SOUTHERN CAVER

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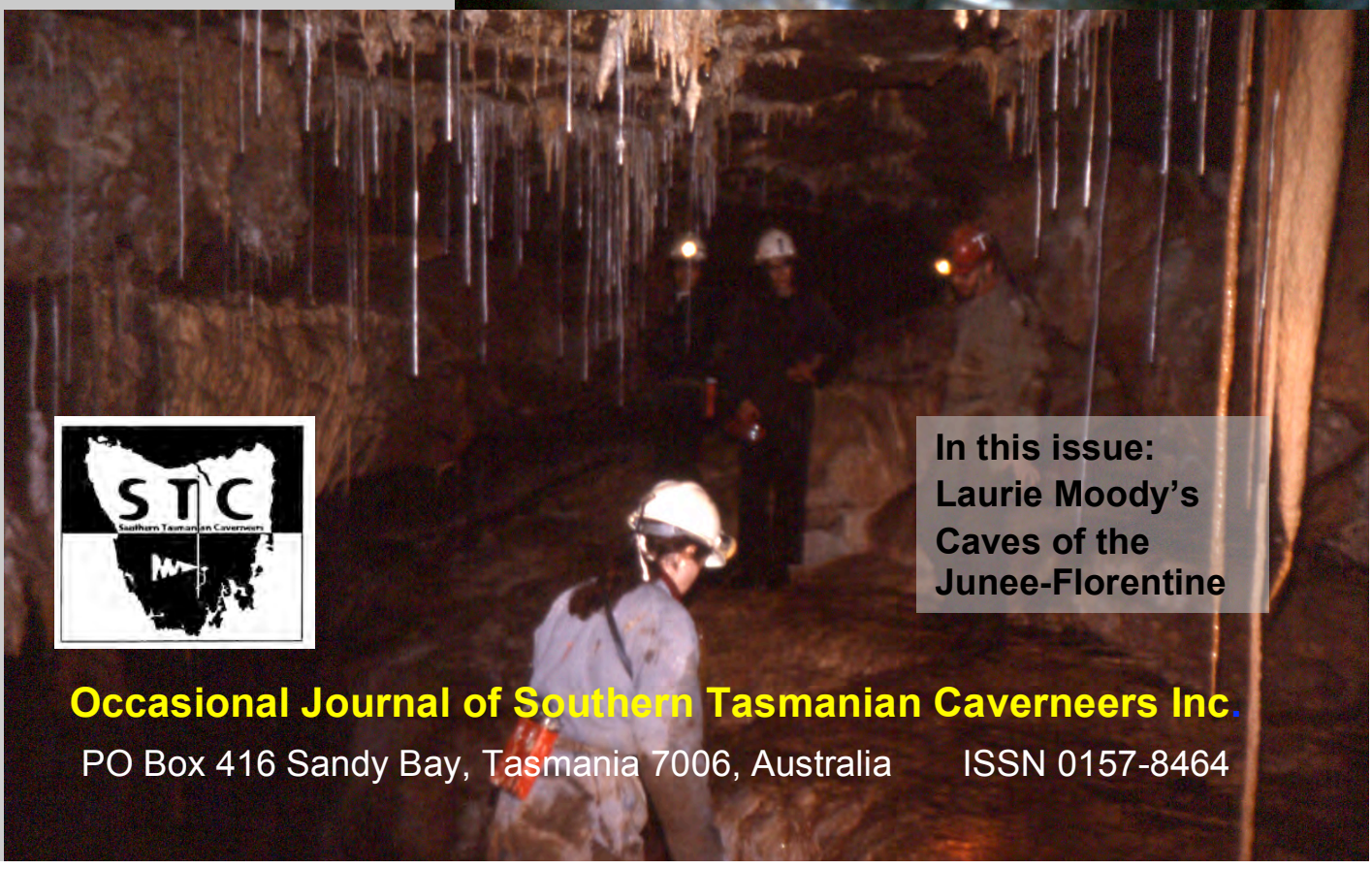
Celebrating 60 years of organised speleology in Australia 1946-2006



In this issue:
Laurie Moody's Caves of the Junee-Florentine

Occasional Journal of Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc.

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Editorial

This issue is devoted entirely to Laurie Moody's "Caves of the Junee-Florentine" – his previously unpublished personal reflections on the history of cave exploration – mainly by the Tasmanian Caverneering Club – in this important Tasmanian karst area up to about 1980.

Laurie Moody joined the Tasmanian Caverneering Club in 1972 and was elected President in 1974-75. Subsequently he edited the newsletter, *Speleo Spiel,* from its 100th issue to No. 116 in 1976. He ceased active caving in about 1980 but then compiled a history of the Junee-Florentine caves. This is composed of personal recollections and numerous quotes from trip reports written and published at the time – mainly in *Speleo Spiel*.

The story of Laurie's work on the Junee-Florentine history, and the fact that he had not found a publisher, was written up in the Burnie *Advocate* newspaper in August 1991 – this is reprinted here in an appendix.

To provide some graphic relief we have included some of Laurie's contemporaneous photos, together with plans and/or sections of a number of the caves (authors and sources as acknowledged).

The Junee-Florentine karst area is one of Tasmania's larger carbonate rock regions and, perhaps more significantly, it is also one of those with the greatest relief, giving rise to many of the deepest caves/potholes in Tasmania (and Australia) – connected by an intriguing hydrological network. It remains a favoured haunt of the country's 'hard' cavers, the exploits of many of whom are commemorated in these pages.

Greg Middleton, Editor

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Cover photos: Top: The late Stuart Nicholas descending the first pitch of Victory '75, 11/12/76 Bottom: In decorated passage, JF229 Welcome Stranger, 25/6/77. All photos by Laurie Moody.

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Celebrating 60 years of organised speleology in Australia 1946-2006

STC was formed from the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, Southern Caving Society and Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group.
STC is the modern variant of the oldest caving club in Australia.

CAVES OF THE JUNEE-FLORENTINE

some personal reflections on cave exploration in the Junee-Florentine area of Southern Tasmania to about 1980

by Laurence R. Moody

INTRODUCTION

Although my active caving experience ceased more than twenty-odd years ago (about 1980) I still endeavour to retain an interest in speleological developments which periodically take place in the Junee-Florentine area. Cavewise, I always considered this area to be the most rewarding of all Tasmanian caving areas.

The Junee-Florentine for many years was the home of Australia's deepest known caves (Rift Cave at 130 m 1947-57; Growling Swallet at 171 m 1957-67) until the discovery of Mini-Martin in 1967 transferred the title for a time to the Ida Bay karst. Tassie Pot (238 m) returned the title to Junee-Florentine in 1970. Then for a decade (1972-82) the title-holder was a cave called Khazad-Dum, some 274 metres in depth – in 1976 extended to 275 metres. However, in June of 1982, a cave with the unlikely name of Ice Tube was found to join Growling Swallet to give a combined depth of 354 metres, thereby wresting K-D's long-held title.[1]

Later that year the title went to the Mount Anne area, some thirty odd kilometres to the south-west when Anne-A-Kananda was pushed to 373 m. Not until 1993 did the title return to Junee-Florentine when a cave known as Niggly (JF237) was found to have a depth of nearly 373 metres [subsequently 374.8 m. In April 2006 Tachycardia just pipped Niggly at 375.2 m. – Ed.]

The deeper caves are mostly found in areas of high relief between what is known as Wherretts Lookout and the logging township of Maydena. Other small and horizontal caves exist along the eastern margin of the Florentine Valley. However, explorations in the mid 1970s resulted in a growing number of small horizontal caves on the western banks of the Florentine River below the Tiger Range.

The caves themselves are often very difficult to locate due to the existence of dense rain forest and thick scrub including patches of horizontal all of which abound in the region. A fair majority of this area is Crown Land, which has for many years been leased by the Australian Newsprint Mills [latterly taken over by Norske Skog]. However, some of the swallets (caves accepting streams) are located within the boundaries of the Mount Field National Park. Access to most of the caves is/was provided by an extensive network of private roads that were originally built to assist in logging operations. It is highly probable that some (if not most) of these roads are now overgrown through lack of use and access may now prove rather difficult. It must also be mentioned that any prospective visitor to this area will need a permit from ANM to do so. This in the past could usually be arranged by contacting one of the two Hobart-based caverneering clubs. The permits themselves serve a three-fold purpose. Firstly, they prevent people from entering the area for any unlawful or malicious reason and secondly, they absolve ANM from any liability should an accident occur whilst in this area. Thirdly, they can also prove to be of great assistance should a party become lost or overdue. This, believe it or not, has happened on a number of occasions.

Perhaps the main reason for my own personal interest in this area stems from the fact that my own first clumsy attempts at caving were made close to Maydena in 1971. At that particular time I was a senior scout leader and virtually knew nothing about caves. It so happened that several of my scouts knew the whereabouts of a 'big' cave near Maydena. They suggested we do a trip and it was soon organised. This so-called 'big' cave proved to be none other than Junee Cave also known in caving circles as the Junee Resurgence or Junee Rising. We duly arrived armed with hand-held torches and a number of candles.

[1] Depths quoted here have been revised in the light of subsequent reassessments (generally reducing them). The figures are from Bunton (2002) and in many cases do not accord with the depths reported in the contemporary accounts which follow – Ed.]

Upon entering the extremely impressive entrance we soon discovered that the cave was impenetrable after only some 20 metres or so. Disappointed, we headed back downstream but in the process one of the lads located a hole above the eastern side of the riverbank. Attached to the limestone beside the entrance was a small oblong aluminium marker with the number '31' stamped on it. A length of rope was quickly secured to a nearby tree and we descended a short pitch to the bottom of the hole. Here, investigation revealed that a low horizontal tunnel led off in a south-easterly direction. Brushing aside a large spider web and its equally large occupant we set out to follow the tunnel as far as was humanly possible. After negotiating some 90 metres of cold, wet and incredibly muddy passage (mostly on our hands, knees and stomach) we were confronted with a tight squeeze. Two of the lads managed to wriggle their way past this obstruction and reported that a further 80 metres of passage finally terminated in a sump. So ended my first introduction to the Junee-Florentine caves. We emerged wet, cold and covered in mud but most found it a very rewarding experience.

Many of the caves in this region are wet and very muddy but there are exceptions. Welcome Stranger Cave in the Florentine Valley is one such cave and that too in some sections can also be wet and muddy. However, the sporting caver is more than amply catered for by numerous deep caves of which of at least eight exceed 200 metres in depth. [By mid-2006 this had grown to 14.]

Although a large number (over 410 by 2006) have been located in both the Junee and Florentine areas and systematically numbered there are no doubt many more waiting to be discovered. To date there has been little if any information published that deals with the speleological history and subsequent exploration of the Junee-Florentine area. This is in fact my fourth attempt at compiling a collection of both historical and descriptive information concerning one of Australia's renowned caving areas. I do not claim that it is a complete reference but I have attempted to cover most of the significant events that have taken place in the area between the years 1850 and 1980.

In 1991 I discovered that Nick Hume, Stuart Nicholas and Trevor Wailes had compiled a history of discoveries and exploration from 1980 onwards (Hume, Nicholas & Wailes 1992 - *Tasmanian Cave Exploration in the 1980s* Vol. 1) and after some discussion with Stuart, I agreed to limit my coverage up until 1980. However, I have taken the liberty of extending the Junee Cave exploration a little further.

Finally, I trust that this reference will serve as a tribute to those members, both past and present, of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, the Southern Caving Society, the Maydena Branch of the TCC and others who have assisted in opening up this region to speleological science.

Laurence R. Moody

October, 2002

[with modifications to May 2006]

The author in a sea cave at Piersons Point 19/7/77

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1.
GENERAL GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Most of the area's main caves lie at an elevation which is sufficient for them to reach a good depth without their entrances being adversely affected by frost shattering. In one area between The Gap and Chrisps Road the limestone reaches an elevation of perhaps 915 metres and frost shattering is plainly evident, with many large holes being blocked.

The caves of this area have been described as being primarily of a vadose nature that serve as conduits or channels for water off the mountains. Drainage from the Dolerite and Permian is generally diverted underground as soon as it reaches the limestone. Therefore there are a series of swallets (holes taking water) of which some are very active whilst others are nearly abandoned. The gradient of these caves is invariably very steep. Khazad-Dum alone drops 305 metres[2] in the first 800 metres. Many swallets are known but so far few effluxes (risings) have been located. There are a series of minor ones dotted about the Florentine but to the south (Junee area) the major efflux is Junee Cave. In August of 1976, Albert Goede and Leigh Gleeson established by means of fluorescein tests (a bright green dye) that the waters of Growling Swallet, an inflow cave at the southern end of the Florentine Valley, emerged from Junee Cave. This is a distance of around 9.5 kilometres (Goede 1976a).

It is also reported that all the tributaries of the Florentine River flowing off the limestone go underground for at least part of their courses and even the Florentine River itself loses as much as half of its water to underground meander cut-offs or ox-bows. Another sizeable stream, Lawrence Creek, also disappears for approximately 3.2 kilometres of its course and as the area is of low relief it is generally believed that it is permanently waterlogged.

Some risings are known but are insufficient to account for all the water sinking near the unconformity, which leaves two alternatives. Either it deflects along the strike to join the river some kilometres to the north, or it must flow east or south under the mountain which forms its catchment. Although Growling Swallet water has been proved to emerge in the Junee River, a large flow, which disappears below Mount Field West, is not present 244 metres below the surface in Tassy Pot. The slight horizontal development at the bottom of the cave (Florentine) trends east and it therefore appears that it too may efflux in the Junee system. Above Chrisps Road (Junee) six major streams sink into a stretch of hillside some 1.3 kilometres wide. This water was presumed to reappear at a large rising, which was reported to exist near the Tyenna River. However, extensive searching both there and in the Florentine has so far failed to reveal the exact whereabouts of the particular rising. Popular opinion has now tended to dismiss this theory and favours the idea that nearly all the water from both Mount Field West and above Chrisps Road flows into the Junee system.

No doubt future exploration will eventually reveal just what does happen to this vast amount of water, which vanishes underground in these areas.

The Junee-Florentine limestone area is geographically situated south and west of Mount Field, partly in the Mount Field National Park, and is approximately 90 kilometres by road from Hobart. The limestone itself is described as being strongly folded Gordon Limestone of Ordovician Age. The area is one of rugged relief, the dominant feature being the Mount Field Plateau, which rises over 750 metres from the river level. Gordon Limestone is a massive, hard, dense, well-jointed and fossiliferous limestone. It varies in colour from dark-blue to grey. The formation reaches a maximum thickness of around 1500 metres in the Florentine Valley where it outcrops in a belt some 1.6 kilometres wide and 11.3 kilometres long. Much of the limestone exhibits its typical mature expression as button grass plains or flat swampy land close to the local base level. The limestone has a maximum relief of 213 metres in the Florentine Valley and over twice that in the Junee area. Here, streams are known to sink underground some 400 metres above the Junee Cave itself.

The limestone overlies mudstone, which in turn overlies lower Ordovician quartzites, breccias and conglomerates. It is also thought that an Upper Pre-Cambrian dolomite outcrops at Tim Shea. This is regarded as a separate karst area although the outcrop closes to within several hundred metres at The Gap. For the uninitiated, The Gap is a saddle that separates the Junee and Florentine areas.

On the eastern margin of the Florentine, and in the Junee area, the limestone is unconformably overlain at approximately 700 metres by a near horizontal succession of Permian sediments. These are generally comprised of the basal Wynyard tillite and marine mudstones including the Fern Tree and Malbina groups. A thick sill of Jurassic dolomite caps the plateau. The Palaeozoic succession has been folded on a large scale during the middle Devonian period. Tertiary faulting has affected most formations and many of the major caves occur in the fault zones.

The area itself experiences a cool temperate climate with a rainfall of approximately 1270 mm per annum. As a result dense rainforest covers the lower mountain slopes. This assists in the solution of the limestone and with the dense vegetation and the high precipitation ensures that large quantities of acid waters, including meltwater, pass underground quickly, initiating cave development.

[2] The depth of K-D has been overstated for many years. In 1999 Jeff Butt corrected its depth to 285 m (Butt 1999). It has since been pushed a little further to 292 m – Ed.

2.

EARLY EXPLORATION (1850-1945)

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Undoubtedly the first people to see and visit caves of the Junee-Florentine area were the Tasmanian Aborigines. During their nomadic wanderings they passed through the Florentine Valley and apparently used some of the more suitable caves as shelters or layover points. This has firmly been established due to the carbon dating process and it is believed that some of these caves, especially Beginners Luck Cave, were visited as long ago as 12,600 years (Goede 1976b).

Other caves known to feature as shelters and/or archaeological sites are Boomer Cave, Titans Shelter and Breccia Ridge Cave, all of which are in the Florentine Valley. These caves have yielded Pleistocene bone deposits with Boomer Cave revealing the fossil bones of *Macropus titan,* a big Pleistocene kangaroo. Dating of bone deposits in Beginners Luck Cave gave an age of 14,450 years on the browsing kangaroo, *Sthenurus*. It is thought that Aboriginal man may have hunted this animal to extinction.

In the summer of 1976-77, Albert Goede and Peter Murray carried out excavations in Titans Shelter and bone remains from a number of extinct marsupials were found (Goede & Murray 1979). Charcoal deposits were also located and sent to Japan for carbon dating. The resultant tests gave a date of 14,300 years which is not much different from the date obtained for the Aboriginal site in Beginners Luck Cave. Another cave, JF169, revealed a large tooth of the 'marsupial lion', *Thylacoleo carnifex,* in October of 1978. This was only the third time that the remains of this animal had been found in Tasmania (Goede 1978b).

In 1850, some 47 years after the first settlement by the British, it was proposed to construct a road into Port Davey in the far southwest of the island. Work began under the supervision of William Dawson with the road commencing at the Dunrobin Bridge (at the top end of the now Meadowbank Dam) on the Derwent River between the townships of Hamilton and Ouse. After leaving the bridge the road passed through the property of Mr W.A. Bethune and through fairly open bushland until it reached the northern side of Mount Misery. Here, it proceeded into thick myrtle and rainforest before descending into the Florentine Valley. The road then crossed the Florentine River and swung south along the western side of the valley, being denied access to the Vale of Rasselas by the Gordon Range. Eventually the Vale was reached via the saddle between the Gordon and Tiger Ranges where it turned northwest to terminate at the Gordon Bend. In all, the winding road from the bridge to the Bend was some 61 kilometres in length and could be used by carts. However, this convict-built road never progressed any further but as a result someone, possibly Dawson himself, did report the presence of limestone in the Florentine Valley.

Eleven years later, in 1861, Charles Gould, whilst conducting a geological survey in southwest Tasmania, confirmed that the earlier report had indeed been correct. There was limestone in the Florentine Valley.

Apparently the next person to note the presence of limestone was Thomas Frodsham, a surveyor, who made the first recorded attempt to find a road route across the South West in the direction of Macquarie Harbour. Frodsham passed along the old Dawson Road on his way there in 1878.

In 1881, Thomas Bather Moore set out from somewhere near Fenton Forest a few kilometres northwest of Bushy Park (possibly Karanja) and headed for Lake Pedder. His route took him through the Junee area and over The Gap into the Florentine Valley. It seems quite feasible to assume that Moore followed the present road to Maydena before branching off towards The Gap. One can only imagine the difficulties that he and his party had to experience as they battled their way through virgin scrub and dense rainforest. Moore, unfortunately, made no mention of limestone but he undoubtedly witnessed its presence.

Later in the same year, Francis McPartlan also ventured along the southern fringes of the limestone. He was en route to investigate the open country near Lake Pedder and cut a track to it. Again, no mention was made of either limestone or caves.

Towards the end of 1889 Thomas Frodsham, who had visited the area some eleven years earlier, was commissioned to mark a track to and explore the Florentine Valley itself. He was then to proceed south and explore the upper Huon River area. His party departed on 1 January 1890 from a depot close to where Maydena now stands. They travelled in almost a straight route over the Tyenna River to the gap between Wherretts Lookout and Tim Shea. This pass became known as Frodshams Gap but in recent years has been simply referred to as The Gap. Frodsham established a second depot on the northern side of this pass and then proceeded along the Florentine Valley. He crossed the Florentine River at a point close to where the Dawson Road negotiated the saddle dividing the Tiger and Gordon Ranges. His comments on seeing the Dawson Road for the first time in 12 years were:

> *This road is now covered in dense scrub and it is only by observing the logs that have been cut out of the track that it is possible to find it!*

Some 84 years later, in 1974, Max Jeffries who lives at Maydena, a number of others and myself, were engaged in searching for caves in this very same area. During our scrub-bashing we managed to locate a section of the old Dawson Road. Huge trees, consisting of sassafras, myrtle, eucalyptus and even patches of horizontal scrub had grown up through it. However, in places the road formation was still visible.

Frodsham established a camp on the Dawson Road and then backtracked along it until he reached the Florentine Bridge at the northern end of the valley. Near here, he found the remains of the ill-fated Dawson settlement, which existed for a short time in the 1850s. It was apparently on this trip that he found a cave later to be mentioned by Twelvetrees. Frodsham reported that:

> *A first-class road can be obtained from the Russell Falls to the Florentine Valley; but until some means of communication are established to enable selectors to reach a market, this splendid lot of land will remain as it has in the past.*

In May of 1896, surveyor E.G. Innes passed through the Florentine Valley but made no mention of limestone or caves in his report.

Around this time a settlement was established approximately one kilometre southeast of where Maydena stands today. It was duly named Fitzgerald. Also at this time plans were afoot to establish a railway connection with the West Coast. This proposed railway was intended to run from Glenora in the Derwent Valley and terminate at possibly Strahan. In due

course the surveyors set off and a supply track known as the Great Western Pack Track was commenced. It was designed with a width sufficient to allow two fully laden packhorses to pass one another. The track began at the end of what is now the Junee Road, northwest of Maydena, and ran past the Junee Cave. The track continued on to Chrisps Creek where a camp was established, then wound its way up over The Gap before swinging west towards the Florentine River. It then swung north around the southern end of the Tiger Range and traversed the length of the Vale of the Rasselas. However, the main corduroy track ended at the Gordon Bend. Despite this survey, the Great Western Railway never eventuated, possibly due to the inhospitable nature of the country and a lack of sufficient finance to fund such an undertaking. In later years, the Derwent Valley Railway was extended to Fitzgerald from Glenora to assist in logging operations. Later still, a further extension was made to the ANM site just west of Maydena.

The honour of being the first recorded cave in the Junee area must probably fall to Junee Cave itself. Although no one appears to know the exact date of its discovery, or who discovered it, popular opinion places the date around 1890.

The year of 1908 saw James Linton Moore, brother of Thomas Bather Moore, preparing for a geological expedition in conjunction with the government geologist, William Hope Twelvetrees. Moore had been instructed to re-open the track made during the railway survey of 1898.

Twelvetrees and a party consisting of a topographer, A.S. Atkins, J.G. Timbs, D. Marriott and Lewis Chaplin, visited the Florentine Valley shortly after. Twelvetrees (1908) reported:

> *The precipitous western face of the mountain [Mt. Field West] descends into the valley of the Florentine perpendicularly for over one thousand feet [330 metres]. Messrs. Atkins and Timbs ascended this mountain from the Florentine Valley. At about four hundred feet [131 metres] above the Humboldt Divide they discovered an enormous cave in the Ordovician limestone. This cave is the size of a large building and a river as large as the Junee pours into it .. .. .. The cave is a stupendous natural feature which, though without the attractions of stalactites, will inevitably draw the attention of tourists once a track is established.*

It is now fairly certain that the cave mentioned was none other than Growling Swallet. A further report of interest is Twelvetrees' description of Frodshams Cave, also in the Florentine Valley but around 16 kilometres to the northwest of Growling Swallet. This report said:

> *... east of the Florentine River. It is a small natural excavation near Frodshams Track, about ten feet wide at a low angle into the water. The roof shows the rather thinly bedded limestone striking about N10°E, and dipping north-westerly.*

Twelvetrees (1908) also provided a good description of Junee Cave:

> *A quarter of a mile [400 m] up the Junee River [from the bridge] through a lovely fern glade is the Junee Cave, reached by a hand-track. A cavity 20 feet [6 metres] in height forms the entrance and the river, a rapidly flowing stream of ice-cold water, issues from it. Inside, a few stalactites still depend but the larger ones have been removed by visitors and others have been defaced. At about 50 foot [15 metres] from the entrance the subterranean river blocks further progress on foot and can only be ascended a few chains further by means of a raft or boat. The cave though large at the entrance, where a rough handrail has been placed for tourists, is in its present condition rather poor in respect of display[s] of stalactites, and, owing to the river, the task of opening it further by blasting the roof, in the end would be somewhat difficult. But this is really the only way in which that cave can be improved. The approach is highly picturesque, the banks of the clear, tumultuous stream being clothed with a luxuriant growth of tree-fern above which the tall sombre myrtles of the forest tower to a great height.*

It appears from some of Twelvetrees' comments that people haven't changed much over the last eighty odd years or so. Junee Cave, due to its ease of accessibility and the fact that it is outside the protective boundaries of ANM, still manages to attract attention from those people who seem to delight in wanton vandalism. Likewise, another cave, which lies about one kilometre southeast of Junee Cave, has also suffered greatly at the hands of thoughtless persons. This cave was quite aptly named Vandalisation Cave!

In 1919, Henry Dennison Reed spent some time snaring animals in the Vale of the Rasselas and subsequently ran sheep there with a family named Salter. They used the Dawson Road for access. Reed also reported that the road was upgraded in 1925 due to the discovery of osmiridium at Adamsfield.

Adamsfield itself was situated on the Clear Hill Plain west of the Thumbs Range. It was the first real town in the South-west. A man named Mervyn Quinn, who was one of the first storekeepers, used the Dawson Road to bring in his supplies. However, possibly due to the time factor involved and the unsatisfactory nature of access a new track was called for.

In October of 1925, the politician A.G. Ogilvie visited the town of Adamsfield both to view it and hear the miners' grievances. They were advocating the construction of a tram-way from the township of Fitzgerald. This did not eventuate but they did succeed in getting a new track. In actual fact, this particular track was not really new. It proved to be none other than the Great Western Railway survey route, which had been more or less neglected since 1908 when Twelvetrees passed along it to explore the Florentine. It followed the original route as far as the Florentine crossing then branched off to skirt the Tiger Range before swinging south. The track proceeded through a thick myrtle forest before finally reaching Adamsfield. The new track was corded and of sufficient width to allow two packhorses to pass. It was completed in the summer of 1925-26 at a cost of £5,000 [$10,000].

By 1930, the 'ossie' boom was over and the former population of 2,000 dropped drastically until only a few people remained.

Despite the great number of people who must have passed along this track, very little information, if any, was forthcoming in regard to the sighting of caves. Old-timers living in the Fitzgerald-Maydena area kindly supplied us modern-day cave explorers with useful titbits of information regarding the possible whereabouts of caves. However, due to failing memories and the nature of the area, most of this 'info' unfortunately turned out to be of little use. One example of this, which I remember several people mentioning, was the existence of 'a big outflow cave near Chrisps Creek'. Unknown timber workers apparently discovered it in the 1940s but despite numerous attempts by myself and others to locate it, this cave remained elusive.

So, after some 95 years of exploration (1850-1945) in the area known as the Junee-Florentine, a total of only three caves were definitely known to exist. Junee Cave in the Junee area being one, with two more in the Florentine, Frodshams and Growling Swallet, yet to be named.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Second World War this situation was to change slowly but surely with the subsequent discovery of some 300 plus caves in just 34 years.

3.

EARLY ORGANISED EXPLORATION (1946-66)

With the formation of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club in 1946, interest in the Junee-Florentine as a caving area began to develop and a few detailed trip reports began to appear. Unfortunately, trip reports prior to 1960 were rather scarce and poorly documented, making it rather difficult to provide a good insight into some of the earlier discoveries. The club itself did not pay a great amount of attention to the region prior to 1950 due to the amount of interest being shown in the Hastings area in southern Tasmania. However, 1946 did see the discovery of one cave, which was close to the old Junee Homestead but very small in size. It was found to contain the skeleton of what was thought to be a horse and was duly named Dead Horse Cave.

In the mid-1970s Max Jeffries (a resident of Maydena and then President of the Maydena Branch of TCC) and I, visited this cave and inspected the remaining bones rather carefully. It is now our opinion that the bones were more likely those of a calf and not a horse as what first thought.

In 1947, club members located another cave in this area. It was described as being 25 metres long and around 22 metres in depth. This cave became known as the Little Dipper (*TCC Circular,* Nov. 1947).

1948 saw the discovery of a further cave in the Junee area but high up on a ridge. It was described as an inflow cave taking a small stream. Club members named this one Rift Cave. It is interesting to reflect on what other caves, if any, this un-named party may have noted on their way to and from Rift Cave. No mention was made of any other finds so it may be assumed that none were sighted. As this particular area is lush with dense rainforest, the lack of any other finds being made at this time is quite understandable. Rift Cave lies virtually surrounded by some of Australia's deepest caves, some of which weren't discovered prior to 1969. Their apparent lack of discovery in 1948 only serves to exemplify the fact that one can walk within metres of a cave and be completely unaware of its presence.

The next recorded 'discovery' was also made in 1948, when a party of club members officially located and named Growling Swallet.[3] Although the existence of this cave had been known since 1908 when it was discovered by Twelvetrees' party, the first real exploration did not take place until 40 years later.

The distinctive entrance to JF34 Rift Cave – 11/1/77

The 1950s saw the commencement of large-scale logging operations by the Australian Newsprint Mills and the town of Maydena was erected about a kilometre west of Fitzgerald. As a result, the Junee area was systematically denuded of timber over the next few years. During these operations an extensive network of logging roads were provided. By using these roads cavers were able to penetrate previously inaccessible areas and this assisted in the discovery of a cave in 1951. It was described as being a large dry cave above Chrisps Road and proved to be about 100 metres in depth. This cave contained numerous animal bones that were found in the vicinity of the entrance. Hence the name, Bone Pit.

The following year, 1952, saw a weekend trip to the Junee and from what I can gather, the Junee Cave was the main objective.

In 1954, another un-named party descended an estimated 500 ft [152 m] into Growling Swallet only to be stopped by a lack of equipment at the top of a large waterfall. The cave was voted as being the noisiest yet (obviously they'd been there before) but apparently gave a good opportunity to test the club's new nylon rope. [*TCC Circular*, 24 Feb. 1954]

[3] But note: Goede (1992) claimed "The first visit by the Tasmanian Caverneering Club is mentioned in an undated (c. 1949) trip report by Des Lyons. He explored the cave for a short distance until he reached a 9 metre waterfall and suggested the name Growling Swallet, which was later accepted by the club." However, the *TCC Annual Report* for 1952-53 records: "Junee area was visited only twice by official parties; once to the Bone-Pit, and once to a new cave in the Florentine. Both caves require more work by larger parties for longer periods. The Florentine cave, tentatively named "Growlingswallett", has been explored to 200 ft. and is still going." (Sargison, 1953)

In November of that same year, another trip was made into the Florentine area but no trip report was apparently produced.

February of 1955 saw a party organised to investigate a large hole that had been reported on Tyenna Peak. It was proposed to attack it via the Lake Dobson Road (National Park) but once again I have been unable to glean any information as to whether or not the trip took place. Some months later, it was reported that a party spent a wet weekend searching the Florentine for what was known as Timms Cave [*TCC Circular,* May 1955]. This was reputed to be 'a large cave near The Gap', according to local information. It is now thought that this cave was none other than Growling Swallet. During this same trip two minor potholes were discovered, one of which was reported to contain an interesting collection of animal bones. It is possible that this cave may have been what is now known as The Dungeon. If so, it is located close to Growling Swallet.

At the end of October, another trip was mounted in a further effort to locate the elusive Timms Cave [*TCC Circular,* 21 Sept. 1955]. Apparently the party was acting on further information (sounds like my own attempts to locate that 'big' cave near Chrisps Creek) but as before, nothing eventuated.

A long weekend in January of 1956 saw another attempt to investigate caves on the flanks of Tyenna Peak. The party leader for this trip was believed to be a Mr Dennis Seymour but alas, no further information in the form of a report appears to have been made.

In late November of this year a party of eleven visited Pillingers Creek Cave that lies a short distance southwest of Maydena itself. It is possible that this cave may have been discovered in the late 1940s as numerous talus or rockslides were reported to have taken place since the previous visit in 1948. Hence we learn of yet another cave that was probably known of in the 1940s, although I could find no mention of it in earlier club records. The depth apparently obtained on the 1948 trip was estimated at 76 metres but the 1956 trip only reached a depth of 38 metres.

February of 1957 produced yet another trip aimed at finding the whereabouts of the mysterious Timms Cave [*TCC Circular,* Feb. 1957]. This time evidently, a guide was arranged but it again appears that this cave continued to evade discovery. Between February and May, a record-breaking trip took place to Growling Swallet. A party managed to reach a depth of 560 feet [170 m] making it the deepest cave in Australia at that time.

In June, a trip was listed to Bone Pit for exploration purposes and if time allowed, exploration of the lower entrances to Pillingers Creek Cave. Investigations of caves that were reported to be under the western side of Tim Shea were listed for later that same month. Apparently it appears that this area had been visited before but by whom and when I have no idea. Pillingers Creek was also visited again and a descent was made to a depth of 122 metres, 46 metres further than the original trip. It was reported that during the last two trips, members had used the new passage that was discovered on 24 November 1956. It was also reported that further exploration was still required (*TCC Circular,* 7 August 1957).

Towards the end of 1957 a further trip to the Florentine was projected. This trip apparently did take place and proved rather rewarding as the party located a new cave towards the end of the forestry road. It was reported to contain some rather good formation (*TCC Circular,* 27 Jan. 1958). Although no name is mentioned in this report, I suspect that the cave was most probably Frankcombe Cave, which was named after the then manager of ANM, Don Frankcombe.

1958 saw a planned trip in April to the Tim Shea area and Westfield Caves (*TCC Circular,* 12 March 1958). Late October also saw a projected trip to the Florentine. However, there appear to be no reports from either trip. Trips were also made in conjunction with the ASF Conference at the end of the year, particularly to Pillingers Creek Cave when Sexton et al. carried out survey work. (Resulting map is on p. 40.)

Mid-March of 1959 saw a projected trip to Bone Pit (*TCC Circular,* 11 Feb. 1959) but it was again to prove a quiet year for this region. A further trip was set again for early December with Frank Brown listed as leader. It appears that Bone Pit was proving to be the most popular cave at that time.

Bone Pit again received a visit in March of 1960. A trip to the Florentine was listed for May (*TCC Circular,* Feb. 1960) and another proposed to the Junee area by Albert Goede. In December, the first official trip report to be published in full, finally appeared (in the first 'Old Series' *Speleo Spiel*) and was written by Frank Brown (1960a). It must be pointed out that the comments in brackets ( ) are entirely those of the trip leader and not those of the author. My comments, when applicable are marked by [ ]. The report was dated 3-4 December 1960 and read as follows:-

> *After a few preliminary difficulties, (why can't Phil Lake live in an easily found residence, why can't John Chick wake up in time?) we all arrived at Springfield Ave. corner. One puncture later we met again at the ANM barrier at Maydena and Don Frankcombe showed us the shortest route to Growling Swallet (at 560 ft., Australia's deepest).*
>
> *Then, amid a loud fanfare of trumpets, the intrepid cavers attempted to plummet deep into the Gordon Limestone. But first the impassable, impossible & impenetrable rain forest had to be passed, penetrated and possed (?).*
>
> *Sounds impressive doesn't it? Well, in a way it was. After scrub bashing through horizontal and the rest of the mullock, we hunted in the rain for "D4", or at least Albert looked while we took shelter under a man-fern humpy around a fire, and when Albert found the pot we refused to budge until much later, we were moved by his entreaties (and by orders of party leader Frank Brown) and crashed on up the hill to Albert.*
>
> *Three ladders were tossed down the pot & Albert went down. Albert came up and another ladder was added and Wilf Taylor went down. Wilf came up and reported that yet another ladder was needed but as it was getting dark, the assault party screamed off through the scrub, down the road and back to Maydena.*
>
> *The next day Frank Brown, Doug Turner, Clive Morris, Albert Goede and John Chick returned to "D4" while the others went sightseeing. On the way up another pot was found and named "E3" (some of these names are really classy), this appeared to be about 100 ft deep from the noise of falling stones.*
>
> *The fifth ladder was added and Albert went down to the bottom, returning from a depth of 130 ft with the news that the hole did not "go". John then went down for a practice to a depth of 60 ft then we pulled up the ladders, packed up and headed out. We made record time out and got back to camp at Maydena. .... Back then to Hobart without a record but with a good weekend's caving behind us.*

The following year, 1961 saw trips to the Florentine with Cashions Creek and Frankcombe Caves being visited. A party also visited Junee Cave. Once again there was no resultant information on these trips.

In 1962, a trip to Frankcombe Cave was set down for May and a further trip to the Junee area, led by Albert Goede, was intended for June. Alas, no 'info' on the May trip but a report was received for the June effort. It was written by Roly Webb (1962) and was dated, Maydena – 16 June. It read:-

> *A party of five members hiked from Maydena up along the old HD10 track to examine a hole found by Albert Goede last summer. After three hours scrub bashing a hole matching the description was found and penetrated to a depth of forty feet. The cave goes further and enlarges but time and lack of equipment prevented further exploration. A number of other promising holes were noted and it is proposed to spend a weekend in the area in the near future.*

Two further trips were located for August of this particular year. One of these trips was again led by Albert Goede and the party investigated a cave which he had discovered some twelve months prior. It reached a depth of ~200 ft before the lack of ladders halted any further exploration (Anon. 1962a). The second mentioned trip again visited this same cave, Rift Cave, where a party of four pushed it to a depth of 430 ft (130+ m). According to the archives, this cave had already been explored to this same depth in 1947. The 1947 party felt that there were further prospects and had intended to explore it at a later date. Possibly due to the fact that there was no numbering system in operation in 1962 the original whereabouts of Rift Cave would have only been known to the original party until it was relocated by Albert Goede some 14 years later. Albert's party also looked at a number of holes in a gully some 180 metres east of Rift Cave. They reported that one went to a depth of 120 ft (~37 m) vertically but the others were choked with natural rubbish (Anon. 1962b).

The year 1963 was fairly quiet with only proposed trips to Rift Cave being mentioned. Apparently there was also a 'dig' in this cave but once again, no resultant information could be discovered through the records.

In 1964 Florentine trips were planned for 27-28 June and 8-9 August [*TCC Circular* May-August 1964]. The November *Circular* shows more planned for 14-15 Nov. and 12-13 Dec.]

1965 saw the formation of a second Hobart-based caverneering club which was in fact an offshoot of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, operating under the name of the Southern Caving Society. They worked in conjunction with TCC and contributed greatly in furthering exploration in the Junee-Florentine areas.

Having not been a member of SCS I did not seek access to their records. From this point onwards information was only obtained from TCC's records. It must be noted that trip reports were now beginning to appear on a more consistent basis. Thus I have provided only a brief resume of each subsequent year's activities.

The TCC scheduled digging trips to 'Junee Caves' in May and July of 1965. The 'dig' was apparently conducted in Junee Cave and was led by Edith Smith. D. Turner also planned a Florentine trip in July, and D. Seymour, another in August (*TCC Circular,* Apr-Jul. and Jul.-Sep.). In September Frank Brown planned another such trip (*TCC Circular,* Sep-Nov. 1965)

Track cutting to Exit Cave at Ida Bay in the far south of the state featured as one of the main undertakings for 1966. However in February Albert Goede planned a Florentine trip (*TCC Circular,* Dec-Mar. 1966) and in August of that year a trip was planned to the Junee area but the purpose of each is unknown. In October another party visited Growling Swallet.

In October 1966 a party revisited Pillingers Creek Cave – after a tip-off from Paull Rose about an extension he noticed on his trip there in 1959. Albert Goede described the cave "as well worth another visit for those who are tired of living" (Goede 1966).

4.
ORGANISED EXPLORATION 1967-74

During May of 1967 a party entered Satans Lair, it having been discovered by members of the Southern Caving Society (Anon. 1967). In October of this year TCC members also made a visit to Frankcombe Cave.

January of 1968 saw a large party consisting of ten members descend on the Florentine Valley. They investigated three holes in a dry valley below Mount Field West (Goede 1968). One of these holes was later (April 1968) named Tassie Pot, due to the fact that the surface opening when viewed from the bottom of the first pitch (some 40 metres below the surface) resembled a map of Tasmania. This appears to have been the only trip to the area by TCC for that year.

The following year, 1969 proved to be one of the most active since the formation of the club in 1946. In March, however, an inexperienced party of three people (who were not members of any caverneering club) were involved in a dramatic cave accident in what is now known as Rescue Pot. A report on this incident is given in the section dealing with Cave Dramas (page 70).

July saw several trips to the Junee area where members carried out some surface exploration. In November, TCC members visited the Florentine where a new cave, located by SCS (Kiernan 1970a), was visited. This was Welcome Stranger Cave, undoubtedly the best-decorated cave yet discovered in the Junee-Florentine areas. That same month, on 22nd, four TCC members located the deepest cave system yet discovered in Australia (Collin 1969) but at that stage were ignorant of the fact. This system was soon to become known as Khazad-Dum, named from Tolkien's book and now a film, 'Lord of the Rings'.

A week later a large party led by Albert Goede also visited this particular area to observe the entrance of the new inflow cave and to scrub bash in the hope of discovering other promising holes. The next month, December, saw Brian Collin, one of the party who discovered Khazad-Dum, return to carry out a preliminary investigation of this cave along with several other TCC members. This same month also saw the introduction of a cave numbering system with JF1 being numbered by Anne and Terry Parkes. On the 21 December, a party from the Victorian Speleological Association and led by John Taylor, arrived to visit the new cave (Anon. 1970).

First numbered entrance in Junee-Florentine, JF1 – 5/3/77

Although no actual trip reports have been located it is highly possible that a number of trips may have taken place to Khazad-Dum in the first half of 1970. These trips would have been mainly for the purpose of cutting tracks to the new cave. In August of that year the track to Khazad-Dum was completed along with another to Cauldron Pot that was also discovered around the same time as Khazad-Dum. Trips were also made to Welcome Stranger, Cashions Creek and Frankcombe Caves in the Florentine. Further exploration was also carried out in JF1 in the Junee and a party also visited Junee Cave. In September another attempt was made to bottom 'K-D' but the flow of water entering the cave thwarted the four-man party. Splash Pot was also located on this trip and later in the month a party returned with intentions of bottoming it. A depth of 46 metres was attained but due to belaying problems a full exploration was aborted. Early in October most of the previous party returned again to Splash Pot and this time succeeded in pushing it to an estimated depth of 97 metres. They then proceeded to Hairygoat Hole, JF15, which was descended to a depth of around 30 metres.

In the meantime another party had visited Welcome Stranger that was fast becoming the showpiece of the Junee-Florentine area. Late October saw a combined TCC/SCS party renew their assault on Hairygoat Hole but they only succeeded in extending the cave another 15 metres giving it a total depth of 45 metres. November saw yet another attempt on 'K-D' but this party didn't venture any further than the waterfall pitch. A further try was made on the 'dig' in Hairygoat but this was eventually abandoned with the party reverting to surface exploration instead. They managed to locate six small holes, which were explored but to no avail (Robinson 1970a). This same day also saw a party at Cashions Creek Cave to collect samples of cave fauna.

On November 14th a party from SCS descended Tassy Pot in the Florentine and bottomed it at a depth of 244 metres, giving it the title at that time of Australia's deepest cave (Robinson 1970b). Recent discoveries at Ida Bay in the far south had temporarily stolen the deepest cave title from the Junee-Florentine with a pothole called Mini-Martin being bottomed at 219 metres. A TCC party had obtained this depth in 1967.

The following day, 15 November, a party led by Albert Goede visited Frankcombe Cave in the Florentine and in early December a small party went to 'K-D' (Robinson 1970c) to ready it for the 1970 Australian Speleological Federation Conference, which was being held in Hobart.

The year 1971 was to be the year of years as far as TCC was concerned. On 16 January, the assault on 'K-D' was renewed and after a six-hour trip underground a depth of 152 metres left them 46 metres short of a previous effort (Robinson 1971a). The following weekend, however, TCC finally broke the Australian record set by SCS and reached a depth of 262 metres. Unfortunately the party were unable to continue owing to the fact that they ran out of equipment at the top of a 30 metre waterfall. This particular trip lasted over 18 gruelling hours (Robinson 1971b).

Early in February, Brian Collin led a party back to 'K-D' in search of a dry way past the 30 metre waterfall but their efforts proved unsuccessful. This party then adjourned to Dribblespit Swallet where they managed to bottom it at a vertical depth of 91 metres. Later this same month yet another assault on 'K-D' took place. This time a combined TCC/SCS effort managed to extend the cave to a depth of 295 metres before a torrent of water forced them to retreat.

In March, Noel White led a numbering party into the general area of 'K-D' and a total of seven holes were numbered. Noel led a further trip to this same area in April with a number of caves being visited. Later that same month a trip was held to the Florentine where Settlement and Lawrence Creek Caves received some attention. A week later, another trip was made to this area with a number of Max Jeffries' discoveries being investigated.

The first day in May saw yet another trip to 'K-D' but any hopes of extending the depth were squashed when the volume of water entering the cave was found to be extremely high. This same day also saw a party out in the Florentine where several small caves were numbered. A party visited Niagara Pot, which lies east of 'K-D' and Cauldron Pot, in June but they didn't enter the cave. Mid-June saw yet another visit to 'K-D' mainly for the purpose of recovering rope and eye-bolts and to clear the track in preparation for yet another assault that approaching summer. The following week a party visited Ross Walker Cave in the Junee. This cave had originally been discovered some years previously but had been "lost" for some time.

In July parties visited Welcome Stranger and Niagara Pot, where a depth of 91 metres was reached. Niagara had still not been fully explored at this stage. August saw a surface traverse carried out from Cauldron Pot to 'K-D' and information gained from this traverse revealed that 'K-D' was approximately 30 metres lower in elevation than Cauldron. That same month a two-man party consisting of Albert Goede (TCC) and Kevin Kiernan (SCS) injected 4.5 kilos of fluorescein into the 'K-D' stream. Some 11 hours later this bright green dye emerged from Junee Cave proving beyond doubt that a connection existed and leaving the residents of Maydena wondering what had happened to the Junee River!

In early September a party again visited Niagara Pot and reached a depth of 137 metres with prospects still promising. Towards the end of the month a party visited Rift Cave for the first time in seven years. At the end of October 'K-D' was visited yet again and despite a good flow of water, succeeded in placing 366 metres of telephone cable prior to the planned big summer push.

November saw a three-man party surface mapping in the Junee area and a week or so later another party carried out an investigation of holes between Rift Cave and Cauldron Pot. Surprisingly, they found nothing of interest.

Two attempts were made to bottom 'K-D' in December but owing to the flow of water and unseasonable weather conditions, they did not succeed. However, a third attempt just before Christmas managed to overcome the final hurdles and a sump was reached at a new depth record of 314 metres. It was still believed that the cave could be extended further but it was not pushed at this stage.

Early in January 1972, a party investigated a number of holes in the Junee area prior to visiting the Florentine where the Lawrence Creek Caves were looked at. In February a party visited Growling Swallet and experienced a close shave when the water level rose unexpectedly due to a sudden storm (Shaw 1972a). Cauldron Pot also received a visit during that month.

Growling Swallet was again visited in March along with 'K-D' where a two-man party located a 61 metre deep cave close by with over 457 metres of passageways. This cave was named Gormenghast and numbered JF35. At around the same time another group of cavers managed to reach the sump in 'K-D' but did not extend the cave any further.

