

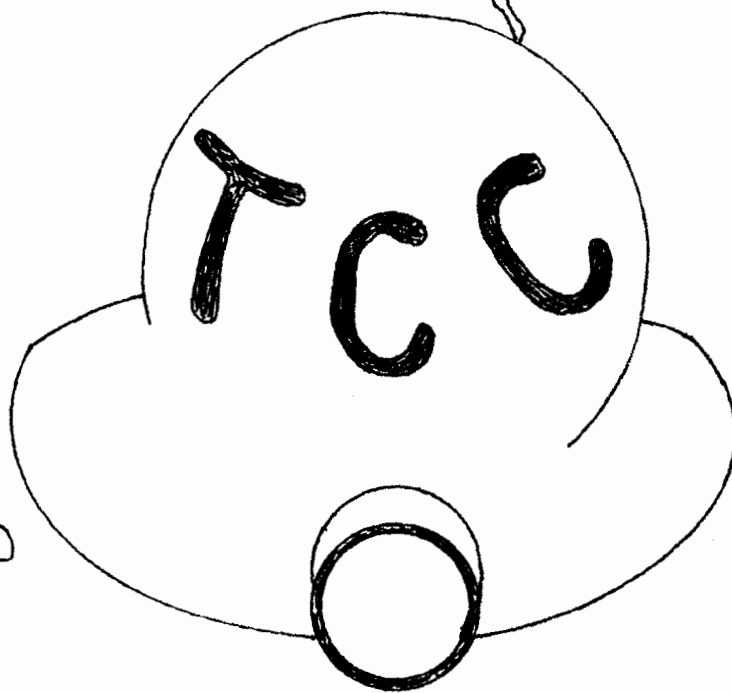
# **SPELEO SPIEL**

**NEWSLETTER of the**

**TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB**

FEB. 1975

**NO. 98.**



**T.C.C. Established 1946**

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President: Laurie Moody, 13 Mason Street, Claremont, 7011.Secretary: Therese Goede, 8 Bath Street, Battery Point, 7000.FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- Feb.15-17 - Exit Cave, Ida Bay. Leader: Andrew Skinner.
- Feb.22,23 - Mole Creek. Cave numbering and surveying in Croesus.  
Leader: Andrew Skinner.
- March 1-3 - Long Weekend. Exit Cave, Ida Bay. Combined trip with  
Launceston Speleo. Club. Leader: Andrew Skinner.
- March 1 - Saturday. LILO trip down the Florentine River.  
Leader: Laurie Moody.
- March 5 - Wednesday: 8 p.m. General Meeting at Brian and Jean-  
ette's house, 66 Wentworth Street, Sth. Hobart.  
Slides of the Cracroft will be shown.
- March 12 - Wednesday: Birthday booze-up at Brian and Jeanette's  
to celebrate Tony Culberg's birthday.
- MARCH 26 - Wednesday: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. 8 p.m.  
8 Bath Street, Battery Point. All members are urged  
to attend. Election of the new committee and import-  
ant business dealing with club management.

EDITORIAL.

Since the last Spiel several exciting things have taken place. The Cracroft Expedition was a resounding success. The area proved to be much more cavernous than the leaders had anticipated and instead of a trip to Mt. Bobs to fill in time several exploration prospects were left unfinished. Despite a wet start to the trip and the higher water conditions which turned the near siphon in Judds Cavern (C 1) into a true siphon a team of four wearing wet suits passed through and explored another 1,000 metres of passage. This included more than 400 metres of main stream passage terminating in another, much more formidable, sump. A large dry passage was found leading to a daylight hole (King Billy Hole) and Attila Vrana free climbed a difficult 18 metres to emerge on the opposite side of the hill close to the buttongrass plain.

Matchlight Cavern (C 2) proved to be another winner with some 380 metres of roomy passage and some very attractive formation including rimstone pools and a large number of long straws. The cave was completely surveyed and several photographic trips were made to it.

Two pots (C 6 and C 7) each yielded a skeleton of the Tasmanian Tiger (Thylacine). The two skulls were collected but

unfortunately one was damaged during the climb out of the cave. Both skulls were brought out for further examination.

Draughting Hole (C 9) has so far yielded about 130 metres of passage and a 13 metre pot. The strong draught which is present continues through a passage too tight for exploration but with good prospects for a dig.

The airdrop was a complete success with 100% recovery. The only damage was some bent tins and a few split packets of soup and dried peas. Several expedition members had little faith in the ability of the leaders to provide an adequate diet and loaded up their rucksacks with additional goodies such as cheese-cake and instant puddings. One even took a fishing rod along. (Where's all that fresh fish you promised us, Mike?) One thing was certain - the diet kept everybody regular and the only shovel proved to be the most popular piece of equipment.

