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Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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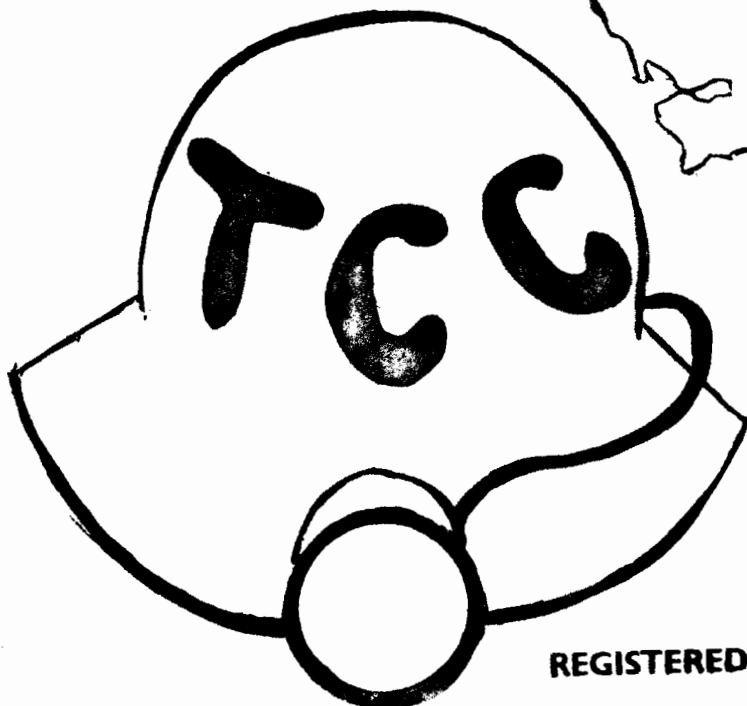
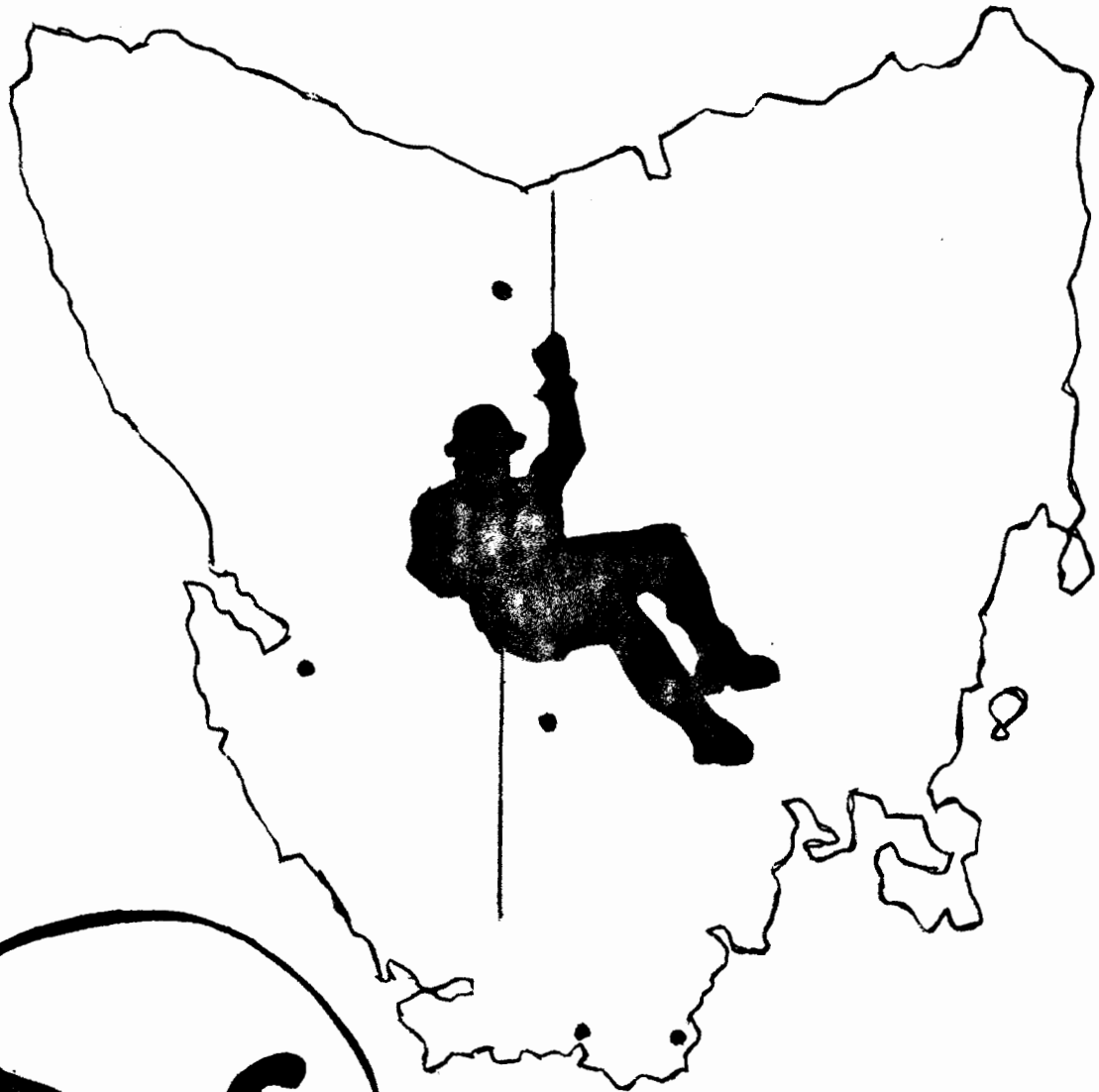
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SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

