

# DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

*Beginning with issue 8 in 1960 the Newsletter regularly published a digest of member club activities. Initially entitled "Exploration Activities" or "Around the Societies", by the mid-1960s this feature was firmly established under the heading "Down Under All Over" and has been a regular feature ever since. Contributions sometimes arrived unbidden and if suitable were published as stand-alone articles, but more often the long-suffering Editors had to extract information under duress from member societies or write their own digest from club newsletters. We have included below entries from a variety of fulfilled, frustrated and determined editors.*

## SOCIETY ACTIVITIES (extracts)

J. David Taylor (editor)

ASF Newsletter 8 (1960)

New societies have been formed or probably will be formed in Port Moresby, Brisbane and in Victoria. This will mean that we now have caving groups in all States and most territories of the Australian Commonwealth.

The Port Moresby Speleological Society was formed in January this year. So far the main scene of operations has been around the Javarere Rubber Plantations, some 45 miles by rugged mountain from Port Moresby. Quite a lot of walking through rain forest is a prerequisite to caving here. To date about 10 caves have been investigated. Interesting stream passages have been encountered, so that surveying and water tracing is planned in order to investigate the hydrology of the area.

...

Over Easter a CEGSA party traversed the wild and magnificent cliffs along the western coast of Kangaroo Island, in search of caves in the consolidated dune limestone. The stream passage (only in SA) draining West Bay Hollow and the big sea caves at the Ravine des Casoars were visited. The cave, further inland from Cape Borda gives promise of further discoveries in this area.

TCC took advantage of the dry summer to do some work in the Mole Creek area where even the Creek that flows through Honeycomb Cave was dry. The Upper Marakoopa Cave (discovered by Joe Jennings) was investigated and after 300 yds - daylight. Noted already, cave beyond Terrace Chamber in Marakoopa entered for first time and a large creek was found. The Xmas trip along the rugged Gordon River was magnificent, caves paltry. The access "track" into Exit Cave has been cut. Using this new "Kokoda Trail" it takes less than 1 ½ days to cover the 6 ½ miles, so this large and spectacular cave will now be properly investigated.

...

With the start of the new Uni year, the Sydney University SS have an influx of new members. On one of the "freshers" trips they came on a new extension of the Mammoth Cave (at Jenolan) ("the Northern River") which is on the central level, but has not been fully investigated. New caves or extensions are still turning up at Jenolan. SUSS reports of a cave north of the Serpentine which they didn't know about, though a chap called Hennings carved his name there in 1888. Surface mapping has been carried out at Yarrangobilly, and eighteen miles at Cave Creek they have found caves but not on the scale of Yarrangobilly, and thus were not impressed.

Little news has filtered through from Canberra, save that they are preparing for the Conference. There was talk that they were walking into Bendithera at Easter, as there are reports of mighty chasms in that area. Maybe some of our cavers are missing!

...

The Western Australian Speleological Group reports the discovery of a new cave which they refer to as "Deeondeeup". They rave about its magnificence – but say little else. This group is exploring the coastal area both to the north and south of Perth. They report excellent prospects in many areas.

## AROUND THE SOCIETIES

Keith Clouten (editor)

ASF Newsletter 11 (1961)

What has your society been doing during the past three months? In most cases, I have no idea! Only very little material in the form of club circulars, newsletters etc. has come the way of the Publications Officer, and most of this is from NSW societies. To be representative, this section of the Newsletter should contain some news of activities from every society around Australia.

## DOWN UNDER, ALL OVER

Ted Anderson (editor)

ASF Newsletter 23 (1964)

From the national capital: CSS have found more subterranean thermal pools at Wee Jasper. Temperature of these is in the mid eighties (Fahrenheit I presume?). At Yarrangobilly -they've been surveying East Deep Creek Cave; and at Cooleman passage between Right Cooleman and Cooleman Caves has been established.

