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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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EDITORIAL

Is the competition from the Tas. Cave and Karst Group affecting us or are we getting fed up with the usual weekend grind to "The Valley" ? What I am on about is the current shift in our interest, from the Florentine to more wilderness type caving. Trips are underway or planned for Precipitous Bluff, Lake Timk and the Weld River Arch areas. These are exploratory trips rather than just touring the caves already known in these areas.

I for one welcome the trend. It is a refreshing change to sample the immense variety of karst available in Tasmania. Who knows, we might even be able to find some previously unknown limestone with some really great caves. Current geological information is fairly scanty in regard to what's about the place. Roll on stereo aerials, Landsat and blink comparators. Maybe we could even have a spot the doline competition, with a free holiday to "Precipitous Bluff" as first prize.

"Caving is a health hazard ! " Be careful of your one a weekend habit. On a recent dive trip to the Mainline / Dreamtime sumps, the ladder in Refuge Aven broke some three metres from the top. Rolan was unfortunate enough to be on it at the time. "Luckily" he landed on top of John Salt sustaining a black eye as a result (not from John). The ladder broke due to corrosion and leaching of the steel wires, adjacent to the crimps and Refuge Aven is one of the drier ladder pitches in Growling.

Lets face it , the permanent rigging in Growling is becoming dangerous and needs replacing , or a nasty accident is going to happen. The same goes for Serendipity, our other permanently rigged cave.

Its pay your subscription time again. If you are at all interested in caving, belong to this club. Our meetings and "get togethers" provide a valuable opportunity for mixing with people who have very high degrees of caving expertise. From this embryo environment a lot of exciting ideas and projects can get off the ground.

Our members interests aren't just confined to caving either. You're probably very like the rest of us, so come and join our adventure orientated gang and have the time of your life. It's not just the money we are after, more importantly, we want your motivation, participation and support to ensure

that T.C.C. remains the country's most productive caving club.

NICK HUME
Acting Editor.

NEWS, BITS AND TRIVIA...

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 26/03/86 and various Office Bearers were voted in as follows;

Trevor Wailes was re-elected as President. Trev modestly suggested that he had done nothing in his previous 12 months in that position. However it was unanimously agreed that he had done "nothing" very successfully, and was voted in unopposed.

Chris Davies was re-elected as Treasurer. Chris has done a marvellous and thorough job with the club's finances and we are lucky to have him retain that function.

Nick Hume was elected secretary. What with underwater hockey commitments on meeting nights, plus acting editorship duties and sundry promises to write certain articles, I might just start sounding like Stuart, "Christ...".

Albert Goede was re-elected Archivist, while Rolan Eberhard scored the position of Librarian. Stuart Nicholas carries on as search and rescue representative and A.S.F. councillor.

A committee was appointed consisting of Stefan Eberhard, Arthur Clarke, Andrew Briggs, Leigh Douglas and Albert Goede.

Lamp batteries are still for sale at \$70.00 as well as lamp head pieces..see Trevor Wailes for details.

The Karst Index book is out - Stuart Nicholas is still taking orders, copies are \$25.00 or thereabouts.

That well known verbose person, Stephen Bunton from Sydney is now living in Tasmania, and has even joined our club. This should increase our verbal output and possibly our caving output as well. Seriously Steve is a fantastic guy and is a very welcome addition to the Tasmanian caving scene...Welcome Steve!!!!!!

(continued see page 7)

FUTURE TRIPS...

3rd/ 4th May

A two or three day weekend trip to the Weld River Arch. Scrubbashing and exploring. Bring carbides in case of worthwhile finds. Contact Nick Hume for more info.

10/11 May

Porcupine Pot ; exploring, surveying, derigging and possibly even dye testing trip to this very interesting system (just read Buntys critique in S.S 213!).

contact Nick Hume or Rolan Eberhard.

19-21st May

Tim Sprod requires some help for a Hutchins School caving trip. Phone Tim Sprod on 278049 if you fancy some easy caving.

