

Issue no: 146

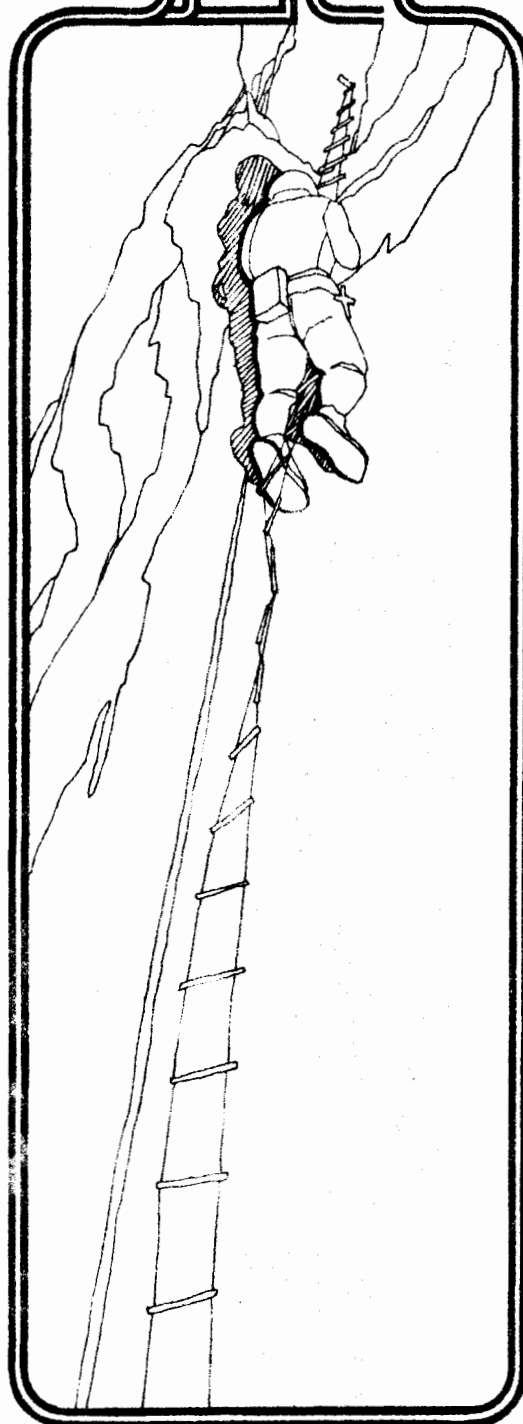
Month:

June 1979

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Established 1946

# SPALSO

## SPAL



PO Box 416  
Sandy Bay 7005  
Tasmania

Registered for posting as a Periodical, Cat. B

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Annual Subscription \$4

Single copies 40 cents

---

President: Bruce McIntosh, c/-"Springvale", Midwood St.,  
New Town, 7008. Ph: 28 1282(H), 34 2833(W).  
President Max Jeffries, 18 South Crescent, Maydena, 7457.  
(Maydena Branch): Ph: 88 2256(H)  
Secretary: Ian Gothard, 9 James Avenue, Kingston Beach.  
Editor: Stuart Nicholas, 7 Rupert Ave., New Town, 7008.  
Ph: 28 3054(H), 28 4691(W).  
Typist & Sue Feeney, 60 King Street, Sandy Bay, 7005.  
Distribution: Ph: 23 1699(H), 34 6299(W).

---

FORWARD PROGRAMME

Sat. & Sun. -Exit surveying trip in Eastern Extension;  
June, 16 &17 Friday night start. Leader: Bruce McIntosh.  
Wed. June, 20 -Committee Meeting; Wheatsheaf Hotel, 8 p.m.  
Sat. & Sun. -Chairman (JF99) exploration epic. This SRT  
June 23 & 24 trip will be long and hard but should produce  
some results (with any luck!) Leader: Stuart  
Nicholas  
Wed. July 4 -General Meeting; Wheatsheaf Hotel, 8 p.m.  
July -Wolf Hole, Hell's Passage.  
Wed. July 18 - Committee Meeting; Wheatsheaf Hotel, 8 p.m.  
Fri. or Sat. -Annual Dinner, possibly at Prince of Wales  
Sept. 14 or 15 Hotel  
October -Exploration push in Kubla Khan. Leader: Bill  
Tomalin  
Sat. & Sun. -Photographic trip to Kubla Khan. Leader: Bill  
Dec. 1 & 2 Tomalin  
Jan. 1980 -Annual trip to Cracroft area  
1980 -Finish of Kubla Khan survey. Leader and co-  
ordinator: Bill Tomalin.

Don't forget the S & R exercises alternate Thursday nights at the  
S & R store - see last month's Spiel for details.

\*\*\*\*\*

EDITORIAL

At the end of last month, a very successful cave search and rescue  
exercise was held at Mole Creek. For the first time in Tasmania,  
representatives from every interested group in the State gathered  
to discuss and experiment with various cave rescue systems and  
equipments. I am quite sure that everyone of the sixty-two people  
present learned a lot about rescue techniques, met people from  
other areas of the State and generally had a good time.

