

SPELEO SPIEL

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* TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB *
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* 1988/89 PRECIPITOUS BLUFF EXPEDITION - Special Speleo Spiel Issue #2 *

Introduction to Part #2

The following is the final instalment of two special issues detailing activities occurring over the second half of an expedition to the karst area of Precipitous Bluff (covering the period from December 27, 1988 to January 6 1989). Additional incoming participants this time included Trevor Wailes, Chris Davies, Leigh Douglas, Lew Mitchelmore (all members of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club), and Gavin Duffy, Mark Crapelle, Tim Dunnicliff from the Victorian Speleological Association. Only Steve Bunton and Nick Hume remained on from the earlier group that came into the area.

This latter period was equally productive, with much additional cave being found. Sufficient leads and possibilities were left unexplored to lure us back sometime in the future. Many thanks to all those involved, including Stuart Nicholas, Albert Goede and the seaplane pilot Graham Bird. Arthur Clarke, Stefan Eberhard and Steve Bunton were also very helpful with their proofreading of this text. In particular, I would like to extend TCC's sincerest gratitude to the Department of Lands, Parks and Heritage without whose assistance the expedition would not have been possible.

Editor - Nick Hume

Tuesday - December 27: Trev goes on shift-work!

At last, a fester-day! Ostensibly it was a day off to await the arrival of the seaplane from Southport. The weather was generally pretty socked-in. In fact, the worst day since our arrival and not the best way to welcome the second group for their stint on this expedition. Ironically, at the campsite we were going flat out packing up for the departure of Stef, Jim and Arthur. Meantime, the group waiting to come in at Southport were going "flat out" wiling away the hours until the cloud lifted.

An early attempt by the plane to reach the area was aborted near *Prion Beach*, heard at camp as a distant drone. Conditions improved by afternoon. The reassuring buzz settling on the waters of the lagoon heralding the first of three gear ferries in both directions. Trev's pallid features peered from the cockpit, a victim of the culture shock we had known from several days ago. Arriving also were Chris, Leigh, Lew, Gavin, Mark and Tim. Among trivialities exchanged was news from the outside world, such as University exam results! Stef, Jim and Arthur went aboard, Arthur emptying his copiously filled gumboots into the Lagoon from astride the float-strut (a ritual he performed on the way in!). Then the plane was gone...

Bushwalking friends Ann Wessing and Mark Stanford also turned up "out of the blue", in their case via the summit of PB, albeit simply passing through on a walk to Melaleuca. Their rain-sodden appearance said it all - it wasn't a nice day. Good to receive their company all the same.

Wednesday - December 28: exploring *Christmas Cavern*, *Persephone* joins into *Bauhaus*, plus the discovery of *Enone*.

Jeff and Greg departed for the South Cost Track, bidding found farewells. Chris, Leigh and Lew went up the summit track to explore *Christmas Cavern* (PB18). Here, a long sloping pitch of thirty metres was descended to a rubble floored chamber. Beyond was a 10m pitch into serpentine rift leading down to a blockage at some 5m below the level of the continuation. To the left and above the entrance headwall, Lew found a short-lived piece of dry passage. The end of this carried a small stream of water percolating down to the larger cave below. (Source - Chris Davies)

Leigh climbed up around to the right of PB18 doline. Some 50m to the south-west, she found an impressive gaping shaft dropping directly from a wide, elongated rift-type entrance, *Enone* (PB19). This was partially descended by Lew but a lack of rope prevented a fuller exploration. A pitch of 25m dropped to a step, immediately below which several metres of downclimbs led to a c. 10m pitch underneath a perched log jam. A boulder / log strewn chamber appeared to continue beyond. (Source - Leigh Douglas)

Trev, Buntly and Nick set out to bottom *Persephone* (PB17). After a fracas as to who would rig the thing, Nick placed a necessary bolt on the left wall of the entrance and descended to a ledge / alcove, some 15m down. Here, tapes draped over a bollard as a rebelay, allowed the next section of the drop to go free. The shaft was in a massive rift, extending along and downwards beyond the visible range of a carbide light. A descent was made on the extra 34m rope that was carried, but this merely left Nick free-suspended with still no sign of a floor. He had to return to the alcove to await further gear.

Steve entered the cave, abseiling past Nick to arrive at the final knot in the rope. Above this he placed a side-pull from a thread in the wall, to direct the rope away from a "flying buttress" of protruding rock. Tying on another 35m section, he was then able to reach a rubble slope in a long chamber that barrelled off into a sizeable lead. Total shaft depth was around 60m.

Downclimbing some boulder threatened drops, he moved through some very old passage development, false and decaying floors being encountered. The passage began to ascend again past a jungle of columns and wall decoration. A short section of this led to a body sized floor hole in calcite through which a pulsating draught roared with strength sufficient to extinguish a carbide flame. He was soon joined by Nick and Trev. They severed some 15m of surplus rope from the big pitch to use on the draughting slot. Little else, other than Trev's "skinny" last-resort rope remained, for what potentially lay beyond.

Trev dropped down the 8m pitch, landing in a rubble floored passage, blocked at one end, but with a further short pitch at the other. This he rigged with the ten metres of 6mm rope. Domes of limestone were then downclimbed to an exit passage leading off the left hand slide. Below the flowstone was a further drop requiring rope / handline, but this could not be checked because of the total lack of gear at this stage!

The exit passage was big and very well decorated, a unique forest of ancient columns forming a wall on the left hand side. A strong draught flowed through here and was pursued to a solution trough truncating the major passage. This dropped down to a separate and active streamway below (*Wallaby Bob*), itself of respectable size. Trev pushed upstream here to where the passage devolved into a crawl that could still go with a bit of effort. Steve found similar possibilities some few metres above in a continuing section of narrow canyon. The stream is very

likely being fed from the waters entering *Christmas Cavern* and *Enone*, judging by the trend of the passage.

