

SPELEO — SPIEL

NEWSLETTER

of the

TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB . No. 80

JUN 1973

T.C.C.,
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"THE KHAN" IN KUBLA KHAN.

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President: Albert Goede, 8 Bath Street, Battery Point, Tas. 7000.Secretary: Andrew Skinner, 2/62 Colville Street, Battery Point, Tas.Editor: Andrew Skinner.Typist: Therese Goede.FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- June 9 - Saturday: SRT practice, Rocky Tom. Leader:P.Robinson.
June 17 - Sunday: Day trip to Florentine to explore two new caves, reported by Maydena member Max Jeffries. Leader: Albert Goede.
June 23,24 - Exit Cave: Fridaynight start to Camp 2. Sat."The Dig", Sunday: Photography in Eastern Grand Fissure and Conference Concourse. Leader: Andrew Skinner.
June 23,24 - Exit Cave. Work in Labyrinth area, camp in Grand Fissure. Limited numbers only. Leader: Bill Lehmann.
June 30,July 1 - Combined trip to Mole Creek with SCS and TCC(NB). Booze-up on Saturday evening. Suggested trips to Croesus(rubbish collecting and photography), Maracoopa 1(bug collecting) and other caves depending on numbers. Should be a varied programme with opportunity for social intercourse. Leader: Andrew Skinner.
July 4 - General meeting at Flat 2, 62 Colville Street, Battery Point. Slides of Exit Cave, courtesy of Andrew, also bring your own.
July 10 '13 - ASF sponsored Australasian Conference on Cave Tourism, Jenolan, NSW.

Editorial.

At the A.B.M. the concept of union between the two southern clubs was mooted. Although the idea certainly did not receive unanimous acceptance from the club it has some merit. A long-standing member of TCCNB has written to the club, mentioning a suggested Federation of Tasmanian Clubs. Perhaps a loosely-knit structure in which the existing groups could retain their individuality may be acceptable to all. One can still retain a strong identity within a larger structure. In Victoria several groups combined to form VSA, with no apparent ill effect. The various groups and individuals still retain their identity and the overall body has the advantages of scale. Is Tasmania any different? Certainly there would need to be a separate branch in the north of the state for obvious geographical reasons. TCC is not a homogenous body even now; for there are individuals interested in vertical caves and exploration, individuals interested in conservation, others in horizontal caves, cave fauna and so on. We do not have a clearly defined club identity. What would be the advantages of ultimate union? Certainly there are obvious economies of scale. We could afford to produce a larger and more varied Newsletter. Expensive items of equipment could be more readily obtained. Duplication of work could be avoided. The classic situation is Mole Creek, where neither group knows what the other is really doing and overlap sometimes occurs. Instead of having half a team of vertical cavers in each of the southern clubs there could be a more effective task force for exploration. Our existing system of cave numbering has been described as crazy by outsiders. In an area such as Precipitous Bluff we have PB 1,PB 2,PB 3 then PB 201,PB 202 ... What are your opinions? Comments and letters to the editor please!

May was a relatively quiet month with little new work. On a trip to Maria Island, Tearflesh Chasm was explored for almost 200 metres. A digging project commenced in Exit Cave. South of the Grand Fissure a small stream joins the main stream from the west. A strong draught issues forth but the passage is infilled with gravel. A trench about 7 metres long was excavated and a further trip may break through to some large chambers. Exit will reach 20 kilometres yet!!

This issue we publish articles by Peter Shaw and Albert Goede. In the next Spiel there will be a report on Maria Island explorations and a second article on SRT by Peter Shaw.

Andrew Skinner.

CONGLOMERATE BLURB !

+ New cave names - Pigface Cavern and Tearflesh Chasm(Maria Is.)
Full report next issue.

+ New members - At the last two general meetings the following were accepted as club members.

Full members: Stuart Gamble, c/o Dover P.O., Dover, Tas. 7116.

Tony Sprent, 18 Bracken Lane, Fern Tree, Tas. 7101.

Junior member: Fiona Skinner, c/o 2/62 Colville St., Battery Pt.7000.

+ Prospective members. The following two were accepted at the last general meeting.

Jan Hardy, 44 Mt.Stuart Rd., Mt. Stuart, 7000. Ph.34 1875.

