

S.U.S.S.

Newsletter of the Sydney University Speleological Society.

Edited by the Hon. Secretary.
Box 35, The Union,
University of Sydney.

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April, 1961.

ARE YOU FINANCIAL?

YOU ARE NO LONGER A MEMBER OF S.U.S.S. AND THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST CIRCULAR IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION BY 7th APRIL, 1961. Prospective Members who paid their 2/6 before September, 1960 and who wish to remain Prospective Members, should pay a further 2/6 before 7th April. Current Membership fees are:-

Graduates and Associates	- 20/-
Corresponding Members	- 15/-
Full Members	- 10/-
Members under 17 years	- 7/6
Prospective Members	- 2/6

EDITORIAL.

Firstly, I thank the people who have contributed any words of wisdom or articles etc., to this volume. It is rewarding to see the number of trips and other activities of the society, which have taken place since the beginning of the year. These have proved to be a temporary break in the political wrangling which played such a large part in the activities of the society in previous months. One hears the pleasant sound of caving talk on the Botany Lawn these days, instead of the political gossip which ran rife last year. Let's hope it continues.

The last A.G.M. got off to a flying start, the main topics discussed in General Business being Nylon Ropes, belaying and other safety measures. The sudden splurge on safety was sparked by the unfortunate accident on the Three Sisters at Katoomba, some weeks back, when an experienced climber fell 1,000 feet to his death after the sheering through of the nylon rope on which he was belayed. This naturally provoked prolonged discussion on nylon rope of which S.U.S.S. owns and uses some 500 feet in varying lengths. It was brought to light that the most commonly used lengths (60 feet and 200 feet) were in poor condition. Some of the meeting were in favour of discarding at least those two lengths. Others argued against this as it is not often that S.U.S.S. rope is used in a direct belay in caves and is therefore less likely to suffer "shock loading". No drastic action was decided upon at the meeting but a Safety Officer, Jon Hinwood, was elected to carry out extensive tests on the S.U.S.S. rope and further action will be considered subject to his findings.

Elizabeth Hahn of the Sydney University Mountaineering Club who was present when the unfortunate accident mentioned above, occurred, has contributed an article on the importance of the correct belay for safe caving. It may help influence those people in S.U.S.S. who scorn safety ropes on ladder descents. Article to be found on Page of this Newsletter.

Further business at the A.G.M. was mainly the Annual Election of Office Bearers. For the information of those not present, the Committee for 1961 - 62 is as follows:-

PRESIDENT	- Chris Court
VICE PRESIDENT	- John Lotz
HON. SECRETARY	- Jennifer Tomlinson
HON. ASSISTANT SECRETARY	- Margaret Smith
TREASURER	- Elizabeth DeBurgh
FULL COMMITTEE MEMBER	- Dr. Ted Faunce.
ASSOCIATE COMMITTEE MEMBER	- Peter Knowland

CONGRATULATIONS.

The congratulations and best wishes of the Society are extended to Peter and Gill Knowland who are the fond parents of a new baby daughter, born on the 11th March. Let's hope the baby is allowed to go caving before she gets too much bigger because at present she is a very convenient size for 'squeeze holes'. A genuine "Micro-bod".

RECENT S.U.S.S. TRIPS.

Hollender's River Limestone Surface Exploration Trip.
4th and 5th March. Leader: David Anderson.

The main party examined some small limestone outcrops along and near Hollender's River. No possibilities were reported in this area, however, a subsidiary party who examined two small outcrops along the Tuglow River, reported finding three caves and a deep hole with possibilities. The first of these three caves occurred in the first outcrop upstream of Tuglow Farm and had previously been entered. It contained some fine flowstone but was only about 150 feet in total length. The hole with possibilities occurred in this same outcrop and is estimated to be at least 50 feet deep but thorny shrubs and other unpleasant vegetation discouraged descent as shorts appeared to be in vogue amongst the party. This hole is definitely listed for later, more detailed examination. The other two caves occurred in the second bluff and did not extend very far but would encourage cave blasting as the floors were hollow. A map of the limestone outcrops in this area is now in the S.U.S.S. map collection.

