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# SOUTHERN CAVER

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# "Southern Caver"

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## Society Meets

Each Wednesday 8.00 P.M.  
R.S.L. Hall, 188 Lenah Valley Road, Lenah Vally.

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AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION - EIGHTH BI-ENNIAL CONFERENCE

HUTCHINS SCHOOL BOARDING HOUSE, SANDY BAY, HOBART, TASMANIA

JANUARY, 1971

K. Kiernan

The 1971 A.S.F. Conference was co-hosted in Hobart by the Southern Caving Society and the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. The conference centre opened on the afternoon of 27th. December with business commencing the following day. The official opening was performed by the Hon. Kevin Lyons, Tasmanias Deputy Premier, Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourists, who spoke of his boyhood reading of Casteret and the Government's responsibility to preserve the State's tourist assets. He said that the Government had made a late start in some cases but was now fully aware of the situation. Mr. Lyons said he fully supported the aims of speleological organisations, and their work involving pollution and conservation problems. He said the Government recognised the value of such clubs.

The opening address was given by Prof. S.W. Carey of the University of Tasmania (Geology), the founder of T.C.C. (Australia's oldest caving club) and therefore the founder of organised speleology in Tasmania. He said caving was a great sport, the second oldest in the world and "one of the greatest equalisers" of people-be you doctor or grease-monkey, there is not much difference when your flat on your face in the mud. He went on to tell of the formation of T.C.C. and then spoke for a while on the use of caves in warfare. A former comando, Prof. Carey spoke of the tactical advantages of caves and some training methods used by the army during the last war. He also displayed a map of the Mt. Etna caves in Queensland which was prepared by the army.

The Committee meetings accomplished a great deal. The constitution was drastically modified in accordance with Elery Hamilton-Smith's recommendations. S.C.S. was accepted into the A.S.F. The capitation fee was raised to \$1.00. The budget for the Newsletter was raised from \$200 to \$500, and it will now be professionally produced.

V.S.A. appears to have a mortgage on A.S.F., with almost all of the new officers being from that club. Main changes were;

PRESIDENT: Elery Hamilton-Smith (V.S.A.)  
SECRETARY: Miles Pierce (V.S.A.)  
TREASURER: John Taylor (V.S.A.)

John Dunkley (S.U.S.S.) will be continuing as Newsletter Editor. The next conference is to be held in Sydney. Incidentally, for those who claim A.S.F. is not interested in Tasmania, it might be interesting to note that Albert Goede was one of two nominations for A.S.F. President. Clubs represented were T.C.C., S.S.S., K.S.S., C.S.S., N.U.S.S., V.S.A., G.E.G.(S.A.), W.A.S.G., H.C.G., U.Q.S.S., I.S.S., S.U.S.S., U.N.S.W.S.S., M.S.S., and S.C.S., T.C.C.(N.B.), N.S.W. Baptist S.A., and Swiss S.S.



Party: Phil Robinson (T.C.C.) (Leader), Peter Shaw (T.C.C.), Norm Poulter (H.C.G.-S.U.S.S.), Laimonis Kavalieris (N.U.S.S.), Kevin Kiernan (S.C.S.), Chris Harris (S.C.S.), John Morley (S.C.S.), Greg Blake (S.C.S.), Stuart Nicholas (T.C.C.).

On Saturday 23rd January, 1971, the Australian Depth Record was broken. The previous record of 800ft., set only three months previously, was bettered by 40ft., when a combined S.C.S.-T.C.C. team ran out of time, tackle and energy at the top of a high waterfall in Khazad-Dum JF4-5. The 840ft. record set, plus the waterfall yet to be descended, brings the visible depth of this system to well over 900ft. The difference in height between the entrance of Khazad-Dum and Junee Cave where the stream presumably reappears is around 1300ft, the horizontal distance about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles. A possible depth of up to 1200ft. is envisaged for Khazad-dum. The current Australasian and Southern Hemisphere record holder is Harwood Hole in New Zealand - 1130ft. Thus Khazad-Dum may possibly even become the deepest in the Southern Hemisphere.

The midnight silence of the logging town of Maydena in S.W. Tasmania was rudely shattered as a motley looking group of individuals in a strange assortment of vehicles arrived to find the Tyenna bridge on the Junee road washed out, so they turned on their tracks, and, swearing profusely, took the alternative route to their hut by way of the A.N.M. logging roads. After the customary bout of friendly stirring with the gate-keeper, they slipped through into the A.N.M. roads, and as the gate clanged shut behind them headed the dust trails up the Junee Quarry Road to the hut.

The lights of the town were starting to fade again as several figures carrying enormous rucksacks, car fridges, gas stoves, but - alas - no torches, (these were all in the bottom of the packs), blundered through the old fields, found the hut, set down their possessions inside and promptly went to sleep. Then the whole rignarol happened again. Sometime in the early morning things quietened down. The mist rolling in over Tyenna Peak was accompanied by the sound of fitful snoring, Norm hiccoughing and Stuart deciding he hadn't enjoyed his tea after all, and didn't want it anymore.

The day broke reluctantly, neither wet nor dry. Leader Phil struggled to his feet and tried to rouse the S.C.S. members, but found, as many before have done, that such a task is impossible. Filled with enthusiasm he took two mainlanders (who seemed to be over-adjusted to daylight saving), and one ex-mainlander by the hand, and gently led them up the hill to the cave. One hour later the S.C.S. contingent followed. Stuart was still feeling ill so stayed at the hut.

The creek into the entrance was flowing weakly, at about 0.5 cusecs. At 11.00 a.m. the first group left the surface. Down the noisy glow-worm filled entrance passage, up the 15ft scaling pole pitch the party went, and into the quiet roomy upper level. Then past the passage leading to the Serpentine Extension, down a 15ft ladder, down a steep passage where a 100ft rope is necessary, into a small chamber and then into a sandy 10inch high flattener 50ft long. With the roar of water ahead the way leads down passages where fault control is evident, past a little decoration, through some talus, and a 100ft deep chasm is crossed. In a small chamber 140ft below the surface and some 600ft from the entrance the two groups met as the first was rigging the ladder pitch.



From this chamber a free drop of 93ft 4 inches ends on an enormous pile of talus in a big chamber with a huge chockstone estimated at 3000 cubic ft. hanging 30ft above the floor. Here Kav. and Kevin re-commenced the survey conducted to this point during the A.S.F. conference trips. There are some striking exposures of concentric folds on one wall of this chamber. The pitch is memorable for a waterfall which hangs beside it at a comfortable distance for the last 50ft. This waterfall also accompanies a scungy 70ft pitch, which starts directly at the base of the 93 footer to drop down into a spray-filled chamber, from where a dry passage runs steeply to the top of a 94ft pitch-against the wall - into a big chamber. This (94ft) pitch also has a spectacular 100ft plus free - fall waterfall hanging nearby. Up above is a hole where during the A.S.F. conference the chamber was first entered by way of a 150ft pitch.

The way on from here is via a large and rather sporty stream passage, which is followed for 900ft. Then comes the first of many waterfalls. The passage is only about 4ft wide at the top of it, the ladder is rigged on a flake and hangs beside the waterfall. The descent of 20ft involves only a brief wetting.

From here the way leads on along more stream passage to where exploration during the A.S.F. trips had been stopped atop a further 30ft waterfall. The first few rigged this pitch in the middle of the waterfall, some later comers rigged it dry by way of a difficult rock-climb.

At the base of this drop there occurred what could have been rather a nasty accident when a large rock fell and clobbered Norm on the foot. This was very painful, but fortunately no serious damage was done. He and Peter returned to the long stream passage and spent the rest of the trip freezing.

From the base of the 30 footer a short length of passage was followed to a 15ft waterfall, descended with the aid of a rope. Then a couple of hundred feet of stream passage was followed past a couple of short climbs to a wet 25ft drop. Here the sole of Greg's left boot fell off, so he could go no further. He made the trip out with one boot and what was left of the uppers of the other.

Then down a dry pitch of 25ft, across a deep pool, down a 10ft chimney wide of a waterfall, and a couple of steep scrambles to the top of a 30ft pitch, the wettest of the lot so far.

With one ladder and one rope left the party searched desperately for a belay point. One was finally found a long way up the passage. Feeling semi-drowned, Phil descended 30ft to a small spray filled chamber.

A couple of steps took him to the brink of a deep abyss. The stream foamed around it like water in a plughole and leapt down through the ceiling of a tall chamber. The bottom of the drop could not be seen, but was estimated by rock-drop testing to be 100ft down.

Then came a long and tedious trip back up out. At the top of the first 30ft pitch the explorers met up with Kav. and Kevin who had surveyed down to this point at 640ft. (Another record! - the deepest a survey has yet been taken within a cave in this country). Aneroid readings indicated the depth reached below this point to be 210ft + or - 10ft., thus the total depth reached was around 840ft.



After many hours the party gathered at the bottom of the free 93ft drop, stupidly left without a belay man on top. All were tired, no-one was game to climb it without a lifeline. Finally the one-booted Greg stepped forward and commenced the ascent, rested several times but luckily made it O.K.

The surface was reached at 4.00 a.m. Sunday, after 18 hours underground. The party sat around a fire and froze till daybreak, then returned to the hut, and to sleep. Maydena was disturbed again that afternoon, but I suspect the masochists who participated in this venture to be even more disturbed. Still, 200ft had been added to the depth of Khazad-Dum, and 40ft added to the Australian Depth Record.

- KEVIN KIERNAN

N.B. The Australian Depth record set on this trip was originally thought to be 860ft, but an error has been detected in the original computation of the survey, and a figure of 840ft now established. In addition, the more recent, 970ft. record becomes 950ft.

#### QUEENSTOWN-GORMANSTON

Some time ago S.C.S. received a report concerning an active stream passage passing under the Gormanston football ground. This was encountered by a drilling team from the Mt. Lyell Mining Co. Some efforts have been made to locate the possible swallet of the stream but proved fruitless. It has now been learnt that the cave in question is totally water-filled anyway.

A few miles south of Queenstown investigation in a limestone quarry revealed a few holes none of which extend far.

Most promising outcrop investigated so far is at Double Barrell. Here the limestone seems to attain a good relief. Unfortunately it is on the wrong side of the King River Gorge, and this has prevented actual surface trogging on the limestone. It would be best reached from Crotty. On the way to this area along the old Queenstown-Strahan railway line a small limestone quarry at Lynchford was investigated without success.

Narrow lenses of limestone and low relief seem to be the norm in this area.

STEVE VINCE.



As the result of a monumental full scale combined SCS-TCC expedition into Khazad-Dum at Maydena, the Australian depth record has again been broken. Somehow it seemed fitting that this new record should be set over the Australia Day long weekend.

Forced to concede defeat to a tremendous waterfall nine hundred and fifty feet below the surface, this incredible decent must remain as a classic in caving. It must surely have been the biggest and most severe underground speleological expedition yet undertaken in this country. It was a tremendous and memorable trip to look back on, but at the time was an agonizing ordeal of exposure, exhaustion and hunger.

That ferocious twenty-one hour battle with Mother Karst was a great example of teamwork - great reliance on others was the keystone of the expedition. No one let anyone down. Prior to the trip the general feeling was "1000 feet or bust"! We got the "bust" but did not fail. In the conditions it was a triumph. Somehow it also seems fitting that this mighty swallet should beat us once again, rather than be bottomed. One thing is for sure - no-one who was on the trip will ever forget it!

