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The Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated
PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tas 7004
http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/scaving/

The views expressed in the Speleo Spiel are not necessarily the views of the Editor, or of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated.

Issue No. 307, Mar-Apr 1998

CONTENTS

Editorial

Well as usual I write an editorial that tries to find new and interesting ways to complain about the lack of Spiel content. Then 3 days after the deadline I'm deluged with trip reports, articles, cartoons etc.

So this I think is Sp307 editorial v3, each version getting smaller as the need to fill space diminishes.

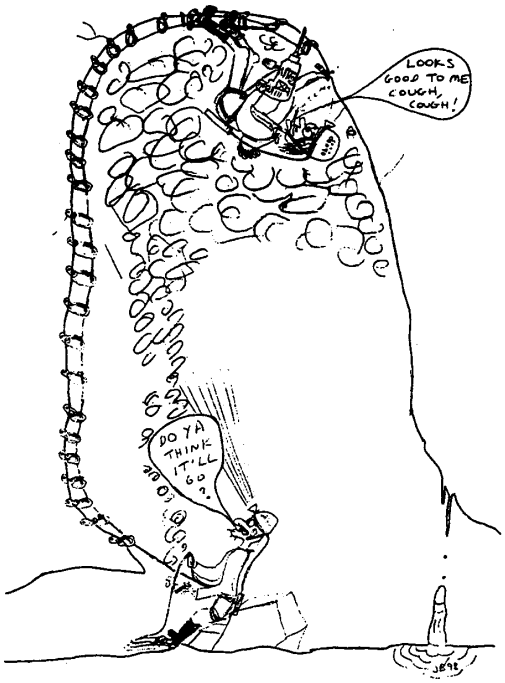
As you can see we have a bumper Issue and several articles have been held over for the next issue. Thanks to all. Keep caving.

A thought on Leigh's safety note (see *club matters*): Perhaps someone should write a F.A.Q detailing conditions to expect, minimum clothing, standard clothing & where to get it, basic safety & emergency equipment, ethics etc. This could be distributed to new members and put on our web site.

John Hawkins-Salt
Spiel Editor

Club Matters

Membership fees Now WAY OVERDUE



New Librarian:

Some people may not be aware but Greg Middleton has taken over as STC Librarian and the library is now located there.
Contact Greg by:
Email: gregmi@delm.tas.gov.au
Ph: (03) 62231400

Good luck I hope you get more done than I did. (ED)

FOR SALE: 120 metre length of 11mm Bluewater II rope. Ten years old and only used twice. Bargain priced at $3.00 per metre = $360.00 Contact Mick Williams on 6297 6368

Forward Program - May/June

Note that contacts are listed as trip facilitators and are not necessarily the trip leader.

ARMCHAIR CAVING:
Wed May 20 STC Social Meeting
MIDDLETON'S MADAGASCAR (Greg Middleton) JEFF'S MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR (caving overseas with Jeff) 8.00 p.m. in the lounge at the Shipwright Arms Hotel, Battery Point.

Wed June 3 STC Business Meeting,
Hampden House, Battery Point, 7.30 p.m.

REAL CAVING:
Sat May 16 BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE (horizontal) Contact Leigh Douglas (62310348 or ldouglas@postoffice.tased.edu.au

Sat May 23 FREUHOF QUARRY abseil & prussik session Contact Jeff Butt (62238620 or jeffbutt@netspace.net.au)

Sun May 24 OWL POT (vertical) Contact Jeff Butt

Sat May 30 SATAN'S LAIR rediscovery day - bushbash and GPS Contact Bob Cockerill (62441836 or Bob.Cockerill@dpif.tas.gov.au)

Sat June 13 THREE FALLS or SESAME (vertical) Contact Leigh Douglas or Kelly Miller (62247452)

27-28 June
"NOT QUITE THE WINTER SOLSTICE" WEEKEND EXTRAVAGANZA!! Still in the planning stages - staying at the Maydena Lodge, bushbash, GPS, cave, eat, drink, be merry!!!

A safety note: Since the amalgamation of the clubs, we have many 'newer' people caving. These people many not be as familiar with the terrain or caves as some of the more active cavers. It seems with more people caving of varied backgrounds the chances for mishap seem more likely.

On a few trips lately some people don't have basics such as emergency blankets or backup lights. Being stuck in a cave or out in the bush overnight with a wet and exhausted hypothermic caver does not appeal to me. It would be really appreciated if people would make the effort to carry these two essentials.
Leigh Douglas

New beginnings for caving in southern Tasmania: the foundation year of S.T.C. alias: the President's report for 1997

On December 4th, 1996, the history of caving in southern Tasmania took a radical step forward when Southern Tasmanian Caverneers (STC) came into being. Our new club name contained the elements of the original names of the three former bodies that amalgamated to form STC: the Southern Caving Society (SCS), the Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group (TCKRG) and the Tasmanian Caverneering Club (TCC).

The TCC was formed in 1946 and was the oldest (first formed) caving club in Australia. Hence, as its immediate successor (incorporating all of TCC's assets, archives, history and membership), our new body (STC) proudly continues to as the oldest group of organised cavers in Australia.... but that doesn't mean we're all elderly!

The cave and karst science (speleology) component of the former TCKRG was retained in our new body and the funds from former TCKRG accounts were used to form the basis of the STC Science Account; the funds being set aside for expenditure on scientific research related to speleology. The continued funding of this Science Account will be maintained by ten percent (10%) of all annual income along with the sale of remaining (or future) TCKRG journals.

The balance of the funds from both SCS and TCC were transferred into one combined account which forms the basis of STC's General Account for operational transactions. The combined transfer of funds from SCS, TCC and TCKRG gave us a healthy starting balance of $10,335.39; composed of $2844.72 from SCS, $3405.57 from TCC and $4,105.10 from TCKRG. Just under half of this combined amount, i.e., $5,000 was invested in a two year term deposit: $2,000 from the STC Science Account and $3,000 from the STC General Account. The remaining balance of operational funds were retained in two interest bearing (Science and General) cheque accounts.

Our accumulated gear from SCS and TCC included about 1300 metres of caving rope, of which 800-900m was still considered as "good" rope; the balance was suggested as being sold off to "yachties" and/or for use as tow-ropes! Other equipment includes eight (8) flexible "Electron" wire rope ladders, 23 cap lamps, 14 helmets, 5 gear packs and a quantity of carbide, plus other sale-able items inherited from the former "SCS Warehouse Sales". In addition, we have an immense library: all the accumulated books, periodicals and journal swaps of SCS, TCC and TCKRG, plus numerous maps and surveys.

Our first initailly elected office bearers included: President: Arthur Clarke; Vice-President: Kelly Miller; Secretary: Jeff Butt (then Dean Morgan); Treasurer: Vaughan Andrews; Equipment Officer: Jeff Butt; Public Officer: Steve Bunton; Librarian/Archivist: Arthur Clarke; Map Archivist: Trevor Wailes; Karst Officer: Arthur Clarke; Scientific Officer: Albert Goede; Editor/s: John Hawkins-Salt and Jeff Butt; Search and Rescue Officers: Dean Morgan and Jeff Butt. The STC membership year started with 57 foundation

members, including the 23 Life Members "inherited" from SCS, TCC and TCKRG. Our first new STC members were Greg Middleton, closely followed by two new household members: Sue Baker and Paul Scofield.

The amalgamation and following 1997 year began with a flurry of caving activity, particularly in southern Tasmania: with trips to caves in the Florentine Valley, Ida Bay and Hastings and also further afield in the north (Mole Creek, Loongana, Gunns Plains etc.) and northwest (Mount Cripps, Savage River and Timbs Creek etc.). Most of the Junee-Florentine caving was being lead by John Hawkins-Salt who was instrumental in exploring some new upper level sections of the *Growling Swallet* system, deploying the aid-climbing technique of bolt laddering to climb up to these upper levels. Some of our caving activity waned during the early to mid-year of 1997, as various STC members left our shores to go touring/ caving on the mainland and/or overseas.

