

SOUTHERN



C A V E R

■ VOL.5 NO.1 ■

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"SOUTHERN CAVER"

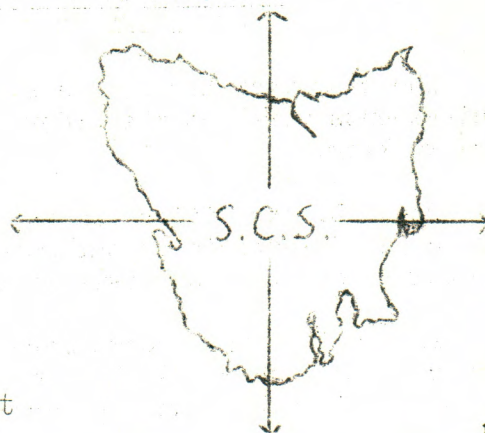
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July, 1973

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PRESIDENTS REPORT

Delivered at the A.G.M. on May 2nd, 1973.

The past year has been a successful one for the Society. Great achievements were not the order, however, members were none the less hard working.

The F.B. expedition was successful and our thanks to all who participated, especially our good Mainland friends. However this important conservation issue is unfortunately not yet won.

The Society has become more involved in Conservation matters that require much research, time and effort. We cannot expect to carry on this aspect unless more members assist.

Surveying is now coming to the forefront in the club activities. This is good to see and we must continue with this important aspect of Speleology. We need members to become involved in projects and to see they are completed and fully documented.

Our problem is we have too many caves and not enough enthusiastic workers to record the necessary information in our records. This state of affairs must urgently change.

The well cleaning operation was most successful resulting in a donation of \$200.00 to Society funds, with both enjoyment and knowledge being the reward of the very hard working members who participated.

Single rope technique is gathering supporters and we now have 600ft. of American "Blue Water" caving rope on order, that will be a mile-stone in the Society's history.

Search and rescue equipment received much discussion, and our request to the Government to provide the necessary items has had some results in that the Police Department Search and Rescue Squad have requested a combined recommendation from climbing and caving clubs. This has been done and we now await the outcome. However, we should not rely on this but continue with the proposed purchase of our own equipment for training purposes.

It is most heartening to see the increasing numbers of new and prospective members coming to the meetings, and the past year has seen the Society with a record breaking number of financial members.

Just a few brief statistics: The number of Meetings for the year was twenty six and average attendance was 9.5. Visitors averaged 1.3 over twelve months and in the last eight months the average rose to 2.5.

Trips have been many, however our recording system became defunct in the last two months. Why? You can guess!

Your support on an even more enthusiastic note is needed in the ensuing year, so please devote a little more of your time to recording and assist in the general running of your Society.

J. McCormack.

TREASURER'S REPORT

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Balance Forward	110.96	Southern Caver	47.64
Subs & A.S.F.	94.00	Advertising	3.52
Trip Fees	85.00	Rent	156.00
Southern Caver	35.25	Insurance	19.78
Badges	6.95	A.S.F. Subs	39.00
Misc. (inc. Donations)	274.41	Misc.	73.95
Bank Interest	3.20	Post Box Rental	5.00
		Subscriptions	7.50
		Cheque Books	3.00
		Equipment	103.39
		Balance Forward 1973/74	150.99
	<u>609.77</u>		<u>609.77</u>

<u>Bank Reconciliation</u>		<u>Society Funds</u>	
Cash Balance at Bank	30.4.73 168.99	Bank Balance at 30.4.73	168.99
Less Unpresented cheque	18.00	Interest bearing deposit	229.70
		Conservation Account	38.00
	<u>150.99</u>		<u>436.69</u>

The well cleaning operation raised \$200 and kept the wolf from the door during 1972/73. However as the rent on the Clubroom is a major item of expenditure, a concerted effort will be necessary to raise funds in 1973/74 to keep the balance healthy.

My thanks to Dave Elliott who audited the books.

R. Mann.

QUARTERMASTERS REPORT

At the 30th April, 1973, the Southern Caving Society owned the following equipment.

LADDERS

30 foot - 11 (1 damaged)
20 foot - 1
10 foot - 1
8 foot - 1

Material for 2 x 50' ladders on hand.

ROPE

360' - 1 length
240' - 1 length
120' - 3 lengths
60' - 1 length
300' - 2 lengths Blue Water
Kernmantel (on order)

HEADERS

30' - 4 (1 damaged)

SURVEY EQUIPMENT

Suunto Compass
Suunto Inclinator
Fibreglass Tape (100')
Compass/Inclinometer Holder

MISCELLANEOUS

Cloggers - 2 pairs
Ladder Bags - 6
Fluorescence - 15 lb.
Numbering Equipment
Duplicator

An effort should be made early this year to construct the ladders. The two 300' lengths of Kernmantel rope on order should satisfy our S.R.T. enthusiasts, for a while at least.

