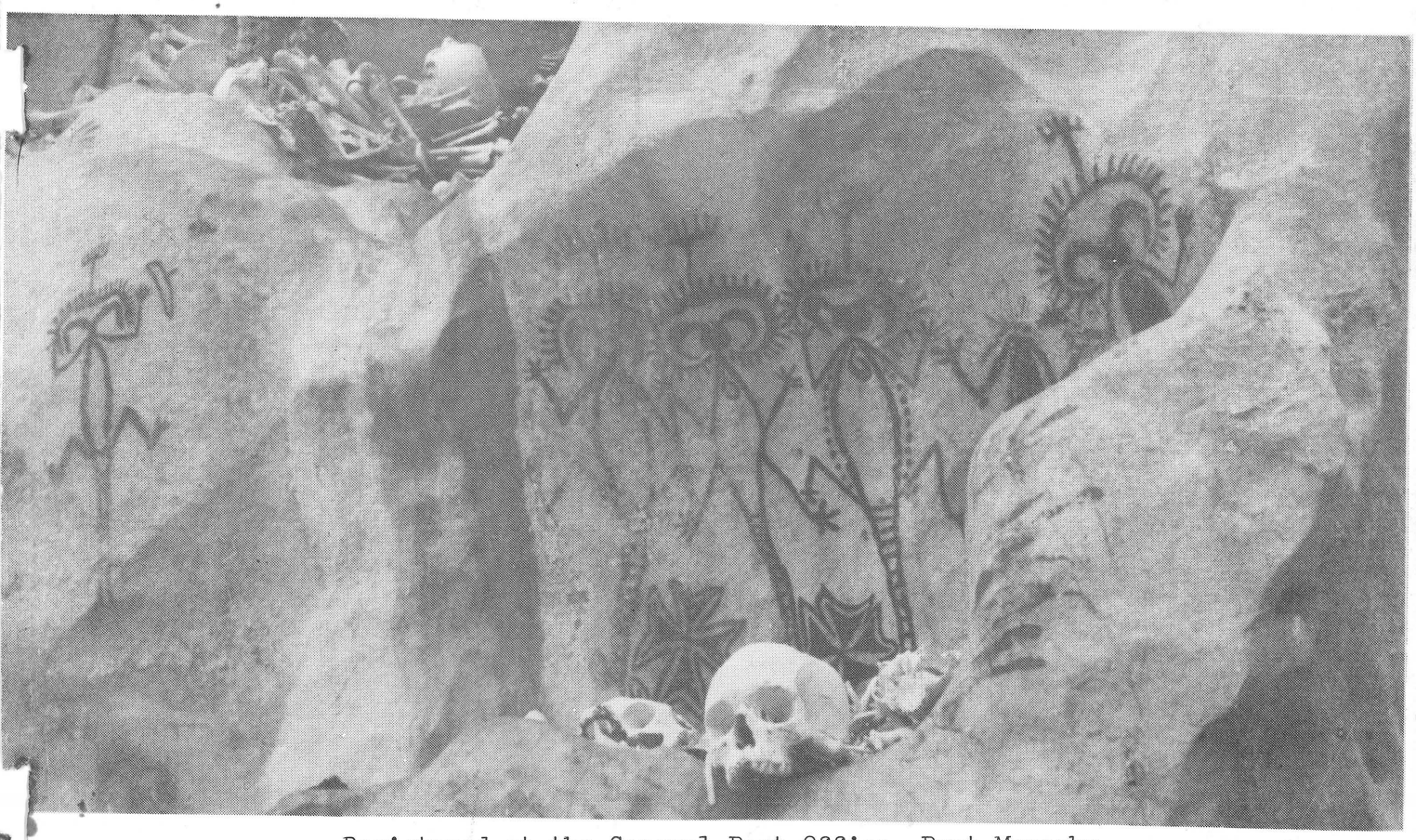
NIUGINI CAVER

Volume 2 Number 4 November 1974

NEWSLETTER OF THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP



Registered at the General Post Office, Port Moresby
for transmission by post as a Qualified Publication.

Niugini Caver is the newsletter of the Papua New Guinea Cave Exploration Group. The PNGCEG is an informal association of persons engaged in speleology in Papua New Guinea.

Volume 2 Number 4. November, 1974. Quarterly.

Price 50 cents per issue. $A2.00 per annum.

Editor R. Michael Bourke, D.A.S.F., Keravat, East New Britain, Papua New Guinea.

Typist Jean Bourke

Production of Last Number Michael and Jean Bourke, Hal Gallasch, Chris Prior and Peter Masangeri.

Contents

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Cover Photograph. Burial and art site, Buang Mountains, Morobe District. All the sites are in ledges and niches beneath overhangs of a limestone cliff opposite Afaruru cave. For a description of the site see Hal Gallasch's article "Some Burial Caves in Papua New Guinea", Niugini Caver 2(1): 138-141. You might see this design on T-shirts around the place. Bev Wilde took the design for the shirts from the drawings in N.C.

Photo by Nick Bowden.

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TOKTOK BILONG EDITA - CAVE CONSERVATION

Cave conservation is an aspect of the sport we have paid very little attention to in the past, mainly because there have been few apparent problems. In an industrialized and urban country, such as Australia, Britain or New Zealand, that most of us call home, caves are threatened by mining for limestone, damage by visitors, both organized cavers and casual ones, and certain aspects of "development" such as flooding by irrigation dams. They also serve as convenient rubbish tips, particularly for dead livestock. These abuses have occurred here, but they are not widespread. For example, in Irapui (Irukunguai or Queen's) cave near Kundiawa, the whole of the floor of the main passage was turned from a sparkling series of crystal filled rimstone pools into a muddy waste covered in tin cans, cigarette packets and broken shards of stalactites and stalagmites in the year following its discovery by Europeans (Parker, 1965). Kev Wilde's trip report to the same cave in this issue mentions rubbish left inside by cavers. The walls of the well known Matapara cave at Medina on New Ireland are decorated with visitors' names (Bourke, 1974). I know an isolated doline in the Raulei Ranges of New Britain that is three days' walk from the nearest road - but it contains thousands of empty tins, courtesy of an army surveying team. A small cave near Kandrian in W.N.B. was recently blasted in for 'koronas' to pave the road.

Despite these and other examples, destruction of caves or their contents is not at all common here. Most caves are not easily accessible; few residents, either indigenous or expatriate, are inclined to go any distance underground; few of our caves are well decorated compared with those in dryer climates; many caves are river ones and rubbish is removed naturally; and the economy is based on agriculture and one mine rather than secondary industries. We can probably expect more of these conservation problems with more industrialization and urbanization.

There is, however, an aspect of cave conservation that is of great concern in P.N.G. As Jim Allen points out in his article "Caving and Archaeology in Papua New Guinea" in this issue, burial and art sites are commonly located in caves and rock shelters. They also provide evidence of former living sites. Dr. Allen points out the responsibility cavers have not to disturb such sites and to report them to professional archaeologists. The extract from the Museum's "Guide to the Preservation of National Cultural Property" gives the legal version of such preservation.

