Cover:
The Pleasure Dome, Kubla Khan, Mole Creek Karst National Park.

Photo by: S Morley, 1968

The Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated
PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7006
http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/scaving/

Issue No. 316, October-November 1999

Contents

STC was formed from the *Tasmanian Caverneering Club*, the *Southern Caving Society* and the *Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group*. ***STC*** is the modern variant of the Oldest Caving Club in Australia.

Editorial

Issue # 316 is the last for 1999; it is also my first solo attempt at continuing the tradition of the Speleo Spiel. I hope to maintain the high standard set by Jeff and perhaps bring my own touch to the publication.

1999 has been a busy year. While taking time off from fighting the Y2K bug, I attended the STC School of Knots at Fruehauf Quarry. Jeff Butt conducts technique and skills training during the summer on the 'off' Wednesday. These nights are great fun and are a must for all novice cavers (see the Forward Program for details). After my graduation from Knot School, I went on to successfully complete my first vertical cave. Many thanks to Hugh and Liz who guided me that mighty day at Slaughterhouse Pot, it was an exhilarating experience that will difficult to top.

The Annual General Meeting was well attended at the gear store and a good night was had by all at the Annual Dinner at the Tyenna Valley Lodge. The theme was 'Caver of the 21st Century' and several members went all out! A full report will be in the next issue.

STC Y2K Disclosure: We have tested and can verify that all Tasmanian caves are Y2K complaint. However, if you do catch a Y2K bug while caving please send it to our Scientific Officer for classification.

As this is the final Spiel for 1999, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday over the Christmas break. Thankyou to all the new people I have the pleasure of meeting this year, 2000 will be a great year, make sure you're there to enjoy it!

Jamie Allison. ♦ ♦ ♦

Club Matters

At the Annual General Meeting held on 3 November, the following persons were elected to the Executive and Committee of STC:

Executive:

President:	Trevor Wailes
Vice President:	Hugh Fitzgerald
Secretary:	Liz Canning
Minute Secretary:	Hugh Fitzgerald
Treasurer:	Arthur Clarke

Committee:

Scientific Officer:	Albert Goede
Public Officer:	Steve Bunton
Search and Rescue Officer:	Jeff Butt
Editor of Speleo Spiel:	Jamie Allison
Sub-Editors:	As Required
Karst Index Officer:	Arthur Clarke
Equipment Officer:	Jeff Butt
Archivist / Librarian:	Greg Middleton
Map Archivist:	Trevor Wailes
Webmaster:	Hans Benisch
List Server Manager:	Arthur Clarke
Electronic Archivist:	Jamie Allison
General Committee Members:	Andrew Briggs Chris Sharples

Contributions

Trips reports make great reading and serve as a great resource for others in the future. For new members, or others that may not have submitted a report before, it's easy! Just write down your experience and send it in. Email is the preferred method, but hand written or disk submissions are no problem. I am also looking for photos / slides for cataloguing and publication. If you have some pics that you would like to add to the collection, please let me know.

Forward Program

Meetings:	Shipwright Arms Hotel, Battery Point
Wed Dec 1st	Business Meeting at **7:30p.m.**
Wed Dec 15th	Albert Goede Slide Show Presentation at **8:00pm**
Wed Jan 5th	Business Meeting at **7:30p.m.**
Wed Jan 19th	Social gathering from **8:00p.m.**
Activities:	
Wed Dec 8th	**From 5 p.m.** Fruehauf Quarry SRT session-Tune up your SRT gear. Just turn up at the Quarry. Call Jeff **62238620** if you need directions of how to get there.
Wed Jan 12th	**From 5 p.m.** Fruehauf Quarry Ropes practise-Tyroleans and other fun stuff.
Trips:	*Please contact the Organiser of any trip for more details*
Sat Dec 11th	**NEWDEGATE CAVE CLEAN UP:** Come and help be a beast of burden and tote 2.5 tonnes of bagged up rubbish (~15 kg bags) from the cave. Meet at the Newdegate Cave carpark at 1 p.m. Bring a pack to save your arms and/or your wheelbarrow driving licence. Free BBQ/drinks supplied afterwards for the workers at the Thermal Pool BBQ area. Contact Jeff **62238620** for more details. Please RSVP (for catering purposes) if intending to come.
Sun Dec 12th	Some caving/surface work at Hastings, following the working bee.
Mid Jan-mid Feb	Caving in the NW of the South Island of New Zealand. Any takers?? Contact Jeff **62238620**

President's Report

By Trevor Wailes

There's no excuse, I can't complain about "there's no one to go caving with". There have been lots of quality trips going over the last year both exploratory, survey and fun trips. Unfortunately I've been preoccupied by commitments and it has been my loss. Jeff and other members both old (established members!) and new have been flying the STC flag or rope or both.

Exploratory trips are always worthwhile you never know what you'll find, Dripplespit yielded more torturous extensions while many hours spent in Mystery Creek only served to prove the connection with Exit will be a hard won prize. The mythical Hairy Goat Hole proves now frustrating caving can be. We know its there, but we can't find it, just like some of the draughting caves that have huge potential, but fail to find an ongoing passage.

Two accidents marred this year. First John Palmer taking a fall in the Black River series in Growling and Penny Lopez taking a quantum leap in Loons. The first sustaining head injuries, the latter a broken ankle. It was good to see quick recoveries with John going on to explore Vietnam with great success. Others venturing out of Tassie were Jeff Butt, Greg Middleton, Steve Bunton and Arthur Clarke.

Some of our new members are certainly worth a mention. Jamie Allison has breathed new life into the already very readable Spiel Alaric Bennett, as a novice has done more caving since he joined than many of the stalwarts of the STC. Matthew Holl had some interesting experiences, first assisting with the evacuation of John Palmer from Black River and then narrowly avoiding thermal exposure in Splash Pot while surveying. This technical side of caving can also be rewarding and the highlight this year was the downsizing of Kazard Dhum from -320m to -280m. I hope nobody ever checks Ice Tube!!

I personally would like to thank all the people I caved with this year for such good and often humorous companionship and the members of the committee particularly Jeff Butt, Arthur Clarke, Hugh Fitzgerald and the ever sailing, non-complaining minute secretary, Liz Fitzgerald-Canning for all their hard work. ♦♦♦

Treasurer's Report

By Jeff Butt (Acting Treasurer)

Our outgoing Treasurer, Arthur Clarke was re-elected at the recent AGM, however Arthur is currently on a jaunt overseas, and so I have taken on the role of Acting Treasurer. In this capacity, I have finalised the STC financial books for the 1998/9 STC year and had them audited. A copy of the Financial statement and Auditors Report appear below.

Auditor's Report

I have inspected and audited the accounting records kept by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated in respect of the year ended 30th September 1999 and have received all the information and explanations as required for the purpose of my audit.

In my opinion -

(i) there were kept by the organisation in respect of the year, satisfactory accounting records detailing the sources and nature and purposes of expenditure; and

(ii) the attached accounts and statements are properly drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of :
(a) the financial affairs of the club as at 30/9/99, and
(b) the income and expenditure, and surplus of the club for the year ended 30/9/99.

Hobart, Tasmania .....

17th November 1999 *Diane Hext*

The financial statement is largely self-explanatory, the bottom line is that at 30/9/99 we had a total of $6946.57 in our accounts. Last year the STC subscriptions were increased slightly, this resulted in increased revenue from this source and has not led to an attrition in the number of members, indeed in recent times there has been a small influx of prospective members. Both light and equipment hire were down over the previous year, this reflects the lower levels of caving over the last twelve months. But on the other side, less money has needed to be spent on maintenance / replacement of equipment, so a small net gain has been maintained in this department. In the last twelve months subscribers to the Speleo-Spiel have helped offset the costs of producing this publication; this is beneficial, and it would be good to increase the number of people subscribing to the Spiel if at all possible. Other 'fixed' costs have remained about the same, and unlike in the previous year, no major items (eg. GPS) were purchased. The net effect is that we are now moving along at a roughly constant level (our funds only declined by about $100 over the last 12 months) and not eating into our assets. ♦♦♦

Equipment Officer's Report

By: Jeff Butt

The gear store has been a bit quieter over the last year (103 loans recorded in the Gear Book) than the year before (132 loans), reflecting a lower level of caving activity. A consequence of the lower levels of caving activity is that both lamp and gear hires were down on the previous year, and thus STC gained a reduced income from this source.

