

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

Saturday-Monday Mt Anne, see PH
19-21 November

Saturday-Sunday Esperance Diving
26-27 November

Saturday-Sunday Exit Cave, anyone and everyone, see PH.
3-4 December

Saturday 10 December Growling Swallet, anyone and everyone, see PH.

Saturday 17 December Serendipity, Trev & Phil & ?

Weds 21 December Committee Meeting, 7 Rupert Avenue, BYO.

Saturday-Sunday Merry Christmas - I won't be here.
24-25 December

Saturday 31 December Piss up somewhere.

EDITORIAL

Activities are certainly picking up with a lot of surface exploration on the NE ridge of Mt Anne turning up many new potential deep caves. Most of the trips on the future programme are getting off or rather under ground; the most significant of late being the highly organised and well executed Serendipity trip. This was marred only by the cave trending in a slightly different direction to that which we would have preferred, however, until it's drawn up its position is speculation.

There are only two Spiels left for this year, and as there are only 11 per year, (January and February is a double issue) as usual the December issue will be late and should arrive in your hot little hands mid January (I hope!). More surveys should appear in these future issues, and hopefully a list of surveys and prices will be published for mainland groups wanting maps of our longer and deeper caves.

1ST RESERVE EDITOR - TREVOR WAILES

CLUB NEWS AND OTHER TRIVIA

- The economic situation of this country is affecting cavers and clubs as it is everyone else. Hills Speleogy Club have for sale a set of six posters 41 x 61 cm in full colour and of very high quality. Obviously, some clubs are trying to assist their financial position with a positive approach. If anyone has any ideas on these lines for the TCC we would be glad to hear them.

The subjects are:

Shawls, Wee Jasper, NSW
The Pleasure Dome, Mole Creek, Tas
Aragonite Flowers
Entrance of Mamo Kananda, PNG
Formations Jenolan, NSW
Main Cave, Mount Fairy, NSW

They will be posted free in a cardboard cylinder for the incredibly low cost of \$20.00. For orders contact: Shane Wilcox, P O Box 198, Baulkham Hills, 2153.

- The NSW Cave Rescue Group - Rescue '84

Rescue '84 a cave rescue and training practice weekend, organised by the NSW Cave Rescue Group and with the invaluable help of many, will be held at the Bungonia State Recreation Area, on the 10th and 11th of March 1984.

The cost of the weekend will be \$10.00 per head and this includes lunch and dinner on Saturday, lunch on Sunday, morning and afternoon teas, the film and camping fees. You will need to supply your own breakfasts.

Interested persons should contact Gerald Watters (047) 361 921, Brian McQuillan (047) 586 868 or Stephen Murray (047) 587 152, or write P O Box 122, Bankstown, NSW 2200. The club has questionnaire sheets which should be forwarded by interested participants. A limit of 300 people will be taken from the first questionnaires received.

- Quotable Quote

Heard during a recent Police cave exercise in Growling Swallet: "Is this the new subway to Hobart?"

- Gear

Missing a few krabs? Or perhaps your collection has grown lately without you having to fork out any of the folding stuff? Since my collection has recently shrunk somewhat, I would be interested in having a "krab night". This would involve you in no expense at all, just bring your entire collection of krabs along to a meet sometime and, assuming Trev doesn't say "I knew I'd lost thirty four krabs last weekend", we should all end up with our own krabs again.

Stu, the Quartermaster

(Ed's note: Yes "wine and krab" nights are very popular in the UK!).

- Yes this is Speleo Spiel despite the strange cover. A few credits are due -

Photograph, slide	Nick Hume
Subject	Stefan Eberhard
Cover design and layout	Trevor Wailes
Typesetting and screen work	Crystal Graphics
Printing	Focal Print

Unfortunately this action shot was not necessarily taken in Tasmania (but it could have been). Please note that the last Spiel cover was "dark Green" - this does not reflect the political colour of the TCC, it just looked good that way!!

