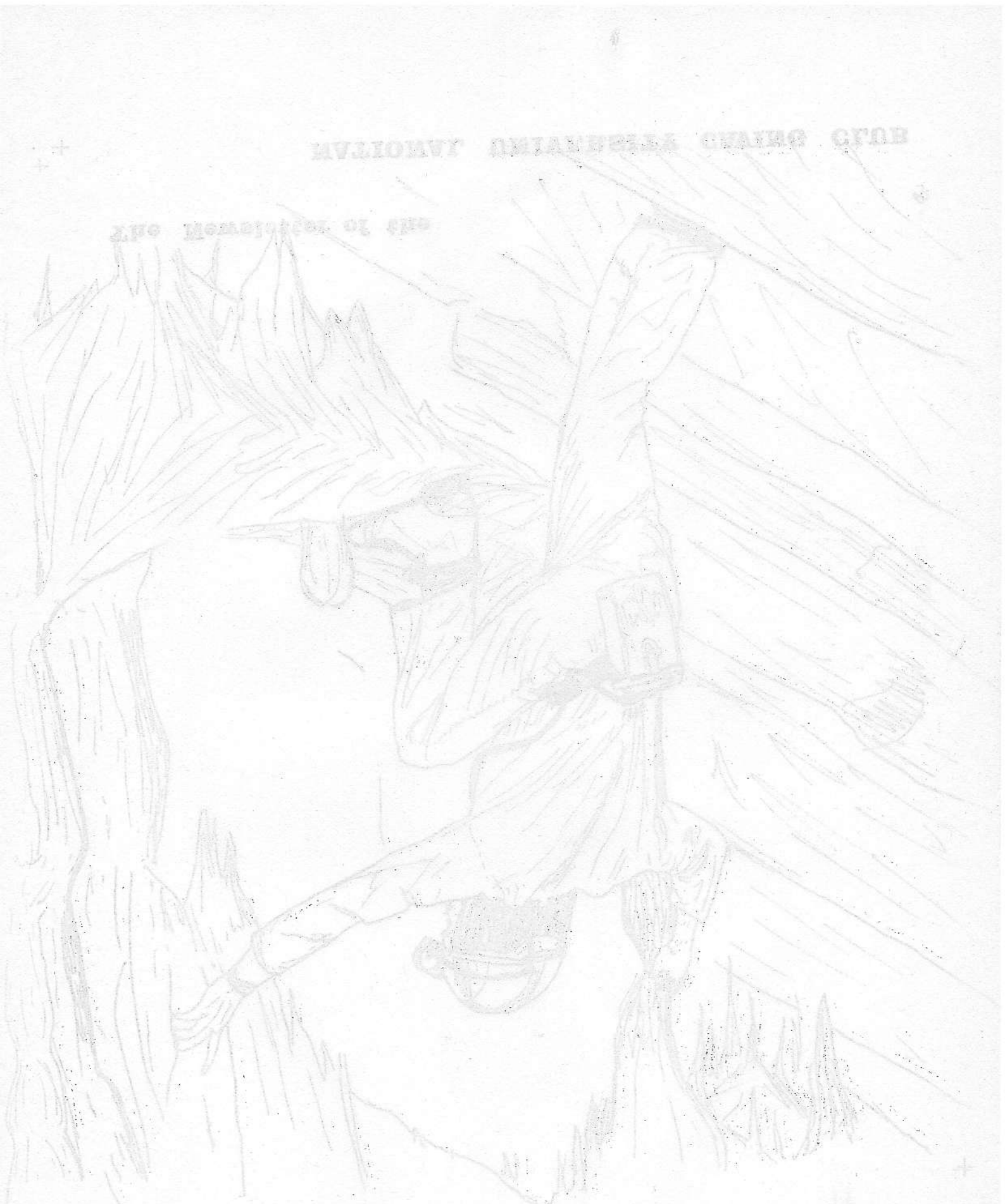
Vol 11 No 4-5
Aug-Oct 71

SPELEOGRAFFITI

The Newsletter of the

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUB


SKELEOGRAPHY

AUGUST/OCTOBER 1974. VOLUME 11. No. 4/5.

