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THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE AUSTRALIAN
SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

No. 10

Published Quarterly

December 1960.

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Third National Conference -- Canberra, A.C.T.

Although many details remain to be finalized, the programme of our coming conference is certainly going to be the best yet. It is still uncertain how many people will be attending, but two members of the Western Australian Group will be making the long journey, covering over 4,000 miles, to be present.

Slides and films to be shown will take delegates into virtually every caving area of Australia. Papers to be read include one by Ilex Bastion on the origin and development of caves in Western Australia and two papers from the new Northern Territory Society on the history and hydrology respectively of their caving areas about Katherine. Our former president, Joe Jennings, as always, will no doubt have many interesting things to say about his investigations over the last two years. Cliff Ollier will draw on experience in the British Isles, East Africa, and the Congo.

A "second edition" of the programme and agenda is being prepared for distribution to societies in the very near future.

What is your society contributing ? -- Slides or films ?

A paper for discussion ?

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VICTORIAN SPELEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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Has this Newsletter a Future:- This is the tenth issue of the Newsletter of A.S.F. so at least it has had a past. The first six issues over three years were merely newsheets keeping everyone in touch with A.S.F. business, and with speleological research that was being conducted in Australia. This is the fourth issue which has been produced in a more newsletter form, and which has attempted to cover the whole gamut of speleological activity in Australia. The attempt in part has been successful. Overseas speleological bodies and scientific institutions within Australia have shown interest in receiving this newsletter. It has certainly caused an increase in the number of publications we receive from overseas societies. However member societies of A.S.F. seem to want more; more society news; more comprehensive resumés of A.S.F. business; more reviews of the latest developments of speleological research overseas as well as in Australia. Only by the efforts of these member societies can we publish more. Firstly we have to have the material to publish, and secondly we'll need a lot more finance.

Finance is the major question. A larger newsletter could be published quarterly (or even more frequently) if the labour involved in production and distribution was removed from three pairs of shoulders. In other words everyone would be happy if I could hand the copy to a commercial concern for production and distribution, and A.S.F. footed the bill. Many societies produce newsletters - good ones at that - and all by voluntary labour. But I doubt if any of them have a distribution of 550. Also I note that their publication dates are as erratic as mine.

Many people feel that this newsletter is playing an important part, and certainly has a future. But the future depends on member societies for more financial support, as well as more contributions for publications.

Registration of Newsletter for transmission by post as a Periodical:- Enquiries have been made. It would mean considerable savings in postage. The present form of this newsletter is acceptable for registration as a periodical. However before registration can be approved amendments have to be made to the A.S.F. constitution. Also a complete list of all A.S.F. members who receive the Newsletter has to be submitted to the P.M.G. These matters will be discussed at Canberra.

A.S.F. Annual Journal ? S.U.S.S. has recently circulated a notice of motion to alter A.S.F. Constitution. Elery Hamilton-Smith, A.S.F. President, has already commented on them in a circular to all member societies. Only one concerns publications, so I would like to add some further comments on the proposed Amendment 2 which states that:-

- (a) The Publications Officer shall be editor of the A.S.F. journal.
- (b) All Members and affiliated Societies are entitled to submit reports, maps, and articles for publication.
- (c) The journal shall be published by October of each year.
- (d) The price of the journal shall be included in the membership subscription.

Evidently S.U.S.S. members are amongst the many people who feel that an Australian Journal of Speleology is a necessary contribution by A.S.F., and that the time is now ripe for it's birth. But there are difficulties which must be ironed out, else this ambitious scheme will be thwarted, and a lot of work and worry will fall on people whose time would be better absorbed in fulfilling their professional careers.

What I have said on the future of this Newsletter applies regarding the publication of a Journal. Finance is even more a problem as everyone would like to see the Journal well produced. Doing it ourselves is out of the question. Material would be available, but it should be in the form of Speleological papers. Another suggestion has been made that A.S.F. produce "Occasional Papers" when suitable material is available, rather than a regular Journal. This would eliminate chasing people for contributions, which even at present is a time consuming task for the Publications Officer.

If this S.U.S.S. amendment is passed, there must be a closer co-operation between Societies and the Publications Officer, who-ever he may be. If this is not guaranteed, the whole scheme will fail. Yet the Journal is essential for progress.

Membership of A.S.F. :- Another of the S.U.S.S. amendments is that A.S.F. membership be open to individuals as well as societies, as is membership of N.S.S. or U.S.A. Thus full membership of A.S.F. will be open to any financial member of an affiliated Society. Associate membership will be open to anyone who resides more than 50 miles from the nearest Affiliated Society.

