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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

Sun. Feb. 15 TRAPDOOR SWALLET - the BIG (?) push! Chris &
Trevor seem to be organising this.

Wed. Feb. 18 NORM'S SLIDE SHOW - 8 p.m. at 7 Rupert Avenue.
Be There!!!

Sat.Sun. & Mon. CHAIRMAN - another trip to this terrible hole!
Feb. 28 - Mar.02 Also other caving as well on this long weekend.
See Stuart if you need more persuasion!

Wed. Mar. 04 GENERAL MEETING - 8 p.m. at 7 Rupert Avenue.
Perhaps Trev. might show us some more of his
blue movies!

Wed. Mar. 25 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 8 p.m. at 7 Rupert
Avenue. Make sure you come along.

Wed. Apr. 01 APRIL FOOLS DAY! Also a General Meeting at
the usual venue and time.

Is anyone going caving? All meetings and no caving makes T.C.C.
a dull scene, or something like that. What about Dwarrowdelf,
Mini Martin, Cauldron, Niagara, the hole(s) up on and/or near the
slip and around The Gap?

EDITORIAL

Welcome to 1981, the year of exploration! Already a new cave has
been found in the Florentine with good prospects for more, both
there and closer in around the Junee area. This might even be
the year of the BIG breakthrough! Keep in mind that the Growling
Swallet stream flows underground for about 10 km and re-emerges,
having been joined by several other cave streams, at the Junee
Resurgence just down from the Homestead.

Will the exploration of this system be left to cave divers or is
there a "ary" access someplace? It's a pity Khazad-dum didn't go,
but has anyone been in Niagara Pot since 1974?

There are many more caves waiting to be found and explored, one
of which just might provide access to a really big system. So
let's get stuck into it and do some real caving this year. It's
all good training for the 1982 Niugini aspirants, to say nothing
of being good for Tasmanian caving!

CLUB NEWS & OTHER TRIVIA

- Despite what you may have read in the editorial of the latest ASF Newsletter (No. 90), I have not been abducted by SCS!
- ABC TV the other night had a news item giving some details of a recent cave find in Borneo. Apparently, it has a chamber with a floor approximately sixteen times the area of a soccer pitch - this is two and a half times the size of the previously known largest chamber (in Mexico, I think!). Twenty-two speleos were involved in the British expedition.
- Following on from the very successful and informative WILDERNESS MEDICINE WORKSHOP held last November, the Australian Sports Medicine Federation is conducting a further workshop over the weekend of March 28 & 29. This will be a repeat programme, subject to availability of speakers, and I can certainly recommend it to everyone. Further info. from Stuart Nicholas. BE THERE!
- Trevor's SRT gear still has not arrived from the homeland. I hope it's speed of arrival bears no relation to its speed in use!
- There are no FOR SALE ads. this month.
- For the fitness fanatics, why not see Geoff Fisher and join the Trogging Trotters Team in the Run for Fun to be held in May?
- A recent combined SCS/TCC trip to a hole discovered by SCS roughly south of Growling Swallet was quite successful. Still going (only just), Serendipity is approximately 200m deep!

--NORM'S SLIDE SHOW--

For the uninitiated, one only Norm Poulter (the Quiet Rover, the Cream, and other pseudonyms!) is currently in Tassie. For the even less initiated, Norm was here in 1971 for about 8 months and participated in the exploration of Khazad-dum.

He has with him a magnificent slide show of a recent trip into Central Australia together with picutres of other areas of Australia (inc. Tassie). The one and only showing will be next Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 7 Rupert Avenue starting around 8 p.m. Make sure you're there and tell all your friends as well!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 - 8 P.M.

Yes, folks, it's almost that time of year again. Who's going to do what, where and when for the next 12 months of the Club's existence? Think about it.

Don't forget: A.G.M. - Wednesday, March 25 - 8 p.m. at 7 Rupert Avenue.

