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Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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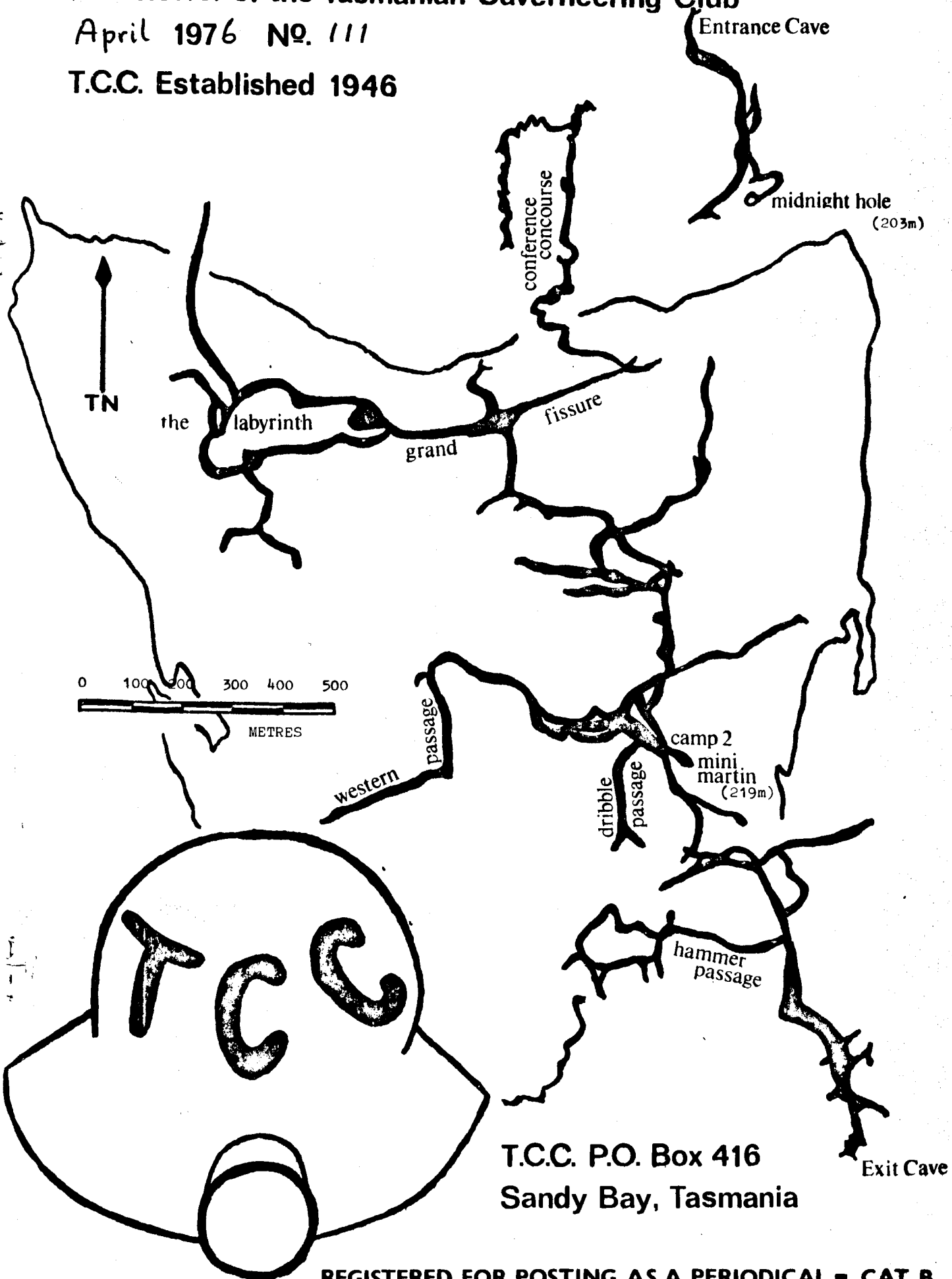
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SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

April 1976 No. 111

T.C.C. Established 1946



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

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FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- April 16-19 - Exit Cave:- Extended trip with Adrian Davey(VSA)
 April 16-19 - Loongana:- Leader: Andrew Skinner.
 April 25 - Florentine:- Leader: Laurie Moody - this trip will be mainly to
 survey and number recent finds.
 May 1-2 - Operation Ferret:- (Mole Creek) Search and Rescue Exercise. See
 Peter Watts for details.
 May 5 - Wednesday:- General Meeting at Hank Meerdling's place, 7 Gourlay
 Street, Blackmans Bay. 8PM.
 May 8 - Maydena Area:- Leader: Laurie Moody.
 May 22-27 - Maria Island Trip:- Laurie Moody & Andrew Skinner.

