

# AUSTRALIAN CAVER

THE AUSTRALIAN  
SPELEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

**No.118**

**1988**



# AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION Inc.

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*All articles, reports, tests, photos and reviews are welcomed for publication. These may be sent to:—*

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### DEADLINE FOR COPY

*All articles should be submitted to the editor by the end of:—*

**FEBRUARY  
MAY  
AUGUST  
NOVEMBER**

*If you find writing a chore, why not phone the editor directly???*

### COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

*Forget-me-not Cave,  
East Buchan  
By P.J. Ackroyd*

*The opinions expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the A.S.F. Inc. or the Editor.*

# CAVE CLASSIFICATION - THE "CREATIONISM" OF SPELEOLOGY

By Terry O'Leary

The parallels between the current controversy over cave classification in the Jenolan Caves Reserve Draft Plan and the debate over creation versus evolution are striking. The system of cave classification is a simplistic solution to a complex problem. Cave classification also shares with creationism, the inappropriate use of jargon which has the effect of creating confusion. Cave classification, as does creationism tries to provide a neat solution to a complex natural phenomena.

The careful monitoring of each cave and karst area requires considerable effort and expenditure. What is needed is an ongoing scientific survey of the karst resource by professionals. Resources must be allocated by management authorities to do a scientific survey of the karst resource. The database established by A.S.F. Inc. is a first step, but this needs to be expanded.

A simplistic approach to study karst, would be to introduce a cave classification system. This would be a 'cop out' for management authorities. For this and other reasons A.S.F. Inc. policy does not endorse a system of cave classification. A cave classification system would generate income for a couple of individuals (most of whom are social scientists), by artificially creating a need for all the management authorities to get the caves, under their control, classified or be left out of the latest pseudo science craze in speleology.

Before any reasonable system of controlling use of the karst can be established, considerable resources have to be spent collecting a set of base data for the reserve of cave systems. A system that is used for controlling access to the karst resource must be based on a scientifically established database, be ecologically sound and scientifically objective. The use of a system of cave classification is certainly subjective; fraught with pitfalls and easily lends itself to pseudo science.

The use of classification can be a trap for land managers. It provides a neat rigid system that will often become 'set in concrete' and result in the poor management of some classes of the resource. Classification can be useful as a tool, as in the sciences of Botany and Zoology, that have used classification systems for hundreds of years. The classification system often becomes an end in itself and the real reason for their application is sublimated to the classification process itself. Classification systems do change regularly and these changes may cause disruption.

However, if a karst classification system is changed, whole portions of a limited resource may have been lost or damaged due to a poor original classification. The use of a cave classification system by land managers means many more caves will have access restricted and with a classification system the easiest caves to administer, are the ones with no access.

No karst classification system can be said to have worked in other areas as the time that any system has been applied has been very short in a biological and geological time scale. The full impact of any classification system has yet to be measured. Most if not all areas to which various classification systems have been applied, have not been subjected to full scale environmental monitoring. Papers have been presented at A.S.F. Inc. Conferences and published in their Journals supporting cave classification. This does not mean A.S.F. Inc. endorses a system of cave classification, rather that it has allowed discussion about this topic. Ignorant people believe if you talk about a fallacy often enough, it will become the truth.

Another problem with classification systems, is that they require reference sites with buffer zones for each class and sub class. The diverse nature of caves and the large number of classes that they require, would preclude the establishment of any ecologically viable representative reference site for each class and sub class. Some reference sites may be established, but they could not represent all classes and sub classes and hence the classification system would have to be arbitrary and therefore ineffective.

The method to control access to caves, should be based on the principle, that any level of use of the resource that has unacceptable levels of impact shall be reduced until the impact is acceptable. Use of the karst resource should be such that visitation will be permitted when guidelines based on the ecological sensitivity of a particular site are followed. This type of system needs scientific study to establish guidelines and to monitor their application and effectiveness. The problem with this type of system, is that it needs funding, plus good hard work along with reliable scientific data. This system cannot be established by a few social scientists whose expertise lies in the area of human interactions, but requires the input of real scientists.

# A.S.F. AWARDS

By Lloyd Robinson

Convenor Awards Commissioner

Fellow of the Australian Speleological Federation

Involvement in Speleology is not likely to attract the attention of those with the task of dispensing Australias' awards. The ASF Inc. has its own three tiered system of awards as a means of recognising those who have made noteworthy contributions to any field of speleology.

The most recent addition to our award system, namely "The Certificate of Merit of the ASF Inc.", has been involved in a 'catch up' operation with many nominations in the initial years of its existence. To-day, nominations have slowed to a trickle with the result there has been no need to bestow any awards at the in-between Conferences' Council Meeting of January 1988. Nominations for any three of the ASF Inc. awards can be made to the Awards Convenor at any time.

Recipients of awards announced during the Speleotec Conference of January 1987, have all been finalised and are:

## Fellowship of the ASF Inc.

ANDREW SPATE

For many years of outstanding service to the Federation in the fields of Administration, Management, Library and Promotion of the Federation, with Cave Management Authorities.