S P E L E O G R A F F I T I

The Newsletter of the National University Caving Club.

Editor: John Brush.
Typiste: Rosemary Hall.
General Slack Arse: John Furlonger (no trip reports)
Cover: From a photo by Frank Bergersen showing J.Brush in Lilly Pilly cave at Murrindal (Vic).

C O N T E N T S

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STALACTITES FORMING IN HIGH RISE OFFICE BLOCKS

(From Financial Review 27 June 1974)

Stalactites and stalagmites, similar to those found in limestone caves, are forming on facades and even walkways of some modern high-rise office blocks in Sydney.

These formations are causing damage running into hundreds of thousands of dollars, according to a just completed survey.

The survey was carried out by Solution Chemicals Pty Ltd, a Sydney-based company specialising in cleaning, protective coating, waterproofing and fireproofing buildings.

Mr Tony Marshall-Harrison, the company's managing director, said mineral deposits with high acidic elements were also wearing away the surface and creating grooves in expensive granite, reconstructed granite and marble facings on the facades and on steps and walkways.

The general discolouration of external surfaces was being caused by pollution and chemical deposits left on the facades after construction.

"This is a common occurrence on new buildings, particularly those with granite and marble facings," said Mr Marshall-Harrison, who is heading his company's campaign to "clean-up" Australia's buildings.

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HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES - OR HOW NOT TO GO CAVING

30 - 31st March 1974

Saturday Night Baptist Union Caving Group Sydney entered Punchbowl about 8.00 p.m. Capital Hill Venturers watched them descend. Last man descended on a double rope which failed to reach the bottom - he then climbed out again and used another group's rope (to descend again) which was later removed. C.H. Venturers then went down and left a single rope for a prussik return. About 10.30 p.m. the Baptist group returned to the bottom of the pitch and decided to wait for some assistance, since they did not know how to prussik or self belay. Because they were cold they lit a fire. When I went to the pitch top at 1.00 a.m., to belay C.H. Venturers out, the first member of the Baptist group had just reached the ladder top after climbing without a belay, prussik or any other safety rig. He then proceeded to belay his party out - his own security was poor - he had 2 - 3 feet of slack trace behind him attached to a leather waist belt. The smoke from their fire penetrated into Loxin - the Ballroom and Strawberry Shortcut. C.H. Venturers were seriously affected by the smoke on their way back from Showl Corridor.

How the Other Half Lives cont

On the Sunday the Baptist group entered Dip 4 Extension - removed a nylon safety line belonging to C.H. Venturers and left their own sisal (old - worn) rope in its place and left their ladder fouling C.H. Venturers' ladder.

Ron McLachlan
V.L. Capital Hill Venturers

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MARBLE ARCH DESCRIPTIONS

THERMOCLINE CAVE MA14

From the low entrance the passage generally increases in size to a 'chamber' at the inner end. This chamber is up to about 10m. high and contains many bats. In addition to the main passage are several small tubes which slope down away from the main passage and towards the entrance. These old stream passages are floored with mud guano and some rock. In general the pebbles (derived from overlying clastic sediments and volcanics) are more common in the side passages.

Wombats appear to inhabit the small tubes though as far as I can remember, none have been seen.

The occurence of pebbles derived from overlying rocks on the cave floor, and also cemented to the wall at one point indicates there were probably other entrances at some time. As most of the pebbles are very angular it seems possible they may have fallen through openings in the roof; they have not been subjected to continued abrasion in active streams.

This cave differs from most of the other MA caves in that it trends East-West, approximately at right angles to the limestone trend.

