

SPELEO — SPIEL

NEWSLETTER

of the


TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB. No. 76

FEB 1973

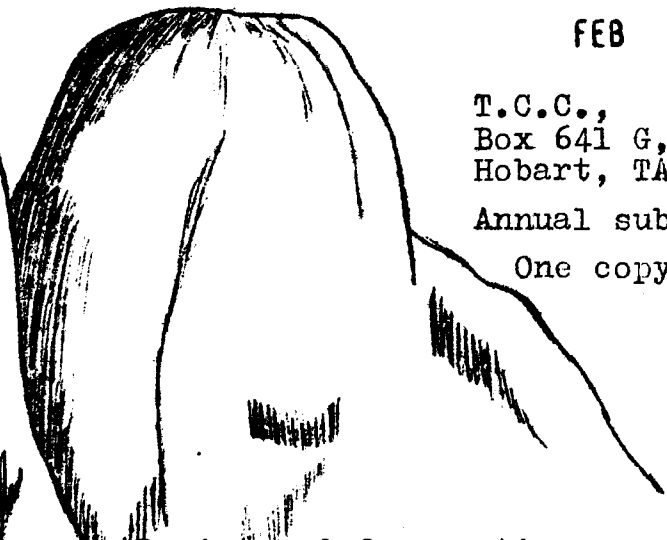
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"THE KHAN" IN KUBLA KHAN.



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

Secretary: Peter Shaw, 27 Congress Street, South Hobart, 7000.

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FORWARD PROGRAMME.

February 17,18	-	<u>Weekend.</u> Exit Cave on Saturday. Newdegate Cave on Sunday. Acting leader: A.Skinner.
February 24,25	-	<u>Weekend.</u> Exploration of the Lake Timk Swallet. Leader: Peter Shaw.
March 3,4,5	-	<u>Long weekend.</u> Tentative trip to Mole Creek. Execution Pot, with Northern Branch, and other caves. Leader: Peter Shaw.
March 7	-	<u>Wednesday.</u> General meeting at 8 Bath Street, Battery Point. Meeting starts at 8 p.m. Refreshments and slides welcome.
March 10	-	<u>Saturday.</u> Surveying of Cauldron Pot. Leader: Philip Robinson.
MARCH 28	-	<u>Wednesday.</u> <u>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</u> at 8 Bath Street, Battery Point. Meeting starts at 8 p.m. Please make every effort to be there. Refreshments and slides welcome.

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EDITORIAL.

After a flood of activity, the pace has finally returned to normal. Peter and Bill returned from the A.S.F.Conference raving about magnificent deep canyons and those ho-hum deep caves at Bungonia. An exploratory trip by Peter and Jeanette to Vanishing Falls near Precipitous Bluff failed due to bad weather. The Precipitous Bluff expedition organised by S.C.S. found several new entrances, found and explored a 280 ft. pot, and further explored and also surveyed the caves found by T.C.C. in 1960.

Cauldron Pot was visited several times, and exploration has been pronounced complete at a depth of about 740 feet.

On the January long weekend, mainland parties from Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney combined with T.C.C. to visit Khazad-dum, JF 14 and Cauldron Pot. While all S.R.T. cavers reached the bottom of Khazad-dum, only one caver from the laddering party of a dozen reached the bottom, a female caver from S.U.S.S. Highlight of the weekend was the females stirring the men up so they could go underground. JF 14 was connected up with the bottom chamber of Khazad-dum after a 220 ft. pitch to provide one of Australia's best sporting trips for vertical cavers. Thanks very much to Stuart Nicholas and Denis Seymour who provided transport to get all the cavers to Juneee.

A recent surveying trip in Tassy Pot established the squeeze at the bottom as -758 feet. Exploration which was planned for the same trip was postponed due to lack of time. A very pleasant trip ensured that this cave will have a return visit.

Peter Shaw.

Changes of Address.

Tony and Judy Sprent, 18 Bracken Lane Fern Tree, 7101.
Henk and Gerrie van Twillert, 18 Nixon Street, Sandy Bay, 7005.
Anne Hirst, 4/54 Edge Avenue, Lenah Valley, 7008.
Clive and Dot Boulter, 5 Faraday St., West Hobart, 7000 (temporary)
Kevin Kiernan, 281 Elizabeth Street, North Hobart, 7000.
Andrew Skinner, 281 Elizabeth Street, North Hobart, 7000.
Joe Donnelly, c/o 53 Lord Street, Sandy Bay, 7005.
John Bluhdorn, 471 Macquarie Street, South Hobart, 7000.
Nick Cummings, 23 Parliament Street, Sandy Bay, 7005.
Bill Hodge, 18 Scott Street, Glebe, 7000.
Delia Maloney, 63B Sandy Bay Road, Hobart, 7000.

