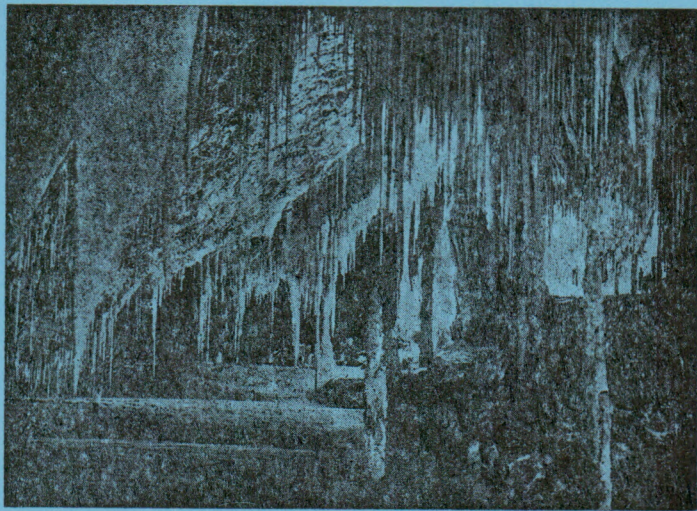




# SOUTHERN



# C A V E R

 VOL.6 NO.1 

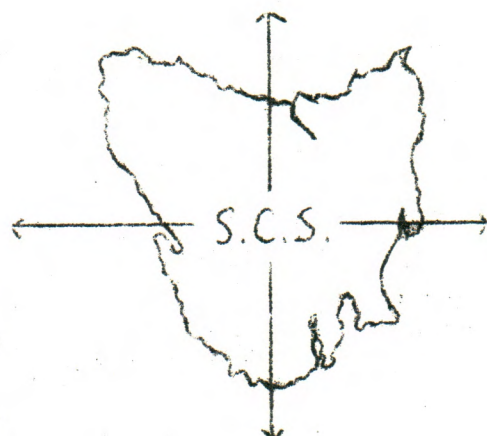
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# "SOUTHERN CAVER"

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Aleks Terauds

Magazine Committee:  
Ron Mann, Terry Corcoran,  
Kevin Kiernan, Mike Cole

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Volume 6. Number 1

July, 1974

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## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Delivered at the A.G.M. on May 1st, 1974

Another year in the history of the Southern Caving Society has drawn to a close.

It has been a good year, and one, I feel, of consolidation.

Membership of the Society has continued to increase and attendances at meetings has been gratifying indeed.

Activity in the field was good; we saw some new discoveries as well as many previous discoveries revisited. Herberts Pot also received much attention as did the surveying side of things and we should soon see more printed results.

Conservation also received its fair share of attention, with a well prepared submission to the National Estate and one on the Mole Creek System going to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. We achieved, by mutual agreement with the parties concerned, alteration to boundaries of Prospecting Licences affecting the proposed Exit Caves Reserve, (a pleasant change I must say).

Another notable event in the year was the formation of the Tasmanian Council of Speleology and in the coming years we should see much closer co-operation and working between clubs.

Much training has taken place in the "S.R.T." and this method now has a strong following.

It was pleasing to see our Social Committee in action - well done ladies.

This year also saw another first, a public interest display, mounted in the window of the Murray Street Branch of the Bank of New South Wales. It proved very popular. Many compliments were received from the public. We must consider seriously this type of display on a regular basis.

Search and Rescue equipment has been ordered by the Police Search and Rescue Squad, for use by all outside activity clubs, with much specialised gear for cave rescues being included, as a direct result of our approach to the Tasmanian Government.

Yes it has been a fairly busy year.

We have seen many visitors to our clubrooms, Speleo's from the mainland and as far afield as the USA.

The Editors of our magazine and their assistants have done a grand job in advertising the club far and wide.

May I take this opportunity to thank all members for their keenness in their club and especially the rest of my executive committee for their co-operation in making my year in office that much easier.

Regretfully I no longer reside in Hobart and am unable to stand for election.

Good caving fellow speleo's

John McCormack

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SECRETARY'S REPORT:

After occupying the position of Secretary to the Society on three occasions, I have decided to step down after this financial year. During the past twelve months the most significant feature has been the successful liaison with the Editorial Committee. I think this has to continue in the future with perhaps the Secretary being a compulsory member of the committee.

There has also been co-operation with the Conservation Committee which, although only in its infancy is starting to stand on its feet. I have endeavoured to assist whenever possible.

The workload has increased dramatically since the Society involved itself in conservation issues such as Precipitous Bluff. The position requires a person with a full understanding of these matters.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the year's work was the Society's objection to a special prospectors licence granted to Benders Spreading Services by the Mines Dept. which partly covered the proposed Exit Cave reserve. Subsequent correspondence persuaded Benders to operate outside the proposed reserve. Most correspondence dealt with conservation issues. Letters to State and Federal ministers produced many and varied replies with a "brush off" being the overwhelming favourite from the State Government and a "sitting on the fence" attitude from Canberra.

Mike Cole

# TREASURER'S REPORT

The Society began the year with a working balance of ~~\$~~150.99 and finished with ~~\$~~18.00 plus advance subscriptions of ~~\$~~69.00 for 1974/75.

Rent on the clubrooms is still the largest single item of expenditure followed closely by "Southern Caver" production costs and these items will contribute to the major part of next years budget.

