

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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The Southern Caving Society is the greatest caving club on earth - well they certainly have a far better chance of winning the prize than the somewhat dead little clique group of pseudo-/ex- cavers that call themselves the Tasmanian Caverneering Club..... Here we are with a number of people around who have expressed interest in trying the sport and what do we do? Basically ignore them! This has happened a number of times in the past and because of that we now find ourselves in the situation of having bugger-all active members.

The phone rings.... "I am interested in doing a bit of caving." "Sure, come along to the next meeting and meet some of the gang - we'd be only too pleased to take you on a few trips and you can see if you really enjoy the sport."

How often has that occurred and the poor guy turns up only to be given a very cold shoulder? Caving by necessity is a team, and hence, clique-forming sport - you frequently rely totally on other cavers in the group to rig pitches, supply and use gear and so on in which you place total faith, which inevitably leads to the formation of little "closed" groups. However this must not be an excuse for ignoring potential new members - the more members there are, the greater the number of cliques you can choose from!!!

For once in the recent history of TCC, let's be a little more social towards outsiders wanting to get into some underground activity. We may even see them again after their first appearance at a meeting or trip.

Stuart Nicholas
Editor SPELEO SPIEL

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OBITUARY

On behalf of members of the TCC, past and present, I would like to extend condolences to Max Jeffries and his family on the death of his wife Phyllis. Phyllis was known to many cavers and walkers through Max, and I'm sure a lot of people will remember being welcomed into their home before and/or after trips.

I first met Max and Phyllis in 1977 and was a regular visitor over the next few years. Since the decline of my caving activities I find the thing I remember most from that time is their friendliness. Max is a kind and cheerful person and I hope the support of his many friends will help him overcome the pain of his loss.

Geoff Fisher
30 May, 1985

** Most of the "regulars" would be aware that we had a visitor from NZ over January in the form of one Don Fraser. Recently he sent some news of happenings in the land of the long deep cave. Apparently a new cave on Mount Owen is now (end of April) down to -400 metres and has lots of leads. There will most likely be a Christmas trip there (more info to follow later). One Trevor Worthy has pushed a hole on Mount Arthur to about -200 metres with some hope for a link with Nettlebed.

** Don also arranged via Barry Were (HTG) for us to receive a sample or two of Donaghys rope for evaluation for possible use as "permanent" rigged rope in, for example, Serendipity and Growling Swallet. The samples duly arrived but I fear we need Nik to rig yet another "world's smallest pitch" - they are only about half a metre long (they did send two so maybe we could tie them together.....). Nevertheless, the rope is interesting for the purpose in question. Two sizes are made - 10mm and 12mm - both double sheathed polyester construction with breaking loads of 2200kg and 2500kg respectively and fairly low elongation figures. The price is the best bit (even now) at only \$NZ141.06 per 100m of 10mm rope - ie about \$AUS1 per metre, plus freight and, no doubt, import duty. The stuff is worth a thought for permanent rigging as originally suggested.

** Does anyone out there in reader-land know of, or even know, one Ken Draper? Last year he paid a subscription to our worthy magazine but somehow his address was mislaid. As a result there are a number of Spiels sitting on the editor's desk awaiting delivery. If anyone can help please let us know!!!

** Rumour has it that a certain cave in Thailand frequented by a few Oz bods is now something over 7 kilometres long with most of it being canoed or rubber ducked! They ran out of time not paddable water.... Roll on GS/Junee Master Cave....!

** A new depth record ? Not quite ! The last (should that read THE LAST) issue of the ASF Newsletter (No. 105 - wot happened to 100 ???) contains an article written by Dale Gilliat on a trip to Anne-A-Kananda in April 1984. According to Mr Gilliat's sketch survey a new depth record of 396 metres was achieved in the Desiccator area of the cave. Over Easter this year a team from VSA returned and surveyed the so-called Rocky Mountain Way extension, and calculated an accurate depth in the vicinity of 340-350 metres. All credit to the guys who came back and did a decent survey, unfortunately (for VSA!) the depth of Anne-A-Kananda remains 373 metres. [Ed note: The VSA survey found the R M W extension to be 345 metres deep, as well as an increasing discrepancy in the TCC results...]

