

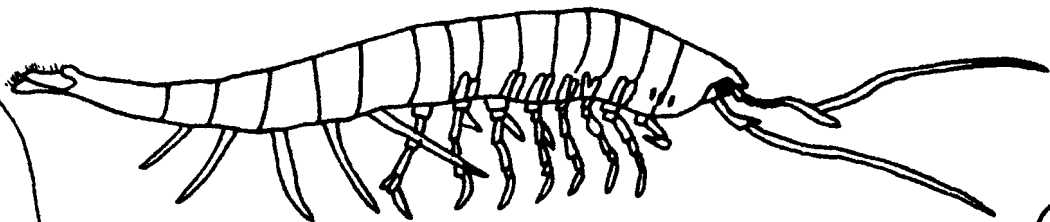
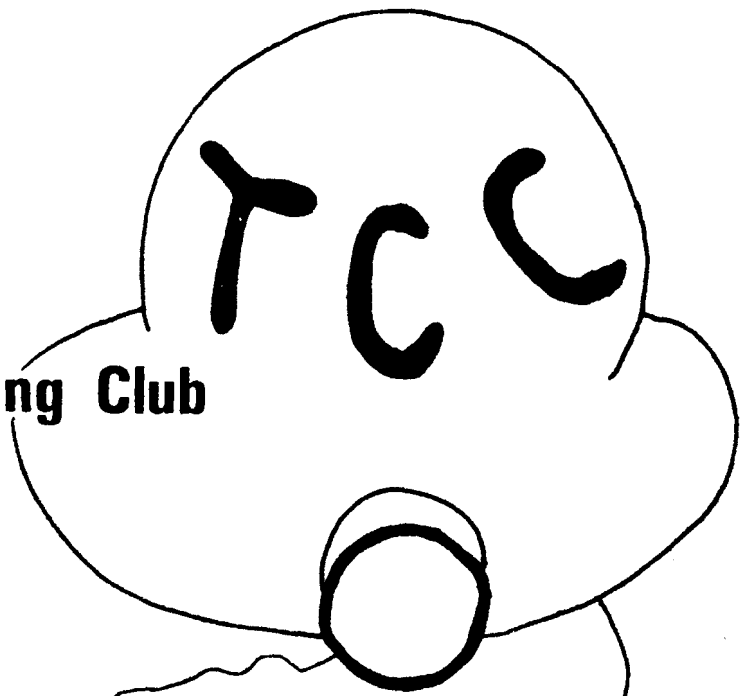
SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the

Tasmanian Caverneering Club

Oct. 1975

No. 106



Tasmanian mountain shrimp
(Anaspides tasmaniae)

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

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FORWARD PROGRAMME.

October 5 - Sunday:- Midnight Hole - Leader: Tony Culberg.
October 11-12 - Weekend Trip:- Mole Creek area - Leader: Albert Goede.
October 13 - Monday:- Junee area - To have a further look at those shafts - Leader: Laurie Moody.
October 18-19 - Weekend Trip:- Junee area - Assault on the shafts below Wherrett's - Leader: Tony Culberg.
October 26 - Sunday:- Florentine Valley - Survey work in Beginners Luck Cave - Leader: Albert Goede.
November 1-2 ? ? ? ? ?
November 5 - Wednesday:- General Meeting at 13 Mason Street. Come and see his colour TV - book now!
December 26 - January 1 - Mole Creek & Leven Canyon - Leader: Andrew Skinner.
January 24-26 (1976) - ASF Committee Meeting in Wollongong.

Editorial.

Firstly, I would like to apologise for the error which occurred in the Sept. editorial when I mentioned that Khazad-dum was on a relief of 488 metres. It should have read 688 metres! Secondly, my hopes of locating some "new finds" in the area north of Bone Pit were dashed! Evidence that SCS have already done a thorough job in this area was plainly apparent. Oh well, you can't win them all!

However, the trip did not prove to be a complete waste of time. A brief inspection of a landslip area beneath Wherrett's Lookout on the Junee side of the Gap, resulted in the subsequent discovery of at least a dozen promising shafts. As a number of these shafts exceed 30 metres for the first pitch, it is hoped that a major discovery of some kind is in the offing. The relief is good and an assault on this area is planned for October 18-19.

On the whole, September was a very quiet month with very little caving being done. Several interesting articles appear in this month's magazine and will no doubt provide some interesting reading.