What other responsibilities do we have? The question of publication has troubled me. In N.C. I have adopted a policy of publishing any submitted material on archaeological sites considering that the recording is more important than the need to limit knowledge of such sites. This decision was made in view of (1) the lack of published information; (2) the difficulty in getting to many of the sites; and (3) the lack of interest in such sites by casual readers of N.C. Perhaps a more restrictive publication policy should be adopted?

Cavers are now presented with an opportunity to give their ideas on caves suitable for inclusion in National Parks - see the extract from Mr. Hill's letter. I am not certain how important National Parks are in conservation in a country where most land is owned by villagers, but this is an opportunity

conservationists in other countries would not pass up. Neither should we. To enable me to reply to the request, information on caves suitable for inclusion in National Parks is needed. Mr. Hill's letter gives the three types of caves of interest. Cavers with thoughts on the subject are asked to write to me.

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R.M.B.

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CAVING AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

J. Allen *

Because of its short occupation by Europeans, and no previous development of writing by local groups, the development of historical traditions in Papua New Guinea is dependent on oral, linguistic and archaeological evidence. Of these, archaeology can explore further into the past than either of the other forms of evidence. The history it produces is not the sort of history most Europeans immediately understand. It provides no dates of battles or lists of kings. Instead, working from the discarded and broken rubbish of the past, the history which emerges is primarily one of technological change, from which, by a variety of developed techniques, changes in past economic and social activities can be documented.

Such work in New Guinea is still in its infancy, but already a complex picture of human progress extending over 25,000 years is emerging. It is a history of immediate value to Papuans and New Guineans in particular, but fascinatingly its relevance extends to the wider region of island South East Asia and ultimately to the world history of man. New Guinea's past history, combining man and his unique climatic and biotic setting, is offering explanations of development now rarely obtainable, particularly in questions such as the ways in which simple tropical agriculture developed and spread and was intensified.

Much of this evidence comes from caves and rock-shelters, where it has been protected from the decay and obliteration of a tropical environment. Burial sites, living sites and art sites have all been reported in the pages of Niugini Caver, and all these are, in one form or another, historical evidence of considerable value. Professional archaeologists are few, and are normally dependent on information such as this for the location of sites, but all too frequently, even in a country such as Papua New Guinea, where objects found in sites have little or no monetary value, the archaeologist arrives to find sites disturbed and plundered. Apart from anything else, people who interfere with sites of past human habitation are breaking the law and are

* Dept. of Prehistory, Australian National University, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. 2600.

liable to prosecution, but this is not the point. The law exists for a reason, and that is, by removing objects from the location where they were originally discarded, the status of the objects is reduced from pieces of historical evidence to worthless curios. Despite the painstaking excavation and recording of sites which the archaeologist does, he is himself conscious that as he excavates he is as surely destroying the evidence before him as he would be by reading a manuscript and carefully burning each page after reading it. A collection of pottery shards dug out of a site and sent to a museum or university is of little or no more value to the archaeologist than to the person who has collected them.

Cavers, by the nature of their activities, encounter archaeological sites more frequently than most people, and the recording of them can add another facet to caving. There exists in Port Moresby the facility for recording site locations and other information in The New Guinea Archaeological Survey, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Papua New Guinea, P.O. Box 4[illegible], University, P.N.G. Alternatively, one can contact the Curator of Anthropology, Papua New Guinea Museum, Port Moresby. Site recording forms are available from The New Guinea Archaeological Survey.

The Do's and Don't's of site recording are simple: Do record the location of the site by its grid coordinates on a published map if possible, or by clear directions if not; try and find out who owns the land on which the site is located, either an individual or a group; note the sort and size of site, whether it is a cave or rock-shelter or something else, and whether it is an art site or burial site etc.; whether it has shell or bone or pottery or stone flakes scattered around the surface. Don't dig holes in the site to see how deep the deposit is or what it contains; don't interfere with rock faces which are painted or carved in ways which may hasten deterioration of the surface; don't despair if an archaeologist doesn't appear on the next plane to excavate your site. There are only three archaeologists resident in Papua New Guinea at the moment, and all are in Port Moresby. Your information will be appreciated and acknowledged. Finally, don't collect artifacts from the site unless requested to; personal collections are usually the first thing into the garbage tin when one 'goes finish'.

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STARTERS WANTED FOR NEW IRELAND EXPEDITION

An expedition to the Lelet Plateau of New Ireland is being planned for the middle of 1975. The aim is to find and explore deep caves. The possibilities for finding very deep caves are good and depth potential is up to 1400 m according to the geologists. Access is good with only one or two days' walk in needed. A reconnaissance trip in April, 1974, discovered 30 caves in five caving days, four of the caves being too deep for the two man trip to handle with the available rope. A further recce trip is planned for January, 1974.

No major scientific programme is planned. Equipment and costs will be kept to a minimum. It is envisaged that most of the finance will be provided by the members. Costs ex east coast Australia will be in the order of $500. Cost ex Rabaul should be less than $200. A party of 8-10 cavers familiar with single rope techniques is planned. At this stage there are five definite starters, and a number of possibles. Persons interested in coming on the trip, either from P.N.G. or overseas, should contact Michael Bourke. A doctor is needed, as are persons with

extensive SRT experience. Plans will be discussed at the Brisbane ASF Conference at Christmas. Timing is still undecided, but a tentative date to leave Rabaul for New Ireland is 27th July, 1975.

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CAVES FOR NATIONAL PARKS

The following is a text of a letter sent by Mr. M. A. Hill, the Executive Director of the National Parks Board, to the editor. It is self-explanatory.

. . . . . .

The Papua New Guinea National Parks Board is interested in obtaining as much information as possible concerning caves and cave systems within the country. This is with a view to making an assessment of caves suitable for development. At the same time there may well be cave systems that because of their geological, biological or other values should be given full protection status.

So far little or nothing has been done by the National Parks Board in regard to the development or protection of any cave systems though several are on the list of potential areas for investigation. We, currently, have no one on the staff with any experience in caves or caving and I am therefore writing to you to seek your assistance.

If you could possibly suggest a list of references in relation to caves in Papua New Guinea I would be most grateful. I would also be grateful for any comments, suggestions and recommendations you or any other members of the group (the PNGCEG) would care to make.

At this stage, in general terms, the Board is interested in 3 types of caves. 1) Those that could or should be developed for public visitation; 2) those of historic or prehistoric interest that should be preserved as such and 3) those which need full protection because of their scientific interest.

Although I don't anticipate the Board moving very quickly in this field, the sooner we start getting information together and making contact with your members the sooner we can begin to get our thinking straight. Any assistance you can give us and any suggestions you care to make regarding the broad management of caves in Papua New Guinea will be most welcome.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

..... are due again. The sub for Volume 3 will have to be $3 I am sorry to say. Most salesmen justify the all-too-common price rises these days by citing rising costs. I won't. It's just that Niugini Caver is running at a loss, and I want to reduce the loss. This year I will be $80-100 out of pocket. Any additional sales you can rake up will help the finances. The larger the production run, the cheaper is the cost per issue. An order form is enclosed for persons who are now unfinancial.

