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Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Established 1946



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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

Wed. October 12 Committee Meeting, 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue.

Sat. October 18
or Sun. October 19 JF341 - further exploration of this great
cave on Junee Rdge. Contact: Geoff Fisher

Sat. October 25 Trapdoor Swallet - after the last trip we
should be able to get thru' into the cave
proper - bring your waterproof gear!
See: Stuart Nicholas

Wed. November 5 General Meeting, 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue.
Bring your slides etc. for entertainment.

Weekend November
8 - 9 Wilderness Medicine Workshop, Waddamana

Regular week nights
while daylight
saving is on Techniques training or - how to prusik big
pitches without stopping and climb ladders
without falling off!

Wed. November 19 Committee Meeting, 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue.

Sometime during
November Tasman's Arch - a great slack day SRT-ing
this 62m pitch. Bring your suntan lotion!

Weekend November
29 - 30 The Chairman - unfortunately bureaucratic
bungling stopped the last trip but come-what-
may, this time we'll DEFINITELY GO. So, get
fit and organise yourself some knee-pads.
Stuart Nicholas is the show director.

Wed. December 3 General Meeting, 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue. As
a Christmas special, we should have some
underground French films for this meeting!

Wed. December 17 Committee Meeting, 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue.

Last week of the
year Christmas trip - destination? Nick Hume and
Trevor Wailes are keen to go somewhere so get
in touch with either of those guys.

Is anyone keen to have an informal Christmas party somewhere,
sometime?

December 27 - 31 13th Biennial Conference of the A.S.F. in
Melbourne.

EDITORIAL

A rescue last month has proved the viability of our call-out system and the dedication of our members at such times. Everyone contacted responded without hesitation despite, in some cases, prior social arrangements on the Saturday night in question. The efficiency of the operation was something to behold with everyone doing the right thing at the right time enabling the whole crew to be back home about 12 hours after the initial call-out. Good work (and may it never happen again!)

PUBLICATIONS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Most members would know that T.C.C. exchanges publications with quite a large number of clubs, societies, and organisations here in Tasmania, on the North Island and overseas. Most publications received find their way to the Editor's/Quartermaster's residence where they sit for a while before disappearing into the club archives.

As of now, I intend to produce a list of the magazines received together with a brief summary of the contents of each. You will all then know about the interesting reading you have been missing out on up to now.

Received this month:

Down Under Vol. 19 No. 3, August 1980. Newsletter of the U.Q.S.S. Notice of AGM, historical notes on Chillagoe, index to back issues, trip reports - Mt. Etna and Fanning River.

Griff No. 208, September 1980. Newsletter of Hamilton Tomo Group (N.Z.). Always good reading with various trip reports, past and future.

The Journal of the Sydney Speleological Society Vol. 24 No. 9, September 1980. Summary of 1973 Niugini expedition (inspiring stuff), trip report of the 1979 Tasmanian expedition.

Nargun Vol. 13 No. 4, October 1980. Newsletter of the V.S.A. Moons of Jupiter, history of Buchan, various trip reports, cave descriptions.

N.S.S. News Vol. 38 No. 6, June 1980. Newsletter of the National Speleological Society, U.S.A. Plenty of good adverts., article on Manison Cave, Kentucky.

Wildlife Newsletter, August 1980. First edition of newsletter from N.P.W.S., caving (in this edition), wildlife research. Comments about the newsletter and suggestions of topics are encouraged.

All these plus more are available for reading at 7 Rupert Avenue but are not available for loan. Come along to a meeting and for your edification, read a mag. or two, or three.

CLUB NEWS

Nick Hume is growing a beard. Must be a reaction to the thought of having to deal with the heavy climbing/caving scene in N.Z. over summer!

Correspondence with Ross Ellis (S.S.S.) recently has brought forth the information that he can supply most of the books on the sheet included with last month's Spiel plus many others. If you want to know more, see Stuart Nicholas or contact Ross directly at 11 Arkana Street, Telopea, N.S.W. 2117. Phone: (02) 630 5384 (H).