A minor safety audit was conducted during the year (a major one was carried out during the previous year). A rope testing session was held in May (see Spiel 313, p4) and was very successful for getting a large number of rope samples (private ropes as well as club ropes) drop tested and as a social event.

The four rope / plastic rung ladders in Growling Swallet were replaced during the year, something which had been talked about for some time.

CAVEX-99 resulted in a small number of items going missing for some months; in the end all but one trace and a few hangers were returned. When there are large numbers of people and large amounts of gear, keeping track of everything can be somewhat difficult.

Apart from the losses mentioned above, all gear is either present in the gear store, or accounted for in the Gear Loans book.

Lamps

Currently there are 17 serviceable lamps, 10 Gel-cell and 7 Oldhams (Oldham "I" failed, "L" & "J" were retired due to low capacity. Gell-cell "13" also failed.) In due course, the 'dead' Oldhams will be converted to Gell-cell lamps and/or the headpieces used for spares as required to maintain the reliability of the working lamps.

Capacities of the lamps are shown in the table below. If you take any club light out, you can anticipate that it will last at least 8 hours on high beam.

The ancient 6-Volt charger has an intermittent fault and at times is problematic, as reported in last years report. I have made a start on building a replacement for this charger.

The Oldham (4 Volt) charger (of a similar vintage) still works, though two of the six circuits have fried components and needs some new parts. Given that we are gradually changing over from Oldhams to Gell-cells, it might be more sensible to replace the dead 4 Volt charging boards with 6 Volt ones.

No one has made use of the Sewer pipe lights over the year. These need some work to make them more reliable.

Recommendations

- Our number of lamps be restored back to at least 18 and maintained at this number.
- The new 6 volt charger be completed during the year.

Helmets

There are 21 serviceable helmets in total. Nineteen of these are Construction Workers Helmets that are only suitable for horizontal caving. Of these 19 helmets, 9 are nearing the end of their life. Five other older Construction helmets were retired during the year.

The 2 SRT suitable helmets are in excellent condition.

Recommendations

- Consider gradually starting to replace the Construction workers helmets with helmets that are SRT suitable. This would not be inexpensive process.

Ropes

A rope testing working bee was held in May (as outlined in Speleo Spiel #313, p 4) and about 120 m of rope was retired as a result of the test results.

A couple of lengths of serviceable rope were used to construct the replacement ladder for Avon's Aven in Growling Swallet. That leaves us with a total of 1296 metres of serviceable static rope. (A complete rope inventory is included at the end of this report.)

The age distribution of our ropes suggests that another 400 m of this rope is nearing the end of it's life. The fixed ropes in Slaughterhouse Pot have seen a reasonable amount of use since their installation in March 98, and will be replaced shortly.

Recommendations:

- Continue to progressively bring some of new

	4 Volt Oldhams										6 Volt Gel-Cells										
Lamp	A	B	C	D	E	F	H	I	J	L	1	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Capacity* Nov '97	>7	>7	>7	>7	>7	>7	>7	>7	6	5	NB >7	>7	>7	NB >7	6	NB >7	>7	>7	6	NB >7	6
Capacity* Aug/Sep '98	>11	>11	>11	>11	SC	>11	>11	7	4	5	10	11	>11	11	>11	>11	>11	>11	NB >11	>11	6
Capacity* Sep/Oct '99	>10	>10	>10	>10	RB >10	>8	>8	BF SC	2 SC	1 SC	>8	>8	>8	>8	>8	>8	>8	>8	>8	>8	SC

* Capacity in terms of hours on High Beam. **>** indicates battery still had reserve.
NT=Not yet Tested BF=Battery Failure SC=Scrapped RB=Replacement Battery since last test.

stored ropes into service.
- Continue with annual drop testing of any older ropes, or any suspect ropes and use the results of these tests to make an informed decision about the retirement of our ropes.
- Aim to have about 500 m of good rope and to be replacing it due to it being worn rather than aged.

Gear Bags

We have a small collection of serviceable gear-bags. Most regular cavers have there own gear-bag, so the need for club bags is reduced.

Ladders and Tracers

We have 5 serviceable ladders (1 by 50', 4 by 30') and a number of serviceable traces. The ladders are only occasionally used and we have sufficient for current needs.

Recommendations:

- Affix a 'date-tag' to all ladders and traces, so that we accurately know their age.

SRT Gear

The old Whaletails have finally worn out, so we are down to one Whaletail and one rack. A new Petzl Stop descender was purchased (Oct. '99) to bring us back to having two complete sets of SRT gear. We still have an assortment of other SRT bits and pieces.

Recommendations:

- Continue to replace gear as it wears so that we maintain two complete sets of club SRT gear.
- If demand increases, then consider purchasing the necessary items to allow us to have three sets.

Bolting Gear / Power Drill

The only use the power drill has seen during the year was for testing some glue-in bolts. If we decide to go for glue-in P hangers (the bolt of choice in the UK), then our drill is not 'up to it', as it is only rated to take a 15 mm bit, whereas an 18 mm diameter hole is required for these.

The hand-bolting gear was used just once during the year.

Recommendations:

- As a matter of policy, relatively short lived spits should not be placed in caves that are going to receive heavier use, the stronger and longer lasting stainless steel hardware we are moving to should be used.

Survey Gear

There are three complete sets of gear, which have seen only a small amount of use during the year. The accuracy/calibrations of these instruments have not been assessed. If you plan to use them it would be worth your while to run a few checks on them first.

The GARMIN GPS 12XL unit has been used regularly and about 100 cave positions have been recorded with it to date.

Rope Protectors

We have more than enough for our needs.

STC Warehouse Sales

See the back of a Spiel for what we have and current prices. There is a continuous (but fairly small) demand for dynamic rope and 4.5 volt flat-pack batteries.

Summary

The club equipment (a complete inventory follows) is well maintained and the Equipment Store remains in a well organised state. The contents are gradually shrinking (due to retirement of old gear) from the amount needed for two clubs down to the amount needed for one club. ♦ ♦ ♦

STC GEAR INVENTORY 30/9/99

NOTE: Additions this STC year have the date shown in BOLD TYPE

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	7	n/a	good	store
6 Volt Gel-cell lamps	10	n/a	good	store
Belts	24	n/a	good	store
Oldham headpieces (complete)	5	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
Container of spare 4V bulbs	1	n/a	new	store
Container of spare 6V bulbs	1	last in Aug-98	new	store
Spare 6 Volt gel-cells	0		out of stock	
HELMETS (Total 24)				
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	7	Feb-96	good	store
Safety Helmets-white	2	Aug-95	good	store

Item	Quantity	Purchased/ made/ put into service	Condition	Location
STATIC ROPES				
Serviceable ropes-see attached Ropes list	1296 m	various	various	store
Retired ropes	quantity	n/a	u/s	store
ROPE PROTECTORS (Total 23)				
red PVC	5	n/a	good	store
yellow PVC	10	n/a	good	store
canvas (firehose)	8	n/a	mostly good	store
SRT GEAR				
Petzl Rapide harness and alloy D-Maillon	1	Sep-95	good	store
Petzl Super Avanti harness and steel D-Maillon	1	Apr-98	good	
Stuff sacks for SRT gear sets	2	Apr-98	good	
Rappel rack (long)	1	n/a	good	store
Whaletails	1	n/a	1 good, 2 poor	store
Petzl Expedition ascenders	2	Jun-90	good	store
Petzl Croll ascenders	3	2 in Jun-90	2 good, 1 medium	store
Cowstails (each with 2 snaplink carabiners)	3	2 in 98, 1 in 96	3 good	store
Jumars-yellow	2	n/a	good	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
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	1 in 95, 2 in 97	good	store
Box of Unserviceable/old ascenders/descenders	1	n/a	poor or unserviceable	store
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')	6	n/a	medium	store
3 mm wire traces-short length (1.3 m/4')	1	n/a	ok	store
PVC rung ladders	4	3 Jul-98, **1 May-99**	good	Growling Swallet
ACCESS KEYS				
Junee-Florentine key 1	1	n/a	n/a	store
Junee-Florentine key 2	1	n/a	n/a	John H-S holds
BOLTING GEAR-ELECTRIC				
Hitachi DH15DV Hammer Drill-complete	1	1996	good	store
12 Volt Gel-cell (Yuasa)	1	Aug-98	new	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
Drill bit-6.5 mm	1	n/a	medium	store
Drill bit-8 mm	1	**Dec-98**	good	store
Drill bit-10 mm	1	**Dec-98**	good	Store
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 and cones	3 sets	n/a	good	store (bolt kit)
Container of grease	1	n/a	good	store (bolt kit)
Troll hanger	1	n/a	good	store (bolt kit)
Petzl Twist hangers	6	n/a	good	store (bolt kit)
Petzl Twist hangers	3	n/a	poor (corrosion)	store (bolt kit)
Petzl Twist hangers-old style	2	n/a	good	store (bolt kit)
BOLTING GEAR-SPARES				
Fixe stainless steel expansion bolts (90 mm by 10 mm)	8	May-98	new	store
Fixe stainless steel hangers with captive rings	8	May-98	new	store
Petzl 10 mm self drive spits	36	n/a	most good	store
Cones for 10 mm spits	34	n/a	most good	store
Petzl 15 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