In April, Niagara Pot had its depth increased by about 4.5 metres giving it a total depth of 141 metres. Gormenghast was also trogged again and some survey work was carried out. Mention was also made about dangerous rocks within the vicinity of the entrance.

Early in May, a trio of cavers numbered Growling Swallet (JF36) and surface trogged in the general area. Several other holes were noted and duly numbered.

On 3 June a party visited Dwarrowdelf (JF14) that had been explored to a depth of 21.3 metres in February 1971. This time it was extended to a depth of 79 metres and a fortnight later it was pushed to a further 43 metres and there was talk that it might even connect with the 'K-D' system.

In July trips were made into both the Florentine and Junee areas. Dwarrowdelf was extended to a depth of 213 metres and the party were still not able to bottom the cave. In August, the Gormenghast survey was continued and the following month saw yet another attempt to penetrate JF38 (Trapdoor Swallet) but to no avail.

At the end of October a party descended 'K-D' using abseiling/jumaring methods (single rope techniques). As a result, the cave was bottomed during an 11 hour trip, making it the fastest yet.

November saw another trip to 'K-D' to recover 73 metres of rope that had been lost on the previous trip. This was duly accomplished. The following week saw a further assault on Niagara Pot but the depth was not extended.

Early in December, cavers investigated Slaughterhouse Pot, which lays in close proximity to Trapdoor Swallet, A week later Cauldron was penetrated to a depth of 115.4 metres with further prospects being reported as very promising. Seven days later the same party returned again and pushed this cave to the 183 metres level.

Mid-January of 1973 saw the previous party return to Cauldron Pot and place bolts that would enable them to clear the waterfall. A total of twelve and a half hours were spent underground on this particular trip. The next weekend saw them back again but no extension to the depth of 183 metres was recorded. That same day, another party visited Dwarrowdelf and as a result a link-up with 'K-D' was established at a depth of 220 metres. This was only 7 metres further than the point reached on the previous trip made in July of 1972. The party then exited via 'K-D' proving that a round trip was possible. The following day the Cauldron Pot party entered 'K-D' and exited via Dwarrowdelf.

As it can be seen by the amount of activity taking place at this time caving interest was on the increase and it was attracting new members for both clubs. Mainland cavers were also keen to partake in the opportunity to venture into Australia's deepest caves.

Early in February a two-man party from TCC paid a visit to Tassy Pot that lasted some 11 hours using SRT (single rope technique) (Robinson 1973b). This new method was to revolutionise vertical caving and virtually eliminated the need for bulky wire ladders. It also eliminated the need for large support parties if a push was being made on a potentially deep cave. Time was also another important factor in its favour. Most of the trips made to deep caves in Tasmania, prior to 1972, were done using wire ladders and necessitated long hours spent underground retrieving them. However the use of SRT meant that cavers were able to reduce this time considerably.

In March, Cauldron Pot was surveyed to a depth of 263 metres making it Australia's second deepest cave at that time. This particular trip was a joint TCC/SCS effort (Robinson 1973d).

June of 1973 saw my official appearance on the caving scene and in August, I was with a large party led by Andrew Skinner, which went to the Junee area. We visited the upper sections of 'K-D' and also viewed the entrance to Cauldron Pot. Early in September, a party that included myself, and led by Noel White, visited Frankcombe Cave in the Florentine (White 1973).

The next trip to the Junee area was made late in October with the author acting as leader. Surface exploration was carried out north of the Junee quarry that resulted in the discovery of a small cave adjacent to the quarry itself. Dead Horse Cave and JF1 were also visited during this trip. A further trip to this same area in November resulted in the discovery of a small pot some 25 metres deep. It was numbered JF47.

The first weekend in January 1974, saw scrub bashing being carried out near Frankcombe Cave in the Florentine. This party also made a visit to Welcome Stranger. February saw three trips to this same area, two of which were scrub-bashing efforts. The other trip visited JF50 and Growling Swallet.

Mid-March saw a trip to the Junee area for the purpose of establishing whether or not there were any resurgences emerging along the Tyenna River. This party, however, found no evidence to support this theory. On the following day another party visited a number of caves in the Florentine. Then, at the end of the month a large party led by myself attempted to locate that "big outflow cave near Chrisps Creek" but despite a lot of scrub bashing failed to find any sign of it. However, we did locate the remains of a wooden hut on the old Adamsfield Pack Track. On the day prior, a three-man party led by Peter Shaw, pushed Niagara Pot to its limit, reaching a final depth of 149 metres.

Early in April two cavers visited Splash Pot to tie up some loose ends and another party did some scrub bashing, noting the entrances to Bone Pit and Rescue Pot in the process. A week later Albert Goede, Kevin Kiernan and myself, set off in an effort to see if we could detect any resurgence below Tim Shea. Unfortunately, this trip also failed to yield any positive results due in part to the thick scrub and the fact that we didn't get anywhere near our intended objective (Goede 1974).

The beginning of June saw further investigation of an area near The Gap that resulted in the discovery of several small swallets. This party also visited JF1 later in the day. The following weekend a large party visited Cashions Creek Cave and the week after that, Max Jefferies and I explored a small cave that Max had found on the western side of the Florentine River (Moody 1974b). This discovery opened up an entirely new area for cave exploration. A further two caves were located during this same trip. Another trip was made to this vicinity the following week, where the largest of these caves, JF55 or Deviation Cave, was surveyed.

July saw yet another trip into the Western Florentine and the discovery of another cave that was numbered JF57. It was on this trip that we located the old Dawson Road. In August a party inspected a number of small caves in the Florentine and another group visited Splash Pot and the upper section of 'K-D'.

During the following month, Welcome Stranger, 'K-D', Junee and Ross Walker Caves were entered and Pillingers Creek and Deefour Pot (D4) were numbered. In October further exploration and numbering trips were made to the Florentine whilst November saw trips to Bone Pit and Growling Swallet.

Mount Field West from Westfield Road – 6/12/76

5.

ORGANISED EXPLORATION 1975-80

Early in March of 1975 a party including myself investigated a section of the Florentine River using a rubber dinghy. Although a number of small partly submerged caves were noted along the banks of the river, nothing of significance was found (Moody 1975a). April saw the discovery of an important archaeological site in the Florentine Valley (Anon. 1975). The cave in question was JF79-82 (Beginners Luck Cave). On the day prior to this discovery, the Maydena Branch of TCC was inaugurated with a meeting and slide show taking place in the Maydena Hall. JF79-82 was the first cave to be discovered and explored by the branch, hence its name. Cavers also visited 'K-D' on that same day. Later on in the month, the Maydena Branch conducted a surface exploration in the vicinity of Chrisps Creek with two caves being earmarked for further investigation (Miller 1975a).

Early in May a party visited Beginners Luck and checked out a number of other holes in this area. Towards the end of the month the Maydena Branch conducted another surface exploration in the Florentine. Eight small new caves were discovered as a result (Miller 1975b).

In June, further exploration work took place in the Western Florentine and another two small caves were located and numbered (Moody 1975c). July saw the numbering of JF90 (Vandalisation Cave) and further scrub bashing in the Florentine. A two-man trip was also carried out west of Junee Cave and one small hole was located in thick scrub.

On 2 August members of the Maydena Branch spent a morning exploring JF90 in the Junee (Jeffries 1975) and a fortnight later a party spent the day scrub bashing in the Florentine again.

In September, a party investigated an area between Bone Pit and Cave Hill in the Junee. As a result, they relocated a number of caves that had originally been discovered and numbered by SCS (Moody 1975e). At the end of the month another trip was made to this same area and later that day the landslip area below Wherretts Lookout was visited. A few promising holes were found in this area, most of which proved to be of a vertical nature (Moody 1975f). This area attracted a further three trips in October but no hole reached a depth exceeding 55 metres. Trips were also conducted to Welcome Stranger and Beginners Luck, both in the Florentine.

Two trips were made to the Florentine in November mainly for the purpose of collecting cave fauna from a number of caves.

The last day of January 1976, saw a rather large party 'tourist' Welcome Stranger and Cashions Creek Caves. The following day, 1 February, also saw a party at Beginners Luck Cave. Two weeks later the landslip area below Wherretts Lookout received further investigation but with negative results. The following week another group inspected a small pot near The Gap before proceeding into the Florentine to scrub-bash.

In March a two-man party visited Growling Swallet and extended the depth a further 5 metres giving this cave a total depth of 176 metres (Shaw 1976). A week later, Junee Cave also received a visit.

Early in April further scrub bashing was carried out in the vicinity of Beginners Luck and several small caves were located. A further trip to this same area took place the following week apparently with little result. May saw two trips again into the Florentine where several small new caves were numbered.

In June, John Parker and Steve Annan (Maydena members) began to systematically explore an area south and east of Rift Cave in the Junee. A number of promising holes were noted and the following week a combined TCC/MB trip was held. Two holes were partially explored and the area was later described as having depth potential.

Cave numbering was carried out in the Florentine the following month and eight caves were numbered on one trip alone (Goede 1976c). (The numbering process was a rather slow one as a hand-drill and masonry bit were used to attach the aluminium tags to solid limestone with stainless steel screws.) In August, Albert Goede inserted 3 kilos of fluorescein into the stream entering Growling Swallet in the Florentine. The following day the green dye emerged from the mouth of Junee Cave, a distance of some 9.5 kilometres to the southeast proving that the 'K-D' stream and Growling Swallet stream linked up somewhere underground (Goede 1976d).

The same month also saw the first attempted exploration of JF99, a recently discovered pot with depth potential. This cave located by Maydena members was duly named The Chairman as it was felt that this cave presided over the other caves in the area. A trip was also made to the Florentine where JF96 and JF97 were entered (Goede 1976e).

Albert Goede and others at entrance to JF 99 The Chairman – 28/8/76

September saw trips to The Chairman and several other holes in that area as well as a trip to the Western Florentine (Jeffries 1976). The last-mentioned trip resulted in the discovery of a cave reputed to be the largest found in the area so far. The following month saw the numbering of seven more caves in the Florentine area (JF101-107).

Mid-November resulted in the relocation of Little Dipper Cave in the Junee that had been originally located back in 1948. It was duly numbered JF108. The same party then adjourned to the Florentine where they numbered Breccia Ridge Cave (JF109) that later proved to contain late Pleistocene bone deposits (Goede 1976g).

The final month of the year saw the exploration of another hole close to The Chairman. John Parker had first discovered the hole itself late in 1975. It was duly descended to a depth of 125 metres and named Victory 75 (JF110)(Annan 1976c).

A visit was also made to Cashions Creek and Welcome Stranger earlier that month.

Early in January 1977 the author conducted a party of five Mainland cavers in a familiarisation tour of the Florentine and Junee areas with all the usual caves being visited. Maydena members also held two trips to the Chrisps Creek area where a number of new holes were investigated. Later in the month Max Jeffries and John Parker located yet another cave in the Western Florentine.

In February, Maydena members decided to explore JF31, an extremely muddy cave downstream from Junee Cave (Annan 1977). It was later described as "easily the muddiest cave we've ever been in!" and as it was the first one I ever entered, I can certainly vouch for that!

Growling Swallet was visited in March as was also Rift Cave. In the Florentine, Frankcombe, Cashions Creek and Beginners Luck were the main attractions. In April, John Parker visited the Pillingers Creek area and located a new inflow cave on the western slope of Roberts Hill (Parker 1977a).

At the beginning of May, Maydena members scrub-bashed in the Eden Creek area in the Florentine. A week later they accompanied me on a photographic trip to the Western Florentine. Late in June a two-man party went to JF112 and pushed it to a depth of around 60 metres. A week later, in July the pair descended to the 70 metre level but due to the unsafe nature of the cave concluded that any further exploration was too risky (Nicholas 1977c). That same month saw Maydena members looking at an area in the vicinity of Eleven Road out in the Florentine. One small hole was found and it was believed that further trips to this area were warranted.

During August, John Parker numbered nine caves in the Junee area (Parker 1977b). A number of those caves were reported as being in close proximity to Rift Cave. John Parker and the author also visited Ross Walker Cave during that month.

October saw further exploration of holes in The Chairman area, Chrisps Creek and the Western Florentine. Gormenghast was also inspected and nearly bottomed by the party concerned. Cavers also took a 'tourist type' trip to Cashions Creek and Frankcombe Caves around this time.

During November, John Parker numbered a further eleven caves in both the Junee and Florentine areas (Goede 1977). December saw trips to the area above Junee Cave, Growling Swallet, Splash Pot, the Serpentine Passage in 'K-D' and Cauldron Pot.

Early January 1978 saw a large party led by Stuart Nicholas advance on The Chairman hopefully in search of a new Australian depth record which was still held at that time by 'K-D'. The attempt, however, resulted in a depth of only 187 metres and a passage length of approximately a kilometre (Nicholas 1978a). The same month also saw a party bottom Growling Swallet once again whilst John Parker continued on his merry way numbering a further seven caves.

February saw a lone trip to Vandalisation Cave in the June but in March, Splash Pot, The Chairman and 'K-D' received further attention. April saw parties at Beginners Luck on a number of occasions prior to a Search and Rescue exercise. Cavers also visited the Western Florentine, the Settlement area and Bone Pit.

Gormenghast received another visit in June and in July; trips were made to the Frankcombe Cave area and JF71 for scrub-bashing purposes. This trip resulted in the discovery of several small holes.

During August four trips were made to an area between Leo Thorne and Settlement Roads with a number of new caves being found. JF1 also received its first visit for some time and caves in the Western Florentine were also afforded attention. Later in the month cavers visited Frankcombe Cave and the Upper Tiger area in the Western Florentine. Early in September a party entered Beginners Luck and a number of other caves close by. In mid-September, John Parker located several small caves in a burnt-off area near Frankcombe Cave. Several days later, a party conducted a survey traverse of the Junee Ridge in order to establish the position of the caves in the area relative to Junee Cave and the Map Grid. This was duly accomplished (Nicholas 1978d).

October saw the numbering of twelve caves in both the Junee and Florentine areas. No doubt this was due to the recent addition of a new cordless drill that was a definite improvement on the old hand-drill. During that month a number of trips were made to the burnt-off area near Frankcombes, the Upper Tiger area and Junee Ridge.

In November, John Parker managed to number a total of 57 caves, which in itself must prove to be an Australian or even a world record. All were in the vicinity of Frankcombe Cave and most had been located due to the burn-off that tends to greatly assist in cave location (Parker 1978). Maydena members also visited JF88-89 and JF137 during this period.

December saw a trip to The Chairman and surface exploration was carried out downstream of Cashions Creek Cave in the Florentine. Three small caves were discovered, one of which was actually reputed to contain a good display of glow-worms.

In January 1979 trips were made to Welcome Stranger, Cashions Creek, Titans Shelter, and Junee Caves. A party that included a number of Mainland cavers visited 'K-D' in the middle of that month and were detained some 12 hours longer than they had anticipated (Nicholas 1979a). This was due to a sudden thunderstorm and the resultant flash flooding preventing the party from regaining the surface until the following day.

March saw a single trip to Growling Swallet and in April a party visited both Frankcombes and JF61. During May, a group went to The Chairman area and entered an un-named hole in that vicinity.

Early in June three cavers visited Trapdoor Swallet but were thwarted by a rock fall just inside the entrance. They then adjourned to Growling Swallet and inspected that cave instead.

July saw a party of seven out in the Florentine where JF340 was numbered and JF341 visited. During August, cavers inspected a newly discovered find in The Chairman area. It was duly explored to a depth of around 100 metres and appeared to be continuing. September saw a further trip back to this same cave along with trips to Owl Pot and Tassy Pot.

In October a single trip was made to JF341 and the following month a party set out to take a look at Beginners Luck. However, due to a fallen tree across the Florentine Road below The Gap, this trip was abandoned. Instead, the group returned to the Junee where a vain attempt was made to locate JF1. Undaunted by their lack of success, the party visited the entrance to The Chairman and adjacent caves. Later in the month JF1 was successfully located and JF342 was paid a visit.

A few days before Christmas 1979, a party of four conducted yet another assault on The Chairman where more of the cave was surveyed and photographed (Nicholas 1980a).

There was a rather sluggish start to 1980 and it was the end of March before a large party visited Cashions Creek, Welcome Stranger and the entrance to 'K-D'. April saw trips to

Growling Swallet and Trapdoor Swallet, where another attempt was made to excavate the entrance.

During May a six-man party again set out to attack Trapdoor but due to extensive rain prior to the trip this effort had to be abandoned. The party then searched for the elusive entrance to JF1 that had been re-located in November of 1979. However, it again proved elusive and they were unable to locate it. However, they did manage to locate JF148 but due to its dangerous condition, their stay was brief.

Two trips took place in July, one to 'K-D' which lasted six hours and the other to JF147, which, like JF148, had proved to be something of a dangerous cave, especially in the entrance section.

August saw a party visit four caves at the end of Leo Thornes Road in the Florentine. In September, trips were made to Trapdoor Swallet and Bone Pit. Trapdoor was opened up to a depth of around 25 metres and still appeared to have some potential. September also saw a trip to Slaughterhouse Pot that resulted in a minor cave drama when one member slipped from a ladder due to exhaustion (Fisher 1980). A rescue operation was efficiently swung into operation and the victim was safely removed after an enforced eight-hour underground stay (Nicholas 1980b).

In October, trips were made to Bone Pit, JF341 and the various archaeological sites in the Florentine Valley. The landslip on Wherretts was visited in November along with The Chairman and a number of small caves in the Florentine. A further two trips in December saw cavers at Fifteen Second Pot and Growling Swallet.

So ends 130 years of discovery and exploration in the Junee-Florentine. During the following decade and into the 1990s cavers were to discover deeper caves and extensive systems that make the Junee-Florentine truly THE area in Australian caving circles.

6.

JUNEE CAVE (JF8)

Junee Cave itself is undoubtedly the best-known cave in the entire Junee-Florentine area. Known to both cavers and locals of the Maydena region the cave is also shown on most maps. The first actual reported description was that of W.H. Twelvetrees, the Government geologist, in 1908. He had this to say about the cave:-

> *Junee Cave. - A quarter of a mile up the Junee River (from the bridge) through a lovely fern glade in the myrtle forest is the Junee Cave, reached by a hand-track. A cavity twenty feet in height forms the entrance, and the river, a rapidly flowing stream of ice-cold water, issues from it. Inside a few stalactites still depend, but the larger ones have been removed by visitors, and others have been defaced. At about fifty feet from the entrance the subterranean river blocks further progress on foot, and can only be ascended a few chains further by means of a raft or boat. The cave, though large at the entrance, where a rough handrail has been placed for tourists, is in its present condition rather poor in respect of display of stalactites, and, owing to the river, the task of opening it further by blasting the roof in the end would be somewhat difficult. But this is really the only way in which the cave can be improved. The approach is highly picturesque, the banks of the clear, tumultuous stream being clothed with a luxuriant growth of tree fern, above which the tall sombre myrtles of the forest tower to a great height.*
>
> *The Junee River is at the 20-mile on the Great Western Railway survey line.*

A classic piece of writing! The land in the immediate vicinity of the cave has not changed much since 1908. However, some of the myrtles have gone and on the Maydena side of the Junee Road, which passes some 200 odd metres southwest of the cave, cattle were grazing there during the author's last visit. Perhaps the most noticeable physical alteration is that of the Junee River itself. In 1976, the owner of the property on the southern side of the Junee Road re-routed the course of the river with earth-moving equipment. Prior to this, the Junee meandered haphazardly down the valley eventually linking up with the Tyenna River. However, in the winter months, or after several days' heavy rain, the river had a tendency to flood a wide area. Therefore in an attempt to combat this flooding, the property owner constructed a deep trench and to date I believe, it appears to be doing its job efficiently.

Prior to the report of Twelvetrees a resident of Fitzgerald, name unknown, did apparently make an attempt to exploit Junee Cave as a tourist attraction. Due, however, to the unsuitability of the cave, it is believed that the venture did not last very long at all.

For some years now, most cavers had been of the opinion that a huge underground reservoir exists somewhere between Growling Swallet and the Junee Cave. A fact that tended to support this theory is that the Junee River has never been known to stop running, even in the driest weather.

The cave itself pumps out an impressive average flow of 30 cusecs [0.85 m^3/sec] and a minimum of 10 cusecs [0.28 m^3/sec]. Early exploration of the cave terminated at the sump, some 90 metres in from the entrance. However, in February 1966 a team of divers entered the sump and claimed to have penetrated 550 ft [170 m] underwater (Anon. 1966). The main reason for this dive was to see if the cave opened up beyond the sump. This has been known to occur in other places and can result in the discovery of quite extensive cave systems.

The first person to have popularised sump diving in caves was a Frenchman, Norbert Casteret, in the earlier part of the 1920s in France. The 1966 dive in Junee Cave revealed that the water extended to the roof level for most of the 170 metres covered.

The next attempt was probably made in 1978 by a group of divers from South Australia. It is reported that they only managed to reach a point 120 m in (Stace 1979).

It had been my original intention not to proceed with cave history beyond 1980 but I feel that the story of Junee Cave would only be partially complete without recording a trip that took place between October and December of 1981. A party comprising Nick Hume and Rolan Eberhard had decided to make another attempt at diving the sump and they subsequently reported:

> *A mountain of gear was transported to Maydena with much optimism for diving this inviting sump. At the bridge, the Junee River was about 2 metres up on its summer level and running strongly, fun, fun, fun!*
>
> *After suiting up we wrested the streamway up to the sump where you could literally be swept off your feet. Allied with a two foot visibility, we stumbled on the realisation that penetration diving was out* (Hume 1981b).

Later that same month, Nick Hume and Rolan Eberhard returned to the cave for another attempt Part of Nick's report stated:

> *Junee River was down at last, so through the sump we went. Both taking turns diving, having a look around and practising with the linereel.*
>
> *It was a dive made gloomy and remote by unseen walls, invisible beyond the 2-3 metre sphere of vision for much of the time. The initial submerged passageway extends 20 metres or so back from the mouth of the sump, before taking a 90° turn to the left, through a 'squeeze'. This is part of an extensive, narrow fissure, which requires care on return to locate the correct place to exit.*
>
> *Beyond this an open chamber with a sandy floor and scungy roof runs steeply away for 20 metres to a water depth of 12 metres, ending in a blank wall. Here the passageway continues to the right for an unknown distance.*
>
> *There is obviously much potential for further exploration in this system and enthusiasm is high for a return. This will require one, preferably wet-suited Sherpa per diver for extra gear involved in 'pushing'* (Hume 1981c).

Another visit was made in December and this time three divers, Nick Hume, Rolan Eberhard and Stefan Eberhard, dived the sump. Nick reported:

> *Low rainfall, alcohol enhanced suicidal tendencies, unlimited flex-leave credit ... perfect conditions for further exploration of this sump. The author was first in, tying off a 50 metre permanent line in the initial passageway to make things easier on subsequent dives. This process took half an hour, largely spent sorting through a catchbag of uncooperative slings (ever tried untying a double fishermans underwater with wet-suit gloves on?).*

Rolan was next and rigged up with twin 90 cubic foot cylinders for the 'push'. Arriving at the end of my fixed line, he tied off his line-reel and continued on through straightforward passageway for a further 50 metres before turning back – 100 metres from airspace and still going!!!!

The passageway so far reaches a maximum depth of 18 metres at a point 50-60 metres from airspace, then tends upward to a depth of 12 metres before levelling out. No constrictions bar the way at this stage and before long, extensions of fixed line will open the way for further exploration. Stefan also took a plunge for a look see thus adding to our group of diving looneys.

Submerged times of 40 minutes with existing wet suits appears to be the limit because of low water temperatures. Therefore, the value of a permanent line in speeding up transit times is enormous and the line also adds considerably to one's confidence! (Hume 1981d)

Five days later, Nick, aided by an array of helpers managed to rig up more fixed line. He reached a squeeze some 100 metres from airspace but recommended for safety reasons that the squeeze would have to be negotiated with side-mounted air-tanks.

So there you have it. For further advances in the exploration of Junee Cave it is recommended that you obtain a copy of *Tasmanian Cave Exploration in the 1980s* – still available from the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers, P.O. Box 416 Sandy Bay, Tasmania, 7006.

[For more recent updates, see Eberhard, S. 1998 'Plumbing the depths of inky blackness' *Speleo Spiel,* 307: 15-19 and Payne & Doolette 2005 'JF8 Junee Cave – cave diving exploration trip: March 2004' *Speleo Spiel* 349: 3-7. The latter includes an excellent map – Ed.]

7.

GROWLING SWALLET (JF36)

Although Albert Goede covered the early history of Growling Swallet in 'Tasmanian Cave Exploration in the 1980s' (Goede 1992) to a great extent, I feel that I too, must contribute the information I have obtained both historically and through trip reports.

A.S. Atkins and J.G. Timbs, both members of W.H. Twelvetrees' geological survey party in 1908, apparently discovered Growling Swallet. Twelvetrees (1908) reported that:

> *... on the north side of the track is the peak called Wherretts Lookout, with its diabase-crowned summit, and behind it to the north are two cones, which we have called The Knobs. These, together with a lumpy mountainous mass, which we have labelled with the name of Pimply, rise northwards into the majestic pile of Mt. Field West (Mt. Humboldt). The precipitous western face of this mountain, composed of columnar diabase, descends into the valley of the Florentine perpendicularly for over 1,000 feet. Messrs. Atkins and Timbs ascended this mountain from the Florentine Valley. At about 400 feet above the Humboldt Divide they discovered an enormous cave in the Ordovician Limestone. This cave is the size of a large building, and a river as large as the Junee pours into it. In ascending fossiliferous Permo-Carboniferous strata, shale sandstone, and limestone conglomerate, were met with. These are below the coal horizon, and no coal seams were seen during the trip. Higher up an excellent freestone was observed. The trigonometrical station is on the highest point, 4721 feet above sea level, but built up behind the natural rock summit, and the station pole having blown down, the formed beacon pile cannot be seen from the south and west.*
>
> *The cave referred to just now is a stupendous natural feature, which, though without the attractions of stalactites, will inevitably draw the attention of tourists once a track is established. The present starting place for a track to it would be the Great Western Railway pack-track on the west side of the divide, at a point 30 chains past the 12-mile peg, first descending into the Florentine Valley, then ascending to the base of Mt. Field West.*

Max Jeffries has mentioned to the author that he had visited Growling Swallet back in the early 1940s, but only as a spectator.

Apparently the first visit by Tasmanian Caverneering Club members occurred around 1949. The cave was apparently explored a short distance to a 9 metre waterfall. Des Lyons suggested the name of Growling Swallet, due to the roaring noise it made when in flood. [But see footnote 3 on p. 9]

According to Albert Goede in 'Tasmanian Cave Exploration in the 1980s' it was late in 1953 before a party led by Leo Luckman revisited the cave and apparently reached a depth of around 150 metres. The *TCC Circular* dated 24 Feb. 1954 recorded:

> *a party descended an estimated 500 ft. into Growling Swallet only to be stopped by lack of equipment at the top of a large waterfall, the cave was voted the noisiest yet but it gave a good opportunity to test the new nylon rope.*

After a period of heavy rain, a tremendous amount of water surges into the large opening. The roar of the water can reputedly be heard up to 500 metres away on a still day.

Between February and May 1957, a party reached a depth of 560 feet [170 m] (*TCC Circular,* 6 May 1957). This gave Growling Swallet the distinction of being Australia's deepest cave at that time. The cave was visited in January 1960 for survey purposes (Brown 1960b, Sexton 1960). Due to a lack of time the survey was terminated at -240 ft [c. 73 metres]. Brian Collin and party visited the cave in December 1966.

> *The cave was entered to near the bottom where a 30' ladder would be required and as the weather was overcast and as the 'superb' formations did not appear to be improving it was decided not to push providence too far and the cave was vacated* (Collin 1967).

The next recorded visit complete with trip reports was made in February of 1972.

This first report was written by Peter Shaw (1972a) and entitled … "The Facts!" Others in the party were Laurel Norbury and Philip Robinson. The report read as follows:

> *After camping at the end of F9 road the night before we had a leisurely start and headed down into the valley below Florentine Peak. After two hours we had followed the stream down and had arrived at the impressive entrance to Growling Swallet. We immediately decided to return in winter to see what the entrance looked like with a roaring torrent thundering into it – little did we know! The weather was perfect with a cloudless blue sky when we went underground at 12.30 pm. We soon reached the pitch just inside the entrance and spent quite a while locating the bypass route. From here onwards we followed the stream downwards through several large chambers with a host of glow-worms until we reached the twenty foot [6 m] pitch. A ladder was quickly rigged and we all descended. Several hundred feet later the passage became constricted and the stream finally sumped. A side passage was investigated, the old streamway, but this was choked with tons of mud. Another side passage was discovered at the top of a step mud slope and was found to have a roaring draught. The passage was followed for a hundred feet [~30 m] until it became choked with boulders. Several boulders were removed but the way on, along a narrow rift, was blocked by a small boulder, which we could not remove. Not a great deal of work would be required to shift it with some persuasive tools. Beyond the blockage, the passage, about a foot [30 cm] in width, is visible for 15 ft [4.5 m] and then drops down. The floor was not visible due to the boulder.*
>
> *At about 3.30 pm, we left the bottom to return to the surface. About halfway up we missed the route for a moment during which time the stream suddenly turned brown and rose alarmingly! The weather had been so good four hours previously that this was unbelievable! At this moment when speed was essential if we were to get out before the stream rose too much, my trousers fell down. In a frenzy of activity, I removed twenty feet of waist-length, accumulator, trog-suit, parka and over-trousers, pulled up my trousers and replaced everything before being able to move on. In the chamber just below the entrance, water was cascading from everywhere as we struggled up the bypass route to emerge within sight of the entrance. Fifty*

feet [15 m] to go and we were brought to a halt by a torrent. After investigating all other routes, we rigged up a rope and Philip managed to cross the stream and set up a handline for the final section.

It was a very thankful trio that emerged from the cave at 6.30 pm into fine weather. On our way home we learnt that at Maydena, there had been seventy points [about 19mm] of rain in 45 minutes!

The second account of this particular trip was written by Phillip Robinson (1972b) and was described as being "especially written for the British caving public". It was entitled … "The Emotions"!

For ten years up to 1967, this pothole, at -560' [170 m], was the deepest in Australia. Every caving trip in Tasmania is essentially an exploration. Few caves are re-visited. I decided for once to have a sporting trip down one of the 'classics'.

Three of us set out from Hobart in anticipation of an easy, enjoyable day's caving. Is it ever easy in Tasmania? We passed the ANM barrier at Maydena into the heavily forested Florentine Valley. Through a maze of rough dirt roads nearly tearing the poor Hillman apart, we reached our destination. The road had taken us as far as possible into the middle of nowhere. Burnt out forest surrounded us, a tangled mass of branches and trees. The sun shone brightly, hot in a clear blue sky. We donned shorts and overalls, loading our packs with caving gear. It is an adventure reaching a Tasmanian cave, apart from exploring it. We fought our way for half an hour through the black, dead barrier of fallen trees and boughs. Relief at last, the cool shade of the rain forest, relatively open, green, damp and mossy. No leeches and few mosquitoes also. Two somersaults and half an hour later, we reached the bottom of a river valley. The creek was only a few feet across in a bed 30-40 ft [9-12 m] wide. The water level was very low. Flood debris could be seen up to 30 ft [9 m] high on either side of the banks, some great logs too. We gazed up in amazement. What volume of water had caused this? The riverbed was followed down towards our goal, Growling Swallet. The way on was soon blocked by a veritable dam of dead trees, undergrowth, etc. washed down in wet times. We climbed up the side into the forest again and made our way down.

After two hours we finally reached the entrance, a truly awesome sight. A black chasm and cliffs surrounded by beautiful, lush vegetation. We donned caving gear and descended. The stream passage all the way down is very large and exciting. Numerous small cascades and only two 30 ft [9 m] pitches, led us to the sump at -560 ft [170 m], about half a mile [835 m] underground. We found a dry side passage with a howling gale. Rocks were eagerly moved in anticipation of a good lead. It was too tight! We returned to the streamway and leisurely made our way back towards the surface.

The action suddenly hit out in all confusion! Three waterfalls were coming into the chamber! They weren't there before!? One looked slightly brown. Which way did we come in? It suddenly dawned on us all! The water was rising rapidly! We rushed around looking for our point of entry in vain. A 10 ft [3 m] wall was scaled just to the side of one of the waterfalls. The girl member was hoisted up. Then up the streamway to another chamber, waterfalls everywhere now, up in the roof, heavy showers and spray from all directions. We clambered up, realising that now speed was essential. Then daylight could be seen. Heavens! It was not to be!

We stood on a large rock 200 ft [60 m] from the entrance, peering out into the oncoming floodwaters. The little cascades had turned into mighty falls. The 'stream' filled the 20-30 ft [6-9 m] wide passage. The force of water was too much. It was also rising quickly. Valuable time was spent up some obscure side passage in desperation to find another route out. The entrance chamber is large. We were soaked to the skin. The prospect of the night being spent perched on some small ledge above the roaring foam was not welcomed - that is, if it stopped rising! It was still raining outside. We had a 120 ft [37 m] rope, which was looped up 20 ft [6 m] onto a flake. A caver dangled down over an overhang, swinging onto a ledge. A slab of rock in the middle of the waters had only 5-6 inches of water on top. This reached in desperation, then a lunge for the far wall of the cave. Here the water was less strong. Feeling for holds under the waterfalls, a short ascent was made, then no alternative but straight up the cave wall vertically for 20 ft [6 m], few holds. A small ledge was reached. Safe at last - now where?

Traversing at the same level out towards daylight above the floodwaters was surprisingly straightforward. One man out - one girl and one man to go. The rope was secured half-submerged in the water. The situation seemed unreal. Imagine Mossdale in heavy flood, crashing down several drops of 5 to 10 ft [1.5-3 m], the river 20-30 ft [6-10 m] wide. The girl had little strength left in the arms. Somehow the far wall was reached, clinging to the rope. An attempt at the rock face proved fruitless. A sloping, undercut notch running up the side of the wall was just big enough to crawl along. Shouts of encouragement were lost in the roar of the water. Twenty, ten feet away, five feet, completely submerged in water now - a feeble 'Can you hold me?' - then collapse! A great heave against the terrific water force and all was well. She shook off surplus H_2O and recovered. With the aid of the rope the third member successfully left Growling Swallet also.

We struggled out high up the riverbanks, watching in amazement at the tiny creek turned torrent - now thundering into the cave. It was still not over. The long bushwalk back to the car had to be achieved quickly. It would be impossible to find one's way out of the bush in the dark. As we emerged from the dank vegetation to daylight, the sun was sinking in a beautiful sky. Seventy points of rain in 45 minutes plus a very large catchment had made Growling Swallet a place to be remembered!

An unknown party visited this cave the following month but no report was forthcoming. In May of 1972, however, Peter Shaw, Phil Robinson and Stuart Nicholas finally got around to numbering Growling Swallet, JF36.

No further trips were made to the cave until January 1974. Unfortunately, once again, no documentation as to the nature of this particular visit appears to have been published. Moody (1974c) reported a visit under very wet conditions in Nov. 1974. According to the next trip report, Peter Shaw apparently visited the cave in 1975 but I could find no record of this visit.

In March 1976, Peter Shaw and Stuart Nicholas returned to Growling Swallet after originally intending to visit Herberts Pot at Mole Creek. Peter reported (Shaw 1976):

Stuart wanted to know how to get to the cave so that he could lead a party there later and I planned to have a poke about in the sump using a lightweight telescopic aluminium tentpole. The weather was overcast but showed no sign of rain. We set off from the original parking place. . . and soon picked up the old horse track. The track was pretty

well overgrown and after some 40 minutes, we arrived at the cave. The water level was okay; although large amounts of debris near the entrance indicated that the cave had received a gigantic flush in the last twelve months since I'd last been there.

After a snack we headed in and spent sometime looking for the slot, which bypasses the drop just inside the entrance. Having found it the way onwards was straightforward and we soon reached the pitch near the bottom. The cascades section of the passage on the way down was a delight. Pity there aren't more caves with similar passages! Quantities of sand in the glow-worm chamber, partway down, seemed to indicate that the stream had backed up to this point in the flood.

We descended the pitch and had a look at the mud passage just below it in the hope it had been flushed out; but no luck there! We crawled down the sump passage and discovered that the stream was sinking in the gravel just before the sump, and, instead of a sump, there was a great mound of sand almost completely blocking the passage. A swift dig revealed the way onwards with not a drop of water in sight.

The passage rose up immediately indicating that it could have been free-dived anyway. We reached a T-junction, with a sand-filled passage rising to the left and a gravel-floored passage descending to the right. We crawled along this to a small chamber where the stream had once sunk in a corner of the floor but no way on now! The sound of water could be heard from a narrow rift, so we followed it along over two mounds of sand until we came to a pool. The pool, which was at least a metre deep and just over two metres long, disappeared under the end of a rift with 10-15cms of airspace visible. The stream was audible and seemed to be agitating the end of the pool. As neither of us was willing to totally immerse himself, we decided to head out. We had a look at the left-hand passage at the T-junction and concluded that it was an extension of the mud passage near the pitch and that it would be quite easy to dig through if necessary. After a brief snack at the foot of the pitch, we headed for the surface which we reached after only three hours underground."

Peter went on to say that it was obvious that if they were to proceed any further, wet suits would be needed and he also suspected that the sump could fill up again if the stream flow increased. He also stated that if the cave did keep going it would be prudent to dig out the mud passage to provide an alternative route.

The exploration of this new section added another 5 metres to the depth, increasing it to 176 metres (Shaw 1976).

An August 1976, Albert Goede inserted 3 kilos of fluorescein into the stream entering JF36 and proved that there was a connection between this cave and Junee Cave, some 9.5 kilometres to the southeast (Goede 1976d).

It was March 1977 before Growling Swallet received its next visit and the party consisted of Stuart Nicholas, Bill Nicholson and John Parker. The following trip report ensued, written by Stuart (Nicholas 1977b):

The proving of the stream connection Between Growling Swallet and Junee Cave last year has provided some inspiration for further exploration of Growling Swallet. So armed with high hopes and three shovels, we proceeded to the cave via a couple of wrong roads and a wrong turn on the old horse track. The stream was quite low, although I have seen it lower, which made the descent fairly easy.

With great enthusiasm we rushed along the mud passage below the pitch to the point where the funnel-shaped depression in the side of the passage leads to a small tube. Unfortunately, the main sump in the stream passage was full which prevented access to the bottom end of the afore-mentioned tube. Anyway to make a short story even shorter we found after a few minutes digging that the supposed sand or mud tube, was in fact a small and lined rock-tube - a real blow! This discovery was made even more frustrating by the fact that the running stream-type noises could be heard coming from the tube - at least this confirms that the tube does go through to the stream passage.

After much moaning and groaning, we proceeded out of the cave getting rather wet in the process. (It's amazing how wet one gets when climbing a 4 metre waterfall!) The cuppa and fire were much appreciated when we eventually returned to the Annans' after four hours underground.

Stuart went on to say that there was a side-branch about halfway between the bottom of the ladder pitch and the normal sump which usually takes a little water. The possibilities of constructing a diversion dam by using rocks and a large sheet of plastic could send the stream down the other passage, lowering the sump and hopefully giving access to a new extension.

December 1977 saw Stuart Nicholas and John Briggs back at Growling Swallet but due to the high water level at the entrance they decided to opt out. However, during the January long weekend of 1978 Stuart returned. Two Western Australian cavers Evelyn Tulp and Rauleigh Webb accompanied him. This trip report (Nicholas 1978b) followed:

To make this short story longer it seems that Maydena has had little rain during January. That is not to say that heavy rain has not fallen recently - GREEN leaves stuck to the wall above eye-level in the Mud Passage made for some interesting speculation!

Anyway on with the story. After an incredible slow start we managed to reach the entrance sometime after lunch. Following the 'putting-on-of-caving-gear' ceremony some time was spent in the entrance section looking for the dry (?) bypass around the waterfall. Eventually, this was found and after much splashing in the rather deep pools of the stream the short pitch was reached and descended. Brief inspection of the Mud Passage revealed the previously mentioned green leaves and twigs stuck to the wall close to two metres above floor-level and some changes to the shape of the mud-coated sand floor.

Crawling down the stream towards the sump it was observed that the giant flush the system had obviously recently received has had the effect of diverting the stream to the left into a low side passage - exactly what I had planned to do with a sheet of plastic and some rocks! Hence the way on through the sump was clear!!

The way on was up a rocky, sandy-floored crawl to a T-junction as described in a previous report (April 1976). More rocks and sand have been washed into this passage since the trip of that report but it can still be negotiated fairly easily and to the right leads to a still, quiet pool. To the left there is a possibility of a 'dig' through to the far end of the Mud Passage.

Having suitably impressed our West Australian friends we then exited the system, having a look at a few side passages on the way and reached the surface after four hours underground.

The next trip to Growling Swallet took place in mid-March 1979. A party consisting of Sue Feeney, Geoff Fisher, Tim Douglas, Chris Davies, Diana Davies and others entered the

cave on a 'tourist' jaunt but were unable to reach the sump as the water level was fairly high.

June saw yet another visit by to Growling by Stuart Nicholas, Nick Hume and Pavel Ruzicka after a vain attempt to penetrate the rock-choked entrance of Trapdoor Swallet. No further work was carried out and a 'tourist-type' trip eventuated.

It was April 1980 when Stuart Nicholas and Ken Lance from Western Australia decided to take yet another look at the cave. This time it was Ken who provided the trip report (Lance 1980):

After Stuart had attacked several recently fallen trees on the track with a chainsaw we arrived at the entrance. The 'growling' was audible some distance away from the cave ands Stuart announced that it was 'up a bit today'. The rain had eased by now just in time to let the swallet take over the drenching process. Whilst donning various layers of wool, rainproofs, etc. I was struck again by the contrast with caves in W.A. where a trog-suit and jocks suffices me on most occasions.

Following the stream into the gaping cleft with some trepidation I was impressed immediately by the rushing water - both the volume of it and the noise it made. I found it all a bit off-putting as it was totally unlike anything I had ever experienced before. I had to really concentrate on what I was doing (We can't go down THERE surely, was my first thought - but we did!).

It soon became apparent that the properties of the sharply corroded limestone mercifully had far more in common with the Exmouth and Kimberley varieties than the aeolian calcarenites of southwest W.A. Thin ledges and nobbles which looked like excellent hand and footholds actually were - mostly! At one point where the main stream tumbled through a narrowly down cut section into a deep pool, so did Stuart. This bit was evidently somewhat weaker than the rest. Stuart wasn't hurt much, apart from the indignity of it all. I retrieved his gloves and we continued.

Walking in the streambed was made considerably easier as the brown, rounded pebbles were not slippery. I presumed that this was because we were far from any light, which would allow algae to grow.

Some distance into the cave I obeyed Stuart's instruction to turn out my cap-lamp and looked up. I let out a whoop of delight as a whole milky way of glow-worms zapped me with blue luminescent rear-ends! The roof and walls were absolutely streaked with them. This was really tremendous - definitely a highlight of my Tasmanian visit as I had only seen the beasties once before, in Carrai Bat Cave near Kempsey [New South Wales].

Stuart and I didn't descend to the sump but retraced our steps just before it. After a bit of stuffing around including a couple of wrong turns we arrived back at the surface about two and a half hours after entering.

I feel that Ken Lance's remaining remarks also warrant inclusion as he goes on to give some history of the packhorse trail which passes close to Growling Swallet and has often been mentioned in earlier reports:

Back at Maydena I asked Max Jeffries about the pack-horse trail ... He said it was cut back in 1938 by Mr McCallum under contract to ANM in the early days of their activities. (Mr. McCallum had died just a few weeks previously at Maydena, aged 99.) The trail went from the [old] Adamsfield track to a settlement about 12 kilometres into the Florentine Valley. Max recalled how, when he was sixteen [and] with a work party, he had cycled from town to where the new track began, walked to the creek near Growling Swallet and camped there for about three weeks. He spoke of the group losing toothbrushes, toothpaste and soap kept on a normally dry rock near the entrance, when, after heavy rain the creek rose quickly in about an hour!

In February of 1981 Stuart Nicholas, Chris Davies, Trevor Wailes and a number of others again visited Growling Swallet. It was noted that the cave was exceptionally dry for a change and in places; the stream was nowhere to be seen. The party managed to reach the third sump and concluded that the cave possibly continued in a south-easterly direction but at a lower level. Access, however, was blocked by sand after the first sump (Nicholas 1981a).

So ends my coverage of Growling Swallet. It is interesting to note that the two oldest known caves in the Junee-Florentine area (Junee Cave and Growling Swallet) that were previously thought to be explored to their limits have since continued to reveal one of the most extensive cave systems in Australia.

For further information on the ongoing saga it is recommended that you read 'Tasmanian Cave Exploration in the 1980s' Vol. 1., edited and produced by Nick Hume, Stuart Nicholas and Trevor Wailes.

8.

KHAZAD-DUM (JF4-5)

The discovery and subsequent exploration of this cave was without doubt one of the most significant events in Australian caving history at the time. Although this cave has been relegated to the fourth deepest cave in Australia, [by 2006 it was reduced to seventh – Ed] documentation covering the sequence of developments as they occurred was surprisingly consistent and as a result the full story of Khazad-Dum or 'K-D' as it is affectionately known, is featured in this chapter.[4]

This swallet was first located on November 22, 1969, by a TCC party consisting of Brian, Jeanette and Peter Collin and Sally Morris. Little did they know that they had actually discovered the deepest cave system in Australia at that time. It was already a recognised fact that this area had depth potential exceeding 300 metres. At this point of time, Mini-Martin Cave at Ida Bay in southern Tasmania, held the Australian depth record at 219 metres.

Brian Collin's historic report (Collin 1969) read:

> *In a matter of five hours two new holes were found and are now ready for the intrepid members of the club to explore. I suggest that Hobbit Hole [Ida Bay] might be used for initial training prior to tackling the new ones. The new discoveries were where expected from previous reconnaissance and I'm certain more will be found in the area.*
>
> *Hole No. 1 [Khazad-Dum] has a creek running into it [of] approx. 2 cusecs and was explored for about 50yds [46 m]. The first drop of some 10 ft used up all of our available rope and further progress was prevented by an 8 ft overhang drop. We could see about 20 ft [6 m] further on by the light of a feeble torch but could not ascertain the prospects of further progress. Air movement was inwards and a good display of glow-worms was seen.*
>
> *Hole No. 2 [Cauldron Pot] also had a creek of some 2 cusecs flowing into it. No entry was made, as 60 ft [18 m] of rope instilled no confidence in the onlookers of this spectacular entrance. Admittedly the dropping of stones indicated the first drop to be only about 60 ft [18 m] but thankfully time was running out so we headed home. Both these caves have a potential of over 1000 ft [300 m] in depth. Access approx. 1 mile [1.6 km] of reasonable bush.*

The following weekend a party consisting of Albert Goede (leader), Therese Goede, Terry and Ann Parkes, Simon Stephens, Denis Seymour, Delia and Anne Maloney, Mieke Vermeulen, Angela Komzak, Richard Murdock and Judy Patterson set out with intentions of exploring the swallets found the previous weekend. Albert's report stated (Goede 1969c):

> *It rained in Hobart when we left and also when we returned but in the area it was dry and the weather was quite pleasant for walking. We left the cars at 11 am with a good deal of gear and followed up the dry valley until we met our old marked track. We followed it up the hill until it started to turn east. We then headed due west, met the dry valley just below its junction and followed up the western branch.*
>
> *Two hours after leaving the vehicles we were still struggling uphill with no cave in sight and grimly reminded of Brian's estimate of a 45 minute walk from the cars. I suggest that all times given by our worthy treasurer should be multiplied by two for a strong party, three for an average party and four for all other parties.*
>
> *At 1 pm the party stopped for lunch but Simon and I went ahead to locate the cave (Brian's No. 1 Hole). It took us another half hour. The entrance doline is quite impressive with the creek tumbling into it over a cliff at the northern end and going underground at the southern. Two old entrances a little further downstream are now blocked but their presence suggests that the cave may well open up further in. With only one candle and no equipment between us we reluctantly retreated and rejoined the main party at 2.30 pm. As it was getting a little late to go caving we headed straight up the ridge to the southwest and followed it along in the direction of the cars. The ridge has recently been burnt and is fairly open higher up but lower down are fallen trees and tangles of dead scrub. Reached cars at 4 pm.*

An editorial that appeared in the December issue of *Speleo Spiel* (TCC Newsletter) mentioned the discovery of two small swallet holes in the Junee area and the fact that hopes had been raised that the club would soon be able to penetrate the unknown cave system that lay beyond the siphon in Junee Cave. Both Swallets were believed to be more than 300 metres above the Junee resurgence and capable of reaching a good depth.