## Eddie Smith Award

BARRY LOVEDAY

for dedicated service and leadership, over many years to the cause of Cave Surveying Projects in Western Australia.

## Certificate of Merit

EVALT CRABB

For Administrative services to the Highland Caving Group and the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. over many years.

STUART NICHOLAS

For inspiring and leading and documenting numerous Cave and Cave Diving explorations in Tasmania and for services to the Tasmanian Caverneering Club and the Australian Speleological Federation Inc.

RON ALLUM

For inspiring and leading numerous Cave and Cave Diving explorations, especially on the Nullarbor, for innovatory developments in Cave Diving technique and safety and for forging links between Cave Divers and Speleologists.

GRACE and DON MATTS

For dedicated service to the cause of Cave Rescue in New South Wales; for service to the Sydney Speleological Society.

Due to repeated requests, here is a complete list of the recipients of each of the three ASF Inc. Awards.

- a) Elery Hamilton-Smith (December 1974)
- b) Peter G. Matthews (January 1985)
- c) Andrew Phillip Spate (10th January 1987)

## Eddie Smith Award

- a) Aola M. Richards (1972)
- b) Edward A. Lane (1972)
- c) Joseph N. Jennings (1974)
- d) Elery Hamilton-Smith (1976)
- e) Benjamin Nurse (1978)
- f) John R. Dunkley (1980)
- g) Vince Kinnears (1983)
- h) Kevin Kiernan (1983)
- i) Albert Goede (January 1985)
- j) Barry Loveday (January 1987)

## Certificate of Merit Award

- a) Bruce Dunhill & Ray Rowney (December 1982)
- b) Julia James (December 1982)
- c) Neil R. Montgomery (December 1982)
- d) John Taylor (December 1982)
- e) Ross Ellis (December 1982)
- f) Roy Skinner (December 1982)
- g) Andrew Phillip Spate (December 1982)
- h) Henry Shannon (December 1982)
- i) Ian Lewis (December 1982)
- j) Lloyd N. Robinson (December 1982)
- k) Stefan & Roland Eberhard (December 1983)
- l) John Bonwick (December 1983)
- m) Ian D. Wood (December 1983)
- n) Colin Carter (December 1983)
- o) Alan Warild (December 1983)
- p) Adrian Davey (December 1983)
- q) Gregory Middleton (December 1983)
- r) Michael Bourke (December 1983)
- s) Barry Moore (December 1983)
- t) Robert Woolhouse (January 1985)
- u) Ken Grimes (January 1985)
- v) John Watson (January 1985)
- w) Tom Robinson & Les Pearson (January 1985)
- x) Members of Vic. Speleological Assoc. Inc. (Jan85)
- y) Cathie & David Rothery (January 1985)
- z) Andrew Pavey (January 1985)
- aa) Evalt Crabb (January 1987)
- ab) Ron Allum (January 1987)
- ac) Stuart Nicholas (January 1987)
- ad) Grace & Don Matts (January 1987)



# COMMUNICATION OR STANDARDIZATION - THAT IS THE QUESTION!

By Ron & Fran Poulton

It is important to standardize calls for abseiling/caving/climbing or are we missing the point? Standardized abseiling calls are a perennial chestnut that gets dragged up now and again without ever being satisfied. Already it looks like we are going to pick on Ann but this is not so. Actually, we agree with her that a lot of problems arise due to misunderstood communications (not only in caving) but feel that trying to make everyone the same is not the answer. The essence of calls is communication and it doesn't really matter whether you say 'On rope', 'Hello', 'Number one', or whatever as long as all members of the party understand what is meant by a particular term. Absolutely essential, we would have thought, before going away with an unknown group would have been five minutes spent sorting out what means what.

There is an old story, actually told about doctors, but also applicable to cavers. It goes something like this: If you put five cavers in a committee and ask them what are the correct calls for abseiling, you are guaranteed at least six answers. This is not to say that some points of commonality don't exist and shouldn't be highlighted. Ann describes quite accurately the syndrome best described as "I'm right why should I change. It's the rest of you that are wrong". So that everyone can get suitably aggro, here is our contribution to the "I'm Right Series".

Abseiling and Caving Communications as used by South Coast Area Scouts.  
(includes interpretations).

## ABSEILING

- 1) ON ROPE: Made by the abseiler immediately prior to touching the rope and is designed to alert the bottom belayer and all and sundry that the rope is in use.
- 2) ON BELAY: Reply from bottom belayer indicating ability to perform function.
- 3) ABSEILING: Given by abseiler immediately prior to removing cowstail or other safety device.
- 4) SAFE: By abseiler indicating that they are not only on the bottom but in a safe position. (note they could still be attached to rope whilst changing to another rope).
- 5) ROPE CLEAR: Indicates that abseiler is clear of rope and landing zone and the next abseiler may commence descent.

All of these terms have been used for a number of years and have been found to be clear, both above and below ground and in unpleasant weather conditions etc.