In South Australia: CEGSA report a small colony of Eptesicus pumilus (Bats to you!) at Punyelroo, where they have also been doing some surveying. Vague rumours indicate that they have discovered a cave at Naracoorte by means of earth resistivity measurements. Last I heard, they were still trying to find a way in.

On the Macleay: after some 90 inches of rain in 1963 and with their beloved river in flood again this year, KSS's catch phrase is "Weather to be or not to be a caver". But despite this, they have been very active, visiting Temagog, Big Hill, Windy Gap, Carrai, and Moparrabah, to mention a few. Among their many reports are some interesting ones about sea caves at Big Hill (one even decorated with helictites) and a possible lava cave at Tyringham. At Windy Gap they enjoyed a display of glow-worms; and they have been busy numbering caves at various places.

NTUCSS have been far and wide to Jenolan, Colong, Timor and Mudgee as well as joining forces with their Kempsey neighbours.

In Sydney: the mob wearing the triple "S" brand were, last year, making valuable contributions to surface mapping at Bungonia and Jenolan, as well as organizing a giant search and rescue practice attended by Illawarriors (ISS) , HCG, UNSWSS and SUSS. This year, all were stunned by the Society's first change of President in its decade of existence; while at Jenolan the more hardy members have been trying, with some success, to show that J41 might be as large as Mammoth (J13) – and probably muddier!.

Conversely, SUSS are very proud of themselves for demonstrating that the supposedly all muddy Mammoth has some exceptionally beautiful, decorated caverns. They have: discovered an extension to Lower Level which contains, in addition to a fine display of all the usual pretties, numerous delicate straws (some about 7 feet long) and some crystal growths presumed to be aragonite .

UNSWSS have been looking at some of the lesser visited caves at Jenolan, and have added some passages to the upper levels of the re-discovered Wiburd's Lake Cave.

From north of the 29th: my second hand information reveals that UQSS hold certain fears for the continued existence of some of their caves. Cause of their concern are some unnatural disasters: quarrying near Mt Etna and the effect of the proposed Pike Creek Dam on Glen Lyon and Viator.

From Victoria: VCES report some enjoyable (and apparently useful antics) in M3 and Trogdip at Murrindal. Also surface surveying.

In the Conference state: WASG began the, year by discovering an extension to Easter Cave, in the Augusta region, and they've been extending it ever since. This addition, now about 1000 yards long, maintains Easter Cave's high standard of decoration, and contains its largest cavern as well as numerous lakes.

## DOWN UNDER ALL OVER ... News from around the societies.

Laurie Moody (editor)

ASF Newsletter 73 (1976)

### CEGSA

Dot Peisley reports that there have been a very busy few months in the past with more to come. A Federal Grant to upgrade the Victoria Fossil Cave at Naracoorte has finally come through and CEGSA will be busy helping with a complete survey and pilot tunnel for the new exit. The Grant means complete new wiring, new pathways and an Interpretation Centre. Plenty of trips to the South-East for exploration and surveying. Several trips to the Flinders Ranges with Ian Lewis leading a trip to Wooltana Cave in the Northern Flinders. Wooltana has an entrance pitch of 60 metres! Other trips were held to Bakara Well in the River Murray area, Corra-Lynn which is on the Yorke Peninsula and there has also been an upsurge in membership which has brought fresh enthusiasm and activity into the club. Dot

also informs us that occasional Paper Number 5 is now out. This is the South Australian Reference Book (a complete listing of all S.A. caves). Price \$6.00 each (extra good value).

