

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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FORWARD PROGRAMME....!

Yes, its back! Every Spiel will have some sort of FP to hopefully entice people out of the pubs and into the underworld. Certainly for anyone new or not directly into the "Club" scene, it is essential that this feature of old be reinstated. Planned trips will be solicited at each General Meeting, so put your thinking helmet on and give some thought to where you may be going (caving wise!) in the next month or so!

November 25: KUBLA KHAN / MOLE CREEK area - Mole Creek area! See Nick Hume.

December 9 & 10: POLICE RESCUE SQUAD TRAINING EXERCISE - Florentine Valley. We'll need two or three bods to run a couple of trips for the POLSAR people. See Stuart Nicholas for info.

Christmas / New year: PRECIPITOUS BLUFF EXPEDITION. Tentative flight dates have been set, but all depends on landing permits for New River Lagoon being obtained. Stefan Eberhard and Nick Hume are the protagonists for this little trip. No hangers on - only people willing to work while there need apply (Stefan has spoken...)!

EDITORIAL

In recent months, it ought to have, and to a great extent has, become apparent to the members of caving and speleological fraternity in Tasmania that issues relating to conservation and management of reserves, areas of present or planned national park and the World Heritage Area(s) within this State are becoming important and will not "go away". In times past, cavers have tended to adopt a "head in the sand" approach to such things, if only because the issues did not directly affect their activities or if they did, other people sorted, or appeared to sort, the thing out.

The environment / conservation issue has become very much bigger than ever before and this approach will no longer work. The population at large is interested and becoming involved in these highly complex issues and hence the resources of the "conservation movement" are being used more in a management role rather than as the sole entity on the side of conservation. Small common interest groups are having to "do their own thing" in conjunction with other like interested groups. To this end, we must act on the information and invitation from the Department of Parks, Wildlife

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and Heritage to submit our ideas and concerns re the World Heritage Area management. The basic information relating to this is given below.

The entire issue of environmental concern is politically, socially and economically far from simple and must be dealt with in a manner befitting its delicate nature. Whatever is done needs to be handled with great diplomacy by all parties concerned. Only an attitude of understanding and a mutual interest and desire for solution of the many problems will ultimately enable areas of disagreement to be sorted out.

Stuart Nicholas

Correspondence from the Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage

A letter and two articles relating to public participation in the establishment of management guidelines for the World Heritage Area has been received by TCC. Part of the letter is reproduced below as is the shorter of the two alternative articles of explanation. If you are interested in putting together a submission, and we ought to be in order to protect our access to "limited" areas, the second article contains more definitive information. Contact Stefan Eberhard or Stuart Nicholas for a copy of this second article or the Department as indicated below. Brief notesheets on various management issues of concern to cavers, including huts, walking tracks, campfires, aircraft use and cave management, are available from the Department.

"... The Tasmanian Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage is the managing authority for Tasmania's World Heritage Area. Over the forthcoming summer the Department will be seeking submissions from the public regarding the management of this important natural area. I am certain that many of your readers would welcome such an opportunity for public involvement.

For further information please contact Mr Sam Rando, phone 002 303912. Thank you for your assistance."

MANAGING TASMANIA'S WORLD HERITAGE AREA - WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Are you interested in the future of Tasmania's World Heritage Area? How should this magnificent area be managed? The Tasmanian Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage wants to hear your ideas. From the beginning of December 1989 until the end of February 1990, the Department will be seeking submissions from all interested individuals and organisations. Your submission can be as long or as short as you like. Pamphlets detailing the boundaries of the area, important management issues and giving advice on writing your submission will be available from the Department. So, have your say! Your ideas will be considered by the Department in the preparation of a draft management plan for the area.

For pamphlets and any further information, please contact:

World Heritage Area Planning Team
Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage
GPO Box 44A
Hobart 7001.

Phone: 002 303912

FAX: 002 238765

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CLUB NEWS & OTHER TRIVIAL TRIPE

- The Annual Dinner has long since come and gone, in every sense of meaning! All in all quite a good evening was had, although being in the main lounge with other bods did take the edge off it a little. Still, as an annual carnifest, it seemed to succeed! We'll have to do some more social eating out before the next one is due to find another more suitable venue.