Item	Quantity	Purchased/ made/ put into service	Condition	Location
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
Mt. Weld number tags (1-10)	10	n/a	new	store
Nylon sleeves and nails (for number tags)	27	n/a	new	store
GPS GEAR				
Garmin 12 XL GPS unit (Serial No. 35324575)	1	Jun-98	good	store
External Antenna	1	Jun-98	good	store
SURVEY GEAR				
50 m fibreglass tapes-open reel	1	Nov-97	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	1 at store, 1 at Greg Middleton's
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
Transparent heat-shrink	1 length	Aug-98	new	store
Aluminium rod (for making rack bars)	1 piece	Jun-98	new	store
STC WAREHOUSE SALES-gear for Sale				
part roll Edelrid 1" tubular tape	~60 m	Oct-95	new	store
part roll Donaghys 2" flat tape-blue	~30 m	Jun-95	new	store
Space blankets	7	Dec-95	new	store
Duracell flat pack batteries	20	**Jul-99**	new	store
Petzl 21 litre carbide jets	2	n/a	new	store
Beal 9 mm Dynamic rope (for Cowstails/Safety loops)	~18 m	**Mar-99**	new	store

STATIC ROPE INVENTORY-30/9/99

Rope No.	Brand	Type	Diameter (mm)	Purchased	Label	Shrunk length (m)	Into Service	Condition G/M/F	Notes
2	Beal	Static	9	?	R2-?	200		unused	still on roll
40	Bluewater II	Static	9	?	R40-90	27	1995	good	
14	Bluewater II	Static	9	?	R14-90	11	1995	good	
34	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R34-89	30	1989	good	
7	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R7-89	22	1991	medium	many melt streaks
8	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R8-89	16	1991	medium	
9	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R9-89	15	1989	medium	
13	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R13-91	13	1991	medium	
51	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R51-89	12	1991	medium	
11	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R11-89	11	1991	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	SH-89	9	1989	medium	
10	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	R10-89	8	1991	medium	

Rope No.	Brand	Type	Diameter (mm)	Purchased	Label	Shrunk length (m)	Into Service	Condition G/M/F	Notes
SH	Bluewater II	Static	10	1989	SH-89	8	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	in S.H. Pot 3/98
25	Bluewater II	Static	11	1986	R25-86	25	1986	fair	in S.H. Pot 3/98
24	Bluewater II	Static	11	1985	R24-85	23	1985	medium	
21	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R21-?	23	?	medium	in Avon's Aven 5/99
27	Bluewater II	Static	11	1986	R27-86	22	1986	fair	in S.H. Pot 3/98
60	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R60-?	22	?	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-?	13	?	medium	
32	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R32-?	12	?	medium	
33	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R33-?	12	?	medium	
61	Bluewater II	Static	11	1983	R61-83	12	?	fair	stiff
20	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R20-?	10	?	medium	
35	Bluewater II	Static	11	?	R35-?	9	?	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	11	1983	SH-83	9	1983	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	11	1983	SH-83	8	1983	medium	
SH	Bluewater II	Static	11	1983	SH-83	7	1983	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	
54	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1995?	R54-95	49	1995	medium	
55	Edelrid	Superstatic	9	1995?	R55-95	22	1995	medium	
38	Edelrid	Superstatic	10	?	R38-?	29	?	good	
39	Edelrid	Superstatic	10	?	R39-?	11	?	good	
45	Edelrid	Superstatic	10	?	R45-?	10	?	good	
49	Edelrid	Softstatic	10.5	?	R48-?	10	?	medium	
58	Edelrid	Softstatic	10.5	?	R49-?	9	?	medium	
48	Edelrid	Superstatic	11	?	R48-?	13	?	good	
					Total length	**1296 m**			

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 was published in Speleo-Spiels 308 and 313.
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.

Search & Rescue Officer's Report

By Jeff Butt

Again, the year just gone has not been without incident! One fall resulted in a head-injury in Growling Swallet (see Speleo-Spiel 312, p5), a jump in Loons Cave resulted in a broken ankle (see Spiel 313, p6) and one party spent a night out misplaced on the surface after a very lengthy underground trip (see Spiel 312, p5).

I am pleased to say however, that for each of these incidents the party was able to sort out their own problems and 'self-rescue'. This is very pleasing to see, as it indicates that caving parties are both well resourced and well prepared for any incidents which may crop up. However, as always, prevention is much better that cure, and so avoiding putting oneself into a high risk situation or position is by far the preferred way to go. Nevertheless, sometimes unforeseen things can still happen, so I would just like to stress that: Anyone going caving needs to be well prepared, carry enough emergency equipment to be able to treat an injury, and have the necessary skills and training to be able to react appropriately if an accident does happen.

CAVEX-99, was held in February (as reported in Spiel 312, p5) and was attended by people from all over the state. It was pleasing to see so many cavers, police, SES, Parks and Forestry people come along and get involved. At the present time CAVEX 2000 has yet to be planned or organised,

but keep watching the Spiel for details about this event.

Nationally, in the last few months there have been some discussions about setting up an Australia wide 'parent' body to cover Caving Search and Rescue activity all around the country. Discussions are only in the early stages, but there are potentially many good things that can come from such an arrangement.

By the way, Daylight savings and long-evenings are here again, so "off meeting Wednesday nights" training/skills enhancements nights are being held at Fruehauf Quarry, as advertised in the Forward Program in this Spiel, so please attend if you can!

Editor's Report

By Jeff Butt

Six Speleo Spiels (310-315) were produced during the year. Each issue has been well filled with club news, a forward program, trip reports and some more substantial articles. Overall a high quality and timely publication was produced.

Jamie Allison came on board to assist with Spiel 314, and he proved to be very capable and has now taken over the Editors job. Good luck Jamie.

During the year the timing of the Spiel was altered so that now it is produced at the end of each odd month (Jan, Mar, ... Nov) to avoid the Christmas rush. Also, this allows the August-September issue, produced at the end of September to give plenty of warning of the AGM (which is held in the 4th quarter of each year).

Spiels 313 and 314 came with colour covers, as an experiment. The cover of 313 was produced by Greg Middleton on an ink-jet printer, whilst the cover for 314 was done on a colour photocopier. The ink-jet cover worked out at about $2 each whilst the colour photocopy version was about $1 each. The photocopy version was superior, but despite being half the cost, still made the Spiel expensive, i.e. it doubled the cost of each Spiel (which is about $1 a throw), and thus a colour copy will only be a once a year treat.

On the subject of covers, I sought to have a new picture on the cover of each Spiel, and ideally I sought to have a good photo of a caver and a cave. It is not always easy to find a new cover shot each two months, so anyone out there with some good photos is encouraged to forward them to the Editor for Spiel covers.

Currently, our print run is 110 copies and the mailing list takes about 100 of them, leaving some spares for distribution to prospective members and other interested persons.

During the year a couple of life members informed us that they no longer wished to receive the Spiel as they no-longer had any caving interest. Because of this, in Spiel 315 all 'seldom-seen' life members were given the option of removing themselves from the mailing list. Five people selected this option.

Thus the print-run can now be dropped back to 100, to cut cost by about 10%.

Anyway, that's enough. I'd like to encourage all potential authors of articles out there to put fingers to keyboard/pen to paper and write up your activities, even though they might not seem like anything much, they do at least give an indication of the activities of STC. I'd also like to encourage authors to get their articles to the Editor well in advance of the deadline, as it makes life for the Editor much easier. Jamie, our new Editor will surely appreciate this. Good luck Jamie.. ♦♦♦

Ida Bay Vertical Weekend with NC & Vics: 6-7/11/99

Party:
Saturday: Dave Butler, Andrew March, Janice March and Pete Hollings to Milk Run (IB38).
Kent Warby, Paul Brooker, Alaric Bennett, and Jeff Butt to Cyclops Pot (IB57).
Sunday: Dave Butler, Janice March, Andras Galambos and Jeff Butt to Cyclops Pot (IB57).