#### CSS

Gordon Taylor informs us that with the warmer weather of Spring, increased activity is evident in the club. CSS are coming out of winter hibernation. Although still concentrating their activity on Yarrangobilly, there have been trips to many other areas. These include Wee Jasper, Wyanbene, Marble Arch, Jenolan, Cooleman and others. A spate of trips (7 in fact) were made to Yagby to dig in Hanging Spring Cave. Digging was quick but now dirt removal and bad air problems have arisen. A portable generator and fan were used to circulate air. Interest has now waned on this project. A detailed report by four CSS members on London Bridge is to appear in Volume 13 of Australian Geographer. Amphipods and Isopods from a cave at Wee Jasper are at present being studied. Preparations are also well in hand for Cavconact. Several notable guest speakers have been engaged and it should prove to be a very productive event. Hope we see you there!

#### KSS

Jean Piggott reports that news from KSS is rather short this quarter, but does not imply inactivity – just the opposite, for literally tons of rock and rubble have been cleared out of the ½ Way Efflux by some of the biggest working parties seen at the Macleay Caves. The more rubble removed from the cave, the more there seems to be, but it still looks good! By courtesy of Kevin Kenah, use has been made of a block and tackle (Turfa?) and the results from the use of this mighty little gadget have been spectacular. Work is continuing.

#### LSC

George Bamford informs us that LSC have had a very quiet year with very little caving being carried out. It is hoped that things will improve over the coming twelve months and with George as our LSC correspondent we will no doubt hear much more about this club.

#### MUSIG

Colin Killick reports that MUSIG have been fairly active of late and a 'Chocolate Crackle' sale at the University organised by several female members succeeded in raising about \$40 towards a Forestry Compass which was needed desperately for survey work. The 24th - 25th June saw them in Mammoth and Wiburds Lake Caves at Jenolan, collecting specimens of spiders for Australian Museum staff to identify. Hopefully they will be able to continue this work and forward a report of the results for publication. MUSIG is handicapped by not having a publication of its own despite its rapidly growing membership. The matter has undergone some discussion but decided against publishing due to the already heavy market. (I don't agree with this! Suggest you start publishing even if it's only a quarterly news-sheet! - ASF Editor.) Colin also mentions that several trips have been held to Bungonia, mainly for digging purposes. They have a dig underway (not B125!). Two MUSIG members, Richard Wilson and David Rothery have recently returned from Papua New Guinea where they were part of Julia James' expedition.

#### NUCC

Peter Hart informs us that the first half of 1976 was fairly quiet, with the following trips being held: Wee Jasper – caves visited were Dip, Gong and Signature and the turn-up was good. Bendethera – small party visited this area with the Landrover Club. Yarrangobilly – a party went in conjunction with Highland's Canberra Branch. Wyanbene – small party visited the main cave, WY1. Wee Jasper – small party of three visited Dip, Signature and Gong caves. Wyanbene – two trips were held, one with a party of two, the other with a party of four. The former party explored Aitchesons Avens and the second explored Caesars Hall and the Gunbarrel Aven. Of late, club activity has increased and this is to be supplemented by a vigorous advertising campaign. A trip to Wyanbene, WY1 has been planned to look around and survey the largely unexplored upper levels. Another visit to Yarrangobilly is anticipated mainly to continue the work on the dig in East Deep Creek Cave.

#### OSS

Ray Rowney reports that Descent has been resurrected and is being edited by Phil Ireland. Trips have been held to Cliefden mainly for the purpose of replacing some of the gates and gating Jable. Trips have also been held to Canomodine (thankyou) which is an area about 30km west of Orange towards Canonimdra. This is in the same area of limestone which runs from Cliefden north through Cargo to Molong. An area familiarisation trip was also held to Tuglow late in June. Some members have also been practising their SRT although this is not needed at Cliefden. However, they hope to try it in other areas. OSS have also got their fingers crossed that the government is running out of money for the Growth Centre and won't need to build the proposed dam to flood Cliefden.

