

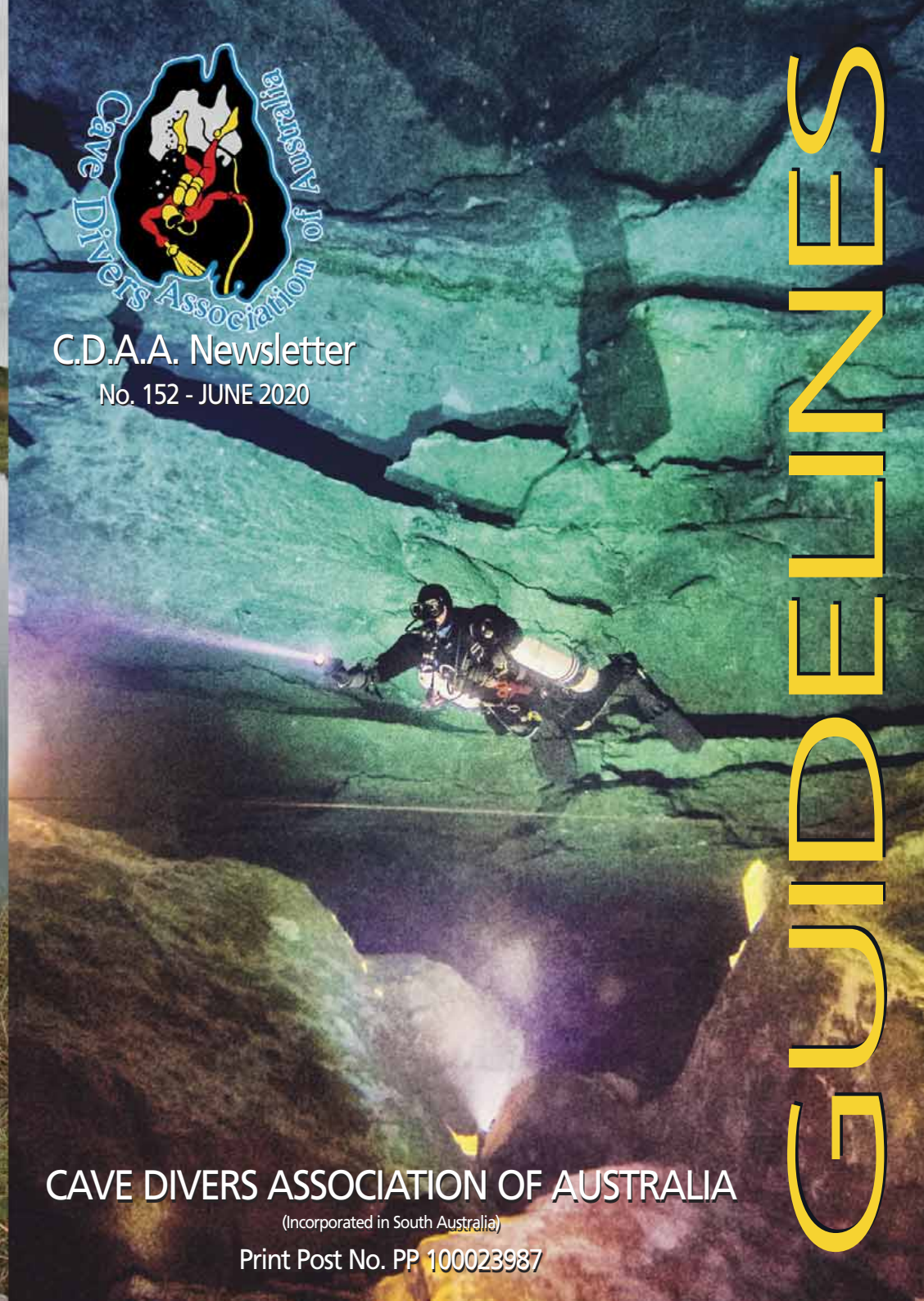


Photo by Neil Vincent. Diver in the water is Mark Jobbins, diver stepping in is Sue Burnett.



C.D.A.A. Newsletter

No. 152 - JUNE 2020



CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

(Incorporated in South Australia)

Print Post No. PP 100023987

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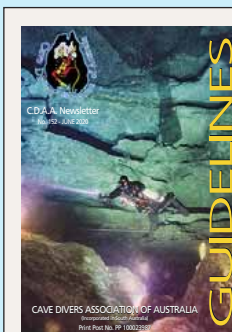


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Cover:
Andrea Russo
inside the CCR
(Crazy Czech
Room) of The
Pines Cave.

Photo by
Stewart Donn

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

ABN 65 062 259 956

P.O. BOX 544, Mt Gambier, SA 5291

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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CDAA INSURANCE

Web Site PDF: <http://www.cavedivers.com.au/public-documents>

Policy Type: Affinity Combined General & Products Liability Policy - LIU-CAS-AEAL-14-01
Insurer: Affinity Insurance Brokers Level 1, 1265 Nepean Highway, Cheltenham. VIC 3912.
Underwritten by Liberty International Underwriters ABN: 61 086 083 605.
Incorporated in Massachusetts, USA.

Name Insured: Cave Divers Association of Australia Inc. Policy# 441680
Public Liability: \$20,000,000 any one claim. Expiry: 30th September 2020.

Pine Tank Lodge

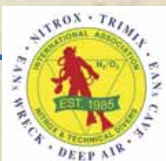


Photo by Liz Rogers

Just 5 minutes drive from the best Cave & Advanced Cave dive sites.

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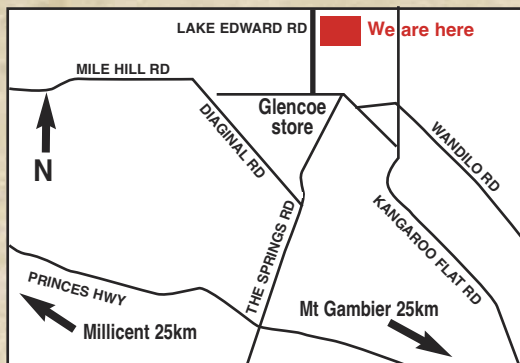
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- Shearwater Computers full range and best prices.
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- Fill whips, digital gauges.
- Light Monkey full range
- Spools & Reels.



Pine Tank Dive Lodge AquiferTec Australasia

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PUBLICATIONS REPORT

MEGGAN ANDERSON



Dear members

It's crazy how much has changed since last issue's report (in that issue I was harping on about overseas visitor permits, well that has pretty much come to a standstill). Due to the forced downturn in activity, my priority the last few months has been to keep the association connected and engaged with members. Thank you to those who have engaged in our Facebook posts and for the positive feedback. I hope it has been as good for your mental health as it has been for mine, trying to come up with ideas for content got me through a rough patch of social isolation. If you aren't on social media (sometimes a smart move in my opinion) but also want to know about the various cave diving related activities you can do while not being able to dive, then please send me an email and I will compile a document with links for you.

June is usually a busy month in our records space, as it is when renewals are due. I want to thank the Records Officer Brendan Moore, who is working hard to process these. There are often glitches that happen (and we may have to call upon our IT whiz Rowan!) and it is a super busy time, so I ask that you please bear with us if something goes wrong. I also want to thank all of you who are renewing and continue to support the association. If you have any questions about renewals, please feel free to get in direct contact with us at records@cavedivers.com.au I sometimes see rants on Facebook around renewal time, (factcheck: back fees no longer exist) where if they had simply emailed the question, the correct information and resolution would have been provided.

It was really important to me that we attempted to produce a bumper issue of Guidelines for June because of the current climate. I want to thank all who contributed to this issue so that we could make it happen. I also want to thank our advertisers, a lot who have been impacted by COVID19 but are still supporting us for this issue, it means a lot. Some have paused but have pledged their support for future issues. Please support our advertisers, producing Guidelines can be costly, so they are helping us to keep it going. Big thank you also to Dave, who has been so good at managing our advertisers for so many years.

I hope when I write to you again in September we would have continued to ease restrictions and be closer to everyone getting back in the caves. Please watch out for email communications as things often change at the drop of a hat.

Until next time, stay healthy and stay safe!

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

Articles for Guidelines Sept. 2020 - Deadline is Aug 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

JUNE 2020

Hi members,
Hope you are all hanging in there. What a challenging time the past three months have been for everyone. At the time of writing it looks like some of the COVID-19 restrictions are finally easing in some states, including SA and WA. It won't be long until some of our members can once again go diving in some of our fantastic caves, albeit with some additional measures in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of our members, and communities who support us.

Surprisingly, the temporary cessation of diving hasn't really slowed things down on the administrative front. However, instead of the typical day-to-day stuff to do with diving, we've been able to shift our focus more towards some of the other (equally important) things that had (unfortunately) been put on the back-burner.

It brings me great pleasure to say that we have finally been able to secure the purchase of Ground Penetrating Radar equipment and honour the wishes of past member, Peter Naujoks, who generously gifted the CDAA with the bequest that allowed this to happen. This equipment opens up a broad range of new research opportunities for the CDAA and will help us learn more about some of our existing cave diving sites, as well as aid with the location and exploration of new cave.

In choosing a suitable GPR unit there was much to consider. What did we want to achieve? Where would it be most useful? What were its limitations? How much training does it require to use? How much ongoing maintenance is required? The list of questions was extensive.

In the end the GPR of choice was a Mala GX80 HDR. It's a fantastic unit and ultimately ticked a lot of the boxes we were looking for. When it came to choosing the appropriate unit, much of the ground work (excuse the pun) was done by CDAA member Mark Simpson. I would like to thank Mark for the time and effort he put into researching different units, and the enthusiasm

and persistence he has shown to see this through to fruition!

I would also like to give a massive shout-out to Bill Barber from Mala Australia - most of all for his patience! From initial enquiry, to finally making a purchase, (which has taken a while!) Bill has been generous with his time, willing to answer all our questions, discuss the pros and cons of different equipment and explore our available options, and make sure we were able to work within our available budget.

By now I know that many of our members have heard about an incident that occurred at Tank Cave in late March, which required the emergency resuscitation of one of our members. Thankfully the member involved has made a full recovery and I'm happy to say is looking forward to getting back in the water. On behalf of the cave diving community I would like to thank everyone that was on site that day for leaping into action, and for the manner you went about providing such an effective emergency response. It is because of your actions that this incident had a happy ending.

In the aim of continuous improvement, we seek to learn from such events, so I would also like to thank the member involved, and those who provided assistance, for sharing accounts of what transpired and providing consent to publish an incident report in a future edition of Guidelines.

In the nearly three years I have been the National Director there have been four occasions that the CDAA and/or its members have had to initiate a larger-scale emergency response. These have been primarily for medical emergencies or missing/overdue divers. Thankfully, all had positive outcomes. Such incidents provide us with a stark reminder that irrespective of how proficient or experienced we may be as divers, it only takes a small lapse of judgement or moment of complacency, an "off day" so-to-speak, for things to go South very quickly. The CDAA's excellent safety record and demonstrated ability of our members

to recognise and respond to emergency situations is a testament to the high level of training the CDAA provides and the efficacy of the site access and emergency protocols we have in place. It is also why the CDAA has dedicated SAR Officers - Phillip Croker and Richard Harris, whose expertise we can draw upon when the need arises.

In closing out this Director's report, I'd like to extend my deepest appreciation to the members, landowners and their representatives, for your patience and continued support. The COVID-19 situation has brought upon us all some unprecedented challenges and hardships. No doubt there are many small businesses that rely on tourism and travel, particularly in those rural areas - the places we go cave diving - that are suffering. Once the restrictions have eased, and we can resume travel and diving activities, I encourage all

members who are able to, to get out there so we can do our bit to support the services, businesses and communities who have supported us for so many years.

