

**Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club**  
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# **SPELEO SPIEL**

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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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TCC TROG TALK AND TRIVIA

The meeting held recently (this Spiel is a bit later than the date suggests!) with regard to the continuing membership of TCC in ASF certainly brought out some of the rarely seen faces. After some generally constructive discussion (something new there to start with...) the vote was held and went in favour of retaining our ASF membership by a substantial majority.

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Early in February a Swiss film crew will arrive fresh from the snows of Switzerland. Two members of the set-up, Gerald and Rosemarie Favre, were here a couple of years ago essentially just touring. They have decided to return in order to make a film along the lines of "The Seven Underground Wonders of Australia". Starting in Sydney and then moving directly to Tassie, they will be in our state for about two weeks and Australia about three months. During their time here they wish to get footage of some waterfall shafts, underground rivers, underground action (make of that what you will!), maybe some diving in Junee (they are cave divers as well), surface karst on Mt Anne and some of the Mole Creek decoration. Despite the apparent enormity of the task, this is by no means their first underground filming venture. It is in fact the last in a series of six films on caving, caves and karst in France, Iceland, Hawaii, Southern Africa and PNG, and shortly Australia.

These guys WILL NEED OUR HELP during their visit if only for cave location. Let Stu know ASAP the days that you can help Spelefilm Enterprise. They will arrive about Feb 9 and depart about Feb 22. They are fit and certainly competent cavers, so there should be no problem at all! This is an opportunity to cave with some really great people and assist them in their endeavour to show some of our underground heritage to the rest of the world.

MAKE SURE YOU HELP!

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JUNEE FLORENTINE

3 September, 1985

PARTY: Andrew Briggs and Chris Davies

A deep narrow rift was found a month previously by Jeanine Davies on a bush bashing and fungus photographing day. The entrance is 100 to 200 metres north and uphill from Rift Cave (JF-34), over a small ridge to the left of Rift stream. The cave consists of a 2 to 3 metre wide by 3 to 4 metre high rift trending north and descending at about 80 degrees in a series of steps. It terminates with a sandy floor at about 70 metres depth.

No number tag was found, although it may have been obliterated by the giant myrtle which has recently fallen into the entrance. The only notable feature was the prescence of several large boulders with no visable means of support!

Chris Davies

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SPLASH POT - JF-10

September, 1985

PARTY: Martyn Carnes and Rolan Eberhard

Sitting in the car at the top of Junee Quarry Road looking at heavy rain falling without any indication of respite, we came very close to choosing an activity other than caving for the day. Eventually Martyn's exceptional enthusiasm shone through, and he led the way towards Splash Pot.

Our descent of the cave was without incident, although while abseiling the last pitch the origin of the name Splash Pot is particularly apparent. At the base of this pitch is a higher chamber where the stream flows into a narrow and awkward canyon. Following the stream on an exploration trip in 1973, Peter Shaw later wrote (SS 79): "Eventually a section which was too narrow halted me. A hammer would be necessary to continue." For this reason we had brought a hammer and set to work enlarging the rift, presumably at the point where Peter had been stopped. Finally enough rock had been chipped away and I was able to squeeze through the constriction and continue along the rift. Unfortunately the passage remained consistently tight and awkward, separated by very short but encouraging open stretches. Eventually I halted at a more intimidating squeeze, where perhaps some effort with a hammer would be necessary to get through. We returned to the surface and were confronted with the discouraging sight of a layer of snow covering the ground.

Despite the tortuous nature of this lead, I feel that further exploration could prove rewarding. Splash Pot is close to Khazad-dum with at least equal depth potential. On this trip an estimated 8 metres of depth was added to the cave, giving a new depth in the order of 106 metres.

Rolan Eberhard

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DIVING THE UPSTREAM SUMP IN PENDANT POT

13 October, 1985

PARTY: Peter Cover, Tim Sprod and Nick Hume

A perfect day at Maydena. However keenness overcame our sensibilities and we went underground anyway. Once in Black River, the ritual coffee brewing got under way, together with the ritual entry into a cold clammy wet suit - brrrrr!

We wandered the now familiar "yellow" track, past National Gallery, along a line

of features (generally blocked) to a small doline that held a narrow "going" rift. Stefan whacked in a bolt within the rift to allow a freehanging pitch of some 33 metres. This was backed up by 15 metres of rope secured to a chockstone at the entrance of the cave. Stef descended and reported another big pitch, whereupon the rest of us eagerly followed down with more rope.

