

# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Volume 10, Number 9

April 1971

## COMING EVENTS

- April 1 Annual General Meeting - Again a new meeting place, this time it's - ROOM 328, SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE QUADRANGLE at 8.15PM. This is the corner with the jacaranda tree. At this meeting the new Committee will be elected, the proposed Constitutional amendments will be voted on and the membership fee will be set. Also preliminary organisation for the Easter trips will get underway.
- 3,4 COLONG - New date for the cancelled March 20,21 trip. General caving for new members. Jim Seabrook 74.6084
- 8-13(Easter) 1. COOLEMAN - Surveying, exposure tests(?), general caving and perhaps some easy bushwalking in beautiful alpine country. Fishing for those with licences. Celebrate Zyg's departure from the army. Bring your own flags. John Holliday 54.1922 - Ludwig Muenzenreider is ill and can no longer lead this trip.
2. YARRANGOBILLY - Surveying, general exploration in tres pretty caves, perhaps some easy bushwalking. Again BYOF's. Jim Seabrook 74.6084 - Ludwig is no longer leading this trip either.
- 24,25,26 JENOLAN - Continuation of Mammoth work - surveying, photography perhaps some hard caving. Waiting list only - this trip is already fully booked. John Dunkley 759.9956
- 29 Sydney Speleo Society Meeting at which there will be a debate on the issue of ladders versus mechanical climbing devices - this should be of interest to some members. Venue: Room M, Ground Floor, Y.M.C.A. Building, Pitt St., at 7.45pm.
- May 6 General Meeting - probably in Rm328, Quadrangle, however this is not definite - full details will be given in the May Newsletter.
- 15,16 CLIEFDEN - Surveying in Taplow Maze. Tentative only. John Holliday 54.1922
- 29,30 JENOLAN (tentative) John Dunkley 759.9956 (tentative TL)

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SUSS — The SYDNEY UNIVERSITY  
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY ———

President: John Dunkley  
22/53 Alice St.,  
Wiley Park, 2195.  
759.9956

Secretary: Jim Seabrook  
142 Parramatta Rd.  
Croydon, 2132.  
74.6084

Editor: John Holliday  
56 Lynwood St.,  
Blakehurst, 2221.  
54.1922

Editorial —

EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY

..... This is not really an editorial but rather an explanation of the present situation as regards SUSS equipment. This is necessary because SUSS at present faces a rather large expenditure on ropes, the Ushikata compass and possibly ladders. Unfortunately everything has come at once.

Following the Wee Jasper trip, Murray Anderson, the Safety Officer, presented the following report to the Committee:

"After seeing the rope failure at Wee Jasper, as well as the shambolic situation of 'who owns this rope', I would like to list a number of suggestions to increase the reliability of the Club's equipment.

1. Retire all Manilla ropes from service.
2. Buy 1 x 150' and 1 x 120' No. 4 Nylon for belaying and 1 x 150' and 1 x 120' 1 1/2 inch Manilla for abseiling.
3. Each rope should be made identifiable by some means (dyeing?) and an accurate log sheet maintained, stating the dates used and the types of usage, eg:

'Wee Jasper, 6/7 March 71 - 150' Manilla: 8 x 70' twisted knot abseils. 120' Nylon: 16 belays with some abrasion over rock edge.'

4. No lending or private usage of gear without the permission of the Committee.
5. The following procedure before, during and after a trip: the Trip Leader will arrange the necessary equipment with the Equipment Officer. After returning the equipment in a good clean condition, the Trip Leader will give the Equipment Officer the exact details of equipment usage so that the log sheets for these items may be filled out."

The Committee agreed to Murray's recommendations. So far 3 ropes have been purchased and dyed. Murray and Jim Seabrook (Eq. Officer) are investigating the purchase of the 4th rope -- perhaps 150' of Kernmantle rather than nylon. The Society By-laws concerning equipment require amendment to put the other recommendations on a legal basis and this is one task which will confront the new Committee. However, the log sheets have already been commenced concurrently with the purchase of the new ropes.