- Some of you may recall selling and/or buying some ultra thick TCC raffle tickets a few months ago, all in the cause of attempting to refill the somewhat depleted TCC coffers. Well the winning tickets were all sold through the Doctor Syntax Hotel. Pity really, a gallon (4.54 litres for those mod bods out there) of Scotch would have gone down fairly well! For the record the winners were: 1 - D. Cook, ticket 288; 2 - Ken Rhodes, ticket 458; 3 - P. Farrow, ticket 303.

- And now for some news from the Wild West per Frank Salt..... The Savage River side of the club has become mildly active again with the disappearance of the glaciers from the North of the State.

The lump of limestone at Mt Cripps now boasts 30 caves with some of the largest karst features seen on air photos yet to be visited. The deepest so far, called STETTLE POT is approx. 80m deep with 4 pitches including one very wet 30m one.

A trip was also made to Gunns Plains following up on a story by a local of a disappearing stream on his land. The result was a single passage cave with a 10m entrance pitch. The cave formed a natural staircase dropping at an angle of 45° to a total depth of 65m and ending in a sump.

BOOK REVIEW

"Spring Into Caving", by Hugh Downfall
Distributed by Longitudinal and Lateral Press 1989.

This is the book which will revolutionise caving. In this neat A4 volume is a wealth of information about the soon to take Australia by storm Bungy Caving Technique (or BCT). For those people not 100% familiar with the subtleties of this lightweight high speed vertical technique, the theory goes something like this. Rope abrasion and the need for an operational prusik rig are obviated by using Bungy jumping to descend pitches and by anchoring the Bungy cord at the bottom of the pitch it is possible reascend pitches without expending energy in prusiking. In short the Potential energy lost during descent as it is converted to Kinetic energy, is stored in the extension of the rope to await re-utilisation as the Kinetic energy to relaunch the caver back up the pitch. The book includes useful tables of Young's modulus for various diameters of Bungy Cord, lengths of cord required for various pitch lengths and conversion tables such that this can also be calculated for various diameters of Bungy cord. This technique works extremely well for solo cavers since it is difficult to get the cord back to the person waiting at the base of the pitch. The most usual way to overcome this problem is by the use of a harpoon gun with Infra-red sight such that the second person's rope pack can be targeted. A quick and efficient means of ascent is then assured if this person is wearing it at the time. Subtleties such as padded pack straps and belay strength waist belts for rope packs are not overlooked in this most authoritative text.

Spring Into Caving will certainly have you thinking about your caving efficiency and logistics. It will also sharpen your reflexes since the whole underlying principle depends upon being able to anchor the rope securely at the bottom of the pitch and this second "bottom belay point" and its suitability need to be instantly recog-

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nised. Large boulders are obviously the best and Spring Into Caving includes Volume-Mass tables and Diameter/Height-Mass Tables so that cavers can instantly choose the most appropriate rock. These tables need to be memorised and there is therefore infinite potential for friendly rivalry in the pub as to who can state whether a rock of a certain size is suitable. This system is simplified if considered with respect to Free Factors. A rock has a Free-Factor of ONE (FF 1) if a caver's body mass will lift it on the strength of the Bungy's recoil. Boulders with a $FF < 1$ will lift from the substrate and those with a $FF > 1$ are of course safe to use. It is therefore essential that each caver knows their own mass both dry and when wringing wet and that Bungy pitches be rigged accordingly. For those people unfamiliar with the technique I should point out that cavers in any given party should, where possible, be the same mass and Spring Into Caving does suggest some unique ways to carry and hide those extra few kilograms which make caving together so much smoother.

