

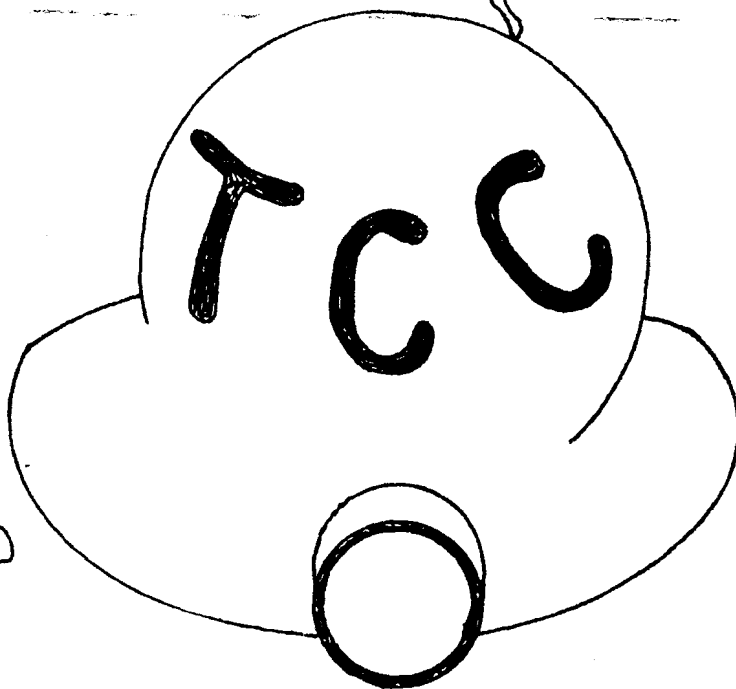
SPELEO SPIEL

NEWSLETTER of the

TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Aug. **1974**

NO. 93



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President: Laurie Moody, 13 Mason Street, Claremont, 7011.

Secretary: Therese Goede, 8 Bath Street, Battery Point, 7000.
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FORWARD PROGRAMME:

- August 24 - Saturday: Florentine. Either Trapdoor Swallet, Slaughterhouse Pot, Gormanghast or surface trogging south of Growling Swallet, depending on who wants to go. Leader: Peter Shaw.
- August 24-25 - Weekend: Mole Creek. Combined trip with Northern Caverneers and Launceston Speleo.Club. Meet Sat. a.m.(early) Mole Creek hut. Leader: Andrew Skinner.
- September 4 - Wednesday: General meeting at Brian and Jeanette's 66 Wentworth Street, South Hobart, 8 p.m. Slides and refreshments welcome.
- September 14 - Saturday: A N N U A L D I N N E R
Black Buffalo Hotel, Letitia Street, 7.30 p.m.
4 course dinner - \$5.25 per person.
Bookings to the secretary with \$2.00 per.pers. deposit as soon as possible.(The hotel wants to know how many to expect.)

MAKE IT A NIGHT TO REMEMBER - PLEASE COME.

Dec.'74 - Jan.'75 - Tenth Biennial Caving Convention in Brisbane. See Therese for enrolment forms.

Jan 25 - Feb 2 - T.C.C. 1975 Cracroft Expedition.
Leaders: Brian Collin and Albert Goede. See June Spiel for more details.
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EDITORIAL

Another month, a few more caves. Laurie and Max keep finding caves down near the Florentine but that big cave keeps eluding them.

A return trip to Marble Hill to look at a promising looking hole discovered by Brian and Noel turned into a shambles of a trip with people going everywhere, and nobody with the right gear at the right time. Nothing like a smooth running, efficient, trouble free trip!

Peter Shaw.
.....

Prusiking Ropes.

The Blue Water ropes have arrived and it is planned to cut the ropes so that the following prusiking ropes will be available.

