



SPELEOGRAFFITI

The Newsletter of the National University Caving Club

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EDITORIAL

We cannot look back on the past year and use it as a model for the coming one. There have been too many events we would rather forget; too few that we can really boast about. But it has been a solidifying year, a year for correcting mistakes and strengthening weaknesses. As such it must be looked on as a necessary evil, like politicians and departmental red tape.

NUCC is stronger in many ways than it was at the beginning of the year. Equipment - sore point! - is organized and better cared for, thanks to some sharp lessons during the year. The complex question of safety has strutted and fretted its hour, but refuses to leave the stage. The behind-the-scenes organization progresses a little more smoothly. Even the Newsletter has somehow lasted to the end of the year - a miracle for which the present editor is in no way responsible, being as astonished as the rest of you.

Unfortunately we have done little in the way of exploring new caving areas. Most of our caving has been in the tried-and-trampled grounds of Wee Jasper and Bunyan.

The year's brightest effort (just ask those responsible) was the May assault on Dog Leg. This unfortunate cave has been mapped, remapped, had rock bolts and pitons hammered into its unyielding walls, been dug inside and out, but steadfastly refuses to be conquered. So far it has claimed a rope, a helmet and several Minties. In return it gives only cold feet, wet clothes and bruised knees. But we go back for more. This cave has shown that it requires large-scale determined assaults, and remains a future project.

Apart from this provoking thief, other possibilities for the future are Yarrangabilly, Buchan (a long trip) and Jenolan. Let us make next year a pioneer year.

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

A Possible Source of Water for Dog Leg Cave (WJ 13)

Dear Sir,

A possible source for much of the water flowing from Dog Leg is a stream which flows from the ridge to the south of the caves, to the west of Punchbowl Hill, the main limestone outcrop area. The rock-type in the headwaters of this stream is a bold, weathering porphyry; soils are thin on the steep slopes here. The stream is probably ephemeral because of the lack of a moisture-retaining soil mantle, small catchment area, and absence of springs on the impermeable porphyry. Runoff will be rapid, and the stream will only flow after rain. During the latter part of this year, a wet period, the stream was observed to flow continually in its upper reaches, but was never flowing beyond a point where it first passes over limestone. The bed is choked with boulders in its upper part, but the lower part has finer alluvium: the stream disappears into its coarse bed a little above the contact between the limestone and the porphyry. Such flow is not uncommon, and the rate of flow may be large, however it is less likely that the water flows underground in the lower reach of the watercourse, because of the finer nature of the alluvium. No resurgences have been seen between the road and the area of sinking of the creek: this is surprising since the alluvium must thin considerably as it passes through the gap just above the road.

The contact between the limestone and the porphyry is faulted. This major fault changes direction in the area behind Punchbowl Hill, hence there may be cross-faulting and fracturing, rendering the area susceptible to cave formation. The large sinks at the back of the hill (including WJ 7) may be evidence of this, as may the course of the stream across the area. Thus there is a possible escape-route for the water flowing in the stream bed. The possibility of a subterranean cut-off of the stream can be seen on a contour map: the difference in level between the Dog Leg efflux and the sinking is about 200', of the same order as the difference in level between the sinking and Wee Jasper Creek, but over a short distance.

Flow from Dog Leg is too strong and constant to be due solely to runoff from Punchbowl Hill, yet the level and position of the cave precludes any runoff from the limestone belt to the east: most water has joined the stream before the 3rd water trap.

In synthesis, the water is believed to enter the fault zone from the permeable bed of the creek, and travel by cross-faults and joints (perhaps caverns) to the upper part of Dog Leg Cave. Flooding of the cave may be due to the rate of supply exceeding the emptying capacity of lower levels of the cave.

The theory may be tested by detailed observation of the behaviour of the stream behind the hill, and the water flow in Dog Leg, and more directly by addition of a tracer such as fluoroscien or chaff to the stream at its sinking behind the hill. WJ7 may be the ultimate entry into the upper reaches of Dog Leg Cave.

J. Ian Raine

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This is the last edition of 'Speleograffiti' that Michael Henry is likely to see. So we take this opportunity, on behalf of the Club, to congratulate Michael and Vicki, and wish them every success. They are taking off for uncivilized lands in the not-to-distant future. They will be missed, but we want to say

Good Luck, Michael and Vicki.

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The Archivist Again

We found the Club Archivist and dusted him (it?) off this morning. When he had cleared some of the spiders from his files he produced the following facts.

For 1966 there are records of 25 official trips. An average trip consisted of 3.75 males and 1.50 females crawling around in the dark for 7 hours 4 minutes 12 seconds. Wee Jasper is still by far the most popular area for this activity (48%). Dog Leg has accounted for 15.4% of the trips and 38% of the hours of the whole year, as well as an unknown fraction of the Minties.

Colong and Wyanbene were next: 11.5% of trips each.

Fearless leaders most often: GVC and REO 23% each.

May (16%) has lost out to March (20% as the most popular month for caving. There are no trips recorded for October.

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Those trips recorded in No 1. Vol 3. of this newsletter as largest, smallest, longest and shortest retain their titles.

Some noted trends:

	1964	1965	1966
No. Recorded			
Official Trips	16	25	25
Ratio Males/ Females	3.2	3.0	2.5
Av. Time Underground	4.85 hrs	6.05 hrs	7.07 hrs

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TRIP REPORTS

1. Colong 6/7 August

Neville King, Ian Raine and non-member Barry Mayfield went on a trip held in conjunction with the Canberra Bushwalking Club. They noted there was snow by the side of the road and inform us that THAT hill is getting steeper. They spent eight hours underground, entering Lannigans', King's Cross, Woof's Cabin and its extension. Unable to find an alternative exit via the stream passage below Woof's they returned through the gate.

2. Wee Jasper 19th November

Graeme Chapman and Ian Raine took nine non-members through Dip No. 4 Extension and Signature Cave on a Canberra Bushwalkers' Trip. They found the caves very wet and treacherously slippery - a rope was necessary in places.

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