

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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FORWARD PROGRAMME....!

Soon after Easter: **SESAME POT** - good trip for not-so-new New Bods. Trevor Wailes is the bod to hassle about this one!

NIGGLY CAVE and others - Wherretts Lookout area (maybe also a trip into the far reaches of Growling Swallet for photography and rigging for a possible through trip (from above!)). See Nick, Bob, Dean, Stef, Trey and so on!

Other trips in the not too distant future: **JF341** - another try(!) - Bob Reid

WHERRRETTS LOOKOUT - scrub bashing / track marking and so on **plus** actual caving in what is becoming a fairly exciting area - see note above (don't forget to do your thigh training!).

CAULDRON POT - Nick Hume is doing some water tracing at some stage and will need people to go along for the ride (and help rig/derig the cave!) So if you want to see the new streamway, hassle Nick for more info..... May be other "good" stream caves involved as well.

In general - if you are keen to do a trip on any particular day/weekend, phone around the main bods in the Club (ie the Committee above) and hassle them to let you in on it!!

EDITORIAL

What happened to the hard days of the early 70's and 80's? Who knows - the answer is probably too much in the realms of philosophy anyway for this magazine! In any case, it looks like they are about to return.... Recent discoveries on Wherretts Lookout in the Florentine Valley have people staggering up that (not small) hill for close to two hours before reaching the site of the action. Many entrances and shafts have been found and with the reports of other unlooked at sites within that area, the prospects are very good for a deep (another Oz record?) system going into the south eastern extremities of the Growling Swallet system, or (and this may be "dreamtime" stuff...) beyond the known limits into another section of the "master cave", whatever that means.

So, get out your scrub-bashing gear, tone up those flabby thigh muscles and lookout for the Wherretts invasion! The only difficulty, apart from the size of the hill, is getting in and out within the ANM time constraints, but I am sure some arrangement can be made on that front to enable exploration to proceed apace. Stay tuned...

Stuart Nicholas

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, ELECTIONS and so on!

You may have noticed that some of the names have changed on the committee list above. If not, stop reading this for a minute and read the top half of this page. Despite this being nominally the March edition of the Speleo Spiel, the AGM has come and gone (this being written in April!).

The usual reports from the president, secretary, treasurer etc. will appear in due course, but in the interim the results of the elections are given below. Please update your phone number list appropriately.

As usual, the most important but perhaps dreaded matter of money rears its ugly head. For several years we have had the same fee structure but unfortunately the world at large hasn't and inflation is taking its toll. Hence it was deemed necessary to increase our fees across the board by around 12% to 15%. The fees payable are listed on the **renewal form** appended to this edition of the Spiel. This form is a new innovation (in my memory anyway) and the idea is that you fill it out and send it or bring to the Club **with your money** - that way we can update our address / contact list with fewer hassles than in the past. **BUT**, it relies on you to do the deed! Please fill out the form and pay as soon as possible. Should you have already paid, please fill out the form anyway, so that our address and contact information is correct. If we don't hear from you (ie **GET YOUR MONEY!**) within three months, your name will definitely be removed from the mailing list, so there! These new finds on Wherretts may require more gear to explore and that costs \$big and if you don't subscribe you won't hear it first in Australia's best caving mag!

THE NEW COMMITTEE (well, things have changed a little bit...):

President	Trevor Wailes	Librarian	Stefan Eberhard
Vice President	Dean Morgan	Cave Diving Convenor	Rolan Eberhard
Secretary	Nick Hume		
Treasurer	Leigh Douglas	General Committee:	Tim Sprod
Quartermaster	Bob Reid		Simon Morgan
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Another Obscure Record - Khazad-Dum

25 March 1990

PARTY: Rolan Eberhard and Stephen Bunton

When I first did Khazad-Dum it was via the Serpentine Route and back to the first pitch. Sometime later I did the Scaling Pole Pitch but realised that both these routes down the cave avoided the main issue of the Streamway until the six famous wet pitches. It wasn't until last year that I did the Serpentine Route and became excited about how much of the cave I hadn't really seen. About the same time Stefan became excited about KD "the wet way". It was an idea that inspired me and also Rolan, who had it on his hit list since returning from PNG. Over the weekends the

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pair of us procrastinated until this day when 32 degree temperatures were predicted and there was no excuse but to get down and shiver for the day.

