

CALCITE

38



June 1994

Newsletter
of the
Highland Caving Group.
(Founded 1957)

PO Box 154, Liverpool, N.S.W., 2170.

Contents:

Editors Report	Robert Wray	2
Current HCG Executive		2
Rapid Underground Photography	Chris Fisher	3
Ghar Pharu'ed Again	Brett Moule	3
Jenolan 15-16 May 1993	Brett Moule	4
Wyanbene 20th June 1993	Robert Wray	5
Tuglow 21-22 August	Robert Wray	6
Handbook of Caver Types	Carol Eckel	6
Yarrangobilly October Long Weekend 1993	Robert Wray	9
Update to the Handbook of Caver Types	Robert Wray	10
Deep Thoughts		12
Tuglow and Breakfast Creek	Robert Wray	12
Yagby 19-20 February	Brett Moule	13
Rapid Underground Photography, Pt.2	Robert Wray	13
Six Canyons, Six Morro Bars, and a Great Time	Brett Moule	13
Yarrangobilly, Easter 1994	Robert Wray	15
Tiger Snake Canyon Cave	Robert Wray	19
Tuglow and Kalang	Jason Moule	19
Watta Canyon	Brett Moule	20

Editors Report.

A little over a year has passed since the last Calcite, but here it is, Calcite 38, the newest, almost up-to-date, in style, 3 years or 60,000 km warranty, resumé of the activities of Highland Caving Group.

As Editor, and Projects Officer (...oh, and also President), I am very pleased to report that quite a bit real speleology has been going on during the last 18 months, much of which is reported in this issue. I have been continuing to research my PhD, and a little of this work has originated there, but I am pleased to say that several other Club members have been active in speleological research elsewhere.

One sore point, however, is the poor turn out for a number of Club trips during the last year. The Secretary goes to great lengths to arrange permits etc, but during the week prior to many trips the leader has often had to cancel the trip because of insufficient numbers, or ring around threatening people to get enough sufficient participation. **THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.** Your Club trips have been arranged after consultation with members at meetings; is it too much to ask for you to put these dates in your diary, often several months in advance? We need input from all the Club regarding trip destinations, and convenient dates. It is hoped this problem will soon cease.

Phil Fleming has mounted several trips to the Molong region, and several caves and karst features have been found and surveyed. Another trip or two are needed to tie up loose ends, and it is hoped a full report of these activities will be forthcoming in Calcite 39.

A cast of thousands, well about half a dozen of us...., commenced the major task of surveying North Deep Creek, Y.7, at Yarrangobilly last Easter. The project is proceeding well, see report this issue, but there is a lot more left to do. The more we surveyed, the more we found that needed exploration and mapping. Don't miss out on the October Long Weekend trip, dust off those tape measures and compasses, sharpen those pencils. Get your name on the map!, we need you all in this fantastic cave.

Jason and Brett Moule are off to Java at the end of June for about a month. They are members of a expedition organised by a number of Western Australian cavers to explore a little known karst area with huge potential. Trips in recent years to nearby areas have resulted in the exploration of numerous new, very large caves, including the discovery and mapping of the longest cave in Indonesia. A full review of the expedition will appear in Calcite 39. Best of luck!

Thanks to all those who have written articles for this journal. To all those who haven't, and especially those who repeatedly promised copy,

May your descender not, your ascenders won't,
Your battery be flat and your carbide be ruined,
May your rope be twisted, and your Sunnto's fog up,
I curse you!

Current HCG Executive.

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The ideas, opinions and spilling mstaks expressed in this Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Executive or Members of Highland Caving Group.

Rapid Underground Photography.

Chris Fisher,

Reprinted from SPAR 44, April 1975.

Well, here it is, the article you've all been waiting for - a truly practical, step-by-step-correction rapid step-by-step (almost approaching a fumble), guide to dropping your camera... er, I mean photography.

The first step is to learn the language of the RUP (Rapid Underground Photographer). The flashgun operator calls "Lights out!" several times, screams abuse, until he finally realises that the only one with a light on is himself. He then says "Ready?", to which the RUPS reply "Wait a minute", "Please turn the light back on", or "I'll just put my boots on and be right there", etc., etc.

Eventually, the count down proceeds. The flash operator calls "Three, two, one!", to which the RUPS reply with "D____". I forgot to wind the film on". The RUPS now wind their film on and the procedure is repeated. At this stage two things may happen. If the flash operator required ultra-rapid photography then the flash is let off just after the countdown and the RUPS take pot luck as to which direction their cameras are aimed. The other alternative occurs if a RUP calls "Some bloody light on the subject!", whereupon those RUPS with their camera shutters open respond with "Nooo!" and clasp their hands over their lenses. The calls are then repeated from "Ready?".

Having learnt the calls we now move to the second basic step - how to hold the camera. Perhaps the quickest method is to set the camera on a tripod which removes the necessity for some of the calls, although a few new ones must be learnt, e.g. occasional calls of "Watch the tripod!" followed closely by "Well there you go!", etc. There are also many hand-held positions. You'll repeatedly hear members of the club discussing these around the campfire - "One hundred and twenty one", "Seventy four", etc. I won't discuss these positions further. Just look for the RUP who turns reddest when a number is quoted at such times and ask him the relative merits of this position.

Further hints will appear in Part 2 of this article.

Ghar Pharu'ed Again

Brett Moule

I'd been psyched up all week waiting for Friday to come around so I could eventually do some of Tasmania's caves. Longer. Harder. Deeper. Prettier!!

I had been eager to get to Tassie for three months having missed Tastrog, having heard so many reports of the best streamway and passages in Australia, together with rumours that there were great discoveries to be made. Peter Dohnt had been in contact with us enticing us into a trip into recently discovered Kutna Hora.

Kutna what??? you ask! Kutna Hora; this is a cave that Peter and "The Bastards" (the infamous Northern Caverneer cave .. um... bastards) had discovered about 6 months before on the pine covered hill just before Wet Cave Reserve, Mole Creek, by the usual method of rising steam on a cold morning.

The message I received was that "there had only been one trip into it's depth for exploration. The cave had a few climbs and a long abseil into streamway. The stream is of unknown water depth and disappears around a corner. The exploration stopped due to lack of time and equipment".

This sounded like an excellent introduction to Tassie caving for me, and the possibility for discovering new passage seemed inevitable. This was going to be a good trip!!!

Friday afternoon was here, after an eternity of waiting, so after packing Jason's trusty Hilux we jumped in for the long drive down to Port Welshpool, Victoria. I jumped in behind the wheel, not just for the first shift of driving, but for the entire two weeks. Jason still had a cast on his fractured wrist from his fall in Colong two weeks before and couldn't drive or do any vertical or hard caves for that fact.

We arrived in Port Welshpool on Saturday morning and proceeded to board the dreaded 'Spew Cat' (read Sea Cat - Ed.). The trip across Bass Strait was relatively uneventful, I don't know why everybody complained so much after Tas Trog. (You obviously didn't experience 5m seas, nor spend your time trying to remember the safety drill and if it was 5 long blasts of the ship's horn followed by three short and two long, or three short two long and four short blasts meant abandon ship or were out of coffee (something to really worry

about), or was it nine long, three medium..... Ed.). Once in Georgetown we drove south to Launceston to meet up with Peter, and finally on to the Wet Cave reserve near Mole Creek to meet the other local cavers.

I awoke Sunday morning knowing that Kutna Hora was waiting for me so I quickly rose and joined the others around the camp fire whilst we ate breakfast and talked about Tassie caving in general. I was told the water in the bottom of the cave would be very cold and it would be a good idea that I put a wet suit on since I would probably be the person exploring the streamway. 5mm of neoprene, wetsuit booties, waterproof gloves, Nylon suit and dairy boots later I was ready for some seriously wet and cold caving.

The first explorers had abseiled the 30+ metre muddy pitch into the water then prusicked back out but there was so much mud on the rope, their ascenders were slipping. This time we were taking two 50ft ladders to use to climb back out with.

Of course I ended up carrying one of these ladders, so off we went trudging up the hill with wetsuit on and nylons. By the time we reached the cave entrance, which was three quarters the way up the hill, I was sweating like a pig. Anyway, five of us entered the cave which was a bit colder than outside and started down. The first climb was 7m down which we rigged a rope as a handline. After this we climbed a few more drops of about 2 - 3 metres, a few vertical squeezes and finally popped out at the top of the 30m pitch after a fairly tight horizontal squeeze.

There was thick gluggy mud, the kind that sticks on about 15cm thick around boots and anything else it touches, at the top of and all the way down the pitch. The only place to stand was a small slopey bit of mud about 3/4 m square that was slowly slipping down the pitch. Every few minutes you had to step back so you didn't fall off. At this stage I was second in line for the abseil and starting to get fairly hot and looking forward to jumping in the water at the bottom to cool off. Once I heard the 'off rope' call from Rob?? I quickly connected and started abseiling. On the way down I was looking for the water that was talked about so much, but none came. Instead, all that I landed in was about 20cm of pure mud. "Where's the water?" I asked. Rob?? kindly told me that the water looked to have dried up!! "Great", I thought, disconnecting and yelling "Off Rope" back up the pitch, "Now I'm going to die of heat exhaustion!!"

