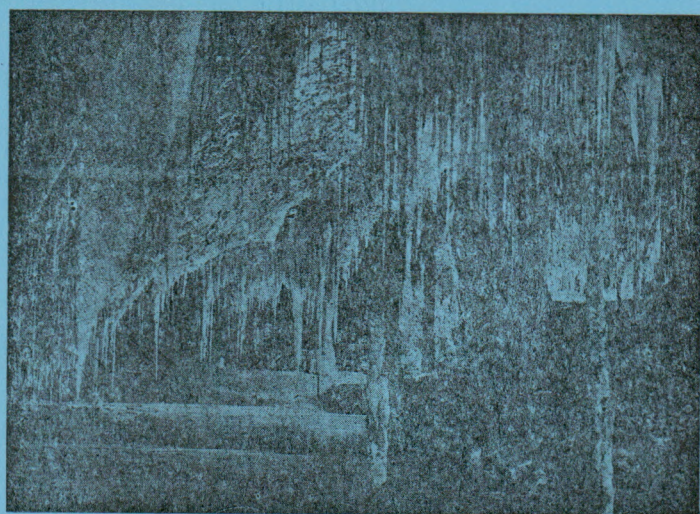


SOUTHERN



C A V E R

■ VOL.6 NO.4 ■

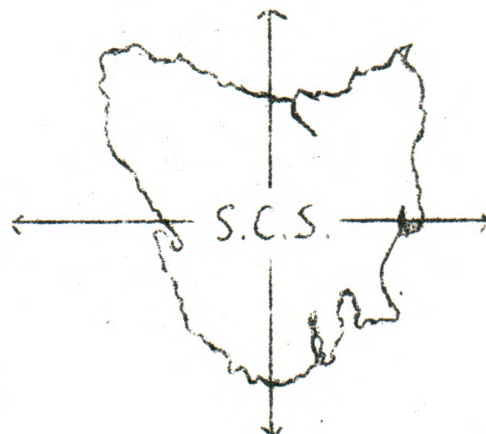
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THE FIRST TEN YEARS

An occasion that must not be permitted to pass without comment is the tenth anniversary of the formation of the "Southern Caving Society".

It is not our intention here to do more than touch on a few of the high spots of our group's ten year history, as we hope later to produce a special publication worthy of the occasion.

The Society was formed in April, 1965. Under its first President, Barry James, early caving activity was focused on the Wet Caves System at Mole Creek, with important work in Herberts Pot. Kellys Pot was bottomed and a water link between Westmoreland Cave and Wet Caves was proved. Westmoreland also has the distinction of being the first cave to be surveyed by the Society.

The link between Georgies Hall and Wet Caves was discovered while at Maydena, Satans Lair was the major find. The main social pastimes were fund raising and making equipment.

Bob Cockerill, who must at some time have held every position the Society has to offer was President from 1967 to 1969. A new area, Mt. Ronald Cross, was visited resulting in the discovery of Aquarius and Virgo Caves with a new species of cricket being found. In January, 1968, the Society conducted the caving section of the National Fitness Council's Adventure Camp, at Hastings. Work at Herberts Pot continued with further new extensions being found.

The Society's third President was Dave Elliott who held office from 1969 to 1971. In this period, the Club took part in no less than three major search and rescue operations. Six members were awarded Royal Humane Society medals for their part in the rescue of Timothy Walters. On the caving scene, Welcome Stranger was explored, and, after a series of expeditions, Tassy Pot was bottomed on November, 14th, 1970, to give the Society the Australian depth record at 800 feet.

An event of great importance was the A.S.F. Eighth Biennial Conference that we co-hosted with T.C.C. This and our subsequent entry into A.S.F. marked the end of the isolationist philosophy of the early years. The Conference organisers for the Society were Bob Cockerill and Rien de Vries.

Aleks Teraud's year as President saw a concentration of effort in the Junee-Florentine and Hastings areas with surface surveying and systematic scrub bashing making a significant contribution to our knowledge of the latter area. In this year we lost the depth record to T.C.C. at Khazad Dum - Some consolation was gained however, as Chris Harris of S.C.S. with Phil Robinson of T.C.C. were the ones who went to the bottom.