We entered the cave through the JF5 entrance which is 8m higher than the trade route entrance. The entrance climbs are easy, gravity assisted until the first pitch signals the start of the fun. Rolan rigged the rope from familiar belays and then shuffled across to a bolt which hung the rope free to a spray soaked ledge and rebelay. We thought we were short of rope and so the traverse line was a little tight and I tried not to resolve the vectors as I slipped into space. (This bolt is just across from the entrance chamber where the stream plunges out of sight metres beyond The Scaling Pole Pitch.) Our economy efforts were in vain - we needed another 8m length of tat' to complete the pitch which was quite wet on this lower section. Rolan assured me the next pitch was even wetter but we could probably avoid it by descending a new pitch around to the left. A bit of gardening and sundry other community service was required before descent. Twenty metres down this pitch is a ledge and rebelay. (This ledge is level with and opposite the bottom of the scree slope at the foot of the "dry 90' pitch".) Again we had to resort to a 5m length of designer off-cuts to get to the bottom of this pitch. This was the original touchdown point of the first trip beyond the dry 92' and from here the water descends into a nasty looking hole that repelled Stefan at an earlier attempt. The route we chose was the dry pitch originally descended on one of the early push trips before the discovery of the 30' and 70' pitches. (Shorter pitches were easier to ladder.) The casing for the original Loxin was still in place but not the bolt and we had to place our own. This pitch had not been descended in close on twenty years and never by a party entering from the top entrance. It finished beside the waterfall at the upstream end of the classic piece of horizontal streamway and I couldn't resist a run down it for old time sake.

On the way I noticed a high level oxbow which appeared to bypass the low sections (former sumps) in the main streamway. Determined to investigate it on my return I managed to locate its downstream end on my return and sure enough it linked back to the lead discovered earlier. I was probably the first to negotiate that section of KD (Bunt's Bypass will suffice my narcissism). Rolan's light had snuffed out by this stage and we groped our way out almost in tandem. Somehow I managed to score most of the rope on the derig since I could see what to do with it and then had the means to see where to haul it to. The climb back to the entrance is a bit user-unfriendly under load. I didn't mind the burden too much - good training, I guess! For what? I don't know - since Rolan did most of the rigging, quite adeptly actually, from a selection of nuts. Once he's got it wired, to use a bad pun, he believes this trip will become a classic the most pleasant and deepest route to the bottom.

On the surface it was a warm afternoon which faded into a balmy evening. In the rainforest, at the entrance of the cave we reflected on the trip and realised we'd just made the deepest penetration from the upper entrance but that's an obscure record which won't stand for long.

Stephen Bunton.

THE 10TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF SPELEOLOGY

August 1989 in Budapest

Every four years the Union International Speleology (UIS) organises a get together for cavers and speleologists alike. This time it was held in Budapest, Hungary. If you're a conference groupie then this is an event not to be missed. With up to 1000 speleos from all over the world attending, it is a great opportunity to meet your international counterparts, old rivals and new contacts! The Russians I met were

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very friendly and would welcome westerners on their expeditions, and they have some mighty fine caves to explore, like in the Caucasus where there is a new deepie biting on the heels of Reseau Jean Bernard (1535 m = world's deepest cave in France). Along with Mexico, the Caucasus Mountains in Georgia are the hot spot for depth record caves. Further north in the Ukraine there is Red Cave, a 30 km long streamway with five sumps. Also in the Ukraine of course is Optimisticeskaya, the world's second longest cave at 157 km. Anyway, if anyone fancies a caving experience with a difference and the chance of exploring some very deep caves to boot, contact Timin Andrey (st. Engelsa, 6kv.61; Kiev, SU-252001, USSR) of Speleo Club KARST". They run annual expeditions to Georgia during July / August. Last expedition they pushed a cave to 1100 m, probably with wire rope technique!

Needless to say the Congress was a hectic week of lecture sessions, ghoulish parties, films and caving trips (the city of Budapest is built on cavernous limestone). Topics in the lectures ranged from the esoteric to obscure - I gave a talk on Tasmanian Cave Fauna! During the week in Budapest I did a night dive in Molnár János Cave in the company of Rob Palmer, Charles Maxwell (a South African cave diver who recently explored and mapped the world's biggest underground "Dragon's Breath" lake), Andy (another Pom) and numerous Hungarian guides. We parked in a street in town and there over the fence was a cave full of water. The visibility was excellent, it was only a brief 50 m penetration into this water table maze cave but it was difficult to get lost - the guide line being a 30 cm diameter water pipe, at points it being necessary to squeeze past this obstacle! Apart from the fact that I had the 'flu this was an enjoyable little sortie; I surfaced from the dive to blasting flashguns, but with a face mask full of green snot!

