

# ASF NEWSLETTER

THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



photo N POULTER

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AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION  
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SPELEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP WA		PO Box 120 Nedlands WA 6009	
WESTERN AUSTRALIA SPELEOLOGICAL GROUP		PO Box 67 Nedlands WA 6009	

## ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

AVONDALE SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY	c/- 20 Avondale Rd Corranbong NSW 2265
CAMPBELL TOWN CAVING & OUTDOOR GROUP	PO Box 281 Campbelltown NSW 2560
CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB	PO Box 92 CAIRNS QLD 4870
MOUNT ISA CAVING CLUB	PO Box 2328 Mt Isa QLD 4825
MACARTHUR CAVING GROUP	PO Box 537 Campbelltown NSW 2560
NORTH WEST WALKING CLUB	PO Box 107 Ulverstone TAS 7315
NORTH QUEENSLAND SPELEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION	1 Boden St Edge hill Qld 4870
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SCG SOUTH AUSTRALIA	c/- 44 Fullarton Rd Norwood SA 5067







## NOTES ON THE ASF

### THE FIFTEENTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE AGE

Tasmania - January 1985

For your edification we present...**SPELEOMANIA**

This is the BICON you have been waiting for and its finally entered the phreatic maze of organisation!

#### **DATES:**

The conference proper will run from Monday January 7 to Thursday January 10, inclusive.

#### **COST:**

At this time the cost is estimated to be around \$80 for six days accommodation including food. Needless to say this is subject to the vagaries of economics and other imponderables.

#### **TRANSPORT:**

Block bookings have been made on the good ship EMPRESS as follows:

Melbourne - Devonport - Friday 4 Jan 1984  
Devonport - Melbourne - Sunday 13 Jan 1984  
Devonport - Melbourne - Sunday 27 Jan 1984

If you wish to said on any of these dates, **PLEASE** notify SPELOMANIA as soon as possible, giving name, address, number travelling, type of berth (chair or cabin) and car type. Otherwise its up to you.

If you fly please use ANSETT where possible.

#### **FIELD TRIPS:**

Both pre and post conference field trips will be run, but all will be fairly loosely structured with the emphasis on doing your own thing. There is certainly more than enough for everyone to do, no matter what your interest or abilities may be - we can even provide sites for digs! That prime vertical caving area, the Florentine Valley, may be subject to fire bans and hence access could be restricted at times, however this should not cause too many problems.

Other areas - Mole Creek, Ida Bay, Mount Anne and so on - should have relatively unrestricted access.

#### **PROPOGANDA:**

The usual T shirts, stickers and such like will be on sale prior to, during and probably after the whole shebang.

#### **ADDRESS:**

SPELOMANIA  
P.O. BOX 121, MOONAH, TASMANIA 7009

#### **MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING**

28/29 Jan 1984

(with most of the really boring bits left out)

The following is a brief(?) account of the goings on at the January 1984 ASF Council Meeting. I have attempted to cover the major

issues, the unabridged versions can be obtained from you club secretary.

**Presidents Report;** Reprinted in full in issue number 102 as the "State of the Union Address"

**Incorporation;** The final motion to allow the ASF to become incorporated was passed unanimously by the meeting. The ASF is now to be known as the Australian Speleological Federation Incorporated.

**Special Levy - South West Tasmania;** Due to the early Federal election and the subsequent High Court challenge, the money collected to mount a campaign was not used. The meeting voted that the money be placed in a Special Karst Conservation Fund in order that money be available when the next conservation issue affecting caves blows up. The problem in the past has been that we have never had any money up front to fight campaigns and the people who have loaned the money have often had to wait extended periods before they are reimbured.

**Caveconvict;** Phil Mackey has asked that those who are entitled to receive conference proceedings send him their name and current address so that proceedings can be sent.

**Speleovision;** The conference proceedings were due to be printed in February and are expected to be distributed shortly.

**Speleomania;** The progress report appeared in full in issue 102, Speleomania ads will appear in every issue this year.

**IUS Congress 1989;** ASF is negotiating to hold the 1989 IUS Congress in Australia. Dr Guy Cox, convenor of the committee investigating this matter, has organised a multi-lingual letter to be sent to every member of the IUS Committee suggesting Australia as a suitable venue.

**Nibicon;** For those of you who don't know, NIBICON was the ninth bianual conference of ASF (Speleomania is the sixteenth!) The proceedings of this conference have never been published because Mr A Renshaw will not hand over the tapes of the sessions. This has become an institutionalised annual wrangle and will probably remain so for years to come. If Mr Renshaw ever does hand over the tapes, the wrangle as to whether to publish the proceedings (half the papers are out of date and the authors don't want them published) should keep us occupied for the next ten years!

**Cave Safety;** A new set of abseiling guidelines were circulated for comment. The guidelines will be published in ASF Newsletter 104.

**Certificates of Merit;** There were ten recipients of this award in 1983. The citations appeared in full in ASF Newsletter 102.

**Conservation;** Mr A Davey submitted a paper entitled "Nullabor World Heritage Nomination - Proposal for ASF Sponsorship". The recommendations detailed in the paper were accepted by the meeting. A copy of the proposal is reprinted in full elsewhere in this issue.

**Newsletter;** The editor did her normal rant and rave about the injustices of the world.

- I also submitted my resignation, which is effective from January 1985.

- The editor circulated a discussion paper on the possibility of future conference proceedings being published by Helectite and the ASF Newsletter. The meeting decided that the ASF Conference proceedings be discontinued as a series and that papers from the conferences be published by Helectite and/or the ASF Newsletter within two years of each conference.

**International Relations;** The meeting was informed that the IUS Vice President Russell Gurnee and Mrs Gurnee visited Australia in May 1983 to attend the Fifth Australasian Conference on Cave Management (organised by ASF). While they were here they took the opportunity to go



caving and meet as many cavers as possible. Cavers across Australia were extremely hospitable and the Gurnee's were very impressed. Take a bow all involved.

**Library;** Mr A Spate reminded clubs that copies of their club newsletter should be sent to the National Library for inclusion in the ASF Library. Attention was drawn to the fact that the inter-library loan system can be used to access material held in the National Library.

**Speleohandbook II;** Well the saga continues. The ultimate cut off date for Speleohandbook II was supposed to have been 16 May 1984. The Handbook Commission was also supposed to have circulated each member society with a complete dump of all material in the data bank by 31 Mar 1984. Neither of the above dates has been adhered to. It looks like we are going to say the same things all over again in 1985.

**New Members;** The RAN Caving Association and Endeavour Caving and Recreation Club were accepted as members of the ASF.

**New Associated Organisations;** Cave Country Caverneers, Top End Speleological Society, Perthville Potholers, North Side Cavers and SCG South Australia were invited to become Associated Organisations.

**Membership;** The old "Associate" category has been abandoned. The categories of "Participating Associate", "Corresponding Associate", "Institutional Associate" and "Subscriber" were approved by the meeting.

**Patron;** Dr J N Jennings has been asked to accept the title of "Patron of the Australian Speleological Federation Incorporated". The meeting carried the motion unanimously.

**Sydney Speleological Society;** SSS submitted their resignation from the ASF. The resignation was accepted unanimously and the relevant management authorities have been notified.

**New Office Bearers;** Mr S Nicholas (Tas), Mr M Armstrong (NSW) and Mr D Warden (NSW) were each elected to the position of vice-president. Mr T O'Leary was elected as secretary and Mr G McKenna is the new assistant secretary.

**Cathy Rothery;** The meeting thanked Cathy for her services as secretary of the ASF.

**Capitation Fees;** The damage for 1985 has been set at \$7.50.

**1986/1987 Bi-annual Conference;** NSW Speleo Council will host this conference, venue to be decided.

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## Letters to the Editor

I would like to thank all concerned, for I received the award on New Year morning 1984, from the President of the Chillagoe Caving Club (Alan Cannins) accompanied by approximately 20 of the CCC members, as a beautiful surprise.

After the presentation I took a party of friends on a tour of Spring Cave. I went in an entrance different from the main entrance and about an hour later popped out to the main entrance to see three CCC bods, I presumed waiting for me to turn up. I said follow me, come on, they tried but somehow I think that they took the wrong way and we didn't see them until around 5.30 pm. All asked "where did you go?". In a cave like Spring Creek you have to know where you are going (ask Don Matts).

Neil Smith was here for a couple of months late last year and has got me a fair bit interested in the Tassie Conference in January 1985, so if I see none of you before, might see you there. Regards to you all

Vince Kinnear

Chillagoe 6 Jan 1984

Editors Note: The Federation's highest award for outstanding contributions to Australian Speleology, the Edie Smith Award, was presented to Vince Kinnear in 1983. The full citation appears in ASF Newsletter 98.

