

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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President: Geoff Fisher, 115 Brooker Avenue, Glebe, 7000.
Ph: 20 8013 (W)

Secretary: Chris Davies, 2 Elanore Place, West Moonah, 7009.
Ph: 72 4104 (H)

Treasurer: Bruce McIntosh, 243 Davey Street, South Hobart, 7000.
Ph: 34 2833 (W)

Editor: Stuart Nicholas, 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, 7008.
Ph: 283054 (H)

FORWARD PROGRAMME

Sat. 07 March MINI MARTIN: Descent and/or ascent of this great pot-hole. Chris Davies is the man.

Sat. 14 March TASSIE POT: A trip in conjunction with the Eberhards of SCS to push the new extension.

Wed. 18 March COMMITTEE MEET: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue

Wed. 25 March ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue. Make sure you're there! Subs. are due at this meeting too.

Weekend 28-29 March WILDERNESS MEDICINE WORKSHOP at Waddamana

Wed. 1 April ATEA '78 VIDEO TAPE SHOWING: The 1978 New Guinea Expedition video tape showing at the University Geography Department, 8 p.m. See inside for more info. BE THERE (WITH MONEY)!

Easter, 17 to 20 or 21 April MOLE CREEK inc. Herbert's Pot. See Trevor Wailes Ph: 25 1801 (H).

Wed. 15 April COMMITTEE MEETING: 8 pm at 7 Rupert Avenue

Wed. 06 May GENERAL MEETING: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue

Sun. 17 May CITY-TO-CASINO RUN FOR FUN. Life-Be in It and all that jazz. Why not do a bit of training and enter as a team? Geoff Fisher seems keen to get a team together so why not see him about it?

EDITORIAL

Who said "old caves never die, they just get bigger"? They were right! A few weeks ago a group of SUSS cavers made a very major breakthrough in Tassie Pot, giving an estimated 1,000m of previously unknown, walking type cave, formations and all. They shifted a few rocks at the "end" of the Morocl Passage, pushed a squeeze and burst out into virgin cave with leads going of everywhere!

Why do visitors seem to make more breakthroughs than local trogs? Maybe we should go away and come back again or get out of the other end of our sleeping bags. A few more discoveries like this are needed to re-vitalize the local caving scene (and my editorials!), so let's go to it and find something big.

Apology: Last month's Spiel was somewhat late, like about 3 weeks, owing to various production hitches. Sorry about that, especially as Norm Poulter's slide show was advertised in it and a few members possibly missed the show because of the lateness. Hopefully, it won't happen again - I know I've said that before, but one can but hope.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 25 March, 8 p.m.

Place: 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town.

BE THERE!

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE AT THE A.G.M.:

- \$10 Full member
- \$ 5 Junior Member (under 18)
- \$ 5 Associate member
- \$ 5 Speleo Spiel Sub.
- \$15 Family membership
- \$ 3 Prospective member

Why not come to the A.G.M. and pay your subs. in cash thereby avoiding postal costs, cheque costs and the inconvenience of having to walk to the mail box? Also, don't forget that elections will occur, for which purpose names of people are needed as its difficult to hold elections without candidates.

BOOKS AND SIMILAR LITERARY OBJECTS

Of interest to a number of bods in TCC is the report of the 1978 Australasian Speleological Expedition to Papua New Guinea. The book, published last month, includes a description and large-size survey of Atea Kananda, the longest known cave in the Southern Hemisphere at 30.5 km, and much more. "Caves and Karst of the Muller Range" has a colour cover, 150 pages, many photographs and is priced at \$15. See Stuart Nicholas if you would like a copy and a bulk order can be sent to Ross Ellis in Sydney.

Also of interest is the booklet by Mike Boon - "The Great San Agustin Rescue". Mike's impressions and feelings during the protracted rescue of a caver with a broken back are vividly portrayed in this small and almost frightening book.

Yet another recent publication, "Australian Caves and Caving" is a book of photographs, many colour. This can be obtained for the bargain price of \$8 either via Stuart or directly from Ross Ellis, 11 Arkana Street, Telopea, N.S.W. 2117.