As regards other items of equipment, the Ushikata forestry type compass plus tripod will cost approx. \$100. This has been paid for by private loan, but the Society must pay for it eventually. Finally ladders -- Murray has withdrawn one 50' ladder from service and is investigating the possibility of making or purchasing new ladder.

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SUSS AT LARGE or ROVINGS OF THE QUIET ROVER --Norm Poulter Reports on Khazad-dum.

(Editors note: SUSS member, Norm Poulter, commenced a round Australia, working holiday in Tasmania immediately after the ASF Conference. This is the first of a series of reports that Norm will provide as he tours Australia. Since early January, despite caving injuries and Landrover trouble (ie: the Quiet Rover), he has played a major role in the exploration of Khazad-dum, Australia's deepest cave. On Jan 23,24 he was in a party which pushed the cave to a depth of 860ft. His leg was injured at a 30ft waterfall on this trip. Then on Feb 27,28 he was in the party that got to a depth of 970ft, and this article is his description of that trip.)

February 27:

About 13 people from TCC and SCS set out from the Junees Homestead to carry gear to JF4 (ie: the main K-dum entrance) and partially rig the main pitches. By prior arrangement the members of the attack team (I was one of them) were to take it easy and were expected only to assist in carrying the 700ft of ladder and approx 8-900ft of rope to the cave but not into it, however we all went in. Peter Shaw(TCC) and I had predecided to explore the high level dry passage that I had discovered during my first trip into the main section of the cave during the ASF Field Trips, and was yet still unexplored. I was confident that it bypassed the 70 and 94ft ladder drops along the usual route down. In 30 minutes we found that it did, coming out about 150ft downstream from the 94ft pitch. The passageway had a 25ft drop followed by a winding damp streamway terminating at a 60ft drop in 3 stages which I descended with some of Rick Crowles parachute tape and a waistlength. After seeing where it came out and that it was the best and easiest way down and up, I re climbed the almost sheer drop. The discovery caused a lot of confusion with the rigging parties and a lot of derigging and rorigging went on and set back schedules. The significance of the new passage is this -- before there was 164ft of laddering to do, now there is only 85ft of easy laddering leaving just on 80ft of ladder that can be used elsewhere.

Sunday, Feb 28:

Attack and support parties entered about 11.30am. Attack broke into two 3 man parties, the lead team consisting of Phillip Robinson (TCC), Peter Shaw and myself, the second team of Kevin Kiernan (SCS), Chris Harris(SCS) and Graeme somebodyorother (SCS). I was wearing a loose fitting wetsuit. We came to the waterfalls -- my pet hate. The first one had me full of apprehension and I took a deep breath and started down, caught my foot in the ladder about 4ft from the bottom and had a rough landing. Next came a real waterfall -- the one where the rock landed on my foot last time only this time I just had to go through the water. Once again I mustered up some courage and started down, but about halfway panic set in and I fell off the ladder and landed in the pool below hurting my leg. I was able to continue down the rest of the falls however to the 860ft level (the furthest anyone had previously been), where we spent an hour digging a hole for a Soxin bolt so that we could go down a supposed 100ft drop which turned out to be only 70ft and partially wet. Side exploration discovered an estimated 150ft dry drop and a small draught free, dry chamber good enough to have meals in or else sleep several people if they had the energy to carry sleeping bags in.

Kevin, Phillip, Chris and I went down the 90ft drop to be confronted with another waterfall drop of unknown depth. Kevin volunteered to go down. He went for about 60ft to a small ledge before yelling frantically to get hauled up the ladder -- he returned scared stiff and half drowned to report that he still could not see the bottom of the drop. After I took a water sample for Albert Goede(TCC) we started back to the others and a meal -- a hot one in the small chamber mentioned. We did not have time to go down the 150ft drop, nor the inclination. We had lunch/tea at about 7-8pm and then started back in two three man teams. The lead team (Kevin, Chris and I) to carry approx 90ft of ladder each and at least 120ft of rope each and to go back to the main (94ft) pitch chamber. The other team would descend and carry all that back.

