

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

=====

Annual Subscription \$7.00, Single copies 70¢, Non-members \$1.50

President: Trevor Wailes, 47 Waterworks Road, Dynnyrne, Tas 7005 Ph 34 4862

Secretary: Richard Hortle, 13 Fehre Court, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005 Ph 25 2124

Treasurer: Rik Tunney, 11 Conneware Crescent, Berriedale, Tas 7011 Ph 49 3222

Editor: Stuart Nicholas, 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, Tas 7008 Ph 28 3054

Typist: Sue Wailes, 47 Waterworks Road, Dynnyrne, Tas 7005 Ph 34 4862

FORWARD PROGRAMME

Wednesday 20 July Committee meeting 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, BYO.

Wednesday 3 August General meeting; hopefully a slide show by Nick, Andrew and anyone else with any slides - 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, BYO.

Wednesday 17 August Committee meeting 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, BYO.

Wednesday 7 September General meeting. Discussion on whether to go caving or not!!

All Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 9.00 pm onwards, the TCC meets socially in the public bar of Winston Churchill where reminiscences are heard of past trips. Turn up and reminisce over a beer, orange juice, or whatever. On the occasional Saturday or weekend the TCC goes caving, perhaps to Tassie Pot, Sesame II, Slaughterhouse Pot, Owl Pot or Rescue Pot - if anyone is interested in any of these pleasant winter trips see somebody about it!

EDITORIAL

Not a great deal has been happening recently owing to the weather and general slackness, but this month's exciting edition contains reports of trips from last year and earlier this year. Remember the trip that broke through into Mainline and Dreamtime in Growling and the Mt Anne expedition breaking the depth record (again), well all is revealed in this month's mag together with a report from a little known and somewhat esoteric branch of TCC. Don't forget that SUBS ARE DUE and should be paid pronto if you are to avoid the ultimate fate in this age of electronic paraphernalia - deletion from the computer file! In fact, this will be the LAST Spiel you will receive if you do not pay up.

STUART NICHOLAS

CLUB NEWS AND OTHER TRIVIA

* Last month all the addresses for the Speleo Spiel were transferred to another computer. Needless to say this involved a fair amount of tricky typing so if you find anything wrong with the address on the wrapper that you have probably just thrown out, let Stuart know. Similarly, let him know if you move house or change your name or your sex or any other vital piece of information which may be on the file (but probably isn't). Worse than that, if this is someone else's Spiel you're reading because you did not receive your copy, let him know asap!

- * For those of you with slack public service type jobs or other means of not being in the office, you may have seen (by virtue of bad luck) the Mike Walsh Show recently. You may have also seen some of our lads starring in a segment featuring "Tasmania's Beautiful Caves". This was filmed by a crew who flew down for a day and a night and payed the guys' motel accommodation, food, drinks and even for their time - professional cavers! The original plan was to do a through trip in Kubla Khan but that was abandoned when the over optimistic film crew saw the enormity of the task. The film segments turned out well even if the story/script was not the best, but then again, the show is aimed at housewives not cavers!
- * There is a general move amongst the internationals in our midst to buy 9 mm rope and they are currently looking for anyone interested in taking out a share in a possible 200 m roll. The club is going to pay a share in it, but individuals are only too welcome to come forward with some of the folding stuff. See Nick if you've suddenly found some money you didn't know you had!
- * The new ladders are currently in production after something like a year of procrastinating. A couple have almost been completed but the crimping tool broke during one late night squeezing session. This essential tool was originally supplied by a member employed in a well known public utility and now another member employed by the same organisation is investigating the repair/replacement of the tool.
- * That annual extravaganza, the TCC Annual Dinner is looming up again, but so far a venue has not been found. Could anyone with any ideas please let Trevor know as he is desperate (to find a venue for the dinner!). At this time the Ferntree Tavern seems to be in the running, but it is by no means certain yet and any other ideas would be appreciated.
- * Trevor recently acquired a photocopier for the grand sum of \$22 at Johnson's Mart. What is even more surprising is that it works well and is almost a current model. It will be used to make printing plates and do general copying work for the club and anyone who is willing to pay.
- * A couple of quotes from the Mike Walsh film crew "Christ, it's dark in here!" "God, I feel so macho!!!" what more can you say!!
- * Fund raising is always a problem for the club but more so now than ever. We're not broke or anything like that, but we certainly need more money (doesn't everyone!!). Maybe there is an underground market for stals, or we could do a bank job Seriously, if you can dream up any means of raising a few dollars for TCC, please let someone know or do it yourself and give the proceeds to Treasurer Rik.