1	91 metre Blue Water	(300 ft)
1	70 metre Blue Water	(230 ft)
2	45 metre Blue Water	(150 ft)
2	30 metre terylene	(100 ft)
1	21 metre Blue Water	(70 ft)
2	16 metre terylene	(60 ft)

Tasmanian Cave Fauna,

by Albert and Therese Goede.

Part 4 - Pseudoscorpions.

Pseudoscorpions(false scorpions) make up the order Pseudoscorpionida and are relatives of the ticks and mites(part 3) as well as of scorpions, harvestmen and spiders. Because of their small size and retiring habits they are known to few people despite the fact that nearly 2000 species have been described(Vandel, 1965). Pseudoscorpions resemble tiny scorpions without a tail and are completely harmless to man despite their fearsome looking pincers(pedipalps) which may be double their body length when fully extended. On the surface pseudoscorpions are found in forest litter, under rotting wood and under the loose bark of some trees. They are predators and for many species springtails(part 1) are the principal food supply. They have the remarkable ability when threatened to move backwards faster than they move forward, an ability that they probably share with very few other animals.

Pseudoscorpions in the Northern Hemisphere whose life cycles have been studied have a complicated courtship which precedes mating and construct cocoon-like shelters in which they pass the winter, lay their eggs and shed their skins(Savory,1966). We know little or nothing of the habits of Australian species and most of the cave species are known only from one or two specimens.

Pseudoscorpions are small animals. Their body length is usually less than 5 mm. and frequently much smaller. In caves they may be found in association with bat guano, rotting wood and vegetation, tree roots penetrating from the surface and under stones.

Pseudoscorpions are subdivided into a number of families. Most specimens collected from caves, particularly in the wetter parts of Australia, belong to the family Chthoniidae which has many cave adapted species in the Northern Hemisphere. Seventeen species belonging to this family have now been described from Australia (Beier 1966, 1967, 1968, 1971) and belong to five genera:

<u>Tyrannochthonius</u>	2 species (none from caves)
<u>Pseudotyrannochthonius</u>	9 species (6 from caves)
<u>Austrochthonius</u>	2 species (1 from caves)
<u>Sathrochthonius</u>	3 species (1 from caves)
<u>Morikawia</u>	1 species (1 from caves)

It can be seen that more than half of the species are from caves and with one exception they have not been found on the surface.

The distribution of these genera is quite interesting. Tyrannochthonius occurs only in Western Australia and is probably a relatively recent immigrant as the genus is widespread in the Northern Hemisphere and the Tropics. Pseudotyrannochthonius and Austrochthonius are found in the southern half of Australia including Tasmania but also in southern South America in Chile and Patagonia. Their origins may go back before the time when the Southern Continents (Australia, Antarctica, India, South America and Africa) broke apart - a break up which started more than 100 million years ago. Sathrochthonius is only found in Australia. Morikawia is another genus with an interesting distribution(Chamberlin, 1962) - one species from the west coast of Mexico, one from the shores of Japan, two from New Caledonia and one cave adapted species from the Grill Cave at Bungonia. Its distribution would require some explaining!

All pseudoscorpions collected from Tasmanian caves belong to the genus Pseudotyrannochthonius. Quite a mouthful to pronounce even for a zoologist! Three species are known from our caves of which two have been described by Dartnall(1970) and the third re-

mains so far undescribed. P. typhlus from caves at Mole Creek has a body length of less than 3 mm. and the first specimens were discovered in Georgies Hall Cave by Alex Terauds. We have since collected specimens from Baldocks Cave and Scotts Cave. The most interesting feature of this animal is that it is completely eyeless - both eyes and eye lenses are absent.

