

XX
.....

THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE AUSTRALIAN
SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

No. 11 Published Quarterly March 1961

Official publication of the Australian Speleological Federation, Post Office Box 198, Broadway, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Publications Officer : Keith H. Clouten,
 Australasian Missionary College,
 Cooranbong. N.S.W.

.....
XX

Editorial

It is unfortunate for the Australian Speleological Federation that Australia is divided into six states, and that the majority of speleological societies should be within one of them. Or perhaps the bad fortune lies in the fact that the typical Australian is as jealous of his state as the average European is of his country. It brings us certain problems, for if the administration of A.S.F. is to be efficient and workable, it must be centralised in one place. This fact has been borne upon us by the experience of four difficult years.

Now, for the first time, the executive officers are within shouting distance of each other. The problem may not now be one of executive operation, but it could be a problem of unity and coordination. It will be difficult for an executive in and around Sydney to understand and represent speleological societies from Perth to Port Moresby. Let us not try to deny this problem; it exists, and we must live with it.

Our greatest contribution to speleology will be made when every society works, not only for its own ends, but for the benefit of other clubs too. Now, more than ever before, the A.S.F. needs the support and interest of every speleological society and of every speleologist. Successful operation demands co-operation.

PLEASE RETURN
TO
VICTORIAN SPELEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 5425 CC G.P.O.
MELBOURNE, 3001

OUR PRESIDENT ASKS ...

WHAT IS THE EXECUTIVE DOING ?

Having inherited almost £50 of unpaid accounts, some of which date back to 1958, the first aim of the executive is to pay off all debts, before spending money in connection with an A.S.F. Journal or the organization of A.S.F. trips. We plan to improve the "Newsletter" still further and, if material is forthcoming, to increase the number of pages. Kempsey society is organizing a really first-class Convention for us in December 1962, and it is planned to combine business proceedings, practical caving, speleological discussions, beach trips and social activities into what promises to be a most memorable five days. Field trips to the more remote and unexplored caving systems in the Macleay valley will follow the Convention.

In order to be able to do all this, we would greatly appreciate your support, as without the active assistance of Australia's speleologists, the executive can do very little to further the aims of the A.S.F..

Warren Peck.
A.S.F. President.

SYDNEY, KEMPSEY CHOSEN FOR A.S.F. MEETINGS.

The next annual committee meeting of the Federation has been set down for Anniversary weekend in January, 1962, the place of meeting to be Sydney, where most of the present executive officers are located. The Biennial Conference in December of 1962 is expected to convene at Kempsey (North Coast, N.S.W.) where the local speleological society will play host.

- - - - -

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE A.S.F. CANBERRA CONFERENCE

Canberra S.S. was host for the 3rd. Biennial Conference of A.S.F. held December 1960 at the Y.M.C.A. camp at the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo rivers, a few miles from Canberra. Eight societies were represented directly by members, and five more by proxy. The following items were among those discussed.

Three new A.S.F. member - societies.

At the Committee meeting, three new societies were accepted for A.S.F. membership, two of them subject to completion of some constitutional requirements. The societies which we welcome into the Federation are -- Port Moresby Speleological Society, the Sub-Aqua Speleological Society (Victoria), and the Brisbane Cave Group. This brings to seventeen the number of member societies in the A.S.F., and gives us representative societies in every Australian state, as well as the A.C.T., Northern Territory, and New Guinea.

Suggestions for National Parks wanted.

The Australian Academy of Science has appointed a Committee on National Parks and Reserves, with a Convenor of the committee in each state. This Committee urgently requires suggestions for suitable national parks, and information about them. The A.S.F. Conference agreed that any cave areas selected should be those worthy of preservation on the grounds of natural beauty, scientific interest, or tourist potential. Societies having suggestions or information are asked to communicate with their own state Convenor of the Committee.

Responsibility of A.S.F. Office-bearers.

In the past, A.S.F. affairs have sometimes suffered because an office-bearer found that he was unable to carry out his duties satisfactorily. In the future, this problem should not exist, since an A.S.F. resolution now holds an office-bearer's society responsible for the satisfactory carrying out of his duties.

Northern Territory expedition in 1962 ??

The speleological society centred at Katherine in the Northern Territory has invited the A.S.F. to conduct an expedition into the caving grounds some time during the cooler parts of the year. The A.S.F. executive has been instructed to consider the organization of such an expedition some time during 1962. Keep it in mind, and watch for details at a later date.

