

SOUTHERN CAVER



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"SOUTHERN CAVER"

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CONTENTS:

A Word From The President.....	Page 2
An Early Note on the Caves of Mole Creek..	Page 3
Coming Events.....	Page 4
The Mt. Ronald Cross Surveys.....	Page 4
Christmas Trip to Mole Creek By Graham Bailey.....	Page 13
Area Reports.....By Stephen Harris.....	Page 16
Membership List.....	Page 18

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

During the Christmas trip to Mole Creek a small incident with a ladder highlighted the necessity for continuous care of equipment.

Lindsay Wilson was climbing a 30 foot pitch when the wire rope broke near the eye, at the first rung. The cause appears to be a combination of rust and wear.

An inspection of the ladders showed that the rust is virtually confined to the section of rope which passes through the rung between the two copper crimps. My view is that the cause is insufficient cleaning, i.e. mud is left in the rungs causing rusting of the strands. It is a very simple matter to clean out the mud with a high pressure water jet and the ladders do not take long to dry; therefore there is no excuse for returning ladders in a dirty condition.

This applies equally to ropes as a jet of water removes a lot of surface dirt which otherwise would infiltrate into the rope. Stricter control over the return of equipment will be necessary if party leaders do not comply with these simple requirements.

The Society has a good safety record however neglect of basic maintenance of equipment could result in a serious accident.

ALL equipment must be returned in CLEAN condition.

(RON MANN)

STOP PRESS ! STOP PRESS !

MAJOR FIND IN HERBERTS POT

A trip to Herberts Pot on 24th February, 1976 by Chris Harris, Graham Bailey and Steve Street, discovered a new length of passage filled with the finest formation yet found in this cave.

A detailed report will appear in the next issue of "Southern Caver."

AN EARLY NOTE ON THE CAVES OF MOLE CREEK
(FROM WEST'S HISTORY OF TASMANIA 1852)

"..... About 15 miles from Deloraine, in the Western Mountains, are situated the great caves, which, in extent and beauty, perhaps equal subterranean wonders of more celebrity. They have not often been visited; but those who have seen them describe them as being extremely grand and beautiful. The entrance of the principal cave, which is considerably more than two miles in length, is in the limestone rock, at the upper extremity of a narrow ravine, down which flows the stream which issues from the mouth of the cave, and extends throughout its whole length. The opening is thirty feet high and fifty or sixty in width. At a considerable distance from the entrance light is admitted by two openings in the roof, the only ones throughout the whole extent of the cave, and when these are passed the full beauty of the scene breaks upon the view of the visitor. Stalactites of every form, hang like icicles from the roof; some presenting the appearance of inverted cones, others that of glistening semi-transparent tubes, about the thickness of a pipe stem, and several yards in length. In some parts, the stalactites, meeting with their opposite stalagmites, form pillars in appearance supporting a roof of immense height. In other places they assume the form of elegant and flowing drapery thrown over the huge rocks that project from the sides of the cavern. The fringes of this drapery, when struck by any hard substance, give forth a ringing sound, and every variety of note, high or low, according to their respective lengths. The floor is covered with stalagmites of every form, and it sparks as if paved with diamonds. If the visitor extinguishes his torch, myriads of glow-worms are seen to cover the roof and walls, emitting a faint blue light, and making the surrounding stalactites appear like spectres in the gloom. As the spectator proceeds, new objects of wonder appear. In some places the stalactites shooting out in all directions, into innumerable small fibres, appear like fret-work along the roof; in others like masses of elegant drapery extending fold above fold, to the height of thirty or forty feet from the floor to the roof. Near the entrance of the cave they are of a grey or brownish colour, but in the interior they are of a pure white. There are several chambers, some of great beauty, which branch off from the main passage, and have been formed by the rivulet which passes through the cave. Others will probably yet be discovered in the Western Mountains."

Quoted from

WEST, John, HISTORY OF TASMANIA volume 2, p.363,
Henry Dowling, Launceston. 1852

COMING EVENTS

EASTER

Mt. Ronald Cross exploration trip based at the tarn campsite. Members will include : Leigh Gleeson, Steve Street, Rod Hughes and Lin Wilson.

MAY 1st and 2nd

A combined Search and Rescue practice exercise consisting of Police, cavers, climbers and walkers will be held at Mole Creek. The exercise will take place in Herberts Pot.

