

BULLETIN *of the*

S*ydney*

U*niversity*

S*peleological*

S*ociety*

Lumen in Tenebris



FOUNDED 1948

Volume 34, No. 3.

November 1994 - February 1995

SUSS TRIP & MEETING LIST, 1994/95

If you wish to suggest a trip or have a question about this list just ring me,
Philip Maynard on (042) 21 4334 (w), (02) 517 1050 (h)

SUSS General Meetings: 7:30 pm Holme Building, these meetings are held every first Thursday of the month.

SUSS Committee Meetings: British Lion Hotel 6:30 pm (St Johns Rd, Glebe, just up the road from the Forest Lodge) every Tuesday of the week preceding the General Meeting unless advised otherwise.

- November**
- 5-6 SSS 40th Anniversary Celebrations at Jenolan.
 - 5-6 Hole in the Wall - Canyoning, with John Oxley, 868 4660 (h).
 - 12-13 Cliefden - Permit Pending.
 - 19-20 Jenolan Philip Maynard 517 1050 (h).
 - 22 Committee Meeting 6:30 pm - British Lion Hotel.
 - The last committee meeting for the year.
 - 26-27 Tuglow - Photography trip, with Ian Cooper 692 2972 (w).
 - All photographers, we need photos for the Tuglow Book.
 - 26-27 Wellington Caves - Cave diving and caving, with Keir Vaughan-Taylor 816 5210 (h) (accommodation free).
- December**
- 1 General Meeting-Common Room Holme Building, 7:30 pm.
 - 3-4 First Aid Course - Keir Vaughan-Taylor 816 5210 (h).
 - 10-18 Jenolan Xmas Party - week long post exam trip including exploration of Northern Spider, Bottomless Pit, Watercavern, and Mammoth
 - Mark Staraj 333 6858 (w).
 - 17-18 Tuglow Ian Cooper 692 2972 (w).
- Jan 1995**
- 1-27 NZ'95, South Island - Classic Alpine expedition inc Ellis Basin, Mt Arthur & Takaka Hill (all near Nelson) - Ian Cooper 692 2972 (w).
 - ASF Biannual Conference - Hamilton, Victoria. Caving trips in Victoria, South Australia. Patrick Larkin 960 4726 (h) 930 7966 (w).
 - 7-8
 - 14-15
 - 21-22 Thunder Gorge - Deep and dark.
 - 24 Committee Meeting 6:30 pm - British Lion Hotel.
 - 26-29 Jenolan - Mark Staraj 333 6858 (w).
- February**
- 2 General Meeting-Common Room Holme Building, 7:30 pm.
 - 4-5
 - 11-12
 - 18-19 Jenolan - Don Matthews, 634 6468 (h).
 - 21 Committee Meeting 6:30 pm - British Lion Hotel.
 - 25-26 Davies Ck Canyon - Keir Vaughan-Taylor 816 5210 (h).

The Editor's Bit

People go caving for all sorts of reasons. It could be academic, recreational (dare I say it) or spiritual. The next time you are in the throes of a gender dispute or a tad hyperactive, try and get near some calcite formations, but *don't touch!*

Crystal Power

Here are some extracts from the Legion of Light's Crystal Awareness guide. Take this handy list with you next time you go underground and get in touch with the crystals in your favourite cave.

Agate A variety of chalcedony. Tones and strengthens body/mind. Imparts a sense of strength and courage. Facilitates ability to discern truth and accept circumstances. Grounding, but energetic. Powerful healer.

Calcite Aids kidneys, pancreas, spleen. Balances male/female polarities. Alleviates fear, reduces stress. Emotionally balancing. Grounds excess energy. Increases capacity for astral projection. Joy, lightness.

Fluorite Strengthens teeth and bones. Improves absorption of vital nutrients. Beneficial for blood vessels and spleen. Grounds excess energy. Excellent for advancement of mind, greater concentration, meditation. Helps one grasp higher, more abstract concepts. Facilitates inter-dimensional communication. Powerful healer.

Meteorite Helps reveal past lives from other planets and galaxies. Enhances connection with extraterrestrial energies. Expands awareness.

Pyrite Aids digestion, improves circulation. Strengthens and oxygenates blood. Enhances brain functions, influences a more positive outlook on life. Enhances emotional body, strengthens will. Helps one's ability to work with others harmoniously. Practicality.

Quartz (clear) Enhances the crystalline properties of blood, body and mind. Activates and enhances pineal and pituitary glands. Emotional balancer. Stimulates brain functions. Amplifies thought forms. Full spectrum energy activates all levels of consciousness. Dispels negativity in one's energy field and in environment. Receives, activates, stores, transmits and amplifies energy. Excellent for meditation. Enhances interdimensional communication and communication with Higher Self and Spirit Guides.

Smoky Quartz Strengthens adrenals, kidneys, pancreas. Increases fertility, balances sexual energy. Aids depression. Mildly sedative and relaxing. Initiates movement of kundalini. (sic) Dissipates subconscious blocks and negativity on all levels. Grounding, centering. (sic) Excellent for meditation. Enhances dream awareness and channelling abilities.

The SUSS Christmas 1993 Jenolan Bash

by
Mark Staraj

December 12-19, 1993.

Participants - Ian Cooper, Mark Staraj, Andrew Matthews, Don Matthews, Kevin Leong, Ben Shale, Chris Hennessey, Kevin Moore, Chris Young, Michael White, Phil Maynard, Keir Vaughan-Taylor, Ron Allum, Kathy Savage, Kelly ?, Helen Casby, Justine Lions, Christina & Basil Kunnecke, Hugh Comins, Mike Lake, Jill Rowling, Eric Tse, Patty Fu.

Disclaimer: as events have been recorded some time after they occurred then it is likely some of you will remember them differently. In particular the diving escapades are pretty hazy. As I was burdened with the task of writing this report all I can suggest to those who are aggrieved is - read it and weep!

Saturday 11th December BBQ, Frisbee! & Jubilee Cave.

PARTYYYYYYYY!

I managed to arrive around midday whereupon I hassled the 8 or so people already there into coming down to Playing Fields to throw the flying disc (proper name!) around. It was quite hot so shortly we all found a piece of shade to hide in. Entertainment consisted of a few favourites. We had 2 discs so trying to hit someone who wasn't watching was popular, sometimes using both discs. The favourite variant here was targeting the President. And I can tell you they were reasonably successful. Other options were to throw it such that the catcher ran into a tree, or headlong into Playing Fields Doline (to reappear a while later), or better still into McKeowns Creek (not to reappear for quite some time). The best of all these was Phil Maynard's headlong (unexpected) dive across the top of a tree trunk.

Next was a series of duals between 2 players with 2 discs. The throws must be deemed catchable and they must be caught. The aim is to never be in possession of both discs. Thus at 10 paces the throws were hard, fast, low, high, curved, sliced, air bounced, backhand, forehand, inside out and overhead. But despite the numerous tactics available the preferred option was always hard and fast at the body!

This done it was back to the hut to organise the BBQ. Steve Reilly provided the not so mobile BBQ unit (requires 4 people to move it). Back down at Playing Fields the feast was cooked and washed down liberally with beer and soft drink. Then it was time for a game of Ultimate which most people joined in for. This lasted until too many had retired exhausted, injured or sick.

Finally it was back up to the hut for further Christmas celebrations. As the day started - so it finished. Settled down for the night, next to the kitchen doorway I peered into the almost complete darkness and listened to the numerous sounds of sleeping cavers. All of a sudden my face was fanned by a brief wind and the night

blurred as something passed overhead. This was followed by a long scratchy scraping sound on the kitchen floor ending in a crescendo of disturbed plates, beer bottles and pans. "Damn", came almost inaudibly from the direction of one Ian Cooper. People were mumbling and complaining - "What the hell is going on!" I retrieved the disc and listened carefully to Ian trying to second guess the throw. I threw. Bang! A loud boom as the disc hit the wall. I've missed! Shouts of alarm now emanated from the back room. Ian returned fire - bang! - as he hit the wall between the kitchen and the bathroom. Bang! "Bloody Hell!" Bang! plus other variations from the floor as the others realised that they were now caught in the middle of an invisible and inaudible crossfire. They hit the floor, laid low and cursed. Better than a game of "Where are you Moriarty?"! After a time the aims weren't improving and no really satisfactory hits had been achieved so it was back to sleep, perchance to dream, nightmares of interminable surveying trips with Ian Cooper.....

Sunday 12th December Spider Cave - Wishing Well surveying. Blowing Hole digging. Century Bluff exploration. Jubilee Cave visit.

Today Phil, Kevin Moore and I went back to our dig in Blowing Hole, begun earlier in the year with the help of Ron Allum. The last time I was there we had reached a rock constriction - beyond this it widened but remained low, and still all the while the breeze blew out.

We worked steadily on the squeeze but conditions were cramped. Some practice swings of the 1.5kg hammer might have prevented me swinging it into my thigh - I didn't repeat this mistake! There was not a lot Kevin could do so he nodded off to sleep. Back on the surface I scouted the bluff for Century Cave to no avail. The south side of the bluff is Wombat City. High up near this side I found J199 - a short but large passage that looked as if it might be significant when dug out. We then called it a day.

The others had gone into Spider with the intention of doing lots of surveying. Chris Hennessey found out the hard way that he doesn't like Spider's squeezes - very especially Pirates' Delight. Eventually he was cajoled as far as Glop Hole Gallery. A bit of a tour of the river followed. Sometime later Ian somehow lured him through the Crystal Crawl!

Don, Basil, Christina and Helen were planning on returning via the short freedive through Sump 1. So Don stashed some warm clothes on the downstream side before proceeding with Ian's survey group through Crystal Crawl. Given all the delays Andrew also abandoned the survey crew and they began diving. Unfortunately Christina had not heeded the Martin Scott Lesson for sump diving - ensure there is no air trapped under your helmet before you dive. Add to this a loose chinstrap and the result was Christina's helmet slipped back causing the chinstrap to snag across her throat. This unexpected turn of events caused Christina to surface a little early and she hit her exposed head on the rock as she came up from the dive. Not exactly a pleasant experience but fortunately not a fatal one. Don took some photos of people coming through the sump which created a lovely effect for those on the other side because the light of the flash was

illuminating the water an enchanting blue-green. Basil and Christina gratefully donned the spare clothing and they all left the cave.

Meantime Ian and the remnants of his survey crew ie. Chris Young, Ben Shale and Chris Hennessey completed a survey connecting the Wishing Well with the riverway, and proceeded back out via Crystal Crawl.

Up in the hut' discussions turned into a contest for the best bruise. There was no doubt Helen had a great chance with an assortment of purple and yellow wonders. Then I remembered flaying myself with the lump hammer. "Whoa!" I said. " Wait 'til you see my leg. I swung the hammer into it in Blowing Hole!" A hush from the crowd. Intense anticipation. I rolled up my thermals. Da da! I proudly displayed the winning entry. No one looked impressed. I looked down, worried I had the wrong leg. Definitely a brown smudge there but it could have been mud. The crowd shook their heads. It was a fizzer. I stared at it in disbelief. 1 1/2 kilos of metal had gone into that!

This night also Steve Reilly came around and offered to take us into Jubilee Cave. These are unrefusable - Steve Reilly tours of the Show Caves are great value. They are also somewhat depressing - made me wonder why I was bothering to put all that effort into Blowing Hole.

Sometime after dinner I was joined by an unexpected companion - a white moth - that landed on my hand and seemed to settle down and go to sleep. Later we all piled into the cars and headed down to the Grand Arch and into the cave. So did the moth.

Through the Imperial Cave, down to the river, to the Lily of the Valley, Alabaster Hall and finally Water Cavern. So did the moth.

Back to the river to go fishing for coins. Ian had some major success with an old 1937 penny. Steve also scored well. The rest of us managed either 20c pieces (usually the one someone else had tossed back in) or beautiful smooth green pebbles. I gave up, much to the relief of the moth.

Then we all piled back into the cars and headed back up to the hut. By this stage I had forgotten the moth was even there on my hand. Unfortunately I decided to rinse my mug in hot water, and so was the moth. There was much discussion of the sort of creatures that were attracted to Staraj.

Monday 13th December Mammoth Cave - Infinite Crawl/North West Passage. Wiburds Lake Cave - Pitter Patter Passage. Imperial Cave diving.

We split into two groups today. Ian led the smaller group on a trip up the valley to Wiburds Lake Cave. He took them to Pitter Patter Passage which is one of the extremities of the cave. This involves going out along Western Passage past where SUSS once had a dig in the Sand Traps. Where Western Passage ends at a branch to the dig site there is a steep mud and rock wall. Ian scaled this and set up a tape handline on the 10m climb. Beyond this there is apparently some ascending zig zags which at one point requires negotiating a climb around a corner to avoid a

1m deep mud pool. It seems at least one caver fell in and another also after some unsought for assistance by the trip leader. The trip was then declared a success. A few more familiarisation trips will be required before SUSS will be ready to tackle the Wiburds project.

As a relief from Spider Cave (ie. Ian Cooper surveying trips) for most of these cavers a trip to northern Mammoth was planned as none had been much further than the Dry Siphon. Who better to run it than yours truly - Mr Mammoth.

Including a visit to the north end of the Railway Tunnel could not be achieved due to the repellent force of official pink tape (a jaded version of the infamous red) that prevented access to 2/3 of the Railway Tunnel. This I am told is to prevent further degradation of the mud slopes further on after 107 years of abuse.

We made our way north via the Debouchment Detour which everyone declared to be a lot of fun. Before long we had reached the Dry Siphon which was readily recognised by its trademark pool of water (surely this Dry Siphon joke has outlived its humour?). The leader pushed on through the wet gravel and the watery beyond to sit drenched on the far mud bank. It was some consolation listening to the surprised voices from the far side - there had been far too much splashing for their liking! I felt a few demonic noises were in order - "Come, my lambs!" I said. "Come and be damned, ha ha ha". In my best satanic chuckle.

Well come they did and their dismay with floundering in the large pool was most enjoyable (Ian and I obviously share the same sense of humour). We then pushed on into North West Passage, which was well admired. One or two had been to the Infinite Crawl before however their leader, Chris Norton, could not find his way across to the North West Passage. At the far end of NWP we climbed the Guzova whereupon Andrew and I penetrated the Guzunda to prove that I for one, did know how to connect it to Infinite Crawl. Using a tape on the greasy climb down we all crossed to the Crawl. At the junction of the Crawl and Guzunda there are 2 impressive avens. One of these was not attemptable with any degree of safety (it climbs directly above the continuation of the Crawl where it bends NE). It appears to choke out after 15m anyway. Opposite to the west another climbs up into a rift across wedged boulders. Andrew and Don set off to explore this. Also Andrew explored an interesting side passage in the rockpile which plunges downwards. However it gets quite cramped near the bottom where progress would need to be made head first. This would need some careful planning to avoid the explorer becoming badly stuck. Nonetheless it may have some interesting potential.

