

SPELEO — SPIEL

NEWSLETTER

of the

TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB . No. 84

OCT 1973

T.C.C.,
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Hobart, TAS. 7001.

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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, 7000.

FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- Oct. 13 - Ida Bay, surface exploration and numbering.
Acting Leader: Laurie Moody.
- Oct. 20 - Florentine. Trip to Growling Swallet and to a 'nasty big hole'. Leader: Noel White.
- Oct. 28 - Day trip to Clear Hill. (Somewhere in the S.W.) Max Jeffries knows of a cave in the area. Acting Leader: Laurie Moody.
- November 7 - General Meeting:- at Laurie Moody's, 13 Mason Street, Claremont. Slides of Exit, Kubla Khan and Croesus. Meeting starts at 8 p.m.
- Nov.10-11 - Wolfhole. Trip to complete the survey on Saturday, scrub-bashing on Sunday. Come either for day or weekend. Leader: Andrew Skinner.
- Mid-late Nov. - Surprise Bay. (tentative).
- December 2 - Ida Bay and Hastings. Ross Mansfield would like some help with the New Norfolk High Adventure Camp, and needs cavers to lead parties to Mystery Creek Cave and to Hastings. Help is also needed for the 9th Dec. for a trip to the Wolf Hole.
- Christmas '73 - Mole Creek. Spend the festive season with a scaling pole at Mole Creek. Kubla Khan will be visited to clean up flowstone. (tentative, dependant on transport) Leader: Andrew Skinner.
- Late Jan. '74 - SCS may have a trip to the Lower Gordon.
- Easter '74 - Maria Island. Possibility for exploration of large sea caves.
- Sphinx Rock - climbing practices will recommence as from the 7th Nov. on each Wednesday night except when there is a general meeting. Why not get rid of unsightly fat after work? Leave from Brian's place at 6.00p.m. and bring tea and a light.

EDITORIAL:

News that the Federal Labour caucus has moved on Lake Pedder has just been announced. With the present political situation in Tasmania the possibility of the lake being restored seems just as remote. But the Federal decision is most significant for several reasons. For the first time national consciousness on a wilderness conservation issue has been aroused, and this represents quite a social change. The fact that Federal money may be offered to Tasmania in "compensation" for wilderness conservation is quite a historic precedent. Prospects are bright that the same principle might be applied to Precipitous Bluff. Premier, Eric Reece, is quite correct - poor old Tasmania cannot foot the bill - if P.B. is a national asset then Federal finance must be made available.

Caving trips were held every week last month. At Mole Creek a cave was explored near King Solomon, yielding chambers with good decoration and a small creek, which siphoned both upstream and downstream. Scotts, Maracoopa 1, King Solomon and Honeycomb 1, 1½, 2 were also visited. During an unsuccessful attempt to locate Baldocks, several resurgences were investigated near Sassafras Creek, but they were all in Jurassic dolerite!!

Ida Bay was visited three times, and some small holes were found and numbered. Two trips to Mystery Creek Cave were held, one for photography and the other to take a group of sea scouts caving. A disappointing trip was held to Exit, with only the first kilometre of the cave visited. At Hastings we assisted in cleaning up in Newdegate Cave and visited King George V. Two climbing practices were held;

and plans are to have them on Wednesday evenings when daylight saving comes back into operation.

The Annual Dinner was quite a success, with an excellent attendance, including foundation member Frank Brown and wife Joyce. Thanks go to Ros and Andrew Skinner who extended an invitation to everyone to continue the merry making at their home after the hotel closed. Thanks to Henk for providing \$ 2.00 worth of chips.

Fifty three trips were held in 1972-73, a drop of eight on 1971-72, but still an average of one per week. For the first six months of 1973-74 there have been 41 trips, not including unreported track-cutting trips. Keep it up!

Speleo-miscellany:

Welcome to the following new members, who were elected at the last two meetings:

Robert Eaton, 15 Wyndham Road, Claremont.

Nick Berwick, 12 Charles Street, Moonah.

Nick Gould, Main Road, Sandford.

welcome also to the following prospective members:

Graeme Whitchurch, 20 Bourneville Crescent, Claremont.

Paul Eaton, 15 Wyndham Road, Claremont.

Shane Pinnington, 20 Leighland Avenue, Claremont.

Brendan de Bomford, 12 Bilton Street, Claremont.

Eleven new members have joined since the A.G.M.