Sept. 1977 No. 127

T.C.C. Established 1946



T.C.C. P.O. Box 416
Sandy Bay, Tasmania

REGISTERED FOR POSTING AS A PERIODICAL - CAT. B

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club.

Annual Subscription \$4.00.

Single copies 40 c.

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Pres.(Maydena Branch): Max Jeffries, 16 South Crescent, Maydena, 7457.

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Editor: Albert Goede, Ph.23 1929(H),23 0561ext.415(B). Typist: Therese Goede.

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Forward Programme.

- September 14 - WEDNESDAY. 7.30p.m. Search and Rescue practice meeting at Police Garage, Patrick Street.
- Sept.24-25 - Weekend: Exit Cave, Ida Bay. Exploration with the climbing pole in Devils Stovepipe. Party will stay at Camp 1.
Leader: Bill Nicholson.
- October 5 - WEDNESDAY: General Meeting at 8 p.m. at Unit 4, 120 Strickland Avenue, South Hobart. ("Wellington Heights" sign at entrance to drive). First driveway on left-hand side of road after bus stop 21 - three stops past the Cascade Brewery.
- November 13 - SUNDAY: Day trip. Either Exit Cave, Leader: Roy Skinner
Or Abseil down Midnight Hole, Leader: Tony Culberg.
- December 3-4 - Weekend: Kubla Khan, Mole Creek. There is a party limit.
Leaders: Bill Tomalin, Tony Culberg.
- January 21-29 - Summer trip either to Precipitous Bluff or the Cracroft area. Final decision at the next General Meeting.

WEEKLY GET-TOGETHERS - As usual at Stuart's place, 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town. Every Wednesday except the first Wednesday of the month.

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EDITORIAL.

From the contributions received for this Spiel it is obvious that there has been a fair amount of activity going on in recent weeks. Some of our recent influx of prospective members have been able to complete their qualification for membership and we were pleased to welcome four new members at the last G.M. held at Roy's place - a meeting that was well attended and saw some animated discussion of club matters. At the October G.M. we hope to have Phil Robinson to show us some slides of his recent visit to the Himalayas.

The club celebrated its thirty-first birthday with an Annual Dinner at the Bavarian Tavern. Twenty-five members and friends had an enjoyable time. I have never seen so many caverneers on the dance floor!

With the coming of warmer weather and with the influx of keen new members we can expect an upsurge of caving activity. Stuart is to be congratulated on the making of 150 ft(45 metres) of new ladder in 5 30ft(9 metre) lengths. This is now ready for testing, (any volunteers?) and will form a welcome addition to the club's equipment. Stuart's shoulder is on the mend and he and Bill Nicholson are planning attacks on The Chairman and Khazad-dum next summer together with the Maydena Branch. Bill is also revitalizing exploration in Exit Cave by means of the climbing pole. Laurie Moody is pursuing his interest in sea caves. Anyone who prefers the coast next summer is welcome to join him. We also expect to see caving activity in the Cracroft area and possibly at Precipitous Bluff.

