

SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caver's Club
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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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EDITORIAL

As I write this editorial I know that I won't be the person who completes the typing and editing of this issue of Speleo Spiel. I am about to embark on the next adventure-filled chapter of my globe-trotting career, climbing in Alaska and Europe. I will be away until September, a duration of 4 1/2 months and by my calculations about 4 1/2 issues of the Spiel. The message behind this is simple - we need somebody to produce the Spiel in my absence.

Production of Speleo Spiel is quite easy using the Kaypro II wonder computer - I've even left instructions! All that is basically required in the interim is for some kind soul to type in the text and Stuart Nicholas will knock it all into shape with the dazzling array of editing commands at his fingertips. Alternately anyone can learn these themselves. This is an ideal opportunity to learn how to work a word-processor... More than a Job it's a Career! You could be in this position for the rest of your life, especially at the rate at which cave is being discovered. Keep abreast of the latest discoveries! Edit the Spiel Now!

Stephen Bunton

TROGTH ITH STRANGER THAN FRICTION

The Eberhard Brothers Senior, alias Trevor Wailes, and Chris Davies have succeeded in pulling off this year's first caving discovery coup with Old Ditch Row (103m). This four pitch cave drops into Exit Cave just at the outside end of the Rockpile. Backdoor is another newly discovered entrance to Exit just near the real entrance. Cavers are reminded that permits are required to visit Exit Cave. The REAL Eberhards have only secured second place with a breakthrough in Asteroid Pot, with Trevor and Co, which led to another draughting dig. This lead is no less promising now than it ever was, particularly as the super SMAPS survey software shows Serendipity to be intimately related (could this be an astral amalgam of two pots??).

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE.....

Albert Goede has organized some 1:5,000 contour maps of the Growling Swallet area in the Florentine Valley upon which Stuart Nicholas has superimposed a complete set of SMAPS printouts of the caves of the Systima Growling. This is the first time an accurate (?) overview of the whole area has been achieved.

Mt Anne seems to have come in for some more exploratory attention. For the duration of March a seven man Czechoslovakian expedition combed the northern section of the northeast ridge for caves. They found 11 caves the deepest of which was Goggled Eyes at 77m. This cave is almost 400m in length and has two vertical entrances. The passage dimensions in the cave are also quite impressive, 40m wide by 10m high for 150m of its length. The Czechs intend to prepare a written report and copies of their maps for publication in Speleo Spiel later in the year. This group and several others earlier this year have made the Nicholas New Town transit lounge take on a more than passing resemblance to Sandy Bay caravan park, with tents, gear and bodies strewn all over the house and yard.

Mt Anne hasn't escaped the eagle-eye of Bob Davis, a photogrammetrist with the Department of Surveying at Tas. Uni. Bob gave a lecture to the Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group on 7th April and his professionally displayed aerial photos of the Mt Anne Karst Region captivated and enthused quite a large audience. In particular there were several photos looking down the throat of as yet undiscovered caves lurking beneath the King Billies and Scoparia, which nearly sent the lads racing up the hill that night in search of "caverns measureless to man".

Recently a round of the Tasmanian Rally Championship was run using the roads in and around the Styx and Florentine Valley concessions of ANM. Spectacular stuff - it isn't every day (or night) one can see cars doing three times the speed limit on those magnificent roads... The major service at the junction of Repulse, Settlement and Florentine Roads looked like a car yard - floodlights everywhere, complete mobile workshops, cars and bodies everywhere, even a computer scoring system and hot dog stand! Quite an event, quite a night - even the weather was fine! Congratulations to ANM for letting the circus play on those great roads.

The 1987 Annual General Meeting of TCC was held... Does anyone know anything about "election" results and that sort of stuff??

The March edition of this rag was going to be an epistle detailing the PB trip of about twelve months ago. It is all set to go, but for reasons unknown someone has gone cold on the idea and a NOGO clamp has been put on it..... Hence the combined edition you are now reading.

SERVALANE - ONE OF THE GROWLING NASTIES...

9 November, 1986

Team: Nick Hume and Trevor Wailes

Natural attrition had reduced what should have been a strong party of six to a scratch team of oldies. Servalane and narrow rift passage heading into the unknown 25 to 30 metres above Coelacanth is not regarded as the most friendly outpost of the Growling Swallet system. The passage terminates "Federation Free Space" and is the only one known on this level (the assumption that passage exists above is well founded due to the number of avens in the area). Hopefully it was going to lead to a "new dawn" of exploration.... However not this day!

