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OF THE AUSTRALIAN  
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News From the Four Corners

The March issue of the A.S.F. NEWSLETTER contained only a very little news of caving activity by the individual member societies of the Federation. However, in recent weeks the Publications Officer has received letters or reports from most of the affiliated societies, and this NEWSLETTER brings you a much more representative coverage of news from our states and territories.

Many societies send only their monthly or quarterly news sheets to the Publications Officer. Some of these publications do contain reports of trips and activities, while others are meant to convey chiefly social gossip, and in these cases it is difficult to discover what the societies have been doing along practical lines. This difficulty is experienced as much in connection with the larger societies as with the smaller ones. Invariably, the most useful information comes from notes and letters from club officers.

This is your publication. If adequate information of the right kind can be obtained, then the value of this NEWSLETTER will be greater, and improvements in production may be possible.

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

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- PAGE TWO PERSONALITIES -

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President Peck has been travelling around a good deal in the past few months. After spending some time at the RAAF Base at Williamstown and making contact with the societies at Newcastle and Cooranbong, Warren headed south to Melbourne, leading a S.U.S.S. trip to Jenolan on the way. In the south, he visited V.C.E.S., Sub-Aqua S.S., and CEGSA, and returned to Sydney in time for a brief meeting of the A.S.F. executive officers in June. As we go to press, Warren is in the Northern Territory, where he will remain till the end of the year. In his isolation there, he would be delighted to receive copies of all club newsletters, as well as personal letters. His postal address is now as follows :- Fly. Off. Peck (0211609), 5ACS, RAAF, Darwin, N.T..

Joe Jennings has been travelling again, this time to the Apple Isle. According to Tasmanian Caverneering Club, he has been chasing water samples at Mole Creek. Another visitor to Tasmania from Canberra is Rolley Webb - also caving with T.C.C. And Edith Smith has likewise made the pilgrimage from Canberra to Tassie, but is not expected to return.

On the credit side, Canberra is receiving Lex Bastian, who has been a leader in the West Australian Speleo. Group. Another West Australian caver, Gordon Bain, is now the secretary of the Port Moresby Speleo. Society in New Guinea.

Speleologists who attended the inaugural A.S.F. Conference in Adelaide in 1956 will remember June Marlow of CEGSA. June is now Mrs. Lynn, and is holidaying in Perth and Adelaide, before returning to England. June has trogged with V.A.S.G. recently.

Another traveller is Paul Rose, recently returned from a trip to India, where he had time to visit some remote caving areas. Paul is a member of S.S.S., and president of the almost legendary Snowy Mountains S.S.. And finally, A.S.F. Secretary Ted Lane has been swishing around the Continent in the wake of Senator Spooner. He is able to make frequent contact with C.S.S.

A WORD FROM THE LIBRARIAN

(Graham Wallis)

Would any person knowing the where-abouts or having one or more of the volumes listed below, notify the Librarian immediately as they have not been sighted since the post was taken over by the present Librarian.

N.S.S. NEWS

Vol.17 (1959)

Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11

Vol.18 (1960)

Nos. 5, 10, 11, 12

This is imperative!

AGAIN -- a request to those societies and clubs which have not forwarded their library lists to do so as soon as practicable. The absence of these lists makes it impossible to even start the compilation of the section of the Library Index which is of most benefit to members. So, it is up to the individual members of the involved clubs to see that their Librarians forward to the A.S.F. Librarian the required lists. By acting now, you can save embarrassment later.

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ROUND-UP OF SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

\* South Australia. Following the successful Christmas trip to the Nullarbor Plains, CEGSA has continued its years activities by mapping much of "Corrells Cave" at Curramulka (Yorke Peninsula) the "Sand Cave" (Naracoorte), and completing the "Homestead Cave" at Lake Hamilton. The Group supported Sub-Aqua recently when its members made dives in the Caroline Sinkhole and one of the Mt. Schank Sinkholes, the latter to a depth of 140 feet in crystal clear water. A large black mark on the air photos of the Caroline Forest proved to be "Hell's Hole", a sinkhole 150 feet diameter by 100 feet deep, and with 50 feet of water at the bottom.-- large enough to drop the Warbla Sinkhole into comfortably, admittedly with a large splash. Surveys during this week-end brought the length of traverse made during 1961 to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles.



CEGSA has just published its second occasional paper : "A Preliminary Report on the Karst Morphology of the Mullarbor Plains" by J.N.Jennings of the Australian National University. This was based on observations and surveys made during the 1956-57 CEGSA/A.S.F. expedition and will be of considerable interest and value to those who have been able to visit this fascinating area.