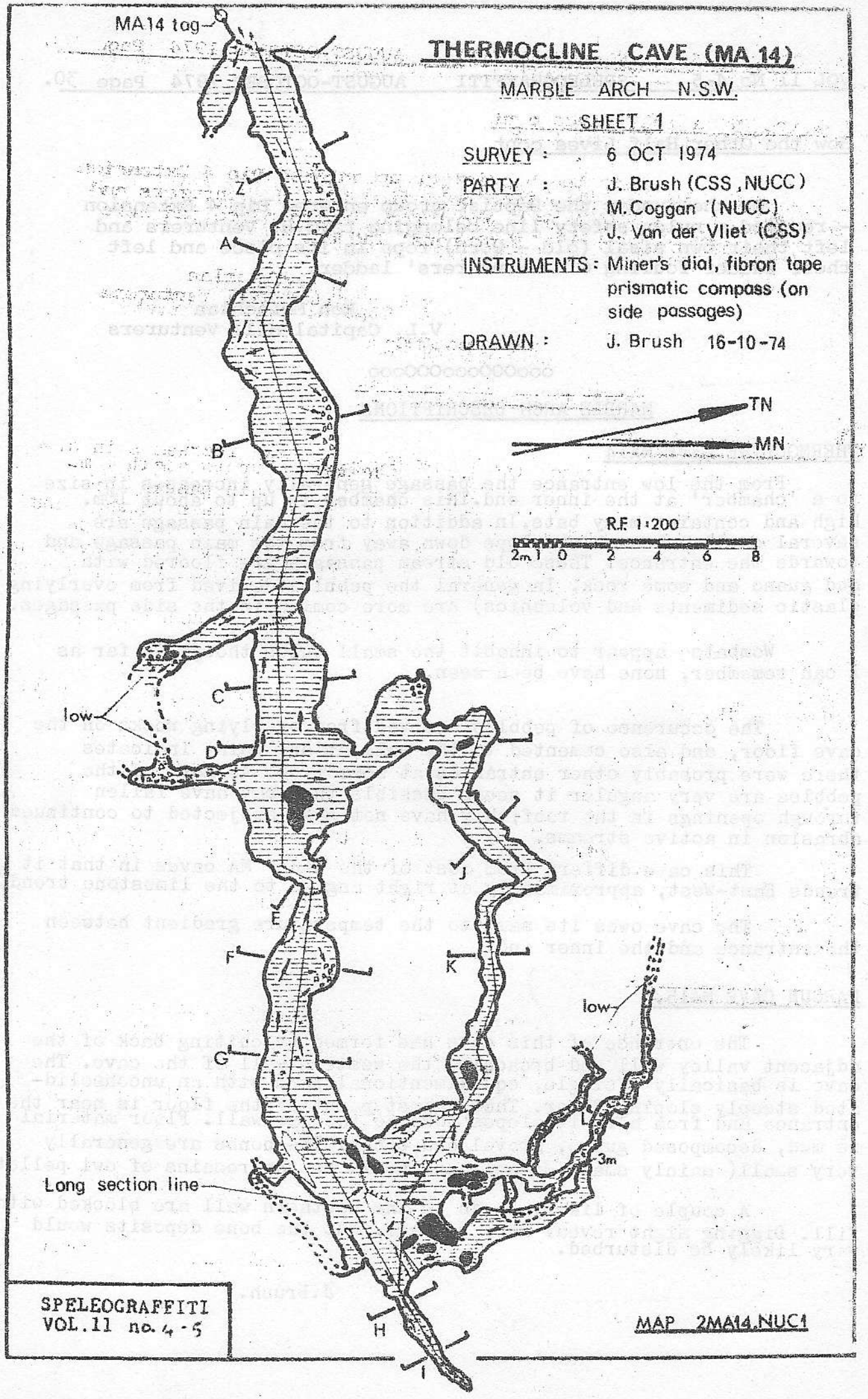
The cave owes its name to the temperature gradient between the entrance and the inner end.

NARGUN CAVE MA15.

The entrance of this cave has formed by cutting back of the adjacent valley wall and breaching the western wall of the cave. The cave is basically a single, equidimentional room with an unconsolidated steeply sloping floor. The highest point of the floor is near the entrance and from here it slopes down to the far wall. Floor material is mud, decomposed guano, gravel and bones. The bones are generally very small (mainly small mammal) and could be the remains of owl pellets.

A couple of likely leads in the southern wall are blocked with fill. Digging might reveal more passage, but the bone deposits would very likely be disturbed.

J.Brush.



