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

The Newsletter of the Australian National University Caving Club

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## IN MEMORIAM

## REQUIESCAT IN PACE

An old friend of NUCC has passed on. That well beloved attender of countless club trips over the last 2½ years will be seen no more. Never again will that well faded and battered countenance spring upon the unwary from behind some stalagmite, or come whistling down on one from igh in the roof of some unfrequented cave.

It all started in February 1966, when M.G.W. was bet that he counldn't wear a boiler suit long enough to replace all the original material with patches. Well, he did, and now this old favourite, veteran of Bunyan, Wyanbene, Bungonia, Wee Jasper, Kybean, and may other, with its faded blues (and greys, yellows, browns and green) is no more - he's bought a new one.

We wish this old museum - piece well, and humbly suggest to Michael webb that he keeps it - to provide patches for his new one.

Viva la Boiler Suit!

The Editor.

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P.S. Mrs. W. suggests the incinerator would be preferable

Shame shame!

## RECENT ACTIVITIES.

Our motorcycling Vice President certainly gets around. A murmur reached my ear the other day that he has had two trips recently up into the mountains to some place in the Kosciusko State Park called Ravine. Seems that when looking at a map he spotted 7 square miles of limestone hiding amongst the junk, and went to investigate. His first trip at Christmas only gave the lie of the land ("North-south steep, East-west rugged, all densely overgrown"), but the second, about three weeks ago, was more fruitful;-

"I started walking from the machine at about 1.30 p.m., and reached the top of the range about an hour later, finding myself at the top of a fantastic scree run, on a watershed not quite 3'6" wide. The slopes on either side were at least 45° and more probably 55°. The mountain was very densely overgrown, so I walked down the fringe of the scree - more dangerous, but easier. 500' down I found myself at the top of a long series of limestone cliffs of about 150' to 200', which I couldn't descend, since I didn't even have abseil ropes with me."

He then returned back up the hill, and drove down to Ravine, arriving just after dark.

Friday morning was not very useful, butthe afternoon was considerably more interesting.

"Of the four main watercourses, only Wallaces was flowing. On walking up, I found that fora t least three miles it was bordered on both sides by tiers of cliffs, totalling nearly 500', up which I only saw four routes. The cliffs are packed with entrances, and there should also be some spectacular waterfalls when it's a bit wetter. Above the cliffs I found a definite efflux, which I decided to call RV1. On the SMA's Cabramurra 1 mile sheet its position is 28547,17387. So far as I know, this limestone is virtually unexplored, so good discoveries may be made."

One gathers there will be further trips.

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The Fresher Trips were a success, with 25 people on the first, many of whom are now new members. Let us hope that the rest of the year's trips are as good. Dick Price, who took a party of Scouts caving last Sunday, reports that Dog Leg is open still, but that he didn't go to the end.

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Apparently John Foster found that Sump 1 in Murray's Cave at Cooleman was still open on February 28.

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TEST TO DESTRUCTION OF AN NUCC LADDER SECTION.

The ladder section destroyed was a rung with attached wire from one of those constructed by Graeme Chapman and other members of NUCC in 1965. The ladders were first used on 2/10/65 at Bungonia. Owing to bad usage, parts of the cable were damaged and so the ladders were condemned in mid 1967. After the good parts were salvaged, a good rung and wire section came my way. I decided to dismantle one side ( section A below), and destroy the other by repeated stressing until something broke. (Section B.)

The object of this was to determine (a) the effects of 18 months occasional usage, and,

(b) the resistance of the rungs and cable to use.

In my opinion the ladder did not perform satisfactorily in either category.

First some comments on the system of manufacture.

A hollow rung was taken and holes drilled to take the 3mm aileron cable which formed the walls. A 0.3" brass wood-screw was then screwed into the cable and 1" of the rung at each end filled with epoxy resin. The ladder was then baked for 1 hour at 100°C to cure the resin. It is not my part to criticise this method of construction. The results given below can tell their own story.

Results. Section A.

Extreme care was taken while dismantling the rung, thus ensuring that no damage was done to components by me.

The wire was carefully detached from the ladder rung. It was found that:

(i) the epoxy filling had rendered the core very bbittle, and did not allow passage of the hemp oils.

(ii) the core was broken in three places, just above and below the rung itself, and also about the point where it was spread by the screw.

(iii) the head of the screw had broken free of the shank, and was lying in a cavity in the epoxy. The cavity was slightly larger than the screw head.

(iv) the point of the screw was missing.

(v) the epoxy filling was not thicker than the inside of the wire.

(vi) several strands of the cable were broken within the rung.

Results. Section B.

A good wire was bent through 180° about the rung 30 times. Over 3 outside strands were broken, and a few inside strands appeared broken.

On the other side of the rung, the steel cable was bent backwards and forwards the same way until it completely broke ( test to destruction). 99 bends of 180° completely fractured the wire flush with the rung. 60% of the strands broke in the period 80 - 99 bends, with only 40% breaking up until that time.