Something which the sceptics may overlook when they brand this innovative idea dangerous is that the caver's velocity is zero when they reach floor level, something which is not the case should something go wrong with the technique they are using now. Of most interest to the novice BCT caver is the amazing range of designs of do-it-yourself harnesses included in this well-illustrated volume. The padded shoulder and chest combination models are certainly the most popular and functional since they allow the caver a greater degree of freedom to grasp the bottom belay, lasso it and then easily step out of the tensioned system. Although the market is too small to support specialist BCT harnesses at this stage, quick release karabiners are available and they are certainly worth considering for clipping the belay upon reascent. For those cavers who don't trust their reflexes but still wish to cave by this high-speed and extremely safe method there is a list of suppliers of lightweight winches should you end up stuck at the mid-point of the rope with zero velocity component on either your ascent or descent. The book also suggests that people will soon giving pitch rigging details for both the top and bottoms of pitches and suggests eyebolts as the most useful. For pitches interrupted by ledges or that spiral around corners, it is still possible to employ BCT using eyebolt rebelay.

At \$44.95 the price of this book might seem like your life savings but after a few trips on BCT you won't be needing them anyway!

Stephen Bunton

There's nothing like an up to date trip report and this is nothing like an up to date trip report! But it is a trip report.... (there's a hint there somewhere!).

JUDDS CAVERN / ICE BOX

Easter 1989

Trip members: Peter Bostock, Tim Sprod, Tim "where's my boot gone" Lyons, cameron Booth, Bernard Ralston and James Plaister.

Over the Easter long weekend a group of cavers set out to do Judds Cavern with a look see in Ice Box. Some really enjoyed the walk in, some didn't (my first meeting with button grass plains is definitely my last). We arrived at the campsite late afternoon and after some grub went to sleep. Bright and early the next day (about 9 o'clock) the camp started to stir and by 10 o'clock we were heading back across the button grass plains to find Ice Box. It was enjoyed by all though getting in was a problem because one of our members, ie Tim Lyons esq., was leaning on the hole.

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We arrived back at camp for a brief lunch and then headed off to look in Judds. Some of us were keen to do the duck until we found out how cold the water really was. Back at camp one of the more adventurous members of our small group decided his boots needed a wash. Two minutes later we heard several oaths uttering from the vicinity of Judds streamway. When asked what the matter was, Tim L. replied "I've lost one of my boots". After much laughter we headed down to offer some assistance but to no avail - the boot was lost forever. For the rest of the night, Tim had to endure wise-cracks from some of the more cruel members of the party, ie all of us, like "Gee I hope its a bootiful day for the walk out tomorrow" and "Tim, hadn't you better go and wash your other boot - its fairly dirty".

PS. Anyone finding a left Rossie Falcon boot, size 8 or 9, in Judds streamway, please hand it in (or make an offer for the right one!).

Peter Bostock

Caving at Elizabeth College

Despite this ambiguous title, what is really meant is that we offer introductory "Ho-Hum" type trips as part of Expedition Skills and Electives at the College.

Some students coming to College have never been in a cave (Shock! Gasp! Horror!) so we bung them through Entrance Cave - employing every nasty device we can to put them off for life. Sadly, some survive this and are keen to go further. In desperation, trips are organised to the only refrigerated sewer in Tasmania - Loon's Cave.

Even this, with its 24.09m abseil and swim out after two hours grovelling up to armpits in gloop, does not stop some very low IQ neophytes wanting more.

The Wolf Hole - final despairing attempt to stop this stupidity, usually catches a few of the hardier types and they retire to their born-again yobbo existence.

Does the Club want any more members, well schooled in filthy activities and with unassailable egos?? We've given up on these keen ones...

PS. Bruce McIntosh has some clean cavers, too!

Bill Tomalin

The All New Supa Dupa Mighty Morgan Caving/Camping Extravaganza....!

Florentine Valley

August 5 and 6, 1989

Participants: Cian Morgan, Simon Morgan and Dean Morgan (and Scott Morgan on the Sunday only)

Part 1: "Tackling Tassie" - Saturday August 5

After being woken by every alarm in the house at 6.00am (no slacking here Trev.), Cian, Dean and myself set out to the Florentine, for the start of our weekend's caving. Tassie Pot was the cave of the day this time, as long as we had a permit, otherwise we were to go to "The Chairman".

We arrived at the gate to be greeted by Noel, informing us that we did indeed have permits for both days.