* * *

EXTRACT FROM GUIDE TO THE PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

P.N.G. Museum *

The National Cultural Property (Preservation) Ordinance, amended 1967, of Papua New Guinea is designed to preserve the natural history and cultural heritage of the country for future generations. The Papua New Guinea Museum and its Trustees have been entrusted with this responsibility.

NATIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTY

National Cultural Property consists of objects of particular importance to the people of Papua New Guinea. National Cultural Property may include any object or place associated with the traditional culture; or minerals, fossils and zoological specimens of scientific interest (Part 1, Section 4 of the Ordinance). The following schedule lists categories of National Cultural Property which have specific restrictions regarding their acquisition and transfer:

SCHEDULE OF 18 MAY, 1967

1. Human remains or any part thereof when dried, preserved, decorated or otherwise dealt with in a manner traditional to the indigenous people of Papua New Guinea.

2. Traditional funerary objects or things.

3. Carvings or engravings on stone.

4. Carvings or engravings on implements, tools, weapons, utensils and ornamen manufactured wholly or partly from stone.

5. Carvings, paintings, engravings or other representations on rock.

6. Deposits of ancient pottery or other relics of historical or antiquarian interest.

The acquisition and transfer of these materials is limited to:

a. The Trustees of the Papua New Guinea Public Museum and Art Gallery,

b. A native in accordance with native custom, or

c. Any other person or organisation approved by the Administrator in Council after having received a report from the Trustees,

except insofar as that acquisition or transfer is authorised by an Act or Ordin

Any contravention subsequent to the date of initiation of the schedule will re in a substantial fine being imposed on the offender.

Physical locations which are protected by the Ordinance specifically inclu a variety of places:

* P.O. Box 635, Port Moresby, P.N.G.

a. A cave or other place in which ancient remains, human or other, are to be found.

b. A carving, painting or other representation on rock or in a cave.

c. A deposit of ancient pottery or historical remains.

d. A place used in former times as a ceremonial or burying ground.

A person shall not disturb or otherwise interfere with a place or object referred to in this list. A penalty is scheduled for any violation of this section of the Ordinance.

Any individual planning to investigate and work a site of this nature should obtain permission in writing from the Trustees of the Papua New Guinea Museum prior to the initiation of their activities. Materials listed in the schedule of 18 May, 1967 may be exported on a temporary basis for study purposes (Appendix III).

* * *

AMBITIOUS P.N.G. EXPEDITION TO VISIT GREAT/BRITAIN

Plans are well advanced for one of Papua New Guinea's most ambitious overseas speleological expeditions. Following several expeditions to Australia, New Zealand and Japan, our boys are now looking to the Territory of Great Britain to set new records for cold and wet caves. Rumours suggest that the Great-Britain caves are so incredibly cold that the natives wear rubber suits instead of the normal shorts to go caving. Of course such stories must be treated with caution until we can verify them. However to be on the safe side all members of the expedition will be issued with a jumper.

News of political unrest in the remote Scotland and Wales sub-districts has been unsettling, particularly local agitation for independence. Tribal fighting in the slums is said to be very bad. Coupled with power shortages this wet season, the country sounds a most primitive area.

The expedition will concentrate on the Mendip-Pennine area with day trips to Cork and Wales. With a proposed budget of $238,329,741.52 and the 82 man expedition in the field for 17½ months, we can confidently expect new frigidity and dampness records.

(Prompted after reading in recent numbers of Descent plans for the 1973 Australian and 1975 British expeditions to P.N.G.)

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ADVERTISING

In this issue there is an advertisement for New Guinea Disposals. It is hoped to obtain more advertising in the future to offset production costs. Readers can help by patronizing the companies that advertise in Niugini Caver, and by mentioning N.C.

* * *

THE 1965 STAR MOUNTAINS EXPEDITION

M. J. Shepherd *

In February 1965, a small Australian expedition comprising six whites and seventeen New Guineans set out from Telefomin in central New Guinea in order to spend several months in the unexplored eastern Star Mountains region. Co-leaders of the expedition were Paul Symons and Tom Hayllar, both with a wealth of climbing and caving experience in many parts of the world. The remaining members were Barry Craig, anthropologist, John Huon, medical officer, David Cook, geologist, and myself, geomorphologist. Apart from carrying out surface exploration and scientific work in various fields, we intended to explore any caves that we should encounter in the region. Two members of the expedition (Symons and Craig) had lived in New Guinea and were known personally to our Telefomin carriers. This was to prove invaluable during the arduous months ahead, as our carriers remained loyal throughout, incredibly honest, and almost invariably in good humour. With some difficulty we were supported by three air drops in more accessible locations, and this was essential in the highest part of the mountains where local food was unavailable.

