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C.D.A.A. Newsletter

No. 159 - MARCH 2022



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Front Cover:
Andrea Russo
in Tank Cave
at Marker A52.

Photo by
Stewart Donn.

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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

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Pine Tank Lodge



Photo by Liz Rogers

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Publications Report Sherryn Amor

Welcome all to the first Guidelines of the new year, and with it brings a change to the Publications & Records Director position.

Unfortunately Victoria has had to step down from this position, and I was approached to take on the role, so here we are! With only 2 weeks in so far, I'm still finding my feet, and learning the system, so please be patient while I've got the "L" plates on.

I'd like to thank Victoria for her assistance in the handover, for her help with learning to edit the new website, and getting my head around the bookings system and Guidelines. It's been a challenge, and I'm so grateful she has been there to help, and answer my emails and phone calls! It can't be understated the amount of time and effort that Victoria has put in to get the website up and running to this point. It's an amazing achievement, and I'm certainly glad to be taking over at this stage of the process!

Thanks also to Brendan, our Records Officer, who has been a great help so far in answering membership queries, and renewals.

Just a reminder that the bookings system is still a fairly manual process, so please be considerate of the booking officers, and try to book well ahead so that there is time to process the bookings. Confirmed bookings also have to be manually updated on the webpage so again, please be patient!

There are still some teething problems with the new website, mainly around logon issues, so if you need any help, send me an email and I'll help you out. Please also log on, and check that all your details are correct, upload a photo for your digital card, and update your next of kin details. Again, if you need any help, get in contact, and I'll give you a hand.

We are always looking for members to contribute articles, stories, photos etc to Guidelines, so please send anything through to publications@cavedivers.com.au. We are really going to push to get a lot more member involvement going forward, so if you have anything to contribute, even some ideas for content, or what you would like to see in Guidelines - send it in.

As borders are opened again (mostly), it's great to see a lot of our members travelling to Mount Gambier again, and getting back to what we love doing.

Until next time, enjoy your diving!

Sherryn Amor #4994
Publications & Records Director
publications@cavediving.com.au

Did you know?

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WE NEED YOUR STORIES & PHOTOS FOR GUIDELINES

Articles for Guidelines June 2022 - Deadline is May 13th

- Send articles and jpeg images by email to seapics.davebryant@gmail.com

National Committee Update

MARCH 2022

Hi all,
Sitting here, post Christmas, and it seems like some sort of normality is coming back. Seems the worst of the last couple of years is behind us and hopefully we can get back to some sort of equilibrium.
Opening of the borders to SA just before Xmas must have been welcome news to Eastern state divers and was certainly apparent in the amount of site bookings for that period.
On a personal basis, I am settling into the job, and very excited for the future of the CDAA, with very positive discussion in the directors group about improvements and opportunities.
Fossils cave seems to be very close to State Heritage listing, more to come on that, but very good news.

Negotiations with Landowners/Stakeholders have been progressing very well, and Landowner liaison meetings have recommenced. This development is very important to the CDAA, in that as custodians of access, training, standards, we have a statutory obligation to keep the interested parties up to date with any changes that may affect their personal liabilities.

On that note, please have at the top of your mind, that access to the caves we dive is not guaranteed. We all have a part to play in preserving our access, and sometimes it's the little things that matter. Be respectful to landowners at all times, and please understand that every time we go to a dive site we are representatives of the CDAA, and our personal behaviour reflects on the whole organization.
Hoping that everyone is enjoying getting back into the clear water that we love so much.

Cheers Rick Nash #4187
CDAA National Director



On behalf of the
National Committee



Michael Liaraoks,
Business Director



Kelvyn Ball,
Site Director



Tim Featonby,
Standards Director



Sherryn Amor,
Publications and
Records Director

WE NEED YOUR AUSTRALIAN STORIES AND PHOTOS FOR GUIDELINES!

Hello CDAA Members...

*Many of You have indicated there is too much
European material published in Guidelines.*

These stories and photographs have allowed us to keep Guidelines running but now, more than ever, as we get back to normal life in Australia (hopefully) I hope all divers in the Association will get back to what YOU love, and when you next have a dive at your favourite cave site, we would love to receive a short story and photographs which will allow us to produce Guidelines with more Australian material. Thank you, Dave Bryant.

Site Report

Kelvyn Ball

Welcome to the New Year, hopefully it will involve more diving for everyone this year. Thank you to the Geoff Paynter, WA State Representative for his involvement over the years and welcome to Jamie Hardwick for taking on this role.

Little Blue will not be open for bookings April 4 to 10, 2022 as police divers are using the site for training.

The Shaft is open once again and we will post dates as they become available.

A Land Liaison meeting is organised at The Bellum Hotel early March to catch up and chat to the landowners.

Tank Cave Committee has been meeting to

discuss rules, regulations and what else is wanted or needed at the site.

Tank Cave users, would be appreciated if divers could wash out the toilet when it gets muddy from shoes after rain and let AO know if toilet paper and disinfectants etc are needed.

KILSBY SITE ENTRY RULES UPDATED. Please check the website for the new requirements. Mainly to meet 30mins prior to booking like in the old days.

Cheers and safe diving!!

KELVYN BALL
CDAA SITE DIRECTOR

NEWLY CERTIFIED CAVE DIVERS

congratulations to these divers...



David Flinn, who has just passed his basic cave course.



Brian Harris, Nathalie Maher, and Andrew Bishop who have just completed their cave course.



Business Report

Michael Liarakos

Well time certainly flies when you are having fun. Plenty happening in CDAA land with borders opening up and diving re-commencing in earnest. It has been great to get over to Mt Gambier and reacquaint myself with some of our wonderful dive sites, as well as catching up with old dive buddies and making a couple of new ones. I hope you all have or will shortly have a chance to do the same!

While much on the Business side continues to tick along I have been involving myself in a number of activities to bolster my knowledge and history of the CDAA. In particular I want to thank my fellow Directors for their wealth of knowledge. I have been helping out on the Tank Cave Committee under Kelynn's leadership and also helping to renew the

Landholders Liaison Committee amongst a myriad of other tasks.

Speaking of other tasks, I am please to announce that Nathalie Mahler has been appointed to the newly created role of Media and Marketing Officer for the CDAA. Nathalie has hit the ground running and is preparing a draft social media strategy as well as getting stuck into a number of other activities. Now that Nathalie is onboard, I will also look to start getting some focus groups together to hear directly from all of you and building this feedback into our future strategic plans. Safe diving everyone!!

Michael Liarakos #5182
Business Director



Standards Report

Tim Featonby

Well, it looks like lockdowns are over and things are getting back towards normal. We may even be able to get back to the Nullarbor again soon. With borders opening up many divers used the opportunity to make their way to Mt Gambier in order to get back into the caves. We have had quite a number of members rejoin after having a break, some up over 10 years.

Our instructors have been very busy jumping straight back into the swing of things with numerous courses being run over the last few months which is great to see. Welcome to all the new members and congratulations to those who have advanced their knowledge and ability.

I would also like to congratulate Ryan Duchatel on successfully completing his basic cave instructor internship. We look forward to seeing him do well and to pass on his knowledge and passion to future members, and maintain the world leading high quality and standards of the CDAA.

We have another three instructors in the wings lined up for internships. This puts us in a very healthy position towards the future.

We are looking at introducing a digging permit system. This is not to hamper exploration or to restrict our members in any way, but rather to assist exploration in a safe, logical and legal way as well as keeping us in line with other caving agencies best prac-

tices. Members who wish to dig will be required to provide some information as to where, when, how and why they intend to alter a cave. The application will be assessed to ensure that there is no adverse potential palaeontological, ecological, or cultural damage to the site, and geologically to ensure that there is a real potential for the site that is intended to be altered to actually go somewhere.

We are also looking at introducing another application to alter or place new fixed line in caves. Again, there is no intention to restrict members' activities. The aim of this application is to ensure that any fixed lines that are in caves are placed in a safe and logical manner, that all members are made aware of any changes in the caves, and maps can be appropriately updated. The emergency fixing of fixed lines, and placing temporary lines in caves as part of ordinary diving activities is perfectly fine and will continue as normal. This application is intended just for permanent fixed lines, and will be submitted to the site director.

These two new forms are currently being drafted, and further information will be made available to all members once the permit system is up and running.

Be safe and follow the rules (they will keep you alive).

Tim Featonby #3372

Standards Director

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The Rescue Review - Giving the Audience What They Want!

Documentary Review by Meggan Anderson #CDAA 4942

'The Rescue' is a 2021 National Geographic documentary about the Thai Cave Rescue in 2018. It was directed and produced by the husband and wife team of Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, who also directed Free Solo. I watched it at my local cinema and at the time of going to press, it was streaming on Disney Plus.

