

VOL. 8 NO. 2

# SOUTHERN CAVER

PRICE 50 CENTS



# "SOUTHERN CAVER"

Published Quarterly by the  
Southern Caving Society.

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VOLUME 8 NUMBER 2

OCTOBER, 1976

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## A LONG AND BORING ARTICLE

- Kevin Kiernan

Perhaps I shall be seen as a heretic. Mores of former days have long tended to get themselves somehow enshrined in speleological folk lore, develop into unwritten rules and be rigidly adhered to. But mores come and go, and as time passes the constant evolution which accompanies it leads to change: yesterday's notion becomes today's dogma and tomorrow's curiosity.

One example will suffice. There was a time when SRT was opposed on the grounds of safety. (Yours truly still avoids it, but for aesthetic reasons rather than safety) only one rope! What if it were damaged? And what if the inexperienced were to try it? Besides, abseiling is inherently dangerous in caves what with loose rocks and so forth. Oh deary deary me no, that would never do. The safety oriented objections, principally from the longest established in the speleo-fraternity, seemed endless, and persisted throughout the slow (and cancerous) spread of SRT throughout Australia. A not altogether rational opposition, though no more or less condemnable than those who would have denied women the vote at a time when it was just a socially unheard of proposition. Nothing necessarily vindictive, simply a product of prevailing societal attitudes and expectations generally upon individual responses to the situation.

But women gradually got the vote. It was even conceded that children and slaves might be people, and that suggestion would doubtless have also stood people on their ears once upon a time. And SRT arrived in Tasmania and who would now deny people the right to use it? (should their personal standards be sufficiently base).

Mountaineering and rock-climbing has seen a similar evolution. In common with most of the outdoor sports, solo exploits have been rather frowned upon. Following the safety-in-numbers approach, it was held that there should always be plenty of folk around.

This approach is often justified by appealing to a suggestion of thoughtlessness in doing otherwise: that if one came unstuck others might be put at risk or inconvenienced in performing a rescue. Yet despite this, more and more climbers began to turn to the mountains alone; perhaps the highest and purest form of climbing: no more an impatient second to over-ride shattered nerves with fear of witnessed failure; no comforting conversation; no rope to hold a fall. This was the ultimate test, alone and free, failure or success within and for oneself. It's been widely suggested that the tremendous advances in climbing over recent years have been a product of improved equipment, but I tend to think that the parallel advances in free solo climbing demonstrate that it is more a product of maturing mental attitudes.



Perhaps it is partly for this reason that solo-climbing continues to become more respectable, and while high standard soloing remains the domain of the top line, it is now widely recognised for what it is: the ultimate plane.

I guess its about time to come to the point. I have tried to briefly sketch evolution of thought in a couple of situations, because it seems to me that speleos tend to be more bureaucratised than most, and maybe need to have it pointed out to them that things tend to change over time as rationality over-rides habit, and that absolutes tend to be exposed as relatives. I wish to suggest its time to move and to flow. And that solo caving be removed from the "banned" list.

That doesn't mean wholesale encouragement or even encouragement at all. Just a breach in the wall and a lack of enforcement. Discretion. A blind eye to those generally considered competent, at one level or another. Tempered by common sense rather than arbitrary rules.

Safety. Firstly, I'd like to suggest that one person alone is not inherently unsafe. Sure, an unroped fall from a ladder would be more likely to occur perhaps but I suggest that the most dangerous elements of caving would be no more dangerous to a solo caver than to a party of cavers, in fact in some circumstances, loose talus perhaps, one person just might be safer. A member of a party would in most circumstances be just as likely to slip and break an ankle whereas a solo-caver just might more fully appreciate his problems were he so careless, or unlucky. I think there is just a need to admit that caving can be risky. I'd suggest also that anyone competent enough to feel up to soloing a major cave would have a pretty fair idea of the dangers and his own capability. And I'm certainly not advocating it as a game for novices.

