

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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EDITORIAL

Winter, and a few easier trips are on the cards, ones more suitable to the novice cavers "surfacing" in our midst. Sesame is an ideal such cave and the Leigh/Nick team are definite starters, so why not join the queue! Tassie Pot, Owl Pot and a K D serpentine circuit are other possibilities. If you are interested in these sorts of "social" trips, come along to meetings and make some suggestions.

A few harder trips are on the agenda as well: how does a dive trip to Mainline take your fancy! With a bit of luck and co-ordination this may actually happen (and may already have). Kilometres more in Growling Swallet would have Trev's eyes sparkling, but enough of this chortle.....

AND NOW A WHINE FROM THE QUARTERMASTER.....

Could members picking up and dropping off gear, at the quartermasters store, please inform them of their presence. Failure to do so could be interpreted as a territorial incursion and result in the offender being assaulted by a 4 by 2, or anything else to hand.

Club lamps contain acid! It should not be diluted so much that its efficiency starts to fall off, as in when it takes a swim in a plunge pool along with its wearer, or when its hosed off after the trip. Better to "whack" some electrical tape over the breather holes (of the battery !), if either of these things is likely to happen. Syringing the excess out is a real bastard !

It has been noticed that a certain person has a perfectly good AC/DC T-shirt, which has been ruined by the addition of a crude caving illustration. The depths of some people's taste !

Corrections - Speleo Spiel 236: "Caves Near Kandrian, PNG" article:
"Alinbit River" should read "Alimbit River"
"Laiana" should read "Laiana"

Underground Utterances & Other Oddities

Does someone know something we don't.....? ".....EXIT CAVE, MINI MARTIN AND MIDNIGHT HOLE CONNECT TO CREATE A 17 KM SYSTEM....."; this was quoted in the DEEP CAVING DOWN UNDER article of April's AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC. One of a number of dubious interpretations made in the story, but then I'm prone to the occasional bit of poetic license myself.

On the whole, the spread was excellent though, covering SUSS's battles with force ten gales on Mount Anne, caving on the Nullarbor plus a well deserved tribute to Al Warild's caving skills by Julia James. Included also is a foldout wallmap/summary of Australia's major caving areas (maybe it'll fit under my CURE poster!). All this and the good photos make caving look exciting stuff, from the comfort of the armchair anyway....

Speaking of which, an excellent new caving book has been seen around lately. David Judson's CAVING PRACTICE AND EQUIPMENT is a "tad" on the expensive side at \$47, but it has to be by far and away the best technical guide yet, easily replacing the former (and very dated) "bible" of the caving arts, Montgomery's SINGLE ROPE TECHNIQUES.

While owing much to Montgomery's original format, such as graphically depicting a multitude of rigging situations, blah, blah...., it's text is much more refined and covers a broader range of caving styles, more in keeping with modern attitudes about exploration. Assistance by contributing authors draws together a wealth of practical experience, rather than being content to treat some topics superficially. Despite this multi-authorship, the segments within the book thread together very well and are refreshingly readable.

The book is big, allowing plenty of detail right through it's "grass roots caving" chapters and onto a plethora of esoteric specialties. Included is very useful information on water tracing, cave diving (Martyn Farr), surveying (Bryan Ellis), electronic communications, rescue, expedition planning, conservation, cave biology, geology, archaeology, photography, instructed caving, explosives, the list is endless! A must for the serious caver and (at the price) the very keen aspirer to advanced skills.

A copy of Ben Lyons VENTURING UNDERGROUND, THE NEW SPELEOS GUIDE, has been generously donated to the club library, recently. The book is a concise manual of caving, aimed at the beginner to medium level of expertise. It's up to date (1983), revealing most of the styles, techniques and gear in use at the present time.

A definite plus factor is its brief abstractions on speleogenesis, surveying, cave photography, etc, thus hinting at the types of activities available to people persisting in the sport. Highly recommended to our members, just starting out. Please don't hoard it with "other things to read" though. Keeping it in general circulation gives others a chance to be informed too.