#### SCS

Ron Mann informs us that his club has been quite active. Water tracing has been carried out at Mole Creek mainly in the vicinity of Herberts Pot. Visitor and tourist type trips were made to Trowutta' Montagu, Hastings and Entrance Caves. A trip was also held to the Jane River area where a number of dolines were investigated but no major finds resulted. This particular party resorted to bicycles for the last 7 miles of the track. In the Junee area, combined club

water tracing proved links between Growling Swallet and Juneë Rising breaching the topographic divide – linear distance of 10km. Earlier tracing of Rescue Pot (JF201) and Satans Lair also proved to link with Juneë Rising. Club also participated in exploration of The Chairman, a new cave (JF99). Present depth is approx. 155 metres.

### SSS

Keith Partridge reports that SSS thrashed SUSS in a football match between these clubs. It turned out to be a great success and provided a good afternoon's entertainment for all who attended. Keith extends his congratulations to SUSS on their great effort but as predicted they were no match for the SSS giants and were thoroughly thrashed 27 - 2. It is hoped that a few more inter-club games can be held. The August edition of the journal gave a reprint of an article on Tuglow Cave which was first printed in the "Sydney Mail" in January 1935. It includes an early history of the cave and has numerous photographs of how the cave used to look in those early days before the vandals got to work.

A recent trip to Wombeyan by Tom Hayllar and friends resulted in the discovery of several small caves, which were mapped and given temporary cave tag numbers. These maps have been reproduced in the July issue of the journal.

The need for extreme care when using SRT was highlighted again recently when one well known lady caver found herself dangling down the side of Bungonia Gorge with a lock of her hair caught in her whaletail. Let this be a lesson to all long-haired dangles – keep your valuables clear of your rigging. In June a trip to Walli discovered that demolition work had been carried out to enlarge the passage between Piano Cave and WA35 and that a very flimsy gate had been placed in the passage and padlocked. This work has been done in the first half of this year but it remains a mystery as to who did it and why. Can anyone supply an answer?

The advantages of permanently locating stretchers and first aid kits at major caving areas was demonstrated recently when the equipment at Bungonia was given its first real emergency workout. While working in the efflux, Bob Holland was struck by a boulder dislodged from above the trench and suffered several broken ribs and a bruised lung. After he was made comfortable an ambulance was called and the stretcher and medical kit were collected from a nearby farm and several volunteers enlisted to help carry it. By the time the ambulance arrived, all the necessary equipment was on hand at the efflux and after a quick check by the first aid officer, Bob was placed on the stretcher and taken up the hill and then to Goulbourn Hospital – where he spent three days giving the nurses merry hell. The point here is, that all equipment was on hand in the area and by the time medical help arrived, the stretcher and kit were at the scene of the accident. This is a big time saver particularly where the stretcher has to be manoeuvred deep into a cave – time which is very important to a seriously injured person.

### SUSS

Peter Campbell informs us that surveying using gravel-mounted forestry compass was carried out through the squeeze sections of the new extensions to Spider Cave (Jenolan). Documentation in the Southern Limestone (Jenolan) has been brought up to date and further work in this area is being planned in collaboration with UNSWSS, MSS and the guides at Jenolan. SUSS would appreciate hearing from anyone who has knowledge of this area and if so, please contact Bruce Welch. Work on "The Caves of Jenolan 2: The Northern Limestone" is almost complete and this should be available by the end of the year. This publication is in the "Mammoth Book" style and contains information on the Northern Limestone. Other activities at Jenolan include exploration of Lower River and Ice Pick Lake in Mammoth Cave, and the investigation of blocked passages in Naked Lady cave, which unfortunately did not lead to vast unknowns. SUSS has had trips to Wyanbene and Marble Arch. Malcolm Handel and Randall King have recently returned from Niugini and report that the Atea is a good prospect. They surveyed 4km of tributary passage without even examining the main stream passage, in 5 days. They plan a much larger expedition in 1978. SUSS regrets to report the death of Mr. R.E. Murdoch early in September. Mr. Murdoch was the director of the Dept. of Tourism in N.S.W. Although he was not a speleologist, Mr Murdoch always showed interest and gave support to the ASF in its activities in the areas under his jurisdiction. He gave support to Nibicon, and to the Cave Tourism Conference. The protection of Jenolan, Wombeyan & Abercrombie was due to his conservation-oriented attitudes towards access. His influence will be missed.

