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# SOUTHERN CAVER

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## EDITORIAL

That most conservative and editorially bigoted publication the "Mercury" newspaper saw fit to celebrate the rescue of Professor George Wade and his son, who had been lost in the Labyrinth near Lake St. Clair on a walking trip, with an editorial (Feb 2, 1978) suggesting that costs associated with search and rescue be contributed to by "individuals or members of clubs - walking, climbing, ocean racing, or whatever".

This suggestion, savouring of equating human life in the cold cash terms of a cost accountant's book keeping entry is particularly obnoxious. It fails to recognise the contribution made by outdoor groups to the community in moulding the character of the young. It also fails to take into account the man hours and expertise gladly made available by club members to State Emergency and Police Search and Rescue squads.

For the small specialist clubs such as ours the suggestion of young members, many of them students, meeting the extra cost of a levy or some impost, like an insurance scheme with the attendant legal wrangling that would inevitably follow would be disastrous. Clubs would disband and individuals thrown on their own resources would make the problem far worse than it is.

It is pleasing to note that the suggestion contained in the editorial was rejected by both the Minister for Emergency Services, Mr. Brian Miller, and the Police Search and Rescue Commander, Inspector Maurice Massie, who was quoted as saying that he disagreed with suggestions that people who were lost and later rescued should contribute towards the cost of the search. "If people who are lost think they will have to pay then they might not bother to notify police - we don't want dead bodies," he said.

Many search and rescues have resulted not as a consequence of club members finding themselves in difficulties but because members of the general public and Mainland visitors venture blindly into conditions for which they are totally unprepared.

A programme directed towards educating these people would serve a useful purpose, but any suggestion of clubs or individuals meeting costs of search and rescue must be resisted. This is a community matter and must be accepted as such.



## KARST AREA AT LOONGANA

by Kevin Kiernan

The Loongana district lies 32 km. south-west of the town of Ulverstone on Tasmania's north-west coast, in the valley of the Leven River. It is 12 km. south-west of the Gunns Plains karst outcrop, while the limestone occurs again 12 km. to the south at Lake Lea, as a northward extension of the Mt. Mayday deposit. Moina (now partly flooded as part of the hydro-electric project) and Lorinna (likewise) are 10 km. and 19 km. respectively to the South-West.

Loongana lies in a minor broadening of the Leven Valley where the river swings temporarily eastward from its northward course from the Central Plateau into Bass Strait, upstream of Hells Gates, an impressive limestone gorge. Hells Gates represents the upstream end of the Leven Canyon, a very spectacular declivity several hundred metres deep where the river cuts through the Loongana Range. The latter range (app. 860 m.) over looks Loongana from the north, while to the south lies Black Bluff (1339 m.).

Part of the valley floor has been converted to pasture. Timber milling has been important in the past, and is now again of significance following the aquisition of a sizeable area by Alstergren Pty.Ltd. One cave has previously been utilized in an undeveloped state for tourism.

### GEOLOGY:

Karst development occurs within two outcrops of Gordon Limestone (Ordovician) overlying sandstones and conglomerates, and faulted against Cambrian slates to the west. Tertiary basalt directly over-lies the limestone in places. A number of streams, such as Jeanbrook Creek, plunge down steeply from the basalt, which is part of a large basalt plateau extending over much of the North-West of the state. Winterbrook Creek, plunges steeply from the Tiger Plains high above, near Black Bluff, with a spectacular series of waterfalls off the dolerite escarpment on its principle western tributary.

The principle limestone outcrop extends for perhaps 7 km. along the valley, outcropping as cliffs up to 30 m. high beside the river, and is up to 2 km. in width. The second outcrop, a short distance further upstream, is a little under 2 km. in length and 0.7 km. wide. Alluvium obscures lower parts of the deposit. Maximum limestone relief is of the order of a couple of hundred metres.

The limestone is at the top of a synclinal trough, separated from Gunns Plains by an anticline which brings the underlying sandstones and conglomerates to the surface to form the intervening ranges. Minor faulting is present within the deposit and the smaller western outcrop is delineated by it, with the southern perimeter cut off by under-lying sediments. The river follows the east-west strike of the limestone beds.