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Soon after arriving at the Nine Road we were fully trogged up and set out on the gruesome 40 second bushwalk to the entrance. On arrival, Dean firmly pushed the manfern to which Nick rigged the first pitch on a previous trip and nearly sent it tumbling down the 40 metre shaft!! He then rigged it to a fern closer to the edge and backed it up to the other.

Cian descended first, while Dean and I marvelled at the imaginative rigging, until a shout of "Rope free" had me clipping onto the rope with my brand new, never used, super clean, Bob Reid style, home made Rappel Rack (thanks Bob). I was soon in the disgusting mudpile at the bottom and soon Dean joined us after having rigged the rebelay 8 metres down.

He then continued descending to a ledge just above the second 27m pitch and tied in the rope from the first pitch to the bolt so as to obviate the danger of sliding down the mud bank and on down the nest shaft (although Dean nearly fell off the ledge and down the drop anyhow!). He then continued down, followed by myself and then Cian. From here Dean led the way down the 13m chimney climb type thing, until we reached Goodbye Chamber. With haste, the final 70m pitch was rigged and Cian descended first while Dean and I pondered the thought of how, if the huge boulder we had the rope backed up to came unstuck it would not fall down the shaft, but would jam in the "doorway" to the pitch, leaving us trapped anyhow! Pretty stupid conversation really... I descended next, so that Cian and I could head off through the squeeze and horizontal stuff, while Dean rigged the rebelay and caught us up. We made it to the final chamber before turning back.

I ascended first, with Plan A being for me to take the empty pack and head straight out, leaving Cian and Dean to derig. My ascent went smoothly for the first bit, until the first rebelay which was rigged with a very small loop and I found exceptionally difficult to cross.

Eventually after much longer than it should have taken I was past and wasted as little time as possible in proceeding out of the cave once off the rope. However, halfway up the Chimney Climb, I dropped the empty pack and was definitely, positively not going back to get it! For this reason, Plan A was abandoned and with no Plan B, Plan C (which neither Cian nor Dean were aware of) was put into action. My ascent from here was uneventful and apart from that rebelay, we were back on the surface in reasonable time. We arrived back at the gate at about 4.50pm and not very prepared for Part 2 of the weekend.

Part 2: "We Saw the Junee Homestead"

OR... Saturday night - "Where do we sleep??"

After Tassie Pot, we decided finding a place to rest was the next thing to do. So, on this basis we headed off up the Junee Road, looking for the homestead, unaware of what lay ahead....

Dean was unaware of the state, or exact whereabouts of the Homestead and so we turned up the first road that we saw. After driving many mud bogs, we concluded that this was not the way to go, so turned back. Returning through the mud was, however, a very different matter and we planned the only way to go was straight through them, very fast and risk ripping off the exhaust pipe. This was done, with the exhaust intact, but we nearly hit enough trees to have completed ANM's logging for good! Once back on the Junee Road we headed further up and took the next road to the left. However, when we reached the mud bog, it was deemed that walking might be in order. This turned out to be the correct road as just around the corner we found a pile of wood, holes, metal, holes, bricks and holes, which it was presumed

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was the Junee Homestead. Upon seeing this, we decided a tent at Mount Filed was a better idea. We soon arrived and after much fighting over food with the possums it was sleepy time, so we could be up in time for Sunday and Part 3 of this epic.

Part 3: "Back to the Nine Road" — Owl Pot - Sunday August 6, 1989

After a very, very cramped and uncomfortable night in a 3 man tent (actually with three in it) we awoke to a typical winter day in Maydena... you know those cold, frosty, icy mornings when outside caves is colder than inside them. We packed up our tent and headed for the Maydena shop to meet Scott, driving up from Bridgewater (and a warm comfy bed). He arrived about 8.15am and shortly after we were back at the Nine Road. After much laughing at the obscure sounds Cian was upon pulling on caving gear already wet and muddy from Tassie Pot, we finally headed off for yet another killer 100 second bushwalk to Owl Pot.

A handline was rigged for the entrance mud slide (which I removed again as Dean decided it wasn't needed) and I headed into the entrance chamber, followed by Dean to rig the first pitch. Dean descended first on the club's brand new unused 11mm Bluewater rope and headed off towards the rockpile, while I waited to show Cian and Scott the way on.