First of all it was Albert (and Judy) Goede on a touring/ geomorphic trip to New Zealand, closely followed by Greg Middleton who disappeared for a six-months overseas jaunt to Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, Central America and Europe; and Trevor Wailes joined a U.K. caving expedition to North Vietnam (and was nearly washed away!). Ian Houshold decided it was time for a break from his cave/karst officer's job and went off caving in New Guinea! During Easter, Arthur Clarke and Stefan Eberhard attended the 21st ASF Conference at Quorn in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia. Stefan Eberhard was away for almost all the year working/ caving and climbing overseas (North America and Europe) and on the mainland of Oz, (particularly in NSW and WA), plus also caving in New Zealand. Jeff Butt went off to New Zealand, then returned briefly to Tasmania, before heading off to North America (including a working visit to Carlsbad Caverns) and then on to Europe; he was closely followed by Arthur Clarke who went straight to England and ended up in Trevor's old stomping ground: the Yorkshire Dales, just 3-4 days after Jeff had been there. A.C. then went on to do a week's caving in the Schwabische Alb area of southern Germany, plus more in Switzerland (including an ice cave) and onto southern France to check out some cave art sites. In early to mid-August, Greg, Jeff and Arthur joined another 30 Australian cavers attending the International Union of Speleology (UIS) 12th International Congress of Speleology at La Chaux-de-Fonds (near Neuchatel) in northwest Switzerland. After the Congress Jeff, Greg and Arthur went off caving in other parts of Europe. John Hawkins-Salt joined the overseas trend and went tripping overseas to Indonesia and Thailand: more caving of course and then it was Kelly Miller and John Steen who went off to Europe: mainly France, but we are lead to believe they saw more French wine than caves!

All this disappearing and re-appearing did wonders for our organisational structure; aside from this we lost a few members permanently and temporarily. Vaughan Andrews got lead astray by other personal commitments, Jol Desmarchelier decided that Canberra was a better place to continue his PhD studies researching climate and environmental change from "stolen" cave speleothems and Dean Morgan became caught up with ASF matters as the new Editor of the *Australian Caver*, plus going into paternity mode for the arrival of soon to be expected new junior caver! As a result of all these comings (and mostly goings), your President variously acted as Secretary and Treasurer; there were four Secretaries appointed during the year: Jeff, Dean, Jol and Dave Rasch; the Treasurer's job was done by Vaughan, Kelly and Arthur; Equipment officer by Jol and Di Sward and John Hawkins-Salt took over the Librarian/Archivist position from Arthur.

John Hawkins-Salt also took-over the management and structure of the former SCS website set-up through the State Library's "Tasonline" service and converted this to become our STC site with links to other caving related Internet sites. The production of *Speleo Spiel* continued as the main (only) caving publication for STC during 1997. In the very capable hands of John Hawkins-Salt, the *Speleo Spiel* regularly appeared in our mailboxes (give or take a few spelling mistakes and typos while our proof reader was away!), and we had some excellent issues with trip reports, numerous articles, plus some photographs. John introduced us to a new way of looking at the *Speleo Spiel*: in electronic form as "html" (hyper-text mark-up language) versions were posted to a "url" (unique resource locator) for access by STC members who preferred to have an electronic (computer) copy instead of/ or as well as a printed hard-copy.

Another advantage of having html versions of *Speleo Spiel* - it enabled them to be immediately incorporated into our STC electronic archive: another "brainchild" concept introduced by John to bring STC members into the electronic media age! Also posted to a "url" (and on disc): both only accessible to STC members, the archive represents many long hours, plus weeks of work and dedication by John amassing an indexed archival record of caving, cave exploration and speleology in Tasmania. John has scanned in hard-copy versions of past issues of *Speleo Spiel* and *Southern Caver*, plus where possible used

electronic (computer disc) copy of past issues. The archive utilises "html" language and links, to allow the contents to be "plat-formed" assisting users to almost instantly locate any referenced article, cave site or caving related aspect of the archived collection of journals. One of the limitations to this project relates to print quality of the caving magazines (for scanning purposes) and access to early editions of different magazine articles about caving in Tasmania. (John is still looking for some back issues and volunteers prepared to re-type some of the earlier type-written, "roneoed" or Gestetner produced editions of *Speleo Spiel* and *Southern Caver.*)

And yet another inspiration by John (how does he find time to go caving?)..... has been the set-up of our own STC List Server for all members who have computer email access through home or work. During the course of our amalgamation and establishment as STC, it became apparent that nearly two-thirds of our membership (including most of the active members) had access to email. The List Server which is maintained by John (also through the State Library's "Tasonline" service) has proved invaluable for assisting our President, Secretary and Treasurer to communicate with members, saving the time and cost of using postage and mail-outs. However, the one obvious drawback has meant that this "easy" and accessible means of communication has left those STC members without computer or email access feeling ostracised and left out in the dark! Although we are indebted to John's efforts in the electronic media department, we need to be mindful that some members will still prefer to be kept in touch by telephone or ordinary (snail) mail through the post!

Also while on the topic of electronic access to caving and speleology in Tasmania, Arthur Clarke was able to announce that his report on cave fauna submitted to the Tasmanian RFA (Regional Forest Agreement) had been marked up into html and is included on a national website for RFA reports from Tasmania. The 167 page report is titled: "*Management prescriptions for Tasmania's cave fauna*" and includes colour microscopic images of invertebrates from Tasmanian caves, and can be viewed at:
http://www.environment.gov.au/land/forests/cra/tas/caves/contents.html

One unfortunate loss to caving in Tasmania in 1997, was the announcement by Dean Morgan that the Cave Leadership Accreditation Group (CLAG) was being wound up. ASF-CLAG (Tasmania) had been formed as the caving subsidiary body to the Tasmanian Outdoor Leadership Council (TOLC) which itself was part of a national Australian body, known as NORLD: the National Outdoor Recreation Leadership Development body. Within a framework of developing a nationally uniform standardisation of qualifications and assessments, the Tasmanian group referred to as "ASF-CLAG", had been designed to consider the necessary minimum competency standards required for commercial caving operations and to develop training strategies for commercial caving leaders. During its time of operation, CLAG (Tasmania) produced one substantial publication in 1995: a 92 page bound booklet titled: "*CAVING SAFETY 1: Course Manual Version 1.1*" - written and compiled by Jeff Butt and Dean Morgan with copyright to "ASF-CLAG (Tasmania)". Considerable work effort was put into this by Jeff and Dean (the respective former presidents of SCS and TCC): the contents of this manual (selling for $12.00) cover trip planning, personal caving equipment, reading and interpreting cave surveys, caving hazards, safe rigging, ladders and belaying, dealing with an emergency, glossary of caving terms, etc.

STC business meetings in 1997 initially dealt with amalgamation issues and this in turn involved some protracted (?) discussions of different points of view. After the amalgamation issues, there were several recurring themes that came up for discussion at a number of meetings, both at the Brownlow Room (in Hampden House) and our favourite third Wednesday of the month "watering hole" at Shippies (Shipwright Arms Hotel). Some of these recurring subjects were not resolved to everyone's satisfaction: use of carbide in caves, purchase of a GPS unit, the "aid-climbing" technique of bolt laddering (as a means of upward vertical exploration) in caves and our membership in ASF (Australian Speleological Federation). However, we survived the year with general consensus on most issues, agreeing to disagree on a few issues and despite having a few long and boring meetings, we look forward to many more years of caving comradeship: both at more exciting (?) meetings and sometimes underground!
Arthur Clarke

STC GEAR INVENTORY-23/3/98

The following tables give a complete inventory of all STC gear on 23/3/98. Columns in the tables are self explanatory. Many items of gear have unknown dates of purchase or dates of going into service, so many "?" appear. In future, an inventory will be conducted annually (at the end of the STC financial year) and it is hoped that an accurate list of what we have, and what condition it is in will thus be maintained. *Jeff Butt.*

