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SOUTHERN CAVER

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"SOUTHERN CAVER"

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Presidents Report

The Society's eleventh year began slowly with only a few trips; a large percentage of these being of the "tourist" variety, however, caving activity picked up around December and trips have been more frequent and productive.

Much valuable work has been done overall and approximately 800 M of new passages found in Herberts Pot, steadily adding to the length of this interesting cave. With the return of Leigh Gleeson from an extended visit to New Guinea and outlying islands, the surveying side of the Society has revealed the fact that the downstream sump in Herberts Pot is probably only a few metres from Shishkebab and perhaps Georgies Hall.

The distance between Kellys Pot and upstream Herberts would appear to be in the region of 1,200 m and hopefully further trips will be able to discover the link. The most exciting discovery in Herberts Pot for some time was found in February, by a party led by Leigh Gleeson. A long dry passage containing masses of delicate formations including helictites and long thin needles was the result of continued efforts to extend this cave to its limits.

An expedition to Mt. Ronald Cross during Easter, although handicapped by bad weather, explored a large area but unfortunately only found several small caves.

Two new 50 foot ladders will replace four 30 foot ladders which had to be condemned because of rusting of the wire. With the exception of the ladders the Society's equipment is in good condition.

The Society library grows steadily with the receipt of exchange publications from other Australian clubs however the trip records section suffers from a lack of interest in recording details of trips. Filling out a Trip Report only takes a few minutes and the information can be valuable to others who may need information for a project and of course they are used as the source of the Area Reports in the magazine.

The Editors will have published all four issues of Southern Caver when the current issue rolls off the press. Copy has been hard to obtain and if a sufficient quantity is not forthcoming, the future of the magazine could be in doubt.

Membership of the Society is at a high level with 32 members on the books however new members are always welcome and keep the Society moving.

If subs are to remain at the same level in the next year there will have to be a concerted effort on the part of all members to raise additional funds to cover rising costs.

A combined Search and Rescue exercise in Herberts Pot is scheduled for the 1st and 2nd May and will give members valuable experience in the problems associated with cave rescues.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity of being President and would like to thank the members for their help during the year. I will not be standing for President this coming year so I ask you to fully support the incoming President and make our twelfth year the best yet.

RON MANN.

TREASURER'S REPORT

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Balance forward	22-65	Rent	\$104-00
Subscriptions	225-00	Southern Caver	100-00
Southern Caver	43-00	Insurance	27-45
A.S.F.	39-00	A.S.F.	48-00
Bank Interest	2-15	Post Box	15-00
Miscellaneous	14-60	Subscriptions	10-00
		Survey Equipment	19-75
		Miscellaneous	19-50
		Balance Forward	2-70
	<u>346-40</u>		<u>346-40</u>

SOCIETY FUNDS

Credit Bank Balance	\$ 2-70
Interest Bearing Deposit	282-51
Conservation Account	28-95
	<u>314-16</u>

MICHAEL COLE

QUARTERMASTER'S REPORT

The Society owns the following major items of equipment:-

LADDERS

7 x 30 foot
1 x 20 foot
1 x 10 foot
1 x 8 foot
2 x 50 foot

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 foot tape
1 50 metre tape
1 Compass/Climo Holder

MISCELLANEOUS

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

No major items of equipment were purchased this year however the decision to destroy four 30 foot ladders because of rusting of the wire will temporarily reduce the available length of ladder.

Two new 50 foot ladders will bring the total length back to 348 feet - 20 feet less than at the start of the year.

New ladders to replace some of the older surviving ladders will be needed next year and provision will have to be made for their purchase.

Ron Mann

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS 1976/77

The Society elected the following office bearers to represent it for the year 1976/77 :

<u>Patron</u>	Mr. R.D. Baker
<u>President</u>	Michael Cole
<u>Secretary</u>	Margaret Russell
<u>Treasurer</u>	Ron Mann
<u>Magazine Editors</u>	Dave Elliott & Ron Mann
<u>Magazine Committee</u>	Stephen Harris, Michael Cole Graeme Watt, Kevin Kiernan.
<u>Records Officer</u>	Leigh Gleeson

.....