The squeeze in the rockpile brought yet more obscure sounds from Scott and Cian, although looking from the top it looks big! The second pitchy thing went by smoothly and I led Scott and Cian to the final pitch, finding it already rigged by Dean. At this point, I suffered an attack of Lethargy and opted out of continuing on down. The others disappeared into the blackness accompanied by various hummed renditions of Bob Dylan and Cat Stevens tracks, courtesy of me!

While waiting for their return, humming more tunes I looked around upstream and returned to the pitch in time to barely make out the returning trogs (my lamp was fading fast...). By the time Cian was up the rope, my lamp was basically dead and we were forced to wait for Scott so I could borrow his Tekna hand torch. Cian and I then headed out while Scott and Dean derigged. By the time Cian was up the second pitch, the deriggers had arrived at the bottom and I began the uncomfortable prusik. Once at the top, I shed my SRT gear ready for the squeeze, which seemed harder than I remembered (mainly due to the Tekna in my mouth!). Dean passed his pack up to me and then struggled on basically with no light. Once everyone was through, packs were grabbed (Not by me! I had one in Tassie Pot and managed to avoid it this time) and I led the way to the top pitch. Dean prusiked out aided only by me shining the Tekna light up for him, since his cap lamp was completely dead. I was next up and headed straight out, struggling up the muddy handline. At the top I was greeted by yells from Cian below... "Can you come down and get this pack so I can get past this rock!" and so I slid back down, retrieved the pack and struggled back yet again. Dean arrived at the cars to say "Jeez, I'm glad that handline was there...!" and Scott just said one thing... "Disgusting!"

A top weekend, itself topped off by my getting out of washing the ropes!!

Simon Morgan

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Ida Bay - Loons Cave and Arthurs Folley

August 12, 1989

Party: Dean Morgan, Simon Morgan, Scott Morgan, Jocelyn Morgan and John Polya.

We left Kingston about 9am for an easy day's caving at Ida Bay, with Loons Cave being the targeted system. We took a couple of harnesses to do the vertical bit so the beginners could have a bit of practice. The descent went smoothly and we left the rope rigged so that Dean and I could walk up the hill and derig, rather than drag the rope through the cave.

We followed upstream taking every side passage we spotted, one of which had some red-brown helictites. Throughout the main passage there are a few avens, one of which had water dripping down in a kind of shower.

Dean and I had a bit of a grovel in the end rockpile before turning back. At the base of the pitch we retrieved Dean's brand new, very own rope pack, courtesy of an unmentionable member of that other unmentionable club.

One of the logs in the entrance has washed away which may make it rather hard to stay dry on the way in. The water was about chest deep for the taller people on this day, but for shorter folk (such as John!), it was a bit deeper and more of a problem...

Once out, Dean and I headed uphill to retrieve the rope and we all met back at the cars about 10 minutes later. After a brief food-fest, we headed off for a quick trip into the Chamber With the Tree Roots in Arthurs Folley, although Jocelyn opted out. The water was very low, in fact too low to be interesting. John didn't seem real impressed with the cave and we returned to the cars only 20 or 30 minutes after leaving.

NE If anybody finds a blue Tekna light with a black neck string, in or around Loons Cave, could they please contact Dean as his went missing on this trip.

Simon Morgan

BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE

August 20, 1989

Party: Leigh Douglas, Mark Bryce, Paul Merhulik and Paul Tabart.

Er... there's someone burning a house down on Sunday; interested?... OK, the thought of using incendiary devices has an interesting appeal, but I thought the idea was to go caving!?

Well, having been put straight that Burning Down the House is the name of a horizontal cave system in the Junee-Florentine area, I was keen to go on my first caving trip.

We left George Street at 8am, reaching Westerway an hour later for a fill up of food and petrol. The next leg of the journey was fraught with uncertainty and trepidation with Leigh heard to have said, "I've got a map and I've been there before, but I'm not sure if I can find it again."

Finally after some tentative to-and-froing on the Nine Ring Road we found the lead to the entrance. A quick change, check of gear and we were off.

