

NEWSLETTER OF THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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EDITORIAL

The following forward, by the Earl of Cranbrook, to *Studies in Speleology*, Vol. I, Pt. I, 1964, is reproduced here to provoke a little straight thinking on the subject of caving as a sport (not again surely??) :-

" That men destroy the things they love is one of those clichés which yearly become more obviously true in so far as it refers to the countryside, from sea level to the highest hills. This is very largely due to the increase in the number of country and nature lovers, an increase which is much to be desired in the abstract but the concrete results of which can be disastrous. It is good that more people should be interested in the countryside and that there should be more botanists, entomologists and even more bird-watchers (sic), but where one man can safely look at a rare plant or watch a rare bird, six, a dozen, a score or a hundred well-intentioned "nature lovers" can unknowingly tread that plant and its whole surroundings into a roadway or frighten that bird away.

That is too often too obviously true above ground but it is just as true below, where there is another wonderland of natural history, living and dead, just as interesting and just as vulnerable - stalactites, bats, cave-dwelling invertebrates, fossils and the like. With the great increase in caving as a sport which is now taking place much irreparable damage can soon be done, not deliberately but none the less inevitably by cavers who do not realize the significance of the wonders they unwittingly destroy. This can best be prevented by providing the means whereby they can look after their heritage and be conscious of the need to do so. That is the object of the Penhelly Cave Research Centre at Buckfastleigh and of this Journal: those interested in cave research have seen what has happened above ground and all of us who are keen on the conservation of nature hope that they will be successful in preventing the same sort of damage below."

I commend this pointed plea to the attention of the one or two souvenir hunters with whom we are unfortunately endowed, to the prospective and fresher member, and to the proliferating crowd of freelancers who have no experienced cavers from whom to draw a little advice on this subject.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

January 29-31	WYANBENE	leader Jane Watts (ring Rick Crowle 447415)
January 29-30	A.S.F. Committee Meeting,	Ainslie Scout Hall, Canberra
February 5-6	CLIEFDEN	(batting trip with O.S.S.) Ring Barbara Dew
February 5-6	* JENOLAN	(Oolite digging, also further work in Great North Cavern) Limited numbers - Glenn Hunt
February 10	GENERAL MEETING	7.30pm, Geog. Bldg.
February 26-27	* JENOLAN	(with O.S.S., Batting etc.) Barbara Dew or John Dunkley
March 5-6	* JENOLAN	(scaling-pole work in Oolite) John Dunkley
March 12-13	BUNGONIA	Freshers' Trip Tom Landecker (of course)
March 24	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	7.30pm in usual place (see notice)
April 8-12 (Easter)	ABERCROMBIE	John Steele
April 8-12 (Easter)	COOLEMON	Geoff Butlin
April 8-12 (Easter)	YARRANGOBILLY	(concentrating on exploration of North Deep Creek) John Dunkley
* TOTAL FIRE BAN NOW IN OPERATION		

FOR SALE

We are privileged to be able to offer for sale a rare example of the early colonial period in N.S.W., to wit, one 'Dick' hand-operated rotary duplicator complete with accessories, more generally known as Moby Dick. The aforementioned item, purchased several years ago for £25, is now offered for your inspection with a reserve price of £10. Enquires to Secretary.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome John and Maureen, (Mr and Mrs) Lovering, formerly very active cavers in England, to Associate Membership
Address :- 65 'Merinda', 7 Raymond Road, Neutral Bay

REVIEW

COMMUNICATIONS, Occ. Paper no. 1, Sydney Speleological Society
This publication appeared more or less monthly as the SSS society newsletter, but was discontinued about 3 years ago. It is now re-issued as an Occasional Paper. In this first such issue R. Zimic summarises the results of investigations into the

GENERAL MEETING

The next General Meeting of the Society will be held in the usual place, top floor, Geography Building, at 7.30pm on THURSDAY, 10th FEBRUARY, 1966. Slides of recent trips, and reports on same, will be featured.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Preliminary notice is given of the Annual General Meeting of the Society, to be held in the same place at 7.30pm on THURSDAY, 24th March, 1966.

S.U.S.S... LIBRARY

My thanks to the members who assisted in bringing the library up to date at the last meeting. This enabled me to find that there are several defaulters with outstanding material, which they are asked to kindly return before or at the next meeting:-

Diane Perkins	N.S.S. Digest, 1961	borrowed 5/8/65
Tom Landecker	Speleology: Study of Caves	5/8/65
Richard Heffernan	N.S.S. Digest, 1960	5/8/65
Jeffrey Hinwood	Grottes de Roumanie	5/8/65
Phillip Bryson	Caving and Potholing	10/6/65
Richard Crowle	Helictite, 2, 3	15/12/64
Graham Jessup	Ten Years under the Earth	15/12/64
Leslye Mackay	More Years under the Earth	15/12/64

These people are ordered to return the material, so there.

