

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

The Newsletter of the National University Caving Club

Volume 6, Number I.

April, 1969.

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## EDITORIAL

As seems usual for NUCC newsletters, this issue is about a month overdue. If the number of trip reports seem extraordinarily large, remember that the last newsletter was published towards the end of last year.

Already this year quite a few trips have been made, one of which had the rather dubious distinction of including a relatively minor accident which could have proved much more serious. Hence a few words on cave safety would seem appropriate. This accident was simply due to carelessness on my part, as I put all my weight on a rather unstable foothold, which collapsed - resulting in a rather badly cut eye. Obviously this could quite easily have been avoided, however, it serves as a good object lesson to others as to the effects of carelessness.

As can be seen from the list of coming trips and trip reports, this promises to be an extremely active year. There probably will be a trip on every weekend and with the entertainment offered - i.e. an extremely varied bar, roaring campfire, together with much singing to the accompaniment of guitars - there is no excuse for armchair caving. Also any activity in the line of writing articles for the newsletter would be greatly appreciated. These don't have to be original; if you read anything on caving or which could be of interest to cavers in general, jot down a quick summary and give it to a Committee Member.

The Editor.

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THE N U C C LIBRARY

Believe it or not, NUCC has a Library. This contains issues of newsletters of Sydney Speleological Society, Canberra Speleological Society, Metropolitan Speleological Society, West Australian Speleological Group, Sydney University Speleological Society, University of Queensland Speleological Society, Australian Speleological Federation, as well as all back issues of Speleograffiti. Also we have the ASF Speleohandbook, articles on overseas caves, such as Dan-yr-Ogof in Wales, American caves, European caves, as well as a large book containing much information about local caves. Also scientific publications, maps, photographs, and numerous pieces of paper about anything to do with caving.

We even have a recording of Mendlesohn's "Fingals Cave"! If you want any of this material, see Michael Webb (much of the above actually belongs to him) and he will issue it to you.

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### NEW CAVING AREAS AROUND CANBERRA?

There are several limestone deposits within 30 or 40 miles of Canberra which may prove to contain small caves. Up to date, caves, although not extensive are known at the following localities: White Rocks, S of Queanbeyan; London Bridge, S of Queanbeyan; Cotter, W of Canberra; Mt. Fairy, NE of Bungendore; Michelago, S of Canberra.

There are several other areas which have not been properly examined, if at all.

Limekiln Ck., junction with Shoalhaven River, referred to as Etrima in the Speleo Handbook. Reported to look cavernous by Clarke in his book "Southern Goldfields". Four small caves have been reported.

Warroo, South of Goodhope, see trip report. The crinoidal limestone in this area is reported to contain a fairly large cave and several sinkholes.

Primrose Valley, South of Bungendore, I have not examined this area yet but hope to do so in the near future. Reported to be several limestone deposits in the lower Silurian sediments of the area.

Area East of Bredbo contains a large number of limestone deposits in lower Silurian sediments. One of these is about a mile long by  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile wide and is near to a track and straddles a creek. This area will also be investigated shortly.

There are two large deposits of the Micalong Limestone, South of Wee Jasper, one is near the road and has been metamorphosed to marble by the large intrusion of porphyry SW of Wee Jasper. It is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a square mile in extent and larger than the other deposit which is about 4 miles South, at the junction of Limestone Ck, and the Goodradigbee River.

Many caves have been reported on the East side of the Goodradigbee both North and South of Wee Jasper but have not been examined. (Unfriendly farmers)? ?

There are at least five limestone deposits South of Captain's Flat. Although most of the above areas are not likely to contain caves they are worth looking at just to satisfy one's curiosity at least.

Kenneth Palmer

POST CONFERENCE NULLABOR TRIP - 31/12/68 - 17/1/69

After the close of the conference on the morning of Monday 30/12/68, we had lunch at the conference centre (Graham's Castle at Goolwa, 55 miles south of Adelaide), then arranged a lift into Adelaide to the Alberton Scout Hall where we were to be billeted for the night. We waited there for a while, for someone to come and let us in, but eventually got tired of waiting, so Henry Shannon (Pres, UQSS) and myself went into Adelaide for a look around. It's much the same as any other large city, although a lot cleaner than most. Adelaide also contains a lot of beautiful old buildings, most very well kept. On the whole, the place is far neater than say Sydney or Melbourne, or even Canberra. But, Oh those hideous Stobey Poles! There is very little wood in S.A., so metal and concrete is used for telegraph and light poles - two metal plates about 6" apart, filled with concrete. The things will virtually completely destroy any vehicle silly enough to hit them, without even being scratched themselves. Adelaide is full of them. We had a very good meal in the usual poky Italian cafe somewhere towards the western end of North Terrace, and then returned to the Scout Hall to wait some more.