The limestone is of quite high grade, but although rail facilities extend to within about 6 km. and there exist a number of easy potential



quarry sites, the rock has to date only been utilised to a minor extent for road metal, due to the availability of other high grade deposits elsewhere in the North-West.

#### THE CAVES:

The following caves have been reported to date. Some potential remains for further discoveries. For conservation reasons locational information is not provided.

L1. Small un-named cave downstream of a stream-sink.

L2. Very small cave with multiple entrances leading to water.

L3. Leven Cave. An outflow stream cave with an attractive entrance in river-side cliffs. It is probably the best decorated (least vandalised) cave in the area although the short-sighted attitude of the Nomenclature Board and Lands Dept. of marking some officially named caves on publically available topographic maps when no form of management protection from innocent souvenir hunters and other vandals is available will doubtless mean an unfortunate future for this cave. Two entrances, one of which is not numbered, give access to about 180m of passage, mostly higher level. Substantial population of Micropathus fuscus.

L4. Mostyn Hardy Cave. This is the best known cave at Loongana, having been utilised for some time in a largely unmodified state for tourism. The entrance is a doline about 14m deep, one side of which is a steep mud slope into which steps have been dug. A little decoration remains but vandals and heavy traffic have made their mark. About 300m of passage, much of it fairly low roofed streamway, gives access to a small but most attractively situated and memorable glow-worm display at the upstream end. Tourism reportedly ceased for safety reasons based on cave stability, but the most serious objective danger appears to lie in tripping over copious balls of string left by casual visitors, scouts, State Emergency Service rescue exercises and the like. Diving of a pool in the entrance doline has been said to give access to further passages. Population of M.cavernicola. Map TCC 115 Gr. M43.

L5. Swallownest Cave, has another picturesque river-bank entrance, giving access to nearly 300 m. of narrow, winding streamway with a large population of M.cavernicola. Progress halted by a sump. Map TCC116 Gr.M43

L7. A small swallet extending 15 m. to a log blockage.

L8. Another small cave of similar dimensions to L7 and ending in a pool.

L9. Tiger Cave. A small cave with a vertical entrance leading to a chamber with a steeply sloping floor and a short side passage. Bones of Thylacinus cynocephalus recovered.

#### Other, un-numbered caves:

(1) Wicked Cave consists of a couple of small chambers with some unusual decoration and a 9 m. vertical shaft.

(2) A small resurgence at the base of a cliff; blocked by a sump after 4m.

(3-?) A number of holes on the opposite side of ridge to Tiger Cave - no details, possibly unexplored.



## THE PROSPECTS FOR LOONGANA:

"There are now 4000 million people on this planet. We share the lands and waters of the earth. We live by the harvests of the fruits of its use. Some are richer, some are poorer. The bounties of the earth are not equally distributed. The 400,000 people who live in Tasmania enjoy one of the richest and one of the most beautiful parts of the earth. What they have done with it, and what they are doing to it, is an offence against nature and a crime against their fellow men. The following section.....will make recommendations concerning resource management....What is needed is the scarcest resource of all: humility. Until the people of Tasmania abandon the arrogant view that they have a right to destroy this island, desecration, despoilation and waste will continue. No report, no recommendations, will generate humility."

- The Young Report: An Appraisal of the Prospects for Tasmania's Economic Future.  
Tasmanian State Strategy Plan-Consultants Report No3.

The future of Loongana does not look bright. At present it is an idyllic spot to spend a few days: caving in the valley; liloing in the canyon or on the gentler river of the limestone country; walking around Black Bluff and elsewhere; maybe rock-climbing in the canyon; horse-riding throughout the valley; canoeing.

There remains scope for further surface exploration for caves, while determination and a shovel could doubtless reveal a few of the many entrances reported to have been filled in by local farmers.

In recent years tourism interest and a bushwalking club on the north-west coast have developed a lookout, picnic area and good walking tracks at Leven Canyon. However, a proposal for its protection under the National Parks and Wildlife Act as a State Reserve has been trenchantly opposed by the Hydro-Electric Commission.

