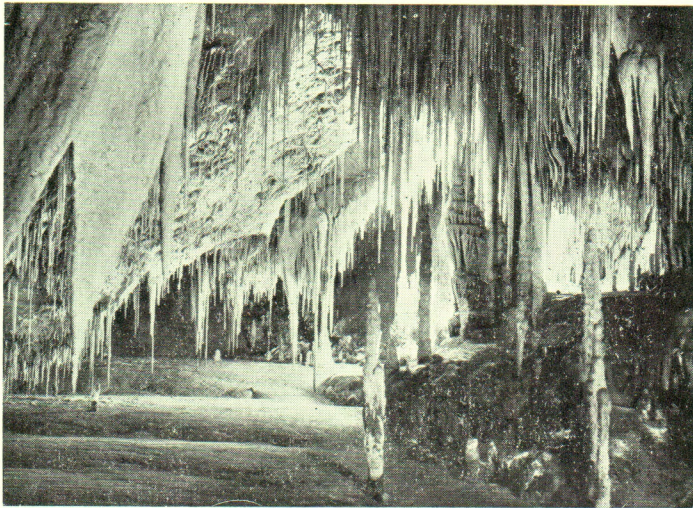


SOUTHERN



C A V E R

▨ VOL.4 NO.3 ▨

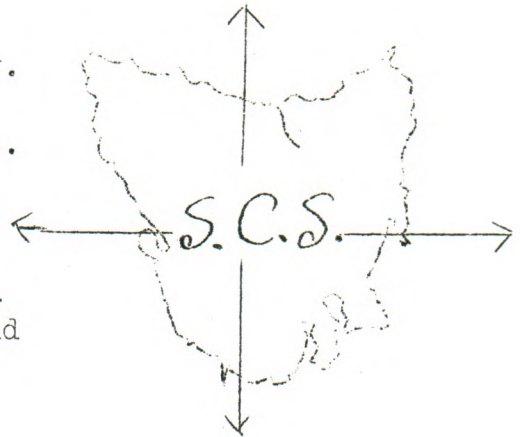
PRICE 25 CENTS

"SOUTHERN CAVER"

Published Quarterly by
the Southern Caving Society.

Postal Address:
P.O.Box 121, Moonah, 7009. Tas.

Club Room:
132 Davey Street, Hobart.



Editors: Aleks Terauds and
 Bob Cockerill
Magazine Committee:
 Dave Elliott
 Ron Mann

Volume 4. Number 3.

January, 1973

CONTENTS

Editorial	Page	2
Cave Fauna, Part 2 A. Terauds	"	3
Attitudes to Tourist Caves K. Kiernan	"	12
A Word from the Magazine Committee	"	13
Cavers Carless? A. Terauds	"	14
Back Issues in Stock	"	15
A Visit to Rocky Cape M. Cole	"	16
Aspects of Conservation at MC M. Cole	"	17
Area Reports, Nov. 1. to Jan. 31.	"	19
'A Story of Three Wells' D. Elliott	"	21
Society Notes R. Mann	"	22

*

EDITORIAL

IN the September 1972 issue of the 'Journal of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science' the Editor, John J. Lenaghan begins his Editorial as follows: "Put simply, an editor's function is to compile a respectable journal and help both its readers and contributors. And surprising though it may seem to some, an editor also needs help."

The 'Southern Caver' does not attempt to emulate, either in quality of content or literary merit, the standard of journals such as the one of the A.I.A.S. And, our definition of respectable is a far cry from that of the above journals. Nevertheless, J.J. Lenaghan's comments apply to us as equally as to the readers for whom they were produced.

The editors of the 'Southern Caver' help the reader by providing a magazine with a balanced load of subject matter, as much of it as possible pertaining to the subject of most interest to them, namely caving. We help the contributor by deciphering articles, correcting 'bad' grammatical errors and minimizing changes from the original as much as possible, believing that whatever is lost by a lack of flow in the prose, much more is gained by having the topic treated as much as, again, possible, in the "spoken words of the author". The editors, magazine committee and the production of the magazine are not helped by articles not arriving on time or being withdrawn or by contributors not delivering as promised. All of the latter make the editors more proficient in composing contents pages (we change these at least five times for each issue) but do nothing to assist us to produce a 'respectable' magazine on time.

Tasmanian Cave Fauna.

