

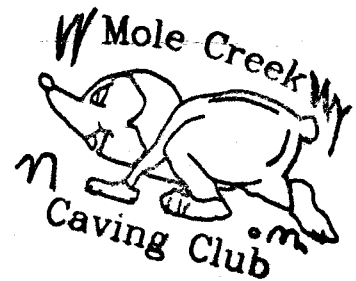
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Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Established 1946

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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

Sat. & Sun. SERENDIPITY: Will this cave beat the Australian depth record  
Sept. 19-20 currently in Khazad-dum? This trip might find out. Stefan  
Eberhard is the leader and chief activist.

Fri. Sept. 25 ANNUAL DINNER: Letitia's Restaurant at the Black Buffalo Hotel.  
Be there from 7.30pm with \$16 per head. Contact Trevor Wailes  
(251801) and tell him you are going.

Sun. Sept. 27 JUNEE RESURGENCE: Another possible attempt to dive in the sump  
for familiarisation purposes. Nick Hume is the chief protagon-  
onist here.

Wed. Oct. 07 GENERAL MEETING: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue. Bring some entertain-  
ment, such as yourself, or even some slides or films or  
something. Is anyone a Monty Python freak? If so, a video  
tape of the M.P. and the Holy Grail will be shown.

Sun. Oct. 11 JF 341: A further digging trip to hopefully break through  
into the heard but not seen stream. See Stuart Nicholas or  
Trevor Wailes.

Sun. Oct. 18 JF 147 and/or JF 142: Exploration of these holes by the mud  
belay enthusiasts. See Andrew Briggs or Nick Hume.

Wed. Oct. 21 COMMITTEE MEETING: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue. All welcome.

Soon KHAZAD-DUM: When our new rope appears, we will be in a posi-  
tion to visit this infamous hole so dig out your waterproofs  
and stay tuned. See Stuart Nicholas for details.

CAULDRON POT: This classic should also be visited during  
Summer just for the sport. Stuart is again the bod to see.

A few EASIER TRIPS (but not too easy!) for our new bods.  
Everyone is keen but some simpler trips are needed to intro-  
duce them to the gentle art of hard caving.

Wed. Nov. 04 GENERAL MEETING: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue. Once again bring some  
entertainment.

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EDITORIAL

Not much to report or comment on this month despite a couple of pending major  
(like big!) breakthroughs. Stay tuned as these will be reported on in due course.

The 200m sparkling new Bluewater rope should arrive any day now and hence we must  
think seriously about the cutting of this expensive addition to the gear list.  
The total length of SRT rope available will then be close to 600m - enough to do  
most caves around here! Cutting of some of our older SRT ropes into shorter  
lengths must also be considered as we seem to have a large collection of fairly  
long ropes, although some have been involuntarily shortened recently!

I know I've said all this before but nobody has responded yet so I've said it  
all again!

Stuart Nicholas

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### CLUB NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

Several items recently received from overseas deserve a mention, if only to fill this Speleo Spiel!

- First is the notification of an International Symposium on Altitude Karst to be held from April 30 to May 4 next year in the town of Imperia, Italy. The timetable contains some interesting items, so if you happen to be jet-setting at that time, why not go along.
- Second item is from Guy DeBlock, a resident of Belgium. He is apparently a collector of badges, insignias, decals and so on, issued by caving clubs and societies. He is requesting that we send him anything that T.C.C. might have in this line. I feel it would do no harm, and probably some good, to send him one of our small club lapel badges, perhaps together with a few words about our club.
- Thirdly, Chris Davies has acquired for us a copy of an N.S.S. (U.S.A. version of the A.S.F.) booklet describing caving accidents in the U.S. during the last few years. We also have their permission to reproduce, with acknowledgement, anything from this book.
- The annual Cave Search and Rescue Exercise will be held at Mole Creek over the weekend of December 5 and 6 this year. The format has yet to be decided upon and more news should be available next month. This is the only exercise involving bodies from all over the state and is regarded as being of great importance by the Police S&R Squad for that very reason. Remember, a major cave rescue would involve cavers and Police from all over the state possibly with the addition of mainland trogs as well.
- On the membership front, a recent influx of prospectives has swelled the ranks somewhat. Welcome to Christin Wider, Jeanine Davies, Margaret Palfrey and Jacques Sayers. Hope to see you all in some dank, dirty hole sometime!

Still on membership, Stefan and Rolan Eberhard recently paid their subs. and were, needless to say, accepted as members. Both Stefan and Rolan have been very active with SCS for some time, but have finally seen the light and joined T.C.C.

- At the last meeting, Nick Hume, that cool trendy from Sandy Bay, was voted in as a trip leader. Good stuff, Nick.

- For those with piles (of money), a brochure arrived detailing the forthcoming Australian Himalayan Expeditions expeditions for 1981/82. A great brochure but the trips are expensive to say the least.

The usual collection of publications also arrived from other clubs and societies in Australia and overseas. All this literature may be viewed at Rupert Avenue.

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### REPORT ON SARYM 81

Held over the weekend of August 22-23 at the Lea scout camp (and including the Friday night), this year's Sarym was attended by approximately 35 people. Representatives of most outdoor clubs were present although there were a number of notable exceptions.