REVIEWS (cont.)

design of radio direction finding equipment for cave work, Hayllar, Hawken, Hamilton-Smith et al. provide the report on exploration in New Caledonia which prompted the recent expedition, and that British bloke Smith gets over-sentimental about the hell of mid-winter caving on a snowy Yorkshire moor. Well-produced and enclosed in an attractive semi-hard cover, Communications is a welcome revival. Only 5 bob a copy too.

WALKABOUT, November 1965

It is a sad commentary on the way SUSS conducts its affairs that accounts of the 1963-4 Nullarbor Expedition have appeared in the pulp press twice and in a scientific speleological journal once when nothing has been produced by the Society itself as yet. However we digress; the Walkabout article is, naturally, a rather journalistic account of the trip but makes good reading for the lazy. The pictures, by Jeannette Partridge, are rather more inspired than the accompanying blurb.

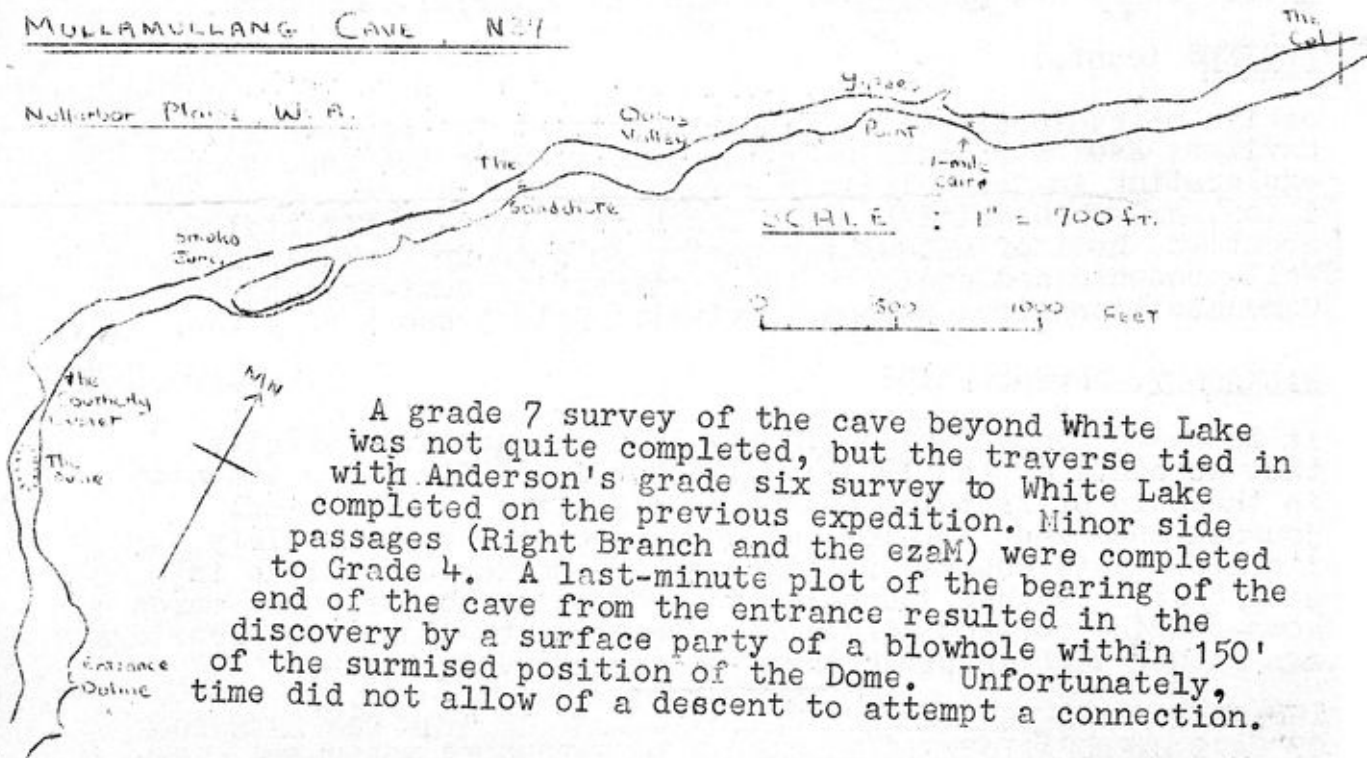
THE PERSON WHO BORROWED MY PERSONAL COPY OF "THE COMPLETE BOOK OF CAVE EXPLORATION" IS REQUESTED TO RETURN IT FORTHWITH.- Sec.

