

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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PRESIDENT / QUARTERMASTER:

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

SECRETARY:

Nick Hume - 9 Primrose Place, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005. Ph 251934

TREASURER:

Chris Davies - 1 Fingerpost Road, South Hobart, Tas 7000. Ph 391419

EDITOR / TYPIST:

Steve Bunton - 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, Tas 7008. Ph 283054

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EDITORIAL

Don't Panic!

If you haven't seen your precious handwritten masterpiece-of-a-trip report and it isn't included in this volume then there is no cause for alarm. Even the darkest cave reports see the light of day in the SPIEL. It only took a year for Arthur's Ida Bay manuscript to surface in the last edition and now the Easter trips are finally resurrected, only three months after the event, or almost 2,000 years, if you prefer. The many good articles we receive each issue breathe new life into the club, so my current policy is to include those ahead of trip reports. Features such as President's Report take precedence anyway and act to summarize the year's developments, besides they add to that "living in the past" feeling which is reinforced from reading out-of-date trip reports. So if you think nostalgia isn't what it used to be, then read the Spiel.....

STEPHEN BUNTON

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TROG TALES AND TRUE from the legendary farce...

How famous are you? Do want to get your name in the papers? Try smoking in bed! Can you walk into the Police Station and see your photo on the wall? I wouldn't if I were you! But if you really are an underground heavy then chances are you already have your picture reproduced in the latest Australian Caver feature on Speleomania. Obviously TCC were behind the scenes in this extravaganza, this must account for the fact that so a few of them made it into the mug's gallery.

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Arthur Clarke our Dover correspondent has, besides his contributions to this edifying journal, become the editor of the newsletter of The Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group. The first edition has just appeared and features a wealth of information about the more cerebral side of caving, ie speleology. Articles of

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interest include a policy statement on bone deposits in caves, an update on the situation with Kubla Khan and some dye tracing information. Hurry to your newsagent before copies sell out!

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We all hate to see some people go and there's some people we just hate, but as it happens the person we love to hate is going. Petrina Quinn in her hectic career as a radio journalist has unfortunately left us for a variety of locations on the North Island, firstly Perth and then Mt Gambier. Both of these are caving / cave diving locations, so local cavers be warned that an incredibly enthusiastic and capable young lady trog is coming your way! Trained by TCC she should be an asset to any club and we all wish her well on the next leg of life's long survey traverse.

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From ANM Maydena.... If you phone for a permit through the week and on the designated day decide to cancel your trip, PLEASE phone the gate (same number 882 371) and let the gate keeper know.

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This year, 1986, is the year of the Pig Out and not only that its a birthday year for TCC. These two events have been combined into one auspicious occasion by the clever planning of the committee. Details of the "TCC 40th Year of Existence Feast" appear later in this issue.

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#### LONG PITCHES OF TASMANIA

This list was started one rainy Sunday afternoon when I had nothing less trivial to occupy my time. Pitches of 45m and longer have been included. Bob Woolhouse provided information about Mole Creek and various Hobart cavers contributed. By convention the pitch lengths are the length of the drop and not the amount of rope required. It is possible, however, that some pitch lengths were calculated from the amount of rope needed to rig them. Some lengths are estimates only. Mini Martin is one that may prove to be slightly exaggerated when an accurate survey is done. In some cases there are differing reports for the length of a particular pitch. In such cases I have preferred either the surveyed length or the shorter of the values given. Different rigging sites may vary the length of any given pitch, eg. Kellars Cellar could be made longer by abseiling from one of the other entrances than the one that is traditionally used. In fact this is one cave where the originally quoted figure of 128m was shown to be a miscalculation when the cave was accurately surveyed in 1982.

The 85m shaft (P 10) in Anne-A-Kananda refers to the Priority Paid series, while the 76m pitch (P 11) is located in Desiccator. An alternate shaft for the final pitch (Phobos) in Serendipity has not been included even though it is probably about 45-50m.