Dear Quartermaster - editor, stuart nicholas, etc.

After doing the "odd" trip with the TCC and wishing to do more, which group should I join and will I be accepted? I'm 19 and 36-28-36, and very willing to learn, but who will teach me and how hard will it be? I'm quite fit and healthy and very keen on sport, and I understand I have to pay 50¢ for upto possibly 11 hours - this seems relatively fair to me and I don't care whose I use. I take it that I can choose any available provided they're fully charged, and the m/c does that anyway. If you could possibly point out the strongest one with the longest life and give me the number, so I can use it over and over again week by week. I know it's awfully dark in there, and if I got hold of the wrong one would it upset anybody?

I do not have all that much experience, so if I started with one rival group would the other be disappointed, although I suppose I could swap alternate weekends? I just want to be useful to the club and keep doing it with anyone who is interested in taking me.

DESPERATELY FRUSTRATED

TAKING GROWLING SWALLET BY STRATEGY

5/8/83 - R Eberhard, P H

The aim of this trip was to continue exploration beyond the rockfall that represents the upstream limit of Dreamtime. In May this year, Al Warild and Stefan Eberhard climbed up onto the rockfall and reached, but were unable to descend a pitch apparently leading into open passage below.

This drop turned out to be very short, about 5 metres, through a slot in the boulders where we found ourselves in a wide mud floored passage similar to the upper reaches of Dreamtime. With a commitment to be out of the valley by 5.30 pm, Phil found himself a comfortable position and I set off at a stiff jog to see what lay upstream. The passage was consistently spacious and the quantities of mud decreased as I proceeded upstream until I was able to run in the cobbled streambed itself.

Passing a walk-in passage on the left, the stream took a sharp turn to the right, at the same point a mud bank on the left led up to a reasonable sized chamber (Tiger Mountain). On one side a small stream entered as a waterfall from an inviting aven stretching up into the darkness. Following the main stream, the passage became smaller and eventually lowered to a belly crawl in the streambed. At this point I decided to call it a day with well over half a kilometre of new cave being traversed.

Trevor has suggested the name River Lethe for this section of cave. "Lethe (lē-thē), n. A river of the underworld said to make those who drank of it's waters forget their former existence; oblivion. Lethēan, a. pert to Lethe; oblivious. (Gk. *lēthē*, a forgetting)."

ROLAN EBERHARD

JUNEE CAVE FISH

On a recent dive in Sump 1 of Junee Cave, I collected with a handnet one of the small white fish that are common in the sump. Most are between 10-15 cm long, white in colour and some with small red spots on the back and sides. Hopes for an amazing new species of cave fish did not eventuate as it seems they are only introduced Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) who have become pale without the presence of light. The identification was confirmed by Peter Last of the Fisheries Research Laboratory. Pale introduced trout have also been recorded many years ago from Mole Creek in Kubla Khan Cave (TCC Bulletin, No 4, 1960).

ROLAN EBERHARD

TROWUTTA ARCH - Tasmania's answer to Mt Gambier?

29-30 October 1983 - Divers: Nick Hume, Stuart Nicholas and Stefan Eberhard

Stefan received high inspiration from an SCS article on Trowutta Arch written by Kevin Kiernan. This was further fueled by his recent experiences on the record breaking Australian expedition to Cocklebidy, while all this merely fueled my own fears of having to transport rafts of air tanks about grotty sinks in zero viz.

That Friday night we loaded Stuart's car to the courtesy light with three sets of diving gear, ten air tanks, about a kilometre of guideline, together with assorted camping and caving gear. The Sigma threatened to explode numerous times on the drive to Smithton, however, the passengers alleviated general discomfort with strong drafts of Southern Comfort, taken frequently, which made the trip up a pleasant change from the usual Maydena grind.