## LADDER CLIMBING:

These calls, although used for rockclimbing, are specifically for ladder climbing and do not cover all eventualities of rockclimbing. We think that most of these calls are self explanatory and have kept the comment to a minimum.

Climber: ON ROPE

Belayer: ON BELAY

Climber: TAKE IN If slack is needed, the call is always SLACK nothing more, nothing less with the stop being THAT'S ME.

Belayer: TAKING IN.....IS THAT YOU?

Climber: THAT'S Me.

Belayer: CLIMB WHEN READY.

Climber: CLIMBING.

Belayer should acknowledge this call YES, ALRIGHT or whatever. 'OK' tends to be confusing sometimes.

Climber: SAFE.....OFF ROPE.

Belayer: OFF BELAY.

These calls are in sequence when everything goes perfectly. If for some reason a delay is needed, then the call is WAIT. Hopefully followed by more information. If for some reason the climber stops, then the call is RESTING, with the full sequence of calls to restart the climb. BELOW is of course used as I'm sure most of us use it. When trouble arises we have found that the usual call is either a long ARGHHH or copious four letter words. However, FALLING would be equally appropriate. The point that we are trying to make is that standard calls for these activities are a wonderful idea but who will surrender first. In view of this, we suggest, that everyone be aware of the need for clear communication at all times and take the time before you start to make sure that all people in your party understand each other, no matter what may be called.

## REPLY - STANDARDIZATION OF CLIMBING/ABSEILING CALLS

By John Vanderleest

With regards to the article on calls used when climbing. I must agree to an attempt to standardize calls. One of the most common mistakes of people engaged in any cliff work is not establishing call procedures before they start an ascent or descent. This is not restricted to cavers but to many climbers as well.

Whilst I agree with Ann in her comment that the use of the words 'slack' or 'rope' can lead to confusion amongst members of a party, the confusion can only come about by omitting to clarify or discuss the calls before they are required. SCUBA divers have the concept of 'Discussion of Communication Procedures', before they start the dive, well drummed into them. This discussion is not commonplace with caving groups and Ann's article only highlights the need for discussion and the potential danger if the group assumes that they all have the same terminology.

One of the major problems I have encountered whilst climbing is not being able to adequately hear what the other person is saying. For this reason, all important communication was always kept to one word sentences, hence the use of words such as 'slack' and 'rope'.

The word 'falling' definitely has its place in caving. It lets the belayer know what is happening, but it also lets people below know. This is important because rocks may be dislodged during a fall. Whilst on the subject of falling rocks, the word I have always used for anything falling is simply 'rock'. The word also invokes immediate response, as it usually conjures up vivid images of one tonne blocks hurtling down on top of them. The word should always be used irrespective of the size or weight of the falling matter. A small stone can easily make short work of a helmet. The diving fraternity has a fairly standard set of international communication signals. Maybe the ASF should be looking at a standard which would encompass input from climbing and caving clubs, as well as various rescue groups. This standard would hopefully be adopted by all clubs involved with cliff work. In the meantime, I suggest that people establish communication calls before they enter any cave and hopefully avoid the need for a cave rescue.

## TOUGH NEW PENALTIES FOR ABORIGINAL ART VANDALS By Minister For The Environment

PRESS RELEASE 17.7.88

The N.S.W. Minister for the Environment, TIM MOORE, today announced tough new penalties for people and companies who damaged aboriginal art sites.

MR. MOORE said Cabinet had agreed to increase penalties for individuals five-fold; from \$1 thousand dollars, to \$5 thousand.

For companies, the penalty would double, from \$10 thousand, to \$20 thousand.

MR. MOORE said the law was being changed, to make company directors liable for prosecution, where they knowingly permitted employees to damage aboriginal art sites. Previously only the individual or the company was liable.

MR. MOORE said the changes were needed to prevent 'morons damaging Australia's' priceless heritage of aboriginal art.

The Minister was speaking at the opening of the Red Hands Cave, in the Blue Mountains National Park. The cave is an ancient art site of the Daruk people, who are believed to have moved into the area between 12-14 thousand years ago.

Experts disagree on the age of the art work in the Cave, which contains a frieze of more than 70 hand stencils, mostly in red, which give the cave its name.

The Aboriginal art work in the cave is protected by a new barrier and a perspex screen. However, there is some graffiti in the cave, which PETER FOX, a consultant on aboriginal sites, says should be removed.

MR. FOX says the graffiti includes a car, ship, rocket and a mythological subject very similar to a high - tension power line, or a stylised cow.

MR. MOORE has instructed the National Parks and Wildlife Service to remove the graffiti and today issued a public warning that such vandalism will attract severe penalties in future.

**INFORMATION:** - John MacGregor 2216477

Home: 3277389



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In reply to Ann McLaren's letter re abseiling signals: probably the most effective way of overcoming problems of a group having differing backgrounds, is to agree on the surface the signals to be used. As long as everyone knows which call is going to mean what action, it doesn't really matter what the signals are - AS LONG AS THEY ARE EFFECTIVE. The signals suggested by Ann are good (perhaps a bit too complex), but they suffer a similar fate to many other call systems - they would not be heard over long pitches, which may bend around or be obscured by overhangs, or water falling over a pitch.