"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children". Readers Digest.

Quote. " Maybe a rise in the capitation fee is justified, maybe not. At least the membership sees something glossy for its money these days. But if TCC will excuse me for saying so, I would rather read their crummy looking 'Speleo Spiel' with its generally rather exciting trip reports, than the undoubtedly excellent ASF Newsletter. Of course I wouldn't object if Speleo Spiel was in six-track stereo and supa-colour, but primarily I am a caver, not a librarian, and it's the news I'm after!" CEGSA Newsletter, Feb.-April, 1973. Comment made in editorial by Grant Gartrell.

(Sorry Grant no supa-colour. This is the best we can do. Co-editor.)

Journal of the Sydney Speleological Society. Jan. 1973. page 19-20.

" At the last Committee Meeting (11th January) Mrs. Edna Pemble was admitted to full membership of the Sydney Speleological Society. Mrs. Pemble has fulfilled all the requirements necessary and the Committee takes this opportunity to wish her continued interest in and good caving with the Society.

Mrs. Pemble's project was a 355 page manuscript entitled Lime-stones Caves and Cavers. This well written and interesting book has eleven chapters covering the Story of Marine Limestone, Geology (at Chillagoe), Speleology and Palaeontology (at Wellington and Naracoorte), History (The Jenolan Saga), Pioneering (at Yarrangobilly), The Sea Caves of Victoria, Prehistory (Nullarbor), Sand Dune Limestones (Western Australia), Exploration in Tasmania (Exit Cave, Remarkable Cave and Khazad-dum), New Guinea (the Star Mountains) and Hints for Beginners. There is also a glossary and a further reading list.

A copy of the manuscript has been presented to the Society and will be held by the Librarian. This book is to be published shortly.

This project required many hours of diligent search, letter writing and typing and the Committee congratulates Mrs. Pemble for her fine effort and looks forward to seeing the work in print."

Quote: "A hole is nothing at all, but you can break your neck in it"- from Chelsea Speleo. Soc. Newsletter, Vol. 15, No. 1.

Whaletail Descender.

Neil Montgomery of S.S.S. is planning to make a batch of whale-tails in the near future. Cosy will be approx. \$20. Anyone who wants one should let Peter Shaw know.

Vanishing Falls.

Brian's latest project is a marked route to Vanishing Falls. Plan is to cut a track to the summit of Mt. Bobs before Easter. Easter will be taken up by a six day trip to Vanishing Falls. Assistance is very welcome.

Launceston "boo-boo".

The latest issue of Skyline, the Launceston Walking Club's annual magazine, has an article on the Mt. Anne area. About a year ago a party of L.W.C. members set off for the N.E. ridge, having been told that the turn-off was easy to spot. It wasn't until they were half-way to Lake Tink that they realised that the track they were on wasn't going to the N.E. ridge. On their way out they noticed the correct turn-off and decided to mark it better. Several months later they returned with a large sign-post, but missed the turn-off again and reached the Search Camp before realising their mistake. Turning back, they found the right turn-off, put up their sign and reached the top of the ridge. The sign post and markers on the lower end of the track have since disappeared, in an effort to preserve the Pandani Shelf area.

" They delved too greedily and too deep, and disturbed that from which they fled, Durin's Bane."

From "Lord of the Rings - 'A Journey in the Dark'".

Durins Bane is the unofficial name for JF 14.

TRIP REPORTS.

South Picton Range 26/12/72 - 30/12/72, or How Not To Go To The Cracroft.

Party: Brian Collin and Albert Goede.

The intention of the trip was to reach the Cracroft limestone area via the South Picton Range, to set up camp on the shores of a small lake S.E. of Burgess Bluff and from there to explore the limestone contact and visit Judds Cavern.

