

# 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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## EDITORIAL.

It has long been a mystery to me that although we are all members of a University - an institution theoretically dedicated to the advancement of knowledge - such little scientific work is done by members of this club. Most of our members are in the Faculty of Science, and consequently ought to be well used to making observations and deductions on unusual things they see, but these observations seem to be very rarely investigated.

In spite of a total of over a hundred different members within the club since its inauguration in 1964, a total of only two series of experiments and investigations have ever been published in this magazine. These are:

"Radio Surveying" by H. David Fenn, published in Speleograffiti in May 1967, and

"Potentiometric Surveying" by Michael G. Webb, published in Speleograffiti in July 1967.

In addition, three experiments are now in progress or else contemplated, to my knowledge:

Investigations into the formation of aragonite in caves, by David Moore; David Nicholls, Byron Deveson and Michael Webb are attempting to obtain emission spectra from phosphorescent cave formations; and Michael Webb is "on and off" experimenting on antibiotic activity in cave micro-organisms. (A change for a Physicist, surely?) Of these, only the second has reached the stage where preliminary results may be published shortly.

Why is there this apparent anomaly? Is it because only persons caving for a number of years become interested in the scientific side, and that most of our members are comparatively new to caving?

Yet should it only be experienced cavers who have an enquiring mind? Surely that is a prerequisite for study in the Faculty of Science, whence come most of our members.

There is considerable practical speleological research that can be done - e.g. into cave meteorology, fauna (there is quite a lot underground), the erosion effects of subterranean water (shades of Wyanbene!), and the formation of that particular speleothem called cave coral. Bunyan is full of this unusual type of formation. Unfortunately it is now closed, but Michael Webb may be able to help anyone interested.

EDITOR.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUB

ANNUAL REPORT 1967-68

The fourth full year of existence of the National University Caving Club is now at an end. University clubs must be resigned to losing a high proportion of their members every year. However the club membership is already equal to that of last year, and judging by the number of enthusiastic new members this year attending the introductory trips, the year promises to be an active one for the N.U.C.C.

Through the continued support of the Sports Union, we have been able to increase our equipment by the addition of 120' nylon rope 30' wire ladder, several karabiners, and a soft pack (haversack) Adequate carbide is available for another year's operation. It has been decided to put together 150' of wire ladder, for which the club has had the materials for some time, by the swaged ferrule method.

An average of more than one trip per fortnight has been maintained since the last A.G.M., including the summer vacation. Wee Jasper, Cooleman Plain, Wyanbene, Colong, Marble Arch, Tuglow, Taemas, Ravine, Cotter, Kybean, London Bridge and Bunyan were each visited at least once. The club's first "Field day", on which members learnt abseiling, belaying and ladder climbing techniques, as well as how to cook steak in the pouring rain, was held in July.

New ground for the club was broken at Marble Arch, Kybean, and London Bridge(!) Most important discoveries were in Dog Leg Cave and north of the village at Wee Jasper, and in Wyanbean Cave.

No serious accidents occurred inside any cave, the only casualty being a broken arm sustained while en route to a cave area.

On the political side, an attempt by the club committee to have the club affiliated with the A.S.F. was rejected by a general meeting, but minor constitutional reforms necessary for such a move have been made. A high point in the later part of the year was a talk by John Chappell on caves and prospective cave areas in New Guinea. Another good feature was the regular production of the club newsletter, 'Speleograffiti', now entering its fifth year, this effort in a very large part being due to Michael Webb.

The prospects, again, are for a bright and active year for the club.

Thank you,

I Raine  
President.



### HARD HATS

Have you ever sat down and thought of all the uses to which a caving helmet can be put? No, this is not an Intelligence Test, but an honest thank you to the man who first thought of hard hats, battle bowlers, or what you will.

The first and most obvious use is as a seat. Easily carried to the farthest reaches of a cave, and, although not having the regal splendour of a throne, or the style of a Chippendale, yet after a little practice, and, preferably, 10 hours caving, they become almost as comfortable as your favourite T.V. Chair.

Closely allied to this is its wonderful recuperative powers as a pillow. It may be used either convex upwards or downwards depending on the type of cave entered. In wet caves it is best to use the convex downwards, providing you are not resting in water more than one inch deep, when upwards works quite well to about six inches, or, for those who only insist on breathing, one foot of water.