NULLARBOR EXPEDITION, 1965-66

Eight SUSS members and prospectives participated in the 45-strong CEG(SA) Nullarbor Expedition. Leaving Adelaide on December 27, the expedition visited briefly Koonalda, Weebubbe and Abrakurrie Caves as appetisers en route to Mulla-mullang where most of the effort was concentrated.

Following hurried visits by several small parties in 1964 and 1965, this cave was shown to be just too large for conventional methods of exploration and surveying. An underground camp was therefore set up (see map), complete with primuses, survey table, record player and the Goons, and was manned continuously for 7 days by 14 to 20 people. Contact with the surface base party was maintained by telephone, with tapings also at The Southerly Buster, White Lake and the Drop-off. Experimentation produced quite a range of reasonably palatable foods and drinks that could be prepared with the cave's salty water, so that fresh-water requirements were cut to about one pint per person per day. This, together with any other requisites, was carried in by 'sherpas', without whom the venture would have failed.

Exploration failed to extend the main tunnel of the cave, but about 3000ft. of new passage was discovered in the right branch and in the ezaM. This complicated maze of passages begins at the very end of the cave and weaves back more or less above the roof of the main passage. It is seemingly endless and was not pushed to the limits in the available time.



The generosity of the Adelaide Weather Bureau and other bodies, a valuable collection of meteorological recording instruments made possible the first organised investigation of the air currents which blow in and out the Nullarbor blowholes. Efforts were concentrated on the Southerly Buster and the Drop-off in Mullamullang, a nearby blowhole, and a surface control. Stations had to be manned continuously by at least two observers, as readings were taken every quarter-hour. Earlier assumptions that the blowholes exhibited two cycles per day - a daytime blowing and a nighttime sucking - were refuted. Preliminary results suggest that the air flow goes thru four cycles daily, usually

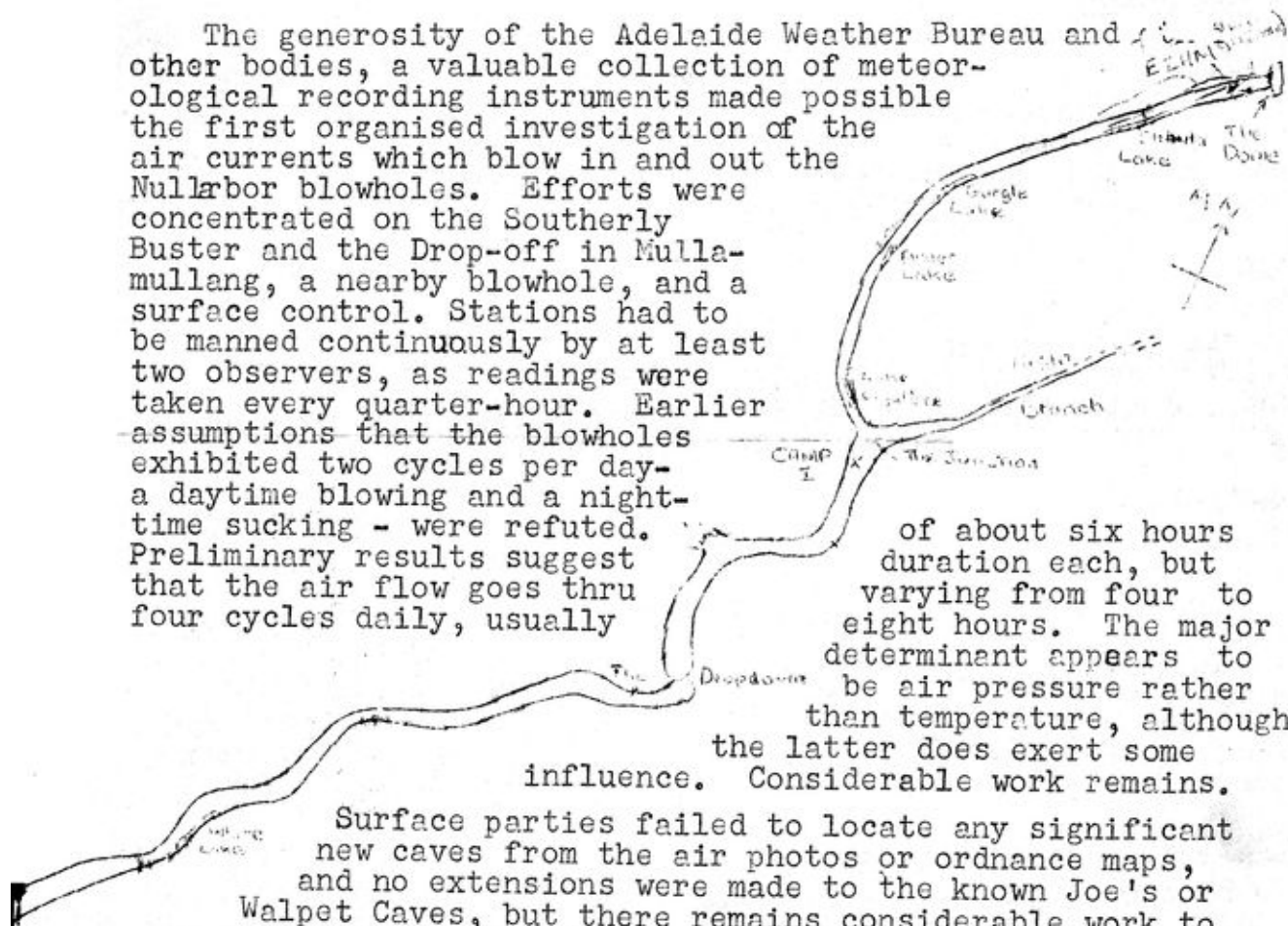
of about six hours duration each, but varying from four to eight hours. The major determinant appears to be air pressure rather than temperature, although the latter does exert some influence. Considerable work remains.

