ASF NEWSLETTER
Winter, 1975 No. 68

THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

Cover — The Pendulum Exit Cave, Tas. Photo by George Bamford, Launceston Speleo. Club

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION
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ASF NEWSLETTER

Number 68. Winter 1975

CONTENTS

- * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * - * -

EDITORIAL.

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGY - WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

The present situation with all Australian speleological societies is that very little caving activity is apparent. This was noted by John Dunkley in a previous editorial of the ASF Newsletter. Since mid 1974, activity has been at a low ebb. ASF Secretary, Tony Culberg, has had little response to two ASF Secretarial Circulars. Some notable activities have occured: SSS/SCS expedition to the Gordon River, UNSWSS Filming in Kubla Khan and the TCC expedition to the Cracroft area. However, there is a general slackening of normal club activities and certainly very little exploratory work. This is viewed with great concern by some ASF clubs and executive members. As I write this, nostalgia for the late 1960's and early 1970's swamps me. This was a period of intense activity, coupled with excellent reporting by John Dunkley in the ASF Newsletter and individual club journals. Oh, for the good old days! Let us all "pull our fingers out" and get on with the job!

ANDREW SKINNER

ASF Vice-President.

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REMINDER - DEADLINE FOR COPY - SPRING ISSUE - NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 25th. - LEM

Editor: Laurie Moody, 13 Mason Street, Claremont. Tasmania. 7011
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NOTICES & NEWS

PUBLICATION PROBLEMS.

Once again, we are faced with a small issue due to a lack of material. Unfortunately, we experienced a few problems regarding the printing of the Autumn issue which therefore resulted in the subsequent appearance of this particular issue after the proposed deadline date. I would like to thank our old friend Peter Matthews for his efforts in rushing his copy to me just on the expiry date.

The proposed deadline for the Spring issue has therefore been extended to ensure that this issue is out in plenty of time to enable contributors to get their material to me. You may have noticed that we are experimenting with "Letraset" and hope to be able to continue in this medium. However, this particular process is rather difficult to obtain in Hobart at present. If one of our readers knows where there is a place where we could obtain a reasonable number of varied faces, using "Letraset", I would only be too pleased to hear from you.

Although I have written to a number of people regarding the "Caves of Australia" series, I have yet to receive an article. Some feed-back has been received for the "Who's Who" series but we need a lot more. Club news is rather sparce and I urge you to retaliate on this one. In order to put this magazine back on a top footing, we must have articles and if you can assist us, it would be greatly appreciated. Just a thought, if someone could fill me in on the Editorial Awards for 1974-75, this would also be appreciated.

To quote Andrew Skinner's editorial on the previous page - "Let us pull our fingers out and get on with the job"!

NARACOORTE CAVES.

According to information received, the Naracoorte Caves in South Australia, have been taken over by the National Parks (previously Tourism Dept.) There are some new proceedures concerning access. If someone from CEGSA can supply more details on this one, we would like to hear from you. Also, due to CEGSA's involvement at Naracoorte (particularly with regard to Victoria Cave), a research and interpretive complex costing $200,000 has been funded from Federal money.

SECOND Y.R.G. SYMPOSIUM.

It is proposed to hold a second symposium at Yarrangobilly in Canberra on the weekend of 29th and 30th of November, 1975. Hours planned are 1.00pm to 5.30pm Saturday and 9.30pm until early Sunday afternoon, probably with social B.Y.O.G. get-together Saturday night. It is intended to hold it in the Physics Lecture Theatre, A.N.U., but this location will be confirmed by circular to all clubs nearer the date and to all YRG members.

Anyone interested in Yarrangobilly, whether a member of YRG or not, is invited to attend. The purpose of the meeting is to review the progress made at Yarrangobilly since the previous meeting in October 1973, the role of YRG, and to discuss future work planned for the area by clubs and individuals.

TASMANIAN SUBMISSIONS.

A State Strategy Plan is being proposed by the State Planning Commissioner. This is to identify future growth possibilities for the state. Andrew Skinner is preparing a submission on behalf of ASF on the national importance of Tasmanian caves. He is also preparing a submission on the South West National Park concerning the importance in regards to wilderness caving.

FOUR AUSTRALIANS BOTTOM GOUFFRE BERGER.

News has just reached me advising that four well-known Australian cavers, Andrew Pavey(UNSWSS), Julia James, Neil Montgomery and Stuart McCann (SSS) have successfully reached the bottom of the Gouffre Berger, the second deepest cave in the world (1141m). They have spent the northern summer touring European caves and had arranged to join a South Wales Caving Club trip to the Berger. They arrived (with brilliant timing) just after the cave had been rigged and went straight down from the entrance to Camp I in three hours. There they changed to wet-suits and continued to the sump and back to Camp I in nine hours.

Andrew Pavey's report on the foursome's European caving activities can be read on Page 15 of this Newsletter in the form of a late supplement.

KUBLA KHAN FILMING TRIP

by JOHN CARMICHAEL

Trip was held 1 - 9 February, 1975.

The object of this trip was to take a thirty minute 16mm colour movie of the cave, to make a video record of the taking of the film and to experiment with the diprotodon. The project was financed by a grant from the Australian Council for the Arts Experimental Film and Television Fund.

The trip was attended by up to 40 people mostly from UNSWSS and TCC, but there was also the odd one or two from NC, CSS, NUCC, SUSS, NSWITSS, VSA, ISS, SSS & NZSS.

The lighting was provided from four 2kw photofloods powered by two generators. 240 volt flex was used to connect the lights to the generators and the length of the cable was as much as 1,800 feet (550 metres) at the Pleasure Dome. As was expected, the distance caused troubles from voltage drop. The result was that the film shot beyond 400 feet (122 metres)(nearly all of it) was red because the voltage drop caused a drop in the colour temperature of the lights. This I am told, can be corrected in the laboratory.

To add to the problems, 400 feet (122 m.) of original underground film was ruined in the processing laboratory. Attempts were made to replace this footage by shooting more film at Cliefden in N.S.W. This attempt was also plagued with trouble and was only moderately successful.

Two and a half hours of successful video tape was taken before the video unit, a Sony Porta-Pak, stopped working due to a blown high tension tube and/or mud and moisture. The video unit and the tape ($\frac{1}{2}$" high density) was loaned from the "Access" group of centres, without charge. The video proved to be particularly flexible medium. It operates on very low light intensities - as little as two cap lamps! It is cheap and easy to use, it is moderately portable but needs to be handled with a great deal of care and can be powered by re-chargeable batteries.

Video is an exciting medium and I recommend that it be used when, for instance, the non-caving public needs to be shown the extent, size, beauty and features of any caving area that is the subject of a conservation battle. The cost of making such a video program could conceivably be reduced to as little as $30 per 30 minutes of video tape.

The use of generators, cable and lights proved to be less exciting. Such a source provides large amounts of light for movie film, but should only be used when going short distances into the cave. This method of lighting is also expensive, our unit costing $100 per day to hire. This form of lighting also requires large numbers of porters to carry and lay cable. Need I conclude that this form of lighting is not recommended. Lighting a cave for movie making does, however, pose some difficult problems. To light chambers of any appreciable size, lighting power of the order of 8,000 watts is needed. This means using a system such as we used. Portable sources of light do not provide enough light for colour movie films except in confined spaces. A possible solution is the use of 1,000 w "sun guns" which are very portable and have re-chargeable batteries. But these are expensive and you would need a lot of them and also huge numbers of batteries plus a source to charge them from.