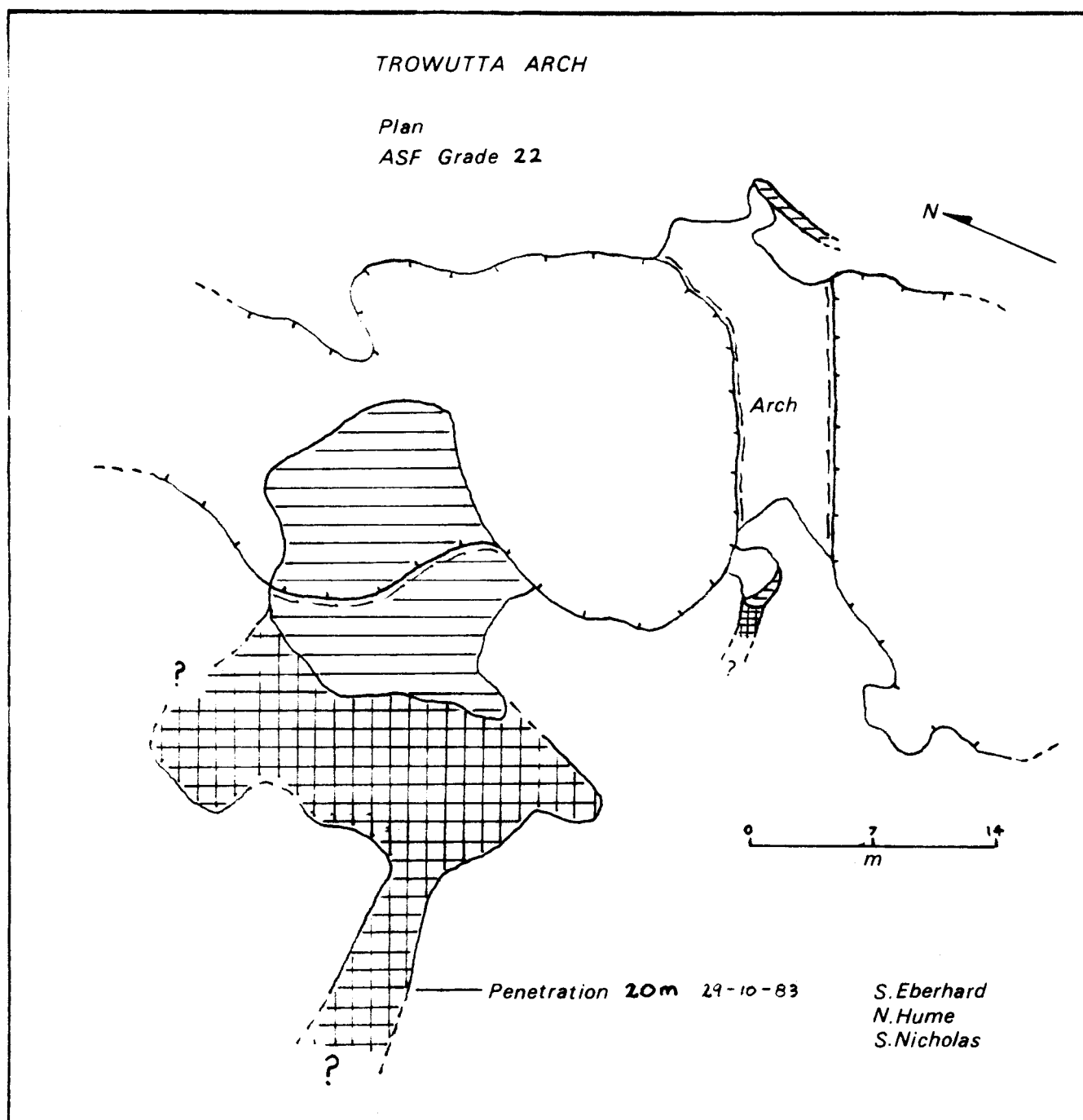
After an overnight stay at Ross Mansfield's new digs, we turned inland to Trowutta, and as none of us had been to the arch before, sought out some local knowledge. We chatted to a couple of blokes who were standing around in a paddock, and they told us that they had both visited the place some years before and that it was about a mile over there somewhere. They further suggested that we go up the road to Tom's place as he knew all about it. Tom looked a bit the worse for wear, but he had visited it several years ago and yes, it was about a mile over there somewhere. Tom thought Fred would be the bloke to see as he knew all about it. Fred was very friendly and yes, it was about a mile over there somewhere. After pressing Fred for a while we learnt that someone had tried plumbing the pool with 180 foot of line without reaching bottom (gulp!), and he promised to help us find it as near as he could remember.

