

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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EDITORIAL

The AGM has come and gone with the discussion on the night being surprisingly quiet and even constructive! Thanks must go to all those present for their attendance and input to the meeting.

As pre-empted in a previous Speleo Spiel, the long running issue relating to the membership of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club in the Australian Speleological Federation was resolved by majority vote at the AGM. The vote was in favour of the resignation of TCC from the ASF. Any members of TCC who wish to continue their interest in affairs of a national nature can join ASF as an individual. The fee for this is \$10.50 per year (if paid before June 30) and should be sent to the ASF Treasurer, Brendan Ferrari at 1/23 Windella Avenue, Kew East, Victoria 3102.

The formation last year of the Tasmanian Speleological Federation was aimed at creating an authoritative state body to enable continuation of access agreements/arrangements to restricted caves and liaison with the relevant Government bodies and private organisations concerned. Appropriate official recognition of the TSF has yet to occur but indications are that such action is a formality only.

Stuart Nicholas

OBITUARY - Frank Brown

It is with deep regret that we report the recent death of Frank Brown after a short illness. Although none of our currently active members would remember him, Frank was a foundation member and honorary life member of TCC. He was born in about 1928 at the Junee Homestead where the family lived while his father was a linesman responsible for maintaining the telephone line to the mining settlement of Adamsfield. Later the family moved to Hobart and bought a newsagency in Battery Point. Frank entered National Service two weeks before the end of the war in 1945 and with the other trainees were home after a big celebration when the war ended.

After the war he decided to do a science degree with geology as one of his interests. Frank soon discovered that academic life was not for him but like a number of other students he became involved in caving

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when Prof Sam Carey formed TCC in 1946. Frank worked at a variety of jobs after leaving university. He worked as a field assistant and surveyor on the West Coast.

Subsequently he took over his parents business but after a few years found that he needed a change. He taught himself photography and became a professional photographer. Eventually he found his niche as a science teacher in Scottsdale.

Frank helped to make important early contributions to cave exploration in many Tasmanian cave areas but the Florentine Valley and Mole creek were probably his favourites. He and Edith Smith were largely responsible keeping TCC going in the early 1950's when early enthusiasm had worn off. He was a great "raconteur" who always proclaimed that "the truth should never stand in the way of a good story". He was a keen photographer - both colour slides and black and white - and encouraged many others to risk their camera gear underground.

Those of us who were his contemporaries have fond memories of nights around the campfire with large mugs of coffee liberally laced with rum. New caves at Mole Creek were often discovered by visiting the local pub and pumping the locals for information. As we sometimes also tried to drink each other under the table on those occasions, directions we were given to new caves, while seeming perfectly clear at the time, sometimes seemed rather confusing the following day.

Frank's last caving activity was in 1970 when he led one of the post ASF Hobart Conference field trips to the Florentine Valley. We have seen little of him in recent years but were delighted to see him at the TCC Annual Dinner a couple of years ago where Arthur Clarke was able to hand him back his machete, lost in 1959 when another early club member, Frank Hassler, was using it to help cut a track to Exit Cave. It was lost when he nearly stumbled into the entrance of a vertical shaft and dropped the machete. The hole was henceforth known as Machete Pot.

Frank was one of two Tasmanian cavers who represented TCC at the inaugural meeting of ASF in South Australia in 1956. He went on the Nullarbor field trip after the conference and returned to the Nullarbor timed in subsequent years. He was involved in the discovery and early exploration of Mullamullang Cave in 1964 and a survey station in the cave (Franks Station) bears his name.

Frank is survived by his wife Sady and two children from an earlier marriage - Peter and Avril. We extend our sincere sympathies to them.

Albert Goede

TRIVIA & NOT-SO-TRIVIA....

The system, if there was one, is breaking down... How can the editor, namely myself, produce a readable, funny, witty, even just vaguely readable rag if you (the cavers of time frame NOW) don't send in trip reports, articles, cartoons, info and any miscellaneous bitz relating to caving?! The New Town spy force tells me that certain underground activities are taking place, under cover of weekends, but no reports are forthcoming. Its just not good enough!