HONORARY MEMBERS ELECTED FOR 1976/77

Mr & Mrs D.W. Frankcombe, Maydena.	Mr J.N. Howe, Mole Creek.
Mr R.L. Graue, Hastings Caves.	Mrs Lambert.
Inspector T.E. Howard, Tarcoona.	Mr G.R. Linger, Caveside.
Sergeant M. Massie, Hobart.	Mr R.E. Martin, Caveside.
Dr J.N. Jennings, M.A., Canberra.	Mr Richardson, Sandford.
Mr G.J. Melville, Mole Creek.	Mr T. Richardson, Mole Creek.
Mr & Mrs M. Oliver, Chudleigh.	Mr C.J. Shaw, Mole Creek.
Mr & Mrs R. Skinner, Hobart.	Mr D. Turner, Rose Bay.
Dr J. Wane, Lenah Valley.	Mr Gourlay.

It was resolved by the Society that all Cave Guides would be accorded the status of Honorary Members of the Society.

THE CAVES OF EASTER ISLAND.

by Kevin Kiernan.

Often described as the loneliest island in the world, Easter Island, or Rapa Nui, lies in the South Pacific about 3260km. west of the South American continent. Tahiti lies 3540km. to the west while the nearest significant islands are those of the Juan Fernandez group, scene of the real life epic which gave rise to the novel "Robinson Crusoe". Of entirely volcanic origin, Easter Island is riddled with lava caves which have played a significant role in past cultures on the island. Through its isolation, however, the area appears never to have been subject to organised speleological investigation.

Physical Descriptions.

Roughly triangular in shape, Easter Island is about 130sq. km. in extent and rises up to a maximum elevation of about 500m. Topographically dominated by the volcanoes which lie at each corner and the smaller cones which give an almost moonscape appearance, the island has a sparse vegetative cover broken only by occasional eucalypt groves.

Although the three principal volcanoes, including the magnificent caldera of Rano Kao contain crater lakes, the island is effectively devoid of surface stream erosion, with the notable exception of the small gorge of an overflow stream cut into the flank of Rano Aroi.

According to Bandy (1937) water sinking into the porous ash cover of the island reappears at shallow depths along the coast in sufficient quantity that it used to be collected by the natives for domestic purposes.

Bandy's account refers also to the presence of natural arches associated with the overflow drainage of Rano Aroi, while the presence of lava tunnels and tubes in the most recent lava flow on the island was also referred to in passing in another geological paper. (Baker, 19) These two reports formed the basis for cave investigations by the present writer in April 1976.

Anthropology.

The island appears to have witnessed three separate cultural phases. Close fitting masonry of large blocks was constructed on the island by about AD 400. Much of this was destroyed by a later civilisation to construct raised temple platforms known as ahus, upon which were raised moais, the massive stone statues which are the best known features of the island. There are over 600 of these, some up to 12m. high and weighing several tons, some topped by massive stone caps which like the busts were transported several kilometres from the sites from which they were quarried.

Probably around 1670 a further phase developed with the arrival of the ancestors of the present polynesian population. The "long ear" people reputedly put the "short ears", whom they dominated, to work on such projects as clearing the basalt rocks from the grasslands to permit agricultural pursuits. Feuding and civil wars developed and all of the moais were pushed down. The islanders' reed houses were abandoned and many fled into the caves, often using the foundations of their former residences for building purposes in the caves. With entrances among the boulder strewn grasslands often covered over deliberately, these caves were difficult to locate and remain so.

The Caves.

Thus some of the caves of Easter Island have been investigated for archeological reasons but apparently not for their own sake. Probably the first of this investigation was undertaken by Father Sebastian Englert, a missionary who became uncrowned king of the island after gaining the confidence of the people following years of slaughter and abduction by slave traders and the like. Englert compiled an inventory of the moais and with the help of two islanders investigated a number of caves. Perhaps the most noteworthy of his exploratory activities was his exploration of the Cave of the White Virgins, which he penetrated for some 400m from the entrance, in the 300m. cliffs of the Poike promontory at the eastern end of the island. Young women were confined to the darkness of this cave to become pale for special religious ceremonies. In its isolation they survived a smallpox epidemic which decimated the island population but died of starvation as there was no one to bring them food.

