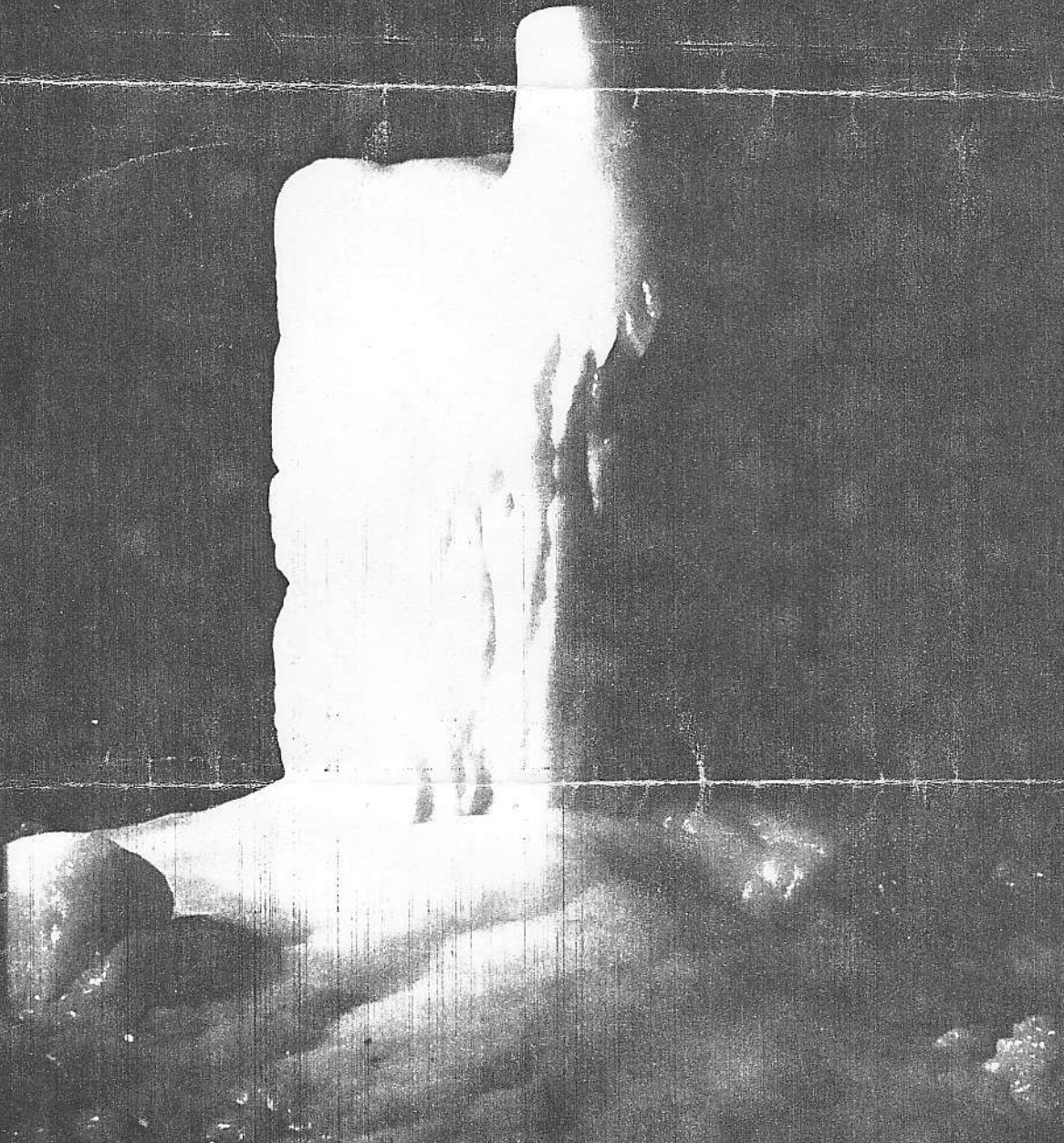


SPELEOGRAFFITI 16,2



Tasmania provides undoubtedly the deepest, longest and amongst the most sporting and beautiful caves in Australia. Its other great attraction for the caver is the vast untapped potential for new caves.

It was to enjoy the vertical, sporting caving and the hope of finding new caves that attracted a group of NUCC cavers to Tasmania over the 79-80 Summer Holidays. The plan was to stay for almost 2 months, and not only the best of Tas caves but some original ones as well as Steven Kaiser and Lawrence McCook Taylor, John Briggs and Tim Rudman as well as Steven Kaiser and Lawrence McCook for some of the time.

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C R E D I T S

Editor	- Gordon Taylor
Typing	- Sports Union
Cover	- A stalagmite, Eastern Grand Fissure, Exit Cave Tasmania by Tim Rudman

The following weekend, Brian D. Stuart W., and Dave Southgate followed 341 and tied in with the two existing surveys. The big pitch was taped at 38.2 metres free hanging. The main level was surveyed to the second to last chamber. A lot of surveying remains to be done. Rock bolting around the

TASMANIA 1979-1980

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THE JUNEE-FLORENTINE

In total almost 2 weeks was spent in the Junee-Florentine. This is the mecca of Australian vertical cavers and boasts the deepest cave in Australia, Khâzad-dum. Whilst there we enjoyed the comparative comfort of the TCC hut near the Junee Resurgence, and were assisted by local TCC caver Max Jeffries. Caves visited included JF 341, The chairman, Khâzad-dum (via Dwarrawdelf), Junee Resurgence and Dead Horse Cave.