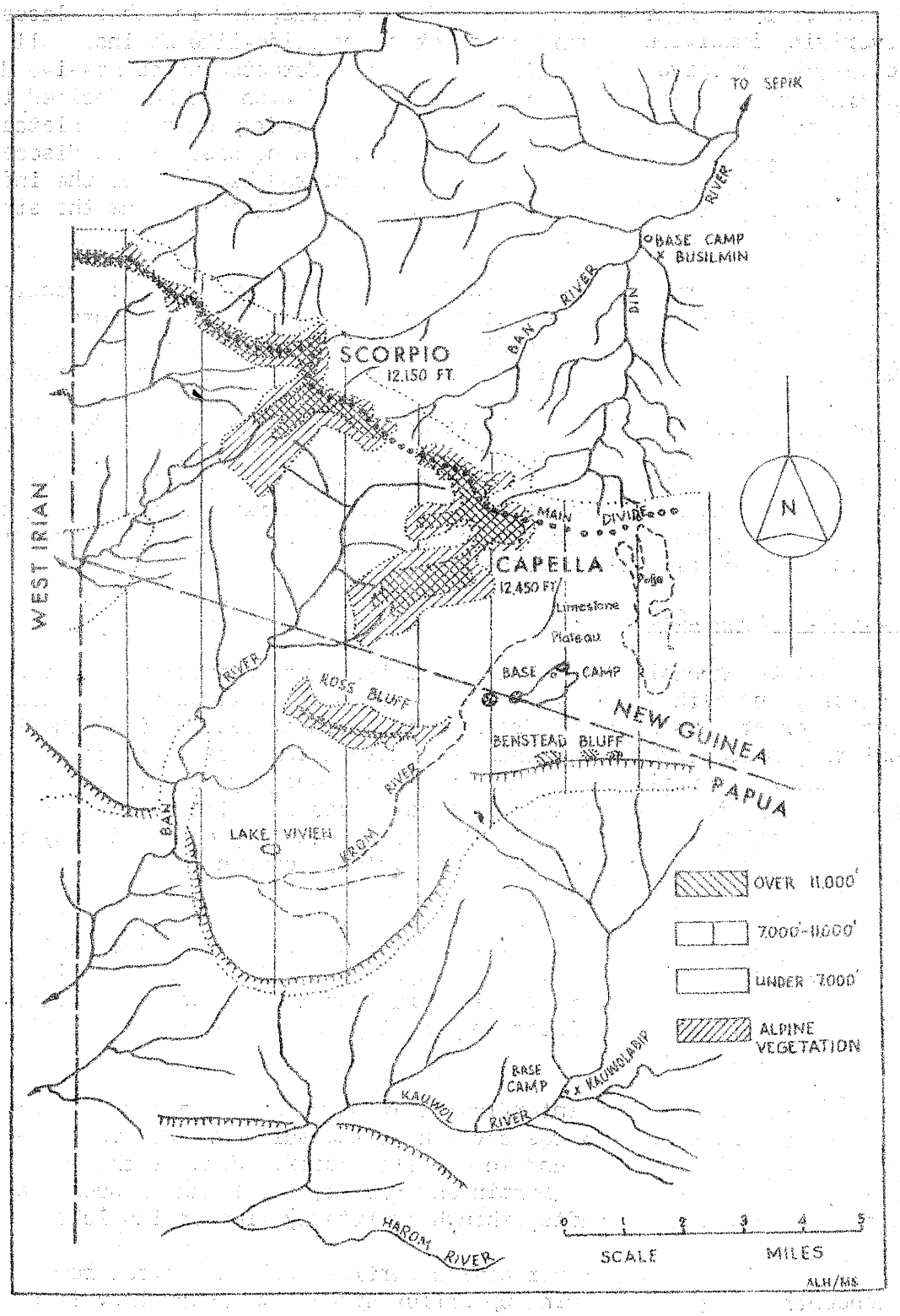
The journey from Telefomin to the Star Mountains consisted of an eight day walk which involved crossing the main dividing range and travelling across extremely rugged country which had been deeply dissected by the headwaters of the Fly River. We finally arrived at the village of Kauwolabip which we made our base for several weeks while we explored the southern foothills of the Star Mountains. To ascend into the Mountains it was necessary to penetrate the 'Limestone Barrier', an almost continuous line of cliffs 900 - 1200 m high extending into Irian Jaya. This was accomplished by means of a track cut over the Beroro Pass; by following the dry bed of the Krom River we were able to reach the 3000 m high Dokfuma Plateau, where a base camp was erected (see map). Excursions were made to Lake Vivien and to the highest of the Star Mountains, including Scorpio and Capella, both over 3600 m high. After six weeks in the mountains we completed the first crossing of the range and descended to the village of Busilmin in the Din Valley (1500 m a.s.l.), from where the Wop and Al Valleys were visited. After a further two weeks the party returned to Telefomin along seldom used native tracks lying between the Sepik River and the Main Range.

CAVING

One of our many aims was to gauge the speleological possibilities of the area, which were expected to be highly promising in view of the fact that the bulk of the eastern Star Mountains is composed of a Miocene limestone bed which is over 900 m in thickness. In addition, the mountains receive an annual rainfall estimated to be 3800 - 6300 mm, and much of the drainage is subterranean.

Many limestone areas with small dolines were seen in the foothills both to the north east of the Star Mountains, and during the rugged week's journey from Telefomin to the foot of the mountains, but time and/or equipment were lacking for their investigation. The main limestone area in the mountains is a plateau at about 2900 m bordered by 900 - 1200 m cliffs to the south and the dividing range on the north. On the plateau a bed of marlstones and mudstones about 60 m thick overlies the limestone, but the surface is interrupted by three

* Geography Department, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.



STAR MOUNTAINS AREA CENTRAL NEW GUINEA

huge dolines up to nearly 90 m deep and 800 m wide, and in other places where the overlying impervious strata is thicker, by polje-like basins. All of these features receive influx streams. We had detected these massive dolines and basins on air photographs prior to the expedition and had decided to focus cave exploration in this area. Equipment was air-dropped to the plateau and we examined all the major dolines and basins. In no case did we discover any sizeable cave system, but we frequently encountered blockage of the influx passages by clay or boulders. In one doline and in many basins the streams simply terminated in muddy surface pools.

The highest part of the eastern Star Mountains, the Capella Massif consists of lapiez karst and is dissected by two major sets of joints. Whilst scaling the peaks a number of shafts (30 m plus) were observed. We examined several but found them to be blocked with glacial or periglacial material.

The main surface drainage feature on the limestone is the Krom River, a tributary of the Ban River, which in turn is part of the Digoel River system in Irian Jaya. The Krom River was dry for most of the eight kilometres of its length which we examined; but it was seen that the river must flow at the surface periodically. We descended a number of shafts along the dry river bed, but again found no sizeable caverns.

SPELEOLOGICAL PROSPECTS

It must be emphasized that this expedition was primarily of a reconnaissance nature, and although little caving was done, it is clear that large cave systems do exist. Underground drainage is dominant over most of the limestone encountered, which covers more than 50 square kilometres at depths up to 1200 m. Large quantities of aggressive waters quickly make their way underground in a variety of karst types. Karst features exists even where the limestone is thinly covered by clastic rocks, probably controlled by fault lines or major joints, but suggesting underlying caverns.

Despite the evidence for large cave systems, there may be practical problems in entering them. For example, the large dolines on Dokfuma Plateau were blocked by alluvial fill from overlying clastics and further insoluble deposits no doubt would occur at points further into any caves. Similarly, on the Capella Massif, cave exploration was stopped by deposits of glacial or periglacial origin.

In the lapiez karst of interfluvial areas water appears to be not sufficiently concentrated to form large caves near the surface. However, solution pipes 30 m or so deep were found in Capella Massif. Some of the world's deepest caves, such as Pierre St. Martin and Berger, are found in such areas and are entered through deep shafts, though admittedly free of insoluble residues.

It is possible that further caving parties would be better rewarded if they concentrated upon following up efflux streams to where they issue from the foot of the limestone cliffs. The dense vegetation would render the task a difficult one, however. In retrospect, I would tend to expect the major effluxes to debouche on the western boundary of the limestone near the Krom/Ban junction, about 1.5 km from the Irian Jaya border to the south of the main divide. The expedition did not visit this locality, but it would appear

to be far more accessible than the higher parts of the Star Mountains. In addition, local food would be available.

There are of course immense logistical difficulties in actually reaching the Star Mountains. Any serious cave exploration will require equipment far beyond what could be carried on this preliminary trip; it must be remembered that exploration of the deep caves of France, Italy and elsewhere has required several heavily equipped expeditions just to explore a single, relatively accessible cave.

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* D.A.S.F., Keravat, E.N.B., P.N.G.

explored, including burial caves near Tifalmin and cave art.)

