

SPELEO SPIEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE

T.C.C.

TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

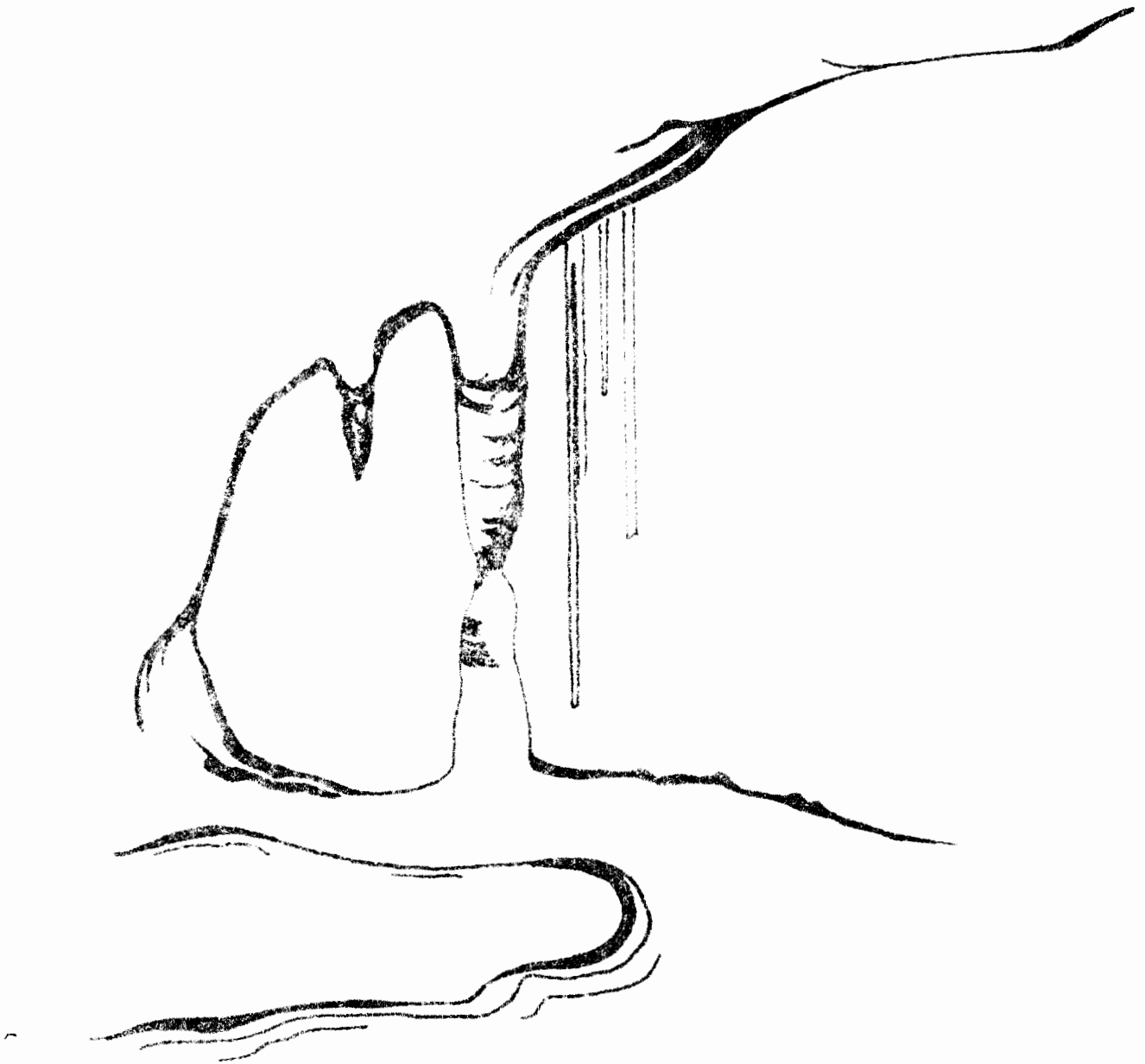
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April 1979 NUMBER 14⁴.



Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

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Single copies 40 cents

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

- April 8 - Junee Florentine: EMC trip. Leader: Bruce McIntosh.
- April 17 - Easter trip to Cracroft for 1 week. Leader: Bill Nicholson.
- April 18 - Committee Meeting, Wheatsheaf Hotel, 8 p.m.
- After Easter - Exit survey gets underway. If you wish to learn the rudiments of this gentle art, drop around and see Stuart for a complex explanation of a simple procedure! Exit mapping co-ordinator: Bruce McIntosh.
- April 28, 29 - Mole Creek trip. Leader: Ian Gothard.
- May 2 - General Meeting, Wheatsheaf Hotel, 8 p.m.
- May 3 - St. John First Aid Course starts. Ph. 237751 for details.
- May 13 - City-to-Casino Run for Fun. See Stuart Nicholas for further details, entry forms, etc.
- May 26, 27 - H.W.C. Caving trip to Mole Creek. Bill Tomalin requires more T.C.C. leaders for this trip which will probably visit Blackshawl, etc.
- June or July - Rescue Exercise at Mole Creek. See Bill Nicholson or Frank Brown for details.
- Mid. July - Hells Passage, Wolf Hole. Leader: Ian Gothard.
- Dec. 1, 2 - Kubla Khan. Photography etc. Leader: Bill Tomalin.
- Late Jan., early Feb. 1980 - Another Franklin River expedition. See Ian Gothard for info.
- Early 1980 - Completion of survey of Kubla Khan. Leader: Bill Tomalin.
- Mid. to late Feb. 1980 - Possible Cracroft expedition.

EDITORIAL

Once again another A.G.M. has come and gone, giving the Club a new committee full of new ideas. It is very pleasing to see some really new faces this year who will no doubt, provide the older faces with plenty of new ideas and renewed vigour for caving.

Speaking of older faces, I would thank our retiring President, Bill Tomalin, for his invaluable work during the year, inspired chairing of meetings and knowledge of the ins and outs of various government organisations. A full list of newly elected and appointed officers of the Club appears elsewhere in this edition.

Getting back to things of a more objective nature, the problem of finance could rear its ugly head again in the foreseeable future with the possible removal of our right to the proceeds from the beer-ticket sales. Any ideas for raising finance would be appreciated by the Committee since a rise in subscriptions is otherwise certain. Money for replacement of existing gear is always needed and the purchase of totally new gear is occasionally required (ropes, ladders and so on in addition to existing stocks) so, if you want to avoid higher subs., think about some other ideas for raising money.

!!SUBSCRIPTIONS!!**!!SUBSCRIPTIONS!!****!!SUBSCRIPTIONS!!**

As you may have guessed, annual subs. are now due and should be paid PROMPTLY if you wish to receive the Speleo Spiel and enjoy(?) the other benefits of Club membership.

Senior \$7.50

Junior \$4.00

Family \$10.50

Prospective membership fee \$2.00

Send or give your hard earned money to Bill Nicholson as I'm sure he needs the practice in dealing with Treasury-type matters.

T.C.C. Committee and Office Bearers for 1979-80

President: Bruce McIntosh
 Vice President: Pavel Runicka
 Secretary: Ian Gethard
 Treasurer: Bill Nicholson
 Quartermaster: Stuart Nicholas
 Public Officer: Thorene Goede
 Committee: Gail Marsh
 Geoff Fisher
 Chris Davies
 Archives: Albert Goede
 Editor: Stuart Nicholas
 Typist: Sue Feeney

Federation of Tas. Bushwalking Clubs Rep.: Bill Tomalin
 Search & Rescue Officer: Bill Nicholson
 Search & Rescue Co-ordinators: To be appointed
 A.S.F. Delegate: Albert Goede
 Hon. Auditor: Paul King
 C.O.O.E.E. Rep.: Bill Tomalin

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CLUB NEWS

Our ex-President and Spiel editor, Laurie Moody, has finally taken the plunge and moved house. He may now be found at 11 Melita Court, Geilston Bay. Ph: 438709.

