

The Newsletter of the Australian National University Caving Club.

Volume 4, Number 4.

June, 1967

EDITORIAL.

By this time, most club members will have heard of Ian Raine's accident on Cave's Ridge, where he broke his arm while descending a 50 degree slope with a heavy pack. You have probably also heard of the lack of first aid equipment. The Club did have a first aid kit, but it has disappeared as mysteriously as it arrived. Consequently, we are trying to make a list of persons with a knowledge of first aid to ensure that there is always at least one qualified person on each trip, so that in the event of an accident, somebody who knows exactly what to do is on hand to take charge. Can you imagine how nasty it would be for a person to break a leg at the far end of Wyanbene or Dog Leg if nobody knew how to improvise splints and the correct way to apply them?

The Club's Cave Rescue System was covered as an editorial last year, but to summarise, the Trip Leader signs out his equipment in a book, and enters the names of those going on the trip. This book is then left with a Call Out Officer, together with a written 'Control Time.' If he has not checked in by the time stated, the Call Out Officer notifies all the experienced club members he can find, and also C.S.S. These all promptly roar off to the caving area in question to find out why the party is overdue, and to assist if they are in trouble.

However, all this takes time. To continue the example of Wyanbene, about 6 hours will have elapsed since the party was due out of the cave by the time the rescue party arrives. Can you imagine lying in that creek for 6 hours with a broken leg? Rather you than me.

Obviously then, we must have first aid kits on trips, and also people able to use them effectively. Consequently, we would like any club member with a St. John's Ambulance First Aid Certificate or its equivalent to kindly inform a member of the Committee.

EDITOR.

ASSAULT CAVING.

This is the side of caving that most members of a club such as ours rarely see. Most N.U.C.C. jobs are more or less tourist trips - the caves have been known for years, have usually been surveyed, and at least one person, the Trip Leader, knows his way around with some degree of

familiarity. Consequently we come, we are shown around, we take pictures of formations photographed countless times before, and we go away again, to leave the place in silence for another week.

But there is another side to subterranean exploration.

How did these caves we are so familiar with get to be so well known? Somebody saw a hole in the ground - and climbed into it. If the results of his effort were worth it, he came back again next week, and went a little further. And the word went round. A new cave was added to the list.

There are two main types of assault caving: the search for extensions of caves already well known, and the work involved in discovering and exploring new caves from the surface.

The former is almost always arduous and difficult, often requiring the forcing of syphons, squeezes, deep fissures, and various other forms of subterranean unpleasantness. For example, in the exploration of the sections of Dog Leg (WJ13) past the water trap, Neil Anderson of CSS and Ian Raine and David Moore of NUCC had to force two duckunders - short syphons, nearly full of water, requiring complete immersion to pass them - and also tramp through the typical Dog Leg mud. They were tugging for over 10 hours. The results were worth it - a fantastic new chamber, and another passage covered with helictites, flowstone, and shawls. Another example is the Rockfall Chamber at Wyanbene, discovered in 1965 by Geoff Marchant and Neville King of NUCC. Those who have been to Wyanbene well know the glories of the Helictite Chamber AND the discomforts of the wet crawl. By passing through a narrow fissure, they discovered an upper level stream passage, and the Rockfall Chamber - 50 yards long. Since then, nearly 1000' have been added to the known sections of Wyanbene, almost doubling its length. The new sections are worth the effort. Caesar's Hall is nearly 400' high, or 3 times as high as the A.M.P. Building in Hobart Place.

The point I am making is that we can enjoy the products of work, but somebody had, sometime, to put up with trials and tribulations, and not stop when the rest gave up, but break the last straw that broke everyone else, and keep going, in the faint hope that maybe their ideas about what could be beyond the obstacle are right. They sometimes are.

The other type is more difficult. In extending caves, one has the advantage of at least knowing where the entrance is. When looking for new caves, one must find the entrance. This is no longer as easy as it was when almost every hole in the ground was a new cave entrance. So many are now known.

Consequently, methods of exploring caves without entering them are coming into their own. My own Potentiometric Survey System is an example. These methods can tell the speleologist if there is a cave

within an area of limestone. They also help pinpoint the entrance for him. Often then he must dig away collapsed rubble before he can explore his cave. I once had to shift 13 tons of rock fragments before exploring a pot-hole. Unfortunately, I hadn't surveyed it first - there was no cave there. This episode demonstrates the disadvantages of the 'By guess and by God' technique of 'Look for a hole, clean it out, descend'. Hence Potentiometric Surveying. You may still have to dig, but at least you can eliminate most of the horrible uncertainty first.

