

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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PRESIDENT:

Trevor Wailes - 47 Waterworks Road, Dynnyrne, Tas 7005. Ph 344862

SECRETARY:

Question - is it Martyn Carnes?? Phone him on 252659 and see!!!

TREASURER:

Mike Edwards - 334 Davey Street, Hobart, Tas 7000. Ph 232520

EDITOR / QUARTERMASTER / TYPIST (again!):

Stuart Nicholas - 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, Tas 7008 Ph 283054

FORWARD PROGRAMME

Dec 22 to 26: Christmas Weekend - who's doing what, where and with whom??

Dec 29 to Jan 1: New Year weekend - ditto above ??

Jan 7 to 11: SPELEOMANIA - the dreaded conference!!!

Jan 12 to 27: CONFERENCE FIELD TRIPS.....

February 3: Mexico bod(s) depart Hobart into a Tequila Sunrise!

Ho, Ho, Ho and all that stuff. Well folks, as you no doubt know its that time of year again when you hang out your gear sac before going to bed and the next day there it is, just the same! Santa Trog probably found the survey incomplete and missed you out on his crawl around the neighbourhood!

In case we don't, and I can assure you that we won't, get another Spiel out before the end of the year, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. As a passing reminder to all those wise bods giving up smoking, or more particularly to those who aren't, don't forget, smoking is a dying habit!

Stuart Nicholas
Editor - SPELEO SPIEL

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE, AGAIN

It must be the weather or the club or the colour of the rope..... Everyone is on the move. Two bods have recently moved house and now

reside at the addresses below.

George Albion
40 Lampton Avenue
Derwent Park (just opposite "Tubemakers" steel store.....)
Phone 728666

George has actually bought this place and become one of these real estate kings of which there seems to be a few in TCC these days - there used to be a shortage of cars in the club, now everyone seems to own houses, cars, boats, etc.

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Rolan Eberhard
10 Kingsley Avenue
Sandy Bay
Phone 253969

This is off Broadwaters Parade towards the bottom end of Churchill Avenue. Make a change from the Leslie Vale health farm and horse store.

TRIP REPORTS - SOME OLD, SOME NEW!

JF-341

March 1984

PARTY: Phil Hill and, um, well that's all.....

After discovering a new lead on a previous trip with Steve Bunton, a second visit was in order to satisfy my curiosity.

An uneventful entrance was made into the site of the dig, being the main stream continuation where the cave branches right into the lake.

After half an hour of digging, mostly to remove the gravel washed in by the stream, a very tight squeeze was negotiated giving a further 20 metres of passage, terminating in a squeeze that is impossible to follow. This is obviously the main stream drainage which is discernable beyond the original dig.

Returning to the car four hours later, the afternoon was passed pleasantly sun baking on the Junee Quarry Road, before returning to Hobart via Roy's Maydena eatery.

Phill Hill

MIDNIGHT HOLE

4 AUGUST, 1984

PARTY: Chris Davies, Ann Wessing and Phill Hill

Phill, having recently lost the plaster from his left leg and a little sanity due to the inactivity suffered, was looking for an easy trip.

What more could one ask for than a pleasant Midnight Hole - Entrance Cave through trip to introduce Ann to the joys of vertical caving, with Chris as support.

After negotiating Midnight Hole and the Matchbox Squeeze, Phill decided to follow his curiosity and turn left into a small stream passage instead of the normal route out into the main cave.

The stream proved to go for a long way, as a very low serpentine allowing passage only by laying on one's side in the water for most of the distance. The passage terminated in a large draughting boulder pile with a way on plainly visible. It is likely that the stream passage would connect with the main cave, upwards through the boulders with the large air movement in the area.

Before exiting (Entrance-ing??), a trip to the sump was made with thoughts of how easy it is underestimate a "tourist" cave and how much I had missed on my earlier visit.

Phill Hill

IDA BAY TRIP REPORTS

Weekend September 29/30

PARTY: Alec Marr, Mick Flint and Arthur Clarke.

Saturday was an exploratory excursion. With our not unusual leisurely start (early afternoon), we taped a route off the Moonlight Ridge track about 250 metres up from the quarry. Heading south east our circuitous route around sinkholes and doline collapses was aimed at searching for a lost torch, some largish trees and a shaft. Like so many others on Marble Hill, this shaft blocked off after only 15 metres. Moving east we soon came to the head of a steep sided "dry" gully in which lay several dolines. The upper doline is a steep sided log-jammed affair with a soak and a draughting hole. Located previously by Trevor Cook and A.C. during a "lost body" search, the doline lies about 250 to 300 metres SSW of the eastern (Entrance Cave) end of the old quarry. The doline appears to be either on the contact or in a fault zone with mudstone to the southeast and limestone on the northwest side.