Albert Goede.

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CLUB NEWS

* Congratulations to Bill Nicholson who was elected party leader at the last G.M. to take effect from his eighteen birthday - 16/9/77. Despite his youth Bill has experience on his side having been a junior member for several years. He is the youngest member ever appointed party leader.

Club News(cont.)

* New Members. We extend a warm welcome to the following new members who were accepted at the last C.M.

Full membership: Bruce McIntosh, c/o Hobart Patric College, Letitia St., Nth Hobart
Matthew Lewis, 268 Sandy Bay Rd., Sandy Bay, 7005.
Ian Gothard, 10 Allison Street, West Hobart, 7000.

Junior membership: Caroline Rees, 9 Addison Street, Rosetta, 7010.

Welcome to the mob and keep up the good work.

* As the Spiel goes to press we are still awaiting news from Bill Tomalin whose wife is expecting twins at any moment. We hope all goes well. It seems rather a drastic way to ensure a supply of future caverners.

* On Wednesday, 31st August, members gathered at Stuart's place enjoyed a slide show of West Australian caves given by Linley Flester, secretary of the Speleological Research Group (W.A.). Many of the slides were by club member Norma Poulter and reflected his usual high standards of photography. The only complaint is that we would have liked to see more. It was followed by slides taken recently in Croesus Cave and elsewhere by some of our prospective members - shown and commented on by Bruce.

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Cave Conservation Rules - Do you agree?

The following cave conservation rules were tabled for consideration at the Canberra A.S.F. committee meeting. They have been circulated for discussion by members of A.S.F. clubs and a decision about whether or not they will be adopted will be made at the Mollongong A.S.F. committee meeting at the end of January.

Since some members are likely to hold strong views about the desirability or otherwise of these rules being introduced they are reprinted here so that we can have a full, informed discussion at the October C.M. If we are opposed to some of them it is important that our A.S.F. delegate be instructed accordingly so that the opposition can be voiced.

The proposals are:

1. They will not camp overnight in any cave.
2. They will not smoke in caves.
3. They will not conduct any dig, on the surface or underground, without the express prior permission of the landowner (or management authority) and their society committee.
4. They will not use any tools other than their bare hands in any dig.
5. They will not use explosives, on the surface or underground, under any circumstances.
6. They will not construct a gate in a cave without first obtaining the permission of the landowner (or management authority) and their society committee, and ensuring that permanent provision is made for the security of keys.
7. They will not construct a gate in a cave without an accompanying sign explaining the reasons for restricting access, and the circumstances under which authorised visits are possible.
8. They will not carry out any water tracing experiments in karst areas without first having carefully assessed the alternative tracing agents and techniques available, and selecting only those which can be shown to present no danger of chemical pollution of the cave or disturbance of aquatic flora or fauna.

(Re-organizing and re-numbering of the various sections of the Code of Ethics will be required.)

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Cave Numbering.

John Parker has been active recently numbering caves in the Junee Florentine area and has supplied the following information:

All the caves are on either side of the forestry track that leads on from John Bull Road.

- JF 121 - Small cave on the left of the track 50 yds. on from the turn-off to JF 110 - fully explored - 50 ft. pitch that divides into two at 20 ft. level - both squeeze off at 50 foot level. Grid ref. 669-698 (Nyenna).
- JF 122 - Cave to the left of the track on the ridge that also contains The Chairman (JF 99); 30ft. entrance pitch that enters into a large chamber - well decorated - fully explored. Grid ref. 667-701 (Nyenna)
- JF 123 - Inflow cave above The Chairman - has not been explored. Creek that feeds the cave is dry in summer. Grid ref. 668-701 (Nyenna).
- JF 124 - Large cave with pitch of approx. 100 ft. to sandy floor, some scope for further exploration. Cave 60 ft. on from JF 113 along the track - to the left of the track. Grid ref. 666-701 (Nyenna).
- JF 125 - Adjacent cave to JF 124, 30 ft. to NW - is a small swallet - small flow even in summer. Has been partially explored. Grid Ref. 666-701 (Nyenna).
- JF 126 - Adjacent to JF 125 - small swallet partially explored - large number of cave crickets - lot of loose timber and rock throughout the cave. Grid ref. 666-701 (Nyenna).
- JF 127 - Proposed name "Murder Pot" - 100 ft. off the track to the left of the track in the ridge before Rift Cave. Entrance pitch of 60 ft - that levels into a passage chamber - some decoration - very dirty cave - has not been fully explored - this cave nearly killed me while exploring it, a very nasty cave. Grid ref. 662-700 (Nyenna).
- JF 128 - "Deep Pot" - 50 yards S.E. of JF 34, has been explored to depth of 60 ft. from the entrance pitch - a sloping mud flood leads off - not fully explored. Cave to the right of track just before the turn off to JF 34. Grid ref. 662-669 (Nyenna).
- JF 129 - Proposed name "Rain Tunnel". Cave to the north of JF 34, inflow cave - creek near dry in summer, explored for 50 ft., drought present, very tight. Grid ref. 662-669 (Nyenna).