A.S.F. Finance:- At present the finance is very cumbersome. Simplifications are a must. The suggestion is that a direct subscription be levied from each member through Affiliated Societies. This Annual Membership subscription will be fixed every two years.

Activities of Member Societies:-

Newcastle Technical and University Speleological Society:- It appears that this society has been very active during the year, but unfortunately their newsletters have not been reaching me through no fault on their part. The Timor area is one of their stamping grounds. (Timor (Isis Caves) are located in the most northerly section of the Hunter Valley some miles off the Newcastle N.S.W., where the Isis Limestone forms a broad anticline.) As in most areas there was a lost cave. This one complete with underground river. Well the Newcastle Society finally located it - underground river - rimpools and all. They report cave shrimps and cave snails from the Wollombi Caves and a new cave - the Wollombah Cave. They note that the Wollombi Caves (Gloucester area) are to be inundated by 10 million gallon dam. They have also been active at Jenolan and seem to be finding more "Lost caves" or rather extensions in the Jubilee and Temple of Baal. Trickett's Arch-Tuglow area is also receiving their attention. Newcastle also seems to have made some notable scientific discoveries. Bat guano samples from Timor were sent to the South Australian Museum and were found to contain mites of new species, and more samples have been requested. Some of their members have been investigating bone breccias in various systems, and have built up interesting collections.

The Newcastle Society seem to be working in close co-operation with S.U.S.S. and the Kempsey Society, thus achieving many mutual benefits. Another interesting project is a "school" for senior Scouts who wish to qualify for their Climbers' Badge. C.E.G.S.A. conducted a similar project several years back. Here is a good idea for a lot of societies.

University of N.S.W. Speleological Society:- Lately they have been concentrating on Bungonia, where they claim a new system, though they admit probably it has been entered before but the squeeze that leads into the main part of the system had not been penetrated. Three pitches (42ft., 90ft., & 60ft.)

on the other side of the squeeze, lead to a fissure, then down a steep slope and finally a mud block, where they think the system ends some 350ft below the surface. This cave is numbered B.31.

Tuglow Area:- As Newcastle Society, Coorangbong has been working in the Trickett's Arch area - Tuglow. It is a little confusing as each society claims to be first into certain systems. Unfortunately this kind of thing always happens when tow societies operate in the one area. The problem can't be avoided so we must live with it. Similar 'incidents' have occurred before in N.S.W. (e.g. Bungonia) and are common overseas (e.g. Mendip). On top of it all I got involved because I publish unintentionally the wrong thing.

The important thing is that work is being carried out in this mountainous area, to which access is difficult unless LandRovers are available. The Geological Structure and the elevation of the area indicate high potential. Many small holes have been investigated and much digging has been done and is to be done. The Uni. of N.S.W. Society has also done considerable exploration and mapping in this area commencing their interests in 1953. Then of course S.U.S.S. members have been toting their gear into the area since the late 40's. All because Trickett detailed the area. Sydney Speleological Society & Orange Speleological Society

Colong Caves (west of Sydney) are still accessible to the caver despite the fact that the Warragamba Dam has cut off the old route. S.S.S. went there recently, travelling via the Wombeyan Road, thence by fire track and stick route to the gate into Gardner's and Lang's property. From the gate it is a two mile walk to the caves. Permission to enter the property must be obtained, and set dingo traps are scattered over the property.

S.S.S. and Orange held a combined trip to the Clifton Caves where a new extension was found containing spelian decoration rivalling those of the Chevalier Cave at Jenolan. Unfortunately it was difficult to prevent the red mud from the floor being splattered over the decoration. So if you have the good fortune to enter this new extension, please make every effort to confine muddying to as small an

area a possible. Walli was also visited, and another trip is planned in order to descend the Stove Pipe - a deep ladder pitch with a difficult start.

Kempsey Speleological Society:- Reports more bat banding in Carrai Cave, and Peter Dywer made a flight north to Ashford Caves have been mined for guano. Speleological prospects are not good but the batting is! It is of interest to note that Dr.G.Allen, an American Zoologist, visited the bat caves in the Kempsey District, mentioning them in his book on bats published in 1939. Fungi collection has been investigated at Yessabah. Other societies are showing interest in the caves of the Kempsey area, and the Kempsey Society reports visits from S.S.S., S.U.S.S., Newcastle, Coorangbong and Brisbane. In the October issue of their Newsletter "Trog" they give a resume of the caves of the area. To name a few, Tomagog, Mcparrahah, & Sebastapol Caves seem to offer good potential for future work. The mountainous terrain and the northern N.S.W. rain forest offer the difficulties!