Michelle Farrell, 1B/19 French Street, Dynnyrne, 7005.

+ Changes of address:

Arthur Clarke, c/o INAL, P.O. Box 482, Queenstown, 7467.

Rodney Hughes, 79 Poets Road, West Hobart, 7000.

+ Hear Ye Vertical Cavers. A long newsy letter was recently received from Arthur Clarke now stationed at Crotty. He has the following comments to make on the survey report of Tassy Pot in the February issue of the Spiel:

" It is obvious that SRT fans are wrapped in rapid vertical descent/ascent but are pikers when it comes to horizontal or such type downhill exploratory passages or squeezes! If Phil was wondering where another 40' of depth in Tassy Pot could be found he should have lead his entourage of bravados(self and Peter), along the MOROCL Passage(originally named after Morley, Robinson and Clarke) thinking perhaps it should have been named the miracle passage - if so he would have gained more depth from the so-called bottom - and at the end of the morocl could have ventured into an even larger chamber - which due to fatigue and lack of time was left unexplored by Messrs. Morley and Clarke - though in outline it appeared immense with a high roof extending up to be possibly a lower chamber of one of the other unexplored holes leading off the original "goodbye chamber". This bottom chamber was damp and muddy and a trickle of water lead out from it to connect with the bottom end of the MOROCL passage (which admittedly would be hard to survey even by Suunto) - and thus the chamber probably would not have opened out to further depths but merely been a twin vertical system to the Goodbye Chamber".

+ The Precipitous Bluff Affair continues unabated. The decision handed down by the Supreme Court was a bitter blow as it now is clear that the Public must have a proprietary interest or estate to object to developments on Crown land. The "public interest" is thus vested in the State Government. It is now up to the Premier and his cabinet to decide the issue. All the individual can do is to write to Mr. Reece and his colleagues expressing opposition to mining and prospecting in the area. The following quotes from the April "Spar" may serve to emphasize the speleological importance of the area:

"The trip achieved its aims of finding and exploring some spectacular caves Caves were found in the disputed lease area and fauna collecting and observations indicate a rich ecology. The caves contain excellent speleothem decoration and are quite unique in being some of the most active outflow caves explored in Australia. Both Precipitous Bluff and its caves should be included in a National Park".

Write a letter to Mr.Reece NOW!

+ TCC(NB) were not happy about some unkind comments about their gear, printed in "Spar" and reprinted in the last Spiel. However it was something of an exaggeration and the matter now appears to be cleared up. The wicked rumour-monger, one Kiernan, has been dutifully presented with a "new ladder" all of his own. Although it may not

be ideal for descending on, it should suffice for eating porridge.
 + A quote was obtained from a local printing firm for club car stickers and cloth badges. These would cost approx. 70 cents each. If you are interested please contact the secretary.

+ The venue for the club's Annual Dinner will need to be decided upon at the July general meeting so that a booking can be made. Any suggestions of a good hotel, decent band and reasonable prices (I suppose that is asking a bit much) to Therese Goede before or at the July meeting please.

+ LOST - from the Mole Creek hut, one gas lantern. Any information on its whereabouts to The Secretary, TCC(NB), Box 315, Launceston.

+ TEBICON is coming. Next ASF Conference will be hosted by UQSS and CQSS at Brisbane in late 1974.

+ For Sale the second edition of the ASF Handbook will be completed by the end of this year. Maps, guides, technical information, summary of every known cave in Australia the "Bible" of speleology. Watch out for your friendly local agent conning advance orders.

+ Peter's farewell. Last month we were sorry to have to say goodbye to Peter Shaw who has left Tassie to go on the New Guinea expedition via Eastern Australia. Then he is off to either Europe or New Zealand. Peter will be sorely missed. He was club secretary and Speleo Spiel editor for 1972-73 and was the driving force behind the adoption of SRT in our club. No doubt he will keep in touch and let us know what the caving news in other parts of the world is. That is if he gets past New Guinea. We've just been reading the New Guinea Caving Expedition Circular No.4: Quote:

" One of the many outstanding features of the area is that it is absolutely 'honeycombed' with huge dolines and sinks (Van Watson reckons that we will have to fit people with blinkers to stop them from being distracted from the main target). Other outstanding features are that the area is virtually unexplored and the indigenous population of the area is almost wholly unaffected by European influence. Our particular area is occupied by a group known as the 'Bugaio' who have only been contacted on rare occasions and are unaffected completely by Administration influence. It is said that they are nomadic and are still cannibalistic, they have threatened missionary patrols in the area in the past but fear the weapons of the government."