31/12/68.

Left Alberton Scout Hall in three cars at 5.45 p.m., and spent the next 50 miles passing through market gardening areas. Camped that night just past Iron Knob. A hideous blot on the landscape to be sure - even by moonlight it looks dirty.

However, our New Year Party was quite fun even though we were to be on the road by 9 a.m.

It was the second of January before we explored our first cave - a blowhole whose only title is its grid reference which determines its position correct to 1,000 yards, which, I suppose, is fair enough in 75,000 square miles. This turned out to be about 30' deep and have a small chamber at the bottom, completely devoid of decoration, but containing a dead wallaby and a couple of rabbits. We then went down to Wigunda Doline (N147) near the coast.

#### N147

Large sink, depth 60', diameter 120' with a tunnel running off the western side and following the doline around to the north for a distance of 50'. The edge of the doline is steep cliffs below a steep slope, but quite climable. We then went back to the coast to look for any efflux for the sink. Did a lot of rockclimbing in blustery Antarctic Ocean winds, but no luck on efflux.

Some more climbing - Site No. 40, a 2008 high microwave tower which is part of the communications link between Perth and the eastern states. The tower sways nicely in the wind, so it was necessary to really hang on, in spite of the fixed steel ladders to the top. However, the view made the climb well worth while as we could see for about 20 miles around, picking out all the places we had been that day, or at least their directions.

Unfortunately, we were refused access to Koonalda cave, so we went down towards Clay Dam Cave, and camped there for the night.

Friday 3/1/69.

Clay Dam Cave. The cave is well named, being primarily composed of clay and loose loose loose rubble. It is about 70' wide and 70' deep, and it is necessary to use a ladder and brave the inevitable falling rocks on the way. As I was first in and last out I had plenty of time to have a good look around. Found many spiders at the bottom as well as many other insects. Boulder piles, compacted over the years, cover the floor, as well as a lot of recent loose rubble, much of it put there by our party. Apparently the shaft has recently held water, as there is a soak in the eastern corner which has not long dried out. There are still plants growing on the mud, generally a species something like crab-grass. We also found several wetas at the bottom. Although there is no offshoot from the sink worth note, I spent 2 hours at the bottom, and enjoyed every minute of it.

Then back to the coast, where we descended the cliffs to the very rocky bottom, ostensibly to look for caves (which we did) but also to enjoy the sun and the view (which we did better). We saw 7 or 8 porpoises in the bay, and I think I saw a seal. I tried free climbing one route back up the cliffs, with nearly disastrous results, so I used the rope and wall-walked. The actual cliff is about 130' high, with over a hundred feet of boulders and talus between the bottom and the ocean.

After lunch, head west again for Eucla, where we gratefully sank much (cold) beer, then to Weebubbie Cave. Lost a vehicle on the Weebubbie road (?) but eventually found it again. Found a good campsite for the next three days near the cave.

4/1/69

Breakfast 8.30 a.m. then off to find Abrakurrie, about 40 miles away, which is the seventh largest chamber in the world, I'm told.

First many miles of searching for it, then a look at the Chowilla Landslip, the Abrakurrie. N3 is basically a wide and



lofty tunnel with a mud floor in the centre, rubble at the sides. There is no formation in the eastern sense, but there are some good fossils in the soft white limestone about 6' up from the floor. There are also many short avens in the roof, varying between 5 and 50' wide and 20 to 40 feet high. The shape of the tunnel is basically that of a Gothic Arch about 60' high. The walls are very soft, so I suspect that many of the famous Aboriginal Hand Prints are in fact fairly recent, put there by people knowing of the existence of the hand prints and adding a few more. The chamber is 1100' long and about 100' wide. In fact, as I did, it is possible to walk right round it and back to your starting point without ever realising you have turned round. We then returned to our campsite, and went down Weebubbie for a bath in the lake. Swam to the end of the cave (300 yard round trip) in 40' max of cold clear water. So clear in fact that you would think the bottom was only 10' or so away. Just try to reach it. It's a long way down.

