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Speleo Spiel

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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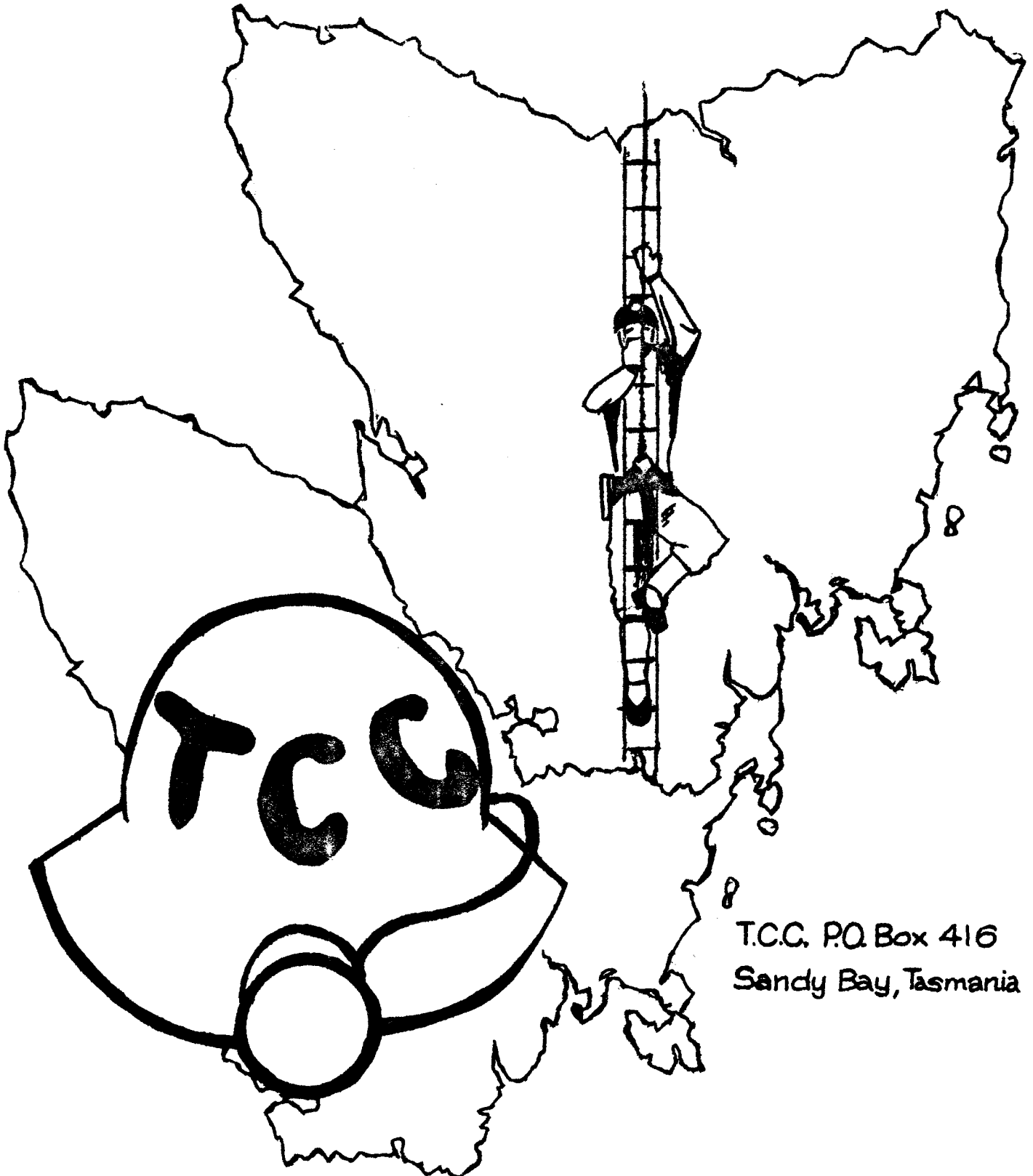
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SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

SEPT. 1978 NO 138.