Mark leading, we entered the system heading down the gently sloping entrance. the following passages were quite roomy with only a moderate amount of crawling and

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shuffling until we reached a squeeze down climb where Leigh rigged a ladder for the return. After this the passage became much tighter and things began to get hotter as we reached the first rockpile. Here we split up to search for elusive tapes and promising leads that might get us through. After a very tactile and intimate relationship with most of the rocks in the pile we finally found a tape covered in mud that led to the next part of the system. This was much more open and finally we encountered a stream entering on our left. We stopped here for a bite and Mark and the two Pauls headed upstream to see how far it went. After about 100m Mark decided that discretion was the better part of valour where the prospect of cold dunking was not a pleasant one since footprints were apparent on the other bank.

After a nibble, Leigh led us downstream with the famous last words, "Last time I was here the water didn't go over my boots...". Five minutes later, having rung out sox and emptied boots we found a side passage that would have meant a dry detour! We continued on, finding some very well preserved bones of two small and one large (possibly possum?) animals.

Following the old stream passage using the slow shuffling crouch reminiscent of an arthritic chimpanzee (with cold feet!) we reached the second rockpile. This involved some very squeeze contortions that finally lead into a large chamber. From here we spent about 3/4 of an hour looking for new passage. However, after much squeezing, pushing, shoving and swimming (by Leigh) we could not find any further passage past the existing cairns.

Having not found anything promising we turned around. On the way out Mark and Leigh were keen to find the other entrance (JF228). After some very tight passages and sumps we turned around and headed back to the main passage, being relieved that we had left the ladder in place.

We reached the exit at about 3.30pm and Leigh and Mark wet off to find the JF228 entrance, whilst the two Pauls made their way back to the cars for much needed food and drinks. Cutting things fine, we were back at the gate by 4.58pm!

Thanks to those involved for a great first trip!

Paul Tabart

Kubla Khan - Mole Creek

September 2, 1989

Le Vieux finally paid his membership and got legal again, just in time for a nostalgic ramble through Kubla Khan! Since this particular trip had been planned way back in 1985 you'd think nothing could go wrong - but we didn't reckon the pilots doing their thing! So instead of a smooth, no-hassles type of trip, it ended up as a last-minute rush to get things together for our interstate colleagues.

Caving was pure delight in comparison with the organising. Apart from a few ultra-greenie grumbles over the buckets, brushes and hosepipes adorning the top end of the cave, the trip was just as refreshing as the many others over 25 years getting to know this cave. Of course, far too much time was spent photographing our way through and revisiting Dulcimer which remains fairly unspoilt. Pleasure Dome had been washed beautifully clean in the flooding a month ago so we had a pristine view. Sad to say, one more stalactite came off on the traverse of the Shuffle - I suppose its getting safer now that most (all) of the hazards are now in the stream-bed, together with several hand torches and two cavers dropped in the Alph River during the last quarter century.

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Judging by the condition of the cave, the permit system, although irksome, seems to be holding off the ravages of too-many cavers. That top gate is pure delight for double jointed troglodytes!

Bill Tomalin

September 9 - Making Others Envious: Welcome Stranger and Growling Swallet.

Those envied: Dean, Jos and Simon Morgan, Paul Tabart, Doone Pierce, John Polya, Thad Sasso and Nick Hume.

Impressing novice cavers is no easy matter these days, when "bungy" jumping, parapenting, and other such things are almost passe. Turning a journey to the Florentine Valley into a magical mystery tour requires stealth, indirect answers to direct questions, and a certain amount of laissez-faire leadership. All of these skills happen to reside in myself, as well as Dean, so a day's worth of uncertainty and excitement was guaranteed.

We started casually enough, entering Welcome Stranger from its upper entrance and working our way into what was a very dry initial section of "streamway". John and the Morgan family raced on ahead checking every lead and side-passage, forming their own separate group in the process. The "sedate" party were content to wander through the best of the decorated passages and ponder on the myriad colours and forms of speleothems, and of the nature of speleogenesis (very) generally. One inlet carried the bones of a small species of bat, false flooring and other hazards here restraining Paul's keenness to find a way on.