It was noted some time ago that our in situ homemade wire ladders were showing signs of corrosion due to electrolysis and that they should be replaced with homemade rope ladders. Fortunately the club had an 'expert' rope ladder constructor in the shape of Steve Bunton. The two test ladders had been made some time ago but waited for a hapless team such as ours to install them.

After initial bouts of apathy and the trek in concluded, it was a rapid trip down to the sump area that terminates the Entrance Series. The silt bank is still receding and it will be interesting to see what, if anything, is revealed if and when it is totally removed. Up through Windy Rift, and what used to be the second chock stone was rocked into a different position in a vain attempt to drop it down the rift. Passage over these obstacles is now possibly more difficult instead of less! Higher up past the grovelly bits, Nick climbed Refuge Aven and installed the first ladder which I was then expected to climb. While gingerly ascending this device of antiquated design, I thought of Steve, but not necessarily favourably! The 14 inch rung spacings proved intriguing...

At the top of the next 10 metre handline pitch the rescue / incarceration supply was checked and rubbish put aside for removal at our departure. The worthwhile stock was stashed on a ledge in Slaughterhouse Aven, this being the highest safe spot in the area. Black River with White Bits In It would have to flood to the roof before this aven was inundated. However, if GS Entrance Series floods and backs up Windy Rift and on into Trapdoor Streamway, the pitch out of or up to Slaughterhouse Aven could be impassible. On the other hand, rescue groups coming into GS (Heaven forbid...) would most probably enter via Slaughthouse Pot and this aven, making it a most likely base of operations.

The old wire ladder into the Trapdoor Stream series was pulled out and replaced with the second of the 'Bunton Special' rope ladders. The wire ladder here was the one causing most concern. The replacement has a rub point which ought to be protected in the near future. On into the Trapdoor Series and turn left and up into Destiny. From here the climb up into Hyperspace Bypass is easily missed but leads around to the far side of the 28 metre Destiny Pitch, on into Shower Aven and the Ear Shearer (now slightly enlarged due to the passing of many ears in recent years). A short stop for a light lunch and biscuits was made at the Rock Bridge Pitch at the start of Federation Free Space, before crossing the bridge and turning left into Razor Aven and eventually into Cauliflower Corner. This is the beginning of Servalane...

Servalane was worse than I remember it - short climbs in rift passage interspersed with low crawls that could rip a suit to shreds without care. Surprisingly (when you are there) it is only about 60 metres to the Space Rat Alley turnoff and hence this section was readily explored in the early stages of the GS expansion. Beyond this turnoff the onward route lies at the top of a 15 metre deep rift. This closed down somewhat at the top, so the larger section of the rift lower down was followed

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE.....

to a narrow chamber which pinched out. A climb up the highest point here revealed a continuing offset rift (Is that a printing joke? - Ed) and a small mud covered aven afforded a climb down with another step down to the base of the vadose trench. The rift continued as a narrow crawl in mud with the 15 metre high rift above being impossibly tight. Nick and I both tried to push this crawl hoping for something better but neither of us feel we improved much on Stefan's limit of a few months earlier. The most intriguing aspect of this rift is the slight draught, and although it has been well looked at, one can't help feeling that there is more. The phreatic roof tube is noted for its solution pockets - some look quite extensive and appear to carry a draught.

Nick and I retreated to Space Rat Alley where Nick had a look at the descending rift heading in the general direction of Coelacanth. Again nothing new was turned up although some rocks were overturned and replaced just to say Nick had 'been' there. The return trip was made through Space Rat Alley avoiding Servallane and a rope was hung and left at the awkward Cauliflower Corner down climb. A relatively quick exit was made with Nick showing how unfit I was. The old ladders were carried out as was the rubbish from the food dump.

Not an inspiring day but a pleasant trip to see if anything would go - maybe another time at another lead!

FOOTNOTE!

It was noted the ladder causing greatest concern was replaced with no time to spare as it virtually disintegrated when examined sometime later...

Trevor Wailes

SPLASH POT - Another meeting of the Potters and Splashers Society

FEBRUARY 1987

Splashers: Trevor Wailes and Rolan Eberhard

Trevor and I had been to Splash Pot on separate occasions. We had both pushed through a squeeze at the original deepest point and had been stopped at a further squeeze into which neither of us had the confidence to commit ourselves. Later, when comparing our description of the squeezes, it was apparent we had been stopped at different points. In order to settle the question of who had gone further, a return trip was deemed necessary, and in any case we both agreed another look might pay off.

