

SPELEO - SPIEL.

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February, 1972.

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President: Albert Goede, 8 Bath Street, Battery Point, 7000.

Secretary: Noel White, Geology Dept., Uni.of Tas., Sandy Bay, 7005.

FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- February 12,13 - Weekend. Exit Cave, Ida Bay. Camp underground. Celebration of Delia's birthday, mapping and photography. Leader: Bill Lehmann.
- February 16 - Wednesday: Barbecue at Henk Meerding's place, 7 Gourlay Street, Blackmans Bay. Any time after 7p.m. Bring your own food and drink.
- February 19 - Saturday: Further exploration of Niagara Pot, June area, to push beyond the 450 ft. depth reached so far. Leader: Peter Shaw. Sherpas as well as explorers welcome.
- February 23 - Wednesday: Ladder practice at Sphynx Rock. Last opportunity with summer time. Depart Brian's, 66 Wentworth St., South Hobart 6p.m.
- February 26,27 - Weekend: Combined trip with S.C.S. to Herberts Pot, Mole Creek. One of the most exciting sporting caves in the state. Leader: K.Kiernan.
- March 1 - Wednesday: General Meeting. 8p.m. Bill Hodge's place, 5 Bayley St., Glebe. Bring slides and refreshments. Mystery prize for raffle provided by Clive Morris.
- March 4,5,6 - Long weekend. Easy trip to Mole Creek. Should suit all types. Camp near Croesus. An attempt to salvage the gate - shovels, rubber boots, waders and sledge hammers will come in useful. Also further exploration of Tailender Cave with climbing pole. Leader: Albert Goede.
- March 11,12 - Day or weekend: Preparation for another and last Khazad-dum descent. Leader: Phil.Robinson.
- March 18,19 - Weekend: Another and last push to the bottom of Khazad-dum to complete survey and exploration. Also removal of all equipment including telephone line and eyebolts from cave. MANY hands needed. Leaders: advance party: Phil Robinson; support party: Brian Collin and Albert Goede.
- MARCH 29 - WEDNESDAY - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. - 8p.m.
at 8 Bath Street, Battery Point. Election of office bearers for coming year.

Editorial.

KHAZAD - DUM BOTTOMED AT 1020 FT.!

A New Australian Depth Record.

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

At the time of descent it was the third deepest 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 to a depth of 1160 ft. 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: Phil Robinson(leader), Peter Shaw, Kevin Kiernan,

Graeme Watt, and S.C.S. member Chris Harris.

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

Day support(Sunday): Albert Goede(leader), David Cripps, Menk Meerding, Stuart Nicholas, Wes Carpenter, Judy Chambers, Sally Morris, Ross Bell, Delia Maloney 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 ladder 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 mudslope (which appears to lead to a large cavern) opposite the base of the 125 ft. pitch, has not yet been scaled due to lack of an ice pick. This trends in a direction opposite to the siphon. The survey also has not yet been completed although it has been extended to -696 ft. The trips planned in March will hopefully tie up the loose ends.

Albert Goede.

Club News.

+ Changes of address:

Arthur Clarke, c/o P.Wessing, 141 Mt.Nelson Rd., Mount Nelson,7007.

Peter Shaw, 53 Lord St., Sandy Bay, 7005.

Kerry Holloway, P.O.Box 333, Smithton, Tas. 7330.

John Bluhdorn, 12 Nixon St., Sandy Bay, 7005.

+ New member:

We extend a cordial welcome to Andrew Skinner who was accepted as a full member at the last general meeting. His address: 21 Kelly St., Battery Point, 7000.

+ Prospective members:

Also welcome to the mob: Sue Morris, 4 Somerdale Rd., Claremont, and Joe Donnelly ex. Queensland, as yet no fixed address.

+ Congratulations to Roy Skinner - superintendent at Hastings Caves and a long standing member of our club - who has won a Churchill Fellowship for 1972. This will enable him to make a study tour later this year to visit cave areas in New Zealand, Japan, U.S.A., France, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Lebanon and South Africa. No doubt his experience will be very valuable if or when Exit Cave is developed as a tourist attraction. As Roy is not a photographer but would like to take a series of Tasmanian cave slides to exhibit overseas he has requested that anybody who has slides that could be used make them available to him for copying. Please contact Roy if you can assist.

+ Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Robin Booth, at present at the Port Moresby Hospital in New Guinea. Robin and his wife Judy are club members and Robin was vice-president when he resigned in August 1970 to take up an appointment as patrol officer in New Guinea working in the Madang district.

He was injured when a truck in which he was travelling plunged down the bank of a river crossing on a rough track 40 miles south of Usino patrol post and was admitted to Madang hospital with a fractured nose, cuts to an eye and numerous cuts and abrasions. Following the accident his vision failed to improve and he has been transferred to Port Moresby for specialist treatment.

A.S.F. Conference Proceedings.

The editors are sorry to report that there has been a further slight hold-up in their publication. The typist who was doing the final typing became ill and then went on holiday. The proceedings are now being reset in 10 pt type and type setting and proof reading are two thirds complete. The use of smaller type together with the reduction of diagrams will reduce the number of pages to between 100 and 110 and will result in a much superior publication. We expect that it will see the light of day about the end of February. Some advance orders have already been received. Orders should be sent to "The Secretary, A.S.F. Convention 1970, Box 641 G, G.P.O., Hobart, Tas. 7001. Cheques should be made payable to A.S.F. Convention 1970. and NOT to the clubs.

KUBLA KHAN - Conservation or Slow Deterioration?

Our president recently received a letter from Lloyd Robinson (Illawarra Speleo.Society) from Wollongong, N.S.W. who with a friend visited Kubla Khan and Exit Cave in December. Lloyd is a leading cave conservationist and what he has to say about Kubla should concern all Tasmanian cavers. The editor has therefore taken the liberty of publishing a portion of his letter:-

" The chaps who placed the concrete blockage in the top entrance sure went to some trouble. Mr. Howe told us that none of the party involved knew of the position of the top entrance and had to be shown its position by his son; the Howes were told that they were going to use the cement to make a good track up the hill to the cave. My concern is not with who or why the cave was sealed but in the future protection of this fine cave. In my opinion this is one of the outstanding caves in Australia especially with the stalagmite growth where there are some of the finest examples I have ever seen. Also there are excellent helictite-aragonite crystals. In the section we visited there are parts where it is impossible to progress without walking across and on formation. There are places where:-

- (a) more than one path is used across formations.
- (b) spent carbide and rubbish have been dumped.
- (c) uncovered faeces on formations.
- (d) aragonite crystals have been removed.

It is obvious that some form of controlled visiting to the cave is needed, under the control of one who knows the cave. In our opinion Kubla is far too good to be used for training, familiarisation, or scouting trips. We suggested to Frank Brown that a lock up grill is needed on the top entrance; and a more distinct trail is needed over some sections. From my experience in W.A. caves, Kubla will suffer swift deterioration if left as it is. Frank seemed interested in the fact that we were so interested and concerned with Kubla. Frank places much emphasis on what the three(3) discoverers of the top entrance wish to be done, if anything, about it. In fact the way he talks they have the final say."

Whatever our feelings about the unknown mainlanders responsible for blocking the top entrance it is quite obvious that we are not doing enough to preserve our best caves. Our president recently had a discussion with Bill Tomalin about the problem who assured him that a locking bar had been made up and was just about ready to be placed in position to block the top entrance.

This will be a partial solution provided that, and here I quote our secretary Noel White - " There is no point in having a gate if everyone and his dog can go through it whenever they choose. If arguments about safety are to carry any weight the gate should be used ONLY when its use is required for reasons of safety. The best protection for the cave is to drastically reduce the numbers visiting it. Anyone not capable of doing the cave from the main entrance should not be in it.

All clubs should adopt as a fixed policy that no prospective members should be taken to Kubla Khan."

We are prepared to stick to this policy and hope that other clubs and unaffiliated cavers will adopt the same attitude.