Victorian Cave Exploration Society:- As the Buchan - Murrindal area has the best caving potential in Victoria most trips went that-away. Following further unsuccessful excavations at the bottom of M29 (Gyorgidig), operations were suspended - a passage 12ft long has been cleared at a little over 100ft below the surface. In the same area however, a 30ft diameter, 120ft deep shaft, M14, was investigated. This is the third shaft over 100ft in about two acres. Investigations in the hills around Murrindal and Scrubby Creek resulted in the discovery of several promising shafts, the deepest of which went 150ft in two stages.

Sub-Aqua Speleological Society of Victoria:- Little cave diving lately but a lot of surface investigation and mapping around the Scrubby Creek resurgence, Murrindal. A calculation of the amount of tufa at the resurgence suggests that an awful lot of CaCO_3 has been carried in solution by the creek. This could mean that there is a mighty system behind the resurgence. The tight entrance fissures add to the difficulties for the cave diver. Another dive will be attempted before Christmas.

Northern Territory Speleological Society:- Bob Wren, their Secretary, has recently visited Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne,

and Adelaide. Those cavers who met him and saw his slides will be well aware of what the dissected limestone plateau in the Katherine area has to offer. Also they will appreciate the difficulties of penetrating these long systems where both the humidity and temperatures are high. They have penetrated one system for $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles and it still goes but they couldn't keep up the water for their own system - water has to be staged. Underground streams are in plenty. When Bob described them in Melbourne, one cave diver sat on the floor drooling !

Queensland:- Three societies; The Brisbane Cave Group, the Brisbane Speleological Society, and the University of Queensland, and the only thing they lack are caves close to Brisbane. Whether or not they combine into one society is a leading question, but at least they are all in close co-operation.

Much caving will be done in the next few months.

In the next issue we will hear the results so why worry about discussing plans. All that is to be said is the "Best of Luck to you Sir !"

Recent Australian Literature:-

Though not directly concerning speleology attention should be drawn to the recent publication by the Geological Society of Australia; - namely; - The Geology of Queensland, Journ. Geol. Soc. Aust., Vol 7.

This volume by many contributors covers all recent knowledge of the geology of Queensland. It is a standard reference for anyone intending to cave in that state, though no doubt the Brisbane cavers have already devoured it.

Mention is made of the geology of such caving areas as Camooweal; Chillagoe; Georgina-Bullia area (Cottonbush Ck. Digby Peaks); Texas area (Ashford, Mingoola, Glenlyon); Rockhampton area (Mt.Etna, Marmor); and Warwick (Cement Mills). On page 403, J.T.Woods summarizes fossiliferous cave deposits. Suggest you borrow it from a library as the cost is \$5. An excellent geological map is also included.

The Geological Society of Australia have already published the Geology of Western Australia (1956 volume 4.pt. 2) and the Geology of South Australia (1957 volume 5. pt. 2).

Mulvaney, D.J., 1959 - Archaeological Excavations at Fromm's Landing on the Lower Murray River, South Australia, Royal Society Victoria, Vol.72, pt.2, pp.53-85. Although this excavation was carried out in a rock shelter rather than a true cave, this paper outlines the exact and precise methods which must be used if a clear picture of human pre-history is to be obtained. The radio-carbon 14 date on material from levels 8 - 10 (numbered from the surface; 11 layers are classified) was 4850 ± 100 years. These levels were of the Pirrian Culture (the pirri is a stone instrument diagnostic of a culture and thus of a definite stratigraphic range). The radio carbon 14 age of the Pirrian at Fromm's Landing is consistent with the age of 4250 ± 180 years for the Pirrian in Tindale's dig at Devon Downs, also on the Murray. A culture (level 11) was established below the Pirrian where extremely simple artifacts were found.

Wakefield, Norman, 1960. - Recent Mammal Bones in the Buchan District, Victorian Naturalist, Vol.77 (6) (October, 1960). pp. 164 - 178 This is a report of the work of the Faunal Survey Group of the F.N.C. of Vic., on the bone deposits in certain caves in the Pyramids, Murindal, and East Buchan. These bones were 'recent' remains of marsupials and rodents on cave floors and were not in bone breccia. The Pyramid caves were apparently lairs of the Eastern Native Cat (Dasyurus quoll) which was wiped out from S.E.Aust. by an epidemic at the turn of this century. Few rabbit bones were recorded. Owls contributed to the bone accumulation in some caves.

See You At Canberra !