



Laplet Slate Mine in Belgium - see story on pages 20-27 this issue.



C.D.A.A. Newsletter

No. 158 - DECEMBER 2021



CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

(Incorporated in South Australia)

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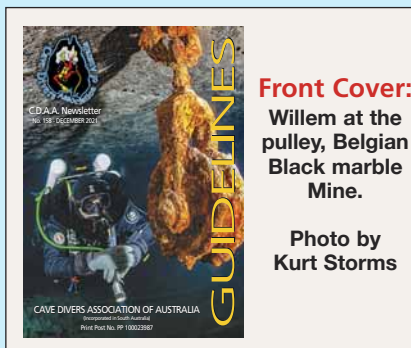


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Front Cover:
Willem at the pulley, Belgian Black marble Mine.

Photo by Kurt Storms

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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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
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Pine Tank Lodge



Photo by Liz Rogers

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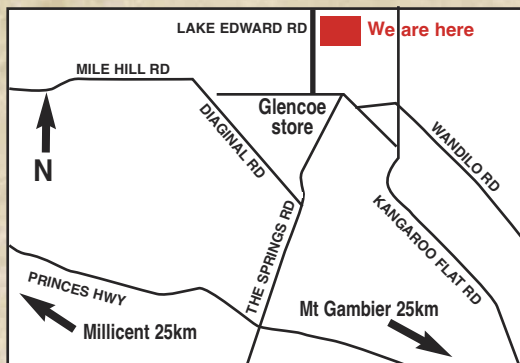
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Pine Tank Dive Lodge AquiferTec Australasia

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PUBLICATIONS REPORT VICTORIA HUDSON



Hi all,

What a whirlwind the first couple of months in this position has been. I'm writing this report on the day the new website is to go live and finding it very hard to write something when I'm unsure how successful our launch will be. Of course, by the time you read this, the new website will have been up and running for a couple of weeks.

For the most part, my first months in this position have been almost completely taken up by the website. Thankfully, most of the enquiries that have come through from members have been able to be dealt with by our Records Officer – Brendan. The rest of the National Committee has been great about leaving me alone to get on with the website.

For those that know me personally, you will know how poor my computer skills are. Sure, I can type a document, but anything more than that (e.g., copying a disc) means me making a phone call to someone for help. To say setting up and bringing in the new website was personally a challenge for me is an understatement. Prior to this, I had no idea how to make a hyperlink and no idea what a widget even was, let alone how to make one! Thankfully, the staff behind the scenes at Member Jungle have been great and together (mostly them), we've managed to make a website that I think is workable and reasonably user friendly.

What you're currently seeing is Phase 1. We have a running list of improvements, updates and changes that we still want to do, but given the back end to the previous website (including bookings) was being run by essentially 4 people, we needed to get the current system rolled out ASAP to give those people a break.

There are quite a few changes to the way the new website works compared to the old one, some of which has been touched on by Kelynn and Tim.

I specifically wanted to mention Member Records. You will notice as members that you no longer have access to the Submit a Scanned Record button. This is mostly due to the change in process regarding Indemnities that Kelynn has spoken about. During Phase 1, the only documents we require to be submitted are Records of Training and Q&A forms. If you are an instructor or a student enrolled in a course, you will have access to this function.

I'm sure there will be teething problems, things not working as they should or changes from the previous system that are new and scary. If you have issues or feedback on the new website, please reach out and let me know. I can't promise I will immediately know the answer to your problem or be able to implement every change, but I'm more than happy to hear them and do what I can.

My final note on the website is a huge thank you from me to the outgoing directors, Meg, Pete and Mary-Anne, all of whom have answered my (often frantic) emails, texts and calls at all hours of the day while I've tried to make sense of the new website setup and getting all of the data from the previous website.

Another part of this position is the production of Guidelines, which is yet another thing this is personally terrifying for me, even with the help of our long-time editor, Dave. If anyone has anything to contribute to future issues, be it funny stories or quotes, trip reports or even photos, please shoot them through to me at publications@cavedivers.com.au.

With the borders opening soon, I hope to see some of you out and around Mount Gambier.
Stay safe and happy diving.

WE NEED YOUR STORIES & PHOTOS FOR GUIDELINES
Articles for Guidelines March 2022 - Deadline is Feb 11th
• Send articles and jpeg images by email to guidelines@cavedivers.com.au •

NATIONAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

DECEMBER 2021

Hi all,

I am very pleased to be taking up the position of National Director of the CDAA.

I am sure the next years will provide many challenges, opportunities and satisfying moments but mainly the satisfaction of maintaining and improving in this wonderful cave diving organization.

On behalf of the CDAA thank you deeply to the outgoing Directors, Pete Wolf (ND), Meg Anderson (PD) and recently, due to increasing work commitments Mary-Ann Mcleod (BD).

They have have given their all over the the last years, four each for Pete and Meg, three for Mary-Anne, dealing with complex issues and of course the seriously disruptive arrival of Covid19.

Welcome to Victoria Hudson our new PD and Michael Lariakos who has been appointed BD for the twelve months remaining until the next CDAA election.

Victoria has hit the ground running, ditto for Michael and with the ongoing contributions of Kelvyn and Tim in Site and Standards respectively, and I believe we have a very capable and enthusiastic team ready for the opportunities ahead.

Thank you to all our behind the scenes volunteers in the myriad of positions without whom the CDAA would not be able to function including of course our state representatives.

Lastly, thank you to all the passionate CDAA members who make our sport so enjoyable.

GETTING BACK INTO THE WATER

As you receive this edition of Guidelines the opening up of borders should be in full swing. We are expecting massive interest in bookings to get back into the caves that we have missed for so long. Administration of this will be an ongoing challenge due to different rules applying to different states but one thing that will not change is the fact that most of us have been out of the water for a considerable time. In that time our skills and safety procedures can become a little rusty ie pre dive checks, buoyancy control, gear configuration. Both for the sake of your own and buddy's safety and cave conservation please take to time to do simple warm up dives to address any of these issues.

WEBSITE AND BOOKING SYSTEM

Our new website and stand alone booking system should be up and running by now. We have taken a little time with this as we did not want to be presenting something with bugs although some start up glitches can be expected. Please be patient through this period as the full replacement of both systems has been a very complex and time consuming project. Victoria may have something to add on this subject.

FOSSILS CAVE STATE HERITAGE LISTING

The process to designate Fossils cave as a State Heritage listed site continues with the CDAA providing important input into the process. Should be more to report on this in the next issue of Guidelines.

In closing thanks again to our outgoing Directors who continue to provide support to the us newbies in what is a complicated handover procedure.

I have no illusions that the next couple of years will not be a challenge with the myriad of ongoing projects to deal with. Landowner consultations continue, with our overall concerns regarding safety and conservation at the fore front of our discussions. More on this at a later date.

