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Laddering Midnight Hole, by
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Negotiating a squeeze; photo by Jeff Butt.

Editorial

Caving again made the news over the holiday period, with the rescue of the very experienced Kieran McKay from deep within the Bulmer system in New Zealand. (There is a short article about this incident in this Spiel.) I believe there were in excess of seventy cavers involved in the rescue. Experience doesn't prevent one from having an accident; in fact when an experienced person has an accident it is more likely to be in a more remote and difficult place. Bearing this in mind, I hope that everyone who can will attend the forthcoming Caving Search and Rescue Exercise "CAVEX-99", details of which are in this issue.

You may have noticed that this Spiel is 3 months after the last; that is a change made so that Spiels will miss the midst of the Xmas holidays. Spiels are now due out at the end of every odd month of the year. By the way, to facilitate the production of the Spiel, how about some articles from YOU after ANY caving trip! It gets pretty boring seeing the same names appearing time after time!

Jeff Butt

Club Matters

ANNUAL STC FEES

Note that the **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE**--if payments are made to the Treasurer **PRIOR TO 4/2/99**, then the **PROMPT PAYMENT DISCOUNT** is applicable. Please take advantage of this offer....you don't have much time left!

ASF Membership Card

Amidst a small sea of controversy, the ASF has decided to issue Membership cards. Yours will have either been handed to you at the January STC meeting, or is included with this Spiel.

There are many ideas behind the card; it does allow one to prove membership of the ASF, this could be useful for obtaining permission to pass on to private land, or to gain permits for limited access caves. However, given that the Card doesn't have any signature, or photo on it, then it doesn't offer very convincing proof!

In the USA, the National Speleological Society (NSS) also has a similar membership card. In the US, production of the NSS card gives many discounts, e.g. Hire cars etc. Maybe a similar thing will happen here. For those who can remember back to the days of the Doghouse Hotel, (where both TCC and SCS used to hold meetings), you may recall that production of the Club Card meant that the entry fee did not have to

be paid. In addition via these cards one could gain 10% discount at local gear shops. Club membership cards seem to have gone via the wayside in recent years. Perhaps we should re-instate them and see what discounts local businesses may be willing to offer.

Anyway, whether you like it or not, ASF cards are here (for the moment), you can file yours as you deem fit.

Congratulations

On Saturday November 21st, 1998 Hugh Fitzgerald and Liz Canning were married in Newdegate Cave, (photo at lower left). This wedding is believed to be only the second one that has been held in this cave.

A number of Cavers attended the wedding; Arthur Clarke came attired in



A wedding guest; photo by Robyn Claire
his 'bag-of-fruit', complete with caving lamp and an umbrella (photo above) to cover against any contingency.

The wedding cake resembled a cave formation, as did the name of the contents "mud", but I for one can vouch that the chocolate mud cake tasted better than the cave variant.



The wedding Cake; photo by Arthur Clarke.



The newly wedded couple in Newdegate Cave; photo by the Wedding photographer.

CAVEX-99

The Annual Caving Search and Rescue Exercise will be held in the Florentine Valley on the weekend of Feb. 6-7.

Participants are expected from Police Search and Rescue, Ambulance Service, Fire Service, State Emergency Service, Forestry Commission and Caving clubs from all around the State.

Some Details:

The Aims for the weekend are for participants to be able to practise a wide variety of skills, including responding to emergency situations that might occur on a normal caving trip, working with a wide variety of personal from different agencies, learning new rescue skills, practising old skills and having a bit of fun.

To facilitate satisfying the aims, the first part of the weekend will involve participants from the various groups forming caving teams and heading off on a 'routine' caving trip. Each group will have a series of envelopes which are to be opened at certain points in the cave. Some envelopes will contain information indicating some incident, change in conditions, or change of plan. Each group will then address the changing circumstances to the best of their ability.

As the weekend draws on, it would not be unexpected if the nature of the caving trip evolves into a complex rescue exercise where the individual groups will be drawn together into a large rescue team. Saturday might well be a long day; in keeping with a real life scenario.

Everyone will have the opportunity for hands-on work and will be able to make important contributions to the exercise. You won't be sitting around, being bored whilst others do all the fun stuff!

An evening debrief will follow; and precede some evening refreshments.

Activities for Sunday will depend upon interest/energy and enthusiasm levels.

Gear to Bring:

Bring your own caving and camping gear, food and drinks. The Police BBQ will be coming along, so bring your own BBQ'ables. Also, please bring drinking water in case we camp at a roadhead.

Transport arrangements:

The Police will be supplying a bus, if you wish to take advantage of this, then please rendezvous at the Police Search and Rescue Head Quarters, 76 Federal Street, North Hobart. Note, that access is off Strahan Street-vehicles may be left in the compound. Please turn up at 08:00 for an 08:30 departure.

If you wish to travel independently, then please rendezvous at the Picnic Area on the left hand side of the road immediately before the gate to the South West National Park between 10:00 to 10:30.

To facilitate in the planning of scenarios and/or to reserve space in the Bus, please RSVP to me before 3/2/99.

Thanks, and see you there!

Jeff Butt (SAR Officer)

TRAINING EVENINGS

Don't forget, these are still happening on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, at Fruehauf Quarry. Come along and learn some new skills, or practise some old ones! See the Forward Program (below) for details!

Glue-in Bolting Technology trial

Just before Christmas a small workshop was held by Ian Houshold, Steve Bunton, Hans Benisch and Jeff Butt at the Gear Store. Ian brought the Parks portable drill along (a 24 Volt model, much more powerful than the STC 12 Volt model), as well as a Hilti glue dispenser gun and glue cartridge.

Various sizes of hole were drilled into some pet limestone rocks in the backyard, which were then adorned with various bits of stainless steel hardware (e.g. P hanger, Fixe eye-bolt). Some valuable experience was gained at using the Hilti HY150 glue. We also experimented at using a mixture of drill-dust and glue to fill up holes. The next stage is to attempt to remove some of these adornments to gain some experience in this process.

In the very near future P hangers will be installed in Midnight Hole. In addition, some attempt will be made to fill in the rope-grooves at the top of the final pitch. Re-bolting other popular caves will also be planned.

NB. For anyone interested; there will be a comprehensive article about modern bolts and bolting techniques in the next Australian Caver.

JB

FORWARD PROGRAM:

Meetings: (held at the Shipwright Arms Hotel, Battery Point)

Wed Feb. 3rd General Meeting at 7:30 p.m. (last chance for a SUBS. discount!)

Wed Feb. 17th Social gathering from 8 p.m. (Greg Middleton will show some slides of his caving in Madagascar, Mauritius and the Comores.)

Wed Mar. 3rd General Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Wed Mar. 17th Social gathering from 8 p.m. (Trevor Wailes will show some slides of caving in the June-Florentine in the old-days!)

Training Sessions: (held at Fruehauf Quarry on the 'off meeting Wed's.')

provided it's not raining!! From 5 p.m. till dark, contact Jeff for info. 62238620.

Wed Feb. 10th Novice abseiling and prussiking evening.

Wed Feb. 24th Tuning your SRT rig, how to make prussiking easier.

Wed Mar. 10th Rope rescue, how to pluck someone off a rope.

Wed Mar. 24th Tyroleans, hauling systems.

Trips:

(Please contact the Organiser of any trip for more details.)

Sa/Su-Feb. 7/8 CAVEX-99, June-Florentine. RSVP to Jeff, 62238620 asap!

Sa/Su-Feb. 20/21 One day of Track work, and one day in Exit Cave, Jeff 62238620.

Dates to be fixed •Newdegate Cave-out the back, Arthur 62282099

•Growling Swallet-install Avon's Aven ladder, Jeff 62238620.

•Mesa Creek-explore and track-work, Arthur 62282099.

The ANNUAL DINNER & “PERIOD” CAVING TRIPS: 5-6/12/98

Party: Robyn Claire, Albert Goede, Miranda Howie, Jeff Butt, Arthur Clarke, Dave Rasch, Hans Benisch, Andras Galambos.

Preceding the STC dinner, a couple of trips, in period style were planned and even eventuated. Robyn, Albert and Miranda headed into Mystery Creek Cave, as did the late starter Jeff. Arthur, Dave, Andras and Hans headed down Midnight Hole.

Mystery Creek Cave Trip:

I had been bemused by the nineteenth century etching of a female caver dressed in full Victorian drawing room regalia inside a cave chamber, whilst timidly clutching the elbow of a brave chap wearing a suit and hat - effecting a romantic “*I’ve climbed Mt. Everest*” victory pose. This prompted my attempt to do a “dressing-up” thing for the STC “Period Caving” Annual Dinner/Christmas party weekend trip into *Mystery Creek Cave*.

So, what sort of difference does clothing make to caving experiences? I dug out a long woolly dress and stockings to wear, but since there wasn’t a suitably feathered hat in the attic, I settled for an old bicycle helmet. The costumed outfit was all really very cosy. The three of us strolled into *Mystery Creek Cave* several hours after the other STC party took off to *Midnight Hole* for their abseiling/ laddering through trip with their head-mounted carbide lamps.

Inside the cave, the light of our hand-held carbide lamps softened the atmosphere as we lingered longer - peering into the cave formations, as Albert explained the cave’s geomorphology. (Albert resisted effecting any victory poses, despite having two charming ladies on each arm!) We snuffed our carbides out to view the glow-worms - putting up with the acrid smell of acetylene! The myriads of glow-worms shone like stars in the night sky.....

A little further on - and we were at the start of *Matchbox Squeeze*. When it was suggested that madam might like to remove her long flowing dress to negotiate this narrow passage, madam decided that clothing did matter in the tricky bits of cave passage so she declined to show her bloomers. Madam actually ended up doing a little damage to her bloomers anyway, when sliding down the *Laundry Chute*.

Robyn Claire

[It is unfortunate that Robyn, Albert and Miranda were not captured on film during this trip, as Arthur with the only camera was coming down Midnight Hole. Robyn’s dress was particularly striking, and the light provided by the large hand-held carbide lamps cast a delightful glow. Ed.]