The party arrived at Maydena early on Saturday morning and walked up to the cave. The plan was that one group would descend the cave and rig the early pitches before leaving a pile of spare tackle atop the first twenty feet waterfall. This was done. There was some added interest, however, when Norm, Peter and Chris explored a dry passage heading off from the end of the chamber at the bottom of the ninety two feet free-hanger. After a length of horizontal passage a thirty feet pitch was encountered. The passage then changed direction and meandered down to a further sixty feet drop, with ledges twenty feet apart. Norm abseiled down this to find himself at the base of the ninety four feet pitch. Then in a remarkable effort he re-climbed the rope and reported his findings. Unfortunately the seventy feet and ninety four feet pitches thus by-passed were already rigged by this time, so the further preparatory rigging of the cave was done by the old route, which was then de-rigged.

On Sunday everyone was amazingly eager and lively. Every thing went smoothly, the by-pass was set up and the assault team, Phil, Peter, Norm, Kevin, Chris and Graeme, hurried down to the top of the twenty feet waterfall. Albert, David M., David C., Stuart and Richard left their belay point atop the ninety two feet free-hanger to do a spot of surface exploration. They were to return after ten hours to belay the assault team up.

At the waterfall the assault team split up; Phil, Peter and Norm going ahead to rig the drops while Kevin, Graeme and Chris followed behind with the spare tackle. Pressing on down, some ladder-climbed the waterfalls while others abseiled, according to taste. Abs iling was preferable as it reduced the time of immersion in the icy water. Five hours after leaving the surface we reached the top of the thirty feet pitch at the base of which was the waterfall yet to be explored. Norm climbed high in the chamber to find a belay point, then he Phil, and Peter descended



followed later by Kevin, while Graeme and Chris waited as long as possible outside of this cold, draughty and spray-filled chamber.

The new drop was then investigated. On the other side of a slab of rock near the fall was a hole where a reasonably dry pitch, but for the final twenty feet, could be rigged. Traversing across the top of the waterfall a dry passage was entered. After a few yards this led to a dry circular chamber. Clambering up a wall a quiet, dry shaft of unknown depth was seen. Rocks dropped into this took two seconds to make their initial impact, and then dropped again for another two seconds.

But back to the stream way. A bolt was driven in as Graeme and Chris descended to this freezing chamber. Kevin descended to the top of a further pitch. He was quickly joined by Phil and a mountain of spare tackle. There were a few anxious moments when a great drumming, roaring sound filled the spray-soaked air. Thinking the worst the intrepid explorers braced themselves for a flash flood, but the noise turned out to be just the waterfall hammering on one of the ladder bags. Norm and Chris then descended.

The ten feet cascade was then descended and a six feet deep pool traversed to the top of the next pitch. The water had increased markedly in volume by this level and it all poured straight down the ladder pitch. There was no way to avoid this tremendous roaring waterfall, even using eyebolts it would be exceedingly difficult and require major artificial rock-climbing techniques with etriers. It was hard to see far down the pitch, but some rocks were visible some forty feet down and this was taken to be the bottom.

With a sixty feet ladder rigged from the bottom of the ladder from the seventy footer and with Phil on belay, Kevin began to descend this fearsome hole. The spray was rather choking, but the descent for the first few feet was not too bad. Then things began to get nasty. The splashing carried the water into parka hood and arms thus rendering such waterproof garb. Ineffective! The water was breathtakingly cold. Thirty feet down at a new record total depth of nine hundred and fifty feet a semi-drowned look around indicated the "floor" seen from above to be just a ledge. The shaft continued on down until it was lost from sight in the spray. Exhausted, cold and wishing to ascend, Kevin blew into his whistle but found it to be more effective as a bubble pipe than a means of communication!! What would Martel have done at a time like this!! Taking the only action which years of experience in taming the terrifying chasms of Mother Earth taught was possible in the situation, Kevin took a deep breath and screamed in panic. This was surprisingly effective. A strong pull on the belay rope was followed by his sudden arrival at the top where a group of anxious faces were gathered. Appropriate comments were made!!!

In order to obtain a better view Norm and Phil sat at the top of the waterfall to dam the stream to allow the others to see down. Everyone gaped down the drop. There were no volunteers.



Worried expressions were the order of the day when the ladder was found to be caught at the bottom, but fortunately it was freed from the top with some difficulty. It is certainly too dangerous to attempt descent in this waterfall of unknown depth.

Then back up to the chamber at eight hundred and thirty feet and along into the dry chamber near the dry shaft. There was no time to explore the shaft, as we had now been underground nearly ten hours and it was a long way back to the surface. Some soup and stewed apple was heated up and we all gratefully sipped at the warmth.

All shaking and shivering, we set off for the surface; an unbelievably long, drawn out, agonizing retreat. Strangely some of us began to feel a little more energetic. Kevin, Norm and Chris set off with the spare tackle, with Phil, Graeme and Peter detackling as they came. It soon became apparent how fatigue can increase the significance of otherwise minor problems. A couple of the small pitches had naturally been left unlined, yet even these twenty footers proved major obstacles, with tired cavers lacking the strength to push their way up through the water, the power of which had become overwhelming as exhaustion set in. These drops will be life-lined in future!!

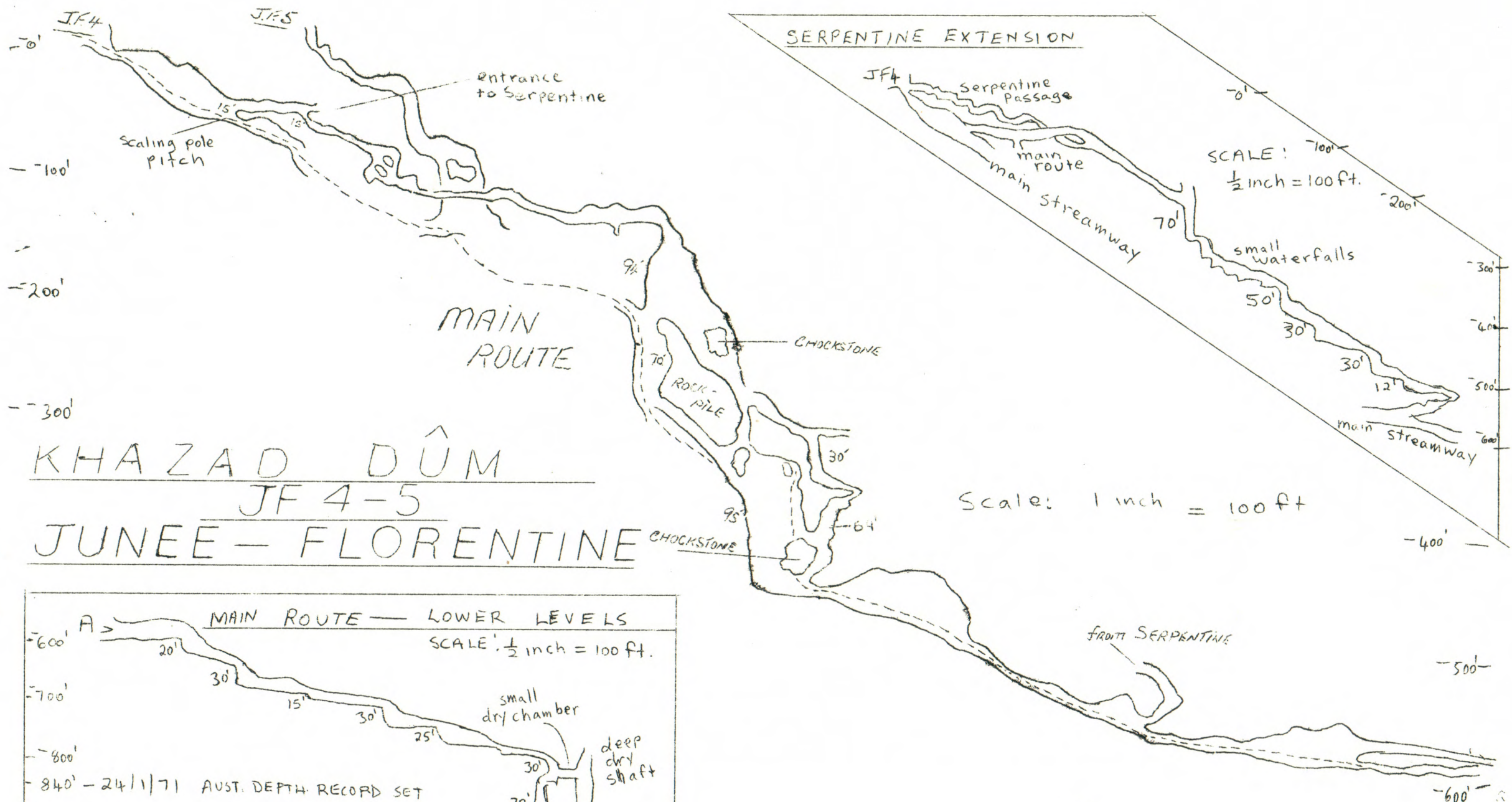
There were many heart-stopping moments. On one pitch Chris couldn't muster the strength for the final few rungs. One hand and foot became detached from the rung and flailed about uselessly in the water. Then with a mighty effort and a little help from the man on top he dragged himself painfully over the edge. We then rigged a lifeline for Norm, Phil, Peter and Graeme to follow. This scungy little twenty five footer - a mere twenty five footer - still provided some desperate moments, when Norm also nearly came to grief.

We were all on our last legs and our lights were low. Battered, bruised, cold, tired, hungry and wet, we dragged ourselves up to the sixty feet by-pass pitch. The first few ascended and went to the top of the one hundred and fifty feet drop, hoping that it would be possible to raise the tackle straight up to the foot of the ninety two feet free hanger, but all efforts were thwarted by unexpected snags and we returned to the by-pass.

The rest of the trip out was just as frightful. David Mitchell from the support party descended to the top of the sixty feet drop to help bring the tackle out. A strong belay by Albert, Richard and David on the free hanger was much appreciated. Sharing the feeble glow of a dull torch between as many as three people we man-handled seven hundred feet of ladder and over a thousand feet of rope through the accursed flattener. The rest of our lights were run out or smashed in twenty one hours of the severe conditions.

At last we saw daylight ahead. The last two hundred feet of passage was unbelievable long, but eventually we dragged ourselves





C.R.G. Grade 2.

K. Kiernan 4/6/71



to the surface, collapsed flat on our backs and gazed gratefully up into the sky. The sound of a raging river which had been the central core of our existence pounding our eardrums during the past long hours seemed far away and long ago, and had faded to the bubble of a small stream. The morning rain seemed warm and comfortable by comparison. Stuart had a fire alight and some hot soup ready.

We eventually made our way back to the hut, where Delia prepared a magnificent meal of hot home-made stew and fruit. Never was a meal more appreciated.

This trip was thrilling, enervating, demoralising, exhausting, miserable, enjoyable and frustrating. Only one hundred and ten feet had been added to the depth record, but what a trip!

