into a cave with you. Though they may appear physically weak and puny, they could be possessed of diabolical cleverness. Play safe!
7. Do not go caving if you are suffering from gangrene, a broken neck, bullet wounds, hydrophobia, smallpox, fractured ribs or food poisoning. Many situations arise underground that demand alertness and top physical form.
8. Under no circumstances should you ever try to drive through a cave in a car. If you run out of petrol there is no place to buy more.

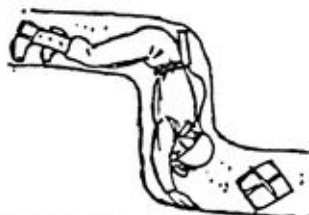
Rolf demonstrating the latest in  
Draining Techniques (the D.T's).



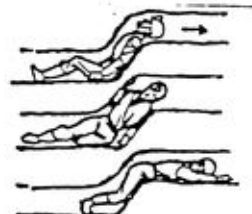
4' high  
crouch walk



3' high  
walk on all fours



SUSS BULL 25(3):24



Rolf passing the S-bend



## DRAINING

As noted in the Glossary, there are a few minds in SUSS that are not merely warped, but actually bent. These poor devils claim they suffer from a disease known as dementia subterranea. This disease is more elusive than RSI or PMI. It is a neurosis, and that's all there is to it. Still, they have written a series of articles for each other - the "Sydney Pseudokarst Series". I would not encourage new members to join their ranks, and therefore I have not reproduced the information in these articles. To do so would be like encouraging a junky to take heroin. Instead, I extract the headnotes that preceded their depraved babblings.

### Sydney Pseudokarst Series

#### MEMO TO MEDICAL STAFF

##### Re: Dementia Subterranea

If you find your patient staring at the ground with vacant bloodshot eyes, dribbling upon your shoes and wailing at the moon, then it may be that he is suffering from a newly diagnosed ailment unique to the caving fraternity. If he falls twitching to the floor and starts to foam at the mouth, then he is in dire need of help and as his practitioner you should act as swiftly as possible upon the advice that follows in these articles. The most effective indicators of this dilemma are the knees of the patient. If they show, upon examination, much fresh bruising and scarring then the patient is a potential sufferer but at present not at risk. If the knees are unscathed then it may be assumed that the individual has not entered contaminated areas and hence is not at risk. However, the most useful sign of this disease are knees that have well-healed scars upon them. These belong to a seasoned caver who has been deprived of his beloved pursuit for many weeks, even months. When this occurs, strange changes take place in the metabolism, reducing the once collected individual to a mumbling wreck.

Withdrawal symptoms manifest themselves in as many ways as there are addicts (for some of the more common see the beginning of this paper). Nevertheless, all have a common factor, which is the prolonged absence from limestone. Immediate action is essential. Take the patient directly to the nearest karst landscape and encourage subterranean activities. It is futile to attempt to break this addiction and any such endeavour should be discarded. The only route is to satiate these desires that have so overcome the once rational individual.

Certain practical difficulties intervene in this therapy however. Most caving locales are at least 3 hours drive from the Sydney metropolitan area and as the disease takes its course the patient demands new and more stimulating regions to satisfy his desires. This often exceeds the financial means of those persons aiding the victim and for this reason we relay a series of articles written by some chronic cases in the hope that their novel solution to this endemic problem may be of benefit to others in the same plight.

-----O-----

SUSS Bull 24(1):15

WARNING: Don't Believe Anyone in SUSS Who Says They Can Drive!

SUSS people are noted for their inability to do simple things, like drive cars and operate stoves:

Trip Report  
Kalang Canyon  
Sunday, 10th July

Present: Mike Lake, John Kaye, Keir Vaughan-Taylor.