GROWLING SWALLET - SATURDAY 5 MARCH 1983

Party: Stefan Eberhard, John McCormack, Stuart Nicholas

It was one of those rare days in the Valley when there were more cavers than things to do! After the usual stuffing around and chaos, our group materialised from the others who were planning some surveying in the Black River section of Growling. Our aim was to take John, our visitor from Adelaide, on a real caving trip and look at a shaft that Nick had found the week before at the end of Necrosis. After a rapid trip down the main drag and through the rift and climbs, a krab was left on the ladder leading down into the Trapdoor stream. This was to be removed by the first group out to indicate that fact to the other group.

Our group headed off into Necrosis while Trev and company went off to their mundane but important surveying in the Black River. Proceeding through the breakdown and serpentine of Necrosis following Nick's directions and prints in this complex section

of the cave, we looked at a couple of side leads on the way. A small high level crawl, led off at the end of his tracks - this had to be the way on but it looked untouched. However, any lead was worth a look so we proceeded on into a large bone dry breakdown chamber. 30 metres away on the other side of the chamber Stefan found a way through the blocks into another similar chamber or probably an extension of the same one blocked by a rockfall.

A period of looking around was punctuated by a primordial yell from Stef followed by words most often heard in deserts and similar places "water, water, I can hear a stream!". Without wasting a great deal of time (!) we literally ran down a steep and in places loose boulder pile, ending up in a metre-and-a-half wide fast flowing stream!! This was it, the find of the year if not the decade. John was somewhat startled by our sudden activity but when told of the significance was similarly inspired. Upstream a few metres the water welled up from a hole in the floor with the passage extending perhaps 50 metres further. Downstream was a different story with the 2-3 metre wide and 3 metre plus high passage continuing on. A few jelly beans and then for variety a 1½ kilometre run down the passage!! Needless to say the inevitable happened and when Stef and John looked at a side passage, Stu went on downstream another 200 metres to a sump.

Exploration of the side passage that Stef and John had found revealed more outstanding passage. Large near-dry sand tubes shot off into the never-never some of which we followed but none to their conclusion. Particularly promising was a passage with a strong draft but the length of the trip and the overwhelming excitement of it all was beginning to tell on John's lamp so a reluctant retreat was made. Plodding up the main drag we realised just how far we had actually gone. Finally reaching the Trapdoor ladder we found as expected that the other group had exited before us and no doubt returned to the Homestead as planned.

Our return to the Homestead after 11 hours of exploratory ecstasy underground was greeted with something less than enthusiasm by the others as they had figured that we had found more than the bottom of the shaft described by Nick. In fact we did not even see that shaft, but who cares after a trip like that!

Subsequent surveying indicates that at least 2 km of passage was found with more still awaiting exploration. One inlet stream passage noticed on the initial downstream run has since been linked to the bottom of Australia's now second deepest cave, Ice Tube via a tortuous piece of cave known as Mother's Passage. The main streamway is called Mainline, being as it is a section of the fabled "Master Cave", and the fairy tale sand tubes off to the side near the far end are known collectively as Dreamtime. Drawing up of the survey has induced a great deal of excitement in the ranks since both Mainline and Dreamtime are heading south east, which anyone who is familiar with the area will know the significance of

Roll on the Junees!!!

STUART NICHOLAS

MT ANNE - TCC EASTER EXPEDITION TO FIND AUSTRALIA'S DEEPEST CAVE

Members directly involved: Trevor Wailes, Stefan and Rolan Eberhard, Chris Davies, Rich Hortle and Nick Hume.