### TCC

Andrew Skinner reports that a recent meeting between SCS and TCC representatives discussed the feasibility of the clubs working in much closer co-operation. The outcome is that meetings of both clubs will be held at 132 Davey St; Hobart, and that there will be closer co-operation in fieldwork. Whilst this falls short of the amalgamation desired by some TCC members, it is still a significant step. Fluorescein tests conducted by Albert Goede and Leigh Gleeson of SCS have proved that the water from Growling Swallet (JF36) flows under the surface divide and resurges at the Juneë Rising (JF8); a distance of 9.5km! Prospects for an enterable cave are not good. A spectacular doline discovered by John Parker, Steve and Anne Annan of TCC / Maydena has now been explored to a depth of 165 metres. This cave, now known as "The Chairman" (JF99) now rates as the 9th deepest in Australia. Prospects for extending this depth are considered to be possible but only further exploration will prove this point. The most gratifying aspect has been the teamwork and co-operation between the members of TCC, SCS and TCC/MB. In August, a previously unrecorded decorated cave (MC114) was explored at Mole Creek. Although not as spectacular as reported, it is still a significant find. TCC has now been established for 30 years. The club was formed on 13 Sept. 1946. This date not only marks the establishment of TCC, but the beginning of organised speleology in Australia. An anniversary dinner was held on the 18th Sept. and was a great success.

## VSA

Lloyd Mill informs us that VSA have been busy in the following areas: – Buchan: More trips have been held to Dukes Cave on the Reserve for the purpose of looking at some high-up holes using scaling poles, sadly with little success. Following an invitation from the Reserve Manager, Alan Costigan, a party entered Fairy Cave & re-found Moons Lost Chamber – lost since the turn of the century. Peter Robertson & party found a hole on the side of Hopes Hill East Buchan, recently. It was eventually found to be 43m deep. Bat Ridges: A few trips have been held to this area to continue the River Cave survey & find more caves. A dozen or so have been located. Bureaucracy: Moves are afoot for a dramatic increase in club bureaucracy with new jobs being created faster than they can be filled. Adrian Davey (Pres.) says “we’ll have a job for everyone before the end of the year!” A very valued and respected VSA member, Lou Williams, has gone to Europe for a few years. VSA wish him well!

## WASG

Kerry Williamson’s report is the one we were unable to print last issue and covers March, April and May of this year. “In Easter Cave, AU14, the miners dial traverse has been put through to the water marker in the Epstein Section (just near where the wet passages lead off to the Gondolin), and also through the First Duck to the large chamber past the false floor. The survey is progressing at a good steady rate and there have been several detail mapping trips to the large flat-roofed chambers just beyond the First Duck. Dry gear is ferried through the Duck in plastic bags inside packs. The Epstein section and corkscrew passage has been photographed. Moondyne Cave (AU11) has seen photography, cinematography and video taping trips. Witchcliffe: March has seen a complete underground and surface survey of the Devils Lair/Nannup/Strong’s/Mill Cave System (WI60, 61,63, and WI59). This master map has in latter months been extended south to the Crystal Cave (WI62)/Block Cave (WI107) region, and in May has been extended further south again resulting in the recording of two previously poorly documented caves. The resulting map is answering many questions but posing just as many – which is a good thing. A small previously unrecorded cave has been located near Museum Cave (WI31). A small collapse and a cave have been found in the region between Boyabouka and WI45-46. WI9 has been visited and photographed. Tight Entrance (Bussell) Cave (WI101) has been entered – foul air being present. Winjans Cave has been trogged and a movie made of the upstream end of Strong’s Cave. Cowaramup: Bats were once again sighted in Quininup Lake Cave (Col). Yallingup: The Cave of the Seven Sisters (YA3) has been mapped and a new cave and several collapses found nearby by the WASG. Yanchep: Has seen recommencement of the work on documenting of the numerous caves in the area. Eneabba: Saw a trip to the Lake Arramall area in May. The entrance area and about half the main passage in River Cave (E23) were mapped. Familiarisation trips were made to Arramall Cave (E22) and the left-hand trend of the Second “Y” Junction pushed to its bitter end. Several new features were also noted in the area. Further mapping of River Cave will have to wait until late Spring when the winter floodwaters recede.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ASF Newsletter 91 (1981)

