



KING RAT SERIES, A-A-K, MT. ANNE

SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

ESTABLISHED 1946

P.O. Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania. 7005

Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. TBH 0201

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Newsletter Annual Subscription \$15.00, Each \$1, Non-members \$2.00

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FUTURE TRIPS and EVENTS! (a rare entry in the Spiel these days)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY MARCH 30 at The Wheatsheaf Hotel. This often neglected annual event is IMPORTANT - make sure you are there. The Club can only be run the way you want it if you elect the bodies who will do the job your way... DON'T FORGET IT - MARCH 30

GROWLING SWALLET: SERVALANE - further exploration (its still going!) and surveying (Stu's computer needs feeding again...). See Trevor.

GROWLING SWALLET: COELACANTH - a dive trip; sherpas wanted... See Nick Hume. This could be combined with a Black River look-see as Stu is interested in this area (someone must have installed wheel chair access!!).

JUNEE RESURGENCE: DIVE TRIP - yet again the water bods are planning a push trip into Sump Two.... Will it ever occur? How do we get a portable recompression chamber into "For Your Eyes Only" ???

Errata (yes, even we make mistakes...)

Speleo Spiel 232 had an article reprinted from The Australian of 23/06/1987 titled "Largest Lake Below Ground to be Explored". Unfortunately the gremlins struck (or was it the Troll Princess?) and the area of the Lost Lake of Tennessee quoted on page 4 as 18ha is in reality 1.8ha. The article will now make a little more sense!

SURVEYING WORK AT MOLE CREEK

Herbert's Pot is currently the third longest cave in Tasmania (5730 metres) and stands in a class of its own as a sporting trip in the Mole Creek area. Although the cave was initially explored by TCC it was members of the Southern Caving Society who broke through into the main streamway in the 1970's and spectacular discoveries were made in both upstream and downstream directions. In more recent years

Herbert's Pot has been a popular tourist jaunt but little in the way of new cave had been turned up. It has long been known that Herbert's is part of a much larger system of subterranean drainage that collects water from two main swallets, Kelly's Pot and Westmoreland Cave, and feeds the stream that ultimately emerges into daylight at Wet Cave, having passed through Shish Kebab, Dangerous Cave and Georgies Hall on its underground journey. While the latter two caves are physically linked with Wet Cave, the appealing possibility of making additional connections prompted me to compile a map showing the known drainage pattern of the whole area. This sort of information is particularly useful in the planning of cave dives and will hopefully contribute to more successful dives in the future.

Much of the leg work required to produce a map had already been done by SCS a decade or so ago. In addition to cave surveys, valuable information was available in the form of hydrological tracing using fluorescein by Leigh Gleeson. Thanks to Leigh for sending the raw data from the Herbert's Pot survey. Ron Mann also contributed with survey information from Kelly's Pot and an overland survey between Herbert's and Kelly's Pot. So apart from surveying Westmoreland Cave and Shish Kebab, all that was lacking was an overland survey to establish the relative positions of cave entrances. An Easter sojourn by TCC at Mole Creek provided an opportunity to harness some useful surveying expertise. Adrienne, Trevor and myself, with the company of the junior Wailes', surveyed from Herbert's Pot overland to Dangerous and Shish Kebab. On the same trip Westmoreland Cave and Shish Kebab were surveyed. Later in the year with the help of Adrienne, I incorporated the Westmoreland Cave entrance into the surface traverse. Our surveying is equivalent to ASF Grade 5, I think! (ie Suunto instruments read to nearest degree and tape to nearest 0.05m). Stuart's much appreciated computer skills must not go without mention.

The accompanying map is traced from a SMAPS plot. Dotted lines represent confirmed hydrological connections established by SCS (see Southern Caver 8(2), 1976). While it is tempting to speculate what a mighty system it would be if all the caves could be linked together, I will restrain my imagination and just give a few comments below about each cave of interest. It should be remembered that the map I have drawn is provisional only. Additional surveying remains to be done in some caves and a few anomalies in the existing data cleaned up. Hopefully it will eventually be possible to include a plot of Georgies Hall and Wet Cave in a future draft. Phil Jackson tells me he has also been doing some surveying in the area and perhaps our results can be combined at a later date.

Kelly's Pot

This cave is located just over one kilometre to the west of Herbert's Pot. A major dry valley can be followed from the open paddocks into the forest where a sizeable stream sinks at the base of a cliff. A small dry entrance on the side descends steeply and rejoins the active streamway after a 5 metre pitch. A large sloping talus chamber precedes a length of horizontal streamway. From here to the sump involves a rather arduous mixture of stooping and flat-out crawling on a not so comfortable floor of rounded boulders. Towards the sump the ceiling becomes progressively lower and near here is an aven that might well be worth tackling with climbing^{gear} eventually.