Both parties met towards the end of the cave, with stories of leads and other interesting "bits" being swapped before splitting up again. An unnecessary flattener was pushed through to the terminal sump by way of making things more interesting, though I'm not sure it was fully appreciated when the more normally used route was discovered later! Returning, one side-passage held promise of new ground and was willingly pursued until becoming tortuous. One member was unimpressed though, and hung around the entrance of the lead playing "red nose day" with some colourful mud. For this and other reasons it was a pity that no camera was taken into the cave.

With munchies at the cars came the realisation that it was still far too early to feel comfortable about heading off home. Going into the entrance series of Growling Swallet, instead, sprung readily to mind. It offering the most extreme contrast imaginable with the previously entered cave, and having the advantage of "rinsing" accumulated mud from our trog suits into the bargain!

The walk through the rainforest was very pleasant indeed, and it's funny how you miss these sorts of things normally because of the rushing around associated with just about every other sort of trip into Growling. This time leadership was necessary from up front, such things as handholds and "which side of the waterfall to jump into" needing to be pointed out to those new to the cave. The streamway was by no means in flood, but sufficient noise was coming from the crashing waters to make conversation (and even thinking for that matter!) difficult.

We waded and climbed our way into the Glow-worm Chamber halfway down to the first sump, lacking the time to do very much more. Returning by the various optional routes, a hoped for swim through the very wettest way out had to be abandoned because of the already sodden and cold condition of the crew. They surfaced looking moderately stunned, but I think this had more to do with the transition back to the sanity and quiescence of the forest, than to the fact of their survival! Mention was made of a jealous budgie (or was it "Burgii") who would be very envious of what

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transpired on the day. Probably none of the team could imagine what awaits in traversing the full extent of Growling Swallet, but maybe they will one day get a chance to do just that. Many thanks to all those who helped and participated.

Nick Hume

"Meme Chose" Just the Same Really!Khazad-dum 10th September 1989

D/fault Trip Leader: Stephen Bunton with party members Dean Morgan and Leigh Douglas.

Nick proposed the idea that this trip should be "Down the wet way!" but when a runny nose stopped him from coming it left me holding the babies. Had the deluge overnight got anything to do with it? Did he really think a tribe of participants down this penstock wasn't such a good idea after all? I certainly didn't and raced inside to the bookshelf and quickly memorised the numbers 23, 15, 8, 9, 5 (the pitch lengths for the Serpentine route down KD). With a few extra ropes and a minimal of rigging gear we headed off. While driving up to Maydena, my only regret in the rapid re-organisation of objectives was that I was still committed to caving in a wetsuit. This trip seemed more appropriate for Leigh who constituted the main reason for going... "I've got to get out of Hobart this weekend or I'll go mad!"

It didn't matter about the wetsuit as it turned out, Hewy having obliged nicely overnight - the stream was up (thankfully we weren't doing Plan A) and there was water flowing down the Serpentine Route. It was good to do a passage I'd never seen before and know nothing of the rigging details. Myopia dictated that we use a chock on the first pitch to back up the excellent thread on the floor. A bollard on the floor of the halfway ledge used as a rebelay made this pitch "user friendly". The second pitch was found to be a little untidy but a rebelay from a brilliant projection on the right hung the rope free of abrasive nasties and even down the next pitch. This whole set-up was a quantum-breakthrough-in-technique dilemma for Leigh who'd "never had to swing across so far before". (Lucky she didn't have to do that thing in The Chairman!) Nevertheless she coped and her mini-struggle proved inspirational for the cartoon at the back of this Spiel. (I'll have to go caving more often if I think up a joke a trip!) While contemplating navel at the bottom of this pitch I found a mould infested jumper, without anyone in it! This proved to be the other half of the inspiration behind my cartoon. If anyone belongs to this remnant then I've still got it. The next pitch has a rock climbing bolt on it, which when combined with a bollard on the opposite wall, makes a perfect Y-hang that was both easy to get on and off and allowed the rope to hang free of the water. A few short climbs can't be mistaken for the final pitch which is rigged from a thread behind a block where it touches the ceiling and a little bollard on the nose of the same block.