Stef rigged this next 44 metre drop from a small chock, backed up by the rope from the first pitch. There was definitely a paucity of natural anchor points in this place, a trend that was to continue through the rest of the cave. Two dubious pitons from my dwindling peg rack side-pulled the main 9mm rope (mine!) out of harm's way. I followed Stefan down this somewhat moist drop, rigging another sidepull about halfway down. This cave could possibly be nice and dry in normal conditions, however snow melt combined with the strong draught made for quite chilly weather in the cave. We strolled a mere few metres to the next drop of apparently 60 metres. This pitch was broken into two sections. A short 7 metre section belayed to an interesting tower of sculpted rock, led to a small floor area complete with pool, this pool being used for various functions! The second section went freehanging (except for two protectors) from a bolt down about 45 metres, to another pool above a 36 metre pitch. This pitch was left undescended, for our remaining 15 metre rope wouldn't fit.

We left the place. I managed to do most of the derigging on the way out, which was simplified by the very vertical nature of the cave. The ropes were simply tied together and hauled up in stages all the way from the bottom. Nicer than pack-hauling, but exposing the pile of rope to stones from above. The return walk to the quarry was almost pleasant, praise be to the instigators of this new access track (Arthur Clarke et al).

The cave draughts strongly, hinting at large development below, if not a connection with Exit Cave itself. It is a sporting, utterly vertical cave, still going at over -150 metres, to the top of an undescended 36 metre pitch. Definitely worth a return bottoming / survey trip.

Nick Hume

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#### ASTEROID POT - HAVING YET ANOTHER DIG AT THE FLORENTINE

2 NOVEMBER, 1985

PARTY: Stuart Nicholas, Martyn Carnes and Nick Hume

Another ghastly 5 am start, but at least we had a slack day to look forward to. The original idea was to spend half the day digging and the other half bushbashing, but a minor breakthrough in Asteroid saw us persisting with the former for the rest of the day.

Crowbars, shovels, lump hammers and other unaccustomed impedimenta were lowered down the now sizable hole and we each took turns digging away and removing the mud. Not a particularly stimulating task this, however going down through numerous soil horizons, with evidence of ancient bushfires could have been interesting for some.

Eventually a hollow appeared and this was enlarged to reveal a small draughting tube. Small stones lobbed down this seemed to travel a short distance beyond. Fresh wet walls visible at the end of the tube spurred us on to more digging, this to enlarge the tube sufficiently to allow a head first entry and thus a bit of a look about. Due to the awkward nature of digging in such a confined space, this



HO, HO, HO AND ALL THAT JAZZ .....

took some time. Towards the end of the day, Stu managed a somersault and peered down yet more "diggable" tube. Slightly discouraging, however the strong draught and the proximity of this hole to the far end of Serendipity, could make further work worthwhile, but you would have to be keen!! Any future trips to Asteroid should be equipped with some caving ladder, or run the risk of having to dig through to Serendip!

We left the haul bucket (somewhat the worse for wear) and the line in situ, ie its still rigged. Idle lazing in the sun back at the cars, completed a quite pleasant day. Anyone with a case of AKADAMA fruit juice for sale should contact Stu for a guaranteed immediate sale!

Nick Hume

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WELCOME STRANGER and GROWLING SWALLET 2 November, 1985

PARTY: Sharon Collins, Paul Vligt, Val Latham, Andrew Klekociuk, Cassie McClaren, Jean ? and Nick Hume.

The usual pleasant stroll through Welcome Stranger was enlivened somewhat by some contrived squeezes for the benefit of these keen beginners. I attempted some explanation of speleogenesis which was received enthusiastically, much to my surprise. I disappeared on numerous occasions to allow the group the opportunity to find their own way about (something to do with enhancing group dynamics), reappearing suddenly in baffling locations - a sort of cave guide with a bit of mime thrown in!

A visit to Growling Swallet was made which everyone found to be very impressive, even in the very low water conditions. We went most of the way to the sump, noting a fair number of glowworms in the major dry chamber half way down. Andrew removed a handhold in the dry bypass of the entrance series, to fall some four metres into a pool of water. This was fantastic to watch, though frightening some of us more than Andrew! Other than that, all the climbs were completed very competently. Indeed two rock climbing types attempted a complete wall traverse of the cave, rather than wade through the cold water - a bit slow but very well done.

When the roar of Growling Swallet died away Val asked the penultimate question - "Do you do this for fun??" She told us that it was possibly the most adventurous thing she had ever done! We all got fairly wet of course, and when one of the girls stripped off back at the carpark, I was gentlemanly and proffered her a spare pair of my underpants!