Early in 1970 a party consisting of Allan Keller, Brian Collin (TCC), Bob Cockerill, Gray Wilson (SCS), John Taylor and Lesley (surname unknown and both from Victoria) went back to the area near the swallets. A brief summary by Brian Collin (1970b) gave the results of the trip:

> *Caves numbered 2, 3 and 4 visited. Cave No. 5 discovered. This cave is a fissure type some 100 yds [90 m] southeast of No. 4. Cave No. 4 entered to top of the first waterfall. Cave No. 5 entered via two 60 ft [18 m] pitches to bottom of first waterfall in No. 4 cave. Further progress stopped by more waterfalls. Cave 3 bottomed at 160 ft [48], dead end. Cave 2 looked at from the top. Of note: 7 people, 300 ft of ladder, one and a half hours of rough walking through bush - IT CAN BE DONE!*

It might be prudent at this stage to point out that holes 4 and 5 mentioned are the two entrances to Khazad-Dum, which had still not been named at this time. Neither had hole 2, which was in fact Cauldron Pot. Prior to this report Brian Collin and several others had visited the area a few days before Christmas 1969 and had numbered three caves. However, despite the fine weather previous rain had swollen the creeks but the party did manage to enter cave No. 4. Brian remarked that:

> *Cave No.4 had a really good flow of water entering it but progress to the previous point reached, some 50 yds in, was easily accomplished and a further 30 ft [9 m] covered. At this point the creek descends magnificently into a large hole. Air movement was inwards and some interesting trogging is assured* (Collin 1970a).

One of the people in Brian's party was John Taylor, a member of the Victorian Speleological Association. Part of his report concerned his visit to the cave on 21 December 1969. It read:

[4] Though not detracting in any way from the drama or excitement of the epics involved in the bottoming of K-D, its depth was exaggerated at least from early 1971. While depths of over 1000 ft (more than 300 m) were claimed, Jeff Butt recalculated the depth using the original survey data in 1999 and found the cave had only been pushed to 285 m – for details see Butt (1999) – Ed.

Soon we arrived at another river flowing underground (JF4) - a flow of about 10 cusecs roaring into a more horizontal looking cave. The first drop of 10 ft. was negotiated with a rope, then the river passage could be followed for 50-100 feet, with numerous glowworms, to another 10 ft. drop (roped again). Thirty feet further on the river thundered over a great drop into a long fissure. The noise was so great that rocks rolled over the edge could not be heard striking the rocks below. Exploration was halted here until the river was a little lower. On a later (combined SCS-TCC) trip we looked along the surface in line with the fissure and followed a hole (JF5) down 30 ft. to a chamber, then a 50-60 foot pitch to a landing, then a 50 ft pitch to the bottom of the waterfall that had stopped our last exploration. The stream now diminished in volume, cascaded semi-horizontally for 20 ft then over another drop but [the] spray was too great for us to attempt it safely.

Given a record drought (unlikely in Tasmania) these caves could possibly be bottomed and may prove to be Australia's deepest. The Maydena area is very extensive and a good deal of it is still unexplored; however, scrub bashing is required and it will be quite some time before the area is covered in detail (Anon. 1970).

On 1 August 1970, a TCC party led by Albert Goede and comprised of Noel White, Sally Morris, Simon Stephens, Tony Thurstans, Wes Carpenter and Judy Chambers, arrived at the Junee to carry out both track-cutting and track-marking work to JF4. In part Albert reported (Goede 1970a):

From here on the route was obvious and little marking was needed. JF4 was reached at 11.45. We decided to have a look at JF4 first and used our 60 ft [18 m] rope on the 10 ft [3 m] entrance pitch. Despite the uninspiring entrance the cave is roomy and pleasant inside particularly when wearing waterproofs.

Between the first and second waterfall pitch an entrance to a higher level can be seen which could easily be entered with the aid of a climbing pole. The second 10 ft [3 m] pitch required a rope so we had to borrow it from the first pitch having made sure we did not have to do and Indian rope trick to get out. Another 40 ft [12 m] of sloping passage brings one to the top of the third waterfall pitch. It is impossible to look down it, as the first 15 ft [4.5 m] is an 80° slope. However, since it can be by-passed via JF5 there is no need to descend this pitch.

The report concluded:

JF4-5 seems to offer the most promising prospects for further exploration. The next party should descend JF5 and take a good look at the problems involved in descending waterfall pitch No. 4.

Five weeks later, in September, another attempt was made to penetrate the unknown depths of JF4-5. This party consisted of Albert Goede, Noel White, Bill Lehmann and Phil Robinson. Albert reported (Goede 1970b):

On arrival at the usual parking spot the small mountain of gear was divided up between the four of us and we were off. The weather, which had been reasonable up to now, deteriorated and by the time we reached JF5 it was snowing heavily.

The creek running into JF4 was flowing strongly and the normally dry JF5 entrance also proved rather wet with water cascading down from the cliff above. Since none of us had been in the cave before [Albert had?] we left our gear on the surface except for one rope tied to a tree at the entrance. The way through was easy to find as we could hear the distant roar of the creek. We reached a place where a ladder seemed desirable but Noel claimed it was an easy climb and proceeded to prove it and Albert followed. We ran out of rope just before reaching the top of the next pitch, which had the creek roaring in from the left. It seemed that with so much water we would be battling to get as far as last summer's party, let alone further.

I left my carbide lamp and we climbed up again. This was a less happy experience as with the burning carbide lamp down below we could see just how exposed our climb was. Although the climb is not difficult a ladder should be used for inexperienced cavers. We went back to the surface for lunch where we huddled together under a log to escape the wet snow. Intrepid leader and Noel had by this time lost all enthusiasm for the cave in its present state but Bill and Philip were keen to go back to look down the second drop and rescue leader's carbide lamp.

The next visit took place on Sunday, 8 November 1970. A party made up of Noel White, Phil Robinson, Bill Lehmann, Clive and Dorothy Boulter, Mike Robinson and Peter Shaw were there to investigate JF5 and Hairygoat Hole (JF15). The following report resulted (Robinson 1970a):

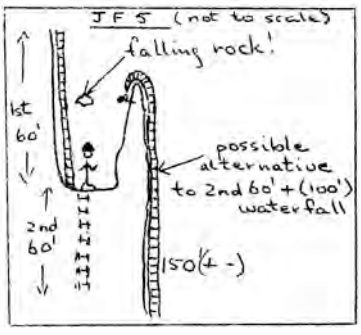
A 7 am start from Franklin Square saw us soon past the barrier at Maydena and foot-slogging up the track towards the caves. It was very humid and the going a trifle sticky. Halfway up the dry valley the party split up. Noel, Bill, Clive and Dorothy set forth up the side to dig the choke in Hairygoat Hole while Phillip, Peter and Mike carried on up the valley to JF4-5.

Despite the dry day there was still a tremendous amount of water cascading down into JF4. The dry entrance, JF5, was descended [at] approximately 11.30 am. The easy 30 ft [9 m] entrance climb led straight to a small chamber and the first 60 ft [18 m] drop. This is climbable with a rope though a ladder is a little easier. We were all soon down this pitch along with the tackle and a few large sized rocks. A rope was cut in two by one rock. This pitch is unsafe and there is no shelter at the bottom. A further 60 ft [18 m] ladder was tied on and the next drop descended. Halfway down the JF4 water can be seen thundering away close by. Rocks thrown down the next pitch were lost in the roar of water. An estimate of 100 ft [30 m] is approximate. There seem to be three ways to tackle this waterfall pitch:

(a) Climb straight down the water with a wet suit in drier weather. Prior to such a hazardous attempt it would be advisable to immerse oneself in the upper reaches of JF4, just to test the feel of things.

(b) Drive in two bolts 10 ft [3 m] up the left-hand wall. This will take the ladder away from the main force. A wet suit would still be desirable when driving the bolts amongst the spray of the previous pitch.

(c) Drive in a bolt 10 ft up the wall at the bottom of the first 60 ft [18 m pitch]. Hang 150 ft [46 m of] ladder (at least) over the top. This may well avoid the 100± ft [30 m] waterfall altogether (see diagram).



The party returned to the surface after 3 hours underground.

Some four weeks later, 6 December, Brian Collin, Peter Shaw and Phil Robinson were back. The resulting trip report by Phil Robinson (1970c) describes the visit:

The reason for this trip was to size up once more the cave and prepare it for the conference [Australian Speleological Federation Conference was to be held in Hobart that year]. This had to be done. Three bolts are now securely driven in and a 100 ft [30 m] dry pitch, avoiding the waterfall, awaits exploration - a gift indeed! An hour's walk with heavy pack and we reached the cave near noon. Despite heavy rain during the previous night the creek was lower than usual. The 30 ft [9 m] climb led to the first 60 ft [18 m] pitch. A bolt was driven and the ladder thrown down. The second 60 ft [pitch] was climbed. It was decidedly wet as per usual at the bottom. Returning to the bottom of the first 60 ft, a further bolt was driven. It is approximately 15 ft [4.5 m] above the floor. A traverse round above a deep drop leads to a small hole. Thirty feet [of] ladder was lowered down the hole and a ledge reached. The drop-off is around 100 ft [30 m]. A bolt was driven again into some very solid-looking limestone. Unfortunately, only 30 ft [9 m] of ladder was left. The chasm was inspected off two sides of the ledge. One led to a boulder chokestone about 30 ft [9 m] down but the best way is along the side. A traverse led to a pile of loose rock. Gardening ensued for several minutes, ending in a climax of one five feet [1.5 m] long boulder. The whole cave shuddered as it shattered to the bottom. Peering over the lip of the drop in the order of a hundred feet [30 m] was seen.

Seven hours were spent underground on a very useful expedition. Returning, we walked along the side of the dry valley, missing it altogether. This is infinitely better than walking down in it. Joining the marked track once more we were back at the cars 40 minutes after leaving JF5.

Prior to this trip, TCC had recently relinquished its claim to have found Australia's deepest cave. The Southern Caving Society had explored Tassy Pot and had bottomed it at a depth of 244 metres, thereby taking the record (Robinson 1970b). However, in January of 1971 the chances of TCC re-capturing the depth record looked extremely promising with JF4-5 crying out to be fully explored. Then on the 16 January, the assault was renewed when a party led by Albert Goede and consisting of Peter Shaw, Phil Robinson and Laimonis Kavalieris, descended on the cave with a vengeance. Philip's detailed report had this to say (Robinson 1971a):

After the successful ASF Conference trip the week before the party eagerly set off back to Khazad-Dum [the cave had just received its name]. It was intended to explore the upper passage and undescended 90(?)ft [27 m] pitch in the hope of finding a quick way down to the main streamway. A torrential downpour the previous night had caused the cave to fill almost to flood conditions. The trickle of water in our route had turned to a fair-sized stream but it was still negotiable. At the cave entrance, a trusty tree was felled and chopped up for two stout belays. The cave was entered at 11.30 am underneath the entrance waterfall and along the 'Serpentine Passage' to the top of the pitch. Depth here is 180 ft [55 m] and several hundred feet [~90 m] from the entrance. The logs were placed in position and the pitch laddered.

Kav., well protected with waterproofs and Philip with wet suit, descended to find a very wet 70 ft [21 m] pitch. Trouble was experienced lowering tackle with a ledge 20 ft [6 m] below the top. A 10 ft [3 m] climb followed, then another short waterfall and another. This continued for a few hundred feet [~100 m with] the passage winding around. It was difficult to tell which direction we were heading in. The passage is often narrow and high, the rock sharp and weathered. One cannot avoid a soaking in the climbs. Soon, another ladder pitch was encountered, wet and 50 ft [15 m] deep. The first 20 ft [6 m] are climbable with a rope. At the bottom one lands on a pile of large boulders, sharp with some loose. A 30 ft [9 m] vertical drop follows. For once in the pothole this is dry. The stream sinks in behind the boulders and emerges at the base of the pitch. It was laddered. After a short distance, another wet pitch was encountered, 30 ft [9 m] deep. As no tackle [was] left a return to the previous 30 ft pitch was made. Kav. climbed up, dropped the ladder and tried to climb back down.

Unfortunately, climbing [back] down without a ladder or rope proved much more difficult than climbing up without a ladder or rope. Nevertheless, he eventually dropped down and the next 30 ft [9 m] waterfall was laddered. Philip descended finding two 10 ft [3 m] climbable waterfalls and a small chamber. A large rock wedged in the rift was climbed and the stream followed along a crawl to a 12 ft [3.5 m] waterfall. This was overhanging and impossible to climb without tackle. Thus the pothole goes on, wet and sporting.

Depth reached down this route is estimated at 500 ft [152 m], ¼ mile [~400 m] from the entrance. Depth down the main way in Khazad-Dum is -650 ft [~200 m]. No roar of water was heard at the 12 ft [3.5 m] pitch. Whether the two link up is still to be determined, although it is very likely. Two cold, wet cavers returned to the 70 ft [21 m] pitch.

At the top we were welcomed by Albert and Peter, also very cold after a 2-3 hour wait. The trip lasted six hours. Returning to the car, a track was marked with red tape along the side of the dry valley. This meets the old track just before it heads down the valley. Even though a little horizontal scrub is encountered on the new track, a walk-in of 30-40 minutes with a heavy pack should now be possible.

The following weekend, a large combined TCC-SCS party led by Philip Robinson and consisting of Peter Shaw, Kevin Kiernan, Laimonis Kavalieris, Norm Poulter, Chris Harris, Greg Blake, John Morley and Stuart Nicholas, returned for yet another crack at 'K-D'. Phil's trip report (Robinson 1971b) announced:

In a highly successful expedition the Australian depth record has been broken. 860 ft [262 m] underground, the team ran out of equipment at the head of a 100 ft [30 m] waterfall. The cave must surely be at least 1000 ft [305 m] deep. Unlike the other deep potholes, it is over one mile [1.6 km] long [with] 3,500 ft [1,067 m] of passage having been surveyed already.

We arrived at the Junee Homestead, Maydena, on Friday evening. It was decided to set off Saturday morning and have one long trip possibly through to Sunday morning. It lasted a total of 18 hours.

The team was reduced to eight when Stuart developed stomach troubles. To save time, Peter, Kevin, Norm and Kav. set off in advance to ladder the early pitches. A 45 minute walk through the scrub and we were down the cave at 11.00 am. Mounds of ladder and rope were ferried through. 100 ft [30 m] inside the entrance, the 15 ft [4.5 m] scaling pole pitch was ascended. This led along a walking passage to a 15 ft ladder pitch. A 100 ft [30 m] rope was lowered for the next climb and the gear lowered down into a small chamber. From here the passage lowers to less

than one foot [30 cm] high [and is known as] 'The Flattener', a nuisance to drag the gear through. Luckily it only lasts for 15-20 feet [5-6 m]. Another small chamber and a terrific roar of water is heard. Pressing on under some rocks, a rift is followed over a deep drop to the head of a 92 ft [28 m] free hanging pitch. The ladder lands on an enormous pile of talus jammed in the rift. If it weren't for this a drop of 200 odd feet [~60 m] would be encountered. Here we were joined by John, Chris, Greg, Kevin and the rest of the gear. The 70 ft [21 m] pitch was rigged opposite a very impressive waterfall. Underneath the talus pile the next pitch, 94 ft [nearly 29 m], was laddered. This runs next to another waterfall 100 ft [31 m] high.

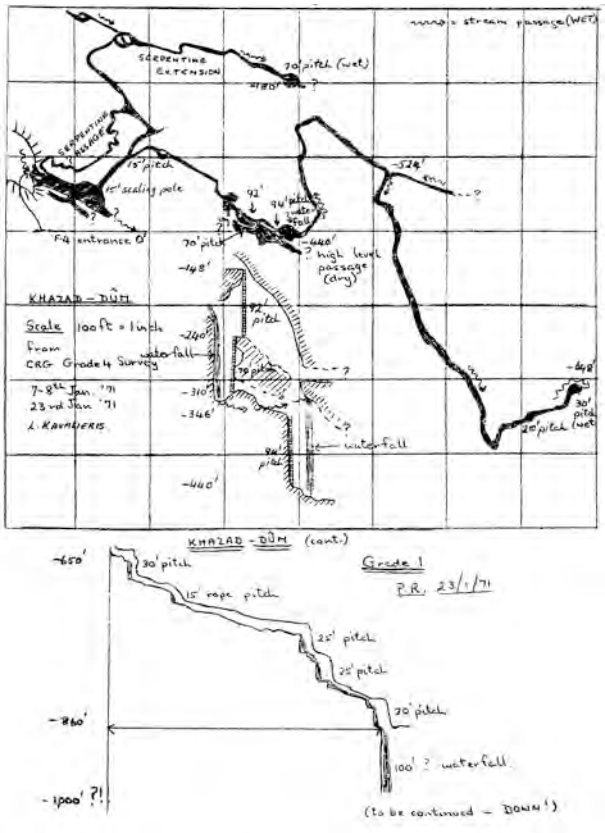
Greg, Philip and Chris pressed on down an exciting streamway 800 ft [~250 m] long to the top of a 20 ft [6 m] waterfall. The ladder can be hung to one side of the water. Soon after, the head of a 30 ft [9 m] waterfall pitch marked the end of previous exploration (an ASF Conference trip on 9 January). No way to avoid the water was obvious so we all got saturated. A short passage led to a 15 ft [4.5 m] drop in the water once more. Walking on, yet another short waterfall pitch followed, 25 ft [7.5 m] deep. Here Greg had to stay. His sole gave way and he had to last the rest of the trip with one boot. John arrived with further bad news. Trying to avoid the 30 ft waterfall, a rock had bounced, bruising Norm's ankle. He had returned [upwards] with Peter. This left three of us to continue, Chris, John and Philip. Kav. and Kevin were behind doing a splendid job surveying.

Down two short climbs, a 25 ft [7.5 m] pitch was laddered out of the water. A 10 ft [3 m] waterfall was climbed, the passage followed for a short way to another 10 ft climb, then a 30 ft pitch. With one ladder left a frantic search for a belay point was made. Using a 60 ft [18 m] rope (the last of the tackle) John belayed the ladder way back in the passage. Philip, half-drowned, descended what seemed the wettest pitch of all. Twenty feet [6 m] later, an enormous black chasm engulfed the whole water. Rocks thrown down took several seconds; a 100 ft [30 m] pitch is the estimate. The water must be avoided on this drop. It will be difficult. The cave was as dry as ever this summer, the water thundering down still fearsome. ... Altimeter checks back to the first 30 ft waterfall showed a drop of 210 ±10 ft [64 ±3 m]. Kav. and Kevin surveyed down 650 ft [198 m] to this point. Thus the depth reached is 860 ft [262 m].

A strenuous return was made back to the waterfalls. John did some exciting acrobatics on Norm's 'dry pitch'. Although Norm had avoided the water a severe climb at the top was needed. John re-rigged the 30 ft pitch back to the water for Philip, Chris and Greg to ascend. The strain of many hours underground was now beginning to tell. People were weary mentally and physically, dragging all the gear out - 520 ft [160 m] of ladder, 800 ft [244 m] of rope in all. All eight gathered at the base of the 92 ft [28 m] free-hanger, foolishly left un-lined. No one at this stage was confident enough to climb it without a rope. Twenty minutes later, Greg freezing and wet, with one boot, set off with the sling. He had several rests but finally made it. The rest of us followed. It is surprising how such a short pitch is an obstacle after many hours continuous effort underground. The rest was routine. All were out of the cave at 4.00 am Sunday morning in front of a roaring fire. Waiting till daylight a return was made to the cars.

The party was an excellent one. Everyone did a wonderful job. The next expedition??

A party of four or five purely for support would be very welcome. They would spend several hours laddering the early pitches. Another party could then enter and hopefully push right down below the 100 ft waterfall. If met by the rested support party on their return, they could all haul the gear out together.



Sketch map of Khazad-dum as known to 23/1/71 – by L. Kavalieris – from Speleo Spiel*, 54: 5*

With Khazad-Dum at a depth of 262 metres, 18 metres deeper than Tassy Pot, TCC then tried to find another 'dry' way into the cave in further attempts to bottom it. They located a promising looking hole the following month but on subsequent exploration it (JF13) was found to be very wet and only a depth of 90 metres was attained. At the same time another party located another hole which was numbered JF14. Explored to a depth of 21.3 metres, the party then ran out of ladder. Seventeen months later, this particular pothole was found to connect with the 'K-D' system but by then, it was all over!

At the end of February 1971, another assault was mounted on 'K-D'. This party too consisted of both TCC and SCS members and was led by Phil Robinson and Albert Goede. Others involved were Peter Shaw, Norman Poulter, David Cripps, Stuart Nicholas, Richard Bloomfield (TCC), and Kevin Kiernan, Chris Harris, Graeme Watt, David Mitchell, Delia Maloney (cook) and surface support party on the Saturday, Bob Cockerill and Aleks Terauds (SCS). Phil Robinson (1971c) again supplied the report:

> *Nine hundred and seventy feet [295 m] down and forced back by a raging torrent of a waterfall. Depth [of waterfall] unknown. So ended one of the hardest, most exciting caving trips in Tasmania for many years. Khazad-Dum is providing a real challenge, one of which few people wanted but all expected.*
>
> *Fourteen people gathered at the Junee Homestead on Saturday morning. Hopes were high of breaking 1000 ft*

[305 m]. Conditions were dry and the weather good. 700 ft [210 m] of ladder, 1000 ft of rope plus bolts and slings were hauled through the scrub to the cave entrance. The day was spent laddering the early pitches and dragging the tackle to the 20 ft [6 m] waterfall, 590 ft [200 m] underground. All was routine down the familiar drops, the 15 ft scaling pole pitch, the 15 ft ladder, 100 ft rope climb, The Flattener, the 92 ft [28 m] free-hanger onto the rockpile, the 70 ft [21 m] and the final 95 ft [29 m] pitch next to the waterfall. The work was essential for the final push on Sunday.

Not all eleven cavers were needed for lowering the gear. Norm, Peter and Chris set off to explore a passage at the base of the rockpile, depth –300 ft [90 m]. A 25 ft [7.5 m] pitch was descended and followed along to a 60 ft [18 m] drop. Norm descended on a rope to find himself at the base of the 95 ft pitch in the streamway. An easy way down had been found, avoiding the 70 and 95 ft ladder pitches. Unfortunately by this time all the gear had been lowered down the 70 ft pitch and the old route had to be followed. How Norm climbed back up the 60 ft pitch on a rope is still a mystery. The first 25 ft is a vertical wall, then a ledge and a further one, 15 ft from the top.

With no gear at all, the surface was reached very speedily and the walk back through the bush was wonderful. Saturday's trip underground lasted seven hours. Everyone was remarkably lively on Sunday morning, eager to be away. A party of six, Philip, Peter, Norm, Kevin, Chris and Graeme were to reach the bottom at 860 ft [260 m] and push it to the limit. At 12.00 noon, Albert and David Mitchell entered to belay the 92 ft free-hanger. They returned to the surface, coming back on Sunday night with Richard and David Cripps.

The new route was followed, the 25 ft and 60 ft pitches rigged with ladder. The six descended to the 20 ft waterfall to find mounds of ladders and ropes left the previous day. Splitting up, Philip, Peter and Norm set off laddering the short waterfalls. The others followed with the rest of the gear. The 20, 30, 15, 25, 25 and 30 ft pitches were descended to a depth of 860 ft. Everyone was now cold and extremely wet [due to being] battered about on the waterfalls. Abseiling down the waterfalls was found to be highly exhilarating, also reducing the time spent in the water. It took 5 hours to reach the bottom. An hour was spent driving in a bolt beneath the spray and gale provided by the last 30 ft. Each person eagerly awaited a bash with the hammer. Even wet suits were insufficient to keep one warm.

Meanwhile the drop was traversed to find a dry passage running for 30-40 ft [9-12 m] to a small chamber. From here, one could climb up a 12 ft [3.5 m] wall. Peering over, a dry quiet shaft fell away into the darkness. Four seconds later, a rock hit the bottom, bouncing off a ledge two seconds down. This was a great opportunity to avoid the waterfall. The bolt, however, provided a dryish pitch next to the waterfall. There were thus two alternatives. It was decided to follow the streamway to the limit. If we could go no further then we would return to this dry route.

Attached to the eyebolt, the ladder was lowered over the drop. Kevin descended a 70 ft [21 m] free-hanging pitch. Philip Norm, Chris and tackle followed. Down a 10 ft waterfall and a chest deep pool, another pitch was encountered. Forty feet [12 m] down, what appeared the bottom could be seen. Ladder was attached to the end of the 70 ft and Kevin descended. In the middle of a tremendous waterfall, his light disappeared down, 10 ft .. 20 ft ... 30 ft .... then a terrific shriek of 'up rope' (and Kevin settled for the 'or bust') Slowly, he dragged himself over the edge, badly shaken, exhausted and a 'trifle' wet. Apparently what we could see was only a sloping ledge. The pitch continued well below 30 ft - it could even be 100 ft. It was too dangerous to continue down this pitch with Kevin suffering shock, the constant roar of water making it difficult to hear one another, the cold draught and everyone soaked. We had to return. Even with bolts, this waterfall could not be avoided. Kevin had reached 970 ft [295 m].

Soon, belayed by Graeme and Peter, we were back up the 70 ft pitch. Moving into the dry passage, an attempted 'brew-up' followed. The solid fuel stove was very slow. Nevertheless, we were all grateful for a few mouthfuls of warm chicken soup and stewed apple. It was too late to attempt the dry alternative route much as we would have liked to do so. We had been down 9½ hours. It would take a long time to haul the gear right out of the cave.

Chris, Kevin and Norm set off back with tackle leaving Philip, Peter and Graeme to de-rig the pitches. It was a very slow return. People were sleepy, cold and exhausted. Time was wasted hauling up onto the rockpile. It was hoped we could haul it straight up the 150 ft drop. Four or five attempts to throw the rope down failed. Norm and Chris, with David Mitchell from the support party, returned to the 60 ft. The pitch is narrow with ledges. Philip and David positioned themselves on the ledges to guide the gear up. Slowly, we reached the 92 ft free-hanger. Albert and support had been waiting 9 hours at the top. From here to the surface was painfully slow, tired, wet and cold. It took 12 hours from the bottom of the cave.

Future teams must leave the de-laddering for another day. It started to rain as we returned with heavy, soggy packs. Near 10 am [Monday] the Homestead was reached. Delia provided stew and fruit for the party for which we were all extremely grateful.

Was it worth the effort?? Seven hours underground on Saturday; 21 hours underground the following two days. 110 feet [33 m] have been added to the Australian depth record, now 970 ft [295 m]. The cave ceases to be enjoyable and becomes a real struggle in conditions such as these. But the cave goes on, the dry pitch is there, 860 ft [260 m] underground, waiting to be descended. Khazad-Dum is providing a worthy challenge which can only be taken up by a strong team of experienced potholers.

Early in May of 1971, Phil Robinson led yet another party to 'K-D'. However, bad weather the week prior to the trip ruled out any possibility of proceeding beyond the 295 metre mark. Regardless, Phil reported on the trip (Robinson 1971d):

The day dawned grey, shrouded in mist. A week of rain had dashed all hopes of another attempt at 1000 ft [305 m], which will now have to wait till summer. Instead, five set off on a ten hour bolting, photographic and 'tourist' trip. Enthusiasm at an all-time low, it was a battle to get 80% of cavers out of their vehicles. A wet bushwalk to the cave and we were down by 11.30 am. Once inside, enthusiasm rocketed in the opposite direction for some unknown reason. Perhaps it was the thought of a Khazad-Dum trip devoid of a push to the bottom. Pitches were rigged and tackle lowered to The Flattener. Cries of horror to find 3-4 inch pools of muddy, icy water in the 10 inch [250 mm] high passage. Muddy, wet cavers reached the 92 ft [28 m] free-hanger. Clive [Boulter] and Peter [Shaw] stayed at the top to place a bolt. Norm [Poulter], Philip and Kevin [Kiernan] descended onto the rockpile below. The 25 ft [7.5 m] and 60 ft (actually 69 ft [21 m]) pitches were also

bolted. Photographs were taken of Kevin bashing away, protected by a white umbrella held by a gallant Norm. Needless to say this type of equipment was found to be too fragile. Joined by Clive and Peter, the streamway was followed to the 20 ft [6 m] waterfall about 600 ft [~180 m] underground. Legs and feet numbed by icy cold water, a 20 ft [6 m] pitch was not on the cards, certainly not with this volume of water. The Serpentine passage at -508 ft [-154 m] was explored by Kevin and Phil up to a 12 ft [3.5 m] waterfall. This was recognised as the one reached from the surface on a previous trip (16 January 1971). Thus there are two ways down Khazad-Dum to the -508 ft [154 m] level. One is sharp, tight and wet (The Serpentine) with 5 pitches; the other is big, dry (in summer) with 6 pitches. In the latter, 25 and 69 ft [7.5 and 21 m] drops now avoid the 70 and 95 ft [21 and 29 m] (or alternatively 150 ft [46 m]) pitches. Further down the streamway another side passage up to the left was explored. This rejoins the streamway 100-200 ft [30-60 m] further along, 6 ft [1.8 m] above the water. Chimneying high up in this passage may lead to further ways above the river.

Early in July, Phil Robinson, Bill Lehmann and Norm Poulter visited the cave to remove some gear. Phil reported (Robinson 1971e):

With snow covering Tyenna Peak the waters of Khazad-Dum were high. JF5 was entered to remove a fixed rope and three eyebolts. Also, there was the added excitement of the undescended pitch. Down the 30 ft [9 m] entrance climb and 60 ft [18 m] pitch to the rope traverse. No rope. It had mysteriously vanished since the ASF Conference trips at Christmas [1970]. Rigging a fresh rope, the section was traversed along and down to the third bolt. From a ledge, a large drop fell away. Bill and Philip in turn descended a very impressive wet 125 ft [38 m] pitch. The ladder, 5 ft [1.5 m] short, made the return somewhat arduous. With a 80 ft [24 m] high waterfall thundering next to it, this is one of the most thrilling pitches in the Khazad-Dum system. Unfortunately, there is a small waterfall directly down the ladder too. This is just enough to saturate one to the skin. One enters Khazad-Dum between the first and second big waterfalls about 200 ft [60 m] underground. The section of streamway between these two is only 70 ft [21 m] in length, containing two 10 ft [3 m] waterfalls. For pothole-waterfall enthusiasts it is well worth a visit. Returning, the bolts were removed from the cave.

About 100 yds [90 m] down the track from JF4-5 a camp was selected for future trips. Norm and Bill built a shelter for firewood. With some work there would be room for several tents.

It was January 1971 before any further trips to the cave took place. Preparations were being made to ready Khazad-Dum for yet another summer assault and this party consisted of Brian Collin and Bill Lehmann, who were to rig 360 metres of telephone cable in the cave. There was also a bolting party of five and a surface party of four. Brian provided this report (Collin 1971b):

Three inches of rain had fallen on the previous few days and a good flow of water was cascading into the entrance. Undaunted, Bill and I followed the bolting party inside - we had to as they had our lunch! Under Bill's guidance, 400 yards of telephone cable has now been placed. It starts from 50 yds [46 m] inside the cave and ends at the bottom of the 70 ft pitch. A further 200 yds is required to do an adequate job. If the cave continues, possibly another 400 yds would prove very useful. After seeing the cave for the first time I am firmly convinced that a support party of at least 8 will be required. This party will not have an easy task and all should be familiar with the cave down to at least the creek level. The next telephone trip should see the line completed from outside base-camp to creek level and the telephones tested in situ.

The bolting party comprised Phil Robinson, Peter Shaw, Kevin Kiernan, Graeme Watt and Chris Harris. Phil submitted this report (Robinson 1971):

We intended to install several expanding eyebolts in the lower reaches of Khazad-Dum. This was primarily to avoid a series of waterfalls which prevent progress in anything but dry conditions. There is nothing quite like Khazad-Dum in flood (not in Australia anyway). Everyone enjoyed the spectacular, crashing, thundering 100 ft waterfall. The gale and spray blew everyone down into the streamway. Stumbling down the now fast flowing riverbed to an impossible 20 ft pitch - a white, seething cauldron. Peter of course had some bright idea to descend this waterfall. Holding ladder bags to the side diverted the water a foot to one side of the ladder. A solid wall of rock is one thing; a wall of water is different. The attempt was abandoned at this -580 ft level. We were surprised to see Brian and Bill who had laid the telephone wire to the streamway. One other useful result of this trip was the consolidation of a team who now know the cave really well. The speed with which we reach the streamway - 450 ft [140 m] underground, was incredible compared with earlier trips. There is now a high likelihood of obtaining a support party from club members. The summer could well see Tasmanians finally cracking the tremendous cave.

The December 1971 issue of *Speleo Spiel* featured the following editorial (Anon. 1971):

DUM'S DAY IS COMING!

Excitement is mounting as D-day approaches. Next weekend (Dec. 11-12) may be the climax of a lot of planning and preparation. Antarctic weather and heavy rain caused the cancellation of the trip planned to Khazad-Dum on the last weekend in November. Last weekend's attempt to bolt the waterfall pitches mostly succeeded - but only just - as heavy rain had swollen the creek the night before. But by the time the advance party reached the waterfall pitch the water had subsided sufficiently to allow further progress and four bolts were placed. Only two more are needed and they can be done on Dum's Day, provided the water is low. On the way back to the surface the advance party made the exciting discovery of a series of caverns leading off from the base of the 70 ft pitch and heading back steeply towards the surface. The telephones were tried out and excellent communications were established between the top of the 93 ft pitch and the streamway. The second part of the line from the 93 ft pitch back to the surface is not yet in working order. Khazad-Dum has added to its defences by the presence of a VERY dead wallaby in a pool right at the entrance.

The surface traverse from Khazad-Dum to the Junee Resurgence has been calculated and the linear distance is 11,250 ft [3,430 m]. The difference in height is 1257 ft [383 m] - a little more than the 1220 ft [372 m] estimate obtained from an aneroid traverse. So Khazad-Dum still has a chance of beating New Zealand's Harwood Hole - the deepest in the southern hemisphere at 1210 ft [369 m]. At present, [1971] Khazad-Dum 950 ft [290 m] is the fourth deepest as it is exceeded by two other New Zealand caves - Blackbird Hole (Mt. Arthur Range) at 1040 ft [317 m] and Curtis Ghyll (Mt. Owen) at 955 ft [290 m].

The bolting trip mentioned in the above editorial was again led by Philip Robinson who reported (Robison 1971g):

After the winter snows had disappeared and with a fine week of weather, a reasonable descent of Khazad-Dum was anticipated. On Friday morning the Junee Resurgence was down to a flow of 30-40 cusecs. After only a few hours rain on Friday night, the flow was well over 100 cusecs on Saturday morning. The possibility of a party suddenly trapped by floodwaters is now very apparent. Tasmanian weather is as unpredictable as anywhere in the world. [Being] caught by flood water in Exit Cave is inconvenient, down Khazad-Dum, highly dangerous! After a long hard trip, soaked to the skin, there is a great risk of exhaustion and exposure. There is now every need to install the telephone down to the -840 ft level in order to warn the advance party of a sudden storm.

Nevertheless, with a high volume of water cascading into the entrance, Khazad-Dum was entered at about 11 am Saturday morning. Tackle was ferried down and the pitches gradually rigged to the streamway, over 500 ft underground. The pace was slow. There was little hope of a push down the waterfalls. Photos were taken, the telephone tested from the 92 ft pitch to the streamway. Eight [people] reached the head of the first waterfall pitch of 20 ft. The flow of water was heavy. Not another trip abandoned! Surely we could get down?! There was a possibility of a belay on a dodgy-looking flake of rock. It was several feet above and out over the top of the pitch. Philip lifelined, rigged a short rope traverse and slipped the ladder over the flake. It avoided much of the water. Volunteers to test the arrangement were sadly lacking. Phil unwillingly tried it himself. Much to his amazement the flake didn't break off; he only half-drowned and reached the bottom more or less in one piece. As Peter [Shaw] and Kevin [Kiernan] and Graeme [Watt] were well acquainted with waterfalls and the lower reaches of Khazad-Dum, they also descended. Simon [Stephens] stayed at the top of the pitch to help on our return. Wes [Carpenter], Stuart [Nicholas] and David [Cripps] returned to the surface. Gear was lowered. Amid deafening noise the streamway was followed down cascades to the next pitch. Two bolts were installed to avoid the 30 ft waterfall. One bolt is to ease the climb to a ledge 15 ft up the wall of the cave. The other provides a 45 ft [14 m] pitch, completely dry. Down the streamway again to the next pitch - 15 ft. Climbing up towards the roof, a bolt was placed providing a moderately 'dry' pitch of 20 ft. The cave survey was continued by Kevin down from its previous end of -632 ft [193 m].

Through deep pools and tiny waterfalls, the passage was descended to the 25 ft waterfall. Searching in the roof, Graeme found a route above the pitch. Amongst loose rock slabs, a 40-50 ft [~14 m] dry pitch was possible. This was deemed unsafe and also long, for such a depth underground (750 ft [230 m]). As a big push would only be done in dry conditions anyway, a bolt at the top of the 25 ft wet pitch would be better. There was only room for one person, roped up, on the edge. The water was shooting out so fast it was difficult to stand up. As Graeme was drilling twice as fast as anyone else without tired wrists or arms, he offered to have a go. He succeeded admirably. Peter brewed up stew and coffee. There was no possibility of going further. The water force was far too strong for even the hardiest of potholers. Below us were 25 and 30 ft wet drops to the big undescended shaft at approximately -840 ft [260 m]. The survey showed that we were at the -720 ft [220 m] level. The tackle was left in the cave.

A speedy return as made to the 20 ft pitch where Simon had gallantly waited 4-5 hours. His lifeline was well appreciated. The pitch was nothing (though wet), the take-off tricky. Returning to the streamway near the bottom of the 70 ft pitch (at about -450 ft), Kevin dived into a small hole and disappeared. Shouts about a large cavern. Peter, Graeme, Phil and Simon quickly followed. We were in a large passage heading very steeply up towards the surface. Clambering over a large boulder, there were jammed rocks everywhere, some immense. Under and over boulders, up and up. There were leads all over. The particular passage followed, went upward 200-300 ft [60-90 m]. A cool draught was felt. Intensive exploration in these large, new caverns could lead to an easy route from the surface to the stream passage.

After 12 hours underground, lights were dimming. A return was made onto the rockpile to the 92 ft free-hanger. No lifeline!! Shouts and screams but no answer! The others had obviously left the cave several hours ago. This had been agreed - yet no rope left hanging? This was incomprehensible ---?? Phil eventually climbed up with a chest sling. The rope was lying in a heap at the top.

We were out of the cave at 2 am, Sunday. A 15-hour trip. Back through the bush - Max [Jeffries] had been on the track with his chainsaw again. We were very grateful for the easier walk back to the cars. Also, a pile of firewood at the Junee Homestead - where we collapsed into sleeping bags at 4 am, Sunday.

Four more bolts in the cave, more survey, new passage and part of the telephone system tested. A successful descent, despite the high water. The cave is laddered to -720 ft [220 m] for next weekend's big push - weather permitting.

Unfortunately, that weekend was to be spoilt by rain but the cave was entered. An advance party made up of Peter Shaw, Phil Robinson, Sim Stephens, Chris Harris and Graeme Watt made the attempt and Peter reported (Shaw 1971e):

Procrastination was the spirit of the day. The weather reports were not the best and so we successively put off making a decision on Friday night, Saturday morning at Brian [Collin]'s, at the ANM barrier, at the start of the track and at the entrance of the cave. A decision was finally made in the streamway and the bottoming attempt was postponed.

Assisted by the telephone party, we placed 200 ft [60 m] of SCS ladder in the streamway in readiness for the next weekend. Telephone contact with the surface enabled us to arrange a belay on our way out. Having decided against the bottoming attempt, we turned our attention to the new sections discovered the previous week, which were surveyed by Phil and Simon, while the rest explored.

Highlight of the exploration was when Graeme dislodged a rock the size of a rucksack, to the consternation of those immediately below. A high aven with very good acoustics was discovered and admired. After completing the exploration and survey, we adjourned to the foot of the 30 ft pitch for the foundation meeting of the Khazad-Dum Gourmets and Gluttons Society.

After a large and sumptuous repast, five very bloated cavers struggled up the thirty and back to the ninety for a welcome belay by the support party. We surfaced at 7 pm after a pleasant 7 hours caving.

The following weekend, 18-19 December 1971, they tried again and Phil Robinson gave a victorious account of what transpired (Robinson 1972a):

On Saturday 18 Dec. at 7 pm, the sump pool was finally reached at a depth estimated near 1020 ft [310 m] - another Australian record! It was a great triumph of teamwork and organisation. Much credit must go to the support party, numbering 15-16 during the weekend. Without their help the attempt would have been useless.

The two previous weekends (both wet) saw the cave laddered to the -720 ft [219 m] level. An extra 200 ft [60 m] of ladder and 360 ft [110 m] of rope were stacked in the streamway at -530 ft [160 m]. On Saturday morning, nine cavers headed for Khazad-Dum praying heavily that the weather would at last give them a break. Brian Collin and Andrew Skinner lined the forward team down the 92 ft [28 m] free-hanger. Bill [Hodge] and Tom [Forster] stayed just inside the entrance to test the telephone. During the day this was fixed from the rainforest campsite to the streamway, -450 ft [135 m] down.

Without tackle the streamway was soon reached. The water was lower than usual yet still higher than last summer. The assault was on. The five waterfall pitches were descended smoothly to the last 30 ft [9 m]. Here a bolt was driven, taking the ladder just behind the waterfall. It was a long cold wait. This icy, wet pitch is the most unpleasant and exciting of all. Abseils were fairly swift. Gear lowered and 'Brew Chamber' at -840 ft [256 m], was reached. Immediately, the Gluttons Society started work. This sheltered section is a relief from the cold draughty streamway. Water temperature is 6-7°C. The big dry shaft was reconnoitred. The bottom or sides could not be seen. Rocks thrown down were only vaguely heard. Yet another bolt was installed for an easy belay. There are few solid rock flakes or boulders in Khazad-Dum. One hundred and eighty feet [55 m] of ladder was lowered and Phil prepared to descend. The top 25 ft [7.5 m] is against a wall, the rest free-hanging. Below the overhang, the ladder dwindled down into the darkness, hopefully touching the bottom. Would we pass 1000 ft [305 m] down this pitch? As Khazad-Dum pitches usually go, a waterfall appeared lower down, 50-60 ft [15-18 m] high. It came crashing in 20-30 ft [6-9 m] to one side of the ladder. The pitch was 125 ft [37.5 m]. The waterfall was obviously the one from which Kevin Kiernan retreated in March 1971. Chris also descended. Excitedly we pressed on, climbing down over boulders to the streamway again. The passage is 20-30 ft [6-9 m] high and wide; flat with sandbanks on one side. The passage lowered to a crawl in water, froth and [a] murky pool 20 ft [6 m] across. The sump is very deep. Disappointment; no more pitches, no Master Cave.

Returning about 100 ft [30 m], a climb up a steep sandbank led to a crawl, then a dry upper passage. This was leading over the sump but eventually dropped down to the pool again. It was traversed to a passage beyond. This is blocked after 20 ft [6 m] by mud and flood debris. Another small passage was followed just above the sump for 200-300 ft [60-90 m] leading upward. This became tight, jagged, unpromising and was not followed fully. A return was made to the base of the pitch, estimated at 50-60 ft [15-18 m] vertically from the sump; i.e. depth 1020 ft [311 m]. A steep slope high up opposite the pitch looked as if it led to a large cavern. This would need steps cut in the mud to reach the top.

A good line [belay] was appreciated back up the pitch. The 100 ft [30 m] free-hanging section is a spectacular blackness, a feeling of depth. There were mixed feelings, relief at reaching the bottom yet also disenchantment about there being no great cave to explore. The pitches were de-rigged and the tackle hauled back to the base of the 70 ft [21 m] pitch (-450 ft [137 m]). Nine bags were left for the support party to remove on Sunday. The campsite was contacted via telephone and a belay arranged on the 92 ft [28 m] free-hanger by Brian and Andrew.

The surface, fire and coffee were reached at about 2.00 am Sunday - a 14 hour trip, pleasantly tiring. We returned once more to the Junee Homestead, thankful that the support party and not us, would pull 820 ft [250 m] of ladder, 960 ft [292 m] of rope, plus krabs, slings, bolting gear and two telephones out of Khazad-Dum later in the day.

The editorial in the February (1972) issue of *Speleo Spiel* acclaimed the feat (Goede 1972):

Our last chance before Christmas [1971] did come off. Out of the advance party of five, two bods reached the bottom at an estimated depth of 1020 ft [311 m], where the stream flows into a deep pond and siphons. For good measure, the last pitch proved a spectacular 125 ft [38 m], with the bottom 100 ft [30 m] hanging free. Hopes of making Khazad-Dum the deepest cave in the Southern Hemisphere or of finding an extensive horizontal system were not realised but the cave is by far Australia's deepest.

At the time of descent, it was the third deepest cave in the Southern Hemisphere but was relegated to fourth place a few weeks later when a combined New Zealand-Australian expedition pushed a newly discovered pothole in the Mt. Arthur Range (New Zealand) to a depth of 1160 ft [353 m], where the stream siphons. This new hole has been named 'Golgoroth'.

The bottoming of Khazad-Dum was the result of many months of planning and training and this paid off with the advance party underground for only 14 hours.

The following cavers took part in the successful attempt: Advance party: Philip Robinson (leader), Peter Shaw, Kevin Kiernan, Graeme Watt and SCS member Chris Harris.

Weekend support: Brian Collin (leader), Tom Forster, Bill Hodge and Andrew Skinner.

Day support Sunday: Albert Goede (leader), David Cripps, Henk Meerding, Stuart Nicholas, Wes Carpenter, Judy Chambers, Sally Morris, Rosalyn Bell, Delia Mahoney and Bill Lehmann.

It was a splendid team effort by our members. We are also very grateful to the Southern Caving Society who continued their support by making all their ladders available. Appropriately, one of their members in the advance party was one of the two to reach the siphon.

Exploration of the cave is not yet complete as a steep mud slope (which appears to lead to a large cavern) opposite the base of the 125 ft pitch has not yet been scaled due to the lack of an ice pick. This trends in a direction opposite to the siphon. The survey had also not yet been completed, although it has been extended to -696 ft [212 m]. The trips planned in March (1972) will hopefully tie up the loose ends.

As was intended, the March trip did take place and a party led by the indomitable Phil Robinson paid yet another visit to 'K-D' with the intention of bottoming the cave to carry out photography, surveying, exploration and de-tackling all in one day. However, they only succeeded in reaching a depth of 175 metres and withdrew. The reason for their withdrawal is not known but presumably the water level was too high.

