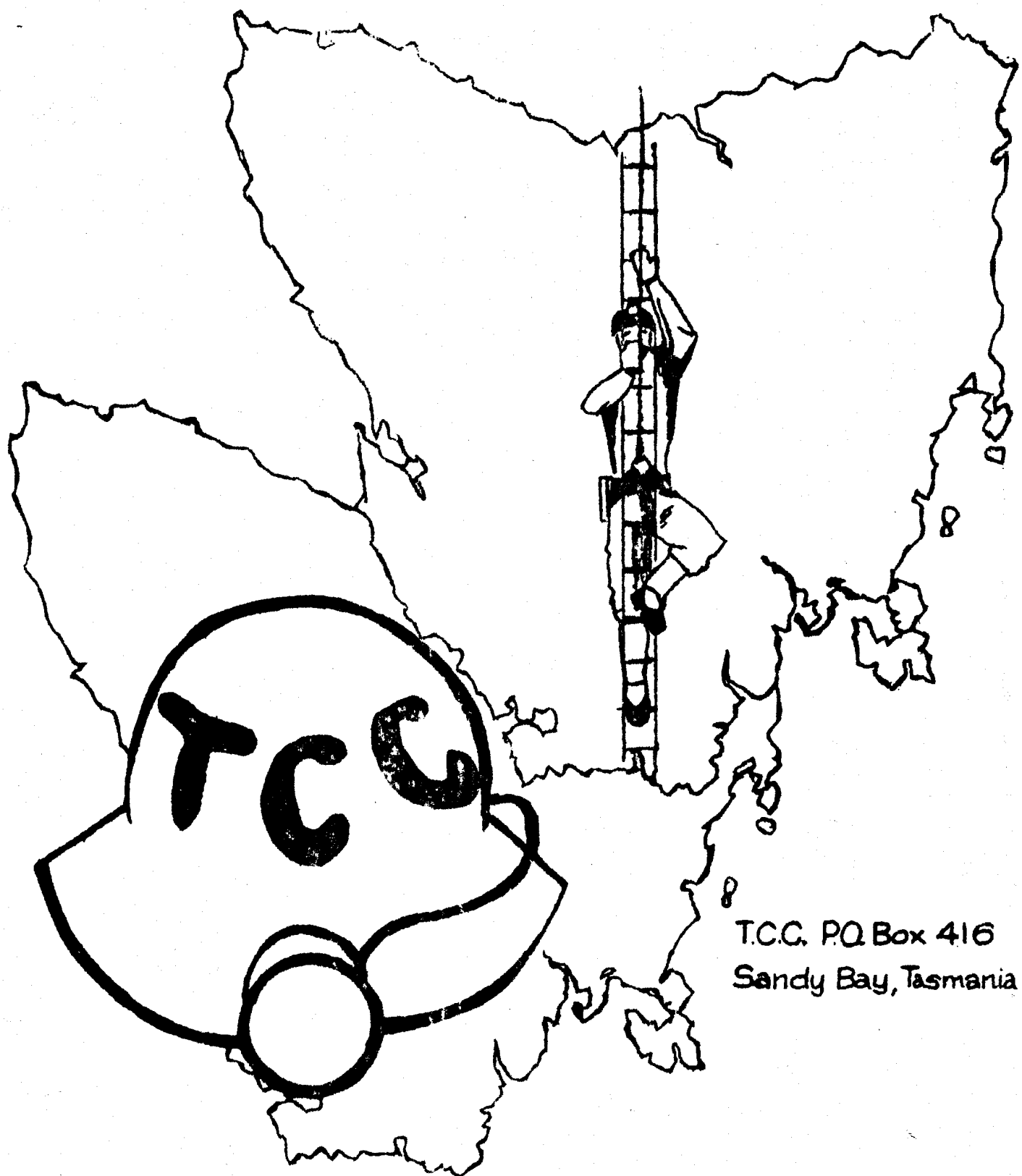


# SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

FEB. 1979 NO 142.