We met up with the mob from "Porcupine Pot" back at the National Park Hotel. Some refreshment was had between introductions, Trev muttering something about leading a few beginners trips himself. These people have some abseiling experience and are keen to do a bit of SRT practice sometime, as well as some more caving also.

Nick Hume

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PORCUPINE POT

9 November, 1985

PARTY: Stuart Nicholas, Rolan and Stefan Eberhard, Chris Davies and Nick Hume

In typically perverse, perservering TCC fashion, there had been two trips to PP

prior to this one. The first trip had enlarged an impassable rift at a depth of 60 metres, by various interesting methods, to reveal a going cave. The second trip had pushed on further, down several pitches to a good sized breakdown chamber, proven by survey to be at -156 metres. Further exploration on the same trip intersected a nice sized stream passage, containing what was speculated to be the water from Tassie Pot. Downstream development of the cave hinted at the possibility of an extensive horizontal system, possibly heading towards both the Growling Swallet and Owl Pot areas.

This day, an early start unfortunately excluded some of the more nocturnal members of the club. I say unfortunately, because the day developed into quite a warm one, providing the starters with pleasantly dry caving conditions, in marked contrast to the predictions of our elder statesman. We were underground by 8 am!!

The floor of the Porcupine Pot doline is choked with fallen logs and the usual scunge. However a way over this can be found, higher in the entrance rift, via a short squeezey ladder pitch. This leads to various interesting downclimbs, two of which are worthy of a handline. Below is a more spacious area of cave that includes a 15 metre pitch rigged with ladder. This is anchored with a header around an obvious bollard low on the right hand side, overlooking the drop. Following on from this is a series of three pitches stacked on top of each other. These are described in order of descent:

(a) A 20 metre pitch from a boulder in the main passage and rebelayed on a head high fluting on the righthand side to allow the rope to free hang.

(b) Another 20 metre pitch tied back to the previous rope. This goes free from a bolt placed on the left side of the narrow rift atop the pitch.

(c) A 5 to 6 metre pitch that is below an area containing a decidedly dangerous table sized slab of rock which is scarcely in balance. This brings you to the big chamber.

We downclimbed large breakdown blocks losing some height (gaining depth!) before arriving at the trunk passage carrying what is possibly the Tassie Pot stream. Ignoring the upstream lead, we followed the flow of the water, I guess to see how far things went in the direction of Growling. This large and easygoing passage terminated after something like 150 metres, constricting to two leads. Rolan looked at a side chamber while Stef and I crawled along some 50 metres of flattener that was taking all the water. The cobblestone flooring of this "squeezeaway" was irksome and wet to negotiate. However before long Stef gave off some animal yelps of delight and we emerged into a considerably bigger stream passage than the one before! This contained a separate and much larger stream, and perhaps originating from the Owl Pot / Three Falls Cave system, the Tassie Pot (?) water being a mere tributary!

Having conveniently left our surveying gear at the start of the crawl, we ran off downstream, again ignoring the upstream lead. After a short distance the huge passage appeared to sump. However, a bit of floundering about revealed a way on into a small side chamber that was littered with very fresh breakdown..... A large loose "flying buttress" of rock suspended in the ceiling appeared very keen to flatten yours truly, so favouring discretion, I retreated to the waters and found a safer bypass into yet another huge chamber. This took the form of a massive hall, leading off at right angles to the stream, upwards and away out of sight.

Mesmerised by this, we wandered up over fresh breakdown, travelling some two hundred metres until it terminated below a small inlet aven. In places the hall is some 20 metres wide and very reminiscent of Genghis Khan with various interesting

types of decoration being present. Stefan climbed into the ceiling, while I squirmed downstream between massive blocks without finding anything definite. Rolan had joined us at this stage and we proceeded with further exploration of the place, skidding on thick layers of gooey mud. It made us ponder the conditions required to flood this place.

Returning to the stream, we swam/crawled into another constricted passage following the water. A few dry oxbows and sidechambers were thrown in for light relief. After a couple of hundred metres, this transformed itself into tortuous and terminal looking stuff at which point I gave it away. Stefan continued bravely, forcing a tight duck by lying on his back fully immersed and struggling a lot. Not a very inspiring act for Rolan and myself to follow, though Rolan reluctantly passed it moments before Stefan yelled back that the lead had finished! We were pretty numbed by the cold water at this stage, evidenced by a rock falling on my hand with no pain being felt.