For me the Congress was an excellent affair, a tribute to the organising ability of our Hungarian hosts. The next Congress will be in China in 1993/94. Be there for Mega-Karst! Incidentally, lots of people (Americans in particular) would like to see a congress in Australia (heaven forbid!) - mooted for 2001 - so stay tuned....

Caving and Cave Diving in Hungary

After the Congress I went on a five day excursion to Agtelek in company of German cave divers Franzjörg and Barbara Krieg (they take their 6 year old daughter cave diving!) and about ten Hungarian guides.

Our leader was a nice man, Attila Kollár who drank and smoked and was a pioneer cave diver in this country. We went for a stroll through Baradla Barlang, Hungary's longest cave at about 25 km, though a portion of it extends underneath Czechoslovakia! It was a through trip of some 5 km of easy walking down big stream passage - the abundant decoration has been blackened by soot from "fire trees" used in the early exploration of the cave. We paused in a large chamber resplendent with massive formations, to be treated to a light show and the acoustics of Pink Floyd - Shine On You Crazy Diamond! The Europeans utilise their caves for more than just caving - they make good concert halls and speleo-therapy is a serious business (the cave atmosphere apparently cures bronchitis, hypertension, asthma and various other allergic conditions). The following day we went to dive the resurgence of Baradla Barlang, Baradla-Alsó. Entrance is through an adit and then along a section of streamway - some low roofed sections indicate former siphons, their roofs since raised by blasting. The first siphon is about 20 m long with poor visibility for all but the first diver. The Germans had their own double tank arrangements and everyone else had single tanks with a single regulator - the reason being the difficulty in passing heavy equipment through the rockfall to be negotiated to the next siphon. I had a back mounted 7 litre bottle, a free-flowing regulator and a single hand held torch, but at least I had a pressure gauge. Some of the Hungarians did not have one. In Hungary they sometimes use a long narrow 4 litre bottle which

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can be slung across the shoulders with a piece of 7 mm cord - bandolier style! One diver I noticed was using what appeared to be the gas tube supplied with Petzl carbide lights to connect his first and second stage. Another second stage I noticed did not have a rubber mouthpiece to bite on - just cold steel to suck! The Germans, and some of the Hungarians also, were using DIN screw mounts to connect the first stage to the tank valve. These screw mounts provide extra security in cave diving because the "O" ring and first stage cannot be displaced from the "O" ring seat on the tank valve after receiving a knock.

Anyway, the eight of us eventually arrived at the next siphon - also about 20 m long. I was given the privilege of diving first for the visibility and it was excellent - a blind amphipod hovered in front of my mask as I moved slowly along, "finger-walking" and "shuffle-kicking" to minimise silt disturbance. The line curved along the wall and around a corner as the sump passage did a dogleg - some line rebelay might have been useful here. I surfaced and not wishing to linger in the freezing water I paddled a further 20 m to dry land. Sándor came through next and not seeing me in the sump pool he assumed I had become lost somewhere in the sump - he dived back immediately and told Attila who instantly gained a few extra grey hairs! (Needless to say I had signed a declaration of indemnity beforehand, claiming I was using my own tested equipment and also a double system.) Meanwhile I felt my way gingerly back along the line. In zero visibility I had both hands firmly on the line, shuffling along with fingers pointing the direction out. Attila was more than a little glad to see me emerge safely. I was just glad to get out of the cave! It was another night of heavy drinking...

The next day was another caving through trip - in Béke Cave which is another long cave (8.9 km) close to Baradla, and which used to be part of the same system. A small hospital is situated at the tunnel entrance leading into the cave proper where there are speleo therapy rooms decked out with beds. After that it is the mud and then the streamway which continue for perhaps 4 km as constant wading (sometimes to the armpits) through gour pools in cold water. The 15 people in our party, moving always as a single group meant that it was a slow trip. Finally we reached a steeply ascending tunnel dug in the solid rock with concrete steps and a rainstorm on the surface.