Back on the topic of N.Z., there is an NZSS trip in late December this year to Nettle-bed Cave (I don't know where that is in N.Z.) with the prospect of bettering both the local length and depth records. I wonder if they'd mind if a couple of Tassie hards dropped in?

It's about time some of us (including me) got fitter than we are at present. Noticing the huffing and puffing on a few recent trips, it is quite evident that fitness is lacking in a few members. Organising yourself to spare a half hour or so after work (or before breakfast!) shouldn't be any hassle - remember the hardest part of training is getting out the door. If anyone is keen, weight training facilities can be arranged, but at this time aerobic fitness should be the main aim so get stuck into it.

FLORENTINE LIMESTONE IN PARTICULAR

The following article is general to say the least and is confined to the Florentine Valley and Junea Ridge limestones. The structures in the area which have major interest cave-wise are the Westfield syncline, Humbolt fault, Tim Shea anticline and the Tiger syncline. The position of the base of the dolerite is also useful and an attempt at positioning these major features on a contour map for all to see is underway. These features appear to strike at something approximating 330°N.

The Gordon Limestone sequence (subgroup of Junea) has been divided into three formations:-

1. Benjamin Limestone - Upper limestone member
- Lord's siltstone
- Lower limestone
2. Cashions Creek Limestone - Wherretts Chert member
3. Karmberg Limestone

The sub-group is 4,000 - 6,000 ft. (1,200 - 1,800 m) thick in the Florentine Valley and is 430 - 480 million years old (Ordovician).

Karmberg Limestone: the upper 150 m of limestone is chert rich; the lower 300 m consists of impure nodular limestone and siltstone and can be seen out-cropping at the Nine Road junction. The chert member is mainly unfossiliferous, dark grey and contains up to 50% chert. It out-crops on the Four and Six Roads and the NW slopes of Wherrets Lookout.

Cashion's Creek Limestone: is thickly bedded dolomite limestone which forms prominent strike ridges and weathers to a white colour. Outcrop can be seen at the junction of Lord's and Westfield Roads. Maclurites (a large flat bottomed gastropod) and Girvanella (spherical colonies of alga up to $\frac{1}{2}$ " across) occur in profusion.



Typical x-section
of Maclurites

Benjamin Limestone:

- (i) The lower member is exposed in the vicinity of the 16 Road. The lower half of the member is mainly unfossiliferous with occasional brown to black beds of limonitic limestone. A distinctive fossiliferous horizon is exposed about 100 m SW of the Eden Creek and Lawrence Creek Roads junction. The rock is mainly composed of fragments of corals, sponges, brachiopods, gastropods and cephalopods.
- (ii) The Lord's Siltstone member is 15 m thick and is exposed on the Florentine Road 200 m east of the Florentine R. Bridge.
- (iii) Upper Limestone member is 600 - 700 m thick and is exposed at the southern end of the Westfield syncline. Fossils are distributed throughout the member, corals being most common with gastropods, brachiopods and some cephalopods also present. At least six zones of very impure brownish black limonitic limestone occur (Two Straws - JF 147).

Bibliography:

- (1) "Ordovician Stratigraphy of the Florentine Synclinorium, Southwest Tasmania", Corbett, K.Q., Banks, M.R., Pap. Proc.R.Soc.Tasm. 107, 207-230.
- (2) K. Corbett, Hons. thesis, Uni. of Tas.

Want to know more? I can loan you a copy of the above.

Di Davies.

THE 1980 CAVE SEARCH AND RESCUE WORKSHOP

Held once again in the vicinity of the Wet Caves campsite at Mole Creek, this year's workshop was once again a great success. Approximately 70 people took part including police from all parts of the State, ambulance officers, climbers and, of course, cavers.

Most who arrived on the Friday night were met by a very MASSie person wearing a purple canoeing helmet with two diving torches attached to it. The uniqueness of this spectacle was such that a few of the assembled crowd even risked a photo or two!