Don't miss this one !

MT. RONALD CROSS CAVE SURVEYS

Virgo Cave was discovered by Ron Mann when the Society made its first trip to the Mt. Ronald Cross area in 1967.

Aquarius was found on a subsequent trip in the same year.

A five man expedition led by Leigh Gleeson and including Lin Wilson, Steve Street, Graham Bailey and Stewart Wilson descended Sagittarius and Taurus caves in 1974. On this occasion all four caves were surveyed. An account of this expedition may be found in the July 1974 edition of "Southern Caver", which also contains the surveys of Capricorn (MR.204) and Libra (MR.208).

AQUARIUS MR201

ENTRANCE
NUMBER TAG 201

ASF MAP NO. 7MR201 SCS 1

ASF GRADE M44

SCALE 1:200

0 10

METRES

SECTION

MN →

7m
PITCH

10m
PITCH

Section
through
passage

SQUEEZE

Section
through
passage.

NARROW
SQUEEZE

SURVEYED APRIL 1974

L. GLEESON

G. BAILEY

S. WILSON

L. WILSON

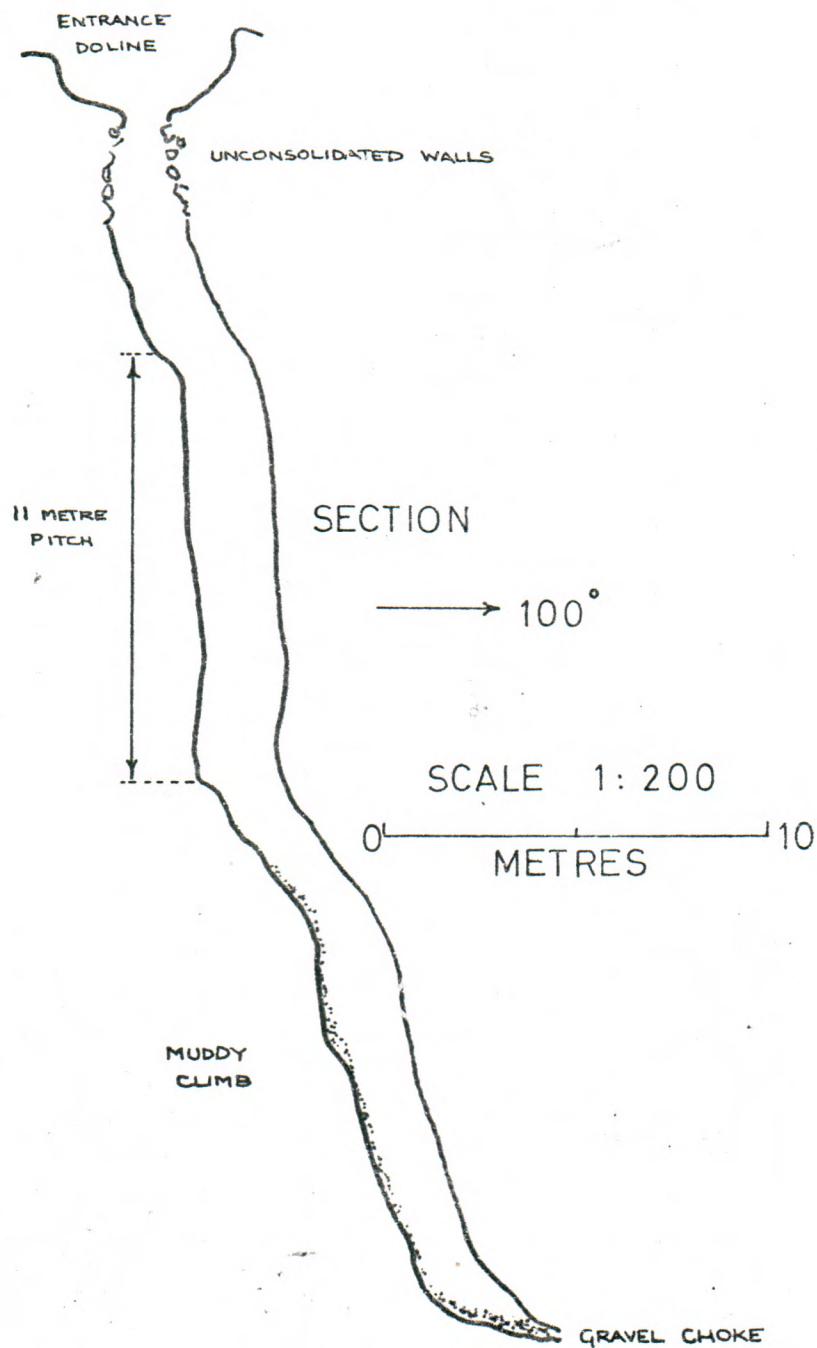
S. STREET

SOUTHERN CAVER

VIRGO MR202

ASF MAP NQ MR202SCS1

ASF GRADE M33



SURVEYED APRIL 1974

SOUTHERN CAVING SOCIETY

SAGITTARIUS MR205

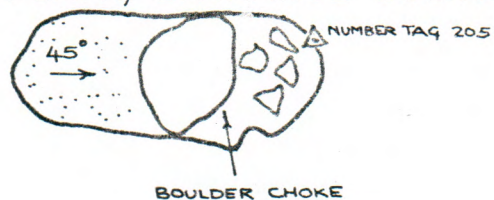
ASF MAP NO 7MR205SCS1

ASF GRADE M44

SCALE 1:200

0 ————— 10
METRES

PLAN of ENTRANCE DOLINE



SECTION

← MN

PEBBLE AND
MUD SLOPE

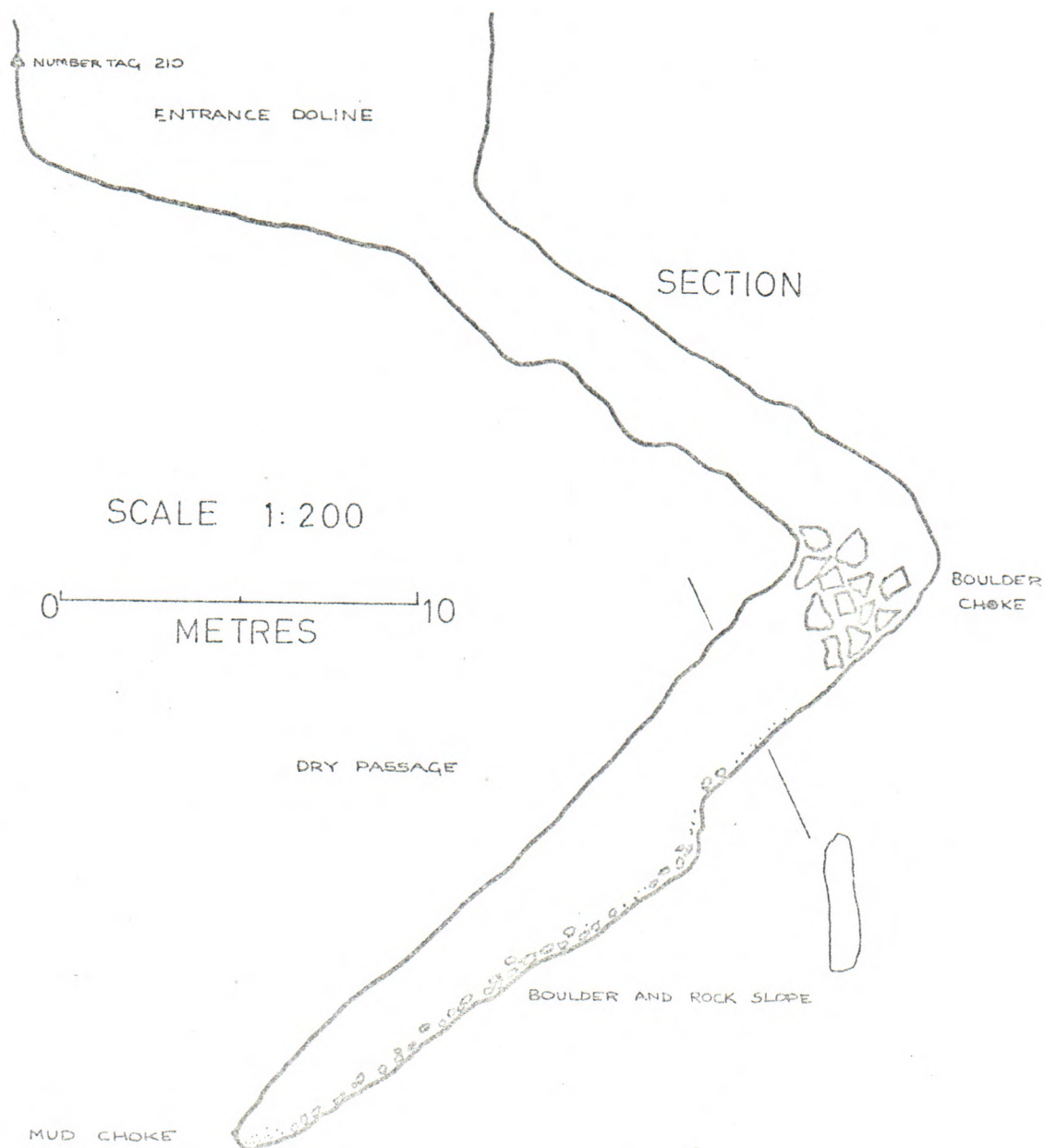
SQUEEZE
(END OF CAVE)