T.C.C. Established 1946



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

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Cavermeering Club.

Annual Subscription \$4.00.

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Secretary: Ian Gothard, P.O. Box 193, SANDY BAY, 7005.

Typist: Therese Goede, 8 bath Street, Battery Point, 7000.

FORWARD PROGRAMME.

Sept. 16th - ANNUAL DINNER. Wheatsheaf Hotel, Macquarie Street.
Pre-dinner drinks 7 p.m. onwards. Dinner 7.45 p.m. onwards.
Get together with your underground acquaintances for an evening of conviviality and some armchair caving and theorizing.

Sept. 19th. - TUESDAY: COMMITTEE MEETING.
7.30 P.M. At the wheatsheaf Hotel.

Please note earlier starting time and that it is on the Tuesday instead of a Wednesday.

Sept.23.24 - Surveying trip to the Junee Ridge. Leader: Stuart Nicholas.

Late Sept. or early Oct. - Wolf Hole. Trip some time in near future.
Contact Bruce McIntosh, if you are interested. by phoning him at Springvale Hostel (evenings).

Oct. 4th. - General Meeting. 8 P.M. Meeting Room, Wheatsheaf Hotel.

Late Oct. - Trips to Cub Hole and Wolf Hole, Hastings. For further details contact Ian Gothard (address as above).

November. - Binney Tunnel, Hastings. Limited numbers. Contact I. Gothard. also CROESUS, Hole Creek, photographic trip.
Limited numbers, for details contact Ian Gothard.

Late Nov./Early Dec. - Training trip for Franklin River Expedition on either the Huon or the Picton Rivers. Contact Ian Gothard for further information.

Early Dec. - Hobart Metric. College Cav. Group. Full scale weekend EXIT CAVE trip. See Bruce McIntosh for further details.

December 9 - Kubla Khan photographic trip. LIMITED NUMBERS.
Contact Bill Tomalin for details.

JAN. 14-29, 1979 - ANNUAL TRIP.
Base will be the Maydena Homestead.
Trips will include surveying, exploration, cave numbering in the Junee-Florentine area as well as social intercouring. Mainland cavers are invited to participate and may contact the secretary for further information.

28th JAN.-5th FEB. - Franklin River Expedition.
The trip will be extended to 15th Feb. for those able to stay and will involve floating up the Gordon River. For further details contact Ian Gothard.

REMINDER - ANNUAL DINNER, SEPT. 16th. WHEATSHEAF HOTEL.

EDITORIAL - Please turn to page 5.

VALE.

-

Emily (Pen) Skinner.

It is with deepest regret that we announce the death of Emily (Pen) Skinner after a short illness. Emily and her husband Roy have been associated with our club for many years and were well known not only to most Tasmanian cavers but many mainland spelcos as well. They moved to Hastings Caves in the early 1950's when Roy became cave guide there and later cave superintendent while Emily took charge of the restaurant at "The Chalet" and subsequently in the new building. Their stay at Hastings was the beginning of a period of close association with the caving fraternity.

Some years ago, after Roy Skinner won a Churchill Fellowship, he and Pen were able to travel around the world and see tourist caves and their management in many far away places. It was a period when they found many overseas friends.

When forced to move to Hobart about four years ago for health reasons they maintained their close links with cavers. Many club meetings were held at their home and Roy maintained an active interest as a cave guide by organizing summer wilderness excursions to Exit Cave and Croesus.

We will always remember Pen for her warm personality, her interest in young people and her ability to make visitors feel welcome and at home. She will be sorely missed. Our sympathies to Roy and their children Andrew and Fiona.

Albert Goodc.

Hobart Metric College Caving Group's Activities. 21-23/7/78. Mole Creek.
Bruce McIntosh (Leader), Bill Nicholson and seven students.