Bungonia Search and Rescue Trip. 25th and 26th February.
Leader: Tom Landecker. The trip was mainly a search. A bod, well hidden in the Fossil Cave, was found within one hour. Sunday was devoted to the experimental construction of a bush stretcher. This was given a prolonged try out around the camp and then, on it, an imaginary injured trog was rescued from the rum Cave.

Bungonia Freshers' Trip. 25th and 26th March.
Leader: Tom Landecker. The Fossil Cave, Grill Cave and B31 were introduced to the eleven Freshers present and Tom reports that they all show signs of becoming capable trogs.

Jenolan Freshers Trip. 11th and 12th March.
Leaders: Barbara Dew and Jenny Tomlinson. Of the 24 present, there were six Freshers and several others new to caving.
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Henning's Cave was first on the agenda, after which the party was split into two for the Mammoth Lower Level. Half the party went to the Lower Level River via the "Squeeze", the other half via the "Rockpile". Some of the braver souls crossed the river either by climbing around the wall or by swimming it but the L.L. River Extension was not visited. The Oolite Cavern introduced some of the party to impressive cave formation. Most enjoyed an easy day on Sunday. The Alladin Cave was visited to show off the "Golden Waterfall" etc., to the Freshers and afterwards a few descended the Glass Cave to look at the new extension.. A large amount of biological collecting was undertaken in the Mammoth Cave with good results, a species of land Planarian being found near the L.L. River. All Freshers and others new to caving, present on the trip put up an excellent performance and needed very little assistance. They show every sign of becoming good trogs.

Wee Jasper Trip. 18th and 19th March.

Leader: David Shatwell. This was a large trip with 24 present. Three caves were visited, Dip Cave, No.4 Extension to Dip Cave and the Punchbowl Cave. Two parties entered the Dip Cave, one by the Rubbish Tip entrance, the other by the 66 foot entrance. They were able to connect by a 20' ladder drop; i.e., passages 2 and 3 were linked. Some exploration was carried out in the region of the 90' drop. 230 bats were banded in the Punchbowl Cave.

Jenolan. 26th March.

Leader: David Anderson. A well organised trip into the Northern River Section of the Mammoth Cave was carried out to extend it beyond the newly examined (11th March) Great North Cavern. This cavern occurs about 160 feet past the Sink Hole Cavern. Details of this cavern are as follows:-

"The Great North Cavern"

'Note: For the convenience, pending the approval of the committee, a number of sections of a large, recently discovered cavern and adjoining passages in the Mammoth Cave, have been given names. Included is the name of the cavern itself, "The Great North Cavern".

The Great North Cavern is in the Northern River Section of the Mammoth Cave. It lies at the end of "The Thousand Foot Passage" or Northern River Extension. The Cavern was first entered on 7th December, 1960, when the previously blocked "Ian Williams Squeeze" (See point C, reached Easter, 1960, on Map "Mammoth Extension"; S.U.S.S. Journal 6:1) was forced by Ted Anderson and Ian Williams.

From the Ian Williams Squeeze another 100 ft. of passage (measured) have been added before the Great North Cavern is reached. The approximate maximum dimensions of the cavern are: Height 70'; width 50'; length 180'.

The accompanying sketch (map) was drawn mainly from information gathered during the recent exploration of the cavern, by S.U.S.S. members: D. Anderson, N. Campbell, R. deFerranti, T. Anderson, with the greatly appreciated assistance of J. Tomlinson and J. Dunnet.

FOR THE NEW AND INTENDING MEMBERS.

A comprehensive list of recommended caving and camping equipment, the prices and names and addresses of places to

Intending Members. Cont'd.

buy it at, is available from the Secretary on request. It is advisable to consult this list before buying as it contains sound advice.

GENERAL.

As there are still a few copies of S.S.S. "Communications" on stock, people wishing to build up their personal caving library are advised to contact the Secretary and take advantage of this free personal offer without delay. Those available are the November, December and January editions. Limited copies available only so hurry.

S.U.S.S. Cloth Badges. These are available from Barbara Dew at Tropical Medicine at the reasonable price of 2/3. Boilproof and suitable for packs or patching trog suits. They look very chic on the sleeve of a parka or windjacket. SUPPORT YOUR SOCIETY - BUY A BADGE.

