

NEWSLETTER OF THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Box 35, The Union, Sydney University 2006

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January - February 1971

LONGEST CAVE IN AUSTRALIA

DEEPEST CAVE IN AUSTRALIA

LONGEST LADDER DROP IN AUSTRALIA

The members of SUSS who were present on the Field Trips following the A.S.P. Convention in Hobart take this opportunity to thank the Tasmanian Caverneering Club and the Southern Caving Society most sincerely for arranging the most successful convention and Field Trips ever.

For the record, Exit Cave has reached 10 miles, a new cave near Haydena, Hhazhad-dum (JF4-5) has been pushed down 950' or so, and a ladder drop in one of the Mt Anne dolomite caves came out at 420'.

THERE WILL NOT BE A GENERAL MEETING IN FEBRUARY OWING TO THERE BEING NO CHAIRS IN OUR USUAL PLACE DURING SOME RE-ORGANIZATION OF UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS

COMING EVENTS

The Editor regrets that the great haste with which this Newsletter has had to be assembled has not left much time for chasing up details of forthcoming events. A rough outline is set out below and another Newsletter will be circulated before the end of February.

THERE WILL BE NO GENERAL MEETING IN FEBRUARY -
OWING TO THE GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT HAVING CHANGED
ITS PREMISES OUR MEETING PLACE IS NOT AVAILABLE

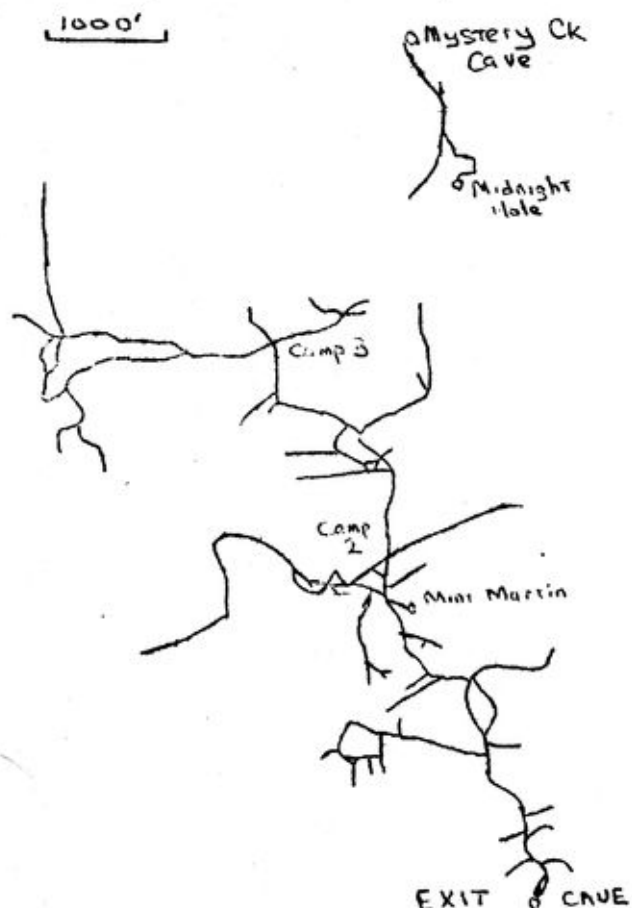
- January 30-31 COOLEMON Leader : Ludwig Muenzenrieder
Ludwig is rumoured to have been carrying out experiments on perception in caves
- February 20 SYMPOSIUM ON MINING AND CONSERVATION
Organized by the Australian Conservation Foundation at the Union Theatre, University of Sydney, and to be chaired by Sir Garfield Berwick. This should be of special interest to cavers as so many of our limestone areas are threatened in one way or another by mining. At least one SUSS member will be forking out the necessary \$5.
- March 4 GENERAL MEETING at 7.30pm. The venue will be advised in the next newsletter but will probably be the old meeting place in the Griffith Taylor Building, Top Floor, subject to permission of the new tenants.
- March 6 - 7 WEE JASPER Freshers Trip Leader : Ludwig Muenzenrieder
- 13 Field Day at Palm Beach (TENTATIVE DATE) Details will be circulated later.
- 20-21 COLONG Leader : Jim Seabrook ph. 746004.
- 27-28 JENOFAN Leader : John Dunkley ph. 7599956
Continuation of long term project in Mammoth Cave. Someone suggested that this may be the opportunity to make another visit to the remote Great North Cavern.
- April 8 - 12 COOLEMAN Leader to be appointed.
It is hoped to finish maps of three caves discovered by SUSS in the Coolemon-Blue Waterholes area several years ago.

