

**Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club**  
**ESTABLISHED 1946**

# **SPELEO SPIEL**

**P.O. Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania, 7005**

**Registered by Australia Post – Publication No. TBH 0201**



NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Newsletter Annual Subscription \$10.00, Single copies \$1, Non-members \$2.00

\*\*\*\*\*

PRESIDENT / QUARTERMASTER:

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

SECRETARY:

Martyn Carnes - 8A Lambert Avenue, Sandy Bay 7005. Ph 252659

TREASURER:

Chris Davies - C/- 412 Huon Road, South Hobart, Tas 7000. Ph 723617

EDITOR / TYPIST:

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

\*\*\*\*\*

FORWARD PROGRAM IDEAS AND PLANS

(a) Survey of a few remaining bits of Serendipity and possible derig trip. A great chance to see the place on a relativley "easy" trip. Contact: Nick Hume 251934 (home).

(b) Push the remaining upstream lead in Porcupine Pot and look at one or two inlets that have not been checked. Contact: Nick Hume 251934 (home).

(c) March 1,2: Weekend at Mole Creek. Possible trips include Rat Hole and Herberts Pot. Anyone welcome. Contact: Peter Cover 641150 (home).

=====

MORE OF THE USUAL TRIVIA AND OTHER BITZ

A recent circular from the ASF Handbook Commission indicates that the Karst Index is completed and currently at the printers. A printed copy will be available at the January ASF Committee Meeting, and bulk supplies are expected to be available in February.

The book turned out to be 492 pages, including 290 pages of cave details, 63 pages of map details, and 16 pages of reference details. Also included are length and depth statistics, gazetteer of cave names, the five ASF standards related to documentation, Karst Index system description and an address list.

The price to ASF members is \$25 per copy plus freight, payable with order, and with a discount of 10% for orders of 10 or more copies ordered at one time, and 5% for 5. Cheques should be made payable to "ASF HANDBOOK" and sent or handed to Peter Matthews. Freight details will be sorted out at the January meeting in Melbourne. We may well buy ten anyway and resell them upon arrival. See Stu for more details, placing orders and so on.

.....

Looks like we're slipping up in the length stakes. Apparently recent exploration in Mullamullang Cave on the Nullarbor has pushed the length of that system from something like 15 km to over 30 km !!!!! Exit Cave has taken an exit from being number one long cave in Oz. Congratulations to "whoever" for that effort. The cave is very dry and hot making exploration quite as much, if not more of, an epic than similar work here. Water has to be carried in and all wastes removed with the high salinity of the cave environment making conditions quite unpleasant.

.....

Several of our members are giving the dank underworld a miss for a few weeks in favour of the alpine crispness of New Zealand. Nothing like leaving a mountain hut at 3 am on a cold blustery morning, but they say its fun so it must be! Not much spring snow late last year has apparently left conditions a little the worse for wear. Big slots abound and there is more exposed "rock" than usual, but if all else fails one could always go caving up at Nelson or north of Greymouth on the west coast of the South Island. At least there wouldn't be any of those ugly alpine starts!

+++++

#### THE PROPOSED CHRISTMAS '85 PRECIPITOUS EXPEDITION

The expedition was thwarted at the last minute due to the sudden unavailability of a seaplane to land us on New River Lagoon. The seaplane was deemed necessary to place the cavers and their gear close to the cave area. Given the time limitation for the expedition itself (this included a requirement of up to three days to walk out) it was felt that there were no other practical avenues open for continuing with the trip, so it was called off.

The Precipitous Bluff area appears very promising for the discovery of new outflow caves as well as vertical systems (depth potential limited to 200 metres). The steep nature of the terrain between the contact and the Lagoon allows the possibility of connecting holes found high on the slopes of PB with entrances down at sea level. I flew over the area twice during the holiday break and it looks an exciting and compact karst region, and while it has been looked at briefly before, still offers very good scope for heaps more exploratory caving.

Both authors, and particularly Stefan, have done considerable groundwork on the region leading up to the aborted trip, and we are both very keen to have another go, possibly at Easter or Christmas this year. To make the trip feasible we need a few more people interested enough to come along too. If you fancy joining an inexpensive "caving expedition of a lifetime" type trip, contact either of the authors to discuss arrangements.