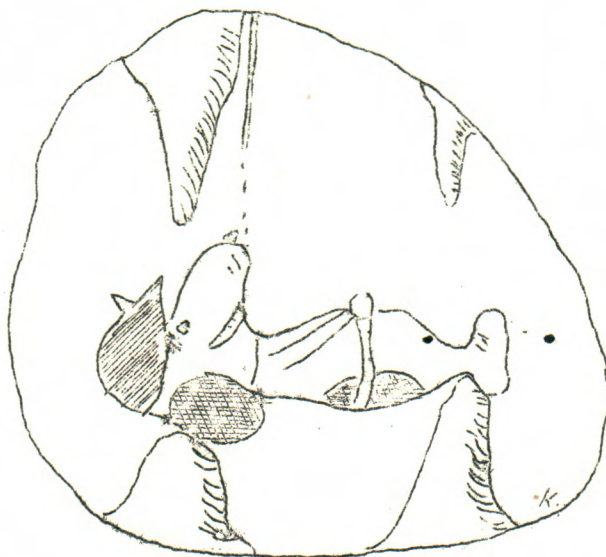
The Australia Day long weekend (27th February - 1st March, 1971) will always remain foremost in the minds of those involved in this expedition, either as an exhilarating experience or grim ordeal, but certainly as a tremendous trip.

Despite the drawbacks, we (some of us!) shall return. After all, isn't this precisely what good, hard caving is all about!!

Assault Party : Phil Robinson(TCC) Leader, Peter Shaw(TCC)  
Kevin Kiernan (SCS) Norm Poutter(HCG-SVSS)  
Chris Harris(SCS) Graeme Watt(SCS)

Support Party : Albert Goede (TCC)in Charge, David Mitchell  
(SCS) Stuart Nicholas(TCC), David Cripps  
(TCC), Richard Bloomfield(TCC).

Cooking : Delia Maloney (TCC).





~~CONFIDENTIAL - FRANKLIN RIVER~~      BY JOHN FIDMONT

This area was visited in December-January, primarily as a challenging raft trip, but there is so much limestone in the area that some caving was unavoidable.

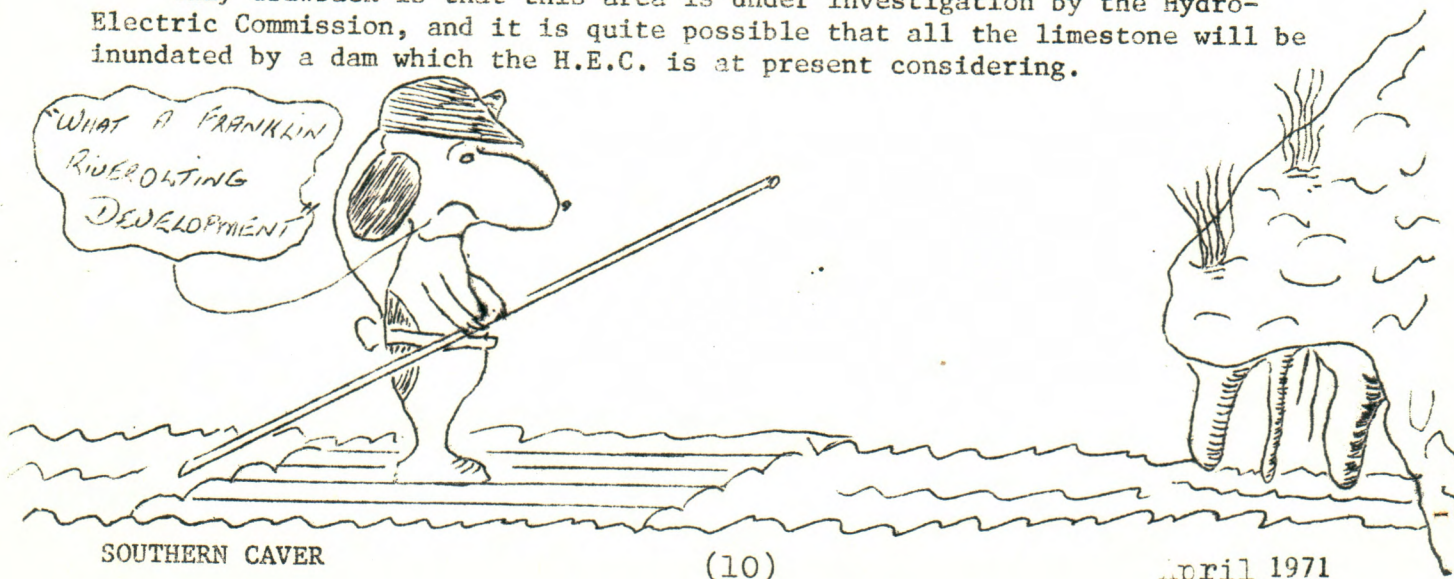
A party of six, including two members of S.C.S. journeyed on three rafts down the Franklin River from the Lyell Highway to the Gordon River, from which they were fished out raftless, after three weeks away, by the tourist launch, and caused more of a stir on board than when entering a tourist cave (Eds. note: this is the first time the Franklin has been floated down successfully, a total distance of some 40-50 miles, through some of the biggest gorges, rapids and rugged country in Tasmania. The Franklin has been claimed to be Australia's most dangerous river).

Limestone was first noticed just downstream of the confluence of the Jane and Franklin Rivers. It possibly occurs further upstream than this but shipwrecks etc. in the main gorge left little time for geologising. Some geology maps of the area indicate outcrop there but any geology maps of this area are highly suspect at this stage.

Some caving was done on the Eastern side of the river about 4 miles south of the mouth of the Jane River where a number of small dry holes were explored, none of which went very far. An efflux with a small entrance in a low cliff a short distance from the river was explored to a sump 40ft in. This cave contained some decoration. A number of other abnormally cold creeks were found which probably come from underground. The local limestone relief here is quite low - generally around 100ft close to the river, but the width of the belt is unknown and the limestone may well attain a better relief further into the hills.

The limestone outcrop was seen to be continuous on both sides of the river, all the way from the Jane down to the confluence of the Franklin and Gordon, a distance of around 14 miles. Only the area at the junction of these two rivers had been visited before (once). We now know there is definitely a terrific amount of limestone upstream of there, some cave development, and a reasonable chance of quite good limestone relief in at least some areas.

Only drawback is that this area is under investigation by the Hydro-Electric Commission, and it is quite possible that all the limestone will be inundated by a dam which the H.E.C. is at present considering.





LIMESTONE DEPOSITS NEAR MT. MAYDAY by R. Mann

Two large areas of Gordon Limestone exist in North West Tasmania separated by Mt. Mayday. The area to the East of Mt. Mayday is confined to a section of the Belvoir River valley and is approximately 3 miles long by one mile wide.

The deposits to the South-West of Mt. Mayday are situated around the junction of the Mackintosh and Southwell Rivers with a long band of limestone extending almost the entire length of the west bank of Mayday Creek (according to the geology map of the area).

BELVOIR RIVER DEPOSIT

A trip was organised by S.C.S. on 28th September, 1968 to investigate limestone deposits in this area.

The party approached from the Cradle Mt. road but due to lack of time only reached the plateau some distance from the Belvoir River.

On Boxing Day 1968 a party drove to a small creek, one mile along a track leading off the Cradle Mt. road, where camp was established.

That afternoon the dolines in part of the Belvoir valley were investigated but the only thing found was a small creek flowing a pool alongside a small limestone cliff. The creek appears to surface again a short distance away from under the buttongrass.

The limestone in the area appears to have no cave development although the entire deposit was by no means fully explored.

On the 27th December the party set out to try to reach Mt. Mayday to determine what kind of country existed on the western side near Mayday Creek and whether it was feasible to reach the Mackintosh River deposits by this route.

Only the lower ridge of Mt. Mayday was reached but with the help of binoculars a road was observed on the western side of Mayday Creek.

It was decided that access via the road, when it was located on a map, would be far easier than via the Cradle Mt. route.

The road was found to be a private logging road on a lease held by Associated Forest Holdings of Burnie.

MACKINTOSH-SOUTHWELL RIVERS DEPOSITS

Following the sighting of the forestry road at Christmas 1968 a trip was organised over the long weekend 1st-3rd March, 1969. The distance from Hobart is approximately 250 miles and the greater part of a day is needed to drive there.

The Section explored was the northern extremity of the limestone, as marked on the geology map, on Mayday Creek. The party spent 8 hours scrub-bashing from the plain down to Mayday Creek and around in a circle back to the starting point.



Several creeks were crossed and followed and a great deal of dense scrub and horizontal were encountered but there was no sign of any limestone. Examination of the geology map revealed that this section was only marked as a probable extension and it has yet to be proved how far the limestone extends up Mayday Creek.

The conclusions drawn from this trip were that as large distances were involved in getting to and from the locality, trips would have to be longer than 3 days to do any constructive work.

The limestone relief of the area as indicated by the geology map looks very promising for cave development especially as it is Gordon Limestone, the same type as at Mole Creek, Maydena and Ida Bay.

#### JUKES-DARWIN

Some surface exploration has been carried out in this area, but unfortunately no new caves have been found.

In the valley west of Mt. Jukes and Mt. Darwin there are extensive limestone deposits but that which was explored was all of very low relief. There are tales of caves in this area but these are of dubious credibility. One concerns a swallet and efflux, another two water filled outflow caves which it may be possible to drain. An area of reasonable limestone relief was found near Crotty but no caves as yet.

A straight walk down the Kelly Basin track to Macquarie Harbour was equally fruitless. It is from this area that the most interesting tales come. Decorated caves a quarter of a mile long are reported to exist. The limestone relief approaches 1,000ft.

It is worth bearing in mind that the H.E.C. is considering damming the King and Andrew Rivers. The resultant lake would flood the Northern end of the Jukes - Darwin area, part of the Lyell Highway, and possibly the Nelson River caving area as well.

STEVE VINCE



AN EXPLORATORY TRIP TOWARDS THE MACKINTOSH-  
SOUTHWELL RIVERS JUNCTION - JANUARY, 1971

BY R. MANN

On Friday evening 8th January an S.C.S. party consisting of Ron Mann, Steve Street, Chris Harris and Graham Watt drove from Hobart to Burnie.

After collecting the pass on Saturday morning we drove through the barrier at Hampshire to the end of Mayday Road in the Associated Forest Holdings lease area.

With packs loaded for an anticipated 5 days in the scrub we left the road at 12.00 p.m. and set off on a rough bearing of  $220^{\circ}$  through dense myrtle forest to endeavour to reach a clearing shown on aerial photos. Due to the lack of any visible landmark and obtaining the bearing from guessing the position of the end of the road on the photos the clearing was missed and after 4 hours of walking through the forest we came out onto button grass plain about half way along the Mt. Cripps range.

The track through the myrtle was roughly blazed on the western side of the trees.

The ridge leading to Mt. Cripps was reached about 5.00 p.m. but low cloud and rain forced us to descend the other side of the buttongrass-covered ridge and seek a campsite in the myrtle forest.

