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# SPELEOGRAFFITI



The Newsletter of the

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUB**



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CREDITS

EDITOR : Gordon Taylor

TYPING : Sports Union, A.N.U.

COVER : The "Jailhouse", Wyanbene by  
          GORDON TAYLOR.

EDITORIAL

Recently the H.E.C. presented its proposals for the development of the Lower Gordon-Franklin scheme to the Tasmanian Parliament. The proposed scheme will flood the Lower Gordon and Franklin rivers and thus inundate the largest limestone area in the state. Undoubtedly many caves exist in the area. The surface has only been scratched to date, S.C.S., S.S.S. and T.C.C. having had trips to the area.

The caving fraternity has so far appeared little moved by these developments. Surely to call oneself a responsible caver, and certainly to be a member of a federation (A.S.F.) whose whole rationale is against the destruction of caves requires you to actively oppose this scheme. It can only be hoped that we see a more concerted effort in this campaign from the Federation, from caving clubs and from individual cavers.

GORDON TAYLOR.



CONSERVATION

THE LOWER GORDON-FRANKLIN LETTER

The following is a transcript of NUCC's letter to the Tasmanian Premier, Mr. Lowe, outlining our opposition to the flooding of the Lower Gordon-Franklin.

"The Honourable D.A. Lowe,  
M.H.A.,  
Premier of Tasmania,  
HOBART, TASMANIA 7000

Dear Mr. Lowe,

This society opposes the Hydro-Electric Commission's proposals to flood the Lower Gordon and Franklin Rivers.

As cavers we are deeply concerned by any threat to the magnificent underground world of caves. Tasmania contains the largest and most spectacular caves in Australia. The area to be flooded by the Lower Gordon-Franklin Scheme encompasses the greatest area of limestone in the state. Only recently has exploration of the Lower Gordon and Franklin caves begun, being limited to the river banks. Undoubtedly this area provides the largest unexplored cave region in Australia. It is inevitable that innumerable large and awe-inspiring caves remain to be found.

The known caves have chambers hung with magnificent tapestries of stone shawls, stalactites and straws, as well as providing the dark home of cave crickets, beetles, spiders and other animals unique to caves. Glow worms provide wondrous displays, piercing the darkness with their glow. All this would be submerged by the Lower Gordon Dam.

We oppose the development for other reasons as well. The scheme will destroy the Franklin, Tasmania's last wild river, and some of the country's most spectacular gorges. The Darwin meteorite crater, irreplaceable Huon pines, and flora and wildlife habitats will all be inundated. The Lower Gordon and Franklin rivers form a unique part of the best wilderness area of Australia and so it is imperative that this area is not destroyed.

In conclusion we once again urge your government not to flood the Lower Gordon and Franklin.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) Gordon Taylor,  
PRESIDENT.

DUEA-WOMBILLIGA SUBMISSION

Following the proclamation of the Duea-Wombilliga National Park after many years of vacillation, a park management plan was required to be drawn up. Since the new park contains Big Hole, Wyanbene, Marble Arch, Bendethera, Duea and Cheitmore cave areas, the management plan will have great bearing on cavers. Because of this and the fact that areas such as Wyanbene already have substantial management problems, urged interested cavers from the three Canberra clubs to make a submission, on behalf of the N.S.W. Speleological Council, to the park authorities.

The submission outlines the present usage position and problems, and then provides a short resume on each karst area in the Park. This is followed by sections on user conflicts, caving safety and the present access to each of the areas. Interim management proposals are then put forward for each cave area.

Further information or any correspondence concerning the report should be addressed to -

N.S.W. Speleological Council,  
C/- C.T.C.G.,  
P.O. Box 638,  
Woden, A.C.T. 2606

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MINING EXPLORATION LICENCE

Notice was given in "The Australian" on Wednesday, 7th November of an application by Dampier Mining Company for a mining exploration licence. The area specified includes the karst areas of Wyanbene, Big Hole, Cheitmore and Marble Arch. All these areas are within the Duea-Wombilliga Park and in fact a considerable area of park is covered by the lease. To the best of my knowledge mining activities are not allowed in National Parks. Nevertheless it may be worthwhile to keep an eye on this licence.

MT. ETNA

Another step has recently been taken in the fight to save Mt. Etna from limestone mining with the printing of a glossy pamphlet putting forward the case for the mountains preservation. The pamphlet has been produced by the University of Queensland Speleological Society, and is their latest effort in the battle with the Queensland Government. Copies may be obtained either from N.U.C.C. or direct from U.Q.S.S. at a cost of 20¢.

U.Q.S.S. is also calling for support for their campaign. They wish people to write letters to

- their federal member, urging him/her to support the inclusion of Mt. Etna in the Federal Government's Register of the National Estate. Mt. Etna is already on the interim list but the Queensland Government has objected.