The organisers of this weekend exercise are to be commended for  
their efforts and it is to be hoped that more can be organised on  
a regular basis in the future. Don't forget, sooner or later a  
full scale rescue is inevitable and we must all be as ready as  
possible for this eventuality.

### NOTICE OF ELECTION

Owing to the resignation of Bill Nicholson as Hon. Treasurer and Julie Marsh as Committee Person, it will be necessary to hold an election for these two positions, at the General Meeting to be held on July 4, 1979 commencing at 8 p.m. Nominations will be called for at the meeting but voting members are asked to give due consideration to potential nominees.

### PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

Following Bill Tomalin's H.W.C. caving trip to Mole Creek a few weeks ago, four prospective members appeared at the last general meeting. It's great to see some new blood in the Club and we hope to see their muddy faces on future caving trips. Please extend a welcome to Nick Hume, Julie Engelman, Linda Aspinall and Dave Southgate.

### WAITOMO CAVES ACCOMMODATION

For your next caving trip to New Zealand why not stay at Hamilton Tomo Group's hut at Waitomo. Reading the pamphlet provided by Peter Watts indicates that the name "hut" might be understatement. Facilities include electric stoves, cooking utensils, not showers, washing machine, fridge, radio, electric heating and other indescribable extras that give the hut its "atmosphere"! The fee is only \$1.50 per night and there is no limit to the length of stay.

### PUBLICATIONS AND MAGAZINES

As of now, publications and magazines received by our Club will be available for reading by members from the home of the Editor, Quartermaster, etc. Up until now it has been difficult for members to see these interesting publications but the current editions will now stay at 7 Rupert Avenue for a month or so.

### SOUTH WEST BOOK

Released only two weeks ago, the book is a treatise on this wilderness area with many brilliant photographs and plenty of words of wisdom as well. Although I have not read the book yet, it appears to be a worthwhile purchase for the price of around \$11 for the soft cover copy and around \$16 for the hard cover.

\*\*\*\*\*

### G O R E T E X

#### The Waterproof Salvation!

The search for a waterproof fabric which eliminates the problem of body condensation has been going on for many years. Such a search seemed less likely to be successful than finding the Holy Grail until the advent of Goretex which is waterproof from the outside but breathes from the inside.

Many members have no doubt heard about this apparently miraculous material in recent months with at least two rainproof jackets being owned by Club members and some discussion of its virtues taking place at the recent S&R exercise at Mole Creek. The material is just what is seems - every outdoor enthusiast's waterproof salvation!

Goretex (a trade name for this material) is available in two versions - 3 ply and 2 ply. The 3 ply type is used for parkas,

pants, climbing suits and so on, while 2 ply is used for outer lining on a lot of down gear (sleeping bags, duvets, etc.).

Test data available indicates that Goretex is roughly 50% more waterproof than coated nylon (the usual waterproof material) and yet can breathe 11 times as much water vapour per unit area in a given time. The material consists of a very thin microporous membrane of polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) bonded between conventional woven nylon fabrics. Related to Teflon, that well known non-stick frying pan coating, the membrane of PTFE is extremely stable and inert and contains 9 billion pores per square inch. This is the secret of the fabric. Water vapour molecules are 700 times smaller than the micro-pores and hence pass easily through, allowing body vapour to escape. Water droplets, on the other hand, are far larger than the pores and do not pass through except under great pressure. Heat from your body creates the necessary thermal differential across the material which allows the water vapour to diffuse out, but the large droplets on the outside cannot move inwards through the very small pores as explained above.

The editor wore a parka made from Goretex on a well known K.D. trip earlier this year and found it to be very successful. No condensation formed on the inside at any stage and no water came through from the waterfalls, even on the very fast and hard trip out when you would normally expect to be soaked in perspiration!

\*\*\*\*\*

**\*\*CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS\*\***

FOR SALE

Oldham-Wheat caving light. Excellent condition, i.e. it works!

Going cheap at only \$35

Contact: Julie Marsh, 103 Brisbane Street, Hobart.

Wet-suit; full length "Farmer John" style, 7 mm lined neoprene. Excellent condition. Will fit if you're smaller than the editor. Suit is a Size 3. Editor is a Size 4!

A steal at just \$65 (almost half new price)

Contact: Stuart Nicholas, 7 Rupert Ave., New Town.  
Ph: 28 3054(H), 28 4691(W)

\*\*\*\*\*

CAVE SEARCH AND RESCUE EXERCISE

MOLE CREEK - MAY 27 & 28

Since the overall exercise consisted of several small exercises running simultaneously in different caves, two reports appear below.

The first is from the Honeycomb I group who experimented with the Para-guard stretcher in cave conditions. For those unfamiliar with this device, it is a collapsable, aluminium-framed, canvas-lined stretcher designed originally, I believe, for use in the narrow confines of ships. It has lifting and carrying straps attached as well as tie straps for the patient.