After drifting past to the north during his epic Kon-Tiki expedition, Thor Heyerdahl led an archeological team to Easter Island in the mid 1950s and subsequently published a map of the island locating a number of caves explored by his expedition. Heyerdahl's almost Casteret-like accounts give some idea of the extent of cave utilisation as well as the morphology of some of the lava caves:

"Later we visited several of these huge caves with room after room like pearls on a string running down through the underworld. Their entrances were all so skilfully walled up so that no-one could get down through the narrow funnels cut with sharp angles or zig-zags, in which any assailant would be completely helpless. There was water in some of the largest caves; two of them had regular subterranean ponds and right down at the bottom of a third we found a walled well of ice cold water surrounded by a stone pavement and a well built terrace some ten feet high".

From an anthropological point of view, the caves of the island appear to fall into four categories; residential caves of predominantly coastal location and quite shallow; shallow temporary shelters; refuge caves used to escape war and persecution; and storage caves in which were hoarded family treasures, stone sculptures, pots, wood carvings, and some of which were also used for burials.

Yet Heyerdahl's map was blank in the two locations mentioned in the geological reports of Baker and Bandy. Thus it was these areas where exploration was concentrated by the present writer.

New Cave Exploration:

A few short days, language problems and a solitary speleo, inadequately equipped, imposed certain constraints upon the extent of cave exploration which was possible during the course of this visit. Little information was forthcoming from the islanders, but their apparent disinterest was probably purposeful: the local school-teacher and carabineros (Chilean paramilitary police) exhaustively searched my possessions immediately before departure, an encouraging sign that the Chilean Education Department, which is charged with the protection of the island's relics, is no longer prepared to see the place plundered by the typical scientific lust which has robbed it of many of its treasures.

Nonetheless, it was possible to gain an insight into the great potential for speleological activities on the island.

The caves associated with the overflow of Rano Aroi proved to be of no apparent anthropological interest but are interesting in so much as they probably represent the only known caves on the island resultant from stream erosion rather than from lava flow characteristics. They are remnants of a very much more extensive underground streamway most of which has now collapsed to form a small gorge up to 20m. deep leaving four natural arches over an active streamway. They are situated a short distance from the crater lake where the stream first sinks into the porous ash on the southern flank of the mountain.

But the area of greatest interest undoubtedly proved to be the recent lava flow centrally located on the west coast of the island north of the leper station and overlooked by the Ahu Akivi. This triangular shaped flow covering about 4sq. km. is incredibly rich in caves.

Perhaps the most striking feature in this area is a massive collapse about 200m. long and 50m. wide with a depth of around 20m. At the western end a narrow entrance through talus at the foot of a small cliff gives access into a spacious cavern 12m. in height and containing a sizeable retain wall forming a terrace. The dark rock and dimensions of this cave emphasised the inadequacy of lighting equipment carried and a couple of hundred metres of passage was explored without reaching the end.

Westwards of this, numerous other cave entrances were located. Two small but extremely promising entrances near the first cave were left uninvestigated. Not far away a further large collapse gave access to a wide entrance 4m. in height beyond which lay a lofty passage and another roomy passage, the end of which was not reached. A second entrance in the other end of the same doline was left unexplored as an overwhelming number of promising entrances were located all over the flow.

In all, at least 30 cave entrances were located and the search was by no means exhaustive. Only a few of the smaller caves were fully explored, some containing old man made terraces with other passages deliberately blocked off by stone walls, leaving one to speculate as to what lies beyond, and for what purpose they were blocked.