The first specimen of P. tasmanicus was collected by Therese Goede from a discarded rubber glove in the dark zone of King George V Cave, Hastings. The description is based on four specimens, three from the dark zone of the cave and one from rotting wood on the surface not far from the cave entrance. The intriguing thing was that while the cave specimens had lost their eyes but retained a small pair of eye lenses, the surface specimen was completely eyeless. Loss of eyes in cave species is generally regarded as evidence of cave adaptation and had it not been for the chance find of a surface specimen the species would undoubtedly have been classified as a troglobite (true cave dweller). Additional specimens have since been collected both from the surface and from the twilight zone in the entrance chamber of King George V Cave. One of the more recently collected cave specimens is also completely eyeless and is shown in the figure.

A third undescribed species belonging to the genus is known from two specimens we have collected from Cashion Creek Cave, Florentine Valley.

Pseudoscorpions are obviously rare in Tasmanian caves and so far have been collected from only five caves in three different areas. It is interesting to note that three of the caves were former tourist caves where rotting wood from ladders and bridges has given rise to an abundant food supply. In non tourist caves the best places to look are in and near accumulations of organic debris.

Specimens from other caves and caving areas would be of considerable interest but should only be collected when a proper collecting kit is available. Specimens are best transported alive in a glass tube with plaster of Paris in the bottom and protected from breakage in an aluminium film container. Tubes should be kept cool in a moist cloth and should be delivered to Allan Dartnall at the Tasmanian Museum as soon as possible after being collected.

Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to Allan Dartnall of the Tasmanian Museum for his interest in the cave pseudoscorpions and describing two of the new species. We thank the Tasmanian Museum for making available the binocular microscope that enabled one of us to draw a specimen of P. tasmanicus.

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THE WESTERN FLORENTINE AND BEYOND!

This particular area lies west of the Florentine River and is presumed to stretch from the southern end of the Tiger Range to Cables Creek, just a little south of the 'Pagoda'. This comprises of an area approximately one kilometre wide by 24 kilometres long. The relief is by no means high but the scope for horizontal caves is very feasible. So far, four horizontal caves have been numbered on the western bank, three of which are in close proximity, JF 55, 56 and 57. The other, JF 51 lies 7-8 kilometres further downstream. The two largest, JF 55 and 57 have yet to be surveyed but both are in excess of 50 metres in length. Of these two, JF 57 has proved to be the more interesting as it contains more side passages.

Within the next few months, I hope to investigate as much of this area as possible. To date, only a very small area has been looked at and already finds have been made. A couple of un-numbered holes with further possibilities have also been noted but ropes and ladders are needed for further progress. The area itself is ideal for scrub-bashing. Sparse rain forest in the region of the river, gradually gives way to slightly denser scrub, interspersed with myrtles, blackwood, sassafras, stringybarks and towering eucalyptus. The going, however, is still very straightforward.

Later this year, possibly October, an expedition is being planned to enter the Rasselas Valley via this route. A wide belt of limestone is known to exist on the far side of the Tiger Range and extend for some distance up the valley. As the caving potential of this area is completely unknown, I hope to be able to elaborate further on the completion of this proposed trip.

Further details on this trip will be published in the next Spiel but I intend to spend at least five days in this area and interested parties are asked to contact me regarding further information.

Laurie Moody.

Cave numbering:

- JF 57 - Small but spacious cave in the ridge west of JF 55. Some formation, interesting side passages, two chambers. Discovered 13/7/74 by L. Moody, M. and T. Jeffries, L. Smith and D. O'Brien. Explored same date. (F)
- JF 58 - Small, funnel-shaped shaft on ridge due east of Cave Hill. Depth to date in excess of 25 metres. Further investigation is required. Discovered by M. Jeffries and L. Moody 13/4/74. Partially explored by David O'Brien on 13/7/74 and numbered by Moody, Jeffries and Smith. (J)
- JF 59 - Horizontal series of small tunnels leading off main passage; some formation; full exploration prevented due to water in some tunnels; close to road; length estimated to be in excess of 40 metres. Cave numbered on 3/8/74. Located in Florentine Valley.
- JF 61 - Horizontal cave with small sloping entrance hole leading to small chamber; interesting network of dry crawls and squeezes; roundabout link-up established due to dig; formation; exploration incomplete; numerous cave spiders; close to road; adjacent to JF 59; 70 metres of passage to date. Numbered 3/8/74. Located in Florentine Valley.
- JF 62 - Tight entrance hole opening into two separate chambers via duck-under; moon-milk; possible extension by excavation. Numbered on 3/8/74. Located in Florentine Valley at about 420 E76IN, (yards).

