

## EDITORIAL

At our last meeting the final plans were made to produce a newsletter. This newsletter has been talked about for so long that it seems its actual production is like the finding of a new cave - exciting, absorbing and when one starts into it, like floundering around in the dark.

As this is our first publication, we hope the articles and information will be of interest to all.

## HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY

The Southern Caving Society came into being on the 7th April, 1965 with a foundation Membership of thirty-six (36) members. Eighteen (18) of these members were active cavers. This membership has been maintained to the present day.

During the initial twelve months a total of fourteen trips were made by the Society, ten of these being to Mole Creek Area, one to Maydena Area and the remaining three were to Hastings Area.

This is of course a small percentage of the weekends in a year - the majority of the others were taken up with fund raising and ladder construction. At the end of six months the Society's equipment consisted of 5 x 30 foot ladders, 1 x 12 foot ladder, 6 x 120 foot ropes, 2 x 30 foot wire headers and a reasonable First Aid Kit.

Twenty-three trips were conducted during the second year - Mole Creek fourteen, Maydena five, two trips to Hastings and two to Lune River.

The third year has only just got under way, but in this period April 30th to July 31st there have been seven trips to Maydena, two trips to Mole Creek and one trip to Hastings. Ladder making is again under way and 5 x 30 foot ladders are near completion.

## MOLE CREEK AREA.

Mole Creek has been visited more frequently than any other area. This is due to the interest in the Wet Cave system, which appears to be the major tributary of the Mole Creek itself. Upstream from the Mole Creek Rising, in topographical order, the following caves are situated:

Cow Cave (explored by N.T.C.C.) with a dry link to Pyramid Cave (T.C.C.), a semi-dry link from Pyramid to Spider Cave (T.C.C.), Honey-Comb System (3, 2, 1½, 1) (T.C.C.).

MOLE CREEK AREA CONT'D.

At this point, a short section of surface stream occurs between Honey-Comb I and Wet Cave, with supplementing "young" underground connections developing.

S.C.S. activities have been concentrated upstream from Wet Cave, in the catchment area on the foot-hills of the Great Western Tiers. From this area, three surface streams have been proved to feed the Mole Creek by underground stream passage via Wet Cave system.

The largest of these streams flows into Kelly's Pot and thence to the water passage of Herbert's Pot and through Shish-Kebab Cave, Dangerous Hole and Georgies Hall to Wet Cave. A small surface stream enters at the top of Herbert's Pot. Westmorland Falls Creek, which goes underground into Westmorland Cave, joins the system somewhere between Herbert's Pot and Georgies Hall.

These water links have been proved by the use of fluorescene dye with visual watch being kept at the appropriate points. The straight line distance for the system is 1.1 miles. The time from Kelly's Pot to Wet Cave was just less than 51 hours.

A major breakthrough in exploration occurred when a route between Georgies Hall and Wet Cave was discovered. This was named Eureka Link.

The way into the upstream passage (Sennacherib's Passage) was found during the same weekend, but progress was halted by a large and deep syphon approximately a quarter of a mile upstream. Many attempts have been made to find a way around this obstacle. Apart from a low dis-used water passage with large, disorganised talus collapses along it there does not appear to be much chance of success.

The next cave in the series is Dangerous Hole which, as the name implies, is extremely dangerous due to the presence of very loose and mobile talus throughout. Since a bulldozer and tree felling gang have been working on the roof, and around the entrance of the cave, we have ruled this cave "out of bounds" to Society members for safety reasons. When things have settled down, it will be interesting, in the light of present knowledge, to see if we can get through to Georgies Hall or forward into Shish-Kebab Cave.

Shish-Kebab is reached via a ninety foot vertical fissure. This leads into a cave with a relatively flat roof and a floor of large talus blocks. The name Shish-Kebab was coined due to the very numerous helictite decorations on strawl stalactites. Underneath the floor is a short water passage which syphons at both ends.

#### MOLE CREEK AREA CONT'D

Herbert's Pot was next in line for a solid thrashing and proved to be deep, extensive, sporty wet and extremely hair-raising. Downstream the water-passage ends in another syphon with one known possible extension. Upstream progress was halted for many trips by a 30 ft. water-fall at the far side of a very deep pool. Finally an upper level was found through a talus and chock-stone ceiling. This enabled exploration to continue past the water-fall but once again the inevitable syphon was encountered.