For this reason, a call system that can easily turn into a whistle system is a good idea. Macquarie University Caving Group use a system outlined in the British Publication "Caving Practice and Equipment" (Judson and Montgomery).

This is as follows:

one	whistle	blow	-	stop
two	"	"	-	up
three	"	"	-	down
four	"	"	-	rope free

**Lucinda Coates**  
(Secretary MUCG)

\* \* \* \* \*

I write, I fear predictably, to protest about Peter Ackroyds' article on explosive use printed in Australia Caver No.117. The title is misleading; not everything that a responsible caver would like or need to know about blasting is covered in the article. There is also the fairly broad assumption made that the caving community accepts digging as an acceptable practice.

There is no mention of impacts of explosive use on cave faunas through blast effects and particularly chemical by-products. Whilst modern explosives might be 'user-friendly' they will certainly introduce foreign elements into the cave ecosystem. As far as I know all explosives in common use in this country are nitrogen based. As we know so well from our sewerage and other discharges, this element is a powerful nutrient - one of the many destabilisers of the simple underground environment.

Digging itself may also be a questionable activity. Even in the British situation there are those who are concerned about digging in the cave environment. The arguments for and against have been put many times and it is probably not necessary to reiterate them here. However, arguments against include:

- \* modification to cave climates and hydrologic regimes, leading to changes to speleothems and to cave ecosystems.
- \* straight modification to caves which many like to view as an unmodified 'wilderness'.
- \* destruction of fossil, sub-fossil and sediment material.
- \* destabilisation of surface landscapes and hydrologic systems.
- \* modification of people flows through caves which may lead to further modification of the cave environment.

These arguments, and others, have been better expressed elsewhere as perusal of ASF Conference proceedings and society newsletters will show. I invite interested people to list the various digs around Australia and make a rational assessment of whether they did result in a new cave or other discovery. They should also list the various problems generated by digs - many come to mind. I can only hope that Peter Ackroyd submitted this article in an attempt to generate material for Australian Caver.

**Andy Spate**

\* \* \* \* \*

This letter has been brought about by the controversy in N.S.W. that has surrounded the recent Jenolan Caves Reserve Draft Plan of Management. Confusion seems to be now occurring between work done by cavers (for love) and work done by consultants (for money). While ASF Inc. has been named as sub-consultants in the Jenolan Draft Plan of Management, it does not appear that the treasurer or ASF Inc. has received any money. Yet the sub-consultants fee was \$12,000. Where is the money and in what accounts is it placed. Will the cash end up in individuals pockets, going to a Cave Management Organisation or come to ASF Inc. The use of ASF Inc. name and reputation by individuals to obtain consultant work with little or no financial gain to ASF Inc., is a dubious practice. If the money has gone to individuals, the question arises. Has ASF Inc. just been used as a convenience? If ASF Inc. is not going to benefit financially it should not allow its name to be used by consultants. Even if a reasonable financial return is obtained, the work must be of such a standard that ASF Inc.'s reputation must be enhanced and never damaged. The system of government of ASF Inc. does not allow for review of the work done by consultants or sub-committees in response to short term deadlines. The lack of consultation with cavers was a hallmark of the Jenolan Draft Plan. Despite that, specifications called for extensive consultation with cavers.

**Terry O'Leary**

ASF DOCUMENTATION COMMISSION CIRCULAR

Circular 3  
July 1988  
P. Matthews

## Karst Data Special Interest Group

As mentioned in the Commission's Annual Report last January, I am starting up a *Karst Data Special Interest Group* (KD SIG) so that those interested in this aspect of speleology can make themselves known and more easily participate and assist in the Commission's development work by discussion, review, ideas, proposals, helping with programming, etc., etc.

The scope of the KD SIG would cover karst data collecting and use in general, not just the computer aspects. It would not cover surveying and mapping, which of course are catered for in Ken Grimes' Survey Commission's *Computer Interest Group*. It would however cover cross-referencing to existing surveys, maps and displays, either indirectly or on-line.

Those interested should contact me at the following address, preferably supplying the information requested below:

66 Frogmore Cres, Park Orchards, Vic 3114. Or phone (03) 876-1487 a/h

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr) .....

Address .....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone Home ( )..... Work ( ).....

Occupation .....

Organisation(if relevant)/club .....

Any relevant positions held? .....

Other cave documentation background? .....

KD interest area(s): scientific record keeping database design uses  
publication marketing programming operation

Other(s) .....

.....

Want to take active part or just be kept advised? active / kept-advised

Operating a karst database now? yes / no / expect-to-be

Whose? State / club / personal / other

Comment .....

Software expertise? .....

Scientific or other expertise? .....

Computer? Type .....

Operating system(s) .....

Database software .....