Several schemes for raising funds have been put forward and appear to be excellent methods of obtaining reasonable amounts of money without taking up much of the members' time.

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Balance forward	<del>\$</del> 150.99	Rent	<del>\$</del> 104.00
Subs	99.00	Southern Caver	91.00
A.S.F.	19.50	Insurance	19.78
Trip Fees	83.50	Advertising	5.28
Southern Caver	47.65	A.S.F.	18.00
Miscellaneous	42.43	Post Box	6.00
Bank Interest	4.61	Cheque Books	1.50
		Miscellaneous	65.20
		Equipment	79.52
		Subscriptions	11.50
		Badges	27.90
		Balance c/forward	18.00
	<u>447.68</u>		<u>447.68</u>

<u>Bank Reconciliation</u>		<u>Society Funds</u>	
Funds C/forward	18.00	Credit Bank Balance	87.00
Advance subscriptions	69.00	Interest Bearing Deposit	240.00
	<u>87.00</u>	Conservation Account	<u>24</u>
			<u>327.24</u>

Ron Mann

## QUARTERMASTERS REPORT

The only major items of equipment purchased this year were 3 x 5 metre, 3 x 10 metre ladders, headers and a new Suunto compass. These accounted for \$52.65 of the \$79.52 spent.

The Society owns the following major items of equipment:-

### LADDERS

11 x 30 foot  
1 x 20 foot  
1 x 10 foot  
1 x 8 foot  
2 x 50 foot ladder material

### HEADERS

4 x 30 foot  
3 x 5 metre  
3 x 10 metre

### ROPE

1 x 360 foot Kernmantel  
2 x 150 foot Kernmantel  
1 x 360 foot  
3 x 120 foot  
4 x 60 foot  
1 x 20 foot

### SURVEY EQUIPMENT

2 Suunto Compasses  
1 Suunto Inclinator  
1 100' Tape  
1 Compass/Climo Holder

### MISCELLANEOUS

2 pairs Cloggers  
Duplicator  
Rope Protectors  
Ladder Bags  
Number Punches  
Hand Drill  
Helmets

Ron Mann

HONORARY MEMBERS ELECTED FOR 1974/75

Mr & Mrs D.W. Frankcombe, Maydena.  
Mr R.L. Graue, Hastings Caves.  
Inspector T.E. Howard, Taroona.  
Sergeant M. Massie, Hobart.  
Mr J.N. Howe, Mole Creek.  
Dr J.N. Jennings, M.A., Canberra City, ACT.  
Mrs Lambert.  
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, Hobart.  
Mr D. Turner, Rose Bay.  
Dr J. Wane, Lenah Valley.  
Mr Courlay.

It was resolved by the Society that all Cave Guides would be accorded the status of Honorary Members of the Society. Should there be additions to this list that have escaped our notice, acknowledgement will be made in a subsequent edition.

## ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

<u>PATRON</u>	Mr R.D. Baker
<u>PRESIDENT</u>	Stephen Harris
<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u>	Kevin Kiernan
<u>SECRETARY</u>	Mieke Vermeulen
<u>TREASURER</u>	Ron Mann
<u>EDITORS</u>	Aleks Terauds & Dave Elliott
<u>MAGAZINE COMMITTEE</u>	Ron Mann, Mike Cole, Terry Corcoran, Kevin Kiernan.
<u>SEARCH &amp; RESCUE OFFICER</u>	Bob Cockerill
<u>ASSISTANT SEARCH &amp; RESCUE OFFICER</u>	Leigh Gleeson
<u>CAVE RECORDS</u>	Leigh Gleeson
<u>LIBRARIAN</u>	Leigh Gleeson
<u>QUARTERMASTER</u>	Ron Mann
<u>DELEGATE TO TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF SPELEOLOGY</u>	Bob Cockerill
<u>CONSERVATION COMMITTEE</u>	Stephen Harris (Convenor), Kevin Kiernan, Leonie Smith, Dave O'Brien, Dave Elliott, Terry Corcoran.
<u>SOCIAL COMMITTEE</u>	Margaret Russell, Miff Williams, Mieke Vermeulen.

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## NEW PARTY LEADERS ELECTED AT A.G.M.

Stuart Wilson

Dave Elliott

## EDITORS REPORT

The Editors, ably assisted by the Magazine Committee, have produced the four issues of Volume 5 of the "Southern Caver" scheduled for 1973/74.

No major difficulty was encountered in the production of the magazine. The number of contributors in the past year increased over that of the previous year and the subject matter of the articles varied from the humorous to the informative and scientific, with a minimal requirement for "fill-ins" to make up a full issue. This support from members, while gratifying, was also often illustrative of the powers of persuasion of the producers of the magazine.

An Editorial in Vol. 4, No. 4, brought a quick response per the medium of the "Letters to the Editor" pages. The response was appreciated by the Editors who feel that the magazine serves a greater purpose still when members utilize it to express their opinions on contentious issues.

The "Southern Caver" is still being produced on an old Gestetner duplicator. After the "running-off" of the last issue the counter on the machine was reading 353,807. This is a lot of turns on the handle and the Editors are especially grateful to the hand of Committee member Ron Mann who has mastered the idiosyncrasies of the old machine to the extent where whole issues are run off without the loss of a single "bad" page.

Normally, about 80-90 copies of each issue of the "Southern Caver" are produced. About half of these are bought by members or other subscribers. About 30 copies are sent to other Australian speleological clubs on an exchange basis. Postage is thus an important item in the production costs of the magazine.