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FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- March 3-5 - Mole Creek. Get together at the Mole Creek hut for cavers from  
all the clubs in Tasmania. All welcome.
- March 7 - General Meeting at the Wheatsheaf Hotel, Macquarie Street, Hobart,  
at 8 p.m.
- MARCH 28 - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 8 P.M.  
Wheatsheaf Hotel. Hope to see you all there.
- Mid-winter - Hells Passage, Wolf Hole. Contact Ian Gothard.  
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EDITORIAL.

The successful conclusion of WACCON possibly heralds the beginning of a new era in Australian caving - that of exploration in difficult and remote areas such as the Nullarbor and Western Queensland. Rumour has it that Mullamullang Cave on the Nullarbor probably rivals Exit in length - survey trips in the next few months will probably confirm this.

Quite a large section of Exit has not been properly surveyed although several attempts have been made to complete it. Hence I believe that a major project for 1979 should be concerned with Exit surveying and exploration, including a number of shafts that exist in the hill above the cave. Everyone can be involved in this as explorers, surveyors, cartographers and so on, so let's get on with it!

On a completely different subject, the hazard of unpredicted rain was brought home to all of us when a TCC party was trapped in Khazad-dum recently. In this instance there was no danger but often wet caves such as Growling Swallet could present a danger if flooding occurred while a party was underground.

Good caving in 1979 and once again REMEMBER --

No more mate, you're DRIVING.

Stuart Nicholas.

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CLUB NEWS.

- \* For anyone interested (and we all should be) there is a St. John First Aid course beginning in February. It lasts for 8 weeks (1 night per week) with a test on the ninth week which, if passed, gives you a St. John First Aid Certificate. For further details Ph. 23 7751. Cost is \$15.
- \* \* The club has the opportunity to present a short discourse on our activities aims etc. on "ZR the music-maker" in the near future. This will provide a good chance to enlighten the general public on an activity about which they are generally in the dark!

- \* Charles Atlas (alias Mark Forwood) has moved to Launceston to take the Physical Education course at the Newnham Campus of the T.C.A.E. Good luck Mark and watch out for those Phys.Ed. birds - they're very fit!
- \* On February 21 Don Whillans, the inventor of those well known sit-harnesses and a very experienced mountaineer, will be giving a lecture at the Uni. Bill Nicholson has all the details so contact him if you are interested.
- \* The February general meeting was a non-event owing to lack of a quorum. Informal business was dealt with but other business requiring discussion and/or approval by a meeting will be dealt with at the Committee Meeting and/or the March general meeting.

General meetings are important items on the Club's programme so please support them by coming along and having a say in the affairs of your Club.

- \* Anyone finding a billy with a mug, spoon and packets of soup and so on in it, at the bottom(near the sump) of K.D. please return it to Stuart as it has great sentimental value! The remains of a rappel rack may also be found somewhere at the bottom of the 92 ft. pitch. Same goes for that!!

### TRIP REPORTS.

JF 137, Junce Area. - Sat. Nov.11th, 1978.

Party: Stuart Nicholas, Mark Forwood, Pavel Ruzicka.

On a previous trip track marking and surveying the Junce Ridge with Len Smith, Stuart Nicholas, John Parker and myself, John showed us where JF 137 was located. Stuart and I decided that we must make a trip down this hole. John told us that he had thrown a rock down and it had taken quite some time to reach the bottom. Because there was a considerable draught coming from the hole, and the chance that it might link up with the Chairman system no time was lost in planning a trip (4 weeks). Upon our rapid return to Maydena we once more walked up the spine crunching John Bull track and on to the hole. At about noon we finally had managed to drop some ladders down. I began to gingerly descend the rungs with the words on John Parker ringing in my ears - "when I threw the rock down it went kaboom, Kaboom, KA-BOOOM! forever." The first 10 to 12 metres was a sloping slide with much loose material of sizeable proportions. The slide ended with a overhang which drops some 30 m. to a small ledge and then a further drop of about 6 m. to a small floor. With the entrance being almost directly above this point there is no really safe place to protect oneself from falling rocks. At this point Mark came down with the ladders and we then set up a handline and crawled down another 6 metres. Here the cave comes to a dead end, mainly because of all the loose rock and clay which have fallen into it. However, we noticed one tight squeeze, and Stuart, who had been sunbaking on the surface up till now, was persuaded to come down and look at the squeeze. Mark and Stuart, not wanting to lose their manhood looked sceptically at the squeeze. We decided to throw a ladder down and I poked my nose in only to come face to face with another dead end. Unfortunately it appears that over the years the loose rock and soil have virtually filled the cave in. The sump is a rather large chamber of some 15 m. in height. About halfway up one of the walls there are 2 large rifts which appear to go for some distance. Unfortunately the wall is unscaleable unless a bolt kit was put into use. It was at this point that we decided to climb out, very disappointed because it did not provide easier access into the Chairman system. This cave is definitely a swine for hauling up ladders. The limestone has many jagged lumps which ladders continually become hooked upon. When we finally reached the surface we figured that the hole had a depth of some 80 metres. It appears that the cave runs dead BUT there is still that strong draught coming out so perhaps continued exploration of the two rifts may prove worthwhile. Any takers?