## NOTICES and NEWS

### IUS CONGRESS SPAIN

Well it was to be in 1985, but it appears that things haven't quite come together. I am reliably informed that the IUS Congress will now be held in September 1986.

### CAVES AND KARST IN WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES

Does anybody know any caves and/or karst

features in the Western Division of NSW - there are a fair number of limestone occurrences known - but are there any caves? Contact Andy Spate, PO Box 18, Talbingo, NSW, 2720

### WHERE IS THE SECRETARY?

After much searching the secretary has finally been located. Terry O'Leary, the secretary of the ASF Inc lives at;

604/72 Henrietta Street  
Waverley NSW 2024  
02 387 4504 (h)  
02 217 3977 (w)

The inside of the front cover will be updated for the next issue.

### CAVES IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has now started, or restarted, the production of the statutory "plan of management" for the Blue Mountains, Kanangra-Boyd and Wollemi National Parks. Any Society and/or caver who wishes to have input into the planning process is invited to contact the Service - preferably with practical suggestions as well as whinges about current cave management practices or lack thereof. Canyoneers, rock climbers etc should also make their views apropos their own field of interest (Note this is a LEAK!). Write to:

The Senior Ranger - Planning  
National Parks and Wildlife Service  
Blue Mountains District  
PO Box 43  
Blackheath NSW 2785

## Copy Deadlines

**SPRING ISSUE : 1 AUG**

**SUMMER ISSUE : 1 NOV**



# Conservation Column

## NULLARBOR WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - PROPOSAL FOR ASF SPONSORSHIP

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Nullarbor Plain is one of the largest karst areas in the world and is arguably the most significant of all Australian karst areas at the international level, on account of unusual features arising from its semi-arid setting.
2. Many of the natural features of the Nullarbor Plain area are of outstanding international interest.
3. The Nullarbor area has a rich cultural heritage, especially Aboriginal.
4. The caves of the Nullarbor Plain offer outstanding cave exploration challenges (especially diving) of a character very different from caves anywhere else in the world.
5. The Nullarbor Plain in the sense of a vast and supposedly flat treeless landscape is as much a part of the Australian consciousness and folklore as Ayers Rock or the Great Barrier Reef.
6. The geological and environmental entity comprising the karst area, the flora and fauna and the cultural features of the Eucla Basin clearly fit the criteria for world heritage areas as outlined under the convention.

### BASIS FOR WORLD HERITAGE PROPOSAL

7. The property: The area to be nominated for listing on the world heritage register will be defined on geomorphological and ecological grounds as the entire onshore Eucla Basin.
8. Land use: The nomination will be made on the basis that the following land uses may continue within the area, subject to appropriate controls at sensitive sites: grazing, communications, transportation, car-touring, tourism accommodation and servicing, outdoor recreation including cave exploration, nature conservation, cultural features conservation, petroleum and mineral exploration, meteorological observation, survey and navigation and groundwater utilisation.
9. Land tenure and management: It is desirable for there to be active resource management of the entire area. This may encompass arrangements under the following land tenures: pastoral lease, special lease or other ownership of service centres, homesteads, communications installations etc., Aboriginal land, national park, wildlife or nature reserve, conservation park, or similar, or specially managed Crown land. Management arrangements for the lands of whatever tenure or use must provide for: landscape protection and management, maintenance/restoration of range condition, conservation of important natural and cultural features, fire management, appropriate tourism and recreation, and proper maintenance of access and structures and disposal of wastes.
10. Management co-ordination: It is desirable for the Commonwealth to provide some mechanism for co-ordinating the management of different land tenures and uses within the two states concerned, but it is envisaged that all direct management would be the responsibility of the state.
11. Management plans: The nomination will propose that an overall co-operative management plan be prepared for the entire area and that the detail be carried into effect via formal management planning instruments appropriate to the tenure of individual areas.

### NOMINATION PROCEDURE

12. Nomination of a property under the world heritage convention must come from the national government concerned. Protocol in Australia is that the Commonwealth only acts on the recommendation of the relevant state(s).
13. ASF has a special interest in one very important aspect of the proposed nomination and has wide experience of the area. It is proposed that ASF draft a detailed nomination and formally sponsor the initiative. ASF would then ask the two state governments to support the proposal and seek Commonwealth action to make the eventual nomination.
14. The states and/or the Commonwealth may considerably supplement the content of an ASF draft nomination. Nevertheless, it is highly appropriate that ASF sponsor the initial proposal. The state governments and appropriate Commonwealth authorities will be consulted during the process of preparing the ASF draft to make sure the preliminary submission has wide support.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

15. That ASF formally adopt the proposal to seek world heritage nomination for the Nullarbor karst area, in recognition of its outstanding international significance.
16. That the executive be authorised to approve a final nomination for submission on behalf of ASF to the two state governments and the commonwealth and to take appropriate action to advance the proposal.
17. That member societies be asked to co-operate in preparing the submission as much as possible.
18. That the submission be compiled and edited by someone working in consultation with the executive.



# THE LAVA CAVES ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF HAWAI'I ISLAND

Most of the well-known caves on the Hawai'i Island are on the eastern side of the island, on the slopes of the currently active volcano Kilauea, or the older Mauna Kea. A good summary of the largest of these is given by Wood, 1981. On a recent visit to the island, Teresa Dibbayawan and Guy Cox looked for lava caves on the western side of the island, in the Kona district, on the western flank of Mauna Loa. Most of the dated lava flows in this area are 19th century, though further south flows have occurred as recently as 1950.

We were told of two caves in the area, one, east of Keahole Airport, proved impossible to find - extensive bulldozing is taking place for a new development, and the roads have been realigned, so the entrance may be covered. The other was easier to find, and is described below, though it, too, is under threat from development. The map also shows a cave at Laniakea, a park in the centre of Kailua, but we could only find a large storm-water drain at this point - we followed it for a little way, but it showed no sign of entering a cave. Lava tube caves are often extremely inconspicuous from the outside, and it would seem certain that there are many more caves in the area, known locally or not known at all.

C Wood, 1981, Exploration and geology of some lava tube caves on the Hawaiian Volcanoes. Trans. Brit. Cave Res. Assoc., 8, 111-129.

## LAVA TUBE CAVE NEAR KONA - CAVE DESCRIPTION

### Location

Near Kahulu'u, between Ali'i Drive and Kuakini Highway.

The main entrance lies on the SE side of King Kamehameha III Road, by electricity post no. 6, where electric wires branch off to the east. Going uphill (towards Kuakini Highway) this is just after the 35 mph speedlimit signs. The entrance is a circular hole, partly surrounded by a stone wall, up a gravel slope (road cutting) at the side of the road. This entrance pitch is approximately 5m, but a small hole to one side provides a freeclimbable way in.

### Downflow

The cave extends from the entrance in both directions. Downflow, it consists of a spacious walking passage. Two side passages on the right join each other, and continue - we did not follow this branch to its end.

The main passage continues at walking size for a considerable distance, until a collapse causes a short constriction. After this it opens out into a big chamber, at the end of which daylight is visible, entering through a small eyehole. Just beyond the eyehole, on a ledge on the left of the passage, is the first of a number of burials. To the right, beyond this, is another entrance, which has steps formed up to it and a drystone wall screening it from direct communication with the chamber.

The entrance itself is a square hole,

approximately 0.5m on each side, and is presumably the means of access used for the burials - possibly it would formerly have been closed by a flat stone. In the chamber beyond this entrance are many more burials on ledges on the left and right of the passage. In some the bones are more or less in their natural positions, while in others the bones are jumbled. Some have what appears to be rotted timber and cloth with them.

At the end of this chamber the passage forks. The left-hand branch passes above the right-hand, and joins it again via two holes in the floor, the second of which provides the easier descent. The lower route is a hands-and-knees crawl. From here the passage is spacious for a while, but debris gradually fills it to the roof. "2109 feet" is written the wall at the end - this is presumably the distance from the roadside entrance.

### Upflow

Initially the upflow passage is large - 5 x 5m - and ascends steeply. After an S-bend there is an oxbow passage, above which the slope becomes more gentle. The roof lowers just before a large collapse which has formed a pit open to the sky - it looked as if it would be difficult to climb out here, however.

The way on is a dogleg crawl among boulders, leading to big passage again. The passage shape becomes more variable, and it ends in a low, wide chamber. Two other passages lead downflow from this chamber; one is initially quite large, but the roof soon lowers and we did not follow it further. Upflow, the passage seems to be totally choked, but a small passage on the left leads to a small and very inconspicuous hole to the surface. This entrance, too, seems to have been modified with dry-stone walling inside the cave, but we saw no sign of burials in the chamber beneath.