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The format of any articles or reports and the physical media is irrelevant - words of Strine, English or even American are acceptable whether typed on paper, chiselled in rock tablets, wood carvings, ASCII files on floppy disks or even just handwritten (in pen or pencil) on paper - all will gratefully be accepted! Contributions can be mailed to the editor's residence, given to him in person (if you can find him!) or passed on via anyone heading out this way - easy really!

Many trips are going but nothing is being recorded - naughty! How can our infamous group make history and be known to making history if its not written up as it happens??

Looks like we're being imperfect again.... The April edition of this esteemed rag noted that Steve Bunton was the only TCC member to have bottomed the Gouffre Berger. Not so.

A recent note in the mail revealed that there is one other now TCC member to have done so. Frank Salt of Savage River and other places on August 23, 1962 (27 years ago... "even it does seem like the dark ages") lead the second only trip to bottom the system at the then world record of 1100+ metres! Good stuff - in those days, that would have been a hell of a trip - an epic in the true meaning of the word. Maybe we can somehow coerce Frank into writing up some of that stuff for the Spiel....

Maybe there will be a third Berger Bottomer in a couple of months! Stefan Eberhard, that champion of hard living, is heading off to the Tenth IUS Conference in Budapest, Hungary with preconference field trips to Czechoslovakia with some of the team that were out here a couple of years ago. Should make for some good Spiel copy....

As seems to be the directive of most caving groups (and cavers!), TCC is in need of more money. To this end, a raffle is being organised with first prize being a mega bottle of whisky! Trev is doing the dirty work and tickets ought to be available fairly soon. The plan is to draw the raffle at the annual dinner in September (could be a rather extended show if the winner is at the dinner...). Minor details, like ticket distribution and so on, will be organised at some stage and with any luck the money raised will help pay for the 400m of Bluewater rope we have just bought!

Book Review: VERTICAL - A TECHNICAL MANUAL FOR CAVERS by Alan Warild

My first impression when I heard Al was writing a book was "Oh no!... It's been done!" I would rather have read about his exciting adventures than a lot of irrelevant details of fiddling with strings. My first impressions when I saw the book was "Oh no!... It's just the same as the Montgomery book only more modern (new things have been invented in the last 10 years)". There the similarity ends. After a quick flick through its pages I'd learnt heaps from the superbly clear diagrams, things I'd never have thought of.

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Now I don't ever profess to know it all but having read this incredible book I've made a list of all the things that struck me as new or different or something I learned from it despite considering I already have an operational caving system and style that I'm unlikely to alter much. Here goes....

Chapter 1 - Personal Equipment

- Sew neoprene kneepads onto the inner suit.
- Repair and storage of Pontonieres.
- The correct glue for trogsuit repairs (rather than trial & error).
- Using one open Maillon as a spanner on another.
- The correct number of stitches for sewing a harness.
- When exactly to retire gear.

Chapter 2 - Rigging Equipment

- The code for date of manufacturer of rope.
- Effects of geology on strengths of anchors (removes the guesswork).
- What to listen for in a dodgy belay.
- Bolt failure statistics.

Chapter 3 - Knots

- A list of characteristics of a good knot.

Chapter 4 - Rigging Devices

- Relevance of fall factors to various rigging configurations.
- Why redirections don't need to be as strong (I'd never thought about it).
- Half drilled bolts for redirections.
- Two slings for redirections to get it exactly in the right place.
- Lasso bowline.
- The Pabsabloq for sloping Tyroleans.
- Anchor loads for Tyrolean traverses.
- Rebelays and redirections for narrow sections

Chapter 5 - Advanced rigging

- How to prepare a rope for cord technique.
- Shock absorbing knots.
- Climbing platforms and poles.
- 6mm Dynabolts for aid climbing.
- Using a descender (not an ascender) for self belays on aid climbing.
- Use of Loxins for eternally sound bolt placements.
- The weight of ice on ropes.

Chapter 6 - Descending

- Using an Italian Hitch as an abseil brake.
- A better way to lock-off an autostop.
- Strengths of descenders.
- Testing of shunts.
- Passing a knot using only one ascender.
- Alternative bottom belays.
- Mousqueton Coulant.

