



C.D.A.A. Newsletter

No. 131 - MARCH 2015

## **THIS ISSUE...**

- *New Zealand's Blue Creek Trip report*
- *Member Profile - Linda Claridge*
- *Mexico Cave Diving*
- *Advanced Cave Course in Mt Gambier*

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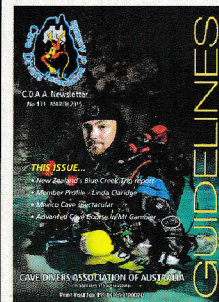
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### Cover:

Brett Harris  
 preparing to dive  
 at Weebubbie

Image by:  
 Stewart Donn

## CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

ABN 65 062 259 956

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GUIDELINES is a newsletter of the Cave Divers Association of Australia. All articles for the following issue are to be sent to the Publications Director, Email: [publications@cavedivers.com.au](mailto:publications@cavedivers.com.au)

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### CDAA INSURANCE

Policy Type: Combined Liability Insurance Policy# BN-EAL-14-441680L.  
 Insurer: Liberty International Underwriters ABN: 61 086 083 605  
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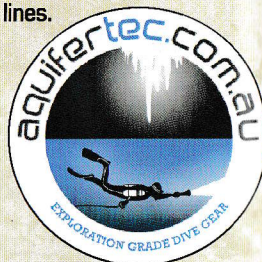
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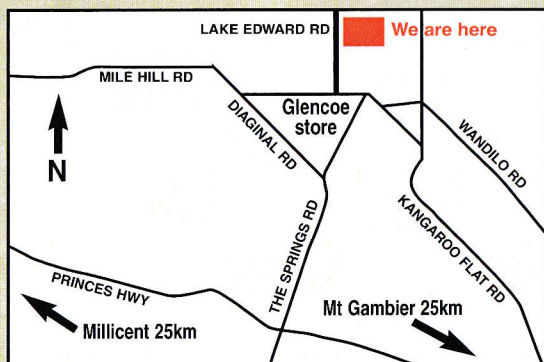
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## EDITORIAL

ROWAN STEVENS



Hi and welcome to Guidelines issue 131.

Firstly write it down, add it to your mobile device and circle it on your wall calendar as AGM 2015 has been scheduled. This year the AGM will be hosted in Mt. Gambier over the weekend 26-27th September 2015. Refer to the official notice enclosed which includes a call for Election of National Committee Members and Voting for Member Motions and Constitutional Amendments.

In this edition we have a cave diving trip reports to New Zealand and Mexico, information on the new Scubapro MK25 EVO/A700 Black Tech Regulations and a report from Michael Mallis who successfully completed his Advanced Cave Training. There is also a CDAA Member Profile for Linda Claridge and a report from Florida on the sad story of a double fatality by non-certified divers who drowned at Eagles Nest.

Signing off for another issue,

Happy reading.

Rowan Stevens #3177 | Publications and Records Director  
M: 0417 550 509 | E: [publications@cavedivers.com.au](mailto:publications@cavedivers.com.au)

## IMPORTANT NOTICE:

### Rebreather diving in The Shaft Sinkhole . . .

Following a number of successful rebreather dives carried out in the Shaft with a couple of the current guides, Trevor Ashby will permit the use of rebreathers on his site. The current procedure will be limited to an acceptance by the guide on the day in whether they are comfortable in having RB divers with them, that is, it will be the guide's call. Should you wish to dive The Shaft with your RB, please note the guide on the day and CONTACT them PRIOR to the day to see if they are ok with this...

There are three points here...

- 1) Get to know your guide and they in turn, you and your rebreather.
- 2) Current maximum depth will be 40 meters.
- 3) The more we dive The Shaft with rebreathers, and they are seen in use, the more comfortable the landowners will become.

Of course with familiarity and further support, depth will increase as has occurred with open circuit trimix.

### Articles for Guidelines June 2015 - Deadline is May 20th

- Send articles and jpeg images by email to [guidelines@cavedivers.com.au](mailto:guidelines@cavedivers.com.au)



# NATIONAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

MARCH 2015

Recently I was in the USA where I was able to speak with several peers from the NACD and NSS-CDS. Learning of their challenges around litigation and the costs they were incurring, I was quietly pleased to know that the CDAA is not suffering the same challenges and that we are appropriately insured.

Outside of discussing insurance and litigation, it was also good to see the amount of common thinking around what needs to be done in terms of training and membership dollar value in order to lift our respective organisations. There was much discussion on how we may be able to work together and look forward to a closer working relationship in the future.

The one thing that did stand out was the fundamental differences in our training. While ultimately achieving the same outcome, how our respective organisations achieve this ultimate goal of creating competent cave divers was substantially different. This is not to say one system is right and one system is wrong – they are just different. In their case, divers with Full Cave qualifications have less actual training days than that required by the CDAA, but have more time training inside actual caves. In the USA, they learn a lot about currents, but less about silt management as in the case with our training – as I said – it's different. They train for their local conditions and we train for ours. The take out for me is the question of whether we should start to look a little closer at our local differences. E.g. should our training be adapted to local conditions for students learning in the Nullarbor or NSW? Are we missing the finesse in our strive to be uniform?

In diving different locations in Florida, I did come up with a couple of challenges. I discovered specific sites required you to have side mount qualifications, scooter qualifications and/or rebreather qualifications. As we don't offer all these qualifications to our members, it did pose a problem for me and a few other Australians I bumped into while in Florida. As a lot of members do travel to Florida, we need to address this issue. I am not suggesting that we start compelling members to do additional training, but we need to figure a way of recognising those members who do have these skills. We need to make sure that when our members travel, they can access all the dive sites.

Also when in the USA, I met one of the owners of X-Dive from Italy – a professional dive light manufacturer. I offered to take a number of their lights and show the members on the proviso that people could actually try them in the water and not that they were simply a static display. To this end, they agreed and passed onto me a range of lights for you to try should you be in the market for a new light.

The idea of having equipment available for members to try in the water turned out to be a snowball. National Committee members have since spoken to other manufacturers and suppliers who are also willing to contribute to the idea. Deep Dive Gear has already provided an X-Deep side mount harness, with others to come on board soon. How this will work in practice is still to be figured out. It may start with a bit of a road show, with equipment moving between States. It may be something we leave at Mt Gambier as a bit of equipment library.

There is no intention of the CDAA becoming an importer or retailer, but to be able to try equipment in a pool or a cave before forking out their hard earned cash, is a great benefit of membership. And if we do it right by ensuring the suppliers also get value out of the deal, then we should be able to continue to see more equipment and most importantly, the latest of the new equipment that comes onto the market, added to our library.

On the home front, things have progressed. OzTek was held over the weekend of March 14th and 15th in Sydney and we had our Association on display at our Stand.

The Tank Cave Management Committee has prepared site development and risk management plans for the National Committee to review and endorse. After our feedback has been incorporated these documents will be presented to the membership for wider comment.

On the Standards front, a draft SRT program has been developed for consideration by the National Committee and Rebreather dives to 40m are now able to be conducted The Shaft Sinkhole.

Lastly, we are also working on a revamp of the Online store and the range of CDAA products available so watch that space.

May your drysuit remain wet on the outside.

John Vanderleest

On behalf of the National Committee.



John Vanderleest,  
National Director



Peter Horak,  
Business Director



Linda Claridge,  
Standards Director



John Dalla-Zuanna,  
Site Director



Rowan Stevens,  
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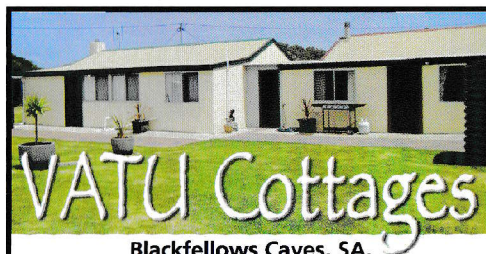


# Florida Father & Son Found Dead in Cave Diving Accident ... and Why it is So Important to be a Certified Cave Diver!

Source: <http://www.scubadiving.com/florida-father-son-found-dead-cave-diving-accident>

A Florida father and his teenage son drowned during a cave dive on Christmas day while trying out new scuba equipment they'd received for the holidays, according to media reports. Neither was a certified cave diver, though the father was an experienced diver. Darrin Spivey and 15-year-old Dillon Sanchez were last seen alive at the Eagles Nest Sink location in Weeki Wachee on Florida's west coast. Eagle's Nest has both upstream and downstream tunnels with depths reaching 310 feet. It is recommended only for advanced cave divers. Sanchez was not a certified diver; Spivey was a certified diver, but didn't have the separate certification for cave diving.

Fox News says the two were seen by a hunter who saw them suited up Christmas morning. When he returned hours later, he noticed their car was still there. The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office sent divers into Eagles Nest on Christmas night and found the son at about 67 feet and the father at 127 feet. Robert Brooks, an experienced cave diver who knew Spivey and helped recover his body, told the Tampa Bay Times that the lack of experience most likely led to their drownings. "The sad thing is, I told him, 'One night they're going to call me to come get you,' " Brooks told the paper.



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## NOTICE OF 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, ELECTION OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOTING FOR MEMBER MOTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

This notice is issued pursuant to Clause 12 of the Constitution and serves to advise members that the Annual General Meeting of the Cave Divers Association of Australia Inc. will be held on **Saturday September 26, 2015** at the Main Corner Dress Circle, Mt. Gambier, SA.

The AGM will commence at 6:00pm and will conclude no later than 7:00pm.

This notice also serves to call for Nominations for

- \* National Director
- \* Publications and Records Director
- \* Member motions
- \* Amendments to the Constitution

The Returning Officer must receive nominations for the National Committee positions no later than the close of business Friday July 3rd, 2015.

**Mail to: Returning Officer, CDAA - PO Box 9286, Mt. Gambier West, SA 5291**

The Business Director must receive member motions and proposals for amendments to the Constitution no later than close of business, Friday July 3rd, 2015.

Items received after this date will not be accepted nor will any extensions to this date be granted.

**Mail to: Peter Horak, CDAA Business Director - PO Box 113, Collins Street West, Victoria, 8007**

Members intending to nominate for a National Committee position must be eligible members of the Association as defined in the Constitution. Nominations should be accompanied by a précis not exceeding two hundred and fifty [250] words detailing skills, experience and achievements relevant to the duties and responsibilities of the nominated position. The responsibilities of National Committee members are contained in the Constitution of the Association. Nominations must be in writing and be signed by the nominee, the proposer and the seconder all of whom must be eligible members of the Association.

The polling date close for the election (if required) is Monday September 14th, 2015. The election of National Committee members and voting on amendments to the Constitution will be conducted entirely by postal ballot.