TASMANIA '70 - '71

At least a fuller report on activities in Tasmania in December and January will be made in the next newsletter; this space-filler merely records a few random thoughts about the greatest speleo trips since the heyday of Mulla-mulla. Probably the best ever in fact.

Well over 100 cavers turned up at the convention centre in Hobart. Four days of non-stop yakker, papers, arguments and a jolly good booze-up at the Caveman's Dinner on the last night. Particularly noteworthy personalities included Ian Wood's biannual rendition of song and dance, Norm Poulter falling for the same trick as at Goolwa, being removed bodily from his travelling house by a bevy of beauties. Ben Nurse compromised. John Dunkley holding a paper plane. Quite impossible to describe in words regrettably.

The BIG news, of course, comes from the field trips. While forced by floods to camp in Exit Cave for 4 days, one party found another 3000' + of new cave which with other unmapped passages brings the total length to 10 miles. Up in the rain forests of Junece, several new caves were entered. The most significant turned out to be a cruddy wet hole since named Khazad-dum. On Saturday 23rd January SCS reached 850' down to run out of ladder at the top of yet another 100' drop. There are several other most impressive dolines in the area with vast quantities of water pouring in. The potential is tremendous.



The editor was very favorably impressed by the superb trees in the Florentine valley which we drove through one day. Tallest hardwoods in the world it seems. Being felled at a rapid rate by APPM too. Dreadful mess made by their 97 tone gadget that pulls the trees around. Huge logs in dolines and no doubt a great deal of debris being gradually swept into the caves.

The Editor drove past Mt Anne on a nice fine day and looked at the mountain from the comfort of his car. Quite hardened bushies who were on the Field Trip up there were heard to complain for a few weeks after about collapsing legs. The little news that has leaked out suggests that most energy was expenced in getting up there and getting into two of the big dolines. One of these, probably the most awe-inspiring karst features in Australia, went down about 550' with one ladder drop of 420' taking out a new Australian record.

The editor was overwhelmed by the friendliness shown by people in the tourist caves of Tasmania. Special mention must be made of Mr Skinner at Hastings Caves who is probably the most dedicated cave guide I have met. His son Andrew has established an excellent little museum incorporating many items of speleological interest. It seems a shame that a good museum has not been established at places like Jenolan although it has been suggested often enough. The relations enjoyed by Tassie cavers with property owners, government departments, local authorities and tourist cave operators is almost unbelievably too good to the NSW caver. Where else but Tasmania would speleos get the Deputy Premier to open a convention?

Up at Mole Creek it seems the best 'tourist' trips were being taken. Now cavers as a whole are not given to extravagant raving on about cave decorations. Seen one you've seen the lot type approach prevails. So, judging from the unrestrained comments in the field log book regarding Kubla Khan, this must be a fantastic cave.

Members of SUSS, about the last to leave Mole Creek, were able to explore a new cave the entrance of which was found by Henry Shannon on 19 January. The new cave, named Tailender 1 & 2 (it is in 2 parts) ~~when the~~ explorers, the tailenders from the trip, is near Croesus Cave and appears to take flood water from Vanishing Ck away from Croesus and Lynds Caves. The main cave is about 1400' long, with 1000' or so of almost dead straight strike-oriented low passage. A side passage leads to a well decorated chamber overhung by canopies, over which successive people tried to climb without success. A bolt would probably be sufficient to get over the last obstacle and the possibilities appear good as there is a draught. The main passage siphons but this may prove passable in dry weather.