Not far from the village of Hanga Roa, a number of small caves were examined in the vicinity of another Ahu. These were mostly of fairly small dimensions and included some of those visited by Heyerdahl. The stonework around the entrances to some old residential caves has been more recently repaired and the chamber put to use for stock. One cave was found to be blocked with recent stonework, possibly to protect anthropological relics. Other shallow residential caves were visited in the vicinity of Rano Pao, a shapely cone inland of Hanga Roa, and also along the central section of the island's south-eastern coastline.

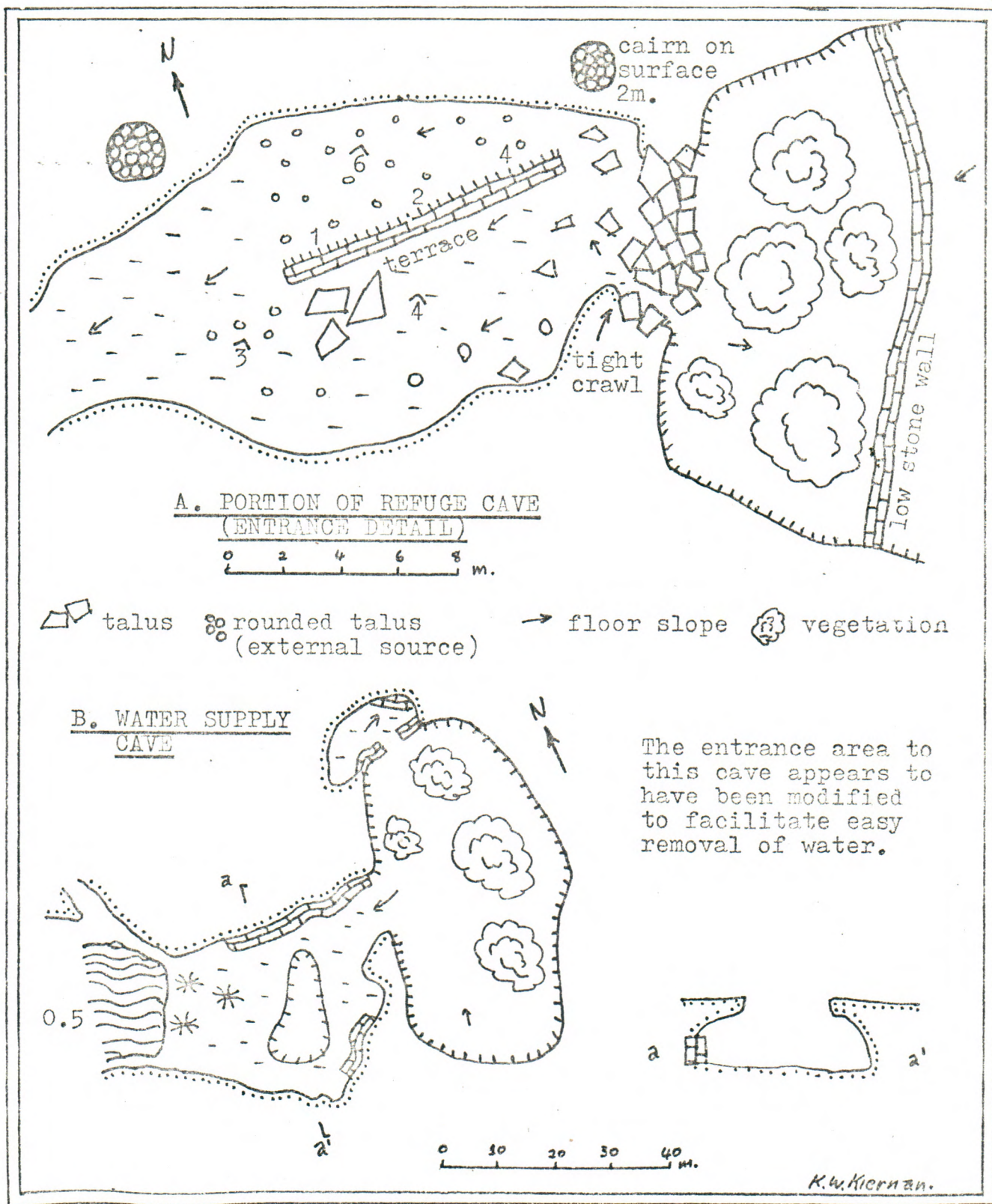
Perhaps the most interesting of the small caves located however was on the south-eastern coastline where human remains were found in a cave filled with small basalt rocks from the nearby grasslands. From a cursory examination it appeared that one human skeleton was supported by these rocks in a standing position.