After numerous electric fences (zap), we all went bush and before long Fred, Stef and I stumbled on a huge doline, about 20 metres deep, complete with arch, unfortunately we lost Stuart! After much lung wrenching yelling, Stuart re-emerged from the bush line looking as though he had just finished wrestling an alligator and told us an exciting story of choked off dolines interspersed with horizontal scrub.

We squirmed into wet suits, said several goodbyes to Fred, then sliding into the doline, passed a spectacular arch to find a beautiful, still pool of some 15-20 metres diameter. There is no surface stream feeding this, so presumably it indicates the local watertable, a log choked twin and two narrow fissures, adjacent, lead to the same water level and weren't considered promising diving prospects, so our attention was directed to the main pool.

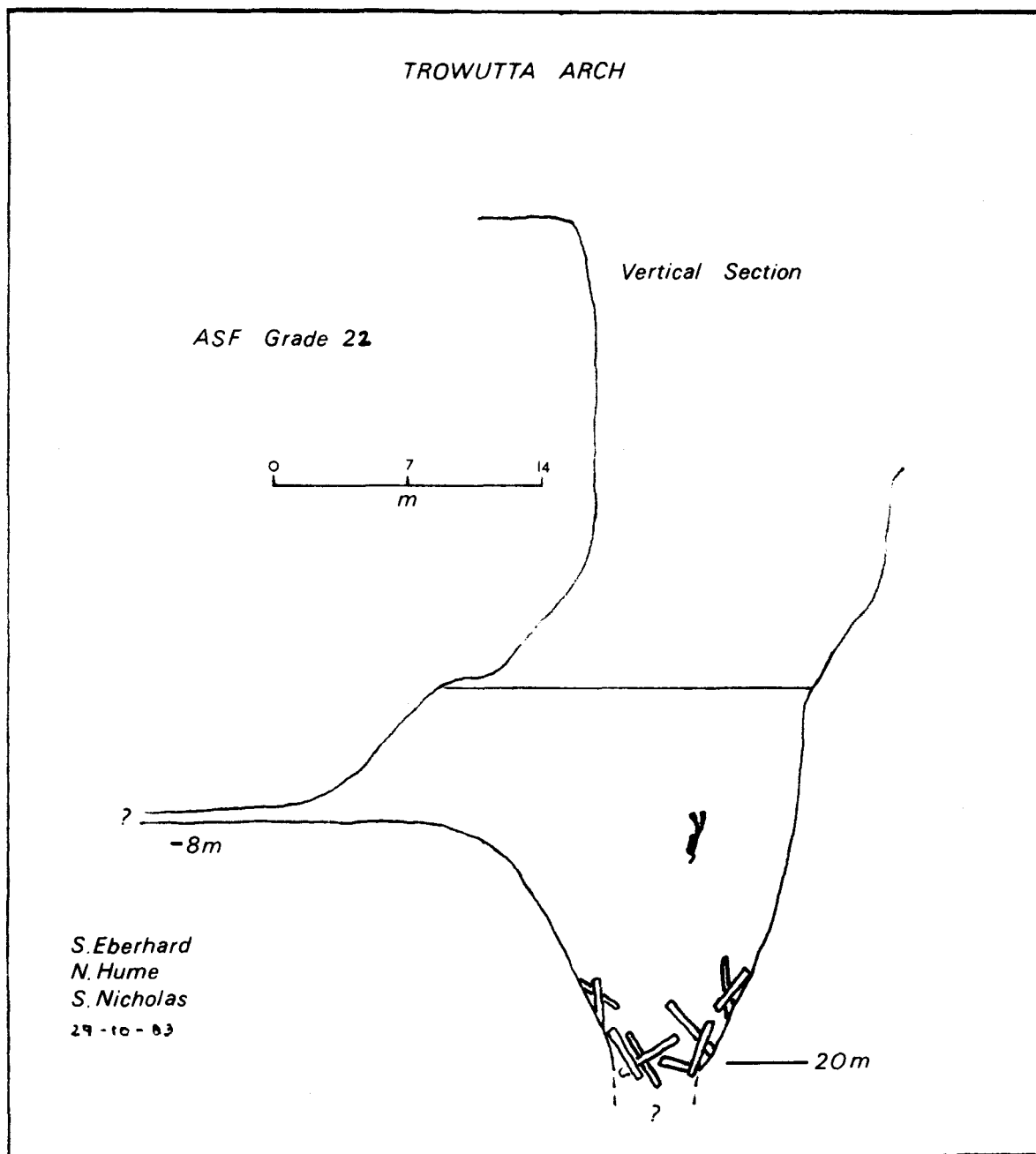
Stefan swam out with a lead weight attached to some line and did a depth survey of the pool without revealing anything beyond about 20 metres. His "sinker" snagged somewhere about mid-pool indicating a log choke below that point. The three of us decided to dive an open area for acclimatisation before committing ourselves to explore under the cliff overhanging most of the pool. This first dive showed that the sides of the pool dropped precipitously away to about 15 metres where we landed on a log choke. At that depth we were in complete darkness due to the tannin content of the water, however, the visibility was reasonable, our lights penetrating 3-4 metres with siltation being fairly minor. Resurfacing proved eerie as the surface glow was blood red in colour.