Responsibility. It would be impossible not to feel bad about causing a rescue team to be called out. But I guess someone with a broken leg in downstream Herberts would be just as hard to get out whether it happened while soloing or as a member of a party. The principle difference would be in the personal risk, in the exposure while waiting, but that is part and parcel of what the soloist takes on. And somehow, on looking around the likely front-liners in the club for any rescue, I rather doubt that there would even now be many who would find the idea any more distasteful were a solo caver involved. I'm not suggesting that's all that needs to be said by any means, but generally I don't really think a solo caver necessarily has a much greater personal responsibility to shoulder for being the object of a rescue than a member of a party.



The aesthetics of it all. A couple of years ago a friend and I decided to try to eliminate the artificiality involved in the descent of what was to us an unknown cave, Growling Swallet. Armed with acres of chocolate for what we had heard would be a long wet trip, we free-soloed the two ladder pitches, spent a while scratching around down the bottom and regained the surface in a bit under two hours. (Times change, Herberts was once a 15 hour trip either way) Anyway, I'm not suggesting it was a dreadfully heroic or desperate act, perhaps its even become the norm since, I don't know. But I do know that we felt good on two counts: firstly because it seemed a more natural and fundamental experience for not having used ladders and ropes, and secondly because we felt freer in our own minds without the artificial security of tackle and a larger party. And more recently, when faced with solo caving or nothing while overseas the same sentiments came to the fore. Doubtless many have felt the same.

So I guess I'm suggesting three things: firstly that solo caving, while it should not be encouraged, should at least be tolerated when undertaken by experienced cavers; secondly that solo-caving should perhaps be recognised as providing a higher level of caving experience for those moved to indulge in it; and thirdly, that provided adequate advice is left upstairs, it isn't necessarily that much more dangerous or irresponsible, and that what danger does exist should be tolerated, as part of the sport.

MOHO.

While hitching back to Melbourne from Mt. Arapiles earlier this year, I was picked up by a nose-picking, beer can hurling hoon in a lowered, glossy purple, wide-wheeled, bobble fringed vehicle, complete with noddy-dog perched among the parcel shelf cushions, and peering out through the venetians with eyes which glowed hideously with each application of the brakes. We'd just raced a train across a level crossing, and as I climbed back up from under the dashboard where I'd been praying fervently to anyone who would listen, he wiped his nose and the pie crumbs from his mouth with a single magnificent movement of his sleeve spreading remnant blobs of tomato sauce halfway to his pierced left ear lobe, then asked what I'd been doing.

"Climbing", I said confidently, my composure re-established.

"Shit, , are you one of those bloody fuckwits?"

"Yes", I said with less confidence and less composure.

"I don't know why they don't lock you silly bastards up, you're a menace to society".

"How come?" I replied.



"You'll all bloody fall off and kill yourselves one day, you're all bloody mad".

"A, we seldom fall off and B, we use equipment to protect ourselves", I said, with all the cold analyticality my university past could muster.

"Bullshit, You'll all kill yourselves one day. Shouldn't be allowed".

The conversation broke off briefly while he grovelled around on the floor chasing after one of those little gnomes toilet seats from the top of his latest beer can. He tossed it out the window, explained how much he couldn't stand his car being untidy, then disappeared half-way back out the window to untangle his football team colours from around the radio aerial. Then he looked across to curse an elderly gentleman manfully wrestling his Charger at a valiant 40 kph. on this great wide open road, and didn't even notice the big semi coming the other way which just squeezed past us.

"No way", he said, "I just don't believe people should be allowed to kill themselves. Take that silly wog character who tried to walk across that bloody desert. Bloody vanished didn't he, bloody idiot".

"Wasn't hurting anyone but himself", I said, "his business if he's prepared to risk it, said he didn't want to be searched for, what's the harm in that?".

I sat back to watch, but a flash in his eye made me immediately realise I had blown it.

"But there was a bloody great search wasn't there, all that trouble and expense".

It was clearly an afterthought. My own carelessness had armed him with the possibility of others being inconvenienced, given him a nucleus to crystallise his ideas around, his first rational objection. (I remain ignorant, however, as to how such a big word as "expense" crept into his vocabulary). Howsumever, the conversation which followed was long and involved. He was all for abortion on demand, but didn't much like the idea of "Having the olds put to sleep", though conceded it may be on in some circumstances. And he reckoned anyone wanting to commit suicide should be locked up or shot. I left the car confused and bewildered, but still alive.