The next day was diving again, in Rákóczi Barlang known also as Esztrámos. I felt more confident about doing this dive, with double back mounted 5 litre bottles, that is until I attached one of the regulators only to find the "O" ring had a disturbing tendency to have hernias and vent large quantities of the tank contents. The other regulator did not have a pressure gauge so the one third rule involved a bit of guess work! This cave has no natural entrances and was breached by mining activities - our very large party sauntered down a couple of hundred metres of mine adit, across a conveyor belt and then into the natural cave - spectacularly adorned with pristine cave coral formations. A 12 m steel ladder drops directly into a large crystal-clear lake where there is a pontoon to gear up on. I swam around in this large underwater cavern, admiring the submerged formations and superb clarity of the water. From 12 m down I could clearly see the pontoon and the people standing on it, looking down on me as I look up at them. I dropped down to -20 m for a brief foray (I was forbidden to go deeper than this) where the chasm drops to depths in excess of -45 m; beyond this remains unexplored. Attila and Franzjörg joined me and we followed a line along a deep canyon to surface in an airbell resplendent with formations. Esztrámos is certainly a beautiful dive. That night we had a barbecue in the forest and everyone got drunk!

The final Hungarian cave I visited was called Kossuth - a resurgence with yet another gate then adit leading into the streamway proper. It ends at a siphon which has been dived to a constriction with strong current at 30 m depth.

Perhaps one other dive worthy of note (which we didn't visit) is Héviz - a large thermal karst spring surfacing as a deep lake where there is a constricted tunnel leading into a blind chamber. The water temperature down here is very warm. A few years ago there was a triple fatality in this cave - the exact reasons for the tragedy are still unclear.

The final dive I did was in a lake near Budapest - the upper surface waters were a balmy 23°C and teeming with plant and fish life; below the thermocline (at about -11m) it was desolate and cold (8.4°C).

I learned a great deal and thoroughly enjoyed my caving and diving experiences in Hungary. The excursion was extremely well organised and I was overwhelmed by the Hungarian hospitality. I extend many thanks to Attila Kollár, Erika Bázlik, Susan Lovassy, "Shoppi", "Sándor" and my other guides (apologies for the probable misspelling of names!).

Bulgaria

This was another post-Congress excursion, organised by Dr. Yavor Shopov of the Bulgarian Speleological Society. Before it all started I arrived in Sofia only to get mixed up with a wild gypsy party! After that it was off into the countryside with North American cave biologists John Holsinger and Lyn Ferguson. First stop was Iscrec Cave in the Ponor Mountains area - this is the largest karst spring in Bulgaria (without a constant debit). More interesting was the fact the road had been built right across the top of a natural arch forming part of the entrance. Next stop was Temnata Dupka situated in the Lakatnik Valley. "Temnata Dupka" translates as Dark Cave!! This was an interesting horizontal maze system, though heavily visited and containing a good deal of rubbish, especially broken glass! Nevertheless, a nice section of roaring streamway was teeming with troglobites.

Next day started with Ledenika (Ice) Cave near Vraca where just inside the entrance the temperature drops to -25°C in winter and produces ice speleothems. Beyond a stoopway the inner part is an impressive decorated chamber, being a tourist attraction and also utilised as a concert hall. Yavor gave us a suitably impressive rendition of the acoustic qualities of this chamber (albeit it in Bulgarian!). Of interest to me was the finding of terrestrial troglobites living in abundance in sections of passageway heavily trafficked by tourist, provided with artificial lighting and a distinct lampenflora problem!

In the afternoon we visited seven more caves in the Karlukovo Karst area. This included another Temnata Dupka (there are quite a few caves of this name in Bulgaria!), but this one had several deep archaeological excavations made in the entrance which had revealed 300,000 year old human remains and artefacts. Most spectacular was Prohodna, a section of huge remnant tunnel 42 m high - the road ran across the top of this feature. The other small caves visited included Cherdjenitsa, Kontrabasa (this had troglobites and a dead goat in it!), Bisernata, Bezimenna and Zadunenka.

Following day we surface-trogged the biggest karst spring in Bulgaria, Glava Panega, before moving onto Sueva Dupka tourist cave which was nicely decorated of course.

Everywhere Bulgaria was characterised by spectacular karst and spectacular caves. Many thanks are due to Dr. Yavor Shopov and my other Bulgarian hosts including Dr Petar Beron.