Pavel Ruzicka.

Kubla Khan, Mole Creek - 2,3 Dec., 1978.

Party: Bill Nicholson, David Barry and Pavel Ruzicka.

This is one cave that combines all the aspects of speleology for the pleasure seeker, photographer, scientist and the sporting caver, and is a never ending source of surprise. It contains many wonderful and awe inspiring formations from the Great Khan to the Jade Pool. This is definitely one place that every caver should visit (if he is fit) and it would no doubt be decided by every visitor that the sooner we perfect a lock for the entrance to prevent vandals and formation thieves the better. A most enjoyable time was had by all including the other party we bumped into at the Great Khan which had one guy claiming it was his 77th visit to the cave. It is a pity this number does not match his age of some 70 years less (see President for verification)!

Pavel Ruzicka.

The Chairman - 16th Dec. 1978.

Party: Bill Nicholson and Chris Rathbone (Ditto).

Sherpas: Peter Watts, Stuart Nicholas, Pavel Ruzicka and Len Smith.

After a late start and  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour of stirring from Ditto Bill led the first pitch at about 1 p.m. Three protectors and a short rope delayed our descent to 3 hours before we hit the streamway.

A short brew, umpteen metres of blue tape and 4 hours later Bill and Chris reached the last chamber so far explored. By this stage it was 8.55 p.m. We did no further exploration of this chamber or beyond because Chris chose this moment to dislodge a body sized piece of talus down a 7 metre rift putting our nerves on edge. We left ten minutes later back along the way we had come. What took 4 hours to reach only took an incredible 1.25 hr. back. Just goes to show what grim determination, a well marked route and an empty stomach will do.

After a brew and yet another brew we proceeded to jumar out. Once Chris was on his way up the 84 m. entrance pitch Bill tied all ropes end to end (uncoiled) to be hauled up afterwards.

By 1.30 a.m. and after 12 hours of solid knee stretching, leg pulling, hand scratching, rib bruising, nose scraping, mind blowing, arm jarring, hip dragging, and smellies (Bill had had 4 eggs for breakfast) we had a rip-snorter of a trip.

Many thanks to the sherpas who carried all the gear for us.

Gear list for JF 99 (The Chairman).

Entrance pitch: (84 m.)

91 m. rope (B.W.)  
2 m. header and krab.  
4 protectors.

Handline pitch: 10 m. laid rope.

37 metre pitch: 40 m. rope (B.W.)  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  m. header and krab.  
3 protectors.  
2 split tube.

Bottom pitch: 10 m. rope (B.W.)

Plus personal gear 2 slings and krabs minimum spares.

Bill Nicholson.

Florentine Valley - 23/12/78.

Object of the day was to look at the lower sections of Cashion Creek on from Cashion Creek Cave. Began where the creek crosses the road and almost immediately came across a number of passages in a low rise of limestone - these appear to be abandoned intake for the creek. Five individual holes in this area - but no prospects for continuation.

Next looked at a cave a little further downstream, mentioned a few weeks ago. Investigated a very low muddy passage with small creek flowing out - only

result being that I got soaked and covered with fine black mud. No real prospects in this direction!