5/1/69.

Down to Wilson's Bluff to search for sea caves. Two were no good, but I found one that was about 50' long and with a few lateral extensions, but it wasn't really worth calling a cave. A swim in the Antarctic Ocean, then fun a frolic on the ginormous Delisser Sandhills. Off to Warbla Cave (N1) then back to camp. Met a water carrier on the way, who offered to show us a blowhole. This one has an entrance about 18" diameter, opening into a small chamber with a snake skeleton and three dead kangaroos. Also red-back spiders everywhere. Virtually no other insects were seen. After exploration, back to camp for a late (10.30) tea, then to bed.

Monday 6/1/69

Some people got up at 5am to climb a microwave tower nearby. I stayed in bed, then down into the cave for a swim. When we came out of the 65°F cave at one o'clock the temperature in the shade was 117.5. We then headed for Mullamallang, via a look at the Hampton Escarpment. I could see several miles across the Roe Plain to the south with the Delisser Sandhills to the east merging into sandy beaches to the west. The demarkation was about a mile to my east. The trees of the Roe Plain merged into low acacia and bluebush about 2 miles from the coast, then into the sand of the dunes and beaches.

We then adjourned to the Eucla Pass Motel for a beer, then down to old Eucla itself. Here, the sand has encroached on the old telegraph station until it is virtually covered with sand-dunes, except for one lonely oak tree that still stands guard over the ruined buildings. This and the two ruins, and the old jetty are all that is left.

Met Ted Anderson, Ian Wood and Co. about ten miles from Eucla and had a natter, then on to the first tank for water. Then Majura for more beer, teaming up with Allan Hill, Howard Den-gate and Co., then on to N37. Got lost three times on the way eventually ending up bivouacing for the night after the comment "I'd say Mullamallang is about 30 miles over there. We'll have a look in the morning".

Tuesday 7/1/69.

Left bivouac at 10 am for N37, and arrived at noon, after getting directions from owner of Majura Station. Set up camp. Temperature 121.5 at noon.

Down N37 at 1.30, down the enormous entrance rockpile, 150' high, then down to S-Lake where we had a swim, and through Easter Extension, where Henry Shannon (Pres. UQSS) and I took Tail end Charlie jobs and cruised through at our own rate, admiring the pretties, and taking our time up to five minutes behind the rest. Then back through from Easter Extension to Franks Station via one of Peter Hawkes discoveries and onto the Col. Bill Wallace ruined his knee again so we had a slow trip out assisting him along. Reached surface at 8.45 p.m.

8/1/69.

Down Mullamallang for a two day stay at Camp 1,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles in. Through to Southerly Buster, then a stop at S-Lake to yarn to John Taylor and Paul Jenner who were camped there taking water table measurements. Then continue to Camp 1,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from daylight. Had a meal then went up to the Dome to take Diprotodon photographs. This is a high aven at the top of a rockpile and has very soft walls, which we talked about climbing. Caught a spider and a cockroach in the Dome. After that we found the Exam (Maze spelt backwards, because that's the way it's going). Boss then insisted on starting surveying. After two abortive attempts at finding unsurveyed passages, we ran into the other survey party who were having the same trouble. Back to Camp 1 to bed.

Thursday 9/1/69

Found I had Flu. Cured it with a handful of Vegenin tablets, and learned that the plan had been changed, now no survey, just a CRF I sketch if anyone felt like making one. Henry and I didn't so we wandered off into the right hand branch from Camp 1. Rockpiles rockpiles rockpiles for a thousand feet or so. Back to Camp 1 via a beautiful lake about 500' from the camp. Gypsum and Epsom Salt crystals 3" thick on walls and bottom. Very pretty.

Friday 10/1/69

Photography at Lake Cigalere and Camp 1, then away. Met Hilly's party at the Sail, then pictures galore from there to the entrance, which we reached at 9 pm, to find that it had rained while we were underground.

11/1/69.

Back into Mulla-mallang at 10.30 to take pictures in Easter Extension. Spent 2 hours taking water table measurements at Oasis Valley, then into the Easter, and out again at 5 o'clock to have lunch. Then to the Majura Pub on route for the mythical Dingo Donga and Cocklebidy. Left the pub at just after midnight, and camped about 10 mile west for the night.

Sunday 12/1/69 - Saturday 18/1/69 to be printed next issue.

