

* MENDIP CAVING GROUP BULLETIN *

NUMBER 8

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DOWN UNDER DOWN UNDER

*article by Vince Simmonds
title (sorry Vince, couldn't resist it) by Ed.*

13.1.90 OLSEN'S CAPRICORN CAVERNS, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

John Olsen, a Norwegian migrant, discovered the caves in 1882 and opened them to the first visitors in 1884, thereby making Olsen's Capricorn Caverns the oldest tourist facility in Queensland. They are called "Capricorn" because they lie on the Tropic of Capricorn. The caves themselves consist of a series of interconnected chambers and collapses. They are very dry and only a few decorations still drip water. One particular chamber named "Cathedral" and about 20m high, was quite impressive due to its acoustic qualities - it is used as an unusual setting for weddings and carol services. Another chamber called "The Belfry" was the home of a large number of bats. A further chamber, "Colosseum Cavern", was the home of the rare, and Australia's largest, carnivorous bat - the Ghost bat or *Macroderma Gigas*. Bat guano was at one time commercially mined. Also noticeable was the number of large moths in the entrance chambers, presumably staying cool as the temperature during the day can reach 37deg C outside. A number of collapses were evident and many of these have been caused by fig tree roots penetrating small cracks and forcing the rock apart. One root reaching through the "Cathedral" was 20m in length and took 9 years to grow. The caverns on the whole were worth a visit but it is a pity that no attempt has been made in recent years to explore and extend the known cave system. The potential is excellent and I wondered how much the fact that there are some other show caves just down the road, which are in all probability part of the same system, are a cause of this. (Ed. sounds like a potential Wednesday night dig! With some effort, it could be linked to Upper Flood.)

25.1.90 JENOLAN CAVES, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

The drive to the caves was nearly as good as the cave trip, along a narrow road following the side of the mountains and snaking down to the massive arch of the "Devil's Coach House" through which the road then ran. The tour, in a section of the cave, was given a name to imply that it was a separate cave. The tour we chose was called "The Orient", a series of chambers all well decorated. They contained some excellent helectite, and stalagmites up to 25ft high. However, most of the natural beauty has been destroyed by over-zealous use of railings and fencing. Unlike Olsen's Cavern, there is a lot of exploration being carried out in Jenolan and the surrounding area. No doubt, if contacted in advance, some arrangement could be made to see further depths in what is certainly a very impressive system.

Sadly, we did not have the time (or money) to do justice to the caves in this area.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Thanks to all those members who reported errors and omissions in the Group's database. Rather than list the twenty or so amendments, an up-to-date membership list is included with this bulletin.

There are three prospective members: Barry Parker, Kevin West and Katja Kaufmann. Goff Daine, Steph Bohin and Sonia Cotter have been accepted as full members and Chris Nevard as a probationary member. In future, all categories of associate members will be issued with their own "guest" key, ie they will have access to the cottage and shed but not the library and tackle store. Finally, Derek Walsh is deemed to have resigned as he has not yet paid his subs for 1989, and Pete Dymont is listed as missing in action - the occupier of his last known address said he moved on 2 years ago.

TYING THE KNOT

Carol Nunn and Barry Wall are to be married on June 2nd.

Andy Beare and Lesley Robbins tied the knot in secret in Reading on February 3rd. *Congratulations to both couples.*

MORE PROPOSALS...

...this time for the AGM. Nominations for office and proposals to change the Constitution and Rules should reach the secretary no later than 10th March. Motions for discussion should reach the secretary prior to the meeting.

DYO & OFD LEADERS

Thanks to Geoff Barton and others for bringing the list of leaders up-to-date. DYO - A. Knibbs, G. Smith, J. Mirriam, P. C-Wells, I. McKechnie, R. Wallington, J. Beauchamp. OFD - A. Knibbs, G. Smith, J. Mirriam, G. Barton.

If you are a leader but your name is not on this list, contact Martin Rowe.

NEW LOCKS/KEYS

The front, side, tackle store and library door locks were changed on 4th February. In addition, the shed now has the same lock as the cottage. As a result, only paid up members can enter the Group's property. Please return your old keys to any committee member or deposit them in the letter box at the cottage on your next visit.

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

03 Mar - 04 Mar	Members weekend
31 Mar - 01 Apr	Members weekend (AGM)
21 Apr - 22 Apr	Linda Gates (10)
05 May - 06 May	Members weekend
18 May	Dave Gibson's sch (11)
02 Jun - 03 Jun	Members weekend

COTTAGE MAINTENANCE

Here is the list of work to be done on 03/04 Mar - the committee will provide materials, you provide the labour:

01. COMPLETE NEW SOAKAWAY
02. CONSTRUCT DRAIN ACROSS FRONT GATE
03. TREAT SHED (no, not at the Hunters)
04. CLEAN SURFACES IN LOUNGE/HALL
05. CLEAN OUT GUTTERS
06. REPLACE BROKEN SHOWER MIXER
07. COLLECT COAL BUNKER
08. REPAIR KITCHEN CUPBOARD DOOR
09. REPAIR TOILET WINDOW
10. REPLACE TOILET SEAT
11. REPLACE HOSE NOZZEL
12. REPLACE/REPAIR BUNK HOOKS
13. REPAIR DAMAGED BUNKS
14. TREAT SHOWER CEILING FOR MOULD
15. CLEAN SHELVES IN KITCHEN

PAYPHONE CHARGES

The payphone is adjusted to give the Group a profit on calls to cover line rental. As a result, 10p buys only a short time except for local calls. You will get more time for your money if you use local codes for local calls, rather than the STD code.

MISSING NEWSLETTERS

Wayne has been sorting out the library, which has been left in a sorry state by members. As a result he has noticed that our library copy of MCG News is missing several issues. If you have the library copy of any of the following issues, or can donate an issue to replace the missing copies he would be grateful:

1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,14,15,16,17,18,19, 43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50,51,52,53,54,55, 56,57,58,59,61,63,65,71,72,73,74,75,76, 77,78,89,92,105,108,174,178,188,189,193, 194,195,196,197,198,199,201,203,204
In addition, someone has the only copy of Journal No.3 and the spare copies of Journals No.4 and 6.

YVS'DROPPING

Martin: "What's Arthur Spains wife called?"
Vince: "Sunny"