NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

Sat. 16 August OR Sun. 17 August	Junee Florentine - A "slip trip" to investigate hole known by Max off the side of the landslip on Wheretts Lookout - quite promising from what we've heard - Geoff Fisher seems to be in charge.
Wed. 20 August	Committee Meeting - also informal get-together at S.C.S. clubrooms after (see inside) - 7 Rupert Avenue, 8.00 p.m.) for committee meeting).
Weekend 23-24 August	Speleo Sports - Macquarie Uni. in Sydney - organised by MUSIG OR if you're not in Sydney why not do some surveying on Junee Ridge - contact Stuart Nichols or Diana Davies (N.B. no previous experience required!)
Saturday 30 August	Junee Florentine - yet another go at Trapdoor Swallet (weather permitting) - a good trip for some of our newer members. See Stuart Nicholas.
Wed. 03 Sept.	General Meeting 8.00 p.m. at 7 Rupert Avenue Anyone taken any slides lately? Bring them along if you have.
Friday 12 Sept.	Annual Dinner - Ali Baba's in Sandy Bay - come along for this, social experience of the year! Contact the Davies (preferably come along to the General Meeting).
Wed. 17 Sept.	Committee Meeting 8.00 p.m. at 7 Rupert Avenue.
Weekend 20-21 Sept.	S. & R. Workshop at Mole Creek. Be there! More information next month.
Sometime in September	Chairman JF99 - This trip will definitely go, despite rumors to the contrary! We only need one more bod to make a strong team of four. See Stuart Nicholas.
27-31 Dec.,	13th Biennial Conference of the A.S.F. - Melbourne.
18-25 July, 1981	8th International Speleological Congress, Kentucky, U.S.A.

EDITORIAL

Well, here we are again - another month, another Spiel. Activity all over the place, plenty of enthusiasm, prospective members rolling in and two new trip leaders to lead them into the bowels of the Earth!

Our club is currently in a mini-boom period. To maintain this high requires your help - trips must cater for a wide range of interests, not just a minority who can afford and are interested in hard SRT caving. Diversity is the name of the game with possible fields of interest ranging from speleochemistry to "sport" so why not get a trip going and do your own thing in the fantastic underworld that abounds in Tasmania.

ONLY FIVE (5) MONTHS TO GO!!! YES, YOU HAVE ONLY FIVE (5) MONTHS TO GO TO PREPARE FOR:

* * * * CAVE CONVICT * * * *

* * * 1980 * * *

THE 13TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

OF THE

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL

FEDERATION

MELBOURNE, 27TH - 31ST DECEMBER, 1980.

NEW TRIP LEADERS

At the July meeting, Diana Davies and Trevor Wailes were elected as leaders. Congratulations, and may there be many trip reports forthcoming from your trips!

For those interested, current trip leaders are (from memory):

Chris Davies	72 4104 (H)
Diana Davies	72 4104 (H)
Geoff Fisher	20 8357 (W)
Albert Goede	39 9265 (H)
Max Jeffries	88 2256 (H)
Bruce McIntosh	34 2833 (W)
Stuart Nicholas	28 3054 (H)
Trevor Wailes	25 1801 (H)

SEARCH AND RESCUE

This regular monthly topic comes up yet again. S. & R. registration forms are rolling in but there are still many blanks on the membership list. Even if your are not available for call-out, please send in a completed form - it could save us time trying to contact you when you're not available anyway.

SEARCH AND RESCUE (continued)

There seems to be some confusion as to who finally gets the forms - the registration list (and forms) stop with the club S. & R. officers, the Police only have a short "contact list". The first member of which to be contacted organises the club call-out from the complete club list. I hope that clears up the confusion.

Don't forget the Cave Search and Rescue Workshop at Mole Creek on September 20th-21st. Full details next month.

TCC/SCS COMBINED TRIPS

This topic has been brought up many times and combined trips do periodically happen but perhaps members of both clubs should participate in each others' trips more often.

