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SPELEOGRAFFITI

The Newsletter of the

National University Caving Club

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THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CANTON CLUB

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National University Canton Club

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Acknowledgements

Cover Design: From a slide showing John Masala negotiating the pitch of "Punchbowl Cave", WJ8, Wee Jasper N.S.W.
By kind permission of Rod Sparks.

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E D I T O R I A L

As promised in Vol. 12 No. 1, regular publication of "Speleograffiti" is continuing!!! Credit for this issue must go to our trip leader(s) who took notice of my stirring in the last issue and cooperated in catching up with their unsubmitted reports. Thanks a lot - keep up the good work! Just a reminder that there may be members of the club who, though they have not lead any trips this year, have had considerable experience in caving (e.g. John Furlonger) and hence may be able to submit articles which are of interest and benefit to other members.

There have been a number of changes in the club since the last issue. The composition of the executive has altered slightly, and a new policy on General Meetings has been adopted. For further details, see the back page. In addition, several new members have signed (and paid!) up.

Let me encourage members to support the club by attending General Meetings (next being on October 5th). Failure to do so will result in a visit from the heavies. It is at these meetings that trip details are given out and members ideas discussed. If you don't attend meetings, please don't sit on your backside and complain about lack of club activity. Frequently these are merely the symptoms of a dreaded disease among cavers - "Lethargiosis Slackarsememerosis" (after J. Brush)

Yours in Caving,

MATTHEW WEBBER (Editor)

KEEP ON DIGGIN'!

EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S INTERIM REPORT

J. MASALA

The Club has this year received a new 30' ladder donated by IAN GERAHTY, a trace to suit must however be purchased by the club. A slightly used 30' heavy duty trace was also put at the club's disposal this year.

Interest in club activities has again started to tax some of its resources, mainly in the areas of charged lights and belts. To remedy this situation 5 new belts and possibly one new 2 lamp charging unit will be purchased along with 2 new batteries to replace two damaged ones. Delivery of the batteries and belts is expected within 3 weeks. The battery charger to be purchased has not been decided on, but is expected to be finalized before the new batteries are delivered.

NOTE: A gear cleaning and inspection must be carried out soon so repairs and replacements can be done before summer.

* * * * *

WYANBENE TRIP REPORTSATURDAY, 3rd APRIL, 1976

PARTY: Rod Sparks (L), Frank Hume, John Masala, Jane Olson, Ian Tranter, Kim (?).

This trip was primarily a fresher trip for the newer members of N.U.C.C. As the river was up, we (?) decided, rather than wander off to any other area, to brave the long walk to the cave entrance. This took about 1½ hours, the return journey being somewhat shortened by the use of an available landrover.

However, I would suggest that the practice of walking to the cave should only be repeated with some reservation, due to the physical and mental strain on one's poor battered body.

The trip itself was without any spectacular incidents, the party making it to Caesar's Hall (how the freshers always fail to find the bypass, I'll never know).

We returned to Canberra after some hot soup at about 8.00 p.m.

WYANBENE TRIP REPORTWEDNESDAY, 30th JUNE 1976

PARTY: Peter Hart (L), Philip Allen, Michael McKenzie, David Reith.

We left Canberra at about 7.30 a.m. and made good time, despite the recent rain. Proceeding via Captain's Flat, the Shoalhaven crossing was reached by about 8.45 a.m. The river was reasonably high and water managed to pour into the car through the door bottoms. The track in was fairly good until the farmhouse was reached, and it became impassable.

Parking the car here, we donned our gear and walked to the WYL entrance. As we made our way along the stream passage, "Cleopatra's Bath" was visited and "Aitcheson's Bypass" used. Once out of the passage, "Rockfall" was reached and after some searching the lower entrance to "Caesar's Hall" via "Nicholl's Squeeze" was found.

From here we worked our way to "Far Caesar's Hall", "Diarrhoea Pit" and the climb overlooking the "Chamber Pot".

Returning up "Caesar's Hall" and to "Rockfall", "Gunbarrel Aven" was looked at briefly from the side, and the hole leading to the lower route to "Gunbarrel" was found, but not investigated.