Stefan Eberhard

THREEFORTYONE (JF341)

DECEMBER 1989

Participants: Lew Mitchelmore, Gavan Duffy (VSA) and Dean Morgan.

After trying to decide whether or not to go caving the day before going down to Precipitous Bluff or whether to keep the caving gear packed away, the decision was made by a phone call from Gavan. Nobody had a permit so the cave decided upon was JF341 as it wasn't too strenuous. I picked up Gavan and Lew and we were off to make some big discoveries.

The first few pitches were done on SRT although I think it is easier to do with ladders because of the mud. The main pitch of 40 m was rigged with Gavan's brand new Bluewater rope brought over from Melbourne for the PB trip. I descended first and soon realised that the rope didn't touch the bottom! After thinking about the hassle of changing into prusik gear on the rope, I looked down and decided that it was possible to swing across near the bottom and maybe free climb the last few metres. Arriving at the end of the rope it was apparent that was not possible so I untied the knot in the end and abseiled the extra length thus obtained. By this stage I was only about 2 m off the deck so swung across over a flatter bit of ground and let go of the rope. After a few milliseconds I hit the deck with a big thud and the sound of shouts from above wondering what had happened. I explained that our spare 10 m rope needed to be brought down and tied to the end of the main rope - I sat down and watched with amusement as Gavan had to pass the resulting knot only 2 m from the ground. He has obviously had a lot more practice at it than I.....

Once down we shed our SRT gear and headed off since Lew knew the cave well and could catch us up later. Upon arriving at the first crystal pool we noticed some new footprints had crushed the crystals in a different place from those made during the initial exploration. We went into the newer extensions and looked around near the second pool. The water levels were very low and the pools didn't look as spectacular as usual. After 15 minutes or so we hadn't seen Lew so went looking for him, thinking he may have had some trouble with the knot but he had been looking around some of the older parts of the cave. Lew then took us to "the end of the cave" and a spot that hadn't been looked at as much as the rest of the cave. We arrived at a large mud pool that I thought was the end of the cave, but we turned left through a rift, up a short climb then went exploring. I spotted a large borehole and climbed up to it. After a few metres a steep muddy climb could be avoided by climbing left and bridging a wide rift. Once at the bottom I went to the right only to find the chamber we had split up in. Going the other way and down through a hole in floor took me to a muddy climb and down to a spot where a stream emerges from a sump, does a 180° turn and disappears into another sump. Both of these sumps looked like short U tubes but were only about 1 metre wide and fairly shallow. I had a couple of goes at getting through but couldn't work up the courage to free dive them. There is much more water in this stream than the main JF341 stream so it would be interesting to know the source and destination of this stream as it seems to be heading away from the rest of the cave.

Coming out I met Lew who said that Gavan had apparently disappeared up a climb and hadn't been heard from for a few minutes so I figured it must go somewhere and climbed up myself. At the top Gavan could be heard returning so I waited for him and he reported that it continued on for a fair while but he had reached a spot which no obvious way on.

It was then decided that we had had enough at this stage, so headed out. Fairly soon after we were back on the surface talking about how muddy you get in the entrance series. In the end no startling discoveries were made but an enjoyable day was had by all.

Dean Morgan

NIAGARA POT (JF29)

January 6, 1990

PARTY: Steve Bradford, Mark Bryce, Bob Reid, Simon Morgan and Dean Morgan

We all arrived in the Florentine Valley keen to explore and survey a new section of cave I had found on a trip here before Christmas, but mainly to try and let Bob use his new bolting kit which he had just bought! The previous trip had been almost dry but today extra layers of clothes were deemed necessary after seeing the amount of water tumbling into the entrance of Niagara. Everyone headed off to the bottom of the cave without any hold up, except for myself checking a passage halfway down a pitch and stopping progress for a short time.

From the "bottom" chamber the group headed into the new section which drops down a hole in the right hand wall well up the side of the chamber away from the waterfall. Some steep climbs lead to a pitch that was found on the previous trip. At the top of this pitch I could hear water and noticed the sound was issuing from a small rift in the wall. Mark had a look at this and reported a big pitch, but we decided to look at original pitch first. I arrived at the base of this 25 m pitch and it didn't look very promising, but after climbing over a couple of boulders, a steeply descending rift came to light. This was downclimbed for about 10 m to where a small stream came in on the right hand side and followed for a further 5 m to where it degenerates into a rockfall. A further 10 m down it was blocked, although a draught was still present. No way on from here could be found. Heading out I met Mark and Steve coming down the rift, so we went to look at the other pitch. Mark descended this 25 m first with Bob and myself following. This promising looking large chamber unfortunately choked off after another 3 m and the only other lead went into the original pitch.