CONGRATULATIONS.

We would like to take this opportunity of expressing our congratulations to Delia and Michael (Tich) Cole on the birth of their son, Joshua Denis, on the 20th. of September. Delia was a member of TCC for many years until she went and discovered Mike in SCS.

Mr. Editor - Your metric slip is showing!

The editorial of the September Spiel (No. 105) indicated that Khazad-dum is at an elevation of 488 metres. This figure is incorrect and should be 698 m., based on a survey traverse from Junee Cave to Khazad-dum with Junee Cave at an elevation of 305 metres (1,000 feet). It appears that this is much the same height as the "newly discovered" swallet near Sesame. That is, if it is a new discovery. SCS have done a lot of exploration in that area and not all the caves that have been found have been numbered. Plenty of scope for a deep cave but it will be hard to beat Khazad-dum.

Albert Goede.

An apology regarding the above-mentioned comments appears in this month's editorial. A slip of the finger on the typewriter? No! Just a "boo-boo" on my part! LRM.

Change of Address.

Fiona Skinner, Flat 2, 561 Nelson Road, Mount Nelson. 7007.

ATTENTION - Change of Meeting Place.

The venue of weekly Wednesday night meetings has been changed. From now on, we will be meeting at the home of Andrew and Ros Skinner, 18 Nixon Street, Sandy Bay. There are also moves for Stuart Nicholas to take over as quartermaster from Brian Collin in the near future.

We are extremely grateful to Brian and Jeanette Collin for their hospitality and open house on Wednesday nights for many years. Also to Brian for his long and valuable service as quartermaster. His loving care of caving equipment and careful planning has contributed a great deal to TCC exploration activities in the last seven years or so.

General meetings will continue to be held on the first Wednesday of each month (excepting January) and their venue will be announced in the Spiel.

Special Thanks:-

Are extended to Roy Skinner for the way in which he organised the annual dinner. It proved to be a very enjoyable evening and over 36 members, including representatives from our Maydena Branch, attended. Thanks Roy!

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FAMOUS AMERICAN CAVE SYSTEMS.

OREGON CAVES, RUSSELL CAVE AND TIMPANOGOS CAVE.

The Oregon Caves are situated in the state of Oregon and the area which was declared a National Monument in 1909, covers 480 acres. The caves themselves are a labyrinthine series of chambers on four levels, deep within Elijah Mts. in the Siskiyou Mountains (part of the Klamath Range), 32 kilometres south-east of Cave Junction in the extreme southwestern part of the state.

The caverns were discovered in 1874 by Elijah Davidson and contain an interesting display of stalactite, stalagmite and pillar formations. They are the result of both volcanic and glacial activity, for the original fissures, made by crustal movements, were enlarged and decorated by streams of glacial origin. Calcium carbonate dissolved from the rock by the water was re-deposited in other places where the water was subject to evaporation. Some of the deposits have assumed grotesque and fantastic shapes, while others, especially the miniature waterfalls created in stone, are extremely graceful. The inevitable descriptive names which have been applied to various parts of the caverns include - Paradise Lost, Ghost Chamber, Neptune's Grotto, Joaquin Millers Chapel and Stans Cradle. The caverns

SOME SOUTH AFRICAN CAVES.

by Albert Goeds.

At the end of July, I went to South Africa for some ten days to attend the First International Symposium on Cave Biology and Cave Palaeontology at a place called Oudtshoorn and to present a joint paper with Peter Murray on the cave bone deposits at Montagu in North-West Tasmania. A report on the symposium will be presented in the ASF Newsletter in the near future. I also managed to get a look at some of the country's caves.

I arrived in Johannesburg on Thursday, 31st July, and was met at the airport by two Australian cavers. One was Dave Hawk, a member of CEGSA, who is spending a year in South Africa studying for a higher degree (M.Sc.) at the University of Witwatersrand - the topic of his study concerns the evolution of some caves in the Transvaal. The other was Imans Kavalieris - a former caving companion of Noel White and brother of Laimonis ("Kav"), who is well-known to many of the Tasmanian cavers. Imans is working as a geologist with the Geological Survey and is stationed at Pretoria, a city to the north of Johannesburg. I was taken to the University and introduced to most of the staff in the Geography Department including Dr. Margaret Marker - a karst geomorphologist who has been studying the caves in the Transvaal.