STC GEAR INVENTORY 23/3/98

Item	Quantity	Purchased/ made/ put into service	Condition	Location
LIGHTING				
4 Volt charger	1	n/a	good, but one clip U/S	store
6 Volt charger	1	n/a	intermittent fault	store
4 Volt Oldham lamps	9	n/a	good	store
6 Volt Gel-cell lamps	11	n/a	good	store
Belts	24	n/a	good	23 store, 1 on loan (JHS)
Oldham headpieces (complete)	3	n/a	good	store
Box of assorted lamp spares	1	n/a	various	store
Sewer-pipe lamps	2	n/a	springs need attention	store
Sewer-pipe spare battery carriers	3	n/a	good	store
plastic fish crate	1	n/a	good	store
HELMETS				
Edelrid Ultralite Helmet	1	Jul-96	good	store
Petzl Vertical Helmet	1	Sep-95	good	store
Safety Helmets-white	10	Feb-98	good	store
Safety Helmets-white	8	Aug-95	good	store
Safety Helmets-green	3	~1994	good	store
Safety Helmets-miscellaneous	3	n/a	fair	store
Total number	26			
STATIC ROPES				
Serviceable ropes-see attached Ropes list	1530m	various	various	store
Retired ropes	quantity	n/a	u/s	store
ROPE PROTECTORS				
red PVC	5	n/a	good	store
yellow PVC	10	n/a	good	store
canvas (firehose)	8	n/a	mostly good	store
Total number	23			
SRT GEAR				
Rappel rack	1	n/a	poor	store
Whaletails	2	Jun-95	poor-nearly worn out	store
Whaletails	2	1990	u/s-worn out	store
Petzl Expedition ascenders	2	Jun-90	good	store
Petzl Croll ascenders	3	2 in Jun-90	2 good, 1 medium	store
Cowstails (with 2 snaplink carabiners)	3	4*Clog Aug-90	1 good, 2 to be renewed	store
Jumars-yellow	2	n/a	good	store
Jumars-grey	2	n/a	the original jumar	store
Clog ascender	1	n/a	poor	store
CMI handled ascender	1	n/a	medium	store
CMI chest ascender	1	n/a	poor	store
SRT medium ascender	1	n/a	poor	store
Gibbs ascender	1	n/a	good	store
Petzl Rapide harness	1	Sep-95	good	store
Alloy D-maillon	1	Sep-95	good	store
Screwgate D Carabiners	3	n/a	good	store
Screwgate Carabiners	3	n/a	good	store
Snaplink Carabiners	3	n/a	good	store
Harness tapes (6 m * 2" white tape)	3	1995	good	2 store, 1 on loan (DR)
PACKS				
Medium-yellow	2	Feb-96	good	store
Extra large-white	1	n/a	good	store
Small-green	1	n/a	poor	store
Small-red	1	n/a	good	store
Small-red/blue	1	n/a	fair	store
"Dead" packs	3	n/a	u/s, suitable for patches	store
LADDERS & TRACES				
15m (50') Bonwick ladder	1	Sep-95	good	store
9 m (30') Bonwick ladders	4	2 in Apr-91	3 good, 1 fair	store
3 mm wire traces-long length (6.1 m/20')	2	1 in Sep-95	good	store
3 mm wire traces-medium length (2.4 m/8')	7	n/a	medium	store
3 mm wire traces-short length (1.3 m/4')	2	n/a	ok	store
BOLTING GEAR-ELECTRIC				
Hitachi DH15DV Hammer Drill-complete	1	1996	good	store
12 Volt Gel-cell	1	1997	good	store
Gel-cell pouch	1	1997	good	store
Arlec 12 Volt Gel-cell charger	1	1997	good	store
Drill bits-1/4	1	1996	good	store
Drill bit-5 mm	1	1996	good	store

Item	Quantity	Purchased/ made/ put into service	Condition	Location
BOLTING GEAR-HAND				
Petzl Bolting kit pouch	1	n/a	good	store
Petzl Bolting hammer	1	n/a	good	store
Petzl Bolting Driver	1	n/a	good	store
Petzl 10 mm self drive spits	4	n/a	good	bolt kit
Cones for 10 mm spits	3	n/a	good	bolt kit
Container of grease	1	n/a	good	bolt kit
Troll hanger	1	n/a	good	bolt kit
Petzl Twist hangers	9	n/a	good	bolt kit
Petzl Twist hangers	3	n/a	poor (corrosion)	bolt kit
Petzl Twist hangers-old style	2	n/a	good	bolt kit
BOLTING GEAR-SPARES				
Petzl10 mm self drive spits	40	n/a	most good	store
Cones for 10 mm spits	38	n/a	most good	store
Petzl15 mm self drive spits	2	n/a	good	store
Cones for 15 mm spits	2	n/a	good	store
Petzl Twist hangers	3	n/a	new	store
Petzl hangers	4	n/a	new	store
Nylon bolts (for markers)	24	n/a	new	store
CAVE NUMBERING GEAR				
Box of Blank number tags	1 box	n/a	good	store
Metal punches, set of 10 numerals	1	n/a	good	store
Ida Bay number tags (207, 214-220, 227-269)	51	n/a	new	store
Mt. Weld number tags (1-10)	10	n/a	new	store
Nylon sleeves and nails (for number tags)	27	n/a	new	store
SURVEY GEAR				
50 m fibreglass tapes-open reel	1	1997	good	store
30 m fibreglass tapes-open reel	1	n/a	good	store
30 m fibreglass tapes-open reel	1	n/a	ok, but only 20 m length	store
50 m fibreglass tape-closed reel	1	n/a	good	store
50 m fibreglass tape-closed reel	2	n/a	ok, but 30-40 m length	store
Suunto compass #333530(3)	1	n/a	good	store
Suunto compass-no number (repaired unit)	1	n/a	good	store
Suunto compass #438188(25)	1	n/a	fair-blue oil	store
Suunto compass #811154(25)	1	n/a	u/s	store
Suunto compass #438122(25)	1	n/a	u/s	store
Suunto clinometer #033141	1	n/a	good	store
Suunto clinometer #423770	1	n/a	good	store
Suunto clinometer #510520	1	n/a	u/s	store
Box assorted Suunto components	1	n/a	mostly u/s	store
FURNITURE				
long wooden box with 2 lids	1	n/a	good	store
wooden cupboards	2	n/a	ok	store
metal rope racks	2	n/a	not used	store
wooden rope rack	1	Mar-98	new	store
DROP TEST RIG				
80 kg weight	1	Mar-98	heavy!	store
Zennit maillons	3	Mar-98	ok	store
Screwgate Carabiner	1	n/a	poor	store
MISCELLANEOUS				
Rope cutting knife	1	n/a	good	store
Ropewasher	1	n/a	good	store
quantity old fire hose	1	n/a	ok	store
sack metal ladder rungs	1	n/a	ok	store
Metal adjustable squeeze	1	n/a	ok	store
STC WAREHOUSE SALES-gear for Sale				
part roll Edelrid 1" tubular tape	~70 m	Oct-95	new	store
part roll Donaghys 2" flat tape-blue	~50 m	Jun-95	new	store
part roll Donaghys 2" flat tape-red	~20 m	n/a	new	store
part roll Donaghys 1" flat tape-white	~10 m	~1990	new	store
space blankets	11	Dec-95	new	store
Duracell flat pack batteries	6	1996	new	store
Petzl 21 litre carbide jets	2	n/a	new	store
Beal 9 mm Dynamic rope (for Cowstails/Safety loops)	~35 m	Dec-95	new	store

Jeff Butt, STC Equipment Officer.

STATIC ROPE INVENTORY-23/3/98

Rope No.	Brand	Type	Diameter (mm)	Purchased	Label	Shrunk length (m)	Into Service	Condition G/M/	Notes
2	Beal	Static	9	?	R2-?	200		unused	still on roll
36	Beal	Static	9	?	R36-?	110	?	good	
37	Beal	Static	9	?	R37-?	64	?	good	
40	Bluewater II	Static	9	?	R40-90	30	1995	good	
15	Bluewater II	Static	9	1986	R15-86	14	1986	medium	
16	Bluewater II	Static	9	1986	R16-86	13	1986	medium	
14	Bluewater II	Static	9	?	R14-90	11	1995	good	
7	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R7-89	35	1991	medium	many melt streaks
34	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R34-89	30	1989	good	
8	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R8-89	16	1991	medium	
13	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R13-91	16	1991	medium	
10	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R10-89	14	1991	medium	
9	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R9-89	13	1989	medium	
11	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R11-89	11	1991	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	SH-89	9	1989	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	SH-89	8	1989	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	SH-89	5	1989	medium	
5	Bluewater II	Static	11	1992	R5-92	109	1992	good	
4	Bluewater II	Static	11	1992	R4-92	69	1992	good	
19	Bluewater II	Static	11	1983	R19-83	38	1983	medium	
26	Bluewater II	Static	11	1986	R26-86	30	1986	fair	stiff
25	Bluewater II	Static	11	1986	R25-86	25	1986	fair	stiff
24	Bluewater II	Static	11	1985	R24-85	25	1985	medium	
21	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R21-?	23	?	medium	
27	Bluewater II	Static	11	1986	R27-86	22	1986	fair	stiff
28	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R28-?	18	?	fair	stiff
22	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R22-?	17	?	medium	
30	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R30-?	15	?	medium	
32	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R32-?	12	?	medium	
33	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R33-?	12	?	medium	
35	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R35-?	12	?	medium	
23	Bluewater II plu	Static	11	?	R23-?	11	?	medium	furry sheath
20	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R20-?	10	?	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	11	1983	SH-83	9	1983	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	SH-?	7	?	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	SH-?	5	?	medium	
1	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1994	R1-94	125		unused	still on roll
31	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	?	R31-?	80	?	medium	
6	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1994	R6-94	67	1994	good	
12	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1988	R12-88	25	1988	fair	many melt streaks
46	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1988	R46-88	15	1988	fair	
41	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1988	R41-88	12	1988	medium	
SH	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1988	SH-88	8	1988	medium	
SH	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1988	SH-88	7	1988	medium	
38	Edelrid	Superstatic	10.5	?	R38-?	29	?	good	
39	Edelrid	Superstatic	10.5	?	R39-?	11	?	good	
49	Edelrid	Softstatic	10.5	?	R48-?	22	?	medium	
50	Edelrid	Softstatic	10.5	?	R49-?	10	?	medium	
48	Edelrid	Superstatic	11	?	R48-?	13	?	good	
					Total length	1530m			

Notes:

1. All ropes of at least 10 m in length have been allocated a number. All shorter ropes have been given a "SH" (i.e. short) identifier.
2. All ropes have a label (beneath clear heatshrink), this label consists of three lines, "STC"; "Rn-yy"; "mm"
   where "STC" denotes ownership by STC.
   "n" is Rope number
   "yy" is the year of purchase (if known)
   and "mm" is the length (m).
3. All these ropes have been inspected and assessed for safety. A detailed report on this process, including subjecting test pieces to Fall Factor 1 drop tests with an 80 kg load will be presented in a forthcoming issue of the Speleo Spiel.
4. Rope log sheets are now being kept for all ropes. As old ropes are replaced with new ones, histories for all ropes will become complete.