Also happening on the Friday evening was the hypothermia data collection exercise. Two bods, one fit, one not, were soaked in water and installed in Honecomb Cave. Physiological and environmental data were collected during the night by the ambulance officers from whom a report should be forthcoming fairly shortly.

Saturday morning dawned fine and mild which was just as well considering the muddy nature of the paddock camp site. Various stretcher, drag-mat and body manoeuvring exercises were carried out during the morning together with a cave-diving exercise in Wet Cave. Four police divers plus Nick Hume and Stuart Nicholas from T.C.C. took part in this, the main aim of which was to familiarise all concerned with easy diving conditions underground. An open pond near the Daylight Hole was used on this "first time" experiment, maximum depth being about 3m but, with a fairly strong current and visibility 0.5m or less, conditions were somewhat interesting! Disorientation proved to be a major problem, as expected.

Saturday afternoon, the same stretcher type exercises were carried out with teams swapping equipment and caves. The divers plus six others assembled at Shish Kebab for a hauling demonstration put on by the T.C.C. bods involved in Dave Southgate's retrieval from Slaughterhouse Pot a few weeks earlier. Various people laddered and abseiled into the 24m entrance pitch while the hauling system was rigged. The situation required the main pulley to be tied back against the pull on the hauling rope. Evidently the pulling effort of three people when approximately doubled by the hauling system is quite considerable as the tie-back tape broke while a luckless policeman was being hauled up the pitch. The main pulley belay was still OK so there was no problem in this case, but it's a lesson worth remembering. More detailed info. on this incident will appear in a later Spiel.

The fine mild Saturday night provided an ideal environment for socialising which I believe continued until the not very early hours of Sunday morning. Rain interrupted play at this time and continued with such vigour that Sunday's planned hill search was abandoned, our energies being expended against bogged horseless carriages instead.

All in all a very successful weekend with a number of new activities taking place and a lot being learnt, particularly by the divers and haulers. Next year's should be even bigger and better! For those interested, T.C.C. members taking part were Chris and Diana Davies, Nick Hume, Stuart Nicholas, Chris (ditto) Rathbone, Dave Southgate and Trevor Wailes.

Stuart Nicholas,
TCC Search & Rescue
Officer.

TRIP REPORTS

One day the full saga will be told of this incredible voyage to the cave on the south coast of Tasmania. A trip involving such stalwarts as Albert, Bill Des (North West), Iain and four murky sailors from Hobart's fishing fleet.

The good ship Frolic was our transport and, loaded to the scuppers with survey gear, tugging apparatus and goodly sustenance, headed out into the wilderness of 10 metre swells and 70 knot winds on Saturday, 30th August. Eight hours of terror and bravado found us casting somewhat green looks at two sea-cave entrances set in monstrous cliffs from a distance of 200 metres - the said metres being crammed with nasties like reefs, crashing surf, grinding boulders and no doubt a Jaws or two laughing their stupid heads off.

Discretion, old-age and a touch of mal de mer played the better part of valour and we surfed the odd 10 miles away to safe (!?) anchorage at Deadman's Bay. From this gently heaving haven we went ashore to recover and camp.

Next day dawned murky and hail-filled. Provisions running low so Bill (ex Presidente) and Des (N.W. chief) rowed a small dinghy out to the mother-ship for goodies. Three minutes after

boarding, el Presidente had relinquished his breakfast and the dinghy, which had been cunningly lashed to the rail with fifteen varieties of bowlines, was fast disappearing toward New Zealand. Nothing daunted but spurred on by the Captain's insistence over 2-way radio that we "go and catch the bloody thing!" the aforementioned matelots drove the Frolic after said dinghy. Despite gale force winds and massive swells, plus a decidedly crook feeling, you will be happy, gentle reader, to hear that the heroes reclaimed the dinghy from the maw of the ocean. Medals were handed out all round and the (now gray haired) Captain explained that "boats do not have brakes and you don't really have to give way to your right", to the adrenalin drenched figures of the adventurers.