Midnight Hole Through Trip:

The gentlemen had not quite put the same amount of effort into dressing in period Garb that the participants for Mystery Creek Cave team had; perhaps they were reserving their energies for dueling with the 170’ of ladders to be used! A concession to period costume theme was the use of helmet mounted carbide lights, so at least the glow of the past was present.



50 m of ladder hanging down the final pitch in Midnight Hole; photo by Arthur & Jeff.



Andras about to climb; photo by Arthur

Andras drew the short straw and toted the 'white elephant' pack with five the ladders. Incidentally, this was the full complement of STC ladders, (4 by 30' and 1 by 50'), and was just enough for the final 49 m pitch. Descent of the first five pitches was by modern techniques. The ladders and a separate abseil/belay rope were duly installed. This is probably the first time those big eyebolts, installed in the late 60's have seen a ladder for

decades!

The magnificent photograph on the previous page shows the installed ladders hanging down (which hang free from the wall most of the way down the shaft) this pitch. Arthur, Dave, Hans and Andras abseiled down the pitch, and then Arthur and I set up the camera, tripod and flashes.

Andras was first to tackle the ladders (using a self belay onto the rope), and he set a precedent of counting off the ladders as he powered up, see the photo at right and this Spiel cover. There was little discernible slowing as he ascended.

Hans headed up next, the numbers indicating progress didn't issue forth quite so fast, but it never looked like he would have any trouble.

I headed up next, with numerous stops to allow for photograph opportunities. I can vouch that even with good technique, one's forearms still tire somewhat (perhaps even more so if you are hanging around to take photos!), and that the insides of ones thighs also gets a little pained from rubbing the sides of the ladder (feet in from behind) as one ascends.

Dave (who has a pulley on his chest ascender, which lets him prussik without using his arms; which as a result are a little lighter in the muscle department) probably had the toughest time on the ladder. Best to say that at the top of the pitch we could hear him coming before we could see him. Belay ropes are handy things. But persistence paid off, and yes he did make it.

One wonders about the size of cavers arm muscles today as compared to the cavers of old, we must be bits of wimps these days. It would be interesting to try a really big pitch, say Mini-Martin (110 m) on ladders; but maybe it is lucky that we only have 50 m.



Jeff with carbide; photo by Arthur.

Instead of laddering back down, we abseiled as Robyn, Albert and Miranda had already headed back to get the food on the go. We

thought it best not to keep everyone waiting longer than necessary and anyway our Swallets were Growling!

Ladder winding lessons followed under the glow of carbide lamps. Carbide light really is a very pleasant light to cave by; but of course there is the requisite faffing factor and every now and then one misses the beam of the electric for finding the way in large areas.

Arthur enjoyed the laddering/abseiling spectacles from below; his "test" was yet to come. Some interesting rationale was at work here; AC decided that if he went down Midnight Hole he'd only have to do *Matchbox Squeeze* once, and by then the thought of what was to come for dinner would be enough to entice him through. But, if he went in via Mystery Creek Cave the enticement of the laddering spectacle wasn't enough to get him through the squeeze in the first place. We're glad he chose the first option, as the photographs came out really well. Well done Arthur!



Andras on the way up; photo by Arthur & Jeff.

All in all it was a really fun little trip, ladders still do have their uses, but SRT is a lot easier, and faster and you have to carry significantly less gear overall. On the flip side the use of ladders and a belay rope is inherently a lot safer than SRT which depends upon a rope alone.

Soon enough we were back on the road and bound for Arthur's 'Francistown Caving Hut', where the dinner was being held. It was somewhat disappointing that with around seventy people in the club, only eight could make it to the dinner.

We arrived back (fairly late of course, but the evening was yet young). As we walked through the door we were welcomed

with an *Ap'res Caving Brandy* and *Apr'es Growling Swallet hors d'ouvres*.

As the evening moved on we dined as per the menu below (I hope all you non-attendee's are suitably drooling at this, as I can vouch for the fact that the food was absolutely superb in both taste and presentation).

All of us whom attended really owe a **great big thank-you to Robyn** for doing all the hard work procuring and cooking up this food. Also, **many thanks to Arthur** for the use of your home

for the dinner and as a crash pad afterwards.

The courses came and went, the wine and stout came and went and much discussion of the days activities followed. All in all everyone had a really great time and it was a small roaring success.

After receiving thanks from everyone, Robyn issued a challenge to Dave and Jeff to be responsible for the 1999 STC Annual Dinner. Well that could be interesting!!!

As these things tend to, the night rolled on into the small hours of the day. No surprise that when Trev. and company turned up to go caving the next day, things were going rather slowly; more so for some than others (as is always the way!) But, I'm pleased to say, some caving did happen the day after; as did some extra food....that great food just kept on coming!

Jeff Butt (text)
and Arthur Clarke (menu)



More wine coming on line!; photo by Robyn.

STC DINNER MENU

Ap'res caving brandies - a nip thereof: with

Ap'res caving Growling Swallet hors d'ouvres:

(morsels of marinated octopus, quails eggs, olives in spices, sun-dried tomatoes in herb-flavoured oil, filo pastries, chillies, pecan & cashew nuts)

Pot Hole Pottage: Borscht with olive bread

STC fortification casserole:

succulent venison brewed in stout, beer and mustard, with

- turnip and potato cake;

- spinach, pecan and feta roulade;

- braised aubergine with sun-dried tomatoes;

- pumpkin pieces;

- salad greens.

[With filleted and marinated cutlets of cave fish (Atlantic Salmon) on hand for the fish-eating vegetarians!]

Midnight Hole Profiteroles:

Choux pastries dipped in hot chocolate sauce (equates to cave rocks covered by mud), accompanied by:

Oolites and pebbles: brandy flamed Oolites (blueberries) and pebbles (strawberries), with Elgar Farm biodynamic yoghurt.

WINE LIST:

- Rhubarb Wine;

- Elderberry Wine;

- Dover Pub stout; and

- Ginger Beer.

and the day after:

Champagne Breakfast: Elderflower Champagne with Francistown strawberries;
after caving sustenance: Venison soup

Retired Cavers go Caving!

Rumour has it that some of the less active cavers are actually getting out and about and some of the 'X-cavers' are threatening to do so.

Dean Morgan and three visitors recently visited Arthur's Folly. I'm not sure why Dean would take them to such a crawly cave, maybe he wanted to impress how little fun caving is compared to mountain biking or rock-climbing?

Chris Davies was almost on a trip to Black River in Growling on Australia Day. The trip rendezvous point was at Chirs's place, but we left without him!

I have heard that recently Stuart Nicholas was talking about a Khazad Dum-Dwarrowdelf exchange trip.

Age of Caving Cars

On a recent 'in car, whilst you drive to the cave' survey, it was learned that the average age of Tasmanian Cavers

cars is 27 years: Dave's MG is 29, Andras's Kingswood is 27 and Jeff's Torana is 25. STC Cavers are certainly doing their bit to keep the average age of the car fleet up!

One wonders if this is in anyway related to the rapidly overgrowing roads in the Junee-Florentine. Currently when one travels up the Eight Road any mud (and remaining duco!) on the sides of the car gets scraped off.

[The following article was recently posted onto OZCAVERS by Lindsay Main.

We have had two very similar incidents here in recent times (in the bottom of Ice Tube, *Speleo Spiel* #307, p 10; and deep within Flick Mint's Hole, *Speleo Spiel* #309, p 7). Examining incidents provides good food for thought, and thus I thought it worthwhile to reproduce the article in its entirety here.

Accidents do happen, even to experienced people; indeed, their experience often means that they are deep within a cave, often in difficult places and/or where no-one else has been.

An incident like the one below in the far reaches of any of our deeper and longer caves would severely tax local caver resources.

If you can, please come along to CAVEX-99, and learn.

Ed.]

Bulmer Cavern (NZ) Rescue, January 1999

On 28th December 1998 12 cavers assembled at Bulmer Lake, Mt. Owen, for the 13th South Owen Expedition. Three of the group, Kieran McKay (Turangi), Marcus Thomas (Christchurch), and Rob Gillespie (USA) left for Bulmer Cavern to spend three nights at Camp 2, which was established last year as an exploration base for new extensions beyond the previous limit of exploration in the Soupmix area.

Bulmer Cavern is New Zealand's longest cave, with around 50 km of passages surveyed to date. The new extensions have given a long-awaited boost to exploration, adding 9 km during several camping trips by small teams. The cave is complex, with several old phreatic levels and a streamway interconnected by vadose rifts and shafts. There are seven entrances and the depth is 748 metres. The passage is all contained within an area about three kilometres from north to south and a few hundred metres wide.

On the first caving day those based at Bulmer Lake rigged down the Erebus Passage to The Labyrinth area, at a depth of about 400 metres, and toured

around the upper levels of the cave. Most rested on the second day. At Camp 2 Rob, Kieran, and Marcus surveyed about 200 metres of passage on the first day, and on the second day headed for a promising looking area involving some small shafts. Kieran descended a shaft to the top of a second one, and prussiked back up again to swap the ropes around. Just as he was starting to descend again, a large rock bollard forming one half of the Y-hang anchor broke loose and hit him, doing little damage but causing him to lose control of the rack and fall about 15 metres, landing on rocks at the bottom.

[Anchors can sometimes fail, the use of backups prevents disaster. Loss of control whilst abseiling on a rope can cause more problems than an actual impact from a rock.

In the Ice-Tube incident, Dion lost control of his rack and essentially free-fell down part of the pitch, the impact at the bottom of the pitch caused his broken ankle. In the Flick Mint's Hole incident, I did not lose control when struck by rocks (anchor failure), but had I, then my Stop descender would (most likely!) have prevented an uncontrolled descent. The injuries I sustained were those caused directly by the falling rocks.

Of course, rescuing someone who is unconscious on a rope presents a different set of problems, so descender choice is not totally clear-cut.

Ed.]