Nick Hume  
Stefan Eberhard

+++++

#### REVELATION CAVE IB-1

In May 1969 an uninspiring entrance was found near Hobbit Hole at Ida Bay. The explorers were pessimistic about the chances that it would prove to be a rewarding cave, but surprise awaited them. Several short climbs led down to the top of a pitch, and the name Revelation Cave was bestowed. The following day the pitch was descended and a large fissure where several high avens entered was explored. Although a choke stopped progress, the direction of the cave and the presence of a

draught indicated a connection with Exit might be possible. The following week a return trip attempted digging through the blockage. A sizeable stream was flowing through the cave and what had previously been a dry pitch was now a soaking waterfall. Two metres of progress was made at the dig before it was decided any breakthrough would require a major effort. The cavers emerged as daylight faded, and spent some time lost in the scrub before finally locating the old quarry. The following year a further fruitless attempt tried digging at the deepest point.

The first descent of Revelation Cave in recent years was in September 1984. Several attempts were made to pass a wet squeeze in the stream bed, however unfortunately the ceiling lowered to an impossibly low level. A considerable draught reported in the original trip reports was barely detectable. A survey was completed establishing the total depth of Revelation Cave at 121 metres. The surveyed length is 320 metres. Further digging may prove rewarding and is in a relatively dry and comfortable location. The cave is only small, but nevertheless provides an enjoyable trip. Its relationship with nearby Yodellers Pot is yet to be established by survey.

References: Speleo Spiel 36, 37, 42, 202.

Rolan Eberhard

+++++

#### PORCUPINE POT JF-387 - AN EXPLORATION OVERVIEW

Porcupine Pot had long been considered a good prospect since its discovery by Stefan Eberhard in 1982. The main entrance was found to be blocked with boulders, but a small upper-level was noticed. A single wedged rock stood in the way and in 1984 Duncan Holland and I returned and managed to remove the offending rock. We were confronted with a very tight squeeze onto a short pitch, through which a cool breeze blew. Some prolonged hammering enlarged the squeeze sufficiently to allow us to descend the pitch. This squeeze remains an annoying diversion for the less lithe caver! A jagged descending rift was followed to a point where yet another wedged boulder stood in the way. Duncan (who is irrepressible) sensed that these obstacles must hide something very important. By sheer violence and bad language he moved the rock and the way on lay open!! Alas for us - a pitch lay beyond and we were without further gear to descend it. The next day Trevor, Stefan and Martyn returned. They descended the 15 metre pitch but to no one's surprise an impossibly tight squeeze barred the way on.

At that time our perserverance had been strained to the limit, but in October '85 NEW TECHNOLOGY became available to TCC..... Even the most stubborn caves can be reasonable when explosives are used! The slot was enlarged with ease and I was able to continue down the steeply descending rift. I stopped where the entrance rift intersected a much larger passage - a vertical drop lay ahead.....

On November 3, 1985 Alec Marr, Martyn Carnes, Trevor Wailes, Stefan Eberhard and I returned to continue exploration of Porcupine Pot. Upon gaining the exploration front a rope was rigged and we descended an 18 metre pitch. Another pitch followed immediately. Vowing to bring a bolt kit in future, we rigged rope from various dubious anchor points and abseiled down.

Reaching an extensive rockfall we had only time left for a superficial check of the leads. At one end I found a small stream entering, which I followed upstream for some distance. Stefan located a major downstream passage, and he followed this

For some distance with no end in sight. By this stage we were forced to abandon exploration and start our return to the surface in order to meet the gate deadline. I look forward to the next trip with optimism.

Rolan Eberhard

+++++

NOTES ON FLICK MINTS HOLE - JF-371

Flick Mints Hole was recently (late 1985) explored in an exciting series of trips that bottomed the cave at a depth of 204 metres. It currently ranks 12th on the list of Australia's deepest caves. A survey and exploration description were published in Speleo Spiel 210. The major part of the survey was accomplished by Trevor Wailes and Rolan Eberhard on October 25, 1985, completing a traverse from The Cramps to the deepest point. Unfortunately on a previous survey trip the compass was not functioning correctly and for this reason a plan has not been published. It can be seen, however, that the basic trend of the cave is in a south easterly direction, as other caves in the area generally follow. The total surveyed length of the system is 465 metres.