The next man in was John McCormack who held office until May, 1974. Perhaps John's master stroke was the acquisition of the centrally located club rooms in which the Society maintains its headquarters. In John's term, our financial membership increased and the group became deeply involved in conservation issues such as the flooding of Lake Pedder and the Precipitous Bluff issue, which remains unresolved. In this context we must mention Kevin Kiernan whose contribution to the cause of conservation is without parallel in the Society.

A major caving event was the expedition to Precipitous Bluff organised by the Society. Mt. Ronald Cross received attention with the discovery of eight new caves and further work was done in Herberts Pot.

With Steve Harris, the Society's sixth president, our record is complete. Steve's work in Herberts Pot and his efforts in the field of cave conservation have been of great value to the Society.

This brief article can in no way attempt to do justice to what is a proud achievement by the Society. With application, we can ensure that our next ten years are just as worthy.

We are here to stay.

THE KARST AREA IN THE UPPER WELD RIVER VALLEY SOUTH-WESTERN TASMANIA

by Kevin Kiernan

The upper Weld River karst area is situated in south-western Tasmania and is developed upon an extensive outcrop of apparently unfossiliferous dolomite. The area is virtually unexplored and heavily forested. Caves have been reported although their likely extent is difficult to gauge.

Location

The area lies 60 km to the west of Hobart and is located peripherally to the south-west wilderness area from which it is isolated by the Scotts Peak Road. The dolomite occurs in the headwaters of the Weld River to the north and west of the Mt Anne karst area, from which it is topographically separated by a low range of hills, and the valley of Sandfly Creek.

Accessibility

Part of the area is unalienated Crown Land but extensive tracts of State Forest are present, some of which are encompassed by forestry concession areas held by Australian Newsprint Mills Ltd. The area lies within the South-West Conservation Area but is outside the boundaries of the South-West National Park.

The area experiences a particularly heavy rainfall giving rise to dense rain forest vegetation over most of it. As with many Tasmanian karst areas this imposes some constraints upon the nature and extent of surface exploration.

The writer has experience of only two localities in the Upper Weld area but there the vegetation dominantly tends to be fairly open, mossy rain forest, with myrtle (Notofagus sp.), sassefrass (Atherosperma Moschatum) and scattered eucalypts occurring on raised dolomite in undulating country, though exploration is very frequently made more difficult by patches of horizontal scrub (Andopetalum biglandulosum) in wetter areas. Baurea, a thick flowering vine lies tangled adjacent to surface water-courses, and in association with ti-tree (Leptospernum sp) in ecotonal areas adjacent to plains characterised by button-grass sedge (Gymnoschoenus adjutus) which occurs in very low boggy areas close to the local water table, or where induced by firing on hill flanks.

Consequent upon construction of the Scotts Peak Rd to one of the damsites of the Middle Gordon hydro-electric project the challenge in reaching the area has been considerably diminished. The siting of transmission lines from the Gordon project is currently being under-taken and this together with logging road construction will make the area less inaccessible still, though it spells the commencement of its scenic despoilation. Access currently requires a walk of only two hours to reach the edge of the area.

The Dolomite and its Caves

The dolomite itself tends to be widespread in the upper part of the Weld Valley, with other areas, probably not continuous, extending further downstream. The rock is probably of late Precambrian age and may correlate with the Stevens Dolomite of the Tim Shea area, some 10 kms to the north beyond Mt Mueller. It may be continuous to the Mt Anne area.

The local relief attained by the dolomite over much of the area appears generally quite low, though there appears considerably potential for moderate sized horizontal cave development which appears to occur dominantly within the semi-isolated low ridges and outcrops of the undulating valley sides and headwaters. Surface creeks in this terrain tend to incise quite deeply, especially towards the river itself.

From the air isolated dolomite towers are evident rising up to 30 m or more from low relief areas adjacent to Mt Bowes. Western (1969) and King (1968) have both noted similar features from ground level and report small holes from this locality. Other holes are rumoured from the outcrops further downstream, including a major swallet on the south-eastern flank of Mt Weld. These latter outcrops should perhaps be considered as separate karst areas.

Cave Exploration to Date

Exploration of the caves of this area is in a very embryonic state.

Following upon the report of King (1968) who described a visit to the area made in 1927 and noted the presence of caves, a Monash University party visited the area in 1969 and explored several small caves. Around 1971 the Tasmanian Caverneering Club cut a track towards the river, exploring a couple of small holes a few kilometres east of the old Damper Inn hut but failed to reach the river itself before apparently losing interest.