A man could get killed!

Pete's Left-Overs.

This is a list of things I haven't got around to finishing. There are more exploratory chances here than most mainlanders get in a lifetime.
June - Florentine

1. Niagara Pot. The chamber where the water disappears has not been pushed thoroughly. In the last big chamber, in the far left corner, climb up a sloping block into the foot of an aven. It is possible to climb down a long way until a 15' drop is reached. Hasn't been descended.
2. Splash Pot. Several prospects as outlined in the May Spiel.
3. Khazad-dum. Go down the Serpentine Passage, below the upper section and look for upper levels and side passages. Only one party has been down this passage and they were trying for depth.
4. Trapdoor Swallet. Only in fine weather. A large entrance doline. Could be good if you can get past the entrance talus.
5. Slaughterhouse Pot. Not an attractive cave but with an undescended fifty foot pitch it can't be overlooked.
6. Growling Swallet. The source of the strong draught in the side passage at the bottom has not been located. Artificial means may be necessary to climb up. It could bypass the sump.
7. Gormenghast. In the side passage at the bottom a waterfall enters. This appears quite climbable but has not been climbed.

Mt. Anne Area.

1. Lake Tink Swallet. Only after an extended drought or with a strong wet-suited party. There must be quite a bit of passage just to take that much water.
2. Near the Weld track on the Lots Wife ridge is a hole down which a

rock will roll for quite a way.

Mole Creek.

1. Upper Mill Creek. A large doline is marked on the map. This proved to be too tight after fifty feet. There are several other holes nearby which were not looked at.
2. Cobbler Cooler. The sump is worth a look at.
3. Atlantis Cave. Use a scaling pole after climbing up the mud in the left hand section. An upper passage is visible.
4. At Gillam Creek, just after going through the gate, a creek emerges from the hill on the right. This is very low and wet but has been penetrated to where a hammer was needed to remove a small obstruction.
5. Just before turning up the hill towards Prohibition Cave is Mr. Martin's farm on the right hand side of the road. On the ridge behind the farm is an undescended sixty foot pot.

Peter Shaw.

Tasmanian Cave Fauna,

by Albert and Therese Goede.

Part 2 - Springtails (Collembola).

Springtails are insects belonging to the sub-class Apterygota, which contains all primitive forms whose ancestors never developed wings. They are very small insects and rarely exceed 4 mm. in length. In fact all the specimens so far collected from our caves are smaller than the head of a pin! However, some "giant" surface species up to 9 mm. long (*Ceratrimera* spp.) are found in the bush especially under rotting logs (Green, 1969). Springtails derive their name from the presence of a peculiar springing organ (furcula) attached to the lower surface of the abdomen. With this they can make remarkably large jumps for such a small animal. The springing organ when not in use is held in place by a catch (retinaculum).

Because of their small size springtails are not likely to be seen unless you are specifically looking for them. If you do, you will find that they are remarkably common. They are probably the principal food supply for many of the larger cave predators such as pseudoscorpions, harvestmen, spiders and beetles.

In our caves springtails are most often found amongst sticks and leaves and other organic debris washed in by floods and on damp mud floors. Occasionally they may also be found on the surface of small pools of standing water. Although they are not water animals they are so small and light that they can walk and jump on the water surface without breaking it and becoming wet. Elsewhere in the world cave species have also been found on the surfaces of damp formations and they may well turn up in similar situations here.

The classification of springtails is as follows:

Phylum:	Arthropoda
Class:	Insecta
Sub-class:	Apterygota
Order:	Collembola

Hamilton-Smith (1967) reported in a review of the arthropods of Australian caves that springtails belonging to the families Entomobryidae and Isotomidae have been found in New South Wales caves at Jenolan and Yarrangobilly. They are apparently only troglaphiles. Vandel (1965) in his book on biospeleology states that the Isotomidae rarely give rise to true troglaphites but that the family Entomobryidae includes many true cave species.