Meantime Michael and Helen headed on up the Crawl. I was going to follow Don and Andrew but was discouraged by the onset of inclement weather - generally overcast but with the occasional rock shower. The rest had been sunning themselves on a boulder but when it started to hail they took shelter a couple of metres away. I decided I would follow Michael and Helen. The NE stretch of the Crawl bent NW again after 10-15m or so. However the groans of struggling cavers came from a small hole directly ahead. Inside I found Helen fighting her way up a steeply sloping, narrow tube that altered direction and shape frequently just to keep up the challenge. Somewhere up ahead was Michael.

After a while Helen and I found our way into a little room. From here the passage continued as a steep chimney. Michael had just discovered a pretty nest of oolites and that the lead pinched out. I made a mental note to include yet another unmapped passage for the 3rd edition Mammoth survey. I headed back to the junction to find that Andrew and Don had returned - with fanfare! The others who had been resting were just returning from obscure parts of the cave, dusting themselves off. The sharp tang of blasted limestone permeated the air. Don had cleared the way below him with a massive rock that he had "gardened" from up in the aven.

The Matthews had climbed up some 12m in height. The aven became two routes penetrating up through rockpile which was liberally covered in clay and loose rock. Don went one way which is where he cleared away the large rock. After a while it had become too precarious to continue due to loose debris. Andrew pursued the other lead, also through rockpile, and it continued as a small passage that narrowed to an impassable squeeze leading upwards from a slope. Andrew gingerly eased his head through, needing to exhale to get his head positioned to look on. He could see that it opened out into more rockpile chamber. He looked back and his helmet wedged in a V-shaped notch. He tried tilting his head back to reverse the move and only succeeded in jamming it further. So he tilted forward again but the helmet slipped back and the chinstrap caught his throat.

"Don, aaarghh, aaarghh!", gurgled Andrew.

Fortunately Andrew managed to reach up a hand to release the strap and thus got free.

As for the Crawl, about 15-20m from the corner where Michael climbed an aven to find the oolites, Michael found it starting to plunge. Referring to the map this seems to be as far as the survey has been taken. Somewhere beyond here is the Ending Aven and the awkward U-tube near the Crawl's unpushed end. Don and Andrew then went to check out the oolites.

The way back was accompanied by a lethargic Justine complaining about interminable climbs and just about everything else. About half way back someone said "There's a light...", to which I added "...over at the *Frankenstein place*". And then all of a sudden the cave burst into song " *There's a ligh- igh - igh- iggght, burning in the fireplace*". A complete rendition of the Rocky Horror Show followed for the next hour courtesy of the Matthews duo. As a reward for Justine's persistence I took her through a couple of unusual squeezes on the way back - at least she now had something different to whinge about. This was nicely finished by Mother Nature who greeted us outside with an absolute downpour.

In summary everyone enjoyed the change of scenery. Two of the avens on the Crawl had been crossed off the curiosity list. Remaining is Ending Aven which the book describes as well explored to 30m with no prospects. The other aven at the junction of Guzunda and the Crawl requires a confident climber or scaling poles. However apart from the fact that it in all certainty it has been climbed long before without finding anything, I feel certain from what can be seen that this

aven won't go. SUSS should finally follow up expectations in the Serpentine Bulletin and push the end of the Crawl - I would suggest two Norton-like ferrets on leashes, with some basic digging gear (small bucket).

Ron and Kathy had been making some exploratory dives downstream from Imperial Cave towards the resurgence. Ron was remapping this section for the Jenolan System survey. It had been first mapped by himself and other SA divers back in 1979. During this week the survey was carried through to within 10m of the resurgence where progress is blocked by a log jam. While exploring a submerged side passage Kathy, who had been following Ron, ran into difficulties at a silty constriction and somewhere lost her much valued dive knife. They retreated leaving Ron's lead unconquered.

Something of a sinister element was evident in the hut that night. A fork that had one of its prongs bent such that however it fell a metal spike stuck upwards waiting for an unwary foot was discovered on the carpet in the main room. The owner was tracked down to be one Ian Cooper - practicing guerilla war techniques. Later on, an innocuous comment from myself on Kathy's possible need for a buoyancy vest received a totally unwarranted response. Turns out Kathy has a Mafia background as she almost succeeded denailing my big toe. From then on no-one teased Kathy without either having boots on or standing on chairs.

Tuesday 14th December Spider Cave - Etrier Pitch surveying.

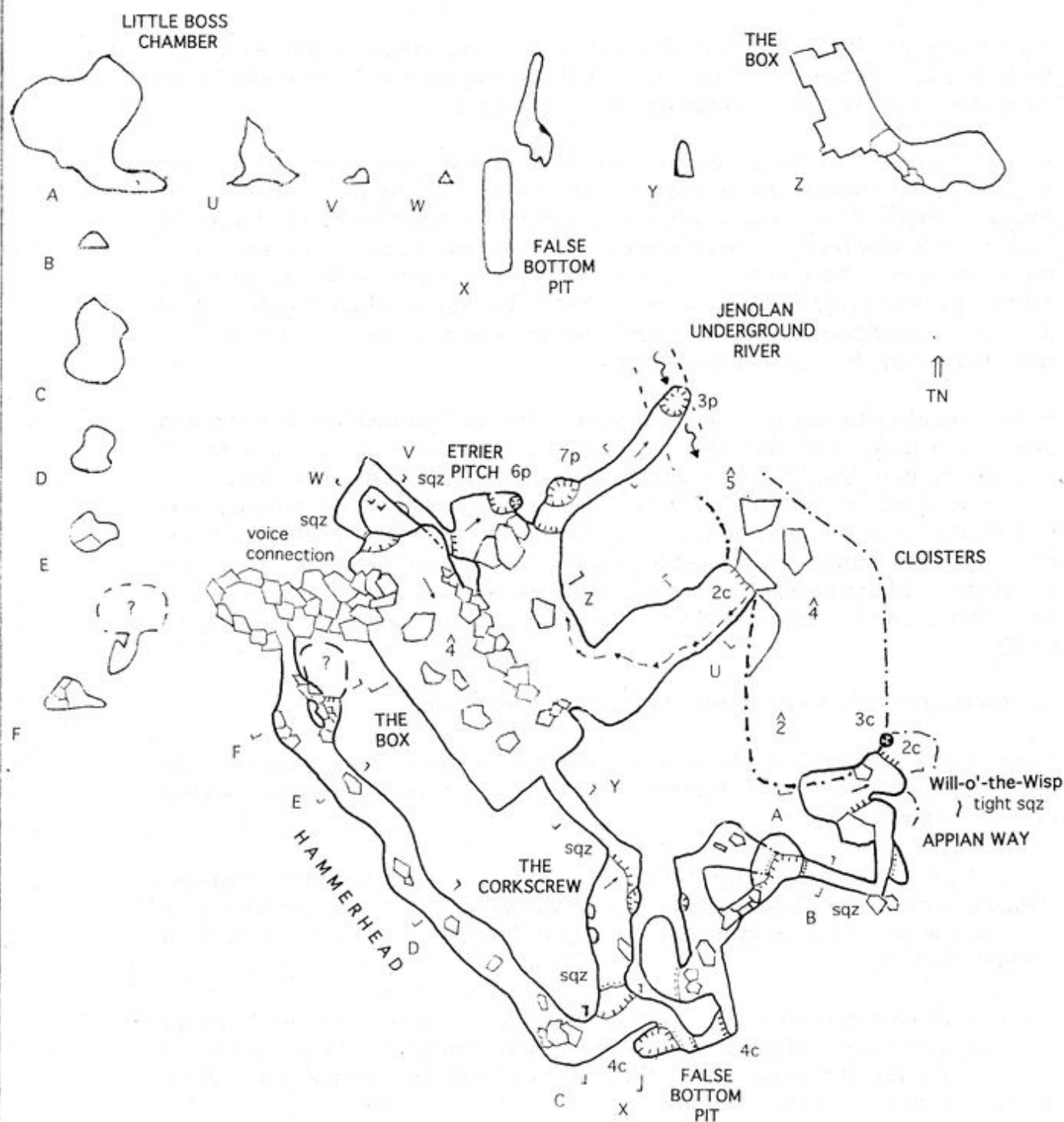
Today it was time again to do some surveying in Spider Cave, especially as the previous trip had not been as fruitful as planned. So Ben, Ian, Kevin and I headed in towards Etrier Pitch.

We had in mind to tie in the Etrier Pitch with the new streamway survey, bringing it back into Cloisters. In particular we wanted to include the unnamed and unsurveyed chamber immediately west of Etrier Pitch. This has now been dubbed The Box.

The trip in was uneventful and work began in the streamway. As I wasn't required (and I was feeling lazy after the trip into Mammoth the day before), I waited at the top of the pitch while the others did their job. I amused myself by throwing their lunch down at them.

Then my work began as I was the only one to have any idea of where the unmapped passages were. Back on a trip earlier in the year with Max Midlen (the day before Pat and Max found the Gnome Room etc) we checked a number of leads in this area. Besides The Box there were 3 other passages located. One of these lead to a 4m deep pit, one to a 3m drop directly over the river and one was tight and Max declared it ended past a corner I could not reach because of a squeeze.

Before long we had surveyed The Box. 8m long by 4m high the most interesting feature was the cleavage shown in the roof which gave the chamber a striking shape. The way the blocks have slipped here is very reminiscent of the bottom of



RECENT EXTENSIONS CLOISTERS AREA J174 SPIDER CAVE, JENOLAN

A4 DRAFT

DRAWN BY M. STARAJ 1/11/94.

SURVEYORS: I. COOPER, W. FORSYTH, K. LEONG, A. MATTHEWS, D. MATTHEWS, P. MAYNARD, B. SHALE, M. STARAJ, S. TIDMAN, I. YOUNG (OSS).

SURVEYED: 14/12/93, 6/2/94, 12/3/94, 4/7/94.

INSTRUMENTS: SUUNTO KB COMPASS, INCLINOMETER, FIBREGLASS TAPE.

ASF43A
1:200

Henrys Hole somewhere above. From the south end lead the passage to the 4m pit. I let the others survey this while I hunted the northern end for the tight passage. I found a squeeze and a passage but not the one I was looking for. Some time later the others reappeared. Ben had lead the way up a tight inclined rift to some breathing space (now called The Corkscrew). A short dig ensued through an awkward bit into a room. Around a corner was the 4m pit Max had found (now known as False Bottom Pit). The pit was linked into the survey. Ian spotted a lead heading in the opposite direction to the pit. Before Ian could marshall the troops they had deserted him back down the squeeze leaving Ian to observe the imponderables of an unpushed passage through a too small hole over a rock. Ian detected a faint breeze. He subsequently thought that this section may lead to Henrys Hole following a push by a Chris Norton.

The passage I had found was dug out and entered by Ian. As Ian began to describe how it went around a corner I suddenly realised where the missing passage was - it lead from above the Etrier pitch itself in the same direction. I raced back to it and shortly confirmed that the 2 passages were actually the same forming a loop. After we surveyed this we took the survey back to Cloisters for tying in later to the Upstairs Rockpile, then headed out.

The results were 70m of survey, 40m of it new, and one going lead. The passage to the pitch over the river was estimated only at the time but I now think it should be properly mapped in to help pin down the complex network of passages in this area (and there is probably some 10m of passage). The new and expanded map of this area shows the original one placing the river 5m too far west.

Additional Notes:

- *Subsequent mapping shows that Henrys Hole will come into Spider somewhere near Inspired Point, some 40m or so further east than Etrier Pitch.*
- *Ian's lead was explored later by Willow and Kevin and named Hammerhead.*
- *The unmapped passage leading to a 3m pitch over the river has now been mapped.*
- *The sequence of events by which these passages were explored is quite bizarre. The story is completed in an article by Willow Forsyth. Referring to the map the details are as follows: Max Midlen had passed The Corkscrew and found the bottom of False Bottom Pit but failed to notice Hammerhead passage. Ian, Ben & Kevin repeated Max's feat and Ian investigated the start of Hammerhead but failed to explore it as he found himself alone and thought the start to be blocked by rocks. Neither Max nor Ian's group noticed the chimney upwards forming the rest of False Bottom Pit and so missed out on extensions leading back to the Appian Way. This was left to be discovered by Willow and Kevin via Will-'o-the-Wisp. However Willow and Kevin easily passed the "blockage" at the start of Hammerhead. The Corkscrew was left as a challenge for another trip even though it had been passed by Kevin 2 months earlier. Despite Kevin having been in this area before with Ian he failed to recognise any of it!*

Wednesday 15th December False Frenchmans Cave surveying.

Captain Chaos has arrived today in the sad looking guise of Keir Vaughan-Taylor with conjunctivitis. Not that broken legs or pussy eyes ever stop him from caving.

As always Keir had a grand plan." Lets do False Frenchmans."
So off we toddled with scaling poles, ladders and survey gear.

How are we going to climb up to the entrance? In the old days there was a ladder from a ledge to the entrance. But no more. We briefly considered the step ladder from the cottage but it would have been too short - and Keir was adamant it was a straight forward climb. I was once on the ledge with John Morris who gave it a brief tryout but decided against it. The penalty for failing the sheer 5m climb is a 20m fall.

Undaunted Keir slung a cave pack with tape and ladders in it over his shoulders and strained upwards for a handgrip. Stretch. Stretch. Keir don't fall!

No luck. Ian is summoned to give a boost. Keir teetering on Ian. Ian teetering on the precipice. It looked like an acrobat routine about to go horribly wrong. I couldn't watch. I couldn't not watch. Keir climbs the wall like a spider. "See no problem. Easy." (No thank you!)

Keir drops a ladder for the others to follow. Meantime I'm laying back taking in the delicious sunshine - very comfortable and couldn't care less. Ian and Chris had already joined Keir and had climbed onto the large false floor and disappeared into the gloom.

"C'mon on up, Staraj," says Keir & Ian.

"Oh, no - I'm right thanks" There was a very short traverse to cross that I was just not psyched up for. I really was very comfortable.

Unfortunately a short time later Keir returns and "Staraj, we need the scaling poles." Bloody Keir and his scaling poles! I'm sure Pat did us a favour when he lost the last set. Luckily they were on the roof of Keir's car which was at Playing Fields. Ben, Kevin Leong, Eric, Patty and I went back and fetched the poles and hauled them up to the cave. Ben and Ken decided they had done enough (I think they caught sight of Ian with his survey equipment) and headed back up to the cottage to go home.

The ladder was lengthened to the base of the drop and Patty, Eric and I climbed up. Once there Ian and I began to survey but without completing the first leg my light died and Chris took over. Further in the scaling poles were being erected to access a high upper level. The cave here is a high rift which ends where the flowstone has sealed it at a bend, except for a hole some 5m up. At the same point looking back some 10m up can be seen a ledge 3m below the ceiling. The poles were put together and the ladder connected. Keir climbed up. The poles were short of the ledge by about 2m so here Keir, able to see further untrodden passage, improvised a climb and explored onwards. The results were mixed. There were a few metres of passage which ended except for an aven. Keir reported a draught and insects etc. generally indicating a surface connection. Keir was unwilling to do this climb without aid so we kept him up there for the survey. Ian had the task of taking up the tape to Keir and helping with the survey.