CLUB NEWS AND OTHER ODDMENTS

- If this Speleo Spiel appears a little smaller than usual, there is a reason for this, nobody is writing anything for it! Why not be brave and let your budding literary talent burst into print. Someone may even read the article if its sufficiently inspired - alternatively, they may not, but at least there will be more smooth white paper available for miscellaneous household use.
- Nick Hume has been seen, and heard, after his return from doing battle with long white clouds, avalanches, NZ beer and mill baked bread.
- A couple of weeks ago, Keith Harper of the Police S&R Squad did a dive into Junees Resurgence. This, to my knowledge, is the first dive there since the South Australians about three years ago. The very low flow made for fairly good visibility during the 20 min. foray into the black world of a water-filled cave. Keith reached a depth of about 10m but did not reach the passage trending upwards from a depth of about 15m reported by the SA divers. Further dives are planned in the near future.
- Due to the withdrawal of a few candidates from the Bush and Mountain Walking Leadership Training Board's Course 2 there are now a limited number of vacancies. Course 2 commences with a residential weekened at Waddamana over Easter and further information is available from the Division of Recreation, Kirksway House.
- Owing to the age and general condition of some of our SRT rope, a proposal has been put forward that a 200m Bluewater 2 rope be purchased. Obviously the club cannot find such a purchase (cost approx. \$350) and it seems desirable that those who use the rope should pay for it which was the situation with the initial acquisition of SRT rope in the early 70's. Would anyone willing to contribute to the purchase please let Stuart Nicholas know so that an equitable sharing arrangement can be worked out. Remember, the more contributors there are, the cheaper it is for each.

- It was with great pleasure that we accepted an offer by Norm Poulter a few weeks ago for him to show some of his magnificent slides. Quite a large crowd was present and everyone enjoyed the show. Thanks Norm and all the best for the future.
- Realising that T.C.C. membership needs a boost, ex hard-caver and K.D. exponent, Peter Shaw has done something about it. During the middle of last month, Pete and Yvonne became the proud parents of a baby girl, Katherine Nicole. Congratulations!
- For those who attended the Mole Creek CAVSAREX 80, the report is now available for perusal at Rupert Avenue and, if so desired, I am sure copies can be made.
- If any of our members has some money to spare, why not either give it to me for safe keeping or quickly contact Traditional Explorations in Sydney. They are running trips to the Eighth International Congress of Speleology in the U.S.A. and if you're very fast, they may be able to squeeze you in on one of the three trips.
- Down Sandy Bay? Feeling hungry? Why not drop in and see a couple of friends of the editor's in the form of David and Colleen Howell. They have bought the grocery store cum milk bar on the corner of Lipscombe Avenue and Sandy Bay Road and take possession about the middle of this month. Dave is a former winner of the Tasmanian B-grade Rally Championship so you can be assured of fast and efficient service!
- MISSING! one Premier carbide. Please return to Chris if you have it.

CAVING SAFETY

(The following article on cave safety originally appeared in SPAR 46, July 1975 and more recently in SUSS Bull. 20(10) from which this was extracted. It has been slightly modified for local situations.)

Every caver is surely aware that no aspect of caving deserves more attention than that of underground safety. This is true for a number of reasons, e.g. if caving accidents are allowed to mount, caving as a sport will decline in public favour, caving societies will dissolve, and then what would all we weirdos do for congenial company? Furthermore, careless caving is bad for the caves themselves - blood spilled in caves is unsightly and makes them slippery for cavers to negotiate. Finally, and perhaps most worthy of note, certain caves are so constructed as to make recovery of accident victims virtually impossible. If sufficient safety precautions are not taken, such caves will become packed solid with bodies and will thus be rendered impassible for explorers. It is therefore in the caver's own interests to pay heed to the dictums expounded in this article.