JF 341

Only located in May 1979 by TCC. JF 341 revealed itself to be the find of the year. Not only did it prove to be deep (147.8m and still going) but both extensive, and having some very unique and beautiful formation and an exhilarating 38m pitch.

The following history of exploration is extracted from Speleo-Spiel #157.

HISTORY OF JF-341

1. The partially blocked entrance to 341 was found on an exploration trip by a party composed of G. Fisher, C. & D. Davies and S. Feeney on 26th May, 1979. (See Spiel 148)
2. On 4th August, with the addition of S. Nicholas to the original party, the first trip into the cave was made. Exploration to a depth of approx. 70 metres. (See Spiel 150)
3. A further trip on 8th September gained another 10 metres and found "the big pitch". (See Spiel 150)
4. The 14th October saw the first attempt on the pitch and failure with Geoff hanging off the ladder about three quarters of the way down (or a quarter of the way up). This resulted in a rest for 341 while the prospective explorers developed single rope techniques. (See Spiel 151)
5. The NUCC trip about the beginning of 1980 bottomed the cave and began the survey of the main level. The big pitch was estimated to be 200 feet. The full extent of the cave was not determined although NUCC was very thorough.
6. The first SRT trip for TCC was on 17th February, 1980 with Nick Hume, Geoff Fisher and Chris Davies. The cave was bottomed (we think) and the fabled crystal pool described by NUCC was seen but not crossed despite ideas of floating across. Diana did some solo surveying in the upper section, and Stuart had a wog in his stomach and stayed in his car all day.
7. The following weekend, Diana D., Stuart N., and Dave Southgate bottomed 341 and tied in with the two existing surveys. The big pitch was taped at 38.2 metres free hanging. The main level was surveyed to the second to last chamber. A lot of surveying remains to be done. Rock bolting around the