The Magazine Committee was advanced a total of \$91.00 during the past year to meet production costs. The breakdown of expenditure was as follows:-

Paper, ink, covers, stencils	\$ 29.17
Typing, maps	31.00
Envelopes	6.65
Postage	21.12
	<hr/>
TOTAL	\$ 87.94

CASH IN HAND \$3.06.

The Magazine Committee "inherited" from the previous year some stocks of paper, ink and envelopes and ended the year with approximately similar quantities of the above materials left over for next year's use. As usual, some materials were donated to the Committee and this helped considerably to keep the costs down at a reasonable figure.

As can be seen from the Hon. Treasurers Report income from the "Southern Caver" amounted to \$47.65. The nett cost of the four issues of Volume 5 was therefore, \$39.29.

Aleks Terauds

Dave Elliott

Editors

#### HERBERTS POT - IMPORTANT NEW WORK

Recent activities by a dedicated team of Southern Cavers have resulted in the following new knowledge about Herberts Pot:

i. Two major extensions discovered. One is a large 120m formation chamber. The other is a new 600m long passage in the upstream section.

ii. About 3600m of the cave surveyed and mapped. The exploration-survey-mapping team estimates that there is a further 600m of cave to be surveyed in the upstream section. The work in the downstream section is complete.

iii. An established connection between Westmoreland Creek Cave and Herberts Pot. Fluorescence placed in the former cave was sighted in Herberts Pot, in the upstream branch just beyond the waterfall chamber. Water colouring was subsequently seen in Wet Caves (9hr after the sighting in Herberts) and finally at the Mole Creek rising.

-- extracted from Leigh Gleasons reports  
of his team's activities in Herberts Pot.

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Steve Harris.

I here record my thanks to those who have elected me. I am fortunate in succeeding to the presidency of this Society in its present strong position. Not only is this attributable to the firm leadership of the recent executive but to the members themselves, some of whom go caving almost with a vengeance. In fact things couldn't be better in all spheres except the financial. One of my principal objectives this year will be to boost club funds so we can ~~attain~~ the position of being able to buy almost any item of equipment members wish.

The number of field trips leaving Hobart is at an all-time high and I would encourage all members to involve themselves in one or two ongoing projects. Our speleological activities have important implications in scientific and tourist matters. While members should by all means range promiscuously over a variety of cave areas, it is important that each should work, for example, on the exploration of a particular system, or mapping of a particular cave or number of caves, or compiling photographic dossiers of certain areas, or any one of a dozen other activities.

Our membership growth rate is healthy so that our prospectives offset our very occasional retirements. We certainly don't want floods of members and I think we can all admit to being selfish beasts. As far as I'm concerned this might be justified under the slogan "all the more for us!" On the other hand we need injections of new blood from time to time. The best way of getting members is by encouraging friends and younger brothers (also sisters) and inducting them into the ways of speleology on suitable training and "tourist" trips.

We have appointed several amongst us to act as a Conservation Committee but in a sense all of us belong to it, the committee per se being the paperwork bunnies. We should all be aware of the omnipresent threats to cave environments and areas. These threats affect our caving-something that is for some of us a way of life. Incursions by logging, mining, and hydro power interests into our caving and wilderness areas are occurring at a greater pace. We must all act, not only as members of a speleological society protecting fairly narrow interests, but as a unit of influence in larger conservation issues (albeit sometimes of peripheral interest to caving, yet of significance to us all.)

When a cave area is threatened, whether by an HEC dam, siltation after clearing, vandalism or whatever, we must muster quickly evidence and information that is fuel for any fight for preservation or other evaluation. Photographs, maps and articles, especially those with which we are besieging the editors of Southern Caver, are presently being included in a bibliography appertaining to each cave area. Please co-operate with the conservation committee on this.

A further aim this year will be to increase our liason with other clubs on an informal level. Most of us know little about the non ASF-affiliated Latrobe caving group but it would certainly be of interest to keep up with their activities. I see no reason why members should not visit on trips of different clubs. This would broaden our interests and horizons and keep us up to date on different club projects. The individual clubs, however, I believe should and will retain their individuality.

I must impress here that this Society is for its members and whatever we do is only limited by our vision and creativity.

. . . . .

#### A THOUGHT ON SEA-CAVING

In early June a boy was drowned after being swept by a wave from the shore platform at Fossil Cliffs on the north-eastern coastline of Maria Island, off the east coast of Tasmania.

For speleos this tragedy is perhaps a timely reminder of the potential dangers of sea caves, a field in which there is fortunately some interest at last among Tasmanian groups, especially in relation to the limestone coastlines of Maria Island and also Surprise Bay on the state's south coast.

The incident evidently occurred at the entrance to (MI.I) Tear Flesh Chasm, although it is not known whether the cave was being visited at the time.

KK

## CAVES OF THE REDPA DISTRICT

by Kevin Kiernan

Much of the N.W. corner of Tasmania is set upon a dolomite basement but low dolomite relief tends to limit cave potential. Discontinuous outcrop and lithological evidence support the treatment of Redpa as a separate karst area. The rock here appears more cavernous than most of the adjacent dolomites though the small outcrop size and high local water-table precludes the possibility of particularly extensive negotiable caves and potential for further exploration is minimal.