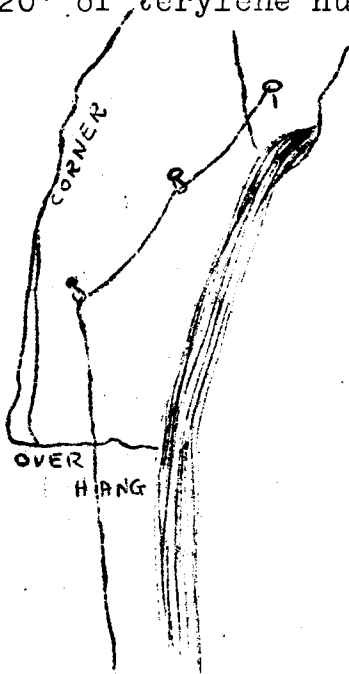
We left on Tuesday afternoon and spent the first night at Blakes Opening. Next morning under threatening skies we headed up Mt. Picton. The upper part of the Picton "track" seems to consist of an alternation of creek beds and buffalo wallows not helped by the fact that by now it was raining solidly. When we reached North Lake the view was blotted out completely forcing us to camp for the rest of the day. Next morning the weather had cleared sufficiently for an early start to climb the Hewardia Ridge and soon we were on the South Pictons. Good going followed until we reached Pine Tree Saddle. Thick scrub was met climbing the next ridge to the south. We reached the top just in time to see the scenery blotted out by a westerly change. We finally decided to retreat to Pine Tree Saddle selecting a different route down which proved a good deal worse than the route up. On reaching the creek I stepped on a rotten log which collapsed forcing a stick into my eye with rather painful results. After fruitless attempts to relocate our lunch spot a reasonably sheltered campsite was found. Once again the rest of the day was spent in the tent with Brian attempting several minor operations on my right eye. Rain persisted until lunch time of Thursday when it miraculously cleared. It was too late now to achieve anything at Cracroft and as the eye was still giving a good deal of trouble we decided to head back home. We reached Blakes Opening at 7 o'clock that night after a six hour tramp and lunch at a delightful little tarn below Mt. Picton. The next morning we were back in Hobart - a little earlier than expected. No doubt about it. There must be easier ways - if perhaps less scenic - to reach the Cracroft area. That is the way I am going next time.

Albert Goede.

Cauldron Pot(JF 2) - 20/1/73.

Party: Peter Shaw, Stuart Nicholas and Laimonis Kavalieris(Kav).

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 level before starting work. An eyebolt was placed at the head of the pitch and 120' of terylene hung off it. Peter abseiled down the rope 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 into the point where the water was disappearing 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 investi-



gation. 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 four hours to reach the surface after twelve and a half hours underground.

Peter Shaw.

Exit Cave - Jan.21-24, 1973.

Party: Laimonis Kavalieris and Norm Poulter.

Aim: Extended photographic trip, but photography does aid science

- and - Result: Possible all time record in cave fauna collecting.

After a late start Kav and I finally set out for Exit early Sunday afternoon. First shock of the day was to find the access track dry for the second time that I know of - this good fortune was offset by the condition of the track. Maybe it is time the Khazad-dum Highway Co. made a comeback and either upgraded the existing swamp or constructed the long forshadowed forest trail.

After numerous navigational errors Kav and I stumbled into Camp 2 and settled down to a well earned rest, planning to go to the Conference Concourse early on Monday morning. Morning dawned as a platoon of candles were lit to save exhausting our electric lights. Shortly after setting out from camp and in the dimness of carbide light I noticed a survey tag hanging from the ceiling. Stopping to read the number (Station 80) a spider was spotted 2½" south of the tag. Kav and I caught it and put it into an empty film canister. The journey continued despite numerous flash and Diprotodon shots until we found ourselves at the Waddle 'n' Splosh in the Concourse section. Kav and I had only just finished talking about the lack of aquatic life in Exit and were lining up a stream photo when I spotted an Anaspides in the water 50 metres downstream of the Waddle 'n' Splosh. Much effort was spent collecting this little beast as this time there was a distinct possibility of getting our feet wet, hitherto undampened due to the low level of Exit's river systems. While still maintaining the dryness of feet we caught the Anaspides and put it in yet another film canister. Shortly after we started photographing our way back to Camp 2 arriving in the late evening after a 14 hour jaunt.

Tuesday dawned with less candles and as this was the day that we had set aside to photograph in Edies Treasure we were that much more sluggish in getting out of our sleeping bags. However, after a lengthy breakfast and checking that our livestock were still alive we did achieve such a feat.

We entered Edies armed with our respective close-up gear zeroing in on the gypsum trees. While peering through my trusty bellows unit at the top of one tree near the entrance slope of the extension I noticed a little brown shape that looked a trifle out of place. On closer examination it appeared to be a multi-legged creature 3mm. long. After taking the initial photograph we switched to a higher power lens to get a closer look at the creature and also to get a close-up position shot before attempting to remove the beast from its precarious perch. All this done we abandoned our gear and adjourned to camp for lunch. While having lunch Andrew Pavey and Peter Radcliff(?) from UNSWSS showed up having a rush trip through Exit on their return from Precipitous Bluff. After a combined lunch they pulled out for the Concourse and we headed back to Edies to finish our photography before withdrawing to Camp 1.