Mike is usually punctual unless he is lost. Since he was late, it was logical that he was lost. The telephone rang and Mike explained that his motor vehicle navigational system needed more key information such as notable landmarks. I live opposite this enormous railway station, (recognizable by large, clattering trains). This data seemed to put him on the right track and just to be sure I stood perched on the kerb and waved furiously as Merly Stoss's racing Audi attempted to reduce the passing railway station to a mere blur. "House numbers are easier to see below the speed of light", I said, leaping into the car. We set off to collect John in Pymble and the navigational equipment in Mike's car led us erringly to our destination by a process of Newtonian approximation. The problem was that the navigational equipment in Mike's car consisted of a street directory, most of its pages detached and suffering from an advanced case of entropy. I shall not go into the details of how we went to Pymble via Hornsby. At Pymble, the Audi was left to sleep away the weekend while the Austin Kimberley drove through the night to Kanangra.....

Trip Report  
Rockclimbing and Claustal Canyon  
or  
The Day Mike Set Himself On Fire  
19th - 20th November, 1983

Present: Judy Clarke, Keir Vaughan-Taylor, Anne Gray, Nick Melhuish, Mike Lake and his stove.

..... The pub proved to be rather boring apart from our discovery of some beer mats containing entry forms for a Naughtie Week in Paris. So we entertained ourselves by ringing Richard in Sydney to tell him that we were sending in some entries on his behalf.

After this bit of silliness, we drove to Mt Banks to camp, so that we would be fairly close to Claustal for the next day. Mike then decided that it was time to test his stove on Shellite, having previously successfully run it on Metho. We watched him with some apprehension, but our fears died down when the stove proceeded to burn docilely at simmering speed. The only problem was that it refused to go any faster. Mike wondered why, and fiddled with the valve, while Keir and I peacefully finished eating dinner. Suddenly Mike gave a yell, and we looked over to see him struggling to push the valve back into the stove as flames were shooting out. The futility of this rapidly became evident and we were shocked to

see Mike leap up and run, with his arm and back on fire. Luckily, the flames quickly went out, leaving Mike and his fibrepile only slightly singed. We all ran away from the burning stove and watched with awe as the campsite was brightly lit up by the flames from three quarters of a bottle of ignited Shellite. Luckily no explosion occurred; the Escort was out of range (just)! and the open space was big enough to avoid starting a bushfire. Once our pulses slowed down, we stamped out the remaining flames and doused Mike's burning food box. Mike asked someone to put water on his hand, so Keir threw water all over him. This enabled us to see the funny side of the whole situation and we laughed for a long time.

.....

### Epilogue

Mike's stove was undamaged after its fiery experience, so it and its owner are still alive to cause further holocausts on future trips.

Judy Clarke

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#### ONE DAY AT JENOLAN Tuesday, 15 May, 1984

Just to be perfectly fair, I should point out that as a member of SUSS, I too am capable of driving aberrations. The tale of the Baroomba Rocks trip, and in particular of the necessity to rotate my car's distributor, re-connect the starter motor, not to mention the unfortunate incident with a two car loads of Vietnamese, will not be retold here. ( That's called 'Editorial Licence'.)

However, I cannot hold back the reports regarding an unusual day at Jenolan. On the same day, our Honorary Treasurer found a hole so narrow-flavoured that even he got stuck; our Honorary Secretary spent hours wandering in confused circles in Mammoth Cave; and Keir Vaughan-Taylor and myself had a fun little adventure with some pegs, mud, freezing water and no ice-picks....

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#### Trip Report : Jenolan 14th-18th May 1984

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Present: Bruce Stewart, Rolf Adams, Keir Vaughan-Taylor, Robert Brandt, Graeme Galloway, Mike Lake, Martin Scott, Pat Larkin, Ian Diversi, Paul Chatterton, Adrian Philbey, Sherrie-Lee Evans.

.....

#### Tuesday

Best of friends, Graeme Galloway and Robert Brandt were to meet us at the guides office 9.00am sharp. We hung about for a while but the urge to go caving overcame us and so we split into teams. One group went to dig in J168 while Pat and Keir went off to explore the other side of Ice Pick Lake in Mammoth cave. (See report below for this little adventure).