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Editorial.

Apologies for the lateness of this issue are extended to all our readers. The reasons are two-fold - completion of the ASF Newsletter which will be available later this month and a reluctance on my part to get Spiel started. Unfortunately, I was unable to unload this job onto someone else and therefore you will have to put up with my ravings for another twelve months. On the brighter side, things are looking up since the publication of the March issue. Thun Junction Cave at Ida Bay was bottomed at an approximate depth of 130 metres, the depth of Growling Swallet was extended another 5 metres (176m) and two new caves were explored in the North Florentine, one of which has proved to be quite extensive. We also held an AGM and a new club President was elected. Congratulations are extended to Andrew Skinner on his appointment and a vote of sincere thanks goes to Albert Goede who completed yet another turn in this capacity. Most of the other positions remain the same but there are several new faces. A run-down on this can be seen overleaf. Reports are still filtering in regarding vandalism at Genghis Khan and this matter is being attended to. Finally, I would like to remind all members about the Search & Rescue Exercise at Herberts Pot. If you can make it, be there! Read on -

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A WORD FROM YOUR NEW PRESIDENT.

Firstly, may I thank you for your support at the A.G.M. We should also pay tribute to Albert Goede, who has been President for eight out of the last ten years. Albert was President when I first joined TCC in 1966. We know that he will be retaining his interest in caving although he may not be able to devote as much time as before.

With reference to the coming year, there are several projects that should be undertaken. I have listed these below for discussion at the next General Meeting.

Surveying: There are several caves where surveying is not complete, including Exit, Entrance, Marakoopa, Growling Swallet and Wolf Hole. I hope to arrange a trip soon to introduce some of the younger members to the gentle art of surveying.

Cont. from Page 1.

Conservation: Further track marking work is planned for Exit and it has been suggested that Genghis Khan needs some attention. We must also keep up pressure on the State Government over Exit, Kubla Khan and the South-west. These issues are reaching a critical stage and we must continue our efforts.

Exploration: It is pleasing to see that vertical caving is making something of a comeback. There is still a lot of potential at Junee and Mt. Anne, whilst Ida Bay is perhaps the most promising area.

Mole Creek Project: Systematic numbering, surveying and documentation in this area should be continued. I hope to make one trip per month to this area.

Expedition '77: I hope the club can organise an expedition next summer to Precipitous Bluff or the Cracroft.

Sea Caving: This is one field in which we have made little impact. A trip to Maria Island has been planned towards the end of May.

Andrew D. Skinner.
President, T.C.C.



NEW COMMITTEE.

Conratulations are extended to the new committee which was elected at the March Annual General Meeting.

- President: Andrew Skinner
- Vice-President: Albert Goede
- Secretary/Treasurer: Tony Culberg
- Quartermaster: Stuart Nicholas
- Search & Rescue Officer: Peter Watts
- Search & Rescue Co-ordinators: Laurie Moody & Tony Culberg
49 3316 43 8546
- Keeper of Archives: Albert Goede
- Committee Members: Pat Fullerton, Hank Meering, Peter Watts and Laurie Moody.
- Delegates to Fed. of Tas. Bushwalking Clubs: Therese Goede
Andrew Skinner
- Delegate to A.S.F. : Albert Goede
- Delegate to South West Committee: (To be decided at next G.M.)



NEW MEMBERS. Welcome to prospectives, Jean Thomas of Heybridge and John Parker of Maydena.

Welcomes are extended to Stephen and Anne Annan, who were accepted as members (Maydena Branch) of TCC at the A.G.M. Glad to have you.



SUBSCRIPTIONS SUBSCRIPTIONS SUBSCRIPTIONS - ARE DUE NOW! SEE T.C. WITH LSD.

Members are reminded that this is the last Spiel that you will receive if you have not paid your "subs"! The Secretary has informed me that to date(11 April) only about 10 people have paid up! If you are one of those who hasn't paid up - you should do so at your earliest convenience - otherwise - you will be regarded as an un-financial member!