By Jeff Butt & Pete Hollings

Cyclops Pot ***By: Jeff Butt***

On Saturday the two parties set off with ~450 m of rope. The weather was a bit drizzly, but this soon turned to rain and it rained solidly all day. At Francistown 17.3 mm of rain fell during the day.

The Milk Run party found the cave OK and got to the bottom. The Mini Martin track is pretty bad now, there are many tree-falls and it could use a track-working bee.

The Cyclops party headed bush about 5 mins after the first yellow taped track that goes up to National Gallery, and virtually hit Cyclops Pot directly (Cyclops Pot is right next to IB58). When walking along the Skinner track, about 5 mins after the track to National Gallery, about 50 m after the track goes under a large log (one you have to kneel and sway under), there is another big log (you go over this one) that has fallen down the hill and over the track (it has a few bits cut from it).

Just there head up the hill, keeping to the left of the big log to avoid the worst of the tree-fall (which has nearly totally taken out the taped track that used to be there). It is only about 100 m up to Cyclops Pot, which is to the right of IB57, just beneath a small rock-outcrop.

There is an old stump just on the lower side of the IB57-58 doline complex. The small rock outcrop is

slightly overhung, which gives protection from the rain, should it be falling at the time!

Cyclops was pretty much as I remember it; a bit of an awkward inclined squeezy rift at the head of the first pitch. CEGSA have installed a stainless steel bolt with hanger here (opposite wall), sometime since my last visit ~6 years ago. A jug on the floor/wall gives a great Y-belay. At the second pitch, there is another CEGSA stainless steel bolt right at the pitch head, on the wall in front of you. About 2 m down there is a spit on the LHW. A bollard on the RHW, back up the passage plus a tieback acts as backups. Because of the wet conditions, this pitch was quite wet, a streamway runs down the passage leading to the pitch head, and the bolts leave you about 20 cm from the waterfall. It was quite soaking on the ascent here.

The third short pitch was rigged using a rib on the left and the big 'totem' on the right, plus a tieback. A protector on the lip was employed as we were using 9 mm rope. The impressive fourth pitch was rigged using another Y-belay, a bolt (spit) on the RHW, and a wide juggy bollard on the floor on the LHS. The top part of this jug parted company when Paul was on the ascent (3rd up), and whizzed past him. As a result a sling only just stays on this natural anchor-which is now best used as a deviation with a thin slip-knotted sling. The rope, when deviated about 5 cm from the wall beneath the bolt gives a lovely free-hang and keeps you out of most of the water.

The passage leading to the fifth and final pitch is quite muddy. A jug on the RHW pointing out the passage was used as the first anchor, then a wrist thick bridge across the passage was used as a second anchor. This bridge isn't very substantial, but appears ok and sounds solid. It stood up to the job (as it has done on previous trips). At the pitch head the existing spit is about 1 m out; the very corroded hanger was replaced. To prevent any possibility of a bad shock load, the knot in the rope attached to the hanger is best used with about a metre long loop in it. Whilst on rope it is possible to climb down into the small streamway beneath you, just before it plummets over the edge of the drop. You can pull the main rope into you, get onto it here and gently let yourself swing out under the bolt and descend. On the way up, you just reverse this manoeuvre.

As noted above, the rain fell all day, and on the way out the second pitch was quite soaking. It was a very squelchy walk back to the car. A convivial evening was spent at Arthur Clarke's house (Arthur was overseas, but many thanks Arthur and Robyn). Little rain fell overnight, and the morning revealed many slumbering people, but the sun did come out for a short period. There was a mad frenzy of people hosing down their gear and attempting to get things a little dry. However, there wasn't much enthusiasm for going caving. This always seems to happen when you've got two caves rigged and your gear is wet and/or grotty. The original plan was for the teams to swap caves and derig on day two. Anyway, that's life. So, Dave, Janice and I headed south and met Andras waiting for us at the carpark. We headed in and derigged Cyclops, which was even wetter today. Whilst we were in the cave the rain came steadily down, (another 7 mm was captured by the Francistown gauge), so it was wetter again on the way out. Things in the rainforest, including us were very soggy. Any thoughts of derigging Milk Run was washed away and so Milk Run remains rigged for another day. Everyone had a good little workout. ♦♦♦

Milk Run ***By Pete Hollings***

Jeff, Alaric and I arrived at Arthur's place outside Dover late on Friday night, to be greeted by the enthusiastic barks of the new puppy and the even warmer welcome of Robyn. We were halfway through our first cup of tea when David, Andrew and Janice arrived from Launceston. We chatted for a while before anticipation of the arduous day Jeff had planned for us drove us to bed.

An early start by caver standards meant that we were able to rendezvous with the Victorian's only half an hour late. Jeff quickly split us into two teams so that we would be able to rig both Milk Run and Cyclops (with the plan being to swap caves and derig them the next day). I found myself teamed with the Launceston group and having loaded up on rope we set off into the bush.

We followed the trail to Exit cave for about 40 minutes before heading off on a much rougher track that we hoped would lead up to the entrance. For someone who has spent the last five years on the Canadian Prairies, the stunning temperate rainforest with its lush foliage was an amazing experience. Given the dense vegetation we wasted only a short time in trying to find the entrance after some moderate bush bashing. Once there we were able to clearly see the well-flagged trail that we had somehow missed on the way up.

We rigged the 41m entrance drop off a nearby tree and redirected the rope from another, running it over the rotten log that was sometimes used as an anchor in years gone by. The pitch was a fairly impressive shaft with a clear free hang after the first couple of metres. A small chamber at the bottom offered shelter from the debris knocked down by those above. From the chamber a series of three short pitches were rigged to the top of the next major drop. It was here that Andrew called it a day, as with sore shoulders he decided that he didn't want to get out of his depth.

After the short series of steps, David quickly rigged the 26m drop via a traverse to a bolt at an exposed pitch head and Janice and I followed him down into a fair sized chamber. A couple of metres of stooping passage led quickly to the next pitch where David was already traversing out over the drop to rig from another bolt. As he descended the drop Janice and I rigged the tail of the rope from the pitch above so as

to make it easier to get on rope. This 49m pitch was a beautiful free hanging descent through clean washed limestone shaft typically 3-4 metres across.

In the chamber at the bottom we had a choice of two routes down to the end of the cave and chose the one on the left. A muddy drop with a snug pitch head dropped 9m to the top of the final pitch. As we were approaching the rendezvous time with the other group I turned back at this point and started out, leaving Janice and David to continue. As it turned out only David made it to the bottom as Janice turned round at the top of the final drop. Due to problems finding a rebelay point this ~30m drop included a knot some 9m off the floor.

The trip back to the surface was pretty uneventful until I was about 10m from the top of the entrance pitch. Andrew chose this moment to suggest that I prussik more gently but refused to explain why. I cautiously continued my ascent to find that what we thought had been a free hang actually rubbed on the lip of the drop once the rope was loaded. We quickly changed the rigging and the other two soon joined us on the surface.

While we'd been underground (about 6 hrs all told) the rain had been falling continuously so we quickly headed off down the now much muddier trail. I was glad we were heading back in daylight as I suspect a trip through the rain forest in the dark would be challenging at best. Just before we reached the main Exit Cave trail I learned my first important lesson about caving in Tassie, always step over soaking wet fallen logs, never try and walk on them. In doing so I slipped and pulled a muscle in my thigh ruling out any serious caving for the rest of the weekend.

Back at the cars we were happy to get into warm dry clothes, although I was a little shocked to see how casually Janice removed the two leaches clinging to her legs. With images of the movie Stand By Me flashing through my mind I carefully checked my exposed flesh before getting dressed. Still I suppose it's better than changing in a blizzard in the Yorkshire Dales. The Cyclops team made it back to the cars an hour or so later, much to our relief as the thought of donning our wet gear to go and look for them was not very appealing.

With everyone accounted for, the Milk Run team headed back to Arthur's for some hot food. As we drove off we realised that we didn't know where the key was stashed but rather than go back and find out we instead retreated to the pub for a beer. All in all it was a great introduction to caving "Down Under".