Saturday was spent looking for cave entrances but everything we found was too full of water. Westmorland Cave is a must for a future trip: the creek was full this time with water plunging down a short gorge into an impressive, acutely arched entrance. The landowners permission was readily granted and access straight up the creek is quick and easy. Lynds Cave on Sunday, with the Mersey up to discomfort level for fording. Likewise, the pool at the base of the entrance waterfall.

Further Activities: The HMC Caverneering Group has been training on abscils and ladders since April this year, using the Pink Palace South Face (14 metres) the Proctors Road Quarry (about 28 metres) and the invaluable guidance of Bill Nicholson. This culminated in a successful Wolf Hole expedition on Saturday, 5/8/78, with assistance from Bill Donalin wearing his Recreation Division hat. Ten students completed the abscil, the round trip to Lake Pluto, some minor exploration and the ladder ascent with no holdups except the leisurely ascent by their leader. We're hoping for another trip soon for those students who missed this one.

B. Mc.

Honorary Associate Membership.

At the August Committee Meeting it was decided to confer Hon. Assoc. Membership to Laurie Moody, in appreciation for his efforts as editor of the Speleo Spiel and his active interest in the club during his time of membership, during the course of which he also held office as president.

"Mercury" - 6/9/78. (extract)

A British-sponsored expedition team has discovered what could possibly be the largest natural cave passage in the world. .. A team of spelaeologists led by Dr. Anthony Walther of Britain surveyed more than 50 kilometres of cave passage in Sarawak's national park.

TRIP REPORTS.

Florentine Area - 6/8/78.

As before the aim of the trip was the investigation of the area between Leo Thorne's Road and Settlement Road. Once again more caves were located than you could poke a stick at - will just describe a few and give full description of all caves when they are eventually numbered.

One interesting cave which was found spiralled down into the ground for 150 ft. or so, nearly walkable all the way, and ended in a mud wall. The whole length of this cave was choked with small mushrooms.

A new entrance was found into JP 87, a numbered cave in the area, and a long length of new passage was found with the aid of a shovel. Two other possible extensions were seen - again with the aid of the spade.

Six holes in line were found along the crest of a limestone ridge and one was investigated. A 15 ft. pitch led into a large chamber then through a squeeze into a further large chamber. The hole next to it has a small entrance. Rocks dropped into this rattle for a considerable time with a strong draught coming out.

Apart from these I can think of 14 other new caves found today, most not yet looked at. The way things are going there will be at least 50 numberable caves in the area encompassed by Thorne's and Settlement Roads.

John Parker.

Thursday, 10th August - Florentine Valley.

Party: Albert Goede and John Parker.

The purpose of the trip was to visit the area around Leo Thorne's Road which was burned out last summer and where John Parker has since discovered about 50 cave entrances all of which are as yet un-numbered. We arrived about mid-morning and stopped at the first significant limestone outcrop on the left-hand side of the road. We visited a number of holes most of which were insignificant. One was quite impressive with a large vertical entrance near the top of a ridge. The entrance is a six metre ladder drop. The cave is fairly small and further progress in all directions seems to be blocked by rockfall and cave fill. Some of the roofs have fossils standing out in positive relief due to differential solution. Some good specimens were seen.

We then visited nearby JP 87 which I had not seen before. Without a short ladder the "easiest" entrance, which is un-numbered, is a tight downward sloping passage. The cave itself is quite interesting with large amounts of cave fill. A few bones were noticed in several places including some in the roof. The latter were so far gone however, that they fell apart when I tried to touch them. We found several small extensions to the cave. We went out for lunch but returned in the afternoon to collect some of the bones.

This is quite a good cave to take a group of beginners. The cave is reasonably dry and has interesting crawls and chimneys.

Albert Goede.

Tuesday, 15th August - Florentine Valley.

Party: Albert Goede and John Parker.