Thus the area remains virtually untouched from a speleological standpoint. At present it still provides something of a wilderness experience though not for much longer. The combination is one which is becoming increasingly attractive to speleologists both from within Tasmania and inter-state.

Cave List - Upper Weld River Area

The following caves have to date been reported. No caves have been physically numbered and numbers are for reference purposes only. Caves W1-W6 are recorded by Weston (1969). The remainder are known first hand to the present writer. It is likely that some other holes have been visited but not reported due to insignificance or difficulty in relocation.

- (W1) THE CHASM: hole at bottom of deep sinkhole on ridge; 6m pitch into horizontal passage 6m long.
- (W2) BLACK HOLE: vertical shaft through loose earth and rocks on edge of large collapse; narrows after 7m; considered too dangerous to allow further exploration.
- (W3) GAILS HOLE: entrance at base of dolomite cliff on river; impassable after 2m.
- (W4) BONE CAVE: shallow cave with large entrance in dolomite cliff on Weld River; contains many small bones.
- (W5) STREAM CAVE: small stream cave 15m long; 10m long dry passage leads to chamber with some decoration.
- (W6) UPSTREAM CAVE: stream cave 90m long; upper entrance a 6m deep pot; stream passage 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m deep; not explored beyond upper entrance.
- (W7) Swallet of small creek immediately beside track; entrance chamber 4m in diameter and 2m long with creek sinking into passage too narrow to negotiate.
- (W8) Small cave 10m long in foot of low cliff; narrow second vertical entrance 5m above innermost extremity; not far from W7.
- (W9) Narrow passage 15m long with small terminal chamber, located 100m from W8.

- (W10) Small hole only 2m long just outside of a bend in track beyond Damper Inn.
- (W11) Small cave with 10 metres of passage; deep pool of water; large population of the cave cricket Micropathus tasmaniensis; located between W10 and track.
- (W12) Very small swallet beside Mt Bowes track at foot of major hill in first forest south of the South Gordon track not far from old hut side; unnegotiable.

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SOME NOTES ON THE SURVEYS OF ZULU POT, PYGMY CAVE
AND JUNEES CAVE

By Stephen Harris

The Society has a folder of cave surveys which have been completed and drawn up, however a single copy of a map which few can refer to is practically useless, hence the policy of this journal to publish all cave maps produced by members of this club. We would strongly recommend that other clubs do the same as unnecessary duplication will be avoided. A small number of maps will be published in each issue henceforth.

The three maps appearing in this issue are : Zulu Pot (JF.215), Pygmy Cave (JF.214), and Junee Cave (FJ.8), all from the Junee/Florentine Area near Maydena. The surveying teams consisted variously of M. Vermeulen, L. Wilson; S. Wilson and G. Bailey, under the direction of Leigh Gleeson.

Junee Cave, said to have been discovered in 1890, is an efflux which carries the powerfully flowing Junee River (average flow is 30 cusecs). It is most likely the major resurgence of the Junee area and takes the waters of Khazad-dum. Long known, Junee cave was visited by the geologist Twelvetrees in 1908. Trekking to the cave on horseback from Fitzgerald, he noted even then, destruction of stalactites by vandals and suggested its use as a tourist cave.

Pygmy Cave has been known at least since 1960. It is small gem. Virtually horizontal and of small dimensions it is packed with formation. A short distance up the hill from Pygmy Cave is Zulu Pot which was discovered by S.C.S. in 1967. A passage 6.7m from the bottom has yet to be explored. The cave wasn't properly bottomed until July, 1972 when fragments of bone were collected and given to Phil Andrews who identified them as belonging to Thylacinus cynocephalus (Harris 1808). The full skeleton was subsequently recovered on a later trip.