A fortnight later, a further party consisting of Phil Robinson, Brian Collin, Graeme Watt, Peter Shaw and Stuart Nicholas, entered the cave to continue the survey. Phil reported:

> *The five entered at 10.15 am soon reaching the top of the 20 ft waterfall. The waterfalls were laddered and surveying continued from the previous limit -696 ft [212 m]. All gathered at the Brew Chamber (-828 ft) with tackle for the last pitch of 135 ft [42 m]. The trip was only 3½ hours old. Philip and Graeme descended this very (h)airy, black pitch. Accumulator lights are hardly enough to penetrate the gloom. Surveying was continued to the sump (-1029 ft [314 m]). Footmarks in the sand near the sump (left in late December 1971) were still present. No backing up of water seems to have occurred. Fluorescein has travelled the 2½ miles [~4 km] down to Junee in 12 hours. An energetic hour was spent pushing tight crawls above the sump. There are a few squeezes still left if anyone likes pushing squeezes at -1000 ft.*
>
> *Returning to the base of the big pitch, Graeme succeeded in climbing the steep mud, boulder slope adjacent. This was an exciting ascent to watch from the far side of the chamber (sheltering from rock avalanches). Geology pick in one hand, cutting steps up the 50-60° slope. Sixty feet up, he disappeared from Philip's view at the base of the ladder. Brian, Peter, and Stuart at the top could now see his progress, still up and up. Eventually he was above the party (i.e. at least 150 ft [45 m] above the chamber floor! A large upper level passage was discovered, abundant formations, straws - Khazad-Dum is not ended. This old passage could easily lead past the sump; and (?) into the Junee master cave.*
>
> *Time running out with the long de-tackle ahead, Graeme returned. The slope looked much easier on the descent. A brew, then the haul back to the base of the 92 ft free-hanger. Seven bags of gear were left. Surface was reached after 15 hours caving. With the support on Sunday, gear was removed in 1½ hours by seven cavers.*
>
> *The future:- Large upper levels to explore, 800 ft [240 m] down; tiny passages near the sump pool. An expedition assault is now an attractive proposition. So much time is spent tackling and de-tackling, weekend after weekend, delays by bad weather. Sandbanks above the stream at the 1000 ft level provide an excellent campsite. Once laddered, the bottom of the cave could be reached in under three hours. Supplies ferried in by a support team in contact by telephone. (Cable is already down to -450 ft.)* (Robinson 1972d)

A further seven months passed before anyone visited the cave again. A party, again led by Phil Robinson, bottomed 'K-D' using abseiling/Jumar techniques in just 4 hours. Investigation of the big chamber at the top of the mud bank unfortunately yielded nothing of significance.

Over the next few years, 'K-D' was to receive frequent visits from both local and interstate cavers, who, by the use of SRT (single rope techniques), were able to bottom the cave in just a matter of hours providing of course that the weather was suitable. This was a long cry from the heavy, bulky ladders that were used in the initial exploration attempts. In March of 1975 the following article, written by Albert Goede, appeared in *Speleo Spiel* and prompted some further speculation:

> *K-D - IS IT REALLY FINISHED??*
>
> *To bottom Khazad-Dum is a regular tourist-trip for North Island [Mainland] hard-core cavers these days - just to be able to say that you've been at Australia's lowest point. Everyone knows that it ends in an impenetrable sump so that when you get to the bottom, the one thing to do is to get out again as quickly as possible. But just suppose -- there's a way on somewhere down there. Have we really investigated every possibility or is K-D one day going to be another Tassy Pot or Herberts Pot [Mole Creek], where cavers from another society and perhaps a future generation are going to make another major breakthrough?? Perhaps to discover the most extensive cave in Australia - the elusive Junee River System. A little paragraph published in a trip report in* Nargun *(March 1973) by Lou Williams (VSA) makes me wonder. Here I quote:*
>
> > *At the top of the sandbank above the sump is a passage leading on - small by Tassie standards - where Phil Robinson had been down for a couple of hundred feet. There were three leads going off from this and Rudy pushed one and Brian and I pushed another, which was soon choked by very loose talus, but a passage could be seen on the other side of it. Back out in the main lead, I pushed on past some formation and up a short climb. Most of the going was fairly tight up till this stage (and my trog-suit began to fall apart); it then opened out but not for long. I kept going until I came to a small chamber, some 50 ft [15 m] past here it closed down to a mud-filled flattener with a good breeze - would have to be dug to get anywhere and may be a way round the sump, who knows? I built a cairn back in the little chamber and moved back to the others. On reaching them, my trog-suit had completely been torn to shreds.*

Albert concluded with the words: "Well. Has anyone been back there since?" (Goede 1975)

Prior to this particular report, Albert had made mention of the elusive Junee River System. Even at that stage, Albert was a firm believer that this system existed. Some eight years later, his beliefs were confirmed when the secrets of Growling Swallet and the Junee Resurgence were eventually revealed to the persistent efforts of cavers, some old ones and some new ones.

Shortly after the aforementioned article appeared in *Speleo Spiel*, a party, no doubt prompted by this, again visited 'K-D' and a closer inspection of the sump and mud bank area extended the total depth of the cave to -329 metres. The deep cave list (1992) shows the depth to be -333 metres. So therefore, at this stage, so ends the saga of Khazad-Dum. Discussions with Stuart Nicholas in 1991, however, revealed that recent discoveries (late 1980s) may extend the size of the cave but not the depth.

As I've already mentioned, the name 'Khazad-Dum' originated from the book written by J.R. Tolkein entitled *Lord of the Rings.* This book, now also a film, was also the source of the name 'Dwarrowdelf', which is a shaft that connects with Khazad-Dum. This shaft and its exploration will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Fortunately, no one was ever able to convince the author to proceed beyond the top of the 28 metre free-hanger. I can still recall the thunderous noise of the water vanishing into the darkness below.

9.

CAULDRON POT (JF2)

Cauldron Pot was located on the same day as Khazad-Dum, 22 November 1969. This impressive-looking swallet surrounded by lush rain forest was duly numbered JF2. It became one of Australia's deepest caves with a depth of 307 metres. Part of Brian Collin's report describing the entrance reads as follows:

> *The creek entering No. 2 cave flows off the sandstone by way of a waterfall that extends directly into a sinkhole. The only feasible way into the hole is from the side onto a ledge some 120 ft [37 m] down. As we only had 110 ft [33 m] of ladder, John [Taylor] could only make an aerial appraisal whilst being showered with water. Further progress is likely to be wet.* (Collin 1970).

John Taylor of the Victorian Speleological Association left his own account of this particular visit and had this to say:

> *On my first trip (21 December 1969) we went to look at some new holes found a few weeks previously. An hour and a half's walk took us to the first one - a large sinkhole with a river flowing in - and an impressive waterfall over the lip. The efflux is unknown but is suspected to be 1000 ft. lower down.*
>
> *We only had 120 ft of ladder with us which we rigged on the driest side of the 50 ft wide opening, about 20 ft or so below the lip. As it looked dampish, I was given the 'honour' of first descent. I was wearing a parka but at the bottom of the pitch there was so much spray that several cusecs of water were running down my neck and out the bottom of my trog-suit. The water was still falling in its first drop to an unknown distance below me and I could only see another 50 ft. The climb up was a little difficult due to near-frozen hands (rubber gloves would be a useful item for waterfall pitches). We numbered the hole JF2 ...* (Anon. 1970)

Cauldron was again visited on 11 January 1970 but was not descended at this stage. In August of that year, a track was cut to the cave via the 'K-D' track. With attention being mainly focused on 'K-D', it was February 1972, before any further attempt was made to explore Cauldron. A TCC party consisting of Phil Robinson, Peter Shaw and Laurel Norbury arrived at the entrance and Phil supplied a short report (Robinson 1972c):

> *As only one person had ever seen the bottom [?] of Cauldron Pot [namely John Taylor who didn't actually see the bottom] another reconnaissance was thought justified. The other reason was the sport of a spectacular shaft - water low. Phil descended, lined [belayed] by Peter. If it looked promising Peter would also descend (free-hanging or not)! Pitch was 135 ft [41 m] close to a 150 ft [46 m] waterfall. A large log protrudes halfway up the pitch. A steep, boulder, dead tree strewn slop (40 ft [12 m] high) descends to a blockage - a strong draught prevails. One does not invite suicide by digging at such a spot.*

Apparently, Phil was not overly impressed with the state of the blockage and it was not until the assault on Khazad-Dum was over that further interest was taken in this cave. In December of 1972, Peter Shaw and Bill Lehmann decided to take another look. Peter (Shaw 1972d) reported:

Cauldron Pot has been laddered three [?] times previously but on each occasion only one person has been to the bottom of its 140 ft [43 m] entrance pitch. Theorising that one man on his own will not push very hard, we headed to Cauldron Pot with a couple of ropes to put two people at the bottom of the pitch and have a good look around. If nothing were found, it would still be good sport. The pitch was quickly rigged and Peter dropped over. Unfortunately, it was rigged from the wrong spot, which meant that the last fifty feet [15 m] was under a stream of water. Bill dropped in, cursing the water and we had a look around the chamber. Looking up the shaft with its curtain of water was very spectacular. The limestone dips very steeply causing the entrance chamber to have a flat, steep roof. A floor of very loose talus dropped for fifty feet at not so steep an angle until it met the roof, at which point the stream was disappearing. We began clearing the talus out of a likely looking hole until we realised that we were trying to knock out was supporting what we were standing on! Fifteen feet [4.5 m] from this point in the western side of the chamber, Bill found a small side passage and disappeared into it. It was a very steeply dipping, two foot [0.75 m] wide passage with dry, non-grotty limestone. We shot off down the passage to emerge after some time on the main stream. The entrance blockage had been avoided! Elation! We were standing on the top of two small drops. At a corner in the passage we could see a third drop down which stones rattled for quite a while. Happy with our day's exploration, we headed back up, measuring the length of the by-pass passage with a waist-length. The prussic back to the surface was fast. Peter covered the first fifty feet [15 m] up the small waterfall in 30 seconds. Length was 310 ft [~95 m], which with a very conservative angle of dip of 45 degrees, gives a depth gained of 220 ft [67 m] plus 40 ft [12 m] for the entrance chamber plus 120 ft [37 m] for the entrance pitch, which gives a total depth of 380 ft [115 m]. Prospects are very good. From here on, it will be wet. Manipulating one bag of gear up 'Bills Bypass' will be very awkward, two would be impossible. The structure of the stream passage is very similar to parts of Growling Swallet. The waterfalls that we can see so far are very steep cascades, which are drier than the steep drops. Time will tell. Meanwhile, Cauldron Pot is a very attractive prospect.

Peter states in the beginning of his above report that Cauldron had been laddered three times previously. This could indeed be the case but I could find no mention of any other visit in the records.

A week or so later another trip was made to Cauldron. Brian Collin joined with Peter Shaw and Bill Lehmann in an attempt to penetrate deeper within this cave. Peter's report (Shaw 1972e) stated:

> *With good prospects for a deep cave, we could not wait to get back to Cauldron Pot. The rope was rigged differently to the previous trip; from the tree near the number, which gave a free drop, after the initial thirty feet [9 m] down the wall. A tackle bag at the top and two rope protectors at the start of the free section were needed to protect the rope with a tail hanging down the section against the wall to avoid having to move the protectors on the way up. The trip down 'Bills Bypass' was more difficult with tackle bags but we soon arrived at the previous limit. A bolt was placed and sixty feet [18 m] of rope rigged to get us into the stream and down the next two ten foot cascades. Another bolt was placed with the limestone proving rather reluctant to take it. A 120 ft [37 m] rope was tied to it and Peter descended the waterfall. The first 20 ft [6 m] was down a steep, slippery*

dip chute and then a tension abseil for 20 feet enabled the worst of the water to be avoided. The rest of the rope was anchored to a large talus block and thrown down the next drop. ... A third bolt was placed and Bill abseiled down to one side of the water. This pitch was about forty feet [12 m]. At the foot of this drop, a climb up into a small chamber gave some respite from the thundering water. Down the streamway, a 120 ft [37 m] rope was tied to a large block of talus and Peter descended with some misgivings. A ten foot [3 m] drop, ten feet of passage and then - nothingness. The water was crashing down into a wide shaft with an estimated depth of 100 feet [30 m]. There was no immediate way of avoiding the water and progress was halted. The next party must either use wet suits or avoid the water. At the top of the pitch is a steep slab, across which it would be possible to place a bolt traverse. At the foot of the pitch, the character of the cave seems to change to large chambers rather than steep, narrow passages, as was the nature of the cave so far.

Back up the waterfalls we went, to the foot of the bypass. From here, it took us an hour and a half to negotiate the 300 feet [90 m] of constrictions to the entrance chamber. A welcome break was had here as we admired the rope hanging down the centre of the shaft. No trouble was experienced in prussiking up the 140 ft [43 m] to the surface and the changeover to the tail went smoothly. The gear was hauled up and we were away after an 11 hour trip. Practise will now be had in horizontal bolt traverses. ...

On 20 January 1973, Cauldron received yet another visit. A trio of cavers comprised of Peter Shaw, Stuart Nicholas and Laimonis Kavalieris, entered the cave; Peter's report stated:

Armed with a mountain of bolting gear and spectacular plans for bolting our way out of the water for the undescended pitch in Cauldron Pot, we plunged downwards. Three and a half hours from the surface, we had examined the problem, formulated a plan of attack and were having a brew-up at the six hundred foot [183 m] level before starting work. An eyebolt was placed at the head of the pitch and 120 ft of Terylene hung off it. Peter abseiled down the slope for ten feet and leaning horizontally in tension, placed a bolt about six feet away from the water. The rope was tied off to this bolt and hung directly over the overhang. One more bolt would get us out of the water. After another brew-up, Peter abseiled fifteen feet off this bolt and leaned out again to place the second bolt almost in the corner. After a lot of mucking about trying to get a hole started the bolt was placed and tied off with a hero loop. The main rope was tied to it and hung well clear of the water. The way onwards was clear! With a great deal of doubt as to whether the rope reached the bottom, Peter abseiled down to find that there was 10 feet of rope to spare. A 110 ft pitch with the last 70 ft free. At the bottom was a fairly large chamber with the stream disappearing immediately into the talus on the floor. Several leads were noticed but nothing good enough to warrant immediate investigation. Time was running out, so after a brew-up we headed out. It had taken three and a half hours to conquer the final pitch. Leaving all the ropes in place, it took us 4 hours to reach the surface after 12 and a half hours underground (Shaw 1973a).

A week later and Peter, Kav and Bill were back, accompanied by Julia James (Sydney Speleological Society). A further report ensued:

With the cave already rigged on the previous weekend, there was no gear to hinder us. On the third pitch the rope had been tied off around a large boulder at its foot as an anchorage for the fourth pitch. As Bill climbed around this boulder, he dislodged a rock below it, which was supporting it, causing the boulder to slide forwards, pulling the rope above it tight. Julia had already reached the bottom of the third pitch while Peter and Kav were at the top of the pitch and couldn't see what was happening. Bill and Julia chopped the rope above the boulder allowing Peter and Kav to abseil down, while Bill cleared all the loose boulders by knocking them down the fourth pitch. Unfortunately, one boulder about 2 feet in diameter, jammed at the lip of the waterfall. A new rope was rigged off the now settled main boulder and Peter abseiled down to clear the one at the lip of the waterfall. Instead of going over the 'fall', the rock settled back into the pool at the top. A bolt was placed in the wall above the boulder to avoid running the rope over it. Bill still did not like the look of it and decided to return to the surface. Julia accompanied him. Peter and Kav continued down to the bottom chamber. No major side passages were found. Two streams were found, both of which sumped. In one side of the chamber, a passage was spotted about 15 ft up the wall. A rope was knotted up and tossed into the passage where it jammed in one corner. Peter prussiked up into the passage and then abseiled a forty foot pitch on the far side. This led into several hundred feet of passages with no further prospects. Back to the surface we went, emerging after 12 hours underground (Shaw 1973b).

The following day, a party led by Phil Robinson (TCC) and made up of Keith Dekkers, Neil Montgomery and Andrew Pavey (all Mainland cavers), also visited Cauldron Pot. Phil (Robinson 1973b) reported that:

The cave lived up to and beyond all our expectations. Following the 140' [43 m] entrance pitch, the awkward bypass was soon descended to the streamway. Then followed waterfalls and cascades, exhilarating abseils. The final 110' [34 m] had been bolted relatively dry. An exciting short traverse led along and down to a free abseil just next to the water. After a snack in the large chamber, enthusiasm for surveying unfortunately declined. We prussiked out and de-rigged. The water was refreshing provided one kept moving. All ropes (approx. 600' [~180 m]) were tied together and threaded right up. This worked well until a knot came undone in the bypass. Andrew was left muttering with a large pile of rope. An 8 hour trip.

Some six weeks later Phil Robinson led a combined TCC/SCS party to the cave to complete the survey. Members of the group included Peter Shaw, Stuart Nicholas (TCC), Leigh Gleeson and Chris Harris (SCS). Once again Phil provided a report (Robinson 1973c):

Having failed to persuade a party of Mainland 'heavies' (??) to survey Cauldron Pot (presumably due to its aqueous nature) a Tasmanian party had to be organised. For Chris and Leigh, it was their first SRT trip.

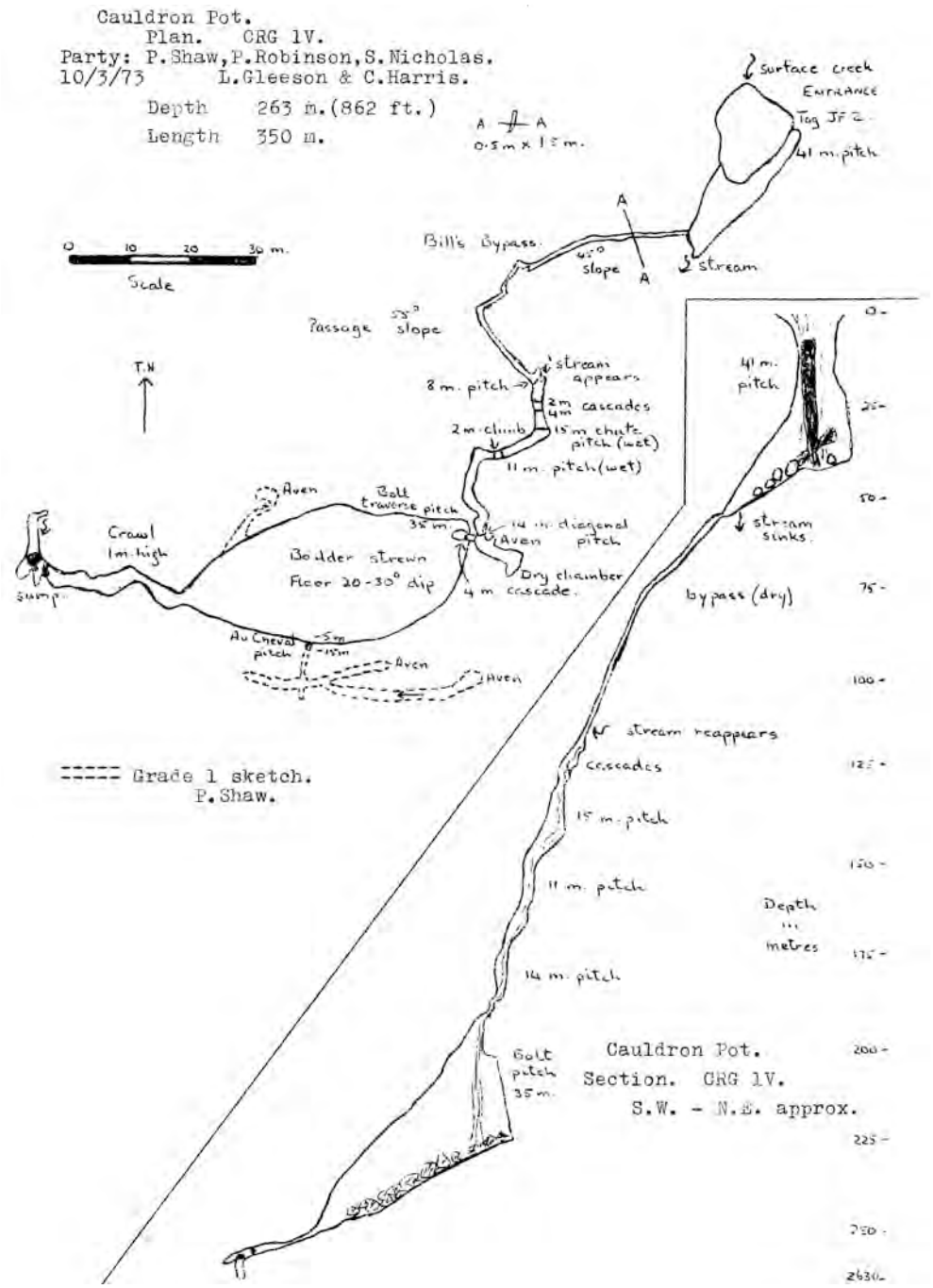
At about 11.00 am we abseiled the 135' [41 m] entrance pitch. Though raining, the water level was reasonable. Peter, Leigh and Stuart disappeared with all the rope. Philip and Chris surveyed down the bypass. It is a constricted tunnel 4' by 1' in places, sloping at 45°-55° for 280 ft [85.4 m]. Eighty feet [24 m] down this passage, Chris' light refused to work. There was no alternative but to return to the surface. Leaving a survey cairn, Philip shot down to join the other three at the last pitch. The rope traverse rigged, Peter then jumared down to below the third bolt. Leigh then managed to get across but Stuart had some difficulty. With frozen hands, he eventually had to retreat.

To add to his discomfort, climbing back up the short cascade, he slipped and pulled an arm out of joint. Now this was serious and very painful. He rested as Philip crossed the traverse and abseiled the 115' [35 m] pitch to inform the others. Leigh soon prussiked out with the stove and brew. Phil and Peter quickly recovered the ropes from the high-level passage and surveyed from the sump.

Back up the big pitch, Stuart had managed to force his arm back in. Needless to say, this had been an unpleasant operation. Philip and Stuart surveyed out as Peter and Leigh de-rigged. Somehow the survey book remained quite dry despite the copious supplies of water. We gathered at the base of the bypass with heavy haversacks (five in all), full of wet rope and hardware. How to finish the last bit of survey and also remove the tackle? Peter and Leigh volunteered out with two bags each, a fantastic effort up the very awkward bypass passage.

The survey was thus completed. At -862' [263 m], Cauldron Pot is [was] Australia's second deepest cave. Pitches of 135' [41 m], 50' [15.2], 48' [14.6], 36' [11], 45' [13.7], 115' [35 m] (all with waterfalls) lead to the large chamber (160' x 70' [49 x 21.3 m]), then on to the sump. This trip lasted 12 hours.

With exploration then declared complete at that time, hopes of penetrating the fabled Junee System via this cave were dashed. To my knowledge, Cauldron was not visited internally until early June 1981. As twice the normal volume of water was entering the cave, the two-man party, consisting of Stuart Nicholas and Trevor Wailes, never ventured beyond Bills Bypass. However, at some stage apparently an extra 44 metres was added to the total giving it a total depth of 307 metres.



Survey of Cauldron Pot by Shaw, Robinson et al. – 10/3/73 from Speleo Spiel*, 78: 8*

10.

NIAGARA POT (JF29)

Niagara Pot was located at approximately the same time as Khazad-Dum and Cauldron Pot (November-December 1969). However, the aforementioned caves received most of the attention and it was June 1971 that it evoked some interest. Peter Shaw, Laurel Norbury and Phil Robinson decided to take a closer look at the swallet. Peter's report recorded:

> *We followed the old Khazad-Dum track as far as the dry valley where we left the track and headed east for a hundred yards, into the valley containing Cauldron Pot. Five minutes later, we reached the pot and paused for a photo. From here we headed east through patchy horizontal scrub into the next dry valley in which was the swallet presumably found by Tim Walkden-Brown and Jeanette Collin. The stream falls over a 20 ft [6 m] cliff as a curtain of water, into a pile of talus. With two dim torches we climbed down through the talus for 15 ft [4.5 m], where we were stopped by a dry 30 ft [9 m] plus drop down a sloping rift. Suggested name for the cave is "Niagara Pot'. From here, we intended to head east into the prominent valley above Junee Cave* (Shaw 1971a)

Later that same month, a party set off from Hobart intending to investigate Niagara Pot further but ended up investigating the mislaid Ross Walker Cave instead (Shaw 1971b). However, on 31 July 1971, a party consisting of Phil Robinson, Kevin Kiernan, Graeme Watt, Albert Goede and Brian Collin with Peter Shaw as leader, set off again. Peter's enlightening report recorded (Shaw 1971c):

> *After a fantastic feat of navigation in re-locating the cave, the four of us set fourth underground whilst Albert and Brian surveyed to Cauldron Pot. After descending through some very loose-looking boulders for ten feet, we laddered a 30 ft [9 m] pitch to reach the stream. This was followed for 50 ft [15 m] down two small waterfalls to the next pitch. This was 30 ft with the bottom ten feet very wet.*
>
> *The stream at this stage became impossible to follow, so 90 ft [27 m] of ladder was lowered down a drop into a small side passage. Phil and Peter descended 60 ft [18 m] free to regain the stream where Phil managed to commit a breach of caving ethics for which he was apparently well known in England. The stream at this stage fell down a rift formed along the dip, which was about 80 degrees. Sixty feet [18 m] of rope were tied to the end of the ladder and with this we descended the rift to another 30 ft [9 m] pitch, which was the wettest of all. At the foot of this pitch the stream vanished into a narrow passage through which Phil squeezed in his wet suit to emerge on top of an estimated 60 ft [18.3 m] pitch. After re-climbing the last pitch, Peter traversed into a side passage with a 20 ft [6 m] pitch, which was laddered. From here, the stream continues down a 30 ft pitch and out of sight. We returned to the surface having spent six hours underground.*

Five weeks later, a four-man party consisting of Peter Shaw, Lance Rutherford, Stuart Nicholas and David Cripps, again visited Niagara. The trip report stated (Shaw 1971d):

> *With a punctual 7 am start, we managed to reach Niagara Pot by 10.30 with the aid of a surface party led by Brian Collin and were underground by eleven. Three hours later, we reached the previous limit of 300 ft [90 m], despite being burdened by large quantities of gear. The increased volume of water in the cave meant that in a previously dry section, we were subject to a continuous spray of water. From the previous limit, a 20 ft [6 m] pitch led to a ledge on the opposite side of a spray-filled hole, down which the stream was thundering. During a halt to place an eyebolt, a brew of coffee provided some welcome relief. Ninety feet [27 m] of ladder were lowered down the hole and Peter descended an 80 ft [24 m] free [hanging] pitch, which was rather moist.*
>
> *At the foot of the pitch, a small side-stream was followed for 50 ft [15 m] into a chamber, 150 ft [45 m] long by 60 ft [18 m] wide, which ran north-south. Here the stream was sinking through large blocks into the floor of the chamber. Shortage of time prevented any further exploration but the cave is still going. The return to the surface by the four wet and cold cavers was accomplished in a fairly fast time of 4 hours. The cars were reached at 10 pm after wandering back in the dark with the assistance of Brian's party carrying the gear. What was the first trip for Lance, seems to have dampened enthusiasm all round. Who'd like to go next time?*

Peter's party achieved a depth of 137 metres on that particular trip but due to the wet nature of the pot and the hazardous conditions, it was six months before it was visited again. On the 8 April 1972, Peter Shaw led another party to the cave. Included in this party were Phil Robinson, Joe Donelly, Stuart Nicholas, Chris Rathbone and Ross Mansfield. Peter's report read (Shaw 1972b):

> *It is amazing how the grotty and horrible features of a cave are gradually forgotten over a period of six months.*
>
> *Back to Niagara with only a trickle of water in the entrance. It can't be a hard cave if there is not a thundering stream. In two parties of three, we reached the bolt ledge and abseiled over the 80 foot [24 m] free pitch while Joe and Stuart remained on the ledge to safeguard our return. With 150 ft [46 m] of ladder and 300 ft [90 m] of rope, we commenced trogging the chamber at the foot of the pitch. Ross began grovelling in the talus in one corner of the chamber and called for someone to join him. Philip attempted a squeeze and declined on the grounds that Peter was leading the trip. Peter was coerced into the squeeze and continued on through the talus with Ross. A fifteen foot [4.5 m] pitch was reached and Ross returned for a ladder. The ladder was rigged and Peter had descended two rungs when things began to move. Hastily the pitch was forgotten and a speedy withdrawal carried out. To have continued would have been suicidal.*
>
> *Back in the main chamber, Philip had discovered a dry passage, which led for several hundred feet [~90 m] to a pitch. A ladder was rigged but the passage did not continue. The head of the pitch was crossed and a larger passage was entered. This was followed for 200 ft [60 m] to where it emerged into a large chamber. Enthusiasm was running high. 'Wait for me, I want to find some too!' 'The trouble with this dust is that it keeps getting in your eyes.' Would it keep going? Speed was the essence. In one corner a passage was found leading into a second large chamber with a large shaft leading upwards at the top of an unclimbable slope. A 15 ft [4.5 m] high bedding-plane leading off in one corner was unexplored due to lack of a rope. Due to lack of time, anything that could not be*

walked into was not explored. Back to the grotty stream section and up the ladders.

The surface was reached after an 11-hour trip. It would take three hours to reach the new sections and about 5 hours to get out. When will we be back? The stream passage is so discouraging that enthusiasm for the cave is at a very low ebb. Total depth added to the cave was 15 ft [4.5 m], which makes it 465 ft [141 m] deep.

In November of 1972, Peter Shaw and Bill Lehmann returned with intentions of exploring it further. Peter reported:

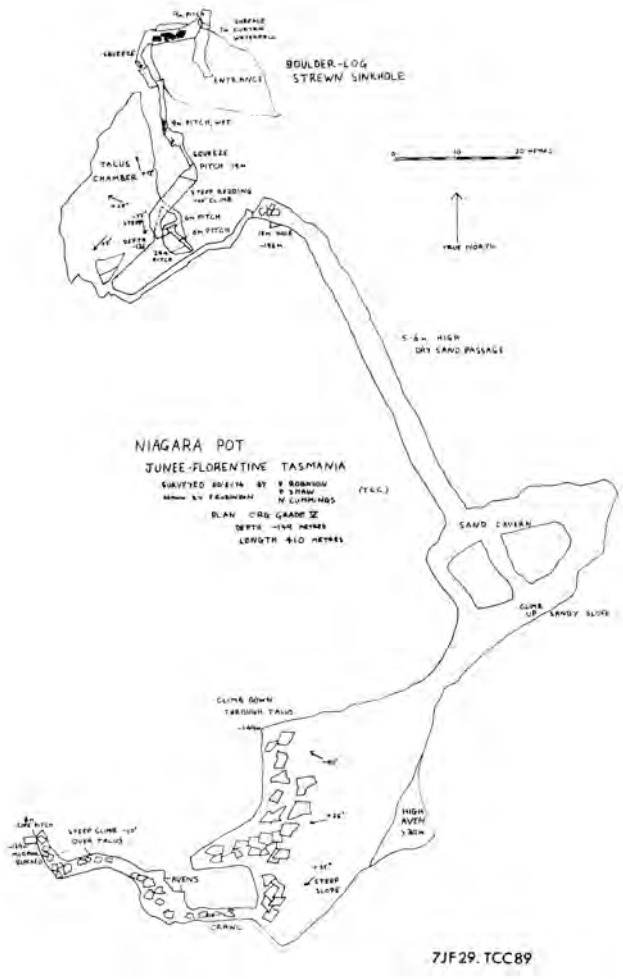
After a prompt start at 7.00 am from Hobart, we reached Niagara Pot by 9.45 am and were underground by 10.15, intent on exploring the big chambers at the bottom [of the cave]. At the top of the third pitch, we attempted to place a bolt but with no success. We could not find sufficient firm rock to put one in. At the top of the fourth pitch, we placed a bolt in an ideal placement and then continued downwards to the big chambers, which we reached at 12.30. Exploration was carried out with scant success. All we could find was a lot of loose talus. Only one lead onwards remains which we did not explore to completion. In one corner a shaft filled with talus heads down to a short pitch about 15 ft [4.5 m deep]. As the ropes were a long way away and we were both tired, we did not return to this passage. We started upwards at 3.30 and were on the surface at 6.00 pm after a demoralising trip. It is not a very nice cave although it is not super-severe as some people would have it (Shaw 1972c).

At the end of March 1974, Peter Shaw led another trip to Niagara to both survey and complete exploration. He was accompanied this time by Phil Robinson and Nick Cummings. His report (Robinson 1974) stated that:

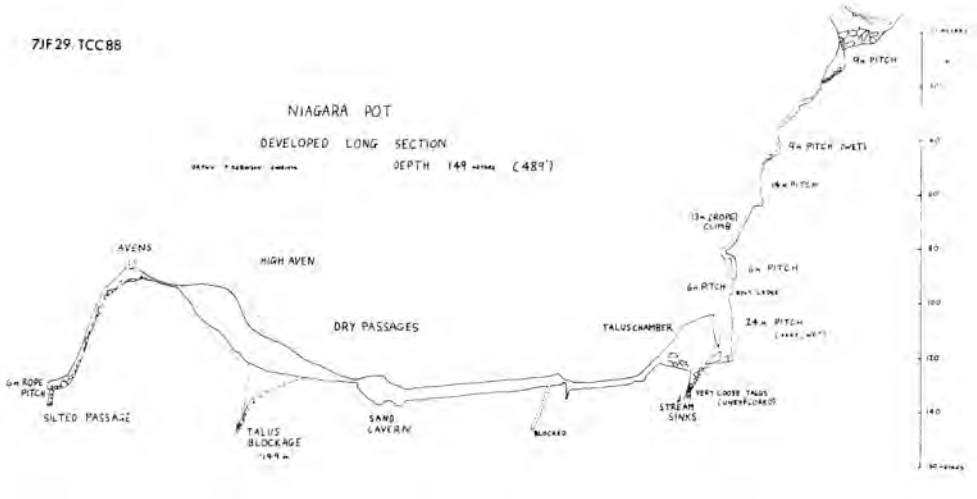
A final trip to Niagara Pot to survey the cave and explore a previously unentered section. We set off from the entrance at 11.15 am using single ropes and surveying downwards as we went. The stream was only a trickle, which made conditions relatively pleasant. We reached the dry chambers at the bottom at 3.00 pm and continued surveying towards our one chance of exploration. After climbing down a sixty degree talus slope, we reached the top of a fifteen foot [4.5 m] drop and rigged a rope down it. I abseiled down and found that the passage closed off immediately. We returned to the first dry chamber for a snack and then headed off out, reaching the surface after 3 hours. Calculation of the survey results revealed that Niagara Pot has a depth of 489 feet [149 m].

To my knowledge no further trips took place to this cave up to 1983. However, there did appear to be some contention as to whether or not all the possible leads had been exhausted. I duly consulted Stuart Nicholas about this and was informed that exploration had virtually been terminated. There was, however, one possibility, this being the unstable talus where the stream sinks. Yet due to the dubious nature of the talus it was deemed advisable not to continue further exploration.

However, it does appear that someone paid the cave another visit sometime after 1983 as 'Tasmanian Cave Exploration in the 1980s' gives Niagara Pot a total depth of 222 metres. So therefore at some stage, another 73 metres was added.



Plan of Niagara Pot by Robinson et al. – 30/3/74 from Speleo Spiel*, 92: 13*



Niagara Pot developed long. section by Robinson et al. – 30/3/74 - from Speleo Spiel*, 92: 14*

11.

JF 1 CAVE

Although this particular cave has no real claim to fame, I feel that it is still worthy of a mention. Anne and Terry Parkes first discovered it in early December 1969. JF1 has the distinction of being the first cave to be numbered in the Junee-Florentine area.

Some eight months after its discovery, Albert Goede and Simon Stephens decided to conduct the first actual exploration of the cave. Albert reported (Goede 1970d):

... After seeing Don [Frankcombe] we went through the barrier and headed up the left branch of the Junee Quarry Road to look for JF1. It took us almost half an hour to find it but it was quite an impressive entrance with clean walls in limestone dipping steeply to the east. The entrance pitch slopes down at 60° and required a rope. The number gave us positive identification, showing that our numbering system is already showing dividends.

We went back to the car to get our gear and roped the entrance pitch. Several promising passages leading off below and sloping steeply downwards, all came to dead ends and Simon remarked that the cave hardly deserved its number 1. However, we were puzzled by the presence of a draught and Simon discovered that it was possible to climb upwards. Not a very promising lead when you are close to the surface but we tried and found a roomy chamber with a daylight hole opening out above the normal entrance. There was some formation but the only sizeable passage leading off soon petered out after sloping down steeply.

We did, however, find a 20 ft [6 m] hole in the floor, which required a ladder. At the bottom we found a small muddy chamber with all obvious leads blocked. However, Albert discovered one unpromising squeeze that after a right-angled bend, opened up into a sizable chamber with a floor covered by large blocks of talus. From here, a narrow winding rift could be seen leading downwards at a steep angle and a distinct draught was present. We managed to climb down through the talus and went down the rift. A short distance further on the passage appeared to be blocked but we found that the blockage was just a piece of false floor that could easily be removed with a hammer and the passage could be seen to open out below. As we had no hammer and it was getting rather late, we reluctantly turned back. Back in the talus chamber, we found some large bones encrusted with 'moonmilk' formation and embedded in the floor. Two bones were collected for identification.

A very promising cave which needs further investigation. Depth reached so far is approximately 150 ft [46 m]. The cave has no running water and requires only one 100 ft [30 m] rope and one 30 ft [9 m] ladder as far as explored. An added advantage is that it is only a five-minute walk from the cars. We will be back soon!!!

They were! The following weekend, Albert lead another party consisting of Julie and Peter Henley and Noel White, back to the cave to investigate it further. This time, Noel supplied the rather humorous cynical report (White 1970a):

After his trip with Simon Stephens the previous Tuesday to JF1, Albert's imagination had time to run away with him. So, when he found out there were actually a few people prepared to go out on Saturday there was no holding him back. We were all fired up by Albert's report of what he had seen and his assurances of all the favourable omens - geological structure of the limestone, geomorphological indications at the surface and the superb quality of the enclosing slate, sorry, limestone. Add to this the incentive of getting into the Junee 'caverns measureless to man' without falling down a hole at the top of the hill, or drowning in a siphon at the bottom, and no gullible mainlanders could resist! Just to clinch the deal, he assured us that the cave was DRY!!

We started out at the relatively civilised hour of 8 am and such was our enthusiasm, that even the weather on a typical Hobart Saturday morning could not dampen our spirits. With the help of Peter's driving and despite Albert's directions, we arrived quite early and visited one of the quarries in the limestone. Here, Albert had assured me, could be found pyrite nodules in the limestone. As he had unfortunately neglected to mention that a dentist's drill would be needed to get them out. I did not manage to collect any for my analysis.

As the more time we spent elsewhere, the more of the cave we would have to leave unexplored, we soon hurried on. The cave was only a few minutes walk from the car and the entrance was easily located. As we arrived the rain stopped coming down in separate drops and started to come down in continuous trickles, so we were pleased to get into a DRY cave. There was little difficulty getting down to the level where Simon and Albert had not been able to get further, with only a thin barrier of false floor stopping them. False floor!? - SOLID limestone!!! However, even that yielded to some of Albert's gentle persuasion, assisted by a geology pick. Once again the way was clear and we could go on, after that is, muggins had gone back through the cleft, rock fall, squeeze and ladder pitch, to get the rope and ladder from our Illustrious leader's pack, which our I.L. had left behind.

However, these are minor inconveniences when you are exploring an immense new system. That is to say, they would have been, had it been an immense new system. No sooner was Albert down the ladder than we began to hear plaintive cries of 'It doesn't look very promising ... It doesn't seem to go on ... It's a dead end ... !' So much for our glorious dream - a little chamber with a pool of water in it. One small hole was found on the way up with a strong breeze blowing from it, but explosives would be needed to have any chance. As for Albert's DRY cave - I think I would prefer a wet one. They are no colder and certainly much cleaner. Where I come from [Sydney], a dry cave is one where you brush the dust from your clothes when you come out, not scrape off an inch thick layer of mud.

Even Albert seemed disappointed by this cave - he must have believed his own propaganda. After lunching, we briefly visited the Junee resurgence where we were torn to shreds by blackberries and our clean, dry clothing became wet and dirty. So much for bringing a change of clothes.

Judging from his report, Noel was not unduly impressed with his little excursion to JF1. However, JF1 up until the 1980s was still visited from time to time and is an ideal cave with which to introduce new members to the sport of caving as it has a little of everything.

12.

PILLINGERS CREEK CAVE (JF66)

This particular cave was apparently located in the late 1940s. Its early history and exploration is rather vague, as no documentary evidence appears to be in existence. The first mention of it in TCC files was made in November of 1956. It was reported that numerous talus slides had taken place since the previous trip in or about 1947. The depth reached on this occasion was estimated to be 76 metres. However, the 1956 visit only resulted in a depth of 38 metres being attained. It appears that the talus movement since the first visit had closed off the previous route down the cave. The cave itself is found in a large depression west of Maydena and has a rather impressive entrance.

In February 1957 Albert Goede, Frank Brown and 2 others followed a route pioneered the year before and reached a depth calculated at 400 ft [120 m] (Goede 1958).

Sometime in 1959, Paull Rose, a UK/mainland caver unknown to the author, visited the cave and later provided this report:

> *On our visit to the cave in 1959, I entered an extension leading off the low-level passage but a small-scale rock fall during this investigation prevented us [from] pushing this [passage]. We mentioned the extension to TCC members and I have often wondered if it had been investigated at a later date.*
>
> *Briefly, the story is as follows:- We had entered the low-level passage from a point below the Devils Spear and as I expect everyone else does, we trundled along to a small cavern with the sandy squeeze. While some of the others played moles in the sand, Dave Lanyon and myself returned to a point where I had noticed it was apparent that the stream had originally run down through loose boulders in the passage floor. We managed to remove some of these and I was able to squeeze down between the stable wall and the loose rocks into a small room. The rocks above my head were very loose and there was a large, rectangular chock stone wedged across an aven up on the left (more by good faith than friction). Straight ahead, a tube in solid rock led to a slot and progress here was halted by loose chock stone. Rather than tackle this alone, I decided to get someone to back me up. Returning up the wall, I noticed that some of the chock stones were very precariously balanced and later, when Dave was climbing down, there was one hell of a crash and the lot fell in.*
>
> *I am convinced that with a bit of effort, the blockage could be cleared and the extension pushed. It is evident that this tube has been a conduit for water at a much later date than the sand squeeze and the possibility of extending the cave would seem to be quite good* (Rose 1966).

On 8 October 1965, a large party led by Albert Goede entered the cave. Goede (1966) reported:

> *The trip to Maydena was uneventful until we arrived at the barrier and discovered that Peter Harrold was missing, although last seen at Maydena. He was eventually found firmly bogged on the road to Junee with no oil in his sump as the plug had fallen out. After his 'rescue' we pushed on but were stopped on the Styx Road by a four-foot deep and three-foot wide trench where the new PWD [Public Works Department] road crossing is being built. Mike [Jagoe] bravely jumped into the trench, discovering too late that a one-foot thick layer of oozy mud was in the bottom. Fragrantly perfumed, he, and the rest moved on.*
>
> *We returned to the barrier and after consultation with the gatekeeper, were given the key to another barrier and eventually we made the old Pillingers Road. The collapsed bridge had been bypassed and it is now possible to drive the cars right to the beginning of the track. The cave was located and the party soon reached the chute below the chock stone. Those who went down first were greeted by a hail of rocks as the others came down.*
>
> *Brian [Collin] and Albert collided head-on when they dived for shelter under the same rock. Brian, Albert, Steve [Vince] and Peter [Harrold] pushed on ahead and poked around in the sand of the terminal chamber. They then headed back to try and locate the place where P. Rose reported an extension in 1959, which was blocked by a collapse as they'd tried to explore it.*
>
> *Since the whole cave is one big collapse, we could not locate the right spot. As we climbed around, we were greeted by much abuse and a hail of stones as Mike and the rest of the party descended through the ceiling down an improbable looking chimney having been unable to find the 'easy' way down.*
>
> *On the way back, Brian, Steve and Albert had a quick look at the side passage shown on the ASF [Australian Speleological Federation] map but were eventually stopped by a vertical shaft. The cave is well worth another visit for those who are tired of living. It has the best collection of talus of any cave in Tassie!*

The next TCC visit to Pillingers was made in 1974. This party consisted of Albert Goede, Leonie Smith and the author. After some difficulty we finally located the cave and numbered it JF66. Upon spending some time dubiously inspecting the entrance with its grotty-looking limestone, the party refrained from entering. Albert had mentioned in his previous report, that it was a cave for those who were tired of living and as we all had no suicidal tendencies, we took his advice (Moody 1974d).

John Parker [Maydena Branch] made a visit to this cave in 1977. He also appeared very dubious regarding the amount of loose rock and described the cave as being 'very dangerous'.

Then on 2 August 1980, Geoff Fisher, Nick Hume and Trevor Wailes paid a visit to the cave and Geoff's resultant report announced that an accident had taken place (Fisher 1980). This report can be read in the section dealing with Cave Dramas.

Following this accident, Pillingers Creek Cave was 'black-banned' and further visits to it were discouraged. This announcement prompted Frank Brown, a long-time TCC member to provide a written comment on the early history of the cave. Frank had this to say (Brown 1980):

> *Pillingers Creek was first entered by the writer and David Elliott in May 1947. We gained access via a small entrance further along the wall than the present entrance. This leads to a narrow, steeply sloping passage, which actually has some solid rock! Well, relatively solid. Our only equipment consisted of 50 foot [15 m] of hemp rope of the brand known as 'vintage'. This passage gives access to two*

shafts, one of which connects to the top of the main talus heap and the second, to the bottom of the heap.

Since the entrance is obstructed by a large, wet, smooth dolerite boulder, we were able to experiment with two new methods of dealing with a shaft. We claim to have pioneered the GAD system (Gravity Assisted Descent) and the GOA (Gravity Opposed Ascent) - you fellows can't get away with SRT on your own!

The final shaft was measured at 170 ft [52 m] by the DRAC method (Drop Rock And Count). In the absence of a ladder (we only owned one 50 ft rope and wood ladder then) exploration terminated.

In 1949 the pot was re-visited by the above two [Frank & David] in company of Edith Smith and Fay Peterson. Our new 150 ft [46 m] of wire ladder plus the fifty feet of rope ladder was used and the shaft was first bottomed by David Elliott. On the return climb the writer got cramp in both arms about 30 feet [9 m] from the top. This is fascinating when there are no karabiners in the party. Oh yes, it was also noted then that the top of the shaft had collapsed in between the two visits. This prompted the writer to buy his first helmet, an ex-Indian army pith helmet, mainly made of paper and held together by spit!

In the winter of 1950, the last descent through the upper level was undertaken by the writer and David Elliott, accompanied by Edith Smith, Bob Geeves, Victor Kuciaskus and (unwillingly) Max Banks from the university. This time the first pot was descended and reached the top of the talus heap. The writer descended the talus slope and called back for the next man who was Victor. Now Victor was a splendid climber, in fact, he was a qualified Alpine guide. He descended the talus heap by the mountaineering technique known as glissading. The resulting rock fall caused the writer to climb the far wall of the cave by means of yet another instantly pioneered technique called 'levitation'! All the equipment needed for this method is inspiration - and nail holes in the hands and feet!

To the best of my knowledge, the upper passage has not been visited since that date. In fact, the cave was not re-visited by the club until [the] 1958/59 ASF Conference. This could well have been due to certain vows taken by the various members of the earlier exploratory trips.