Dear Rosie,

I write the following letter to the editor in the hope of drumming up greater support for ‘Down Under All Over’ in the ASF Newsletter.

The thirteenth biennial convention of the ASF has come to a successful conclusion in Melbourne. This conference was hosted by VSA and an admirable job they did in its organisation I am told. However, on an entirely different front - their contribution to the ‘Down Under All Over’ section of the ASF Newsletter has been sadly lacking.

I recently reviewed the clubs that have been contributing to the regular feature in our Newsletter over the period 1978 to 1980. Over this three year period, nine issues of the Newsletter contained ‘Down Under All Over’ contributions. Of the nine issues, no club contributed in every issue, but WASG came close with eight. Looking at the contributions on a club for club basis, those that did bad to poor were, I believe, VSA (1) and SSS (0). Other only fair efforts were CEGSA (2) and UQSS (2). On the positive side NUCC (7), CSS (6) and CTCG (5) turned in the best state coverage.

Overall, I think that it is a pretty poor effort. The ASF Newsletter is the only publication that reaches individual members of caving clubs and hence the only method you have of informing the cavers of Australia what your club is doing. So you 34 other clubs out there how about appointing a reliable person to send contributions to ‘Down Under All Over’ in 1981. Let’s support our editor and federation in this small but significant way.

Yours faithfully,

Rauleigh Webb (WASG)

## DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

Australian Caver 112 (1987)

Hills Speleological Club : GLENROCK CAVES - NSW's NEWER AREA.

Rick Pinnock

So – who's heard of Glenrock? Not many hands up I see. Well neither had we until a few years ago. What could have been a scungy piece of limestone is anything but, and now yields a very high number of caves.

Glenrock lives in the upper Hunter Valley and the caves are situated entirely on Private Property and any intending explorers must gain permission from the property owner.

The limestone is part of the Tamworth Group (which includes Timor/Isis and Crawney Pass) and is of the middle Devonian Age. The area also contains areas of Paleokarst (which is where volcanic flows change the development of existing karst and later affect subsequently forming karst). The limestone outcrops for about 8 km discontinuously and to widths of 1.5 kilometres and with a possible depth potential of 100m. The limestone varies from massive unfractured, to blocky jointed and highly fractured areas.

The caves are generally small, tight and vertical, often containing foul air in reasonably high concentrations, very sharp bedrock and unfortunately little formation.

Going on the amount of area to be searched and the current rate of cave finding, Glenrock has the potential to yield around 110 to 115 caves. Currently the cave count stands at .... gasp! .... 98. Cave depths vary between 0 and 47m and lengths between 2 and 140m. Foul air has defied further exploration in CR30-Hens Teeth, but has great potential to continue to greater depths, and GR43-Bats and Bandicoots could continue further and deeper by pushing an unstable rockpile in foul air.

We (Hills Speleos) intend finishing documentation early to mid 87 and are currently organizing a photocopy type publication containing cave descriptions, cave maps, and details on the geology etc. of the area.

So there you have it – Glenrock at a glance – a completely new area of 100 caves. Impressive, eh?

