

SPELEO - SPIEL.

No.55.

March, 1971.

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FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- March 13 - Saturday: Complete cutting of track to Weld River.  
Leave 7 a.m. from 8 Bath St. Leader: A. Goede.
- March 27,28 - Weekend: Trip to Exit Cave to further explore new  
extension. Leader: B. Collin or P. Robinson.
- March 31 - Wednesday: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. 8 p.m. at  
8 Bath Street, Battery Point. Make sure you are  
there, election of new president, vice-pres. and  
committee for the coming year.
- April 9-12 - Easter: Lake Margaret area. Camping out. To explore  
caves recently found by Arthur Clarke. Impressive  
glacial scenery. Owners of 4 wheel drive vehicles  
especially invited. Leader: F. Brown or A. Goede.
- April 24 - Saturday: Day trip to  
Exit Cave with group of  
15 physical education  
students doing Adventure  
type training with Iain  
Barnes. Leader: to be  
appointed.

E D I T O R I A L.

Khazad-dum - now 970 feet deep !!

Another Australian depth record and it keeps on going. The Australia Day long weekend saw a combined T.C.C. - S.C.S. party launch another assault on this fascinating, frustrating and enervating system.

The advance party was under ground for 21½ hours. Far too long for efficient caving as it turned out. The return to the surface was somewhat akin to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow as cold and exhausted cavers struggled painfully with mountains of gear. Unlike Napoleon but more through good luck than judgement we managed not to leave any gear or bods behind.

Many of us on reaching the surface swore a solemn oath not to return to this dastardly cave. No doubt we will be back but it will not be before next summer. The trip was not without its successes. The 70 & 95 ft. ladder pitches were by-passed following a new route which involved only a 25 and a 60 ft. pitch. Although the wet way down from the 860 ft. level proved a little too wet to be feasible a deep dry shaft was discovered to go down from this level and no doubt will be the main objective of the next expedition.



Meanwhile some planning and preparation during the coming winter could improve our chances for next summer. Gear handling could be speeded up if ropes as well as ladders were carried in bags. Petrol primuses are much superior to solid fuel stoves and should be taken next time. The 150 ft. shaft should be rigged for lowering and raising of gear. A telephone line from the surface to the bottom of the 92 ft. ladder drop would obviate the necessity for a support party to wait long hours at the top of this pitch and would leave them in better shape to assist with transport of gear. Use of mechanical abseiling and rope climbing methods would considerably reduce amount of gear required for the cave. No doubt other improvements are possible and it is worth giving some thought while the experience is fresh in our minds.

### CLUB NEWS.

+ Congratulations to Bernard Howe and his bride who took the plunge on 20th Feb. We hope to see them at the next meeting as we have not yet had the pleasure of meeting her. She must be an understanding woman as Bernard stated in a letter to the secretary that we may start seeing him again on trips soon. Their new address is 46 McKinly Street, Midway Point, 7171.

+ New members: Congratulations to the following two new members elected at the last general meeting:  
Arthur Clarke, 2/46 King Street, Sandy Bay, 7005. (Full member)  
David Cripps, 442 Elizabeth Street, North Hobart, (Junior member).

+ Cave numbering: - June Florentine.

Four caves were numbered in this area during the last month. All were numbered on 28/2/71.

JF 12 - Unnamed pothole discovered on 28/2/71. Unexplored. Depth of first shaft estimated 60 ft. Number placed on tree as no rock face available.

JF 13 - Unnamed pothole discovered and explored on 7/2/71. Depth approx. 300 ft. Four ladder pitches of 30, 60, 180, and 30 ft.

JF 14 - Unnamed pothole discovered and partially explored on 7/2/71. Depth reached 70 ft.

JF 15 - Hairygoat Hole. Discovered on 26/9/70. Explored on 18/10/1970 to depth of approx. 150 ft.