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CAVE NUMBERING AT MOLE CREEK - REVISED AND NEW NUMBERS

by Albert Goede and Bob Woolhouse

MC-3 Pyramid Cave System (Pyramid Top Hole). This entrance was originally numbered by Andrew Skinner in 1974 and listed as an un-named cave which had not been explored. This was incorrect. The entrance has recently been inspected by Bob Woolhouse who identified it as Pyramid Top Hole, a vertical entrance into the Pyramid Cave System. This entrance is not normally used for access. Since this is the entrance with the lowest number the general information about the cave will be transferred from MC-19 to MC-3.

MC-16 Glowworm Cave. Dry, steeply sloping rift entrance into the cave. Rift is approximately 2 metre wide and 5 metre long. The number plate is approx. 0.3 metre above ground level immediately to left of entrance. This is the normal entrance into the system. It is approx. 5 metre higher than and 10 metre away from MC-137E, which is at the point where the stream emerges.

The number was originally attached by Andrew Skinner to a streamsink further up the valley which he mistook for the entrance to Glowworm Cave. The number has disappeared from there. A new number plate was punched and used.

MC-17 Cyclops Cave. Entrance is 2 metre wide and 3 metre high. It is dry and slopes directly down to an active steam. The number tag is placed on a rockface above the left hand edge of the entrance (facing in). A second entrance, as yet un-numbered, is reached by following the creek downstream. It acts as an outflow when the creek level is high.

The number MC-17 was originally attached by Andrew Skinner to the downstream entrance to Glowworm Cave (now MC-137E), as he mistakenly believed it to be Cyclops Cave. The number has been transferred from there to the Cyclops Cave entrance.

MC-70 Training Cave. Entrance is at base of 4 metre high overhanging limestone cliff in Mersey Hill depression. Entrance is sloping inwards and permanently dry. It is triangular in cross section being approx. 0.9 metre wide and 0.45 metre high.

The number plate was found in a crack and was reattached on a smooth vertical rock face on the left hand side of the entrance. The cave is synonymous with MC-X68.

MC-71 Jawbone Cave (was MC-X30). This number has previously been listed as un-assigned. It had in fact been used to tag one of the two entrances to Jawbone Cave. The other entrance is now numbered MC-154E.

The MC-71 entrance slopes inwards and is dry. It is approx. 2 metre wide at the base and 1.5 metre high. The number has been attached to the left hand side of the entrance.

The cave consists of a complex of small low roofed chambers and meandering passages. Total length estimated at 50 metre. Some decoration. Evidence of occasional flooding. Cave depth estimated at 3 metre.

MC-107 to 109. Three entrances to Honeycomb 2. They had been wrongly listed in the checklist as Honeycomb 1 1/2. Details are as follows:

MC-107 Honeycomb 2. Entrance is horizontal, intermittently active inflow and is approx. 4 metre high and 5 metre wide. Number is at chest level on left hand side of entrance.

MC-108E Honeycomb 2. Entrance is horizontal, intermittently active outflow and is

approx. 8 metre high and 6 metre wide. Number is on left hand side of entrance.

MC-109E Honeycomb 2. Entrance is vertical fissure with 6 metre drop into main passage. It is located on a slope at the base of a 1 metre diameter gum tree and 4 metre above the floor of the dry valley. Dimensions 2 by 0.8 metre. Number is on a rock face to the left of the entrance.

NEW NUMBERS

MC-127 Devils Drainpipe (syn. Atlantis Cave) (was MC-X12, syn. MC-X1). Downward sloping entrance leads to sumps which dry out under dry conditions to give access to remainder of cave. Length est. at 275 metre.

MC-128E Marakoopa 2. Upper entrance.

MC-129E Marakoopa 2 (Lakes Entrance, Rift Pot) (was MC-X35E). Vertical entrance into the system.

MC-130 Devils Pot System (was MC-X13). Large swallet hole, being intake of Short Creek; 3 pitches between 15 and 25 metre; water disappears through narrow horizontal slots at end of cave.