This expedition began the weekend prior to Easter with the core group of Stefan, Rolan and myself, delivering cave gear and food to the Anne-A-Kananda campside, on a day trip. On this day we passed members of the Northern Caverneers who were retrieving rope from a previous attempt on "Kellars Cellar".

Easter itself saw Stefan, Rolan, Rich and myself arrive a day earlier than the main group, to gather wood and construct a reliable water supply for the site. The

following day dawned, looking rather grim, and we wondered how many "expeditioners" we would return to that evening.

A previously unexplored tight rift bypassed "Organ Grinder I" and "Dessicator" to the top of "King Rat". A 20 metre pitch here gave access to a draughting slot, through which we crawled to the top of a 10 metre pitch. This was exposed to some large, loose boulders which made it decidedly unfriendly! A further 10 metre pitch, rigged from a piton and tied back to the previous pitch, landed us in a big passage. Typically, "downstream" (dry) ended abruptly, so we went "upstream", eventually scrambling over big blocks to a short pitch that proved to go nowhere. We surveyed out, disillusioned with this southernmost end of the cave, despite the strong draughts percolating from the breakdown, hereabouts.

We re-emerged at the campsite to be greeted by Chris and a roaring fire. It was some moments before we realised that the pathetic, shivering bundle behind the flames was a hypothermic Trev, wrapped in a horseblanket! The "usuals" had performed their piking routines earlier that day and this was our "main party". Nevertheless, we still had a team of six very capable cavers. Overnight saw Trev off the critical list, thanks to various medications, however, he declined to go underground with us next day.

We moved quickly via a 17 metre pitch into what became known as "Screaming Heart", following the obvious way on, down an 8 metre pitch to a choked chamber, containing two tight draughting leads. One of these looked possible but improbable, the other looked definitely impossible. Much digging in the former enabled Rolan to squeeze into a rift that proved impossible to negotiate thanks to an abrupt right angle bend. We surveyed back to "Screaming Heart" where Stefan found another tight rift that actually went! We were finally onto something and it was something big. A bolt was placed above an apparent 100 metre pitch, before a general withdrawal to get more ropes.

In our absence that day, Trev and Richard had made the campsite very comfortable indeed, with some major excavation work. They were firmly ensconced on "Rich's Lazy Chunk", a stone sofa, when we returned. Another pleasant night of reflection and idle chatter drifted by.

Fourth day of the expedition and things went, almost, like clockwork with "Heart Beat" proving to be an enormous 118 pitch, albeit wet! Rich and Trev waited on this pitch for some hours, enjoying a thoroughly good washing, while Stefan and Chris went on to discover two further pitches of 7 metres and 39 metres respectively. Then followed the by now routine withdrawal to get more rope, with the cave still going strongly.

That night unbeknown to us, Mick Flint and Arthur Clarke were experiencing another kind of epic on North East Ridge. Neither had been to the cave before and both were benighted, without shelter while attempting to find the entrance. After a wild night in foul weather, they retreated from the mountain in disgust! I retreated too, due to work commitments, and missed out on the record breaking trip next day. Events from then on went something like as follows.

Stefan and Rolan explored further pitches of 39 metres and 34 metres before running out of rope in one of those awkward narrow stream canyons that seem to have no floor and no roof. A depth of 340-350 metres had been reached. Both then surveyed out, with Rolan continuing his lucky run with pitons, when a tie-off on the 39 metre pitch "popped".

Trev and Rich meanwhile surveyed to the far end of "Organ Grinder II" before meeting the returning push team on the way out. (Where is the last survey station Trev?). Rich somehow managed to drop my Premier down "King Rat" and had to exit with a mouthfull of Cyalume sticks!

On Tuesday Rich came off the mountain whilst Stefan and Rolan reluctantly prepared for one last trip down Heart Beat to finally finish it off.

Pushing on through some nasty passage and two short pitches of 4 m and 17 m, the cave abruptly died in the arse in a hopeless rockfall. Hauling half a kilometre of sodden rope up the 118 m pitch was an epic in itself, and the surface was finally reached after a 12 hour absence.