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STUDIES IN SPELEOLOGY

This international journal is published by the William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust Ltd. The journal aims to publish well informed articles on all aspects of cave studies, but not specialist articles which can be understood only by other specialists in the same field. The latest issue, Volume 2 part 6 (for 1973) contains a number of most interesting articles. One article describes the formation of lava tubes in Hawaii as observed by vulcanologists - a somewhat hazardous occupation, it would appear, as one of the staff fell into molten lava. The man in question suffered no permanent disability except disfigured skin. Excellent colour plates accompany the paper. Other articles describe blister caves from Ethiopia and their mammal fauna, and Kenyan lava caves. Earlier issues contain other interesting papers from around the world, such as "Caves on the Moon and on Mars"; "Cave Calcite"; "Cave Bears"; "The Early Recording and Preservation of Rock Painting in South Africa".

Studies in Speleology can be obtained from 16 New Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, U.K. at £1.50 (£1.25 for earlier issues) plus postage (10p for 1 copy, 20p for 5 copies). If you have an international interest in speleology, this journal represents good value.

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THE NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Allen was engaged in extensive archaeological field work in P.N.G. for a number of years. He was a lecturer in prehistory in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the U.P.N.G. before joining the Department of Prehistory at the Australian National University, which is his substantive position.

Nick Bowden is more of a walker than a caver, but he's done some caving at the Mumeng caves in the Morobe District. He is a surveyor by profession.

Geoff Francis is a member of S.U.S.S. He came to P.N.G. this year and in a few months has managed to explore and survey a number of caves on Manus and Los Negros Islands. His particular interest is karst geomorphology. He is a teacher.

Mike Shepherd was a member of S.U.S.S. and participated in the 1965 Australian Star Mountains Expedition. As well as doing some caving on the trip, he studied karst geomorphology.

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THE CAVING SCENE

Eastern Highlands. In August Kev and Bev Wilde, Dick Knight, and Graham Wilson did some caving in the Sinofi area along the Kainantu-Okapa road. A number of rock art sites and three small to medium sized river caves were visited. This is the first report of caves from this area. (See report this issue.) Kev, Dick and a visitor, Graham Wilson, also did a trip out to the well known Hell's Gates in late August. Kev reports a cave nearby with the unlikely name of Tin Tin Banga. He must be kidding! (See report this issue.)

Kev got out to Kafiavana south of Goroka in late October. He writes: "The art is fantastic .... Techniques, style, motifs and materials are beginning to form a pattern of distribution now and I am getting wrapped in the whole thing."

East New Britain. Tim Sprod and Michael Paspari from Vuvu took a party of ten students out to the Iuvare caves in August. Duwai, Luminas and the Alumga Cutoff cave were visited. Iuvare was also visited in September by Michael Bourke and Jim Farnsworth. The trip was to introduce Jim to the area, and and to complete the surveying which was done by doing a surface traverse from Luminas to Syngoinga. All four caves were visited. Together with Francesca Malonga, they visited the pumice caves at Malabunga in October. All the caves were explored and Jim did a survey in cave number 2. The same day a new cave some 51 m long was found at Rabagi village. Again this is a first for this area. Method of formation is slightly different from the other pumice caves, as it is formed at the contact of the overlying ash and volcanic rock. The others are formed at the contact between the sandy ash and buried clay layers. The cave was surveyed. Another small cave in pumice at Keravat was visited by Michael Bourke and Chris Prior in November.

Limestone caves and pumice ones - that leaves caves in corralline limestone. The group at Londip was explored by Jean and Michael Bourke, Alan, Muriel and Simon (age 2) Leadley, Les McKenzie, and Chris Perry in September. Three new caves were found, one of which contains a well preserved Japanese gun. One cave was sketched. More surveying was planned, but picnic lunches on a white sand beach and a few ales are not conducive to surveying. However Jim Farnsworth got out to Londip in November and surveyed three of the caves on his own.

Expeditions. Nobody seems to have heard of the Yanks, so perhaps they aren't coming? Maski. The British trip seems to be definitely on now. Base camp will be Telefomin and target areas will be the Hindenburg Mountains and the Lavani Valley. Backing is being sought from the Royal Geographical Society, the Everest Foundation and the Royal Society. The R.A.F. have promised to fly the members as far as Singapore which should cut costs considerably. May to October is the proposed period. On the trip will be some of Britain's most experienced cavers led by the well known Dave Brook. Sid Perou will be making a couple of films for T.V. while "most of the others (20 in all) are experienced types and a pretty tough bunch". Howard Beck has already been out to Kagua making a film for British T.V. to boost the trip.

The P.N.G.-Australian expedition to the Lelet Plateau of New Ireland is now a goer (See request for starters, this issue.) It will be a more modest trip than the others planned for '75, but the potential of the area is almost as good as any other, access is very much better, and the party will contain a number of speleos with previous expedition experience in P.N.G. The place will be getting crowded out at this rate!

Madang. In October Michael Bourke and Kev Wilde got out to a cave, or was it two?, near Madang. It was explored for a few hundred metres only, but provided some good sport as there are two duck-unders inside.

Manus. The gap in our knowledge of caves on Manus is being rapidly filled by Geoff Francis. In August he spent some time in Kari area in central Manus. This is the largest limestone outcrop in the District. Geoff writes: "Kari proved to be really interesting. The limestone was not as extensive as the air photo interpretation had suggested; in many places it was overlain by clastic sediments, or had been eroded down to the impervious volcanic basement. But there were many river caves. I surveyed 13 of them, ranging from 50 m to 1000 m in length. There were quite a few high level openings into abandoned river passages, but these were difficult to get into." In September, he did a Grade 4 survey of Nge-Pelimat.

Geoff has visited 18 caves so far, and has information on about 10 more. He has the usual problem of no one to go with. "There don't seem to be any keen cavers on Manus, so I usually end up going with some of the school boys. Occasionally a couple of the sisters come along, but only if it's a walk in job with a lot of pretties. Anyway, the nuns' habits are not very suitable for rough caving."

New Ireland District. Despite the lack of a resident speleo, New Ireland manages to get its share of the caving action, mostly from the Keravat mob. Chris Perry and Chris Prior had a look at a number of caves on Lihir Island in October. They visited 2 or 3 in cliffs, a river cave with an entrance some 12 m tall, and were shown the location of another at the base of a cliff. Hal Gallasch got over to Lihir the following month, and went through the river cave with Paul Jamieson for about 90 m until they were stopped by a waterfall. Hal reports that the cave is in volcanic rock, probably basalt, not in the corralline limestone that occurs in that part of Lihir. He also saw an archway near the river cave and a small cave above the archway.

Looks like all for this issue. Seems to be a pretty active scene at the moment. By the way, any action down Bougainville way or out of Moresby? Don't forget to let the editor know your caving news. That's the only way the scattered brethren are going to hear what is going on.

R.M.B.

* * *

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TRIP TO THE YONGGAMUGL AND ENDUGUAKANI CLAN AREAS, POROL RANGES, CHIMBU DISTRICT

Kevan A. Wilde *

On 23-24th March, 1974 a party of seven visited Obondoyonaminge and Irapui caves on the dip slope of the Porol Ranges. The party was: Kevan Wilde, Bev Wilde, Dick Knight, Geraldine Deutrum, Lynette Mayne, Judy Mayne (all from Goroka), and John Gires (Pari village).