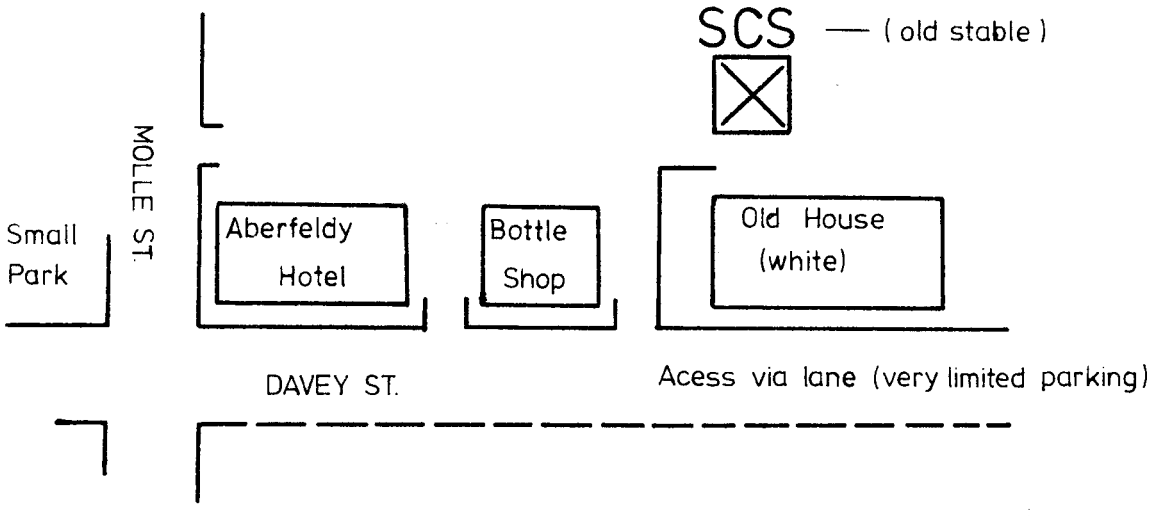
For the benefit of some of our new members it might pay to explain that in Hobart there are in fact two caving clubs - Tasmanian Caveneering Club (that's us!) and the Southern Caving Society. SCS tend to have ups and downs just like TCC and it is the opinion of some members of both clubs that a combined effort would give a greater range and diversity of trips for all cavers in Hobart.

Obviously each club has their own "hunting grounds" but I can see no reason why we all should not operate as a big happy (informal) family in so far as most trips are concerned.

To this end, SCS have invited members of TCC to their clubroom on the night of August. [redacted] (20) for an informal get-together. To avoid confusion, (or add to it!) a rough map is given below of SCS clubroom location.

Please try and make it along as the meet will undoubtedly be to the benefit of caving in Tasmania which is after all why you and I joined the club in the first place, i.e. to go caving in Tasmania!

Stuart Nicholas.



HOW FAST DO TASMANIAN STALAGMITES GROW?

A little over eighteen (18) months ago club members helped me to remove a broken 107cm tall stalag mite from Kubla Khan. It had been broken into a number of pieces and a couple of unsuccessful attempts had been made to glue it together. Stalagmites that can be dated by the uranium-thorium method can often be used for isotopic analysis of the oxygen and carbon in the calcite to reconstruct the temperature conditions at the time when they were growing. They can also tell us something about how much vegetation was growing at the surface above the cave. At the Geography Department in the University of Tasmania we have almost completed analyzing a 197cm tall stalagmite from Little Trimmer Cave, also at Mole Creek.

This work still has to be done for the Kubla Khan stalagmite but it has now been tested so that we know how old it is and how fast it grew. Nothing about this stalagmite gave any indication of its size but we now know that it stated growing about 194 000 years ago and stopped growing about 94 000 years ago. So this very modest stalagmite took 100 000 years to grow! During the first 42cms it grew at a very slow rate of 0.64cms every thousand years. Then it suddenly speeded up and continued to grow at a rate of 1.82cms every thousand years until it reached its present height.

By comparison, the Little Trimmer stalagmite, which was found broken in six pieces, stated growing perhaps 120 000 years ago and stopped growing some 78 000 years ago at the beginning of the Last Ice Age. Only the top half has been successfully dated but it grew at a much faster rate of 5.41cms every thousand years.

However, both were slow growers compared to a 72cm tall stalagmite from Frankcombe Cave in the Florentine Valley. This was dated by the carbon 14 method and was found to have grown at a rate of some 27 cms per thousand years during the last 2800 years. This is probably one of the fastest growing rates recorded for a stalagmite anywhere in the world. The growth rates of the Mole Creek stalagmites are more typical compared with the rates measured in North America and Europe.

Albert Goede.

COLLECTION OF CAVE SNAILS

Subterranean snails are known from many parts of the world including New Zealand, Japan, Europe and North America. At the present time none are known from Australia but they almost certainly do occur here and are just awaiting discovery. Most cave dwelling snails are very small, white and live in seepages and streams in the caves. They are important in helping to understand the past distribution of animals because many appear to be the relics of once widely-distributed groups which have disappeared from the surface but have survived in caves. For example one genus of small snails lives in Europe, Japan and New Zealand but is only known from caves.