The attempt to shoot film using the diprotodon was not successful. This source of light flickers too much for use with movie film, does not give off enough light for colour shooting and cannot be adequately filtered for colour temperature. In our own attempt, we used 125 ASA Ektachrome 3200 deg. K film, pushed to 400 ASA, filtered down by approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ stop to about 4500 deg. K, and shot at half speed (12 f.p.s.). The diprotodon was set off in the middle of Xanadu Chamber but did not give off enough light to yield useable shots of the Khan or Begum.

The diprotodon used was the one developed by Llyod Robinson. Slides taken at the same time did indicate that daylight film is much closer in temperature, to the diprotodon, than tungsten. Accordingly, it is recommended that if the diprotodon is used for films, that daylight film filtered down or even unfiltered - be used, and, perhaps, two diprotodons might cancel some of the flickering and light intensity problems. Good results could probably be obtained by pushing B & W film.

Because it is difficult to obtain movie film of large chambers especially of the size of Xanadu or Cairn Hall, it is highly recommended that slides be taken. In fact, it is a good policy to take slides of anything that keeps still and is needed in the film. Movie film can later be taken off the shots if anything goes wrong.

Film and hire equipment is almost impossible to obtain in Tasmania. Anyone contemplating a movie there should be prepared to transport everything from the Mainland and therefore budget for the transport costs involved. We air-freighted most of the equipment from Sydney at a cost of $140.

Cont. overleaf -

An attempt has been made to summarise the incidents and recommendations which were the result of this trip. A full and detailed account can be found in SPAR 45.

It remains to be said that the trip generated a lot of publicity in Tasmania. The opportunity was taken to use it to publicise the fact that Kubla Khan is completely unprotected by reserves etc. The newspapers carried full page, front page and feature articles headed "Australia's Most Beautiful Cave", "Protect this Cave" etc. Kubla was also the subject of two current affair shows on the TV and many news announcements on both radio and TV. This publicity however, generated little interest from the authorities. When the film is completed, it will be used to get public support for the protection of Kubla by showing the people and the authorities, just how magnificent this cave is.

The film should be completed in November, 1975. The video tape is available now; both can be obtained from the author.

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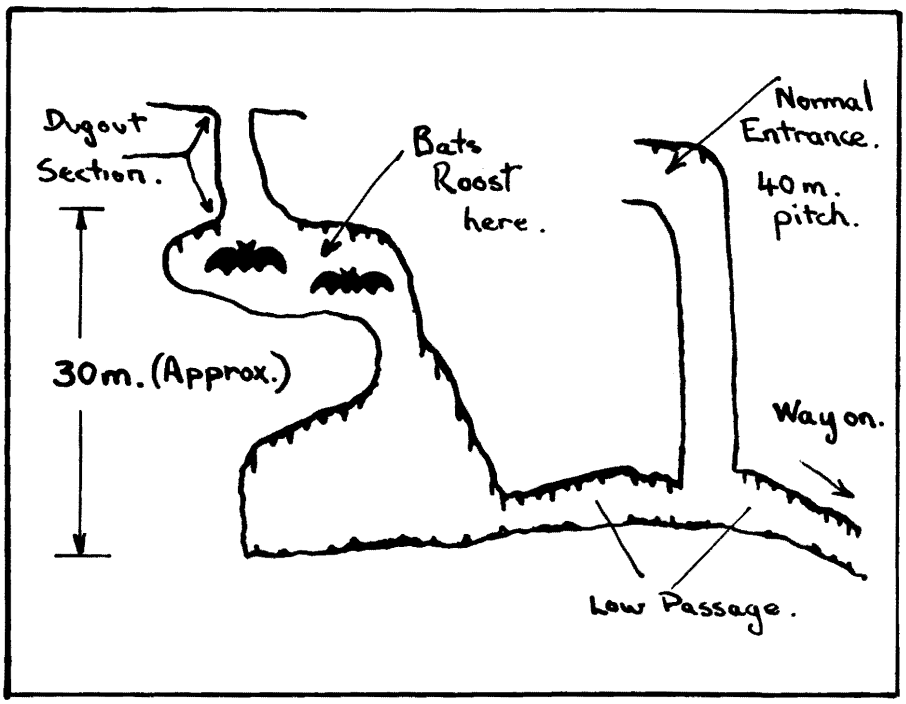
DIGGING

by TONY CULBERG

Early in my caving, I heard a discussion about vandalism. Part of it involved "what is vandalism?" A noted caver, a heavy on the Sydney scene, remarked that if you smashed formation but found 1,000 m. of cave - that was science; if you found nothing - then it was vandalism!!

Recently in NSW, there was an unfortunate series of events. A dig, which had been underway for a long time, broke through to a cave. For a variety of reasons the digger was unable to return to investigate and no trip report was published. Eventually, it was found that the new cave was in fact, part of the DRUM system, a bat maternity cave. There was a chamber at the top of an aven - see diagram.



The section was infrequently visited and the bats were therefore undisturbed as no one had climbed up the aven. The entry via the dig had two effects which were not good.

1) The bats were disturbed
2) The pocket of warm humid air at the top of the chamber could escape through the dig.

This meant that the area were the bats breed would have it's temperature reduced, which might affect the bats.

The exercise of digging for potential caves is perfectly acceptable. I believe though, that once a connection is proven, the finder should write it up and then block it up again. I understand that UNSWSS has since concreted the new entrance in.

If we are to preserve and promote our image as responsible cavers, it is imperative that any interference to the ecology of an area should be minimised. This topic is one that could be discussed at the next meeting, in fact, I will list it on the agenda.

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DID YOU KNOW -

that the title of the longest cave name in Australia is "THE CAVE WITH THE THING THAT WENT BUMP?" It is found at Mt. Etna, Queensland.

SPELEO HANDBOOK — DEVELOPMENTS

by PETER MATTHEWS

In 1968, ASF produced the first edition of a 320 page book called 'Speleo Handbook'. It's main purpose was to help Australian cavers by bringing together in one volume, all the basic information they might need to further their caving interest. The contents included -

1) Thirteen articles of a "how to do it" nature on various aspects of both scientific and technical speleology
2) All ASF's recommended codes and standards
3) A catalogue of the names and brief descriptions of all known caves in Australia and Papua/New Guinea
4) Appendices of useful information

It obviously fulfilled a need as that first edition sold out very rapidly indeed.

The very nature of the book's contents dictated that regular updating would be required. However, the Federation did not have, year after year, the tremendous number of volunteer man-hours needed for such a task. Elery Hamilton-Smith saw a possible solution in the newly emerging technique of photo-typesetting, which stores all the text on magnetic tape so that only the changes have to be added manually for each edition, not the whole book retyped and rechecked. A further step could be the computerisation of the cave data. Technical and economic feasibility however, remain to be worked out.