From here I followed the limestone around the crest looking for a reported outflow cave in the area. After much slogging through stinking scrub I found the creek flowing from a low entrance. Got into the cave and followed it back through fairly deep water and loads of silt to a low airless sump. A few formations - but, a remarkable display of glow-worms throughout the length of the cave. Also a number of small fish seen in the water.

Nearby this cave two other caves were located, one with a large entrance extended back to where it gets too narrow to follow, the other consists of a low muddy passage full of wombat dung.

Is the club aware that a new manager has now taken over Don Frankcombe's position at Maydena? His name is Jerry Cross.

John Parker.

Stop Press. (28/12/78) - Quick trip out to area East of the backroad between Tiger Road and Florentine Highway. Small cave discovered near previously numbered cave, can't remember its number.

Further along the base of the ridge near the creek a large cave was found with four entrances - several passages leading off, a number of large chambers with formations interconnected by narrow passages - certainly not fully investigated.

Two other caves were located further around the base of the ridge but as my light had folded could not look at them. Later had a look at JF 61 - down towards the Florentine River - and also an adjacent narrow passage which contained a swallows nest complete with 5 eggs.

J.P.

Florentine Valley - 27/12/78.

Anne and myself, together with Jenny and Kali plus Tin-dog drove out to the Florentine Valley to look at a cave east of the connecting road between Tiger Road and Florentine Highway mentioned in the last report.

Leaving the kids in the first chamber, pushed on along a narrow squeeze passage to a T intersection - this was explored both ways. Numerous formation along the length of passages - together with considerable draught - but further extension will need use of a shovel. Tim, who accompanied us through the cave could not be coaxed to push on - though an expert cave digger.

30 Dec. 1978.

Drove out along the Hydro Road behind Mt. Lueller to the Weld Valley area. Followed the creek down for a considerable distance - only a few shallow shafts found clogged with mud and rubbish - rather disappointing, but when I get a bit more enthusiasm will have another crack at it.

On the way back spent a bit of time walking back along the old Port Davey track, in the process locating the shelter hut known as Damper Inn. The hut is still in fair condition - used my axe to remove several trees lying across the roof - will return later and put a new floor in the hut.

6 Jan. 1979.

This trip involved initial look at the Bubs Hill area off the Mt. Lyell Highway. Most of the caves located had already been numbered - together with a few other grotty passages not worth numbering. The scrub in the area to put it mildly is thick, but further trips may turn up something.

John Parker.

Westmorland Cave, Mole Creek - 6/9/78.

Bruce McIntosh and 8 HMC students.

This HMCCG trip was held in conjunction with Bill Nicholson's Club trip to Genghis Khan, the whole party staying in the Maracoopa Hut.

Westmorland Cave is about 10 minutes walk up the Creek from Arthur Claridges farm at Caveside. Flow to the Claridge property is made permanent by supply from a concrete aquaduct taking water from the creek before it all

flows underground. The cave is approached by climbing down a bank of decaying vegetation to the creek which flows into the steeply arched entrance. For perhaps 200 m. the narrow winding stream passage descends a series of little waterfalls (1-3 m.) all of them easily negotiable, interspersed with short stretches of waterworn stones. This section opens into a large domed cavern about 25 m. high with a bank of mud and gravel sloping steeply down from one of four small openings in the roof. It would have been interesting to see where this opens on the surface but, since the climb out presents some difficulty we decided to push on down the creek.

The ceiling of the stream passage becomes lower and the creek disappears down a slit in the left side of the floor after about 50 m. From here on the passage is used by the creek only in time of flood. We negotiated three long pools stagnant with decaying leaves and mud, before deciding to turn back (the Bureau predicted thunderstorms). Steve Marshall went about 30 m. further than the rest of the party and reported hearing the creek further on. Investigation by a small party would be interesting, perhaps after looking into ancient trip reports first. Wet suit booties highly recommended.

Bruce McIntosh.

### The Annual Trip. 13 - 29 Jan. 1979.

Achievement on the Annual Trip was disappointingly small due to two factors: a fantastic growth of thistles on the newly burnt areas, and lack of people.