SURVEYED MAY 1974

SOUTHERN CAVING SOCIETY

SOUTHERN CAVER

TAURUS MR210



SURVEYED MAY 1974
SOUTHERN CAVING SOCIETY

ASF MAP NO 7MR210SCS1
ASF GRADE M44

SOUTHERN CAVES

CHRISTMAS TRIP TO MOLE CREEK

by G. Bailey

Personnel

S.C.S. Michael, Delia and Joshua Cole, Graham Bailey, Chris Harris, Graeme Pickford, Leigh Gleeson, Dave Montgomery, Neil and Sue James.

U.Q.S.S. Dave Gillieson, Jill Landsberg.

N.C. Peter Dowde

Christmas 1975 saw the largest gathering of cavers seen at the Wet Caves camp site for some time with three clubs being represented. Stays varied from three to ten days with cavers arriving as others departed in a most organised "accidental happening."

A lot of enjoyable caving was done with the newer members learning the secrets of some of the lesser visited caves.

On the exploration front four new caves were investigated in the Western Creek region and an exciting new discovery in Herberts Pot followed hot on the heels of the side passages discovered in November. A new era came to S.C.S. with the arrival of a second generation member, young Joshua Cole, a bare three months old, who experienced his first caving trip, something that the other married members of S.C.S. could well contemplate.

The trip also marked the return of Dave Gillieson to active caving.

Caves visited

Little Trimmer -- A party of four visited this cave which was most aptly named

Lynds - Visited by two parties. The first pushed the talus where the stream emerges for some distance before retreating and the second party had some sport traversing high sections of the cave.

Westmoreland - A party of three went to the siphon at the known end of the cave

Shishkebab - Four cavers viewed the brilliant formation and also climbed down to the water for a look with the usual "no go" report.

Georgies Hall - Wet Caves - Two through trips were made in this system while two other trips visited Wet Caves.

Ho Hum -- This small cave which lies near the base of Pyramid Hill was explored and a small cave on the top of the hill was also explored

Honeycomb -- A small party visited this cave but due to failing lights the trip was cut short.

Croesus -- Two S.C.S. members went on a most enjoyable "Northern Caverneers" trip to this cave. The party went in through Top Hole and down to the gate then returned via April Fools entrance.

New Caves

Four new entrances were shown to Society members by Gavin Linger. Two were vertical caves about forty feet deep both with twenty foot entrance pitches. Another horizontal cave had a thirty foot main passage with a small side extension. Some large spiders were noticed in the cave. The fourth entrance did not go.

Herberts Pot

On January 3rd, G. Bailey, D. Montgomery and P. Dowde ventured into Herberts Pot to show Peter the upstream end of the cave. With the water level very low quick time was made with Paragon Vaults being reached in 2½ hours. It was then decided to take a look at the upper-most part of the cave.

Returning to the stream and continuing upstream we reached a big chamber where exploration had previously ended. The stream appeared to sump but on entering the water progress was made with only inches of air space for at least sixty feet until it opened into a small chamber ten feet in diameter. The stream then went into another apparent sump but this was not checked.

Progress was then centred on the previous chamber where a side passage was discovered that went for several hundred feet before coming to a constriction. This was then broken through and continued for several hundred more feet where a chamber was reached. We then decided to turn back with the passage still going.