At the main KD streamway I did a quick look at the first streamway pitch before we all went up to the waterfall where it was pounding out of the roof. Dean tested the water, as it were, by standing under the torrent for a while and we were all glad that we didn't have to prusik up it to get out. We returned to the junction of the two streamways and took on board prusik gear and a few calories (or are they killer-joules these days??) before doing battle with gravity and that part of the water-cycle it controls. Rope packs became bloated pigs of saturated nylon but it was me who grunted through the not-unpleasantly-tight passage back to the surface. The wetsuit proved appropriate temperature-technology, although fighting the stretchiness of rubber with every movement is a bit like doing aerobics in a straight jacket! We crawled up to the Scaling Pole Pitch and with a handy 8m rope through the eyebolt, and a 3m tape at the ready tied to my pack on its haul cord to act as a counter weight we had devised a suitable retreat strategy. Soon we were

WHERE'S YOUR TRIP REPORT??

scrambling up to the entrance over the familiar dolerite boulders, to be greeted by the remains of a lovely day. A good day was had by all and they all lived happily ever after.

Stephen Bunton.

September 15 - Garth's Creek, Asteroid Pot, and (nearly) Servalane.

Those involved: Trevor Wailes, Dean Morgan and Nick Hume.

Rumours abounded the night before of plenty of rainwater making its presence felt in various karst areas. Contingency plans were drawn up, with the original idea of pushing one of Trev's "pet" leads in Servalane being left open. Arrival at a very inundated entrance soon "drowned" thoughts of getting very far into Growling Swallet, so plan B came into operation.

We surveyed up Garths Creek for later determination of where this river lies with respect to the known upstream extent of cave passage in Black River. Suspicions are that the latter follows a subterranean course going under that surface stream, and possibly receiving the separate waters of caves located well to the north. Anyway, the data is now being analysed by Stuart and computer, with results to be known shortly. The survey was terminated some 300 metres upstream of the log-bridge on the track toward Pendant Pot, and the final station is indicated by a cairn (below a blue-taped tree) on the eastern side of the river. Surface exploration was continued in a wide circuit encompassing both sides of the stream and well beyond our last survey marker, but fluvial sediments and eroded dolerite boulders seem to have claimed anything vaguely resembling a cave entrance.

A retreat was made to Asteroid Pot for a bit of a dig. This cave is known to be very close (both in lateral and vertical terms) to the upstream extremities of Serendipity, and if a way can be forced through from this entrance it would make for much easier access to that area of the system than the present option of Serendipity's entrance pitch-series. Asteroid is infilled with considerable breakdown, but there is sufficient draught coming through the pore-spaces between the rock to provide incentive to keep digging.

I was impressed by the minor chamber that had been opened up by Stef on the previous visit. Reaching it from the already excavated "well" requires a well-lubricated head-first entry down a confined tube of mud. A draught is still noticeable here, and was eventually tracked down as emanating from the lowest point in the chamber (to the right of the sink for the small quantity of water trickling into the cave). Digging through the rubble along the left wall increased the rate of airflow, and all of us shared in excavating downward for a metre or so. The in-fill material is mostly loose and clean, with just the occasional "lens" of clay and an awkward boulder or two presenting any difficulty.

The lowest point reached was in very loose material above a bed of clay. Possibly the clay represents a path for the lateral shift of waters towards entry to the corresponding aven in Serendipity, but uncertainties as to the precise direction of that aven with respect to this chamber could mean a lot more digging is still needed. So close and yet so far! Eventually tiring of the damp and cold, we retreated homeward to the consolation of a beer.

Nick Hume

IT COULD HAPPEN SO EASILY....

GOD I HATE
REBELAYS!

GRUNT!

HO HUM!

YOU'VE BEEN THERE
HALF AN HOUR!

NOW WHAT AM
I SUPPOSED TO DO?

I CAN'T HELP
IT IF YOU....

BUGGER!

I'LL FIX
YOU AND
YOUR FANCY
RIGGING!
BASTARD!

ROPE
FREE
!

WHAT DO
YOU MEAN

ROPE
FREE

?

Gordon