MC-131E Devils Pot System. Lower entrance into Devils Anastomosis.

MC-132E Devils Pot System. Higher entrance into Devils Anastomosis.

MC-133 Kiwi Pot (was MC-X33). Small pot ending in choke above Short Creek section of Marakoopa Cave.

MC-134 Paste Pot. Twenty metre deep pot requiring tackle.

MC-135 Un-named rift. Forty metre deep vertical rift, ends after reaching creek below large doline. Little hope of further progress in either direction.

MC-136 Rat Hole. Extensive stream system accessible only in dry conditions, mostly explored in 1984. This cave has previously been listed as MC-24. This is incorrect. The number MC-24 has been attached to a small hole that does not go at the bottom of the doline. The Rat Hole entrance is in a small cliff in the side of the same doline.

MC-137E Glowworm Cave. Perennially active outflow entrance approx 2 metre high and up to 1 metre wide at base. Located at base of hill 10 metre downhill from MC-16 (the usual way into the cave).

MC-138 Not allocated. Accidentally attached to entrance to Execution Pot (MC-4) but will be removed at earliest opportunity.

MC-139 Long Drop (was MC-X38). Pothole close to Execution Pot with 25 metre pitch from small entrance in cliff. Pool at bottom.

MC-140 Not allocated

MC-141 My Cave (Polythemus Cave) (was MC-X43). Stream cave ending in sump after approx 400 metre; stream believed to emerge in Cyclops Cave (MC-17).

MC-142 Cobbler Cooler (was MC-X6). Steeply sloping rift entrance located at bottom

of doline. Entrance is 1 x 1.5 metre. Number attached to steeply sloping rock face approx 2 metre to left of entrance. The cave is low roofed and wet with 150 metre of passages.

MC-143. Intermittently flowing, impenetrable stream sink in Mersey Hill depression at base of 13 metre high cliff. Sink is blocked with gravel and timber. Number on vertical face 1.5 metre above sinking point. This swallet is close to MC-70 (Training Cave).

MC-144 Wet Cave. The upstream entrance of three intermediate entrances close together. Entrance is steeply sloping and approx 4 metre wide and 2 metre high. It is within the same doline as MC-145. Number immediately above left side of entrance.

MC-145E Wet Cave. The middle of three intermediate entrances and in same doline as MC-144. Entrance is dry, steeply sloping, 1 metre high and 3 metre wide. Number on left wall at highest point between this and last entrance.

MC-146E Wet Cave. Downstream one of three intermediate entrances. Entrance is dry, very steeply sloping, 5 metre high and 4 metre wide. Number at extreme right of entrance on rock face above.

MC-147E Honeycomb 2 (see also MC-107 to 109). Large dry sloping entrance approx 4 metre wide and 7 metre high. Number at chest height on right hand side.

MC-148 Blackberry Swallet. Sinking point of short surface stream at base of vertical fissure. Impenetrable. Number placed on right side 2 metre above stream.

MC-149 Blackberry Hole (was MC-X3). Entrance is perennially active outflow, triangular in cross-section, approx 2 metre wide and 3 metre high. Cave is approx 5 metre in length.

MC-150 Un-named cave. Small cave west of Ivan's Cave (MC-152) at base of Dogs Head Hill. Floods under wet conditions. Entrance consists of two wombat-sized holes almost separated by a projecting rock. Noticeable draught. Entrance is dry and slopes gently inward. Number placed on concave rock surface immediately to right of entrance. Cave consists of several small chambers connected by tight passages. Further exploration possible if constriction can be widened. A little formation. Length 25 metre, depth 3 metre.

MC-151. Un-named intermittent streamsink at base of Dogs Head Hill. Can be penetrated for only 3 metre. Located between MC-150 and MC-152. Number on steep cliff-face 3 metre above bottom of channel.

MC-152 Ivans Cave (MC-X29). Entrance on slope of Dogs Head Hill approx 8 metre above base of hill. Triangular entrance is behind fallen block, 2 metre high and 3 metre wide. It leads to a fissure cave parallel to the hillslope. Steep descent can be free climbed. Length 30 metre, depth 13 metre. Subject to flooding, some decoration. Number on rockface on left of entrance.