+ New caving areas:

Two new caving areas have turned up since the last Spiel. Arthur Clarke who has been geological field assistant for Mt. Lyell during the summer reports the presence of caves in the side of a gorge in the Lake Margaret area N.E. of Queenstown. The caves occur in an area glaciated during the ice ages and at an altitude of 2000 ft. They are in Gordon limestone and contain formation and glow worms. A trip to the area is planned at Easter.

A small party of the Manuka Club have reported some cave entrances in large dolines in the Cracroft area. One has a Kubla Khan like entrance while another has a strong draught. A report from the party that the rock is dark may indicate that it is Gordon limestone rather than dolomite. If this is so the prospects for large caves are excellent.

+ Adventure Training: A letter has been received from Iain Barnes (National Fitness Council) asking for our assistance in taking 15 final year physical education students (age 20 - 21, 6 men and 9 women) on a day trip to Exit Cave on Saturday, 24th April. The students will be doing this as part of a 15 day adventure type camp and their programme also includes canoeing and bushwalking. We hope that club members will participate.

+ Congratulations to Clive and Sally Morris on the birth of their second offspring.

### TRIP REPORTS.

June Area (approx.  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile S.E. of Khazad-dum).

Date: Sunday, 7th February, 1971.

Party: Brian, Jeanette and Peter Collin, Bill Lehmann, Peter Shaw, Kevin Kiernan, Philip Robinson, Stuart Nicholas and David Cripps.

The purpose of the trip was to find a direct dry way from the surface into Khazad-dum, that would by-pass the 100 ft. waterfall (now known to be 70 ft.). We failed but the trip was not without interest.

A suitable hole was found (numbered JF 13 on 28/2/71), it proved to be a more vertical than horizontal system, in fact its principal dimensions were 50 ft. horizontal, and 300 ft. vertical. The

pitches being 30, 60, 180 and 30 ft.

The estimated depth of the 180 footer varied from 150 ft. to 400 ft. so Kevin descended using 190 ft. of ladder. A ledge at 100 feet was a welcome surprise but the 30 ft. drop near the bottom of the 180 footer was awkward as he had no spare ladder. A wet Kevin, Bill and Peter(Shaw) came to the surface for a conference. The outcome saw Philip at the bottom of the 180 footer, Brian 90 ft. down the same pitch and prevented from going further as the ladder had caught on a projection and Kevin on belay. Another lengthy conference. The outcome this time was that Brian joined Kevin and Philip descended the 30 ft. pitch on his own. Philip returned to the bottom of the 180 footer and called for the safety rope. Kevin promptly tied a stray rope end to a belay and Brian threw Philip all the safety rope as requested. (Curses unprintable were heard.) Some time was spent in getting another safety rope and a wet Phil Brian and Kevin came to the surface.

Whilst the first attempt was in progress Stuart, David, Brian, Jeanette and Peter(Jnr.) looked at a second hole some 300 yards to the east. (Numbered JF 14 on 28/2/71). Stuart ran out of ladder at 60 ft. David bottomed at 70 ft. and from his description it appeared that a passage continued similar to JF 10. The party returned to the others at JF 13.

By the way both caves had soak type shower systems installed and especially in the first one(JF 13) some intriguing ledges of loose rocks which took the monotony out of waiting for the next person to come down.

Some apt but unprintable names have been suggested for the first cave.

A good trip, Brian Collin.

Ida Bay - Saturday, 13th February, 1971.

Party: Brian(leader), Jeanette and Peter Collin, Peter Shaw, Phil Robinson, Albert Goede, Stuart Nicholas, David Cripps and Simon Stephens.

The party left Hobart at 7 a.m. with the rather optimistic feeling that the day would see a triumphant link up between the small swallet near the old quarry and Exit Cave. Maybe we should not have gone on the 13th! Jeanette and Peter were left at base in the old quarry with a good fire going. Then the six of us headed for the swallet which was not quite as scungy and dangerous as Brian had led us to believe. It did not take long to reach the 20 ft. pitch at which the first party had stopped. Philip went down and after following a passage at the bottom for a short distance found that the cave ended in an impenetrable crack. Meanwhile Simon and Albert explored a passage near the top and to the left of the 20 ft. pitch but this continued back towards the surface and was followed as far as possible. The only find of interest was an Idacarabus beetle collected by Albert. Rather disappointed we untackled the cave and returned to the quarry for lunch. Suggested name for swallet - Disappointment Pot.

