SPELEOVISION SPELEOSPORTS

INTRODUCTION

SPELEOVISION Speleosports emphasised observation, teamwork and safety. Entry was open to teams of A.S.F. members properly equipped for normal caving. Teams could be of any number and composition.

The campus of the Flinders University is laid out on three spurs running down to the Adelaide Plains. Interesting voids exist within the footings of many of the buildings. A steel arch footbridge spans a re-vegetated gully between the Registry area and the (residential) University Hall. The campus contains various bodies of water and of course the vital stormwater drains. With the cooperation of the Registrar and staff we were able to lay out a course using non-destructive adaptations of the architectural features together with several exotic artifacts. The course was triangular, with sides about 0.5km long, and consisted of nine stations. The construction of most of the stations on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, under the noses of some of the more observant of our fellow Australians, posed an interesting challenge.

THE STATIONS

1. TYRE SQUEEZE

The successful use of old tyres for artificial fish reefs seems to have created a market for otherwise useless objects. We were nevertheless able to assemble enough 165R-14's to build a traditional Ferrari-proof structure under the Library stairs. With suitable team-work, Coke bottles could be passed from one end to the other.

2. DUCKUNDER

The forecast warm weather for Speleosports gave us some problems in ensuring the personal comfort of team members. We decided on evaporative cooling using the reservoir provided in the Library Plaza. The duckunder was in sunlight. The more desperate team members could escape unharmed except for the loss of points.

3. CRAWL

Two bicycle racks lashed together formed a triangular tunnel with projections from the floor and the two walls. A piece of white paper on the floor showed wet footprints well. (Don't tread on the flowstone.) Added interest derived from the fact that one of the bicycle racks had seven stands, the other eight. Padding made safe two dangerous brackets without impairing the general awkwardness of the passage. Most teams passed gear, but this was very much a technical challenge for individuals.

4. CAVE SURVEY

Sports Centre Cave, recently re-discovered, contains one chamber developed as a tourist cave. Cavers gain access to a second chamber by lying on the right side before corkscrewing down a rubble slope beneath stalactites. The chamber contains magnificent columns, with interesting vadose elements in an aerial matrix. The maintenance engineer reports no recent surface stream activity. The management plan provides for supervision during the conference season by a surveyor of fearsome rigour, recently retired due to exhaustion of his wombat supply.

At the south-eastern corner of the second chamber, an awkward move gives access to a 40 metre side tunnel. A recent survey (Whitehouse et al., 1983) reports bats in this area, in contrast to the earliest known report (Grimsley et al., 1383), which refers to dragons. Dragons are known to have frequented caves from earliest times. They were in fact warm-blooded animals, as