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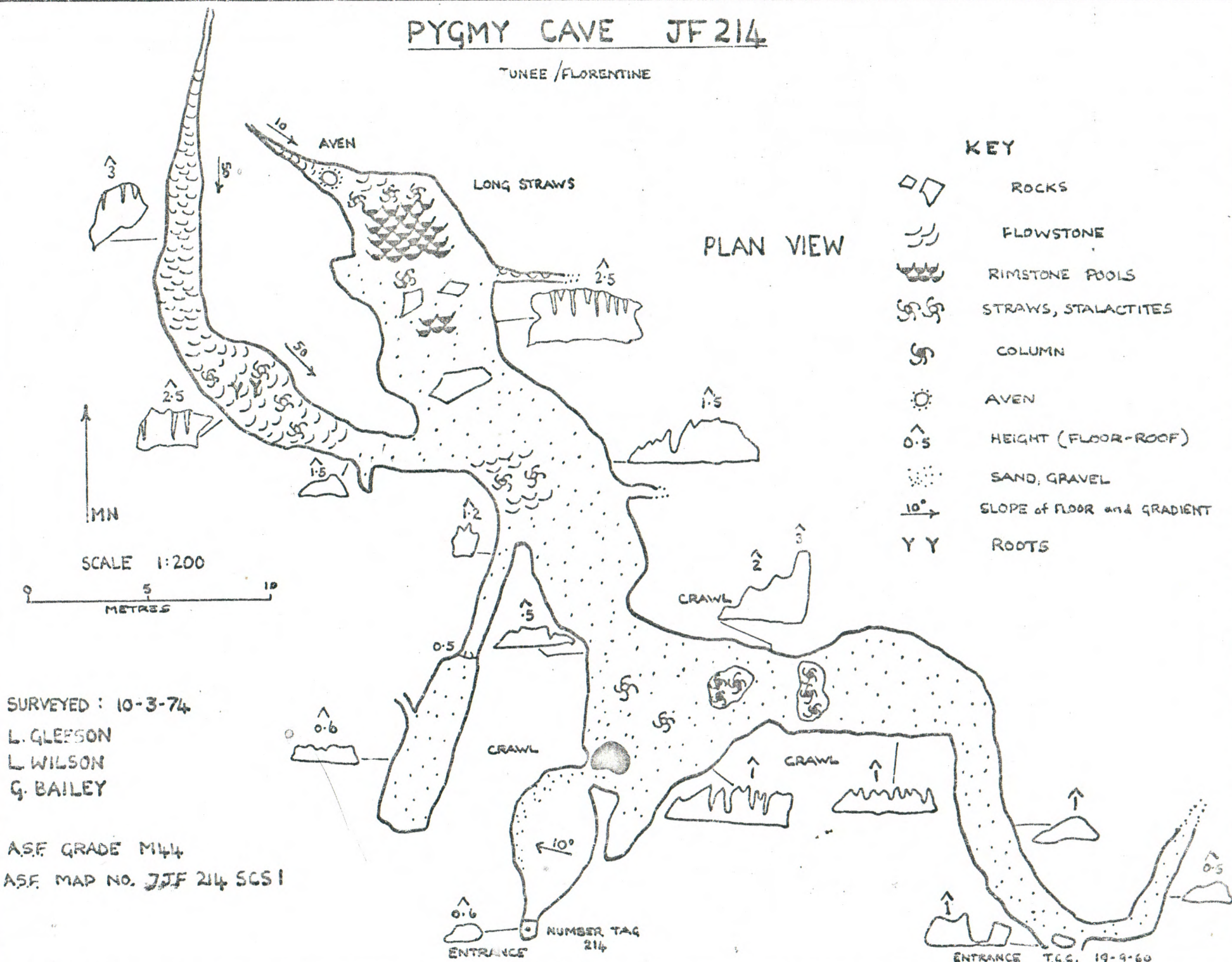
PYGMY CAVE JF 214