Sunday morning dawned fine and clear and we broke camp at 10.00 a.m. and ascended the ridge where it was decided to drop packs and go on to the summit with cameras to observe the country to be negotiated. The ruggedness and dense covering of the ridges and valleys leading to the junction surprised everyone and it was estimated that from this point it would take at least one days hard scrub-bashing to reach the objective. This would mean two days on the return journey to the car. As the party was not over-enthusiastic it was decided to return to the road and after some searching for blazes reached the road at about 8.00 p.m.

Weather conditions on Monday looked ominous and the trip was abandoned and the party returned to Hobart via Burnie.

CONCLUSION

The area seems to have some promise but accessibility is the major problem. Carrying food and caving gear means heavy packs and the distances to be covered would require a very fit party.

Another point of access could be from the Murchison Highway but judging from observation on Mt. Cripps the myrtle is very dense and the slope is steep so it would be just as difficult a route.

Perhaps the best solution is to wait until the proposed Pieman River power scheme becomes reality. The proposed 250' high dam two miles downstream from the Sophia River junction on the Mackintosh River will create Lake Mackintosh 750' above sea level and this is scheduled for completion by 1978.

Then all we would have to do is travel up the lake by boat and step ashore on the edge of the limestone!!



by Graeme Watt

Precipitous Bluff - situated along the South Coast of Tasmania above New River Lagoon, is abounded on its western flanks by many square miles of some of the purest limestone in the State.

As yet the area has not been thoroughly investigated because of numerous difficulties which inevitably reduce the chances of major expeditions to the region.

Basically there are four main alternatives of access, but each has major disadvantages. The cheapest means of access is via the two overland routes heading from the Lune River area - approximately 70 miles from Hobart.

The high route commences at the Lune River station and leads onto the plateau of Moonlight Flat after a steep 2,000 foot climb. It involves a strenuous trek through rough, alpine country and usually requires about 3½ days to complete without expedition equipment.

Although intensely scenic this route is always prone to unpredictable weather conditions which can cause unwanted delays to the progress of an expedition. The route is fairly indistinct after Pandanni Knob (see map) which is about 12 miles in and from this point it continues through patches of head-high scoparia and thick tea-tree scrub.

There are three recognised air-drop zones along the high route situated at Pigsty Ponds, Ooze Lake and on the Mt. Wylly plateau. A good campsite can be found here where the creek flows over the edge of the escarpment. A large sandstone cave provides accommodation for about 12 people. Water is unreliable at camp sites beyond Mt. Wylly.

Camps along the high route are generally well sheltered and firewood is readily available. Good campsites can be found at Burn Creek on Moonlight Flat, Reservoir Lakes, Pigsty Ponds, Lake Ooze, Mt. Wylly, Tramp Camp on No. 8 Ridge and on the summit moraine of P.B. itself. Emergency bivouacs can be found near Moores Bridge, at Pandanni Knob (water unreliable) and at Leaning Tea-Tree Saddle.

The limestone on the western flank of P.B. can be approached from a rough route going between the summit ridge and New Rover Lagoon. Thick horizontal scrub is the main problem to cavers.

The second overland route to the P.B. limestone is via the South Coast track. This route is much shorter and has the advantage of consistently easy going country with only a few patches of scrub and a well marked track. Travelling time is 2 days usually, but three days would be necessary with heavy loads. The main campsites occur at Bare Hill near South Cape Bay, South Cape Rivulet, Surprise Bay and on the west end of Prion Beach - New River Lagoon. Water is reliable at these sites.

However, the main disadvantage of this route is the access to the start of the track - over the Cackle Creek Road. Since it is usually in very bad condition



