

ASF NEWSLETTER

THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



A New Depth Record !

ICE TUBE photo by Nick Hume

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AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION
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Even the Northern Queenslanders are at it, caving that is. Chillagoe Caving Club and Brother Nick seem to be stirring up so much interest that several Sydney cavers are going "north for the winter".

The South Australians plus a few ring-ins from the eastern states have been seen on the Nullabor, and again there are rumours of interesting finds, even new caves!

I have it on good authority that CEGSA gained quite a few new members this year. In Sydney we have also noticed an upswing in club membership, both SUSS and MUCG had record numbers of prospectives join them this year. In fact MUCG had so many that the old hands are outnumbered three to one!

I'm not quite sure what is going on out there but things do seem to be starting to happen. Could this be the long awaited up-swing in Australian caving ? Is the editor going to be inundated with reports of new finds ? Does this mean people are actually going CAVING !!? If any of these questions can be answered in the affirmative, I for one hope that the trend will continue.

STUART NICHOLAS

Tube was more than just a typical grotty
Juree-Florentine pot.

Recent breakthroughs in Growling Swallet gave strength to the possibility of a way being forced into the fabled Junee "Master Cave". Ice Tube being S.E. of Growling Swallet provided an ideally located access and so enthusiasm grew rapidly.

But this was not to be - Ice Tube blocked off at its deepest point with the stream sinking in the floor. There is, however, the possibility of some higher level extensions in the vicinity of the last pitch.

Some statistics may be of interest: plan length 226m; survey traverse length 529m; total pitch length 253m; total depth 345m. As can be seen the cave drops very steeply!

A full report and survey will appear in the next issue of the ASF Newsletter.

NOTES ON THE ASF

READ THIS:READ THIS:READ THIS: READ THIS!!

I would like to thank all the clubs that have taken the time to read and respond to Secretarial Circulars. These clubs are making my job easier and helping ASF to run efficiently and effectively.

However, there are numerous clubs that are either defunct or slack. In the next newsletter I will be publishing these clubs names. It is very inconsiderate that YOU are preventing the Hills Districts Speleo's from joining ASF by your failure to reply to the postal vote. I ask all cavers to check that the secretary of their club is doing their job.

If your club is not answering mail it will be considered defunct and action will be taken accordingly.

C Rothery
Secretary

A.S.F. NEWSLETTER

After much work by a few people the newsletter is now in full swing at its new Sydney base.

All financial member's names are now stored on computer - thanks to the efforts of Paul Greenfield, Mark Twigg and Rosie Carson (without whose help this would not have been possible).

These details will be updated every four months so if you have any changes you wish to make in your club lists, please inform me. The next update will take place at the end of July.

Back issues from now on will be sent out at the same time as each issue is posted. If you have any back issue requests please inform me by the date set for copy deadline and I will deal with them.

Ian Mann
Newsletter Manager

TREASURERS REPORT

This Newsletter is being sent to all clubs for which we have address lists, - HOWEVER, the next will NOT be sent to everyone.

The following clubs were financial members of ASF as of 24/5/82.

Full members:
CSS, MSS, SRGWA, KSS, MUCG, OSS, SCS, CTCG, SUSS, UQSS, BMSC, TCC.

Associates:
NQSA, RANCA, PNGCEG, CCOG.

The following clubs are Unfinancial as of 24/5/82. If you belong to one of these clubs, prod your executive.

Full Members: (?)
WASGA, VSA, NC, CEGSA, HCG, CQSS, UNSWSS, SSS, NUCC, BCA, ISS, NSWITS.

Associates:(?)
Hills Speleo club
ASS, CCC, MICC, MWWC

The list is a long one and includes some of the larger clubs. At this stage we have only received 25% of the A.S.F. annual income. We need money to keep the Newsletter running.

NO MONEY, NO NEWSLETTER!

If I don't receive an address list and 1982 subscription fees, Ian Mann, the newsletter manager, doesn't get an address list and YOU DON'T GET YOUR NEWSLETTER.

Please pay up Ed.

NEW ACCESS CONDITIONS FOR JENOLAN, WOMBEYAN AND ABERCROMBIE

JOHN DUNKLEY

Perhaps the single most important question confronting speleo groups these days is that of continuing access to the caves themselves. There is nothing quite like overly restrictive access conditions to practically put a halt to long-term exploration and research programs.

NSW members will therefore be pleased to learn that an ASF Advisory Group has negotiated with the NSW Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism for new access conditions to Jenolan, Wombeyan and Abercrombie. We are hopeful that the revised conditions will prove more flexible and much less bureaucratic than the old ones. At the same time, the responsibilities of both individual member clubs, and of Trip Leaders, have been strengthened considerably.

Read the new conditions and answer this short test:

1. Did your club discuss these conditions at your last meeting? If not, why not? A detailed circular on the subject specifically asked for this to be done.
2. Was your club present at the ASF Committee Meeting and NSW Speleological Council meetings at which these matters were discussed? If not, why not? Perhaps your club does not wish to be eligible for the benefits for which we have been negotiating.
3. Does your club wish to be included in further discussions about unresolved issues such as camping location at Jenolan?

Your club's, and thus your own rights to access to controlled caving areas may well depend on whether you are properly represented at future meetings.

All members, and especially trip leaders should ensure they are thoroughly familiar with the new conditions and guidelines.

Thanks for their assistance in this task to John Bonwick, Ken Keck, Mike Lake, Alf Learmonth, Andrew Pavey, Philip Toomer and especially Randall King.

14TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

SPELEOVISION

3 - 7 January 1983

Flinders University - Adelaide

The fourteenth conference proposes to have two aims as basis of discussion. These will be:

1. Visual aspects of cave recording

- i) This theme will cover all aspects of cave recording. Topics will include photography, both in 2D and 3D and their application in mapping, scientific and navigational activities in caves.
- ii) Trends in cave mapping with the advent of computer plotting, alternative methods of depicting caves and holograms.
- iii) Use of information retrieval systems eg, microfiche, aperture cards and word processors.

2. Forecasting the future of Australian Speleology

- i) How advances in technology affect speleology
- ii) Cave access and management in the next decade. How past trends may affect the future.
- iii) Population - pressures on our natural cave resource.

THOSE INTENDING TO PRESENT PAPERS ARE REQUESTED
TO NOTIFY MEREDITH REARDON BY 27 AUGUST 82.

The Conference Field Trips

At this stage it is planned to run a pre-conference field trip to the Flinders Ranges. This trip would move through the Flinders visiting Mairs Cave, Clara St Dora Cave, Mt Sims Cave, Wooltana Cave, Narrina Cave, Thunderdrum Cave and the Mt Remarkable Blowhole.

Post Conference Field Trips

Trips to Upper and Lower South East, River Murray, Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island are planned. Bookings for the Traubridge have to be finalised early so delegates wishing to visit Kangaroo Island must let the committee know by 5/11/82. After that date we can not guarantee a berth. The cost of ferrying people to Kangaroo Island is \$103.00 for each car and \$40.00 for each passenger (return). A maximum limit of 40 people is being allowed. South Australian cavers will be limited to those acting as guides.

Nullarbor trips will not be organised from Adelaide but WASG will co-ordinate those who wish to visit the Nullarbor.

A trip to Eyre Peninsula will be organised if enough people are interested in visiting that area.

Further details can be obtained by contacting Meredith Reardon, 3 Harcourt St, PAYNEHAM SA 5070. (08 422441).

Twenty Years Ago

This segment is compiled by Jonathon Campbell. It is hoped that it will become a regular column. We would delighted to receive contributions for this column, so delve into your club library and see what you can dig up. Articles on epic caving trips, equipment and techniques a la the late 50's and early 60's, attitudes and arguments of the day, even what people did around campfires in the "olden days"! - all contribution will be gratefully accepted.

Opening Address

The following opening address was given at the 3rd Biennial Convention of A.S.F. in Canberra on 29 Dec 1960 by Mgr Favier. Some sections of the address have had to be omitted but the sentiments expressed in the following extract are as relevant today as they were in 1960..

"I congratulate you upon your initiative in establishing the Federation and in holding these Conventions in the face of a good deal of pessimistic apathy or even opposition from those yet to be converted to the benefits of federalism. The Federation and the Conventions both derive from the quality and quantity of the membership of constituent bodies, and their continued success will be based on the spirit of true comradeship and joint enterprise which prevails amongst most cavers.

Though Speleology is an 'ology' and is sometimes defined as the scientific study of caves, I venture to say that Speleology - for the average speleo - cannot be called a Science. It certainly does extend the frontiers of knowledge, it touches on many branches of science, and some few speleos are in the game for scientific reasons, but the majority take to it mainly because it is an adventure, because it is their sport, their recreation, their hobby. Therefore, let us not get too pompous or pontifical about it - let us have Conventions and papers, but let us not expect that all our Bods are going to turn into Boffins.

Certainly, too, Speleology though not a Religion, can lead a thinking person to Religion by the speleo's reverence for these beautiful and unusual works of God's Creation so unexpected within the very bowels of the earth - the shawls, the stalactites, the helectites, the massive and microscopic beatury of limestone caves, formed over geological aeons in the evolutionary cycle, by the operation and interaction of the Creator's laws of nature.

Therefore since - as I claim - caving is neither a Religion nor a Science, but rather a sport, let us beware of exaggerated claims for caving - claims that cannot be substantiated."

from the ASF Newsletter No.11 March 1961.

WE NEED COPY SO PLEASE START WRITING

Letters to the Editor

Cave Rescue Group - NSW

The Cave Rescue Group of NSW has had a chequered history. Its main success has been to become a member of the Volunteer Rescue Association (VRA). This means official recognition by the NSW Police, insurance coverage and the use of VRA facilities and personnel.

In its early days the Cave Rescue Group lost some of its most proficient members due to the ineptitude of the group, and some members of the NSW Police with which it was associated. As a result, the average age of Cave Rescue Group active members is quite high when compared to the rest of the caving community. Many of these people have a wide range of experience and offer much, but they lack the agility and knowledge of modern caving techniques (in particular vertical techniques) which is possessed by many younger active cavers, who are not members of the group.