MAP NO. 5 FULVSA90

ASF grade 4

5/1/83

SPELEO VISION

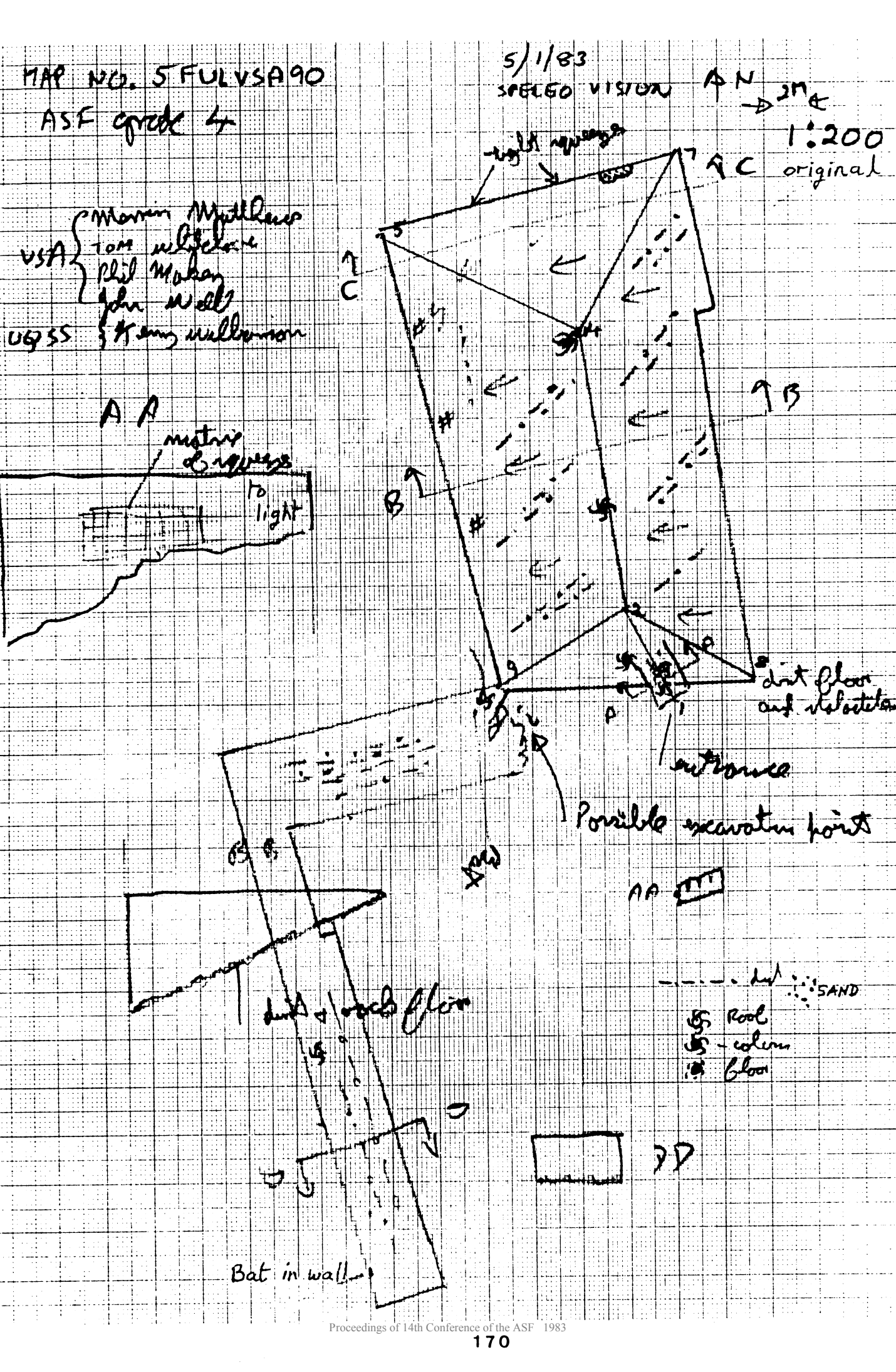
N 2m

1:200

original

USA { Marion Mullens
Tom Wheeler
Phil Mahan
John Wall

UGSS { Tony Wilkinson



evidenced by their incendiary exhalations. As a result of cooling and shrinkage in the moist atmosphere of the cave, dragons may well have evolved over the intervening period into the little creatures we know today as bats.

5. LADDER/ABSEIL ASCENT/DESCENT

The university footbridge afforded university staff and members of the general public (insured) an opportunity to see safe practice on simple vertical moves. The abseil was 20 metres, the ladder 8 metres. All teams except one chose to abseil down, and that exceptional team ascended by means of the ladder. As a consequence, the organisers were unable to award the special bonus points for the upward abseil.

6. ROCK TRAVERSE

A rockface ten metres long was traversable with one or two difficult moves. Performers varied, but few competitors were bothered by the potential fall of 0.5 metres. This station was the scene of an incident involving an armchair caver, reported below.

7. DIG

The dig consisted of a hollow log one metre in diameter and four metres long, with a somewhat larger chamber at one end. The floor rose to a prick-paved constriction in the middle, then fell away to a short flattener. Earth and rubble containing items of archaelogical significance blocked the constriction and part of the passage. Large tarpaulins excluded light from the chambers.

Initial excavation disclosed a small roof hole immediately above the constriction, from which fell, after the passage of each team, a similar quantity of earth and rubble, containing artifacts reminiscent of those already discovered. Teams earned points for organisation, diligence in searching for artifacts, and volume of rubble removed from the chamber. The dig was most successful. In the words of one team leader -- "You've go to be joking!"