Convenors of standing committees.

One A.S.F. committee - that on Cave Ethics - has now been terminated, with a finished task. The new Code of Courtesy and Ethics is the product of this Committee, and is published elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The following persons continue to act as convenors for the committees listed here :-

Alan Hill (President, CEGSA)	-	Constitutional Committee
Bob Sexton (CEGSA)	---	Cave Survey
Des Lyons (Tasmania C.C.)	---	Cave Safety
Dave Purchase (Canberra S.S.)	-	Bats
Tom Landecker (S.U.S.S.)	---	Coordination of N.S.W. Caving Activities.

A.S.F. finances and budget.

At the Conference, a budget was accepted for the year 1961, based on a capitation fee of 3/- per society member, and this fee includes the Newsletter subscription of 1/3. Societies are being requested to forward their fees to the A.S.F. Treasurer, Box 198, Broadway, Sydney, at their first convenience. These fees will cover the years 1959, 1960, and 1961. The Treasurer will advise clubs of any deficit or credit in connection with the 1958 emergency levy.

INTRODUCING THE A.S.F. EXECUTIVE ...

WARREN PECK, A.S.F. President and retiring President of S.U.S.S., has a hold in both earth and sky, as he is a geologist with the Department of Air. Warren anticipates being able to enjoy caving with most Australian societies during the next few years as he travels to and from the various RAAF Construction Sites around the Continent. In the past six years, he has organised many successful trips to the caving areas within 150 miles of Sydney.

TED LANE, A.S.F. Secretary, specializes in collecting Secretaryships. Ted is secretary of S.S.S., and recently resigned from his position as a Sydney newspaper editor to become Press Secretary to Senator Spooner, who is Minister for National Development and Government Senate Leader. While travelling from state to state, Ted hopes to meet many of Australia's speleologists and further his knowledge of Australian cave systems. Ted will be remembered by many as having led the S.S.S. exploration team that discovered the vast Olympian system at Wombeyan, which includes one magnificent cavern 198 ft. by 194 ft. by 198 ft. high.

ROLY PAINE, J.P., is A.S.F. Treasurer and President of Newcastle T.U.C.S.S. In view of the thirty or more expeditions he organises every year, Roly must be one of Australia's most active speleologists, and so needs little introduction, as he has already met many of you. Few caving areas have escaped Roly's systematic examination, and he plans to visit these in the near future.

KEITH CLOUTEN, A.S.F. Publications Officer and newly elected President of C.S.A., has recently come home to Cooranbong (N.S.W.) to accept the position of Librarian at the Australasian Missionary College. Having been for some time an archivist at the Mitchell Library in Sydney, Keith has acquired an interest in the historical aspects of speleology. Keith enjoys cave survey work in his spare time.

GRAHAM WALLIS, as well as A.S.F. Librarian, is Vice-President and a foundation member of the University of N.S.W. Speleological Society. Graham is a geologist with the Geological Survey branch of the Mines Department. Recently he took a prominent part in the U.N.S.W.S.S. discovery and descent of the great 400 ft. shaft system in B31 at Bungonia.

- - - - -

A WORD FROM THE A S F LIBRARIAN

The principal task of the Librarian will be the compilation of two catalogues: the first a Publication Catalogue, the second an Article Catalogue. Both of these will be divided into two sections: one dealing with the A.S.F. Library, and the other with the literature held in the various society libraries.

Any person in possession of any publication belonging to the A.S.F. Library is requested to forward the same to the Librarian at the A.S.F. address in Sydney for cataloguing. It is intended to maintain abstracts of selected articles and publish them from time to time in this Newsletter. Chris Court, of S.U.S.S., has kindly offered to supply abstracts of articles published in foreign languages.

Only three returns have been received in response to a request by the previous Librarian after the 1960 Committee Meeting, this request being that Member societies provide A.S.F. with a copy of their catalogues of the items held in their respective Libraries. The three received have come from the Australian National University Library, Sydney Speleo. Society, and the Sydney University Speleo. Society.

It is necessary to impress two things on members with respect to the Library. One, it cannot function efficiently if the basic material is not supplied to the Librarian; and two, it is a waste of time and money if members do not avail themselves of the facilities of the Library. It is hoped that when the initial library list is published it will be put to use, and still greater use as more articles are added to the Library.

Graham Wallis.
Librarian.

A.S.F. PUBLICATION FOR SALE.