On Saturday we set up residence at the "haus kiap" at Pari village. We set off for Sigewagi, but part of the Chimbu Gorge had collapsed, so we set off cave hunting. Having achieved nothing by 11 a.m., we went up to the limestone bluffs above Sigewage for rope and ladder instruction. Later that afternoon we visited Obondoyonaminge. We paid $5 entrance fee to Kagl-Tongia and went inside. Kevan was pleased to see that the entrance was still well concealed and the contents of the cave still much as they were some 2-4 years ago. Kagl (the owner) informed us that there had been a number of European visitors in the preceding couple of months. We returned to Pari at about 6.00 p.m. That evening the elders mentioned two other burial caves, one being Uram (visited by Fred Parker in 1964) and an unnamed cave south west of the rest house. Neither was visited by us.

Sunday morning we headed up to Irapui. We shot off to Marata Chamber and rigged Irapui Kombogo Pitch (25 m) with a 40 m terylene. Firstly we set off down Base Camp Passage and along the first part of Niglagle Passage to The Balcony Passage. All managed the Balcony Pitch, although the girls were somewhat apprehensive and found some difficulty in negotiating the overhang. We had a look at the passage of a Thousand Wounds and everyone was very impressed by the formation. Lyn managed to cut her stockinged feet on the cave crystals and looked quite bloody, although she had only two cuts. It seemed quite appropriate. John was particularly impressed. He is the first New Guinean to enter this particular part of Irapui. Kev and Dick went down to the lake in Tarn Chamber which was almost up to its old level - it dries up in the dry season. After lunch at Nigagle Pools we proceeded to the Irapui Kombogo pitch. Kev and Dick descended. To our disgust we found a heap of rubbish down the bottom of the shaft - obviously thrown down by tourist-type cavers. We collected and buried it as best as we could. We prussiked out, derigged and were all out by about 5.00 p.m. Arrived at the car at 7.15 p.m., and headed off to Kundiawa where we feasted and boozed with friends. We arrived at Goroka at midnight tired but happy.

A new cave was observed from the bridge over the Kwinigl Gorge; access is by abseiling about 50 m down into the gorge. A return trip is planned. It looks as though the highland caving scene may start moving again.

* P.O. Box 113, Madang, P.N.G.

* * *

TRIP TO GOMEA AND NOLA VILLAGES AREA, CHUAVE, CHIMBU DISTRICT

Kevan A. Wilde *

Over the period 5-6-7th July, 1974, Kevan and Bev Wilde, Dick Knight and Helen Wilson visited Kaimomo, Nola, Angunga and Kiroro Werara caves. In an earlier paper Wilde (1973), I erroneously called Kaimomo cave 'Kiowa'. Friday night we travelled from Goroka to Kaimomo cave via Chuave and Gomea village. We set up camp in the entrance of the cave. The party proceeded to the 15 m pitch. Bev and Helen stayed at the top of the pitch and Kevan and Dick rigged and descended on single ropes. The stream was down and we explored upstream for some 100 m when further progress was cut short by a 6 m waterfall with a huge volume of water cascading down, making it impossible to climb without bolting a route to the right and clear of the water. The party returned to the pitch and explored downstream for about 150 m. The stream travels approximately north. Again a waterfall was encountered and being short of a handline, we abandoned the fall. The party returned to the rope and prussiked out. The pitch was derigged and everyone returned to the entrance - round trip about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. A high water mark 15 m above the present water level was observed.

Saturday morning we had a quick look at the right hand passage as far as the drop into the stream. The lake which was observed by Wilde and Watson in February, 1972 was found to be dry and the main chamber inhabited by bats. At 10.00 am. we proceeded to Nola village (Leiya) and to Nombi (referred to as Noumbe incorrectly by Wilde (1973)). Here Mary Jane Mountain was working on an archaeological dig. Back to Nola where Kevan and Dick were shown Nola sink a short distance north of the village by one Councillor Nomani. Kevan rigged the entrance pitch with 40 m of rope and abseiled in over a sharp overhang and struck bottom at approximately 33 m. He free climbed the remaining 10 m to the bottom which was blocked by surface soil and rocks. Dick followed and both prussiked out. Nomani then took us to Angunga sink a short distance north east of the village (10 minutes walk). The sink is taking a small amount of water which would increase considerably in the wet season. The stream was followed for a short distance above ground and then underground for about 20 m; the stream then dropped vertically for a considerable distance which was estimated as about 80 m plus. Kevan and Dick decided that more rope and people were required for a descent, and hope to plan a return trip as the sink has enormous potential for depth - possibly -300 m. An outlet was not located and the system possibly drains into Kiowa.

The local inhabitants said that it was commonly held that both systems (Kaimomo and Angunga) are connected to Kirove cave near Fikombaru some 5 km south west of Kaimomo cave (Gomea Village). Kirove was not visited but a trip of well equipped cavers to this area is warranted. Good sporting caves with horizontal as well as vertical development can be expected. (A number of dolines extends between the systems indicating possible connections.)

The party visited Kiroro Weraro (the Mouth of the Flying Fox) on three occasions during the weekend. The shaft was not descended as the local people had erected a flying fox (weraro) trap over the entire opening which is some 25 m wide! The trap was constructed of wooden poles and kunai grass and was an

* P.O. Box 113, Madang, P.N.G.

excellent demonstration of local engineering. The flying foxes are trapped in the kunai when they attempt to leave the cave to feed in the evening - some 1,000 flying foxes were claimed to have been killed. It had, apparently, been some 30 years since the last time such a trap had been erected. The sink is apparently blocked at about 40 m deep. A 40 m rope was lowered down by Kevan and Dick to assist the villagers in collecting the flying foxes that had fallen dead to the bottom of the shaft.

REFERENCE

Wilde, K. A. (1973). Notes on Some Caves in the Elimbari and Chuave Areas of the Chimbu District. Niugini Caver 1(4): 110-115.

* * *

TRIP REPORTS, SOME LEGENDS AND NOTES RELATING TO A NUMBER OF CAVES IN THE SINOFI AND HENGANOFI AREAS OF THE EASTERN HIGHLANDS

Kevan A. Wilde *

SINOFI AREA, KAINANTU SUB-DISTRICT

Situated some 4.8 km along the first right hand turn-off along the Kainantu - Okapa Road is an insignificant area of limestone with a surprisingly large amount of fairly well horizontally developed cave systems and reported shafts and sinks. Sinofi village is centrally placed amongst the limestone and gives easy access to the entire area. Kevan Wilde, Dick Knight, Graham Wilson, Bev Wilde and Helen Wilson visited the area on 17-18th August, 1974. No really large caves were observed by the writer and party, but a number of rock art sites and small to medium river caves were visited.

1. Tefola Cave

Located opposite the Sinofi 'singsing' grounds at the rear of a food garden; a small river cave with some 200-300 m of passage and some not so spectacular formation. The creek submerges some 300 m north of Sinofi village and travels in a roughly southerly direction and emerges in the garden mentioned above. The cave entrance area, above the river, has been frequently used for shelter and protection during tribal fighting and could possibly be of archaeological interest. A polychrome anthropomorphic figure appears on the left hand wall of the entrance; and on the right are a number of faded, linear and enigmatic charcoal designs.