TRIP REPORTS.GROWLING SWALLET, FLORENTINE VALLEY - 6/3/76.

Party: Peter Shaw and Stuart Nicholas. (TCC)

Seeing that the two of us were the only starters for Herberts Pot, we decided that this was too small a party for Herberts, and so went to Growling Swallet (JF36) instead. Stuart wanted to know how to get to the cave, so he could lead a party there later; and I planned to have a poke about in the sump using a lightweight telescopic tent pole. The weather was overcast but showed no sign of rain. We set off from the usual parking place on a branch of the F9 road and soon picked up the old horse track. The track was pretty well overgrown and after some forty minutes, we arrived at the cave. The water level was O.K. although large amounts of debris near the entrance indicated that the cave had received a gigantic flush in the twelve months since I had last been there.

After a snack, we headed in and spent some time looking for the slot which bypasses the drop just inside the entrance. Having found it, the way onwards was straightforward and we soon reached the pitch near the bottom. The cascades section of passage on the way down was a delight. Pity there aren't more caves with similar passages! Quantities of sand in the glow-worm chamber part way down seemed to indicate that the stream had backed up to this point in the flood.

We descended the pitch and had a look at the mud passage just below it, in the hope that it had been flushed out; but no luck there. We crawled down the sump passage and discovered that the stream was sinking in the gravel just before the sump, and instead of a sump there was a great mound of sand almost completely blocking the passage. A swift dig revealed the way onwards with not a drop of water in sight.

The passage rose up immediately indicating that it could have been free-dived anyway. We reached a T junction, with a sand filled passage rising to the left and a gravel floored passage descending to the right. We crawled along this to a small chamber where the stream had once sunk in a corner of the floor but no way on now. The sound of water could be heard from a narrow rift, so we followed it along over two mounds of sand until we came to a pool. The pool, which was at least a metre deep and just over two metres long, disappeared under the end of the rift with 10-15 cms of airspace visible. The stream was audible and seemed to be agitating the end of the pool. As neither of us was willing to totally immerse himself, we decided to head out. We had a look at the left hand passage at the T junction and concluded that it was an extension of the mud passage near the pitch, and that it would be quite easy to dig through if necessary. After a brief snack at the foot of the pitch, we headed for the surface which we reached after only three hours underground.

Future Prospects:

Obviously, the pool and its airspace must be entered by a couple of wet-suited cavers. I suspect that the old sump could fill up again if the stream flow increased. In which case, if the cave keeps going, it would be prudent to dig out the mud passage to provide an alternative route, and also to knock a few lumps off the roof in the sump which would probably create an airspace.

New Depth:

With the exploration of this new section, five metres has been added to the depth of the cave giving it a provisional depth of 176 metres.

Peter Shaw.

JUNEE-FLORENTINE - 13/3/76.

Party: Tony Culberg (L), Pat Fullerton, Andrew Skinner, Brent Nightingale, Shane Garlick and Bill Nicholson. (TCC)

The party set off to do Welcome Stranger but were told at the ANM barrier that they (ANM) were burning off around that area. This information totally confused the party, so after a while we decided to do the Junee Cave. When we arrived at the cave, two cavers piked out. The remaining four cavers pointed their noses at Junee Cave. The final result of the trip was, four drowned cavers, one broken watch and two road signs found by Bill and Brent.

Brent Nightingale.

TRIP REPORTS Cont;

IDA BAY - 20/3/76.

Party: Phil Robinson (L), Bill Nicholson, Brent Nightingale (TCC), Asahel Bush, Chris Rathbone (Climbers Club Tas.)

Thun Junction (IB20) amazingly enough had been left unexplored for nigh on two years! The pothole, lying directly above Exit Cave, was first discovered in May, 1974. Lack of gear prevented further progress at the head of a 30 metre 4? pitch. We kept talking of its potential, dropping down one of those big avens into Exit - - - , yet never seeming to organise a trip. Well, it did come at last:-

We left Hobart at 6.30am with several hundred feet of Bluewater at the ready. It was bucketing down as we drove south to Ida Bay, our thoughts full of soaking wet rain forests. It was not to be! The sun shone brightly as we back-packed up the hill above the quarry. The branch south to the caves is not clear and despite a careful lookout, we all missed it on the way in. Backtracking with Asahel 20 metres into the scrub, we finally spotted a piece of red tape. The cave was reached two hours after leaving the cars. It was then that a misunderstanding came to light. Unfortunately Bill and Brent did not realise it was to be a long vertical trip (11 hours in fact). They had no jumars and were unexperienced in SRT. Wisely they chose to go as far as the first pitch, then return to the surface for a very long wait. Our humble apologies - - - .