In Tasmania specimens collected by us from Cashion Creek Cave, Florentine Valley and a single specimen collected from Mostyn Hardy Cave, Loongana have been identified by Professor Salmon of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

The specimens from Cashion Creek Cave have been identified as *Ceratophysella armata* Nic. (family: Entomobryidae) and a new species of *Arrhopalites* (family: Sminthuridae). The first is obviously a troglaphile and has also been recorded by May (1963) from Waitomo Cave

in the North Island of New Zealand. The second species may be a troglobite as many species of Arrhopalites elsewhere in the world are cave adapted.

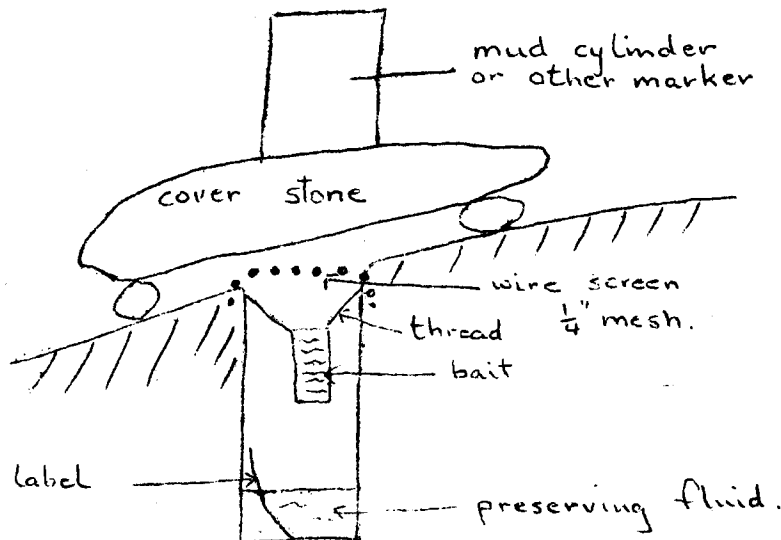
The single specimen from Mostyn Hardy Cave was found to be a new species and genus belonging to the family Paronellidae which also has many troglobitic species outside Australia. Salmon describes this specimen as " a quite unique insect, quite strange and unlike anything I have ever seen before in amongst the Paronellinae".

Further specimens of springtails have been collected from Mostyn Hardy Cave, Loongana; Mersey Hill Cave, Mole Creek; and King George V Cave at Hastings. They have also been sent to Professor Salmon but have not yet been identified.

For collecting Hazelton and Glennie(1964) in British Caving suggest the use of a small sized water-colour paint brush of good quality. When freshly licked it can be used effectively to pick up small cave fauna such as springtails and deposit them directly into a bottle of preservative. The brush should be free of alcoholic preservative when used for collecting springtails from water surfaces as alcohol tends to push the surface film of water away and with it the specimen. They can also be collected from water surfaces using an eye dropper.

Another method which we have found very successful for collecting springtails is the use of traps recommended to us by Dr. Britten of C.S.I.R.O., Division of Entomology, Canberra, for the collecting of cave beetles. In his own words:

"The traps are 3"x1" tubes sunk into mud in the cave floor and baited with a wet mixture of ground raw meat and soft cheese which has been allowed to putrify for two weeks (in a jar covered with a cloth to exclude flies). A non-volatile, odourless liquid is required in the bottom of the tube to kill and preserve the insects. Ethylene glycol (anti-freeze) is recommended but glycerol might be effective".



A similar method has been used by Stewart Peck (Harvard University) in the U.S.A. but the preserving fluid was Galt's solution (5 parts sodium chloride, 1 part chloral hydrate, 1 part potassium nitrate, 100 parts water). Such traps when used should NEVER be left in place for more than a week and preferably for a shorter period of time.

Springtails can be preserved in a mixture of 70% methylated spirits and 30% water with a few drops of glycerine added to prevent the specimens from becoming brittle. All specimens should be labelled immediately after collection giving the name of the cave and area, the date collected and the name of the collector and also whether the specimens were caught in the dark or twilight zone. Details are best written in pencil on a small bit of paper inserted into the tube with the specimens.

Acknowledgements.

Our thanks are due to Professor Salmon of New Zealand for his

identification of some of the Tasmanian cave specimens.