Data exchange media .....

Modem access? Speed/protocol .....

Phone Number ( ) .....

Any extra information: .....

.....

# SPELEO SYNOPSIS

## APRIL - SEPTEMBER 1988

By Peter Ackroyd

### AUSTRALIA

Speleo Spiel 236. A TOC Easter trip to the Cracroft area (Tasmania) has turned up 1.5km of new passage beyond a 30m sump in Judd's Cavern (C-1).

JSSS 32 (5) Hand stencils 14,000 years old or older were found in caves on the Maxwell River and Cracroft area (Tasmania).

ACMA Newsletter 1 (June 1988). This, the first issue of the newsletter of the Australasian Cave Management Association, contains information on the next cave and karst management conference (to be held in New Zealand), a history of cave lighting methods used in Australia and a review of past management conference proceedings.

ISS Newsletter 2 (5) (Sept. 1987). The lengthy involvement in the Kimberley karst by the Illawarra Speleo Society is well known. This issue of their newsletter contains a report of their mid 1985 trip to the Lawford Range in the Kimberleys (WA). A map of Mimbi Cave (6KL-5), which is now 13.5km long, is included.

Spar 100 (produced July 1988). This special edition of Spar from UNSWSS contains articles by Ernie Holland and extracts from Al Warild's letters describing his solo trips down the world's deepest caves in 1985/6.

The Western Caver 26 (1986). This journal contains a complete list of all maps (about 250) held by WASG, listed in order of cave area.

Speleo Spiel 237 (Special Precipitous Bluff Issue). Details of the April 1988 expedition to Precipitous Bluff in southern Tasmania are contained in this issue. Line surveys of two significant new caves, Cueva Blanca and Bauhaus, and a species list of collected fauna are included.

The Western Caver 27 (1987). Cape Range is featured in this issue of Western Australia Speleological Group's annual journal. An isolated plateau of limestone near Exmouth WA, it contains many vertical caves 50 to 60m deep and at least one long cave, Wanderer's Delight (C-163) which is now over 3.5km long. Many of the caves contain significant concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Helictite 26 (1) This issue contains an article which suggests that the headwaters of the Jenolan River, NSW, are located on the opposite side of the Great Dividing Range. A dimpled karst terrain on the saddle suggests a continuous belt of limestone underlies the Quaternary deposits on the surface.

Speleograffiti Edition 3 1988. Ian Household has reprinted his 'Nature of Karst' introduction to the resource inventory compiled for the Tasmanian National Parks Service. It is excellent.

### EUROPE

Descent 81 (Apr-May 1988). Two articles are of considerable interest in this top British Magazine. The first is a detailed story of the discovery of a dry cavers route to the 'Maytime Series' in Agen Allwedd (South Wales). This January 1988 breakthrough allows more diggers at the face to make the final attempt at connecting to Daren Cilau, now only 250m away. The second item concerns a phenomenal effort by a handful of American cavers in No Business Blowing Cave (Tennessee, USA) involving climbing and blasting their way to an upstream connection with the swallet, Wayne Did Well. After four years of dedication the connection still eludes them and is on the 'back burner' at the moment. Other items include "A Wimp's Eye View of Caving", an examination of the untapped caving potential of South Wales and a note that Switzerland's deepest cave is now the Siebenhengste-Hohgant System (1,020m deep, 110km long).

Descent 82 (June-July 1988). Some bad news in this issue. Three cavers were crushed to death when a boulder pile they were exploring moved down in the Easegill System (Northern England) in May 1988. A young cave diver drowned when he dived a tight sump without a guideline in April 1988 at Barbondale (North England). On a brighter note, this issue also has reports from the China Caves Project team - enormous caves, several kilometres surveyed, huge underground rivers, underwater shafts 70m deep or deeper, the usual stuff. A historical piece covers the first descents and descriptions of Eldon Hole (Derbyshire) in 1770.

Caves and Caving 40 (Summer 1988). There are lots of articles in this issue worth reading. An item on the Apuan Alps in Italy, which contain Italy's deepest caves, leads off. A report on the British 1988 expedition to China (caves with clouds in side them) is followed by a run-down on the recent discoveries in Agen Allwedd (South Wales) which provide a dry caver's route on the main sump (sump4) in the cave. The continuation of the series covering the history of exploration below Llangattock Mountain (South Wales) is in this issue along with brief items dealing with nutrition and caving the Michie earth return phone system.

Cave Science 15 (11) (April 1988). Paleomagnetism of cave sediments from South Wales; Natural Tunnel, Virginia, USA; postglacial tufas and travertines from Yorkshire; pigmentary development of caver-nicolous organisms; a least squares method of cave survey data reduction for a PC.

**NEW ZEALAND**

NZSS Bulletin 7 (136) (Dec 1985). This issue is entirely devoted to a paper on caves and karst conservation and management in New Zealand 1883-1985.

NZSS Bulletin 7 (137) (Mar 1986). Trip reports from the 1982/83 push in Nettlebed Cave (Mt Arthur) make up this issue. It includes a description of the discovery of the main bypass route 'The Overlander'.

