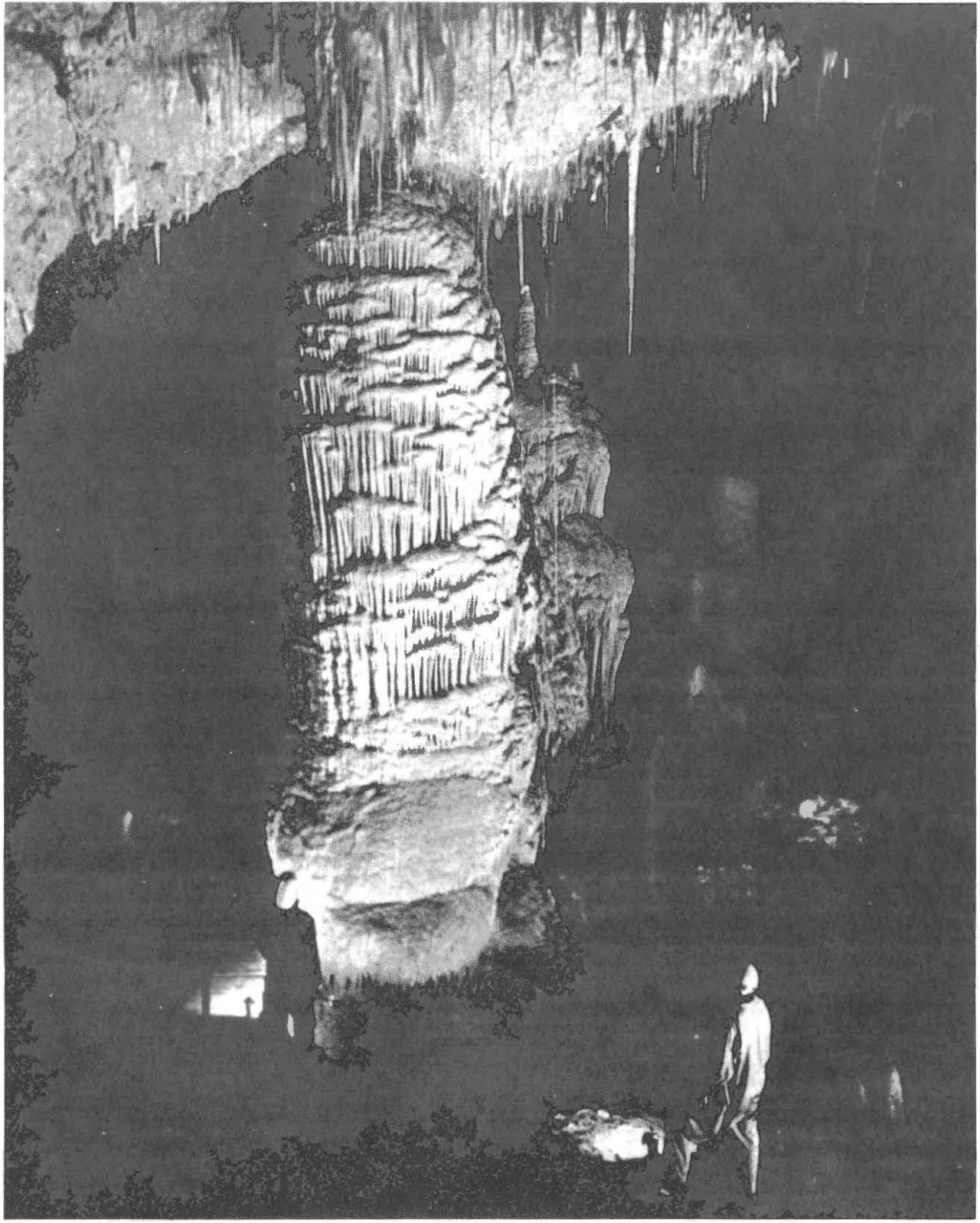


ISS. 413 X

# ASF NEWSLETTER

Summer, 1980/81 No. 90



Stalagmite in Moondyne Cave, Augusta, W.A. B & W from an Ektachrome slide by Glenn Pure

## THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

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# NEWSLETTER

## Summer, 1980/81 No. 90

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Once again the *ASF Newsletter* has managed to surface with enough copy. This recurring plea must become tedious for you to read each issue, but here it is again. More copy is needed for Issue 91, next year. My thanks especially go to Chris Olsson (BMSC), Tom Porrit (CCC), Jim Reid (CTCG), Dave Dicker (ISS), Philip Holberton (KSS), Gordon Taylor (NUCC), Stuart Nicholas (SCS), Richard Mackay (SUSS) and Rauleigh Webb (WASG) for their copy for 'Down Under All Over'.

Next year, I would like to do an article, similar to the ones John Dunkley did many years ago about club newsletters. It's somewhat difficult to do when only receiving eight. Enough said!

If you are still wavering about Cave Convict in terms of 'Do I go?'... 'Don't I go?', I would suggest that you do. When I first started caving, I was terrified about going to Nibicon. I've never regretted attending. The friendships formed there, and more especially on the field trips, and at succeeding conferences have lasted, and I've even managed to visit caves throughout Australia on the way.

\*\*\*\* - \* - \* - \*\*\*\*

### DEADLINE DATES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

For numbers 91 and 92, the dates are 14 February and 14 May, 1981 respectively.

\*\*\*\* - \* - \* - \*\*\*\*

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## CRACROFT EXPEDITION 1980

Dave Gillieson and Gordon Taylor

The Cracroft karst is an area of Ordovician limestone located on the South Cracroft River between Burgess Bluff and Mt. Bobs (see map 1). Previous work has been summarised by Goede (1974, 1977). The longest cave in the area is Judds Cavern (C1), first entered by Henry Judd and Ben Griggs in, or prior to, 1881, and subsequently relocated and mapped by TCC and ASF parties between 1971 and 1975 (Goede, 1977). This report serves to update Goede's reports in the light of discoveries made by TCC parties in the intervening years, and by the 1980 expedition. A brief report has already appeared (Taylor, 1980).

The team assembled at the end of the Picton River forestry road on 2 January, 1980, and by that evening had negotiated the track up Farmhouse Creek and over a saddle into the South Cracroft drainage basin. Base camp was established in myrtle forest outside Judds Cavern by the members of the expedition who were:

TCC: Bruce McIntosh (Leader)	NUCC: John Briggs	UQSS: Dave Gillieson
Chris & Diana Davies	Lawrence McCook	Jill Landsberg
Albert Goede	Steve Ralser	
Sam Steane	Tim Rudman	
	Gordon Taylor	

Objectives of the expedition were as follows:

- to relocate and survey all caves explored, but not mapped prior to the expedition.
- to look for enterable caves on the limestone along the 'red route'.
- to fully explore and survey a large cave entered by TCC members in 1978 and 1979, and provisionally named 'four tape cave'.

To achieve this, it was necessary to re-cut and mark existing track systems in the dense myrtle forest which covers the karst. This was accomplished by one group in the first two days, while another group surveyed Skull Cave (C7) and explored entrances adjacent to the red route. The track cutters, searching for King Billy Hole (C8), located a long joint controlled rift on the hillside to the west of C8. This feature had a series of sinks and shafts along it, several of which were entered and had substantial draughts emerging.

By the third day the teams united to work on the extensive unmapped system which was dubbed 'Icebox' (C15) in view of the frigidness of the entrance gale. This survey took two days, totalling 767 m of passage, all of which were pushed to sumps or rockpiles. By day five, a return to the rift was indicated and the first entrance was descended (13 m pitch) to a large rift chamber with a number of skeletons- hence the name, Calcified Crypt (C12). A promising draughting shaft was disappointingly bottomed at only 20 m. The largest shaft entrance (a 27 m pitch) was descended to a large domed chamber from which leads were followed to phreatic passages with a small stream in the bottom.

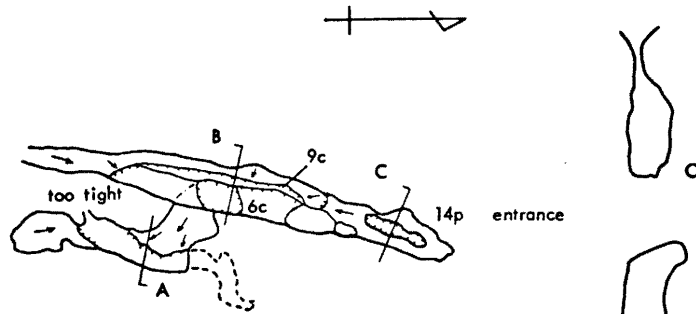
This cave was named Griggs Rift (C11) in honour of Judd's companion on the 1881 jaunt. During this period, other caves such as Judds and Matchlight Cavern (C2) were visited. The team left the area on the seventh day following a massive food binge.