### General

The cave probably contains at least 2 km of passage. It seems to have been frequently visited, though not seriously vandalised. Many visitors seem to have unrolled balls of string as they went - a somewhat superfluous precaution in a cave consisting of a single passage with five entrances along its length! The cave also seems to have been surveyed. The passage is generally in a dull, dark-coloured lava, and devoid of lava speleothems. Near the bottom entrance, however, there is a small chamber lined with glossy chocolate-brown lava which has formed attractive patterns. Tree roots hang from the roof in several places.

At the time of our visit the whole area above the cave was being surveyed for a new residential and commercial subdivision. It is to be hoped that appropriate steps will be taken to preserve and conserve the cave, both for its archaeological significance and its geographical and scenic interest.

GUY COX SUSS



## THE HSC POSTER COLLECTION - A Review

NORMAN POULTER SRGWA

Some months ago, a form letter arrived from the Hills Speleology Club (NSW) advertising the release of a set of six full gloss colour, quality posters for \$20.00, posted.

The 41 x 60 centimetre posters, purported to have been chosen for their variety and clarity offered caving scenes from Tasmania, New South Wales and Papua New Guinea. Each poster represented a different photographer.

The packaging for my copies was innovative and effective and survived the rigors of the postal system extremely well.

Choosing the subject matter for such an enterprise would not have been easy and it would be equally difficult to predict the eventual quality of the individual posters from the original photographs. However, HSC came very close to achieving their ambitious aim as I attempt to outline below.

SHAWLS, WEE JASPER, by I Hine  
Format - vertical

An exceptional, well illuminated photograph of a colourful shawl against an adequately dark background. An out-of-focus piece of decoration in the foreground detracts from the main subject not one bit. A smaller shawl in the immediate background, both out-of-focus and slightly over-exposed unfortunately tends to attract the eye away from the main subject. Even so - a very good scene.

PLEASURE DOME, MOLE CREEK, by D Barlow  
Format - horizontal

Due to its size - the Pleasure Dome of Tasmania's Kubla Khan Cave taxes the skill of any photographer. This photograph depicts the upper half of the magnificent expanse of rimstone pools. With a caver in the middle distance to provide scale, the scene appears to be a little 'washed out' with a subsequent loss of colour. No doubt the staircase nature of the pools prevented effective shadowing to give a greater sense of depth to the scene although the shadowing and reflections in the immediate foreground rescues the situation. The column illuminated with a single flash by the 'scale' caver is a trifle over-exposed. Overall, a commendable effort.

ARAGONITE FLOWERS, by R Pinnock  
Format - vertical

Illuminated against a backdrop of reddish rock, the white flowers have excellent definition although a slight amount of over-exposure to the left of the decoration detracts slightly from an otherwise well composed and presented picture.

ENTRANCE OF MAMO KANANDA, by S Wilcox  
Format - vertical

Who couldn't be impressed by the sheer magnitude of the entrance to this New Guinea cave?

Looking along an 'L' shaped passage with the entrance out of sight around the corner, the daylight penetrating the massive passage throws a bluish hue over an impressive jumble of rocks and three people who provide scale, two augmenting the daylight with proximity flash. Most of the rockpile that these two cavers stand on is left black and constitutes the majority of the foreground and the lower part of the picture. This was a good move as it is a common trap to illuminate the entire scene and thus ruin the overall perspective. An extremely good photograph.

FORMATIONS, JENOLAN, by A Ridgeley  
Format - horizontal

Although a reasonably good picture, it is difficult to understand why this photograph was included in the set as it is not quite the same standard as the others already mentioned. This is not to condemn the picture out-of-hand. Although handicapped by two whitish stalagmites in the foreground that reflected a bit too much light in relation to the darker decoration behind, and despite the visible power cable, the rest of the scene is evenly illuminated, augmented by two hidden 'tourist lights'. The detail of the ceiling decoration is very clear, small helictites showing up particularly well.

MAIN CAVE, MT. FAIRY, by K Sale  
Format - horizontal

A well composed 'caver contemplation' shot in a low ceiling section of cave with some good water sculptured rock descending from the ceiling providing welcome additional interest to a small, almost uninteresting deposit of stalactites. A fallen section of ceiling to which no importance seems to be placed, but containing a few stalactites repose at an incline on some stubby stalagmites near the feet of a suitably mud-spattered caver who would have looked a bit less posed if his light had been on. Again, a slight amount of over exposure on the foreground ceiling detracts slightly from an otherwise evenly illuminated scene with surprisingly few shadows providing a very good feeling of 'depth'.

Printed with good colour rendition on thick glossy paper with few printing imperfections, this series represents good value for money. Obviously representing a huge financial outlay by HSC, the series deserves to sell well and is a credit to all concerned with this production.

I highly recommend the series.

**WE NEED COPY SO PLEASE START WRITING**

**Copy Deadline**

**SPRING ISSUE : 1 AUG**



# Safety and Techniques

## A GUIDE TO CAVING ROPES

Alan Warild

A great deal has been said and a little written about caving ropes over the last year or so. To such a degree that several "experts" have got their sit-harnesses somewhat knotted as to what is safe/dangerous/spins/bounces/costs too much etc.

When buying a rope you either know what you want or ask advice. Unfortunately the most often volunteered advice comes from those people trying to sell you the rope. As no one shop sells all of the available brands of rope it is unlikely you'll get an objective story from anyone!

After reading and hearing a considerable amount of dubious information on caving rope I have put together some of my own tests and experience and combined this with work from other sources to give what I hope is a more complete picture.

By knowing something about what you want and why you want it "beginner" rope buyers, can make a more informal choice and the experts may re-think about whether they are getting what they thought they were getting.

### DIAMETER

In general terms, the thicker the rope the "safer" it is. Thicker ropes are easier to hold on abseil and when used as handlines. Ascenders usually climb better on thinner ropes. Most people seem to prefer an 11mm rope - probably for the feeling of security it gives, although, when badly rigged even the toughest rope can be dangerous. Virtually all of the rope characteristics to be discussed are controlled largely by the rope's diameter.

### BREAKING STRAIN

If you look only at ultimate tensile strength then almost any synthetic rope over 8mm diameter would be "strong" enough but unless you are lifting boulders with your prusik rope the load will never progressively increase until it reaches the rope's ultimate tensile strength. The more important "strength" to consider is whether or not the rope can withstand a "shock" load. Climbing ropes must survive a series of falls in which an 80 kg load is dropped 5 metres and stopped (hopefully) by a 2.5 m length of rope. This is known as a "Fall Factor 2 Fall (80kg)" and while highly possible in climbing is relatively rare in SRT. A fall factor 1 (fall=rope length) is the usual maximum (greater than Fall Factor 1 falls could occur if you are above the belay point when clipped to the rope as many people are, when preparing to abseil.) See Figure 1.

Static ropes, because of their lower stretch and consequent lower shock absorbing ability cannot perform as well as climbing ropes but they should survive at least one "Fall Factor 1 (80kg)" fall. This is especially important to those who still use sailing ropes such as Marlow and Downs. Recent tests in the UK have shown that even good 10mm Marlow never survives even one "Fall Factor 1 (80kg)" fall.

Most ropes are constructed such that the whole of the rope absorbs load progressively until it breaks. Ropes such as Viking Super Speleo and Beal Dynastat have a different construction and are designed to perform in a different manner. They both utilise a low stretch core which supports the load in normal use. If a severe fall should occur though, the low stretch core would be unable to survive the shock load and would break. The load would still then be supported by stretchier shock-absorbing sheaths. Although the Kevlar core of the Viking appears to be quite "strong" in relation to the total strength of the rope it has rather poor shock absorbing ability - hence the need for a stretching sheath.

The next time you prusik up to a main belay point consider how far you would fall should that belay fail. Compare it with the length of rope to your secondary belay. (Fortunately a lot of shock would be absorbed by your body, harness and pendular movements.) This gives the lie to those who consider that shock loads don't happen in caving

### ELONGATION AT FAILURE

Greater stretch indicates greater shock absorbance but otherwise a useless statistic unless you want to calculate whether you'll hit the bottom before or after the rope breaks.

### ELONGATION IN USE

Stretch is highly variable even within the same type of rope. New ropes normally stretch less than older ones. Low stretch ropes are easier to prusik on, especially if using the Frog System against a wall. It is also easier to guesstimate the placement of protectors and to allow for stretch between belays. Stretchy ropes absorb shock loads better and so place less strain on belay points and falling cavers. It is not hard to get used to prusiking on stretchy rope.

Rope stretch is roughly related to diameter so some compromises must be made. Few cavers are willing to drag around a 13mm rope just to ensure bounce-free abseils. At the other extreme I prefer to use the stretchier 9mm ropes and carry much less weight around.

