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Speleo Spiel

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Speleo Spiel

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S T O A L L
A N D A H A P P Y N E W Y E A R .

FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- December 11,12 - Weekend. The BIG push to the bottom of Khazad-dum provided weather is favourable. Leaders: attack party:- Phil Robinson; support party:- Brian Collin and Albert Goede.
- December 18,19 - Weekend. Alternative weekend for last one if weather is unfavourable for the big push on Dec.11-12. Our last chance before Christmas.
- December 23 - Christmas (and hopefully Khazad-dum) Celebrations. 8p.m. at 8 Bath Street. Food provided, please bring own booze and bird. R.S.V.P. 20 Dec. to Albert at uni. or 8 Bath Street.
- January 16 - Sunday. Day trip to Wolf Hole to support Adventure Camp training with Iain Barnes. Leader to be appointed.
- January ~~30,31, Feb. 1~~ ^{29,30,31} - Long weekend. Trip to Nelson River. A beautiful spot to camp with some small but interesting caves to explore. Come prepared for walking. Leader: Albert Goede.
- February 12 - Wednesday: General Meeting. 8p.m. Henk Meerding's place, 7 Gourlay Street, Blackmans Bay. Bring slides and refreshments. Raffle to be held in aid of needy caverneering club - namely us. Mystery prize provided by the Boulders.
- February ~~13,14~~ ^{12,13} - Weekend. Trip to Exit Cave. Mapping and photography. Leader: Bill Lehmann.

EDITORIAL. - DUM'S DAY IS COMING!

Excitement is mounting as D-day approaches. Next weekend (Dec. 11,12) may be the climax of a lot of planning and preparation. Antarctic weather and heavy rain caused the cancellation of the trip planned to Khazad-dum on the last weekend in November. Last weekend's attempt to bolt the waterfall pitches mostly succeeded - but only just - as heavy rain had swollen the creek the night before. But by the time the advance party reached the waterfall pitch the water had subsided sufficiently to allow further progress and four bolts were placed. Only two more are needed and they can be done on Dum's Day provided the water is low. On the way back to the surface the advance party made the exciting discovery of a series of caverns leading off from the base of the 70 ft. pitch and heading back steeply towards the surface. The telephones were tried out and excellent communications were established between the top of the 93 ft. pitch and the streamway. The second part of the line from the 93 ft. pitch back to the surface is not yet in working order. Khazad-dum has added to its defences by the presence of a very dead wallaby in a pool right at the entrance.

The surface traverse from Khazad-dum to the Junee resurgence has been calculated and the linear distance is 11,250 feet. The difference in height is 1,257 ft. - a little more than the 1,220 ft. estimate obtained from an aneroid traverse. So Khazad-dum still has a chance of beating New Zealand's Harwood Hole - the deepest in the Southern Hemisphere at 1210 ft. At present Khazad-dum 950 ft. is fourth deepest as it is exceeded by two other New Zealand caves: Blackbird Hole (Mt. Arthur Range) at 1040 ft. and Curtis Ghyll (Mt. Owen) at 955 ft.

Apart from Khazad-dum one other trip was held since the last Spiel to explore two other holes between Niagara Pot and Rift Cave. They were rather disappointing as one petered out at -25 ft. while the other (unofficially named Grandstand Pot) met the same fate at

-100 ft. You can't win them all and there are still a number of good prospects left to be explored in the Junee area.

Club News.

+ Ladder practice at Sphinx Rock every Wednesday night has been well attended despite poor weather conditions and there has been a lot of improvement in ladder climbing techniques. Some members with little previous climbing experience have turned into first class ladder experts. Prizes for the most improvement go to Wes Carpenter, Nick Cummings and Sally Morris and we now have a strong support party for Khazad-dum.

+ Prospective members: Welcome to the following:-

Sue Morris, 4 Somerdale Rd., Claremont. 7011.

Andrew Skinner, Hastings Caves, / 21 Kelly St., Battery Point. 7000.

+ Changes of address: Laurel Norbury, 53 Lord St., Sandy Bay. At present staying with Brian and Jeanette.

+ Farewell to Mike and Shirley Tarburton who joined us from Western Australia early this year. They are going back to the West. We wish them all the best. Their new address is: c/o Carmel College, Carmel, Western Australia, 6076.