The next most obvious class of uses is that of a receptacle. No, not just for dandruff but for all sorts of interesting things like bottles of champagne at a caver's dinner, for matches and chocolate etc. when you swim through Wyanbene, as a mug for the last of the big tea drinkers, as a bowl for those who leave their plates behind on overnight trips, or as a chamber pot for those who brought too much on overnight trips. It is tried and tested a carrier of sand from the Sand Trap and, no doubt, could be used for bailing out your boat on the lake on Sundays.

Finally, there are a few ancillary uses to which this magnificent utensil can be put. The brim works efficiently as a digging tool and this can be combined well with the sand and soil cartage mentioned above. Requiring no foot-hold, by stacking them as a ladder. This could be the ultimate solution to climbing the Opera House Wall: a set of steps made from helmets.

One final thought: it has been rumoured that some people wear them on their heads as a means of protection, like armour, and even hang lights on them somehow. Strikes me as a bit of a waste though.

David Moore.

DETAILED PROPOSALS FOR CALL - OUT PROCEDURE.

P.W. Aithison, D.M. Christie, D.H. Moore.

1. Definitons.

- (a) A Check-out Officer is any person suitably placed to report non-return of a particular trip leader by a pre arranged time. Wives, Parents, Flate mates etc. could conceivably prove most useful here.
- (b) A Contact Officer is a member of NUCC considered by the committee to be capable of organising a call-out and having the nedessary information to organise a call out.
- (c) A Call out is the preliminary investigation of non-return of a party and the placing on "alert" of personnel for the possible formation of a Rescue party.
- (d) A Rescue Operation is an operation designed to rectify any emergency discovered to have arisen by the Call-out operation.
- (e) A Rescue Officer is a person considered by the committe to be competent to lead a Rescue Operation.
- (f) The Check-out Book is a book held between trips by the Equipment Officer in which every Trip Leader shall enter:
  - 1 Trip Leader
    - 11 Names of all people in party and their addresses and telephone numbers if these are not included in published club lists. (See below)
    - 111 As detailed an itinerary as possible including departure time, destination, cave(s) to be entered and, if possible, portion(s) of cave(s) to be explored. Estimated return time and call-out time should also be included.

2. The Trip Leader

- (a) The Trip Leader should be familiar with check-out and call-out procedure and implement this.
- (b) Before each trip, the Trip Leader shall appoint a Check-out Officer.
- (c) On the evening before each trip the trip leader shall supply the Check-out Officer with the Check-out Book (completed) and a list of Contact Officers, indicating, if possible, an order of preference bearing in mind the area to be visited.
- (d) The Trip-Leader should not make any change of plan without
  - 1 Altering the Check-Book
    - 11 At least leaving a note in some obvious spot (e.g. on vehicles, at cave entrance) indicating the change of plan.
    - 111 If any new extension is to be explored, the trip leader should attempt to leave some indication of this, such as a piece of equipment at the entrance.
- (e) If a trip is delayed through reasons not requiring call-out the trip leader should make every effort, by a long distance phone call if necessary to circumvent a call-out.



3. The Contact Officer

- (a) The committee should compile a list of responsible people, familiar with NUCC capable of acting as a contact officer.
- (b) All contact officers shall be provided with a copy of Check-out and Call-out procedure and familiarise themselves with this.
- (c) All contact officers should keep in their possession a list compiled by the committee including

1 All members of NUCC

11 All members of NUCC capable of acting as Rescue Officers

111 All members of NUCC capable of taking part in a rescue operation below ground.

IV Selected members of NUCC, ANU Mountaineering Club and Canberra Bushwalking Club, and other caving clubs, capable of assisting underground.

V Contacts such as Police, and Civil Defense organisations from whom above ground support and (possibly) equipment can be obtained.

These lists should give addresses, phone numbers and alternative contact places, if possible.

4. Call - out Procedure

This procedure should be followed in the event of a party failing to return by the call-out time set by the Trip Leader and recorded in the Check-out book.

- (a) The Check-out Officer shall notify a Contact Officer and convey to him the Check-out Book or at least provide him verbally with the details entered therein.
- (b) The Contact Officer shall then attempt to contact other members of the missing party to determine precisely who is missing.
- (c) If (b) fails to provide any information the Contact Officer should take steps to form a preliminary investigation party of 4 or 5 competent people to be equipped and despatched in one vehicle to the search area.
- (d) The party mentioned in (c) shall be led by a Rescue Officer (as included on the list of Rescue Officers see 1 (e)) who shall take charge of field activities at this stage and be prepared to direct a Rescue Operation should one develop.
- (e) The Contact-Officer (or someone appointed by him who shall henceforth become a new Contact Officer) shall remain in Canberra at a predetermined place to await communication from the Rescue Officer.
- (f) The Contact Officer shall then attempt to contact and determine the availability of persons competent to form a Rescue Operation, placing some or all of these on "alert" as he sees fit. He should then leave his phone as idle as possible so as not to delay any communication from the Rescue Officer.