+ President, Albert Goede, arrived back in Tassy for a fortnight and is now in Auckland at the uni. there. His suntan and slides of the Kimberleys(W.A.) were admired at the last General Meeting.

+ Noel Rawlinson(remember - the red beard and Cascade countenance) has sent a detailed report on his trip to Tasmania, extracts from which will be published, space permitting.

+ The submission to the Federal Government's National Estate Enquiry is in the process of being typed and will be exhibited at 66 Wentworth Street on October 24th. The photographs have cost the club \$12.

+ Precipitous Bluff posters are available from the Tasmanian Environment Centre, 281 Elizabeth Street, North Hobart.

+ Peter Shaw is now living in the land of the kiwi. His address: 132 Crummer Road, Grey Lynn, Auckland 2, New Zealand. His article on the Nuigini expedition is printed - thanks for the 'scoop', Peter.

+ For sale: CEGSA Occasional Paper No.4 "Mullamullang Cave Expeditions 1966", edited by the late Alan Hill. It gives the exploration history, technical information and speleology of Australia's longest mainland cave,(7 miles) in 50 pages of detailed, excellently printed articles in book form. Available from:

The Secretary,

Cave Exploration Group(South Australia),

c/o South Australian Museum,

North Terrace, Adelaide, South Aus. 5000.

Price \$ 1.50 per copy, inc. postage.

Have you seen the sun-rise over Mullamullang's Lake Shulba yet ???

+ The following numbers have been affixed at Ida Bay:

IB 8: Small swallet; short distance west of old limestone quarry, depth approx. 46 metres; small creek is probable source of stream in Conference Concourse, Exit Cave, but disappears into impenetrable cracks. Discovered May 1968, explored Feb.1971, numbered 13/10/73.

IB 9: Small cave in fissure on western side of track downhill from IB 7. Descended using rope for three metres. Contains two small tunnels - both dead ends. Creek at bottom dry but muddy. Abundance of cave crickets.

IB 7: Small, dry, sloping hole on the eastern side of the La Perouse track not far from the southern end of the old quarry. Squeeze leads off to right but was not pushed. Appears to be some formation at far end of squeeze.

IB 16: Small hole SE of IB 9. Seven metre entrance pitch. No formation. Small room at bottom. Infested with cave crickets. Suggested

name is Hopper Hole.

No.s. 9, 7 and 16 were located on 30/9/73 and explored and numbered on 13/10/73.

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The Deepest Hole in the World.(A myth).

Peter Shaw.

August saw the holding of the most expensive caving expedition in the world, and possibly the largest. Twenty-six cavers from N.Z., Australia and New Guinea combined to explore a completely unvisited area of the limestone country, in the Muller Range in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

After landing at Mendi, we drove fifty miles through unexplored limestone to the village of Kelabo from whence walking was to commence. On the way we crossed two rivers which, we learned later, resurged from the limestone not far from the road. The first day's walking involved a 5000 foot climb which combined with the heat and lack of oxygen to knock everyone out. For the first few days, we followed a track cut by the local kiap(patrol officer). A forward party of three cavers and ten local natives had already been in the field for 3 weeks, cutting the final section of the track to our base-camp and air drop site. This we reached after four tiring days of mud and bamboo. The hardest part of the walking in was going past all the dolines and shafts, on both sides of the track, which screamed out to be explored.

After a day's rest in base-camp, I joined a party which intended to explore the area S.W. of the base-camp known as "cheese country" because of all the holes in it, as indicated by the aerial photos. The dolines were tremendously impressive, about 600 feet deep with streams flowing into most of them but no holes. At the bottom of each doline, the stream sank into an impassable mud choke. In five days in the "cheese country", we explored a 120 foot pot, and a railway tunnel type stream cave which was blocked by rockfall after 150 feet. We were glad to get back to base-camp. It was decided to move the base-camp back along the track towards Kelabo to explore some of the holes we had passed on the way in.

It was here that we found our major hole, Sunrise Cave. This was explored and surveyed in two trips to a depth of 1053 feet(provisional) and a length of over one mile. On the first day we pushed down to 350 feet and could see the next pitch opening into a large chamber. Next day we returned with plenty of gear, and found that after two more pitches the passage evened off and dropped only gradually to the final sump. The passage was generally 20 ft. high and 15 ft. wide with a small intermittent stream and several pools, one of which provided a lot of fun as we traversed around it. Only right at the end did the passage become in any way tight. We carried out this exploration and surveyed out in twenty hours, emerging at sunrise. Fortunately the atmosphere of the cave was pleasant, allowing us to keep dry.