Pt.2. What It Consists Of.

By Aleks Terauds

When one enters into a cave and brushes against, trips over or is attacked by one of its inhabitants one should not immediately grab it, bottle it and send it to the local expert to be identified. This is not only from the point of view of conservation; the chances are that a beastly that obvious has already stepped on, tripped or bitten some one else and carries a scientific name tag a yard long.

I shall, for the purpose of this discussion, divide our cave fauna into three groups. The first one consists of those beasties that are extremely common and/or obvious. A good example is the glow-worm, Arachnocampa (Arachnocampa) tasmaniensis Ferg., a species of fly known from caves of probably all of our major caving areas. It is fairly safe to say that we have only the one species here, so collection of further specimens is unnecessary. Yet, more information on the distribution of this insect within our caves could be of value and I would, therefore, urge cavers to note the insect's presence and abundance in all new caves they visit and enter this information into their trip reports just as naturally as they note particulars about equipment used or difficulties encountered.

Another very common insect is the cave cricket or weta, insects belonging to the family Rhaphidophoridae. They are usually found just within cave entrances and at night outside the caves. The following species have been described from our caves: Micropathus cavernicola Rich.,

M. fusca Rich., M. tasmaniensis Rich., M. montanus Rich., Parvotettix rangaensis Rich., P. goedei Rich., P. maydenaensis Rich. and Cavernotettix flindersensis (Chop.).

Collections of cave crickets should be made from areas, not necessarily individual caves, where the insect has not been collected to date (see Goede, 1967 and Richards, especially 1970, 1971 and refer Tables 1 - 3).

There are two other arthropods commonly seen in Tasmanian caves, easily recognizeable and which should not be collected without prior request from particular authorities investigating them. They are the Cave Spider, Hickmania troglodytes (Higgin and Pettard) and the small freshwater crustacean, Anaspides tasmaniae (Thomson).

In my second group of cave animals I have placed those that will be obvious to the collector but will be seen only rarely by the average caver who is not interested in biospeleology. Most of the cave fauna described in the last ten years or so in Australia belongs to this group as too, a wealth of material must still be here to be discovered and described. However, before any concerted efforts to collect are made, the works of the authors mentioned below should be consulted and specimens taken only from those caves where a particular species has not been as yet collected (see my previous article on wasteful collecting).

The more prominent members of this second group are the cave beetles Idacarabus troglodytes Lea and I. cordicollis Moore. (The former species has been collected only from Ida Bay, the latter from Hastings; a further, as yet undescribed species has been collected from Mole Creek and recently another one from PBI at Precipitous Bluff - Moore, pers.comm.). The other cave beetles we know from Tasmanian caves are Tasmanorites flavipes Lea,

Tasmanotrechus cockerilli Moore, Goedetrechus medumae Moore, G. parallelus Moore (see Moore 1967, 1972), Cryptophagus troglodytes Lea, Cyphon doctus Lea and Licinoma sp. (see Hamilton-Smith, 1967). In this grouping I place, also, the three species of pseudoscorpion, Pseudotyrannochthonius tasmanicus Dartnall, P. typhlus Dartnall (see Dartnall, 1970) and the undescribed species of the above genus (see Goede, 1970), the two species of harvestman, Monoxyomma cavaticum Hickman (Goede, 1967, op.cit.) and Monoxyomma sp.n. (see later) and the two species of slaters (Isopoda), Echinodillo cavaticus Green and Styloniscus nichollsi Vandel (Green, 1967, 1970). Other examples of what might be included in this group are the sphaerocerid flies collected by myself in 1968 and the following species of insect listed by Goede (1967, op.cit.): the crane flies (Tipulidae), Monophilus sp., Limnophila sp. and Trichocera sp. and a species of stone fly (Plecoptera), Eusthenia spectabilis.

My third group of cave arthropods contains those that will not be visible in their natural habitat to the naked eye; they are mostly very small or live a concealed existence in litter and cave debris. They include mites (Acarina), millipedes (Diplopoda), centipedes (Chilopoda), spring-tails (Collembola) and psocids (Psocoptera). All of these have to my knowledge been collected in Tasmania at some time or other but very little material has been submitted for identification. The usual way to collect these small creatures is to scoop up cave litter, debris, rotten organic material such as wood, remove this to the laboratory and separate the arthropods from the inanimate matter by some method such as flotation or heat/light extraction (Berlese funnels).