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MAP 2MA14.NUC1

THERMOCLINE CAVE - SHEET 2

DEVELOPED LONG SECTION

CROSS SECTIONS

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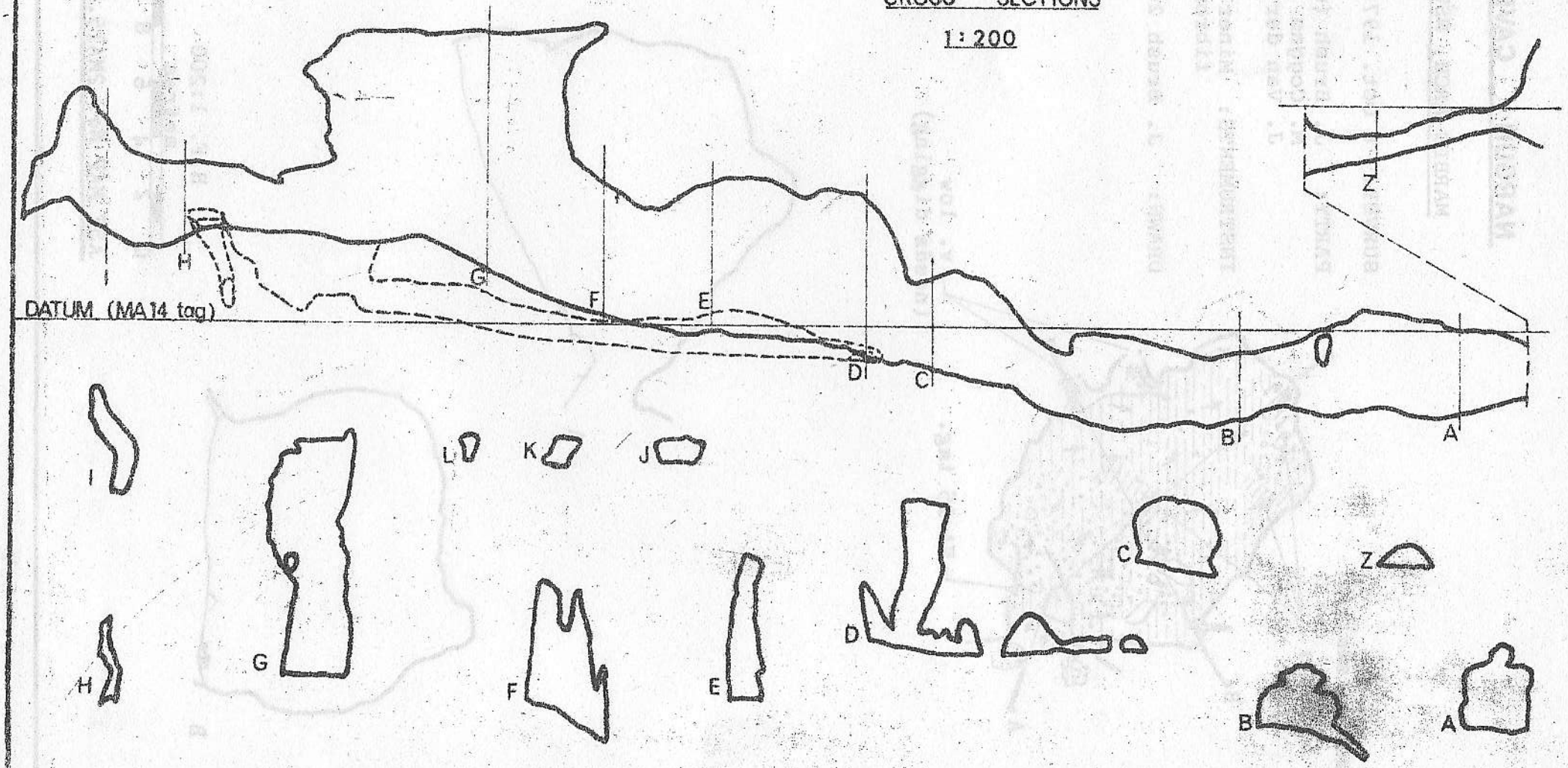


NARGUN CAVE (MA 15)

