

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

Sat. October 13 -Wolf Hole: School trip with Bruce McIntosh

Sun. October 14 -JF 341: The new hole on Junee Ridge (see report this Spiel). Further exploration of this great new cave. Leader: Stuart Nicholas.

Wed. October 17 -Committee Meeting, 8 p.m., 7 Rupert Avenue.

Sat. October 27 &/ or Sun. October 28 -Trapdoor Swallet or JF 341: Depending on weather etc., an attempt will be made to clear talus from the entrance of Trapdoor Swallet with the use of a winch, crowbar, etc. This inflow stream cave has great potential. Alternatively, JF 341 may still be going, so we may go there instead, or aswell as, or something! Leader: Stuart Nicholas

Sometime before end of year -Chairman JF 99: Possibly a multi-day trip involving underground bivvies. Prior to this a one day preparation trip will take place to investigate different and safer riggings for the first two pitches - a good trip for budding SRT freaks! See Stuart Nicholas for details.

Wed. November 7 -General Meeting, 8 p.m., 7 Rupert Avenue.

Wed. November 21 -Committee Meeting, 8 p.m. 7 Rupert Avenue.

January, 1980 -Annual Trip to Cracroft area. See Albert or Bruce for details.

Beginning with Daylight saving -Laddering, SRT, etc. exercises together with B-B-Q on Sphinx Rock, Wednesday evenings. All Welcome!!

DON'T FORGET: If you want to go caving, come around to Stuart's place (7 Rupert Avenue, New Town) Wednesday nights, and with any luck we'll get a trip going. There's certainly plenty happening and potential for a lot more on the exploration scene (the real SPICE of caving!)

EDITORIAL

Caverneering is regarded by many as a strange, esoteric activity carried out by a group of equally strange people who enjoy crawling along small muddy passages deep beneath the surface of the earth. This concept may or may not be true but it is certain that the enthusiasm of members of all clubs and societies around the world plays a major role in the continuance of the sport.

Members of the T.C.C. are no exception - the production of this, the 150th edition of the Speleo Spiel, proves the point. As far as I am aware, the "Spiel" has appeared eleven times per year for the past thirteen and a half years. Sometimes it has had many pages, sometimes few, but approximately once a month (except January) this publication has emerged from the dark confines of the Editor's desk to keep our members, and others, informed of the activities of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club.

Owing to the slightly dicey state of the Club's finances at present, and the fact that subscriptions barely cover the cost of production, it has been suggested that the monthly format be dropped in favour of a quarterly edition, perhaps printed instead of duplicated. I am not wholly in favour of this idea because I feel that regular monthly "Spiels" help hold the Club together and also provide a means of keeping members informed of the forward programme (not that there has been a great deal in it of late!). The quarterly edition idea would probably work if the T.C.C. had its own club-room with notice boards and so on, but that is another story.

Stuart Nicholas.

Notice of Motion

At the last General Meeting, Albert Goede gave notice of the following motion to be moved at the November General Meeting -

"That the Tasmanian Caverneering Club resign from the Federation of Tasmanian Bushwalking Clubs."

Notice of Election

Pavel Ruzicka resigned as Vice-President and member of the T.C.C. Hence the position of Vice-President is now vacant and an election will take place at the November General Meeting.

Search and Rescue

After some confusion, Bruce McIntosh has been elected S & R Co-ordinator for T.C.C. but the position of S & R Officer is still vacant following Bill Nicholson's resignation. This is a position of great responsibility and should be taken on by a suitably experienced bod who is interested in S & R. Any volunteers?

Apology

Owing to the incredible speed with which the last edition was produced, (it was in the mail about 40 hours after the General Meeting) a couple of bugs crept into the system. Firstly, the photo-copier which was to have been used broke down and an alternative duplicating system had to be coaxed into action with a consequent loss of print quality. The review of the Atea article appearing in Geo will be reprinted shortly.

The second bug concerned the Forward Programme which did not contain notification of the next General Meeting. Everyone turned up anyway, so that was no problem.

NPWS Permits

Several caves in this State have NPWS reserves proclaimed around their entrances, the latest being Exit Cave. In order to gain access to these locked caves, it will be necessary in future, to obtain a permit and the key from the NPWS in Magnet Court. Only leaders from A.S.F. Clubs will be issued with the permit and key and application must be made at least a week before the proposed trip.