So we headed out to look at one remaining lead about 4 metres up a wall just before the pitches. Bob's bolting hammer finally became useful with Mark suggesting that it be used to "garden" a crack in the wall and then traverse across. This was done successfully, but the passage blocked off after only 5 metres. The plan to survey the new extension was abandoned as it was already getting late. On the way out I noticed that the rock filled rift / squeeze which led into the new extension from the original "bottom" chamber only had one rock left in it! Later I was informed by Simon that all the rocks had dumped themselves on Steve's head as he was going out! Finally a retreat was made from the world of darkness to the world of sunshine after devouring Bob's Mars Bar. Niagara Pot is now an estimated 200 to 210 m deep.... but still needs surveying! Is anyone keen??? [Editor's note: subsequent surveying has revealed that the cave is now 222m deep.]

Dean Morgan

HURTLING HOBBITS, HURTLING SPIDERS, BOB'S BOLTS? & A BIT OF MONTY PYTHON!**HOBBIT HOLE (IB15)**

Monday 29 January

HOBBITEERS: Bob Reid, Dean & Simon Morgan.

"Mrs Nigger Baiter has just exploded!!", exclaimed Dean. This was the typical conversation style for this Monday morning and by about 11am we had all decided it was going to be one of those days.

At the top of the forty metre pitch there were no decent belay points apart from two scungy, rusty old bolts which were the wrong size anyway. By this time Bob was just about jumping with joy at the thought that he may actually get to use his brand new bolt kit.

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When Dean asked if he was feeling energetic, he looked so stunned that it looked like he was about to plummet (notice they do not so much fly as plummet!!) down the pitch after fainting. Anyway, he soon settled into a steady routine of THUD's and "AAAgh - my thumbs" while Dean and I waited. After finishing the result was a solid looking bolt casing, which is on the LHS when facing down.

As Dean began to descend he mentioned that I could have his car stereo (which consists of a hole in the dash, such is the brotherly love in the Morgan family) and his Compact Disk player. Bob looked thoroughly shocked at this revelation and said with some dismay... "I didn't even know he had a disk player", while Dean disappeared.

After a few minutes Dean was apparently at the bottom of the pitch and Bob began his descent. Judging from his oohs and aaahs I made my first conclusion of the day - "The first pitch is impressive". As I soon discovered, my conclusion was correct. Reaching the bottom, I could see no nice way on and just as I was starting to worry that the "tight bit" as it, Dean pointed and said "Look what's next". I said nothing and Bob just looked stunned and mumbled something about compact disks and the consequences of failing bolts!

Dean headed off through the tight bit and Bob followed. As usual I brought up the rear. When I reached the bottom of the "tight bit", Dean had already gone down the next pitch and judging from the water going down this, I made my second conclusion of the day... "The second pitch is wet.". Once again I was correct. The top of this pitch proved to be a minor struggle as it is moderately tight and at the same time goes around a corner. At the bottom of this pitch a crawl under a wall leads to the third and final pitch. Upon arriving here I found Bob in his usual sitting stance while Dean was in his usual "Rigging the pitch" stance. As usual Bob was second and I went down last, succeeding in pulling one of the redirections off the wall on the way.

At the base of this pitch I was suddenly transferred from the bottom of Hobbit Hole, Ida Bay, to the centre of the Bible, with Bob playing the lead role, at the last supper. There was food everywhere!!... cakes, biscuits, chocolate, sandwiches and every other food type imaginable. Dean was nowhere in sight and had apparently gone down a short pitchy-climb type thing. When he returned, he reported that the serpentine passage went for a short way until closing down to only a few centimetres wide. Bit of a pity really, as some people had high hopes for a connection with Exit Cave.

Bob offered Dean some chocolate, obviously remembering an earlier trip which taught him it very unwise to be on the rope below Dean while carrying chocolate. Dean said no thanks, he had some of his own. It was only then that I realised the full potential of Dean's talents, as he reached into his pocket and proudly presented... a spare battery for his Petzl Laser light!!