The Friday night consisted of an informal session devoted to general chatter and other social activities. Some gear was on display which was metaphorically pulled to bits, criticised and generally looked at.

Saturday dawned fine and clear, although for some it was red and painful! Following the official opening by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Viney, reports were presented by the three Police division S&R heads of operations and activities during the past year. Questions concluded this session. Morning tea was had followed by a discourse from Dr. John Watson, National Parks in W.A., on the problems of search and rescue in that state. Some of his statements were rather startling such as the fact that there exists no official S&R organisations at all in W.A. Groups do exist, as does equipment, but mostly private.

Then came the main educational session. Mr John Cattell, Deputy Director of Mapping, Lands Department, provided a talk which was nothing short of brilliant. His style and obvious extensive knowledge of maps and mapping, together with an excellent sense of humour, provided an hour and a half of fantastic entertainment and education. For those who missed this session, bad luck, you missed an outstanding orator speaking with enthusiasm about his favourite subject!

A late lunch preceded a paper-work exercise designed to illustrate to the participants, the sort of mental gymnastics that S&R organisers and co-ordinators go through before and during each operation. Designed as it was, it succeeded. However, as expected, a number of unforeseen problems occurred, but lessons were learned by both organisers and participants. A discussion of the "helicopter problem" followed, after which the entire troop adjourned to a Kingston pub for an extended joke-telling dual between two of the long-armed bods.

Sunday morning produced some mist and fog, in mind, if not in reality! Mr Graham Manning, Training Officer for A.N.A.R.E., Antarctic Division provided a talk cum film/slide show of the Antarctic Division activities, as well as a tour of the H.Q. at Kingston. This was both informative and interesting, providing many seeds for thought in so far as dreaming up ways of getting to the Antarctic. A return was made to the Lea for lunch and a final debrief/planning session finished off what was an excellent weekend.

Everyone enjoyed themselves, new acquaintances were made and much talking, both formal and informal, took place. For the meagre price of \$10, two nights accommodation plus two breakfasts and two lunches provided by Frank Brown's Clarence S.E.S. Squad, were had. The beds were good, the food great (complete with hot scones and strawberry jam for afternoon tea!) and the atmosphere terrific. All in all a great weekend of search and rescue planning, learning and organisation.

Thanks must go to Bob Cockerill and Frank Brown for most of the organising, together with Bob Crosthwaite and at one stage, Phil Jackson. Yours truly was also involved.

Stuart Nicholas,  
T.C.C. Search and Rescue Officer/  
Co-ordinator.

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As promised last month, reproduced below is the article from Earthwatch News Vol. 3, No. 2 June 1981, concerning the conservation problems of Bermuda's caves. It appears we are not alone in our conservation battles:

#### PROTECTING BERMUDA'S CAVES

Caves, with their fauna, flora and mineral deposits, constitute one of the rarest and most fragile environments on earth. The delicate and beautiful mineral deposits, called speleothems - take thousands of years to form. Cave animals and plants, some evolved from species that colonized the caves tens or hundreds of thousands of years ago, are often severely restricted in their geographical distribution. Some are known only from a single location. Thus, destruction or significant alteration of these subterranean habitats can result in the extinction of entire species.

The caves of Bermuda have been a source of mystery and fascination since the earliest colonists landed on the islands. Captain John Smith, writing in his journal in 1623, told of finding "varye strange, darke, and combersome Caues." Because Bermuda has one of the highest concentrations of caves in the world, it provides good examples of both the variety of cave features and the damage that can result from man's abuse of the environment.

Speleothems: amazing mineral deposits

Bermuda's caves are richly adorned with a variety of speleothems, including stalactites and stalagmites. Stalactites are the icicle-like deposits hanging from the cave roof or walls and are formed by the precipitation of calcium carbonate from dripping water. Stalagmites are their counterparts, and rise from

the cave floor. When a descending stalactite meets a rising stalagmite, a column is formed. One such column in Admiral's Cave in Bermuda is over 65 feet in circumference.

Other less-familiar mineral deposits found in the caves include flowstone, which is deposited when films of water flow down the cave walls; cave pearls, formed when calcium carbonate is deposited around a nucleus that is agitated by dripping water; small, twisting helictites, which seem to defy the laws of gravity; and "moonmilk", a white, putty-like substance thought to be derived from the action of bacteria on flowstone.

Another distinctive geological feature of Bermuda's caves is the clear blue sea-water pools that rise and fall with the tides. In some caves, these underwater portions are reported to extend nearly 80 feet below sea level. Large speleothems, which can only form in air, are found there, little altered by their long submersion. Some of the caves can be reached only by underwater passages, and it is thought that many of them may be linked by such passages into large systems.

#### Unique cave inhabitants

Many rare species of animals are found exclusively in or close to the entrances to the caves, a number of them remarkably adapted to their cave environment. These species, which lack eyes and pigments, include both terrestrial and marine examples.