TRIP REPORTS:

Hastings - Ida Bay, Weekend 29.30 June, 1974.

Party: Albert Goede(leader), John Richardson, Glenn Pinnington, Robin Smith and Christine Moran(Prosp.) Sat. only: Andrew Davey and visitors Louise Ellis and Tony Payne.

John and I left Hobart at 8 a.m. on Saturday morning to meet Glenn, Robin and Christine at the Hastings Hut. They had just gotten up and took off without breakfast. Unknown to us Glenn had not been to Mystery Ck. Cave before and lost sight of us on the way. After the two of us had changed we drove back to locate him. When we were just about ready to leave the cars Andrew Davey turned up with two friends. We entered the cave together and the leader showed the party the interesting route(chimney and crawls) that leads to the upper entrance. Then to Cephalopod Creek where the leader was left behind. Later the party was reunited at the Ramp where Glenn and the two girls decided to return to the car. The rest of us pushed on to visit the bottom of Midnight Hole but nobody was game to negotiate Matchbox Squeeze which was rather wet. Then we went down the chute and through the talus to the final chamber. It was noticed that a small rockfall had blocked the way down to the stream passage that leads to the siphon. Everybody inspected the Canyon. We then returned to the cars.

On Saturday night the weekend party visited the Dover Pub to buy some medicine to help them face the following day. The next morning the leader got up at 10.20 a.m. and by his "good" example managed to persuade the others to leave their sleeping bags. As John and I were the only ones who wanted to go caving we decided to go to King George Cave. We found the entrance cunningly concealed. About 2 hours were spent in King George V Cave making a tour of most of the known cave and initiating John in the mysteries of cave fauna. On our way out we removed the broken gate attachment to take back to Hobart and left the padlock with the new cave superintendent - Robert Grauw. We rounded off the day by going for a swim in the warm pool and were back in Hobart at 5.40 p.m.

Albert Goede.

Western Florentine - June Area - 13/7/74.

Party: Laurie Moody, Max and Tim Jeffries, Leonie Smith and David O'Brien.

We signed in at the ANM barrier at 9.50 a.m., conditions foggy, and made our way out into the Florentine. Several stops were made to allow David to take photographs. It was around 10.30 a.m. when we parked the two vehicles down Felix Curtain Road. Our intentions were to cross the Florentine River and push inland towards the Tiger Range, in an effort to establish the extent of the limestone. We set off and were able to cross via the log near JP 55. The water level of the river had dropped considerably since our previous trip.

The party then pushed inland and the going was fairly straightforward. Several dolines were noted and duly inspected, one of which may go with a dig. Gradually we began to climb and eventually reached a small steep sided gully approximately 1 kilometre from the river. At this point we lost the limestone and struck north-east in a gradual sweep to locate it again. It was soon located and shortly afterwards I noticed an unlikely looking hole, close to the top of a small limestone ridge. David, Max and Tim eagerly disappeared inside while Leonie and I awaited the outcome. Cries of excitement finally enticed us inside and the unlikely looking hole proved to be a little more than we first thought. The small entrance led into a rift-like chamber approx. 15 metres long by about 5-6 metres wide. Several small extensions led off and were duly investigated. The left-hand one yielded about 10 metres of crawling while the right-hand one led about 4 metres on to another chamber. This chamber was about 4 metres high and a metre or so higher than the first. Flowstone and moon-milk were in evidence and several small straws were

noted. A left-hand passage led on a short distance and rose up towards the surface. Another passage led hard right and a slight climb was negotiated. At this point the going became rather constricted and another sharp right-hand bend led to a small tunnel. This was pushed but ended in a muddy choke. Several other passages were examined on the way out but the results were negative.