The last of the great magicians I called it while Dean just cursed and munched away on the chocolate Bob gave him. He then switched to carbide as his electric light was dead and began the prusik up. For a change I was next up, and Bob brought up the rear. At the top Dean gave me his pack which was full of rigging gear and said that I may as well head out and meet them on the surface. Knowing that this meant I didn't have to help derig, I heartily agreed. At this point Dean also looked at another lead that he had been told of by Arthur, but that also went nowhere.

At the top of the first pitch I noticed a strange looking spider sitting on top of the chock. Upon taking a closer look, it appeared to think that I was a talent scout for the circus, as right in front of my eyes, it did a death defying leap from wall to wall (about 1.5 m) complete with a triple somersault and half pike. I then

named him "Hurtling Harry The Harassed Spider". Later, on the surface I noticed another of these jumping between logs.

The bushwalk back was, for a change, interesting, the highlight being an upside down tree complete with roots in the air and branches hanging upside down, scraping the ground!!

Simon Morgan

WHERRETT'S LOOKOUT

10 February 1990

Party: Leigh Douglas and Nick Hume

A follow up trip to explore two promising looking swallets we had discovered on a bush bash some months ago. Both are high up on the contact in a "pocket" of gullies on the south side of Wherretts. A locality approximately overlying parts of the known extremities of Growling Swallet (ie River Lethe area).

Getting there is by no means easy, though several different lines of approach have been tried. Cleverness doesn't pay either, for this time we chose a short side road and various dragways off the main Florentine Road, seemingly a shorter route, only to end up in the thick treefall and fields of fern. Two and a half hours later we arrived at the entrances, bypassing the first (Bunyips Lair) in favour of the more pleasant looking Niggly Cave, some hundred metres further west.

The entrance is located at the top of an impressive section of limestone canyon, a small stream spilling over a headwall marking the changing rock type. Some of the waters meander into north-bearing vadose cave-passage, while the overflow gradually sinks into streambed lower down the canyon. The passage leads to an apparent blockage of the cave stream at a point scarcely out of daylight. However a draughting hole at head-height goes over the top of this obstruction and drops away to a 12 metre pitch on the other side.

We rigged the pitch from a small thread back from the draughting hole and on the left wall. The rock was clean and smooth, lacking much in the way of natural belay points and some pitons might have been handy to have. The pitch dropped into an elongated chamber, narrowing down due to rockfall at its further end. Shifting a couple of blocks opened a slight squeeze through to some low narrow streamway beyond. Generally this wasn't too bad, requiring just a bit of stooping and sideways shuffling on occasions and with a consistent moderate draught throughout, seemed reasonably promising.

Pacing out a hundred metres of passage, we came to an eight metre pitch opening onto a large chamber below. This was rigged from a couple of poor natural anchors, Leigh waiting above with a spare rope (in case of failure!) while I descended for a quick "recce". A downclimb after the base of the pitch led into a 15 metre high aven, a wide but inaccessible lead being visible half way up its walls (and heading away on a northerly bearing). At floor level, more of the narrow canyon awaited. I persisted with this for about 150 metres, with no sign of it ending. The passage was narrow, but clear, with only a couple of bits of rotten false flooring "getting in the road". the strength of draught at the furthest point reached is undiminished from that at the entrance of the cave and the impression gained is that only a structural disruption of the bedrock would prevent the passage from going on *ad infinitum*. Total extent of the cave is about 300 metres.

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Mindful of the time, I gave up on continuing further. The cave is probably worth a return visit sometime, preferably with an earlier start given the amount of bush-bashing required to get there. We derigged the pitches and returned to the surface at about 3 pm.

A direct route downhill was chosen, both to explore new ground and hopefully to find an easier route to the area. Some 50 metres down the gully below Niggly Cave, we found a doline harbouring a cave entrance on its northern side (Casamassima). A mudslope led to a precarious edge overlooking a twenty metre pitch. Inspection with a light revealed a large chamber / aven, perhaps 30 metres in total height and 10 metres in diameter, and the sound of water (probably the overflow waters from Niggly Cave gully) falling to its base. No great draught was apparent in the largeness of the entrance, but it looked promising all the same.

Much further downhill, we came across a blind valley hard against a cliffline. The tag JF398 was found on overhanging rock above a boulder blockage of the (at the time dry) stream course, the obstruction issuing a howling draught of cold air. Probably the long lost hope of Andrew Briggs and / or Chris Davies, described from their wanderings in this area many moons ago. We didn't have time to look at the thing, other than noting another nearby draughting hole in the base of the cliffs.