### RESISTANCE TO SPIN

With the advent of kenmantle ropes spin is a non-event unless you coil your ropes. Coiling can generate twists with each loop on or off the coil and can lead to some unpleasant side effects (helical chunders etc.).

### ABRASION RESISTANCE

Abrasion resistance is an extremely difficult thing to measure and as yet consistent reproducible test results have not surfaced.

As a general rule the better wearing ropes have a harder more compact sheath and as a consequence are normally stiffer. As far as total destruction goes the thicker ropes last longer (more or less!) but if you are only looking at "biting" a hole in the sheath this may not be the case.

Thicker, tougher ropes are more suited to those who don't want to spend the time and effort involved in rigging ropes free of the rock. No matter how careful you are about rigging your rope it will still wear out from the effects of nasty dirty cavers sliding down it.

Again a compromise must be found because tougher



ropes also tend to be heavier, stiffer and more expensive while lighter, softer, cheaper ropes don't normally wear as well.

#### HANDLING AND KNOTABILITY

Ropes normally start out nice and soft and head toward "wire" rope. A rope which is stiff when new has a considerable head-start on one which is initially soft. Stiff rope has only one advantage - it tends to run through ascenders better.

The main disadvantage of stiff rope is that you simply can't get as much of it in your pack as you can with similar soft ropes. If you leave the rope outside your pack it will only get even stiffer and wear out faster. Stiff rope can also be rather nasty to abseil on, especially with non-variable abseil devices.

Tying knots in stiff rope becomes a real test of strength and often requires a lot of rope. Thicker ropes tend to be harder to bend so stiffness is more of a problem with them. By washing and fabric softening your rope between uses its downhill slide to "wire" rope will be slowed markedly.

#### WEIGHT

Weight is a crucial factor if you are rigging a deep cave with only a few people. If the cave is high up a mountain then weight is even more important.

The new weight is a reasonable guide but ropes only ever seem to gain weight. It is has been said that nylon ropes gain 10% - 15% extra weight by absorbing water during their first wetting and then retain that water. This is not so. If you buy a new rope and measure and weigh it, then wash and dry it, you will find that it is about 5% shorter and weighs exactly the same. But if you calculate its new weight per metre it will now be 5% heavier.

Some ropes shrink up to 15% with only a few weeks of heavy use so you can expect it to be up to 15% heavier per metre with age. A rope's weight when wet (i.e. completely saturated like it is in your rope pack) seems to be consistently 35% - 45% above its dry weight, the values for old ropes being more relevant. Some ropes dry out much faster than others which may be important if your rope also goes canyoning.

I'll bet you thought your old Marlow was heavy when wet, I found that it had a 64% weight increase when saturated and lost no measurable weight hanging in the sun for 15 minutes!

#### PRICE

Although price is an important consideration it is usually better to buy what you want if one particular rope is in your opinion "outstanding". Remember that a thinner, cheaper rope could cost you more if you wear it out faster. Most shops will give you some discount if you buy a full 200m roll.

Part Two of this article, entitled "Which Rope Is The Best", will be printed in the next issue.

#### **PETZL AUTO-STOP DESCENDER : MARK'S OPINION**

With a NZ trip coming and faced with the thought of carrying my New Guinea-proof 12" water pipe bar rack across, but mainly up, mountains I decided something lighter was the go.

Enter TSA catalogue, and about three months later, after French translations, bank drafts,

customs and Australia Post officials' "Sorry, but we seem to have lost half your package, but pay the duty any way" I ripped open the package to see the auto-stop in the flesh - bright blue body and sexy red handle. So with just one quick trip down Drum (B13, Bungonia NSW), to try it out it's off to New Zealand.

To cut all the drivel that seems to have filled the page above, the big question is "Is it any good?". The answer "BRILLIANT".

The auto-stop works well on ropes up to 12mm, it definitely won't work on NZ-type-rope 10/80H (suitable only for mooring ferries). Although I didn't take any totally-out-of-control plunges down shafts to try out the auto-stop, it did seem to work well, but it did creep a little when there was no bottom weight (this was on brand new Blue Water 9mm at the bottom of the pitch).

I found the auto-stop great for rigging, just slide down the rope, release the handle to stop, rig away to your heart's content, then grab the handle and you're away.....(watch out you don't bash the handle or you may go when you want to stay, quite exciting...beginners mistake!)

The Petzl also has the advantage of being very quick on and off the rope, unlike the old PNG "knee breaker". The Petzl in comparison is also much shorter (about 8") and lighter (just over 300g), and rated by the manufacturer at 1500kg. As for the big pits, it was great on Harwood's (176m) using Blue Water 9mm although it did get a little warm (if you take it slowly you won't need your water pistol!).

The Petzl is slightly faster than other devices I have used but it is only a matter of improving your technique and using your body occasionally to generate more friction.

Although the auto-stop won't give you the same super frictional variation as a rack or whaletail, this is the only time it comes in second place.

#### **SUMMARY**

<u>GOOD</u>	<u>NOT SO GOOD</u>
Light	Two hands needed
Short	Less frictional variation
Quick on/off time	Single rope only
5/Steel capstan wears well	Heats up easily

"Mark from Chester Hill"  
(Mark Wilson)

## **NOTICES and NEWS**

#### **CAVING IN ISRAEL**

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel has circulated a leaflet detailing the caving attractions of Israel; both conventional tourist caves and wild caves are described - many of which are either artificial and/or have very long historical associations. Some of the caves are in salt and are below sea level but dry! It would appear that visits to all sorts of caves can be organised through the Society which hires out caving equipment. Further details from the Editor.[ie The Ed of the above leaflet, not me! ASF Ed]



# GUANO

## THE GEARFREAK CAPER

By Rex Slim (With added Australian flavour  
from a well known Sydney Gearfreak)

With Apologies to Woody Allen\*

In my business you got to be able to spot a mealticket from a dry hole right off. I was pretty sure Lady Luck had sent me home a winner when this tweedy gent with pipe comes through the door marked CLAUDIUS FOX PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR and walks up to my desk.

He smelled like money. Trouble too. But that's my bag, isn't it?

"Mr Fox?" he queried.

"That's what the name says on the door," I countered.

His suit was rumpled and not exactly new, but you could tell he didn't get it off the rack at St Vinnies. His shirt was expensive and the tie was as conservative as a baked potato. But what caught my eye was the tie clasp: a thin, small, neatly embossed golden dollar sign. I liked that.

"My name's Godfrey Gearfreak. I need help and I'm willing to pay for it," he started in, me not objecting to the last part.

"I've never dealt with a private detective before, but I don't want this to get to the police. You see," his eyes fell "I'm being blackmailed."

I'd heard this story before. Only this one turned to have a new wrinkle.

I motioned him to a chair and drew paper and pencil from under the flask in the desk drawer.

"Tell me all about it," I mused in my most understanding tone.

"My wife and I used to go rock climbing together a lot. We met in a National Parks beginners' group. We used to go to Boroomba, Arrapiles, vacations in the Himalayas, Yosemite, everywhere together."

"Sounds nice and healthy," I smiled. "What went wrong?"

He plunged in: "The equipment - all the climbing gear: I found it fascinating; she was bored by it. I got all the latest catalogs - Chouinard, Spelean, North Face, Lowe, Edelrid, Troll, you name it. I grooved on the Mountain Safety Research Newsletters. I had to try all the latest hardware, each new belay plate, and seat harness, not to mention all the new tent designs, anatomic pack frames, sleeping bags, stoves ....."

"And your wife didn't like your spending the money," I put in.

"It's not that. We can afford that kind of money."

I liked to hear him say that; it gave me a warm feeling in my wallet.

His voice lowered. "She just never took an interest in the equipment. She still wants to go hiking and climbing on weekends. Clamboring around on the rocks is all right, I suppose, but there's so much new gear to try out and read about, I didn't want to waste all my free time just out there climbing around."

"Christ, Claudius," he blurted, "who wants to seat out some lousy grade 19 move when you could be looking at and talking bout this hot new thinsulate material for sleeping bags that uses a super K coated nylon taffeta with a .050 inch layer of bonded metal and a lining of thin nylon tricot!"

No question, I had to agree with Gearfreak there.

"Well, I found out there's a place in this town where they'll set you up with a girl who knows all about climbing equipment and will talk with you for an hour about any gear you want to talk about - for a price." He paused, embarrassed.

"Go on," I urged.

"I never wanted to get involved. I'm just looking for a quick stimulating exchange of ideas on all the latest gear - then I want the girl to leave."