The survey data was plotted up and the new Australian depth record calculated at -373 m.

The following day the three remaining bods came off the mountain to a well earned celebration at the National Park Hotel.

Finally, many thanks must be given to all the people who contributed to the success of this expedition, particularly to the Australian Newsprint Mills (Maydena) and the Examiner Newspaper who supported us financially, in a marvellous effort to these austere times. Thanks also to Mike and Chris Edwards, Stuart Nicholas, Rik and Janine McTunney, Alex Marr, Tim Fountain and especially Phil and Jenny Hill who selfishly took on vital sherpa duties, a great effort. Also thanks to John Walch of J Walch & Sons for supplying a set of survey instruments at near cost price.

The expedition set a new national depth record that will be very hard to beat. The 118 m Heart Beat pitch now replaces Kellars Cellar as the longest single natural shaft in Australia. This broke our own depth record, set less than 12 months earlier in "Ice Tube", a truly remarkable effort on the part of TCC.

25 APRIL 1983 - MT ANNE - more flexitime, more exploration, more masochism

Members involved: Stefan and Rolan Eberhard, Nick Hume.

Yet another weekend saw us on that very familiar track. We gathered some rope from the pile in "Screaming Heart" and squirmed into "Organ Grinder II". An awkward 5 m drop had to be negotiated here because of the tight and angled nature of the rift, particularly difficult on return.

Beyond this the passage became pleasantly sizeable, running back under itself via a 4 metre handline to the top of a 12 metre pitch, rigged from two pitons and tied back to the handline. This pitch is exposed to any rockfall from "Organ Grinder II" and leads to a chamber floored in boulders of convenient size for rigging a further pitch of 20 metres. A brilliant abseil lands you beside and downstream of a large pool (fed by a small flow).

Further downstream we squirmed down through narrow vadose canyon for a 5 metre pitch/handline. Beyond this we yielded to an intense zen experience on discovering an obviously huge pitch, in fact 100 metres. Stefan and Rolan explored this to find yet another pitch, which Stefan determined to be roughly 70 to 80 metres. We left the cave rigged for the following weekend, certain that this pitch would return to "Heart Beat" probably fairly low down. We surveyed back to "Organ Grinder II".

30 APRIL - 2 MAY 1983 - MT ANNE - National Expedition to "Anne-A-Kananda"!

Those involved - Julia James, Al Warild, Anne Gray, Mark Bonwick, Ed Garnett, "Basil" (Sydney based), Rolan Eberhard and Nick Hume.

Julia arrived on the late Saturday morning flight from Sydney and combined with everyone's natural reluctance to go, resulted in a 3 pm start for the mountain. Darkness found the group struggling somewhat only halfway up North East Ridge, so I led Al and Mark off ahead to get a fire going. I managed to lose these two on the cold, windy ridge, and after waiting ten minutes or so saw their lights approaching me from the Weld River side of the crest!

Rolan led Al, Ed and "Basil" through "Organ Grinder II" to rig beyond the big pitch discovered the previous weekend. I followed up with Julia, Ann and Mark, giving us time to inspect the geology of the cave and take a few photographs. "Organ Grinder II" was its usual pleasant little self, fortunately the rigging party had removed the knot on the 20 metre pitch which made things a lot quicker and we rejoined the rigging party on the 100 metre pitch.

Here Julia and I developed a bout of the "Mount Anne Torpor" and spent the next several hours cuddling each other for warmth, while the exploration results were yelled back to us from below. Rolan and Al performed some involved rigging on an 85 metre pitch below the 100 metre one, and found themselves abseiling into "Heart Beat's" 34 metre pitch, as was expected. Mark, Ed and "Basil" followed on. Meanwhile, I watched horrified, as Anne asked Julia how to pass knots, before she proceeded down the 100 metre shaft with its two tie offs! I kept cuddling Julia.

Al and Rolan pursued a false lead at the bottom of the 85 metre pitch, before beginning the time consuming retreat to the surface. Much fun was had regaining the tight rift in "Organ Grinder II" and the cave was derigged back to "Dessicator".