MC-153 Harrys Creek Cave. Perennial inflow cave. Length 20 metre, vertical development 4 metre. No formation, glowworms. Slight draught. Number on large boulder above entrance 2 metre above level of stream. Triangular entrance is 1 metre high and wide. Cave ends in sump.

MC-154E Jawbone Cave (see MC-71). Entrance is dry and slopes inwards. It is 1 metre wide and 0.6 metre high. This entrance provides most convenient access to most of cave.

MC-155 Shish Kabab (Top Hole, Barrys Hole) (was MC-X55). Entrance is in doline with overhanging cliff sloping back towards access track. Rockfall at base with two vertical entrances 2 metre apart. Both are approx 1 metre in diameter. Cave has large chamber with creek at bottom. Chamber contains spectacular helictites. Entrance pitch is 21 metre.

MC-156 Honeycomb 1 1/2 (was MC-X27). Horizontal inflow entrance 5 metre wide and 2.5 metre high into normally dry upper level. Within cave floor hole gives access to lower level with permanent stream. Number at eye level on left wall.

MC-157E Honeycomb 1 1/2. Rift-like entrance approx 15 metre long and 3 metre wide completely bisects passage and marks 'downstream' extent of mapped cave. Number is on concave facet of vertical face on left side when descending eastern end of entrance.

MC-158 Nut Bath Cave. Entrance is vertical rift requiring rope; low wet cave; 150 metre of passage; sizeable underground stream ends in rockfall in both directions; same stream reappears in Cobbler Cooler (MC-142); cave contains 6 metre waterfall with deep pool at base (hence cave name!).

Editor's note: The following article was written by Don Fraser following his Conference visit to Tassie, for the New Zealand Speleological Society journal called the Tomo Times, of which I believe he is now the editor!

THE TASMANIAN CAVING EXPERIENCE.....

by DON FRASER

Between Jan 5 and Feb 2 this year I returned to Hobart after some 18 years of New Zealand residence. I began caving in Tasmania in 1966 at a very tender young age, and had spent many hours in the early exploration of Exit Cave which is Australia's longest at 17 km. The heady excitement of discovering an apparently endless succession of huge chambers became a lure I've never really succeeded in shaking.

The first week was spent at the ASF Conference where I found myself accepted again as a Tasmanian caver and therefore a breed apart from the mainland caver. Tasmania cavers enjoy Australia's longest, deepest, most beautiful and most demanding caves. The conference included talks and papers on the Cocklebidy cave dive, cave conservation, cave communication and cave classification. I could hardly wait for the conference to end and the caving to begin. I showed the Nettlebed video and gave a short talk on the recent exploration of Nettlebed and HH. This was well received by an audience of about 120.

Following the conference I got my first taste of vertical caving in Tasmania at Serendipity, a cave described as one of the most sporty in Australia. Our party consisted of Trevor Wailes, Nick Hume, Stefan Eberhard, Mike Edwards, Martyn Carnes and myself. Serendipity is Australia's fourth deepest cave at -276 metres. We entered the cave around midday after a hot bush walk of about an hour and proceeded down a 31 metre pitch and through Castigation Crawl to 36 metre and 4 metre pitches. On the way we passed a party of mainland cavers from the conference who had entered earlier on a tourist trip. Fortunately the cave was rigged but one of our tasks was to derig... (hence my invitation??).

The cool of the cave had at first been a welcome relief but at the fourth 'deluge' pitch (20 metre), cool turned to ccccc...cold. The final pitch of 44 metre with a rebelay saw us safely at the bottom and into a major streamway. Here the rest of the party proceeded upstream to continue a survey while Stefan, Martyn and I followed a circuitous oxbow downstream looking for new leads but failed to find anything significant. We eventually arrived at a junction with the stream again at a point where Jean-Paul Sonier had apparently found the way on during an earlier trip. Here a waterfall fell some 15 feet or so but had not been climbed. I chimneyed to the top but found I couldn't fit my helmet through the slot. I considered removing my helmet but also considered it a bit unsafe.