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Although not strictly T.C.C. business, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Laurie for the excellent work he has put in over the past few years as editor of the A.S.F. Newsletter.

Note: A.S.F. Newsletter editor is now -

Rosie Shannon,
44 McCaul Street,
TARINGA. QLD. 4068.

Ph: 07-3708959 (before 8am or after 5pm Qld.
time only please!)

- That long-time stalwart of caving at Maydena, Max Jeffries, was appointed an Honorary Life Member of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club at the recent A.G.M. This is indeed a deserving appointment as Max has done a tremendous amount of work for the Club, beginning with the clearing of the "Khazad-dum Highway" about nine years ago. Since that time, he has been an invaluable club member, helping visiting cavers, cutting tracks, clearing existing tracks, keeping the Junee Homestead in good repair and so on, and so on. The list is endless. Thanks Max!!
- On your next trip to Britain, why not visit a guy by the name of Steve Worthington? Steve stayed at the Editor's house earlier in the year for a few days, after spending six months in Niugini and a total of about twelve months away from home. He is a great guy and has had extensive climbing and caving experience all over the world. His address is: 12 Machan Bank Road, Nether Edge, Sheffield 7, England. Ph: 0742-583641. To ring from here using ISD, tune up your digit and dial 0011 44 742583641!!!
- On the subject of Niugini, some members will recall a gentleman by the name of Bill Lehman who joined T.C.C. in 1970 and has just spent 3 years working in Niugini. Well, he's back! Having been involved in a survey of Exit some years ago, he is going to provide Bruce with the data he acquired which should help the Exit Cave survey project considerably.
- During the middle of the year, there is a proposed S & R exercise to be held in Kubla Khan at Mole Creek. The proposal is to haul a dummy victim out through the bottom entrance from Cairn Hall. The organisation is being done by Frank Brown Jnr. and any comments on this exercise should be directed to him. Frank will be at the next committee meeting to discuss the exercise further, so if you are interested, come along.
- Note from Quartermaster: If you borrow gear please fill out the gear registration book and please bring gear back promptly. Remember, it may be you that needs rescuing and if all the gear is in your house or flat and your name is not in the book, it could be a trifle embarrassing.
- For more years than I care to remember, Therese Goede has been dutifully typing this fine publication and I would like to thank her for the many hours she has spent slaving over a hot typewriter. Our new typist is Sue Feeney who did a marvellous job on one edition last year and has offered to do it full-time this year.
- Just a brief note on pre-trip procedures: If you are going on a trip, particularly an extended one, make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to return. This information should be written down by you and given to the person concerned with suitable instructions as to what to do should you fail to appear by the nominated time.
- Another note on safety: The next St. John's Ambulance Brigade First Aid Certificate course starts early in May (3rd), so make sure you enrol now. It is not hard (the Editor is doing one right now!) and everyone should have a working knowledge of first aid. For further information phone: 237751.

- If you, as a trip leader, anticipate being sued for damages after a caving accident, a good plan is to take out personal risk liability insurance. Premium amounts to about \$26 and you are then covered up to \$250,000 damages should you be taken to court. This is a good idea for any leader in any potentially hazardous sport.
- Peter Murray has requested that everyone stay out of the surface climb (original entrance) in Genghis at Mole Creek for scientific reasons. Apparently, there is a bug in there which must be preserved and left in peace for the time being.
- Maps of the sections of Exit surveyed earlier in the year have been received from Rauleigh Webb and Gordon Taylor. These will be correlated with the main map and, together with future work, published in the Spiel from time to time. Note: Anybody interested in helping with this project, contact Bruce McIntosh or Stuart Nicholas. Helpers are needed!

