

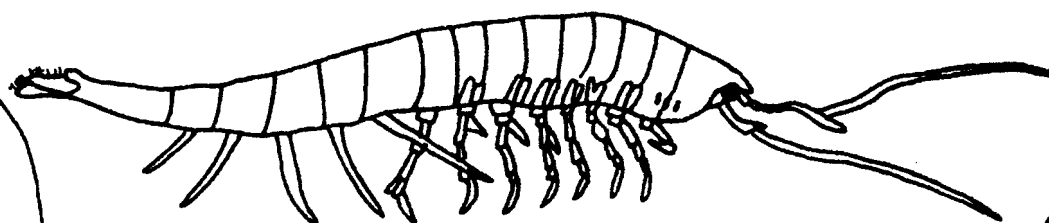
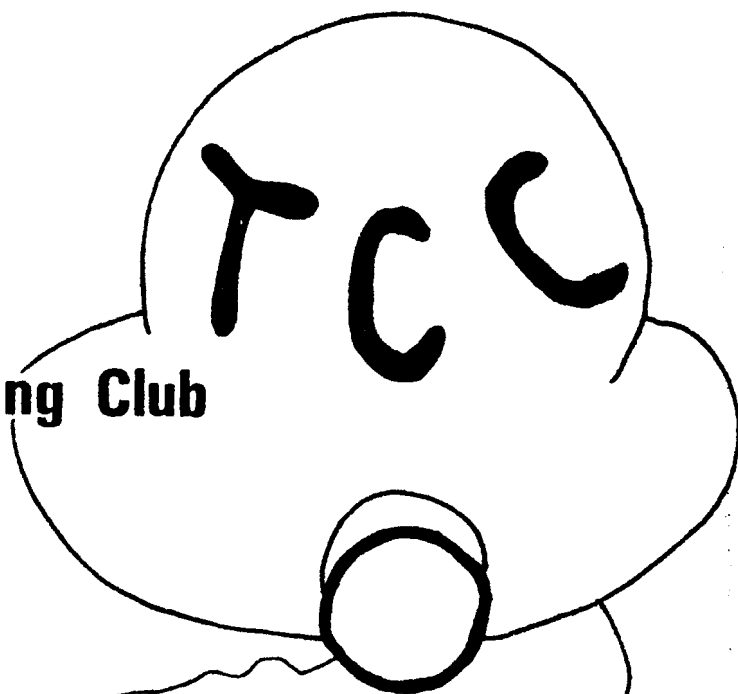
SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the

Tasmanian Caverneering Club

Aug. 1975

No. 104



Tasmanian mountain shrimp
(Anaspides tasmaniae)

T.C.C. P.O. BOX 416,

SANDY BAY, TASMANIA, 7005

Registered for posting as a periodical - category B

NOTICES CONT;

The Launceston Speleo Club 2nd. Annual Dinner Dance will be held at the Four Seasons Town House Motel on Saturday 30th. August at 7.30pm. There will be a four course dinner. Tickets are available from R. Kearnes or David Rigby at a cost of \$6.00 per head.

Accommodation for southern visitors will be made by club members. For any further enquiries, contact -

R. Kearnes, 16 Humphery Street, Waverley, Launceston. 7250 or Ph. 391037

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THE HUT.

Years and years and years and years ago, when I waded through my first Mole Creek cave, I emerged in the damp cold condition usual in Tassie. So I changed into dry clothes while the girls turned their heads away (I told you it was years ago), jumped into the car and drove home. A few years later, I went on my first trip with TCC-NB (now NC) and it was a weekend affair. Emerging late Saturday evening we headed for "THE HUT" i.e. building with roof and fireplace. There we dumped the gear - club and personal in heaps - walked round, flaked, drank, flaked where-ever - Great! Shortly after, several weekends were spent camping in tents - the small kind. We emerged, went to the camp, crawled, flaked and drank etc., crawled - on the ground! Definitely not up to the sophisticated standards of a hut. We had to be tidy, and neat, and careful. Sod that!

