

SPELEO — SPIEL

NEWSLETTER

of the

TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB . No. 85

NOV 1973

T.C.C.,
Box 641 G, G.P.O.,
Hobart, TAS. 7001.

Annual sub. \$ 2.00

One copy 20 cents.

"THE KHAN" IN KUBLA KHAN.

Registered for posting as a
periodical - Category "B"

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

Secretary and Editor: Andrew Skinner, 5A Hampden Road, Battery Point.

FORWARD PROGRAMME

- Nov. 11 - Maydena. Exploration and surveying. Leader: Laurie Moody.
- Nov. 18 - Hastings. Wolfhole. Surveying. Leader: A. Skinner.
- Nov. 24-30 - Surprise Bay. Walking and caving in coastal limestone area. Leader: Andrew Skinner.
- Nov. 25 - Hastings. "Slack" trip. Leader: Laurie Moody.
- Dec. 2 - Ida Bay. New Norfolk High Adventure Camp. Day trip to Mystery Creek Cave. Leader: Ross Mansfield.
- Dec. 5 - GENERAL MEETING. 8 Bath Street, Battery Point.
- Dec. 15-16 - Tas. Council of Speleology. Meeting on Saturday at Mole Creek. Dinner has been arranged at the Mole Creek Hotel by Northern Caverneers. Delegates: Simon Stephens, Bill Lehmann and Andrew Skinner.
- Dec. 26 - Jan. 2 - Mole Creek. Exploration of high level areas in Wet Cave using a scaling pole. Track-marking in Kubla Khan. Numbering and surveying. Leader: Andrew Skinner.
- (1974)
- Jan. 26 - ASF Committee Meeting - Melbourne.
- Jan.-Feb. - Lower Gordon. Inquiries to Southern Caving Society Box 121, Moonah, Tas. 7009.
- Easter '74 - Maria Island. (Tentative).
- Dec. '74 - Jan. '75 - ASF Conference in Brisbane, Q'ld.

SPHINX ROCK - Climbing practice every Wednesday night. Leave 66 Wentworth St., Sth Hobart at 6.00p.m.

EDITORIAL.

Vanishing Falls has been conquered! During the month Jeanette Collin and Atilia Vrana reached the Falls via the Picton Valley. The water drops some sixty metres into a deep pool, reappearing at a resurgence 1.2 km. down the valley. No caves were reported but there are prospects. Brian Collin is planning to investigate the Cracroft Limestone soon.

There is little other news with only three other trips reported. At Junee JF 46 was explored to a depth of 25 metres and JF 47 was pushed to a depth of 25 metres. Some track marking has been undertaken in Exit Cave and the project is almost complete.

Speleo - miscellany.

- + Congratulations to Laurie Moody who was elected a party leader at the Nov. general meeting.
- + Prospective member:
Leona Conrades, c/o Nurses Home, Calvary Hospital, Lenah Valley.
- + Andrew and Ros Skinner have moved to a new home. They can be found at: 5A Hampden Road, Battery Point, Tas. 7000.
- + Cave numbering:
JF 46 - 'Quarry Hole' (proposed name).
JF 47 - 'Suicide Pot' (" ").

For descriptions see trip reports.

TRIP REPORTS.

Ida Bay - 13/10/73.

Party: Nick Berwick and Laurie Moody.

The main objective of this trip was to locate and number a series of holes that I had observed briefly a fortnight before. Despite lack of numbers (rather unusual) Nick and myself arrived at

the new quarry at 10.30 a.m. A brisk 10 minute walk found us at the site of the old quarry. The La Perouse track was then followed to where the wildlife notice is displayed. We dumped our gear at this point, then followed a nearby gully uphill in an easterly direction. In a distance of about three hundred yards we located half a dozen holes of which only one warranted numbering (No.7).

After a quick lunch we headed west down the gully as far as No.8. After covering both sides of the gully we located seven more holes, two of which were numbered, Nos. 9 and 16.

A description of the finds is as follows:

- No.7. - Small, dry sloping hole on eastern side of the La Perouse track not far from the southern end of the old quarry. Squeeze leads off on right but was not pushed. Appears to be some formation at far end of squeeze.
- No.9. - Small cave in fissure on western side of track downhill of No.7. Descended by aid of rope, 3 metres. Contains two small tunnels - both dead ends. Creek at bottom dry but muddy. Abundance of cave crickets.
- No.16. - 'Hopper Hole'. (proposed name). Small hole SE of No.9. Seven metre entrance pitch. No formation, small chamber at bottom. Infested with cave crickets.

Laurie Moody.

June Area - 28/10/73.

Party: Laurie Moody (A-Leader), Fiona Skinner, Nick Berwick and Max Jeffries.

After a somewhat belated start, due to a person named Berwick who didn't put his clock forward, we arrived at Max Jeffries place at 8.15 a.m. (Weather ideal). Clear Hill was given a miss as the hole reported is apparently not in a limestone area. (Max is seeking further information on this one). Anyway, Max suggested that we take a look at an area west of the Khazad-dum track, where two caves were reported by timber workers.