A survey of this streamway was made, finishing back in the major borehole above. On the other side of the passage truncation, a long (5m) floor-to-ceiling straw marked the continuation into large passage (*Superstraw Passage*). Occasional floor collapses interrupted the route, moonmilche being found in great profuseness. After one hundred metres, a steep rift dropped away into a very sizeable chamber. Nick found a solution tube bypass into this rejoining the lower streamway. The group then wandered down to a confluence of two streams, the left branch being surmised to originate at least partly from PB16. The major side-aven on the left may well be the final pitch of that cave.

Downstream of that confluence, the passage narrowed into serpentine canyon, continuing in that fashion for a considerable distance and becoming tortuous to the extent of not unexpectedly finishing explorations. Nick happened to chance upon a hand-print on the wall of the passage. Someone had been there before, but however they got there it certainly wasn't through *Persephone*. Everyone suddenly became excited, Trev clawing his way through tight fissures in pursuit of the way on! Downstream, the passage became very, very small, virtually dying altogether. Resting in puzzlement, the group found that they were sitting below a rock bearing the carbided message "CD 1988". It suddenly dawned on everyone exactly where they were!

On the previous TCC expedition, Chris Davies had dropped into this streamway from some of the older chamber development in *Bauhaus*. He had persisted on pushing the downstream section to no conclusion and didn't go upstream into *Persephone* proper (Speleo Spiel 241). Very unfortunately he wasn't here on this occasion to rediscover his handiwork. Without the indication of his passing, no doubt the connection to *Bauhaus* would not have been realised on this trip. Well done Chris!

A climb upward was made after some difficulty in locating Chris' wear marks. Long legs were needed to overcome some of the breakdown blocks barring the way, but very soon the canyon yielded to more familiar ground. The connection had been made! Following the footprints led to a point where daylight from the New Order shaft could be seen some 70 to 80 metres above. The *Slime Climb* and a wander through the massive entrance chamber were all that remained to exit *Bauhaus*. A return up the 60m pitch in *Persephone* was thus obviated and the trio wandered back to camp very pleased with themselves. (Source - Steve Bunton)

Gavin, Tim and Mark spent the day negotiating the cryptic route towards *Quetzalcoatl Conduit*. They proceeded to enjoy a bit of free-style swimming and general looking around in that cave. Tim and Mark were less than enthusiastic about some of the sections of roof sniffing. Gavin however, wearing a thicker wetsuit, thrived on every minute of it and charged on in something of a frenzy until finally the roof scrapings extinguished all light coming from his electric. (Source - Mark Crapelle)

Thursday - 29 December: surveying *Persephone*, more in *Bauhaus*.

A team was drafted to survey the discovery of the previous day. Everyone tagged along, some planning to derig the cave by way of a reverse through-trip. An exodus from camp ensued. From the main entrance (PB6) of *Bauhaus*, we grouped closely together for the intricate route-finding into *Persephone*. Beyond the entrance chamber and directly above *Slime Climb*, Nick checked a maze of solution tubes. One of these ascended for 15-20 metres emerging in a corridor of massive

chambers (*Kokoku*). A handline was going to be necessary to negotiate the floor collapses here and a return was planned for later.

The main group moved through to the base of the 60 metre pitch. Here one party went up the rope and derigged from the surface, while the other party started a survey back into *Bauhaus*. Gavin was fastest into his prusik gear, his ascent interrupted frequently by calls from a photographer below. Tim went up next, followed in turn by Chris. The surveyors / photographers were then on their own.

There was much photography carried out in *Superstraw Passage*, the "flashers" being Nick and Lew, trailing within earshot of a highly argumentative Steve and Trev, an entertaining position to be in for the rest of the return. The survey went on to cover some of the previously undetailed sections of *Bauhaus*, notably the large chambers above Chris Climb and the passage above *Slime Climb*. The tape was taken right back to the entrance tag (PB6), hopefully simplifying later interpretation of what is an exceedingly complex area. (Source - Nick Hume)

Sixty one stations were surveyed from the base of the big pitch in *Persephone* to the number tag PB6 at the entrance of *Bauhaus*. Trev was on the book, Steve on instruments and Mark on tape. The whole operation lasted four hours, for a total traverse distance of 550 metres. The *Bauhaus/New Order/Xymox/Persephone* system now includes 2.2 kilometres of surveyed extent and has perhaps 2.5 kilometres of known cave length. Connections to *Cueva Blanca* and *Damper Cave* would yield a very significant system indeed.

Leads still to be looked at and surveyed in *Persephone* include:

1. Upstream from *Wallaby Bob*. The same area could probably also be gained by the undescended drop below the third pitch.
2. The aven and stream anabranh at the end of *Superstraw Passage*.
3. Downstream from *Chris Climb*. Though fairly tortuous, more passage may be realised en route to the main streamway in *Bauhaus*.

The last survey station in the *Persephone* streamway is a carbided dot on the canyon wall. Mark also found a passage above *Chris Climb* which was later explored and surveyed. (Source - Trevor Wailes)

Lew and Nick climbed up into *Kokoku* with the aid of a 10 metre rope. The chambers here are obviously very ancient, being similar in development to the borehole of *Xymox*. Fifty metres along the right hand passage, the rope was rigged as a handline into a solution collapse. The left side of the trough led into bottomless canyon, too wide to bridge unfortunately. In the other direction, an easier and more major lead ran through a field of clay/moonmilche mix.

A downclimb led fairly immediately to a round-edged drop into massive chamber. A long handline would be needed to go any further. At least one rift could be seen exiting from the opposite side, though the full entirety of the chamber could not be seen. Shouts did not establish the presence of the survey party in *Bauhaus*, so it is surmised that the lead is heading more toward the *Bela Lugosi* end of *Xymox*, than the truncated section of borehole above the former caves. On the other side of the climb up into *Kokoku* was another very large chamber. The 10 metre handline was insufficient to get far down a greasy entry slope only enabling access to a ledge above some narrow transecting canyon. This was bottomless and seemed too risky a way of getting any further. There may well be a way on from the obscured left hand wall of the large chamber.