A surface survey from Serendipity revealed Flick Mints Hole is 70 metres higher than the lower (JF-344) Serendipity entrance. It was initially theorised that Flick Mints may connect with the lower horizontal passages in Serendipity but when the plan survey of both caves was plotted it could be seen that Flick Mints extends well beyond the downstream limit of Serendipity. A connection with currently known parts of Serendipity therefore appears unlikely, although a tantalizing suggestion is that Mick Flints joins Serendipity in passages beyond the downstream sumps. The potential depth of 340 metres was not attained, much to the disappointment of the explorers. Some leads still remain to be investigated and a list of the more obvious exploration prospects is given below. The origin of a prominent draught noticeable higher up in the cave (The Cramps in particular) can only be surmised.

(1) At the top of Pitch 2 it is possible to look up into a passage that apparently continues at a higher level. It is not unlikely that this passage leads to the top of the 55 metre shaft, which would make an impressive long abseil. A belayed climb would be needed to reach it.

(2) There is an open area beyond Hammerlock Passage, at the top of the pitch into Decadence. An aven enters here and it has been suggested that the draught present higher up in the cave may somehow be related to this aven (??).

(3) At the far end of Decadence chamber an upper level continuation can be seen. Reaching this would require a sustained and hazardous climb.

(4) At the deepest point, the stream sinks into fallen boulders. Descending into the boulders one can follow the stream for a short distance, although prospects for a breakthrough do not look good. It is an area that tends to promote a feeling of paranoia in many cavers!

Flick Mints Hole is a challenging cave, providing sporting trips of respectable difficulty. It has six pitches, including the splendid 55 metre third shaft. The cave is one of variety with some entertaining sections of passage. Cavers who find The Cramps demoralising will experience utter despair in Hammerlock, particularly if full cave packs are carried. Having struggled through Hammerlock and descended the next pitch, Decadence is a spacious and welcome relief. A rather creepy rockfall must then be negotiated to reach the final pitch. Omnium must rate as one of the longest chambers in the Florentine Valley, with a length of 120 metres and a height



and width of over 20 metres in the middle. At one end of Omnium is the deepest point, where the stream showers onto the rockfall.

A description of how the cave was rigged during exploration is given below:

Pitch (1): 43 metres. Rigged from a tree overhanging the shaft, with a redirection to a large stalagmite halfway down. The tree shudders in an interesting fashion as cavers prusik the pitch.

Pitch (2): 14 metres. Belayed from a large boulder cemented in flowstone near the edge of the pitch.

Pitch (3): 55 metres. Initially belayed to a bolt (hanger in place) on the left, well back from the narrow slot at the start of the pitch. After squeezing through the slot at stream level and out into the shaft, abseil about 5 metres and pendulum to a small ledge on the right (as you abseil). There is a bolt in the wall at head level, which can be used as belay for the major part of the pitch. A wire trace was used to protect the rope immediately below the bolt. Towards the base of the shaft are several ledges, and some cavers may wish to use re-belays here. The next pitch is just a continuation of this shaft.

Pitch (4): 8 metres. Belayed with wire trace to natural features.

Pitch (5): 15 metres. A wire trace and a small wired chock were used to rig, with one protector at the lip.

Pitch (6): 12 metres. Various boulders were used to rig from.

Rolan Eberhard

+++++

FLORENTINE VALLEY

23 November, 1985

PARTY: Stefan and Rolan Eberhard

The morning was spent accomplishing a surface survey of almost two kilometres from Tassy Pot to Porcupine Pot. This will enable the recent spectacular extensions in Porcupine Pot to be plotted on a master plan showing other caves in the area. The relationship between Porcupine Pot, Tassy Pot and Owl Pot should become clearer, and hopefully possible connections will be apparent.

Later in the day, while Stefan went scrub-bashing, I went to Punishment Pot for yet another attempt to penetrate this cave. This time I used explosives to enlarge a squeeze in the small draughting hole in the doline. Setting up the charges was difficult in awkward and constricted conditions. Although I removed the squeeze, the cave did not look particularly promising beyond. Rockfall seems to have blocked most leads, and digging may be required. My inspection was only superficial and another trip is warranted.