The line reel was tied off at the base of the overhang and our second dive was to be into an obvious weakness in the cliff face. We dived straight down to a depth of 8 metres or so then followed a compass bearing into the rift, penetrating an estimated 20 metres before coming to a dead end. At this point I figured Stefan must be predisposed to narcosis as I watched him unscrew the top of his waterproof torch and begin to poke about in the mud with the open end. I soon realised that what he in fact was doing was to collect an isopod specimen, albeit in an unconventional way.



A "flattener" led off the side of the rift, heading at right angles to it. This took the form of a tight horizontal fissure with a rotten roof, that could only just accommodate a diver. We had another two dives attempting to penetrate into this, but it tended to squeeze off after a short distance and was heading in the wrong direction to be promising. Fine siltation made exploration slow and difficult, also the expectation of the roof collapsing did not assist us much. On returning we clung to the roof and observed the refracted image of the whole of the surroundings of the pool through its undisturbed surface, cosmic baby! We had a final dive to the deepest part of the pool where Stefan squirmed his way down through the choke, even deeper, while I looked on wondering where it would end. Large, loose logs dancing in front of my facemask did not inspire me greatly and we headed off to tell Fred what we had found before repairing to the Smithton Hotel.

Some part of Saturday night was taken up with Ross Mansfield reminiscing about "The Old Days" of TCC, to the extent that we forgot to advance our watches and resulted in a late start next day. On the Sunday we felt keen to do some deep



diving so headed off to Lake Chisholm, south of the Arthur River, expecting it to be embedded in a giant doline of tremendous depth and scope, however, in reality it was quite different. The lake was obviously fairly shallow with a gentle shoreline, so we left the diving of Lake Chisholm to a lone platypus.