Chapter 7 - Ascending

- Modifying a Gibbs for a one-sided ascender.
- Gripping cowstails (rather than shock loading an ascender).
- Safety loops (for use with cowstails) when crossing knots.
- Safety prusiks for ascenders.
- Using descender as an ascender (thankfully I have never needed to dream up anything like this)

Chapter 8 - Organisation

- Allowance lengths for knots and rebelayes when packing ropes.
- Cooking times for pots over carbide lamps.
- Bolt pullers for useless bolts.

Chapter 9 - Disaster

- Using a bobbin as a pulley.
- Abseiling a taut rope.
- Extracting victims from the rope.

Chapter 10 - Surveying

- Surveying with a Topofil.
- Random errors in surveys.
- Obtaining "D" values from computer programs for drawing developed long sections.

So that's it. I hope you learn as much from reading this book as I did. Certainly the book is a real credit to Al and I hope he receives as much acclaim for its production as he has for his exploits.

Stephen Bunton

Survey Data Reduction Software - A Review of SMAPS 4

Most readers of Speleo Spiel will be familiar with the fact that cave survey data reduction took a leap into the computer age two or three years ago with the local appearance of a copy of SMAPS 3.3, an American software package dedicated to this slightly esoteric application. Subsequently, much of our cave survey data (both new and old) has been reduced to rectangular coordinate format (some may say reduced to rubbish!) with the aid of that software.

During the latter part of last year a major revision/rewrite of the software became available in the form of SMAPS 4. Written for use only on IBM or compatible DOS machines, it embodies many of the "wants" arising from use of the previous version on both IBM and CP/M machines, as well as having a few kinks of its own.

The software has now been written in a more "modular" form which will enable additions and modifications to be made by the authors much more easily than previously. Shortly, another module will be available to give advanced screen graphics of cave survey traverses, a facility many (older...) cavers will be clamouring for! Various other modules and upgrades are noted in the manual as being planned and/or worked on for forthcoming updates, based mainly around advanced graphics facilities including solid representations, colour, topographic overlays and arbitrary viewing angles with perspective (as yet there is no mention of an optional armchair...). Other work will include line texture variations, powerful clipping options (to limit the scope of map plots), wall representation as well as a SMAPS programming language for ease of data manipulation and report production.

The initial release of SMAPS 4 version was 4.1 which, in common with new software from most sources, did contain bugs - most however were fairly innocuous being little more than a nuisance and easily overcome. Recently SMAPS really came of age with the release of version 4.2. Most of the known bugs (in particular, some problems plotting

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maps with wide carriage printers) have been remedied with this release, as well as there being a few improvements added.

Overall there have been many changes made from version 3.3, the initial and most obvious being the "user interface" (sounds like a plug into your brain!), ie the screen display and command selection system as seen and used by the operator. In common with most menu driven software these days, many functions and commands are displayed in pop-up menus or windows with the addition of "expert selection" mode via a single letter command selection rather than having to move the cursor and hit <RETURN>. It even has a context sensitive "help" window for those moments of SMAPS amnesia!

Some of the other major changes / features are given below:

* SMAPS now has separate data printer and map plotter drivers with associated appropriate output ports selectable. This enables two different output devices to be used without swapping cables over (if your machine has two output ports) and changing driver names. Drivers are now available for X-Y pen plotters as well as the usual dot matrix printer/plotters. Many standard printers and plotters are supported. There is also an option for having your own driver written if you own a backwoods brand of output device...

* Common operations are selected using the ten standard function keys, together with the ALT key, as found on IBM/DOS machines.

* As mentioned above, the software is only available for IBM/DOS PC/XT/AT/386 machines or clones thereof. It is recommended, and is almost mandatory, that 640k of memory and a hard disk be used. Greatly improved performance can be had if a maths co-processor is installed - the software has automatic detection of such a device - although it runs faster than the old version 3.3 anyway. Use of a ramdisk / virtual disk also helps if you (and your machine!) can spare the memory.

* Survey station names up to eight characters long instead of the six for SMAPS 3.3 can be used. Also has an automatic station number sequencing / incrementing facility, even when non-numeric prefixes or suffixes to the number are used (a great feature). Existing station names can be changed in a block by adding or deleting a suffix or prefix to or from the selected block of data; shot type may also be changed in a block of data. Station name searches and search and replace operations can be done.