R. Mann.

HONORARY MEMBERS ELECTED FOR 1973/74

Mr. & Mrs. D.W. Frankcombe, Maydena.
Mr. R.L. Graue, Hastings Caves.
Inspector T.E. Howard, Taroom.
Mr. J.N. Howe, Mole Creek.
Mr. J.N. Jennings M.A., Canberra City, A.C.T.
Mrs. Lambert, Mole Creek.
Mr. G.R. Linger, Caveside.
Mr. R.E. Martin, Caveside.
Mr. G.J. Melville, Mole Creek.
Mr. & Mrs. M. Oliver, Chudleigh.
Mr. Richardson, Sandford.
Mr. T. Richardson, Mole Creek.
Mr. C.J. Shaw, Mole Creek.
Mr. & Mrs. Roy Skinner, Hastings.
Mr. D. Turner, Rosebay, Tas.
Dr. J. Wane, Lenah Valley.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

<u>PATRON</u>	Mr. R.D. Baker
<u>PRESIDENT</u>	John McCormack (Phone 729380)
<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u>	Bob Cockerill (Phone 437623)
<u>SECRETARY</u>	Mike Cole
<u>TREASURER</u>	Ron Mann (Phone 232760)
<u>EDITORS</u>	Aleks Terauds & Dave Elliott
<u>S. & R. OFFICER</u>	Bob Cockerill (Phone 437623)
<u>ASSISTANT S. & R. OFFICER</u>	Leigh Gleeson
<u>QUARTERMASTER</u>	Ron Mann
<u>SOCIAL COMMITTEE</u>	Delia Maloney & Margaret Russell
<u>RECORDS OFFICER</u>	Leigh Gleeson
<u>ARCHIVIST</u>	Judy Sprent
<u>MAGAZINE COMMITTEE</u>	Ron Mann & Graeme Watt

STOP PRESS: A NEW FEDERATION?

An informal meeting between senior members of T.C.C., S.C.S. and T.C.C.N.B. was hosted by Albert Goede on June 16th to discuss an idea put forward by Frank Brown of T.C.C. N.B. that a Tasmanian Speleological Federation be established.

The Federation would consist of delegates from the three A.S.F. clubs whose functions would be all aspects of cave documentation and to speak with a united voice on such matters as conservation and search and rescue on a state wide basis.

It was agreed to present the proposal for approval in principle to the three clubs and for details of functions, terms of reference and election of office bearers to be

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

THE PRECIPITOUS BLUFF SNOWBALL

by Kevin Kiernan

In the Devonport Mining Wardens Court on December 4th, 1972, a former chief geologist for the Tasmanian Department of Mines claimed to have staked a datum peg on 17th December, 1971, indicating one corner of an area for which a special prospectors licence was sought by Mineral Holdings (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. Mines Department officials marked the peg as lying on the Prion Beach sandspit on the South Coast track, but no walking parties managed to find the 3ft. high peg on the featureless spit. Twelve months and several statutory declarations after its alleged placement the former Mines Department Chief Geologist suggested in court that it was in some thick scrub and would be hard to find. It could not be shown that the law had not been complied with, nor could it be seen that it had.

The Wardens Court hearing was won by the conservation side. Day long secret discussions ensued between the Mines Department and another of its former chief geologists now also affiliated with Mineral Holdings (Australia) Pty. Ltd., on whose behalf he acted. The outcome was an appeal to the Tasmanian Supreme Court. An initial determination in chambers was lost by Mineral Holdings, but when the reserved judgement of the full appeal was handed down the company was victorious on Friday June 8th, 1973. Mr. Justice Nettlefold found that the Mines Warden had no jurisdiction to refuse the application of Mineral Holdings, and that the objectors to the application had no legal right to object, the implications of the latter finding threatening to be felt throughout the country.

Mr. Justice Nettlefold said that "a consideration of the public interest in the broad sense is the function of the Minister, not the Mines Warden", whose sole job it was to determine whether the objectors had a legal interest in the disputed land. The decision refutes that "a mere licence" confers any legal interest on the part of the licence-holder.

The decision to grant or refuse the application must be made by the Minister upon the recommendation of the Director of Mines. The confusion appears to have arisen out of the Act not stating expressly what was to be the effect of a wardens decision. In 1958 the power to recommend in relation to Special Prospectors' Licences was transferred from the Warden to the Director. There exists no right of appeal for conservationists on points of fact.

The decision now rests with the Minister, Tasmanian Premier, Mr. Eric Reece, whose attitude to conservation is well known. It is up to this one man from the west coast, himself formerly a miner and a person to whom no doubt, the denuded hills of Queenstown and sludge banks of the King River are an accepted part of mining, to evaluate and balance the conservation and mining cases.

Mr. Reece, together with Agriculture Minister Lloyd Costello (in charge of national parks) has commented that he believes mining and aesthetics may be compatible in the P.B. area. Mr. Reece suggested a screen of trees could be planted to hide any scarring. Presumably the instant mashed potato people have progressed sufficiently to be able to immediately provide trees of sufficient height to cover the 300ft. high near vertical escarpment proposed as the quarry site. Trees, however, could never hide the intrusion.

Mining regulations, state that an application for a Special Prospectors Licence runs out in December, and if not renewed by January 8th it expires. The Mines Department have admitted privately that Mineral Holdings have not renewed. Another group, Matrix Mining, applied earlier this year for a Special Prospectors Licence at P.B. in realisation of this situation, but was refused on a technicality. Subsequently one of its Directors, Mr. J.P. Kennedy, well known among conservationists for his attacks on the campaign to save Lake Pedder, applied on a personal basis. Despite this the Mines Department continue to treat the application of Mineral Holdings, a director of which was formerly Mines Department Chief in Launceston, as the current one.

Meanwhile Federal Environment and Conservation Minister Dr. Moss Cass has suggested that to allow mining at P.B. would be like quarrying the Australian War Memorial for its sandstone. While the analogy may or may not lack strength, Dr. Cass made quite clear his attitude to the Supreme Court decision, as based on a point of law, but a very old one.

Concurrently, the story gained ground that the Tasmanian Government proposed to include P.B. within the South-West National Park, but with provisions in the management plan to allow mining. The situation would be somewhat analagous to that following the initial moments of the Pedder furore, when to placate conservationists the government extended the Pedder National Park to include a large area of the S.W., but then gave the go-ahead to the obliteration of almost one third of its area.