"They've got all kinds of girls - some of them know all the latest tents, some can tell you about ropes and their test strength, some are technical ice climbing specialists." He sighed a crooked, bitter sigh: "It's really satisfying, Claudius, to spend an evening secluded with a girl who really understands how baffles are superior to sew-through seams, and can talk intelligently and sympathetically about proper stitching, who appreciates the difference between super down and feather down, and who isn't afraid to talk openly about Dacron as a medium for sleeping bags."

"All sounds great," I commented. "What's the prob?"

"Blackmail! I've been arranging these rendezvous for several months. The price was stiff, but it was worth it. Now they're upping the ante - asking for real money - or they tell my wife."

His voice dropped to a whisper: "They've even got a photo of me showing a Sticht plate belay to a young girl in lederhosen."

I was intrigued. I'd heard that the boys down at the Vice-Squad were working on some big time racket involving outdoorsy-types, but I also knew they weren't getting anywhere on the case. Maybe this was a lead.

"Tell me what you know about this operation," I hunched over the pad.

He demurred. "But will you help me? Will you take the case?"

I looked again at that thin, small, neatly-embossed golden dollar sign tie clasp.



"Seventy bucks a day plus expenses. And I don't guarantee results. But I've got some hunches I'd like to play."

He looked assured. I had me a client.

After he left, I also had me a packet of notes on all he knew, including the telephone number for his contact. I was ready to make my first move.

Going out to a pay phone so it could not be traced, I plugged in my coin and dialed the seven delectable digits. A husky voice with bronchitis answered.

I started off briskly: "I understand a fellow could get a little companionable talk on the advantages and disadvantages of different lightweight stoves at this party."

"I'm totally mystified as to what you're talking about, mister," responded the decidedly unmystified voice.

"I have a hundred here to refresh your memory," I growled.

Madam husky-voice was suddenly all business.

"Do you want to talk heating capacity or weight and volume, honey?"

"The works," I thought it best not to seem cheap.

"That hundred dollar will get you a nice evening with a girl who knows all the stoves and has tried them out in high winds and at different altitudes. She was one of the first to use the MSR X G/K."

"Sounds like my ticket," I opined, gave a room number at the Regent and hung up.

An hour later I answered the buzzer at this same room number to see a shapely young sheba who was all Miss Outdoors from the tip of her balaclava right down to the toes of her Osolos. In between she filled out her hiking knickers and Northcape Polo like so many well filled (but just right) stuff sacks.

Her Travel Kinnic bulged with odd shapes and sizes of stoves.

"Hi, I'm Bobbi," she cooed sweetly.

"Baby, I don't know how you got by the commissionarie," I winced as I pulled her into the room. "Anyone can tell you'r an equipment nut."

"Five bucks usually keeps them happy," she smiled confidently.

Unshouldering her Travel Kinnic, she shot a glance around the room.

"Would you like to begin by comparing the heating properties of the Optimus with the newer MSR X G/K."

I parried: "I've heard the MSRs a fabulous heating machine, but won't simmer on low heat like the Optimus." I had to string her along, see what she'd do, see how far she'd go.

"True," she laughed a hollow, brittle laugh. "But the weight of that Optimus

never appealed to me. And since you have to carry a fuel bottle anyway ..."

She started in and kept it up, with just an occasional query or rebuttal from me, for fully an hour. Here she was, probably not old enough to buy a beer at the Newnes pub but had all the hardened flippancy of the jaded equipment freak. I was amazed. I mean, I've been around, but this was something new.

When she got through explaining how the jets for the new MSR stoves accomodated several varieties of fuel, I got up, stretched, and taking two fifties out of my wallet, stuffed them in the outside pocket of her Travel Kinnic.

"Say, you're nice," she grinned suddenly. "Would you like to do it again sometime? Or maybe try something a little different ... a little unusual?"

"What you have in mind?" I countered.

"Well, I have a girl friend you'd like," she purred. "The two of us could come up and talk about cross country ski wax for a really divine evening. We could even get into /..." her voice trailed off, but her lips shaped the word, "... bindings ..." She winked.

"I think we might make a deal," I murmured, bluffing. "I'll call you in a day or so," I ushered her and her Travel Kinnic out of the door, familiarly patting her D-rings as she passed.

Pay dirt! I knew I had stumbled right into just the mess the Vice Squad was after. I suppressed a snicker. I knew a detective who would be climbing walls (14) when he found I had beaten him to the quarry again.

Before I took the direct route to my prey, though, I thought I ought to do a little advance nosing around through a third party, a certain shady character of my acquaintance, name of Slightly Bent, who is willing to give me underworld information on occasion in exchange for my not giving the boys downtown certain information about Slightly Bent.

Slightly was his usual obnoxious and uncooperative self until reminded of the advantages of being on this side of those Long Bay walls. Then he sang long.

"The Vice boys haven't got to first base on this one," Slightly told me over a draft in the Shady Deal Cafe down by the Quay."

"This operation is really big time and the cover's held up airtight so far."

"For fifty bucks you can spend a couple of hours with a brunette going over the pro's and con's of Eureka tents versus the Morrone, reviewing ventilation, condensation, tunnel entrances, mosquito netting, zippers, and cookstove holes."

"For just twenty five, you can get a set up with a leggy Swedish broad, lighting lanterns and stoves and testing for beryllium and carbon monoxide."

"If you're into technical climbing, you can climb into and out of every seat harness, chest harness, and leg loop in the book with two cuties who can tell you the fall force which each one could absorb and will listen



sympathetically to all you want to tell them about different hard hats, even including their energy absorption and lateral rigidity. That would cost you seventy five bucks."

Slightly paused to order another brew.

"Write down this name: Gloria Rucksack. She's the brains and the muscle behind this one, from what I hear."

"What's her background?" I wheedled.

"She's an equipment nut from way back. You know Hallmark's fancy Chrysallis tent?"

"The one with the unique condensation-dispelling properties?" I questioned.

"That's the one. Well, Dingle doesn't know it, but Gloria Rucksack spent a weekend in the pilot model before he did."

I gulped.

"You know Tricky Ricky's new sleeping bags at Mountain Designs?" went on Slightly. "She slept in it the first night the baffles were stitched."

"With or without Tricky?" I quipped.

"You want solid info or witty repartee?" Slightly shot back. "She knows them all - Penberthy, Montgomery, the Strwezeki brothers. Anyway, the place you want is a little backpacking supply store on the outskirts of town, Northern Alpine Sports. It's a front, of course. The real operation runs out of the back of the store. You'd probably find Gloria there."

An hour later, when I walked into Northern Alpine Sports, a young man in vibrams asked if he could help me.

"I'd like to see a rucksack," I croaked.

"For what purpose?" he inquired.

"Glory-a only knows," I muttered.

"In that case, go right on back," he knowingly waved me down the long hall that led to a door marked STOCK ROOM EMPLOYEES ONLY. I pushed open the door and gingerly stepped in.

Here indeed was Gloria Rucksack's pleasure palace. The place was a perfect set up. A huge high ceilinged room, with windows along one side as tall as your grandmother's giraffe. Only no light showed through the heavy maroon curtains, embroidered with thick gold. The light was supplied by three glittering silver chandeliers suspended from the ornate ceiling. An Oriental carpet large enough to fly in Farouk and all his concubines buried the floor. Victorian decor all the way.

And girls? Wow! A trio of beauties sat on the one out-sized sofa, provocatively leafing through pages of Blue Water catalogs. A gorgeous redhead in matching crimson knickers, who looked like she'd just been poured into her Whillans seat harness like thick strawberry jam, was sorting tricams voluptuously on the floor at one end. Slouched in an armchair near the door, a slender pretty girl no more than 17 years old

was opening and closing Jumars and Gibbs ascenders.

Within seconds after I entered, a slinky black girly sidled up to me from nowhere, slipping her slim hips in and out of a wrap-around pack frame and breathed huskily:

"Would you like to go upstairs and talk about different kinds of hip bands?"

"Catch you later at Camp Four, baby," I snapped out of the corner of my mouth. "I got other things on my mind right now."

A honey blonde in a leopard skin fibrepile whispered at me from the other side.

"If you're into technical ice, we could have a cozy chat about the test strengths of Lowe's tubulars verses Salewa's. And I have a new wrinkle on how to use a ice axe that would tickle you."

Before I could answer, a familiar husky voice from behind me intervened:

"Later, Brigit. This one's for me."

Swinging around, I saw before me the queen mama of them all - a statuesque raven-haired venus who would make anyone forget to button down his supergaiters. Her skirt was like a good tent fly - form fitted and not too long. And the blouse material was strictly sewn through.