"THE HUT" was not always available, so the hunt began. First a rather nice house was obtained but the effort in keeping it nice was one hell of a chore and plus we had neighbours. Enough said! Then we got the use of an old house in the middle of a paddock, no neighbours, sufficiently rustic - beaut! Till the farmer turned it into a shearing shed and requested us to move. Finally victory! A three-room shack with power and piped water. No neighbours, plenty of firewood and parking, central - real beaut! We mended the windows (about five if I can remember correctly), built bunks, benches, scrounged furniture and put in big light bulbs. Terrific! One glorious weekend we slept eighteen (18) without everbody falling over everybody. Naturally the power bill had to be paid - 18 shillings a quarter (\$1.80 to you blokes) also glass, putty, bulbs, brooms, axe had to be purchased. So, a charge of one shilling (10 cents) was placed - per person per night. We were in clover and the owner - who had a sawmill, thought we had done such a good job fixing the place up that he moved us out and one of his workers in (with family). We could not grumble (out loud) as we had not been charged rent.

On with the quest! One member arranged for the use of an old house, way out in the back paddocks that was ideal except for one snag - rent! It was minimal but it had to be paid. A complicated but essentially fair system was set up to cover the rent, and this meant book-work, collections, notations, etc. What a bore! I'm a caver not a bloody book-keeper! Quietly the quest went on!

We had driven past it 1,028 times and one day, stone cold sober, I saw it! The old hut near Marakoopa. Enquiries revealed that it belonged to Roy Bayard. Roy!? We knew Roy! We liked Roy (We like nearly everybody at Mole Creek)! Roy is a "character"! He's a big man - with a big beard, a big deep voice, a glorious sense of humour, a keen observer, a bushman. A terrific fellow - should have been a caver!

"Roy - can we use your hut?"

"Certainly."

"Want any rent?"

"No - just look after the place."

"Sure."

So that was the formal part of the contract.

We moved in! Tables, chairs, beds, water tank, fireplace, cupboards - beauty! Cave guide a little way up the road to keep an eye on the place. We decided to keep the fee at 10 cents per head, per night. This was to buy lamps, candles,

BIG NOFL'S TASSIE TROG.Part Two.

On the Sunday, we washed all the gear, packed up and headed for Hobart via Caveside where we had a quick look at the Wet Cave and Honeycomb Cave. On the Tuesday, 14th. August, we set off from Hobart for the Ida Bay area. Our objective being Exit Cave where there is an extensive cave system. Arriving just after mid-day, we donned our packs and set off towards the cave. For obvious reasons the location of this cave is not given in writings that are likely to be published but I can say this, whoever wants to enter this cave has to earn the right by first negotiating the thick scrub, cutting grass and the first bog which is littered with fallen trees but still somewhat easier than the second.

After passing through a clump of ti-trees, we entered the hardest part of the walk - the second bog! A real nightmare! You sink in mud up to the knees after breaking the ice on top of the water. This section of the track is fast becoming a little stream. Up to this point of time, I had tripped three times and the weight of my 100 lb. pack was not helping me at all. Finally, we reached the entrance, one and three quarter hours after leaving the car. Oh for a pair of wings! In May, I was prevented from entering the cave due to the water being too high but this time it was only twelve inches or so deep. Just inside the entrance and off to your right is a gate that has to be unlocked before a dry entry can be made. We made our way to Camp One and there we rested. I had only recently found out that Exit was the longest and biggest cave in Australia and now I was starting to see why!

After proceeding through the Wind Tunnel, we entered the first of the big caverns nearly 600 metres long and 30 - 33 metres in height and about 60 metres wide in places. In this cavern there is a high traverse above the river from which access can be made to "The Ballroom", "The Colonnades" and "Hammer Passage". The D'Entrecasteaux River and another stream also enter the cave in this cavern. Up until now, it had been easy going but ahead of us lay the "Talus", a large rockpile which had to be negotiated. I was informed that novices are only taken this far until they have had enough experience - a wise move. Anyone not carrying a pack can pass through the "Talus" in about 15 minutes but it took us about 45 minutes.