CAVE RESCUE REPORT 1978-79

For the newer members I thought a brief history of cave rescue involving the Tasmanian Caverneering Club would be beneficial and highlight the importance of such an organisation within the caving clubs and polsar in Tasmania.

1976 - "Operation Ferret", Mole Creek (Spiel 112)

This was the first exercise held in Tasmania and was quite successful in pointing out the exceptional difficulties that are associated with a rescue of that type. The cave used was Herbert's Pot.

1978 - An exercise was planned for early 1978 but was cancelled. (See 1977-78 Rescue Report)

- "Operation Womguano", Maydena (Spiel 136)

Following a two year spell and the cancellation of an earlier exercise, "Operation Womguano" came into being. This exercise, I feel, was more successful in the aspect of testing the G.Q. Para-guard stretcher and drag mats together. The main point brought home was not the difficulties involving stretcher usage, but the medical problems associated with such an operation.

- Khazad-dum Incident (See Rescue Report 1977-78)

- Midnight Hole Call Out (Spiel)

This was the first callout for Club members for many years for an overdue party and it was handled with very few problems. A State alert was issued.

1979 - Khazad-dum Callout (Detailed Report N/A)

A rainstorm, overdue party and a potentially long technical rescue gave way to an extensive callout.

Full reports of the above exercises and callouts are in their respective Speleo Spiels and I hope the newer members can find time to read them.

Judd's Cavern Incident: 25th March, 1979

Misinterpretation of callout times (midday instead of midnight) brought Rescue Officer, Tony Power on duty and the Geeveston policeman heading down to Farmhouse Creek to find our party in various states of undress before heading off home. No Clubs were notified except ours. All was forgiven.

Entrance Cave Incident: 26th March, 1979.

Not finding the trip leader home on Sunday night or at work on Monday, morning prompted me to make enquiries. Inspector Massie informed Dover Police and the Hastings P.W.S. Ranger who checked the cave car park and found no car.

The party leader's employer failed to notice him arrive at work and so accounted him not there. All was forgiven.

A major step was achieved for Cave safety last year at a symposium in Kingston where reps. from clubs around the State converged to discuss, debate and report on the safety aspects of their respective sports.

As the findings of the caving group are too extensive to print here, the minutes of the meeting can be obtained from me.

Eighteen months ago I became S.& R. officer. My aim then was to pull the S.& R. section of T.C.C. out of the doldrums and mould it into an efficient part of the organisation. This I have done but not without the help of the Committee and Bob Cockerill, Alex Teruds, and others of the Southern Caving Society, Frank Brown Jr., and those men of starched shirts, Inspector Maurice Massie, Keith Harper, Graeme Galloway and Tony Power of Police Search & Rescue. Without such an organisation the Midnight Hole and Khazad-dum callouts would not have gone off so smoothly.

I am now at the stage where a Cave Rescue Team will be formed soon on the same basis as the Cliff Rescue Team, i.e. regular training sessions, testing rescue equipment for modifications and so on, in small parties.

All in all the past year has been very busy. Safety standards are improving but, more important, members are becoming more safety conscious which is where it all starts.

Keep on trogging.....

Bill Nicholson,
Cavsar Officer.

Further Comments on "Khazad-dum Communications" and Cave Communications in General (See Speleo Spiel-March 1979)

As was stated in the letter by Bruce McIntosh, a telephone line was set up in K.D. during the main period of exploration. It extended from the camp site (50m from the entrance) to the bottom of the 70' pitch, a point approximately midway, in terms of depth, between the entrance and the sump.

The installation of this line was, if I remember correctly, not without problems. The wire used was a light gauge doubled single strand type normally used for door-bells and such things and hence was prone to breakage from sharp bends and links. The telephone in the cave was kept sealed in a large tin when not in use. Reliability of the system proved to be surprisingly good, with only a couple of breakdowns occurring during its life of (I think) about fifteen months.