#### Sat. 13/1/79.

Mr. Nicholas drove my Kombi to Maydena and a two week permit for the ANM Concession area was organised via Max Jeffries and Jerry Cross (ANM Manager). Therese Goede drove Mr. Nic. back to Hobart (thank you both) and I settled into the Junee Homestead. Using timber from the ruined shed, built a toilet (magnificent view) got in a wood supply and several jerry cans of water. Bath in the river (June Water Torture) and about to cook tea when 3 Northern Caverneers turned up - Peter Cover, Tony Powe and Robin Jacques. By 1.30 a.m. we had told all our most exciting stories, sitting around the fire outside.

#### Sun. 14/1/79.

Welcome Stranger Cave: Bruce McIntosh, Peter Cover, Tony Powe and Robin Jacques.

This trip was advertised in the Spiel so, although nobody else turned up we went anyway. Went through the top route as far as the sump where the water level was so low that there was a 5 cm. gap through which darkness could be seen. It looked like a small squeeze and would require total immersion and possibly an air supply. On the return trip, explored all side passages including the stream passage, which takes you in a figure-eight under the high level route. In investigating possibilities, became temporarily uncertain of position and took 10 minutes to get out, about 2.30 p.m. Three ravenous cavers helped demolish a roast loin of pork I happened to have in the van. We thought of looking for some of the new caves, but the sky was black and it started to rain, so back to the Homestead. Peter, Tony and Robin set off for Launceston and I was visited by Max and Phyllis. Enjoying a cuppa when Gordon Taylor (Canberra Speleo.Soc.) turned up, weary from carrying two packs up from Maydena.

#### Mon. 15/1/79.

Frankcombes Cave: Bruce McIntosh, Gordon Taylor.

A  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m. tiger snake lives in a log in the entrance doline. Because of thistle and stinging nettle growth, this log offers the easiest access to the entrance. The creek in the entrance chamber was dry. Followed the usual route in the cave, past the small helictite area, until we got sick of crawling. Gordon went out to get his camera while I looked at the gallery above the helictites, where Albert has 2 jerrycans collecting stalactite drips. Air temperature on Albert's thermometer was 8.6°C. After photography and three hours in the cave, out to the van - 2 more snakes seen on the track.

Since I didn't know the ANM Concession at all well, while driving out from Frankcombes we checked the distances between the many sideroads off Florentine Road,

named and un-named, so they could be placed on our out-of-date, undetailed maps. Drove to the end of Settlement Road to see how far it went, and got up the Tim Shea Road past the quarry where it became a 4 WD track. Magnificent view of the whole Florentine Valley bounded by the Sawback Range, Tiger Ranges Wylds Crag, Mt. Field West, etc.

Tues. 16/1/79.

No other cavernceers in sight and Gordon hadn't been to National Park so we did the walk up to Tarn Shelf. Flocks of Anaspides in Johnsons Tarn and galaxids in Roberts Tarn.

Wed. 17/1/79.

Made a valiant effort to get something done, but committed the grave error of visiting the Annans first, and reached the ANM gate at 3 p.m. Searched for the cave on Cashions Creek (Spiel 141, p.5.) but, not finding it 100 m. upstream or downstream from Florentine Road, tried the point where the creek crosses under Cashions Ck.Rd. - again no success. Pottered about at the end of a little spur road near the junction of Tiger Road and Cashions Ck.Rd. and found a hole under a large burnt log in a small doline, 30 m. north from the end of the road. Gordon went down it but it pinched off after 5 or 6 m. Back to the start of the spur road and followed some blue tapes on poles to a ridge containing Titans Shelter(JF 97) and an un-numbered vertical entrance (lower and about 50 m. south of JF 97). Entered JF 97 and found an excavation of Albert's and a small passage littered with large Devil droppings. More blue flags on the other side of the road, but lack of time prevented investigation. Visited Max in the evening.

Thurs. 18/1/79.

Looked into Junee Cave and proceeded to critical level before deciding it was a wet suit job, though the water was less than 1 ft. on the gauge. Did the week's washing and hung it on the Kombi to dry in the sun while indulging in the Junee Water Torture. Walking back to the Homestead from buying an evening icecream in Maydena, we found that Sam Steane had arrived, and determined to throw off camp lethargy and achieve great things tomorrow.