Jeff Butt, STC Equipment Officer.

STC Treasurer's Report for year ended 30/09/1997

In my capacity as President for STC, I took over the role as STC Treasurer in late September, 1997..... when it became evident that the book-work detailing our finances had not been kept up to date during the time when the STC Quartermaster (Jeff Butt) and I were away overseas and following on from when the previously elected Treasurer (Vaughan Andrews) had resigned from the position (and caving in general) due to work commitments and other personal engagements.

The books have been updated and audited by Diane Hext according to provisions laid down by the Corporate Affairs Commission which requires incorporated bodies such as ours to submit an audited statement within 6 months of the end of our financial year.

Important points to note from the accompanying audit statement. Our total income for the year ended 30/09/1997 was $986.39, with $687.00 coming in from light hire and $21.00 from gear hire. Our expenses for the same period total: $1,757.36, giving us a net operating deficit of $770.97 for the financial year. (NOTE: Due to a decision made during the amalgamation process of the three former clubs to form STC, it was agreed that we would not charge current club members of TCC, SCS or TCKRG any membership fees for our first year of operation as STC.)

Our major expense items were equipment purchases ($30.24 for helmet light globes and $111.25 for new drill battery and charger); printing and photocopying ($13.00 for meeting notices and $384.09 for photocopying or printing of *Speleo Spiel*); postage ($50.00 for postage of *Speleo Spiel*; $45.00 for Secretary's mail-outs; $11.70 for meeting notices; $9.00 for cancellation notices & $4.50 for posting of Quartermaster's invoices); membership subscription to other bodies ($493.00 for ASF membership & Liability Insurance; $40.00 for ACKMA); book-keeping and incorporation fees ($78.00 for rental of P.O Box 416, Sandy Bay; $29.00 for audit of former S.C.S. Inc. accounts and $40.00 for annual return of SCS books to Corporate Affairs Commission) and social expenditure ($197.30 for STC Xmas party on 18/12/1996).

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
Income & Expenditure From 18/12/96 to 30/9/97

Income			
Receipts -			
Membership fees	$ 108.00		
ASF m/ship & insurance	$ 12.00		
Light hire	$ 687.00		
Gear hire	$ 21.00		
Journal sales	$ 40.00		
Equipment sales	$ 88.00		
Total receipts		$	956.00
Bank interest		$	30.39
Total income		$	986.39
Expenses			
Stationery		$	107.65
Meeting hall hire		$	100.00
Equipment purchase (1)		$	141.49
Printing/photocopying		$	397.09
Postage		$	120.20
Subs./insurance		$	533.00
Govt.duties		$	13.63
Bookeeping/incorp fees		$	147.00
Socials		$	197.30
Total Expenses		$	1,757.36
Net Operating Deficit		$	(770.97)
Plus a/c transfers in (2)		$	10,330.39
Net income/expenses		$	9,559.42
Represented by :			
CBA operating a/c		$	3,033.07
CBA Science a/c		$	2,113.30
Esanda debenture stock		$	5,000.00
		$	10,146.37
Plus o/s deposit	$ 50.00		
Less u/p cheques	$ (636.95)	$	(586.95)
Total Funds		$	9,559.42

Note (1) - Equipment Purchase
Not detailed this year

Note (2) - Transfers in from other clubs

From TCKRG	$ 597.80
From TCKRG	$ 1,502.46
From TCKRG	$ 504.83
From TCKRG	$ 1,500.01
From SCS	$ 2,844.72
From TCC	$ 320.82
From TCC	$ 3,059.75
	$ 10,330.39

Verified by :
Treasurer
President

Audited by :
Di Hext

We should note the recommendations made by our auditor:

- get our STC audit done in October each year so an audited financial statement can be presented at our AGM;
- ensure all meeting minutes are held in one central spot;
- ensure that all expenditure is approved and passed by committee members and recorded in our meeting minutes;
- ensure that all expenditure receipts are obtained, with petty cash receipts kept separately;
- petty cash records to be drawn up separately to operational account transactions;
- ensure that an inventory of caving gear and library books and magazines or archives are done at least annually (with a copy attached to the financial report);
- annual inventory and audited financial statement to be pasted into minutes book after acceptance at STC meeting.

Arthur Clarke

Jeff

Trip Reports

GPSing around (JF36), 5/4/98.

Tony Veness, Mim Jambrecina, David Clement.

The aim of the days adventure was twofold: to become accustomed with the use of the Garmin 12XL handheld GPS receiver for use in surveying surface features in the Florentine Valley, and to have a bit of a wander from the end of Road Eight up to Ice Tube (JF345).

Having only a 1:25000 topographic map and some descriptions of routes, we set off in the misty rain from Road Eight and into the uncharted territory (for us) above Growling Swallet (JF36). All was going well and we soon passed (and waypointed) Slaughter House Pot (JF337) and Pendant Pot (JF37). The track upwards and onwards to Trapdoor Swallet (JF38) and Ice Tube lost us for a short time but luckily it ended up going in the same direction we were, so all was not lost.

After much puffing and wheezing, and two or three waypoints later, we made it to Ice Tube. Whilst the GPS was doing its thing, we plotted the day's collection of waypoints onto our 'wobble board' laminated maps to see if the days collection made sense. It all seemed believable, though a smaller scale map would have made life a little easier as the rain and mist began to cause our waypoints to merge into one kaleidoscope of coloured spots.

Satisfied that we deserved to be home in Hobart at a reasonable hour on a Sunday night, we started our way back to the car. Later in the week, the collected waypoints were marked on a 1:10000 topographic map which also had the known passages of the Growling Swallet system on it. The fun begins...

GPSing around (JF344), 19/4/98.

Tony Veness, Mim Jambrecina, David Clement.

Another weekend, another trip to the Florentine. The aim of this particular Sunday was to gather a few waypoints along the McCallums track and at known entrances around Serendipity (JF344).

Leaving the car at the end of Road Eight (again), we went in search of the collapsed bridge along McCallums track, which indicates the way on from the turnoff to Growling Swallet (JF36). After no looking at all, we stumbled on it once again headed off into unfamiliar territory (for us). We were slightly better prepared this time with printouts from the club Karst Index to guide us along the flagged tracks. Any volunteers for guides next time out there amongst the armchair cavers?

A number of waypoints were established at various turnoffs and entrances along the way to Serendipity, including Asteroid Pot (JF366) and Frost Pot (JF347). A very rusty post hole digger was found at 0458815 E 5273175 N, should anyone be missing one from the toolshed. The track from Serendipity up onto the saddle was followed for a short time, though a lack of tapes and an abundance of fallen trees meant the going was getter harder and harder. A small, potentially diggable doline, North East above Serendipity was the found, as was the last piece of flagging tape.

Enough was enough and we headed for home. We headed North along McCallums Track past the turnoff to Road Eight and established a waypoint at what we think was Gormenghast, though hopefully a trip shortly with those in the know will clear it up.

The weekend's waypoint for JF344 was later overlaid on a position calculated using data from a past surface traverse from one of the Growling Swallet system entrances. The two ended up being only tens of metres apart. However this could sadly mean both are wrong by the same amount. To be continued...

JF-36 Black River. ?/4/98

Party: *John big nose Palmer (NCC) UK, Trevor Wales, John H-S.*
The plan to look at a lead Trev had at the end of Nix Inlet off Black River in Growling Swallet. Excessive water meant we had to in & out Slaughterhouse, much to Trev's disgust. Thankfully John didn't know any better as this was his first Tasmanian cave.