Kokoku wasn't surveyed, but should be attempted at some future date to establish where this development lies in relation to the rest of the cave. The narrow meandering form of canyon below here is also present in *Xymox*, which may

offer the possibility of interconnecting both sections of cave, representing as it does a rapid down-cutting of drainage to the present basal-level of *Bauhaus* streamway. Interestingly, the older higher level development in *Cueva Blanca* (*White Room*) may well be part of this former drainage. (Source - Nick Hume)

Friday - December 30: *Enone*, surface surveying, *Elusive Bluff*.

Chris, Trev and Steve went up the track to survey overland from *Log Doline* through the entrances of PB16/PB17/PB18/PB19, thus tying in these new finds. Nick and Leigh followed the trio, then continued on to *Enone* to place a number tag on the cave (PB19 - on an outcrop at the south rim of the shaft) and rig its pitch series. A man-fern on the southern side of the shaft served as anchor. The rope was rebelayed from a bolt some 3 metres down the pitch, giving a freehang to a ledge about 20 metres below. Walking along this ledge gave access to a breakdown filled alcove on the western side. A wet inlet climb here went for several metres before closing off.

From the ledge, a handline was set up for the 5 metre mud bank. A piton was then inserted in a wall on the left to anchor the rope for a 5 metre abseil into a rift transecting the width of the shaft. Below this, extensive tree-fall threatened an 8 metre drop leading to the visible floor of the cavern. Another piton allowed this next pitch to be rigged following a lot of "gardening". Nick descended onto a rubble slope, expecting the place to terminate fairly immediately.

Leigh joined Nick to savour her caving find. They climbed into an alcove on the southern wall of the chamber to find a small floor hole overlooking a 10 metre pitch. There was only a very slight draught present and a dropped rock gave the sort of flaccid thunk on landing that did not augur well for a continuation. Even so, a rift did appear to go underneath the pitch top where they were standing so further exploration was certainly warranted. Unfortunately no more rope was immediately available. The situation was shouted back to the survey party, then arriving at the entrance. Trev and Steve made a promise to return with more gear on the following day; thus the cave was left rigged. (Source - Nick Hume)

With the overland survey completed, Steve went for a bit of an exploratory bash around the general area. He established a shorter route between *Enone* and *Persephone* than the circuitous one we had been using. He then headed north in search of the dolerite-paved gully found on December 25. Slightly uphill of his former path, he (pink) taped for some 270 paces without gaining that feature, finishing at a doline that contained no evidence of limestone. Probably this and the few other signs north of *Enone* are subjacent karst: mudstone / siltstone collapses into underlying caverniferous development. A major tree-fall above *Christmas Cavern* has exposed little else other than this type of rock. (Source - Stephen Bunton)

Meantime, Gavin, Mark and Tim decided to have a thrash south of *Reece Cave* (PB207) in an attempt to gain the eastern side of *Elusive Bluff*. Mapped sinkhole features there correspond very well to the surveyed extremities of *Quetzalcoatl Conduit*. From the forested glade on the western side, they broke into more or less open plain. This they traversed to thicker vegetation near the southern end of the bluff where to make further progress looked daunting. The blue-taped route ends here, the distance covered being of the order of 20 minutes south of *Reece Cave*, though the time indicated is due only to the existence of their track, it having taken several hours to carve out. They returned to camp via the high-level route taking them past PB14, but no gear was carried to check this shaft. (Source - Gavin Duffy)

Saturday - December 31: water tracing, finding *Aikea* and *Gaping Grin*.

Mark and Gavin went back to *Bauhaus* to explore and survey the lead above *Chris Climb* noticed on the trip of December 29. One hundred and thirty five metres of quite large passage was found (*Throbbing Gristle*), which was essentially an upper level series of the *Persephone* streamway. Considerable decoration made exploration difficult. (Source - Mark Crapelle)

Trev, Steve and Lew also went up the hill to push and survey *Enone*. Steve re-rigged some of Nick's "make-do" efforts from the previous day and together with the other two, descended to the floor-level lead. Trev partially free-climbed the head of a several metre drop, arriving at a steep and greasy ledge. A rebelay allowed access to a rubble floor about 15 metres down. The area was choked with breakdown, thus there only remained the task of surveying back to the surface. Total depth was -60 metres. (Source - Trevor Wailes)

Chris, Leigh and Nick moved around the southern rim of the *Bauhaus* depression to relocate and tag numerous finds from the previous TCC expedition. The PB7 number plate was attached to the headwall above the more major entrance of *Xymox*. *Orpheus* received PB8, placed on its western wall immediately above the drop. Uncertainty as to the original location of *Nick Cave* (allocated PB9) led to it not receiving a tag.

The lower entrance of *Pseiko Killers* was explored by Chris. A drop of several metres was explored into a number of narrow rifts, only one of which did anything and that was simply to return to the higher twin entrance. The tag PB20 was drilled into a small fin of rock next to where Chris had gone down. He then retrieved a rope left on the entrance pitch of *Xymox* by Leigh and Nick, before heading east into the next gully for some surface exploration.

Chris went due east (magnetic) from *Xymox* going diagonally upslope (to a point where the islands in the bay were sighted on a bearing of 200 degrees) and into the gully. He then went up the gully (on a bearing of 20 degrees) to the limestone contact. Nothing major was found, despite the high expectation of there being a sink of the *Bauhaus* waters in this general area (correlated with a surface position above *Amyl Aven*). Many karst features were seen en route, but no going cave. He then returned to the summit track on a rising westerly bearing, this roughly corresponding to the line of contact. The limestone / mudstone interface was observed to be indistinct in places and possibly interbedded. One transecting gully was filled with a great number of dolerite cobbles. (Source - Chris Davies)

Back in *Xymox*, Leigh and Nick were enjoying a bit of photography. A lead was noticed near the base of the entrance of *Pseiko Killers*, but was not looked at due to the distraction of f-stops and guide numbers. They then headed downstream in *Bauhaus*, ending up at the first deep swirlpool about 50 metres before the sump in *Floating Anxiety*. Here, an exercise designed to confirm the common drainage of *Bauhaus* / *Damper Cave* was commenced.