"You look like you could use a sociable brew in the back room, honey," she purred and guided me toward a low door near the back, just past a wrought ebony bookcase sporting titles like Freedom of the Hills, Advanced Rockcraft, early Paddy Pallin catalogs, and a handsome leather bound complete set of MSR Newsletters.

She slipped a chain out of her bosom and sorted through the Swiss Army knife, Suunto compass, and Tekna micro-lith, till she came to a tiny key for the door. But not before I noticed on that key chain one other little trinket ... a thin, small, neatly embossed golden dollar sign.

I followed her into a richly appointed little boudoir and as she walked ahead of me, I said:

"Nice little pad you have here, Gloria Rucksack or should I say ... Mrs Gearfreak!"

She wheeled around sporting a new piece of equipment - a shiny little black revolver that I knew that she didn't pick up at Karrimoor.

"That's right, Fox, you walked yourself right into the middle of more than you bargained for this time."

"I don't get it, baby," I countered, stalling, trying to look calm. "Your old man said he couldn't get you to talk about Friends at breakfast."

"That creep?" she snarled. "He doesn't know his rear end from a cook stove hole. What he doesn't know about equipment would fill three Mountain Equipment catalogs. Just as soon as I get this operation a little more profitable, it'll be Goodbye Godfrey! And meanwhile, Foxie, you're going to take a little hike of your own - down the middle of Sydney Harbour in pair of cement EB's."

I thought fast - and acted faster. With one swift karate chop, I separated Miss Glorialocks from her shiny black plaything and in another



motion swooped an extra long Mont bag over her head. She whipped out her Swiss Army knife and cut her way out, filling the room with more feathers than you'll see at a Pheasant Pluckers meet. By this time though, Your Humble Narrator had the revolver and the outing was over.

The rest of the story came out downtown and today Miss Rucksack - Mrs Gearfreak - is doing a ten year bivouac in a really windproof tent at Silverwater.

Except for my cheque from Mr Godfrey Gearfreak in the mail, I neither saw nor heard from him again. But I've been told that he now roams the Bogong Plains, with no climbing hardware, no tent, and just an old army blanket for nights, in which he rolls all his simple belongings, so that he needs no fancy pack. They say he takes no interest in the latest gadgets and gear of the other climbers or hikers he meets on the trail, but simply invites them to join him in looking at the birds and the wild flowers.

\* \* \* \*

- \* Mr Allen's inspired narrative on "The Whore of Mensa" in The New Yorker provided the take off point for this tale. Rex Slim in private life is Guy Waterman of East Corinth, Vermont.

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## Conservation Column

VISITOR SURVEY - A SNEAK PREVIEW  
B26 CHALK CAVE, BUNGONIA, NSW

On 26 Dec 1978, Point Clare Rovers established a small visitors book in the entrance of B26. The statistics tabulated below were extracted on 18 Mar 1984 and are presented for your perusal. The notes are include at the foot of the table

Numbers in the table below refer to individuals

	end 1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	so far 1984	TOTAL
ASF society members	-	14	19	16	9	2	0	60
Non ASF group members	-	16	5	19	5	5	0	49
Scout Assn Crews/Units	4	49	26	88	48	40	20	275
Scout Assn trg courses	-	27	21	60	21	47	7	193
Cave Rescue Group courses	-	2	0	14	4	0	0	20
Government Dept groups	-	0	0	6	0	0	4	10
Non caving groups	-	6	17	2	31	29	0	85
Individuals + families	-	11	71	31	36	22	4	185
Non serious entries	-	6	4	4	6	6	0	26
ANNUAL TOTALS	-	131	164	240	160	141	-	

### Notes;

1. Chalk Cave is some distance from the roads in the Caves reserve and many intending visitors find it hard to locate. It contains a medium sized pitch with some "nasty spots" and a small decorated but dry chamber accessible without technical know-how.

2. Many visitors seem to have recorded their organisations name even if they were present with another group, and some simply wrote their name (perhaps in the belief that they were so well known that no-one could fail to know their affiliations). This distorts some of the figures.

3. Non-caving groups included High Schools, Fire Brigades, Rotoract and (apparently) the employees of a certain MacDonald's restaurant! Bushwalking and outdoors clubs were included in the non-ASF caving groups. The Scout Association groups all appear to have been genuine official groups from areas administered by Area Caving Teams - as were the courses run. The increase in 1981 probably relates somewhat to the implementation of Scout Association Caving Guidelines which prescribed the courses.

Chris Rush MSS

# Exploring New Dimensions

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- Boots from Raichle, Rossi and Scarpa.
- Packs from Climax, Jansport and Lowe.
- Sleeping bags from J & H and Blue Ridge.



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### CAVE ACCESS RESTRICTIONS IN TASMANIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES

Recently V.S.A. has received letters from the National Parks and Wildlife Services of Tasmania and New South Wales regarding access restrictions to some caves in both States. So that all V.S.A. members are aware of the current situation, extracts from both letters are reproduced below.

In Tasmania a permit system is now in operation for the following caves:

Newdegate, King George V and Wold Hole at Hastings, Exit Cave at Ida Bay, Croesus, Lynds, King Solomon, Haillie Selassie, Marakoopa, Kubla Khan and Ghengis Khan at Mole Creek and Gunns Plains Cave. Some of these caves are locked and gated.

No access restrictions will apply to other caves in the Hastings Caves State Reserve, Exit Cave State Reserve, Junee Cave State Reserve, Mount Field National Park, Baldocks Cave State Reserve, Trowutta Caves State Reserve, Franklin-Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park or Southwest National Park.

No cave or part of any cave will be completely closed for the present but policy may direct visitor pressure away from more sensitive caves in the future. Because of the special significance of Kubla Khan Cave only a limited number of permits for it will be issued each year.

Permits will only be issued to party leaders who are members of groups which are full members of the Australian Speleological Federation and to persons undertaking approved research.

Permits will only be available from the Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service, P O Box 210, SANDY BAY, 7005. At least 14 days should be allowed for issue of permits.

All applications should give the name and address of the trip leaders, name and address of the caving club of which they are a member, the cave which it is intended to be visited, date of visit and purpose of visit. It will be a condition of the permit that a report must be made on the trip and forwarded to the Service.

Copies of the permit form are available from the V.S.A. Secretary.

It is suggested that each club should designate an authorised officer who shall be responsible for lodging of applications which, for the club's own protection, should be made on official stationery.

In New South Wales the access provisions for Yarrangobilly and Cooleman Caves have yet to be finalised, but will probably be large as follows:

#### YARRANGOBILLY

Yarrangobilly will be managed strictly for conservation of natural values but recognising that responsible recreational caving (including show caves) and scientific research are appropriate uses (to use Service jargon).

A permit will be required for all non-show caves with the exception of Village Cave (Y110). No modifications to cave environments will be countenanced, eg. no digging or diverting of water. Party sizes will be a minimum of three and a maximum of eight. Camp sites will be

defined; if a bush site is approved no more than 12 persons total are to be in the party. Reports and maps are expected from users of Yarrangobilly caves. Parties, especially in the Village and tourist areas, must be aware that they are in a privileged position and must avoid displays of caving gear - a visit by cavers to the tourist area leads to many enquiries about cave access.

Cotterill's Cottage will not be available over the Christmas holidays or Easter. The N.S.W. NPWS are currently considering total annual limits on numbers of visitors to some caves which are being overly heavily used.

A cave classification scheme is being developed in which there will be some caves virtually totally closed, others will be scientific reference caves to which entry will only be under an appropriate scientific consent from the Service. Groups will be encouraged to undertake management oriented projects such as clean-up or full documentation.

#### COOLEMAN

Three classes of caves are envisaged at Cooleman.

Barbers, Murrays, Cooleman (and Right Cooleman), Blue Waterhole and Zed Caves will be open public access. Other than in the management plan this fact will only be made public by the Service in answer to direct public enquiry.

A large group of caves will be open to ASF members and certain other groups on an annual consent basis. This consent is subject to cancellation at any time; prior notification of consent trips will be expected from consent holders, by telephone if necessary. The more important caves will require permits and will be gated where practicable.

A schedule of caves and their classification will be made available to those applying for consents and permits - this schedule will not include locations. Party sizes etc, are the same as for Yarrangobilly. Reports and maps will be required after each permit trip and annually for consent holders. Users, whoever they are, will be expected follow the ASF Code of Ethics and Safety Code.

Copies of the permit application forms and caving report forms are available from the V.S.A. Secretary. (Most clubs should now have these. Ed.)

JOHN WEBB VSA

NARGUN Vol 16 No 5

## Diving team claims record

PERTH. — A French diving team is claiming a new world record for the longest underwater dive on a remote and deep cave on the Nullarbor Plain.

The five-member team has penetrated 5.86 kilometres along the longest known underwater cave in the world, Cocklebidy Cave, 1160 kilometres west of Perth.