Never having been to Black River before I was suitably impressed with yet another part of GS which is a respectable cave in Its own right. Trev's running commentary on unchecked leads and unsurveyed side passages reminded me yet again how much work should be done in this system. No wonder I'm still doing 3 out of 4 trips to GS.

Eventually we got to the end of Nix, pity the leads weren't as good as the commentary. The main aven was way to high for my ambitions and in poor rock. The secondary streamlet entering in the preceding chamber though only 5m of the ground was deemed unclimbable due to the incredibly poor rock/mud pretending to be a wall.

Going back up Slaughterhouse was good exercise if nothing else. Although the day didn't turn up anything new I was very pleased to visit a new part of GS (new for me) Thanks Trev for enduring Slaughterhouse in reasonably good humour and for the tour. I think John enjoyed the trip, welcome to Tas John I hope you intend to continue caving during your stay.
John H-S

Ice Tube: 3/5/98

Party: *John big nose Palmer (NCC) UK, Trevor Wailes, Dion Hutcheon, John Hawkins-Salt.*
Some trips are to be enjoyed, some endured and some you just want to end. I think this was one of the latter two. Everything augured well for a good trip. Sunny day with no sign of rain, low water, good team, experienced guide. What could go wrong ? Well what I should have asked is what couldn't ?

The first sign of things to come was waiting 20 minutes at the top of the first pitch for someone else to come down and belay me out to the anchor. When Dion had gone to fire up his carbide he discovered the jet had fallen out. With no spare jet and stuffed wiring in the Petzl backup, eventually he started the trip on John's main backup Zoom. Reaching the base of P2 Trev and I went on leaving the others to pack rope and catch up at the next pitch. 30 minutes later, Trev went back to find them. The rope had got stuck and John had been back up the pitch to free it (last one down should move the knots down a few meters).

By this stage it was obvious we were moving too slow. Even though we had expected to be slow we didn't need any more hold-ups. The Dry way went smoothly and Fabulous Spangly is a superb pitch. But then a major rope tangle on Killing Joke took another 30 minutes. If water had been even normal flow conditions this would have been very cold.

I was at the base of Maelstrom finding the rigging for Never Forever. When I herd F**K Shitttttttttt------- **THUMP**. Dion was lying in a heap at the bottom of the pitch groaning and saying "don't move me !". What do you do at the bottom of Ice Tube with the victim of a serious fall? Cut his thermals off and let him cool down. This would be more merciful than trying to get a Sked back up 10 pitches. That and many other things went through my mind, god only knows what went through his. After lying there for a couple of minutes and doing the DRABCD thing we realised much to our amazement that nothing major was broken.

After a few minutes to recompose we gingerly descended the next pitch and started looking for the entry to the Fallopian Tubes. An hour later we were still looking. The whole thing had been so heavily trogged by people doing the same thing that the way on is not particularly obvious. Route finding was further hampered by the fact that we only had carbide which when covered in mud and jammed in a squeeze you can't scratch yourself in is sometimes less than reliable. By this stage I was starting to worry, Dion was beginning to exhibit symptoms of shock combined with uncontrollable shivering, we had to get moving.

We decided to dump all unnecessary gear, 170 m of rope + the drill and battery in favour of speed and expecting Dion to require assistance. Eventually we found the right part of the rift and resumed our slow and somewhat dim progress. With cries of joy we greeted Main Line, a hot meal and major lamp cleaning session ensued, while we contemplated just how much cave was yet to go. The plod / grind turned out fairly

straight forward if slow with Dion managing under his own steam, much to our and his amazement. We finally collapsed back at the car at 1:30 am after 12-13 hours underground.

Incident details: Dion was abseiling a very wet free hanging pitch on double 9mm rope using a short stainless 5 bar rack. The ropes became twisted and the crossed rope became jammed in the rack. In pulling up slack to free the jamb one of the brake bars jumped out. This left 2 bars in the system and he was unable to control his speed of decent.

The fall and subsequent wait while route-finding in the Fallopian tube caused the victim to begin exhibiting general signs of shock which given the circumstances and our limited training was difficult to distinguish from hypothermia. Either condition was virtually untreatable at the time. He also sustained 2 broken bones in the left foot and is now sporting plaster and crutches. Ibuprofen was administered for the pain, panediene forte was available but avoided as the victim needed to remain as alert as possible to get out.

For those unfamiliar with Ice Tube: All concerned believe that a stretcher rescue from this part of the system would be practically impossible, and it is unlikely that a victim requiring stretcher rescue here would survive long enough for a rescue attempt to be mounted.

In this case pure luck and the victim's own determination saved the day.

Prevention: On short racks do not allow ropes to become crossed. Jumars, prussic knots or something similar could have been attached above the rack before attempting to free the jamb. However it is unlikely that any reasonably experienced person would bother with such precautions while under a waterfall. In short this was a genuine mishap and while most mishaps are preventable the situations which produce them are generally overlooked until they occur.

In hindsight dumping all the rope was pretty silly as we were left without any rope to belay the victim on the ladders and climbs.

Rigging replacement in Ice Tube:
The primary purpose of the trip was to replace old bolts placed during exploration and subsequently, with permanent 10mm stainless expansion bolts equipped with ring hangers to facilitate pull-through trips. In most cases the original bolts were re-used to back up the new bolt. A return trip should remove the 2 or 3 old bolts which are no longer necessary.

P1: Ring hanger added backed up to single existing spit. Semi permanent traverse line installed.
P2: Unchanged, Double spit's and hangers conected by tape. (Original bolt needs removing before a new bolt can be placed.)

Dry Way:

P3: Ring bolt placed, Old sling removed.
P4: Ring bolt placed, Old sling removed.
P5: Ring bolt placed, Old sling removed.
P6: Fabulous spangly, Bolt placed for permanent traverse line & line installed, Ring bolt added for pitch tied back to existing bolts.

At this point the battery died. So nothing else was changed. The following are suggestions to finish the job.

P7: Use existing bolts, replace tape and add a stainless ring.
P8: Killing Joke. Remove 1 of 2 old bolts, Add new bolt and backup remaining bolt.
P9: Maelstrom, (No good placement exists) Remove both existing bolts and replace, construct Y belay with tape to new SS ring. Add fixed tail to get over ledge.
P10: Never forever, Remove excessive tape belay and install 1 ring bolt. Backed up to 1 ss Dynabolt.

Any volunteers to go back get the gear then go back and finish the job?
John Hawkins-Salt

Frankcombes Cave (JF7)-18/4/98

Party: Sharon Heritage, Hans Benisch, Paul Scofield, Robyn Claire, Rupert (from the UK), Jeff Butt.

Determined to make the new STC Forward Program a goer, we set off for Frankcombes Cave with a couple of verbal descriptions such as, "er, 7 something past er some road off to the left", "cross a creek and it's karsty and exciting, the caves not hard to find", "lots of long yellow tapes". Well our directions

weren't too far off the mark; we found the track, 700 m after Frizons Road, and some pink tapes took us past a small swallet and on to the entrance.

First we checked out the right-hand branch of the cave, quite low, wet and crawly. Of course, it would be much wetter under normal conditions and we probably wouldn't have ventured as far. This was Rupert's first wild cave - you could say he was baptised here.

Back to the main branch of the cave, collecting Robyn en-route (she sensibly opted not to get a soaking before the main part of the trip). Route finding was no trouble, there were cobbles a-plenty giving those knees a good pounding. Some quite good formation-rich areas en-route as well. Those with cameras were kept busy.

The in-situ drip collecting experiment storage vessel was overflowing. Joi, is tnis one of yours??

We checked out the upper level and found some excellent straws. Two closely spaced very long straws reside here, one 3 m long and the adjacent one about 70 cm shorter. Quite a few straw fragments lie on the ground beneath and it looks as though sometime in the past both these straws were 3 m long. Does anyone familiar with the cave know??
Jeff Butt.

Niggly Cave Photography Trip 21/2/98

Present: *Stephen Bunton (STC) , Darren Brooks and Stephen Wright (WASG).*

This trip was an opportunity to repay some of the hospitality shown to me at the Margaret River ASF conference. Steve contacted me to arrange a trip to a deep cave whilst WASG were in Tassy during February for Henry Shannon's Karst Studies Seminar. I actually met Steve in Mole Creek a few weeks prior to this trip and explained that Niggly was scheduled to be de-rigged on the 14th by the Police S+R guys. The cops involved joked about the state of my love life if I scheduled hard trips on St Valentines Day!! As it was some bloke wasted himself on the Totem Pole late on Friday 13th (spoooooky!!!) and the POLSAREX guys couldn't make the derig trip. (Just for the record I went back to bed at 6.30 on the morning of St Valentines Day and that's all I'll say about that!!) So the Western Australians were lucky.