The Cave Rescue Group is a good idea. However, it lacks enough support from the general caving community to make it the Cave Rescue Group. Most cavers only know about it through the Rescue Practice Weekend organised once a year (in March) at Bungonia. I have attended most of these and attended the last one with Ken Lance (A.S.F. President), who flew from Port Headland in Western Australia at his own expense, to see what these weekend exercises were about.

Talks about first aid, cave safety, etc were given on the Saturday and practice rescues attempted on the Sunday. The logistics of the weekend were most impressive. This appears to be one of the strong points of the Cave Rescue Group.

Members of the NSW Police Rescue Squad were present as well as four members of the Victorian Police Search and Rescue. An interesting aside was the attitude of the Victorian Police. It was stated by them that they had a closer relationship with NSW cavers, through the VRA, than they had with Victorian cavers. This is perhaps something the Victorians could look to in the future.

A useful feature of the CRG relationship with the VRA is the availability of Wireless Institute Communications Emergency Network (WICEN) for communications, and the Police Rescue Squad mobile canteen. These facilities are available for exercises, to assist with the logistics of the weekend.

All the organisation and logistics however, cannot make up for the lack of young, fit and knowledgeable cavers. This is what the Cave Rescue Group really needs. Many people criticise this group's efforts, often with just cause. The people who criticise should not just be negative. They should join the group and change it from within. Some of the group's technically competent former members, who left due to the ineptitude mentioned earlier, should also consider what they could contribute.

The Cave Rescue Group should not be an ego trip. It should really only be a means where one caver can help another caver who is in trouble, or provide him with sufficient information to prevent a dangerous situation arising.

Terry O'Leary

Book Review

AUSTRALIA: A TIMELESS GRANDEUR

Photography by Reg Morrison

Text by Helen Grasswill

Lansdowne Press, Sydney, 1981.

304pp, 37 x 26cm, Price about \$30 - \$35

reviewed by JOHN DUNKLEY

There have been many coffee table books on Australia in the last decade and most would not be worth reviewing in this newsletter even if they had a few cave photographs.

This is an exception. The text, the photography, the layout and the high quality full-colour printing in this book are all first class, and the price reflects quality, not quick profit.

The text is wholly professional and scientifically accurate, with a flair for the descriptive, the picturesque and the evocative. The geological structure, climate, vegetation and wildlife of the major landscape regions are covered, along with discussion of man's relationship with the land from Aboriginal prehistory through to the present day. As well as the obligatory treatment of Ayers Rock, Devils Marbles and Port Campbell, many less known Australian landscapes are covered, such as the remarkable reversing Tidal Waterfalls of the Kimberleys.

The real grandeur, however, is in the stunningly powerful and atmospheric colour photography; Reg Morrison has really mastered the art of underexposure, the 500mm lens and the polarizing filter. He rejects the superficial homogeneity of the geographical environment, particularly of the vegetation, by an obsession with shape, form and pattern, and with subtle variations in colour hue and saturation.

There is a whole chapter each on Kubla Khan Cave, the Nullarbor and the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Caves, and shorter sections on Jenolan, Tunnel Creek and other areas. The photograph of the Khan in Xanadu Chamber of Kubla Khan Cave is the finest of many I have seen. There are unusual low-level aerial photos of the dolines of Aburakurrie and Koonalda Caves and the Bunda Cliffs, and a double page of the main chamber of Aburakurrie, surely one of the great caves of Australia. The accompanying text is up-to-date, with information on cave diving in Cocklebidy and caves at Precipitous Bluff and along the Franklin River.

In all, nearly 10% of the book is concerned with cave and karst environments perhaps a fair reflection of the contribution of these to the "strange and lonely grandeur of Australia", and to the remoteness and solitude inherent in the Australian landscape.

Change of Address - Please Take Note

Baptist Caving Association
90 Parkes Street
HELENSBURG NSW 2508

Kempsey Speleological Society
27 River Street
KEMPSEY NSW 2440

Conservation Column

MORE CAVES, ARCHAEOLOGY, TURMOIL AND PROBLEMS ON THE FRANKLIN RIVER Continued from Issue No 95.

KEVIN KIERNAN

Destruction of Fraser Cave by Dams or People? - a personal perspective

The implications of my archaeological find in Fraser Cave has deeply troubled me, for perhaps there are some things that are best left undisturbed, just as there are things best left unsaid. Against the risk of possible damage by people traffic stood the certainty of obliteration by damming if silence was maintained.

It was however, saddening to see the scar of our later excavation, which despite our best efforts, does mar the cave. The specialists have been followed by tourists whose unguided trampling has severely compacted the earth floors. Flowstone floors have been muddled, artefacts have been indiscriminately souvinered and a small but brutal private dig has been hacked into a sensitive part of the deposit. A commercial raft tour operation is even advertising Fraser Cave on its itinerary. To newcomers the cave remains impressive, but from the personal perspective of that first magical day, the transformation is incredible.

Although the cave lies within the Wild Rivers National Park, the NP&WS has done nothing to help protect Fraser Cave, at the time of writing this article, not a single ranger was stationed in the South-West to manage the 640,000 ha of parkland that has been nominated for the World Heritage listing. In view of these difficulties, the location of new cave finds remain confidential.

Another problem has emerged which has far reaching implications, the Franklin it would appear, is one of the greatest archeological valleys in the world. The danger of unwitting damage to the archeological relics is frightening. The days have passed when merely amassing a large number of Franklin caves will have any significant effect on the Franklin battle - it is time to take stock. This is no ordinary caving area. Cavers, by their very presence in these caves, can damage them. The area is very sensitive and deserves special consideration and care. It must not be forgotten that we are talking about the richest archeological find in Australia, and one of the world's great sites.

While the prehistorians are concerned for the future of the human past, we speleologists must be concerned for the biophysical resources of this karst. I am aware of several instances on the mainland where cavers have not reported archeological discoveries for fear of damage to the caves that contain them. In the Franklin Valley however, declining to tell archeologists may be to threaten the greater danger of total obliteration by flooding. The fact still remains that however careful, an archeologist is no different to any other beginner caver....unfamiliar with moving through a delicate cave environment and often unaware of its fragility.

A European society, less than 200 years old now proposes to dam a river upon whose banks, humankind dwelt for one hundred times as long. The landscape was fashioned during a succession of ice ages which may have lasted one hundred times as long again. Within two hundred weeks of humankind returning to Fraser Cave, its degeneration was in progress and 200 weeks later still, this degeneration had been magnified by perhaps as many visitors. Must it be a choice between this and total destruction by damming? Is that any more of a choice than a referendum which gives the right to decide between losing an arm and losing a leg?

This article is not meant as criticism of the archeologists who have proven to be sensitive and caring people. After all it was cavers who initiated the popularisation of this area years before rafting was in vogue. The names we applied first drew the attention of national politicians to the plight and value of the Franklin wilderness. Our persistence has led to the discovery of an archeological dimension within the caves, and the alliance between cavers and archeologists. This alliance has provided what is arguably the single most powerful element in the case against the dams. How are we to minimise our joint impact upon the caves and their deposits? Where is the balance? How do we achieve it?

Editors Note

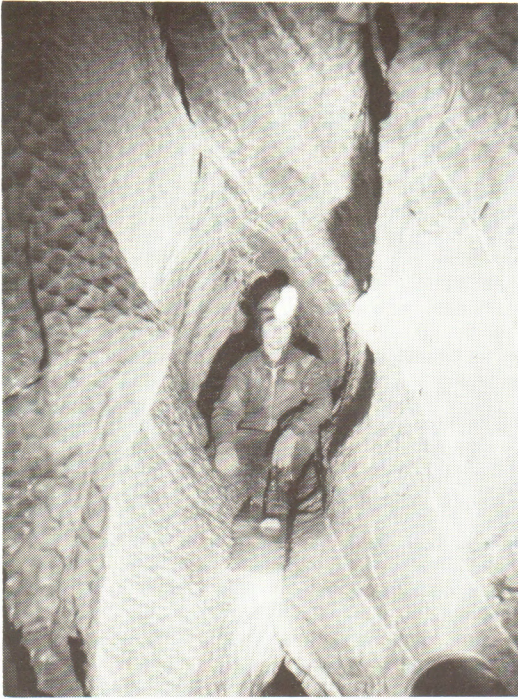
A friend and I recently wrote to the Prime Minister expressing our concern at the decision to flood the Franklin River. In reply we received a two page letter and a copy of the relevant extracts from Hansard. It would appear that the PM's Department has perceived the possible electoral implications of this matter. To make sure that the PM's Department continues to be aware of these possible implications, we intend to send Mr Fraser a monthly note just to let him know that we are still watching developments with interest.

If you care about what happens to the Franklin you may wish to write too. The address is
THE PRIME MINISTER, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA.

Yarrangobilly Caves May Close Indefinitely

Apparently the National Parks and Wildlife Service has sold the two diesel generators at Yarrangobilly - no doubt cashing in on the power crisis rush to private generation in NSW. No orders have been placed for new generators due to a purchasing freeze imposed by the Government. Even if placed, orders are unlikely to be filled before the end of the year.

This leaves Yarrangobilly with only the possibility of guided "wild" caves and no tours at all. In view of the staffing pressures in the Kosciusko National Park, it won't be surprising if cave tours of any kind are dropped indefinitely. This will deprive the park service of its only real chance of telling the public about caves in National Parks. The remaining caves open to the public in N.S.W., are the privately operated Carey's Caves at Wee Jasper and the NSW Department of Tourism caves at Jenolan, Wombeyan and Abercrombie.



NETTLEBED - SCENES FROM THE EXPEDITION
photos by John Webb

Nettlebed Expedition - New Zealand

PHILLIP HUTCHESON - VSA

Date: 2 - 9 January, 1982.

