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May 1969

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Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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Southern Tasmanian Caverneers, "Speleo Spiel" (1969). *Speleo Spiel* . 341.
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Published monthly by the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, Box 641G,
G.P.O., Hobart. 7001.

Registered at the G.P.O. Hobart.

Annual subscription 60 cents.

Single copies 10 cents.

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FORWARD PROGRAMME.

- May 24,25 - Exit Cave and Hobbit Hole. Small party for Saturday trip to Hobbit Hole for track cutting and fluorescein-ing. Leader: B.Collin.
Weekend party to Exit Cave for exploration, surveying and fluorescein tracing. Leader: Allan Keller.
- June 1 - Sunday: Day trip to Florentine. Leader: A.Goede.
- June 3 - Tuesday: General meeting at 8p.m. at 66 Wentworth St., South Hobart. Your hosts: Brian and Jeanette.
- June 7,8 - Weekend trip to Ida Bay to attempt first descent of big pitch in Hobbit Hole. Come if you possibly can. A large party is needed. Leader: B.Collin.

Editorial - The MIGHTY Hobbit Hole.

Sooner or later all the scrub bashing at Ida Bay on the north side of Marble Hill had to lead to another discovery in an area which has already produced some spectacular potholes. On April 19 a small party led by Brian discovered a promising hole to the northwest of Chockstone Pot with a small stream flowing into it. The party descended a steep slope for 60 ft. before being halted by a 20 ft. vertical drop. The presence of air movement suggested a promising prospect. Brian was so impressed by the cosy atmosphere of the hole at a time when he was half way through reading "The Hobbit" that he suggested the name "Hobbit Hole".

In doing so he tempted fate for Tolkien in his fascinating book about hobbits, elves, and goblins described a hobbit hole as follows: "Not a nasty dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort".!! These illusions of comfort and cosiness were quickly dispelled when another party led by Kees Sparreboom visited the hole again on May 5. The 20 ft. pitch was quickly conquered but the next pitch proved to be a surprise. The graphic details of its discovery are best read in Kees's trip report. Enough to say here that twin shafts were discovered - one wet and one dry - down which falling rocks take some 4 secs. to travel. The depth is estimated at between 250 and 300 ft. which would rank it amongst the three longest vertical pitches in Australia.

We hope to make the first ladder descent of the big pitch on the June 7,8 weekend but we will need a large party to get two bods to the bottom. If the cave proves to be extensive it may well be worth our while to invest in a winch to give more of us the opportunity to get down. If we are very lucky we may find a link with Exit Cave. The water going into Hobbit Hole could be the source of the water in the north-west creek passage in Exit. If a link is made it would be possible to go right through Marble Hill from north to south.

CLUB NEWS.

A number of items were discussed at the last general meeting.

+ The "Hobbit Hole" was officially approved by the meeting as the official name for the new hole at Ida Bay.

+ There was considerable discussion about the proposal to abolish trip fees. The treasurer pointed out that although trip fees were only 10 cents per day they were rarely collected by party leaders and revenue in the past year had been small. He suggested that a better way to provide income would be to review subscriptions at each A.G.M. and raise them if necessary. The meeting agreed to abolish trip fees.

+ Albert Goede was appointed coordinator for the A.S.F. conference and was given authority to act on behalf of the club to get things moving.

+ Brian Collin expressed concern that the new chrome-vanadium carabiners recently purchased by the club were already showing signs of rust where knocked or worn by ropes. Enquiries are to be made with the firm responsible for their manufacture.

+ The meeting set a record for both apologies and attendance. All chairs were occupied and so was the floor.

TRIP REPORTS.

Exit Cave - Sunday 13/4/69.

Party: Brian Collin, Albert Goede, Peter Brabon, Robin and Judy Booth.

The one day trip to install the first part of the gate was successful and not as unpleasant as one sometimes envisages a working trip to be. The cosy atmosphere of the wind tunnel proved ideal for long and earnest discussion whilst the holes were driven into the roof. As only two could work at a time Peter showed Robin the first part of the cave.

The track is rapidly becoming, I should say is, a bog. The average depth of mud for a considerable distance is 12". Good luck to the P.W.D. inspector who has been instructed to inspect the gate on completion.
B.Collin.

Lune River Area. - Saturday 19/4/69.

Party: Brian and Jeanette Collin, Kees Sparreboom and John Boyle.

An enjoyable trip that saw the discovery of a very promising hole that could lead us to Exit. The hole is located to the north-west of Chockstone Pot and is where a small creek goes underground at the sandstone - limestone junction. After descending a steep slope for some 60 ft. further progress was halted by a 20 ft. vertical drop. Air movement was observed at this point and all looks very promising for some interesting, even if a bit wet, caving.

The limestone strata is dipping at about 20° near the hole and a short distance to the north a surface creek was found. It would appear that this is another point on the east-west fault line that passes near Entrance Cave and the old quarry.

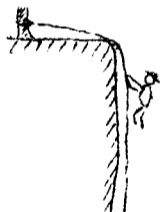
Several other holes were found in this area that should be descended some day but no air movement was observed. The sinkhole to the east of station 24 on the La Perouse track and the 60 ft. hole some 200 ft. to the west of station 34 were descended but neither went any further than the first drop. The 60 ft. hole proved to be very enjoyable, the hole opening up from approx. 3 ft. by 2 ft. at the top to some 20 ft. diameter at the bottom. Brian Collin.

Rocky Tom - Jumar practice. - 25/4/69.

Party: Brian Collin, Sib Corbett, Kees Sparreboom, John Boyle.

A pleasant afternoon finding out many of the disadvantages and some of the good points of mechanical rope climbers. With further experience some of the conclusions formed on Friday may be proved wrong but for what it is worth this is what we found out.