As Ian approaches the top: "Keir! How did you get up there!"

"Oh, says Keir. " I ahh, sort of put a foot there and.....I'm not sure."

Ian tentatively gives it a go, and rapidly retreats to be swinging from the top pole which is bending alarmingly.

"Keir! You're mad - you're bloody mad!"

"Oh - if you say so."

"Here's the tape - you'll have to do it yourself."

So Keir completes a 1 man survey. He then reverses his precarious climb to a round of applause. We swing the poles across to the hole above the flowstone blockage. Before long Kier is calling for another ladder! No choice but to pinch a ladder from the entrance climb. Thus equipped we surveyed down the 5m pitch on the far side where the cave continued on as 5m high walking passage for 15m where it petered out in a sediment flowstone choke. By its general size this was once a principal piece of cave. It will be interesting to see what other cave passages it relates to.

As evening descended Ian raced time to complete a forestry compass tie in of the entrance tag. This done it was back to the hut.

Thursday 16h December **Water Cavern - the assault on "Watergate".**

Keir: "What do you think about doing Water Cavern? I've got the buckets."

Mark: "Great idea. I've always wanted to have a go at that sump. Lets do it."

So, except for Ian who couldn't be bothered the rest of us collected the buckets and armed with the Imperial Cave key from the guides we were all soon at the sump. For the next two hours we bailed and bailed and bailed. This set up a little stream running back down the cavern making Water Cavern look and sound just as it should. Meanwhile Ron managed to climb into a spacious passage 4m above the sump but as expected it was blocked by sediment after no more than 10m.

It was clear that bailing by hand would be a long term venture. We retreated back to the hut to join Ian for lunch. For amusement I calculated that the sump would be 10m long. Sometime during the afternoon we received an offer to use a new sump pump - Yes Please! So back we all went (with Ian this time) to set up the pump. The only issues were finding 100m of extension cord and more hose. Once set up and going we headed back to the cottage to await results.

At 7pm we went back to check on progress. Just in time! The pump was beginning to suck air. We turned it off and Keir waded into the pool to reposition it. The rest of us had to construct a wash basin out of loose rocks to make up for the short hose - nonetheless a steady amount still washed back into the sump. We also made sure the river did not wash over the concrete path and platform at the far end. The river merrily swept into a channel on one side of the cavern and through tubing underneath the path to pour into a 3m deep pit. And then? Well it all looked very intriguing so I clambered down to have a look. Below it disappeared down yet another 3m drop and then sumped. The next time the siphon is drained we should have someone in the area of Sump 6 below to see which avenge the stream reappears from after leaving Water Cavern.

Back in Water Cavern the receding sump was revealing a horrendous sloppy floored muddy chamber. This mud was thick as a chocolate thickshake and clung to everything, weighing everyone down with huge sticky globs of goo. Some other things had appeared. A kind of trench led down into the sump. The bank on the right contained numerous inscriptions dating back to the early 1950's. I guess the dates corresponded with previous droughts. The end of a long wooden plank also protruded from the base of the trench. This was probably used on the only other serious attempt on the siphon way back in 1953.

Soon there was a long sucking noise and a brief breeze. Was this it - the breakthrough? We had been told that when the water was low enough that a breeze blew through. Excited, Ron (who luckily had a wetsuit on) waded out to look in the hole that had appeared at the side of the sump. It was a small room but not the way on - the breeze was caused by air being sucked into the vacuum.

It was now 11 pm so we called it a night. Great care was taken when changing from the disgustingly filthy caving gear to clothes to wear back out through the tourist caves. Packing it into packs was a tedious and unpleasant job.

Ian had disappeared earlier to see whether the Water Cavern Intermittent Stream had caused any noticeable discolouration of the Imperial Streamway section of the Jenolan River. The answer was no, but it was obvious that Ian's real motivation was scooping for coins while no one else was around! Coinrush fever had claimed another victim.

Friday 17th December Playing Fields Cave surveying. Imperial surveying. Water Cavern dig.

This morning I retrieved my oversuit from the ground at the side of the path where I had dumped it the night before. The mud had dried into a hard cake all over it and where it had lain against the ground it was now infused with twigs leaves, gravel and stones. Cemented on, it would not yield to beating with sticks, water jets or being thrown against the hut. This mud is bad news! There must be a connection between Water Cavern and the infamous Dwyers Cave!

Today there was just Ron, Keir, Ian and I so we decided to tackle one of the smaller jobs to be done. Ron continued his exploration of downstream Imperial, diving with Keir. Some time ago Ian had begun a resurvey of Playing Fields Cave. This cave appears to have been an old stream swallet feeding water directly down strike and therefore into fossil river passages lying above the presently known extent of Spider Cave. The cave begins as a short walk along tunnel boring straight into the hillside about 30m above creek level. After about 25m a short rockpile is negotiated to a low squeeze. Beyond the cave opens up to sitting height in a small chamber. The alluring directness of the tunnel is lost and here the cave is more rambling in nature. This is where we recommenced the survey.

The day's survey included a side chamber with a hidden draughting lead and an obvious passage inclined steeply upwards past a tight flowstone squeeze. Beyond this the rift extends a few metres higher ending where a hole in the floor drops

into some rockpile via a chimney. There is also a persistent slight draught here. A tight squeeze here may be a prospective lead but might have been checked previously by Chris Norton.

We used a hammer to get into the lead off the side chamber but unfortunately the breeze issues from a small horizontal crack with no possibilities of extension. Below the start of the inclined rift is another passage leading via a squeeze into a small room. Ian did not believe me when I told him he had been in there before and declared it dead. So in he went again. When he had spent 5 minutes trying to manipulate himself back out - the memories returned!

A short distance up the rift is a low side passage. This leads to a view from its end of a small chamber gained by a slope. To date no one has successfully managed to contort around the corner to get into the chamber. No breeze is evident but further cave is a possibility even if appearing unlikely. We should come back with the Norton ferret and finish this lead and that at the base of the chimney.

With the exception of the two leads this cave appears finished. The only remaining survey is of the unattainable chamber. When comparing the survey with the existing one in the Jenolan book we were surprised to see that not only was the previous survey significantly incomplete (and incomprehensible) but somehow it has now shrunk 10m on completion!?

After an early dinner it was back to Water Cavern accompanied by Keir. In a short time as much water as possible had been sucked from the sump. Keir was being bitten by the mostly exposed pump, so we turned it off. The sump led into a partially exposed passage where the roof came down almost to the water. Keir crawled through the knee deep water and mud slurry and past the short duck into a small aven. At the top of a short mud slope a mud choked crawl headed north with a handspan of air space issuing forth a cold breeze. Keir was joined by the more sensibly attired Ron in his wet suit. Ron began pulling down the mud slope which Keir noted with alarm was turning the duck back into a sump. So Ron squeezed back out to fill the buckets and lower the water level again. We began carrying out the buckets of the mud slurry which had the consistency of a thick shake and the weight of cement. This was back breaking work.

As Keir needed to return to Sydney tonight and a breakthrough was still some time off we called it quits. Now we had the tricky task of removing the pump and hose, buckets and 100m of extension cord that all needed to be cleaned before removal from Water Cavern. All this in addition to packing our own gear. This done we were hanging out for a beer

Less Keir we went to Caves House at about 9pm but was told only the upstairs bar was open. After an hour we were told the downstairs bar was reopening. This meant access to the pool table. A stack of house staff had gone off duty and so we shared some interesting stories and played pool. Come midnight it was time to walk back up. At first it wasn't too bad with light from Caves House and Carlotta Arch catching on the road markers. After leaving number 2 carpark it became so black it was impossible to see a hand in front of your face. Navigating the road was by touch and sound - the crunch of gravel on the side of the road or tangle of

legs if veering too close to the others. An interesting experience but I think I would use a torch next time!

Saturday 18th December **Frenchmans Cave surveying.**

Three of us today with the return of Chris Hennessey. Considering the results of the Spider Trip the previous Sunday - Spider would not be on today's agenda. So we chose one of the other associated caves - Frenchmans Cave.

Ian decided it would be quicker to go down the gully immediately below the Cavers Cottage as it would lead straight to the cave. This would cut out a lot of time and effort, with carrying the ladders and all that.

It was not long before we realised that Ian's sense of direction was today as bad as Mike Lake's. It brought us out at Aladdin, so we had to climb down to the bottom of the gorge and climb up the steep slope to Frenchmans after all.

Before long we had begun the survey, taking it down the main route to the final chamber. We included both entrances and a possible lead in a pit that I thought may offer a way into Spider Cave. There is no breeze but digging required in dirt fill. This pit seems to collect much of the material falling down the entrance pitch and I wonder if it ultimately leads to the avens in the Main Chamber area of Spider Cave beneath which are the dingo skeletons. The original idea was to just survey the entrance drops but we got carried away and spent 4 hours surveying and checking out the cave.

One of the aims was to confirm the proximity of the final chamber with Upper Helictite Chamber in Spider Cave. This relationship was shown on a 1979 Guy Cox compilation map and had intrigued many since. The new integrated survey shows this to be true - the separation being some 20m all in elevation. A connection between the two caves would be a major plus as it would add as much as perhaps 400-500m to the Jenolan System. The Jenolan book survey indicates 120m as the length for Frenchmans but we achieved 80m and there are very many side passages to tie in.

During the survey we noted much geological interpretation to be done and found an additional unrecorded dyke. The final chamber has always been enigmatic for the strong breeze blowing out of the terminal rockpile but to date it has not rewarded efforts. In fact it almost appears as though the breeze is originating from a higher level and not from Spider below. There is at least one other draughting lead that does lead down though but is tight and requires digging. To realise a connection in this area I believe we will need to tackle it simultaneously from both the Spider and Frenchmans sides, much as what was done most successfully with Spider and Imperial Caves.

When we returned we found Ron, Kathy and Kelly (a friend of Kathy's) had come to share the last day's caving. Off to Caves House for one last night of carousing. We sat outside drinking beers to the airs of some classical music. On the way back to the hut Chris surprised a wombat crossing the road.

Bump. From the back: "Gees they're a bit lumpy aren't they!" I blurted as I bounced off the roof back into my seat.

"Got him!" said Ian approvingly to Chris who had gone white with dismay. "But you've got to use more acceleration next time. You only winded him. Here, let me drive!"

Sunday 19th December **Spider Cave visit. Imperial Cave diving. Surface surveying.**

One of the things I wished to check after opening up Watergate was what signs of this would be evident in Spider Cave. In particular there had been recently a persistent stream from Khan Passage - was its source related to that which fills the Water Cavern Sump? Was there any relationship between the Human Glophole in the Eyrie and the sump?

In order to check this out I reluctantly agreed that another Spider trip was called for before the sump had a chance to refill. Since there was only Ron who would be diving and Chris Hennessey who would not enter Spider for any reason and Ian who would enter Spider for any reason but then what would Chris do? - I decided I had to do this and therefore do it solo. So Ian went surface surveying with Chris, and Ron went diving in Imperial Cave again.

However the return the night before of Kathy with her friend Kelly changed all that. Kathy would dive with Ron and Kelly was here to go caving. Since I was the only one actually caving I agreed to take her with me - somewhat reluctantly. After all Spider is not for everyone as Chris H can attest. Her resolve survived all the scare stories of people being stuck for days on end - so that was that, she was coming. And then I was quietly told by Kathy that she be well looked after and have a great time since that was what she had promised her friend. In Spider Cave? Well! I wondered if I didn't actually have conflicting requirements. My toe began to ache anew.

Nevertheless we prepared carefully for our trip. As a sign of faith I handed her the Spider Cave gate key for minding. Mostly because all my pockets now had holes thanks to a week's caving at Jenolan.

"Kelly - whatever you do, please do not lose this key! Without it we may as well sit in the hut!"

"Don't worry", she said. "I won't lose the key".

Twenty minutes later and I remembered how sticky the lock had been when I had shut it earlier.

"I should have asked Ian what tricks are needed to open this bloody lock. Sorry about this."

"That's OK."

Five minutes later and I'm still getting nowhere.

"I'm really sorry about this!"

After 10 minutes the lock finally starts to give! Well I thought so anyway at first. In fact the key now looked like a metal helix.

"Ah - whoops!"

Eventually I had the key back into a recognisable shape. It had been 15 minutes now since I had first tried to open the lock.

In absolute despair I sat back and looked resignedly at the cursed object.

"This stupid, bloody, bloody*Mammoth Cave key!!?*"

No. It clearly said Mammoth Cave.

"I ah.....I ah , I think I've got the wrong key."

"Oh?"

"Sorry about this [and I was, very]. You'll have to wait another 1/2 hour so I can go back to the cottage and get the Spider Cave key. I'll be as quick as I can."

Going up the damnable hill - *I hope no one told her I'm the President of this club!*

At the top of the hill I see Ian and Chris walking towards me. "DON'T ask me. Just DON'T ask!" I waggle the key at them. "It just so happens that this is not the Spider Cave key."

Fortunately some time later we are actually caving Spider Cave. Through Dingo Dig and Z-Squeeze - not a problem. I'm impressed. However try as she might the ramp past Pirates Delight was just a little too difficult.

After the Rockpile we went for a tour downstream and to Khan Passage to see the Mini Khan, helictites and straw clusters. I must admit its not a bad little collection of pretties. The stream here had stopped running.

Next destination was the Eyrie which involves crossing the Terror Traverse. This was achieved without any drama and before long I was dueting with the Singing Shawls of the Eyrie. A rather nice sound it was too. The Human Glophole was still wet and was fathomed at 1m. A slight but noticeable breeze was blowing across the Glophole from somewhere in the rockpile.

Job done we headed back out to daylight. Fortunately for my toes Kelly was able to tell Kathy that she had thoroughly enjoyed her trip. Back at the hut we were greeted by Tony Allan, an eccentric SUSS recluse, reclining in his portable deck chair all set for some tough geological field work.

Diving. Kathy had enlisted Ron's help to locate the expensive knife. Pointing Ron in the direction she thought she may have lost it in she waited for the results of Ron's search. She had a cursory look in the side passage - the scene of some excitement on Monday. In the constriction she could see the knife! Putting aside memories of bouncing around in a silt out (and submerging herself in the floor) she retrieved her knife and pirated Ron's lead to find some passage with no further prospects (aside from digging). Ron was not to be outdone. Emptyhanded of knife and plundered of lead nonetheless he brought back the prize of the week - a large tooth of some prehistoric Australian fauna! This caused quite a stir

amongst everyone. What would it be! A diprotodon tooth? Woolly Mammoth molar? Perhaps traces of some monstrous megafauna platypus? Well - the Australian Museum decided it was actually from a sheep.

In the meantime Ian and Chris had extended the surface survey to Hennings and Maiden Caves.

Thus ended an extremely enjoyable and satisfying week's caving at Jenolan.

SEE Y'ALL IN '94!

C.M.A Map Offer

Douglas Bock of SUSS and Sydney University Bushwalkers has kindly informed us that the Bushwalkers has become a map agency.