Then comes the day when the last rock has been removed, the hole is 'chimney swept' (all the small rubble removed so that it won't brain anyone), and the assault party disappears below. They'll only be gone a couple of hours at this stage - just to see what the hole is like, worth more effort or not. If the results are good, the next weekend a full-scale assault is planned. The cave is explored as far as possible, and surveyed. Photographs are taken, and the discovery announced to other clubs and societies.

Permission to search for caves must obviously be gained from the owner of the land before work commences, otherwise everyone suffers when he quite reasonably closes the area. He should also be kept informed of what is happening, and should be the first person told of any new discoveries. He will probably want to see it in its virgin state, pre boy scouts and such.

People going on assault trips must all be perfectly capable of taking control of the party at any time. They should all be highly experienced, and are usually qualified to lead trips to areas familiar to them. Invariably they are experienced in all types of ropework and climbing techniques.

The prime prerequisite for this work is confidence - both in your own ability and that of others in the party, and in the theories you are testing.

And there is nothing to match the thrill of finding a beautiful cave that no man has ever seen before.

THEN you can say 'I came, I saw, I conquered.!!'

MICHAEL WEBB.

Word has reached an editorial ear that since Trip Leaders are becoming concerned at the leaning out of their numbers, and by the lack of people on trips with more than very elementary knowledge of ropework, it is proposed to hold a Field Day at Red Rocks on the Murrumbidgee River, or at Ginninderra Falls on Saturday, 29 July, 1967.

At a Field Day, some of the Trip Leaders act as instructors in abseiling, laddering, belaying, the uses of pitons, karabiners, and prusik slings, and the uses of the more important knots, as well as the ones to avoid when there are better ones.

For example. Did you know that a bowline can be turned into a pretty good slipknot? A chap I knew once went to all the trouble of tying a bowline half-way down a 120' manilla rope. He wanted to stand on the loop while he swung on the rope from one small ledge to another, to continue his climb.

He then went and tied the rope UPSIDE DOWN! i.e., his bowline was upside down. Therefore it became a slipknot. The poor bloke hung upside down in the loop (60' up) for nearly 2 minutes before we managed to get down and free him.

Need I comment there is a better way of traversing - two of them in fact, one using knots, the other pitons.

After attending a Field Day, needless to say you won't make a mistake like that one. (Neither did he, again, come to that.)

The trip is open to all club members, and should provide a pleasant day in the sun (?), and some good photographs.

Contact Michael Webb, David Moore, or David Nicholls for further information.

Articles please! Anything, appropriate or inappropriate, or even vaguely slanderous published (if you're willing to be prosecuted for libel, because I'm not going to be!) Closing date for July issue is 31 July.

If Trip Leaders could get their trip reports to me within 7 days of the trip, I'd be very grateful; otherwise we get a month out of phase with the newsletter, so far as trip reports are concerned.

The Editor sincerely regrets the lateness of the last issue, but would like to make clear that the factors causing it were entirely out of his and the publisher's control.

TRIP REPORTS.

Dog Leg. 2 June.

The trip divided itself naturally into 2 parties, with Mike Webb leading David Nicholls, and me with the rest, and Ian Raine handling the telephones on the surface. We entered at about 11 a.m., tested the telephones and Group 2 proceeded directly to the right-hand branch, while the larger Group 1 went to the Meander Pattern to show Dr. Eggleton of the

A.N.U.S.G.S. Geology Dept. the gypsum needles and allow him to collect some, and also to photograph them. After this, Dr. Eggleton and Mike Robey were guided out to the Lake Chamber by Laurie Curtis, and after stopping for lunch at the bottom of the Meander Pattern the rest of the group pressed on until we came across M.G.W. and D.C.N. at what they called the end of that branch. L.W.C., R.P. and D.C. then went back out again and surfaced at about 5.30 I think. M.G.W. and D.C.N. wandered off again, and D.H.M. and P.A. climbed into the upper section by an obvious chimney some hundred or so feet from the end of the passage, to find some tree roots, (dead and very rotten) some of the most superb aragonite imaginable (checked later optically and by X-Ray Diffraction), and a rock choke, probably the bottom of Helix. This section had been looked at once before, probably by Neil Anderson the weekend before. P.A. and D.H.M. then made their way back very deviously, but were unable to make contact with the surface party after the third water trap due to a damp telephone. In almost all parts we went to, there was a set of tricouni tracks in front of us (the treasured possessions of Neil A. again). We arrived at the surface at about 9.00 p.m., exhausted, and struggled back to Canberra.