While we had been exploring the "cheese country" and Sunrise Cave, a second exploration party including Phil Robinson had been checking out shafts in the vicinity of Camp Horatio. They had found a seven hundred footer and a pot just over 1000 feet. In one of them Paul Caffyn had abseiled down and, finding he was just above the floor, had tied his prussik slings to the end of the rope and continued down. Quite a surprise for the next man down.

After two weeks of exploration, we began to head out, stopping on the way to look at the submergence of the river Atea. A river about the size of the Derwent thundered over a seventy foot waterfall and then flowed into a cave. Because of the size of the stream, it was impossible to penetrate more than a couple of hundred feet. We calculated that, if we bolted horizontally around the walls for two and a half months non-stop, we would reach the resurgence two miles away and 3000 feet lower, provided there were no problems. Quite a

few other solutions were suggested:- a dam upstream; a viaduct to carry the water over the top of the hole; a small zeppelin; one hundred tons of jelly crystals and a spoon; a large refrigerating plant and some crampons; a ten thousand foot condom, which would be floated down the cave and inflated - truly a technological challenge.

From the Atea, we returned to Kelabo and civilization. A lot of our superfluous gear had been dumped for the walk out, and this had been seized by the porters with no indication of sartorial taste. Some were wearing only socks, or a single boot, or three shirts, all at once. One very smart looking fellow was parading around in two pairs of Julia James' lace trimmed panties. Julia had left us the previous week to walk out early.

A highlight of the trip was seeing the native huts and villages and meeting the natives. They could erect a waterproof shelter in a short space of time, and light a fire in conditions that would make even Brian(Collin) reach for his Primus. All in all, a really memorable experience.

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HASTINGS CAVES (cont. See Sept. Spiel for first portion).

Survey and Exploration:

Following its formation in 1946, the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, at the request of the Tasmanian Government Tourist Department, carried out extensive explorations and a detailed survey of Newdegate Cave, on a scale of 40 feet to one inch. A plan of the survey together with a progress report of the work done was submitted to the Department in July 1947 by the club's president, Professor S.W. Carey. The report contained details of new discoveries made by the club, especially Christmas Chambers and extensive caverns downstream including Mystery Chamber.

In 1947 the club commenced excavation of a tunnel at the far end of the Cathedral to provide an all-weather route to the downstream section of the cave, including Mystery Chamber, which at the time could be entered only under drought conditions. In February 1950 the Binney Chambers were discovered by the use of rigid ladders to scale the wall of Mystery Chamber. Two months later the newly discovered chambers were connected to the Cathedral by the completion of the tunnel project which had involved about 100 ft. of tunnelling through clay by the club over a three year period. This meant that an all-weather route was now available for the exploration of the downstream portions of the cave. The 1950's saw the surveying of the Binney Chambers and the exploration of an extensive network of passages - Hell's Half Acre - associated with a tributary stream near the down-stream end of the cave.

The approximate length of passages in Newdegate Cave (apart from Hell's Half Acre, which still remains unsurveyed) is 4,000 feet. The highest point of the cave is at the tourist entrance, and the lowest point at the down-stream end of the river passage is 140 feet lower. Here further progress is blocked by a rock fall.

Further development of the cave system for visitors is doubtful because of periodic flooding of the lower passages. Although some fine formation areas occur in these lower passages, names that have been given to some of them such as The Pophole and Hell's Half Acre, are sufficient to deter all but the most ardent enthusiast. Several attempts have been made to connect underground streams with surface streams, but these attempts have so far been unsuccessful and the visitor entrance remains the only means of entry and exit.

The Binney Cave: The Binney Chambers referred to previously are sometimes known as the Binney Cave. This was named after Sir Hugh Binney, Governor of Tasmania 1945-1951, who actually made the muddy crawl through the tunnel in 1950.

King George V Cave: This cave is located about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (800 meters) from the entrance of Newdegate Cave and occurs within the cave reserve. A fairly complex cave system, much smaller than Newdegate,

possessing some very fine straw stalactite formations, and a small underground stream which flows intermittently. It is not considered for development for visitors in the immediate future because other caves in the district possess a far greater potential.