In Summary:

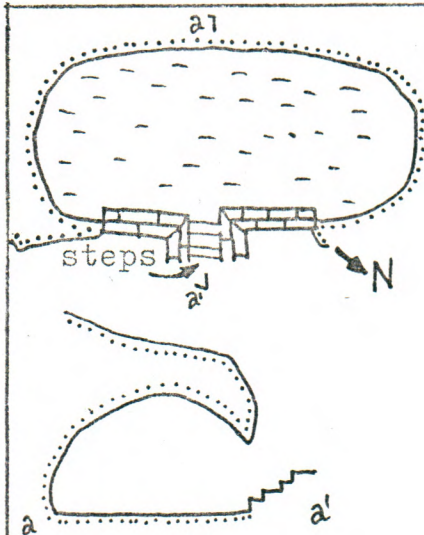
A large number of caves were located which are not included on the map published by Heyerdahl. These were principally in two restricted areas as well as a few scattered coastal locations. It is likely that the potential for further cave discoveries on the island has hardly been scratched. But it is probably the less obvious entrances which might be expected to contain the most striking anthropological data. Some of the known lava caves on the island are of very large size, and Easter Island remains a very tantalising area for further cave exploration. Yet it will undoubtedly be a very considerable time before the bulk of its underground territory is known, due not only to the isolation of the island but also to the habit of the former cave dwellers of covering up their narrow cave entrances with boulders for purposes of defence and to maintain the security of their possessions.

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| HEYERDAHL, Thor. | (1958) | <u>Aku-Aku</u> . (Allen and Unwin, London) |