An hour of scrub-bashing revealed nothing definite, so it was then decided to try and locate another cave which is reputed to be at the rear of the quarry. This particular cave is supposed to be very deep and some years ago cordite was tossed down in an effort to establish its depth. A hole was located beside the old quarry and as it had no number we decided that this might be the one concerned. We secured a ladder and Fiona, Nick and myself descended a 5 metre pitch to the first level while Max remained on the surface. Two small holes were located and checked out. The first dropped two metres and ended in a choke. The other proved to be a free hanging pitch, so we joined two ladders and descended to the bottom of the hole except Fiona who elected to wait on the first level and await developments. The pitch dropped for about 15 metres and the hole continued for several yards further before ending in another choke. A feature worth mentioning at this point was a wall of pure white mondmilch which was slightly damaged during the descent. This cave showed no signs of previous entry and was duly numbered JF 46. No cordite!

After lunch we investigated several nearby sinks then decided to take a look at JF 1. About this time the weather began to crack up and after an inspection of JF 1 by all of us, we decided to head home but not before taking in Dead Horse Cave and noting the position of JF 32.

No sooner had we arrived at Max's than down came the rain. Many thanks to Max and his wife for the coffee and for the use of Max's ute.

Postnote: JF 46 was not the cave referred to by quarry workers and I now have an approximate position. I hope to be able to take a look in the next few weeks.

JF 46 - ('Quarry Hole') Hole 25 metres deep; two levels; 5 metre entrance pitch, 15 metre free drop; mondmilch abundant; no other decoration; next to quarry. (J)

See next issue for survey of JF 46. Laurie Moody.

Exit Cave - 3-5/11/73.

Party: Andrew Skinner(L), Peter Dowde, Lorna Schmidt, R. Emmett, M. van der Molen, T. Daniel, W. Hardman and Bob Woolhouse (from Northern Caverneers).

After a late start we walked into the cave to find that the water level was relatively high. We entered using the rope traverse and waded across the stream. En route to Inner Base Camp visits were made to the Hammer Passage, the Pendulum and Mini Martin. On Sunday Conference Concourse was visited and some photographs were taken by Bob Woolhouse. Edie's Treasure and the Devil's Stovepipe were visited on Sunday evening.

Spills in the river: Lorna near Mini Martin; Bob in the talus.

Supplies in cave;

Wind tunnel - small container of petrol,
two synthetic 30' orange ropes.
Outer Base Camp - one bottle metho,
two 30 cm. candles.
Inner Base Camp - 4 litres petrol,
2 litres shellite,
2 litres metho,
3 sealed coffee tins carbide (about 8 kg.)
1 spade,
two 30 cm. candles,
1 vanity mirror,
1 bag of blue track markers.
at 'The Dig' (see June Spiel) -
2 plastic buckets,
1 small spade,
1 small pick.

Track marking completed on 3-5/11/73.

- (1) Blue plastic markers replaced with reflectors in Hammer Passage.
- (2) Orange tape and aluminium tent peg barriers erected in Edie's Treasure.

Track marking work to be done:

- (1) Completion of barriers in Edie's Treasure.
- (2) Markers across a mud floor in Conference Concourse.

Andrew Skinner.

June Area - 11/11/73.

Party: Laurie Moody(L), Ros and Andrew Skinner, Glenn Pinnington, Henk van Twillert, Leona Conrades(P), and Max Jeffries.

Miracles do happen! Everyone was on time and we reached the gate around 8.30 a.m. only to discover that no permit had been obtained. Thus a quick trip to Don Frankcombe's, who kindly arranged for us to be allowed entry. (Thanks Don).

Our first stop was the June Quarry where a search for the elusive "deep" cave revealed a small hole which didn't even warrant numbering. (disappointment!) This was the "hole" referred to by the quarry worker.

It was then decided to survey JF 46 and while Andrew, Ros and Leona surveyed, with Max assisting on the surface, Henk, Glenn and myself investigated a series of holes halfway between the quarry and Ross Walker Cave. Nothing of significance was found, even when the survey party added their combined efforts and we then adjourned to the quarry (scrub-bashing en route) for lunch.

After chow, we moved camp to an area below Sunshine Road, where Max had reported locating one of the holes that had eluded us on our last trip. This hole, now numbered JF 47, dropped down beside a large tree stump and was partially covered by the fallen tree trunk. Andrew suggested that we abseil but as the necessary gear had been left in the car, the descent was made by ladder. Andrew descended

the first pitch of about 10 metres and reported that a vertical pitch further down would require all three ladders joined together. For some unexplained reason I was elected to make the descent into the blackness and on reaching the bottom, found only 1 metre of ladder to spare. Unfortunately our hopes of finding another K.D. came to an abrupt halt and on hearing my findings, Andrew decided to vacate the premises, leaving me to ascend the 15 metre pitch. Estimated depth 25 metres, little formation.

