

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Annual subscription \$5.00

Single copies 50 cents

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

Sat. Oct. 17 OWL POT: Tourist trip organised by Andrew Briggs
Wed. Oct. 21 COMMITTEE MEETING: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue
Soon KHAZAD-DUM: Another tourist trip to this classic cave. Stuart is the bod to see about this one. Possibly going down the Serpentine Passage depending on gear and time. (Trip depending on weather and people)
Thur. Oct. 22 SHOW DAY
Sat. Oct. 31 &/ JF341 OR JF142 OR JF147: Who's keen to do one or more of these
or Sun. Nov.01 and hopefully "finish them off"? Stuart is keen to, so see him if you are too.
Wed. Nov.04 GENERAL MEETING: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue. The usual requirement for entertainment still stands, so bring yourself along!
Sun. Nov.08 IDA BAY: Track clearing and scrub bashing (several promising holes noted) on new track to Exit Cave. Bring track forming gear - mattock, scrub hook, spade, etc. Drive to top of Lune River quarry. Please support this day as it will add considerably to the work already done by Roy Skinner and Co. on this track.
Wed. Nov.11 FILM NIGHT: Climbers Club of Tasmania has organised some great climbing films for this night to be shown at Rosny College starting 6.30pm. See inside for more details.
Wed. Nov.18 COMMITTEE MEETING: Usual time and venue. If you have anything to discuss concerning the running of the T.C.C., come to a meeting and have your say.

AS USUAL trips will occur other than those listed here, so keep in touch if you're keen to go into the underworld.

Is anyone interested in a Christmas party during December? Possibly a counter tea somewhere with a few lemon squashes after!

Wed. Dec. 02 GENERAL MEETING: 8pm at 7 Rupert Avenue. On this day the editor will be 10,000 days old!

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EDITORIAL

If recent indications are anything to go by, the era of epic and rugged trips is here again. This is great for cavers with the experience and inclination to partake in these trips. But what of new bods or those not interested in animal epics?

There are currently quite a large number of relatively new bods in our club for whom some easier trips should be run. The hard men (and women!) will do their own things regardless but what about a few less demanding trips occasionally?

Nevertheless, it's still great to see some hard action coming along this Summer - roll on the deep ten!

CLUB NEWS

- The annual dinner last month was a great hit with everyone. A good time was had by the thirty odd bods who went along to Letitia's Restaurant which proved itself to be quite a reasonable eating house, complete with music and dance floor. Some members even weakened to the extent of making use of the floor (for dancing, that is)!

- Still on the subject of the dinner, after some confusion, Prof. Carey missed paying for his meal. However, a cheque duly arrived in the mail to the value of \$50.00, the change from the dinner cost being a donation to the club. Thank you Prof. for supporting T.C.C. in this way and indeed being involved in the Club's formation. Where would we be without it?!

- Anyone wishing to buy gear, e.g. krabs, at mainland prices right here in Hobart, see Stuart. Via a contact, who has a contact, who has a contact, who has a.....etc., climbing type gear can be obtained at reasonable prices. Alternatively, see Doug Bruce at a climbers club meeting.

- On the subject of the Climbers Club of Tasmania, a FILM EVENING is to be held on Wednesday, November, 11, starting 6.30pm. at Rosny College. Four French climbing films are to be shown and another three from the National Film Library have been ordered including Sentinel, The West Face and The Old Man of Hoy. All in all it should be a great evening so why not go along and see how the climbers live! Admission is FREE, but supper will be provided for a fee.

- Back on the subject of gear, Bill Nicholson, will be involved in the commencement of Paddy Pallin's first shop in Tassie, right here in Hobart. The shop is due to open on November 2 in Criterion Street and should do wonders for the outdoor gear market in Hobart.

- Still on gear, Caving Equipment has a sale on at the moment with some good bargains to be had. Also offering are two prizes to the value of around \$110. To be eligible however, you must buy gear to the value of \$200 or more before November 30! Why not group together and send off a bulk order for, say, 38½ krabs! Maybe we should buy another 200m roll of rope to keep the first roll (which arrived recently) company. The new rope has yet to be cut so, if you contributed to its cost, why not tell me your thoughts on how it should be cut.