Cheers Rick Nash #4187
CDAA National Director

*On behalf of the
National Committee*



Michael Lariakos,
Business Director



Kelvyn Ball,
Site Director



Tim Featonby,
Standards Director



Victoria Hudson,
Publications and
Records Director



SITE REPORT

KELVYN BALL



With Borders opening soon, I shall start with some housekeeping.

- All divers please be cautious, refresh your skills, plan your dives well and look after the site you are diving in. It's been a while for some of us. It would also be greatly appreciated if site bookings could be left to the interstate divers coming back for a bit if there looks to be an influx.

- The new website and booking system is up and running with a lot of dedication from directors, past and present. Please be patient with bookings and let us know of any issues. As with all new programs, we expect there will be some minor hiccups to be found. It is worth noting that we have set bookings to close up to 48 hours prior to the day you plan on diving. This is to allow our booking officers time to complete their checks. The booking officers are volunteers so please be respectful that they have other jobs as well.

- With the recent change in booking site, all indemnities will be approved upon booking. You will need to click to confirm that you agree to the Terms and Conditions and Site Indemnity, each time a booking is made.

- Tank Cave Access Officers. All current AO's have come across from old site and we are freezing all new applications until 31/03/2021. At this point we will be asking everyone who wishes to continue to reapply. On approval, this will be the last time you need to re-apply unless you are subject to disciplinary action or drop back to non-diving membership etc. It is also worth noting that all AO's are approved or rejected by the directorship and submitting an application does not guarantee approval.

Forestry SA has sent a reminder email of upcoming Fire Danger Season. Fire Season for the Limestone Coast has been declared to start November 22nd, 2021, and will run through to likely April.

[\(https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/bans-and-ratings/fire-danger-season-dates/\)](https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/bans-and-ratings/fire-danger-season-dates/)

Can we please remind divers to check the CFS web-

site when booking, to ensure their planned dive date can avoid a possible Total Fire Ban. The CFS offer a guide of up to 4 days which is available here:

<https://cfs.sa.gov.au/bans-and-ratings/>

ForestrySA closely monitor fire ban ratings for the region and close the forest on declared TFB days, including cave sites. Being aware of TFB days is the responsibility of all forest visitors, including divers.

If a booking is made and it falls on a declared TFB day, the diver may receive an email from the Ranger regarding their booking. Alternatively, divers are asked to seek an alternate date change or offer a % refund by emailing recreation@forestrysa.com.au prior to their booking time.

ForestrySA Rangers, fire crews and other forest owners patrol the forests on TFB days. Safety to the public, permit holders and our staff is paramount. ForestrySA endeavor to provide a safe experience to permit holders and as always we appreciate the organisations promotion about the fire season.

As usual with the borders closed, I haven't been able to physically do a lot except skype meetings with Directors and Landowners and ask divers to keep me up to date about site conditions.

It has been great to see some zoom meetings happening to keep divers who have been unable to dive interested and keen. A great resource to have.

Unfortunately, with borders opening I still will not be able to get over to do the Tank Cave Toilet Installation until early January as work commitments (ie harvesting crops) will hold me up. As soon as I can bring them over and get them installed, I will.

SPECIAL REQUEST

I am working on getting another cave open and need a Hydrologist to do water samples and a report. Is there anyone with these skills/certs in our membership who is able to volunteer? If so, please contact me. Alternatively, if anyone has any recommendations, please contact me.

Enjoy your diving and stay safe. I am definitely jealous. Cheers to the New Year!

KELVYN BALL #3276



Hello all! Well a few weeks ago the last thing on my mind was writing my first Directors report for Guidelines!! Nevertheless things have been moving quickly in recent times and with Mary-Anne deciding to stand down, I got a call to help and was very happy to do so.

Firstly, even though I've only been involved for a week or two, there is a power of work going on behind the scenes on a range of topics. None of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the previous committee. In particular I want to thank Mary-Anne. She has gone to great lengths to establish a very professional system for the CDAA on the Business side and while still work in progress, has been very generous and organised in handing over her responsibilities to me. I am hopeful I can persuade her to continue serving in some capacity!!

With the new website looking to go live it has certainly been a baptism of fire but what a great team to work with, everyone pulling together to get things done! I am certainly looking forward to working with them in the future.

Needless to say, having only just started, I don't have a lot to report directly from the Business side other than getting things swapped over from Mary-Anne and keeping things running on the payments side and helping out where I can on the new website.

I am lucky to be joining the Committee at an exciting time. Many changes are a foot, we have a number of new committee members and excellent balance of experience and enthusiasm. With that in mind I have a number of thoughts about new initiatives that we could pursue. However, before I get too carried away by those thoughts, what I would really like to do is hear from you. After all this association is set up to facilitate safe and wide ranging cave diving for you.

With that in mind, I intend to run a number of small "focus group" type sessions to hear from everyone who is kind enough to participate, what you want and need from the CDAA in the future. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to drop me a note at business@cavedivers.com.au with any initial thoughts you may have or just to say hi.

Finally looks like things are opening up and for some, a chance to get back into the water after quite a break. I know for me that will involve evicting a few spiders from the dive gear, a quick service on the car and taking it nice and slowly when I get back in the water hoping I can still remember how to do it! Safe diving everyone!!

Michael Liarakos #5182
Business Director



G'day All,
I hope everyone is well and getting ready for boarders to open up.

We have a new website with a new booking system. Everything new is a bit painful to start with but we will all learn how to use it quickly enough.

You will find that all members are able to book on to all sites. This means that you may be able to book on to sites you are not yet qualified to do, ie, basic cave members booking onto cave sites. I would like to remind you that you are not allowed to dive sites you are not qualified for. When you book a site you are waitlisted until your qualification is checked. If you

are attempting to book sites you are not qualified to dive you will be rejected at this stage and your booking cancelled.

I expect that there may be quite a number of people coming back to Mount Gambier to dive. I ask that you show curtesy and respect to others and don't overbook if you're not intending to dive.

Lastly be sensible and ease yourself back into it especially if you haven't been diving for a while.

Take care and be safe.
Tim Featonby #3372
Standards Director

NEW CDAA WEBSITE LAUNCHED NOVEMBER 2021

The new CDAA website is now live. Physically, it looks very similar to the website we're all familiar with however there are a few changes that are worth mentioning here.

Membership Cards:

These are now digital and will replace the plastic cards that have traditionally mailed out to all members on renewal. You will see that they still include an expiry date, highest qualification details and member photo.

Members will have the choice to renew at their current level from 120 days prior to their current expiry date. Renewing at a higher level (e.g., Non-Diving upgrading to Diving) can occur at any time.

Printed certification cards will still be supplied when divers complete courses (Basic Cave/Cave/Advanced Cave). If you need a replacement because you've lost one or need names updated, these are available at a cost of \$25. Please contact records@cavedivers.com.au to arrange this.