Christmas trip to the Nullabor. Come along and play "cave divers" in this once in a lifetime opportunity of exploring beautifully clear submerged caverns like Cocklebiddy and Weebubbie (or just ride a camel if you want to!). The prelude to a blue holes of the Bahamas expedition. Contact Phill Hill or Nick Hume for your itinerary.

TRIP-REPORTS

SERENDIPITY _ THE JINXED CAVE

23rd February

PARTY: Leigh Douglas, Peter Cover, David Rasch, Petrina Quinn.

This Serendip trip coincided with the inaugural trip of the Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research group. However I believe at the time (due to an expected transfer) that this would be a rare opportunity to pot hole Serendip. From an initially large party size, eventually four set off. Serendipity was virgin to all of us except Peter Cover. The cave was entered through the higher dry passage. The scramble down to the first pitch, Cathedral, was the only pitch requiring rope (it's worth noting that a subsequent trip on the 30/3, believing the cave was fully rigged, turned back !). My homemade oversuit (nylon oxford 8 ounce) began tests through Castigation Crawl. The double foam padding on the knees and elbows proved a windfall- a feature that negates the many and tiresome alternatives of wetsuit kneepads, etc.

Progress slowed to a bottleneck at the second pitch - Deimos. Here David kept caution close by and rope traversed to the large boulder used as a belay. The rope as with all pitches was coiled out of the water. The bolt on the right wall is positioned such that it requires a little swing out from the ledge. Just picture Tarzan on a jungle vine! Descending Deimos, mansize horizontal joints or platforms can be seen, no doubt their potential already ascertained. Time for rest and resuscitation until the party teamed.

At the four metre cascade, Peter glared in horror as I classic descended with rare speed onto Deluge pitch and an interesting traverse out too two bolts. The ten metre recommended tie back is probably a good idea. At this point Leigh and Peter decided to seek the sun. David noticed slime on the rope. The bolts may require checking given the continual wet, despite all bolts and hangers having been replaced in October '84. Deluge was "specy" with a reasonable waterflow. Forward to Phoebos pitch and the apparently safe boulder seemingly poised in soft silt above, gave me the heeby-jeebies. Trevor informs me large flakes on the nearby face peel off! It is indeed wise to wear prussik gear and when in doubt, perhaps mandatory. The pitch requires two rebelay and has a knot to cross just seven metres from the bottom- typical. Phobos seemed colder and wetter than Deluge probably due to the slow pace and gear change overs. After a cursory look around and with time stealing any further adventure from us, we ascended.

At the top of Phoebos, to my amazement, I realized David and I had been tandeming. I could not off load until the weight was off. My harness was tested for comfort, until when in earshot, David deroped. Again the poised boulder induced an instantaneous little sweat to my brow, but it never moved the slightest centimetre! Continuing to the top of Deluge pitch and again we found that we were tandem prussiking. This time there was no place for David to get off the rope. Fortunately a long cow tail at the top of the pitch proved the saving grace, no doubt put there to make life easy getting off. With the roar of water, our pitch communication was not up to scratch. However one learns by experience. At this stage we knew we would be pushing it to make the permit time. My homemade oversuit was standing up well, my weakened right hand was OK but meant I was probably slow, Davids wetsuit was cold and constrictive to move in, and his ropewalker with shunts was difficult and time consuming across rebelay and knots.

The rope on the four metre cascade was inadvertently not coiled up out of the water, hence is now stuffed. Time was escaping us and the thirty six metre, Diemos, took longer than expected, as did Cathedral. Dragging a forty metre up that mud sodden climb already being two hours over due was rather taxing, as was that seemingly pathetic two metre bit near the entrance. There, like a circus acrobat I scrambled up on Davids battered shoulders. Meanwhile he was left to struggle, only to finally grab my hoof for whatever little assistance it was. Outside and darkness. A cautious trek through the rainforest saw us stumbling to the car, late, wondering how sympathetic the gate-keeper would be. We were indeed late, Trevor had mobilized ready for some S & R. For those at A. N. M., and the worried cavers we deeply regret causing any inconvenience. Looking back, to avoid the situation, we either start near dawn, have a late permit, burst a gut or don't do the cave. Serendipity deserves a jinxed reputation!

PETRINA QUINN

EASTER SUNDAY; GROWLING ATTRACTS ALL AND SUNDRY
PARTY; Petrina Quinn and Edward Stow

This trip to Growling Swallet was primarily one to entice a potential caver and to indulge in photography. After a leisurely start, upon entering the cave a nymphette appeared behind a boulder- Leigh Douglas. Just five minutes later, Martyn Carnes, was spotted camera in hand, in deep contemplation. Easter Sunday was as easy paced for them as for us. Later, a mysterious figure brushed past me and two and two made Peter Ackyoyd, who was astonished that a stranger would know who he was. Not far behind was Stuart Nicholas steaming in his fibre pile. But the cave traffic was not to ease as very soon, in the dry passage near the twelve metre vertical free climb leading up to New Feelings, there emerged the grunts and groans of Bunty Anne and Phill. Their trip to Serendipity had been jinxed, being under the impression that the first pitch was rigged. As a result they opted for Growling. After some ferreting, and again being pressed to meet the five p. m. permit deadline, the enlarged party turned back. The water level was very low, even the roar of Growlings entrance did not bellow as usual. Nevertheless, Growling at Easter was a rather social place to be.

PETRINA QUINN

PORCUPINE POT - March '86
(or where did Giotto go for the missing six minutes)
PARTY: Stefan Eberhard, Trevor Wailles, Rolan Eberhard.

Bits, sentences, phrases, paragraphs, and black humour has been in the pages of Speleo Spiel over the last year, regarding this system, here is some more.

The entrance is approximately four hundred metres SE of Tassy Pot. Its the only known cave entrance in the area and the track to it is marked with blue tape. Adjacent to the entrance doline is a much larger impenetrable sink doline. A scramble down a steep bank littered with greasy logs, to an obvious entrance which eventually chokes with infill, it looks promising but the way in is to the right high up where a small chamber with a cairn marks the route to the first squeeze. It has been sworn at, cursed and bled on, but it remains the easier of the awkward tight bits. A ladder is used at present as this vertical narrow bit lacks suitable handholds on the return. A five metre drop into a roomy chamber is the start of the steeply descending rift passage. In parts of this near entrance series, short climbs and squeezes through over talus, make for slow progress until a thirteen metre pitch marks the start of more solid cave. A short narrow slot at the base of this pitch was chemically enlarged to afford a vertical squeeze onto a steeply dipping section of flutings which need care or a handline to arrive at the second awkward section. This squeeze is best accomplished by staying as high in the slot as possible and dropping sideways at 45° onto a foothold which should be memorised, below is a ten metre vertical with more flutings with sharp aretes. It is easily free climbed but if tired on the return trip, can be arduous. From the base of this drop the rift followed so far joins a cross rift after a short five metre climb down. Holes in the floor of this new passage attest to much more cave below, after left and following the rift to another five metre climb, followed by a short steep ramp in Serpentine Rift doubling back under the climbs above, the first rope is gained. A large block that rocks alarmingly is the standpoint for gearing up. I had desired to be here first as I knew the first on the rope would get a breather in the chamber below but Stef and Rolan new the shortcuts through the climbs and had beaten me by seconds.

Batman and Robin quickly descended followed by me the Penguin. This vertical section in two pitches of twenty metres approx., both free hanging with a near vertical, narrow rift climb between them is the only SRT work needed in the system. It would be a suitable trip for cavers with moderate experience, however the dynamic duo were kicking their heels as I descended the last five metre handline directly below the second twenty metre pitch and bridged my way into the large chamber marking the horizontal sections of the systems. I was informed that it had taken forty mins to this point, so the overheating I was experiencing was not imagined. I felt the speed of the descent so far was alarming, you could afford to miss a foot or hand hold as you were rapidly bearing down on the next one anyway.

I was still derigging myself, as the "masked meddlers" shot through with a "just going to place some detectors", obviously Giotto was expected. The "Penguin" thought that was the last he'd see of these caped crusaders as they dissappeared down the mountainous talus heap. Following as best he could, the snaking route round and down to the streamway below. He misplaced the route in his haste, and the hapless bird hung by his dorsal flippers over a three metre drop. No way back up and only one handhold, no instant levitation act. If I can just reach that ha..F..Ouch! You stupid bastard. The right knee broke his fall. That was done, will it work, it's not broken, lets go on... Mentally "it's just another knock" seemed to work. Physically, after the shaking stopped the pain was bearable. The streamway below the talus mountain is at

approx - 200 m. It's an easy pleasant distraction from the vertical squeezes of the entrance series. The voices and lights ahead of me meant I had done the impossible and caught them up (it must have been my short cut). This pleasant canyon streamway terminates at a small rockfall and continuous flat out in the stream for seventy five metres. After this knee wrecking and belly dragging the impossible happens and the cave opens out into mega passage! Here the "justice junkies" were laying more detectors. The stream we had followed so far joined a veritable river, detectors were placed above and below the junction. Having been here before I knew what to expect, huge passage, easy walking stopping only to empty full wellies, not having been down stream which was classed as being a bit unpleasant, I was quite happy to saunter up stream.

The "Penguin" had them in his clutches for a few seconds before they did the usual disappearing act and left me bemused in the dissipating steam trail. The initial greasy talus pile was negotiated into more upstream mega passage of Exit cave proportions. Easy going until the old fossil big stuff is by passed by the more recent inflow route, which narrows and lowers until a large rockfall terminates the easy going. This point 500 m upstream at the junction is marked by the best display of aragonite crystals of outstanding size and profusion in the Florentine, is situated above the rockfall that marked the end of the known cave. On the last trip here Stef had wriggled into the talus just above stream level and had discovered another fifty metres of passage to more rockpile. This first section is fragile and cannot be rushed, a narrow squeeze halfway through is most delicately poised. The fifty metres of open passage is two metres wide and similar to that preceding the aragonite chamber. The second rockpile, Stefs upstream limit, is short but even more delicate, little would be needed to seal the next section of outstanding master cave. Once through the second heartstopper Stef and Rolan ran away. I followed at my own speed in high wide megapassage, the dark rock reflecting little of its features, over a sandy floor with a large meandering stream. At times the stream disappeared as it flowed under cuttings to one side of the phreatic tunnel. The roof started to lower after about 150 m and the walk became a stoop, a crawl and finally a crab walk grovel in a wide arched type bedding plane. The water deepened, ran slower and after a deep pool and sand bank meander with only about half a metre airspace, it finally sumped out. The "Penguin" had the dynamic duo cornered but not for long, a smoko in these low surroundings would send Giotto and Space Control berserk. The survey out commenced and the 550 m of virgin master cave was recorded in good time due to fifty metre legs.

The survey completed, our pace back to the pitches was very fast, the flat out crawl was painful and the cold started to bite a little. My annoying little knee was starting to wear me down. Rolan was up and gone but I convinced Stef that some company might be prudent and on the climbs out to the squeeze cramps seemed to be my major strength. Stef gave me a hand through the awkward little bastard slot. The other squeeze at the top entrance was completed slowly and methodically as was the long gring back uphill to the cars.

Porcupine Pot is an excellent caving experience, demanding a lot of arm and shoulder work. The flat out crawl takes more out of you than you think and the return free climbs can be desperate when strength is failing. Nearly two kilometres is surveyed including the new section of master cave upstream, most of it is easy walking but some is drudgingly awkward. The cave at this stage is still rigged so now is your chance to experience

Porcupine Pot the easy way. The survey shows almost one and a half km of master cave running towards the downstream sump, in a south easterly direction (roughly toward Growling). It extends up the valley, beyond and parallel with Tassy Pot and its trend would take it slightly west of Udensala. The proposition of diving the upstream sump falls in the fantasy bracket!

TREVOR WAILES

FLORENTINE VALLEY 3rd March 1986

On a solo bushbashing weekend on the ridge from Growling to the Wherrets knobs saddle the only thing of significance found (apart from a large number of Eberhard footprints) was a 20 m x 5 m deep collapsed doline in the flat on the western side of the saddle. Fresh rock indicated recent movement. The doline was marked with day-glo tape.

Also found were three small pots about 5m deep, about 350m downhill on a bearing of approx 300° M from the unnumbered entrance above JF 338 - Lost Pot. Two don't go. The pots were marked with yellow tape as was the track from JF 338 to the unnumbered entrance.

As above- 23 rd March 1986

Max Jeffries and I tried to find Max's elusive pot in the horizontal, on the eastern slide of Wherrets slip and failed again. We shall return!

While in the area we found a group of small caves about 500m below JF 118, which is a Wherrets slip contact cave. This group of caves consisted of a 5 m deep x 10 m collapsed cave, 50 m uphill from a series of three impressive rift caves. This series contained a considerable number of bones, three wombat skulls plus two species of Kangaroo and other small skulls. Fifty metres below the rift series was a small five metre pot with no prospects. This group was marked with day-glo orange tape and is below the rocky treeless area under and to the east of JF 118

CHRIS DAVIES

NEWSBITS AND OTHER HAPPENINGS CONTINUED...

A strong contingent of mainland cavers will be visiting Tassy in May this year, including Al Warild, Anne Grey, Baz Slade and Dave Martin. They should be easy to recognise, wearing sombreros and gibbering conversantly in fluent Spanish. Maybe we ought to follow them about in case they find any 1000 m deep caves in the Florentine! Seriously they are a very experienced team and will give the locals some rare competition.

The expeditioners have returned from Precipitous Bluff with exciting tales of horizontal scrub, falling trees, swimming type river caves under huge dolines, etc, etc. Seems as though they had an epic walk out squeezing three days walking into two because of lousy weather experience at the end of the trip. The surveys will be interesting to see whenever they are done.

Stuart Nicholas is holding another fireworks night on May 24th at 7 Rupert Ave, Newtown. These now annual events are anything but fizzes so make sure make sure you attend this explosive event, Rolan is preparing some charges already...

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Spiel numbers are underlined to distinguish them from cave numbers. The index is divided into a 'general' section and a 'caves' section. Article authors please head your articles with name and/or number if possible.

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VERTICAL CAVES OF TASMANIA

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CHOCs

by Tony Mills

Reprinted from Mountain # 65 - Hopefully without
Jan/Feb 1979 infringing copyright.

The purpose of this article is to make available to the climbing world in general the outstanding results of the intensive research that has been carried out at an undisclosed place in the southern hemisphere, which are about to revolutionise the whole concept of alpinism, ice-climbing and the logistics of high altitude climbing.

The subject of this research is what are scientifically referred to as Consumable Pitons and Belays. The basis for this research is a fact that has been known to climbers of all nations for many years, but has hitherto been totally overlooked. It is, in its simplest form that, as the ambient temperature decreases so the texture of chocolate becomes harder and more rigid. Anybody who has attempted to eat a bar of chocolate, or God forbid, a Mars bar, in the middle of a Scottish gully, will bear witness to this. Surely we could use this phenomenon to our advantage.

The research team selected a variety of proprietary brands of chocolate and later other sugar based confections, and carried out stress resistance tests on them when they had been hammered into ordinary granite cracks, in a varying range of temperatures. The results summarised on the accompanying graph were astounding.

We can see that the standard sized bar of Cadbury Milk Chocolate yielded a strength of 4,000 kg at -12 C increasing to an astonishing 6,000 kg at -25 C, whilst Galaxy despite being "so full of milk it almost moos" yields a maximum stress factor of 2,500 kg at -18 C. This inherent weakness in this product is probably due to its high fat content. Chocolate Aero Bars were disappointing despite their lightness and it is expected that this is due to the format of the bar, rather than the holes in the material, although there does seem to be little control over the thickness of the walls surrounding the holes - perhaps if this were standardized results would improve. The Milky Bar far from the insipid object suggested by its appearance

proved to be the strongest at high temperatures, seeming to retain its strength even though it has become rather soft and flexible. It is difficult to see when in snow though. We have recently moulded the chocolate into a range of conventional piton shapes called Choco-pegs, but with the exception of the blade pegs we have found that the normal shaped blocks of varying thickness gave the better performance.