Ofcourse all these grid references are very approximate, accurate survey needed.

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Liffey Falls Cave

by Albert Goode.

I had never heard of Liffey Falls Cave until some time last year when I visited the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston with Peter Murray to look at their collections of fossil bone. The zoological curator, Bob Green, mentioned that a lot of insect material had been collected in recent years and because of my interest in cave crickets (family: Rhaphidophoridae) I asked if I could go through the collection of crickets to extract any material belonging to the cave cricket family. About half a dozen tubes of specimens were found. One of the most interesting was a tube containing two specimens from Liffey Falls Cave. Dr. Aola Richards from Sydney has subsequently borrowed the material and has determined that it represents a new species.

On Saturday, 13 August, Judy Hine and I set out from Launceston to visit the cave. It is about an hours drive from Launceston and from where one leaves the car it is about an hour's walk along a poorly maintained track to the Falls. The weather was fine but heavy rain had fallen on the previous two days and there was a lot of water about. When we reached the falls on the right bank of the river a wide low cave entrance could be seen on the opposite bank just downstream from the falls. Fortunately a large log provided a safe crossing place. The cave proved to be remarkably dry and roomy with a roof height of up to two metres. The cave appears to have formed by lateral undercutting of the cliff by the stream.

Subsequently the front part has suffered roof collapse creating fairly dark conditions at the back. The cave has developed on a pebbly mudstone with a lime-rich matrix and poorly developed coralline formations are found on some of the walls. The cave had a sizeable population of cave crickets belonging to the genus Micropathus and we estimated a population of about 100 including both adults and nymphs.

The cave is well worth a visit if you happen to be in the area. From inside one has a splendid view of the Falls. The walk to the cave is quite pleasant and much of the way is through unspoiled rainforest.

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Bubs Hill Area

by Albert Goode

During August I twice visited the Bubs Hill area. The first time to relocate Tinys Watch Hole (23rd) and the second time to descend the cave with the help of laboratory technician Denis Charlesworth in order to collect samples for my research project on cave sediments. The second trip was unsuccessful because we only brought 75 ft. of ladder (all that was available at the time) and this was found to be 15 ft. short for the entrance pitch.

As a result of my visit I have found that a number of caves in the area have been numbered by S.C.S. I was previously unaware of this as no list of numbered caves has been published for this area. On the first trip I left the vehicle at the Bubs Hill sign, followed up the hill to the transmission line and then walked downhill in a westerly direction along the transmission line track which has been cleared in recent years. A number of holes were observed. Two of these were numbered 201 and 204 respectively. B 201 is a small swallet, probably dry in summer and B 204 is an elongated fissure a short distance further west. I eventually located Tinys Watch Hole which is not numbered. Afterwards I made a quick visit to Thylacine Lair. This cave has two entrances close together which are labelled jointly as B 203.

On the second trip, after my unsuccessful attempt to descend Tinys Watch Hole, I visited the limestone quarry on the northern side of the Lyell Highway. Here we found a small cave entrance numbered B 205 and we also noticed an opening higher up in the face which can not be reached without equipment. It has a small trickle of water coming out of it and has not been numbered. Bubs Hill has potential for further caves but thick vegetation makes searching for them a difficult and time-consuming pastime. Meanwhile, I would like to know how many caves in the area have been numbered . . . by whom . . . and where I can find a list of numbered caves?

