

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Box 35,
The Union,
Sydney University.

Price Five Cents

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Ad augusta per angusta

Edited by the Hon. Secretary

Registered at the G.P.O. for transmission by post as a periodical

Volume 6 Number 7

1st October, 1966

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

October

1-3

Yarrangobilly [Joint with S.S.S.]

John Dunkley 854333
Erik Halbert 6305502
Usual place 7.30p.m.

6

GENERAL MEETING

Usual place 7.30p.m.

December

88

GENERAL MEETING

Usual place 7.30pm.

[Details in December Newsletter]

27-31

A.S.F. Conference, Vic.)

Duplicated details and application forms from Glenn Hunt or Geoff Butlin.

31+

A.S.F. Trips

Hunt or Geoff Butlin.

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GENERAL MEETING

The 65th General Meeting of the Sydney University Speleological Society will be held at 7.30p.m. in the usual place, top floor of the Geography Bldg, University of Sydney, on Thurs 8th October, 1966. Park in the grounds after 6p.m.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Business to be conducted will include the election of the following officers:-

1. President;
2. Safety Officer;
3. ASFNSWCSC Representative;
4. If the election of President
should leave a Committee vacancy,
then this vacancy will also be
filled.

Elsewhere within is the motion not put at the last Meeting but which will be on this occasion.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,
With ref to yours of the inst.

Deep in the Karakoram Mountains
in a tiny cleft of rock above the
tree-line, there lives an epileptic,
astigmatic, uneducated hermit.

He is a deaf-mute and his
astigmatism, which is acute and
incurable, would permit him to read
only if the ~~xxx~~ words were printed in
thick letters four inches high and in
Sanskrit.

The ruler of the kingdom in which
his cave exists passed a law a decade
ago forbidding the use of writing
paper anywhere in his domain.

Pens are not made in that part of
the world and have to be imported
by yak-train once a year at vast expense
and considerable loss of life. To use
a pen, a \$100 licence is needed. None
is ever issued. The nearest post
office is at the southern end of the
Khyber Pass, which is several sections
along the line, but the hermit couldn't
use it because he doesn't have any
money. Anyway, he's only got one leg
and can't walk far. I thought you'd
like to know about this chap, because
despite your acid comments to members
in various Newsletters, we are not the
world's worst writers. That damn
hermit is !

Yours sincerely,
Mal Watson [with apologies etc].

Sir,
I regret to inform you, that because of my travelling to Britain
to take up a scholarship with the Confederation of British Industry
for a year's employment with the Cleverland Bridge and Engineering
Co. of Darlington, England, I will have to resign as President
of S.U.S.S.

Yours sincerely,
Richard Roberts.

[Richard left Sydney on the 26th September on "Oriana". A telegram
was sent on behalf of SUSS. The Assistant Secretary advised him
not to make any "hasty decisions" whilst on board because it can
be a "nasty business".]

EDITORIAL NOTE: There will be no November Newsletter. The Editoria
Office however (Box 35) will remain open for your contribution,
trip plans, etc. for the December issue.

Sir,

Three Prospective members would like to offer an item of dubious interest, on a recent trip to Bungonia.

Our own caving experiences were the usual dirt grovelling type found frequently in the locality, together with incessant bruises and accompanying blasphemy and less frequent leaps (with rope) into vertical sinks.

Our efforts were however overshadowed by a rival group who were doing their utmost to ensure a speedy entry into an obscure pothole for one of their members by dangling him on an 80' rope. Typical of many "trog" they were dressed in blue levis, football guernseys, pointed shoes, desert boots, and very smart striped beanies. Other "in" trog accessories seen were Eveready torches.

This rope not being long enough the "caver" decided he must continue. At his request a dirty great piece of twine, which could have been nothing less than a shipping tow-line, was lowered to his place of rest. He succeeded in changing ropes, and also succeeded in dropping his lamp.

Undaunted the fearless "trog" descended hand-over-hand until realising that the end of the rope (and possibly that of himself) had arrived simultaneously he took a surprised plunge to join his lamp.

He was only shaken up (possibly due to the loss of the lamp).

Amid such comments as "nits" and "Christ !" we left them groping blindly for their comrade.