Kelly's Pot proved to be no exception when a syphon was found at the end of a very long and low water passage. A possibility for extension exists in an upper level which has not been fully explored.

Westmorland Cave contains a stream which has developed the cave in the form of a long, narrow, vertical fissure. Waterlevel exploration has been halted by a deep syphon. Several attempts have been made to find extensions in the older upper levels but no appreciable progress has been made as yet. Water connection with Wet Cave was proved October 20th, 1966.

SUMMARY: A complex system of underground drainage is being investigated through seven caves. At least three surface streams are known to contribute water to the system. Water passage exploration is being hindered by repetitive syphons.

#### FUTURE PLANS FOR INVESTIGATION

The Society plans to survey the complete system and make further investigations in Dangerous Hole and the sections around the syphons in all caves of the system. Cave diving, would be almost impossible due to the severe conditions and the long distances underground. Electro-chemical methods with integrated dye tests are being investigated in order to gain additional information about syphons.

#### MAYDENA AREA

This area is becoming increasingly popular with members for three reasons - the travelling distance from Hobart is only a little over 60 miles compared with approximately 160 miles to Mole Creek, fires have cleared the scrub over a large area of limestone country making surface exploration much easier, and the discovery of many dolines and drainage sinks makes the area quite promising.

#### MAYDENA AREA CONT'D

Our biggest find in the area to date has been named Satan's Lair. This cave has quite an insignificant looking entrance, but investigation leads to better things. The first ladder pitch proved to be 120 feet to a small chamber. Through a talus floor a narrow chimney leads to a 30 foot ladder pitch and then a steep narrow descent for 120 feet. A series of stair-like drops follow ranging from 10 to 25 feet and finally a ladder pitch of 80 feet.

The estimated total depth is 470 feet.

There is a very large chamber at the bottom with good formation, a talus floor and a water-fall coming through the roof. A side extension proves to end in small drainage passage-ways too tight for further progress.

Several other holes have been investigated but most appear to be drainage sinks between 30 and 80 feet deep. Many other holes have been noted for future trips.

#### LUNE RIVER AREA

Very few trips have been organised to this area by the Society, but the small area investigated shows some promise. Several holes of varying depth and size have been found. Most of these appear to be sink holes with little prospect for extension but do provide good practise in ladder climbing and ladder rolling technique.

At this point we offer our heartiest congratulations to the Tasmanian Caverneering Club for the sterling work they are doing at Exit Cave and wish them continued success in this venture.

#### HASTINGS AREA

Once again not a lot of trips but some vary interesting finds have been made. A series of vertical sink-holes has been found on the upper edge of the dolomite. Some of these contain active creeks and water-falls and others contain some good formation. In spite of extremely thick scrub there always seems to be enough enthusiasm for surface exploration. Perhaps this is due to the Thermal Pool, which, after a caving jaunt, in a most welcome spot to soak a tired and aching body.

#### SURVEYING

Westmorland Cave was surveyed using a theodolite and metal tape. Thirty-nine (39) stations were needed to complete this cave, these covering just over 1500 feet of passage. Time taken to complete the survey was 15 hours.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

This phase of caving is fairly popular with the members, but while exploration keeps opening new fields, photography seems to get pushed aside. Even so, slides and prints appear from time to time and so the "bug" strikes again. Multi-flash shots are very popular due to the special effects obtainable. Teamwork and the sharing of resources helps to keep the expense within range, Lighting by magnesium ribbon is being investigated and some thoughts have been given to the construction of a diprotodon.

#### CAVE FAUNA

Some fine specimens of Wetas (cave crickets), cave spiders and Anaspides have been collected and mounted. A noteworthy discovery is the occurrence of the cave beetle, Idacarabus troglodytes Lea at Mole Creek. This beetle was originally found at Ida Bay, Lune River. Professor Hickman has identified several different specimens of insects collected by the Society and these are on file for reference.

#### BONE COLLECTION

On different trips, the Society has collected quite a variety of skulls and other bones. These have been identified by the staff of the Tasmanian Museum and include Possum, Potaroo, Wallaby, Platypus and even a couple of dog skulls.

#### PERSONAL

##### OBITUARY

It was with deep regret that the Society noted the death of one of our Foundation members, Mr. Fred Lambert of Mole Creek. To his family we offer our sincere condolences.