After the recent hail and snow, the mud and squelch and mess of rotten logs made this doline somewhat less inviting. However our hole was still draughting and the previously mentioned soak was now an obvious swallet taking plenty of water. While Mick and Alec rigged the pitch, Arthur looked into the swallet and under the rotten debris. The swallet emptied into a mud-caked shaft which would need digging (and drier weather) for roomier access, while under the logs revealed two more shafts..... one into a muddy bank, the other clean walled with water spray and draughting/breathing.

As light was fading, Alec decided it would be nice to keep his fibre pile clean and dry, so Mick was "volunteered" to descend the rigged pitch. Slithering down a muddy shute, Mick then abseiled into a bell-shaped shaft with an 18 metre pitch. A climb down crumbly rock

to a floor then a crawl led into a 3.5 metre high dome shaped chamber well decorated with straws and 'mites. Back out to the floor and down another 4 metres into another chamber with the ceiling eventually squeezing the passage to nothing. Returning up the bell-shaped shaft, about two-thirds the way Mick pendulumed across to a ledge and horizontal passage which terminated in a loose boulder pile. Through this he felt a strong draught, saw water gushing and Arthur's light from above. He reckoned the boulder talus could be shifted to gain access to another shaft, but preferably in drier conditions.

In keeping with the Tolkein fairytale tradition, Mick suggested the tentative name of "Gollum's Grovel", with the proviso that if anything better developed we upgrade it to "Gollum's Gulch", "Smegol's Secret", or even "Gandalf's Glee"!

Sunday August 29 - Revelation Cave and surrounds

PARTY: Alec Marr, Mick Flint, Arthur Clarke, Nick Hume, Martyn Carnes and Rolan Eberhard.

Revelation Cave (IB 1) was originally located and explored in the winter of 1969 with the last reported visit in January 1970. En-route along the Hobbit Hole (IB 15) track, Alec, Mick and Arthur investigated a sizable swallet in a dolerite boulder choke in what is normally a dry creek gully near the base of the dolerite contact. Numerous boulders were removed but it was deemed that a crowbar was needed. About 20 metres "downstream" a small collapse was noticed in the sandy floored stream bed. Since our objective was IB 1, we backtracked and followed Rolan's new blue taped "short cut" route to the cave. While Nick, Martyn and Rolan concentrated on the survey, we three inspected the "dig" where the stream disappears, posed for photos on the 20 metre pitch, investigated 4 or 5 of the longer side passages and de-rigged the cave. With grunts, groans and curses from Mick (and talk of getting Arthur a gear sack for his birthday!), we emerged into the late afternoon twilight.

Since the others had left to check another hole, Alec and Arthur coaxed Nick into joining them to look into another shaft they were investigating about 15 metres down the creek from Revelation. This takes water and is probably the swallet reported in Speleo Spiel 37, July 1969, as taking water to join the IB 1 system. Our brief investigation revealed a draughting, water sprayed shaft variously estimated by Mick, Alec and Arthur to 100, 120 and 150 feet deep. Leaving it for another day we cap-lamped our way back to the quarry.

Despite its critics, Ida Bay still has a lot of potential, besides which there's got to be a "back door" somewhere!!

Arthur Clarke

CAVE DIVING / CANOEING WEEKEND

13/14 OCTOBER, 1984

PARTY: Nick Hume and Lou, Ann Wessing and Phill Hill

With the club dinner about to happen a suitable excuse was sought and found to avoid being present (apologies to the organisers).

Hearing of two "new" sea caves and one land cave, all in close proximity, a trip was planned to the NW Coast to look at them.

A late and leisurely start was in order, due to driving to Burnie the night before and conversing late into the night with our host for the weekend, Mark Wilson - thanks Mark.

Driving out to Sisters Beach, with nothing more than a brief description and a cross reference on a map, Nick and I took to the cliff-top footpath in 9mm wetsuits with girlfriends acting as porters! (Is that what girlfriends are for?? - Ed)

Arriving at a point which we all agreed looked correct, we donned our gear and took the plunge, refreshingly welcome after our cliff walk in wetsuits.

Disappointingly we failed to locate this the first of the sea caves, so we headed off to procure some lunch and locate the entrance of "Wet Cave". This proved not too hard as we were informed that it was situated on a tourist type track only ten minutes from the car.