+ Mt. Wellington Search and Rescue. On Saturdaynight, 20th November three of our members - Bill Lehmann, Bill Peterson and Bernie Howe - took part in a search for a party of five missing bushwalkers and were successful in finding them. One of the missing party was Mrs. Merle Iredale who was an early member of our club and whose husband was club secretary about twenty years ago. The new miners lights were used for the first time on the search and proved most successful in the bush. Unfortunately Bill broke his thumb during the search and will not be caving for a while.

+ A preliminary report has been submitted to the National Parks and Wildlife Service on the desirability of adequate protection for Exit Cave and boundaries have been suggested for a cave reserve. A letter has just been received from the director - P. Murrell - expressing interest in our proposals and he hopes to organize an inspection of the cave soon.

+ We welcome two visitors from Wollongong, N.S.W. They are Lloyd Robinson and Wolfgang Stengel from the Illawarra Speleological Soc. Lloyd has been an associate member of our club for some years and is the A.S.F. Safety Officer. He is well known for his exploration and photographic exploits in the S.W. of Western Australia. At the moment they are in Exit Cave, but they plan to come to Khazad-dum next weekend followed by a visit to Mole Creek.

+ At the last general meeting the precarious financial state of the club was discussed. This is a result of the large amounts of money spent on equipment especially in connection with the exploration of Khazad-dum. There has also been a considerable rise in costs in the production of the Spiel as paper prices and postage have gone up steeply in the last year. It was decided to hold a raffle at each meeting to increase revenue rather than to re-introduce trip fees. The winner of the raffle will provide a prize (not exceeding two dollars in value) at the next meeting. The secretary kindly donated a piece of stichtite (a rare mineral from the west coast) which was won by Dot Boulter.

Blocking of the Upper Entrance of Kubla Khan, Mole Creek.

About a month ago a party of northern cavers visited Kubla Khan. Most of the party took the lower entrance while one of their members went up to the upper entrance to ladder the pitches to make a round trip possible. To his astonishment he found the entrance blocked by a wall of concrete and rubble to which a brass plaque was attached with the following inscription:-

SAVE COLONG

KJW N.S.W.

PMM N.S.W.

JFK VIC.

SEPT 1971.

As a result he had to rush back to the lower entrance and do the rather dangerous river passage traverse alone to warn the other party that they would not be able to make the round trip. They also observed that air movement in the cave had virtually ceased as a result of the blockage.

Naturally members of the Norther Branch and north-western cavers

were incensed since they were responsible for the discovery of the upper entrance about a year ago and were in the process of planning to block this entrance with a padlocked bar or gate.

The action by at present unknown mainland cavers shows a total lack of common sense as well as a remarkable degree of rudeness. The total blocking of the entrance has obviously affected air movement in the cave, would also have affected cave life and would have made the rescue of an injured caver from the far chambers of Kubla Khan all but impossible.

The blockage was removed in a three hour operation by members of the Northern Branch and North Western Cavers who are planning to install a gate as soon as possible.

The incident has left a bad taste in the mouths of many Tasmanian cavers as it seems very likely that whoever blocked the entrance was assisted by one or more mainland cavers who had been shown its location either during the conference fieldtrips or during the VSA Easter trip to Mole Creek.

The blocking was done with complete disregard of the A.S.F. code of ethics which states(rule 6) that " They(members of A.S.F. societies) will when visiting an area frequently visited by another club, do all in their power to cooperate with that club". It also shows the stupidity and arrogance of some people associated with the "Save Colong" movement.

A protest is planned by both our society and the Southern Caving Society at the January Committee Meeting of A.S.F. Meanwhile the initials remain a mystery and may in fact be fictional. For example there is no one with the initials J.F.K. in the Victorian Speleological Association. Meanwhile the action of a few has brought mainland cavers into disrepute in our state.

A.S.F. Conference Proceedings.

Some queries have already been received concerning the conference proceedings. The editors are pleased to report that progress although slow has been steady. Holdups have been due to the reluctance of some authors to supply manuscripts and the problems associated with transcribing the discussions following each paper from tape into meaningful written English.

All editing has been done and final typing on an electric typewriter is half complete and expected to be finished before Christmas. The proceedings will be produced by offset printing and will consist of approximately 180 pages made up of twenty contributions. Three pages of photographs and numerous diagrams will be included. The editors are hopeful that the publication will see the light of day before the end of January. The cost to those who did not attend the conference will be \$ 3.00 per copy. Due to costs only a limited number of copies are available for sale. If you want to be sure of getting yours put in an advance order now. Orders should be sent to " The Secretary, A.S.F. Convention 1970, Box 641 G, G.P.O., Hobart, Tasmania, 7001. Cheques should be made payable to " A.S.F. Convention 1970."