Except for the fact that neither of them knew where the other one was at 10pm the preceding evening and numerous phone calls made the matter no clearer, by an amazing act of clairvoyance they both met me at my place at the nominated time. The trip went off without a hitch. I stopped at Bushy Park to get a trashy magazine to read whilst the other two bounced the Black Supergiant pitch. No expense spared I also took the stove and brewed up cuppas and lunch for the 3.5 hours I was sitting around. The whole trip took 10.5 hours and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. I was glad to have the pleasure of caving with Darren and Steve.

The only problem was that cavers from warmer climates don't have the sexy waterproof overalls that make for sexy photos. Niggly is a particularly unphotogenic cave. It's so tight that you can't separate the flash from the camera far enough to perceive good depth in the photos. The dry pitches look as bad, muddy and unspectacular in the photos as they are in real life and the main feature of the cave, the big pitch is so much beyond my skill and perseverance as a photographer that all in all I have some pretty ordinary photos. They are my excuses. I have some good photos but one day I'd really like to see some better Niggly photos.

The walk back in the dark in the rain was the usual drudge made bearable by the ongoing joke at the expense of their mate, Perry Raison (who hated mud or wet or caving or something and), who'd walked in to Frenchman's Cap during the bad spell of weather. I like a good laugh.
Stephen Bunton

Wet Cave (MC144)-14/3/98

Party: a motley collection of "Extreme Diners", including Tim Anderson, Jeff Butt.
A late evening sojourn into Wet Cave with the aim to exit via Georgies. However, the guide became a bit befuddled with the low water levels and different looking geography. With everyone wet up to the tits we all thought that retreat and sleep was a better idea.

Honeycomb Cave-some fine dining-15/3/98

Party: a motley collection of "Extreme Diners", including Tim Anderson, Jeff Butt.
A silver service three-course dinner attired in top-hats/tails and ball-gowns was the order of the day, all for the purpose of raising money for charity. Of course having fun and some good food was also high on the agenda. Permission to use Honeycomb was given by Parks and Wildlife. As butler, I was not only serving the food, but ensuring we had a minimal impact upon the cave. We chose a hard surface and used a large drop-sheet beneath the table and chairs to catch any foreign material.

Midnight Hole-(IB11)-3/5/98

Party: those "Extreme Diners again"
What better than a Midnight Hole pull-through trip after dining in style on a flat-car on the Ida-Bay railway. Also, Tim was keen to recover his ropes that refused to come down on the last pitch the previous week. I was keen to have a look at the state of the eye-bolts. Well, the bolts are the same as they have always been. The bolt on the final pitch has a stainless steel shackle fixed through it, this is avoiding the wear on the eye-bolt when the rope is pulled through. The grooves in the rock below the eye-bolt are substantial (and were the reason Tim's rope didn't come down). When the time comes for a replacement bolt then consideration should be given to filling in the groves, or adding some sort of protective plate over them to prevent rope-retrieval problems. There is one other old bolt casing nearby, it is situated in a better spot than the existing eye-bolt; removing this casing and re-drilling the old hole is probably the least impacting method of replacement.

Entrance Cave (IB10)-5/5/95

Party: A large group of aspiring adventure cavers.
A quick loop through Entrance Cave, taking in: Glow-worms, Cephalopod Creek, the Matchbox squeeze, the Laundry Chute and the return to daylight. Everyone seemed to have fun, maybe we will get some more cavers down the track.
Jeff Butt

Slaughterhouse Pot through trip-8/4/98

Party: Tim Anderson, Jeff Smith (SA), Paul Scofield, Jeff Butt.

Jeff was over from SA and wanted to append a tad of caving onto his holiday to complement his rafting and walking. With the imminent replacement of ladders in Growling, I thought that a through-trip would be ideal, that way we could measure up the ladders to ensure that the new ones would fit well.

We headed down, the cave being already rigged made life pretty simple. I added a short piece of Bluewater 11 mm to the top of the existing rope on the first pitch to allow the bottom end to be a bit more user friendly.

As we headed out the three existing rope ladders were measured up, rungs for each ladder are only needed for 7 of the 10 m lengths. This is good as it means that with the quantity of pipe purchased we will be able to have 30 cm rung spacing instead of a leg-stretching 40 cm.

We emerged from Growling three and a half hours after entering Slaughterhouse. Quite a simple and straightforward trip. Water levels were still at low levels.
Jeff Butt.

Slaughterhouse Pot through trip-26/4/98

Party: *Kai, Sarah, Nat, Anna John H-S.*
My obligatory beginners trip, was not advertised as it was full until the 4 others piked the night before. All had a good time and were most impressed with this caving business. All are keen to go again. We might get 4 out of 4 new cavers!! Might even runout of caves at this rate.
John H-S

Niagara Pot (JF29)-24/3/98

Party: *Dave Rasch, Damien Bidgood, Jeff Butt.*
With the unusually dry conditions still prevalent and Niagra fresh in Dave's mind (he was there the previous week) we set off to have a look at what lay beneath the waterfall-soaked talus pile at the base of the 24p. Trevor had reported to us that Martyn Carnes had been down there one time and that it was a pretty horrible place, wet and full of large loose boulders - certainly not a very attractive position.

Damien and myself checked out the leads in the rain whilst Dave looked at another. I made about 10 m depth winding through the boulders, progressively getting wetter via the spray which was going everywhere. Upon reaching a squeeze (which looked Dave-size) I retreated to let Dave take a look. Dave went through the squeeze and disappeared out of ear-shot, so we reluctantly forced our bodies through the hole and squirmed down further. A rather dodgy place to be, we were about 24 m down a boulder filled shaft. There are very few times when I'm not happy in a cave, this was one of them. I retorted to Damien that if this lot moved, they'd never find the bodies and our disappearance would be a mystery. Dave had found a pitch, so a rope was duly rigged and he headed down, stopping for a while whilst he was suspended by his helmet in one sub-Raschian place. He made it to ground in this decidedly spooky place and reported that he was now on bedrock with a small stream heading off through a rather small and gnarly passage, progress would only be possible by moving rocks. That was enough for all of us and we headed out, we estimated that Dave had made it 30 m down through the Talus.

We headed over to the sand-passages for a better look. We had a good look around the far end and had a look at the steep mud covering rock slope, deciding that it was not possible without some bolting aid. I investigated some horizontal spaces and found myself in a fracture zones between large blocks. We all clambered around to check out the place. There were several leads, down looked most interesting. After some interesting climbing I made it down to the base level, presumably about the same level as the other part of the cave. There was no sign of any visitation in this area (a small dry stream-bed). Progress downstream was not possible, this should head back to the other part of the cave. Upstream it was possible to go for a few metres before being a really low, tight and muddy place.

Time was up and so we headed out. Niagra really needs a thorough survey; it can't be that far underground to the upstream end of Three-forty-one.
Jeff Butt.

Using technology to dig up the past

Ross Walker Cave (JF??), sometime in March, 1998
David Rasch & Kelly Miller.

A desire for some fresh air and the excuse of playing with a GPS resulted in us bushbashing (through pretty serious bush) to look for a doline located on the hill east of the Junee Quarry. It must be a large doline to be shown on the 1:25000 Maydena map. Apparently it has not been visited (by any club cavers) since 1969. After struggling through the very thick undergrowth, I can understand why. Using the coordinates on the map, we fed in our destination and GPS'd our way from the Junee Quarry towards the gully separating us from the doline, with the plan of contouring around the hillside. Great idea, but a bit impractical. We soon dived into the gully, forced our way up the hill and started heading towards the elusive target. When the wobble on the GPS is ±15 metres (on a good day), the target moves more and more the closer you get to it. We occasionally resorted to double checking directions with a compass because of the small time lag the GPS required to correct itself. A combination of technology saw us searching the appropriately facing slope without success. One final "I'll just have a quick look over here"

yielded a large hole surrounded by lots of limestone. Funny how we always find things in the last place we look for them!

Within the doline are three entrances to Ross Walker Cave. The doline is close to the top of the hill, about 10 metres deep, open to the south and very dry. Where the water came from to form it and the underlying cave is anyone's guess. The main entrance to the cave is via a broad hole in the right wall (no tags located). It drops down into a chamber over some rock fall. This chamber is about 20-30 metres in diameter and drops away to the right leaving a red-mud floor that is probably under water for most of the year. There were large gypsum deposits that were so dry they felt like styrofoam to touch. The cave seems to have been well-known to locals, at least 50 years ago, as there were numerous sets of initials carved into the gypsum with dates ranging from 1939 to the 1950s. I guess that counts as historical vandalism.