The problems involved in keeping a system operative which extended for the entire length of the cave would, however, be quite considerable. Something in excess of 1 mile of double wire would be required and in many places this could not easily be protected from the ravages of passing cavers, a flooded stream and general corrosion.

The stream passage in the bottom half of the cave would present most problems. In many places the passage is not particularly wide or high and a wire strung through these areas would be prone to breakage by cavers. As well as this, the environment is particularly adverse, being continually wet and a satisfactory method of joining the wires could be difficult to find.

In any full-blown cave rescue, the efficiency of the communications system is going to be absolutely critical in determining the outcome of the exercise.

At this point in the state of the art, a practical solution to the problem is the use of telephones, however, establishment of permanent lines in caves I do not regard as being desirable for two reasons:

- (a) in the event of an emergency, the proper operation of the system is always in doubt - it may not have been checked for some time and the hurried movement of people and gear could easily disrupt it.
- (b) ethically and/or aesthetically the line may prove undesirable, depending on the cave and the persons assessing it.

A system suitable for quick installation in any cave, should the need arise, would be far better than a permanent one. It could be used anywhere in the State and during installation could easily be checked for faults as it progresses through the system.

The ultimate underground communications system is a two-way radio but problems involved in the use of these in a cave far outweigh those involved in a telephone system installed as required.

Perhaps some experimentation could be carried out during any forthcoming S & R exercises or an exercise could be held for the specific purpose of experimenting with various systems. Regardless of the system, the prime requirement is familiarity and expertise in its operation by all potential users.

Would anyone interested in the problem of cave communications, please send any comments, suggestions and so on to me since it is a subject in which much work remains to be done and is of personal interest to me.

Suart Nicholas

TRIP REPORTS

Khazad-dum: 20 & 21.1.79

Party: Stuart Nicholas, Eveline Tulp (WASG), Rauleigh Webb (WASG),
Chris Rathbone ("Ditto", CCT)

Support: Bruce McIntosh, Simon Stops, Sam Steane

"Super Support": Gordon Taylor, Peter Cover

Since their last visit to Tasmania, both Rauleigh and Ev had become very enthusiastic about a trip to Khazad-dum, Australia's deepest known pot at just over 321m. They finally made it over here during January of this year, armed with many lengths of rope and still shiny jumars.

After much planning, packing and repacking of gear, we arrived at the entrance about 09.30 Saturday. Unfortunately, due to a misunderstanding, Gordon Taylor from NUCC (Canberra) who was staying at the Homestead with Bruce McIntosh, missed out on the trip proper and I most sincerely apologise for this. We set off underground at 10.15. The weather was fine with little prospect of rain. The forecast indicated possible thunderstorms on the West Coast but fine elsewhere over the weekend period.

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Prior to our going underground, we arranged with Bruce McIntosh to have some "sherpas" at the entrance by about 21.30 for an expected return between then and midnight.

After a few minor navigation problems, we reached the top of the last wet pitch (the second last pitch in the cave) and noticed the stream was slightly muddy and appeared to be a little higher than normal. Decided to shoot down and up again without wasting any time.

After looking at the bottom sump, we jumared back up to the Brew Chamber and noticed that our means of exit was completely blocked - the last wet pitch was in full flood and definitely not negotiable. Owing to the cold in the Brew Chamber, a decision was made to go back down to the bottom chamber where there were no drafts and more room. A message to that effect was left in the Brew Chamber floor.

By 06.00 Sunday, the stream near the sump had dropped considerably and I had made a decision to start heading out when Gordon Taylor (NUCC) and Peter Cover (NC) appeared bearing gifts of food and other desirable items. After yet another brew and some food, it was decided that Chris and Stuart should head straight out to call off the S & R standby which had been set up. Peter and Gordon would assist Rauleigh and Ev to partly derig the cave.