In the afternoon, I attended a lecture on Dr. Marker's favourite topic - caves of the Transvaal - and then visited the palaeontological museum where work is being done on extracting bones from some of South Africa's well-known cave bone breccias from such famous sites as Sterkfontein, Swartkrans and Kromdraai, which contain remains of Australopithecines - the South African Ape man who lived between 1 and 3 million years ago. These very old cave fills have become almost as hard as the original rock and the bones are extremely difficult to extract. Our bone deposits at Montagu are very young by comparison - almost certainly less than 100,000 years old.

The following day - Friday - we started the long drive to Oudtshoorn in East Cape Province, a distance of some 1700 kms. Apart from myself, the party included Dave Hawk and Frances Niven - a staff member from Wits University with an interest in studying cave climates. We arrived at Oudtshoorn at lunchtime on Sunday and after finding somewhere to stay, went to Congo Cave for a tourist trip. The cave attracts a large number of tourists and surface facilities are excellent with a modern restaurant and other amenities including a large carpark and beautifully landscaped gardens. The cave is quite large and extensive and including a new discovery made the previous day is several kilometres long. It includes large chambers and impressive formations but lacking the variety in colour found in the best of our Mole Creek caves. Also, in the tourist cave at least, most of the formation is dead. Another curious feature is that since the formations were formed, a large quantity of aggressive water has filled up and flowed through the cave partly dissolving the formations. This rare phenomenon has given rise to some unusual sculpture. The guided tour is a mixture of good and bad. Quite a lot of coloured lights are used - not always to advantage. As we arrived a little late, we missed out on the beginning of the tour where a dummy of the original explorer (Van Zijh) is shown sliding down a rope into the entrance chamber. In fact, we arrived just in time to see all the lights turned off and to listen to a recorded rendition of the South African National Anthem. The reason for this piece of patriotism was the fact that it had been written by a native of Oudtshoorn. His one time residence in the town has been turned into a national shrine.

At the far end of the tourist cave an interesting option was offered to the younger and more enterprising tourists in the form of a self-guided tour through a squeeze and a series of crawls, climbs and slides. Of course I had to be in it! The whole route was over very highly polished flowstone and remarkably clean. Even so, it didn't improve the good trousers that I was wearing!

On Thursday, following the Conference, I had another opportunity to see Congo Cave. This time I was in a caving party and suitably equipped to see Congo 2 - the extension that was found during Roy Skinner's visit to South Africa three years earlier. At the same time, some of the hardy types made a quick return visit to Congo 3 - discovered the previous Saturday. As this entailed a long, wet and muddy crawl through a stream passage (with continuous pumping to keep

the water down to a level where it is just possible to keep your nose above the water), I decided to opt out of being a hardy type! Besides, what do you do with wet and muddy clothes when you have to travel round with everything in a single suitcase?

Cango 2 was certainly worth a visit. It had originally been difficult to get into but mining operations by the Oudtshoorn Tourist Authority under the energetic leadership of the town clerk, Mike Schultz, had turned squeezes into very comfortable passages by quarrying away four feet of solid flowstone from the floor. Unlike the formations in the tourist cave, those in Cango 2 had not been affected by resolution processes and were alive, wet and sparkling. Really outstanding features are the spectacular and abundant helictites and also the large calcite crystals growing in some of the pools. A surprising feature was the occurrence of numerous bat skeletons scattered throughout the extension. Many of them were cemented into the flowstone floors. Numerous photographs were taken and a TV reporter from one of the national stations tried to take some movie film. In all, it was a very worthwhile visit.

Saturday morning saw me several hundred miles away in the suburbs of Cape Town struggling up a mountain near Kalk Bay behind Pieter Breedt - a member of SASA (South African Speleological Association) and by profession, an officer in the South African Navy. Although the climb to Boomslang Cave was only 1500 feet, I soon discovered that Pieter was a good deal fitter than I was. The cave we were going to visit is one of quite a number in the Table Mountain Range that runs from Cape Town south to the Cape of Good Hope. The peculiar thing about these caves, is that they are not in limestone. The rock is a hard sandstone and looks more like a quartzite. Not the sort of rock you would expect to be soluble in water but there are in fact solution features on the surface - poorly developed karren and solution pans. And, as I discovered in Boomslang Cave, the caves are true solution caves - not just widened fissures. Although most of the caves are not large, they are well-known for their cave fauna which includes quite a few cave adapted species. Whilst there, I collected some cave crickets for Aola Richards. I also discovered that the cave is one of the most polluted that I have seen. It is littered with empty beer and wine bottles, tins, wrappers and even rotting meat and other foodscraps. Broken glass is a major hazard. The fact that the cave is so close to the suburbs of Cape Town has obvious disadvantages. Name writing is another favourite occupation of the local yokels.