Lamp Donation

A member and hard-caver of a few years ago, Arthur Clarke, has donated his lead-acid lamp to T.C.C. for general club use. Thanks Arthur! Incidentally, Arthur is still interested in any trips going south - he lives at Francistown and may be contacted via Albert.

A.S.F. News

The editor of the A.S.F. Newsletter, Rose Shannon, has notified us that a new column will be incorporated in future issues concerning equipment. The idea is to publish details of any gear failures, modifications, ideas and so on that may occur to any caving gear.

Caving can be quite a technical sport and even quite small mods. to gear can make a large difference to its ease of use so, if you have any ideas or info. on failures, let Stuart know and he will pass it on to Rosie.

Obituary

The Club notes with regret the death of Brian Parsons as a result of a plant crash in Victoria.

Brian caved for several years with the Latrobe group and was part of the team which discovered the top entrance of Kubla Khan. He also helped during the cave-diving exercises in Kubla.

Brian will be remembered by his caving friends for his dry sense of humour, inexhaustible stock of jokes, and his sensitivity to our caves. Our sympathies are with Liz, his wife, in her sad loss.

Bill Tomalin.

CLUB NEWS

-As everyone who attended the last meeting is no doubt aware, it was a fairly dull affair. Does anyone have any ideas for brightening up these important but usually dry meets? If so, please say something at the next, hopefully less dull, general meeting!

-Big Bill Lehman who returned from Niugini only a few months back after a three year stint assisting with their telecommunications systems, is apparently off to Nigeria fairly soon to do similar work over there! Good luck Bill, we hope to see you before you leave.

-The club library is short of two books - "Single Rope Techniques" by Neil Montgomery and "Caves" by Tony Waltham.

Assuming the card system works, it appears that a certain person by the name of Julie Marsh has these two books. If your're listening to this Julie, please return the items promptly!

-New member: At the last G.M., Tony Morgan was elected to the ranks as a Junior member. Tony has been around for a couple of years now and has, in fact, done quite a few trips with T.C.C. including surface support on one of the "Chairman" trips early last year. His place of abode is 12 Kirby Court, West Hobart. Ph: 34 7554.

-Speaking of Chairman trips, an idea for further exploration of this potentially sign cant system was brought up a few weeks ago. Because of the size and difficulty of the cave, it seems that a practical solution to the exploration problem is a multi-day underground expedition involving several (i.e. more than one) bivvies. The logistics of this exercise are not as daunting as may first appear. With planning, a great deal of valuable work could be done over a period of about three days.

Any takers? We need a team of four, or thereabouts.

ON POLYTETRAFLUOROETHYLENE MEMBRANES:

This unpronouncable marvel (Goretex) promises to be the answer to many bushwalkers' and cavers' dreams of a breathing waterproof material. The statistics stated (Speleo No. 146) support the comments gleaned from those fortunate enough to be able to afford garments made of this material.

Amongst the good news, I have, however, heard of disturbing reports that the material has shown signs of de-lamination (peeling apart). A suggestion is that this is caused by an ultra-violet photochemical reaction with fluorenes. When we consider that Tasmania receives a high dosage of ultra-violet radiation, we could perhaps expect a fairly rapid breakdown of Goretex-type fabrics.

The material hasn't been available here long enough to make field tests of this nature. Anyway, when you consider that its exposure to high-intensity u/v is limited (hot days and early morning/late evening sun), the deterioration would be minimal. So, go ahead, buy one if you can. Me, I'll stick to me trusty old gunny-sack and plastic bags!

Bill Tomalin.

UPSEILING

Noting the reference to the use of pulleys when hauling a stretcher vertically (Speleo No. 146), I could not resist writing to proclaim to the caving fraternity how this technique was perfected in the early 70's by one illustrious ex-President and friends.

Bearing in mind that most of my early caving trips were virtually S & R situations anyway (candles and clothes line cord), the reader is asked to sympathise with the non-technical explanation to follow.

To exit from Kubla, our rigging consisted of one static line, one doubled abseil rope through a single-block pulley, the idea being

that the ascending caver tied onto the abseil rope while his companions (never less than three) grabbed the free end. On the command "Do I have to!?", the three ground-men would haul rapidly away. The climber, if he were lucky, would adopt a running stance up the cliff - if unlucky, a face-to-cliff posture.