NZSS Bulletin 7 (138) (June 1986). This issue contains summaries of Whakapunake Caves (Gisborne) and Ten Acre Cave System (Mahoenui). There is also a bibliography of articles related to underground wireless communications system, and trip reports covering Nettle bed Cave (Mt Arthur), Misty Pot (Mt Arthur) and two rescue call-outs.

NZSS Bulletin 7 (139) (Sep 1986). The lead article is a gripping account of the exploration of Blizzard Pot (Mt Arthur) and its connection to Nettlebed Cave System. Other items include a test on torch batteries, a rundown on the Mangaone Cave System (Hawkes Bay) and some minor discoveries at Matawhero and Waitomo.

**USA**

NSS News 46 (3) (Mar 1988). Mainly concerned with the 10th International Speleo film festival conducted at La Chappelle in France during August 1987.

Nylon Highway 26 The lead article states the case against using bolts in caves as being non-aesthetic and unsafe. The following article points out inherent weaknesses in the Bowline knot when used for kernmantel rope. A couple of humorous articles are included in this issue along with three short items on vertical caving techniques.

NSS Bulletin 49 (1) (June 1987). A radio location device, the Ogof Beacon, is described and circuit diagrams provided. Operating at 38.4 kHz, it is used principally as a survey aid.

NSS News 46 (4) (April 1988). Alabaster Caverns (Oklahoma) feature in this issue. The 2km long cave is the only commercial (show) gypsum cave in the US. The article details its geology, relationship with nearby caves in the same beds of gypsum and a lengthy clean-up effort conducted by local cavers. Another major article is an examination, using tensile tests, of the effect of use and age on caving ropes. The conclusion is: ropes being used regularly should be retired after ten years (or earlier if damaged) and ropes should be washed in water only since fabric softeners appear to have a deleterious effect on tensile strength. This issue also contains an index to Volume 45 and report on an incredible cave dive in Wakulla Springs (North Florida) during which a team of 3 divers penetrated a distance of 1.3km at a depth of 90m! The dive took 80 minutes (using diver propulsion vehicles) resulting in a decompression time of 10 hours. Total underwater time was 12 hours!

NSS News 46 (5) (May 1988). Honey Creek Cave is described in full in this issue. The longest cave in Texas (26km), it involves almost continuous swimming in its deep streamways. The cave's other claim to fame is that it contains several underground watersheds (water divides).

NSS News 46 (6) (June 1988). Two caves are featured in this issue - Coldwater Cave a 17km stream system in Iowa and Titan Caverns, at 860m long, one of the more significant caves of Armpit, Wyoming.

NSS News 46 (7) (July 1988). Lechuguilla Cave (New Mexico) is in the news a lot. It is now over 25km long, has mind-boggling decoration (see the cover of this 'News' for an example) and is still growing. The story of the original dig into it is told in this issue.





AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION  
INCORPORATED  
P.O. BOX 388,  
BROADWAY,  
N.S.W. 2007.

Ref CD88/8

In reply, please address all correspondence to:

The Secretary

All Councillors,  
Officers & Members of ASF

# JANUARY '88 MINUTES and NOTICE OF DECEMBER '88 MEETING

This letter, the Minutes and any accompanying Reports are to be circulated amongst all members of your club or commission/committee. They should complement the role of 'Australian Caver' in communication and influence amongst individual cavers. Some of the views herein are my own and not necessarily those of ASF.

## REPORTS

About half of the 1987 Reports were posted in advance of the January Meeting in Goulburn. Officers/Convenors present, and those clubs represented at the Meeting by either their elected Councillor or a nominated Proxy, received the remaining reports except for the two included herewith. For some clubs not represented at the Sydney Meeting, I've included some of the 1986 Reports they never received. I've also included the Sydney Minutes for some groups.

## JANUARY '88 (GOULBURN) MINUTES

I make no apology for reducing the 24 pages of Minutes to a compact six sheets of paper. About 90 copies have been produced, so that this format saves trees, time, bulk, postage and storage. Copies of Minutes and various reports have been sent to:

- . all Corporate Members of ASF (27)
- . all ASF Associates (15)
- . all ASF Executive Officers and ASF's Public Officer (9)
- . all Convenors of Commissions and ad hoc Committees (20)
- . ASF Individual Members (15)

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

I have supplied Individual Members with Minutes, the President's Report and Notice of Meetings. There is no particular policy on what material is to be circulated to these people - including subs notices. [Subscription for 1988 is \$16; four 'Australian Cavers' should issue for the 12 months straddling 1988/89.]

## ASSOCIATES

Likewise there is no specific policy on material going to Associates. For example, two 'Australian Cavers' is insufficient to inform of influence, or

.../2

2.

solicit much input from clubs, some of whom are as strong and substantial (even more so) as any ASF Member club. For Associates, I have included copies of all reports to which Member clubs are entitled. Associates are earnestly invited to send at least one representative to, and be involved as a club in, the coming 'Tropicon' Conference.