TRIP REPORTS

The epic following depicts a saga of human (?) courage, strength and endurance, ie. a fairly normal Serendipity trip! Yours truly (the Editor) managed by devious means to avoid going, but is keen to visit this "Hell Hole" some time in the future.

The area: Florentine Valley, S.E. of Growling Swallet

The team: Rolan Eberhard, Stefan Eberhard, Trevor Wailes, Andrew Briggs and, Nick Hume (the only person I know who'd go on a 40m deep wreck dive the next day apparently without waking up!)

The cave: SERENDIPITY - possibly Australia's toughest cave.

Unexpected good luck and fortune continues to the bottom of this, possibly the hardest trip yet! OR maybe I'll just watch! Read the book and see the movie when it comes out.

This is the account of the 7th/8th trip to this most distant area of Juneeflorentine Karst yet explored to yield significant cave development. Originally found by S. & R. Eberhard about 12 months ago, on each of the subsequent explorations either bad weather or lack of equipment had thwarted attempts to bottom it (wherever the bottom of it is). The previous attempt at this trip had provided a strong team and a high degree of organisation. On a Thursday about 2mths ago, Stefan and Rolan were to rig the system down to the limit of exploration and exit. On the Saturday a strong contingent of T.C.C. members was to

take extra rope, etc. and push onwards and downwards to what we hoped was to be a new Australian depth record! But.....on the Wednesday, it snowed!!!

At the time of organisation it seemed a pretty slack team that committed themselves. The Eberhards were keen, Andrew seemed almost keen, Nick wanted to go diving and said he'd help carry gear in then leave maybe, and myself, not very enthusiastic but thought I might go just to watch all the gear being carried in. (I like work; I can watch it for hours on end!)

For a pleasant change, we were in no great hurry to get to the A.N.M. gate as we had already decided it had to be an overnight stay. Once through the gate, Andrew and myself drove up to the start of the Growling Swallet track while Stefan and Rolan drove round to the log near the Homestead and waited for Nick to leave his vehicle for an early morning getaway! Andrew and I waited, and listened to "Hurricane" Dylan and waited, and did the crossword and waited, and watched the threatening rain clouds pass by overhead and waited, and then decided to go look for the rest of the group which passed us as soon as we set off. I'm still not sure what caused their delay but it was something to do with Nick having no wheels on his off-road Toyota (?)

To cut a long, sweaty trek short, 1½ hours later, we arrived at the insignificant stream sink that was Serendipity, which we considered an achievement in itself and indeed, it is. Nick by now had decided to have another look in (his second trip); I was still content to watch! The group was split into an advance rigging party Stefan, Nick, a watching party (me!), and a protecting group, Andrew and Rolan. We all changed slowly, (it's funny how after struggling into a wetsuit, one remembers he has diarrhoea and hastily rips it off behind (literally) a convenient sassafras tree.) On returning to the group, Rolan pronounces he has flu and maybe will just watch Andrew protect. Andrew reckons he had a late night and might only go to the top of the first pitch (Cathedral Pitch). This the usual T.C.C. happy apathy hour.

So into some caving for which the T.C.C. of late is not renowned. Nick and Stefan lead off watched by me. It's a fairly narrow slot but dry and it bypasses a large wet breakdown area of suspect black limestone blocks. A series of short climbs brings one to a more solid passage carrying the stream down to the initial junction of a cross passage. The water flows under what appears to be a solid wall and to follow it puts one in a very squalid wet crawl, a right turn and a 1½m climb up into a dry phreatic tube which is an easy crawl for maybe 9m then into a downward sloping chamber to the first pitch - silent and dry, almost friendly. Nick and Stefan have readily rigged and Nick is on his way down followed by Stefan while I watch. I wait a while thinking the others won't be far behind and give the rigging party 10 mins. to get on and rig the next pitch. A cigarette is comforting without anyone complaining of stench and fog. At length, with the rearguard party still not arrived, I rope up and begin the 30m descent of the dry, free hanging pleasantly quiet Cathedral pitch. Nine metres down, the wall, constantly 1m away, shelves off creating the effect of a theatrical stage of about 30m². Stefan and Rolan had looked at this platform for leads but found none. On the far wall of this circular shaped aven is a series of fluted calcite curtains giving the effect of giant organ pipes, hence the pitch name, Cathedral. A truly pleasant pitch dropping onto a gently sloping boulder floor which leads to some of the best horizontal development in the area.