If you wish to vote you must be an eligible member of the Association and you must only use the ballot papers to be provided in the next issue of Guidelines (#129), on the Association website [cavedivers.com.au](http://cavedivers.com.au) or by special mail out.

The ballot papers must reach the Returning Officer (Darren Walters #3555) no later than close of business, Monday September 14th 2015.

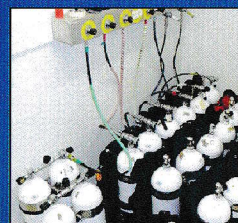
Detailed voting information will be provided with the ballot papers.

Questions may be directed to the Returning Officer at [returningofficer@cavedivers.com.au](mailto:returningofficer@cavedivers.com.au)  
Peter Horak, Business Director - [business@cavedivers.com.au](mailto:business@cavedivers.com.au).

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PO Box 9286, Mount Gambier West, S.A. 5291



# Blue Creek Cave Diving - Trip Report January 2015

Richard "Harry" Harris (CEGSA)

*Reports of a positive dye trace from Bulmer cave to Blue Creek Resurgence piqued the interest of the Wetmules, and a plan was made for a visit in early 2015 (and a year off from the Pearse Resurgence exploration).*

The Blue Creek cave and the nearby resurgence have a long history of exploration. Most recently, I am aware of dives in the resurgence by David Apperley and Rick Stanton in 2007 using sidemount techniques. Rick felt that the possibility of major finds were low, and commented that the sand flies were of epic proportions at Courthouse Flat campground! Over the last few years Australian and New Zealand members of the Global Underwater Explorers (GUE) have performed numerous expeditions to the site, both for purposes of training and exploration. No major new finds have evolved from these trips but survey work has progressed well.

Tom Crisp is a local cave diver who has worked with the

GUE teams, and provided major logistic and practical assistance to the Wetmules trip. Although not seen by himself, Tom understood that a side mount restriction off the main passage held promise of new passage and this was to be the main focus of our trip. As the GUE divers utilised backmount techniques, there was a definite possibility that side mount divers may be able to push into new cave that precluded these divers. In addition, the ability to do more prolonged dives using closed circuit rebreathers meant that the Wetmules would be able to spend more time searching for new leads.

The team included our regular suspects: Ken Smith (CEGSA), John Dalla-Zuanna (VSA), Sandy Varin (VSA),



Dave Bardi (VSA), Craig Challen (CEGWA), Luke Nelson (CEGWA) and Richard Harris (CEGSA). As always, the Nelson Speleological Group and in particular our wonderful hosts Oz Patterson and Deb Cade gave us enormous assistance in NZ. We were joined at the cave by divers Tom Crisp and his buddy Stefan Parsons from Auckland, and also enjoyed a visit from Martyn Farr (Wales) who is doing some amazing exploration in the Takaka Valley.

## The Expedition

Four pallets of diving and camping equipment were shipped from Australia in December and the Mules arrived in Nelson on January 10th 2015. A BBQ with our hosts Oz and Deb gave us the strength to prepare for 2 weeks camping at Courthouse Flat starting the next day. Solliers transport was employed to ferry all the gear to the camp, and a hired van to transport us. Under two hours drive got us to the camp via some beautiful local scenery, trout filled rivers and Mt Owen looming in the distance. Freshly mown grass and a long-drop toilet made for a very comfortable site, although we missed the adventure of a helicopter drop!

All things come at a price! The blessing of the camp amenities was slightly offset by the daily 1.7km stroll to the cave entrance. This is where the rebreathers again proved their worth as once all the gear was ferried to the cave; only the consumables needed to be taken back to the camp each day (small oxygen cylinders, CO2 scrubber and batteries). Still, it was good exercise and beautiful walking in the mostly excellent weather.

Diving at Blue Creek is pretty easy. The main resurgence is an overflow for the cave system that only flows in very wet conditions. All the water appears from a bit further downstream so the entrance pool where diving commences is still and therefore pretty silty. A bit of boulder hopping delivers you onto a small beach where two divers can comfortably gear up. Water temperature is slightly warmer than the Pearse at about 7-8 degrees, although at depth (in the slowly flowing water) it is closer to 6C.

## The Diving

Over the course of the next 11 days the team performed approx. 70 dives total in the system with a max depth of 77m and max dive duration of around 3 hours.

A collapsible habitat was installed at 6m depth although for dives of < 90 minutes it was not required. With the exception of two divers (KS and LN) dives were performed on closed circuit trimix, with the team utilizing either Flex or SF2 sidemount rebreathers.

Tape measures were run throughout the main passage from the entrance to the cave terminus with a total linear distance of 256m. This baseline was used for much of the subsequent survey and supplemented with some sketches in the side tun-

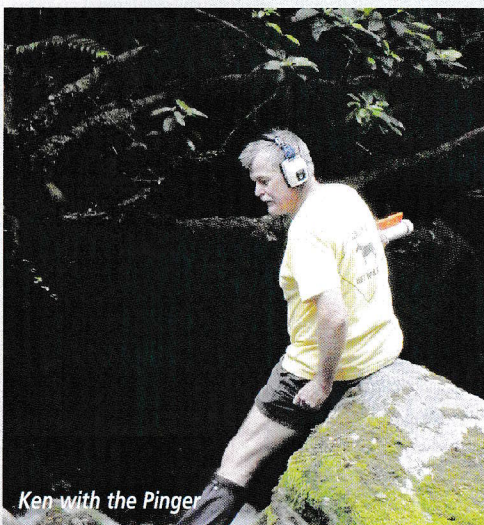






Dye Trace

nels. The electronic cave logger mounted on a scooter was used to complete circuits in the A,B and C tunnels. A "pinger" point and dye tracing were utilised to establish the connection between the cave passage and the main outflow under a surface rock (apparently known as "Mike's Rear Entrance"). A physical connection from above and below could not be made, as it appears to be a boulder-choked chimney.



Ken with the Pinger

At a point 188m into the cave (depth 65m) a restricted tunnel entrance was seen on the right side entering the cave. A "T" was formed off the main line and the tunnel explored for 20m to its terminus. The floor was scoured and rocky and appeared to have low flow in the recent very dry conditions. No line was present in the passage. At the end of the tunnel (70m depth) two large boulders blocked the way on, although tunnel was seen beyond. On the left on the floor, a very tight hole led into further passage with definite flow emanating from it. Moving a few rocks led us to believe that exploration might be possible. Over the next 5 dives, the entrance floor was excavated by Challen and Harris until the author could wriggle backwards into the hole with one cylinder removed. Reversing down the passage for several body lengths Harry could then turn around, replace the cylinder and swim forwards. The tunnel curved down and left to a depth or 77m until it pinched out with a small, solid and un-passable lead to the right. Another branching tunnel in this section was explored to the side leading up a rocky slope. Further potential exploration is possible here although a fair bit of rock will need to be moved to progress, however this seems to be the most promising lead in the cave remaining. A view of the boulders blocking the end of the sidemount tunnel was gained from behind, and Harry and Craig



The trip finished on a slightly low point when one of the divers developed neurological decompression illness on the second to last diving day. Unable to self-rescue from the entrance initially, local cave SAR and police were notified and activated. Fortunately by the time help arrived, we managed to get the diver out of the cave and over the next 1-2 hours all symptoms resolved with effective first aid. The team is extremely grateful to the local volunteers and SAR personnel who responded so quickly.

briefly entertained a "deadman's handshake" through the small gap (readers of *The Darkness Beckons* by Martyn Farr will understand this reference!) but both quickly thought better of it! The system was named "Patience Tunnel" after a local creek and the determination of the team to make this small breakthrough.

During the cleanup dives a large amount of old line of many different types was removed from the cave (above pic.). A new orange line was installed although there is no guarantee this will survive the winter floods.

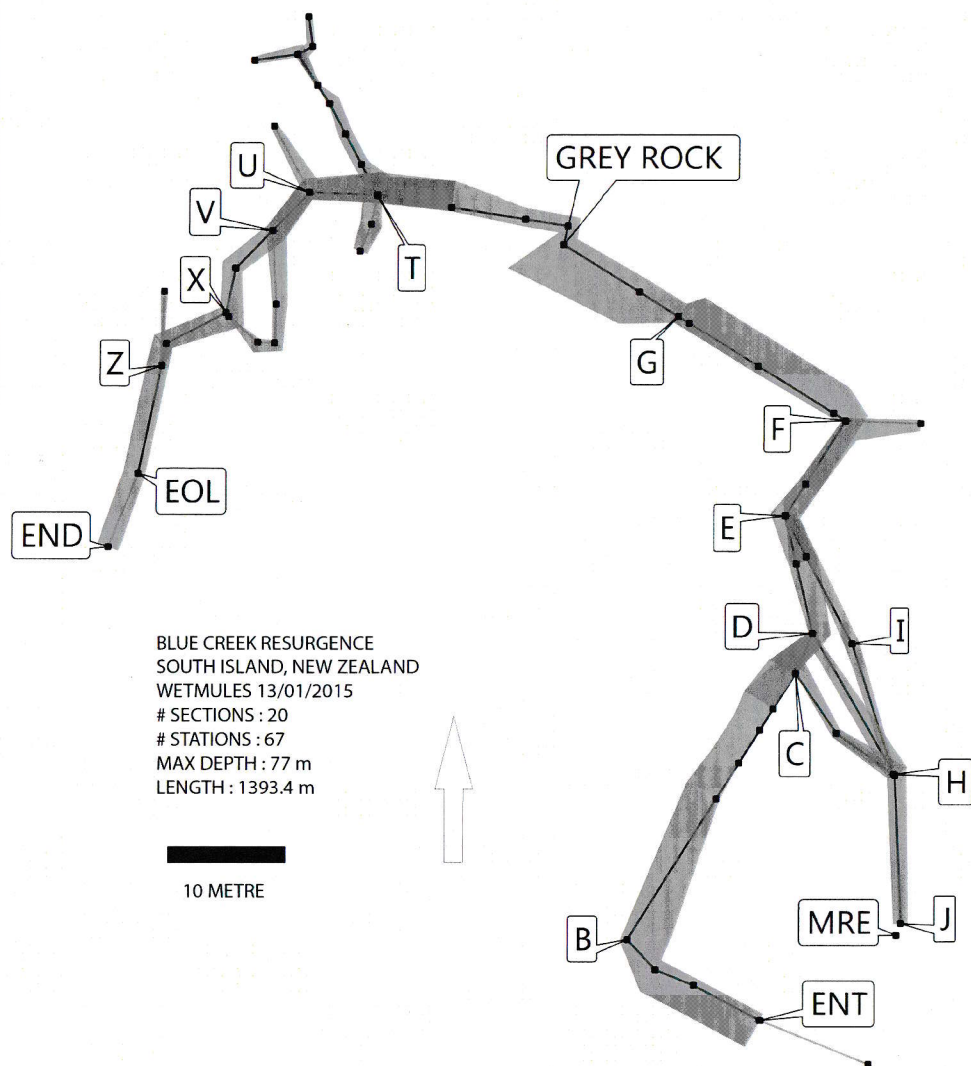
The new maps are shown (over the page) including an enlarged sketch of the Patience Tunnel. The combination of tape measure, compass and knots, electronic logger and dye tracing provided a lot of information however only the main passage survey could be considered of a high grade. It is interesting to see that like the Pearse Resurgence, the main tunnel lies under the river above.