These little snails can be collected by using a fine mesh net (maximum mesh size about that of a tea strainer - an ordinary kitchen sieve is too coarse). Many subterranean snails are only 1 to 2mm in size although slightly larger ones of 2 to 3mm in length are also known. It is probably for this reason that they have been overlooked in Australian caves.

COLLECTION OF CAVE SNAILS (continued)

The net should be scooped across the surface of mud or sand, or debris, stones or rocks picked up and washed over it. Another method is to stir up the debris in the stream or pool, to lift the snails from the bottom, and then scoop with the net. Any debris collected in the net should be shaken into a container and preserved in 5% neutral formalin (most easily made by adding sodium bicarbonate to concentrated formalin to excess) or, if formalin is not available, in 70% ethyl alcohol. It is important to preserve the samples because the "soft parts" are essential to work out the taxonomic relationships of the snails.

The writer is very interested in receiving samples that may contain snails for a research project in which he is currently engaged. Any postage or freight costs will be reimbursed if necessary and full acknowledgement will be given in any publication in which the material is included.

Wintson F. Ponder,
Australian Museum,
College Street,
SYDNEY. N.S.W. 2000.

FLORENTINE VALLEY (Saturday, 2nd August, 1980)

Party: Geoff Fisher, Nick Hume, Trevor Wailes

The aim of our trip was to explore Pillingers Creek Cave (JF66), the entrance to which was found back in May. We drove up Roberts Hill Road to the start of the track and made our way to the cave by mid-morning. Rumors indicated the existence of a 50' pitch so we went prepared with ladders and rope.

Entry to the cave is through a boulder choke, which was very hazardous. Loose rocks varying in size from pebbles to boulders made our progress slow. Past the entrance the cave opened up into a large chamber with a steeply sloping floor. Evidence of rockfalls was apparent everywhere, many rocks were chipped and cracked and unsteady underfoot. Gaps and holes between the boulders on the floor offered a potential for exploration so we decided to check them out on the way back. We bottomed the cave fairly quickly without need of the ladders as the route went around and under the huge rocks, rather than over them. After a snack at the end of the cave we headed back to the entrance.

Near the entrance a promising hole was sighted, so we rigged a ladder in it and went down to explore. Below the ladder pitch a series of easy clumbs took us to a depth of about 60'. Although there were leads here and there, they all blocked off, mainly by recent-looking rock movement. By this time we'd had enough and headed back to the ladder. Trevor and I were in front, with Nick about to climb up from a level below to join us. As I stepped forward a rock moved under my foot and fell under the boulder, where Nick was. I attempted to warn him but it happened too quickly for him to be able to protect himself. The rock had hit the back of Nick's right hand, which was obviously extremely painful. I improvised a bandage and bound his hand while Trevor rigged a ladder which was now needed to get Nick back out of the hole, climbing being out of the question.

FLORENTINE VALLEY (continued)

Even though he could only use his left hand he was able to safely ascend the ladders, albeit slowly. Nick continued up through the boulder choke without too much difficulty and in a short while we were all back on the surface relieved that our incident had not been worse. Back in Hobart Nick went to the R.H.H. for treatment, where it was found that he had broken a metacarpal bone. Although it was unfortunate to have been injured at all, the nature of JF66 was such that the accident could have been worse, possibly even requiring a full-scale rescue exercise.

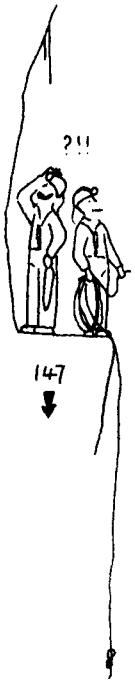
Geoff Fisher

TRIP REPORT (Sunday, 27th July, 1980)
J.F.147

Party: Andrew Briggs, Chris and Diana Davies, Nick Hume and Peter Watts

The trip began as a K.D. - to the bottom effort, but apathy struck, and the survivors decided on J.F.147.

On our only other visit (Speil 144) we ran out of gear, and decided that 147 was not terribly safe. This time we surveyed down to approx. 80m, with a passage length of approx. 100m (it is pretty steep!)



The party was stopped by a 20 metre (min.) pitch associated with an absolute lack of safe, natural anchor points. High quality rock bolting is required as the rock is very soft. We did'nt have any rock bolting equipment.

J.F.147 retained its reputation as an unsafe cave. Diana was hit on the helmet by a sizeable cobble. There was non-one above her. Chris attached a ladder to a prominent, jutting, apparently solid rock and Andrew went down the 2.5 to 3 metre step. Chris then followed and pulled the anchor down on top of himself. It weighed 10 to 15kg, but, forunately no damage was done to person or gear! Low cost lesson!