This last group presents tremendous scope for

rewarding collecting and exciting discovery. I would urge, therefore, cavers to collect debris from one or two 'live' caves in each of our caving areas as part of our new programme of collecting cave fauna.

All material collected from caves should be examined before being submitted to an authority for identification. The collector should ensure that what is sent away is really the insect or whatever and not just a piece of wood; the scientist will probably be as amused by the latter as by having to search through a pile of cave rubbish allegedly or supposedly containing something that could be alive. Yet, I would recommend one to err on the side of rashness and send to a coleopterist the common house fly as a new species of beetle rather than to 'sit' on collected specimens (as many of us have done), repeating bashfully that they are probably of no value at all.

Collectors should not sit on information, either, wheather it consisits of sightings of a particular cave inhabitant or data obtained in personal communications - unless, of course the latter consists of priviledged information. What I refer to here is the letter from the expert about the specimens referred to him, where he states or infers that he will not pursue the matter any further. About four years ago Emeritus Professor V.V.Hickman, the noted arachnologist, wrote to one of our members about some harvestmen and spiders sent to him for identification; the harvestmen from three caves at Mole Creek were identified as "Monoxyomma sp.n. - all the same species, probably a new species"; others from Scotts Cave were identified as Paranuncia gigantea Roewer and from Bottomless Pit, St. Mary's, as Odontonuncia saltuensis Hickman. The spiders from Bottomless Pit (collected 1/6/68) were identified as Ptychoctenus sp., from a fissure in Mt.

Arrowsmith (20/7/68) as Meta sp. and from Scotts Cave (10/6/68) as Rubrius sp. Prof. Hickman noted that "the three spiders are probably all new species". This data should have been made available to biospeleologists everywhere. I trust that nothing similar is being sat on.

References

- Dartnall, A.J.(1970)- Some Tasmanian Chthoniid Pseudoscorpions. Proc.Roy.Soc.Tasm., 104:65-68.
- Goede, A. (1967)- Tasmanian Cave Fauna:Character and Distribution. Helictite, 5:71-86.
- Goede, A.(1972)- Distribution of Tasmanian Cave Fauna. Proc.8th Nat.Conf. A.S.F. Hobart,1970.
- Green, A.J.A.(1963)- A New Species of Echinodillo (Isopoda, Oniscoidea, Armadillidae) from Flinder Island, Tasmania. Proc.Roy.Soc.Tasm., 97:77=80.
- Green, A.J.A.(1970)- Stylonoscoidea (Isopoda, Oniscoidea) from Tasmania and New Zealand. Proc.Roy.Soc.Tasm., 105:59-74.
- Hamilton-Smith, E.(1967)- The Arthropoda of Australian Caves. J.Aust.ent.Soc., 6:103-118.
- Moore, B.P.(1967)- New Australian Cave Carabidae (Coleoptera). Proc.Linn.Soc.N.S.W., 91:179-184.
- Moore, B.P.(1972)- A Revision of the Australian Trechinae (Coleoptera: Carabidae). Aust.J.Zool., Suppl. Ser., No.18, 1-61.
- Richards, A.M.(1964)- The Rhaphidophoridae (Orthoptera) of Australia, 1: Tasmania. Pacif.Insects 6:217-223.
- Richards, A.M.(1966)- The Rhaphidophoridae (Orthoptera) of Australia, 3: A New Genus from South-Eastern Australia. Ibid. 8:617-628.
- Richards, A.M.(1968)- The Rhaphidophoridae (Orthoptera) of Southern Caver

- Australia. Part 6. Two New Species from
Northern Tasmania. Ibid. 10: 167-176.
- Richards, A.M. (1970)- The Rhaphidophoridae (Orthoptera)
of Australia. Part 8. Two New Species of
Parvotettix Richards. Ibid. 12: 1-8.
- Richards, A.M. (1971)- The Rhaphidophoridae (Orthoptera)
of Australia. Part 9. The Distribution and
Possible Origins of Tasmanian Rhaphidophoridae,
with Descriptions of Two New Species. Ibid. 13:
575-587.
- Williams, W.D. (1965)- Subterranean Occurrence of Anaspides
tasmaniae (Thomson) (Crustacea, Syncarida). Int.
J. Speleol., 1: 333-337.