During the time we were underground, a heavy snowfall had occurred, which resulted in a surprising increase (by Mt Anne standards) in the quantity of water going into the system. Next day Rolan and I clawed our way out of the snow plastered doline, slipping on the ice covered handline in waist deep snow! The weather had turned what is normally an easy, steep walk into an epic, and there were metre deep snowdrifts on the ridge to follow. We wallowed down the track largely by instinct.

The remaining cavers stayed on for a few days, the snow killing thoughts of doing "Kellars Cellar". Instead they bottomed out and surveyed "Dessicator", calculating its total depth at 320 metres. Al went back to Sydney with a good sense of achievement I imagine, and many thanks to Julia, Al, Ed, Mark, "Basil" and Anne for helping us with the exploration. A bit of decent weather shall see our return to Mt Anne.

NICK HUME

TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB GOES DIVING TODAY/TONIGHT CLUB

13 June 1983

SS "Nord" struck a reef off the Hippolyte Rocks sometime in 1915. The 3000 ton steamer finally went down in 140 feet of water, about 1 km north of Cape Pillar and though no lives were lost in the incident, a protracted search of the peninsula was required to round up the largely Chinese crew.

A combining of the TCC GDT/TC and Tas Sub Aqua Clubs resulted in a trip to the wreck on the long weekend Monday, a day on which gale warnings and generally foul weather was forecast, but which eventually proved uneventful for the boat trip, save for Stuart Nicholas' lengthy dissertations on "..... bloody smokers, Christ!" and "..... it's a handbasin I keep telling you". By sighting on various shore features we were able to drop the anchor into the wreck itself, which was quite handy. "Deco" lines with spare airtanks securely tied on (2 lost an airtank in similar circumstances the previous weekend!) were threaded over the stern while Chris Davies, Stuey and myself struggled into manifolded, twin tank setups.

We followed the anchor line down to the "Nord's" deck which is at about 110 feet depth, noticing that the damaged bows had further collapsed in the past 12 months or so. I set about photographing the event while the other two, alternately swam and posed their way through the engine room, to the stern section. Clouds of fish, drifting sponges and a pair of courting seals, added to the unreality of this place.

I managed to lose the other two while literally immersed in subject distances and "f" stops, but caught them holding some sort of dialogue in body language, next to the ship's propeller (something very "Nordy" I suspect). We swam through this huge structure and moved lazily along the ship's side back to the bow, which brought us up to the 25 minutes bottom time of our dive plans. It was at this point we noticed the anchor line missing and the faint noise of a distant motor could be discerned, senses working overtime!

With no choice but up, Stuart suddenly became very sociable and reached for our hands to keep us together on the ascent - we were horribly reliant on that boat finding us. At about 10 metres depth we spotted the hull of the boat in the good visibility, moving towards where our air bubbles were breaking surface. We gratefully hitched a ride on the vital, trailing "deco" lines. These lines swung off plumb while the re-anchored boat came about, so Chris decided to start his decompression on the anchor line.

Stuey flashed his torch at Chris, to rejoin us, however, Chris further decided to create a "menage a trois" with the courting seals. He left the anchor line and proceeded to cavort in a very good likeness of an excited bull seal (the seal population will never be the same again). Stuey and I looked at each other in some wonder, then at Chris, then at each other, then at Chris, He eventually rejoined us, with a satisfied expression obvious through his facemask. We completed decompression stops of 5 minutes at 9 metres, 5 minutes at 6 metres and finally 10 minutes at 3 metres before tumbling back on board the boat.

Meanwhile, back at the jetty, a fisherman out of Pirates Bay had caught a 5 metre white pointer in his nets and had dragged it ashore plonking it under a sign that read; "It is an offence to leave fish here"! A very sobering sight. This fish generated much excitement around Eaglehawk Neck and we heard some pretty wild yarns (other than our own) in the "Lufra Hotel" that night.