Chris and Stuart made the surface about 09.30 and the others appeared around 14.30 having left the gear at the top of the first wet pitch (end of the horizontal streamway). Following an extended period of eating and discussion, we made our way back to vehicles at the end of the road.

It appears that a flash storm during the Saturday afternoon was the cause of our problems and, at peak, the stream was flowing very strongly indeed (the large boulders just at the entrance were apparently well covered by water).

With a successful end to the trip, on behalf of Eveline, Rauleigh and Chris, I sincerely thank all those who helped or were prepared to help should the need have arisen. Deserving of a special mention are Bruce McIntosh, Max Jeffries, Steve Annan and especially Gordon Taylor and Peter Cover who both braved the early morning apathy syndrome to come and see what we were up to in Australia's deepest known pot. I would also like to thank the A.N.M. Operations Manager, Jerry Cross, for organising men and machinery to assist should the need have arisen.

- Notes:
- (a) Everyone on the trip was quite capable of negotiating the cave with "normal" stream levels.
 - (b) In retrospect, the decision to keep going down seems the wisest move. Had we started out from the top of the last wet pitch, we would have been trapped by the rapidly rising stream with no dry place to rest and wait out the flood. The wet pitches would certainly not have been safely negotiable either up or down during the flood peak.
 - (c) We had sufficient food for probably another 15 to 20 hours of "normal" eating and fuel for a similar, possibly longer, period.
 - (d) Cold was the main problem, although towards the end of the stay, our clothes had dried somewhat and we were keeping relatively warm with less exercise. Possibly a "space blanket" or some type of bivvy bag would have helped.
 - (e) If anyone finds a billy with an enamel cup, a spoon and some tea, coffee and soup in it down near the sump (possibly in the stream), Stuart Nicholas owns it and would appreciate its return! Don't worry about the rappel rack somewhere at the foot of the 92 foot pitch - it's not worth bringing back!

Stuart Nicholas.

N.B. A more detailed report has been submitted to Police S & R and a similar one will be submitted to the A.S.F. Newsletter for publication.

Picton-Cracroft Saddle
Judds Cavern and the Matchlight Hole: 27 to 29.1.79

Party: Geoff Fisher, Chris and Diana Davies (Maydena branch)
Danny Moore, Adrian West (Non-members)

Off to a 7 o'clock start on Saturday morning for all but Diana who walked in solo on Sunday morning. More than 5 hours later we arrived at the Cavern and pitched camp in the Myrtle/Sassafras grove which surrounds the cavern creek.

After recovering from the walk and eating, the four of us donned helmets and lamps and headed into the cavern. The other three decided to try and keep dry by taking the high route, while I trudged up the creek. They were soon forced to come down to my level.

The stream flowing through the Cavern was swift, and not quite deep enough to get the naughty bits wet ('specially if you're 1.8 metres tall). The Cavern itself was massive and apparently confined to one level, with a long succession of extensive chambers, some having small well-decorated off shoots. Towards the end, a tributary branched to the left of the main stream. Geoff followed this to its end in a small siphon. A little further on, progress was stopped where the roof sloped down to a siphon. Exploration could possibly be continued by those who are careless of what they get wet, and who have low oxygen requirements.

The party was underground for more than 90 minutes and moving at a slow walking pace for most of the time, in which case, a little quick arithmetic proves the cavern to be massive, at least in the experience of the party. Formation in the cave was isolated and limited.

The following day, Sunday, Geoff, Adrian and Danny decided to attempt to get a better view of Federation Peak by crossing the plains of the South Cracroft and climbing an un-named ridge of an un-named peak. I opted out, still savouring the delicacy of yesterday's buttongrass and tea-tree, and decided on a restful day of exploration in the local area. The explorers returned within the hour, having viewed some magnificently dense stands of tea-tree.