...continued over page



Restriction

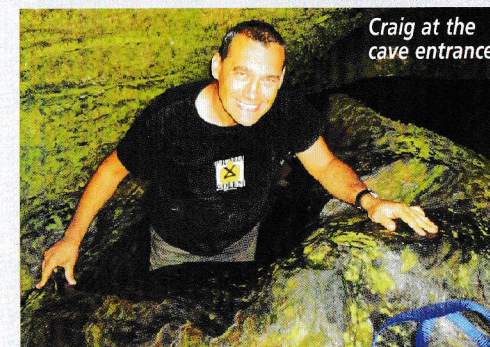




Harry in the Patience tunnel.  
To his left on the floor is the  
restriction that was excavated.  
Beyond his red helmet is the  
boulder choke where Harry  
and Craig considered the  
handshake!

### Conclusion

The gala dinner in Nelson was more than sufficient to make up for any indiscretions and all enjoyed the local ales. The trip was a success in that a more accurate map of the cave was produced, the efficacy of sidemount rebreathers in this environment was proven and small gains were made in the exploration of the site. The surface outflow connection was definitively linked to one of the cave passages, and the bond between Aussie and NZ cave divers was further strengthened. We look forward to working with the kiwi cavers again next year back in the Pearse!



Craig at the  
cave entrance





## Scubapro MK25 EVO/A700 Black Tech Regulators

*The exceptional A700 second stage, teamed with a perfectly matched MK25 EVO first stage, forms the ultimate high airflow system for all diving needs. SCUBAPRO sets the standard for second stage regulator performance with the A700. Integrating air-balanced valve technology, the A700 brings you extraordinary breathing performance in a striking, precision-handcrafted, full-metal package. Whatever your dive destination, the SCUBAPRO A700 lets you breathe effortlessly and naturally underwater for a lifetime of exceptional dive experiences.*

When you partner the stellar MK25 Evo first stage with the exceptional A700 second stage, you end up with SCUBAPRO'S premium high-performance regulator. In 2015, with the addition of the Black Tech coating, it's also the reg that offers the most protection, and it's arguably the coolest looking breather of the bunch.

The SCUBAPRO brand has long been the gold standard when it comes to piston-controlled first stages, and there's no better example of supremely solid first stage performance than the MK25. This air-balanced flow-through piston design provides divers with consistent and effortless airflow, regardless of depth, tank pressure, or breathing rate. With the addition of Extended Thermal Insulating System (XTIS) anti-freeze protection, the MK25 Evo now offers thermal insulation from the environment by fully isolating the mechanical elements of the first stage from the cold, increasing its freezing resistance 30 percent over the current MK25 without compromising breathing performance. There's also an external intermediate pressure adjustment for hassle-free maintenance, as well as two high pressure ports and five low pressure ports mounted on a swivel turret for convenient hose routing. It's available in a choice of INT or DIN configurations.

The A700 second stage, with its metal casing, screw-down casing cover, metal valve housing and over-molded accents, exhibits a real muscularity in design. Its air-balanced valve technology and oversized exhaust valve work in conjunction with a well designed sectional exhaust tee, a first-rate purge and responsive user controls to create a bullet-proof breather with effortless inhalation and an ease of exhalation that is unmatched.

Put these two components together and what you get is a proven subsurface performer. The Black Tech coating is just icing on the cake; however, it is not just for aesthetics. Applied to both first and second stages, this high tech coating's scratch and corrosion resistant properties perform an important function in protecting the reg against the ravages of rugged technical diving and the saltwater environment.

### MK25 EVO/A700 BLACK TECH AT-A-GLANCE

- Extremely scratch and corrosion resistant, the Black Tech coating applied to both first and second stages both protects and lends a technical look to the regulator.
- Air balanced flow-through piston first stage provides constant and effortless airflow that's unaffected by depth, tank pressure, or breathing rate.
- Patent pending XTIS (Extended Thermal Insulating System) offers thermal insulation from the environment by fully isolating the mechanical elements of the first stage from the cold, increasing freezing resistance 30 percent over the current MK25 without compromising breathing performance.
- New spring insulating coating, body insulating bushing, antifreeze cap, bigger body and cap thread all work in concert with the XTIS to improve cold-water performance.
- Anti-freeze protection radically increases breathing reliability when diving in the most extreme water temperatures.
- Two high pressure and five low pressure ports on a swivel turret maximize hose routing options.
- Anti-freeze protection increases performance and reliability when diving in the most extreme water temperatures.
- External intermediate pressure adjustment enables technicians to fine-tune first-stage performance quickly and easily.
- First stage is available in either 232bar/3364psi INT or 300bar/4350psi DIN first stage configurations.
- Full metal case and valve housing make for a rugged second stage able to withstand years of aggressive diving.
- Air-balanced second stage smoothes out the inhalation effort when diving at varying depths and supply pressures.
- Second stage user controls include a diver-adjustable inhalation effort knob and Venturi-Initiated Vacuum Assist (VIVA) switch.
- Super-flow hose features oversized bore to increase airflow to diver.
- High-comfort orthodontic mouthpiece is easy to grip yet doesn't inhibit airflow.

### NEW REGULATOR TESTING STANDARDS

The new European EN250-2014 regulator testing standards were slated to be approved in July 2014. As part of these new test standards, the following changes have been made:

- WOB test parameters have been adjusted down to 2.5 J/l (previously 3.0 J/l).
- Regulator cold-water tests (2°C/36°F) are run with single breathing (62.5 l/min for 5 min @ 50m/164ft) and simultaneous breathing from both 2nd stage and octopus (560 l/min for 2 min @ 30m/99ft).

SCUBAPRO regs have already been tested by RINA, the Italian certification board, according to these new standards and have been given the green light. "EN250A" markings identifies regulators that went through the new and more severe certification test.

### MK25 EVO/A700 BLACK TECH ADVANTAGE

With the MK25 Evo/A700 Black Tech divers can reach for the outer limits with full confidence that their reg will deliver air reliably and effortlessly, regardless of depth, air supply or breathing rate. Tests have shown that even when pushed to extremes, the MK25 Evo/A700 will keep on cranking out air while maintaining a substantial reserve capacity. The addition of the Black Tech coating lends a level of external protection to the MK25 Evo/A700's already high level of overall quality.

### SUMMARY

The MK25 Evo/A700 is a true muscle reg. Tests have shown that the more you stress this reg, the better it behaves. It breathes smooth and dry in all positions, the purge is first-rate, and the large exhaust valve makes for ultra easy exhalations. Now, with the introduction of the new Extended Thermal Insulating System (XTIS), the MK25 Evo/A700 proves to be a superb performer in extreme cold-water conditions as well. Add the Black Tech coating and you have a time-proven reg system that works as good as it looks, eclipsing all others in its price class.



### SECOND STAGE

- DLC black finish
- Balanced High Performance First Stage
- Air-Balanced Flow-Through Piston Design
- 5 Port LP Swivel and Dual HP Ports



### FIRST STAGE

- DLC black finish
- Precision handcrafted construction
- Exceptional breathing at any depth
- New aligned VIVA system with co-axial 2-piece dive switch
- Full metal body and metal components assure maximum performance
- Metal provides the best thermal exchange imaginable in cold water.



\*This editorial is supplied by Scubapro Australia





# CDA A MEMBER PROFILE

## Linda Claridge

*Linda was nicknamed "BP, The Quiet Achiever" by Steve Sturgeon during the Vanuatu Cave diving exploration trip in 1996. I think this sums up Linda in the way she goes about her diving – and in fact how she goes about her life in general. Nothing is too hard for her to try or succeed in. Holding the position of CDA A Records Officer for about 5 years and now Standards Director is testament to her commitment to the CDA A. She has been a great dive buddy for a lot of years (nearly 30 but don't tell her I told you that). Her enthusiasm for teaching Cave diving is infectious and all who meet her will attest to that. She grabs challenges and runs with them with little fuss but great gusto.*

*Gary Barclay cdaa #1735*

*Introduction by Gary Barclay Interview by Dave Bryant*

**Linda, tell us about yourself and your life so far, where were you born and where did you grow up and what were your interests 'before' diving?**

*I was born in Koroit, SW Victoria and raised in Port Fairy. My childhood was spent doing all of the things that the under 30's possibly have never been able to do – hanging with friends all day as long as we were home by dark, spending hours jumping off a diving board into the ocean (after checking where the shallow bits were) and trying to avoid the myriad of critters (bugs and reptiles) that my two brothers seemed to love keeping at home. Living by the ocean I spent a lot of time swimming and snorkelling but also dabbled a bit with motor bikes (painfully) and rock climbing.*

**What is your first memory of Diving or Snorkelling, and where was it, Fresh or Salt water? Who got you Interested in Diving?**

*Snorkelling was my initial foray into life under the waves and I spent a lot of time at our local beaches snorkelling amongst the rock pools in that area. We would also snorkel in many of the rivers and lakes around Port Fairy and Warrnambool. My move into Diving was one of natural progression and was for a brief time (about 10mins) really exciting. Gary hired some tanks, a harness, regs and a contents gauge from the local petrol station – as you did back then – and after a bit of instruction from him which basically went along the lines of ... "Put this on your back, put the reg in your mouth and just breath normally!" It was fun until I got a bit freaked out and dumped everything leaving Gary to lug it all back to shore while I swam back to terra firma – and without any floatation at all I think he just dragged it all along the bottom. Gary decided he had better learn how to dive properly that year and after a further 12 months I also did my NAUI open water course.*

*Welcome to a brand new section for Guidelines where we interview past and present CDA A members who have made an impact within the Association. Sit back and enjoy old photos, historical facts and some great stories.*

*Diving didn't come naturally to me and I wasn't a confident diver but his patience (read insistence) kept me diving and practising until enjoyment took over from fear. We started to venture further away from the cold SW waters and dived in SA, NSW and QLD and went on our first live aboard boat trip (but certainly not our last) out to Moreton Island in 1988. Warm water was such a novelty for us that we out dived everyone on the boat usually getting in the water first and out last, but what a great introduction to tropical diving.*

*I have been a member of our local dive club, the Warrnambool Sub Aqua club for many years and was appointed a life member last year. The more experienced members of the club were a great source of information and guidance with our dives in the early days. We actually did very few formal courses back then, the main educational stream was via a mentoring system from the more experi-*



*Fossil Cave - 1992.*

*enced divers. The only formal certification I had was OW until I joined the CDA A and I eventually did my AOW after I had done my CDA A Penetration course.*

**What age did you become a Cave Diver?... Was it a challenge or did it just seem Natural? Who inspired you to get in to this particular side of diving?**

*Cave diving came about as a way to extend our diving opportunities during the times when the seas around here were too rough to dive. We had been diving rivers and lakes but then discovered the fresh water sites around Mount Gambier. In 1990 with a group of friends, I reluctantly did my (then) Category 1 and Category 2 test under the breakwater in Warrnambool with Tony Richardson.*



*Early days at Lake Purrumbette ~ 1988.*



## Group to dive below treeless plain

### Below The Nullarbor

• From Page 1

"Not many people realise there are subterranean waterways out there but the Nullarbor is riddled with caves — and the water temperature is about 22 degrees."

