

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

The Newsletter of the National University Caving Club

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A HAPPY AND PROFITABLE NEW YEAR TO CAVERS EVERYWHERE!

## EDITORIAL.

The National University Caving Club has now commenced its fifth year of activities. Not only is this in itself four years longer than our enemies prophesied, but we are more active now than ever before. An analysis of the last twelve months is given below, together with some comparisons to previous years.

Further confounding the infidels is the fact that you are, I hope, reading this. "Speleo-G." has completed three years regular publication, and apparently will continue. This beats even the most optimistic uninitiate's prediction by about 28 months, still increasing.

The club's great strength is the regular influx of new members each March and April, some of whom become enthusiastic (and able) spellos, and, not infrequently, end up running the show. Similarly, our great weakness is the regular loss of old hands to other Universities and to Industry each December. So far the ratio has been in the club's favour. Hopefully that state of affairs will continue.

1967 was quite a satisfactory year for us, with the exploration of Dog Leg, open for the first time in years in May; of the WJ 300's; and in that for the first time, NUCC availed itself of scientific methods in mapping and cave hunting.

It is to be hoped, in fact ensured by us, that 1968 is even better.

EDITOR.

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## CAVING - 1967

A summary of our caving activities from January to December, 1967.

We relocated the archivist (missing on a trip to Nirvana since last March) the other day, and, after we had given him (or maybe "it"?) a meal of Dog Leg mud to get him/it in the mood, and scraping the cobwebs off his/its slide rule, or, as he/it persists in calling it, "guessing stick" (you work out the figures, then

guess where to put the dismal point) he/it came up with the following:

During 1967, 33 trips were reported, with an average of 3.89 males and 0.80 females per trip. Average time spent crawling around in the damp was 4 hours 57 minutes 18 seconds. This is the lowest since 1964, but everything else is up.

Most popular area is still Wee Jasper with 58% of the trips to its credit (?). Wyanbene and Bungonia then tie with 12% each.

Most often visited cave is still Dog Leg with 10 trips (31%) for 42 hours underground and 133½ man-hours.

Longest visited cave is Wyanbene with 4 trips (12%) for 46 hours and 134½ man-hours.

Shortest trip was London Bridge (15/4/67) lasting 5 minutes for a magnificent 25 man-minutes!

Longest trip was the "August Special", 5/8/67, to Wyanbene, lasting 18½ for 91½ man-hours in the wet (from M.G.W. "And cold!"). (New club record. Previously 16 hours, also in Wyanbene).

Largest trip was the Field Day at Red Rocks with 10 members present, closely followed by Kybean with 9 members.

Smallest trips were lon assaults on Dog Leg by D.H.M. and M.G.W. on 26/11/67. (They only had one boiler-suit.)

Intrepid leaders most often: David Moore, 33% of trips, leading for 47 hours, and Michael Webb, 31% of trips, leading for 60½ hours.

Most popular activity: drinking tea - 81 pots.

Least popular activity: going to Bunyan - 3 trips cancelled.

Ratio of males to females on trips is at an all time high. Does this imply that females are finding activities in the dark less enjoyable?

Comparisons with previous years.

	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	
No. of club trips	16	25	25	33	
Av. time below	4.85	6.05	7.07	4.96	hours
Ratio males to females	3.2	3.0	2.5	4.87	

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# ACTIVITIES AT WEE JASPER

Following a report in the 'Canberra Times' of 17/11/67 that the Goodradigbee Shire Council intended to purchase the caves at Wee Jasper and open them to the public, we went out to WJ on 26/11/67 to ascertain, if possible, the position of caving societies once plans were complete.