Have your say in the running of T.C.C., perhaps even stand for one of the office positions.

E A S T E R _ 1 9 8 1

Various bods have suggested an "Easter Extravaganza" at Mole Creek this year. Why not? Sounds great with a Herbert's Pot trip included for the same low cost, namely the fuel to drive up there. See Trevor, Chris or Diana for more info.

WANTED! Keen team to have a go at Herbert's Pot, possibly at Easter depending on, if and when we can get a guide (do we need one?). Also in this area (Mole Creek) are whispers of an old bushranger's cave hideout!!! Privileged information on this is thought to be accurate. A weekend camp is intended and it would be good if we could have a good turnout of old and new members instead of the usual faces - this means YOU. You, reading this magazine and never being in it. Make arrangements now to come at Easter. Lots of easy caves and varying length bushwalks. The more the merrier, Hic! Contact Trevor Wailes, 251801 and don't waste another holiday.

TRIP REPORTS

Hastings Area - Wolf Hole

Saturday, 13 Dec.

Party: Stuart Nicholas & Nick Hume (TCC), Keith Harper, John Cherry, Stuey Scott & Peter van der Woude (Police S&R divers), Phil Jackson & Stefan Eberhard (SCS)

Following on from the initial cave dive "experiment" at the Mole Creek S&R Workshop, a second exercise was organised to dive Lake Pluto in Wolf Hole.

Despite the attraction of a Kubla Khan (Mole Creek) trip which effectively reduced the TCC sherpa troop to zero, we pressed on regardless with the aid of Phil and Stefan from SCS. Carrying scuba gear as well as caving gear up to the cave and lowering it all down the entrance pitch proved to be a formidable task. It was four hours from leaving the vehicles until we were set to dive! Maybe the mosquitoes could be harnessed to fly it in on future trips!

The Police divers operated in pairs with a rope fed from shore, while Nick and myself used Nick's Mk.11 line reel which worked reasonably well. Absolute zero visibility was the order of the day after the first swim around. This made orientation difficult to say the least, although laying out and following the line proved reasonably straightforward. Proceeding by feel around the wall was also difficult because large pieces of the very rotten rock kept falling off at the slightest touch, stirring up the fine silt even more. The deepest point is about 4m with no extensions anywhere, as expected.

After 25-30 mins. of splashing around we de-gearred ourselves and proceeded to laboriously haul bodies and gear out of the cave. No dramas occurred on the entrance pitch although in future, much more care must be taken with the knots used, especially for hauling tanks. The consequences of a dropped full scuba tank are catastrophic and very dangerous to all in the vicinity. For those who don't know, tanks are filled to a pressure between about 2200 psi and 3000 psi depending on type and material of manufacture. A relatively minor knock can break off the brass valve and then you're in big trouble!

Before the next exercise, a more serious attempt has to be made to manufacture a reliable line reel. Following that, much more practice is required in its use, since the successful laying of the line is paramount to everyone's safety.

Stuart Nicholas.

Kubla Khan (almost a movie)

Dec. 13/14, 1980.

"Oldens never die" but they sure come close to expiring! Half way to Mole Creek, the infamous HQ decided to overheat so our arrival at the Kubla camp was delayed. In order not to upset it too much, we rested it outside the Mole Creek pub, while Len and I got our bearings and Boags. Three hours later (after leaving the pub) and checking out every possible track off the road looking for water in dry stream beds that gushed noisily, we parked and set to the task of resting 200 yds. from the elusive Briggs & Co. camp. The morning of the epic trip dawned and Len and I drove down to the Marakooa Cave turn-off to cook breakfast and play cricket (?) until Chris and Di Davies turned up to show us the way to the campsite.

I had heard many things of Kubla Khan and must admit to my suspicions of half truth. The campsite found, the group gathered, loaded with photographic gear, ladders, rope and nourishment. When Greg arrived, we set off.