### CAVE DESCRIPTIONS

Skull Cave (C7) : Named after animal remains (Thylacine ?) within, this cave is entered by a short drop which leads to a chamber. From this is gained the main passage which extends north-south. The southern section is dominated by large collapse blocks, amongst which the way on to several further chambers is found. These extensions terminate in tight rifts. A passage leads off from the chamber floor, doubles back and heads north under the rest of the cave. A hole 20 m up in the roof connects this passage with the northern section of the cave.

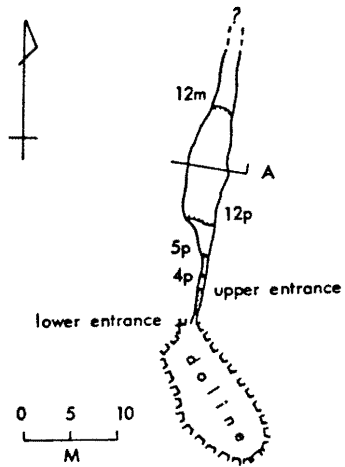
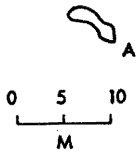
The northern section begins with a long large chamber which abuts the entrance chamber. One section has an impressive display of straws in the roof. A loop passage leaves this chamber, but completion of this loop is not feasible owing to a 15 m climb in the boulder strewn passage. further exploration in the collapse chamber may reveal additional passages.

Icebox Cave : The entrance is located at the base of a large doline adjacent to the termination point of the red route. A 4 m pitch, best rigged, leads to a gravel floored chamber from which a short crawl over gravel enters a narrow rift. The lowest level of the rift ends in a mud blockage, but



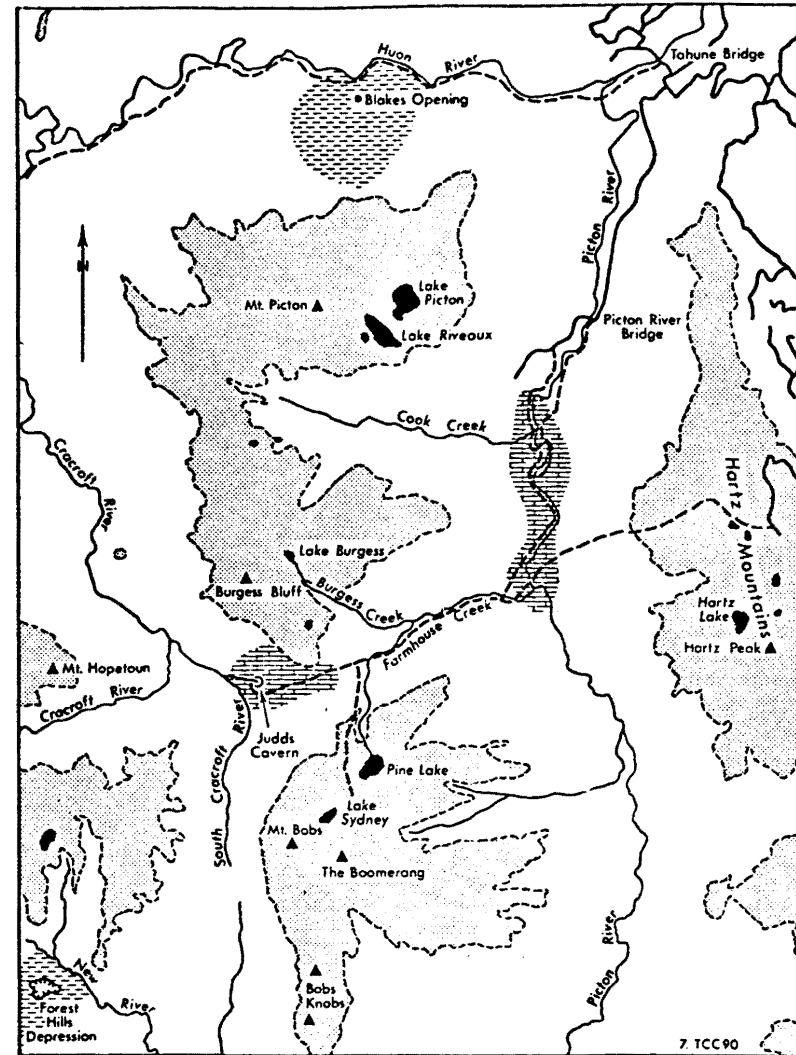
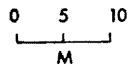
**CALCIFIED CRYPT (C12)**  
Cracroft Karst Area, S.W.Tas.

Surveyed: G.Taylor  
T.Rudman  
L.McCook 6/1/80  
Drawn: G.Taylor  
D.Gillieson  
ASF Grade 4.2



**UNNAMED SHAFT (C13)**  
Cracroft Karst Area, S.W.Tas.

Surveyed: G.Taylor  
J.Briggs 6/1/80  
Drawn: G.Taylor  
D.Gillieson  
ASF Grade 3.2



Map showing location of Cracroft Area and nearby areas of Carbonate Rocks

- Precambrian dolomite
- Ordovician limestone
- Land above 600 metres
- Road
- Resurgence
- Track



1980 CRACROFT EXPEDITION (Cont.)

a climb in the top of the rift leads over dry sediment banks to a chamber where a rift intersects. Good straw decoration at this point dictates care in movement. A short phreatic maze to the south of this section ends in mud blockages with calcareous crusts on the mud. The main rift permits easy walking east, past collapsed sediment fills to a junction. To the east, the passage ends in a mud blockage, while to the north, entry is gained to a large collapse chamber orientated along the strike. This chamber has a deep eroded sediment fill showing discrete laminations. There are large pools of water and abundant stalagmite decoration. Following this passage east, two short drops are negotiated to a gravel floored area where the passage bifurcates. To the north, a low crawl over gravel leads to a high roofed rift with a static sump at the eastern side of the chamber. The continuation of the rift is blocked by talus and mud, but might possibly reward a climb. A high aven at the junction carries a trickle of water, and organic debris suggests a surface feeder. To the south, the water flows sluggishly down a gravel-floored phreatic passage, and a south westerly branch can be followed past a short sump to a mud blockage. The main passage continues miserably to a termination. Here a 3 m climb leads to a low-roofed bedding plane crawl which intersects another rift. This was followed past tributary passages for another 50 m to a point where the muddy fill reaches the roof and further progress would require digging. This point in the system is at, or close to, the level of the button grass plain and short phreatic cave at the base of the ridge. The best possibility for extensions is through the sump or along the rift at the northernmost extremity of the cave.

Griggs Rift (C 11): This is a medium sized, predominately phreatic system. An interesting 27 m entrance pitch enters a larged domed chamber. From this point, large breakdown blocks are passed and the phreatic passage is encountered. A way can be found through the breakdown to a small creek but progress along it is not possible. This creek is again sighted further into the cave but it is not accessible. The remainder of the cave is a phreatic passage from which other side passages diverge and mostly ascend to a rockpile. Passages in the cave are extremely close to Judds Cavern and a connection might be made. The creek almost certainly feeds into Judds, possibly downstream near the sump.