Couple of days later I was standing forlornly on the side of the Hume Highway just out of Albury. My feet were hurtin', the sun was hot an I was still confused. The trains over the way were just shuntin' back an' forth, gettin' about as however as I was, an my feelin' matched their wailin'.



I had drifted back into thinkin' about the Frenchman when an old Morris Major pulled slowly up in a hurried flurry of nothin'. I crept in through the cobwebs to the back seat and peered out through a gap in the windscreen: "Safe Driver - 10 years accident free" overlaid by "15 years", "20" and so on up to "40". They asked me why I carried a rope and I told them. The inevitable response: I moved to hold them in check by telling the tale of my earlier lift. They listened patiently, then Missus Moonah turned to me and said "Yes, of course, I agree completely, as long as there's no chance of anyone getting hurt". We didn't talk much after that, I just sat there in the musty dullness, the air a funny colour from filtering in through the "I've been to ....", stickers on the back window and the blue rinse in the front seat. It's not that I didn't like Captain Crashbar and his good lady, it's just that we didn't seem to have much in common. So I just erected a safety fence around my mind and sat watching the countryside go past. Slowly, and I came to the conclusion that deep down, people are basically just self righteous do-gooders.

MOHO

Synthesis of different moods at different times. There are risks in most things worth while. Perhaps, I am essentially espousing freedom. The opposition is superficially the expense to others; but I suggest deeper down it is simply an innate do-gooder tendency, submerging individualism in the name of majority benefit. In the name of democracy? Or is democracy a system designed to cater and provide for minority dissent from the mass mentality? The freedom of others to drive a car places me at risk everytime I walk out my front door, even though I don't own a car myself. Seems to me basically fair enough: I guess there are some things I do which, although I believe them safer than driving, could possibly put others at risk. Caving alone or with others, SRT or ladders, with tackle or without: the choice should be vulnerable to persuasion but not to sanction, be it in the form of organisational punitive measures or social ostracism.



A diagnostic feature of many Tasmanian cavers is that they are extremely active for several years but subsequently lapse into that much more sluggish role of armchair caver. In fact a psychological barrier is built up which inhibits the tackling of the wetter, longer and more miserable caves. Unfortunately these are often the most exhilarating caves.

Well, given that this is an observable trend and a fate to which we are all destined, it seems to me that great benefit could be gained from planning for speleological retirement. Rather than letting ourselves become repatriated to brick veneers in the suburbs for the rest of our days, my suggestion is that we pack ourselves off to a more leisurely, more gentlemanly caving area where once again we can push to the limit of every cave we discover and overcome all exploration odds.

In order that this article should not appear to be a total joke and that the suggestion should have some credibility, I have decided to outline some of the speleological prospects and caving areas in the Bismark Archipelago and the Solomon Sea in the S.W. Pacific. This region would have particular appeal to us mid-latitude cavers, firstly because of its tropical flavour (none of this ridiculous caper of creeping around in freezing stream passages for 15 hours) but also because there is a great deal of exploration and discovery still to be done. The caves are easy and the cultural and environmental contrast is vast when compared to Tasmania.

I will exclude from discussion details of inland or mountainous karst areas such as the Lelet Plateau on New Ireland or inland New Britain for these involve the hard yakka of carrying equipment, going down big shafts and all that type of nonsense. No! We are thinking of something a little less rigorous, something more sensible, more leisurely. The coastal areas of the larger islands with their white coral sand beaches and the smaller volcanic islands and coral atolls would be more appropriate.

Well, let us look at what is offered. Starting at random with say New Ireland (see map), caves are ubiquitous on the N.E. coast and there are some on the S.W. coast. At least seventy caves have been reported (Bourke 1974) although not all on the coast. Many have associated with them burial sites, rock carvings and cave legends which make them extremely interesting to visit. Most are fairly short although largish chambers are fairly common and are easy going. These coastal sites are easily reached by road and an appropriate approach to the local villagers may yield a native guide.