While waiting for the others to come down Rob showed me some gypsum flowers that would rival those of Kubla Khan and Ghenghis Khan, except for the mud which coated them.

When the others arrived we started off where the water was supposed to be and started exploring around the corner. Not more than three metres around the corner, you wouldn't believe it, the cave stopped! This was not good. I was down the bottom of the cave in full 5mm wetsuit and all the other garbage I had on and already I was really hot. I still had to exit the cave.

We searched for any leads but there were none, so the exit was started. I was the last up the pitch, so at the top of the bottom ladder I pulled it up, chaining it, and put it in my pack. This sounds a lot easier than it was. You see, the mud that was caked in it made it four times as heavy, plus the ladder also stuck to the wall as I was pulling it up. This was bloody hard work. By the time I got to the top of the pitch my wetsuit was soaking wet, from sweat!! I would have taken it off, but there was no room in my pack, so on it stayed.

After retrieving the other ladder and rope we continued out, up climbs and through vertical squeezes (which were quite hard) and finally out of the cave after about three or four hours. At this stage my pack felt as if it weighed about a tonne, so after quick surface trog, we scrambled back down the hill and to the cars.

When I took my wetsuit off you could literally wring the water out, and my overalls could almost stand up by themselves from the mud. And the abseil rack, crabs, Croll, all you could tell of them was that they were balls of mud!! (Sounds like a trip to J41- Ed.). For me Kutna Hora would be one of the harder trips that I have been on, mainly due to being severely overheated. It was an experience I won't forget for a long time!!! After attempting this cave Argyle hole at Bungonia seems like a self-guided tourist cave, and Mangawhitikau, Waitomo (see Calcite 36), is just a doddle.

**Jenolan, 15th - 16th
May, 1993**
Brett Moule

Members Present: Brett Moule (TL), Jason Moule, Michael Breenan, Phil Fleming, Dave Scascighini, Bruce Waddington and Family.
Visitors: Jane Michie (SSS), Stuart Hinkin.

It was fine all weekend, but very cold on Saturday, the coldest May 15th for 100 years). Everybody but Bruce made it Friday night. We started caving at about 9.30 - 10 am Saturday morning, but as the day progressed, people succumbed and stopped caving.

First Brett wore Jane out going up Boomalakka Wee Passage. The Lake was dry, but still there was muddy passage to be found.

Jane and Dave left after about 4 hours in Wiburd's Lake Cave, then after Hennings Michael also went back to the Cottage. The survivors then moved on to a bit of squeezing in Serpentine.

On the walk back to the Cottage Jason twisted his right ankle which swelled up a bit later on Sunday.

As usual we played some speleo games on the table and kitchen cupboards Saturday night, to the detriment of various parts of the anatomy.

Those that survived the games with minimal damage to body and soul ventured into Mammoth Cave Sunday morning by way of Central River, bypassing the Skull and Crossbones down some muddy vertical squeezes. Dave couldn't not make it down the vertical squeeze, so he exited the cave by himself making it out Ok.

The others, Michael, Bruce and Family, went to Aladdin Cave for about 1.5 hours to take photos.

Wyanbene 20th June 1993

Robert Wray

Members Present: Robert Wray (TL), Brett Moule, Jason Moule, Phil Fleming.

Visitor: Jane Michie (SSS), Stuart Hinkin.

After uneventful drives from Sydney, Stuart arrived at the cave campsite early on Friday night and we turned up at an early 10.30. Phil and Jane finally made it about 12.30; as usual, not long after we had just gone to bed...all up again.

Several important projects were to be accomplished this weekend, so a moderately early start was made Saturday morning. Firstly, in Wyanbene Cave I was intent on crawling around on the floor of the Gunbarrel looking for non-limestone rocks of various

colours. Secondly, Jason was intending to climb the waterfall at the end of Barking Dogs, and Phil wanted to visit the Frustration Lake area again.

Quick time was made past the gate, with a quick detour into Helictite Chamber. The photographers, Jason, Brett and Robert, decided to pop up to Cleopatra's Bath, so up we all climbed. The helictites in the lower area were quite superb. Obviously the cameras didn't think the same as they all promptly totally fogged out. A short time was spent warming and defogging.

Back in the main stream we quickly (well I did, the others took a while to catch up) moved up the streamway, through the Wet Stretch, and up into the Bypass to the Second Sump. It took some a while to find the way on, whilst those of us that knew the trick sat back and had a snack and a giggle.

Next were the climbs up the mud slopes into Rockfall Chamber. In the last three or four years these have become increasingly eroded by people 'slippery dipping' down the sediment banks. Not good.

At this point the others headed off through the collapse toward the Gunbarrel, whilst I looked at the lower stream level of the same rockpile. Following the stream coming from the Aven upstream is tight and muddy, and eventually gets too tight for progress. I returned and made my way out by the normal route. In the Aven, as the others left, I began my work looking for various flavour rocks on the floor. A detailed search reveals some very interesting things. The Aven reaches the overlying Devonian sediments and volcanics. Several samples were collected (under my NPWS Scientific Research Licence, it is illegal to collect rocks in National Parks otherwise) for detailed laboratory analysis for my PhD.

Back in the main part of the cave we moved to the Barking Dogs for an hour or more exploration high in the passage. Jason found where the water heralds from, but a formation blockage stopped progress. In full flood water really thunders out of the roof in this area, this was seen in a winter trip several years ago. There is good prospect for new passage here, it is a higher level tributary to the main stream, but progress will necessitate removal of several stals.

Getting bored with all this, Phil, Jane and Stuart went on to Frustration Lake.

We bumbled around for a while in the mud below the gour pools then began to work our

way out taking a few photos. There are some really nice small helictites in the roof of the stream passage. Other unusual 'spiky club' shaped formations are also common.

After dinner about 8.30, just as we were planning on going back to find them the hungry and tired 'Lakers' emerged to a cool night and a warm fire.

Sunday was also planned as a big day. Big Hole. A Tyrolean Traverse was contemplated but dismissed as this would only give one rope to descend/ascend on.

Once again with trusty geological hammer and plastic bags in hand, I rigged down from the tree on the west, with one rebelay and a free hang (almost) 95ish metres to the bottom. Phil rigged his own rope from another tree on the north wall.

Dropping down, I placed one protector for a minor rub point, but Brett encountered a problem with the protector. It came loose and slipped, all the way to the bottom, and another lower rub became apparent. This necessitated pulling up the rope, all 80m of it, with the slipped protector and another necessary protector tied on. Hard work!.

Phil came down the alternate way, but had some trouble crossing the free hanging knot, but all was right in the end.

I ferreted round for an hour or so whilst Brett, Jason and Phil descended, looked around, and left. Jane and Stuart volunteered for the important job of stopping tourists (or was it Jason, Brett and Phil?) throwing rocks at me, or generally being a pain.

Some time later with notes, rock strength measurements, samples and water samples (nearly 25kg) I ascended Phil's rope swearing at the weight of the bag.

Dinner was had in Goulburn and ended an interesting, enjoyable and scientifically rewarding weekend.

What did all the rocks show?? Ah.... you will all have to wait. I can't tell you just yet.....

Tuglow 21st - 22nd August Robert Wray

Members Present: Robert Wray (TL), Brett and Jason Moule.

Visitor: Glen Brew.

This trip was a dedicated photo trip of the lower streamway of Tuglow Main. Further photo trips will follow in due course.

Entering at about 10.30 am on Saturday, we descended the short climb and quickly negotiated the rockpile to the Diamond Mine, the old upper level stream canyon.

Some time was spent here photographing before proceeding to the top of Flowstone Wall.

Quickly rigging, we all easily abseiled to the active stream level and slowly proceeded upstream photographing scalloped passage and gours. A turnaround was made at the climbs up to Knight's Chamber, and we retraced our steps downstream to the bottom sump. Jason, like all good photographic models, couldn't resist getting wet for the cameras by climbing down through the eroded gours just at the right time.

From here we quickly scaled the Flowstone Wall, and exited the cave about 6 pm. with several rolls of excellent action and scenic photos.

On Sunday we drove to Porters Retreat via Jauntier to spend some time standing in more cold water freezing our hands and straining our backs looking for and finding a few tiny sapphires.

Handbook of Caver Types.

*Being a Guide to the Speleologist in
Recognising the Many and Varied
Species of Underworldlings.*

Carol Eckel,
Reprinted from SPAR 43, March 1975.

1. The Troglodyte. Has an ASF number of about 100. Generally bearded if male, occasionally if female. Once every 3 years, emerges to vote and tends to be a bit cloudy on events above ground. Has visited caves all over

the country, has his bloodstains in Khazad-Dum, his footprints in Kubla Khan, his clawmarks in the B.4-5 Extension, shreds of his clothing in Mammoth Cave and his name in the Bungonia book.

2. The Neophyte.

Type A: The Wide-eyed Innocent.