The Splash Pot trip finally eventuated. We found ourselves wriggling along a particularly arduous section of cave passage roughly 100m below the surface. The vadose canyon remained consistently narrow and it was continually necessary to stop and locate the widest point in order to squeeze through. Numerous rips in my trog suit and bruises in unusual places bear testimony to the effort required in negotiating this passage. The precise number of squeezes we had passed, or who had previously gone furthest, seemed to lose significance in a spirit of shared self-inflicted suffering. When caving with Trevor one can always tell when the going gets really tough by his inevitable remark (given with wry satisfaction), "...this is just like caving in England...". In this way he has effectively cured me of any desire to ever go caving there. Obviously he was thoroughly enjoying the trip, I was to I think!

We paused to hammer the lugs off another constriction. More inelegant contortions saw us at the brink of what we had simultaneously been hoping for and dreading - a pitch. The drop was only short, but not quite as short as our single length of spare rope. At this stage Trevor was fired up with nostalgic fervour and suggested lowering the rope and descending to a ledge visible below. The idea sounded fine, except we had no rigging or prusiking gear with us; additionally it seemed assumed that I would be the one to climb down. After some hesitation I had to agree it was worth a try. I proceeded down with a firm grip on the rope, while Trev kept a stern eye on the belay point. An enthusiastic little stream dived down the neck of my caving suit with uncanny accuracy as I kicked footholds into the rotten rock... Upon reaching the ledge some 5 metres above the base of the pitch, it was apparent the rope was definitely too short. I conveyed this information to Trev, who boldly suggested a solution to the problem. He would untie the rope and lower it to me, thus allowing me to tie off again and proceed to the bottom. On the way up I could toss the rope up to him and he would re-belay it for my climb up! Simple as it sounded, I wasn't quite that keen. Besides, the rest of the drop was freehanging and there was nothing to belay from at the ledge anyway. It was time to admit defeat, for the moment anyway.

Our return to the surface passed remarkably quickly. A cold change had passed through during our underground sortie and when we reached the car the peaks had a substantial covering of snow. During the drive home there was plenty of time to speculate upon the unknowns of the reincarnated Splash Pot. From first impressions, it could be the sort of cave that will make Porcupine Pot seem like fun!!

Rolan Eberhard

FLOWERY GULLY & GUNNS PLAINS - A BRIEF VISIT

1, 2 March 1987

Party: Adrienne Van Schie and Rolan Eberhard

Flowery Gully is a small limestone area barely 30 kilometres north of Launceston. The main cave has been known since last century and this, coupled with the ease of access and local quarrying activities, has resulted in substantial damage to the caves. Apart from outright vandalism, there are even direction arrows painted at various points on the cave walls to assist those who might become disorientated. In fact we found the system surprisingly extensive. We followed the main passage upstream (dry at this time) to a point where the tunnel dips steeply and appears to end. However, it was possible to squeeze up into the rift above, which lead to another entrance. Although daylight was visible a large wedged rock effectively seals the hole.

We then backtracked and explored some upper-level passages nearby. Formation in this area was comparatively untouched, including some sparkling flowstone and a dense patch of short helectites. Of interest was a length of string that had become partially embedded in flowstone, although the string itself did not seem particularly antique. Broken pottery and ironware indicate that another entrance nearby has been filled in at some stage. Before leaving Flowery Gully we looked at some other small caves revealed in the faces of nearby quarries.

The next day we drove to Gunns Plains, a picturesque valley to the north-west of Mole Creek. I had a look inside GP4, a resurgence on the western side of the valley. Grovelling up the streamway was an unpleasant start, but the passage soon opened out to a spacious and well decorated chamber. At this point the stream divides into two tributaries. The righthand branch ended at a low sump after a short distance, while I did not proceed far along the other which was tight and

muddy.

We returned to Launceston via Loongana, another small karst area. A very pleasant spot it was too, although we didn't bother to find any of the caves.

Rolan Eberhard

HAIRY RALLY CARS AND OTHER GOATS - A TYPICAL WEEKEND IN THE FLORENTINE!

A STORY IN TWO PARTS

Goats: Stuart Nicholas and Lew Mitchelmore - Easter 1987

Many days and many nights sitting in front of the dreaded green screen keying survey data into SMAPS eventually revealed the need to "tie up a few loose ends" on some of the overland traverses. Lew, a worker in the same salt mine as the author, last year expressed rather startling enthusiasm to go caving. And so finally we went, complete with Suunto instruments and tape, a forestry compass, chainsaw and a stove with toast making accessory! One cannot go without some luxuries in one's more mature years....