Cast: Numerous New Zealanders, Phillip Hutcheson, Susan Green, Neil Lamborn, Lloyd Mill, Brian Carter, John Webb, John Taylor, Stefan Eberhard (T.C.C.) and John McCormack (C.E.G.S.A.).

It was only by pure luck we were able to be part of the Nettlebed Expedition. Avis and Budget Rent-A-Car supplied us with mini buses and cars to suit our intricate needs and budget, exchanging seven vehicles throughout our trip. Qantas airlines were happy enough to book and rebook and rebook our flights. Lists of caving equipment were obtained from past newsletters of various clubs.

Eventually Arthur Freeman (expedition organiser) sent each person a circular with the expedition itinerary. A final circular was sent out several weeks after the expedition, listing the achievements.

The transfer from Takaka Hill to Nettlebed took some time to complete. Often news bulletins crackled over the radio, "a breakthrough has been achieved, speleologists are literally climbing Mt Arthur from the inside". This left us quivering and muttering "there won't be anything left for us to discover". The enormous amount of equipment and size of the party, as well as the small size of the car, made it necessary to make four trips to the Pearce River.

Nettlebed cave is situated at the base of Mt Arthur, north-west of Nelson. The meandering, rutted, dusty, dirt road leading to the beginning of the walking track was hard to find, even with a descriptive map. Finally, just before lunch, we were fully packed and assembled at the foot of the bridge which marked the beginning of our walk.

After 1 1/2 hours (if you know where you are going), but in our case 3 hours, you are confronted by a funny little building we later found out was the latrine.

Base camp is on the junction of the Pearce Rising and Eyle Creek. The towering, steep valley rarely allows the sun to penetrate and warm the base camp wallahs. It often rains, even with the absence of the rain makers - the clouds. Lloyd Mill was seen sitting on a log in his water proofs entranced with the sky, muttering "imaginary rain".

The camp was laid out with an 8 metre by 4 metre mesh shelter, crudely constructed of young sapplings and a heavy duty plastic. Under this and extending the full length of the shelter was a 1 1/2 metre wide table where meals were prepared and the documentation of the daily surveying done. Against the wall was a current map of Nettlebed which almost extended across the whole length of the shelter. This map enabled us to keep up with the daily progression of exploration as well as pinpoint the best area for exploration. Close by were the carbide, equipment and food tents.

Nettlebed cave entrance is approximately 500 metres up the Eyle Creek. The river rarely resurges from the Eyle Creek or the entrance,

but after heavy rains it may do so, as it is a tributary of the Pearce Rising. It is from this entrance that exploration has been going on since 1969. Around the late 1970's a dye trace from Grange Slocker to the Pearce Rising took just under a week, giving a potential depth and length of 900m and 16km respectively. At this time exploration was taking place on the tops of the Mt Arthur region. Some of these holes extend as low as 300m, but unfortunately end in rockfalls. By 1979/80 speleos had explored up past Jacobs Well with a survey length of 6225m and a height of 459m.

The entrance is spacious and infested with nettles (hence the name Nettlebed). Shortly after entering the cave you encounter a number of squeezes, the most memorable being the Hinkle Horn Honking Holes, a series of squeezes almost joined together producing a 50kph gale rendering carbide lamps useless, and hand held torches have to be used. You are also confronted with tricky free and handline climbs. On these you need to be on your toes, or the inevitable can occur.

Unfortunately, one of the Australian cavers, John McCormack, whilst negotiating a handline climb in the Caecumslither, peeled off and plunged several metres down to the rocky stream bed below. Luckily he only suffered bruising to the base of his spine and was able to make his own way out to base camp. Regretfully it did prevent him from any further caving and caused several days of stiffness. Other obstacles were permanently fixed three metre ladders. Two at a section called the Up and Overs, which are open during the summer dry spells, but are siphoned by long rubber hoses during the winter. Unlimited long and mazed, wet, dry, high and low level passages which seem to extend without any reprieve, navigation was constant turmoil, with trial and error the only solution.

The only S.R.T. pitch before Salvation Hall is the 53m waterfall at Jacob's Well in the Abyss. Although prussiking beside the waterfall, carbides are rendered useless by the breeze and spray of the crushing fall. Looking down the pitch, you are intoxicated by an exciting view of tiny specks of light, flickering amidst the sprays of water, whilst directly in front, vast emptiness.

Journeying on, diverting around large rock boulders, rock hopping becomes unavoidable. The river shows no sign of ending, there are large deep pools fed by cascading waterfalls which have to be traversed and scaled. High and low ledges are crawled along pushing tackle packs ahead, taking care to avoid over estimating the thrust and sending the pack tumbling into the river several metres below.

Although sections of the cave were tiresome, other areas were greatly rewarding with the pleasures of multi-coloured speleothems of all types and sizes. Large rimstone pools with flowstone cascading several metres at an inclination of 60 degrees, protected by a thin flow of water. Although it seems ludicrous, the usual route is straight through the centre, between the blue ribbons, which are placed

throughout the cave for its protection. Arduous sections of the stream passage are compensated with enchanting leisurely strolls in other sections. In some sections, while standing in the stream passage, it is difficult to illuminate a particular feature on the wall. The fascination of mammoth caverns after passing through an insignificant hole or squeeze is felt time and time again. Most of these caverns were filled with the sounds of pounding waterfalls or by echoing water drips in the far reaches of the chamber.

Salvation Hall is the place troglers come to from base camp or the exploration areas to shed wet, cold gear, eat and rest weary bones. It is better described as a sanctuary veiling the toilsome elements of the cave. The camp is set high and directly across from where you enter the Hall. You proceed up and over a large rockfall, then up a sandy slope to where a five metre ladder is permanently fixed. Scuttling up and down this was always an effort, because you are usually just starting or finishing anything from six to twelve hours trogging.

From the campsite it was possible to look across Salvation Hall and see the parties descending the far rockpile. Those in the camp would then prepare a brew in time for the parties arrival. After each push, meals had to be prepared, log books written up and discussions held on past and forth coming caving itinerary.

It was always difficult getting out of warm clothes and into your wet gear for the day's trogging. From Salvation Hall the way on was up the chamber, and up an eleven metre pitch which was climbed with the assistance of a handline. Still progressing upwards, you follow a scree slope. Up, up and eventually you're confronted with a verticle ten metre climb. At the top it flattens out, with pools of water to side step. Another short descent and more scree climbing until you eventually reach a boulder choke. With more climbing, squeezing and pushing you pop into what seems to be the grand daddy of all

rock screes, the Knee Trembler. At this point you're at an elevation of +322m, with nowhere else to go except up, the walls and roof are hard to detect. You finally arrive at the +407m cairn, where the 1981-2 exploration commenced.

Although the rock scree continues up, you make a slight diversion through a boulder choke into a passage called Diamond Alley. The tingling of crystals beneath your feet is ignored as you cross crystal pool after crystal pool. (What about track marking?! Ed.) Eventually you come to the lip of a 36m pitch which descends into the Antlion Chamber, this being one of the two S.R.T. pitches. The rope of 12mm Marlow made abseiling and prussiking very difficult indeed. Dropping down, wait for it, to another boulder choke, weaving upwards, and after 18m of vertical squeezing, you break through to the top of the scree. This choke was originally opened with a large hammer (hence the name Hammer Hole). With a final heave followed by a grunt you're through, and looking up at the GRAND DADDY of all rock slopes - Hammer Heights. This scree slope extends 165m at a 35 degree angle before reaching the top known as Misty View.

Descending slightly, after reaching the top, you end up in a high level passage known as Route 66. A 4m climb, and you're in the beginning of a mass of unexplored vertical and horizontal passages with unbelievable formation. Sticking to the main route, you eventually arrive at a large rockfall chamber known as the Rubic Room, continuing through a narrow passage (Cactus Table), you reach a 50m climb up into an unexplored rockfall with a stream pouring from it. This is the highest point of the cave at +626 metres.

The above is an abridged version of an article by Phillip Hutcheson originally printed in NARGUN Vol. 14 No. 9.

GUANO

CULINARY CONTRIBUTION

The following was noticed by Jim Mahoud (NSWITSS) in "Wild Food in Australia" by A B & J W Cribb a book published by Fontana Press.

"BATS"

Most bats are small animals, many with bodies no larger than those of mice. However, a few of the fruit bats, commonly known as flying foxes, reach considerably larger sizes and weights up to about 1 kg. We have not eaten flying fox, but have been told that it is of excellent flavour and resembles chicken. The animals are usually roasted whole in the coals, only the wings being removed first. Squeamish diners may remove the entrails after cooking, but it is not necessary to do so beforehand; the skin is not eaten.

Flying foxes were a greatly appreciated article of food both to the Aborigines and to some of the white pioneers. Leichhardt and his party, at one stage on their expedition, feasted on twenty-nine flying foxes. They have been widely used in southeast Asian countries."



"No, thanks. I'm a vegetarian. I don't believe in killing animals."

Scenes from a Chinese Train Window

A Caving Trip to China

JOHN DUNKLEY

Chinese trains are always on time, I had been warned, so I was at the station a good 30 minutes before the scheduled departure time. A huge crowd thronged the platform, dredging up dim memories of Pymont wharves in the 1950's, waving good-bye to distant relatives leaving on a P & O liner. A great clanging of bells announced 15 minutes departure and was repeated 10 minutes later. With 6 or 8 heads leaning out of every 2nd class window the atmosphere became more like a departing troop train during a war. Then, with no further warning the attendants pulled up the folding steps, a last handshake with a Chinese acquaintance, and the 20-carriage Kunming-Shanghai Express departed at precisely 4.40pm on its 2 1/2 day journey across southern China.

For the first half hour or so the train put on a good start across the rolling limestone basin containing Kunming, one of the most fertile parts of the Yunnan Plateau. Away to the west across Dien Chih Lake the fault scarp of the Western Hills was just visible. Its rocky cliffs contain a number of excavated niches and caves of the Ch'ing dynasty.