Caves of sorts have been described from Lihir island to the east of New Ireland (Gallash 1976) in the volcanics there. To the northeast on New Hanover, several caves have been found (Gleeson 1976) in the raised coral limestone and no doubt many more await formal recognition. The Admiralty Group (Manus Island group) have a considerable number of caves (Francis 1975). Los Negros Island has at least eleven caves varying from 15 metres to 150 metres in length. Bunai has about six with a few well decorated. Central Manus island has thirty six caves again up to 150 metres in length and several have cave legends. The host of smaller islands in the area also have varying numbers of caves (Francis 1976). Lou, Baluan, Rombuto, Naura and Ndova islands all have caves or show prospects of having caves.

At several spots around the coast of the large island of New Britain cave prospects look good. For example, at Kandrian (Gallash 1973) and at Pomio (Borough 1973) caves have been found however most of the limestone is unknown from a caving point of view.

From the beautiful Trobriand islands a large number of small but interesting caves have been described (Ollier, Holdworth 1969). Many have legends, customs and burial sites. One may even come across some old carvings but if not certainly the present day ones will be appealing.

There is very little described from the Milne Bay area. It appears that there are limestone sediments on Woodlark Island and caves have been described from Goodenough Bay (Anthony & Gemmell 1974). Probably more could be found by a casual caver creeping around this multitude of coral lined islands.

From Bougainville Island and the other members of the Solomon Island group, caves have been described. Meier (1975) reports a cave of 1500 metres (easy access, easy cave) near Borumai in the N E as well as others in the N E (Meier 1973). Parker (1970) gives reference to a magnificent system on the west coast which has dimensions for its largest chambers of 150 metres high, 120 metres wide and nearly 300 metres long. It appears that there are caves on the smaller islands of the Solomon group such as Santa Ana island (Anon 1969). One might even find some caves with war relics. Apparently large numbers of caves occur near the coast at Guadal Canal (Vince 1974) and a few near Honiara.

And so it goes on. Countless numbers of beautiful islands and the possibility of countless caves all within the psychological limits of retired cavers. Access to these areas is relatively easy and cheap. It only requires a little initiative to score a ride on a copra boat or hire a dug-out canoe or take advantage of merchant ships or pleasure yachts.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
and  
SOLOMON ISLANDS

0 100 200  
KMS.





Furthermore, what has been considered here is only a small segment of the South Pacific and the same prospects and potentialities apply to New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Fiji, Samoa and so on.

Thus it seems to me then, that we can retire in dignity if we so desire. We can forget about these miserable Tasmanian caves and go on light weight expeditions to the South Pacific.

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## HYDROLOGY PROJECTS AT MOLE CREEK AND JUNE

By Leigh Gleeson

In recent years the Society has been working consistently on the hydrology of the Mole Creek system. This has involved co-ordinated exploration, surveying and water tracing work, particularly in Herberts Pot.

This cave has proved to be the most significant in the whole Mole Creek system for it is in Herberts that several major streams and some minor tributaries merge to form the greater Mole Creek system. The most important recent confirmations of hydrological links are that Kellys Pot and Westmoreland streams together constitute the bulk of the upstream waters in Herberts Pot.

There is still much to be resolved in the area generally; new complications and possibilities are constantly arising. Thus it is expected to be some time before the society can publish a comprehensive and detailed report on the Mole Creek system, though intermittent breakthrough will no doubt appear in this magazine.

Concurrent with the Mole Creek project similar work has been started at the Junee area near Maydena. This has carried on the good work done by T.C.C. in establishing links between Khazad-Dum and the Junee resurgence, a linear distance of 3.5 KM. Waters sinking in the remainder of the Junee topographic basin (and indeed some beyond) had also been suspected of contributing to the Junee resurgence but until recently had not been verified.

Consequently it was planned, together with Albert Goede, to systematically determine whether surface waters sinking at Satans Lair, Rescue Pot and Growling Swallet respectively re-appeared at the Junee Cave efflux. Positive results were obtained in all cases demonstrating that the Junee Rising is the principal resurgence of the greater Junee drainage basin.