Warmest regards to you all.

Peter Wolf

CDAA National Director

*On behalf of the
National Committee*



Mary-Anne Mcleod,
Business Director



Kelyvn Ball,
Site Director



Joseph Monks,
Standards Director



Meggan Anderson,
Publications and
Records Director



I hope everyone has stayed safe in this uncertain time with COVID19, creating a whole new lifestyle for most. As a farmer, I am very grateful and lucky that my workplace has not had to change much but understand how challenging things have been for others.

Not a lot has happened with Sites since the last report but as a Committee we have been very busy still sorting out other time consuming issues.

I am currently working with the Landowners to see who is happy to open and who is not and what precautions need to be put in place.

At the time of writing my report, The Shaft, One Tree, Allendale, Engelbrechts East and West and Kilsby's will remain closed at the request of the Landowners. Tank Cave will be open for weekend bookings of up to maximum of 6 divers. State social distancing rules to be followed at all times. I have not received any information for WA sites as yet.

Little Blue, Forestry and DEW sites will be open but divers must obey the regulations put in place by the government social distancing laws. Any other sites not listed in this report are still works in progress and I will update

when they become available.

This is only a guide as the nature of this pandemic changes very quickly and hence divers will need to keep an eye out for updates on the websites, emails and FB posts for current information.

Divers in all states must follow their travel restriction regulations and it is solely their responsibility to know what those restrictions are.

On another note, we are looking for nominations for State Representative positions for NSW and ACT. Anyone interested please contact me.

Also wanting to start a group of people (possibly a group of max 6) to help with maintenance of some sites including Tank Cave. Anyone interested in joining me some weekends please contact me.

Safe travels to those that can and even safer diving to those that are lucky enough to enjoy!

Catch you in the next quarter!!

Cheers Kelyvn Ball – Site Director



Hello Team,
I hope everyone is staying safe in these uncertain times. It has been very quiet on the teaching side of things for the CDAA due to the current government-imposed restrictions. As a result, there is not too much to report on in this regard, but the National Committee has been working in the background to ensure the CDAA is in the best place it possibly could be at this time.

I have a very important issue that I need to highlight for everyone in this forum today. This issue involves dealings with our highly valued and respected landowners. We want to make it very clear that abuse toward the people involved with taking bookings will not be tolerated. The CDAA places great trust in its members and it is expected that you will all act accordingly. We want you to treat landowners/ bookings officers in the very same manner that you would like to be treated yourself, with dignity and respect. When these simple expectations are not followed, the impact is felt by the entire association.

It was not too long ago that we had dealings with an Instructor who took it upon himself to treat people within the CDAA and people from outside agencies with great disrespect, this person chose to use inappropriate language and an aggressive tone of voice when speaking to a land agent and unfortunately this impacted the CDAA, Land Management and our members in a negative way.

This was not an isolated event- this person went on to harass other Instructors and intentionally caused a great deal of unrest among the CDAA membership by making inflammatory statements posted on public forums. This person was obviously aware that the National Committee members are bound to protect personal information and correspondence by the constitution and therefore were not able to dispel these mistruths at the time.

I am happy to report that this particular Instructor has left the association, and while we will be managing the fallout from their very damaging public comments for some time to come, I believe that the association is now well positioned to move forward from this. Rest assured that this person was given every opportunity to participate in resolving the situation however they chose to resign from the CDAA and seek an independent course of action.

So please, I ask of you all- if you have any questions or concerns or need something interpreted, then ask the National Committee. You can be assured that you will receive accurate information in accordance with the regulations and constitution. It is disappointing that the CDAA has been abused and negatively impacted to a great extent, let's work toward protecting this fantastic organisation and everything it stands for.

One last note on this topic, you may not realise but there is a huge amount of work for the National Committee and other people involved by way of gathering the required information for these types of investigations. There is no personal gain on the part of the person reporting the misdemeanour, they are simply aiming to do their part in protecting the sport. In the future we would like to see members placing their trust in the National Committee to complete investigations in an unbiased manner, in line with our regulations. I will finish this discussion with a reminder that your actions can have consequences, so please keep it in the back of your mind to always think about the impact these actions may have on others and/or the association.

On a final note, we will be including information in the Regulations and Training Standards regarding fossils and their treatment. This information gathering has been in collaboration with subject matter experts in the field

and external agencies. We all have an obligation to protect these important remains. We are not allowed to remove or tamper with fossils for ANY reason, there are laws protecting them and anyone who feels that they are above these laws may face criminal action. I would like to end on a very positive note by letting you all know that Tim Payne has been

working closely with the Instructor body to bring the material included in the training slides up to date.

Dive safe and within the standards.

Joseph Monks #4653
Standards Director



The June quarter certainly has been an interesting one, but one I hope we do not see again, with the risk of COVID-19 leading us to close the CDAA-Rated Cave sites and a pause on courses.

During the hiatus, our Products Officer has done some fantastic work with our product portfolio, introducing some new items and sourcing a new supplier who we hope to be working with for a long time. As part of this new model Victoria will co-ordinate with members for periodic bulk orders, along with merchandise continuing to be available for purchase at the AGM symposium, Oztek and other such events.

As the financial year end approaches, I have been reviewing the YTD results to assess the likely impact of COVID-19 for full year. As we would expect, revenue will be down on budget but I anticipate this will be offset with a reduction in discretionary spend. The full year results and 2021 Budget will be available prior to the AGM – I encourage you to read these and I'm happy to answer any questions!

The AGM and Symposium will be held on Saturday 24th October in Mount Gambier. Based on the current State and Federal roadmaps, it looks like we can go ahead with the event. Alternative options will be investigated as a backup only, in case state borders are not opened in time, or social distancing rules

that might apply make it unviable. However international travel is not looking as positive at this time. In light of this we will plan for domestic and possibly New Zealand speakers only, but with our calibre of divers, explorers and other dive related professionals it will be a success! Due to the uncertainty, speakers are not yet confirmed, but following recent relaxation of restrictions we are ready to go now. We do already have some volunteers, if you have any further recommendations or ideas please let me know.

AGM time also means voting time. There are 2 National Committee positions up for nomination: Standards Director and Business Director. Please refer to the Notice of the AGM for further details. Hall of Fame nominations are to be submitted to myself, Business Director, by June 30th along with a supporting statement (Refer section 5 of the Constitution). Life Memberships nominations are to be submitted to the National Committee by June 30th (Refer section 4.1.2 of the Constitution). Voting will again be conducted by Electronic Voting this year, with further details to provided closer to the time.

Mary-Anne McLeod #5011
Business Director

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

Notice of 2020 Annual General Meeting, Election of National Committee Members and Voting for Member Motions & 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, 24 October, 2020 at the Main Corner Complex – City Hall, Mt. Gambier, SA.**

The Annual General Meeting will commence at 11:00am and will conclude no later than 12:00pm.

This notice also serves to call for:

- *Nominations for Standards Director and Business Director
- *Member motions
- *Amendments to the Constitution

NOMINATIONS

The Returning Officer must receive nominations for the National Committee positions no later than the close of business Friday, 24 July, 2020.

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

MOTIONS & AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Business Director must receive member motions and proposals for amendments to the Constitution no later than close of business Friday, 24 July, 2020.

Mail to: Mary-Anne McLeod, CDAA Business Director – PO Box 544, Mount Gambier SA, 5291

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

ELECTION CRITERIA

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.

POLLING

The polling date close for the election (if required) is Friday, 16 October, 2020.

The election of National Committee members and voting on amendments to the Constitution will be conducted entirely by electronic ballot.

Voting will be conducted via an electronic ballot according to instructions to be sent via email to members. To be eligible to vote you must be a current member of the Association.

The electronic ballot must be completed by close of business, Friday, 16 October 2020 for management of the Returning Officer (Darren Walters #3555)

Detailed voting information will be provided via email and in the next issue of Guidelines.

Questions may be directed to Darren Walters, Returning Officer at returningofficer@cavedivers.com.au or Mary-Anne McLeod, Business Director at business@cavedivers.com.au

Please note that Australia Post quote 2-6 days for standard delivery from capital cities to Mount Gambier.

Detailed voting information will be provided with the ballot papers.

Questions may be directed to the Returning Officer at returningofficer@cavedivers.com.au

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Niggly Cave (Tasmania), December Push Dive – The Bin Chicken Haven

By Stephen Fordyce

Party: Ben Armstrong, David Butler, Stephen Fordyce, Alan Jackson, Gabriel Kinzler, Martyna Michalska

It seems like the rest of the December 2019 Niggly trip has been covered in other reports (with the possible exception of a Gabriel-led survey/sketch attempt of the Pissior Streamway). Here is my account of the 12-odd hours I spent on the dive push, on the auspicious day of Friday the 13th.

This was a much-anticipated dive – having been on the cards since the discovery of a bypass to the Business Class Lounge on the Niggly/Growling Swallet connection trip in May 2019. Our previous attempt at the dive was aborted due to high water levels, and hopes were high of some epic discoveries beyond Bossland.

The dive gave the opportunity to extend the upstream reaches of Niggly, which was making a beeline for a point where Living Fossils in Growling Swallet, and the downstream end of Porcupine might conceivably come together. The distance to this point was a potentially achievable 500m.

Getting Back to Bossland

Thursday afternoon I had spent prepping and setting up all the dive gear at the DIY Sump, so minimal faffing was required and maximum time could be spent pushing the cave on Friday. After some contemplation, I did the push dive in a wetsuit towing a caving bag containing food, a water bladder (for the likely possibility I would be overheating up in a dry rockpile), dry survey kit in a drytube and a length of rope – all under the assumption the cave would go dry. Turns out I was right, and all the items were put to good use!

I left camp about 9am and started to make the now familiar dive through the DIY Sump (sump 1). My dive computer records the DIY Sump dive

start time at 10:46am – I'm a bit shocked that I faffed for that long, but maybe 9am is incorrect... However the DIY Sump guideline was broken near the start, and being a little sceptical of the thin white line under JF conditions, I replaced all of it with 3mm orange line from my primary push reel, hoping I wouldn't regret this later (I had about 500m of guideline for the push, optimistic even by my standards).



A full reel and beckoning tunnel

The traverse up and over the short dry section to the Lateral Hire Sump (sump 2), then through the Bossland streamway passage were straightforward although time-consuming with taking kit off and transporting it in pieces for each dry section. Eventually, I began my Bossland Sump (sump 3) dive at about midday – doesn't time fly, etc.

The Push Dive

The Bossland Sump turned out to be short, with a surveyed length of 25m, and shallow (my dive computer did not register the depth), low but open and fairly clean, with no serious restrictions. A short section of knee deep streamway passage was negotiated (with tanks off) and another dive encountered – I submerged here at 12:40pm. This 4th sump was similar in character but a little more serious, with a surveyed length of 60m, and a maximum depth of 3.7m. A good sized airbell with a large rock fallen out of the ceiling in the middle broke up the dive, and also provided a moderate restriction/line trap to negotiate on the far side. This was later named the "Bin Juice Sump" (sump 4).

Surfacing from the Bin Juice Sump, I was in large streamway passage with shallow water flowing over gentle rapids – it seemed that the sumps were over, at least for now. The passage was clean, square, without breakdown, and the roof sloped up to give impressive proportions of 5m x 5m. But all too soon (60m from the dive line tie-off), the lovely passage ended in mud-encrusted rockpile with the stream squirting through the base of it. The rest of the days pushing efforts



Gear on and gear off and much linework was required



The visibility was 3-5m – it was enough to find the way on

would be spent crawling through mud and squalor.