Our next exciting adventure involved finding a survey track to the swallet of the Julius River. After much beating about the bush we eventually gave up and desperate for something positive to do, decided to return to Trowutta Arch to have another go at the "flattener" with my mini-airtank and do some underwater photography.

The weekend provided some interesting diving and proved the sinkhole at Trowutta to have no prospects regarding extensive, navigable submerged passageway, see above survey. Thanks Ross for accommodation and thank you Stuart for the drive.

NICK HUME

RIVER LETHE - UPSTREAM IN THE JUNEE FLORENTINE MASTER CAVE 15/10/83

Party: TW, PH, RE, NH, MC-SCS

The rockpile that had terminated the Dreamtime survey was finally scaled by Al Warild and Stefan Eberhard on 8/5/83. It was found to be just a collapse and the passage of railway tunnel proportions was thought to continue beyond. Further exploration was halted by a 6 m free hanging pitch in breakdown with a good draught and a shower of water. This pitch appeared to be the only area in Dreamtime and River Lethe not to be coated in liberal quantities of mud.

A couple of months ago Phil H and Rolan Eberhard took a 10 m ladder to this pitch and pushed on through the remaining talus into the River Lethe series reporting close to a kilometre of virgin master cave.

Our party of 15/10/83 intended to survey the new section and push if possible any leads, although Rolan had stated them to be few. Expecting a long trip of 12 hours plus, we set out through the now familiar Entrance series, Trapdoor stream, Necrosis, Mainline and Dreamtime. Unfortunately Martin aborted his trip in the Entrance series complaining of weakness and stomach wogs. A rope as handline had been left by Rolan and Phil at the previously terminating rockpile. The climb is still awkward and the thick mud negates any climbing skills. The route through the breakdown is marked with cairns and boot prints to the narrow slot that is the pitch. The rock here is eroded and rotten though cleaned from the shower inlet. A short climb leads to the continuation of large passage and steeply banked mud. After leaving the rockpile, surveying became more "straight forward" with legs of 30.2 m "which happened to be the length of our tape". The streamway was followed intermittently as longer legs were recorded across the mud banks to a chamber containing three avens. Two of these avens were active stream inlets while the third at the furthest point of the chamber was dry with a high rift development. The mainstream (River Lethe) was flowing in from a large passage on the left. In this chamber we rested and ate. My head was pounding with a strengthening migraine thought to be caused by a tight helmet, narrow light beam causing squinting, or the more commonly accepted hangover!

The decision to continue surveying was made as at this point the passage changed direction and headed off to the left, still high, wide, with steep mud banks. The gradient of the passage was still only $+1^{\circ}$ to $+2^{\circ}$. Phil Hill had gone on ahead as he was superfluous to the survey party and he passed the previous limit of Rolan's exploration, the point we used to terminate our survey. The roof lowered and the mud banks became less prominent until a low crawl developed. Phil had gone beyond this point up the half metre high crawl which extended for about 200 m to where it opened up again to finally terminate after more passage in another boulder pile. Solo attempts by Phil to negotiate a route through were thwarted but hopefully a larger group of people will have more success. The ever present strong cold draught seemed far more noticeable returning although it was blasting downstream.

The return to the surface was uneventful apart from some minor exploration in choked side passages and mistaken route finding. Our exit from River Lethe was sub three hours-quick and tiring but successful. The trip took 9 hours with a surveyed addition of 800 m which brings the total surveyed length to 8 kilometres. A return trip to the River Lethe is over 6 kilometres with hope for extensions providing much, much, more! The Growling Swallet system extends under Wherretts Look-Out saddle and it is suspected River Lethe trends towards the "slip", however, far too much water is present for the Wherretts drainage and only conjecture indicates the source could be the Tassie-Owl-Threefalls area several miles away in the Florentine Valley "Over the Gap!".

TREVOR WAILES

LETTER FROM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF TASMANIA - DIVISION OF RECREATION

Kubla Khan

The annual photographic epic passed once again in all its glory.