* The date format problem of SMAPS 3.3 has been solved by using the format set up in the operating system "country code" of the machine.

* Block cut-and-paste and copy functions are available. Directory subtrees and surveys can be moved at will (as per SMAPS 3.3) and the map file system reorganised.

* Comments can be put between lines of raw survey data - a most useful facility!!

* Wall, ceiling and floor distances from each survey station can be entered and the points plotted for later map drafting. SMAPS 3.3 had a facility to enter the data but "for information only".

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* Thread measuring devices (eg Topofil) are supported for leg length inputs. As well, depth gauge readings can be entered for vertical measurements when surveying underwater (or very deep 'dry' caves....).

* Various messages, prompts and status indicators appear on the screen to indicate progress, errors, space available in various buffers and so on. The error trapping is quite extensive and specific if you can stand the bleeps from your machine (!) - no more (well, fewer anyway) of those mysterious system crashes encountered with SMAPS 3.3.

* During conversion of data to rectangular coordinates, no calculated data appears on the screen. Instead, a progress screen is displayed which continually updates various conversion statistics. Figures such as number of shots, printer pages used, total length, maximum extensions of traverse and so on are displayed - quite spectacular to see the numbers clicking over when converting a big survey!

* The SMAPS 4 loop closure / adjustment procedure is improved over that in SMAPS 3.3 in that one can specify constrained stations, ie stations that must be constrained at the original calculated location during loop adjustment. The closure technique is as per SMAPS 3.3, ie method of least squares. A progress screen similar that described above is displayed during the closure routine. Version 4.2 has had a minor bug fixed in the procedure.

* Map plotting appears to be faster, ie plot file generation is faster. Maps are plotted sideways on the paper of dot matrix printers with the usual selection of scale, station names and so on available via a pop-up window. No comment can be made as to the effectiveness or functionality of the X-Y digital plotter driver routines as the author of this article does not have access to such a device...

* As mentioned above, no screen graphics are possible as yet (on version 4.1) despite the appearance of such an option in the plotting menu window. The graphics module is scheduled to be available in a few months, a release that will definitely be worth waiting for! [Version 4.2 has a rudimentary screen graphics included with it which will allow caves to be displayed and rotated to any angle, zoomed in on and the labels displayed - in effect, the plotting output can be routed to the screen rather than a hard copy device.] The full powerful graphics package is due for completion by, and release at, the NSS Convention in August.

* Survey linking is now possible. Complex systems (eg Growling Swallet) can be analysed as a number of individual surveys (ie as entered in the first place) and then linked together for plotting and so on. As before a progress screen is displayed during this procedure.

* Maps may now be clipped / limited in extent very simply (unlike SMAPS 3.3!), ie limits specified to define a smaller section of a larger map for plotting in both plan and profile. As yet no developed section plotting facility exists - possibly a fairly significant weakness for Oz use anyway. Only projected sections ("profiles") can be plotted with the viewing angle, scale and so on being selected by the user; horizontal datum lines may be optionally plotted on profiles and as well, an exaggeration factor may be included to vertically expand plots lacking vertical range in relation to the horizontal extension of the plot / cave, as per SMAPS 3.3.

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* The file structure has changed quite extensively from that of version 3.3. For those upgrading from SMAPS 3.3, a conversion routine is supplied to crank the data into the new version 4 file structure, so no rekeying is required. This works very rapidly and without any hitches whatever - fairly unusual for such conversion routines...

* Data can be dumped to an ASCII file for use by other software and also taken up from appropriately structured ASCII files created by other programs (a minor bug currently existing in this routine will be fixed in version 4.2). A conversion utility is also available for conversion of data from CMAP, another US cave survey program.

* External programs are able to be run from within SMAPS 4.2 (an often useful facility for any software, especially for DOS [operating system] commands). SMAPS 4.2 also enables the automatic loading of survey info and parameters when surveys are created and processed. This facility was partially in place in version 4.1, but in the new revision has been much improved.

* The manual is a 100 page production and is reasonably easy to work through, although I suspect its actual publication may have been a little hurried... Section 8 on plotting is omitted from the first edition but is supplied on disk with the version 4.2 upgrade.