# MAIN ROUTES TO "P.B." LIMESTONE.

△ PEAKS

⊙ CAMP SITES

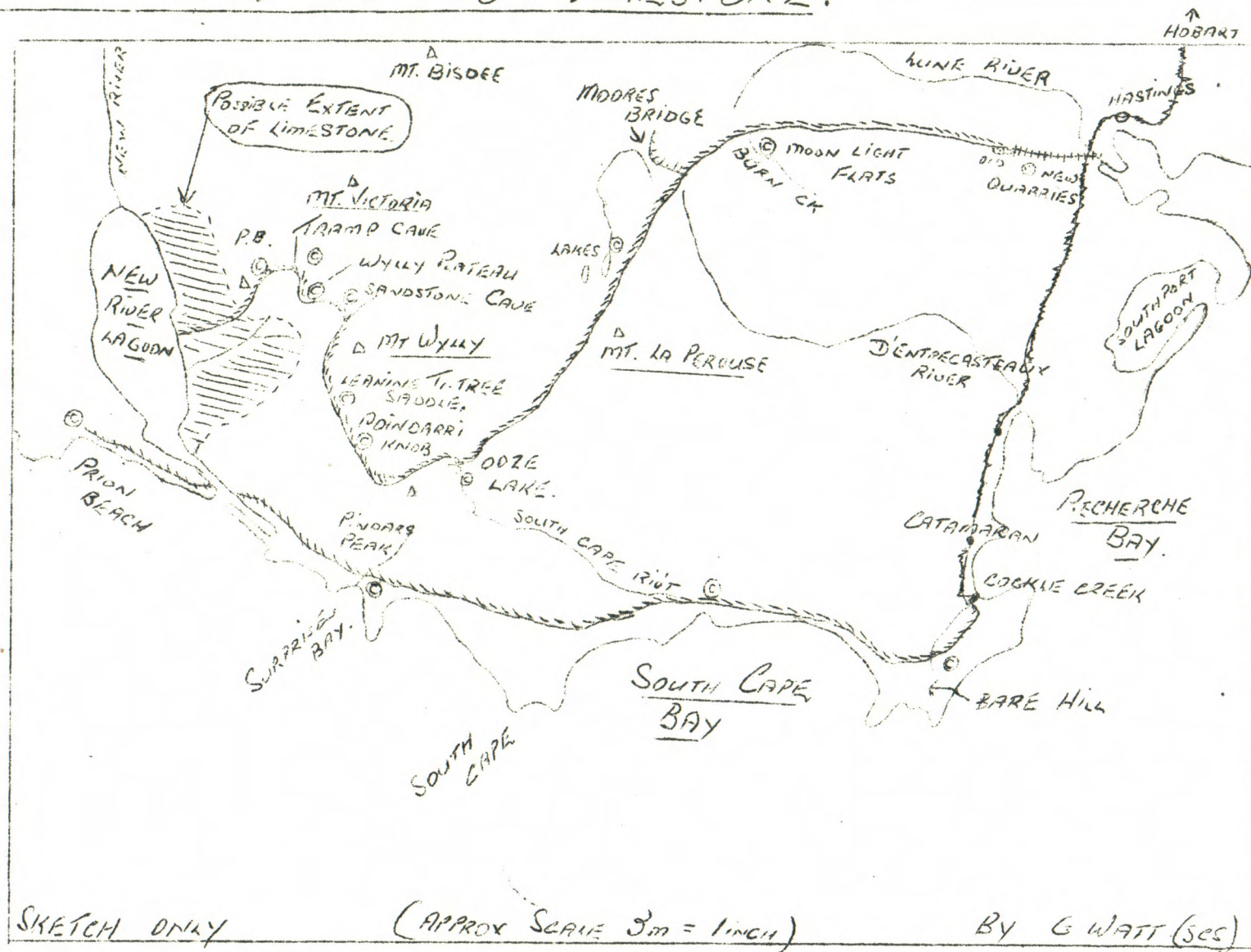
++++ RAILWAY

⌋ CLIFFS OR ESCARPMENTS

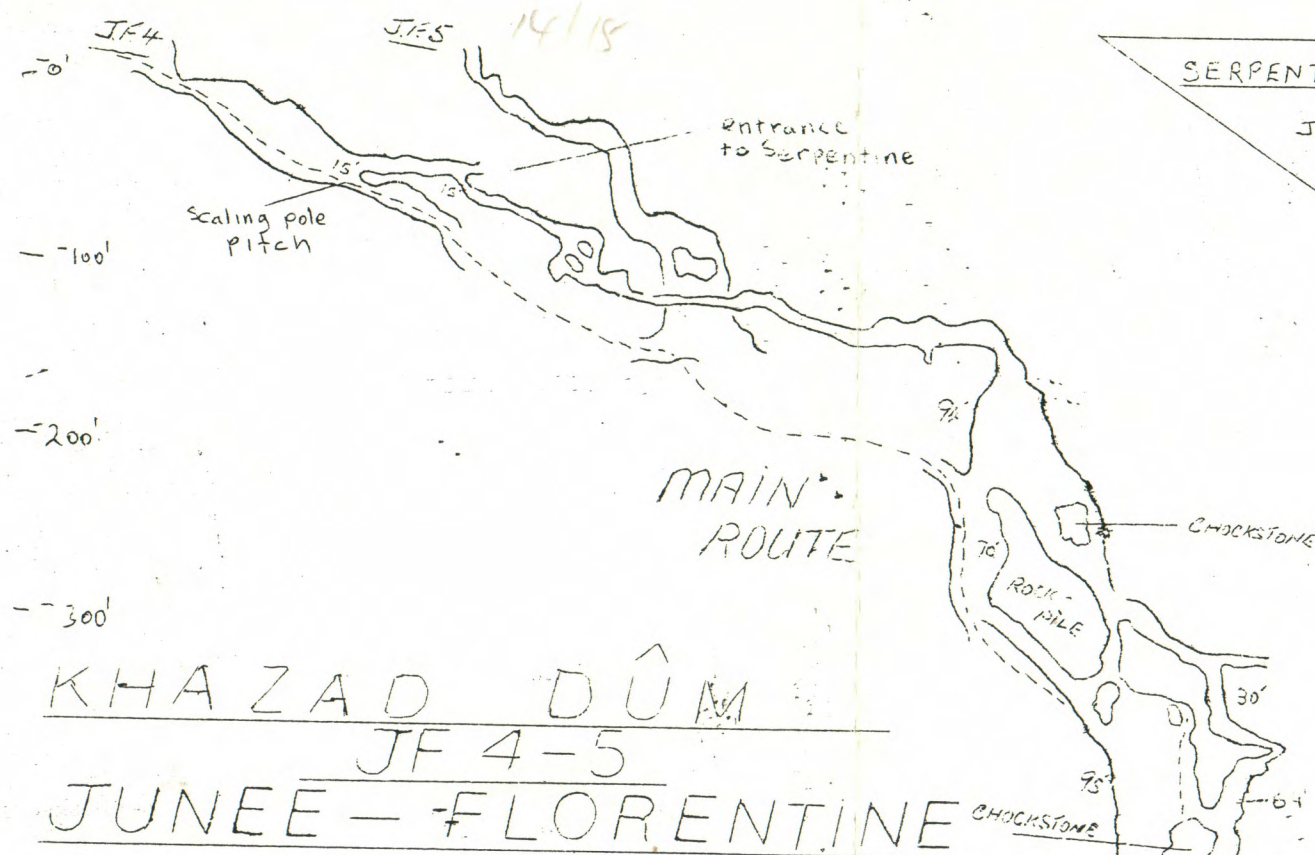
— MAIN ROUTES

— MAIN ROAD

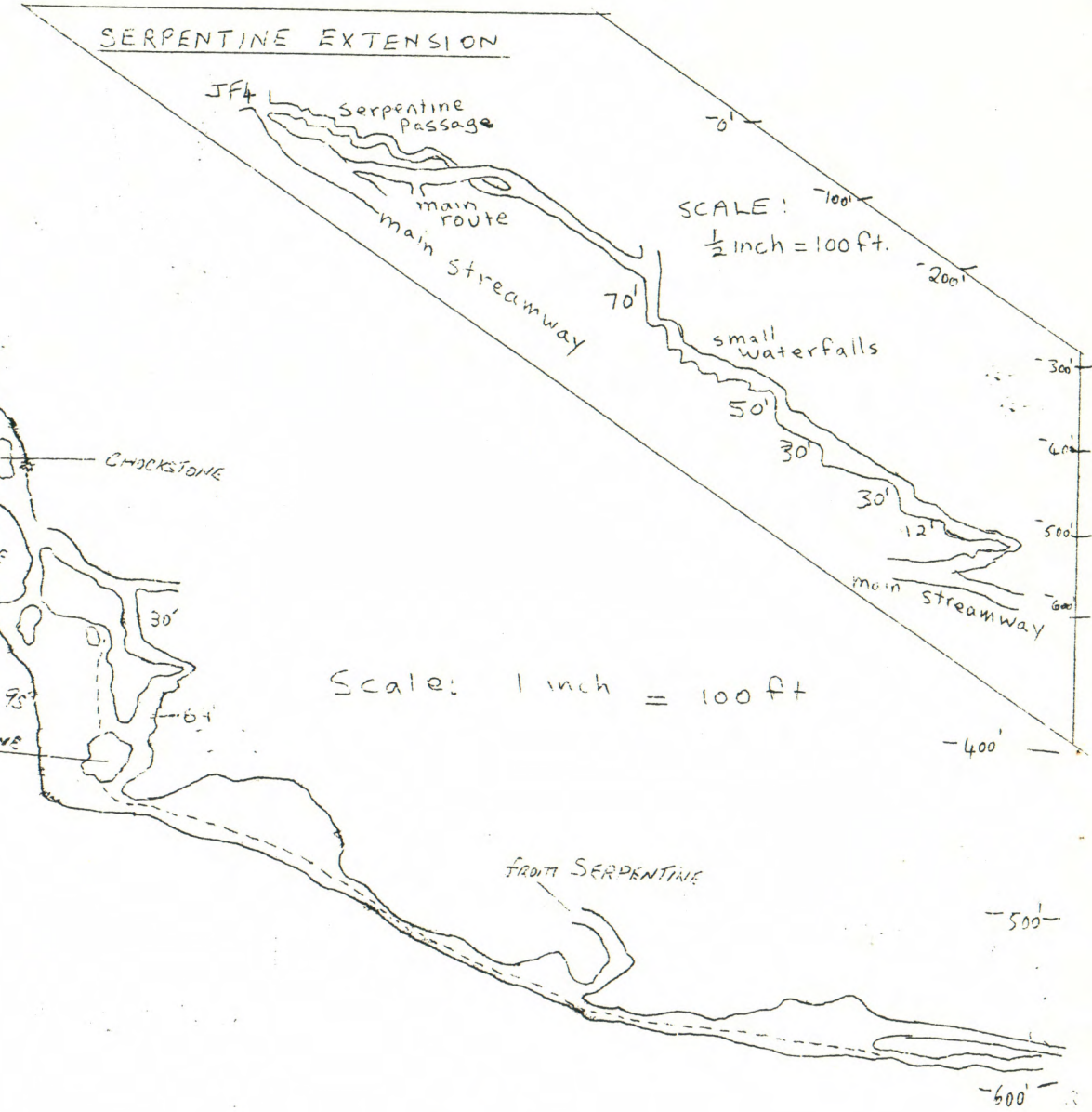
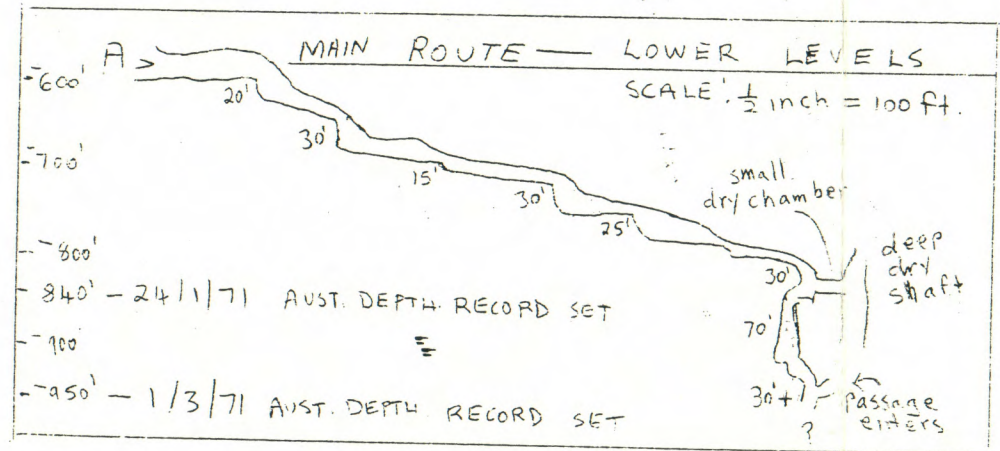
(FOR FURTHER DETAILS SEE  
HOBART WALKING CLUB ROUTE  
GUIDES & MAPS)







KHAZAD DUM  
JF 4-5  
JUNEE - FLORENTINE



C.R.G. Grade 2.

K. Kiernan 6/6/71



four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended. The South Coast track provides a more direct route to New River Lagoon where base camp for an expedition would most likely be set up. Two small boats are provided at the mouth of the New River Lagoon for easy crossing.

The third and fourth alternatives of access to the P.B. limestone depend mainly on finance and the size of the expedition. These alternatives of either taking a fishing boat from Dover or flying in from Hobart would certainly provide more overall advantages to parties intending detailed explorations of the area. By these means of transport a large quantity of gear and food could be made readily available, but evaluation of the materials by the same means on completion of explorations could depend largely on weather conditions thus leaving the possibility of considerable delays and uncertainties back home as to the safety of the party.

If air transport was chosen, the choice would be between flying boat to the lagoon at a high cost or light aircraft to Prion Beach, depending on the weather and the quality of the beach.

In summary, the isolation of the P.B. area greatly increases the dangers of exploratory caving expeditions there. Access is difficult by any means and previous experience has found the fishing boat proposal too expensive and inconvenient. Furthermore the two overland routes cannot readily be used in a combined way for access and departure. If for example the overland high route was chosen, return via the coastal route would depend on the organisation of transport at both the different starting points. In spite of these difficulties the limestone of P.B. remains a challenging area for some of the great frontiersmen of the future.

Don't be discouraged by the length or endurance of such a trip; the high route to P.B. has been done return in a mere 28 hours of pretty constant walking.

#### BUBBS HILL

The most noteworthy discovery is that the hill is not as easy to climb as it looks, due to it being covered in dense scrub. One trip has been conducted, this resulting in the discovery of a small entrance leading into a small muddy chamber with all possible leads blocked. Despite intensive exploration elsewhere on the hill nothing else of any significance has been found.

The Bubbs Hill area has a quite large deposit of limestone. However, there do not appear to be many very significant caves. There is, however, an intriguing tale of a big cave further into the Raglan range.

STEVE VINCE.



## GEORGIES - WET CAVES

Georgies cave is on the side of a partly cleared hill in the Caveside area at Mole Creek. The entrance is in one corner of a large, deep doline. A short rope is very advantageous in descending into the doline.

A steep mud slope leads into the entrance hall which has a talus floor. The route is along a ridge of talus blocks on the right hand side of the cavern and up through an open chimney into another cavern. This part of the cave is known as Root Hall because of the long tree roots protruding for twenty to twenty five feet from the roof. A small hole in the talus blocks at the back of the chamber leads into Eldorado 2, a large cavern containing extensive red and white coloured formation. The next cavern is called Eldorado 1, and also has the same type of formation in it.

The way to the stream is in the opposite wall through talus blocks and down a passage.

Upstream a short distance from where the stream is encountered is a siphon. The water is very deep and naspidæes can sometimes be observed here. The stream passage is known as Sennacherilis Passage and the way is through the water on ledges of rotten rock. The water is usually about waist deep unless it has been raining for a considerable time.

After climbing through talus heaps and back into the stream again a talus heap is reached which leads into Georgies Hall, a cavern below Root Hall and the entrance hall. A very interesting part of the trip comes in Eureka Link, the next section of water passage, when it is necessary to stretch one foot out into a deep pool to find a rock about two feet below the surface. This has to be done while clinging gingerly to the muddy walls.

Several more heaps of talus are encountered before coming to a sandy crawl. This leads to where several rocks were removed from a pile to provide access to Wet Caves.

Wet Caves is a large stream passage with extensive formation high on the walls. This part of the trip is easy walking except for another lot of talus. It is near this talus that the cold water begins to penetrate and the feet start to numb.

Wet Caves is quite a long cave and it takes a while before the three daylight entrances are seen. These lead into the paddocks. Continuing on downstream the exit is soon reached and then it is only a few minutes walk to the edge of the paddocks near Honeycomb Caverns.

by R. Mann



## AUSTRALIAN CAVE RECORDS - 1971

It seems to have been some time since a list of Australian Cave Records has been published, the most recent in the society's library being in Stop Press (October, 1966). Since then many new discoveries have been made, and it seems about time that a new list was published, so here it is, revised and enlarged. Some of the records are rather dubious - specially nos. 25 and 30. Any corrections will be appreciated.

1. LARGEST LIMESTONE AREA - Nullarbor Plain (W.A./S.A.) - 65,000 square miles.
2. GREATEST LIMESTONE RELIEF - Mt. Anne (Tas.) - 2,000 ft. (dolomite)
3. GREATEST THICKNESS OF LIMESTONE. Florentine Valley (Tas.)  
5,000 feet.
4. DEEPEST LIMESTONE GORGE - Bungonia Gorge (Bungonia, N.S.W.)  
- 1200 feet long, 90 ft. wide and  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  mile long.
5. LONGEST CAVE - Exit Cave (Ida Bay, Tas.) - 10 miles
6. DEEPEST CAVE - Khazad-Dum JF 45 (Juncus Florentine Tas.) 250950'
7. LARGEST CHAMBER - Main Chamber, Aburakurrie Cave (Nullarbor Plain, W.A.) - 1100' long, 150' wide 80' high
8. LONGEST LADDER PITCH - Kellers Gellor (Mt. Anne Tas) 420'
9. LONGEST LAVA CAVE - Mt. Hamilton Cave (Mt. Hamilton Vic.) 3,500'
10. DEEPEST LAVA CAVE - Mt. Eccles Cave (Mt. Eccles, Vic.) 100'
11. LARGEST CHAMBER IN LAVA - Main Chamber, Skipton Cave (Mt. Widderin, Vic) - 195' long, 65' wide 26' high.
12. LARGEST CHAMBER IN DOLERITE - (Wyatinah, TAS.) - 60' long, 30' wide, 30' high.
13. LONGEST GRANITE CAVE - Labourtouce Cave (Vic) 250' long, 20' wide, 20' High.
14. LARGEST FAULT CAVE - (Grafton, N.S.W.) - 90' long, 20' wide, 20' high (pools of water of unknown depth on floor.)
15. LARGEST SEA CAVE - St. Michaelis Cave (Avalon, N.S.W.) - 300' long, 30' wide, 40' high
16. LARGEST SEA ARCH - Tasmans Arch (Eaglehawk Neck, TAS.) - 100' long, 80' wide, 170' high
17. WIDEST LIMESTONE ARCH - Grand Arch (Jenolan, N.S.W.) - 227' wide, 470' long, 80' high.
18. HIGHEST LIMESTONE ARCH - Devil's Coach-house (Jenolan, N.S.W.) - 280' high, 430' long, 132' wide.