Shortly afterwards the landscape gradually changed, a deep weathering mantle increasing eroded and stripped to expose bare limestone, the occasional broad shallow doline containing a few hundred square metres of rice. This was just about the only obvious manifestation of karst drainage which I saw in the Kunming area, other than the justly famed Stone Forest of Lunan, where the overlying mantle has been thoroughly stripped, exposing 30m tall spires of limestone. A temperate karst of subdued relief, dolines and potholes should prevail on this 2000m high plateau. Certainly large river caves are known, but I was unable to track them down in the time available. The dolines which I saw were all quite localized and were developed near the margins of tectonic basins. Presumably the faulting in such areas, especially obvious from the air on my trip into Kunming, enhances infiltration and underground drainage.

The train laboured up a long gradient, topped a pass near Yanglin, and doubled its speed down the other side. Bare limestone mountains rose to perhaps 3500 metres out of a broad valley, catching the last rays of the sun, and were visible until long after dark as we neared Kutsing. Gazing at them too long, I found the dining car closed. The Chinese eat early.

Guizhou Province

From here the railway line begins the long descent from the Unnan Plateau at around 2000 metres, to the Guizhou Plateau at 1000 metres. Until this line was completed in the late 1960's, Kunming was 10 to 20 days hard driving from the nearest rail or river port. The first class sleeper proved worth the not inconsiderable expense and was every bit as comfortable as the Southern Aurora. I awoke only once, briefly at 3.00am to find the train already among low towers near Anshun. Shortly before dawn we stopped briefly at Guiyand, capital of the province and still regrettably closed to tourists and would-be cavers. This is the city

whose airport runway required the removal of several offending limestone hills. There is a tourist cave right in the city and it appears likely that this is the centre of the best prospective cave country in China.

Low cloud now hung over the hills, apparently a feature of the province. Although entirely in limestone and containing many dolines, dry valleys and minor karst features, the next 150km is more of a rail bug's delight, with innumerable bridges, cuttings, viaducts and tunnels. In effect there are two parallel rail lines on each side of a narrow valley, one carrying traffic between Changsha and Chungking, the other Kunming to Guilin and Shanghai. Again, until the railway less than 20 years ago, this was one of the most inaccessible parts of China due to the encircling limestone mountains.

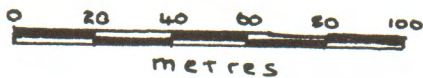
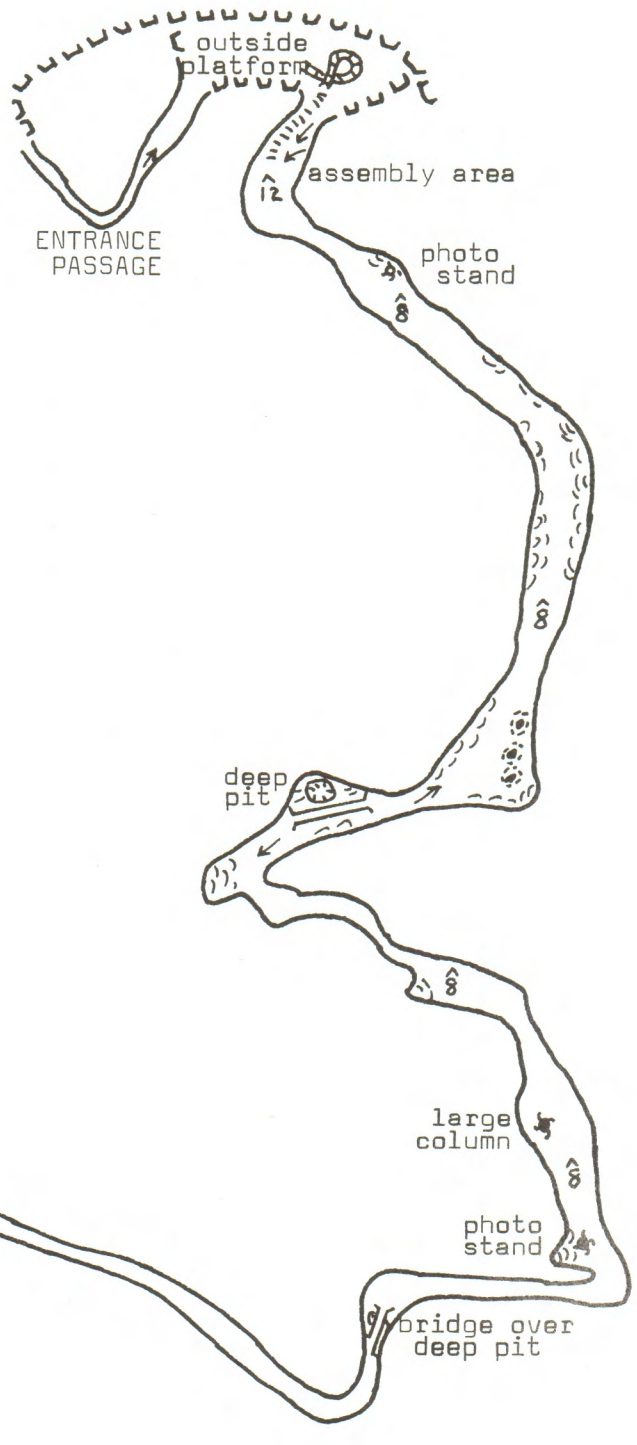
Shortly before Tuyen the line turns south along another valley for several more hours of endless dry valleys and dolines and not the slightest sign of water.

At 12.45pm, suddenly the landscape changed markedly. We emerged from a succession of narrow valleys on to what seemed like an old lake bed or planation surface. For the next hour or so the train meandered around, between and through limestone hills of all shapes and sizes, a forest made up of hundreds upon countless hundreds of almost bare karst towers on all sides. They may well be arranged in a linear pattern as the occasional corridor opened up on one side of another enabling one to see a succession of towers stretching perhaps 30 or 40 kilometres to distant mountains.

Joe Jennings has written that in this area, in a few hours, he saw from the moving train more cave entrances than he had been into in his whole life.

On my observation this may well be an understatement. In less than a single hour near the city of Liuchai I would estimate I saw a thousand or more discrete limestone towers. Every single one seemed to have at least 5 or 10 cave entrances, many so close by that stalactites and stalagmites could be seen and photographed as the train rumbled along. Some could be seen to pass clear through a tower. There were huge entrances, not-so-large entrances, small entrances and no doubt innumerable entrances not visible from the moving train. Most were from a few metres to a few hundred metres above the plain surface rather than level with it, and presumably evidence former planation levels or stillstands during the uplift which has occurred throughout the region. Enough to keep a whole nation of cave taggers busy for a very long time.

By 2.00pm the character of the country changed again, with more soil, less bare limestone and some evidence of reafforestation programs. For another four hours the train laboured up steep grades and around remarkably sharp curves, travelling long distances uphill at barely 20 kilometres per hour, followed by screeching descents, barely much faster down the other side of a succession of what seemed to be steep-walled poljes or valleys at markedly



Seven Star Cave

Guilin, Guangxi, CHINA

differing floor levels. For miles it traversed high above the valley floor through endless cuttings, viaducts and tunnels on the side of mountains rising perhaps another 1000-5000 metres. Far out to the south-west, sharp-peaked, presumably limestone mountains could be seen rising in serried ranks to the horizon perhaps 60-80km distant.

At 5.40pm on the second day we entered the gorge of the Lung Kiang, along the first substantial river seen, deep blue with a lot of dark, almost black sediment deposits on its banks. The high hills started to recede by 6.30pm as we emerged on to the lowlands near Liuzhou. However after this the train turned north-east again and re-entered a tower karst region which continued until, 31 1/2 hours and 1300km from Kunming and in limestone nearly all the way, we finally drew into Guilin at 12.10am, and of course, dead on time.

Guilin

Time spent in Guilin is invariably too short. So said the guidebook, and if this is true of the average tourist, how much more frustrating for a speleologist to have only half a day spare for exploration of the most famous scenic spot, and the most accessible karst and caves in China!

The karst around Guilin is of the Kufeng type, in which clustered or isolated karst towers up to perhaps 150m high dot the surface of an extensive alluviated corrosion plain. A more picturesque description was given by the poet Han Yu who likened the Guilin hills to blue jade hairpins. There are plenty of these towers within easy reach of the city, and there is a saying in Guilin that where there's a hill there's a hole. A short stroll from the town centre turns up a dozen or more easy caves and there are literally hundreds more towers visible from the top of any one of them, stretching to the horizon in all directions. Several are noticeably asymmetrical in form due to local variations in bedding. The accessible caves here provide an introduction to the variety typical of the area, including long horizontal fossil river caves, active and inactive meander cutoffs, cliff-foot and swamp notch caves, and relict arches. They are developed at eight or nine distinct levels and the larger ones exhibit evidence of development at several levels.

Seven Star Hill

With only a half-day to spare I concentrated on Seven Star Hill across the Li River to the east of the city. This small urban park of about one square kilometre is centred on seven limestone hills arranged roughly in the shape of the Big Dipper, and contains at least ten caves with an aggregate length of more than a kilometre. Paths wind around, between and to the top of the peaks from which there are excellent views of the city and, of course, innumerable other peaks.

Seven Star Cave is a tourist cave entered from the northern end of the park. The tourist section is nearly 900 metres long and lower levels said to contain water would bring the total length to over one kilometre - not bad for a relatively small hill barely 140m high and maybe 400m in diameter. The cave is about 30m above the surrounding plain and is very spacious, averaging 5-10m high and wide for almost its whole length. The tourist path is paved most attractively with a tiled pattern of

pebbles and stones laid in cement, its edges defined by painstakingly constructed little fences of concrete. The lighting is surprisingly modern - subdued but with some high level spotlights throwing roof pockets and wall niches into relief. One or two garish coloured lights do not detract from the overall experience, which is excellent. The 100 or so others in the party were all Chinese but the guide spoke excellent English and evidently gave her group a much appreciated tour for the 20 cents charge. For a small extra fee you can be photographed under floodlight against a backdrop of cave decoration by the ubiquitous Chinese twin lens reflex. The decoration is profuse, massive and clean, and contrary to some guidebooks, is not visibly dulled by the passage of centuries of candle-carrying tourists.