In honour of the Ibis Song ("A Song About Birds" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mO-OpFjHRbE>) which has been a recurring theme for Niggly trips, I named this remote and squalid place the "Bin Chicken Haven". Maybe it's a better alternative for the Ibis than migrating to the giant garbage patch in the Pacific as the song suggests.

The Bin Chicken Haven

I dumped dive gear and reconfigured for dry caving. It was to be an afternoon of overheating in my wetsuit, with occasional interludes of frenzied activity, frustrated swearing, and eyeing of questionable leads.

The base of the rockpile had the stream coming out in multiple places, which immediately put me off. I had a couple of looks at the start and end of the day, but it didn't look promising. Above the rockpile was a large upward-sloping void, which could be accessed by carefully kicking steps in steep mudbanks, giving access to the only leads on the eastern side of the rockpile. These, and the upward sloping leads, much like the Business Class Lounge, these got smaller and smaller until choking out in mud.



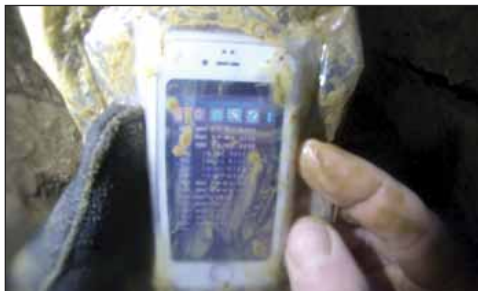
The stream emerging from the base of the Bin Chicken Haven rockpile



The Bin Juice Sump airbell



Reel 1 was satisfyingly emptied (re-lining the DIY Sump helped though)



Mini phone, major pain

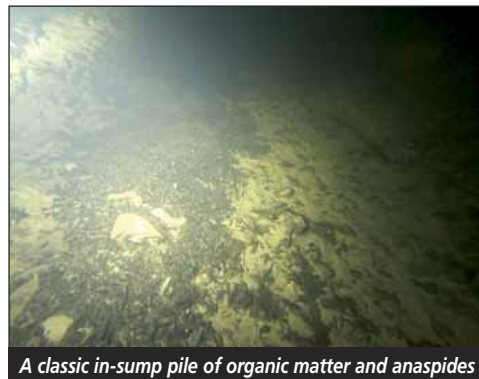


Discarded push diving gear, and the bag of dry caving equipment

I retreated a little, and found a flood bypass passage on the western side, perhaps 5-10m above water level and following a solid west wall. With some clean washed rocks, and dimensions big enough to crawl and wriggle through, this seemed promising, and indeed went for what felt like a long way but was surveyed to be a mere 60m. This main lead ended just as excitement was building – in a dead end, with the water path seeming to be from a slot above. In two places near the end, what might have been a void was seen up through small cracks, but these were at least 80cm away, through some large rocks that didn't have any obvious chance of moving. Giving up on this lead, I got out the dry survey kit and started surveying back, and checked a few other leads going up. Station "BLX5" was labelled with tape, and above this was an annoying climb leading to a pinching nothing lead. I was glad of the rope, which I used to get down (retrieve via a short sacrificial section of a knot wedged in a crack, with a loop the other end). Having the forethought to bring a knife to cut it was useful too. This lead is not worth revisiting! I don't remember much of the up lead at BLB16, but that probably just means it wasn't very exciting.

Surveying back, and the return

I was prepared, with a DistoX and miniature phone in a drytube, to do a proper dry survey, and mentally prepared for it to take a while. Lumping bag, wearing wetsuit and juggling instruments through the squirmy bits took some time, but the job was done. I'd put pre-labelled markers on each end of the dive lines to tie the wet/dry surveys into and that went well. The



A classic in-sump pile of organic matter and anaspidae

decision to vacuum seal the phone since it was too small to fit any waterproof case was... questionable, as it made for a tendency for buttons to automatically press themselves – next time, less vacuum! Shear bloody-mindedness got me through that, and the survey gear was painstakingly removed and replaced in the drytube 3 times. I re-did the survey of Bossland and found it disturbingly similar to my previously estimated version.

It was a slow process getting out – each dry section required removal of dive kit, multiple portaging trips and a surveying trip. I put my tanks on and took them off 8 times that day! The first return dive (through the Bin Juice Sump) began at 7:31pm, and the final return dive (through the DIY sump) began at 10:08pm. Enough motivation was left to break down the dive gear and pack it into caving bags at the sump, before heading back to camp in my wetsuit to arrive just before midnight.

Survey Results

About 265m of new cave was added, and about 80m of Bossland was surveyed properly. The new cave was very straight, still beelining for the projected junction with Living Fossils, but alas still a fair way away. As things currently sit, it's 350m to the projected junction, and 580m to the nearest point of Living Fossils.

If anyone ever goes back...

Another dive attempt hasn't been completely written off, but at least for the moment, it seems like the effort required is better spent elsewhere (ie. Pushing from the



A classic JF current against gravity slope. Loose gravel at angle of repose on the floor, roof steps on the ceiling. Fortunately at this point, there seems to be enough flow to

Living Fossils side). A second set of eyes, or at least a second look may be all it takes to make a breakthrough – just like in the Business Class Lounge.

I have plenty of archived GoPro footage of the day, and some of the leads. Ask me for it. Regarding the Bin Chicken Haven:

- In general, my feel is that the top levels are choked with mud, and if there is a way through, it's low enough to be kept clear by normal or flood water.

- Double check and do some hard squeezing at the base of the rockpile where the stream comes out. This worked in the Business Class Lounge.

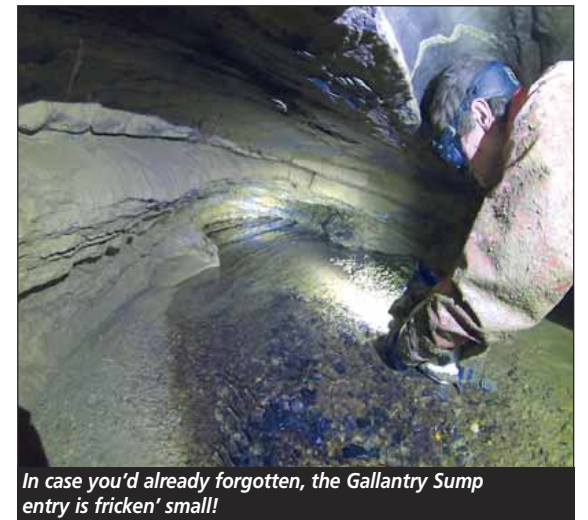
- Maybe try harder to get back down to stream level in the rockpile.

- I felt like I did a reasonably exhaustive check for leads, but perhaps less so in the downwards direction, where the stream emerges from the rockpile, and in the initial section of crawlway in the rockpile.

Dive data

This might be useful for anyone else looking to visit the Bin Chicken Haven

- **Exposure protection:** 7mm Seatec Semi-Dry, 7mm hood, 5mm wetsuit gloves, 5mm wetsuit boots over wetsuit socks and explorer socks. Coldest place (predictably) was the deepest - the bottom of the DIY sump. I barely felt the cold in the shallows, and had to frequently stop to cool off while pushing dry leads.



In case you'd already forgotten, the Gallantry Sump entry is fricken' small!

- **Weights:** weightbelt with 6x weights (~1.3kg each), rigging kit on each cylinder with 4x weights (~1.3kg each)

- **Gas pressures:**

- (Using 2x 9L carbon fibre cylinders)
- Start: 245bar/205bar
- @Business Class Lounge: 190bar/205bar
- @Bossland: 195bar(?!)/200bar
- @Air bell in Bin Juice Sump: 190bar/195bar
- @Bin Chicken Haven (before return): 190bar/180bar

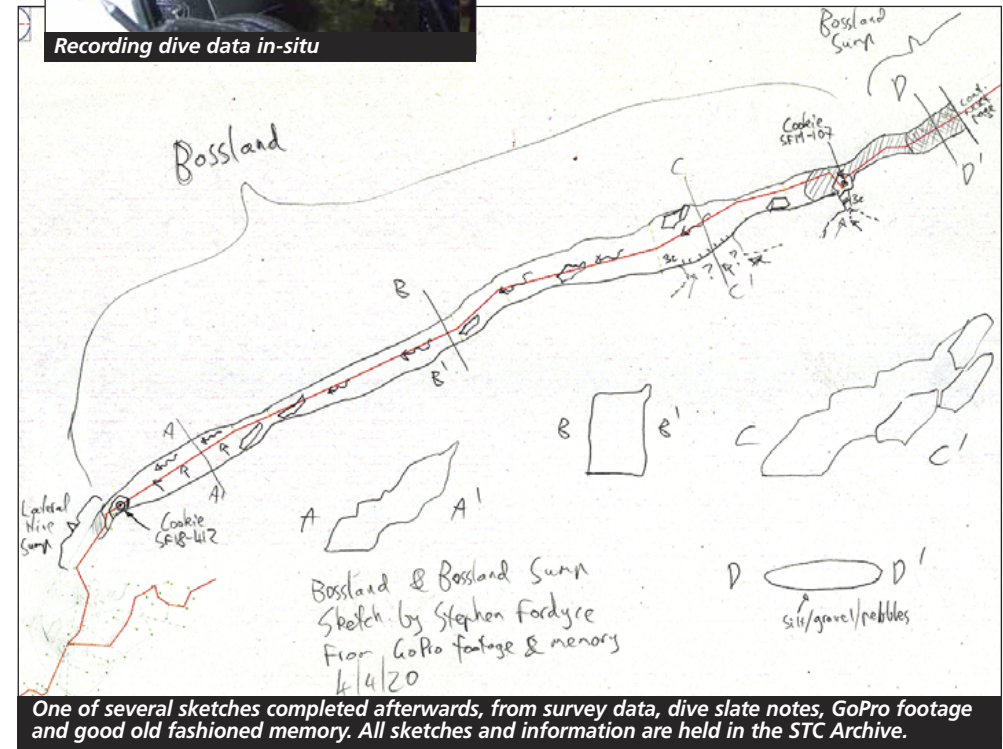
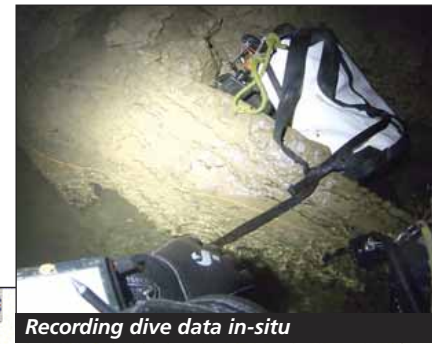
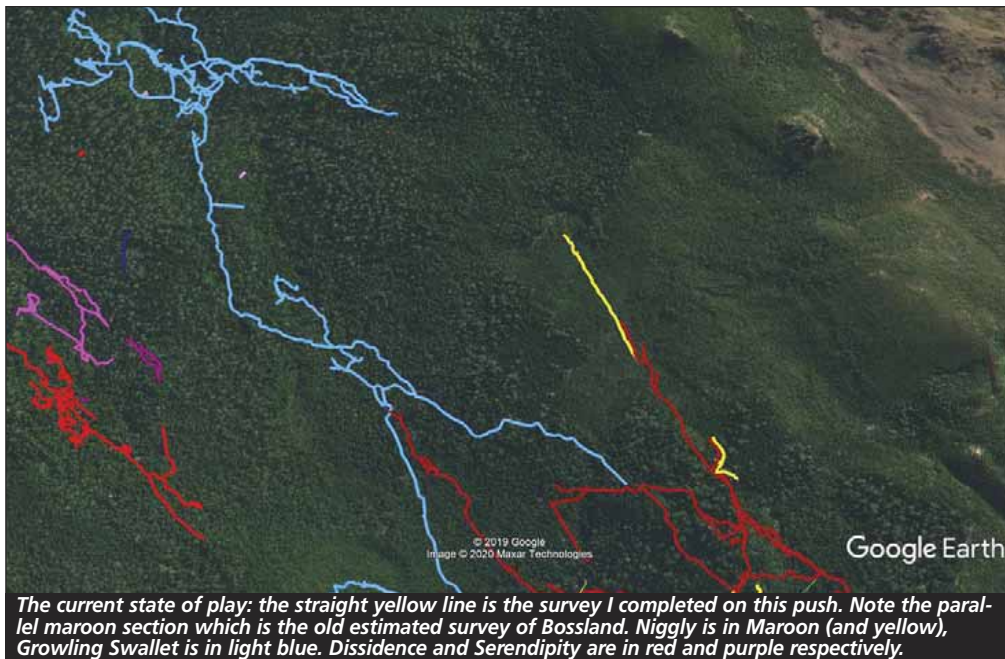
- End gas: 185bar/95bar
- Note that the left cylinder was deliberately left full so it could be left in the cave and still be useful.