19. LONGEST LIMESTONE ARCH - Abercrombie Archway (Abercrombie, N.S.W.) 600' long, 100' wide, 80' high.
20. HIGHEST AVEN - "Gun Barrel" aven (Wyanbene Cave N.S.W.) ~~345~~ 365 feet plus/minus 10'
21. LARGEST UNDERGROUND RIVER - Junee River, Junee Cave (Juneeflorentine, TAS.) average flow 30 cusecs.
22. LARGEST UNDERGROUND LAKE - The Lake, Cocklebidly Cave, (Nullarbor Plain, W.A.) - 750' long, 150' wide, 30' deep.
23. HIGHEST UNDERGROUND WATERFALL - Last Pitch, Hobbit Hole (Ida Bay, TAS.) 140'
24. LARGEST CALCITE CRYSTAL - In fault cave, (Grafton, N.S.W.) 6' - 7' across.
25. LONGEST STALACTITE - Spear Shaped Stalactite, Entrance Chamber, Augusta Jewel Cave, (Augusta, W.A.) - 16'
26. LONGEST STRAW - The Straw, Strongs Cave, (Augusta, W.A.) 20'6".
27. LARGEST STALAGMITE - The Altar, Wellington Caves, (Wellington, N.S.W.) 50' high, 100' circumference
28. TALLEST STALAGMITE - The Khan, Xanadu Chamber, Kubla Khan Cave, (Mole Creek, TAS.) 58'
29. HIGHEST COLUMN - The Begum, Xanadu Chamber, Kubla Khan Cave (Mole Creek, TAS.) 40'
30. LARGEST SHAWL - The Giant Shawl, River Cave (Jenolan, NSW) 16' long, 4' wide,  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick
31. LARGEST GOUR - gour in Main Stream Passage, Croesus Cave, (Mole Creek, TAS.) 5' deep, 9' wide.
32. LARGEST OOLITE - oolite in Devil's Earhole (Mole Creek, TAS)
33. LONGEST GYPSUM NEEDLE - in Edies Treasure, Exit Cave (Ida Bay, TAS.) 3'
34. LARGEST BAT COLONY - Naracoorte Bat Cave, (Naracoorte, S.A.) approx. 2,000 bats.
35. LONGEST RECORDED BAT FLIGHT - North Sydney Railway Tunnel, (Sydney, N.S.W.) to Mitchell's Cave, (Glencoe West, S.A.) 640 miles.
36. GREATEST DEPTH INSIDE CAVE AT WHICH ABORIGINAL PAINTINGS HAVE BEEN FOUND - Abrakurrie Cave, (Nullarbor Plain, W.A.) 300' inside, 180' deep.



37. EARLIEST RECORD OF MAN IN AUSTRALIA - Kenriff Cave, (Central QLD.) - charcoal and Tasmanian type artifacts dated 10,950 B.C.
38. LONGEST SOLO STAY UNDERGROUND - Mrs. Dorothy Williams in 1963 (Yallingup Caves, W.A. - 90 days.
39. LONGEST CAVE DIVE - Underwater Exploration Group in 1965 (Kubla Khan Exit, Mole Creek, TAS.) - 1,685'.
40. OLDEST SPELEOLOGICAL GROUP - Tasmanian Caverneering Club, (Hobart, TAS.) - formed 1946.
41. MOST ACTIVE SPELEOLOGICAL GROUP - Southern Caving Society, (Hobart, TAS.) - 54 trips last year

#### NOTES

No. 26 is a world record and no. 24 probably is also. The fault cave was encountered by a mine, which has since fallen in, rendering it inaccessible. Most of the big calcite crystals were cut up and sent to Germany for use in the manufacture of optical products.

No. 12 was encountered during tunnelling activities by the H.E.C. and has since been sealed off. Further information about this cave was published in VOL. 2, No. 3 of this journal.

K. Kiernan.

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Have you contributed an article for this magazine!

ACTION!!!!!!!!!!!!



## A.S.F. CONFERENCE AND AREA REPORTS



Big things have happened since the last Southern Caver. The A.S.F. Conference and field trips went off without a hitch. At Junee-Florentine the Australian Depth Record has been broken twice when combined SCS-TCC parties reached 840 feet and later 950 feet in Khazad-Dum (J.F. 4-5). At Mole Creek, 2000 feet was added to upstream Herbert's Pot at Easter, one extension containing what is probably the finest display of helectites yet found in Tasmania. New caves seem to be turning up everywhere.

1. Lorinna
2. Mole Creek
3. Queenstown-Gormanston
4. Jukes-Darwin
5. Bubbs Hill
6. Junee-Florentine
7. Mt. Anne
8. Hastings
9. Ida Bay

### JUNEE-FLORENTINE

by Kevin Kiernan

The new depth record of nine hundred and fifty feet seems to give further evidence that Junee-Florentine is certainly destined to become Tasmania's, perhaps even Australia's, premier caving area. Not only does it contain already the deepest caves known in this country, but there are indications that perhaps it may hold the longest as well. It not only has hard, sporty caves but pleasant, well decorated horizontal systems as well. In general, it seems to cater for all tastes.

About thirty five cavers opted for this area. The gentler ones revelled in the delights of the Florentine's horizontals, while the more energetic spent their time in some of the mighty swallets of the Junee area. Most of the southern Tasmanians



went to Junee-Florentine, along with some twenty interstate visitors. The expected vast numbers of new holes were not found, due to there being little interest in scrub-bashing. Instead, one main system, Khazad-Dum (JF4-5), was the centre of attraction.

#### Florentine:

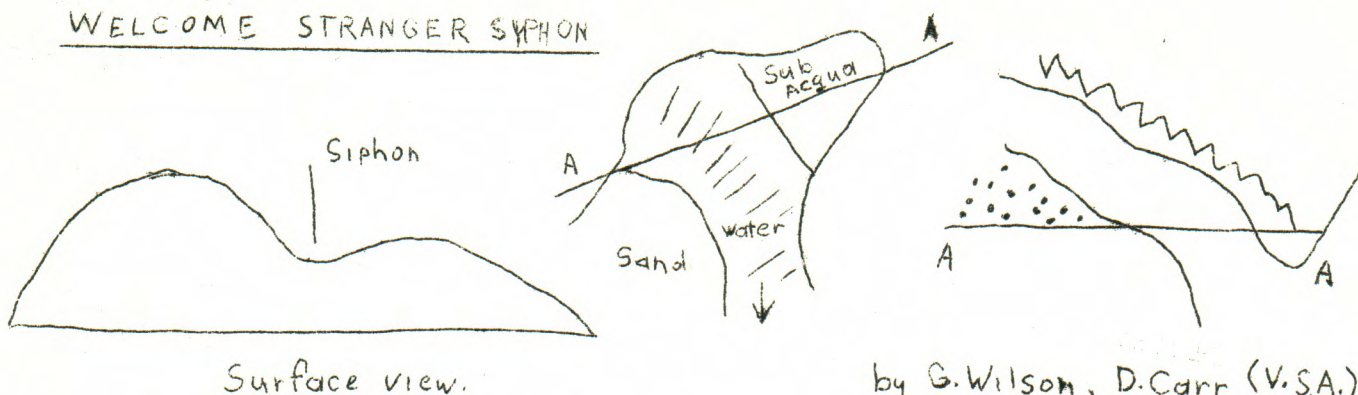
Due to wet weather it was not possible to descend Tassy Pot the then deepest Australian cave, during the first week, and in the second every one was so enthused about Khazad-Dum nobody wanted to. Rock trundling, however, proved a popular pastime and two parties journeyed to the hole to lob so many rocks down that perhaps it would have lost the depth record even if Khazad-Dum had not come along. Similar filling-in efforts were made at Owl Pot nearby. Heavy rain in the same area in the previous week changed Three Falls Cave to Six Falls Cave, with a great amount of water disappearing into this disappointing swallet. Unfortunately there was only quite a small flow during the second week. The magnificently exposed unconformity between the limestone and the Permian at this spectacular entrance had the geologists giggling, photographing and poking it with delight, while others were more impressed with the waterfalls, and some of ANM's incredible logging machines parked nearby.

About the only scrub-bashing done was a very enjoyable jaunt of a few hours in some light bush near the Cole River at the foot of Wylds Crag in the N.E. Florentine Valley. This trip was led by Don Francombe, manager of Australian Newsprint Mills at Maydena, who punctuated the walking with interesting descriptions and information about the forest. About three years previously he had come across a large and apparently deep doline lake containing deep green coloured water. In a hill nearby he had found a few holes. The area had never been visited before by cavers. The holes and lake were not found on this trip, but the area is worth another look.

Wet weather prevented any further exploration in J.F.228, but the hill above it absorbed an hour or two while members collected vast numbers of fossils. Rainbow Cave (SCS 1967) was visited to confirm that it was the cave since found by TCC and numbered J.F.11. Welcome Stranger was visited on a couple of occasions. An upper level passage was explored and found to lead into a chamber containing a large and very pretty flowstone cascade. One SCS member climbed up the side of this but gave up about forty feet up when things became a little diccy. To one side a narrow tube was explored and found to lead up to a point about one hundred feet above stream level. Photographers were very active in this cave. We also have a little more information on the siphon due to the efforts of two V.S.A. members.



## WELCOME STRANGER SIPHON



Surface view.

by G. Wilson, D. Carr (V.S.A.)

Growling swallet was also visited and descended to a depth of around one hundred and fifty feet.

### Junee: (Chrisps Rd.)

Some caves were visited in the Chrisps Road area. On the first day of the field trips a group was introduced to the Junee-Florentine area in Bone Pit J.F. 203, a three hundred and fifty feet deep cave which is in many ways typical of the area. After the party had dragged a scaling pole into the cave one SCS member free-climbed into the passage it was brought to reach. This passage, about twenty feet up from the bottom of the final shaft, went only a few feet before terminating in a small chamber. There is a slight chance of extension from this chamber using a scaling pole. The trip was enlivened by falling rocks and false floors.

A small party toured through J.F.208 and found a few insignificant holes in the same area. The first week also saw a day of general touring at Chrisps Road. The entrances of J.F. 213 and Rescue Pot J.F.201 were visited, the latter being entered for a short distance. Then to J.F. 202 where members spent some time gazing at the five cusec stream hammering over the waterfall into this most impressive hole.