We continued through the cave to a small wet side passage that had been partly explored by Martyn and Nick on an earlier trip. We crawled to a rockfall that had marked the limit of the earlier exploration and Stefan and I continued on to larger rift passage that eventually led to an aven with largish bones at the bottom. The aven didn't present an easy climb but just below it a passage led to a point overlooking a 12 foot drop into what appeared to be rather a large chamber. We lacked any means of descending to the chamber so went back down the main rift some distance to a side rift which led us into the new chamber. Up to this stage the cave had lacked any real formation but part of this new chamber was extremely well decorated. We explored the chamber and Stefan tried a formation climb of about 15 feet that didn't go. After completing our exploration of this large chamber we returned to the junction of the side passage where we met some of the surveying party and Martyn. The balance of the surveying party had apparently exited the cave so we all proceeded to survey our way toward the pitches. Derigging our way out was something of an endurance test as packs got heavier and heavier with each successive pitch. When we finally reached the surface and faced the downhill walk back to the vehicles, one party member suggested we 'redistribute' some of the weight. He was met with some very blank stares! In all we had been under for about 13 hours. The new passage explored by Stefan and I was estimated to be about 350 metres and would justify another trip to survey and also look more closely at climbing the aven.

Over the succeeding weeks I did some very enjoyable and exciting caving, mostly with Stefan but also with others from the Serendipity trip. The most sporting of these trips was the famous Ice Tube - Growling Swallet through trip. This involved double roping 11 pitches (25, 22, 7, 19, 29, 49, 13, 3, 44, 36 and 13 metres) followed by a muddy squeeze into the main Growling Swallet streamway and then a pleasant amble back to the surface with a few climbs and a crawl in mud up to the eyes (Herpes III).

Another memorable trip was to Growling Swallet where Stefan and I used climbing poles (carried in on an earlier trip) to ascend a waterfall of some 50 feet or so. The climbing poles were not long enough so we had to haul them up to a ledge and use them again with the top tied back and held by Stefan while I gingerly ascended. My impression is that Tasmanian cavers regard Kiwi cavers as very expendable. On reaching the top of the waterfall, time was running out so we did a quick recky up stream before returning, leaving a rope rigged on the waterfall.

Tasmanian caving is both demanding and rewarding. There is tons (tonnes?) of potential but very few cavers willing to take the necessary repeated self abuse. The most significant area for sporty vertical caving is the subject of a logging concession and access is by permit. A few days of fine weather can see entry barred due to fire danger when the water levels are at their best. Despite this, a hard core of demented individuals who listen to weird music and SMOKE IN CAVES continue a fine tradition of "going where no man has gone before". I hope we will see more Tassie cavers over here for Australasia's best caving in the near future.

VARMINT POT

MARCH 4, 1985

PARTY: Martyn Carnes and Rolan Eberhard

Not to be deterred by the driving rain Martyn and I headed for Maydena on what was obviously going to be a truly miserable day. At the Eight Road a brief lull in the downpour gave us the chance to get changed and head off along the track. Our aim was to explore a shaft that had previously been located in the forest, roughly between Serendipity and Ice Tube. Needless to say the task of relocating the entrance proved a frustrating affair. After some two hours of searching, the heavy rain turned into hail and we were both cold, wet and our dedication was rapidly fading. Following a decision that the day was destined to be non-productive and starting our return to the car, Martyn managed to find the elusive cave entrance. By this stage our morale was not noticeably improved by that fact, although it was slightly warmer and drier below ground.

We descended the initial mud slope to a squeeze that had halted previous exploration. Some concentrated work with a hammer saw the squeeze enlarged to allow access to what was apparently a reasonable pitch beyond. A rope was rigged and I abseiled to a comfortable ledge overlooking a second shaft. It was while waiting for Martyn to descend with more rope that I noticed the carpet of bones that I was crushing underfoot. Closer inspection revealed an interesting array of skulls and bones of various forest varmints. These included possums, wallabies, echidnas, wombat, bandicoot and also a fragmented skull of the extinct Tasmanian Tiger. Despite these zoological distractions a rope was quickly rigged down the next short pitch, at the base of which a spacious tunnel could be seen descending. Any vague flutters of optimism were extinguished by a most inappropriate and also very terminal mud choke below the pitch. We estimated the depth to be around 60 metres and started our ascent. At the ledge below the first pitch I explored a short length of rift passage, and collected a selection of the bones. For future reference a brief description of how to locate the cave is given below.