Arrival at Camp 1 was in early evening and apart from a 12 hour overnight shot time exposure of some glow worms (which incidently came out) no further discoveries were made.

Wednesday morning was spent photographing the Pendulum and withdrawing from the cave, where, because it had - and was still raining, we were forced to get our feet wet as the track had become its usual quagmire self. We reached the car by 1 p.m. and proceeded to Hastings to pick up Pavey on our way up to Mole Creek and our trip into K.K.

Norm Poulter.

Cauldron Pot - 27/1/73.

Party: Peter Shaw, Bill Lehmann, Julia James and Laimonis Kavalieris.

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 top of the waterfall. Instead of going over the fall the rock settled back into a pool at its 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 fifteen feet 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 future prospects. Back to the surface we went, emerging after twelve hours underground.

Peter Shaw.

Khazad-dum and JF 14. - 28/1/73.

Party: Peter Shaw, Bill Lehmann, Julia James and Laimonis Kavalieris.

After Philip and party had entered via JF 14 and come out via Khazad-dum on the previous day, our plan was to do the trip in reverse, derigging JF 14. Fifty-five minutes after leaving the entrance, Peter had reached Brew Chamber at 860' and was ready to rig the final pitch. The 135' pitch was rigged with an 8 mm. kernmantel 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 for the 220' prussik, the rest of the party visited the sump. De-rigging JF 14 went ahead smoothly and after nine hours underground, we were back on the surface, a truly superb trip.

Peter Shaw.

JF 14 - 27/1/73.

Party: Philip Robinson, Keith Dekkers, Neil Montgomery and Andrew Pavey.

Confusion slowly cleared at the Junee homestead. Parties left for Khazad-dum(KD) and Cauldron Pot. Our hope was to connect with KD. -- There was no rush. The Victorians had over approx. 1000 ft. to descend.

A short walk through the forest saw us at the entrance, a 70' pitch. Philip and Keith headed down followed by Andrew and Neil surveying. Gardening was required on the second pitch, 90'. The third, a 180 footer, 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 4th pitch, 120'. The 5th trip had previously been reconnaissanced by Philip - 180' down he had run out of ladder. Spray had reduced visibility to about 20'. Optimistically 400' of rope was lowered off a bolt. So followed a typical anticlimax -- a mere 220', yet free and a very enjoyable abseil. We entered the final chambers of KD. Five minutes later a whistle was heard. The Victorians had just arrived at the top of KD's last pitch, the 135'. High up on the far side of the chamber was a tremendous view of their descent next to the final 60' waterfall. The survey was continued to the base of the 135', then a snack near the sump.

There was still no sign of the KD ladder party. We set off out

via KD. Prussiking up an 8 mm. kernmantel nylon on the 135' 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', 30', then up the rockpile to the 92' free hanger. Here we met the tail of the laddering party. A block up of bobs in the entrance passages was eventually cleared. We headed back through the bush in the dark. A great round trip. Philip Robinson.

Cauldron Pot - 28/1/73.

Party: P. Robinson, K. Dekkers, A. Pavey and N. Montgomery.

The cave lived up to and beyond all our expectations. Following the 140' entrance pitch, the awkward bypass was soon descended to the streamway. Then followed waterfalls and cascades, exhilarating abseils. The final 110' 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 derigged. The water was refreshing provided one kept moving. All ropes (approx. 600') 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.

Philip Robinson.

Tassy Pot - 3/2/73. (for survey see next Spiel.)

Party: Philip Robinson and Peter Shaw.

Tassy Pot was first explored to 250' by T.C.C. in 1968. Then followed five epic laddering descents by S.C.S. in 1970 pushing it to Australia's deepest cave (now 2nd deepest). Depth estimated by aneroid and guesswork was 800'.

An ideal pot for S.R.T., we decided to have a survey and exploration trip. Armed with suunto gear, vibron and 800' rope we entered at 10 a.m. Entrance pitch is 42 metres (138') a beautiful shaft directly followed by the 27 m. (90'). Through the chamber, down a hole to the chimney, 13 m. (43') and thence to Goodbye Chamber. A bolt was placed at the big pitch, 74 m. (243') and the survey continued down to the bottom at - 231 m. (-758', passage length 490') Manhandling the rope bags whilst surveying left us no time for exploring the holes off Goodbye Chamber. It is highly likely, that if they go, they will drop into the large chamber below the big pitch. Trip lasted 11 hours. Without surveying or exploration gear Tassy could easily be done as a sporting trip in about six hours.