Dave discovered a helictite display near the start of the new passage so we marvelled at a brilliant display rivalling that seen in Paragon Vaults. The entrance was reached after ten enjoyable hours underground.

Summary

Surveying will resume in Herberts Pot in the light of recent discoveries. A trip will be made on the Australia Day weekend and the results are keenly awaited.

PRECIPITOUS BLUFF ISSUE

The Society gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Sydney Speleological Society and particularly Ross Ellis, Editor of Journal of Sydney Speleological Society and Bob Hawkins in providing the photographs and maps used in the previous issue of Southern Caver.

AREA REPORTS

Stephen Harris

Last issue of the Southern Caver was devoted wholly to Precipitous Bluff with no trip report summary for the respective quarter. This summary therefore covers a 7 month period from the beginning of July through until February 2nd, 1976.

Mole Creek (5 trips)

Important New Discoveries

Undoubtedly the focus of most intense interest by the more active cavers in the Society. The principal attraction once again is Herberts Pot, the largest cave in the Mole Creek system. Exploration, mainly concentrated at the upstream end has produced some spectacular discoveries. The November, 1975 party, including A. Bowden, a visitor, explored at least a couple of hundred metres of new passage in the vicinity of the Junction of the 2 main upstream watercourses. The principal passage has been christened "Star and Frog" due to the delusions and misperceptions of certain members of the party.

In December/January, upstream of Paragon Vaults turnoff, another new section of passage was found, this containing very good helictites. Among this team were Dave Gillieson and Jill Landsberg from U.Q.S.S.

Towards the end of January, a party under Leigh Gleeson's leadership set out for a surveying, exploration and watertracing trip into Herberts and 200 metres of new passage was discovered and surveyed. Excellent straws were found. The watertracing from Kellys to Herberts proved not only fruitful but it also threw the torchbeam onto questions not yet answered.

The Christmas/New Year team, as well as a previously mentioned trip into Herberts Pot, also visited Little Trimmer (X1), Lynds Cave (X2), Shishkabab (X1), Ho Hum (X1), Georgies Hall-Wet Caves (X4), Croesus (X1) and Honeycombe (X1). Following a lead given by G. Linger of Caveside, 3 new (although small) caves were found at Western Creek, 2 were 13 m deep shafts and one other was a 10 m horizontal passage.

The earliest trip to the Mole Creek area for the period (August, 1975) entered both Chengis Khan and Georgies Hall Caves.

Florentine Valley (2 trips)

These 2 trips on the 16/11/75 and 2/2/76 were tourist excursions into Welcome Stranger. The formation has sadly deteriorated since it's initial welcome. It is now certainly no stranger.

Hastings (1 trip)

On the 26/1/76, a small party ventured into Wolf Hole as far as Lake Pluto. Wanda Buza, who was on her first trip underground was instructed in ladder climbing techniques. The party was underground for 2 hours.

Ida Bay (2 trips)

Two parties (2/11/75, the other in early December) ventured into Exit Cave, one to Camp 1, the other to the vicinity of the Pendulum.

June (1 trip)

On the 5th and 6th of January, a party led by Leigh Gleeson, bottomed Khazad-dum on a 14 hour trip. The team, which included 2 members of U.Q.S.S. and 3 members of S.S.S., found a possible new lead in a small creek behind the sump but reported that a geology pick was required.

(Herberts Pot - more discoveries - see page 2)

MEMBERSHIP LIST 1975/76

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GLEESON, Peter	5 Derwentwater Av., SANDY BAY		
HARRIS, Christopher	44 Clydesdale Ave., GLENORCHY	726450	-
*HARRIS, Stephen	30 Poets Rd., WEST HOBART		
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JAMES, Sue	GLENORA, Tas.		
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RUSSELL, Peter	30 Blair St., LUTANA	726784	-
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SKINNER, Roy	12 Nixon St., SANDY BAY	231506	-
SKINNER, Pam	12 Nixon St., SANDY BAY	231506	-
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WILLIAMS, Myff			
WILSON, Lindsay	TEA TREE, Tas.	681361	-
WILSON, Stewart	QUEENSLAND.		

* Police search and rescue contacts.

SOUTHERN CAVER

(18)

JANUARY 1976