## REPRESENTATION

Six clubs (CTCG, NEWCAVES, UNSWSS, UQSS, CEGSA, SCS) were not represented (Councillor or Proxy) at Goulburn. One of these was unfinancial - a year after fees became due! ASF's government is by its Council, comprising an elected Councillor from each Member club or its nominated Proxy. If your club is not represented you hamper the government of the Federation as happened in January in respect of the Capitulations debate [item 14]. ASF's Constitution is open about how a club may authorise its Proxy representative. Returning the 'proxy form' in advance of the meeting helps me, but is not mandatory - many clubs don't bother! Club secretaries and Councillors please note that a phone call could suffice to authorise your choice of Proxy. If a club is unrepresented three times running, its membership lapses!

## 1988 REPORTS

As indicated above, ASF's reports go to quite a few people. 20 or 30 or even 50 copies just aren't enough. One report was produced double-spaced, single-sided and spanned five pages; I converted those received to three sheets, but it could have been produced as one sheet of paper! By all means make a substantial report, but let's save some trees (and a few man-hours). Verbal reports are implicitly little thought about and necessarily fail to reach those not physically present at the meeting - except that I bother to precis them.

Written/typed reports are to be submitted to the Secretary by October 1988. If you have to pay for copies, ASF will reimburse you. I need at least 70 copies, preferably condensed and double-sided (if you are at all conservation minded) as are the Minutes. If you have only four lines to report, then submit them in writing (one copy) and I will include them whole in the next Minutes.

Again I make no apology for labouring this point: for ASF to keep its Members, Associates and Officers informed we need bulk copies. Twenty of you each doing one man-hour's work saves me doing 20 man-hours!

## DECEMBER 1988 MEETING

This will be held on 27 and 31 December 1988 at Lake Tinaroo, Atherton, North Queensland in conjunction with the 'Tropicon' Conference. Preliminary notice is hereby given, and you are asked to notify any matters you wish to see placed on the agenda and discussed. Don't presume someone else will already have raised a particular item, raise it yourself. If you or your club care to offer a report or discussion paper on any matter, please do. As a start, your attention is drawn to items 7.2 and 14 and Motions 20 and 39 of the Goulburn Minutes concerning structure and fees.

Chris Dunne  
ASF Secretary  
July 1988

## DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

**SUSS:** The last year and a half for SUSS has been the most speleologically productive and enjoyable period in memory, with members of the club visiting new caving areas, both overseas and within Australia, surveying and discovering new caves and extensions. The highlight was the 1987 SUSS Expedition to Mt. Anne, painstakingly organised over six months which included major sponsorship from Australian Geographic (certainly a first for cavers in Australia) leading to national exposure with the publication of "Inside Mt. Anne" in AG10. The expedition lasting three weeks in miserable weather, discovered and tagged about 20 new caves, surprisingly with around half of them unfortunately only between 50 and 70 metres deep. The major discovery was however the 183 metre deep cave Deep Thought (this is the official depth despite numerous other depths quoted elsewhere - a map is to be published soon), making it the 19th deepest in Australia (Eberhard R., Aust. Caver 115). The caves Kellar Cellar and Col-in-Cavern, were surveyed as well as the 1986 SUSS discovery Potatoes (-116m). The caves explored on the expedition, particularly Deep Thought which has 3 separate streamways, have lead to a greater understanding of the hydrology and cave development at Mt. Anne. A full report of the expedition is slowly being compiled.

Away from the usual caving areas in NSW, SUSS has run a number of trips to the "classics" at the Junee-Florentine as well as Mole Creek in Tasmania, and also to Mt. Gambier and the Nullarbor. The Mt. Etna struggle has drawn a few cavers north, to hopefully help save the remaining caves. New Zealand has also attracted few trips by SUSS members to their wonderful caves at Waitomo and Mt. Arthur, as well as joining expeditions to Bulmer Cavern, Takaka Hill and the Ellis Basin. Probably the most exciting of which was the discovery on a Nelson Speleo Group expedition of a new vertical cave in the Ellis Basin, which is at least 350 metres deep. Five pitches lead to a streamway cutting its way through a thick shale bed (most hazardous for rigging) in the marble and over an 80 metre pitch to a couple more small pitches. The streamway which is gathering more stream as it heads ESE in the general direction of the Pearse Resurgence, was left descending over another

pitch due to a lack of rope and rising water. It would appear the New Zealanders are going to have another deep cave behind only Nettle-Blizzard Pot, Bulmer and HH. Seven SUSS members also spent 1987/8 on the successful Chilchotla expedition in Mexico, despite failing to reach the elusive - 1000m.