The boulder slope changes to good solid passage in light coloured limestone with the roof continually lowering to what appears to be an 18m crawl flat out - "castigate" crawl - not so punishing entering the system but cruel on the return with wet heavy tackle bags to manoeuvre. The roof rises and gentle serpentine passage leads to an aven where the stream crashes down on its return to make our abandoned section very active. A 1½m step down into the shallow splash pool from the 6m high aven with obvious passage above, gives a fierce momentary shower which tends to make one skip quickly onwards into narrow serpentine passage. A large fallen slab gives the choice of under, a roomy crawl in the

water or over, a short crawl with a squeeze at the end and an awkward take off back into the serpentine passage for 6m and then to the chamber prior to the second pitch.

This is a cold and draughty place where I caught up with Stefan and Nick. Stefan had rigged a hand line out into the rift to a wedged boulder and was rigging the pitch out of the water which cascaded down this second 30m+ pitch. "Deimos", an apt name for this pitch (terror) takes a good ½ hr to rig. Stefan disappears to God knows where below, as Andrew and Rolan worm their way into my tiny chamber. Nick attaches a C.M.I. to the handline and traverses out to the "eagles nest". I watch for hints as my turn is next and squatting for so long has given me time to think, never a good pastime in this situation. Idle minds....etc.? Nick curses the C.M.I., the tackle bag and the involved rigging but finally quiets down and descends. Deep breath; not much conversation between us three remaining. I choose a krab to use on the handline. The traverse is through narrow rift which bells out 3m below me to the floor 30m+ below. Five metres out is the eagles nest, a hairy, eerie eyrie. The safety line is necessary - one slip manoeuvring onto this awkward descent would be final. At length I'm racked on to the rope and have my safety krab removed and I'm off. Another free hanging pitch with the need for a protector about 12m down. Six metres down and I start getting sprayed on, the last 12-15m is wet but not as wet as what is to come!

This is the largest chamber so far encountered in this system, 30m+ high, 9m wide and 15m long with another small stream entering from the opposite side converging in the base of the chamber and flowing into more serpentine passage. Six metres of this narrow passage brings us to an 8m drop which has been rigged with a handline (essential). It's a wet descent in full stream to even narrower serpentine passage. This is hard work with tackle bags and climbing up out of the stream to secure wider and easier movement eventually brings me to a small area of breakdown with the very wet "Deluge" pitch immediately following. Things are going smoothly with not too much waiting around, Nick and Stefan working well and me not getting to watch all I want.

This pitch is something I didn't want to see. In the water for 3m down, it's good as only the legs get wet; step across onto an enlarged eyehole out of the full force of the stream and down 3m - dry, only to meet the water full force for the next 9m. Very wet, having to push off the wall behind the water fall and try and pick out the next jump spot. I thought to myself at this stage "going up will be damp" and tried to forget.

The serpentine continued harder and narrower. This seemed a long section until I finally emerged in more breakdown with the rift dropping steeply away under me below boulders. A climb through under and over brought me face to face with our intrepid advance party. "Hello, I've come to watch" I said, thinking I'd had enough and would wait here. But, in this small chamber with the wind whistling through, I was told this was the end so far. The "Balcony" had a small ledge which led onto a sloping pitch in a very high chamber. Stefan had descended to a ledge 30m down which was the absolute limit of past exploration. We waited in the Balcony for 10mins or so until Andy and Rolan arrived with the extra rope.