Early afternoon saw a couple of hours of scrub bashing in an area to the S.W. of the quarry. It consists of broken limestone with numerous dolines and small caves none of any significance. Finally on going uphill we found a promising hole. Simon went down a 20 ft. pitch on a rope but reported use of ladders desirable. Albert and David went back to the quarry to collect some gear. The entrance pitch having been rigged Brian, Albert and Peter went down. At the bottom of the pitch a tight stream passage can be followed for a short distance - then another 10 ft. drop with a passage to the right to a small chamber. From here an increasingly tight stream passage slopes downwards. Brian went first and reported two holes too small to enter although a draught was noticed. Then Albert decided that the left hole could perhaps be deepened by removal of waterworn boulders. This suggestion was followed up by Peter who moved them out of the left hole into the right one but found that some largish rocks near the far end were impossible to shift. He turned his attention to the right hole by shifting the boulders back into the left one. He then attempted to get through feet first but found his shoulders jammed. A slighter person may be able to get through as the passage seems to widen a little beyond. The use of explosives is another possibility. This cave is worth another try and the name "Bottleneck Cave" is suggested.

Albert Goede.

BE THERE, GET WITH IT

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 31/3/71.

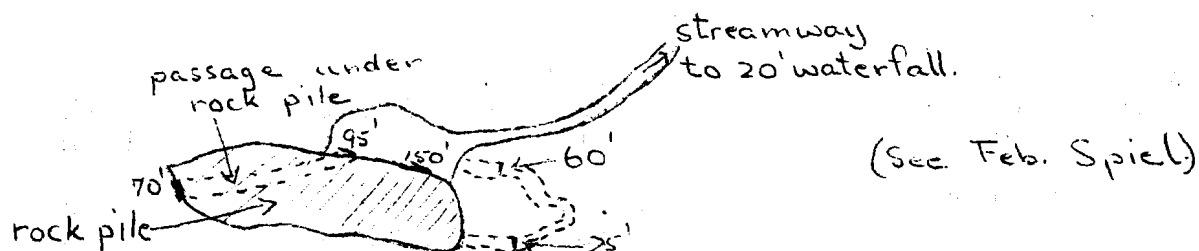
KHAZAD-DUM - Feb 27 - March 1, 1971.

Party: Philip Robinson, Albert Goede (leaders), Peter Shaw, Norman Poulter, David Cripps, Stuart Nicholas, Richard Bloomfield, Kevin Kiernan (SCS, TCC), Chris Harris (SCS), Graeme Watt (SCS), David Mitchell (SCS), Delia Maloney (who did the cooking), and surface support party on Sat. Bob Cockerill and Aleks Terauds from SCS.

Nine hundred and seventy feet down and forced back by a raging torrent of a waterfall. Depth unknown. So ended one of the hardest, most exciting caving expeditions in Tasmania for many years. Khazad-dum is providing a real challenge, one which few people wanted but all expected.

Fourteen people gathered at the Junee homestead on Saturday morning. Hopes were high of breaking 1000 ft. Conditions were dry and the weather good. 700 ft. 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. waterfall, 590 ft. underground. All was routine down the familiar drops, the 15' scaling pole pitch, the 15' ladder, 100' rope climb, the flattener, the 92' free hanger on to the rock pile, the 70' and the final 95' 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 rock pile, depth -300'. A 25' pitch was descended and followed along to a 60' drop. Norm descended on a rope to find himself at the base of the 95' pitch in the streamway. A easy way down had been found, avoiding the 70' and 95' ladder pitches.



Unfortunately by this time all the gear had been lowered down the 70' pitch and the old route had to be followed. How Norm climbed back up the 60' pitch on a rope is still a mystery. The first 25' is a vertical wall, then a ledge and a further one 15' 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.