Some time ago, the A.S.F. produced a brochure entitled "Caving in Australia", chiefly for distribution at a world speleological convention in Italy. Quite a number of copies remain, and these are for sale to anyone at 6d. per copy. Copies may be obtained by writing to the Secretary at the A.S.F. address.

A.S.F. BUDGET 1961.

In spite of a considerable deficit in 1960, the A.S.F. has budgeted to permit a reasonably progressive year for all of its working parts. The Budget as accepted at the A.S.F. Conference is as follows :-

Deficit 1956 - 1960	£20	5	9
Newsletter	30	0	0
Stationery & General	5	0	0
Postage & general	7	0	0
Library	6	0	0
	<u>£68</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>

In practice, this works out to a capitation fee of 3/- per head for members of federated societies.

CODE OF ETHICS AND COURTESY

1. Members of A.S.F. societies will, in reporting their work, avoid and discourage sensationalism, exaggeration and unwarranted statements.
2. They will treat guides and other officials of tourist caves courteously and respectfully.
- 3.1 They will carefully observe the established rules of good camping conduct.
- 3.2 They will be careful to bury all carbide and rubbish.
- 4.1 They will have specific or tacit approval from the owner or guardian before entering private property or caves reserves.
- 4.2 They will follow normal local practices regarding gates on properties or reserves.
- 4.3 They will not, except in cases of emergency, presume on the goodwill of owners in dry areas for supplies of water. Prior arrangements must be made.
- 4.4 They will take care to avoid interference with stock or crops.
- 4.5 They will, where a cave entrance has been blocked by the owner to prevent injury to livestock, either reblock the entrance after use or construct a substantial and permanent fence around it.
- 5.1 They will not leave rubbish in caves. Spent carbide, flash bulbs, wrappings and other refuse must be brought out of the cave.
- 5.2 They will not disfigure caves by any unnecessary markings.
- 5.3 They will take care to avoid disfiguration or destruction of cave decoration (formation).
- 5.4 They will not under any circumstances leave faeces in caves. They will prepare themselves beforehand or, when underground, make provision for the removal of faeces.
6. They will, when visiting an area frequently visited by another club, do all in their power to cooperate with the club.

3rd. Biennial Conference of A.S.F.

- OPENING ADDRESS -

(This address was given at Canberra on Dec.29th. 1960 by Mgr. Favier. Some sections of the address have had to be omitted).

I have been genuinely honoured by the request of your Canberra Convenor, Dave Purchase, to officially open the third Biennial Conference of the A.S.F., and the first gathering of the Federal body in the A.C.T..

I congratulate you upon your initiative (1) in establishing the Federation and (2) in holding these Conferences in the face of a good deal of pessimistic apathy or even opposition from those yet to be converted to the benefits of federalism. The Federation and the Conventions both derive from the quality and quantity of the membership of constituent bodies, and their continued success will be based on the spirit of true comradeship and joint enterprise which prevails amongst most cavers.

Though Speleology is an 'ology' and is sometimes defined as the scientific study of caves, I venture to say that Speleology - for the average speleo - cannot be called a Science. It certainly does extend the frontiers of knowledge, it touches on many branches of science, and some few speleos are in the game for scientific reasons, but the majority take to it mainly because it is an adventure, because it is their sport, their recreation, their hobby. Therefore, let us not get too pompous or pontifical about it - let us have Conventions and papers, but let us not expect that all our Bods are going to turn into Boffins. Certainly, too, Speleology though not a Religion, can lead a thinking person to Religion by the speleo's reverence for these beautiful and unusual works of God's Creation so unexpected within the very bowels of the earth - the shawls, the stalactites, the helectites, the massive and microscopic beauty of limestone caves, formed over geological aeons in the evolutionary cycle, by the operation and interaction of the Creator's laws of nature.

Therefore since - as I claim - caving is neither a Religion nor a Science, but rather a sport, let us beware of exaggerated claims for caving - claims that cannot be substantiated.

Certainly caving is not an appealing sport to the vast multitude of men. To them there seem to be many more appealing ways of spending their leisure than in caving. To them it would seem much more sensible and pleasant to feel the gentle glow of King Sol on your back in the brilliant sunshine at Bondi than to feel, in the pitch darkness, the bite on your back of the stalactites as you wriggle - or shall we say, reptate - through a squeeze, wondering as you get more and more stuck whether you'll lose only your ears or also your head if you're pulled out backwards; or whether, if you go forward into the unknown the foul air that's making your head boom is going to give you the K.O. before the sweat around your eyes blinds you or the water rising around your mouth drowns you. If you are a confirmed speleo, it's into all this that you'll go forward - not in present enjoyment; that will come in retrospect.