TUNEE / FLORENTINE

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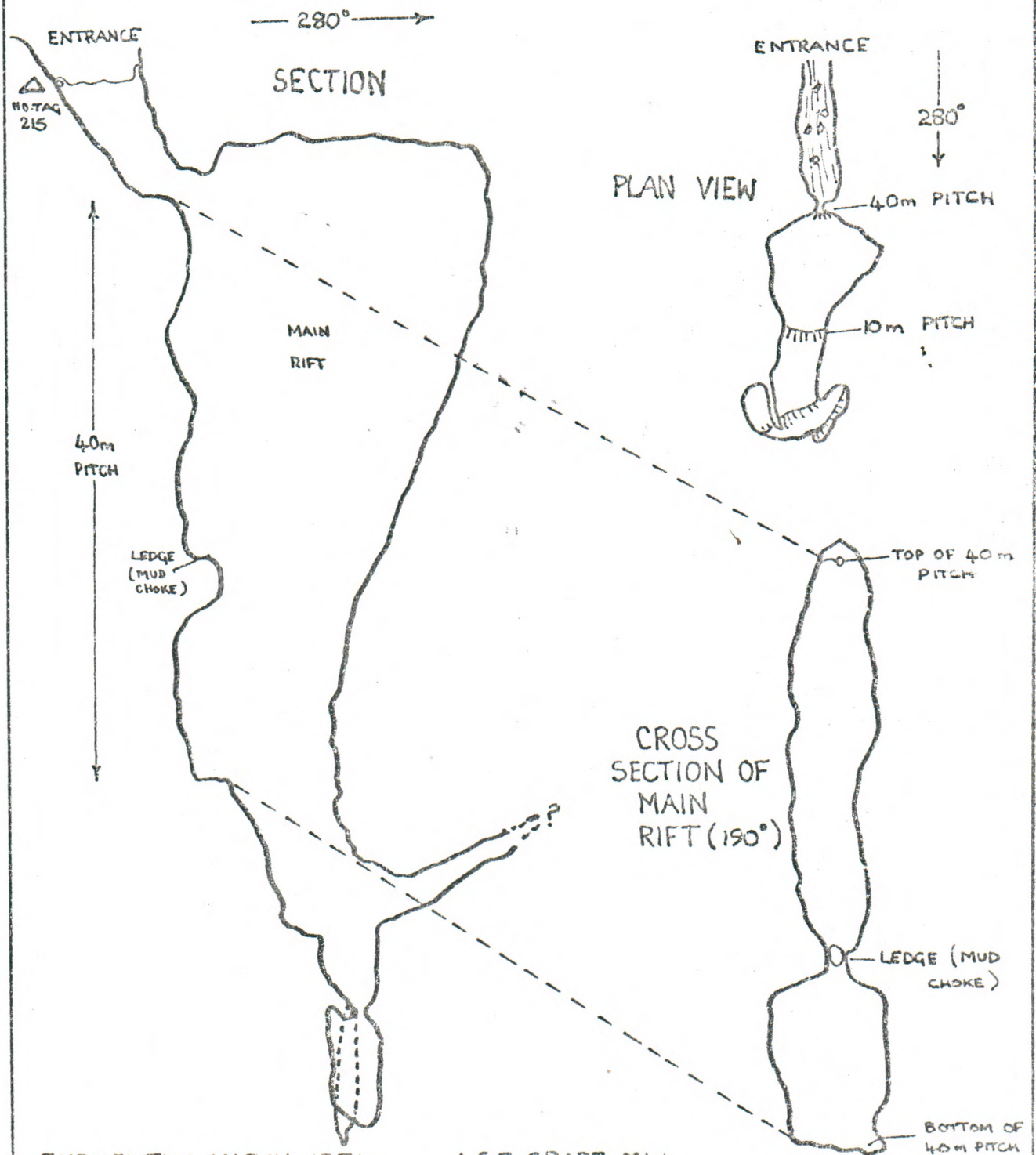
-  ROCKS
-  FLOWSTONE
-  RIMSTONE POOLS
-  STRAWS, STALACTITES
-  COLUMN
-  AVEN
-  HEIGHT (FLOOR-ROOF)
-  SAND, GRAVEL
-  SLOPE of FLOOR and GRADIENT
-  ROOTS

