



Diver against sunlight, with snorkelers at the surface, Lagoa Misteriosa, Brazil



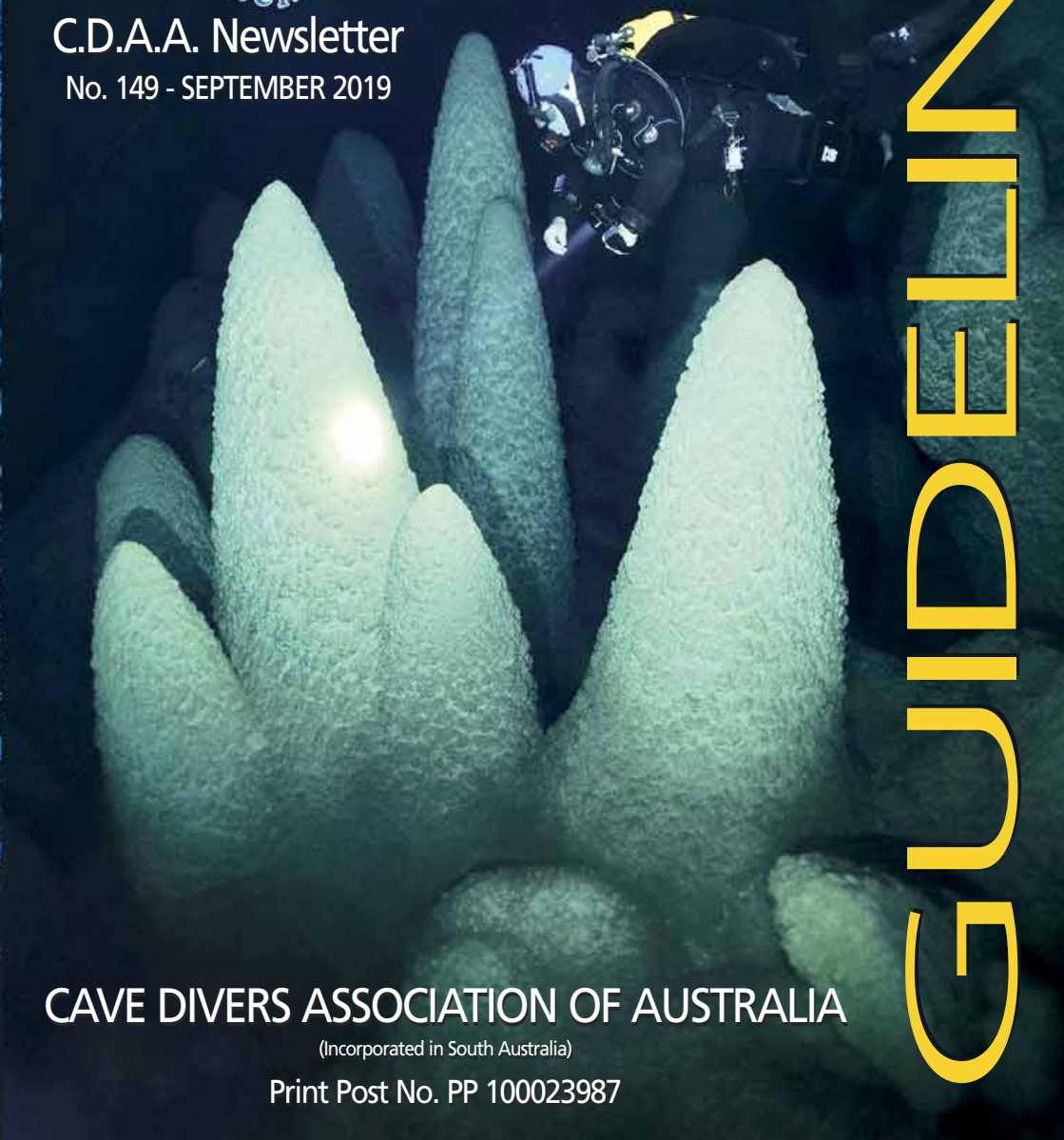
C.D.A.A. Newsletter

No. 149 - SEPTEMBER 2019

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

(Incorporated in South Australia)

Print Post No. PP 100023987



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CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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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

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Pine Tank Lodge



Photo by Liz Rogers

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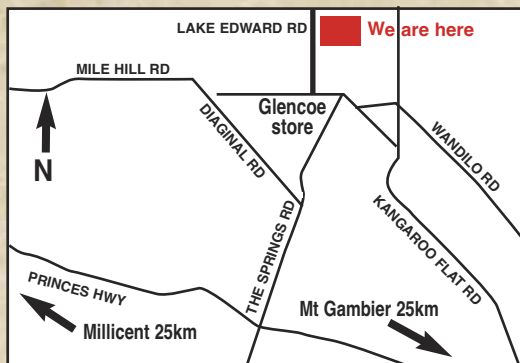
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EDITORIAL MEGGAN ANDERSON



Dear members

Welcome to the latest issue of Guidelines. As with previous September issues, the content is largely focused on the upcoming AGM and Symposium in October. However we also have some great articles by members about their travels. This includes an article from one of our symposium speakers, Dr. Peter Buzzacott. Our symposium is pretty exciting this year, in that all our speakers are "home grown" CDAA members and "Australian Made" (or if they weren't made in Australia, they were certainly designed here cave diving wise). This year will also be the first time you can vote electronically, saving you in stamps, envelopes and paper cuts. The directors annual reports will be available on the website one month prior to the AGM.

The busy membership renewal period is now over and I want to thank you for your patience during this time. Sometimes things go wrong but everyone was patient and understanding. If you have an issue we are responsive to emails, the CDAA Forum on the website as well as direct messaging through our Facebook page. Commenting publicly on non-CDAA social media channels can be a little awkward for us so it's not ideal. Also if you are not getting emails from us you need to please let us know.

Thank you also to Brendan and Rowan for holding the fort while I was away on holidays in July. I did some great dives in Gozo (including some caves) and tried to convince some people to come and dive our caves here!

On a personal note, I completed my CDAA Advanced Cave course in June. This is very exciting for me and I feel like a massive weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I felt extra pressure because I am a director. However, it was good for me as to do a course as a director because it made me think more about standards and what we are teaching as well as giving feedback on our materials. I had been having some mental challenges with my diving and I am really glad I stuck it out the past 12 months. I also dived with a lot of different people the last 12 months and they all taught me something. If you're having challenges with your diving, I learnt there is no shame in sharing. It's funny how when you are honest about your struggles, others share that they've been there too and you feel less alone and determined to overcome them.

Hope to see you all at the AGM and Symposium!
Meg

Meggan Anderson #4942 | Publications and Records Director
M: 0415 291 904 | E: publications@cavedivers.com.au

Articles for Guidelines Dec. 2019 - Deadline is Nov. 10th

- Send articles and jpeg images by email to guidelines@cavedivers.com.au

Did you know?

You can opt for an electronic copy of Guidelines rather than a paper copy. Simply login to your CDAA online account, select the dropdown menu under the My Records tab and click on Update My Details. Handy for those who have multiple CDAA members in their household or for those wanting to do their bit for the environment!

NATIONAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2019

It has been all-hands-on deck this quarter for the National Committee.

Meg, (Publications) is coming off the busiest time of the year for her portfolio, processing member renewals with the help of our new Records Officer, Brendan Moore. An influx of both newly qualified and returning members means that our membership base is continuing to grow.

Mary-Anne (Business) has been preparing the CDAA's EOFY reports for auditing, and getting things ready for this year's AGM, symposium and the CDAA's inaugural electronic ballot. It's been chaotic, and working to strict deadlines is often stressful, but she is doing an amazing job.

Kelvyn (Site) has had his hands full overseeing winter-maintenance, the opening of Pannikin Plains and re-opening of Fossil Cave. I have also recently been working with another member, Mark Townsend, to draft a new risk assessment that will hopefully allow Kelvyn to finalise the proposal to lease 3-Sisters cave, and inform the proposal to allow deeper diving at Piccaninne Ponds, in the near future.

Joseph (Standards), has been overseeing the development of new training materials, and preparing for the Annual CDAA instructor meeting and upcoming Sump Rescue Orientation Program (SROP), this year being run by SAR Officer Phil Croker.

So for those that have accused us of sitting around, with nothing better to do – it couldn't be further from the truth! ;P It seems there is NEVER a dull moment.

By the time this edition of Guidelines goes to print, members should once again be able to book and dive Fossil Cave. Following increased concerns

arising from the unauthorised removal of fossil material from the site earlier this year, and the disturbance of fossil material in the new areas of Tank Cave, the National Committee has worked with DEW to implement and/or plan additional measures to help prevent a repeat of such incidents in future. Some of these measures include;

- A review of CDAA Regulations and subsequent amendments to promote increased protection of fossils and other cave values
- Commissioning a number of related educative articles to be published in "Guidelines".
- An investigation into the incidents. This resulted in a formal sanction for the member involved – which is currently the subject of a peer review
- Development of signage to be installed on site at Fossil Cave, (draft currently with DEW for approval)
- A presentation about the region's fossil record, by Dr Julien Louys, scheduled for this year's CDAA AGM (Saturday, October 26th, 2019)
- A workshop (following on from the above presentation) to be conducted by Dr Julien Louys and another locally-based palaeontologist (Sunday, October 27th, 2019)
- A condition assessment of Fossil Cave, undertaken by Ian Lewis and Peter Horne, to measure the impacts of increased visitation and create a baseline for future monitoring.

Once again, we'd like to remind all members that visitation to the sites we dive is a privilege, not a right, and that you are each responsible for ensuring that the impact of visitation is minimised.

In this year's ballot, the National Committee has endorsed four nominations for some of the CDAA's highest honours. These include nominations for the CDAA Hall of Fame, for Richard

'Harry' Harris, and Craig Challen, in recognition of their now world-famous efforts in Thailand last year. It also includes nominations for Life Membership for two of the CDAA most influential and hard-working members, John Dalla Zuanna and Warrick McDonald, who have both dedicated decades of service for the betterment of the Association. The National Committee strongly feel that all of these nominees are worthy candidates of such accolades, and humbly requests that you vote 'YES' so that they may be duly recognised for their respective accomplishments.

Lastly, on a personal note, I'd like to thank all the members that approached me with words of support following my last Guidelines article. I had been seriously considering not running for a second term as National Director due to feeling per-

petually "boggled down" dealing with negative matters, but your kind words of encouragement have reignited my enthusiasm for all things cave diving and the CDAA, and strengthened my resolve to invest more time and effort into pursuing the good things that benefit us all as members.