In the second week J.F.202 was explored. Climbing partway down the side of the doline the ladder was hung from a small balcony. A sixty feet pitch and short slope leads in under the waterfall. What was previously thought from a distance to be a crawl at this point turned out to be another pitch, where the passage narrows to a slot three feet wide through which all the water pours with the ladder hanging in the middle. A climb of thirty feet, impossible without a wet suit, saw one member reach a total depth of around one hundred and ten feet; then follows a few feet of stream passage to a point where the water became waist, chest, then neck deep, and horror!! There blocking the way was a very deep siphon. One of the most shattering disappointments we've had in a long time, and most unexpected for this, the biggest swallet in the Junee area, with a theoretical depth potential of around nine hundred feet or more. Some time was spent trying to divert the water from J.F.202 into Rescue Pot J.F.201, and this was partially achieved. If all the water can be diverted from J.F.202 there is a vague possibility of the water in the siphon



drying up and perhaps allowing us into the system.

Pygmy Cave J.F.214 and Zulu Pot J.F.215 were also briefly visited, although the one hundred and seventy feet drop in the latter was not descended. A number of new small pots were discovered in the vicinity of the "Tarn Creek" swallet, one of which had a drop of around one hundred feet into it and these may be worth looking at sometime.

Since the conference, and SCS visit to an area two ridges west of (Pygmy) Cave Hill on a combined search exercise with Civil Defence resulted in the discovery of a number of new holes. One has an entrance drop of one hundred feet, another three exist in the same area, all are "dry" and have a theoretical depth potential of around one thousand feet. Lower down the hill two other noteworthy holes were found. A major dry valley was crossed at one point, and crossed again further up the hill where it was occupied by a sizeable creek. The swallet has not yet been searched for.

(Eastern Junee)

Biggest news comes from this area where Khazad-Dum J.F.4-5<sup>1</sup> has been pushed to a depth of nine hundred and fifty feet to set a new Australian Depth Record.

Visitors were rather impressed with the thirty odd cusec Junee Cave J.F.8 (Junee Rising), but even more so with the two main swallets (2 cusecs) feeding it from 1300 feet above and two and a half miles away. Khazad-Dum J.F.4-5 and Cauldron Pot, J.F.2 immediately captured the imagination of everyone.

On the 3rd January, 1971 a party of three (SCS, TCC, V.S.A.) discovered and explored a small new cave in a doline complex west of J.F. 5. A creek sinks into the collapse at the northern end. The entrance, in the middle, is a steep mud slope, leading into a small stream passage. Down a series of short drops and waterfalls the cave eventually comes to a halt at a depth of around one hundred and twenty feet where it is blocked by gravel. There is some six hundred feet of passage, and a few small chambers. The bottom is thought to be about directly under the valley floor at J.F. 5. If anyone desires to add some seventy feet to the depth of Khazad-Dum a dig at the bottom of this cave may well do the trick.

After a brief inspection of the entrances to Hairygoat Hole and J.F.10 it was decided that it was too wet to explore the latter so these three decided to have a look at the entrance to Cauldron Pot J.F.2 before doing some of the dry potholes reported to exist in the same area.

A secondparty teamed up with this group, and suddenly while sitting at Cauldron someone rudely decided that an attempt should be made to descend this hole, on the feeble excuse that the creek looked slightly lower than February last when descent was previously attempted, but defeated by lack of gear and the force of the waterfall. (A V.S.A. bod had reached one hundred and ten feet and reported he could see another fifty feet down to a ledge, and then



the water seemed to crash over a further drop, the size of which was unknown due to the blinding spray filling the shaft at this point.) The S.C.S. bod was selected on the grounds of defencelessness and flung screaming to the apparent bottom of the pot. There was no further drop, instead the cave consisted of a large rift, the water thundering along this and then disappearing from sight into talus. A quick look from under the waterfall, and then the ascent was made, a difficult climb due to snags which entangled the ladder and rope. The estimate of one hundred and forty/ one hundred and fifty feet for the pitch was overruled by the belay team who insisted two hundred feet of rope had been taken out.

Three days later the Cauldron pitch was proved to be only one hundred and thirty five feet long when a team of three (V.S.A. TCC, NUSS) visited the hole, the original trier making the descent to declare the talus into which the stream vanishes to be totally impenetrable, although this is perhaps open to doubt.

A most impressive aspect of this cave is the view from the bottom of the pitch. A shaft of light illuminates the chamber and carries a free-fall waterfall which fills the air with spray and a deafening roar.

One day a group of four (2 SCS, 1 SVSS, 1 CSS) returned to Cauldron to photograph the entrance. On the way back to Khazad-Dum J.F.4-5 a series of holes was located which later proved to be previously known, one having been explored to the bottom at one hundred and sixty feet (J.F.3). Unaware of this at the time, the party explored them, some to the limit of tackle available and others to the bottom. Everyone seemed to have been humming various of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos all day so the worthy editor of the A.S.F. Newsletter dreamt up the names - "Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 Pot", Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 Pot" etc., but was unfortunately overruled by the nomenclature board. The mind boggles at the endless possibilities such a naming system would provide. Dead Horse Cave was also visited by some.

But Khazad-Dum was the main interest. It was a largely unknown quantity before the conference. Certainly the potential was there, but just how to get around the water etc., was the problem. By conference end the upper levels of the phenomenal cave was mastered, and it was well on its way to becoming the deepest and most dramatic cave yet found in Australia. Discovered eighteen months ago, initial exploration in J.F.4 was halted by a waterfall, but progress was halted by a second. Just prior to the conference the big push on J.F.5 began, the cave was to be explored in an "artificial" manner, using as many eyebolts and rock-climbing techniques as necessary to pass the waterfalls. The bolts for a further one hundred and fifty feet drop in J.F.5 were positioned. An SCS bod got to within sixty feet of the bottom during the first week of the conference before running out of rope.



Then things started to happen, when three V.S.A. members spotted an upper level in J.F.4 and next day returned and chopped down a sapling to use as a scaling pole to have a look at it. A twenty five feet climb took them away from the roar of the main stream into a quiet passage, then a fifteen feet ladder drop, steep descent on a rope, fifty feet long flattener ten inches high and then with the thunder of a waterfall ahead a small chamber. A passage to one side leads to a point directly opposite and halfway down the pitch in J.F.5, another leads to a step across a hundred feet canyon and a small chamber with a ninety feet pitch. The V.S.A. members then surveyed their way out.

A series of trips then located a further pitch of one hundred and fifty feet which can be bypassed by drops of seventy feet and ninety feet, a big chamber with an immense three thousand cubic feet chockstone near the roof and one thousand feet of horizontal stream passage. By conference end the cave had been pushed to five hundred and seventy feet, stopping atop a twenty feet pitch. A few weeks later this and a couple of others were descended to set a new Australian depth record of eight hundred and forty feet, stopping atop a further waterfall of one hundred feet. By this time a mile of passage had been explored. Then another descent and the cave was pushed to nine hundred and fifty feet. The stream passage route proved too wet, but a dry shaft was found at eight hundred and fifty feet which is yet to be explored. On the same trip the seventy feet and ninety feet pitches were bypassed by way of a thirty feet and sixty feet pitch.

On a trip with TCC on 7th February, 1971 one SCS member was involved in the exploration of an interesting new pot which unfortunately does not go. The entrance, in the bottom of a small collapse, is a fifty feet ladder pitch. This leads to a small and very drippy wet ledge from which there is a further one hundred and eighty feet drop, with a ledge one hundred and ten feet down. At this point a number of large avens are connected at the base to form a sizeable chamber. The SCS contingent descended to this point and found a further pitch of thirty feet, leading into gravelly shaft bottom. He came back convinced it would not go. It didn't! A couple of hours later the TCC boys dropped down the big pitch with some more ladder and found that it was a dead end. Our representative came close to being exevuted orworse when he belayed the end of the wrong rope and gaily threw a two hundred and forty feet coil over the main drop. Fortunately there was plenty of spare rope on hand. The hole has been named Dribblespit Swallet!

#### Mt. Anne

##### MT. ANNE ASF TRIP

There were no SCS members on this trip but this report is included for the information of interested mainland cavers.

The two biggest holes on the top of the NE dolomite ridge of Mt. Anne were explored. The deepest was named "Kellers Cellar" after Alan Keller of TCC. The entrance ladder drop is four hundred



and twenty feet (i.e. equivalent to the total depth of the deepest mainland cave). From the foot of the pitch a steep slope leads down to a depth of five hundred and ten feet where the cave is blocked by talus. This hole is particularly cold. The second big hole has a four hundred feet dolomite cliff face leading into it, and is laddered from a natural bridge from which it is a one hundred and fifty feet pitch to the top of a talus slope. Through a cleft a further fifty feet pitch leads to a chamber at the end of which the cave chokes with talus a a depth of around three hundred and fifty feet.

Frost shattering has resulted in the blocking of the two biggest holes on the ridge, and the results of the trip were much as expected. The key to the deep caves obviously existing within Mt. Anne seems to lie with the smaller, scungier holes on the side of the ridge. Future exploration will probably be largely centred on locating effluxes and trying to get into the caverns associated with the subterranean drainage from Lake Timsk.

by. Kevin Kiernan.

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### Ida Bay and Hastings

#### IDA BAY-HASTINGS ASF TRIP

Once again there were no SCS members on this trip.

Ida Bay proved very popular with the mainlanders who flocked in for the now legendary Exit Cave trip. Biggest news resulted when an extension was discovered at the far end of the cave and approximately three thousand feet of new passage explored which runs parallel to and alongside Mystery Creek Cave. There appears to be only 300 feet between the two caves and the chances of claiming those bottles of beer for the big link-up now appears a bit brighter. The extension is also only 800 feet away from a small swallet near the old quarry on the North side of Marble Hill. This swallet had previously never been explored but after a preliminary investigation just after the Exit extension was found the chances of linking the two caves were deemed to be quite bright. This would provide a most interesting and rather unique through trip through a major surface divide.

Other activities at Ida Ba included visits to Loons Cave, Revelation Cave, and an abseil trip from Midnight Hole into Mystery Creek Cave (Entrance Cave).

At Hastings Newdegate Cave, King George V Cave and Wolfhole were visited, with quite a deal of photography done, especially in the former.

by Kevin Kiernan.



## LORINNA

### RUMOURED CAVE ON LIMESTONE CREEK LOCATED AT LAST!

by Kevin Kiernan

On Saturday 16/1/71 a party of stragglers from the A.S.F. conference visited this area and located a cave which appears to be almost definitely the one which has been searched for by S.C.S. for over a year.

Lorinna had to be reached from the south, i.e. via Lemonthyne Power Station, as the road from the north was found to be completely washed away for over 300 yards about two miles south of the turn-off. As a result the visitors unfortunately missed out on the spectacular trip up the Forth Gorge

After finding that only a full scale dig would render any further progress possible in L201 three members effectively finished scrub-bashing the area between the Post Office and the Showground. No success.

Then to Limestone Creek where one member went bugging in Canned Crawl L202 and discovered a new tiny upper level chamber in the process, while three others wandered downstream to have a look at the creek gorge. A previously un-noticed entrance was sighted in the southern wall of the gorge about 6ft above creek level and investigated to reveal about 60ft of decorated passage finally choking at a point where recent flooding has filled the cave with silt just enough to render it unnegotiable. On the opposite side of the gorge an efflux flowing at approximately 0.1 cusec was found and dug at for some time, the result being the lowering of the waterlevel by about 9". Both holes may be above the level to which the H.E.C. dam will flood. It appears we have at last found the entrance so long rumoured in this area, but apparently we must dig to get into the "caverns measureless to man" supposedly existing beyond it,

The cave appears to have at one time been the swallet of Limestone Creek, but is now active only at time of high flood.