As a rather tame but nevertheless real intro to the gentle art of caving, a quick sortie into Welcome Stranger made for an easy start to the day. Back along to the Nine Road, a long leg was surveyed from the Porcupine Pot track up the road for a hundred metres or so in order to indicate a proper junction on the computer plotted overland map. Someone seems to have moved the Porc. Pot track but I think we found the correct starting point... Quick entrance viewing sessions at Tassie Pot and Owl Pot finished off the day's work in that neck of the woods. Next stop - the Eight Road junction with the Florentine Road to survey a leg or two each way on the Florentine Road, again to give a better indication of the actual junction. Trev and Rolan surveyed the length of the Eight Road some weeks ago which has made the location of GS and surrounds somewhat more positive than its ever been.

Dodging rally cars (or should that read "Dodgem cars") was the order of the day on the Nine Road - a round of the Tasmanian Rally Championship is to be run in the Florentine Valley and other nearby ANM road networks early in May and a couple of the organisers were out logging the event (no pun intended). I am not sure who was more surprised at seeing the other car..... Congratulations to ANM for allowing their magnificent roads to be the venue for the heart stopping raw egotistical excitement of forest racing!

Toasted sando's, cups of tea and other necessities of life preceded the trek into Growling Swallet. At the junction of our "Eight Road Track" and the original McCallum's track, one shot was taken beyond the junction, once again to give an indication on the map of the location of the junction.

Wallowing into the Entrance Series of GS in very low stream conditions made for a pleasant sojourn and an intro to damp (ie real) caving for Lew. We even found some more passage - a small ox-bow that I am sure no-one had ever looked at. There must be considerable numbers of such passages which if surveyed would add significantly to the total length of the system. Interesting to note how the entrance stream flow had changed since my last visit. The dry bypass was completely dry!

END OF PART ONE

START OF PART TWO

Many moons ago (when some of our present members were mere children) a small pot called Hairy Goat Hole was located on the hillside between Splash Pot and the top of the Junee Quarry Road. The feature of this hole ("I remember it well...") was a good draught and a remarkably small entrance shaft which led to a downsloping rubble ramp and a medium sort of chamber. The draught was issuing from a rift / crack in the far side. Recently there has been some interest in furthering the exploration of this hole, especially as nearby Splash Pot (once said to be "finished") has had something of a revival.

The first and obvious necessity is to find the entrance. Stefan has had one or two sorties into the area without success and my last visit there was sometime around 1970 or '71! The original method of discovery involved a post-graduate geology student running around the hill side wearing shorts (without gaitors...!). By standing near any holes found, it was possible for him to sense draughts emanating from them on his unclothed legs!!

Lacking the required student, and not wishing to be ruined for life by wearing shorts on a bitterly cold day, we resorted to a slightly more scientific method, namely proceeding up to Splash Pot and then heading back towards the road more or less in a straight line. This protocol was followed at the time of original discovery but that day all involved became somewhat affected by the frenzy brought about by numerous small caves being found in rapid succession, together with much shouting and other animal noises.

As an aside, I was interested to note the good condition of the Khazad Dum highway and that the original 5 metre entrance shaft of Splash Pot has collapsed negating the need for an entrance ladder.

So much for the history. Back and forth we tripped and stumbled, starting quite high on the hill and working down as the rain poured out of the heavens with ever increasing intensity. Quite a number of small entrances and collapses were found by both Lew and myself, but none of them went anywhere or draughted. The bracken growth has been rather prolific in places and many trees have fallen over the years making movement quite difficult, to say nothing of actually finding the cave in question. Needless to say we did not find Hairy Goat Hole, although a couple of the entrances were very similar.

On the return home a hot coffee and chips from the Maydena store was most welcome while pondering the location of the shaft.

Dredging the bottom of my memory, I recall that H.G.H was approached on a couple of trips subsequent to its discovery by proceeding from Splash Pot as before and heading around the hill towards a significant tree. However, I cannot recall why the tree was significant - whether it was dead, thick, thin, branched, tall or whatever - or where the hole was in relation to this tree! If anyone who was around at the time can recall a little more information we would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

Stuart Nicholas

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE.....

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[illegible]

SPACE RAT ALLEY — SERVALANE
 FEDERATION FREE SPACE GROWLING SWALLET
 COELACANTH 30m BELOW (SHADED AREA)

5m
 10m



COELACANTH

SPACE
 RAT
 ALLEY

DAISEY'S END

SERVALANE

CAULIFLOWER CORNER
 RAZOR
 AVEN

BLACK RIVER
 WITH WHITE BITS
 IN ITS SUMP

TO FEDERATION FREE SPACE
 AND G.S. ENTRANCE

COELACANTH	
	SUMP
	WATER SURFACE
	OPEN PASSAGE

DRAWN T. WAILES