On emerging after half an hour, the cave was duly numbered JF 57. It was evident that at some stage the cave receives a certain amount of water but this was not so on our investigation. About this time Tim expressed some concern about his dog, who wasn't present when we reached the surface. However, he soon showed up and we set off back towards the river, cutting a track which will be used for further investigation of this area. David zigg-zagged across the track and eventually located another hole. Inspection proved that a ladder would be needed and as we hadn't bothered to bring one, this will be left until our next trip. We finally emerged at the top of a cliff face and after checking for holes (nothing there), we reached the river, a short distance downstream from the flood crossing.

After lunch, (2.30 p.m.) we headed back to the Junee and Chriss Road. In Spiel No. 90 I mentioned having located one of two shafts due east of Cave Hill. This was the objective and armed with 18 metres of ladder and 30 metres of rope, we arrived at the shaft. The ladder was rigged and David volunteered to make the descent with yours truly acting as belay. David made contact with a steeply sloping floor after about 10 metres and announced that it went down. He continued on down until his faint voice called out that he'd run out of ladder. A further drop of about 4-5 metres was noted at this point. On surfacing David told us that the hole appeared to stop at about 25 metres but there is a slight possibility of it continuing as he could not see below the slight ledge above the 4-5 metre drop. He expressed the wish to return at a later date with more ladder. This hole was then numbered JF 58.

Coffee and biscuits were consumed at Max's before we set out for home, arriving back about 7.00 p.m. Once again a profitable day's caving was enjoyed by all and thanks go to Mrs. Jeffries for the cuppa.

Laurie Moody.

Marble Hill - 13/6/74.

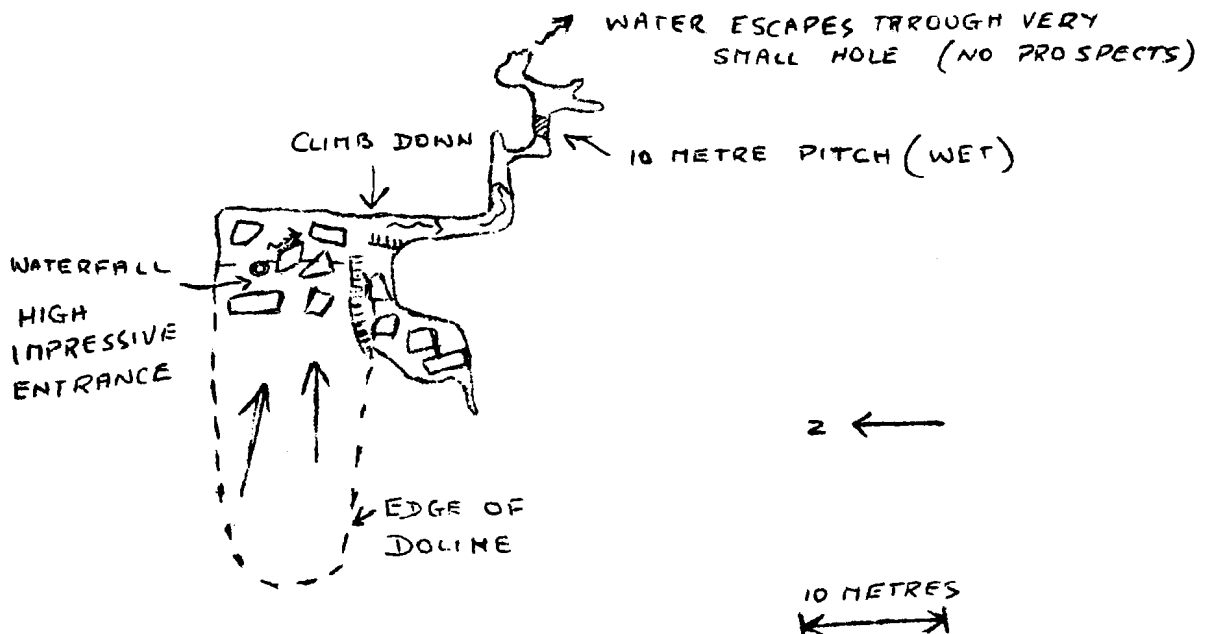
Party: Peter Shaw, Stuart Nicholas, John Richardson, Peter Reynolds Andrew and Ros Skinner.