In 1958 some members of CEGSA [Caving Exploration Group South Australia] elected to be critical of TCC for not 'rising to the challenge of the splendid sporting cave'. This trip proved relatively quiet until David Lanyon (CEGSA, last heard of in Africa) was contemplating the best way to descend into a cave below the talus slope. His contemplation was interrupted by the sudden vanishing of the section of cave into which he was about to descend! The party made an almost instantaneous return to the surface.

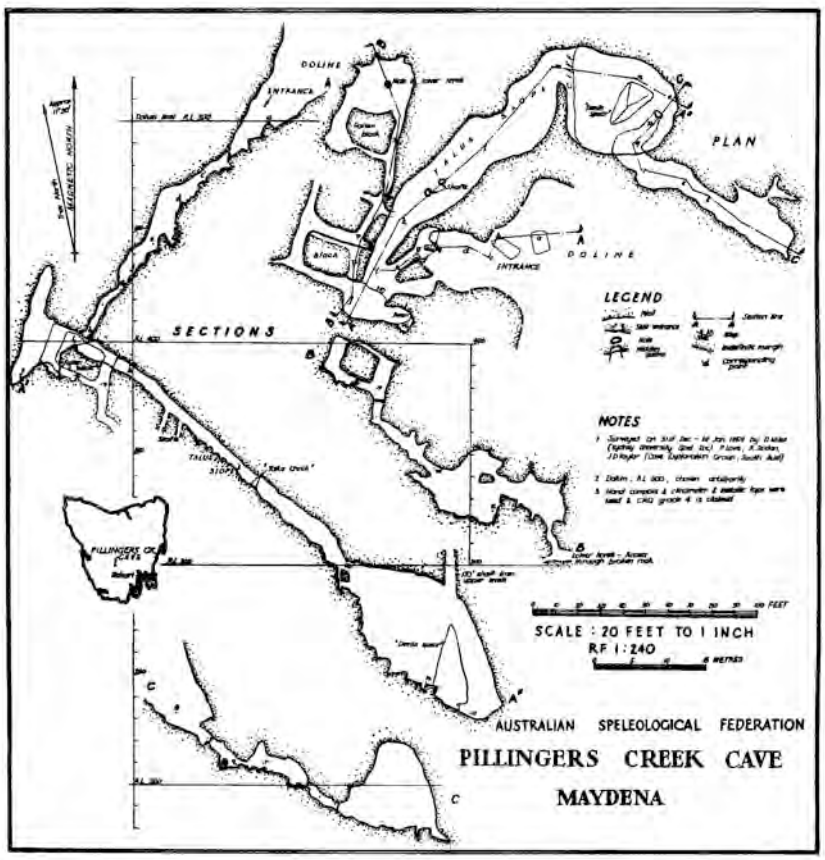
It is a point to note that no attempt was ever made to survey the system.[5] *Firstly, it was considered pointless to survey something that changes so rapidly, and secondly, it is impossible to hold a compass when your hands are shaking.*

Memories of this cave are still fresh in the writer's memory after 30 years, in the form of the dreams, which come after every supper of toasted cheese, pickled onions and flat beer. I feel fortunate that neither my own skeleton nor that of some life-long friends has been left here. I suggest that any caver who looks around that huge collapse doline at the entrance and feels a shiver at his neck not feel ashamed of his reluctance [to enter].

It is also necessary to point out that a meeting of TCC after the last trip recorded here, placed this cave 'under the interdict' and declared it closed to members from 1959. Look up the old minute books!

Further exploration of Pillingers Creek Cave therefore appears an extremely risky proposition and it would be advisable to exclude it from all but experienced cavers with uninhibited suicidal tendencies!

[In 1998 it was decided to constitute a separate Risbys Basin Cave Area so Pillingers Creek Cave was re-numbered RB-X1, pending affixing of tag #1 on its entrance – see Desmarchelier & Clarke 1998. – Ed.]



Plan and sections, Pillingers Creek Cave by Miles, Love, Sexton & Taylor (CEGSA) 31/12/58-1/1/59 from Bulletin of T.C.C.*, No. 4, facing p. 44*

[5] It seems to have slipped Frank Brown's memory that the cave was actually surveyed by CEGSA members in 1958-59 (Brown 1960b) and the resulting plan and section [reproduced above] were published by TCC in its *Bulletin* in 1960 (Sexton 1960) – Ed.

13.
RIFT CAVE (JF34)

Rift Cave was another of the early caves discovered by the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. It was located in 1947 by a party who were investigating a ridge high above the Junee resurgence. The cave was described as being in inflow system taking a small stream at the bottom of a large doline. This party entered the cave and succeeded in reaching an estimated depth of 132 metres.

Apparently no further attention was paid to the cave until Albert Goede noted it in the summer of 1961-62. It appears that another group set out to locate the cave acting on information that Albert had supplied but were unsuccessful in pinpointing its exact whereabouts. In August of 1962, Albert led a party to further investigate the cave. An account of the trip appears below (*TCC Circular,* Sept. 1962, pp. 1-2):

> *This time as Albert was leading, we found the cave entrance which had been found last summer. The other cave entrance found on the last trip to this area is 200 yards [~180 m] away and apparently a different system. The new hole is a gigantic rift nearly 200 ft [60 m] deep with a creek flowing in. Having used the available ladders, the party was halted at a 20 feet [6 m] pitch not far beyond the threshold but still about 200 feet [60 m] below the surface. Another trip is organised for 18-19 August and with an additional 60 ft [18 m] of ladder, should reveal more of the cave's secrets.*
>
> *The water temperature of the creek was taken at 36 deg. F [2° C] and it felt warm to our frozen hands. We also made the acquaintance of a marsupial mouse which welcomed the unexpected supply of tit-bits.*

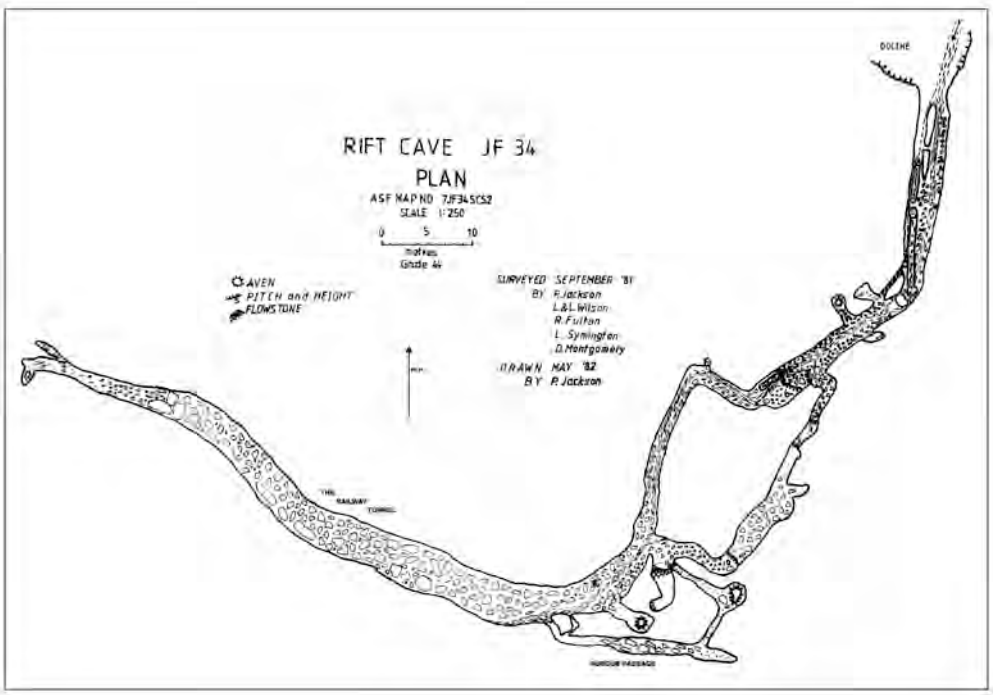
A fortnight later the cave was visited again and a rather brief report resulted (*TCC Circular,* Sept. 1962. p. 2):

> *A party of four spent the weekend up at the Rift Cave which had been explored down to 200 feet [60 m] on the last trip. This time, a depth of 430 feet [~132 m] was achieved by abseiling a pitch and then walking down steeply inclined talus. At this depth there are two possible continuations - a crawl which needs digging out and a smooth chimney.*

Further trips were made to the cave in 1963 but unfortunately; there are no written reports of the work that was carried out. Brian Collin and Kevin Kiernan made the next recorded visit in September of 1971. Brian's report does give some further information in regard to the cave (Collin 1971a):

> *A pleasant trip to re-visit Rift Cave which was well-known at one stage but had not been visited for the past seven years or so. The bottom of the cave (430 ft [130 m]) could be reached with the aid of one 10 ft ladder and 30 ft header but to make a pleasant and dry descent, an additional 120 ft [36 m of ladder] (used at the start whilst still in daylight) and 60 ft [18 m] of rope would be useful.*
>
> *A small creek runs into the cave entrance, which is located in a large depression. About 150 ft [45 m] vertically from the bottom, the creek seeps away through floor gravel and the remainder of the cave is dry.*

Other visits have been made to this cave since, including one by the author, but sadly apart from a brief occasional mention, there appear to be no further detailed reports. [In 1988 and 1994 there were dramatic extensions. – Ed]



Plan of Rift Cave JF34 – as known in 1981 – by P. Jackson et al. (SCS) from Southern Caver, *51: 15 (Dec. 1982)*

[The cave was significantly extended in March 1988 (Silver Lining) and in 1994 it was connected to JF341 – see Butt, J. 1995 Rift Cave (JF34), the completed survey and some notes about the cave. Southern Caver, *59: 5-6. – Ed.]*

14.

BONE PIT (JF203)

This cave was discovered in 1951, not far from the top of Chrisps Road by a party of TCC cavers apparently acting on information received from timber workers. The cave is located at the base of a low cliff and entrance is gained by negotiating a 4 metre pitch. On investigation, it was found to be around 100 metres in depth. Numerous bones were found in the vicinity of the entrance, hence its name.

Although a number of trips were made to Bone Pit in the years following its discovery, especially between 1959-60, once again there appears to be no record of what was achieved on these visits.

The Southern Caving Society numbered the cave in the mid 1960s but whether or not they investigated it further is unknown to the author.

However, in November of 1974 a party consisting of Leonie Smith, Roy (?) and the author decided to take a look at the cave. My report (Moody 1974e) read:

A leisurely start saw us signing in at the barrier around 10.30 am. The objective of this trip was to visit Bone Pit (JF203) and if time permitted, endeavour to locate Growling Swallet (JF36). Eleven o'clock saw a ladder rigged at the entrance to Bone Pit and we set off down the steeply inclining passageway. Soon we discovered how the cave got its name and after a brief examination of the numerous bones, we pushed on. Reaching the lowest point of the first section called for a little climbing. The way on was fairly simple until we emerged at the top of a gaping pitch. The pitch itself appeared to drop off in a series of pitches and no doubt leads to the bottom of the cave. A short distance from here suddenly found us at the top of a five metre pitch. It was obvious that this passage continued and by backtracking several metres, we soon discovered a passage leading down on our right. By following this we emerged at the base of the five metre pitch.

Passing through a small chamber and into another passage soon produced yet another obstacle - a classic example of a 'letter-box' type squeeze. Our leader [me] shoved his head in through the slot and deciding that this was the way on, proceeded to worm his way through. However, much to his annoyance, he succeeded in jamming himself halfway (bloody accumulators). After recovering from a fit of insane laughter and proclaiming his temporary predicament to the others, he finally made it! After Leonie and Roy had eased themselves through the slot, we negotiated a small chimney and moving on, reached yet another minor obstacle. Ducking down beneath a low section the leader was confronted with a pool of water and once again put his foot in it - and I don't mean that as a figure of speech! I do recall someone saying that you must put your best foot forward and that's exactly what I did! My foot disappeared from view in wet, gooey, muck! By the time it reached my knee with nothing solid underneath, I hastily withdrew it. Using half a dozen large rocks, I was finally able to establish a reasonably solid support and then we emerged in a fairly large chamber. Inspection of this chamber revealed nothing of significance and the way on appeared to be at yet another lower level. Leonie volunteered to explore this lower level and after inspecting two small tunnels, finally emerged cold, wet and with no way on.

Satisfied that we had examined all bar the chasm, we headed back out handling the obstacle course with the ease of professionals. Pausing only to inspect some of the many bones littering the floor near the entrance, we emerged after spending some two hours underground.

The cave was not visited again until 1978, when a party from the Maydena Branch inspected the cave. The resulting report failed to elaborate any further on what was already known. However in September of 1980, a large TCC party decided to take a closer look at this cave. Part of Trevor Wailes' report ran:

Half a mile of steep track further was the clearing for the Spar (logging term!) and 200 yards further (after getting changed) through horizontal rotting forest was the exposed aven of the Bone Pit. An impressive entrance high on Cave Hill which could have depth potential of 1500 ft [454 m] but as yet is only 300 ft [90 m]. A small pitch into the base of the aven probably 25 ft [8 m] had to be abbed [abseiled] as ... TCC is pretty tight with ladders.

The steeply descending boulder strewn floor soon funnelled into a very old, steeply graded, dry stream passage with thick chert (moonmilk) covering the walls, offering no handholds on some of the more awkward climbs - not so bad going in with gravity but returning without it can be hard. The passage seems to nosedive from the entrance aven and after scrambling down said climbs and over infill boulders, a Y junction is confronted. To the left down a series of easy climbs is the pitch, but straight on, in high wide passage through one or two collapses, the cave tends upwards again under several high avens which must be close to the surface. This passage ends in an almost impossible climb up over some massive sheer-sided boulders coated with chert into a very high aven with a steep boulder slope down to the top of the said boulders. A little way back from here is a rat-hole entrance [the author's letter-box?] into a small rising rift which was pushed beyond previous exploration to a tight section, which if someone is serious enough, will go on up into the enlarging continuing rift. A small curtain was removed at this point and Andrew Briggs was pushed into the orifice without success although I'm confident it is not impossible.

Back to the junction leading to the pitch below, begins the old winding stream passage which runs steeply down into a rift of which all but the last 70 ft [21 m] can be free-climbed through a series of back and foot dents. The trickle of water appearing at the bottom of the rift runs over a lip into the aven pitch about 20 ft [6 m] down, but in the top of the aven is an eagles nest of a few stout boulders with the rift continuing over the pitch head. (This continuation was not looked at this time but had potential?).

The pitch rigging for both SRT and ladders was a little lengthy but were soon hung and the descent began. The pitch [is] 70 ft and free-hanging after about 15 ft of rock protrusions which need rope protectors for the SRT rope. Everyone abseiled down using clog figure eights, racks or whale tails. The foot of this pitch is the present termination of this system but there is no sump. The trickle of water coming down the pitch sinks in some boulders, which have quite large calcite deposits on them.

It was possible to see about 3 feet down the aven wall through these rocks and hear the water running away. Our half-hearted efforts to clear a way through the mud and rocks were futile without some metal tools, i.e. crowbar or lump hammer. So that's something to look at sometime in the future.

From the base of the pitch is a 12 ft climb up to what looks like a continuing rift passage but this is all part of the aven floor. One possible way on would need another bolt or a maypole as the rift peters out into what looked like a boulder slope above a rather difficult overhang, so Geoff [Fisher] and I returned to the base of the pitch to rejoin the others. The 12 foot climb down is quite awkward and some of the holds aren't too safe (they move under pressure).

Some of us SRT'd out of the chamber and some laddered, a nice easy pitch and quicker to climb with ladders than SRT because of the frequent removal and replacement of rope protectors. All went smoothly if a little slow and the pitch was soon de-tackled and the outward trip was made. Some of the climbs were difficult with all the tackle and ammo box that Chris [Davies] carried for me, he made me feel quite exhausted as we pulled ourselves up the last 25 ft [8 m] ladder climb to the surface. A good trip - the best I've had since leaving Yorkshire. A cave with quite a bit of potential and one that will have to be looked at again.

Footnote: The Bone Pit is a very apt name as skeletal remains were abundant throughout the main passage from top to bottom. From the skulls, there appeared to be mainly blue-tongue or stumpy-tails (lizards) probably looking for refuge during past bushfires.

Not having seen a survey, it is difficult to say how much of the cave is known or if the emergence of water in the rift has been looked at to any conclusion (Wailes 1980).

In October 1980, Geoff Fisher, Trevor Wailes, Andrew Briggs and Cam Douglas returned to take a further look at the drainage hole. Geoff's report stated:

The purpose of our trip was to investigate the drainage hole at the bottom of Bone Pit. We went equipped with a G-pick and lump hammer to aid in excavation. A crowbar had been mentioned but, unfortunately, no one had brought one.

We rigged the pitch in record time (for TCC!) and were soon sniffing about, ready to start shifting rocks from a promising hole. It quickly became apparent that without more substantial tools - sledgehammer, crowbar, pick - we wouldn't get very far. We did, however, manage to shift some rock fill and could see that the water in the cave ran off through the boulder choke below us.

Being limited by our lack of equipment, we had no choice but to leave after a fairly short stay although we made a start and the prospects for extending the Bone Pit seem reasonable (Fisher 1980c).

In November of 1982, an article written by Andrew Briggs appeared in *Speleo Spiel*. It was entitled 'THE SAGA OF THE BONE PIT' and read as follows:

It all began one slack photographic trip when Jeanine Davies squeezed through a seemingly impossible hole at the base of the bottom pitch in the cave. After pushing, climbing and squeezing through more talus, she eventually arrived at a small hole in the side of an aven with a small stream trickling down it. Unable to get any further, it was left amid great excitement, for there was a possibility of extending the Bone Pit and with a depth potential of 300-350 metres, it looked promising.

Return trips were planned and the first of these took place several weeks later. This time, Jeanine and I both squeezed through and arrived in the aven with the stream shortly after. We descended about 10 metres to where the trickle of water disappeared through talus. Several boulders were moved to reveal a narrow slot along which the water flowed and out of which a promising draught issued.

The next two months saw several trips to the Bone Pit, each one with the purpose of clearing the talus so that body could be forced along it. John Salt and Chris Davies both assisted me [in] doing this menial task. However, to no avail as the rift proved too small and we have again left the cave in peace. However, the discovery is significant because the cave has much depth potential and it has been known for so long. Although it has not been surveyed as yet, I guess we have deepened the Bone Pit by at least 15-20 metres (Briggs 1982b).

It appears that no further trips to Bone Pit took place prior to October 1983. Therefore, (unless someone has been there since) Bone Pit still continues to be a cave where further exploration could still reveal a connection or a way into the fabled Junee Master Cave. As of 1992 the depth was -113 metres.

15.

FRANKCOMBE CAVE (JF7)

This cave was one of the first horizontal-type caves to be found in the Florentine Valley. It is situated in a small, crater-like depression and was apparently discovered by a former ANM logging manager, Mr Don Frankcombe, late in 1957.

It was duly investigated in that year by a TCC party and found to contain some rather good formation. Once again, no trip report has emerged to cover this particular visit. It appears that no further visits took place until 1961, when an unnamed party visited a number of caves in the area. During this inspection a new section, which contained further impressive formation, was discovered. It is also known that a number of trips were made to this cave between 1961 and 1967. However, the first brief trip report, apparently written by Peter Brabon, did not appear until 1967. Peter made these comments (Brabon 1967):

We met at the barrier to find no trace of Robin [Booth]. We drove some 20 miles along the ANM road after a discussion with Brian [Collin] who had obtained directions from Albert [Goede] and with the help of what Joan [Brabon] remembered from her last visit to the cave some five years ago.

After some scrub bashing we found the entrance. After having some lunch, Robin and party turned up and explained that they had been bushed. We all entered the cave which has some very nice formation sections but a lot of knee-bashing is involved in negotiating the 1000 ft crawl with some water hazards added.

Frankcombe Cave entrance, JF7 – 22/10/77

The cave received two visits from TCC members in 1968 but it was 1970 before the first detailed report was published. It was written by Albert Goede (1970e):

Frankcombe Cave was quickly found and the whole party went through the formation section except Albert who spent the time collecting cave fauna in the overflow stream passage. This proved very rewarding. Not only were troglobitic trechine beetles found (the first record of them from this cave) but more exciting still, a beetle larva was found - confirmed as almost certainly that of the cave beetle. This is the first troglobitic beetle larva to be recorded from Australia.

When the others returned we all followed the fossil passage downstream. As this gets narrower as one goes on, we were soon well spread out. Noel [White] and Peter [Shaw] pressed on, determined to push exploration further and disappeared from sight. They were followed more reluctantly by Bill [Lehmann], Mike [Robinson] and myself. The others stayed back to admire the fossils.

The three of us followed in Noel and Peter's trail, well beyond the previous limit of exploration. The going got progressively harder and in severa places, the floor had been dug out but [there was] no sign of them. In the end our lights were getting dim and we got fed up with progressing like earthworms, so we made our way back to the surface. Another hour later, Peter and Noel emerged. They must have crawled nearly to the Florentine River but still claimed it would go further with a little digging. Any takers?? A pleasant day despite somewhat damp conditions.

Formation pool, Frankcombe Cave – 22/10/77

In September of 1973, the author made his first visit to this cave. Noel White led the rather large party, eleven in fact. Noel's completely unabridged report appears below:

The party left on time at 7.00 am and gathered at Maydena before 9.00 am. Despite a great deal of new clearing in the area, the marker was found with little difficulty and a dazzling array of new trog-suits were soon donned. The weather at this stage was dry and overcast and everything seemed to be running smoothly. No difficulty was found in locating the cave entrance and the first stage was occupied with showing the party over the 'pretties' section.

The real purpose of the trip was to examine and try to push the long stream passage which was partly explored by Peter Shaw and Noel White a couple of years before. Apart from a sudden lack of interest by Laurie [Moody], this part began well. We were compensated for his withdrawal by the appearance of Max Jeffries, who obviously reads his 'Spiel' [the TCC newsletter].*

A couple of minor side passages were found, one with some calcified bones. Two large detached ones and a small skull were removed. Despite the strain on the knees, we pressed on. There seems to be rather more water than previously and finally the worst became apparent. By the time we reached, at a cost of extreme discomfort rising chiefly from almost total immersion, the area we were interested in, we found that parts that were previously 'dry' now were covered by over a half a metre of water, which caused some inconvenience as much of the area was less than that high. Having done our best, we turned about for the long haul back.

> *Outside, it was pouring with rain although the fire Therese [Goede] had prepared was some comfort. Everyone (except Therese and Laurie, the pikers) was thoroughly cold, wet and uncomfortable. Still, it was all good?, clean?, fun?? And we could be thankful that we had chosen a 'dry' cave for that day* (White 1973).

After all these years of silence, the author feels that he must explain the reason for the asterisk beside his name. Upon sighting this uninviting, grotty, grovelling section of cave (which he wouldn't even send his mother-in-law into), he immediately decided that discretion was undoubtedly the better part of valour and courteously allowed those more experienced in the rigors of cave exploration, to proceed ahead without him. On witnessing their eventual emergence, he felt more than justified by his wise decision.

Numerous 'tourist-type' trips have been made to this cave over recent years and apart from Welcome Stranger and Cashions Creek, Frankcombes would have to be one of the most frequently visited caves in the Florentine area. Although I haven't been able to locate any further trip reports, at some stage someone surveyed the cave to give it a total passage length of 900 metres.

16.

CASHIONS CREEK CAVE (JF6)

Originally Known as Westfield Cave, this small stream cave is adjacent to the Florentine Road, which runs within metres of it. However, the cave itself is virtually impossible to see from the road itself (or it was last time I saw it in 1982), as it was virtually surrounded by thick, lush growth. It appears to have been discovered by timber workers in the late 1940s or in the early 1950s but I have been unable to find any reference to it prior to 1961. At that time, it was visited by Albert Goede, Joe Jennings, Edith Smith, Peter Smithies and John Fairhall (*Speleo Spiel,* (OS) No. 4, p. 3).

Surprisingly enough, there appear to be few detailed reports on the cave itself. Cashions Creek would have to be one of the most frequented caves in the Florentine Valley, along with those I have mentioned in the previous chapter. Perhaps the main reason for its popularity is that it is an ideal cave for beginners and no scrub bashing is required. In 1975 I took my father into this cave and he was 74 years of age at the time.

JF6 was visited by Bruce McIntosh, Gordon Taylor and Sam Steane in January 1979. Bruce reported:

> *This cave is half a kilometre north from Cashions Creek: it is ESE up the right hand side of a small creek which runs under Florentine Road a few metres south from the junction of Westfield Road. We discovered this by a combination of Max's instructions and the guidance of Albert ... Only three minutes off the road, a nicely decorated cave in places and fun for an hour or so* (McIntosh 1979).

In 1980 Stuart Nicholas included the cave in an introductory trip, of which Diana Davies reported (Davies 1980):

> *... we set out in force (a small convoy) for JF6 - Cashions Creek Cave. The weather was typical Maydena sunshine - light drizzle and none too warm. After standing around for a while watching Stuart and Ken procrastinate, ... we entered at the tagged end and proceeded down the stream passage. Ken concentrated on photography with assistance in flashing and others checked out the various formations. I crawled along the lower stream passage as far as possible without getting really soaked but failed to turn up anything new.*

Entrance to Cashions Creek Cave JF6 – 6/12/76

Entry is gained by negotiating a small, rather tightish entrance (see photo) and descending a 2 metre muddy slope. At the foot of this slope a low crawl-type passage leads off to the left. After a short distance one emerges in a low, wide bedding plane passage. At the end of this passage there is a short crawl, which opens into a small, decorated chamber. To the right of this chamber, the stream disappears into a small hole in the floor. From here, another crawl branches off to the right and emerges in yet another slightly larger chamber. The decoration in this chamber consists of mostly flowstone with the few odd stalagmites. A concentration of short stalactites hangs from the ceiling.

Continuing on, one climbs up over the stream and negotiates a small heap of talus. The stream passage is considerably wider at this point and it is relatively simple to follow it up until a final chamber is reached. At this stage, one has reached the end of the cave and can proceed no further. On the way back downstream, it is possible to climb up into a second level and follow a dry former stream passage some 20 metres or so until it too, terminates.

Upon leaving the upper level and rejoining the streamway it is always advisable to extinguish one's light. After several minutes the eyes become accustomed to the darkness and it may be possible to observe tiny pinpricks of greenish-light that indicate the presence of glow-worms. Sometimes these tiny creatures are quite numerous but usually, only a few may be seen. A closer inspection will reveal their sticky thread-like secretions, which trap minute insects that enter via a small daylight hole in the cave roof close to this section.

Decoration in Cashions Creek Cave – 6/12/76

Cashions Creek can be entered most of the year round but it would be inadvisable to enter after a period of heavy rain as flooding does tend to occur.

17.

TASSY (TASSIE) POT (JF223)

Don Frankcombe, who noted three holes in a dry valley below Mount Field West, discovered this spectacular pothole in 1967. In January 1968, a party from TCC made the first attempt to investigate the holes and a trip report, written by Albert Goede duly appeared (Goede 1968):

A day trip to investigate three holes in a dry valley below Mount Field West. They were shown to Albert by Don Frankcombe a fortnight earlier. The party followed the silver trail to the holes, taking three quarters of an hour. There should be a law against surveyors using silver paint. The three holes are close together along the bottom of the valley. The upper one was the largest and deepest and the first pitch was descended by Brian Collin. It is a 150 ft [45 m] descent. The first 40 ft [12 m] are steeply sloping followed by a 110 ft [34 m] drop. It could not be tackled because one ladder had been left in Albert's car.

Lowest hole was investigated next and was found to consist of two 30 ft [9 m] drops, separated by a slope. Total depth is approximately 70 ft [20 m]. Judy [Robinson] made her first ladder descent and discovered the joys of caving. Why is every hole in limestone surrounded by stinging nettles? The upper hole was laddered again while Michael [Burke] went back to the cars for another ladder.

Peter [Brabon] was first down followed by Brian, each carrying hefty rucksacks with rope and ladder for the next drop. Peter descended the second pitch, which proved to be 90 ft [~28 m] deep, with just enough ladder to reach the bottom. From there, he explored it to a muddy chamber where he discovered a narrow fissure going down another 60 ft [18 m] approximately. There was no sign of air movement. Lack of gear prevented further exploration. Depth reached approximately 250 ft [75 m]. Hole rather wet and muddy. We had difficulty recovering the ladders due to snags. A fine performance by Peter and Brian who did all the ladder work. They suggested the pot should be known as Tassy Pot because looking up at the bottom of the first pitch, [the] surface opening resembles [an] outline of Tasmania.

The next trip to Tassy Pot was made by a party from the Southern Caving Society in June of 1970. A report appeared in the SCS newsletter *Southern Caver* dated September 1970 (Kiernan 1970b). It stated:

It [Tassy Pot] was visited by SCS on 20/6/70, primarily as a tourist trip but things developed. At the bottom of the two ladder pitches (150 ft [46 m] and 90 ft [27 m]) an insignificant looking, wet, muddy and restricted crawl was explored. This led on into a very small chamber and a squeeze that did not look very inviting but inspired by an appreciable draught, this was negotiated by the party, which found itself in an interesting 70 ft [21 m] chimney. This chimney is of varying width, due to large talus slabs within it, being in places a tight squeeze and elsewhere being very wide and necessitating fully outstretched manoeuvres, while it is necessary to transfer to a single vertical face to climb down the final 15 ft [4.5 m].

At this point, all began to wonder where the water table was but pressed on over a further 10 ft [3 m] drop and a steep, narrow passage was entered. This led on through a couple of squeezes out onto a catwalk on the side of a great shaft and across into a chamber at –350 ft [106 m]. Still no water table. The big shaft is approximately 80 ft [24 m] across and falls from the upper levels to the visible floor, which was estimated to be 100 ft [30 m] below; on the next trip five members reached –350 ft [106 m] with 100 ft of ladder. However, one look at the drop showed that the previous party had underestimated its depth, so the pitch was not rigged. One member chimneyed 50 ft [15 m] down a rift at the end of the big chamber to attain a depth of around 400 ft [122 m] but this promising-looking lead did not go. It had been a battle to get the gear in but it was more so to get it out again, and by the time the surface was reached, 12 hours had been spent underground.

In November of that same year, SCS bottomed this cave. Included in the party was none other than Philip Robinson, a TCC member. Philip wrote a separate account for the TCC newsletter *Speleo Spiel* (Robinson 1970b):

Near midnight on Saturday, November 14th, a party from the Southern Caving Society bottomed Tassie Pot at 800 feet [244 m]. I was lucky enough to be with the team during the 17 hour trip. (Previous record: Mini-Martin [Ida Bay], 720 ft [219 m] by T.C.C. 1967.) The first man descended the 150 ft [46 m] entrance shaft about 1.00 pm on Saturday. The seven-man team were soon pressing down with tackle. The second pitch, 90 ft [27 m] and the 70 ft [21 m] chimney, were descended. After a few more climbs, we found ourselves in a sizeable chamber with a deep chasm off one side. Three hundred feet [91 m] of wire ladder were lowered over and John Morley prepared to descend. Soon, his usual audible voice had disappeared. We were left wondering. His absence on the end of the rope, when it was hauled up, suggested he had bottomed it. 270 ft [82 m] of rope had been used. I tied it on and descended steadily. The ladder was twisted, caught and heavy, the climb awkward. At 140 ft [43 m], a narrow 2 ft wide ledge to one side offered a welcome rest. A candle was lit below and John could be seen vaguely in the darkness. Continuing down, an over-hang is reached and the last 80 ft [24 m] is free hanging in a very large chamber.

At 260 ft [79 m], the bottom was reached. Climbing up a slope, I met John. About twenty minutes later, Arthur Clarke had joined us. The altimeter read 640 ft [195 m] and the cave went down! We climbed through some loose rocks and down a series of short, unstable drops. Below the big pitch to the bottom are many precariously positioned rocks. Care is needed on the descent. We gingerly continued down, down. Where was the bottom? At last it levelled off and we walked for 100 ft [30 m] or so. The passage lowered and a tight squeeze was encountered. Eagerly the altimeter was read: -820 ft [-250 m] - the record!, easily. We shook hands and felt very pleased. The depth was later amended to 800 ±20 ft [244 ±6 m] to allow for an error in the aneroid. Arthur decided this wasn't enough and proceeded to force the muddy squeeze. John followed and a further 30 ft [9 m] of passage was found. Another cave [?] was entered, in fact another stream, but no way on. The bottom had definitely been reached.

The return was careful and the big 260 ft [79 m] pitch planned. We ascended without mishap. Some excellent lifelining by Chris, Graham, David and Kevin was very much appreciated. Also on the surface, John McCormack, lining on the 150 ft [46 m] entrance shaft had a very long

wait. Once up the big pitch we were as good as out of the cave. The entrance 90 ft [27 m] and 150 ft [46 m] ladders seemed like chickenfeed. We were all on the surface at dawn Sunday, weary and jubilant.

So ended another of the 'epic' caving trips in the Junee-Florentine. A new Australian record had been established. However, within the space of fourteen months, Tassy Pot would lose its crown to an interesting inflow cave some kilometres to the east, in the Junee area. That cave had already been penetrated to a depth of 198 metres and was to become known as Khazad-Dum.

It is believed that SCS members and other Australian caving groups made a number of trips to Tassy Pot after the depth record was obtained but the next recorded trip by TCC members did not take place until February 1973. The two-man party, using SRT completed the trip to the bottom and back in just 11 hours, including surveying (Robinson 1973c).

The next recorded visit was made in September of 1979. Leigh Gleeson, Lindsay Wilson (SCS), Chris Rathbone and Stuart Nicholas (TCC) made up the party but due to problems with lights, only three people reached the top of the 74 metre pitch but did not descend it (Nicholas 1979b). However, in March of 1981, a follow-up trip was made to investigate a claim that a mainland party had discovered an extension earlier in the year. Andrew Briggs (TCC), Stefan and Rolan Eberhard (SCS) comprised the three-man party. Andrew supplied this report (Briggs 1981):

In January or early February, a group of Sydney cavers bottomed this deep cave (231 m) and after negotiating a fairly wet squeeze they found an estimated one kilometre of 'railway type tunnel'. This figure of one kilometre was given as a 'minimum' and according to reports; running shoes and/or a small bus would have been suitable for exploration. They did not come to the end of this impressive find nor did they explore any side passages, due to a lack of time. It is a remarkable discovery and the bods involved deserve credit for their efforts.

The reaction in TCC ranks was one of astonishment quickly followed by 'let's get down and have a look', however, due to previous commitments and a trip to Mini-Martin [Ida Bay] the weekend of 14th March was the earliest possible date suitable. Several SCS bods were also keen to 'do' the cave especially since there was this 'cake walk' at the bottom.

Well, finally off we went and after checking with Max [Jeffries] and leaving some gear in the Homestead, we arrived at the cave about 10 am. The entrance is 30 seconds walk from the road which proved to be very convenient for we were carrying nearly 700 ft [212 m] of rope plus SRT gear, etc.

We quickly rigged the first drop making it a 140 ft [42 m] free-hanging pitch. The second pitch (90 ft) [28 m] is also free-hanging and directly below the first. This section of the cave requires great care as anyone on these two pitches cannot escape from falling debris.

The second pitch leads into a high aven, which is rigged with a hand-line. After lowering the remaining 300 ft [90 m] rope plus the rest of our gear, we trotted further down to a chamber with a 3 ft by 5 ft window in one side, through which we went when abseiling the final 220 ft [67 m] free pitch.

SRT gear was removed and we proceeded into the cave proper. The way on to the extension is fairly obvious, by simply following the small stream down until you are forced to lie in it. The squeeze is a 20 ft [6 m] grovel with a right-angle corner, which leads into the 'tunnel' extension.

You beaut, we had made it! It was fairly impressive at this stage; we could stand up again, walk around and admire the spattering of flowstone that graced the passage walls. We had two choices of movement, upstream or downstream. The upstream passage was decided upon, as this is what the Sydney bods had looked at. Downstream did not look promising, as we had emerged from a pile of boulders, into which a small stream flowed joining up with the stream from Tassy Pot.

The 'railway tunnel' passage continued for about 200 metres until we came to the first talus blockage. There were about 40 m of crawling before we emerged again in more passage. At this stage, the cave was proceeding west, i.e. out of the hill. After several hundred metres of similar walking and crawling we came to an obvious bend in the passage where we left the creek and tended more south westerly. This section of the cave also showed signs of a creek but none was present.

Further on, we came across a large hole in the floor, about 2 m wide and 6 m long with a false floor all round. Rolan climbed down 9 m to the blue-green pool in the bottom, which appeared to be the sump. After several tricky moves to negotiate this hole, we continued on while the cave got smaller with more talus blockages and all the time curving back towards the main shaft (easterly).

After squeezing through a muddy and wet rift, a wall of calcified boulders appeared to bar the way. It was obvious that a small creek had flowed into the cave at this point but we had had enough of really squeezing at this point so it is still there for the 'hard men' to push. The same applies for most of the side passages we looked at on the way back, when they got too tight or seemed to block off, we left them.

Back at the squeeze, we estimated that we had seen close to a kilometre of 'passage', some of it good, some of it grotty. We then worked our way downstream though copious quantities of mud to a point where the cave appears to choke off. We estimate that the cave (downstream) was about 100-150 metres long and about 10 metres deeper than at the squeeze. Retreat was now the order of the day and by 11 pm [?] we were all on the surface.

In conclusion, I would say that this cave extension is worth a visit, but whatever is pushed will probably be tight and grotty. The streams in this cave are very small, even in high water conditions. It is not as bad as The Chairman yet, but it won't be long.

It was to be May of 1982 before the next visit took place and a four-man party consisting of Trevor Wailes, Nick Hume, Mike Martyn and Stuart Nicholas bottomed the cave in preparation for another attempt at the recently discovered Ice Tube. Stuart (Nicholas 1982) provided this report:

Following the Ice Tube trip of the week before, it was considered desirable to have a training trip prior to the expected record breaking epic planned for May 22. Tassie Pot was the obvious choice being close to the road, basically dry, and having a couple of long pitches in it.

Hence the above party, with rope, assembled themselves in the Tassie Pot doline at the fairly late hour of 11 o'clock [am]. With rope attached to a trusty fern and accompanied by various bits of wood and clods of mud, all descended the 42 m and 27 m entrance pitches, the 13 m chimney and finally experienced the buzz of the 74 m bottom pitch. A fruitless search for the bolt shown on the survey forced us

to rig this pitch via a header from the jammed rocks above the 'window'.

The Morod Passage (?) [Morocl] was its usual loose wet self and the squeeze at the end was grotty enough to almost turn us back.

Originally a survey trip, that idea fell through due to general apathy and the totally uninspiring nature of the 'new' section. Pushing downstream revealed mud banks and small grotty crawls in an obviously once sumpy area with little potential except by a massive digging effort. Upstream was not looked at.

A slow exit was made with everyone out by dark ... The cave certainly needs surveying completely but finding bodies keen to do it could be a problem.

The following month (June), Chris Davies, Jeanine Davies and Andrew Briggs visited the cave and Andrew supplied this report (Briggs 1982a):

The purpose of the trip was to examine several holes at the back of the big 220' [74 m] pitch. These holes are shown on a rough survey drawn for the 'Spiel' several years ago. They all had question marks below them, so they looked interesting.

We arrived at the gate about 9 am after breakfast at the Maydena shop. A quick trip around to the cave saw us rigging and doing the usual mental activities prior to a caving trip. As this was my second trip to the cave, I was to rig and Chris to protect. As usual, I rigged from the road side to make the first pitch a 140 ft [42 m] free-hanger using only one protector. This would have to be one of my favourite entrance pitches.

Rigging off the second pitch quickly followed and we continued on down. As usual, care was needed at the lip of this pitch because of the pile of logs that perches there. This is another nice 90 ft [27 m] pitch, dry of course! A further 60 ft [20 m] abseil saw us down the awkward chimney and still heading down to Goodbye Chamber, which is at the top of the big pitch.

Now for the big 'let-down'. A quick butchers at the unknown holes revealed shallow, small and choked holes leading no-where. The deepest of these was about 40 ft [13 m], and kept going, however, its diminishing size meant that it was impossible to continue . ...

The next trip to Tassy Pot took place in June 1983. Due to rain, a party consisting of Mike Edwards, Nick Hume, Trevor Wailes and Rolan Eberhard cancelled their previous plans and decided to take a look at the horizontal section originally discovered by the Sydney University Speleological Society in early 1981. Rolan's report (Eberhard 1983) stated:

Originally planned as a Serendipity trip, this idea was rejected due to rain, and with varying degrees of enthusiasm we agreed to have a look at the horizontal streamway at the bottom of Tassie Pot. Rigging went smoothly down the first three pitches and we regrouped at the chamber above the final 70 metre shaft. A trace was used to protect the 9 mm rope over the initial edge, and some 15 metres down I placed a bolt. From here the rope hangs free to a sloping ledge, 30 metres off the deck, where ideally another bolt is necessary. However, in order to save time, I placed an angle piton in a convenient crack with a trace over the lip, several metres further down. To complicate things, there was a knot between the piton and the trace and this received considerable verbal abuse as the others descended.

A climb through loose boulders followed by a squalid crawl in the stream, and we were in the horizontal streamway discovered by SUSS in early 1981. We proceeded upstream along the pleasant walking passage, through the definitely unpleasant rock falls and eventually halted at a crawl. Mike pushed on and reported [that] it was blocked by a rockfall a few hundred metres further on. At this stage we made the noble decision to start a survey of the system and many stations later, arrived at the base of the final pitch, which was the end of our survey. Apart from here back to the surface, the main upstream passage was surveyed to its limit; only the downstream section and a few side passages are yet to be done. We arrived back at the surface well after midnight and I felt vaguely satisfied with the day's effort but not unduly inspired by Tassie Pot itself.

Further trips were made to Tassie Pot in or about September 1983, and one of these parties consisted of Ric Tunney, Mick Flint, Janine McKinnon and well-known Sydney caver, Andrew Pavey. Janine provided this report (McKinnon 1983):

Ric and I had planned to finish the survey in Tassie Pot on this weekend but were beaten to it by the industrious lads of the club, a fortnight before.

We got a call from Andrew Pavey in Sydney, however, to say that he was coming down for a few days and would like a vertical caving trip, so we decided we might as well make it Tassie Pot. None of the party had been down it before, so it would make an interesting trip for us and also scratch one off our list of 'caves to do'.

We got a relatively early start and I was descending the entrance pitch around 10.00 am. Andrew followed, then Mick, with Ric protecting. On reaching the top of the third pitch, I wasn't too sure if it was the start of the pitch or just a climb, so Andrew went down for a look and I rigged the pitch and threw the rope to him when he decided, halfway down, that it was really a pitch.

For the final 220 footer [70 m], I carried an extra 15 m rope just in case the rope we had used wasn't quite long enough, but fortunately, it wasn't needed. I hadn't been remarkably impressed by the cave up until now but that final pitch made it worthwhile.

Mick decided to head out at the top of this pitch as he hadn't had a lot of prussiking experience and he thought the rest of the cave was enough for one day.

I think that two protectors should really be put on the bottom lip of this pitch instead of the one in the gear list, as we found a tendency for it to bunch up and not properly protect the point. (It really needs a bolt on the lip to tie off the rope and hence remove the need for protectors - Stuart Nicholas). The only hassle on the way out was that nasty third pitch; I'm sure it must be infamous by now.

Janine McKinnon's report concludes this chapter on Tassy Pot. The reader may have noticed that there are two variations in the spelling of 'Tassy'. Either way is applicable and is really of little consequence. The first published report appears to use 'Tassy' (Goede 1968). On most cave listings and reports, 'Tassy' seems to be the one most frequently used. The 1992 deep cave list gives the depth of Tassy Pot as –238 metres although an altimeter reading in 1970 gave the depth as –244 metres. [An alternative route to the final 70 m pitch was found in 2004 (Jackson 2004).]

18.

WELCOME STRANGER CAVE (JF229)

Welcome Stranger would certainly be the best-decorated cave to my knowledge yet discovered in the entire Junee-Florentine area. Another of Don Frankcombe's discoveries, it was located in 1969 and first explored by members of the Southern Caving Society. The first TCC party to visit this horizontal stream cave was led by Albert Goede. This trip took place on 2 November 1969, and Albert reported (Goede 1969b):

The original purpose of this trip was to do some surface exploration near Junee but the scrub would be wet after days of rain and Don Frankcombe, when phoned for a permit, mentioned a new cave in the Florentine Valley, recently discovered during logging operations and already explored for half a mile by SCS, so we made a quick change of plan.

We left at 8 am and gathered at the Fitzgerald store, where by chance we met Don who marked the location of the cave for us on a map and wrote us a permit on the spot. Having arrived at our destination, we had a bite to eat and then, following directions, soon found the cave.

The entrance does not look promising, consisting of three small holes at the head of a dry valley but once inside, a breeze indicated that this was no small cave. We set off with Anne [Parkes]'s [carbide] lamp frequently catching fire and soon found a crawl, which proved easy to negotiate except by Wes [Carpenter] who insisted on doing it with his rucksack on. At the first opportunity, we climbed out of the stream passage, which was dry except for some pools, and explored a high level passage packed with formation. We were very impressed but much more was to come. Back in the stream passage we found a pool full of Anaspides *and amphipods and Therese [Goede] and I collected some specimens. A little further on, we came to a running stream disappearing into a siphon. From there on, we followed high level passages wherever opportunity offered and admired the wealth of formation. In places it was impossible to avoid walking on formations although we were as careful as possible. Terry [Parkes] had the interesting experience of falling through a false floor three times in quick succession while trying to avoid walking over flowstone. Wes used his camera to advantage and we are looking forward to his slides. We spent a pleasant and leisurely four hours underground without getting to the end of the cave. The route back was much quicker as we followed the stream down. The cave is undoubtedly the best formation cave yet found in the Florentine Valley.*

Of particular interest is the high level about 15 ft [4 m] above the present stream passage, which keeps on crossing the latter at a marked angle. The cave is well worth another visit. It is easy to reach and explore. The formations are superb and it is an ideal place for photography.

In August of 1970, Welcome Stranger received another visit from a large TCC party, once again under the leadership of Albert Goede, who reported (Goede 1970c):

... headed for the cave entrance only to find it flooded to a depth of several feet with the creek running strongly out of the entrance. After some searching, Sally [Morris] found the upper entrance, first discovered by SCS, and this proved to be a reasonably dry route into the cave. Inside, the creek had risen little although carrying a lot more water than usual. We followed the upper levels and went as far as the final siphon before returning along the creek.

The following year, 1971, saw yet another large party descend on the cave, which was proving to be the showpiece of the Junee-Florentine area. Noel White led this particular trip and he stated (White 1971):

This record party set out from Franklin Square on a cold but clear Sunday morning. By 9 am we had reached the ANM gate and by 10 am were ready to enter Welcome Stranger Cave. The trip had been planned for photography and to examine the interesting geological and geomorphological features of the cave. With so many 'tourists' along however, it was necessary to split the party to allow the photographers to proceed at their own pace. A few hours after entering the cave, our numbers were further increased by a party of S.C.S. members.

By this time, the party was strung out along the full length of the cave. The last body to leave the cave did so six hours after entering to find that most of the group had had their fill and departed.

The success or failure of the trip will be judged when the slides are shown. It must be noted that Kevin Kiernan and other members of S.C.S. carried out a delicate scientific experiment in which they established a connection between a small swallet and the cave, by means of the rare and expensive chemical known as fluorescein.

In February of 1974, a scathing article written by Andrew Skinner, a well-known TCC member, appeared in the club newsletter *Speleo Spiel*. It had been prompted by the amount of damage being done to the cave as a result of its popularity. Andrew had this to say (Skinner 1974):

Welcome Stranger is an outflow cave situated in the Florentine Valley and is the only cave with significant decoration in the whole Junee-Florentine area. Straw stalactites, 'curtains' and flowstone present along the streamway are of a good standard. Upper level chambers contain crystalline calcite floors and gours.