COMING TRIPS AND EVENTS.

April 22 - 23. BUNGONIA SEARCH AND RESCUE. Leader: John Lotz. (Jul 974)

May 6 - 7. KANGAROO RIVER SLOTH TRIP.
Pleasant river for swimming and trout, also very fine suspension foot bridge suitable for tipping people into the river. Good camp site. Wanted: person to organize this trip. Contact Sec. Botany Lawn or XX7105.

- Events -

April 7th. BIG PARTY AT 525 NEW SOUTH HEAD ROAD DOUBLE BAY. Courtesy of Tom Landecker. Highlighted by the presence of two kegs and dancing girls. Ring Tom at FM4215.

April 13th. 7.30 P.M. Usual Place in New Geography building. GEN. MEETING.

OVER TO ELIZABETH AND BELAYS.

Dear Caver,

I sincerely hope that you will appreciate the reason for this letter and bear it in mind even if nothing at all is done about it. These following paragraphs are the reasons why I think S.U.S.S. should take proper safety precautions.

In your activity these precautions are not needed often and the amount of time taken in making a correct belay is negligible compared with loss of human life. That idiot above you that is supposed to be safeguarding your climbing or ladder descent - is he doing what he should so that in the event of a fall you will live to tell the tale? Then again, if you are belaying a fellow trog down a drop and are not tied on to anything, there is no chance of holding the person below if you come off too. There will be no warning in the darkness of a cave, you will fall much further than he who is on the other end. So therefore, a greater risk is taken when incorrectly belayed than when actually climbing. Pray tell me - what is the use of insisting

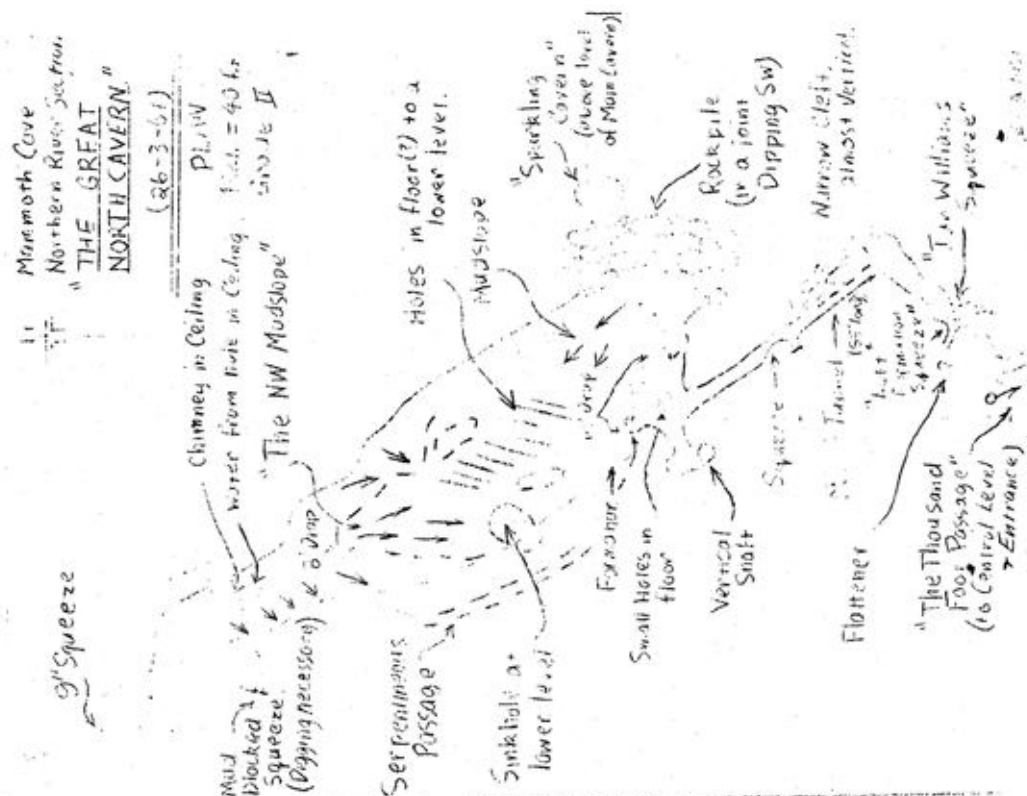
Elizabeth Cont'd

that Freshers should be able to tie a bowline expertly when it is going to be of no use to them whatsoever. A belay is not a belay unless the person safeguarding the one climbing, is tied firmly to a wall or face.