Fighting our way through hordes of revenous leaches, and low scrub, we arrived at the top entrance to Kubla about 11 a.m. Rigging the initial entrance pitch (10m) took some time - Yawn! Once inside and down the hand line onto the top of the second pitch of 12m approx. which was directly over and down a massive flowstone, things slowed up even more as many photos were taken, in this hall called Forbidden City. This is, or was, impressive but due to the numerous flashes of light is now quite green and lush with algae several feet deep! From here we proceed through many halls, up and down many climbs, snapping and flashing all the way (it's a veritable jungle in there now with the amount of light expended).

After spending 10 years looking at formations in various karst areas around the world, I must admit that the Hall of Kings is surrealistic, but very real and I must say this area of the system is one of the most spectacular I've ever seen. The stalagmite formations following the drip fault above them, leads one through the hall and virtually points the way on up into the roof and on to the next hall over which The Khan itself presides.

The Khan, an immense (? metres) stalagmite, defies photography by its sheer size. Sitting on the lowest level of the Khan, decisions were made as to who wished to continue through the system and who wanted to shoot hundreds more feet of film. If all the film exposed in this half of the system were edited together we'd have a half hour movie and prize winner at that. The decision was made - Chris, Len and myself would continue into the unknown (for us), and the rest of Bill's party would shoot everything that grows fractions of millimetres over the millenia. For me, this is where the real caving starts and the large "tourist" halls end.

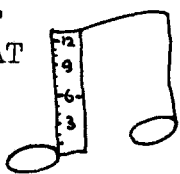
Forty metres up and behind the Khan by the cavern wall is a drop down into an old stream passage with static pools of varying depth. The actual climb which descends through three levels is a good free climb and the whole cave changes shape from large solution halls into sporting, abandoned and active stream passage. This abandoned passage ends positively in a rack wall and a 6m climb into the roof where formations seem to bar the only possible way on. This climb, again sporty, with useful stal hand grips, leads into a short

crawl where water can be heard in the distance and after crawling under, over and through formations, we emerge high on a flowstone ledge in a large chamber with a very active stream somewhere below. Taking as few risks as possible, the undetermined length of the pitch was single-rope and secured to useful handy stals, after Chris gave his approval and abseiled over the gentle curve of the descending flowstone. He kept to the right of the pitch as he went down and found an easy free climb starting about half way down to the cavern floor. The rope was pulled up and doubled so it could be pulled thru after us. Len was next down, and myself last, remembering just in time to bring Len's photography gear which was a good idea as I had the rack rigged for suicide - AHHGG!

The handy 'stal' was perfectly positioned for the pull through and without much fuss we easily climbed down to the streamway. Following the cold water towards its emergence upstream over and thru some uncomfortably deep pools, it got to the stage where, to keep our necks dry, we climbed up into the rift where some hairy traversing became necessary. This manoeuvre continued quite some way at about 10m above the stream on ledges which varied in width on either side so changing sides happened frequently. At one or two sections, we had to climb down to the stream. The climb up to the exit Bill had spoken of, finally presented itself and was difficult to miss, also to climb. A massive flowstone is the problem and after the passage of many muddy feet, the 8m ascent is now a greasy slide. Keeping to the wall edge, we all finally managed to scale it with the help of a rope.

Once up this obstacle, we are back into a large solution hall with a deeply gouged floor. A shaft of light from the exit comes in half way up the far wall which we head for and find a 12m ladder climb in daylight. It's an easy walk out of the fault and down the hill back to camp. A good trip, sporty and not too wet, not too long and straight forward. It took us about 3 hours after leaving the main party to emerge triumphant. Back at the campsite a Boags was first, then something to eat. The main party joined us about 4 hours later as we sat round a large fire.