The marine species may be descended from deep-sea animals, which were only able to compete with shallow-water forms in the specialized environment of the caves. Cave-adapted animals may also have evolved from surface species that had been forced by the drastic climatic changes of the Ice Age to seek shelter in the interior of the caves. The development of Troglobites, or animals that live only in caves, was probably accompanied by the extinction of the surface forms.

Large fossil deposits are also found in many caves around the islands. The most numerous are those of the endemic land snail, *Poecilozonites*, but other species include the reptilian "skink", the Cahow, two now-extinct "finches", and various marsh birds, including a true crane, a mallard-like duck, and at least four species of rails.

#### Destruction of Bermuda's caves

Despite their obvious scenic and scientific value, a number of Bermuda's caves have been damaged or destroyed by man. There are four major threats to the fragile caves: filling and quarrying activity, water pollution, dumping and littering, and vandalism. Examples of the damage abound. The Tucker's Island Caves, one of which was once described as "the most exquisite bijou of Bermuda's caverns", were destroyed during construction of the U.S. Naval Annex. Another, Bassett's Cave, believed to be Bermuda's largest and geologically most instructive, has been used for dumping waste fuel oil and raw sewage. And extensive dumping at Sears Cave may have destroyed a rare fern for which the cave was once noted.

Vandals also play a part in the destruction. Irreplaceable speleothems have been broken and cave walls defaced with names. Beer cans, broken bottles, and bags of garbage are common sights in many of the better-known noncommercial caves.

#### What can be done?

Although many important scientific studies, involving both geology and paleontology, have been carried out in Bermuda's caves, much more remains to be done. Only a few of the caves have been mapped and controversy still exists over how they were formed. In order to protect and preserve the caves, conservation guidelines need to be set up. These guidelines should encourage the establishment of cave preserves, the placing of entrance gates where appropriate, the enactment of laws to protect the caves and their contents, the cleanup and restoration of damaged caves, and a program for educating both cave owners and potential users of caves about the importance of conservation.

Bermuda's caves are exceptionally vulnerable resources. Unless action is taken to halt the irreversible damage that is being done to them, these unique environments will soon be gone.

### EXPLORATION OF OWL POT/THREE FALLS SYSTEM

In December 1979, members of the Souther Caving Society, made a significant breakthrough in Owl Pot(JF 221) when they extended the depth of the cave to 244m, making it the third deepest in Australia.

Three Falls Cave (JF 225) is a major swallet hole located uphill, but in the same dry valley as Owl Pot. The cave had previously been surveyed to a depth of 84m whilst the stream at the "bottom" of the cave was known to sink into a very narrow slot. However, in August 1981, a way on was found via a bedding plane squeeze which dropped straight into a 5m pitch. Time did not allow the descent of the further short waterfall.

It is confidently assumed that the stream flowing into Three Falls Cave is the same stream encountered in the lower sections of Owl Pot.

A Grade 4 surface traverse was run between the two entrances to verify that Three Falls is only 5.3m higher than Owl Pot. Thus a connection between the two caves would produce a system 249m deep!

Stefan Eberhard

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### TRIP REPORTS

Junee Ridge JF 341

Sunday, September 06

Party: Trevor Wailes, Len Smith, George Albion, and Stuart Nicholas

Following the glowing reports from Trev. of large underground river noises, the four intrepid bods above made their way amid much heavy breathing along the now all-too-familiar track to JF341. Looking more like grave diggers, with spades and other unusual implements, we eventually reached the site of the dig in the end of the "phreatic maze" area near the "crystal pool" in the bottom of the cave.

A short ceremony then took place, common I believe in some (most?) mainland caving areas as well as further overseas, in the form of hushed listening whilst stooped over a small hole in the terra firma\*, followed by such words as "Wow", "good stuff", "it must go" and "let's go home".

The actual excavation then proceeded with periodic thrusting in of feet and ultimately hanging upside down and looking by Trev and Stuart. There is no doubt that the site is a short (less than 2m) sloping phreatic tube which appears to lead to a dirt floor one to one and a half metres lower than the level of the bottom of the dig, i.e. about two or three metres lower than the floor. Very pronounced large-stream type noises emanate from the hole and, as no other large active stream exists in the cave, this dig has to be worth pushing.

Exiting from the cave produced little drama except for Len's high wire circus act when he nearly turned upside down at the lip on the main pitch. This provided some entertainment for Trev and George 38m below and for Stuart about 10m up the slope! I think there is a lesson to be learnt there somewhere!

A high speed trip out and back to the cars took place owing to the gate closing time and concluded a satisfying seven hour trip.

Another few hours work should make the hole big enough for homo trog to enter as well as a few local cavers. Will we find the troll princess or even the Junee River? Or will it be just another stream mysteriously draining the Junee Ridge? Stay tuned.....

As an aside, on the way in we arrived at the gate just in time to witness the felling of the big spar just behind the check-lodge. It had stood for thirty years but was very rotten at the base and is to be replaced by a steel tower to be used for the same purpose, i.e. drying fire hoses.

Stuart Nicholas.

\* for the ignorant and otherwise uninformed, "terra firma" in this context can be taken to mean the usual grotty filling material found in most Junee caves.