The area consists of four small isolated hillocks 5km S.E. of the hamlet of Redpa, on a farm property. It is located 10 km inland of the western coastline and 31 km W.S.W. of the main N.W. population centre of Smithton. The nearest other known cave areas are at Montagu, a linear distance of 20 km to the north and near Trowutta, 29 km E.S.E.

The area lies approximately 40m above sea level to the west of the Welcome Swamp, and is drained northwards into Bass Strait by the Welcome River. Rainfall is of the order of 150cm per annum. Original wet sclerophyll vegetation has receded approximately 1km to the south, principally under the impact of clearing for dairying activity.

Apart from a visit by an individual TCC member many years ago cave exploration has been conducted almost entirely by local farmers, though more recently on three occasions by the Southern Caving Society.

### PREVIOUS INTEREST

Interest in the area has principally centred upon the potential underground water supply. A regional survey by Nye (1932) noted Paleozoic limestones and dolomites at Redpa overlain "with great unconformity" by Tertiary limestones. Hughes (1957) summarised mainly unpublished previous work on the district. Gulline (1959) also investigated potential water supplies and noted the general geology as "a gently folded basement of Cambrian silt stones resting on Precambrian dolomite". Longman and Mathews (1961) examined the limestone out-crops here considered, recording the existence of caves. Gill (1962) noted the Tertiary material and referred it to Miocene on paleontological grounds. Goede (1967) provides an extremely brief description from a speleological viewpoint.

## LOCAL GEOLOGY

The main cave bearing rock is an unfossiliferous dolomitic limestone. The limestone strikes at  $320^{\circ}$  with a north-easterly dip of  $61^{\circ}$ . Longman and Mathews (1961) describe the rock in thin section as oolitic, formed under conditions of local agitation, and suggest this structure would tend to retard the dolomitisation elsewhere more apparent. They note a non carbonate content of 0.2%, and dolomitic content of 13-15%.

This formation is unconformably overlain by 15-30m of Tertiary rocks, consisting of a pale pink limestone primarily composed of fossil fragments with a lower conglomerate component of rounded sandstone, dolomite and quartzite fragments in a fine pink cement.

Small patches of Tertiary basalt overlies the Tertiary limestone. Recent alluvium occurs to a depth of 11m in water-bores, obscuring all but the most elevated outcrops of older material.

## THE OUTCROPS

The most northerly of the hillocks which comprise the area lies 50m north of the access road, and is a grass covered outcrop roughly circular in plan primarily of the Tertiary material. It has a diameter of around 30m and height of 6m, with the N.W. and W. sides exhibiting the most pronounced solution activity.

Approximately 400m to the south is a limestone castle composed entirely of the Precambrian limestone standing 4m above the surrounding plain. It is roughly 15m x 6m in extent, being elongate along the strike of the limestone beds, and has weathered into a honeycomb complex (R210).

The two principle cave bearing hills lie 200m to the east and 400m to the S.E. respectively. The former contains the main caves. It is some 70m x 170m in extent (again elongate along strike) with a maximum elevation of some 20m above the surrounding paddocks. Cave development is restricted to the western side with no apparent penetration of the eastern margin. The eastern hill flank has weathered into a series of small benches and a light scrub vegetation covers the summit. The unconformity lies 10m above the paddock level on the western side dropping to the base of the hill on the eastern.

The more distant hill attains a relief of some 6m and is 30m x 90m in extent with a light scrub cover. Caves penetrate from the western side to within a short distance of the Tertiary limestone at which point they peter out into minor channels.

In addition to these outcrops the paddock areas between the hills are pock-marked with shallow, degraded and irregularly spaced dolines while some minor isolated strike ribs exhibit rudimentary rund karren development.

### CAVES

The caves present appear at first glance of disproportionately large extent considering the size of the limestone outcrop. Their nearest known Tasmanian analogy may be at Montagu where the caves occur in a somewhat similar topographic setting though tend to be slightly larger.

Longman and Mathews (1961) noted "...numerous caves occur which contain deposits of recent or Tertiary origin... The largest cave visited was over 200 yards in length and the height varied from six to ten feet. Numerous small caves up to 15 feet in height contain excellent stalactites, stalagmites, shawls and flowstone".

Passage profiles are strikingly tabular in cross section. Immediately inside the cave floors drop approximately 1.5m below the level of the surrounding plains, and this remains as the general floor level, with the slight development below this being water-filled. Undisrupted ceilings correspond to the levels of the surrounding plains, extensions upwards of this being primarily due to roof collapse. Collapse is responsible for enlargement of the majority of cave entrances with R203 and R204 the principal points of initial inflow. Flat ceilings independent of dip are the norm wherever passages have not been modified by collapse.

Where cave floors lie within about 0.5m of the static pools previously mentioned they tend to be covered by a thick mantle of sticky cave clays. It is probable these floors are flooded for long periods during winter.

Thus the outcrop is in the form of small scale and isolated remnants, generally with bold margins rising from the alluvial flats. Small marshes persist adjacent to minor watercourses on the flats with severe ephemeral waterlogging extending to hillock margins in some cases. This, together with the general elongation of the caves along the hillock margins perhaps suggests lateral solution by swamp waters to have been the dominant process, with the area in a fairly late stage of reduction.

## OTHER ASPECTS

While numerous spiders have been noted in some caves no cave crickets have been recorded and no biological collecting appears to have been undertaken.

Vertebrate remains, if present, must lie beneath the clay floor deposits. Their existence is suggested by a persistent rumour of the uncovering of a large number of bones when part of one of the hills was bull-dozed away several years ago.