We will consider a few personal rules of personal safety:

1. Never go into a flooded cave. You will be unable to keep your carbide lamp burning under water and will surely become lost
2. Never enter a cave during an earthquake. Blocks of stone may fall from the roof and in so doing may tear your clothing. This may cause you to catch cold when you leave the cave.
3. Always use a rope when you abseil. This point cannot be stressed too strongly.
4. Stay away from caves that are known to be inhabited by cave bears, dragons, sabre-toothed tigers, pterodactyls and bunyips. Some scientists feel these animals may be dangerous.
5. Showing off in a cave is frowned upon. No matter how skilled you may be, walking on your hands on the Tyrolean Traverse in Cauldron Pot is extremely unsafe. The rock here is rough and you may scrape your palms most painfully.

6. Be choosy about your caving companions. If you have just stolen your mate's girlfriend, or if your flatmate has taken to dropping pellets in your coffee and standing beside your bed at night with a meat cleaver in his hand, it is best not to take these persons in a cave with you. Though they may appear physically weak and puny, they could be possessed of diabolical cleverness. Play safe!
7. Do not go caving if you are suffering from gangrene, a broken neck, bullet wounds, hydrophobia, smallpox, fractured ribs or food poisoning. Many situations arise underground that demand alertness and top physical form.
8. Under no circumstances should you ever try to drive through a cave in a car. If you run out of petrol there is no place to buy more.

For information of Club Members:

Philip Voss is now running the Mobil Service Station in Maydena. If you find you need fuel or mechanical repairs after a hard day in "The Valley" see Vossie. (He lives in the house just behind the service station if you need help out of hours).

Bill Nicholson is managing 'Camp Scene', a new outdoor shop in Eastlands. If you're having trouble getting gear of any sort, Bill swears that, if humanly possible, he can get it, quick!

1978 NEW GUINEA EXPEDITION VIDEO TAPE

With all the current talk about New Guinea expeditions, why not see what it's really like from the comfort of a University chair? The '78 Expedition video tape which we have had in our possession for some time is to be shown at the University Geography Dept. on the night of Wednesday, 1 April. Despite it being April Fool's Day, rest assured, this is for real!

The aim of the showing, aside from generating interest in the '82 Expedition, is to raise FUNDS to enable it to go ahead. Cavers are notoriously poor, however, I don't think anyone will begrudge a few dollars to help this major expedition, so bring your wallets, handbags, etc. with money inside!

In brief: WHAT: '78 New Guinea Expedition Video Tape
 WHERE: University Geography Department
 WHEN: Wednesday, 1 April, 8 p.m.
 WHO: Everyone welcome, members or not.
 COST: Quote: "A small fee!"

TRIP REPORTS

Florentine Valley: Trapdoor Swallet (JF38) & Gormenghast (JF35) Sun. 14 Feb.

Party: Stuart Nicholas, Chris Davies, Trevor Wailles, Andrew Briggs, Phil Steane and Gerry (Phil's mate), Angelo (Trevor's mate)

An early start for this trip promised a successful cave exploration and Trapdoor Swallet was a cave which had good potential. Last year Trapdoor was first entered after removing the rocks which had previously barred the entrance and prevented any exploration for several years.

Arriving at the cave entrance about 10 o'clock, Wow!, Stuart discovered he had left two "lead-acids" at home. He was persuaded to use a carbide and Trevor used a Dolphin. We left all the tackle on the surface and descended thru a number of waterfalls to reach a small "chamber" about 40m down, the chamber being due to a house-size boulder forming the roof. The cave consists of a boulder pile with the creek funnelling down the larger holes. At the level of the 'chamber', the stream disappears between smaller rocks where gravel makes continuation difficult. Several holes in the floor of this 'chamber' were descended but with similar results. In general, the whole cave is held together by a prayer and rotten rock which became quite a menace, so we returned to the surface just in time for lunch.

Stuart was coerced into showing us Gormenghast. This cave is also a stream sink but the cave is superb and a swift descent was made to where the final crawl takes one to the last chamber which is apparently "decorated". We were all back on the surface by 4pm to conclude a very good trip.

Andrew Briggs.

(Ed's. note: Trapdoor has a possible continuation via a wet flat-out crawl under some blocks, however, this could be a bit dicey. The main "chamber" has a floor of loose scree which, with cave, could be dug out and access possibly gained to the cave proper.)