Tackle: 150', 100', 2 - 50' ropes.

Philip Robinson.

LIMESTONE AREA WEST OF LAKE SPICER

by Albert Goede.

The first indication that a small area of limestone in the Tyn-dall Range contained caves was given by club member Arthur Clarke, when he was working as a field assistant with the Mt. Lyell Exploration Company from their base camp at Lake Rolleston, during the summer season of 1970-71. He followed down the creek flowing through the limestone area and reported the existence of a limestone gorge with caves opening off the side.

An attempt to reach the area was made at Easter 1971 with Norm Poulter's long wheel base Landrover and camper but the track proved too rough and we were forced to retreat with a broken axle.

In January I was able to spend ten days in the general area on a Geography Department fieldtrip of which four days were spent exploring, mapping and photographing the limestone gorge and its caves and to collect water samples for later analysis.

The trip was made in a Toyota Landcruiser and from where the track turns off the Murchison Highway 100 yards North of the Geological Monument it took us two hours of bone-shaking driving to reach Lake Dora where a base camp was set up.

From here the route is west through open country towards the unnamed lake at the northern end of the limestone outcrop. The creek rising from this lake is the one which traverses the limestone. When

coming down the final slope towards the lake turn north towards an open button grass lead covering a low moraine ridge on the eastern side of the creek which flows in a southerly direction. This is followed almost as far as possible before heading down to the creek. After crossing several limestone strike ridges you descend to the creek through relatively open forest. The creek is first met where it flows through a short gorge-like section in limestone - the edge of the gorge is followed downstream until an open streambed is reached. It is essential not to reach the creek too soon as this short upper gorge is in part too deep to be followed. From the lower end of this gorge the best route is to wade down the creek and after nearly an hour of slow going over slippery boulders the second gorge is reached. This gorge is from 5 to 10 metres (15 - 30 ft.) deep and the walls are mostly vertical or even overhanging. The limestone which is rather impure is dipping steeply to the west and sections aligned along the strike alternate with short stretches where the stream flows down dip.

The first cave (LS 1) is on the left hand side going upstream and consists of a 6 metres (20') long tube-like passage leading off about 3 metres (10') above the stream. The second "cave" (LS 2) is a little further along and on the opposite side and consists of a small stream emerging from a fissure probably too tight for entry but no determined attempt was made. Some distance further downstream and on the same side about one third of the water disappears into a cave mouth cleverly camouflaged by an enormous log jam. We first discovered the downstream entrance several hundred feet downstream (LS 3) where the water rejoins the main stream as it emerges from an impressive 5 metre (15') high passage. The cave can be traversed without a light if necessary and contains some formation. Stalactites up to 60 cms. (2 ft.) long were observed.

A very short distance further downstream the water flows through a natural arch (LS 4) having abandoned an older surface course by an underground meander cut-off and several hundred feet further on disappears into a further cave (LS 5). This is a rather longer cave up to 7.5 metres (20') high but by going just inside the entrance it is possible to see a glimmer of daylight at the far end.

After passing through this cave the stream gradient becomes rather steeper with huge log jams and deep pools which necessitate getting rather wet. The stream then swings left where undercutting has produced a 25 metres (80') high overhanging limestone cliff. It then swings right again disappearing into another cave (LS 6). The stream was followed no further than this but once again daylight could be seen at the far entrance where the stream emerges. How much further the limestone gorge continues is not known.

Caves LS 1 to LS 4 were numbered. LS 5 and LS 6 were not numbered but had numbers assigned to them as their location can be adequately described.

Glow worms were observed in LS 3 and cave crickets belonging to the genus Micropathus were found in LS 1 and LS 3. Some specimens from LS 3 were collected for further identification.

The area is of considerable scenic and geomorphological interest but caving potential is rather limited as the area of limestone is restricted and the water table is close to the surface. The area was heavily glaciated by a small ice cap during the Last Glaciation and both the gorge and the caves have developed in post-glacial times.

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Very best wishes are extended to Ros Bell and Andrew Skinner who will be married shortly - within the next fortnight, when time permits. From what Andrew said the honeymoon may end up being an extended caving trip - in many areas.