We started the day by visiting JP 1. It is on a low ridge on the left (west) of the road going to the beginning of the track to Khazad-dum. I was interested in having a look at the deposits in this cave as Anne Parker had collected some Forrester kangaroo bones from there some years ago. With John as guide it did not take us long to find the cave. The entrance slope was as wet and greasy as ever and the rope came in very useful. At the bottom of the slope John found an untouched can of green ginger beer! We then went to the daylight chamber and down the 6 metre drop. Not much was found in the way of bone material but I pointed out to John an interesting fissure from where I had noticed a strong draught on a previous visit. On examination we decided that it could be enlarged with a crowbar and John was going to return and see if he could break through. (He has since been back and reports that it leads back to a known part of the cave.)

We then drove to Eleven Road where we had lunch. After turning off from the Florentine Road we drove for 3.0 kms. to reach a bridge across the Florentine. After another 1.1 kms. there is a smoothly rounded limestone ridge on the left-hand side of the road. On top of this ridge is JF 119 which was visited on the way back. It has a sloping entrance about 1 metre in diameter which leads into a small network of passages most of which can be explored only by crawling. This cave is not worth another visit.

We continued on to a large stump splashed with red paint on the right-hand (eastern) side of the road at 3.8 kms. from the bridge. Our purpose was to look at JF 150 which Max Jeffries had looked at with Anne Parker. Neither John nor I had been there before so we had to rely on Max's sketch map. From the road the country slopes down towards the Florentine. We spent quite a while of bashing around in the scrub without success. On the way back John stumbled on the sinkhole in which JF 150 is located. The main entrance is situated in the north-facing side of the sinkhole and is wide and low with the floor sloping inwards. It is an interesting little cave which is fairly spacious inside and contains large amounts of dissected clay-rich cave fill. There were a few bones in the deposit but not enough to warrant excavation. At the low point of the cave was a small but deep-looking lake with a partially water-filled passage going off to the left. A passage to the right was explored by John but did not go far.

At the far end of the cave is a small second entrance at the top of a steep muddy slope. John went out that way while I went back to collect the few bones I had seen. Although the cave is short, the main passage is of quite large dimensions and it is well worth a visit on a fine day as it is only a few minutes walk from the road.

Albert Goede.

Florentine Valley - 9/8/78.

A quick trip out to the Florentine Valley to finish off exploration of the area at the end of Settlement Road. Four numberable caves were found after much searching - nothing very spectacular - mostly crawly shafts, low, with some nice formations.

These caves should be about the last of the caves in the area between Settlement and Leo Thorne's Roads - which would now total about sixty numberable caves.

10-8-78. Trip up to the Chairman area to try and clear the entrance into JF 137. This cave is about 300 yards SE of the Chairman and was found about two years ago, but boulders and mounds of soil prevented entry. After 2 hours digging and barring the entrance was cleared sufficiently to allow access. From here the cave drops steeply away and from the sound of rocks thrown down there is certainly considerable depth to this cave.

The position of this cave is in line between the Chairman and Victory 75 (JF 110) which together with the strong draught coming from this cave seems to indicate that it may possibly enter the Chairman system.

Two other caves in the vicinity of the Chairman remain to be investigated. One is an inflow cave, JF 123 above the Chairman - a now permanent creek flows into the cave which has never been entered. Another cave, the famous "15 second" (JF 111) 100 yards NW of the Chairman has a very narrow entrance but opens up after this. It has been partly dug out but more work needs to be done on it before exploration of the cave can take place.

John Parker.

Florentine Valley - 19/8/78.

Visit to the Florentine Valley area yet again and if I remember correctly it was a nice sunny day - one of the few.

Began by looking at area near Beginners Luck Cave - numerous small caves near the road, some with formations, but no large caves.

Drove to the end of Settlement Road, where a number of caves were located to the left of the road. One, a dry inflow cave has low, crawly passages. An adjacent cave has a large entrance going back into a narrow passage with numerous large formations. (Continued on Page 6.)

EDITORIAL.

At the last general meeting our editor, Caroline Rees, was forced to submit her resignation owing to work commitments. Pending the appointment of another editor I am writing the editorial for this issue.