So while the objectors to the Mineral Holdings application searched for and eventually found grounds of appeal to the full bench of the Supreme Court on points of law rather than fact, they and others also busied themselves objecting to the Kennedy application.

Thus S.C.S. has now taken its first steps into the field of conservation campaigning with the lodging of its Objection to the Kennedy proposal. Other objections seem likely to come from numerous outdoors clubs, at least one Young Labour branch, and perhaps the Tasmanian University Union, at last taking an active interest in the environment. Significantly, this is also the first instance where a major political party in Tasmania has committed itself to the conservation side of an issue, with the latest statement by the State Liberal Opposition to the effect that there is no room for compromise at P.B.

The campaign now threatens to really "lift the lid off" Tasmania. On top of the current furore the Lake Pedder Enquiry Committee is due to report in the next couple of weeks and is strongly tipped to recommend to the Federal Government that the lake should be drained and funds offered to restore Lake Pedder to its former condition. For the Federal Government not to act upon the recommendations of its own Enquiry could be severely embarrassing, and for it to act may result in a head on clash with the Tasmanian Government with which it has already collided heavily over Pedder a few times this year. A Federal Pedder victory could strengthen the hand of Dr. Cass for the P.B. dispute.

Coupled with various other disputes and political party expulsions, there is clearly nothing terribly unusual happening in Tasmania at present.

THE MONTAGU KARST

by Kevin Kiernan

The Montagu area is the most north-westerly of Tasmania's known karst, and the most distant, from the State capital. It is located a linear distance of 7 km south-west of the township of Montagu, in a forestry area the concessions to which are held by A.P.M. Ltd., which company's permission is required for access. Logging roads reach to within 100 m of the entrances. The nearest other known cave area is that at Redpa, 20 km to the south.

The caves were presumably first discovered by timber cutters, and evidence of previous useage exists in the form of an old timber ladder on the descent of 1 m into the entrance of MU202. That entrance was visited some years ago by a member of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club and a fauna collection was undertaken. More recently, that cave and another nearby were fully investigated on two separate occasions by S.C.S. parties in late 1972 and early 1973 resulting in the exploration of significant extensions in both cases, one involving swimming.

The area is one of generally subdued relief, with flat and occasionally swampy to gently undulating plains country, heavily cloaked in a sclerophyll-~~fi~~tree based forest subject to annual precipitation rates of the order of 110 mm p.a. and is drained northwards into Bass Strait by the Montagu River.

The area consists of two isolated and wholly limestone remnant hillocks, both rising no more than 10 m above the surrounding land surface. These are moderately elongate north-south, being some 200 m x 300 m in extent. Their surface is heavily etched with numerous small channels leading into the caves below. The southern hill contains a development of tiny pots just south of the known limit of the main cave in that hill. Broken limestone outcrops are visually more dominant than what ground level vegetation exists. The limestone is gently dipping and of unknown age, but is similar in appearance to the Ordovician Gordon Limestone. No other outcrops have been encountered beyond these two main ridges and local information is that such do not exist.

Cave development is concentrated within the eastern and northern flanks of the ridges. Low level entrances close to the level of the plains are in most cases the only negotiable means of access. Inside, the caves are perhaps surprisingly spacious. Passage profile is generally fairly wide and flattened. Immediately inside the entrances the floors commence to slope downwards to a level approximately 1 m below the surrounding flat land at which point deep pools of apparently static water are generally present. Interior drainage is all to this general level, being particularly evident in Main Cave.

Stalactitic decoration is fairly plentiful but concentrated in wetter sections of the caves, and is generally active. Some drier passages are similar to those at Redpa in terms of both size, shape and floor and speleothem type and appearance, but sections of the caves at Montagu contain somewhat larger chambers and passages than those occurring at the former locality.

The floors are generally fairly smooth, consisting of thick deposits of cave earth, reddish brown in colour. Incision by a small streamlet in MU203 has exposed a depth of some 2 m of this earth, with numerous bones present throughout this depth. This is a potential source of interest although it may be that the deposit is a fan over broken talus. Bones collected from the surface layers of such deposits in both caves have been few in number but have proved quite recent, representing predominantly the Tasmanian Forester Kangaroo (Macropus) and another hitherto unidentified species.

Cave fauna collection has been undertaken to some extent. Parrotettix goedei Rich has been recorded from Main Cave and other crickets probably of the same species, have recently been collected from MU203. Millepedes and other life apparently of surface origin are of great abundance in entrance regions.

Despite a lack of great size then, the Montagu area is still one of considerable interest.

Further, the impression generally gained of this part of the far N.W. is that there exists the potential for other small but highly cavernous limestone areas such as Montagu and Redpa, which by virtue of their area insignificance and lack of great topographic prominence in terms of relief, combined with the forest cover still present over much of the intermediate area, have escaped detection to the present date.

MU. 201-202

MAI CAVE

Montagu, N.W. Tasmania

Scale 1:500

LEGEND:

△ large stalactite

⊙ large stalagmite

→ direction of flow

2 variable detritus/ice free

△ 2 talus / mud

○ 2 pool (ice surface / water surface)

∞ vertical drop

1 2 ceiling height / water depth (m)

○ 2 surface boundary - edge of containing hollow

blocked by mud

daylight visible

blocked by mud

very slippery - steep mud slope with flintstone base

△ blocked by mud and talus

daylight through narrow slot

approx direction grid north

MUSEUM

MUSEUM COMPLEX of entrances

old timber ladder

CIC Gr 2 Kiv R. 201-202 31 Dec 72

1012 201-202 / 1012 201-202

large stalactites/flowstone
direction of floor slope

vertical drop

ceiling height (m.)

talus/mud/vegetable debris

surface formline: edge of
limestone hillock containing
cave.

