

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club.

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President: Stuart Nicholas, 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, 7008.

Pres.(Maydena Branch): Max Jeffries, 16 South Crescent, Maydena, 7457.

Secretary: Tony Culberg, P.O. Box 36, Lindisfarne, 7015.

Editor: Albert Goede.

Typist: Therese Goede.

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FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- July 9-10 - Day or Weekend. Laddering practice and caving at Maydena.
Leader: Stuart Nicholas.
- July 30 - See August 6.
- August 3 - Wednesday; General Meeting at 8 p.m., 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town.
Slides will be shown of South African caves and scenery.
- August 6 - (or July 30) Mystery Creek Cave for introductory caving trip with
barbecue for parents and high school students. Leader: Tony
Culberg.
- September 10 - Saturday: ANNUAL DINNER at the Bavarian Tavern. Pre-dinner drinks
at 7.30 p.m. Dinner at 8 p.m. See last Spiel for full details.
Please let Albert have your names if you are coming.
- December 3-4 - Weekend: Kubla Khan, Mole Creek. Leader: Bill Tomalin. There is
a party limit of nine.
- Summer Trip - At the July General Meeting the possibility of the Club organizing
a summer trip of approximately one week's to ten days duration
was put forward. Areas suggested were Mt. Anne, Precipitous Bluff,
and Cracroft. Suggestions will be considered at the next General
Meeting. Where do you want to go, and when ? ? ?

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EDITORIAL

The editor has returned from overseas and is back on the job. It is gratifying to see that a good deal of material is available for this issue and that I don't have to write as well as edit this Spiel. I ask all contributors to continue the good work and keep me supplied. With so much caving waiting to be done and with a resurgence of interest, judging by the number of prospective members, we can look forward to a more active period. During the past month caving activities have centred in the Junee area. JF 112 was 'bottomed' at a depth of approximately 70 metres although there are some slight prospects for further progress.

CLUB NEWS

- * John Parker of the Maydena Branch was elected as a party leader at the July General Meeting. John needs no introduction as his stirring work in locating new holes on the Junee Ridge is well known. His most important discovery so far is The Chairman(JF 99). Congratulations John and keep up the good work.
- * At the last meeting club members agreed to make themselves available twice a year to stick address labels on A.S.F. Newsletters. Liquid refreshments will be offered! Ask Laurie for details (ph. 49 3842).

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" FALLING INTO THE SWING OF THINGS ".

by Alan Warild.

(Reprinted(in part) from Spar 60, Jan.1977, pp 2-5).

Tasmania, 17th -29th of January, 1977.

Present: John Minchin, Alan Warild (leaders), Jim Caddey, Alan Vassey (BSA), Randall King (SUSS), Lucy Vassey (V) plus a few others who came and went, or live there anyway.

- the following is an expanded and contracted reproduction of the diary kept by

me while at Junee-Florentine and Hole Creek -

... 18th Packing gear etc., then Jim, John, Alan and Alan made a late start on Khazad-Dum (Australia's deepest hole at - 350m)

The 3 km. walk in served as a warm-up for the donning of wet suits and/or waterproofs and the rapid progress which was then made into the depths. With Alan V and John rigging, and Jim and Alan V birthing up the rear, everything went like clockwork. But while John and Alans V&I were rigging pitch 6 (1.5m from a waterfall) a scream was heard from somewhere up the streamway ..
..... rounding a corner on his way back to investigate, John was greeted by the spectre of Jim sitting in a plunge pool and half under water, blood running from his mouth??

Jim had reached the 5th pitch as last man, just as Alan V left its base for the next one. Nobody is sure what happened next, but apparently Jim clipped his X-krabs onto the rope and stepped off the edge. Somehow those same X-krabs weren't clipped to him. Being unable to hang onto the rope for long, he fell. But not before letting out a large H E L P !! 7m. lower down Jim stopped in the 1m. deep plunge pool - dazed, shocked and with a bitten tongue, but no other apparent injuries.

The remaining ropes etc were abandoned on high, and the entire party exited. Jim was still able to prusik, but not very fast and the light of day was seen after 4½ hours underground.

19th Jim was feeling generally sore but OK, so Alan, John and Alan went back to KD for a 3 man assault. The Khazad-Dum streamway is a superb piece of work, usually only 1-2m wide and 10 m plus high. Moving down it involves paddling, wading and abseiling down the many small pitches of 5-10 m. Despite the strategically placed eyebolts on most of these pitches, all but one can be rigged out of the water.