JF 341

Plan

Scale 1:500



0 5 10m

Survey Grade ASF 5.2

Present Survey Length 367.2m

12/79 G.Taylor et al NUCC

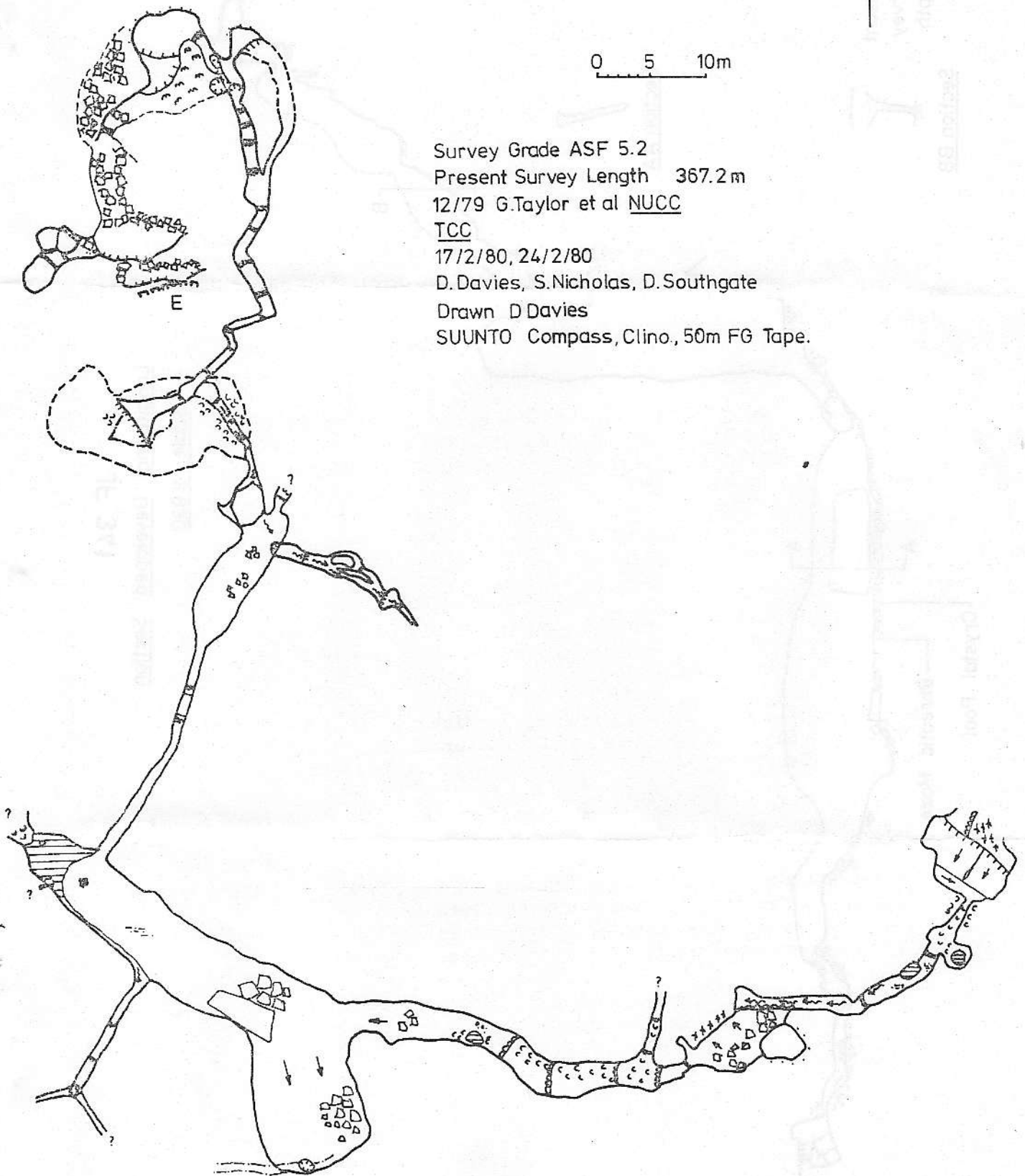
TCC

17/2/80, 24/2/80

D.Davies, S.Nicholas, D.Southgate

Drawn D Davies

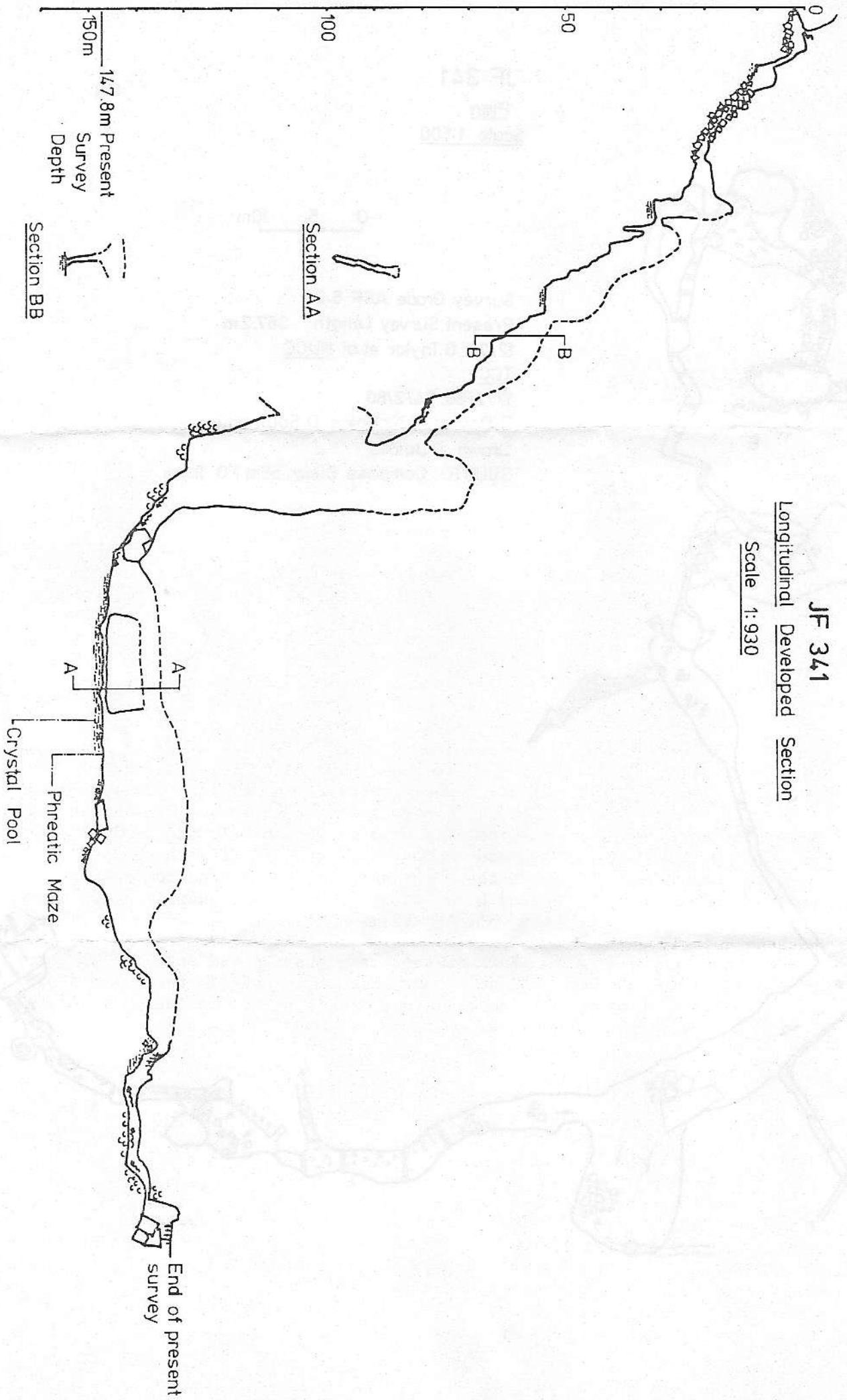
SUUNTO Compass, Clino., 50m FG Tape.



JF 341

Longitudinal Developed Section

Scale 1:930



pool was declared "not on". Diana drew up the plan of the developed section on the accompanying pages, using both TCC surveys and some NUCC information kindly sent by Gordon Taylor.

Hopefully, when we have reclaimed the scaling pole from Exit, we can cross the crystal pool or at least reach a rift in the wall half way around the pool. Yet another rift hasn't been looked at and the chamber of the big pitch requires further exploration.

G. Fisher, D. & C. Davies

When visited by NUCC a very fast, low grade survey was done of the known cave. Subsequent trips by TCC accurately surveyed the cave. The accompanying maps are a result of both these surveys. They originally appeared in Speleo-Spiel #157.

THE NUCC EXPLORATION

With tales of a vertical cave, with an unbottomed 200' pitch we made JF 341 our first objective. After arriving at Maydena the day before, we were finally at a cave entrance. We started our descent of the cave, the chance of unexplored cave through all our minds. We reached the unbottomed 200' pitch, and descended it post haste. At the bottom we explored a small chamber. However much to our annoyance, our lights began to dim and ascent proved necessary. Gordon ascended the pitch last, and whilst waiting for the others to ascend, explored further to a T-junction with a large chamber.