Not so funnily, it was our turn the same afternoon. In search of rock specimens we unexpectedly found ourselves parking our car a few miles along an old road (synonym for hopeless track) - our only specimen being a broken front drive shaft.

During the afternoon we found a phone, half a dozen nasty sheep dogs, and four very attractive young women (their whereabouts shall remain undisclosed).

We also found some unfriendly motorists as we chalked up our estimated 15 mile walk back to Marulan. They were at least rewarded with a "B-----d !" as they sped past issuing funny quips and much dust.

After unsuccessfully trying to hitch a ride from a member of the constabulary passing in his Mini we immediately made for a motel via a diversive route through the roadside scrub.

We were greeted by doubtful stares as we three very grubby trogs plodded through Central carrying a G-pick, a black book looking suspiciously like a Bible, a water flask, looking suspiciously like a wine flagon, and a camera.

The car is still in Goulburn, and so is our gear.

Who said Prospectives wern't keen ?

Bruce Harris.

Max Alewood.

Bob Nielson.

P.S. On a serious note we learned from an H.C.G. man that a party descended the Drum on a rope ladder with 30" rungs [H.C.G. rescued the leader - Ed.]

and also from a lass on a farm that

"someone gets killed in the Drum every year"

Also heard was a comment from a woman whose father owns a farm near the caves

"we've heard the caves are beautiful inside...."

Any comments ?

THIS 'N' THAT

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION. The results of the Photographic Competition held in August are:-

Black & White Print,	1st Prize Rick Crowle
Colour Print,	1st Prize Geoff Butlin
Colour Slide,	1st Prize Graham Bradley

The Society's thanks go to the Judge, Peter Knowland, and his assistant, Leslie Mackay. Peter and Gail were kind enough to leave a downtown Ball to come to the Exhibition. It is hoped next year's Judge is also in black tie! From the twelve entrants came an array of extremely high calibre: in next year's competition it is anticipated that there will perhaps be sections for 8mm and 16mm also.

A LECTURE WORTH ATTENDING

Under the auspices of the National Trust of Aust. (NSW)

• Lecturer: Dr J.G. Mosley (A.N.U.)
 Topic: "Conservation of Natural Areas. Objectives and Problems of Planning and Management."
 Place: Cell Block Theatre, East Sydney Technical Coll.
 Time: 8p.m. FREE. Visitors welcome. -8. NOV. 1966

DOES ANYONE know anything about a strip of Kodak film and 2 prints left at the S.R.C. offices addressed to "Editor, 1965-66 Yearbook, Speleological Society" ??? The Editor would like to know as he can see no connection with the content of the film and any known trip undertaken by any member, let alone caving or the Yearbook.

RECORDS OFFICER. The Committee has revived this office, but in a new form. It will not be a joint Librarian-Records position, so adequate justice may be done to both. In essence the Records Officer will collect and collate Trip Reports and information about local caving areas. He will be an ex-officio member of the Surveying Subcommittee and will work in close harmony with the Convenor of the SSC. Trip Reports should still be routed through the Secretary so details may be published. The Records Officer is Erik Halbert.

THE COMMITTEE decided to appoint a Minutes Secretary. This will be arranged by the creation of a Minutes Subcommittee consisting of the Assistant Secretary and his/her girlfriend/boyfriend. At the moment it is a femme in the shape of Venita Stewart. (95 22 88).

IT HAS BEEN suggested that a Science or Special Projects Subcommittee be formed to coordinate interest and activities in selected fields. Those who may have some special interest which may need coordinating should approach Glenn Hunt.

NOTICE. Did you read the notice at the bottom of the front page? See also the top of the next page....

MOTION. The following Motion was not put to the vote at the last General Meeting because no one could remember what to put. If this is not repeated, it will be moved at the G.M. on 6th October. "That paragraph 4e of the Constitution become 4e(i);

That the following clause be inserted as 4e(ii):

4e(ii) Following the Annual General Meeting, the incoming Committee shall prepare a Budget, setting out expected income and an outline of suggested expenditure. This Budget shall be presented to the first General Meeting following the election of the Committee for discussion and approval."

Moved by Malcolm Watson.