Longyinyen (Dragon Refuge Cave) is a through cave on the banks of an anabranch (dry in winter) of the Li River, 40m long and about 5m high and wide throughout. Its name derives from a resemblance to dragon scales of the scalloped niches on the walls. Nearby is a shallow meander niche, little more than a large overhang, containing hundreds of carved inscriptions and poetry which can be inspected for 2 cents.

There are two caves almost next to the exit path from Seven Star Cave. One is a walk-in passage about 65m long and 7m wide. At the time of my visit it was being used to store grain and was inhabited by several rats.

Other Caves in Guilin

Time did not enable these caves, mentioned in several sources, to be checked although two could be seen from the hotel room window.

Lu Ti Yen (Reed Flute or Reed Pipe Cave) is a tourist cave about 10km north-west of the town and can be reached readily by local bus. It has been used since the Tang dynasty and was developed for tourism about 20 years ago. The path is about 500m long and garnish coloured lights seem to be an attraction.

Diecaishan (Folded Brocade Hill) is near the Li River banks about 2km north of town centre and is traversed from north to south by Wind Cave which contains some Tang and Sung engravings. The cave is about 4m high and wide.

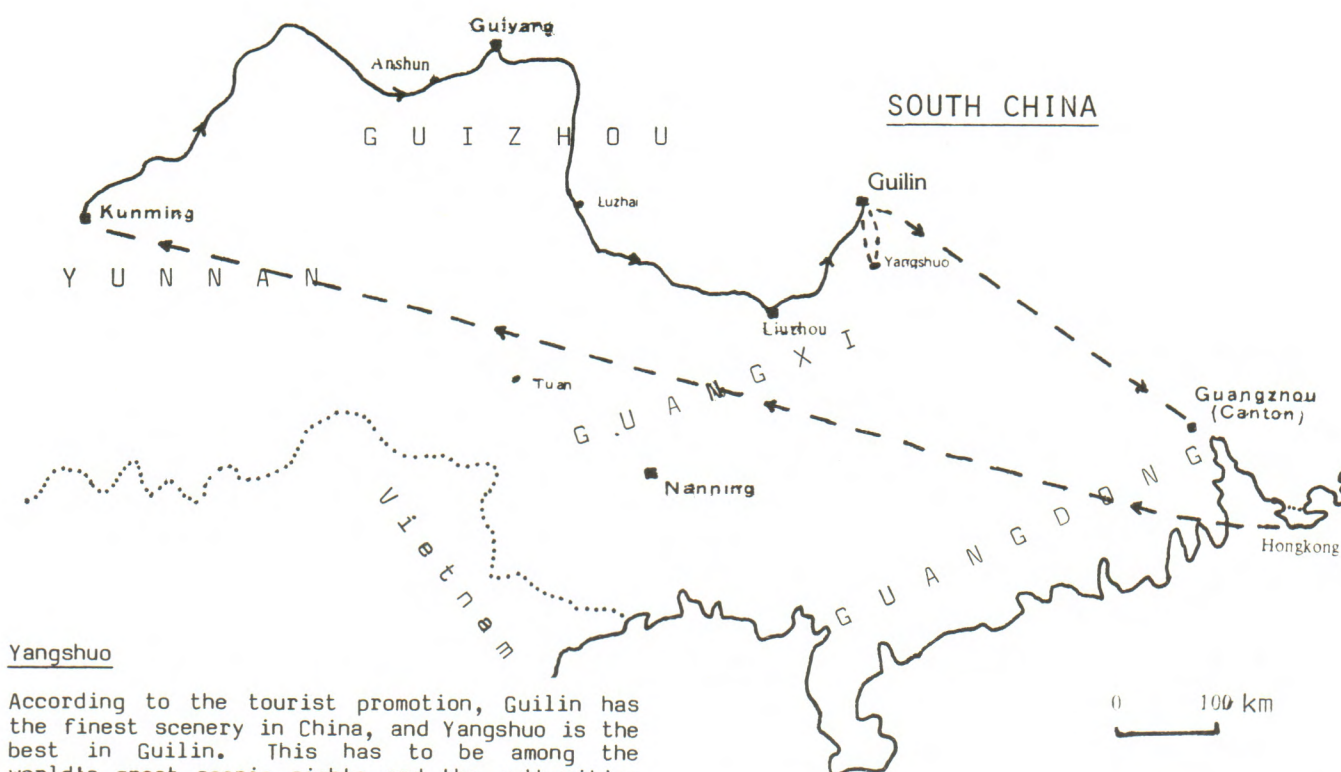
Fupo Shan (Underground Water Hill) is on the Li River banks 1 km north of town. Over 300 Buddhist carvings of the Sung dynasty can be seen in Huanzhutong (Recovered Pearl Cave) in the hill. Legend has it that a fisherman once stole a gleaming pearl used by a dragon to light the cave, but he was so filled with shame that he returned it.

Elephant Trunk Hill is right in the town and contains a very short (5m) meander cave on the river banks, its shape explaining the name.

Tunnel Hill is about 3km south of Seven Star Cave and is pierced by a long cave. I was told that a cave 200-300m long had been discovered here as late as 1980 and perhaps this is the same one.

White Dragon Cave is in South Creek Hill, about 3km south of town on the Yangshuo road.

Lotus Cavern and Crown Cave lead off the banks of the Li River some 30k south of Guilin.



Yangshuo

According to the tourist promotion, Guilin has the finest scenery in China, and Yangshuo is the best in Guilin. This has to be among the world's great scenic sights and the authorities have not been slow to realize the monopoly profits available from cruises down the Li River between Guilin and Yangshuo. The scenery is stunning; great blue, green and grey cliffs of limestone rising 300m out of the river, almost painfully verdant to Australian eyes. In this section the Li River cuts an antecedent gorge through a landscape of karst cones and depressions, and there is a much greater likelihood of long caves here than in Guilin itself.

Cave Exploration in China

No doubt the question uppermost in readers' minds relates to the prospects for cave exploration in China. All I can say from personal experience is that no impediments of any kind were placed in my way other than the sheer difficulty of communication. At the same time, of course, my explorations were cursory in the extreme and were restricted to public parks.

This opportunity to visit China was so unexpected that I was not even armed with maps and the limited literature available. Lex Brown, the only other caver I know who has been able to travel independently in China had no more time than I did, but his advice and assistance in Hong Kong was invaluable to planning.

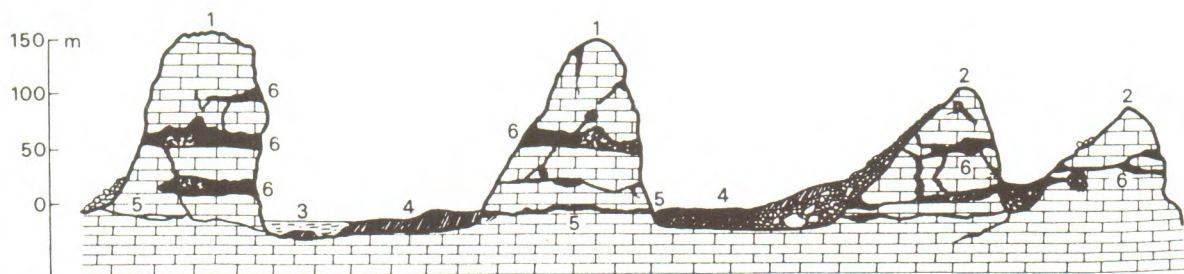
There is no doubt that a great deal of cave exploration is going on in China, but until recently at least it has been strictly directed, in accordance with Maoist ideology, towards productive socialist construction. Thus a river cave will be explored for such functional purposes as underground dam construction, irrigation diversion and hydroelectric potential. In the process, large numbers of people may be mobilised. For example, exploration and exploitation of the Tisu underground river, near Tuan in western Guangxi Province, required more than 2,000 local people for surface reconnaissance, exploration and cave surveying which turned up 169 caves. The Tisu underground river itself was shown to be some

50km long (no, not all traversable yet) and drains an area of 1050 km². In the west of Guangxi Province, the Soliao underground river system has been explored, producing over 100 caves in an area of 30 km², the deepest being 120m, the longest 4,000m, and a total cave length of 15 km.

I made enquiries about recreational-type caving and was told there are groups in Guilin, Liuzhou and Nanning at least, and that a new cave was discovered as recently as 1980 in Tunnel Hill in Guilin. This compares with the situation reported in 1975 by Joe Jennings, who was unable to find evidence anywhere in the country of recreational caving. Even in the densely populated south, there must still be significant areas of limestone virtually unexplored because there is no pressing utilitarian need. North of Nanning, the flight from Hong Kong to Kunming took 10 minutes to cross a vast area of kegelkarst, entirely forested and with no sign whatever of streams and only one or two marginal vehicle tracks. No need for irrigation or whatever here, but what caves are there underneath an area receiving maybe 1500-2000mm precipitation a year?

Conclusion

In the last few years ideology in China has moved away from Maoist puritanism towards greater pragmatism, mobility and a modicum of personal freedom, at least to the point where some leisure activities will not be discouraged simply because the contribution to socialism is not immediately apparent. Only in the five or six years since this thaw began have Chinese scientific workers been able to exchange views with their foreign colleagues. If our experience is any guide, continued research will go hand-in-hand with exchanges on technical and technological advances in cave exploration as well, and there will be many of us who will welcome an opportunity to join our Chinese colleagues in the further exploration of the largest karst region in the world.