We entered J168 about 10.00am and started digging away at a slot about 20 cm at its widest point and approximately one metre in length. After about two and a half hours of digging Rolf managed to squeeze through this incredibly small opening and tear large holes in his overalls. The inner section apparently consisted of very loose rockpile with an earth floor which appeared to have once been a stream passageway. Five metres down this passage was a rock pile with two large

boulders preventing passage. Rolf administered some therapy with a hammer and chisel and finally convinced the boulders to move. Beyond there was a small chamber with few formations and no way on. The return trip through the initial slot against the force of gravity took twenty minutes. Twenty horrifying minutes while Rolf displayed his usual amazing gift of passing through very small holes in rock (with considerable difficulty).

After J168 we went to Peter Lambert Cave and looked at the potential for further discovery. We came to the conclusion that this cave has no potential at all for a dig due to the nature of solid rock.

Back at the cars we met the other party coming back from Mammoth. They had lost the keys to the gate in Mammoth and it was only because we were lucky enough to find a kind official at the top with a set of keys that we managed to escape with our cars to the cave at Hampton for some horrible sausage rolls and the usual liquid refreshment.

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### Ice Pick Follies (see previous trip)

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Present: Pat Larkin, Keir Vaughan-Taylor

We had long heard about the remarkable Icepick Lake in Mammoth cave. Apparently back in 1964 it had been crossed by a team from SSS with liloes to the steep mud wall on the other side which was scaled with the use of ....icepicks.

Icepick lake appears to be the resulting sump of the western drainage from one section of the Railway Tunnel. The Railway Tunnel backs onto a fissure in the limestone which runs off to the west. The fissure narrows chokes and appears to terminate however closer inspection will reveal at the top of the fissure a right hand turn into a rock filled chamber. From here it is a relatively unhindered descent down Hell Hole to Naked Lady Chamber. Naked Lady Chamber is really a large boulder filled cavern which becomes progressively less boulder filled near the bottom where she drains herself into Icepick Lake below (Ed- I trust you had the decency to avert your eyes).

Pat took his wet suit with him for the cool swim across the lake. My wetsuit is a heavy neoprene suit for scuba diving. The thought of forcing it through tiny squeezes and pressure tubes didn't appeal to me so instead I elected to brave the cold waters naked. The plan was to put our gear in a garbage bag to keep it dry and swim to the other side where we could change clothes and continue exploration from there. The edge of the lake begins immediately two metres below a small opening in some formations.

There is a small nine inch wide "beach" of very sloppy mud. It is just wide enough to perform tightrope operations. Each time Pat struggled in the squeezes of his wetsuit the oozing "beach" threatened to avalanche down the steep lake bottom. I stripped off and stashed my paraphernalia in the garbage bag. We became aware of the temperature of the cave. Pat also put his boots and overalls in the garbage bag. It will interest you all at this point to know that Pat had unthinkingly put the keys to Mammoth in the breast pocket of his overalls. We tied a strong knot in the top of the garbage bag and extra secured it with a piece of cord. For psychological comfort we left one light on a rock shining down the stream passage. We both belly flopped into the black waters and ignored the initial shock of sudden water immersion by swimming hard and fast. The passage has a slight S shape to it and as we swam to the other side the brave light we left pointing the way faded to a dim glow and then to blackness.



As one might expect the water was a little nippy and we bee-lined it for the other side at a great rate of knots. The discovery of a right hand fork in the passageway did not divert us from the main goal of the other end of the main stream passage. The right hand fork could be seen to be completely blocked at the end.