PRISON LABOUR PLAN for cave improvements. State Cabinet Ministers are considering using prison labour to improve the Yarrangobilly Caves, near Tumut, the Minister for Mines [?], Mr T.L. Lewis, said in the Legislative Assembly. If this was agreed to it would be necessary to exclude the general public from the area while the work was going on. - Sydney Morning Herald, 17.8.66.

CAVEMAN HAS HIS FIRST BEER in 130 days. "Gosh it tastes good" David Lafferty said to his wife after emerging from his cavern 350 feet below the Mendip Hills in Somerset after breaking the world underground record. During the period he lost track of one month of the time he spent underground. A preliminary medical report described his general condition as good but his colour vision and balance were disturbed.

XMAS PARTY. Anyone offering a venue for the end of year barbeque should contact the Secretary as soon as possible.

TRIP REPORTS, ETC.

WOMBAYAN- Discovery of new extension in Fig Tree.

For the past few months SUSS has been surveying the Fig Tree with the SRC theodolite, largely on trips led by Graeme Jessup. On the last trip we decided to do some compass and tape work to get an idea of some of the cave and also to get as much mapped in case we were not able to complete the survey as we would like to for reasons beyond our control. As far as we know there are two river sections in Fig Tree which are active at some time or another. The better known stream drains water from Victoria Arch (ie. Wombeyan Creek when it is flowing well) but is often dry as it is now. The other stream is perennial. The downstream section is entered by a hole leading off directly below the main Fig Tree entrance in the first large breakdown chamber. The upstream section is entered through a "Wood-pile" or down a hole in the second large breakdown chamber containing the Three Sisters formation. The two are connected (presumably) by a siphon. The upstream section can be followed until it narrows down and ends in another siphon. We were doing compass and tape work in this section when I stumbled on the extension (surveying does have its virtues). Just before you reach the upstream siphon there is a reasonably conspicuous rock-pile running off the passage on the left. The natural tendency is to

go up, but it is quite easy to go on for a couple of yards if you bend down. You are in a small chamber but a low-semi-circular passage with a water flattened floor runs off from a corner and leads you further into the rock-pile but still more or less at stream level. I didn't really have any idea where I was going but started to ferret around to see whether I was getting any plumper -- I was, but still battled on. I had a Prospective with me, and decided that rock-pile work wouldn't do her any harm. After following a few leads and drawing blanks I went down between a couple of slabs and up the other side to find myself in a room in the rock-pile. This led into a passage from where we could hear the sound of running water. It always sounds good, but I thought I must have come around in a circle and finished where I started. But the passage I was in looked a little different and therefore my hopes were raised. It was new. With lights fading after a day's caving I decided to go out and enlist help. We met Graeme on his way after us, so we returned to search out the extension. The map [not published] gives sufficient details but I might mention the extremely beautiful flowstone stairway near the upstream siphon and the remarkable solution features. I hope to comment on the latter later on. Next day we returned to do a quick compass and tape survey. Future possibilities exist in pushing one or two of the rock-piles in the extension.

Glenn Hunt.

STUART TOWN AREA AND BORENORE.

John Byrne is studying the geology of an area in the vicinity of Bakers Swamp and Stuart Town south-east of Wellington, NSW, for his PhD thesis. The area contains interesting geological features, including several outcrops of limestone. We thought it would be worth a trip to look around and see what caves we could find. John had previously located entrances in his field work so we had a look at these.

After an enjoyable trip to the central west (including an autumn drive through the cherry orchards of Orange and a winter drive in the snow on Mount Canobolas) we met John at "Banderra" property near Bakers Swamp.

Next day we visited the Garra Limestone beds west of Bakers Swamp. This Devonian limestone consisted of small outcrops of low relief in the area visited and only had minor solution features with no caves developed.

Next area visited was at the limestone outcrops near Newbrigyn Creek near Stuart Town. Two small holes noted previously by John were examined. These holes were in a small rugged outcrop which contained several interesting solution features -- rillenkarren, solution pits, evidence for greater solution under moss covered soil than on lichen covered rock. Both holes were about 20' deep but were blocked by soil fill, presumably washed in along joints from the outside. One contained small and very old weathered stalactites almost at the opening, the other had a fair sized flowstone deposit. The two holes were possibly part of a larger cave before the outcrop became extensively eroded. Unpleasant coral formations also lined the walls.