Gallantry Sump Dive Mask Checkout

Alan made a passing comment about this in his trip report. It was good to stick my head into the sump with a mask and actually see what it looked like without GoPro distortion. It was a bit less enticing – still low, wide enough but only just, and with hard ceiling and gravel floor. Would need much grovelling to get through, but a determined diver could probably do it with enough effort. I doubt I'll feel the need to try though.



Maybe the song about birds was more apt than we realised: the fully-grown David and Alan feed chicks Gabriel and Martyna. Steve wonders whether he should attempt to feed Ben (out of frame).



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CDAA Research and Conservation Initiatives and a new sign @ Fossil Cave!

By Pete Wolf

In the last 18 months, CDAA members have taken part in a number of valuable research and conservation projects. Aspects of these projects have involved cave survey, mapping, baseline and condition assessments, paleontological assessments, and video rendering. On occasion, such research has required entry into a site, or part of cave, that is a designated conservation or reference area which is otherwise off-limits for general recreational cave diving. To gain access to these areas, CDAA members must apply for a Science, Mapping and Research [SMR] Permit - an initiative that was implemented by the CDAA National Committee in 2018 to facilitate research activities while ensuring that access to these areas is regulated and diver impact is minimised.

ESTABLISHING A "CONTROL ZONE"

One of these vulnerable areas is a relatively small room at the end of a long restrictive section of cave, West of the G16 line marker in Tank Cave. It has become known colloquially as the "Bone Room" or "Bone Pit" and is situated in close proximity to the Fossil Cave entrance. A concentrated fossil deposit in this area attracted much media attention and excitement amongst both the scientific and cave diving communities upon its discovery in late 2018. In the weeks that followed, early reports indicated that some of the fossils in this area were already subject to disturbance by divers. This led to concerns that, due to the confined nature of the cave in that area, the long-term impacts of continued, unregulated visitation by cave divers to the "Bone Room" would result in the significant loss of valuable scientific data. The area was therefore declared a "Control Zone", with access, for the time being, declared off limits for general recreational cave diving.

GATHERING DATA

After consulting with CDAA member and Palaeontologist Dr Julien Louys, we resolved to capture as much preliminary and baseline information as possible whilst ensuring that any unnecessary disturbance was minimised. A plan was established to engage divers with the appropriate diving and photographic skills to take photos, which could then be recorded into a fossil database that the CDAA can make available to researchers. Ideally it would include wide angle images of the fossil deposit, as well as close-ups of individual specimens. This information could then be used to inform future research activities.

CDAA members Stew Donn and Andrea Russo had provided us with some of the earliest descriptions of the fossil deposit and "new" sections of the cave shortly after its discovery, and helped us get these areas added to the updated Tank Cave map. Having prior experience navigating the tight, silty passage leading to the "Bone Room", as well as being a pho-

tographer by profession, made Stew the obvious choice when it came to finding a suitably qualified diver to assist with the project. Fortunately, both he and Andrea were happy to get involved.

Around the same time I came up with an idea of creating a high-res "stitched" image of the "Bone Room" – an extreme wide angle that could simultaneously convey important information about the fossil deposit, the layout of the cave, and the orientation of the fossils therein. Something along the lines of what some ocean diving photographers had managed to achieve with shipwrecks that were strewn across the seabed. Given the additional challenges that cave diving presents, I had absolutely no idea if this would even be possible, but I put the idea to Stew anyway. Over several months Stew and Andrea made a number of visits to the control zone to capture the photos of individual specimens for the fossil database we'd established and formulated a plan to create the stitched image.

NEW SIGNAGE FOR FOSSIL CAVE

While much of this was taking place, the committee were also in the process of developing new signage to be installed at the entrance to Fossil Cave as part of the initiative to raise awareness of the significance of this site. The signage needed to communicate key information about the cave – what makes it so unique, information about access and conservation, as well as generate interest amongst general tourists and cave divers alike.

With an abundance of information about Fossil Cave widely available to draw from, together with input from the CDAA's Science Officer Ian Lewis and Dr Julien Louys, and a copy of the historic map drawn by CDAA Life Member Peter Horne, we soon had all the information we needed for the "nerdy" parts of the sign.

I was intent on finding an eye-catching image for the sign so I trawled through the CDAA Image Bank, and put a call out to several photog members. It doesn't take a genius to know that fossil cave is unique for two obvious reasons – the abundance of fossil material that has been discovered there (who would have guessed!?), and its significance as a cave diving

site. Despite having some great pictures to choose from, I really couldn't find one that combined the two elements that make Fossil Cave so unique, and at the same time had the necessary "WOW!" factor. So, in the end I chose a fantastic, though relatively generic photo of a diver hovering mid-water in the light-zone and submitted the first draft of the signage to the Department of Environment and Water [DEW] for feedback.

TWO PROJECTS COME TOGETHER

To be honest, when I'd envisioned what the photo stitch was going to look like, I'd pictured a plan view of the "Bone Room" that captured the layout of the room, and depicted the position and orientation of the fossils. Certainly interesting, but quite sterile. So, to say I was blown away when Stew finally sent through the composite photo he'd created is an understatement! It is not what I was expecting at all. Not only does it capture a lot of information, I knew immediately that we had found the perfect image for the sign at the Fossil Cave entrance! It conveys perfectly the two elements that make Fossil Cave so unique – fossils and cave diving!

We are pleased to present to our members the final version of the sign which will soon be installed at Fossil Cave.

*Many thanks to Ross Anderson and Aidan Laslett at DEW for their support and feedback on the signage

**If any members would like to get involved in developing signs for some of the other unique cave diving sites, please feel free to get in touch.



See pages 22 and 23 for a spectacular centrefold Guide to Fossil Cave.

REIGNING FROM THE IVORY TOWER

***"We're going on a ~~bear~~ witch hunt.
We're going catch a big one! What a beautiful day!"***

by Peter Wolf

In the manner of the supreme overlords who have come before us, last week, the other committee members and I convened in our ivory tower for our general monthly meeting. With our eyes glowing hellfire-red in the dimly lit boardroom, we sat, sharpening our pitchforks, plotting world domination, and deliberating which unwitting CDAA "explorer" we could go after next.

While this is, of course, pure fantasy, some of the "discussions" that recently took place on social media suggest otherwise. So, with everything else going on at the moment, I felt that this might be an opportune time to provide a response to some of the specific points that were raised, dispel a couple of myths, and hopefully, help separate fact from fantasy.

Afterall, there have been several individuals dropping so-called "truth" bombs about the CDAA and making hard-hitting claims about the Association, myself and the other directors with such convincing authority that I almost found myself getting out the sharpies to make my own placard, and joining the dissenters!

WHO ARE THESE DIRECTORS WHO LURK IN THE DARK, PUSHING SECRET AGENDAS AND POLITICS?

While I've always fantasised about a life in espionage, and such conspiracy theories really get the tin-foil hats buzzing, the truth, unfortunately, is nowhere near as exciting. Believe it or not, we committee members are like the vast majority of members (yes, you!) – ordinary people who "just want to go cave diving". Apologies if that made you do a little bit of sick in your mouth.

For better or worse, every committee member that has served the CDAA made a decision to give back and volunteer their time so that the mem-

bers can continue to enjoy the privileges the CDAA affords. None of us are perfect, but considering the Association is still going strong after 47 years, some of the directors obviously did something right along the way.

Rest assured, if we lose our way, we are quickly put back on the right path, as there is always someone who is more than happy to tell us what we're doing wrong and how we can do it better.

PPPPFFFTTTT... THIS IS SO EASY!

Whoever came up with the phrase "It's like herding cats" has clearly never dealt with 750 cave divers! So, what is life really like for a CDAA director? Well, aside from the free cocktails with little umbrellas, hoards of screaming groupies, cash-filled envelopes under the table and secret CDAA-funded dive expeditions to exotic cave-diving locations...

First and foremost, it requires a significant amount of personal sacrifice. For each of us the workload is a little different depending on the role. Sometimes it trickles in. Often it's a steady flow. Sometimes it rains down like a tonne of bricks. Personally, I spend on average about two hours every day on the phone, responding to messages, or writing emails relating to CDAA matters. That's mostly just the day-to-day dealings with members and other committee members, and when the need arises, landowners. That's without actually

"getting anything done".

I want to say from the outset that I put my hand up for this, so I am no hapless "victim". For the most part, I enjoy the role and it brings me satisfaction. I feel it's an honour to represent an organisation I am passionate about. I imagine for the other volunteers the sentiment is similar.

But that doesn't mean it's not a sacrifice. It takes me away from my business. It's time I could be spending with my kids and my wife. It's time I could be enjoying other leisure activities. It's time I give freely, so that the CDAA wheels keep turning, and so the majority of divers, like me, can "just go cave diving".

But what does being a CDAA director really involve? It means attending meetings, writing reports, and filling in paperwork. It means a lot of time coming up with solutions as a team. It means sacrificing our own leisure time to ensure that CDAA members can enjoy theirs. It means representing the Association and being responsible for the actions of others (including when they might have done the wrong thing). It means getting phone calls at 9:30pm on a Saturday night, while we're out to dinner, at the movies, or relaxing with our families, to approve a member's last-minute paperwork or booking. It means helping an instructor make alternative arrangements when the site they had booked becomes unavailable. It means dropping what we're doing to drive several hours to Mount Gambier to undertake urgent site maintenance, rather than close a site, so nobody misses out on a dive. It means coordinating dozens of flights, accommodation, presentations, venues and the activities of domestic and International guest speakers for our Annual symposium. It means reviewing financials, or compiling and proof-reading articles for the publication of our quarterly magazine. It means being on a family holiday and getting that gut-wrenching phone call that a diver is missing or overdue or has had an accident. In the past few weeks it has meant being the target of a smear campaign and seeing the reputation of the Association and us as individuals being dragged through the mud on social media, largely at the hands of a small group of dissenters who would rather blame the perceived shortcomings of the CDAA than take responsibility for their own actions. Last year, it meant hours at the computer overseeing the investigation of two member breaches and coping threats of legal action, abuse and indigna-

tion, while I (literally) sat next to my dad's hospital bed, feeding him, cleaning him and trying to share a few last precious moments before he died. Did I mention that we are volunteers and have a life, as well as our own challenges to deal with, outside of the CDAA?