Not much more to be said really. For the meagre price of \$70 AUS, the package is an absolute bargain, being quite professionally written and free of most of the bugs and problems often encountered with software, even that written by some of the world's biggest software companies! The software is available in Australia from Ken Grimes. Before digging out your cheque book, phone or write Ken for details on printer and plotter driver availability as only two routines are supplied with the package - if you need more drivers, the number on the end of your cheque needs to be a little bigger.

Addresses:	Ken Grimes	SpeleoTechnologies, Inc.
	13 Dewar Terrace	PO Box 293
	Sherwood Qld 4075	Frostburg
	Queensland 4075	Maryland 21532
	Ph 07 379 3895	JSA
		Ph 0011 1 301 689 3423

Technical support is available (for those with free access to ISD telephones!) via a computer bulletin board system in the USA. However Doug Dotson (the author) is most helpful and responsive if you write to him at the above address (SpeleoTechnologies, Inc.).

Stuart Nicholas (BigChief Armchair Caver.....)

GROWLING SWALLET - PERFIDY

26 March 1989

Party: Nick Hume, Trevor Wailes, Martyn Carnes

Apart from the warm-up tourist trip showing new members Herpes 3 and Avon's Aven the previous week, as well as installing new ladders on the 20m face up to Necrosis, it had been over a year since my last sortie into this varied and sporting system.

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The Easter weekend had seen the Melbourne VSA crew rig and complete the Ice Tube / Growling through trip and other explorations within the Growling system. Our original plan was to join them on a trip to Frownland, however our early start found us at the Eight Road alone at 9am, with the prospect of a 12 hour plus trip ahead of us. Before we had a chance to disappear into the bush, SCS members Phil Jackson, Jeff Butt and someone else arrived. They loaned us a clinometer, changed and headed off for Black River. While our group ruminated, three other cars arrived with a contingent of VSA bods. They were going for a tourist trip into Mainline. Growling Swallet was going to literally crawl with cavers - shades of Gaping Ghyll in Yorkshire! Our uneventful traverse of the entrance streamway, Windy Rift, the climbs and Trapdoor streamway raised body heat to perspiration (plus) level. But the cooling effect of semi-immersion through Herpes 3 and the draughting climb up Avon's Aven reminded us of the barriers that had been overcome to force the system to the 11km plus length that it stands at today. Necrosis, pleasant, quiet, abandoned, benched phreatic zone, is involved and at one time its complexities had hindered further exploration. But it now is liberally marked with cairns and the occasional survey flag as well as scuff marks from passing cavers all of which makes route finding relatively simple. After short crawls and large open breakdown chambers, Mainline is encountered. It appears water from the area before Necrosis (ie Trapdoor and GS entrance) emerges from beneath the initial boulder pile and flows in open passage for perhaps a kilometre, interspersed with occasional rock fall to the Mainline sump. A phreatic flood bypass leads to the Dreamtime sump and on into the serenity of majestic Dreamtime. After our run through Necrosis and Mainline we gathered at the start of Mothers Passage leading to Ice Tube, cooled down a little and crossed the streamway. Our route through Bloody Smokers bypassed the sump and low crawl area and led us quickly into Dreamtime. Nick and I were moving well but Martyn's "Low Life" style was beginning to tell on him... His past hectic week was catching up to him and he hadn't been beyond Mainline before. We made our way up the shingle bed of the streamway past high and imposing mudbanks to the Dreamtime Stonedown. A fixed rope here assists a climb up to blocks covered in glutinous mud. A short stroll (more of a balancing act) brought us to the climb back down to large passage. We had initially overlooked this 3m climb and in the past had brought ladder for it.

A section of old rope ladder left over from the new installation at Avon's Aven was put in at this 3 to 4 metre drop. This disgusting lump of gear was tangled and weighed heaps but was sufficient for the job. Going down it was easy. Martyn was obviously thinking of his plight and wasn't keen on going too much further. We suggested a stop and feed at Tiger Mountain beyond River Lethe. River Lethe is the second section of Dreamtime and a little harder going as slippery mud banks must be negotiated as must some stooping on a short section!