Rolan Eberhard

+++++

ANOTHER PORCUPINE IN THE POT.....

24 November, 1985

PARTY: Trevor Wailes, Stefan Eberhard, Steve Bunton and Nick Hume

CAUGHT BY THE SOFTWARE AGAIN..... See next page for report

Stef, Steve and I got away early, much to Trev's disgust. Even with a late permit, we still required a lot of time for surveying and poking about in PP. The three of us were getting ready by the side of the Nine Road around 8 am, when to our utter disbelief, the earth shook, and around the corner came Trev's van! It was almost a religious moment. By the time we had relocated our lower jaws, Chris and Dale tumbled out of the van too. These two were going to do some bushbashing towards Growling, Trev though was coming with us.

The familiar vertical section of the cave was fairly fast and easy going for us old hands, however, "newcomer" Steve was I suspect possibly impressed with it all. This was certainly the case in two or three of the vertical "squeezes". He was last man down the pitch series and could be heard a long way off, discoursing on terminated pregnancies and the like. How that subject could be related to this cave, we weren't sure.

After only minor stuffing about we made our way down to the Tassie Pot (?????) stream and enjoyed some fine crawling through the flattener into the Owl Pot (?????) stream. Here we wandered upstream to push some possible continuations mentioned by Stu and Chris on their original exploration of that area of the cave two weeks earlier.

The upstream section of the cave is magnificent. Initially formed as a large loose floored chamber, the way on bypasses another flattener to emerge in very nice passage indeed. This continues for some distance, following up the stream to a 15 metre wide by 10 metre high chamber where the water emerges from a smaller side passage near the base of a wet aven. We ignored the side passage for the moment and followed the trend of the major passage to where it ended in a blockage of collapsed roof. Trev and Stef dispersed on various continuation finding forays without success.

We reassembled at a nicely decorated corner to begin the survey out which was actually pleasurable, due to the superb nature of this place. The huge passage was dry and flat floored enough to sprint along, a rare piece of cave indeed. We explored the side passage containing the stream up to a sump within dangerous looking blockage. This didn't look at all promising and no sane person would attempt to find a way on here. Above the sump a fresh breakdown slope led to a higher level chamber containing some exquisite aragonite flowers. We spent some time looking for a way back to the stream. Stef pushed a difficult squeeze to go another 50 metres through awkward ground, without finding a bypass. This lead still goes, but only just.

We began surveying again, down through the wet pools to re-emerge in the major passage. It was a relief to return to doing 50 metre survey legs again. Surveying went fairly smoothly though we were definitely cooling off the idea as the instruments became progressively more fogged and difficult to read. Cold and sluggish on returning to the Tassie Pot (?????) stream juncture, we aborted the idea of going on to survey the downstream section. In fact it was getting late by now and we still had to survey back through the flattener, a task no one was looking forward to.

Trev shoo'ed Bunty, who was tapeman, as far into this "drainpipe" as he possibly could, while reading the instruments from the vantage point of almost total immersion in freezing water. About 70 metres long, the flattener is definitely the least enjoyable part of the cave and it took some time for us to make the connection between the old and new surveys at the "outside" end of this flattener. Again we had no time to look at the upstream lead and therefore decided to leave the cave rigged for another trip.

We SRT'd the pitch series to the accompaniment of Bunt's Bad Jokes. He changed his tune somewhat upon encountering the squeeze below the 15 metre ladder. Religiously anti-smoking, he expressed a desire for a cigarette when he was finally "born again" on the top side that particular obstacle, a remark that caused considerable mirth amongst the three of us waiting below. Trev must have thought I was dozing off on the ladder climb, for he dropped an apparently large rock squarely on my helmet as I was nearing the top, bless his heart. We good naturedly assisted each other in the confined upper sections of the cave, to emerge on the surface about 5.30 pm.

It was a very warm day to be staggering back up the hill in full caving rig. Stefan almost trod on a large snake, but the subsequent hissing and spitting was such that a retreat was made to the safer haven of a rotten log (by the unfortunate serpent!). Dale and Chris were waiting at the cars with the story that they hadn't found anything. At least they said they hadn't found anything. A great day's caving with some 750 metres of surveying done and the cave hasn't finished yet.