Shows up for his first trip in street clothes and a beanie, equipped with candles, a ball of string, a torch, and a pocket knife (for killing cave dragons). Remembered extra batteries for torch, but forgot a change of clothes. Usual highlights of ensuing trip include panic at first bat, painful extrication from a deep hole, attack of vertigo on a high ledge, snagging pants on projection in crawl, loss of torch in pool, loss of shoes in mud, loss of beanie in fall down slope, loss of string around own neck. On trip home, wrapped in blanket, usually comments between chattering teeth, "G-g-gee, th-that was g- great! When c-c-can we g-go out again?".

Type B: Good Time Charlie. Appears for trip dressed similar to Type A, but a bit dirtier. Forgot candles, torch, etc., but remembered flask of port in case of chills, snakebite, etc. Coordination is none to good to begin with, and deteriorates rapidly under frequent doses of said medicine; proportional use of spirits marked by loud guffaws such as "Gee, I wasn't gonna hurt the bat - just wanted to stir him up a little", "Oops! Oh well, it was only a little stalactite" and "There y'are - don't my name look neat on that flowstone!". Generally concludes at end of trip that others in the party are a bunch of deadheads.

3. The Explorer. Is frequently present at the beginning of a cave trip but seldom at the end of it having vanished into the first inaccessible crevice encountered in search of new horizons to conquer. Knows all the twists and turns in the wild sections of Wyanbene and Colong Caves and rarely goes on trips to Bungonia or Wee Jasper. During holidays is rarely contactable as he has dissapeared into the wilds of Tasmania, New Zealand, New Guinea or Mexico. Often found associating with Types 1 and 7.

4. The Digger. Has a vast number of cave discoveries to his credit, most of which average 3 metres in depth, 2 metres in length and 1 metre in width. Generally has some pet rabbit hole that he is certain will lead into a cave with a judicious amount of digging and/or blasting. Years after the excavation of this hole has been stopped by an underground spring, a sewer system or a nest of furious wombats, he still can be heard muttering "It goes! I know it goes! We just didn't dig deep enough....".

5. The Geologist. Any trip he accompanies is bound to be somewhat rocky. Nothing mineral escapes his flinty gaze - he leaves no stone unturned. Has a passion for exactitude and takes nothing for granite. On all but geological subjects, he maintains a stony silence. A real man of iron. Always attends the annual Christmas Party and never fails to get stoned.

6. The Naturalist. Can easily be recognised by a certain glittering intentness of eye, and a tendency to pounce without warning on anything that moves. Is able to tell at a glance whether it is a cave cricket, is male or female, weta it is married or single, and, if the former, weta it has successfully adjusted to married life. Travels underground encumbered by butterfly nets, reference books, formaldehyde, specimen boxes, and cyanide bottles for quick, painless execution of bats, rats, bugs, slugs, centipedes, millipedes, snails, whales, puppy-dog tails, and cavers who aren't fast on their feet.

7. The Climber. Rates worth of a cave as directly proportional to its verticality. Scorns anything less than 80° with more than one toe-hold per square metre. Is generally believed to sleep hanging by his toes from the ceiling. While he probably can't really walk upside down, he tries. Other's more sea-level conscious, have to take on faith his enthusiastic reports of fabulous stratospheric passages, chambers and formations, although this leads to a certain element of doubt.

8. The Photographer. Can be heard long before he is seen - his movements are accompanied by the rattle of flashguns, the clink of reflectors, and the clashing of 14 cameras slung around his neck. Often heard muttering incomprehensible phrases like "Lets see....Kodachrome 64 at F.4, hand held for one second might do it....maybe Tri-X.... wide angle lens in a ground level shot....try it at 1000 with a yellow filter." Has a camera for every conceivable situation - 35mm for small caves, large format press camera for big caves, underwater cameras for Nullarbor caves, box cameras for boxwork and a Brownie camera for leprechauns. Punctuates cave trips with howls of "But I want to take pictures!". Has been known to burst into tears when a bat refused to smile at the camera.

9. The Organiser. Aim and object in life is to turn a nice, comfortable, confused, disorganised bunch of cave gawking slobs into an efficient, well-functioning unit. This alone proves he is insane. Can be distinguished by a

military air of command, knife-edge creases in overalls and a nervous habit of tapping imaginary swagger stick against imaginary riding boots. Cultivates deep, ringing chest tones for use in shouting "Lets get this show on the road!", "Follow me men!", and "CHAARGE!!". Has occasionally been seen posing in front of mirrors with his hand inside his shirt front, which has given others in his group the idea of arranging his exile to the bottom of Khazad-Dum.

11. The Retired Caver. Although most members of the club have never seen this type underground, the repeated insistence of other retired cavers establishes their credibility. Retired Cavers are always a great source of anecdotes and caving stories, especially around the fire at night. Current trip leaders often pall when stories of their early caving trips are told. Contemporary high-tech cavers often recoil in horror at the techniques and equipment once used by retired cavers, whilst words like "classic abseil", "manilla", "carbide" and "unexplored cave" are often unknown to them.

12. The Cave Camper. There are two species, readily distinguishable by their lists of equipment necessary for a weekend caving trip.

Type A. (Eg. most club members)
1 blanket, 1 toothbrush, 3 toilet rolls.

Type B. Sleeping bag, air mattress, electric blanket, electric output for blanket, 3 caving lights, 5 helmets, 73 "Big D" karabiners, 1500m of rope, 4 sets of jumars, 2 extra pairs of overalls, sun lamp, gas range, 108 piece china table setting, trinkets and beads to trade with natives, comb, brushes, razor, mirror, Valet, folding lounge, lawn mower, suntan lotion, portable bush toilet, food (enough for 3 months), lantern, heater, record player, radio, the kitchen sink, etc, etc, etc.

13. The Con Man. Knows at least 10 commercial cave guides or park rangers personally, and can wangle free trips in their caves at a moments notice, and is fond of wheeling and dealing and cooking the books. Always packs enough paraphernalia to supply an African safari, but seldom seems tired, since he can usually persuade some poor bugger to carry it for him. Generally equipped with the latest and most luxurious items of camping, caving and climbing gear, which he gets wholesale. His car is invariably the one that gets stuck, but a few whispers in carefully selected ears always produces many willing volunteers to push.

14. The Politician. Generally has no interest in his own club, is concerned mainly with the ASF and bettering his position therein. Has no time for actual caving, since most of his time is spent making plans to load the Council with representatives from his region. At meetings, can usually be seen at the back of the room surrounded by his cabinet, stacks of lists, documents, and memoranda. Prides himself on always having the "inside info". Always attends the Conference, but is hardly ever seen since he is usually holed up in a hotel room with other politicians, debating, haggling and passing the word. Seldom seen with mouth closed, except when cave trips are being organised.

15. The Family Group. Is usually headed by a pair of ageing avant-garders, at least one of whom is determined that just because their married and have all these kids doesn't mean they have to give up caving altogether, by heck. They are accompanied by 2 to 10 juvenile delinquents ranging from 5 weeks to 15 years of age which dash, scramble, crawl, stumble, leap, climb, wallow, careen, stampede, swing, stumble, shriek, wine and howl their way through the cave, getting in front of cameras, upsetting tripods, moving survey stations, getting lost and being sick to their stomachs. Their movements are punctuated by screams of "Elwood! Stop setting Susies hair on fire!", "Put down that geo-pick!", "Put that film back in the mans camera!", "There isn't any ladies room down here", and "Come down this minute!". Generally the group has the cave all to themselves before the halfway point is reached.

16. The Girl Caver. Three species have so far been identified.

Type A, The Suffragette. Denied the opportunity to parade with Germaine Greer banners and chain herself to the gates of Parliament House, she heads underground to prove her equality to the stronger sex. Disdaining masculine aid, she climbs every mountain, fords every stream, suffers bruises and lacerations in comparative silence, and thinks rats are cute. Takes her turn at belaying, and shows no hesitation at being the last man out of the Big Hole. Underneath, however, she is wholly feminine, and suffers violent shock when she realises the remark about "you fellas" includes her.

Type B, The Lily Maid. Discovered sometime ago the charm, chivalrousness, virility, cash and general lovability of the male caver; decided caving presented the best opportunity for proximity thereto. Has no desires to prove her equality to men; quite the

contrary - the ruggedness of underground exploration is perfect for setting off her femininity. Her shrieks at bats, need for helping hands (male) across two foot wide holes, and quivering distress at rope and ladders arouse protective instincts in men, and killer instincts in other women. High point of this occurs when she is carried, twittering and giggling, across cave streams, usually by types 3 or 9. Usually fails to attain ultimate objective, permanent entrapment of cave man, since general consensus of opinion is that she is too much damn trouble!

Yarrangobilly October Long Weekend 1993

Robert Wray

Members Present: Robert Wray (TL), Brett and Jason Moule, Ian Lutherborrow, Cathy Brown, Murray and Catherine Dawes, Michael Brenan, Mathew Lyon.

Visitors: Stephen Kelly.

The rain poured down...