VARMINT POT location description: From Growling Swallet follow the track towards Icetube. Just after crossing the Trapdoor Swallet streams there is a minor dry valley on the right. Follow the dry valley uphill, initially past limestone cliffs. The valley eventually terminates in a large but choked doline. Well before the doline is reached, blue tapes lead off on the right to Varmint Pot, a short distance uphill.

Rolan Eberhard

MOLE CREEK

Easter 1985

PARTY: Martyn Carnes, Adrienne Van Schie, Stefan and Rolan Eberhard

Over Easter the four of us decided to spend a few days at Mole Creek doing tourist trips and experiencing a change of scenery. A brief resume of trips done over the four day period is given below. By the end of our stay it was generally agreed that a trip to Mole Creek once a year is enough.

Friday: Stefan and Martyn arrived at Mole Creek. Their attempts to locate Kelly's Pot were unsuccessful.

Saturday: Martyn and Stefan went downstream in Herbert's Pot. They spent some time bashing the talus at the draughting hole, without making a breakthrough. Rolan and Adrienne arrived at Mole Creek and did a leisurely trip through Croesus Cave.

Sunday: Everyone went to Dangerous Cave for a look at the upstream sump. A set a diving gear was carried down the jumbled talus climbs to streamlevel. To reach the upstream sump from where the stream is first met involves a tricky squeeze through talus blocks, followed immediately by two very short ducks, also between talus blocks. Proceeding upstream is a short section of open stream passage ending at the sump. The sump looked fairly promising and I kitted up with a single 16 foot tank for a look underwater. In poor visibility I could see the submerged passage continuing as a narrow rift, although lower down it was obviously more spacious. With alarming clouds of silt that seem a feature of Mole Creek sumps I did not make a serious push.

Monday: Stefan and Martyn went to Croesus Cave. Rolan and Adrienne located Soda Creek Cave and had a quick look inside. They drove to Westmoreland Cave. It was noted at the entrance that the stream was being diverted by a concrete conduit, and virtually no water was present in any part of the cave, with the exception of the final sump pool.

Rolan Eberhard

GROWLING SWALLET

28 APRIL, 1985

PARTY: Trevor Wailes, Stuart Nicholas, Rolan and Stefan Everhard

The aim of the trip was to introduce the recently returned Trev to the equally recently discovered "New Feeling" extension in Growling Swallet. In addition there was also surveying to finish, leads to push and photographs to take. Keeping with the trend of TCC trips lately one caving lamp failed as we climbed down the boulders in the entrance of Growling. The deceased lamp was Trevor's and Stuart who had had a New Feeling previously, generously lent his lamp and stayed on the surface. We proceeded into the cave and in the crawl leading off the main streamway it was noticeable that a strong draught normally present was almost totally absent. This may be due to atmospheric conditions, although it is possibly related to the fact that water levels were rather low.

Having completed the climb and short constricted section that follows, we took a rest in the large dry tunnel at the start of the extension. The cave passages in this area are apparently very old, in places obviously phreatic, and contain some fine calcite decorations. In order to preserve what constitutes the best decorated sections of Growling Swallet known so far, coloured tape was placed in some spots to act as a guide over delicate calcite floors and around crystal laden pools. Future parties must exercise particular care to minimise their impact on this area. There are excellent straws, stalactites, flowstone and the exquisite crystal pools are perhaps the best examples in Tasmania.

At the large chamber several attempts were made to photograph the massive 5 metre high stalagmite that stands in the middle of the chamber. We ascended the rubble slope beyond and surveyed into another spacious chamber nearby. This chamber starts with a flat mud floor but changes to a steeply ascending talus pile at the far end. We surveyed up to the highest point and then spent some time pushing various leads in the vicinity. Stefan explored a narrow but complex system of passages below the

rockpile, without reaching any definite end.