Nick Hume

=====

WARHOLE (or is it WARHOL ???)

8 December, 1985

PARTY: Trevor Wailes, Stefan Eberhard, Martyn Carnes, Leigh Douglas and Nick Hume

Martyn and I changed into cave gear that was still unwashed from a Hutchins School trip held a few days previously - yuk! We all trudged up the Serendip track to the Lost Pot turnoff and branched right towards the latest Rolan Eberhard find. We were all actually keen!!

The entrance pitch was only about 10 metres but of respectable diameter nonetheless. A scungy floor led down through some old blocks and into an easily negotiable passage to the top of the next drop. This was a 15 metre affair that Martyn rigged from some interesting anchor points and descended through a small hole that enlarged to a nice aven littered with some large (presumably kangaroo) skulls.

A third pitch of ten metres was rigged with 8 mm rope and only just hung free. An airy downclimb below this involved friction-bridging on walls covered with "pop-corn". Some of this would "pop" disconcertingly, but was otherwise easy to descend. A collection of Thylacine bones was noted, resting behind a slab in the chamber below this climb.

Nearby was a tiny hole in the floor from which was issuing a very chilling draught indeed! Initially it was thought that the hole was unnegotiable, but as it was the only way on and apparently contained a 30 to 50 metre pitch, some enlarging was deemed worthwhile. Trev and I belted away at the thing with a Petzl bolt hammer, then Martyn had a go at squeezing through without success. More hammering and wee Trev managed to squeeze out through this "sphincter" into a sizable aven.

A rope was lowered and Trev was on his way leaving us lesser (Ed's note - maybe that should read "greater"!) mortals to freeze in the strong draught hereabouts. He bombed a thirty metre pitch to rig another one of 15 to 20 metres using the same rope. Exploring further he found yet another drop estimated at 20 metres, but we had no more rope to look at this. Trev returned to our group, now enlarged by the arrival of Stefan from "Jelly Pot". Trev got back through the squeeze but only after considerable grimacing and abuse. Stefan and I began surveying out of the cave. We didn't bother to derig as it's still going strongly and a return trip will obviously occur real soon. Trev certainly had a good day's exploring.



The cave is on about the same contour as Serendipity and not that far away from it so it will be very interesting to see how deep it actually goes.

Nick Hume

=====

SUNDAY DRIVE TO IDA BAY

15 December, 1985

PARTY: Martyn Carnes, Leigh Douglas, Petrina Quinn and Nick Hume

An industrial dispute stopped us from entering Australia's best sport caving area this weekend so we cast about looking for a few alternatives. There aren't many to choose from!