Warm Regards, Pete
CDAA National Director



On behalf of the National Committee



Mary-Anne McLeod,
Business Director



Kelvyn Ball,
Site Director



Joseph Monks,
Standards Director



Meggan Anderson,
Publications and
Records Director



It's definitely the busy time of year for Business! Preparations for the AGM are in full swing. Please come join us on Saturday October 26th, for the 2019 AGM and Symposium. In addition to the official AGM proceedings, we are fortunate to have some great speakers covering a broad range of topics from the local Mount Gambier Fossils, to Deco theory and Explorations in Australia and overseas. There will also be some video of the newly re-opened Pannikin Plains. After the success of last year's Social Function, we will again hold this at no charge for members, and ticketed for partners/friends. It's a great opportunity to catch up with fellow divers and meet some new ones.

I have been continuing to investigate new merchandise options and will have a fresh run of apparel available for sale at the Symposium. Keep your eye out for one or two new options! Whilst on the topic, the Products Officer role is still vacant. If you are interested please get in contact for further details.

This AGM will be the first using electronic voting. Whilst all Director nominations were unopposed, we will have 2 Life Memberships, and 2 Hall of Fame nominations to vote on. Instructions will be provided via email shortly. Please do take the time to consider these well-deserved nominations recognizing the achievements and dedication of our members and vote.

The 2019 Financial Statements and 2020 Budgets will be made available prior to the AGM. Please take the time to review these, and contact me if you have any questions.

It's not too late for sponsorships for the Symposium via door prizes for the members. If you are interested in supporting the day and promoting your business, let me know, we would love to have you on board.

As the only nominee for Business Director, I look forward to contributing to the association and members for the next year.

Mary-Anne McLeod #5011
Business Director



Hello Members,
There is not a great deal to report from Standards, at this stage everything has been moving along smoothly. We have had a lot of courses being run and I feel that all the instructors are doing a fantastic job in educating both new and old members.

I have been approached by past divers interested in returning to cave diving and the CDAA, this is great news and very encouraging to see; we all know that life often gets busy and we have to make sacrifices but the fantastic thing about this sport is that it's 'as old as the hills/caves' and fingers crossed will always be around for when the time is right for you. I think this is awesome and I encourage members who are in contact with any past members who may have been thinking of returning to contact me so we can assist them to get back into the sport.

We have an Instructor Day coming up in September, this allows the group to come together and discuss any changes that may need to occur and discuss the direction that we need to head. I would like to say a huge, heartfelt thanks to our retiring instructor Warwick McDonald #1882. Warwick is a familiar name in the CDAA, both new and old members know of him and have benefited from his knowledge of the sport. He completed his Basic Cave (JDZ recommended Category 2 so this was back in the day) in 1985 diving the local sites in Mt Gambier and afar. It was not long before he decided to pass on his knowledge, becoming a Cavern Diver Instructor in 1990, Cave Instructor in 1996 and last but not least Penetration Diver Instructor in 2004. I will not delve too much into his various stints on the National Committee or all the other amazing things he has done for the association

(with great personal sacrifice) as that is for another time. I will say he has changed the lives of every person he has touched throughout his instructor career. I would like to thank Warwick from the Standards position, mine and the previous directors who have sat in this position, for your immense contribution of knowledge, time and most of all the passion you have given your instructing career in the CDAA. You have acted as a true ambassador for the CDAA, always maintaining the highest standards and ethos for all members. You have provided one of the best examples for future instructors to follow and you should be proud of your own achievements as well as that of your students who have become some of the best divers in Australia (or dare I say the world?) with your help. I hope to see you diving around Mt Gambier some more with the freedoms that a CDAA member enjoys.

On this note I would like to congratulate Samuel Bennett on becoming our newest Basic Cave Instructor. It takes a lot of hard work and co-operation to archive this and I look forward to working with you in the future.

I would like to end this update with a quick reminder that site access is a privilege and any member that is dealing with the various departments or persons involved with this process is an ambassador for the CDAA; that being said, I would also like to thank all the members present, past and future for making this association great and for working as a team towards the future of the sport.

Peace Out and dive safe within the standards.

Regards,
Joseph Monks #4653
Standards Director



How's everybody handling this incredible weather? Brrr!! Definitely been a cooler and wetter winter than the last few years. But hey, the extra rain should help out the water tables. So, my grizzle is up first!

No double booking sites please. If you are booked onto Tank Cave, do not book anywhere else. There are members on wait lists for Tank Cave and other sites and it is not fair to double book. I have been notified of several cases and I will be keeping an eye on this. Also please notify your AO and cancel your Tank Cave booking if you are unable to attend. It is polite to not keep them waiting and also a last minute member on the waitlist may be able to attend.

Just a heads up Forestry is looking at charging a fee to get rid of nuisance bookings i.e. divers not turning up.

Access Officers please make sure you are aware of all protocols to run your site inline with your booking, it's not just an open and shut the gate roll. There are specific regulations to your role. If any issues arise please let the Directorship know as soon as possible.

SHAFT – At the moment the Shaft is opening up for the next 2 months – get in touch with

Gary Barclay and he will organise a date.

FOSSILS – DEW has now informed us that Fossils is open for bookings. Time slots have been allocated.

HELLS HOLE – trying to organise a clean up day with Forestry. An upgrade to access the site is happening in the next 12 months so hoping to hear back before Christmas that a vehicle can get down the track that is currently closed off by a boulder.

PANNIKIN PLAINS – permission has been finally granted by Department of Parks and Wildlife to access the site. Yay!! Big shout out to all involved in the huge effort behind the scenes. This has taken many years and numerous hours by everyone involved, so please, anybody intending to dive this site read all the documents, protocols, conditions, no go zones and fragile areas etc. This site will be well monitored so please take special care to ensure CDAA has ongoing access.

Hope to see you all at the AGM in October and catch up for a chat. Going to be some awesome door prizes!!

Happy and Safe Diving!
Cheers Kelvyn Ball – Site Director

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SA State Event: Tank Cave VR

By Damian Bishop # 4738 CDAA SA State Rep

I was unfortunately unable to make it over to Oztek in March and missed a fantastic event with some great presentations. So when JDZ emailed to say he was coming to Adelaide, with his VR gear in tow, I jumped at the opportunity to kick off a state event to showcase the Tank Cave Virtual Reality experience.

This was the showpiece of another great CDAA SA social event.

The event started with dinner at the Maid of Auckland Hotel, where about 25 SA members met. We've used this venue before, because of the free of charge function room, very handy for CDAA events. There were many new faces and new members, many of whom I'd never met. There were also lots of familiar faces in the crowd, some who have been in the association for many, many years. It was great to

see a mix of the old and the new.

The VR experience was unlike anything I'd experienced before... it was amazing going for a 'dive' through sections of Tank Cave, it was fully 3D and we all felt like we were actually there.... where ever we pointed our 'light' (the hand controller in real life), the light head in the virtual world would mimic. We had strung up a line between 4 chairs for people

to follow... with the VR headset on, the user is quickly immersed in the virtual world and the obstacles of the real world (such as people) remain unseen, hence why people were confined to a safe area. It was great to see everyone followed the line well and no one needed to perform any lost line drills!!

Everyone was amazed at how realistic the cave looked and it gave a great impression for Basic Cave

and Cave divers of what they can expect to see in the future, if they continue to Advanced Cave level. I am sure we have convinced more than one member to work towards Advanced Cave so they can experience the real Tank Cave.

Thank you to JDZ for bringing the Tank Cave VR experience to Adelaide for the SA members.



Ian Lewis with the VR Gear



Members watching JDZ do his magic



Members socialising during dinner



Members Symposium

Sat. 26th October 2019

Main Corner, 1 Bay Road, Mount Gambier.

The symposium will be held in the City Hall commencing at 9:00am.

**The Annual General Meeting will commence at 11.00am,
and complete no later than 12.30pm.**

Drinks and Canapes will follow at 7:00pm.

Sunday 27th October Workshop:

Recognising and Recording Fossils

For any questions, please contact **Mary-Anne McLeod** (Business Director)
at business@cavedivers.com.au or **0401 508 838**

2019 Annual General Meeting and Members Symposium

~ AGENDA ~

TIME	SPEAKER	TOPIC
09:00am	Welcoming Remarks	
09:15am	Julien Louys	<i>Underwater Fossils of the Mount Gambier Region</i>
10:00am	David Doolette	<i>Mixed gas diving</i>
11:00am	Morning Tea - Catered	
11:30am	Annual General Meeting	<i>Agenda published separately</i>
12:30pm	Lunch break	
13:30pm	Peter Buzzacott	TBA
14:30pm	David Doolette	<i>Exploration in the Woodville Karst Plain</i>
15:30pm	Afternoon Tea - Catered	
15:45pm	Stephen Fordyce	<i>Closure: Connecting Niggly Cave and Growling Swallet</i>
14:30pm	Stefan Eberhard	<i>Nullarbor Video Perspectives</i>
17:15pm	Conclude	
19:00pm	Evening Social Event	<i>Members free of charge, guests ticketed, available soon</i>
23:00pm	Evening event concludes	

With Special Thanks to:



City of
Mount Gambier

2019 Annual Symposium – Speaker Information

Keynote Speaker – Associate Professor David Doolette CDAA #1310

Associate Professor David Doolette began scuba diving in 1979 and was introduced to the sinkholes and caves of Australia in 1984. During this time he alternated between his university studies and working as a dive instructor, and he developed an interest in diving physiology. He planned and conducted among the first technical dives in Australia in 1993. Since being awarded his Ph.D. in 1995, he has conducted full time research into decompression physiology in academia and for the military, published widely in the scientific and military technical literature, and produced military decompression procedures. He has been a member of the Undersea Hyperbaric Medical Society since 1987 and received their 2003 Commercial Diving Award. He has been a member of the South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society since 1990 where he was the Education Officer for five years. He is a member of the Cave Diving Association of Australia, the Australian Speleological Federation Cave Diving Group, Global Underwater Explorers, the Mexico Cave Exploration Project, and the Woodville Karst Plain Project, and is an avid underwater cave explorer. He has lectured widely on topics related to decompression theory and technical diving.



Dr. Peter Buzzacott CDAA #4233

Dr. Peter Buzzacott, MPH, PhD is an advanced cave diver, advanced trimix, closed-circuit rebreather diver, and former recreational and technical diving instructor. He is the former Director of Injury Monitoring and Prevention at Divers Alert Network (DAN) in Durham, North Carolina. Before that, he conducted decompression experiments for two years at the University of Western Brittany, in France, with both civilian and military divers. Peter has published more than 60 scientific papers and delivered as many diving scientific conference presentations, in 14 countries. He is currently a Senior Research Fellow at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia.