Age 3 Sep 1983



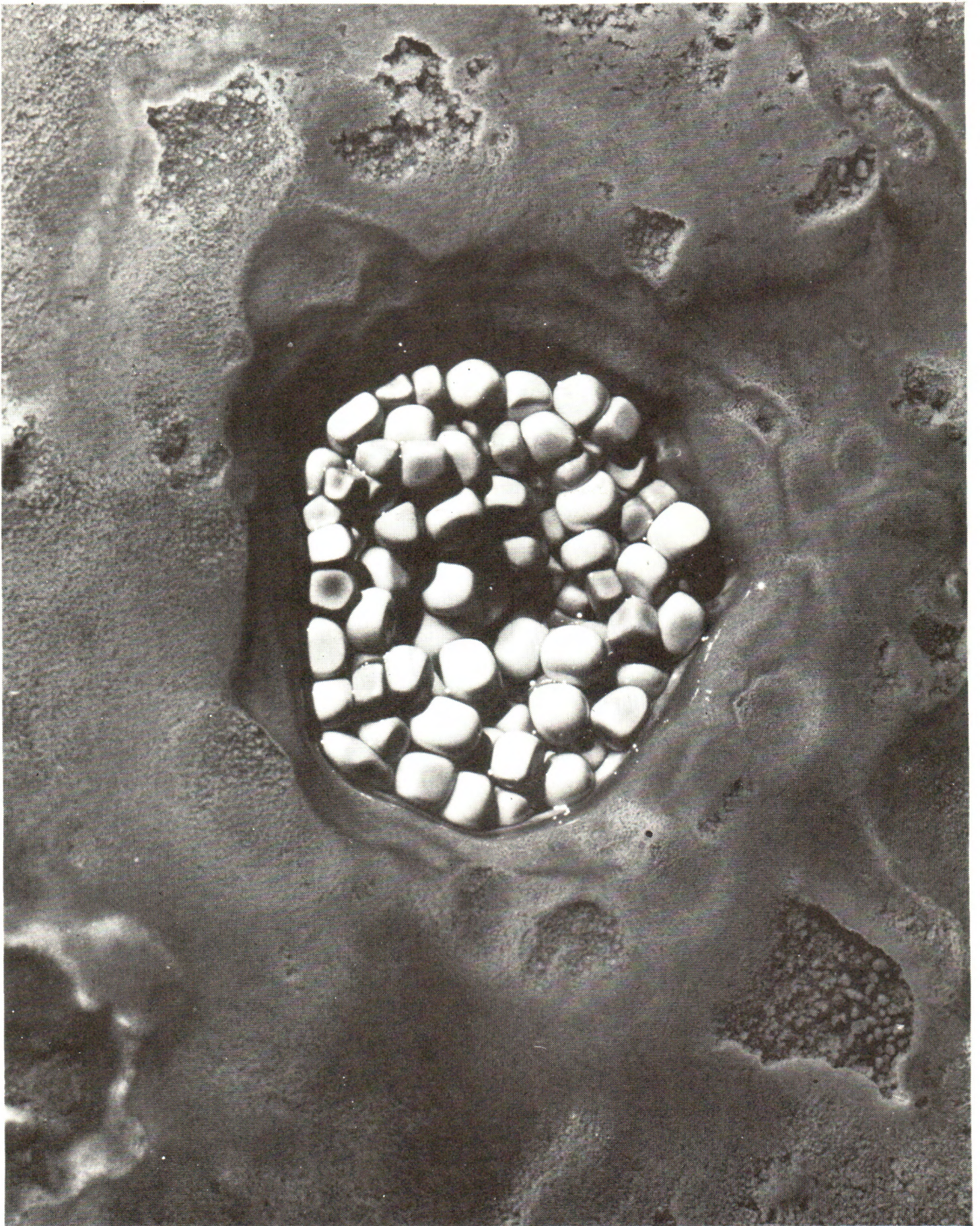


photo N Poulter



# DOWN UNDER ALL OVER

**BMSC** It has been a good year for BMSC. Brian Skinn has led the way with his discovery and tagging of a new cave at Jenolan. The club is digging through loose rubble following a strong updraught and is hoping to extend this cave's 18m to an even greater length. The new cave, Split Rock, has aroused a great deal of new activity and interest within the club. Terry and Louise Coleborn have been very busy at Cliefden with the completion of the Taplow Maze survey. They have surveyed over 3000 metres. This is a very creditable effort and the club is very thankful for their unlimited energy in this project. During 1983 and early 1984 BMSC revised and updated its constitution. A beginners handbook is also being produced to complement the new constitution. Our membership, after being relatively static for a long period is finally on the increase. With new members, hopefully new ideas and energy will be brought into the club. Chris Olsen

**MSS** This Society continues as active as ever and has been making considerable progress on some long-standing tasks, especially at Abercrombie caves. Last November a new small cave was discovered by members of the Alexander family, and several other promising holes investigated (November, January and February trips). All these minor caves are receiving instant attention from our surveying photographic and biological members and details have been included in a paper being prepared by Ken Keck which is expected to be published soon. The Superintendent at Abercrombie is being provided with a photographic index of the whole area as an additional task. Recent trips have been made in co-operation with HSC to continue work in the Arch area, the documentation will be included in the forthcoming paper. A combined trip with UNSWSS was also held recently to familiarise that society with the Abercrombie area. Recent work on the legendary "Bushie" dig has made the continuing narrow passage negotiable for another 20 feet and now a view of another 20 feet is available to encourage those intrepid wombats who enjoy digging. A field day of cliff sports was undertaken at Bilpin in November and Rocky Creek and Bell Creek canyons were visited in February and March. Members of the society SRT'ed the Big Hole on a recent weekend trip in which Wyanbene, Marble Arch and Chietmore (/Cleatmore) were also visited. Details of all recent trips are due for release in our newsletter very shortly. All ASF member societies regularly receive our newsletter, but at present only five reciprocate - one of them every month (thank you TCC). Please see if your Society/Club can include us in your list when you receive the coming Newsletter. We would appreciate it Chris Rush

**SRGWA** The Group's cleanup programme in Yallingup tourist cave, near Busselton is nearing completion. Since the programme started in 1982, some 250 hours have been spent carrying several tonnes (well, at least two) of rubbish out of the humid cave. A detailed report shall be published when the work is completed. A fortuitous visit to an industrial auction in March enabled Norm Poulter to purchase a compact Watts (1920's or 40's style) theodolite with associated tripods and stadia mast. A confirmed museum piece in excellent condition, Norm has already been offered nearly twice the purchase price by surveyors who reckon it's sacrilege considering taking such a work of art caving. When the Group, including Norm have been schooled in the gentle art of surveying, some high grade surveys should result. The Group is also saving its cents, dues and fees in order to develop an electronic multi-channel recording device for monitoring cave environments. It is hoped that the design will enable the device to be left in the cave for six months or more. Information would then be extracted by computer. Assistance is canvassed from anyone in Australia who can help in the design of the circuitry or contribute information, hardware etc., for the project.

**SUSS** As usual the Sydney University Speleological Society has been quite active [in organising itself as well as in caving]. The club's constitution has been updated as required due to the ASF's incorporation. This proved to be such a mammoth task that we eventually ended up with a totally new constitution. We are now equipped with a new and workable constitution, along with a new, enthusiastic and experienced committee. The club has had its annual influx of new members and we are looking forward to the oncoming year's caving. A first aid course weekend was held recently with virtually all the committee as well as many members participating.. Caving activities of the recent past included trips to Jenolan, Bungonia, Wombeyan, and so on, with two trips to Tasmania in the summer. The main achievement of the club was the taking of a scaling pole into the Great North Cavern in Mammoth Cave Jenolan to investigate an aven. This task was considered by some of the older speleos to be a "fools dream". None the less the poles got there but the aven didn't go. Some problems with camping at Jenolan, again, may hamper such dedicated speleo work.