Andy, like myself, wasn't planning on doing much more but when the pitch (Phobos) was rigged and Stefan had descended to the ledge and rigged another 40m of rope, things were sounding exciting. Rolan went down next, followed by myself, Andy and Nick. The ledge is roomy and has protection from the hail of stones that precede anyone descending. A large boulder is a useful tie off point and another 30m down is a false floor of huge boulders which, when you're the first to ever stand on them can make you uneasy. I sat there thinking, "It's a long way back." Stefan and Rolan looked for a continuation downwards but it was Nick who followed the obvious route of the stream and came to another short 8m pitch leading under the false floor. Now was no time to turn back - the pitch was rigged. Stefan and Nick went down and checked a possible continuation. They told us to follow and we soon saw the base of the 90m high chamber after a 12m climb down over boulders.

Taking the lead, I headed for the base of a waterfall apparently falling the full 90m. After looking down the sewer which carried the total water of the system and seeing an eyehole which had a 6m drop into what looked like a flood section of the descending sewer, I decided I'd had enough. Stefan looked down this sewer and followed it some distance. Rolan and Nick checked out the continuing rift the other side of the main waterfall and reported it high, dry with an active stream crossing it at right angles.

I quickly caught Andrew up and we began our ascent. We estimated we had to climb out from the bottom 200-250m or more with the tackle. I had borrowed Alex Tubb's chest harness and ascender which I thought might work easier than my own. It did and ascending was almost a pleasure. The Serpentine was strenuous and tackle bags a nuisance. The Deluge pitch was very wet and cold and one of my footloops came adrift here so I had to hop up! Everyone was tiring but Rolan kept disappearing to follow a lead while Andrew and I chewed on chocolate and sardines - Ugh!

The first 30m pitch, Deimos, was reached and I slowly ascended. The climb up into the eagles nest proved hairy again and Andrew who followed me, had trouble with his jumar on the safety line so unclipped it and waited for Nick to retrieve it on his way to the safety of our small chamber. The horizontal section through to Cathedral was slow and laborious. Castigate Crawl made arms ache and lips curse as heavy wet tackle bags jammed and wedged into wearisome slots in the passage wall. Cathedral attained by myself and Nick, I rigged up and started the last strenuous haul up to the surface. With arms cramping, every step up the last pitch was an achievement. Andrew followed me up and we pulled up lead weight tackle bags with leadweighted arms. When we had enough to set off with we made our way to the surface but tiredness was telling and we weren't sure of the route out - I couldn't even remember coming in. We couldn't find the exit slot either and so crawled around in the entrance breakdown for 10mins until Andrew located it through a maze of large black limestone see-saw boulders, just as Nick caught us up using the normal route.

It was an easy squeeze out that gained us our hard won victory over Serendipity. Rolan soon joined us followed by Stefan 15mins later. Andy said "Bloody hard"; Nick asked "When shall we survey it"; I grinned, I enjoyed it. But Andrew was right! We changed slowly in the drizzle, but the evening wasn't cold. Two hours later saw me (and the others) knackered but back at the cars after a 13 hour absence. "Wow, what a trip!" Andrew said. "Animal." - no one disagreed, they all smiled - I watched and smiled too!

Trevor Wailes.

Footnote to Trev's durable dissertation on Serendipity:-

Stefan was coerced into exploring a grotty tube at the apparent bottom of this cave ("..... it's your ??#!?!! cave, so you push it") and did so for 100 metres (30 minutes return!) in chase of the streamway. It continued beyond his furthest point, becoming more animal and "more tighter".

Meantime, Rolan and I sensibly explored a dry, open, serpentine passage leading off the wet tube area. This remained pretty level, winding for 200 metres to intersect another serpentine passage containing a small stream. Jogging along this by oneself was a rare experience.

Downstream, exit stage right, kept going and going, but eventually choked off after 300 metres. Upstream was not explored very far, before we turned back to collect Stefan and start the entertaining 4 hour trip to the surface.

Change of subject: My motif of the month is - "Cave Divers Can't be Stuffed"

Nick Hume.

Junee Resurgence - 4th October, 1981.