Emerging on the other side, we found that we were close to Mini-Martin, once the deepest section of cave in Australia. On reaching Camp Two, where we were to spend the next two days, I found that I was completely exhausted and was glad to get rid of my pack. After eating and resting, we entered a section known as "Edie's Treasure" which was named after the late Edith Smith who was a foundation member of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. This passage has a good variety of gypsum crystals and I was very interested as I had not seen this before in a cave. Leaving here, we proceeded into the Western Passage and to a higher level where we saw the "Devil's Stovepipe", a large aven similar to Mini-Martin but its height was unknown. I was duly informed that there are 47 known avens in the cave itself. Slides were taken before returning to the camp. The following day, we set off upstream through a long section of cave that is just river passage. Before long, we encountered another rockpile which had to be traversed over the top and as we were travelling light it was not too difficult. Soon we reached the Grand Fissure and again rested. Some photographs were taken before we made our way to Conference Concourse which was found during the 1971 Conference.

From this point we made our way to an area known as the "Last Straw" which is supposedly not far from the abandoned limestone quarry. Here we saw the skeleton of a possum which indicated that we were not far from the surface but this has yet to be proved. There is a small stream running through this section which comes out of a rockpile which has not been pushed very far as you would have to do so in water. On the way back we came to an aven known as "Bill's Aven", not as big as the others but just as impressive. The flowstone at the bottom of this aven looks like big round blocks of cheese which have been piled on top of each other to form terraces. Here once again I noticed that the decorations are not solidly covered, but are covered by a thick 'paste'. Can anyone explain why this occurs? In the early part of the cave the formations have been broken down by bacteria into "moon-milch" but this section is quite some distance away. The Grand Fissure is enormous in all directions and is also very well decorated with

calcite and gypsum. We took nearly 2½ hours to photograph this area. Arriving back at Camp Two, we had a feed and collapsed inside our sleeping bags after being away for 11½ hours. On the Thursday, I awoke at 7.30am and after obeying the call of nature, went back to sleep. I awoke again at 9.30am had a feed and then discovered that my watch had stopped. We decided to add two hours until we got back to civilisation. The party adjourned to Camp One for the Thursday night and en route near Mini-Martin, we could smell the cooking that we had done an hour before apparently being drawn up to the surface via this shaft.

On reaching Camp One, some time was spent attempting to photograph the glow-worms. We then proceeded towards the entrance and being unable to see any daylight, again advanced my watch a further two hours. We then set up our cameras and photographed the entrance cavern before working our way back to Camp One.

From here, we proceeded to the "Colonnades", a high section of the big cavern on the right hand side approximately 20 metres above the river. This is the smallest of the three caves that branch off this cavern. There is a defined track through this section as well as in "Hammer Passage" and the "Ballroom". There are no massive formations in this section but it is very well decorated and the floor is covered with "moon-milch" that is very common in the first kilometre of Exit Cave.

If the cave is ever opened to the public, this type of formation will have to be studied in detail and a very comprehensive report made on the study. I feel that the guides etc. would have to state more than just 'the bacteriological breakdown of the calcite decorations'.

From here we then visited the "Ballroom" and this passage would be the nicest part of the whole cave and has the most unusual decoration - "The Pendulum", an enlarged straw stalactite that has a large lump of "moon-milch" on the end of it. It is not an isolated formation as there are others near it and also in other sections but it would be the most significant. "Hammer Passage" was then visited. It is on the opposite side to the "Ballroom" and "Colonnades" and has a lot more "moon-milch" on the floor. It extends for some distance but we only went as far as where the hole with the draught is. We returned to Camp One, did some more photography and called it a day about midnight.