Two days later we returned to 341 with high hopes. They were not to be dampened. We quickly descended getting to the bottom of the main pitch in short time. Unexplored cave lay before us. Surveying as we went, the previously seen T-junction with a large cavern was soon reached. To the right the way was blocked by a 20' x 20' pool of water. Wading across it was prevented, the pool being completely lined with fine crystals. No way was available around the wall either. The pool trickled over a gour edge into a tantalizing rift beyond. There was no lack of cave to explore though. To the right the cave continued. The main chamber soon split into two. The righthand passage soon came to an end, but a hole in the floor gave access to a narrow passage, but progress along this was halted by a curtain of delicate shaws. Next a rift which had been passed on the wall of the main chamber, was explored. The passage quickly changed to a phreatic maze. It was decided to suspend the survey and simply explore. Each of the leads was checked until it blocked off. False floors abounded, and in one chamber, a hole in the false floor revealed a forest of straws from ceiling to false floor. A connection with the previously explored straw blocked passage was also found.

Having exhausted the possibilities in the maze we emerged into the main chamber and continued the exploration of its left hand branch. Expecting it to block off at any moment, instead the passage went on and on upwards. At one point a side passage lead to the bottom of a 150' oven. The main passage went on revealing a section with superb straws. Siddling past these we went on. Finding ourselves in a low section, with a flowstone covered floor. This opened out and by climbing a short flowstone pitch we found ourselves in the pre-eminent chamber of the cave. Before us was a chamber hung with the most delicate of straws, all exceedingly long, with some up to 20' in length. Most resplendent of all was a straw 12' long growing from the floor. Just 1cm away another straw grew from the ceiling, the two overlapping about 3cm. It is thought a straw previously joining ceiling and floor had been broken by an earth movement and miraculously stayed in place.

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From the chamber the way on was up a very steep flowstone wall. It presented a difficult climb and as time was running out we decided to beat a retreat. A rough survey was done as we did so. On the way out we almost came to grief. Gordon and Tim ascended the main pitch safely. However on his way up, John, to his dismay discovered an unprotected rub point some 20' from the top, had abraided the rope through to the core. Returning to the homestead, we were tired but jubilant.

The Chairman

This was a pre-arranged trip with Stuart Nicholas of TCC in an effort to get some more surveying done in the cave. Stuart arrived at the ungodly hour of 8 am on Sat. morning, to not surprisingly find us still in bed. Eventually we got going, driving around through the ANM gate and up to the track turn-off, followed by a brisk walk to "The Chairman." The entrance is one of those which will stick in your mind for a long time. It is essentially a large doline which drops straight down into a 260' pitch. However it may be broken into 2 by tying off 90' down on a sloping ledge. It must rate as one of the most splendid entrances in Australia. This first pitch of 260' is followed by 50', 120' and 40' pitches before the streamway is reached. The 50' pitch is as nasty as they come. The top of the pitch involves a very tight vertical squeeze through a tight rift. Not recommended for the more rotund caver. At the bottom we had a welcome feed before proceeding along the horizontal streamway to the end of the survey. Crawling through much rockpile, this section is particularly obnoxious. The track is marked with blue tape almost to the limit of exploration. We could find the rough end of the survey but not the exact point. Picking a readily discernable point we surveyed to the limit of exploration. The surveying was a cold and miserable task. It is not hard to understand why exploration has stopped. Not only is the getting there fortuous but the end is in very unstable rockpile. Feeling tired and cold we proceeded out of the cave, to reach the surface just on dark at 9.30. The long walk back to the car followed, and by this time it was raining. We arrived back at the hut at 2 in the morning having spent 9 hours in the cave. Snow was falling on the surrounding peaks.

KHAZAD-DUM

We descended this deepest of Australian caves on a subsequent return trip to the Junee-Florentine. Having been involved in an incident in the cave the previous year I felt the Dwarrow-dwelf route was more suited to our small party. This route involves the descent of the cave by pitches of 70' 90' 180' 120' 220' length. They came one after the other providing a quick descent. As well Dwarrowdwelf is dry, except for a trickle of water on the final 200' pitch. In contrast on the main route down K.D. one has to contend with a river. The pitches require a lot of rope protectors, rub points being all too numerous. As well bolt brackets are required. We reached the bottom okay, and had lunch before going on and looking at both of the sumps. The ascent of the cave is a little less speedy, even our party of three taking an exceptionally long time. We emerged from the cave just on dark at 8.30. We felt pleased having done the deepest and one of the best SRT caves in Australia.

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IDA BAY (Exit, Entrance, Mini Martin, etc.)

Approximately 100 miles south of Hobart, the area consists of a large hill (Cave Hill) of limestone. On the west side, Mystery Creek disappears underground forming Entrance Cave. The creek reappears in Exit Cave on the east side of the hill. Exit Cave is Australia's longest, having over 17 Kilometres of known passage. It contains the world's best glow-worm display, massive passages, a delightful river and immaculate formation, both large and small. Up on Cave Hill many shafts penetrate the hill. Only one of these, Mini-Martin, had been explored. Mini-Martin was only once descended in 1967, at the time making it the deepest in Australia. The potential was obvious, numerous undescended shafts existing on the hill.

Exit, Conference Concourse

We left on Sunday, Bruce McIntosh driving us down. Carrying a pack each of gear we needed in the next day or so, we walked into the Exit entrance. This was to be our camp site for the next week. After lunch we entered Exit. Bruce was with us also. On the way through we admired the glow-worms, visited the Ballroom, and proceeded through the rockpile. Then it was on up to the Eastern Grand Fissure, and hence along to Conference Concourse, travelling to the end. From there we returned to the entrance, arriving back at 9.30pm having spent 8½ hours in the cave. The three of us set up our camp beside the river, Bruce walking out to his car for his return to Hobart.