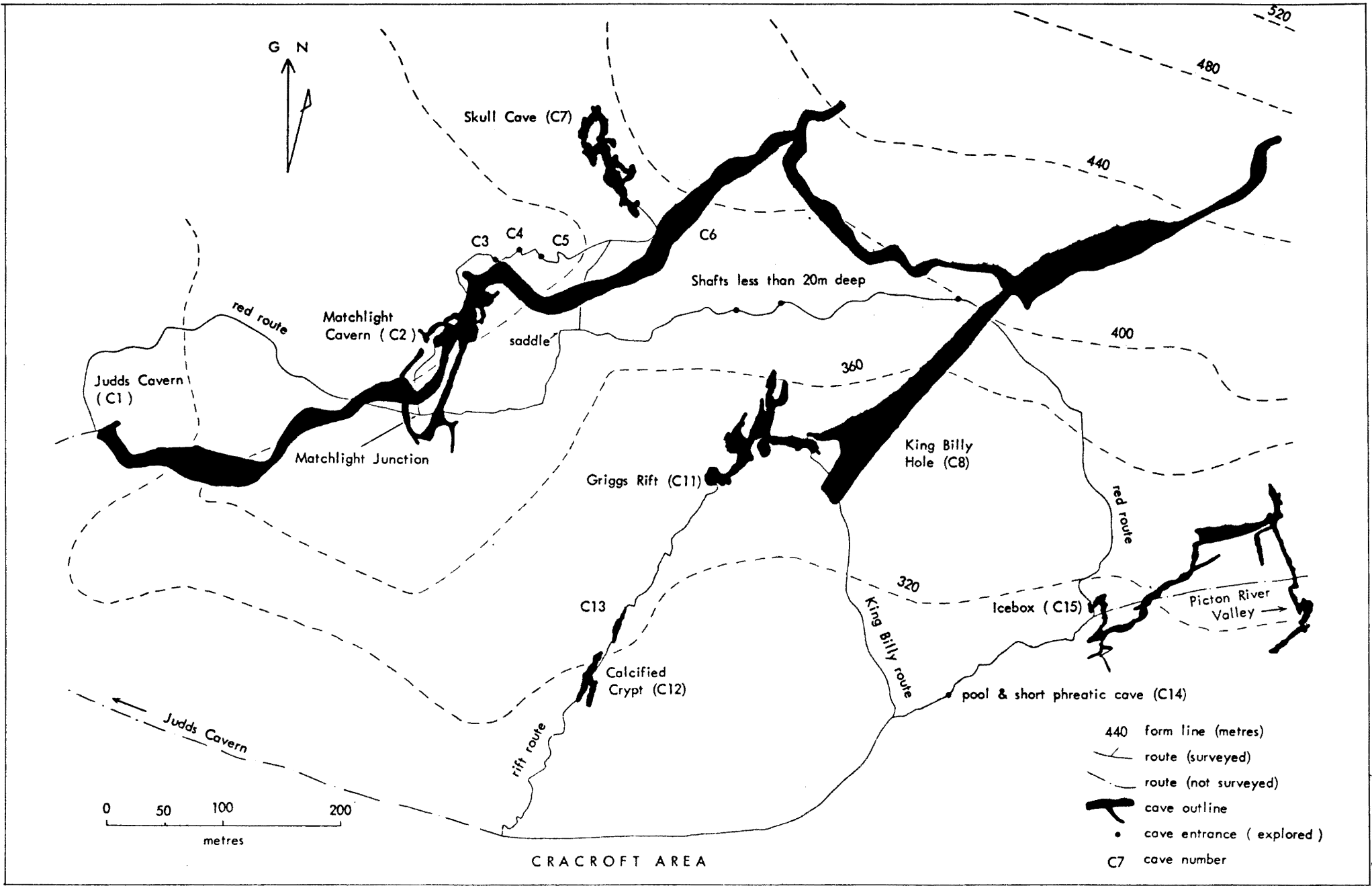
Calcified Crypt : This is essentially a large rift chamber to which access is gained by a 14 m pitch. Further 9 m and  
(C 12) 6 m pitches lead to the base of the chamber, from which a short blocked passage can be followed. The name derives from the large amount of calcified animal bones in the cave.

Un-named Shaft : A promising entrance on the basis of the draught, this is a series of 4, 5 and 12 m pitches in a  
(C 13) narrow rift. At the base of the 12 m pitch, the passage continues along the rift but a climb would be necessary and the rock is friable.

Un-named shafts : Some six shafts were investigated along the red route. Although entrance pitches were up to 15 m,  
on the red route all blocked off at less than 20 m depth. There are a large number of dolines on this hillside, of which only the more obvious were investigated. Some may feed into Judds Cavern.

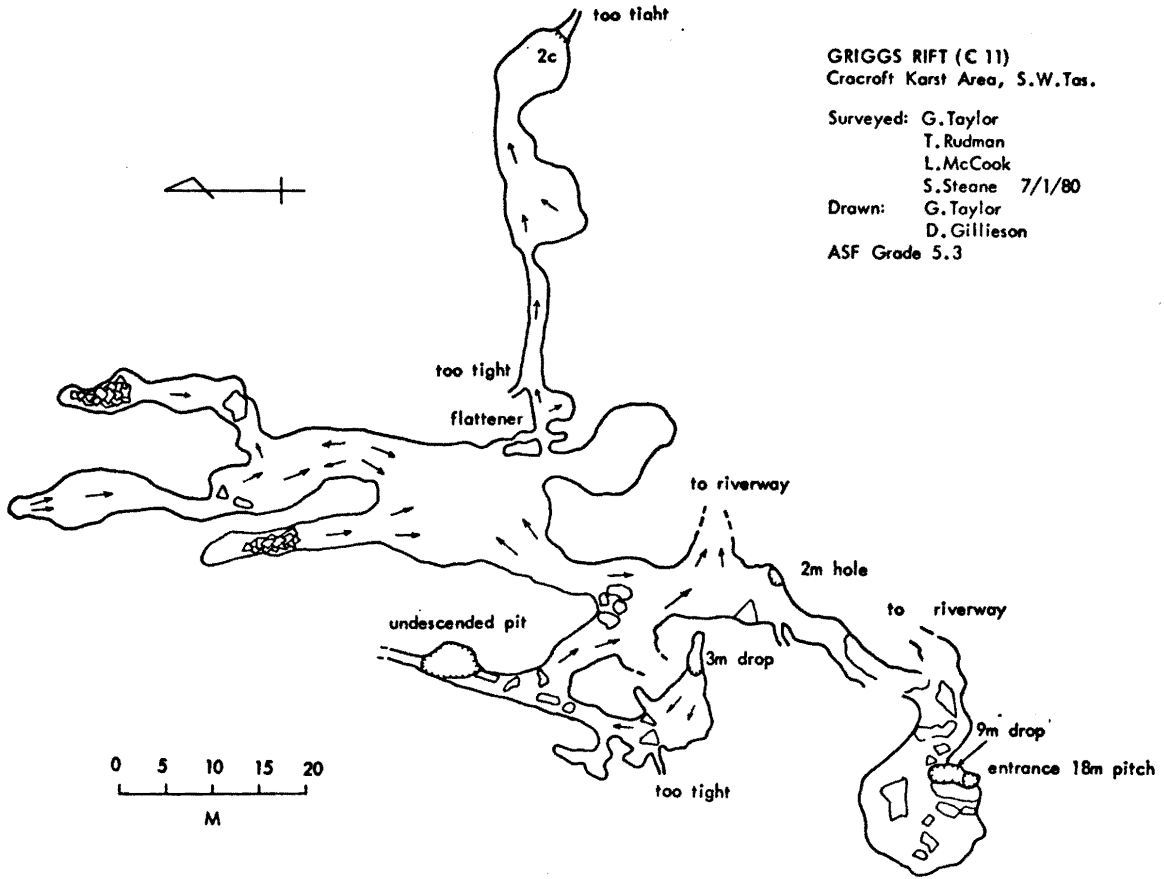
CRACROFT KARST AREA - Revised Cave List

No.	Name	Length	Status
C1	Judds Cavern	1721 m	mapped
C2	Matchlight Cavern	380 m	mapped
C3	Unnamed shaft	10 m	estimated depth 6 m
C4	Unnamed shaft	-	estimated depth 3.5 m
C5	Unnamed shaft	18 m	estimated depth 12 m
C6	Unnamed shaft	-	estimated depth 39 m
C7	Skull Cave	235 m	mapped



CRACROFT AREA

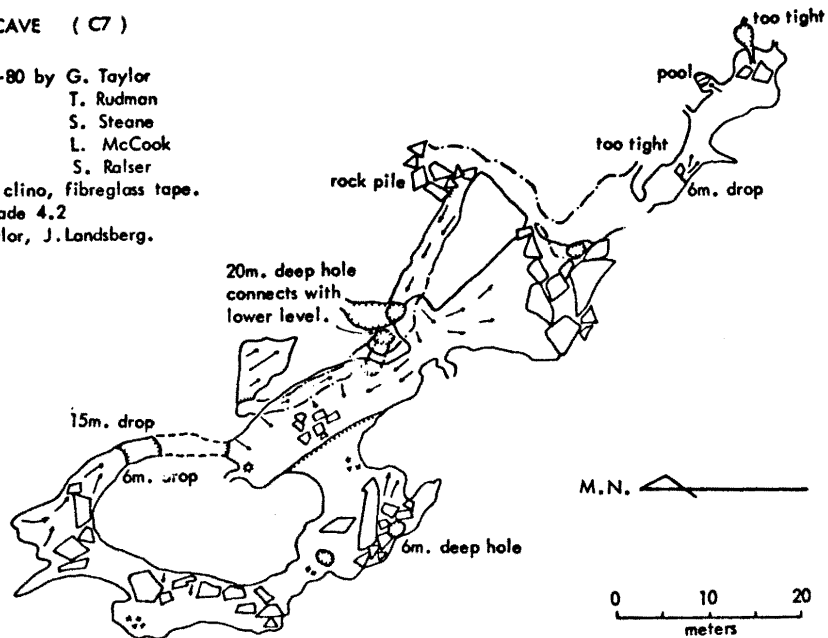
- 440 form line (metres)
- route (surveyed)
- route (not surveyed)
- cave outline
- cave entrance ( explored )
- C7 cave number