2. Kekeronunga

This is a limestone cliff with a small river cave resurging into the Sinofi river and is situated immediately behind the village of the same name. The stream can be followed for some 40 m where it closes down into a very tight and wet squeeze. A sink hole is reported to be situated on the top of the cliffs but was not visited. The cliff face, however, displays a prolific amount of drawings and paintings. These include linear charcoal designs, anthropomorphs, chevrons, circles, circles with 'sun-rays', chains of filled-in inverted and upright triangles -

* P.O. Box 113, Madang, P.N.G.

charcoal with red ochre fill-in and linear geometric designs of no apparent form. Almost above the resurgence is a drawing of a man and his dog which, although modern in appearance, is claimed by the local elders as having been executed beyond living memory.

There is a spiritual significance attached to a small cave in the cliff face. Formerly (before the days of veterinary aid) when a pig became sick the owner would slaughter it, take the carcass to the alcove and remain there living off the flesh for seven to ten days, after which he would leave the alcove and wash himself in the river.

3. Isiabinunda (not visited)

A dry sink reported to be located on the top of a limestone hill, a short distance north west of Sinofi. A legend relates to a male and a female spirit who were married and had a young daughter. The two 'masalai' lived on the mountain near Isiabinunda and were responsible (by legend) for the drawings and paintings that appear in the caves and rock faces in the area. Because of the height and position of some of the drawings, it is said that the two spirits were able to fly up the cave walls. When the daughter grew up, her parents allowed her to marry a young man of the Oiyana area and they left Sinofi to go and live with their daughter. This latter part is probably of modern origin to explain the absence of spirits since the breaking of the cave 'tabus'. The sink has not been explored and is not visited by local people because of the 'win no gut' which is said to come from the hole.

4. Ofafunga Cave

Approximately 4 km east south east of Sinofi village; a river cave of two levels and some potential for exploration. The cave is situated in a fairly large outcrop of limestone with several small caves which were not visited. Information from local inhabitants suggest that they have little or no potential. The cave consists of a river passage some 200-300 m or more long and a large chamber on the south eastern side above the efflux; the chamber is dry with almost no deposition taking place. At the north east extremity there is a 25 m shaft which gives access to the river system below. In the south west corner of the chamber is a fissure followed by a mud slope which also gives access to the river and there is an open entrance in the eastern corner.

The walls of the chamber are profusely decorated with charcoal drawings of a similar nature to those at Kekeronunga, with chains of upright and inverted triangles, and cross-like motifs being the most predominant. A large number of anthropomorphs and zoomorphs also appear, along with 'leaf' motifs, linear designs, concentric circles and circles with 'sun-rays'. The chamber shows evidence of occupation and could be of archaeological interest.

Conclusion

It is likely that there are many rock art and cave art sites in the area. It is also likely that there are a large number of small caves and further exploration could be rewarding. The art sites were recorded in detail and will be published separately at a later date.

HENGANOFI AREA

1. Hell's Gates (Murifinka cave)

Access is via a secondary road that is located on the left and some 4.8 km on the Goroka side of Henganofi. 5.5 km along the road is Yohotegave village and about 1 km north west of the village is Hell's Gates or, more correctly, Murifinka cave. The cave is situated in a fairly insignificant outcrop of limestone at the base of Mt. Marunu. The cave was visited by Kevan Read and others in 1963 (Read, 1974) and has been visited quite frequently since then. The following is a brief account of a trip carried out by the writer, Dick Knight and a newcomer, Graham Wilson, from New Zealand.

We left Goroka at 8.00 a.m. Sunday 24th August, 1974 and drove to Yohotagave village (we had had two previous attempts and could not find it), walked the track to Hell's Gates sink and rigged it with 45 m of terylene; Kevan abseiled down to a ledge about 20 m down and looked over the overhang down to the bottom. Seeing the rope did not reach the bottom, he climbed and prussiked out again and re-rigged the pitch, which is alongside a 35 m waterfall, in two sections. Kevan recalled that there was reportedly a small fissure cave some 400 m north west of Hell's Gates with a 25 m pitch; so we decided to go and explore that first. The entrance was found and the small, slightly wet, river passage was followed for some 30 m or more where the vertical pitch was rigged with 18 m of ladder and a nylon belay. There was little water and the pitch was easily descended by the caving party and two local fellows, the total drop being some 15 m only.

The bottom of the pitch brought the party into a surprisingly well developed stream passage which was followed for some 200 m (estimated) in a north westerly direction (guessed). We then found ourselves in a very large chamber which was a veritable zoo. We observed very large leaches red to pink in colour, spiders, cockroaches, tadpoles, flying insects and hundreds of thousands of flying foxes and heaps of beetle infested guano. No specimens were collected and no species were identified.

The small stream joins the mainstream in the northern corner of the chamber and this was followed for some 75 m or more and abandoned when we ran out of dry ground and would have had to swim. The party went back to the main chamber and went upstream along the mainstream for some 75 m or so, and in a generally southerly direction. The large and impressive Hell's Gates entrance and waterfall could be seen and the party climbed over some exceedingly slippery rocks to the bottom of the sink.

The party returned by the same route and de-rigged the ladder and rope. When on the surface we found that the local youths had de-rigged our Hell's Gates ropes, bagged them, and brought them around to the small entrance. Kind, but dangerous. The trip took some 4-5 hours but could easily be done in half the time, and was found to be very rewarding. A return visit to survey the system is planned for the near future.

Between Hell's Gates and the small fissure cave is a small dry through cave known as Tin Tin Banga, and judging by the smoke blackened roof and ashy floor, it has some archaeological potential.

Conclusions

Kevan Read (Read, 1973) mentions many caves and some sinks in this area and there are no doubt more. The area is worthy of more attention and further exploration will be carried out in the future.

REFERENCE

Read, K. (1973). Some 1963 Trips to Monono, Henganofi, and Chuave, Eastern Highlands and Chimbu Districts. Niugini Caver 1(3): 77-86.

* * *

NGE-PELIMAT CAVE, LOS NEGROS ISLAND, MANUS DISTRICT

Geoff Francis *

Lolak village is on Los Negros Island (Manus District), about 4 km west of Momote Airport on the Lorengau road. Nge-Pelimat cave has formed in a low limestone ridge to the east of the village; entry is subject to permission by local villagers. The name of the cave means 'flying fox hole' and is quite apt, since several hundred flying foxes shelter there.

Entry to the cave is gained via a collapse doline, containing rough, solution pitted boulders. It is possible to climb down into the doline on one large boulder which leans against the side. From the base of the doline a low roofed solution passage leads off to the north west. The main way on is down a boulder strewn slope in the other direction. At the bottom is a high but narrow chamber; its mud floor shows signs of periodic flooding. A short scramble up a guano covered flowstone slope on the eastern side gives access to another high chamber. A rope would be needed to reach the floor of this chamber.