During the twelve months or so the members of the Maydena Branch have been undertaking some sterling work in the Florentine Valley and also on the Junee Ridge. A vast number of new holes have been located but most remain unexplored. On the other hand, many trips have been held by Hobart members to the same old caves, particularly Wolf Hole and "minimum caving" trips to Hole Creek.

What has happened to everybody's exploration enthusiasm? Isn't it about time that the Hobart members gave Anne, Steve, John and Max of Maydena some help in continuing the fantastic work they are doing? Remember, the areas at Maydena are probably amongst the most exciting in Australia at this time as far as new finds are concerned.

During the last few months, several prospective and new members have shown interest in our sport and joined our club. Surely, the best way for us to keep up their interest is to take them on exploration trips to newly located caves. What about it??

Stuart Nicholas.

Until a new editor has been appointed please forward any articles for the Spiel to Stuart Nicholas, 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, 7008.

Visiting Caver.

Rawleigh Webb from WASG will be here in Tassy in January 1979 for a conference. After his conferring he will have a period from January 19 to January 29th free for caving. He has asked me to try and organize trips to Khazad-dun and Exit Cave if possible. Rawleigh is an experienced cave surveyor and has indicated his willingness to survey some sections of Exit.

Could anyone who is interested in either of these trips (leading or participating) please let me know as soon as possible.

For any members who did not meet Rawleigh when he was here early this year, he is an extremely enthusiastic guy and hence we should make every effort to run trips for him during his visit.

Stuart Nicholas.

" SAVE OUR CAVES " T - SHIRTS !

The University of Queensland Speleological Society is selling T-shirts with "Save Our Caves" printed across the front, to raise money for a campaign to save the Mt. Etna caves from mining interests.

The price of the T-shirts is \$4.50 each plus 60 cents postage, and they are available in most sizes, and in the colours blue, green, white, yellow, bone and orange.

Orders may be placed with: Uni. of Q'land. Speleological Society,
c/o The Union,
University of Queensland,
ST LUCIA, QLD. 4067.

or: The Secretary,
Tasmanian Caverneering Club,
Box 416, P.O. Sandy Bay, Tas. 7000.

Several other caves were found nearby, one with good formation. The area at the end of Settlement Road looks really good for further caving finds with numerous dolines throughout the area.

John Parker.

Ida Bay and Hastings - Wednesday, 23rd August, 1978.

Went to Ida Bay to visit Loons Cave as part of my research work. I had hoped to swim in through the lower entrance wearing a wet suit as the upper entrance is a 25 metre drop which I could not negotiate without assistance. As it turned out the lower entrance was full of water and I was unable to locate the upper entrance. As the weather was wet I only made a short search.

In order to assist other people who want to visit the cave the following are the directions for finding it and a description of the site. Turn off at Ida Bay and follow the South Lunc Road. After 1.2 kms. you cross the railway line. Then drive for another 2.8 kms. - a point about 400 metres on the Ida Bay side of the turn-off to the limestone quarry. On the north side of the road is a hydro pole (No. P 2774). About 10 metres further on a small stream crosses under the road from left to right through a concrete pipe. This is the stream that flows through Loons Cave. It rises in a spring a few metres away from the road. Five metres past the stream crossing on the south (left) side of the road I have tied three blue tapes to a 20 cms. diameter gum tree. From here a line of tapes leads to the lower entrance of Loons Cave (IB 2) - a downward sloping hole a good metre across with water in the bottom. This appears to represent an old channel of the stream. When I was there conditions were very wet but I am told that under dry conditions it is possible to swim through into Loons Cave. This cave is well worth a visit. It has an active stream passage, some good formation, two big avens leading up towards the surface, plenty of mud and some good crawly passages further in.