Under blue skies we laboured up the track past the quarry to the saddle above Exit. An hour and a half from the cars we reached the first caves on the track down the south side of the hill. Here we turned eastwards off the track while Andrew and Ros went off to number holes. After a lot of mucking about, we found the big, dry valley and headed up towards the object of our trip, a large impressive entrance found by Brian and Noel. Just before this cave we noticed several promising looking smaller holes, one of which was draughting quite well.

After sorting out the gear we discovered we had three sets of Jumars between four. We had brought to the cave two 60 metre ropes and three 20 metre ropes. As we wanted to be on our way back up the hill by dark, I decided to leave one of the 60 metre ropes outside. We headed off into the cave, climbing down a rift into the stream passage. After a short distance we reached a short pitch, ten metres and obviously wet. Open the sacks and what have we got - two 60 m. ropes! We'd left the wrong one outside. A short distance from the foot of the pitch, we reached the end. The stream was flowing through a very small hole which gave no prospects of opening up again. A climb around the roof of the passage was fruitless, so we headed out. The pitch proved to be a good initiation into vertical caving for the two newcomers to prusiking, particularly as neither of them had a parka. There's nothing like a wet pitch for driving home the necessity of having the right equipment and technique. Emerging

from the cave at 3.30 we headed straight up the hill, gradually moving westward towards the track and the saddle. We hit the main track just above the saddle and set off for the cars which we reached at dusk. Suggested name for the cave is Great Expectation Cave.
Peter Shaw.

GREAT EXPECTATION CAVE (Grade 1 Sketch)



Junee - Sat.10/8/74.

Party: Peter Shaw, Yvonne Collin and Albert Goede.

What better activity for a beautiful fine day than a grovel through the narrow passages of Splash Pot(JF 10)? How about Gormen-ghast you say?! Yes you are probably right. The aim of our trip was to recover a Jumar I had left behind on a previous trip. Unfortunately it was not at the entrance so we had to rig the entrance pitch and head off into the cave. Several hundred feet of wet grovelling later, we reached the head of the second pitch and found the missing Jumar.

Upon our return to the surface, we headed around the ridge to Khazad-dum which was taking quite a bit of water. We entered the cave and made a brief excursion to the top of the first pitch in the Serpentine Passage. Interestingly the flow of water down the main part of the Serpentine has diverted at the entrance and most of the passage is dry. The only water going down the pitch is the stream entering from the side passage above the top of the step across the waterfall.

After lunch, we walked down the dry(?) valley and up to the contact to JF 12, which was numbered two and a half years ago, and had never been looked at. It has a nice 60 cm entrance belling out underneath. A nine metre ladder was rigged and just reached the floor. It turned out to be a typical Junee entrance - no stream therefore no passage. It was blocked at the foot of the pitch. A point of future consequence that arose from this trip was the gate-keeper's saying that the barrier is not manned after 8 p.m. Could be that the Junee homestead will be seeing more activity in future.