The other way leads off about 3 m above floor level, into a smaller chamber with well developed solution pockets. These are of flattened spherical shape, extending up to 1 m into the walls. There are also larger recesses, separated by smooth bedrock projections. Beyond this point the cave form changes to a narrow vertical fissure, with a false floor of calcite cemented mud. About 13 m along this passage, the cave is blocked to a considerable height with flowstone. This can be climbed with difficulty, though a rope would be useful. On the other side of the raised floor the fissure drops away again. From this point pebbles can be dropped into an unseen pool of water; about 15 m of rope would be needed to reach the bottom. Through a narrow crawl on the right is a small chamber, containing some knobbly stalagmites. Rough, pitted limestone rocks are scattered over the floor. There is a narrow daylight hole above the entrance of the chamber. Solution pockets and smoothed recesses are also evident at this location.

The solutional forms near B and D (see map) are suggestive of eddy currents in the phreatic zone. Most of the cave has developed along a

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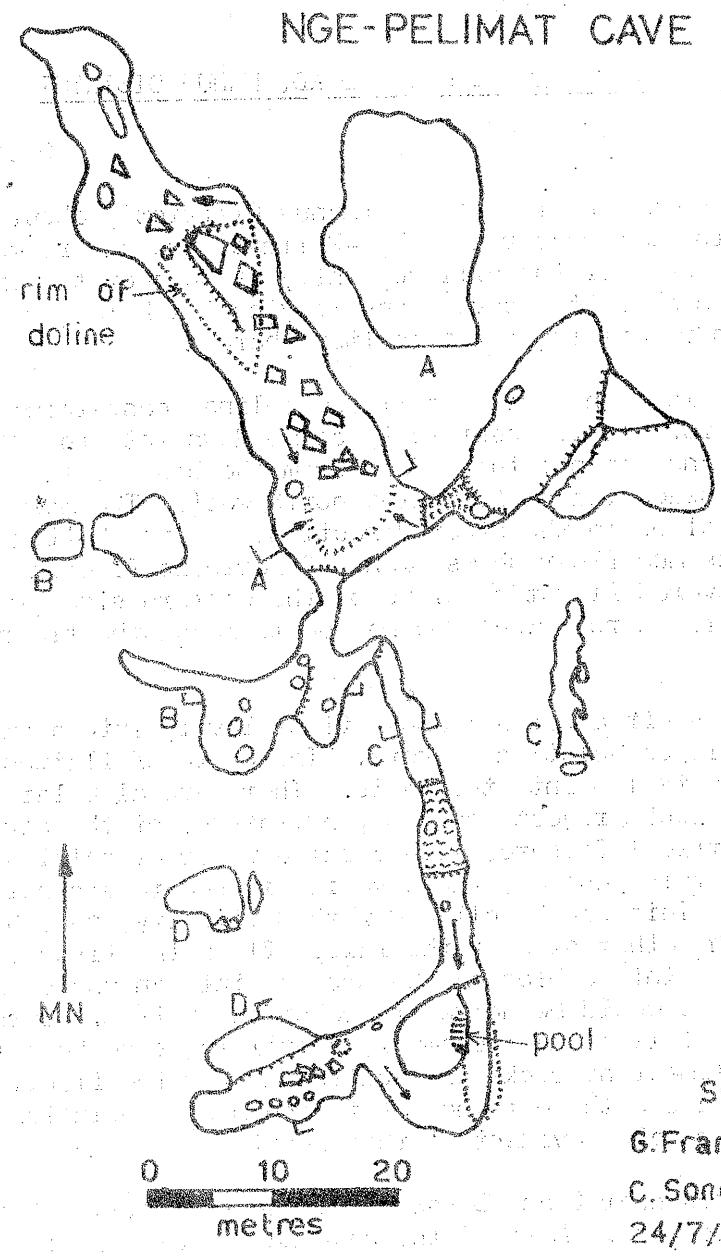
prominent line of vertical jointing, bearing between 345° and 355°. This has favoured the development of high but narrow passages, which have been locally modified by breakdown or calcite deposition.

* * *



SPELEO PERSONALITY - KEVAN WILDE

Most cavers in P.N.G. don't know each other personally. So in this new section we will provide a character sketch of some of the more prominent cavers around. And who is more prominent than the Wilde?

.....

Kevan Alan Wilde would have it that he was born in Birmingham in 1946, and after leaving school he worked in a factory before joining the constabulary in Birmingham at the age of 19. Two years later he moved to the Tasmanian police force, and in March 1968 he joined the same establishment in P.N.G. Here he moved all over the country before resigning in 1973 to go on a caving trip. Later in '73 he joined Carpentaria Exploration Company as a geological field assistant, this being his substantive position. (Hair's longer nowadays, by the way.)

Kev's caving career commenced in Tassie in 1970, and continued at Mendi in 1970-71. '72 must have been a good year, for apart from becoming married, he met Van Watson accentally in the Chimbu. The pair joined forces and so started a profitable caving partnership. Kev reckons that he became 'serious' about caving in the Chimbu. Mrs. Bev Wilde might say obsessive. Wilde and Watson scored an impressive number of exploratory trips in the Chimbu, not the least of which was Bibima. The new depth record firmly placed P.N.G. caving in international standing.

'72 was also the year Kev's prolific writing ability surfaced. He has now provided many valuable cave descriptions, as well as publicising caving here. His main interest lies with vertical caves, and his search for the elusive 'deepest hole in the world' continues. As well as the Chimbu, Southern and Eastern Highlands, he has caved around Bereina and Madang. Kev played a major role in the organization of the '73 Muller Range expedition, and to him must be given much of the credit for its success. He's the P.N.G. rep for the '75 British show ('the Pom Trip', he calls it), and will be in the field for six months if the trip goes. Otherwise he's a starter for the New Ireland expedition.

Vertical holes, expeditions and writing. That leaves cave art - a field in which he takes a lot of interest. Kev has a number of papers behind him or in press. On present indications he'll have more descriptive cave art work done shortly than any other writer.

It would not be nice to list his vices - sufficient to state that he has his share. But one word of warning: don't ever follow Wilde's street directions - it's not his forte.

R.M.B.

* * *

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VAN AMSTEL, John	P.O. Box 41, Kundiawa. Chimbu District. (D.A.S.F.)
WILDE, Bev and Kevan	P.O. Box 1055, Goroka. (Goroka Technical College) OR Carpentaria Exploration Co., P.O. Box 113, Madang.

.....

Last year a list of cavers and subscribers to N.C. was published. There were 39 cavers from 12 districts. This year there are 34 individuals from 10 districts. Of those 34, 20 people were on last year's list and only 13 are in the same place. Little wonder two caving clubs have collapsed in the sixties with such a mobile expatriate population? There is a concentration of cavers in Moresby, Rabaul and throughout the highlands, so perhaps we should consider another go at more formal groups? The PNGCEG must be the only caving group with a newsletter, a library, some gear but no formal structure.

R.M.B.

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END OF VOLUME 2