At about the same time, the Federation had decided to devote some effort to helping it's member societies record data concerning their caves. This proposal was soon recognised as also offering possibilities of helping the Handbook problem, and accordingly the Federation designed a recording system embracing the needs of -

1) the caver in the field
2) society records-keepers
3) a national catalogue

Included, were an integrated set of forms - some to collect the raw data, and others to summarise. The summary forms, besides performing their primary task of helping society records-keepers, were designed to be suitable also for automated updating of cave, cave area and cave map data in a national catalogue. A method was devised whereby any changes to the previous data could be seen, and only these manually punched for the computer at each update. The computer would then directly produce an updated typesetting tape of the entire cave list. By these means, the updating labour for the book would be cut by about 95%, yet costs would remain reasonable.

A further result of this system would be that the Federation would then have a computerised data base of all known Australian caves, which, with careful use, could be of great benefit to our speleology; for example, all caves satisfying desired criteria could rapidly and cheaply be singled out by the computer to enable further study. As with the first Speleo Handbook, only general cave locations would be included (nearest 10 km) and the policy would remain that precise locations could only be obtained by direct contact with the club(s) listed.

To keep things in perspective, it should be remembered that the publication of the catalogue is but one aspect of a comprehensive data recording system whose primary purpose is to help clubs keep track of their caves. The Operating Manual for this "ASF System" will be published later this year, together with supplies of those forms at present issued only in draft. In the meantime, societies are encouraged to use copies of the draft forms as circulated, and to advise me of any deficiencies found in them.

Whereas the "ASF System" and it's forms were fairly inexpensive to produce, setting up for the automated updating of Speleo Handbook would require considerable initial expenditure. Despite this, the Federation went ahead and designed it's system to include this facility, optimistically assuming that somehow the money would be found to put this part of the system into practice too. Once set up, revenue from sales of Speleo Handbook would finance the whole recording system indefinitely. This policy of optimistic readiness paid off when the National Estate Committee of the Australian Government saw fit to grant our request for funds for this purpose to the value of $14,000.

But there is always a catch - the money had to be spent by June 30th, a most difficult though not impossible deadline. The word went out, and, displaying the tremendous spirit of co-operation that has made ASF what it is today, almost everyone asked put aside their own pressing problems and met the requested deadline. National Estate however, had problems getting the money to us, and in fact, did not succeed until mid-July; they have therefore now extended the deadline into this financial year, a welcome relief which will allow a more rational approach and a better result. The present stage is finalising the computer programmes, a phase which could not start until the money actually became available. While these are being finished and tested, and the text and data is being punched, there is now an opportunity for missing or additional material to be sent in. This should be done via the original co-ordinators until the final deadline is advised. Sales details will be released immediately reliable estimates can be made.

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BACK ISSUE REPORT

by Peter Kowald

I have been informed that the title of the job that I have been trying to do for the last three months is: Business Manager (or Sales Manager), ASF Newsletter. One of my duties is looking after the sale of the back issues of the newsletter. Therefore, I would like to advise our readers and other interested persons of the following changes to the information about the sale of back issues which usually appears on the inside back cover of our publication.

1) People wanting to order back issues are to write to me at the address given below rather than Keith Oliver.

2) Issues now available are:

36 (1 copy), 40 (2 copies), 42 (7 copies), 46, 47 (1 copy), 50 - 67.

Prices: 1 issue 50c., 2 issues 80c., any 5 issues $1.50, any 10 issues $3.00.

It may be worthwhile mentioning some of the main articles in issues 63 - 67. They are:

63 - Second Nullarbor Cave Diving Expedition
Barkly Tableland Karst Features

64 - Yarrangobilly Solution Studies
Kubla Khan
Histoplasmosis

65 - Eagles Nest, Yarrangobilly
Camooweal-Lawn Hill Expedition
Manus Island Karst

66 - Longest and Deepest Caves
Bat Identification in South-Eastern Australia

67 - Cave Safety Features
What is a Cave Like Kubla Khan For?
Cave Accident Report - WA

Peter Kowald's address is:- C/o School of Librarianship, University of New South Wales, Kensington, 2033.

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DID YOU KNOW - that there has been only one recorded sighting of an albino bat in Australia?

THE MOLE CREEK HUT.

by BOB WOOLHOUSE

The Mole Creek hut near Marakoopa, has recently come into frequent use by parties both from other parts of Tassie and also from the North Island. Some of these parties tidy up after themselves but some do not! None seem to know anything about the hut and most seem to have the attitude that, as cavers, they are entitled to use it.

It must be emphasised that this hut is private property, as is also the paddock in which it stands. It belongs to Roy Byard of South Mole Creek. Roy is NOT a caver but some years ago he very generously allowed some of us, who he counted as his friends, to make use of it freely with no strings attached. Roy cannot be blamed if he feels his hospitality is being abused, and he has every right to close off the hut.

The Northern Caverneers attempt to act as custodians. The charge of 10 cents per night was initiated to cover the costs of minor repairs, replacement of gas cylinders and so on. However, our treasurer has received no money in the last year for the hut account from any but our own members, and we are now minority users of the hut, as we mostly return to Launceston at night.

In the days when we first negotiated for the hut, I had had an accident and was out of caving, so I poured some beers into Frank Brown (Jnr.) to persuade him to give a first hand account. Seemingly I overdid things, but older members may find his historical ramblings of some interest.

For the record, in chronological order, the huts Frank mentions are:-

1) The forestry shack with a broken door at Liena Mill (taken away at least 12 years ago).

2) "Rather nice house" was a genuine house belonging to Sassafras Creek Mill, across the road from the Mill, obtained by Doug Turner's glib tongue.

3) The old house in the middle of the paddock was on the track up to Sassafras Cave. Again T.C.C negotiated this one.

4) The three room shack was at Sassafras Creek Mill. It was a wreck until we took it over, we did learn that tennants should beware of making improvements.

5) The "house in the back paddocks" was near Toboggan in the Den Plain area. It cost us ten shillings a week which with about six active members, was a drain on our resources. This would have been about 1965.

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HOW STRONG IS A STITCHED SPLICE IN NYLON WEBBING ?

by Cal Magnussen

Tubular nylon webbing is one of the most versatile materials used in mountaineering. It is used for rappel anchors, rappel slings, chest slings, runners, hero loops, jam nut rigging, swami seats and any other uses that the imaginative mind will conceive.

JOINING THE ENDS

Probably the most common method for joining the ends to make a loop is with a knot. There are a number of different knots that can be used quite successfully, but all knots have certain disadvantages.

Cont. overleaf -

The efficiency of knots varies from less than 50% to possibly 75 %. Some knots require several inches of material, thus the sling or loop is heavier and bulkier than necessary. Some knots in slippery nylon materials tend to work loose unless they are pulled extremely tight or safe-tied by additional knots.

Sewing the ends of a piece of webbing together to form a loop or a sling, if done properly, is much better than a knot. Some of the advantages of a sewed splice over a knot are higher strength, smooth surface, less material required, and more secure in use.