There is a second chamber leading off the main one. It is slightly smaller and has another two surface entrances. We checked out a couple of leads without finding much more. Back out in the doline, search revealed a hole on the left wall, about 1 metre in diameter. It dropped into a very small chamber (3-4 metres), then a hole in the floor led through to a second larger chamber, sloping down at approximately 45°. It did not appear to go any further. Total length was probably in the region of 20-25 metres.

Outside again, a slot about 30 cm x 50 cm was found nearby, rocks were dropped, it sounded like it went a little way, but probably dropped into the hole we had just got out of. We tried heading back to the car by the direct route, using the trusty (and now redeemed) GPS. Well, we got back, (±15 metres).
Kelly Miller

Plumbing The Depths Of Inky Blackness

by *Stefan Eberhard*

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the Sacred river ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea"

- *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

In March 1959 Bill Kunert, Glyn Davies and Michael Tobias penetrated 200 feet into an underground spring at Mole Creek. The divers were attempting to explore the resurgence of the River Alph, which disappears into a siphon inside the fabulously decorated Kubla Khan Cave before emerging about a mile away on the other side of the hill. It was the first cave dive made in Tasmania (Frauca 1959).

Kunert carried a sealed beam light of 12 volts powered from a lead wire connected to a battery on the surface. The lead ran along a 200 foot lifeline tied around the waist of Kunert and fed from the surface. Tobias and Davies were clipped into the line with karabiners. With Kunert leading the three divers submerged and disappeared. They had to dive head first through a bottleneck that was so narrow their aqualungs scraped the rocks.

At the end of the 200 foot line the divers surfaced in an airbell. Clinging to the crumbly mud walls, their breath steaming around their masked faces, the frogmen stared in wonder at the eerie sights in an underground stream. Their teeth were chattering, their limbs were almost numb and they found breathing difficult underwater in the intense cold. There was only one thing to do - retreat. Had they gone on they might never have come back as the cold waters would have claimed their lives (Frauca 1960).

In February 1965, Brian Barlow, Lance Barlow and Carl Summer borrowed 1,000 feet of baling twine from nearby residents and managed to penetrate 750 feet into the resurgence - an Australian record (*The Mercury* 27-2-1965). On their next attempt the team claimed to have penetrated a distance of 1,685 feet.

In 1974 Bill Kinnear and two companions made a series of dives using a base-fed line with a communication cable which enabled the surface crew to talk with the divers when they surfaced in air pockets. Two of the divers surfaced in an air pocket 80 metres into the resurgence and using their 'black box' device they informed the surface crew that the third diver had failed to show up. They were informed

that 120 metres of line had been fed out to the missing member who had apparently become entangled underwater. He eventually surfaced in the air pocket festooned in rope. The team continued on, but not without further incident;

'The torches did nothing but reflect a blinding glow and all I could see were my own bubbles....I had the rope in my hands but didn't know which way along the rope was out and which was towards Bill. ....I pulled in yards of the stuff, first from one direction and then the other, and finally felt Bill pulling at the rope and swam to him and surfaced. Both air tanks were approaching the half full mark and return to the surface became urgent' (Robertson 1977).

On a subsequent dive Bill Kinnear pushed ahead alone. His single air tank was drawn to half full when he turned around at a point 1,200 feet into the resurgence. Plans to return were abandoned when Kinnear died in a hunting accident a few days later.

It wasn't until February 1978 that the connection into Kubla Khan Cave was completed by Ron Allum, Phil Prust and Peter Stace (Stace 1979). The connection was surveyed by Nick Hume and myself in 1983, revealing 1.1 km of passage containing three siphons of 500m, 120m and 40m length. The length of the siphons varies considerably depending on water levels.

The first exchange through trip soon followed. Nick Hume and Stuart Nicholas dived from the resurgence end whilst Rolan Eberhard and Duncan Holland abseiled into Kubla Khan at the other end of the system. The teams met up in Cairn Hall, where the diving and caving gear was swapped, then each team continued out in the opposite direction. So far everything had gone according to plan. However, there was a lack of solid natural anchors to tie the line off at the start of the third siphon, so Nick had brought along an onion bag which he stuffed with mud for this purpose. Unbeknownst to the second diving team, the onion bag anchor had leaked it's contents so that as they reeled in the line, so too was the now useless anchor pulled into the sump towards them. Rolan and Duncan were soon confronted with an empty onion bag in the middle of the siphon. Duncan was unperturbed, so leaving Rolan with the reel which was their only security, he swam on until he surfaced on the other side of the siphon - it was Duncan's first cave dive! They continued on their way out but became separated again in the first long siphon. Duncan had got entangled in the line and by the time he sorted himself out he was completely disoriented - with no compass or detectable current he couldn't tell which way was in and which was out. He took a guess which proved to be correct - Duncan seemed to lead a charmed existence.

Recalling those early days now I think we had all been very lucky. I remember getting scared on numerous occasions, as we learnt the rules of survival in cave diving by trial and error. One hard-learned lesson in particular is worth relating. Union Cave at Mole Creek had received brief diving forays by Toby Clark in 1971. In 1979, Frank Salt and Peter Cover passed three short siphons but were unable to scale the sheer wall leading out of the water on the far side. Rolan and I ventured in there soon after we started cave diving. We passed through the first duckunder and peered into the second siphon - the water was beautifully clear and there was no silt on the bottom, so throwing caution to the wind we dived through without laying a line, which we intended to save for use later on. The third siphon was not so straightforward as the sediment we stirred up obliterated all visibility. Before losing the visibility entirely we were able to find our way some 40 metres through to the far side. We eagerly clambered out of the water and explored about 250 metres of nicely decorated cave before encountering another siphon.

We felt pleased with our discovery, but a little apprehensive about the return dive in zero visibility, so we organised some signals to communicate with by a series of 'hand-squeezes'. One squeeze meant 'Stop', two squeezes meant 'OK', and three squeezes meant 'There is a slight problem'. We set off, reeling in the line as we went, until the line unexpectedly disappeared into a narrow slot - until now we hadn't learnt the technique of rebelaying the line to prevent it being pulled sideways into hazardous restrictions, or so-called 'line traps'. Rolan attempted to follow the line into the slot but it soon became impossibly narrow. He squeezed my hand three times and I squeezed him back three times, because I didn't relish the prospect of trying to reverse our way back to the previous airspace without the line in place to guide us. He gave me three squeezes again, and I squeezed him back. My breathing rate increased as the seriousness of our situation took hold. We were probably going to die I thought, as vivid images started to roar through my brain at 100 miles per hour, one image was the tragic scene that would confront Nick when he came to retrieve our bodies. After a period of time that seemed like ages, but which was probably only a few minutes, we developed a new underwater communication signal - lots of squeezes meant 'There is a very big and very serious problem here.' Then a miracle happened - the line came free from the slot it was caught in and we were able to follow it out.

Upon surfacing we both swore never to go cave diving ever again. Our trials were not quite over however as we still had another siphon to get through - the one with no line in it, and which by now was completely silted-out. Suddenly no longer brash, I groped my way through using the line reel, and then reeled-in Rolan from the other side. We both learnt a lot about cave diving that day.

KUBLA KHAN February 1998

Chris Brown disappeared into the gloom as I struggled along behind, the gumboots I was wearing were causing considerable drag thus handicapping my finning movements. I caught up with him as he was clipping on the fourth reel of line which would hopefully take us to the end of the first siphon. He scampered ahead again but soon came back, bringing with him a cloud of silt which enveloped both of us. Using sign language he indicated that the passage ahead got narrow, and also could I please disentangle the line which had wrapped itself around his tank valves. He then thrust the reel into my hands with the obvious implication that I should take the lead since I had been through the siphon before and therefore ought to know the way.

In deteriorating visibility I probed ahead cautiously until getting to an unpleasant restriction which I did not remember from my previous visit 15 years before. I glimpsed an old piece of rotted line buried in the silt, a relic from the pioneering dives done here in the 1950's and 60's. I sensed the feeling of extreme isolation and loneliness which must have accompanied those early explorers when they first entered this cold, dark and inhospitable place. I felt in control of the situation but I definitely wasn't having fun as I groped around in zero visibility trying unsuccessfully to find the way on - it seemed like the passage had been nearly filled up with sediment. There was only one thing to do - retreat. I couldn't see Chris but I knew I'd found him again when our helmets 'clunked' together. I gave him a gentle shove in the direction of 'out', and with no further encouragement he was gone.