Although it has not been visited by many parties of speleos, damage to decoration in Welcome Stranger is considerable. Along the streamway many of the straw stalactites have been broken by sheer negligence and laziness. Many visitors have attempted to keep their feet dry and by their efforts to remain 'comfortable', have extensively damaged speleothems. Instead of the minor discomfort of experiencing wet feet, they have clambered along the sides of the streamway, soiling flowstone and needlessly breaking stalactites. Whilst broken stalactites may be irreparable, further damage can be minimised if ALL PARTIES PROCEED ALONG THE STREAMWAY AND DISREGARD THE DISCOMFORT OF HAVING WET FEET.

It is possible to clean the mud off some of the flowstone with a soft brush and bucket and a further visit has been planned to attempt this. In the upper levels, cavers have walked at random across crystal floors.

Andrew concluded that:

Welcome Stranger is a very valuable cave resource in an area lacking in decorated caves: don't ruin it by carelessness!

Some time prior to this article, Andrew Skinner had been instrumental in placing reflectorised track markers in sections of Exit Cave at Ida Bay. Andrew, the author and others, also implemented this practise in parts of Welcome Stranger Cave during 1973. Although it worked to some extent, later observations revealed that some of the markers had either been damaged or removed altogether. As the cave is not accessible to the general public, it is fairly obvious that the guilty parties were members of the caving fraternity. Having not visited this cave since 1977, I am unable to comment on the state of the cave at the present time and whether any of the markers still remain. However, I do urge all leaders to advise their parties to use exceptional care when visiting this particular cave.

Some of the exceptional calcite formations in Welcome Stranger

Over the years, cavers have often speculated on the possibility of diving the sump in this cave. I can vaguely remember that someone did attempt to do this in the mid-1970s but retreated after a short distance. However, in July of 1981, Trevor Wailes, Stuart Nicholas and Nick Hume decided to put their cave diving expertise to the test and solve this enigma. Part of Nick's report appears below (Hume 1981a):

> *With Trev as anchor man, Stuey and I geared up with single, side mounted tanks (Stuey's invention or adaptation, or something), no flippers and matching canoe helmets for the dive. Stuart was kind enough to inform us that his thermometer registered 6° C when immersed in the streamway, whereupon with not excessive zeal I entered the sump and proceeded with some dying flounder impressions to amuse Trevor during his enforced vigil.*
>
> *Surprise, surprise, instead of an easy duck to another airspace as I had hoped, there was a straight, silt floored tube one to one and a half metres wide and less than one metre high, disappearing into the murk at a 30° angle. Visibility was good, one and a quarter to two metres, with the usual subaquatic rumblings to entertain my imagination. I cautiously moved down, rattling my helmet along the roof, spilling mini-avalanches of silt before me .... fun, fun!*
>
> *At 30 metres distance from airspace and 11 metres depth, I got a bit of a buzz as ahead appeared to be a passage running off upward! Acute disappointment as this turned out to be a high scallop in the roof. A few metres further on the tube ended, with the water flow entering via an approximately 15 cm high crack to the left. Too narrow - unfortunate, as this crack tended horizontally to the limit of visibility. With no effective flow here to clear the tube, I felt disinclined to dig about, so I squirmed through 180° for the ascent.*
>
> *No visibility . . . glove up to facemask . . . can't even detect it! Which way is up? . . . down? . . . reference points please. Remember Stuey's untested line reel, held by a death grip in my right hand . . . mmm, seems to work alright . . . up I go. Ascending blindly to the flatulent accompaniment of my bubbles dribbling along the roof, sounds and pressure alter noticeably and pop, I'm on the surface yelling excited expletives!*
>
> *Now for Stuey's turn, eh heh! After half an hour or so, waiting for the tube to clear, Stuey plunged in for a look-see. Trev and I feeding the line out this time, seeming a simpler method in the circumstances. Unfortunately, Stuey had some buoyancy problems (like too much) and did not get as far as I and was finally defeated by cramp in the jaw and the cool situation.*
>
> *Then came the much-dreaded epic of transferring the entire contents of Trev's van back to Trev's van (pronounced 'vun') ending in hot, peppered soup. Many thanks to Trev for portering and for soup. Stuey's line reel and tank mounts worked excellently.*

No doubt many trips have taken place since then but it appears no further interest has been taken in the sump. Total length of Welcome Stranger is 1650 metres.

Plan of Welcome Stranger by P. Jackson et al. 1983 – from Southern Caver, *58: 30*

19.

DWARROWDELF (JF14)

In February of 1971, cavers were surface trogging in the vicinity of Khazad-Dum Cave, searching for a dry way in which to enter the cave. Two possibilities were found. The first (JF13), which was later named Dribblespit Swallet, proved to be 90 metres deep but no continuation was found. The second located on the same day, also looked promising. It was numbered JF14 and was later to become known as Dwarrowdelf. A party consisting of Stuart Nicholas, David Cripps, Brian and Jeanette Collin investigated this hole with Stuart descending to a depth of 18.3 metres. However, David managed to get to a depth of 21.3 metres and from his description, it appeared that a passage continued similar to JF10. It was not pushed any further at that time due to a lack of ladders.

Nearly sixteen months passed before Dwarrowdelf was visited again. The exploration of 'K-D' had all but been completed and no dry route into the cave had been forthcoming. On 3 June 1972, a party led by the intrepid Phil Robinson and assisted by Noel White, Stuart Nicholas, David Cripps, Ron Akhurst, Ross Mansfield, Nick and Helen Cummings and Mieke Vermeulen, arrived at the rift-like entrance. Phil Robinson supplied the report (Robinson 1972e):

> *Half the trip(?) was spent gardening pebbles from the head of the second pitch. Previous exploration had halted at the base of the 70 ft [21 m] entrance pitch. From here a descent of about 40 ft [12 m] through jammed (?) blocks saw Ross and Noel jumping up and down on loose boulders and rubble. A lifeline was attached to Ross who once again jumped up and down. 'There's a b....y big one perched just on the edge! I need a geology pick.' Bang, tinkle, boom ---- ($8.00 pick and boulder now down shaft). Ladder was eventually rigged, Philip and Ross descending an 85 ft [26 m] shaft (ledges at 15' and 45' [4.5 and 14 m]). Noel, Stuart, David, Ron, Helen and Nick stayed at the top. At this stage it was too dangerous for more to go down. A small passage approx. 4' [<1 m] high led down via two 10 ft [3 m] climbs and a crawl to a further pitch. This was a 15 footer [4.5 m] through a tiny hole. A further 10 ft drop to a squeeze. Digging enlarged it enough for Ross to enter and find a further vertical drop. No tackle, so a return was made. Depth reached approx. 260 ft [79 m]. At -220 ft [67 m], a dry, narrow stream passage was followed to a tight crevice. Rocks fell for 2-3 seconds. A large shaft was also found off the base of the 85 ft pitch - a 3-4 second [rock] fall. Three ways on. JF14 goes - down!!*

A fortnight later, the cave received another visit. It was again led by Philip who was ably supported by Peter Shaw, Bill Lehmann and Ross Mansfield. Phil reported (Robinson 1972f):

> *Burdened by enormous packs of ladders and ropes, the four staggered up to the pothole. The 70 ft [21 m] entrance pitch was rigged. Phil and Ross descended this and the next drop (85 ft [26 m]). Peter and Bill followed with most of the tackle. Delay was caused by Peter's accumulator and carbide [lamp] refusing to work. Ross's cell was hoisted up the 85 ft pitch. At last 4 bods, 3 lights and (half ton?) gear were positioned at the head of the 'big' shaft. Rocks hurled down indicated depths between 150 and 300 ft [45-90 m]. Three hundred foot [90 m] of ladder was lowered through the narrow hole at the top of the pitch. Bill had flu, Peter a cold and no light, Ross no experience on ladders. Phil descended 200 ft [60 m]. Down a boulder slope of 30-40 ft, which lead to the head of a further, drop of approximately 80 ft [24 m]. Yell ... 'Anyone else coming down??' Phil's suggested name for JF14 is 'Pikers Pot'. No alternative but to return surrounded by a tangle of 300 ft of ladder on waist, legs and arms. Much swearing and good hauling later, everything was back up the pitch. The gear was rolled and the two pitches ascended smoothly to the surface.*
>
> *The big pitch is the easiest 200 ft imaginable. Against the wall, split by numerous ledges of 2 to 10 feet, (this was the cause of the ladder snagging during de-rigging). 'Pikers Pot' is now 400 ft [120 m] deep with an undescended pitch of approximately 80 ft. It surely much reach down to the Khazad-Dum system.*

These were to be prophetic words. On Saturday 8 July, a party again visited JF14 under the leadership of Phil Robinson. The group consisted of Peter Shaw, Brian Collin, Albert Goede and Graeme Watt. Phil revealed that (Robinson 1972g):

> *A seven o'clock start from Hobart led through to a beautiful crisp blue sky, sunshine and snow - an ideal weekend! Ideas of skiing and climbing on Mount Anne were lost as we headed into the forest. The usual mess of gear; this time 670 ft [200 m] of ladder, 860 ft [260 m] of rope - enough to crack anything?! Down JF14; 70', 90', 200', 120', 180'+ ? pitches later, we were 700 ft [210 m] underground and still not at the bottom.*
>
> *Manhandling that amount of gear up and down such pitches is an old story. A cold shower of water throughout, added to the misery. Abseiling the first three pitches provided some excitement. Albert and Brian stayed as belay men at the first 200', Peter at the 120'. This was the start of new exploration.*
>
> *Graeme, Phil and Ross gathered at the head of the next pitch. 180 ft [55 m] of aqueous, free-hanging ladder later, Phil was still dangling in space. Visibility through darkness and spray was only 20-30 ft. The bottom could not be seen. Next move - UP! Help from Ross and Graeme was well appreciated by a rather unfit Phil. Rocks were again dropped, five seconds? (180-400 ft [55-120 m]).*
>
> *The long haul back to the surface was frustrating. With pitches one on top of each other, falling stones a menace. Often 2-3 people could do nothing except wait (and shelter). Trip lasted 15 hours. It will be some time before JF14 is further explored. Few people are willing to tackle 200 ft and free-hanging pitches 500 ft underground. Single rope trainees have just started. It is an ideal pothole for such descents.*

As can be seen, SRT techniques were in their infancy around this time (1972). Also as a result of the problems associated with bottoming JF14, seven months elapsed before it was entered again. The long weekend in January 1973 saw three parties operating in the area. One, led by none other than Phil Robinson and accompanied by mainland cavers Keith Dekkers, Neil Montgomery and Andrew Pavey entered JF14. Phil (Robinson 1973a) reported:

> *Confusion slowly cleared at the Junee Homestead. Parties left for Khazad-Dum and Cauldron Pot. Our hope was to*

connect with K-D. -- There was no rush. The Victorians had over approximately 1000 ft [305 m] to descend.

A short walk through the forest saw us at the entrance, a 70 ft [21 m] pitch. Philip and Keith headed down followed by Andrew and Neil surveying. Gardening was required on the second pitch, 90 ft [27 m]. The third, a 180 footer [55 m], needed a bolt. As usual the rotten limestone was reluctant to take pitons or offer solid belay points. However, Keith managed an angle on the fourth pitch, 120 ft [37 m]. The fifth pitch had previously been reconnaissanced by Philip - 180 ft [55 m] down, he had run out of ladder. Spray had reduced visibility to about 20 ft [6 m]. Optimistically, 400 ft [122 m] of rope were lowered off a bolt. So followed a typical anti-climax - - a mere 220 ft [67 m], yet free and a very enjoyable abseil. We [then] entered the final chambers of K-D. Five minutes later a whistle was heard. The Victorians had just arrived at the top of K-D's last pitch, the 135 ft [41 m]. High up on the far side of the chamber was a tremendous view of their descent, next to the final 60 ft [18 m] waterfall. The survey was continued to the base of the 135 ft [41 m], then a snack near the sump.

There was still no sign of the K-D ladder party. We set off out via K-D. Prussiking up an 8 mm kernmantel nylon [rope] on the 135 ft was somewhat unpleasant. The cave had been laddered from here on. With the water low, the six waterfalls were easily ascended along the streamway to the 70 ft [21 m], 30 ft [9 m], then up the rockpile to the 92 ft [28 m] free-hanger. Here we met the tail of the laddering party. A block-up of bods in the entrance passages was eventually cleared. We headed back through the bush in the dark. A great round trip.

On the following day, the 28th, another party led by Peter Shaw and consisting of Julia James, Bill Lehmann and Laimonis Kavalieris entered Khazad-Dum and exited via JF14, de-rigging in the process. Peter's brief report read (Shaw 1973c):

After Philip and party had entered via JF14 and come out via Khazad-Dum on the previous day, our plan was to do the trip in reverse, de-rigging JF14. Fifty-five minutes after leaving the [K-D] entrance, Peter had reached Brew Chamber at 860 ft [262 m] and was ready to rig the final pitch. The 135 ft [41 m] pitch was rigged with an 8 mm kernmantle rope, which was a curse. It chewed a deep groove in the rappel racks, such that if the pitch had been 400 feet, it would have possibly gone right through. While Peter rigged up the 220 ft [67 m] prussik, the rest of the party visited the sump.

De-rigging JF14 went ahead smoothly and after 9 hours underground, we were back on the surface. A truly superb trip.

Possibly the best description of Dwarrowdelf itself and the gear needed to descend it, appeared in an article written by Neil Montgomery in June of 1973. Neil had this to say about the cave (Montgomery 1973):

JF14 is the lowest entrance to the JF4-5-14 system. It is on the side of a largish doline, about 8 m above the doline floor. The entrance is elliptical, with a stream (generally small) running in on the northern side. The entrance pitch (21 m) is belayed from a tree on the eastern side of the entrance. It is against rock and requires three protectors and 25 m of rope. The rock is crumbly, with many fine shale lenses that protrude from the walls. This character is maintained right through the cave.

At the bottom of the pitch, one leaves the stream and a sloping, rubble-floored passage is taken. This drops quickly into an easy 7.6 m chimney and the passage meets a cross rift, about one metre wide trending at 240°. The rift continues upward for at least 8 m, but going downwards, bells into a shaft averaging 4 m in diameter. This shaft is descended by belaying on a chockstone 3.5 m from the shaft lip. Thirty-five metres of rope and two protectors are required for the 25.4 m pitch. It is largely against rock, with a ledge 14 m down. The obvious way on is down a small north-trending passage inclined at 40°. This is not taken and instead a southwest trending passage is followed, of equally small dimensions. After a few metres this drops into a 57 m shaft, averaging about 8 m in diameter. A bolt needs to be placed here, with a tie-back to the rope from the second pitch. There is a pitch of 46.6 m to a wide ledge, where a boulder is used as a tie-off for a further 10.4 m pitch. Sixty metres of rope, a 3 m trace and four protectors are used to tackle the shaft.

A sloping, boulder-floored chamber is followed to the next pitch. There is a cluster of chockstones in the roof above the pitch. A piton or bolt is required, with a tie-back to a floor boulder. The pitch of 36 m starts in a north-trending rift and then goes down a sloping face. Forty metres of rope, a 3 m trace and a couple of protectors are used. The shaft leads straight into a second, larger shaft of 66.5 m, but it is possible to step off into a chamber at this point. Two avens come into the chamber, one containing what is probably the entrance stream. There is a poorly cemented mud and boulder pile in the centre of the chamber.

A bolt is placed to belay the 66.5 m shaft with a tie-back to the rope above. Two protectors are used on the lip and then there is a superb free abseil down the centre of the shaft. The shaft is fairly consistent in size, about 8 m x 4 m and elliptical in cross-section. Light and dark banding in the shaft walls, reflect varying mud content in the limestone. A shower of water (the stream from the aven) may make for poor visibility while climbing. The shaft bells out towards the end into a large passage and the pitch ends in a boulder-filled depression in the chamber floor. The water disappears into the boulders. A small, dry, meandering stream passage probably represents a former course of the water. This passage ends in a rockfall after about 15 m.

The main passage is 5-10 m wide and up to 10 m high, floored with roof collapse boulders, sand and gravel. It can be followed southeast and upwards for about 4 m to a narrow rift, or northwest for a similar distance, where it opens out into the immense final chamber of Khazad-Dum. A climb down a steep boulder and clay slope is necessary to reach the terminal sump.

So ends Neil's graphic description of Dwarrowdelf. This cave is another which derives its name from *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's classic novel. Since 1973, Dwarrowdelf still manages to attract the odd caving group intent on doing the notable deep caves of the region.

[A plan and projected long. section of JF14 by Neil Montgomery are in *Speleo Spiel,* 81, facing p. 4.]

20.

SPLASH POT (JF10)

This particular pothole was located in September 1970. It was amongst a number of holes discovered by Albert Goede and Noel White. The part of Albert's report regarding its discovery stated:

> *... Next, we turned to the swallet with a small waterfall disappearing into a flat-bottomed 20 ft [6 m] hole. Leader, confident from long experience that hole wouldn't go, stayed on top while Noel, Philip [Robinson] and Bill [Lehmann] descended. A little later came the request for another ladder, then one and a half hours of silence while leader jumped up and down and wandered around the bush to stay warm. The party returned in high spirits although rather wet and a little worse for wear, reporting that they had reached a depth of about 200 ft [60 m] before turning back at the top of a 50 ft [15 m] shaft* (Goede 1970b)

Final comments made in the overall report were:

> *According to Noel, the underground course of the new swallet swings towards the east and there is a good chance that it will eventually join the JF4-5 system, so further exploration is certainly worthwhile. The new swallet has only a small creek running into it, which would probably dry up during the summer* (Goede 1970b)

Later in that same month (September 1970), a rather large party returned to the swallet to explore it further. This party consisted of Albert, Therese and Diana Goede, Phil Robinson, Clive Boulter, Bill Lehmann, Stuart Nicholas, David Cripps and Kevin Kiernan. The leader was Noel White and he had this to say (White 1970b):

> *The purpose of the trip was to continue exploration of the new cave, temporarily christened JF X, which had been found on the previous trip to the area. That time progress had been stopped by a 50 ft [15 m] pitch at a depth of about 150 ft [45 m]. Rather than be caught with insufficient gear, we had brought over 200 ft [60 m] of ladder and about 400 ft [120 m] of rope. By carefully distributing this mass of gear among the available packs, the sagacious leader managed to keep his own pack light, thus ensuring rapid progress up the hill. Unfortunately, there was no guarantee that the cave would continue beyond the pitch, so the leader cunningly decided he would have to find a few more holes to placate the angry mob if JF X fizzled out. By taking a short cut to the cave, he managed to find four by the time the rest of the party arrived.*
>
> *The ladder for the entrance pitch was soon in place and Philip, Bill and Noel dragged the gear through the cave while Albert attached the tag, which officially numbered the cave JF10. There was much less water in the cave than previously and the pitch looked quite simple. Just to be sure the ladders went all the way to the bottom, four ladders were joined, giving over 100 ft [30 m] down the hole. With Bill as belay man, Philip descended and a long period of puzzlement began for those at the top of the pitch, punctuated only by faint cries of 'up - up', and 'down - down', and various other screams of horror or delight which were not among the pre-arranged signals. Finally, greatly to our surprise, came a call for someone to bring down more ladders. Rather than sit shivering at the top, I elected to take these down myself. With the ladders dangling from my belt and bumping about my heels, I started down and soon saw how grossly wrong our estimate of the depth had been. The first vertical drop was 60 ft [18 m], followed by an inclined drop of a further 40 ft [12 m]. At this point, I learnt what the un-rehearsed screams were about, as the icy water poured over my head, thoroughly soaking everything. At this point the cleft had opened out and was up to about 10 ft wide and about 40 ft long. The next drop that gaped in front of us was sheer for about 60 ft and appeared to have a pool of water at the bottom. The lights we had were not adequate to see well at that distance, and unfortunately, my powerful torch had pulled from my belt on the way down and was out of reach about 20 ft lower. For this reason, we could not guarantee what the length of the final drop would prove to be, or even if it is the final drop. The ladder which we had was probably adequate, but it would have required attaching another rope to the safety line to continue belaying from the top. This Bill properly refused to do, so we returned to the surface. Our estimate of the length of the pitch had been at least 300% in error, so we must wait for another trip to learn what is at the bottom of the next [pitch].*
>
> *One interesting feature of this cleft is that it is formed along a fracture zone, which consists of limestone fragments cemented by calcite. This may represent a fault zone. The cave is becoming larger as it gets deeper and although it is no longer an easy cave, it is at least possible, so far, as long as there has been no heavy rain.*

A week later, a party under the leadership of Brian Collin, returned to JF10 all prepared to do battle with the next pitch. Others in the party were Phil Robinson, Bill Lehmann and Stuart Nicholas. Bill supplied the report (Lehmann 1970):

> *At the usual Wednesday night meeting at Brian's place it was decided, that as Mt. Anne was still under snow, to have an all out effort to push JF10 (we still need a name for this swallet), and all agreed heartily on a 6 am start. But, as is common with all good intentions, something goes amiss and there were only four of us slugging up the track to the cave with all available gear shared out between our packs. A fine drizzle had started and raised the humidity sufficiently to make walking with full packs tiring, so when we had gone up the valley far enough to hear the water running into JF4-5, we cut across to the yellow track. My estimate of 70 yds to the cave was most welcome but it turned out to be 200 yds. However, we eventually got to the cave at the unforgivable hour of 8.30 am.*
>
> *After refreshments, the top ladder was hung and the intrepid group descended into the damp darkness. Luckily, the creek was running less strongly than the previous week but we were still damp by the time the 'big drop' was reached. 90 feet [27 m] of ladder was dropped over the edge and well belayed on a double wedge flake at the edge of the hole. With Brian as safety-man, I plucked up my courage and descended to be followed in short order by the gear and Philip. At the 60 ft mark, I arrived at the 4 x 2-2½ ft ledge that was descended to before. While Brian tied the safety-line off at the top, Philip and I connected up another 90 ft of ladder and fed this over the edge of the wet section of the climb. This was about 10 ft down at a 45° angle and then this was followed by a 40 ft [12 m] drop down the rift line with a ledge at 20 ft. I went to the bottom of this 40 ft to rescue the torch Noel dropped last trip. This section is subject to water pouring from the roof, 80 ft above but*

forewarned by Noel and Philip's previous experience, we were wearing waterproofs and Philip had found a dry spot to belay me from. The water was still very hard when it falls that distance. Noel's torch was hung on a convenient spike of rock on the ledge at 20 ft and I walked along this ledge ~15 ft to the top of the biggest drop so far encountered in this cave – 80 ft [25 m] free.

As I was feeding the ladder over, I could see the reflection of my headlamp peering back at me from the pool at the bottom of the drop. But as luck turned out this was only 6 ft in diameter and 6 inches deep. At the bottom of the drop, there is a flat area roughly 12 x 20 ft [4 x 6 m] with a pebble-lined floor. There is a right-hand bend in the chamber to another area about 12 ft in diameter where the water also drips down. In the outer corner of the chamber is a low crawl which, when cleared of rubble, proved to be 2 ft x 2 ft with 6 in. of water in the bottom. A short (6 ft) look along this proved that it continued with a right-hand turn and a 'waterfall' sound a bit further on. As I was tiring and extremely wet, I backed out and returned up the ladder with a bit of difficulty at the top, due to a narrowing rift in which I was jammed at the last 10 feet. With a bit of gymnastics, including hand over hand up five rungs, I was soon standing on the dry ledge next to Philip. As the time was now about 12.30 pm, we pulled up the gear and returned to the top of the big drop where Brian and Stuart were patiently waiting for us. Philip and Stuart grabbed half the gear and headed for the surface, while Brian and I rolled the rest and decided to try the squeeze when the weather was dry.

Two and a half years passed before the cave was visited again. Then, on 14 April 1973, Peter Shaw, accompanied by Stuart Nicholas and Ron Akhurst, arrived to carry out a survey and further exploration. Peter's report had this to say:

The trip was a surveying and exploration one. On a previous trip 2½ years ago, Bill Lehmann had reached the bottom and [had] said [that] the stream was flowing into a 2 ft x 2 ft hole. Possibilities of exploration but nothing exciting. We surveyed downwards and in four hours had reached the bottom after putting in a bolt for the final pitch. The water flowed into a small hole at the foot of a high rift.

Surveying as we went, we explored along the narrow rift and soon found ourselves in the roof of the passage. The stream disappeared off into a rift at a lower level and we continued in the roof and eventually started to climb upwards, following a very strong draught. After several short climbs, the passage became too tight and we retreated, leaving one small side passage unexplored. I had a look along the rift containing the stream, which was very narrow and awkward. This involved chimneying in a horizontal position at wherever the rift was widest. Eventually a section which was too narrow halted me. A hammer would be necessary to continue. We returned to the foot of the pitch and then took four hours to reach the surface after 12 hours underground. Four possibilities remain:

1. *The unexplored side passage in the uphill section.*
2. *The stream. A hammer would be necessary.*
3. *The high-level passage entering the chamber at the foot of the last pitch.*
4. *At the formation corner, the downstream passage roof is just above your head. Where this passage leaves the pitch chamber, it is 150 ft [46 m] high. By climbing up near the formation corner a continuation of the rift may be found* (Shaw 1973d).

Twelve months later, in 1974, Peter Shaw and Stuart Nicholas were back to finalise exploration. Peter's report showed there was no hope of extending the cave:

The objective was to tie up a few loose ends in Splash Pot [now named] ... Nearly 50 millimetres of rain had fallen during the previous week, changing the area from very dry to very wet. We reached Splash Pot at 9.30 am in a slight drizzle to find it taking quite a bit of water. We were obviously in for a soaking. We rigged the ladder and were underground by 10.00 am. We reached the top of the pitches at 10.30 am. On the two intermediate ledges we were subject to a continual spray of water and were glad to reach the bottom and get out of it. At 11.30 am, we set off to look at the unexplored possibilities and an hour later, were back at the pitch with exploration complete. We set off at 1.00 pm and were out by 3.00 pm after a 5-hour trip. It was quite a change to emerge in daylight after a trip underground (Shaw 1974).

With exploration declared complete, the depth of Splash Pot remained at 96 metres. In August of 1974, Peter Shaw again returned to the cave but only to recover a Jumar which had been left behind during the April visit. No further trips took place until March 1978. Two cavers, Peter Dempsey and Ross Bridges, visited the cave; Ross reporting:

A pleasant 9 hour trip in a very grotty cave. Actually, the rope pitches were quite interesting, but the horizontal, squeezy, muddy stuff near the exploration limit is uninspiring to say the least.

I managed to climb some 2 metres up where the small stream drops down into the main rift (just below the bottom pitch). Belayed from a beautiful knob of rock, I traversed a few feet where I could see that from then on, it was all 'ninety degrees due up'.

The only prospect for further exploration appears to be along the streamway after a bit of hammer work. ... (Bridges 1978)

To my knowledge, the last known trip to Splash Pot took place in October 1983. Six members of TCC apparently visited the cave, one of which was unfortunately involved in a minor accident, when a rock was dislodged and struck him on the hand. Further information on this incident can be found in the section dealing with Cave Dramas (page 70).

[A plan and vertical section of Splash Pot by P. Shaw are in *Speleo Spiel,* 79: 10. The cave was pushed deeper in the 80s and 90s; it is now 306 m deep. – Ed.]

21.

BEGINNERS LUCK CAVE (JF79-82)

The discovery of Beginners Luck Cave virtually coincided with the formation of the Maydena Branch of TCC in April of 1975. ANM workers located the cave itself during felling operations in the Florentine Valley. Max Jeffries was duly informed and reported the find to TCC members.

A week or so later (12/4/75), the author and a number of other cavers arrived at Maydena to spend the weekend. Apart from investigating the new find, we were there to assist with the formation of the new branch. However, on the Saturday morning, Penny Knox (Northern Caverneers), Andrew Skinner and the author travelled out into the Settlement area to investigate a number of small caves in close proximity to the as yet unnamed Beginners Luck. In part, I reported:

> *A short distance from here on the same rise, Andrew located another hole, which led downwards at a fairly steep angle. It proved to have a 20 metre entrance pitch, which Andrew managed to negotiate in a free climb.*
>
> *However, a brief glimpse by yours truly resulted in the fetching of a rope, which made the going much easier. Two passages led off at the bottom, one to a small sump and the other choking off. Andrew managed to climb up to an upper level above the sump and was gone for sometime before returning. He reported that he had gone some distance and had noticed several side passages. He also left a cairn to mark his point of progress. Andrew suggested that we return on Sunday to survey and explore further* (Moody 1975b).

This particular hole proved to be one of two near vertical holes leading into the horizontal system, which later yielded a total of four separate entrances.

The following day, a large party led by Andrew Skinner and the author, returned to the new cave. Others present were David Walton, Max and Tim Jeffries, Philip Voss, John Miller, Michael Bromfield, Ruth Stephenson and Richard Priest. My trip report further stated:

> *A large combined party (some with thick heads [due to celebrations on Saturday night]) proceeded out to the Florentine Valley for another go at JF79 and to see what else we could turn up. A brief stop was made en route to locate a resurgence previously discovered by Max. A reasonable spring emerges but the flow of water did not live up to expectations. [Author's note: It had not been confirmed at this stage that Growling Swallet emerged in the Junee and we were always on the lookout for any resurgences.]*
>
> *Eventually the party arrived at the cairn [on the side of the road] and Max led us to the cave that he had discovered. It was not one of the ones we had found the day before. Andrew and I had walked past it twice on the previous day and had failed to notice it. The rather large entrance lay hidden down a bank behind fallen logs and [man] ferns. It contained a lower and upper passage. After a brief inspection, Ruth, David and Phillip diverted their attention to the upper passage and that was the last we saw of them for nearly three hours. After affixing a number (JF80), I joined the remainder of the party and went inside for a look. The passage was followed as far as a small chamber with a daylight hole and this was duly climbed by Andrew (the third entrance). Max, Tim and yours truly decided to check out an upper level in this chamber and crawled cautiously along one of the best-decorated passages I have yet seen in this area. Great care was taken [especially after Andrew's scathing remarks about Welcome Stranger] and only essential formation [baring our progress] was broken. The passage extended for some 30 metres and contained a good amount of straws, a pendulum-shaped stalactite (not as good as [the one in] Exit) and a few gours and rimpools.*
>
> *On surfacing, we learnt that Ruth, David and Phillip had not yet emerged. It was suggested that they may have come out of the daylight hole but Andrew was adamant that this was not the case. A brief search inside revealed nothing, so we decided to return to the cars and have lunch. The trio had still not returned by the time lunch was over so John, Michael and myself returned to the daylight hole and went in for yet another look. Another small tunnel led off in this chamber and on an earlier inspection, apparently did not appear to go. I saw that there was a 5 metre drop and called for a ladder. On reaching the bottom, I looked up and noticed that there appeared to be a way on. By placing one's feet on one wall and one's rear end on the other, it was possible to get to this higher level, crab-fashion. Eventually, Andrew joined me and we pushed on along the passage and through a rock-fall area. We pushed through several squeezes but found nothing to indicate that there had been anyone through there before us. About this time, I heard a voice call out and thinking it was Andrew, I did not take much notice.*
>
> *Andrew shushed me into silence and voices were heard again. [It was Ruth, Phillip and David on their way out.] Contact had been established at last. They then informed us that they had established a link with JF79 and noted a cairn which Andrew had built the previous day. They finally emerged after spending about three hours underground. Estimated length of passages to date [April '75] exceeds 400 metres* (Moody 1975b).

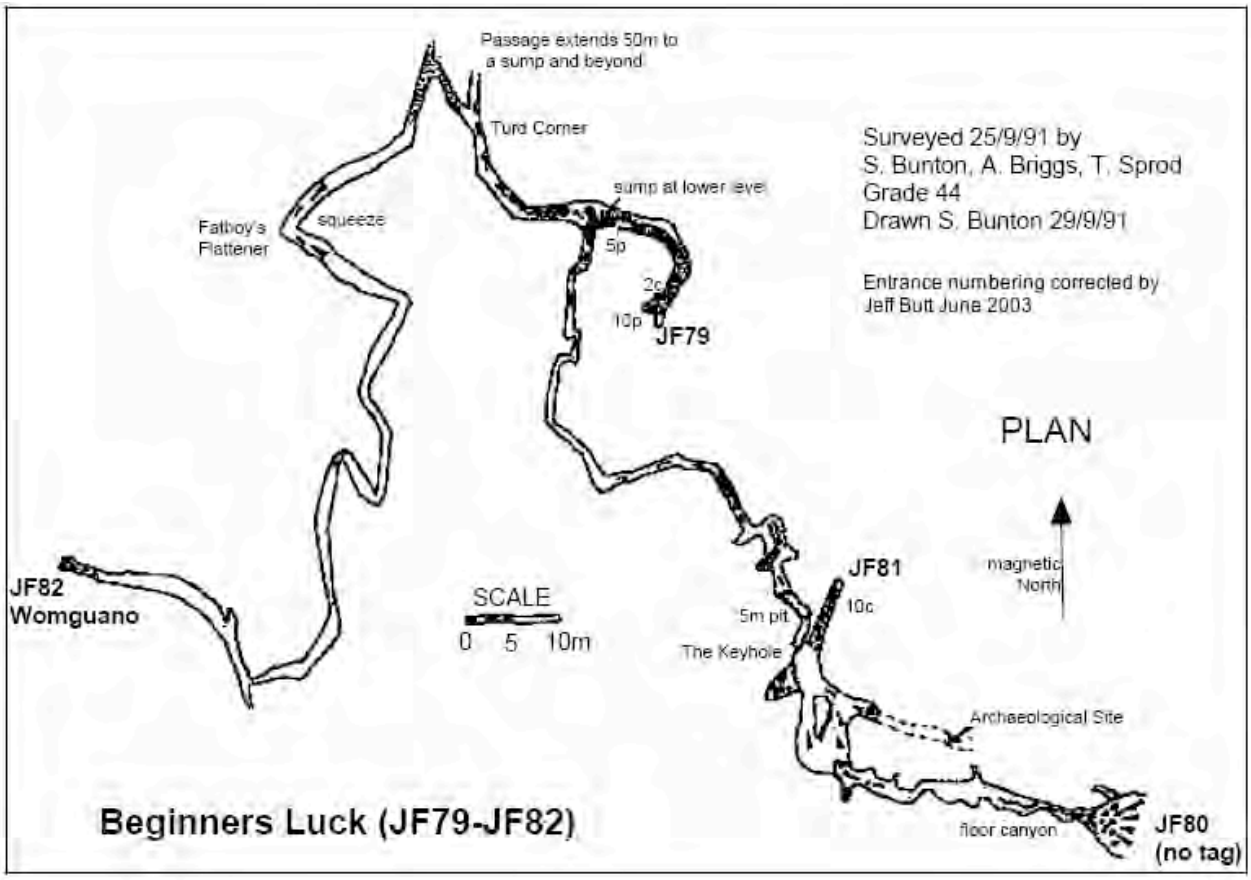
Early in May, the author again returned to Beginners Luck, accompanied by his [then] 8-year-old daughter, Louise, and a number of others including Albert Goede. It was on this trip that Albert recovered some bones, which later proved to be a find of some significance.

A number of trips were made to the cave following its discovery and in May of 1976, twelve months or so later, it was revealed that carbon dating had confirmed that Beginners Luck Cave was of archaeological importance. Charcoal deposits excavated by Albert Goede and Dr. Peter Murray of the Tasmanian Museum, had been sent to New Zealand for carbon-dating and the process had revealed that the cave had been used by Aboriginals some 12,000 years ago. This made Beginners Luck the oldest known Aboriginal site on the Tasmanian mainland at that stage (Goede 1976b).

As a result of this discovery, Albert Goede approached ANM (Australian Newsprint Mills) with a request that the site be protected from forestry operations. With logging work rapidly approaching the area in which the cave lay, it was feared that untold damage could possibly result as the cave lies close to the surface. However, ANM wasted no time and gladly complied with this request, making the area in the immediate vicinity of the cave an un-official reserve. Logging operations, which followed shortly after, skirted the cave, leaving it like an island in the midst of desolation.

However, on my last visit to the area back in 1988, regrowth had taken over and it was extremely difficult to locate the cave again.

In light of its significance as an Aboriginal site, the cave has been given the Aboriginal name Tiata Mara Kominya.



Plan of Beginners Luck / Tiata Mara Kominya Cave JF79-82 by S. Bunton et al. 1991
with entrance numbers corrected by J. Butt, June 2003
from Speleo Spiel*, 336 (May-June 2003): 28*

22.

THE CHAIRMAN (JF99)

This cave was among a number that were located by John Parker and Steve Annan in May-June of 1976. The cave itself lies on the southern fringes of the Junee limestone area, which also includes such notables as Khazad-Dum, Cauldron Pot, Dwarrowdelf, Splash Pot, Niagara Pot and Rift Cave. The Chairman's closest neighbour is Rift Cave. The cave is found at the base of a large, impressive sinkhole, which measures some 20 x 30 metres. The sinkhole is surrounded by lush rain forest.

The first attempt at exploring the new cave was made on 26 June 1976. Those present on this auspicious occasion were Max Jeffries, John Parker, Anne and Steve Annan (Maydena Branch) Therese Goede, Shane Garlick and the author (TCC). A brief trip report was supplied by Anne:

> *Maydena group set off at 8.30 am from the John Bull Road and were joined later at the cave, recently discovered by John Parker and Co. the previous Saturday, by Therese, Laurie and Shane. Sixty metres of ladder was let down to the floor of the sink hole from where three large passages led off. There were also a number of smaller ones. Anne, John, Steve and Shane climbed down but the cold (it was pouring with rain), lack of proper equipment (abseiling is the only feasible way of getting up and down) and exhaustion kept us from getting into any of the passages* (Annan 1976a).

The next trip to The Chairman, which incidentally received its name due to the fact that it was thought to preside over all the other caves in the area, took place on 28 August. Albert Goede provided the report, which stated in part:

> *We left Junee Road at 11.30 am and Phil [Voss] went home while the rest of us went up John Bull Road and then followed the old forestry road along the Junee Ridge to an impressive hole recently discovered by the Maydena Branch. The entrance is in virgin rain forest, a short distance east of the track and was reached at 1.00 pm. It is 20 metres across and occurs in limestone dipping to the west at an angle of 70 to 80 degrees.*
>
> *The Maydena Branch refers to it as 'The Chairman' and Laurie numbered it JF99. The pitch was rigged on the opposite side from the fireplace. At this point, there is a 15 metre long steep slope before the shaft becomes vertical. A natural balcony, just short of the edge, provided a safe and convenient stance for the belays. Quite some time was spent laddering the hole with six 9 metre ladders. Leigh [Gleeson] went down first with two additional ladders on his belt and was belayed by Derek [Shields]. He ran out of ladder and added on the two extra 9 metre lengths. He still found himself 12 metres short of the floor and was lowered the remaining distance on the safety-line. Derek then descended with three ladders on his belt and was belayed by me. Two of these ladders were required to reach the bottom of the first pitch which was estimated to be 75 metres deep, making it the fourth deepest pitch [at that time] in Tasmania.*
>
> *Leigh and Derek reported a sizeable chamber at the bottom and went off exploring at 3.45 pm. Laurie took over the manning of the pitch from Steve [Annan] and myself; while Anne and Max headed off to Maydena as they both had to be back early. Prior to this, Max and Laurie numbered a small swallet only a short distance above JF99, JF100, with the number being fixed to a tree, as no rock face was available. Leigh and Derek eventually returned to the bottom of the shaft and were hauled up by Laurie and myself. They reported that they had reached a depth of nearly 120 metres and were stopped by another shaft of an estimated 15-25 metres, as they did not have enough ladder to tackle it. They also reported the presence of a strong draught, which sounded particularly promising. We decided that an early attempt should be made to bottom the hole and the ladders were left in place* (Goede 1976e).

The following weekend, Leigh Gleeson, Derek Shields, Stuart Nicholas, Mike Johnston, Andrew Davey, Max Jeffries and Therese Goede resumed explorations, Stuart reporting:

> *Aim of the trip was to continue exploration in The Chairman (JF99), the large pot recently discovered by the Maydena Branch. After an early start (relatively) and some drama with abseil ropes, we were all underground before noon. Meantime, Max and Therese were doing some valuable track-clearing work.*
>
> *We continued on from the 80 m entrance pitch, down a 15 m rope pitch to the previous limit of exploration. This turned out to be [a] 40 m (nearly free-hanging) pitch. I am not certain of details from here on, as I remained at the top of this pitch. However, I gathered that there was a 10 m rope pitch and a 10 m ladder pitch directly below the 40 m pitch, leading to a large chamber with a small stream flowing through it. The exploration continued downstream, in a 'railway tunnel', to a rock-fall where crawling had to be resorted to. Progress was halted by a narrow 15 cm slit into which the stream disappeared. Estimated depth is 165 metres with plenty of exploration work still to be done.*
>
> *All were on the surface by 9 pm where a fire left by Max and Therese was most welcome* (Nicholas 1976a).

A week later, a party consisting of Leigh Gleeson, John Parker, Steve Annan, Derek Shields and Graham Bailey returned for another look-see. Steve filed a brief report:

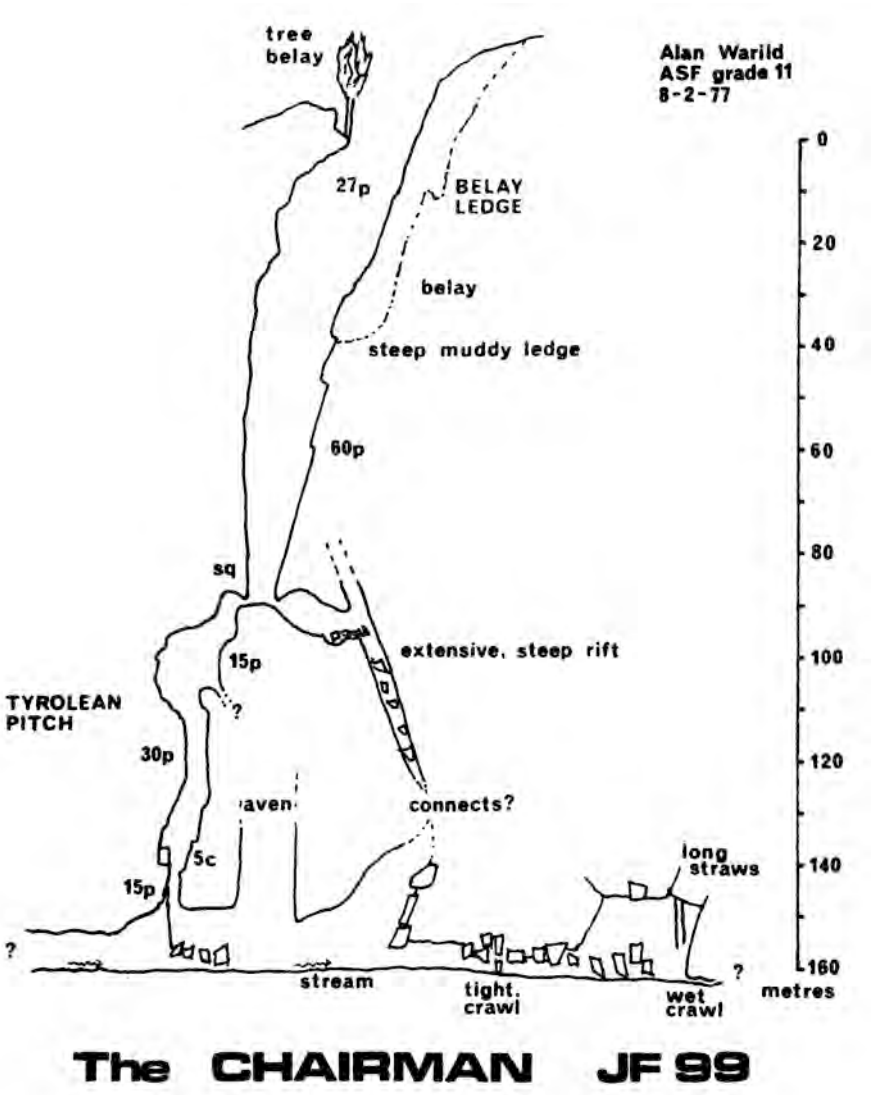
> *Set off at about 10 am - snow covered the ground and it snowed all the way as we walked through the forest, which looked beautiful coated with snow. Derek, Graham and myself descended - with John and Leigh belaying. Derek explored upstream from the chamber mentioned in the last report and reported many passages leading on but once again we were short on ladders. Altogether, we were down for about five and a half hours and after pulling up all the gear, we arrived back at the cars at about 12.15 am, walking in the rain this time - it was a change from snow! There's plenty of more work to be done on this cave - but we have decided to wait till summer before we go down again* (Annan, S. 1976).

In April of 1977, an article written by one of Australia's foremost caving identities, Alan Warild (who lives in Sydney), appeared in *Speleo Spiel.* Part of the article, which covers a visit made to the cave in January 1977, read:

> *Armed with the map and no ladders, John Minchin and I of UNSWSS [University of New South Wales Speleological Society] and Randall King of SUSS [Sydney University Speleological Society] went down to have another look at this cave. The following is both as accurate a cave*

description as I can give plus the story of how we went down this spectacular pothole.

Without even getting into the entrance, our first problem had cropped up - Randall's carbide lamp was at the hut - never mind, we had a torch and two spare cyalumes. The first 27 metre is a superb free hanger from the obvious tree on the south (lower) side of the entrance. This lands just below a good tie-off for the rest of the pitch, which is about 60 metres down muddy slabs to a flat mud floor -90 metres [down]. The obvious hole down a mud slope to the right leads to a series of rifts, which kept us busy for over an hour. They hadn't been entered before and are still not fully explored.



Long. section of The Chairman JF99 – by Alan Warild, UNSWSS 8/2/77 – from Speleo Spiel, *122: 5*

The way on is almost as obvious. A squeeze at the other end of the pitch bottom opens onto a chimney requiring a 15 m handline. It is almost a pitch, but to rig it as such would require very many rope protectors. Also, care should be exercised as this, and the next drop, both throw rocks. Looking up on the left, there is a large flake about 3 metres up the wall. It is a reasonable belay for the next pitch except that it would entail three (at least) critical rope protectors. After a spot of interesting climbing, I had the rope hanging free down the centre of the shaft, from an excellent natural belay on the far side of the pitch. With a protector just below the knot, I abseiled 30 m to the floor, leaving Randall and John to figure out how they would cross the Tyrolean traverse I had just set up. I was now at -135 metres.

As the rocks continued to rain from above, I climbed down the easy 5 m to the next pitch, which from the obvious bollard dropped 15 m to a rockpile below. Walking down the boulders leads to a small stream at -160 metres; the chamber is quite large and a huge aven leads upward much further than our lights could shine. Moving downstream, we quickly passed the last limit of exploration (a cairn?) and after crawling 20 m down the now dry streamway, John and I stepped into more large chamber. This time however, it was adorned with masses of formation including two 5 m long straws. All quite impressive, but as our carbides were fading, we had to go.

Getting out was slow, as de-rigging a technically hard cave can be almost as slow as rigging one. The end result was one damaged rope on the entrance pitch, a 12 hour trip, and the feeling that 'We'll have to come back and do the rest of this cave'.

The Chairman is the type of cave (like Khazad-Dum), which could greatly benefit by a massive assault in the form of a rigging, an exploration, and perhaps a separate de-rigging team. Possibly even leaving the cave rigged for a few days. The streamway at the bottom is still going in both directions - upstream is an easy walk-through passage, downstream is a wet crawl or a bypass through the large, open rockpile above. All it needs is enough people at the bottom to look about (Warild 1977).