While Marcus and Rob were re-rigging the rope and descending, Kieran crawled clear of the base of the pitch (which was dripping heavily), and apparently lost consciousness. When the others reached him he was moaning and incoherent. He was bleeding heavily from a deep cut under the jaw, which they dressed as best they could. He had severe bruising all down his left side, particularly to the wrist, knee and ankle. They suspected broken bones, but as it turned out the only break was to the jaw.

After strapping his arm and splinting his leg, they were able to get Kieran back up the pitch and started the trip back to Camp 2, normally about 1-2 hours. This took 6-7 hours, with Kieran walking most of the way and being assisted up pitches and climbs. Then they settled him for a long wait.

After a brief sleep, Marcus, who fortunately knows the route through the cave extremely well, set off for the surface at around 2 am on the morning of New Years Eve, arriving at Bulmer Lake at 8 o'clock while people were having breakfast and preparing for the day's caving. After a brief discussion we swung into action. The Police were alerted via the Mountain Radio Service, and a few cellphone calls were made to key people to speed the process up. A team of three - John Atkinson, Julian Stone, and Andrew Matthews - was despatched to Camp 2 to assist Kieran. Another team was given the task of trying to devise an alternative route at the top of The Lions Den, the pitch series which connects the upper and lower levels, which had been the site of major rock-falls in the past and was considered too dangerous for a rescue operation. The remaining three made preparations for the arrival of the rescue teams. Marcus was sent to bed.

The first rescue team of three arrived mid-afternoon and included Mike Brewer, a doctor who had recently been involved in exploration beyond Camp 2. After their departure to the cave a rescue headquarters was set up and another team of four strong cavers left to support the medical team, taking a rescue stretcher. The stabilisation team reached Kieran and Rob mid-afternoon and set to work to treat properly Kieran's injuries, and Andrew returned to the surface with Rob. The medical team reached Camp 2 late on New Years Eve, and the stretcher team a couple of hours later.

Later, in the evening, the two cable-laying teams started - one to work from the entrance to the bottom of the pitches at The Roaring Lion, and the other from The Roaring Lion to the site of the rescue.

Both teams made good progress and the two wires were linked, giving telephone access as far as the Wildwest area, at about 8 a.m. on New Years Day. The deep team continued to the Soupmix area, meeting Kieran and the rescuers about three hours later. Kieran had been dragged in the stretcher through some of the low parts, but was walking with assistance along most passages. There were enough people present to use a direct haul on any climbs. The cable-layers accompanied the group to the

Awesome Aven, a forty-metre flat-floored pitch, and then returned to the surface. A feature of the communications on this rescue was a VHF link from the telephone base at the entrance to the rescue controllers at the Lake, enabling those underground to talk directly to the controllers without the need for relaying.

The Awesome Aven was a formidable obstacle which was intended to be re-rigged for the rescue, but because of Kieran's mobility and the availability of enough people and rope, he was hauled using the existing pitch rope, with a safety rope. Then the team moved on through the Wildwest-Wildcat area, arriving at the old campsite in the Octopus Room in the evening. Here they stayed the night.

Meanwhile rigging teams were working in the Lions Den to ensure that this phase of the rescue would operate smoothly. A deep rigging team was to be despatched, but Kieran's speed continually confounded planning and none of the further pitches were re-rigged. However the rescue team was carrying sufficient rope with them to deal with each obstacle as they reached it.

On the next day, January 2nd, a second rescue team relieved those who had stayed overnight at the Octopus Room, and started moving Kieran forward again. By now retrieval of

gear was a priority, and other teams had entered the cave to carry out superfluous equipment behind the rescue team. Several such teams of "cleaners" were used during the rescue.

Kieran now seemed to be walking more readily, and his increased speed meant plans were continually changed and ETA's updated. He reached the Roaring Lion around midday, was hauled up the pitch to Castration Corridor. The narrowness of the passage and the small pitches caused little delay, and the team was at the base of the two 40 metre Lions Den pitches at around two o'clock. These were set up with hauls, with a long tyrolean rigged above the upper pitch so that the very loose section there was avoided. This worked like a charm and Kieran's landing on level ground in the upper levels, along with a brief interview, was recorded by a TV3 cameraman who just happened to be there.

With the whiff of the entrance in his nostrils there was no holding Kieran back, and he made good time to Panorama Entrance, assisted by numerous additional handlines which had been installed over some of the scary traverses and climbs. At around 3.30 p.m. he was picked up by a helicopter from Panorama Entrance and taken to Bulmer Lake, before being flown to Nelson Hospital.

Meanwhile cleaning teams worked on de-rigging the ropes, winding the phone cable back, and lugging all the gear out of the cave. This wasn't completed until the following afternoon. A debrief was held on the morning of the 3rd, and then the rescuers were flown out. The expedition members continued until the 7th as planned, but everyone was tired and very little was achieved.

Overall, the rescue was hugely successful and things ran very smoothly. There were some minor hiccups, as you would expect on an operation of this size, but generally people worked very well and did what was required to make the rescue happen.

The usual absurd statements appeared in the media, with ridiculous comments about crawling under 5 km of parked cars (there are no squeezes and very few crawls in Bulmer). There were also the usual outraged taxpayers complaining about the rescue's cost, but generally these were treated with the contempt they deserve. All in all it was a very successful operation.

Lindsay Main
(South Owen Expedition organiser)

[We wish Kieran a speedy and complete recovery. Ed.]

Hobart's Drains and Tunnels- Where to find them.

I found this on the Internet at (<http://www.squonk.net/users/kriste/drains/hobart/>). It may be of some interest to some of you (and I've got a problematic third of a page to fill in this Spiel, so that's why it's in! Ed.)

Grid References (PAGE/MAP/GRID REF) are for the UBD. TASMANIA - CITIES AND TOWNS. 11th EDITION. 1993 (DR. = Drain A.T. = Army Tunnel ? = Unchecked)

HOBART. DR.
Right in the middle of Hobart. Get in opposite airport bustop.
DOMAIN DR. [82/25/X-28]
Collins Street side of Royal Hobart Hospital. With the flow.
Gets bigger after 5 mins.
FOREST ROAD ? [74/17/J-22]
Northside of Forest Road. Padlocked door.

HOBART DR. [82/25/X-29]
Collins Street side of Royal Hobart Hospital. Against the flow.
HOBART DR. [74/17/L-22]
Enter canal just Southwest of Molle Street on Macquarie Street.
MOONAH DR. [68/11/K-17]
Follow smaller canal against flow along Risdon Road until it goes underground.
MOONAH DR. [68/11/J-18]
Exact location not recorded. Hidden Southwest of Newtown Road.
SANDY BAY DR. [74/17/M-24]
At shore near boat sheds and small pier.
SANDY BAY DR. [74/17/L-24]
Tidal !! Follow either creek leading into Hobart Uni.
WREST POINT DR. [74/17/M-24]
At shore near north end of Nelson Road.
BATTERY PT. A.T. [75/18/N-22]
East side of Princes Park. Padlocked gate.
KANGAROO BLUFF A.T. [75/18/Q-21]
Located in Battery Bluff reserve. Padlocked.
ALEXANDRA BATTERY A.T. [75/18/X-26]
Unchecked. May have army tunnels.

Ida Bay-Some new holes west of Blayney's Quarry-14/11/98

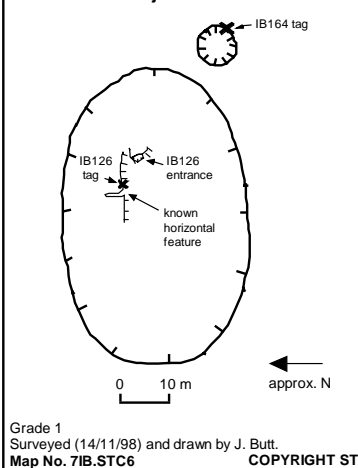
Party: Arthur Clarke, Dave Rasch, Jeff Butt.

Arthur and myself located several new holes during a Field Test of the new club GPS on 4/7/98 (see *Speleo Spiel* 308, pp. 11-13) and for a variety of reasons hadn't made it back to check them out, till this trip (and at the time of writing there are still two 'new-holes' from 4/7 that we have yet to do!).

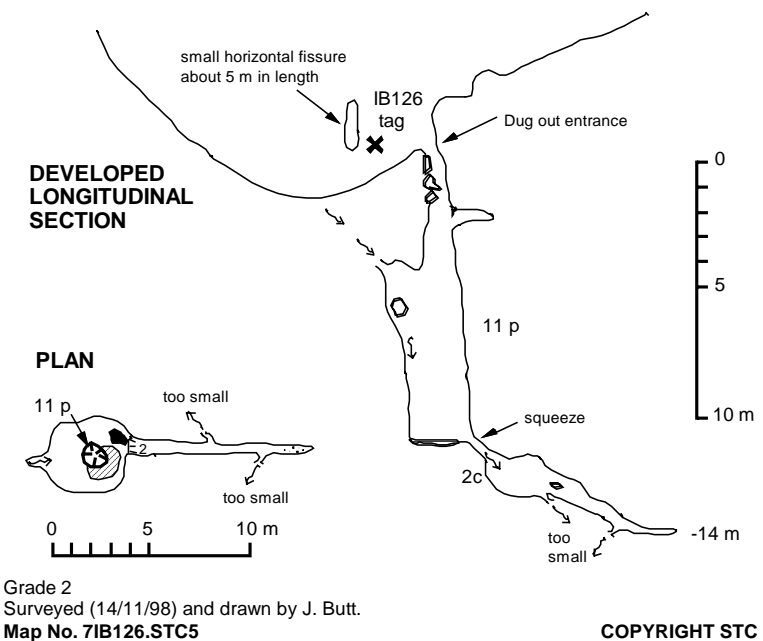
First up we headed to the large IB126 doline (which must lie somewhere above the Conference Concourse region in Exit Cave; apparently the streamlet in the near-by Con Cave (IB22) has been dye traced into Exit), where the first vertical cave awaited us. This doline is one of the largest around, at the bottom is a small limestone cliff with one horizontal passage about 5 m in length in it. The number tag is to the right of this entrance (which is barely a cave). The new slot is about 4 m away beneath a small limestone outcrop; the top filled with rich black humic material. Rocks dropped down indicated a pitch in the 10-20 metre range, and there was also the encouragement of a slight draught. Dave and myself set about the mucky task of digging out the entrance to allow access, whilst Arthur, having forgot his lighter tried to light up a fag using my ageing emergency Greenlites. The three of us just managed to hoist two large problematic rocks out of the entrance and we then had a negotiable and stable slot down which to abseil.

More rocks were placed safely out of the way as I descended, 3 m down a small stal. (amidst literally hundreds of cave crickets) provided a deviation for the remainder of the descent (11 p). Whilst I checked out the cave, Dave came to Arthur's rescue; by shorting his gel-cell

Location map for the new cave in the IB126 doline and the adjacent new cave IB164.



Short Circuit (to Nicotine Nirvana), (IB126)

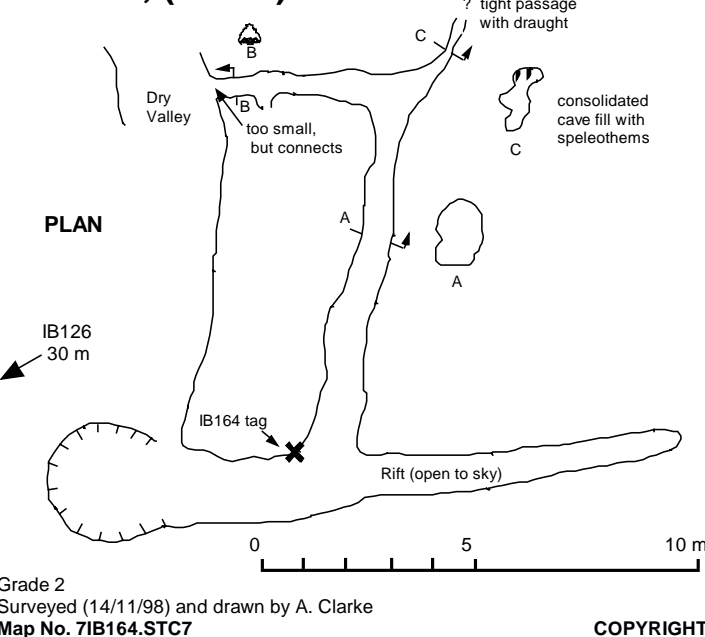


out with his ascender enough heat/sparks were liberated to light the waxy Greenlites. Arthur then set about getting his nicotine fix whilst underground proceedings continued. [Hence the name for this cave, "Short Circuit (to Nicotine Nirvana)".] A small dribble of water came down from the lowest point in the doline, and formed a small pool at the base of the 11 m pitch (and again, there were hundreds of crickets here), a small streamlet then flowed through a squeeze and then in a short distance headed down

two small holes in the floor and for us the cave terminated at about 14 m depth. The total length of this cave is about 22 m. Another disappointment, but you never know until you have a look.

Arthur, who had just finished a bout of chain-smoking was fossicking about the edge of the doline, saying that a doline this big must have another cave in it!, and yes he indeed did find another (small) cave. This horizontal cave was basically an "L" shaped tube (hence the

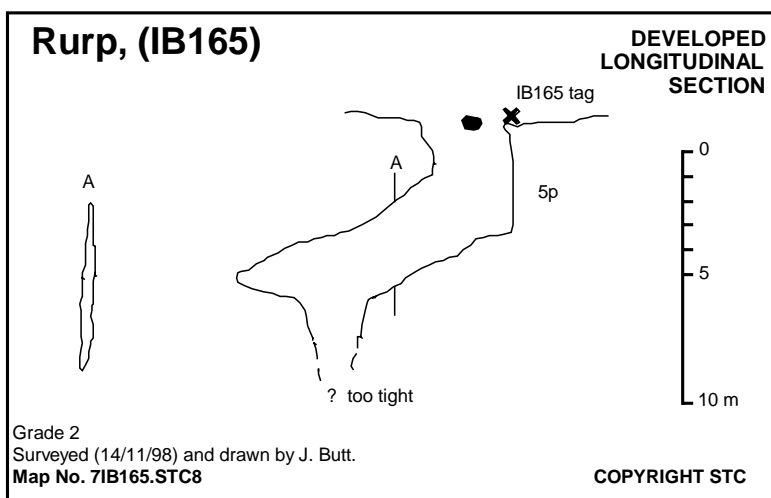
El Tube, (IB164)



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name "El Tube"), about 1.3 m high, 1 m wide. A survey is shown above. Arthur numbered this cave as IB164. El Tube is about 30 metres south-west of Short Circuit to Nicotine Nirvana, in a small satellite doline (as shown in the accompanying location sketch).

We spent another hour or so fossicking around the area, finding many other small holes, some not worthy of numbering, and others that had already been numbered (e.g. IB68). We did find another new cave, which was duly numbered as IB165. This cave is basically a narrow fissure, which after the initial 5p narrows further to become too tight. The shape of this cave reminded me of a Realised Ultimate Reality Piton, or Rurp and was thus duly named. Total depth is about 10 m.



Rurp is only about 20-30 m from where the Southern Ranges Walking Track leaves Blayney's Quarry.

that fruitful, but it was good to do the job properly in that we numbered, explored and surveyed (albeit roughly!!) the caves that we looked at.

All in all, our investigations weren't

Jeff Butt

Solving (?) Mysteries in the back end of Mystery Creek Cave (IB10)- 14/11/98

Party: Arthur Clarke, Dave Rasch, Jeff Butt.

For a pleasant evening trip we wanted to compare notes with each other about our knowledge of what there is at the back end of Mystery Creek Cave. So, we proceeded into the cave, past the one remaining??? (there used to be two), old 20 litre drums, and into the labyrinth of fissured areas. After doing a 'step across', on rope, we descended an extremely muddy ~15 m pitch down to the stream level. (There is a much cleaner similar sized drop nearby which leads to the same area--this is a nicer option for any revisits!) There really is a vast labyrinth of fissures; there are many access points to the streamway and many small sumps. The amount of water in this back end doesn't seem equate to what comes in via Mystery Creek, and so one wonders if we really have the main drain back here, or not.

We exhausted most leads; the furthestmost we got down stream put us in a small streamway which terminated in a large and fairly loose boulder pile--not very inspiring stuff. At the top of the access pitch we have one interesting (and difficult) lead to follow up, namely a high level rift, running at about 30° off from the other rifts; there is a detectable draught here, and one can see at least 30 m of passage heading off into the distance. Accessing this area will be difficult; it would require either a bolt traverse along it; although it may be possible to aid climb vertically up into this rift a little further along to where there are some high level shelves that may more easily allow horizontal progress.

This entire area could do with a good survey! One wonders if one has ever been done in the past???--the lack of carbide survey marks/obvious cairns seems to indicate that it hasn't been done. Arthur has a copy of a very old TCC survey of Mystery Creek Cave which suggests that this area hasn't been surveyed. Apparently Steve Bittinger and his son re-surveyed

Mystery Creek Cave some years back, but no-one seems to have the data or a copy of the survey. In addition I have no idea if they ventured to this area. With the good solid baseline traverse through Exit, it would be very interesting to put the two surveys together again to see just where the extremities of each cave lies in relation to each other.

Postscript: Dave and myself returned (6/12/98) after the STC Annual Dinner, with a party of 8 (Trevor and Travis Wailes, Taha, Jamie Allison, Andras Galambos, Hans Benisch). This was a GMH assisted trip (Andras's Kingswood and my Torana) as Trev. lost his front brakes en-route to Francistown. It was a bit of a dogs-breakfast of a trip, there were mixed agenda's, time-transport scheduling differences, various degrees of hangovers and so the day wasn't quite what we'd hoped for (though we did do a bit of surveying). The high level rift of interest still beckons, although on the day it seemed to have lost is draught.

Jeff Butt

Growling Swallet-ladder replacement trip-29/11/98

Party: Dave Rasch, Jol Desmarchelier, Del Robinson (Canterbury Caving Group-NZ), Angela Bishop (University of Leeds Speleological Association-UK), Jeff Butt.

Having two international visitors was the catalyst to finally install the new rope-PVC rung ladders made way back in July (see Spiel #309). The Orana was heavily laden with 5 passengers and 3 packs of ladders as well as all the other

paraphernalia that one has to take along. The weather wasn't great, a continuous light drizzle was falling, but the forecast was for no worse....after the heavy rains over recent days the last thing we wanted

was some heavy showers, as Growling was primed to flood.

We sauntered to the entrance, Growling was as impressive as ever; the water levels were up as well, more like a winter/spring flow than the summer norm. A quick inspection of the entrance and a check on my 'gauging' rock indicated that all would be well inside. So, we then trundled up to Slaughterhouse Pot (SHP) and headed in.

The in-situ 11 mm Bluewater ropes (installed 7/3/98, see Spiel #306) on the three pitches in SHP are in good condition; but my comments in Spiel #306 still stand. The steel maillons at the pitch-heads are all very rusty, with rust stains on the rope. These should be replaced with stainless steel ones as soon as possible, and the ropes end-for ended (a job for the next trip!) Use of stainless steel ring hangers; e.g. of the type used in Ice-Tube would obviate the need for maillons at all, however as the hangers are attached to glued-in machine bolts this option doesn't exist. The phone line is still in-situ, but the surface end is at best 'in a big tangle'. It would have

benefited from being left on a spool, or in a small bag.

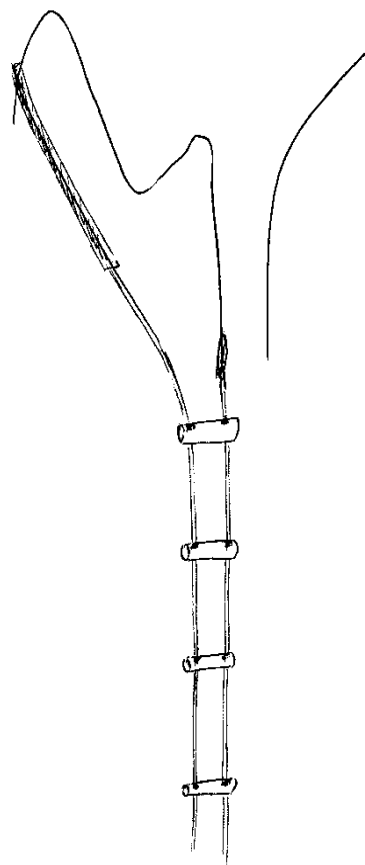
We replaced three ladders (i.e. the 8 m one down to Trapdoor streamway and the two (7 m & 5.5 m) that take you down to Windy Rift). [The 20 m ladder in Avon's Aven also needs to be replaced]. The existing ladders (one was dated "September 1987") were in a very poor condition (rope chafed down to the core around many of the rungs (more so with the Aluminium rungs than the PVC ones), and also around some of the anchors) and were well beyond their "Best By" date.

When dismantling the old ladders it became apparent that several different styles of rungs were tried (i.e. 40 mm PVC, 2" PVC and 30 mm Aluminium pipe) and that some of the PVC rungs had internal strengtheners (broom handle, 20 mm PVC pipe). The old rails were made from a mixture of ropes (10 mm laid polypro., 8 mm and 9 mm kernmantle rope). It was good to note that none of the PVC rungs were broken, they obviously stand up to the rigours of passing cavers and don't suffer from embrittlement (there's certainly no UV about!).

The replacement ladders (all 9 mm Beal rails/40 mm PVC rungs) have very visible installation dates ("November 1998") marked on them. A reasonable "Best By" date would be "2005", but of course their condition should be checked each time before (and during) each use and they should be replaced/repared as necessary.

Note that each ladder has two anchors (naturals), but there is no belay line with these. [The addition of a permanent belay line would be a good idea (there is one with the Avon's Aven ladder) and would fit in with accepted best practise!]. The diameter of the rungs means that it is comfy on the feet, but that it is easier to grip the rope rails rather than the rungs with ones hands.

With the work done, we headed through Windy Rift to the streamway. In the first 'walkable' muddy passage prior to the streamway there were many green leaves; closer to the streamway foam was visible about 2 m up the walls-obviously there had been a very recent sizeable flood, most likely on Friday the 27th with the high rainfall totals. There was a reasonable amount of water about, it was the highest level I'd experienced for many years. The cacophony of noise and seeing the first pulsing waterfall made Del, Angela and Jol wonder what they

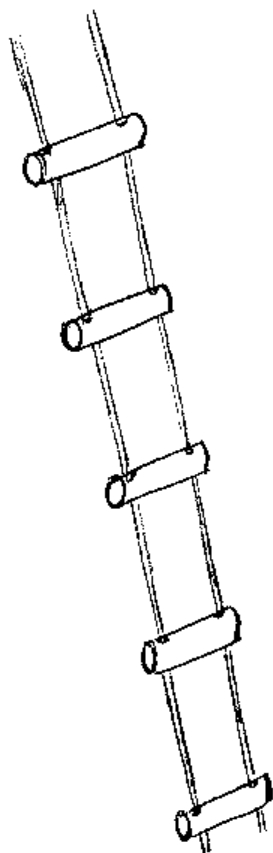


were in for. Angela, even with her experience in the caves ("drains") in the Yorkshire Dales was suitably impressed (or perhaps a tad worried!!). The level was quite manageable, but I was glad that it wasn't raining outside!, many of the races and small falls necessitated a helping hand to the height impaired amongst us. Overall it made the trip quite sporty and fun without being dangerous.

The now not so dry bottom of the dry-bypass was quite amusing, one had to climb by Braille under the torrent; needless to say their weren't many dry bits amongst us (even for those with TSA suits) after this obstacle was negotiated.

We emerged to the same sort of day, light drizzle after 5 hours underground. The hour along the noisy streamway was quite refreshing and revitalising; it made this an exciting and most enjoyable trip for all. It was an added bonus that the three new ladders were also installed.

Jeff Butt (text & drawings)



Knots in the rails, within the rungs hold the rungs in position.

Flick Mints Hole (J371)-bottom/explore/derig-20/12/98

Party: Dave Rasch, Andras Galambos, Damian Bidgood, Jeff Butt.

Finally, after some months of having trouble teeing up a suitable day one was found and we returned to Flick Mints to bottom, explore and derig it. Five months had elapsed since my incident in this cave (see Spiel #309) and over this time I had effected a full recovery. At the entrance I did feel a degree of apprehension, but addressed this by rigging the entrance pitch and heading on down. As familiar obstacles came along I gradually eased back into that comfortable caving feeling. All the rigging and ropes were well checked en-route, in case there was any damage during their 5 month residence; all the maillons and krabs had a significant amount of surface corrosion. It was pleasant that the cave was the driest I'd ever seen it, the 55 metre pitch was virtually dry. Traversing the Cramps and Hammerlock wasn't trivial and made me think that I did a very good job getting out of this place whilst injured

At the top of the pitch into Decadence, I sought to examine from where the bollard that hit me had detached, but I'm not really any wiser; fracture must have occurred along a bedding plane leaving no obvious 'break-point'. A bolt (Petzl Spit) was installed on the left hand side of the floor slot (at floor level) to give a free hang, with the tested bollards above as a backup. Whilst I was installing the bolt Andras and Dave

turned up, their arrival being heralded by rumbling as they negotiated Hammerlock. Apparently Damian had light troubles (some deja-vu here) and had gone back to the car for a spare lamp that was there. We three headed down into Decadence and found the way on to Omnium. The route was easy to find, but the coming to grips with the nature of this part of the cave was less easy. There is so much large rock all just perched on top of each other that one feels that the whole lot could easily collapse at any instant. One small chamber had an ceiling of poised blocks and no-one could see how they were all held in place-this part of the cave is a place for paranoia! When I was part-way down the final pitch, Dave and Andras called me to halt, as a small stream of stones was coming down from above the boulder used as an anchor (this is a tenuous place indeed) and they thought that it prudent to choose another anchor, which they did.

We had a good look around Omnium, which is basically a huge void in the rock filled by rock fragments, that look as if they were created with explosive force. The left hand wall near the upper part of the chamber looks primed to likewise explode; it is a disconcerting place. There is very little evidence of any water worn rock in Omnium. Presumably a large chamber once lay underneath Omnium and that the rock

above had given way to fill this leaving Omnium as a void above. We checked out several leads along the right-hand side (between rockfall and a solid wall) of the chamber, but all these just looped back to the main chamber. The waterfall near the entrance to Omnium was not much more than a few drips, and so we had a good look around in this area. Dave found a horizontal lead (between rockfall and a solid wall) that went about a hundred metres before it finally stopped. I checked out the talus pile beneath the waterfall and down-climbed about 10m between rockfall and the solid wall till discretion (and diminishing space) at being in this place made me return.

We headed up, derigging as we went. The trip out was somewhat more arduous as packs filled with rope. As we emerged out of the Cramps (with everything well and truly liberally covered with mud) we met up with Damian and headed out for the surface. We emerged to daylight (an advantage of caving near the summer solstice) with the feeling that we had now 'done' this cave.

Flick Mints Hole is an interesting and sporty cave, but there are plenty of other holes that deserve a visit before thinking about returning.

Jeff Butt

Wolf Hole-3/1/99

Party: Michael Howard, Dave Clayton, Tim Anderson.

The usual last minute rush to get going meant that we didn't get to the entrance until midday. The intention was to revisit a new lead that we had partially dug out two years ago, and to see if the passage on the other side of our small hole actually led anywhere.

The newly dug hole was on a slope with a four meter drop underneath. To get through meant being lowered on a rope for the first two people, and an assisted abseil for the last. The other two blokes being on the large size, it was decided that they should go first. This duly accomplished, we left the rope rigged (Snow stake in the mud floor and re-

belay onto limestone outcrop) and went exploring our new find. Pushed on for about twenty meters before having to move a few rocks to get through a tight squeeze. This is effectively the end of the new section, however, there is a debris filled tunnel which would need a fair bit of work to clear, but looks very promising.

A good days work done we decided to head out. After jumaring up the fixed rope I came to the by now very small looking hole. Much trouble was had trying to get up into it and along the squeeze. Movement was restricted since there was not enough space to flex ones elbows, and nothing much to push against to force a way through. Much grunting and swearing finally saw me on the other side. The others had an

even worse time of it, being portly blokes, and we resorted to brute force to get them over the lip. A quick jumarm out the entrance pitch and off home, happy that we had finally got around to seeing our small exploration through.

The new area is off to the right near the entrance facing onto Lake Pluto. Follow any path that takes you parallel to the main track, until you are stopped by a 3m climb at the end of a tight passage. There is an upper level beyond the climb at the end of which is a small hole. A rope is needed to descend and ascend the 4m pitch immediately beyond this hole. Mick and Dave named the new section "Surprise, Surprise."

Tim Anderson

The hidden treasure of Newdegate Cave-1/12/98

Party: Peter Price, Jeff Butt and Arthur Clarke.

I had been contracted by the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service to do a study and inventory of the invertebrate fauna in *Newdegate Cave*, the tourist cave at Hastings, largely in conjunction with the current rehabilitation project being performed by STC member: Roger Griffiths, along with Peter Price and other cave guides. In addition to examining the fauna at rehabilitation sites and other "artificial" habitats such as in the abandoned old staircase timbers and dumped refuse (light bulbs and conduit pipe etc.), I was keen to look at the fauna associated with other undisturbed parts of the cave, particularly the stream sections along *Mystery Creek* and the *Hell's Half Acre* tributary. Peter had only seen a portion of this part of the cave and neither Jeff or I had been out to Hells Half Acre.

We met Peter at the conclusion of his day's work in Newdegate Cave and using the old (incomplete) 1947 TCC survey as our guide, we opted to go via *Binney Tunnel* into the back end of the cave. Binney Tunnel was originally a partially cobble-stone filled, siphon shaped, phreatic tube - excavated by TCC members in the late 1940's, then in 1950, it was used to take a former Tasmanian Governor (Binney) into the back reaches, beyond the main tourist section. Binney Tunnel is a relatively narrow, slippery floored passage, adorned with helictites and crystal flowers; it is best tackled head first - downhill for a short section, then a longer sprawling grovel uphill with a small decorated chamber of helictites and straws midway along. This brings you into the magnificent flowstone floored *Binney Chamber*, where someone has dumped an "eyesore" amount of spent carbide on top of a gour-pool flowstone bank. With its flowstone floors and gours, along with ancient sediment banks, its a pretty "specky" chamber with straws and stals, columns, shawls, a few helictites and possibly some aragonite clusters. Along the route, I located a tiny (2 mm long) *Lomanella* type harvestman, a raphidophorid (cave cricket) and an *Idacarabus* beetle.

Beyond Binney Chamber, we headed along a fissure and through a squeeze between short columns to the 8-9m pitch that descends into *Mystery*

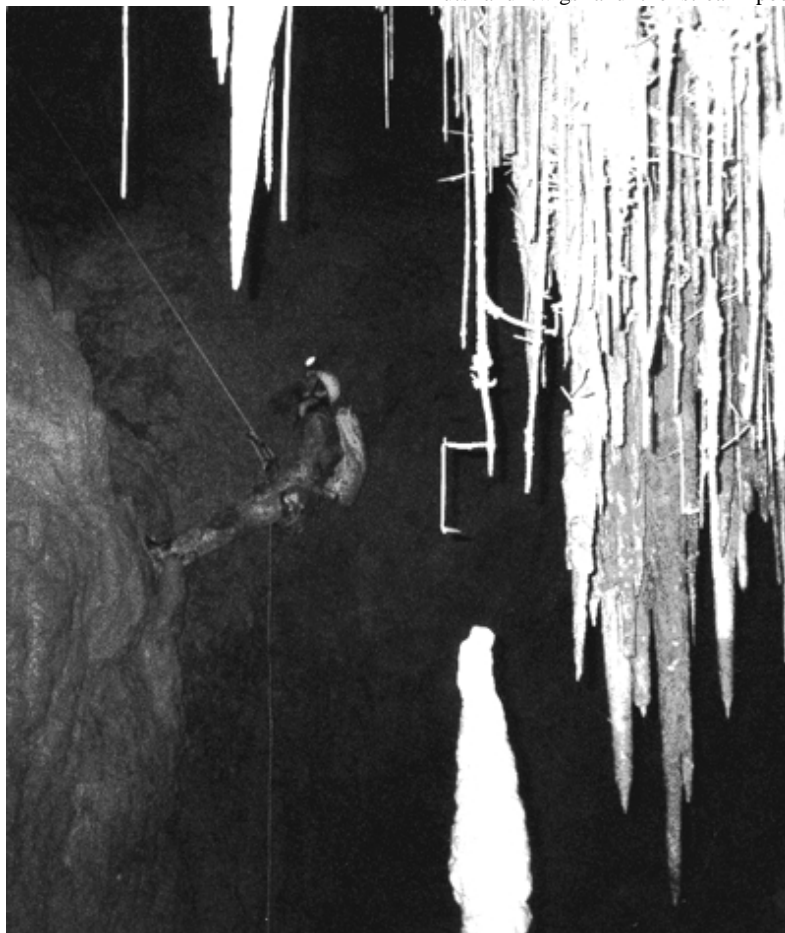
Chamber: the site where Jeff Butt had been "rescued" from during the last caving SAR (Search and Rescue) exercise at Hastings. Peter (and Roger Griffiths) had recently completed an abseiling/ prussiking course, so Peter was keen to try out his newly learnt skills on this short pitch, so we rigged this with a rope, rather than using a ladder.

This Mystery Chamber must be one of the best kept secrets of Newdegate Cave! It contains masses of helictites, some individual ones up to 60 cm long - growing at all angles, including a sharp right-angled form, plus lots of helictite clusters and straws. In fact as far as dolomite caves go in Tasmania, Newdegate is an extraordinary well decorated site, with an amazing range of speleothems. Its a pity about the dumped rubbish in the cave; (it was once described by Elery Hamilton-Smith as the most degraded tourist cave in Australia). Even in this lower part of the cave, there are rusted iron spikes, slabs of rotting timber, broken light globes, the remains of a telephone cable (including a drum reel of wire) and a few spent flashbulbs. From the base of the Mystery Chamber, we climbed down

a slippery mud-bank to the lower streamway - which although largely composed of deep pool sections, contained short flowing sections from where I collected some *Anaspides* syncarids.

This Mystery Creek section of Newdegate Cave includes large walking passage sections, stooping sections and crawls along the streambed cobbles, plus a climb up a steep mud bank and a belly-crawl slot to bypass a tight low-roofed section of streamway. Along the mudbanks, I located some terrestrial fauna: small white (depigmented) isopods or wood-lice, a small springtail and a tiny long-legged spider with a pinkish-tan-white body - possibly a pholcid, or perhaps a theridiid. The Hells Half Acre side passage comes in on your LHS and only a small section of this is shown on the 1947 survey by TCC. (The stream in here possibly comes from another cave in the Hastings karst: *Erebus*, sometimes known as *Waterloo Swallet*.)

At the junction of the passages (Hells Half Acre and Mystery Creek), below a fairly high aven, there is a relatively massive amount of small leaf litter, gum nuts and twigs and the stream pools



Abseiling to reach the Mystery Chamber; photo by Arthur



Helictites in the Mystery Chamber; photo by Arthur

contain aquatic (crangonyctoid) amphipods, aquatic flatworms and *Anaspides*. While Peter and myself were collecting cave beasts at this passage junction, Jeff followed Mystery Creek downstream for another 70-80 metres, to where it flows into an impenetrable rockfall.

Walking upstream beside the narrow entrenched stream in wide the flat-floored Hells Half Acre passage almost became boring until we entered a narrower inclined cobble floored stream section. Clinging to these stream cobbles, I discovered numerous tiny hydrobiids (aquatic snails) which Peter and Jeff helped me collect. Further

along we came to a constricted fissure passage section, where we found an upper level dry bypass that lead into a complex maze of multi-leveled, phreatically sculptured, vadose canyon passages, with some sections containing roof pendants. In a small side chamber, there was what appeared to be the remnants of a cavers "campsite" with the remains of dead matches, a cigarette packet and a decomposed section of an old glossy magazine: possibly *Australian Post*! Peter decided to investigate a narrow side rift which appeared to drop down to a fossil stream passage; this proved to be fruitless, and he couldn't climb

until I managed to give him an arm-haul. This dry bypass brought us back to the streamway at the top of 5-6m high waterfall, which we gingerly crept around and into the upstream section - where there were more hydrobiid snails in the streambed. This upper stream section was quite well decorated with straws and calcite-cemented gravels, false floors and flowstone banks - plus the remains of a large discarded flash bulb in one of the small side chambers. Peter and Jeff followed the main passage up to its end in a rockfall chambered aven, while I took some photos and searched for more fauna. It was now around 8 p.m. - we

had been underground for three-and-half hours, so we decided to exit.

On the way out along the main Mystery Creek passage in Newdegate Cave, Peter reported to us that he had found some specky columns and flowstone above a loose rubble slope - which Jeff and I went up to investigate. Whilst I took the last of my photographs, Jeff climbed higher and discovered that we were in fact at the base of a 60-70m long, steeply inclined flowstone floored "avenue" of cave decoration - masses of columns, stals, shawls and a large straw-dripping shield, plus a huge stalagmite column that appeared to be almost a third to half the diameter of the *Begum* in the Mole Creek cave: *Kubla Khan*. The chamber roof appeared to be collapsing at the upper end of this highly decorated "avenue" of cave formation - in fact some of the stals and flowstone banks had fallen over; much of this collapse debris appeared to be quite recent!

After prussiking out of Mystery Chamber - when Peter discovered his "frog" system was a bit short - we then rapidly traversed Binney Chamber and lead by Jeff, did an even more rapid head-first slide down the slippery slope of Binney Tunnel, then up and out into the main cave where we removed our muddied trog-suits and gumboots on a pre-prepared plastic groundsheet before walking back out through the tourist section. After a most satisfying trip into the back reaches and our discovery of the hidden treasure of Newdegate Cave, we eventually emerged into the darkness on the wooden floored entrance foyer, around 10 p.m.

Arthur Clarke

STC Map Numbers

To date, STC has been a little lax in assigning ASF standard map numbers to

surveys published in the Speleo Spiel. Since STC formed (from Speleo Spiel 300) the following maps have been

published. The following Map Numbers have been assigned to those published surveys.

Speleo Spiel Reference Number	Page	Map details	Map Number
300	10	Line diagram of an extension to Trapdoor Streamway in Growling Swallet (JF36).	7JF36.STC1
305	9	Line diagram of extension to Sassafras Cave (MC96).	7MC96.STC2
308	11	Survey of the bottom of 'old' Sesame (JF210-211).	7JF211.STC3
309	10	Line diagram of passages in the Servalane region of Growling Swallet (JF36).	7JF36.STC4
311	9	Survey of Short Circuit (to Nicotine Nirvana) (IB126).	7IB126.STC5
311	9	Surface map showing relationship of IB126 and IB164 dolines.	7IB.STC6
311	9	Survey of El Tube (IB164).	7IB164.STC7
311	10	Survey of Rurp (IB165).	7IB165.STC8
311	17	Update of Baader-Meinhof Pot (IB113)	7IB113.STC9

Kubla Khan-9/1/99

Party: Trevor Wailes, John Palmer, Tim Allen, Jane Draisey, Matt Holl.

The trip was kindly organised by Trev to allow visiting pommies Tim and Jane, and myself (a now resident Pom) and token colonial Matt, to see the wonders of Kubla Khan. A trip up on the midlands highway on Friday night left us plenty of time to be abused by the locals in the Tiger Bar at Mole Creed. ("You bloody sure you're not bloody canoeists, what are yer then, Greenies? ... Poms mate....Oh.....can yer scrap? Etc. etc.) We stayed a night at the exclusive Northern Caverneers Hut, which is ace.

[The NC's have been doing heaps of improvements to the hut; the once grotty possum inhabited garage, has now been possum proofed and the room cleaned up and fitted out with bunk beds. The outside bath, fitted with an underneath fire gives it that 5th Star. If you want to use the hut (on the road to Marakooa Cave), then contact Paul Van Nynanten, or someone else from the Northern Caverneers. Ed.]

The cave? Well, what can I say. It's big, it's well decorated, it's a wonderful trip spoilt only by the extensive litter in the form of sandbags, rubber mats and hosepipe. this bit is tongue in cheek folks. Send any long and boring letters explaining the environmental need for the above hardware (or gates, or boardwalks, or trackwork, or limited access for that matter) to the editor, not the author. I digress, for those who have not had the good fortune to visit Kubla Khan, I would suggest you get in touch with your friendly Parks and Wildlife agent straight away. It is a marvellous easy trip consisting of an abseil into a large passage which is well decorated, mainly at this stage with tree roots, followed by a couple more shortish pitches and bigger and better decorated chambers as you progress through the cave and a wonderfully wet and cold section of streamway, to the "lower" entrance, which is, in fact, a steep slope up to a pitch of about 25 m to the surface. If you are using this comprehensive description as a guide as you go through the cave, it is at this point you start to wish you had read it all beforehand and taken a few minutes to rig this pitch first!

The formations in the cave are very classy and also thankfully well preserved. some of the gypsum formations are as good as you would see anywhere this side of New Mexico. I brought a few out if you'd like to buy them. (Tongue firmly back in cheek.) A good days caving was had by all. Matt, on his first trip, thinks all caves are like this. Next week, we're taking him to Ice Tube.

John Palmer

Croesus Cave-10/1/99

Party: Trevor Wailes, John Palmer, Tim Allen, Jane Draisey.

Another wonderfully easy and well decorated cave with easy access (once you have got the key!). Again, for most readers of this drive, Croesus probably needs no introduction. Us three Mole Creek virgins were suitably impressed. The formations in Croesus may not be as impressive as Kubla, but the fact that you follow an active river over fine gours helps to make up for this. It is another Tasmanian 'must do' cave. I wish I had found it!

John Palmer

Growling Swallet-15/1/99

Party: Tim Anderson, Damian Bidgood, Jeff Butt.

The aim of the day was to show Damian the streamway (he'd only ever been down/up Slaughterhouse Pot), in anticipation of some possible use for CAVEX-99. We cruised in the entrance, and made our way to Slaughterhouse Aven, where we lunched.

Whilst in Growling, I had planned to go and check out the ladder in Avon's Aven, but after looking at the condition of Herpes III decided I didn't want to get that soaked and totally mucky today, and so wimped out.

En-route back we checked out the Scaling Pole aven where John Hawkins-Salt put a bolt-ladder up (see Speleo Spiel 300). The (now empty) bolt holes (take an 8 mm diameter, 40 mm long dynabolt) can be found upon searching, but aren't that obvious. The rope hanging down is an old Bluewater 11 mm, the lower end is secured to a hanger and dynabolt. Apparently at the top this rope is anchored to two 10 mm Dynabolts, which were installed as a

temporary measure. Experience says that things done as a temporary measure often stay that way on a permanent basis!

Anyway, we headed back and found the route to Destiny Pitch. Near the turnoff, was one of JHS's bolts and hanger in the wall (no pitch or handline anywhere near this!), so one wonders why it was put in. The bolt was removed (easily by hand!!), Dynabolts have little security compared to many other readily available bolts!).

We headed on and located the 26 metre pitch to Destiny. Another of JHS's 8 mm (6 mm bolt up the middle of a sleeve made of 1 mm thick material) dynabolts and home made hangers was found at the pitch-head. The home-made hanger (made out from 3 mm thick Aluminium right-angle) attached was rather light on, with one of the holes drilled within 4 mm of the edge of the material.

In the interests of safety this bolt was removed, again, this was done easily by hand. Note that the location is as good as you can get in this area of poor rock. If needed, the 8 mm hole could be drilled out to take a decent 10 mm expansion bolt (or even a larger glue-in). [On a

recent trip 26/1/99 this pitch was rigged totally on natural anchors.]

These sorts of bolts (8 mm dynabolts) are simply not up to the task of serving as a primary (or even backup) SRT anchors, they are at best suitable for temporarily holding body weight whilst aid climbing.

If artificial anchors (e.g. bolts) are required, then they need to be secure, strong and preferably long lasting.

We then headed out, a pleasant four hour trip.

Jeff Butt

STC has Caving lamps and helmets available for hire to Schools, Scouts and other groups with responsible Caving leaders. Contact the Equipment Officer for details.

Exploration in the vicinity of Log Rift (IB7)-17/1/99

Party: Dave Rasch, Andras Galambos, Jeff Butt.

The aim was to located Log Rift (IB7), and to follow up on some thoughts by Arthur Clarke that Log Rift was one of two 'steamers' (the other being Mini-Martin) in the area. We noted trip reports by Tom Porritt (Speleo Spiel #213) and Nick Hume (Speleo Spiel #214), which suggested that the feature had been well and truly investigated; however, we thought it a worthwhile exercise to have a look at it anyway.

It was one of those hot days, the walk through the Quarry was baking. The forest provided some relief, but it was still hot and dry. The ground was the driest I'd ever seen it, a result of the long bout of hot weather we'd been experiencing of late. In addition the amount of fuel on the forest floor is large; the whole area is primed for a bushfire. Does anyone know when Marble Hill last burned? The Skinner track is deteriorating, there are a large number of tree-falls. A working bee is needed to restore this track to the highway it once was. A bow-saw effort would clean up 90% of the wind-falls, but a small chainsaw would be needed to fully restore the track. There are also a number of tree-falls over the pink-taped track to Milk-Run/Big-Tree Pot/Mini-Martin, the bow saw could be usefully employed here too. This track work would be a good task for a club working-bee.

We dumped packs at the entrance to Big Tree Pot (IB9), and basically did a counter-clockwise loop up to the contact, along it and back. En-route we found several large features, no number tags sighted at all though. We found the two stacked rifts (the top one with a big log diagonally into/over it); so presumably we found Log Rift, but there was no sign of any tag. The stream/waterfall had dried up, but it was

evident where it normally lay. We had a bit of a look here, but only found what previous visitors had.

About 50 m up the hill from Big Tree Pot, one interesting feature was found; a couple of blue-tapes told us that we weren't the first to locate it, but we still thought it worth a look as it did not appear to have been investigated (no sign of human visitation within). Despite a thorough look, there was no sign of any number tag. The absence of readily findable number tags is coming back to haunt us....if the original explorers did the job properly the first time then there wouldn't need to be lots of re-inventing the wheel. Because of the difficulty of finding number tags, entrances would also benefit from being photo-tagged, with the position of the Number Tag outlined in the photo....these photo's could be added into the Archive as well...a good club project for someone who likes it on the surface better than down below!). To rectify this, we should return and tag this entrance!

We rigged the top pitch, Andras descended the ~8 m pitch (via a body sized hole directly under the cliff lip above; this point of entry was easier than via the hole in the floor of the horizontal rift that headed into the cliff), went through a tight spot and descended about another 3 m. After 4 m of horizontal passage is a slippery 3 m downclimb. Below this the passage is blocked by earth and rocks and no draught is felt. A major dig would be needed to make any progress. This entrance needs a tag and being properly recorded, as do the other large entrances in the region. Back in the lowest point of the doline, Andras squeezed in through boulders an made about 5 m of depth between boulders and one solid wall, but that was it. It is an interesting area.

We shouldered our packs and headed off to find Baader-Meinhof Pot (IB113), which was the main purpose of the day. The following trip report tells about this.

Jeff Butt

Baader-Meinhof Pot (IB113)-17/1/99

Party: Dave Rasch, Andras Galambos, Jeff Butt.

After spending some time in the Log Rift vicinity, we headed up to Mini-Martin, and then skirted the top side of the shaft regain the other side (the area is somewhat precipitous!), and locate the orange taped track that headed towards the 'dreaded' IB113. The aim of the day being to have another look at that impassable drafting flattener down below. We soon picked up the orange tapes and found the entrance about 15 minutes on. [The GPS tells us it is approximately 180 m West of Mini-Martin, on the contact. This would put it above the Dribble Passage in Exit (one area I've not ever visited).]

We geared up and it was a relief to head in, out of the heat of the day. As far as we know, this was the first visit to this cave since the original two trips in Nov. '86 and May '87 (Southern Caver #57, pp 24-26). We descended the first pitch; the published survey is a little misleading, the way on to the second pitch is about 6 m off the bottom of the pitch, at that level one has to traverse the rift to the right, and squeeze through the only portion of the rift that allows one to sneak though. We headed down the second pitch (the nylon bolts used to mark the two bolt casings were a little problematic remove due to rusting of the threads in the casing: the bolt casings need to be greased on installation, otherwise the

nylon bolts are liable to break off, making the bolt casing useless) to the choice of routes between the Right Way and the Wrong Way. [Since the last visit in 1987, our SRT skills have advanced somewhat, we used a small deviation on both pitches to good avail.]

I cautiously (one slip and you could end up down the 13 p immediately below) climbed up the muddy slope to the high point, and added a bolt to the left hand wall to allow a rope to be installed down both sides of this obstacle (a ring hanger to allow a pull from both directions is best here). The floor of the ramp on the lower side was particularly greasy and the rope was essential to prevent one from slipping down the 4 m climb. Dave noted a high level passage on the right (not shown on the original survey). We rigged the 13 p and headed down; everything became familiar. The pool that lead to the drafting flattener was still there; it didn't look any larger either. Andras dipped his nether regions into the water and squirmed into the flattener to feel with his feet, but he didn't get far with his light and helmet on. So, he slithered out, ditched his lamp and helmet and headed back in armed with a Maglite. He managed to get about 5 m along the very tight flattener, but was defeated by an impassable constriction. About 5 m further on the floor seems to be sloping and the passage opening up, so there is some hope. The breeze was blowing strongly all the time. The only way to make any progress here would be to dig the cobbles in the

floor, however this wouldn't be an easy task given the general lack of swinging room.

With Dave half way up the 13 p, we pulled him across to the other side of the shaft and after a bit of scrabbling he was able to make the shelf there. He down-climbed a short climb to a chamber with two 6 m pitches (i.e. back to the same 'base' level) heading off. (At the bottom of the rift, after the short squeeze, I climbed up and managed to see Dave's light at the other end of an impossibly tight rift.) Later we all headed up to this region (the prospects of losing the rope would have been interesting!), and I descended the two pitches which drop into a rift about 1 m away from and parallel to the other rift, but otherwise not connected. Down the right-hand side, there was one tight hole that needs to be dug before being accessible, but there is no breeze. The LHS shaft was blind.

Back at the bottom of the 'known' rift, Dave forced himself as far as he could, but it pinched off and became too tight. No breeze either. So, the only real prospect is the draughting flattener.

It was time to leave. As Dave was heading out, I managed to throw a rope over a rock tooth about 6 m up, at the lip of the

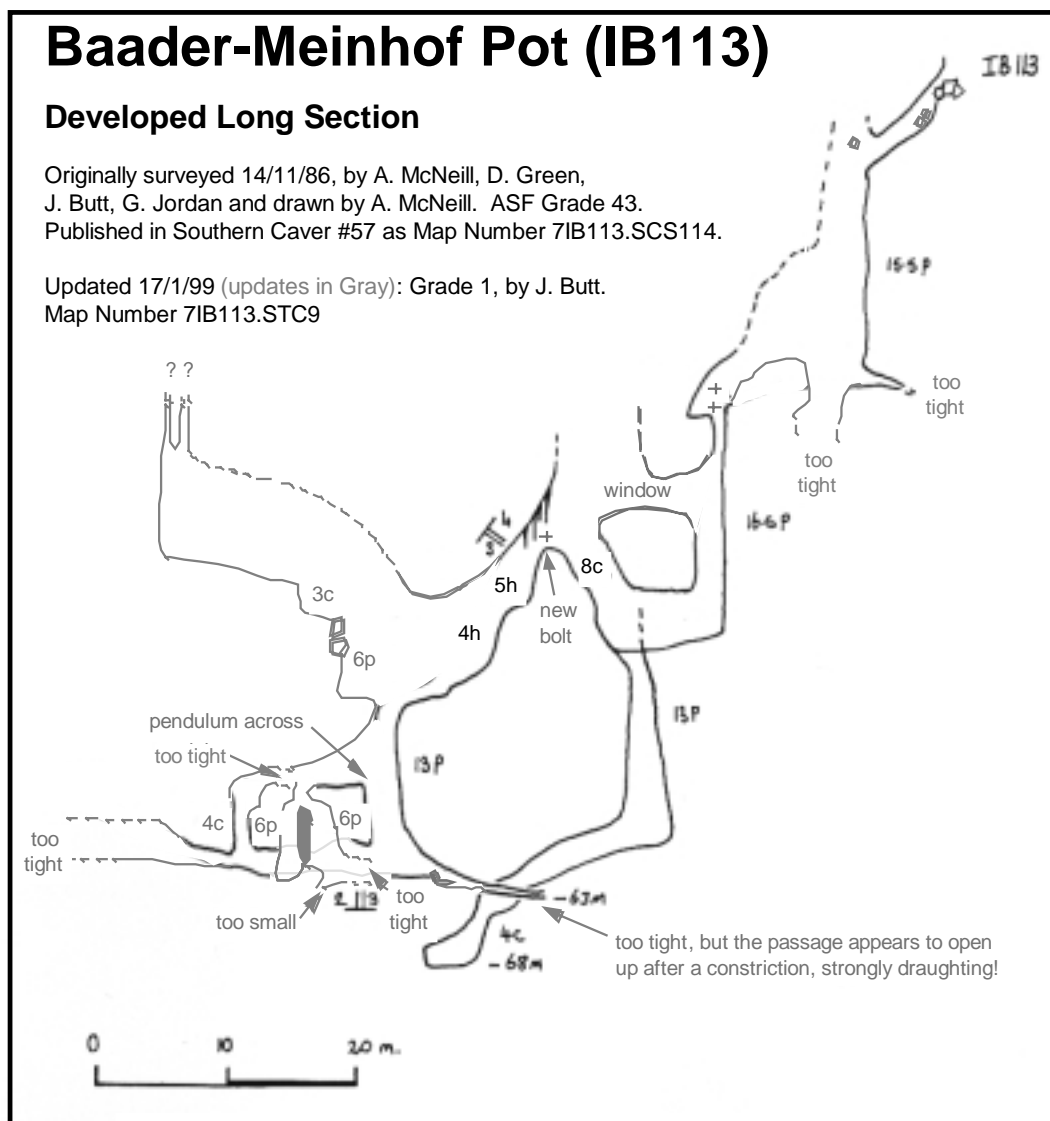
passage Dave spied earlier, and with Andras attached to one side I prussiked up the other to gain access to this passage. After a 3 m climb another 15 m of gradual ascent led to the base of a pair of 1 m diameter, 15 m high avens.

All in all, we found Baader-Meinhof to be quite an agreeable cave (much drier and less muddier than last time), with quite a bit of technical rigging and other fun stuff. It has been a much maligned cave, and doesn't really bear any relationship to the German Terrorist organisation that it is named after!

I have amended Andrew McNeill's original survey (from Southern Caver #57) to incorporate our additions, see below.

We made the surface just on dark, and headed back along the track. Where it goes near Mini-Martin and Skyhook Pot wasn't clear, and we ended up in a bad place, on the wrong side of Mini-Martin. Everything was bone dry....next I found myself bum-hopping across the log spanning the Mini-Martin shaft, quite easy, but not for the faint-hearted as the first slip is a good one. Dave and Andras were initially a little taken aback with this manoeuvre, but followed and we were soon sweating our way up the Skinner Track back to the Quarry and home.

Jeff Butt



Some observations of Caving around the World- Part 3; France.

This follows on from Part 2, published in Speleo-Spiel 310.

My general observations whilst caving in France are below.

- Caving in France is very popular and is virtually regarded as a national sport!
- The average French person is very aware of caving and knows that France has the most of the deepest caves in the world; National Pride is at work here!
- All school students seem to go caving, there is even a Speleo University! That's probably why on weekends, queuing up to get your rope down an entrance pitch is common.
- Speleo museums exists!
- Commensurate with the high use of caves, the wild caves I saw had suffered quite a bit of wear and tear.

- France has the worlds largest number of show caves (several hundred if I remember correctly), as well as large numbers of caves with prehistoric art.
- The association of humans using caves has a long history; I saw two churches built inside caves as well as several gift shops and a collection of concrete dinosaurs.
- Competition between show caves seems intense; the latest craze seems to be Sound and Light shows, complete with various forms of music. Some shows were very well done, but I must admit I think that they would be better suited to a cinema or stage show, rather than a delightful subterranean cavern!
- In one show cave extensive plate glass shielding was used to keep a

massive collection of long straws safe from "Pierres" (thrown stones).

- The technical skills of the average caver are very high; every caver uses the same prussiking system, "frog" no less, and generally every bit of gear has "Petzl" on it somewhere.
- The speleological clubs are very professional, producing high quality surveys and some excellent publications.
- If you see 'cave' get excited, it's a wine cellar.
- A French breakfast doesn't last long into a caving trip, and little food seems to be taken underground. Instead one must coast on a very large evening meal the night before, of course the food is well washed down with wine. The promise of the evening meal tends to keep one going throughout the day.

Jeff Butt

STC WaReHoUsE SaLeS

Gear

- CAVE PACKS, 35 litre volume, made from Heavy duty PVC material, double bottom, reinforced seams, drain holes, large diameter eyelet's. Simple and sturdy. JUST A COUPLE LEFT! \$60.00 each
- Aluminium Bars for Rappel Racks. \$5.00 each

Tape

- 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
- 2.5 cm flat tape (ideal for handlines, rigging, gear bags, etc.) (White) \$0.80 per m

Safety

- 9 mm Beal dynamic rope (ideal for cows tails, safety loop) ALL SOLD, BUT A NEW ROPE ON THE WAY ~\$4.00 per m
- Space Blankets (don't be caught underground without one!) \$4.00 each

Lighting

- Duracell 4.5 Volt flatpack batteries. ALL SOLD, BUT NEW STOCK ON THE WAY. ~\$8.00 each
- Eveready 6 Volt, 0.5 Amp Flange Mount Bulbs (#1417), Blister packs of 2 \$3.00 each
- Metal light brackets for helmets. Complete with rear cable keeper and fittings. \$5.00 each
- Jets (21 litres/hr) for Petzl kaboom \$5.00 each
- Miscellaneous second hand pieces for Oldham headpieces. Contact us for details
- Methyated Spirits, fill your own container \$2.50 litre

Tow Ropes/trailer tie downs/yacht mooring lines etc.

- RETIRED CAVING ROPE, no longer safe enough to use for caving purposes (ADORNED WITH PAINT SO THAT YOU WON'T BE TEMPTED!!), but more than adequate for many other purposes. Available in lengths up to 10 m. \$1.00 per m, less for the stiffer stuff

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.

For sale

- **TROLL waterproof Trog-suit.** Used, but in a well cared for condition. There's a lot of good caving left in it! Small (size 2). \$50 or near offer.
- **Gell Cell Charger.** Through the headpiece charging; small, robust and portable, runs off the mains or plugs into a car lighter socket-\$80.

contact Jeff Butt, 62238620 or jeffbutt@netSPACE.net.au

4 sale

- **TSA PVC Oversuit.** Recently patched and in excellent order. Selling, because it's too small. Contact Andy on the phone: 62679877 (h).