<u>PITCH NAME</u>	<u>CAVE NAME</u>	<u>LENGTH(m)</u>
1 Heart Beat	Anne-A-Kananda	118
2	Kellar Cellar	115
3 P1	Mini Martin	110

4	Priority Paid	Anne-A-Kananda	100
5	P6	Big Tree Pot	90
6	P1	The Chairman	87
7	P10	Anne-A-Kananda	85
8	P11	Anne-A-Kananda	76
9	P4	Tassy Pot	71
10	G Force	Lost Pot	70
11	P1	Dribblespit Swallet	70
12	China Crisis	Ice Tube	68
13	Gom Jabber	Arrakis	67
14	P6	Dwarrowdelf	67
15		Devils/Anastamosis	62
16	P7	Victory 75	58
17	P3	Dwarrowdelf	55
18	P3	Flick Mints Hole	55
19		Col-In-Cavern	55
20		Pillingers Creek Cave	52
21		Armadillo Pot	50
22	P5	Milk Run	50
23		Yodellers Pot	50
24	Fabulous Spangley	Ice Tube	49
25	P6	Midnight Hole	49
26	P3	Skyhook Pot	47
27	P4	Cyclops Pot	45

ROLAN EBERHARD

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#### MINI EXPEDITION TO PRECIPITOUS BLUFF

28th March - 6th April 1986    Stefan Eberhard and Nick Hume

Stefan and I flew into PB on Good Friday, thus repeating a little bit of caving history. Only two other expeditions have ever trogged the area - TCC in 1961 and SCS in 1973, both groups making use of a seaplane, as we did, to ferry in gear and people.

We established a very comfortable camp on the shores of New River Lagoon, next to Damper Creek, with Damper Cave a mere 15 minutes walk away. From this base we enjoyed a week's tremendous weather as well as some interesting and varied caving. The region is similar to New Guinea in character with dense, rotten vegetation and caves containing extensive river passages in beautiful high quality limestone. The only disappointment regarding the whole area is that it lacks any real depth potential.

The day after setting up camp, we followed the righthand branch of Damper Creek to where it issues from the base of a ridge descending from the slopes of PB. This was PB 2 and is unenterable due to blockage. On the other side of the ridge we located the swallet PB 2A. Immediately upstream from this is the resurgence PB 3 Quetzacoatl Conduit. This is a cave which was surveyed for about a kilometre by the 1973 party. A howling gale emanates from its entrance.

We donned wetsuits and half swum the known extent of the cave passing numerous daylight holes. At the previously known limit of the cave we pushed a strongly drafting lead through a section with a mere 10cm airspace into a series of chambers and roofsniffs for a distance estimated at 600m. It was still going at this point but cold forced us to retreat.

On Sunday we bashed north from Damper Creek to find more large scale outflow caves. We reached a series of likely looking depressions (visible on airphotos) but these did not go. Bashing still further north yielded dense scrub and cutting grass but little else. A disappointing day except for the discovery of Cueva de la Blanca on our return route. Three entrances, close together, led into some superb fossil stream passage adorned with considerable moonmilk formation. We were halted at a 25m pitch with the sound of running water at the bottom.

Returning to Cueva de la Blanca on the Monday with SRT gear we descended the pitch, surveying as we went, to arrive in a sizeable stream passage. This was explored, first through some superb swirlpool floored cave to an upstream sump and then downstream to another sump. Constricted parts of the cave drafted very heavily. Two major leads halfway up the 25m pitch yielded more dry passage containing some of the most pristine moonmilk I had ever seen. The second lead contained a 20m pitch apparently dropping into a sizeable streamway. This was left undescended but is probably a connection to Damper Cave itself.

The following day we carried a load of SRT gear up the summit track to where the good limestone comes in contact with a poorer calcareous siltstone. From the well defined contact we bashed off the ridge into a steep-sided gully made up of a line of depressions which is the most obvious feature on the airphotos of the area. Care was required not to fall through the rotten logs and tree ferns into the numerous hole in the vicinity. We spotted a 40m wall with an enormous rift running into it. Although it was impressive it was unfortunately blocked with debris. Further down the gully a doline contained a few shafts which dropped into a wide vadose canyon. In the next doline a large shaft, New Order, was encountered but it was impossible to see the bottom due to the hairyness involved in getting any vantage point around the hole. Immediately adjoining New Order was a massive doline perhaps 50m by 100m. It took us half an hour to bash down to the bottom of it! The floor was in two parts separated by an arete. The uphill side contained a large passage dropping to a large chamber. A daylight hole in the chamber was the 50-60m shaft of New Order. The leads going off this chamber were of big borehole proportions.

On Wednesday we returned to the mega-doline and Bauhaus. The large chamber had a 25-30m shaft dropping away below it. This was bypassed by a side passage containing numerous greasy downclimbs. These led to a chamber where daylight could still be seen from some 80-90m underground. We downclimbed further to a big clear stream passage that we followed comfortably for about 500m to where a big deep pool barred further progress. Foam on the surface suggested a probable sump but we were reluctant to swim to find out!