The main passage almost goes nowhere. There is an almost vertical mud slope with a half inch wide ledge to stand on at its base. We had brought four steel pegs to dig in and climb the mud. These extremely useful climbing implements were next to useless. The mud was too gloppy to act as any kind of supports to the pegs. We managed to wedge one peg tightly across a split in the limestone above our heads. This permitted us to haul ourselves out of the water and onto a thin toehold of sharp limestone. While hanging onto the peg and the toehold we tried to locate a feature in the mud/limestone that would take a peg in such a way as to support a certain amount of weight. The thin toehold of limestone fractured and I joined Pat again in the lake. We should have taken a couple of icepicks. It was some amazing climbing moves (if I do say so myself) which four times dumped both Pat and myself back into the lake. (Fortunately a deep lake). With persistence we both managed to negotiate two separate routes to the top of the mud bank. The route I chose led to a somewhat nasty second climb and with a great height to fall from into the lake. Pat's route was far more acceptable and so I was obliged to once again plunge into the black waters of the lake swim along the mud bank and hang off the remains of oozing footholds modelled by Pat on his initial climb. Each modelled foothold is good for about thirty five seconds before it collapses. Anyone that is going to climb the wall in future should be advised that the remaining intact footholds have a good ten second left in them.

We had been concentrating so much on our slippery progress to the top that we failed to notice the unfortunate effect our activities were having on our garbage bag resting on the mud shelf nine inches under the water. Several large boulder like pieces of mud straffed the garbage bag and sent it bubbling to the bottom. Underwater the bottom falls away rapidly and the visibility is nil. Trying to dive for the gear involved blindly running our hands along the mud in search of PVC garbage bag. At about 4 metres the lake floor dropped off completely. The probability of surfacing under a low rock overhang was high. I had been without warm clothes for more than an hour now and still had to renegotiate the swim back across the lake. I began to lose interest in following the garbage bag to the bottom of the lake.

We had lost our overalls, boots, socks, extra lighting, the keys to the cave and our packet of jelly babies. This was not a desirable set of circumstances especially since I was hanging out for a jelly baby.

We had gone to a lot of trouble to get to the lake and our climb to the top was I thought rather an achievement. Although feeling cold I did not want to return without at least seeing the chamber above the mud slope and what mysteries lay beyond. This meant climbing the embankment again. At the top there is a squeeze in the mud that totally covered me with sloppy mud. (good for the complexion) The chamber roof and floor were large slabs which sloped off towards the lake. It was filled with mud and boulders with no significantly obvious routes leading on. There was another way back to the lake than through the squeeze but the climb is dangerous. Because it was cold I did not explore every squeeze into every opening and so it is remotely possible there is a continuation but there is nothing crawlable.

After deciding there was nothing much to be found I renegotiated the squeeze down to the top of the mud slope and we then climbed back down to the lake without any extra dramatic plunges. After a perfunctory look along the bottom we retraced our strokes along the passage reassured by the friendly glowing light we left sitting on the far shore. Although we fortunately had left reserve clothing on the bank we had no reserve boots. This meant that we had to barefoot it from there. We climbed back up through Naked Lady chamber and investigated the

alternative route through Snakesgut. The Mammoth map shows its position quite incorrectly. Snakesgut connects directly to the Naked Lady Chamber about one third of the way down at a fairly unobvious fissure in the limestone. Since we were not sure of the way along Snakesgut and we had no boots we decided to play safe and go back the way that we were sure of. There were a couple of avens we had seen that warranted exploration and returning the same way gave us the opportunity to chimney up these slop holes and experience the squeeze at the top. They led nowhere and in fact led to the same squeeze which I did not recognise the second time until all the way through it. We pushed on through the upper reaches of the chamber and back into Hell Hole. We heard familiar voices echoing down the tunnels. It turned out to be the other Mammoth team (see other trip report). Graeme cheerfully informed me that I had left my car open and he had kindly locked it to protect it from theft. (The last person that stole my car was Bruce Stewart) This kind gesture had just locked my keys inside the car along with my warm clothes and spare footwear. Graeme and crew had apparently been touring many passageways connecting Railway Tunnel and Naked Lady. Pat foolishly let on that we knew where the location of the Snakesgut entrance was at the bottom of Skull and Crossbones. I only had mediocre interest in this site at that time but somehow Graeme persuaded us to join a "small diversionary trip" to the bottom of the rope and thence to the bottom of Skull and Crossbones. I believe we located what definitely wasn't the entrance to Snakesgut but at the time my enthusiasm to accurately know geography was ebbing rapidly. Thus after having located another famous location in Mammoth Cave we returned to the surface world where I employed a handy piece of fencing wire to burgle my car.