TESTING FOR OPTIMUM SPLICE

A series of tests were made using $\frac{3}{4}$" and 3/32" tubular nylon webbing sewed with various stitch patterns to determine the most efficient splice. Tests 1 through 14 shows the stitch patterns and their respective test strengths. Several rows of parallel longitudinal stitches proved the best of all the patterns tested.

In the first series of tests, the thread broke in all of the specimens so another set of loops were made using heavier thread and the longitudinal stitch pattern (Tests 15 through 21). Most of the second series failed at the one-half inch diameter bolt attaching the loop to the test machine, thus indicating that the optimum splice was achieved.

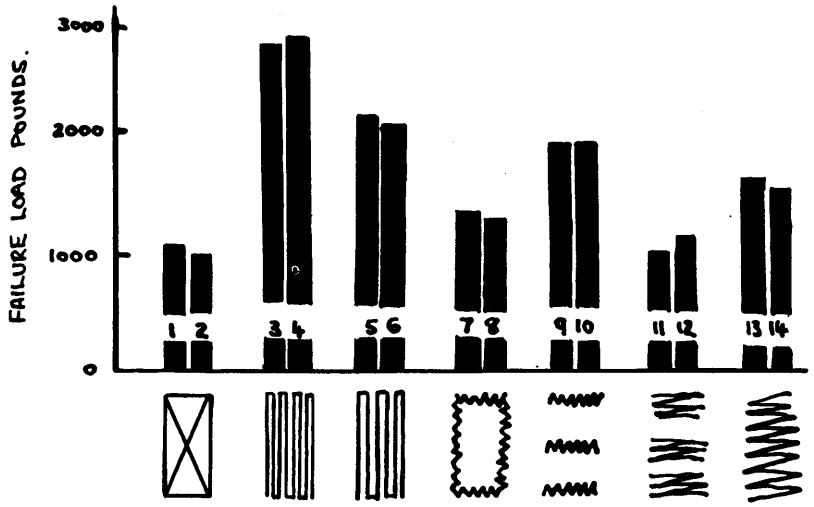


Fig. 1 The first series of tests was designed to determine optimum stitch pattern. Thread and webbing size were selected to insure failure in the splice.

ON THE HOME MACHINE

The first two sets of loops were sewed with an industrial sewing machine using polyester thread.

Since most climbers only have access to a home sewing machine and very few have industrial machines, a third series of tests were run with loops sewed on a Singer portable sewing machine using No. 24 Star Ultra Dee polyester thread and eight stitches per inch. See Tests 22 through 29.

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

Once the seam strength per inch with a certain thread is determined, the optimum splice for any type webbing can be calculated. As shown in Fig. 2, twelve passes on a fourinch lap was stronger than the webbing around a one-half inch diameter bolt. A two inch lap was only slightly lower in strength than the webbing over the bolt so would undoubtedly be adequate for any normal use. One inch tubular webbing with a breaking strength of about two times that of the 3/4" x 3/32" webbing would require twenty-four passes using the same type thread to obtain the optimum splice. The 9/16" x 1/16" webbing would require about ten passes.

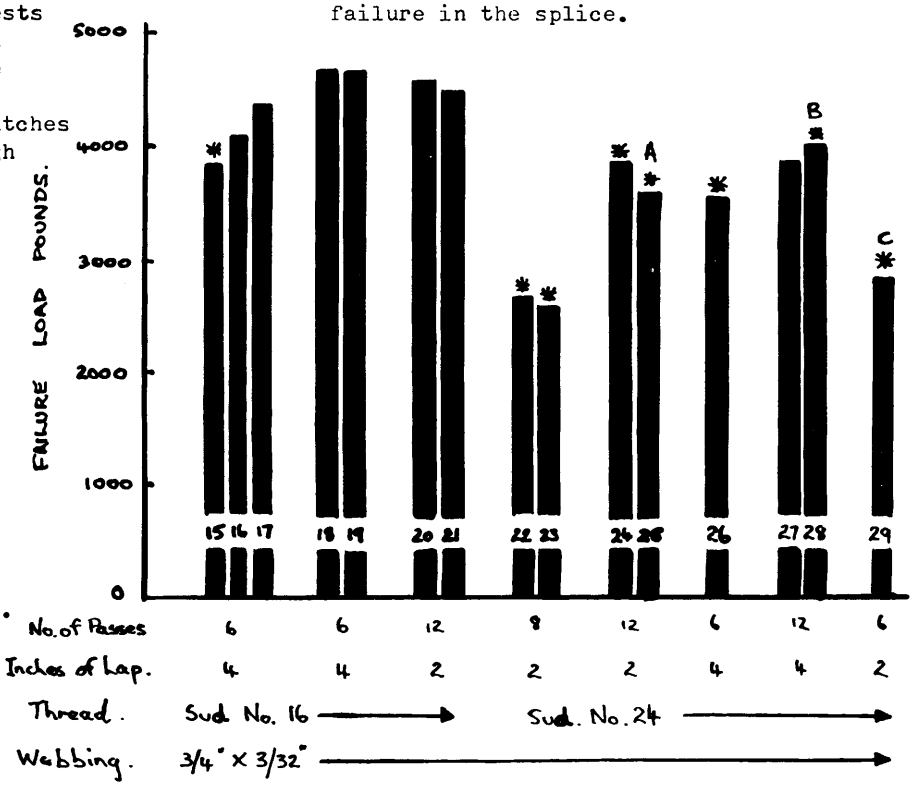


Fig. 2 The second series of tests explored thread size, lap over and number of passes.

A, B & C - Explained overleaf-

A - Six passes of indicator stitches failed at 2800/3200 pounds.

B - Six passes of indicator stitches failed at 2800/3200 pounds.

C - Four passes of indicator stitches failed at 2200/2500 pounds.

A series of test samples were made up using 9/16" x 1/16" blue tubular nylon webbing. The splices with ten passes both broke at the threads so additional loops were made increasing the number of passes, length of splice and stitches per inch.

The loops with twelve passes both failed at the splice by webbing fracture rather than thread breakage indicating the optimum splice was achieved.

Since the 9/16" webbing is thinner than the 3/4" webbing, the stress due to bending around the one-half inch diameter bolt is less with the 9/16" webbing. This would account for the fact that more passes were required than the calculation indicated to obtain the optimum splice and that the failures occurred at the splice rather than at the bolts.

OVERLOAD INDICATOR

An indicator devised by Harmon Jones of Seattle, Washington was tried on several of the test loops. See Test 25, 28 and 29. If a sling is subjected to a high load the nylon fibres take some permanent set as well as some reduction in strength. The indicator stitches will tell if the splice has been subjected to a certain predetermined load.

The splice is made in the normal manner except that an extra inch of material is used. Thus for a two inch splice, the ends are lapped over three inches. About half of the passes run the full three inches while the other half only run from one edge to the two inch mark.

As the loop is loaded up, the indicator stitches will fail first at a load somewhat lower than the breaking strength of the splice.