On the Friday morning, we awoke about 9.20am and after breakfast, repacked thinking it would be lighter going out than coming in. This was not to be. The packs had become damp with the moisture in the air as had our other gear and if there was any difference - we never noticed. We set off from camp and on crossing the river where the D'Entrecasteaux joins, Andrew commented that the river was higher than it had been the previous night. However, before we reached the Wind Tunnel, we stopped and turned off our lights for awhile and had a good look at the glow-worms which were massed in this section. No doubt someday they will be the main feature of this cave and already they are said to rival those in Waitomo Cave, New Zealand.

By the time we reached the entrance, we found that the water had risen by about two feet and as we emerged we found that it was raining. We negotiated the crossing and took photos in this area before facing the long trek across Reeces Bog. We rested twice on the return trip and made the crossing in one hour and twenty minutes and was I grateful to see the car. After stowing our gear, we headed off to Roy Skinner's place at Hastings to have a hot shower. It was also interesting to note that I had advanced my watch too much - by one hour and seven minutes.

To be continued.

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SPACE FILLERS

Just because a rumour is idle - doesn't mean it isn't working!

A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children!

The following article was apparently written by Carol Eckel and appeared in the March edition of SPAR. It was reprinted from the Nittany Grotto Newsletter 9(7): 112-116. It is well worthy of a mention in our magazine and as very few get a chance to read Mainland mags, which contain some great items, I will re-print it for you.

HANDBOOK OF CAVE TYPES.

- 1) THE TROGLODYTE: Has an ASF number of about 100. Generally bearded if male, occasionally if female. Once every three years, emerges from caves to vote and tends to be a bit cloudy on events above the ground. Has visited caves all over the country - has his bloodstains in Khazad-Dum, his footprints in Kubla Khan, his clawmarks in the B^A-5 extension, shreds of his clothing in Mammoth Cave and his name in the Bungonia book.

- 2) THE NEOPHYTE: Type A: The Wide-Eyed Innocent - Shows up on his first trip in street clothes and a beanie, equipped with candles, a ball of string, a flashlight, a pocket knife (for killing cave dragons). Remembered extra batteries for flashlight but forgot a change of clothes. Usual highlights of ensuing trip include panic at first bat, painful extrication from deep pit, attack of vertigo on a high ledge, snagging pants on projection in crawl-way, loss of flashlight in pool, loss of shoes in mud, loss of beanie in fall down slope, loss of string around own neck. On trip home, wrapped in blanket, usual comment, delivered between chattering teeth, "G-g-gee, th-that was g-great! W-when c-c-can w-we g-go out a-again?"

Type B: Good Time Charlie - Appears for trip dressed similar to Type A, but a bit dirtier. Forgot candles, flashlight, etc., but remembered flask of Seagrams 7 in case of chills, snakebites, etc. Co-ordination is none too good to begin with and deteriorates rapidly under doses of said medicine; proportional use of spirits marked by loud guffaws such as "Jeez, I wasn't going to hurt that bat - just wanted to stir him up a little," and "Oops! Oh well, it was only a little stalactite" and "There y'are - don't my name look neat on that flowstone?". Generally concludes at end of trip that others in party were a bunch of deadheads.

- 3) THE EXPLORER: Is frequently present at the beginning of a cave trip but seldom at the end of it, having vanished in the first inaccessible crevice encountered in search of new horizons to conquer. Knows all the twists and turns in the wild sections of Mammoth Cave and has a vast number of cave discoveries to his credit, most of which 3 metres in depth 1 1/2 metres in length and a metre in width. Generally has some pet rabbit hole that he is certain will lead into a cave with a judicious amount of digging and/or blasting. Years after the excavation of this hole which has been stopped by an underground spring, a sewer system or a nest of furious wombats, he still can be heard muttering "It goes! I know it goes! We just didn't dig deep enough".