We now made our way back to the surface and found it just as wet as the cave. Hence, we hurriedly walked back to the car, changed and proceeded homewards, after a good days caving.

PETER HART

WEE JASPER TRIP REPORT 11th JULY 1976 TRIP LEADER: J. Masala

PARTY: John Masala (L), Neil Pida, Philip Allen, Peter Hart, Jane Olsen, Rod Sparks, Ian Tranter, Matthew Webber, Bronwyn Winter.

The Wee Jasper trip started with the accustomed confusion, half the party arriving at the meeting place, the shop, at 0900, the other half leaving Canberra at 0830; consequently mutiny was afoot at the shop.

We immediately made for Punchbowl. The trip was mainly a pleasure outing, though some valuable ladder experience was gained by some of the new members. I gave some individuals instruction on the setting up and operation of a belay system as some were unfamiliar with the methods.

All the major chambers were visited, a good part of the 5 hour trip was spent in pitch chamber moving the party of 8 past the ladder climb. As we all got out around sunset thoughts of doing Dogleg were postponed.

The acute drought that has been experienced in the region has left its mark on the cave, many of the areas customarily wet or covered with slippery clay were either dry or tacky. The Slippery Dips bore no hint of their namesake.

One lamp proved to be below acceptable standards, becoming virtually useless after about 4 hours, later tests showed the battery to be internally damaged.

JOHN MASALA

WEE JASPER TRIP REPORT SUNDAY, 18th JULY

PARTY: Peter Hart (L), Michael McKenzie, Terry McHugh.

After a journey of $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours along "Sawyer's Gully Road" our small party arrived at Wee Jasper and parked near the entrance to "Dogleg" (which happens to be open at the moment). Originally, about 11 cavers were coming, so when we found that the number was actually 3, there was quite an excess of equipment.

At about 10.00 a.m. the equipment was set up for the descent into "Pitch Chamber" of "Punchbowl" cave (WJ8). I laddered down first and Mike and Terry abseiled down afterwards.

From here we moved through the onicket and into the "Ballroom", where "Fossil Wall Chamber" was visited. There is a small colony of bats in this chamber at present, so visiting parties to this area should take care not to unduly disturb them.

"Far Chamber" was next to receive our attention and a couple of small offshoot chambers, namely "Edies Grotto" and "Mud Crack Chamber" were visited.

Next, we made our way under the "Balcony", around "Control Hole" and up through the "Window". After sliding through the "Slippery Dips", "Loxin Chamber" was eventually reached. "Strawberry Shortcut" was then used to go back to "Far Chamber" and after spending 3 hours in the cave, we emerged from its depths.

Lunch was now enjoyed and afterwards we travelled to "Gong", No. 4 extension of "Dip" cave and admired the delicate formations to be observed in "Gong Room".

We now returned to the car and prepared to leave, when we discovered that Mike had lost his wallet. After an unsuccessful search, we departed as it was becoming too dark. It would be appreciated if anyone finding this wallet in the area, return it to N.U.C.C.

PETER HART.

WYANBENE TRIP REPORT

SUNDAY 8th AUGUST

PARTY: John Masala (L), Peter Hart*

The aim of this trip was to locate and explore the upper level(s) in Wyanbene cave, which J.M. had entered unknowingly 5 years before.

The track into the cave was found (eventually, after J.M. drove past it!) to be very dry, and easily traversed.

We quickly donned our gear and entered the WY1 entrance at approximately 0815.

The stream passage was followed as far as "Aitcheson's Bypass", where systematic searching commenced. After a few red herrings we found an upper level and feeling in an explorative mood, proceeded to search the area.

After climbing up some rockpile, a fissure about $\frac{1}{2}$ metre wide was found and chimneyed down for about 4.5 m. Proceeding in this direction a pitch was encountered, which prevented us from further exploration because of lack of equipment.

Hence we decided to visit the "Gunbarrel Aven", and proceeding into the "Rockfall" area, the lower entrance was searched for. Unfortunately, the route to the aven eluded us and somewhat disappointed we returned to the surface.

Upon returning to Canberra, the map of Wyanbene was consulted and lo and behold, the section we had explored was found to be mapped and known as the "Aitcheson's Avens" area.