The divers will make their first dive about 1700 kilometres west of Adelaide. They will be away for two weeks but expect to have only three days' diving, with travelling and preparing for the dives taking the rest of the time.

They will dive at Cocklebiddy cave, the longest one-entrance cave in the world, which is 5290 metres long and contains three air chambers.

The team will also explore Weebubbie cave, which was featured on Channel Nine's 'Getaway' program last week.



Paper clipping from 1992.

Diving to new depths — Warrnambool Sub-Aqua Club members Gary Barclay and Linda Claridge get set for their cave diving expedition.  
Picture: SIMON O'DWYER

By TONY RINDFLEISCH

SIX Warrnambool Sub-Aqua Club members leave today for the expedition of a lifetime.

They will join an elite group of divers who have discovered the underwater vastness of caves beneath the Nullarbor Plain.

The team will employ skills more commonly used by explorers and mountaineers to experience the wonders of the caves, hidden in pitch darkness dozens of metres below the sunbaked earth.

Travelling in four-wheel-drive vehicles, the team will have to navigate up to 35 kilometres along undefined tracks just to find the caves.

And at one of them they will have to winch gear down a 90-metre cliff face, abseil into the crater and then haul the equipment another 200 metres just to reach the water.

"It'll take us a day to get our

## Long-hidden caves will yield secrets

gear in there, then we'll have the next day diving and we'll take another day to get the gear out again," said dive co-ordinator Gary Barclay.

At another cave marked only by an inconspicuous one-metre wide entrance, the team will have to crawl on hands and knees under areas of collapsed rock, towing their diving gear behind them.

The team must be totally self-sufficient, transporting air compressors and generators, battery chargers, water, fuel and medical supplies.

Such is the unusual nature of the divers' expedition, that they had to gain special permission

from the Western Australian Conservation and Land Management Department to dive and camp in the Nullarbor National Park and Nature Reserve.

They have been practising at caves near Mount Gambier over the past few months in order to prepare them to tackle the pinnacle of their sport.

"I've dived in the Solomon Islands and around most parts of Australia, but this is going to be a real buzz," Gary said.

"To go somewhere where not many people have been before, and to come back from somewhere where not many have been will be even better."

Diver Linda Claridge, the only woman in the team, said she was looking forward to exploring an area that few people even knew existed.

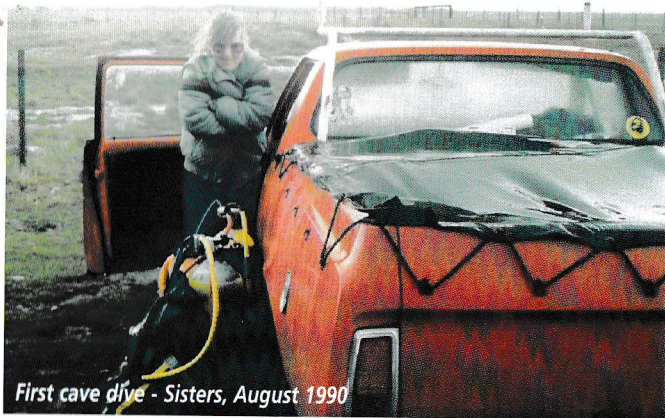
"We'll be diving in total darkness with lights shining on the limestone walls of the caves," Linda said.

• Continued Page 2



Cocklebiddy, 1994





First cave dive - Sisters, August 1990

I had no intention of going any further with cave diving and really didn't think I would like it. I found it very challenging and actually failed the 'blackout' portion of the testing - bit ironic for someone who wore glasses normally but without prescription lenses in her mask couldn't see more than a few meters away anyway. This was a time when the CDAA offered testing - not training. After putting in some further practise I resat the

## Engelbrecht Cave and Cafe

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Looking for a toasted sandwich and a cuppa or some hot soup and a scone in between dives, then call in to see our friendly staff.

Home baked cakes and treats always on the menu along with hot Mahalia coffee.



latter part of the test with Lewie (Ian Lewis) and finally started my Cave diving career. So no, cave diving didn't come naturally to me - but I enjoyed the exploration, the people we were meeting and the camaraderie amongst other cave divers. As I became better at the actual diving I enjoyed it more and more, and I still enjoy it just as much - if not more - today. We live less than 2 hours from Mount Gambier so we can get up, see that the sea is too rough and then head to MG for a couple of

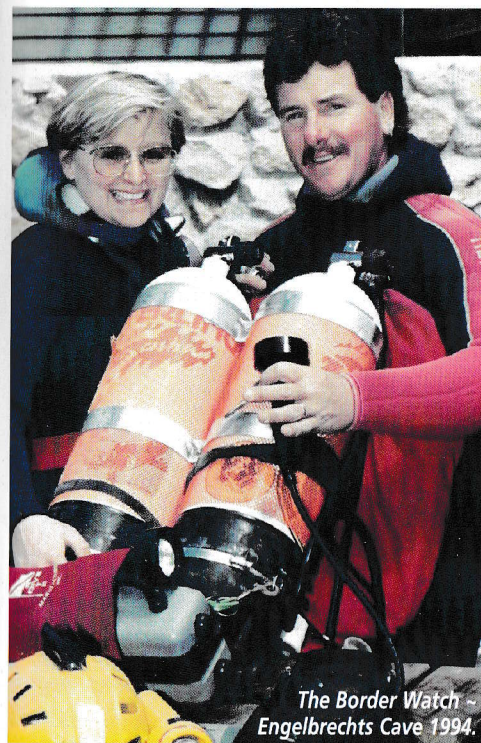
dives and still be home at a reasonable time.

### Who else has inspired your direction and passion for Cave Diving and why?

My buddy through these early days and whose passion and enthusiasm guided and inspired me (and occasional got me into trouble!) was Gary. He was always keen to learn more and encouraged me in my own diving - I think I was also an excuse for him to buy even more dive gear - that still hasn't stopped! With a keen and eager buddy like this my passion for cave diving quickly grew but it wasn't until after I did my Instructor Development Course with JDZ in 1995 that I even thought about becoming a Cave diving instructor. I never consciously mapped out the direction that I took and really only looked as far as the next step - the major driving force was simply my love of diving and teaching. This enthusiasm was also fired by the amazing CDAA instructors that mentored me as I undertook my interning at each level. I conducted my first Cavern/Sinkhole course in November 1997.

My role as a director also helps to fuel this passion - being in a position where you can help guide the direction of the CDAA and where you can respond to members and initiate change is rewarding. The CDAA introduced the ability for divers to do their CDAA training in their RB's late last year so I am also keen to see if it is embraced by members in the near future. We could also look at the option of specialty cave diving programs such as Sidemount or DPV Cave programs - but they are things that need to be discussed with members first.

**What is by far the best Cave Dive you have done to date, and why?**



The Border Watch - Engelbrechts Cave 1994.

That would be the hardest question of all. My best cave dive could be the last dive that I did or the next one that I am about to do! There have been many highs along the way - exploring virgin caves in Vanuatu, diving the cold water caves of England, Wales or Tassie, the deep warm waters of the Thailand caves and the extensive cave systems of Florida. We have done multiple trips out to the Nullarbor over the past 20+ years and still enjoy it

as much as the first trip that we did. I also look forward to getting back to the Roe plains caves with its long low passage.

Over the last 24 months I have been doing further training with my rebreather and revisiting many of the caves on this unit. This is adding a whole new other level to my diving and I am actually really enjoying the challenge of fine tuning the skills and techniques that diving the unit in a cave brings.

### What do you do for a profession?

I am a Registered Nurse and have worked in various areas of healthcare. Mental Health, Acute care, Medical wards and Rehab but have worked for the last 6 months as a theatre nurse. It's great for allowing me the flexibility to dive frequently - we have a self rostering system at work so as long as I am able to fulfil my contracted hours I can usually have the time off that I need for diving and teaching. I have just headed back to Uni again and will be doing a post grad Diploma in Peri operative Nursing this year - in my spare time....!

**It is said that you have taught more Cavern/Sinkhole and Cave Divers than any other CDAA Instructor. Are you proud of your achievement, and what more would you like to achieve, or is it just the love of the sport and the desire to teach that is so enjoyable?**

I was the first female to be teaching at our highest level for some years and I had never really counted the number of students that I had taught. It wasn't until Rowan did some background searches prior to the 2013 AGM that the actual numbers came to light. I am proud of both of these

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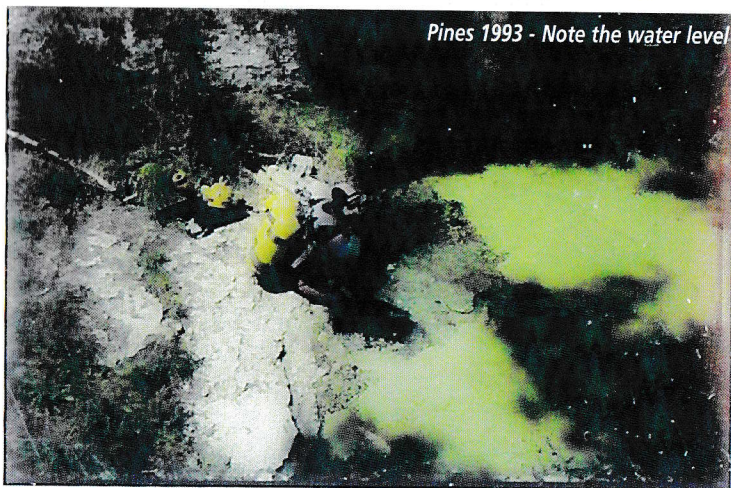


achievement but it wasn't what I set out to do – it really is about the love of cave diving and teaching and the amazing people that I meet in the process. My main inspiration is brought about by the members of our association. The CDAA has some incredibly interesting and inspiring members and helping them achieve their goals is an honour. I actually just enjoy getting back into the water and introducing divers to the caves and sharing the

environment that I love so much. I have been really fortunate to have met and made some very close friends during this time.