The water tracing carried out at the beginning of the trip gave quick results. Three kgs. of fluorescein, placed in the stream sink to the east of the main divide, appeared in Judds Cavern only 12 hours later. - a linear distance of nearly 2.5 kms. It demonstrated an underground breach of a surface divide - the fourth to be demonstrated in Tasmania.

The only accident on the trip occurred on the way out. Joyce Whaite fell and impaled her leg on a spike and while the accident was not serious she was admitted to The Royal Hobart Hospital for a week. We wish her a quick recovery.

An exciting discovery of a different nature took place on a university field trip by myself with Steve Harris of S.C.S. as field assistant. The exploration of caves near Montagu in the far north-west for bone deposits first reported by Kevin Kiernan led to the discovery of a new cave with extensive Pleistocene bone deposits probably between 15,000 and 80,000 years old. The deposits contain bones of at least several extinct animal species and the Departments of Geography and Anatomy at the University of Tasmania are setting up a combined research project which is expected to continue for several years. Systematic excavations are expected to begin in a few weeks. Cavers are requested to refrain from interfering with any excavations in progress when they visit the area and on no account should any bone material be removed.

General meetings continue to be poorly attended and the February meeting only just reached a quorum. There was some discussion about the value of monthly meetings and the matter will be aired at the Annual General Meeting. Albert Goede.

CLUB NEWS.

+ Several club members are involved in Andrew Pavey's filming in Kubla Khan at present in progress. Earlier reservations about possible damage to the cave appear to be not altogether unjustified as two reports of damage have already been received. It is to be hoped that the film will be a success but one must question the wisdom of having large numbers of cavers milling about in one of Australia's finest formation caves.

+ Our president, Laurie Moody, is now on the phone and his number is 49 3316.

+ Plans are at present being considered for the formation of a branch of TCC at Maydena where about half a dozen people are at present interested in caving.

+ At the February Meeting the Speleo Spiel editor was deemed to have resigned and Albert Goede was nominated to hold the position until the Annual General Meeting.

+ A plan was suggested to celebrate the one hundredth issue of Speleo Spiel in April with a special centenary publication. Any suggestions and contributions would be welcomed by the editor.

+ Peter Shaw's private address is now 434A Nelson Road, Mt. Nelson. His postal address has not changed.

New Species Discovered in Exit Cave.

Two Japanese speleologists, both zoologists, who visited the state in the second half of December discovered at least one new species. Yoshinobu Morimoto, who is a specialist on a group of small crustaceans known as Bathynellids, discovered a new species in Western Grand Fissure, Exit Cave, which may belong to the genus Atopobathynella. The animals are extremely small and barely visible to the naked eye. They apparently live in water in the spaces between sand grains making up the bank of the stream. They were collected by digging a hole in the sand and passing the water that accumulated through a plankton net. Bathynellids are widely found in groundwater and caves in the Northern Hemisphere but this is believed to be the first cave record of this family from Australia.

The two zoologists spent four of their nine days in Tasmania visiting caves. Two days were spent in Exit Cave and one each in Cashion Ck. Cave, Florentine Valley and Scotts Cave, Mole Creek. Shun-Ichi Ueno, who is a specialist on cave beetles, was very successful in collecting good series of four of Tasmania's cave beetles. This included six specimens of Goedetrechus mendumae, a rare completely blind beetle known from only five specimens up till now, collected in the vicinity of Keller's Squeeze. The known distribution was extended throughout the western Grand Fissure.

Albert Goede.

Tasmanian Environment Centre.

Notice has been received of their change of address. They are now at 102 Bathurst Street, Hobart. Their phone number is still 34 5543. The entrance is beside Wallpaper Shop and all secretarial and information services are found on the first floor.

New Names. - Cracroft Area.

The following new names were approved at the last general meeting.

1) Matchlight Cavern (C 2) - Well decorated dry cave with approx

380 metres of passage located approx. 15 minutes walk NE of Judds Cavern. Named because entrance chamber first explored by match-light.

2) Skull Cave (C 7) - Pothole with several rope and ladder pitches. Entrance is three metres wide and 15 metres long with steep slope to first pitch at depth of 9 metres. No running water. Named because of Thylacine skull recovered from cave.

3) King Billy Hole (C 8) - 18 metre deep entrance to far end of Judds Cavern. Steep muddy slopes with loose rocks seperated by pitches of 2 to 4 metres. Large dry talus passage at bottom leads to stream. Named after King Billy Pine found close to entrance.