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Watch for the next thrilling instalment of -

THE NULLABOR SAGA

in our next bumper issue of SPELEOGRAFFITI.

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TRIP REPORTS.

5/12/68. Limestone Creek.

Carne and Jones - "Limestone Deposits of N.S.W." (1919) - report the existence of limestone near the Lake Bathurst Railway Station. They say there are four beds separated by sandstone and shales.

The limestone outcrops over a distance of  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile total, in beds about 50' - 100' wide. It outcrops along the creek, very fossiliferous, and grey massive.

I found a tiny entrance near the creek, but didn't explore it as I only had a very poor torch with me. I was in the area only about three hours, but doubt if there is much caving there, as the relief is very low, and in general the outcrops small. However the place is possibly worth another trip.

M.G.W.

15/2/69 - 16/2/69. Ravine.

Left Canberra at about 8 pm on Friday night, and arrived at the campsite shortly after midnight.

Saturday. Straight over Section Ridge from camp and then down 1300' to Wallaces Creek, half a mile away. Upstream 1 mile, then up Section Ridge to the road, and back to camp.

No caves - worse still, no limestone.  
Campfire session that night.

Sunday. Down the road until it crosses the big scree run, then up it. Paulette decided to go back to camp. I wish I'd had the sense to do the same. The scree run is 450' high. We went right to the top of Mt. Byron (4000' odd) and buried a Coke can with due ceremony ("Coke conquers yet another mountain"! ) and went on down the other side, where we discovered how much fun gibberology can be on a 60 degree scrub covered slope. Practical too. It was near here that we discovered RV4 - a converging fissure 25' long, 8' high and 18" wide with a fantastic hexagonal mosaic pattern on the wall outside it. So much for the Mid-Devonian sandstone cap on the top of Mt. Byron. It's all basalt.

Down to Beeby's Creek, crossing it about 50 yards west of the point where limestone was discovered in October. Shales,



Shales. Shale, shale, shale, basalt from there back up to the top of Byron.

After a stop for a well earned beer at the Kiandra we came home.

Comment: I hate geologists.

Idiots who went to Ravine this trip:

Noel and Paulette Call,  
Byron Deveson (no relation to the mountain)  
Michael Webb.

M.G.W.

● 8/3/69. Wee Jasper Fresher.

Since there were so many of us, we split into two parties. Noel Call took one and I the other. My group did a run through Punchbowl (3 hrs), then Signature ( $\frac{3}{4}$  hr), Anemone ( $\frac{1}{2}$  hr), and Wombat Mansions - a grotty hole to be sure. Anemone is a pretty little cave. It's a shame everything is dead and vandalised. Still, I like it. Dinner in Yass, then coffee at my place.

Me, David Hughes, Pip Wisdom, Viv Lowden, John Brush, Annabelle Wheeler, Jim Curtis, Barbara Baxter, Noel and Paulette Call, Ken Palmer, Chris Ryan, David Gibson, Mick Alting, A.N. Other, A.N. Onymous.

M.G.W.

● 15/3/69. Wyanbene

Out Friday night, camped near the entrance, and had a look at the efflux.

Saturday morning into Wyanbene and up the usual route to Caesar's Hall. Considerable exploration was done here: John Brush and myself found a high level stream meander in the roof and followed it until it ended in an aven, 40' from the next bit of terra more less than more firma, and Mick Alting started exploring a grotty hole in the wall just down from Nicholl's Squeeze. Unfortunately

- (i) no-one had much idea where he was;
- (ii) he left his hat behind (this helped while trying to find him, but wasn't much help when he needed it),
- (iii) his hole wasn't rock but mud and he fell 20' into a chamber, lacerating his face and doing

considerable, though fortunately temporary damage to his beauty.

It took Noel and myself an hour to get him out of the hole and back through the squeeze into Caesar's Hall, and then 3 hours from there to the entrance. After cleaning the injuries so I could see them, I decided that I probably couldn't handle them, so Viv and I took Mick into hospital at Canberra (via hospital at Braidwood, which doesn't have a doctor), and stayed until the diagnosis was pronounced curable, then had a meal and returned to Wyanbene, arriving at 4.15 am (pouring rain all the way, sides all over the road, including one complete spin - an interesting trip to be sure).

In the morning we returned to Canberra, getting home at about 3 p.m.

David Hughes, Viv Lowden, John Brush, Annabelle Wheeler, Noel Call, Me, Ken Palmer, Chris Ryan, David Gibson, Mick Alting.