Stardate: Saturday 28.2.81
JF99 "Chairman"

Captain & crew: Stuart Nicholas, Geoff Fisher, Rolan & Stephan Eberhard (SCS),
Sherpas: Trevor Wailes, Bruce Tranter, Malcolm Ritchie.

Ship's log: The aim of our trip was to push downstream exploration of the "Chairman" beyond the present limit and to generally seek new frontiers and boldly go where no man had gone before. Despite our meticulously planned early start, we did not arrive at the impressive cave entrance until 11.00am. However, things did improve and by 12.30 we were all in the main chamber and ready to start exploration. The stream had all but disappeared due to the exceptionally dry summer and the only water in the cave was in the odd pool here and there.. After about two hours, we made it to the end of the surveyed section and entered into terra incognita.

The open, easy streamway was now well behind us and our progress was either along the dry streambed - crawling, or through the massive rockfall above it - clambering. After an hour or so we had gone a reasonable distance along the streamway given these difficult conditions. The life of our batteries only allowed another half an hour on the outward trip and this factor combined with the lack of reward, decided us on turning back. A compass bearing taken at this stage indicated the streamway was veering away from its previously surveyed SE line and was heading in the general direction of the Junee resurgence.

Our return to the surface was reasonably quick but not without incident. Stephan's "Clog" ascenders failed to grip properly on the wet rope in the 40m pitch and it was necessary to lower Rolan's rig for him to use on the 84m top pitch. This rectified the problem and by 1.00 am, we had all returned to the surface and were ready for the walk out to the cars.

Although we did extend the known length of the "Chairman", we didn't make any significant finds and are not in a hurry to go back again.

Geoff Fisher.

(Ed's. note: On behalf of Geoff, Stephan and Rolan, I would like to sincerely thank Trev, Malcolm and Bruce for their help. Crawling over the top of the entrance pitch all hot and sweaty to find you three guys there with a fire going and some cold "tinnies", was a most welcome sight, to say the least!)

Florentine River: Cave hunting canoe trip Saturday 28.2.81

Party: Laurie Moody, Diana Davies

Laurie had looked at small sections of the Florentine River before including the area where JF55 can be found (ie. Deviation Cave). Having failed to persuade him to look at the steep section below the Pagoda, we headed off to the Eleven Road bridge, then the Tiger Road Bridge and, after being turned back by a downed tree on a road below the Settlement, we decided that the river was uniformly log choked and headed to the Pagoda.

We put in at the Pagoda and headed upstream which was no problem as the Florentine was low and hardly moving. Log hopping became the order of the day after about 100m.

At about 1km above the Pagoda by river, we sighted limestone for the first time and just around a bend a small cave (Western Bank) that would please a wombat. We continued upstream for approximately 5km until we were turned back by an enormous number of logs and tops in the river near a recently cleared area. No further caves....so back to Max's to find out more about the bottom section and have coffee.


Di Davies.

Ida Bay: Mini Martin (IB8):- OR "Chris, do I untie this knot 'cos it won't go thru this bloody rack?"
Saturday & Sunday, 7 & 8.3.81

A saga of low courage, apathy, apprehension and derision! A tale of woe and blindness!

But it started early! 7am saw two cars, occupants, and gear heading for Ida Bay Karst. Chris Davies had talked 4 other keen TCC members and myself into something called Mini Martin which I thought cunningly was a small mini cave with its roots reaching into Exit Cave. Having seen the last pitch, supposedly an 80ft aven on a previous trip into Exit I thought it would be a nice easy abseil trip through. Di had already decided to prusik out, so a through trip was on.

9.30am at the car park, at the start of the Exit track after an uneventful drive from Hobart, saw the tackle distributed and packs loaded. A brisk one hour walk through medium dense forest and cutting grass in bright sunlight, brought us to the entrance of Exit Cave where we organised ourselves into the two groups. Malcolm and Di would enter Exit at their leisure, there was no rush for them as we, the other group, (Pete, Chris, Andy and myself) had another hour's walk up onto the plateau to find the Mini Martin entrance. The first half hour of this track justifies the idea that MM is definitely above Exit as it seems to climb about 70° for about 700ft. The track is very well marked (thanks to NUCC & SCS) and because of the prolific tree growth, there is usually a sapling handy to help pull oneself up with. A short rest, once on the plateau next to two shallow sinks and a look round (I was expecting a good view but the bush was so thick you only know you're over the climb because you've ceased going up).