Yet, with all of this on our plates, we somehow still find the time to implement our secret agendas, personal politics, witch hunts and apparently, work towards world domination. Every now and then we even find enough enthusiasm to be creative, motivated and inspired to do things that further the CDAA's aims and come up with ways we can benefit the members, the Association, and the cave diving community.

AS TRANSPARENT AS A BRICK WALL

With so much underhandedness afoot is it any wonder that the concept of "transparency" is so terrifying for a CDAA director? Well, I think it is at this point I need to make an admission. My understanding of what "transparency" means is clearly outdated. In the context of governance, I was of the belief that this term expressed the "qualities of being open and honest". I now understand that this is incorrect.

It seems that by the modern definition, "transparency" means "to inform others of all of one's actions via Facebook, whether good, bad or otherwise, so that ye be judged by all who may access a keyboard, and have an opinion". Evidence, truth, respect, courtesy, and most of all, accountability for one's own actions (and comments) be damned.

INTERMISSION – THE SERIOUS STUFF

"Late last year at a CDAA event I was conversing with a member who started telling me about the time that he'd been suspended. Apparently by me. It actually made for a really good story, except for the fact that he'd never actually been suspended..."

While I could go on regaling the reader with various witty anecdotes, this article also has a serious side. Just in case some readers were swayed by the aspersions cast the way of the CDAA, I will attempt to set the record straight by responding to a number of comments that I have read on social media in recent months. Some of these

continued page 24

FOSSIL CAVE 5L81

Fossil Cave (5L81), known until 1989 as The Green Waterhole, is a cave in the Limestone Coast region of south-eastern South Australia. It is located in the gazetted locality of Tantanoola about 22 kilometres north-west of the city of Mount Gambier. It is notable both as a palaeontological site and as a cave diving site.

CAVE DIVING

Fossil Cave is a notable cave diving site. Access for cave diving is limited to current 'Cave' level certified members of the Cave Divers Association of Australia [CDAA]. Prior to diving, permits to dive must be obtained through the Department for Environment and Water [DEW].

'Cave' level divers must not dive beyond the restriction to enter the adjoining Tank Cave System unless they are qualified to 'Advanced Cave' level and have completed all Tank Cave 'Group' familiarisation dives. The maximum depth permitted for 'Cave' level divers in Fossil Cave is 13 metres.

A WINDOW IN TIME

Since the mid 1960s, a variety of Pleistocene fossil material of birds and mammals has been discovered by divers from the surface of a rockpile to a depth of about 15 metres below the water surface. The probable accumulation mode was by animals drowning when they fell into the cave while using it as a source of drinking water. Dating indicates that fossil deposition has been occurring on site for more than 40,000 years. Examples of extinct species recovered from the cave include the birds Giant Coucal (*Centropus colossus*) and High-crested Logrunner (*Orthonyx hypsilophus*), and the mammals Tasmanian Tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*), Marsupial Lion (*Thylacoleo carnifex*), Giant Rat-kangaroo (*Propleopus oscillans*), Giant Eastern Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus titan*), Giant Wallaby (*Protemnodon anak*), and Gill's, Maddock's, and Eastern Short-faced kangaroos (*Simosthenurus gilli*, *Simosthenurus maddocki* and *Simosthenurus occidentalis*).

IT IS AN OFFENCE TO DISTURB OR REMOVE ANY FOSSILS FOUND IN OR AROUND THESE CAVE SYSTEMS WITHOUT AUTHORISATION FROM THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY. HEAVY PENALTIES MAY APPLY.



MILLIONS OF YEARS IN THE MAKING

Fossil Cave is formed in 30-million-year-old Oligocene coralline limestone. The cave is a karst sinkhole and is largely filled with water. The surface depression is about 20 metres long and 10 metres wide. Beneath the surface it extends to a maximum length of 70 metres and a width of 30 metres. It is joined, via an extremely narrow tunnel, to Tank Cave, which boasts over 8 kilometres of submerged cave passage!

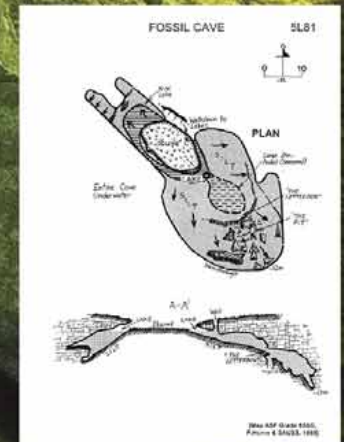


PHOTO: STEWART DONN

comments were inaccurate, and quite possibly, deliberately misleading, with the intent to create dissent. Why? I will touch on that a bit later...

“The CDAA doesn’t recognise training provided by other cave diving training agencies”

This is entirely false. Most major training agencies and instructors who offer cave diving courses provide excellent quality training. It is just not always as simple as comparing apples with apples, and every agency’s standards are different. Examples of such differences include the minimum age an individual may commence cave diver training, the number of experience dives needed before one commences training, or progresses to the next level of certification, and the need to carry redundant gas at all levels.

As the body that facilitates access for its members, and indemnifies landowners, the CDAA needs to draw a line in the sand somewhere. The standard we have set is based on 47 years of experience, with input from instructors that represent a variety of other training agencies, and it is built entirely around Australian cave conditions. As far as systems around the world go, our membership numbers are strong and our safety record is enviable, so it certainly could be argued we’ve achieved a pretty good balance.

Where divers have received cave diver training outside of the CDAA or outside of Australia, they are not made to “start from scratch”. They simply need to complete the “Cross-over” program – a short orientation program that ensures that they (relative to the “level” of training they have received elsewhere) are at the required level so that they can dive independently in CDAA rated sites. While this is sometimes treated with indignation, the CDAA’s responsibilities extend far beyond “just” the provision of training.

So what are some of the things that set the CDAA apart?

- We are also a member-based organisation. This means we continue to take responsibility for our members long after their training is complete.
- As a not-for-profit, volunteer-run organisation, with elected representatives, the CDAA minimises the potential for member regulations and standards to be compromised by other interests or motivations.

- The CDAA’s Constitution, Member Regulations and Training standards have been developed and refined over the course of nearly 5 decades. These ensure the safety of members, the conservation of sites, and the protection of landowners.
- The CDAA provides landowners and their representatives with a single point of contact.
- The CDAA Instructor body represent and teach for a broad variety of other training agencies. They bring that collective experience and input which serves to strengthen and improve the CDAA’s own training standards.
- The CDAA has developed and maintains a booking system that conducts all the checks and balances required – to make sure that indemnities and insurances are up-to-date, memberships are current, diver competency has been assessed, first aid certification is current etc. – all before a diver can gain access to a site. The system also tracks and manages keys if these are required to gain access to sites.
- The CDAA has robust emergency response protocols with members trained and experienced in search, rescue and or recovery operations who can be called upon in the event of emergency.
- The CDAA applies “ratings” to sites after assessing what is required to safely undertake dives in each particular site.
- The CDAA’s training standards are built around the site ratings and the relative risks, not the other way around.
- The CDAA protects important and vulnerable ‘cave values’ via the implementation of ‘reference areas’ and ‘control zones’. Access to such areas is only permitted under a CDAA Science, Mapping and Research permit.

“The CDAA has no control over non-members”

This is true. As a member-based organisation, our Constitution and Regulations apply only to CDAA members. The CDAA relies on its long, and successful relationship with landowners and land managers in areas such as Mount Gambier and the Nullarbor to help us uphold our standards and regulate activities associated with cave diving. It was the mutual implementation of control measures (including the formation of the CDAA) in 1973 that put an end to the growing spate of fatalities in Australian caves.

Over the years numerous individuals and groups have applied to gain access to cave diving sites independently of the CDAA. The CDAA relies on its longstanding relationship and open communication with landowners to ensure that consultation takes place to confirm that such applications have not come about with the intention of undermining or circumventing the systems the CDAA has in place.

“The CDAA Regulations don’t allow for exploration”

Again, this is false. The CDAA Regulations have plenty of scope to accommodate exploration, and even under the right circumstances, (dare I say it!) solo diving. Where we must draw the line is when these activities involve unnecessary or excessive risk, or exploration comes at the expense of conservation or the interests of the broader cave diving community. Nearly all of the caves we currently have access to are in some way thanks to the discovery, exploration, survey, and mapping by CDAA members. So, to say that the CDAA doesn’t foster exploration is ludicrous. Just because you don’t necessarily see members posting about it on Facebook, doesn’t mean it isn’t happening.

I’m pretty sure that every cave diver loves the opportunity of diving new caves and gets excited when new passage is discovered!

“CDAA insurance does not indemnify the landowners”

This is false. The CDAA policy explicitly indemnifies landowners against claims which may arise from the activities of CDAA members. We pay a premium for this coverage to ensure that landowners have peace of mind in their dealings with the CDAA. A copy of the Certificate of Currency is available on the CDAA website under “Public Documents”.

“What about all these suspensions?”

The subject of disciplinary action takes us into delicate waters as the Constitution states that investigation reports must be kept confidential. This is for good reason, as it provides a level of protection to the accused, as well as those who submit a report or provide evidence (note that this is not always limited to CDAA members), and also to the Association. To be blunt, outside of the individuals directly involved, these matters, at least as far as

the details are concerned, are really nobody else’s business. So, if you are after a tabloid-style exposé, I’m sorry to disappoint you.

However, as there has been so much conjecture about the investigation process, the nature and number of offences, and penalties that have been applied, I will take this opportunity to provide some insight. There is no intent to demonise anybody, so I will focus on the process, rather than the individual or the nature of the offences.

Of 750+ current members and the thousands of cave dives conducted over the course of the last three or so years (whilst I have been a director), the committee have received about a dozen reports of alleged member breaches of the CDAA Regulations and/or Constitution. In the vast majority of cases these are brought to our attention by members and instructors.

This is not to suggest that there were this many members implicated – that number is probably closer to 5 or 6 individuals – as there are those who have been the subjects of multiple complaints *sigh*. There are also those who have submitted numerous allegations against others. *again, sigh*

So, the cold hard facts;

- In about one third of all reported breaches, the alleged breach was not substantiated. This is typically due to a lack of evidence to support the allegation.
- Where a breach has been substantiated, the member has in the majority of cases taken full responsibility for their actions. Penalties applied (if any) have been relatively minor – and the entire process has been concluded quickly and without much fuss.
- In one case a member with a previous history of breaches was issued with a 12-month probation.
- In two cases involving more serious breaches, members had their diving privileges suspended for a prescribed period of time. Neither member challenged the sanction.
- In one case a member admitted the breach, but appealed the penalty. This member had their membership revoked. This outcome was ultimately determined by a Peer Review Committee. In this case the individual opted not to lodge a second appeal before an Appeals Committee.

“What kind of factors have contributed to the outcome of each disciplinary matter?”