Dr. Julien Louys CDAA #5110 (photo by Jane Bowman)

I am a vertebrate palaeontologist and palaeoecologist. I received a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Mathematics from the University of Newcastle, Australia and a Bachelor of Sciences (Hons) and PhD from the University of New South Wales, Sydney. I then completed a three year postdoctoral research assistant position at Liverpool John Moores University, UK, examining the use of taxon-free variables in palaeoecological analyses. Following the completion of this project, I worked for 12 months at the Queensland Museum as curator of Geosciences. I later successfully secured a University of Queensland Postdoctoral Fellowship in 2012 with projects examining Australian marsupial palaeontology, particularly Pliocene faunas, as well as community ecology of Pleistocene/Holocene small mammal assemblages. I have also been involved in hominin and large mammal palaeoecological research of the Plio-Pleistocene of East Africa and Southeast Asia. I am currently working on adding to Sumatra's Pleistocene fossil record, and understanding its evolutionary and environmental history. My current research is funded by the Australian Research Council under the Future Fellowship scheme. I have been a member of the CDAA since 2017.



Stephen Fordyce CDAA #4418 (photo by Stewart Donn)

Stephen (Steve) Fordyce seems to enjoy multi-disciplinary cave diving and exploration - the more gear the better! He has laid line in some of the most remote cave sumps in Australia, and recently was the push diver at the pointy end of a big team effort in Tasmania, which connected Growling Swallet and Niggly Cave. This set a new record for the deepest (although mostly dry) cave in Australia, and involved 4 days camped underground. Fortunately, being an engineer and mad scientist, if sufficient gear doesn't exist, he can just create it, and he makes a living by doing just this, designing and making custom technical diving equipment for TFM Engineering Australia. Steve is also well known for his sense of humour, terrible jokes and bad cave/product names. The UnderWater Micro Sound System (UWuSS) is just one recent example.

Dr. Stefan Eberhard #1271

Dr Stefan Eberhard has been exploring and researching caves for almost 40 years. He is the founding Director of Subterranean Ecology Pty Ltd, an environmental consultancy that specializes in scientific research and environmental management of caves and other subterranean ecosystems. He is an Honorary Associate with the Western Australian Museum and an adjunct affiliate with the University of New South Wales. Now based in Tasmania and down-scaling his consultancy work, Stefan is pursuing his long term interests in cave diving and photography, including current filming projects which seek to celebrate the beauty of the Nullarbor and its underwater caves.



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- Caving headlamp & helmet



10% OFF GROUP BOOKINGS of 8 or more.

*Terms & Conditions: All participants must be certified cave divers and will be involved in all aspects of camp set up, meal preparation and gear hauling. A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 participants is required for a guaranteed departure. Trips are based on single site expeditions, multi-site expeditions subject to additional charges. An additional Credit Card Service Fee will be applied to the dollar amount paid by credit or charge card. Prices and inclusions are correct at time of issue and are subject to change. Offers may be withdrawn at anytime without notice.

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CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA NATIONAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS OCTOBER 2019

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Nomination for National Director – Pete Wolf #4419

Proposed by: Jane Bowman #1880 Seconded by: Elizabeth Harper #4680

Representing the members of the CDAA as National Director for the last two years, and working in collaboration with an equally passionate committee and other CDAA representatives, has been a privilege.

Whilst we have achieved a lot during this period, I feel I have even more to contribute to this role, and with a number of longer-term projects still in the works, I would relish the opportunity to be re-elected to this position in order to see these through to fruition.

Such projects include development of a membership app with integrated emergency response capabilities, finalisation of several scientific, research and exploration-based objectives currently underway, and establishment of access arrangements and lease agreements to a number of potential new sites.

As always, I will commit to supporting the other committee members and office bearers in their respective portfolios to further the aims and objectives of the Association, improving processes, maintaining high standards and safe practices, providing access to more sites, and ensuring that the cave diving community as a whole is well represented.

If re-elected, I will remain active, approachable, and ensure the interests of all CDAA members, land managers, and the supporters of the Association are protected and upheld.

Sincerely, Pete Wolf

Peter Wolf has stood unopposed and has successfully been elected for the position of National Director.

BUSINESS DIRECTOR

Nomination for Business Director: Mary-Anne McLeod #5011

Proposed by: Brett Harris #4713 Seconded by: Peter Wolf #4419

As a Chartered Accountant and an avid cave diver, I was appointed to the role of Business Director by the National Committee in November 2018. I now wish to nominate for Business Director for the remainder of the term and continue my contribution to the CDAA.

I have a diverse corporate and consultancy background, and have held senior finance positions in a wide range of industries. I am currently Financial Controller and on the Executive Team of a global design and manufacturing company in the marine and aviation industry. I hold a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) and an MBA from Melbourne Business School, and am also a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

As Business Director I will continue to focus on Financial Controls, Reporting and governance on behalf of the members, drive development of the Strategic Plan over the next 12 months and reinvigorate the merchandise portfolio.

I have been diving for nearly 20 years, but after getting my CDAA qualifications most of my diving is now in the caves. I am passionate about cave diving and would be pleased to bring my knowledge and experience to the National Committee to help further the Association for its members.

Mary-Anne McLeod #5011

Mary-Anne McLeod has stood unopposed and has successfully been elected for the position of Business Director.

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA NATIONAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS OCTOBER 2019

SITE DIRECTOR

Nomination for Site Director: Kelvyn Ball #3276

Proposed by: Gary Barclay #1735 Seconded by: Meggan Anderson #4942

As Site Director in the last 18 months, my intentions have been to improve and maintain the wonderful sites available to members.

This has included reopening Kilsby's for our members and gaining regular access to this site.

Establishing Tank Cave earthworks and a regular mowing program. Working bees and improvements to sites like Allendale (steps) and Englebrecht's (platform upgrade and lightening renewal).

Lots of negotiations with DEWNR re leasing sites and future developments. Liasing with Landowner's is probably my best forte. Being a farmer travelling to Mount Gambier for regular diving for over 18 years has given me an opportunity to build a solid relationship with the landowners and this has helped immensely with negotiations for the CDAA by being a familiar and trusted person.

I like listening to both members and locals and always seeking a positive middle ground that will provide for mutual benefits and keep sites open for members while respecting the interest of the landowners.

A vote for me will be a vote to continue actively negotiating for the CDAA for new sites, some include current positive talks with Barnoulet Landowner and the Wattle Range Council for leasing of 3 Sister's Cave etc. Currently negotiating with DEWNR about extending depth of Piccaninnie Ponds. As being ongoing projects I would really enjoy the opportunity to continue on as Site Director.

Regards Kelvyn Ball #3276

Kelvyn Ball has stood unopposed and has successfully been elected for the position of Site Director.

PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS DIRECTOR

Nomination for Publications and Records Director: Meggan Anderson #4942

Proposed by: Damian Bishop #4738 Seconded by: Peter Williamson #4829

I have been Records Officer since 2015 and Publications and Records Director since 2017. I am therefore experienced in managing this portfolio, dealing with various enquiries and coping with the challenges of the role. During my term, I have performed all the relevant duties as per the constitution and have a hardworking and passionate team. I have employed strategies to reduce Guidelines production costs and wastage. I've also grown the CDAA profile via various online channels, including our Facebook page. This was particularly useful after the media attention the association received during the Thai Cave Rescue. My portfolio team also implemented replacing various paper processes with electronic processes such as electronic Records of Training and improved checks and balances upon course completions. We also assisted the Lady Nelson Centre with implementing online bookings. We have performed regular website updates and ensured all member and instructor records and tasks are processed in a responsive and timely manner. For the next 2 years I aim to: investigate less labour intensive options for maintaining membership records (such as app development), continue to keep the website updated and create quality content for Guidelines and other communication platforms. This role requires working with a number of stakeholders including members, instructors, the National Committee and to some extent, landowners. I will continue to maintain these positive relationships by being responsive and approachable. I live in South Australia and will continue to work with the state representative to grow the sport in my home state.

Nominee: Meggan Anderson #4942

Meggan Anderson has stood unopposed and has successfully been elected for the position of Publications & Records Director.

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LIFE MEMBER NOMINATIONS

The National Committee has motioned to adopt the following nomination for life membership:

Nomination for Life Membership – John Dalla-Zuanna #236

Proposed by: Joseph Monks #4653

Seconded by: Mary-Anne McLeod #5011 Meggan Anderson #4942 Peter Wolf #4419 Kelvyn Ball #3276

NOMINATION STATEMENT:

I Joseph Monks #4653 would like to nominate John Dalla-Zuanna #236 for life membership.

Anywhere you find a CDAA member or even a person that has been involved in the tech diving scene in Vic or SA, the name JDZ is known and everyone has a story to tell.

This name has been around since the beginning of the association and JDZ remains a strong and influential member to this day. He has always been there to pick up the phone to have a chat or give advice to anyone in need. He has given more hours in the pursuit of the CDAA than most ever have or will. He has given interviews on TV, video and radio on multiple occasions, always supporting the CDAA, promoting it in a positive light, keeping the association strong.

Well JDZ joined the association in 1975 at #236 and has been a member for over 40 years and counting.

He has been involved in some major developments of the CDAA including and not limited to the Tank Cave Management Committee, updating the training standards, making strong connections with other training agencies plus instructors internationally and loads more.

He has been part of and conducted trips to further the sport with National Geographic and numerous other media forms from Totally Wild TV show, ABC and everything in between.

In recent times JDZ helped Harry and Craig with the Thai cave rescue behind the scenes and in numerous interviews. This was not the first time either he was an integral part of the world record setting trips at the Pearce Resurgence NZ.

We all know he is well travelled and made strong connections with diving experts from all over the world. He has been an incredible ambassador for the CDAA, always leaving a impression of upmost professionalism and keeping in touch for the benefit of the CDAA and its members.

Some things that people may not know about JDZ:

- He is one of the CDAA's longest serving instructors and has certified hundreds of people in both the old and new classifications. He first certified as an instructor examiner in 1977 helping to grow a strong instructor base. In fact this was the start of the teaching we now use in the CDAA.

- He has helped to guide new instructors, always taking on new people when they wish to intern.

- He has held a number of positions on the National Committee, most recently as the Standards Director. There are also to many positions to mention with sub-committees but I will say he has contributed above and beyond with mapping for the CDAA, always incorporating new technologies or ideas and if that was not available he made his own.

- He has helped to shape and guide the training standards toward the future. Even now, he helps through giving his time to develop new ways to improve the current training.

- He worked hard with the current Site and National Director in getting the association into Pannikin Plains.

- In the late 70's he went over to Florida and meet up with the leading cave divers such as Sheck Exley, Wes Skyles and Woody Jasper to find new methods to bring back to Australia to further cave exploration. One such idea was side mounting.

- SRT development for the CDAA: In the last few years JDZ has been working very closely with a panel of expert climbers and our insurance agency to develop training standards for the use of SRT with the purpose of accessing more caves for the membership. Thanks to his tireless efforts the CDAA has a vertical access endorsement and this in turn has strengthened relationships between the CDAA and landowner.

- He was one of the driving factors and first to get rebreathers into cave diving in Australia. He then incorporated them into the courses. He ran instructor days and spent many hours finding out how they could be brought into the CDAA safely. There is most probably more to add here but the CDAA computer system is a baby compared to his term as a member so I am sure if you ask around there would be many more items to add to the list as JDZ has always been an easy person to make friends with and leaves impressions of experience and strength of character.

He has been working away with the Tank Cave Virtual Reality experience. This was a total hit at OZTek and helped once again to promote the CDAA. He has even taken this on the road and shown the experience in South Australia at a CDAA state meeting. Now thanks to the great efforts of JDZ and his team more people will have the pleasure of experiencing the 3D experience at the Lady Nelson Visitor Centre in Mount Gambier. It will be set up there in the near future for all to experience for years to come.

In 2015 he won the prestigious OZTek "Outstanding Achievement Award" for services to Cave & Technical Diving putting him on a very short list of people to receive this award.

I believe he is a perfect candidate for life membership as he has always been someone with the best interest of the CDAA at the forefront and has given more time than I have even been a member ;).

I thank you for your consideration of John Dalla-Zuanna #236 for life membership.

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LIFE MEMBER NOMINATIONS

The National Committee has motioned to adopt the following nomination for life membership:

Nomination for Life Membership – Warrick McDonald #1882

Proposed by: Peter Wolf #4419

Seconded by: Joseph Monks #4653 Mary-Anne McLeod #5011 Meggan Anderson #4942 Kelvyn Ball #3276

NOMINATION STATEMENT:

Warrick McDonald has, without a doubt, been one of the most influential individuals in the CDAA's 46-year history. Many aspects of the CDAA we all enjoy today are a legacy of the passion, time and effort that Warrick has contributed during his time as a member.

Beginning his recreational diving career way back in 1961, before joining the Royal Australian Navy in 1965 and becoming a Navy Clearance Diver, it seems that Warrick was largely destined for a life underwater.

Though his first "taste" of cave diving in Mount Gambier was in 1972, it wasn't until 1985 that Warrick joined the CDAA, earning his initial Cat.2 cave diving certification from this year's other nominee for life membership, John Dalla Zuanna. Five years later, Warrick decided to begin passing on some of his contagious enthusiasm, qualifying as a CDAA Cavern instructor in 1990, and going on to become a CDAA Penetration (Adv. Cave) examiner in 2004. For almost three decades, Warrick has been one of the CDAA's most active instructors, and has taught hundreds of people to cave dive, from those undertaking their first dives in an overhead environment, to experienced cave divers seeking the highest level of training. It really was the end of an era, therefore, when Warrick recently decided to resign as a CDAA instructor. For those of us who were lucky enough to come under his quality tutelage at some point throughout our own cave diving careers, Warrick's penchant for mischief, cheeky grin and ability to tell a story will forever be a highlight of those experiences.

Whilst 30 years spent teaching others to cave dive is an impressive feat in its' own right, it is arguably not the most notable of Warrick's contributions to the CDAA. That must surely be reserved for the 12 years Warrick has spent serving as a member of the CDAA's National Committee.

From 1992-1994, Warrick was elected to the position of Business Director/Treasurer. At the time, the CDAA's financial position was dire, but Warrick managed to get the Association back on firm financial ground by using his own savings to pay the CDAA's outstanding debts. Such dedication, in the modern era, is almost unimaginable.

At the end of his term, with the CDAA's future looking much brighter, Warrick continued to volunteer his time to the Association, filling multiple roles, including as Victorian State Representative, and Instructor Materials Officer.

Then, in 1999, Warrick was invited to enter his second tenure on the National Committee, this time as National Director. He went on to become the CDAA's longest standing director, sitting as National Director for 5 straight terms (10 years), before finally resigning his seat in late 2009. Knowing first-hand just how much work is involved, I am truly amazed at the dedication this would have taken.

During these years, the CDAA went from strength to strength. While there are far too many noteworthy achievements to list here, some of those that Warrick was directly involved in, or oversaw during his time as National Director, include; the development of policies to allow the use of nitrox, trimix and rebreathers in Australian cave sites, a CDAA presence at the Oztek Technical Diving Conference, the reinvention of CDAA course material to include the best cave diving practises from around the world, the development of the first CDAA website, which brought many member services online – such as bookings, products and site information, the inclusion of a symposium over the AGM weekend to attract more members, and renewed access to a number of previously closed sites, including Kilsby Sinkhole and Tank Cave.

Throughout his 10-year stint as National Director, Warrick's business savvy and prudent management caused the CDAA's financial position to flourish. This allowed the subsequent National Committee to purchase the Tank Cave property, securing ongoing access to one of Australia's most extensive Cave systems, and thereby fortifying the CDAA's future.

Much of Warrick's success can be attributed to his strong personality, unwavering sense of direction, faultless work ethic, and single-minded dedication; traits which allowed him to pilot the CDAA's growth during his decade long tenure. It should be noted that Warrick's "uncompromising" style of leadership, as it has been previously described, also brought him some detractors. During his time as a director, other no-doubt equally passionate members, who may have had other ideas and aspirations, did not always agree with Warrick's style of leadership or the direction he took the Association. On reflection though, it is undeniable that the current strength and success of the CDAA, which remains the peak cave diving agency in Australia after 46 years, is in no-small part thanks to the efforts of Warrick McDonald.

Even after stepping down from the National Committee, Warrick has continued to serve the CDAA. Now the President of the Benteleigh and Cheltenham RSL's, Warrick's generous offer to the CDAA to utilise the function rooms at these facilities is often taken up to host state-held meetings and events. On behalf of his dive shop, Ocean Divers, he is also always happy to sponsor such CDAA events, as well as the Annual symposium.

In considering this nomination, I ask that all members recognize and demonstrate gratitude for the tremendous effort, personal sacrifice and dedication that Warrick has afforded the CDAA. There is no question that he deserves to be awarded the CDAA's highest honour, and it therefore gives me great pleasure to nominate Warrick McDonald for Life Membership.

Peter Wolf #4419

I thank you for your consideration of John Dalla-Zuanna #236 for life membership.

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS

The National Committee has motioned to adopt the following nomination for Hall of Fame:

Richard Harris (#1360) has been nominated for the Hall of Fame for his role in the Thai Cave Rescue in 2018 and other achievements.

Proposed by John Dalla-Zuanna CDAA #236

Seconded by: Peter Wolf #4419 Mathew Rochford #4827 Kelvyn Ball #3276 Meggan Anderson #4942 Mary-Anne McLeod #5011 Joseph Monks #4653 Ian Lewis #258 Peter Horne #719

Nomination Statement: Dr. Richard (Harry) Harris

With great pleasure, I wish to nominate Dr Richard (Harry) Harris for the CDAA Hall of Fame.

Harry started cave diving in the 1980s. His enthusiasm with underwater photography, uw video and technical diving equipment soon led him to engage in interesting cave diving projects. At first, locally in Mt Gambier, and then when he transferred to Vanuatu 2004/05, actively explored, documented & commenced a numbering system of many of the island's caves - in particular, his pet project, the Sarakata Resurgence (1700m against very high flow) using rebreathers.

On returning to Australia, using his expert photography skills and a flair for writing articles for diving magazines, Harry quickly got involved in a number of cave diving expeditions which were brewing.

Harry's specialist medical background and deep diving rebreather experience were also a major expedition asset. Harry has meticulously recorded and documented many projects including:

- Kija Blue, in the Kimberleys, a remote sinkhole in northern Western Australia, 2006 with Australian Geographic Society support:*
- Cocklebiddy Cave, WA in 2008, 2009 & 2015:*
- Blue Lake, Mt Gambier, SA. Soil Sampling & videography 2008:*
- Piccaninnie Ponds, SA. Ongoing deep survey & 3D mapping Project 2008-09:*
- Junee Resurgence, Tasmania 2009:*
- The Pearse Resurgence, New Zealand expedition, in 2010 (Explorers Club Flag # 160), 2011 & 2012 with National Geographic support. 2014 & 2016*
- Xmas Island Caves, WA 2013, with National Geographic.*
- Daxing Spring Cave, China, 2013 & 2015*
- Blue Creek Resurgence, New Zealand, 2015*
- Sra Keow & Song Hong Caves, Thailand, 2017*
- Mokihinui Resurgence, New Zealand, 2018*
- The Cook Islands caves, 2018*
- Crows Nest Cave, Alberta Canada, 2018*

All of these dive projects were extreme in either depth or distance with Harry often at the pointy end...

In 2007, Harry was a recipient of the National Speleological Society-Cave Diving Section - 2007 Exploration Award In 2009 he was the recipient of the OZTek'09 'Outstanding Achievement' Award to mark his exceptional contributions to cave diving exploration.

2017, he won OZTek2017 'Tech Diver of the Year' award.

As the CDAA Search & Rescue and Safety Officer since 2011, Harry has active interest in diving safety, accident and fatality investigation, especially pertaining to cave, rebreather and technical diving. His work in co-ordinating cave diver incident management in Australia has been invaluable.

Harry has a professional and voluntary interest in search and rescue operations, establishing the first sump rescue (SROP) training course in Australasia with support from the organisations, the CDAA, the International Underwater Cave Rescue & Recovery (IUCRR), Aust Cave Rescue Council, Aust Speleological Federation – Cave Diving Group (ASF-CDG), Mt Gambier SES, Mt Gambier Police and Technical Divers International (TDI). The course has been regularly run with many of our members participating. By building relationships with these emergency services in Australia, Harry has placed the CDAA in a highly respected position in this community.

Harry is an Australian Regional Coordinator for the IUCRR.

In 2018 Harry, along with Craig Challen and others, was involved in a cave rescue operation in Thailand to evacuate 12 children and their coach from the flooded Tham Luang Cave system.

On 24 July 2018, Harry was awarded the Star of Courage (SC) and Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) by the Governor-General of Australia for his role in the rescue. On 7 September 2018 Harry was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Direkgunabhorn by the King of Thailand.

He is the 2019 South Australian of the Year and joint-winner of the 2019 Australian of the Year award along with Craig Challen.

Harry has raised the profile of the Cave Divers Association of Australia and Australian cave diving and is an outstanding ambassador for the CDAA.

For all of Harry's cave diving activities, I recommend him to you for the CDAA Hall of Fame membership.

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS

The National Committee has motioned to adopt the following nomination for Hall of Fame:

Craig Challen (#2993) has been nominated for the Hall of Fame for his role in the Thai Cave Rescue in 2018 and other achievements.

Proposed by John Dalla-Zuanna CDAA #236

Seconded by: Peter Wolf #4419 Mathew Rochford #4827 Kelvyn Ball #3276 Meggan Anderson #4942 Mary-Anne McLeod #5011 Joseph Monks #4653 Ian Lewis #258 Peter Horne #719

Nomination Statement: Craig Challen #2993

It is with great pleasure that I wish to nominate Craig Challen for membership of the CDAA Hall of Fame.

Beginning diving in 1994, he progressed to cave diving in the latter 1990s, joining the CDAA in 1997.

Much of Craig's early cave diving was on the Nullarbor Plain of Western Australia and South Australia.

Two of Craig's driving attractions have been engaging in exploration of previously unvisited places which then necessitates the use of advanced diving technology.

In 2000, this drive led Craig to become one of the early adopters of closed circuit rebreather technology in Australia and in 2003, Craig & his buddy Karl Hall, tackled the third sump to the end of the then known line in Cocklebiddy Cave, using Prism rebreathers and scooters.

Not with standing numerous ocean wreck dives around Australia & overseas, Craig continued his exploration in the Nullarbor and in 2006 was part the deep exploration project in Kija Blue, a 100m plus deep sinkhole in northern Western Australia.

In 2008 & 2009, he returned to Cocklebiddy Cave and extended the line in this famous cave.

At this point, his attention was drawn to the Pearse Resurgence in New Zealand where numerous expeditions between 2010 and 2016 have taken Craig to a depth of 217m with in-water run times as long as 17 hours!

In 2011, Hypipamee Crater in Far North Queensland, with its 60m drop to water, was also tackled and its "bottomless" depth was reached at 73m.

By now, Craig's focus on deep caves, led him to Thailand with nearly 200m dives in sight, particularly Sra Keow and Song Hong Caves and 2015, China's Daxing Spring took Craig to 213m.

In addition to these deep dives, Craig has been with expeditions to the caves of Xmas Island, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands which have paved the way for future exploration in these remote island caves.

Include new explorations in Feb 2018, Mokihinui Resurgence, New Zealand and in Sept 2018, Crows Nest cave in Alberta, Canada.

In 2007, Craig was a recipient of the National Speleological Society-Cave Diving Section - 2007 Exploration Award and in 2009, the OZTek Technical Diver of the Year.

In 2018 Craig, along with Dr. Richard (Harry) Harris and others, was involved in a cave rescue operation in Thailand to evacuate 12 children and their coach from the flooded Tham Luang Cave system.

On 24 July 2018, Craig was awarded the Star of Courage (SC) and Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) by the Governor-General of Australia for his role in the rescue. On 7 September 2018 Craig was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Direkgunabhorn by the King of Thailand.

He is the 2019 Western Australian of the Year and joint-winner of the 2019 Australian of the Year award along with Dr. Richard (Harry) Harris.

Craig has raised the profile of the Cave Divers Association of Australia and Australian cave diving and is an outstanding ambassador for the CDAA.

For all of Craig's cave diving activities, I recommend him to you for the CDAA Hall of Fame membership.

**Life Membership and Hall of Fame voting:
Voting will be conducted via Electronic Ballot.
Instructions will be sent via Email to Members.**

Hidden wonders of the Serra da Bodoquena

Story and Photos by Pierre Constant www.calaolifestyle.com

"Moro num pais tropical, abençoado por deus e bonito por natureza..." I am born in a tropical country, blessed by God and beautiful by nature... goes the famous song. Did you say Bonito?

I had never heard of this place, until I met this Brazilian diver in the Galapagos islands. He referred it at the capital of cave diving in Brazil, located in Mato Grosso do Sul, - south of the Pantanal - a state cradled between Paraguay and Bolivia. The domestic flight took me from Sao Paulo to Campo Grande (45'), from where I hired a car at the airport.

The pleasant 300km drive to Bonito passes endless fields of transgenic corn and green pastures farms for zebu cattle. A must for convenience, since you badly need a transport in Bonito to access all the sites, and not to depend on an agency for transportation. The little town is a tourist attraction for Brazilians, a self proclaimed ecotourism wonderland.

Everything is formatted for the 'bonafide' tourist mainly, not for the cave diver! Local agencies control the game and you cannot access anywhere without going thru an agent, who will eventually hand you a voucher for any activity you may think of...

'Serra da Bodoquena' is a weathered limestone plateau embracing both carbonatic and terrigenous rocks of the Corumba group (Ediacaran, Neoproterozoic III, 580 MA), located to the west of the towns of Bonito and Bodoquena. The sedimentary deposits followed a period when the planet was subject to intense glaciation. Afterwards, an ocean formed through separation of continental masses, formerly joined as Rodinia super-continent. The second chapter of geological history of the region happened 60 million years ago (Cenozoic) with the formation of caves. The Bodoquena Plateau slopes east with a 200m escarpment on the west side.

It is in fact a karst area extending 200km north-south, part of a plateau with an average elevation of

800m, that surrounds the lower plains of the Pantanal Mato Grosso Plain. Dominated by dolomites, the eastern sector of the Bodoquena karst exhibits a morphology of karst plains with residual hills and features such as dolines, caves, sinks and springs, as well as tufa deposits along the current fluvial drainage system.

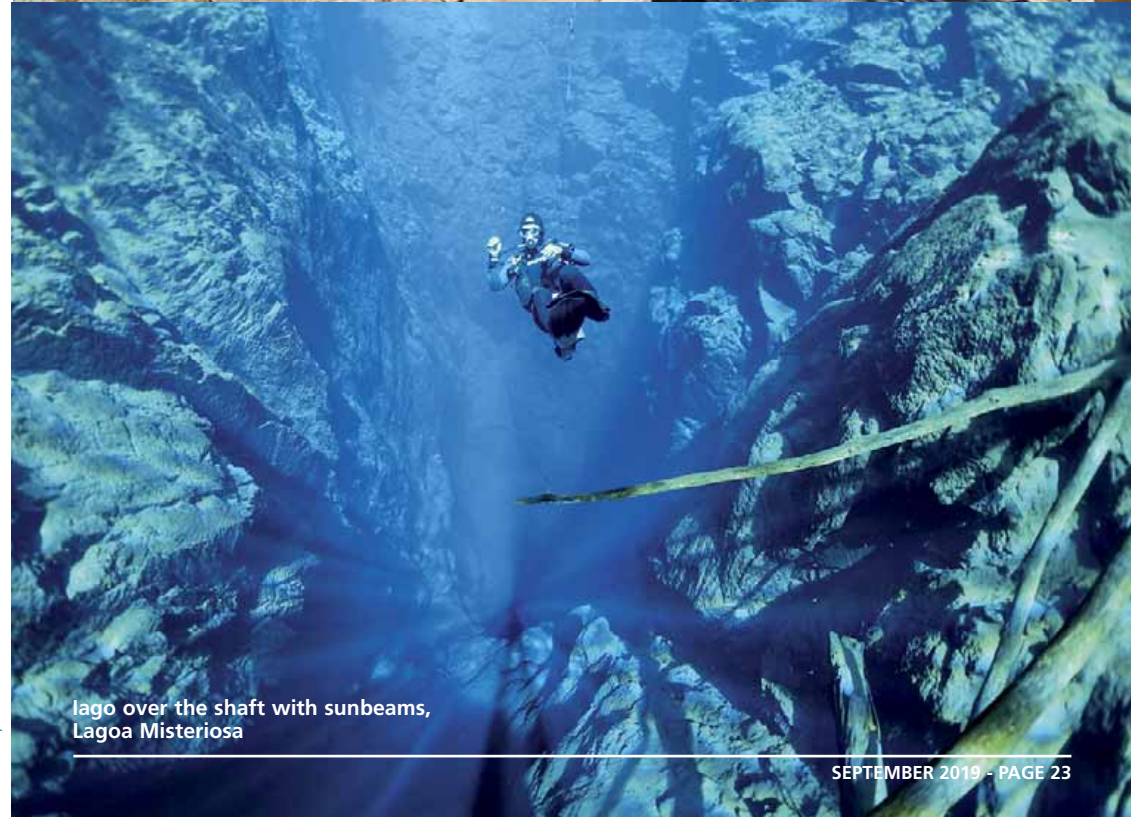
Covering an area of 77022 hectares, the 'Serra da Bodoquena National Park' was created on September 21, 2000 and is administered by the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation. It is part of the Pantanal Biosphere Reserve, classified as a IUCN protected area, with the aim of preserving natural ecosystems of great ecological importance, enabling scientific research, environmental education, ecotourism.



Toco toucan,
"Ramphastos toco",
Corumba



Before a dive in Rio da Prata



Lago over the shaft with sunbeams,
Lagoa Misteriosa



Blue, red and yellow macaw aras, Rio da Prata

Protected species include the Armored catfish "Ancistrus formoso" (troglitic Siluriformes), the jaguar "Panthera onca" and cougar "Puma concolor", among others. More than 200 caves have been identified in the region, all of them on private farm land or in the park and hard to get to.



View of Lagoa Misteriosa spring

Being the odd unwilling tourist - with no other way out - I booked a 400 R\$ tour to dive 'Lagoa Misteriosa'. Transportation cost not included, I was glad I had the car to drive the 51Km south of Bonito to 'Recanto Ecologico do Rio da Prata'. A bucolic landscape of farm lands, with Brahmini cows, 'gauchos' on their horse, and the ever presence of 'Urubu', alias Turkey vultures, swooping above. I handed my voucher, then was allowed to don my shorty for the dive. Part of a group of snorkelers, we were lead through the forest on a 400 metres trail, then down a wooden stairway to the sinkhole in emerald green colour. Iago, my 19 year old dive guide, spoke some English, although my speaking Spanish fluently was not a problem to communicate with Brazilians. Coming from a deep spring into a fracture, the water was at a balmy 25.4°C. There, the first dive ever was made by Augusto Euler, part of a "French-Brazilian Expedition" in 1992. Yet the deepest dive ever was undertaken in 1998, down to 220 metres. However, I was instructed that we

would not go deeper than 25m, a shame since I was promised by the agency that I could dive 40 metres. "But that is not the same price!" I was told abruptly later. Considering the fame of the site and the number of novices doing their 'Baptismo', this is a well oiled industry! The visibility is excellent with a deep blue colour underwater. Plenty of small fish, yellow with a black spot on the caudal tail, swim around my mask like pests! - known as 'lambari' in Brazil, "Astyanax sp.". "There are also 'Mussums' around or Marble swamp eels, "Synbranchus marmoratus" confirms Iago.

Lagoa Misteriosa is prone for creative photography with rays of sunlight filtering through water, old wooden logs underwater, Iago doing the UW model, as well as my assigned underwater photographer shooting me in every position! One positive comment about the experience, is that you can chose photos of your good self in the end, at no extra cost. Just bring a USB key.

Only fifteen minutes away is

'Buraco das Araras', which incurs a R\$78 entry fee (US\$20). This remarkable sinkhole in red sandstone is 160m across, 100m deep with a green water lagoon at the bottom, surrounded by trees and vegetation. Two 'jacare' (caiman) live there, prisoners of their own fate. There is no way down, but a trail in forest goes around the sinkhole, with two viewing platforms, one at both ends. The main draw here is a population of red and green macaw ara parrots, "Ara chloropterus" that dwell in the cliffs and in the trees, noisy for sure, but so entertaining and a beautiful sight in flight. The forest around is teeming with birds and I get the surprise of a striped owl resting on a branch, in the sunlight.