David Doolette and Tim Payne meanwhile had been patiently waiting for us to appear at the Pleasure Dome in Kubla Khan Cave - the plan had been to do another exchange through trip. It was a disappointment not to suceed in completing the through trip, but as my pommie cave diving friend, Scoff, put it, 'No one died so that's a positive result!'

JUNEE CAVE

Junee Cave is a big resurgence, collecting water from many deep inflow caves situated up to 14 kilometres away. The site clearly has potential to lead the way into a very extensive cave system, the so-called Junee Master Cave. The Junee River emerges from a siphon about 100 metres inside the cave entrance.

In February 1966 Carl Sommer, Lance and Brian Barlow, and Dick Lane swam 550 feet into the siphon to a depth of 55 feet (*The Mercury* 28-2-1966).

In February 1978 Ron Allum, Phil Prust and Peter Stace penetrated 120 metres into the siphon, but reported there was little chance of breaking through due to the hazards of cold, poor visibility, strong flow and the small and treacherous nature of the cave (Stace 1979).

In 1981 the Tasmanian Caverneering Club took up the challenge at Junee. Nick Hume, Rolan Eberhard and myself were the chief protagonists, assisted by Stuart Nicholas, Attila Vrana and others. Over the course of numerous dives, a heavy duty fixed line was gradually installed further and further into the siphon. The effort finally paid off in 1982 when Nick located a small air-bell, and then shortly afterwards Rolan reached the end of the 220 metre long first siphon. A piece of the puzzle to the Junee Master Cave had at last been realised. A magnificently decorated section of river passage - named 'For Your Eyes Only' - was tantalisingly short before we encountered a second siphon. This siphon proved to be a major obstacle as it started to descend deeply, thus incurring serious decompression problems. Hume reached a depth of 30 metres, and then in 1985 Ron Allum and Peter Rogers got to 35 metres depth but found no apparent way on. Cavers meanwhile kept searching for an alternative route into the master cave via the deep, wet caves located on the mountain slopes above.

In 1992 I went into Junee for another look. Passing the previous limit of exploration I negotiated a minor restriction at a depth of 44 metres where the current was screaming past me like a freight train from hell - so much water had to force its way through somewhere. At this depth I was suffering from nitrogen narcosis, the effects exacerbated by the cold water and poor visibility. The tunnel continued on - enticing, deeper.

My elation at discovering the cave was still going was tempered by an incident on my way back out. One of my regulators began to free-flow - a pebble lodged in the valve causing rapid loss of air. I struggled unsuccessfully to clear the blockage, then attempted to turn off the valve to the tank when suddenly I got severe cramp in both legs. In a short period of time one of my air supplies was completely drained. I exited using the one third reserve supply of air remaining in the other tank. This sobering episode reinforced a couple of the fundamental rules of cave diving - that is, always use at least two independent air supplies, and, keep at least a third of your air supply in each tank for emergency use. On my way back through the first siphon I was dealt one final humbling experience - the zip on my drysuit failed and the suit flooded with water. The cave seemed to be smirking at my futile, hollow victory - if Junee were to be personified, its most enduring characteristic would be *Schadenfreude.*

The exploration had reached the limits of depth and decompression using air, so far as I was concerned anyway. To push further required the use of mixed-gas techniques to combat the narcosis, as well as pure oxygen to cut down the decompression times. Such technical diving demands considerable expertise and a serious approach, and it isn't cheap either. It wasn't until February 1998 that a team of divers with the appropriate credentials were lured into Junee - Cocklebiddy record holder Chris Brown, diving medicine expert Dr David Doolette, and rising 'top gun' Tim Payne.

David and Tim did the first push dive. They breathed a special gas mixture containing 40% helium, 12% oxygen and 48% nitrogen. The inert gas helium was used to reduce the percentage of nitrogen in the breathing mix (normal air is 78% nitrogen), thus reducing the effects of nitrogen narcosis - this would allow them to dive deep without experiencing narcosis symptoms more severe than those encountered at an equivalent air depth of about 40 metres. Helium however, aside from distorting your voice to sounding like that of Donald Duck, rapidly sucks the heat out of you because it has a high thermal conductivity - clearly not desirable in cold water. To combat this the divers inflated their drysuits from a pony tank containing argon gas, which has better thermal properties. The lowered oxygen concentration in the breathing mix (normal air is 21% oxygen) meant it would be hypoxic if breathed at shallow depths, so David and Tim also carried a tank of 'travel gas' containing normal air, which they would use between the surface and 35 metres depth.

The dive profile still required lengthy staged decompression stops, to allow the controlled removal of the nitrogen and helium absorbed by their tissues under pressure. If they ascended too rapidly they risked the formation of bubbles in their tissues causing decompression sickness - the 'bends'. The rate of off-gassing can be significantly enhanced, and hence deco times reduced, by breathing pure oxygen at the deco stops. Pure oxygen however, has its own physiological complications - it becomes toxic under pressure. The likelihood of suffering an oxygen convulsion above 9 metres depth is remote, but to increase their chances of survival in case of such a mishap, David and Tim had full face masks attached to their oxygen tanks. The full face masks also helped to reduce the chilling effect of the cold water.

Tim and David got to the previous limit of exploration but were soon confronted by a daunting restriction - jagged blades of razor sharp rock hung from the roof like menacing teeth. They pushed through to a depth of 50 metres where the passage seemed to pinch out, but they noticed a possible alternative way on back at 'The Teeth'.

'It's a scary, narky place down there', David and Tim both commented afterwards.

It was Chris's and my turn next. We had a strict time schedule to keep if we weren't to violate our dive and decompression profile. The schedule had been carefully calculated by Tim and David using a clever computer program - both are experts in this field of diving. It boosted my confidence to know that we were doing this dive with a very high margin for safety. Needless to say, 'For Your Eyes Only' is not a good place to get hit by the bends.

I felt unexpectedly calm before my first mixed-gas dive. We dumped our oxygen cylinders at 6 metres and continued on to 35 metres where we dumped our cylinders of 'travel gas' and switched to the deep mix carried on our backs. - we were on schedule. We got to 'The Teeth' and wended our way through, carefully positioning the line so we wouldn't get stuck whilst returning in zero visibility - we did this by anchoring the line to pieces of poly pipe shoved into the sediment like ice screws. Throughout the second siphon we took great care in positioning the line to prevent it being severed on sharp rocks during next winter's floods, and to prevent it being pulled into line traps.

Following Chris in the clouds of silt which billowed past me I got occasional glimpses of green water and blue rock as he disappeared down virgin tunnel. I was intoxicated by narcosis and adrenaline, but focused my attention on monitoring my gauges - at this depth both time and air supplies go very quickly. All too soon we had reached our turning point - the depth was 60 metres but the tunnel kept barrelling onwards. We groped our way upwards. For just 10 minutes of exploration time we incurred 60 minutes of decompression - by the time we finally surfaced I had stopped shivering.

The final push was done by Tim and David again. It had rained overnight and the Junee River was still rising as we wrestled our way upstream. Both divers were already chilled and a little unhappy with the situation even before they commenced their dive. After they surfaced they were even less impressed - they had got to the previous limit but were unable to swim any further against the strong current. In 1985, Hume and Vrana had also been spat out of Junee when a flood pulse came through. David and Tim conveyed their feelings to me, 'Stef, you can keep your bloody cave.'

Living up to character, it seemed that Junee had the last laugh once again. We'll be going back for more next summer.

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STC WaReHoUsE SaLeS

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- Edelrid 25 mm tubular tape. Ideal for rigging, chest harnesses etc. (White) $2.00 per m
- 5 cm flat tape (ideal for harnesses, rigging, gear bags, belts etc.) (Blue or Red) $1.50 per m
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- Duracell 4.5 Volt flatpack batteries. (Use by 2000!) $8.00 each, (or 3 for $23.00)
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If you need any of the above please contact Jeff Butt on (03) 62 238620 (H), or jeffbutt@netspace.net.au, or write to us: SOUTHERN TASMANIAN CAVERNEERS, P.O. BOX 416, SANDY BAY 7005. If you have any other suggestions of gear that the club should Bulk Buy, then let us know and we will see what can be done.

STC Membership & Contact List

If your name is amongst these listed as unfinancial, you can do any of a number of options (using fee scale listed below) and save us (STC) the postage of having to send you a snail mail reminder:

STC membership fees are unchanged from 1997:
STUDENT, JUNIOR AND CONCESSION membership: $18.00;
FULL membership: $25.00;
HOUSEHOLD membership: $40.00;
ASF contribution for LIFE MEMBERS: $12.00.
Regards, Your one-armed STC Treasurer (Arthur Clarke) - with crush fracture to left thumb!

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