**Do you have any news that you can share with us? Where are you off to next and why is it important to you?**

We are looking at our options this year and haven't made a decision on where to go yet – maybe Bahamas or Sardinia? The photos and stories coming out of both of these locations are amazing. Hopefully we can squeeze yet another trip in out



Pines 1993 - Note the water level

West in Oct/Nov. as well – just can't get enough of those hills....

**Where can we see yourself in 10 years?**

Another hard question, I don't plan that far in advance so who knows what the future brings? Each day brings new opportunities and offers new directions. One thing for sure I hope to be diving with great friends, somewhere new, somewhere exciting... or just somewhere!



Pines 1992 - I needed to do a course, to tidy up my hoses!

# CDAA INSTRUCTORS

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# Las Cuevas de México

Story & Pictures by Nat Kenyon

*Those who know and love cave diving will be aware of the reputation México has for its subterranean environment. The state of Quintana Roo – located on the eastern part of the Yucatán Peninsular – possesses a number of the worlds most extensive underwater cave systems. Its food, music, language and history had interested me for some time. Gaining my Advanced Cave ticket mid 2014 was the final push I needed to prompt a visit.*

Rather than organise a detailed itinerary with scheduled dives, I instead elected to arrive and get a feel for who I would dive with. My only plan was to get in as much underwater time as possible.

It was through a friend of a friend that I found my way to Phoea México, one of the larger and

more established dive operators in Playa Del Carmen. I decided to continue with the company after a day of professionally run and easy going dives off the coast of Cozumel.

Although not keen on the idea of a "guide", I quickly found that they are a very handy thing to have. The cost of a hire car, tanks, entrance fees

and other items soon adds up, with the total not a great deal less than paying a dive operator to do this for you. The convenience of having someone who knows the area and can direct you to the caves you wish to dive is worth the little bit extra, particularly when your time is limited.

I was fortunate enough to be paired with Tristan Menant-Leclercq, a Frenchman who has been living and diving in the region for over 4 years. After a couple of check-out dives to gauge each others pace and comfort zones, we developed almost an immediate familiarity and were happy to begin exploring.

I didn't particularly care where we dived, as it was all new to me. This allowed Tristan to investigate sites which he hadn't had the chance to visit previously, leading off into areas which had only recently been mapped. Switching the lead across dives and jumping to many of the available lines provided a large amount variety to the dozen or so dives we had together. The relatively shallow depths and warm temperatures (~24°C) gave us

decent run times of somewhere around the 2.5 - 3 hour mark.

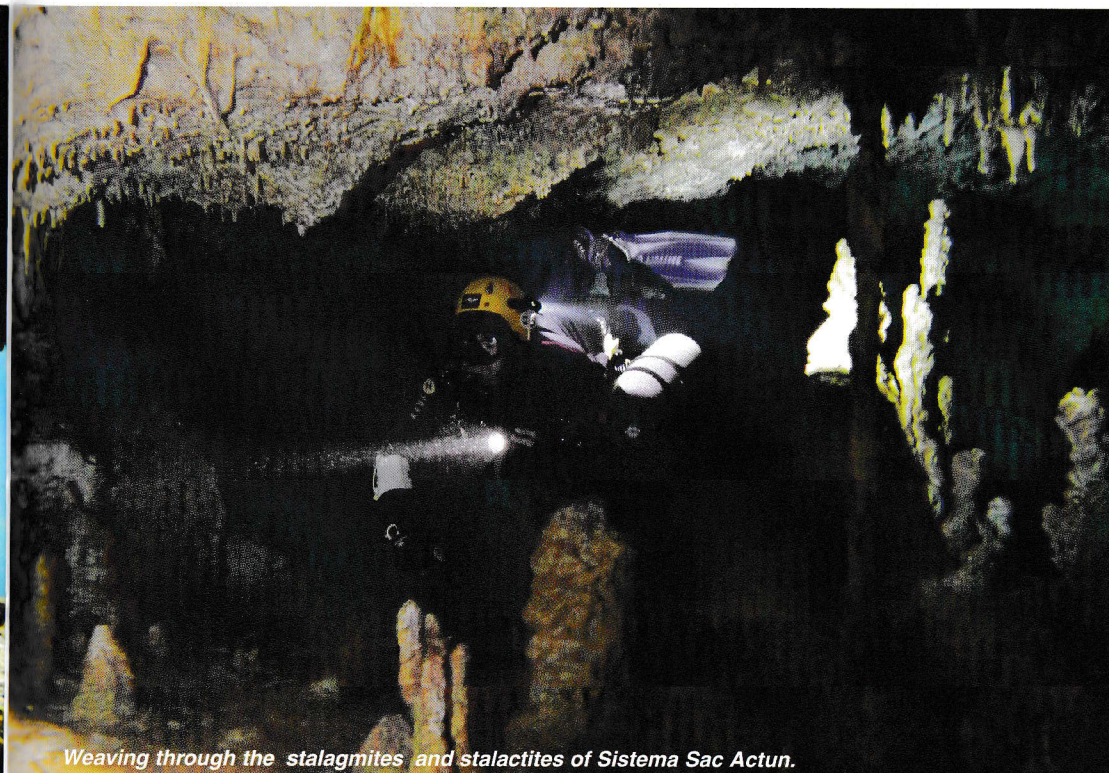
The pictures shown were taken using a point-and-shoot Panasonic Lumix FT2, with Tristan's back up torches turned to light behind him and my primary directed off shot in an attempt to illuminate some of the intricate scenery around us. This of course does not do the caves their full justice, missing many of the beautiful features that only diving in person can accurately convey.

A big thank you to my good friend James Atwell of Thor Travel. An Advanced Cave diver and CDAA member himself, James helped to organise flights and passed on a great deal of valuable information. With the added advantage of a diver's perspective, he is more than suited for arranging such trips. [www.thorworldtravel.com.au](http://www.thorworldtravel.com.au)

Thanks also to Tristan and the staff at Phoea México – a professional and friendly operation whom I recommend highly. [www.mexico-scuba.com](http://www.mexico-scuba.com)



Playing with reflections in Cenote Zazil Ha.



Weaving through the stalagmites and stalactites of Sistema Sac Actun.





*Tannic waters in the 'Carwash'.*



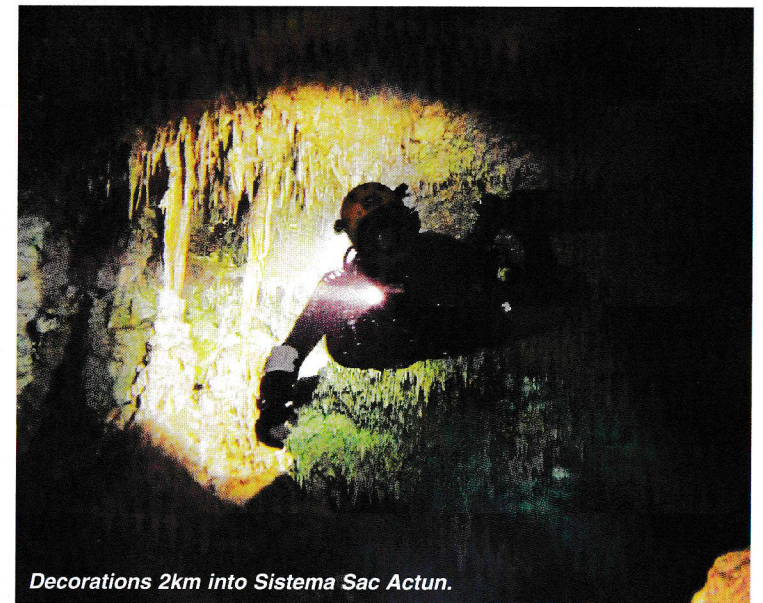
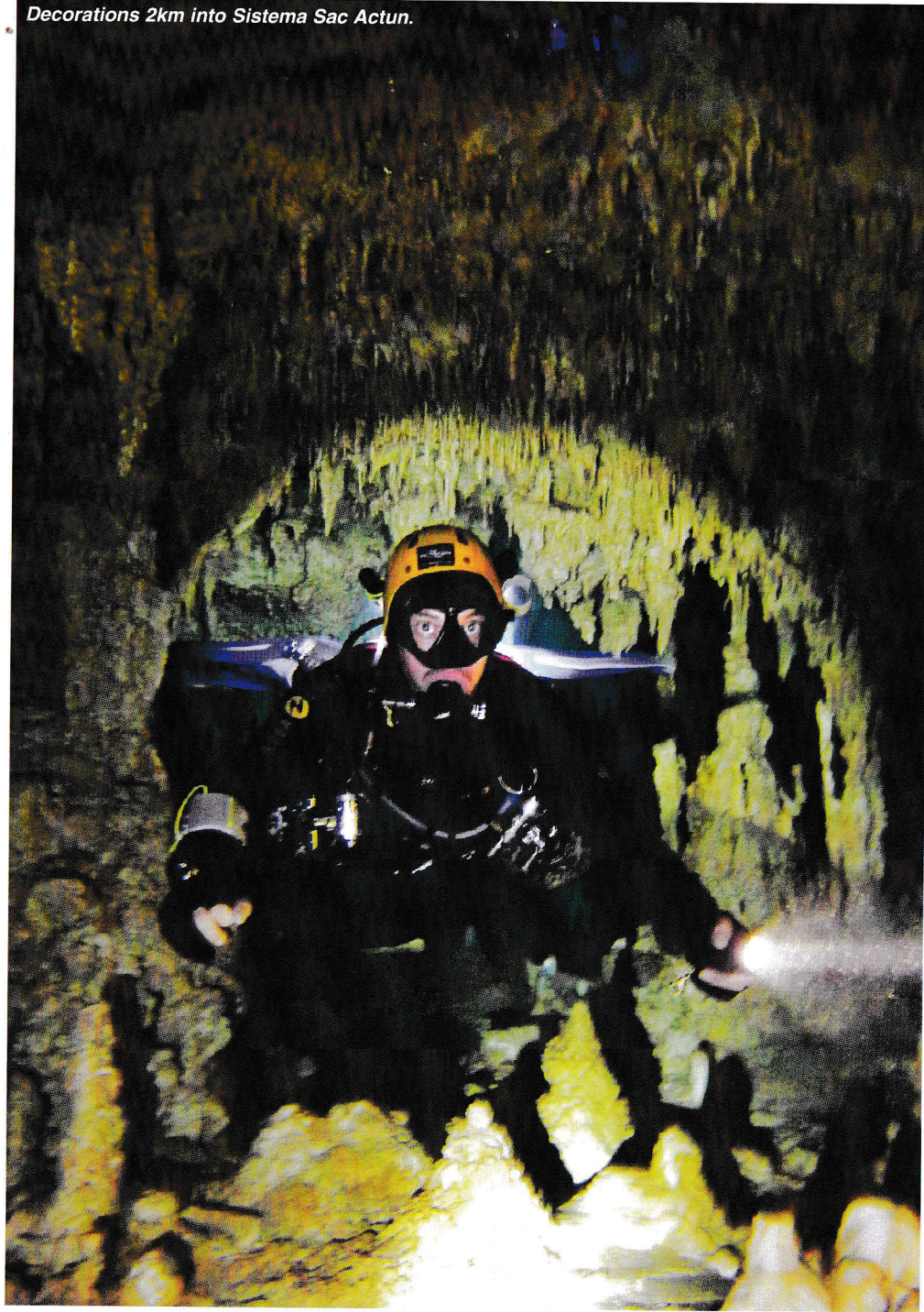
*Midway through a ~3km traverse, Sistema Dos Ojos.*



*Surfacing in Cenote Dos Palmas, Sistema Dos Ojos.*



Decorations 2km into Sistema Sac Actun.