The initial passage is almost a crawl, feet first down a steep muddy slope to an easy 2 metre climb. Here the passage widens to 2 metres and height 10-12 metres. One drops steeply down over waterworn boulders to another 2 metre climb and finally a 7 metre pitch. We looped a rope around a solid flake and descended. The stream passage now becomes lower (1-2 metres) with shelves requiring crawling and various contortions to drag the gear through. We had too much between the three of us. After about 150-200 metres one finds oneself up in a rift with a 3 metre drop to the floor. Careful chimmeying brings one down to the head of the big pitch, the limit of previous exploration. Limestone in the region is very interbedded and rotten. After a good search a bolt was driven high up in the roof in some good calcite. The pitch proved to be 40 m., a large magnificent shaft. We sailed down in anticipation. Twenty metres or so further on, the passage (15m high x 2m wide) almost closed down, choked by flow-stone. A small hole led on to a further pitch of 24 metres. Again a bolt had to be placed, Asahel descended and disappeared for some time. His report was not good. The passage lowered and became too tight after about 100 metres. Not convinced, Phil and Chris descended the pitch and pushed into the narrow passage. Indeed it was tight! Sideways crawling without helmets we progressed no further. So endeth Thun Junction Cave, except for small determined cavers. The draught which had been with us all the way down the cave had also disappeared.

Prussiking and dragging out all the excess rope took time. We finally emerged into the dark forest at 11.00pm and scrub-bashed north, up the hill to dissect the main Moonlight Flats track. The wind was gusting very strongly among the trees as we wearily reached the cars at 1.00am on Sunday. Poor Bill and Brent were still waiting - - - .

Thun Junction is estimated to be about 120 metres deep (400') and 400m (1,320') long. A surveying trip could be done in 5-6 hours now that the system is known.

Phil Robinson.

SPHINX ROCK - 20/3/76.

Party: Ross Bridges, Steve and Anne Annan.

I took Steve and Anne Annan of the Maydena Branch on a laddering and belaying training session on Mt. Wellington. Also gave a prussiking and abseiling "demo" while the enthusiastic newcomers madly took down notes. With a bit of gear and some more practice the Maydena mob will be in and out of every pot-

TRIP REPORTS Cont;

hole in the Junee-Florentine. I hope that this training session will be followed up by some more in the near future. With technical know-how to match their enthusiasm, the Maydena group will be an asset to cave exploration.

Ross Bridges.

MOLE CREEK - 26-28/3/76.

Party: Andrew Skinner, Therese Goede, Bill Nicholson, Shane Garlick, Ross Bridges, Brent Nightingale (TCC)

Friday 26th: Before meeting the above listed mob at the caver's hut on Friday nite I took Graeme Denne from the Tasmanian Scuba Diving Club through Lynds Cave. What was supposed to be an easy day to introduce Graeme to caving, turned out to be a moderately energetic grovel. I spent a good while paddling in the stream and then had some hair-raising moments re-arranging a rather unstable-looking rockfall in an attempted push - my efforts were not rewarded though!

Saturday 27th: At variously un-Godly hours on Friday night everyone arrived at the hut, which was soon littered with snoring bodies. Awakened by Andrew's barnyard imitations, we drove to Baldocks Cave. At last I have seen a grotty Tasmanian cave! During our short tourist trip, the only event of note was a mud fight which flared up rather enthusiastically - all in good fun of course! Therese, who for some silly feminine reason did not share in the fun of the fight, was happily bug hunting!

Back to the surface and off to Wet Cave. CENSORED piked and instead of caving amused themselves in the cosy comfort of the CENSORED.

The rest of us splashed our way through the cave, marching in time to ADS's profane singing. We found our way through the talus and into Georgies Hall and followed a wire to the entrance in an attractive ferny doline. The through trip took about 3½ hours. The walk back to the cars enabled us to get a fair idea of the system's length. New boy, Shane, proved himself to be an able-bodied caver.

Andrew and I agreed that with SCS agreement, the wire threaded through Georgies Hall should be removed. Without this un-necessary route marker the Wet Cave/Georgies Hall system will once again be a good navigational exercise.