Deep Caves in Tasmania.

Several months ago a request was received from Ross Ellis - convener of the A.S.F. Commission for Longest and Deepest Caves - for a list of deep caves in Tasmania including all caves over 230 feet in depth. A list including the six Tasmanian caves over 500 ft. in depth has already been published(Speleo Spiel, No.54,2).

The following list includes only those caves in Tasmania less than 500 ft. but more than 230 ft. in depth. A provisional list is as follows:

- (1) Satans Lair (Junee) -470 ft.
Estimation from ladder pitches. Southern Caver 2(3), 14.
- (2) Niagara Pot (Junee) -450 ft.
Estimation from ladder pitches. Exploration incomplete. Speleo Spiel 62, 1-3.
- (3) Revelation Cave (Ida Bay) -450 ft.
Rough estimation only - probably generous. Speleo Spiel 44, 2.
- (4) Rift Cave (Junee) -430 ft.
Repeated aneroid traverse. A.S.F. Handbook, 262.
- (5) Col-in-Cavern (Mt.Anne) -390 ft.
Survey C.R.G.2. Spar 5, 2-5. June, 1971.
- (6) Rescue Pot (Junee) -350 ft.
Estimation from ladder pitches. Southern Caver 2, (3), 15.
- (7) Pillingers Creek Cave (Junee) -325 ft.

- Survey C.R.G.4. T.C.C. Bulletin 4, 37-38.
- (8) Bone Pit (June) -300 to 350 ft.
Rough estimation from ladder pitches. A.S.F. Handbook, 261.
- (9) JF 10 (June) -320 ft.
Estimation from ladder pitches. Exploration incomplete. Speleo Spiel 51, 4-6.
- (10) Execution Pot (Mole Creek) -310 ft.
Estimation from ladder pitches. Troglodyte(TCCNB Bulletin)No.2.
- (11) Devils Pot (Mole Creek) -310 ft.
Estimation from ladder pitches. TCCNB pers. comm. Troglodyte Nos. 6 and 8.
- (12) Dribblespit Swallet (June) -300 ft.
Estimation from ladder pitches. Speleo Spiel 55, 2-3.
- (13) Owl Pot (Florentine) -250 ft.
Depth by estimation. Southern Caver 2,(3), 15.

At least two - possibly three - other caves at Mole Creek should be included in this list but depths are not sufficiently accurately known at present. Herberts Pot is at least 300 ft. and may be 400 ft. deep. Croesus Cave is at least 300 ft. deep and Kubla Khan is probably in excess of 230 ft. Erebus (Hastings) - also known as Waterloo Swallet - shown in A.S.F. Newsletter 52 (June 1971) should be removed from this list and has not been included here because recent work by S.C.S. has shown that the cave is approx. 200 ft. deep. Reference: Southern Caver 2,(4), 4-5.

Of the list published here nos. 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 are not included in the provisional list in A.S.F. Newsletter 52, 22.

TRIP REPORTS.

Albert Goede.

Lake Timk, Mt. Anne. 23,24,25 Oct, 1971.

Party: Brian Collin, Phil Robinson, Attila Vrana and Hilary Cane.

Combined T.C.C. - Manuka Club trip.

At Christmas Henry Shannon stood on the Mt. Anne dolomite ridge and pointed over the Lots Wife ridge to some of Tasmania's most inaccessible country and said that in his opinion the resurgence of the Lake Timk drainage could be over there. It now appears that his prediction may be true.

On Sunday we left Lake Timk and headed for the Weld River on a true bearing of 35 degrees. This route took us across the dry lake and to a surface creek. No sign of a resurgence was seen, in fact the creek we were following went underground about half a mile from the Weld. Time forced us to return to camp when $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the Weld. At a point where our now dry valley met up with a creek coming from the West.

On Monday Philip and I climbed Lots Wife, or rather the rock pinnacle immediately east of the summit. Dolomite outcrop was observed for the first 600 ft. above Lake Timk.

Brian Collin.

(Map accompanying above report is overleaf.)

Mt. Anne - dolomite ridge. 6,7/11/71.

Party: Brian and Jeanette Collin, Bill Lehmann, Peter Shaw and Laurel Norbury.

The spur ridge overlooking Lake Timk was looked at. Several of the large dolines were traversed and all exhibited the typical scatter of large rocks but no holes.