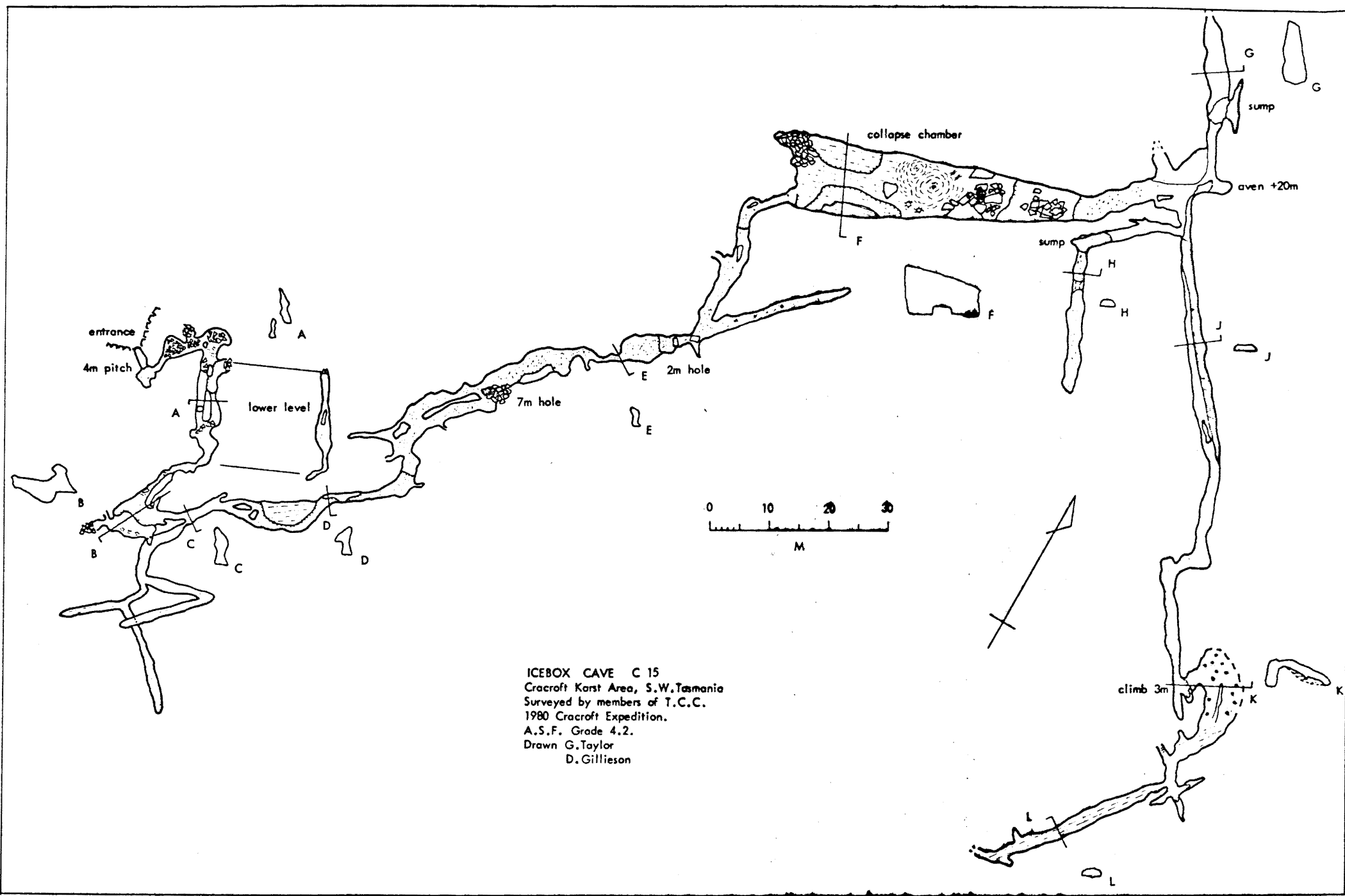
**SKULL CAVE (C7)**

Surveyed on 3-1-80 by G. Taylor  
 T. Rudman  
 S. Steane  
 L. McCook  
 S. Ralser

Suunto compass, clino, fibreglass tape.  
 A.S.F. Grade 4.2  
 Drawn by G.Taylor, J.Landsberg.







ICEBOX CAVE C 15  
Cracroft Karst Area, S.W. Tasmania  
Surveyed by members of T.C.C.  
1980 Cracroft Expedition.  
A.S.F. Grade 4.2.  
Drawn G. Taylor  
D. Gillieson

1980 CRACROFT EXPEDITION (Cont.)

## Revised Cave List

C8	King Billy Hole	entrance to C1	mapped
C9	Draughting Hole/ Attilas Hole	130 m	estimate
C10	not assigned	-	-
C11	Griggs Rift	350 m	mapped, depth 40 m
C12	Calcified Crypt	85 m	mapped, depth 35 m
C13	Unnamed shaft	30 m	mapped, depth 21 m
C14	short phreatic cave on access route	-	-
C15	Icebox	767 m	mapped, depth 40 m

In addition, six shafts less than 20 m deep on red route, numbers not assigned. The total surveyed passage length in area was 3726 m at January, 1980.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

It is clear that Judds Cavern acts as a main drain for at least the area shown on map 2. The exploration of recorded and unrecorded karst features on the ridge overlying this system will probably provide a network of strike controlled caverns with a likely maximum depth potential of around 200m. One factor which will tend to reduce the likelihood of a through trip is the presence of an upper shaly and thinly bedded limestone which produces abundant breakdown.

Further extensions of the Cracroft system are to be expected at the north eastern ends of known caves and will probably trend along the strike. The upper limit of the limestone is imperfectly known owing to the thick bush, and it is possible that some of the drainage from Lake Burgess and its catchment sinks into the limestone to flow along the strike to the Cracroft system. There may therefore be extensive caves to be found in that area. In addition, dye tracing by Goede (1977) confirms that doline drainage on the Saddle between Farmhouse Creek and the south Cracroft feeds to Judds Cavern. This breach of the divide suggests that a more intensive search of this area may be productive.

It is suggested that Judds Cavern and related systems (King Billy Hole, Icebox) have acted both today, and at least in last glacial times, as springs for the subterranean drainage of a surprisingly large area. It is also suggested that the abandonment of Icebox and King Billy Hole is related to the infilling of the conduit, in part owing to normal evolution of the cave system, and owing to increased rates of sedimentation at the margins of the ice sheets. The presence of these ice sheets is attested by the valley forms and till deposits in the area (Colhoun and Goede, 1979).

Perhaps the disproportionately large size of Judds Cavern may be related to the concentration of drainage in the blocked conduit. Alternatively, it may be possibly be related to lithological variation, though it should be noted that Icebox is formed in the same stratigraphic unit.

The Cracroft karst is therefore of interest to cavers on scientific, sporting and scenic grounds. It is to be hoped that exploration and documentation will proceed apace and thus provide supporting evidence for the inclusion of this area within the South West National Park.

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- TAYLOR, G. 1980: Cracroft- A Brief Report. *Speleograffiti* 16 (2): 7-8.

\*\*\*\* - \* - \* - \*\*\*\*

Hence, loathed Melancholy,  
Of Cerberus, and blackest Midnight born,  
In Stygian cave forlorn,  
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks,  
and sights unholy.

John Milton, *L'Allegro*.

## NOTICES AND NEWS

### CAVE CONVICT 1980!

Registration should be received not later than 1 December, 1980. The dates are 27-31 December, 1980. See further in this newsletter for details.

### CAVE RESCUE EXERCISE - BUNGONIA.

This exercise is held annually, and the sixth such exercise will be held at Bungonia Caves, 7 and 8 March, 1981. The aims of the exercise are:

- (1) To teach cavers to avoid accidents in caves as rescue is extremely difficult.
- (2) To teach basic self-help techniques and procedures to follow in the event of an accident.
- (3) To demonstrate the 'back-up' services and facilities that are available if needed.

Cost of the weekend will be \$10 per person, which will include lunch and dinner on Saturday, lunch on Sunday, morning and afternoon teas and camping fees. Any person or group wishing to attend should contact the committee at the address below. A full agenda will be forwarded when details are finalised.

The Committee is concerned at the fall in attendance by ASF societies over the past few years. With the ever increasing numbers of cavers, it seems to be most essential that accidents should be avoided, as the authorities in charge of caves tend to be conservative and regard closure as the safest action to take with any area that is a problem.

'Rescue '81 Committee',  
NSW Cave Rescue Group,  
P.O.Box 122,  
Bankstown, N.S.W., 2200.