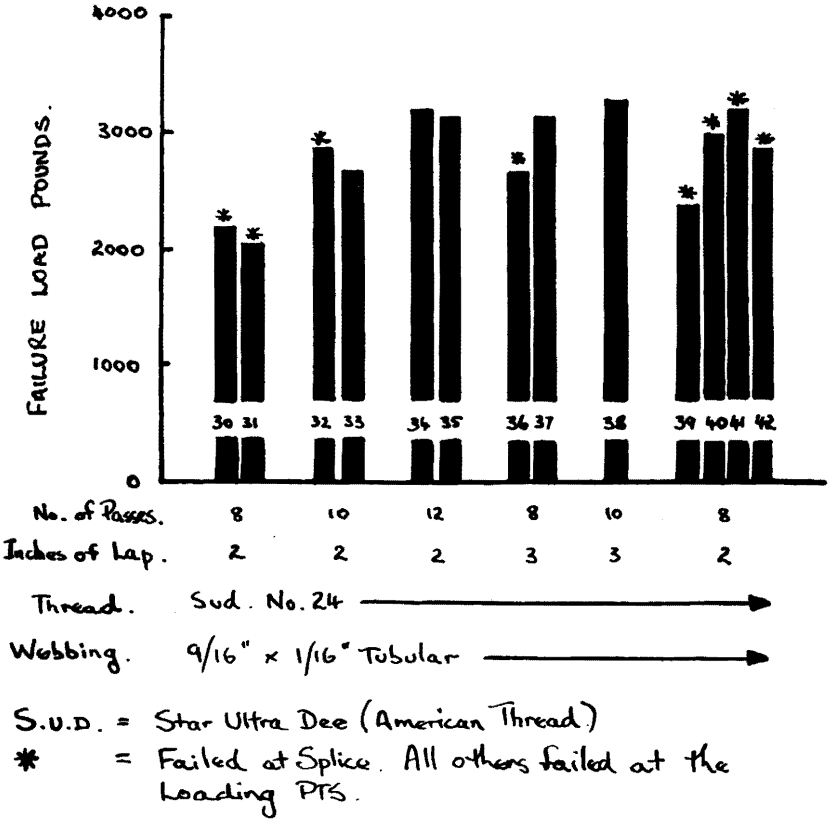


Figure 3.

NUTS

Several jam nuts were rigged with loops made from 9/16" x 1/16" blue tubular webbing. The webbing loop can be sewed together so that the splice is near the nut and the face of the webbing is parallel to the nut. This provides a fairly stiff convenient handle for easier insertion of the small size nuts into relatively deep cracks.

In all cases, the webbing loop on the jam nuts broke at the nut at about fifty-one to sixty-three percent of the strength of the optimum webbing loop. Nuts rigged in this manner would be satisfactory for protecting leads providing the climber does not advance too far above the nut without additional protection, or sufficient rope is cut between the belayer and the protecting nut to insure a dynamic belay in case of a fall.

THREAD

The thread used to sew the webbing loops made for these tests was made by American Thread Company and was purchased at Sewing Machine Service Company in Fenton, Washington.

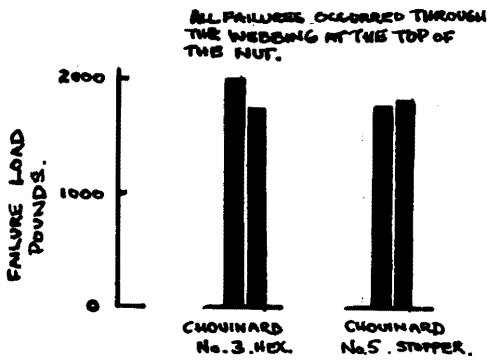
Other thread manufacturers probably make similar thread that would be satisfactory for sewing nylon webbing. The thread size and seam strength information is available in literature published by the thread manufacturers. The yellow pages in your telephone directory will help you find your nearest supplier.

Cont. Overleaf-

HINTS ON SEWING

The ends of the webbing should be hot cut, or melted after cutting to prevent ravelling. The rows of stiches should all be as near the same length as possible except for the indicator stitches if they are used. On some sewing machines the webbing may tend to slip out from under the presser foot if the first pass is made near one edge. If the first pass is made down the centre of the webbing, better alignment can usually be achieved. Stitches should not be run over the ends of the webbing as they would be more subject to abrasion as well as higher stress under a load.

Eight to twelve stitches per inch is probably best. More stitches per inch would be stronger but the machine may not feed properly if the stitch length is too short. Some experimenting with tension and stitch length may be necessary to get the best results.



The above article was reprinted, with permission, from Off Belay, October, 1972.

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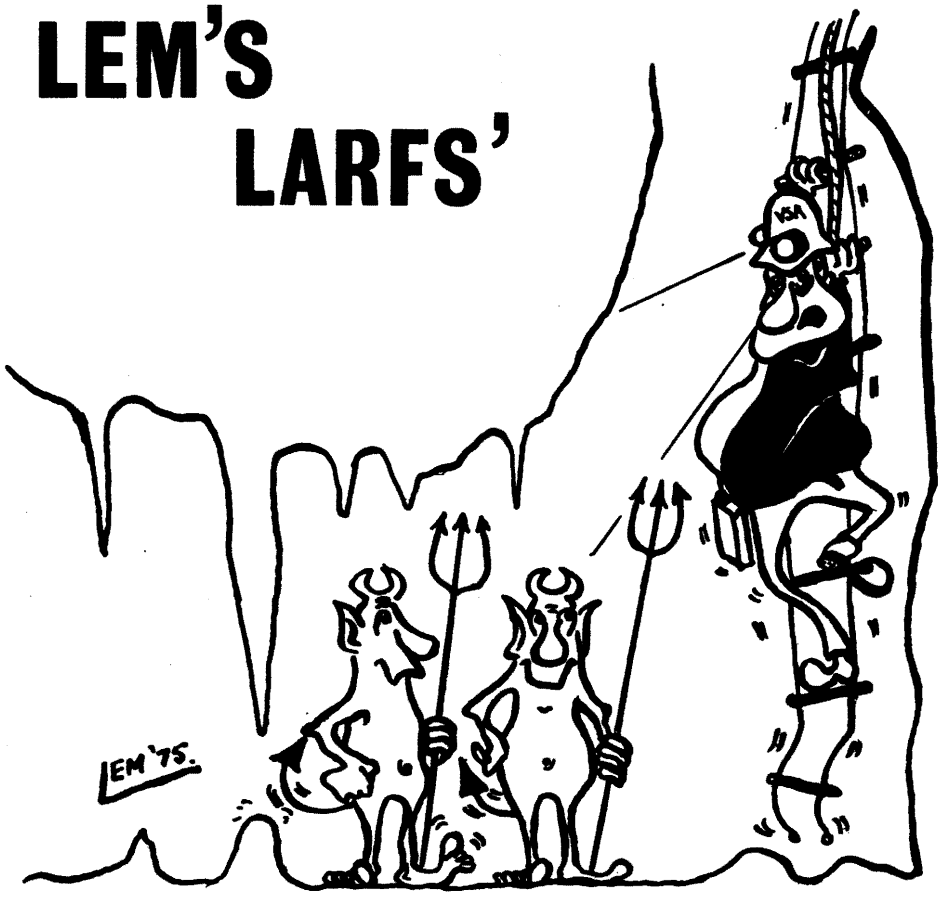
LEM'S LARFS'



"I knew Tassie's caves were deep but this is ridiculous!"