Cross-section of tower karst in Southern China (from Balázs)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Tower karst hills trimmed by lateral fluvial erosion | 4. Karst border plain |
| 2. Typical kegelkarst hills | 5. Active foot cave |
| 3. River | 6. Inactive (fossil) foot cave |

Safety and Techniques

CLAUSTRAL CATASTROPHY

There have been quite a few short articles printed in Newspapers and outdoor magazines. None of which really tell what happened on that Australia Day long weekend.

On Sunday, five of us left Sydney and drove to Mt Tomah, arriving late - 10.15am. The amount of cars in the car park told us there were a few parties ahead of us. We walked across the fields of long grass on the ridge, the sky had a very light cover of cloud and the valley was full of mist. We descended to the saddle, which dropped off steeply into the creek. A pleasant stroll down the sandy bed of the creek, a short swim, a down climb, a jump and into the steep narrow canyon. We stopped for photos of the cascades and the thick green ferns and mosses.

We arrived at the top of the three pitches with two other groups. The first consisted of one leader and about 12 youths most of whom were inexperienced, did not own their own gear, and had to pass the abseiling equipment up the pitch after each abseil. The second group (SPAN) had eight members of which all were experienced canyoneers or abseilers. We put on our cold water gear, full wet suits and pile clothing, and had a long lunch. It started to sprinkle.

Half an hour later, after leaving enough time for the first group to continue, eight members of SPAN quickly organised themselves and rappelled the first pitch, 12 metres. We followed and sat in the water between pitches, the drizzle turned into a ten minute downpour. The first party managed to complete the third pitch (14 metres) and SPAN started down. The water was rising, but slowly.

The first of our group abseiled down, waded across the pool and watched the last member of SPAN descending the third and last pitch. He left the rope there for us. By the time it was my turn down (last) the water was very high and fast making breathing impossible while descending and unclipping. The torrent crashing down gave us headaches and made conversation impossible.

The third pitch starts under a natural arch, the hole being 1.2 metres high called "The Keyhole". Three members of our party had decided not to risk the third pitch and had climbed on to the arch. Two of us pulled down the rope and hurled ourselves towards the others. The water was now 2 meters deep and covering The Keyhole, we found ourselves in a whirlpool just like that around the plug hole in a bathtub. Round and round with tangled rope, both of us struggling to stay afloat and not get sucked down the plug hole. Garbled voices and blurry figures. I hurled the rope towards them to drag us in, and with help, we climbed onto the arch. After a few minutes of coughing and nausea, we realised we had lost our rope in that episode.

The water was still rising and started lapping at our feet. We had no where to go perched on a little ledge between the rising water and 14 meters of waterfall. The walls were vertical and slippery, we belayed ourselves to three rusty 'I' bolts at our feet.

The water was still rising, two of us climbed out to a tiny ledge 50cm x 20cm. The raging torrent was now at waist level for the other three who were bridging across the walls. The noise was deafening. After 10 minutes the water subsided to ankle depth just as quickly as it rose. We organised ourselves better and relaxed for an hour.

Two of us were sitting on a slippery ledge directly above the 14 meter waterfall. The other three standing on the arch shivering, as they were in the wind and spray of the second pitch. We were acutely aware that the high water mark was 6 metres above normal flow and 4 metres above us! It got dark before the water was low enough to proceed. We finished the lunch scraps, a block of chocolate and dried fruit. The other three covered themselves with a lilo. It was raining and windy. The longest night any of us have ever had, was spent staring at the pitch black and the glow worms.

Seventeen hours later, the sky was finally light enough to see. The water was down and the rope left by the SPAN group was intact. We abseiled down and found our own rope in a log jam at the bottom.

This part of the canyon has a catchment area of approximately 4 square kilometres, 100 metres further down, Raynon Canyon comes in on the right, making a catchment area of approximately 8 square kilometres. The next 500 metres of canyon has verticle walls and no alcoves to escape the raging torrent. This is the part of the canyon in which SPAN was caught. Eight went in at the top and five came out. The other three were caught in log jams.

We continued on, past the connection with Raynon Brook into half a kilometre of open canyon. About 200 meters further on we saw a person sitting between two large logs and wondered why he did not welcome us. A cold shiver ran down our spines. Then another broken body. It did not surprise us knowing the situation.

The next canyon revealed five stunned survivors with varying injuries, standing around a smokey fire. We walked out together meeting up with the first party on the exit track. They had spent the night cold but dry in the glow worm cave.

We climbed silently out of the canyon and were met by the Police Rescue Squad who were looking for the over-due first party.

SHANE WILCOX

KISS MY WHIP

(A Masochists Guide to Caving)

FRANK SALT

Having spent most of the winter months in rain, and painful attempts to get off the west and north coasts with scuba gear for a dive, the summer arrived at last and the sea began to flatten.

Obviously time to give up while I was still on a loosing streak and try something else - (CAVING!!!). I blew the dust off my gear and tried on the dried up and crumpled boots, the grit impregnated vests and the S.R.I. Harness that had fitted me so nicely when I'd been 10kg lighter. Agony!!

So off to Mole Creek to give it all a try. Our party numbered seven on Saturday morning (18.12.81) and the day dawned warm, clear and lovely for walking. With this in mind we donned our gear and made our way to Kubla Khan taking with us not only S.R.T. gear but also ladders to double up on possible perversions. The day had been designated a photographic day much to the upset of the two younger members of the party who were hoping to get a good day's caving out of the trip. Slow passage down the drops and through the cave was further slowed by the process of blinding people with flashes and making photographic models spend long periods kneeling in cold pools (it makes them look deeper on the photo).

At last the two younger members could bear it no longer, and casting remarks as to the mental state of the rest of the party, shot out of the cave leaving us looking at photographic subjects and making remarks like "Three weeks at f8" to the blue figures in the pools.

At this point I made an attempt to photograph "The Great Khan", a 10m + high stalagmite in a huge rock filled chamber, using magnesium flash powder. I set up the camera, opened the shutter and poured out half of a cup full of magnesium mixture. I then inserted a 20mm long length of slow fuse into the mixture, (enough for 20 seconds according to ICI) and lit the end. Instead of making the normal fizzing noise the fuse made a high pitched whistle. The noise was so unexpected that I froze over the flash for a second, still holding the match in my hand, then the 20 second fuse blew through, (approx 1 1/2 seconds) and the flare exploded.

For about five minutes I was unable to see anything except a large dancing white blob in front of my eyes, but as my vision came back the first thing I could see was my right hand, blackened and with what looked like a lace curtain of burnt skin hanging from it.

As my vision returned, so did the feeling in my hand and eyelids. A move was made as far as the first cold rimstone pool and both face and hand was plunged in. A rapid exit through the cave was made with stops at every cold pool (fortunately there are a fair number when one looks). The fact that we had also brought 3 x 10m ladders with us made it easy for me to get up the pitches. (I dread to think how I would have managed with a blasted hand on S.R.T.).

Once out of the cave I found the run between the entrance and Mole Creek reached an all time high in pain due to the lack of cold pools and the heat of the day. The nurse at Mole Creek quickly passed me on to the Deloraine Hospital, who in turn passed me on to Launceston. A quick patch job there and I was passed on to Savage River where six days in hospital was followed by six weeks of dressings three times a day.

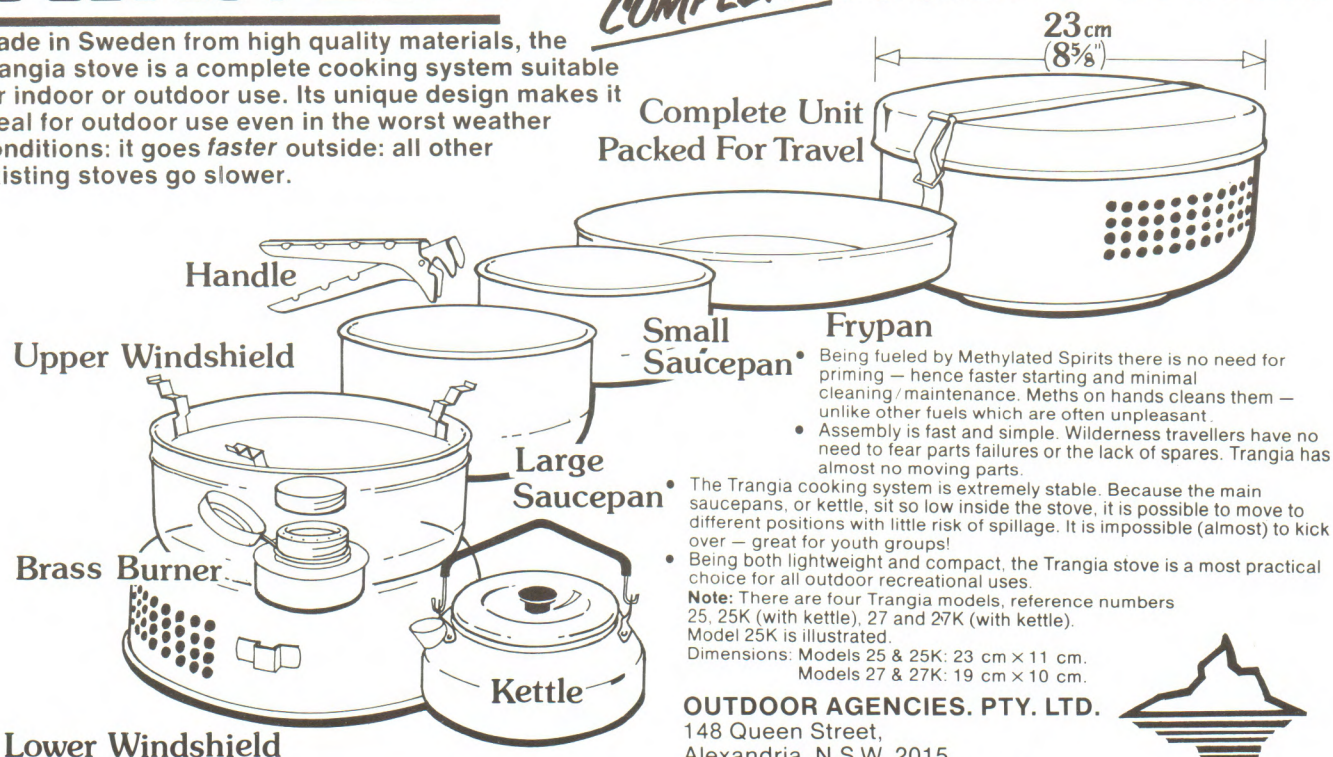
The end result was a hand that looks a little like something out of an Egyptian tomb, although it can still push a Jumar up a rope. The photo? That didn't come out. My body, crouched over the flash threw a vast black shadow down the chamber. However, I did get the Masochist of The Year award from my friends; a choice between a new whip or some more flash powder.

