

NEWS LETTER ofThe National University Speleological SocietyTRIP REPORTS:

On American Independence Day, after a Bruce Hall Ball and a Bruce Hall breakfast five eager newcomers and four old hands embarked for Wee Jasper. That classic introduction to caving, No.4 Extension of The Dip, was the first port of call. N.U.S.S.'s well-proved trusty old faithful rope ladder safely conveyed everyone down and up the 20' pitch. Unfortunately, however, two initiates were defeated in their competition with nature's obstacles when they failed to penetrate the fissure, and displayed shocking sportsmanship by deserting their team-mates to go bushwalking. The others, though, thoroughly enjoyed their new-found sport.

That afternoon, having located the entrances to two thermal pool caves, the rest of the party entered one in the backyard of a Wee Jasper resident. The warm interior atmosphere was a welcome relief from the freezing showery conditions outside and a refreshing swim in one pool provided a fitting climax to a vigorous day's sport. After recording the temperature of the pool in our score-book, the party reluctantly left its underground sports arena.

As we had time only for a brief look at one of the thermal pool caves, a thorough inspection is warranted and another trip is planned in the near future.

Neville King.

DOG'S LEG, Wee Jasper.

An attempt was made to climb up into the upper reaches of the large chamber some 100' beyond the Opera House Wall. The attempt was successful in that the upper reaches were reached with the aid of pitons. However, the roof meander on which we had pinned our hopes of "going" turned out to be a failure. The meander was choked at one end with cave fill. The other end is still to be investigated but as Dog's Leg is now completely flooded and in all probability will remain so until next year, all further attempts have been abandoned. Interesting finds were 4 - 6" long aragonite needles in huge clusters all in the upper reaches and large numbers of dead bats, identified as Horse shoes by the C.S.I.R.O. A live banded horseshoe was also found. The band came from the Humidy Crib, about three miles away. The presence of horseshoes is extremely interesting as these bats do not venture more than 200 - 300' into a cave. This seems to indicate another entrance to Dog's Leg, one we have yet to find.

D.Fenn.

BUNGONIA

At 9.30 p.m. on Friday the 10th of July, a party of cavers set out towards Goulburn. Among them were Andrew Spate and Terry Evans, two C.S.S. members. The N.U.S.S. cavers were David Fenn, Neville King, Ian Raine, Peter Swan, Geoff Marchant, David Moore, Michael Henry and George Foster.

From Goulburn a right hand turn eastward took us to Bungonia, 16 miles on. A short 7 miles further, brought us into the cave country. Although the night was unusually warm, a camp fire was lit; and at about 2 a.m. the party retired for the night (?).

Breakfast next morning was at 7 a.m.

The Drum Cave was situated about 1/4 mile from our camping spot, so by 10 o'clock we were ready to start caving.

About 30 yards off the road, the side of the hill drops away in a sheer limestone cliff 40' high. Beneath a slight overhang, moss-covered rocks lead down into a moderate-sized chamber. To the right is a blank



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wall - to the left a vertical drop of 150 ft.

Joined later on by Bill Price, the more experienced members of the group prepared for the long descent by ladder:

160 ft. of wire ladder was lowered from a ledge at the top of the Drum. David Fenn was the first to try the descent; belayed down on the end of 200 ft. of rope. Two hours later Terry, Andrew Neville and myself were standing on the floor of this mammoth hole, after a physically exhausting descent.

When I reached the end of the ladder, the C.S.S. members had managed to net 3 or 4 bats. A little exploring was commenced, down a passage which led deeper into the hill. However this was out short by a drop further along the passage of 10 or 12 feet.

Exploration of another tunnel leading from the bottom of the Drum yielded a number of giant rinstone pools (dry). The Crescent shaped and circular walls were up to 15" high.

This was the end of the Drum excursion as far as exploring was concerned. Then began the climb back up the ladder. This was far more difficult than the descent, and took me about 20 minutes. Care must be taken when lowering the rope that it does not pass through a rung of the ladder. Neville learnt this only too well, when he had to climb back down 40 feet of hanging ladder - a highly frustrating misfortune.

It was now 4.30 p.m. After tea, at about 6 p.m., cave No.B16 was entered. Two ladder descents of 30 feet each brought the party to a narrow level passage. At the end of this a small hole disappeared into the floor; and a narrow crack at eye-level led off to the right. The crack opened out a little to 2 feet wide; and virtually went straight for about 20 feet. Approximately two hours was spent in and about this fissure, exploring. Via a number of rather tortuous ascents and descents a larger cavern was reached, but not entered, as another ladder or rope would be required. This seems to be very promising exploratory work; and those who entered the far end of B16 are most keen to press on and see where this just accessible cavern leads.

At midnight on the Saturday, the remaining car load of cavers returned.

Michael Henry.