Sump I was reached in 3hrs from the surface after which quite a while was then wasted looking at the "Depths of Moria" (definitely not worth the energy). But without survey gear look was about all we could do. Apart from eating and making suggestions as to what should be done to people who find such grotty sections of cave.

Getting out isn't quite so easy as getting in. And in an attempt to prove this, Alan V managed to get his jumcr rig in an impossible mess while half way up the bottom (40m) pitch. With the help of another Jumar from below he sorted himself out in a half hour or so. From here on out things went well, the 3 of us managing to extract ourselves fairly painlessly. Time - 10 hours. (It could have taken much less time with only a little more effort and now we have SRT, it isn't as hard as it's cracked up to be.)

... 21st At the moment, most caves in the Junee area are being found by ECC Maydena Branch, with help from Hobart for actual cave exploration. This day it was a party of North Islanders out helping the locals explore their grotholes. and what Grotholes they were! Our one being a particularly nasty 50m shaft lined with loose rocks and stinking mud. With 53m of rope and 3 people already down, Alan V descended last to protect the pitch only to find a nasty cut already in the rope at the first lip. The stench at the bottom from rotting greebies was really awful as was the rock and mud fall which followed part of the wall collapsing. (this part of wall also had a belay point on it, and the whole lot just came down as Al V was changing ropes halfway up). However, because of a tight safety tieback, nobody was in any real danger. It was an extremely difficult cave to rig, and would have been much more easily explored using ladders.

As the first of our party reached the surface, the Tasvegians took a quick wiff and promptly decided to go back to Maydena! Afterwards, nobody could decide on whether the HOLE was A/ a vertical sewer B/ a grease trap C/ like jumaring up a dead bear's bum or what that suspicious looking can was doing at the bottom.
Time 3 hrs.

... 24th The closest thing we ever got to an "alpine start" saw John, Randall and Alan V climbing the rainforested hill up to "The Chairman".

A totally impressive hole suddenly appears in the forest floor. . . .
. . . . Our trip took 12 hrs and left Randall decidedly stuffed. This cave is

a sure goer, all it needs is more people down it for more time.

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"Publications available from the UNSUSS Library

The AST Newsletter is read by people who run spelcology.

The JSSS is read by people who think they run spelcology.

'Descent' is read by people who think spelcology ought to be run by another country.

'Calcite' is read by the wives of the people who run spelcology.

'Helictite' is read by people who own spelcology.

The Speleo Spiel is read by the people who think spelcology ought to be run as it used to be run.

The SUSS Bulletin is read by people who think it still is.

SPAR readers don't care who runs spelcology -

PROVIDED SHE'S GOT BIG TITS!

(Reprinted from Spar 60,
Jan. 1977, p.9.)

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CARE OF CLIMBING ROPE.

Anon.

Reprinted from Spar 59, November, 1976.

The best of ropes will wear or may be seriously weakened by misuse. Simple precautions will ensure the longest possible life and regular inspection will show when ropes should be discarded or replaced.

Do's and Don'ts

DO as far as possible avoid dragging the rope through snow or ice.

DO avoid treading on the rope.

DO keep the rope as clean as possible - shake it out regularly, and rinse it in clean, warm, soapy water if it gets heavily soiled. Wash out grit and glacial "flour".

DO let the rope dry in a current of fresh air(not hot air) after getting wet.

DON'T store a wet rope.

DON'T use heat to dry a rope.

DON'T store a rope near heat.

DON'T leave a rope in strong light for long periods, out in the open or under glass.

DON'T allow a rope to come near mineral or organic acids or alkalis such as battery acid, creosote, carbolic acid or lysol.

Inspection.

1. Method.

Examine in detail the complete rope, a foot or so at a time, in a good light.

2. What to look for.

EXTERNAL WEAR caused by dragging over rock, snow or running loaded through karabiners. Indications are a general flattening of the outside of the strands. Some disarrangement or breakage of the outer filaments leading to fluffing of the surface is unavoidable and harmless, if not too extensive.

LOCAL ABRASION caused by the rope passing over sharp edges while under tension. This is shown by a tearing of filaments, yarns or strands. Minor damage to the outer fibres and an occasional torn yarn may be harmless.

CUTS, CONTUSIONS, ETC., caused by falling rocks or careless use. This is shown by local rupturing or loosening of yarns or strands.