Although some local cavers are becoming concerned about the state of the caves in the Table Mountain Range, they have not so far done very much about it. A redeeming feature of the cave is that it goes straight through the mountain and the opposite entrance offers spectacular views of Simonstown and False Bay.

On Saturday night, I was back in Johannesburg after an uneventful flight from Cape Town. Having enjoyed the hospitality of Francis Stewart another SASA caver and his family, where I stayed for the night - I went out with Imans Kavalieris to see two Transvaal caves. The first was a wild cave at Wonderfontein to the south-west of the city. It was a dry cave with a complex network of passages in almost flat-lying dolomite. It's outstanding characteristics seem to be a general lack of decoration and cave life (other than bats). Imans knew the cave well as he and Francis had been mapping it. It was just as well, for I was soon completely dis-oriented in this two dimensional maze where one passage looks much like the other.

After lunch, we visited Sterkfontein Cave - famous for its bone deposits. As a tourist cave it was very badly developed. Until recently, tourists had to go through it with carbide lamps and candles. The cave lighting is of about the same standard as the average underground municipal public lavatory. The native guide explained in Afrikaans and bad English, the weird and wonderful things that can be seen by imaginative people. You shouldn't really have to go underground in Africa to see an elephant's behind! Not a single word was said about the bone deposits which have made the cave famous. An interesting feature of the cave is that it goes down to water-table. In the shallow water on the edge of an extensive pool, we could see small blind shrimps swimming around.

Afterwards, we made a quick visit to the small museum where some fanciful re-constructions of the Ape-man's way of life can be seen. Then, back to Johannesburg. A few hours later and I was leaving the country at 37,000 feet jam-packed in a Boeing 747 and regretting that I couldn't have spent more time in this interesting country.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S CAVES - as seen upside down through a fish-eye lens.

Articles about caves are published in some strange places. My attention was drawn recently, to one that appeared in "Traveller" - the travel journal of the Railways of Australia (Vol. 1, No. 12, April, 1975). If you haven't heard of this journal before - don't worry, neither had I. The title of the contribution is "Western Australia's South West Caves are among the finest in the world".

The article sports a map and three photographs. The largest of the photos show "stalactites and stalagmites in the Yallingup Cave". This masterpiece is taken through a fish-eye lens and printed upside down. This is probably an improvement on the original as many of the stalactites appear to have been broken off. In the photograph the broken ends appear as comfortable seats to sit on!

The connection between the caves and the Railways of Australia is obscure. Neither the article or the map gives an indication of how to get there by train although presumably there is a railway connection between Perth and Augusta.

The article is written in flowery prose. A geological explanation of how the WA caves were formed is guaranteed to baffle any geologist - let alone a layman. In Yallingup Cave's Chamber of Mysteries "the walls are decorated with myriads of pure white stalactites resembling coral and perfect carvings, while graceful folded shaws, semi-transparent and with vandyke edges, hang softly from the roof!" Well - it wouldn't do to have them hanging at all hardly, would it? In case you haven't heard of "vandyke edges" - neither have I! We always stay away from the edges so perhaps we never got close enough to observe one!

Augusta Jewel Cave has "the world's largest straw, a stalactite nearly 60 m. long, backed by four smaller straws of delicate artistry" and also "In another section a broad sheet of flowstone resembling a Frozen waterfall rises 91.5 m. above the still waters of a large crystal lake". It would seem that WA caves are modest in their claims for world records. Perhaps someone in the railway office had a problem with their metric conversion?

"The Yanchep park has a hotel and two guest houses to accomodate visitors, as well as a golf course, tennis courts, artificial lake and swimming pool". It is my suggestion that you camp when you go to Yanchep as there cannot be much room left in the hotel and guest houses after accomodating the other amenities that are listed.

Well, there you are! The article concludes by saying that "every one of Western Australia's caves presents a different kind of charm or beauty and there is no sense of repetition to the visitor bent on seeing them all"! It'll take a little time to see them all of course, so make your railway reservations now! They probably won't get you there but it will be fun trying! However, don't forget to get your latest issue of Traveller - "a congenial companion for those who journey far"!