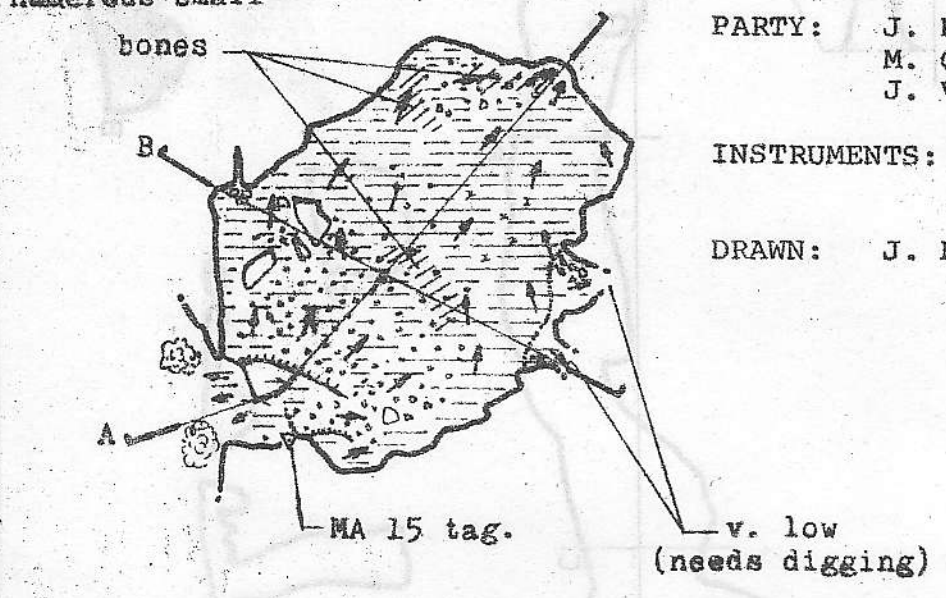
MARBLE ARCH, NSW

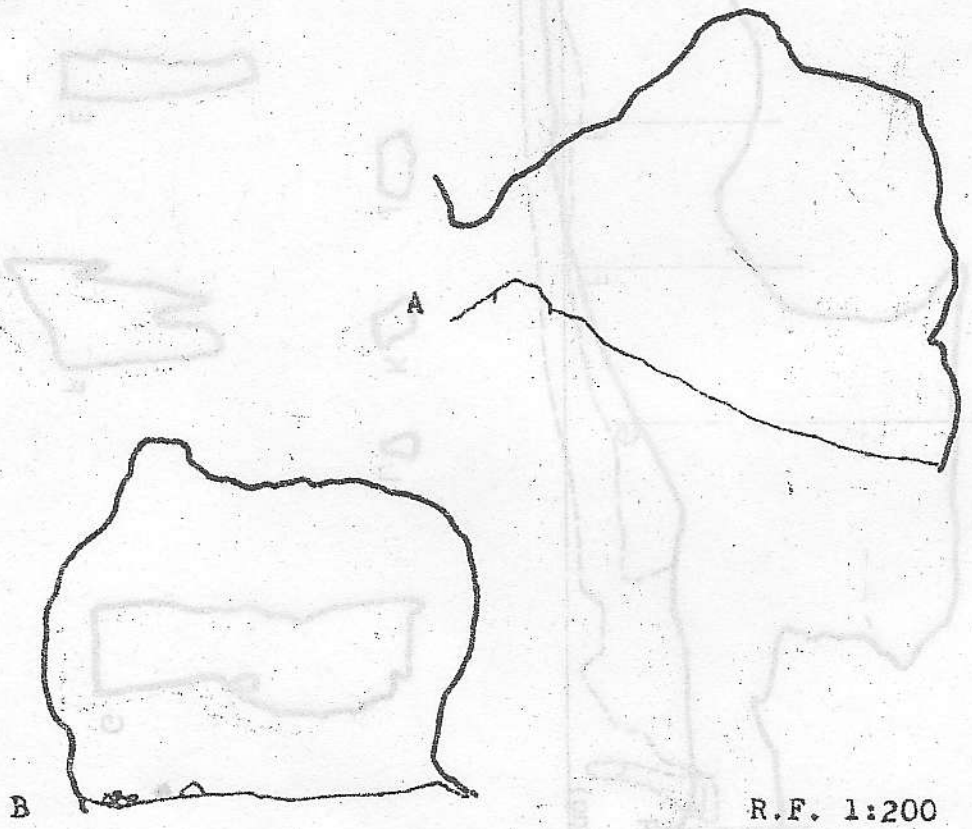
SURVEY: 6 Oct. 1974

PARTY: J. Brush (CSS NUCC)
M. Coggan (NUCC)
J. Van der Vliet (CSS)

