

The Caving (and other) Photographs of Peter Binns

Files Included

Below is a list of files sent to the BCRA.

1. ReadMe-Peter Binns Photographs.pdf
2. Peter Binns Recollections.pdf
3. Peter Binns Holiday April 1934.pdf
4. Peter Binns' Caving Holiday Easter 1935.pdf
5. Peter Binns' Caving Holiday Easter 1935 LowRes.pdf
6. PhotographCatalogue-PeterBinns.pdf – (could be used for viewing and help stop anyone accidentally making changes)
7. PhotographCatalogue-PeterBinns.xlsx
8. 351 jpeg files

Introduction

From an early age I was aware of the existence of photograph albums which resided in a bookcase. They contained mainly contact prints, but some contained enlargements typically of caves and family. I looked at these periodically but as there was no identification whatsoever in all but one of them, they did not mean much. I probably asked questions, but forgot the answers, and there was no way I would have been allowed to write in them. Given that Peter had been shoehorned into a bank job that he did not really like, he was adamant that I be given free rein to choose my own career, which I did. As a geologist, I was seconded to Australia in 1970 by the company I worked for and never came back, except for initial biennial holiday visits to the UK, a year of study in the late 1980s, and more frequent visits in the 1990s. It was in the 1990s that I revisited the albums and asked questions, but this time I wrote the answers in them. Unfortunately, at this time Peter's memory was not as good as it used to be. After my parents passed away, the following things came to light that I did not know about.

Boxes of Peter's 2 ¼ inch monochrome negatives:

- mostly in individual numbered paper envelopes,
- some negatives packaged together in un-labelled envelopes,
- some labelled envelopes containing no negative,
- some labelled glass plate negatives,
- some un-labelled damaged negatives.

and;

- a small folder containing typed or written information about most, but not all, of the numbered negatives, with evidence that some had been re-numbered,
- a collection of loose contact prints and enlargements, some of which had descriptions written on the back,

- an autograph book from his school days,
- two journals describing his Easter caving holidays in 1934 and 1935 with Eli Simpson,
- a scrapbook of cuttings (1934-1937?) from newspapers and various miscellaneous information connected to caving,
- prints showing a 1956 NPC Dinner with some participants identified in a note from Jack Myers,
- Peter's 'Simpson Letter'.

Scanning of negatives commenced in 2017 to mark Peter's 100th birthday, with the intention of somehow preserving the collection by providing it to appropriate organisations in the UK. Three months were spent scanning about 1200 negatives into high resolution files. About 350 of these photographs are related to caving.

It was not until 2021 when time allowed, that the project continued, and contact was made with the BCRA.

The process consisted of:

- a final round of scanning,
- starting a spreadsheet (PhotographCatalogue-PeterBinns.xlsx) containing all the scanned negative filenames and Peter's descriptions in it,
- matching negatives with prints in the albums as well as loose prints (to verify the scans had the correct orientation),
- matching my notes in the albums and Peter's notes on the back of loose prints with those in the spreadsheet,
- inferring dates by interpolating between known dates in photograph sequences that were very likely to be in order of date taken,
- interpreting if possible, the location of photographs that were not identified based on known adjacent photographs.
- coding of all this information in the spreadsheet by some means to indicate data source and reliability.

There are very few un-identified photographs, but these are included on the basis that covers with the appropriate knowledge will recognize them. Some of these photos could be reversed.

While the quality of the negatives and the resulting scans is usually quite good there has probably been some degradation over the years. It is quite possible that professional scanning might improve the results.

Explanatory Notes:

The Caving Photographs and Spreadsheet

The spreadsheet "PhotographCatalogue-PeterBinns.xlsx" contains a single sheet. The first column A contains the photograph file names, and each name is hyperlinked to the relevant photograph file,

provided the spreadsheet and all the photograph files reside in the same directory. The files are sorted by Description1 (effectively by cave name).

Column	Column Name	Description
Column A	File-name	Photograph file names, as written on negative envelopes.
Column B	Description1	Photograph identification [1], eg. cave name, event
Column C	Description2	Additional identification [1]
Column D	Description3	Location (local) [1]
Column E	Description4	Location (regional) [1]
Column F	People	Identification of people in the photograph [1]
Column G	Date	Known date (written in bold), or possible date or date range based on the location of the photographs within the sequence of all 1,200 photos, using all the known dates including non-cave photos. There were some ambiguities in the VF series.
Column H	SortDate	As for the Date column, but with approximate possible months interpolated based on the photos being taken in summer or winter. Again, the VF series was problematic.
Column I	File-Name for Sorting	Modified file names for the purpose of correct sorting. For example, S5.JPG becomes S005.JPG.
Column J	Album 1	Location of print, in album A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, or I
Column K	Album 2	Page number in album
Column L	Album 3	“Pr” indicates the existence of a loose print (from which the correct image orientation is known), with or without written information on the back. Thus, the orientation of a photo may or may not be correct if there is no album or “Pr” reference.

NOTES

[1] In these columns, entries in a normal font means that the information came from material typed or written by Peter Binns, unless otherwise stated. Entries in *italics* have been added by Michael Binns using varied criteria in an attempt to unravel sequences, etc., but they should be fairly accurate – personal knowledge; relationship to nearby photos; relationship to dated photos. In Column D Description3, many of the locations in *italics* were identified or confirmed by entries in “Pennine Underground” by Norman Thornber, 1947. In Column F People, names in *italics* are people I know, or are clearly the same as in photos in which they are identified. Names in *italics*? with a question mark are a guess. A lone question mark -?- means unidentified.

Nomenclature of Photographs

1. The caving photographs are distributed throughout all of the 1,200 photos. Hence it may seem that there are missing photographs, but these are all non-caving ones.
2. Generally, the file name nomenclature is related to the camera and film used.
 - a. VF - means Voigtlander Film
 - b. RF - means Rolleicord Film
 - c. RP - means Rolleicord Plate
 - d. U – meaning unknown, but probably RF
 - e. S – at some stage Peter appears to have tried to collect his Speleological photos into a group, but we think he then reclassified some of them to VF or RF, and there were some remaining S ones.
 - f. 56-, 57-, 58- are photographs probably taken in the years 1956, 1957 and 1958, but a few appear to have been taken earlier (pre-war).
 - g. X – means loose negatives with no numbers or identification, mostly family, very few caving.
 - h. FP3 and HPS are film types.

Method of Scanning

We used a Canon Canoscan 9950F flatbed scanner and improvised to raise the negatives off the glass. The negatives quickly curled up when taken out of their envelopes, and consequently there were some that touched the glass and produced local Newton's Rings. The film holders provided with the scanner were not quite the right size (or the negatives had been trimmed). The software used for the scanning was provided with the scanner. It allowed the negatives to be scanned at 4800 dpi, producing files in the order of 15 MB to 20 MB each. Microsoft Photo was used to crop, enhance and re-size the images. The images were saved at a resolution "suitable for viewing" (4 megapixel, 600KB to 1.2 MB file size). We have retained copies of the original scanned files.

COPYRIGHT

Regarding copyright, we have inserted Peter's name and the copyright symbol (©) on each photo. Our aim is to deter commercial usage. We are happy for the photos to be used in a non commercial way by the BCRA and any other speleological organization for educational and research purposes, but we request that the source be acknowledged. Copies of the images are available without the copyright symbols on request.

Michael Binns and Jennette Binns

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