Some fluorescein had been donated to the expedition by Albert Goede, the Karst Geomorphologist with the University of Tasmania's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Two hundred and fifty grams of tracer was dissolved in a fixed quantity of water, before dispersal in the streamway (at 3.45pm on the Saturday). Flow conditions were up slightly on normal summer conditions because of rain on December 27 and 28.

The pair then left the cave to check on the emergence of the dye in *Cueva Blanca*. Instead of returning to the summit track, they decided to surface explore the region downhill of the general area of *Bauhaus*. Their departure from the branch track is marked with triple blue tapes, just where it crests the ridge veering

rightward towards *New Order*. This ridge was followed westward for some 60 metres to where a prominent depression became visible off to the right hand side.

The depression marked the site of a huge shaft, some 10 metres by 12 metres in size (*Aikea* - PB21). Utterly vertical-sided, it was an impressive find with the best vantage point being gained on its western rim. From here, ferns and other live vegetation could be seen on a sloping mud floor some 35-40 metres below. A wide passage could be seen exiting from underneath the eastern headwall and heading in the approximate direction of *Bauhaus* whose entrance could scarcely be more than 150 metres away. The contour level of the top of the shaft would be similar to that of *New Order*.

There was no safely accessible outcropping of rock so the find was not given a number tag. An overhanging tree was triple-taped in blue and a route taped back to the junction of the *Bauhaus* track. The feature was later found to be clearly visible on aerial photographs, such was its size. A scaled extrapolation reveals it to be directly over the downstream section of *Bauhaus*, about one-third to one-half the way down to the sump. Correlate within the latter cave is a minor inlet passage bearing a profuse number of small-sized animal species remains and a loss of draught also.

From the western rampart of the hole, the pair followed the contour westward. Within 70 metres they found a deep gulch running down from the summit track ridge, distinguished by a massive tree-fall at the head of the trough/ridge interface. Flutings on outcropping rock were suggestive of former water entry, but no caves were seen.

Chris was descending the track at the time and detected Nick's yelps in the distance. He was coerced with a few "...bloody great holes..." into coming down and having a look for himself. Instructed on how to get to *Aikea*, he wandered off never to find it, instead turning up *Gaping Grin* (PB22), a horizontal type entrance taking a howling draught. This led through into some massive borehole passage, with several pitches and other leads being noticed. *Aikea* and *Gaping Grin* must be only 50 to 100 metres apart and would seem to be very probable alternative entrances to the *Bauhaus* system. Chris taped back up hill to near a confluence with the track.

Leigh and Nick contoured back to the main track finding nothing else of significance. They then wandered down the ridge to the entrance of *Cueva Blanca*, abseiling into *Inundation* to check for fluorescein. No evidence of the tracer was found in the *Black Curtains Streamway* up to the time of 8pm. This point is estimated to be only some 150 metres from where the tracer was injected into the *Bauhaus* streamway some four hours before. Hunger defeated the imperative of science on this occasion and the pair made a return to camp! (Source - Nick Hume)

Sunday - January 1, 1989: exploring *Gaping Grin*, plus finding PB23.

Our zeal for exploring very much on this day was somewhat at a loss for teeth! Steve left the expedition to walk out over the *Southern Ranges* and meet some appointments in the almost forgotten world outside. By midday the very motley crew that remained were making rumours about doing something. Chris, Lew and Trev were the main protagonists for this and when it came to the crunch, it was they who tramped back up the hill. At the entrance of *Gaping Grin*, a 5 metre downclimb among boulders led to an intersection with major passage. South, the way was short-lived and went to a series of daylight holes above a sharply eroded drip shaft. To the north, a circular hole in the floor dropped into a short section of horizontal and parallel passage. Short pitches terminated either end of this, a ten metre one at the northern end going into a large chamber. Back above this passage, the major way on followed the bedding plane to a connection above the previously mentioned

chamber. Within this, a pitch dropped away to parts unknown. On the western side, a passage was followed for 50 metres over a thick and dry silt floor to another pitch of 15 metres. An intermittent draught was emanating upwards from this. Lew climbed out over the top of the drop, reporting that there seemed to be an enlarged area of cavern further on. A promising venue, but no gear was carried with which to check these leads.

Back in the main chamber, a northerly bearing passage went for 50 metres to yet another 15 metre pitch, a steep edge here not allowing much of an inspection below. Noticed as well was an inaccessible borehole entering high up on the far wall of the chamber. There are certainly many pitches to be descended here and these mostly carry promising (and pulsating) draughts. (Source - Trevor Wailes)

Lew had a wander in the general vicinity of *Gaping Grin*. Some 100 metres down-slope from that cave he contoured around to where a distinct drop in air temperature was noticed in one particular gully. This was followed up-slope for 50 metres to a V-shaped gap in a cliff bearing two entrances. Both were set 20 metres back into the cliff and at their mouths were some 10 metres wide by 8-10 metres high. The western most feature proved to be a blocked overhang, but the other ran upward to a ledge overlooking a 30 metre pitch (PB23). Arising out of this was a howling draught of cold air, the source of the coolness noticed earlier. (Source - Lew Mitchelmore)

Gavin, Tim and Mark went into *Damper Cave* for a photography session. Several hours were consumed in general exploration. (Source - Gavin Duffy)

Monday - January 2: the last flight out, a hydrological connection established between *Bauhaus* and *Damper Cave*.