PLAN VIEW



ZULU POT JF 215

JUNEE / FLORENTINE



SURVEYED: MARCH 1974

L. GLEESON
G. BAILEY
L. WILSON
S. WILSON

A.S.F. GRADE M4+

SCALE 1:400

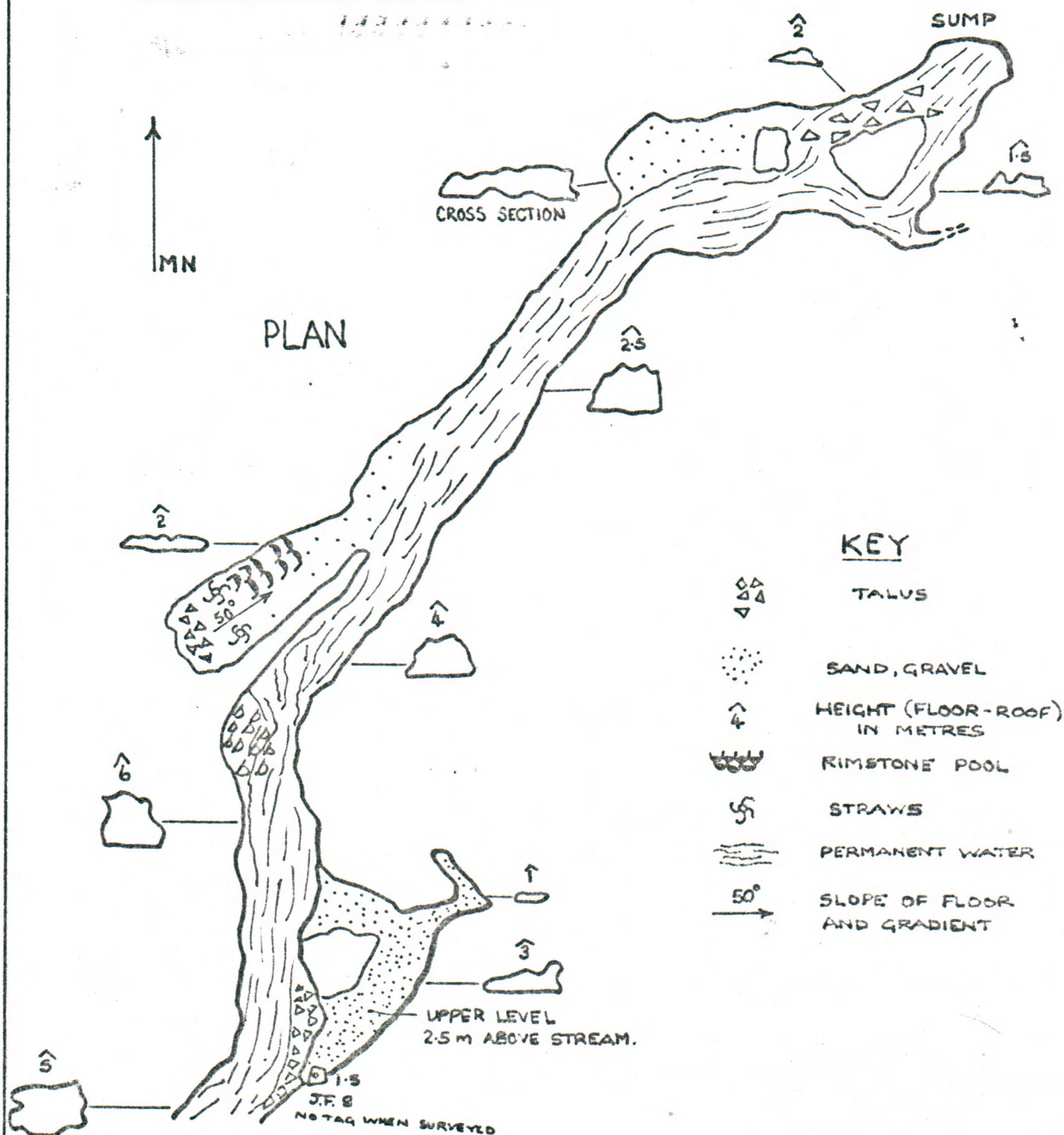
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A.S.F. MAP NO. 7JF 215 SCS 1

JUNEE CAVE JF8

SCALE 1:500

0 5 10 15 20 25 METRES



SURVEYED : 9-3-74

L. GLEESON
M. VERMEULEN

A.S.F. GRADE M44

A.S.F. MAP NO. 7 J.F. 8 S.C.S. 1

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TWELVETREES

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for 1908. Reprinted in Speleo Spiel No.91,
1974.

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No. 4	8	No. 2	12
		No. 3	12
Vol. 2 Nos. 1 to 4	Nil	No. 4	5
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No. 2	15	Vol. 6 No. 1	12
No. 3	3	No. 2	8
		No. 3	15
(Vol. 3 had only 3 Nos.)			
Vol. 4 No. 1	Nil		
No. 2	3		
No. 3	17		
No. 4	12		

Copies may be purchased from the Editors, price
40 cents per copy, including postage.

THE WORLD OF OLEGAS TRUCHANAS

By Max Angus

13 Illustrations 44 Plates

Lithuanian born Olegas Truchanas was a friend of Tasmania's South West. He championed its beauty in thousands of photographs taken over many years in Tasmania, since his arrival in 1948. Most of these were unfortunately destroyed in the 1967 bushfires along with his house and books. It was while in the tedious process of replacing part of his collection that he came to grief - accidentally drowned in the mighty Gordon River.