References:

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- Hamilton-Smith, E., 1967: Arthropoda of Australian Caves. Journal of the Australian Entomological Society 6, 103-118.
- Hazelton, M. and Glennie, E.A., 1962: 'Cave Fauna and Flora' in British Caving. Ed. C.H.D.Cullingford, 347-395.
- May, B.M., 1963: New Zealand Cave Fauna II - The limestone caves between Port Waikato and Piopio districts. Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand (Zoology), 3(19), 181-204.
- Vandel, A., 1965: Biospeleology (Pergamon Press), 164-169.

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Search and Rescue Listing.

Please fill in attached form(at the end of the Spiel) and return to Bill Lehmann, 29A D'arcy Street, South Hobart, promptly.

Please fill in and return even if not available for call out. The sections headed Bush and Caving are self explanatory but the section headed Fire Emergency needs explaining.

A list has been compiled for the Rural Fires Board of persons interested in different areas of Tasmanian bush. This list now needs updating. Volunteers would be called upon in an emergency only to assist in the fighting of a fire in any area in which they are interested. This means that if you are sufficiently interested in the Mt. Anne, Denison Range, Frankland Range or any other particular area to volunteer to fight a fire endangering that area and the Rural Fires Board requires extra help they will call on you. Any person called out would be covered by the same arrangement as if called out on a search and rescue.

Bill Lehmann.

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TRIP REPORTS.

Loons Cave, Ida Bay - Sunday, 6/5/73.

Party: K.Kiernan(SCS)leader, Andrew Skinner, Rudi Frank(VSA), and Michael Cole(SCS).

After a lack of transport to Exit Cave and reluctance to face the high water on Friday, a day trip was arranged to Loons Cave. The entrance pitch was rigged with 30 m. of ladder but is ideal for abseiling. The cave is under Lune Sugarloaf and is apparently overlain with dolerite as it has extensive deposits of mud, probably derived by weathering of the dolerite. The system is probably about 2 km. in length, of which only the stream passage has been surveyed to a rock pile at the upstream end. Some attractive speleothems are present, but mud has been deposited on much of the flowstone. There are two large avens connecting to the stream passage. Both avens rival those of Exit Cave for their size and spectacle. Mud is everywhere up to a metre in depth. Just before the rockfall, we entered a passage trending south-eastwards. This was followed until it divided into several low crawls, some of which were unexplored to our knowledge. A passage to the left led to a fissure with good decoration. Here the muddy footprints ended. A narrow squeeze past the formation proved fruitful, as it led to an abandoned stream passage with a meandering pattern and dry mud floor. At the end of the passage there was an ascending fissure which seemed to close up at the top. On the sides of this fissure were white flowstone deposits; the best I have seen at Ida Bay. Altogether about 40 m. of new passage was discovered. Judging from the dry nature of the passages in the area, it must be under the unconformity; and prospects are thus limited. On the return trip the party exited via the lower entrance. This proved rather fun as it was necessary to swim through a water-filled, very narrow passage, with only about .3 m. of air space in several sections.

Andrew Skinner.

Khazad-dum (Serpentine Extension) - 12/5/73.

Party: Peter Shaw, Bill Lehmann, Chuck (?) a visitor from U.S.

The prospect of a surveying trip down the Serpentine Extension was enough to divert me from an SCS trip to Zulu Pot. After a quick whip-around, we got enough gear for Chuck and off we went. The water pouring into Khazad-dum made me regret forgetting my parka. At the top of the 70' pitch in the Serpentine extension we placed a bolt, and then abseiled over. There was as much water going down the Serpentine, as there is in the main streamway after a dry period. Down the narrow winding streamway to the top of the 50' pitch, we climbed. At the 50' pitch, the passage turned a sharp hairpin corner almost running back underneath itself. Several more short pitches, and we emerged on the main streamway. We followed the stream up to the big waterfall, which was crashing down, an impressive sight. After five hours underground, we set off back upwards with the unattractive prospect of three wet pitches facing us. We gathered at the bottom of the 70' pitch with Chuck and myself very wet and cold. After what seemed like an interminable prusik, we all reached the top of the pitch and staggered off towards the entrance. An eight and a half hour trip, and the Serpentine connection now definitely established and surveyed.

Peter Shaw.

Hastings Area - 12,13 May, 1973.

Party: Kevin Kiernan, Ros. Bell, David Nichols, Fiona Skinner, Kath Medlock, Andrew Skinner and on Sat. only; Albert, Therese and Hilary Goede.