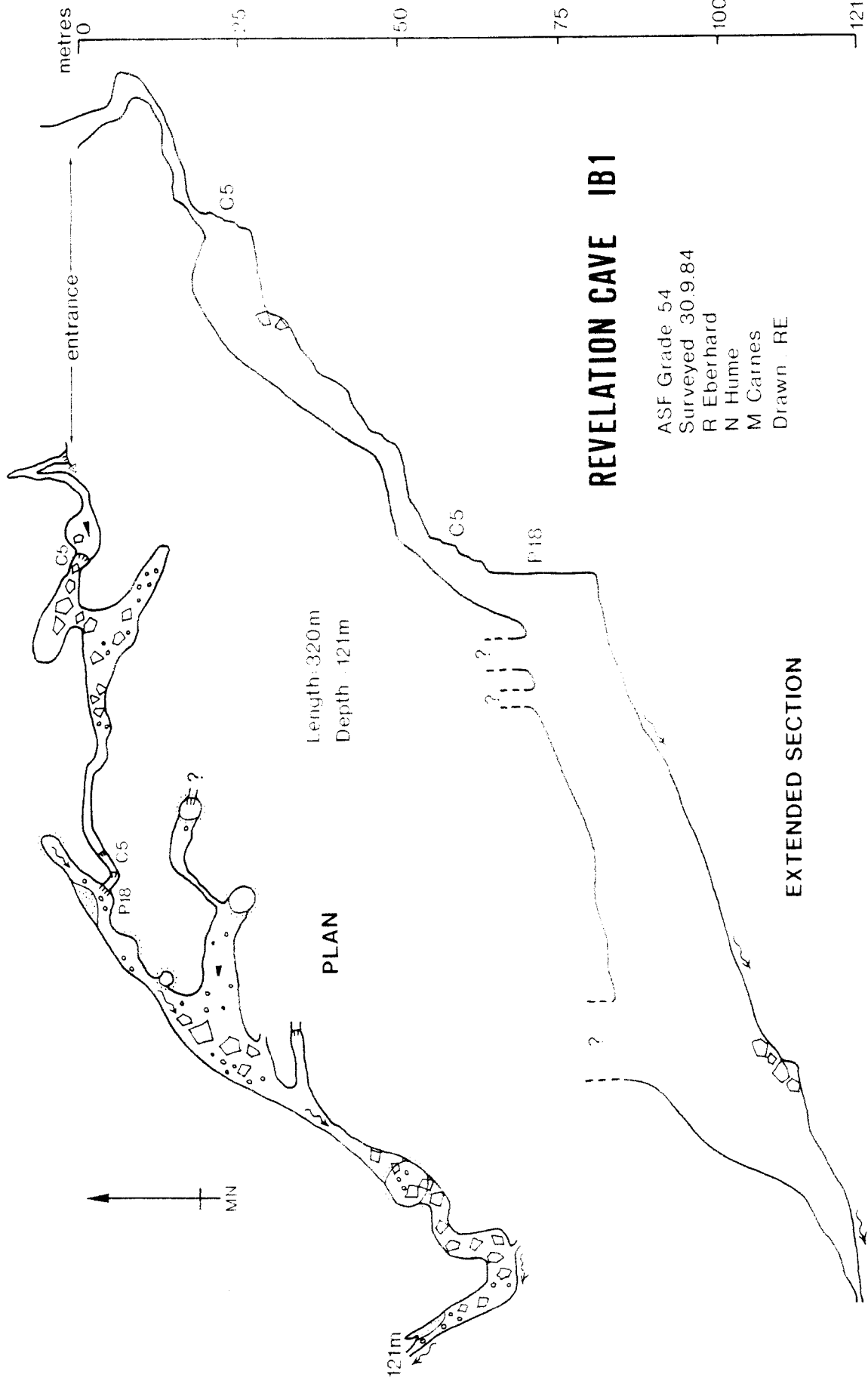
Turning south instead of north from Hobart, we eventually took the right hand road going to Bender's Quarry and went up South Lune Spur 1 to a forestry assessment track. All this without sighting any limestone! We then "hashed" along to Spur 2 road, crossing a few reasonable creeks before deciding to go up one of these in search of some cave. Ascending some 300 metres in a sporting little watercourse, we intersected the far end of the forestry track but found nothing but dolerite.

Driving to the top of quarry we became partially inspired to have a look up the big hill to the east of here. An obvious small valley sank into a small feature just off the road. This was completely blocked with soil and boulders - there was no draught present anywhere to tempt us to have dig. Further up the hill is some very thick scrub with plenty of cutting grass and some dolerite scree. Leigh left a trail of colourful jelly beans so we wouldn't get lost!

Meantime, Martyn wandered the Exit track and found a respectable shaft just off the left of this route some five minutes along it and before the National Gallery turnoff. We took a bit of gear to have a look see and were surprised to find the entrance covered by rotting logs indicating that it had not been looked at before. I rigged the pitch of some 15 to 20 metres, from a fallen tree and Martyn rerigged rfoma chockstone to give a freehang into a sizable chamber. He descended to a large floor from where he rigged a handline down to some fossil stream passage. This did not go unfortunately, fizzing out in a tapering rift.

We derigged the cave in time to meet up with some SUSS bods who were also "having a wonderful time", returning from an attempt to do "Milkrun". They had walked all the way down to Exit without finding the turnoff up the new Mini Martin track! They did however find the National Gallery track and had a look at that, plus several others all the way to the end of the taped section, finishing at the creek. Not a great day as far as caving goes, but possibly better than sitting around watching the cricket!

Nick Hume



# **REVELATION CAVE IB1**

ASF Grade 54  
 Surveyed 30.9.84  
 R Eberhard  
 N Hume  
 M Carnes  
 Drawn RE