Back in Bonito, I checked with another agency and explained my dilemma: "But I came here to do cave diving!..." I enquired about the renown "Gruta do Lago Azul", definitely a place of wonder and enchantment, a large cave which had been dived before. "We'll see if we can get an authorization for you". As expected, it will be denied, being a site of archeological and paleontological research. "You may look for Edy Edmundo, 'Secretario do Meio Ambiente' (SEMA), he is an experienced cave diver here. That office is the Department of Environment. I waited patiently for half an hour, before he came out to meet me. He advised straight away to meet another cave diver, named Tuta, who could possibly arrange a dive at 'Gruta do Mimoso', actually closed for tourism. The man is not in town today, "Come back tomorrow again..."

Meanwhile, I decide to have a look at 'Abismo Anhumas' (Anhumas shaft), another famous cavern, 23Km to the south west, in the hills of Serra da Bodoquena. The red dirt road climbs into the dry 'Mato' (forest) and the last 100 metres are finished



Jacaré, alias caiman, Rio da Prata

on foot. The operation here consists of rappelling down 72m on a rope, through a narrow crack that opens into a huge cavern, with a lake at the bottom. The nearby sinkhole allows for peeping inside, from a viewing platform. One can have a glimpse of people sliding down or being pulled out with harness, helmet and the lot. A mere fee of R\$1517 (US\$400) is charged for the experience, should you decide to dive in the lake as well!!

A team of 6 guys is pulling people out on a rope, running a boardwalk 30-40 metres long. The whole ordeal is carried on with enthusiasm and a good sense of humour. A friendly guy named Fernando gives me the name of the owner, Juca, whom I should approach for further infos. The same evening, I meet Juca by chance on the street, the boss of Ygarape Tours and Bonito Scuba altogether. Two days later, I am back with my dive gear. Nonetheless, it is compulsory to go through the nec-



Waterfall 156m, Boca da Onca



Rappelling down in tandem, Abismo Anhumas

at the bottom of the lake. These were from the giant ground sloth "*Eremotherium laurillardi*" and from the Sabre tooth tiger, "*Smilodon populator*" (between 1,8MA and 11000 years ago). A second expedition in march 2015, led by researchers of the 'Museo da Historia Natural', with divers, photographers, journalists, filmmakers, went to a depth of 90m and with it came the discovery of fossils 12000 years old, at depth of 17m to 50m. Other caves in the region, such as 'Buraco do Japones', 'Nascente do Rio Formoso' and Fadas Cave, revealed Pleistocene carnivores fossils such as jaguar "*Panthera onca*", Pantanal cat "*Leopardus braccatus*", bear "*Arctotherium* sp.", as well as mastodons "*Stegomastodon* sp.", gomphotheres "*Notiomastodon platensis*", prehistoric armadillo or glyptodont (*Glyptodontinae*), tapir...

Nowadays led by a guide, the tourist trail takes you to the bottom of the 60m cliff and into the cavern, by a flight of cement stairs, down to the edge of the Blue Lake. The light being minimal, it is rather difficult to take photos of the lake in natural light, unless you push to 3200 ISO, with the use of the timer and the camera perfectly motionless!

Other dry caves can be visited around Bonito, on a tour, such as "Gruta de Sao Miguel" and "Gruta Sao Mateus", but have very limited interest in comparison to the amazing caves found in Australia.

Back to Bonito to pick up some lights, my aim was now the search for Fazenda Mimosa (Hacienda), where 'Gruta de Mimosa' should be located. Hard to

find, I end up at Estancia Mimosa. A helpful man shows me on the map a road junction on the way to Nascente Azul. Driving to the spot, I discover a hilltop crested with original forest. A dark 4x4 pick up is parked in the shade of some trees. "Gee, these farmers can help me for sure..." I thought. To my astonishment, these are divers, with scuba tanks! Addressing the big one in a dry suit, I reach out my hand: "May I know your name, by any chance?" "My name is Tuta" "Oh, what a coincidence, I was just looking for you!"



'Flutuação' at Nascente Azul



Upon arrival of the 72m rappel, Abismo Anhumas



Armored catfish "*Ancistrus* sp." (Loricariidae)



Aquatic plants, Nascente Azul

Explaining the reason for my presence, he points out his finger towards the cave. "Go have a look, then we'll have a chat..."

Tuta is indeed the new legal operator, who has free entry and permits to take divers into Gruta del Mimosa. He was busy putting lines and markers, with Bruno his assistant, for future underwater circuits, adapted to all levels of diving and cave diving. The greatest depth is reach at 40m+ in the 'Catacumba'. The site is not yet open for visitors, but should be at the end of 2019. "Send me a copy of your passport, TDI Full cave certification and DAN insurance, and we could plan it this week-end". Well, wasn't this providence at last?

The region of Bonito and Jardim is full of 'Nascentes', better known as springs in English. **Nascente Azul**, Nascente del Rio Formoso, Nascente da Ceita Corê, Nascente do Rio Sucuri, Nascente do Rio Olho d'Agua... all of which come from Serra da Bodoquena and from artesian water below. In those, the water comes out crystal clear and warm at 24°C on average, whereas river water on the surface is around 18°C. Colourful fish life is

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View of the open roof of Abismo Anhumas



Diver in sandwich between huge stalagmites,

plentiful at the 'nascentes' and favour an activity known as 'Flutuação', which Brazilian brochures translate as snorkeling. But it is not so and absolutely different! Signing in for the experience, -in the hope to take nice photos of the fish in fabulous visibility- I show up one morning at 'Nascente Azul', with mask, fins, snorkel and my underwater camera. "Sorry Sir, you cannot bring your fins..."

"May I know why?"
"Because it will disturb the bottom and you cannot skin dive".

I frown with displeasure, but the man adds on: "and you cannot bring the camera arms with the strobes... It will annoy other people and create delays". I do not understand, but will comply for the sake of peace. The small group, with family and kids, moves on along the trail to the departure point. Mid-way, we are told we have to collect equipment. "I do



Local guide showing the sketch map of Abismo Anhumas



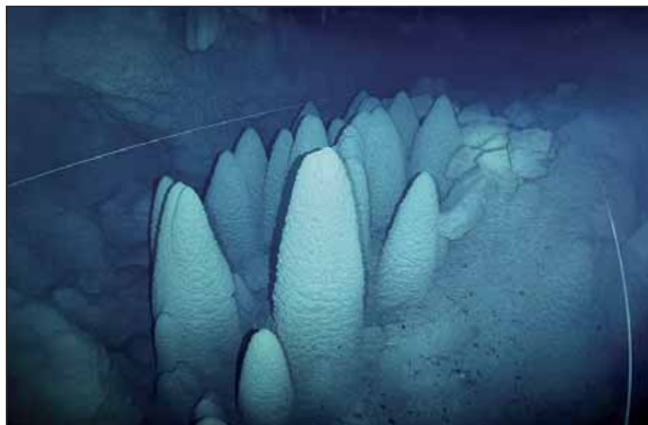
Blue lake, Gruta do Lago Azul



Cluster of cones with Tuta above, Gruta do Mimoso



Skeleton of a 'tamandua' (anteater), Abismo Anhumas



Alignment of cones between the lines



Tuta and Bruno, back from the dive, Gruta do Mimoso

not need the neoprene shorty!" "You have to, Sir, as well as the life jacket. This is the rule of the environmental law for conservation!!..."

By now, I am pretty upset about the whole circus. Once in the water, I feel like a floating tortoise, with the head down and the back curved up like a Champagne cork.

"You must move forward with your arms, do not use your legs!"

For Christ sake, how do they expect me to take decent photos of the fish, just like that? This is ridiculous, what a bad joke. Now you understand the principle of floatation.

'Ceita Corê' is another beautiful spring, on the farm of the same name. The hole, bubbling with gin clear water, connects to a subterranean chamber 6m deep and to a cave fracture that comes down to 155 metres. An enticing cave to dive, but this activity is sadly not on offer. "However, you may snorkel and skin dive to 5 metres, if you wish!"

Tuta has confirmed our diving at **Gruta do Mimoso** on Sunday; "Did you bring your Liability Release signed?", he enquires at once. I nod in agreement. We'll be diving twin tanks, 10 litres steel, backmount with manifold system. "First dive will be a loop around the main tunnel, following the U shape of the yellow line, maximum 18 metres depth, you'll lead", starts Tuta as to test me. No camera this time, only to get used to the cave features of the main chamber. It takes me 15 minutes to cover the circuit, visibility is fabulous, hardly any fish life except for small 'lambari', "Astyanax sp.". Tuta leads the second dive and I bring the camera along. After 5 minutes, a T-junction takes us left into the 'Salon of the Cones', the highlight of this dive. "Do not swim below the line,

always above the cones", Tuta had warned. A vision of a surreal Christmas tree forest in white colour appears in the beam of my torch. Simply breathtaking. The stalagmites are a few metres high and rather close to each other like a collection of rockets pointed towards the ceiling. Flying above, I notice some bulbous ones among the tapered cones. "When we take a right turn at the end of the align-

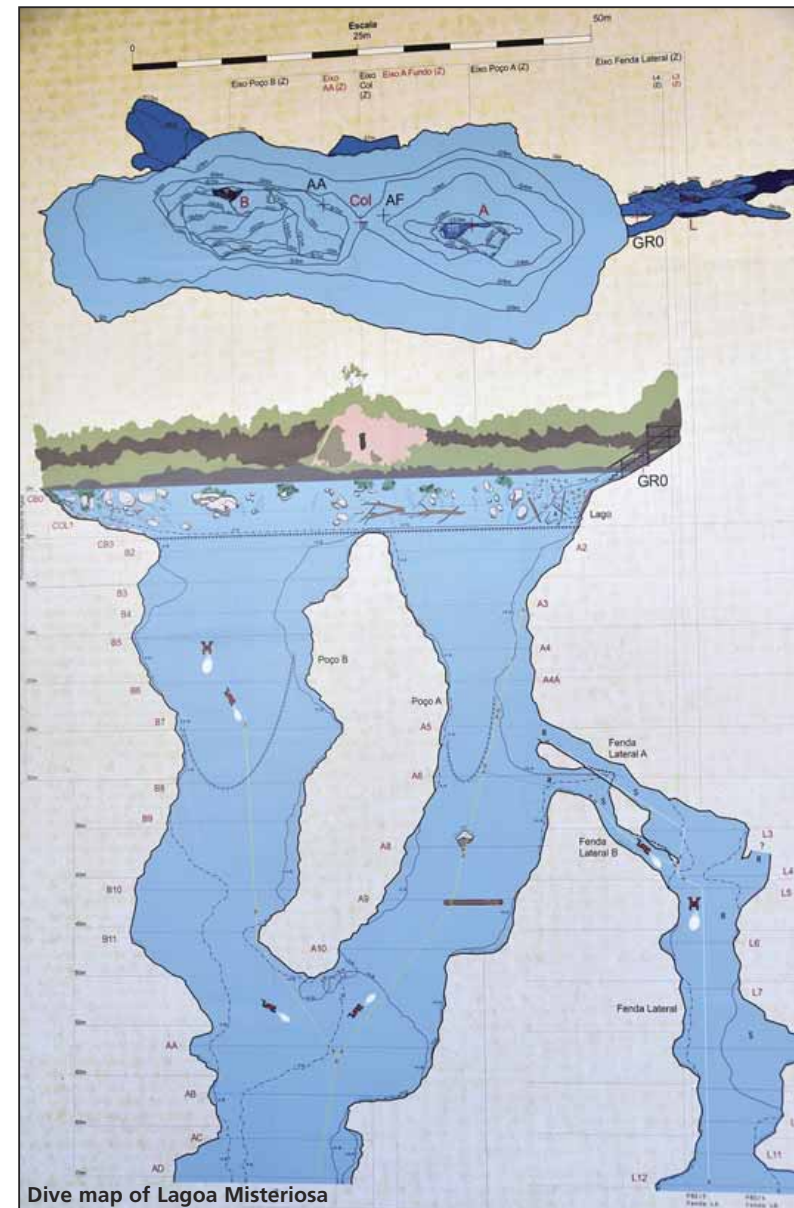
ment, you may come deeper to shoot from below... ", advised Tuta. The depth gauge now marks 26m, from the previous 22 metres. The tallest stalagmite could be close to 10 metres, reckons Tuta. Following the side of the chamber, we stop in front of a small passage, that is the 'Oratorio'. Further on the left, a side tunnel plunges into the 'Catacumba', at a depth of 40 metres +. Not the plan for today ... Back

into the main tunnel, we slowly rise to the 10 m level. Above us is a dry chamber, where we shall not surface.

"Back in 2003, a couple of Italian divers explored the cave. One came out of the water there and fainted after a few minutes... The oxygen level is only 10%. Fortunately, his friend brought him back into the water, where he could regain consciousness with his regulator", Tuta informed, dead serious. I emerge from the dive after 44 minutes, truly enchanted and thrilled by the cave. But there won't be another opportunity. "We still have a lot of work to do on the cave and we are just behind schedule..." , explains Tuta with a nod of the head.

Besides diving in rivers such as Rio Formoso or Rio da Prata, for the colourful fish life of 'Piraputanga'

...continued page 43



Dive map of Lagoa Misteriosa

Highs and Lows Cave Diving in Spain

Story and Photos by Peter Buzzacott

While steadying my two large wheeled cases of cave diving gear, the helpful woman at the car hire desk in Madrid airport cheerfully informed me that I'd been upgraded to a Mini Cooper. Sure, it wasn't as big as the car I'd pre-booked, but it was virtually brand new. And it was racing green. How could I refuse?

Using the GPS we found the apparently rare dive centre in central Madrid that rents 15L steel tanks with DIN valves, and set off north towards the mountains. Overtake, pull-in, overtake, pull-in... gee-whiz it was fabulous to be back in Europe. We stayed in a small village at altitude ~1km, with nowhere to purchase food so we made do with sandwiches constructed from odds-and-ends we'd

collected along the way, plus we shared a can of Spanish beer. It made for a yummy meal as the sun set in northern Spain. In the morning we headed to Covanera, another small village, but from here just 5-minutes to Pozo Azul cave. Pronounced "po-tho ath-ool", the cave is located in the Ebro Valley, at an altitude of around 700m. I hiked the gear up to the entry lake, a short way, maybe 300m, and felt a little

disappointed I had not been able to rent/borrow any aluminium stage tanks. I'd brought stage kits and regs and had been offered some help from the local cave diving community, but at the last minute I hadn't been able to walk away with stage tanks. I was upbeat about the situation but, really, I have been dreaming about diving the second sump for years, since meeting a few of the 2014 push team in south France on their way back from an historic 10 km penetration.

The first sump goes for 700m penetration, and not too deep, but deep enough that a solo diver should take a stage or two, just to be safe. Anyway, today I had two 15L Fabers, filled to the max (200 bar in Spain), and the sun was shining. Nothing would quell my buoyant mood this morning.



Racing green Mini Cooper can comfortably carry two passengers, 60 kgs of dive gear plus tanks

As I got the tanks ready and started dressing, a gaggle of old dears arrived. This was comical to my wife and I because the same thing has happened a couple of times at other cave dives. I joked quietly about being a grey-haired "chick magnet", donned my gear, assured my wife I would be back within 90 minutes, and headed down into the cave, running a primary. The entry itself is spectacular, being split in



Hiking the gear up to Pozo Azul



Arriving at the entry cave to dive Moraig



Peter about to go diving at Pozo Azul. Photo by Alexandr Ilbitskiy

half by a huge stone column. Divers can enter/exit around either side of it, it is quite remarkable. A short way inside the main line starts, so I T-ed in to that and clipped off the reel. The stream outside had been flowing with gusto but inside this huge corridor I could hardly detect flow at all. The walls were wonderfully sculpted into spectacular smooth



Collecting two 15L steel tanks in Madrid

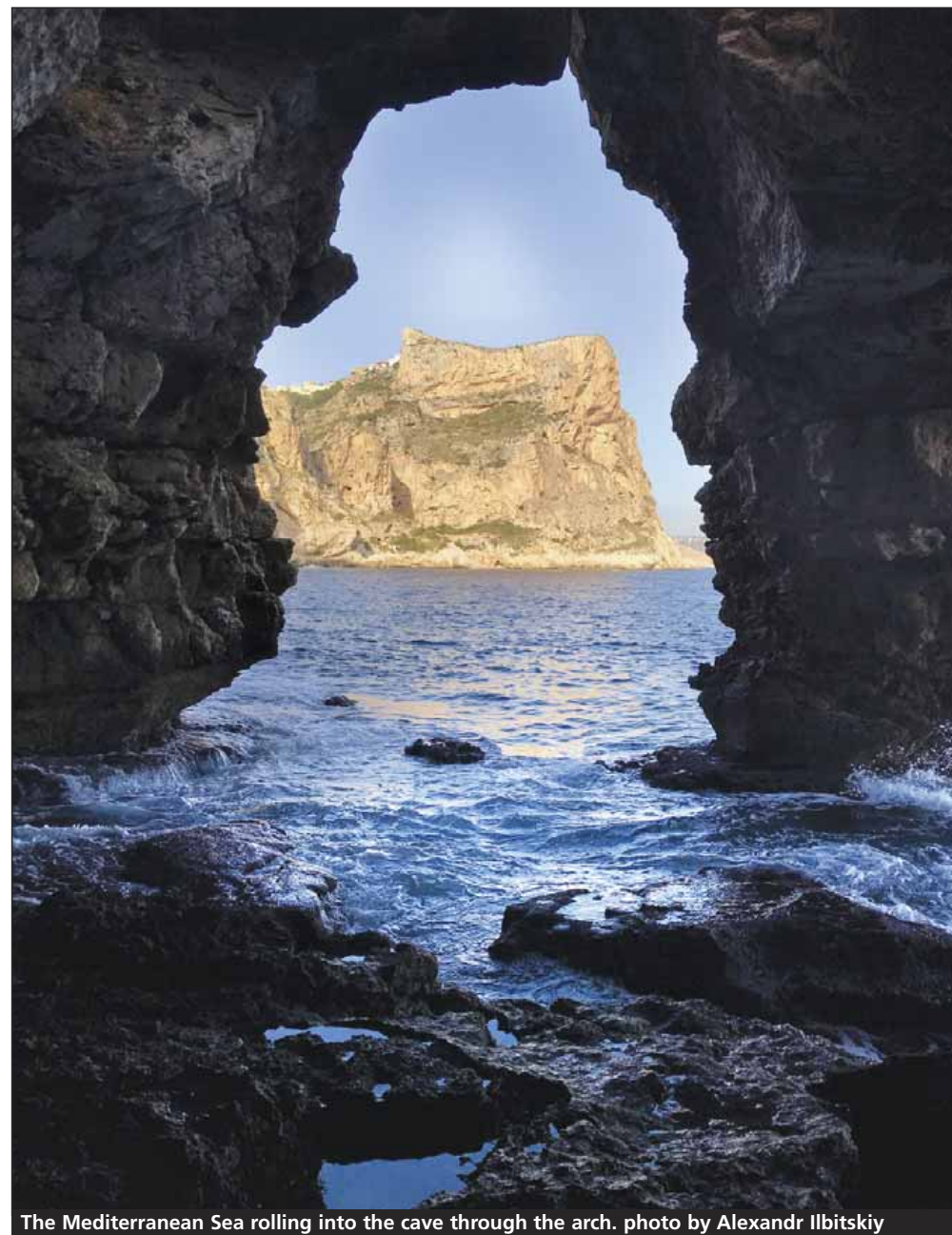
shapes by flowing water. Really, this is a beautiful cave. The rock is darker than, say, Nullarbor caves, but banding in the stone is still clearly visible. The initial few hundred meters are mainly tall "canyon-like" passages, where a diver can hover at 10-15m depth and look down to 15-20m at the swirls in the sediment in the floor, formed by eddies, as the flow is directed around a bend. Really, if you are into visually interesting flooded caves, this is a great dive. People have died in here so there were warning signs, near the entrance and also at the 50m arrow, where a vertical jump took me happily some way from the main line, through shallower and narrower winding passage, all featuring water-carved features in the walls. Unfortunately I'd had a bit of a flood around my throat. I think my hood snagged my neck seal when it put it on, so my chest was soaked and I was cold after 45 minutes. The water was 13°C but I'd read somewhere it might be 8°C so I was wearing dry gloves (probably the reason I got my neck seal fowled). I turned around some way after the 200m arrow on the main line and headed out, taking my sweet time. I'd had a wonderful hour in the first sump, and the second sump still awaits. I'll be back.



The gearing-up rock pool, with gear lines. photo by Alexandr Ilbitskiy

We re-packed the car and returned to Madrid to drop off the tanks, then drove four or five hours to the coast. We stayed overnight in a bright yellow hacienda beside the motorway, which served us well, then arrived the next day at our lodgings in the

mountains overlooking the rugged east coast. A FaceBoook pal, Alexandr, had offered to guide me into a fabulous cave at Moraig, with over 3 kms of mapped passage. He collected me the next morning in his van, gave me three aluminium tanks filled with



The Mediterranean Sea rolling into the cave through the arch. photo by Alexandr Ilbitskiy

nitrox, a weightbelt and a Suex scooter, and we started carrying the gear into a cave bordered to the east by an immense limestone arch in the sea. We stepped around a clean yellow boulder, probably about a ton in weight, that had fallen from the roof in the previous fortnight during torrential rain. In a rock pool at the back of the cave there were two 10mm ropes to clip gear to. Big waves crashed against the entry to this cavern but only a small surge made it over the rocks to the back of the cave, swirling around our feet as we carried the gear in. The noise made it feel more dramatic than it probably was, (although there were many tourists taking photographs so, in all likelihood, it probably did appear as dramatic as it felt).