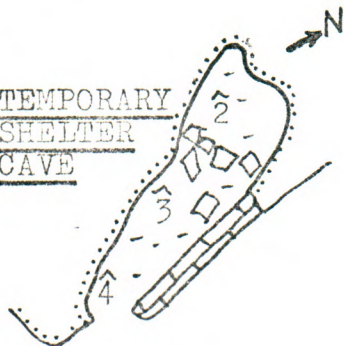


E. CAVES VISITED-LOCATION MAP

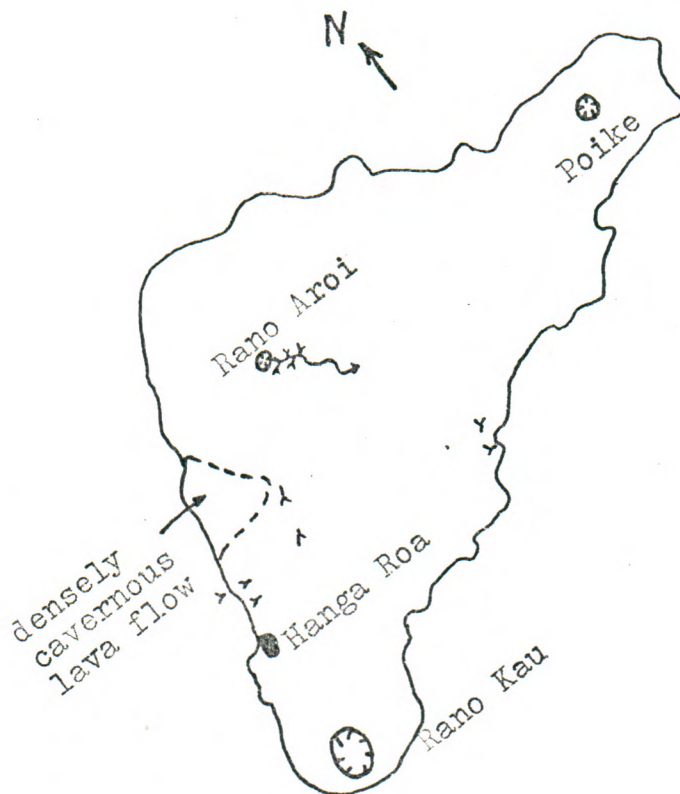


C. RESIDENTIAL
CAVE

D. TEMPORARY
SHELTER
CAVE

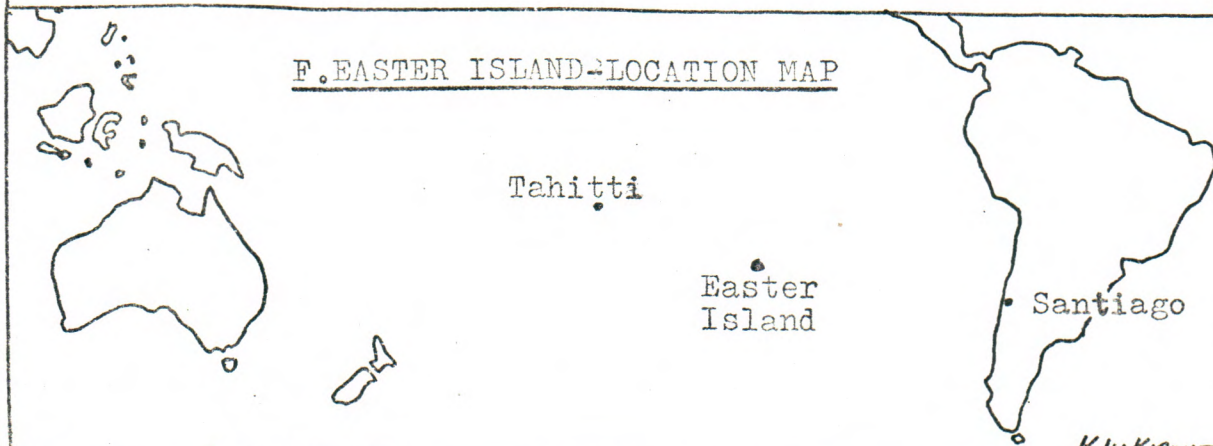


0 2 4 6 8 10 m.



0 1 2 3 4 5 km.

F. EASTER ISLAND-LOCATION MAP



K.W. Kiernan.

STOP PRESS

EDITORIAL

The editorial in the July issue of Spelco Speil touching on the subject of amalgamation is remarkable both for its emotional content and the number of false premises on which it is based.

One need do no more than look back at what has been accomplished in caving on the local scene with two strong clubs operating independently. Khazad-dum, Tassy Pot, Exit Cave and Herberts Pot at once spring to mind, together with the successful joint hosting of the 1970/71 A.S.F. Conference. It might be argued that one group could have accomplished all this, but without the spur of friendly rivalry, we doubt it.

We assure Laurie Moody that the attitude of the "bad men" of SCS is not based on personal hatreds but on a belief in the essential soundness and democratic structure of our group. We are reluctant to place at risk what many of us have devoted years of work to building up for the vague promise of "pie in the sky" through amalgamation.

This is not to say that our attitude is entirely isolationist, as it once was, for those who practised the old hatreds have long since disappeared. There is ample opportunity for co-operation between the clubs in occasional projects of mutual interest.

We suggest, we hope without offence, that the TCC executive would be better employed in putting their own house in order than in fiddling with the white elephant of amalgamation.

Dave Elliott

Ron Mann

CAVING WIDOWS

By Delia Cole

Is this you?

- Are you at home on your own on Wednesday nights, playing second fiddle to a cold clubroom or a pub
- Are you told that you can't go on trips because they are too hard
- Are you expected to pack his gear and food and make sure he has a spare hanky
- Does he come home after a weekend underground, hungry and tired but randy and expecting to be satisfied in all departments
- Are you kept busy knitting socks and beanies
- Are there piles of mud caked washing on Mondays
- Do you find cave dirt in his navel, ears and toes
- Are you expected to nurse his arthritic back and sore knee caps
- Did you spend your honeymoon in the pouring rain at Mole Creek or was it underground
- Is the dirty mud caked stranger you live with really the man you married or the man you let him become

If so - I understand,

I married one myself!