The Karst features on this "flat bit" are unmistakeable and the whole area would produce many more promising sink holes were the bush easier to penetrate. Andrew, leading at a good pace, continued the search for M.M. Here on the flat bit, the track becomes more difficult with fallen trees and, in parts, horizontal scrub. The track is harder to follow but at length, after a gentle incline, we reach the tree with 4 or 3(?) bands of blue tape - MM is 60 ft away up a steep grade marked by a very large stringy bark tree with the number 8 stamped on a metal plate. (I wonder if all the trees are numbered?!) 

Well, we were here. What had I let myself in for?! The entrance shaft is a clean 355ft free hanger which swallowed our depth gauge rocks with a long silence then a distant rumble, Gulp! "Erm, maybe we havn't enough rope"; I've forgotten my rack", and "Sorry, I can't, I've no clean underwear" - apprehension was setting in. There was a very slow flurry of activity as wire headers were snapped together and secured round the eighth tree, rope unvoiled and TIED (Argh!) together and gently lowered into the abyss. Chris and Andrew did most of the work as I had my eyes closed. We all geared up (SRT) (Thanks STU) and, as Chris rigged and was in charged, he descended first, the rest of us crossed to the other side of the entrance shaft to watch as Chris transferred from the "tail" onto the main rope. Watching had mixed virtues, (a) I wanted to know how it was done!!!, (b) I wanted to know the secret swear words to accompany the ten minute transfer, (c) for most of the time I had my eyes closed. Sort of soonish, he was sort of gone (!) so we returned to the safety of the platform above the rigged side, next to the tree that came eighth.

The shaft is about 10ft wide by 25ft long - an insignificant opening in solid rock without the collapsed doline features of the Florentine and also without an inflow stream, a bit of a geological mystery as it is formed from water action and not by rift faulting. Pete broke into my dark thoughts with "That's the whistle Trev, you're next!". I responded with "Y'know, you can see the sea from up here"; well, you could. It was one of those rare moments I had my eyes open!

I snailed forward slowly and racked on and racked off down the tail to the start of the transfer - onto the main descent rope. This is where I remembered I hadn't really done this before and to hoots of derision 330ft from the bottom, I stuffed about until I finally had the jumars slack and the rack taught on the descent rope. Jumars removed and forcing the rope thru the rack, I crept downwards with my eyes closed. The weight of rope was prohibitive to movement. "Too many bars", I thought on my ninth rest. Still, the yellow crash hat with the eyes on the top was starting to look a bit nearer, but so was the KNOT - Argh! As I said a beautiful clean shaft with a slight rift heading off with a possible access - all this I had time to look at and contemplate during my many rests, especially the long one at the knot - Argh! "What do I do now, Chris?" "Where are you?" he said. "Above you", I said. "Oh, shit!", he said, "don't you know how?" "Well, I couldn't see what you did from the top. I ejaculated 280ft down". Well, after doing something I must practice, I was finally past the knot without untying it (much to everyone's relief). Soon, I was sitting next to my Guru, Chris, feeling quite elated. It's about 15ft short of Gaping Gyhl main shaft and Vukan Pot in the Yorkshire dales, but there I would be down, and here I'm only half down, so to speak.

Pete, showing how easy it should be, was next down, but he also complained about the weight of the rope having used more bars than necessary. Andrew was last down after placing rope protectors (about two, I think) as we were rigging the next pitch. We had a ladder to assist us to the lip of the pitch - 20ft down a rubble slope - but it was not used as the rope was secured with wire headers round 2 large embedded blocks of rock at the foot of the 355. Chris had had lots of company here while waiting for me with the frogs and glow worms which he now ledt as he headed down the next drop.