We then returned to the stalagmite chamber and descended the short pitch to the lower streamway. Our intention was to attempt following the main upstream continuation of the passage, through the extensive rockfall underneath the stalagmite chamber. Exploring the confusing jumble of boulders Stefan and I managed to locate a small passage heading upstream. In flaky sharp limestone the passage dwindled in size, eventually becoming impassible. There is still scope for further in this area, but our time limit was up and we started our exit from the cave, derigging at the same time.

Rolan Eberhard

THREE FALLS CAVE

5 May, 1985

PARTY: Martyn Carnes and Rolan Eberhard

The deepest point in Three Falls Cave had not been visited since 1981, when exploration was halted by a wet squeeze at a depth of -158 metres. Considering its appeal as a sporting trip of moderate difficulty Martyn and I decided to do Three Falls Cave. There was also the added attraction of the possibility of a connection with other nearby caves (Owl Pot??).

Water levels were very low and in the doline only the single main waterfall was flowing to any degree. The other two waterfalls had been reduced to a small shower near the main cave entrance. Large chunks of shattered rock indicated where parts of the upper edge of the doline had collapsed, rather a frightening prospect as we scuttled beneath the overhanging lip.

Efficient progress was made along the initial narrow sections and down the climb to the first pitch. Procrastination on the choice of a belay point led us to the conclusion that a bolt was called for. One was duly placed on the left wall a short distance out above the pitch. Problems occurred after sinking the bolt home when the driver refused to unscrew from the anchor in the generally accepted fashion. The thread from the driver remained in the anchor casing, and without a spanner we were unable to rectify the situation. No end of innovative attempts using karabiners, descenders, etc allowed us to unscrew the thread from the casing. It was at this point that our trip down Three Falls Cave took on the atmosphere of a challenge that was somewhat personal in nature. We retaliated to the redundancy of our bolt kit with an exposed traverse and rigged the pitch with a trace threaded behind a stalactite. As I waited at the bottom of the pitch a shout from Martyn above prompted me to jump aside. A large piece of flowstone landed beside me and shattered into numerous glittering fragments. This spectacle was very pretty but nevertheless unnerving.

We continued down the steep rift using surplus rope from the previous pitch as a handline. A short dilemma ensued as we decided to rig the next pitch from high in the rift (a longer pitch requiring several protectors) or straight down the waterfall (short but wet). Eventually we agreed on the latter alternative, using a large boulder wedged some distance back from the edge of the pitch as an anchor point. The flow of water down this pitch was observed to be considerably less than the largest surface waterfall. The water that cascaded onto us as we abseiled presumably originated from one or both of the smaller surface waterfalls. The destination of the main waterfall remains mysterious. Although wet our method of

descent proved convenient for a pendulum across to the rockfall chamber - normally a climb up from the base of the pitch is required. The fourth pitch of 23 metres was avoided by descending into the talus not far into the chamber from the waterfall, immediately after crossing a large fallen slab. The rockfall is loose and particular caution is advisable in this area. A 15 metre handline brought us out of the rockfall into a steeply sloping chamber. From here we climbed down to the stream and followed it to the edge of the last pitch.

The final pitch of 40 metres is an excellent abseil, freehanging beside the waterfall in a shaft of impressive dimensions. At the bottom we followed the stream along a narrow canyon until it lowered to a crawl. The uninviting squeeze was inspected but an upper level in the rift seemed a better prospect. I pursued the constricted vertical rift half choked with calcite, for several metres. It was awkward and gave no indication of opening out, and I soon became discouraged and gave it away. The trip back to the surface was accomplished without delay.

Rolan Eberhard

LAWRENCE CREEK RISING

4 MAY, 1985

Lawrence Creek Rising was previously dived in mid 1984 and with the recent low water levels I decided it was time for another look. The flow rate was much lower than on previous dives but I found the conditions less ideal. Visibility was reduced and small banks of silt had accumulated - probably in higher flow conditions the silt is washed out of the resurgence. The line had also become loose and firm anchoring is needed at some points. I swam as far as the squeeze at a depth of -18 metres, re-familiarising myself in preparation for future pushes.