(vide Tables 1-3, below)

Table 1. Cave Fauna of the Mole Creek District

Common Name	Scientific Name	Cave	Reference
Shrimp	<u>Anaspides tasmaniae</u> (Thomson)	Marakoopa Various	Williams, 1965 Author
Slater	<u>Styloniscus nichollsi</u> Vandel	Georgies Hall Baldocks Herberts Pot Scotts	} } Green, 1970
Harvestmen	<u>Monoxyomma</u> sp.n. <u>Paranuncia gigantea</u> Roewer	Westmoreland Herberts Pot Cow Cave- Pyramid Link Scotts	} } * see text
Spiders	<u>Hickmania troglodytes</u> (Higg. & Pett.) <u>Rubrius</u> sp.	Various Scotts	Author * see text
Pseudo-scorpion	<u>Pseudotyrannochthonius typhlus</u> Dartnall	Georgies Hall Baldocks	} Dartnall, 1970
Cave crickets	<u>Micropathus cavernicola</u> Richards <u>Parvotettix goedei</u> Richards	Marakoopa Other Little Trimmer Scotts Baldocks Little Trimmer Mersey Hill Scotts	} Richards, 1964 } Richards, 1968 } Richards, 1971 } Richards, 1966 } Richards, 1970
Glow-worms	<u>Arachnocampa</u> (<u>Arachnocampa</u>) <u>tasmaniensis</u> Ferguson	Marakoopa Wet Cave Lynds Westmoreland Others	} Goede, 1967 } Author
Cave beetles	<u>Tasmanotrechus cockerilli</u> Moore <u>Idacarabus</u> sp.	Georgies Hall Scotts Herberts Pot Baldocks Unspecified	} } Moore, 1972 } Moore, pers.com. 1973
Flies	<u>Sphaerocera</u> spp.	Pyramid Cave	Author
Miscellan.	Acarina, Diplopoda, Chilopoda, Collembola, Diptera - Various Caves by Author and others.		

Table 2. Cave Fauna of the Hastings Area Caves

Common Name	Scientific Name	Cave	Reference
Shrimp	<u>Anaspides tasmaniae</u> (Thomson)	Newdegate	Goede, 1967
Slater	<u>Styloniscus nichollsi</u> Vandel	King George V	Green, 1970
Spider	<u>Hickmania troglodytes</u> (Higg, & Pett.)	Various	Author
Pseudo-scorpion	<u>Pseudotyrannochthonius tasmanicus</u> Dartnall	King George V	Dartnall, 1970
Cave cricket	<u>Micropathus tasmaniensis</u> Richards	Wolff Hole Newdegate King George V	} Richards, 1964 } Richards, 1968
Cave beetle	<u>Idacarabus cordicollis</u> Moore	Newdegate King George V	} Moore, 1967
Glow-worms	<u>Arachnocampa</u> (<u>Arachnocampa tasmaniensis</u>) Ferguson	Various	Author

Table 3. Cave Fauna of the Junee-Florentine Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Cave	Reference
Shrimp	<u>Anaspides tasmaniae</u> (Thomson)	Welcome Stranger and others	Author
Cave spider	<u>Hickmania troglodytes</u> (Higg. & Pett.)	Welcome Stranger and others	Author
Cave crickets	<u>Micropathus tasmaniensis</u> Richards	Unspecified Cashion Creek Tassy Pot	Richards, 1964 Richards, 1968 Richards, 1971
	<u>Parvotettix maydenaensis</u> Richards	Welcome Stranger Cashion Creek	} Richards, 1971
	Undetermined	Various	Author
Glow-worms	<u>Arachnocampa</u> (<u>Arachnocampa</u>) <u>tasmaniensis</u> Ferguson	Cashion Creek Growling Swallet Junee Cave Udens Ala Others	} Goede, 1967 } } Author
Cave beetle	<u>Goedetrechus parallelus</u> Moore	Cashion Creek Frankcombe	} Moore, 1972
Pseudo-scorpion	<u>Pseudotyrannochthonius</u> sp.	Unspecified	Goede, 1970

NOTE: Tables 1 - 3 are not to be considered as exhaustive reviews of literature on cave fauna in the three respective areas. They have been compiled primarily as a guide to prospective collectors in this Society. Similarly, the reference 'Author' is not intended to necessarily claim discovery of the arthropod referred; it merely indicates a personal sighting and confirmation of identification in the absence of a readily available report in the literature.