Lest we feel too smug about our attitude let me point out that our club was responsible for a gate in Croesus that was washed out under extreme flood conditions eighteen months ago. Croesus is a very vulnerable cave only 100 yards from a sealed road. What have we done about it? Nothing. If you feel a little guilty how about joining the March long weekend trip to do something about it. Members of other clubs and northwestern cavers are welcome to join us.

TRIP REPORTS.

Khazad-dum - 18,19/12/71. (Advance party report.)

Party: Phil Robinson, Peter Shaw, Kevin Kiernan, Graeme Watt and Chris Harris.

On Sat. 18th Dec. at 7p.m. the sump pool was finally reached at a depth estimated near 1020 ft. - another Australian record. It was a great triumph of team work 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.

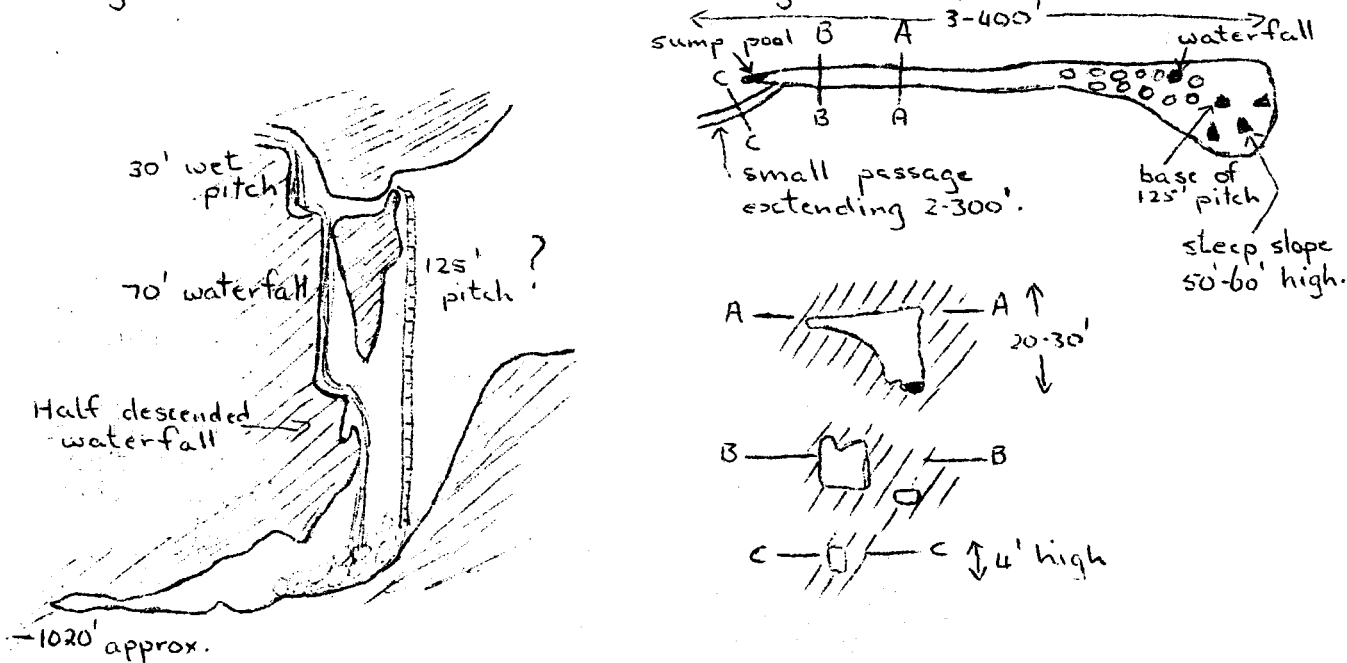
The two previous weekends(both wet) saw the cave laddered to the -720' level. An extra 200' ladder and 360' rope were stacked in the streamway at -530'. On Saturday morning nine cavers headed for Khazad-dum praying heavily that the weather would at last give them a break. Brian Collin and Andrew Skinner lined the forward team down the 92' free hanger. Bill and Tom stayed just inside the entrance to test the telephone. During the day this was fixed from the rain forest campsite to the streamway -450' down.