At Tiger mountain a halt was called as we'd been on the move for nearly four hours. Nick produced a stove and some noodles and our repast began. Martyn produced a space blanket and shivered within it. I produced a woolly hat and shivered underneath it. The chamber was soon full of smoke and steam but the result was rewarding. Martyn was left in a prone position complaining of stomach pains and leg cramps. Nick and I headed upstream into Perfidy placing a fixed rope on a greasy climb and soon reaching the end of the survey. From here we commenced surveying through two belly wallows to the chamber at the start of Frownland. This chamber terminates the enjoyable caving.

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Frownland starts with two low crawls in restricted passage and continues low with crawls over mud banks for 200 to 300 metres. It was 4 or 5 years since Stef and myself had first ventured into this most distant section of the GS system. I didn't recognise the chamber at first, my memory obviously failing! The small side stream coming from Frownland was possibly just a small part of the main water flow. I had initially thought that this chamber marked the confluence with a major stream issuing from the base of a low wall but in fact could be just a low sumped oxbow of the water issuing from the rockpile in Frownland.

With my failure to recognise the start of this final section and Nick leading with the tape unable to find an easy way onwards, I volunteered to check forwards. This is when I realised where we were, the two low constricted crawls led into mud coated passage and surveying through this was not what we had planned for this trip. I returned to Nick and we ended the survey on an obvious block marked with a small rock. Nick's lamp failed at this point but fortunately I had a spare globe and with this duly replaced we retraced our route back to the shivering Martyn at Tiger Mountain. From here we began the long slog back to the surface. Martyn, suffering from cramp and his own personal hell, ambled after us struggling on the rope ladder climb out of River Lethe.

When Mainline and Dreamtime were originally surveyed the twin sumps had been ignored!! Today as we were in the area with survey gear this omission was rectified - four legs saw the Dreamtime sump tied in upon which we thought we'd done enough for the day and began our slog homewards.

Halfway along Mainline the mainlanders (VSA) were encountered. Pleasantries were exchanged, our heartbeat and breathing rates stabilised, and then our homeward journey resumed. We finally reached the surface after an 11 hour trip. I personally had thought that I would never have made another trip into this area. The only technical problem of going to Frownland is the actual route finding; everything is now semi-permanently rigged. If one is fit and dressed properly for the very cool conditions this is a really great semi-endurance test trip.

Trevor Wailes

MORE GOSSIP & ITEMS OF ILL REPUTE..

Al Warild (and probably some other people) was/were back in Mexico this last summer prospecting new cave areas. The two big relief areas (1800 metre depth potential) both bombed - entry permission could not be gained for one area and the other was very choked up with dirt; some caves but nothing outstanding. Nevertheless, back in the Sierra Mazateca (Chilchotla, Huautla, etc.) a big streamsink with a large catchment was located across the river from Maria Luisa. A dry overflow was pushed down to about 350 metres to a rift which may go. The wet route awaits more time / less water.

The TCC survey gear is still missing. Whilst it came back from PB in January, it has not been sighted (!) since. The kit includes two fibreglass tapes (brown & blue), plus Suunto compass and clinometer. Please have a look / think for these items.

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The Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife has proclaimed "fuel stove only" areas in National Parks around Tasmania. Areas of interest to TCC include the Southern Ranges and the Ironbound Range on the South Coast. The letter received from LP&W however doesn't specify if this includes New River Lagoon - apparently not?!

The Great Old Ditch Road / Mini Martin Exchange Show!

Participants: Trevor Wailes, Bob Reid, James Davis, Paul Baustead, Dean Morgan, Simon Morgan, Mark Bryce, Nick Hume and (nearly) Lew Mitchelmore.

You guessed it! Trev ran out of petrol outside the Globe Hotel, virtually seconds after the start of the trip. Bit of a worry this on-going leak in the fuel tank thing. Lends a bit of excitement (and aroma) to caving activity anyway. Well, after dropping off a car engine at Trev's new Kingston residence, plus collecting Mark at Grove, plus Trev's visit to Arthur Clarke's place, plus dropping off some calendars at Hastings Caves, we were in some danger of actually going caving circa midday. After all that, the rest of the day seemed disappointingly straightforward.