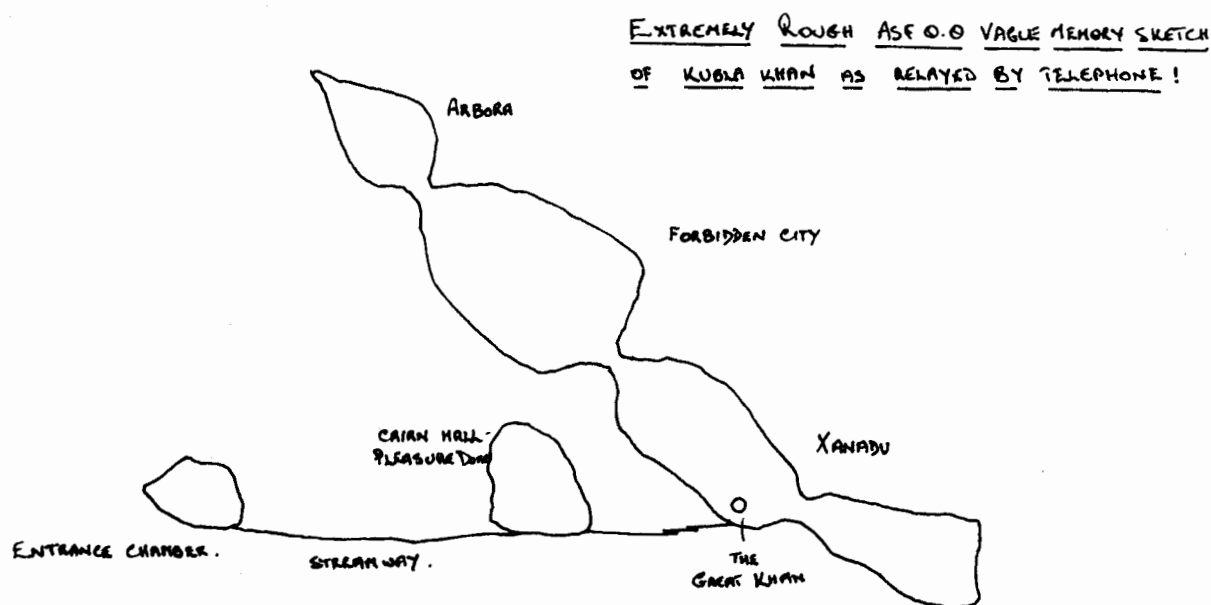
FUT
NOAT



On the way back to Hobart the trusty HQ got very hot and thirsty. Len and I had to melt the ice out of the Esky for the radiator which only contained steam. Anyone watn to buy a hot HQ Panel van?

2ND FUT NOAT The party consisted of Bill Tomalin, (esteemed leader, convenor and feneral factatum), Len Smith (English gentleman?), Chris Davies (what more can I say?), Greg Kerfoot (Mr Smooth), D1 (Chris's other half), Andrew (education never did me no good) Briggs, and last but by no means least, Trevor Wailles (the author of this long and involved saga).

Trevor Wailles.



Junee Ridge - "15 Seconds Pot" - JF111

Saturday, 20 Dec.

Party: Stuart Nicholas, Chris Davies, Trevor Wailes, Len Smith & Nick Hume (TCC), Russel Saunders & Guy (Qld. visitors).

After much procrastinating, buying of cups of coffee and other time wasting activities centred around the Maydena shot, Trevor's blue van arrived at great speed. When Chris finally got his long awaited egg and bacon roll from the shop, we trundled through the gate and up the Junee Quarry Road. Our arrival at the cave produced another flurry of inactivity while various bods attempted to organise the other bods.

The 250mm wide entrance made entry somewhat difficult but with the aid of ladders and a hammer, exploration was pushed in a series of one-man expeditions to a depth of about 80m. The cave is a narrow, near vertical rift all the way to the bottom which consists of the usual Junee cave fill and, in this case, one only folding shovel dropped down a few years ago by John Parker. Yours truly was talked into going to the bottom after Russell had reported a continuation from his stance at the end of the ladder.