Arriving at the boat-ramp/parking area, still clad in wetsuits, we proceeded to climb another hill, followed by a short bush bash until stumbling on a track, which lead directly to the "cave". Returning to the cars, we sorted out our gear and once more with the girls in tow, set off for the cave.

The entrance is quite spacious with a large lake in view whilst still in daylight. The perfect spot for every passing tourist to urinate in!!

Wading through the empty tinnies and logs, the parting surface scum brought visions of ice breakers to mind. Swimming through we ran out an entire reel and clipped on a second to reach the end of the lake and a constriction 120 metres from the entrance.

Taking turns on the way out we explored numerous side passages passed during the swim in. Tanin pigment in the water combined with decaying organic material did not even allow for the orange glow one can normally see. This was total blackness of the kind one normally associates with "dry" caving.

All these side passages closed off as bell chambers, the deepest at 12 metres backing up the theory that this was once a sea cave, now in the hill side and filled with seepage from the hill above.

The only mishap was when Nick resurfaced and made contact with the roof knocking down a couple of small blocks and rendering one of his first stages useless. Fortunately the airspace was clear all the way to the entrance, so an easy safe exit was made.

The following day was passed with the four of us and our host joining the Emu Bay Canoe Club in a pleasant trip down the Hellyer River, and adding another activity to TCC's list of things to do other than caving!

Phill Hill

THE CHAIRMAN - JF 99

20 October 1984

PARTY: Nick Hume and Martyn Carnes

After another abortive attempt to get a Serendipity trip going, Nick and I decided that The Chairman would be a suitable way of passing a few hours.

An hour from the car and a few snow fallen trees later saw us at the entrance. I rigged a 31 metre rope from an obvious tree at the lip of the doline and retied to another obvious tree about 3 or 4 metres down, whilst chanting "I do like caving, I do like caving....". It was at this point that I noticed Nick had joined in on my psyching up ceremony.

The rigging provided a free-hang down to (well, almost down to) a ledge upon which the next slightly inconspicuous belay point was nestled. With minimal disgust I tied a 68 metre rope on the end of the 31 metre to create a knot a couple of metres above the ledge. After retying the rope at the ledge, I descended to wait for Nick who placed the one and only protector needed on the way down.

The next drop was listed as a 15 metre handline but was rigged as a pitch to save stuffing around. The 30 metre pitch directly under this was rigged to an obvious flake and tied back to the 15 metre. The 12 metre last drop was rigged with 8mm rope which after descending I immediately decided was a mistake due to the large number of rub points. Nick was able to alleviate this somewhat with a retie a third of the way down.

After a quick discussion in the spacious streamway chamber we decided to have a look downstream for as long as time permitted, which unfortunately was not as long as we would have liked. We followed the stream under a low crawlway until we began to pick up the trail of blue markers left by Bill Nicholson some years ago. The stream winds its way for some distance through a mass of breakdown boulders. The trail then leaves the streamway up a small chute and through a rift which opens out in a chamber of spectacular dimensions containing some decoration and the previously abandoned stream.

While I was languishing in the streamway further back, Nick was engaged in performing one his now legendary body movements in the large chamber. Upon his return he reported it was really worth a quick look (the chamber that is), and so while Nick returned to the base of the last pitch I went on to view the reported spectacle, treading very carefully as the hairs in my nostrils began to stand to attention.

As time was running short I rejoined Nick at the last pitch and a tin of sardines later, we began our uneventful return to the surface where we arrived at 3pm after a very pleasant 5 hours underground. After commenting upon seeing a swallow's nest containing two eggs on the entrance pitch and reflecting on just how wonderful nature is, we

commenced our leisurely stroll back to the car. A few more tapes were placed on the track around the snow damage and a brief pause made at the entrance of "15 Second Pot", which is a few metres off the track at the base of "the big hill".

During the drive back to Hobart we talked of a return downstream in The Chairman whenever we found ourselves with some time to spare.

Martyn Carnes

WESTERN CREEK SWALLET

26 October 1984

PARTY: Arthur Clarke, Mick Flint, Alec Marr, Nick Hume and "Sherpa"

"Western Creek Swallet" was discovered by Collin, Goede et al, in the late '60's and found to sump after only 15 metres of passage. Mick Flint rediscovered the cave recently and noticed a tight lead to the left of the sump that presumably had not been checked before. The possibility of a connection to Exit Cave, probably in the area of Western Grand Fissure, was sufficient incentive for us drag tackle up the Moonlight Flats track for a look see.