### CAVE DIVING BOOK

The cave diving book written by Ian Lewis (CEGSA) has sold 800 copies of the first run of 1000. The first print may become a collector's item. If you wish further details contact Ian at the following address:

P.O.Box 460,  
North Adelaide, S.A., 5006.

### PADDY PALLIN FOUNDATION GRANTS

The closing dates for grants from the Paddy Pallin Foundation for 1981 is 28 February, 1981. Details may be had from Peter Radcliffe. (See address in front cover).

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

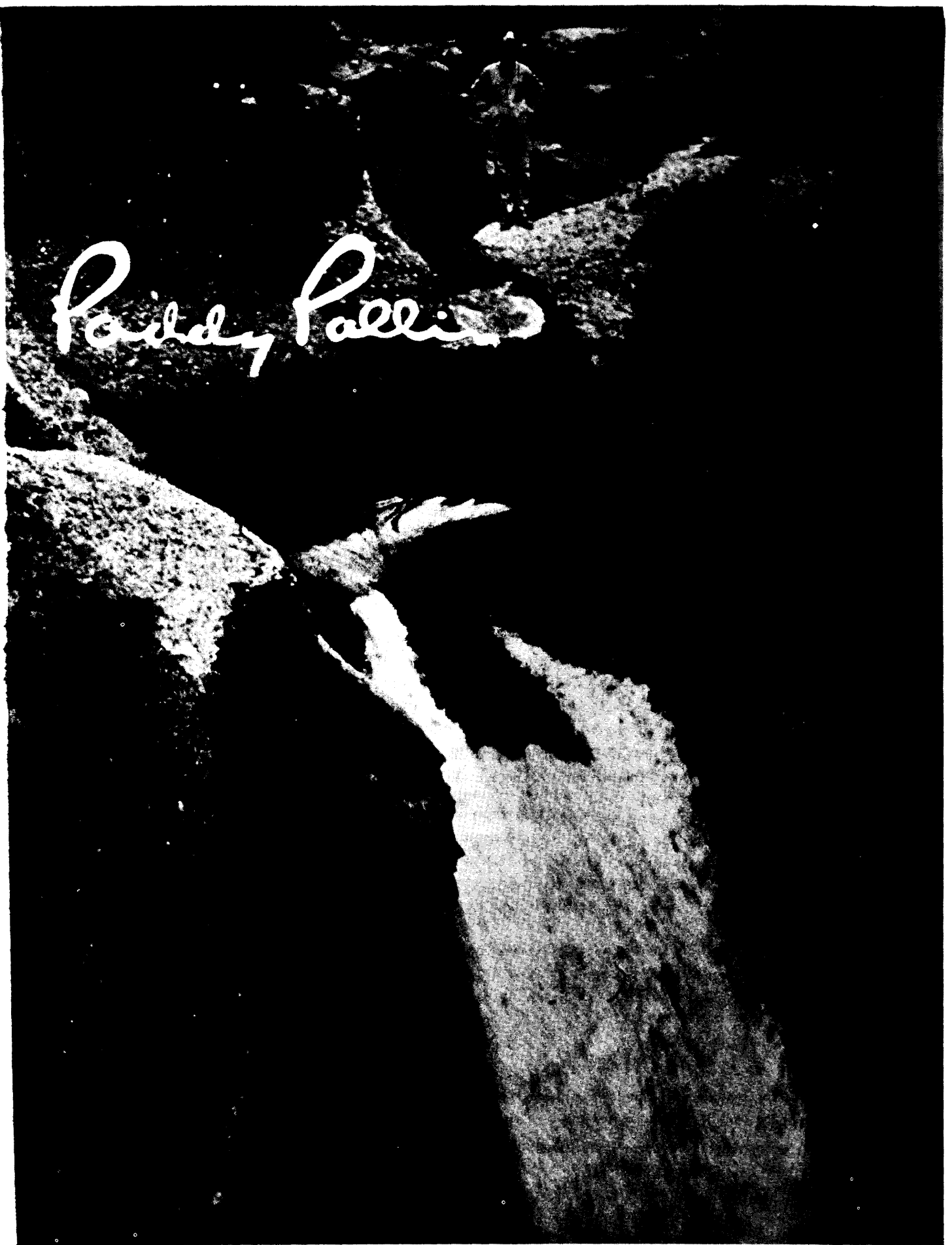
Assistant Secretary, ASF has a new address. It is : Cathy Rothery,  
78A Balaclava Road,  
Eastwood, N.S.W., 2122.

### NEWSLETTERS ?

Does the ASF Editor receive your club's newsletter. Next year, I would like to write a general article about club/society newsletters. The ones listed below are those which I receive as editor. Is yours listed ?

<i>The Caver's Chronicle</i>	SRGWA
<i>Labyrinth</i>	NSW Institute of Technology Speleological Society
<i>Nargun</i>	VSA
<i>Newsletter</i>	CEGSA
<i>Nuigini Caver</i>	Papua New Guinea Cave Exploration Group
<i>Quaver</i>	MUSIG
<i>Southern Caver</i>	SCS
<i>Spar</i>	UNSWSS
<i>Speleograffiti</i>	NUCC
<i>Speleo Spiel</i>	TCC

Also publications from ISS.



John Dunkley contemplating the Sink of Harpan River Cave, Nepal — Photo by Andrew Pavey

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## AN ACCIDENT IN MINYA CAVE

R. Michael Bourke\*

In late 1978, a six man caving party from France, came to Papua New Guinea for two months on a reconnaissance trip for the major 1980 French expedition. I accompanied the team on the New Britain phase of the trip. We went to Nakana Mountains where four great dolines/caves are known, including Ora, which was the target of the 1972-73 UQSS New Britain Expedition. In one of these, Minye, I had an accident on the rope and this is described here. Minye is a very spectacular system. The rope pitch of the entrance doline is 410 m deep on the highest side. It has a volume of 26 million m<sup>3</sup>, which made it the greatest doline in the world in 1978. (It has since been surpassed by Luse (60 million m<sup>3</sup>) in the same area). The river system in the cave (15-20 m<sup>3</sup>/second) is one of the greatest in the world.

On Sunday, 19 November, 1978, the entire party except Gerald Sovourniu (the expedition doctor) descended Minye. Frederic Poggia and Daniel Martinez had rigged the 270 m entrance pitch of the doline/aven the previous day. Daniel was the first down the pitch and I followed him. The pitch consists of a series of stages, mostly over near-vertical vegetation covered rock. The last stage of the pitch is a 75 m one and is free of the rock face for most of the way. The descent was without incident until this final drop.

It is a spectacular drop, for the doline/aven is at most 200 m in diameter at this point; it is in full sunlight; and 160 m below can be seen the bottom of the doline and the huge river disappearing into a large cave entrance. In the usual darkness it would have been a routine 75 m descent. In full daylight, it was an awe inspiring sight and I must admit to being quite nervous.

Soon after I started down the rope on the final drop, I realized I was moving down too quickly. At first I controlled the speed with hand pressure on the rope, but this was not enough. By the time I reached the bottom of the drop, I had very little control and was falling fast. Ten to fifteen metres above the ground, my fall was broken by the branches of a large tree growing on the scree slope. Because of this, I landed quite gently. Despite gloves, both hands were burnt badly, particularly the right hand, and I went into mild shock. Amazingly, these were my only injuries, although the fall had snapped off several large branches of the tree.

When the first aid equipment arrived, Xavier Goyet treated me for burns with painkiller, and assisted me into my sleeping bag. Already, I was wondering how I would accomplish the 270 m ascent out of the cave with both hands immobilized.

Next day, the rest of the party explored a fossil passage of the system which they were able to follow for 2300 m. I spent the day resting in the camp. The camp was most unusual for New Britain for it was located under the shelter of an overhang and it was dry underfoot. In a region where the rainfall exceeds 6000 mm per year, this is indeed rare.

The following day, the party was to exit from the cave and return to Kappena village. Daniel was to be first up the pitch and I was to follow. Thus he could assist me over difficult places. My right hand was useless, but I could work the jumars with my heavily bandaged left hand. I carried no gear and took painkillers before starting up the rope. The ascent was very slow and my hands were painful. The one-handed ascent took three hours, but it would have been much longer had Daniel not been there to assist with passing knots and tie-off points on the rope. The rest of the party waited patiently for us to get off the rope. The last ones up did not get back to the village until nine o'clock that evening, after derigging the pitch.

The villagers at Kappena were duly impressed when my hands were uncovered for dressing by the doctor. The entire palm of my right hand was covered in a liquid filled blister 8 cm in diameter and 4 cm high! But they were not surprised by the accident for they know a malevolent spirit inhabits the huge hole. Perhaps they are right, for three of the major cave accidents in Papua New Guinea have occurred in giant doline caves of this region. In 1972-73, Les Lemon (now Les Brown) of the University of Queensland Speleological Society's New Britain expedition developed a serious infection in her knee whilst exploring Ora Cave. This caused her entire leg to swell and she had to be carried out on a stretcher for three days for evacuation. Then in 1978, a member of a Swiss expedition, Rene Marthaler drowned while crossing an underground river in Kavakuna.