\* Jenolan, N.S.W. At Easter, Warren Peck led a trip of 26 members from both the Sydney Uni. and Newcastle Uni. societies to the Mammoth Cave to carry out exploration and survey in a remote part of the Northern River Section of this cave. Previous trips had discovered and named the "Great North Cavern" in this Section, and the Easter Trip was able to make further discoveries and to map 460 feet of new cave and over 1,000 feet of passages. A highlight of the trip was that 6 members of the party spent  $76\frac{3}{4}$  continuous hours underground - believed to be an Australian record. The 6 members were linked by telephone to the surface party. Unfortunately, time ran out before the cave did.

\* Tasmania. During the past twelve months, Tasmanian C.C. has conducted many trips to the three major caving areas of Mole Creek, Hastings/Ida Bay, and Florentine. In the last named area, which is as yet little explored, a good deal of persistent scrub-bashing has yielded some new holes, including one with a vertical shaft of 130 feet. Mole Creek has been visited on numerous occasions, and a complete report of work done there has been prepared for the Tourist Bureau and the Scenery Preservation Board.

Incidentally, T.C.C. has been able to make good friends with the Tourist Department, which has recently donated them a scaling pole. The Minister of Tourists also went trogging with them at Mole Creek. These good relations result from years of hard work, and speleo visitors from the mainland should not spoil the pie by putting their feet in it. Visitors should contact T.C.C., which assures them of a welcome.

\* New Guinea. Port Moresby Speleo. Society is a newly formed society, and has already diagnosed its troubles. It suffers from frequent transfer of members from the Territory, and also

has transport problems. To visit even the nearest caves, four wheel drive vehicles are necessary, while air transport is required to reach more distant areas.

Despite these problems, the Society made 19 trips to the Javarere Caves (50 miles E.N.E. of Port Moresby) during 1960, and one trip to extensive caves at Chuave, in the Eastern Highlands. Other caving areas in the Territory are numerous, but difficulties of access have prevented trips to these places.

\* Southern Highlands, N.S.W. At Wombeyan Caves, Sydney S.S. organised a Search and Rescue demonstration during April, with participants from the three university societies at Sydney and Newcastle. A successful demonstration is reported.

A party from Cooranbong S.A. visited Colong Caves in May, and continued their survey of passages in the remote Southern extensions. Parties from C.S.A. have also visited Wyanbene and Tuglow Caves in recent months.

At Bungonia Caves, the Uni. of N.S.W. Speleo. Society has been active, and the survey of the hole known as B31 has been pushed to the 300 ft. level. Foul air exists in this cave, though at present not in toxic proportions. Oxygen apparatus is kept on hand if the emergency ever arises. The Society also plans to lay a telephone cable to the bottom of B31 in the near future to be used to warn explorers in the event of a sudden cloudburst. Recently, explorers in this cave were severely dampened by such a cloudburst, and torrent of water in the cave.

\* Orange, N.S.W. Attempts by Orange S.S. to explore a cave of unknown length at Nalangaloo (100 miles N.W. of Orange) have been thwarted due to presence of water just inside the entrance. Recently, a bore was driven down about 60 feet from the cave entrance. No water was discovered, but the water level inside the cave rose another 30 feet. The cave is said to be extensive.

At Bowan Park, S.W. of Orange, attempts have been made to find "Major Mitchell's Cave". Mitchell passed through this area, and left records of a large cave. O.S.S. has found many deep holes leading down to water, but not the required cave. Anyone knowing anything about this Cave, please contact O.S.S.

\* Buchan, Vic. Sub-Aqua Speleo. Society, a new member-society of the A.S.F., has been active at Buchan. Work has been steadily proceeding at the society's two main diving locations there. In the same district, scaling pole attempts are planned at the Pyramids, and the extremely difficult entrance to the Scrubby Creek resurgence is being widened to facilitate entry with diving gear. Surface reconnaissance is being carried out, to find better methods of entry.

A few miles north of Buchan is the Murrindal area, where both Sub-Aqua and Vict. Cave Exploration Society have been working in conjunction with each other, and in this way Victorian cave records are being rapidly brought up to date, and caves neatly chiselled with their allotted number. Last Christmas, Sub-Aqua found a cave known as the Honeycomb, and V.C.E.S. has since been exploring the cave, and members are in the process of excavating some interesting, large bones, which have been positively identified as being those of the Giant Extinct Kangaroo (*Macropus titan*). More bones for investigation have been found by V.C.E.S. in the nearby Labyrinth Cave. If these bones also belong to the Giant Kangaroo, it is hoped that a complete skeleton will be found. As there is only one other complete skeleton in existence, this would be an outstanding and exciting discovery.