On Saturday a short trip was made to Francistown, near Dover, to collect mature specimens of cave crickets. Immature specimens collected earlier suggested that it may be a new species. The cave itself is in sandstone, probably Triassic, and is simply a pile of talus with a small creek running underneath. Unfortunately the cave had been recently flooded and most of the bugs had moved out. Kevin and Albert managed to collect a few crickets whilst the others looked around the bush for orchids. On Saturday afternoon the Inaugural Lune River Derby was held. Kevin and I, the two competitors started out at the Bigsties wearing wet suits and mounting lilos. The river was rather high after the recent rains and a brisk pace ensued. We came across a lot of rather nasty rapids and immediately piked out of that section by wading in shallow water. The main obstacles were logs that had fallen and blocked the river. No punctures occurred and soon the quiet water above the Lune bridge was met. The last mile was painfully slow as there was little fall in the river, and we had to paddle. Anybody know any other rivers with plenty of fast water and easy access?

The aim on Sunday was to survey Hell's Half Acre but after descending into Mystery Chamber and looking at the swollen nature of the creek the project was abandoned in favour of mud-sliding. Surveying the rest of Newdegate will probably have to wait for some time. Still, there is ample surveying to be done in Wolf Hole and King George V, even in wet weather.

Andrew Skinner.

On a visit to the mainland:-

Bungonia Caving - 20/5/73.

Party: Julia James, Tony Dowling, Les, John, 2 Grahams (all Sydney cavers) and Phil Robinson (TCC).

Bungonia in N.S.W. has the mainlands deepest caves. These are very different to the Tasmanian variety. In general one has numerous constrictions, foul air (up to 8% CO₂), warmth, dryness and bats. The cavers drive right up to the cave entrances and often camp five yards away. There must have been nearly 100 cavers camped in the dry, open woodland during the weekend. Many appeared as novice type crews (boy scouts(?), etc.) with hemp, ladders and inexperience. The deepest system is B 24, Odyssey Cave at -485'.

Tony and I first visited the "Drum" whilst Julia took the rest of the party down Acoustic Pit. The Drum pitch is a beautiful shaft (140') and very warm. I prusiked out slowly to admire the bats which

were clustered on the walls only 3-4' away. The entrance passage to Accoustic Pit is very small (approx. 1'x1'). It drops down and along for approx. 100' to a chamber at the top of a 106' pitch. Julia had it laddered and was happily belaying people up and down. I was next in the queue and descended yet another very aesthetic shaft superbly rounded and dry. Julia and self then headed out for lunch and B 24 as Tony organised the derigging.

Though less than half the depth of K.D., Odyssey is still a good sporting pot, probably the hardest on the mainland as well as the deepest. The entrance is very small. One drops through several constrictions (vertical squeezes) in a rock pile until the passage enlarges enough to walk. Then follow 26' and 67' pitches to the 'shale' band climb. Here the CO₂ became noticeable. I found myself sweating and breathing very heavily. The shale band pitch is a 120' climb at an angle of approx. 45°. Below this is a 65' free pitch leading to the final chamber (100'x60' x 70' high) and sump. According to Julia carbon dioxide content was around 3.5% (compared with 0.03% normal atmosphere). We jumared out fairly quickly, the sooner the good air the better. It came 20' up the 2nd. pitch like a sharp invisible boundary. I was suddenly cool and feeling very refreshed. Above the 26' pitch we were met by Tony and the others who helped ferry the gear through the boulder pile. We hit the surface in a record time of 2 hrs. 29 m.

Having been formerly led on by unsympathetic descriptions, I was pleasantly surprised by the Bungonia caves. Coupled with a trip down the famous gorge a visit to the area is well worthwhile. Many thanks to Julia, Tony and co. for their generous hospitality.

Phil Robinson.

Mole Creek - 19,20 May, 1973.

Party: Andrew Skinner, Harvey Cohen (mainland visitor), David Nichols, Delia Maloney, and Steve and Chris Harris and Mike Cole from SCS.

The aim was to run a combined trip to Mole Creek with SCS to survey Dangerous Hole, do some track marking in Georgies-Wet Cave and to collect bugs in Maracoopa I.