Reprinted from Speleo Spiel No.175, March 1982

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NOTICES and NEWS

Apologies to the Following People

* Viv Lord and VSA

The article in issue No 95 entitled "Lord of the Kitchen" was written by Viv Lord and first appeared in Nargun.

* Macarthur Caving Group who were left off the inside front cover in Issue Number 95 remedied in this issue.

* Macquarie University Caving Group whose correct address is
c/-Sports Association,
Macquarie University

Solo Cave Diver

In April 1981 a solo cave diver was encountered at Cooleman by Andrew Pavey. The obvious diving gear hanging up to dry led to a conversation which revealed that the guy had dived Murray Cave to its furthest known extent. The sump was 14m long, 2-6m deep and "didn't lead to much more than rockpile". The solo diver subtly avoided identification, but admitted diving in several caves near Mt Gambier and being aware of the Cave Diving Association of Australia (CDAA) and category three requirements, but not having got around to formalising membership or qualifications. This occurred mid-week with no one else in camp at Cooleman. There was probably not another soul for at least 30km in any direction.

Copy Deadlines

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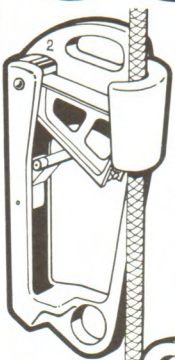
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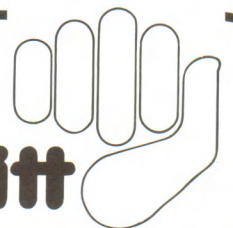
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DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

BCA Just a quick note to let you know that the Baptist Caving Association is still in existence. Over the past year or two we have trips to Colong, Timor, Bungonia, Wyanbene, Tuglow and training field days. We are also interested in inter-club weekend trips to new areas.

BMSC The Club's main centre of activity continues to be at Cliefden with the survey of Taplow Maze, which now approaches 2km of surveyed passage. The main traverse line continues as new passage is located which has slowed down detailing, but with a survey detail team in operation survey and draughting is being accelerated. All parties visiting Taplow Maze Cave are requested to respect survey markers. As a result of the survey, potential leads are being followed in an effort to connect Taplow with CL31.

Material improvements have been carried out on Cliefden Cottage (rest home for retired cavers?) at the club's expense with the coup de grace being a new loo. During March 82, an historic weekend was held at Cliefden with members of the Rothery family (who held the original land grant and now reside at "Cliefden Homestead") being shown parts of Cliefden Main Cave. This was followed by a rarely permitted inspection of the magnificent homestead and its amazing contents all of which are being faithfully and lovingly maintained. The entire weekend activities were witnessed by a reporter and photographer from the "Womans Weekly" and also recorded on video by members of the Railway's Photographic club, the results of which are eagerly awaited. The weekend also materially added to the clubs knowledge of the areas' history. A new (and the most significant cave) has been found at Billys Creek. This cave has been tentatively named and numbered "Balls Cave" BCl. Its name is derived from the vast number of large round mud balls contained within the cave which are thought to be a result of water movement. The cave is some 100m long and currently terminates in a lake some 10m in diameter with a guesstimated depth of 7-10m. Further details will become available following further exploration and surveying. Periodic visits to this area over the past 10-15 years has finally paid off for BMSC.

Ian Bogg

CEGSA During Easter Graham Pilkington led a trip to the Nullarbor. New extensions were found in Thampanna Cave, giving it a depth of approximately 50m. The last leg of survey in Madura South Cave was completed and the map is ready to be drawn up. He also visited and mapped further extensions in the Ezam of Mullahmullang, which judging from tide marks in the cave, had the Southerly Buster UNDER two metres of water. Terry

Reardon also had a mixed diving and dry caving trip to the Nullarbor.

On the home front, caving activity has been fairly dormant with a few relocation trips to the South East early in the year. Planning for the next conference, preparation of a Nullarbor Caving atlas, and kids, seem to be robbing people of most free time.

Negotiations are under way with National Parks & Wildlife for a new hut at Naracoorte.

Kevin Mott

CSS In January, the Society had a break, if undeserved, from caving. February saw CSS in action with a visit to Cooleman to check cave numbers and replace visitors books. As if this effort was too much, the next trip, ostensibly to visit South Coast sea caves, saw lots of sailing and surfing but n'er a cave.

In March, CSS visited Indi and Limestone Creek - a pleasant and interesting area new to most of these present, and which will remain new to that half of the party who got lost on the way there and spent the weekend bushwalking instead! Those not geographically embarrassed also examined a new limestone area two to three kilometres north of the Indi outcrop.

In that month, we also visited London Bridge, to replace the visitor book, and Wee Jasper, to look at some small caves on Punchbowl Hill.

Derek Synnott

KSS Most of our activity has been at Sebastopol, where we have rediscovered Spring Cave and Judd's Hole. (Skeleton Cave is still "missing"; we need a fire through the long grass to give us a chance of finding it again). Hard work with a specially-made 8-foot crowbar has opened a head-sized hole into a promising extension of Figtree Cave; any skinny speleos coming to Kempsey?

One trip to Stockyard probed Walls Cave but failed to confirm it has the deepest on the Macleay. We've "lost" the deepest extension.

A recent trip to Willi Willi found several caves among the lantana on Crystal Ridge. We were in some doubt whether they'd been described before; now they're numbered and securely tagged for the future.

Philip Holberton

MSS Work at Abercrombie has continued resulting in the discovery of a new passage in Stable Cave which may lead to a third exit. This passage will be thoroughly investigated on the club's next trip.

M.S.S. were able to assist in contribution to the recently published book "The Abercrombie Caves" by author Geoff Bates. The book covers the

DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

comprehensive history and development of Abercrombie Caves including details of the natural flora and fauna and speleological work done since 1968. The club will be publishing an occasional paper on Abercrombie Caves which will include a complete cave index with relevant maps and cave descriptions. Our week long trip to Yarrangobilly Caves was a success with the complete "de wiring" of Y 26 Harrie Wood Cave at the request of the N.P. & W.S. The wire in this old tourist cave was installed approximately 80 years ago as a protection against breakages by the then tourists. The removal of the wire does not bring any danger to the formations and improves the cave 100%. Other work at Yarrangobilly included a C.R.G. 6 survey of Y29 "Mill Stream Swallet" which will be published in the club's next newsletter.

Members are hoping to be able to continue work at Jenolan and in particular the dig in J79 Maiden Cave pending review of the present access restrictions.

Scott MacFarlane

MUCG Some of you may have noticed we've changed our name. We were MUSIC, but now we are the Macquarie University Caving Group (MUCG). Possibly because of this less confusing name, membership has shot up to 47 (of that, 40 are new members). Because of the large number of new members, most of our trips this year have been geared towards the teaching of caving techniques and familiarization with caving areas. These trips have included a number to Bungonia, Wyambene, Cliefden, Wee Jasper, and a long weekend trip to Buchan Victoria. As well, MUCG has made use of the university's climbing wall for the practice of SRT and the teaching of vertical rescue. As well as familiarizing new members with caving techniques, the club has introduced them to the other sides of caving, with conservation work in Cliefden Main, and the removal of pumping pipes from B68.

David R Hamilton

OSS Bill Johnston has been re-elected President for this year. Trips have been made to Juglow, Bungonia and Abercrombie, but a proposed trip to Cooleman Plain was aborted due to snow. OSS is still doing cleaning and renovating work at Cliefden with help from all visiting clubs. Cliefden is still as popular as ever with visiting clubs fully booking the area most months so advisable to apply for a permit six weeks in advance. New charges will apply for use of cottage at Cliefden after June 82, \$2.00 for first day and \$1.00 each per day thereafter. Work at Canonodine under the guidance of Derek Halls has been progressing steadily - hoping to produce a book in future. This year the club is going further afield with proposed trips to Timor and Tasmania.

Ray Rowney

SCS The Society is currently involved in three projects. The first is exploring the one hundred newly discovered caves of Ida Bay, that may lead to an extension of Exit Cave. The second is mapping and documenting the caves and surrounds of the Mole Creek System in preparation to do battle with our State Forestry Commission who intend to annex the area to the State Forests list. Such action will allow the systematic destruction of the forests to the obvious detriment of caves such as Herberts Pot and Georgies Hall. The final and ambitious project is the survey of Exit Cave. Any mainland cavers visiting Tassy will be more than welcome if they wish to be involved. We would also like to congratulate the Eberhard brothers and the ICC for their work in Ice Tube which has resulted in a new Australian Depth Record.

Phil Jackson

SRGWA Following a slight restructuring of the Group, the activity of the "small circle of caving friends" is steadily increasing. Following a break-in of Strongs Cave (Wi 63) during January, SRG was asked by the National Parks Authority to design and install a new gate. Strongs Cave was broken into again, as were Devils Lair (Wi 61) and Crystal Cave (Wi 62) just prior to Easter. A combined WASG/SRG trip, assisted by National Parks, installed a new lid type gate in Strongs Cave on 22 May 82, modifying the existing gate at the same time. Maintenance was carried out on the Crystal Cave gates during the same day. The location of Thampanna Cave (N206) as listed in the ASF Newsletter No.95 was proved during a flying weekend visit to the Nullarbor in March 82. The region was almost back to normal after a 150mm deluge several days previously, making a few comments about Thampanna's "mummified roos" and birds obsolete. The "roos" are no longer at the base of the entrance rockpile while the birds have been washed away. Several obviously unexplored caves were seen from the air.