The interesting bit was when you reached the pulley. A frantic yell or despairing shriek was the usual signal to stop pulling. A well-trained ground-crew would then allow slack for the climber to negotiate the top five feet or so. On occasion, less well-trained crew upon hearing the signal would drop their end of the rope, cup their hands to ears and yell "What?", where upon the climber would have to go through the whole exercise again, if he survived.

"Ha, ha!!" I can hear our technical experts muttering, "What happens when the numbers pulling are insufficient to lift the climber?" Well, we had that under control - the static rope was tied on to the climber and pulled up by the mob at the top at the same time as the depleted ground-crew pulled down! The last climber had to be fit. He would back off about 25 yards, yell "Do I have to!?", then run to the cliff, hopefully coinciding with the heaving top mob, and race up the wall. This system rarely failed.

The beauty of this system was that everyone had something to do - none of that hanging around getting cold. The added excitement of running up a cliff, squeezing through a pulley, skinning your nose and the fatalistic hope that the ground-crew were not deaf, all these added to the great sport of upseiling. (Not recommended for 60 plus I.Q.'s)

Bill Tomalin.

TRIP REPORTS

Florentine Valley (Junee Ridge) - Saturday 8.9.79

Party: Geoff Fisher (Maydena Branch), Dale Madden, Ian Sylvester
(non-members)

The party was to include Chris and Diana Davies but they were sidelined by illness at the last moment. Our objective was to further explore the cave described in Speleo No. 148. We left Maydena with stacks of gear, hoping for great things.

Everything went smoothly on the descent, with Dale and Ian really getting enthused. The point where our first trip had been halted was soon reached and ladders became necessary. Sixty foot of ladder was rigged, allowing us to reach a small pond visible from the top of the pitch. It then became obvious that the cave was much more extensive than we'd imagined. About three metres below the pond was an overhang which effectively blocked our view. Scientific tests (throwing stones) revealed that the overhang was perched above a long drop.

Another ladder was attached and I went down to peer over the edge. Below was a pitch of 30m - 40m, beyond which the cave continued. I didn't feel confident to go any further, apart from being wet and cold, so we returned to the surface where number tag 341 was fastened to the entrance.

This cave is a "must" for further attention, and I hope that non-Maydena members will be able to overcome their "Wolf Hole Obsession" to do some real exploration, both in 341 and the area in which it's located.

Geoff Fisher.

Florentine Valley (Owl Pot) - Saturday, 15.9.79

Party: Leigh Gleeson (SCS), Stuart Nicholas (TCC)

Originally set down as a Tassie Pot trip, plans had to be changed when Chris Rathbone indicated he could not make it that weekend.

The pot has apparently only one 30 m pitch not far from the surface. The entrance is very spectacular being a 3m x 4m hole in the gully side and descending at a steep 45° angle to the bottom of a high angled rift along the end of which is the pitch.

Unfortunately, Stuart had taken the wrong drill and hence the bolt was very loose in the hole! Wishing to stay in one piece we retreated to the surface after about an hour underground. After a cup of tea, we did a bit of surface trogging off the end of Chrisps Road (left branch) finding a stream sink and a limestone bluff.

Stuart Nicholas.

Florentine Valley (Tassie Pot) - Saturday 22.9.79

Party: Leigh Gleeson, Lindsay Wilson (SCS), Chris Rathbone (Ditto) and Stuart Nicholas (TCC)

Following the Owl Pot faux pas of the week before, this trip was planned with every detail being investigated - we even looked at the survey!

Whilst gearing up prior to the $\frac{1}{2}$ minute slog to the entrance, Leigh discovered he was missing a vital part - his lamp. At the same time, Lindsay discovered his lamp had developed a short during transport and hence was flat! After some discussion Chris and Stuart handed over their lights and then tore off back into Max's to obtain two more lamps. No actual trip time was lost since Leigh and Lindsay were still rigging the second pitch (directly under the first) when we got back.

Except for the occasional lump of mud or wood flying past, the entrance pitch is a superb 42m shaft. The second pitch is also great but suffers through having no protection at the top from objects falling from the top of the entrance pitch. A wriggle down the slightly hairy chimney gets one to the top of the last pitch which is about 80m.

By this time, one of Max's lights had failed and neither Chris, Stuart nor Leigh felt A1 owing to various wogs. Eventually, Chris, Leigh and Lindsay descended, leaving Stuart with a dead light, heaps of food and the flu.

Everyone was out on the surface by about 17.30 after a slightly dead but nevertheless interesting trip.

Stuart Nicholas.