Exit Hill - The Monday saw us walk out to the road to get the rest of our gear and meet Albert Goode. Albert was on the first and only trip down Mini-Martin some 13 years before. He was one of the few people who knows his way around on the Hill. Having all walked into the camp, we set out to refind the track over the Hill. First blazed some 21 years before as an access to Exit Cave, and last used 13 years ago on the first descent of Mini-Martin. Although finding the blazes was nowhere as difficult as we had expected, recutting the track was still a cumbersome and time consuming exercise. The bush on Exit Hill is particularly dense and entangling. At one point below the knoll we lost the track. Hacking on through the bush we found an entrance which was later to be tagged with temporary tag 1000. Having had lunch on the knoll we went on along the saddle marking the track with marking tape as we went. The old track was soon refound, and another cave entrance passed (#1001). The lowest narrow point of the saddle was soon reached. A doline to the south was investigated to no avail. The track went on up a long slippery log and whilst traversing it Albert slipped, smashing his glasses into his face in the fall. This smashed one of the lenses and swelled his eye. Consequently he decided to turn back - Gordon accompanying him out to his car. John and Tim went on a short distance, passing several holes before returning.

Tuesday saw us once again up on the hill, carting up ropes, tagging entrances and improving the track. The limit of the previous day was gained, entrances being tagged with temporary numbers 1002, 1003 and 1004. We cut on to a large rift filled with logs. This had been located on the Mini-Martin trips and had temporary number 1b-X8 (Mathews 1979). We tagged with the number 1B-7. From here we walked up to the contact with the non-limestone cover rock, following it along. Steam was sighted downslope, and upon investigation proved to be the entrance of Mini-Martin. The Mini-Martin entrance must rate as one of the most awe inspiring in Australia. Great clouds of steam continually rise out of the entrance, as if the earth itself is breathing. Our stomachs were in our mouths as we tepidly peered over the edge into the gloom of the 360' free hanging first pitch. Using a prominent tree as a fixture, the cave was tagged 1B-8. On our return to camp we marked the way down to the main track, marking the junction also.

Wednesday was our day of the descent of Mini-Martin. We speedily climbed the hill to the entrance, but on arrival Gordon found his light was not working. Not to be put off by this, Gordon returned to camp to fix it whilst the others looked at other entrances and had lunch. Upon Gordon's return, John was just preparing to go over the lip. With adrenalin pumping through us we abseiled down the exhilarating 360' free drop. The bottom was littered with loose logs and rocks. Next came a 135' pitch followed immediately by an 80' pitch bringing into Exit Cave. Daylight could be seen at the top of the 80' pitch some 500' deep in the earth. With jubilation and a sense of relief we scrambled down to the Exit river.

Tim decided to go out through Exit whilst John and Gordon SRT'ed out the shaft, Mini-Martin's first ascent. Even for only 2 people prusick out was a slow affair, although the free hanging pitches made the ascent technically easy. Leaving all the rope in a messy pile at the entrance John and Gordon descended the hill to meet Tim at camp.

Having descended Mini-Martin, the Thursday was spent on other nearby holes. In fact Big Tree Pot occupied our attention for the full day. Previously numbered IB-X1 (Mathews 1979), but unexplored, we placed the permanent tag IB-9 at the entrance. In contrast to Mini-Martin the entrance was small. Tim descended first, the initial pitch being \approx 100' with a slight twist. Gordon followed. The next pitch was 50' with a tie off around an enormous pillar. This was followed by a 40' pitch. A tie off here was hard to find, finally a knob 15' up was located and used. Next came another 40' pitch with a hairy tie of low down. The rope was tied back to previous pitch for safety. A shallow pool greeted us at the bottom. This used up the last of the rope Tim and I had brought down. From the pool a fissure went on down. A short way along it a climb was encountered, down which the end of the rope was lowered. Gordon climbed down the 15' and continued along the fissure. A small chamber was encountered followed by a $\frac{1}{2}$ m wide fissure in the floor with gloom below. Dropping a rock down, Gordon waited for the sound of impact. Some 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ secs later it came giving a pitch of about 230'. Thus some 275' down we find ourselves at the top of a pitch which may be as much as 330' deep. This would give the cave a total depth of at least 600', and make it the 7th or 8th deepest cave in Australia (see Goede 1980). With this depth the cave is almost certainly another shaft into Exit. We returned to the surface excited by our find but unable to go deeper due to lack of rope. On the return to camp, #1000 and #1001 were checked out but both blocked off 30' down.