After a demonstration of rally-crosse by Andrew and his 4 wheel drive smoke generator, we returned to the hut for a late lunch. The group then split into two parties. Andrew, Brent and Shane apparently had a beaut time in Tailender to complete an energetic days caving. Bill, Therese and I, went to Genghis Khan to look at the "pretties". Thoughtless, ignorant people have walked on rim-pools, handled dripstones and even demolished some helictite clusters. All this damage was, I am sure, not deliberate, but still I wonder what will become of Genghis. Lynds Cave too, had sufficient damage to disgust me. Again, I am sure that ignorance rather than deliberate vandalism has caused flowstone to be scratched and crystal pools to be crushed. These caves, being amongst the best decorated in the country, shall have to be gated in the manner of Croesus. The club must strive to have these caves (and of course Kubla Khan) included in National Parks and Wildlife Service Reserves. With this legal backing, the entrance can be locked and only small selected parties allowed in - unfortunate I know but the conservation of these beautiful caves must have priority!

Sunday 28th: What better way to spend my last day in Tasmania than an admiration trip through Croesus - thanks Andrew! Our flowstone gazing was made memorable by illumination from magnesium ribbon.

I am writing this on board the "Empress of Australia" and feeling pretty sad to be leaving Tassie and all my friends in TCC.

Ross Bridges.

Quote of the year - from Brian Collin

"I consider orienteering to be merely a stage between caving and playing bowls!"

Remember "Cavers do it deeper!" (apologies to Norauqua Scuba Club, Cairns)

TRIP REPORTS Cont;

FLORENTINE - 3/4/76.

Party: Laurie Moody (L), Bill Nicholson, Brent Nightingale, Therese & kids,
Max Jeffries plus John Thurston, Carol Johnston and Derek Shields (P's)

After a somewhat slower start than usual, we arrived at Maydena around 9.45am and went straight to the ANM barrier where we found Max and three prospectives waiting. The trip up had not been entirely as per usual as young Ben Goede had "chucked up" all over yours truly on the outskirts of Maydena prior to our arrival. Anyway - what were we doing at Maydena? Well, the trip had been arranged on the last minute so to speak, due to the cancellation of the proposed Wolf Hole trip. This had occurred when Andrew Skinner decided to go down with the flu or was it a hangover? Anyway we decided that we would have another look at a cave which we had looked at briefly on a previous trip some weeks back. The cave itself lies beside the downstream end of Cashion Creek and is not far from the gravel pits. On our earlier visit, we had explored the top entrance but were unable to bypass a 6m hole in the floor some 20m or so from the entrance. Max had noted that there was a lower entrance but due to logging operations in this area, the entrance had been blocked by logs, dirt and rubble. In between visits however, ANM had burnt the area off and after a bit of digging, we were able to get inside. The cave proved to have a very intricate system of passages, chambers and pockets of formation. Considering the area, this cave is one which is something of an exception to the rule - formation wise. Eventually, we emerged at the hole which had thwarted our attempts via the top entrance and this was duly laddered and found to lead to a small but spacious chamber on a lower level. The chamber contained a reasonable amount of decoration with numerous straws and rim-pools. From here, a small squeeze led to more passage and another section which was also well-decorated with a straw 2m long. It was thought that this particular section could lead back to the surface but yours truly after doing some very classy chimneying found that this was not to be the case. Groans. Several other leads were checked but nothing else was forthcoming. It is hoped that this cave can be surveyed in the near future. It could yield around 300 metres of passage or more. After some 2½ hours underground, we emerged and had a bite to eat.

Another area not far from Beginners Luck was investigated but failed to turn up anything of significance despite the burn-off. As John, Carol and Derek had to leave early, we decided to have a look at another of Max's finds which was on the western side of the Florentine, beside the new section of Tiger Road, about 1km north of the Stan Murrays Road turn-off. We arrived and a 50m walk from the road found us at a rift type entrance. We entered and followed a walk-a-long type passage for about 80m and eventually emerged in a sizeable chamber. This chamber would rate amongst the best decorated of any yet seen in the Florentine area - a little beauty! Flowstone, rim-pools, stalagmites, straws and "moon-milk"! If we keep finding caves like these two - Ben can "chuck" over me anytime! A small passage led off amidst a maze of straws and this was duly checked but found to terminate after about 30m. All in all, a very profitable days caving! After the departure of the prospectives, Max and I spent half an hour investigating several holes in the burnt-off area close to Beginners Luck. One of these looks promising but was left for another visit.