All **C.M.A** maps of **N.S.W** will be available for around \$5.00 (depending on the size of the order).

Maps include:

- ♣ 1:25000, 1:50000 and 1:100000
- ♣ National Park maps
- ♣ some Historical maps

If you are interested in purchasing maps, first consult a C.M.A map catalogue for N.S.W. Then get in touch with Phil Maynard. Phil will order maps from the Bushwalkers map agency via Douglas when the order is **20** maps or more, so if you want less than 20 maps, combine with other people to make up an order.

Phil can best be contacted at the SUSS meetings.

SNAC'S GO WILD IN SPIDER (and Don misses out again!)

JENOLAN 5/6 February 1994

Following hard on the heels of the January Water Cavern trip, we had some enthusiastic cavers determined to find the Spider connection and, incidentally, complete the Water Cavern survey. (Particularly one Donald Matthews who had a score to settle with one little brother with regard to finding new passage). A guest caver, Daniel from Brazil, described the dimensions of the passageways of his native caves, and his innocent gaze missed the speculative grins passing between the Jenolan initiated - young Daniel was definitely in for a surprise.

Saturday morning saw a change of plans as a check on Water Cavern showed it was living up to its name and would need to be pumped dry before any further work could be done. The group was slightly disappointed, except for Mr Staraj who, leaping with delight, exclaimed "Yes! let's go survey Spider" and those of us who owed Mark a day surveying in return for previous favours, groaned. So we trogged up and trudged off down the hill, with various stalwarts of SUSS gently ribbing young Daniel. We were to head off for the chamber above the Upstairs Rockpile and there do some surveying - however, at Dingo Dig Don's friend Daniel Higgins (some 6ft of muscle) decided the cave was the wrong size and so Don, Daniel and Hilary decided to exit Spider and check out Hennings, Serpentine and Blowing Hole.

Don later reported Serpentine was fine, but the search for Blowing Hole saw them hug the side of the valley, exploring up and down - Don checked into and out of a wombat hole pretty rapidly - got discouraged, rested in a doline, and left by all reports within metres of the cave entrance. The weather however, was "a fine mist like drizzle, with light winds from the NW" and the caving was okay too - at least when they found the caves!!! (It's lovely being able to write about someone else's trip!)

Meanwhile, the Spider survey party had narrowed to Staraj, Kevin Leong, Steve Tidman, Daniel the Brazilian and me. The Bus Stop lived up to its name as our guest caver adjusted to the conditions, though there was a need for a human chain to provide a little leverage on the steepest part of Pirate's Delight, with Daniel suffering a sunken asthmatic chest. Mark led a detour to show Daniel the river then pushed us along to keep our surveying appointment, as we kept explaining that we were just enjoying the restful sense of ease engendered by the cave. Mark ignored such rot and demanded we fulfil our obligations for survey work! On the way through Appian Way, Mark pointed out a small hole, that Max "Icanfitanywhere" Midlen had failed to negotiate on a previous trip to Cloisters. I was volunteered by Mark to "give it a go" and after scraping off some of the mud and divesting myself of helmet and light belt, pushed up into the squeeze and with leverage provided by the roof and my enthusiastic companions, was thrust and twisted through the hole, around the blocking boulder to emerge into a mud covered chamber, some 4 metres high. Clearly undisturbed before and at the base of a rockpile. A quick reckie showed a lead up into the rockpile.

Staraj, gleeful that his lead had gone when Patrick Larkin had dismissively declared "Mark, your lead's never go!" was shouting orders and encouragement for Willow to go have a wee exploration further into the rockpile. The response: "No bloody way, not until one of you guys can get in here as well!" So Kevin was volunteered by Mark, and was pushed, pulled and shoved through the hole.

Together we scrambled into the rockpile and after 10 minutes of exploration found a climbing lead. Kevin climbed down to the False Bottom Pit, which sounded hollow when jumped upon but didn't go anywhere. Some four metres above was a passage we named Hammerhead, with passage continuing but left unexplored, and another lead called Corkscrew, that I pushed a little way before re-emerging only after considerable corkscrewing around to get out. Jubilant the explorer's returned to the squeeze to discover that Mark et al had been constructively spending time naming the squeeze and the entry chamber, respectively, "Willow's Hole" and "Little Boss Chamber"! despite one discenting vote. Staraj was remarkably chuffed and led a quick trip

into the higher level chamber above Upstairs Rockpile. Some excellent formations exist at the back end including beautiful mud drips, drill holes, concentric circles and splash cups. Mark guided us down to what he called "the normal route at the base of the rockpile" and I can only assume some of the earlier euphoria was still clouding his neurons because we became geographically embarrassed for 15 minutes. In fact we were in the middle level of the rockpile rather than the base level.

We started back shortly thereafter having done no surveying whatsoever! It was a slow trip out - eight hours takes its toll especially for those unaccustomed to the rigours of Jenolan style caving, and those who haven't caved for a while! Waiting and resting in the Bus Stop, Mark insisted he heard noises like the sounds of a caver caving, but diving down Pirate's in search of illegal cavers didn't find anyone. Later we wondered if Mark had heard someone caving in Frenchman's. Nothing more was heard in response to our calls. Less sensitive cavers might have suggested Staraj had heard his brain cell rattling round into his skull, but being caring understanding, nurturing types we refrained just suggesting it was possibly a wombat. When we got back to the hut with the news of the new passage, young Don was heard to grind his teeth in frustration - his brother was definitely winning on the exploration front.

Sunday morning and a team was formed to do the survey push into Spider's latest discovery, armed with hammers and chisel. Meanwhile Kevin this time was leading a trip into Mammoth with Daniel and Daniel - though they failed to find the Railway Tunnel - so Kevin came very close to having his trip supervisor status revoked on the basis of woeful navigation particularly in front of two guest cavers.

Steve, Mark, myself and "I'mnotmissingoutagain" Matthews headed into Spider at a rapid rate. Once into Cloisters, Steve was assigned the task of hammering out Willow's Hole (very funny!) while the rest of us surveyed Cloisters. (Mark and I by the way were on a strict time limit if we wanted to catch a lift back to Sydney). Finally the hammering ended and I went through the enlarged opening (quite spacious in fact), followed by Mark who proceeded to make a saga out of it. After a struggling 5 minutes, Mark emerged and made his contribution to the advancement of SNAC's (sensitive new age cavers) by grinning broadly and saying "Well, if there's one thing I can say about Willow's Hole, that is, it's tight!" Steve emerged with suitably less comment, followed by Don who at 6ft had some difficulty, finally popping through exclaiming "Congratulations Mrs Matthews, it's a boy!"

A survey through the newly named "Little Boss Chamber" lead up into the rockpile and along, round and down to the top of the chimney. Time was becoming precious, so leaving a cairn, we did a tape measure check down to Hammerhead, pointing out the Corkscrew lead to Don, which he proceeded to check out and enjoy extricating himself from. Hammerhead measured some 20 metres of passage with some rock rubble before choking out. All in all some 60 metres of new passage (or so we thought!)

A time check had Mark and I scrambling for the exit. A very rapid trip out dragging the gear packs and a tired and weary bunch made it back to the hut in time to do a rapid wash of gear (sorry Coops we missed some!), bodies, and hut and still catch our lift. A great trip, tiring but exciting with two hard trips into Spider, and the smug expression didn't leave Mark's face until it was realised Corkscrew has been entered before by Max Midlen from the opposite direction, but hadn't pushed on through Corkscrew (who gets the last laugh huh?). But the rest is ours!

For further details on this area I refer you to the detailed technical articles put together by our illustrious leader Mr Mark Staraj, published in this Bull. called the SUSS Christmas 1993 Jenolan Bash.

Willow Forsyth.

Wombeyan Caves Trip Reports

26th February 1994 - Grants Cave

Present: Phil Maynard (TL), Jill Rowling, Carol Layton, Mike Lake, David Hughes, Stephen Hughes, David Jackson, Tim Matthews, Belinda and James Reid.

Grants cave is a "fun" cave, used by the Wombeyan Guides for adventure tours. We sprung six illegal cavers who were trying to explore the cave by the light of one penlight torch and one cigarette! They exited when we found them. Our group split into two and spent about four hours exploring the intricacies of this rambling cave which ends in an interesting rockpile.

27th February 1994 - Gundungurra Cave (W7)

Present: Jill Rowling, Mike Lake, David Hughes.

While the others went exploring, Jill, Mike and David surveyed Gundungurra Cave in Blackberry Hole. This took about 6 hours, including teaching David how to survey and sketching in all the fiddly bits (see map). We found a termite runway in the south chamber. This cave is fairly dry, damaged and inactive. It has three entrances, only one of which is tagged.

21st May 1994 - Blackberry Hole & other features.

Present: Carol Layton (TL), Mike Lake and Jill Rowling (big SUSS turnout), together with a Hills contingent.

The manager of Wombeyan Caves, Mike Chalker, suggested that SUSS and Hills combine their trips. This was the first such combined trip, with Hills looking at the Glass Cave area where there are lots and lots of tiny holes. SUSS at present are looking at the hills to the immediate west of the campsite and intend to move southwards.

We surveyed the Blackberry Hole doline (map is yet to be completed - sorry!). Some survey points would not be easily relocated, such as "Carol's Nose". This activity occupied us for most of the morning.

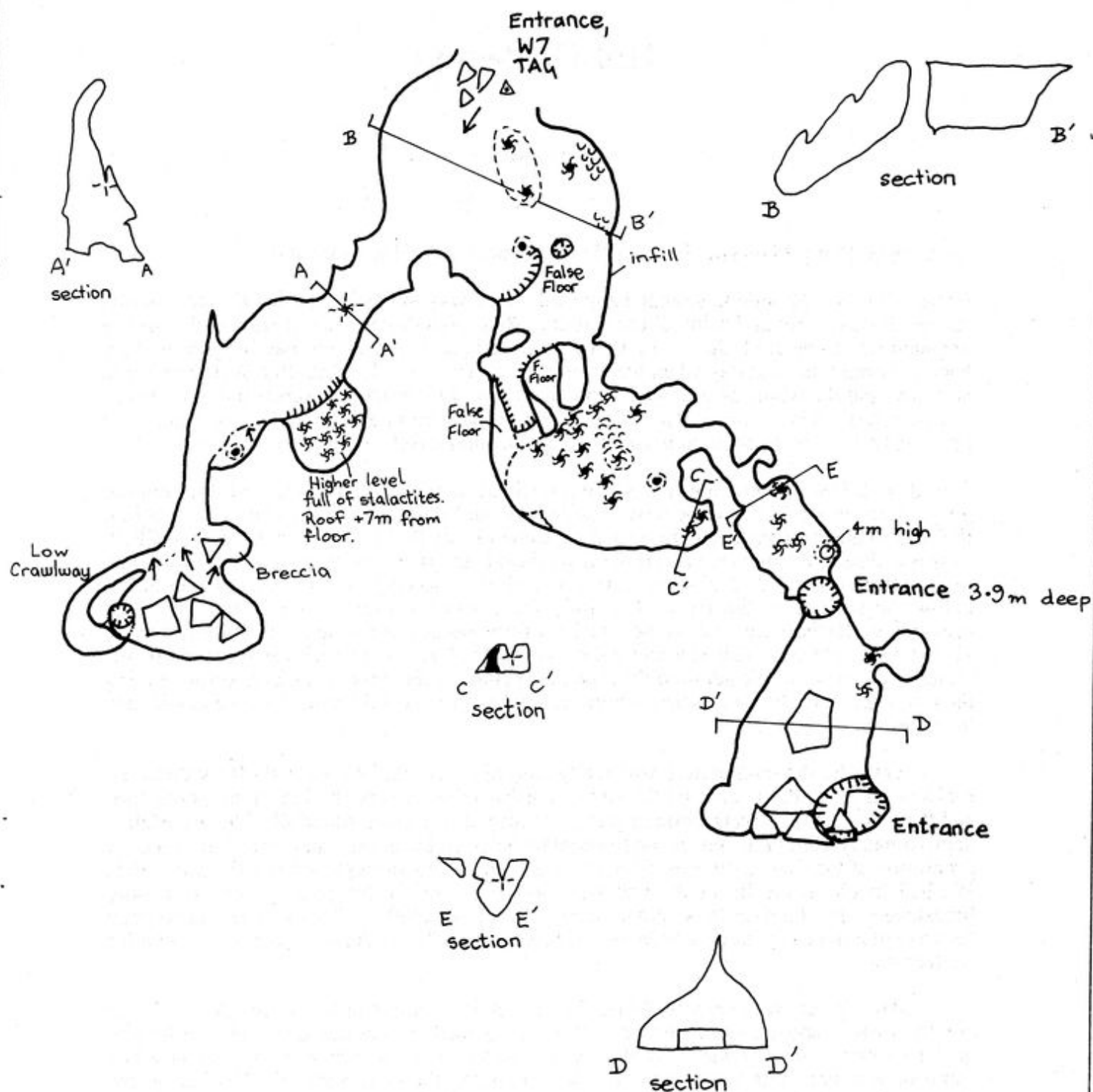
We then went for a walk, looking at W42, a pit about halfway between Blackberry Hole and the campsite. It contains a bees nest right next to where you would drop a ladder to enter the hole. Maybe we'll go one night to survey it when the bees are not so active.

We surveyed a doline further to the north (yet another map to follow) and a small horizontal cave leading north from the doline's western side.

Another small hole nearby was inspected (no tag). This will be surveyed and drawn. Continuing north to Wineglass cave, we surveyed another nearby small hole and tied it into the Wineglass tag.

As it was getting late, we did not survey Wineglass Cave, but inspected it instead. Carol and Jill looked at both branches. This cave is almost filled with loosely cemented angular rock fragments which are not limestone. A few small helictites are on the roof. The limestone seems to be chemically reacting to the fill.

- Jill Rowling, November 1994.

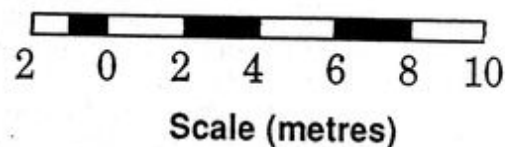


Gundungurra Cave (W7) in Blackberry Hole
Wombeyan Caves, NSW

2W7.SUS1 Sheet 1 (Plan)

Surveyed by Mike Lake, David Hughes & Jill Rowling
on 27-2-94 using Suunto compass, clino & fibreglass tape.
Size of original: A4. Scale of original: 1:200 ASF grade 5 4

Drafted by Jill Rowling in May 1994.
Sydney University Speleological Society



Hot Cooleman

Phil Maynard

1-4 April, Easter Trip

Ian Cooper, Philip Maynard, Steven Tidman, Daniel Clarke, David Ireland

Friday, 1/4/94: Something strange happened on the way to Cooleman this Easter - the sun shone. It was warm and calm all the way into Blue Waterholes. Easter trips to the Snowy are supposed to be cold; there's a long tradition of it, so we assumed that things would get back to normal the next day when we went caving. The water level at Blue Waterholes was very low and the whole area looked particularly dry, with much less scrub and grass than I remembered. There were also a lot fewer tourists camped there than we had seen previously, I guess the drought must have kept the numbers down, like the insects.