In the headlights the slick white lines upon the black greasy bitumen flashed under the bonnet in a seemingly endless countdown. Behind the wheel the tired speleo accelerated out of the corner and changed gear for the countless time. The rain continued to beat its metallic tattoo on the roof..... (I guess I got carried away again, PhD's do that to you)

In the process of major renovations, Cotterills Cottage was welcomed by Brett, Jason and myself as a dry haven from the rain. It wasn't snowing, snow would have been better!

Murray, Catherine, Michael and Stephen had already installed themselves at the Cottage that Friday afternoon. Although the end of season skin of the previous week hadn't been the best, they were well prepared ... there was always the fishing.

Saturday morning dawned wet and overcast (I use the word 'dawned' figuratively, we didn't see the sun and I'll be blown if I was going to get up and look anyway). At breakfast several of the Hills Spelio group paid a social call, they had driven in that night planning to sleep on the now rain resistant verandah, but seeing cars at the Cottage had driven away to camp the night across the road. They paid their respects and moved on out to Jounama Creek for some explorations.

After giving up waiting for Mathew Lyon, and Ian and Cathy to arrive we drove the few hundred metres to the start of the walk to Coppermine. Guess who arrives just before we left the Cottage, Mathew. Guess who we pass on the road, Ian and Cathy.

Brett, Jason, Mathew and Stephen proceeded to the upper levels of Coppermine photographing, whilst Ian, Cathy, Oliver and I traversed the lower streamway as far as the climb. I managed to get in and out without getting my feet wet once. Quite hairy and fun, the walls fall off!

Cathering, Murray and Michael went trout fishing at the ford.

After lunch Murray, Brett, Cathy, Ian, Oliver and I walked downriver along the ridgeline to have a look at the very large entrance to Tricket's Cave which had an enormous volume of air exiting.

Activities on Sunday morning were rather laid back. Between and during heavy rain storm several of us ventured up river to the Leak in the Creek and the small limestone bluffs nearby. Several small holes were found at river level, some which were beautifully scalloped and went for 20-30m, but nothing of great significance.

After lunch, Jason, Stephen and I donned wetsuits and walked down to West Deep Creek. Understandably, with all the recent heavy rain the creek was carrying a considerable volume of water. We estimated the volume of water entering the cave to be in the vicinity of 0.5 cusecs. A lot of water!

West Deep Creek Cave, although it have been raining constantly for nearly two days had not backed up and overflowed. This cave unquestionably goes! The slot at the bottom must be looked at again. Any HCG members who don't scare easily interested?

Passing on from WDC we made our way soggly toward East Deep Creek, Y.7, via way of Janus Cave doline, Y.58. The gate of EDC was quickly opened and we quite easily found the way down through the rockpile. Rigging a handline we chimneyed down into the active stream passage and headed downstream into the active levels of the cave.

This cave is really nice, white flowstone, stals, oolites, meandering bedrock tubes, rockpile, oh.. and some mud if you look for it. Lots of bones too, and lots of cold water to crawl through!!

We had a quick look at the first Duckunder, but the water volume was a bit high, although the cave obviously never floods, the water must have been at about its peak, all the gravel we dug out kept washing back in.

On the way out I followed, unintentionally, another stream passage that became really tight but supplying much of the lower streams water. We soon found the passage we had come down and slowly found our way out via the rockpile which is a little confusing on the ascent in places.

Walking up the hill in the dark the flow of water in EDC had increased considerably in the time we were underground. Getting out of EDC Cave probably would have been interesting to say the least.

Driving home the next day was a chore, not only was there Long Weekend traffic to contend with, but also the problems with road flooding and high winds. What fun.

Update to The Handbook of Caver Types.

*Being Further Unusual Cave Dwelling
Species Recently Identified.*

Rabbit.

The Surveyor. A unique species sometimes encountered on caving trips, especially in new caves or recently discovered sections of an existing cave. Surveyors can easily be recognised as they are slow moving animals and carry long fibreglass tapes, a Suunto compass and clinometer and a sodden, mud covered notebook. They are often seen in groups of two or three, sometimes four, communicating in a strange language; "Station 5 to 6, 3.68 metres, -23 degrees, left 2.3, right 1.6, up 1.9, down 0.5". They have been known to build numerous little piles of stones as they move. As they can be very dangerous if these stone piles are disturbed, it has been surmised that they may have some religious significance. Surveyors also talk of Grades 1 to 6, but it is not yet known if this refers to their level of education. Surveyors appear to be obsessed about not becoming lost, which might have originated with them being separated from their mothers in a shopping centre when they were children. It has been noted that once a cave has become well known

this species is hardly ever found there again, except in very rare circumstances. Several hypothesis suggest they may die out, but the evidence is not yet conclusive.

The Diver. Divers are a cave water dwelling species reported from several areas, but on the whole(!) are not often encountered in Australia. They have often been seen in caves under the Nullarbour Plain, Jenolan and Wellington and parts of Tasmania, but less commonly from the other States. Further reports are found overseas. They have a smooth, multicoloured skin, one or two large flat, shiny eyes, and webbed feet and live in cold water, often of low or zero visibility. Most sitings report one, two or more large rounded protrusions from divers backs, these are believed to be a type of armour and part of a defensive mechanism. Wherever divers are found, a larger group of cavers is often seen standing at the edge of the water admiring their underwater frolics and playfull antics. Unlike dolphins, most divers have not yet learned to toss balls with ther nose. Divers are highly territorial, and each diver marks of its area, usually with a orange rope type material found to be similar in structure to nylon. Inadvertantly getting tangled in this cord is very dangerous, even above water as divers have been known to leave the water to attack cavers who have tangled their cord.

The Entymologist. Entymologists are an uncommon breed of cave visiting animal. They are easily identified and are mostly seen close to the passage floor and walls keenly hunting for animals smaller and slower moving than themselves. This may be an aggressive territorial instinct. They rarely seem to eat any small creatures they find, but rather collect them in small bottles and take them to a currently unknown destination. Entymologists are known to posess two long, thin, metallic-like fingers on one hand with which they collect their prey. Their speech is unusual, containing many long, complex, latin-sounding words. They are generally not dangerous, unless you are smaller than them, but have been easily provoked into attack by the production of a can of fly-spray.

The Conservationalist.

Type A. Easily identified by their appearance; unshaven, unwashed, poorly dressed, and continually shouting. They congregate into groups and wave often intelligible signs of dubious grammatic correctness. The favourite diet of these types appear to be police officers, cement company management and politicians.

Type B. Little is reported of this species. They have been noted in law courts, corporate

headquarters, government buildings, universities and similar places, they usually prefer to be behind locked doors. Unlike Type A, they are known to be educated and literate, often highly so, they dress well in suits, and refrain from chaining themselves to large objects like trees or bulldozers. Despite their mild-mannered appearance they are regarded as more viscous and dangerous than Type A.

The Ranger. Rarely, if ever, seen near caves. Most rangers have little idea of the caves, and karst processes they supposedly manage. Be warned, many rangers are of the scavenger type and attempt to extort exorbitant amounts of money from unsuspecting weekenders. Do not, under any circumstances, offer food or tea to rangers, especially older ones, they will not go away!

Rangers are Not dangerous! they rarely physically harm humans. All that interests them are things which are furry, cuddly or green. They have no interest in, and no idea of, the landscape whatsoever!!!!

The Guide. A predatory species. Guides have been known to travel long distances very quickly. As soon as a cave is opened to the public, large numbers of guides are reported. This rapid increase in guide numbers defies all explanation by natural breeding processes, supported by the fact that young, juvenile, guides are rarely if ever seen. There are, however, many old, often infirm guides around. This suggests two possibilities; they either sense the new cave (by some as yet unknown process) and re-locate from other areas of high guide numbers, or otherwise guides may be a rogue mutation from any other cave visiting species. As yet there is no conclusive evidence for the latter process.

Guides lure large groups of their prey deep underground with wierd and, to the trained person, unbelievable stories of caves and decorations. Once the unsuspecting prey is mesmerised the guide, or often several guides if the hunting is good, turn off all the lights and commence feeding.

The only known defence against guides is to try and confuse them. From fragmentary reports of those few people who have survived a tour with a experienced professional guide is best to try and confuse the guide before attempting ones escape. Confusion is most easily gained by suggesting to the tour group the true processes by which caves and decoration forms, and asking questiones such as, "How do helictites form?", "How dark is in this cave at night?", and that good one, "How many undiscovered caves are there?" (Answer,

42). If all else fails try, "Whats two plus two?", or "What day is it?".

The Scout. One of the most dreaded and dangerous of all cave visiting species. It has all too commonly been recorded roving in large packs near cave entrances at popular areas such as Wee Jasper, Bungonia and Tuglow in N.S.W., scavenging for tinned and packet food and wearing little in the way of respectable clothing. The exact range of this species is unknown, but believed to be most of Australia. Dirty jeans, flannelette shirts, football jerseys, old gym shoes and baseball caps appear to be the favourite attire. It has been speculated in the scientific community that from the way that the caps are worn that these creatures have eyes in the back of their head, but no specimin has been seen with hair short enough to tell conclusively.