DAVID MOORE.

M.G.W. and D.C.N. formed Group 2 of D.H.M.'s WJ13 trip. We went in and found and found that the water-trap was open, so we went on in, following the telephone wire until it forked at the Left-Right Junction. The sump had about a foot of mud, and about 9" of water over that, leaving about 18" of airspace. The dam above it was empty. At the junction we went up the right fork until the phone wire stopped, at which point we had some lunch, polishing off a can of pineapple juice, and a pound of ssrogin between us. We then pushed a squeeze below the end of the wire, until it opened out into a large heap of none-too-stable rubble. We then climbed a chimney leading from the squeeze, and it led into a spacious fissure, with some really excellent formations. We then connected the fissure to a continuation of the R.H.B., which eventually closed down to a very small hole about 200' further on. A few climbs in the tunnel yielded more rubble heaps, and some good formations in off-shoot fissures. D.H.M. plus half a dozen types arrived at this point, so we commuted to another site - the Left-hand Branch. We wandered up to the Double Duckunders, but on finding only about 2" of airspace, decided not to duck. Formation in the L.H.B. is only passable, but then from the looks of the tunnel, it spends most of its time under very rapidly flowing water.

On checking in with the surface party, preparatory to coming out we were told that everybody else was 45 minutes ahead of us, so we rescued a few odds and ends, and came out, bringing the ladder with us. Someone had done a good job of filling in the sand-trap - I had to dig 4" out of it before I could even get a hat through at all, let alone anything else as well!

When we reached the surface, we were told that the earlier report was a bloomer - D.H.M. was still in, so we told him what we'd done when he checked in, and he arrived about 2 hours later. After terrorizing the Central Café in Yass, we arrived home about 1.15 a.m.

MICHAEL WEBB.

Following are some recommendations made by the leaders of this trip -

1. An incredible telephone mess-up caused M.G.W. to take the ladder down, although he was not the last through the Opera House. All surface telephone men shall in future have a list of the names of those underground, and will check off each person as he goes through the Opera House.
2. All telephones shall be kept in plastic bags at all times when not in use, since a dead telephone on this occasion almost resulted in a general call-out of the dozen or so cavers in the WJ area. This should stop the fiasco of parties making arrangements, and being unable to keep them.
3. No further parties should go into the Meander Pattern Section except for research purposes, as damage to the gypsum needles is inevitable, and they are utterly irreplaceable.
4. A log of messages from inside parties will enable the surface party to have some idea of where the sub-surface teams are at any time.
5. Underground parties should check with the surface regularly, stating where they are, what they are doing, and how long they expect to be doing it. In view of the length of trips past the water-trap, we feel this point is essential.

DAVID MOORE.

MICHAEL G.WEBB.

Cheitmore. 11-12 June.

Sunday.

Arrived at the top of Marble Arch ridge at 11.30 a.m. and set up camp. Found the Arch and inspected it in the afternoon. It's up to 50' high and is presumably a cave whose ends have collapsed, allowing access from both sides. It is about 150' long. We found Illawara S.S. in possession of River Cave when we arrived, so we went down the gorge, where I paddled around on a Lilo looking for entrances. David Nicholls and Russell Moon looked at the efflux, and pushed it for about 50'. We then went into Lake Cave, and I sailed about 30' along the lake, until it became a sump. The water in the lake was about 5 degrees warmer than the creek outside. (Both cold.)

Monday.

After fixing 300' of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " rope, I abseiled down from the top of the gorge to the River Cave entrance, which is 85' down, or 45' up from the bottom. I fixed a 50' ladder, and everybody else climbed up. David, Russell, Tim and Beryl tried to go up the fissure holding the river while Carla, Paul and I looked at the north end of the river. We then went out through the squeeze, which is actually a cave in its own right, being formed of a small solution tunnel, joined to the upper reaches of the River Cave Efflux but about 20' above it. This is the first part of the squeeze. A long low passage then connects with

River Cave proper. Everbody then practised abseiling from the entrance of the cave, and took pictures of other people abseiling. We arrived back in Canberra after a very wet trip out at about 11 p.m.