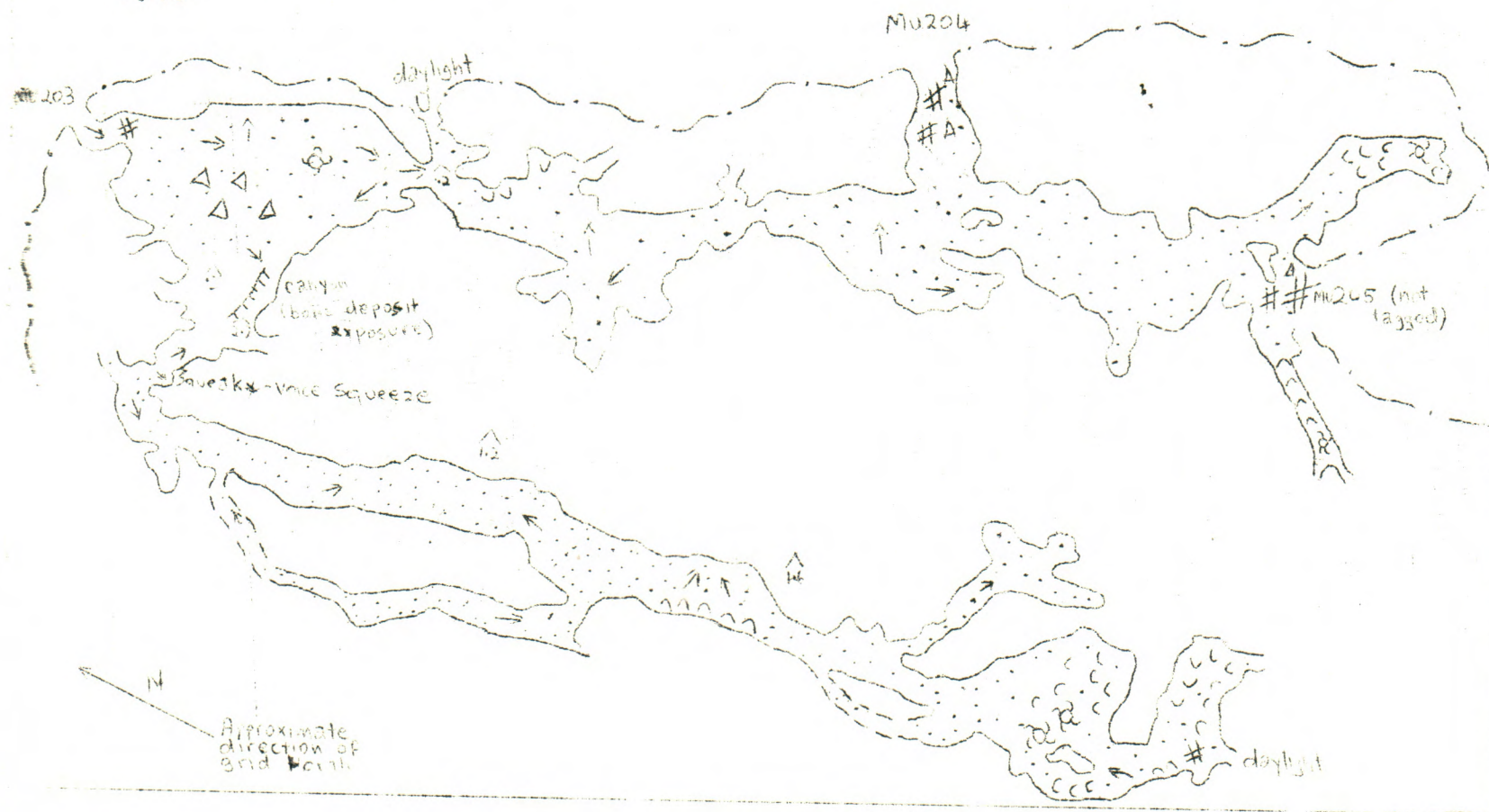
MU.203-204-205

Montagu, N.W. Tasmania

CRG. Gr 2, KW Kiernan 17 FEB 73 MAP NO. 7 MU203-4-5.5051.

Scale 2 1 0 2 4 6 8 10 metres

1:200



July, 1973

(11)

Southern Caver

"...This case simply reflects the rather sudden awakening of the Australian people to what is happening to their natural heritage"

...H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh
in Pedder Papers.

Tasmania over the years has shown a remarkable facility for producing a "cause celebre" capable of making Australia wide, and occasionally international, headlines. The flooding of Lake Pedder has become the "cause celebre" of conservationists on both an Australia wide and an international front. It is not too much to say that the Pedder affair, however it is eventually resolved, will influence the future of conservation in many countries.

A series of disgraceful decisions by successive State Governments at the instigation of their master, the Hydro-Electric Commission, has resulted in the inundation of the lake, and the loss of a priceless national asset.

No one who has visited Pedder or examined the press reports of the evidence presented to the Federal Government's Pedder Inquiry Committee will deny the truth of this statement. I have travelled both in Australia and overseas, but count myself fortunate to have seen Lake Pedder. Tasmania is one of the most beautiful places in the world and we must use every effort to keep it that way. Trading an asset like Pedder for a ten per cent part of a power scheme for which there is no market is a poor bargain indeed and an indictment of those in high places who know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

With the establishment of the Federal Government's Committee of Inquiry, the glare of publicity has again focused on the issue.