Saturday, 2/4/94. A hot sunny day! We decided to go down the river and through the gorge, since it would surely be best to do the wet and shady bits of the countryside before the cold weather arrived. The first cave we came to was Barbers, CP14/CP15/CP16/CP17. This is a classic stream way cave flowing out beside the river, but there was no visible flow in the efflux this time. Inside the cave a stream was flowing, so there must be an efflux below the surface of the river. Certainly there was a lot less water in the cave than previously. Barbers cave has some excellent formations, despite being a Dolphin special, visited by the masses. This is because there are parts of the cave which are not found by the majority of visitors. We admired the sizeable crystals of the upper chambers before exiting the inflow point of the cave, where a blind valley has formed at the contact of the granite and the limestone.

Outside, the temperature was really starting to climb. We cooled off by throwing rocks at Steve while he crossed the river. Further downstream, the limestone gorge ends and there is a pleasant walk through granite country down to the waterfall. The waterfall is approximately 20m high and sits on the contact between the granite and more limestone. A proportion of the flow is diverted from the waterfall to flow through White fish cave, CP18. We had lunch on the lip of the waterfall, looking over the lower gorge and lots more limestone where the river flows down to meet the Goodradigbee. This area would be good for an exploratory trip, having been visited briefly by SUSS in the past,¹ but we left that for another day.

After lunch, we explored White fish, which is an active inflow cave. After several climbs down a vadose canyon, the water suddenly pooled and became deep. Not wishing to go for a swim in the icy water, we craned our necks around a corner to see if there was a sump or whether there was a way on. Sure enough, the cave sumped. Exiting up the climbs, we decided to have a look at the lower gorge. Right at the base of the waterfall, the efflux for Whitefish cave flows into the river. This sumps after about thirty metres, with a handline running through the sump. We believed that this was just a duckunder, but we weren't about to jump into the freezing water to find out. Further downstream, we found CP89. This is the efflux for a small blind valley which flows into the gorge from the north. The cave is active and recent in its development. The result is a small, sharp cave with a stream at the base. We decided not to rip ourselves to pieces and withdrew. Fifty metres downstream on the same side of the river is CP90, an abandoned efflux. This cave was dry and dusty, although there is a spring downstream of it.

We climbed back up over the blind valley behind CP89. There was a stream flowing into a hole in the rocks here, but it was unenterable. Instead of dropping down to the river, we continued climbing to the top of the ridge. This gave us a spectacular view of the gorge, the limestone around Blue Waterholes and of the southern Brindabellas. When we arrived

back on limestone near the gorge, we prospected for any cave entrances on the ridge top, but didn't find any. That night we sampled some more of the SUSS vintage red.

Sunday, 3/4/94. The day was cloudless and hot. I got badly sunburnt, which is not quite what I was expecting on an Easter trip. We decided to look at the major blind valley which flows into the river from the north, just downstream of Blue Waterholes. There is a perennially active stream flowing underneath the surface, with two caves giving access to the stream in the lower part of the valley. These are Frustration, CP10 and New Years, CP9. The outlet of this stream is Z cave, CP30, one metre above the river level. This valley was extensively studied and surveyed by SUSS in the early 1970's under the co-ordination of Ludwig Muenzenreider.²

On our way up the valley, the first caves we found were CP60 and CP61. These are old, dry phreatic mazes and we played around in the passages for a while. Further up the valley was CP34, a large stream passage boring into the hillside in the fashion of Playing Fields cave. Just like Playing Fields it dead ends. CP35 was a walk-through vadose passage with two entrances. In this section of the valley we missed the entrance of Frustration somewhere and decided to find it on the way back down.

After lunch in the shade we went up the valley to find the various sinks for the underground stream. The major eastern tributary was the first sink we looked at. This is a classic blind valley with the stream flowing into a swallet at the limestone contact. Even in the very dry conditions the stream was still flowing quite strongly. This entrance is tantalisingly close to being enterable. It's a dig prospect! We looked further up this valley, but there were no caves although there was more limestone in the catchment. Back in the main valley, the limestone continues for a considerable distance upstream. While still on the limestone we found CP63. This is a swallet on a bend in the dry stream. It takes water during floods and indeed is very similar to Bow cave. Apart from the piles of sediment inside the cave, there is a lot of very sharp rock. The cave chokes out behind a dike, with a draught flowing out. The main sink for the valley was a mud puddle in a doline about 500 m upstream from CP63.

On the way back down the valley, we missed the entrance to Frustration cave again. Indeed! Down near the river we found CP9 tag up on the side of the valley. New Year's cave has a tight climb down ten metres to the stream. We found most of the stream has been captured by a developing lower level, leaving the stream bed at the base of the climb dry. Upstream, we soon found the water. The stream involves hands and knees progress on the river gravels, and a major effort is required to avoid the water. We followed this passage for about 100 metres, until the way on began to demand total immersion. Discretion being the better part of valour, and cowardice being the better part of discretion, we PIKED. Downstream from the entrance the accessible streambed is dry. There is some reasonable formation in this part of the cave, which we used as an excuse not to push our explorations any further. We had to cross the river to get back to the campsite, so we threw rocks at Steve.

Monday, 4/4/94. Also hot and sunny. While the others were still having breakfast, I strolled down the river to Z cave to have a look at the outflow. This cave is well named. There are two extremely sharp bends as the stream jumps from joint to joint. New Year's cave is close but the connection is impenetrable. Eventually, I retreated to avoid having to get wet.

We decided to go up the valley from Blue Waterholes for our final day's caving. The dry gorge at least offered some shade from the relentless sun. The others had a brief look in Coolman Main, CP1, but I sat outside, since there wasn't that much to see. Further up the gorge, we stopped to examine Murray cave, CP3. This is a large streamway cave with some good formations, these apparently are all that remains of what was a superbly decorated cave before the tourists got into it. About halfway along the surveyed main passage there is a sump, which has only been passed a few times this century.³ We had a vague hope that with the current drought we might have a chance of passing the sump, but it was not to be. The

sump was perhaps 2 metres lower than I remembered from a previous trip, but still not low enough. Back at the entrance, I ran into a tourist party being guided by a NPWS ranger. She said that the water had only another metre to fall to expose the roof of the sump. Meantime the others had ducked into a crawl-sized passage off the main passage close to the entrance. This led to an extensive series of muddy crawl through passages which apparently paralleled the main passage running south. Eventually they ran these passages down to the end, but the length of passage is almost equal to the main passage. We left the cave in time to find more tourist parties arriving.

After climbing onto the treeless limestone plateau above Murray cave, we headed straight south in the scorching heat. This was what motivated us to look at the duckunder in River cave, CP6. River cave has an impressive entrance in a side canyon, dropping through some muddy passages to a fast flowing river. downstream in the river, after a chilly wading section, there is a duckunder with a handline through it. Dan went through this first. There is also a narrow slot above the water level, and Steve and I managed to fit through this rather than follow the hand line. Ian and David decided not to try the duckunder, instead looking upstream past the entrance. Beyond the downstream duckunder is a short section of river passage, followed by another sump. Once again, this has been passed on a couple of occasions in the past, but not on this day.⁴ We were starting to feel very cold and were thinking of the warmth on the surface. Back on the surface, we found out how hot it was and started thinking of the river again!

So ended a terrific long weekend at Cooleman. Ian and I drove home, while the others went to the Yarrangobilly trip that wasn't. The following weekend, it snowed heavily at Kiandra and Cooleman.

1. SUSS has reported on trips to Goodradigbee cave three times in the past. See the *SUSS bulletin*, 4(1), 3; 6(3), 6-7 and 21(1), 21-22.
2. *SUSS bulletin*, 12(4), 36-37; 13(2), 36-37; 13(8), 97-98; 13(9), 105-106; 15(4), 76-77; 16(6), 84. These articles contain maps of the valley and the caves.
3. SUSS managed to pass the sump during a drought in the 1960's. *SUSS bulletin*, 6(3), 6-7.
4. *SUSS bulletin*, 8(5), 45-56.

Anzac Day Longweekend, 1994.

A sub- trip report cf. *An Unusual Jenolan*, by Ian Cooper, SUSS Bull. 34(1):28-29.

Saturday 23rd April

Blowing Hole Update

by Mark Staraj

Since the Christmas 1993 trip Phil had been back to show Carol our progress in Blowing Hole, who obliged by forcing her own way past the squeeze (just looking, sure thing!). She managed another bodylength to where more digging is required. Squeezing back out proved difficult.

On another tour of the dig Andrew Matthews discovered an upper chamber containing bones (just looking once again, mind!).

On this occasion it was straight back to the dig where Phil squeezed on to where Carol had stopped. Initially he was despondent but encouraged by my insistence that there is no such thing as a wasted breeze he began to pick at the obstruction and found it relatively easy digging although cramped. Since I had little else to do I began poking around and after squeezing up over the dig site I found myself looking into a chamber that was spacious by Blowing Hole standards, which is to say big enough to kneel in. But I could not get around the corner so I retreated and successfully altered the angle of attack. It was obviously Andrew's discovery as the cairn with the grinning skull proclaimed it. It was not the only skeleton here. At first I took the narrow elongated jaw to indicate it was a bird but birds don't have teeth do they?

There were some tree roots and a passage leading off in the direction (it seemed) of the surface - no breeze. I was discouraged from looking further by a large hairy black spider. This spider was not your average huntsman. The ominous shape of a dead relative gave off bad karma. I now knew what had killed the non-birds - I retreated.

Some time later Phil had had enough. After struggling to get out it was decided that we would concentrate on opening up the squeeze first next time. We now decided to comb the bluff for Century Cave. Century Cave is the largest cave in the bluff and has a breeze. We were keen to check it out to get a feel for what relationship it had, if any to Blowing Hole. In the process we found J97/98 which was a sizeable piece of fossil cave - not extensive but spacious. Eventually we found Century Cave. It too was old and spacious and although mostly devoid of formation, its tall orange chamber with flowstone and tree roots was well preserved and quite aesthetic. It has two entrances and at the mid level a breezy daylight hole as well. However of most interest were the plunging climbs which led to a bottom level. Off this a draughting, tight descending rift went some 4m further down. This had been dug out by SUSS more than 10 years before. I could not squeeze down or more accurately I was not convinced I could squeeze back up. Phil persevered. Below there was a chamber with a small draughting passage leading on but only if you utterly destroyed the pretty formation - NOT ON!

So we returned to the surface. It is extremely unlikely that Blowing Hole is simply a lower entrance to Century Cave. The two are quite distant from each other and both caves were *blowing out*. On our next visit we will survey the new section of Blowing Hole - although only a handful of metres it twists too often to guess the general trend.

Sunday 24th April

A Bit More Wiburd's

by Mark Staraj

Present: Mark Staraj, Tim Matthews, Tom Begic, Sue Westwood.

Ian and a great company of cavers were disappearing from view across the broad flat towards North Wiburds Bluff and the main sink of the Jenolan River. However the three of us had stopped at Wiburds Bluff because we intended to do some caving and there's bugger all of that to do at North Wiburds. On the other hand the 3rd biggest cave of the valley lies under Wiburds Bluff - Wiburds Lake Cave.

No one exactly knows for certain whether this is THE Wiburds Lake Cave but it is certainly the best candidate of any of the currently known caves. The cave of legend Wiburd (a famous caving pioneer of Jenolan) found early this century was supposed to have a large lake. A good sized lake was found in this cave when (re)discovered in the early 1960's but we now know that the lake is intermittent and seldom there at all. No signatures have ever been located which would have been most unusual for Wiburd! If another candidate cave were to be found it would be pretty unfortunate from a naming point of view (False Wiburds Lake Cave?).

In the mid 1970's following the successful completion of the Jenolan Blue Book project the next in line was to have been Wiburds Lake Cave. For one reason or another SUSS has yet to produce it but plans are afoot to refloat the idea (after the Spider and Tuglow Cave books of course). Gradually SUSS is refamiliarising itself the cave.

Today was going to be "know your cave day". However the sun was bright, the shade pleasant, the grass soft, the views expansive, the sky serene, the birds lyrical, the company genial,crunch, crunch, crunch..... a figure materialised out of the heat shimmer from the north. It was Tim Matthews. Alone.

"Hi, guys. The others are lazing around and don't look as though they will be caving. So I came back."

"Oh!" Damn.

"Sure, we saw that you were coming back so we decided to wait. Lets go caving."

A short search ensued for the J92 entrance. Once found this lead via 2 ramps avoiding a drop to a chamber at the centre of The Maze. Since we were essentially exploring we took the left most passage which from memory would lead to the Yawning Gulches No. 2 which needs a ladder to descend. Some lessons in cave exploration were given to the neophyte cavers - how does one find new bits of cave apart from digs, diving and scaling poles/climbing lead? Well one looks into every nook and cranny ie. you keep looking until you are absolutely sure that you have seen every surface of the passage and thus no cunningly hidden passages. With instructions to seek out cave where no man (or woman) has gone before we headed back from the pitch to the centre of The Maze.

I musn't have explained it very well. While bringing up the rear I saw a partially separated side chamber. "Hey, guys how did you miss this?"

"Oh! It didn't look like it went".

But the side chamber became a low tunnel. After 5m it became a squeeze onto a "T" junction. Right - no. Left. Tim followed it around another 5m to where it pinched it out at a dig. This was really interesting stuff. The passage was a 1.5m wide phreatic tube with a lovely mottled roof. Beyond the pinch could be glimpsed a large darkness. Tim immediately set to work on the soft and sticky mud, working like a trooper. Embedded rocks bruised fingers and after 3/4 hour of stretching and burying one's face in the dirt Tim and I switched. In another 1/2 hour we were almost there. It was interesting to note how the closer I got to completing the dig there was an inversely proportional number of offers to help. Equally I noticed that I seemed to gain an inversely proportionate amount of strength, and so additional help was welcome but not required. Finally it was down to one large rock across the entrance that I could only get one hand to. So after a torrid struggle (hoping it wouldn't crush my hand) I managed to unbalance it so it rolled away and clanged into a wall. That resulted in an echoing boom and our faces lit up - you beauty!

"Tim, its all yours - you can be first." I said, feeling most magnanimous.

"And guess what I love most about this?"

"What?" said Tim.

"Don Matthews is going to miss out. Yet again!"

Ha,ha, ha.....

After the laughter subsided:

"He's going to shit himself!": says Tim.

Ha,ha, ha.....!!

"Can you believe it? Everytime something is discovered he's in the wrong cave. There was the Gnome Room discovery, Willow's Hole, Water Cavern...."

"What a loser!"