As the opening credits start, we are given a brief introduction to the region, the Tham Luang Cave and how the boys came to be in the cave. We then move on to Day 2, where we meet those who were on the scene first, such as the Thai Navy SEALs and caver Vern Unsworth. Vern gives a piece of paper with the names of Rick Stanton and John Volanthen to the Thai tourism minister and from there the cave divers are introduced to the story and we move through the subsequent days. We see glimpses of the divers' everyday lives prior to being called up to assist. We learn about what attracted them to cave diving and how previous connections they had formed with each other resulted in the formation of the cave diving team. Divers interviewed include Rick Stanton, John Volanthen, our own

Richard Harris and Craig Challen, Connor Roe, Chris Jewell, Jason Mallison, Jim Warny (who featured in my movie review of The Cave in the previous issue of Guidelines), Josh Bratchley, Ben Reymenants and Mikko Paasi. Look out for a cameo of Harry's dog, Alfie. Harry's account of the moral and ethical dilemmas he faced really hit home and has been a topic that has been severely lacking in other documentaries that I have watched. In this documentary, the audience finally get the insights they want. While the primary focus of the film is the cave divers, other standout interviews are with the divers' spouses, Sgt. Derek Anderson, Dr. Pak, the British consul, Josh Morris and Valepon Gunan (the widow of Saman Gunan). Saman Gunan was featured in a lot of the footage, which highlighted the integral role he played and we learn about the cause of his death. The members of the soccer team did not tell their side of the story, as these rights were acquired by Netflix.

I don't want to give away too many spoilers as I want to encourage you to watch this film. I found the insights divers gave into what attracted them to the sport interesting. Common themes were that cave divers tend to be socially awkward (agree), not good at team sports (I better hide all my high school 1st team hockey shirts) and that cave diving provided peace, relaxation and an

escape from normal society (strongly agree). A few also mentioned the skill required in controlling fear and emotion - Chris Jewell gave the perspective that his level of detachment which may be viewed as a negative in everyday life is actually useful in cave diving. Rick Stanton makes an ironic comment that he feels cave divers are not team players, when this whole rescue was a successful exercise in teamwork. The number of people from all over the world from different skillsets working together like this is not common. This does not mean it was all rosy - there was clearly conflict and differences, even amongst the cave divers (who would've thought!). A clash between Rick and Ben was mentioned in Craig and Harry's book Against All Odds and Ben only briefly features in The Rescue. Rick Stanton however does give credit to Ben and acknowledges that Ben persevered during a period where he and John had given up. But he says it in a tone of voice that hints there was tension. However, I think the directors did the right thing in not addressing this, as it would've distracted from the rest of the story. Ben's experience is documented in the documentary 13 Lost - The Untold Story of the Thai Cave Rescue, which is also worth a watch. Underwater re-enactments for *The Rescue* were shot with the divers at Pinewood Studios in the UK, as the pandemic made it difficult to film in Thailand. However, the directors did manage to eventually get footage from in the cave from the

Thai Navy SEALs. I read the directors were worried the re-enactments may be over the top but instead they present as genuine. You can pinpoint the tense and anxious moments but they don't feel sensationalist. There are some tear-jerker moments in the documentary and most of them are brought on by Harry. The locals and their cultural and religious beliefs surrounding the cave are also featured, with some identifying the princess as the villain, however the real villain in this story is the weather.

Due to the large number of people involved in this rescue with different skill sets, it would be impossible to include every aspect of every person/group who played a part in a two hour documentary. There's definitely room there for a podcast series. However, *The Rescue* will definitely satisfy those interested in the cave diving aspect of the story. We are reminded how miraculous it is that none of the children or their coach met a fatal outcome and the risk the divers were willing to take with their plan when there were no other options left. Having to grapple with that mentally must have been immense, as their lives may have taken a completely different direction if the plan had not worked. I shudder at the thought of what that may have looked like, especially in a world where the media is so unforgiving.

The Rescue is streaming on Disney Plus.

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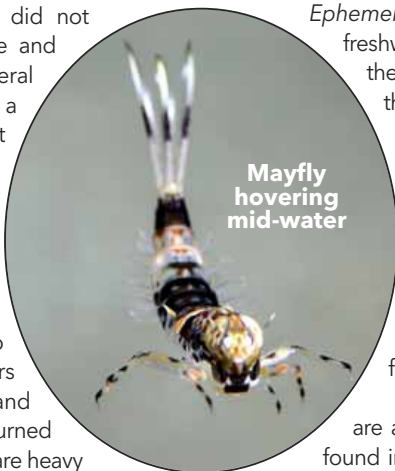
Wet Dream Cave Macro

Story and photos by Eli Wolpin.

It was a hurried trip to Wet Dream Cave in early August, the first of two. We got on the 5:15am ferry to Nanaimo and made it to camp by 1pm. In the back of our minds was the forecast, which called for heavy rain the following day. The Nomash Valley, in British Columbia Canada, is surrounded by steep mountains so when rain arrives, the river can rise quickly, making entry into the cave impossible.

So, with limited time off, we vowed to make the most of the trip and get two dives in that day. Exhausted and satisfied, we collapsed in our camp at 10pm that night, dives completed and bellies full after a warm meal. The rain started that night and continued through the next day.

Thankfully, the downpour did not completely wash out my dive and photography plans. For several years, I thought about bringing a macro camera set up into Wet Dream Cave. This year I finally brought my 60mm lens and flat port. I read about recent discoveries in local caves of new species, so I wondered what could be found. The cave is fed by the Nomash River, so disappears several kilometers upstream into a swallet and reemerges below a large upturned slab of limestone. When there are heavy rains or excessive melt water, the gravel and



Mayfly hovering mid-water

boulder-strewn riverbed swells, hiding the cave entrance below rapids. I knew that much of what I would find was likely life which had washed down into the cave from the river. During previous dives, I saw worms floating by and it was not unusual for a trout to photobomb a few hundred feet inside.

There are two avenues to search for life in the cave: mid-water and amongst the cave bottom consisting of coarse sand, gravel, rough and smooth scalloped rock. We peered into the darkness examining each speck as it floats by. Staring at the bottom while passing a light beam across, small critters catch your eye scrambling across the cave floor. The size varies between a few millimeters up to ten millimeters so keen vision is a must. Often, if you take your eye off the subject for an instant, you will not find it again.

We spotted many mayflies (order *Ephemeroptera*) which were in their freshwater aquatic form. They float in the water column until landing on the cave floor, skittering back and forth. In British Columbia, they generally hatch once a year and transition from nymph (aquatic) to adult emerging from the water. They are a favourite food of trout and often emulated by fly fishermen when they tie flies.

Stoneflies (order *Plecoptera*) are also another species which are found in the cave during their nymph (aquatic) stage of development. We found

them hanging on ceilings and scampering on the floor. Bubbles often knock them from their perch into the water so we would sometimes see them floating down. Colouration varied from lighter orange/white to darker brown. They are sensitive to water pollution, so their presence is generally a good indicator for water quality.

Cave specific species often lose their pigment as they have no use for colour in an environment devoid of light. When I spotted white amphipods

on the cave floor, I got excited. They moved faster and in a more random pattern than the preceding finds. I was able to get a few photos of them in focus. I would focus my camera to where I think they would be and hope I got the shutter off in that instant. Depth of field is often no more than two to three millimeters, so being in focus takes patience and luck.

I am not a biologist, so when we finished the trip, I asked around who would be able to identify



Primary explorer Peter Norris in the main tunnel

**Endemic cave amphipod
on the cave floor**



the species, Pat Shaw was recommended. I sent the images to him and got a prompt response. It was suggested that amphipod species could only be positively identified with a specimen for microscopic examination.

The likely species is the Quatsino Cave Amphipod (*Stygobromus quatsinensis*). They have been previously identified in caves ranging from Vancouver Island to southwest Alaska. If it is a positive identification, then it will be the first confirmed record in the Zeballos area.

We had been preparing for an exploration trip for Reappearing River later in the summer, but the closure of the American border and the pandemic put those plans on hold. So, the second trip of the summer ended up being a return to Wet Dream Cave. One personal goal of the trip became specimen collection.

I had been asking around about specimen collection having never done it. A variety of methods

came up from using a turkey baster, fine netting, or a Whirl-Pak. Short on time, access to scientific supplies, and experience, I decided fashion my own "Whirl-Pak" bag out of a Ziplock bag and Tuck Tape. The idea is to open the bag to suck in the specimen, so I fixed some tabs on the bag so that it was easier to handle with dry gloves.