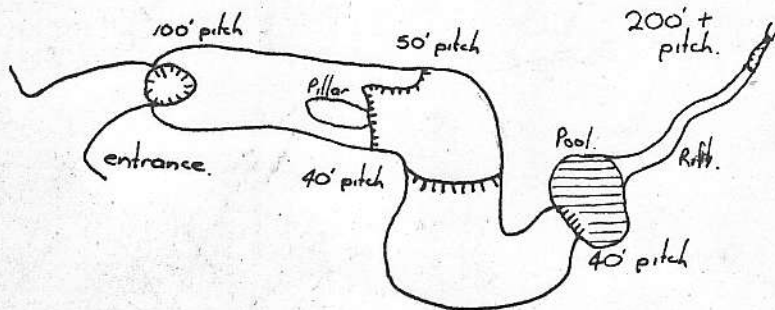
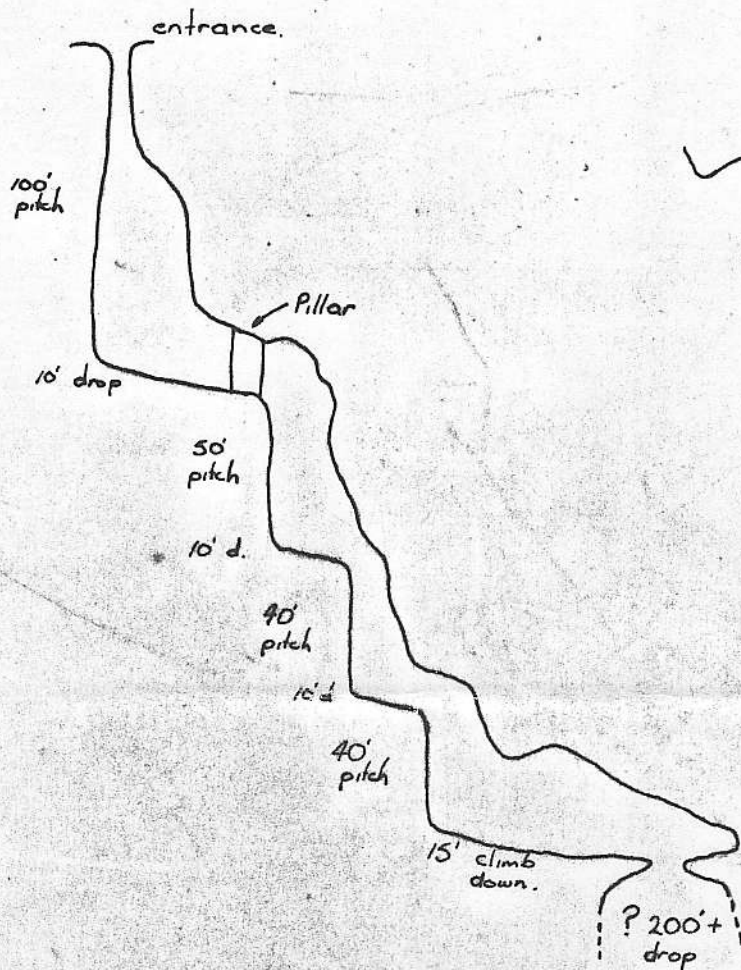
Exit revisited

The next 2 days, Fri and Sat, saw us return to Exit, camping overnight at Camp 2. Leaving at 12.30 pm on the Fri we travelled to Camp 2 with our packs stopping off at the Collonades and Ballroom along the way, and taking the almost compulsory photograph of the pendulum. Having set up camp and had lunch we went and photographed Eddies Treasure, using carbide lights to illuminate many shots. We then returned once again to Conference Concourse, Gordon and Tim returning to Camp photographing as they went, and John poking around in the Concourse rockpiles before returning. Having had a rather full day we returned, experiencing the eerie total darkness of cave camping.

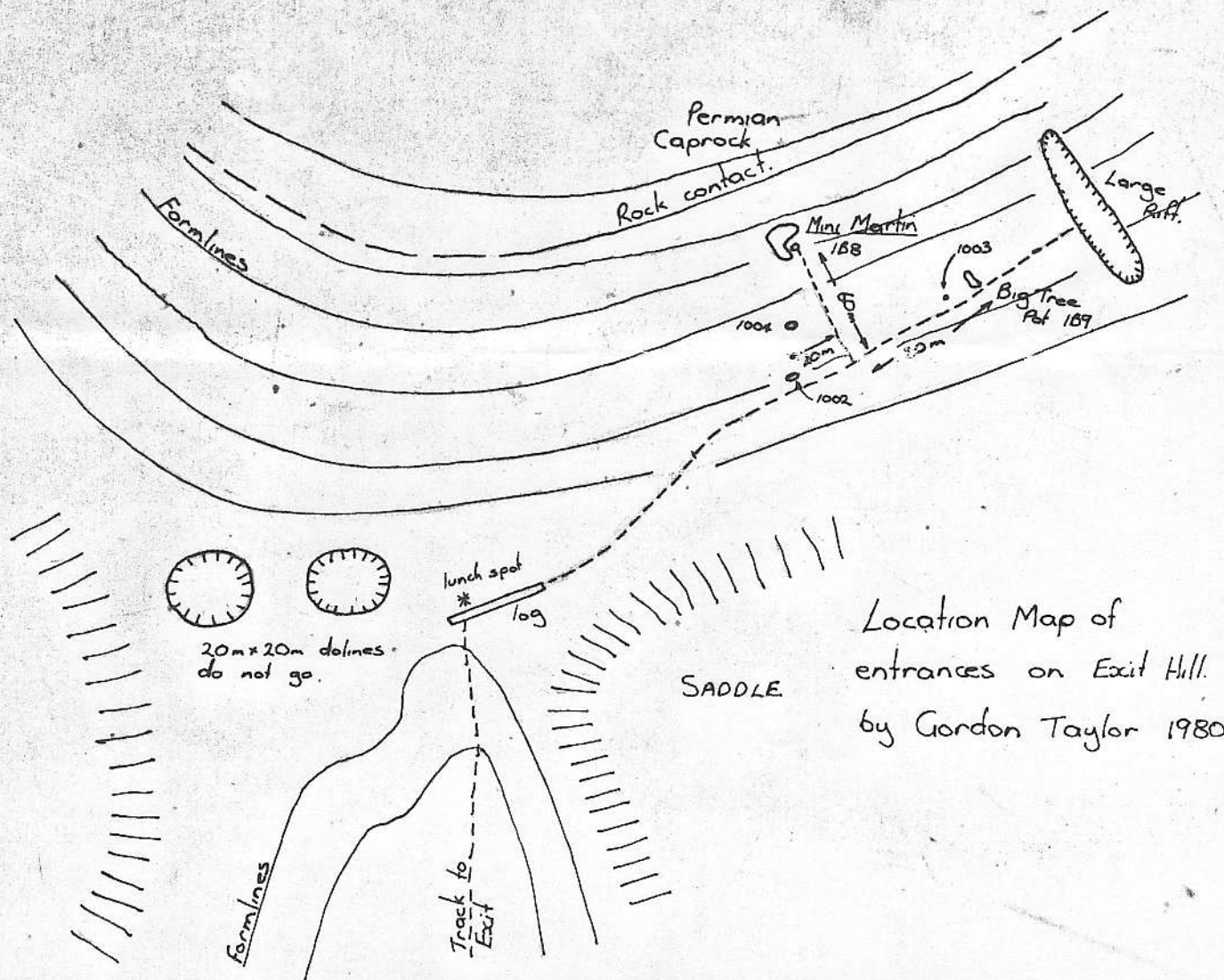
Upon our awakening, we packed up and then went and took further photos in Eddies Treasure before proceeding out. The river was up from rain, so we got a bit wet and needed to use the high level log bridge, arriving at the entrance at 5.30 pm. The following day we walked out to be met by Bruce, our transport back to Hobart.