Keir Vaughan-Taylor

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### **Trip Report : Mammoth Cave, Jenolan : 15th May 1984**

#### **The Comedy of Errors**

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**Starring:** Robert Brand, John Oxley, and Graeme Galloway

The 5-day SUSS exploration trip to Jenolan (14-18/5/84) provided the abovementioned karst of three with the perfect opportunity to engage in what was planned to be a gentlemen's, one-day leisurely visit to Mammoth Cave. Our two aims were to assess which parts of the cave would be most conducive to the filming Robert plans to do in the cave, and to do the Ice Pick Lake-Hell Hole round trip.

After a leisurely walk from the gate at the top of the road which leads to Mammoth Flat, we entered Mammoth at about 12.15pm.

Despite frequent stops to look at the various spelean features, we soon arrived at the Skull and Crossbones and rigged a handline in order to negotiate the steep and often wet mudslope down to the series of boulders.

Having only a careful reading of the Mammoth Book to guide our footsteps to the lake, we proceeded straight ahead from the boulders and into a rockpile. Robert found a way on which saw us squeezing, crawling, and later walking through 15m high serpentine muddy rift passages. These appeared to be what is described in the Mammoth Book as the Snake's Gut. A tricky upwards muddy climb led to a huge chamber which we pursued to the right (Ed: could it run very fast?) So this, I thought, is Naked Lady Chamber. (Read: Railway Tunnel)

Being blissfully unaware of our true position, (which was approximately 20m North of Skull and X-bones) we walked about 100m North to a rockpile. This, I confidently announced to the others, must be the "tricky upwards section" described in the Mammoth Book that leads to Hell Hole. We proceeded up



through some squeezey bits to a tight hole through which a lengthy steepish passage led down. This was obviously the way to Hell Hole, and back to my beloved Railway Tunnel, I thought.

We squeezed through a hole at the bottom of the passage and were confronted by two possible ways on - to the left, a vertical 10m aven down, and to the right, a tunnel which Robert investigated.

T began to freeclimb down the aven but as I was still looking for the Hell Hole inscription, Robert screamed. A large rock had dislodged and holed a section of his sock. Unfortunately his ankle was under the sock at the time. A cursory examination indicated strongly that a quick retreat the way we had come was in order.

Back in Naked Lady Chamber, (read: Railway Tunnel) Robert bandaged his ankle and we retraced our steps to 2 tunnels leading East off the chamber. One led to Hell Hole. (I thanked Robert for screaming.) The other led to a point overlooking the base of the Skull and X-bones mud slope, where our rope was glimpsed.

We went back and negotiated a steep climb up to an upper section of Mammoth. Then John and I went up through the squeeze at the Hell Hole inscription and searched for ways on. John announced that he could hear voices. Oh well, I thought, one man injured, the other going crazy. But soon I too heard voices. It was Keir and Pat returning from Ice Pick Lake!

It is a wondrous feeling that overcomes one when one realises where one really is. (Ed : especially if one is three.) We went back to Skull and X-bones, descended and looked for ways on to the true Snake's Gut.

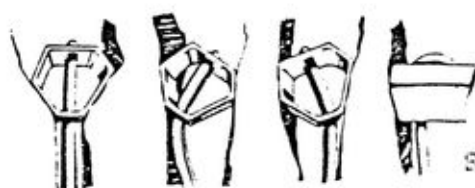
The five of us then retreated from this wonderful cave, my embarrassment about the various confused twists and turns we had taken being vitiated somewhat by the fact that a substantial amount of Keir and Pat's gear had sunk in Ice Pick Lake. (Ed: see June/July Bull)

One may be wondering why I bother to relate our predicaments in Mammoth Cave. I think there are 2 good reasons for doing so. First they emphasize the already obvious importance of being careful when dealing directly with Nature. Woody Allen at least once said "I am two with Nature", and indeed to be one with Nature demands a one sided respect (Ed: presumably by one, of Nature). Secondly, it should be noted that Keir and Pat successfully negotiated the southern banks of Ice Pick Lake which region, to the best knowledge, had not been looked at since the first trip across the lake somewhat more than a decade ago. Their perseverance in swimming the icy cold lake in the name of "exploration" is praiseworthy.