The weather continued unabated (surprise, surprise!) in its usual South West pattern - you know! - Bright blue skies and the gentlest of breezes until you've decided to go - then the usual! By 10 bells on Monday we had had enough of playing footsies with leeches and dodging the odd hail storm so we embarked (got on the boat).

A crashing run through the mad storm of the Southern Ocean via Wedge Island saw us safe in the estuaries leading to home. Safe did I say? Some idiot decided that Albert could drive and we ploughed up the pitch black waters of the Derwent with the Captain below singing sea-shanties and a nervous Hollander steering a noble course which threatened to shorten Bruny Island by a few rocks and god help any other boat in our way on these tempestuous waters.

From the relative safety of my shore based desk I can look back with some satisfaction. Preparation for the trip seemed pretty good, the companions of the Ark were delightful and, did I mention it, there is a cave there!

Bill Tomalin.

Saturday, 6th September, 1980: Florentine Valley

Party: Geoff Fisher, Dave Southgate, Nick Hume, Bruce Tranter

The object of our trip was to complete exploration of Slaughterhouse Pot (un-numbered) which was first reported in Spiel No. 68 of 1972. The entrance is approximately 500m S.E. of Growling Swallet and proved difficult to find. It was about 1.00pm by the time we actually started caving.

The first section of the cave is a challenging squeeze about 30m in length. This ends on a rock-fill perch above a 30m pitch. We knew from the report in the abovementioned Spiel that the pitch was awkward for SRT (a lot of rope protection required) so we came armed with ladders.

Geoff and Dave descended with enough gear to, hopefully, finish the second pitch, estimated at 20m. A bit of easy free climbing and the top of this pitch was reached. Geoff descended with Dave providing a belay.

The pitch was, in fact, 20m and ended at the top of a talus slope in a large chamber. Walking down this slope to the floor a dry creek bed was found and explored, but it appeared to block off. It could possibly go but the presence of large loose rocks made single-handed exploration unsafe. At this stage, depth was estimated at 100m.

The return trip to the surface commenced. The lower pitch was de-rigged and the gear hauled up by Nick and Bruce. Dave was first to ascend the remaining ladder pitch. About 18m from the floor he appeared to tire and paused for a rest. Suddenly the ladder swung from under him, he lost his grip and fell. Thanks to Nick's expert belay, Dave was uninjured and was able to regain the ladder and safely descend.

Exhausted and badly shaken, Dave was unable to climb the ladder so attempts were made to haul him out on the belay rope. However, the lack of pulleys and friction from the contact with the rock in numerous places, foiled these attempts.

It then became apparent that extra help would be needed, so, after sending Dave and Geoff some warm clothing and such food as was available, Nick and Bruce got the rescue under way.

Geoff Fisher.

Rescue Report - Slaughterhouse Pot: 06-09-80

Discovered in 1972, this hole had not been visited until last month, when a trip was run for the purpose of continuing exploration from the top of an undescended pitch. A report on the trip appears elsewhere in this edition of the Spiel.

A phone call at approximately 17.50 on Saturday, 6th September to Stuart Nicholas from Nick Hume at the ANM gate, Maydena, initiated a small scale callout of T.C.C. members for the purpose of rescuing Dave Southgate from Slaughterhouse Pot in the Florentine Valley.

A party of five - Stuart Nicholas, Chris and Diana Davies, Trevor Wailes and Marsh (?) (one of Trevor's mates) assembled at Max Jeffries' house in Maydena by 20.15 and departed about 20.35 accompanied by Max and Nick Hume who had been waiting for us. At the gate, Max acquired the key to the gate lodge and also an A.N.M. vehicle equipped with two-way radio. The party set out on the walk from the Nine Road about 21.20 in light rain but fairly mild conditions and found the cave entrance at 22.45 after a certain amount of wandering around - having Bruce Tranter at the entrance helped considerably!