Fri. 19/1/79.

Cashions Creek Cave(JF 6): Bruce McIntosh, Gordon Taylor and Sam Steane.

This cave is  $\frac{1}{2}$  km. north from Cashions Ck: it is ESE up the right hand side of a small creek which runs under Florentine Rd. a few metres south from the junction of Westfield Rd. We discovered this by a combination of Max's instructions and the guidance of Albert who caught us on the road side on his way to Frankcombes. Only three minutes off the road, a nicely decorated cave in places and fun for an hour or so. Drove back to the area looked at on Wed. where Cashions Creek Rd. crosses Cashions Creek. This time walked up the ridge on the northern side of a swampy area where the creek meanders. All of the area on the upstream side of the road has been burnt and is thickly coated with tall thistles and native pear regrowth. Found JF 88 on the side of the ridge next to the creek and were just crawling in after clearing the entrance of stinging nettles when Max truned up. It was too hot to work and he had found the Kombi on the roadside, so he showed us through the cave in his blue singlet, chainsaw helmet and borrowed Dolphin torch. In a section of the cave is a vertical circular hole about 5 cm. deep leading to the main passage below, which can be bypassed but makes an interesting chimney for people with long legs(Gordon, Sam and me). Max showed us a small vertical entrance(JF 98) in the top of the ridge north of JF 88, which emphasized the tremendous difficulty imposed by the thistles - I could have walked past it 2 metres away and not seen it. Max then showed us the Lawrence Rivulet Rising - the track starts next to a big solitary myrtle on the NW side of Cashions Ck.Rd., between the big gravel quarry and Tiger Rd. Then back to the "little tit road" near Titans Shelter where Max showed us the entrance to the un-numbered cave whose location proved so difficult previously(Spiel.141, p.7). The entrance is due south from the turning circle at the end of the spur road, across a low ridge and a gully then up a steeper ridge almost to the edge of

the standing timber. Max left us to it so we had some lunch(it was 3.30 by now) then went and rigged a 30 ft. ladder from the lattice of small logs over the entrance. More stinging nettles everywhere. The first 20 ft. of the ladder is used as a handline down the steep slope of loose earth and there is only 8 ft. vertical drop if the ladder is kept to the right hand side looking down. Down through the squeeze to the beaut. little rimstone pool with straws hanging into it. There were many snail shells and some wallaby bones in the entrance chamber, some partly calcite encrusted. On returning to the Homestead we found ourselves innundated by armchair cavers who had come for a barbecue and a canoe practice on the Junee next morning. We were joined by Max later and an interesting evening was had by all.

Sat. 20/1/79.

Stuart Nicholas' party arrived at the Homestead about 7 a.m. heading for Khazad-dun. The story of the next two days is told in separate trip reports.

Mon. 22/1/79.

Bruce McIntosh, Gordon Taylor, Sam Steane, Simon Stops.

Slept in late - Rauleigh and Ev. not interested in anything. The weekends events had intervened to deprive Simon, our latest prospective junior, of his first trip underground. It was to have been two caves pointed out by Max near Cashions Ck.Rd. but Gordon and Sam wanted to see Welcome Stranger and none of us were averse to an easy photographic trip. Simon's ill wind blew again and my left front shock absorber came adrift on the way to the gate. The mechanic in Maydena rudely refused assistance but Max came to the rescue once more and after the obligate cup of coffee and Milo we headed for the gate. The ANM workshop was working late and the gatekeeper very kindly agreed to let us out if we got back before 11 p.m. The overgrown track proved only slightly less troublesome than a week before. We used the top entrance and went as far as the sump where rain during the week had caused enough rise in the water level to obscure the opening previously described. Sam and Simon showed how to approach the sump via the tummy wriggle above the stream but the fun really started when Simon was asked to show us the way out. This is now marked by three rock cairns! On the way driving out to the Gate I commented that all we had to do to complete the day was to hit a wombat. Five minutes later we did! There was no serious damage and we reached the Gate at 10.50 p.m..

Bruce McIntosh.

Full details of the K.D. trip will be published in the next Spiel.

also THE Franklin River Expedition report  
AND a report on a trip to the Cracroft area.