Conclusions.

(i) The practice of using epoxy resin seriously damages the hemp core. A British Standards Association report indicates that the resultant loss in check strength may be up to 60%.

(ii) The cable is extremely susceptible to damage by bending. Care should therefore be taken in use, and especially in coiling. Note well the short warning before total failure.

(iii) The screw through the cable damaged the core and the wire, but was of no practical advantage as it broke flush with the cable.

(iv) It's a good thing NUCC has bought some new ladder better put together.

19/12/87.

Michael G.Webb,
N.U.C.C.

Fig.I Method of Construction of NUCC 1985 Ladders.

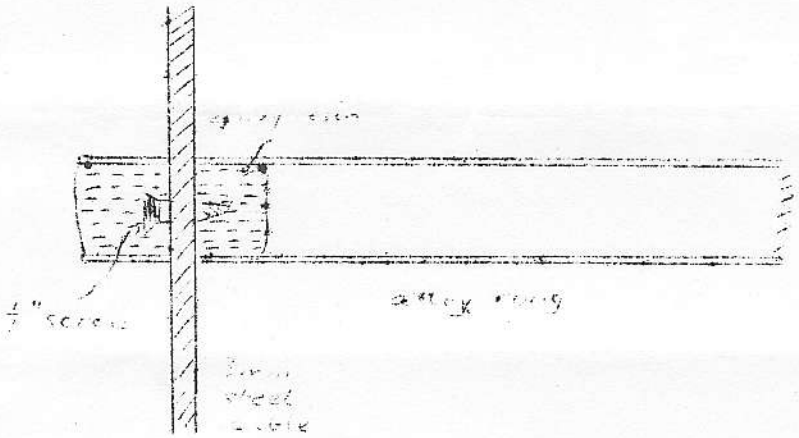
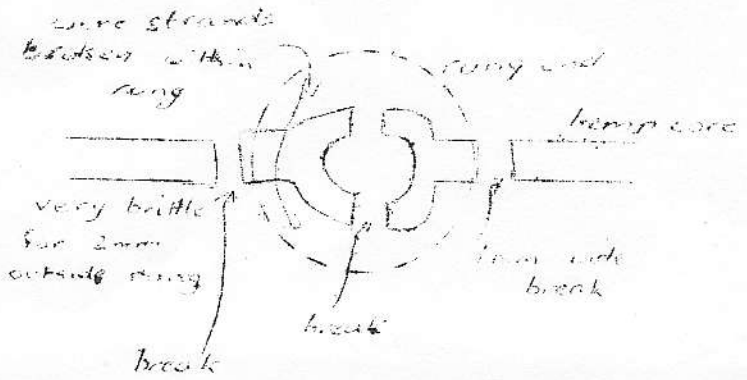


Figure II. Observed Damage to NUCC 1965 Ladder Rungs.




M.G.Webb,
19/12/67.

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO S.S.S.

After 12 years and more of enthusiastic and not so enthusiastic digging, the Efflux at Bungonia has finally fallen. Hopefully it will turn out to be the bottom of a system comprising much of Bungonia. Also lets hope the COB goes with the rock and rubble.

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR 1968.

The Annual General Meeting of the NUCC will be held in Physics Lecture Theatre Number 3 on Tuesday March 19, 1968.
After the election of Office Bearers, there will be a showing of slides of local caves, and supper.

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Rumour has it that this article was written after the "August Special". The reader is left to judge the truth or otherwise of this assertion.

## COLD , WET , AND MUDDY - A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WYANBENE.

This cave is situated 25 miles south of Braidwood, and 4 miles south-east of Krawarree, in N.S.W., at an altitude of about 2600'. The efflux is at the head of a small valley, with the normal entrance some 80' higher. This leads down directly to the river passage, which runs south for 2800feet. Because the cave features a permanent river, the humidity is always very high - usually over 95%. This assists in giving the cave its phenomenally beautiful formations.

300' inside the cave, the river appears from a sump - the first of many. Also near this point is the first chamber - a lofty room called the Mud Chamber. Since this was the limit of the old tourist cave (for 50 years it was all that was known) most of the formations have vanished, but a few shawls and helictites remain, together with a great column known as the Birthday Cake, which is always very photogenic, as are most of Wyanbene's formations.

From the Mud Chamber, the rest of the cave is reached by climbing through a blowhole. Last time I was there, the wind speed was over 25 mph. Although from this point the caving gets progressively harder, it is still fairly easy up until Cleopatra's Bath and Helictite Chamber is passed. The former is a beautiful cluster of rimstone pools, helictites and shawls about 20 feet square and is almost the only cavern known on the east side of the river. The latter is the second large chamber and features several thousand square feet of helictites jutting out from the wall - one a perfect Möbius strip 9" in diameter and 1½" high.