- the Queensland Premier (The Hon. J. Bjelke-Petersen, M.L.A.) and the Minister for Mines (The Hon. R.E. Camm, M.L.A.), C/- Parliament House, Brisbane, Queensland, 4000.

CAVERS CONUNDRUM

by J. Briggs

The following problem is not easy (use a large sheet of paper and have a few spare hours). There are five cavers from five different cities who each cave exclusively in one of five caves. Each cave is of a different type (e.g. muddy, vertical etc.) and each caver prefers a particular style (e.g. armchair, grovelling etc.), consumes one of five different drinks (e.g. water, beer etc.) and gets to the caves by one of five different vehicles (e.g. Holden, donkey etc.). The clues are as follows :-

1. There are 5 caves in a row.
2. The caver from Canberra caves in the muddy cave.
3. The speleo from Hobart drives a Holden.
4. Water is drunk by the caver who caves in the wet cave.
5. The Melbourne caver drinks red wine.
6. The wet cave is immediately to the right of the small cave.
7. The caver who likes groveling drives a Renault.
8. The armchair caver visits the tourist cave.
9. Scotch is drunk by the speleo who visits the middle cave.
10. The Sydney speleo visits the first cave.
11. The caver who likes crawling visits the cave next to the one visited by the caver who uses a donkey to get to the caves.
12. The armchair caver caves in the cave next to the cave visited by the caver who rides a bicycle to the caves.
13. The speleo who likes squeezing drinks beer.
14. The caver from Perth likes laddering.
15. The Sydney speleo visits the cave next to the vertical cave.

Who drinks milk ? Syd

Who drives the VW ? Perth

Who is the armchair caver ? Syd.

You have enough information and you don't need to guess (the second question is the hardest). No responsibility is taken for the characteristic represented by this puzzle. The solution will be published in the next issue of Speleograffiti. The best solution received before 1 April 1980 will receive the next 4 issues of Speleograffiti free (including postage). Wow!

GEAR TEST - Some comments on the C.M.I. 5000 ascender

The C.M.I. 5000 is an ascender similar in concept to the Jumar. Manufactured by Colorado Mountain Industries they have appeared on the Australian market only this year.

Though somewhat larger than the old Jumar, they are lighter, weighing approximately 470 gm. each. The frame is manufactured from extruded aluminium and the cam cast. The cam is opened by a lever protruding from above the cam, being easily operated with the thumb. The cam opens out very wide to facilitate easy removal from and placement on the rope. This is particularly welcome when crossing knots etc. Perhaps most significantly the C.M.I. 5000 is rated to take a 5000 kg. shock load.

There are some possible problem areas with the ascender however. The cams have smaller and more rounded teeth than Jumars, and this can cause some slippage on muddy pitches. When the cam is open on the left hand C.M.I. part of the wire spring protrudes from the frame, where it could catch. On the right hand C.M.I. this bend in the wire runs up the inside of the frame providing protection.



Gear Test (contd.)

With chest harnesses where tape is passed, from behind the rope and C.M.I. frame, through the top hole of the C.M.I., the tape puts pressure across the release lever. This slight pressure can cause the C.M.I. to slip.

AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT INVOLVING LEAD-ACID BATTERIES - J. Briggs

NUCC currently has two battery chargers, each capable of charging 2 batteries simultaneously. Late last year the previous equipment officer 'trod' on one of the leads between the charger and the transformer. The small plug was crushed and when he replaced it, the wires were reversed, causing batteries to be 'charged' the wrong way. Because the other charger was still okay and several of our batteries were already not very useful because of age, the problem wasn't discovered until approximately 8 batteries had been ruined. Several of these ruined batteries will actually light a main bulb for up to 5 minutes with the polarity reversed!

Fortunately, the batteries ruined were mostly older than 5 years but naturally this sort of accident should never be repeated.

MORAL : be careful to always charge lead-acid batteries correctly.

TASMANIAN TRIP

In mid December a small group of NUCC cavers (Gordon Taylor, John Briggs, Tim Rudman, Stephen Ralser) will leave for 2 months caving in Tasmania. We hope to see a great many of Tasmania's caves. As well as seeing some of Tassies better known caves, we will be doing several longer trips to lesser visited cave areas. It is hoped to visit Precipitous Bluff, Mt. Anne and to spend a week or 2 looking on Exit Hill. We may also be participating in the T.C.C. annual trip to the Cracroft. We also have a Chairman trip organised.



TRIP REPORTS

WEE JASPER 15-16 April 1979

Party : Tim Rudman, John Briggs and Gordon Taylor (Monday).