Nick and Diana quickly trogged up and went in to check on the current situation, taking some food and a couple of wool shirts with them for Geoff and Dave. Stuart and Chris geared up and accompanied Nick back in when he re-emerged after the initial reccy. Pulleys, slings, Jumars, krabs and so on were dragged in and a 2:1 hauling system set up. This worked with astounding efficiency enabling our team of four - two pulling hauling rope, one on main belay rope and safety Jumar with the fourth resetting the hauling Jumar and supervising hauling from the pitch top - to haul Dave and Geoff up the 26m pitch in very quick time.

The gear was packed up and we all then retreated to the surface where Max and the rest of the crew had a huge fire and a brew going.

We reluctantly left our fire at about 0300 and staggered back out to the vehicles, arriving back in Hobart around 0715 after a successful night's work.

Thanks must once again go to A.N.M. for their co-operation, Chris and Diana Davies (who missed out on a dinner party), Trevor Wailes and his mate Marsh, and particularly Max Jeffries for organising the radio vehicle, gate keys and the Stones Green Ginger Wine after the successful conclusion of the (w)hole show!

Notes:

- (a) The time taken for the rescue team to reach the cave (5 hours from the call) was the minimum possible and gives an indication of the time that may elapse should a rescue be needed from a difficult and/or remote cave.
- (b) It is very gratifying to note that the operation was carried out entirely by T.C.C. members with no outside assistance. Police S & R were notified shortly after Nick's call but were not needed.
- (c) The four guys on the original trip did all the right things and kept their cool (in more ways than one!) while waiting for things to happen. Bruce Tranter did a particularly good job of sitting alone outside the cave entrance awaiting the appearance of the crew, as it was his first ever caving trip.

Stuart Nicholas.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.....

A FEW WORDS FROM DAVE SOUTHGATE:

After having been hauled out of the hole I definitely owe a lot of people many words of thanks, anyway here are just a few.

Firstly, to the original party. To Nick for not letting go of the belay rope when my body decided it didn't want to go upwards anymore and then racing off to Maydena to raise help. To Geoff for staying down the hole with me for eight hours and to Bruce who spent the same amount of time above on the surface.

Secondly, thanks to all those who gave up their Saturday night and Sunday morning and hared off to the Florentine at a moments notice - Stuart, Di, Chris, Trevor, Marsh (friends of Trev's) and Max.

It was an extremely welcome sight to find Stuey, Di, Chris and Nick at the top of the pitch (really great ride up!), then to go outside and find a roaring fire with the rest of the party dispensing hot drinks of various descriptions (and, of course, Stone's Green Ginger Wine - thanks Max!)

In summary, thanks to everyone for a tremendous co-ordinated effort - the way the whole operation went certainly showed that the rescue organisation in the club does work effectively.

Finally, being stuck down a hole for eight hours definitely shows up the deficiencies in one's personal equipment. It's easy to get slack about not taking woollen clothes, extra food or other little goodies like candles, etc. with the "it won't happen to me" mentality. Anyway, if/when it does, I can assure you you'll appreciate having the right gear along with you!

Dave Southgate.

Saturday, 4th October, 1980: Junee-Florentine

Party: Geoff Fisher, Trevor Wailes, Andrew Briggs, Cam Douglas

The purpose of our trip was to investigate the drainage hole at the bottom of the Bone Pit (see Speleo Spiel No. 160). We went equipped with a G-pick and lump hammer to aid in excavation. A crowbar had been mentioned but, unfortunately, no one had brought one.

We rigged the pitch in record time (for T.C.C.!) and were soon sniffing about, ready to start shifting rocks from a promising hole. It quickly became apparent that without more substantial tools - sledge hammer, crowbar, pick - we wouldn't get very far. We did, however, manage to shift some rockfill and could see that the water in the cave ran off through the boulder choke below us.

Being limited by our lack of equipment, we had no choice but to leave after a fairly short stay although we had made a start and the prospects for extending the Bone Pit seem reasonable.

P.S. Anyone interested in climbing the spar near the Bone Pit?

Geoff Fisher.

P.P.S. (Anyone interested in replacing my G-pick? - Ed.)