Tank Cave Access Officers:

You will see that you have an added card to show that you are an Access Officer. This has been created to aid our booking officer to quickly identify you when he checks the bookings. As mentioned in Kelwyn BALL's site report – all current AO applications will all expire on 31-MAR-2022. At this time, we ask everyone who wishes to continue to reapply. On approval, AO status will remain active unless a member is subject to disciplinary actions or drops from Diving Member to Non-Diving Member status.

Site Access Officer - Kilsby's Sinkhole & Tank Cave

If you are the designated Tank Cave Access Officer or Site Access Officer for Kilsby's (first diver booked as per CDAA Regulations), you will receive an email from the Booking Officer with a list of all divers booked to dive the site on the day. It is your responsibility to ensure only divers on the list supplied dive the site on that day.

Dive Sites:

This page has changed significantly, with dive sites now listed alphabetically and according to state. We are in the process of re writing the site descriptions to describe the dive. If there is anyone willing to volunteer to aid with this – please contact publications@cavedivers.com.au

Bookings:

Again, this page has changed significantly. Although likely to change down the track, you will notice all members are able to book onto any site. Please only book onto sites you are qualified to dive. Each booking and divers' qualifications are physically checked by a booking officer and your booking will be placed onto a "Waitlist" until this has occurred. You are not eligible to dive a site until you receive an email noting that your booking is confirmed.

All dive sites are set to close booking availability 24-48 hours prior to the date of the booking. This allows the booking officers to conduct the necessary checks. Although this is a new process for the CDAA, it has been common practice for both Forestry SA and DEW sites for several years now.

The website is a work in progress, and we welcome constructive suggestions on how you think it could be improved or things you would like to see.
Please email publications@cavedivers.com.au with feedback.

Did you know?

You can opt for an electronic copy of Guidelines rather than a paper copy.

Simply Log in and Edit your Membership Details by these steps...

1. 'My Profile' - 2. View My Membership - 3. View Membership - 4. Edit

Denée - Belgian Black marble mine

Photo Story by Kurt Storms

In the past, a lot of black marble was mined in Belgium, mainly on the Namur sides. Mining was an important pillar in the past. The black marble is distributed world-wide. One of these mining places was the black marble mine Denée.

The Carrière is a well-known mine among Belgian cave divers. Once I also took my first steps in cave diving here.

It's a one-hour drive from my home, so I spend some time here on a regular basis with my buddy Willem Verrycken. The mine is closed off with a fence.

To get access you have to be a member of VVS or UBS, I am a member of VVS (vlaamse vereniging van speleogen).

Today, it's time to take my wife Caroline

Massie and former student Nico Seymus into this beautiful underwater world. Both have recently become members of VVS, but have never dived here before.

I agree with Nico that he will pick up a key so that we can enter the system. The key will be ready in a locker at the covenant house.

We arrive at 10 o'clock, and as usual Nico is right on time and eager to get to the parking lot.

First I explain to Caroline and Nico what it's



A tricky access and entry but a treasure trove awaits.

like here, what they can expect and see. After the briefing we load everything, using speleo bags to make transport easier.

Access to the mine is via a steep drop, for this we use a rope. There is a lot of rubbish down there, two years ago they removed two containers of rubbish, but you can still see the remains, car tyres, fridges that were dumped here in the past.

Even a small car wreck was once brought down here. After a few rides up and down, we are ready to change and put our dry-suits on.

Once ready and at the water's edge, we gear up. S-drill and our heads disappear under the water for the bubble check. We dive in 1 team of 3 divers. The corridors are large and the water is very clear, making visibility enormous. After about 50 metres we come to a fork, here

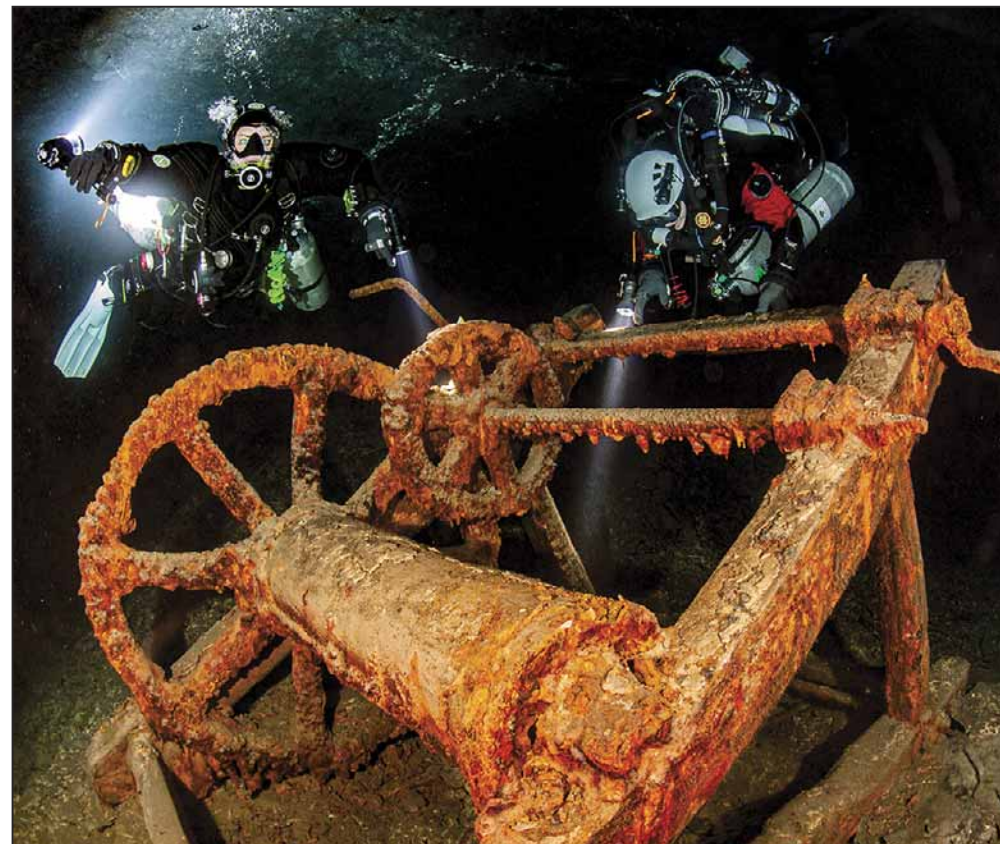
I take the right-hand side.

We pass some remains such as a large wheel. I sign here to pose for a moment so that I can take some photos. Then we continue along the corridor and here and there I turn around to take a picture and check whether everything is all right with the team, especially since they are here for the first time.

After about 30 minutes, we return to the exit. Here I am overwhelmed by the beautiful words and amazement. After a small break of about 5 minutes, we leave again and take the left passage.

After about 10 minutes, we reach the end and return.

Denée is a very beautiful mine, but very sporty when it comes to transposing from and to the waterfront.