TRIP REPORTS

Bendethera

Easter.

Friday: Exploration near Flagpole Falt.

Saturday: to bottom of 210' pot. Extracted wallaby cranium and jawbones from about 180', which were sent to the CSIRO. Also some people went to Bendethera Cave at the same time. In afternoon, digging at efflux from River Cave: lowered level eventually (Sunday) to enable entry by efflux.

Sunday: P.A. and I.R. walked with some CSS members to cairn near Fig Tree Cave, then crossed creek and ridge to the south, having lunch on the way. Found a dry efflux with small collapsed caves at bottom of hill with Ginn Cave a little higher.

Monday: Left, having lunch at junction of Coondella Trail and Bumbo Trail.

Ian Raine.

Bungonia.

6 April

Left Canberra at 8.30 and arrived at Bungonia at about 10.30, after losing and finding several cars on the way. As quickly as possible, we attempted a descent of the Drum, but after Monty M. and fearless leader had descended the main pitch, it was discovered that the small squeeze near the bottom of the pitch was full of CO<sub>2</sub>. Owen Evans descended for the practise, and then all three returned to the surface, the entire exercise taking 3½ hours. P.W.A. and D.M.C. then led a section to Grill returning at about 4.30 D.H.M. led most of the rest of the party to B50 (one unimpressive chamber) and then to B16 at 3.45 (one unimpressive squeeze, interrupted by an equally unimpressive ladder climb and pitch) as far as the base of the Dragon's Teeth. The last members to reach the surface made it by 9p.m. and we returned home in leisurely stages, stopping off at Goulburn at Jane Lyttle's parent's home for tea.

David Moore.

Cheitmore

20 April

Arriving at Cheitmore early Saturday morning after a very wet and bleak trip out, and entered River Cave at Marble Arch via the squeeze entrance. After exploring this cave, and inspecting a couple of Bent-wing Bats, we went into the Arch, and Owen Evans and self extened the Lake Cave by about 80', as the water level was about 7' down. It was still cold though, and still about 7' deep in the middle. Then moved up into the roof of the Arch, but made no interesting discoveries. The hole above River Cave was also of little interest, so we left for home, arriving about 9 p.m.

Michael Webb.



COMING TRIPS

BUNGONIA. June 8 -10, 1968 Leader Michael Webb.

B22 - a very interesting pot-hole, with a perfect 100' ladder pitch.

B16-51 - another pot-hole, but with only one 30' pitch.

Occasional pretties in both

MOUNT FAIRY June 22, 1968 Leader David Christies

GENERAL MEETING July 1, 1968

Physics Department, Room 8, 8 p.m.

ABERCHROMBIE July 6 - 7, 1968 Leader Michael Webb

Non-tourist caving in tourist type caves, so number will probably be restricted

KYBEAN July 20 -21, 1968 Leader Byron Deveson

5 small caves with plenty of formation. Food for cameras

TAGMAS July 27-28, 1968 Leaders various

Cave hunting.

WYANBENE August 3 - 4, 1968 Leader Michael Webb

The anniversary of the August Special. BE WARNED!

Contact the Trip Leader or a Committee Member by 9.30p.m. on the Wednesday previous to the trip if you wish to go. Their names and addresses are below.

President Michael Webb, 1/74 Ainslie Ave., Reid 42970  
or Physics Library or Laboratories

Vice President Norman Stokes, 12 Roberts St, Macquarie  
phone 511053 (home) or 706511(Work)

Secretary Ian Raine, 2 Berrigan Cres., O'Connor 498839

Treasurer David Moore, 21 Gawler Cres., Deakin 71578

Equipment Officer Peter Aitcheson 493752 (work)

Committee Members David Christie, Geology Laboratories  
David Fenn, Gorman Housem Braddon  
Sue Nicholls, 17 Hobbs St., O'Connor 42271  
Ken Palmer, 30 Earle St, Lyneham 480412