OR

"I knew we should've left that dig alone!"

WHO'S WHO....

on the SPELEO SCENE?

1. IAN WOOD

Known as the best dressed caver of the year, Ian has also been the driving force behind UNSWSS, since joining in 1956. Has held position of President for many years and is also a member of the Graduates Club. At present, he is still engaged on producing a map of the Wyanbene caving area. Held position of Editor for SPAR and ASF Newsletter and is currently co-ordinator of cave survey standards. Ian is in his mid-thirties, a bachelor and is employed by Ethnor as an industrial engineer.

2. TED ANDERSON

Without a doubt, one of the best cave surveyors in the world. Has figured in some very notable caving exploits including extensive surveying on the Nullarbor with Ian Wood. Originally caved with SUSS but now caves with both SUSS and UNSWSS. Was also responsible for one half of speleo geography of Mammoth Cave in New South Wales. Ted has also caved in New Caledonia. Currently holds position of Director for Speleological Research Council Ltd; has also held position of Editor of ASF Newsletter. He is presently engaged in clearing up a Ph.D thesis at the University of NSW. Ted is also a bachelor and in his thirties.

3. BOB WOOLHOUSE

Bob came from England and settled in Launceston about 1960. Had caved previously in England and also in Europe. In 1961, he established the Northern Branch of TCC. In the following decade, he was instrumental in the systematic exploration and documentation of the caves in the Mole Creek area together with Frank Brown Jnr. Bob was also President of TCC/NB for a number of years. He is employed as a senior master in biology at the Launceston Matric College. Now in his fifties, Bob is a very capable climber and bushwalker and is an inspiration to younger people. He is also a very keen yachtsman and lives with his family at Deviot, West Tamar.

4. ANDREW SKINNER

Andrew was born in Melbourne in 1953 but spent most of his early life at the Hastings Caves Reserve where his father was Superintendent for many years. He joined TCC in 1966, SCS in 1972, NC in 1973 and LSC in 1974. Has been Secretary and Vice-President of TCC at varoius stages. Andrew also completed a conservation study of the Ida Bay limestone district. He has also been involved in recreational studies and regional planning in northern Tasmania and is presently employed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Andrew and wife Ros, are now living at Sandy Bay, Hobart.

5. TONY CULBERG

Tony was born in Sydney in 1950 and educated at Sydney Technical High and the University of NSW, where he gained a B.Comm. degree. His first caving trip took place in January 1966, when he took part in a senior scout walking tour of Tasmania. This particular caving trip took in Kubla Khan and was led by Frank Brown Jnr. He is currently Secretary of ASF and Secretary-Treasurer of TCC and a full member of TCC, UNSWSS and NSWITSS. Tony is single and is employed by the Tasmanian Education Department and is also a registered Taxation Agent. He has caved widely from Texas to Buchan and also the Nullarbor and was also a director of Speleo Tours Inc. Tony is now residing at Lindisfarne in Tasmania.

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SPELEO HANDBOOK — DEVELOPMENTS

by PETER MATTHEWS

In 1968, ASF produced the first edition of a 320 page book called 'Speleo Handbook'. It's main purpose was to help Australian cavers by bringing together in one volume, all the basic information they might need to further their caving interest. The contents included -

1) Thirteen articles of a "how to do it" nature on various aspects of both scientific and technical speleology
2) All ASF's recommended codes and standards
3) A catalogue of the names and brief descriptions of all known caves in Australia and Papua/New Guinea
4) Appendices of useful information

It obviously fulfilled a need as that first edition sold out very rapidly indeed.

The very nature of the book's contents dictated that regular updating would be required. However, the Federation did not have, year after year, the tremendous number of volunteer man-hours needed for such a task. Elery Hamilton-Smith saw a possible solution in the newly emerging technique of photo-typesetting, which stores all the text on magnetic tape so that only the changes have to be added manually for each edition, not the whole book retyped and rechecked. A further step could be the computerisation of the cave data. Technical and economic feasibility however, remain to be worked out.

At about the same time, the Federation had decided to devote some effort to helping it's member societies record data concerning their caves. This proposal was soon recognised as also offering possibilities of helping the Handbook problem, and accordingly the Federation designed a recording system embracing the needs of -

1) the caver in the field
2) society records-keepers
3) a national catalogue

Included, were an integrated set of forms - some to collect the raw data, and others to summarise. The summary forms, besides performing their primary task of helping society records-keepers, were designed to be suitable also for automated updating of cave, cave area and cave map data in a national catalogue. A method was devised whereby any changes to the previous data could be seen, and only these manually punched for the computer at each update. The computer would then directly produce an updated typesetting tape of the entire cave list. By these means, the updating labour for the book would be cut by about 95%, yet costs would remain reasonable.

A further result of this system would be that the Federation would then have a computerised data base of all known Australian caves, which, with careful use, could be of great benefit to our speleology; for example, all caves satisfying desired criteria could rapidly and cheaply be singled out by the computer to enable further study. As with the first Speleo Handbook, only general cave locations would be included (nearest 10 km) and the policy would remain that precise locations could only be obtained by direct contact with the club(s) listed.

To keep things in perspective, it should be remembered that the publication of the catalogue is but one aspect of a comprehensive data recording system whose primary purpose is to help clubs keep track of their caves. The Operating Manual for this "ASF System" will be published later this year, together with supplies of those forms at present issued only in draft. In the meantime, societies are encouraged to use copies of the draft forms as circulated, and to advise me of any deficiencies found in them.

Whereas the "ASF System" and it's forms were fairly inexpensive to produce, setting up for the automated updating of Speleo Handbook would require considerable initial expenditure. Despite this, the Federation went ahead and designed it's system to include this facility, optimistically assuming that somehow the money would be found to put this part of the system into practice too. Once set up, revenue from sales of Speleo Handbook would finance the whole recording system indefinitely. This policy of optimistic readiness paid off when the National Estate Committee of the Australian Government saw fit to grant our request for funds for this purpose to the value of $14,000.

NUCC : No news received from this club.

OSS : No information.

PNGCEG : According to the April edition of "Nuigini Caver", which provides some very interesting "info" on a number of areas, a few dolines inland from Lonahan on Buka Island, Bougainville were checked out by Hal Gallasch. Javavere in the Central District received a visit from a party which visited Old Cave. March saw the second bottoming of Bibima Cave - that deep one! Hells Gates in the Eastern Highlands District was surveyed by Kevin Wilde. Other areas to be visited were East New Britain, Manus District and the Western Highlands. The British Expedition was due to arrive in June and I would like to hear how things went. Jim Farnworth, P.O. Box 163, Rabaul, advises that he hopes to organise a caving meet over Christmas. If anyone is interested please get in touch with him as soon as possible.

PSG : Again - no information.

SCS : Although fairly quiet, Steve Harris reports that trips have been held to the Florentine Valley, where Growling Swallet (JF 36) was bottomed and Welcome Stranger (JF 229)was visited a few weeks later. Mole Creek also received attention for exploration purposes. Surveying was also carried out in Toboggan Cave (MC 60). Hastings received two separate trips for familiarisation with Wolfhole as the objective in both cases. An exploratory trip was held on the June long-weekend to Julius River in north-western Tasmania, where several caves were located. The trip was described as being a "fair success" but a follow-up trip is being planned for the summer months.