Decorations 2km into Sistema Sac Actun.



Decorations 2km into Sistema Sac Actun.



# CDAA Advanced Cave course

Story & Pictures by Michael Mallis (MidnightElf) CDAA 4553

*Way back pre 2010 I vowed never to dive deep and certainly never considered diving sinkholes or caverns but I did change my mind after the novelty of shore/pier and boat diving wore off. Likewise back in 2011 I vowed never to dive cave systems, far too dangerous I thought but the lure of what lay just ahead was just far too appealing once I got a taste of Mt Gambier freshwater diving. Finally, I vowed never to do an advanced or penetration cave course but true to form, I did it anyway, so what motivated me this time?*

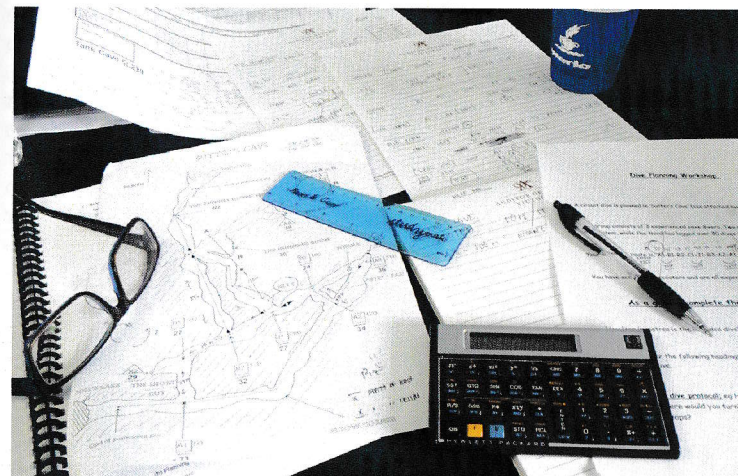
*Whilst I am not a natural born explorer, I am by nature very inquisitive and have an innate passion for finding things out for myself. I still work at perfecting my technique (is it ever perfect?) and still learn from other divers far better and more experienced than me. Advancing one's diving skills is a utilitarian necessity for me, a means to an end if you will, in order to achieve a result, the result being the thrill and excitement of diving places that few divers and even fewer non-divers will ever experience.*

It took me 17 months to progress from deep cavern to cave certification and 37 months from cave to advanced cave. Personally, I was in no hurry to do any course and decided to progress onwards only when I had the opportunity and buddy to do it with. In my opinion, the deep cavern course is hard but cave is easier and advanced cave is the hardest of all. For some, the deep cavern course introduces divers to many firsts, first time diving in a dry suit, freshwater and possibly even a twin manifold/independents setup. The combination of all three is daunting enough let alone attempt doing the course in up to 40m of water with unexpected valve drills and dealing with those nasty underwater



Oh... REELY!

gremlins that love ripping your mask off. The cave course introduces another level of complexity and skills to perfect but those gremlins still lurk in caves, try stealing your mask, and this time shut down your left post. At least by the time you do your cave course you are expected to have excellent buoyancy control and trim and be very familiar with all your equipment and its use. This is why I believe it is easier doing this course, because you would already have enough dives under your belt and have familiarity with the dive sites like Kilsby and Piccaninnie for example to feel comfortable in progressing to cave level. Advanced cave once again ramps up the skill set and competency level and by this time, your trim



and buoyancy control is expected to be perfect along with fin technique, valve shutdown drill and dive planning. On top of this, the skills you are asked to demonstrate should already be practiced well ahead of time, preferably, with your regular dive buddy so that by the time the course comes along you will (hopefully) breeze through it.

All CDAA course are well structured and the skills you will be asked to perfect and demonstrate on the course are no secret, they are on the syllabus so there is really no excuse not to have practiced these to perfection. In my case I committed to the course in June 2014, a few weeks before a trip of a lifetime diving the connotes of Mexico. Recall that in 2014 the CDAA course syllabus for cave and advanced cave changed slightly whereby the cave course had a few skills added to it that were formerly only done at advanced cave level, these were lost line search and jump reel use and possibly a few more. In addition, the requirement that

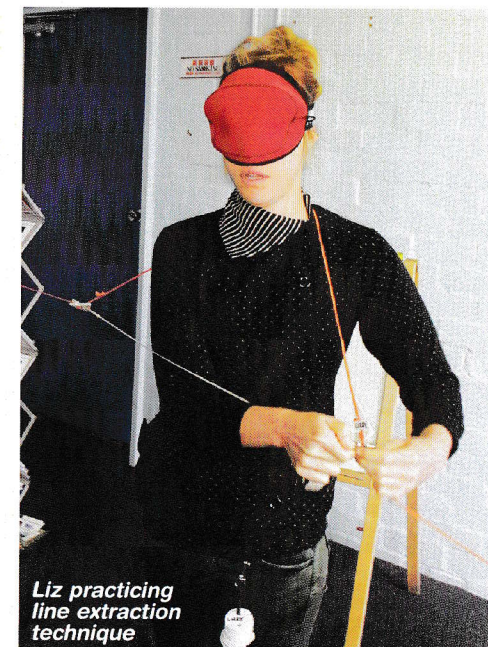


Lost line search practice with Paul

20 odd qualifying dives in advanced cave sites in at least two different sites was dropped before diving Tank cave. These days your last qualifying dive of the course will include an advanced cave site like Tank cave; thereafter you can dive Tank cave albeit on a restricted basis on the A, B and C lines with no stage diving and no jumps until you do the required number of qualifying dives.

Advanced cave is no less easy these days but it is even more structured than before with improved training notes.

In preparing for this course my buddy, Paul Wembridge and I undertook a reasonably structured approach to training which consisted of frequent trips to Mt Gambier to dive Gouldens and practice the skills we were expected to do in-situ. These skills included the following; gear removal and replacement at a restriction, air sharing with



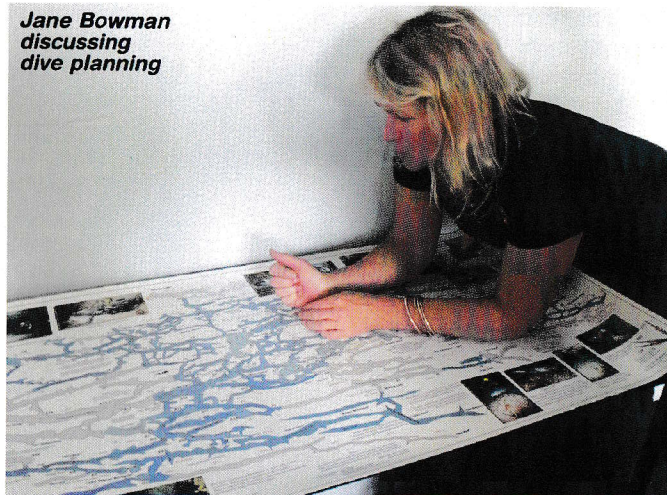
Liz practicing line extraction technique





*Paul learning the finer points of extricating oneself from a line entanglement*

blackout and without mask, lost line search and line entanglement. We also practiced in the shallows back home in Melbourne. At one site in Melbourne, we even set up a permanent trident course in which we practiced these same skills. On one occasion Sandy, Liz and I hired a pool in which we practiced our skills. On another occasion, Paul and I set up a 400-metre line course around Mornington pier near Melbourne in which we practiced laying reel jumps and then with blackout mask making our way back to our starting point.



*Jane Bowman discussing dive planning*

Critical to the success of the course lies in five things; first, you must be in the right frame of

mind and feel that the time is right to progress to the next level of diving. In my opinion this means having at least a year's worth of diving under your belt, maybe 25 to 100 cave dives to your credit under varying conditions and in as many different cave sites as possible. Second, have a dive kit that you have already tweaked to perfection for cave diving. This is not the time to be tinkering or experimenting with new equipment or getting your weighting right.

Third, choose an instructor that you feel comfortable with and with whom you either know personally or can be recommended to you. Feel free to make contact with them and learn how they run their course. Depending on the demand, student numbers etc an instructor can alter when and where certain elements of the course can be delivered, for example, the theory component can be done in your home state or on-site. A fourth element is your buddy of course; this for some is an easy choice as most cave divers seem to have a reg-

ular buddy or cohort of buddies that they frequently cave dive with. For others the choice is not so easy. This last point goes hand-in-hand with the fifth element that can help improve your chances of success on the course and that is getting in enough practice well before the course starts. The skills are all laid out in the syllabus and once you sign up for a course you will be given a copy of the training manual (also available on-line). Your instructor will advise and help you in any questions or concerns you have about these skills so avail yourselves of their help.

Practice 'till it hurts is my advice, you certainly cannot get enough.