Due to a distinctly antisocial set of lows, the weather did its level best to make things unpleasant for those hardy souls who camped, and forced the more timorous to seek shelter at the caves, and hut. These lesser mortals, however, turned up in the morning at a reasonable hour and an incredibly efficient logistics exercise of checking gear and skills saw us all away by 10ish.

The noble Boden and Co (NW Caving Group) had trotted through the mud and slush the previous night to rig both ends of the cave - a task for which we were all most grateful if not a little awe-inspired. However, when you realise that these NW folk actually wear wet-suits as everyday garb (something to do with local politics) the whole picture starts to take on an air of reasonable credibility. Our more lightly-clad southerners dissolved into worried murmuring at the sight of wet-suits but a few harsh words and a kick or two soon brought them back to line.

That antisocial weather afore-mentioned has in fact done a tremendous job of cleaning up the cave. Despite getting wetter earlier and more thoroughly than usual, everyone appreciated the water flows in Pleasure Dome - all gours full and blue, waves of light travelling down and the scintillating splash of saturated explorer socks (how's that for onomatopoeias). All pitches were washed clean, including that horrible one into the River passage. Inevitably the bottom of entrance pitch and the only mud patch in the cave (near Jade Pool) bore a distinct resemblance to the fields of Flanders (circa 1918). Sally's Folly run was as full as it could be and provided some exhilarating gymnastics for those foolish enough to believe the leader.

The photographic exercise was marred only by two incidents; an old, pensioned camera clattered some distance downwards causing its owner considerable anguish but causing no damage at all to said camera, and a brand-new, unsullied, technological breakthrough, super-scope, preheated chromium-titanium Model X took 12 pictures, farted twice, and died! I would guess that about 400 slides were taken and that the heat from flashes raised the ambient temperature of the cave about 2 degrees absolute. Other lessons worth mention were:

- a) You cannot abseil on a doubled rope with a whaletail!
- b) Drum Drop can be neatly avoided by crossing high on the opposite side (thanks, David Wainwright NW!).
- c) Fluency in German speeds things up if there is a foreigner in the group.
- d) Flashers do not slow down as they age.
- e) A bird on a ladder swears more than two in the bush.

Special thanks to John B, John R, Phill M, and David W from the North West and to Phil H (TCC) who all helped to lead, cajole and provide those essential ingredients without which a trip would be miserable experience.

BILL TOMALIN
TRIP LEADER TCC

MIDNIGHT HOLE

Midnight Hole was initially explored by members of the TCC in 1968. They descended six consecutive pitches to arrive at a horizontal squeeze some 160 metres of ladder below the entrance. The surface was eventually regained at midnight after some 15 hours underground, hence the name of Australia's second deepest cave at the time. The next month a squeeze in Entrance Cave (Mystery Creek Cave), a horizontal system in the same hill, was pushed to the base of an aven. Here a matchbox left in the squeeze at the bottom of Midnight Hole was found and the connection made.

With the advent of single rope techniques Midnight Hole has become a popular sporting trip, mainly as a through trip on double ropes but also as a descent and ascent on single ropes. Either trip can be accomplished in a few hours. It is a remarkably easy pothole, dry by local standards, and almost all the shafts are bolted. Despite the rather sordid gravel through Matchbox squeeze at the bottom, the pot provides enjoyable abseiling, especially the final 50 metre pit which is a true classic.

The accompanying survey was done in August by Phil H and Rolan Eberhard and Matchbox squeeze calculated at -166 metres below the number tag at the entrance. The length surveyed was 224 metres and a cairn on the Midnight Hole side of the squeeze locates the final station. According to Albert Goede in Speleo Spiel Nos 118 and 112, the total depth of the system is 203 metres (based partly on an overland survey between the entrances?), with a surveyed length of 902 metres but an estimated total length of 1200 metres. According to the above figure, Midnight Hole-Entrance Cave currently ranks at tenth place in the Tasmanian (Australian) deepest caves list.