The second report deals with the modified Stokes litter as used in Wet Cave, and the home-made drag-mats which were tried in Honeycomb II. The Stokes is available in two forms - a frame with a wire mesh basket hung in it (mainly used for underwater work) or the same basic frame with a solid basket. The latter type was used on the exercise. Drag-mats are just large body-shaped sheets of heavy rubber suitably modified to take ropes, slings and so on and used for dragging patients along low passages and even outside in the bush!

#### Report 1.

Three trips were made into Honeycomb I, each with the objective of carrying a Para-guard stretcher with a live victim in as many places as possible. All three parties consisted of climbers, cavers, police and an ambulanceman to monitor the victim and become familiar with the underground environment. The reason for mixing the parties was to give people the chance to work as a team however, this initially proved unsuccessful in some cases. People started becoming tied up in their own little jobs and this led to the stretcher becoming unbalanced and tipping over. As each team progressed, they started talking to each other and began working as one. As this problem is something that cannot be overcome easily, I think that people should bear in mind that they are not the only person carrying the stretcher. This teamwork was well illustrated by the Burnie police who, from the outside, spoke to and helped each other and were able to take the Para-guard and victim through a very difficult squeeze.

Turning to the stretcher itself - the Para-guard was found to be comfortable by the patients however, they did complain of cold. A solution to this might be to place a closed-cell rubber mat on and under the patient and tie the straps over these. The other problem was the length of the hand straps. Most rescuers secured slings to the straps and the stretcher was then supported by their shoulders.

A lot of problems were sorted out during this exercise and we hope to organise another before the end of the year. Thanks for the support, it was well appreciated.

Pavel Ruzicka

#### Report 2.

The Saturday afternoon saw a party of seven paddling their way into Wet Cave, towing a Stokes litter suitably modified with several tyre inner-tubes to provide it with some semblance of buoyancy. With a patient in the contraption, it was remarkably easy to manoeuvre along the stream and even over smooth sand banks. A lack of teamwork was very evident during the exercise with the towing and steering duties being carried out by only one or two people. Since the patient is virtually helpless and there is a significant risk of the device sinking, everyone should assist with its movement. The only real problem encountered was the lack of floatation at the head end which was lower in the water than the foot end, however, this is easily solved.

When attaching the inner-tubes a great deal of trouble was had which indicates the need for a "bag" or something similar in which the Stokes could be put. If the bag was then inflated, the whole structure would be ready in a few minutes.

Since everyone in the party was fairly wet, it was decided to try an aluminised "survival blanket" to test its effectiveness. Being structurally very weak, it quickly tore but when the torn strips were wrapped around limbs in the fashion of a bandage, they proved very efficient at warming cold legs and arms.

The other exercise in which I participated was on Sunday morning into Honeycomb II. A rubber drag-mat was used very effectively to haul a patient up a steeply sloping rift. With the top anchored rope passing through a krab on the mat and back up to the top, a group of three easily hauled the patient up the slope. As an additional exercise, Peter Cover (NC) rigged a hauling system using jumars and krabs which enabled two people to haul a third up a vertical rift quite easily. If pulleys were used instead of krabs, one person could haul another vertically up without any trouble.

All in all the whole weekend was a tremendous success, both socially and technically and I think I could safely say that everyone of the 62 people there enjoyed themselves and learnt a lot about cave rescue techniques.

Stuart Nicholas

\*\*\*\*\*

#### TRIP REPORTS

Junee Florentine Area - Trapdoor Swallet: June 9, 1979.

Party: Stuart Nicholas, Nick Hume and Pavel Ruzicka

Following the fantastic response to this trip which was advertised in last month's Spiel for last weekend, it was postponed for a week while a couple of participants were rounded up, the leader not being keen on going by himself.

Prospective member, Nick, arrived at Stuart's place looking rather strange following celebration of a squash win the night before. Anyway, a quick brew at the "Pit" soon straightened things out and we got away promptly at 0730.

Eventually, arriving at the usual parking place, we geared up and staggered towards Growling Swallet along the now hard to negotiate track, crawling over fallen trees and sliding down wet slippery logs with gay abandon. About 1½ hours later, we heard that sound which is music to every caver's ears - running water! A quarter of an hour after that at the head of the dry valley, the cave in question was reached.

Some loose rocks at the entrance were soon cleared and Pav descended only to be stopped by the rock fall 3m below the surface. Investigation by Pav and Stuart revealed that, with the aid of suitable winching gear on the surface, one particular block could be removed, thereby giving access to what promises to be quite an extensive system. The stream flowing into the entrances (there are two, both similarly blocked) does not present any great problems, providing that suitable water-proofs are worn (ask Nick about the need for complete waterproofs!)

Being somewhat demoralised, there was an obvious need for some real enjoyment, so after Pav had gone back into Trapdoor to retrieve a sling he had left there, we headed back to Growling Swallet. An hour or so was spent in G.S.-the stream was fairly low and with Nick

and Pav having revitalised themselves from Stuart's supply of jelly beans, a great time was had by all. The possibility of exploration in an upper level was noted when a couple of shafts and/or high level passages were seen.

A really great day was finished off with a brew at Ditto's N.P.W.S. shack at National Park.

Stuart Nicholas