INTERNAL WEAR caused by repeated flexing of the rope, particularly when contaminated by grit. This is shown by excessive looseness of strands or yarns or the presence of loose particles of fibres.

CHEMICAL ATTACK caused by contamination by acids, etc. It may be shown by local weakening and softening of the material so that fibres may be plucked or rubbed off.

EFFECTS OF HEAT, in the extreme, may cause local fusing of nylon which would be shown by the presence of beads, globules or a hard glazed skin. Short of fusing, however, the effects of heat may not be apparent, but may cause serious modification of the internal structure of the material and great loss of strength.

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TE ANA-AU - The Cave of Rushing Waters, New Zealand.

by Pat Culberg.

This is not an official trip report, but as some may be considering going to the Caving Conference in N.Z. in 1979 I thought members might be interested.

Lake Te Anau is in the South Island and the town of Te Anau is the last town before Milford Sound. When Europeans first arrived the Maori name was already attached to the lake. The name was a mystery as the caves could not be found and were not in fact rediscovered until 1948.

The caves are across the lake about 16 km. from the township and access is provided by a fast modern ferry. I have only one complaint about the ferry there was no ventilation, so the trip became a miserable one for non-smokers.

At the entrance to the cave is a cafeteria where we assembled and were told about the caves, what to expect and how to behave. This was a good idea as it gave us all some idea of what we were looking at. Unfortunately it became obvious that the guides only knew as much as they had learned off by heart and were practical jokers as well. Thus we were told very seriously that the red lights were male glow worms and the green females and if you saw them chasing around you knew what was happening!

Obviously that was humorous to those of us who knew something about glow worms but less so for the stranger to caves. If you bothered to hunt around at the cafeteria there was a sheet with all the correct information about the cave on it, but it wasn't pointed out.

The cave is a stream cave with a noisy stream cascading through in spectacular fashion. We were told that this was a 'living' cave whereas most caves in Australia were 'dead'. There was very little formation in the cave but it did have lots of wall scallops, waterfalls, whirlpools, etc. before you got to the glow worm grotto. The managers of the cave have built concrete paths in places, not very artistically, as in one place the path obscures the view of a spectacular fall and plunge pool. In the long pool sections one gets into a flat bottomed boat and then the guides haul you along using chains bolted to the roof. This is what happens in the glow worm section which is not lit. You glide on the water in the dark looking at glow worms (no red or green ones!). The cave has its own generator and the lights are left on all the time. The green growths on the wall didn't seem to worry the guides at all when they were asked about it. Neither did they know anything about the Aurora caves further up the hill or even how much further the cave we were in went!

So if you are going to N.Z. do see Te Ana-au Cave. It is an exciting and interesting cave. Don't believe the guide when he asks you to take off your shoes and socks as there is water on the path, he's just playing a practical joke. The cave is beautiful and thus the lack of interest shown by the guides is very sad as the cave is being allowed to deteriorate (we could see this and our non-caver motel landlady commented to this effect) without any effort being made to correct this.

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SURVEY OF PYRAMID CAVE

- by Bill Tomalin.

Activities Week, in April 1975, provided an ideal opportunity to get a group of students into a working recreational activity situation. To survey a cave is demanding work, physically and mentally, and to combine a survey with a week's bush-style camping is an opportunity not to be missed.

Students choosing this activity soon found that mathematics was a prerequisite. Several sessions were held prior to leaving for Hole Creek to give some idea of how to survey and how to put results on paper. Use of a compass, clinometer readings, accurate metric measurements, details of food for extended camp-

ing, compatibility in camping, specialised clothing, efficiency of wool clothing, safety producers - all of these were discussed and where possible practised before the group left. Equipment was borrowed from New Town High School, from National Fitness and school stock. Transport was arranged through the National Fitness Council and by private vehicles. Two Land Rovers, one Minivan and a Falcon Utility were just (and only just) sufficient to transport 19 students, 4 adults and a mountain of equipment to Hole Creek.

The group left Kingston on Sunday morning and by 4.00p.m. had arrived at the property owned by Mr. and Mrs D.H. Scott who kindly gave permission for camping and allowed us to use their water supply. On our part, we set up camp well away from the road and house, and only the farm dogs raised any protest at the unusual noises coming from our direction. Camp was set up by dark and the first meal cooked over open fires.

The first (and every other) night saw a heavy frost by 11p.m. Tasmanian Devils sang to us from close by, possums yodelled happily above us and Nicholas tried to tape-record some noisy snakes behind his tent. Bed-time was between 11p.m. and 2a.m. depending on each person's stamina.