In the afternoon I went to Hastings and retaped the track to Wolf Hole as well as doing some track clearing. The beginning of the track is marked with three blue tapes. Because of the interest of other members I have also marked the former entrance to the Cub Hole. On the right hand side of the track where it climbs steeply I have tied three blue tapes on a horizontal sapling. The Cub Hole is about 4 metres to the right at the base of a low cliff. It is impossible to enter at present without doing some excavation.

Albert Goede.

Florentine Valley - 24th August, 1978.

This was a day trip to finish my description of the excavation pits in Titans Shelter (JP 97) and to try and relocate Frankcombe Cave. The morning at Titans Shelter was uneventful. I then drove down to the vicinity of Frankcombe Cave. The stream that flows through the cave crosses under the road from east to west about 350 metres past the Brizons Road turn-off (5.8 kms. past the Settlement Road turn-off). Conditions had been very wet and the stream was running strongly (after a dry spell in summer it may sometimes stop running). Most of the area between here and Brizons Road has been burnt out last summer and offers excellent opportunities for surface exploration. I followed a newly made cattrack which heads west from 30 metres south of where the stream goes under the road. After a short distance the track runs close to the base of a steep limestone hill. At this point there is a large burnt gum tree lying against the hillside, cut off from the base. From here the track swings towards the north. A short distance along three blue tapes tied around a standing dead tree indicate the route to Frankcombe Cave. It is only a short walk to the entrance and is well marked by blue tapes. Inside the stream was running strongly. The crawl leading to the formation section of the cave had up to 10 cms. of standing water in it and required a certain amount of skill to negotiate without getting too wet. Nobody appears to have been to this cave for some time but it is well worth a visit.

Visits to the formation section of the cave should be limited to small parties and care should be taken to minimize damage.

Albert Goede.

Upper Tiger area, Florentine Valley - 27/8/78.

Party: John Parker, Sue Peency, Geoff Fisher, Christopher Davies and Max Jeffries
(all T.C.C. Maydena Branch).

Two car loads of eager cavers headed for Gittus Road in the upper Tiger area of the Florentine to investigate a couple of holes discovered the previous day in my work area. However, after much grovelling around in some of them the area was soon abandoned. Nothing seemed to go. Geoff was the poor soul sent down one shaft by ladder only to dead end at 30 ft. Sue was coaxed into another little tight squeeze and promised regular meals until "the end" if unable to get out again while we heroes watched on. This hole also fizzled after some fifteen feet. A quick lunch and then we adjourned to Thorne's Road. Sending Sue, Geoff and Chris down a new entrance into JP 87 to have a look, John and I proceeded with a crowbar to make a cave out of a small opening John had previously found nearby. After, much barring, groaning, cursing, and lifting we finally gained entry to quite a pretty little cave with some formation and a couple of separate chambers, but no prospects of anything further. Well worth a number - 35 ft. of passage which could possibly be extended if one felt enthusiastic. Next attack was on a small tight squeeze almost completely blocked by rocks and dirt but rocks thrown down indicated it might be quite deep. After much excavation we rigged a ladder. By now the others had joined us and this time it was Chris' turn to be the scape goat and be first down the ladder. "It's a go-er" - so down went the rest of us. Quite a bit of room with numerous muddy crawls. Saw some fossils but there was little formation. One large shaft ended in a clear pool (sump) looking a couple of metres deep. A summer possibility to continue past pool. Next a quick look at JP 71 - just a "Cooks Tour" to prove to our visitors that some of our caves have good formation. As it was now getting late 5 weary cavers returned to their respective homes after an enjoyable day.

Max Jeffries.

Wolf Hole - 2/9/78.

Party: Stuart Nicholas, Tony Morgan and Len Smith.

Originally this trip was to have been led by Ian Gothard but as I had seen nothing of him for a couple of weeks I decided to go anyway and introduce Tony and Len to the gentle art of semi-vertical caving. The names are probably not familiar to most members but both have been on a couple of trips and now only need a third trip with a different leader to qualify for membership. Any takers?