Underground they are most dangerous. They move in packs, often with a very dubious, confused, or deranged leader. They find their way by the aid of inexpensive plastic torches tied to bits of string (one between three). These cave creatures navigate by bumping into walls and other formations. They leave trails of disturbed or flung mud, flat batteries, lolly wrappers and other wreckage to follow out.

The more vertically inclined are usually found massing at ladder climbs, usually trying to unravel a cats-cradel of tangled, poorly rigged, ropes.

Fortunately, most of these horrors die before reaching mating age. However, several young have been born in captivity, and the numbers appear to be increasing.

If threatened, attempt to kill the leader first, on no account try to communicate or explain the cave or safe techniques, and never attempt this with the leader. To do this is impossible and is to seriously risk life, limb and sanity.

This is just an introductory list, with many species and sub-types still to be identified. Examples of each type are not found in every club, nor has every behavioural custom been studied or documented, eg. territorial or mating habits. Please keep a wary eye as many of these types have been known to be aggressive, especially if you accidentally drink their beer. Try to record the behavioural patterns of any new cave types, but take care to avoid scaring them.

Deep Thoughts

The current list of the worlds deepest caves is;

Name	Depth (m)
Reseau Jean Bernard (France)	1602
Vjacheslav Pantjukhin (Georgia)	1508
Lamprechtsofen (Austria)	1483
Sistema del Trave (Spain)	1441
Gouffre Mirola (France)	1436
Boj-Bulok (Uzbekistan)	1415
Sima de las Puertas	
de Illamina (Spain)	1408
Sistema Cheve (Mexico) *(See Below)	1386
Snieżnaja Pieszcziera (Georgia)	1370
Sistema Huautla (Mexico)	1353

Whilst on the subject of the Worlds deepest caves, the following was released on the international Cavers Forum computer news on the 12 August 1993 by Louise D. Hose, Geology Department, University of Colorado.

"Funded by a National Geographic Field Research and Exploration grant and by the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, a small team determined the depth of Sistema Cheve in Oaxaca, Mexico.

A visually positive dye trace was performed between the Cueva Cheve entrance in the upper part of the system and Agua Fria de Santa Ana in the Santo Domingo Canon in 1990. Jim Smith of Western Kentucky University provided and dumped the dye while Nancy Pistole and Sheri Engler confirmed its emergence eight days (and 18 kilometers) later. The actual relief between the two sites was not known until now. The depth of the dye trace, the world's deepest, was proven to have been 2363 m by our team this spring. The Cheve entrance, however, is 144 m lower than the highest explored part of the system, the entrance to Cueva Escondida. Adding this figure and the surveyed depth of the resurgence cave (surveyed during dives by John Evans and Bill Stone in 1984), the total proven depth of the Sistema Cheve is 2525m. That figure makes Sistema Cheve the deepest (albeit, not yet fully explored) cave in the world. (Exploration depth to the upper part of the system stands presently at 1386 m. The explored lower part of the system, now over seven kilometers long of mostly dry passage, has insignificant relief thus far.)"

Tuglow and Breakfast Creek

Robert Wray

Participants - Brett Moule, Robert Wray, Jim McGregor, José Abrantes, Brendan Brooke
When - 1994.

Another trip with people promising to attend and then not coming!!!! We went anyway.

Arriving at Tuglow we found another group in the cave, and we had the permit! Supposedly so did they, 17-20 venturers! By this time we were really cranky, so we left. We weren't going to put up with over a dozen venturers in the cave with us.

Thinking around for things to do we went to the Newnes Plateau for some canyoning. Deep Pass was the first stop, as by this time it was mid-afternoon and a little late to start any significant canyon. A nice easy stroll was had through the canyon, with Brett and Brendan accidentally falling of several of the waterfalls - several times to see who could fall from the highest. Brett won.

Next morning we drove out the the Rocky Creek exit track and bashed cross-country through the scrub to the head of Breakfast Creek. A couple of abseils landed us in the ferns at the bottom of the creek, not a nice place - very pretty, but you can't see the tiger snakes. Working downstream through some logs and scrub we eventually came to a section of deep, but wide, cliffed canyon.

The valley kept going but began to look very uninteresting until..... Above was a chockstone about as big as a garage, and the creek spraying over a real abseil. The pitch was rigged from the right, and I was down first. A doubled 50m rope reaches by about -2m. Abseil over the log-jam, not behind. The last person down must stop on the logs and pull down from there, otherwise the rope **will** catch on the logs. It is possible to climb up to, and down from the logs.

After this the canyon is narrow, damp, and quite sporting. Several other easy abseils are needed before Rocky Creek. Walk up Rock Creek pleasantly for about 45 minutes, having a look at several of the side canyons, and either climb up the exit gully or reverse the main Rock Creek canyon.

A great, easy, sporting canyon worth doing.

Yagby 19-20 February

Brett Moule

Present: Brett, Phil, Bruce, Emma and Friend.

A late start was made from Mittagong. Phil picked me up at about 9.30 pm and we reached Cotterills about 3.30 am. We quickly perused the info on North Deep Creek left for us by the rangers and went to bed.

Next morning we awoke to a nice warm sunny day in the Snowy Mountains (for once it didn't rain). The main objective of today's trip was to clean flowstone up past the gate in Coppermine Cave with a brush and bucket. Phil and I achieved this whilst Bruce and the girls came as far as the climb up before turning around and going for a short walk.

After Coppermine, Phil and I walked down the river looking for cave entrances and destroying our legs on blackberries and shrubbery.

On our return to the Cottage a few drinks were shared and stories of ghosts and other tall tales about weird and wonderful things were told.

Bruce and the girls ventured through a couple of Tourist Caves on Sunday whilst Phil and I made a quick recon. trip to North Deep Creek to find the easiest walking access, and to get familiar with the caves entrance rockpile.

Overall it was a quiet weekend, but all the same, it was still enjoyable. It was a bit disappointing that only 3 members made the effort to attend, perhaps next time we shall have more takers. In other words, this trip to this karst had a short cast, ha ha ha.

Rapid Underground Photography. Part 2.

Robert Wray

Following on from Part 1 of the basic techniques of the Rapid Underground Photographer (RUP) is the choice of the camera equipment to be used underground.

A waterproof camera is ideal (for keeping mud and water in!), but most other cameras also leak just as well. All the adjustment controls of the camera must be easily found for use in low-light situations, as there is usually a disagreement in the best aperture to be used for the shot. "Try F8" is commonly replied to by "F off." or "Hell, the knob fell off". With most common modern SLR cameras this changes to "Which button is it?". Motor drives help avoid some of the problems referred to in the last part of this article, but use a lot of film when they short out at the first wet crawl.

Whatever the choice, it must be remembered that transport and use underground is always a problem.

Recent advances in microprocessor technology now allows camera equipment to sense mud, dust and water from further than ever before, and to also monitor the RUP's expectations of the planned photo. This results in a rate of equipment failure exponentially proportional to the quality of the photograph and the time it took to set up. "Everybody ready? Three, two, one.... Oh damn, the battery just went flat!"

The trick here is to attempt to fool the said electronics. A rugged light and sound-proof carrying box is essential for moving modern camera equipment underground. It is also necessary to leave the camera in this box until absolutely the last moment before exposing the shot so it doesn't realise too quickly what is going on. It also helps considerably if the photographer thinks about his last meeting with his/her bank manager before and whilst actually touching the camera, this also helps baffle the electronics.

Further helpful hints on flash usage will appear in the forthcoming Part 3 of this article.

Six Canyons, Six Morro Bars, and a Great Time

Brett Moule

Participants - Brett Moule and Robert Wray
When - 11th 12th March 1994.

BUZZZZ.....Bugger, 2am already. I only finished packing one and a half hours ago. "Why do we do these things???" Because canyons are great, that's why!

Quick, get up, get ready, have breakfast (I only had tea three hours ago), grab the meat and milk out of the fridge and throw them in the Esky. Throw the Esky in the back of the ute and drive up to Robert's place by 3am.

"G'day Robert."

"Moan, moan, grumble, grumble, only half an hour sleep, moan, grumble, only had one cuppa so far. It's 3am, should be asleep!!". (I don't really moan so much, but this is a good approximation. - Ed.).

"Doesn't matter, throw your stuff in the back and lets go, you've stocked up on Morro Bars haven't you??"

"Of course, but we need to stop somewhere to get batteries for my flash, so we'll go via Katoomba."

"OK. All your stuff is packed so let's go. Its 3.30am so we should be at the Hole in the Wall carpark at about 6.30."

We finally arrived at the end of the road at 7am after having a scenic drive around the pine forest at dawn. Quite pretty in some spots and some interesting rock formations to boot.

"So what's the plan for the day Robert?"

"Well, we go down Hole in the Wall canyon, than up the Bungleboori, have lunch, climb an unnamed canyon up the other side, walk over the hill to Banks Canyon, go down it, back up the Bungleboori for about an hour, past Hole in the Wall, then back up the ridge to the car!!"

Pause.

"But in the guide book, Hole in the Wall is classed as a long day, and Banks Canyon is classed as a very long day!"

Pause.

"Yep.....lets go!!, it's already 7.30am."