Caroline and Nico discover a rusted winch



Caroline in front with Nico behind.



The Gallery

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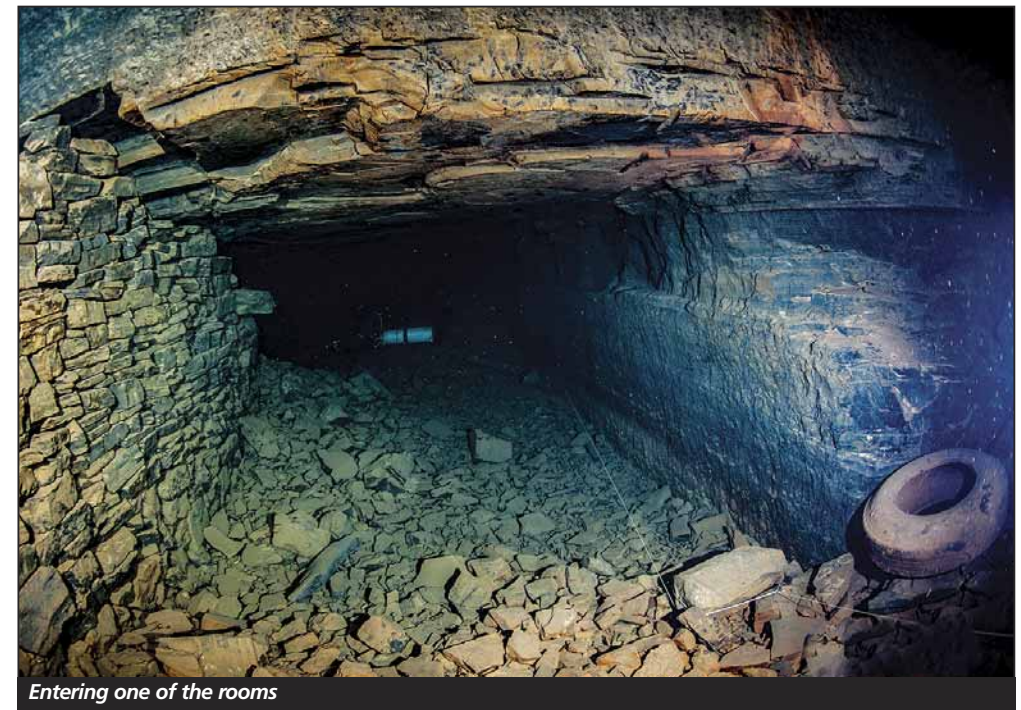
The Wheel



Wall of Slate



Caroline getting used to having her photo taken.



Entering one of the rooms

The Cave (2019)

By Meggan Anderson #CDAA 4942

Growing up, going to the movies was a big deal and a special treat. The closest cinema was 80km away until I was in high school and then they opened one in the neighbouring town over 30km away. I remember watching Titanic there in 1998 and it lost sound because it was owned by the guy whose only prior experience was owning a fruit and veg shop, so my best friend decided to dub the old lady's voice and make sound effects. At university I lived across the road from a 2-storey cinema in Cape Town with art movies on the bottom level and commercial movies on the top level. I didn't have classes on a Tuesday, and it was half price so I would often watch 2 movies every Tuesday. I like watching movies with friends and I like watching movies on my own. I have a lot of memories about where in the world I have watched movies and who I was with at the time.

I currently live near Event Cinemas Marion in Adelaide, which is probably the largest cinema in South Australia. When I was a student at Flinders University, they employed a lot of students and it was a coveted job. Over the years I have still gone to the cinema but usually only once a year in Gold Class or to charity or special documentary screenings at the older cinemas. Then Covid hit. If video killed the radio star, then Covid killed the cinema. And that made me sad and guilty because I subscribe to about 5 different streaming apps. I went to the movies one Sunday morning during Covid and I was the only one in the theatre. The last time that has happened to me was in 2004, when I was living in London and had a random weekday off work and found a cinema showing an obscure limited release movie I had been wanting to watch for some time. The staff are gone. The tickets are now all sold by machine, no one checks them at the door and there is only one person working in the candy bar. So when the CDAA got an email from the promoter of the movie The Cave (2019) offering free tickets to give away despite half the country being in lockdown, I thought it was a good excuse for an outing to the movies (no I did not get free tickets, I am not that corrupt lol). I am trying

to make a more concerted effort to support cinemas, a place that has always held happy memories for me. Two CDAA friends joined me at the Marion cinema and armed with our popcorn and me with my Choc Top, we sat down to watch The Cave.

Firstly, The Cave is not the slick Hollywood production filled with celebrity actors and directed by Ron Howard. That one is called Thirteen Lives and is slated for release in 2022. The Cave is a 2019 Thai production and feels more like a re-enacted documentary than the typical movie with elements added for extra dramatic effect. Even the soundtrack was toned down. Elizabeth Kerr described the film in The Hollywood Reporter as "a technically proficient but unemotional rescue drama." And that pretty much sums it up to a tee. It is apparently the first feature film that came out about the rescue. The main characters the film focuses on are those who were played by themselves - water pump manufacturer Nopadol Niyomka and especially, Ireland-based cave diver Jim Warny. Divers Mikko Passi, Tan Xiaolong and Erik Brown also played themselves. The higher profile divers in the rescue - such as John Volanthen, Rick Stanton and our own Harry (aka Dr. Richard Harris) barely featured. In fact, Harry was

played by some random Aussie who when he briefly popped up on screen, I had visions of a casting director or whoever casts actors going "Oh yeah we need a brief scene with the doctor, go find me an Aussie male somewhere, any Aussie will do." The actor playing him did not look like some adventurous cave diver but more like a daggy dad manning the Bunnings BBQ for the Rotary Club on a Saturday afternoon. He is simply credited as Ross W. Clarkson as "the Australian doctor." The decision to drug the children is therefore completely glossed over. I feel that is one of the failures of the movie and which is why I would never consider it as a movie about the rescue that can eliminate the need to watch anything else. So, if you are looking for a movie that features the high-profile players and covers off on the ethical dilemmas and behind the scenes decision making processes, you will be disappointed. That is not to say the other people involved did not matter, they did and that is what made this film interesting to me - we got a chance to learn about the other players in the rescue who did not get as much media coverage. For example, during the film I googled Jim Warny to find out if

he was made up because I had never heard of the guy. Turns out he is real. He is first introduced as a normal bloke living in Ireland, who just happens to cave dive but also lost a dive buddy to the sport. Jim's life is depicted as so ordinary and non-glamorous that when his friend dropped him off at the airport, I noticed his car didn't have any hub caps.