INSTRUMENTS: Miner's dial, fibron tape

DRAWN: J. Brush 26/10/74





R.F. 1:200

metres

0 2 4 6 8 10

ASF MAP No. 2MA15.NUC1

TRIP REPORTS SECTION

WYANBENE

6 July 1974

Party: John Brush, Frank Bergersen, John Masala, Michael Pryjma and Marge Coggan (TL).

This day was to have been a field day but the rain prevented the outdoor ropework and allowed a field day of another type.

The field day cancelled, we headed out to Wyanbene to find the ford high; not too high to stop us, although for a moment we thought we might have to collect the VW several miles downstream on the way home. Crossing the river turned out to be the simple part. Half a dozen bogs later we reached the cave and quickly got ready to go underground.

The purpose of the trip was to take photographs of Wyanbene for a gating submission. The trip emphasised some of the features of the cave we feel must be protected and the degree of destruction and vandalism which has already occurred there. With the popularity of caving increasing exponentially at present it is essential that some protection be provided for preservation of caves such as Wyanbene which take a large amount of caving traffic.

The trip out through the mud was as interesting as the drive in, but eventually we made it back across the river.

Marge Coggan (T.L.)

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WEE JASPER

20 July 1974

Party: John Brush, Marjorie Coggan, John Masala, Patrick Mooney (TL) and Michael Pryjma.

It was planned to spend a day looking at areas north of the Wee Jasper bridge, and with this in mind we left Canberra at about 8 a.m. despite a depressing atmosphere. Lets face it, there isn't anything more depressing than pouring rain.

None too optimistically, we arrived at the Wee Jasper shop at around 9.30 a.m. Since it was still raining, ideas of 'bushing it' were rejected in favour of a 'tourist' up to Dip Cave. This we did, and proceeded to do series 2, 3, 4 and 5. Gear was cleaned and we returned to the shop for a feed.

By three o'clock, however, the rain was easing and John Masala voiced his eagerness to do some photography in Dip Cave. Dubiously, JB, Marj and Pat allowed them to unload their gear again, while they proceeding to tag.

WJ 243?

The two cars left Dip at about 6 to return to Canberra, the Renault aiding a car in difficulty along the way.

Pat Mooney (T.L.)

RED ROCKS 3 August 1974

Party: Marge Coggan, John Brush, Frank Bergersen (TL).

The purpose of this trip was to have a fun-type abseiling spree at Mt Coree, however these aspirations were soon dashed when JB's VW camper-van refused to negotiate the mud at the base of the steep haul to the summit. Lacking the energy and enthusiasm required to lug the 300 ft rope and other sundry items to the top of Coree, it was agreed to give Coree a miss this time in favour of the Red Rocks abseil. Some little time later saw us lugging the 300 ft rope and other aforementioned sundry items along the river to the Red Rocks abseil, which through some rusty navigation and eroded memories, we overshot by about half a mile in distance and about 1 pint in sweat. Not to worry, the abseil proved the effort to have been worthwhile and it was rewarding to use the club's newly acquired "cave rings". The rings proved to be a very useful and enjoyable abseil device, giving an initially disconcerting degree of freedom to the abseiler, however this was soon lost as the simplicity of use and complete lack of bodily friction made the downward trip a breeze. It was also found that with this device the rate of descent of a bod on the rope could be controlled from the bottom simply by pulling the rope and adjusting the strain. It is obvious that the cave ring has useful applications not only for normal abseiling but also for conveying gear down a pitch, or an injured or petrified bod.

After indulging in a little photography and listening to J.B. giving vent to some bawdy, uncouth and vulgar exhortations whilst negotiating the pitch (a little less than successfully) on jumars, we packed up the gear and headed back to the van. A good time was definitely had by all.

Frank Bergersen

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WEE JASPER 15 September 1974

Party: John Masala, John Brush, Frank Bergersen, Marge Coggan.