- 4) THE GEOLOGIST: Any trip he accompanies is bound to be somewhat rocky. Nothing mineral escapes his flinty gaze - he leaves no stone unturned. Has a passion for exactitude and takes nothing for Granite. On all but geological subjects, he maintains a stony silence. A real man of iron. Always attends the Annual Dinner where he never fails to get stoned.

- 5) THE NATURALIST: Can easily be recognized by a certain glittering intentness of eye and a tendency to pounce without warning on anything that moves. Is able to tell at a glance whether it is a cave cricket, is male or female, whether it has successfully adjusted to married life etc. Travels underground encumbered by butterfly nets, reference books, formaldehyde, specimen boxes and cyanide bottles for quick, painless execution of bats, rats, bugs, slugs, centipedes, millipedes, snails, whales and puppy-dogs tails - and cavers who aren't fast enough on their feet.

6) THE CLIMBER: Rates the worth of a cave as directly proportional to its verticality. Scorns anything less than an 80 degree incline with more than one toehold per square metre and is generally believed to sleep hanging by his toes from the ceiling. While he probably can't really walk upside down, he tries! Other people, more sea-level conscious, have to take on faith his enthusiastic reports of fabulous stratospheric passages, chambers and formations, although this leads to a certain element of doubt.

7) THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Can be heard long before he is seen - his movements are accompanied by the rattle of flashbulbs, the clink of reflectors and the clashing of 14 cameras strung around his neck, and also the mutters of "Let's see.... Tri-X at F4, hand-held for one second might do it....maybe Dupont SX Pan....wide angle lens in a ground level shot....try it at 1000 with a yellow filter". Has a camera for every conceivable situation - 35mm for small caves, press cameras for big caves, underwater cameras for the Nullarbor caves, box cameras for boxwork and a Brownie camera for leprechauns. Punctuates cave trips with howls of "BUT I WANT TO TAKE PICTURES!" Has also been known to burst into tears when a bat refused to smile at the camera.

8) THE ORGANISER: Aim and object of life is to turn a nice, comfortable, confused, disorganised bunch of cave gawking slobs into an efficient, well-functioning unit. This alone proves that he is insane. Can be distinguished by a military air of command, knife-edge crease in overalls and nervous habit of tapping imaginary swagger stick against imaginary riding boots. Cultivates deep, ringing chest tones for use in shouting, "Let's get this show on the road!" or, "Follow me, men!" and, "CHALLENGE!!". Has also been seen posing in front of mirrors with his hand inside his shirt front, which has given others in his group the idea of arranging his exile to the bottom of Khazad-Dum.

9) THE CAVE CAMPER: Here again there are two species, readily distinguishable by their lists of equipment.

Type A: Blanket(1), toothpick(1), toilet rolls(3).

Type B: Sleeping bag, air mattress, electric blanket, electric outlet for blanket, 3 caving lights, 5 helmets, 73 "Big D" karabiners, 15000m of rope, 4 sets of junars, 2 extra pairs of overalls, sun lamp, gas range, 108 piece set China cookware, trinkets and beads for trade with natives, Green stamps, comb, brushes, razor (electric), mirror, Valet, folding lounge, lawn mower, suntan lotion, portable bush toilet, food (enough for 3 months), radio, lantern, record player, the kitchen sink etc, etc, etc.

10) THE CON MAN: Knows at least 10 commercial cave owners personally, and can wangle free trips to their caves at a moments notice, and is famed for wheeling and dealing and working the books. Always packs enough paraphernalia to supply an African safari, but seldom seems tired, since he can usually persuade some poor bugger to carry it all for him. Generally equipped with the latest and most luxurious items of camping, caving and climbing gear, which he gets wholesale. His car is invariably the one that gets stuck, but a few whispers in carefully selected ears always produces many volunteers to push it for him.