Walking (...running) to the canyon is pretty easy and flat, just follow the path to the rock outcrop, turn right then start to drop down into the canyon. After walking along the creek for a while we get to the first 'introductory bit' of the canyon. We put on our wetsuits and continue into this very narrow and very dark canyon.

The canyon opens out for a while and we battle our way down the creek, rock hopping and jumping over heaps of logs. This section is

the only downfall of an otherwise great canyon.

From here it closes down even tighter and darker than before. So dark in fact that we need to get our Petzl Zooms out. There's a couple of abseils (a thirty metre rope is fine), hand over hand climb downs (eight metre tape handy) and optional jumps (must remember to take Zoom of head next time!!).

Then we get to a 'cave' containing hundreds of glow worms, taking a couple of photos of flowstones, eating a Morro Bar we continue on negotiating a squeeze and a few more short swims.

Continuing downstream we come to a waterfall with a small jump. Hey that's the Bungleboori!! That's a bit unexpected. This is also a fairly narrow, and you guessed it, very pretty canyon.

Heading upstream for about a quarter of an hour brought us to a sharp left hand bend where we had another Morro Bar and removed our wetsuits.

11.00am. Great. Heaps of time to see Bank's Canyon! . OK, get everything repacked into the bags again; rope, wetsuit bottoms, wetsuit tops, abseil gear, camera flash, and on the top one last Morro Bar. Wow, this bag's heavy.

Just climb up this little canyon, keeping high up on the right hand side and we'll be right. Gee, we're up high now, almost to the top. Traversing along on these little ledges is fun, should try things like this more often!

Up the top already. Oh wow, great view. You mean we came all the way from down there? Wasn't hard at all.

Just a short walk along the top now then drop down into Banks Canyon, wonder if it's going to be as good as Hole in the Wall?? We'll soon find out.

Already time to put the wetsuits on! Starting to get very narrow and more interesting, good. Pity the canyons so dark, too hard to take photos without a tripod, should have brought it along (and that's with 1000ASA film - Ed.). That's right, we had no room. This is getting excellent, as good or better than Hole in the Wall. A couple of abseils (again with the thirty metre rope), ten metres, seven metres, followed by a thirteen metre drop. Look downstream, that's the Bungleboori.

That didn't take long, but what a canyon!! Now there's only about an hour walk, swim,

wade, up till that sharp left-hand bend again, then the walk out. Swimming up the Bungleboori is very nice. Fifty minutes later we pass Hole in the Wall canyon and ten minutes later we're at the bend taking off our wetsuits and drying the rope to get the pack weight down.

4pm. At a guess we should be back at the car at about 5.30. This first bit of the climb is pretty steep, almost vertical. Once up the top of this bit it will flatten out. Up the top, what a view again. Better keep trudging along.

Is that rain?? Sure it is, grumble, grumble, might have to put the tent up tonight. Good, it's stopped raining. Just around the corner and there's the car. Great, it's still in one piece, no broken windows. "What's the time, Robert?"

"5.30".

Perfect guessing. Get changed back into dry clothes and drive back to the Bungleboori picnic area to set up camp.

Half way through my Chocolate Self Saucing Pudding that night, sitting next to the campfire, thinking of the day's events I thought, "today was the best day's canyoning I have ever done. The canyons were deep, dark, narrow and pretty. The best qualities in a canyon."

"Whungee Wheengee Canyon tomorrow??"

"Of course, it is supposed to be one of the best canyons around!"

I thought to myself, it has to be pretty good to beat today's effort. As I look up it's a cloudless night so I decide to sleep out. 3am, it's raining, bugger, pull the tarp over the top, I should be right. 6am, suns out (just) and the rains gone, take the tarp off the top and hopefully I'll dry out! I did.

We drive back to Mt Wilson and get ready for another canyon. 11am and we're just leaving the car to do Whungee Wheengee Canyon, a full day trip according to the guide. Walking down the Wollangambie exit track is quite easy and fast and we reach the Wollangambie in no time.

We cross and head up the other side, execute about a Grade 12 climb and continue on up the hill losing the poor excuse for a track. Heading to the top of the hill is very scrubby and destroys one's legs and arms. Traverse north along the top of the ridge, find the track again and fly along it for a while. Lost it again, scrub bash out way through, scratching out

legs to bits down to the creek that the canyon is on. This is a lot harder than what it sounds.

2pm., stop for a break and a Morro Bar. Continue on downstream, hope the canyon starts soon. Ah, here it is, put on wetsuits, climb down the waterfall, and wade downstream. Gee there's heaps of rock sumps you have to climb up and over. I sort of wreck the canyon!! It's pretty narrow and deep though, and in some spots fairly dark, not as dark as Hole in the Wall though. Climb down some rocks and swim into a dark chamber. Which way on? Through that duckunder. All right, I've been looking forward to this, Yee har. Great fun!! great spot for photos.

Continue downstream for a while till the first abseil, a real bitch of a start, no exaggeration. Go another one hundred metres or so then another abseil, this one's a bit better (a thirty metre rope is OK)

At the bottom of the canyon there is a great bit of really narrow perfectly straight, deep, joint controlled canyon. Really nice to see. This is where it joins the Wollangambie. We decided to go upstream. Great time for another Morro Bar. My advice for the next group is to go downstream!!

From here it's about 1.5 kilometres upstream, of which about half is swimming, against the current.....hard work, but good exercise. Just a few hundred metres to go until the exit track and there is a two metre waterfall which is quite tricky to climb when you are tired.

At last, back at the exit track, take off the wetsuit and pack the bags again. Have one last Morro and climb back to the car, arriving at 6.30pm.

Of these two days the first was a much more enjoyable day. The walk in was much nicer, and both the Hole in the Wall and Banks canyons were better and more sustained than Whungee Wheengee, and there wasn't a huge swim up the Wollangambie. But overall a very enjoyable couple of days.

**Yarrangobilly,
Easter 1994.**

Robert Wray

Members Present: Robert Wray (TL), Brett Moule, Phil Fleming, Marie Horvath, Bruce

and Linda Waddington, Adam, Emma and friend.

Visitors: Jane Michie (SSS), Paul Bourke.

As the rising sun reluctantly caressed the higher slopes around Yarrangobilly Village, we rolled over and went back to sleep. We might be cavers but we're not totally stupid! A couple of hours later at a more civilised 8am we arose to a cloudy, but not totally unacceptable morning.

Having partaken of breakfast, at 9.15 Brett and I drove down to the Rangers Office only to find they didn't open until 10am. A quick walk down to the Thermal Pool filled in the time.

Back at the Office we briefed Nick Mayo, the acting Head Ranger, as to our plans for the long weekend concerning the survey of North Deep Creek Cave, Y7. Highland had been asked if it would undertake the project several months ago by Neil Kell, Head Ranger at the time, and I had accepted the task after consultation with various members of the Group.

CEGSA had begun the job of resurveying this cave in 1990-91, sections having first been mapped during the late 60's and early 70's, but they were unable to complete the survey at the time. A number of significant sections of the cave needed surveying, whilst in others, wall detail was required. Neil provided a photocopy of a reduction of a faxed rough sketch... of the map produced by CEGSA, but our lack of detailed information of this survey suggested that instead of trying to integrate several surveys into one, with concomitant errors, a more worthwhile course of action was to survey the entire cave ourselves. The plan was to survey the entire lower streamway section ourselves this weekend, with the entrance rockpile survey to be completed during the October Long Weekend.

These tasks in mind Jane, Brett, Paul and I set out about midday on Friday to North Deep Creek. I had explored much of the cave last October with Jason whilst it was in full flood. Water levels were much lower during this trip, but the perennial stream through the lower cave was still high enough to demand a wet suit for prolonged stay. Access was quickly made down through the rockpile and a ladder rigged for the duration of our four day visit. We then strolled down to the Duckunders, admiring the magnificent passages and pristine decoration along the way.

Resurvey of the January Series beyond the Duckunders has been discussed with and approved by Andy Spate and will be an integral

part of the final survey. Brett was eager to penetrate the very sporting roof-sniff passage, and even began digging gravel from the first Duck. Restraint was, however, exercised and the long task of surveying begun. We surveyed back from the Duckunders until cold forced a stop at the Junction of the two main streams.

There is a lot of high level rockpile above the lower streamway which still requires surveying. Much of this is located near the Visitors Book in the region of the connection from Janus Cave, Y.58.

The walk out was made in the dark after about 5 hours of surveying and just before a corker of a thunderstorm. Access to the cave was found to be easiest by walking down a ridge from the highway, and not by the Deep Creek access road. Using our route it only took about 20-30 minutes from the cave back to the cars, but a compass is handy at night. Climb the ridge to the west of the cave, and then follow a bearing of about 50° magnetic back to the road.

Later that night after a very late dinner the days survey efforts were entered into the computer and plotted on the screen for all to see.

Next morning we made a slightly earlier start and were in the cave shortly after 11am. Brett, Jane and I returned to survey, whilst Phil and Maree went walking, and Bruce and Family and Paul went to the Tourist Caves. Whilst exiting Glory Hole, Adam slipped and broke a finger. The afternoon was then spent at Tumut Hospital.