### RESULTS

- (a) 1 Kg fluorescein in stream near Satans Lair -  
Positive laboratory analysis of charcoal bags, possible visual confirmation at Junee Rising a linear distance of 3.7 Km
- (b) 2 Kg fluorescein in stream below Rescue Pot -  
Positive laboratory analysis of charcoal bags, positive visual confirmation at Junee Rising a linear distance of 5.4 Km.
- (c) 3 Kg fluorescein in Growling Swallet stream -  
Positive laboratory analysis of charcoal bags, positive visual confirmation at Junee Rising, a linear distance of 9.4 Km.



In the case of the Satans Lair and Rescue Pot traces, charcoal bags were also placed in the Tyenna River, however, laboratory analysis yielded negative results. In respect of the Growling Swallet trace, charcoal bags in the Tyenna River and in the Lawrence Creek rising (on the Florentine side of the divide) yielded doubtful results. It may be that some of the Growling Swallet waters resurge at both localities but in particular at Lawrence Creek rising.

The outstanding point of interest to emerge from this Junee project is the verification that Growling Swallet is one of the head water streams of the Junee River. It thus represents a classical breach of a topographical divide.

It is hoped to carry out more intensive water tracing in this area using Lycopodium spores (ecologically more desirable than fluorescein). Travel time information so obtained should enhance our knowledge of the nature of the whole karst system.

#### WATER TRACING DATA - MOLE CREEK SYSTEM

By Leigh Gleeson

Below is a summary of relevant water tracing results establishing links between the various caves of the system. All proven connections have been mentioned however repeated and inconclusive experiments have been omitted.

##### Main System:

January, 1959 (Jennings & Sweeting): 5 lbs. fluorescein placed in Honeycomb 1 cave. Visual observation in the following caves:  
Honeycomb 1 to central doline Honeycomb 1 )))) the Arch )))) Honeycomb 1½  
)))) Honeycomb 2 )))) Blackberry Hole )))) Roaring Hole )))) Mouse Cave  
)))) Mole Creek resurgence.

December 1964:(T.C.C.) 2 lbs fluorescein placed in Herberts Pot. Visual observations at Herberts Pot )))) Shish Kabab Cave )))) Georgies Hall )))) Wet Caves )))) Honeycomb 1.

October 1966:(S.C.S.) 5 lbs. fluorescein placed in Westmorland Cave. Visual observations in Westmorland )))) Georgies Hall )))) Wet Caves.

August, 1974: (S.C.S.) 2 lbs. fluorescein placed in Kellys Pot. Visual observations at Kellys )))) Shish Kabab )))) Georgies Hall )))) Wet Caves.



#### Head Water Details:

November, 1974 (S.C.S.) 1½ lb. fluorescein placed in Westmorland Cave. Visual observation in Westmorland )))) upstream tributary Herberts Pot.

July, 1976 (S.C.S.) ½ lb. fluorescein placed in Kellys Pot. Visual observation in Kellys )))) upstream sump Herberts Pot (Lab. analysis also). Furthermore there is evidence of stream capture in upstream Herberts between Westmorland junction and Paragon Vaults junction. Captured water re-appears in Westmorland tributary of Herberts.

July, 1976: (S.C.S.) One sixth lb. fluorescein placed in entrance stream to Herberts Pot. Visual observation in entrance stream Herberts Pot )))) downstream resurgence Herberts Pot (just beyond the standing pools).

October, 1976: (S.C.S.) ¼ lb. fluorescein placed in Kellys old farm house stream. Visual observation (Lab. confirmation) at Wet Caves campsite.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Sirs,

As an interested observer of the Tasmanian Caving scene I have been interested in editorial comments in Southern Caver, 8(1) and Speleo Spiel, 114 on the possibility of amalgamation of Hobart's two speleological groups.

At the risk of being branded an "interfering mainlander" (although I've been here nearly three years) I would like to express a view on the question of unification. Although not a member of either group, I have caved and taken part in discussions on caving and related matters with many members of both groups. One of the reasons I have not joined is that to join either is to take sides in a pointless, and in my view counter-productive, division; to join both would be to waste money and to acquiesce to a bipartite situation which I do not support.