#### CAVE MAN'S WEDDING

Our Congratulations go to Garry and Jill Davis who took the big plunge on May 6th 1967. Mysteriously, toilet tissue, ladders and ropes found their way to the church and with dirt-encrusted trog suits and bash-hats. A guard of honour was formed at the door. Later in the evening; an advance party welcomed the newly-weds to their temporary abode.

PARTY-LEADER LIST

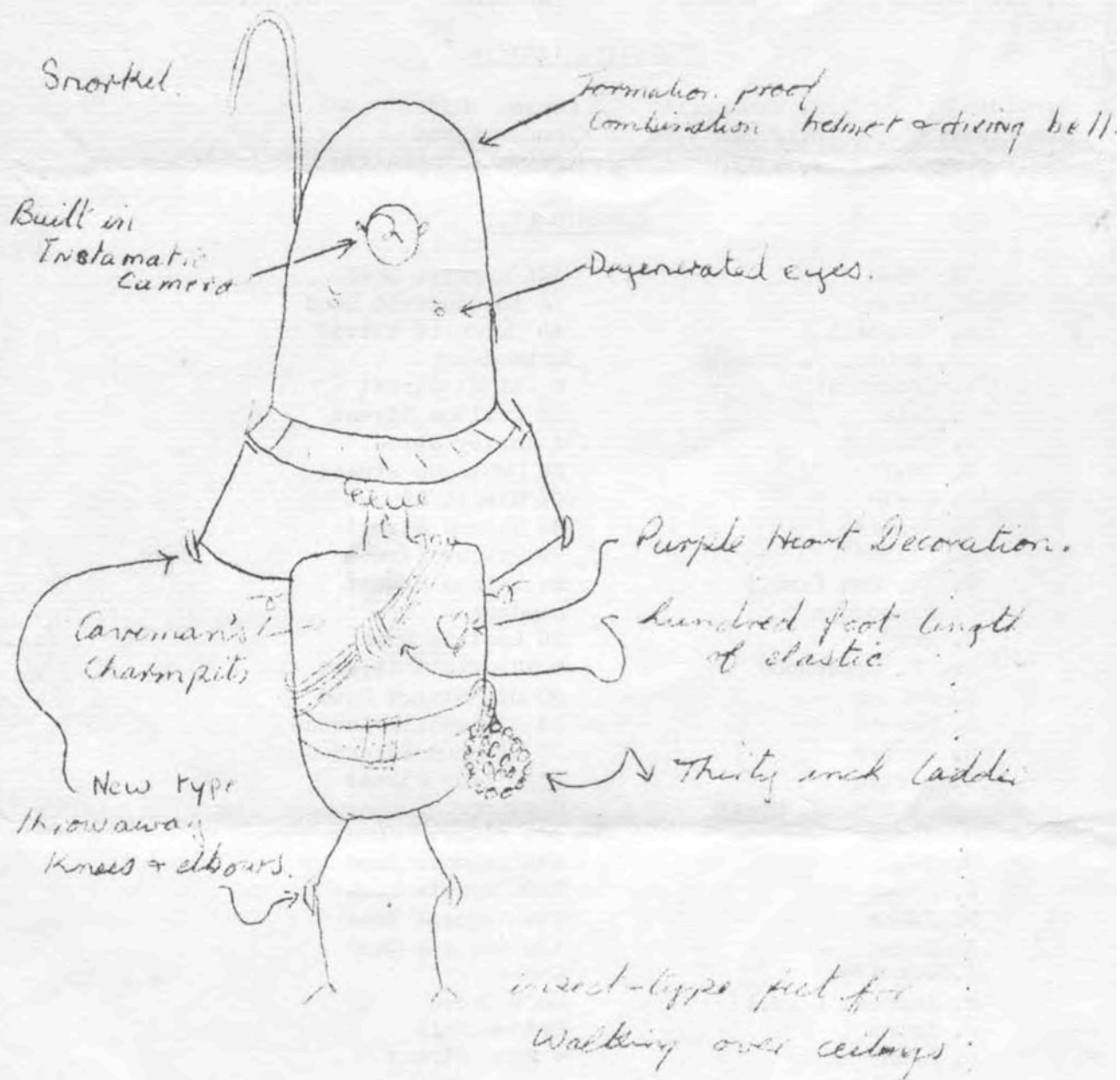
R. Cockerill	G. Fry	B. James	J. Morley
G. Davis	E. Guinan	D. Lyons	J. McCormack
J. Elliott	R. Horner	R. Mann	G. Wilson

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SEE YOU — NEXT TRIP!