Beattie Cave: Situated roughly half way between the entrances to Newdegate and King George V Caves, this small cave is listed as a former tourist chamber, quite well decorated, but badly damaged. This cave was named after the late J.W. Beattie, photographer, who took pictures of the caves in the first months of their discovery. In "The Mercury" of 12th April, 1918, appeared a long article by Mr. Beattie extolling the beauty of the caves. Its small size precludes this cave as a likely future prospect for development.

The Wolf Hole: This interesting hole lies beyond the eastern boundary of the caves reserve in the state forest. From the surface it appears as a large hole approximately 80 feet deep and 40 feet in diameter. It is named after Mr. Amos Wolf, who was concerned with silica deposits in the area during the war years of 1939-45. It is presumed he was the discoverer. The vertical sides make descent impossible without ropes and ladders. Explorations by the Tasmanian Caverneering Club have revealed that an extensive cave exists beyond an opening at the bottom of the hole.

This cave contains the largest known underground lake in Tasmania (Lake Pluto).

The Thermal Pool:

Thermal springs are not common in Tasmania. The Hastings Springs are the warmest and best known. These occur three miles (4.8 Km) south-east from the caves. At this point the road to the caves runs along the base of a hill formed of Jurassic dolerite, trending in a north-westerly direction. To the south of the road is a flat plain covered with recent alluvium underlain with a Pre-cambrian series composed of dolomite and quartzite, which is in faulted relationship with the dolerite.

It is considered that the temperature of the water is due to the probability that the water enters the dolomite in the caves area at a higher elevation than the springs area, descends about 2,000 feet, and has sufficient hydraulic gradient to force it to the surface. This is based on an estimation of a rise of $5/9^{\circ}\text{C}$ for every 66 feet of depth.

Several springs occur in the area, the average temperature being about 29°C . The warmest of these with a temperature of 31°C was formed into a small bathing pool (40 feet by 16 feet, by 3 feet six inches deep) to coincide with the opening of the Newdegate Cave in 1939. The pool was enlarged in 1962 to the dimensions of 55 feet by 25 feet, with a depth of four feet, 6 inches. It was found that some difficulty was experienced in maintaining an adequate volume of water in the pool during dry weather, due to seasonal fluctuations of the water flow. To overcome this, an electrically operated pump is used to supplement the water supply from another nearby spring. The natural bed of the pool is clay, and pebbles have been introduced to maintain greater clarity of water when the bed is disturbed by bathers.

To ensure a high degree of cleanliness, and to maintain a constant temperature of about 27°C , the water is released each evening, and refilling takes place overnight.

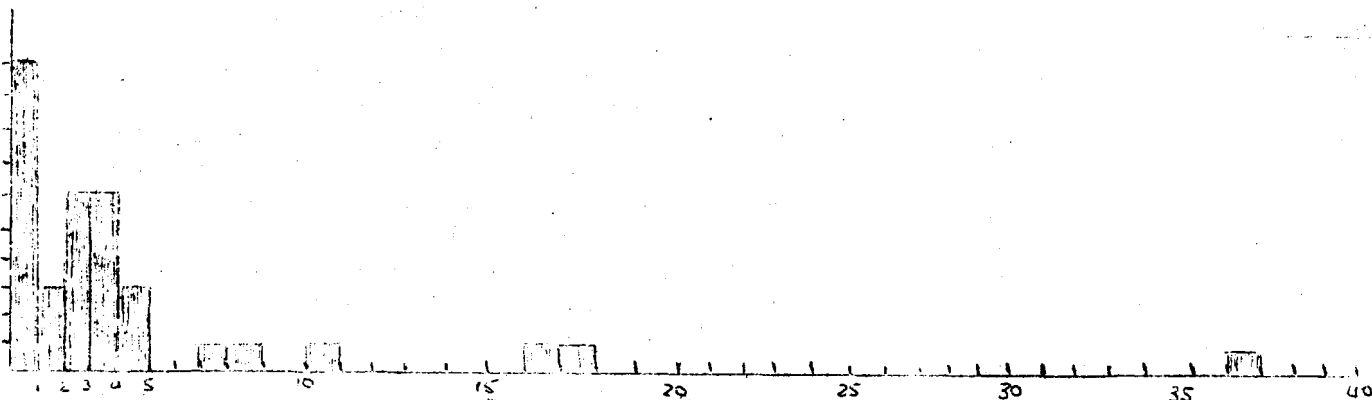
SPELEO - STATISTICS

Andrew Skinner.

For the year 31-3-72 to 31-3-73.