The strength of this film is the diving and technical scenes because they are done by actual cave divers who were involved and are therefore an accurate reflection of what is involved. There is none of that "oh my goodness the equipment is totally wrong" or talking about "oxygen in the tank" (a pet peeve of mine in media reports, where they refer to oxygen

tanks instead of saying air). In fact, it was more of a case of "oh cool he uses the same regs as me." The movie shows them as showing up and simply doing the job in a pragmatic and non-dramatic fashion. A lot of time was devoted to the death of Saman Kunan, the former Thai Navy SEAL diver who tragically died and I feel this was tastefully done. A character who intrigued me was water pump manufacturer Nopadol Niyomka, who in the film faces a lot of illogical red tape in his efforts to assist with the rescue. Apparently, this depiction caused a lot of controversy with the governor. I never ever thought I would find turbo jet pumps interesting. One of my dive buddies thought too much time was devoted to him but I enjoyed learning about someone who was integral to the rescue in a non-diving capacity. It shone a light to another component of what was involved in making the rescue a success.



A scene from the movie

So, is the movie worth watching? I would say it is, as you learn about aspects and people involved in the rescue that you don't really learn about anywhere else. As it is a Thai production, there is also a focus on the locals and their experiences at the time. It's a story about ordinary people who happen to have obscure skills and hobbies that no one usually paid attention to until this amazing rescue was pulled off. How factual is it? Apparently according to my research, it gets pretty close for a movie, but I will never know because I was not there. I am however looking forward to Ron Howard's version as a comparison - something tells me all the cars depicted in that version will have hub caps.

EMERGENCY PLANNING INFORMATION

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Always inform someone (who is not part of your dive team) of your dive plan
- Be prepared, and ensure you can provide critical information (such as your location) to emergency services when required
- Always plan your dive and dive your plan!
- Be trained to administer First Aid and CPR. It's better to have it and not need it, than need it and not know what to do!

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT RESPONSE:

In the event of an incident or accident, CDAA members are to:

1. Assist the person or persons injured.
2. Contact emergency services (if needed) and provide clear and accurate information:
 - a. **WHAT** is the emergency?
 - b. **WHERE** is the emergency? Provide relevant information – street address, GPS coordinates, nearby landmarks.
 - c. **HOW** do emergency services access the site? If possible, direct another member to meet emergency services at the road or a nearby intersection and direct them towards the emergency
 - d. Provide the **NAME** of the injured person/s.
 - e. Provide **YOUR NAME** and contact details.
3. While you are waiting for emergency services record as much relevant information as possible, including times, names and contact details and events leading to incident.
4. Contact the CDAA National Director and/or the CDAA Site Director as soon as possible

MISSING/OVERDUE DIVER:

In the event that a diver has not returned to the surface by the expected time, it is important that members act quickly as time is of the essence. As a guide, if a diver is 15 MINUTES or more over their expected run-time, members are advised to;

1. Contact the CDAA Search & Recovery (SAR) Officer. In the event that the SAR Officer cannot be contacted, call the National Director, or Site Director. Follow the directions provided by the SAR Officer or relevant Director.
2. Provide as much information as you can – names of the missing divers, summary of the dive plan, time the divers entered the water, equipment configuration used, expected run time, time overdue.
3. Establish an appropriate course of action. Consideration should be given to the dive plan, extent of penetration and gas reserves of the missing/overdue divers. Are there other divers on site (or nearby) who may be able to assist with an emergency search. **Note: a search should ONLY be considered if divers available are suitably experienced, equipped, and have sufficient (additional) gas to undertake a search and provide assistance.**
4. If no other divers are available to conduct a search or the missing/overdue divers are not located and have not otherwise returned within the timeframe decided, enact the **ACCIDENT/INCIDENT RESPONSE** procedures listed above.

DECEASED DIVER:

1. If a diver is found to be deceased within the cave, do not disturb the scene. If possible, try to note down pertinent information - location, position, remaining gas, computer runtime, then return to the surface as soon as possible.
2. Contact the CDAA National Director and the CDAA Search & Recovery (SAR) Officer immediately. The SAR Officer will liaise with the relevant authorities as required.

NOTE: Members are advised not to make any statements regarding incidents or accidents to members of the public, to landowners, to the media, or via any other platform/media. Please direct all associated enquiries to the National Director for comment.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Police, Ambulance, Fire	000 or 112 (mobile)	CDAA National Director – Rick Nash	0438 815 643
State Emergency Services	132 500	CDAA Site Director – Kelynn Ball	0428 842 259
Mt Gambier Hospital	8721 1200	CDAA SAR Officer – Richard Harris	0417 177 830
Divers Emergency Service (DAN)	1800 088 200	CDAA SAR Officer – Phillip Croker	0423 393 347

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The Laplet slate mine in Belgium

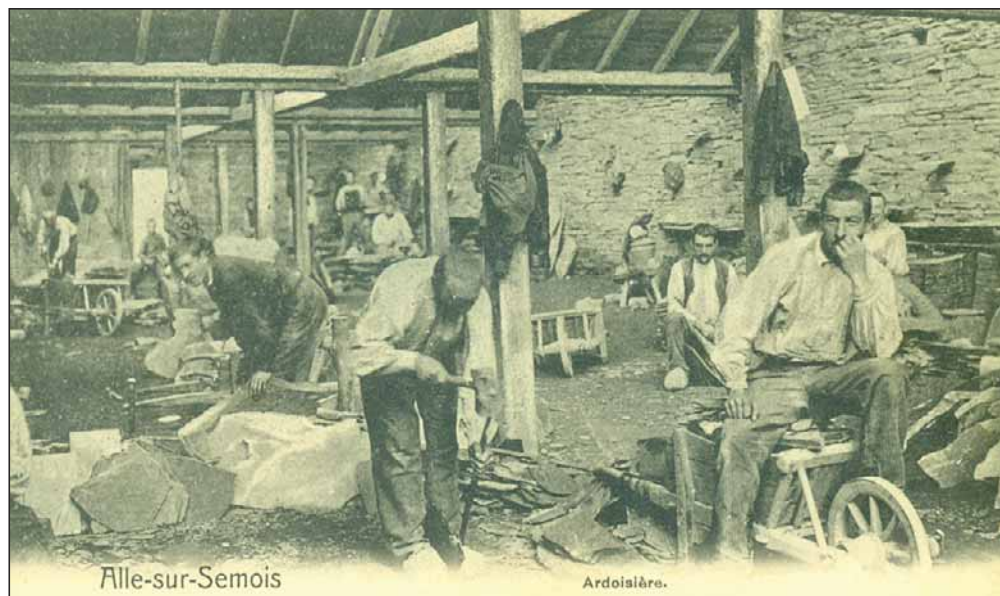
First visit in more than 100 years!

Story and Photos by Vic Verlinden

For a cave diver it is always an exciting moment to be the first to dive at a location that has not been visited by other divers before. The Laplet slate mine in Belgian Ardennes was such a location for our small group of explorers.

