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Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Annual Subscription \$4.00

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

Sat. 22 & Sun. 23 December The Chairman: Yes folks, we're going back there again! Remember the last trip did not stop because the cave had stopped, only our enthusiasm. Stuart Nicholas is the man behind this insane venture.

Tue. 1 to Tue. 8 January, 80. Cracroft Expedition: To be run in conjunction with Dave Guillieson's visit. May be extended for another week. See Albert Goede for details.

Wed. 6 February General Meeting: 8 p.m. at 7 Rupert Avenue (Don't forget new format!)

Wed. 20 February Committee Meeting: 8 p.m. at 7 Rupert Avenue.

EDITORIAL

Another calendar year is drawing to a close although for most outdoor enthusiasts this is a far from quiet period. Here in Tasmania, caving is no exception. Several individuals and groups from the North Island are visiting our shores for the specific purpose of caving in what are probably some of the best areas in Australia.

The Cracroft expedition will almost certainly produce some new discoveries, as will planned exploration of Marble Hill above Exit and the Junee-Florentine area. Every year, more and more significant caves are found throughout the State, a fact which many "mainland" cavers are, I'm sure, very envious of.

While extending a welcome to all our underground visitors this Summer, I would also add a note of caution - many of the deeper caves are possibly more severe than those you may have experienced elsewhere, so please be prepared.

On that note I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Another more "sobering" note: We value your membership (and we need your subs.!) so during your merry-making this year, remember-
No more mate, your DRIVING!

CLUB NEWS

- As usual there will be no Spiel and no general meeting in January so don't ring up and abuse the editor if you fail to receive a Spiel in the New Year!
- Talking of the Editor, both he and the Quartermaster will be in New Zealand from January 6 till February 1 so he probably won't answer the phone anyway! However, should you require gear or even; Shock!, Horror!, have a trip report for the February Spiel, don't hesitate to call around to the Editor's and Quartermaster's residence (7 Rupert Avenue, New Town) and do business with the senior member of the household. The gear borrowing book will be in the shed with the gear (amazing!) so please fill it in when borrowing and returning equipment.
- The weekly single rope technique practice nights are proving very popular and quite successful with much being learnt by all those attending. Why don't you come along and improve your laddering, SRT, rigging and burnt sausage eating techniques. Surprise, surprise, you may even learn something! Contact Stuart Nicholas or Chris Davies (72 4104(H) for info. No specific day or place can be given as both tend to vary.
- If there are any interesting trips going during the next two months or so, Gordon Taylor et al from NUCC would like to know about them. While here he/they may be contacted on 72 7713.
- The last General Meeting was a great success with quite a crowd turning up including a new prospective member, Dale (sorry I've forgotten your surname, Dale). After the new short-format business session, Bruce fired up his projector and showed three very interesting and often hilarious films (mostly thanks to the ad lib commentary of certain members of the audience).
- If you want to see some good pix and read about our British trogging cousins' activities, poke your nose into "Mountain 69". This edition contains a good article in the form of an historical commentary on the caving scene in Britain.

For those interested, there is also an in-depth interview with Ray Jardine, the inventor of Friends! The article appearing elsewhere in this Spiel was derived from that and a following article on Friends themselves.

---DO YOU NEED FRIENDS?---

If the answer is yes, read on.....

During the last twelve months or so, a minor revaluation has occurred in the type of protection devices used by climbers. So what, you might say. The same thing happened a few years ago with the "climb clean" movement and the consequent virtual extinction of pitons.

Most of you would know that so called nuts, chocks, hexes, etc. are used as artificial "chock-stones" in cracks to enable a runner to be used as protection. You would also know that the Spiel is a caving mag. All the above jazz is to introduce FRIENDS, the universal, you-beaut, every-man's answer (not to mention woman's) to climbing protection and possibly artificial anchor points in some caving situations. Hence this article.

In 1973, Ray Jardine, a high grade climber from Colorado and former space-flight-mechanics systems analyst for a major aerospace

company looked for new solutions to the problems of climbing protection. To meet the criteria he set, Jardine undertook extensive scientific analyses and testing of (a) the mechanics and principles of cam action, (b) the physics of the frictional interface between metal and rock, and (c) the strengths and stresses of aerospace alloys.

After a lot of unsuccessful experimentation he enlisted the help of a computer at the University of Colorado, a math professor and two graduate students. They came up with a device consisting of two pairs of cam shaped lobes which can open out and lock in a crack. The cams are designed to contact the rock with the same intercept angle and gripping at any point along the camming surface. Because the four cams are suspended independently, they can adjust to wide variations in the surfaces they touch.

The metal for the cams (and the stem) was chosen for its properties of frictional adherence and light weight. It's an exotic, aerospace aluminium alloy known as 7075-T6. Despite what you may think, the teeth in the cams are cosmetic only. They are not needed to grab the rock. The holding action is designed to work by pure friction and regardless of how smooth the granite, limestone, blue ice or concrete, the cams will hold!

Apparently, when used in limestone, placements must be chosen carefully in cracks with almost parallel sides but, by contrast, Friends will hold in flares up to thirty degrees in granite which has a much higher frictional quality.

Probably the biggest problem with Friends is (aside from the fact that they drop in late at night and refuse to leave!) that their versatility and effectiveness create over-confidence. They are not magic, super-glue rock grabbers. They demand intelligent, observant placement and removal techniques. Friends aren't magic, they're science.

Nevertheless, they should find a place in caving especially on light-weight exploration trips and/or as a secondary anchor for SRT pitches.