## Copy Deadlines

**SPRING ISSUE : 1 AUG**

**SUMMER ISSUE : 1 NOV**

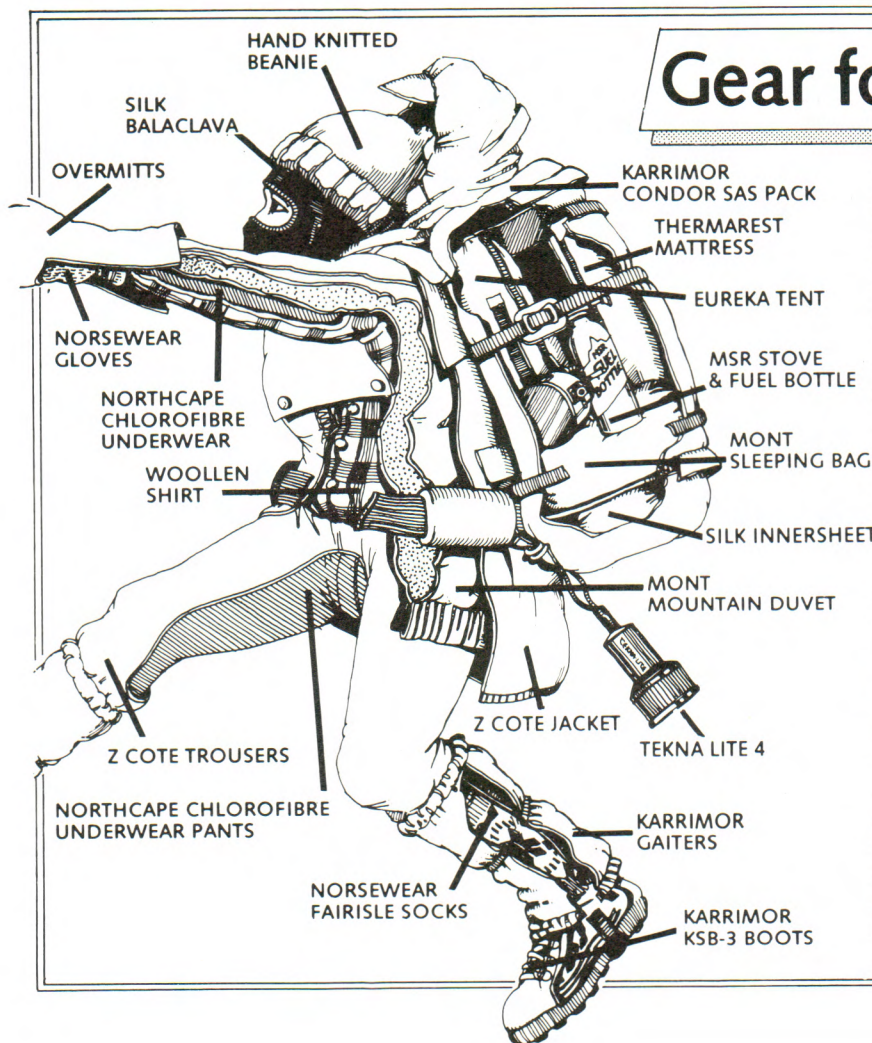
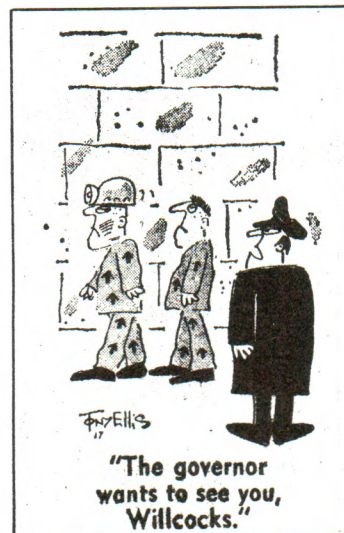


**UNSWSS** Over the last few years UNSWSS has faded away from the scene. I don't think many cavers have seen much of us, probably because we weren't doing much. Well we are back, and with a bit of luck and consistent hard work by our members we will stay back. We started this year off in a flurry of trips (at least one a fortnight). If we can maintain the momentum through the year it should keep interest high. It is good to see active participation by most of the younger members. Along with most university clubs we will be doing our usual orientation week membership drive. We have organised field days and some beginners trips to Wee Jasper and Cliefden to show the newcomers what mud is, they will probably find out about pain too, if the nettles are still in abundance in Cliefden. Anyone who is interested in coming on any of our trips is more than welcome to do so. I can't tell what trips we are running but if you would like to contact us we will supply you with our latest trip list. Some phone numbers:  
John Williams: 02 671 4365  
Bob Whyte: 02 623 5967

**EDITOR's Letter to WASGA**  
Dear WASGA,

Thankyou for the mailing list but this should go to Ian Mann, not me! You say in your letter that if I want a Down Under All Over I should chase up Mr R Webb. This is just not good enough! It is up to you to chase up Mr R Webb not me.

JUDITH



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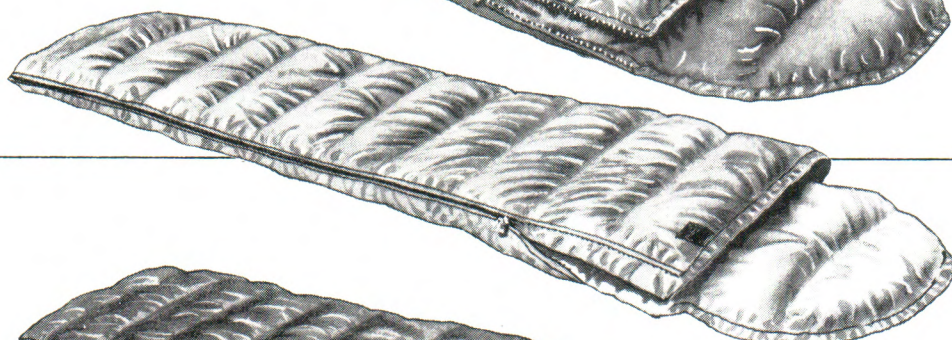
RUCKSACK SPORTS



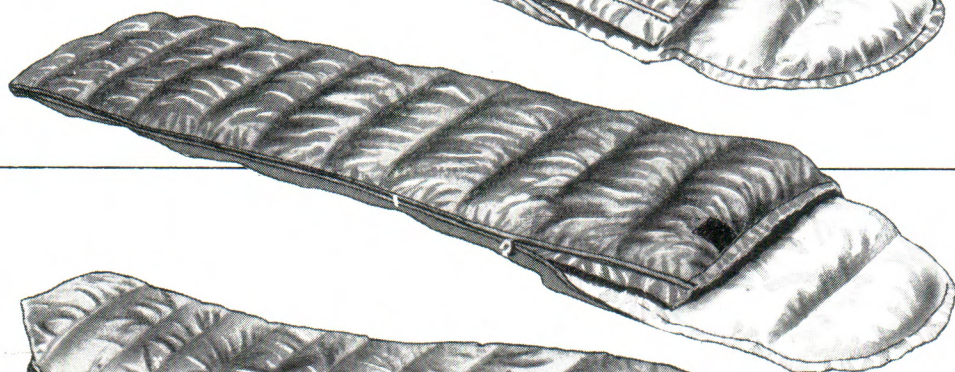
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BIMBERI	1.00 kg	Box Wall	550 g	550 Loft Down	-5°C	Side Zip	30 x 17
HIGH PLAINS	1.80 kg	Box Wall	1100 g	Featherdown	-5°C	Full Zip	34 x 23
HOTHAM	1.60 kg	Box Wall	700 g	550 Loft Down	-5°C	Full Zip	34 x 23
MELALEUCA	1.55 kg	Box Wall	800 g	550 Loft Down	-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
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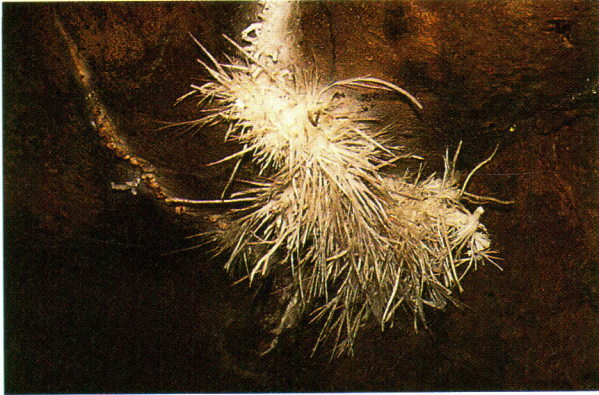
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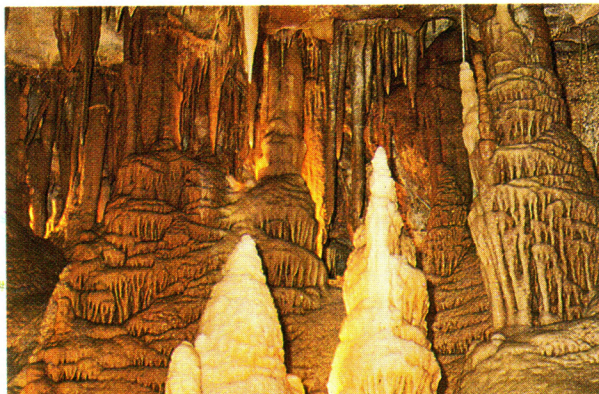
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