The seaplane arrived with Stuart Nicholas as well as the pilot! Great to see Stuey, but time constraints of the outside world didn't allow us to take him on a grand tour of the local karst. Both were invited ashore for a cup of tea and mouldy biscuits after anchoring the plane. They didn't put up with the indignity for long however, loading up with the remaining caving gear and leaving within the hour. Stuey later took this massive load back to Hobart for us, from the seaplane's base at Port Arthur, a generous act deserving our many thanks.

It was Gavin who first noticed the emergence of fluorescein from the entrance of *Damper Cave*. This occurred at around 12am and we all returned to the cave for a lightweight reconnaissance. Carrying hand torches, we first examined the floor hole adjacent survey station #11, this being known to be the closest approach of *Inundation* in *Cueva Blanca*. This was static with no sign of the emerging dye. The main streamway was carrying the dye from much deeper in the cave.

Implications of this are that the *Bauhaus / Cueva Blanca* waters must remain parallel to the streamway in *Damper* passing underneath the tributary passage of *Cane Toad Abuse* and finally connecting into *Damper* in the area of *Stygologia*. Few other prospects for entry exist in between these sections of the cave. This is unusual, because while both the *Cueva* and *Damper* streamways parallel each other, they flow in opposing directions indicating strongly fault controlled development. The through-time of 36 hours for the tracer was also something of a surprise, the many swirlpools and lakes in the *Cueva Blanca / Bauhaus* system severely reducing flow rates. Infiltrating tracer would infuse slowly through these still-water areas before spilling over the flowstone dams into the next pool. Even though the specific point of submerged connection between the two caves was not clarified, dry-air leads in *Honey and Cream* and *Inundation* offer better prospects for interconnection. (Source - Nick Hume)

January 3 to 6: East of Elusive Bluff, and the walk out.

The three VSA members remained in the area for a couple more days of exploration. On the Tuesday, they climbed to the summit of PB, getting the best weather of the expedition with which to obtain views. On the following day, a second attempt was made to skirt *Elusive Bluff* and reach the mapped sinkhole features on its eastern side. Persisting along their earlier route, the general vicinity of the features was gained. Several hours were spent looking along a line of small dolines. The thickness of scrub made it difficult to find anything at all and the impression gained was that further up-slope (on the southern flanks of PB) might be a more productive area. On the Wednesday, they began a muddy trek out along the *South Coast Track*. Masochism didn't cease on their return to Hobart however, as they were involved in a flood interrupted TCC trip down *Dwarrowdelf* (Junee Florentine area) later that week! A Tasmanian visit that will long be remembered. (Source - Mark Crapelle)

On the Monday prior, the band of Chris, Trev, Leigh, Lew and Nick made a painstaking clean-up of the camp area before beginning the walk out. Hot weather persisted over the climb to the summit, giving them some good views of the route to be taken through the Southern Ranges. Though many karst features were sighted up to quite high on the slopes of the mountain (ie limestone re-emerges above the transecting layer of calcareous siltstone), these were heavily inundated with down-washed clays.

After saying goodbye to Gavin and company near the summit, the TCC crew moved down the eastern side of the mountain to camp on *Kameruka Ridge*. The weather changed over the second day to the walk. A halt was called after only a few hours in driving rain at *Wylly Plateau*. Lew and Trev had only glorified fly-sheets to protect themselves overnight and were positively eager to leave despite marginal weather the following day. The wet scrub up to *Pindars Peak* turned this way into an epic, whereas Steve, who passed this way a few days earlier, had almost come down with heat stroke!

From a camp at *Ooze Lake* the group battled against gale force winds through the *Mount La Perouse* area and out over the series of hills to *Moonlight Flats*. Chris's whistle blast brought the battered stragglers together below *Hill One*, Trev being tempted to race ahead on first sighting the familiar profile of *Marble Hill*. The five descended the foothills, having come full circle from the cars at *Ida Bay* to the karst at *Precipitous Bluff* and back again. (Source - Nick Hume)

TCC Cave Numbering and Descriptive Summary for Precipitous Bluff Karst.

Stainless steel number plates were affixed near the entrances of most of the caves found on this expedition, together with many of the finds from earlier TCC explorations. These were secured to a suitable rock face adjacent to the each cave entrance with masonry anchors, holes being first made with a cordless electric drill and masonry bit. The plates and gear were generously provided by Arthur Clarke, chief protagonist for the task and the person who did most of the placements. The tags were, and will continue to be useful for more than just systematically identifying the finds as they also serve as entrance survey datums for the surveys carried out both above and below ground. Overland surveys were carried out to tie the known cave systems to a common reference point at the *Damper Cave* debouche into New River Lagoon. Descriptive data below, is a revision of, and addition to the

list appearing in Speleo Spiel 237 (Eberhard and Hume), also owing some basis to earlier sources, eg Australian Karst Index (Matthews, 1985). The 200 series numbers arise from an SCS expedition in 1973 and are included here for the sake of completeness. Small aluminium tags were placed at that time on most entrances found and this information is noted with all the cave descriptions below, as well as the state of exploration as it is presently known.

PB1 - Damper Cave, found Tasmanian Caverneering Club 1960. A large outflow cave on the plain/slope junction, to the immediate north of the PB summit track. Initially explored for c. 400 metres in 1960. Surveyed and explored to 1000 metres by Southern Caving Society in 1973. Final sump dived and further passage pace-and-compass surveyed to a total length of 1415 metres by TCC in 1988. Entrance tied in with overland survey.

PB2 - unnamed, found TCC 1960. Choked outflow cave at the base of a ridge south of the one bearing the PB summit track.

PB3 - Quetzalcoatl Conduit, found TCC 1960. Large outflow cave in a glade to the south of the PB2 ridge. Explored and surveyed for c. 1000 metres by SCS in 1973. Final siphon pushed for several hundred metres by TCC in 1986. Return exploration and survey in 1988 yielded 1106 metres of new passage. Present total length 2050 metres. Entrance tied in with overland survey.