Tests with conventional boxes of Milk Tray led to interesting discoveries with the many shapes. When used as nuts, these Choco-Chocks as we may call them, seem certain to supersede their orthodox aluminium counterparts. In particular the walnut whirl is proving to be a very versatile shape.

The urp and rump are sure also to be superseded by the chocolate drop, in two sizes, known for short as the BURP (Bite-sized Ultimate Reality Piton) and the SLURP (Succulent, Lickable, Ultimate Reality Piton). The great thing about these is that the heat created when hammering the BURP in causes the chocolate to soften and then, as the heat dissipates, weld itself on to the sides of the crack, giving much greater holding power than the conventional piton.

Thus far we have only mentioned the rock-climbing applications in low temperatures of these commodities, but probably their real importance is in ice-climbing. This is due to the natural surface adhesion between chocolate and snow and ice, which is much greater than for any of the normally used alloys. Thus relatively small chocolate bars with holes bored in the centre make excellent dead-men when placed horizontally or vertically in the conventional T-shaped slot, which however needs to be very much smaller than usual, thus saving time and effort. We shall be producing in the near future a selection of Chocolate Snow-men, although you may choose to bore (or chew) your own holes. The second major innovation in ice-climbing came from our second line of research, where we did not test pure chocolate items but what we termed Mixed Material Munches (mmm's for short).

These included all-time favourites such as Mars and Bounty Bars, only the former of which is it necessary to describe due to its popularity in mountaineering circles. In short the Mars bar may be hammered into even the hardest ice slopes providing a small placement pit is created first. Once fixed it provides an ice piton of unprecedented holding power, giving three times the holding power and strength of any previous piton or screw and in a range of temperatures and ice types. It probably owes its great strength to the reinforcing strip of toffee which becomes extremely strong at low temperatures (Another advantage of Mars bars is, if the ice dinner-plates, you can always use the dinner-plate to eat the Mars bar from). But, to be serious again, Mars bars are difficult to remove but this difficulty can be overcome for practical purposes by the simple expedient of the second chewing off the protruding portion, and provided that alternate leads are employed, each climber will receive his fair share of sustenance whilst in action, thus removing the necessity of time-wasting lunch breaks. Further, should retreat be necessary there is a ready supply of food available on the way down. It is worth mentioning here that the reader should avoid the use of (a) dark chocolate and (b) mixed bars such as Old Jamaica, Fruit and Nut, and the like, at all costs. These are dangerous, their strength is only in their flavour.



These discoveries have far reaching consequences

when considering high-altitude logistics. No longer is it necessary to haul huge quantities of useless aluminium and steel as well as tons of food up the mountain. All that is necessary is to balance the number of Mars and chocolate bars so that the summit assault camp can balance security against starvation ideally using the last bar on the summit. (Perhaps Rowntree will produce giant Mars bars for use as snow-stakes). Of course on the way down no huge amount of metal need be left behind; the mountain can be cleared by simply eating. Thus no longer will emaciated skeletons arriving at base camp, no longer will whole camps endure the privations of insufficient food when storm-bound. On this point, we did test sugar based confections, particularly Kendal Mint Cake, and produced a reasonably successful type of mint-flavoured angle (Mangles) but on the whole we recommend the use of Kendal Mint Cake simply for "sitting on the top and nibbling, looking at the world below" etc.

To conclude, this research offers up ideas for many future possibilities; are the insulating qualities of candy floss superior to those of felt for inner boots, or Fibrefill and down for sleeping bags; would Brighton rock provide a material suitable for ice-axe shafts, adjustable in length by chewing of course; should we carry rucksacks with a refrigerated compartment to keep things hard during the walk-in or hut-grind? The possibilities are endless.

Perhaps one day in the future, we'll all be climbing the frozen Lemonade Springs en route to an ascent of "That big Rock Candy Mountain"!