Jim, Dean, Simon and myself bombed down Old Ditch Road in fairly rapid time. We deliberately left our ropes in situ to be used by the exchange party coming in via Mini Martin. Future parties should note that all the old hangers have been replaced with Petzl "twists", plus that the old Maillons have been removed. Simon was less enthusiastic about participating in the full exchange, so being thoroughly familiar with the cave, was content to leave by the easier way out.

Meantime, the exchange party of Trev, Bob, Paul and Mark were having fun negotiating Arthurs Freeway in pursuit of the entrance to Mini Martin. It was found after a few "ups and downs" and thus their part of the (exchange) contract could be completed. Trev rigged a 120m rope on the big pitch, obviating rub points at the top by running a steel trace several metres over the edge. The main rope was gained via a short section of 11mm Bluewater tied back to the existing bolt placements. Paul followed the rest of the party and placed rope protectors at strategic points on the bottom pitch.

The two groups "swapped over" at the beyond the rock pile, one member finding that he had forgotten to bring a chest harness. .Problematic for any attempt at the 106 metre prusik! Fortunately Dean and Paul were both carrying spares! The group ascending the Old Ditch Road side had some interesting moments negotiating the cautiously short loops provided at the rebelay on the top and bottom pitches. Other than that, their return to the surface was uneventful.

As for the three going up Mini Martin, it was prusik, prusik, prusik. Dean surprised all by taking off his trog suit and going up the big pitch in T-shirt and jeans. Not a bad idea to prevent overheating! Jim came up last, removing bits of rigging gear and tying ropes together, allowing the lot to be pulled up from the top. By then it was almost dark, Jim leading the way back to the main track at a high rate of speed. Both groups emerged from the bush at about the same time. Lew Mitchelmore was still waiting for us at the cars, having suffered a bout of lurgy that prevented him from participating in the

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day's activities. Bit of a shame really as it had been a tremendous trip.

Nick Hume

Growling Swallet - Servalane and other odd places... April 23

The Group: Bob Reid, Lew Mitchelmore, Paul Baustead and Nick Hume.

Leigh Douglas was dropped off at Westfield Road, joining in on a Southern Caving Society trip into Burning Down The House, for the surveying of major extensions found last year by Stefan Eberhard and Martyn Carnes. SCS managed to find one or two things for themselves apparently. Our group then went to Eight Road for the familiar trek into Growling. Ending up in the less familiar indeed confusing sections known as Servalane, we went pretty lightweight, stuffing bars of chocolate into pockets rather than put up with the handicap of cave packs. Thus we were able to move more rapidly than usual and cover a great deal more cave.

From the Trapdoor Stream an inspection was made of the upstream waterfall aven before moving toward our intended objective. This labyrinth was entered after fits and starts of exploration. Everyone seemed to be heading off in different directions following their own private leads. Finally, Lew's disembodied shouts led us to the climb into the boulder pile leading toward the far end of Servalane. We made a brief and abrasive sojourn along Space Rat Alley before coming to the conclusion that the bypass route was a better option.

There is some high aven development located just before the climb and this has obviously been the site of considerable water flow during periods of glaciation. Much material must have entered the system during these events as evidenced here by deep banks of shingle held in a coarse grained matrix. One 10 metre climb immediately prior to the boulder pile led to a draughting even. The latter was far too tall to be scaled, but obviously leads to some sizeable passage above. The pitch was quite dry so a surface connection seems improbable as the alternative explanation for air movement.

Following some intricate navigation, we moved along the more open chamber toward the terminus of the October 1985 survey (station £23). This is the start of a labyrinth of breakdown and narrow canyon. Even though the lack of draught does not auger well for the area, some time was spent checking every available lead. A particularly narrow rift at floor level was not pursued very far, but may be a worthwhile project for the next trip. We had no more time to look at Trev's and Stef's lead at the end of Space Rat Alley unfortunately, so made a hasty retreat back to the entrance. Total time underground was about five hours.

Nick Hume

SATURDAY JULY 1: The much awaited WAILES' house wrecking warming....
Location: 214 Summerleas Road, Kingston; 7.30pm onwards.... BE THERE!