I do not believe the arguments put forward in support of the present state of affairs can be substantiated. If rivalry and competition are necessary or even important factors in the progress of speleology in this State, it is a very sad reflection on its practitioners. That sort of thing has its place in football clubs and political parties but it should not be important in either the sporting or scientific aspects of caving. Very active and productive groups exist in Adelaide and Brisbane without the spur of local rivals. This is not to deny that comparisons and standards are not active in promoting most forms of human endeavour but surely the standards can be set and the competition contained within a cohesive group, or even individuals. Sub-groups or cliques form within every group and these can serve those who desire some form of oppression or competition to achieve their best, thus promoting the interests of the group as a whole.

I am neither aware of, nor interested in, the detailed reasons for the existence of two groups but it apparently sprang from a certain lack of compatibility between some individuals, most of whom are either no longer active or at least no longer harbour old grievances. Any original justification there may have been for two groups no longer exists and I do not believe it has been replaced by a valid new one. The situation tends to become self-perpetuating, with newcomers either unthinkingly accepting it or inventing rationalisations which attempt to justify it.

Mottos such as "In Unity is Strength" and the U.S.'s "Out of Many, One" are based on the conviction that unification brings benefits and advantages. It may be trite to cite here benefits such as economics of scale, better use of personnel, improved communication of knowledge and ideas and greater backing to statements on such matters as conservation, but these are real issues, worthy of objective consideration.

Perhaps some thought should be given to some practical aspects which might arise.



- (a) Much effort has gone into the production of Speleo Spiel and Southern Caver with the result that both are well known publications in the Australian caving scene; would one or both need to be abandoned? I believe not; some rationalisation might be of advantage (perhaps with the Spiel being reduced in size, carrying forward programs and items of news and interest, and Southern Caver carrying more substantial items of longer term significance). Editors everywhere have trouble getting material from time to time; amalgamation should greatly reduce this problem.
- (b) T.C.C. is the oldest caving society in the country - should it be allowed to go out of existence? This might in some respects be unfortunate but it's largely a matter of "what's in a name?" If the new body was to be called, for example, the Tasmanian Caverneering Association, it could claim, as the direct successor to T.C.C., to have originated in 1946.
- (c) S.C.S. meets in its clubroom, while T.C.C. members meet in their homes. A satisfactory compromise here might be to have regular, formal meetings at the clubrooms, monthly or fortnightly and to have informal meetings in houses at other times.

Is all this conjectural waffle, or is there some real basis for unity? The fact that it is being openly discussed and comments published shows that people can conceive of it - and that is an important start. Of course, the question has been raised before, particularly in June 1973 by Andrew Skinner (Speleo Spiel, 80:1) but it has not received sufficient support to yet succeed. Yet it did lead to the formation of the Tasmanian Council of Speleology so there has been a spirit of co-operation in the air. But the Council seems to have languished and does not seem to have put an end to suggestions for unification. (Of course, in terms of conservation of effort the Council idea is wasteful and is the opposite of the advantages of amalgamation).

Perhaps with goodwill on both sides, careful and objective consideration of the advantages of union will now lead to some positive developments. As an interested and uncommitted party I would be pleased to help in any way I could to foster the movement for unification.

Greg Middleton.



.....AND A WORD FROM THE EDITORS:

We were interested to read Greg Middleton's views on amalgamation and propose here to make a few comments on his letter and the one by Albert Goede that appeared in the August issue of Speleo Spiel.

First we must make it clear that the Editorial published in Southern Caver Volume 8 No. 1 was not, as suggested by Albert Goede, a minority opinion or a personal view. It was substantially a statement of the policy of the Southern Caving Society and should be interpreted as such. The suggestion that one extreme view point was put in without foundation. Indeed we found, after several discussions only two members of our group prepared to present a case in support of amalgamation.

Particularly regrettable is the mean interpretation by both Middleton and Goede of our suggestion of friendly rivalry. It is nonsense to speak in this context of football clubs, Olympic Games and oppression. A group of enthusiasts cannot start from scratch as we did and build up a viable caving organisation when there is already a long established club operating without an element of competition being generated, and we suggest that the intellectual stimulus provided by two strong clubs has been to their mutual benefit.