Everything went alright until we reached a certain waterfall that I am very familiar with. Up to this stage all drops with the exception of the first 94ft were unlifeline(d) (they are all short, but very wet drops). On the way out, due to my leg and the waterfalls, I was the only one in my team that wanted a lifeline so I was always the last up. Kevin and Chris would go up, let down a line for the gear and then I would go up on it. Well, Kevin went up alright and then up went Chris (this waterfall by the way was a particularly hard fall with quite a lot of water in a confined area). Chris reached the brink and could not get over and things became desperate. I have never seen anyone so close to falling -- he only had one foot on the ladder and the rest of him was spreadeagled all across the fall -- Kevin rushed to help him and at one stage it looked as though they would both go over. After what seemed an age Kevin managed to haul Chris over the top, Whew! After the gear it was my turn and I foolishly still had 100ft of rope and my day pack on me. The second party had caught up by this time. I made sure the bowline was tight and up I went -- things went OK until I hit the edge of the fall and there I stayed. One rung was in a tight depression and I could not use it and the next rung was about one and a half inches beyond my reach. I did not have the power in my legs to lift myself higher, the pack and the rope probably caused this power loss through water drag. Things were desperate again. I tried to shout out but only succeeded in getting a stomach full of water. I tried again and another stomach full resulted. I tried to raise myself once again but could not do it. Then Kevin and Chris gave an almighty heave and I grabbed at the elusive rung, made it and hung on for dear life. The whole incident seems quite hilarious now but believe me it wasn't. The rest of the trip seemed quite tame after that, Chris wisely deciding to use a lifeline up the remaining waterfalls.

Confusion reigned in the main pitch chamber as to how the gear was to be raised into the chamber, it finally being manhandled up the new passage. We first reached the chamber at about 1am Mon., March 1st. Albert and some of the others had been up the top of the pitch since 8pm that night. We all emerged from the cave at about 8am after being underground for more than 21hrs. I'm glad that this was the last trip this summer (the stream is getting too high). If I ever return to Tasmania I'll make it a point never to go near this cave -- it's a bit too tough for my liking. Water temperature by the way is 8-9deg C. Hours expended on my part was 31hrs without sleep then one hour sleep followed by another 6hrs awake before I could bed down again in Hobart.

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TRIP REPORTSWee Jasper, 6-7 March 1971"The Fresher's Trip or Caving a la Pitt Street"

Co-ordinator: Ludwig Muenzenreider(ML); Co-ordination team: Jim Seabrook(ML) John Holliday(M), Murray Anderson(ML), Ron Murray(ML), Andy Happ(M), Zyg Szramka(ML); Visitors: Beverly Riley(UQSS), Graeme 'Bluey' Thompson(CSS); Other members: Joy Muenzenreider(M), Jeanette Dunkley(M), Mark Gainsford(M), Manfred Listing(M), Brian Wythes(M), R Spence, G Marin, A Blice, L Blice, Jack and Judith Vaughan, B Fisher, J Sanderson, G McGowan, P Crocker, N Reid, B Hutchinson, Keith Brister, Neil Montgomery, P Ashcroft, G Robertson, L Watts, Steve Williamson, Jeff Turner, Janice Turner, Cherie Wheeler, Rick Tunney, Harvey Smith, S Milligan, B Bailey, P Henry, C Mathers, R Stedman, George Kelen, T Minty, L Callaghan, B Spilsbury, A Jenkins, J Welling, Tony Dowling (all Prospectives).

The aim of this trip was to acquaint Freshers with caving. Transport was arranged by car and thanks must go to all the drivers who volunteered their services to make this trip the success it was. Most of the people arrived by 2.30am on Saturday morning, camp being set up under the causerinas on the left hand side of the road as one approaches the ford.

The ladders were set up on a tree with a belay and the whole host was mustered at 9.30am for practice in tying the bowline and climbing the ladders as well as some belaying demonstrations. Some hints were given on cave safety and procedure. Having made sure that everyone was sufficiently competent the host was divided into four groups -- one to go to Punchbowl, the other three to the Dip system. These caves had been rigged with ladders the previous night by the advance party. Those going to the Dip left at various times half an hour apart to insure that no bottlenecks would occur. Needless to say they did, however they were not that bad and everyone spent some six hours caving in this system. All sections of the Dip were visited and the parties were all back by 6pm. Those from Punchbowl returned at the same time except for Murray Anderson who remained behind to aid a group of teachers who had some difficulty in negotiating their way through the system.