Punitive sanctions are not “go-to” penalty. Where a breach has been substantiated, in nearly all cases the individuals involved have;

- Admitted fault
 - Complied with the investigation
 - Taken full responsibility for their actions
 - Sought to learn from the experience, and/or offered to take part in reparative measures
 - Instilled confidence that there was little risk of reoffence.
 - Accepted the penalty (if one was applied)
- In such cases, penalties applied (if any) have been relatively minor – and the entire process has been concluded quickly and without much fuss. Suspension (or expulsion) was limited to cases where several of the following points were applicable;
- It was determined that the member had breached the Regulations and/or Constitution, and in one case, State Legislation.
 - The breaches were considered to be of a serious nature; posing a threat to the safety of the member involved (or others), had the potential to negatively impact site access, and/or caused damage to the cave or the cave’s “values”.
 - The committee considered the probability of re-offending to be high if a lesser penalty was imposed.
 - The investigation uncovered evidence of additional breaches or a history of problematic behaviour.

The fact is that in any other setting, whether it be a work setting, or another sporting organisation, the actions of the individuals responsible for the above member breaches would have resulted in disciplinary action, and possibly even termination. The CDAA, its members and landowners all have a lot at stake, so why should the CDAA be expected to treat these matters any differently?

“The problem is that there is no oversight of the investigation process?”

This is false. While the preliminary investigation is conducted by the National Committee or an appointed delegate (such as an Investigations Officer), the Constitution provides for two avenues of appeal. Both introduce oversight of the process and the evidence. The first route of appeal puts

the case before a Peer Review Committee consisting of two randomly selected members, and a member of the National Committee. The second avenue of appeal puts the case before an Appeals Committee consisting of one life member, one member selected by the National Committee, and one member selected by the appellant. As mentioned above, in all but one case where a breach has been substantiated the members involved accepted the outcome of the preliminary investigation.

“Hang on, what aren’t you telling us?”

There is one additional matter that is conspicuously absent from above summary, as, at the time of writing, related proceedings have not yet been finalised. As the individual has opted to bring this matter to the attention of members and the public, I will only respond to specific statements which have already been made in a public forum, in order to provide balance to the claims made against the CDAA. All statements below can be substantiated.

- The matter involved the investigation of multiple reported breaches of the Instructor Ethical Code of Conduct, as well as clauses of the CDAA Constitution and Member Regulations by a CDAA instructor.
- Reports of inappropriate conduct were received from multiple independent witnesses and were considered serious in nature.
- The committee was in communication with the instructor in question via email and phone and had indicated that we sought to work through the underlying issues. This included on two occasions extending offers (in writing) to have members of the National Committee meet with the instructor.
- While the investigation was underway the instructor opted to initiate formal legal proceedings against the CDAA and the CDAA was issued with a letter of demand.
- It was at this point that members of the National Committee ceased communicating with the instructor directly.
- The CDAA was forced to appoint legal representation, who refuted and defended the claims made by the instructor, and the grounds upon which the claims were based.
- The instructor then publicly resigned his membership, in the process making a series

of unsavoury accusations against the Association and members of National Committee on at least three different social media pages.

- Members of the committee had been “blocked” by the individual, so could neither see nor respond to any of the posts (including any commentary that ensued) but were made aware when screenshots of the posts were forwarded on.
- The individual has stated publicly that the matter had been reported to the department of Consumer and Business Affairs and was under investigation. At the time of writing the Committee is unaware of any such investigation, however should the department of Consumer and Business Affairs determine that an investigation is warranted, the committee would be more than happy to provide any associated records in full.

DON’T BLAME “POLITICS”

Our main aim is to get people in the water, to enjoy the privileges of membership, and to give back to the communities who accommodate our activities, via research, promotion, and tourism. Over the span of nearly half a century, the CDAA has certified about 5500 cave divers, hosted many international visitors, and has about 750 current members.

Like any sporting club or association, the CDAA is not perfect. But we do far more good than some of the “discussions” that have recently taken place on social media suggest. The systems we have in place are designed to safeguard the majority. Cave diving is a serious business, with the potential for serious consequences, so these systems need to be enforced.

99.5% of members seem to have no issue happily undertaking their cave diving activities within the scope of the CDAA’s systems. Of the 0.5% that have run afoul of the CDAA’s rules now and then, only a tiny fraction refuse to stand accountable for their actions. In such instances the finger is most often aimed squarely at the Committee, the Association, or CDAA “politics”. Alas, social media now gives such individuals a “voice” that is seemingly devoid of responsibility and common courtesy. We have entered a culture where evidence is not required, and accusation is assumed as guilt. These issues are across the board, and in no way limited to the CDAA. Nonetheless they are just one of the challenges we must overcome as we move forward.

JUST BECAUSE I’M CRAZY, DOESN’T MEAN IT’S NOT TRUE

If I were to put on my tin foil hat for a second (who am I kidding, I never took it off!), I might think that the latest flare up is all part of a bigger plan. That a small group of individuals who have run afoul of the CDAA’s rules and regulations, have taken their toys out of the proverbial sand-pit, and are actively trying to create dissent against the CDAA because they are in the process of starting their own “Association”. Damn those CDAA rules and regulations – they are cramping my style!

I mean, if a new organisation were to be formed, it would be quite a coincidence if it turned out that the same individuals who are involved are the ones that are making defamatory statements about the CDAA on social media, are admins of the pages where those comments are being made, are the ones who are approaching landowners for access independently of the CDAA, are the ones who have found themselves on the wrong side of disciplinary proceedings.... I mean, if even a couple of these things turned out to be true, that would be a weird coincidence, right? I guess for now I’ll sit rocking in the corner until government comes knocking at my door.

EPILOGUE

I hope you have enjoyed the above article, and what has been (at times) a bit of a tongue-in-cheek insight into the life of a CDAA director. While I have kept this article light-hearted, it hasn’t always been an easy ride. The words and calls of support we receive mean a lot, so thank you.

All the volunteers who contribute to the CDAA want our members to enjoy the privileges that the CDAA affords them, and to have a safe and enjoyable experience when they go cave diving, wherever that may be. We are here to help.

In just a few short years the CDAA will achieve it’s 50-year anniversary – an amazing milestone for any club! The Association has overcome many challenges in this time, and most are now nothing more than stories told around the campfire. Make no mistake, we are still going strong, and we’re here to stay. The best bit is, that those who “just want to go diving” can. I hope we can keep it that way for another 50 years.

Please feel welcome to contact me, or any one of the other committee members if you have any questions, comments or criticisms, or simply if we can help you in any way. My contact details and those of the other committee members are listed on the CDAA website, and in every edition of Guidelines.

The challenges of getting the "Bone Room" shot

Story and Photos by Stewart Donn

Prior to the Control Zone being put in place in Tank Cave, myself and my regular dive buddy Andrea Russo had dived through to the Bone Room a number of times from the then newly discovered Fossil-Tank Cave connection so we were reasonably familiar with the low, narrow, silty and winding restriction passage that forms the entrance to the Bone Room.

Members of the National Directorate were aware of this and also of my background in photography so I believe it was the combination of these 2 things which lead to me being contacted by the National Directorate to see if I would be interested in producing high resolution photographs of the bones in-situ. The intention was to create a baseline archive to inform future research of this and other fossil deposits in Tank Cave. The proviso was that any dive I and my buddy made inside the Control Zone would have to be in accordance

with a CDAA Science, Mapping and Research permit. Permit applications for each proposed dive would have to be submitted and approval given prior to the proposed diving day. I was also asked if I thought it would be possible to create a composite (stitched) image of the Bone Room itself. A stitched image is a single final image created by placing a number of images of one subject together in a seamless transition to produce the whole. For this purpose the camera is usually placed on a tripod to aid in the smooth transition from one



Andrea Russo in The Bone Room.

image to another. While I had been inside the Bone Room a number of times it was always about the dive, not the photographic possibilities. It was agreed that the first order of business would be to get the in-situ bone photographs and while doing this look at options for creating the stitched image.

Given that the safety of the divers should always take precedence over the photography, I and my buddy sat down to discuss the best way to go about achieving the set goals. We decided that the best option was to go through to the Control Zone via the Fossil-Tank Cave connection passage. Although this was a much lower and narrower way than through from the Tank Cave entrance it was much closer to the Bone Room and would not require carrying stage tanks to get there. Two dives from Fossil Cave could easily be made per day with a standard minimal side mount set up. We did however decide that given the nature of the restriction passage into the Bone Room it would be reassuring to know that there was sufficient gas to get out should a problem occur coming out of the passageway when already at thirds due to the time required inside for photography. The first dive would therefore be to stage 2 Ali 80's inside the Control Zone but just outside of the restriction passage. We would leave them there for the duration of the filming process (this turned out to be a little longer than antic-

ipated!). We would also make the staging dive a recce dive for the stitched image.

The stage ferrying process required the tanks to be handed down through the initial Fossil vertical restriction by the rear buddy to the lead buddy, from there it was a little awkward through the Fossil/ Tank connection passage and then plain sailing to the Control Zone. We dropped the stages at the last flat, reasonably wide spot outside the restriction tunnel and proceeded on to the Bone Room. It can get quite silty coming out of the passage into the room itself but once the diver moves into the room the diver can keep out of the silt. The second dive of the day we went back through from Fossils with the camera and got the in-situ photos of the bones unencumbered with any additional tanks. Everything went smoothly during these 2 dives and we were feeling confident of achieving the stitched image.

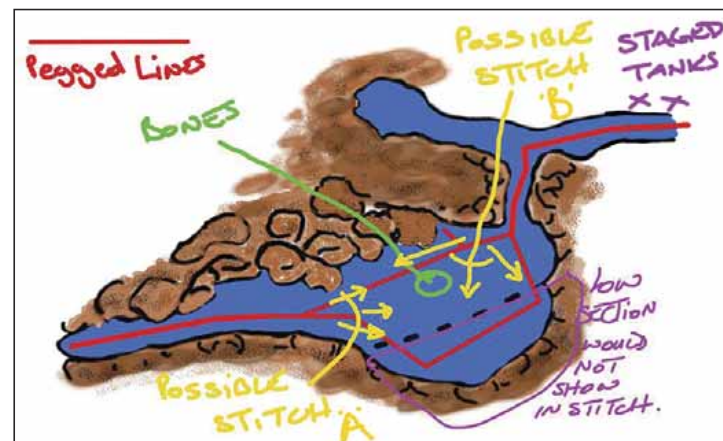
Concluding the first 2 dives I drew up a sketch showing my proposed options for the stitched image and sent this through to the directorate.

What was expected to be a relatively short project did however start to get drawn out.

On one occasion we had permits to make 2 dives over a day. Armed with the camera we proceeded to the Bone Room restriction passage only to find that the line had been pulled loose with more floating slack in the line than we were happy to go through with. We

poked our heads into the passage but decided that caution was the better part of valour, so called the dive. The second dive of the day we left the camera in the car and went back to the passage with some heavier line to tidy up the slack and check all was ok.

On another occasion, diver congestion in the Fossil-Tank connection passage meant that by the time we would get



Sketch of the location of The Bone Room.

into the Bone Room we wouldn't have the required gas to give the photography the consideration it needed so called the dive before going through the connection.

There was also at least one photography dive, probably more, that got called on the surface of Fossil's lake due to what would normally be considered minor gear issues but the Fossil restriction wasn't one that you'd want to have HP hoses popping off or second stage free flows happening in.

During this process Fossil's itself was also closed for some time. What with this and our own availability to get over to the Mount meant that the staged tanks left in the Control Zone were there for a number of months longer than expected.