Some of his more recent photographs have been gathered by his friends who had formed the Olegas Truchanas Publications Committee after his death. The book therefore is a book of photographs -- rich and sensitive colour plates published under 6 sections : The Mountains, Lakes and Tarns, Gordon River, Lake Pedder, Winter, Endemic Flora. A moving memoir of the man precedes his photographs. It is a written portrait of someone who could see that "the time is rapidly approaching when natural environment, natural unspoiled vistas are sadly beginning to look like left-overs from a vanishing world."

Detailed in the memoir, Max Angus outlines the struggles by this one man to secure parts of the South-West for all of us for all time. First of all was the fight in vain to save Lake Pedder National Park which is now under 50 feet of H.E.C. water. Numerous colour transparencies formed the basis of Olegas' once famed public lectures.

A successful result came from a determined struggle by Truchanas to secure a Huon Pine reserve. This rare endemic pine is rapidly being cut out and its habitats flooded by a power commission out of control.

The text of the book is moving, even melancholic to some extent, but also stirs one to guilt that so much has been left to one person. There are others that are probably now achieving and doing as much as Truchanas but it is sad that more people cannot work to achieve consolidation of the whole of the South West as a National Park.

The cost of this book is \$19.50 but by the time you read this you may have difficulty getting a copy. Hobart bookshops, the day after the release of the book, were rushed by enthusiastic buyers. The volume should appeal to speleologists if only because much of our South West region is occupied by unexplored limestone areas, many of which are in danger of being flooded by the H.E.C. If only our politicians and those in "power" could share the vision of Olegas Truchanas.

AREA REPORTS

The Society's work from 1st January to 5th April, 1975 is summarised below. Thirteen trips were conducted to many areas of the State. On 2 of these trips more than one area was visited. An increase has been noted in the number of familiarisation and "tourist" trips with a corresponding decline in excursions conducted for exploration and surveying. Many of the old and familiar caves are being revisited and I think that some periods of such activity are desirable in that established caves are not forgotten. Trips for exploration and surveying should be given a bit more thought by some of our members and it should be pointed out that "tourist trips" and "real work" can be combined in the one trip and may consequently be more satisfying for the visitor.

MOLE CREEK (4 trips)

No exploration work was done but among caves visited were Little Trimmer, Georgies Hall - Wet Caves, and Herberts Pot. Alum Cliffs, Sensation Gorge and Westmoreland Falls were also visited for it is to be remembered that the Mole Creek district has some spectacular surface features let alone underground scenery. Of two parties venturing into Herberts Pot, one team went to the downstream sump with visitors from S.S.S. and Northern Caverneers. The other party visited Paragon vaults beyond the upstream waterfall.

IDA BAY (3 trips)

A visit to Loons Cave and some exploration in the talus of Mystery Creek Cave resulted from two separate trips to this area in January and February. Bradley Chesterman Cave and Exit were also visited on another occasion.

HASTINGS (3 trips)

Talus above a tributary passage in Hells Half Acre was pushed and reportedly showed excellent prospects although the talus is very loose and care is needed. Novice cavers were taken on a through trip from Newdegate to Christmas Cave, the creek being dry at the time.

The track to Wolfhole has been surveyed. A small party at Easter spent four days at Hastings and among other things, climbed the aven in King George V Cave when a prospect for extension was seen in the roof - a big side passage of the main chamber.

JUNEE-FLORENTINE (2 trips)

Welcome Stranger, (twice visited), Growling Swallet and Owl Pot were entered on two separate trips. Growling Swallet was climbed to 253 m with no aids (no ladder or S.R.T.) and was described as "good scrambling" !

ROCKY WHELAN'S CAVE (1 trip)

This is an artificially extended shelter in Triassic sandstone an hours walk off the Southern Outlet Highway near Hobart. Supposedly occupied by a bushranger called Rocky Whelan, the cave extends about 12 m into a small cliff above a very old coaching road which once carried horse drawn traffic between Hobart and the Channel area.

OTHER TRIPS (2 trips)

S.R.T. practice at Blackmans Bay. Weekend Cliff rescue exercise at Cape Raoul. This latter was a joint exercise with members of other clubs including the Climbers Club of Tasmania, Hobart Walking Club and Tasmanian University Mountaineering Club.

(S. HARRIS)