On Sunday, after camping near a permanent waterhole in the centre of the ridge we proceeded northwards. Near the end of the ridge, at the bottom of an impressive doline we found the entrance to a cave.

The entrance is a fissure some 30 ft. high and 15 ft. wide. Looking in from the entrance we estimated the first drop to be 40 ft. to a wide sloping ledge, the second drop would also be about 40 feet. At the bottom of the second drop the floor appears to slope steeply across the fissure. It may go on or it may not. There was no indication of air movement.

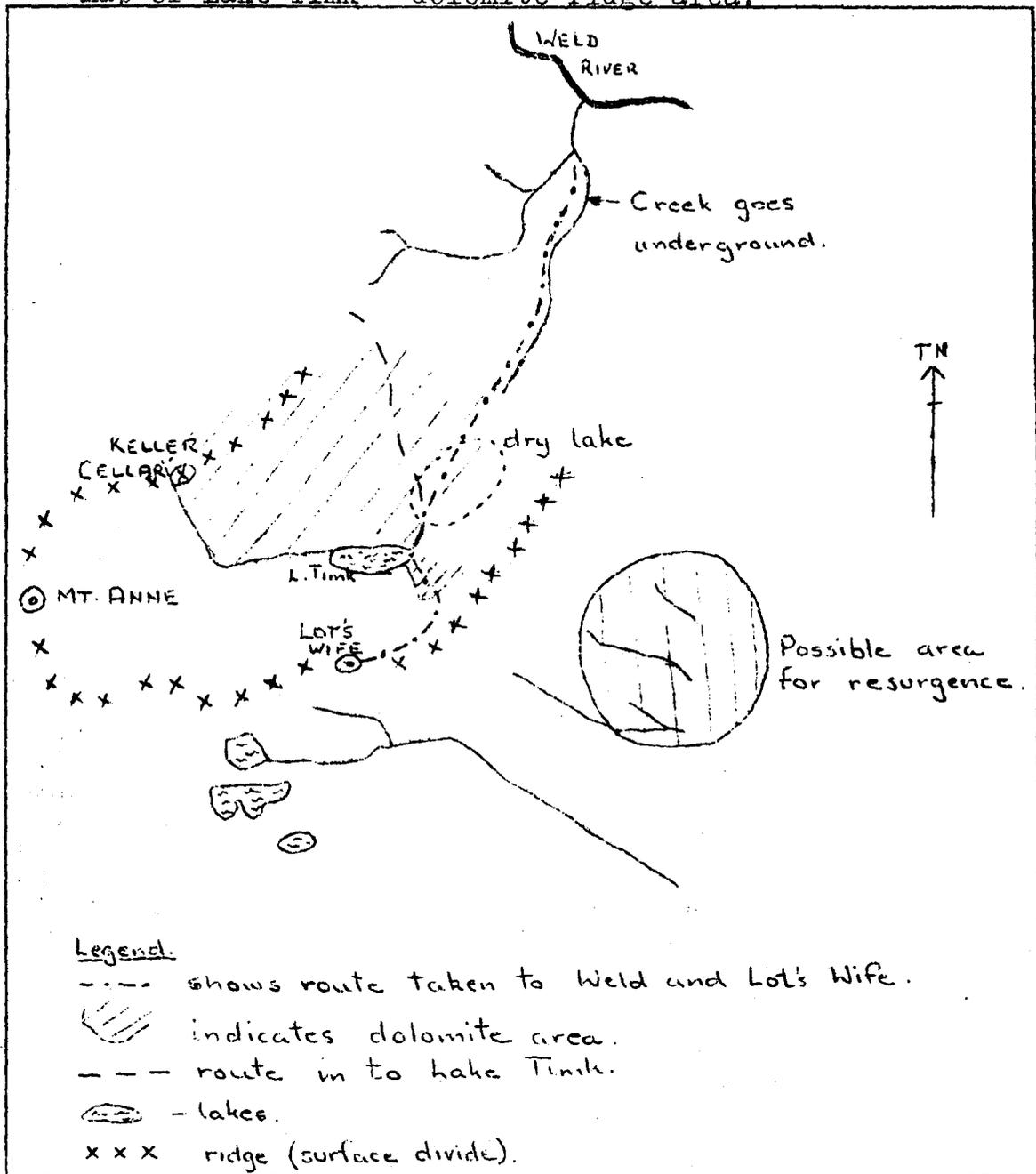
After looking at the fissure we continued down to the search camp and back to the cars.