Total number of trips	-	53.
Trips advertised in Speleo Spiel	-	42.
Exploratory trips	-	34.
Total attendance on all trips	-	252.
Total number on trips	-	73.

Members on trips	-	34.
Non-members on trips	-	38.
Average attendance/trip	-	4.7.

Comments:

The total number of trips was down by 8 to 53 - still very creditable as it averages one trip per week. The number of exploratory trips dropped to 34; caving was done by fewer people, with total attendance dropping to 252. One member went on 37 trips!

Geographical analysis:

Junee	-	16
Florentine	-	6
Ida Bay(Exit)	-	7
Ida Bay(north)	-	2
Hastings	-	3
Mole Creek	-	12
Climbing practices	-	1
Picton/Cracroft	-	2
Maria Island	-	1
Mt. Anne	-	2
Lake Spicer	-	1

For the first six months of this year(31/3/73-31/9/73) the total number of trips is 41, one member having been on 32 of these.

Of these trips 3 went to Junee, 2 to Florentine, Ida Bay(Exit) - 8, Ida Bay(north) - 2, Hastings was visited 8 times, as was Mole Creek, Maria Island again received 1 visit, 6 climbing practices were held, 2 trips to the Picton/Cracroft were reported, but there were more to this area for track cutting purposes which were not written up, and there was 1 trip to a place called Other (?).

"Pest"

Rumour has it that one Mr. N. White has a unique species of Anaspides at his Battery Pt. residence

Speleo-Spiel had a sneak preview and came up with this picture of the situation.



Anaspides - BLAH!!

TRIP REPORTS.

Hastings/ Ida Bay - 11-13/9/73.

Party: Andrew Skinner(L), Laurie Moody + wife Sue and daughter Louise, Fiona Skinner, Stuart Gamble, Shane Pinnington(P), Paul Eaton(P).

Tuesday: At 11.00 hours Stuart Gamble and I entered Newdegate and began scrubbing green algae from the Estcourt Stalagnite. This growth had been noticed a few days earlier and appeared similar to the algae found growing under the lights in the tourist caves at Mole Creek. We used a wire brush, washing down the residue with water. If growth is removed each time it becomes visible it may not "escape" to other areas of the cave. At 13.00 hours Stuart left and the others arrived. After deposition of gear in the hut a short climbing practice was held at the silica quarry near Hastings. At 15.00 hours Laurie, Paul, Shane and myself made the 'Grand Tour' of Newdegate with a quick visit to the Pophole and then the Binney Tunnel. The two prospective members were laddered into the Mystery Corner whilst Laurie and I ab-seiled the 10 meter drop. Much fun was had on the Mud Slide. Two spiders and a fly were collected.

Wednesday: Leaving Sue and Louise at Hastings, we left for Ida Bay at 11.00 hours. A photographic visit was made to Ida Bay Cave. None of us were familiar with the cave, so it was rather exciting to wander through. Several wet crawls were pushed near survey-station No.38.

Thursday: Laurie, Fiona, Shane and Paul visited King George V Cave for about two hours in the afternoon. They reported that the catch on the gate is rusted through, so King George is again 'open to the public'. About a metre of chain is needed to lock the gate. After washing the gear we left for Hobart, stopping at Stuart Gamble's to show some slides. A good trip with some rewarding photographs.

Mole Creek - 3-5/9/73.

Party: Andrew Skinner and Laurie Moody.

Monday: We arrived at the Mole Creek hut at 14.00 hours, and went to Maracoopa Tourist Cave soon afterwards. The aim of the trip was to photograph trails, signs and electrical fittings in the two tourist caves, and also to visit Scotts and Baldocks (two former tourist caves). Chester Shaw and Jan Howe kindly let us into Maracoopa and assisted by Laurie, I photographed most of the tourist section. That night it rained so heavily we were convinced the hut would collapse under the strain.

Tuesday: At 10 o'clock we started to look for Baldocks Cave by walking up Sassafras Creek. After about a mile it was realised that this was not the way and we attempted to cross the creek. Forging the swollen stream required bashing blackberries. After a fruitless search in the bush for Baldocks we followed the western edge of Sassafras Creek back to the main road. Several resurgences (in dolerite) were investigated en route. At 13.00 hours a brief visit to Scotts Cave was made, and photographs of the acetylene light fittings were taken. At 15.00 hours a hole near the path to King Solomon was explored. It proved to be quite a well decorated cave, with formation similar to King Solomons. There is a small creek in the lower parts, with siphons upstream and down. At this stage Laurie's accumulator died, forcing us to make a quick exit. The key to King Solomon was borrowed from Gary Melville and about an hour was spent photographing this cave. On our return to the surface we were treated to a very welcome dinner at the Melville's.