Rick Pinnock

Macquarie University Caving Group:

David Hamilton

1986 has been a busy year for the members and executive of MUCG. In the past twelve months club members have been on an MWS&DB tour of the Old Tank Stream beneath the streets of Sydney, been on a couple of trips through the Narrow Neck Tunnel, walked in the Jagungal region of the Snowy Mountains, been on a number of canyoning trips in the Northern Blue Mountains, and been caving at Bungonia, Jenolan, Wee Jasper, Colong and Tuglow. A small group of club members were even able to visit Chillagoe Caves whilst on holidays in Far North Queensland.

The principal project for 1986 has been the exploration and mapping of Shaduf Cave (B.15) at Bungonia. At the beginning of the year word soon got around that the sump passage connecting B.15 with the B.4-5 Extension, which had been flooded since 1983, had finally dried out. Using the club forestry compass, a high grade survey of the whole of Shaduf was carried out, over 400m of passage being mapped. The results of surveying work were fed into a computer, using the Cavesurv programme for all the necessary number-crunching, and the accuracy of the survey was, later, confirmed using Radio Direction Finding gear on loan from the Victorian Speleological Association. During the survey, the plunge-pool aven and a small hanging chamber were explored using scaling poles.

As a footnote to activities at Bungonia, MUCG's previous dig at Bungonia – 'The Great Escape' – has now been numbered and tagged B. 156.

During the past year various executive members have been particularly busy. Club Safety & Equipment Officer, David Rothery, along with Jeanette Jordt and David Hamilton have joined the NSW Cave Rescue Group, David Rothery recently being elected CRG Training Officer.

David Hamilton has been continuing with collecting material for a second special edition of the club journal, Quaver, and has completed abstracting all issues of Quaver to date for inclusion in Australian Speleo Abstracts.

One of the busier members of the executive has been Derek Hobbs, who in addition to his duties as MUCG's ASF Inc. rep., is also ASF Assistant Secretary, NSW Speleo Council Vice-President, Convenor of the NSWSC Subcommittee on Jenolan, Wombeyan & Abercrombie Caves, and is one of the signatories to the lease to the new Jenolan Caves Cottage.

At the end of the 1986 MUCG members look forward to the 16th Biennial conference of ASF – Speleotec'87 – to be held at Macquarie University in January 1987, and members are currently organising a number of events including Speleosport, and will be helping with some of the post-conference field trips.

#### Metropolitan Speleological Society: THE YEAR IN REVIEW: DECEMBER 1985 - NOVEMBER 1986

Scott MacFarlane

MSS turned 21 years of age on the 13th September 1986. We therefore had reason to celebrate, which we did in the following manner:

December 1985: We discovered a new cave at Jenolan. We called it Winch Cave, which depicts its method of discovery. We plan to call our next discovery Dynamite Cave! The cave is only small, being some 10m in length, however it has dig potential and this is being pursued.

January 1986: We launch our booklet "An Introduction to Abercrombie Caves" at the ASF meeting in Melbourne. The booklet contains 17 pages of information on the area including details of the caves, the history of the area, fauna and speleological activities. Stocks are still available at \$2.50 each, so don't miss out as they are selling fast.

February: Our RDF equipment after some years ago suffering the fate of an amateur 'I can fix it' specialist, was successfully reconstructed to excellent working order with some assistance from VSA. Thanks VSA. We have since put the unit to good use.

April: Halley's Comet. We decided that the hills around Abercrombie would be a good spot to view the monstrous glowing light in our skies .... We are still looking for it! The trip created great interest within the club, with over 60 people attending the trip. A full caving trip was planned together with a comet party and a 21st birthday cake for MSS. The celebrations lasted well into the night and it was amazing how many comets we saw at 3.00am. The next morning a group photograph was taken to commemorate our birthday and the fact that it was our largest trip.

May: Surprise! Our ASF Handbooks arrive and a new game is invented. "Let's spot the errors".