.

AREA REPORTS

Stephen Harris

This is a summary of trip reports for the period from the beginning of May 1976 to 11th July 1976. There were 10 trips during this interval involving over 33 different people.

Mole Creek (4 trips)

Yet again, most attention was given to this area, the honey-pot being Herberts Pot. On the 23rd April, Bob Cockerill showed Messrs. Galloway, Hocking and Woolhouse (from the Police, Climbers Club of Tasmania and Northern Caverneers respectively) part of this cave in preparation for the S&R exercise which was held at a later date. The ladder pitch was examined in particular with a view to trying out winch applications to a rescue exercise.

The actual rescue exercise was held on the weekend of 1st and 2nd May and involved more than 35 people from seven different organisations.

The continuation of serious speleology in Herberts Pot involved L. Gleeson, L. Wilson and D. Shield on the weekend of the 3rd and 4th of July. Water tracing was carried out and the successful results are filling our knowledge of the complex Mole Creek system. A summary of results taken from Leigh Gleeson's trip report is as follows-

- " Results : 1) Established link between Kellys Pot and upstream sump in Herberts Pot.
- 2) Established link between entrance stream at Herberts Pot and the main stream resurgence in downstream Herberts just below the standing pools.
- 3) Verified that part of the main stream between Westmoreland junction and Paragon Vaults junction is captured and diverted towards Westmoreland stream which it subsequently joins and then reappears back in Herberts Pot main-stream "

Again, in May, Herberts was visited by K. Kiernan, S. Harris, G. Middleton and Elery Hamilton-Smith. Two of the party ventured to the upstream waterfall, the others to Paragon Vaults.

MT. Ronald Cross (1 trip)

The aim of this trip during Easter was to continue surface and underground exploration in this scenically spectacular area. L. Gleeson, C. Harris, L. Wilson, S. Street and P. Russell suffered some cruel weather which had them sloshing through snow at the campsite and trying to ignore mist filled tents at night. The speleological results

of the trip were reported by L.Gleeson in Southern Caver 7,no.4 . Although the trip was well organised results were disappointing possibility due to the weather.

Trowutta (1 trip)

K.Kiernan, G.Middleton and A.Skinner visited this remote (from Hobart) area in early May. Kevin reports that they " visited Trowutta Arch via a new access route (i.e. got lost but stumbled over the thing anyway) ". The cave below the normal lake level was negotiable and had an entrance $6\frac{1}{2}$ metres high by 13 metres wide but only extends inward to about $26\frac{1}{2}$ metres before choking off with silt. Some low level leads at the northern end of the doline system were unsuccessfully investigated as well as numerous pieces of water-way under collapsing roofs along the base of the doline.

Montagu (1 trip)

K.Kiernan, G.Middleton and A.Skinner visited this area also in early May and visited Main Cave but " did not penetrate beyond the pool sequence in the main streamway " (trip report K.Kiernan). There is a likely lead beyond these pools which was located some years ago.

Hastings (2 trips)

A party of eight visited Wolf Hole on the weekend 17th and 18th June. The party comprised L.Gleeson, E.Vermeulen, M.Russell, J.van Lund, R.Hughes, R.Nobbs, D.Anderson and S.Anderson. K.Kiernan, A.Skinner, G.Middleton and G.Holloway made an excursion into Newdegate Cave with the TCC scaling pole. An aven in the Hell's Half Acre area was to be the object of exploration but faulty lights put paid to this idea within only minutes of the entrance. Kevin reports that the pole is now stored at Hastings. (A permit from the National Parks and Wildlife Service is now needed to visit Newdegate Cave)

Ida Bay (1 trip)

Seven Rover Scouts were conducted on a trip to Entrance Cave by M.Cole, G.Pickford and G.Bailey. Two and a half hours were spent underground and the visitors were happy with the trip.