MICHAEL WEBB.

Wee Jasper, 24 June.

As Carey's Cave was u/s, it was decided to go to WJ37, or Thermal Cave, (WJ36) if we couldn't find 37. (We couldn't.) Thermal was entered by the main entrance and followed in the direction of the swamps. We were stopped at an 8' drop near the second pool. We were told there had been talk of BLOWING IN THE THERMAL CAVE as a cattle hazard : the ENTRANCE NEEDS A GRILL if this cave is to be preserved.

We explored a fissure near the river, about 300 yards from homestead where Thermal is located. The fissure extends about 100' parallel to the river, mostly at river level (water at bottom of a cave). There are several connections to the surface, including a Dip-style rubbish tip.

It appears that there is a new owner to the Thermal area, and he seems quite willing to help.

DAVID NICHOLLS.

At the request of the NUCC Committee I carried out a Potentiometric Survey on a hill about 1 mile north of the Wee Jasper T-Junction, on the position 672(5)640 of Sheet 8627-IV. The survey showed 3 caves in an area 300' long by 180' wide, and took 3 hours to complete. Each cave was less than 180' deep, and all were formed of narrow, probably lofty fissures. One entrance, situated directly over the biggest of the anomalies, was found by Carla VanDriel. Stones falling down suggest a depth of 150' to the pot, but the true figure is probably considerably less than this - more likely of the order of 80-110'.

After surveying the positions of 4 blind pot-holes, and the 3 caves mentioned above, we adjourned to Punchbowl Hill, there to brew the caver's staple food - tea. We learned from CSS that there appeared to have been a major collapse under the hill at about 4 p.m.

We went down Punchbowl with Neil Anderson and Ian Nankivell of CSS at 7 p.m. to see if any parts of WJ8 had collapsed, but none had.

After Neil and Ian had left, David, Carla and self wandered around for a couple of hours exploring the place, or what we could find of it, since it was 18 months since either Dave or myself were last in there. We found a lot of fresh loose rubble in WJ8, but there were no major falls.

During the survey, I was admirably assisted by David Moore for the experimental side, and by Carla VanDriel and Anne Felton, who recorded the positions of the points, by a very neat job of surveying, which, although hard to read, was highly accurate considering the instruments available. My thanks to all three.

MICHAEL WEBB.

COMING TRIPS.

KYBEAN. 8⁵ July.

Trip Leader BYRON DEVESON. Pleasant walk in through the Dangelong Ranges with the exploration of 5 caves. Formation good, commensurate squeezes.

BUNYAN. 22 July.

Trip Leader Michael Webb. 95' pot-hole. Fantastic formation beats Wyanbene, compensates for the odd squeeze and the pitch.

FIELD DAY. 29 July.

See Michael Webb, David Moore, or David Nichools.

Keep your carbide lamp oiled, as impromptu trips are frequent. Committee Members have the word first usually, so keep your ear to the ground.

FOUND.

1. After Cheitmore trip. 1 nylon sock (green). See M.G. Webb,
2. David Moore wants to know when the owner of the bits of cutlery found after Dog Leg will claim them.

EXHIBIT

TRIP REPORT FROM NEWARK, N.J. to New York, N.Y. and back. The purpose of this trip was to observe the operation of the New York City Police Department and to meet with the Chief of Police.

REPORT OF TRIP

On Monday, January 10, 1960, I left Newark, N.J. for New York, N.Y. and arrived at the New York City Police Department at 10:00 A.M.

TRIP TO NEW YORK

The first stop was at the New York City Police Department, where I met with the Chief of Police, Mr. John P. Jones. We discussed the purpose of the trip and the arrangements for the visit. The trip was very successful and I was able to observe the operation of the New York City Police Department and to meet with the Chief of Police.

TRIP

On Tuesday, January 11, 1960, I left New York, N.Y. for Newark, N.J. and arrived at the Newark Police Department at 10:00 A.M. The trip was very successful and I was able to observe the operation of the Newark Police Department and to meet with the Chief of Police.