June: Rare bones were found and identified at Abercrombie. Specimens of *Protemnodon* (Giant Wallaby) and *Stenthras* (Stub nosed browsing Kangaroo) identified to be between 30,000 and 1,000,000 years old (give or take a few moons) are being investigated by the Australian Museum.

October: New caves were found at Abercrombie. Sixteen caves were found in one weekend, bringing the total found in the year at Abercrombie to 21. However, we are still looking for that elusive cave which is big enough to fit a battleship!

November: Our 21st Annual dinner was held at the Billabong Restaurant Trunkey Creek. This was an excellent evening, with some of the Society's earlier members present who were able to reminisce with some of our older members.

During the year, MSS held in excess of 20 trips, including Jenolan (4), Abercrombie (5), Bungonia (2), Wombeyan (2), Mudgee, Yarrangobilly, Wyanbene, Wellington, Tuglow, Tasmania (Ida Bay and Mole Creek) and one Field Day. We also held trips to various tunnels and other pseudo caves.

Our membership is steadily growing and is approaching 40 members. Next year will be another busy year. We plan to become incorporated and we also plan to reprint some of the older maps of caves at Abercrombie. These maps are being laboriously redrafted to conform with ASF standards. With the new caves being discovered, we will probably have to print a special edition of our Newsletter.

## CAVE AREAS NEAR DARWIN, N.T.

Bill Walsh

ASF Newsletter 18 (1962)

Fenton

The limestone in this area near the Douglas Limestone, very pure in parts, cherty in others, and dolomitic to varying degrees. The beds are very thick and they dip to the south~west at 5 to 10 degrees. Local warping within these dip tolerances seem usual and their effect on the location of caves is being studied by the group. Dry valleys, dolines and water sinks occur in bewildering confusion. Open cave entrances are, however, not so easily found. We are in the difficult position of first having to explore our areas as there are virtually no local inhabitants. Two very minor caves have been visited by the Group and no less than four lost caves are at large (two of them have been lost by us). Blocked or almost blocked (just temptingly, but impossibly small) entrances are common and a few half-hearted attempts at clearing them have been made. All that is needed in this area is time, a few more searches and we should find something.

Douglas River Crossing Area

Two small and apparently related caves (the Dingo Hole and the Quicksand Cave) are known in this area. The caves occur in the bank of the river and are right on the watertable. The passages are low with not much headroom above the water and some unpleasant floor materials with all the properties of a quicksand. A completely flooded pothole (the Homestead Hole) exists in the bed of the river,, and another similar hole has been reported to us. No proper cave searches have been conducted in this area yet, and I am afraid that we may not be able to make one during this field season.

Douglas Gorge

The most delectable reports, but we have been unable to check these yet.

Darwin -Blyth Area

Caves occur in hematite. Two such caves are known to the Group. The Hardy's Creek Cave is insignificant as a cave but very interesting if one is prepared to try and trace the genesis of these caves. The Ochre Cave at Blyth is much bigger but is almost inaccessible. We do hope, however, to get there before the Wet. This cave is at present in use by the local aboriginal tribe. Ceremonial objects are reported to be hidden in the cave and passages have been walled off by the tribesmen. Obviously we must respect their privacy and leave their walls alone. Even while observing these restrictions. we should be able to learn a lot.

Katherine

Although the caves are numerous we think they are the job of the NTSS based at Katherine. The Sixteen Mile we have, however, made an exception of. This has been the most talked-about cave, so some concrete facts should be welcome. The cave is incompletely explored and incompletely mapped. Some conclusions may be drawn, though. The structural geology seems to have had little effect on the siting of the cave passages and it has been suggested that the pattern of the cave was set by drainage patterns developed on the Tertiary sandstones which once overlaid the limestone. The caves were probably formed by phreatic agencies, the main inflow points being the beds of streams which cut through the sandstone allowing an escape of water into the limestone.

The original cave has been modified on elevation to the vadose zone,, and a number of the original phreatic passages have become filled with consolidated sediments and flowstone.