A recently formed group of cavedivers in SUSS are finding an incredible amount of new passages by passing through sumps that have been untouched in NSW. Initially at Jenolan discoveries were made in the Imperial streamway with new extensions past sumps 4 and 6, and more recently in Barralong Cave a difficult tight dive has lead to large new passages heading south in the Southern Limestone. The highlight however, has been the hundreds of metres of new large underwater passages with excellent visibility in Peppercorn Cave (Lime Kiln Cave) at Wellington. The cave is now considered to be the largest at Wellington, surpassing the Cathedral tourist Cave in extent, although most of it is submerged. Discussions with the Wellington Shire Council by SUSS lead to the search for Water Cave, which from old surveys by Trickett was buried beneath the caravan park. With the use of the council's backhoe the park started to resemble a bomb disposals' playground, but under the guidance of Armstrong Osborne, the cave was unearthed revealing an anticlinal roofed chamber with a lake at the bottom, but diving did not reveal any more passages unfortunately. It is hoped to turn the cave into a tourist attraction.

The success of the cave divers in SUSS, has given the impetus to make the connection between Spider Cave and the Jenolan Tourist Caves. Since the discovery of the Jenolan Underground River in Spider Cave in 1979, it has been known that a connection with Imperial Cave was inevitable, but passing through the estimated 20 or so metres between the caves has been slow. Recently trips to Spider Cave have been spent sitting, lying and digging in the underground river for up to 6 hours at a time in wetsuits or thermals, in a very unstable rockpile. Similar trips by cave divers, were also made on the Imperial Cave side of the rockpile breach. In mid August this year, 3 cavers entered Spider Cave and 3 cave divers passed through the sumps in Imperial Cave to hopefully make



at least a voice connection between the two caves. Miraculously they arrived at the same time at the rockpile and were able to grab each other through a constriction! After a couple of hours digging and chipping with hammers and a chisel, a caver from Spider was able to pass through the constriction and into Imperial Cave. The connection between Spider Cave and Imperial Cave and the Jenolan Tourist Caves was made after nearly nine years of trying. Cave diving equipment was swapped for caving overalls and 2 cavers each made through trips, from Spider to Imperial and Imperial to Spider. This trip now makes for one of the best and most technically demanding trips in the country, requiring the caver to pass through squeezes, an unstable rockpile and sumps in the Imperial Streamway, while taking in some beautiful formations and cave passages. The Sydney media picked up the news of the discovery, with claims that it was now the longest cave in Australia but this must await the complete surveying of the Jenolan Tourist-Spider Cave System.

SUSS trips in NSW have been varied in location, notably with minor cave discoveries or extensions at Glenrock, Jaunter, Bakers Swamp and Pigna Barney, which included the discovery of a new entrance chamber to Barrington Cave due to some digging from the surface and also to make the connection. Over the last year SUSS has been surveying Tuglow Cave, which has produced a number of minor extensions and the discovery of a few leads. Recently on a near-epic trip a large team carried diving gear to the distant upstream sump in Tuglow, diving it for the first time and although it did not resurface after 20 metres it continues and will be pushed more comprehensively soon. Sigma Cave at Wombeyan is also being thoroughly surveyed, which hopefully will be finished soon. At Jenolan SUSS continues to find numerous small extensions in Spider Cave and in Mammoth Cave extensions are being found off the major passageways with little effort, including a new deep clear lake.

In May this year SUSS visited Jenolan Caves on mass for a weekend to celebrate its 40th year of caving. Most of the accommodation at the Caves was booked for 150 past and present members and friends of SUSS, but unfortunately we were over subscribed and not everyone could attend. Caving trips were lead to most of the best caves at Jenolan, with a slide presentation in Lucas Cave and a dinner in Caves House on Saturday night. Perhaps the highlight was the after-

dinner speaker, the first SUSS president and now physics professor Jack Kelly, telling us about caving as far back as 1948, making one realise how much it has and hasn't changed since then. Members of SUSS have been successfully using 3D photography in caves with startling and realistic results, as well as filming underground, which has produced some cave-diving videos. The cave survey computer programming by Keir Vaughan-Taylor (see Aust. Caver 112) is getting better all the time and now produces colour 3 dimensional graphics, with improved junctioning of survey legs and loop closures.

**Martin Scott**

## OBITUARY

Orange Speleological Association has lost two of its staunchest supporters with the recent deaths of BRUCE DUNHILL and ROY KEENAN.

BRUCE was the owner of 'Boonderoo', the property on which the Cliefden Caves are situated. From the inception of O.S.S. in the 1950's Bruce co-operated in the management of the caves and granted control over the access to O.S.S.

Although not an active caver, Bruce helped the Society in many ways by providing the 'Cavers'Hut' and other practical help in the conservation of the caves on his property. Our sympathy goes to his wife and family in their loss.

ROY, who was the founding President of O.S.S. and one of its most active members for many years, was instrumental in having O.S.S. accepted into the A.S.F. and fostering the early growth of the Club. His knowledge of all caves in the local area - even the lesser - known ones - has been invaluable to all Club members. Although not an active caver, in recent years Roy maintained an interest in our Club and was always encouraging to our members. Our sympathy goes to Jean and family in their sad loss.

**By Ian Curtis  
(Hon.Sec. O.S.S.)**



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