The scrub on the dolomite ridge is a challenge in itself, taking about 5 hours to travel less than a mile. It is interesting scrub and one can but admire nature's entanglements of Scoparia and mountain myrtle.

Anyone interested in cracking the new cave please contact Bill Lehmann.

Brian Collin.

Map of Lake Tink - dolomite ridge area.



Junee Area - Saturday 13/11/71.

Party: Phil Robinson(leader), Kevin Kiernan, Chris Harris, Judy Chambers(cavers) and Delia Maloney, Bill Lehmann and Jeanette Collin(surface).

Exploration of hole between Rift Cave and Niagara Pot. By some strange misunderstanding we were led to believe that the quickest way to the new potholes was via the Junee Ridge and the old forestry track. Although the route was reasonably clear it involved a steep climb and took much longer than expected. After 2½ hours we reached Rift Cave carrying 240 ft. of ladder and 400 ft. of rope. Ten minutes later the first hole was located. As the majority partook of a comfortable lunch amid pleasant rainforest Kevin and Chris descended a miserable, muddy 25 ft. pitch choked at the bottom and leading nowhere.

Grandstand Pot(unofficial name) was the next objective and large logs across the sinkhole provide a good view for spectators. The cavers abseiled down a 60 ft. drop and 30 ft. of ladder was left on the bottom section for an easy return. From a false floor of branches and mud a small passage led on down. This was followed with mixed feelings to a level of approx -100 ft. where a choke of mud and rocks prevented further progress.

Half the party returned to the cars while the keener members headed further west towards Niagara Pot. Within hearing distance of the waterfall a few more holes were found. Peter and Phil descended one full of enormous spiders, crickets and many other assorted troglodytes. With the aid of a rope -60 ft. was reached before the inevitable choke. There are still some holes left unexplored between Rift Cave and Niagara Pot. All are small, undraughty and without water. Prospects of entering a large system here look dim.

Phil. Robinson.

Khazad-dum, (Junee) - 4,5/12/71.

Party: Phil Robinson (leader), Peter Shaw, Simon Stephens, Kevin Kieran, Graeme Watt, Albert Goede, Wes Carpenter, Sally Morris, Stuart Nicholas, David Cripps and Richard Bloomfield.

After the winter snows had disappeared and with a week of fine weather, a reasonable descent of Khazad-dum was anticipated. On Friday morning the Junee resurgence was down to a flow of 30-40 cusecs. After only a few hours rain on Friday night the flow was well over 100 cusecs. on Saturday morning. The possibility of a party suddenly trapped by flood waters is now very apparent. Tasmanian weather is as unpredictable as anywhere in the world. Caught by flood water in Exit Cave is inconvenient, down Khazad-dum highly dangerous. After a long hard trip, soaked to the skin there is a great risk of exhaustion and exposure. There is now every need to install the telephone down to the -840 ft. level in order to warn the advance party of a sudden storm.

Nevertheless, with a high volume of water cascading into the entrance Khazad-dum was entered at about 11.00a.m. Saturday morning. Tackle was ferried down and the pitches gradually rigged to the streamway over 500 ft. underground. The pace was slow. There was little hope of a push down the waterfalls. Photos were taken, the telephone tested from the 92 ft. pitch to the streamway. Eight reached the head of the first waterfall pitch of 20 ft. The flow of water was heavy. Not another trip abandoned! Surely we could get down?! There was a possibility of a belay on a dodgy looking flake of rock. It was several feet above and out over the top of the pitch. Philip, lifelined, rigged a short rope traverse and slipped the ladder over the flake. It avoided much of the water. Volunteers to test the arrangement were sadly lacking. Phil unwillingly tried it himself. Much to his amazement the flake didn't break off, he only half-drowned and reached the bottom more or less in one piece. As Peter, Kevin and Graeme were well acquainted with waterfalls and the lower reaches of Khazad-dum they also descended. Simon stayed at the top of the pitch to help on our return. Wes, Stuart and David returned to the surface. Gear was lowered. Amid deafening noise the streamway was followed down cascades to the next pitch. Two bolts were installed to avoid the 30 ft. waterfall. One bolt is to ease the climb to a ledge 15 ft. up the wall of the cave. The other provides a 45 ft. pitch completely dry. Down the streamway again to the next pitch - 15 ft. Climbing up toward the roof a bolt was placed providing a moderately 'dry' pitch of 20 ft. The cave survey was continued by Kevin, down from its previous end of -632 ft. Through deep pools and tiny waterfalls the passage was descended to the 25 ft. waterfall. Searching in the roof Graeme found a route above the pitch. Among loose rock slabs a 40-50 ft. dry pitch was possible. This was deemed unsafe and also long for such a depth underground (7 -750 ft.) As a big push would only be done in dry conditions anyway a bolt at the top of the 25 ft. wet pitch would be better. There was only room for one person, roped up, on the edge. The water was shooting out so fast it was difficult to stand up. As Graeme was drilling twice as fast as anyone else without tired wrists or arms he offered to have a go. He succeeded admirably. Peter brewed up stew and coffee. There was no possibility of going further. The water force was far too strong for even the hardest of potholers. Below us were 25 ft. and 30 ft. wet drops to the big undescended dry shaft at approx -840'. The survey shows we were at the -720 ft. level. The tackle was left in the cave.