It had been reported that a fire had swept across the northern flank of Punchbowl Hill a few weeks earlier, consequently at the last moment a trip was organised to Punchbowl. We were to have a look in various small caves on the hill which would be hopefully easier to find with the undergrowth burnt. As it was the fire only just touched the hill. Nevertheless several small caves were entered.

It was also decided to check the sand trap in dogleg as there had been very little rain this year.

Surprisingly the trap was dry and dug out for about 8 metres. Back in Canberra that night a return trip with G.T. also was planned to dig the remaining few metres of the trap.

While trogging up at the entrance the next morning a hoard of about 15 scouts complete with 5 gallon buckets and rope piled into the lower entrance. Eager to beat them to the trap we hastily tied our bootlaces and made for the upper entrance. This bypasses most of the crawl and brought us to the trap first to some of the scouts surprise.

We joined forces and soon had a fairly efficient dig going. The breakthrough was made by Gordon Taylor after about 1.5 hours. A ladder was dropped down the flowstone wall in the opera house after climbing a rather old decrepid looking rope to the top.

The meander section in which there is a few very colourful shawls was looked at and then following the telephone line (a remnant of early CSS trips past the inner sumps) through the second sump (also dry) till the third sump was encountered. Unfortunately it was well and truly full. The syphon tubes were set up syphoning the water down a nearby fissure.

Five of the scouts came through and joined us at the sump for a while before we left.

All in all quite a successful weekend.

T.R.

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MAJOR TRIPS SINCE MARCH '79

by J. Briggs

The 1979 University year started off with two fresher trips, the first, a one day trip to Wee Jasper where Dip and Gong caves were shown to 14 new members.

This was followed the next weekend by a two day trip to Wyanbene where the first day was spent up on the ridge looking at Ridge Mine Pot and some of the other smaller caves. A 1 metre red-bellied black snake had to be killed at the bottom of the main pitch in Ridge Mine Pot. Fortunately it was very docile because of the cold. The second day was spent with 12 people going through to Frustration Lake and Gunbarrel Aven.

In April, 8 members went to Yarangobilly to finish surveying Y7 (North Deep Creek) beyond the double duck-under. The rest of the weekend was spent lazing around with no useful work being done (typical for Yagby). Later in the month another trip to Wyanbene was undertaken to show several other people the Gunbarrel Aven and Frustration Lake.

In May scaling poles were taken to Narengullen to get into some of the upper levels, but not much was achieved, as only 3 people went in the end. But some good photos were taken and a pleasant boat journey was had by those who went. Later in the month an SRT trip to Big Hole was held, 3 people descended and no problems occurred.

In June an SRT trip to Argyle at Bungonia was attended by 3 members. Both sumps were visited and there was no bad air present. No major trips occurred in July with semester exams and semester break, plus many members skiing on what little snow there was.

In August, Gordon Taylor and myself attended the mini-conference at Macquarie University. This was a very enjoyable weekend, well worth attending by all members in future years. Gordon and I competed in the speleosports in a team with Liz and Greg Hurst from UNSWSS.

In September another Big Hole trip was organised with both ladders and SRT. A total of 6 people descended Big Hole. A week later 5 people went to Bungonia and descended Drum Cave with no bad air all the way to the sump. Later 4 people went to Grill Cave where bad air forced us back on the way to the left-hand sump.

In October for the long weekend Gordon Taylor, Tim Rudman and myself went to Buchan for the long weekend. After being shown most of the entrances in the potholes area, we descended Baby Berger and Stirlings on the Saturday. On Sunday we were shown Scrooges Cave at east Buchan and in the late afternoon we visited Honeycomb. On Monday before leaving around lunch time we descended Jampot. This trip was thoroughly enjoyable thanks to members of VSA for showing us around.

Later in the month a trip to Wyanbene was organised to take 2 divers through to Frustration Lake with snorkel gear to look at the diving prospects but the length of the trip in dissuaded them from further trips with full scuba gear.

The year so far has been reasonable successful with other trips not mentioned above, although those above are the more interesting ones. Hopefully next year a larger proportion of members will go on more than just the fresher trips.

CLUB CONTACTS

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FUTURE TRIPS

DECEMBER - Bushwalk into Duea Cave from Wyanbene.  
Duea Cave extension to be surveyed.

Mid-DECEMBER - Tasmanian trip. 2 months caving in  
Tassy



BLUE CONTACTS

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JOHN BRIGGS	Room A1, Corbin Dam Huts Phone 49 3902

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FUTURE TRIPS

DECEMBER	Bushwalk into Dues Cave from Wyandene. Dues Cave extension to be surveyed.
MID-DECEMBER	Teamwork trip. 2 months sailing in Tassey