Attitudes to Tourist Caves

by Kevin Kiernan.

Recently there has been considerable talk of tourist caves and cavers' responsibilities or otherwise towards them. It is difficult to assess the attitudes of the Society, or a majority of members, towards tourist caves, but it seems to me very obvious that appreciation of them by cavers is quite low.

Indeed, it even seems that to some a cave is ended by opening to tourists. To them, the placement of a light or installation of a handrail stops the beauty of a cave forever. It is easy to understand this attitude, but is it really fair? To them it seems that all responsibility for that cave immediately leaves their shoulders to reside upon a desk in the Tourist Department. Surely whether we like it or not, because we are cavers we have certain unwritten responsibilities. Is this attitude not merely an attempt to brush them under the carpet? Personally, I find both the above outlooks rather alarming in the damage they may permit.

Caves are quite unknown to most people. We as cavers do our best to keep them that way, by not disclosing whereabouts or details, by gating, or by keeping their very existence a secret, all in the name of safety, and/or conservation. Then when an area is threatened we wonder why we are the only ones worried, why the public won't support us.

It seems to me that when a threat arises we are faced with two basic problems. Firstly, one that may not be too popular, that is, that we will only receive as much support from conservationists as we have been prepared to give them, and Tasmanian cavers have a miserable history of dismal failure to help conservationists in the past. The second is that people do not understand caves, talk as we may, display photographs as we may, there is nothing like the real thing, obtainable in a tourist cave. Surely then, all people and organisations interested in caves should feel a strong responsibility towards encouraging tourist development.

Tourist caves stand as our only really practical way to demonstrate to the public what a cave is, why and how it needs protecting. As cavers of today we are cave custodians for tomorrow's cavers. We must grasp tourist caves as a vital part of conservation practice, promoting their development from the opening of a new cave, be it Kubla or Exit, to the sealing of the Hastings or Mole Creek roads, our whole enthusiasm and drive should be behind it, both on the Club and personal level.

Let us strive to do our utmost to assist in any way possible to bring about the maximum affect and benefit of such a development, from the placement of a light, aesthetic design of a walkway, concealment of electric wires, or pleasant access above ground. A cave will not be destroyed by opening, and if we help we can minimise damage by ensuring development will be properly done. We may not have control of a cave, but our advice will still often be respected and heeded.

Think about it. Tourist caves are one of the few things we have going for us, one of the few ways of getting the cave message across. Some now look upon opening a cave for tourism as a sacrifice. Let us instead look upon it as an investment in the future, and a very real advance in conservation.

A WORD FROM THE MAGAZINE COMMITTEE

Hope springs eternal in the collective breast of the Magazine Committee. Astute readers will have noticed that we rashly went on record in the last issue promising good things to come, two of which have failed to materialize.

Well, you can't win them all ... perhaps next time?

Having, we hope, learned our lesson, we are not going to tell you what we have in store for you in the next issue.

We will, however, tell you why we are late in appearing again. It comes down to much promise and tardy performance on the part of some of our would be contributors who do not realize that there are such things as a dead line to be met. Similarly, much time and effort could have been spared if all copy was submitted legibly written, double spaced and typed, if possible.

One of the things we do want to do in a future issue is to give a full account of the Precipitous Bluff matter. Our readers will know that in the preliminary miners court hearing, the granting of the mining licence for the area was refused. Subsequently, we launched an expedition to PB and want to record our results.

'Cavers Aren't Really Careless - They Just Try Harder'

by Aleks Terauds.

The car is a necessity to the active caver: to store beer cans in the boot, keep souvenir cave mud on the seats, display helmets on back window ledges and to drive from cave sites to pubs for refreshments. Some of us use cars even to go to cave areas, but that is only incidental. However, when we become carless we really feel it. Which brings us to the point of this article, how careless can we be before we become carless?

There is a story told but, of course, without any truth in it, about a caver who rang up the Hydro Electric Commission to tell them about a hydro pole broken off about one foot from the ground, swinging in the wind, supported only by its wires. The H.E.C. thanked the caller profusely for his public spiritedness; the caller, because of natural modesty, refrained from revealing his name. The conversation finished, the caver staggered out of the phone booth, stepped into his slightly dented car and drove off. Some of those old VW's could certainly take it!