The presence of apparently permanent pools of water is of some economic value to the land holder. The entrance chamber of R204 is utilised by stock for watering in dry summer months.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A. KNOWN CAVES

(All have been physically numbered)

R201 : Small dry cave with three entrances; single chamber 10m long.

R202-3: Largest cave in area; muddy crawls connecting series of small chambers; some decoration.

R204-5 COW HOLE: Entrance 1.3m high in base of hill; pool inside used for stock watering; second smaller entrance on far side of pool.

R206 : Slot leading to small chamber 2m in diameter.

- R207 : Entrance 7m above plains level; steep slope to small complex of passages; some decoration.
- R208 : Dry entrance 1.3m in diameter; no further details; unlikely to prove significant.
- R209 : Entrance 0.6m high to passage 1.1m in diameter passing under southern hill.
- R210 HONEYCOMB : Outcrop 15m long honeycombed with inter-connecting passages.
- R211 : Small hole between R202-3 and R204-5.

#### PRESIDENT BLASTS CAVE RESERVES POLICY

A press statement issued by President Steve Harris attacking the State Government for failure to protect the state's Limestone Caves was published in the "Mercury" on May 15th.

"It is lamentable," Steve said, "that although Tasmania is known to possess the largest and most spectacular limestone caves in Australia, the Society's submissions for cave reserves have fallen on deaf ears."

Steve cited the instance of Exit Cave, where the Society had carried out successful negotiations with mining interests but the Government continued to resist declaring a reserve or granting permission for tourist development. The necessity for reserves in the Mole Creek area was mentioned.

The need for our Society to press the government to release details of proposed extensions to the S.W. National Park now that major caves were known to exist at P.B. was stressed. Operations of the H.E.C. had already destroyed three areas of speleological interest, while the proposed Lower Gordon Scheme threatened large unexplored limestone areas of great potential," Steve concluded.

The arrival on a flying visit of A.S.F. President, Elery Hamilton-Smith, provided timely support. Elery called on the Government to "take strong initiatives to protect some of the most spectacular limestone caves in the world." His statement continued "But although the vast majority of known caves were discovered since organised exploration commenced thirty years ago, no attempt has been made to keep pace with the tremendous discoveries of recent years. Numerous caves are worthy of protection. At least two, Exit and Kubla Khan, rival any cave in the world as potential tourist attractions. The P.B. area had been found to possess major caves." Elery concluded: "One would hope your State Government will have the foresight to protect P.B. and all Tasmanian caves as a matter of urgency.

## EXPLORATION AT MT RONALD CROSS

by Leigh Gleeson

Mt Ronald Cross, a part of the Loddon Range, is situated near the more impressive King William Range in the west of Tasmania. The dolomite, extending over a considerable area, outcrops between 500 and 900m and is overlain by mudstones and dolerite to a summit height of 1113m. Superficial covering of glacial tillite has played an important part in the cave development and blockage in a drainage basin on the S. and S.E. slopes of the mountain. To date most of the exploration by our club has been confined to the upper limit of the dolomite and in particular to the above 250ha drainage basin.

Prior to 1974 the members of the Southern Caving Society had organised some seven trips to the area and had discovered many holes all of which, however, tended to choke off between 3 and 10m. The best known and most promising caves at that time were Aquarius Swallet and Virgo Cave. The former, which under wet conditions overflows and can, thus, be entered into only when dry, had been explored to about 10m; further progress having to be halted because of the lack of a ladder. Virgo Cave, a short distance N.E. of Aquarius had also shown promise but further exploration had been called off because of loose walls and a general instability of the system. Other previous trips had discovered a couple of caves at 760m on the N.E. ridge of the mountain.

In April this year a five man team (Leigh Gleeson, Lyn Wilson, Steve Street, Stewart Wilson and Graham Bailey) returned to the Cross to carry out a systematic job of cave exploration, surveying and numbering. This article reports on the expedition.

Perhaps because the area had been suspected of having a high potential for good caves for a long time many members thought the team a little too ambitious to attempt to carry out all the aims of the project in one trip. Indeed, there were those who laughed outright when it was learned that 300m of tackle was to be taken to the Cross at Easter, of all times (Eds Note: Mt R.C. has been known to be fairly wet at Easter).

Base camp was reached in poor weather at the large mountain tarn campsite by 2.30pm on Friday, 12 April, after a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hr trip from the vehicles. Graham, Stewart and Leigh immediately headed off in search of Aquarius while Steve and Lyn volunteered to set up camp and organise the air drop gear. Aquarius was located in half an hour (water level low), numbered (201) and a "blue water" rigged

for the 9m waterfalls. At the bottom of the pitches the cave was seen to develop into a small, narrow fissure which becomes too tight only 30m from the rope pitch; certainly a disappointment as this cave had been reputed as the most promising one at the Cross. The survey was completed in quick order and a very wet team returned to camp in drizzling rain and darkness.

An early start on Saturday morning saw the start of a tedious search for Virgo Cave. It was found, a rope for the descent rigged and the decision was made that it would be safest if only two members descended in the first instance (Graham and Leigh). When the point was reached where John Morley on an earlier trip had decided that enough was enough (because of falling rocks and collapsing walls) Graham and Leigh entertained similar thoughts but finally decided to continue down the 9m pitch. Once again, to their disappointment, the cave choked off at only 30m.