In the past, especially in the 19th century, the south of Belgium had an important industry with the extraction of various rocks from the subsurface. Especially marble and slate were brought to the surface by thousands of workers from the numerous mines. It was a flourishing industry that provided work for entire villages. The slate was used for various purposes, but mainly for roofing. It was hard labor to bring the stones from sometimes more than 100m deep to the surface and often there were victims due accidents. The Laplet

mine in Vresse Sur Semois (Province of Namur) was opened in 1856 by a certain Balthazar Hoffman. He had a concession for 99 years. It was a thriving business that over the years was sold to other owners. Between 1871 and 1881 more than 2,200,000kg of slate were brought to the surface. But in the early 20th century it became increasingly difficult to pay the costs of mining. In 1913, the mine was closed for good and the estate was given a different use.



An unexpected discovery

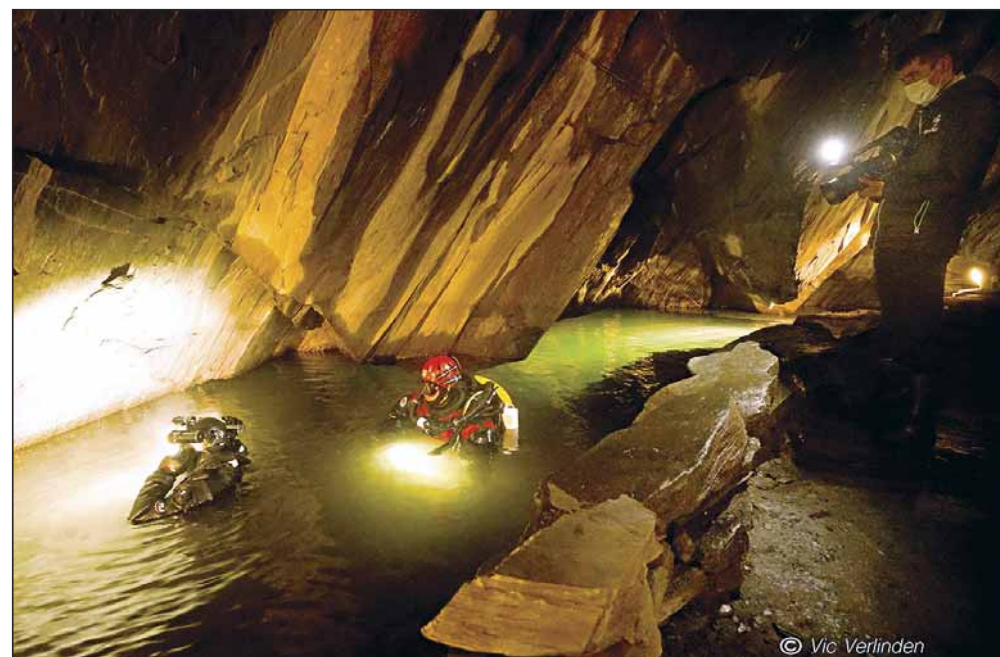
I first heard about the Laplet Mine from my friends Bram Vangorp and Patrik Tuteleers. They had visited the site where the mine was located and were kindly received by the current owner. The domain is now operated as a hotel. To their great surprise, there was still an access to the slate mine that was located under his domain. The original building is still there and right next to it is the current entrance to the mine. Through a concrete cover they could descend into the shaft with a small ladder. Thirty metres down, the mine was completely flooded. The water looked crystal clear. Laplet was known in the past as the largest mine in the area and we did not know at the time how far we could penetrate into the labyrinth of corridors. Importantly, they had permission from the owner to dive to make photo and video footage. A week later, I joined them for a first dive into the system. I formed a team with Bram to do the first exploration of this mine in over a hundred years and that gave a bit of excitement.

The first dives

I would be diving with a rebreather and Bram with an open system. When we were ready to leave, the water had already become quite cloudy due to

the movements we had made and the dust we had stirred up. It did not look very promising when I stuck my head under water and could barely see 30 cm far. The pool we were in was not very large and we could descend a few metres but still not find a passage to the galleries of the mine. Because visibility was getting so bad I decided to end the dive and we swam back to the surface. Bram told me that he might have seen a passage and that he would check it out in the afternoon. After a few hours of waiting, Bram and Kurt Storms started their second attempt to find a passage. They had more success during their second attempt and could find a passage to a depth of about 30 metres. The first part was not so good with the visibility but in the deeper part it became crystal clear. They made a nice dive and could see that the main gallery had several side corridors. This was a major breakthrough for the team to do further exploration in this historic site.

The following week we made another appointment to dive again. We had also found that it was quite difficult to get all the necessary equipment down into the mine. The descent along the small ladder was difficult and required a lot of our strength. It was also dangerous to have a deco accident after a deeper dive. So we decided that