Some yellow tapes ere found on the set side of this doline as we continued back towards the car. Choosing to go downslope rather than try to follow the few tapes, we were soon resident in some particularly horizontal scrub. Eventually we broke through to the road with a great deal of relief.

Nick Hume

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAVING

26 February 1990

PARTY: Trevor Wailes and Dean Morgan.

Once again the Servalane trip was the plan and nothing was going to stop Trev or myself today. We even each had permits to make sure that we would get into the concession area!

The Southern Outlet was tackled without any problems as there was not much traffic about this early in the morning. From the top of Mt Nelson the descent was made into Hobart with some good views of the city on the way down. Just before the traffic lights a Sunday Tasmanian boy (Paperous Sellicus) was spotted and then we waited at the lights before could turn into Macquarie Street. Once the lights were green we were off down the main road. After we had passed Motors we were soon passing the front steps of St Davids Cathedral. We both couldn't help but notice the abundance of churchgoers (Psalmus readercus) which was not unusual I suppose for a Sunday morning. From here we passed Franklin Square and down past Maloneys. The Sheraton Hotel could be seen from here as we followed the main route towards the old railway station.

This was where progress was brought to an abrupt halt as our vehicle was struck by mechanical failure and we pulled over to have a look. The problem was deemed unfixable outside the Red Lion Tavern so the slow crawl commenced back to Kingston. This ended up not taking very long at all and we were soon back at Trev's place but, alas, it was too late to change cars and have another attempt. The rest of the day was spent trying to catch a few Melanoma's and generally enjoying the rare views of Hobart sunshine - something cavers seldom see!

Dean Morgan

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GROWLING SWALLET - SERVALANE (part 7 ??)

4 March 1990

Party: Trevor Wailes and Dean Morgan

It was a case of deja-vu as Trev and I set off to try and get to Servalane. It was about the seventh trip that had been planned but it looked like we were going to make it today! We were rushing things a bit because of the time limit, but upon arriving at the ANM gate we were told that we didn't have to be out until 6pm which gave us the extra hour we might need.

Once at the cave a good pace was set by Trev as he headed off down the Entrance Series and up into Rescue Aven. I was feeling the pace (and wheezing a lot!) because of a recent cold. Once into the Destiny Passage a short distance we climbed up into Hyperspace Bypass, a passage I had not been able to find on a previous trip to look in this area. We had a break at the aven behind the Black River Pitch and then we were up through Federation Free Space and at Razor Aven. I was feeling much better by now as I had cleared out my system and then we were off into Servalane... The first 30 metres or so isn't that tight, just a bit awkward and we were soon where Space Rat Alley connects into Servalane. The pack was left at this spot and from here on it gets tighter as the rift is followed at various levels for a while until you get to a spot where you climb up high and drop down into a parallel rift. this rift was just as awkward as the other one and after a lot more grovelling and a few short climbs, we arrived in a fairly large chamber. Trev said that he was the only one to have come this far in 1987 and he didn't have time to look around on that trip so we separated and began looking. There were a few large passages going off this one but all choked off except for one which had a small stream in it. I followed this upstream and it kept going in fairly large passage, but as we had come to look at the end of Servalane and time was limited, I left that passage until we started out, if time allowed.

I met Trev back in the chamber and he said he had found a way to miss a couple of the mud crawls on the way out. From here we went through Servalane to Trev's 1987 limit again and continued on. After some more grovelling came out into a large chamber and things were looking good. At the end of this chamber a small crawl went off but after only a short distance it completely choked out. We looked around at every nook and cranny trying to find a way on but alas, we could not find one! We started the retreat from here, looking at every lead hoping there was something we had missed, but soon found ourselves back in the original chamber. Time was getting a bit limited at this stage so we decided to head out. Apart from some lost time in Space Rat Alley trying to find the way on and Trev having an attack of terminal cancer forcing me to carry the pack out, the retreat was made without any hassles and we were soon outside the cave. We ended up not needing the extra hour after all as we were out of the gate at exactly 5pm and after driving back to Hobart, five Aspirins and a few beers at the Kingston pub, Trev's cancer seemed to have miraculously cured itself. It's a pity the Trev's lead in Servalane didn't go, but there is still plenty of scope for new stuff in the area.

Dean Morgan

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