The aim of this trip was to continue the search for caves north of Wee Jasper township. The area covered - on "Wyena" was essentially the same as that looked at briefly on a trip in August 1969.

8 caves were tagged, though many other small caves and solution shafts were found - running out of tags being the main problem here. Most of the caves tagged (44, 45, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72 and 98 - filling in gaps in the numbering system - would you believe) were small and of little interest. However 2 caves are worthy of further mention.

WJ 71, 72. Originally this was a very tight rock covered entrance at the base of a massive 1st block - it was the breeze and the way rocks rattled down into the depths that attracted our attention. When cleared we had a very tight vertical shaft which

Wee Jasper cont

dropped 6m to water - a lake in fact, 3m deep and 4m in area - in fact, apart from the dry formation, rock and mud floor at one end, the cave was mostly water - crystal clear no less. Another entrance - difficult but somewhat easier was also found - though briars in the mouth (of the cave) made it somewhat uncomfortable.

The other hole of particular interest is 98 - also with a briar bush in the entrance. It is a vertical shaft 9m deep. It has a mud floor and is the widest part of the cave seen. A ladder is needed, and not having one with us, the cave was not entered.

A final note - the landowner is most reluctant to let cavers (? people in general) on to his property - apparently his attitude has changed little in the last five years.

John Brush

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ANOTHER ANGLE ON THE WEE JASPER 15 September TRIP

WEE JASPER 15 September 1974

Party: Marge Coggan, John Brush, John Masala, Frank Bergersen (TL).

The aim of this trip was to take a look at some of the Limestone to the (north?) of the township, which to all reports had received only minimal attention from speleos.

Having spotted a likely looking area we proceeded to the local farmhouse to seek the owner's permission to trample his pastures in search of new speleological phenomena. The farmer was initially anti this activity, however a little conversation and sincere explanation was soon rewarded with "once only" permission to check out the outcrop. The concern of the farmer in this case obviously emanated from a fear that this may be the first wave of a virtual flood of speleos, however he was assured that our interest was purely scientific and that the attention now being given to his property was only part of a plan to survey all the limestone on all properties in the area. The point which I wish to make here is that this farmer, and most likely other farmers in the district, are sensitive to speleos entering their properties and will certainly not tolerate too much pressure in this regard, whether or not permission is sought. Their reaction and wishes are perfectly understandable and must be respected.

Anyway, to get on with the story, permission was given to traverse the limestone on the property and this was undertaken by our merry band with enthusiasm and high hopes. A few dead end holes and half an hour later J.M. discovered a likely looking, but tight vertical fissure entrance at the end of a large outcrop. J.B. got to work with his G pick to widen the uncomfortable and difficult entrance whilst I returned to the wagon to get the nails for securing the cave numbering tags. On my return the entrance

Wee Jasper cont

was looking a little more negotiable and J.B. was soon able to drop down through the opening. J.B. was instantly excited when he reached the bottom because in front of him lay a not insignificant lake with an ample above water air space and some reasonable formation. Yours truly, J.M. and Marge soon slipped into the entrance in pursuit of John who had quickly established the confines of the small but interesting cave. The water depth was about 3 metres and was obviously part of a body of water underlying the outcrop which effluxed mainly by seepage into a dam which overflows down into the paddock. The water continued on in a narrow fissure with a possible extension, however my efforts to push the squeeze resulted only in about 5 uncomfortable minutes spent seemingly irretrievably jammed some 2 feet above the water at an angle of 45°, receiving loads of sympathy from J.B. who could hardly stop from laughing. With the help of J.M. I managed to extricate myself and we then all departed via the second (and easier) entrance discovered by J.B. Once outside it was decided that because of the froggy sounds that were detected in the cave, that it should be named "hoppers hole". Oh well, at least it's original.

After lunch J.M. and I decided to leave J.B. and Marge to whatever tickled their fancies, and we branched off to investigate another portion of the outcrop. A number of 30ft pitches were descended in separate caves in a comparatively short space of time, however all proved to be dead ends, choking off quickly in unimpressive dry massive limestone. A more promising cave was located by J.M. further over in the paddock, however the cleft proved to be too tight to descend and indeed earned its name of "mik hole" (J.M.'s choice, not mine).