Alexandr was wearing two Liberty sidemount rebreathers with two offboard bailout tanks and I was sidemounting two primary tanks, plus a stage, because the entry passage to this cave has apparently some distance where sidemounting is required, with occasional body re-orientation required en route (turning sideways to bend around corners, etc). I wasn't entirely sure whether this bit was going to be 20m or 200m, but Alexandr (who is another of my growing clutch of Ukrainian dive buddies) assured me there was no need to off-mount so I was happy to go with the flow, so to speak. One can overthink these things. After this, apparently the going is straight forward. We both had Suex scooters too, which we adore (loooove my Suex XK-1).

Once we were fully kitted out we descended and navigated the exit cave, a passage that leads out to sea. The dive turned a bit weird at this stage because Alexandr shimmered and then I lost sight of him. He was right in front of me one minute, then he vanished, then he reappeared once I caught up to him. I was checking gas, back-up lights, dive computers, making sure my regs all work, the usual stuff I do one last time as I depart for the cave, so I thought this was odd but put it down to a pycnocline, or maybe a thermocline, since the water was warmer below the apparition of him vanishing.



The arch that borders the shore at the mouth of the cave



Alexandr prepping our tanks

We scooted around the sea cliffs, to the right, and at one point (at 6-8m depth) we passed beneath a dead-end sea cave where the waves above were being focussed onto the back wall, in the classic way traditional sea caves are brutally formed. "BOOM...BOOM...BOOM..." the pressure waves reverberated through my whole body. I resolved not to surface here on the way back. After some way, possibly a couple of hundred metres, we entered another cave system, accessible only from the sea. As we scooted upstream once again Alexandr literally disappeared before my very eyes, while I was shining my primary light directly on him. It was the weirdest darned thing! I was looking directly at him when he shimmered and disappeared. I let some air out of my wing and drysuit, then moved the scooter to descend, but by the time I'd dropped four or five metres, he was gone. I started shouting through my reg "Hey... hey..." then eventually I surfaced inside a delightful air chamber, all rugged with sharp edges and torment-hewn shapes at every turn. I concentrated on staying in the middle of the room, while the

sea arose and fell around me, as I waited for Alexandr. He soon reappeared, but with unfortunate news. Since the recent flooding rains, the flow was too great to enter the main passage, where it is concentrated, even with the scooters on full thrust.

We redescended, scooted back to the entry cave and ascended through the picno- thermo- cline thing into the rock entry pool, while waves pounded the arch around us. My sincere thanks to my Madrid pals Belen and Oscar for helping me dive Pozo Azul and to Alexandr for his boundless generosity in getting me ready to dive Moraig. On the up side, now I have even more reason to return. Viva Espana!



Inside the ocean cave



Inside the ocean cave

CDAA SITE ACCESS - www.cavedivers.com.au

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BC = BASIC CAVE C = CAVE AC = ADVANCED CAVE











SITE	LEVEL	OWNER	ACCESS DETAILS
MT. GAMBIER - SA Ewens Ponds	Nil	DEW	Groups of 6 or more, phone DEWNR on (08) 8735 1177 for booking. Smaller groups, no need.
Gouldens	BC	DEW	<p><i>Book online: www.parks.sa.gov.au. Please note that these sites are listed under Piccaninnie Ponds Conservation Park on the website.</i></p> <p>Bookings must be made a minimum of 48 hours before the actual dive timeslot to allow for DEW to confirm your booking and details. You will receive a booking confirmation email once all indemnities have been received and CDAA qualifications verified. The DEW office in Mt Gambier is open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, 08 87351177 or you can email DEW.SEOnlineBookings@sa.gov.au</p>
The Sisters	BC	DEW	
Fossil	C		
Piccaninnie Ponds	BC	DEW	
Horse & Cart Tea Tree	BC BC	Dale & Heather Perkins Dale & Heather Perkins	Phone (08) 8738 4083 or email dhperkins@bigpond.com at least 24 hours in advance.
Little Blue	BC	District Council of Grant	Booking can be made by calling Victoria Hudson Mobile: 0439 558 700. Email: littleblue@cavedivers.com.au
Allendale	C	District Council of Grant	Booking can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au Obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Information Centre.
Ela Elap	BC	Dean & Carol Edwards	Obtain key from Management at Bellum Hotel.
One Tree	BC	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	BC	Forestry SA	Booking can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Show ForestrySA Permit to obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Ctr.
Pines	C/AC	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Cave Rated divers cannot enter Advanced Cave Section of Pines.
Mud Hole	C	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au
Nettle Bed	C	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Show ForestrySA Permit to obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Ctr.
Stinging Nettle Cave	AC	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Show ForestrySA Permit to obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Ctr.
Iddlebiddy	AC	Forestry SA	Bookings can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Show ForestrySA Permit to obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Ctr.
Kilsby Sinkhole	BC	Kilsby Family	Bookings can be made online at www.cavedivers.com.au Email: kilsby@cavedivers.com.au

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CN = CAVERN S = SINKHOLE C = CAVE AC = ADVANCED CAVE

SITE	LEVEL	OWNER	ACCESS DETAILS
MT. GAMBIER - SA (continued) The Shaft	BC/C	Trevor Ashby	Booking can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au . Landowner mandates Dive Supervisors (with their own Insurance) leading all dive trips.
Engelbrechts		Mt Gambier Council	Booking can be made online from www.cavedivers.com.au Obtain key from Lady Nelson Tourist Information Centre. Diving should be avoided after heavy rain due to possible water contamination. Diving hours are now restricted to 8am to 8pm CST.
- East - West	C AC	Lessee: Ph: 08 8723 5552 Owner:	
Three Sisters Access available for	AC	Wattle Range Council	Download Indemnity from www.cavedivers.com.au and email to council@wattlerange.sa.gov.au. A \$30 processing fee can be made over the phone on (08) 8733 0900 after Council has received your indemnity. Allow 4 wks for indemnities to be processed.
Tank Cave	AC	CDAA	Bookings can be made online at www.cavedivers.com.au Booking Officer is Noel Dillon Email: tankcave@cavedivers.com.au
Baker's Cave	C	Janet & Bruce Saffin	Bookings can be made online at www.cavedivers.com.au Booking Officer is Matthew Skinner. Email: bakerscave@cavedivers.com.au Climbing equipment required. One member must have previous dive experience at site.
NULLARBOR - WA			
Cocklebiddy	C/AC	WA Dept of Parks & W'Life	Apply in writing for permission to dive at least 4 weeks in advance of trip to:
Murra El Elevyn Tommy Grahams	C/AC C	WA Dept of Parks & W'Life WA Dept of Parks & W'Life	District Manager, PO Box 234, Esperance, W.A. 6450. Phone: (08) 9083 2100.
Burnabbie	AC	WA Department of Lands	Apply in writing or email for permission to dive at least four weeks in advance of trip.
Olwogin Cave	AC	WA Department of Lands	Miss Shannon Alford, E: Shannon.Alford@dph.wa.gov.au Department of Lands, Planning and Heritage, P.O. Box 1143, West Perth WA 6872. Phone: (08) 6552 4661 Fax: (08) 6552 4417
Weebubbie	S/C	WA Department of Lands	P.O. Box 1143, West Perth WA 6872. A site indemnity form must be filled out for each visit to the site. Form can be downloaded from the CDAA website. Diving permission acknowledged by official letter from Land Owner.
WELLINGTON CAVES - NSW			
Limekiln (McCavity) Cave	C/AC	Wellington Caves Management	Access coordinated by Greg Ryan Email: giryan@gmail.com Ph: (02) 9743 4157 Both Cave and Advanced Cave Level are being accepted for this site depending on its water level at the time. When entrance is under water, Advanced Cave Divers only!
Water (Anticline) cave	C	Wellington Caves Management	Access coordinated by Greg Ryan Email: giryan@gmail.com Ph: (02) 9743 4157 Affected by high CO ₂ levels during Summer/Autumn.

CDAА INSTRUCTORS

NAME	Basic Cave	Cave	Adv. Cave	NAME	Basic Cave	Cave	Adv. Cave
NEW SOUTH WALES				VICTORIA Continued			
 FEATONBY, Tim (CDAА 3327) Worworing Heights, NSW Mob: 0402 129 253 E: tim.featonby@hotmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 CLARIDGE, Linda (CDAА 2214) Mob: 0408 052 070 E: garinda@tpgi.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
SOUTH AUSTRALIA				 DALLA-ZUANNA, John (CDAА 236) Mob: 0407 887 060 E: jdz@paintandcustom.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
 MAIN, Robert (CDAА 4909) Mob: 0411 519 825 E: rob@reef2ridge.com	Yes	Yes		 EDWARDS, Chris (CDAА 2247) Mob: 0417 116 372 Email: chrisedwards01@me.com	Yes		
 PAYNE, Timothy (CDAА 2640) Mob: 0448 147 927 E: Tim@diveessentials.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 MONACO, Rubens (CDAА 1731) Mob: 0413 429 533 E: info@idcscuba.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
VICTORIA				WESTERN AUSTRALIA			
 ALLEN, Terri (CDAА 3483) Mob: 0419 176 633 E: terri.allen@monash.edu	Yes	Yes	Yes	 BICANIC, Josip (CDAА 4691) Mob: 0412 571 779 Email: joseph_b@me.com	Yes	Yes	
 BARCLAY, Gary (CDAА 1735) Mob: 0407 527 921 E: garinda@bigpond.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 PAYNTER, Geoff (CDAА 3784) Mob: 0407 445 112 E: gpaynter60@bigpond.com	Yes	Yes	Yes
 BOWMAN, Jane (CDAА 1880) Mob: 0407 566 455 E: janelbowman@hotmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes				



Sinkhole of Abismo Anhumas



Pierre before a dive at Gruta do Mimoso



Fried Piranha specialty dish, Corumba

...continued from page 33

"Brycon hilarii", 'Dourado' "Salminus brasiliensis" and 'Curimbata' "Prochilodus lineatus",

there are a number of excursions available for those who like 'Trilhas', ie to walk. A well recommended one is proposed by Fazenda Boca da Onca, where a two hours tour in the forest takes you first to a platform, where you can rappel down 90 metres to the riverbed of the Rio Salobra. The trail then passes through the forest to 8 amazing 'Cachoeiras' (waterfalls) in a very lush natural environment. The tallest fall is no less than 156m.

Bonito is an experience of a different kind, definitely Brazilian style.... To be perfectly honest, the current restrictions on cave diving left me a bit puzzled and frustrated, knowing that there is so much underground yet to discover.

But as Tuta rightfully concluded:
"Blame it on the Brazilian bureaucracy!...."
Pierre Constant. www.calaolifestyle.com



Tuta entering the 'Salon of the Cones', Gruta do Mimoso