Now the route leaves the river for a while and passes through narrow fissures and jumbled blocks before returning to the stream for a section 18" high at most by 2' wide at most with the stream 4" deep and flowing very fast. Once, for interest, we measured the temperature in this zone. We then wished we hadn't - 48 degrees. This purgatory lasts 130', time varying between 10 minutes and 1½ hours.

Shortly the first of the big chambers (Rockfall, Caesar's Hall, Lake) is reached. Rockfall was discovered by Geoff Marchant and Neville King (both NUCC) in March 1965. Its south end is taken up by an enormous jumble of fallen boulders and scree, through which the speleo must crawl to reach Caesar's Hall. Nicholl's Squeeze was discovered by David Nicholls (NUCC) in March 1967 as an alternative route to the high and tricky fissure through the roof, originally found independently by CSS and SSS. Caesar's is over 350' high and 300' long with the north wall the other side of the rubble in Rockfall. Temperature and humidity last August were 53°F and 93%.

Then back to the river, through two deep and slimy mud pits, up a very difficult climb, down a ladder into Lake Chamber which is the present limit of discoveries. The lake is almost 20' deep, and very cold.

For those that can survive the problems, this is a very beautiful and very rewarding cave.

For those that can't, it's the proverbial "grotty little 'ole" - cold, wet, and muddy.

N.G.Y.

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TRIP REPORTS.

Tuglow. January 6, 1963.

This is the saga of what not to do on a trip.
Left Canberra at 8 am after a scheduled early start of 6 am, because the leading lights slept in. Stopped at Goulburn for a pie and to grab a few other luxuries. Got lost at 12.30 and wound up at Tuglow weather station. Cracked trip leader's shoulder again, ensuring that he would not be fit to chimney effectively. Found ourselves again at 1, but the last 10 miles took an hour, so that after setting up camp and eating, we didn't get underground before 3.45. Because of the consistant heavy rain over the previous week all attempts at chimneying were fraught with danger without lifelines. The first chimney was laddered with the only piece of ladder taken, and then careful exploration dislodged the top of Fearless Leader's carbide lamp, which bounced of into the bowels of the earth, never to be seen again. Returned to surface to get extra rope and a new carbide. Ruined arm completely on return, so, in order to get things moving, stayed at top of first pitch and threw ladder down to MGW and Graeme Holt. (Ian Raine did not enter cave.) It was to no avail, as neither knew the cave, and so were forced to use the ladder again by the wet chimney. A further chimney was climbed by GH, but he required roping. He managed to get to about 140', but was then forced to return because he ran out of ladder on a long chimney. Returned gloomily at about 8.45 pm.
Returned at 10 am next day to take a few photographs and emerged at 11 am. (That, at least, went right )
Took of for home at about 12.00, stopping at the Aberchrombie for lunch.
To cap the whole thing off nicely, we got a flat outside Reid House at 6 pm.
Let's hope that future trips go off better than the first trip of the year.
Fauna: Several Bent-wing bats were noted on both trips, probably between 10 and 20 in number.

DAVID MOORE.

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There have also been two climbing trips - one (MGW, DEM) to Mystery Bay on the South Coast, and the other (JIR,DEM,RCP,MGW) to Mount Coree.

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Cotter. February 10, 1963.

Quick trip out to take pictures of the main chamber.

MICHAEL WEBB.

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Several people owe me trip reports for various occasions.

## COMING TRIPS.

WAIBENE 9 March, 1968. Leader Michael Webb.
Fresher trip.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 19 March, 1968.
Physics Lecture Theatre number 8.

COOLEMAN 23 March 1968. Leader Peter Aitcheson.
Weekend trip to see if Murray C ve is still open.

BUNGONIA 6 April, 1968. Leader David Moore.
The Drum, one of Australia's deepest caves - 330'.

BENDETHERA 13 April, 1968. Leader Ian Raine.
Easter.

RAVINE 13 April, 1968. Leader Michael Webb.
See page 9; this edition.

CREITMORE 20 April, 1968. Leader Michael Webb.

FIELD DAY 27 April, 1968. Organisers Peter Aitcheson and Michael Webb.
Probably at Red Rocks, barbecue afterwards.

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Contact the trip leader or a Committee Member by 5 pm on the Thursday previous to the trip if you wish to go. Their names and addresses are below.

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| PRESIDENT | IAN RAINE 8, Berrigan Cres., O'Connor, 493089. |
| VICE PRESIDENT | MICHAEL WEBB 1/74 Anstie Ave., Reid, 49970. or Physics Library or Laboratories. |
| SECRETARY | JOHN TILLEY Bruce Hall, A.N.U. |
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| EQUIPMENT OFFICER | DAVID MOORE 21, Fowler Cres., Deakin, 71578. |
| COMMITTEE MEMBERS | Carla Van Driel (now left A.N.U.) PETER AITCHESON phone 493759 (W.E.) MERLIN STOKES Mt. Stromlo Observatory 706511 (W.T.) |