If fate does not supply the perfect belay point, there are tried and tested ways, used the world over, for making artificial belays. If any of you are interested in finding out such hitherto unknown methods (I presume this), climbers are offering to hand on what they know for a safer and happier pastime. Don't wait until the time when SUCS will be "wiser after the event" - it has already happened - but to us, not you. When the lesson comes to be learnt, is S.U.S.S. going to ignore it and plunge headlong in its blissful neglect and ignorance to the day when explanation must be given to police, family, and court and the Vice-Chancellor. Why was the deceased not safeguarded in the approved manner? You are all now aware that there will be no excuse as these people know of the approved belays from our reports and statements. You know too, from this letter.

I seem to remember the Society being ready to ban completely the use of nylon rope following the tragic accident on the Three Sisters which sparked off this big panic among the ranks, and took their reasons from the recommendations of two out of hundreds of clubs - climbing clubs, not caving groups. Because there seems to be frenzied enquiry, it is proof that the Society is worried about not doing the right thing previously. What are you at University for, to accept without proof the recommendations of a small minority - where are the scientists among you? Nylon is obviously the only choice for caving as it does not rot. If a natural fibre rope becomes wet, even if it is dried properly, it should be considered as soon as possible fit for the rubbish heap or use as a tow rope. Nylon stretches where natural fibre does not and to check any considerable fall on the latter would probably result in the death of the person from internal injuries. Is S.U.S.S. as financial as all that to discard natural fibre rope every couple of months or so? Whether you use nylon, hemp or manilla, sisal or terylene, it is of no more use than a reel of cotton unless somebody knows how to belay. If nylon rope of greater breaking strain than any other fibre (5500lbs. in 1 1/4") is going to have trouble taking a shock load (bod falling), how on earth are you going to take the load with your 100 odd lbs., which is what happens if you are not tied on. A person falling about 50' will register approx. 1500lbs. onto you. What is the use of spending money on rope if it is only going to pull the belayer after the person falling? It is much harder to receive any warning of a fall, to have witnesses and to remove a seriously injured person from a cave, than in the open. After a fatal accident like this there are always police statements to make, newspapers to avoid, the funeral, countless reports to write, the inquest and most probably meeting the loved ones of the deceased. Deceased because you were too damn lazy to spend just five minutes on making a secure belay, to avoid the anguish that is very evident before you and most important to you, would be clear conscience for the rest of your life. Believe me, it is the only thing that will help you carry on and adjust yourself to everyday life.

Good caving in the future,
Elizabeth Hahn.



RATHER AM.

The Duties of Some of our Members.

1. Do not come on trips.
2. But if you do, do so late.
3. If the weather does not suit you, do not think of coming.
4. If you attend a business meeting, find fault with the work of the officers and other members.
5. Never accept an office: it is far easier to criticise than to actually get things done.
6. Do not bother about getting new members - let the Secretary do all this alone.
7. If asked by the President to give your opinion regarding some important matter, tell him you have nothing to say. After the meeting tell everybody exactly how things should be done.
8. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when other members roll up their sleeves and willingly and unselfishly use their ability to help matters along, complain bitterly that the club is being run by a clique and is merely "Jobs for the Boys".
10. When a function is held, tell everybody that money is being wasted.
11. When no functions are held, tell everybody that the club is dead.
12. Do not see or ask what the club can do to help you but when it does not - RESIGN. (Extract - Mountaineering)

LIBRARY.

Recent additions to the library include two new issues of NSS News; features of interest are the description of The Devils Icebox in Missouri which goes in for 19000 ft., and of which 29000 ft. has been mapped from rubber rafts; also the description of the rescue of a boy from a squeeze using 5lbs. of axle grease. See the librarian for further library information, infact, use the library; that's what it is there for. (Glen Chandler 51-7947)