The ultimate absurdity is Albert Goede's assertion that this leads to secretive behavior. Two publications whose editors are keen to pounce on any newsworthy item is sufficient insurance against that.

Greg Middleton and both of the Spiel's writers have touched on the "RIFT", Goede going so far as to identify us as having been involved in it.

"The rift" appears to have been a more traumatic experience for some members of T.C.C. than it was for us. You cannot build a worthwhile enterprise based on old hatreds. We think of ourselves not as revolutionaries but as foundation members of the Southern Caving Society.

There is a world of difference!

The benefits of a one group system as outlined by Greg Middleton make attractive reading. Unfortunately our experience indicates that these sentiments are an idealisation of the thing as it ought to be but which tends in practice not to work that way. Sub groups operating within a group can lead, as we well know, to a disastrous situation.

Freedom of choice for the individual has not been mentioned by anyone. Greg might well be missing out on a vital part of caving by not exercising his prerogative and joining the caving club he feels comes closest to meeting his requirements.



It was never our intention to put T.C.C. out of business. Our aim was and is to provide a viable alternative and to ensure that there is no return to the deplorable situation that existed in the early sixties under a one club system. We agree that it would be a loss to this State if the name of the oldest caving club in Australia disappeared, but we are not prepared to pay the price of its survival in terms of the loss of our own club and all we have accomplished over the past twelve years.

Nor should this be necessary. Our feeling is that most of the worthwhile things Greg Middleton outlines could be achieved simply by closer co-operation between the two clubs. A proposal to bring this about was in fact agreed on at a meeting of the Society held on September 1st. This, we hope, will result in an improved relationship between the clubs and an easing of their problems.

D. Elliott,  
R. Mann.

SOCIETY REJECTS AMALGAMATION PROPOSAL - CLOSER CO-OPERATION IN.

A long-term proposal for the amalgamation of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club and the Southern Caving Society was rejected at a meeting of the society held on September 1st, 1976. A proposal for possible closer co-operation between the two clubs was passed by ten votes to seven, and will be adopted henceforth. The text of the proposal agreed to follows.

Proposal for Possible Closer Co-operation Between the Southern Caving Society and the Tasmanian Caverneering Club.

1. It is proposed that T.C.C. and S.C.S. activities be more closely intergrated.
2. For an initial twelve month period several suggestions are put forward:
  - (a) General meetings of each club to be held alternately at the Davey Street venue, with informal get-togethers held afterwards.
  - (b) All members of both clubs have discussion rights at general meetings but no voting rights unless a full member of the club holding the meeting.
  - (c) T.C.C. subscribe the sum of \$50 towards the rent of the club room.
  - (d) All trips to be open to members of both clubs.
  - (e) Separate publications continue.
  - (f) Ropes, ladders and headers to be kept at the Davey Street venue, and each club's gear to be marked with identification symbols. All gear movements to be registered by the trip leader. He shall if possible use only gear from his club.
3. It is not proposed that the individual clubs dissolve, but that separate constitutions be retained. If at the end of the trial it is felt that the experiment is not successful, then the clubs can go their separate ways.
4. An extraordinary general meeting of either club may dissolve the association.



## AREA REPORTS

STEPHEN HARRIS.

From the 12th of July to the 3rd of October, there were 9 trips into the field involving 22 different people and five widely dispersed areas of the State. Four trips were principally for exploration, one of these being in a relatively unmolested area. Three trips were for water tracing, one trip for surveying and one trip for sightseeing.

### JANE RIVER (1 trip)

Leigh Gleeson, Kevin Kiernan, Greg Middleton and Bob Graham spent the first two days of August in an area west of Mt. Ronald Cross on the West Coast. Push bikes were the mode of transport from the highway and were finally left about 12 km. along the Jane River mining road from whence the party headed into the scrub toward a region known as the Everlasting Hills. Several holes were located, most of them going for only a few metres before stopping. One hole however, yielded 10m. before inadequate lighting prevented its explorer from continuing. Many small dolines within larger dolines were found however none of them proved significant.