More recently, and this tale is, also, completely made up, another VW driver-caver blamed his blind navigator for not noticing that the road took a sharp turn to the left and kept going straight ahead. The barbed wire strands of the fence tore off a couple of bumper fixtures, the windscreen wipers, and left several deep scratch marks along the bonnet and roof of the car. A few well calculated turns of the steering wheel, a fast drive through the paddock and past the farm house (from the latter a woman's voice was heard to express harsh disapproval) and the caver drove out through the gateway back onto the road to proceed tranquilly to where ever he was going. Fortunately, the night's cloak of darkness shrouded the participants so that we may never know who really did what.

A caver who believes his car can take it was said to have been dared to change back into second gear while doing 55 m.p.h. He did. Three miles further on the steam from his exhaust pipe resembled World War II smoke screens. Motorists behind him were said to have pulled over to the side of the road. Another five miles and two gallons of water later the car ground to a stop with the radiator bone dry and water running out of the exhaust pipe. Still the caver was not worried. After all, it was only the third head gasket he had blown in five years and 80-odd thousand miles.

(The same bloke had a hard luck story about a drunken telegraph pole which a couple of years ago, at 4a.m. on New Year's Day, stepped out into the middle of the road and sideswiped him. This happened two hours after he had blown both his offside tyres on a walk-about footpath). All lies, of course.

There is no need to repeat the story about the caver who hunted rabbits with his vehicle. "There is one!" the cry went. The car shot forward, there was a thump and another bunny joined the evening's barbeque at Mole Creek. And, everybody knows how a caver underestimated the size of a pothole in the middle of a road and went down with his car. The rescue party got him out at four o'clock the following morning. Equally familiar must be the tale of how one of us keeps losing his four wheel drive job; they just won't go when the mud and slush is above the cabin floor level.

Reader, before you get the wrong idea of cavers, let me illustrate how gentle speleos really are. They love animals big and small, people fat and thin. Some even love cars. It's true, as this last fabrication must prove: A caver drove from the city of his residence to a metropolis near a prospective caving area in his beloved vehicle, took a hire car, drove it over mountain and river, track and paddock, through swamp and scrub and finally back to the hiring point where HIS car had been resting, recuperating, while the other was working the rough terrain. The caver drove his darling car home. The car thanked him. They are still together, and so very, very happy.

BACK ISSUES IN STOCK

The availability of back issues of the 'Southern Caver' is as follows:

Vol.1. No.1.	Nil	Vol.3. No.1.	3
No.2.	Nil	No.2.	25
No.3.	2	No.3.	10
No.4.	14	(Vol.3. had only 3 Nos.)	
Vol.2. No.1.	5	Vol.4. No.1.	2
No.2.	3	No.2.	15
No.3.	1		
No.4.	Nil		

Copies may be purchased from the Editors, price 25¢ each, plus 12¢ postage

A Visit to Rocky Cape National Park

by Mike (Tich) Cole.

Recently the first visit by the Society to the Rocky Cape National Park was undertaken as part of a trip to the Montagu and Redpa caving areas.

The park, which was proclaimed on the 21st June, 1967, consists of an area of 4,000 acres situated fifteen miles west of Wynyard fronting on Bass Strait extending from Rocky Cape in the west to Sisters Beach in the east and the area contains six aboriginal sea caves and five small grottos. We visited two of the sea caves named North and South Caves respectively.

The two caves were formed by the action of the sea when the previous sea level was about 70 to 100 feet higher than at present, presumably about 250 to 500 thousand years ago.

North Cave is 30 feet high, 12 feet wide, and is about 60 feet in depth, whilst South Cave is about 6 feet high at the entrance, increasing to 25 feet high inside and extending inwards 150 feet as a narrowing oblique cleft.

Both caves had been regularly occupied until about 300 years ago and then only occasionally until the extinction of the Tasmanian aboriginals. Large middens were evident at the entrance to both caves. They contained hundreds of shells, bones and heaps of stones. It was also interesting to note that the temperature in the caves was very much warmer than their limestone counterparts.

After visiting both caves and the surrounding sea shore we were of the opinion that the aboriginals no doubt lived quite a pleasant life and it was pleasing to note that apart from a recent bush fire the general park was unpolluted and presented a very tempting sea-scape.