Retreating to the "Tassie Pot - Owl Pot" stream junction, Stefan noticed some cigarette butts, indicating that Chris at least had been hereabouts. We figured that Chris and Stu were probably on their way out of the cave, so we returned through the flattener to begin surveying back to the bottom of the pitch series. Unknown to us Stu and Chris were actually pursuing the "Owl Pot" (up)stream lead, possibly coming very close indeed to that system. They independently paced out 750 metres in sizeable well decorated passage, before it flattened out somewhat, apparently still going. [Stu's note: Most of this passage was Exit sized, with the sand and large clear blue-tinted stream making it almost tropical, except for a couple of minor differences. The last couple of hundred metres was in stream passage about 2 metres wide and less than that high, heading along strike making for an inverted V roof and rather wet progress.... At the extreme reached, the roof lowers to within about 150 to 200 mm of the stream level - enough disincentive to pack it in for the day. A left side branch here goes up into a low roofed breakdown chamber containing some quite exquisite decoration - helictites and aragonite crystals abound, making great photographic subjects for anyone keen enough to drag the necessary hardware right up there.]

Its really hard surveying when you're shivering uncontrollably - the small numbers in the window dance through 10 to 20 degrees! How Stefan managed to do the book is beyond me, as we were bloody freezing. Back near the base of the pitch we heard Stu and Chris behind us, much to our surprise. Actually we heard them behind/below us for the next ten minutes or so, as they had misplaced the exit climb from the trunk passage. You can visualize the sort of thing: ".....where are you guys? ..... UP HERE! ..... where's here? ..... gawd! ....." They rejoined us quite excited about their discoveries.

We had something of a food binge, to reduce all possible bulk in our packs - such were our feelings about packhauling through the more intimate sections on the way out. Finally emerging around 3 pm we luxuriated in the warm sun, warding off mosquitoes and irrelevant talk. Stu couldn't understand why we were so lacklustre about the whole thing: "It was a fantastic day's caving. You blokes, you know, carry on as though it never happened." Stuey was right of course, it was a pretty good bit of caving. We had found well over a kilometre of new cave and there were still numerous leads to look at that have potential to connect to neighbouring systems. A return trip will be under way pretty soon to push the cave and do heaps of surveying to find out just where it goes.

Nick Hume

Note: Subsequent surveying seems to indicate that the streams in PP may well be separate from both Owl Pot/Three Falls and Tassie Pot - the stream passages in all



HO, HO, HO AND ALL THAT JAZZ .....

these systems are essentially parallel with no evidence so far of any links between them!!

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IDA BAY

10 November, 1985

PARTY: Arthur Clarke, Trevor Wailes, Martyn Carnes and Nick Hume

A distinct tone of slackness pervaded this trip, probably due to the exertions of the previous day in pushing Porcupine Pot. The story goes something like this..... Arthur had found several holes along the contact, between "Cyclops" and "Chicken Bone Pot". For want of something to do, the three of us joined forces with Arthur, "us" having a look at these holes while Arthur taped and surface explored further on.

First on the agenda was IB-64, a mere 5 or 6 metres from C-B-P. It had a nice enough 16 metre pitch, which Trev rigged, though we noticed a notch on an obvious bollard, indicating predictably that we were not the first. I descended to the floor of the shaft, which was littered with trees, frogs and the lint from a blue fibre pile jacket (Mick Flint's)! A threatened rift led for several metres to the inevitable blockage. This could be removed with explosives but from what I saw, it did not look promising beyond. There was no draught present.

We each took turns SRT'ing and grovelling in numerous holes along the contact, none of which looked the least inclined to go anywhere. Arthur returned with much the same story, at which we departed for the cars and some sunbaking. A pleasant enough day, but totally unproductive.

Nick Hume

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NIX SCHOOL OF UNDERGROUND ACTIVITIES....

November 11, 16 and 17, 1985 at various locations

Those involved at various times: Leigh, Paul, Jean, Sharon, Eric, John(?), Rod, Brenda, Martyn and Nick.

Two SRT pratice sessions at "Burnt Offerings" in South Hobart, culminated in a beginners trip to Ida Bay on the 17th. The day at "The Bay" involved a shortish pitch with a rebelay thrown in and was negotiated with reasonable efficiency by the "cadets". Most thoroughly enjoyed the experience, except for Martyn and I who were a little hungover from the previous night's housewarming at Mike and Chris Edwards.

These beginners are very keen to do more and are really great people. Who's turn is it next to lead a beginners trip? Many thanks to Chris and Mike Edwards for a great Saturday night!

Nick Hume

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