The potential at this site is good for a very long cave dive. Considering the low relief between sink and resurgence it is quite possible that any connecting passages are totally submerged. Unfortunately it seems inevitable that long dives will be handicapped by decompression requirements and in the cold water this presents the usual problems. Lawrence Rivulet is presumably the principal source of water and sinks a distance of at least 3 kilometres away.

Several months ago Martyn and I spent a few hours locating the Lawrence Rivulet sink. Going on the information that the stream goes underground just after passing underneath Westfield Road (at the bridge beyond the turnoff to Welcome Stranger), a previous trip had followed the stream for some distance below the road without reaching a sink. Since that time I had checked aerial photographs of the area and could see that after flowing under the bridge, the stream appeared to take a course parallel with the road for a considerable distance before disappearing. For this reason we drove along Westfield Road past the bridge and then bashed into the scrub at various points in the hope of striking the sink. On the third attempt I followed the stream into a swampy depression, where it flowed into a bank of loose mud and logs. Some small muddy cave entrances were noted but these did not appear particularly promising. A brief look in the scrub behind the sink revealed numerous dolines, some of which appear to fill with water during heavy rain. Mud levels in the main sink depression indicate that at times it too fills with water, becoming a small lake. Although it is an interesting spot, diving the sink appears impractical. A complete traverse from resurgence to sink would therefore also be impossible, and at this stage the suggestion is rather fanciful.

Rolan Eberhard

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Real men live in caves — safe from sallying '70s women

By TRUDI McINTOSH

MANY men wounded by the 1970s wave of feminism, have returned to their primeval cave — a plush, well guarded den, equipped with the latest high-tech hobbies and total independence, a leading psychologist says.

Back in the stone-age days, the cave offered protection against sabre-tooth tigers, and a retreat where man, the hunter, returned to be feted by his wife and family.

But a Melbourne psychologist and psychotherapist, Mr John Message, says today's male dens offer safety from psychological threats rather than real tigers.

Relaxing in his own den, a painting-lined office with busts of Wagner and Beethoven, Mr Message explained that the swing back to dens all started with the American best-seller *Real Men Don't Eat Quiche*.

"Up until then we had the '60s and '70s 'peoples movement', part of which was the feminism wave, but that book really marked the turning point back to conservatism and a desire by men, wounded in a marriage or relationship, to find real romance.

"And I mean romance in the grand sense, of Wagner and Shakespeare, passion which had been drowned by two decades of marital wrangling and battling for equality of the sexes.

"The feminists had a valid case, but overstated it, and the result was a swing back to more traditional roles, matching the swing to conservative politics.

"We now have men valuing the stereotypic maleness and women valuing stereotypic femaleness. It is almost chic to be sexually prejudiced again... pretty cool to be either a male or female chauvinist."

The trouble, Mr Message said, was that too many '70s hunters came home to a pile of dirty nappies, a tired career wife and a host of chores they did not want to share.

"There is a residual of the archetypal hunter buried in every man. We men look back with rose-coloured glasses on our adolescence, when we were independent and had the pleasures of intimacy, sexuality, sensuality and freedom to do the male stereotype things... be the hunter, if you like.

"Our lives are either totally predictable and boring or horrendously frightening, depending on our chances of survival in a nuclear age. What's missing is the middle ground where real passion, romance, took place.

"It's trying to get in touch with the magic again, the magic of the hunt, climbing mountains, being a VFL star or being a Rudolph Nureyev. The den is a return to that, a bit like wearing medals on your chest, a peg on which to hang your identity."

But the 1985 den is far different from its '50s predecessor. Instead of stuffed moose heads today's trophies are more likely to be a \$5000 stereo system or a \$20,000 work of art.

During the past 15 years many men had "graciously acknowledged" those demands by women for equality in the same way that board-room executives had bowed to proposals from subordinates for joint policy-making.

Men felt the pinch and rebelled, retreating to their dens to lick their wounds. They had a choice: adopt a role of equality, and the result was many men became better mothers than the mothers, or swing away completely.