Many members of the Society as individuals have long opposed the flooding, and feeling within the Society has hardened to the extent that as a group we wrote to the Committee of Inquiry supporting the proposition that the lake be restored to its original condition.

About a week after the Premier withdrew his Government's co-operation from the inquiry, a letter from the Society was published in the Examiner newspaper (April 26th, 1973) expressing "firm opposition to the flooding" and to "the principle involved in the intentional destruction of a national park". The letter concluded with the comment "Cave reserves and National Parks containing caves with which our Society is directly concerned will obviously lie in a shadow if Pedder goes under".

This brings us to a consideration of the future for conservation in this State. At the time of writing, the Inquiry Committee's findings have not been announced, and even if they should prove to be favourable, the problem of forcing State Government acceptance of any proposition that may be made by the Federal Government remains to be solved.

In the past, conservationists have tended to be mild mannered nature lovers not anxious to engage in the rough and tumble of political in-fighting. The Pedder issue, however, has produced a militant conservation group (the Lake Pedder Action Committee) and in turn a political party, The United Tasmania Group, with conservation as a basic plank of policy. (Another 'first' for the State).

This group, formed just before the last State election, was not successful in gaining representation in Parliament although one candidate failed by only a few votes. Much mileage has been made of this by those who favour the H.E.C.-Government stand, but there is no doubt that lack of finance and the then prevailing economic climate of unemployment and general gloom were responsible for this failure rather than the principles for which it stood.

That Precipitous Bluff has not so far been lost (though this is again currently before the Court), may in a large measure be due to the psychological effects of the Pedder furore.

It may be argued that secrecy in the case of Pedder was ultimately responsible for its loss, as by the time significant public opinion had been generated it was already too late. We should think seriously about the value of publicity for major caving discoveries.

Ultimately, however, the answer must lie in use of the ballot box. Governments must be made aware that outdoor groups will not tolerate interference with national parks and reserves. Once declared, we must have a satisfactory guarantee that they will remain undisturbed for the enjoyment of future generations, and that never again in Tasmania will the vandalism practised at Pedder in the name of progress be repeated.

Bibliography: Pedder Papers (Australian Conservation Federation)
Lake Pedder-Why a National Park Must be Saved
(Lake Pedder Action Committee)
Where No Road Goes (Bob Mossel)

EASTER TRIP TO MOLE CREEK

by M. Cole.

The Party and Clubs represented were:

- S.C.S. - M. Cole (Trip Leader, S. Harris, S. Street, G. Watt,
C. Harris, M. Russell and D. Maloney.
T.C.C. - M. Vermeulen. N.B.T.C.C. - R. & L. Schmidt.
C.S.S. - N. Fisher, R. Curtis and friend. B.M.S.C. - T. Cornehan
and family.
V.S.A. - N. White, M. & R. Pierce, G. Wilson, B. Harper, L. Williams,
B. Franz, M. James and R. Frank.

Friday, 20.4.73 - Wet Cave: Arrived at Mole Creek in the early afternoon to find that the Mole Creek was running a "banker" with the water being only about 2 feet beneath the camp site bridge and therefore about six feet deep instead of the normal one foot.

The majority of the V.S.A. and C.S.S. members had decided to don their wet suits and survey from Wet Cave to Georgie's Hall. At about 5p.m. the survey party arrived and reported that they had surveyed up Wet Cave to a point immediately where the stream enters the Great Hall and due to the extreme depth of the water could not go any further. It was noted that many large waterfalls were flowing into Wet Cave from the "hill" side of the cave. A future trip was immediately planned to take a scaling pole to these upper levels. The weather was poor all day with rain showers falling intermittently.

Eight hours spent on the survey.

Saturday, 21.4.73 - Georgies Hall: A large party surveyed from the creek passage in the Great Hall up to Root Hall and then from the syphon through Eldorado 2, and Eldorado 1 to the cave entrance. This completed the through survey from Wet Cave to Georgies with only the creek section from the syphon to the Great Hall being omitted. Whilst the survey was being completed several members of the party spent a couple of hours taking photographs in Eldorado 1 and 2 and I spent about two hours marking a reflectorised route through Eldorado 1. The total time underground was nine hours.

Kubla Khan: A party of five led by S. Harris entered Kubla at 4p.m. The object was a very quick trip to the Forbidden City to clear out any rubbish in the area. A ladder bag, tins and other junk were found and brought out. A 6lb. hammer, rock drill bits and a cold chisel which had resided near the sump for a number of years were also brought out. If anyone wants to claim the hammer see Nick White. The party left the cave at 10p.m. The total time underground was six hours.

Sunday 22.4.73 - Westmoreland: A party of eight wandered up to this cave, but did not enter due to the spectacular amount of water entering the cave. The team then went to Herberts Pot to rig the ladder pitch for the following days exploration.

Shishkebab At the same time a party comprising of mainly V.S.A. members surveyed Shishkebab as far as the first lake beneath the talus.

The weather continued to be poor throughout the weekend with at least five tents being blown down by the gusty conditions on Sunday night.

Monday 23.4.73 - Herberts Pot: At 12.45p.m. ten enthusiastic cavers entered the pot. Five under the leadership of S. Harris decided to explore upstream and the rest of the party with C. Harris leading went downstream.

Upstream the water level was very high, with the waterfall pool consisting of a boiling cauldron of foaming white fury, huge piles of foam and the whole chamber being filled with mist. The party visited Paragon Vaults and explored a short passage to the left of the main passage just before reaching the turn off to Paragon Vaults. It was followed into an area about 80 feet high with water dribbling from the roof. The chamber was well worth climbing but the party was unable to do so without bolts and pitons.

Downstream the team moved very fast and found sand passages near the syphon but is not sure whether they are the same passages as found by Fry, Harris and Blake (S.C.S.) several years ago. A tributary passage was also followed up, which had a good deal of water coming down that stopped further exploration. No obvious way could be found past the syphon.

Time spent underground - upstream team - 10 hours
downstream team - 7 hours

Cow Cave to Pyramid: A party of four (V.S.A.) and three (S.C.S.) had a very enjoyable photographic jaunt through this system. Time spent underground was three hours.

Tuesday 24.4.73 - Herberts Pot: A party of V.S.A. members went downstream to the syphon. Photographs of the general cave were taken while four members went around the syphon, but were unfortunately stopped by a difficult rock fall that they could not scale without a climbing pole.

Georgies Hall: I led a party of four into this cave once again, and completed the track marking through El Dorado 1.

During the next day and night V.S.A. were washed out from the camp site and caving was temporarily halted while they moved camp. Members of this Society visited Maracoopa on a tourist trip on 27th and also took photographs in Kubla Khan on 28th. The following day the mainlanders returned home determined to return with better camping equipment next year.

Summary of Activities:

1. About 15 pounds of rubbish was taken from Kubla Khan.
2. Survey from Wet Cave to Georgies Hall completed, (total time taken approximately 17 hours). A SILVA No. 12 compass, SUUNTO inclinometer and 100 foot tape were used. A fluorescent chemical light was used very successfully as a survey marker.
3. A reflectorised path was put through Eldorado 1 in Georgies Hall with about 12 markers being used. The route to the Syphon and through the base of Eldorado 2 is to be completed on May 19th and 20th.
4. Two thirds of Shishko was surveyed.
5. Co-operation between all clubs and societies represented was excellent and S.C.S. was pleased with the assistance given by all members present.

The Future:

1. Dangerous cave will be surveyed on May 19th and 20th.
2. A surface survey to link the entrances of all the caves in the Wet Caves system and the surveying of Herberts Pot are planned to be completed before Christmas 1973.

PUBLIC MEETING; PRECIPITOUS BLUFF CAMPAIGN;

Will be held TUESDAY 31st July 1973 Hobart Town Hall

-Slides and Speakers

Mineral Holdings (Australia) Pty. Ltd. are being invited to put their side of the case. The attendance of all S.C.S. members and friends is requested.

N.B. Protect Precipitous Bluff Car Stickers now available at five cents each.

AREA REPORTS

by Kevin Kiernan

MARIA ISLAND

Maria Island was visited for the first time by Society members, in a combined trip with the T.C.C. and Tas. University Geographical Society.

One cave was explored and named Tear Flesh Chasm. It is developed in extremely fossiliferous Darlington Limestone (Permian) and represents the largest cave known in the Permian limestones of Tasmania (which are generally not cavernous) with a length of some 170m. It is basically a sea cave, but with a small series of upper level passages containing flowstone and some stalactitic decoration. Prospects remain for further exploration. (See map).

Nearby another sea cave (Pig Face Cavern) 20m long was discovered, adjacent to which was found a large fan of travertine leading down a cliff face from an inaccessible hole beneath an overhang some 35m. above the base. The party retired to the convict built brick sewers beneath the old Darlington Settlement.

One party made a 36km return walking trip to Reidle Bay one afternoon, only to be prevented from entering the caves at that locality by a high tide.

The limestone of Maria Island has given rise to some interesting caves which basically represent marine processes but of a greater size and complexity than is generally the case with sea caves. More trips are warranted to this idyllic winter locality.

FRANCISTOWN

A further trip was made to this area to collect specimens of cave crickets occurring in a small sandstone cave.

IDA BAY

A visit to Bradley Chesterman Cave found the stream very dirty and matches unwilling to say alight. Subsequent investigations revealed that a recent non-speleo visitor to the cave had become ill after his visit. It was hypothesised that pollutants may be reaching the cave from the limestone quarry which lies in the head-water area. A second visit some weeks later found the cave to be in fairly good condition. Heavy rain prior to the first visit may have made the difference. The Society is considering the installation of a warning sign.

One attempt was made to visit Mystery Creek Cave but the party found the creek in full flood and was forced to abandon its visit.

Loons Cave was visited by a party who laddered in through the top hole and swam out via the bottom entrance. A small extension was discovered at the far end of a major side passage near the upstream rockfall. It ended in a high flowstone aven but proved memorable for containing some particularly attractive flowstone, and numerous small heligmites rising from it.

PRECIPITOUS BLUFF

A party of three attempted to reach Vanishing Falls, which lies approximately 4km. north-east of the summit of the Bluff. The Salsbury River drops 250ft. over a spectacular waterfall into the hole and resurges some 3km. to the north. It is well known to light aircraft pilots but no ground party has yet penetrated the thick scrub, steep terrain, and unreliable weather to investigate it at close quarters.

This party, which tried to reach it via a high level route from Ida Bay beyond Mt. La Perouse and over Mt. Bisdee struck blizzard conditions and was snow-bound for three days, eventually struggling back to civilisation in gale force winds which necessitated crawling on all fours across some of the more exposed mountain ridges.

This is perhaps the ultimate in big unexplored entrances in Tasmania's south-west wilderness but more parties will probably be demoralised before it is finally explored.

BLACKMANS BAY

A party visited small sea caves in Permian marine mudstones and practised S.R.T. techniques during a day trip to this area.

JUNEE-FLORENTINE

A number of new holes have been discovered in the Junee area which appear to lie at a greater elevation than any to date found in the region. One of the most interesting discoveries has been a large swallet at the head of a limestone gorge, hitherto unexplored. Winter usually sees an upsurge of interest in closer areas such as Junee, and this year looks like being no exception. Surface exploration is currently swinging past the steep flanks of Wherrets Lookout into the exciting area of major valleys towards Chrisps Road, where the biggest streams, and hopefully major caves, should lie. With other holes such as Grot Grovel still awaiting exploration the winter looks like being busy.

TEAR-FLESH CHASM

Maria Island, off Eastern Tasmania

ASF Map No. 7MI1SCS1

C.R.G. Gr. 2

Scale 1:500.

0 5 10 15 20 25
Metres

- surface formline
- height of ceiling
- depth of water
- ## vegetable debris
- UUU flowstone with gours

Plan

Notes:

The cave is developed in a gently landward dipping shore platform of Darlington Limestone (Permian)

AA talus

2 vertical face and height

ooo rounded rocks

--- roof-line

o vertical entrances

---HWN--- high tide level

o areas of stalactitic decoration

ridge of poorly consolidated sediment
max. elevation 20m.asl.

KKiernan 30MAY73

Other activity at Junee-Florentine in the past quarter has also included the exploration of more small holes in the Florentine Valley near JF254.

HASTINGS

Surveying, surface and underground exploration together with water-tracing have occupied time in the Hastings area in recent months.

Water connection between Hot Springs Ck at the Newdegate Bridge, and the rising near the Beattie track has been established. This underground meander cut-off occurs over a linear distance of 500m. Jack Daltons Blue Lake, a sheer sided 10m deep collapse formed entirely in river gravels, lies not far from the general trend of this drainage.

The developing question is from what level surface drainage in Hot Springs Creek is lost to underground routes. In varying weather conditions this creek may disappear at any one of numerous shallow depressions between the upper edge of the dolomite and the caves Road bridge near Chestermans Road. A programme of testing these sinks to determine their relationship to the Beattie Track efflux is planned.

A small pothole, H208 Aquamire, lies several hundred metres upstream of Newdegate Cave on the northern bank of Hot Springs Creek. It is generally blocked by deep pools of water at a depth of some 15m. One report exists of the pools having been found dry, but estimates of the depth attained before time forced a halt are extremely inconsistent, varying between 20m. and 50m. The relationship of Aquamire to Mystery Creek in Newdegate Cave has tended to be grossly over-simplified. It is tidy and convenient to suggest Aquamire as the source, but it now seems likely, however, that no such singular situation exists, but rather a complex network drawing water from several sources. Mystery Creek commences to flow when high flow conditions exist in Hot Springs Creek.

To further complicate the picture, a small swallet lies at the head of Fossil Valley, halfway between Newdegate and Aquamire. This was mapped during the quarter. Prospects for further exploration remain. To test any possible contribution to Mystery Creek 0.25kg of flourescein was injected into this swallet but a 10 hour watch in Newdegate proved inconclusive, as did surface activated charcoal detectors in Hot Springs Creek at the Newdegate track.

In addition to investigation of these aspects of the area, surface exploration has been conducted on the Permian along the top of Cave Hill, in search of a reported large collapse, and down hill of Chestermans Road in the Wolfhole area.

Most of King George V Cave has been surveyed, with a later trip discovering at its innermost extremities a near vertical aven some 33m in height capped with Permian Tillite, which occurs at the base of the Permian in the area. Tight squeezes leading to passages in two directions will be pushed on the next trip to the area. This discovery ranks as one of the most interesting at Hastings in recent years. (See map).

SPHINX ROCK

A small party visited this locality to practice single rope techniques.

A NEW FEDERATION?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5;

dealt with at a seminar to be held at the Society's club rooms on July 21st.

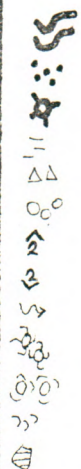
Properly handled, this could prove to be one of the most significant advances in Tasmanian Speleology in recent years, and further developments are keenly awaited.

D.J.Elliott

EDITOR'S NOTE;

Our apologies to Terry Corcoran for mis-spelling his name on page 14.

(magnetic)



passage outline
straw stalactites

aven

mud and silt

talus

gravel

height of ceiling

depth of water

stream (flow direction indicated)

principle stalactites

stalagmites

gouged flowstone

pool

entrance
gate

aven
with
waterfall

signatures

swamp

see also
map of
cave
system

KING GEORGE V CAVE

Hastings, Tasmania.

Scale: 1:500

0 5 10 15 20 25 30
metres

ASF MAP NO.7H214SCS1.

K. Kiernan 17 JUN 73.

Traverse CRG Gr.5

Detail CRG Gr.2

Surveyed by members of the
Southern Caving Society,
May, 1973.

All distances metric.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

by D.Elliott

The editorial by Aleks Terauds that appeared in the last issue of the Southern Caver (Vol. 4 No. 4) has provoked a spirited response from two of our readers, and we are pleased to publish their views in our "Letters to the Editor" section.

Those of us who have been involved over a long period in the production of our magazine have always intended that it should be much more than a mere vehicle for detailing trip reports and club gossip. There should be room for all shades of opinion within the Society and provision for amicable debate on contentious issues. A lively Correspondence Section is an indication that we are succeeding in our objective.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

As a member of the Southern Caving Society I wish to denounce the reckless editorial appearing in Southern Caver V.4/4.

It must be realised that the published editorial consisted of the opinions of one man - the Editor, and in no way reflected the general mood among most of the other members - it is possibly this mood that the Editor is reacting against. The prime catalyst which forced the Editors pen to paper may have been this club's letter to the Examiner (26/4/73) expressing dismay at the flooding of Lake Pedder, and more specifically, announcing support for the Federal Inquiry Committee.