Thus, the elusive upper level(s) evaded our attempts to find them and the bypass will need to be visited again in the near future.

Apparently, to gain access to it, one has to climb 15-20 metres up an unstable wall to gain access to the level and we would appreciate it, if anyone with some knowledge of this section, could contact us.

* Originally, about 6-8 people were intending to come on this trip, which would have helped the searching considerably. Thus caving has once again taken second place to that dreaded disease; Lethargiosis Slackarsememerosis!!

PETER HART

WYANBENE TRIP REPORT

SUNDAY 15th AUGUST

PARTY: Peter Hart (L), Philip Allen, Ian Gerahty, David Reith.

This trip was originally intended to be a follow up trip to the previous weekend's effort. However, with the discovery that the area visited on that weekend, was mapped, it was decided to visit the lake.

Thus we found ourselves on the usual masochistic journey along the stream passage and through the "wet stretch".

After emerging into "Rockfall", a search commenced for the lower route to "Gunbarrel", which was found independently by 3 of us. From here the "Gunbarrel" was easily found and impressed us greatly, being the first time all of us had seen it from the bottom.

The remains of a balloon were found, left by some scientifically minded cavers, whose absent minded or anti-conservationist or lazy ways prevented their removing it.

We now proceeded out of the lower route and to "Caesar's Hall" via "Nicholl's Squeeze", and then to "Far Caesar's Hall".

Some time was spent here locating a hole in the wall about 10-15 metres up, which is worth further exploration. It was decided that a scaling pole would be the best way to reach it, and a future trip is anticipated to do this.

The climb from here to "diarrhoea Pit" was then traversed and the climb overlooking the "Chamber Pot" ascended. A rope was used to descend the other side of this, but was later found to be not really necessary.

Half of us then climbed up the slope in front of us while the rest detoured by a stream fissure, the easier way.

A few more metres, and we were at the famed "Anderson's Wall", a ... 5 metre climb, with an overhang. I managed to free climb this and then rig the 30' ladder which we had brought.

When all were up this side, the ladder was re-rigged on the other side, an 8 m drop.

Once down, we proceeded another 10-20 metres, and there before us was the lake.

The level of the water in this, appears to have dropped about $\frac{1}{4}$ metre recently.

After relaxing for a while here, admiring the well developed aragonite "flowers", and the blue-green water of the lake, we proceeded back to the entrance.

When we emerged, it was to a dark outside that we did so, not very different to the environment which we had just spent 10 hours in.

We quickly changed and started back home, but not so quickly as one might think!

Firstly, we found a hole in the petrol tank, after we stopped from lack of petrol! Fortunately, this occurred after we had forded the river and P.A. and I walked to "Gundillion", the local exchange, rather nicely located near the turn-off to the track. From here, I was able to contact some friends who live at Krawaree, and with their kind help, we eventually arrived in Canberra.

PETER HART.

WEE JASPER TRIP REPORT

SUNDAY 29th AUGUST

PARTY: John Masala (L), Judith Bateman (NUCC, HCG), Marj Coggan (NUCC, CSS), Peter Hart, Rod Sparks, John Brush (CSS), Robert Douglas (HCG), Bob Nicoll (CSS), and other CSS members.

The aim of this trip was to do Dogleg (WJ13) before it was closed off by the rain. We assembled near the entrance at about 0915 and by 0930 we were making our way along the stream bed, the cave itself being very dry.

In due course, the sandtrap was reached and a ladder was rigged so as to minimise any downward movement of the sand.

Once through, 4 of us scaled the "Opera House" wall and the ladder was re-rigged here. When the last person was up, the right hand branch was taken at the junction and followed to the first sump, which had no airspace and was pronounced no go.

Most of the group now proceeded to carry on a conversation, while a few of us started looking around at the upper levels.

Eventually, we moved back to the junction and along the left hand branch for a short distance, when it was decided to return to the surface.

This was agreed to and the outside was reached via the upper entrance by half the group, the rest returning the way previously used.

A quick change and lunch was then had before returning home after a somewhat disappointing trip.

PETER HART

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