STOP PRESS: Greg Rushton, of early Exit exploration fame, offers another dozen bottles for the first human passage from Exit to Entrance, or vice versa. (This brings the total to two dozen. - Ed.)

TRIP REPORTS

The following trip report has been held over as a space filler (no particular reason except it got lost in the great Nicholas piling system!) Anyway, this seems a suitable time to reproduce it, so here it is. Sorry about the delay Bruce.

King George V - 21.7.79

Party: Bruce McIntosh, John Penwill, Julie Engeman, Nick Harvey, Bobbie Solager.

John and I constituted surface support for Ian and Pavel's Wolf Hole operation. The "Death or Glory" boys and girl had descended except for Peter Watts, when Dave Southgate and party (Nick, Julie & Bobby) arrived. Having seen Peter and Dave down the Hole, we headed off to KGV, entering at about 12 noon. The cave was very dry, except for occasional patches of clag and Albert's drip-

collecting gear which seemed rather underemployed. Introduced the three beginners to crawling, clambering, squeezing and other facets of the gentle art while exploring side passages off the main chamber and creek passage. (What Bruce neglects to mention here is his venturing down a squeeze and getting stuck. The grunts and groans of our leader seeking to extricate himself from this predicament kept us entertained for several minutes. J.P.)

Back to the Wolf Hole by 2 o'clock and only just got the fire going to grill a bit of choice scotch fillet when "Hoy!" sounded from the depths and we resumed official activities. Weather mild enough for a swim in the thermal pool before dark on the way home.

Bruce McIntosh.

Welcome Stranger - Saturday 8.12.79

Party: Bill Nicholson, Stuart Nicholas (TCC), Bob Cockerill (SCS), Pavel Ruzicka (?), Keith (the teeth) Harper, et al, from POLSAR + three members of WIACEN

After dragging the Maydena shop-keeper out of bed, the above collection of bodies assembled in the rain at Westfield Road awaiting the arrival of Rod (POLSAR) on his trail bike from the northern end of the ANM concession. A quick trip by Stuart and Bill in the "beast" out to Settlement Road (the original meeting point) where a cryptic note was left for Rod, added some excitement to the day.

The aim of the exercise was two-fold - (a) test a radio communications system in an underground environment, and (b) give some of the newer members of Police Search and Rescue a little more underground experience. Both aims were fulfilled successfully.

Despite predictions to the contrary, very clear (one-way, inwards) communications on HF were established from the car park to the end of Welcome Stranger. This point, I believe, has some 600m of rock separating it from the surface.

Sometime in the near future, further experiments are to be carried out involving bigger caves, different radio gear, different wavelengths and so on. The Wireless Institute members are very keen to assist in these exercises and with their gear and expertise a successful underground communications system may be developed. To say that this would greatly help in a cave rescue is an understatement, as communications are probably more important in this rescue situation than any other.

Thanks to the WIACEN members (whose names I have unfortunately forgotten) for their interest and assistance - we hope we never need you!

Stuart Nicholas.

Maydena Branch Excursion - Junee, Florentine & Gordon

Humbolt Mine - Saturday, 17.11.79

Party: Maydena Branch - Max Jeffries, Geoff Fisher, Diana Davies

Somewhat down in numbers but not enthusiasm, we discussed the day's activities over a cup of coffee and, inspired by Max's story of ghosts and mines, we decided to visit the Humbolt Mine.

The abandoned mine area at the foot of the Needles is reached by fifteen minutes walk from the Gordon Road. The site, now overgrown, was wet, dark and leech infested.

The first addit was 30 ft in length with not so good timbers. Further along the ridge, a large tailing dump marked the entrance of the second and largest addit. Timbers near the entrance were rotting but the majority of the passage was cut in solid quartzite, a remarkable feat considering the age of the mine and the inaccessability of the area. Trolley tracks were still in place on the floor. The passage forked and had an approximate length of 180ft and was comfortably large (5-6ft high and 3-4ft wide). Cave spiders and flowstone too! Little evidence of mineral wealth was found despite Max's metal detector. He did turn up a horse pack frame and a few spikes.

On the way out Max indicated a point on the track where a ghost had shown remarkably bad taste and stolen a crowbar instead of his metal detector which was sitting next to it at the time.

Gordon Quarry

A cave entrance had been reported in a quarry a few miles from the Gordon Road gate. The entrance, apart from being gravel, looked like any other cave entrance so we threw down 30 feet of ladder and climbed into a rift shaped space that didn't go anywhere. "Strange". Total depth approximately 25 feet.

JF342

We returned to a cave on the same ridge as JF1 (reported in Spiel 151 by G. Fisher) and placed the number at the entrance. Down a 45° 30ft pitch in a tight passage: An additional 30ft of ladder was needed for the vertical section not looked at previously. A large knob of limestone made for an extremely tight squeeze, battery off first, and then helmet. Max supervised from above. The vertical section ended in a dry sump.

Geoff checked out another 30ft of passage higher up that headed downwards on a reasonable incline but, alas, it did not go. The cave was declared a "nice little cave" as it had no mud, reasonable formations and no creepy crawlies.

JF1

The elusive JF1 was revisited; what an entrance! We found nothing new but were impressed by the overall size of the cave. Rope was necessary in the entrance as it was horribly slippery.

Back to Max's and surprise.....fresh scones! Thanks Phyllis!!
A thoroughly enjoyable excursion.

Diana Davies.