LOWLIFE held a "bash" or rather, party, in the basement of the Ship Hotel recently (LOWLIFE is the name of Martyn Carnes "post-punk"

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band!). Many cavers were in evidence, rocking on (or should that be rockpiling on) 'til the small hours. That leader of the "brat-pack", Russell Fulton, was obviously enjoying himself to the fullest, led astray to some extent by an absolutely vibrating Jeff Watson (the man's unstoppable!). Jim, Jo, Andrew, Rebecca, David, Leigh, Stef, Nick and sundry other only partially identifiable subterranean types, danced and jittered about. If only our club meetings were like this, you wouldn't have to put up with the "rhubarb" over the volume of the music !

Anyone interested in retaining membership in the AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION, should T.C.C. decide to vote "out", see Stephen Bunton regarding something appropriate. Speaking of having sympathy for Steve, since transporting his worldly possessions to Hobart, some of them have gone for a rather long walk. Anyone who borrowed his full set of CAVING INTERNATIONALS (some covered in Contact), could they please let him know. Anything else they've borrowed too, for that matter: carbide lights, heat shrink, rubber dolls..... "GOD!!!, they must be out there somewhere; the mind boggles!"

While we're having a witch hunt, an anonymous donor to the club gear store is a bit KRABBED off!. Apparently his generous gift of several MAILLON RAPIDES, have been unsighted over the past few months (he wanted to pinch them back!). Who's for a "knee-capping" then.....???

CONGRATULATIONS..... Janine and Andrew Briggs have just turned out a new caver in the form of a baby girl, Kate Adele. Well done, we could do with some more members. Any chance there will be more coming soon, you two.....!?

News has come out at last. JF53, a cave in the Florentine found in the early seventies, has been recently assessed as being highly significant archaeologically. Quite a large number of stone implements and bone fragments have allowed a dating of circa 24000 years B.P., indicating the presence of man some 3500 years earlier than had previously been thought.

Bunty a SOLO MAN ?????. On March 28, Stephen Bunton managed to solo KHAZAD DUM in the astonishing time of six hours using "tat technique": old 11mm ropes to the streamway, 7mm ropes in the streamway and 8mm rope on the final pitch, which required a bolt (tut, tut...Editor) taking half an hour to drill. The bolt casing is "flagged ", just above the lip where the rope goes free.

There seems to be some interest in the Land of the Long Black Rain Cloud and more importantly, going there during next summer. A recent Kiwi type visitor to the Nicholas Itinerant Traveller's and Other Hanger's On Establishment indicated that much was trying to happen in

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE....

that land of many sheep and big holes (or is that big sheep and many holes??) over the Tasman but a lack of suitable masochists was hampering proceedings somewhat. It was suggested that maybe a person or ten from here could be the answer.... The general idea could be to do some caving in the Nelson area or wherever the best action was and on the other fine day do some climbing around Cook or Aspiring or somewhere.

If you are interested, see Stu Nicholas or Steve Bunton soon as both (plus Lew Mitchelmore and possibly even Nick Hume) will be doing a recce (disguised as a ski trip) during September and checking out the scene nearly first hand.

Familiar with horribly slippery Glug boots! You know how dangerous they can be when the soul wears down a little. Well there is a very practical solution - just get them resoled with a Sherpa sole. All this can be done by a New Zealander living at Bellerive, trading under the name HORO. While not overly cheap, the job he does is very good and the difference in grip compared to even a new pair of gumboots is astonishing! Those slimy winter logs are now a breeze, not to mention being useful in slithery cave mud. That's what the editor thinks anyway, and he thoroughly recommends the process.