The writing contained many sloppy generalisations and even some irresponsible statements (to be pointed out later). As a whole the editorial was a bad piece of writing (e.g. indiscriminate not undiscriminatory) which was so vague as to be almost meaningless.

The generalisations include the lumping together of all "conservationists", the Editor claiming that their gospel is "all progress leads to destruction and all advancement to the eventual death of mankind". Well I suppose a number of people feel this way but an intelligent conservationist does not. Although we can twist the word progress to mean several things, the Editor implies a materialistic - economic progress, the ultimate benefits of which are being questioned by many. To recognise and publicize the problems of environmental abuse is the first step to recovery.

The statement that we must support governmental actions that "improve our standard of living" is absolute crap! What standard do we want? The editor's standard of living and mine are very comfortable. Surely the problem is more equitable distribution. Raising G.N.P. and abandonment of strict environmental legislation in Tasmania to attract industry won't ensure this.

The Editor in forcing a parallel between conservation campaigners and objectors to the Vietnam war is displaying the height of immaturity and bad writing. The Vietnam war should not have been dragged into the Editor's little arena. Suffice it to say that the Editor has categorized himself in the minds of many readers, and for such an undesirable image I pity him.

The statement "All dissenting experts in their fields are biased and their statements can be ignored" shook me. Bearing in mind that the author of this statement is a practising scientist, I find his words ignorant at best and irresponsible at worst. Science has leapt forward many times in history just because of dissenting experts in their fields. It often takes a courageous man to raise his opinions against the weighty silence of Establishment Science.

Provided there is due sincerity and conscientious background research let us hear more "dissenting experts", more diversity of opinion. Who cares whether they are geologists talking about insects or garbage collectors talking about advanced wave physics. There are intelligent garbage collectors and I know there are ignorant scientists.

"As cavers our prime consideration in conservation should be caves". My prime consideration is caves certainly, however what is the use of preserving the holes in the cheese?

Caves cannot be separated from the complex web of natural interaction that extends over the whole Earth. The Philosophy that seeks conservation (not necessarily preservation) of Earth resources is not a nebulous concept but one which will of necessity become a positive course of action.

Stephen Harris.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I congratulate you on putting forward an opinion in your editorial in "Southern Caver" Vol. 4 No. 4. Whilst I do not agree with your attitude to earth care, it is refreshing to read an honest and frank opinion.

However, there are some matters arising from the editorial that need some clarification. To compare present-day environmentalists with the "moratoria and student revolt of yesterday" is rather misleading. The present popularisation of the established scientific discipline of ecology through the movement with that rather inappropriate name "conservation" is a pre-occupation of almost solely the middle classes. Conservation has little appeal to students and youth in general; the movement is instead based on vested middle-class interests. Students, in Tasmania at least, are very apathetic when it comes to matters of environmental concern. One only has to superficially study the structure of the Tasmanian Environment Centre or any of the community-based conservation groups to appreciate their middle-class nature.

Most fortunately, many with a sincere interest in environmental matters do not run around with the emotional cries of: "Stop pollution!", "stop progress!", for one might as well say "Stop breathing!" or "Stop living!", it would be just as meaningful. Emotional statements of the man-against-nature type are quite ridiculous to principles of sound resource management and design with the environment with man as part of nature.

I tend to disagree with the way in which you categorise the professions and confine their roles to specific narrow planes. Modern problems cannot be solved by the parochial exhortations of "You keep out of my field because you are not qualified in it". Environmental problems often transcend the traditional structure of the professions. Co-operation with people qualified in other fields is the keynote in modern problem-solving.

If one is to adhere strictly to the line of argument expressed in your editorial on "dissenting experts"; then you should not have written the article on Precipitous Bluff, as you had not done research in the particular area.

I feel that you have been misled on conservation by a few more outspoken critics of progress and economic development. The great body of professional planners and concerned ecologists do not share these extreme views. I certainly do not proclaim that "Non-conservation" is necessarily a bad thing but I equally believe that our present social and physical resources are not being allocated in the wisest sense for the long term benefit of Society as a whole.

Andrew Skinner.

..... and a Reply:

It was to be expected that my Editorial advocating a sane, selective and intelligent approach to conservation should have been misunderstood by some people. In the normal course of events a reply to correspondents' criticisms would not have been considered; after all, Editorials are meant to stimulate discussion. But a correspondent's abuse of an Editor for daring to have opinions which appear to him to be at variance to his own can not be ignored.

I suggest that a re-reading of the Editorial is in order. We, as a club, are entering into a critical period where the saving of caves/caving areas might be dependant on our actions and our reputation. As a group of 30 individuals we can have little effect on decisions affecting the whole State, no matter how hysterical we get or what placards we wave. Yet, as a club, possessing wide caving experience and knowledge we, together with the other speleos are the experts who must be listened to when decisions involving caves are made. We comprise a select minority who can provide the powers that be with information available nowhere else. Or we could be. One sure way to prevent this would be to become classified in the eyes of authority as "just another crack-pot group of eco-maniacs" who will jump on any band waggon bearing the conservation banner.

On the above grounds I will continue to protest at the attempts of any party who may try to make S.C.S. the vehicle for unsound or unselective conservation policies. Our members who belong to other out doors activities' clubs may use these for such platforms or, alternatively, speak as individuals in their own rights. They should have no right to hide behind the Society's name or to prejudice its role in future issues concerning the saving of cave areas.

Aleks Terauds

P.S. This topic is by no means closed and all correspondence (space permitting) will be published, whether it comes from those learning from scientists or relying on data supplied by the sanitary disposal services.

A.T.