8. EXPLORATION OF UNSURVEYED PHREATIC TUBES

From a rubble-faced wall at the end of the gully, parallel phreatic tubes then lead 40 metres to a chamber two metres square. The tubes exhibit intermittent stream activity, but were dry on the day of exploration. The stream exits the chamber in a single tube. Two metres downstream from the chamber a side tube (0.5 metres diameter) enters high on the wall of the main passage. The side tube can be followed 2.5 metres to a small earth-floored chamber, on the far side of which are two further tubes, only one of which can be entered.

Artifacts of several kinds occur in the small chamber, and each team was requested to search for artifacts of a specified kind. Artifacts of interest to other searchers were to be left undisturbed. Members thus had an opportunity to demonstrate to the management authority a responsible attitude to the rights of others. Most were exemplary.

Various groups have excavated at the site over a considerable period of time, and there has been no coordination of records. The A.S.F. map is probably the only one in existence.

9. FLOWSTONE CLIMB

A rare formation of translucent blue flowstone overlying a softer green laminar deposit. The slope is often subject to spray from an adjacent waterfall, and is difficult to climb in these circumstances. Some teams cooperated well without damage to the formation.

SPELEOSPORTS DAY

1. TEAMS

A.S.F. members fielded seven teams, a total of 25 people. The first team began at 1430 hrs. The last team finished 1830 hrs. The average time to complete the course was two hours. Teams scored points for observation, teamwork, care for the cave environment and safety in carrying

out the tasks.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

The relatively large size of the course had certain advantages, among them being the difficulty of collusion in the event of a group fielding more than one team. We were able to obtain five two-way radios which were invaluable in maintaining communications between the stations. One disadvantage of a course of this size is that spectators must necessarily travel around the course in much the same manner as competitors, although this can be useful to the organisers in cases where spectators are in fact undeclared members of teams.

3. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Tighter control of team starting times, as originally intended, would have prevented delays at the Sports Centre Cave, which was as expected the critical node in the system. This is particularly important where competitors are wet. We had a warm day.

The course time would have been shortened if stewards had issued written instructions to teams at each station. This might have removed the element of surprise which provides much of the fun and enables speleos to demonstrate their ingenuity.

More timely refreshments for competitors at the end of the course, and more transport back to hot showers, were fixable given more manpower.

RESULTS

1. The Carina Armchair Speleological Association

The four members representing this unique body bribed their way around the course in their customary manner, delighting spectators and corrupting the stewards. They began well, losing a large number of points at the first station as a result of improper equipment. Deck chairs are not proper armchairs.

There were however unfortunate lapses from the previous standard exhibited by the members of the Association. The first and most serious lapse occurred when the team actually entered the Sports Centre Tourist Cave, made observations of the second chamber and constructed a map of excellent quality which we have produced in evidence. In consequence, our steward was obliged under the rules to award a considerable number of points. The second reported lapse occurred at the rock traverse, where a team member was observed to walk across the top of the rockface carrying a deck chair. Since his feet actually touched a hold on the traverse, it was again our sad duty to award points.

Rosie Shannon, Henry Shannon, Janine Grimes, Ken Grimes, we thank you for your cheerful support.

2. The Kids

The four lads made good time through the course. They were properly belayed on the ladders, and breezed through the squeezes. In Sports Centre Cave they observed many features missed by others. At the Dig, they out-performed all other teams. They were well organised, fast, and took particular care in recording items of potential archaelogical significance.

Stephen White, Chris Matthews, Darryl Pierce, Craig Wilkinson -- a good effort.

3. Victorian Speleological Association (+ one UNQSS)

The V.S.A. team was notable throughout the whole course for good cooperation between team members, technical competence, safety, and care in passing delicate features. They proved themselves good observers and considerate of other teams on the course. They produced an excellent map of Sports Centre Cave and made an evaluation of tourist potential which will be invaluable in formulation of the management plan.

Tom Whitehouse, John Webb, Phil Mackey, Merran Matthews, Kerry Williamson -- a thoroughly deserved win.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To nine people who couldn't walk around the course, my thanks.