With John Parker rapidly locating new caves at a breakneck pace, The Chairman was temporarily left in peace for twelve months. However, in January of 1978, two well-planned trips took place and both had support parties. The first took place on the weekend 7-8 and the advance party consisted of Stuart Nicholas, Phil Robinson, Mike March, Asahel Bush, Ross Mansfield and Bill Nicholson. Support came from Ray and Ros Hart (WASG), Bruce McIntosh (TCC) and Anita ? (VSA). Stuart supplied the report:

Many weeks planning and training culminated it what must surely be the trip of the year as far as TCC is concerned. By a stroke of luck, a bypass was found around the low crawls through the rockpile and surveyed passage length now stands at 785 metres with plenty more to be explored and surveyed! Read on for more details . . .

After much persuasion, Phil Robinson was dragged out of 'retirement' for this trip and he in turn dragged Ross Mansfield (fresh from the European mountaineering scene) and Asahel Bush (another climber) along to make up a very strong party.

A fairly slack start had everyone (except Bruce McIntosh, who managed to come up later) at the entrance before 11 am and Ross, Bill and Stuart had rigged and descended the entrance pitch by 12 noon. Minor hassles were encountered when rigging the handline pitch and the next two pitches were sorted out and everyone, including one smashed accumulator, arrived at the stream after three hours or so. The survey being carried out by Phil and Mike was terminated at this point pending further exploration.

Ross and Asahel had a brief look upstream but did not find anything very exciting although a good push would no doubt reveal more passage. Downstream we messed around in the rockpile and some of the side passages. Bill found the 5 m straws mentioned by Alan Warild (1977) and some giant (5 cm) shrimps after crawling along a low, damp passage into a formation chamber. Meanwhile, back where the action was . . . !

Phil and Mike had poked their heads up through a small hole off to the right of the stream passage and before them lay vast open spaces (well – they were big anyway). Some time later we could see their lights high up to the left of the stream passage - they had crossed over the top and were busily surveying a large chamber. Ross then climbed up a narrow rift to meet them.

Meanwhile, Asahel and myself waited for Bill to return from the formation chamber. When he appeared, we made our way back to the chamber below the bottom pitch where a brew was had. Asahel then started on his way out.

About three hours after Ross left us to join Mike and Phil, the three of them returned with news that every caver likes to hear - they had run out of time, not cave!! Apparently the passage ranges from narrow sloping rifts to wide, open walking-type passages with a number of high level side passages being observed also. A couple of hundred metres of the main passage were surveyed but time had run out and most was left to a later date. The decision to leave all the gear rigged for next week was made after a brief conference and soup drinking session.

Three hours after leaving the stream and about 12 hours after leaving the surface, half a dozen sweaty bodies hauled themselves back onto the surface to be greeted by a log fire, hot soup and heavy 'blues' music, thanks to Bruce and Anita (Nicholas 1978a).

The following weekend, four members of the original advance party returned, Stuart, Mike, Phil and Bill. The support party however, contained a completely different group. Two visiting Western Australian cavers, Ken Lance and Graeme Roberts, and Julia Marsh and Pavel Ruzicka (both TCC). Once again Stuart reported:

After the previous week's victorious trip, everyone managed to reach the entrance at a respectable hour and in fact, the advance group were all underground well before midday. Having left the pitches rigged the previous week enabled the four of us to reach the stream in around forty minutes. This put us two or three hours ahead of the previous trip.

Mike and Bill were sent off along the new section for further exploration while Phil and Stuart aimed to finish the survey and then meet up with the others. The survey took longer than expected, nearly 6 hours in fact, and we had only just reached the previous limit of exploration when Mike and Bill could be heard approaching along a low, rocky crawl.

The cave apparently continues for some distance via crawls and passages and finally a large chamber, partly filled with boulders, is reached. A way through and over this rockpile was found but ended in an estimated 12 m pitch. An obvious continuation was evident at the foot of the pitch. Further exploration may enable a low level route through the rockpile to be found and hence effectively negate the pitch.

Following the re-union, we made our way back towards the bottom pitch, exploring a very large and extensive high level side passage on the way. This passage contained some excellent formation and a small streamway.

De-rigging the cave took a considerable time, with the last man reaching the surface around 3 am, after a 15-hour trip. A lack of water in the area around The Chairman made for a rather thirsty walk out, although Phil came to the rescue with a small quantity of water from the depths of his pack.

<u>Notes</u> -

- *The surveyed length of the main passage from the surface to the first week's exploration limit is 785 metres.*
- *The depth to the same limit is 187 metres.*
- *Known so far there would easily be another 250 metres of passage bringing the total length to over one kilometre.*
- *Depth so far does not increase a great deal from the survey limit.*
- *On both of these trips the new canvas (fire-hose) rope protectors with Velcro fastening were used and proved to be extremely successful.*
- *Two ropes had sulphuric acid spilt on them during the January 7th trip when a gear bag was dropped and the spare lamp it contained was smashed. These ropes have been removed from general usage pending further investigation into the reactions, if any* (Nicholas 1978a).

As a result of these two trips, the editorial in the TCC newsletter, *Speleo Spiel*, for February 1978, reported:

The last two months have been very active ones for the club. The highlight has undoubtedly been the further exploration of The Chairman in the Junee area, which is rapidly developing into one of the state's major cave systems.

Due to the tyrannies of time, distance and difficult access, exploration is far from complete with unexplored passages 'going off in all directions'! So far, the surveyed depth of this system is 183 metres while 785 metres of passage length have been surveyed with another estimated 400 metres explored. The cave, which only has a small stream in it, is still going in the downstream direction and trends south-east so that a link-up with the underground course of the Junee River does not seem likely at present. White Anaspides *shrimps have been collected from the streamway and have been submitted to the University [of Tasmania] zoology department* (Goede 1978a).

Early in March, some two months later, another attempt was made to explore the cave further. Stuart Nicholas led the advance party of Ross Mansfield, Ross Bridges and Dave Buckingham (Division of Recreation). The support party consisted of Jenny Buckingham and Anthony Morgan. Stuart reported (Nicholas 1978c):

After the usual gear sorting ceremony at the road end, what must be close to record time for the walk in with heavy packs was set at 45 minutes. The entrance pitch was soon rigged with Ross Bridges' 91 m Bluewater rope, tied off at the 30 m point. Eventually, all four in the party assembled at the (very low) stream, where excess gear was removed and preparations made to push exploration as far as

possible. No surveying was planned, just a push downstream.

From the limit of the survey, we were in unknown territory since neither Mike [March] nor Bill [Lehmann], who explored beyond that point were on this trip. As we grovelled on along the dry streamway, the talus under which we were crawling began to look decidedly hairy - huge blocks being jammed by small rocks in the diverging spaces between them. One often had to wriggle around or under these 'chock rocks', the ends of which stuck out into the streamway - rather like the detonator used to fire a charge of gelignite!

A very rough estimate put the furthest point reached at about 150 to 200 metres from the end of the survey but this could be quite inaccurate. When our courage ran out, a large cairn was built to mark the limit of exploration along the streamway.

On the way back we climbed up onto the top of the talus and found a couple of cairns left by Bill and Mike on the previous trip. Although a pitch off the edge of the talus was found and descended to yield a negative result, subsequent discussion with Bill and Mike indicates that it may not have been the one they found. Only further exploration will resolve this mystery.

More grovelling eventually got us back to the brew chamber at the foot of the pitches where several cups of coffee and soup were rapidly consumed and enjoyed by all. A minor organisational hitch while de-rigging on the way out was the cause of one terylene rope being hit with a rock and cut partly through.

After a fairly hard 12 hours underground, four grotty and discouraged cavers with no backsides in their overalls arrived back on the surface to be met with cups of coffee served up by Jenny and Anthony.

Notes: (1) The far reaches of the streamway look like they could flood in heavy rain.

(2) Unless you are very brave (or mad) do not attempt to negotiate the streamway beyond a very narrow constriction around an obstructing rock (you'll know it when you see it).

(3) Exploration possibilities still exist in the big chamber above the talus and also downstream. Other high levels may still be discovered.

In mid-December of 1978, an advance party of two, namely Bill Nicholson and Chris Rathbone, aided by Peter Watts, Stuart Nicholas, Pavel Ruzicka and Len Smith, arrived with intentions of exploring the remaining possibilities. However, it was not to be. Bill's report stated why:

After a late start and half an hour of stirring from Ditto [Chris], Bill led the first pitch at about 1 pm. Three protectors and a short rope delayed our descent to three hours before we [finally] hit the streamway.

A short brew, umpteen metres of blue tape and four hours later, Bill and Chris reached the last chamber so far explored. By this stage it was 8.55 pm. We did no further exploration of this chamber or beyond because Chris chose this moment to dislodge a body-sized piece of talus down a 7 metre rift, putting our nerves on edge. We left ten minutes later, back along the way we had come. What took four hours to reach, took only an incredible 1.25 hr. back. Just goes to show what grim determination, a well-marked route and an empty stomach will do.

After a brew and yet another brew, we proceeded to jumar out. Once Chris was on his way up the 84 m entrance pitch, Bill tied all ropes end to end (uncoiled) to be hauled up afterwards.

By 1.30 am and after 12 hours of solid knee stretching, leg pulling, hand scratching, rib bruising, nose scraping, mind blowing, arm jarring and hip dragging, we had a rip-snorter of a trip! (Nicholson 1979)

Towards the end of 1979, enthusiasm for yet another attempt on The Chairman began to increase with a trip being planned for December. This duly took place and attracted a NUCC (National University Caving Club) party, led by Stuart Nicholas [TCC] and consisting of Gordon Taylor, John Briggs and Tim Rudman. Stuart's report said (Nicholas 1980a):

Trudging in along the 'Kokoda Trail', we finally arrived at the impressive entrance shaft about an hour and a half after leaving the car ... A quick and efficient descent saw all four of us at the streamway in good time, armed with plenty of enthusiasm plus photographic and survey gear.

The stream level was low, although there were signs that it had been much higher in the recent past. Thanks to the blue marker tapes left by Bill Nicholson, our progress through the twists and turns of the sometimes torturous route downstream, was fairly rapid, interrupted by only a couple of photographic sections. Thanks to yours truly not having looked at the previous survey very closely before the trip, we were unsure as to where to recommence surveying. After some deliberation, a traverse was started of an object that bears some resemblance to a stretched version of a lemon (I have a picture of it!) and carried on for about 75 metres ending at a cairn on a large, flat sloping rock.

This is situated in an open 'chamber' about 5 m across and high enough to stand up in - an unusual feature of this cave! Later perusal of the previous survey indicated that there is a considerable gap between it and the new section. Given time to forget the knee-tearing, body-wrenching nature of this cave, we'll be back to fill in the gap and hopefully add more to the far end and high-level sections of the survey.

The very nature of the far downstream section of The Chairman is making exploration very difficult since so much time is needed just to do the round trip, without further exploration. Thus far, the shortest trip has been 10 hours and the longest 15, so future visits could well develop into epics of the type not seen here since the initial exploration of Khazad-Dum, Cauldron Pot, Tassie Pot and so on. Any takers for another trip later this year [1980]?!

Despite Stuart's persistence throughout 1980 in attempting to drum up support for another push, it was November before it took place. Those who succumbed to Stuart's persuasive tongue were Diana Davies, Geoff Fisher and Andrew Briggs, with Chris Davies and Len Smith as sherpas. Later Stuart reported (Nicholas 1980c):

After several abortive attempts to pay a visit to this hole, we finally got a trip underway on this beautifully fine weekend.

A fairly early start and a surprisingly fast walk in saw us at the entrance soon after 10 am. The 84 m entrance pitch was soon rigged from the usual trusty trees and by means of a long (9 m) header, was tied off at the mud ledge in such a way as to obviate the need for any protectors. This certainly made for great peace of mind during the prussic out.

Everyone eventually made it to the streamway and after consuming quantities of food, we headed into the relatively unexplored upstream section of the cave. A brief look around revealed a couple of hundred metres of walkable

passage with several small streams joining the main stream from the numerous side passages. Two steep rifts were climbed to heights of about 50 m and 80-100 m respectively, with excellent prospects of them reaching the surface somewhere northwest of the entrance. We will know more when the survey is drawn up. Other leads were looked at but most (not all!) either blocked completely or became too low for easy passage. An only just dead frog and some complete animal skeletons were found in this area indicating positive links with the surface.

The consumption of more food was followed by a surveying session upstream, investigation of more side passages and after all that, a brief look downstream, although not to the grotty stuff at the limit of exploration. A fairly slow but uneventful retreat was made, the leader carefully organising the exit so that Andrew was sent out first, thereby sparing the rest of us the torture of his bad jokes. We were all on the surface by midnight and sat around for some time enjoying the exceptionally mild evening (fine too!) and the cups of tea provided by Chris and Len.

At the end of February 1981, Stuart Nicholas, Geoff Fisher, and two SCS members, Rolan and Stefan Eberhard, again visited the cave. The hapless sherpas engaged were Trevor Wailes, Bruce Tranter and Malcolm Ritchie. Geoff Fisher, alias 'Mr. Spock' provided the log. He noted (Fisher 1981):

The aim of our trip was to push downstream exploration of The Chairman beyond the present limit and to generally seek new frontiers and boldly go where no man had gone before. Despite our meticulously planned early start, we did not arrive at the impressive cave entrance until 11.00 am. However, things did improve and by 12.30 we were all in the main chamber and ready to start exploration. The stream had all but disappeared due to the exceptionally dry summer and the only water in the cave was in the odd pool here and there. After about two hours, we made it to the end of the surveyed section and entered into terra incognita.

The open, easy streamway was now well behind us and our progress was either along the dry streambed - crawling, or through the massive rock fall above it - clambering. After an hour or so we had gone a reasonable distance along the streamway given these difficult conditions. The life of our batteries only allowed another half hour on the outward trip and this factor combined with the lack of reward, decided us on turning back. A compass bearing taken at this stage indicated the streamway was veering away from its previously surveyed southeast line and was heading in the general direction of the Junee resurgence.

Our return to the surface was reasonably quick but not without incident. Stefan's 'Clog' ascenders failed to grip properly on the wet rope in the 40 m pitch and it was necessary to lower Rolan's rig for him to use on the 84 m top pitch. This rectified the problem and by 1.00 am we had all returned to the surface and were ready for the walk out to the cars.

Although we did extend the known length of The Chairman, we didn't make any significant finds and are not in a hurry to go back again.

However, regardless of the above statement, a party containing one of the participants, Stuart Nicholas and one of the sherpas, Trevor Wailes, accompanied by Nick Hume and Andrew Briggs returned in mid-June of that year. Stuart (Nicholas 1981b) provided the report:

A previous trip to this nasty hole had produced an upstream survey showing a low, wet grotty crawl to be directly on the line of the main passage further downstream. The upstream area being far more pleasant than the far downstream section, made it easier to find bods to push the crawl.

So, armed with the usual mountain of rope, Stuey's wellies, Andrew's jokes, Trev's wetsuit and Nick Hume, we staggered along the track, rigged the pitches and eventually arrived at the crawl in question. Much discussion and looking for alternative routes ensued until Andy was persuaded to his 'rat up a drainpipe' impression. Too wet and too low was the result. More discussion. The combined efforts of our four brains conjured up the idea of excavating a large hole in front of the crawl and then breaching the separating wall to allow the water to drain off into the hole. Mud-pluggers Incorporated finally had an estimated one cubic metre hole dug and with no ceremony at all, the wall was breached.

The water level in the crawl dropped by an estimated 150 mm giving a suitable breathing space at the far end. However, all was to no avail as Nick found when he waddled through. A sand/mud bank blocked progress and the running water sound was coming from an arm-sized hole off to the right. The entire area looks like a DOWNSTREAM sump rather than upstream, with passages floored by silt and sandy-mud. To quote a [late] well-known physics professor - 'Why is it so?'

Back at the Homestead by about half-eight after the shortest Chairman trip yet, much chin-wagging and eating of food took place until the not very small hours of the morning. All in all, a great trip and good fun was had by all. ...

Stuart added a postscript to this report saying:

Anyone visiting the upstream Chairman area beware - the low, wet crawl you may look at, suddenly gets VERY deep near the front end of it!

Apparently interest in The Chairman waned considerably over the next two and a half years with no reported trips to the cave whatsoever. With exploration being centred on an un-numbered cave known as Ice Tube; grovelling in The Chairman had apparently gained a very low priority rating.

23.

VICTORY '75 (JF110)

This cave is located a short distance south of The Chairman but on the lower side of the track. It was one of John Parker's first finds and was located late in 1975. On 26 June 1976, it was explored to a depth of around 60 metres by John Parker and Shane Garlick. Part of a trip report supplied by Anne Annan (1976a) stated:

> *After this, we moved on to another smaller hole found by John [again] a few weeks earlier. John and Shane wet down over 60 metres of mud-slide, then a series of drops - without reaching the end - the cave has a few formations and a lot of bones.*

The next attempt at exploration took place in September of that same year. A three-person party, consisting of John Parker, Anne Annan and Max Jeffries visited the cave. In part Anne reported:

> *After lunch we went to the 'mudslide' hole, previously explored on 26/6/76. John and I descended 240 ft [75 m] with Max belaying - this was a further 60 ft [18 m] on from the previous limit of exploration. After a fairly tight squeeze at the 200 ft [63 m] level, we came to a huge drop - and the end of our ladders. We all agreed that the position of the cave, the size of the drop we reached, and the strength of the breeze coming through indicates that this cave could very possibly join with The Chairman system* (Annan 1976b).

The late Stuart Nicholas and Bill Nicholson bolting big pitch in JF110 Victory '75 – 11/12/76

With prospects looking good for yet another deep cave, the next visit was made early in December 1976. Members of this party were Max Jeffries, Stuart Nicholas, Anne Annan, John Parker, Mike March and Bill Nicholson. Part of Anne's ensuing report announced:

> *The trip was originally planned for December 4th but was postponed till the Sunday because of heavy rain. Sunday proved to be pretty miserable as well but we finally pushed off at 11.30 - leaving Therese [Goede] babysitting Jenny [Annan], Ben [Goede] and Steve [Annan] nursing his [broken] leg.*
>
> *As the John Bull Road was flooded, we left the cars at the Junee Quarry Road and climbed the ridge to join up with our usual track. This involved a long, hard haul, and Mike's 'Are we there [yet]?' (meaning at the cave), was greeted with 'This is entrée, mate!' from John. However, we all arrived in satisfactory condition at the cave at about 1.30 pm armed with 16 ladders and plenty of rope.*
>
> *John and I put down 9 ladders - to the edge of the pitch, which was the previous limit of exploration. Bill, Stuart and Mike then descended and John and I climbed out to allow them more room to work (at this point the cave is very narrow, with a tremendously high ceiling).*
>
> *When the others emerged at about 5 pm, they reported that Mike had descended the pitch 210 ft [63 m] and could see what appeared to be a ledge or floor some 40 ft [12 m] below him, but had reached the limit of the ladders. Bill brought out some interesting skulls of what appeared to be some sort of rodent.*
>
> *We sat by Max's huge fire drinking tea before setting off on the long push home. As we had decided to return the following Saturday, we left the ladders rigged* (Annan 1976c).

Apart from a few minor changes, most of the original party returned the following weekend. Stuart Nicholas led the group that now consisted of Bill Nicholson, Anne Annan, John Parker and the author. Stuart reported:

> *Aim of the trip was to further explore the pot visited the week before. Two bolts were placed during the descent - one about halfway down and the other at the top of the main pitch. With two more ladders attached to the already lengthy string of ladders Stuart descended to a ledge about 38 m down. When joined by Bill, we descended a further 16-18 m to the floor of the chamber making a pitch of total length about 55 metres.*
>
> *SRT [Single Rope Technique] was considered for the main pitch but rope protection would have been a nightmare and the idea was abandoned.*
>
> *Wandered about 50 m along a dry streamway to a muddy squeeze with a strong draught coming out of it. Owing to a lack of enthusiasm, the squeeze was not pushed although with the aid of a hammer it could easily be negotiated. There appeared to be a small chamber on the other side.*
>
> *Another possible lead is a pitch on the other side of the ledge encountered during the descent of the main pitch. This could lead to the same place as the squeeze - only time will tell. It is interesting to note that the system is heading slightly west of south - almost directly towards Junee Cave.*

Guesstimated system depth is around 125 m. The cup of coffee provided by the 'Comfort Club' of TCC/MB was most welcome after a seven hour trip (Nicholas 1976b).

On 18 December, Stuart Nicholas, Mike March, Bill Nicholson and one other known only as Brendon, again returned to the cave for what was hoped to be a final assault. Stuart reported (Nicholas 1977a):

With promises of plenty of support from members and a relatively fine day (it was only drizzling intermittently), hopes were high for a continuation of JF110 beyond the squeeze. As usual, nothing came true - support from club members was poor, the squeeze proved a major obstacle and it poured.

We had left the gear in the cave after the previous trip, which saved a lot of time and effort on the walk in. On the descent, we surveyed the pot, the result of which I should have plotted up for the next Spiel. *As Brendon had had no previous ladder experience, Mike and Stuart descended the main pitch (length 57.5 m) with Bill belaying. The squeeze at the end of the dry streamway proved to be a major problem. Neither Mike nor myself could get through it easily so, as a final effort and showing great self sacrifice, Mike took his gear off and proceeded to negotiate the squeeze - removing several large chunks of skin in the process. All the effort was wasted, however, as it opened out slightly and then closed in again to an even tighter squeeze. (A recent trip by a party from New South Wales revealed that the second squeeze blocks off with no further leads.)*

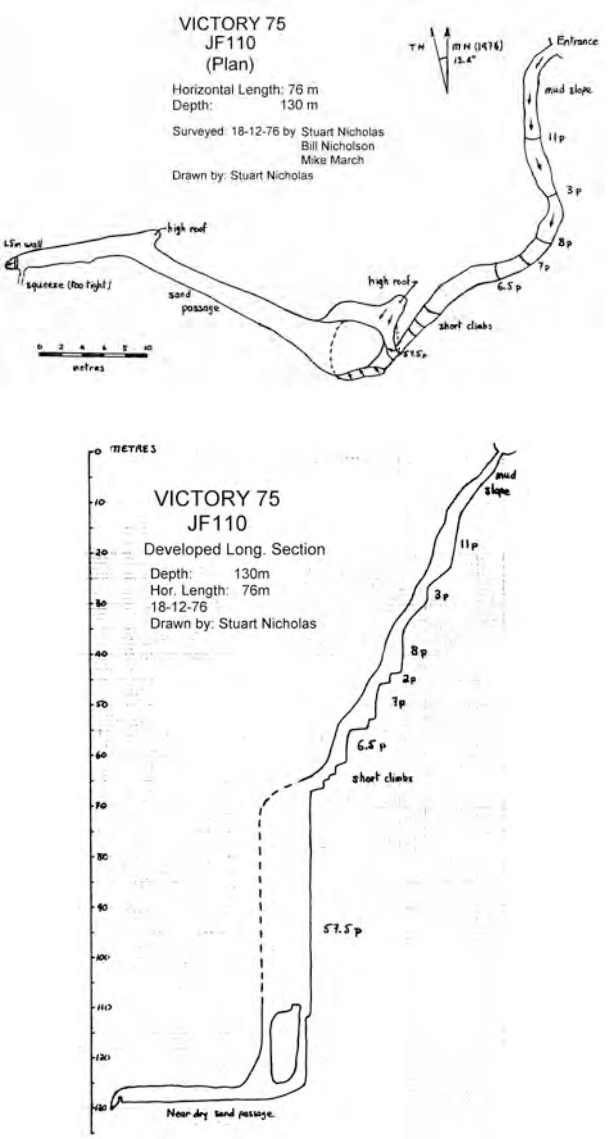
Nearly an hour later, we managed to haul the ladders up the main pitch, a job that proved considerably more difficult than anticipated owing to the gear continuously snagging on the rough rock face. After about 8 hours of hard but enjoyable caving, we emerged with great mounds of gear, which we had extracted from the cave. Owing to the lack of people, some gear had to be left at the cave entrance for later removal.

With no likelihood of a continuation, this cave soon faded into obscurity and its depth remained at 130 metres. No further trips took place until a small party made a quick visit in July 1983. Part of Nick Hume's report ran:

... Mike [Edwards] and I eventually rigged a handline into the steep rift of the entrance ...

We were surprised to find a short SRT pitch, just beyond this handline. contrary to advice, and considering the time and the single 60 metre rope we were carrying, became disillusioned with the idea of bottoming the cave. The looseness of the floor gave rise to an inevitable close encounter, namely a rock and Phil [Hill]'s ankle. He continued to rig the short pitch without complaint, and we all ended up in an unimposing chamber with more scungy flooring. A re-tie to a piton enabled Phil and myself to abseil/handline to a short, narrow pitch, which we descended to the top of the 53 metre shaft and the end of our rope. This pitch could be rigged free, from a bolt and short header, and looks quite impressive (Hume 1983).

The author has also been to the top of this 53 metre pitch and was present when Stuart Nicholas and Bill Nicholson reached the bottom. Having a distinct preference for caves of a more horizontal nature, the sight of their tiny accumulator lights moving around far below me was indeed an awe-inspiring spectacle and one I can still remember quite clearly.



Plan and developed long. section of Victory 75 Cave – by Stuart Nicholas et al. 18/12/76 from Speleo Spiel, *131: 10-11*

24.

THE WESTERN FLORENTINE

This particular area lies on the western side of the Florentine River and on the eastern slopes of the Tiger Range. Prior to June of 1974, cave exploration had been limited to the eastern side of the Florentine River along with the Junee area. With an unlimited amount of caves being located in these two areas it had not been necessary to discover what lay on the western side of the river. During discussions with various club members it was thought unlikely that much of interest would be found. It was a known fact that the limestone did extend as far as the eastern banks of the Florentine River. However, even if it did extend across the river, any caves found would mostly be of the horizontal type due to the low-lying nature of the land.

In or about May of 1974, ANM commenced logging operations on the western side of the river. The following month, Max Jeffries informed me that he had located a small cave, which the two of us promptly investigated. My report appears below (Moody 1974a):

Little did we know what the foggy day had in store for us when we arrived at the barrier at 9.45 am. El Presidente forgot his boots but luckily for him the gatekeeper had a pair that fitted nicely. The purpose of our spur of the moment trip was to explore Max's latest find and do some belated numbering. We reached Tiger Road and travelled down it until we found Gittus Road, which turned off on our left and crossed the Florentine River. This area is being logged and after donning our trog suits we took a short walk down towards the river.

We arrived at an outcrop of limestone and Max indicated a letter-box type squeeze. Lights went on and in we went. After a little scrambling and a few curses from me, we found ourselves in a SMALL chamber (Will you please pull your boot out of my face, Max!) At this point three [small] passages awaited our attention. Max ducked down and disappeared into the left-hand one with me close behind. Several metres later, we were able to stand and admire an undermined piece of circular-shaped flowstone which, when struck with a solid object, sounded [just] like a dinner gong. The passage ended here so we backtracked to the chamber with me in front. Not liking the look of the low-lying passage, I worked my way into the largest passage, where, after a couple of metres, I was able to stand upright again. This passage extended for some distance [not far] before ending in a mud-gravel choke. An aven led up to the surface at this point and daylight could be seen. Daylight was also discernable further back up the passage. Several old stalactites and a couple of stalagmites are also in this section, along with [a colony of] cave crickets and [cave] spiders. After making a rough sketch, we made our way out and fastened our first number to the right-hand side of the entrance - JF51.

This was the first cave numbered on the western side of the Florentine River. It was duly named Gong Cave. After numbering several other small caves on the eastern side of the river shortly after visiting Gong Cave, we then wandered south along the riverbank, as my report continued:

We were keeping our eyes peeled on a roundabout way back to the car. Suddenly it happened - - - the following conversation ensued. 'Hey, Max! Get a load of that cliff face across the river!' I had noticed a large vertical cliff dropping 30-40 metres into the river on the western side. 'Looks interesting,' Max replied. 'It would be okay if we could get across the river.' 'Not much chance of that,' I replied, 'It's too damn wide!' [15-20 metres]

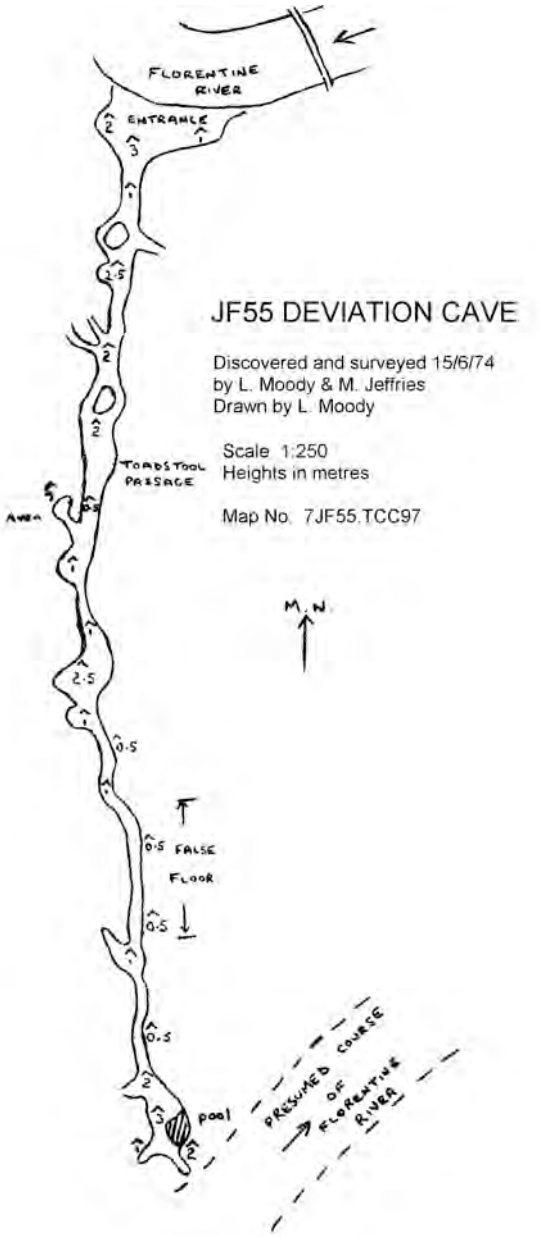
A small round hole was visible halfway up the face but entry was virtually impossible except from the top. We wandered on, scrambling over dead trees, which had been bulldozed to the edge of the river. Max was slightly ahead of me when I heard him shout. 'Laurie! Looks like an entrance at the southern end – and there's a way across!' I hurried to the edge of the river, which was around a sharp bend and saw that Max was already halfway across a fallen log, which spanned the river like a natural bridge. 'Wait for me!' I yelled eagerly, sighting what looked like a cave entrance behind some man-ferns. Testing my sense of balance to its uttermost extent, I gingerly ventured onto the log and noted happily that the water was relatively shallow [at this point]. By the time I reached mid-stream, Max, aided by his spiked boots, was across. As we had earlier discussed the possibility of finding a decent cave, our hopes had risen considerably. On reaching the other side safely, I soon joined Max at the entrance.

'Rather impressive', I remarked as we stood admiring the beckoning darkness. 'Dry too!' Max answered, 'I'll bet it only goes to that corner. It looks too good to go any further!' Silently, I tended to agree with him but our lights went on just in case. 'What's the bet it doesn't go?' Max muttered. 'Lead on!' [says I]. 'Looks like ---' Max began, 'It goes!' I yelled, flashing my light into a low lying passage, 'It damn well goes!!'

Down on my hands and knees and away we went. It went all right! [Seemingly] On and on and on! It was plainly evident that it was an old stream passage and from the amount of debris, it was apparent that it still carried water in flood conditions. The floor was dry and solid with an outstanding feature - no mud. Old formation accompanied us all the way. Several stalactites [had to be] broken to enable us to continue. Ten, fifty and finally seventy metres [quite possibly more] of flat passage were negotiated before we reached a small chamber, which appeared to be close to the surface. A clear, deep pool suggested that we were very close to the river and disappointed but nevertheless happy, we slowly headed back out. We were very happy in the regard that we had found another reasonably long cave [for this area] and so far the longest discovered on the western side of the Florentine River.

We investigated several [small] side passages but apart from an aven about 6 metres high, they went no distance. Toadstools were observed growing in complete darkness and a false floor was noted in one section. On emerging, we proudly attached a number - JF55, and decided that it was worthy of a name. I have since come up with Deviation Cave, which is appropriate in the fact that it [the cave] diverts the water from [part of] the Florentine in flood.

Another cave was located a short distance away and at first we thought it might connect with JF55 but on inspection by Max, this theory has been dispelled. It was numbered JF56. All in all, it proved a very profitable trip. Three new discoveries, all of which were on the western side of the river and of which one at least, is well worthy of a visit by cavers - JF55.



Plan of Deviation Cave JF55 by L. Moody 16/6/74
from Speleo Spiel, *92: 11*

The following week the author led a large party back to the vicinity of JF55. This time Albert Goede, Peter Shaw, Yvonne Collin, Max and Tim Jeffries, John Richardson, Don Holmes, Leonie Smith and David O'Brien accompanied me. My report (Moody 1974b) read:

> *After spending a week wondering about how we would cope with the crossing of the Florentine River, due to heavy rain, the party arrived at the barrier before and up until 9.15 am. The intention of the trip was mainly to take a further look at JF55 and the surrounding area.*
>
> *We arrived at Felix Curtain Road but not without incident. Laurie's car blew a rear tyre coming down off The Gap but with plenty of help and advice, we were soon under way again. Trog-suits were donned and we set off down the track, which was littered in places with fallen trees. Hopes had fallen considerably in regard to crossing the river via the log. This was soon confirmed. Water was pouring over the log and our chances of crossing at this point were dashed. After [some] discussion, the party split up with Peter, Yvonne, David, Don, Tim and Leonie going upstream and Max, Albert John and I, heading down. ... Eventually Max located a suitable spot approximately 300-400 metres downstream from the cave and returned to the cars for rope. Albert and I headed back upstream, 'Hey-bobbing' on the way. [Hey-bobbing is the caving version of 'Coo-eeing']*
>
> *Apparently the other party had had no luck and were already heading back towards us. Whilst waiting for Max to return, JF54 was further investigated. This cave [on the eastern bank] contained and exceptionally deep pool of water, which was easily a metre deeper than usual. Peter gamely ventured in [to the cave] and was accompanied by John. This cave apparently extends a little further than was first thought but will have to wait till summer for a full investigation.*
>
> *Leaving Yvonne to wait for these two intrepid explorers to emerge, the rest of us joined Max, via his 'new bridge', complete with handrail and all, on the other side of the river. Max then commenced blazing a trail along the riverbank a short way, and then headed slightly inland intending to come out close to JF55. In the meantime, Albert chose to investigate a small sloping tube above the crossing. After deciding that it was a bit too tight, he inched his way out then tossed a few stones down - SPLASH!*
>
> *A straggled line of cavers headed off following Max's track but somehow the short walk developed into an overland trek, which eventually brought us out some distance above JF55. Several dolines were noted and investigated on the way but nothing of interest was found. Finally, we ended up at the cave and the party was conducted through. At the far [southern] end Albert collected bugs etc. and David investigated the aven and located a side passage leading off it. However, it [soon] proved to link up with the main passage. Leonie ventured head first into a narrow side passage but did not proceed out of sight. Due to the heavy rain [during the week], the former dry cave of the previous weekend was now wet and Max and I were constantly reminded of this fact.*

The following month, the author again returned to the Western Florentine accompanied by Max and Tim Jeffries, Leonie Smith and David O'Brien. My report (Moody 1974c) stated:

> *"We signed in at the ANM barrier at 9.50 am, conditions foggy, and made our way out into the Florentine. Several stops were made to allow David to take photographs. It was around 10.30 am when we parked our two vehicles down Felix Curtain Road. Our intentions were to cross the Florentine River and push inland towards the Tiger Range in an effort to establish the extent of the limestone. We set off and were able to cross via the log near JF55. The water level of the river had dropped considerably since our previous trip.*
>
> *The party then pushed inland and the going was fairly straightforward. Several dolines were noted and duly inspected, one of which may go with a dig. Gradually we began to climb and eventually reached a small, steep-sided gully approximately one kilometre from the river. At this point we lost the limestone and struck northeast in a gradual sweep to locate it again. [It was during this sweep that we located the remains of the old Dawson Road, mentioned in Chapter Two]. It [the limestone] was soon located and shortly afterwards I noticed an unlikely-looking hole, close to the top of a small limestone ridge. David, Max and Tim eagerly disappeared inside while Leonie and I awaited the outcome. Cries of excitement finally enticed us*

inside and the unlikely-looking hole proved to be a little more than we first thought.

The small entrance led into a rift-like chamber approximately 15 metres long by about 5-6 metres wide. Several small extensions led off and were duly investigated. The left-hand one yielded about 10 metres of crawling while the right-hand one led about 4 metres on to another chamber. This chamber was about 4 metres high and a metre or so higher than the first. Flowstone and moon-milk were in evidence and several small straws were noted. A left-hand passage led on a short distance and rose up towards the surface. Another passage led hard right and a slight climb was negotiated. At this point the going became rather constricted and another sharp right-hand bend ... ended in a muddy choke. Several other passages were examined on the way out but the results were negative.

On emerging, ... the cave was duly numbered JF57. It was evident that at some stage the cave receives a certain amount of water but this was not so on our investigation. About this time, Tim expressed concern about his dog, who wasn't present when we reached the surface. However, he soon showed up and we set off back towards the river, cutting a track, which will be used for further investigation of this area. David zig-zagged across the track and eventually located another hole. Inspection proved that a ladder would be needed and as we hadn't bothered to bring one, this will be left until our next trip. We finally emerged on top of a cliff face [above JF55] and after checking for holes, we reached the river a short distance downstream from the flood crossing.

Due to the fact that more interesting cave discoveries were found further down river to the north, I never managed to return to that region. However, John Parker may have covered it a few years later when he was busy in the Western Florentine. This new area (Stan Murray Road) proved much more accessible than the JF57 area.

During March of 1975, a party consisting of Max and Tim Jeffries and David Walton (a Kiwi), led by the author, journeyed down a 3.5 kilometre section of the Florentine River by rubber raft. The trip was not easy by any means and we experienced problems right from the start. Subsequently I reported (Moody 1975a):

An early start saw us at Max's place around 8.15 am. After a cup of coffee, we proceeded to the ANM barrier, signed in and headed off into the Florentine. The F11 Road was reached and negotiated as far as the new bridge, which now crosses the river approximately 1.5 km upstream from Deviation Cave (JF55). The trip had previously been announced as being a li-lo expedition but luckily (and I mean luckily), Max was able to obtain the use of an inflatable rubber dinghy. The reason for this particular trip was to mainly view a series of limestone cliffs known to exist in an area south of the new bridge, on the off-chance that we might locate some new caves.

However, things didn't go exactly to plan. Leaving my vehicle and family at the bridge, the exploration group headed back to Bill Hanlons Road in Max's ute. On reaching the end of this road, we parked the vehicle and set off down a 'cat-track' [bulldozer track] towards where I imagined the river to be - but alas and alack - no river! The party then split and individual efforts were made to locate it but to no avail. After a brief conference we returned to the ute, collected the dinghy and gear, then set off back to the end of the 'cat-track'. From here, we followed a series of red-painted markers, eventually ending up on the banks of a small creek. It was then decided to take a compass bearing of 260 degrees and a short time later, we emerged on the banks of the Florentine River.

Forty minutes or so was then spent inflating the dinghy and by 11.30 am we were finally afloat. The epic journey was under way but our problems were far from over. Although the dinghy proved its worth, it was frequently being lifted over log obstacles often in deep water and being carried over shallow sections. The western bank proved to be an almost continuous section of limestone cliffs and outcrops. Only one stream was observed entering the river from the eastern side and this was undoubtedly the stream that Albert Goede and I had briefly investigated late last year. The stream itself emerged some 300 metres downstream of our launching spot.

Two limestone cliffs, including the one I fell down in June of last year, were duly investigated but apart from one small cave, the eastern side of the river yielded nothing. Although only two small caves were noted on the western banks of the river, prospects inland could prove rewarding. The trip eventually ended some 500 metres upstream of the new bridge due to an excessive amount of flood debris which could have [possibly] been negotiated had time permitted. Wet, cold but pleased with our efforts, we struggled ashore, man-handling the dinghy over fallen timber until we reached a nearby 'cat-track'. This track led to the F11 Road, a short distance from the bridge. It had taken us over 5 hours to cover [roughly] 4 kilometres of river, including time spent investigating en route.

Further investigation of the Western Florentine area was carried out in June of 1975. On this occasion, Maydena Branch members located two caves off the top end of Stan Murray Road. These small caves were duly numbered JF83 and JF84. However, it was early October 1976 before further interest in the area was stimulated by the discovery of several holes north of Stan Murray Road. As a result of these discoveries, the author led yet another trip to the area. On this occasion I was accompanied by Albert Goede (who wrote the trip report), Max Jeffries, Andrew Skinner, Heather Symes, Therese Goede plus Diana and Ben Goede, Mike March and Anne Bevan. Albert had this to say (Goede 1976f):

Just for once, the weather was reasonable and we passed through the barrier at 10.15 am after gathering at Max's place. The first aim of the trip was to investigate a couple of holes along a new road which branches off Cashions Creek Road at the gravel quarries, a short distance north of the Lawrence Creek Rising. ...

We then crossed the Florentine River and after waiting for some time for road repairs to be affected, we drove north to the end of Tiger Road. After an early lunch, Laurie and I went to the southern end of a limestone outcrop between the road and the river and numbered a previously explored small cave (JF103). This cave is well worth a visit and contains a sizeable chamber with some very attractive formation. Laurie took some photographs while I unsuccessfully tried to push several low-level passages. Outside the entrance we met some of the others who, under Max's guidance, had explored a new hole on the opposite side of the hill, which apparently became too tight to follow after a short distance.

We then followed up the un-named branch road to the north of Stan Murray Road. The first hole we came to was a sloping muddy entrance down which a stream could be heard. This was the place where Max had previously caught a white Anaspides. *The entrance (JF104) goes 4 metres down a steep muddy slope to a short stream passage, which becomes too tight upstream and siphons*

downstream. To my delight the stream contained blind, white amphipods as well as white Anaspides*. I headed back to the vehicles to get my collecting gear while the others went on to greater things. I eventually managed to collect two specimens of each species.*

Meanwhile, Max and Co. went on to the next - a short stream cave with two entrances, which had first been explored on the previous weekend. The higher entrance was numbered JF105 while Max was given No. 106 to fix to the lower entrance sometime. Everyone got really muddy and the girls decided to call it a day. Max, Laurie and Mike then continued to the last cave - a 45° sloping entrance about 100 metres uphill and to the west of JF105. The cave was numbered JF107. It requires a rope for entry and is reputed to be the best and largest formation cave in the Western Florentine with several large chambers - one quite large. Straws with pendulum-type formations are also reported. Unfortunately, I did not see this cave. We returned to Hobart after a good day's caving.

Up until the end of 1980 only a number of isolated trips took place into the Western Florentine area. With interest centred on new and more interesting discoveries in the vicinity of The Chairman and Growling Swallet, exploration of the Western Florentine fizzled out. To my knowledge, thirteen caves were numbered with the possibility of several others being numbered by John Parker. I believe that in time, more caves will undoubtedly be discovered on the western banks of the Florentine River.

25.

CAVE DRAMAS

Fortunately, up until the present, Tasmania has been blessed with a minimum of serious caving accidents. Possibly this can be attributed more to good luck than good management. However, it would only be fair to mention that the two Hobart-based caverneering clubs and their northern counterpart, Northern Caverneers, do their utmost to ensure that members and prospective members are well versed in the pitfalls of the sport.

To my knowledge there have only been three serious caving accidents, which received considerable media attention. The first was in December 1968 when some young lads became trapped in a non-limestone cave ('Devils Den') west of the suburb of Claremont, some 16 kilometres north of Hobart. A rock fall trapped one of the boys inside the cave but he was eventually released with only minor injuries and suffering from exposure (Anon. 1968).

The second accident took place in the Junee area in 1969, whilst the third occurred in 1990. Unfortunately, the third claimed the lives of two young teenage students and their teacher, all of whom were drowned in Mystery Creek Cave, Ida Bay, in the far south of Tasmania. In none of these accidents were the participants members of any recognised caverneering club.

The accident which concerns us took place on 6 March 1969. The following information is reprinted from a report, which was compiled by Albert Goede (1969a):

What happened before the rescue (based on available information). On Thursday afternoon, a party consisting of Mr & Mrs Michael White (aged in their thirties) and Michael Flint (18) were involved in a cave accident in a virtually unknown cave approximately 6 miles [10 km] west of Maydena. Both Michael White and Michael Flint are employees of ANM and the cave is located in the forest concessions held by this company. None of the party were members of a caving society. Neither Mr or Mrs White had any previous caving experience. Michael Flint claims to have had some caving experience as well as being a rock-climber. He has not, however, been caving with any of the Tasmanian clubs.

The cave where the accident occurred was discovered two years ago by the Whites but was not explored. The entrance is at the base of a large cliff and a small stream flows into the cave, which slopes downwards at a steep angle with several short drops. The cave is located in dense rain forest about half a mile [~1 km] from the nearest timber road.

In the afternoon the party made a first attempt to investigate the cave using manila rope and a bulky home-made rope ladder with wooden rungs. They went down several short drops before coming to the top of a shaft, which they estimated to be 100 ft [30 m] deep. The rope ladder was fixed and Michael Flint descended but the ladder was too short to reach the bottom. On the way out the party was climbing up a steep talus slope when Michael White dislodged a keystone, bringing down a considerable amount of talus on both himself and his wife. He was wearing a ribbed aluminium helmet, which was severely damaged and undoubtedly saved his life. Flint escaped without injury. Michael White was unconscious with obvious head injuries, while his wife was in considerable pain. Flint made them as comfortable as possible and went for help.

The manager of ANM's timber operations, Don Frankcombe, made a lightning visit to the cave with some of his men, then returned to Maydena to alert police search and rescue. His staff began the difficult job of cutting a track to the cave using chain saws.

THE RESCUE

Police, at approximately 5.35 pm, alerted the club rescue co-ordinators, Brian Collin for TCC and Dave Elliot for SCS. Public relations officer, Doug Turner, was also warned and proceeded to police headquarters (in Hobart) to take charge at the radio room. At 5.50 pm I was contacted by Brian Collin, told to get ready and stand by. At 6.10 pm a call came through to report to Brian's home, collect gear and proceed to police headquarters. At this stage, we knew that both Mr & Mrs White were injured but not pinned down by rocks. It was suspected that Mr White had a fractured skull and Mrs White, a fractured pelvis.

On the way to Brian's, I alerted Sid Corbett and Peter Helman. At Brian's I found that Rodney [Hughes] had already collected the gear and I went straight to police headquarters. Arrived there at 6.50 pm to find that the advance party consisting of Police Search & Rescue, Frank Brown, Barry James and other members of SCS had already left. I was joined later by Bill Hodge, Bill Peterson and Rodney Hughes. We left in a police car at 7.15 pm but were stopped at Glenorchy and returned to police HQ to collect four portable radios. Made second start at 7.45 pm and proceeded to Maydena. When we arrived at the road nearest the cave, we found Don Frankcombe and a St John Ambulance officer who had returned from the cave to collect blood plasma.

We carried in food, sleeping bags and lights and Rodney also carried blood plasma and transfusion equipment. Met Rien de Vries (TCC) who had driven up from New Norfolk, on the way to the cave. Arrived at the cave mouth at approximately 9.45 pm to find that Mrs White had just been brought to the surface and some of the time was spent assuring an anxious ambulance officer that we had not seen his silver braided hat nor were we responsible for its disappearance. In the meantime, Mrs White was being examined by a doctor and transferred to another stretcher before being carried out. The officer's hat was eventually located among the soggy moss and rotting timber surrounding the entrance.