Albert Goede.

NOTE The Editor would like to apologise to Albert for any typing mistakes or errors that may have occured in either of his contributions. My de-coding of the supplied hand-written manuscripts is virtually a fool-proof system but even the experts can make "boo-boos". Also, if Kerry Williamson would care to comment on the WA caves article, we would be pleased to hear from you.

NEED ANOTHER LAUGH?

Did you hear the one about the lawyer with a reputation for always crossing every "i" and "t"? He had his car struck from the rear by a woman motorist on a crowded expressway. He immediately jumped from his car with a Polaroid Land camera, took pictures of the two cars from different angles then produced a tape recorder and began dictating: "This is Fred Bloggs, I am on the expressway at 5:29pm. on Monday, September 23, 1975. My car has just been

hit in the rear by a car driven by!" and at this he handed the mike to the other driver.

"Good heavens!" she gasped. "I've hit James Bond!"

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TRIP REPORTS.

JUNEE AREA - 27/9/75.

Party: Laurie Moody, Stuart Nicholas (TCC), Max & Tim Jeffries, Johnny Miller and Michael Bromfield.

We arrived at the Maydena barrier at 9.30am. in high spirits and with our fingers crossed. After signing the book, we headed for Chrisp's Road and left our cars on the road downhill from Sesame One. We soon reached the gully to the north of this cave and in no time at all reached the first of the "finds" from the previous visit. I checked out the first but it didn't go very far at all. It was un-numbered. We then moved on and skirted the base of a small limestone cliff where JF 208 was noted, then around the corner we found the objective of our trip. It was rather impressive if nothing else! Imagine the groans of dejection when a metal tag bearing the number JF 207 was finally found! It was Volterra!!

Feeling somewhat deflated, we then moved down into the gully and while the others scrub-bashed uphill to the east, Michael and myself checked out another small swallet. It proved to have one sizeable chamber and a depth of approx. 20 metres. No sign of a number could be found.

Leaving Max, Stuart, Tim and Michael to check out another small pot, John and myself headed up above the ridge overlying Volterra but it was at about this point that the limestone disappeared. We headed back in the direction of Cave Hill, picked up the (one of) creek running down to Sesame and eventually linked up with the other party. So much for that!

Over lunch, we discussed the feasibility of investigating the big landslip below Wherrett's Lookout. Max had been there once before but had gone up thru the scrub. It was therefore decided that we had nothing to lose but our (my) reputation and this was where we headed.

Leaving the cars at the bottom of The Gap, just past Lady Binney Corner, we soon located the bottom end of the landslip which stretches for about 1.3 kilometres. We also discovered that the easiest route was via the small stream which runs down the centre of this slip. To deviate a foot either way off this stream meant that you immediately sank into deep, yellow, gooey mud - Yuk!

Eventually, we reached an area directly beneath the point of the landslip. Throughout the uphill trek we had noted with awe the devastation caused by this act of nature. Massive trees had been picked up and scattered like matchsticks. Mud was evident on some of the surviving trees, up to 10 metres above the base. To fully appreciate the force of mud and water that must have been released, one must visit the scene itself.

Also at this point, we noted a very interesting display of fossils on mudstone which was apparently un-earthed by the slip. Some are perfect specimens. We could proceed no further due to a small cliff and it was then that we climbed the bank and entered the rainforest. John headed downhill slightly and soon announced that he had located a hole. However, Max headed up to where he had noted one on his previous visit and John's was forgotten when Max hollered, - "Come and listen to this"!

By using the "drop a rock and listen method" we were soon able to determine that we had a "deepie" - no matter how unreliable this method is. We then set off around the ridge on the same level and in no time we had located at least a dozen shafts of which four were at least 30 - 35 metres for the first pitch. The pitches are mostly all free-hangers and should provide some good sport for those interested in vertical caving. The remaining shafts vary between 20-25 metres in depth.

Continued on Page 8.

TRIP REPORT Cont;

Gradually, we worked our way back down the valley noting several small pots. Finally, after negotiating a rather dense pocket of horizontal scrub, we arrived back at the landslip but on a much lower level. The limestone still continued to outcrop at this point. All in all, things turned out a lot better than we expected and the day was far from being a disappointment.