The 2.5m halite staligmite discovered during the Goede/Jennings Expedition (ASF No.92) and later recovered for dating experiments formed the centrepiece of the W.A. Museum's Open Day on 18 May 82. The staligmite's base had been eroded by dripping water and broke into twelve pieces when it toppled over. The recovered sections, measuring 2.75m, will ultimately go on permanent display at the museum.

Due to postal and production costs the Group's newsletter, 'The Caver's Chronicle' will become an annual (or biennial) event, sent to selected societies. Material requiring wider circulation will be submitted to the ASF Newsletter or other appropriate publications.

Norman Poulter

SUSS The club has been introducing its large influx of new cavers to all the aspects of being a speleo. This has included SRT techniques at Bungonia, sump diving at Cooleman and the fun of squeezes at Jenolan. Trips to other caves have also been arranged, one of the more notable

DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

involved taking scaling poles into Spider Cave, Jenolan, to examine avens.

Some members are concentrating on improving SRT techniques, at places such as Big Hole, for their forthcoming trip to Tasmania in December.

All SUSS members are hoping for some healthy competition from other clubs in the Speleo Sports to be held on September 4 at Macquarie Uni.

Roy Winstanley

TCC Despite the lack of a report in the last few ASF Newsletters, TCC has been far from inactive. The discovery of a hole in the phreatic maze of JF 341 with loud stream noises emanating from it has led to a concerted digging effort in an attempt to reach the stream. The significance of this hole is obvious, when it is realised that no other active stream is known in the cave. Located west of The Chairman near Rift Cave on Junee Ridge it appears to be the major cave of a series located in its immediate vicinity. The results of further digging should prove interesting.

Our adrenalin junkies have added cave diving to their repertoire of methods for obtaining a fix. The resurgence at the end of Welcome Stranger was discovered to be a straight narrow tube, rectangular in section and sloping about 20° to the horizontal. Thirty metres of line was run out to a depth of 10 metres before a narrow slot stopped progress. A large dome in the roof looked promising but proved to be solid rock, unlike the floor which was very soft silt giving a zero visibility return to the surface.

The Junee Resurgence has also been the subject of an intensive diving programme. About 180 metres of fixed line is now installed from the sump to a large waterfilled chamber. Several leads from this chamber head upwards but are difficult to explore because of bad silting. One tube ascends to within two metres of the starting level of the sump! Other dives away from Maydena have included Westmoreland Cave, Shish Kebab and a near traverse of the Kubla Khan sump, all at Mole Creek.

Aside from this high drama stuff, TCC has also been doing more usual caving activities revolving mainly around Growling Swallet and the surrounding area in the Florentine Valley of Maydena.

Growling Swallet itself has been the site of intensive exploration over the summer following the discovery of a separate drainage system "beyond" the main sump. This series has many large avens, spectacular high level dry streamway, a couple of incoming waterfalls and a frustratingly small tube down which the combined streams disappear. Thus far, over 600m of new passage has been surveyed with a similar amount known but not surveyed. Use of a scaling pole should prove interesting as will the descent of a number of recently discovered 30-40m shafts.

A combined TCC/SCS trip last year to Serendipity (SE of Growling Swallet) proved to be an epic the like of which has not been seen in Tassie since the Khazad-dum era of the early seventies. Ending in scungy crawls at an estimated depth of 250m, the pot had the potential to rival KD for depth but this now seems unlikely.

Another major stream sink nearby with the self-explanatory name of Ice Tube has enormous depth potential. A recent trip put the depth at about 300m with the team being stopped at the head of a 30-40m wet pitch because of lack of gear. Planning for a further (hopefully record breaking) trip was thwarted by heavy snow - we could not get into the Florentine Valley! By the time this is published the Australian cave depth record which has stood for a little over ten years may well be broken (Khazad-dum was bottomed on 18 December, 1971 of a depth of 321m (now 323m)).

Stuart Nicholas

UNSWSS UNSWSS has remained active this year, although still finding it difficult to attract and hold new members. Recent publications include maps of Coppermine Cave (Y12), all 14 pages of it! Leak in the Creek (Y112) and Yarrowigah Cave (CL13), with most surveying being carried out by Greg and Liz Hurst.

Trips in 1982 have included Cliefden (surveying), Yarrangobilly (discovery of a new sporting squeeze, some passageway and increasing the total depth of West Deep Creek), Narrangullen (a prospectives' trip where one said "but my thongs give much better grip for climbing than other shoes" and another thought that a torch would not be necessary!), Tuglow, Bungonia (S.R.T.), and Timor (for a geology thesis).

Graeme Pattison

VSA Since the last Down Under All Over VSA has kept up a moderate level of caving activities. Bat Ridges still continues to receive a lot of attention, many more caves have been surveyed and other miscellaneous scientific work is in progress. A trip to Tasmania at Easter concentrated on the Mole Creek area with most of the usual caves being visited. The Buchan Reserve surveying continues. The B-32 dig in the reserve is slowly proceeding and entry to this cave, which was silted up in the floods of June 1979, will once more be realized. A photographic trip into Scrubby Creek cave was undertaken and should provide our cave records with more photographic information. The rockfall at the end of Scrubby Creek still defies attempts to penetrate it.

A new galvanized iron roof was put on Homeleigh and all the leaks appear to have disappeared.

There is not much to report on the Potholes situation except that it is still being monitored.

Finally a beginners vertical techniques day was held and was successful for both the number of people who came, and the amount of technique they appeared to learn.

Tom Whitehouse

Bungonia Abseiling and Caving School
5 Balfour Road
AUSTINMER 2514
042 673415 (8.00a.m. to 9.30p.m.)
042 674270 (9.30a.m. to 4.30p.m.)

Dear Speleo,

As you may already be aware, Bungonia Abseiling and Caving School is offering a wide range of high standard courses. These courses are not only for the novice but also for the more experienced caver or abseiler.

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abseil and prusik over rope protectors,

abseil and prusik over tails,

abseil and prusik over knots in the rope,

use basic safety techniques,

maintain your equipment,

bottom belay,

then you probably don't need to do S.R.T.I, but you probably DO NEED to do S.R.T.II and S.R.T.III.

Consider, do you know how to rig a rope properly? Tying a rope onto the nearest anchor point and putting on a couple of rope protectors will do on some short pitches, but for proficient rigging more skills are needed to ensure a safe easily negotiable pitch. Do you also know how to get yourself out of difficulties on a pitch? Do you know how to get your fellow caver out of difficulties on a rope or rescue him after he's had an accident? It's a good idea to know how to handle these situations before they happen.

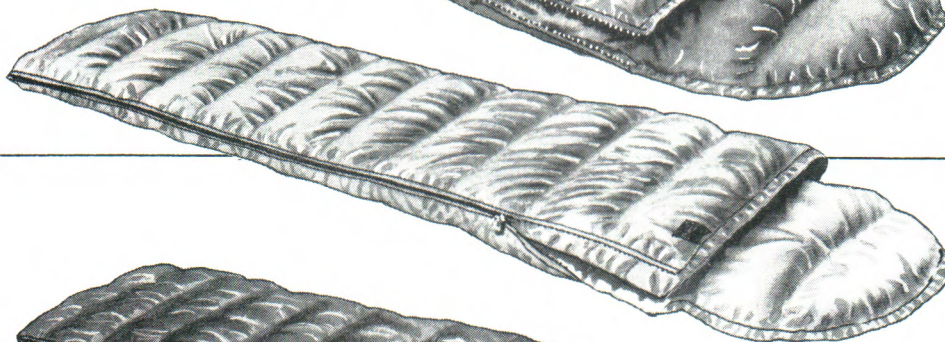
Bungonia Abseiling and Caving School also runs courses in caving skills and in cave photography. We also have plans for even more courses in 1983. Hopefully you will take advantage of one of our courses to improve your caving skills.

Yours in Caving
Richard Willson

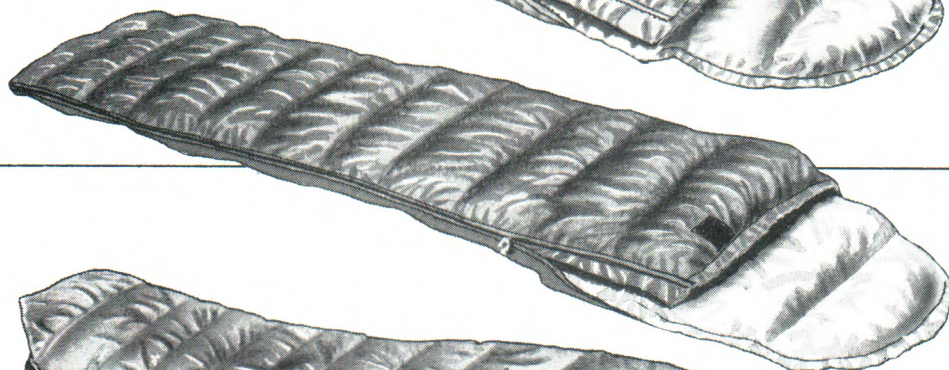
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HIGH PLAINS	1.80 kg	Box Wall	1100 g	Featherdown	-5°C	Full Zip	34 x 23
HOTHAM	1.60 kg	Box Wall	700 g	550 Loft Down	-5°C	Full Zip	34 x 23
MELALEUCA	1.55 kg	Box Wall	800 g	550 Loft Down	-15°C	Side Zip	34 x 23
BOGONG	1.60 kg	Box Wall	900 g	550 Loft Down	-15°C	Full Zip	34 x 23
SNOWLORD	2.00 kg	Slant Wall	1100 g	550 Loft Down	-25°C	Side Zip	37 x 27

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