Entrance

Bruce McIntosh lead us on a one day trip to Entrance just before we left for the Cracroft. It proved an interesting cave, and as well provided some good photographs. Also of interest was the glow-worm display, not as impressive as Exit's but still spectacular.



Memory Scetch of Big
Tree Pot (189). by Tim
Rudman Jan 1980
Drawn Gordon Taylor Aug
1980.



Location Map of
entrances on Exit Hill.
by Gordon Taylor 1980

CRACROFT - A BRIEF REPORT

The following is only a brief account of the trip. A comprehensive report, including maps will appear in the near future in one of the Australian Speleological Journals. (ASF Newsletter).

The trip was actually the TCC annual trip, which we tagged along on. As well as John Briggs, Tim Rudman and Gordon Taylor, Lawrence McCook and Steven Ralser from NUCC also came along. Dave and Jill Gillieson from UQSS were also on the trip. In all 7 days were spent in the area. The first day being solely taken up with the walk in. Normally only a four hour trip for a fit bushwalker, it took us nearer six. This was in part due to the heavy nature of our packs. As well as carrying food and camping gear for a week, we also had our caving gear including overalls, helmets, lights and surveying gear. To top it all off we took along some vertical gear including SRT rigs, ropes (100', 120', 40') and ladders. Upon arrival we set up our camp for the week, along side the river emerging from Judd's Cavern.

The next day saw our first caving in the area. Dave and Jill were shown through Matchlight before breakfast by Albert Goede, who then walked out, only having come for 2 days. That day we split into 2 groups. One group surveyed the previously known Skull Cave, whilst the other group, re-marked and improved the Red Route, a track blazed by a previous expedition. The survey was completed that day, but we failed to find the remainder of the thylacine skeleton which Albert had asked us to collect. (The skull had already been removed hence the cave name).

On the third day, we once again split into 2 groups. One group went and explored entrances adjacent to the Red Route. This proved to be to no avail as all the entrances were shafts blocked by rubble about 40' down. The second group travelled along the buttongrass plain and then headed up onto the hill in search of King Billy Hole. Instead they found a long rift going up the hill. It contained several very promising holes all of which needed vertical gear to descend.

The following day we all concentrated our attention on a cave, then known as 4 tape cave (now named Icebox cave). On the way there we joined the Red Route up with the main Farmhouse Ck track. Icebox was originally explored by TCC, and it was our intention to fully explore and survey the cave. The cave was the longest cave we mapped in during the trip, the end being blocked by a sump. The name was due to the very cold draught in the cave. Several very long side passages were also discovered.

Day 5, proved to be most fruitful. One group returned to the previously discovered rift. The first of the promising entrances was descended, via a 40' entrance pitch. The cave opened out into one very large rift chamber. To reach the bottom of the chamber we had to abseil down a further 40'. A small passage lead off from the bottom but soon terminated. The cave was named Calcified Crypt due to the large number of skeletons. On returning to the surface we met the second group who had surface surveyed around from Icebox, having been unable to finish the Icebox survey because of light failure.

The next entrance was one for which we originally had high hopes but which proved to be disappointing. The original optimism was due to a strong draught coming from the cave. The cave turned out to be a series of 4, 5, and 12m pitches in a narrow rift. This put one at the base of a 12m pitch with the passage leading on above. Halted there we went on to the next entrance. This looked promising from the start, the entrance being a 27m pitch. This descended into a large domed chamber. A passage lead from here past some large breakdown blocks, to a good sized phreatic cave. In 2 places a small creek could be seen but not

followed. The cave consists of a main phreatic passage from which other side passages emanate, most ascending to a rockpile blocked end. All up some 300m of passage was found.

Our last full day at the Cracroft saw the completion of the survey's of the cave in the rift and of Icebox. On our return to camp we visited Judd's followed by a massive feast of all our left over food. The next day, a Tuesday, we walked out to Farmhouse Creek, thus finishing a most enjoyable and productive 7 days in the Cracroft.