The survey was picked up from the previous days end at the Junction, and carried back toward the entrance. A stop was made at the Roo Holes and the end of the lower stream levels. The stream here disappears under a wall near the base of the ladders and will require further investigation, as will the rockpile a little downstream. Higher levels exist here.

A EDM surface traverse from Y7 to Y48, Y49, Janus and Y68 back to Y7 and thence to West Deep Creek and back was conducted next day by Jane, Maree and myself, whilst the others drove out to Cooleman Plain.

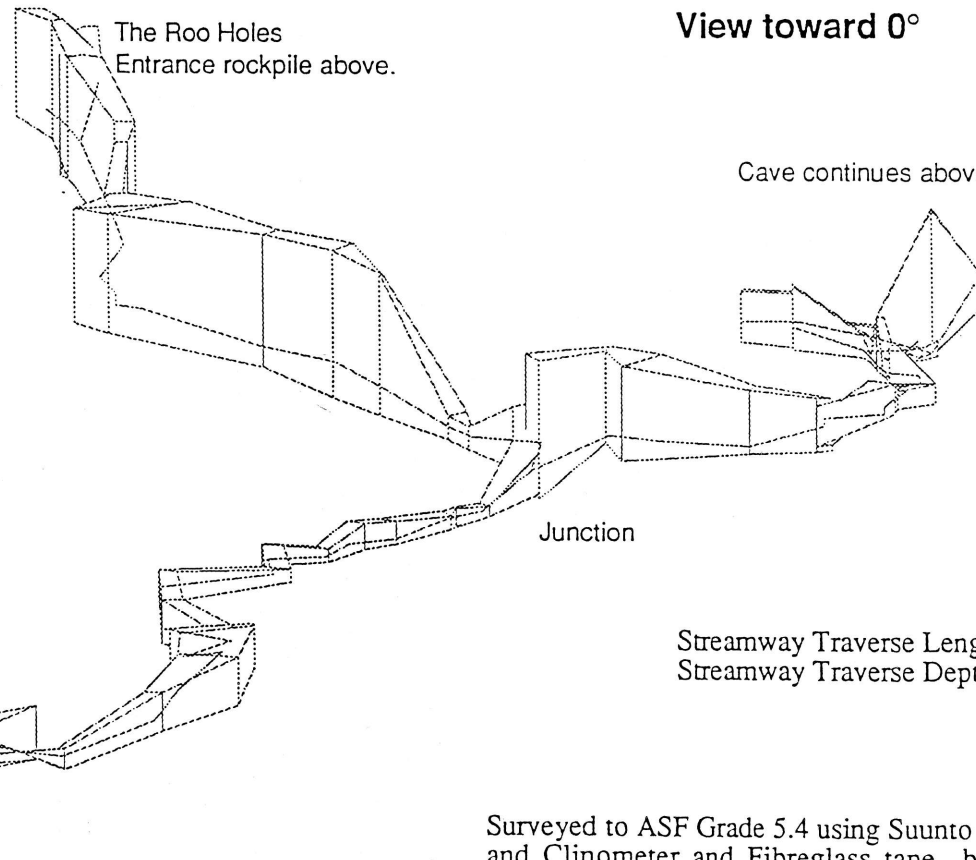
Brett and Phil went exploring up the other stream passage from the Junction where I had had a brief look last October. They returned after a great 6 hour survey effort with tales of sub-metre survey legs, extremely narrow stream passage and numerous unexplored upper levels.

This stream does unexpected things. I had imagined it would head back under the

North Deep Creek, Y7, Yarrangobilly, New South Wales.

0 10 20
Metres

Active Streamways only.
Entrance Rockpile, Janus Cave,
and The January Series omitted.

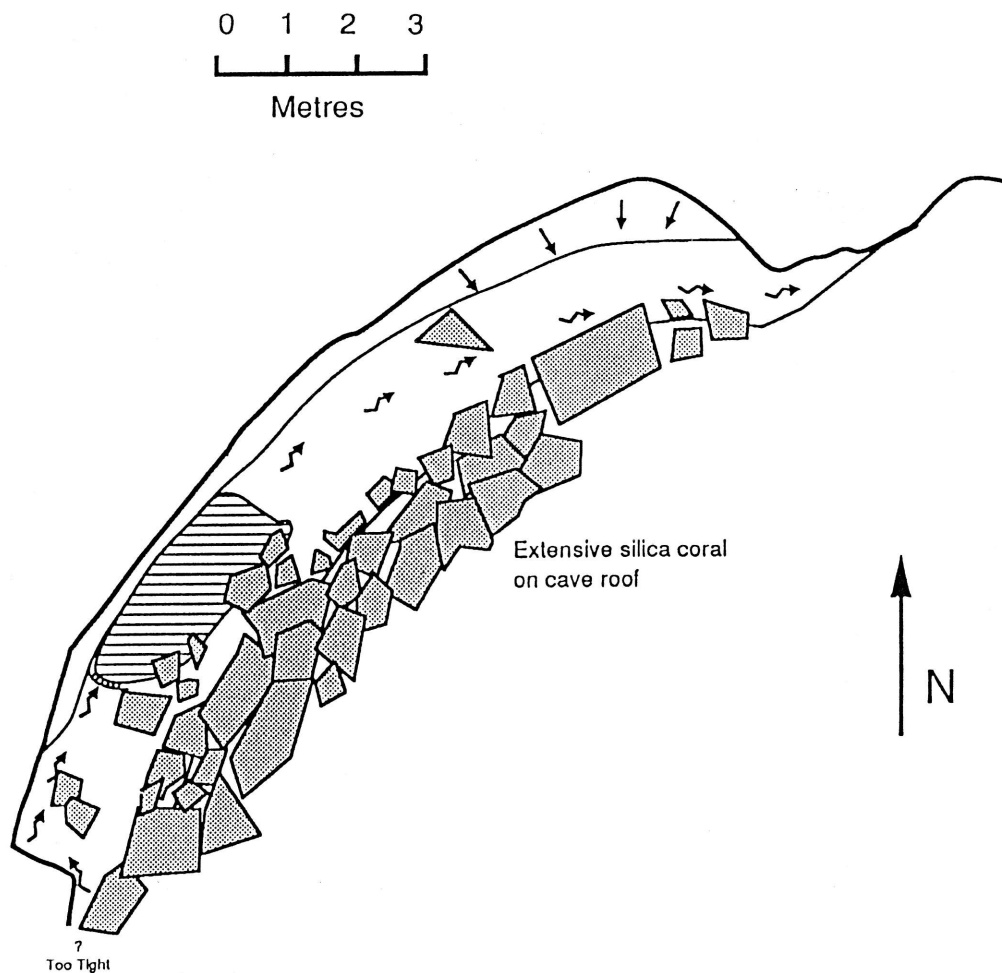


Streamway Traverse Length: 301m
Streamway Traverse Depth: -35m

Surveyed to ASF Grade 5.4 using Suunto Compass
and Clinometer and Fibreglass tape by Robert
Wray (HCG), Brett Moule (HCG), Jane Michie
(SSS), and Phil Fleming (HCG). 1-4 April 1994.

The Duckunders

Tiger Snake Canyon Cave



Surveyed to ASF Grade 5.4, 27 March 1994, by
Suunto Compass, Clinometer and Fibreglass
Tape by Robert Wray, Brett Moule, Rainer
Wende and Brendan Brooke.

entrance rockpile toward the contemporary sink in Y49. However, it doesn't do this, at least at a low level, see map. The stream soon becomes very narrow, then makes several very dramatic changes of direction into two almost larger parallel passages. Phil and Brett report the water 'just sort of disappears' with no obvious source. Many high-level chambers, often containing copious amounts of mud exist here and will require further exploration and mapping.

Monday afternoon was spent partaking in a pleasant stroll through East Eagles Nest photographing.

Further things to do.

- Survey the entrance rockpile from the Y7 tag to the Roo Holes.
- Continue explorations and mapping of the main streamway into the higher levels.
- Find the way upstream toward Y48 and Y49.
- survey the rockpile between Janus and Y7.
- Survey the January Series and investigate exploration prospects downstream.
- Survey Y48 and Y49.

Tiger Snake Canyon Cave

Robert Wray

Tiger Snake Canyon is described in most of the guidebooks. Access is via walking along an old forestry road from the Old Coach Road, near the Glowworm Tunnel.

The canyon is very easy, and quite spectacular, exiting from a very narrow section of dry canyon high in a cliffed valley ample evidence of multiple nickpoint retreat is seen along the cliffs of this valley, as is unusual and rare sandstone rillenkarren. Further down this valley is a geologically recent joint-bounded cliff collapse about 50m long and 40m high. Extremely interesting karstic features are seen on the face of this collapse, but these are not described here.

What is interesting is the cave below this cliff. Tiger Snake Canyon Cave is about 30m long, from 2m to 0.5m in height and about 5m wide. It is formed at the contact of a thick claystone bed within the Triassic Burra-Moko Head? sandstone of the Narrabeen Group by the excavation of both the sandstone and a thick

underlying claystone band. This claystone band is thicker than those usually seen within the unit. It is not just the claystone band that has been removed, but also the sandstone.