### On Hydro-cephaly and Meglomania:

The commission has under-taken "an examination of contour maps and ground inspections" and decided that it would be possible to develop a "useful amount of power" from Leven Canyon. Although opposed to State Reserve status being conferred, the Commission has magnanimously conceded it "would not be opposed to the protection of the area in some other way, provided the Commission's rights to exercise its statutory powers within the area are not affected."

The H.E.C.'s attitude is founded upon the contention that "when the other water power resources of the state are almost fully utilised a choice will have to be made between expensive and polluting fossil fuels or nuclear power to provide additional energy. The water power potential



of the Leven River may well be the more acceptable choice....The power will not necessarily be required for industry but for the day to day domestic requirements (sic) of a growing population." Lofty sentiments indeed, if only they were based on fact (or even half credible fiction). Energy conservation is not a concept with which the H.E.C. is particularly familiar. Hence the Commission's inimicable logic recently enthused in a supplement to every Tasmanian's power bill that "The H.E.C. wants Tasmanians to use more electricity for cooking, lighting and heating. Revenue from such sales pays for the vital expansion and maintenance of the power supply system." Its empire building programs are further supported by massive sales to a handful of low-employment, capital intensive industries at rates so low as to mean that they are effectively subsidised by domestic consumers. Even despite the hard-sell, consumption and projection seldom show any similarity. Tasmania's much vaunted "power without pollution" (ever tried breathing water and staying healthy?) is abundant to the point of being a severe political embarrassment. Its a buyers' market. Hobart's Derwent River leads the world in mercury, zinc and cadmium levels. The state's biggest polluters can write their own conditions, it seems, just as long as they take a large slice of surplus power.

The choice need not be between fossil fuels, nuclear energy and water-power, but between hard sell promotion of energy extravagance and energy conservation coupled eventually with advances in solar and wind generation technology.

The Pedder scheme now nears completion to produce power for which there is no market. The Pieman scheme is under way, the Lower Gordon/Franklin and Davey schemes are being hatched, and then sometime after the Lower Huon and Arther schemes we may see the Leven Canyon become an interesting proposition. At present growth rates, the capacity of the Pedder scheme seems unlikely to be fully utilised before around 1990, and even in the event of massive conversions of (often marginal) heavy industry from other energy sources to electricity, surplus would still remain from just the Pieman project now under way. Is it worth destroying the Leven Canyon for the minor amount of power it might produce in years to come when alternate energy generation techniques will probably produce more power at lower environmental cost?

Meanwhile the Leven Canyon and Loongana caves languish for lack of the protection from limestone mining, vandalism and other forms of environmental stupidity which State Reserve status would provide, in the name of a hypothetical minor power scheme conceived by minor people lurking deep in the vaults of the H.E.C. building, pushing toy trucks and tin soldiers and the unemployed across a relief map of Tasmania, drawing battle lines against any who might question their omniscience, omnipotence or general splendour.

Meanwhile in speleo groups around the state sit even more minor people who are apparently prepared to turn a blind eye. Like they did last time and the time before that, and will probably continue to do. Preferring instead to sit in a huddle wondering whether the old bridge really facilitated the migration of Micropathus cavernicola into



M.fuscus territory, or how they might get a free chopper ride to a shiny new caving area in the South-West wilderness provided they help the H.E.C. flood it. In the morning bus grey flannel yesterday's men read of the Leven Canyon in the morning paper, turn the page and dream of the day when forestry roads will permit easy day trips to the Cracroft caves. How come Tasmania isn't all it used to be? I really can't imagine. But I'll leave you with a riddle: How do you tell the difference between any Tasmanian speleo organisation and the Hydro-Electric Commission? If that's too hard: what's the difference between a speleo and a tree stump? Neatest correct entry wins a jar containing an indeterminate number of jelly beans and a pair of blinkers.

After all, it is only a minor area.

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"I conceive of the land as owned by a multitude of people,  
many of them dead, a few of them living, most of them not  
yet born. I am responsible to all of them."

- an African Chief from Nigeria



by Fred Koolhof

Caves present a challenge to the photographer that is both difficult and rewarding. As well as the obvious physical difficulties there are problems of darkness, mud, condensation, grit and transportation to be overcome. The fact that one is working in a completely dark environment is of surprisingly little consequence. Indeed it might be regarded as an advantage for the photographer is entirely in control of his lighting.