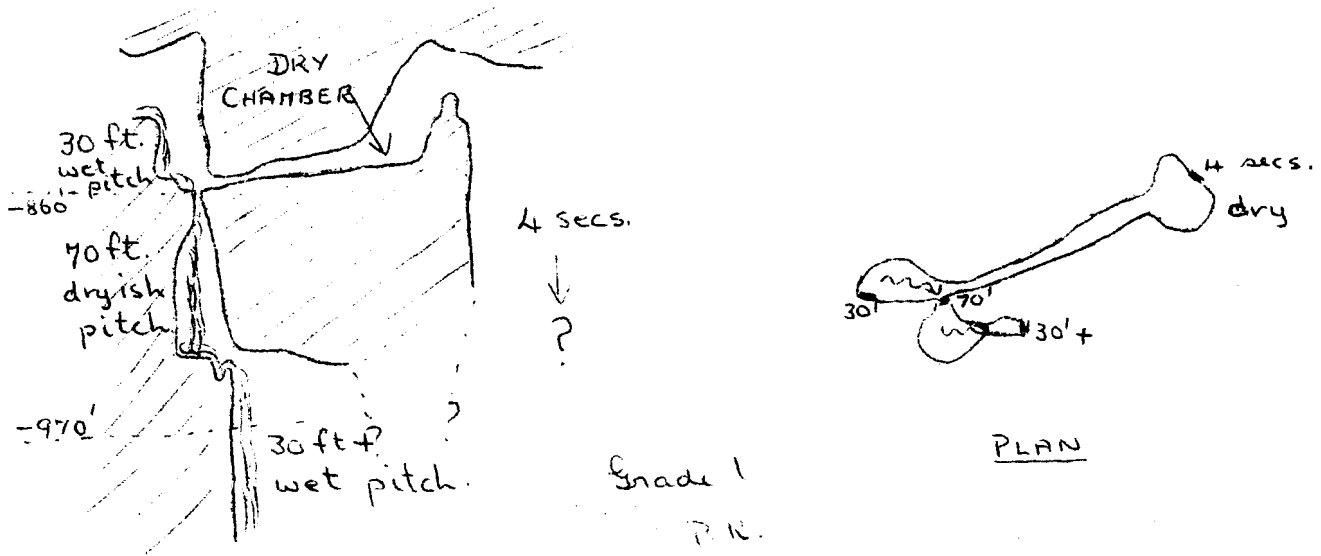
Everyone was remarkably lively on Sunday morning, eager to be away. A party of six, Philip, Peter, Norm, Kevin, Chris and Graeme were to reach the bottom at 860' and push it to the limit. At 12.00 noon Albert and David Mitchell entered to belay the 92' free hanger. They returned to the surface coming back on Sunday night with Richard and David Cripps.

The new route was followed, the 25' and 60' pitches rigged with ladder. The six descended to the 20' 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'. Everyone was now cold and extremely wet 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 five hours to reach the bottom. An hour was spent driving in a bolt beneath the spray and gale provided by the last 30'. 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' to a small chamber. From here one could climb up a 12' 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, ladder was lowered over the drop. Kevin descended a 70' free hanging pitch. Philip, Norm Chris and tackle followed. Down a 10' waterfall and a pool chest deep another pitch was encountered. Forty feet down what appeared to be the bot-

ton could be seen. Ladder was attached to the end of the 70'. Kevin descended. In the middle of a tremendous waterfall his light disappeared down, 10'..20'...30' ..... 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' - it could even be 100'. 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 970ft.



Soon, belayed by Graeme and Peter we were back up the 70' 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 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 gear up onto the rock pile. It was hoped we could haul it straight up the 150' drop. Four or five attempts to throw the rope down failed. Norm and Chris with David Mithhell from the support party returned to the 60'. The pitch is narrow with ledges. Philip and David positioned themselves on the ledges to guide gear up. Slowly we reached the 92' free hanger. Albert and support had been waiting nine 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 10.00 a.m. 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. One hundred and ten feet have been added to the Australian depth record, now 970 ft. 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' underground waiting to be descended.