Danny and Adrian decided to continue the search for the view in other directions. Geoff and I donned caps and also headed up along the Federation Track which moves up the side of a ridge studded with dolines.

We found one likely looking shaft which was blocked by tree roots and continued on up the track till we stumbled on a cave numbered "2" and with a label declaring it to be "The Matchlight Hole".

Geoff and I pushed into the cave and took the left tunnel at a fork soon after the entrance. We were well satisfied after crawling in and out of this short section, but were stunned when we took the right fork. The tunnel opened into a large chamber which had extensive and delicate formations. Moving away from the cave entrance, the chamber narrowed off and many superb straws, curtains and columns and rim-pools were exposed.

At the other end of the chamber, and seeming to circle back under the entrance, was an open walking passage, very dry and with good formation both large and small. A most interesting aspect of this passage was a number of shafts dropping about 20 metres to what may

have been a lower level but, alas and alack, we had no ladders.

Geoff and I returned to camp most pleased and found Adrian snoozing in his tent to escape the march flies and Danny and Diana somewhere in Judds Cavern.

Later, all five moved out to look at the Matchlight Hole. We took camera, flash and machete and opened up the shaft found earlier. The shaft was a bottle-neck with a 5 metre drop. A sassafras of appropriate length was cut, and the still difficult descent was made. The cave was tiny, having only about 15 metres of horizontal crawling space, but was notable for the collection of bones on and in the calcite deposits at one end of the cave. There were two large skulls, possibly wombat, one of a platypus, and several smaller skulls. Out came the camera and flash but the batteries were dead flat. CURSES!!

With great difficulty, the party left this small cave - provisionally called "The Sassafras Hole" and, mainly due to Geoff's pole climbing ability (simian inheritance?), made it safely to the surface. We then moved on to further inspect the wonders of the Matchlight Hole.

That left Monday for walking out in much hotter and drier conditions.

The area around Judds Cavern offers good prospect for further caves, although the forest can be very dense. What about it?

Chris Davies.

Growling Swallett: 24.3.79

Party: Sue Feeney, Geoff Fisher, Tim Douglas, Chris Davies, Diana Davies (all T.C.C. Maydena Branch, plus Tim)

Converged on Max's place having decided to tackle Growling Swallett. Full marks to whoever called it that. We failed to coerce Max into joining in - he wanted to visit his bees - after the traditional cup of coffee and drawing of the map.

We wandered along the McCallum's survey track, impressed by the amount of work that must have gone into cutting it (1920's?). Followed the "growling" up a gully to find a not inconsiderable amount of water being swallowed by a large impressive entrance.

We used two ladders, (one as a header) on a 10m. pitch not far from sight of the entrance (may not be necessary with less water about). The descent from the pitch was reasonably steep following the main water channel and many small waterfalls.

A short section after a sharp turn in the stream under flowstone, brought us to a large chamber; no formations but an abundance of glow-worms. Back into the water and down less steeply to a series of sand banks. We peered down the rapidly diminishing channel which was rather too full of water for comfort and decided to turn back as we agreed that the sump mentioned by Max must be near.

On the way out, Tim and I had a look at a side stream and found a small area of good formation. We eventually rejoined the mainstream, collected the ladders and headed out to find the others.

Returned the ladders to Max and sampled his latest gourmet's delight, Milo-coffe (Moffee?) - not bad. We threatened to return.

Diana Davies.

Mt. Bobs & Judd's Cavern: 24 & 25.3.79

Party: Bill Nicholson, Dave Williams and New Town High Students.

We camped at Pine Camp on Friday night and on Saturday proceeded to Mt. Bobs. We turned back near Lake Sidney as time was short. Made Judd's Cavern at nightfall.

Sunday morning, I showed the party through the first section of Judd's Cavern. Water was up a little but Dave and the students were quite impressed with the cave.

We left soon after to walk back to Farmhouse Creek. A very good weekend.

Bill Nicholson.