Laurie Moody.

THANKYOU - As the money has about run out it is about time to hang up my bash hat and reluctantly return to Sydney Town in search of bread - the folding type! My two trips to Tassie have been made memorable thanks to the help and hospitality of TCC. I am especially thankful for the kindness extended me by Brian and Jeanette Collin with whom I have been staying. Brian's and Albert's tales of the exciting discoveries of the 60's and early 70's make my mouth water. If you think about it, it was probably one of the last important periods of exploration in Australia. It would have been good to be caving then. Thanks to all!

Ross Bridges.

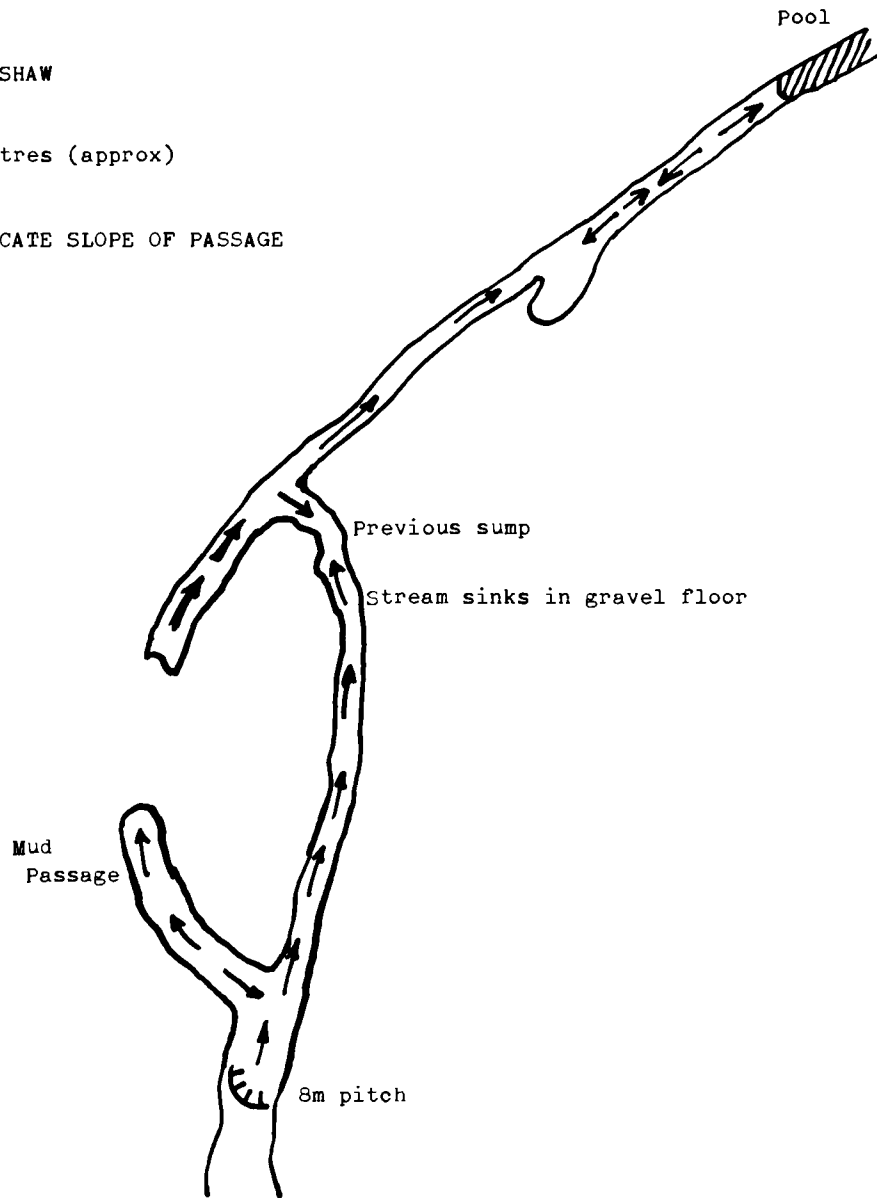
New Extension GROWLING SWALLET, JF 36

DRAWN BY P. SHAW

6/3/76.