RIFT CAVE EXTENSION

9th April 1988

Party: James Davis and Rolan Eberhard

Apparently Rift Cave was one of the first holes in the Junee area to be explored by cavers, this being in the late 1940's. A spectacular entrance ravine leads to a "Railway Tunnel" passage that meanders down to a depth of 130 metres. One gets the feeling that the cave is almost too big for its own good. Tons of rubble have been swallowed into the huge entrance and this finally blocks progress in the descending gallery below. This is indeed unfortunate, as Rift Cave would seem to be just the start of a very big and very old system. It was exciting news when we heard about SCS discovering a major extension to Rift Cave in March this year.

Having been told where to look, James and I had no problem finding the start of the extension and it seems surprising that it wasn't explored earlier, although apparently an amount of rock had to be removed to get through initially. The passage remains quite constricted for a short distance until it intersects a vadose canyon carrying a stream. At the brink of a 17 metre pitch SCS have placed two bolts, one on either wall out in the rift above the pitch. Reflective bolt tags have been put to good use here. Even in the prevailing dry conditions the pitch was a bit damp towards the bottom, so I imagine it would be quite wet normally.

The passage below continues down a steep boulder slope eventually opening out into a series of descending chambers. Finally a rubble choke is encountered and this is the deepest point at -180 metres according to the SCS survey. A slight draught can be detected here, but the amount of infill suggests that other leads might hold more promise. Probably of some potential are phreatic tubes that occur in the ceiling at various points higher up the cave. As James' light had

started to fade badly our investigations were cut short. The whole thing is a very interesting discovery.

Rolan Eberhard.

RIFT CAVE REVISITED

20th May 1988

Party: Nick Hume, Rolan Eberhard, Leigh Douglas.

Having not been caving for many moons it was decided to ease our bodies and minds gently into something not too strenuous. Rift Cave was decided on as Rolan had been there a while ago and wanted to recheck some leads.

Rift Cave has a magnificent (needless to say) rift entry at the head of a doline with a sloping mud floor jammed with boulders; spearheaded slippery logs lead down to the entrance proper.

Inside is a largish chamber and on its right a smallish hole leading into the new extension found by SCS. A short crawl was negotiated before we came to a windy narrow serpentine passage that precedes the only real pitch of 17 metres. This was a little wet to remind us what a wet cave was like. After a bit of loose boulder hopping and a few more low crawls we stopped near 'the' sump for a look at a higher passage Rolan wanted to investigate. I found the climbing tiring so gladly let Nick and Rolan go on to look. I passed the time away looking at the numerous fossils in the rocks - snails shells and things. The other two returned after a short while having investigated a short pitch into a small blind tube. A way over the head of this pitch led to a side passage on the right of a rift. This held another non going short pitch.

After a relaxed 'smoko' stop we went to the survey sump and continued on through a grovelly crawl to a vertical and narrow tube. The walls were of solid rock not mud. This lead up to a squeeze in the roof Rolan had located but couldn't fit through. There was barely enough room for two people, after standing all over Nick I wormed my way up to it. I could sit upright in it at its lip but it narrowed out to a perfectly rounded tube with a sharp elbow bend. After a bit of wiggling I managed to get through. I came out onto a small platform with only enough room to sit, at the top of a small pitch. In front of me was a perfect spike and to the right a perfect jug handle. Both nice belay points. Nick belayed the end of rope on the other side of the squeeze, for me. My helmet, SRT gear and lamp were passed through and I was able to hoist them up with my foot. In a very awkward way I managed to put them on. After much stuffing around I rigged the little pitch, Nick and Rolan shouting advice through the hole. From the platform I was sitting on the chamber was divided by a thin mud wall hollowed out underneath so I could walk from one side of the chamber to the other.

Up to the immediate right was a steeply sloping loose boulder ramp in a wide rift which turned left sharply after ten metres or so and became a bit narrow as it had a few suspended boulders jammed above me. I was following the water upstream. It had sunk into the mud further back. I continued upstream only a short way but decided not to go on as there was a pile of boulders I had to negotiate. The other boulders throughout the cave were not very stable so I was

reluctant to climb up and over these. I could see that the passage continued on and up and my light caught glimpses of water trickles. It was disappointing having the boulders as obstacles and not having Nick and Rolan here to see my find. The squeeze going out was a little more tricky and required getting in the right position to wiggle out.

The trip out was slow with rocks bouncing behind us. Rolan experienced being a ten pin as a ball sized boulder ran over him as he was coming out of a crawl. The prusik up was quite invigorating, washing our muddy suits clean. We got out just on nightfall and made our way back through the forest to the car. It was very pleasant not being pressured and rushed by a five o'clock time limit.

Leigh Douglas.

JF1: Chasing Draughts

In Speleo Spiel #49 (August 1970) is a trip report by Albert Goede on JF1. It describes how an upper level chamber was found beyond the base of the entrance slope. A hole in the floor of this chamber was laddered, and from here a winding rift that contained a "distinct draught" led downward. A constriction in the passage halted the cavers, but they returned several days and successfully enlarged the hole with a hammer. Unfortunately all that lay beyond was a small mud-choked chamber. Apart from denigrating JF1 in general, in his report of the second trip, Noel White makes the interesting comment that "one small hole was found on the way up with a strong breeze blowing from it, but explosives would be needed to have any chance". Considering that JF1 must have been a significant swallet at one time, plus the fact that it is located above where one might suspect the underground course of the Junee River to be, meant that another go at following the draught was called for.

JF1 lies barely ten minutes walk from the Junee Quarry Road, starting in the bracken on the opposite side of the road and just downhill of where The Chairman track begins. The entrance is spacious and slopes down steeply to a mud floor where I was immediately struck by how cold the air felt compared with that on the surface. A short climb leads up to the chamber where the pitch is. The continuation explored in 1970 - a small hole near the base of the pitch, and then a descending fossil canyon - held little promise. But near the base of the pitch is another lead that has presumably also been looked at in the past. A floor level hole gives access to a steeply descending bedding plane rift, liberally coated with sticky orange mud. At the bottom the lead seemed to end abruptly, but by sideways squeezing between two boulders I could see what looked like a continuation. It was not altogether inviting: a flattener beneath a large boulder where a few inches of mud would need to be removed before squeezing through might be possible. Nevertheless, a cold draught of air that was present is hard to ignore. Whether or not this is the draughting hole mentioned in the earlier trip report is hard to say; certainly blasting would not be the best way to get through. Digging in the cramped conditions would be no picnic either, but the source of that cold air is intriguing to say the least.

JF1 is not far from the Junee Quarry, and there is an interesting story told by Max Jefferies of Maydena about a draughty hole

discovered there many years ago. Apparently a significant hole was uncovered in the rock face during quarrying operations. The force of air coming out of the hole is said to have been considerable, but it was plugged up with rocks shortly afterwards. After hearing this story I went and had a look at the new quarry that is currently being worked uphill of the original one. No draughty holes, but it might be worth having a look there every now and again just in case something is opened up.

Rolan Eberhard

Khazad-dum: Down the Water

May 25, 1988

Party: Stefan and Rolan Eberhard

There are three distinct routes from the KD swallet entrance (JF4) down to the start of the main streamway section with the short pitches. The usual route is up the scaling pole (ie rotten stick) then down to the flattener, followed by a 28 metre freehanging pitch to a rockfall chamber. From here it is normal to follow a side passage containing 9 metre and 21 metre pitches that leads to the start of the streamway. Incidentally, before the side passage was discovered, the original route down to the streamway was via a passage leading underneath the rockpile with two pitches of 21 metres and 29 metres involved. It should also be possible to abseil straight off the edge of the rockpile down to the streamway about 50 metres below.

The second route down to the streamway is along the Serpentine Extension. This route starts on the left immediately inside the entrance, although there is also a passage allowing access between the scaling pole route and the Serpentine Extension a short distance along it. Five pitches and some narrow vadose canyon meanders down to rejoin the main streamway. The Serpentine route has been patronised a couple of times in recent years.

Alternatively, there is a third route that has remained more or less forgotten since KD was first explored in the early 70's. This is probably the most direct route and involves following the water after it flows past the scaling pole. When cavers first entered KD they naturally headed straight downstream. A short pitch was descended to where, to quote the original trip report (Speleo Spiel 43, February 1970), "the creek descends magnificently into a large hole". It appears that this pitch was never actually descended. Instead, a couple of relatively dry pitches from the nearby JF5 entrance were found to join the system near the base of the waterfall. A short distance downstream was a further wet drop, but other events directed attention away from this part of the cave. Using a cut sapling as a scaling pole, a dry upper level passage was discovered just inside the JF4 entrance. This was found to rejoin the water lower down and has remained the most popular route ever since.

It was Stefan's bright idea to go and "do" KD down the streamway. Recent heavy rain meant it would be good sporting caving, even though we knew from the start where the water was going. We took a 100 metre length of thin rope, an assortment of rigging gear and set off for KD through the drizzle.

Arriving at the entrance we headed downstream past the scaling pole. The first pitch is only short, being a dry drop of about 3 metres, although it could also be done as a wet climb on the left by following the water. The next shaft followed almost immediately. Looking over the edge of the drop it was understandable why cavers using ladders preferred to avoid this pitch. Rigging for SRT to avoid the chaos of falling water was simple matter either. Hanging off a chock Stefan traversed out to the left wall several metres down the drop and here a bolt was placed. Ten metres below was a broad ledge where the water funnelled down a further drop of about twenty metres. At this stage Stefan had an altercation with the bolt kit, the end result being a blunt casing jammed on the driver. Luckily it was possible to rig off a bollard on one side, giving an exciting but drenching abseil half under the waterfall.

At the spray-lashed bottom was short length of passage preceding the next shaft and it is apparently around here that JF5 connects. From the top of the pitch we could see out into a chamber, presumably the rockfall area below the dry 28 metre on the usual route. Although there was plenty of rope left, the redundancy of the bolt kit meant that rigging the drop was problematic. We decided to leave it for the time being and headed back to the surface.

Stefan spent some time looking around inside the entrance for more cave fauna. His enthusiasm was sparked by the discovery of a couple of cave harvestman (spider like bugs). Apparently this was the first time they had been found in the area. Meanwhile I went to look at another hole in the KD doline that is mentioned in Speleo Spiel 56. The entrance is at the top of the doline a short distance from where the water cascades in. A muddy slope leads down to short climb into an elongated rift. A crawl up one end leads down to a narrow winding passage where a stream is encountered. The passage gradually lowers becoming a belly-crawl, but as there was no draught I didn't push it.

It was a good day's caving. Another trip is called for to finish the complete traverse of this section down to the lower streamway. it should provide a new and novel route for trips to the bottom of KD. Who knows, with a couple of classic waterfall pitches, this route might eventually become the most popular one.

Rolan Eberhard

EXIT CAVE

MAY 1988

PARTY: Stefan and Rolan Eberhard

Instead of walking up the hill to look for Thun Junction as originally planned, the rain plus insidious apathy made us opt for an afternoon in Exit Cave. A rumour to the effect that there existed an aven somewhere off the main streamway past Mini Martin, where fallen logs were evidence of another vertical entrance, gave us a vague objective.

We entered Exit via one of the side entrances joining near the log bridge, and proceeded upstream. Having negotiated the rockfall and reached Camp 2, we decided to follow up the major side passage, that enters here on the opposite side of the stream. The spacious tunnel (not sure if it has a name) continued for some distance until meeting a rockfall chamber. Here a small stream that is present, bifurcates.

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Progress upstream was possible in both leads, although soon becoming low and wet. Needless to say we didn't go far along it.

Back in the main stream passage we headed along to Mystery Creek passage. Following the water that ultimately comes from Entrance Cave we came to a sump after a section of rockfall. Only a short distance away it was possible to climb up to a very spacious continuation - unfortunately it soon became obvious that we weren't the first to find it. A wide sandy floor and patches of decoration made it an impressive section of passage. Further on the active streamway was again encountered, albeit that another sump occurred at more or less the same point. The sump did not look an encouraging site for a dive, nor did other dry leads seem very promising. By this time it was getting late so we headed back downstream. Where the previously mentioned aven is, or whether it actually exists, remains to be seen.

Stefan's lamp died as we tried to find our way back through the confusing talus below the side entrance. Some tape marking the route would be useful here. Luckily my own light proved more reliable and we eventually found our way out into the night forest. I would suggest that people using club lamps not take it for granted that the light will still be shining at the end of their trip. On each of the last three trips I've been on at least one lamp has failed, in one case after barely four hours underground. At such times an emergency light source (eg Tekna light) is appreciated.

Rolan Eberhard.

DISMAL HILL POT. IDA BAY - SURVEY AND NOTES

Dismal Hill Pot is located on the southwestern aspect of Marble Hill, most easily accessed via the Moonlight Ridge track. The cave is situated on the limestone/Permian contact, some 100 metres or so north west of Great Expectation Cave (Leprona 871.5867).

There are 3 proximate entrances, one of which engulfs a small stream. This water course is encountered when descending the first 40 metre shaft rigged through one of the dry entrances. It is presently uncertain if the other dry entrance forms part of this system or represents a discrete downward accessway.

The cave descends as a series of stacked avens (P40, P8, P33) to an estimated depth of 97 metres, first explored in August 1987. Whilst this shaft complex invariably represents a source feeder to the Exit Cave system some distance below, there seems little prospect for extensions at the deepest point. The stream divides, one anabranch dropping 8 metres into a sump whilst the other disappears into a low flattener with no draught and evidence of sumping. However, there is a postulated connection with a large rift entrance a short distance downhill where a c.20 metre pitch leads directly to very tight slot and the sound of a waterfall beyond.

Dismal Hill Pot (IB130) is situated in a comparatively remote and only cursorily explored area of Marble Hill and there is some potential for deep (c. 200 metre) vertical connections with Exit Cave.

Thun Junction Cave (IB20) to the west was explored by TCC in the mid 70's to a tight draughting slot at an estimated depth of 120 metres

(Speleo Spiel 109). Other major caves in the region include Western Creek Swallet (IB18) and the recently connected Valley Entrance (IB120) lower down the hillside. Great Expectation Cave (IB129) has already received a digging/push trip. A couple of small holes in the dry valley immediately below IB129 have been investigated and a shaft entrance on the opposite side of the valley to IB130 has yet to be examined.

Stefan Eberhard

OLD DITCH ROAD - EXPLANATION AND MAPS

The entrance to this swallet was located by Chris Davies on February 22, 1987 and initial exploration in company with James Davis, Richard Hardy and Paul Merhulik revealed 25 metres of serpentine streamway to the edge of a pit (Speleo Spiel 231).

Subsequent exploration undertaken by Davies, Nick Hawkes, Trevor Wailes and Sheila McKemmie dropped 7 metre, 38 metre and 12 metre pits before running out of tackle at the head of a fourth shaft. The follow up trip by Davies, Hawkes and Wailes produced a final 40 metre pitch and realised the anticipated connection with the Exit Cave System (Speleo Spiel 227). At a depth of 103 metres this pothole intersects an upper level beside the Exit main streamway.

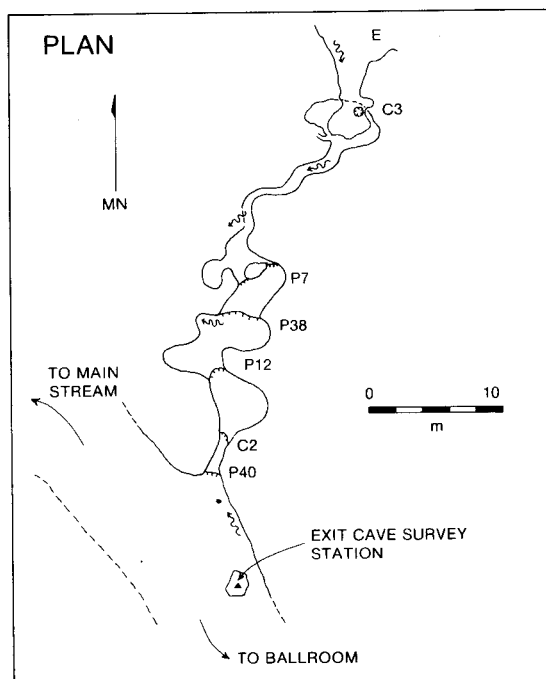
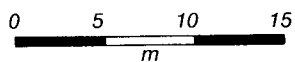
The southerly trend of this level leads into The Ballroom whilst the opposite direction leads downstream a short distance and connects with the main streamway at a point between a 3 metres climb down the side of a large boulder and the beginning of The Rockpile. Old Ditch Road derived its name from homonymous association with a street in England. The cave was surveyed by Steve Bunton and Stefan Eberhard on March 8, 1987. The survey was terminated at a blue plastic tag nailed to the top of a large boulder 9 metres from the base of the final pitch, presumably an old Exit Cave survey station.

There are presently seven known entrances to the Exit Cave System, offering a variety of interesting through trips and the straightforward nature of Old Ditch Road has already established it as a popular route. The first pitch (7 metre) can be readily belayed from a spike. The second (38 metre) and the third (12 metre) pitches have been equipped with a single bolt each although there is a paucity of natural tiebacks in the latter case. There are currently 2 bolts on the final 40 metre pitch (one at the top and one at -7 metre). The gear and rigging utilised on a bolting and pull-down trip through trip are described in Speleo Spiel 228.

Stefan Eberhard

In case you are wondering why this Spiel is number 238 and dated June, the PB issue you should have just received is to be officially numbered 237 and dated May, 1988... So there!

OLD DITCH ROAD I.B. 131 LINK TO EXIT CAVE IDA BAY PROJECTED SECTION (270°)

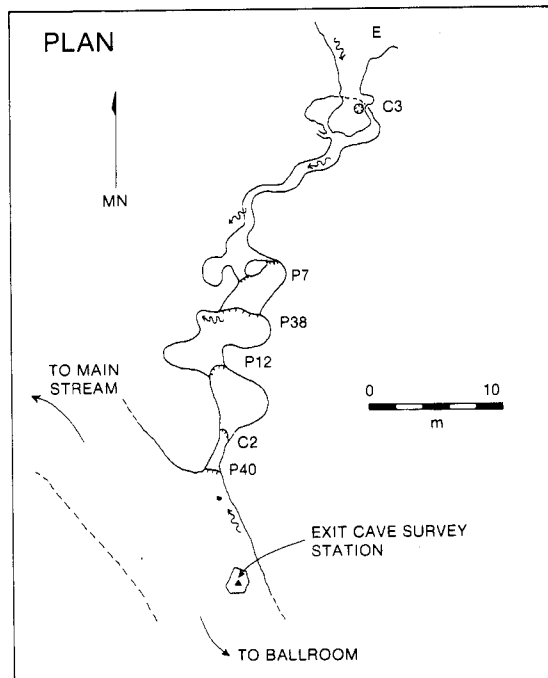
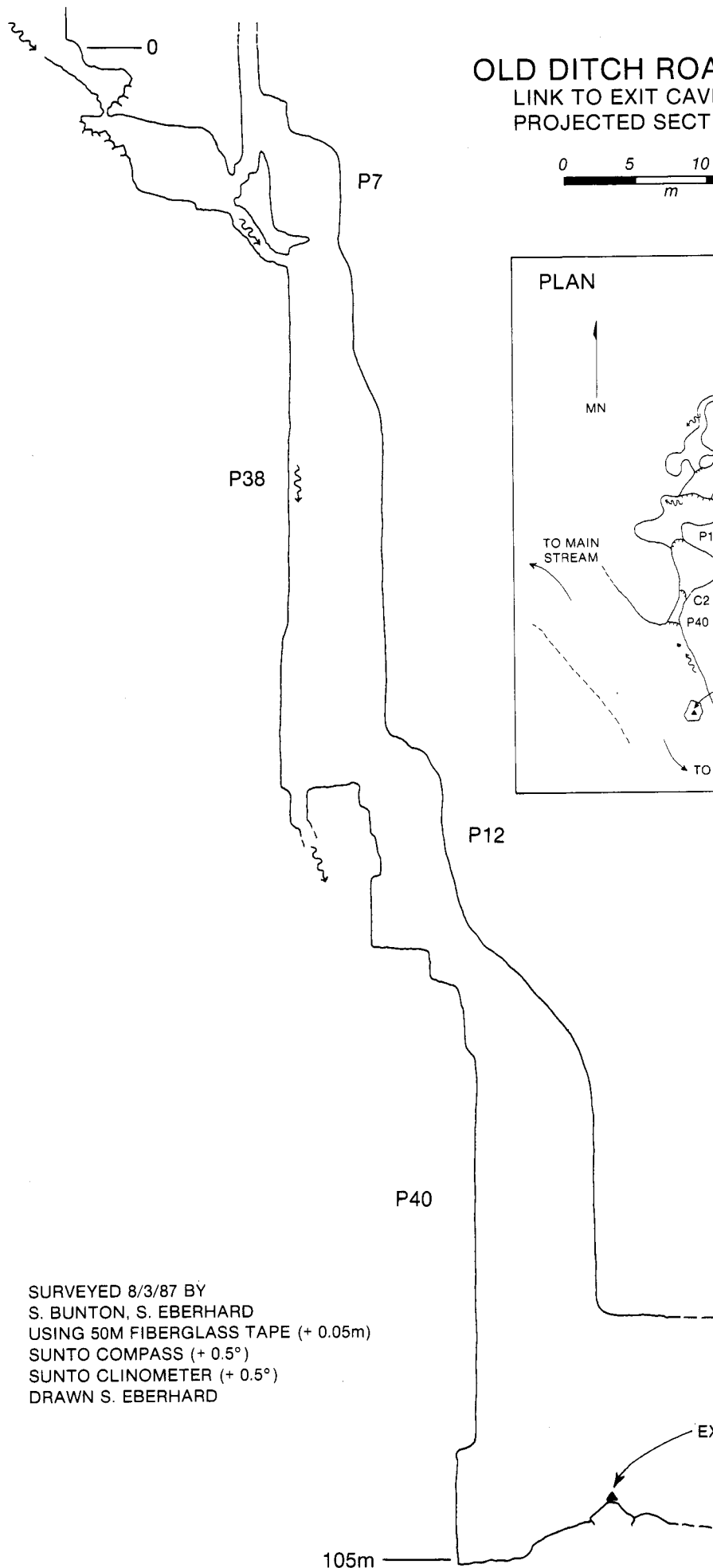
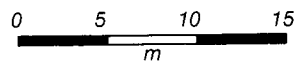


SURVEYED 8/3/87 BY
S. BUNTON, S. EBERHARD
USING 50M FIBERGLASS TAPE (+ 0.05m)
SUNTO COMPASS (+ 0.5°)
SUNTO CLINOMETER (+ 0.5°)
DRAWN S. EBERHARD

105m

EXIT CAVE SURVEY STATION

OLD DITCH ROAD I.B. 131 LINK TO EXIT CAVE IDA BAY PROJECTED SECTION (270°)

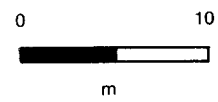


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SUNTO COMPASS (+ 0.5°)
SUNTO CLINOMETER (+ 0.5°)
DRAWN S. EBERHARD

E

DISMAL HILL POT IB130 IDA BAY

VERTICAL SECTION



MEMORY SKETCH
S. EBERHARD AUG. 1987