Bibliography

The Tasmanian Tramp - No. 18 - January, 1968. (H.W.C.)

Aspects of Conservation in the Mole Creek Area

by Mike (Tich) Cole.

With the Precipitous Bluff issue being the first threat to one of our caving areas the Society has had to face since its inception, the conservation of other areas must be seriously considered as our main objective for the present and immediate future. Immediately, conservation of our premier caving area, Mole Creek, readily springs to mind. What problems exist and what has the Society done to preserve and protect this area? Unfortunately the answer to the latter portion of this question could be dealt with quite explicitly on a piece of paper the size of a bus ticket, so I shall endeavour to discuss the existing problems, to offer a few suggestions and to outline a campaign to preserve the area.

As the majority of the caves are situated in a well-populated rural area and are therefore well known to the public many instances of blatant vandalism have been witnessed. Two years ago, when almost out of Pyramid Cave after traversing the route from Cow Cave members of the Society were amazed to see a group of boy scouts collecting formation for their rock collections, and recently a thief was almost caught in Lynd's Cave with a bag on his shoulder which would have contained at least 20 to 30 pounds of booty. Action must be taken to prevent this, but when will the Society begin to act? Perhaps signs could be placed inside the caves with appropriate warnings. If there is no finance available I am sure co-operation could be sought from the local councils, State Tourist Department, local landowners and perhaps large business organisations in the State for financial assistance to build gates on the cave entrances. If positive action is not forthcoming the problem should at least be submitted to the Australian Speleological Federation for advice and assistance. Trips must also be organised to clean up the carbide dumps and rubbish that are so evident in caves such as Kubla Khan, and perhaps discussions with many of the landowners who are filling the entrances to many caves situated in dolines on their property with rubbish.

A threat has also appeared approximately a mile due West of the Mole Creek township on the Mersey River Valley. David Mitchell Estate Limited have began mining operations, and the large rock crushing plant, conveyor belts and the large portion of land already mined is clear evidence that they intend to be

around for quite a while. Whilst the area being mined has no caves of any significance; what will happen when the supply of limestone is exhausted is pure conjecture. Perhaps the hill with the magnificent little cave known as Toboggan Cave in it, being only about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile South East of the mining area may be next to go. Rock samples have already been taken from Wet Caves Hill.

Apart from the exploration of the Mole Creek area, the Southern Caving Society has not shown any inclination to act in matters concerning the conservation of the Mole Creek area. As the Society is now seven years old many questions lie unanswered. As an example, if a mining operation commenced mining the Wet Caves system what action could be taken by the Society to prevent this. Apart from one or two articles in different journals dealing with Speleology, the surveying of Kelly's Pot and a handful of photographs, what real evidence has the Society to show that most members have spent hundreds of hours underground in the system. Can we prevent a limestone mining concern by vaguely telling them that the hill to be mined is filled with a cave if a survey or other evidence is not available?

I am organising a "Save Mole Creek" campaign immediately and all future trips will be organised with this plan in mind. Pathways of fluorescent strips are to be laid on formation which parties cannot avoid in order to maintain the one route instead of several being used haphazardly and slowly destroying large sections of cave. These will be laid on such places as the "Golden Stairs" in "Croesus", and in "Kubla Khan", "Georgies Hall", and "Herberts Pot", etc. Also, signs advising parties of the correct route to take will be erected in all caves. All rubbish found in the caves and in the surrounding areas will be removed, all caves will be surveyed, entomological finds will be recorded, photographs will be catalogued and a complete dossier of the area is to be compiled. Reports on the campaign will be published regularly in the "Southern Caver" and the newsletter.

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED NOW!

AREA REPORTS

November 1 to January 31

The activities of the Society in the field during this period were varied and included a number of 'tourist' trips, some interesting scrub bashes, some surveying and a massive attempt involving other Australian speleo groups on the Precipitous Bluff limestone. The following areas were visited by our cavers (with the number of trips and the number of participants) : Mole Creek (6 trips, 31 participants); Hastings (7, 36); Montagu/Redpa (2, 7); Junee (2, 6); Trowutta (1,4); Flowery Gully (1, 4); Surprise Bay (1, 4); Gunns Plains (1, ?); Precipitous Bluff (1, 13).