The next 2 1/2 hours were occupied in surveying back to the big chamber. The whole cave was an impressive find, particularly the entrance. This feature may account for the "massive drafting shafts" reported by bushwalkers in the past.

On Thursday we had a bit of a look in Damper Cave and otherwise prepared to leave the place. As luck would have it, the weather turned for the worse which made for a cool wade down to Prion Beach the next day. We stayed at Surprise Bay overnight. Spurred on by constant drizzle and hail we made it all the way back to Cockle Creek the next day. This would never have been possible except for the excellent trackwork done by the National Parks and Wildlife Service recently.

A more thorough coverage of this trip with maps, cave descriptions and possibly photos will appear in the "Trevor Wailes Memorial Journal", and/or an occasional paper, either or both of which will be published sometime in the future.

NICK HUME

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT DOING WHAT YOU WANT TO DO?  
Florentine Valley 29-30.3.86

Present: Peter Ackroyd(VSA), Stephen Bunton, Martyn Carnes, Leigh Douglas, Edward ?, Phill Hill, Stuart Nicholas, Petrina Quinn and Ann Wessing...All (or most of) those people too poor to fly to PB?

Martyn's 4-day permit seemed a good opportunity to catch up on some unvisited caves over the Easter period.

Instead of attempting KD as first planned we changed our minds and objective to Owl Pot in light of the fact that some of us hadn't been underground for some time. A cool morning with clear blue skies had me wishing I'd gone bushwalking but a good day's caving was ahead of us anyway.

Phil and Bunty rigged the pitches making improvements along the way. The squeeze was quite interesting and a little of a problem though coming back up wasn't as interesting but more of a problem. The rest of the way was pretty straightforward. Abseiling beside the waterfall on the last pitch was quite nice. At the bottom we decided to look for the sump and eventually found it after a few wrong leads. After a discussion, en route, on the lack of graffiti in Tasmanian caves we were disappointed to see the walls near the sump so adorned.

Martyn headed out first leaving us to it. A gurgling yell from halfway up the waterfall pitch signalled Bunty's carbide had drowned and he finished the prusik in the dark. On arrival at the surface the sun shone and light streamed down the entrance, always a nice sight.

That evening was spent at the remains of the homestead. Trying to view Halley's Comet at two in the morning with a bright full moon wasn't easy but it was a good excuse to escape from the mossies in the hut.

The following day we split into several groups. Stuart and Peter were up for a day-trip photographing in Growling Swallet. Martyn and I joined them. Bunty, Phill and Ann headed off to do something new - Serendipity without rope! It wasn't long before they joined us in Growling. Their plan was then to do Serendipity the following day but ominous weather precluded that as well.

I really enjoyed the opportunity to wander around Growling at my leisure whilst the others were taking shots. It was when Stuart started waltzing his tripod into crotch deep pools that I decided to head out only to be met by Petrina and Edward. Everybody apparently later met up in New Feeling for a Growling Groupie.

Outside it was another lovely evening though clouds on the horizon and a few sprinkles of rain sent Bunty scurrying back to Serendipity to fetch the SRT gear before all and sundry headed home.

Leigh Douglas

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#### DIVING THE MAINLINE AND DREAMTIME SUMPS

Place: Growling Swallet, 12th-13th April.

Party: Rolan Eberhard, Nick Hume and John Salt

A late start was a bit novel, leaving Hobart about 2pm, otherwise it was the same old humdrum. Trog into Dreamtime, taking three hours from the entrance, due to the weight of uncooperative mega-packs full of airtanks and other diving paraphernalia. Well perhaps not quite humdrum! The ladder in Refuge Aven snapped 3m below the belay under Rolan's weight, landing him on top of John. Rolan received a mighty black eye out of the affair. The moral being, "Tread carefully in Growling! Dear Readers."

Following numerous brews of coffee, two bods slithered into their cold clammy wetsuits, always the worst part of diving! Chafing on the obligatory sand and gravel that always somehow manages to creep into things, they entered the Mainline sump. The sump is shallow and low roofed with an initial airspace which becomes a roof-sniff before it finally disappears altogether. Since it's a downstream sump I was followed by my own cloud of silt which reduced visibility to absolute zero. (A chilling prospect! Ed). Though shallow, the sump is wide and I groped about from side to side attempting to find a channel with more room. My back mounted airtank became intimate with the roof. About ten metres from the airspace I was becoming increasingly sandwiched. The flow of water was still there but cleared the visibility only gradually. My chances of seeing a change in passage direction or an airspace were nil and squeezing further into this sump was not only silly but dangerous. I pivoted around and felt my way out. After a few metres of heading upstream, I was surprised to see my line reel in front of my face.