A speedy return was made to the 20 ft. pitch where Simon had gallantly waited 4-5 hours. His lifeline was well appreciated. The pitch was nothing (though wet), the take off tricky. Returning to the streamway near the bottom of the 70 ft. pitch (at about -450 ft.) Kevin dived into a small hole and disappeared. Shouts of a large cavern. Peter, Graeme, Phil and Simon quickly followed. We were in a large passage heading very steeply up towards the surface. Clambering up over a large boulder there were jammed rocks everywhere, some immense. Under and over boulders, up and up. There were leads all over. The particular passage followed went upward 200-300 ft. A cool draught was felt. Intensive exploration in these large new caverns could lead to an easy route from the surface to the stream passage. After 12 hours underground lights were dimming. A return was made up onto the rockpile to the 92 ft. free hanger. No lifeline!!! Shouts and screams but no answer. The others had obviously left the cave several hours ago. This had been agreed - yet no rope left hanging? This was incomprehensible ---?? Phil eventually climbed up with a chest sling.

The rope was lying in a heap at the top. We were out of the cave at 2.00a.m. Sunday. A 15 hour trip. Back through the bush - Max had been on the track with his chain saw again. We were very grateful for an easier walk back to the cars. Also a pile of firewood at the Junee homestead - where we collapsed into sleeping bags at 4.00a.m. Sunday.

Four more bolts in the cave, more survey, new passage and part of the telephone system tested. A successful descent despite the high water. The cave is laddered to -720 ft. for next weekend's big push - - - weather permitting.

Phil Robinson.

STOP PRESS.

Latest Khazad-dum news. Curses foiled again. Rain once more has thrown a spanner in the works, on the weekend of 11, 12 December. Anyway, here's Peter's report:

Khazad-dum - 11/12/71.

Advance party:(the milk of Australian caving): Phil Robinson, Peter Shaw, Simon Stephens, Chris Harris and Graeme Watt.

Procrastination was the spirit of the day. The weather reports were not the best and so we successively put off making a decision on Friday night, Saturday morning at Brian's, at the A.N.M. barrier, at the start of the track and at the entrance of the cave. A decision was finally made in the streamway and the bottoming attempt was postponed. Assisted by the telephone party(seperate report) we placed 200 ft. of S.C.S. ladder in the streamway in readiness for next weekend. Telephone contact with the surface enabled us to arrange a belay on our way out. Having decided against the bottoming attempt we turned our attentions to the new sections discovered the previous week which was surveyed by Phil and Simon, while the rest explored. Highlight of the exploration was when Graeme dislodged a rock the size of a rucksack to the consternation of those immediately below. A high aven with very good acoustics was discovered and admired.

After completing the exploration and survey we adjourned to the foot of the thirty(foot pitch) for the foundation meeting of the Khazad-dum Gourmets and Gluttons Society. After a large and sumptuous repast, five very bloated cavers struggled up the thirty and back to the ninety for a welcome belay by the support party. We surfaced at seven after a pleasant seven hours caving.

For the information of those who are wondering why the illustrious Kevin Kiernan is not mentioned as being in the party, Kevin "piker" Kiernan got as far as the top of the ninety and then indicated his desire to continue no further.

Peter Shaw.

One more Khazad-dum weekend before Christmas. A large party will be NEEDED EVEN if the weather is bad. All the gear will have to be removed from the cave that weekend whether the final push is on or not

PLEASE NOTE. As usual there will be NO Spiel and NO General Meeting in January.

Towards more picturesque speleo-english.

" The North Ridge of Mt. Anne is something like the jaw of a long dead dragon suffering from dental caries."

Henry Shannon.