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D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Lower Derwent.

Laurie R. Moody.

The objective of this particular trip was mainly to locate and photograph a sea cave south of Woodbridge in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel area. Having previously visited this particular cave as a child, I was interested to see it again through the eyes of a speleologist.

The cave itself lies on the northern side of a sandstone outcrop approximately 3 km. south of Woodbridge towards Birches Bay. A small one metre triangular shaped entrance leads to a small chamber with a sloping roof and a small daylight hole which is slightly right and above the entrance. Length is approx. 10 metres with no continuation. Cave would partially fill with water at high tide. Another small sea cave with a larger entrance lies next to the other but does not go in far.

After taking several photographs I then proceeded to a cliff area 2 km. north of Pirsons Point and close to the mouth of the Derwent River. Investigations here revealed a small through cave approx. 10 metres in length. This cave lies at the foot of the cliffs directly behind and below a house owned by a friend of mine, Mr. S. Dickson. Some 300 metres south of this point, I also located what could prove to be an extremely large sea cave. This cave runs into the cliff a considerable distance but access is extremely difficult. Canyon-like cliff walls drop vertically to the water. Entry to this cave, would be recommended during summer and preferably at low tide. However, ladder climbs could

be instigated and this could prove an interesting diversion for a stinking hot summer's day.

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Junco Area - 20/8/77.

Party: John Parker and Laurie Moody.

I arrived at Maydena around 10 a.m. to find that conditions were similar to those I had left in Hobart. Wet, miserable and far from ideal for any serious caving. The morning was spent at the Amman's where my latest slides were shown. We also viewed a number of slides taken by John Parker at the mine-adit near the Needles, west of Maydena.

After lunch, kindly supplied by Anne, John and I decided to pay a visit to Ross-Walker Cave. The weather lifted briefly, allowing us to reach the cave. However, as we did so, the rain began again. Some time was spent examining the cave and each of its entrances. A number of slides were also taken. Prior to departing the rain ceased and we inspected some nearby outcrops of limestone, scrub-bashing through some extremely dense scrub. Our searching failed to reveal anything of interest and our arrival back at the car co-incided with yet another downpour.

Returning to the Amman's, we enjoyed a welcome cup of coffee before returning home.

L. Moody.

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Exit Cave - 27,28 August, 1977.

Party: Roy Skinner, Bruce McIntosh, Tom Middleton, Strato Anagnostis, Anita and Rina Truchamas, Bill Nicholson, Ian Gothard, Pavel Ruzicka, Stephen Smillic, Hugh Stevenson, David Barry, Stephen Marshall, David Walker, Dianne Schofield, Julie Marsh, Katherine Edyvane, Lynne Smith, Robert Johnson (Div. of Recreation) and Linley Plester (S.R.G.M.A.).

This was a combined P.C.C. - Hobart Patric party with Robert Johnson, Linley Plester and Tom Middleton as casual visitors. The objectives were to define walking areas in formation sections, to back-mark the rock-pile and to carry eight 5 ft. sections of scaling pole to the Devils Stovepipe.

To conduct a party of 21, most of whom had little or no caving experience, through the rock-pile is of course a slow and arduous business. However, this was achieved. Put to state events in chronological order --

Departed Hobart approx. 7 a.m. Saturday, met at Dover 9 a.m. Arrived at Exit about 12 noon (42 boats making contact with the track in August soon reduced several sections to the status of quagmire), set up camp at Camp 1 and departed therefrom at 2.30 p.m., entered the rock-pile via the Ballroom in order to pick up reflecting markers for the rock-pile. At a point near Mini Martin, some members of the party were feeling the effects of the protracted exertion and were apprehensive about proceeding farther with the return through the rock-pile still to come, so we left the scaling pole above flood level (and Albert's drill and my hammer below flood level) and returned to the rock-pile. Total time from Camp 1 to the turning point was 3½ hours. Total time of return to Camp 1 was 1½ hours (don't ask me why).

Humans are supposed to have an inbuilt mechanism which tells them that even when underground they know whether it is daylight outside or not. I am unconvinced about this, but not about the rooster which must have accompanied us to Camp 1. He first crowed at 5.30 a.m.