Although much scrub bashing is yet to be done in this vicinity it is thought that only horizontal systems may be found.

Magnificent rainforests were reported in the area though, and some of the party think that these alone warrant a return trip.

### JUNEE/FLORENTINE (5 trips)

This area was the popular object of August's caving activity which included exploration, water tracing and fauna collecting, as well as a thwarted attempt at surveying.

The Gleeson brothers (Leigh and Stephen) spent the 12/13th August at the Cave Hill area to test with fluorescein a hypothesized link between Rescue Pot and Junee Rising. "Visual observation of fluorescein was made by a bushwalker 24 hours later (at Junee Cave)" (T.R. L. Gleeson 14/8/76).

On the 26th August a new cave in the Junee Ridge was explored by a combined party from three clubs. Led by Anne Annah from T.C.C. (Maydena), the party comprised Steve Annah and Max Jefferys also of T.C.C. (Maydena); Albert Goede and Laurie Moody of T.C.C.; and Leigh Gleeson and Derek Shields of S.C.S.

The 15m. wide shaft has substantial depth potential situated on the Eastern ridge of the Junee drainage basin. It was found and previously partly descended by a team from T.C.C. (Maydena). A quote from Leigh Gleeson's trip report about the later trip is most appropriate here:

" We used 280 feet of ladder but estimate the vertical distance to be about 250 feet. The bottom chamber is considerably large - 15 x 8 m. and from here, two possible leads take off.



One only has been checked. This is a very narrow fissure down which we climbed 50 feet onto a ledge. Beyond this was another drop of at least 50 feet but possibly 80 feet or more. This we did not descend for want of more equipment. There is a reasonable draught so exploration future looks good". (T.R. L. Gleeson 28/8/76). The cave was christened "The Chairman". It has been subsequently numbered also J.F. 99.

On 27th August Leigh Gleeson and Albert Goede returned to the Juneeflorentine region for three purposes.

- 1) the visitation of 3 caves in the Cashion Creek road area which included:
  - (a) the exploration of 300 m of passage in J.F. 88.
  - (b) two squeezes being pushed in J.F. 97 (Titan's Shelter), and
  - (c) 50 m of tubular passage negotiated in J.F. 96.

- 2) the collection of 37 cave crickets for study purposes from Cashion Creek Cave.

- 3) retrieval of activated charcoal bags used in the Growling Swallet water tracing. (Results of this water tracing may be reported on independently and at a later date by those undertaking the project).

L. Gleeson and D. Shields, (S.C.S.); S. Annah and J. Parker (T.C.C. Maydena); and Graham (a visitor), on the first Saturday in September, set out to survey The Chairman. The march to the cave was in 15cms. of snow. The sickness of one member of the party and the rigorous conditions ended hopes of surveying, however, Derek, Steve and Graham succeeded in extending the horizontal sections of the cave at the bottom.

An early start was made from Hobart the following day by Leigh and Derek their proposal being to further explore The Chairman. Both spent 11 hours underground bashing several leads. "...still many prospects of extension". (T.R. D. Shields 6/9/76).

#### HASTINGS AND IDA BAY (1 trip)

On the weekend 25th/26th September, Dave Montgomery introduced five novices to caving. (John Axton, Karan Robinson, Annie Stewart, Graham Harvey and Simon Knight). Four hours was enjoyed underground in Entrance Cave and one hour in Newdegate.

#### WARRANE (1 trip)

G. Bailey and Steve Street investigated a small sandstone cave above Warrane.

#### MOLE CREEK (1 trip)

Three days from the 30th September was used by Ron Mann and Leigh Gleeson to check out some surface details in this area. Fluorescein was dumped into the creek behind the old farmhouse on the track to Kellys Pot and a visual sighting was made at Wet Caves 29 hours later.

A number of small holes and dolines was investigated in the area between Wet Caves and the Rising.

It was also noted that a small collapse in a valley to the S.E. of Algy Howe's property has a hole in its depression that could be pushed.