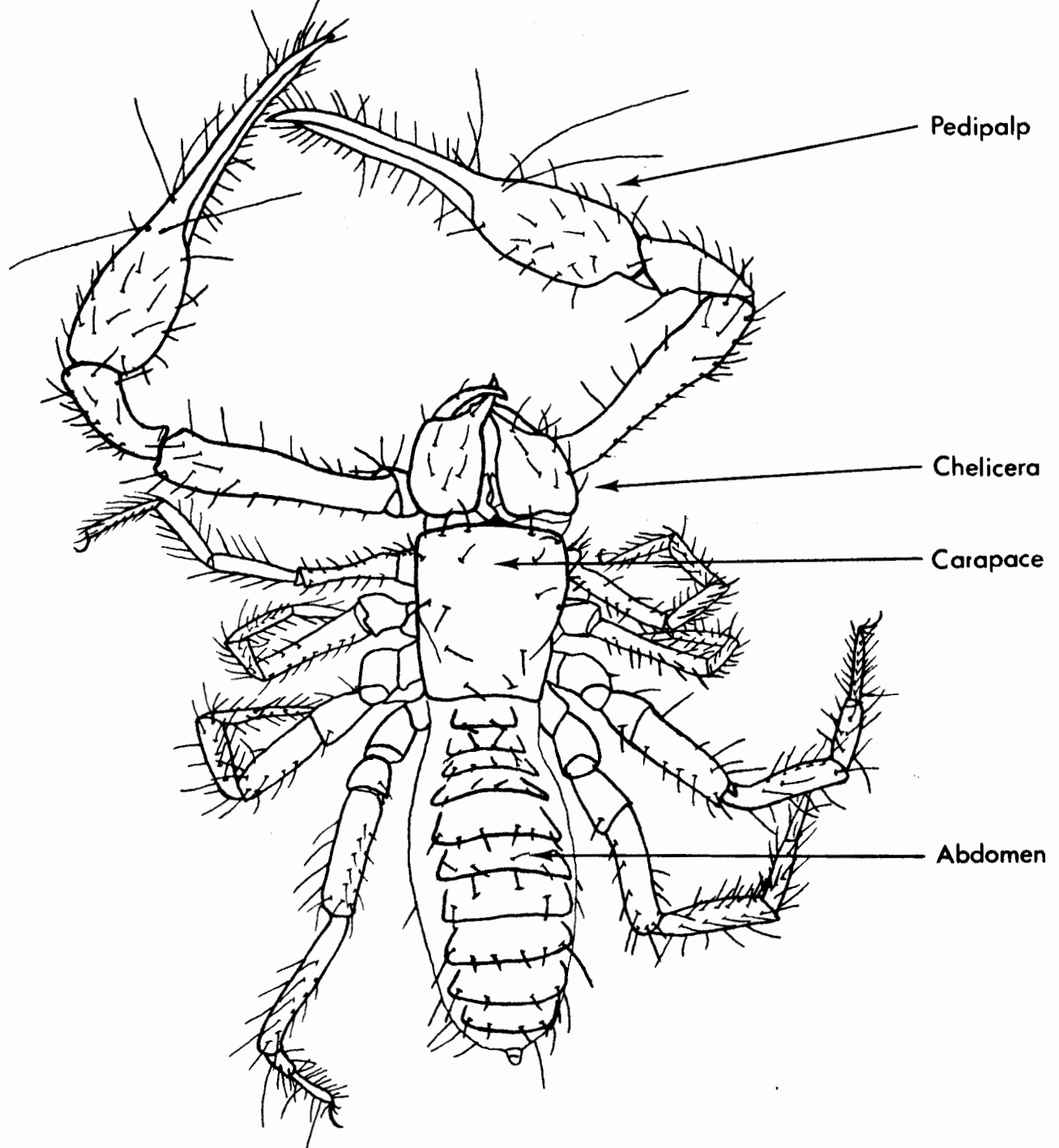
Peter Shaw.

Trip report of 3/8/74 - Floretine Valley will be published in the next Spiel.

PSEUDOTYRANNOCHTHONIUS TASMANICUS Dartnall 1970

c. 25 x life size

♀ Drawn by T. Goede



King George V Cave, Hastings (TAS)

Collected by A. Goede