Without tackle the streamway was soon reached. The water was lower than usual yet still much higher than last summer. The assault was on. The five waterfall pitches were descended smoothly to the

last 30'. Here a bolt was driven taking the ladder just behind the fall. 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' was reached. Immediately the glut-tions society started work. This sheltered section is a relief from the cold, draughty streamway. Water temp. is 6-7°C. The big dry shaft was reconnoitered. 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 of ladder was lowered and Philip prepared to descend. The top 25' is against a wall, the rest free hanging. Below the overhang the ladder dwindled down into the distance hopefully touching the bottom. Would we pass 1000' down this pitch? As Khazad-dum pitches usually go a waterfall appeared lower down 50-60' high. It came crashing in 20-30' to one side of the ladder. The pitch was 125'. The waterfall was obviously the one from which Kevin Kiernan retreated in March '71. Chris also descended. Excitedly we pressed on, climbing down over boulders to the streamway again. The passage is 20-30' high and wide, flat with sandbanks on one side. The passage lowered to a crawl in water, froth and murky pool 20' across. The sump is very deep. Disappointment; no more pitches, no master cave. Returning about 100' 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' by mud and flood debris. Another small passage was followed just above the sump for 2-300' 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' vertically from the sump i.e. depth 1020'. A steep slope high up opposite the pitch looked as if it led to a large cavern. This would need steps cutting in the mud to reach the top.

A good line was appreciated back up the pitch. The 100' 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 derigged and the tackle hauled back to the base of the 70' pitch(-450'). 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' free hanger by Brian and Andrew. The surface, fire and coffee were reached at about 2.00 a.m. Sunday - a 14 hour trip pleasantly tiring. We returned once more to the Junee home-stead thankful that the support party and not us would pull 820' of ladder, 960' of rope, plus krabs, slings, bolting gear and two telephones out of Khazad-dum later in the day. Philip.

Rough sketch of lowest section of Khazad-dum



Mt. Anne Area - 31/21/71 to 2/1/72.

Party: Brian Collin, Wes Carpenter and Albert Goede.

This trip was intended to be a leisurely tour of the Mt. Anne Circuit but persistent bad weather forced a change of plans.

After repacking our packs at the Needles Hut we left the road at 11.15 a.m. headed towards the north-east ridge. Cold conditions, intermittent rain and low cloud made even this idea unattractive and we decided to go to Lake Timk. At the beginning of the track to the north-east ridge we were somewhat staggered to find an elaborate handcarved sign pointing out the track as only a few months previously all markers had been removed from the first section of the track following a decision by the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs.

We arrived at the Search Camp at 1.20p.m. for lunch and finished just in time for the next shower. We left for Lake Timk at 2p.m. and on the way explored two likely places along the cliff for caves. We reached the Lake at 5.25p.m. and had a look at the main swallet after pitching the tents.

The next day the weather was even worse with frequent showers and cold conditions so we had a day of leisure concentrating on staying warm, eating and drying out gear around a hot fire. Brian improved the tent floor which had proved rather wobbly the night before while Wes and myself amused ourselves by improvising a net out of a forked stick and one of Brian's singlets and catching native trout for Phil Andrews of the Tasmanian Museum.

The following morning there was still no improvement in the weather so we decided to walk out a day early. We broke camp and left Lake Timk at 9.45a.m. reaching the Search Camp at 12.55p.m. After a 40 minute break for lunch we went on and reached the road at 3.10 p.m. We were back in Hobart at 5.40. after a rather disappointing trip. Not once during our three day stay did we see the summit of Mt. Anne and I suspect I have brought back the most dismal looking lot of slides ever to be taken at Lake Timk. Albert Goede.

Junee-Florentine - Sat. 8/1/72.

Party: Albert Goede, Therese Goede, Bill Lehmann, Delia Maloney and Queensland cavers Dave Gillieson, John Toop and John Dann.

A day trip to investigate the new hole recently reported by Max Jeffries uphill from JF 1. It was found in a low cliff with two entrances leading down 25 ft. into a small chamber from where a chimney led down another 12 ft. to a choke. It did not take long to investigate and was rather disappointing.