A little later yours truly discovered "prickle pot", a fissure cave with a large impressive entrance filled with prickle bushes, the fissure descending at 45° for about 50ft to water. The fissure is about 4ft by 3 ft and continues below water level. With the return of the rain showers J.M. and I decided that it was time that we hotfoot it back to the wagon. J.B. and Marge made it back to the wagon some fifteen minutes after our return, having had their fill of tickling each others fancies. They alleged that they had found a few interesting shafts, however ladders would be required before their potential could be determined.

Having only covered about half of the limestone in the farmer's property we returned to the farmhouse and requested that we be permitted to return for another look see. The farmer was amenable to this, which completed a successful and enjoyable day.

Frank Bergersen

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WEE JASPER 22 September 1974

Party: John Brush, Marge Coggan, Andersons, Andy Spate, Bluey Thompson, Bob Nicoll and Friend, Martin Norvick and Jenny.

This was basically a CSS trip to gather information for their "project" on the area.

Most of the party went into Punchbowl - Signature to look for evidence of degradation - not a very difficult task one would think.

A.P.S., J.B., M.C. and Carol and Peter and Helen Anderson stayed on the surface to look for flowers (endemic species or something) to photograph and caves to tag. A.P.S. knew where the caves were (or so he thought) and J.B. had the tags.

Caves tagged on or near P.B. hill were: WJ 14, 15 (Dogleg), 22 (Helix), 18 (Howler Hole), 19 (Scouts)Hole), 20 (Ev's Hole), 30 (Tee Cave) and 43.

A walk around the 1st S.E. of P.B hill turned up several interesting holes (incl WJ 43 and a cave with a gong formation at the bottom which? may? have been? Baby Huey - Dinner Gong? (WJ 23).

Later on, in scrub below Dip WJ61 was tagged and WJ 60, numbered in 1969, eluded us again. One new cave 59 to S.E. of 61 was tagged but not entered through lack of equipment, lights and enthusiasm.

John Brush

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WEE JASPER 28 September 1974

Party: John Brush, Marge Coggan, Gra and Ev Young, Bob Nicoll, Bob Dunn, Andy, Jan and Kirsty Spate.

This was basically a CSS trip planned with two objectives in mind - to tag known caves in the Thermal Paddock area, and to look for, find, explore and tag new ones. In both these objectives we were reasonably successful.

All numbered caves (as shown in S.H. I) except WJ38 were found and tagged. These were WJ 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 and 39.

WJ39 - a relatively unknown and apparently little visited (for WJ) cave has a 45' entrance pitch into a long narrow fissure containing some live formation. This fissure connects with another parallel one which in turn connects with another etc. In all about 5 parallel fissures were found. The other entrance - WJ38 which supposedly connects with it was not found.

Wee Jasper cont

In addition 16 new entrances were tagged. Some of these are already well known such as Thermal efflux and the collapse entrance to Humidicrib.

Most of these new caves were fairly small - Thermal efflux cannot even be entered - but are nevertheless still of interest. One WJ104, even contained a "stream" (actually a trickle) - probably the result of heavy rains in the area.

Footnote: These caves are all on "Somerset" except for WJ36 - 2nd entrance - Thermal No 2 which is just over the boundary fence. Alex Howard, the landowner, does not normally let cavers on to his property and chances to revisit the area are limited.

John Brush

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WEE JASPER Sometime in 1974

Party: Patrick Mooney (TL), Clive Wolstencroft, Ian Douglas, Allan Hawkins, Mark Hickey, Steve Thearle, Leon.

The purpose of the trip was an introduction to Punchbowl cave for some members of the group. The cars left Canberra at about 8 and were at WJ shop around 9.30 a.m. By 10 we were at Punchbowl Hill, and while Ian Douglas and the others touristed to Signature, Clive and Pat set up the pitch.

All members of the group were underground by 11.30 and spent some time familiarising. It was notable that bat colony (miniopterus schreibersii) numbers were down somewhat on the previous visit.

All were out by 2.30, gear was washed by the river and as several members had to be back early and the cars left at about 3.00 for Canberra.

Pat Mooney (T.L.)

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