NEW BOOK ON NULLARBOR

A new book of popular interest has been published on the Nullarbor. Titled "The Nullarbor Story", by Basil Fuller, it features a chapter on the caves for which SUSS supplied some information. A review will be made when someone gets time to read the whole thing.

The Editor apologises for this rather insipid, deadly dull newsletter and exhorts you to write something to make the next one rather more appetizing.

NOTE ON AN APPARENT "NEW DISCOVERY" IN MAMMOTH CAVE

by John Dunkley

A recent trip report by E. Halbert in the Journal of Sydney Speleological Society (Vol. 15, no. 1, p. 18) described a "new extension found in the Mammoth Cave, Jenolan" on 2nd January 1971. A small hole was entered off the North West Passage (referred to in the report by its former name of the Left Branch), which led after 150' to Central River.

The accompanying Grade 1 map is not accurate enough to make positive identification possible but the description appears to fit a passage which has been known to SUSS for nearly ten years, having been discovered by Peck et al. on the Easter underground camp trip in 1961. A brief reference to the discovery appears in SUSS Newsl. 1 (5) : 3. A map was drawn up at the time but was retained by Peck. The passage has been entered at least once by H. Shannon and in 1965 I went into the first 50' or so myself. Henry and I were talking about going into it on our trip into that part of the cave late in 1970 but time did not permit.

The passage is a floodway which channels water, originating from beyond the Infinite Crawl, out of the North West Passage and into Central River. Shannon (pers. comm.) has hypothesized that this waterway is an overflow which operates only when Cusec Creek is running above capacity discharge; it diverts flood water from the Woolly Rhinosceros section of Cusec Creek ** into Central River, thus providing a connection between the two running streams in Mammoth. The lack of signs of previous entry reported by Halbert might be attributed to this periodic flooding.

Halbert also notes that Central River is joined in this passage by a small tributary entering from the left hand side. Shannon has observed that the combined volume of the two streams is just sufficient to account for the discharge at the other points where Central River is seen and there is therefore probably an anabranch.

The non-perennial stream passage described above is probably a significant factor in the complex hydrology of Mammoth and deserves some appellation. Although its precise function is not yet proven (carrying out fluorescein tests would be very difficult owing to highly irregular floods and difficulty of reaching this section when the dry siphon is closed), it is clear that much more water than can be accounted for merely by ground seepage flows through. The name "The Overflow" is suggested - this to be a hydrological term referring to the whole of the stream course from beyond the Infinite Crawl (from the Woolly Rhinosceros?) through North West Passage into Central River.

To my knowledge no-one has ever actually seen water flowing in this passage because when it does, the dry siphon would be full, barring access. I would like to hear from anyone who has seen this phenomenon.

** In SUSS mythology, the Woolly Rhinosceros is the as yet unentered section of Cusec Ck. lying upstream of its present known underground course in the Southern Section of Mammoth.

DON'T BE FOOLED !!

Fight for Colong

Caves goes on

THE announcement that the Kanangra-Boyd National Park west of Sydney will probably be extended by 42,500 acres will not stop the Save the Colong Caves committee's fight to save the park's famous caves.

"It's obviously a political sop for the State elections," says Father J. Tierney, a spokesman for the Save Colong group.

The director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dr D. F. McMichael, has said the State Parliament will probably approve the extension during its first session in May.

The caves are the subject of a prolonged dispute between the conservationists and Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers, which had a licence to quarry limestone in the area.

Says Father Tierney: "The position remains, that Portland could legally start mining tomorrow, but because they're wary of public opinion they are seeking an alternative limestone deposit site."

"The fact the park is being extended at one end in no way lessens the urgency of saving Colong from the miners."

The N.S.W. State elections will be held on February 13

The Labor Party has promised to revoke leases for mining in the Colong area if it is brought to power

The Australia Party candidates include members of the Colong Committee

The Liberal Party has not mentioned this important matter of public concern in its policy statements