Meanwhile, back at the cave . . . ! . . . Len and myself had decided to do a little sounding in Lake Pluto to determine its depth. With this in mind, wetsuits, fishing lines and all the other gear was hauled up to the cave entrance. As anyone familiar with them will know, the installation of a good-fitting wetsuit on a body is not a pretty sight at the best of times. Len squirmed into his fairly easily but trouble was ahead for me. About an hour's time and half a tin of talc later my suit was more or less on (less) thanks to the help of Len and Tony.

In the cave itself I was a little disappointed to see so many boot prints - wherever there is soft mud someone had walked through it. This cave is used as a 'training' cave, which may or may not be a good thing, I don't know. But everyone should realize that mud is just as much formation as are the usual speleothems.

There were signs of recent strong flows in all the small streams flowing in the cave but levels were back to normal for our trip.

Spurred on by my assurances that "the lake is only a few minutes from the bottom of the entrance pitch", we spent over two hours unsuccessfully looking for it. With my neoprene skin acting as a mobile sauna (Len had taken his off) we eventually retreated. By rigging a Gibbs ascender on the tied off belay rope I was able to safely climb the ladder, stopping frequently for cooling off purposes. The self-belay worked very well - no jamming, little slack - and I recommend this idea to anyone forced to climb a ladder without a belayer at the top (the rope is still needed of course).

After more struggling my suit was removed by Len and Tony and promptly declared "too small". Following the usual ladder rolling ceremony we toddled off home having had an enjoyable if unsuccessful day.

Stuart Nicholas.

Florentine Valley - Settlement and Leo Thorne's Roads - 9/9/78.

Party: Geoff Fisher, Sue Feeney and Greg Ludford.

We left town at 8.00 a.m. arriving at Max Jeffries' place a bit after 9.00. Max was as hospitable as always and we discussed our plans over the usual cuppa. Unfortunately, Max had business at home and couldn't accompany us.

As Greg hadn't been caving before, it was decided that we'd begin with "Wonguano/Beginners Luck" and later go and have a poke around at some of John Parker's discoveries.

We started at Beginners Luck with the aim of exiting at 81. We followed the tunnel for some distance until it eventually opened up into a reasonable sized chamber. There didn't appear to be anywhere to go from there except down. We were thinking about this when Greg happened to notice a patch of light up near the ceiling, which looked interesting. We climbed up onto a ledge and crawled off towards the light. From a distance it looked large enough to go through, however, on closer examination it was very small - and lousy with spiders and cave crickets - yuccchhh!! Being reluctant to go back the way we'd been, we did in fact, manage to squeeze out this - obviously - new exit. It was so tight that helmets and batteries had to be removed and even then it was still a squeeze. We all felt quite proud of our discovery except for one thing - the entry to JP 81 was only ten feet away! We had apparently been much closer to it when underground than we had reckoned. Anyway, that now makes four entrances that we know of to that system.

Next we went over to Wonguano and went in there, coming out by means of the ladder we'd left at Beginners Luck. Has anyone ever encountered wombats in this system? By the way it smells (stinks !!), they still live there. Can't say I'd look forward to coming face to face with one in the confines of a tunnel!

After lunch we drove around to Leo Thorne's Road and headed over to the ridge Max had described. The first cave was easy enough to find. It was marked by a plastic Aussie flag - courtesy of John Parker.

As mentioned in an earlier trip report, the entrance is quite large, the cave itself being entered by ladder, approx. 25 feet. We made a pretty thorough check but weren't able to find much in the way of tunnels. There were some formations inside, but nothing very spectacular.

From there we went to the other side of the ridge to check out another new cave. This one was more conventional, being just a cleft in the rock. We descended about 30 ft. and found this cave to be similar to the one before, a large chamber strewn with boulders. It had some reasonable formations but, again, nothing outstanding.

Returning to the surface we discussed the next move and decided against going on to JP 87. Instead we went out to the pagoda and checked out the bridgeworks going on nearby.

We then left for Maydena and reported our safe return to Max.

Geoff Fisher.

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