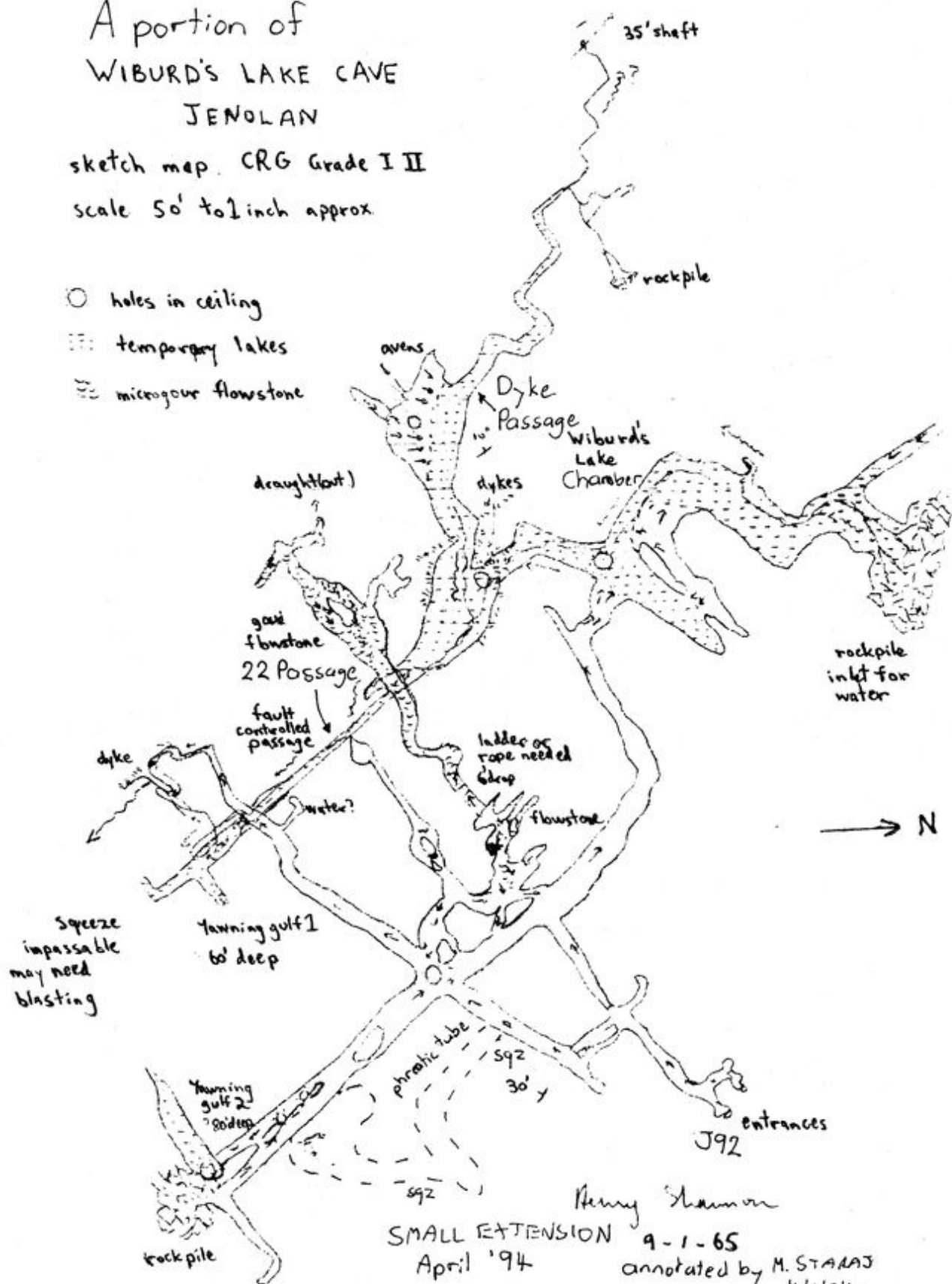
Tim squeezes through into caverns measureless to man. "Mark... there's footprints here!"

Shortly afterwards I could confirm to everyone that the chamber we were looking at was the one we had just left - The Maze, indeed.

A portion of WIBURD'S LAKE CAVE JENOLAN

sketch map. CRG Grade I II
scale 50' to 1 inch approx.

- holes in ceiling
- ⋯ temporary lakes
- ≡ microgour flowstone



The next 20 minutes were spent concealing the hole (that everyone tromps over when entering the cave). If everyone crawled through here they would only end up ruining the leopard-like surface of the tube. So - please don't! (see map)

After this success we took another route from The Maze. This one lead to the Lake Chamber although from appearances it had been a considerably long time since the lake had been present. We explored around here for a while and then took one of the main side passages - 22 Passage. This carries overflow from the lake to Yawning Gulches No. 2. Here it sinks to I don't know where. It's possible to climb down the 4m drop to the floor of this pit but you gain nothing by it. We returned from here and just before Lake Chamber detoured into Dyke Passage. At this point we were joined by Ian and the rest of the gang and decided to call it quits for the day.

For those who have not been into Wiburds it is well worth the walk, offering a pleasant and jolly jaunt down some quite spacious passages and chambers.

UNDER TARAKUANA

or

The case of the snake that missed the grass.

August 27-8, 1994 - Robyn & Guy McKanna (JTL), Martin Scott (JTL), Phil Maynard, Mike & Jill Lake, John Oxley, Hugh Commins & Breeda, Marcia Vagg, Eva-Marie Matizik, and several members of Orange Speleological Society.

Ahh Tarakuana - what a wonderful, relaxing caving location. Or so we thought when we embarked on this trip.

We all met at the comfortable cabin late Saturday morning, after the long, but scenic drive into the pretty valley that is Tarakuana (albeit a little brown with the drought). We introduced ourselves to the members of OSS who had come on this combined club trip.

Then it was up and over the hill and along the valley and through the blackberries to Aragonite Cave. This unimaginatively named cave has some of the best aragonite clusters in Australia in two chambers at its eastern end.

The decorations were appreciated by our team and photographs duly taken. Mr and Mrs Technical Specification (Rowling Lake) laid some tracker markers to ensure the cave remains in its good condition.

The rest of this predominantly phreatic styled cave is quite enjoyable as well, providing a mix of crawling, walking, and climbing through what is an interesting little void. It is just a pity that there is not more of it.

We decided not to scour the hillside for other possibilities, as several of us had already extensively probed the hills on previous trips. The best possibilities are currently inaccessible, being covered by blackberries. And enthusiasm waned for the surface digs.

While some of the team headed back to the cottage, the rest of us headed off to another cave, passing the almost dry seeps from the hillside south of Aragonite Cave. Others had gone off to the region's third cave - a tunnel grovel.

Those of us that remained (Guy, John, Breeda and Eva-Marie) made our way down and across the valley to the more interesting Dragon's Lair cave. The little entrance to this vadose style cave drops about 75 feet in a nice pitch.

John descended the ladder first - unbeknown what lay in wait for him in the Lair.

A dragon was indeed home!

John yelled out from the depths of the cave - "S...S....S....Sn....Snn....Snake!" There was a huge angry snake hissing at the bottom of the pitch and striking - protecting its lair and stopping us from progressing further.

It sounded like a job for Major Chaos, John's voice was heard echoing up the pitch. (General Chaos, Keir, was not able to make this trip).

So Major Chaos (Guy) abseiled the pitch to take on the dragon. And a nasty one it was. The 2 metre brown snake was still active, striking when approached. But with the aid of a stick, it was enticed into a cave pack.

With its tail still sticking out, the pack was handed to John who tied it to the rope and yelled "up snake".

Cave clear and a snake saved and on its way back to the grass, we thought as we began to relax.

But the ordeal was not over - the most terrifying aspect was to come.

As the snake in the sack went up the pitch we lent back against the wall. As he did so, Guy then felt a quivering thing down the side of his neck! Major Chaos was expressing just that when he realised it was caused by the elastic of his petzel light that had been knocked off his helmet by the roof - not a falling snake!

With that little excitement over, the others entered the cave and explored its fissures before exciting on dusk to bush fires.

After all that excitement, the next day was spent relaxing at Tuglow falls. Several of us abseiled the cliff in what is a nice drop before concluding a most pleasant weekend.

- Guy McKanna

The Karst that Played Hard to Get

Comboyne Plateau: 3-4 September 1994

David Jackson

Fellow loonies: Ian Cooper(TL), Robin Hilliard, Phil Maynard, Eric Tse

Early Friday, thinking that Coops wouldn't be able to get the batteries, I returned the Equipment room keys. Meeting Coops as planned at 5pm in front of the Geology Building the following dialogue ensued:

Coops: "I've tried to ring you all afternoon. Where were you?"

I: "In the library, why?"

Coops: "You didn't return the keys, did you?"

Silence.

Half an hour later, after badgering a security guard, Coops and I left, batteries charged. But the forces of evil, in the guise of the Darling Harbour bypass, tried to hinder us yet further. However Coops' car valiantly prevailed and we made it out of Sydney (eventually). With the new roadworks completed (and also as we wanted to finish listening to the 2BL Radio Quiz – do *you* know in which part of the body the fovea is located?) the new eating spot is the Karuah Truckstop. Despite the name, the fact that you can't see it for the trucks and the ridiculous touristy bits and pieces on sale inside, the food is reasonably good (treat yourself to an iced chocolate – mmm...). Feeling recharged we set off northwards. Unfortunately Coops' beloved Kingswood felt otherwise and proceeded to stall at the next available opportunity (at the traffic lights in Taree), resisting all of Coops' sensitive attempts at coaxing it back to life. Coops, never one to be fazed by a problem of a mechanical nature, started poking around under the bonnet. Now as it happened, the person driving behind us was from the local service station and offered 'kindly' to provide his service. It was only *after* altering the positioning of the contacts in the distributor and cleaning the needle valve in the carburetor that he said, "Normally I charge \$40; is \$10 OK?" Coops and I looked at each other. Needless to say, Coops wasn't going to admit that he couldn't have fixed the problem himself and so I relinquished the \$10 note.

Coops: "I could have fixed that!"

I: "Yeah, but he did look at the distributor."

Coops: "Hmmm... I suppose that had to be done sometime."

With that, the car purred all the way to Rob's aunt Bryany's property near Elands (sighting on the way two fine examples of that Australian native - the deer!).

We arrived about midnight. Rob had said, "They told me they'd stay up late and wait for us." However, the only signs of life were the sounds of snoring from the house and so, deciding not to wake anyone, we made a foray into the surrounds. It should be mentioned that Bryany's property is covered with thick temperate rainforest and is one of the most gorgeous properties I've seen. Rob's step uncle Andy is a Scottish engineer and has built all sorts of things on the property including a two-storey free standing cubby house/castle! I was surprised to see two tents (one 1-person and one 3-person) already set up, and even more surprised to see two mattresses in the larger tent! The fireplace even had tinder in it and wood had been collected for us. To top it off there was an outdoor loo! Coops declared that he was going to sleep in the back of his Kingswood. While I was getting my gear in order, in drove Phil, Rob and Eric, who assured me it took them only half an hour to get out of Sydney. As I was directing them to a parking spot, down came Bryany who was surprised to see five people and two cars. I said I'd found everything - tents, campfire, loo, etc. She kept saying how clever we were to have found everything but I guess she didn't realize how good cavers are at finding things in the dark.

After a blissful night's sleep (I'd also brought my pillow!) we were offered tea, coffee and toast by Bryany while Andy told us that he'd been to the caves himself some years before.

"Go down Innes View Rd and where the power lines cross the road for the third time there's a path to the left. You can drive down that for a while then follow the powerlines down the ridge and near the bottom there should be a barbed wire fence to the left. Follow it down into the valley and you should find the caves."

I knew it wouldn't be that easy. First of all, we couldn't find the "path to the left" (a cursory drive round a cow paddock made sure of that) so we decided to try accessing the caves from below. We drove along Tom's Creek Road to the point we thought closest to the caves.

We were armed with a mining map showing the location of a planned quarry in relation to the caves and the Department of Lands topographical map of the area with "Caves Gully" located on it. Comparing the two maps we discovered that they differed in the location of the caves. "Hmmm...", said Coops, "the topo map must be wrong again." "Not surprising", said Phil. So armed with the maps and the information proffered by Andy we should have found the caves in under half an hour. So starts the tale of

Lantana Lunacy

Dodging the cow pats, our intrepid party made its way quickly (too quickly Rob might say) up the first ridge and down the other side, then up the next ridge and down again. Upon ascending the third ridge (a plateau this ain't!), Rob was overcome and collapsed in a panting heap to the ground. Could it be that the evil presence of the Lantana was making its mark even now? A weakened Rob (with Eric for company) slowly caught up as we headed up the gully away from a small active quarry, the quarry workers oblivious to the ever-present advance of the Lantana. Where there's a quarry there's limestone and so up the the gully we headed following our mining map. By this point the topographical map said that we should have now crossed the powerlines. "I can't see any powerlines, guys", said Phil. Half way up the gully, upon close inspection of the rocks, Coops said, "Hmmm... this ain't limestone, it's conglomerate. There ain't no caves here." Could it be that it was all an evil plot by the Lantana to ensnare us and fulfil it's carnivorous fancies? Rob and Eric, meanwhile had decided it was much better to sit on the side of the previous ridge in the shade and watch Coops, Phil and I thrashing our way through the vines. We felt very jealous of Tarzan's inhuman ability to have the vines on *his* side rather than find himself hopelessly tangled as I certainly found myself on numerous occasions. Due to a recent fire everything was covered in soot and, deciding I wanted to be different, I entered a particularly sooty patch of vines which proved excellent at smearing soot from head to toe. My appearance afterwards was worthy of a few laughs from Coops and Phil. Totally bushed (or should I say vined) we waited for Rob and Eric who decided that our attempts were hardly proving productive and were heading our way to lend their expert assistance. From our vantage point we could see right across the gully. Coops, scrutinizing the mining map, said, "They've stuffed it up. There's no limestone here." "Perhaps we should tell them it's OK to build a quarry here then", replied Phil. Ian looked back at the other map and said, "Maybe the caves actually *are* in the gully labelled 'Caves Gully'. We've been looking in the wrong gully." We took a collective look across the gully, but our eyes were drawn downwards by a dense mass of green in the base of the gully. Panic set in as we realized that to get to the other side we might have to go through it. We might have been armed with maps, but unfortunately no machete. However we found that the gully rounded out at the top and so we made our way slowly around, resisting (quite easily really) the lure of the Lantana below us. Upon rounding the next ridge we could see in the distance on the south-eastern face of Caves Gully a large exposed bluff. With enthusiasm rekindled (yes it was that hot) we pressed on, fought our way around more dense green patches, finally to arrive at the bluff.

Now, we all thought, was the easy bit. Little did we count on the native cunning of the Lantana! After searching the obvious spot (the bluff) and failing to locate a

single cave, we split up and headed in different directions, a cunning ploy foisted upon us by the Lantana to divide and weaken us. Up and down and through Lantana (or Nature's Velcro as Phil described it) we went, scouring the gully face, leaving evidence of our struggle (namely pieces of flesh) covering the landscape. This seemed to only afford nourishment to the Lantana, who sensed that the Sun's hot rays were rapidly weakening us. As I had the cave pack on, the Lantana realized that it could hinder my progress by grabbing hold of it. Hence I developed the technique of facing the Lantana square on, helmet forward and charging. This seemed very effective despite my appearance afterwards being akin to someone put through a blender (remember the lawnmower scene in *Braindead*?). The lunacy had taken hold and I was powerless in its spiky grasp.