Wednesday: Honeycomb 1, 1½ and 2 were visited on the way back to Hobart. A broken SCS number was found inside the cave and was brought back to Hobart. (No. MK 204). Thanks to all at Mole Creek for allowing us to complete the photographic project.

Andrew Skinner.

Exit Cave (or - All At Sea) - 22,23/9/73.

Party: Andrew and Ros Skinner, Michelle Farrell, Fiona Skinner, Glenn Pinnington, Robert Eaton, Julie Flynn (friend of Michelle's), Paul de Bomford, Nick Gould(P), Nick Berwick(P) and Graeme Witchurch(P).

The party started walking at 23.00 hours and arrived at Exit after a slow trip (too slow to p-r-i-n-t!) We were delighted to find the entrance flooded (that is, all except Nick.B. who had already had his doggy paddle in Reece's Bog.). Nick G. and I fixed a nylon rope to ferry the packs across. After about an hour both packs and bods were assembled in the Wind Tunnel. Fiona's climb along the rope was VERY moving! After a mighty lungs she made it to the centre of the rope, suspended by both hands, a four metre deep pool of brown water underneath. "What do I do now?" she wailed. Soon she applied energy to her questions and slid across the remaining gap. Since arriving at the cave we noticed that the water had risen about 15 cm. A decision was made to camp in the Wind Tunnel. After only six hours, (six lousy hours), half the party decided that they wanted to get up. Many curses and threats were made by the rest of the party, but by 11.00 hours everybody was up. The news that the water was up by about 1½ metres, coupled with an atrocious weather forecast, provoked us to reluctantly, reluctantly I emphasize, contemplate walking out. A quick visit was made further into the cave. The D'Entrecasteaux was crossed using a rope and the party split up with one group visiting the Hammer Passage and the remainder going up the Collonades. Afterwards the two groups joined and visited the area near the Pendulum. On returning to the D'Entrecasteaux crossing it was observed that the water had risen another 20 cm. However, both packs and people were soon safely out of the cave, en route for the hut at Hastings. Much drowning of sorrows. Sunday morning was spent in leisurely fashion, having brunch adjacent to the pool, with cavers mingling like sore thumbs with the tourists. Some rubbish was removed from Newdegate before we returned to Hobart.

In retrospect, perhaps this trip was only a bad dream and this report only fanciful imagination. However, if it is true, it is worth considering:

DON'T try to get to Inner Base Camp with a party of eleven on a Friday night.

DON'T take a mob who can only sleep for six hours.

Andrew Skinner.

Sphinx Rock - 16/9/73.

Party: Andrew and Ros Skinner, Fiona Skinner, Graeme Witchurch(P).

The day after the caver's dinner (HIC). This small, relatively sobered-up party, decided on climbing practice at Sphinx Rock. A good day with some "new" techniques of ladder climbing by Fiona. Graeme and Ros had their first abseils. Ros was rather apprehensive about jumping off the cliff at first, and almost had to be forcibly persuaded.

Andrew Skinner.

Ida Bay - 30/9/73.

Party: Andrew(L) and Ros Skinner, Laurie and Sue Moody, Wes Carpenter, Henk Meerding, Nick Berwick, Fiona Skinner, Nick Gould, Shane Pinnington, Michael and Peter (Scoutmasters from 2nd Prince of Wales Sea Scouts), seven sea scouts, and Mr. and Mrs. Patten and Judy Carpenter on the surface.

The mob moved off along the abandoned railway towards Ida Bay Cave (Mystery Ck. Cave), How many are there? I couldn't decide if there were seventeen or twenty but finally decided on the figure 19. Upon reaching the entrance of the cave Michael and I went in to set up a photo of the glow worms whilst the others had lunch. The glow-worm display was splendid and some members remarked that it surpassed the present display in Exit. Downstream the party was split, with Laurie taking one group along the easy way and I led the scouts down the creek. Most of them enjoyed the climbing but one only had shoes so Ros and I escorted him along the easy route, meeting the rest of the party downstream. Laurie's contingent departed for the siphon area and Michael took the scouts for a look at the area near station 38. After some more food Henk and Wes left for the road and IB 8 was explored. Laurie and Shane located some holes near old quarry.

Andrew Skinner.