Laurie Moody.

NOTE: - I have since been able to establish that this region was apparently surface trogged by Kevin Kiernan some years ago and he also reported the existence of deep shafts in this area. Whether these are the same ones has yet to be sorted out. LRM.

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FAMOUS AMERICAN CAVE SYSTEMS. Cont;

have a constant temperature of about 9.5 degrees Celsius and are electrically illuminated.

Russell Cave.

This cave is one of the most recent to be granted the status of a National Monument. This event took place in 1961. The area protecting this cave covers 310 acres. Russell Cave is situated near Bridgeport in northern Alabama, and is a particularly fine archaeological site showing evidence of almost constant human habitation from about 8000 BC to 1650 AD (dates established by the radio-active-carbon method). The cave was excavated by an expedition sponsored by the National Geographic Society in 1955-56. The Indian inhabitants of the cave in the period of nearly 10,000 years of occupation were at a relatively simple hunting and food-gathering stage of culture.

Timpanogos Cave.

This particular cave in Utah, was declared a National Monument in 1922. The reserve covers an area of 250 acres. The cave itself contains a series of small exquisitely decorated underground chambers in beds of limestone within the slope of 12,000-foot Mount Timpanogos. The cave elevation is around 6,700 ft; it's entrance is reached by a 2 kilometre walk, with a climb of about 1,000 feet from the headquarters area on America Fork Creek. This cave is well-lit by electric lighting. Much of the cave's interior is covered by pink and white translucent crystals, which glitter and sparkle like jewels. There are also notable large-scale features - Chocolate Falls, the Jewel Box and the Great Heart of Timpanogos. Roads branching from highways between Salt Lake City and Provo lead to the Monument.

LRM.

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STOP PRESS:

Tony Culberg reports that a brief visit was made to the new area below Wherrett's Lookout on October 4th. One shaft was descended to a depth of 25 metres by ladder and it appears to continue - down! Tony went on to say that he was very impressed by the shafts and the name(s) "Perforations" or "Perforation Ridge" has been suggested for this area. A more concentrated effort will be made on October 18-19th. (K.D. - eat your heart out!)

TRIP REPORTS, TRIP REPORTS - WHERE ARE ALL THOSE BLOODY TRIP REPORTS??????

LATE SUPPLEMENT.

NORTHERN SPELEO NEWS.

by your Northern Speleo Ferret.

NORTHERN CAVERNEERS.

Hugh King and Jed Butler report that several trips have been made to Kubla Khan, mainly for photographic purposes. Jed has now left for Northern NSW to seek his fortune orange picking. At his farewell party, his size 14 boots were nailed to the top of a Hydro pole! Jed has visited Yarrangobilly but informs us that he was not very impressed.

LAUNCESTON SPELEO CLUB.

Roy Kearnes reports several trips to the Mole Creek area, including Kubla. LSC are soon to publish a year-book, including some photographs. A display was recently held in the Northern Regional Library featuring trogging gear and photographs. The second annual dinner was held at the Town House Hotel.

Andrew Skinner.

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TRIP REPORT!!!

MOLE CREEK - 27/28 September.

Party: Andrew & Ros Skinner, Tony Culberg, Therese Goede, Ruth Stephenson, Peter Watts (TCC), prospectives D. Cameron and P. Fullerton and students from Geilston Bay High School.

On Saturday, several caves in the Caveside area were trogged. Honeycomb I, The Arch, Pyramid and Spider Cave were visited. This took place before lunch. In the afternoon, Wet Cave was entered as far as the rockfall and Tailender I was also visited as far as the rockfall but deep water prevented access to Tailender II.

On the Sunday, Croesus Cave received a visit going as far as the April Fool's turn-off and the scaling pole was duly removed. A solid weekend's trogging!

Andrew Skinner.

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MAYDNA REPORT.

Max Jeffries reports that members have been joining together with TCC hods and doing their caving with them most of the time. Members are enthusiastic about the holes below Wherrett's Lookout and are expected to join with the TCC assault in mid-October.

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JUNEE HOMESTEAD: - work on the homestead itself is being carried out when members are able to find time and if anyone can supply materials e.g. wire (chicken), timber etc. let us know!

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CONGRATULATIONS are extended to Janet and Simon Stephens on the birth of their daughter. Janet and the babe are doing fine! We don't know about Simon though!