ROLAN EBERHARD

ANNE-A-KANANDA 1966-1983

Reading some old Spiels recently I came across accounts of the early trips onto Mount Anne. In December 1966, Brian Collin led a five day reconnaissance expedition to the dolomite on the NE ridge. Only one and a half days were spent actually exploring dolines on the ridge, the rest of the time involved getting there and back. The first hole noted (Hole No 1) was reported to be half in conglomerate and half in dolomite, and some 300' deep, (presumably what we now call Anne-A-Kananda). This and other entrances were not explored fully and the general opinion was that "large cave systems appear doubtful however interesting exploration is assured in the deep holes found".

In June 1967 Alan Keller led a three day trip to the ridge. They descended the Anne-A-Kananda doline and "crawled 20' along a fissure, climbed down 15' of joined slings into rocky passage about 100' long to find that it fissures out, with no hope of further exploration". How many times have such statements been proved wrong! Later trips to the area in 1971 explored the 115 metre entrance pitch of Kellars Cellar, Col-In-Cavern (-118 m), as well as looking at nearby Lake Timk.

On the first trip to the ridge looking for caves in recent years, Stefan Eberhard had another look at Hole No 1 and decided it appeared fairly interesting. In September 1982 while Nick Hume, Stefan and I were camped in the entrance chamber, Stefan had a quick look in the passage below the entrance crawl. Considering the strong outward draught he decided it should "go" and was worth a proper look. The next night after an exhilarating day in Kellars Cellar Stefan coerced me into having another look down the crawl. This time the cave was draughting inwards and smoke from our campfire reduced visibility to a couple of feet. I stumbled apathetically up to the far end of the chamber and unable to see clearly because of the smog, half felt my way through a slot on the left hand side. Not particularly impressed I wandered along some more passage and arrived at a nasty looking squeeze. By now Stefan had arrived and I spent a few minutes squirming and swearing my way up this vertical slot into space above.

I found myself in a low crawl adorned with a few short straws equipt with interesting "fins" resulting from the continual draught. By now it had dawned on me that the cave was in fact "going". Despite the delightful tinkling sound of shattering straws that barred the way, I burrowed along the crawl almost enthusiastically. This crawl, The Organ Grinder, has since seen the passage of numerous bodies (very few of the straws remain and the crawl is roomier), and Anne-A-Kananda now stands as Australia's deepest cave at -373 m. So there you go!

References: Speleo Spiel Nos 10 and 15
Spar No 5

ROLAND EBERHARD

SPLASH POT

Party: Rik and Janine Tunney and McKinnon, Mike Edwards, Alec and Andrew Briggs

Splash Pot is situated near KD and as the name suggests it is a stream sink. Although the cave is only 320 ft deep, its 190 ft pitch promised to be interesting and was therefore worth a visit.

As early starts should be the norm, we went through the gate at 8.00 am. We found the entrance after also finding JF9. The entrance proved to be in a picturesque doline with the stream cascading into talus on one side. A 20 ft pitch led into crawly and damp stream passage, about 150 ft long to the top of the pitch.

Mike rigged and Rik protected while the rest of us touristed. A gradual retreat to the surface was then begun. It was at this time that the accident occurred; Janine, Andrew and Mike were at the top of the pitch, Alec somewhere on the rope was hit by a 3 kg or thereabouts rock, damaging his hand quite badly - no autopsy yet. A hasty evacuation resulted in everyone being on the surface just after 1.00 pm. The rock appeared to have fallen purely by chance (act of God).

Alec eventually ended up in the Royal where he received 8 stitches in the palm of his hand. However, accidents aside, overall it was a good fun trip.

ANDREW BRIGGS

"Ironically, he was quite
an avid 'heavy rock' fan"



MIDNIGHT HOLE IBII