One hour's walk up the track found us on top of the ridge, where large blazes on two adjacent trees to the left of the track form a sort of doorway to the route, re-taped by Mick. This led down steep hillside to an impressive swallet on the limestone contact. There is considerable water going into the cave and a reasonable draught at the "squeeze" was promising.

Mick remained on the surface because of 'flu, keeping company with the "sherpa". Downclimbing the sharp sculpted limestone, we re-emerged in the stream passage on the other side of the sump. A total of 30 metres of new passage was negotiated to the head of a 10 metre pitch, the descent of which was obviously going to be very wet (fortunately I was wearing a wet suit!). After removing various threatening boulders, some unintentionally, we laddered to a very spray lashed ledge overlooking a large chamber. We rigged a rope from a bollard and abseiled a further very wet pitch of some 20 metres, there being no way of redirecting the rope out of the water. The floor was very loose with sizable blocks only just in balance. Talus had blocked the end of this long steep angled chamber by filling it to the roof. The stream gradually disappeared against the left hand wall and though well checked, there wasn't any navigable passage draining the water. The true end of the chamber was not a digging prospect as the rift was only a few inches wide and totally sealed, there being no draught evident at all.

Ascending the "uphill" side of the chamber we climbed to a point almost level with the top of the rope pitch. Here we found plenty of loose, mud-held blocks, seemingly all set to avalanche the whole area. Alec checked the only downward lead, a tiny hole in the breakdown matrix which unfortunately didn't go. We returned to the surface after only two and a half hours underground, a pleasant enough outing despite the wetness of the place.

Nick Hume

SERENDIPITY

27 October 1984

PARTY: Stefan Eberhard, Nick Hume, Stuart Nicholas, Trevor Wailes, Martyn Carnes and Phil Jackson (s.c.s.)

DATE: 24 October PLACE: The Doghouse. People were yet again expressing interest in going to Serendip. Not so amazing you may say, as it has been common practise over the last few months to TALK of going there.

DATE: 26 October PLACE: By the phone. My phone rang hot with people indicating that they were still interested in a Serendip trip the following day. BLOODY HELL - things were becoming serious! I began to sweat. This trip may actually get off the ground!

DATE: 27 October PLACE: Stuart Nicholas' abode. By 7am everyone who said they would be there had actually arrived. Things had reached a critical level, so critical in fact that we actually went.

Following the fashion parade courtesy of the Wailes Boutique, which left us all with yellow and red spots before our eyes, we entered the cave through the newly discovered and (thanks to Stefan) freshly excavated dry entrance. This is only a few metres away but 8 metres higher than the stream sink entrance.

The first (31 metre) pitch was rigged by Nick and descended in quick succession by the rest of the party. Bodies began to bottleneck at the traverse heading the second (36 metre) pitch. This pitch took a little time to rig due to difficulty in locating the bolt. During this waiting period, Jacko decided he would head out because of the loss of the brand new gloves he had been wearing on the way in (and a lack of enthusiasm). After Nick and Stefan had descended, the bolt was located and a couple of umm's and ahh's later was utilized.

The rest of the cave was rigged and descended without incident to the top of the last pitch. When everyone was gathered together it slowly became apparent that many members of the group had been secretly harbouring varying degrees of apathy and lethargy.

Stefan rigged and descended the first section of the pitch to the ledge and shouted for me to join him in locating a bolt which had been placed on the previous trip. Once again the bolt could not be found, so Stefan descended and retied around a large bollard and dropped out of sight. It was then that results of the prementioned apathy and lethargy struck with its customary ruthless efficiency..... Someone shouted down to me that they and the rest were heading out. Not thinking twice I muttered something like "See you later", and descended to meet Stefan. Upon relating the newly developed state of affairs to him, the cave resounded to "Bastards!" and other sundry utterances.

We continued on to the "dressing chamber" which has become the traditional place to discard SRT rigs. A brief conference ensued to plan our next course of action. After chewing over the possible consequences of continuing a push trip, ie the fact that I would

probably have to stay at the Homestead as we would obviously be late for the gate, we decided to look downstream. We noted the lead explored by Warild, Nicholas and Co. on the previous trip and checked out another lead on the opposite side of the chamber, to no avail. We then went further downstream to where the passage becomes lower and lower, forcing one to grovel in the stream itself.