Dinner was eaten after which the local Council man (or so he said) came to collect a camping fee. I informed him that we would not pay as :

- i) there were no facilities of any kind provided
- ii) we were camped on Crown land

Following this he asked for all the names and addresses ???? I asked him if he wanted them immediately and he said yes. He also made a vague reference to the fact that a Health inspector had supposedly visited the campsite earlier that day. By this time he still had collected no money or names so he left saying that he was going to call the police. However they never arrived. Also no one could remember seeing a Health inspector around earlier on. Eventually the whole incident was forgotten and a campfire was organised -- minus a fire as there was a total fire ban in force at the time. However, it was still a success and some of our boys even got slightly sloshed on the creek water.

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After breakfast on Sunday further trips were led to the Gong Room and a few bods abseiled into WJ4. Also Doglog and Signature were visited, the former being pushed to the first sump. Getting that far involved a swim through oily mud and as a result those cavers returned to the campsite somewhat grimey -- a bevy of cameramen eagerly photographed their mud-encased bodics. All parties returned to the surface by 2pm and all had left by 3.

Ludwig Muenzenreider

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Editorial -- Equipment. cont from page 68

That then is the position. The ropes were urgently needed -- you cannot go caving in many places without them and old ropes just do not suffice. The compass is necessary if SUSS is to carry out any real speleological work. It was ordered early last year and was hopefully to be financed with a grant from the Students Rep Council, but they are apparently unable to help us. The Men's Sports Union cannot give SUSS a grant because SUSS has women as voting members and because speleology is not a sport (curiously enough mountaineering is). Similarly with the Women's Sports Assoc. At other less tradition bound Unis they have combined Sports Unions which do give grants to speleo societies.

Thus the unfortunate position is that SUSS must raise all of its funds itself and so the By-laws have been amended to allow for a 50cent/person trip fee to be levied on all future trips. This still will not provide enough and so further social functions will probably be held. Additionally membership fees may have to rise even more than the expected 50cent rise already made necessary by the increase in ASF capitation fees. This will be a matter to decide at the Annual General Meeting on April 1st.

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By-law Amendment

The Committee has reworded Section D(3) "Trip Fees" to read:

"Persons may attend Society trips at the discretion of the Trip Leader on payment to him of a trip fee of 50 cents. Members and Prospective Members wishing to attend shall have priority over any non-member."

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New Members

SUSS has three new full or associate members: Jack and Judith Vaughn and Richard Tunney. Hopefully they will be the first of a large influx this year.

SUSS also has a new Trip Leader: John Holliday.

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"Mt Etna Caves"

John Dunkley has copies of this good UQSS publication available for \$2.75 at Meetings!

ASF EIGHTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE FIELD TRIP:MT. ANNE, S.H. TASMANIA, 6-10th Jan, 1971

by Ted Anderson

Participants: (16) Brian Collin(TCC-Leader), Ron Allum(UNSWSS), Ted Anderson(UNSWSS,SUSS), John Bennett(VSA), Chris Cosgrove(SUSS), Rick Counsell(UNSWSS), Tony Culberg(UNSWSS), Ellen Davies(VSA), Allan Keller(TCC), Bill Lehmann(TCC), Andrew Pavey(UNSWSS,NZSS), Jim Seabrook(SUSS), Henry Shannon(UOSS), Nick and Susan White(VSA), Ian Wood(UNSWSS).

Objectives: Exploration of at least two large dolines in dolomite on the N.E. ridge of Mt. Anne --- known to TCC for about four years, but not entered. Investigations by Collin and Keller indicated probable 400ft entrance pitch in the largest doline.

Wed. 6th:

An odd assortment of vehicles departed Brian's at about 0930 and reassembled at Clear Water Creek on the Scott's Peak Rd., amid typically magnificent S.H. scenery, including Mt. Anne in full view. (Overheard: "Are we going to climb that?")