1.



With a single rope great difficulty was experienced in negotiating the top few feet where the rope passed over a sharp bend.

2. Two ropes over the top section enabled us to negotiate the top section with reasonable ease. The method being to climb on one rope and near the difficult section to transfer one jumar to the other rope.

3. A chest loop attached to the lower jumar enables resting with reasonable comfort.

4. For caving purposes where the most difficult section will normally be at the top and where speed is essential I feel that a short ladder could be used, the climber transferring from the rope to the ladder.

5. The length of the foot slings are important and each climber should have his own.

Jumars will form a useful addition to our equipment but practice is essential to master the technique. Brian Collin.

Exit Cave Gate - Sat. 3/5/69.

Party: Brian Collin, Albert Goede, Kees Sparreboom and John Boyle.

Exit Cave is now protected by a gate. For some moments after its completion we thought it would prove so vandal prove that even with a key no one could enter, however, after ½ hours hard sawing a small finger hole was cut and with some practice and much manual dexterity we found that the lock could be undone.

A little more work is required to enable the lock to be undone quickly and conveniently and a few more rocks are required to be cemented in beside the gate but as it stands the gate is ready for

Government inspection. I confidently anticipate that the inspector will be satisfied with the construction but I have some doubts whether he will survive the trip in and out. The gate has been left open and the padlock removed, it will be finally locked only when one or more keys can be left inside the cave in case of emergency. The construction of the gate has involved time and hard work but if it stops that one vandal who could destroy the formations then the effort will have been worth it. John's experiment in testing the flammability of parkas was 100% successful, luckily it did not rain on the way out. Kees also proved that torches do not float.

Brian Collin.

Hobbit Hole -(Ida Bay) - Sunday 4/5/69.

Report of the trip to the new cave(Hobbit Hole) by Kees Sparreboom. On Sunday the 4 th of May, a party of five people went their way to find out some more about the new found cave near Chockstone Pot. The names of them were: Peter Helman, Sib Corbett, John Boyle(from Sydney) Carl Björklund and myself.

After some scrambling through tough bush we found the cave(Lead by Peter and Sib.) We had some lunch at the top of the cave and made ready to go down. There we went. We reached the pitch of the cave where we were before, a few weeks ago, that goes down for about 20ft. We fixed a ladder and went down, myself first. My first impression was that the cave finished there, but after some looking I found a hole, threw a stone in it and got the shock of my life when I counted 10 before the stone came to rest. I thought it took 10 secs. but this was wrong I counted too quick probably because my heart was beating so fast.

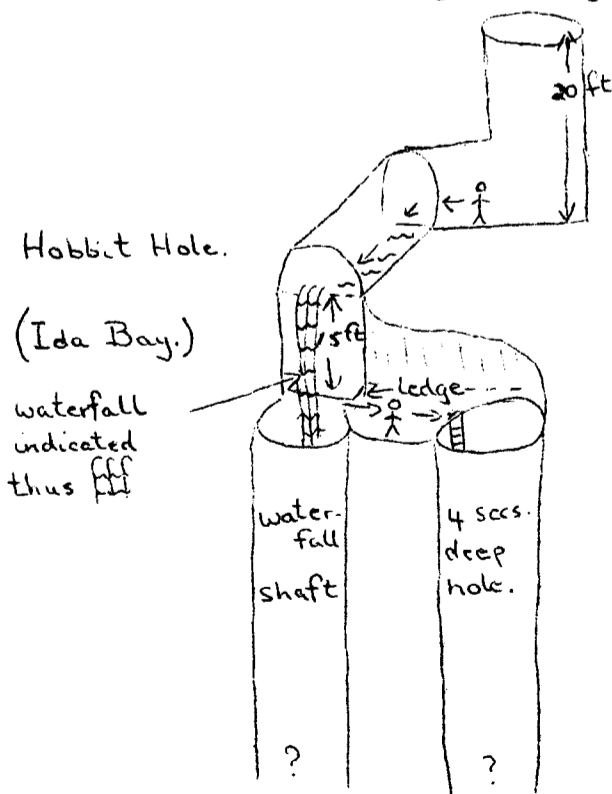
Peter Helman came down quickly and made sure that it was only 4 secs. deep. Still a very exciting discovery. We made preparations there (after the whole party had come down) to explore this hole further. John and Carl got a thick branch from the top, needed as a belay anchor, and we fastened the ladders and dropped them down.

I went down and hit a ledge after about 15 ft. In the meantime the water that came from the creek, wetted me to the skin below the waist and dropped further down in the hole. This hole that I saw was horrible to look into and very uncomfortable to go into, so much water was going down.

Then I looked round and found a passage that lead to another much more promising hole, although it gave me quite a shock after I dropped a stone in to it and this took about 4 secs. again. I decided to drop the ladders into it and have a look. But there I did not feel too well and the ladders did not reach the bottom(hanging free so far I could see) I did not go down because it was pretty hopeless. Then I got up as quickly as possible and as wet as a fish that came out of the water. To get the party out of the cave, John prussiked

up on the rope(20 ft. pitch) and fastened a ladder, so that the party could get out fairly quickly. We had a cup of tea and made ready to find the cars. After excellent navigation of Peter Helman(first visit to this hole) we found the track that brought us to the cars. I think it was very successful with promise of further exploration for this cave. For me another lesson was that the attitude towards things like this must be very watchful and careful to keep out of trouble.

Kees Sparreboom.



Rough sketch of cave after 20 ft. pitch.

Find out for yourself where this hole leads and be there on June 7. Besides we need people to lug gear and give moral support. A fire stoker and tea maker wouldn't go amiss either.

Ed.