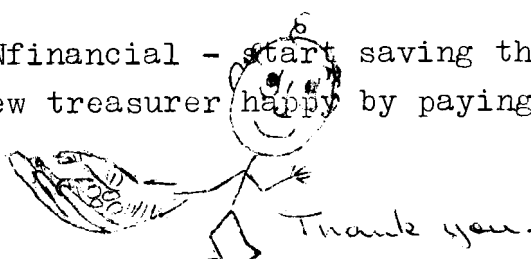
Khazad-dum is providing a worthy challenge which can only be taken up by a strong team of experienced potholers.

Philip Robinson, 4/3/71.

June Area - Sunday, 28th February, 1971.

Owing to lack of space this report will be published in the next Spiel.

SOON YOU will be UNfinancial - start saving those cents now so you can make our new treasurer happy by paying him promptly!!!



TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB - ANNUAL REPORT. 1970 - 1971.

My election as president last year took place during my absence overseas and it was not until the end of June that I was able to take up office. At this time the club was doing very little caving and seemed on the verge of extinction. It has been very gratifying to see the tremendous upsurge in activity and membership since then. During the past year no less than 17 new members have joined the club of which five were junior members, and they now form the active core. There is every reason to hope that the present active membership will continue to grow. However it should be kept in mind that not all members like difficult trips and the club programme should include a variety to suit all tastes.

Exploration. There has been a marked concentration of caving activities in the Junee area with considerable success. A large number of new potholes was discovered - some not yet fully explored due to lack of time. Our greatest success was undoubtedly Khazad-dun. Exploration was greatly assisted by cavers from a number of clubs during the A.S.F. fieldtrips and subsequently by the strong support and participation of the Southern Caving Society. The cave is now the deepest in Australia at 970' and still going strong. The Florentine Valley was visited a number of times - mainly tourist trips were held to Francombe, Cashion Ck. and Welcome Stranger Caves.

Ida Bay was visited regularly. Trips were mostly to Exit but Midnight Hole was prepared for abseiling during the year. In Exit Cave an A.S.F. fieldtrip made a major breakthrough adding another mile of passage and raising hopes of a route through the hill and a possible link with Mystery Ck. Cave.

Surface prospecting was carried out at Mt. Anne. Reconnaissance work paved the way for the A.S.F. party. Lake Tink was reached and a marked route now connects it with the search camp.

Two trips were made to the N.E. and small caves at Gray as well as a granite cave near Scottsdale were explored. Mole Creek received little attention during the year mainly as a result of our preoccupation with areas closer to Hobart.

Techniques and equipment. The equipment situation has remained static during the year. Ladders suffered record use and plans are in hand for the making of another eight 30 ft. ladders. Also 360' of nylon climbing rope was bought during the year.

Search and Rescue. Fortunately the search and rescue team was not called out during the year. State search and rescue was reorganized and we are now associated with the Federation of Tasmanian Bushwalking Clubs. It is hoped to have a new search and rescue list out soon.

A.S.F. Conference. The event of the year was the A.S.F. Eighth Biennial Conference for which our club and S.C.S. were joint hosts. If the flattering accounts in mainland caving journals and letters of thanks from individuals are any indication the conference and field trips were certainly a success. The occasion has also brought about much closer cooperation of our club with S.C.S. There had long been talk of closer cooperation but it needed a conference to make it work. Mutual suspicion of the past seems to have been replaced by mutual respect as we got to know each other better.

Speleo - Spiel. With this issue the Spiel has completed five years of successful publication. I am grateful to my wife Therese who has continued to cut the stencils and has also taken over distribution. Also to Jeanette Collin and Ian Farley who kept it going during our six months absence overseas and finally to the trip leaders whose enthusiasm(?) for report writing has enabled the Spiel to remain an almost complete record of our caving activities.

Finally I would like to thank the out-going office bearers for their support during the year. The rapid increase in membership in recent months offers a good opportunity to elect a strong and active committee for the coming year.

Yours sincerely,  
*Albert Soede,*  
President.