Day 1 started with an extended breakfast. However, by 10 a.m. individual equipment (3 light sources, whistles, high caloric food) had been checked off and the whole group headed off to the entrance of Black Shawl. I chose this cave, after checking with the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, for our survey because of its sporting nature. It is a closed system with a separate entrance/exit. As such, it is feasible to set up a system of check points through the cave, each of which had a waterproofed card with "Station Number" on it. As each student-group passed a Station, a personal card was signed and left at the station. The instructors could easily see who was ahead of them in the cave, and also pick-up any missing bodies. Formations in the cave are generally robust and infrequent so a minimum of damage is caused by inexperienced cavers.

The first trip was to orient the students underground and to mark the main run-through with red vinyl tape. We took five hours to complete the preliminary run, no one showed any signs of claustrophobia and only one showed any mild exposure symptoms. Temperatures remained calm (a critical factor when working underground) and I was satisfied that the experiment could go ahead with no danger.

That evening, surveying equipment was issued and checked ready for a start in the morning. Each group was re-examined on safety procedures and gear-lists. From here on, the students were on their own!

For the next three days, the cave had no rest (neither did the instructors) Mud-covered figures emerged from the depths, some washed occasionally, all sat around huge fires at night, grubby bodies disappeared at day-break back into the cave, nameless females had trouble finding the entrance! (then got themselves hopelessly lost when they finally did get into the cave), one group finished all their work then lost all their notes, a few idiots dragged protesting instructors underground at midnight, another high level cavern was found, students' manners deteriorated exponentially, someone noticed that a star disappeared at the same time each night (clever these students!!) and no-one complained at all!

By Friday a.m. the survey figures were all in, except Station 2. We were expecting Mr. Thurstan's mob to arrive that morning so everyone sat around soaking up the sunlight. Ten students left for Kingston at midday and the remaining 9 dragged in some fairly large trees for the evening fire. When Mr. Thurstans, Mrs. Gartz, one long-suffering bus-driver (Doug Lovell) and 30 (about) students arrived, the remaining troglodites couldn't believe that other students could actually be clean! While some boys re-surveyed Station 2 and cleaned the cave, four of the new arrivals plus Mr. Thurstans were conned into going through the cave, backwards! A very enjoyable trip it was with John V. confessing that he couldn't stand the dark (about 250 metres in!), Wayne Bowerman dragging a very large lump of crystal through 50 cm. gaps, Fransina V. rolling in every puddle she could find and Irene S. (cleanest girl at school) leaping, joyfully, into glutinous mud; and who told Mr. Thurstans that he could sing?!

The clean-mob left us at dark and the remaining trogs slurped coffee around a roaring fire, streaked around the camp-site and four, mud-happy nongs went back for a last look at the cave.

The trip back to Kingston was comfortable, despite Danny R. We met up with the clean-mob around Oatlands and arranged it so that both groups arrived at the

school at the same time. Parents greeted us with looks of horror, or was it resignation, as nine noisy mudballs returned to the bosoms of their families?

(The trip resulted in the production of a very professional looking map of the system. A photo-reduced copy of the original has been obtained for the club archives. Map FCC 131. The total length of passage surveyed was 1156 metres. This length does not include Cow Cave which is also part of the system. Although Bill refers to the cave as the Black Shawl to Spider Complex the club decided some years ago that the whole system, excluding Cow Cave, should be referred to as Pyramid Cave. It was originally discovered as two separate caves, Spider Cave and Pyramid Cave, which were later joined. The name Black Shawl was applied to the passage that was later found to link the system with Cow Cave - Editor.)

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TRIP REPORTS.

June-Florentine - Sunday 26th, June, 1977.

Party: John Parker, Bill Nicholson.

With great expectations we tore along John Bull road up to the start of the Kokoda Trail. The sun was hot and our enthusiasm quickly evaporated. 11.30 a.m. Eastern Standard Time saw two mobile sweat factories at JF 112 "The Slot".

JF 112 is a typical Parker hole - deep and grotty. Approx 60-65 metres was pushed down to a potential belay station where we ran out of ladders. The Pot still goes but dramatically narrows down to 30 cm. in parts, a stone was dropped, it hit the deck 8 seconds later. At least another 30 metres can be pushed but will that thirty metres take us into JF 99?

JF 110 "Victory '75" is only 200 metres away and the Chairman is about 10 - 15 minutes away also.

The Pot was left rigged, minus the rope.