David, Harvey and I left on Friday night, intending to meet the others at the Wet Caves campsite at 10 am. on Saturday. As no cavers had arrived by noon, we set off for Eldorado I in Georgies Hall. After inspecting track marking progress done by SCS during their Easter trip boots were removed to walk on flowstone areas. Several photographs were taken in Eldorado I. As we had no track marking gear to finish the project, we exited after about two hours. Back at camp we met Delia, who informed us that after a late start the rest of the party had left to survey Dangerous Hole. After lunch we entered Wet Caves. None of us had been there before and were delighted to visit a well-decorated outflow cave, in remarkably good condition. We remained relatively dry until the second entrance, where waist deep water was encountered. Upstream were several large chambers with excellent decoration, mainly flowstone, shawls and displays of straw stalactites. The only deterioration observed were scattered deposits of candle grease. Upon reaching a rockfall, with a survey station marked "VSA Easter '73 No.47", we returned to the second entrance. Apparently this rockfall is only a short distance from Georgies, but is separated by deep water. Steve, Chris and Michael surveyed Dangerous Hole until a creek was found flowing through talus. Unfortunately the creek was not negotiable and few prospects exist for a link-up with other caves in the Mole Creek system. On Sunday Croesus was visited, mainly to show Harvey what a "decent" Tasmanian cave was like. Some unnecessary markers, two more drums and a quantity of wire were removed. There is still rubbish near the Masterlock.

Andrew Skinner.

Six Days As A Troglodyte -

or - Exit Cave Report - May, 1973.

Parties: Andrew Skinner, Noelene Sylvester (UNSWSS) and photographer Richard Bennett from Geveston from Tues-Friday; and Brian Collin, Phil Robinson, Glen Kowalik, A. Skinner and Mark(?) for the weekend.

The first part of the week was spent on private research and photography in the section before the talus. We walked in on Tuesday evening to find the water at the entrance low enough to wade.

Wednesday: Emerging from the Wind Tunnel Camp in the 'morning' it was observed that the water had risen by almost 2 metres, so photography was confined to the first section of the cave. Richard, who is a professional photographer, certainly brought some equipment: two Pentax cameras, a small Rollei mini camera, a large flash powered by a lead acid battery weighing much more than an accumulator and a Sunpack flash unit. This compared rather favourably with my single Pentax and small flash unit. We spent nine hours photographing the large chambers in the first section of the cave, using up to thirty single flashes per photograph.

Thursday: The water had risen much more and most of this 'day' was spent in sleeping bags in the Wind Tunnel, writing an article on cave photography for a magazine. At 2200 hours, the water had dropped enough to easily cross the D'Entrecasteaux. Eight hours were spent photographing the high level sections in the first part of the cave; with most time being spent in the Hammer Passage. For the first time I went through the squeeze and visited the innermost recesses of this area. Not yet re-marked, the Hammer Passage is in pristine condition.

Friday: Richard and Noelene left at 1300 hours, leaving me at the outside campsite. After lighting a fire and drying out gear, I was forced to return to the entrance chamber by rain. By 2300 hours I had set up camp on a pile of talus. The other party arrived soon after en route to Camp II. Being quite settled I decided to follow them in early on Saturday.

Saturday: The trip in was uneventful, except for falling in the creek twice. Whilst Phil took Mark and Glen to look at Conference Concourse, Brian and I commenced to excavate the bed of a small creek. This meets the main stream passage north of the Entrance Creek Passage and flows from a north-westerly direction. (see sketch). Whilst the large passage alongside is blocked by talus, the creek has a strong draught, but has been infilled with gravel and mud. We started digging well back from the tight section and excavated a trench 7 m. long, 0.6 m. wide and 0.3 m. deep. The mud and gravel was removed by bucket to a nearby side passage. After about four hours we both had sore backs and retired to Camp II. Further digging would be more comfortable in a wet suit. One more spell at the project may be enough as the passage could become larger soon.

Sunday: Phil took Glen and Mark to look at the Western Passage while Brian gathered up gear at the dig and I stayed in bed. After lunch at Camp II we returned to the entrance via Edie's Treasure, Devil's Stovepipe, the Pendulum and Hammer Passage. Andrew Skinner.

"The Dig",
Exit Cave
CRG 1 Sketch
June 1973
A. D. Skinner.