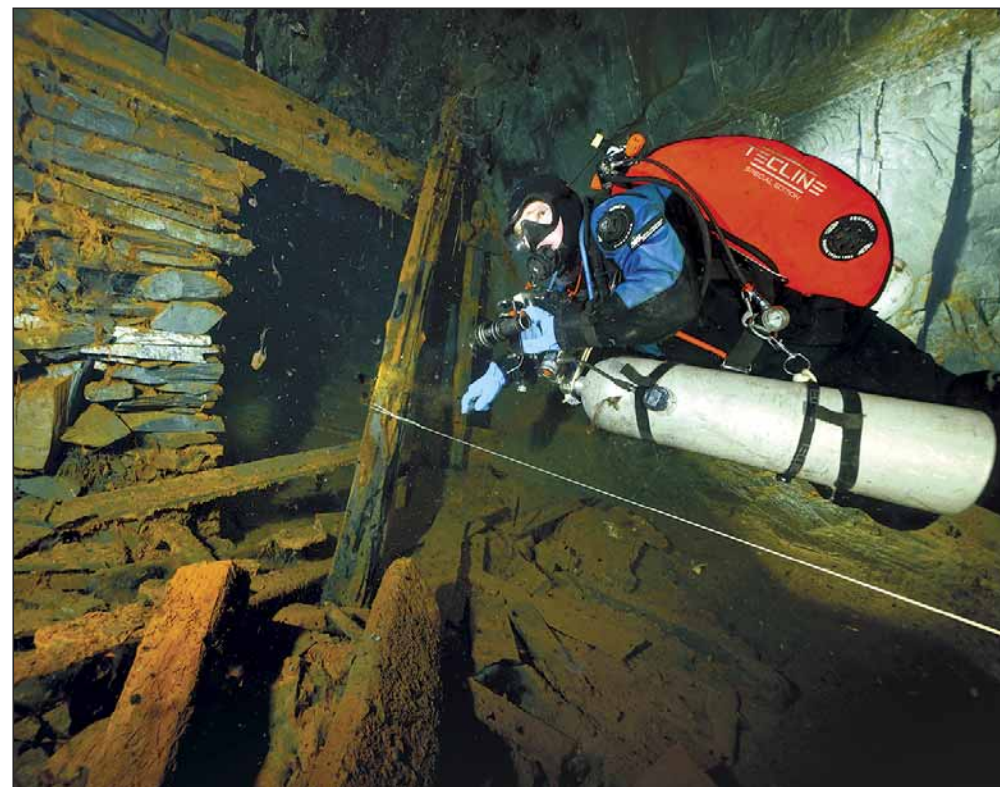
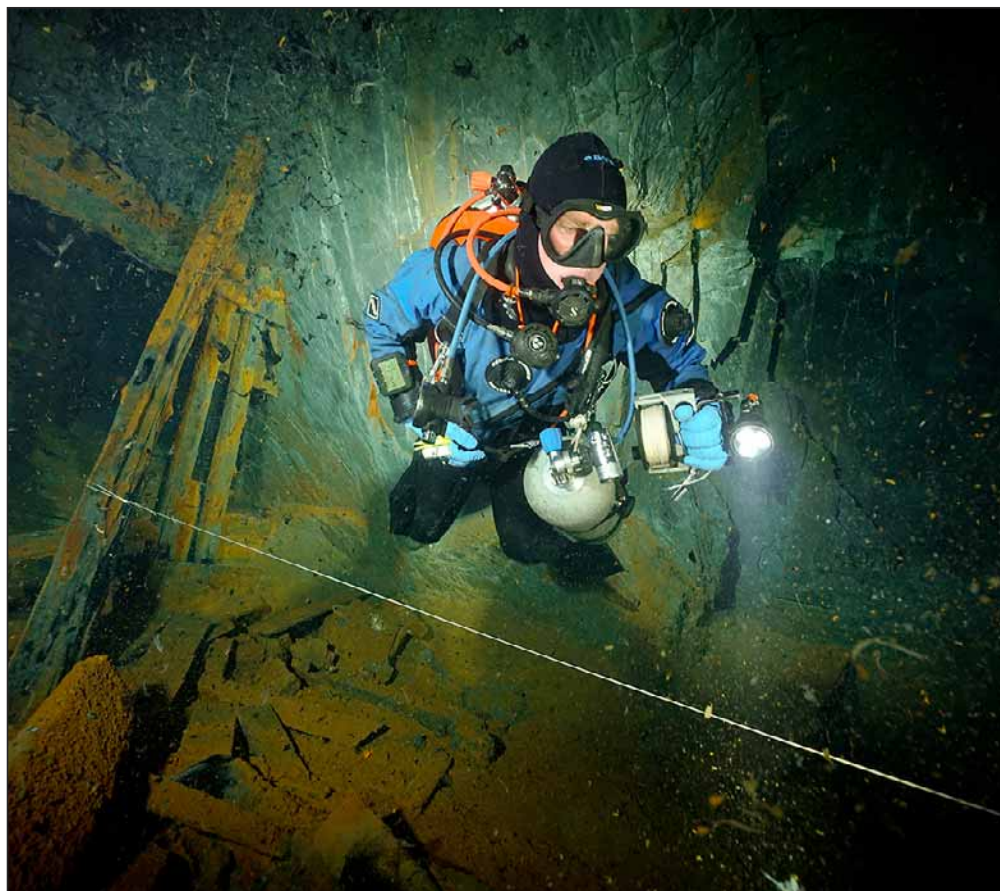
we needed more help lugging the diving equipment and the photo and video cameras . It was agreed that one team would dive and the other would help carry the equipment in and out.

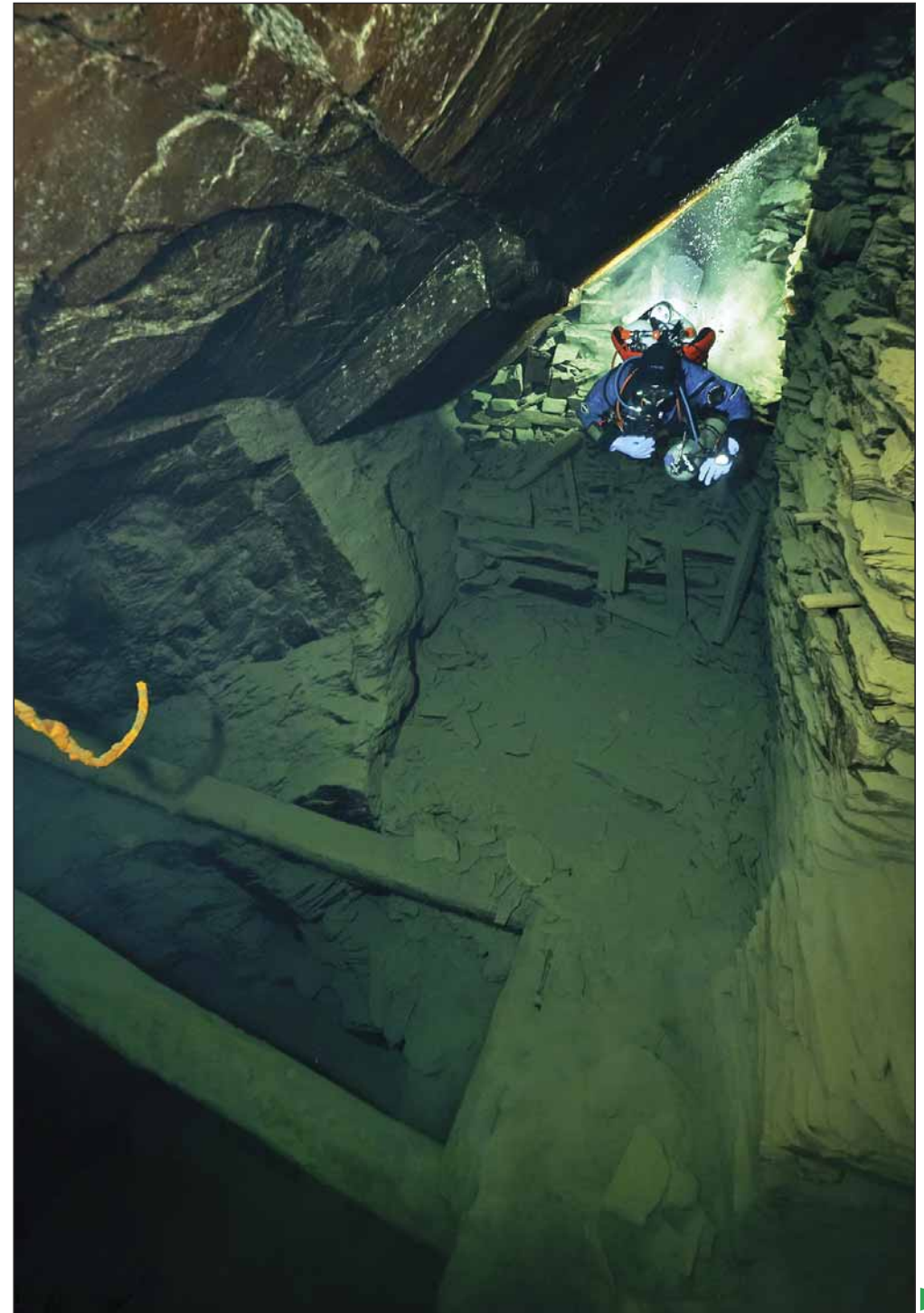
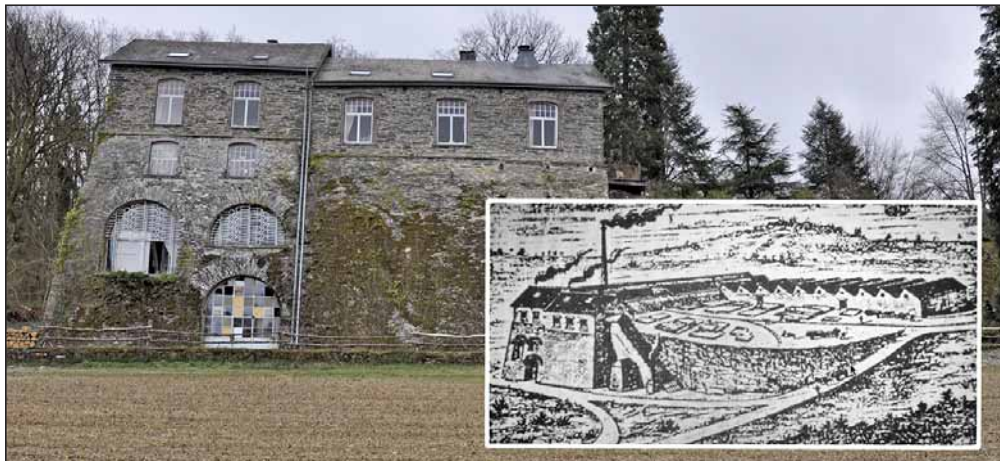
Diving where no one has been in more than 100 years!