Eventually though everything did come together and we got into the Bone Room, achieved shots I was happy with and pulled out the stage tanks on the same dive with only one minor problem. On the way in, through the Fossil-Tank connection which is only wide enough for single file diving, unknown to me at the rear a large rock had slipped down and



partially blocked the way on. Andrea who was in the lead at this point managed to man(woman) handle the offending rock aside and pull herself past. Behind her at this point I was thinking "wtf is she doing?" When I got to the same point I had an "ohhh" moment. For the stitched image I decided that the "A" position would be best. This would allow Andrea to enter the Bone Room first and move to the previously agreed position over the bones to give scale to the image. As I would be entering second I would immediately see she was in position and ready to go, leaving me free to start setting up the lighting. Position "A" also had the advantage of being away from any silt near the room entrance that could cause problems.



The type of lighting to be used was also a consideration prior to the photography taking place.

When making images underwater, especially with introduced lighting (strobes/video lights), a potential problem to consider is "back scatter".

This is when there are fine particles floating in the water which reflect any light off the surface of the particle back into the

camera lens ruining your photo. The closer to the camera lens the lighting is the stronger the effect. This is one of the reasons you see camera systems with strobes on long arms.

The effect is similar to driving in to falling snow at night with your car lights on.

I knew that back scatter could be a potential problem in the Bone Room as it had not been dived enough to clear the ceiling of debris and any bubble percolation that came off the ceiling would fall around a stationary diver/photographer causing back scatter. As I would need to remain stationary for a period of time to get the required number of photos I decided to use 3 LED constant video lights for the image. While this type of lighting tends to be less powerful than many triggered strobes and with shorter battery life, it does have the advantage of not needing costly and temper-



amental remote triggers. Basically, if you can see the light, you know it's working. I could position these as far from the camera as I liked to reduce any back scatter and create "mood" without worrying about trigger placement.

As previously stated a stitch is usually done using a tripod to hold the camera in place, I would need to hand hold the camera in place as best as possible, shooting more frames than normal to allow for the camera frame slipping out of place while making sure I covered all angles of the room.

I have to thank Andrea here for being a very patient diver and holding in place while I ran around setting the lights and getting the shots. It helps having a regular buddy who understands your weird hand and light signals.

Once I had the photos in camera it was back to the computer and time to edit, select and

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process the chosen images. Five images were selected to create the whole. The central image of the diver, one each for left and right walls, an image containing the ceiling with air bubble reflections and an image of the floor containing the bulk of the bones. There are quite a few App's on the market that can be used to auto-stitch an image together. This is the way I would normally proceed. However on this occasion none of the software options available could cope with the fact that the images were shot without using a tripod and the results were very poor. The only way to achieve a stitch fulfilling expectations was to manually blend and transition the 5 images into one large image using Photoshop. Finally came a bit of gentle colour balancing across the image to bring the 3 video lights and Andreas personal primary torch into balance and the image was ready for delivery.

The camera I use for my underwater work is a Canon G7X ii with a Fantasea housing. This is a compact camera, not a DSLR or mirrorless system. However, the sensor is a 1" CMOS, 20 MP sensor capable of recording a 14 Bit RAW file. The camera fell nicely into my 3 main criteria which were, small to carry, can be put into full manual mode and will record RAW



format image files. It also has reasonable HD video capability.

When in water the complete system, camera, strobe and strobe tray/arm is very slightly negative making it easy to manoeuvre and handle. Its small enough that I can loop my hand through the strobe arm and carry it while having 2 hands free for diving tasks. I've also made an armadillo style back plate from a knee pad to protect a couple of the more vulnerable controls on the housing allowing me to happily butt clip the camera off behind me while going through low or narrow restrictions.

For me, the whole project was thoroughly enjoyable and challenging enough to keep the interest up (my buddy may disagree). Once again, a big thanks to Andrea for all her patience and assistance with the project.

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE
OF GUIDELINES**

**The full story on
the CDAA's new Mala
GX80 HDR Ground
Penetrating Radar.**



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Cave Rescue Exercise Tasmania Nov. 2019

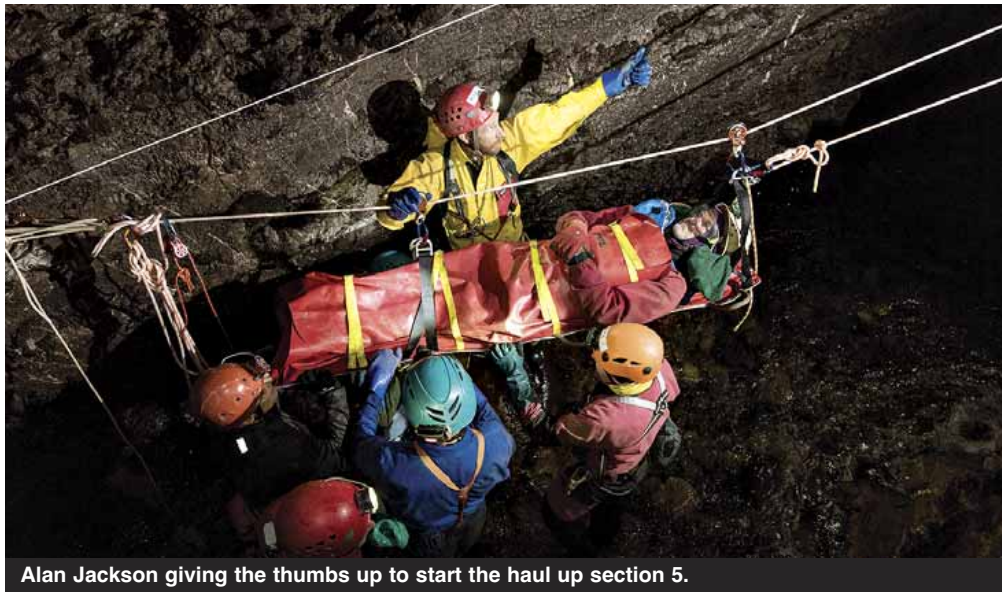
by Phil Croker and Chris Edwards
Photos by Richard Bugg

We joined 53 participants from multiple agencies around Australia on the last Saturday of November, for the annual Cave Rescue Exercise hosted by Southern Tasmanian Caveeners (STC). It was conducted in the Junee/Florentine Karst area west of Hobart, in Growling Swallet Cave. Groups from the majority of the Tasmanian Caving Clubs, several mainland clubs, SES, Tasmania Police, informally Tasmanian Ambulance, CDAA and others were in attendance. The objective was to extract an injured caver from some 400m down inside the cave. For those that know the cave, that's from just upstream of The Keyhole in the main streamway. (see Map next page).

Sounds easy right? Shouldn't take long some said! Hmmm.

We left Hobart about 7am and met the assembled group first in Maydeena and then at the cave carpark, for a briefing by our Task Master, Alan Jackson. We were soon divided

up into 7 teams of 4-6 each and assigned to a specific section of the cave. Our individual missions were to rig each section with Tyroleans (A Tyrolean traverse is a method of crossing



Alan Jackson giving the thumbs up to start the haul up section 5.

through free space between two high points on a rope with or without a hanging cart or cart equivalent i.e. stretcher.)

The plan being to transport the casualty safely through each allocated section and then hand over to the next team. . By the time we packed ropes, pulleys, cordless hammer drills, cave radios and all the other required rescue equipment, it would be well after 10am before we entered the system. Then there

was the inevitable logjam (image 7479) as lots of people waited to negotiate tighter sections of the cave and short pitches etc.

If this was a true rescue, time was vanishing fast. Imagine how much time would be taken up organising logistics and equipment if such a rescue were required on the Nullarbor? A day? Two days? The drive across? Food, water,

shelter, generators, coordination to prevent doubling up, fuel, resupply of materials and manpower etc etc. Phil was briefly involved with the recent bushfire relief efforts as a paramedic and the experience showed, Incident Command System logistics are enormous and time consuming. (Image 7855).

Technically, Growling Swallet is a "dry" cave i.e. there is only a small diveable sump at the very bottom. (Steve Fordyce spoke about this in his presentation at last year's AGM). However the reality is that it is a large, in some places wet, cold (approximately 7C) cave system through which a river runs continuously. For most of us, we would be working in and around noisy, knee deep, flowing water for the next 12 hours. This created a number of issues such as noise



Image 7855 - Phil Croker foreground.



Image 7497 - Inevitable logjam.

GROWLING SWALLET JF 36 PLAN

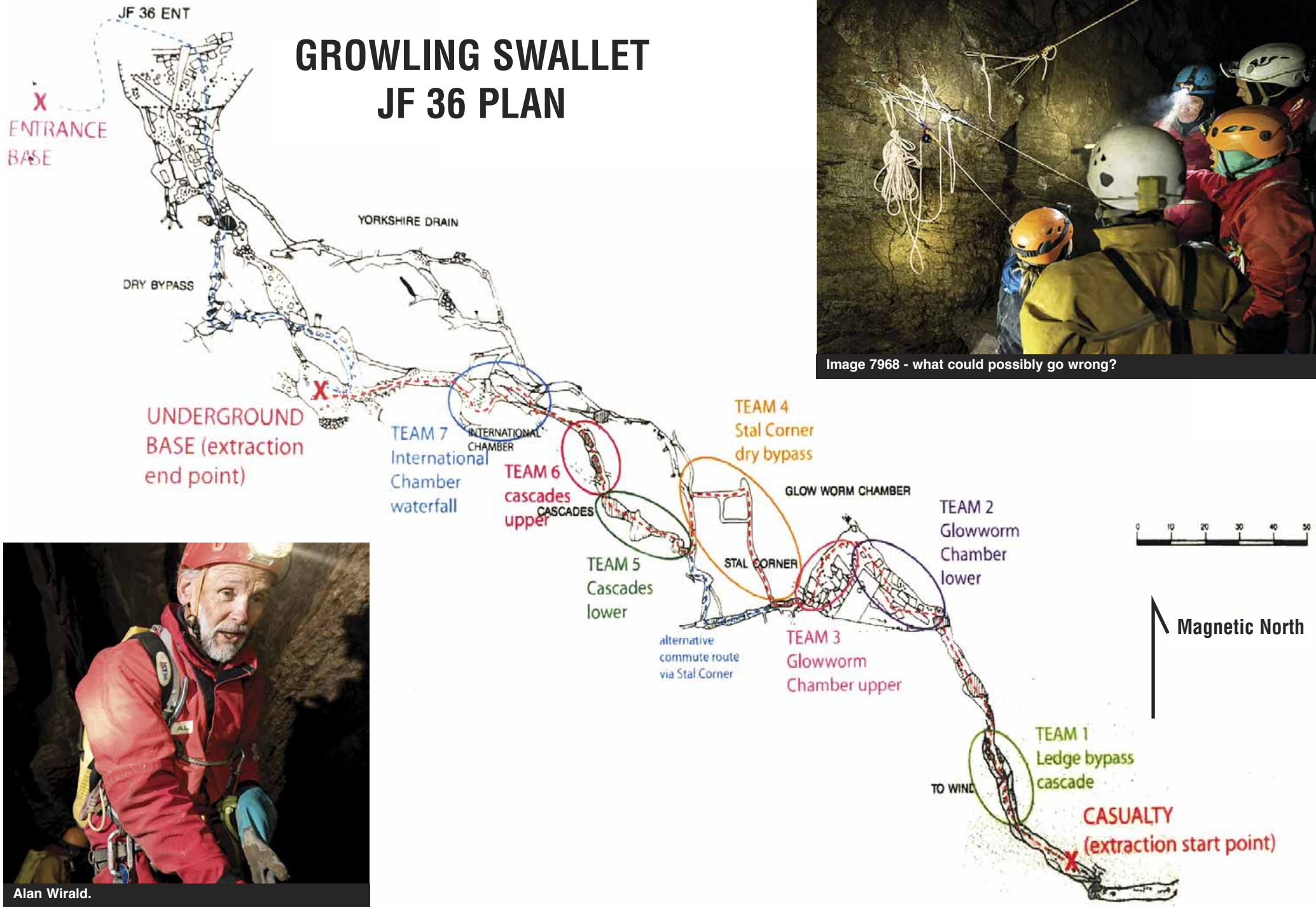


Image 7968 - what could possibly go wrong?