*Warrick and Andy no doubt planning some evil on poor unsuspecting students*

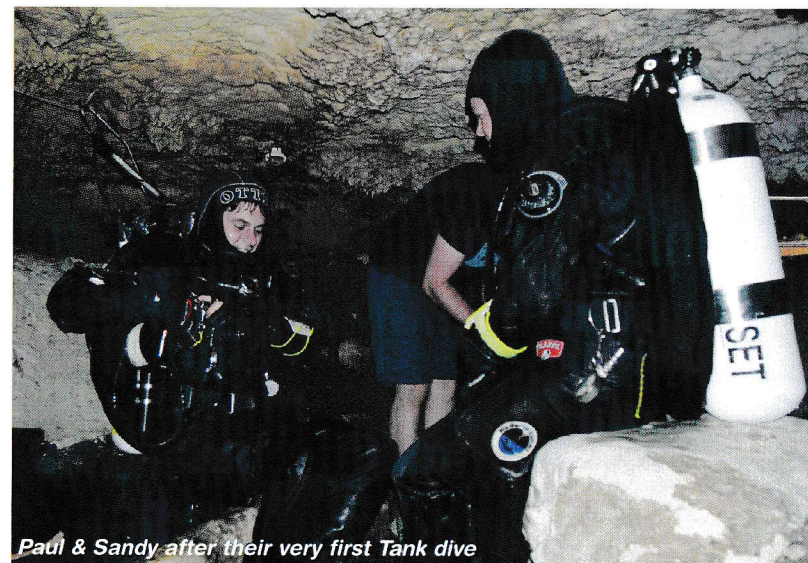
My deep cavern and cave instructor was Andy Higgins who I regard as one of the best instructors you could ask for, a caring, yet serious and highly experienced diver who has the gift of imparting knowledge; he also has a wicked sense of humour, you have been warned. If you ever want a dive role model to follow then you cannot go wrong with Andy. No doubt all instructors have their teaching style and for this reason I made the deliberate choice of selecting another highly regarded and experienced instructor in Jane Bowman for the advanced cave course. My reasons included exposing myself to another diver role model from

whom I could take something away. This is apart from what the course syllabus specifies, as there are always intangible ideas, skills and techniques you come away with if you are receptive enough to spot them. They are not always overt but subtle, things like how they doff and don their dive gear, how disciplined and how safety conscious they can be. Like I said, it's the intangibles and what I call the 'finesse of diving' that I came away with. The bonus for us stu-

dents was that we had during the theory and Gouldens dives not one but three instructors at our disposal. This came about as the ratio of students to instructor in the water was at times one to one for safety reasons more than anything else plus to help expedite the training to a manageable day's length otherwise we could have spent all day and night doing Gouldens dives. Andy Higgins and Warrick McDonald were the two other instructors and each was as instructive and informative as the other was, lucky us.

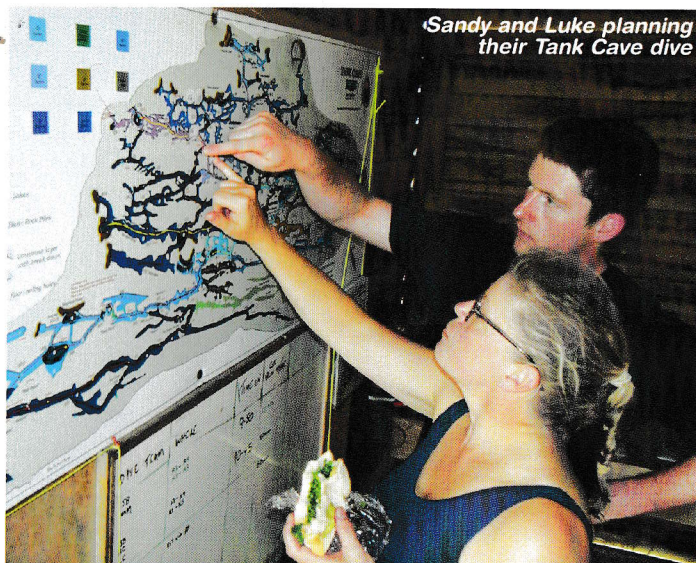
So, what was the course like, very tough but fair is the best way to describe it. The theory, land drills

and in-water skills are easy enough to learn and execute but there is also an exam to pass with a pass rate of better than 75 percent required. The exam is of a multiple answer style from 80 odd questions. It is corrected soon after and everyone is given a chance to comment and learn from any wrong answers. For us



*Paul & Sandy after their very first Tank dive*





**Sandy and Luke planning their Tank Cave dive**

the exam, some land drills and dive planning exercise was done at Just a Bed Lodge where most of us were staying. The theory component was given in lecture style in Melbourne the week before and over a full weekend at Ocean Divers in the style of

fourth was done in Tank cave. The Tank cave dive was a demonstration of planning a dive and demonstrating excellent buoyancy, fin and trim whilst following a fixed line that included doing one jump to another fixed line.



**Sandy and Luke doing their drills in Pines**

classroom presentations and practical demonstrations. Here you learn new skills, dive protocols, procedures, planning and study case histories of diving accidents. Sometimes the whole course is done at Mt Gambier as it might suit students trav-

elling from interstate. The in-water and on-site component of the course for us moved to Mt Gambier with two days of dives in Gouldens followed by another three days of dives in Pines and Tank. The Gouldens dives consisted of a range of skills that needed to be demonstrated including the dreaded stress test (more on this later). Following a successful demonstration of these skills, qualifying dives are then conducted in some advanced cave site, which could include Engelbrechts West or even Pines. There are three such dives and the fourth was done in Tank cave. The Tank cave dive was a demonstration of planning a dive and demonstrating excellent buoyancy, fin and trim whilst following a fixed line that included doing one jump to another fixed line.

Despite even our best laid plans involving lots of practice and preparation I still managed to fail the dreaded Stress Test in Gouldens. Psychologists might have a special word for it but I am convinced that I was simply not on the day mentally prepared for this skill, although I had practiced it dozens of times earlier in Gouldens and in Melbourne. Having said that, I thought that the hardest part of the course would be the gear removal at the restriction point, passing it through and putting it back on after negotiating the restriction; in fact it was far from

it, it turned out to be one of the easiest things to do, go figure. I was so anxious about doing this that I deliberately overweighed myself to ensure I would not float to the surface from five metres despite being assured that I could and would be using the restriction to my advantage to keep me down. The line entanglement exercise and lost line search was not hard at all. The stress test involves negotiating the trident course after first dropping off your stage cylinder, negotiating a restriction, running two jumps, reaching the end of the course and performing a mask exchange with your spare and a complete valve drill. After this you start heading out retrieving your jumps, going through the restriction and retrieving your stages. Along the way, usually at the most inconvenient time such as when your head is down retrieving your jump and after having exhaled,

your mask and that of your buddy plus one primary regulator from either diver are removed. The aim is now to compose yourselves, start sharing gas whilst at the same time at least one of you should be keeping contact with the line. Lots of things go through your

mind at this point such as momentarily thinking who has to donate air, who is in control, who has the line, what do I do with my light, am I still in trim and maintaining buoyancy, what tactile signalling should be done and most important of all, where is my buddy and does one of us at least have the line. It sounds daunting and in some respects it is, you have a few seconds to compose yourself and think rationally as the sudden rush of cold water on your face can also affect your composition but if you have practiced enough this should not be a problem. Paul and I found that practicing with a third diver who is instructed to remove masks and a regulator at some unexpected time is the best way to practice rather than taking off the masks yourselves as the element of surprise is lost.

Paul and I easily managed the stress test on our second attempt with Jane some five weeks later at Mt Gambier after our initial attempt on another advanced cave course that she was putting on. Rather fortuitously, the weather was kind to us in early January as the week before there were very high temperatures and bushfires in the region. The pressure was now off and we looked forward to diving Pines in the advanced cave section and in Tank cave later on. Having dived with Paul numerous times in Pines we were quite familiar with the terrain and we anticipated no issues whatsoever, and as it transpired none eventuated. Up until now all dives in Gouldens were done with our regular dive buddies but the Pines and Tank dives were done with alternate buddies which is a good thing as any rapport and understanding you have with your regular dive buddy is now not there but

in theory it really shouldn't matter. The aim of these exercises is to demonstrate common skill usage, dive planning and execution with anyone. In our case, we each got a chance to carry our stages along a fixed course with one jump in the main cavern area,



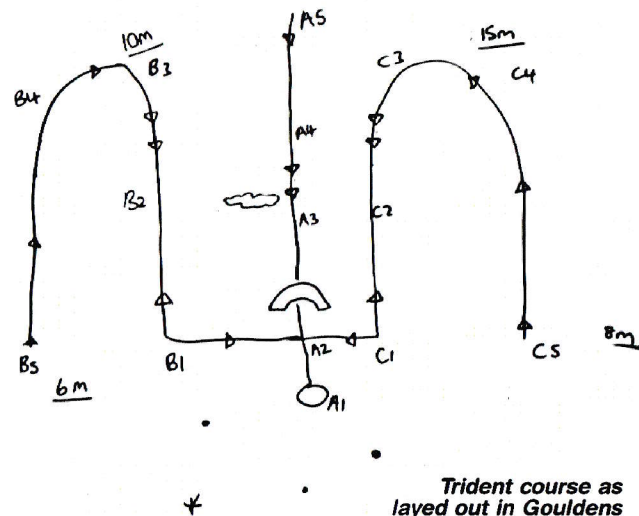
**Lost personal markers in Tank cave (does anyone recognise any)**

drop our stages at a point before proceeding down and into the advanced cave section. We had three such dives, the first to the start of the fixed line, do a mask exchange and then retrieved the line with a black out mask on. The second dive involved the same thing and continuing on down to the Dark room do a mask exchange and at the given signal extinguish our primary lights. One backup light between the two is now used to exit the cave whilst retrieving the line and our stages and jump reel. The third dive involved the same as before except we dived to the Big room. Once again, a mask exchange is performed before exiting the cave and retrieving the line. I do not know what Jane had planned for us on this dive but Paul ended up losing his mask near the Big room and by



the time I realised this we had come to retrieve our stages. I thought Jane had taken his mask but in fact he's lost both masks so took over line retrieval duties and led him out.