M.G.W.

● 22/3/69 Bungonia

Gas at the bottom of the first pitch in Argyle Pot, so back out again. 1½ hours.

Hogan's Doline for abseiling practise.

B22. 8% gas at the bottom of the Whispering Wall, so back out of there as well.

A really dead trip, for the 16<sup>7</sup> people who went.

M.G.W., Mick Alting, Ken Palmer, John Brush, Jim Curtis, Pip Wisdom, Mollie, Paulette Call  
Bill Campbell, John Forlonger, Jim Atkinson

M.G.W.

29/3/69. Warroo (??)

This is an abridged version of the original trip report which was lost (?). Warroo is an area south of Goodhope and north of Taemas and protrudes out into Lake Burrinjuck. A fairly large cave and several sinkholes have been reported by Ida Browne, a female geologist who mapped the area. A.J. Shearsby a geologist who lived in Yass at the turn of the century reports several small caves in the area, including a very deep one containing CO<sub>2</sub>. Mick Alting has spoken with a person who knows someone else who has been inside Warroo cave. This is very intriguing so Mick, Pip Wisdom and myself went for a good hunt around. A deep fissure about 70 feet, was entered

and explored for at least 100 feet, this goes further and was not fully explored. A rubbish tip sinkhole was found, small chamber filled with muddy water worth revisiting. These caves, coupled with Bloomfield Pot discovered a month earlier by this club, make three for the general area, though I am sure there are many more.

Ken Palmer.

Investigation of small caves on Punchbowl Hill and Dip 4th. Extension.

On the 13th of this month, (significant), J.F.<sup>+</sup>, J.A.<sup>#</sup> and self left Canberra and headed NNW along route 25. On arriving in Yass at 7 am. and finding everything closed we proceeded to W.J. Investigations began at 8 am. with a short walk up the hill to about the level of Signature, we then proceeded around the hill in a clockwise direction looking at all small holes. The first hole of any significance was toward the top of the hill and was found by J.A. As the entrance was rather small an attempt to enlarge it was made, this proved fruitless although much soil and rock was removed. Jim; being the slimmest member of the trio decided to descent the pot as it was, and chimneyed down the 15 odd feet to the floor. No side passages were evident although some digging may produce some, many bones were present and a well preserved skull was retrieved, (sheep?). Other holes were looked at, one, to the dismay of John, contained a rather dead sheep and exploration was discontinued. The Punchbowl, W.J.9, a large collapse doline, was entered, great place for abseiling, a nice specimen of Calcite was found in the talus slope. The whole 15 feet of Tee Cave was explored. The whole 10 feet of W.J.40 was not explored. In all, the morning's caving? was almost equivalent to a trip through the smallest cave at Cotter. After a hearty meal, and a cup of tea with queer things floating in it, we felt like some real caving. Having only 30 feet of ladder with us the best we could do was the Dip 4th. Extension. After a couple of hours underground including a visit to the Gong Room and no new discoveries, we set sail for Yass with the setting sun behind us. (Try saying that five times rapidly) As we were bone-fide travellers we stopped at the Royal for some beers and a round of Pool, had a "meal" and returned to Canberra.

Ken Palmer.

+ John Furlonger

# Jim Atkinson.



COMING EVENTS

3rd May, 1969	CHEITMORE	Leader Michael Webb
3 good caves in a narrow limestone gorge. Good scenery, good caving.		
6th May, 1969	Committee Meeting	Chez Call, 8 p.m.
10-11th May, 1969	YARRANGOBILLY	Leader Michael Webb
'nuff said.		
14th May, 1969	GENERAL MEETING	Physics Room 8, 8 p.m.

FILMS

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N.U.C.C. Committee for 1969

President	Michael Webb	1/74 Ainslie Avenue, Reid. Phone 42970 (AH), 489066 Ext. 219
Vice-President	Noel Call	11 Renwick St., Chifley, Phone 493009 (WH)
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Treasurer	Jim Atkinson	58 Jacka Cr., Campbell, Phone 487352.
Equipment Officer	David Christie	Federal Highway, Sutton Phone 703253.
Committee Members	Paulette Call	11 Renwick St., Chifley
	Norm Stokes	12 Roberts St., Macquarie Phone 511053.
	John Brush	149 Mugga Way, Red Hill Phone 94610.

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