Another cave was situated in a cliff in quite a large outcrop by local standards. It appears to have carried a small amount of local drainage. Only being about four feet high and two feet six wide the

passage wound up for a distance of about 50' probably along a bedding line. A small quantity of dry bat guano was present and also a few recent bones (dog, wallaby, rabbit).

Another cave was reported but unfortunately could not be examined. This is reputed to contain large quantities of bone. Cave development in the Nubrigyn Creek limestone is restricted because of low relief and the fact that it only occurs in ~~x~~ isolated outcrops separated by impure limestones such as reef talus (calcirudite).

Nearer to Bakers Swamp is another limestone formation -- the Narroogal Park limestone. This runs in a north-south belt and is crossed by the Bell River, and is in part covered by its alluvium. We staggered into the cave under darkness -- that's all I know. [Maps of location, etc. with Surveying Subcommittee]. The cave itself is extremely interesting and would warrant proper surveying and further study. It is entered through a sink-hole and one soon stands in quite a large passage which once carried considerable quantities of water. Evidently the cave was once much larger than it is now. A small amount of water flows through on odd occasions and has deposited material on a flat floor in the terminal chamber of the cave.

On the way home we called in at the Boremore Tunnel Cave to see whether any bats were around. Only a few were seen on the wing. Glenn Hunt.

FROM THE LIBRARIAN

"The Big Hole near Braidwood, NSW" by J.N. Jennings, Journal and Proceedings of Royal Soc. of NSW, Vol98, 1966, pp215-219.

Canberra S.S. have done valuable work in assisting Joe to carry out his study on the Big Hole (at Krawaree). The following statistics should indicate the difficulty of their task. The Big Hole has a total depth of 360 feet. After ~~an~~ ladder pitch -- a slight 288 feet -- a rubble slope descends under an overhang and ends in still pools of water. The collapse is remarkable because of its great depth compared with its width -- very few collapse dolines in the world approach it. The walls are mainly in Devonian quartzitic sandstone but it is thought that a large solution cavity was formed in underlying limestone (The Marble Arch and Wyanbene Caves are nearby). Tree ferns are growing in the bottom and show no evidence of recent large collapses.

N.S.S. News, 24(6) June 1966.

An interesting note describes the caves and karst in Vietnam. South Vietnam seems singularly devoid (consolations to Rick) except for man-made ones commonly dug by the Vietcong in the thick tropical laterite soils. The southern 25% of Vietnam is all delta (hardly suitable) with the rest in South Vietnam being igneous (ditto). North Vietnam, on the other hand, seems reasonably well endowed with limestone, though caves are only recorded in the ancient legends of the country.

CEGSA Newsletter, August 1966.

A preliminary discussion of the evolution of the Diprotodon (photographic variety). Rick Crowle's has been dubbed "Diprotodon

MK 2" and this has been evolved into another species, "Diprotodon Hillii" (Hill) which we hope will have a high degree of adaptation to the Nullarbor environment. We await a detailed description.

Helictite, 4(3) April 1966.

As well as the papers mentioned in the August Newsletter is an interesting article on some of the old entities at Jenolan. Ted Lane writes on the historian W.L. Harvard, pioneer photographer A.J. Perier, explorer and guide J.C.Wiburd, and head guide J.O'Connor.

SEop Press, August 1966.

"The hydrology of Bungonia Efflux" by Steve Lambert.

Work at the Bungonia efflux still progresses and is becoming rather a ritual. Detailed observations and recordings have been made on the flow of water from the efflux to determine the nature of the ponding behind it. Many conclusions have been drawn but more observations are required, especially after periods of heavy rain. The efflux is thought to drain the area containing the well-known Bungonia sink-holes. The largest and deepest sinks of the system (Drum and Grill) are south of the efflux along the strike of the limestone. More work should produce further valuable results, including a cave it is hoped.

While ladder descents of the north side of Bungonia Gorge had their technical problems, they failed to produce anything of speleological value except jelly-legs and shattered nerves.

A sketch map of the river section at Colong is included.

+++++ IS ANYONE GOING TO TASMANIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE ?
The Southern Caving Society has offered to give information and assistance in any serious caving proposed by SUSS members. Contact Secretary for details.