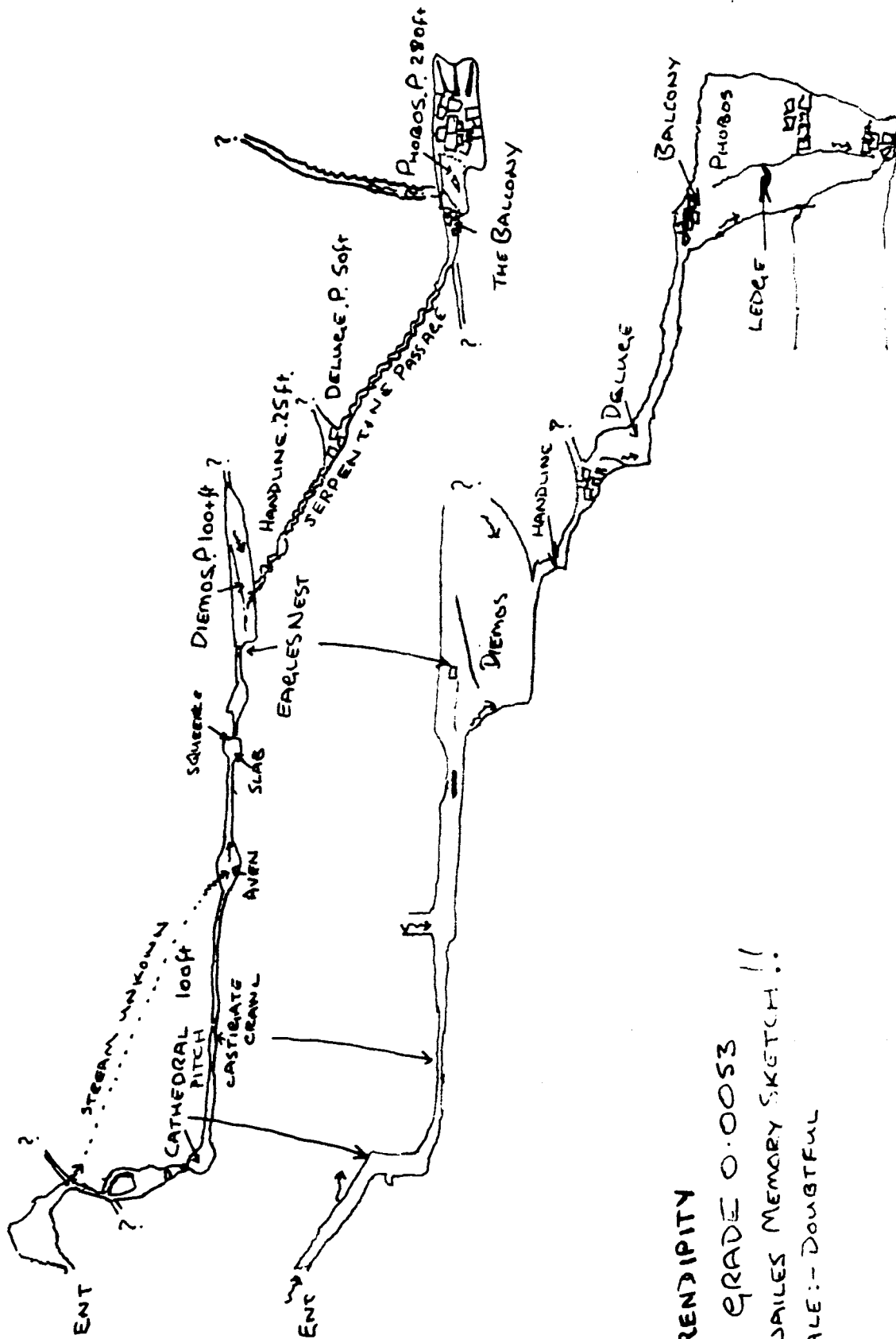
Party: Rolan Eberhard, Nick Hume

A mountain of gear was transported to Maydena with much optimism for diving this inviting sump. At the bridge, the Junee River was about 2 metres up on its Summer level and running strongly, fun, fun, fun!

After suiting up, we wrestled the streamway up to the sump, where you could literally be swept off your feet. Allied with two foot visibility, we stumbled on the realisation that penetration diving was out. Much picture taking and stuffing about followed this anticlimax, and we "exited" the cave by way of rafting, but with no raft!

With Huey's permission, we shall return.

Nick Hume.



SERENDIPITY

ASF. GRADE 0.0053

T. WAILES MEMORY SKETCH !!

SCALE:- DOUBTFUL