[Dave Rasch and Jeff Butt derigged Milk Run on 14/11/99. Everything went very smoothly. However, we were reminded why we normally use 9 mm rope....~220m of 11 mm Bluewater is rather pack bulging. JB] ♦♦♦

STC Trip to Mole Creek Karst National Park, 21-24/10/99

Party: Alaric Bennett, Jeff Butt, Liz Canning, Hugh Fitzgerald, Chris Sharples (Sat & Sun only), Trevor Wailes (Thurs & Fri only)

By: Hugh Fitzgerald

Thursday 21: Lynds Cave:

Taking advantage of the Hobart Show Day holiday, several STC people decided a long weekend of caving was in order, and met at the Northern Caverneers caving hut on the Marakoopa road on a very wet Thursday morning. The rain became heavier, and the planned departure time of 11 a.m. for Lynds Cave came and went as the rain got heavier still.

Jeff had been there before, and informed us we had to wade the Mersey River to get to the cave entrance, so there was no point staying dry. Reluctantly the above mentioned (minus Chris who didn't show up until Saturday) dashed through the rain and piled into Alaric's trusty Landrover Speleomobile, picked up the key from the park headquarters, then drove down to the Mersey River carpark. We changed into our trog suits in the rain and began walking downstream as the rain finally eased and the sun came out to dry things. At this point we plunged into the river crossing, wading waist deep to get across to the entrance at the base of the prominent bluff on the river's true right. A platypus watched our progress as we scrambled along the cliff base to the entrance.

The key duly unlocked the gate (MC14) and in we went, following upstream for about 1km, past one or two rockfalls which necessitated getting rather wet in the streambed. Liz and Hugh stopped where the roof grew crawling low, while Trevor, Jeff, and Alaric pushed on to a curious corkscrew squeeze in the nether reaches of the cave.

That was enough for one afternoon, and we turned around and headed out. Near the entrance we were treated to a spectacular view as sunlight shone directly into a high level entrance in the cliff face (this was about 5pm), providing an ethereal glow to the scene in the cave's largest chamber. We emerged back at the Mersey River after 3 hours to see the platypus swimming about nearby. The day was still sunny but cool, so we lit a fire on returning to the NC hut to dry our gear.

After dinner we headed into the Mole Creek pub for grog, this time the five of us fitting into the presidential limousine (Trevor's Camira) for the mad dash into town. At the pub we met a beef farmer called Ross McNeill, who had recently bought the property called "The Caves" which borders Baldock's Cave Reserve. Ross is a keen caver when farming duties allow, and he was pleased to offer us access across his land to Sassafras and Cyclops Caves.

Friday 22: Sassafras Cave

The day dawned drizzly and damp, but better than yesterday. Having no Parks & Wildlife permits issued for today, we decided to take Ross McNeill up on his offer to visit his place to look into some of the caves in Baldock's Reserve.

Everyone squeezed into Alaric's Landrover again and we headed into Mole Creek where we bumped into Ross in the main street. We all headed up to his property and he showed us the two entrances to Sassafras Cave before excusing himself to attend to his multitude of duties.

We trogged up, fighting off leeches as we did so, then headed into the efflux (MC96) and walked upstream. There were numerous glow worms lighting the way, and also a good number of blow flies lazily buzzing around our lights. Eventually we reached the sump at the top end of the streamway. We have heard that this sump occasionally dries up allowing one through to the influx, but no-one was keen to dive it today.

Following back downstream we took a high level passage on the true right through some nice formation up to the other entrance which pops out on the hillside (MC103) about 10-12 vertical metres above, and 50m up-valley from the efflux.

Friday 22: Cyclops Cave & Other Holes

After eating lunch in the rain and checking out Kevin Kiernan's report on the Mole Creek Karst area, we decided to head off overland to find Cyclops Cave and whatever else we might happen across. Following up the dry valley which leads to the Sassafras resurgence, we soon found a stream sink, the presumed influx of Sassafras (not tagged?), which sumped 10 metres in from the entrance.

Going further up we found other holes which people explored without discovering much (MC137, MC225, MC227). We noticed quite a few carcasses of animals laying about. These brought to mind the 1080 poison notice which was hung on the gate when we entered "The Caves" property, and were possibly the cause of all the blowflies in Sassafras.

Eventually we came across the entrance to Cyclops (MC17) and had a quick look in, following the stream up to a waist deep wade at the first bend and through to a rockfall. Instead of wading, it was possible to climb up on some rubber mats to where an area of pretties had been roped off. Here we saw leeches in the cave!

Having had enough of encountering hungry subterranean invertebrates we headed back to Alaric's Speleomobile, whereupon Ross McNeill drove up hoping we might want to do a bit more caving. Unfortunately we had to decline as we had caving gear to wash for the morrow and a dinner engagement to get to.

Back at the hut we discovered a fat and happy leech which had dropped off someone after feasting all day long. It resembled a large black pudding. Alaric decided he was its victim and visibly paled at the thought.

After coercing Alaric into driving us to Gowrie Park with the offer of a blood transfusion, we bid farewell to Trevor who headed back to Hobart. The rest of us met up with the Boyles at Weindorfers, and a jolly evening was had after a cup or two of gluhwein to get proceedings underway.

Saturday 23: Kubla Khan

A Saturday morning in October was approaching a leisurely breakfast time when Chris Sharples showed up, itching to get into Kubla Khan. With our fifth and final team member putting in such an early appearance, we slug-a-beds had to rouse ourselves into action, packing up our stuff and wolfing down breakfast.

The trusty Club Landrover once more transported us to our destination. In contrast to the previous days' caving, it was rather sunny and hot in the Kubla Khan Karpark as we prepared ourselves for the day's excursion. Jeff showed us the upper entrance (MC1), where he rigged the 18m pitch for us to exit by later in the day.

We then climbed up to the Kubla Khan high entrance (MC29) and rigged the pitch down the formation just inside the entrance by threading our rope through the gate. Once we were all safely down, we pulled the rope down too and hoped we'd find the way through without too much fuss.

Our "official" guide for the day was Jeff Butt, the soon to be recognised STC Kubla Khan guide, who has a good deal of surveying experience in this cave. His memory was to serve him almost impeccably with the path finding, as he led us directly through the cave on the sanctioned route, without more than a moment's hesitation.

What a remarkable cave Kubla Khan is - living up to every bit of its reputation. Chris was placed in charge of the 50W flood light, which he judiciously used to enlighten us to the wonders to be beheld around every turn. Talk about specky!!

Words fail adequate description of this magnificent cave. Through we went, awe struck at the sights we saw, footsore at the bootless exploration of the Pleasuredome, shoulder sore at the frequent boot washing stations. There was a curious amount of cave cleaning paraphernalia to be seen on our journey, including hoses, scrubbing brushes, water bladder backpacks, and pump action water guns. All are necessary to preserve the formation from the muddying effects of visitors.

When we reached Stal Shuffle, Jeff had a curious lapse of memory, informing us that the stream below our precarious position was over 8 feet deep. Liz, never one to shirk the chance to swim, waded on through the water to find it barely came above her knees. Jeff had lied deliberately to make us clamber like apes along Stal Shuffle! Mr Ruse's butt was

exposed! I'm sorry... what I mean is, Mr Butt's ruse was exposed.

Eventually we all dropped down to the streambed and followed it up, until the final waterfall before the climb to the top entrance gate. This short drop has a deep pool beneath it, and it proved impossible to climb without immersing oneself at least up to one's chest in the cold water. Chris lost his footing and sank up to his neck before climbing out; Alaric did something similar. Bringing up the rear and bearing the key to unlock the next gate, Hugh spent rather a long time trying to avoid getting wet unnecessarily, but in the end had to lay chest down over the lip of the waterfall and get hauled up by the scruff of his neck by Alaric. Then Jeff tells us we could have avoided the water by bridging along higher up!

After 8 hours our party of five emerged cold, wet, but unscathed from the trip. We derigged the MC1 pitch and drove back to the NC hut, which we shared with Sarah Boyle and a noisy rat this night.

Sunday 24: Genghis Khan

Another day of multiple cave visits beckoned. We all piled into the club Landrover again and returned to Kubla Karpark, this time to visit Genghis Khan. Here we discovered leeches at the entrance (MC38), so we quickly popped underground to admire the treasures within. Another spectacular display awaited us; it is somewhat more intimate than the Kubla experience, due to the smaller scale.

Temujin established the Mongol empire, declaring himself Genghis Khan in 1206. It was he who made the majority of the acquisitions which made the empire great. By the time his grandson Kublai Khan came to power in 1260, thirty-three years after Genghis Khan's death, the empire was at its peak and on the brink of decline. During Kublai Khan's thirty-four year reign a visitor called Marco Polo stayed with the Khan, and publicised the splendour of the empire throughout the west on his return to Italy. Thus Kublai Khan got more comprehensive media coverage than his grandfather.