Why did the accident happen? Firstly, I was using an unfamiliar French Petzl descender and had not been instructed in the correct usage of the device. After passing the rope through the descender, I did not pass it through a karabina. On pitches that were against a rock face, as in the 217 m pitch in Nare cave, this did not matter. But on the free 75 m stage in Minye, the lack of additional friction was to prove critical. Secondly, I did not respond appropriately when I realized the descent was too fast. If I had wrapped my leg around the rope, it would have been possible to slow the des-

\* P. O. Box 384, Kainantu, E. H. P., Papua New Guinea.

AN ACCIDENT IN MINYA CAVE (Cont.)

-cent. No doubt my apprehension on such an exposed pitch contributed to my failure to respond correctly.

By now, the New Britain part of the expedition was almost over, so I didn't miss out on any caving. Three weeks after the accident, the bandages were mostly off and my left hand was well on the way to full recovery. The scars on my right hand persisted longer and I still bear a scar 2 cm in diameter on it to remind me of Minya. My French colleagues gave me a Petzl descender as a present after the expedition, but it remains in the cupboard always. I much prefer the Australian whaletail for abseiling!

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**A DESCENT OF MINI-MARTIN**

Gordon Taylor

Pushing his way through the bush, John, at the front of the party, sights steam downslope amongst the trees. Could this be it? It looks good. We all rush downslope, uncaring now of the thick bush which has been hindering our progress. Quickly, we reach the spot. Surely this is the entrance to Mini-Martin? An immense column of steam rises high, great rays of sunlight become visible in the mist. And below, the steam emanates from a large black hole. Our haste is tempered by caution; we are at the edge of a large pothole. Great care is needed, as the bush suddenly and deceptively drops into the entrance. Edging our way around the side, we find a clear safe vantage point. Excitement! A rock is collected and lobbed down. One...two...three...four...five seconds before a faint crash is heard. This is certainly the top of the 120 m entrance pitch to Mini-Martin, only once descended some thirteen years before using ladders. The column of steam is not surprising. Mini-Martin is a 'breathing' hole for the massive Exit Cave below, with seventeen plus kilometres of passage.

We are not equipped on this day for a descent, but are merely satisfied to have found the entrance. Placing what rope we have with us under cover, the entrance is tagged IB 8. The only safe visible place near the entrance was a large tree, and here we affixed the tag. Warily we trooped back down to our camp alongside the river at the entrance to Exit Cave.

Three of us, John Briggs, Tim Rudman and myself had come to Tasmania for the summer holidays, to sample the delights of Tassie caving. Our time on Exit Hill was to be one of the highlights of our trip. The previous days had seen our painstaking cutting of the track up onto the hill. Some twenty-one years before, the original route to Exit had been cut over this hill. The track was last used thirteen years before, on the first descent of Mini-Martin.

The next day we arose early. Before we could descend Mini-Martin, we had to laboriously carry over 230 m of rope up the hill to the entrance. Although weary on our arrival, it did not dampen our excitement. The pitch was quickly rigged and John prepared to go over the edge. Tim took up a vantage point for photography, as John eased himself over the lip. Below him was a 120 m free drop. He started down, disappearing into the gloom, but every so often, an enthusiastic yelp would rise from the dark. Unfortunately, our longest rope was only 100 m, so the abseil was interrupted part-way down by a knot crossing. Finally a faint 'off rope' was heard, and Tim went down. I followed. The bottom was littered with an immense quantity of logs and rocks, mostly unstable. The next pitch of 50 m immediately follows the first. This was rigged and descended, whereupon we were at the top of the final 28 m pitch into Exit. From this point, over 160 m down, daylight could still be seen. Post haste, we abseiled the last 28 m into Exit. With jubilation, we scrambled down to the riverway.

After a bite to eat, we started on the long prussick out. Going down may have been quick, but going up certainly wasn't. Several hours later, we were at the top, very tired but very pleased. The first ascent of Mini-Martin was complete.

Mini-Martin must rate as the elite of vertical caves in Australia. A visit is thoroughly recommended.

\*\*\*\* - \* - \* - \*\*\*\*

' There are columns of white and saffron and dawn-rose, Legolas, fluted and twisted into dream like forms; they spring up from many-coloured floors to meet the glistening pendants of the roof: wings, ropes, curtains as fine as frozen clouds; spears, banners, pinnacles of suspended palaces! Still lakes mirror them: a glimmering world looks up from dark pools covered with clear glass... And plink! A silver drop falls and the round wrinkles in the glass make all the towers bend and waver like weeds and coral in a grotto of the sea.'

## CAVE CONVICT

CAVE CONVICT is almost here. By now the secretary of your club or society should have detailed registration forms. The committee asks you to send these back before 1 December, as accommodation bookings must be finalised at International House. Resident participants will be accommodated there. The address is 241 Royal Parade, Parkville. The costs are \$20 per night for 27-30 December. This includes a fully serviced room and three meals a day. Rooms only are available on 26 December and 30 December for \$15 per night. EXCESS ROOMS WILL NOT BE BOOKED BY THE COMMITTEE - so... no booking, no room. You can reserve a room by phoning Sue White at (03) 328 4154, by 1 December. Alternative accommodation is difficult in Melbourne and scarce at the time of the Conference. There are no caravan/camping grounds within reasonable distance, motels are expensive, and YHAs will be full.

Child minding will be available, but let the committee know your requirements early.

Some social events are planned. On Saturday night, there will be a barbecue, free for residents with tickets available for others. On Sunday, the slide competition will be judged, and on Tuesday is the Caveman's Dinner. After dinner speaker will be Andy Spate. B.Y.O.G.

The sessions for the Conference will be generally as noted in ASF Newsletter # 87. There is to be a seminar entitled:

*What is happening in and to caving? What should the ASF do about it?*

This seminar will consist of very short contributions, about five minutes each, from three or four people. Discussion groups will follow and reports will go to a plenary session. If you have ideas and wish to express these, contact Nicholas White at (03) 387 4211, working hours.

The field trips are basically those as published in the ASF Newsletter # 87. Some more details are below.

Two types of trips are considered:

- (1) Short trips, which may be held during the Conference or immediately after. These include Parwan Cave near Bacchus Marsh, west of Melbourne; and Lobertouche Cave, a granite boulder cave of uncertain origin.
- (2) Longer trips, which will commence after the Conference.
  - (i) Western District - Lava and limestone. This will be an excursion. A group will gradually move across the Western District. Camps will be at various places. Camping equipment and water containers will be required.
  - (ii) Limestone Creek - This is a 'drop-in' area where the area co-ordinators will be based for two weeks after the Conference. The area is about three hours drive from Buchan. Camping equipment required.
  - (iii) New Guinea Ridge - This will be a 'walk-in' area. Co-ordinators will be camped there after the Conference. If you are going to visit for more than a day, bring in your lightweight camping gear.
  - (iv) Jacksons Crossing - This is the southern end of the New Guinea limestone, and will require people to walk in and camp. VSA have done very little in this area so there could be discoveries to be made.
  - (v) Buchan - This includes Murrindal, East Buchan and The Basin. All of these areas will be a 'drop-in' basis for most of January. The main centre of operations will be at 'Homeleigh', and all cavers wishing to visit areas around Buchan (including New Guinea Ridge and Jacksons Crossing) will need to report to 'Homeleigh' first. Accommodation is available at the top hut, 'Homeleigh' and at various bush camps. Availability will depend upon numbers, so bring your camping gear anyway.

Many caves are on private land and the landowner's permission is, of course, needed for caving in all caves. There are some restricted areas, and these apply to VSA members as well. The Caves Reserve is a Government-managed tourist area and although the officer-in-charge is very co-operative, there is no caving in this area in the tourist season. If you wish to see the tourist caves, see the area co-ordinator - otherwise no caving.

Scrubby Creek Cave will have trips and these will be led by a special VSA Leader when available, who is in sole charge. Anyone wishing to go on a trip must satisfy the Leader of their ability to handle a sump (low air space). This is for safety. Trips to Exponential Pot will be run, but they will probably be limited for conservation reasons. Details will be available at the Conference. In the Western District, some areas need delicate negotiations with landowners, and this is being done where possible.