Going down was no problem, but getting out way something else! Over an hour was spent climbing about 25m to the end of the ladder which had been extended by Nick after some verbal persuasion from the "bottoming party". The problems of extracting a human being from the small, steep and slippery bottom section were too great to even consider bringing out the shovel as well, so bad luck John, you'll have to get it yourself!

Our late (7pm) arrival at the gate did not please the gate-keeper which is unfortunate and we apologise for our lateness.

Adjourning to the National Park pub, someone (probably called "Cascade") suggested a return trip the next day to push Trapdoor Swallet. Read on to see what really happened!

Stuart Nicholas.

Florentine Valley

Sunday, 21 Dec.

Party: Stuart Nicholas, Len Smith, Nick Hume and Rick (a mate of Nick's)

As you can see, only the hard men were keen enough to leave Hobart at 06.30. After greeting the now friendly gate-keeper with the news that we would definitely be out before closing time (of the gate, that is!), a dusty drive out to the Nine Road was had. More procrastinating, sitting in the sun and other useless activities.

Action at last - a fast 30 min. walk saw us at Growling Swallet looking at the low stream. Trapdoor was abandoned and G.S. trogged instead with the hope that the sump might be dry. With undampened(?) enthusiasm, we zoomed down to the sump only to find it full although the flow into it was very small. The side passage where most of the stream flows was crawled into but deemed to be too wet without wet-suits. Some climbing was done in the high rift up the sand bank to the left of the final stream passage where a very strong draft was encountered. Has anyone been along the narrow section "straight ahead" or down the estimated 10m pitch? Phil Robinson and company climbed the rift many moons ago as did the USA guys about a year ago, but has the passage been really pushed?

More solar energy absorption took place upon our return to the surface and much to the surprise of the gate-keeper, we were back by about 14.30 since Rick had to be at the Mt. Field National Park by 15.00. A great day was rounded off with a milkshake at the Maydena shop and a quick drive home.

Stuart Nicholas.

Florentine Valley - Growling Swallet

07-02-81

Party: Chris Davies, Trevor Wailles, Stuart Nicholas (TCC), Hugh Stevenson, Dale Madden, John (?) (Chris's cousin) and Peter Hutchinson (prospective & visitor).

With the introduction of restricted gate opening hours (0800-1800) and some verbal persuasion by yours truly, we made it thru the gate at around 0815, despite Trevor's wailing (!). Very dry conditions made the drive out to the Nine Road into a guessing game because of thick dust but we arrived at the appointed place without too much drama. Thanks to Geoff Fisher's efforts a few weeks ago, most of the track is now cleared of small logs and the big ones have large steps cut in them. This made for a speedy walk in.

The stream flowing in Growling was so low that, with a little care, one could reach the "sump" with dry feet! In places, the stream was nowhere to be seen. The glow-worm population appears to have shrunk also.

All but Chris (piker Davies!) crawled through the dry first sump and then through the dry second sump to the third which was decidedly wet. At this point, the cave narrows considerably and the possibility of extension in this area is virtually nil. However, if one was armed with a bob-cat excavator and a truck, the sand could be removed from the left branch of the sump passage and a possible extension found. A couple of deep swirl holes in this passage had extensions continuing beneath them but lack of size and loose sand prevented any real pushing. It seems that the cave possibly continues in a general SE direction but at a lower level with access blocked by the sand beyond the first sump. Pity about that!

Some poking around in the rift up to the left from the mud passage was followed by an uneventful exit after three pleasant hours underground.

Having been convinced long ago that all Mk. 1 Cortina drivers are mad, my belief was not to be dispelled on the drive out. Hugh did a magnificent rendition of a rally trick known as a Finnish Flick. Unfortunately, the car ended up facing back the way it had just come and partly embedded in the scrub! And all to no avail, we were not looking for an un-mapped road starting at the junction of the F9 and the short cut to Westfield Road. The rest of the section out to the gate was completed on time and without further drama!

Stuart Nicholas.