Kelly's Pot is apparently the principal feeder to the main sump in upstream Herbert's Pot. As the map indicates, the cave trends directly towards Herbert's, but nearly 800 metres separate the two sumps. Kelly's Pot was surveyed in 1970-71 and a map is given in Southern Caver 10(3), 1979.

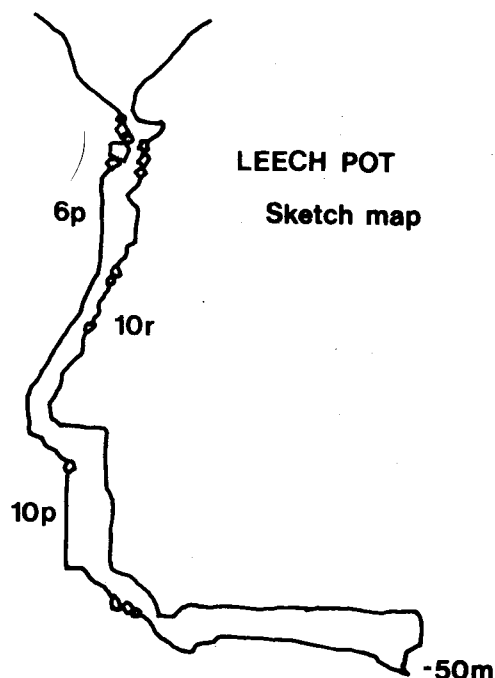
Westmoreland Cave

The Westmoreland stream has also been traced to Herbert's Pot. Although the entrance of Westmoreland Cave is something in the order of 200 metres from the underground section of Herbert's, the trend of Westmoreland Cave is directly away from Herbert's. It was surveyed in April 1987 by Adrienne and myself and a completed map will be published in this magazine at a later date.

Westmoreland Cave is a pleasant enough trip. A stream at the entrance has been diverted with a concrete conduit, presumably to provide water for the farm lower down the hill. There are in fact two entrances very close together beside the track leading to Westmoreland Falls. A clean washed passage winds down to a large chamber where light filters through a couple of windows high in the ceiling. A very small tributary joins the cave here, but its flow is soon lost in a jumble of boulders on the floor. The rest of the passage that follows has been dry on both occasions that I have been there, but organic debris indicates that water does flow at times. The sump itself was dived in 1982 for a length of 30 metres (see Speleo Spiel 176). A tight tube descended to a depth of 9 metres where a larger passage was encountered, although siltation hampered further progress. There does exist some prospect for non-aquatic exploration in high level leads above the sump.

Leech Pot

The entrance of Leech Pot is a small hole at the bottom of a funnel shaped doline and apparently the local farmer sought to prevent his cows making a one way trip to the bottom by plugging it with rocks. Thus Leech Pot had remained effectively sealed and I don't think anyone has been down it for nearly two decades. Although it's position is not indicated on the accompanying map, the entrance is rather strategically located roughly halfway between Westmoreland Cave and Herbert's Pot. Leech Pot was obviously overdue for another look. Struggling through the blackberries to get there proved a minor epic in itself, but having accomplished this I found it was possible to squeeze into the entrance after removing a few of the larger boulders. A loose mass of boulders suspended overhead encouraged cautious movements while rigging a ladder down a short drop immediately below the squeeze. The Karst index records a single pitch of 40 metres, however it is really three separate pitches. Below the first short drop is a steep chute where I rigged a rope as a handline. This led to the brink of a vertical drop roughly 10 metres in length. A bolt allowed some boulders perched at the lip to be avoided and at the bottom was a scree slope that opened out to a sizeable mud-floored chamber. A couple of side passages contained calcite formation and trickles of water that flowed down to a mud choke at the deepest point of the chamber. Prospects for further exploration do not look particularly promising although my investigation was admittedly very brief.



At the same time as exploring Leech Pot I located two other nearby karst features. The first was a minor swallet discovered by following uphill a dry valley that passes very close to Leech Pot. A short distance into the forest is a stream that sinks behind a large boulder. Issuing from a small hole where the water enters is a cool draught and this may well be worth opening up at some stage. Another small hole near Leech Pot was found by following the edge of the paddock uphill (roughly towards Herbert's Pot) and heading into a doline just inside the forest margin. Below a series of steep limestone outcrops was a small hole. A climb down led into a chamber floored with talus where slight air movement could be detected. A lot of rubble would have to be moved to find anything.

Herbert's Pot

As already described, most of the water in Herbert's Pot originates from Kelly's Pot and Westmoreland Cave. A further tributary joins much later near the downstream sump. It is possible that the source of this water is a swallet located between Herbert's Pot and Kelly's Pot entrances. A stream is passed when crossing the paddocks between these two caves. It sinks into a cave entrance concealed in a thicket of blackberries much lower down the hillside. The water cannot be followed underground for more than a few metres, although it turns up

eventually at Wet Cave (trace from "Kelly old Farmhouse stream" in Southern Caver 10(3)). It does not seem unlikely that this water enters the system as the aforementioned tributary in Herbert's.

Further breakthroughs in an extensive cave such as Herbert's Pot are never out of the question. The downstream sump looks spacious, however siltation is a discouraging factor for potential dives. Perhaps of more immediate interest is the draughting hole in the Sand Passages that extend beyond the sump at a higher level. At one narrow point the draught is, at times, of quite remarkable strength. An extensive rockpile beyond has thwarted all attempts so far to discover the source of this draught. It remains an intriguing lead. A survey of Herbert's Pot is published in Southern Caver 8(3), 1977.

Drop In Cave

To my knowledge no one has been down this cave for many years. It is located in an obvious doline in the paddock just below Herbert's Pot. A couple of small holes may be seen and apparently do not go very far. A survey was published in an old issue of the Northern Caverneers' Troglodyte magazine.

Shish Kebab

Shish Kebab consists of an 18 metre entrance pitch dropping down to a large chamber noteworthy for impressive calcite formation. A fossil streamway with large gour dams enters at one end of the chamber and is almost entirely blocked by a flowstone boss at a point known as Old Jamaica Corner. Attempts to force a squeeze here have been unsuccessful - it doesn't look promising beyond anyway. There are two sumps below the chamber. One is reached by descending through the rockfall and the other requires a 22 metre vertical descent into the middle of a deep elongated lake. Both sumps have resisted abortive dive attempts. Dye tracing has revealed that the rockfall sump at least receives water from downstream Herbert's Pot, but the precise relationship between the two Shish Kebab sumps remains unknown. The fact that water in both sumps appears more or less static is slightly puzzling, although the depth of water may make such observations misleading.

In April 1987, Trevor and I surveyed the major part of the cave. We were unable to locate the route through the rockfall to one of the sumps, so a complete picture must await more surveying. It is possible to see that the trend of passages both at Old Jamaica Corner and the mud passage above the pitch sump, are parallel and heading west. This is not towards Herbert's as might have been hoped, but digging the mud passage is a vague possibility.

Dangerous Cave

Despite their proximity, a link between Shish Kebab and Dangerous Cave has remained elusive. Dangerous Cave consists of an almost continuous rockpile leading down to an active streamway. In the downstream direction a link with Georgies Hall was established in 1980 (see Journal of the Sydney Speleological Society, 25(2), 1981), demonstrating that Dangerous Cave therefore contains the water flow

from Herbert's Pot. Leigh Gleeson sent me data from a survey of the cave in 1980, but so far no map has been published. On the survey trip a significant extension was made in the form of an upstream passage. A squeeze at stream level followed by a near total immersion in the water led to a spacious streamway. Joy was short lived, however, when a sump was encountered. This extension remains unsurveyed and is high on the list of things that need to be done.

Rolan Eberhard

CYCLOPS - for those myopic enough to try it.

PARTY: Trevor Wailes, Nick Hume, James Davis and Martyn Carnes.

Almost like a splinter in one's finger I had played host to thoughts of returning to Cyclops Pot for some time. There was a tiny glimmer of hope left for a lead that required a pinch bar and therefore could not be explored on the initial exploration trip.

Due to the tedium of gaining access to the Florentine Valley in recent times, Ida Bay has experienced a resurgence of activity. One of the major attractions is the freedom from time restrictions. So needless to say that on this occasion we started late and finished late.

The walk to the cave was hot, but otherwise moderately unpleasant. The first pitch was rigged and descended with varying degrees of expediency. There was a slight holdup at the top of the second pitch while I attempted to place a bolt in rock that bore the characteristics of a Rocky Road bar. After locating a rare solid "looking" section of marshmallow rock, things proceeded famously until the insertion of the cone in the anchor, whereupon the whole section of rock split and peeled away. During my climb down from over the pitch, everything I was standing on decided to follow suit and split/peel away. However, a quick leap here and there and the odd tug in the right direction from Trevor prevented an unnecessary cleanup at the bottom of the pitch. (Skeptics please note that cave conservation is forever on our minds.)

The other pitches were rigged and descended relatively uneventfully and Trevor and I soon got to work with the pinch bar on the offending rock which prevented access to our glimmer of hope. Needless to say when it was removed (or rather re-lodged further down the passage) we could see quite clearly that Cyclops had finished revealing itself.

Our ascent and de-rigging ran quite smoothly with the minor exceptions of groans and curses from me while getting off the rope at the top of the last pitch, and groans and swearing from the other three whilst negotiating the squeeze at the top of the first pitch.

Quite an enjoyable trip was had by all. Cyclops is one of the sportiest caves in the area and is therefore recommended to be experienced. Trevor and James made their way back to the cars, whilst Nick and I proceeded onto the old Exit campsite with ridiculously heavy packs for a couple of days camping/exploration, but that is another story....

Martyn Carnes

Cracroft and Beyond.....

23 to 26 January, 1988

The Wet Ones: Leigh Douglas, James Davis and Nick Hume.

The rain began to fall as soon as we left the car (Bunty had jinxed the latitude's weather by going off climbing in New Zealand that weekend!). More of the same over the next few days thwarted our plan to do Federation Peak. However we did manage to do a bit of caving in the Cracroft area and generally had a good time.

The Farmhouse Creek walk is fairly humdrum with few views from which to gain much of an appreciation of the wider countryside. Several hours of this leads to more open ground, plus the bonus of one of the state's dwindling karst areas of allowable access. Underground seemed to be the driest place in the South West at the time, so we went caving.

Our first foray was to a shelter cave containing a number of Aboriginal hand stencils. Though faint with age (the stencils, that is!), Leigh relocated them easily, highlighted as they were with distinctive red ochre. There are two or three clusters, the clearer set displaying an apparent finger deformity in the leftmost print. A detail about the artist, transmitted over nearly twenty thousand years of history. The collage reminded me of the body stencils created by the bomb blast at Hiroshima, a not altogether spurious analogy. Soot on the roof of the cave, together with myriad stone flakes littering the floor, attest to the wealth of archeological information awaiting to be interpreted here.

We moved onto the campsite at Judds Cavern. The evening was spent exploring the enormity of this fine stream cave. Leigh and Jim were "enslaved" by electronic flashes and some productive photography ensued. Sporting bare legs, we declined to go further than the near syphon though we made a vow to attempt the far sump with SCUBA at some time in the future, preferably via King Billy Hole.

Next day saw a move to Paperback Camp near the base of Moss Ridge. Being a thoroughly lightweight trip, deteriorating weather conditions made life a bit marginal. My fibrepile sleeping bag under a fly sheet left me a bit cold, though a hot water bottle in the form of Jim's water container allowed me to survive the night! Day three was again a shocker, finally putting paid to the plans of both ourselves and our campsite neighbours to race up "Fedder". Sticking around in hope of an improvement did not seem like a particularly good idea, so back we went.

A few dry gullies were checked for fossil resurgence sources some 10 to 15 minutes before reaching Judds. These were followed through some vile cutting grass to minor dolines on a gentle slope. None of them were goers. Once at the campsite we dried out and were once again comfortable. Swapping stories with a multitude of other walkers caught in the same predicament as ourselves, was the order for the rest of the day.

Day four was again abysmal, so we opted to walk out rather than bring plan B (climbing Mt Bobs) into effect. Plan C, a trip into Icebox, proved to be an interesting diversion. The major doline some fifteen minutes after leaving the button grass plane contains the cave in question. The actual entrance appears minor, but exudes a

considerable draft. A short scramble leads to a seven metre downclimb, then on through some crawls following the breeze to some easy passage.

The initial larger passage is false floored with views down to even wider passage below. This it intercepts after thirty metres or so. We went "downstream" in dry easy chamber for some distance. More false flooring gave two or more options for travel at various levels. Numerous bifurcations into smaller canyon were checked by Jim and Leigh (Jim's enthusiasm was painful to watch as he only had a slouch hat). We halted at a three passage junction agreeing that this cave was perhaps the highlight of the trip.

Back at the surface, more rain seemed to bid us farewell under the proviso that we shouldn't come back. A return would be worthwhile for the abovementioned dive, plus some continued exploration of the swallets on the saddle with the Farmhouse Creek watershed.

Nick Hume

The next biennial conference of the Australian Speleological Federation is to happen at the end of this year in Chillagoe, North Queensland. The following blurb appeared in our mail and is reproduced verbatim....

PO Box 92, Cairns 4870
28/1/88

TROPICON IS COMING....

It is being held in North Queensland between the 27th and 31st December 1988. Some of your club/society/ association members may not as yet have decided to come to Tropicon, so we have assembled promotional material detailing a few of the attractions in the Cairns area. Hopefully this will help persuade these undecided people to organise their holidays for a good time in North Queensland at Christmas.

Pre-conference field trips will be held at Rockhampton (everyone who is anyone cannot rest peacefully until they have witnessed the "Bat Emergence" from Bat Cleft, Mt Etna), and post conference trips at Chillagoe.

Registration forms will be inserted into Australian Caver No. 117. In addition there will be a call for papers. Details of the Photographic Competition have already been published in Australian Caver.

Looking forward to seeing a good representation from your club.

Yours in caving,

Chris Parr, Secretary.

Question of the month..... Is your rigging USER FRIENDLY???