Lloyd Mill is the contact for field trips. He can be contacted at (03) 370 9305, or write:

19 Regent Street,  
Ascot Vale, Vic., 3032.

## DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

## ... news from around the societies

- BMSC** Chris Olsson reports that the society has had an active year to date. Most caving efforts have been in the Jenolan/Cliefden areas, with Karl Bilger's survey being a major priority. In June a group of stalwarts ventured to a limestone outcrop at Waterfall Creek. They learnt the value of 4WDs when driving through metre deep snow drifts. After tramping through the snow for several hours, they eventually made camp at Waterfall Creek near a limestone outcrop. Other areas recently visited were Walli and Wyanbene. Several members visited Mole Creek in May 1980. They are planning a return visit in mid-December. Perhaps the society should set up a sub-branch there. On the 'social' side, there have been the usual rallies, parties and a 'talent' night.
- CCC** Tom Porrit reports that the Chillagoe Caving Club has been busy with many visitors over the past few months. Joe Jennings and Bao Haosheng (a Chinese geomorphologist from Nanjing University) kept some members occupied for two weeks in July in the Chillagoe and Mitchell-Palmer limestone. A number of UQSS cavers have visited at various times, while some of the southern cavers timed their visit to co-incide with the American team, studying bats and swiftlets in Chillagoe- August to October, 1980. The research team, headed by Professor Jim Simmons (including Professor Donald Griffin) was funded by the National Science Foundation of USA. The project occupied 15 overseas academics, as well as Australians with associated studies. The team hired the Chillagoe Town Hall for their laboratory and constructed a 9x4x3 metre dark flight chamber inside. Study projects were auditory physiology of sound production and hearing in swiftlets and bats, behaviour studies on sonar performance in bats when feeding, avoiding obstacles or flying high (300 m!) and the foraging habits of some bats. This last involved some night tracking of bats carrying radio transmitters. Support by the CCC, visiting cavers and the Chillagoe National Parks and Wildlife Service was commended by the study team, especially on 'bat' watch evenings. Now the scientists have left (but they would like to return and probe questions raised in the work just finished) CCC continues to survey and document the growing list of tagged caves, ignoring many un-entered holes in an effort to keep the work load at realistic levels. Even some of the radio tagged bats were tracked to previously unknown caves.
- CTCG** This is a report of the group's activities from March to July, 1980. Wee Jasper has seen some activity over the last few months. A through trip was undertaken in Punchbowl Cave. This entailed ascending Loxin Wall and abseiling 17 m back into the entrance chamber. Very satisfying was the trip into Dogleg Cave. All the sumps in there were open this time, and most Canberra cavers paid a visit to it. The quality of the decoration impressed us all and the sumps were quite 'delightful'. Most of us kept at least one ear and one nostril dry. The Sandtrap in Dogleg however has to be entered with a great deal of commitment. At least three members suffered nightmares related to it. Deep into the cave, we met with two 'cavers' equipped only with handtorches. We assume they got out. At Yarrangobilly, a new gate and new locks have been installed in the Eagles Nest system. Further work has been discontinued in this cave until spring/summer, owing to the very cold temperatures, and dangerous ice formations. Surface explorations at Yarrangobilly centered on the Pine Forest area, although one day was spent in the Black Perry area. At Bendethera, the shorter days also curtailed exploration. The ridge containing Tricketts Pot is marked down for further exploration. However, as a 400m ascent over six kilometres through thick scrub is needed to reach this area, we are planning other avenues of attack, viz. a 400 m descent over one kilometre. Windlass Pot was descended and earned a reputation as an eater of Bluewater rope. More rope protectors needed. Wyanbene was given another outing. This one was about 13 hours duration. Ten members attended the CRG weekend at Bungonia. One disturbing incident in this exercise arose when they were involved in a real rescue. High CO<sub>2</sub> levels were encountered by a group in Argyle Hole while on a rescue exercise. CTG members were involved in a surface exercise, but were asked to assist, when problems were encountered in Argyle Hole. On descending, the rescuees were found to be suffering badly from the CO<sub>2</sub>, and a hurried exit was arranged before the rescuers succumbed too. Members of CTCG, CSS and NUCC gathered by Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin in May for the annual BBQ. With pleasant weather, squadrons of frisbees and no caves, it was a most enjoyable day.
- ISS** Dave Dicker reports that the society has mounted another very successful Kimberley trip. This year, the aims were to carry out further surveying and recording in two areas: around Cave Springs and in the western end of Napier Range. At Cave Springs, many of the smaller caves were surveyed, recorded and photographed. Mimbi (ex-Upper Cave Springs) has been extended to some eight kilometres- including grikes. In the western Napier



DOWN UNDER ALL OVER (Cont.)

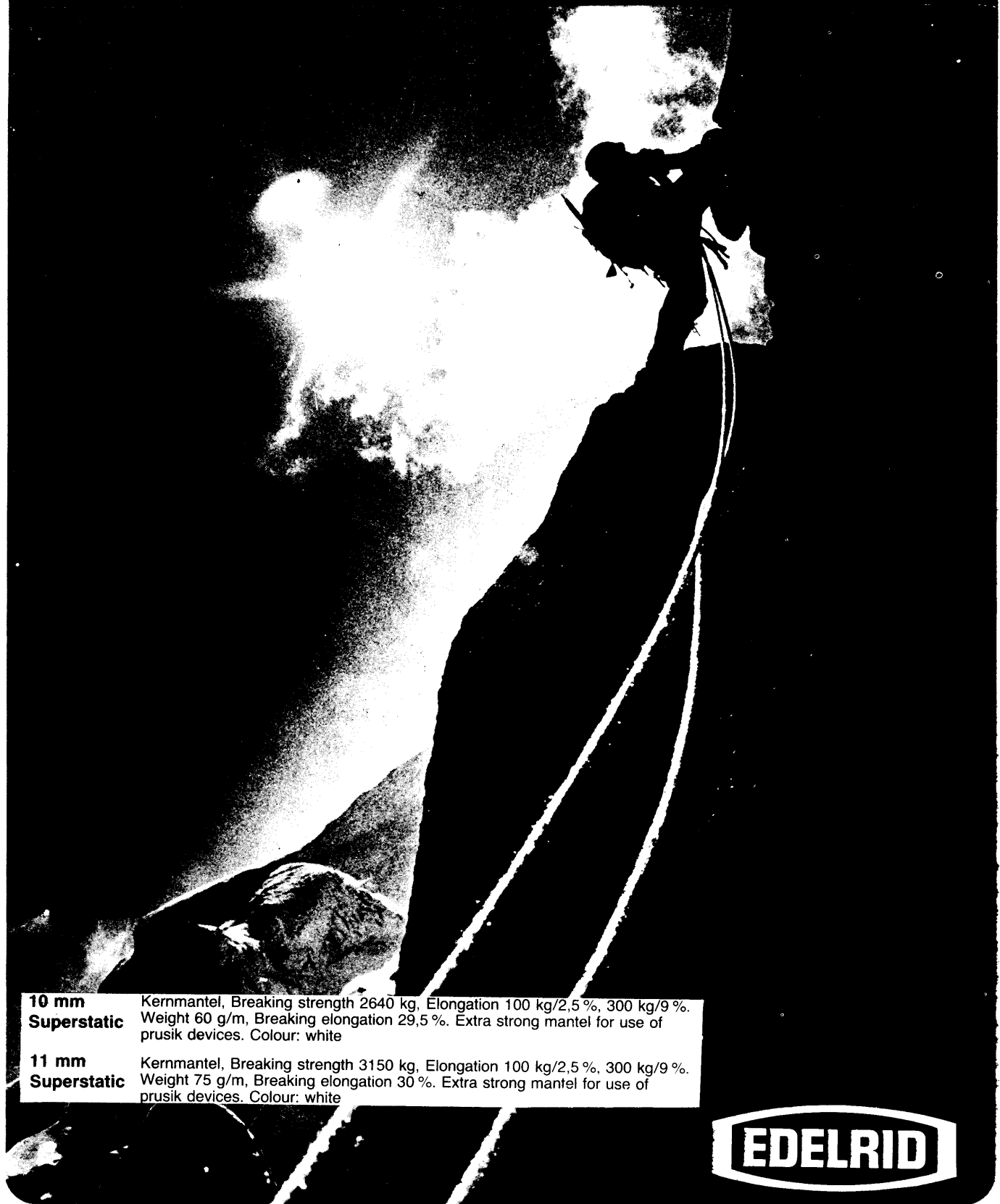
Range, less spectacular results were obtained. Some photography was carried out in Barnet Springs Cave and Old Napier Downs Cave, and the Range behind Barnet Springs Cave was investigated without conclusive results. The way home was via the Gibb River Road, Kununurra, Katherine and Central Queensland. The Newsletter covering the 1979 and 1980 Expeditions should be out soon. Plans are now afoot for the 1982 Kimberley Expedition for April/May. Anyone interested should contact the society. This may be a 4WD trip only, as the wet season may intervene. The society has been active at Jenolan- two stream gauges are now in the Southern Limestone. The society is also involved in a dig in J 46, which appears promising. Several trips have been taken to Wyabene, mainly as introductory trips for Venturer groups. Plans are in train to resurrect the 'Gunbarrel Balloon' equipment, this time using 35 mm colour film. The Lake Frustration submarine project hasn't yet eventuated owing to many other commitments.