Deciding that getting drowned for such potentially little reward was not a good idea, we set off upstream to investigate two undescended pitches reported by Rolan on an earlier trip. It was noted on the way in that the strong breeze was blowing upstream, therefore the greatest probability of discovery lay in this direction. About 500 metres of delightful serpentine passage later we were climbing up to Rolan's pitches which marked the limit of previous exploration. Stefan discovered that one pitch was free-climbable down a dubious looking rockpile into a quite large old phreatic streamway which "WENT". After attempting the climb down, and in the process dislodging a handsome sized rock used by Stefan as a hold on his climb down, I decided to rig a rope. However due to the lack of obvious belay points, I urged Stefan to have a look without me to save time.

About 30 minutes later he returned and reported about 200 to 300 metres of quite large passage which eventually lowered to impractical dimensions. However there were still a few side leads which he did not look at - something for the next (or next, or next, or.....) party to look at. Upon his return to the climb Stefan noticed that the other pitch led down into the same passage, evidenced by a piece of red string left by Rolan (and/or Chris Davies) at the head of the pitch and visible from below. A cry from Stef while climbing back up prompted me to enquire as to his well being, whereupon he replied he was OK but had nearly peeled off.

We returned to make a fast time back to the "dressing chamber", and a tin of sardines and a cherry ripe later, were on our way out of the cave proper. During my exit I noticed that the bolt on the 4th pitch, or rather the anchor thereof, was protruding from the rockface and is in my opinion potentially dangerous. Maybe the next party should consider replacing it with a properly placed anchor.

As I neared the top of the second pitch and was preparing to change over onto the traverse line, a huge section of rock peeled away from the area containing the anchor! When my pulse rate returned to normal I continued on to the surface where Stefan was able to amuse himself with my curses as I negotiated the now sodden climb at the entrance.

Upon returning to the car at 7pm we found Jacko had thoughtfully waited to supply a lift back to the gate and my car, since the others had driven it back to leave it outside the gate, and to return to Hobart in Trev's van.

Thanks to a late exit we were all able to return to Hobart after a great day's caving.

Martyn Carnes

PARTY: Nick Hume and Martyn Carnes

The moment that the rest of my body (apparently of its own free will) wrenched my head from the pillow I knew that the price of the previous evening's overindulgence was going to be high. I had vague recollections of making arrangements to meet Nick at 8.30am at his place to do "something" (as yet undecided) down at Ida Bay. Upon my arrival, Nick suggested Yodeller's Pot which had been discovered and explored by Arthur, Mick and Alec a couple of weeks earlier and had pitches of 5 metres, 50 metres and 40 metres with prospects for further exploration.

Numerous cups of coffee and steak and tomato pies later, we drove past the Lune River youth hostel and spotted Mick and Arthur. We called in for a brief chat and after taking into account the uncharacteristically high level of apathy felt by Nick and myself, decided to have a look at Loon's Cave instead as it is only 10 minutes walk from the road.

Parking the car next to an old drill pipe Nick became engrossed by the almost magical acoustic effects produced by dropping rocks into the pipe! Having an ear for what many people consider unusual noises (there's nothing wrong with Captain Beefheart), I too became equally engrossed and was quite prepared to substitute this remarkable acoustic phenomena for the proposed day's caving. However when the novelty had worn off a little we began to think about getting changed, and then suddenly we developed strong feelings of guilt as to our slackness and in an instant we were on our way up the moderately disgusting track to Yodeller's Pot.

The entrance is only a few metres down the valley from Revelation Pot and the difference in character between the two is amazing considering their close proximity to each other. Yodeller's is virtually all vertical in crumbly leached rock, as compared to Revelation's larger more horizontal stream passage.

The first pitch was rigged with a 14 metre rope about 9 metres of which was used to drop onto a small ledge at the top of the 50 metre pitch. That was rigged from a small block about 3 metres above the ledge. A retie 1/3 of the way down reduced the number of protectors to two on the lip itself. This 50 metre second pitch drops one at the head of the third pitch which is about 25 metres down to a ledge. This is followed by another 5 to 6 metre drop into a moderately sized chamber containing talus through which is a short climb down to a streamway carrying very little water. Straight ahead is a large aven which probably connects with Revelation. Upstream is narrow serpentine stream passage which becomes too tight after a short distance - no draught. Downstream also offered few prospects for continuation with the trickle of water flowing through a small hole too messy to worry about - also no draught. It was possible to poke around in some of the dry passage and breakdown blocks to the left of the disappearing stream, but this looked very terminal and also had no draught whatsoever.

It was at the top of the 25 metre pitch on the way in that the full price of overindulgence the night before a caving trip was exacted upon me. This resulted in my coming dangerously close to having a

technicolour yodel on Nick's head as he was placing a piton to avoid protection on the awkward narrow take-off to the drop.