A couple of hours of scrub bashing followed and one small cave (numbered MR 203) was found. But Graham Bailey then wandered over to the rest of the team, talking of a hole he had seen some 300m down the gully from Aquarius. It had looked promising from the top, being about 18m long, 8m wide and 40m deep. A bypass entrance obviated a technical descent, Graham carried out the exploration while the other party members followed up with the survey. This cave, too, ended in a mud choke, with 137m of surveyed passage. The cave was named Capricorn and numbered MR 204.

An early start again on Sunday morning soon paid dividends with the discovery of Sagittarius (MR 205) by Stewart. This cold, muddy, miserable hole was the target of much abuse and blasphemy after completion of a 46m survey to a tight squeeze. Indeed, had it not been for a roaring fire and a cup of tea made by Graham to revive the outraged cavers some of the threats made against the discoverer of such an abominable hole might well have been carried out.

The team soon developed an efficient method for handling the many small caves which were appearing. "Hawk-eyes" Steve was thrashing about in the mostly alpine terrain finding holes which he and Graham would check out. If they went, Lyn, Stewart and Leigh would be called over for surveying and numbering. In this fashion two small caves, MR 206 and MR 207, and two larger ones (Libra, 208; Taurus, 210), along with numerous others (which were not numbered) were explored.

CAPRI ORN

MR2 4

MT RONALD CROSS

ASF MAP NO  
7MR 204 SCS 1

MAIN  
ENTRANCE

(40 METRES)

BYPASS  
ENTRANCE

TAG  
204

SECTION :