The plan was to scan the bottom on each cave exit to spot them. The first few dives, I only saw them on the way in, not wanting to compromise the other dive objectives, we did not stop. Invariably, I could not find one on the way out... until the very last dive. I found a few at the bottom of the chimney (a vertical section of the cave). The bags were stored in a pouch clipped behind me, and by the time I was able to retrieve them, I lost sight of the target. We continued towards the exit until my dive partner Glenn found one on scalloped rock. He kept it in sight until I could retrieve a bag and focus on collection. I tried "sucking" it in by opening the back quickly, but that did not seem to work. So, then I tried holding the bag open on the rock surface and letting the amphipod walk into the bag. It worked!

Dive completed and back at the campsite, I poured the specimen into a jar. To keep it alive, I topped the jar with more oxygenated river water and put it in my cooler. I had to get to the ferry, so spent a few hours packing up my camp, and saying goodbyes before hitting the road. When I got cell service around Woss, I contacted Pat Shaw to arrange a meet up on my way back. Only hours after emerging from the cave, I dropped off the specimen, still alive! Hopefully, I can collect more specimens in the future and contribute in a small way to science.

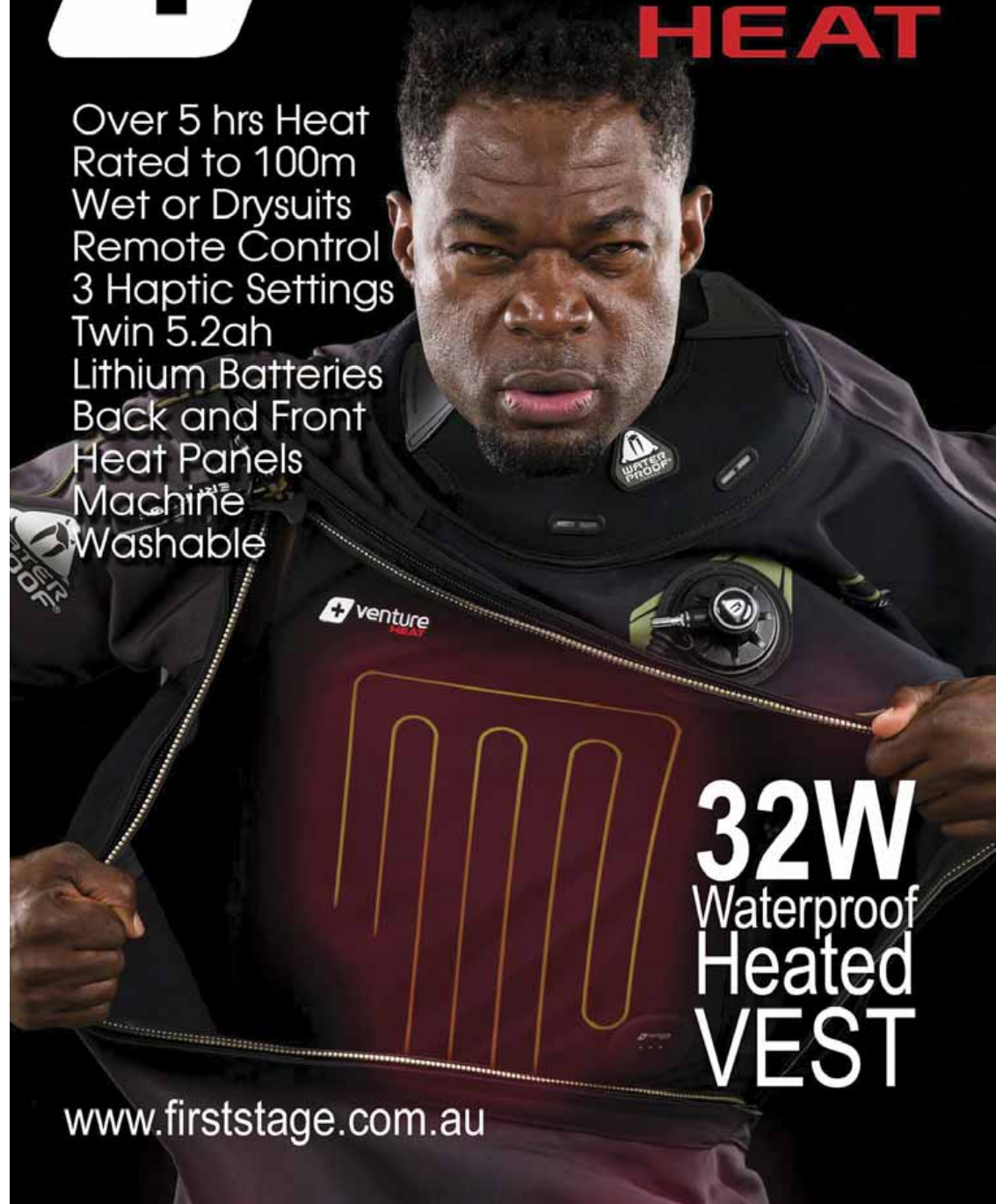
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January 2022 Tasmania Expedition Highlights

By Stephen Fordyce. Photos by Stephen Fordyce unless otherwise credited.

I've just come back from a month of caving (with a few dives) in Tasmania, and have a tonne of things to catch up on, data to process and reports to write, but here is a brief update on some of the best (and worst). It was great to be back and somewhat decadent to spend so long there, but there was a lot of lost time to make up for thanks to COVID, and it turned out to be a very good time to be absent from Victoria.

JF-761 Delta Variant (Australia's new deepest cave?)

Although no diving was involved, the best would have to be the discovery of a new and very exciting cave: JF-761 Delta Variant, and the delicious and most cringeworthy COVID naming theme. I.e. The Omicron Inlet joins about halfway along the long and winding passage (the Test Station Queue) to get to the first pitch. The Alpha Inlet is old and dried out, but it joins part way along too. The first pitch is named Quarantine, and past the junction with the Nasal Passage there is a 16m pitch which seemed like a good thing initially, but then got a bit outdated and we stopped using it. This second pitch is named COVIDsafe.

The third pitch is named Daily Cases, because at that stage of January, the only thing bigger than this pitch was daily COVID cases. It's as-yet undescended, but if you drop a rock

(and it needs to be a big one) there is silence for 6.5 seconds before the distant boom. We reckon that means it's about 150m - or 154.4m according to Jemma Herbert's spreadsheet. I put Brendan Moore through a lot in the 2 weeks he was there, and hopefully being first to set eyes on and explore this cave helped to make up for some of the other stuff...

In a spectacular case of being overlooked by generations of cavers, JF-761 Delta Variant is literally 10m from the entrance of JF-237 Niggly Cave, the current deepest cave in Australia and the subject of a long and ongoing project.



Brendan and the Delta Variant entrance



The Delta Variant entrance is under this log



Brendan enjoys(!!) Quarantine as part of Delta Variant



Happy days in Delta Variant - "she goes!" (photo by Gabriel Kinzler)

There is a large stream going into Delta Variant (a small trickle splits, and flows over a low cliff into Niggly), which we dye traced to a large and previously mysterious waterfall at the bottom of Niggly. Even more satisfying than finding the cave was me being right in my theories about its existence, and in the character of what it would do. That was some top notch ego stroking! Oh, and if the cave connects into Niggly as we expect (and the survey data yields no unpleasant surprises) we should be able to add about 4m to the depth and take the cave depth to 402m. Hoorah!

JF-211 Sesame Cave - Push Dive

Another major undertaking of the trip was a push dive at the end of Sesame Cave. I'd done one last year and wasn't satisfied it could be written off in good conscience, due to lack of visibility (it's a downstream current, and just getting to the sump silts it out). For all that it's the epitome of awful, the prize is off the charts - 5km of missing master cave between Niggly and June. This year, it took 7 days and 2 nights underground for the 30 minute push dive (2 days for rigging/derigging, 2 days staging dive gear, 3 days for the push trip).

The push trip was 3 days and 2 nights at Camp Squelch by the sump, so the water could clear overnight, and almost certainly the most miserable and difficult thing I've ever done. Brendan and local caver Ciara Smart did a spectacular job helping shuttle 7 stupidly heavy caving bags through the dreaded "Wet Hole", 11 out of 10 mud, and assorted other nightmarish



Happy days in Delta Variant
- "she goes!"



Before the breaking-in process begins, everyone is a shiny

scenarios. The plan for visibility was a great success, although it allowed the tight and nasty sump to be fully appreciated. 10m further than last year, the dive choked (fairly) comprehensively and I was supremely glad to be able to write it off. Brendan lead-checked the dry section of the streamway, so that the entire cave can be left for some eternal optimist in the next generation.