I was going to make a team with Wim and Kurt for this dive to try to take pictures in the big room they had seen the previous dive. So I mounted a slave flash on Kurt's rebreather. I got a signal from the other team that they were almost done and I lowered myself to a depth of 6 meters and waited there for the other two divers from my team. However, it took a long time and as the visibility was getting worse I decided to leave on my own. I suspected that there was a technical problem in the other team and did not want to wait until the visibility was zero like during my first dive. The first

few meters the visibility was still bad but then it became crystal clear and I could follow the laid line with great ease. I was in a fairly wide corridor that quickly descended to a depth of 30 meters. On both sides of this corridor there were other side corridors of different sizes. In the large corridor there were thick tree trunks that served as supports. Along the way, I came across several ladders that had been left behind when the last stonemason had gone up more than 100 years ago. At the end of the large room, I saw that there were two more corridors leading to a deeper area and I decided to follow one of them. The corridor quickly went deeper again and along the way I saw all kinds of objects that I could not immediately identify.

At a depth of 63 meters, I did not immediately see a next connection and I decided to turn back. On the way back I met my dive team who were mak-





ing the descent. After 15 minutes of decompression I was back on the surface and could tell my story. It had been a wonderful dive in a unique location. I had made some nice pictures but unfortunately there was no diver to be seen on them.

The next weekend I made a dive with Bram Vangorp to explore the different side passages. This was another dive where there were more

questions than answers as we inspected the different rooms. But during this dive we did take the necessary pictures. I think this mine still hides many secrets and we will make many nice discoveries in this mine where time stood still in 1913.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Vic Verlinden (Belgium). Diving since 1975. CCR cave and wreck diver. Underwater photographer and author of 4 books. (Diving for treasure).

Have written articles for diving magazines in Russia, China, USA, Germany, UK, Belgium etc.. and a guest speaker on all major technical dive shows.

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HMS ROYAL OAK - 80 YEARS UNDERWATER OZDIVE SHOW PODCAST 4!

Have you caught the podcast yet? **Dr Peter Buzzacott** kicked off with his excellent presentation on Diving near misses, Injuries and Fatalities... so, so good.

Following hard on Peter's heels, **Dr Neal Pollock** provided an intriguing and informative Knowns & Unknowns in Breath-Hold Diving (in which I learnt a lot!) and this dovetails very neatly with a recent discussion in InDepth Magazine by Charly Stringer on the potential increased health benefits if scuba divers switched to the Frenzel method of equalising.

AND today, **Emily Turton** takes us back to the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow. Emily tells the extraordinary story of this great battle-ship catastrophe, extra special because this wreck is a protected war grave and cannot be dived by 'regular' divers.



Links and additional information is posted on the website for each pod:
<https://ozdiveshow.com.au/OZDive-Show-Podcast>

Hosted by Dean Laffan and **Michael Menduno** (M2), with the odd sound bite from myself (Sue Crowe), this bi-weekly podcast provides insight into the incredible diving stories, research and adventures you can expect to see in October 2022!



HMS Royal Oak was sunk by torpedo attack in Scapa Flow with the loss of 835 men and boys. The 80th anniversary Royal Oak White Ensign flies over her. We will remember them.



The OZDive Show Podcast can be found at **Apple, Spotify, Amazon or anywhere you find your podcasts.**

For those who have never attended a show, these podcasts provide a snippet of the camaraderie, topics and a taste of what is to come.

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NAME	Basic Cave	Cave	Adv. Cave	NAME	Basic Cave	Cave	Adv. Cave
NEW SOUTH WALES				VICTORIA Continued			
 FEATONBY, Tim (CDAА 3327) Worwong Heights, NSW Mob: 0402 129 253 E: tim.featonby@hotmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 DALLA-ZUANNA, John (CDAА 236) Mob: 0407 887 060 E: jdz@paintandcustom.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
SOUTH AUSTRALIA				 DALE, Steve (CDAА 3926) Mob: 0468 417 211 Email: info@extremewatersport.com.au	Yes	Yes	
 PAYNE, Timothy (CDAА 2640) Mob: 0448 147 927 E: Tim@diveessentials.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 EDWARDS, Chris (CDAА 2247) Mob: 0417 116 372 Email: chrisedwards01@me.com	Yes		
VICTORIA				 MONACO, Rubens (CDAА 1731) Mob: 0413 429 533 E: info@idcscuba.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
 BARCLAY, Gary (CDAА 1735) Mob: 0407 527 921 E: garinda@bigpond.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	WESTERN AUSTRALIA			
 BOWMAN, Jane (CDAА 1880) Mob: 0407 566 455 E: janelbowman@hotmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 BICANIC, Josip (CDAА 4691) Mob: 0412 571 779 Email: joseph_b@me.com	Yes	Yes	
 CLARIDGE, Linda (CDAА 2214) Mob: 0408 052 070 E: garinda@tpgi.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes				



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