- KSS Philip Holberton reports that the Kempsey Speleological Society has had more activity since making the last Sunday in each month a definite 'trip' day. UQSS warned the society that a slim caver could squeeze past the gate into Coorumbene Cave. This was rectified by cementing an iron bar and rocks in the gap and now 'a small grub would have trouble squeezing past'. Visits were made on the same day to Carrai Bat Cave and abseiling practice was had on the Natural Arch. Trips have been taken twice to Willi Willi, relocating a number of caves on the south side of Mt. Pleasant, including the Possum Cave. They intend to go again soon, as several caves are still 'missing'. The new owners of Sebastopol, Lyn and David Collett, have joined the society. They came with us to Willi Willi, and on the September trip went to Sebastopol with us, and found several small new caves near the house. There's a lot more trogging to be done below the cliffs. Now is a good time, as the lantana is dry and brittle from the drought.
- NUCC The year thus far has been less active than usual, but still fruitful. Trips have been held to Wyabene, Coolemon, Narrengullen, Bungonia and Wee Jasper. The highlight of Wee Jasper was several trips beyond the sumps and the Sandtrap in Dogleg Cave. This region is only accessible in rare and very dry periods. It contains some superb helictites and great quantities of glorious gloopy mud. The winter also saw the publication of another *Speleograffiti* concentrating on the previous summer's Tasmanian trip.
- SCS The major accomplishment has been the discovery of a link between JF 210 (Sesame 1) and JF 211 (Sesame 11) by the Eberhard brothers - Stefan and Rolan. The breakthrough happened in early September, when a slight squeeze in Sesame 1 was followed into a rubble strewn chamber. A low crawl leads from this chamber to a chamber of Sesame 11. Although Stefan reports that the alternate route through Sesame 1 bypasses three of the pitches in JF 211, it cannot be recommended as it involves strenuous and time-consuming work hauling the gear through the awkward crawls. An attempt was recently made to survey the link between Georgies Cave and Dangerous Cave. However, high water levels thwarted the exercise. The recent discovery of this link has caused some attention to be paid to the Mole Creek system and some exploratory work is planned for the summer. The Mole Creek system, principally Honeycomb Cave and Embryo Cave was the focus (not for exploration) but of a large search and rescue exercise held on 20-21 September. The exercise was attended by several caving clubs, the Police Search and Rescue Unit, the Ambulance Rescue Squad and WICEN, an amateur radio group, who are at present experimenting with underground to surface communication.
- SUSS 1980 activity has so far centered around Jenolan, with the new President, Mike Lake, leading numerous trips. At present the exploration of Spider Cave is continuing, but no new major discoveries have been made. New knowledge of the position of part of the Underground River has inspired many ventures into some rarely visited caves (and assorted wombat holes). Trips have also been made to Coolemon. The last two months have seen a concentration of effort towards a display for the University Open Day, 26 July. SRT and laddering demonstrations were made. In addition, photographic presentations were made of Spider Cave, the Atea Expedition and other major caving ventures. Items of speleological hardware were displayed to the public. With Open Day over, SUSS looks forward to a more subterranean second half of 1980.

DOWN UNDER ALL OVER (Cont.)

- TCC New members abound in TCC at the moment, with more appearing at every meeting and consequently enthusiasm is running high. Caving skills training and easier trips are taking precedence over most other activities, however 'normal' trips are still going. Surface surveying of the Junee Ridge is well underway, with a most impressive map being drawn up by Diana Davies. The completion of this project in the near future will enable a much more systematic approach to the task of finding more caves in this area. Not that TCC needs to find any more at the moment! A recent trip to Trapdoor Swallet, near Growling Swallet, has, after eight years of trying, broken through the boulder collapse and given access to the system proper. If the size of the stream is any indication, this could turn out to be a significant system. Another trip to the Chairman is planned for late September, to push exploration further downstream, have a look upstream and do a little more surveying. The annual statewide Search and Rescue workshop at Mole Creek was most successful and interesting. A recent injury to one member in Pillingers Creek Cave (JF 66) has highlighted the danger of rockfall in many of Tasmania's caves, and this particular cave has a 'black ban' placed on it (voluntary). A caver trapped under fallen rocks would be in dire straits indeed with rescue being very difficult and dangerous for all concerned. Trips are planned later in the year for Mt. Anne area (general 'look around') and further exploration of the Marble Hill area above Exit Cave, Ida Bay following on from Gordon Taylor's work at the beginning of the year.
- WASG Rauleigh Webb reports on the period from June to August, 1980. WASG has had rather diverse activities during this period. The club has been entertained at meetings by talks given by Mike Martyn on his various caving exploits, Tony O'Connell on Harwood Hole in New Zealand, Ken Lance on the Kimberleys, Dr. Stewart Peck on cave fauna and Rauleigh Webb on work in the Easter-Jewel System. On the caving scene, Rob Capon's survey of Winjans Cave is going very well with the last trip finding a new extension. Meanwhile, the Easter Cave survey has passed the 7.3 km mark and is now the third longest in Australia. Ken Lance has been on long service leave for the last six months and has been caving all over the place. He has spent the last month (August) or so in the Kimberleys and has collaborated with Simon Jolly and Greg Williamson to produce a numbering system for this area. This is to be published in the next *Western Caver*. The Cape Caverneers are a small but active group of cavers based in Exmouth. Their work in this area has already produced several new caves. In August, Ev Tulp, Greg Clarke and Rauleigh Webb paid them a visit for a week and several more new caves were added to the list. These included Tetra Dome Cave which was high in CO<sub>2</sub> and contains an undescended pitch. One other cave had a 37 m pitch but, as is usual in this area, blocked off at that depth. A recent trip to Eneabba found that UNIWA Cave was full of water from the Stockyard Gully, and was sumped at only 100 m from the entrance.
- SUSS (later entry) SUSS members have not been directing all their recent efforts toward the subterranean. Several successful skiing trips were held during winter. (At one point it was suggested that SUSS stood for 'Sydney University Social Skiers!'). A number of 'authentic' caving trips have been held, primarily to Jenolan. Mike Lake organized an interstate trip to Buchan during August. A small sandstone cave at Balmain has been surveyed- Aureoles Cave- total length 7 m. The Speleosports held at MUSIG headquarters on 23 August were very successful for SUSS- first and second in the team event. The CUSS (Combined Universities Speleo Societies) Dinner held on 26 September was enjoyed by all. John Dunkley gave a 'smashing' speech. He accidentally knocked a window pane into the street below.

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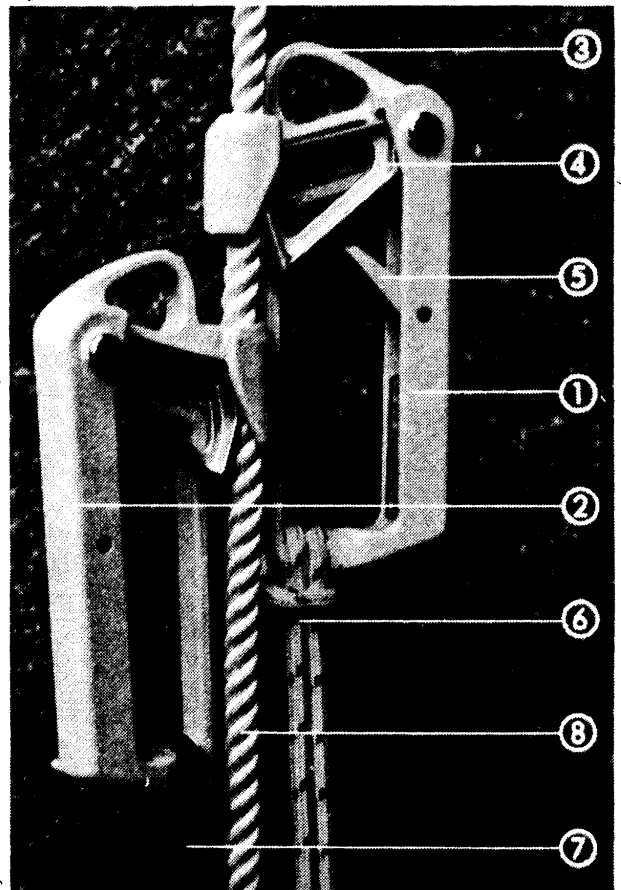


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