SRGWA : No club news but Norm Poulter advises me that he has not yet received his two copies of the ASF Mullamullang submission. Can someone help him out on this one?

SSS : Unfortunately, I had not received material from this club in time to include it in the last issue of the Newsletter but SSS have been fairly active over the last six months. Early in March, a trip was held to Wombeyan and Women's Lib triumphed with a majority of the party being females. Wineglass Cave (W 10) was located and surveyed and survey work began on The Palace Cave (W 147). Photography was carried out in W 130. Mid-March saw three members at Jenolan and Serpentine Cave (J 72) was entered after removing rubble from the entrance which had just recently collapsed. Wiburds Lake Cave (J 92) was also visited. At the end of March, a party visited Bungonia to have a look at College Cave (B 84) and Grill Cave (B 44). Fossil Cave was also visited. Early May saw trips to Bungonia, where B 24 was descended and to Wombeyan, where Grants Cave was subjected to dye tests. Information on recent trips did not appear in the SSS July Journal but it does include the club's submission to the National Estate Inquiry which is well worthwhile reading.

SUSS : This club has also been fairly busy with a trip to Yarrangobilly taking place at the end of May. A search for Coppermine Cave (Y 12) was unsuccessful but a visit was made to Y 10. The Eagles Nest was visited entering via Y 2. The rest of the trip was apparently slack with a "romp" around the Tourist area taking place. Jenolan was visited late in April with Rho Hole (J 20) the main attraction. The area was again trogged early in May with surveying being undertaken in Bushrangers Cave (J 88), a visit to Wiburds for photographic purposes and the location of a new cave. During Easter, two members visited the Texas area and a number of caves were visited. Bungonia also received a visit in mid-May with Grill Cave (B 44), Drum Cave (B 13), Argyle Pot (B 31) and B 15 being the centres of attraction.

TCC : Have been fairly quiet over the winter months and this is being blamed on the lousy weather that has been prevailing for some time. However, some work has been carried out. A new cave was located and explored in the Junee-Florentine area but attempts to survey it were hindered by water and the presence of a dead wombat in one of the passages. This particular cave was located by members of the Maydena Branch of TCC, which was formed in April. The President of this branch is Max Jeffries, who is well-known to many mainland cavers who have shared his hospitality over the years. The cave, Beginners Luck (JF 79-82), was the first cave to be discovered by this new group. May saw trips tothe Florentine, Flowery Gully and Mole Creek, where Croesus Cave (MC 13,43,51) was surveyed. A trip was also made to Gunn's Plains. June saw trips to Mole Creek for numbering purposes, Exit Cave (IB 14), Junee-Florentine - location and numbering and to the West Florentine, where two new caves were explored and numbered. July also saw trips to these same areas. President, Albert Goede left Tassie at the end of July to have a look at a few South African caves and to visit relatives in the Netherlands. He is due back in early September.

UNSWSS : Has also been pretty active with the highlight of the year being the filming of Kubla Khan, in January. A full detailed account of this venture appears in SPAR 45. After the filming was completed, some members took a look at Exit Cave at the other end of the island. Several of

UNSWSS (Cont;) : their members also paid a visit to Kangaroo Island in South Australia. A number of caves were visited.

UQSS : Went to the Kempsey area early in May on an introductory trip for those who hadn't been there before. Caves at Willi Willi were located including one in particular which is yet to receive a name and contains some rather good decoration. It is thought that this may be the "really big cave at Sebastopol" which KSS have been looking for. Crystal Cave, Carrai Bat Cave and Queensland Cave were also visited during this trip. Two parties, one from Brisbane and one from Rockhampton visited the Mt. Etna/Morinish area late in April for photography and mapping in Prometheus Cave, and reports that apart from a crawlway and a possible new extension, work is nearly completed. Boulder caves in granodiorite were also visited at Morinish. A further trip to Mt. Etna was led by Rosie Murphy in mid-May and in July, a trip to Texas was again led by Rosie. This particular trip took in Drop In Pot, Russenden, the Joint, Kruscen. Henry Shannon spent most of his time at his favourite past-time - digging!

VSA : According to Rhonwen Pierce, in the July issue of NARGUN, a trip was conducted to Buchan on the Labour Day weekend in March. Some scrub-bashing and numbering took place, plus a visit to Oolite Cave (M 56) and M 124, mostly for photographic purposes. Mention of a water tank being salvaged from the Buchan Tip and being put to use at the hut, was also made. Reference was also made concerning a trip to Bindi and Buchan in February with Cave Hill being trogged with little result. Cloggs Cave (EB 2) was also visited during this particular trip.

WASG : Conducted trips to Witchcliffe and Cowaramup in February mainly for exploration and survey purposes. Caves visited were Connelly (Wi 48), Swamp Inflow (Wi 87), Museum and (Co 1) Quinninup Lake. Yallingup received a visit late that month where work commenced on the excavation in the Amphitheatre. Bone material was collected. March saw several trips to Witchcliffe and a survey of Wi 9 was commenced. The Margaret River area was also visited in March by a large party to conduct a "dig". No mention of a cave name appears but I presume that it was either Connellys or Swamp Inflow. (Correct me if I'm wrong - Ed.) Strongs Cave, which was the scene of an accident in January, was visited again in April, mainly to show new members and explore possible extensions. Nothing of significance was found. April-May saw trips again to Witchcliffe, where surveying, dye tracing and "digs" plus scrub-bashing were carried out. Kieth Lightbody's "dig" proved successful and a small cave was located. Strongs was again visted in May/June and a solution pipe was abseiled (44 metres) near Giants. Brackman Cave (Wi 93) was also visited. Mid-July saw a very large party in the Witchcliffe area with Wi 45, 46, Tight Entrance Cave, Block Cave, Terry Cave and Moondyne being tagged. Early July also saw a surveying party in Co 4, and Co 3 was generally "toursted".

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NOTICES & NEWS Cont;

LATE SUPPLEMENT.

ANDREW PAVEY'S EUROPEAN REPORT.

"The Gouffre Berger is the second deepest cave in the world (1141m) and was discovered in 1953 by Grenoble caver Jo Berger. The cave was explored by successive French & International Expedition to a sump at 1122m in 1956. Since then, divers have extended the cave to 1141m. The Gouffre de la Pierre-St. Martin in the French Pyrenees is currently the deepest cave at 1171m, although it has never been traversed top to bottom as it has entrances near the centre (Lepineaux Shaft) and bottom (E.D.F tunnel to Salle Verna). The Berger is universally acclaimed as the finest sporting cave in the world and is visited by several expeditions every year with the sole intention of reaching Sump I (diving is now banned).

The four of us arrived(with brilliant timing) just after the cave was rigged and went straight down from the entrance to Camp I (In the Hall of the Thirteen) in 3 hours, changed to wet-suits and went to the sump and back in 9 hours. After a comfy sleep (4 in 1 sleeping bag), we returned to the surface after 33 hours caving.