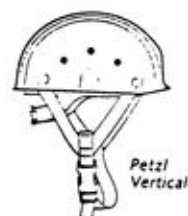
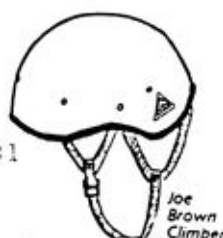
As regards to the efforts of Robert, John and myself, it seems that we found a little-visited way on through the Railway Tunnel Rockpile which SSS members had discovered some years before, as well as pursuing an unsurveyed route from Skull and X-bones back to the Railway Tunnel.

So it seems, serendipity is the name of the game (Ed : wrong cave, wrong State). However, as I emerged from Mammoth into the cold darkness of the night, I could almost hear the hearty laughter coming from deep inside the cave.

Graeme Galloway



SSS BULL 25(3):31



# NEWS \*\*\* WHAT'S HAPPENING

## JUDY CLARKE AND RICHARD McNEALL

Congratulations to Richard and Judy, who were recently married.

For the information of new members, Richard and Judy are long-standing members of SUSS. Both of them have held the office of President in past years. It was a truly SUSS marriage!

## STOP PRESS - RECENT DISCOVERIES IN MEXICO

Over the last few months an Australian Expedition to Mexico has made a number of discoveries of world significance. These include:

- \* a 940 metre deep cave
  - \* a 750 metre deep cave with a 300 metre entrance pitch
  - \* a 760 metre deep cave
  - \* a 500 metre deep cave (discovered by Phil Cole)
  - \* a 300 metre deep cave that is still going
  - \* a 250 metre deep cave that is still going
- and a number of other finds.

I am told that there is ample potential for undiscovered 1000 metre deep caves in the area and that further expeditions are to be planned.

There were 11 people in the expedition party, most of whom were Australian. There were 3 SUSS members, namely Phil Cole, Anne Grey, and Guy McKanna.

## CAVING IN FRANCE

SUSS members Phil Cole and Mark Hunter became the 10th and 11th Australians ever to reach the bottom of Berger Cave, Grenoble, France. Berger Cave is France's deepest cave. I do not recall the exact depth of this cave, but it would be in excess of 1100 metres. CONGRATULATIONS PHIL AND MARK!

## THE COMMITTEE

<u>President</u>	Ian Mann	692 2525 (w)
<u>Vice President</u>	Kier Vaughan Taylor	692 3756 (w)
<u>Secretary</u>	Graeme Galloway	692 3571 (w)
<u>Treasurer</u>	Rolf Adams	969 6655 (h)
<u>Minutes Secretary</u>	Denusia Kucharska	928 3518 (h)
<u>Editor</u>	Mike Gibbon	44 3578 (h)
<u>Librarian</u>	Paul Chatterton	
<u>Equipment Officer</u>	Mike Lake	692 3145 (w) ; 524 5229 (h)
<u>Safety Officer</u>	Ivan Desaiiley	692 2525 (w) ; 799 7264 (h)
<u>ASF Councillor</u>	Guy McKanna	

## General Committee Members

Greg Wilkins

Bruce Welch 469 2380 (w) 569 9928 (h)

Margret Brooker 7984984 (h)

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## TRIP LEADERS

This is not an exhaustive list of Trip Leaders. A number of Trip Leaders are overseas or interstate, and these have not been included on this list. Some of our less active Trip Leaders have also been omitted.

Rolf Adams 969 6655

Judy Clarke 726 1845 (h)

Ivan Desailey 692 2525 (w) 799 7264 (h)

Richard McNeall 726 1846 (h) 638 0122 (w)

Ian Mann 692 2525 (w)

Mike Lake 692 3145 (w) 524 5229 (h)

Patrick Larkin 684 1714 (h) 230 3053 (w)

Bruce Stewart 94 5166 (h)

Greg Wilkins

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## Acknowledgements

Some of you may have noticed that I am not the usual editor. The opportunity arose at work for me to have the SUSS New Members Bulletin word processed, so Mike Gibian handed over the reigns for this issue only. Compiling this issue has convinced me that I NEVER want to be editor of the SUSS Bulletin. It's too much work. Mike Gibian and especially Paul Chatterton have my deepest respect for taking on the burden of the editorship.

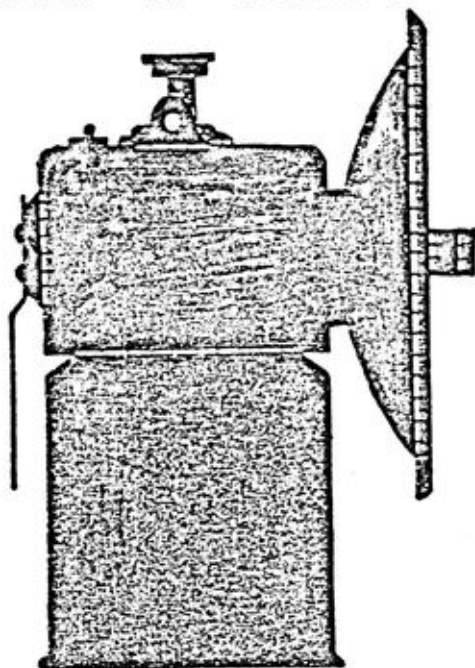
I would like to thank the following persons and bodies corporate:

- (i) Mike Gibian, for his general advice and assistance;
- (ii) Mike Lake, for his assistance in compiling the glossary;
- (iii) Caving Equipment, for their kind permission to use diagrams from their catalogue;
- (iv) Carole Power, for her endless patience and advice about the word processor; and finally
- (v) Marthe Pelchat, for her wonderful typing skills.

Pat Larkin.

Lumen in Tenebris

NEW MEMBER'S BULLETIN  
March, 1986.



# SUSS

BULLETIN  
of the  
SYDNEY UNIVERSITY  
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BOX 35, HOLME BUILDING,  
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY,  
N.S.W. 2006

FUTURE EVENTS

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Wed/Fri 19-21 February | Orientation Week  |
| Sun 23 Feb             | Fresher's Field Day at Avalon<br>Learn Abseiling, laddering and belaying, visit<br>some sea caves and come to a party at fashionable<br>St. Ives afterwards! Phone Mike Gibian 44 3578  |
| Sat/Sun 1-2 March      | Wombeyan Caves<br>Beginner's Trip. Phone Pat Larkin 684 1714(h) or<br>230 3053(w)   |
| Thu 6 Mar              | General Meeting, Common Room, Holme Building,<br>7:30pm. All Welcome! Slides, wine, persons and<br>song, cheese and chips.  |
| Sat/Sun 8-9 Mar        | Cave Rescue Group Practise Weekend, Bungonia.<br>Registration \$15, includes lunch and dinner Sat<br>and lunch Sun. There are activities for all<br>standards of cavers. Registration must be made<br>in advance!! Phone Mike Lake 524 5229(h) or<br>692 3145(w). |
| Sun 16 Mar             | Probably Canyoning. Stay Tuned.   |
| Sat/Sun 22-23 Mar      | Wombeyan Caves<br>Beginner's Trip. Phone Pat Larkin 684 1714(h) or<br>230 3053(w)   |
| Thu 3 April            | Annual General Meeting<br>Common Room, Holme Building, 7:30pm. Come along,<br>get roped into a Committee position, SUSS needs<br>YOU!   |
| Sat/Sun 5-6 Apr        | Colong Caves<br>Contact Greg Wilkins (at a meeting).  |