Meanwhile, Coops had reached the top and discovered why Andy's directions hadn't been very effective. All that remained of the fence was a trail of barbed wire on (in some cases under) the earth. No doubt the powerlines had burnt down or something. So that was mystery number one solved. There was still the matter of the caves though. By this stage our meager supplies of water had run out and we were despairing of ever finding anything. Mutters were had of "Who's silly idea was this anyway?" Rob, for whom this was his inaugural caving trip, asked naively, "Are SUSS trips always like this?" Just when we were on the point of giving up (or rather when we were on the point of leaving Coops to his obscure, to say the least, Karst area) Ian gave a cry of "I've found a resurgence." Finally, water! Rob and I at that moment were high up near the mouth of the gully at the north-eastern edge of the limestone and decided to head down for a drink. On the way, Rob dropped his waterbottle. Upon retrieving it, Rob turned to find himself facing a large cave entrance roughly 5m across and 5m high. How could we have missed that? Our search was (for the time being at least) over. After 4½ hours of wandering, climbing, thrashing and getting devoured by Lantana we could hardly contain our joy. Having rediscovered the cave, Rob offered the name of "Waterbottle Cave" if no other name existed, a name which didn't particularly excite either Coops or Phil. Thank God it was Rob, the SUSS fresher, who discovered it as he would not otherwise have expressed his desire to go on the following Jenolan trip (he actually did!). After about 15 minutes of Lantana-induced frenzy the others converged on the cave. Referring to our crude maps of the 4 caves known to exist we quickly concluded that this was CB2. Rob and I made a quick trip into the cave to discover a) lots of moths, b) lots of bats (the cute little furry kind – Eastern bent winged bats I was told) and c) another exit! I went out and surprised the others back at the entrance who had started the survey. The survey was a joy with legs of the order of metres. While Coops was tagging the two entrances (in a manner I know not, considering he had left his rivotting gun back in Sydney) I carried on north-eastwards at the same height (passing what Phil said was the largest stinging tree he'd ever seen) and discovered

another cave, albeit a small one (it went a couple of metres before choking out). This was reasoned to be CB3. After Ian and Eric surveyed it we all headed down to the resurgence for a grateful drink. It was nearly sunset at this point and we didn't feel like finding any more caves (CB4, the largest cave, and CB1 are still awaiting rediscovery). Thus we made our leisurely way back, wisely steering clear of any Lantana, while Ian paused every so often to procure some rock samples (there's more limestone in the next gully). Finally we made our way to the car, pausing at the start of a rubbish tip to lament the sorry state of the world and made our way back to Rob's rellies' place at around 8 o'clock (via Comboyne RSL to get some beer of course). The evening was spent chatting with Andy and Bryany, avoiding the smoke which seemed to unerringly head in Rob's direction, and thinking of ways to rid the Universe of Lantana, cursing Edward Lantana or whoever it was that brought the accursed stuff into the country. We thought that maybe some napalm would do the trick. Maybe a modified form of chain logging (chain lantanaing?) could be used to somehow drag the stuff up the hill out of the way. We mused on what would be the 21st century's solution to the problem. Rob's envisaged solution is shown in an accompanying diagram in the form of "The SUSS Total Lantana Environment Suit".

Daleks Invade Elands

Picture if you will your average Elands farmer waking up on Sunday morning to the peaceful sounds of birds twittering in the tree tops and the metallic grating of Daleks from the neighbouring property.

SUB-SUBSCRIBE...SUB-SUBSCRIBE...SUB-SUBSCRIBE

BY OR-DER OF THE SU-PREME DA-LEK OF DU-ME-RIC IS-LAND,
YOU MUST SUB-SUBSCRIBE TO RA-DI-O 2-BOB'S RA-DI-O-THON OR
YOU WILL BE EX-TER-MI-NA-TED.

SUB-SUBSCRIBE...SUB-SUBSCRIBE...SUB-SUBSCRIBE

Is the Big Oyster really the disguised Dalek Mother Ship into which people are being lured for experimentation to see the effects of replacing their brains with oysters (I don't know if they expected to see any great change) and disgruntled at the lack of human subjects had they decided to utilize that well-known radio station Radio 2BOB to strike fear into the populace?

The reality was that Andy works for Radio 2BOB and Rob happened to mention that I can do Dalek impressions. Thus the first hour of Sunday morning was spent recording ads in Dalekese for Radio 2BOB's imminent radiothon. Eventually, we left

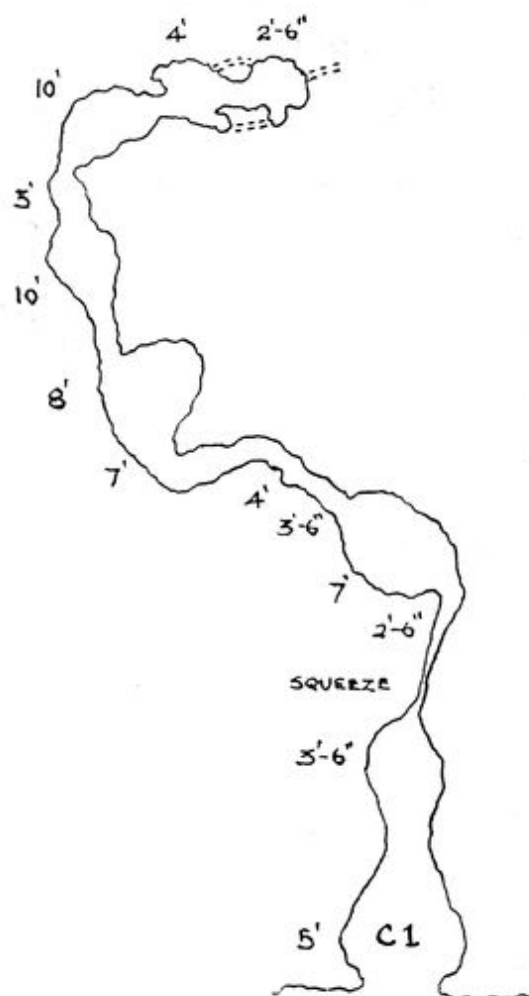
and graced Ellenborough Falls with our presence, and quite some falls they are. We immediately tried to find anchor points for a future abseil. It's roughly 175m down making for a fun abseil! We then made the trip back to Sydney (stopping, of course, at the Karuah Truckstop).

Rob's rellies are to be gratefully thanked for providing their property, making the trip so much more pleasant that it could otherwise have been.

Thanks also must go to Coops for persevering with Comboyne. Despite the cuts and scratches I had a great time and will certainly be back next year for the sequel. As for the rest of you disbelievers out there, now that we've done all the hard slog and know exactly where (two at least of) the caves are there'll be no excuse not to come and share in the Comboyne experience.

KNOWN KARST FEATURES AT COMBOYNE

Cave	Description	Length	Depth
CB1	Personal communication 1994 (J. Taylor, KSS). Not seen on trip. Currently not tagged.	(?)50m	?
CB2/6	Horizontal open 2 entrance cave with bats. Tagged and surveyed 3/9/94.	77m	8m
CB3	Small single chamber cave. Tagged and surveyed 3/9/94.	13m	3m
CB4	Personal communication 1994 (J. Taylor, KSS). Not seen on trip. Currently not tagged.	~ 100m	?
CB5	Resurgence of Caves Gully, 2ℓ/s flow (3/9/94). Currently not tagged.	na	na



CB1

Comboyne NSW



Sketch map provided by John Taylor, (KSS).

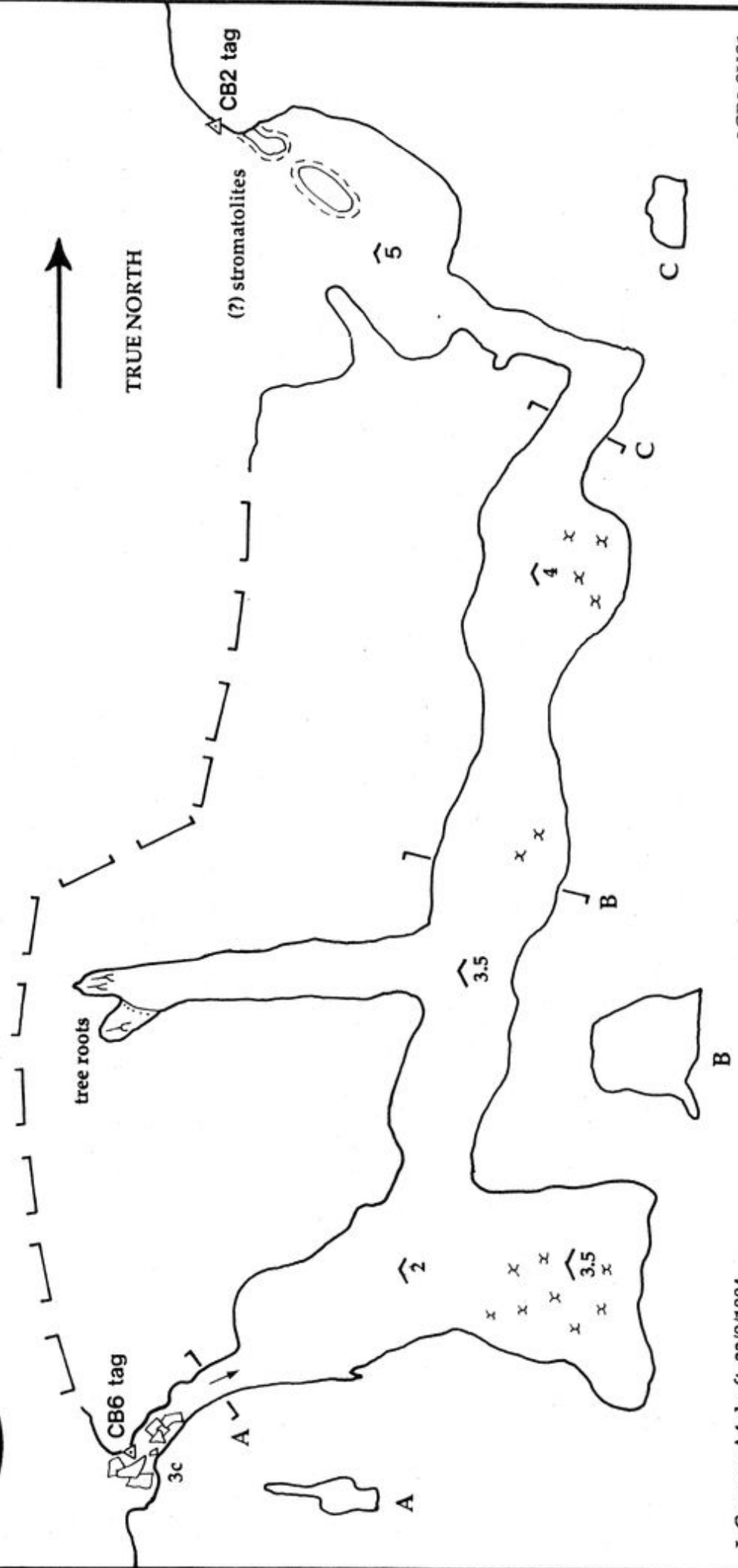
CB2/6

Comboyne NSW



Surveyed 3/9/1994 by Ian Cooper, Rob Hilliard, Phil Maynard to ASF grade 44.

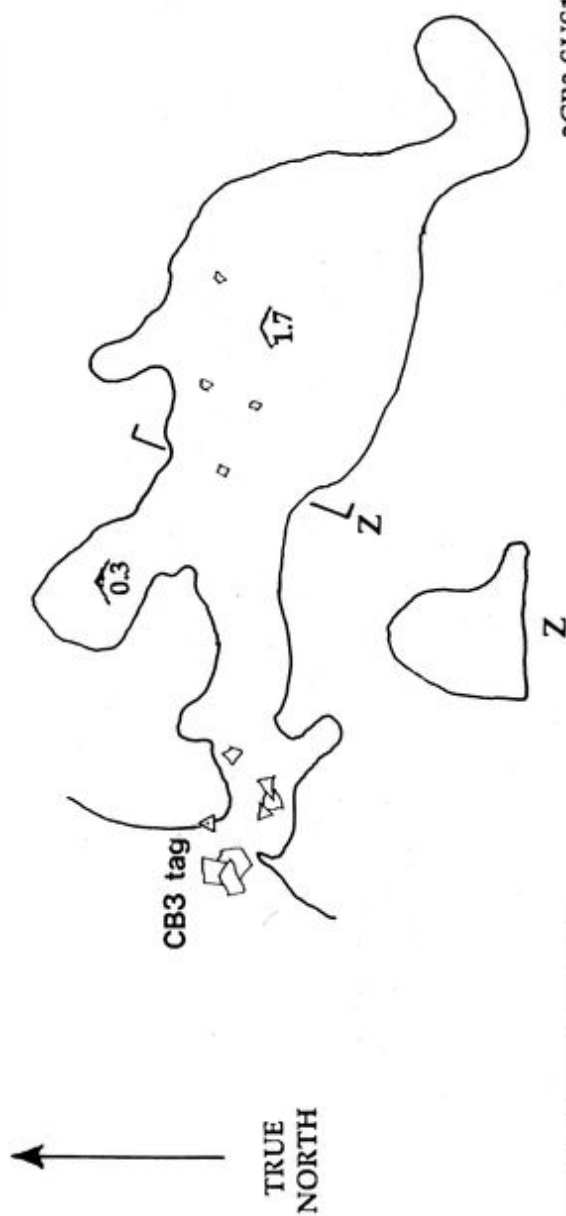
Length: 77m Depth: 8m



I. Cooper, A4 draft, 22/9/1994

2CB2.SUS1

Length: 13m Depth: 3m



I. Cooper, A4 draft, 22/9/1994

2CB3.SUS1

CB4

Comboyne NSW



0 15m

Sketch map provided by John Taylor, (KSS).

Down an Up Mt Banks

29th October 1994

⇒ Carol Layton, Stephen Keenlyside, David Jackson, Don Matthews, Kevin Leong, Igor Kovac and David Ronalds.

Mt Banks was originally planned for the 31st July but on that day it was reported to be snowing in the Blue Mountains so quite understandably people rang up with sensible reasons for not being able to turn up. Fortunately, the morning of Saturday 29th October was sunny with a bit of a breeze. No backing out now.

The group met at the Mt Banks carpark off Bells Line Road at around 9.30am. And what a happy group, some with very shiny descenders and karabiners. Oh no, this is not meant to be a beginners abseiling trip. I was assured that it was not. This is not the ideal place to learn how to thread the rope through a rack with a drop of about 400 metres beside you.

Mt Banks is a great abseiling trip but it is certainly not for those with a fear of heights or uncertainty with gear. By the end of the 12th abseil (it is easy to lose count) a descent of about 400 metres will have been covered with hardly any walking. There are lots of small abseils around the 20 to 40 metres in length but there is one that is almost 50 metres. Each abseil except for one is a large eyebolt set in concrete in the sandstone. The one that isn't is a chain tied around a tree through a fork. The view is incredible over the valley to the escarpments.