Flash on the camera is satisfactory, perhaps essential for record and action shots, but generally undesirable especially on formations which will appear flat and uninteresting.

A far better idea is flash off the camera used with an extension lead. In some cases extreme side lighting or even back lighting can yield beautiful results.

For multi-flash techniques the camera must be set on a tripod and a series of flashes fired. This may be done by: (A) Extension leads giving synchronised flash (suspect, however, because damp, grit, etc., often short circuits the system and bulbs or electronic flashes fire prematurely or not at all). The use of a "slave unit" on the second flash unit does away with long extension cords and has a range of up to twenty metres from the flash on the camera. (B) A count down in complete darkness by the camera man with a number of bulbs or an electronic flash being fired as near simultaneously as possible: or (C) BY "painting" the chamber or passage with one flash unit being held and fired by a member of the team at predetermined points. Use a black cloth over the open lens between each fire rather than dousing lights.

With each of these methods the light source should normally be shielded and placed as far as possible from the walls where over-exposed will result. Care should also be taken to avoid "ghosts". A figure or other familiar object with an isolated flash should be included to give the scene some comparative scale because it is difficult to tell the size of a stalactite without some kind of measure.

Flash bulb and electronic flash unit guide numbers are computed for a "normal room". Caves rarely fit the specification, so numbers must be adjusted accordingly except when photographing very bright formations. Down rate the guide numbers and/or film speed very drastically. Of course when using electronic flash units that are computer controlled all these calculations are done for you.

Almost any camera can be used successfully though a clear viewfinder and full synchronisation are desirable. Greater versatility may be obtained through use of a camera in which the lenses are interchangeable.

Single lens - reflex with wide angle lens and facility for use of other accessories for close-ups, etc, is ideal. Weight and volume of



the camera cannot be ignored. The decision whether to take an expensive top brand camera on such an arduous undertaking must remain a personal one.

The ideal camera is the Calypso-Nikkor 11 (formerly Nikonos) which is compact, completely waterproof, tough and easy to use, has clear controls, an excellent viewfinder and a wide angle lens. Regretably, at a high price. The Rollei 35 is also an excellent choice for its compactness, 40 mm. lens and a weight of only 13 oz. However, both these cameras have fixed lenses.

I personally go for a large format camera basically to get quality. I use a Hasselblad 500 cm. with 60 mm. Distagon lens and 120 mm. S-Planna lens with Proxar auxiliary close up lens.

Choice of flash equipment is also very important for it again should be compact and light weight. This tends to rule out the larger electronic outfits, which are also costly but it is worthwhile employing an electronic flash unit of maximum output since the capacity of a small unit (at full power) is exhausted much too quickly. The unit should be mechanical, robust and the electronic circuitry absolutely reliable in view of the probable 95-100% saturation of the atmosphere.

By and large, however, bulb flash is more suitable as it is cheaper, more powerful than the smaller electronic flash units, fairly light weight and easily disposed of. My units consist of a Braun F900 Professional, a Metz 202 and a small Argus unit which I use to fire off the two large units by way of a slave unit on each. At full power the Braun gives me a Guide Number of 255 feet for 125ASA film and the Metz 202 unit 200 feet for 125 ASA film.

Film choice is clearly a personal matter but relatively fast film is desirable. My choice is either Ilford FP4 (125ASA) or Ilford HP4 (400ASA) which can be rated at 800 ASA or more in a special developer. The graininess, however, is not always desirable.

Kodak have brought out the new Ektachrome Professional films (Process E 6) which have improvements in speed, colour, quality, sharpness and granularity compared with the Process E3 Ektachrome professional films that are being replaced. The new Kodak Ektachrome 200 ASA Daylight film can be rated at the effective speeds of ASA 160, 200 or 250 and the new 64 ASA Daylight film at ASA 50, 64 or 80.

The Ektachrome transparencies are excellent for the purpose of producing Ilford "Cibachrome" colour prints. Cibachrome has an incredible contrast of colours especially the black for any formation backgrounds.

Problems of condensation can be minimised by using a Calotherm cloth on a permanently fitted ultra violet (UV) filter.

The obvious rewards for all the efforts of preparation lie in capturing the incredible delicacy and beauty of formation or the purity of a new discovery.

"Take nothing but photographs,  
leave nothing but footprints."



## SCS-SUMMER SALE

The society is offering back issues of Southern Caver for the bargain price of 20¢ each plus postage. A postage cost guide appears at the end of the list of issues available. Please note that some of the early issues are in short supply.

The main articles from each issue are listed and there are also regular Area Report segments which condense the various trip reports into their essential details.

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>MAIN ARTICLES</u>
Vol 2 No. 3	Notes on the stream passage in Herberts Pot. Safety - Protective Helmets. Tas Caving Areas - June/ Florentine. Cave Numbering.
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| No. 4                      | New Zealand Caves and Cavers.<br>Kellys Pot.<br>The Trowutta Area.<br>SRT<br>Caving in the Solomons.                             |
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- No. 2                      A Long and Boring Article.  
Hydrology Projects at Mole  
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## AREA REPORTS:

By Ron Mann

The period covered by this report is from 11th October, 1977 to 31st January 1978.

Several trips are not included because trip reports have not been furnished and I have been unable to obtain details of the area or caves visited.

### Mole Creek (3 trips)

During the period October 20/23 Ron Mann, Leigh Gleeson, Mieke Vermeulen, Graeme Pickford, Rod Hughes and Peter Russell descended on Mole Creek.

Westmorland Cave was visited on Friday and low water levels allowed Ron and Leigh to reach the end of the cave where the high level passages were checked out again for possible extensions.

That afternoon Spider Cave was the scene of much grunting and groaning as Ron tried to get through the squeeze into Pyramid Cave, but to no avail.

The whole team went to Marakooa Cave on Saturday and went past the tourist section into the area behind the Fireplace. Most of the party had not been into the cave before this trip.

Honeycomb 1 and Honeycomb 2 were looked at (for the umpteenth time) on Sunday and an attempt to locate Honeycomb 1½ was unsuccessful. Low water levels allowed some passages to be explored that are usually partly full or flooded.

On the 17th and 18th of December Chris Harris led a trip to Mole Creek, however no details are available.

At Christmas Michael Cole and his family camped at Mole Creek for several days and were joined by Lin Wilson and Louise. The only caving that was apparently done was a trip into Georgies Hall to Eldorado where some photography was accomplished.

### Hastings (2 Trips)

Kevin Kiernan, with a party of three, went to King George V Cave on a general "tourist" trip and wandered about.



On the 18th November Kevin Kiernan, Greg Middleton, Steve Karpinie, and Michael Cole visited Trafalgar Pot and the link into Erebus Cave (Waterloo Swallet.)

They spent some time trying to follow the stream down but were defeated by a large rock - at least for the present. The presence of a sizeable upper level lead was confirmed and there may be others further back and higher. A scaling pole is required as it is 10 - 15m. up to the lead and the sides are muddy and crumbly. On the way out they found a chimney bypass (15m) of the second pitch.

#### Junee - Florentine: (2 trips)

Kevin Kiernan led a party of five to Growling Swallet and Welcome Stranger on a sightseeing trip.

On the 30th November Aleks Terauds, Bob Cockerill and three visitors went to Welcome Stranger, then scrub bashed surrounding hills and collected some insects. An extension in the cave was found which could possibly lead to the surface but the composition of the party prevented further exploration.

The water in the stream passage was about 30 cm deep and very cold (about 5 degrees c).

#### Upper Weld River - Mt. Weld: (2 trips)

Kevin Kiernan led both trips to these areas, however the dates are not known accurately.

On the first trip they climbed Mt. Bowes from the old Port Davey track off Scott's Peak Road. The next day they climbed the quartzite towers which are about 30m high that were visible from Mt. Bowes. They came back via Frodshams Gap and looked at a small hole near the track which had been described in a Southern Caver article. A bluff just south of transmission line was seen and will be looked at on another trip.

A trip to Mt. Weld explored two pots, the deepest of which was 15m. The outcrop was found to be fairly small.