This is the point we were at when we first heard Di and Malcolm in the basement. A 200ft rope was used on this pitch and to our surprise it reached full length into Exit proper. I went next and found just how uncomfortable a Whillans harness can be - a bit like riding a bike with no saddle. An 80ft drop on to a series of steps down to what should be the last pitch. Chris was nowhere in sight and there was nowhere to hide, so I presumed he was now in Exit down the last 80ft drop. This last pitch is the one I had seen from the bottom on my last trip into Exit. I followed Chris and gave the signal for Pete to follow.

Once at the foot of the last 80, a rubble slope perhaps 120ft leads down to the Exit stream where I staggered to partly because of the Whillans Syndrome and partly due to the unaccustomed darkness which hits you as you leave the foot of the 355. Pete soon followed and while the 5 of us waited for Andrew, we dined on Mars bars, sardines, smoked oysters, crackers and tea. Andrew, after placing rope protectors, eventually joined us to make some decisions - it was now about 5pm and still a long way to go.

Andrew and Di were going to prusik out of M.M. and retrieve all the gear and Malcolm, Pete, Chris and I would exit thru Exit, climb back up the hill to help with the carrying of tackle and collect our sacks. Exiting thru Exit lapsed into the apathy part, firstly, in finding the way out of the initial chamber and then again in the collapsed area where we lost about an hour trying to find a way thru. Ashamedly, we know every wrong lead thru that collapse. At length, we were through it and then moving quickly to the entrance of Exit and out into a warm, dark evening with the enthralling idea of at least 3 hours relatively hard walking ahead of us. The hill directly behind Exit entrance is soul destroying as Malcolm, who did not climb it before, was finding out. Fairly good time was made to MM's eighth tallest tree as the blue tape is quite abundant, Di and Andrew had been out about 10 minutes and were already pulling up the ¼ kilometre of rope. Eventually, all the gear was up, the rope coiled and stowed into rucksacks. It was about 10pm as we left the tree with eight branches for the cars and home.