As in canyons, it is highly advisable to take two ropes for leap frogging (it's a lot quicker) and in case you have any mishaps. We had a mishap. The SUSS rope did not get left behind on the cliff but it could have been and I would have been bashed by the committee (or more likely, do the trip again the next day). Stephen and I were looking after the first rope for the next abseil while the second rope was being pulled down. A knot was noticed in the end of the rope. This was about 3 metres above. Whoops, thank goodness for the slightly lost Venturers who were waiting for us to finish with the abseil. They very considerably undid the knot so that the rope could be pulled down. The Venturers were slightly lost because they had gone trampling off into the bush trying to find the way on to the next abseil. I am really glad that we showed them where it was.

Apart from Don attempting to be Tarzan swinging on the vine in the jungle act when abseiling there was only one other interesting mishap. (Don's act was a crowd pleaser but I when I mentioned the potential for damage to the rope, Don's face visibly paled). The other mishap was a major splinter on the track on the way out to Pierces Pass. Stephen somehow managed to insert a 4cm stick into his inside right ankle parallel with the ground and into his muscle so that when he walked he could feel it moving. It did hurt he assured me. When Stephen got to the carpark he managed to get it out with pliers.

A fun day for all.

Carol Layton

The SUSS Literary Supplement

This is the last in our series of extracts from our favourite book Caves of Mystery, by John Scott Douglas, published by Fredrick Muller, London, 1957. It comes from Chapter 6: Creatures of the Darkness and has been edited. It could be subtitled "101 Uses for a Live Bat"; and we take no responsibility for the morality of the suggestions in the article.

Bats are of great interest to many spelunkers. They are not, strictly speaking, cave animals, though as a rule they sleep and hibernate underground. Certain people search for unknown bat caves to find deposits of guano rich in nitrogen and readily saleable as fertilizer. And a few students keep bats for pets in order to learn more of their habits.

This may seem odd to those who find bats repugnant. Largely this dislike is the result of ancient folklore, which associated bats with witches and other evil creatures of the night, or the mistaken notion that bats blindly fly into a bystander's hair.

There are Old World bats that live on blossoms and fruit, others that prey on their own kind, and vampires that suck the blood of animals and occasionally humans. Though bats are associated in the popular mind with rats and mice, they are not related; they evolved from insect-eating animals untold ages ago, and the ancient fossil forms are little different than those of today.

Numerous caves have been discovered by guano hunters. But though bat guano has sometimes proved very profitable to cave explorers, it can also be a very real hazard. Dr William R. Halliday had an unhappy experience after inhaling guano and other dust in Bodfish Cave, in California. The thick dust became so irritating that he found himself growing short of breath and had to leave the cave within two minutes of entering it. Even after that brief exposure, it was painful to breathe deeply for two days afterwards. Spelunkers exploring bat caves or other caverns where dry earth may be stirred up would probably be wise to follow the example of scientists and wear dust-masks.

Failure to take this precaution had a tragic outcome when a party of young spelunkers stirred up dust in a guano cavern near Tampico, Mexico, in late August of 1952. Eleven Mexican teenagers entered this bat cave with picks, shovels and sacks to mine guano. Lightheartedly, they pushed through to a big chamber festooned with clusters of bats and began breaking up the deposits of fertilizer that several of their number had discovered. Clouds of dust rose around them as they shovelled the dry guano into their sacks, but none of them recognized their danger until one of the boys began to have difficulty in breathing. Then one by one the others began to gasp for breath. Frightened by these symptoms, they fled from the cave, but the fresh air did little to

relieve the worst sufferers. Five of the boys died before they could reach the nearest doctor, and the remaining six were seriously ill.

Few people are aware of the part bats have played in the wars fought by the United States. Nitrates from the bat guano in Mammoth and other southern caves, as was mentioned earlier, went into the making of gunpowder during the War of 1812. When Confederate ports were blockaded by Federal ships in the War between the States, these caverns were nearly exhausted but the bat caves of Texas supplied nitrates that were made into gunpowder in a plant south of San Antonio. Fertilizers were so desperately needed for soil replenishment in World War I that Texas alone shipped fifty car loads of bat guano by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

An attempt was made to use these small cave mammals in an even more unique way in World War II, when the Army and Navy spent approximately \$2,000,000 on a bat project in charge of Dr. Lyle S. Adams, a surgeon of Irwin, Pennsylvania. He conceived the idea of attaching small incendiary bombs to bats and releasing them over the tinderbox cities, ammunition dumps and storage depôts of Japan, to create internal disorder.

Dr. Adams assembled a small group of field naturalists and spelunkers and sent out search teams that explored 1,000 caves and 3,000 mines in an effort to find large concentrations of bats. Pressed by time, these teams took appalling chances. Dr. Adams descended 900 feet into an abandoned mine shaft in Quartzite, Arizona, with only a knotted rope leading from ledge to ledge. The Devil's Sinkhole of Texas was entered by means of a ladder made of hundreds of feet of barbed wire, with brush serving as rungs.

Experiments proved that the mastiff bat could carry a one-pound stick of dynamite, but this species was so scarce that scientists decided upon the smaller guano bat. Though it could fly only a one-ounce load, it could be caught in screened cages by the millions. These little bats could be transported in egg-crate bomb trays by reducing their temperature to ten degrees below zero, and when revived by warmth, they showed no effects from being frozen. When dropped by parachute, one thousand to five thousand at a time, the bats were freed by a simple releasing device upon landing and immediately flew to the eaves of the nearest building, to chew away the cord attached to a dummy bomb before seeking other shelter.

A test was made with live bat bombs dropped over a dummy village set up in the desert, and it burned to the ground. But the bat was an undependable ally, unable to distinguish friend from foe. A short time later two bats escaped from a careless handler near an auxiliary air base at Carlsbad, New Mexico, and deposited their incendiary bombs under the roof of a building, which was then razed by fire.

The army lost interest in bats. But the Navy took over the project in August, 1943, continuing work on the bat bomb until it was made obsolete by the development of atomic weapons.



On the wall ... the signature left by 10-year-old Brett Whiteley in 1949. "He was inclined to print."

A scared boy – but the artist signed his name

By JAMES WOODFORD
Environment Writer

Turn off your helmet light in the Elder Cave and it's so dark the blackness seems almost solid.

It is hard to imagine a 10-year-old boy pushing past the stalactites that drop from the cave ceiling, wedging himself through a crack beneath millions of tonnes of limestone and dropping deeper into a maze of blackness stretching for 20 kilometres.

But it happened in July 1949. And the boy was Brett Whiteley.

He sat on the dust-covered rocks with a pencil in his hand and wrote his name and the year – "Brett Whiteley 1949" – on a hidden corner of a smooth rock ledge where it can still be seen today.

Where he sat, a freezing breeze blows constantly.

"Trust Brett Whiteley to put his name in the only place in the whole cave where it's always windy," said Mr Rob Whyte, the co-ordinator of the Historical Inscriptions Project (better known as the graffiti project), who has spent hours studying the signature.

The project is being funded by the Jenolan Caves Trust and aims to enter all historic graffiti in caves around the State into a database.

Mr Whyte, who is secretary of the University of NSW Speleological Society, discovered the Brett Whiteley inscription when he began looking at the thousands of historic signatures in the Jenolan Caves.

Much closer to the entrance of the Elder Cave, he discovered the names – in three places – of Brett's parents, Clem and Beryl Whiteley.

But for Mr Whyte, the Whiteley signatures are of secondary importance. His real interest is

the graffiti left by the discoverers of the cave nearly 150 years ago.

Mr Whyte believes that when Brett left his signature he was probably scared.

"People in caves nearly always leave their names at the place where they can go no further," Mr Whyte said.

"They go as far as they can, and then they leave their name.

"If I were 10, I would have been scared at that point."

The public has not been allowed in the Elder Cave for nearly a century because it is considered too dangerous for anyone without a guide.

For much of the time since 1900, the entrances have been sealed. The Whiteley family were not supposed to be in the cave and were certainly not meant to leave their signatures. It is believed one of the entrances was open for part of 1949.

Mrs Beryl Whiteley learnt of the discovery yesterday and told the *Herald* she found it amazing the signatures were still there after 45 years.

The family had visited Jenolan Caves three or four times during school holidays while the children were growing up, she said. At the time, Brett was at the Scots School in Bathurst.

She remembered visiting a cave which was closed to the public but did not realise Brett had left his name there. She recalls the visit to the cave being dangerous.

"There's no doubt it's Brett's signature," Mrs Whiteley said.

"I have letters he sent me from school, and at that time he was inclined to print. We were there having a holiday just like any other people."



Cave man . . . Rob Whyte, co-ordinator of the Historical Inscriptions Project, explores the section of the Elder Cave in which Brett Whiteley signed his name. Inset: How Whiteley signed his paintings later.

Photographs by PETER RAE

THE DRAINERS

A group with a special interest in underground Sydney is SUSS — The Sydney University Speleology Society. Normally members of this society spend their weekends exploring caves at the Jenolan Caves or any of the other relatively scarce outcrops of cave-forming limestone in New South Wales.

Apart from a few sea-caves along the coast, Sydney is not well supplied with natural caverns. However it does have drains.

What sort of person would want to go and explore a drain? Well, basically it's the same kind of interest that sends people into the bowels of the earth in search of limestone caverns, geological formations, bats, cave insects, and a sort of general reverse claustrophobia. A certain amount of wine drunk at a cavers' party is often a preliminary to these night-time draining expeditions.

Isn't it dangerous? Well, not if one is careful. Flash floods are a hazard in ordinary caving and naturally one has to choose one's weather for draining. The only other danger is stepping on the occasional eel.

Doesn't it smell? Apparently it is no worse than most caves. Drainers only go down stormwater drains — not sewers. Rotting vegetation in the drains can build up an undesirable level of carbon dioxide.

Drainers generally wear normal caving gear and carbide lamps on their expeditions into the bowels of Sydney.

Is it legal? The drainers are not sure. Some drains have signs prohibiting public access. But normally they enter the drains at places where anybody who wants to can just walk in. Sometimes they leave by lifting a manhole or grille. On other occasions they simply retrace their steps.

What are the best drains to explore? Basically the drains they choose are the old creek beds of Sydney that have been culverted and covered over to build such thoroughfares as the Warringah Expressway, Parramatta Road and various suburban streets. Near the Harbour, these drains are generally big enough to stand up in. They get smaller as they proceed inland.

Where are the suitable drains? The archetypal drain and every drainer's ambition is the Tank Stream which now flows beneath Pitt Street. But there are a number of others. Here are some other examples. One of the best drains begins at Milsons Park near the Ensemble Theatre. Entry is made from the Harbour although the drain is above tide level. This drain has particularly intriguing old brickwork and has obviously been there a long time. It starts off quite large and proceeds up towards the Warringah Expressway by way of a three metre high rise in the drain. It is probably the site of an old waterfall that once tumbled down to Careening Cove before reclamation and roads transformed the area beyond recognition.

During one expedition through this drain the cavers lifted a grille and found themselves at the side of Warringah Expressway with the traffic whizzing by. They replaced the grille and continued on until the drain narrowed to the point where they had to proceed on their hands and knees. They then found an exit through a manhole cover in Miller Street, North Sydney.

The drain which runs from the Waverton shopping centre down to Waverton Park and the Harbour is a modern concrete affair. However, it offers an exhilarating slide down its slippery surface. It is an ideal drain for skateboarding.

On the other side of the Harbour is Johnstons Creek which forms the boundary between Annandale and Glebe and later Annandale and Camperdown. It has a branch, Orphans School Creek, which is the boundary between Glebe and Camperdown. Orphans School Creek runs past the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children and Sydney University. It is wholly culverted and drainers who have followed it quite a way have discovered no way out.

Johnstons Creek is open for much of its course but becomes a covered stormwater drain passing under Parramatta Road and later under Stanmore Road. There is an exit at Salisbury Road.

Whites Creek Stormwater Drain nearby is the boundary between Leichhardt and Annandale. It is also open for part of its length. It is a concrete drain from Rozelle Bay towards Parramatta Road. There is an exit at Norton Street, Leichhardt.

The Kensington Drain has an entrance at Lorne Avenue. It always has quite a stream flowing. It follows Doncaster Avenue to emerge in Centennial Park. This is presumably the creek that flows into Botany Bay via East Lakes.

How do you find suitable drains? Basically by looking out for them. Some, like Whites Creek and Johnstons Creek, are named in Sydney street directories. In other cases there are hints on the map through the red lines marking in postal districts. These apparently arbitrary boundaries tend to follow the courses of old creeks which have long since been covered over by roads to become part of Sydney's network of underground drains.

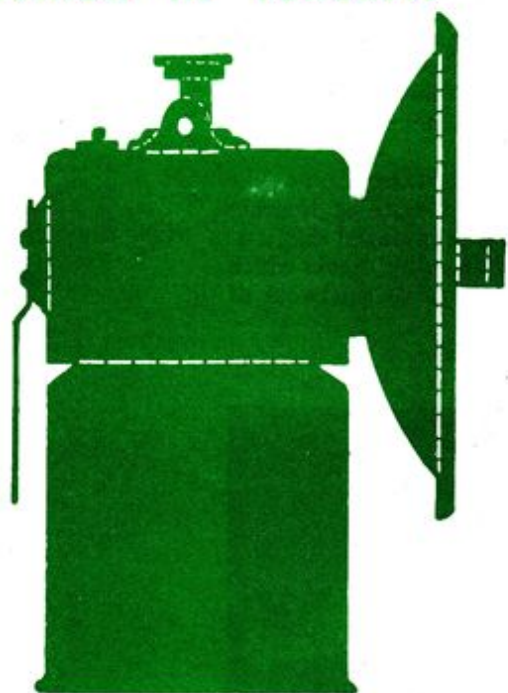
So, to those interested . . . good draining!



Reprinted from:
'Sydney Tunnels'
Brian and Barbara Kennedy
Kangaroo Press 1993

Sponsored by
The University of Sydney
union 

Lumen in Tenebris



SUSS

BULLETIN
of the

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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

Contents

SUSS Trips and Meetings	2
The Editor's Bit	3
Crystal Power	3
The SUSS Christmas 1993 Jenolan Bash	4
C.M.A Map Offer	19
SNAC's Go Wild in Spider	20
Wombeyan Caves Trip Reports	22
Hot Coolman	24
Blowing Hole Update	27
A Bit More Wiburd's	28
Under Tarakuana	32
The Karst that Played Hard to Get	34
Down and Up Mt Banks	45
The SUSS Literary Supplement	46
Vandalism in Elder Cave	48
The Drainers	50
Carol Layton	3
Mark Staraj	4
Willow Forsyth	20
Jill Rowling	22
Phil Maynard	24
Mark Staraj	27
Mark Staraj	28
Guy McKanna	32
David Jackson	34
Carol Layton	45
Brett Whitely	48
B. and B. Kennedy	50