I returned to the others who shivered acknowledgement and then divested myself of the airtanks to allow a better look around the sump "chamber". Investigation revealed a deep pool beyond a "squeeze-type" upstream fork passage. This appeared to be a third Mainline sump with upwelling water. Dragging airtanks into there was devoid of any pleasure.

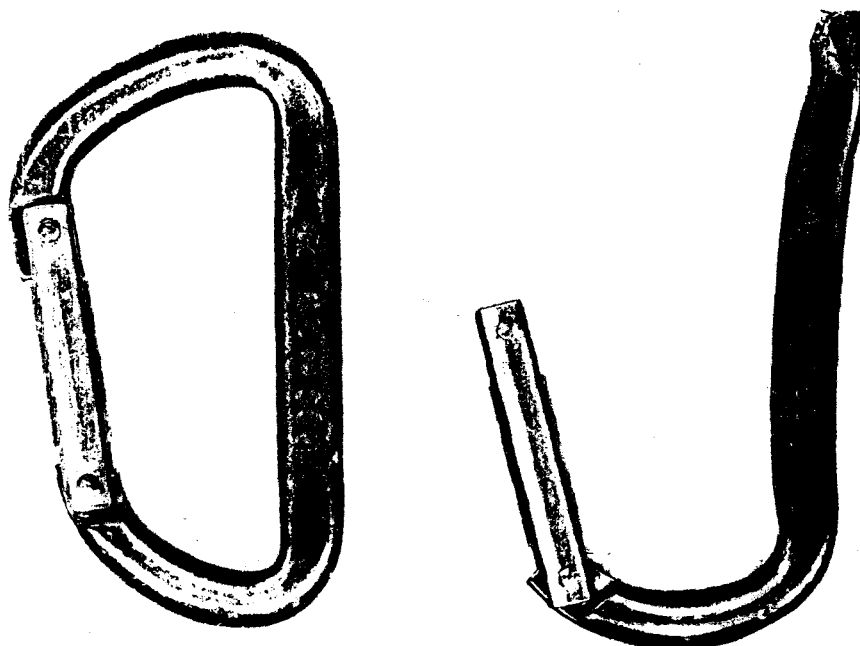
I kitted up with difficulty and dived down a steep-angled, fairly clear tube to a sculptured constriction where the water streamed through quite rapidly. The sound produced by the structure was rather interesting. Beyond this constriction the passage opened out at a depth of seven metres. Re-silting and a jamming linereel slowed me somewhat, however, I found an ascending slope heading into the direction of water flow. I followed this up losing sight of the floor and walls and thus orientation, until I surfaced in an airbell. A low air supply and freezing cold conditions forced me to head back from this point. In retrospect I was probably very close to surfacing in the downstream Mainline sump. The two seem quite close. It will be interesting to see just how close when and if a survey is ever done. I surfaced with the line wrapped around my first-stage. Cold is the enemy of patience (and efficiency)!

The whole trip was a fizzer in terms of the expectations of a kilometre more passage just waiting to be found. On the positive side we did make the whole Growling Swallet system 7m deeper (361m total)! We also found a third sump which connects the Mainline stream with Dreamtime sump and virtually ruled out the prospect of finding anything further by diving. Anyone attempting to push Dreamtime sump under present conditions would have to be a lunatic!

We forced macaroni cheese and vegies with blackbean sauce (what happened to the jelly beans??? - ex-Ed.) through chattering teeth before returning through Mainline. Numb bodies groping in the mists of stovesmoke that created a surreal landscape. Rolan pushed a sidelead near the Ice Tube junction and reported back on two hundred metres of grot which terminated in a 10m pitch overlooking the reminiscent second last pitch in Ice Tube, or possibly something else again?? We crawled out of Growling at about 3am after ten hours underground. Not a superhard trip except for the weight of our packs. We passed through the ANM gates at about 7am Sunday morning much to Noel's surprise.

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SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!



You know those lightweight, brightly coloured and generally gimmicky karabiners that are for sale these days? Well, they make excellent sack haul krabs, keyrings and accessory clips but never, repeat never, use them in load bearing situations either caving, climbing or anything else. Notice the slight difference between the two shown above? No it is not an improvement nor a new design feature... John Salt was using this type of krab on a foot mounted Jumar in his rope-walking rig when it failed. This was most likely the result of bad loading, possibly with the gate open. Whatever, it certainly highlights the weakness of these things. So if you are tempted to use your haul sack krab on the last pitch because you've run out of real karabiners, then think again. That's just the sort of place from where a rescue / exhumation would be the most difficult. Thanks John for the enlightening demonstration of such a dark prospect.