We (just) made it to the pub, and the phrase "pooped out your mojo" was coined due to a hilarious episode on the way out, so it wasn't all bad. Big thanks to Ciara and Jemma Herbert for rigging, and to Lachlan Bailey for hauling out a load of dive gear later on.

JF-237 Niggly Cave

The month also included 7 days and 6 nights in Niggly Cave across 2 trips, continuing to push the downstream terminal rockpile (remember that 5km of missing master cave?). Not the most pleasant caving, although the 1.5km commute from The Dunes campsite at -350m is pretty awesome. Petr Smejkal shifted a rock in an obscure place and gained access to what seems to be a converging separate streamway and a big new chamber named Biohazard. We came back with gear to drop the 15m pitch and to our surprise found a deep pool which appears to be a sump, but not the expected streamway.

It was immediately declared that the Biohazard Sump was way too hard/awful and should never be dived, but the fact that it had eaten a large (80cm x 60cm x 20cm) dislodged chockstone with not a trace was interesting. I figured we should come back next time when the water was clear and at



The horror of Sesame began at the entrance, with 3 left gloves for me.



Jemma apparently enjoying surveying an unhealthy amount in the Niggly terminal rockpile.



COVID precautions in the depths of Niggly - Oxana uses a RAT to make sure she didn't get pick up COVID in the airport.



Orange cave line is excellent for stitching up large holes (photo by Oxana Repina).

least assess it for diving. I mean, with 3L cylinders it might be possible. We dropped and surveyed some other pitches and surveyed everything in minute detail – it's a very big and complex rockpile (the extents of the surveyed leads are 43m high and 60m wide, with leads everywhere) and in light of the prize behind it, hopefully in 3D we can get a feel of what it's doing and maybe just break through.

There is still heaps left to survey, some aid climbs and a traverse – now that we know there is something interesting in the Biohazard area, we will have to push harder in what was previously a low-prospect sideways direction. And of course, the sump almost certainly needs to be dived. As Lachlan pointed out, it's amazing how things change over time...

A great triumph in Niggly was the use of orange cave line to sew up Lachlan's suit when he tore a gaping hole in on day 1 of 4.

JF-008 Junee Cave

Brendan jumped at the chance to have a dive in Tasmanian conditions (murky 7degC) and check out the wonders of For Your Eyes Only, the superbly decorated streamway passage after sump 1. The 7mm Telstra line (which we carefully assessed as we went) was broken in one place and snapped in my hands in another place – suboptimal, but probably just from local abrasion with winter flows. We were able to fix it and continue.

We spotted the glint of treasure in one of the deep pools in the streamway and Brendan heroically duckdived without a hood to eventually dig it out - apparently the ice-cream headache was pretty epic. It turned out to be a light head with E/O connector, which we later found out was lost by Grant Pearse about 12 years ago. It was pretty shagged but not flooded and... still worked!!! The brand was Light Monkey, in case anyone was wondering.

Other stuff

My electronic dye detectors and depth loggers had done well, some were still going after 11 months underground! We retrieved a bunch, left some more, and released some dye, mostly targeting the detectors which are still in Sesame – only one more trip is required to retrieve them and derig. There's a whole lot of data analysis and further

tweaks to be done there.

In mid-January we did a pulldown trip going into Ice Tube and out the main entrance of Growling Swallet – this is quite committing as you pull the ropes down behind you, so the only way on is forward. It's a classic if epic Tasmanian through trip, with some fantastic big pitches and a long traverse along the streamway, although with some

nasty tight bits too – Herpes III being a particularly nasty squeeze. This was always set to be an epic but getting out of the cave at 2am was a bit more epic than hoped for. Fortunately we managed to call off the cavalry before they left Hobart (an incident report is in the works) and bounce back ok the next day.

We discovered and tagged a bunch of caves in our travels doing dye releases and generally having fun-times, although only Delta Variant was particularly exciting. Choice names including Brigadier General, Bush Poo, Booster Pot, Nuns Nasty, Suboptimal Pot, Shock Relter and Bum Steer. The last was when the undescended 25m pitch had the decimal point omitted...

My last caving day was with local caver Karina Anders and we did a whirlwind tour of JF-387 Porcupine Pot collecting detectors. We also left Ken Murrey's mask as a memorial at Trump Rock, the gear-up spot before The Ken Murrey River (500m+ of sump dive which we pushed in May 2021).

Emergency suit stitching in progress
(photo by Oxana Repina).



The second Niggly crew
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The Famous Ressel Cave

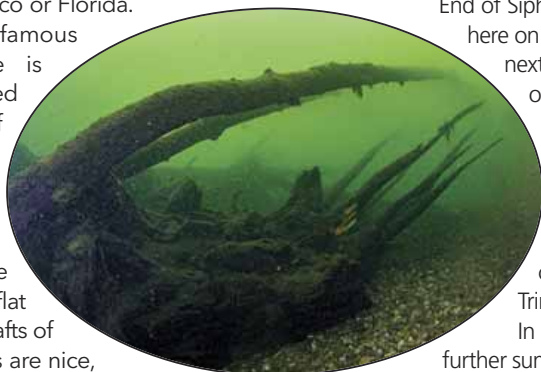
Story and Photos by Kurt Storms.

Finally!!! We can go to the Lot again! The covid conditions had already thrown a spanner in the works, but because we are all vaccinated, we can finally leave. This time for a week of training and then a week of diving holiday with the wife. I have two students with me for the training. The next few days they will be busy with skills and dry teaching. Theory has already been given in Belgium so we can get the most out of our dives.

Why the 'Lot'?

This area in France is famous because most European divers take cave classes so they don't have to travel to Mexico or Florida.

One of the most famous caves around here is Ressel. Ressel is located in the village of Marcilhac-sur-Célé. In the heart of the Lot. Most pictures you can see online show dramatic and huge blocks of white rock, flat structures, and the shafts of this cave. The facilities are nice, we have a large parking for our cars, and finally there is also a nice building with a toilet. From the car park we have to walk about



100m to get to the entry point on the River Célé. Here we can put all our equipment ready for our dive.

History

The Ressel was first dived in 1968, by 2 divers of the speleoclub Auvergnat. Martin & Debras reached 150m. It was only in 1973 that the line was extended to 300m, with a max. depth of 30m. In 1975, Fantoli and Touloumdoian reached Pit 4 and went to a depth of -45m. Further exploration will continue over the years, especially by Jochem Hasemayer in the early 1980s, where at 1100m into the system he plants his knife in the rock to which he attaches his line. This knife is still there.

On 12 August 1990, Olivier Isler will be the first to cross Sump 1. The total dive time back and forth will be 10 hours, 35 minutes.

End of Siphon 1 is at Lac Isler, from here on you can continue to the next siphons. Ressel consists of 5 sumps, of which siphon 1 is the longest (1850m) and the deepest (-83m). From Pit 4 onwards, the deep section begins, which can only be done with Trimix mixtures.

In the following years the further sumps are explored by gentlemen like Rick Stanton, Martin Farr, Mallison. In 1999 the end of Sump 5 was reached. The total length on the main line is 4415 metres.

Spectacular views in the first section.

To be honest, the visibility is spectacular all around. More than 10 metres visibility, which was about 5 cm before the start in the Célé River, so quite a change. As soon as you get to the entrance, it looms up, the water clears like snow in the sun. The first thought that ever crossed my mind was: How on earth did they find this cave? How, with the visibility of the river, can you see a hole that is 6 meters below the surface on one side, which is frankly not that big. Enquiries with the locals revealed that when the cave is full of water, you can even see a geyser in the river! Another impressive detail.

There is a rope that runs from the point where you get in, all the way into the cave, and it continues to the main line - you don't need a primary reel here - it's really easy to find the entrance, at 6 meters deep. Then there is a huge tunnel, with white giant boulders, impressive.

The first dives were only up to the T (180 meters), here the obligatory skills were practiced, so that later one can widen the comfort zone. This is

also a very beautiful part, especially because of the large blocks that lie here. There are even 2 exceptional phenomena visible, these are 2 blocks consisting of white limestone, with a large black spot in it. You won't find these black spots anywhere else. It is wonderful to be able to admire nature like this.

We got in, and on the first dive, with Sidemount set consisting of 2x 80 cft's, we did the first T, taking the left corridor, on the next T, we continued towards the shaft, to take a look, to a maximum depth of 30 meters. It is so impressive! You feel like you are going to the abyss, and actually you are, to the abyss below ground, and under water. But now they were even more curious about the famous Pit 4 of the Ressel.

To be able to do this dive, we had to bring the right amount of gases. The first dive was with Jo, he had his Sidemount configuration with an extra 7ltr along, I dived with my Divesoft Liberty SM rebreather. There we went, all prepared. The way there is about a 28min dive. On the way I showed Jo the shunt that goes to the deeper part of the first loop. Enjoying the ride, we continued until we



Caroline in the Entrance of the Ressel



Caroline in first section



Caroline in SM-configuration



Jo at the Blocks



Caroline at the -20m section

reached the point of the shaft. Here I asked Jo if everything was OK and we descended to a depth of about 40m. You could see in Jo's eyes that he was enjoying himself. But we didn't have much time to enjoy ourselves, because we had to go back again. If you have deco, you can do it all on the way back on a NX50. For the advanced divers, you can take your O2 at 6 meters and finish any decompression on O2.

It's actually a great dive, and the cave allows for

a variety of dives, just by choosing different depths in the tunnels to have different perspectives.

Once we got to the top, Jo was unstoppable about the amazing beauty of this cave, and especially Pit 4. This made my wife want to go and have a look too. This dive was done a few days later, when both gentlemen had gone home. This time we did the dive by scooter, a big difference, at 13 minutes we were at the shaft, and again I saw a happy face. How nice it is as an Instructor to be able

to pass on your passion. This is what we do it for. Ressel is also one of the most beautiful caves in Europe. It remains an easy, accessible system.

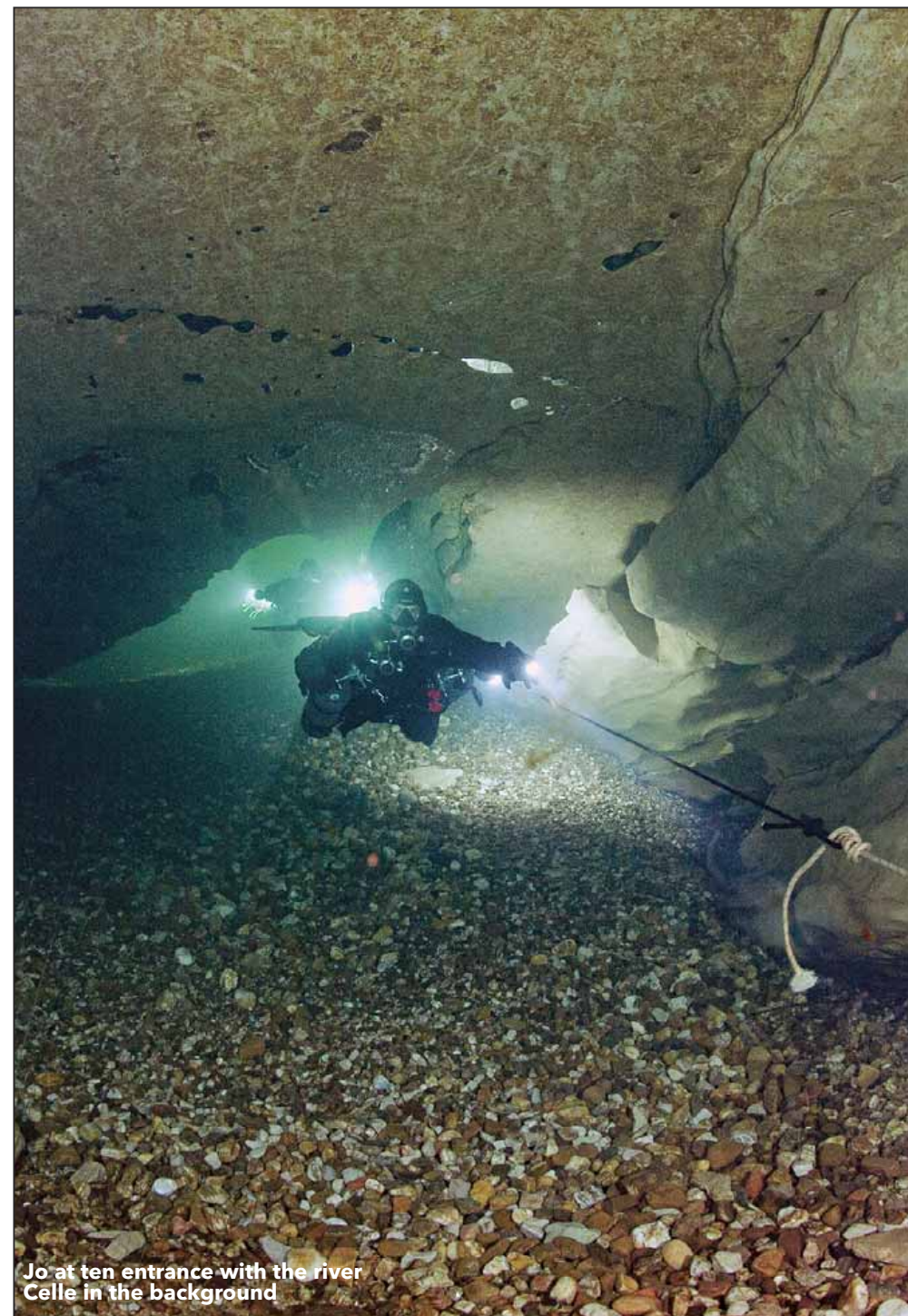
The Ressel is and remains a special cave. Last year, I did the Deep loop (1160m and 73m depth) here with two friends. And I still enjoy it when I talk about it. We still have to come back to do the rest of S1.



Jo putting Cookie at first T



Jo enters the Cave



Jo at ten entrance with the river Celle in the background



Fontaine Saint Georges

Story and Photos by Sebastien Delautier.

This is the story of how we shot a 54m meter dry cave after cave diving into the Padirac network end known as Fontaine Saint Georges...

On that day of spring 2019, Lucas and I are getting ready for a special shooting in the Fontaine Saint Georges cave. The previous days, visibility was reported to be 8-10m which is quite exceptional for this cave given the high amount of clay. It turned out to be rather 6m but this was still acceptable with a fisheye lens for photography purposes.

About Fontaine Saint Georges.

Located under Causse de Gramat, the Padirac network develops over a total of 50km of galleries, including 10km underwater. It is famous for the Gouffre de Padirac which can be visited with a lift to go into the pit, followed by a boat trip along the underground river. This access point is favored by tourists but its beauty and atmosphere will also please cave divers for a guided and comfortable break during a one-week cave diving trip in the area.

The Padirac most downstream point exits at "La Fontaine Saint Georges", close to the village of Montvalent.

Going underneath a Medieval age bridge, the stream flows calmly during the spring sea-

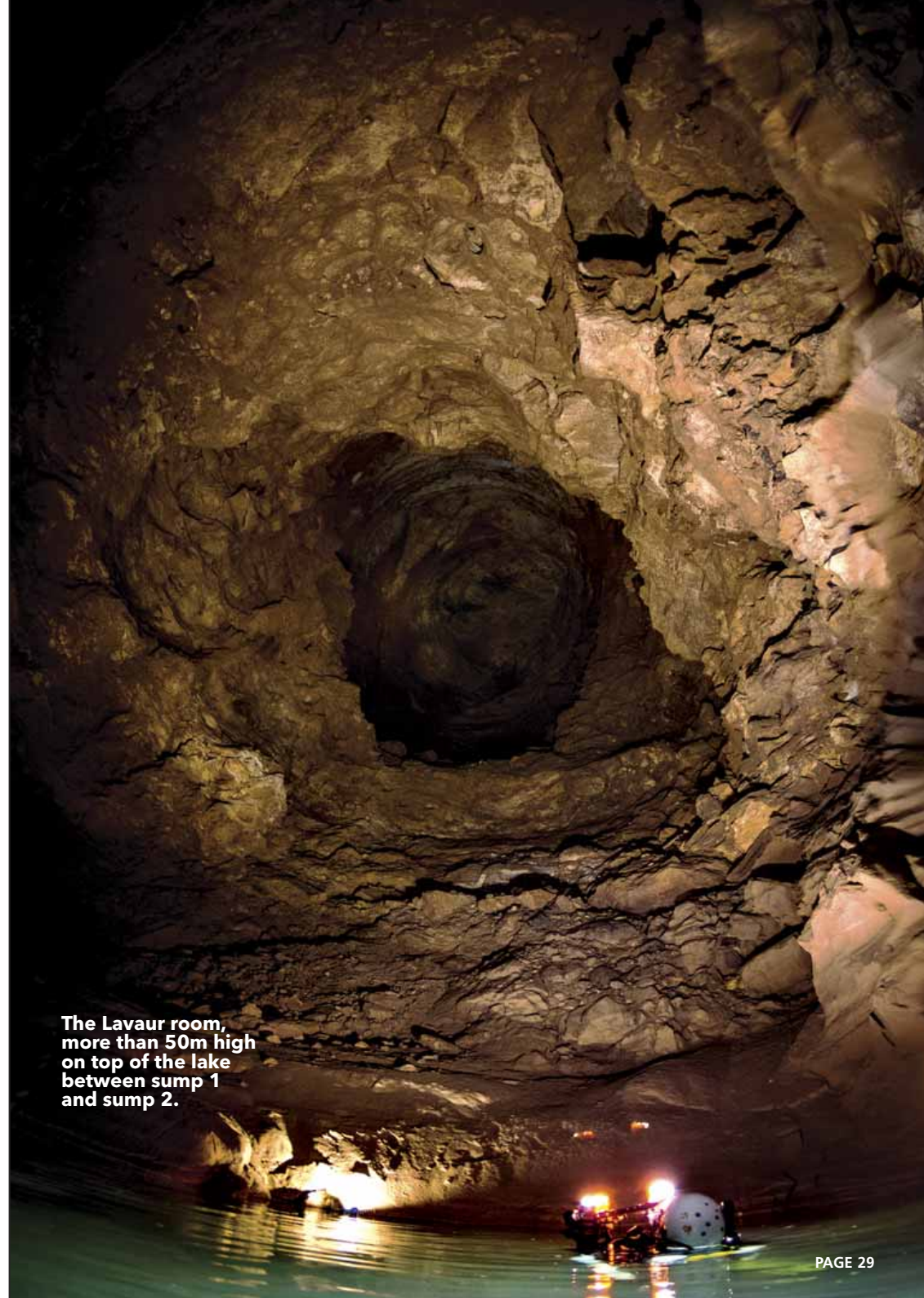
son. The entry point is a wide pool at the bottom of a cliff.

The Lavour room is our objective for today shooting.

Named after Guy de Lavour, one of the first Saint Georges spring explorers back in 1948, this huge dry room tops up at 54m above a wide lake, at the end of sump 1.



The Saint Georges entry pool flows under a medieval bridge



The Lavour room, more than 50m high on top of the lake between sump 1 and sump 2.

This is the third time I dive this cave and I have a special photography plan in mind: I want to show the full Lavaur room on a vertical picture, with a diver at the surface of the lake to give some perspective. The challenge will be on both the team and the gear since my buddy Lucas will need to hold the lights straight to the ceiling for a long time, until I can come up with the targeted picture. I will personally have to hold at arm's length my 8kg photography rig above water, not getting any help from its usual buoyancy underwater. All this while framing the shot and drifting on the lake.

Getting into the cave.

After our usual land check followed by a photography briefing, we get into the pool for our pre-dive START sequence. Once everything is ok, we go to the bottom passage and get into the Saint-Georges cave. At -29m, the deepest and narrowest part of sump 1, we arrive into the main corridor. From this point on, the gallery is quite wide and the visibility is usually affected by the permanent stirring up of clay accumulated on the rocks.



Saint Georges spring emerges at the bottom of a cliff providing a comfortable entry pool.



A clear sunny day providing great background from within the entry pool



Lucas & Sebastien cave dive with Revo rebreathers for this shooting session



Sump 1 main corridor ceiling

We take several shots on the way. Lucas is leading with the remote-triggered strobes while I frame on the go. We gradually go shallower, as we near the Lavour room.

A short stop in an air bell (under pressure at -5m, avoid breathing...) provides additional picture close to the configuration we will adopt in the bigger room.

Reaching the lake and Salle de Lavour.

After 400m of clay-covered gallery, we end up in the Lavour room. A calm lake, where we can breathe without scuba. This is time for a 40-minute air break...

First Lucas drops the continuous light mounted on a tripod at the bottom of the clay slope. After this, Lucas takes different positions over the lake on my recommendations, until I have a satisfying composition. Once this is done, I need to push my camera to the limits, fisheye lens wide open and ISOs at 800. This room really is huge and hard to light, even with big strobes through air. After about 20 minutes of shooting

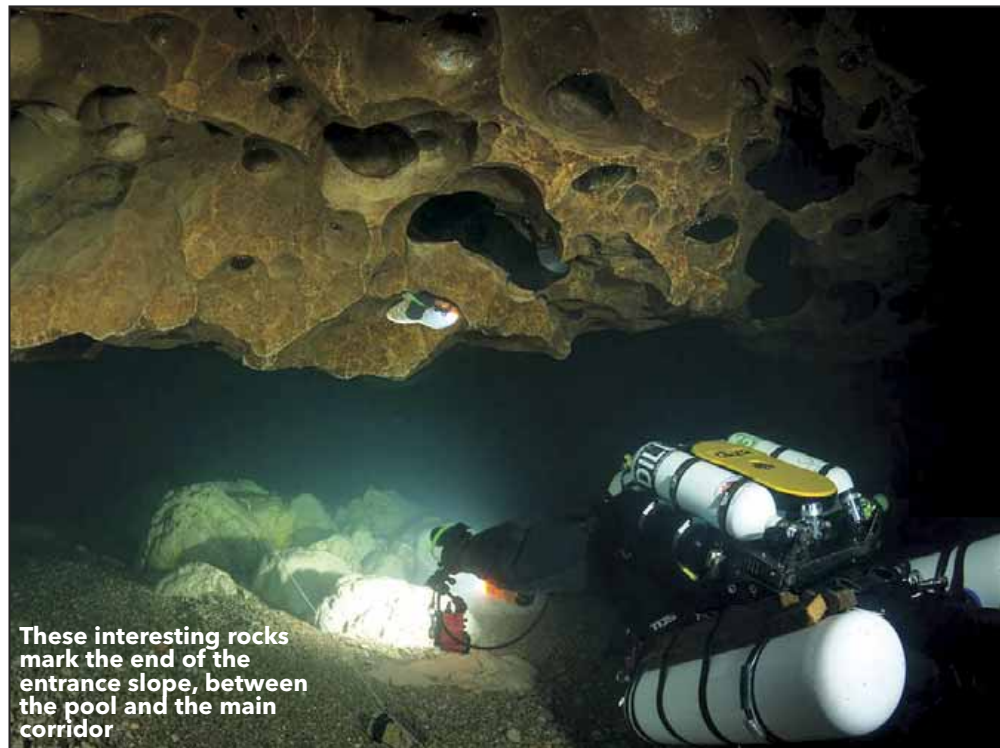
time, we finally achieve the shot I had in mind and are ready to get back.

On the way back.

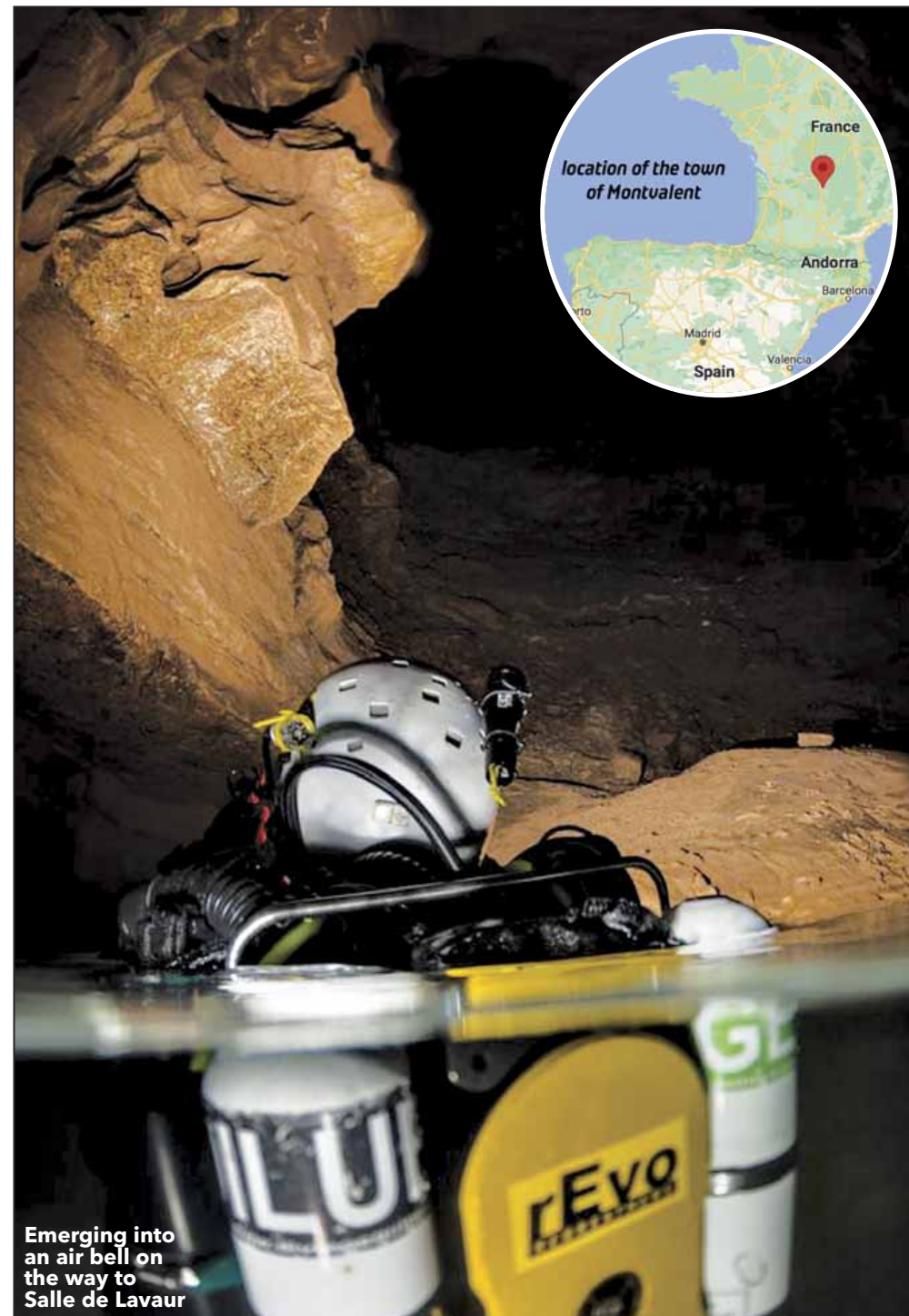
Our wandering on the lake surface stirred up quite a bit of submerged clay without us noticing. Lucas goes first into sump 1 so I can get additional pictures as we did on the way in. As soon as I get under the surface, I can see a massive cloud of clay slowly moving with us. No sign of Lucas. I swim faster than the cloud along the ariane's line and we re-unite 20m further into the corridor where Lucas was waiting for me in clearer visibility.

We take additional photographs of the beautiful rocks in the entrance slope and are welcome in the pool by the sun. This is an occasion for a last shooting in the pool itself backlit by natural light for once.

Later that day we will draw plans for our next Saint Georges photography expedition into sump 2.

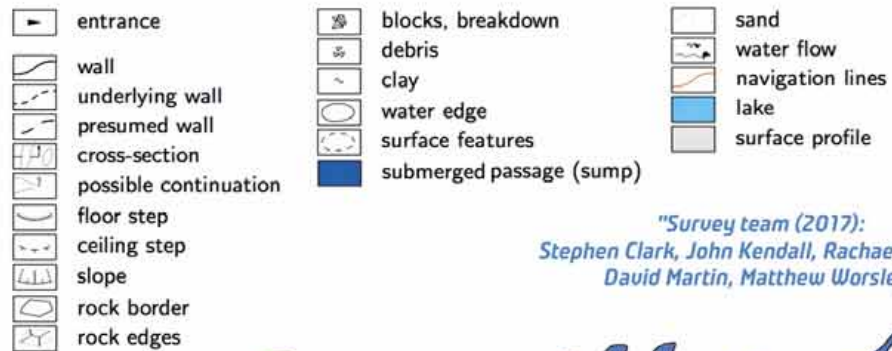


These interesting rocks mark the end of the entrance slope, between the pool and the main corridor



Emerging into an air bell on the way to Salle de Lavour

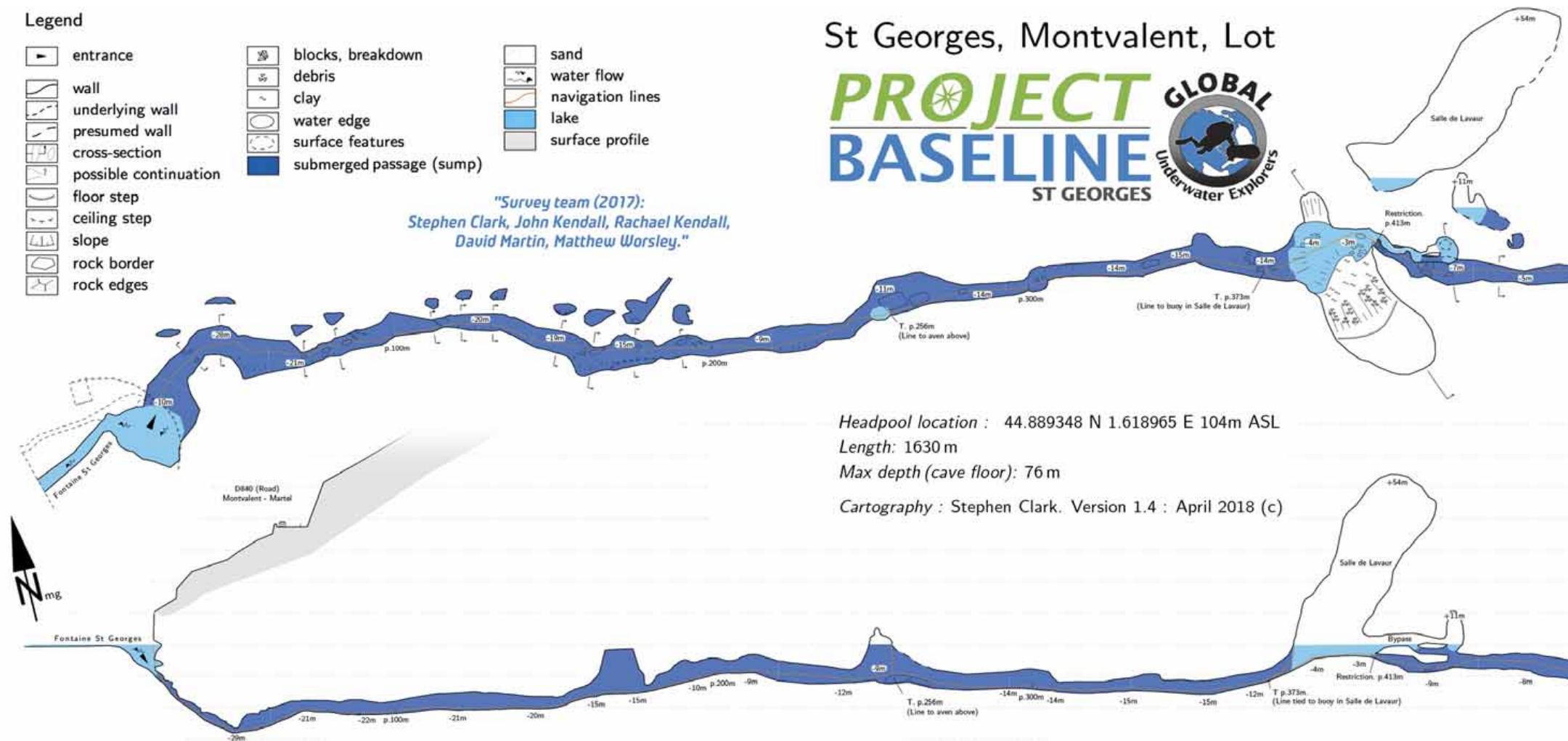
Legend



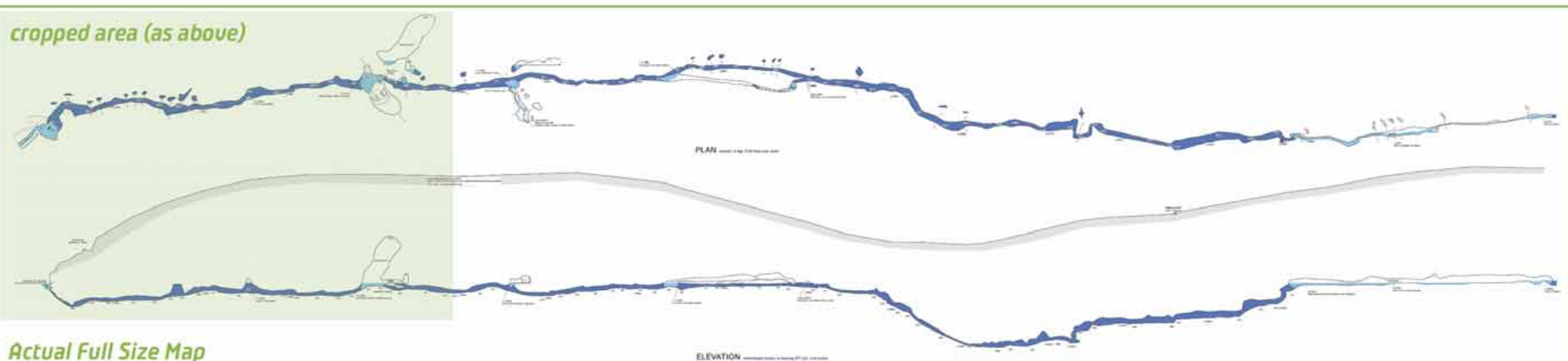
"Survey team (2017):
Stephen Clark, John Kendall, Rachael Kendall,
David Martin, Matthew Worsley."

St Georges, Montvalent, Lot

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cropped area (as above)



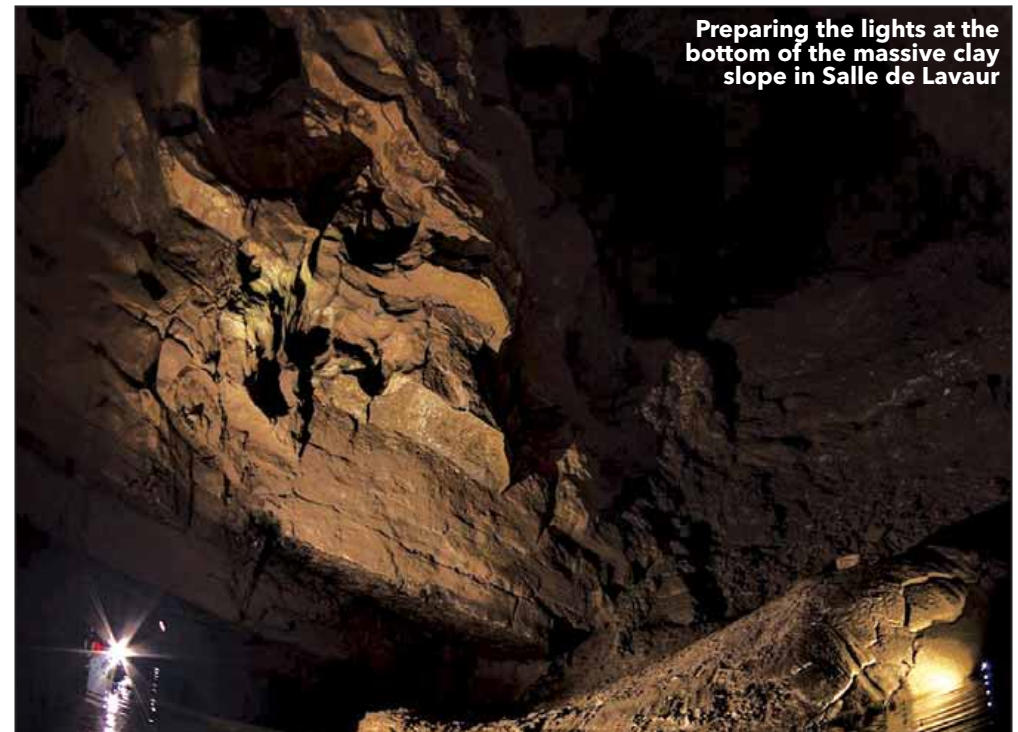
Actual Full Size Map



Dark rocks and clay require the use of powerful lighting to be captured on photos



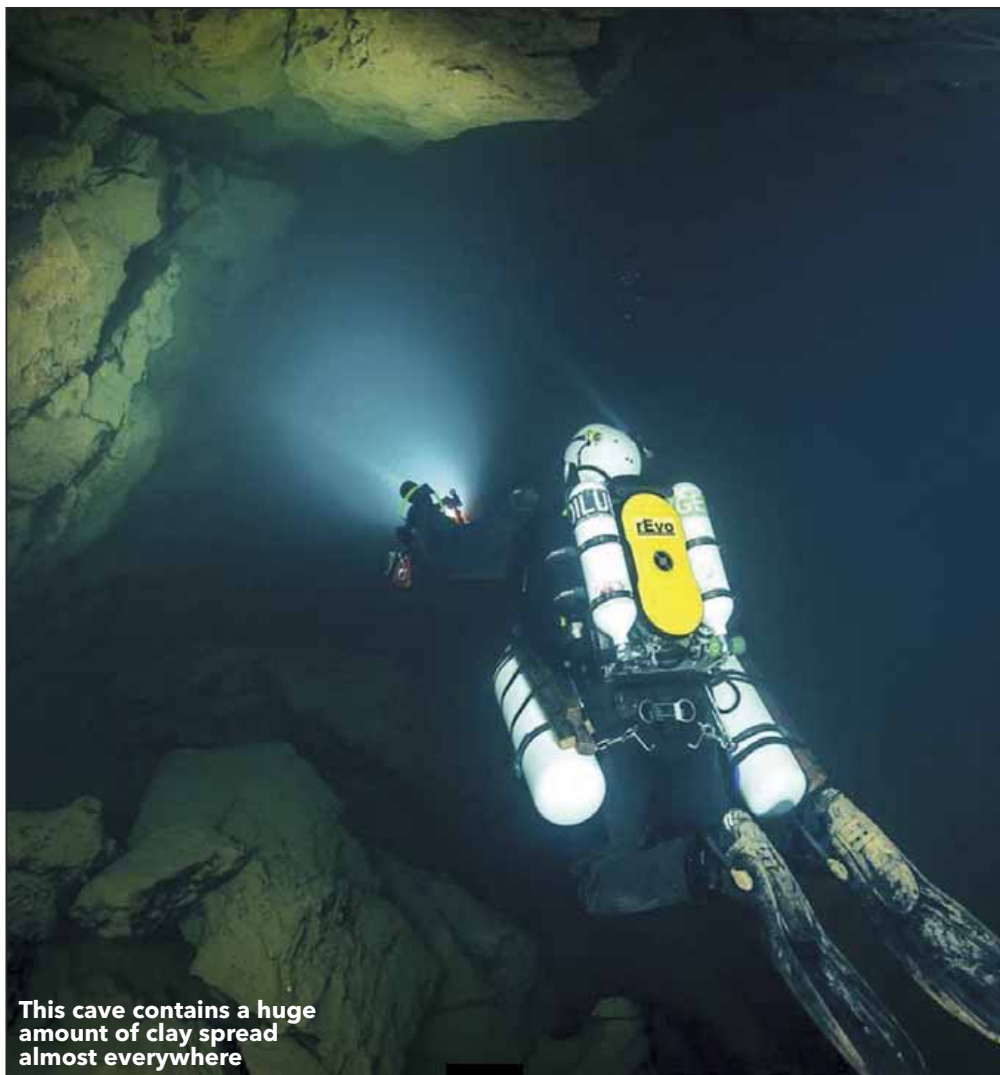
Setting up the light.
Splits session in the
Lavaur room



Preparing the lights at the
bottom of the massive clay
slope in Salle de Lavaur

About the author.

Sebastien Delautier is a cave diving photographer located in France. He started diving in 2007 while living in Australia. He got into cave diving in 2018. Since then he regularly organizes photography expeditions in France to document the caves with his team of models. In 2022 Sebastien was awarded at the Underwater Photographer of the Year competition with a photo from the French cave of Marchepied. Portfolio and more information on www.sebastiendelautier.com



This cave contains a huge amount of clay spread almost everywhere



Lucas lighting the rocks close to the entrance section.



Exiting sump 1 towards the spring pool

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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CDAA INSTRUCTORS

NAME	Basic Cave	Cave	Adv. Cave	NAME	Basic Cave	Cave	Adv. Cave
NEW SOUTH WALES				VICTORIA Continued			
 FEATONBY, Tim (CDA 3327) Worworing Heights, NSW Mob: 0402 129 253 E: tim.featonby@hotmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 DALLA-ZUANNA, John (CDA 236) Mob: 0407 887 060 E: jdz@paintandcustom.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
 Ryan Duchatel CDA 4983 Mobile: 0419 268 714 E: ryan@totalimmersiondiving.com.au	Yes			 DALE, Steve (CDA 3926) Mob: 0468 417 211 Email: info@extremewatersport.com.au	Yes	Yes	
SOUTH AUSTRALIA				 EDWARDS, Chris (CDA 2247) Mob: 0417 116 372 Email: chrisedwards01@me.com	Yes		
 PAYNE, Timothy (CDA 2640) Mob: 0448 147 927 E: Tim@diveessentials.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 MONACO, Rubens (CDA 1731) Mob: 0413 429 533 E: info@idcscuba.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
VICTORIA				WESTERN AUSTRALIA			
 BARCLAY, Gary (CDA 1735) Mob: 0407 527 921 E: garinda@bigpond.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	 BICANIC, Josip (CDA 4691) Mob: 0412 571 779 Email: joseph_b@me.com	Yes	Yes	
 BOWMAN, Jane (CDA 1880) Mob: 0407 566 455 E: janelbowman@hotmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes				
 CLARIDGE, Linda (CDA 2214) Mob: 0408 052 070 E: garinda@tpgi.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes				



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