I cannot stress enough the following few take home points about the Pines dives; first, stay close to your buddy. This might qualify as an extra rule or addendum to the five golden cave diving rules but it is no less important when it comes to exiting a cave in a blackout situation (in silt out, no lights and/or whilst gas sharing). Extremely close contact and tactile signalling cannot be stressed enough. Everything else is easy enough if you remember to follow this simple rule. A separation of even one metre can be critical if you do not know where your buddy is. Students have been known to fail this part of the course and repeat it because of too great a separation. With this in mind Paul and I paid particular attention to this aspect of the Pines dives. Second, keep up the pace. The first half of the dive should only be a little bit more than the second half of the dive. Pacing oneself is important when it comes to gas management planning

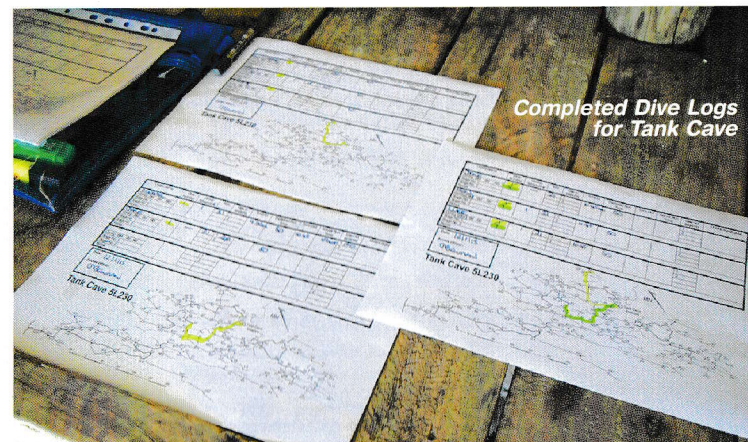


as well. You should be exiting the cave a bit faster than what you entered. Third, keep silting and environmental impact to a minimum. When and where appropriate using the pull and glide technique is quite acceptable and even encouraged on both the entry and exit phase of a cave dive. This is applicable to most of the advanced cave sections

of Pines but not in Tank cave so use it judiciously and where appropriate. The use of fin movement should consciously be kept to a minimum and is usually not even required in the advanced cave sections of Pines.

On the last day of the course, we still had one more qualifying dive at Tank cave, without doubt the premier dive site in Mt Gambier. After the now daily ritual of having a breakfast, picking up cold filled tanks at Just a Bed we had a dive brief with Jane reminding us of what to expect and not to be forgetting anything behind. We followed Jane in convoy up the Princess Highway towards Glencoe, a 23km drive taking about 18 minutes. The property gate was already open so we slowly drove in and aligned our vehicles parallel to Jane's. I had already visited the site as part of my Deep Cave course but back then the shed was much smaller and there is a site toilet and a tap with running water, luxury. The windmill still makes funny noises when the blades turn. Jane opened the access hatch to the cave entrance and we all entered the cool dry area and allowed our eyes to get accustomed to the dim light. We were given a rundown on site protocols, responsibilities and how best to enter and exit the water. On the surface further responsibilities of the Access Officer, safety protocols and site-specific regulations were also given before we proceeded to discuss the day's dives. As there were five of us there were to be three dives, the first I did with Jane, then Paul with Luke and Sandy with Ben. Each dive was to last about 50 minutes and each of us did one of the A, B and C lines with one jump. Dive plans were made, agreed to and logged prior to equipment checks in the shed. Negotiating the nearly four metres of a fixed vertical steel ladder is not any harder than the ladders at Kilsbys but you really do want to be very careful not to slip off the rungs, especially when it gets wet. At some point of the dive, there would be an out of air situation that the students had to respond to. We all did this quite well and more importantly survived and stuck to the dive plan. Jane kept us in sus-

pense until we had all done our dives and de-kitted before telling us we had all passed. Temporary CDAA certification cards were issued that we all proudly showed off in a group photo soon after. During the surface interval, we all got stuck in to a great packed lunch of sandwiches that Sandy had made that morning which was mostly made up of left-overs from the night before. Jane reminded us that as newly certified advanced cave divers we were able to dive Tank cave if we liked. Given we already had permission to be diving that day we



Completed Dive Logs for Tank Cave

paid off and I couldn't have been happier. Overall the take home message about the CDAA advanced cave course is that it is tough but with proper and methodical preparation you stand a good chance of passing the first time but like me, don't be put off by any setback. Persist and you will get through. Remember, your instructor is not there to fail you; they are there to help you pass the course and are truly committed to getting the best out of you.

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Advanced Cave graduates L to R as Michael, Paul, Sandy, Ben and Luke.



# CDAA SITE ACCESS - www.cavedivers.com.au

Remember: Access is a privilege, not a right. Please be considerate of landowners wishes.  
CN = CAVERN S = SINKHOLE C = CAVE AC = ADVANCED CAVE

SITE	LEVEL	OWNER	ACCESS DETAILS
<b>MT. GAMBIER - SA</b>			
Evens Ponds	Nil	DEWNR - P.O. Box 1046 Mt Gambier 5290	Groups of 6 or more, phone/mail to Dept. for Environment, Water & Natural Resources (DEWNR). Smaller groups, no need. (08) 8735 1177 Fax: (08) 8735 1135
Gouldens	CN	DEWNR	<b>General Diving:</b> Divers to contact DEWNR and notify of date and site to be dived. Please make requests by phone or fax only.
2 Sisters	CN	DEWNR	Divers must have the correct CDAA diving endorsement for the site and carry current financial CDAA membership card.
Fossil	C		The diver must have signed an indemnity with DEWNR before access is permitted and original copy must be received by DEWNR prior to diving. <b>Training:</b> The Instructor is to notify DEWNR of the date the sites are needed and to forward signed indemnities from each student and their temporary card number/ membership number.
Piccaninnie Ponds	S	DEWNR	Bookings can be made online via the CDAA web site.
Horse & Cart	CN	Dale & Heather Perkins	At least 1 week prior by email: dhperkins@bigpond.com or phone (08) 8738 4083.
Tea Tree	CN	Dale & Heather Perkins	
Little Blue	S	District Council of Grant	Permission not required - must carry card.
Allendale	C	District Council of Grant	Obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Information Centre.
Ela Elap	S	Dean & Carol Edwards	Key available from Simon Livingstone at the Bellum Hotel.
One Tree	S	Mr. Peter Norman	Visit the house before diving. If no one is home - no dive!
Dave's Cave	C		Maximum 3 divers all weekends between May & November inclusive (check and update on CDAA website).
Hells Hole	S		At least 4 divers in group - 1 with previous site experience.
Pines	C/AC	Forestry Sth. Australia Phone: (08) 8724 2876 Fax: (08) 8724 2870	Unrestricted days or numbers - Cave rated divers must not enter Penetration sections (stop signs)
Mud Hole	C	or book on-line via the CDAA website to arrange permit.	Unrestricted days or numbers.
Nettle Bed	AC		Open every weekend. Maximum of 4 divers per weekend undertaking 1 dive only (check an update on CDAA site).
Stinging Nettle Cave	AC	email: conservationandrecreation@forestrysa.com.au	Open every w'end max 3 divers per day undertaking 1 dive per day (check updates on CDAA website).
Iddlebidy	AC		Open every Saturday max 4 divers, 1 dive only (check an update on CDAA website)
		Forestry Sth. Australia	<b>IMPORTANT:</b> Divers must advise Forestry SA of their online booking. Collect permits from the Forestry Office, RHS of driveway to Carter Holt, Jubilee Hwy, Mt Gambier.
		Forestry Sth. Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No diving on Total Fire Ban Days.</li> <li>Permit also required to run compressors during fire danger season.</li> <li>Keys for Hells Hole, Nettle Bed, Iddlebidy and Stinging Nettle Cave can be obtained from Lady Nelson Visitor Ctr on presentation of Forestry SA permits.</li> </ul>
Kilsby's	S	Landowner leased to CDAA	Refer to CDAA website. Twin Tanks - Maximum depth of 40 metres on Air. Meet at gate of property at 8.55am or 12.55pm. Book on-line at www.cavedivers.com or contact Craig at kilsby@cavedivers.com.au <b>No diving on Total Fire Ban Days.</b>

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SITE	LEVEL	OWNER	ACCESS DETAILS
<b>MT. GAMBIER - SA (continued)</b>			
Shaft	S/C	Generally open one weekend a month. Trevor Ashby	For access dates go to the CDAA web page. Nitrox as a diving mix is not allowed in the Shaft unless a trimix endorsement is held but deco mixes attached to the shot line are permissible. Refer to Shaft access bulletin within CDAA Regulations. Divers applying to dive in the Shaft for the first time must document dive experience with twin tanks. <a href="#">Download form off website.</a>
Engelbrechts - East - West	C AC	Mt Gambier Council Lessee: Ph: 08 8723 5552 Owner: John & Sue Douglas	Obtain key from Mt Gambier Tourist Information Centre. Access agreement must be signed prior to diving. 2 divers must sign out keys, all divers must sign in advising which groups they are diving with. Diving should be avoided after heavy rain due to possible water contamination. Diving hours are now restricted to 8am to 8pm CST.
Three Sisters	AC	Millicent Council	Download Indemnity from Web Page. Access available for experienced Penetration divers only. Access agreement must be signed prior to diving. Allow 4 wks for indemnity process.
Tank Cave	AC	CDAA	Access Manager: Noel Dillon. Email: tankcave@cavedivers.com.au
Baker's Cave	C	Janet & Bruce Saffin	Access Manager: Matthew Skinner. Email: bakerscave@cavedivers.com.au Climbing equipment required. One member must have previous dive experience at site.
<b>NULLARBOR - WA</b>			
Cocklebidy	C/AC	DEC	Apply in writing for permission to dive at least 4 weeks in advance of trip to: District Manager, Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), PO Box 234, Esperance, W.A. 6450. Phone: (08) 9083 2100 Fax: (08) 9071 3657.
Murra El Elevyn	C/AC	DEC	
Tommy Grahams	C	DEC	
Burnabee	AC	Department of Lands, WA	Apply in writing or email for permission to dive at least four weeks in advance of trip.
Olwolgjin Cave	AC	Department of Lands, WA	Miss Shannon Alford, Email: Shannon.alford@lands.wa.gov.au Phone: (08) 6552 4661 Fax: (08) 6552 4417 P.O. Box 1143, West Perth WA 6872.
Weebubbie	S/C	Department of Lands, WA	A site indemnity form must be filled out for each visit to the site. Diving permission acknowledged by official letter from Land Owner.
<b>WELLINGTON CAVES - NSW</b>			
Limekiln (McKavity) cave	C/AC	Wellington Caves	Both Penetration and Cave Level are being accepted for this cave depending on its water level at the time. The cave has a restriction at the entrance which is underwater making it a Penetration Dive. During drought, the water level drops to form a small lake below the restriction allowing experienced Cave Divers access to this delicate cave.
Water (Anticline) cave	C	Wellington Caves	Affected by high CO <sub>2</sub> levels during Summer/Autumn. Access is co-ordinated with the Wellington Caves management by Greg Ryan - Email: gjryan@gmail.com. Phone (02) 9743 4157.
Rum Jungle Lake	S	Coomalie Community Govt Council	Unrestricted access currently exists - Please refer to website.
Burrinjuck Dam	S/C/AC	NSW Parks & Wildlife	Please refer to website. There are no specific access arrangements.





Linda Claridge, Big Blue Lake Project 2008. Photo by Richard Harris