Surface parties failed to locate any significant new caves from the air photos or ordnance maps, and no extensions were made to the known Joe's or Walpet Caves, but there remains considerable work to be completed in this field also. There was unfortunately no time to investigate fully a new deep cave discovered near mile-post 267 between Madura and Cocklebidy by Lowry et al. shortly before Christmas.

The expedition was rather fortunate to be accompanied by a professional photographer who greatly assisted (and was assisted by) the numerous amateurs on the trip. The 1966 new model diprotodon was used to advantage in several locations, although the PF100 flashbulbs also proved indispensable.

This is believed to be the first attempt in Australia to establish a large-scale camp underground for any appreciable length of time; Mullamullang is perhaps the only cave in the country that really warrants it and this trip demonstrated that such a camp is feasible and that it can be supplied from the surface.

After the return trip to Adelaide, Mr Richard Heffernan became the first interstate caver to be awarded the CEG(SA) Royal Order of the Leather Medal, "for not making a face on the 1965-66 Nullarbor Expedition".



TRIP REPORTSBungonia6-7 NovemberBarbara Dew

The Grill, Drum and Fossil were entered for the purpose of batting and bugging. Cave fauna was collected from the Grill but only one *miniopterus* was seen here and there was no foul air either here or in the Fossil.

Timor13-14 NovemberBarbara Dew

The trip was planned to investigate the bat distribution, to see if there was a breeding cave. Mist netting at the Belfry Cave captured 6 *Miniopterus Schreibersi* (bent-wing) and 3 *Rhinolophus megaphyllus* (eastern horseshoe). Sundry cave fauna was collected in the Main Cave.

Bungonia20-21 NovemberBarbara Dew

About 206 bats were banded, all *Miniopterus*. There were also 6 recoveries. The Grill was entered to collect fungi and an attempt was made, unsuccessfully because of foul air, to penetrate beyond the bat chamber. The *Rhinolophus* cave was located by Glen Chandler but no bats were present. The Skull cave was not found but several other holes were entered and will be looked at again later when more gear is brought. Tom Landecker led an unsuccessful attempt to find the link between the Fossil and Hogan's Hole.

Nioka, Borenore & Cliefden11-12 DecemberGlenn Hunt

Two bats were located in a cave on Nioka property during a trip last year and it was planned to investigate this further. Unfortunately the property owner was away and the cave was not visited. He should be contacted early Saturday mornings before he goes shopping, or after he returns. Orange Speleological Society was visited in the person of the Keenans and an OSS member accompanied the party to Borenore Tunnel (River or no. 2) cave where some bats on the wing were observed. The party was presented with a map of the area. There was no time to visit some caves reported nearer Mt. Canobolas. The night was spent in Pinnacle Reserve. On Sunday the party joined OSS in an inspection of Cliefden Main Cave where a maternity colony of *miniopterus schreibersi* was observed. This is believed to be the first maternity colony seen in this particular cave. The Jewel Extension off the Boot Room was visited to see the extremely beautiful dog-tooth spar. Other members of OSS explored a newly discovered cave after forcing a narrow entrance. This was the first SUSS trip to Cliefden for nearly four years and we have to thank OSS for their hospitality on this occasion. There are still many possibilities at Cliefden and across the river in Angulong, and it is to be hoped that several joint trips will be made in the future.