1cm = 10 metres (approx)

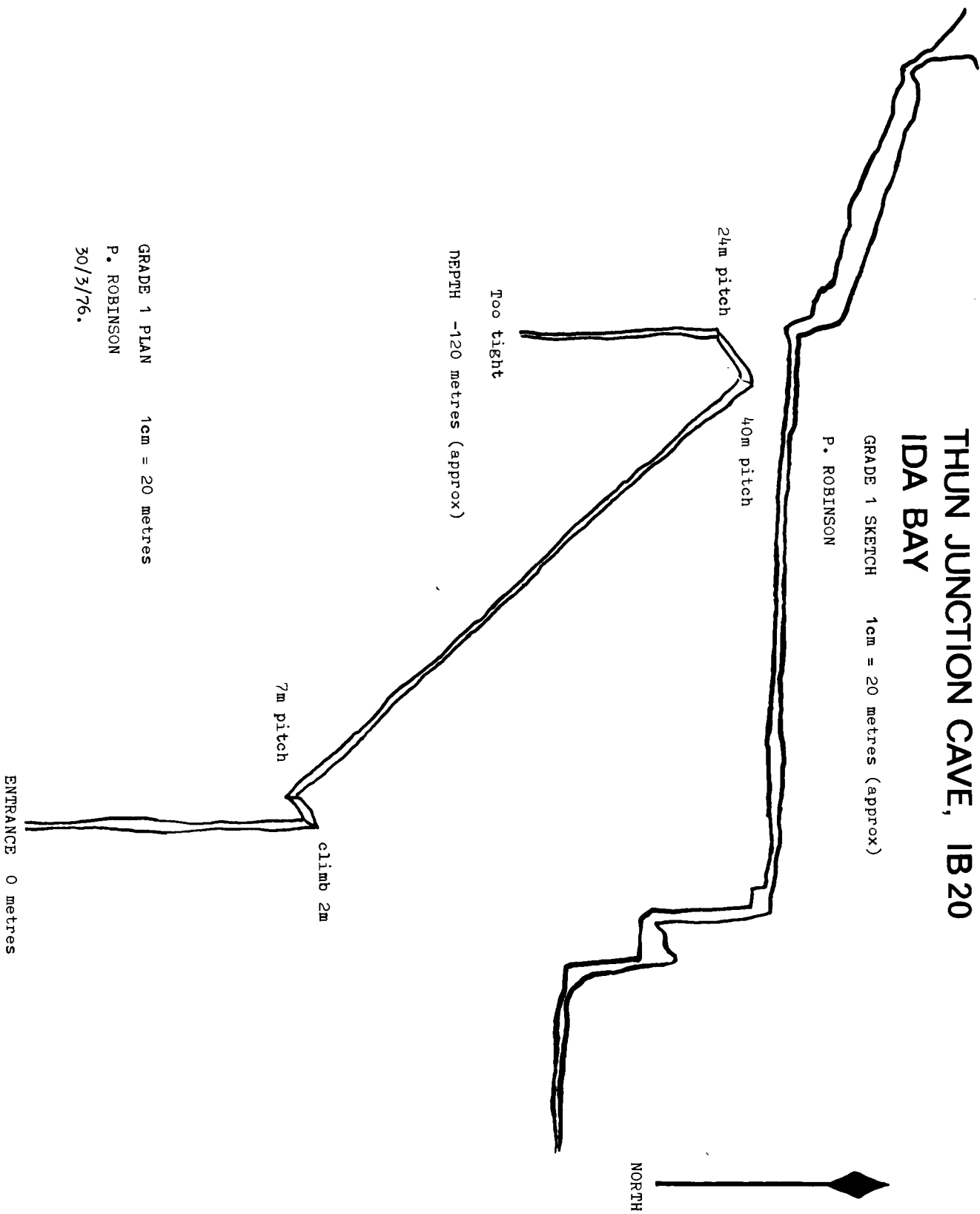
ARROWS INDICATE SLOPE OF PASSAGE



THUN JUNCTION CAVE, IB 20 IDA BAY

GRADE 1 SKETCH 1cm = 20 metres (approx)

P. ROBINSON



NEPTH -120 metres (approx)

Too tight

24m pitch

40m pitch

7m pitch

climb 2m

ENTRANCE 0 metres

GRADE 1 PLAN 1cm = 20 metres

P. ROBINSON

30/3/76.