When Michael White was brought up at approximately 10.45 pm, we were able to help pull up the stretcher, inches at a time, to prevent further injury. He was then transferred to a Neil Robinson stretcher after having been examined by a doctor. We were able to help carry out the stretcher, which proved a back-breaking task, as it was not suitable for the terrain and kept tipping to one side.

Michael White at this stage was fully conscious. His face was badly cut and his left shoulder was causing him some discomfort. We reached the ambulance about midnight under the glaring lights of the TV cameras. The rescue teams were invited to Don Frankcombe's house in Maydena, where we were regaled with coffee and tea .... Mrs Frankcombe was kept more than busy keeping up with the appetites of a hungry pack of rescuers, many of whom

had missed out on their dinner that night. We arrived back in Hobart at 3.00 am on the Friday morning.

As a result of their expedition, Mr White was found to have had head injuries, a broken collarbone and broken ribs. Mrs White suffered a double fracture of the lower leg.

Having already mentioned the 'close call' in Growling Swallet (pp. 20-21), I will not elaborate any further on that incident. However, in June of 1975, three young girls were exploring a small cave close to Maydena itself but experienced some difficulty in extricating themselves. Fortunately, Max Jeffries happened to be in the area tending his bees and arrived at the scene to find a young lad vainly trying to encourage his three companions to climb the rope back to the surface (Moody 1975d).

They had entered the cave via a knotted rope that was nearly rotten. Max entered the cave through another nearby entrance, which led into the same system. After guiding the girls out of the cave, Max learnt that they had been there for around two hours and were totally unaware of the other entrance. Fortunately, apart from their enforced stay, they emerged none the worse for their experience. The cave in question was none other than JF90, Vandal Cave.

Apart from the usual cuts and bruises, which are all part and parcel of the average caving trip, nothing of real interest took place until August of 1980. A party of three, Geoff Fisher, Nick Hume and Trevor Wailes decided to visit Pillingers Creek Cave (JF66) notorious for its unsafe nature (Fisher 1980a). Evidence of this instability lay everywhere but the party managed to bottom the cave safely and was nearly back to the entrance when a promising hole was sighted. A ladder was rigged and the party descended some 20 metres but found that a number of leads were blocked off, mainly by recent-looking rock movement. Both Trevor and Geoff safely ascended the ladder but in the process, Geoff dislodged a rock, which struck Nick on the right hand. Using only his left, Nick managed to re-climb the ladder where he reached the surface without too much difficulty. Back in Hobart, a trip to the hospital revealed a broken metacarpal bone.

The only other incident took place only a few weeks after Nick's experience in Pillingers Creek Cave. The venue this time was the aptly named Slaughterhouse Pot. A party consisting of Geoff Fisher, Nick Hume, Bruce Tranter and Dave Southgate arrived at this cave with intentions of completing its exploration (Fisher 1980b). They began descending at 1 pm on 6 September 1980, leaving Bruce on the surface. After reaching a depth of around 100 metres, they carried out some exploration work and were on the return trip when the incident happened. Dave was first to climb the remaining 30 metre ladder pitch and was about 18 metres from the floor when he appeared to tire and paused for a rest. Suddenly, the ladder swung from under him and he lost his grip and fell. Fortunately, Nick's expert belay served its purpose and Dave was able to regain the ladder and safely descend! Due to a culmination of exhaustion, the fall and obvious scare, Dave was unable to proceed. Attempts were then made to haul him out on the belay rope but this proved unsuccessful. It was then apparent that extra help would be needed and Nick set off to Maydena for assistance.

Five hours later, a rescue party of cavers from Hobart, assisted by Max Jeffries, arrived at the cave with food, clothing and all the necessary equipment needed to extricate Dave. The Police Search & Rescue Unit were notified but their services were not required. Eight hours after the fall took place, an efficient pulley system hauled both Dave and Geoff to the surface (Nicholas 1980b).

After the successful conclusion to this particular incident, it was noted that the time taken for the rescue team to reach the cave (5 hours from the call) was the minimum possible and gives an indication of the time that may elapse should as rescue be needed from a difficult and/or remote cave in the Junee-Florentine area.

However, in recent years (post-2000) advent of a new Search & Rescue helicopter especially equipped for both day and night operations in difficult terrain, would undoubtedly reduce the time factor.

26.

CAVE LISTINGS

The caves of the Junee-Florentine now, I believe, number in excess of 400. Many, especially those in high relief areas, are renowned as being deep, wet, grotty and physically demanding and in a few instances - even very dangerous. In most cases, the danger arises from the cold, wet conditions, which tend to expedite the onset of exposure and hypothermia in one form or another. Danger is also continually present in the form of unstable talus or rocks, especially in those caves of a vertical nature.

The area has been described as tremendously exciting and rewarding. It is also a place where exploration is far from complete. I was once of the opinion that the possibility of finding a deeper cave than Khazad-Dum, was extremely unlikely. However, the discovery of Ice Tube has since proved me wrong. Nevertheless, I do maintain that there is every chance that a 'show' cave, at least equal to Welcome Stranger, will eventually be discovered.

Below are listed the known caves of the Junee-Florentine area **up until the end of 1985.** [Many of the depths have been increased since the –Ed.] Readers will please note that (J) signifies the Junee area, (F) the Florentine area and (W/F) the Western Florentine. For conservation purposes, the exact locations of caves have not been included; they are only available to members of caving clubs or *bona fide* researchers.

Numbered Caves

JF1 'Dry' cave approximately 45 m deep; strong draught but becomes too tight; several chambers and some decoration; small pool at bottom; interesting entrance. (J)

JF2 CAULDRON POT: Spectacular swallet; siphons at a depth of 307 m; has 41 m entrance pitch. (J)

JF3 Pothole 48 metres deep; no continuation. (J)

JF4-5 KHAZAD-DUM: Swallet 333 m deep [actually c. 290 m]; numerous drops between 6-42 metres; at least 1.6 kilometres of passage has been mapped; also has glow-worms in vicinity of entrance. (J)

JF6 CASHIONS CREEK CAVE: Small stream cave 240 metres long with some good decoration and interesting fauna. (F)

JF7 FRANKCOMBE CAVE: Cave at least 900 m long; good decoration and interesting fauna; crawling through water is required in some sections. (F)

JF8 JUNEE CAVE (Junee Rising/Junee Resurgence): Outflow cave which drains a large area of the Junee and southern Florentine Valley; average flow is 1,000 litres/sec.; originally the cave was blocked by a sump after some 90 metres; divers have penetrated some distance into open cave; exploration still incomplete. (J)

JF9 Steeply slopping bedding-plane tunnel; blocked 15 metres in; close to JF10. (J)

JF10 SPLASH POT: Small swallet with narrow stream passage and spectacular ladder drops to a depth of 96 metres. (J)

JF11 RAINBOW CAVE: Small swallet with 60 metres of passage ending in a deep pool. (F)

JF12 Un-explored pot with an 18 metre initial drop. (J)

JF13 DRIBBLESPIT SWALLET: Wet pot 90 metres deep with main pitch of 54 metres. (J)

JF14 DWARROWDELF: Spectacular pothole; normally dry; pitches of 21, 27, 54, 36 and 66 m; joins Khazad-Dum at an approximate depth of 220 m. (J)

JF15 HAIRYGOAT HOLE: Dry pothole 45 metres deep with short pitches; constriction at bottom. (J)

JF16 Pothole 9 metres deep with unstable floor; small side chamber with numerous bones. (J)

JF17 Small cave in 5 metre high cliff face; 18 metres long and 5 metres deep. (J)

JF18 Cleft 6 m deep; no extension; numerous insects. (J)

JF19 Hole 9 metres deep in limestone face of 9 metre deep sinkhole; small extension. (J)

JF20 Two small holes joining at a depth of 9 metres; no extension; fossils; adjacent to JF19. (J)

JF21 Large shaft 9 metres deep; no extension. (J)

JF22 Pothole 60 metres deep; small vertical entrance with two very narrow squeezes; chamber 15 metres down; 33 metre pitch; dead-end. (J)

JF23-24 LAWRENCE CREEK CAVES: Complex system 15 metres deep with several entrances; incredibly muddy; subject to frequent flooding. (F)

JF25 Small cave SE of Welcome Stranger with small entrance chamber and 45 m of narrow passage. (F)

JF26 Small cave near JF25; no potential. (F)

JF27 Small cave near JF26; no potential. (F)

JF28 Small swallet in a large doline with about ten unexplored holes. (F)

JF29 NIAGARA POT: Swallet east of Cauldron Pot; 142 metres deep; large chambers at bottom; impressive waterfall at entrance; some scope for further exploration. (J)

JF30 Inaccessible inflow cave taking small part of the Junee River; downstream from Junee Cave. (J)

JF31 Small cave with 170 m of wet and very muddy passage; squeeze at 90 m mark; ends at sump. (J)

JF32 Small cave near JF33; about 15 metres deep. (J)

JF33 DEAD HORSE CAVE: Tiny cave discovered in 1946; has skeleton at bottom first thought to be that of horse; later considered to be that of a calf. (J)

JF34 RIFT CAVE: Inflow cave with small stream; discovered in 1948; depth is 130 metres; was 'lost' but rediscovered and named in 1962. (J)

JF35 GORMENGHAST: Small swallet; tight; steeply descending stream passage; dangerous talus; good formations at downstream end; stream siphons; interesting aquatic fauna; surveyed passage length is 582 metres; depth is 128 metres. (F)

JF36 GROWLING SWALLET: Large swallet; was 176 m deep; depth extended to 375 [c. 360] m via Ice Tube; is subject to flash flooding; noise of water can make speech inaudible; glow-worms; extensions near sump lead up to extensive new section; length

now exceeds 10 km; further possibilities; one of the oldest known caves in the Junee-Florentine area. (F)

JF37 PENDANT POT: Small cave with 9 m high entrance in a large doline; small chamber; near JF36. (F)

JF38 TRAPDOOR SWALLET: Entrance doline with fair-sized stream; explored to a depth of 25 metres?; exploration incomplete. (F)

JF39 Small pothole 9 metres deep; near JF36. (F)

JF40 Small cave near Khazad-Dum campsite; 30 metres deep; 90 metres of narrow passage. (J)

JF41 Pothole; dry 21metre shaft; blocked at base; two entrances 3 metres apart; only one is numbered; located near JF3. (J)

JF42 Tube sloping down at 60-70 degrees; one metre in diameter; depth 18 metres; near JF 3. (J)

JF43-44 Small cave; two entrances at base of low cliff; steeply sloping passage to small chamber followed by a short drop; short way north of JF1. (J)

JF45 Small dry cave with approximately 60 metres of passage; northwest of Cashions Creek Cave. (F)

JF46 QUARRY HOLE: Hole 30 metres deep; two entrances; lower one too tight; 'moonmilk' decoration on lower walls. (J)

JF47 SUICIDE POT: Pothole 30 metres deep; some decoration in chamber at bottom; no extension. (J)

JF48-49 Muddy cave 120 metres long; contains intermittent streams; three entrances; may be overflow outlet for JF7. (F)

JF50 Small cave near JF48-49; low passages. (F)

JF51 GONG CAVE: Small dry cave with 25 metres of passage; some old formation; was first cave discovered on western side of Florentine River; two daylight holes. (W/F)

JF52 Shaft with small active stream at bottom; 20 metres deep. (F)

JF53 One of two small caves in cliff face; several small passages; close to JF52. (F)

JF54 Small cave with very deep pool; several small passages; has dry formation; close to JF53 and Florentine River. (F)

JF55 DEVIATION CAVE: Cave on western bank of Florentine River; former stream passage; has dry formation; length ~80m; impressive entrance. (W/F)

JF56 Small dry cave with small chamber; close to JF55. (W/F)

JF57 Small but spacious cave in ridge west of JF55; some formation; two chambers; has interesting passages. (W/F)

JF58 Pothole on ridge east of Cave Hill; 20 m deep. (J)

JF59 Horizontal series of small tunnels beside logging road; subject to flooding. (F)

JF60 Small cave near JF59. (F)

JF61 Horizontal cave with sloping entrance; has small chambers; network of dry crawls and squeezes; length approximately 60 metres; near JF59. (F)

JF62 Tight hole with two small chambers. (J)

JF63-65 ROSS WALKER CAVE: Small dry cave with large chamber; three steeply sloping downward entrances; shallow pool of water at lowest point of cave; on ridge northeast of JF8. (J)

JF66 PILLINGERS CREEK CAVE: Dry cave 99 metres deep; 52 metre pitch can be bypassed; increasingly dangerous talus; not recommended. (J)

JF67 DEEFOUR (D4) POT: Pothole consisting of 40 m pitch; blocked at bottom; first discovered 1960; 'lost' but relocated in 1974; east of Cave Hill. (J)

JF68 Pothole on eastern slope of Cave Hill; 30 metres deep; no extension. (J)

JF69 Small cave taking some water from Khazad-Dum Creek; on opposite side of doline from JF4 entrance; short slope to 4 metre drop. (J)

JF70 Small dry cave; inclined entrance leading to single chamber; some formation; on eastern side of hill near Leo Thornes Road. (F)

JF71 Medium-sized cave with several chambers; narrow low-level passages containing deep pools; near JF70. (F)

JF72 Small dry cave with inclined entrance; some formation; no extension. (F)

JF73 Small swallet between Leo Thornes and Frizons Road; number on dry entrance 5 metres upstream from swallet; dry entrance too tight; wet entrance blocked by rock fall at 9 metres. (F)

JF74 Small cave; 2 metre drop into small chamber; short crawl to second chamber; no extension. (F)

JF75 Small cave; inclined entrance leads to a maze of short passages. (F)

JF76 Tiny cave; inclined entrance peters out after 5 metres or so. (F)

JF77 Small tight hole leads to fissure-type chamber; several tight passages; length 20 metres; Settlement Road area. (F)

JF78 Small inclined entrance to small chamber; small extension to choke; on hill above JF77; length 30 metres. (F)

JF79-82 BEGINNERS LUCK CAVE: Four entrances leading into an extensive system of passages; good decoration; important archaeological discoveries; Settlement Road area; length > 400 m. (F)

JF83 Small cave in doline; takes some surface water; several small passages; some formation; 'dig' has not been pushed to sump; north of JF84. (W/F)

JF84 Small cave beside Stan Murray Road; active stream sumps; length 30 metres; second entrance 4-5 metres from numbered one. (W/F)

JF85 Small tight cave with 30-40 metres of low crawls; west of JF79-82. (F)

JF86 Small pot on ridge near end of Frizons Road; 6 metre entrance pitch; end in choke; bone samples collected proved negative. (F)

JF87 Cave in rift northeast of JF79-82; series of muddy passages; fills with water in wet weather. (F)

JF88-89 Cave with interesting system of passages; some good formation; length surveyed 377 metres; 7 metre entrance pitch can be bypassed via tight squeeze; two entrances; downstream from Cashions Creek Cave. (F)

JF90 VANDALISATION [or Vandal] CAVE: Small cave with two vertical entrances; only one entrance is numbered which is not obvious; ~100 m of passage; one chamber; had good formation but now badly vandalised; close to Junee Road. (J)

JF91 BOOMER CAVE: Small cave with low and wide sloping entrance; fossil bones of *Macropus titan,* Pleistocene kangaroo; in ridge north of JF88-89. (F)

JF92 Very small cave with fissure-type entrance; 2.5 metre drop; 8 m of low passage; near JF91. (F)

JF93 Small cave with sloping entrance made accessible by digging; chimney followed by sloping passages to water table; fossil bones; near JF92. (F)

JF94 Small cave with two entrances (one sloping, one horizontal); short passage; near JF93. (F)

JF95 Small cave opposite JF79-82; length 10 metres; no extension. (F)

JF96 Small cave with sloping entrance; no extension. (F)

JF97 TITANS SHELTER: Large shelter cave above JF96; contains Pleistocene bone deposits. (F)

JF98 Small cave with vertical entrance; two 5 metre pitches; bone deposits cemented in flowstone at lowest point of cave; close to JF88. (F)

JF99 THE CHAIRMAN: Large pothole with 75 metre entrance pitch; active stream; good formation; over 1200 metres of passage; depth is 197 metres. (J)

JF100 Small swallet close to JF99; steeply sloping to flat floor then 9 metre free-hanging pitch to rubble floor; depth 21 metres; no extension. (J)

JF101 Small tight horizontal cave with sloping entrance; two branches; left too tight; right terminates in small chamber; length 12 metres; Cashions Creek area. (F)

JF102 Small horizontal entrance behind logs leads to small chamber; close to JF101. (F)

JF103 QUICK VISIT CAVE: Small, normally dry cave with well-decorated medium-sized chamber; narrow sloping rift entrance; Tiger Road area. (W/F)

JF104 Steeply sloping muddy entrance to 10 m stream cave; stream siphons; Tiger Road area. (W/F)

JF105-106 THE ELIMINATOR: Small cave with sloping entrance; large chamber; tight 6 metre ladder drop to small stream; some tight passages. (W/F)

JF107 Medium-sized cave with sloping muddy entrance; two passages: left one to small chamber with some decoration; right one to large chamber; 10 m crawl at end of this chamber leads to a further low-roofed chamber; has some interesting formation. (W/F)

JF108 LITTLE DIPPER: Small cave on hill behind old Junee Homestead; first explored and mapped in 1946; 'lost' for many years; relocated and numbered in 1976; two entrances; lower one is steeply sloping (numbered); upper one is vertical. (J)

JF109 BRECCIA RIDGE CAVE: Small cave on ridge NE of JF79-82; sloping entrance to single chamber; contains late Pleistocene bone deposits. (F)

JF110 VICTORY 75: Pothole 130 metres deep; small entrance in side of doline; mud slope leads to an 11 metre pitch; further small pitches lead to final 57.5 metre pitch; southwest of JF99. (J)

JF111 FIFTEEN SECOND POT: Pothole northwest of JF99; very narrow and vertical rift; explored to a depth of over 80 metres. (J)

JF112 THE SLOT: Pothole explored to a depth of 40 metres; close to JF110. (J)

JF113 THE SENTINEL: Pothole with 20 metre pitch; further 22 metre pitch to floor; depth believed to be 45 metres. (J)

JF114 TOM HALLAM: Pothole with narrow entrance; 18 m and 9 m pitch; strong draught; exploration incomplete. (J)

JF115 Pothole 48 metres deep; foul smelling and muddy; close to JF114; Chrisps Creek area. (J)

JF116 Small cave with 9 metre entrance pitch; small crawl passages; near end of Leo Thornes Road. (F)

JF117 Small cave; depth 18 metres; near JF116. (F)

JF118 Unexplored pothole near Wherretts landslip. (J)

JF119 Small cave with 100 metres of decorated passages; beside Eleven Road. (W/F)

JF120 Inflow cave near the Florentine River; partially water-filled; unexplored; below Eleven Road. (W/F)

JF121 Small cave fully explored to a depth of 15 metres; beyond end of John Bull Road. (J)

JF122 Cave with 9 metre entrance pitch; large chamber; some good decoration; off JF99 track. (J)

JF123 DEEP THROAT: Inflow cave north of JF99; tube explored to depth of 10 metres. (J)

JF124 Large cave with 30.5 m pitch to sandy floor; some scope for further exploration; close to JF113. (J)

JF125 Small swallet; partially explored; near JF124. (J)

JF126 Small swallet; partially explored; loose talus; cave cricket colony; near JF125. (J)

JF127 Pothole with 18 m entrance pitch; levels into fissure-type chamber; has some decoration; very dirty and also dangerous; not fully explored; near JF34. (J)

JF128 Pothole explored to depth of 18.3 metres; sloping mud floor; some continuation; near JF34. (J)

JF129 WASHOUT CAVE (Railway Tunnel): Inflow cave but dry in summer; explored to 15 m; boulder blockage; draught present; very tight; N of JF34. (J)

JF130 Small cave partially explored to a depth of 9 metres; further 7 metre pitch continues; some formation; near Dewhurst Quarry. (J)

JF131 Small inflow cave; explored to a depth of 20 metres then sumps; south of Wherretts summit. (J)

JF132 Reportedly unexplored pothole close to JF131; requires further investigation. (J)

JF133 Unexplored pot close to JF132. (J)

JF134 Small cave with sloping entrance pitch; 13 metre passage to stream; very narrow and wet; cave cricket colony; near Eleven Road. (F)

JF135 Cave with two entrances; believed unexplored; lies southwest of JF131. (F)

JF136 Cave with sloping entrance; 2 m entrance pitch; approximately 200 m of passage to squeeze; further investigation warranted; northwest of JF133. (F)

JF137 Pothole explored to 80 m; entrance is small hole in wall of doline; strong draught; tight constrictions; falling rocks; possible extension; near JF121. (J)

JF138 Small dirty cave with dirty formation; explored to depth of 15 m; no extension; northwest of JF99. (J)

JF139 Small 15 metre deep cave; tight entrance to large chamber; southwest of JF34. (J)

JF140 Unexplored cave with small entrance; loose talus; between JF34 and JF99. (J)

JF141 Small cave with low, wide, sloping entrance; very narrow passage 60 metres long; no extension; above The Gap and below Wherretts. (J)

JF142 Pothole explored to a depth of 27 metres; narrow squeeze leads to stream; further prospects limited; close to JF128. (J)

JF143 Cave with large fissure-type entrance; explored to a depth of 36 metres; muddy floor with debris; no extension; in JF110 area. (J)

JF144 Small pothole with cylinder-shaped entrance; 24 metre pitch to floor; very narrow squeeze continues; draught present; near JF143. (J)

JF145 Pothole with 7 metre entrance pitch; 15 metres of muddy passage; close to JF143. (J)

JF146 Un-explored pothole; close to JF142. (J)

JF147 PEANUT BRITTLE POT: Cave with small entrance inside of deep solution trench; small passage with old decoration; explored to a depth of around 50 metres; extension requires further investigation; near JF142. (J)

JF148 Small cave with narrow entrance; small passage leads to un-explored pitch; close to JF147. (J)

JF149 Pothole with winding passage; 15 metre pitch ends at sandy sump; southwest of JF34. (J)

JF150 GIBRALTAR CAVE: Small cave in sinkhole; two entrances; main one slopes down to chamber; pool at bottom; Eleven Road area. W/F)

JF151-153 No descriptions available.

JF154 EMU CAVE: Cave with sloping rift-like entrance to squeeze; good formation; several other squeezes; cave sumps; extinct emu bones found; near JF7 (F)

JF155 Small cave with steep entrance slope to large chamber; 7 metre pitch with collapsed chamber; some formation; many bones; small stream present; unsafe talus in roof; in area of JF7. (F)

JF156 Small cave with two entrances; 18 metres of narrow passage; JF7 area. (F)

JF157 Small cave with two entrances; narrow passages; near JF156. (F)

JF158 Small cave developed on two levels; passage leads to water-filled sump; 3 entrances; west of JF7. (F)

JF159 Small cave with 23 metre passage leading to a small decorated chamber; JF7 area. (F)

JF160 TIMS REWARD: Cave with sloping entrance; several chambers; main passage ends in squeeze but can be bypassed; further chamber with sandy sump; some formation; not fully explored; in JF7 area. (F)

JF161 Small cave; entrance in side of doline; 30 metres of passage; little formation; south of JF143. (J)

JF162 Small unexplored cave in Junee Ridge. (J)

JF163 Small cave with two adjacent entrances; easiest is numbered; narrow 8 metre pitch; not recommended; in JF7 area. (F)

JF164 Small cave with low passage; some formation; ends in small muddy pitch; Leo Thorne Road area. (F)

JF165 Alternative entrance to JF87. (F)

JF166 Small cave with sloping pitch of 6 metres to chamber; squeeze to further chamber; some formation; north of JF165. (F)

JF167 Small cave with low, wide entrance; maze of muddy crawls; Leo Thorne Road area. (F)

JF168 Pothole on ridge with very difficult 6 metre entrance pitch; large decorated chamber; several passages; cave sumps; bones present; near JF169. (F)

JF169 Small cave on ridge; two decorated chambers; bones embedded in flowstone; JF7 area. (F)

JF170 Small cave with impressive entrance; number of low chambers; 23 m of passage; Upper Tiger area. (W/F)

JF171 Small cave with low sloping roof; muddy formation; JF7 area. (F)

JF172 Cave with impressive entrance; number of low chambers; 23 m of passage; Upper Tiger area; [description very similar to JF170. May have been numbered twice? LM] (W/F)

JF173-174 Small cave with two entrances; low 12 m passage to pool; muddy 10 m crawl to end; JF7 area. (F)

JF175 No description available.

JF176 Small entrance to creek system before JF79-82. (F)

JF177 Second entrance to JF176; extensive passages; many shell fossils. (F)

JF178 Upstream entrance to JF177; very low-roofed. (F)

JF179 Cave with low entrance; 70 metres of passage; in Settlement Road area. (F)

JF180 Small cave close to JF179; small pitch; narrow, wet crawl-type passages. (F)

JF181 Exit entrance to JF180. (F)

JF182 Cave entrance where JF180-181 system first enters limestone; short passage to large pool. (F)

JF183 South of JF182; situated in horseshoe-shaped trench; high-roofed fissure; 6 m entrance pitch; 2 sumps. (F)

JF184 Sizeable cave with 3 metre pitch into centre of system; contains active stream; downstream end sumps; several levels; east of JF176 system. (F)

JF185 Small shelter cave with squeeze passage leading off; passage continues to chamber; some formation; pool; near JF79-82. (F)

JF186 Small cave with sloping passage; further horizontal fissure passage; some formation; chute leading down to sump; near JF185. (F)

JF187 Dry inflow cave; small entrance; passage to squeeze and small chamber; near end of Settlement Rd. (F)

JF188 Small shelter cave; numerous very solid stalactites; connection with collapsed doline behind cave; on same ridge as JF187. (F)

JF189 Small decorated cave above JF187; three adjacent entrances. (F)

JF190 Small cave with tight difficult entrance; low chamber and squeeze to long chamber with

numerous formations; chute down to sump; not investigated further; north of JF189. (F)

JF191 Small cave with 8 metre pitch; well-decorated chamber; close to JF190. (F)

JF192 Small cave with small chamber; some formation; is adjacent to JF191. (F)

JF193 Small cave with 6 metre pitch; squeeze to further 6 metre pitch; chamber with some formation; very muddy; on opposite side of road to JF187. (F)

JF194 Small cave with 9 metre pitch; very muddy; close to JF193. (F)

JF195 MUSHROOM CAVE: Small cave with spiral passage; length 46 metres; no extension; contained mushrooms when first discovered; on following ridge to JF79-82. (F)

JF196 Small horizontal cave with 3 entrances; central one numbered; between JF79-82 and JF185. (F)

JF197 Small cave with tiny entrance; long, walkable and sloping-roofed; very muddy; Frizons Road area. (F)

JF198 Small cave with small entrance; 6 metre pitch; horizontal passage; calcified bones; on opposite side of road to JF197. (F)

JF199 Small cave with 6 metre pitch; crawl and squeezes to 3 metre pitch; series of large muddy sumps are connected by squeezes; west of JF198. (F)

Numbers JF200-299 were assigned to the Southern Caving Society and have been applied by this club.

JF200 No description available.

JF201 RESCUE POT: Swallet with small stream; 107 m deep; 27 m ladder drop; ~200 m of passage; scene of rescue of two amateur cavers in 1969; dangerous talus; north of Cave Hill. (J)

JF202 Impressive swallet with sizeable stream running into a waterfall entrance pitch; pitches of 18 and 9 m; virtually no passage; total depth 33 metres. (J)

JF203 BONE PIT: Large dry cave; large rift-like entrance; 113 metres deep; numerous bones; discovered in 1951; east of Cave Hill. (J)

JF204 Small pothole; 14 metre pitch into chamber with aven. (J)

JF205 Small cave; 9 metre pitch; no extension. (J)

JF206 Swallet hole; access through dry entrance to a depth of 30 metres. (J)

JF207 VOLTERRA: Swallet of small stream in very large doline; wet entrance not negotiable; dry entrance is blocked at a depth of 15 metres. (J)

JF208 Cave with tiny horizontal entrance into large passage; 150 metres long terminating in large chamber; some decoration. (J)

JF209 Dry cave in bank of creek; 2 metre climb to series of passages; some formation; exploration incomplete. (J)

JF210 SESAME ONE: small cave in large doline; choked at depth of 15 metres; former swallet; now dry. (J)

JF211 SESAME TWO: Steeply downward sloping cave; several short pitches; longest 9 metres; contains talus and bones; surveyed depth is estimated at 220 metres; survey grade 4. (J)

JF212 Unexplored pot with 6 metre entrance drop. (J)

JF213 Unexplored small swallet; low entrance under cliff; may require crawling. (J)

JF214 PYGMY CAVE: Small dry cave with two or three small chambers connected by crawls; some decoration, includes mondmilch and straws. (J)

JF215-217 ZULU POT: Short horizontal passage to a ladder drop of 52 m; ledges at 27 and 45 m; loose walls; short passage in wall 6 m up from bottom. (J)

JF218 Pothole 15 metres deep with short passage at bottom. (J)

JF219-220 Small cave with decaying decoration; two entrances. (J)

JF221 OWL POT: Large dry cave 244 m deep with two sizeable chambers and 34 metre pitch; decoration is damaged due to log trucks passing overhead. (F)

JF222 Small pot beside Tassy Pot; 12 metres deep with an 8 metre ladder drop. (F)

JF223 TASSY POT: (Tassie Pot) Difficult pothole c.238 m deep; ladder pitches of 42, 27 and 74 m with a 13 m chimney; horizontal extensions at bottom. (F)

JF224 Small pothole 21 metres deep; two 9 metre pitches separated by a short slope. (F)

JF225 THREE FALLS CAVE: Small cave with some decoration; swallet with spectacular entrance doline; three waterfalls enter over cliff; depth 158 m. (F)

JF226-227 Small stream cave 135metres long with entrance at both ends. (F)

JF228 Small stream cave explored for 300 metres; no decoration; subject to flooding; sumps; some prospects for further exploration. (F)

JF229 WELCOME STRANGER CAVE: Outflow stream cave with over 1600 m of well decorated passage developed on two levels; longest and best decorated cave yet found in Junee-Florentine area. (F)

JF230 Very small grotto. (F)

JF231 No details available.

JF232 UDENSALA: No details available.

JF233-235 No details available.

JF236 BUNYIPS LAIR: No details available.

JF237 NIGGLY: One of three deepest caves in Australia; depth 373 metres; contain sheer pitch of 190 metres; discovered 1990. (F)

JF238 CASAMASSIMA: No details available.

JF239-250 No details available.

JF251 Small swallet; depth 19 metres. (J)

JF252 Pothole near creek; 20 metres deep; horizontal constriction at the bottom. (J)

JF253 Small grotto 18 metres long. (J)

JF254 Pothole in large doline at elevation of around 900 metres; short horizontal passage to 24 metre drop; dead end; collapse cave 15 metres long in side of doline; has branching passages. (J)

JF255-299 Details regarding these numbers are unknown to the author but one number, believed to be JF260, is attached to a cave near JF173.

JF300 Small cave with low passages; some formation; may be possible extension; close to JF199. (F)

JF301 Possible outflow of JF7; close to JF260, 173. (F)

JF302 Small cave with stationary stream; formation; has dangerous log-choked entrance; near JF301. (F)

JF303 Small cave north of JF302; very narrow entrance; unexplored. (F)

JF304 Cave with two adjacent entrances; 3 metre pitch to large chamber; exploration incomplete; above JF303. (F)

JF305 Small cave partly explored to narrow pitch; has some formation; above JF48-49. (F)

JF306 Cave with narrow entrance; unexplored; up ridge from JF305. (F)

JF307 Small cave with low-roofed maze of muddy crawls; has several entrances; close to the Florentine River; in JF48 area. (F)

JF308 Small low crawl-type cave with two entrances; only one with logs is numbered; JF48 area. (F)

JF309 Small cave with two entrances; pool of water at lowest point; JF48 area. (F)

JF310-311 Small stream cave with two entrances; some formation; 3 metre entrance pitch; near JF309. (F)

JF312 Small cave with four entrances; close to JF311; series of muddy crawls; exploration incomplete. (F)

JF313 Small cave at base of low cliff; low muddy crawl; behind ridge containing JF309-312. (F)

JF314 Small cave with 9 metre entrance pitch; some low passages; north of JF313. (F)

JF315 Small cave directly above JF313; 4 metre pitch into chamber; some formation; further squeeze to an even smaller chamber. (F)

JF316 Pothole on top of ridge; north and close to JF315; sloping chamber with muddy crawl to sloping pitch; further crawls. (F)

JF317 Deep fissure drop of about 15 metres; has passage and some formation. (F)

JF318 Very large hole with 7 metre pitch; horizontal passages lead off through rock falls; some formation; sump; north of JF316. (F)

JF319 Small cave in rock face; 3 m pitch; horizontal crawls; draught; possible extension; N of JF165. (F)

JF320 Shallow cave with log-choked entrance; small pitch to sloping chamber; squeeze to a further chamber; north of JF319. (F)

JF321 POND CAVE: Small cave with narrow entrance; 6 metre pitch to muddy chamber; crawls; sump; possible extension; north of JF320. (F)

JF322 Small cave with 3 metre pitch; chamber with some good decoration; squeeze leads to further chamber; passage blocks off; Leo Thorne Road area. (F)

JF323 Small cave with two entrances; has some formation; in JF322 area. (F)

JF324 Small cave with sloping entrance to squeeze; small chamber; further squeeze and passages; some decoration; between JF322 and JF323. (F)

JF325 Alternate entrance to JF71. (F)

JF326 Cave with large entrance; 5 m pitch; has muddy extension; exploration incomplete; N of JF71. (F)

JF327 Small dry cave with low crawl to small chamber; some decoration. (F)

JF328 Small cave west of JF327. (F)

JF329 Medium-sized cave with entrance under mass of logs; 6 m pitch leads to sump; active stream; crawl passage to large chamber with good formation; same ridge as JF327-328; exploration incomplete. (F)

JF330 Small cave with narrow entrance; some formation; no extension; north from JF329. (F)

JF331 Cave with small entrance through dangerous boulders; large chamber with formation; 9 metre pitch; passages lead off; exploration incomplete; northeast of JF329. (F)

JF332 Small cave with tight entrance; dangerous talus to muddy sump; Leo Thorne Road area. (F)

JF333 NANWOON CAVE: Entrance located at base of low cliff; wide and low with tight passage sloping steeply to right; 3 m deep; archaeological site. (F)

JF334 Un-named cave; very small with two entrances; lower one numbered; north of JF333. (F)

JF335 Un-named cave with steeply sloping entrance to small stream passage; stream resurges a few metres away; close to JF334. (F)

JF336 Cave with two entrances; not fully explored; south of JF334. (F)

JF337 SLAUGHTERHOUSE POT: No further details. (F)

JF338 LOST POT: Entrance at bottom of doline; no further information available. (F)

JF339 BRIGGS SQUEEZE: some formation; bones; tight squeeze leads to sump. (F)

JF340 Cave with tight entrance to rockpile; 6 metres deep; 30 metres of horizontal chamber; rocky and muddy crawls. (F)

JF341 THREEFORTYONE: Cave 165 m deep; discovered May 1979; has series of small pitches to c. 70 m; free-hanging pitch 38.2 m; cave then develops horizontally; crystal pool and some formation; exploration believed incomplete (1990). (J)

JF342 Close to JF1; no other details. (J)

JF343 Small cave only 3 metres deep; no continuation. (F)

JF344 SERENDIPITY: Stream cave; 275.5 m deep. (F)

JF345 ICE TUBE: Stream cave with three entrances; [was] Australia's deepest cave at 375 [c. 360] metres; part of Growling Swallet system. (F)

JF346 Un-named dry cave near Serendipity; steeply sloping rift. (F)

JF347 FROST POT: Vertical cave in small doline with 6 metre fallen log across one side; entrance measures 1.5 x 2 metres. (F)

JF348 BENSON POT: Vertical pothole; rectangular entrance. (F)

JF349 Vertical pothole. (F)

JF350 Vertical pothole. (F)

JF351 HEDGES POT: Vertical pothole. (F)

JF352 Vertical pothole. (F)

JF353 PITTA PATTA POT: Pot 6 of Benson & Hedges series; no further details. (F)

JF354 Pot 7 of Benson & Hedges series; near edge of cliffed doline; no further details. (F)

JF355 POX POT: Pot 8 of Benson & Hedges series; rift entrance. (F)

JF356 GUNGE POT: Pot 9 of B&H series; no further details. (F)

JF357 Pot 10 of B&H series; no further details. (F)

JF358 Pot 12 of B&H series; two entrances; no further details. (F)

JF359 Small un-named cave within Ice Tube doline; very muddy. (F)

JF360 Upper entrance to Ice Tube. (F)

JF361 Small swallet close to Ice Tube; 5 metre entrance pitch; becomes too tight. (F)

JF362 SETTLEMENT CAVE: (Middle entrance); vertical rift 4 metres deep; no further details. (F)

JF363 SETTLEMENT CAVE: (Upstream entrance); entrance in rock-walled doline; no further details. (F)

JF364-365 No details available.

JF366 ASTEROID POT: Cave with two entrances; both entrances blocked after short distance. (F)

JF367 THE DUNGEON: Cave with 6 metre entrance pitch; depth 8 metres; no continuation. (F)

JF368 ARMADILLO POT: Pothole with 50 metre pitch; large chamber; depth 60 metres. (F)

JF369 Un-named cave depth 10 metres; no continuation. (F)

JF370 MONGREL POT: No continuation after 15 metre entrance pitch. (F)

JF371 FLORENTINE POT (Flick Mints Hole): Small entrance to 45 metre pitch; impressive chamber; further 15 metre pitch; no continuation. (F)

JF372 SLIMY POT: Depth 37 metres; no further details. (F)

JF373 PUNISHMENT POT: Inflow cave chokes; further excavation required. (F)

JF374 Un-named shaft; blocked at 15 metres. (F)

JF375 Second entrance to Serendipity; slightly higher than JF344. (F)

JF376 VARMINT POT: Sloping entrance; depth 60 metres; two pitches of 25 and 10 metres; bones found include those of Tasmanian Tiger. (F)

JF377 Un-named cave; depth 4 metres. (F)

JF378 MENAGE-A-TROIS: Cave with 3 tiny entrances; no further details. (F)

JF379 GASH POT: No further details. (F)

JF380 Cave with two entrances; depth 45 metres. (F)

JF381 Un-named cave; no further details. (F)

JF382 Cave with depth of 15 metres to draughting constriction. (F)

27.

CONCLUSION, NOTES & GLOSSARY

During the 1980s cave exploration was focused mainly on the area of high relief, northeast of The Gap and Wherretts Lookout. Numerous caves with depth potential have been located in this area and were being steadily and systematically explored even into the 1990s. As mentioned earlier, Stuart Nicholas, Nick Hume and Trevor Wailes have published a journal covering this exciting period of speleological exploration.

My own efforts have mainly been concerned with the years prior to 1981. However, in some instances I have ventured into more recent times for the sake of the story. One can only speculate as to whether or not the Growling Swallet/Ice Tube system will establish a through connection to Junee Cave itself. It is highly unlikely but still an exciting possibility.

With depths of 375 metres being obtained in recent years it might still be possible to break that magical 400 metre mark. However, due to the deep caves taking precedence, it appears that the low-lying limestone in both the Junee and Florentine areas has received little attention. Although low-level horizontal-type caves don't have the same appeal as the deep ones, I've no doubt the search will go on. As I mentioned earlier, somewhere within that extensive expanse of low-lying limestone lies a cave comparable to that of Welcome Stranger. It's only a matter of time before some enterprising caver discovers it.

NOTES:

Junee Homestead: this former residence was, through the kind permission of the late Jim Hall who owned the property from the early 1970s, used as a staging point for numerous caving expeditions for quite a number of years. Close to Junee Cave and long devoid of tenants, the homestead was frequently the target of wanton vandalism. Although it was in a rather dilapidated condition, cavers attempted to maintain two of its rooms in reasonable condition, one of which was rumoured to be haunted. Unfortunately, when I last visited the property in 1996, it had been completely demolished. Bricks, iron and bits and pieces were strewn over the general area.

Bats: although bats do exist in Tasmania, in the forest, they have not so far been found living in any Tasmanian Cave.

Parentheses: The reader may notice that in the text I have included information in square brackets [ ] in various places. They were not part of the original report. Information in brackets, as ( ) is from the original. My reasons for these brackets [ ] are mainly for conversion of feet to metres and where some further clarification is needed.

GLOSSARY

Although this publication is mainly aimed at members of the caving fraternity, the uninitiated may be confused by some of the terminology which appears in some of the trip reports. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, I have compiled a list of these words and their meanings.

Some Caving Terms:

Accumulator	rechargeable battery
Anaspides	type of tiny fresh-water shrimp
Aven	vertical shaft rising from within a cave; not usually breaking through to the surface
Bedding-plane	a surface separating two beds of rock
Bushed	lost
Chimneying	ascent or descent by means of body/limb pressure against two walls
Chock stone	a rock wedged between two walls of a passage
Crawl	low-roofed passage to be negotiated on hands and knees
Curtain	a wavy folded sheet of dripstone
Dig	excavation of mud/sand/rock from possible lead
Dodgy	suspect/possibly dangerous
Doline	depression formed due to a solution of limestone or collapse of limestone beneath
Draught	a noticeable movement of air; often indicates a passage 'goes'
Efflux	outflow of water from cave or spring
False floor	thin floor usually created by water removing silt or sand
Flattener	a low, often wide, passage negotiable on the stomach
Free-hanger	free-hanging pitch away from wall of cave
Friable	easily crumbled
Gardening	clearing of loose rocks usually from the edge of a pitch
Grotty	of dubious origin but dirty as well.
Hairy	risky or dangerous
Heavies	cavers well known in caving circles
Horizontal (scrub)	a dreaded horizontally growing tree common in the south-western areas of Tasmania; extremely hard to negotiate one's way through
Jumar™	a one-way sliding, otherwise gripping device used for ascending a rope
Keystone	a rock holding other rocks in place
Lead	a possible way on
Moon-milk	(mondmilch) milk-like calcite substance probably of biological origin
Pitch	a vertical drop or a steep drop
Pothole	natural vertical shaft open to the surface
Pushing	extending
Resurgence	outflow of water from underground; implies re-emergence of former surface stream
Scrub bashing	hunting for caves in thick scrub
Scungy	of dubious origin
Sherpas	porters or support party
Sink	where water drains underground, usually in a depression

Siphon	a water-filled passage; may also be called a sump
Squeeze	tight, constricted hole or short passage
Suunto™	liquid-damped sighting compass used for surveying
Swallet	hole or cave taking water (may not be humanly enterable)
Talus	rock debris from roof or wall of cave
Tie-off	place to secure a belay or header
Tourist	easy caving trip
Traverse	movement along a narrow ledge with a vertical drop
Trogging	caving or cave exploration
Troglobitic	living permanently underground
Trog-suit	a pair of combination overalls worn when exploring caves
Vadose	above the watertable (in the zone where air is present) (as opposed to 'phreatic' – below the watertable)

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APPENDIX:

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Depths of Tasmania place of cavers' dreams

by Reg A. Watson

Of the 11 deepest caves in Australia, Tasmania has the deepest of them all. Our island State is a cavers' dream and while there are already hundreds of caves listed, many, many more are yet to be discovered in years to come.

Speleology – the study of caves - has been in Tasmania since the 1890s, but it really took off in 1946 with the formation of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club.

Laurie Moody is an enthusiastic speleologist who has taken on the chore, since 1979, of researching Tasmania's caves and their discovery up to 1980.

Laurie hopes to publish a book, which he will finish writing later this year.

It is an important work. Except for the occasional article in specific journals, little has been recorded for public use on the subject. Laurie has had ample experience in the Junee-Florentine areas of Tasmania, west of Maydena. Indeed he says the area is the home of Australia's deepest caves. A recent addition to the 10 deepest caves is Niggly Cave, at 375 metres believed to be Australia's deepest. Then comes Anne-A-Kanada, at 373 metres, down to No. 11, Midnight Hole (203 metres), located at Ida Bay.

In his introduction to his book, 'Caves of the Junee-Florentine', Laurie writes that the caves are often difficult to find because of the dense rainforest and thick scrub which abounds in the region.

"A fair majority of this area is Crown Land which has, for many years, been leased by the Australian Newsprint Mills (ANM). However, some is located within the boundaries of Mt Field National Park."

Prospective visitors to ANM areas will need a permit.

Laurie has actually discovered new caves and, like astronomers who locate stars, he has the honour of naming the discovery. Several such discoveries are the Deviation Cave in the western Florentine Valley, Suicide Pot and Vandal Cave in the Junee area.

He believes his book is filling a vacuum by documenting the caves all under one cover. According to Laurie, caves were studied for the first time in Tasmania from the 1850s, but caving as a sport and science really began from 1890 onwards. Before organised documentation, caves were accidentally discovered by bushmen.

Laurie said he began exploring caves in 1972, enjoying hunts through the bush to find them. "It is an incredible experience knowing that you are the first person to go inside of it." He said the entrances to caves were not always large and distinctive. At times the entrance could be small and well hidden; and there was always the danger that people could be caught in them. Laurie is devoting a chapter to such episodes. Even so, remarkably, there have been few mishaps of tragic consequences, but the danger is there even for experienced cavers.

"Knowing that in this age there's not a lot to be explored or discovered, it is good to know there are numerous, perhaps hundreds of caves yet to be found right on your back doorstep," Laurie said. "Most Tasmanian caves are solid with stable limestone, but there's always the risk of a collapsing roof," he added.

One of the biggest "show" caves in the State is the Welcome Stranger Cave in the Florentine Valley, which is a stream cave – all horizontal with some of its formation really spectacular. Located in 1969 by Don Frankcombe, its entrance consists of three small holes which at first appearance do not look promising. Since then there have been several expeditions to the cave. The cave itself has straw stalactite "curtains" and flowstone present along the streamway is of a good standard. Upper level chambers contain crystalline calcite floors and gours. However, damage has been considerable. Many of the straw stalactites have been damaged by visitors' negligence and laziness.

Laurie urges all leaders to advise their parties to use exceptional care when visiting this particular cave.

Interestingly, he corrects an often misunderstood fact that bats live in caves; leastways not in Tasmania, even though we do have bats. Other life found in caves are the cave spider, which can grow as big as a man's hand, but it is harmless; and a type of a fresh-water native shrimp.

While there is no vegetation, occasionally animal bones are found and there have been several instances of the bones of the Tasmanian tiger being found.

At the Beginners Luck Cave explorers found implements which, after carbon dating, were judged to be 12,000 years old and used by Aborigines. As a result of this find, an approach was made to ANM to protect the area from logging operations and it complied to the request.

Most caves are fairly inaccessible to the general public and while the Junee-Florentine Valley are exceptional areas for caves, there are throughout Tasmania such places as Ida Bay and Hastings in the extreme South, Mole Creek and Gunns Plains in the North-West and Precipitous Bluff in the South-West.

A publisher for Laurie's book is yet to be determined.

The discovery of caves and information on them from 1980 will be the subject of another book being written by Tasmanian Caverneering Club president Stuart Nicholson [Nicholas]. The subterranean world will come alive in this book. Readers will be allowed to explore caves with such exotic names as Niagara, Khazad-Dum (named from Tolkien's book, *Lord of the Rings*) Dribblespit Swallet and Cauldron Pot, with ease from the comfort of an armchair.

Photo captions:
A caver makes his way down the 54 metre pitch of Victory 75 Cave in the Junee area. [Front cover, upper]
The formations are spectacular at the Welcome Stranger Cave in the Florentine Valley. However, the straw stalactites have been damaged in places by negligent visitors. [see page 51]
Stalactites frame an underground fairy world as cavers traverse a passage of the Welcome Stranger Cave. [Cover]