PB4 - Cueva Blanca, found TCC 1986. Fossil outflow cave above plain north of Damper Cave. Outstanding decoration in upper levels. Explored and surveyed for 407 metres in 1986. Entrance tied in with overland survey. Sumps halting further exploration.

PB5 - New Order, (untagged) found TCC 1986. A wide shaft dropping 60-70 metres into main entrance chamber of Bauhaus (PB6). Entrance tied in with overland survey.

PB6 - Bauhaus, found TCC 1986. Large sloping entrance on the northern wall of a massive doline. The principal entrance of a complex system, including the known entry points of New Order/Xymox/Persephone. An admix of very old borehole development and lower level active streamway. Total surveyed extent is 2222 metres. Entrance tied in with overland survey. Estimate of explored extent is 2500 metres.

PB7 - Xymox, found TCC 1988. An entrance on the other side of an inosculating doline with Bauhaus. Ten metre entrance pitch gives access to borehole passage, leading into Bauhaus via a side passage. Surveyed to station #75 in that cave (Speleo Spiel 243).

PB8 - Orpheus, found TCC 1988. A wide shaft in the northern wall of a doline immediately east of Xymox. Pitch of 25 metres gives access to rubble floored chamber. Explored down to a terminus at -50 metres. Memory sketch in Speleo Spiel 243.

PB9 - Nick Cave, found TCC 1988. A small draughting hole-in-the-wall entrance on the eastern side of the next doline east of Orpheus. Pitch of 40 metres drops down to a large chamber. Narrow rift leads below this to an estimated depth of -70 metres. Memory sketch in Speleo Spiel 243.

PB10 - unnamed, found TCC 1960. Formerly allocated the number PB2a. An inflow cave taking waters immediately downstream of Quetzalcoatl Conduit. Only a short section of deep streamway.

PB11 - (Divers Entrance), found SCS 1973. An entry point to *Quetzalcoatl* at the upstream end of surface break into that system. Located about 200 metres south of PB3.

PB12 - (Pendulum Palace) found SCS 1973. Another entry point to *Quetzalcoatl Conduit*, some 50 metres up-slope from PB11.

PB13 - unnamed, found TCC 1988. A large horizontal entrance in an embayment off the glade, some 70 metres south of PB11. Large entrance chamber with small stream meandering through breakdown, heading in the direction of the *Quetzalcoatl Conduit* streamway. Unsurveyed.

PB14 - unnamed, found TCC 1988. A wide shaft in the northern end of a rift / glade. Pitch drops 25 metres to a chamber, undescended and unsurveyed. Entrance marked with three pink fluoro tapes.

PB15 - unnamed, found TCC 1988. A large gully / solution trough associated with a mapped sinkhole feature (at 670848 on Precipitous 1:25000 series sheet). Headwall infilled with mud and no going cave.

PB16 - unnamed, found TCC 1988. Small horizontal entrance under limestone bluff in doline immediately off the north side of the PB summit track. Leads to head of undescended 20 - 40 metre pitch. Entrance tied in with overland survey. Possibly PB 201 Severance Cave.

PB17 - Persephone, found TCC 1988. High draughting entrance in next gully north of PB16. A 60 metre shaft, plus shorter pitches gives access to large well decorated passage. A lower level streamway connects through to *Bauhaus*, surveyed length to connection of 538 metres. Entrance tied in with overland survey.

PB18 - Christmas Cavern, found TCC 1988. Very large sloping entrance in the next gully north and uphill from PB17. Handline of 30 metres leads down to a pitch of 10 metres. Finishes in blockage at -60 metres. Entrance tied in with overland survey.

PB19 - Enone, found TCC 1988. A large elongated shaft some 50 metres south west of PB18. The 25 metre shaft leads to pitches of 5m, 10 and 15m, finishing in a blockage at -60 metres. Surveyed and tied in with overland traverse.

PB20 - Pseiko Killers, found TCC 1988. Two entrances in the southern wall of the *Xymox* doline. Only short passage.

PB21 - Aikea, (untagged), found TCC 1988. A massive shaft of 10 metres diameter to the west of *Bauhaus*. A 35 to 40 metre pitch leads to a sloping vegetated floor, undescended.

PB22 - Gaping Grin, (untagged), found TCC 1988. Horizontal draughting entrance to the south west of PB21. Intersects large borehole passage, with several undescended pitches.

PB23 - unnamed, (and untagged), found TCC 1989. Strongly draughting 30 metre shaft south west of PB22, undescended.

PB24 - Wombat Wallow, (untagged). Additional entrance to *Quetzalcoatl Conduit*. Surveyed by SCS 1988.

PB201 - Severance Cave, found SCS 1973. Constricted pothole 82m deep with main shaft of 24m, good decoration in lower levels.

PB202 - unnamed, (and untagged), found SCS 1973. Small pothole 20m deep.

PB203 - unnamed, (and untagged), found SCS 1973. Small pothole blocked with clay.

PB204 - unnamed, found SCS 1973. Unexplored hole in ridge north of PB207; slope leads to 10m shaft; other holes in same doline.

PB205 - unnamed, found SCS 1973. Unexplored hole south of PB204. 3.5m drop to steep slope.

PB206 - unnamed, found SCS 1973. Unexplored cave; two possible entrances, main one consists of very steep mud slope dropping at least 6.5m.

PB207 - Reece Cave, found SCS 1973. Impressive inflow entrance at foot of small cliff. Strong draught.

PB208 - unnamed, (and untagged), found SCS 1973. Unexplored 14m shaft.

PB209 - unnamed, (and untagged), found SCS 1973. 3m drop to mud slope; north of PB1 and 33m above it. Unexplored.