17th and again on the 24th June

A night dive at Pirates Bay that Friday proved abortive when the author forgot to bring his facemask. I walked up to the bar of the "Lufra" in full wetsuit, in an attempt to borrow one from the licensee, but was promptly refused!

The following Friday night saw greater success when Chris, Stuey, Stefan Eberhard and myself decided to dive the mighty Dunally Canal (right next to the "Dunally Hotel"). This involves stepping out of the car onto a jetty, then straight into the water, however, Stefan was reluctant and muttered something about " there must be plenty of sharks around in a place like this", though I thought it was a pretty stupid place for sharks to be, myself.

There is a very strong current here and once "flushed through the system", we walked back along the main road to queue for another trip. I discovered that the best effect was obtained while "standing" on your head with eye level just above the "rapidly moving" floor of the canal, quite freaky. A plentiful supply of sleepy spider crabs made good photographic subjects and excellent head adornments on other divers. Afterwards a very pleasant night was had at the pub, where a local (girl!) got desperate enough to ask Stefan for a dance.

These dives, etc, threaten to become regular social events, so if anyone else is interested

NICK HUME

MORE CLUB NEWS AND TRIVIA

- * John Dunkley, President of ASF, will be in Tasmania from 31 August to 11 September. He is keen to meet local cavers and attend a meeting, not to say anything specific, but to discuss any grievances, questions, and so on, that anyone may have. A combined TCC/SCS meet will probably be arranged for Wednesday 7 September. Further details in the next Spiel.

* ERRATA

Due to the Pommie President's ignorance and lack of geographical knowledge of Tasmania, he inadvertently stated Chris Davies' trip at Christmas was going to Federation Peak (snigger, snigger). This should of course have read Precipitous Bluff. He's still keen and now that we've changed the venue is anyone else?

* FOR SALE

Ex caving jackets and jumpers - wide selection only partly soiled/destroyed. Great conversation pieces at that coming wedding or funeral. They'll keep you partly warm and partly dry, and the best thing about them is the strategically placed ventilation (a bit like 'posh' holes) to keep you smelling and feeling nice all day. Buy now while stocks last at slashed and shrunken prices. Ring 34 4862 or view (through) them at our warehouse - 47 Waterworks Road.

IDA BAY 3/7/83

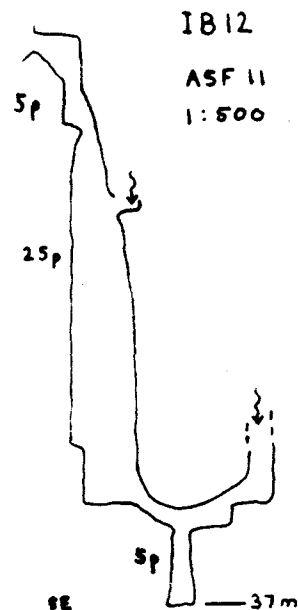
Whilst the others were mucking about in Midnight Hole, Trev, Nick and I decided to continue the exploration of IB12, an extremely scungy but still unbottomed hole.

The entrance leads under the overhang of Permian caprock, down a 5 m pitch to a small vertical slot which had water falling down it. A re-belay and a 25 m pitch with water pouring in from all directions landed Trev and I at the limit of exploration in this vertical sewer.

Nick sensibly stayed up the top to guard against cave pirates!

A small hex. balanced on a rock was the only available anchor point for the next 5 m pitch which was also quite horrible. It didn't go of course, so we exited before concluding that, like Niagara Pot, this cave was a total waste of space.

STEFAN EBERHARD



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

I would like to take the opportunity to thank TCC for your hospitality while I was visiting the 'Land of Plenty' in February/March this year. Hopefully, more CEGSA people will continue to make the trip to experience the vastly different caving environments in Tasmania than what South Australia has to offer.

In addition, it is with great honour and delight that I accept the Category and qualification. Ironically, I undertook the Cat 3 practical exam one week after returning from Tasmania but, unfortunately, bombed out. I assume that means I theoretically drowned in Junee!

Congratulations on your work in Growling Swallet and on Mt Anne. I have to come back again.

JOHN MCCORMACK