Bill Nicholson.

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June-Florentine - Saturday, 2nd July, 1977.

Party: Stuart Nicholas and Bill Nicholson.

During the week prior to this trip tales of huge pitches with fifteen second stone drops were related to me by Bill. This kind of talk obviously needed further investigation.

Arriving at Maydena somewhat late owing to a minor problem with the car, I found that Bill and myself were the only starters for the trip to JF 112. (unofficially called The Slot) which was already partly rigged. An hour or so later we arrived at JF 110 (whoops, wrong cave!) and then back-tracked to the cave in question. The entrance, and in fact most of the first pitch is a slot about 0.5m wide and nearly vertical with our progress being to the S.W. Negotiation of this pitch was relatively straightforward but drama was to follow!

The second pitch starts only 4 or 5 m. from the foot of the first (sounds like Dwarfrowdelf) and with dropped stones rumbling on for a considerable time. The cave looked quite promising. Not to be! A large mound of ladder was lowered down the pitch. With great expectations I climbed down a metre or so for a preview, where-upon most of the solid-looking material at the top of the pitch fell away. This resulted in some damage to two of the ladders and a dampened enthusiasm for the cave. After further minor gardening operations, Bill descended about 10 m. to a point where the pitch became too narrow to follow.

A couple of hours later we emerged on the surface to face the prospect of carrying fourteen ladders plus our personal gear back along the "Kokoda Trail". Only ten minutes or so from the cave we met Anne and John who relieved us of some of our load, an act which we greatly appreciated.

Estimated depth is around 70 m. with some small (in more ways than one) prospects for further exploration, after more extensive gardening at the top of the second pitch.

Stuart Nicholas.

MAYDENA BRANCH REPORT.

Area - Coal River. 4th June, 1977.

Party: Max Jeffries, Anne Annan and John Parker.

Yet another assault on the Coal River area. The Coal River is shown on some of the ANM maps as disappearing underground somewhere before it would reach the Florentine, suggesting a possible river cave.

On this trip we set off from the Pagoda and walked along the Florentine and to cut a long story short we discovered that the Coal River does not in fact go underground but flows into the Florentine roughly opposite Manning Road. We did pass over one interesting limestone ridge and found a small cave.

Area - Florentine. 12th June, 1977.

Party: Max Jeffries, Bill Nicholson, Anne Annan, Roy Skinner, Bruce McIntosh and a group of 14 students from Hobart Matric.

First stop was at a small cave in No.11 Road, reported by a bushman a few weeks previously. This turned out to be an interesting little cave, containing some old formation and approx 35 m. of passage. About 2 hrs. was spent here, every possible lead was pushed by the enthusiastic matric students.

Next we drove to the Pagoda for a quick lunch, after which we headed off for Beginners Luck, where we spent another two hours. Not everyone appreciated the long crawl - but, that's caving!

Altogether a very enjoyable day - marred only by the fact that some of the students showed a marked lack of respect for borrowed caving equipment - but hopefully this was through ignorance and will not happen in the future.

Area - Junece. 26th June, 1977.

Party: John Parker and Bill Nicholson.

This trip was organised to further explore "The Slot", a deep fissure in the vicinity of JP 110 (Victory '75). This cave was partly explored by John last year and he has been eager to get up there again ever since. This time John and Bill descended to an approx. depth of 70 m. and report that the cave appears to contain a lot more depth, but probably narrows off.

Another trip was planned for the following weekend and the cave was left rigged.

Training Day - 9th July, 1977 Area - Dewhurst Quarry.

Party: Bill Nicholson, Stuart Nicholas, Max Jeffries, Therese Goede, Laurie Moody, Anne Annan, Stephen Annan, Jenny Annan and John Parker.

After the usual delayed start we arrived at the quarry at about 11 a.m. Stuart and Bill rigged rope and ladder pitches from the top of the quarry while the "Comfort Club" got a pretty miserable fire going.

The day was spent practising abseiling and climbing with the assistance of Bill and Stuart. The pitch proved unsuitable for prusiking and we decided to have another day at Sphinx Rock for this.

Packed up for home at about 3.30, after which members were treated to high class musical entertainment at the headquarters of the Comfort Division of the Maydena Branch

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On the 29th June Laurie Moody made the trip up to Maydena to show us some of his slides. Thanks for a very entertaining evening Laurie.

Anne Annan.

Tony's trip to Mystery Creek Cave for August 6th will now be held on August 7th.