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Eberhard, S & Hume, N. (1988), Report of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club 1986 Speleological Reconnaissance Expedition to Precipitous Bluff. Speleo Spiel Special Issue (£237), Specialty Press, Hobart, Tasmania.

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The two issues of Speleo Spiel making up the report of the 1988/89 Tasmanian Caverneering Club Precipitous Bluff Expedition, numbers 252 and 253, were compiled and edited initially by Nick Hume from contributions by the expeditioners as noted throughout the text. Arthur Clarke supplied additional historical and biological information and assisted with final editing of the text of both issues. Maps and surveys have individual credits noted on them.

This edition of Speleo Spiel had final typing done by Stuart Nicholas, using Word Perfect 5 software on an IBM PS/2 30 computer. Printout was on an Epson LQ1050 dot matrix printer. Final printing and collation was organised by Trevor Wailes.

PERSEPHONE

ENT P.B.17

BARNINNI'S STUDIO

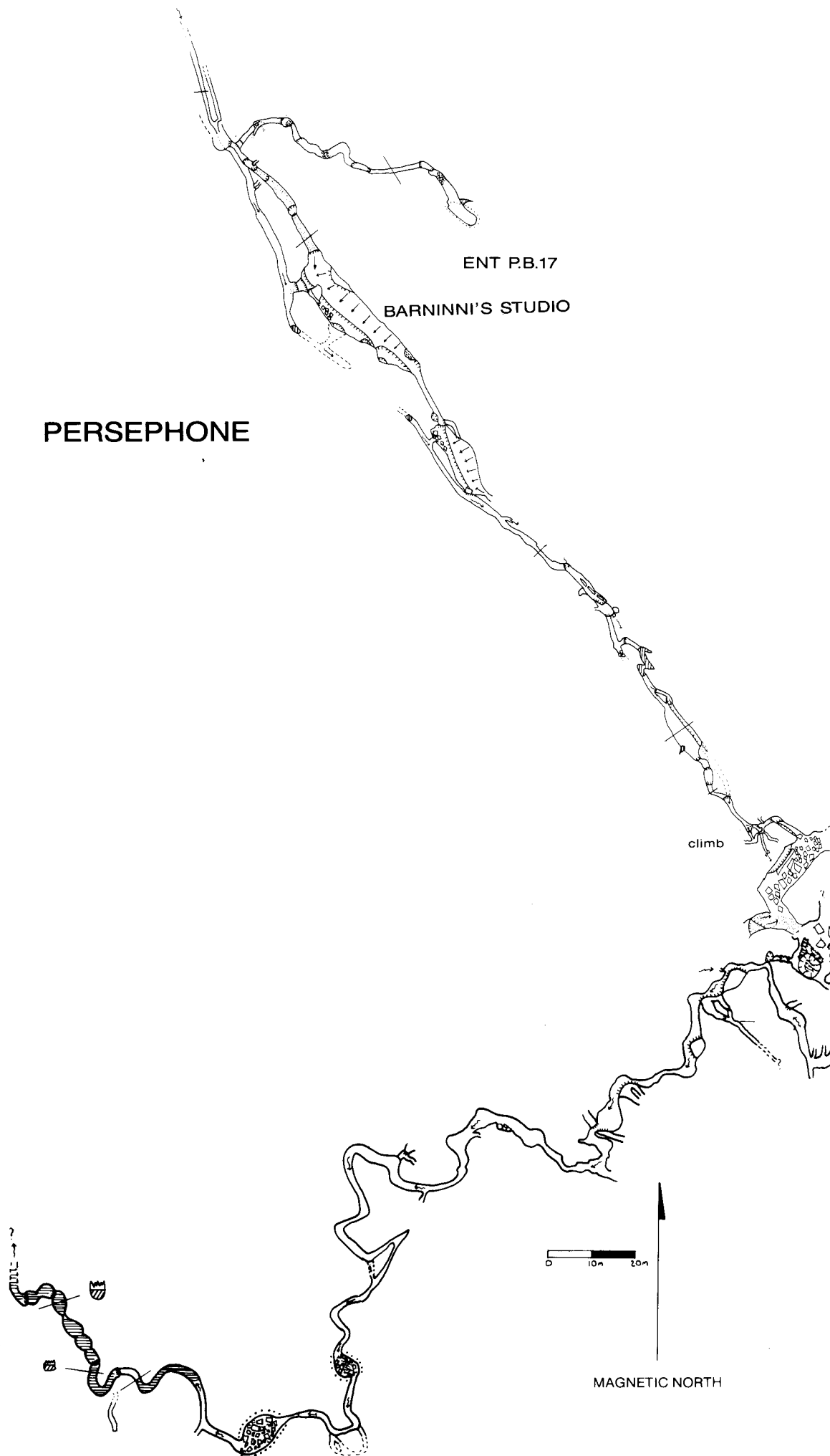
climb

DOWNSTREAM SUMP

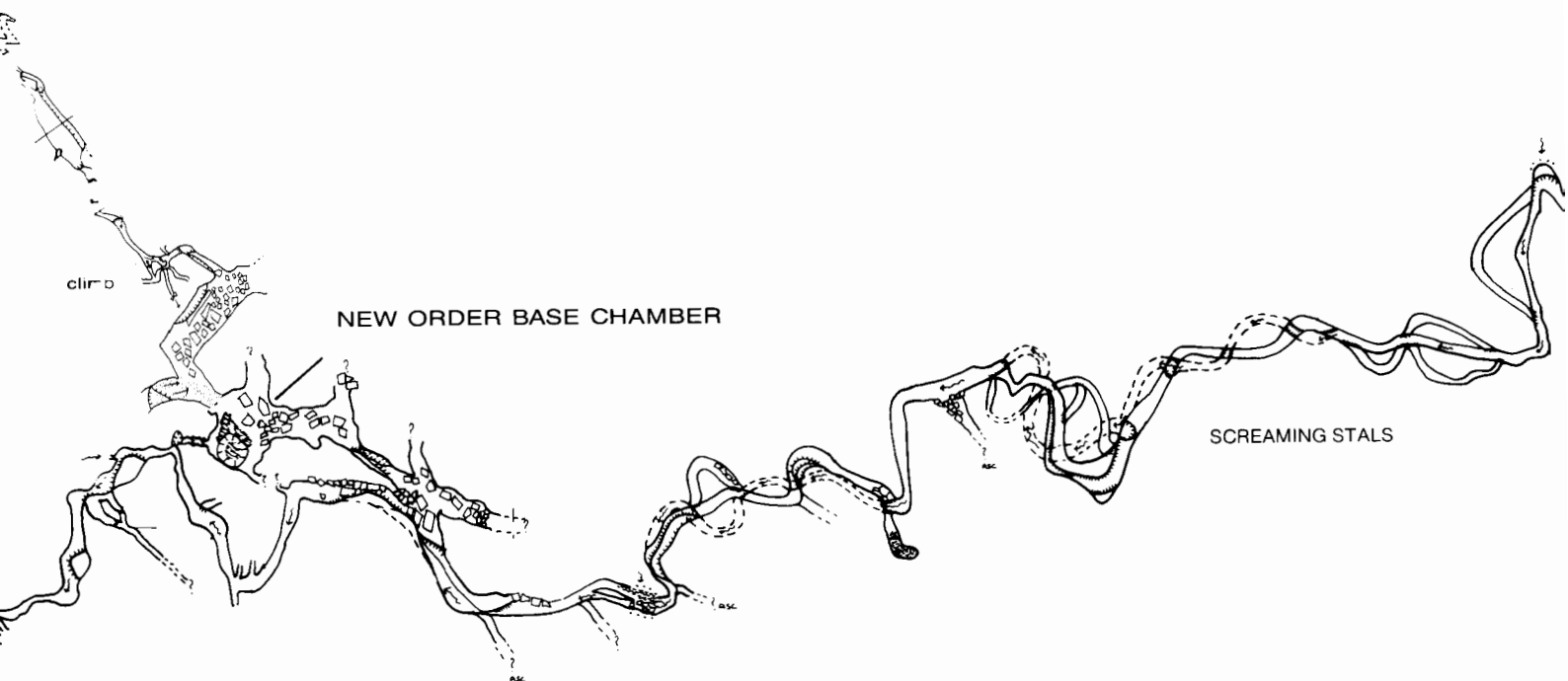
FLOATING ANXIETY

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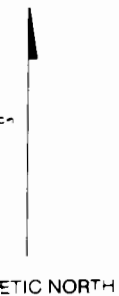
MAGNETIC NORTH



PRECIPITOUS BLUFF
BAUHAUS SYSTEM P.B.6
PERSEPHONE P.B.17

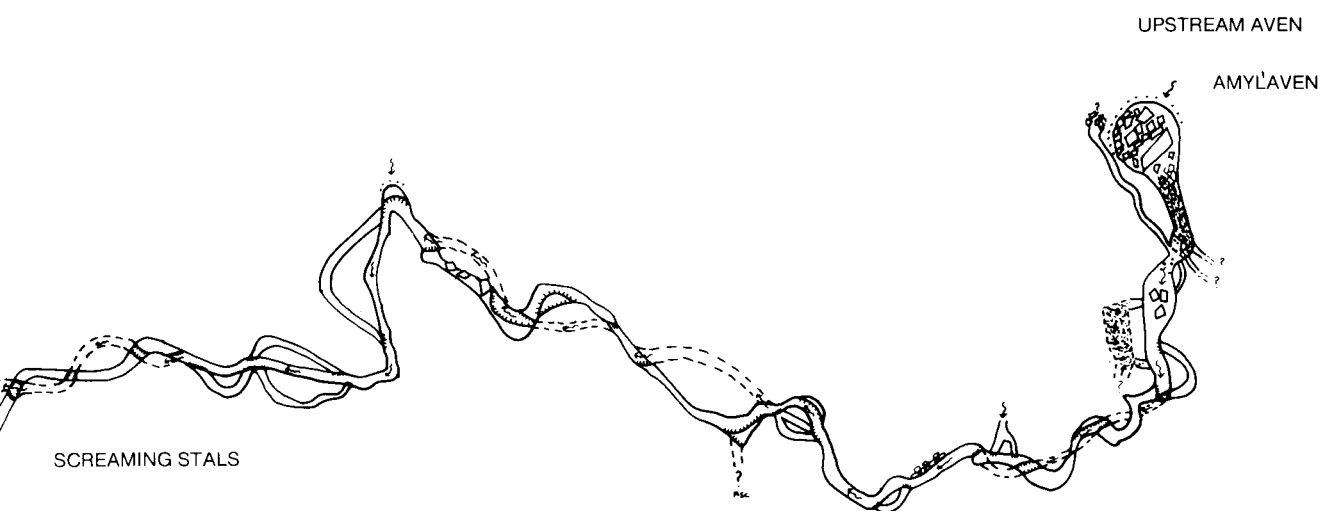


BAUHAUS



MAGNETIC NORTH

NOTE: THE ENTRANCES OF
NEW ORDER P.B.5 AND XYM
NOT SHOWN, THIS SURVEY
THE BASAL STREAMWAYS A
OF PERSEPHONE POT P.B.17



E: THE ENTRANCES OF BAUHAUS P.B.6
ORDER P.B.5 AND XYMOX P.B.7 ARE
SHOWN, THIS SURVEY ONLY SHOWS
BASAL STREAMWAYS AND ENTRANCE
ERSEPHONE POT P.B.17.

PERSEPHONE POT P.B. 17

SURVEYED DEC. 1988

T. WAILES

M. CRAPELLI

N. HUME

A.S.F. GRADE 5:4

DRAWN T. WAILES