To eliminate any unscientific bias from this article I constantly and personally shock load one of these karabiners with my car keys and as yet it has not failed nor suffered any noticable deformation!

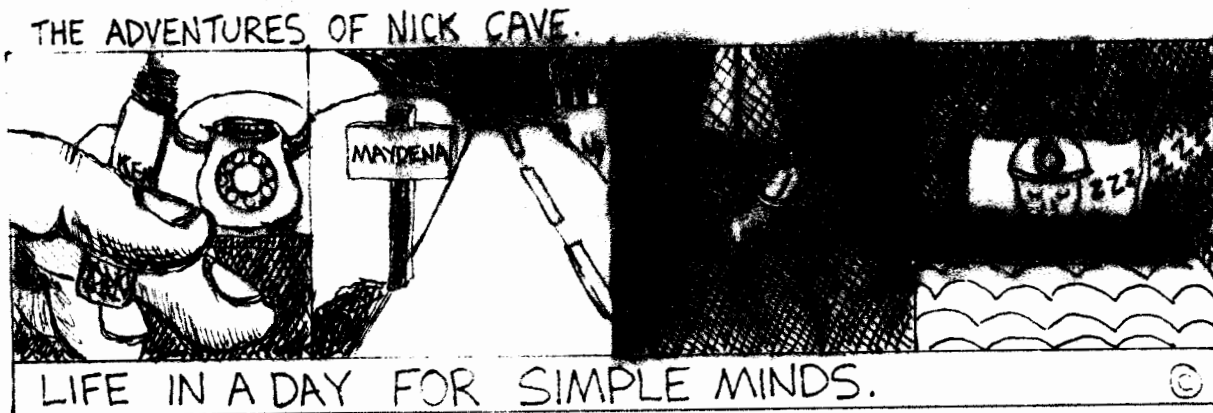
Nick Hume

(NOTE:

It is unlikely that the force applied by one of John Salt's legs was sufficient to break the karabiner in question even with the gate open or even side-loading the krab. If that is the case we ought to harness that power to a turbine! It is more likely that the krab suffered some prior damage which was not apparent as any noticeable deformation. Because it is hard to guarantee that your rinky-dink accessory krab that falls to the floor as you loose your temper with your rope pack,

or whatever, is 100% as strong as the manufacturer claims everytime you use it, it is most important that you heed the warning above. In short the safety margin is too small on such an item. These karabiners are designed for extreme aid climbing where weight is critical and where they are only subjected to one body weight. Should a point of aid fail it is the dynamic rope which absorbs the impact force. Using static ropes such as we do in caves is asking for it. The problem with these krabs in aid climbing situations is the crowding you get with two fifi hooks and a second krab all on the one krab that's clipped into the aid. Alan Warild, however, does use these krabs for redirections on his lightweight solo trips. - Ed.)

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TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB 40th ANNIVERSARY DINNER

This may not be the 40th Annual Dinner but it is the dinner of the 40th year, so we won't quibble. A venue has now been decided upon by the committee and a date set, so here it is...

THE PLACE:

THE CELLAR

13 Cromwell St, Battery Point.

THE DATE:

Friday 26th September, 1986

THE TIME:

7.00pm for 8.00pm Dinner.

THE COST:

\$18 per person.

THE MENU: Cost covers a 3-course meal with a choice for each course as follows:

Soup: Cream of Celery  
Vegetable Consommé

Main Course: Roast Sirloin of Beef Madeira  
Fresh Trevalla with White Wine Sauce  
Bullotine of Turkey

Dessert: Selection from the Sweets Trolley including  
Hazelnut Torte and Strawberries Romanoff.

Coffee is Complimentary.

Wine is available by the carafe for \$5.50 and beer by the jug is \$5.00.

We will have the restaurant to ourselves. There is a dance floor and music for those in need of some exercise to settle the stomach.

DON'T MISS THIS GASTRONOMIC EXTRAVAGANZA! Few cavers make it to 40 still going strong, let alone caving clubs. Fact is that this is Australia's first. Forty years of anything is a big deal so don't miss the big deal of your caving career, be a devil anyway, even if you haven't been underground for a while, you'll feel at home at The Cellar.

RSVP (as soon as possible): Trevor Wailes 344862 (ah)

COME TO THE 40th ANNIVERSARY DINNER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB