



KING RAT SERIES, A-A-K, MT. ANNE

SPELEO SPIEL

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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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EDITORIAL

Does this look familiar?? It ought to... For this issue of our esteemed rag we're back to/with the (all too) familiar key strokes of the editor of old... Nick's claiming over-work or under-work or something so I've taken on the editing again for one or two issues.

By the time this issue hits the streets, the AGM will have come and gone, with its attendant elections and associated official activities, discussions (bun fights!) and so on. It would appear that we are at some kind of watershed with regard to TCC's involvement with the Australian Speleological Federation. The ASF is certainly not without its problems, in particular those associated with funding and communication with the membership in general, two interlinked issues.

However, most groups, clubs and so on are seen to have similar problems. At the most recent ASF Conference held last summer, I understand some resolutions were made regarding fee structures and the Newsletter organisation which promise to alleviate the difficulties perceived by the general membership of the Federation. More information on the changes will be to hand shortly and notes regarding these matters will appear in Speleo Spiel.

On a less divisive topic, TCC is going through something of a boom on the new member scene. At a recent meeting yours truly didn't know a large percentage of the bodies to be found in the back room of the Wheatsheaf Hotel. What does this indicate? Speculation on such subjects I will leave to the reader! Anyway, it's great to see renewed interest in the various facets of self abuse required to discover, explore and document the dark and forboding world beneath our feet, following something of a slump in the club's membership during the last year or so.

Stuart Nicholas

DON'T FORGET - ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE: No money => no Spiel!

\$25 full membership; \$30 family; \$18 junior/Spiel/student

April, 1989

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE...THE WORLD UNDER THE WORLD (AS WE KNOW IT!) (or, International News)

Seems like Tassie is not going to get the world's deepest cave prize this year.... Things are definitely on the down and down in the race to prove Jules Verne right or wrong. The December 1988 edition of NSS News from the USA reveals that Mexico is the place to go for some of life's lower experiences! At least three Mexican caves are now deeper than -1000m with the pace of exploration and discovery being rather more than frenetic. Sotano de Ocotempa in Puebla has been pushed to 1041m but will go to 1063m when two Belgian discovered higher entrances are tied into the survey. This system is now being called Sistema Ocotempa. Nearby, the Belgians pushed a new cave to a reported 1130m, while an American expedition to an area south of Huautla pushed Cueva Cheve to 1038m. A positive dye trace has been recorded between Sistema Huautla and a resurgence about 1650m lower than the highest point in S-H and 10km south of the Sotano de San Augustin entrance to the system..... This resurgence is not the one expected to be the outflow of Sistema Huautla.

Two years ago there were 22 caves deeper than 1000 metres - now there are 32.

The world's deepest list (as compiled by Mark Minton at Dec. 1988):

1. Reseau Jean-Bernard, France, 1535m
2. Vjacheslav Pantjukhin, USSR, 1465m
3. Sima de las Puertas de Illamina, Spain, 1408m
4. Sistema del Trave, Spain, 1381
5. Snieznaja Pieszcziera-Mezhonnogo, USSR, 1370m
6. Sistema Huautla, Mexico, 1353
7. Reseau de la Pierre Saint-Martin, France/Spain, 1342
8. Gouffre Berger-Reseau Rhododendrons, France, 1241
9. Vladimir Iljukhin, USSR, 1220
10. Batmanhohle, Austria, 1219

And now for a really up to date trip report.....

Cyclops Pot

13 June, 1987 (yes, that's right!)

Present: Steve Bunton (TCC), Jim Blyde (a mate of Mark Wilson's) (Hills Speleo Club), and another Steve (a mate of Jim's).

Whoever explored Cyclops had a one-eyed approach to cave rigging... put in a bolt! So after reading the description of the rigging on the second pitch "3m trace tied back to a #2 RP and a rebelay..." we put in a bolt. Unlike the generous persons before us we didn't leave the hanger on it.

The cave seems straightforward but Trevor's appraisal came in the form of advice... "Don't underate it!" We did!

Four pitches, no problems. Rigging the back-up belay around the chockstone for the first pitch is the crux - it involves getting a cricked neck and a scraped nose! The rest of the cave is brilliant, though the interior decorating leaves a lot to be desired. Ida Bay glug just doesn't fit in with superbly vertical free hanging pitches and geometrically designed..... artistic wank.

It took 6 hours. We were knackered at the end of it mostly due to the struggle out of the rift at the top of the first pitch. I made use of Queen Elizabeth's 62 birthday holiday to wash my trog suit at a leisurely pace and then it rained for a week and I couldn't dry the silly thing. Caving's the pits!! At Ida Bay anyway....

Stephen Bunton

ONE FINE DAY

9 December, 1988

An "as is where is" article.....

TCC had faltered in its attempts to go caving. The weather was too nice. Stefan and Bunty almost managed it with a climb on the Organ Pipes which was described as "clean & subterranean", but the day's entertainment didn't stop there. So intense was that good feeling of satisfaction, that I felt moved to pick up a hitch hiker on the way down the Huon Road below Fern Tree. This fellow looked like a day walker or possibly a tourist. That warm inner glow blossomed to full blown self-righteousness and I happily chatted to him about his affairs. He was from Sydney, he oozed air of out-of-townness. In fact he talked cost of living, house prices and had just bought a block of land at Fern Tree and was down for the weekend to check it out. I thought "He must be gullible!" and then perhaps "He's not too bright!". Finally he asked what we did for a living and Stefan promptly replied "I'm a biologist and he's teacher.". Teaching fired his imagination and he turned the conversation towards the prospect of teaching in Tassie for a career. ("Boy, he must be gullible!") Stefan got out and I ran the hitchhiker up to the Youth Hostel, my mind still frantic for a way to create some mischief when he dropped his guard and I seized the opportunity... "So, what have you people been doing for the day?" I looked at my still taped hands all dirtied and frayed, bloodied knuckles. I'd forgotten my pen-knife and was going to cut the tape off at home. I replied "We've been digging Devils out of their nests and photographing them for the day.". "Oh!" he said, "So that explains the plasters on your hands!". I nodded "Yes".

Steve Bunton
(The Nasty Little Man...)

DRAMA IN DWARROWDELF....

9 January, 1989

VSA: Mark ?, Gavin ?, Tim ?; TCC: Martyn Carnes.

Upon receiving a phone call from the above VSA party indicating that they were very keen to do some more caving after the PB trip I suggested that a trip to Dwarrowdelf would be good. And so the next morning we grabbed a combination of TCC & VSA rope and got off to a moderately late start.

When we arrived at the Quarry Road we chanced upon a meeting with a group of MSS (Sydney) cavers who were preparing for a trip to Cauldron Pot. They had apparently been down here for a few days touring in Owl Pot, Welcome Stranger and Growling. After relating to them the

location of the bolts on the traverse of the final pitch in Cauldron, I offered to show them the turnoff on the KD track as both parties were ready to leave the cars at the same time.

After leaving the MSS boys at the turnoff we continued on to the Dwarrowdelf track to discover an annoying amount of tree fall over the track, indicating the need for some track work in the future. I made the mistake of wearing my fibrepile undersuit on the walk in and consequently arrived at the entrance extremely hot and bothered.

The rigging proceeded smoothly down to the head of the second last pitch where I deemed that it was about time there was a bolt put in to keep it line with the rest of the pitches. (It really needed one - honest.) At the head of the last pitch we had a knot tying display courtesy of Mark and myself. I had just read in a book how to tie a figure-of-8 on the bight, the night before, to enable us to rig a Y belay on the bolts placed there by Al Warild a couple of years ago. Mark suggested that he could vaguely remember an easier way to tie the knot... It can be quite messy due to the length of rope required for the knot. However it was worth the effort because we eventually ended up with a neat+safe+adjustable Y belay that allows you to hang the rope where you want.

I still maintain that this last 67m pitch is one of the best to be found in Tas - beautiful shape, texture, length etc.

Once at the bottom, we all de-rigged and went off in search of the KD sumps 1 and 2 with the intention of investigating the draughting rockpile reported by Rolan some years ago. We climbed up to the left of the first sump and into the well-worn draughting passage. This passage is of crawling dimensions and continues for some distance meandering in and out of a large rockpile. After a suitable amount of crawling and grovelling, Mark and I decided to head back and make a start up the pitches to avoid unnecessary waiting around. Gavin decided to poke around a while longer while Tim decided to follow Mark and myself.

When Mark started up the rope I heard him muttering something about the rope having moved and him getting wet. I also noticed that he was trying to keep over to the left (to little avail) to avoid getting wet. When it was my turn to ascend I tried the same, wondering what could have happened to cause the rope to move so far under the water. The higher I reached, the greater the flow of water became. When I reached the top the water was literally pounding my head so much that it took a moment or two to see Mark standing up to the right of the pitch in order to gain respite from the deluge. By now there were no prizes for realising that there must have been a lot of rain to cause this amount of water. The next pitch looked even wetter, and as we were all soon to discover, it was.

The plan was to pull all the rope out of the cave in one length. Gavin was the last up the pitch and when we tried to pull the rope up, we discovered to our horror that it was snagged. With a ton of freezing cold water pouring on your head, this was not going to be easy to rectify. I looked across at Tim who had been fairly slow coming up the last pitch and saw that he looked quite cold and apprehensive. In view of the situation I suggested that we leave the cave rigged and just get the hell out as quickly as possible. Gavin continued out first. Tim followed and was momentarily overwhelmed by the water on the next pitch. Mark gave him some verbal encouragement

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ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE...

enabling him to continue. I headed out last behind Mark and was by this time feeling quite cold after a long wait. The next pitch was disgustingly wet and by the time I reached the top my face was nearly totally numb. Tim was feeling the pinch with the cold and so progress out of the cave was fairly slow. Only the 3rd and fourth pitches were relatively dry; the rest were relatively wet. We all emerged on the surface after about eight and a half hours underground to clear blue sky. The last traces of the downpour had disappeared.

We made fairly short time of the walk back to the car, revelling in the new sensation of not being pounded by freezing cold water. It wasn't long before we began wondering how the MSS guys were going in Cauldron Pot. Upon our arrival back at the cars, as I had half expected, there was no sign of them. I decided that it would not be a good idea to go into Cauldron looking for them. For one thing we were fairly tired ourselves and they could just be slow but otherwise OK.

As they had mentioned earlier that they were staying at the National Park caravan site, I decided to contact the Park Manager, who incidentally is also the Ranger. My contingency plan went something like this: if the MSS boys were NOT seen to be at the caravan park by the Ranger in the morning, he would 'phone me in Hobart and a rescue would be organised. I also left a note on the MSS Landcruiser informing them of my plans and instructing them to contact the Ranger when they got out to avoid a false rescue callout. We spent about an hour tracking down the Ranger on the way home. I arrived home at around midnight and went to bed hoping that the MSS people wouldn't be forced to spend the night in the cave.

At around 9.30am the following morning, I received a call from the Ranger informing me that they were safely out of the cave. They did however encounter problems with the water levels and didn't reach the surface until midnight. It was with a large sigh of relief that I relayed this message to Stuart whom I had placed on standby the previous night.

Later on that week, Gavin graciously returned to the cave with Lew and a wetsuit to de-rig. They were soaked once again for their troubles as the water levels were still high due to further rain during the week.

Martyn Carnes

NIAGARA POT

John Salt and Martyn Carnes

John rang to inform me that he was down on holiday for a week or so and was keen to do some caving. As there wasn't much new stuff on the go I began to rummage amongst certain parts of my mind normally best left unmentioned, in the hope of coming up with an old classic which may be worth pushing. Decisions of this nature are rather like deciding which old movie to re-watch or what record to play. I had only been down Niagara once and didn't really have a good enough look around at the bottom, so Niagara it was.

The walk into this cave is really quite long and tedious taking close to an hour. The track passes close to the entrance of Cauldron Pot

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which I showed to John on the walk in. Niagara consists of a rather squalid streamway which drops via a series of 6 short pitches to a depth of approximately 150m. As the name suggests, some of these pitches are quite wet.

The final 28m pitch drops into a chamber of moderately large dimensions. A large quantity of surface debris is to be found in this area. Together with the presence of spiders and glowworms (at the head of the last pitch) suggest a more direct entrance to this part of the cave.

After dropping through a hole in the talus pile close to where another small stream drops in, I found the trunk passage that connects a series of medium to large chambers which are very similar to parts of the new extension in JF341. In the last of these chambers there is a large talus pile which halts progress approx. 20m down where a small stream enters and flows into the talus. It is however possible to squeeze through into the very unstable boulder pile to a point where a very small hole follows solid rock down almost vertically. Upon trying to enlarge this hole by removing certain offending rocks, I discovered that the whole boulder pile that I was wedged upon vibrated with disconcerting vigour during the gardening process. Not wishing to exchange the last letter of my Christian name for an "R" and become a Martyr, I decided that discretion should become the better part of valour and reluctantly retreated. I say reluctantly, because there was an enticing draught that was at that stage breathing out. In retrospect I do think it could be worth a further push with a handline for safety measure in order to avoid placing pressure on loose rocks on the climb out because it is quite tight.

Having decided that this was enough for the day, we returned to the bottom of the final pitch where we brewed a cup of coffee on John's stove before heading out. The only incident of note on the trip out was that my light decided to die which was quite annoying - especially on the wet pitch. All things considered, it was a rather enjoyable trip which is contrary to most people's low opinion of this cave.

Martyn Carnes

DRIBBLESPLIT SWALLET (JF13)

Explanation:

Dribblespit Swallet was discovered in the 1970's at the time when the potential of the Junee area for deep caves was becoming apparent. The 66m entrance shaft was descended on ladders, but the cavers involved were not particularly excited by what they saw at the bottom. At that time there were plenty of other caves to explore anyway.

In more recent years Dribblespit was again descended, this time using SRT. A draughting squeeze was noted as worthy of further attention. The second of two further trips saw the constriction successfully hammered open and two pitches beyond were descended. The next trip (March 1988) succeeded in extending the cave to a depth of around -160m, with a couple of leads remaining to be pushed.

In June 1988 I went back to Dribblespit in the company of Mark Bawn of NZSS and Steve Keenlyside of SUSS. Dribblespit was still rigged from

the previous trip and Steve and I headed straight for the bottom while Mark followed making a survey as he went. (Mark's topofil survey reached as far as the small tunnel above the second last pitch and the final station is marked with a sheet of waterproof survey paper.) At the far end of cave I descended a short pitch using Steve jammed in the rift at the top as an anchor for the rope. It was disappointing to find that no continuation lay at the bottom. The cave was derigged during the return to the surface.

Location description:

Follow the Khazad-dum track from the end of the Junee Road, past the turnoff to Cauldron Pot, to the Dwarrowdelf turnoff. Proceed towards Dwarrowdelf, crossing the KD dry valley, but branch off to the left before actually reaching the Dwarrowdelf doline. Head uphill to the line of contact between the limestone and the overlying rock, while traversing around in the direction of KD (ie away from Dwarrowdelf).

A number of shaft entrances and a large circular depression on roughly the same contour level as Dribblespit are passed shortly before the entrance of the latter is reached. A large fallen log and manferns tend to obscure the entrance if viewed from the downhill side. It consists of a shallow but vertical-walled doline and there is an identifying metal tag (JF13) fixed on the wall at the bottom.

Pitches:

(NB. On the survey: P = pitch, R = rope handline, C = climb.)

1. R5 A handline is useful for climbing in and out of the doline.
2. P66 Various natural belays and redirections were used to rig this pitch during the recent trips. It has two distinct sections: an initial 20m drop to a comfortably-sized ledge, just below which is a further ledge/alcove that precedes the main part of the shaft. A long length of tape or several traces may be useful to belay from a large shoulder of rock at the second ledge.
3. P12
4. P5 A short drop immediately beyond the squeezes; can be handlined if necessary.
5. P18 There are two bolts on the left wall (facing down the cave). One is on a rib of rock at roughly chest level and the other is further out on the wall out over the shaft. A "Y" hang may be rigged from the bolts.
6. R4
7. P8 Pitch is immediately beyond a sideways squeeze.
8. R3
9. P4
10. P12 There is a bolt in the ceiling of the low passage at the edge of the drop, with a further bolt on the left wall several metres further down and well out over the shaft (will probably be hard to relocate).
11. P7

NB. Bolts refer to 8mm Terrier anchors (spits). No hangers were left on the bolts.

Conclusions

Dribblespit is a surprisingly demanding cave for its depth. Those cavers who enjoy the more testing trips may find it to their liking.

For others, however, Dribblespit has little to recommend it. The mud, friable rock, squeezes and awkward rifts, tend to exceed what normal cavers consider to be within the bounds of reasonableness.

Nevertheless, there is one thing that may eventually tempt cavers back to Dribblespit. This is the possibility of connecting it to Khazad-dum. Not that a connection would be likely to make KD deeper, but Dribblespit as a fourth entrance to the system would add to the already considerable number of routes that may be used in descending and ascending KD.

At the end point of Dribblespit there are two leads: one is a blind shaft that was descended on the most recent trip; the other is a narrow rift that continues horizontally beyond the top of the blind shaft. The rift becomes progressively more constricted until further progress is extremely arduous, if not impossible. It is at this point, however, that in addition to the draught that blows through the rift, the distant reverberation of falling water may be detected. Given that Dribblespit is located between the entrances of Dwarrowdelf and Khazad-dum, the water heard is presumably that in the KD streamway somewhere above the final pitch that leads to the bottom chamber. An overland survey between the respective entrances that would allow their relationships to be plotted with reasonable accuracy has not been accomplished, but the assumption that Dribblespit is very close to KD seems reasonable. A concerted effort with hammer and chisel or the use of explosives would probably be required to realise the connection.

Rolan Eberhard

Errata - Speleo Spiel 245

- The Muller '82 article which appeared in Descent #78 & #80 was first published in Spelunca and this article is a direct translation.

- Stephen Bunton has bottomed Gouffre Berger, the only TCC member to have done so although he wasn't a TCC member nor resident of the state at that time. Gouffre Berger is 3rd deepest cave in France behind Jean Bernard and PSM.

The ~~Whales~~ Wailles are on the move.....!

Yes folks, that's right. Trevor and Sue plus the Waillettes are moving house. No longer will that well known Dynnyrne residence be the centre of many and varied activities associated with underground activities. The entire shebang is moving "down the country" to an estate in the vicinity of Kingston, south of Hobart. No doubt there will be a house warming at some stage - stay tuned for more news.

In order that caving gear will still be reasonably readily available, pending the establishment of a more permanent arrangement, an interim arrangement has been formulated such that those requiring gear should phone Nick Hume at home (251934) with their requirements and all will be organised. Magic really, and it even should work!

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DRIBBLESPIT SWALLET (JF13)

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