Perhaps a similar situation exists with the two caves that bear the Khans' names. Did Kublai Khan squander the riches earned by his grandfather's hard work on ostentatious display? Pondering this, we re-emerged after an hour underground to find the leeches gone and the hot sunshine most welcoming.

Sunday 24: Croesus Cave

After a picnic lunch in the sun, we drove to the Mersey River to visit our final cave on this Mole Creek mini-expedition. We parked the Landrover on the main road and walked along the road edge trying to locate the track leading to Croesus Cave. Eventually we picked it up and walked the hundred odd metres to the entrance, a gated efflux (MC13).

A key was produced and the gate unlocked, and in we went through a low stoop until the roof rose enough to allow upright posture. We followed the stream up, wading through pools that got waist deep at times. The Croesus stream cascades over a remarkable series of low gours, quite unlike any others I have ever seen. Each rim raises the stream level by only 5-10cm, yet contains a half metre deep pool behind it. Progress up stream means carefully stepping over each gour, or walking along the rims when a series interconnects in a reticulated pattern.

Eventually we reached the Golden Staircase, where we nudged up to climb over this rather abrasive feature. It is newly bereft of the raft that was once moored there. Back in the stream, we continued up to where the passage ended at a rockfall. From here, crawling passage leads to two other entrances, but we chose to leave these for another occasion.

Back we turned and began heading out when Alaric's light began to fail. The party's progress slowed accordingly, so we thought it best to abandon him in a dark recess while the rest of us ran away with the only good light sources. (Such behaviour contravenes ASF Safe Caving Practices. It is not recommended - Ed.) Reaching the gate, we locked him in and commandeered the STC Speleomobile. Given that all known entrances to Croesus Cave are gated, he'll probably stay right there until the next group visit the cave with a key to release him. Beware the slavering Beast of Croesus!

Time party spent underground: two and a half hours.

Editor's note: the concluding paragraph of the trip report to Croesus Cave contains a number of alarming statements which should not be construed by the casual reader as typical behaviour of caving parties in general and of STC caving parties in particular. It is a crime in Tasmania to imprison people against their will, and it is also an offence to abscond from the scene of a crime in a stolen vehicle. Following Mr Fitzgerald's admissions in the above report, the document has been passed on to the authorities. Four members of STC are assisting caving police with enquires. Meanwhile, the STC has several positions vacant in its Executive (Vice President, Secretary, Minute Secretary, Committee, Equipment Officer, SAR Officer, and General Committee) ♦♦♦

Kubla Khan and Genghis Khan, 23-24/10/99

Party: Alaric Bennett, Jeff Butt, Liz Canning, Hugh Fitzgerald, Chris Sharples **By: Chris Sharples**

Having lurked with cave bureaucrats long enough to pass myself off in conversation as an actual caver, I had long been aware that this cave called Kubla Khan was something to see. So when a long weekend visiting permit caves at Mole Creek was organised I decided that the time had come. As usual, there were too many commitments for me to drive up on the Friday, so it was another 5am start on Saturday morning. By the time I arrived at the Northern Caverneers hut at Marakoopa it was a

brilliant sunny day, just the weather to be underground. Despite the fact that we had permits for a grand slam of Mole Creek's finest caves, there was only a grand total of five starters. But who needs crowds anyway? So all five of us jumped into Alaric's vehicle and bumped off down the dodgy track towards Kubla.

After Jeff had fixed a rope in the rather imposing lower entrance (MC1) for our later exit, we wandered up the hill to the rather un-imposing upper entrance (MC29). This entrance involves a couple of abseil pitches that start a little awkwardly then get easier. Of course, my somewhat jerky descent was the result of my Petzl Stop being a bit too new, not to any lack of technique you understand! Having pulled the ropes down after us, we started into the Forbidden City, part of a large collapse chamber that culminates in the enormous (and appropriately named) Xanadu.

Kubla Khan is particularly famed for its decorations, and the Forbidden City set the tone for what was to follow: basically, an awful lot of "oohing and aahing" on account of the profusion of helictites, aragonite flowers and a variety of other mineralogical delicacies known by a curious collection of scientific terms. By the time we reached the enormous chamber of Xanadu, I felt like I was traversing a mountaintop ridge rather than clambering over collapse boulders in a cave, so spacious were the surroundings and so elevated the ridge of collapse blocks. The Khans Army, a row of stalagmites lined up beneath a dripping roof joint, led us down to the enormous stalagmite known as the Khan, the phallic appearance of which seemed obvious to me, although cynics would probably argue that's just the way I think. But I digress...

Leaving the old chamber of Xanadu, the scrambling became a little technical in the narrow fossil streamway of Sally's Folly until we arrived at Cairn Hall and the active stream cave. Following the River Alph upstream led us to the highlight of the trip, the great cascade of flowstone and gours known as Pleasure Dome. That place has got to be one of the most extra-ordinarily beautiful places in Tasmania; we spent half an hour just tip-toeing around it in bare feet going "ooh!" and "aah!' like we hadn't already said those words enough for one day! Amazingly, nobody had brought a camera, so we were able to just absorb the beauty of the cave without the technicalities of photography; sometimes its nice to do that. Moral message: the pristine nature of the Pleasure Dome brought home the reason for all those tedious boot washing stations throughout the cave - even a few clots of mud would be enough to noticeably mar the flowstone surfaces, let alone the hideous thought of trampling dirty boots over them!

The route on led us inexorably to the final (or first?) section of the cave, several hundred metres of narrow streamway leading to the Lower Entrance Chamber. Here there are two alternatives: for the gung ho or well - wetsuited, there is a relatively simple splash up the River Alph. For the more circumspect but not faint-hearted, there is a higher level traverse known as the Stalactite Shuffle. We chose the latter and commenced a sometimes awkward and unprotected traverse metres above the stream. Although Liz at first rebelled and started splashing up the streamway, she was soon teetering along at high level with the rest of us. However, discontent grew as we considered how "easy" it looked to just splash through the creek below us. Finally, frustration got the better of us and we descended to the creek. No sooner had we stumbled into a near - bottomless pool, and thoroughly drenched ourselves in it (well, I did; Hugh painstakingly found a means of getting through it only half-drenched), than we realised we were at the end and could ascend to the Entrance Chamber. Wetly wishing we had stuck to the high level traverse for just another few metres, we ascended the ropes Jeff had fixed earlier, emerging into the evening gloom after about eight hours underground.

After a night spent at the delightfully olde worlde Northern Caverneers hut the same five hard cases decided, it being Sunday, to have a look at Ghengis Khan (MC38). The entrance to this non-technical cave is located a little west of the upper entrance to Kubla Khan, and appears to be aligned with the Forbidden City - Xanadu part of Kubla, suggesting that it may be part of the same cave system, although no connection has yet been found. The cave consists of broad passages descending down over inclined collapse blocks. This is another well-decorated cave, the highlight of which is undoubtedly a long inclined flattenner through which one crawls keeping ones head carefully below the profusion of helictites and aragonite flowers adorning the roof. More time was spent "oohing" and "aahing". I think it was at about this point that I made a firm decision to order Hill & Forti's classic book "Cave Minerals of the World". After this bout of mineralogical appreciation, and greedily feeling that we could probably cope with being spoilt a little bit more before going home, we departed for Croesus Cave. But that's a tale for someone else to tell.

♦ ♦ ♦

A Cup Day Hydrology Lesson in Growling Swallet-2/11/99

Party: Paul Brooker (VSA), Kent Warby (CCV), Andras Galambos, Jeff Butt. **by Jeff Butt**

It was a perfect sunny Melbourne Cup day, Tuesday November 2nd, with 8/8 th's blue sky and the Weather Forecast for totally fine conditions, but I had all the money on Growling Swallet flooding out today, the day we had earlier selected for a trip to the back end of Growling Swallet.

Despite the perfect weather, I knew that on the previous weekend it hosed down with snow falling on the Sunday night to about the 500 m level on Mt. Wellington. On the Monday morning Mt. Wellington looked very wintry, but by the afternoon virtually all the snow had disappeared. I imagined that Mt. Field would have had a similar story to tell.