For the statistically minded, it takes three hours for twenty-one people to have breakfast in Exit Cave, so if you want to do anything in the morning and you have twenty people with you, 8 o'clock is too late to start breakfast, but some of us went and defined the walkway in the Ballroom while the rest went photographing in the Collonades and Hammer Passage.

The cave was evacuated by 2.30 p.m.

Tony and Pat Culberg had planned a one day visit with David Perkins of UNSWSS, but when David was unable to make it, it didn't take many glances at the watery heavens on Tony's part to convince him that the sanddunes of Cockle Creek were a better proposition for the day.

Unexpected visitors on the Saturday were the Editor himself and Judy Hinc

on a brief "tourist" visit.

roy Skinner.

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Wolf Hole - 21/8/77.

Party: Bill Tomalin, Bill Nicholson, Chris Rathbone, Bruce McIntosh and 13 assorted students.

Despite a last-minute panic over scrounging enough ladder to rig the Wolf Hole, the trip got underway on schedule. There were rather too many for this particular trip as the Wolf Hole presents a few logistical problems when exiting. However, the main purpose was to provide experience of abscil and ladder work in a caving situation.

Abscail - The pitch was rigged by the Bills and Chris. I'd have preferred the students to do the rigging but time was short. I've never seen such an array of abscail methods on one occasion. All methods were to be found in the book but I have serious doubts as to the safety of looping the abscail rope around the barrel of the karabiner. With novices there is a tendency to abscail in stops and starts and the heat generated in the karabiner by this method could have serious effects on the rope. All students appeared confident in abscail - it might be pointed out that most fatal accidents in climbing are caused by overconfidence in abscail.

Caving - Each of the two groups had about 3 hours charging around the mud slopes of Wolf Hole (excluding waiting time). Bill Nicholson perjured himself by swearing blind that Lake Pluto was in the opposite direction when the two groups met. Bruce drove the second group mad with his photographing everything that didn't move and Chris drove everyone mad anyway. The cave was surprisingly dry (for Wolf Hole).

Laddering - As expected, some had little trouble and some had a lot. Lack of technique rather than physical strength caused most of the hang-ups. One student took 1/2 an hour to climb out - a major feat when one considers that 1/2 hr. on a ladder is more than most of us would care to cope with anyway! Against-the-face technique was badly lacking, as was negotiation of a lip. Bill N. was tremendous at talking bodies over the lip. It is well-known that one's sense of humour during a ladder climb deteriorates as an inverse square of the amount of difficulty one is experiencing, and the situation is not improved by barracking from the top! It was well-intentioned but sometimes overdone.

Three students have indicated that they wish to join the Kubla trip in Dec. I observed, carefully, their performance on Wednesday and their skills are adequate. I'd like them to now get experience in rigging and photographic techniques.

General - a worthwhile experience with some lesson learned. On schedule up to the laddering. Bill N. has some suggestions on following up a new lead found in South run.

Bill Tomalin.

Wolf Hole (Group B Report) - 31/8/77.

A/L - Bill Nicholson, Caroline Rees, Matthew Lewis, Chris Rathbone, Jan Gothard Pavel Ruzicka, Julie Marsh.

Walkie-talkies were used on the entrance pitch for communications and excessive abuse, these proved to be invaluable and worked quite well until the batteries died. Approx two and three-quarter hours were spent in the Wolf Hole complex, lunch was eaten on the shores of Lake Pluto and a fissure was partly explored. Exploration of this fissure will continue next trip by placing a bolt to allow access to a lower passage. A few people experienced slight difficulty in ascending the 90' ladder pitch and fortunately no mishaps occurred.

Bill Nicholson.

Genghis Khan - 3/9/77.

Party: A/L - Bill Nicholson, Caroline Rees, Matthew Lewis and Dave Davies.

A few our were spent (mostly on our bottoms) in G.K. admiring the delicate spelcothens and splendid formations. No exploration outside the main chamber was carried out and no recent vandalism or natural breakages were noticed.

*** Many thanks to the E.H.C. mob and others who carried the sealing pole equipment in past the talus in Exit Cave recently.

Bill Nicholson.

STOP PRESS! Twin Boys arrived Saturday morning. 7lb 10ozs and 8lb 4ozs! Congratulations to Kerry and Bill. Twins nominated for future membership in 1992.