4) Draughting Hole (C 9) - Sloping entrance with strong draught at bottom of doline. Located approx 15 minute walk to south of main access track from saddle down to buttongrass. Dry cave with approximately 130 metres of passage and 13 metre pitch. Further exploration requires digging.

Cave Numbering Cracroft Area.

- C 1 - Judds Cavern. Stream cave of large dimensions with approx. 2,000 metres of passage. Little formation.
- C 2 - Matchlight Cavern. For description see "New Names".
- C 3 - Unnamed hole. Entrance approx. 1 metre in diameter gives access to 6 metre pitch ending in north-south trending fissure 1 metre wide and 3½ metres long. No further prospects.
- C 4 - Unnamed hole. Fissure 30 cms. wide and 2½ metres long. Three and a half metre pitch to gravel floor. No further prospects.
- C 5 - Unnamed fissure. Trends N-S. Twelve metres deep with ledge half way down. Chamber two metres wide and six metres long at bottom. Contains bones. No further prospects.
- C 6 - Unnamed pothole. Fissure type entrance 1½ metres wide and 4½ metres long located in small doline. Three metres down to lip. Two 15 metre pitches seperated by rock jam. Passage at bottom becomes too narrow. Skeleton of Thylacine found. Total depth 39 metres.
- C 7 - Skull Cave. For description see "New Names".
- C 8 - King Billy Hole. For description see "New Names".
- C 9 - Draughting Hole. " " " " " "

NOTICE OF MOTION.

A motion will be put at the Annual General Meeting that " meetings will be held quarterly until enthusiasm in the club picks up."

TRIP REPORT

Judds Cavern, Cracroft Area. - Tuesday, 28/1/75.

Exploration of the area upstream from the first sump.

Party: Attila Vrana, Peter Shaw, Brian Lefoe and Peter Downes.

After the rain of the previous few days, the steam was still about four inches higher than usual as we entered the cave with the rest of the expedition party, some of whom were to support us at the sump and some who were to explore the dry passages. The four of us were wearing wet suits and were to use 150 feet of courlene as a handline in the sump together with a lightweight telephone set-up for communication.

Normally there is not a proper sump but a one inch air gap which extends for four feet before opening up into a chamber on the upstream side. Attila had already placed a bolt on the downstream side for anchoring the rope a few days previously. On arrival at the chamber before the sump, Attila took the end of the rope and waded the fifty feet to the end of the pool. Here he made

several short dives before locating the position of the passage and swimming through. On the far side he crossed a pool and began placing a bolt to anchor the rope. Meanwhile, with one of the phones tucked in my belt, I waded up to the sump and ducked into the water in readiness. The water was freezing and completely took my breath away. It gave me an appreciation of what a feat it was for Attila to swim through that first time without a wet suit. With the phone on the upstream side, it didn't seem as isolated and we soon had a bolt placed, and the rope tied off for Brian and Peter D. to come through. The phone hookup organized by Bill Lehmann worked perfectly and would have been difficult to do without. With the four of us through the sump, we set off upstream, wading chest deep in the water for a hundred feet to a rockpile. After climbing up several boulders, we could see a black void above and quickly clambered up.

We were at the end of a long high chamber with the roof formed by the dip slope which disappeared into the gloom. After climbing along the rock pile, we descended to the stream and started following it upstream again. After wading for a while in thigh deep water, we reached a section chest deep with a low triangular roof which provided just enough room for our heads. A few more hundred feet and we were at a second sump. After some investigation, we decided that we would not free dive on sight and commenced our return looking for side passages. Just below the triangular roofed passage, we climbed up onto the top of the rockpile but there were no onward routes. Back at the stream crossing in the main chamber, we followed the eastern wall southwards and discovered a narrow side passage several feet wide and up to sixty feet high in places. This passage was followed for approximately 800 feet with several side passages which remain unexplored. We returned to the main chamber and began to head out. While looking for the route back down into the stream, we came by accident into a large dry upper level passage. This we followed for several hundreds of feet looking at all obvious side passages culminating in the discovery by Peter Downes of a second entrance, a daylight hole. Attila climbed up over sixty feet, the drop being broken up by several ledges. With the rest of us unwilling to follow Attila, he returned to the main entrance overland while the rest of us returned through the sump. On the far side we were greeted by Brian Collin who had hot coffee and cheese and biscuits waiting for us. Very welcome!! We finally emerged from the cave at 5.00 after 7 hours underground. A very worthwhile trip.

Peter Shaw.