40°

ASF GRADE M44

SURVEYED MAY 1974

by L. GLEESON  
G. BAILEY  
S. STREET  
S. WILSON  
L. WILSON

SCALE 1:500

0 5 10 15 20 25  
METRES

SAND  
&  
GRAVEL

ENTRANCE PLAN

MUD CHOKE

BYPASS ENTRANCE

MOSS & VEGETATION  
ON DOLINE WALLS

TAG  
204

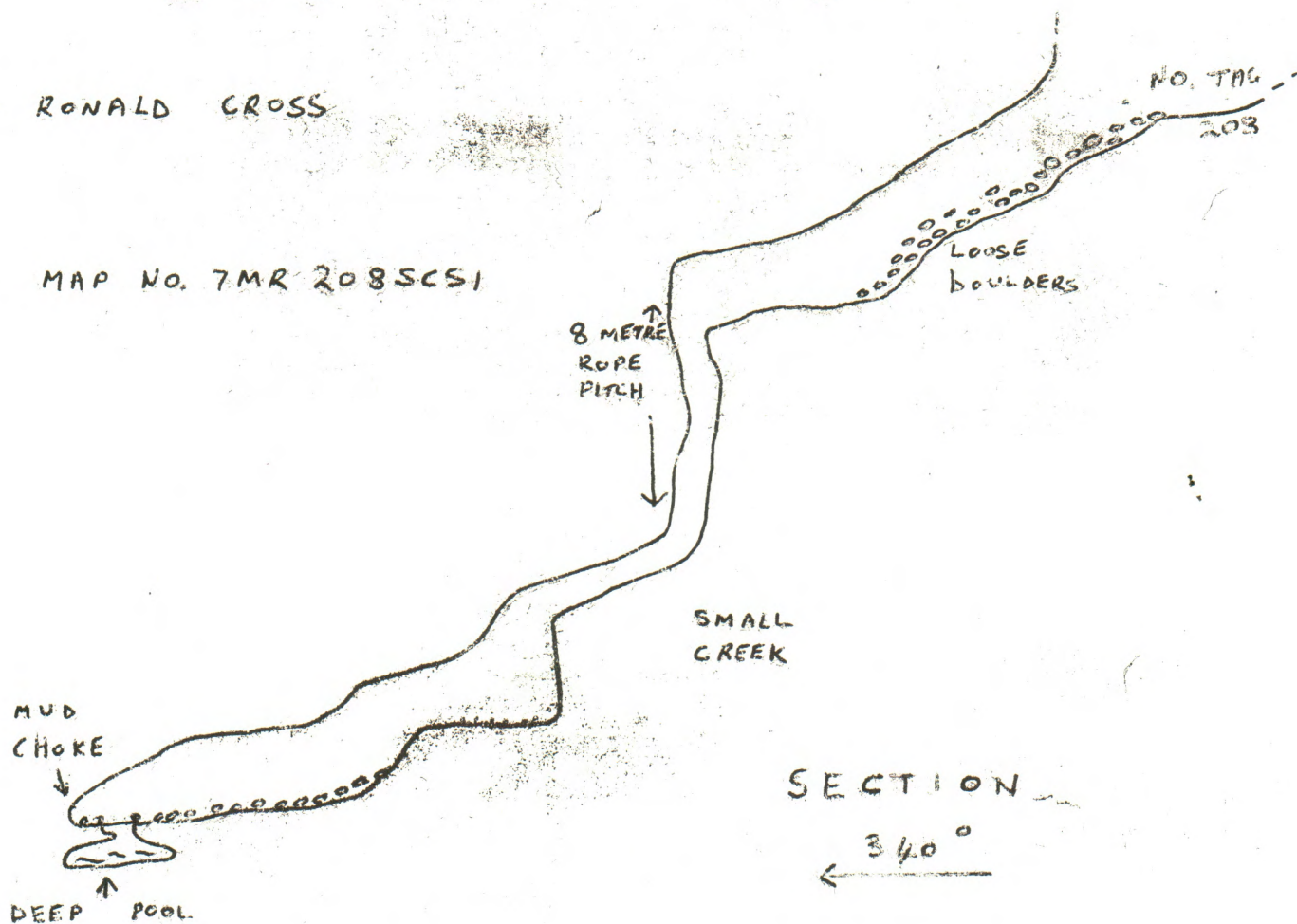
TREND SE - NW

MN

# LIBRA MR 208

MT RONALD CROSS

ASF MAP NO. 7MR 208SCS1



SECTION

340°  
←

SCALE

1 : 500

0 5 10 15 20 25

METRES

ASF GRADE M44

SURVEYED MAY 1974

by  
L. GLEESON  
L. WILSON  
S. STREET  
G. BAILEY  
S. WILSON

Both Libra and Taurus, discovered by Steve, have impressive entrance dolines, about 15m across, but despite this and the large dimensions of their passages, both ended 'several hundred feet' from the surface.

The final cave to be explored Scorpio (MR 209), was found by Lyn in the same doline that contained Libra's entrance. Initially, the cave looked like being a small horizontal system but after about 60m it emerged back at the surface overlooking a gigantic vertical shaft at least 30m deep, 18m long and 9m wide. Unfortunately our time on the Mountain had run out and we had to terminate our surveying and exploration leaving this most promising cave to another trip. It would appear that this shaft could well be the one described by a field geologist some years ago.

I would suggest that further exploration potential around Mt. Ronald Cross is extremely good. No doubt many caves are still to be found on the lower slopes of the Mountain. None of the streams or gullies on the S.W. slopes have been investigated and in here is included the creek which drains the large tarn on which the campsite was based. Notwithstanding the caving possibilities of the Cross one could not fail to be impressed by the intrinsic beauty of the Mountain, as all those who have visited the region will testify.

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#### SOCIAL EVENING

A film evening held recently at the club rooms was attended by about twenty five members.

The main film "AKIYOSHI-DAI" A Karst of Japan, was purchased by Mr. Roy Skinner during his Churchill Fellowship tour studying tourist caves of the world. The thirty minute film is in colour and has some very good caving shots. It ends on a conservation note.

The supporting film also in colour, was "The Living Lakes" one of a series entitled The Web of Life, that showed the animal and bird life of the Rift Valley in Africa.

## SRT VERSUS CAVING

by Kevin Kiernan

To suggest that 1968-69 was an interesting era may be a little too esoteric for these young whipper-snappers and their single rope mentality to comprehend, but none the less as the year of the preliminary arrival of SRT in Tasmania it was. Long before the banana bender comesouth to bend minds instead, and before the Gread Flud of the year one thousand nine hundred and seventy nothing when pilgrims from many lands were presumptuous enough to visit the karsticide isle during their Chrissy hols., rather than throw up their jobs, family and social responsibilities and immigrate as one Black Pete Shaw would have them do, there were many interesting events in Hobart Town and nearby caves. Check the minutes Mr Gleeson.

Howsumever, not the least interesting of these events was an old auntie I once had (for that matter I suppose I still do-come-back auntie wherever you are I still love you!). Anyways, she would tilt her head to one side, cock one eyebrow above the other and tolerantly suggest "everyones entitled to their own opinion but only a bloody fool would think that!" And thus it is alarmed I am that one Shaw and one Gleeson would dare to dispute the infallability and universallity of my value judgements towards that abhorrent SRT nonsense.

SRT has not one leg to stand on, and by the time those two have argued its case it is but a heap of rubble on the floor. Yet it was interesting to see them scurry from the woodwork when it seemed the rot they had established may bring the lot down around their ears. My old auntie used also note (she was a very perceptive woman) that the degree to which people take things seriously is directly proportional to the degree to which they take themselves seriously. But as one more percepture member of TCC said to me - "You wouldn't after all this would you?" He's right of course, so I won't.

Thus as my eccentric editor stands over me with a length of garden hose gently smashing my knuckles to pulp at regular intervals, brevity demands but a few superficial comments.

Perhaps I had better establish at the outset that to me SRT is a frame of mind. Hence it is irrelevant whether the bolts in Khazad-Dum (which were mildly protested at the time, both spoken and written) were placed for ladder teams or SRT sensu stricto, rather they are simply a sign of the rot setting in.

Incidentally, Pete makes uncomplimentary suggestions of anyone who believes bolts are emplaced unless "absolutely necessary", but as I recall all but a couple of the pitches now bolted in K-D were initially descended without bolts. I can only presume that Black Pete's "Absolutely necessary" is a vague term somehow related to degree of comfort.

Anyway, I have always felt that the pro and anti SRT factions of this world were based largely on emotional grounds, not that I would dispute the worth of such a base of course. I remember the storms in SCS long ago when a few of us argued and caved SRT purely in defiance of the entrenched conservatism that saw ladders as a God, just as the SRT-ites now see SRT. But it is interesting now having drawn the SRT-ites out on such a base rather than a boringly logical discussion of the pros and cons to see the extent to which their arguments are coherent and relate to the old "factual" lines.

Pete for instance suggests little increase in "the amount of cave discovered relative to time under". The converse used to be a basic pro-SRT case! Pete so argues in relation to whether more caves are likely to be explored in a shorter time with SRT in vogue, deciding in the negative. Does Pete really think people off caving for the day who might now be able to finish their cave early will be content to nibble their picnic lunches and sniff the geraniums for the rest of the day? SCS experience suggests the blighters (good word that!) go and do another cave. But then Pete suddenly completely contradicts himself by suggesting "SRT actually allows more time for exploration on a caving trip because there is less time consumed in gear hauling". Hmmm.