According to the trip reports the purposes of the expeditions were :

Mole Creek

Mostly for 'tourism' and photography. New members were introduced to or older members revisited the following caves: Baldocks, Croesus, Georgies Hall, Honeycomb 1 and 1½, Kubla Khan, Shishkebab and Wet Caves. An exploratory trip went to Paragon Vaults in Herberts Pot.

Hastings

Some surveying, including the Newdegate Tourist Caves, touring in Wolff Hole and King George V, serious trip to Waterloo Swallett and an aborted experiment at fluorescening where 'in the dark of night the dye was mistakenly injected downstream instead of upstream of the manned station'.

Montagu/Redpa

Exploration and numbering of caves 'in (according to Kevin Kiernan) this the first organized caving trip to a caving area (Tasmanian) more distant than any other from Hobart'. The first cave visited had its two entrances

numbered Mg 208 and 202; one of the entrances had in it an old wooden ladder. The exploring party went through a decorated chamber containing three deep pools, the last of which had to be swum, then a fourth pool, a number of small chambers, crawls and the like to a further, decorated chamber containing many old bones on the floor. About 800ft of the cave were explored in the three hours underground. Five other entrances were numbered in subsequent surface work.

Junee

Surface work only, one of the trips accidentally so because the party was bushed in the bush at 2 a.m. during a rainstorm and could not find their way underground.

Trowutta

An exploratory party found eight caves.

Flowery Gully

Explored and numbered Vanishing Cave, FG 202 and Flowery Gully Cave, FG 201.

Surprise Bay

The following caves explored; the numbers are used for reference only as the party had no numbering tags and could not put on the official numbers: Beach Cave, SB 201: small passage 30ft long, 30ft above sea level, about 50 yards from the beach; SB 202: entrance hole 2ft in diam., cave leading downwards at an angle of 30 degr.; 202 is about 100yds from 201; SB 203, Surprise Arch: an arch about 20ft long close to the next cave, SB 204 which has an impressive entrance 20ft in diameter ending in a shallow chamber containing rounded limestone pebbles; there is next a 30ft long passage in which was seen a high aven with coloured flowstone.

Gunns Plains

A trip mainly to number caves, with some new work.

WELL, WELL, WELL!

If you glanced through the trip reports for the quarter, you may have noticed an apparent decline in activity. Appearances, however, can be deceptive, as much work was channelled into a novel way of raising urgently needed funds for the Society.

President John McCormack's method of raising a fast buck (in the form of a substantial cash donation) was to undertake to clean out a convict built well, about ninety feet deep, on a drought stricken Richmond property.

The task involved most members of the Society over several weekends. Those particularly active in masterminding the project were Bob Cockerill, John McCormack and Ant Sprent. Special mention must also be made of the great effort by John Ward, Lee Gleeson and Graeme Watt, who worked unchanged at the bottom of the shaft throughout the final clearing operation.

STOP PRESS

A finance committee has been appointed by the Executive to inquire into ways and means of raising funds. Committee members are A.Sprent, M.Cole, P.Andrews and Treasurer R.Mann. Several suggestions are already under consideration, of which more later.

ERRATUM

On p.20, please read Mg 201 instead of Mg.208.

SOCIETY NOTES:

by Ron Mann

Greg Blake (ex S.C.S.) returned to Tassie for a short holiday and showed up at a meeting to renew old acquaintances. Greg stayed only a couple of weeks and is now back in the land of Kiwis.

Steve Street walked into the clubrooms during the film evening completely surprising everyone. Steve has been in New Zealand on a working holiday and returned home via Qld., N.T. and W.A. He intends to stay for a while, although there are rumours that he plans a trip to the caving areas of Europe and U.K. with Ron Mann.

We were pleased also to welcome Victorian exile Gray Wilson who visited us briefly before walking in Cradle Mt.

Our congratulations to Kay and Barry James on the arrival of a daughter - Teena Ann.

The P.B. Barrel on Jan. 25th was a great success. Australian Caving was well represented by such names as John Dunkley and Greg Middleton. Among clubs represented were S.C.S., T.C.C., U.Q.S.S., C.Q.S.S.; N.Z.S.S., S.S.S., UNSWSS, and SUSS. My apologies for any omissions, but I did not get to meet everyone of the considerable number present.