\* Western Victoria. In March, a party of members of V.C.E.S. explored an extensive, volcanic cave system at Mt. Hamilton in the western district, and a few weekends later, two members returned and did a complete survey of this complicated system. Mt. Hamilton is located near Lake Bolac, north of Warrnambool.

\* Kempsey, N.S.W. Some of the remote parts of the Macleay valley contain extensive limestone deposits, and Kempsey S.S. continues to pay attention to new discoveries. During the past quarter, trips have been conducted to the Carrai area, and from here a walking trip leads to Stockyard Creek, where caves have been explored. At Easter, Walls Cave at Stockyard Creek was explored on its various vertical sections, and the party discovered and explored a smaller cave nearby. Bats inhabit many of the caves in the Carrai district, and members of K.S.S. have banded quite a number, and made recoveries in other places.



\* Canberra, A.C.T. Canberra S.S. keeps in continual contact with the bats at Wee Jasper and other places. Dave Purchase is the ringleader of this aspect of activity. On a weekend late in June, a party from Canberra linked up with Orange S.S. at Cliefden Caves (S.E. of Orange). The aim of the trip was to find bats. Two were banded in the Gable Cave, and in the Murder Cave large numbers were noted, and 250 banded. Fifteen banded bats were recovered, including four from Wee Jasper.

In the Shoalhaven valley south east of Canberra, twenty members visited the famous "Big Hole" on May 21. This unusual hole is 300 feet deep, and is thought by some to have been caused by the collapse of limestone caverns underneath. Three C.S.S. members made a 250 ft. vertical ladder descent, and discovered a clear deep pool of water in a small passage at the bottom. No sign of limestone, however, On the day before the descent, two members visited the Cheitmore Caves nearby. Their object? To band 47 bats, of course!

\* Perth, W.A. West Australian Speleo. Group reports encouraging growth in the past six months or so. From the extensive caves of the south-west numerous paleontological finds are reported, including a human skeleton in the Bone Cave near Augusta. The bones had been scattered about by water, but most of the large bones have been collected except the skull. Another interesting find was the skeleton of a Ghost Bat (*Macroderma gigas*), found two feet below the surface in Nannup Cave, much further south than the present distribution of the species. Other noteworthy finds include discovery of skulls of the Tasmanian Wolf, and a particularly fine skull of the Tasmanian Devil. Both are now extinct in these regions, of course.

The disastrous summer fires in the "up" country in the South West have cleared much undergrowth, and W.A.S.G. is taking advantage of this to search numerous outcrops in these areas. Numerous holes and some small caves have been found and explored in the past few months, though nothing spectacular has yet been found.

\* Northern Territory. No report. However, Warren Peck is now up that way, so we look forward to something next time.

CAVE SURVEYING CAMP PLANNED

During the Christmas - New Year period, 1961-62, C.E.G.S.A. proposes to conduct a cave surveying camp at Naracoorte, the object being to instruct members in cave surveying techniques. CEGSA extends to all Australian cavers the invitation to attend this camp if interested. If you want more details, contact Bob Sexton, CEGSA, C/- South Australian Museum, Nth. Terrace, Adelaide.

BAT BANDING (Abstract of an article by Bob Copley in the Bulletin of the South African Speleo. Assn., 1960, Pt.I, p.16. This abstract has been prepared by G. Wallis, A.S.F. Librarian)

The article is a broad survey of the work being carried out in the field of bat banding in South Africa. A Bat Banding Committee was set up late in 1956 by the Board of the Transvaal Museum at the suggestion of Hans Arnold, who had done some bat banding in Europe and Egypt.

The objects of banding are explained as the tracing of the movements and migrations, the study of the life cycle, type of resting place, seasonal changes in area, and size and colour changes.

At present, the Committee of the Museum lays down policy, maintains the register and clearing house and other aspects to co-ordinate activities and avoid any overlap of projects. Members of the Committee and other authorised persons, with assistance are responsible for the identification of the bats and submitting banding reports.

Data necessary when a recovery is made is listed and also a plea to the effect that the bats should not be injured in any way. Data required include number, sex, date and place as well as colour, size and temperature of refuge.

A few practical hints about catching and banding the bats finish off the article.

(Other prepared abstracts are not included in this issue, but will appear in the next. - Ed.)