Both these champions of the SRT movement seek the level of technique and equipment development acceptable, but lapse into bouts of reductio ad absurdum, which Leigh maintains for a page without really saying much. Pete dreams of anti-gravity suits while Leigh gets all obsessed with underpants and boots. I merely suggest that the mentality which seeks to establish simplicity in place of tradition makes for an austere, hollow and empty life as a consequence of its culture destroying rampages. A landscape devoid of trees or a street of identical plastic boxes maybe more simple, but I suggest it is infinitely nicer (to me anyway) to see a cloak of forest or a row of fine old sandstone cottages, however complex. If I may repeat my initial assertion:

"Once we reach the lip between inability and ability must we try to extend beyond it?....once we have an electric light so we can see climbing waterfalls must we then develop plastic capsules to wear so we don't get wet?....there is a constant (continued)...

effort to make this rat-race life easier....but caving is an escape from that rat-race....the joy is its primitiveness.... may all the curses fall upon those who would (bring) the very attitudes from which it escapes down the caves with us".

SRT is becoming an end in itself whereas ladders have always remained a means to an end. Yet my complaints have obviously been completely mis-interpreted by Messrs. Gleeson and Shaw who would do well to reconsider my initial screed and their own positions. For they do their cause (miserable and unjustifiable as it is, he mumbles tolerantly....) no good by contradicting themselves, making inaccurate statements and inferences, or attempting to persuade that I said something other than what I said by paraphrasing sections of my initial screed and arguing in its favour, as Black Pete has done.

I suggest you seek out the perceptive TCC fellow before continuing. Considering it ~~rather~~, may I end by saying "I forgive you, for you know not what you do", (or indeed really understand what motivated you to do it).

Editors' Note:

We extended to Kevin Kiernan, the author of "The Ethical basis of SRT" an invitation to reply to the criticisms levelled against it. The comments by Peter Shaw were published in a recent edition of "Speleo Spiel".

An invitation is extended to any reader who may be interested to continue this discussion per the medium of our "Letters to the Editor" pages.

## TRIP REPORTS

BY RON MANN

This report of the Club's activities covers the period 1 April, 1974 to 30 June, 1974. It was a fairly average quarter, with a total of 18 trips. Perhaps the more notable feature was the 'advances' in the exploration of Herberts Pot.

### MOLE CREEK (3 trips)

Early in April a trip to Herberts Pot continued surveying upstream to a station in the talus above Tombstone Traverse. At Easter, surface surveying from Herberts Pot entrance towards Kellys Pot ended at a clump of trees on the edge of the paddock near Kellys. The Cow Cave-Pyramid round trip was done by other members of the group.

A five day underground trip to Herberts Pot in June camped in the downstream sand passages and observed for fluorescent dumped in Kellys Pot; however, there was no result from the main stream or the downstream branch. Surveying above Tombstone Traverse resulted in the discovery of an upper level formation passage. Paragon Vaults was reached on the third day of the trip and after 300m of passage was surveyed a side passage was found which also yielded 300m but the exploration of this was not concluded because of lack of time. Side passages in the downstream section were surveyed on the fourth day but the fifth day was required to haul the gear to the surface.

### IDA BAY (2 trips)

A general trip into Exit covered Conference Concourse, Eastern Extension, the Dribble system and part of the Western Grand Fissure. Fish were noticed in the creek some distance inside the cave. A trip at the end of June was made to collect some of the fish for a zoologist and the collectors also trogged a fair amount of the cave.

### HASTINGS (6 trips)

Surveys to King George V Cave and from K.G.V. to a new cave (Minerets) were completed, together with a survey of the latter cave. Wolf Hole was explored and the party waded around the lake to explore the passages beyond. A party to the Binney Tunnel found some cave pearls in a small upper level passage.

HASTINGS (continued)

Hells Half Acre creek was surveyed from the junction of Hells Half Acre creek with Mystery Creek up to the talus from which Hell Half Acre creek issues. Side passages remain to be surveyed.

JUNEE/FLORENTINE (6 trips)

Satans Lair was relocated and scrub bashing in the area carried out although no new caves were reported.

JF 210 was surveyed and on a later trip JF 206, 207 were surveyed to ASF grade 4.

Bone Pit was visited and on the way from Bone Pit to JF 208 a new hole was found and explored to about 20m. JF 208 was then surveyed.

Cashions Creek Cave was mapped by another party.

MT. RONALD CROSS (1 trip)

An Easter trip by a party of five found eight new caves. An air drop of supplies and gear was arranged to save the hard climb up the mountain with heavy packs. (report this issue).

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UNDERGROUND TROUT DISCOVERED

Mountain trout found by members of the Society at Ida Bay (See "Area Reports" page 23) proved to be a significant discovery. The "Mercury" of July 23rd published the following report:

"Mountain trout have been found in an underground stream. They were found about 3,000ft from a cave entrance in Ida Bay by members of the Southern Caving Society.

Mr A.P. Andrews, a zoologist at the Tasmanian Museum, said they were the same as the common surface mountain trout. But this species was paler and did not have the usual spotted body colour.

He said brown trout had been found in a cave at Mole Creek but he believed this was the first time mountain trout had been found underground."