11) THE POLITICIAN: Generally has no interest in his own club, is concerned mainly with ASF and the bettering of his position therein. Has no time for actual caving, since most of his time is spent making plans to load the Board of Directors with representatives from his region. At meetings, can usually be seen at the back of the room, surrounded by his cabinet, stacks of lists, documents and memoranda, overflowing ashtrays and clouds of cigar smoke. Prides himself on always having the "inside info" - always attends the Convention, but is hardly ever seen since he usually holes up in a hotel room with other politicians, debating, finagling and passing the word. Seldom seen with mouth closed, except when caving trips are being organised.

12) THE FAMILY GROUP: Is usually headed by a pair of aging avant-garders, at least one of whom is determined that just because we're married and have all these damn kids, doesn't mean we have to give up caving altogether, by heck. They are accompanied by 2 - 12 juvenile delinquents ranging from five weeks to 15 years of age. These dash, scramble, stumble, trot, leap, climb, wallow, careen, stampede, swing, tumble, shriek, whine and howl their way through the cave, getting in front of cameras, upsetting tripods, moving survey stations, spilling carbide, getting lost and being sick to their stomachs. Their movements are punctuated by screams of - "Filwood! Stop setting fire to Susies hair!", "Leave that geo-pick alone!", "Put the film back in the man's camera!", "There isn't any ladies room down here" and "Don't swing on that stalactite!" Generally the group has the cave all to themselves before the half-way point is reached.

13) THE GIRL CAVER: Again two types.

Type A: The Suffragette - Denied the opportunity to parade with Germaine Greer banners and chain herself to the gates of Parliament House, she heads underground to prove her equality to the stronger sex. Disdaining masculine aid, she climbs every mountain, fords every stream, suffers the usual bruises and lacerations in comparative silence and thinks cave rats are cute. Takes her turn at belaying and shows no hesitation at being the last man out of the Big Hole. Underneath, however, she is wholly feminine, and suffers violent shock when she realises that the remark about "you fellas" includes her.

Type B: The Lily Maid - Discovered some time ago the charm, chivalrousness, virility, dash, and general lovability of the male caver; decided that caving presented the best opportunity for proximity thereto. Has no desire to prove her equality to men; quite the contrary - the ruggedness of underground exploration is perfect for setting off her femininity. Her shrieks at bats, need for helping hands (male) across two foot wide pits and quivering distress at ropes and ladders arouse protective instincts in men, and killer instincts in other women. High point of trip occurs when she is carried, twittering and giggling, across cave stream, usually by types 3 or 10. Usually fails to attain ultimate objective - permanent ensnarement of cave man - since general consensus of opinion is that she is too much damn trouble.

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TOLKIEN'S 'LORD OF THE RINGS'.

Many of our members have heard about or read about the 'Lord of the Rings', by J.R.Tolkien. This spell-binding classic has stimulated lively discussion at many of our meetings and it was from this story that the famous name that became a house-hold word in caving, originated - KHAZAD-DUM. The world which is portrayed in the book is known as Middle Earth, a place of sharp contrasts; it's homely, weird, gay, joyful, bitter, grim and savage! Despite the strangeness, we are able to connect it with the world in which we live and in some of the characters we are able to see our own virtues and failings. The story ~~can~~ and has been likened to the Norse sagas, medieval stories and Irish legends. In these, heroic figures struggle through their destiny with qualities of skill, daring and resourcefulness. Still, Tolkien does not always have us high in the realms of Faery but brings us back to ground as we plod along with the hobbits or relish with Merry and Pippin in the spoils from the sack of Isengard.

You meet some very interesting characters such as - Gandolf, Treebeard, Sam (a central figure), Aragorn, Legolas, Gollum, and Frodo another central figure. You hear of the different lands that are encountered on the search for the Ring. Rhovanion, Eriador, Gondor and Mordor just to mention a few. If you have'nt got around to reading the story, I suggest that you beg, borrow or steal one as soon as you possibly can. It's an epic in it's own right. There is also a long play record available with music by Bo Hanson. (Unwin Books, \$5.70 the set of three volumes). Ed.