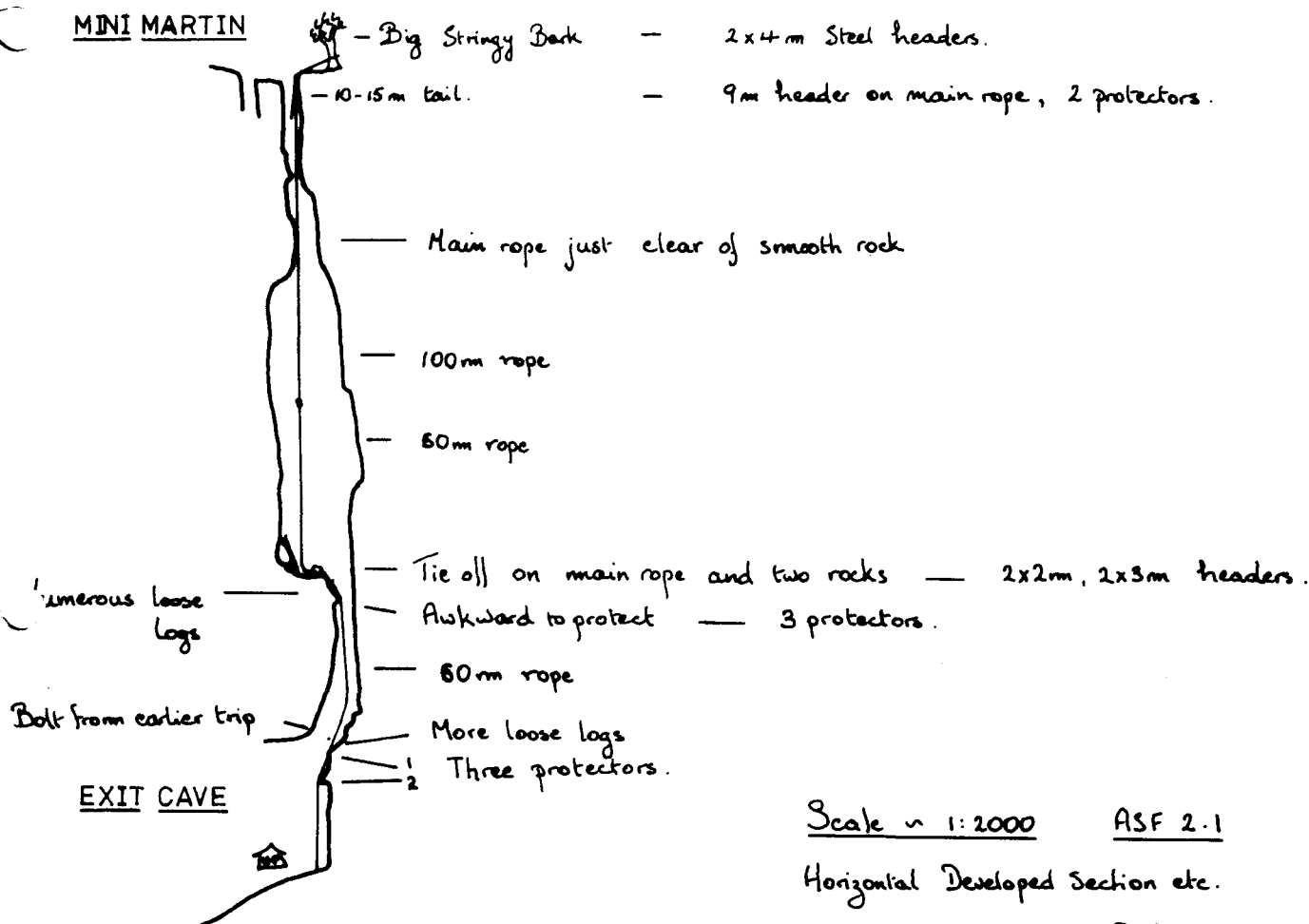
Retracing our steps along the track proved harder than expected, the tapes are harder to spot and the bush was swept facing us by our incoming passage so we were moving slower than planned. We were all tiring so the pig like behaviour at the Exit entrance stream was unfortunate. The walk had made us all very thirsty and for future parties planning this trip, it would be wise to carry some water. It was a very tired TCC party that eventually emerged from that never ending track onto the car park and relative luxury of putting packs down and getting out of sweat sodden grotts into something more comfortable for the drive home. It was 12 midnight as we reached the cars and the pubs were shut, 1.30am at home saw Malcolm, Chris and I celebrated a hard day with a coldie each.

Future trips:- There is no water after leaving the stream at Exit entrance for Mini Martin top entrance until you reach the stream in Exit at the foot of Mini Martin.

Party: Malcolm Ritchie, Chris Davies, Di Davies, Peter Hutchinson, Andrew Briggs, and me, Trevor Wailes.

Trevor Wailes.

———— " ————— " ————— " ————— " —————



EASTER MOLE CREEK EXTRAVAGANZA

So far I've been inundated with two phone calls regarding the Mole Creek Herberts Camp. Please don't be shy - the more the merrier, Hic! Let's have a good turnout by older and newer members, for what will be an expertly arranged caving, camping weekend. Bring your friends, wives, girlfriends (or both!), and boyfriends!? Have an Easter to remember - plans are well advanced - all I need is people. Ring Trev 25 1801 (H).

Speleo Spiel Index 135 - 165

The following index is for Speleo Spiels 135 to 165 being the total number to which I had access. The index is intended to help with information retrieval regarding caves and general articles of interest. It has become apparent that there is a large amount of information within the club that has been forgotten. Perhaps a complete Spiel Index and a centrally located complete collection of Spiels (say, held by Stuart) would help the problem to a certain extent but some fifteen years would still be lacking.

I hope this short index is useful and that someone (plural) will offer to extend it to earlier editions of Spiels or at worst, lend me the Spiels so that I can continue the index.

Spiel numbers have been underlined to distinguish them from cave numbers and the index has been divided into a "General Section" (including rescues in specific caves) and "Caves" which generally refers to trip reports. No longer do you have to scratch through your Spiels to find "that cave"..happy browsing.

Di Davies.

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