The western side of the Forth river has been rendered inaccessible due to collapse of the Showground bridge. The reported cave near the cemetery is yet to be investigated. Late in February the gates on the Cethana diversion tunnel clanged shut, and already some of Lorinna is no more. For much of the rest it is only a matter of time.

## RUMOURED CAVE

Limestone Creek, Lorinna  
Tasmania

Details:

Map by H. Shannon (UQSS)  
gr3, scale 1 inch = 20 ft

Cave located:

K. Kiernan (SCS)

Exploration:

K. Kiernan (SCS)

A. Graham (UQSS)

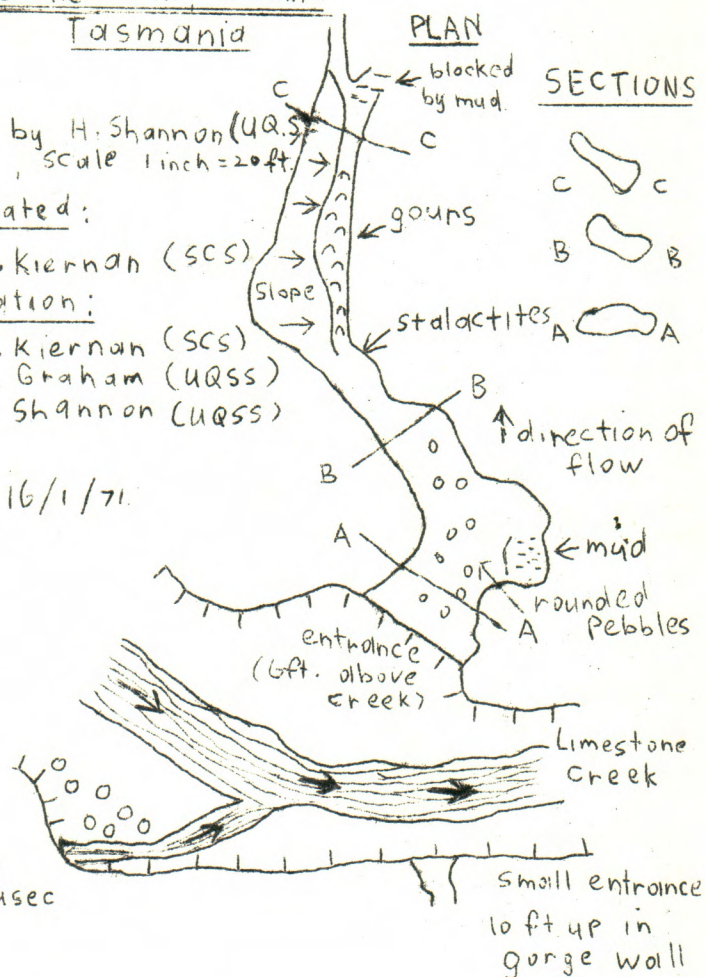
H. Shannon (UQSS)

16/1/71

efflux  
0.1 cusec

PLAN

SECTIONS





## Mole Creek

All the known main systems were thoroughly trogged during the ASF conference, although only four people braved Herbert's Pot.

Two new caves were discovered. Ho Hum, in Cheops Pyramid contains some decoration. Near Croesus a party discovered Tail-ender Cave, which has around one thousand feet of near straight passage. A side passage ends in a chamber with good decoration and a draughty inaccessible hole in the wall which could be reached with the aid of some bolts. (This may be Mill Cave.)

Kelly's Pot has been further surveyed and only about two hundred feet of streamway remains to be traversed.

Easter was spent at Mole Creek with a large party from V.S.A .

Prohibition Cave was visited on Good Friday and both levels thoroughly trogged. Another party visited Maracoopa I Cave. On Saturday a large party visited Croesus Cave where photography was the order of the day. Another party set out to bottom Devil's Pot but the attempt was thwarted when the Telurit crimp on one side of the head of a new V.S.A. ladder slipped. After some tense moments two people already down the hole (one on the ladder at the time) were back on the surface. As the security of the whole batch of new ladders was put in doubt the trip was abandoned. After a half-hearted attempt to find Devil's Earhole the party headed back to the hut, grabbed some fresh ladders and set off to explore the very deep pond at the foot of the ninety feet drop near Old Jamaica Corner in Shish-kabab. It is definitely not the pond reached previously from Candle Chamber, and there are no leads off it. It is one hundred feet long. Highlight of the trip came when a small was dislodged which fell down the pitch puncturing the lilo upon which a V.S.A. member was floating. Many curses and frantic paddling noises were heard.

The following day a large party headed for Kubla Khan. This was entered via the top entrance and photographed thoroughly. The trip was memorable for the illumination of Xanadu Chamber with a diprotodon. Another party of six headed to Herbert's Pot, strangely only two V.S.A. members braving the caves' reputation to come along. The others really missed out on something. The party broke through some talus about a quarter of a mile beyond the upstream waterfall and discovered the Paragon Vaults, some fifteen hundred feet of tributary creek passage containing what is probably the finest display of helectites yet found in any Tasmanian Cave. The decorated section is about a thousand feet long. The helectites are incredibly intricate and parts of the extension are absolutely packed with them. Some are over two feet long, while smaller forms occur in passages of crawling dimensions, and wierd heligmites grow from the dry sandy floors of the larger chambers. Much of the extension consists of a flat elliptical passage with a sandy floor. At the end it is blocked by a dangerous rockfall which may be pushable but was not attempted on the day. Many photographs were taken.



This most magnificent decoration is very well protected from vandalism with some six hours of difficult cave between it and the entrance.

The same party did lesser things in Herberts as well. A quarter of a mile beyond the entrance to the vaults the sump on the main stream, reached early in 1970, was found to have 18" of air space, instead of the former 2". After negotiating one hundred and fifty feet of wide but very wet passage a decorated chamber was entered where a further sump halted progress approximately two hundred and fifty feet beyond the last. This is impenetrable, and so it seems that main stream exploration upstream has at last concluded.

Between the sump and the waterfall, however, are many side passages, and these also received some attention. There are some impressive but inaccessible entrances to higher levels in the roof. There appears to be a major passage entering from the left but it is totally blocked with talus. Some possible leads were seen but the party was not equipped with the pitous neccessary to safeguard the rather hairy climbs needed to reach them. These should provide good sport for future parties.

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ERRATUM VOL. 2 No. 4

Due to the Christmas rush some errors crept into the last issue

P.3 150 cms should read 150 mm.

P.4 2 cusecs should read 1 cusec

Author - K.kiernan (also author of previous Tasmanian Caving Areas articles).

URGENTLY REQUIRED:

Good black and white photos of the surface of Juneeflorentine. Some underground shots needed too.  
Please contact

Kevin Kiernan

Phone 237121 (day) or 278527 (home)



#### A HISTORICAL SIDELIGHT ON JUDDS CAVERN.

In 1892 Tasmanian pioneer Henry Judd published a report concerning a cave he had discovered in the Cracroft River area. A reprint of this appeared in Speleo-Spiel (TCC) recently.

Last Easter a TCC-Manuka Club party rediscovered the cave. At the entrance was a pine plaque on which were the names Judd, Clarke and a third no longer legible, plus the date 1881.

SCS members Chris and Steve Harris may have ascertained the identity of the third explorer. Following a radio report of the rediscovery, Mrs. Harris was told by an aged neighbour that the person was her father who had spent some years prospecting in the South-West and had been with Judd at the time of the discovery. His name was Gallagher. She also stated that there was a fourth member of the party whose name did not appear as he could not read or write.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

##### A NEW FEATURE

In this issue of the "Southern Caver" we have included a "Letters to the Editor" page, the first of which appears opposite. If you have a topic that might prove of general interest to Club members, let the Editor know about it.

Unfortunately, lack of space will restrict the number of letters that can be used, but every effort will be made to publish those likely to attract the widest Club interest.

The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor and Committee of the "Southern Caver", nor should they be taken to represent official Club policy.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Lake Pedder-its not too late.

(K.Kiernan)

Tasmanian speleos should be vitally interested in the battle for Pedder. The result will have a great affect on the future if the entire S.W., of which Pedder is the symbol, and battle for which will be much harder without that symbol. HEC schemes now on the drawing board threaten huge unexplored limestone areas. But Tasmanian conservation is held back, by: apathetic fools; emotional nitwits; idiots who think they are being smart by denouncing it; self-appointed experts who feel free to criticise efforts to save Pedder, even though they generally havent even taken the basic step of reading the relevant Parliamentary reports; and so-called conservationists who refuse to support the Pedderists, claiming them to be disorganised (they arent) yet never dreaming of dipping into their pockets to rectify the situation they think exists, preferring instead to support inter-state causes while criticising fighters for their own state as they sink into deep debt.

The anti-conservationists say "weve got stacks of scenery-plenty more where that came from! To a certain extent true, but once they used to say that about the Tasmanian Aborigine. And the Thylacine. I seem to have heard it before somewhere!

Saving the SW is not a matter of cursing the HEC, which has done a magnificent job developing hydro power-the blame for faults lies with the state govt. and the people who blindly accept. The govt's short-sighted move (the first of many) to develop the Central Plat., rather than the W. as recommended by the HEC was a fortunate blunder though, despite the droughts and power rationing. It would be a waste to flood the SW. and W. now with nuclear power less than 20yrs. away, the advent of Bass Strait oil and development of low pollution thermal plant making thermal generation far more attractive. Less than 50 years of economically significant power generation does not justify destroying Pedder forever.

According to the consultants who studied the scheme for the HEC Pedder could be saved by modifications costing \$6 million-costing every Tasmanian \$1 per year (2 cents a week-the cost of a cigarette). The Premier now says \$11 mill., which the gullible public have accepted. Yet even this is only about 5% of the total cost of the scheme-well within the 10-15% allowed by HEC for contingencies.

Its time SCS took an interest in conservation. And to become an effective force we must become involved in all aspects-not just caves. Its time not just to tread on toes but to jump up and down on them. If Pedder is lost it will be due to gutless, spineless groups who should protest, but like SCS prefer to suck up to the govt., HEC, etc. (albeit pointlessly-weve been trying to get permission to use the Franklin Road for over a year) and winging, cringing cynics who say they cant do anything when they can. Write to your MP. To newspapers. The PM. The Premier. DONATE.

In the last two weeks the Aust. Conservation Foundation has pledged full support; the Federal Australia party is seeking Commonwealth intervention; the House of Representatives Select Committee on Wildlife has noted the need for the Commonwealth to absolve the state from financial agreements preventing Pedder being saved and are returning to study the matter further. The tide may be turning, but all will be wasted if you dont do your bit.

If the Chief Justice can take the time to write letters to the Premier so can you. Support, like him, the conservation of Pedder. Demand a referendum, so that at least one thing that happens in this state can have the will of the people behind it, not the whim of some politician. Or perhaps You dont care about your kids.

Its not too late. Pedder can still be saved, if only a few of you people will get off your backsides and do something. The Scotts Peak Dam is still just a hole in the ground. Contrary to what was said in the Legislative Council.