MOLE CREEK

This was the tourist trip of our stay in Tasmania. We went there to finish off our stay. Four of us, Gordon, Tim, Lawrence and Steven went, John having already returned to Canberra. We hitched to Mole Creek in 2 groups, and arranged to meet on the River Mersey. Unfortunately Gordon and Tim got stranded and had to spend a night camped just out of Mole Creek. Whilst in Mole Creek Gordon visited the local National Parks Ranger to get a key for Croesus Cave. Unfortunately he proved to be an inept petty bureaucrat who would not give us a key unless we had club membership cards? The fact that I was president seemed of little import.

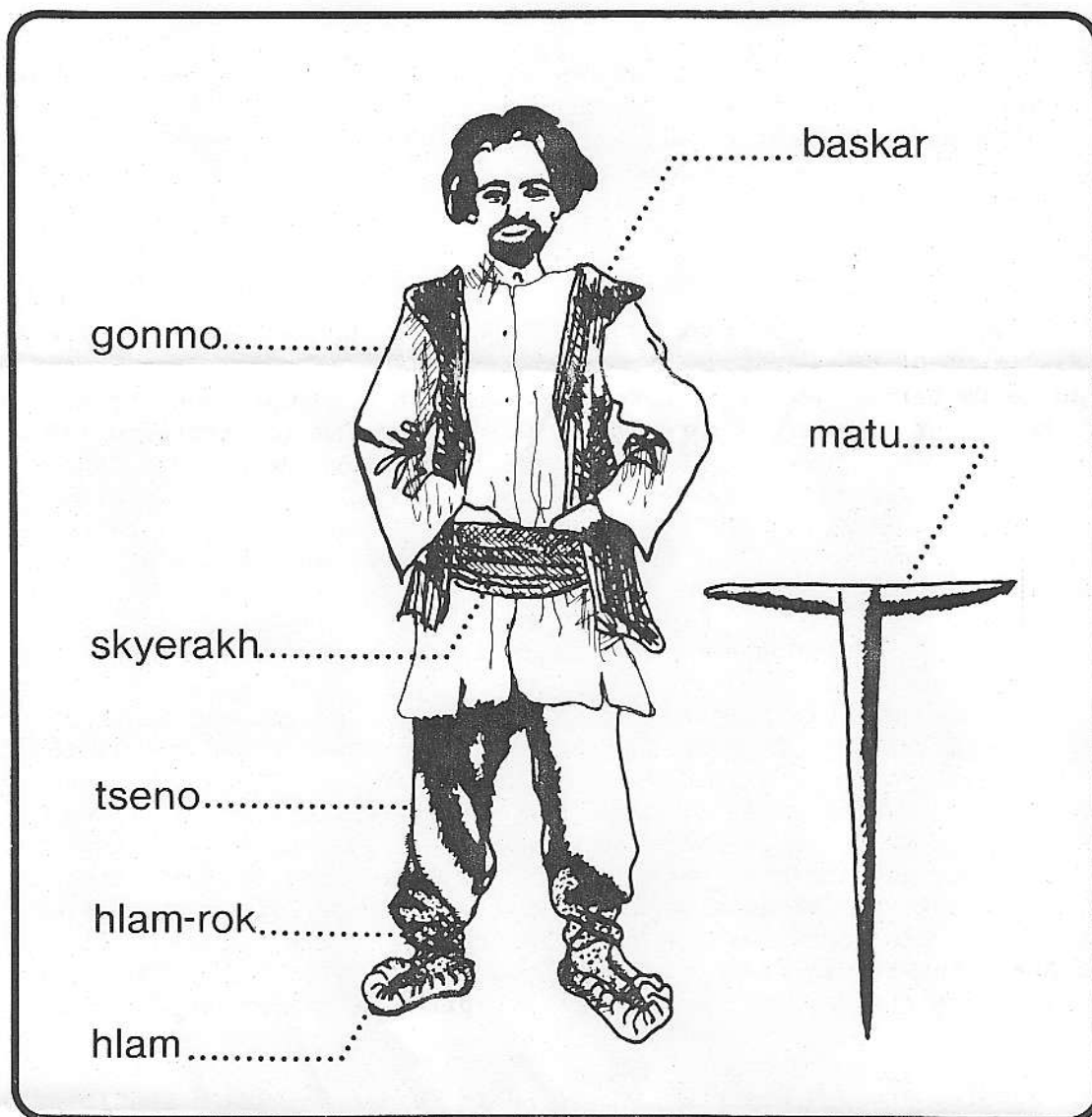
The following day Tim and Gordon made it to the Mersey, and all four of us strolled down the river to visit Lynd's Cave. This is an excellent stream cave, with a wet entrance followed by excellent long straws and razor thin shawls. That afternoon Bruce McIntosh arrived from Hobart and we all moved across to the Northern Caveneer's Hut. The next day we visited the ranger station, and learned that the Croesus gate had been forced and a key was not needed. In fact a couple of bars had been bent, so we had some fun negotiating the gate without getting wet. Once through the gate and a low wet entrance, the cave opens up into a 1 km long magnificent stream cave. The stream floor is lined with splendid gours for its whole length. We had planned to climb out the top entrance, but it was found to be not possible. After a look in a deep water section of the cave which ended in rockpile, we headed out the way we came.

The next morning Bruce dropped us off at Kubla Khan. We rigged the lower entrance and then descended the upper entrance. We then came across a further pitch which Gordon had forgotten about. Just as we were giving up we met up with some S.A. cavers, and using their gear we were able to continue on through the cave. They came in the opposite way, and we met in the pleasure dome. The prettiest cave in Australia was certainly a satisfying way to end our caving in Tasmania.

CLUB CONTACTS

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John Briggs and Tim Rudman - 34B Templeton Street, Cook Ph. 514950
Steven Ralser - 12 Dugan Street, Deakin.
Phone 813024

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