We then headed for the Florentine to Lawrence Creek. With the exception of the Goedes the party led by Bill disappeared into an unnumbered entrance about 10 ft. to the right of JF 23 when facing downstream. This is part of the JF 23 system and was also found to link with JF 24. The party explored a three dimensional maze which obviously fills up completely in wet weather. Bill estimates that a further 500 ft. of passage was explored. The final cave to be visited was Welcome Stranger to show our visitors that not all caves in the area are scungy, muddy holes without formation. It was a pleasant and leisurely day. The weather was hot and sunny and to go underground was a welcome relief.

Albert Goede.

Lake Timk Resurgence - 8-12/1/72.

Party: Brian Collin and Kevin Kiernan.

Departed from Lake Timk 11a.m. on Saturday morning on a true bearing of 120°. For the first 700 feet of the climb the route is on dolomite and the scrub open. The scrub then gets progressively worse being a distinct hindrance on top of the ridge and "b....y" well near impossible on the other side. We wandered off the compass bearing generally veering northwards in a vain attempt to find easier going. 'Ork's Nest Camp' was established adjacent to a small creek at map reference unknown.

On Sunday we decided to have a look further on, no packs, no lunch, no water sample bottles and no optimism. Within 5 minutes the scrub opened up and within 15 mins. we were in 'Elvin Glade'. We followed this creek down for several hours (again on dolomite) until a much larger creek coming from the south was found. The new creek was about 30' across and flowing only a few inches deep, its bed was white quartz sand. Time and hunger forced our return to the 'Ork's Nest' thankfully we had blazed the route. Camp was then transferred to the 'Elvin Glade'.

On Monday we headed back to the top of the ridge the scrub very quickly making progress an acrobatic feat. From the top of the ridge we headed for the eastern end of Lots Wife and cut across the gully

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to Lake Picone. This area is very beautiful. Tuesday dawned overcast so after a few hours sightseeing we headed for Lots Wife, Kevin climbed same, then to Lake Tink and home.

The creek we found with the quartz sand bed is unusual for the area and could easily be from the resurgence. If we had carried the sample bottles we would now know the answer. A good trip.

Brian Collin.

Ida Bay - Sat. 15/1/72.

Party: Albert Goede(leader), Peter Shaw, Delia Maloney and Bill Lehmann.

A day trip to search for a party of Queenslanders which had allegedly gone missing in Exit Cave. We left Hobart at 9.30 a.m. after contacting Roy to see if by chance they had arrived at the Chalet. We first drove to Roy and Pam's then south to the start of the track. Had we but known it the missing party was in the Lune River post-office as we drove past. We left the car at 12.15 p.m. and had lunch at the outside camp before entering the cave. We went as far as the inner base camp but no sign of the missing bods. A quick trip to Edie's Treasure to show Delia the needles then back again carrying some rubbish back to the entrance. At the gate we noticed that the spare key had disappeared. After another snack at the outside camp we arrived back at the car at 4.45p.m. The whole trip - to the inner base camp and back - had only taken 4½ hours. The cave stream was very low and Reece's Bog was also surprisingly dry. When we arrived back in Hobart we found the "missing" party already at Brian and Jeanette's. Fortunately for our search and rescue coordinator he was well out of reach somewhere beyond Mt. Anne. Albert Goede.

Hastings - Wolf Hole - 16/1/72.

Party: Albert Goede(leader), Bill Lehmann, Delia Maloney, Peter Shaw plus numerous(15) Adventure Camp trainees and instructors Bill Tomalin and Des Robertson. Also mountaineer Richard Bennett to take photographs for "The Mercury".

A change from previous years in that all but one of the boys abseiled down the entrance. However, since they all had little experience of abseiling and all had to be life-lined this proved very little faster than the orthodox method. Albert stayed on the surface as belayer while Bill and Peter acted as guides underground. An uneventful trip and all were out by 4.30 p.m. Some did not appreciate having to wade through the lake especially when they found what was on the other side. Bill reported numerous Anaspides in the lake near the far side and it is hoped to have a return trip soon to do some collecting.

Albert Goede.