Hurried sorting and distribution of about 600ft of ladder and 1000ft of rope -- much muttering about an apparent, large, local, positive gravity anomaly ("I wonder if I will need the three dozen Stubai 7oz. D's and the can of strawberries?") -- hasty farewells and off at a scorching pace across the blackened button grass at 1230, followed by a slow, stumbling squelch through the swamp at 1235. Sumptuous scroggin lunch in somewhat more sumptuous surroundings at Fern Camp at 1400. Heat, humidity, heavy packs, 700 metres (one above the other), "horizontal" and other varieties of Tasmanian trog-eating scrub (they actually preserve the stuff in national parks) provided all concerned (very concerned!) with their own personal battle for the next four hours.

Contrary to plan two camps were established a couple of kilometres apart on the southern side of the ridge. The glaciated morphology of cloud filled valleys, towering columnar dolerite peaks, flecked by remnant snow and etched dramatically by the oblique diffusion of the twilight provided an inspiring and memorable scene as dinner was prepared in the shadow of Mt. Anne.

Thurs. 7th:

While one party moved along the ridge to cut a track to "Number two big hole", the remainder struggled (fell) through the over present scrub and regrouped with all the trog gear at the edge of the Number one hole entrance pitch. Nick, with transceiver, remained perched 125m. above on Lookout Rock to warn away any intending gibberologists. The pitch was rigged, 165m. of ladder being greedily consumed by the hole, as fast as it could be unrolled and lowered. Allan descended first, relaying instructions and sundry superlatives to the surface by transceiver, including after 28 minutes of climbing the depth of the pitch -- a record at 128m. Andrew and Ron followed, with extra rope and ladder, Rick belaying, Ted, John, Nick and Ian assisting with the rope and radios and avid photography. Half an hour of exploration and the hole was bottomed at 158m. in a tight, rubble-choked slot at the side of the vast main chamber (75m. long, 30m. wide, 60m. high). A quick sketch  
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map was made and the explorers retreated, looking perhaps just a little tired as they reached the surface. The pitch was painfully derigged and the gear assembled in preparation for the Number two hole descent the next day. Number one hole was thereafter referred to as "Keller's Cellar".

Fri. 8th:

Brian, Ron, John, Rick, Henry and Ian set off to Number Two Hole, while a large party took advantage of excellent weather to climb the final 300m. to the summit of Mt. Anne (1400m.). The mountain goats were rewarded by a two pi panorama including Precipitous Bluff, Federation Peak, the Arthurs, Franklin Range, Coronets, Frenchmans Cap, Mt. Hodge and Mt. Bowes, Tyenna Peak, Mt. Field and every other name worth mentioning in the southern half of the island. Dozens of feet of Ektachrome (well, several metres!) and a snow fight later saw the party heading back to camp followed by a roaring sou'wester. The trogs radioed news of their exploration -- a 55m. entrance pitch, a long talus slope and some passages to a depth of about 150m. Several small holes were investigated on the return journey along the ridge without success.

Sat. 9th:

After a cold (6deg C), wet, squally -- a cold, wet, foggy day. The only thing observed to be moving fast that day was the declining rate of activity as it hurtled hotfoot towards zero.

Sun. 10th:

Weather had cleared considerably. A quick trip (actually several in rapid succession) down the ridge was followed by a leisurely lunch at Fern Camp. A brisk pace (civilisation in sight) across the button grass ended in a minor skirmish which converted Clear Water Ck. to a muddy pond, thus effectively concealing the sunken "Cascade" treasure from the eager, panting stagglers.

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#### SUSS FIELD DAY - March 13

A full report may appear in the next issue, but at this stage SUSS would like to thank Mr and Mrs Anderson and Murray for their hospitality in staging the tres-enjoyable B-BQ. Their efforts as hosts were much appreciated by the hungry and thirsty ladder-climbers and abseilers. If only there could be a field day every month.....?

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#### Odd Items --

Don't forget to come to the Annual General Meeting -- the new venue is ROOM 328 IN THE SOUTH EAST CORNER OF THE QUADRANGLE at 8.15PM. The late start is necessary because the room is used for evening lectures up till 8.15.

Hooray for computer printed address labels -- thanks Jeff.