Anyway, on Melbourne Cup Day Andras and I headed up to the Mt. Field Caravan Park to collect Paul and Kent, who were over for a Tassie caving sojourn. I told everyone where my money would be for the day, and we headed up to Growling. There was quite a visible amount of snow left on the western slopes of Mt. Field West (indeed probably more snow than the area saw over any of the last winter!), which would turn to melt with the afternoon sun and come flooding down. En-route to Growling, the small gully one crosses just before reaching Growling was flowing with about 5 cm depth of water in it (Paul and Kent said that it was flowing much more on the Sunday, when they were in the area). The flow into Growling was up a bit, but lower than I would have expected given the fine day for melting snow on Monday. The streamway would have been quite negotiable.

We headed up to Slaughter House Pot (SHP) and headed in. SHP was quite wet, the initial grovel was flowing and the last pitch was a small waterfall. We headed down to have a look at Herpes III; the Trapdoor streamway had only just started to back-up, there was an ankle deep pool about 2 m long. I told everyone how on a previous trip we saw this area flood out in about 2 hours, it was definitely not a good idea to proceed through Herpes III, otherwise one would be spending 24-48 hours waiting for the water to subside.

We headed up to Destiny area, Paul took some photos, whilst I got side-tracked having a look around the Hyperspace Bypass and the small labyrinth of passages that lead to Servalane. Growling was particularly cold on the day, we estimated the air temperature was about 3 to 4°C due to all the snow-melt. Anyway, after about 2 hours of looking around we zipped back towards Herpes III to have a look at what the water had done. We found a lake about a metre deep at the bottom of the handline leading to the area, Herpes III would now have been closed off. It was quite a sobering experience for Kent, Paul and Andras seeing how much the water had come up in such a short time. Kent said he was really glad I had come on the day; as with the perfect weather, low water

levels they wouldn't have hesitated to go through Herpes III, and they'd have been stuck.

We then headed through Windy Rift to have a look at the main streamway, I was imagining that we'd see a lot of water there, and that we wouldn't be exiting that way. We could still hear the stream, ie. it hadn't sumped out. The walls weren't vibrating like we found on the trip on 26/5/99, so I didn't think that Growling stream was ridiculously high. Anyway, the next thing, Andras reported to us that there was a pool of water in the passage, ie. it was nearly sumped. As we were watching the water, we heard the last couple of gurgles as the passage sumped out, then all was quiet. I said, this wasn't a great place to be, and in very quick time the four of us were back through Windy Rift; we could see the water level rising into the bottom of Windy rift as we traversed it. We then headed back out SHP.

Upon reaching the Growling entrance the water had visibly risen, the whole streamway was a white seething mass of rapids. Paul took a couple of photos, which I hope come out and I can append to this trip report. I checked my outside gauging rock, which was now about 20 cm under; so the streamway had come up about 25-30 cm due to the melting snow. The 'gauging rock' just inside the entrance was hidden under a seething mass of white foaming water, the streamway was definitely impassable and very dangerous now.

On the way back to the car, the small stream in the gully had gone; the local surface run-off had finished; but not so for the snowmelt coming down the slopes from Mt. Field West; the Growling Streamway was still rising.

It was quite interesting seeing the flooding and sumping of Growling, indeed I'd seen similar things on my last three trips there; on 26/4/99 (see Spiel 313, p 14) we experienced the Trapdoor streamway sumping out and flooding Herpes; on 3/7/99 (see Spiel 314, p17) we visited Growling in flood to find the system well flooded (Trapdoor backed up to Scaling Pole Aven, and Windy Rift half flooded). Also, at CAVEX-99 (see Spiel 312, p5) we experienced another Growling flood.

For the previous incidents I published rainfall totals from some (those which are published in the newspapers) nearby weather stations, and so think it is worthwhile to do this again.

Rainfall (mm)

Station	24 hrs to 0900 Tue 26th	24 hrs to 0900 Wed 27th	24 hrs to 0900 Thu 28th	24 hrs to 0900 Fri 29th	24 hrs to 0900 Sat 30th	24 hrs to 0900 Sun 31st	24 hrs to 0900 Mon 1st	24 hrs to 0900 Tue 2nd
Maydena	0	12	10	5	0	7	n/a	n/a
Bushy Park	0.2	2	5	0.4	0	2	13	0.2
Strathgordon	1	35	22	15	0.6	22	21	2
Scotts Peak	0	19	7	7	0.2	12	n/a	n/a
Lake St. Clair	0.4	27	10	6	0.6	17	23	2

Note: Most of the precipitation over the 24 hour period to 0900 on 1/11, fell as snow to about 500 m.

From the rainfall totals, you can estimate that about 40 mm of rain fell over the area a couple of days prior to our trip, with maybe half of that falling as snow (ie. about 20 cm snow) on the upper slopes of the Growling Stream catchment. It was also quite a wet week in the area. From a quick look at the 1:25000 topographic map, the catchment for the Growling Streamway is about 8 km2, all above 550 m in altitude too.

It would be interesting to do a proper study of the hydrology of the system (plenty of water tracing has been done in the past, but I don't know of any flood-rainfall analysis etc.) to develop a 'Growling Swallet Sumping predictor'. But, it seems that if you get anything like 40 mm of rain in the area over two days, then that is enough to fill up any reservoirs in the system and to have it start to back-up. Once the reservoirs in the system are full, then even with a normal or decreasing flow running down the Growling streamway that is enough water to sump out the system. If any of the rain falls as snow, then even if the weather is perfectly fine, snowmelt may release enough 'rainfall equivalent' to flood the system. From entrapments in the past, it seems that it takes about 24-48 hours for the backed-up water to subside.

It is a good thing that emergency caches are located at the bottom of Slaughterhouse Pot and at the Top of Aven's Aven. Having SHP permanently rigged as an escape route is also handy. But, if you are going to Growling Swallet for a 'big trip', then it is worth while choosing a fine day after a spell of fine weather! ♦♦♦

Seeking Sodden Satan (Satan's Lair, JF365)-4/10/99

Party: Damian Bidgood (STC & SAR), Steve Archer (SAR), Jeff Butt. **by Jeff Butt**

It was a wet, drizzly day in the Florentine with the SAR team and trainees. One group had gone into Growling Swallet, another into Beginners Luck (rumour has it that some of this team couldn't make it past Fatboy's flattener) and we three were planning to visit Satan's Lair (S.L.). Yes, we were all Satan's virgins. Anyway, we consulted the good book (Vertical Caves of Tasmania) and located the correct bend on Chrisp's Road where the track headed off. Mmmm, but of course we couldn't actually locate the track. A widespread sweep search found us one old and faded pink tape, but no more. Never mind, we had the GPS technology with us, and thanks to Dave Rasch and Andras Galambos visiting JF365 early in the year (they came in from the East; see their trip report in Spiel #312, p 10) there was a position for S.L. stored in it, that we could head for. So, we set of under the control of the GPS, or so we thought. We were really under the control of Satan's sense of humour.... regrowth scunge, fallen logs, large bracken, mouldy logs and all that other sort of horrid stuff....what a mislead soul I was, I thought the path to hell was full of debauchery. It was drizzling and the scrub was wet, so the GPS was put safely away and we sort of wandered about a lot. We occasionally consulted the Oracle, only to find that we were not getting any closer...So, we started heading the correct way. We didn't find much in the way of dolines or other karst features, but did find some nice outcrops of limestone. Eventually the Oracle said we were at the Lair of Satan, ie. within 100 m of it, but still no sign of it, or any tapes at all. We were wondering what the hell was going on.

Not wanting to make a total waste of the day we did a bit of a sweep search up various gullies, and eventually located two pieces of orange tape, ahh, we had found the track, so all we had to do was to follow it to S.L. Well, sounds good in principle, but the two pieces of orange tape didn't seem to be connected to any other pieces of tape. After a bit of a general search, I headed over to a small collection of logs, and after moving some manfern fronds aside found a cave. This entrance was extremely well hidden, as was any number tag that resides there (another good reason to photo-tag entrances). What I could see down the cave did at least fit the description of S.L., so we thought we may as well venture in to see. By this time we were all quite looking forward to visiting the Lair of Satan for some much needed warmth, as we were totally sodden and on the shivery side.

We bopped down to the rockfall chamber at the base of the second pitch and located the way on (with the Oracle gathering more information on the surface). However, time was against us and in order to make our rendezvous with the others we thought we'd best allow plenty of time for the trip out. We were somewhat better at finding our way out, and did manage to run into the odd bit of tape here and there, but by no means were we following a track, or even a route! Eventually we made somewhat familiar looking territory, but no tapes were to be seen, so we just kept on ambling in the perceived correct direction (we did make one mistake, that was not to mark the location of the vehicle!). Anyway, providence was with us and through the trees I caught a glimpse of the maypole at the top of Chrisp's Road. We made a slight course correction and came out on the road about 50 m from the car, about an hour after we left S.L.