And so what is the honest answer to the question? Why do you do all this? The simplest and most honest answer is - "Because we like it." Few sports offer their devotees a wider range of disagreeable moments than does caving. Certainly, there is the aesthetic value of the views in the new cave, but there is also the very definite ascetic value of the descent, involving as it does risk, uncertainty, sacrifice, discomfort, hard rations, and dogged perseverance.

However, we speleos feel that to clamber for a day or so over virgin subterranean gullies, and down their waterfalls, to dive through syphons or to traverse chasms is an addition to our personality and an exercise of individuality - a personal achievement which involves preferring the happiness of effort to the pleasure of remaining comfortably in the rut.

Again, attend to science if that be your bent, collect your specimens, classify your rock formations, plan your trips, study your maps, announce your route, follow the safety code - but go also and always to enjoy yourself. Go like a child into a region of wonderful things. Be attuned to the harmonies of Creation. Then will your precious sense of wonder never be blunted - then will you hear the music of the depths, and the thrilling voice of new and lonely places.

BAT BANDING IN AUSTRALIA

(Summary of a paper read by D. Purchase at the 3rd. Biennial Conference of the A.S.F. at Canberra).

Mr. Purchase introduced his subject with a brief world history of bat-banding, from its early days in 1916 until the present time. In Australia, bat-banding did not begin until August 4th. 1957, when Dr. G. M. Dunnet of the C.S.I.R.O. Wildlife Survey Section in Canberra, banded the first bats. Shortly afterwards he left Australia. Mr. Purchase, also of the Wildlife Survey Section, began banding operations on March 2nd. 1958, in conjunction with the Canberra Speleological Society.

In July 1960, owing to increasing interest being shown in this work in Australia, the Australian Bird-Banding Scheme (which is operated by the Wildlife Survey Section) decided to place bat-banding on a similar footing to bird-banding, and enrol banders for this specific purpose. By the end of 1960, six banders had already been enrolled.

Standard bird-bands are at present being used in this project, until supplies of bat-bands can be obtained. These bands are being placed over the forearm of the bat and closed just enough to encompass the forearm without piercing the wing membrane.

Other methods of marking bats which had been, and are being used in other parts of the world were explained. Demonstrations were given of the various procedures and equipment used for the capture of bats.

Results obtained from bat-banding within Australia to date have given much information on distribution, migration and dispersal, local movements, and general insight into the ecology and biology of some Australian species. Knowledge is also being accumulated on the subjects of longevity and homing ability.

Concluding his paper, Mr. Purchase discussed the future development of Australian bat-banding.

AROUND THE SOCIETIES ...

What has your society been doing during the past three months ? In most cases, I have no idea! Only very little material in the form of club circulars, newsletters, etc. has come the way of the Publications Officer, and most of this is from N.S.W. societies. To be representative, this section of the "Newsletter" should contain some news of activities from every society around Australia. Please add the Publications Officer to your mailing list for circulars and publications. If your society does not publish news of its activities, please assist by writing a note at least once each quarter, so that all other Australian speleologists can read about your club's activities. If your society has a Publicity Officer, he may be the best person to entrust with this responsibility.

In Sydney, the two university societies have probably been quiescent during the vacation period, and the only news comes from the Sydney Speleo. Society, which has held a number of successful trips, including an exploratory trip to examine some limestone country near the head of the Hollanders River, a few miles south-west of Jenolan. According to "Communications" some shallow caves were investigated.

Newcastle society has also been active, and its President, Roly Paine, has been the leader of a large expedition to the Nullarbor during Christmas and New Year. Some interesting anthropological finds have been reported.

Canberra S.S. is continuing to investigate outcrops of limestone in the upper Goodradigbee River valley. Edith Smith and other members were joined at Wee Jasper Caves by some speleos from Cooranbong Speleological Association, on the January anniversary weekend.

Further afield, members of Tasmanian C.C. have discovered and are surveying an extensive cave at New River Lagoon in the rugged south-west, according to the Hobart "Mercury" of Jan. 5th., 1961. Access to the area has been achieved by the use of a floatplane belonging to one of the club members.