Image 8015 - on the Micki Phone

fatigue, thermal fatigue (from standing around when we had no tasks), and communication challenges. In some locations within the cave, through ground cave radios and Micki Phones became quite difficult to operate clearly and effectively. (Image 8015). The extraction would not commence until all designated sections had been rigged and

triple checked for safety, those checks being done firstly by the initial team, secondly Alan Jackson and last but certainly not least Alan Warild (and if you don't know who he is read this: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com.au/people/alan-warild.aspx>). The Tyrolean anchor points required triple redundancy, with holes being drilled into the rock and concrete screws used to secure the anchor points. To these carabiners were clipped and then a specific, cunning series of rope attachments were utilised (Image 7968). Our team leaders

were experienced cavers and were rightly fastidious in the placement and rigging of each section. Once a victim is on the rope there is limited opportunity to rectify a less than optimally placed anchor point. It was 7.30 pm by the time we were ready to start transporting the victim. All teams were now providing muscle to carry the stretcher



Image 8162

through everywhere that being hung on a Tyrolean was not possible. (Image 8162). Those who have taken part in the SROP, who have had some exposure to the techniques of moving a stretcher device along using manual handling, will have some insights into how this could become a risky business. We did it in a rock and boulder strewn flowing stream way, with trip hazards every step and narrow passages where the stretcher had to be passed from one to another. This required teamwork, care and co-ordination. It would be extremely problematic to injure more people with twisted and sprained ankles/knees/shoulders and

backs. (Image 8326). (Image 8482). Almost four cold and wet hours later we reached our designated exercise end point at the start of what's called the Dry Bypass. It was where last year's exercise commenced. Teams combined to remove all the anchor points and ropes and then shared the load to carry it all out. Moving a large group such as ours also again created a fair few bottlenecks, which is where some became a little hypothermic and fatigued. We finally reached the check-out at the register point not long after midnight and trudged back to the car. It was very sobering to later discover that last year they took almost

five hours to exit the victim from where we ended that night!

What did we all learn?

Firstly, that the old adage "fail to prepare = prepare to fail" is very true. This was an excellent exercise run very professionally and provided lots of opportunity for all involved to gain very worthwhile skills and experience. To quote the CDAA's and STC's Janine McKinnon "This was the most successful and technical rescue practice we have achieved. The time taken to rig so many lifts and traverses was the quickest we have ever done. Annual practice rescues are definitely vastly improving our skills and confidence. They are well worth the effort involved."



Image 8217

Whilst it was designed to rescue a caver (as distinct from a diver) many of the techniques utilised would be just as valid out on the Nullarbor and even potentially in Englebrechts. Secondly do not underestimate just how long a rescue like this takes. It has to be done safely and that simply takes time, problem solving, food, warmth and patience. Thirdly do not forget the prime maxim of first aid i.e. look after the rescuer first. Despite more than enough warnings, several participants underestimated the cold, wet environment both via clothing and food.

Thanks to absolutely everyone who organised and ran the day. There are too many to mention them all but in particular STC's Alan Jackson should be singled out for his patience, expertise and last but not least his sense of humour and bad jokes. Thanks also to everyone who participated. The camaraderie and team work on display was exceptional. With an age range from early 20's to mid 70's it was heart warming to see and experience the sharing of knowledge and the offer of assistance without prejudice, whenever it was required.

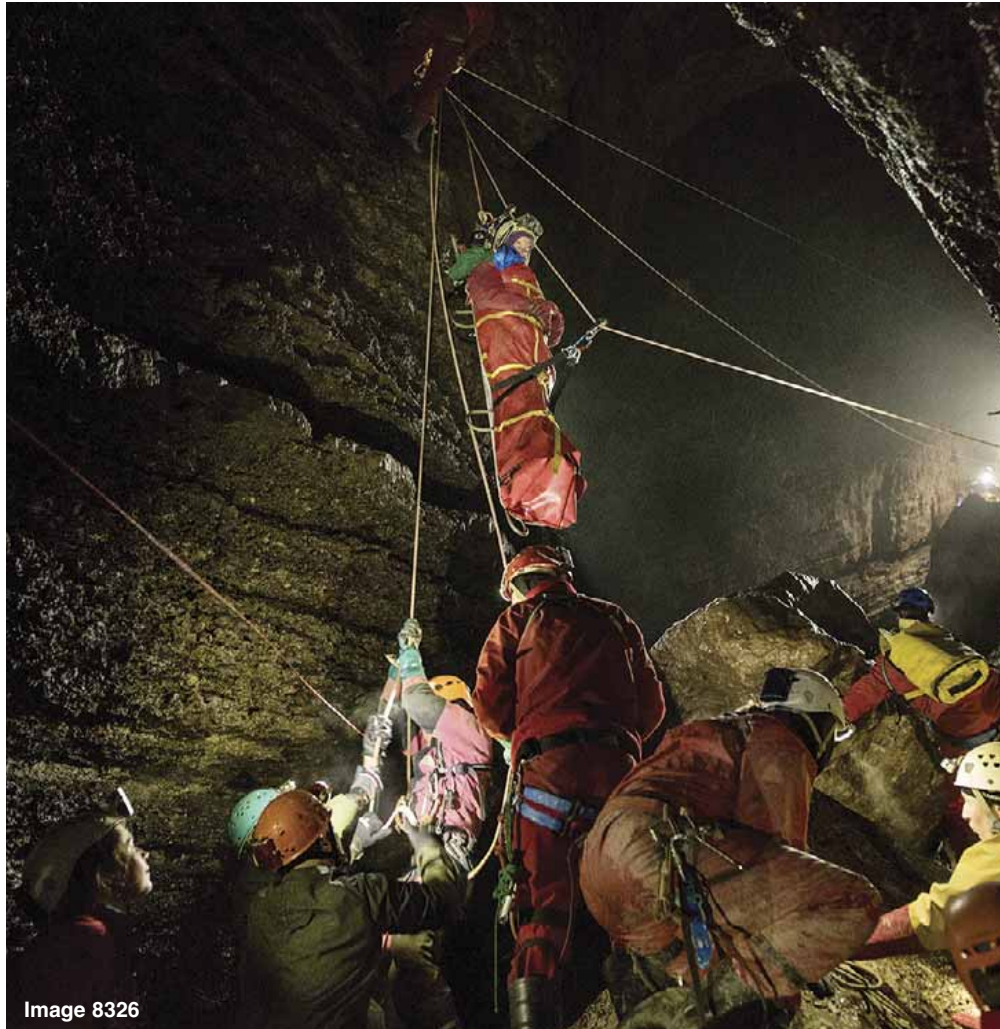


Image 8326

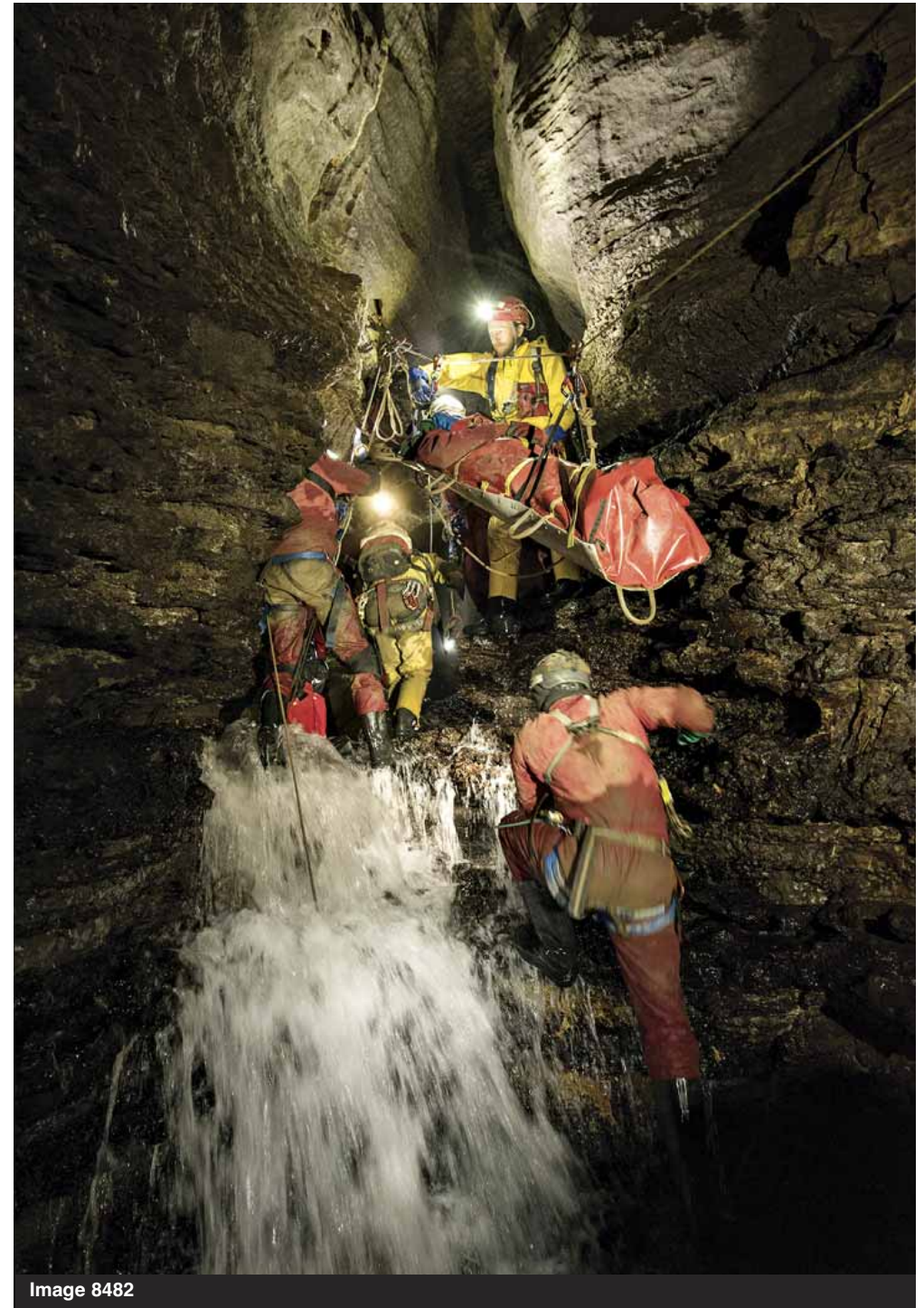














Image 8482

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 |  DALE, Steve (CDAА 3926) Mob: 0468 417 211 Email: info@extremewatersport.com.au | Yes | Yes | |
| SOUTH AUSTRALIA | | | |  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 | | | | |
|  CHAMBERS, Geoffrey (CDAА 3484) Mob: 0438 059 886 E: geoffie1@gmail.com | Yes | | | | | | |
|  CLARIDGE, Linda (CDAА 2214) Mob: 0408 052 070 E: garinda@tpgi.com.au | Yes | Yes | Yes | | | | |

PARTING SHOT



Tank Cave - Photo by Gary Barclay
From June 2010 issue of GUIDELINES.