Back at the car, Nick commented on how he had rather enjoyed the trip once we got going. Personally I thought, with the exception of the 50 metre pitch, the whole thing went down like a Jewish BBQ, but then all the unpleasantness was self inflicted.

Martyn Carnes

THE LOST WORLDS OF VICTORY '75 - 18 November 1984

Those attempting to be involved - Martyn Carnes & Nick Hume

The previous trip to Victory '75 gained some notoriety when several members became lost in the separate space-time continuum that seems to exist in that area. In this issue Martyn and I attempt to relocate the obscure accessway to this alternate universe - now read on..... An early start together with the long walk beyond the Chairman was frustrated when we were unable to relocate the way off the old forestry track. The way on is marked by a red blaze several metres off the old track and was possibly obscured by snow damage. However we did locate a short stretch of old blue tapes that led to JF-137, an inauspicious little hole that was described by Stuart as "..... a cave that's still going, but the floor below the first pitch collapsed when we were there....."

Martyn poked his head into the hole, partly out of curiosity and partly to escape the hordes of blow-flies that were gathering around. Interestingly quite a large number of the flies followed Martyn to the top of the undescended pitch, much to his dismay - perhaps they were enjoying this opportunity to explore the cave. We rigged the pitch, of about 10 metres, from a log anchor point outside the entrance. I led off followed by Martyn and the merry band of blowies. The top of the pitch looked somewhat dicky from below explaining why the floor had a habit of collapsing - in fact the whole place was fairly unstable. Fortunately the thing bottomed out after a few crawls and downclimbs. A parallel aven, of moderate slope, enabled me to ascend to what must have been near surface level - the way on was barred by dry breakdown.

Back on the surface we soon tired of the company of the flies and returned back past the Chairman, to a hole about half way up the notorious hill. This ten metre deep chasm is just off the left of the track (returning) and above an obvious doline. Martyn descended the pitch in shorts and T-shirt, landing on a sharp arete. He retied the rope here and dropped into a muddy rift that soon blocked off. Checking the north end of the surface feature I noticed a steep downclimb that bypasses the first pitch, but to no event.

Martyn checked JF-125, a minor hole just above the chasm which terminated just inside its entrance. We returned along the track (that makes a change - Ed). Martyn looked at the swallet under the log below "Sardine Can Corner", curiously also numbered JF-125, while I wandered up to Rift Cave. We caught up with that well known author-to-be, Rolan Eberhard at the National Park Hotel.

Nik Hume

RESCUE EXERCISE - FLORENTINE VALLEY

NOVEMBER 24, 25

VARIOUS TCC BODS, AMBULANCE BODS AND POLICE BODS INVOLVED

Organised by Jacko, that stalwart of SCS, the aim of the weekend was to give the non-cavers present some underground experience, as an aside do some surveying in Owl Pot to tidy up a survey and set up a hauling system on a pitch in Bone Pit. The first two aims were achieved on the Saturday with Sunday being devoted to the hauling/stretching exercise in Bone Pit for anyone surviving Saturday night at the homestead!

All the non-cavers hanging around Roy's shop (well most of them anyway) were put in one of three groups depending on previous experience, interest and so on. The groups were taken into Sesame, Owl Pot or Serendipity for a few hours caving without any rescue type things being done.

Everyone seemed to have a good time on Saturday and hopefully the n-c's learnt something about the gentle art of cave craft.

Sunday was occupied with a Z-pulley hauling exercise in Bone Pit which apparently went quite well, ie the victim didn't fall to his doom!

Needless to say the same old problems became apparent, yet again. The style of the Police SRT rigs leaves a lot to be desired and the eternal problem of communications underground reared its head on Sunday during the haul exercise. Various radio systems have been and are being built and claimed to work but I have yet see it. The only really reliable, if not totally satisfactory, system is a telephone of some sort. However, the only one presently available is an ancient field telephone set-up which does work but is hardly ideal when it needs to be lugged underground. Laying the wire is of course another problem, after one has found a kilometre or two somewhere.

Time is the enemy of survival in our wet and cold caves. The only really satisfactory solution to rescue is for all trips to be self contained and able to at least start the removal of the victim while, if needed, outside assistance is obtained. Chances are that help will not be required unless the victim is severely injured. We all could use some practise at setting up hauling systems quickly - most trips take pulleys, but how many of us could actually set the thing up without too much thought??

Stuart Nicholas