THE HUT Continued from Page 2.

and whatever, replace them as they got stolen and "look after the place". We decided not to build bunks as there was sufficient room in the hut and associated structures to sleep a considerable number. The word got around and many of our Tassie cavers asked if it was O.K to use it. No worries. The word reached the North Islanders who wrote and asked if they too could use it. No worries. It soon became known that "THE HUT" at Mole Creek was a caving hut for use of any caver. Worries! We would turn up at odd times and find bods - complete strangers in "our" hut. No fights - but normal territorial feelings were kind of aroused.

The saving fact was always that the strangers were cavers. Many hundred over the 10 cents per night. Many did not pay. Most cleaned up at the end of their trip - some didn't! Stuff disappeared - probably not cavers responsible, but we had to replace it. Some people burned all the wood and did not even leave any kindling. Others filled the wood-box, back-porch and half the bloody paddock with firewood.

So now you know the story and the reason why we may have seemed rather strange and strained when you found that you were sleeping in Brownies' Corner when he staggered drunkenly through the door one night or on Hardman's couch. They were not being over-possessive. They just didn't know you were going to be there - and you just might be the pack of bastards that left the heap of unburned tins in the fireplace, left the tap on the watertank open, broke the axe and let all the cows out onto the road.

The NC have a moral responsibility for the hut. They may not keep it the way you would but most of the things they do or don't do - are done - for good reason. This has been learnt from experience. Nobody who has asked has ever been refused admittance, nobody who has not asked has been booted out - YET! So for the sake of peace and comfort - ASK and PAY.

Frank C. Brown
NC/TCC

Many thanks to Frank for this article. We have also received an article from Bob Woolhouse which also deals with "THE HUT" at Mole Creek - this will be published in the September issue of Spiel - watch for it! Ed.

TRIP REPORTS.

MOLE CREEK - 16-17/7/75.

Party: Andrew and Ros Skinner (TCC), Jed Butler, Peter Dowde, Penny Knox, Bob Woolhouse plus guides and scouts.

A large group of about 20 boy scouts and girl guides were conducted thru Pyramid-Spider Cave. Penny, Ros and myself entered Pyramid Cave with the visiting groups and proceeded along Galleon Passage. On our return, we were met by Bob's party who abseiled in through the 24.4 metre top entrance. We returned to the surface via Spider Cave entrance whilst Bob's mob prussiked up to the top entrance. We then met an SCS party who were about to visit Pyramid. Saturday evening was very wet and yours truly had his tent flooded at the SCS campsite. We made an early return to Hobart on Sunday morning.

Andrew Skinner.

IDA BAY. - 23/7/75.

Party: Andrew Skinner, Jed Butler (TCC), Tony Moscall (V), Robert Cleary, David Randall (visitors from a group preparing a tourism study including Exit Cave).

over-leaf -

Andrew Skinner.

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Andrew Skinner.

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However, Steve assured me that he wasn't lost and the hole was over the top of the hill on another ridge. So, we headed due east straight up the hill which was almost vertical for 280 metres then the same down the other side in reverse. This lead to an enormous doline but this was not our objective and we headed to a saddle which appears to bridge the gully directly below Ross Walker. We soon reached the hole which was hidden by high bracken and definitely a "man-trap"! Tim discovered this on his previous visit. It was now 4.15pm. and we were very

JUNEE - 2/8/75.

After some rude remarks about how clean Ray and I were, the trio headed out to change leaving Ray and I to remove the gear. Michael also had a look in another passage before emerging but it got so tight that he called it a day. Back at the cars, we decided to wash Brom in the creek clothes and all before his mother saw him but he put a desperate struggle and this was abandoned. We headed home for dinner at 1.30pm. and it is believed that young Michael collected a thick ear from his mother when she saw him.

An index covering numbers 76 - 100 has been produced mainly to serve as a guide to anyone doing research on areas or better known Tasmanian caves. If you would like a copy, contact Tony Culberg or Laurie Moody. The price is only 40 cents including postage. Get your copy now!