Structurally, the cave is really just a large overhang which has had its outer side sealed by talus from the cliff collapse, but the cave now has a large dark zone. Whilst mechanical erosion processes have probably been dominant in the formation of the overhang, the processes of solutational weathering have undoubtedly been significant. This is most easily seen in the overlying cliff face and fallen blocks, but these processes will not be examined here.

What is most evident is the secondary deposition of silica from solution. The roof of the cave is absolutely covered with the most profuse silica stalactite display I have seen in all my PhD researches. Not only is the roof covered, but silica and iron? based stalagmites, phytokarst, flowstone and shawls are exceedingly common on the walls, floor and roof.

A further small overhang on the right a little downstream also displays similar features, but with a little more iron.

At the upstream limit of Tiger Snake Canyon Cave water flows out from an impenetrable slot between blocks. This is undoubtedly the creek which flows through the canyon which sinks in sediment within the narrow section of the canyon.

The decoration within this cave is VERY fragile. Please take care in this remarkable cave.

Tuglow and Kalang.

23-25 April 1994

Jason Moule

Members Present: Jason Moule (TL), Robert Wray, Ian Lutherborrow, Oliver Lutherborrow, Brett Moule, Gabriel Webb.

After meeting Gabriel at Jenolan on Friday night, we drove through the usual fog trying to avoid the odd wombat to Boss Mountain. The turnoff onto the Kowmung River Fire Trail is about 2km past the K15 sign. Later that night Ian, Oliver and Brett arrived.

Next morning we investigated the Tuglow Resurgence, T.11, at Tuglow Hole, which had a surprising water flow coming out of it. We

found where the water was coming out after fighting the blackberries for a while (and they won), then finding out that there was a track through them on the other side of the creek.

After a short wander around drove back to Tuglow Main Cave.

Robert, Ian and Oliver went for a surface trog while Brett, Gabriel and I entered the cave only to find I.S.S. heading out of the cave! with a permit as well. Another N.P.W.S. stuff up!!!

They had their ropes rigged down the laundry Chute, so we laddered down the Flowstone Wall as usual. Robert, Ian and Oliver went down to the bottom sump, had crawl around and then ventured back to the surface.

Meanwhile, we took some snaps of Knights Chamber and the Waterfalls. Brett and Gabriel had lugged their wetsuits all the way, and so Brett fulfilled his life's ambition and abseiled down, then climbed back up the 10m waterfall. Gabriel also abseiled down, then we walked downstream taking more pictures.

On Sunday, Gabriel drove home whilst Ian and Oliver walked to Morong Falls, whilst the other three of us dodged down Kalang Falls, which was very picturesque.

Kalang is a very open canyon with 10 abseils, and can be done in winter. It took us about 6 hours, taking pictures and videos (the birth of Canyon Cam?, Ed.) of the beautiful waterfalls as we went.

After slogging up Murdering Gully, which is a very appropriate name, for about 1 hour, we met Ian and Oliver at Boyd River and stayed the night.

Next morning Ian and Oliver drove home via Kanangra Walls whilst we drove out to visit Mt Hay and walked to the top. A weekend enjoyed by all.

Watta Canyon

Brett Moule

(Detailed references to the location of Watta Canyon have been removed - Ed.)

The Scenario.

The year - 1984, Brett - age 11, Jason - age 13.
"Jason, what are we looking through all Dad's maps for?"

"Just having a look ... Gee, look at this creek on the map (south of Wollongong). It's got a real box looking section in it."

"Yea, and look at all the cliffs around everywhere..."

"We have to check it out soon!"

"Yes."

Exit Stage Left.

Enter Stage Right - Brett, Robert.

Thursday 3rd March, 1994.

"O.K. fellas, I've got the topo of the area around Creek, were ready to rock and roll. Yee har, lets go.. Hey Robert, look at this creek over here on the map, it look real good. Might be a good canyon!!"

"Hmm, it looks interesting, I'll check it out on the aerial photos and we'll go do it."

"Sounds good to me."

Exit Stage Left - Robert.

Friday, 18th March, 1994. 1.00pm.

I had this afternoon free, so I thought to myself, I said "self, you can go and do that creek you've been wanting to check out, so lets go." I jumped in my car and drove up to to the nearest spot I could. From here it was only about one kilometre walk to Creek. I thought that I could walk down beside the creek until the first cliffline without getting wet, so I didn't take any thermals or rope or other canyoning gear, except for a pair of Volleys, shorts and shirt. I was wrong!

This creek starts off into a canyon as soon as you reach it, with 5 to 10m walls on both sides and a 2m jump in down a waterfall, what a start to a canyon. After this you swim, wade, scramble downstream admiring all the rock formations: potholes, cascades, almost phreatic sculpting in some spots. All the way down the canyon there is a beautiful layer of moss on virtually everything above water. But that makes all the rocks above and below the water extremely slippery, What a canyon.

It took me about half an hour, without a pack and only wearing shorts (freezing to death on the way) to get to the last swim before the first abseil. This is an awesome sight. All you see as you swim down is the 10m cliffs on either side, a rather large log sticking out of the water on the left, and the water disappearing off the edge. Once I had swum across to the log (which is about 3m from the edge) I could see that there was a waterfall about 5-10m high, and no way to rig the abseil out of the water. This was as far as I was going this time.

From the top of this waterfall I could see the interesting cliffline section shown on the map, and it looked good!! I quickly made my way

back up the canyon negotiating some of the climbs that I had jumped on the way down. There was one that stopped me though... The 2m one at the start, and there was no way to climb it. I had to go downstream about 30-50m and climb the right hand wall looking downstream (true right - Ed.). I grabbed my shirt which I had left at the top and walked/jogged back to the car where a dry set of clothes awaited. The whole trip only took 1 1/2 hours.

Enter Stage Right - Jason.

Sunday 17th April, 1994.

Jason and I, on the spur of the moment, grabbed a couple of ropes, wetsuits, Volleys, a bolting lit, and a camera for proof of what we'd done, and headed off to the canyon. We arrived at the start about 11.00 am and, after getting changed into wetsuits, headed off downstream taking photos along the way. This was it, we were got to the last swim, put our harnesses on, and got the rope ready. In we jumped and quickly swam to the log, threw a tape around it, clipped the rope on and threw it over the waterfall. Now the fun begins!!

I threaded my raprack on and started abseiling down the waterfall. About halfway down, all I could see when I looked down was a torrent of water just pelting down, and the rope disappearing straight into it. What's down there? Will I be able to unclip without drowning? Will I be able to breath abseiling inside this torrent?, these question were all going through my head. As I entered my adrenalin was pumping, the water was pounding, and I was loving it. I took a breath and continued down. "All right, this is great..... Hey, where's all the water gone?" I had swung in behind the waterfall in an overhang. All my questions were answered.

"Whooooaaaa. Yeeaaaah!"

Anyone who has ever abseiled down into the unknown, especially straight down the middle of a roaring waterfall, probably being the first one ever down, knows the adrenalin rush that goes with it. This was action pumping stuff. I was psyched and ready to do anything.

At the bottom was a small ledge to unclip on and then to jump back into the raging torrent and swim across to the other side to let Jason know that I was O.K. and for him to come down. After Jason got down we were both chanting "what a canyon", yea, excellent!!", (hence the name Watta Canyon).

We scrambled down from here for a hundred metres or so to where a spectacular sight meets

the eyes. A 70-80m drop at which if you stand in just the right spot you can see three waterfalls tumbling over this cliff. Seeing as we only had 50m of rope we didn't abseil down here. After checking out rigging points, we explored around a bit then started back. We only got as far as the first abseil before we were slowed down. We had to prissik up this short waterfall. This was much more difficult a task than what was first imagined. Imagine this, a waterfall about 5-10m high with a torrent of water pounding down on top of you. Let me tell you, your head gets a little bit cold!! This task was eventually completed and after pulling up the rope, our exit was continued back to the car at roughly 5pm.

Sunday 1st May, 1994.

Knowing that the canyon was very cold and there was a stuffing bit abseil, and possibly an even bigger prisik, we tried a different line of approach. Coming up from the bottom. What this involved was to drive to the top of, walk down to the bottom, and then a nice walk downstream until we met up with then heading up it. The purpose was to find the correct exit track, and to see if there were any waterfalls on the track that would have to be climbed. This was going to be a leisurely afternoon stroll.....NOT!!

Below on theRiver there are huge boulders which required us to scramble around, down and through, virtually a huge rockfall. At the bottom, where the river does a hard left turn, is where Watta Canyon enters. It joins dramatically with a beautiful set of cascades that are perfect for photography. We started up Watta Canyon but didn't succeed in reaching the base of the 70-80m falls as we ran out of time, and there are lots more bit boulders to climb up.

Doing a through trip shouldn't be too bad, but it won't be one of the most pleasant walks out that I could think of. Its getting a bit cold now probably to attempt a through trip, but I can't wait until the weather warms up again so that I can run the first through-trip. All I need is two 100m ropes and we can go and do it. So....who's coming?