The cave entrance starts with a short pitch from a limestone pavement set in pine forest and then continues on as a series of pitches down an abandoned meandering streambed with some tight & awkward chimneys. The last pitch in the section (40m) leads out into a large passage known as Grand Gallery and only a few short pitches, Tyrolean traverses and a huge Nullarbor-sized rockpile (The Great Rubble Heap) separate it from Camp I (about 450m down). The Camp was remarkably clean compared with other caves which have had expeditions in them (notably Italian ones). Below Camp I is the Hall of the Thirteen with massive 6-8m flat-topped stalagmites and a large floor of gour pools. Then the Canals start. Originally traversed by boat but now waded or swum, these lead to the wet pitches such as Claudines and Grand Cascade (20m). Then the Grand Canyon and an interesting sloping traverse on a muddy rockpile and after a short crawl (the only one in the cave) there are Little Monkey and the Hurricane pitches which are both interesting in their own little way. Another rubble floored chamber leads to the final canals which seem much colder and deeper than the first set. The sump itself is not large and there is a small rubble beach where you could get out of the water to look at all the names on the wall - definately a good site for a visitor's book!

Other caves visited by the party were Aven Jean Nouveau near Vaucluse in France (570m with a 167m entrance pitch), Spluga della Preta (870m with a 131m entrance pitch followed by a 102m pitch) the third deepest cave in Italy (6th in world), Antro de Corchia (668m) a fine stream passage with many small pitches and a howling draft at the entrance, Kaena jama in Jugoslavia (175m entrance pitch), Planinska jama and Krizna jama (huge river caves near Postojna Tourist Cave which require extensive swimming or boats). Skoejanska jama is undoubtedly the finest tourist cave in the world with a huge river canyon 100m high and 50m wide with a thundering river&mist clouds above the bridge which is 42m above the river.

Postojna Cave is world renowned and features 2km of railroad track to take visitors well into the cave for the rest of an on foot inspection. The whole cave is superbly decorated (even by Jenolan standards) and many salamander live in the cave stream.

Grotte Gigante near Trieste is claimed as one of the biggest chambers in the world (250 x 115 x 60m) although Julia thought Carlsbad (USA) was bigger and Tony thought Salle Verna (PSM, France) was the larger.

The party also visited Dachstein Eishohle (a large ice cave) and the nearby Mammuthohle (third longest in Austria but all were muddy, rocky tubes and not very interesting (27km long). The final part of the trip was a long drive to Greece for an attempt on Provetina (second deepest shaft in the world at 392m) which failed due to lack of time. However, six new caves were found on the Astraka Plateau. Ulysses Cave was a good stream passage but only 150m deep, whilst the "Hole of the Married Women" had to be left at 270m depth with a 60m shaft undescended due to lack of time once again.

Later on the last day a shaft which rattled for 8-10 seconds was found but had to be left. The area contains the deepest cave in Greece (Epos Chasm) and has barely been touched as yet."

AUSTRALIAN/PAPUA NEW GUINEA EXPEDITION TO NEW IRELAND.

An eight man party of Australian and Papua New Guinea based cavers led by Michael Bourke and Lex Brown has just returned from a month long expedition to the Lelet Plateau of New Ireland. Here there is over 200 square kilometres of limestone plateau between 800 and 1400 metres above sea level and only a few kilometres from the sea. Rainwater sinks on the plateau and emerges in the sea or on the coast as strongly flowing streams or seepages. Hence the party held high hopes of exploring very deep systems with the depth potential as high as 1400 metres.

Over 100 caves were explored, many of which were blocked off before much depth was attained. The deepest explored was about 100 metres deep. The longest pitch descended was an 81 metre shaft on the

NOTICES & NEWS Cont;

top of a hill. As well as numerous vertical systems a number of river caves were explored, the deepest going to about 70 metres depth. Despite the lack of systems of any great depth, the party is confident they are there to be found. In the time available it was possible to explore but a tiny fraction of the plateau area.

The karst topography is most interesting. On the high plateau (above 1200m a.s.l.) it occurs as honeycomb karst - numerous adjacent dolines each containing a number of cave entrances. The country looks impossible to traverse from the air, but is in fact relatively easy on the ground. In the lower and inhabited part of the plateau the topography takes the form of cone karst - limestone cones up to 100 metres high.

There were other compensations for the lack of very deep systems. With easy access and friendly villagers, it was a hassle free trip. Coastal New Ireland must rate as one of the most beautiful unspoiled tropical islands anywhere in the world, and the party spent a relaxing few days on the coast on the way in and out.

We were able to collect a number of legends associated with the caves - such as the one about a man who fell into a cave and emerged in a resurgence on the coast 1000 metres lower a few days later! Animal bones were common in the caves and human bones were found deep inside one tight horizontal system. An expedition report is to be found in this Newsletter soon.

The article above was supplied by R. Michael Bourke who was oneof the leaders on this expedition.

TWO DIE IN THE BERGER.

According to a recent report by the French Press, it is with regret that we learn of the deaths of two French cavers. Eric Meunier and Alin Marechal were apparently killed by a rockfall whilst guiding a party of four British cavers through the Gouffre Berger. The four British cavers were brought to the surface after spending several days trapped in the cave. However, the bodies of the two Frenchmen remained interred some 800 metres below the surface. Further information on this unfortunate accident is not yet available.

SPELEO PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE.

Jenolan Submission $1.00 (plus postage)- P. Kowald
Nullarbor Submission $1.00 (plus postage)- P. Kowald
7th.-(CEGSA), 8th.-(TCC), 9th.-(UNSWSS),-10th. (UQSS) Conference Proceedings.
Jenolan (Mammoth) Books - John Dunkley
Bungonia Caves Books - SSS

This list is far from being complete and anyone with further editions, prices and from whom available, should contact me in time for the next issue of this Newsletter.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

CSS have advised me that they have changed their address - (postal address). The new address appears below -

18 Arabana Street, Aranda, ACT, 2614

This club also reports that they have been active in the following areas - Paddys River (Cotter)and White Rocks. At Paddys River, Cotter Cave (PR 1), Powder Store Cave (PR 2) and Blasted Cave (PR 3) were surveyed. In the White Rocks area, White Rocks Cave (WR 1) was also surveyed and mapped.

INTENDING TASSIE VISITORS - PLEASE NOTE!!!

Any caver(s) intending to visit Tasmania in future are hereby asked to contact one of the four ASF representatives in this state -

Laurie Moody, 13 Mason Street, Claremont, 7011 or Phone 49 3316
Tony Culberg, 16 Nelumie Street, Lindisfarne, 7015 or Phone 43 8546
Roy Skinner, 12 Nixon Street, Sandy Bay, 7005 or Phone 23 1506
Andrew Skinner, 18 Nixon Street, Sandy Bay, 7005

The original address of Brian Collin at 66 Wentworth Street is no longer available due to other commitments. Therefore, anyone requesting keys, area information or digs are now asked to contact one of the above mentioned people who will do what they can to assist you.

NEXT ISSUE.

The "Great Victoria Cave Giveaway"!
South African Caves.

REMEMBER - DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR NEXT ISSUE - 25th. OCTOBER - REMEMBER - 25th. OCTOBER - REMEMBER.