We spoke first to Mrs Greg Carey, an old friend of NUCC, whose husband owns both Punchbowl Hill, and about 10 acres around Dip Cave, as well as most of the area containing our recent explorations (WJ300's). We received word from Mrs Carey that a representative of NUCC was to get in touch with Mr Earl Archer, of 'Brooklyn', Cavan. We spoke to Mr Archer the same day, and discussed the position with him. He told us that the Goodradigbee Shire Council wants to block off major entrances in an attempt to curb the rising amount of vandalism in the caves. In general, the entrances will be blocked with steel mesh, with a padlocked gate inserted. The key will be available either from the Shire Council, or maybe from Mrs Carey.

Towards the cost of the work, the U.S.W. Dept. of Lands has offered \$2,000, on condition that the Federal Government gives a similar amount. The Council have also asked the Department of the Interior for \$2,000.

It is intended to block off especially WJ 1-5, 8, 13, 16, 24 and maybe also 36. An area of approximately one acre about each important entrance will be fenced off with posts about 4' apart (thus keeping cars out, but allowing grazing cows and tourists in), and signposting with the identity and a description of the cave. Large shafts (e.g. WJ 2-5) will be fenced and marked.

Gates to WJ 13 and 24 will probably be placed inside, for protection and ease of placement. Mesh will be used wherever possible in preference to concrete, as care will be taken to minimise disturbance to any speleological cycles (for example: meteorology, entomology, ecology etc.). Bats, of course, will fit through the mesh.

Eventually, when money becomes available, guided tours of Dip and Punchbowl will be arranged. We were assured that the Council has no intention of using Dog Leg, and that societies such as ours will not be prevented from carrying out trips at will.

David Moore  
Michael Webb  
NUCC.

TRIP REPORTS

Wee Jasper, Dog Leg, WJ 13.

26 November 1967

Went in late afternoon for about half an hour after we returned from seeing Mr. Archer. (See previous page, this issue.) I collected 10 samples of fungi which were growing on the cave floor within the first 400' of the cave.

Michael Webb.

Entered cave at 5.35 p.m. to check the water levels and found the sand trap open (just, due to sand.). It needs about an hour's digging to really clean it up. The whole cave is rotting with many moulds etc. growing in the main passage. Quite a few grass seeds have germinated in the mud, too. Got as far as the Opera House (the top  $\frac{1}{8}$  anyway). Surfaced at about 6.15.

David Moore.

Wee Jasper, Dog Leg, WJ 13.

9 December 1967

Spent about 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours digging out the sand trap, removing about 4 cwt of sand, and arranging the rest to make it safer. The Railway Tunnel is now infested with Herrings, owing to some person's idea of an ideal caving lunch. Beware!

Further note on the Goodradigbee Shire Council's plans: the caves mentioned earlier are to be blocked within 3 months, apparently. The passage was covered by patches of fungi up to 6" across, probably carried in from the surface by muddy boots. Also, we saw a large butterfly 200' in, and also many beetles and flies. The above note is for the information of anyone else interested in cave flora and fauna.

After tea at Punbowl Hill, we returned home arriving at 10 p.m.

Michael Webb.

MERRY CHRISTMAS !

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Changes of address:

R. Moon to 10 Vancouver St., Red Hill, phone 92660.

M. Webb to Flat 1, 74 Ainslie Ave., Reid, phone 42970.  
'about 50 yards west of the Ainslie'

H. Stokes to 12 Roberts St. Macquarie.

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Leader: Ian Raine.

DOG LEG IS OPEN

Bring your slides. Probably in Meetings Room, Union, or in Chemistry Lecture Theatre.

Leader: Ian Raine.

Fresher Trip, Dip and Punch bowl.

Leader: Michael Webb.

Fresher Trip, and also further work about the bottom of Caesar's Hall.

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Contact the Trip Leader or a member of the Committee by 5 p.m. on the Thursday previous to the trip, if you wish to go. Their names and addresses are given below.

President Ian Raine,  
2 Berrigan Crescent, O'Connor  
or Geology S.G.S. Tel 498839

Vice-President Michael Webb,  
1/74 Ainslie Ave., Reid.  
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Burton Hall, A.N.U.  
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