Andrew proposed the name of "Two Straws" for 147 as that is about the limit of the formation. We will return in the near future as this promises to be a deep cave, and is getting safer with depth.

Chris Davies.

Note: The survey team was Diana, Nick and Peter. Diana has drawn maps. These will be published when exploration is closer to completion.

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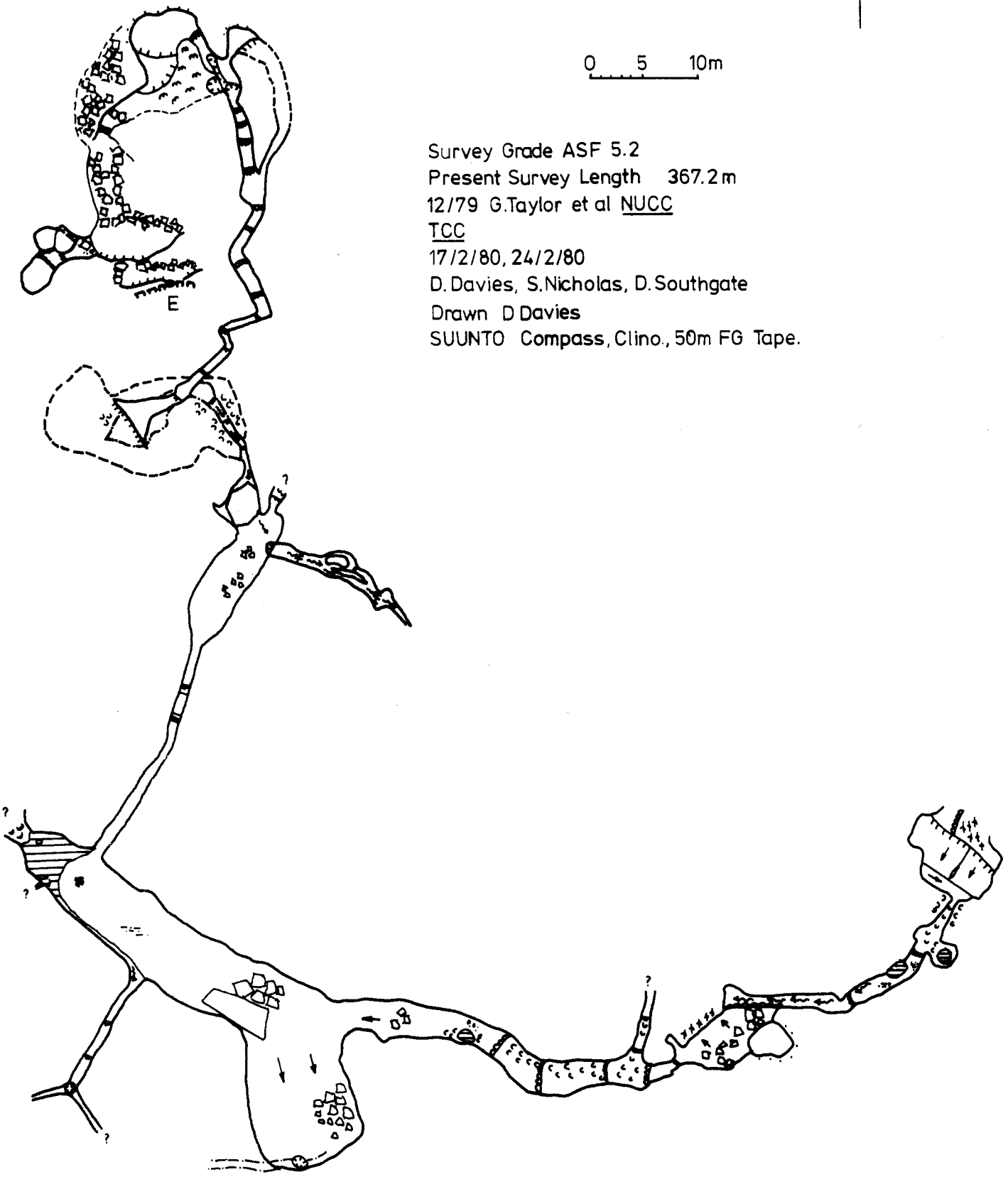
JF 341

Plan

Scale 1:500

MN

0 5 10m



Survey Grade ASF 5.2

Present Survey Length 367.2 m

12/79 G.Taylor et al NUCC

TCC

17/2/80, 24/2/80

D. Davies, S.Nicholas, D.Southgate

Drawn D Davies

SUUNTO Compass, Clino., 50m FG Tape.

JF 341

Longitudinal Developed Section

Scale 1:930