Well, the day didn't quite turn out as intended, but it still was successful in that at least we found Satan's Lair. We shall return, but armed with track-marking tape, bowsaws and other devices to repel the devilish scrub to make the path to hell a little less arduous. ♦♦♦

A Terrific Tyrolean at Adam's Falls-5/10/99

Party: Damian Bidgood, Paul Steane, Richard MacMillan, Malcom Budd, Kate Chambers, Christian Oakes, Adam Filler, Jeff Butt. **by Jeff Butt**

Another training day with the SAR team, the damp conditions of yesterday had retreated leaving us with a magnificent day in the glorious Southwest.

Damian and Paul had sussed out a great place for a rather exposed Tyrolean, across Adam's Falls, on the Clear Hill Road (Grid Reference: 424698 on the Wedge 1:100,000 map sheet.). These falls are right next to the road, so access is easy. The creek here passes beneath the road-bridge, then drops through a series of cascades and a major waterfall into Lake Gordon, about 50 m below. At either side of the creek are rock buttresses about 20 m above the level of the creek. A tyrolean stretched between these two buttresses puts one in a rather exposed (accentuated by having a lake on one side; which was also down ~10 m) position, about 60-odd metres up, above the spectacular Adam's Falls.

It was easy to toss a rope across the creek, and walk it up to the buttresses at either side. Each buttress is well endowed with trees that provide the required anchors. We used a single 110 m length of fairly new 11 mm Bluewater rope, doubled to provide one tensioned line (the traverse line) and one slack line (the safety/control line). An extra 30-40 m of rope on either side was used to connect the lines to the series of anchors. The anchors on both sides are about at the same level, this gives a nice 'horizontal' tyrolean.

The buttresses on both sides are well shaped, in that the Tyrolean hangs free of all the rock, which means that there are no abrasion points to worry about. Deviations were used on both sides to ensure that the lines stayed in the best position. Both sides of the buttresses are a little scrubby, and thus the first and last part of the traverse involves a bit of moving scrub aside.

We used a Z-pulley system to tension up the main line. Damian was the 'crash-test dummy', and from this trial we soon realised that the main line was no-where near tight enough, so some extra slack was taken in. With this done, it was much simpler to zip across, and bodies were going back and across for the next hour or so. [For completing the Tyrolean, one is attached to the main line via a pulley and a cowstail as a back-up. The other cowstail is attached to the control/safety line, and abseil devices/ascenders can be used on this line to effect the traverse.]

Both lines did tend to stretch and sag, so periodically we had to re-tension them. We found it unnecessary to abseil down to the bottom of the vee, as there was enough friction in the pulleys and cowstail krabs to prevent unwanted speed. It was obvious that the small Riley pulleys worked far better than the similarly sized lightweight Petzl Swing cheek pulleys (which were also very squeaky). Kate, who was the lightest person there, made the crossing look amazingly easy, she just zipped down the rope on the pulley, and 'armed it' up the other side, completing the whole traverse in a couple of minutes. For the heavier males, it was necessary to use ascenders or strong arm it (maybe this is where the saying "the strong-arm of the law" comes from??) to ascend up the last part of the traverse. From the bottom of the vee in the rope, the view was quite spectacular, so much so that one tended not to want to take it in for too long. Rope games 'neath the earth seem a lot safer, there's something comforting in blackness!

All in all, it was quite a fun tyrolean in a spectacular spot on a glorious day; you couldn't ask for more than that! Thanks to the SAR team for the spare seat! ♦♦♦

Subs Are Now Due

If you would like to pay your SUBS (now due), then you can either post to STC, PO Box 416, Sandy Bay 7006, or present them to Jeff while Arthur is away.

Rates are the same as last year: If you pay by **Feb 3rd**, you will be eligible for the PPD (Prompt Payment Discount).

Full: (for persons 18 years or older) $45.00 **($35.00 PPD)**.

Junior: (for persons under 18 years of age) $25.00 **($20.00 PPD)**.

Household: (for two persons 18 years or older and any number of persons under 18 years of age, all having the same residential address) $65.00 **($52.50 PPD)**.

Concession: (for persons 18 years or older, whom are either Students, unemployed or entitled to some other concession) $35.00 **($27.50 PPD)**.

Life with Full ASF Membership: (for life members who are actively caving and require ASF Insurance) $20.00 **($15.00 PPD)**.

Life with Australian Caver: subscription only (for life members who are no longer actively caving and do not require ASF Insurance, but would like to receive the Australian Caver) $15.00 **(no PPD available)**.. ♦♦♦

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.

STC WaReHoUsE SaLeS

Publications:

- "Caving Safety 1 Manual", 92 pages, covers Planning, Safety, Maps, Gear, Rigging, Emergencies etc. ____ $15.00
- Back Issues of Southern Caver, Speleo-Spiel. There are various issues available. Please contact the Librarian, Greg Middleton (gregmi@delm.tas.gov.au) with your requirements._____ ~$1 each

Gear:

- BATA full-length Gumboots, Black with yellow sole, no steel toe-caps. Sizes 6/7/8/9/10_____ $25.00 pair
- CAVE PACKS, 25 litre volume, made from Heavy duty yellow PVC material, double thickness material at wear points, strong seams, drain holes, large diameter eyelet's, adjustable straps. Good Value. _____$48.00 each
- Aluminium Bars for Rappel Racks. _____$5.00 each
- 5 cm (2") plastic Tri-glide buckles, ideal for battery belts, cave packs etc.) _____$0.80 each

Tape:

- Edelrid 25 mm tubular tape. Ideal for rigging, chest harnesses etc. (White)_____$2.00 per m
- 5 cm (2") flat tape (ideal for harnesses, rigging, gear bags, belts etc.) (Blue)_____$1.50 per m

Safety:

- 9 mm dynamic rope (for cows tails, safety loop) (Red with Blue/Yellow fleck) _____ $3.50 per m, eg. Cowstail $10
- Space Blankets (don't be caught underground without one!) _____$4.00 each

Lighting:

- Metal Lamp Brackets, complete with fixing rivets and cable keeper_____$6.00 each
- Plastic Lamp Brackets, used but in good condition. comes with fixing screws _____$2.00 each
- Alkaline 4.5 Volt 'flat-pack' batteries (NEW STOCKS!)_____ $8.00 each or 3 for $23.00
- Eveready 6 Volt, 0.5 Amp Flange Mount Bulbs (#1417), Blister packs of 2 _____$3.00 each
- Jets (21 litres/hr) for Petzl kaboom (just a couple left) _____$5.00 each

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

- RETIRED CAVING ROPE, no longer safe enough to use for caving purposes, but more than adequate for many other purposes. Available in various lengths. _____ $1.00 per m, less for the stiffer stuff

If you need any of the above please contact Jeff Butt on (03) 6223 8620 (H), or jeffbutt@netspace.net.au, or write to us: SOUTHERN TASMANIAN CAVERNEERS, P.O. BOX 416, SANDY BAY 7006.

FOR SALE:-Lighting Stuff

Sealed Lead Acid (Gell cell) Caving Lamp.
Reconditioned Oldham headpiece connected to a new Yuasa 6 Volt/7 Amp. Hr. sealed lead acid (gell cell) in an Oldham battery case. Belt included. Very reliable. A robust and inexpensive light to cave by. Runs for 14 hours at 3W. _____ $140. ($10 extra for QH option).

Sewer Pipe Caving Lamp.
Reconditioned Oldham headpiece connected to a 3 D-cell Sewer Pipe battery case, with belt. Run on Nicads (8 hr duration) or Alkaline (18 hr duration) batteries. If you prefer an even smaller battery case, then a 2 D-cell option is available. Very sturdy and compact light; great for expeditions or international travel (you can get D-cells anywhere). Belt included._____ $140. (batteries not included) ($10 extra for QH option).

Gell Cell Charger.
Through the headpiece charging; small, robust and portable, runs off the mains or plugs into a car lighter socket. LED's indicate charging status._____ $80.

QH Cave Blaster light (Really SEE the cave!)
50 (or 20) Watt QH dichroic bulb mounted in a PVC fitting. Convenient to hold in your hand. Secure switch that will not allow a Chernobyl in your pack! Runs off a 12 Volt sealed lead acid battery (extra)_____ $25.