When I finally stumbled out we decided to take in JF 1 as only Max and myself had been in previously. Leaving the others to look around the main cavern, Henk and myself descended the 6 metre hole by ladder and decided to push as far as we could. Henk located a duck-under which led some 20 metres or more further on, at an angle of 45°. Henk pushed a squeeze at the end of this tunnel and reported that it drops down to a lake of undetermined size. Further exploration is possible but a ladder is needed at this point. We believe that JF 1 has only been pushed as far as this squeeze. Can anyone confirm this?

On surfacing, we all made a bee-line for the shop at Maydena and I must report that a very enjoyable days' caving was had by all, no doubt due to the fact that the weather behaved itself.

Laurie Moody.

(Surveys of JF 1 and JF 47 will be published in the next issue).

NIUGINI SPELEOLOGICAL RESEARCH EXPEDITION - 1973.

Muller Range, Southern Highlands.

Philip Robinson.

In Australia there had been no news of the advance party for over two weeks. Kevan, Van, John and 10 native porters were cutting in the high mountain jungles of the Muller Range. Aerial photographs and helicopter reconnaissance had shown a small clearing on a high plateau above the Strickland. It was in the midst of an impressive area of honeycomb karst. A depth potential of 3-5000' with enormous dolines and sinks had sparked off the 1973 Australian expedition.

The New Zealanders, Tasmanians and West Australians flew into Sydney on August 3rd. The following day a large party of non too tidy cavers boarded the luxurious comfort of a Boeing 727. Beautiful views of the Great Barrier Reef and warm tropical seas were followed by touch down in a hot humid Port Moresby. Total numbers on the trip were now 26 with costs estimated around \$(A)18,000 (inc. \$5,000 sponsorship). Via DC 3 charter the main party were transported to Tari (5,400') in the Southern Highlands. Julia James came in the following day in a Twin Otter after seeing the main expedition supplies safely off the boat in Moresby. There was good news at Tari. The advance party had found the clearing. Van and 2 porters had walked out to meet us. It was only four days walk in for us yet the last 'day' had taken eight days of track cutting. From Tari admin. tractors and Toyotas took the party over a rough, hilly 46 miles to Kelabo via Koroba.

Kelabo was the start of the journey into the wild country of the Muller. The mountain range is of limestone (9-12,000') all completely under forest and usually cloud. The foothills have numerous dolines to traverse, up and down continuously through knee deep mud, rotting vegetation, tripping over tree roots and bamboo in the pouring rain. Packs of only 40-50 lb. soon became very heavy. Many people were cut, scratched and exhausted. The Base Camp clearing (waist high grass) was a very welcome sight indeed. Two tons of gear had been airdropped during the walk in. Only four bags were lost. We were impressed by the pilot. The small Cessna was struggling to pull out at 8,900 a.s.l.

Base camp was well established. There was food, running water, and a large shelter for cooking and eating. The expedition was lucky to have a qualified doctor with experience in the tropics. Radio contact was made most days with the assistant district commissioner

at Koroba. After a day's sorting out of 26 cavers and 10 porters the cave exploration could begin. Parties set off in different directions with rope, 3-4 days supplies and porters. Two to three weeks were spent in the area and over 20 caves explored. The deepest were Kanada Heiowa Hein (Sunrise) -1,000', and Uli Guria (Hole of the Earthquake) -1020'. Characteristics were deep shafts in creamy, sharp lime-stone (miocene), loose rock, mud, small seepage waterfalls and pots ending too narrow or choked. Much of the time was spent scrub-bashing which was why a large party was needed. Disappointing was the "cheese country", the area with enormous scrub choked dolines 4-5,000' deep, $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometre across, big cliffs 200' high and waterfalls. This was the region of greatest expectation; impressive scenery but yielded no significant caves.

The natives were invaluable bushmen, track cutting, lighting fires and building shelters. These very primitive people, living in the stone age only 20 years ago, were friendly and helpful with a good sense of humour. Twenty more were hired from Kelabo for the walk out. The expedition was 4 days walk from the nearest village in one of the remotest areas in the highlands. A very worthwhile diversion was made during the walk out to explore the mighty Atea River sink. The large forested river valley ends abruptly at the mouth of an incredible cave entrance, surely one of the most awe inspiring in the world. Four hundred cusecs of fast, foaming white water thunder over an 80' drop in the cave mouth. Most of the party were just too staggered to think of exploring the system. The volume of water was too enormous to touch, a dinghy would be swept away in the torrent. The only way would be to traverse the walls with hundreds of bolts, a tedious task with present bolting methods. Other problems are the big logs 30' in the roof. It rains heavily each day. How easily could one be trapped or swept away? Depth potential is uncertain at present (2-5,000'). The remoteness of the place is another difficulty. The exploration of the Atea and other New Guinea caves will provide plenty of excitement and adventure in years to come. Potential tremendous.



