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Although the date is now August 1993 it does not detract from this issue's worth. After having laid around in a cardboard box for three years waiting for finished surveys and notes and being forgotten and ignored, here it is!

This is the second part of the last expedition to Precipitous Bluff, South West Tasmania, by the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Unfortunately a section survey of Bauhaus has not been assembled but hopefully in the not too distant future one will appear in a new look Speleo Spiel, ie, within the next three years.

Pitch details of Bauhaus system are omitted from the fold-out survey. Information on pitch lengths can be gleaned from the narratives of each cave and from information in the appendix of karst index on page 17 onwards. Hopefully an overall line plot showing the relationship between Bauhaus, Ceuva Blanca and Damper Caves will also appear at a later date.

Cover photo: Surveying at the top of Trubbles pitch, Xymox.

Photo: Nick Hume

Trevon Wailes
Sec.

 * Tasmanian Caverning Club *
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 * 1989/90 Precipitous Bluff Expedition - Special Spiel Issue *

Introduction to Part #2

The following is a direct continuation of the 1989/90 Precipitous Bluff expedition narrative begun in the previous issue of Speleo Spiel (April, number 258).

Sunday, the 7th of January: Tree Root Cave (PB33) continued.

Stef and Rolan descended the 15 metre pitch to a chamber, continuing on over a 9 metre climb on the far side wall. Beyond was a 7 metre pitch, and this led to a terminus at a "rabbit-sized" hole taking a slight draught. The sound of a streamway could be heard coming from the other side of this obstacle, but there was no simple way of getting through. It was surmised that this cave could connect through to Swine Pot (PB16), which is nearby on the immediate north side of the walking track.

A survey was made of the cave prior to the pair going over to Bauhaus (PB6) to look at one or two remaining leads. They went through the main Bauhaus entrance chamber, to the rockfall area (Middle Order) near the link to Persephone streamway. A climb into some tall meandering canyon followed a circuitous route to the large collapse chamber at the base of Trubbles Pitch in Xymox (PB7). This canyon also links back to Bauhaus main chamber, via a small rift passage leading off the northern wall at the base of New Order shaft. They were then able to freeclimb up Trubbles Pitch, and back out to the surface. (Source - Stefan Eberhard).

Stuart, Trev, and Gavin numbered the new PB35 entrance to Gaping Grin, which they entered to complete a survey of the previous days finds. They continued down Black Mariah Pitch, derigging by pulling the rope down behind them. Rubble bridges in the rift were traversed to a loose talus slope, and a 5 metre pitch was descended. On the right hand side at the base of the drop, the downclimb was made to the Bauhaus streamway and the survey tied-in at station #37. Stef and Rolan were encountered in Middle Order, the larger group exiting together. (Trevor Wailes).

Jim and Nick went up the Summit Track, past the prominent hillock on the right hand side that marks the top of the ridge dividing New Order and Xymox gullies, to where the limestone is seen again above the mudstone interruption (250 metres above sea level). They left the track and headed north, finding a small slightly draughting entrance after only fifty metres or so. This led to an uninspiring pitch within a narrow rift and wasn't descended. Two rusted krabs and steel headers were found protruding from the mud outside. The initials, "AJD" and "JMJ" were embossed on these, presumably some of John Dunkley's and Julia James' gear borrowed for the 1973 expedition. No documentation of such a cave is found among the reports for that trip, and so a number tag (PB36) was placed at the entrance for later identification.

Jim climbed uphill from this point, through the field of dolines sighted on the 6th of January. They both contoured near the 300 metre level for a kilometre, the scrub and treefall becoming seemingly worse. Eventually a retreat was enforced down slope, to where they found an exploratory route made the previous year by Stephen Bunton. This was followed south to the entrance of Persephone (PB17). The gully above that cave was ascended past the route leading to Xmas Cavern (PB18) and Enone (PB19), and a large entrance was sighted among a field of bracken fern. This was tagged PB37, on a tree on the south rim of the doline (due to drill failure). A handline was used to descend the 10 metre pitch, but heavy sediment infilling had claimed the elements of a low passage leading off on the southern side of the drop.

They then headed further uphill to a prominent area of treefall, where the biodegradable-taped route, made the previous day on returning from PB38, was intersected. PB38 was tagged on a tree overlooking the north side of its entrance. (Source - Nick Hume).

Monday, the 8th: Diving upstream Cueva Blanca (PB4). Surveying leads inside the entrance of Damper Cave (PB1).

Stuart, Trev, Gavan, Stefan and Rolan, lugged diving gear through Cueva Blanca for one more try at connecting through the siphon to Bauhaus. Such a connection would add about 500 metres to the whole system, and introduce the possibility of a more major enlargement should Cueva be eventually linked to Damper Cave.

At the sump in Black Curtains streamway the water was found to be a bit murky, probably from the previous days caving activity on the Bauhaus side. Stef dived in conditions of poor visibility, feeling his way to the end point of last years explorations. Here he placed a weight on the guideline to prevent it from drifting into the constricted rift above. Continuing over a deeply silted floor, another "tie-off" was made to a knob of rock. A few metres beyond this, he reached an inclined rock, or rift (or something!), possibly corresponding to the tight canyon Nick had tried to negotiate from the Bauhaus side (dive of the 30th of December). Obeying the "one-third rule" of air consumption, the guideline was cut (left in place) at this point, and a retreat made to the airspace after a submerged time of 20 minutes.

Total distance penetrated into the sump was 35 metres, thus there must only be a few metres needing to be completed to connect the two caves (the straight-line gap between the two sumps is 40 metres according to the survey). With better visibility and a streamlined diving kit, the final connection should be an easy proposition when the next opportunity arises. Many thanks to the sherpas who took part. (Source - Stefan Eberhard).

Some leads still remained to be explored and surveyed inside the entrance of Damper Cave. Jim and Nick began by resurveying the major inlet stream leading north from station #2. The data from the previous year having been lost for some reason or other. At the final aven, Jim climbed up 8 metres to an impassable vertical constriction. Nick attempted the second last aven, moving through a hole in the wall to a point above the previous passage. Entering the roof was a small inlet tube floored in dolerite

cobbles, but this could not be pushed very far at all.

Surveying was then carried out from back at station #2, towards a series of leads estimated to be below various connection possibilities with overlying Cueva Blanca cave. The major westerly-bearing dry passage was followed to a draughting crawl. This intersected a trunk passage, the left hand branch of which was pursued to a small mud-floored chamber. One climb on the right hand side led to a drop overlooking the banks of the main Damper streamway. A climb on the far side entered a sloping inlet passage, bearing south westerly and presumably passing over the top of the main streamway, which continued up to a stalactite blockage. Cave spiders in the roof here hinted at a nearby surface break, but only a very slight draught could be detected.

A survey was then completed back to the entry crawl into the mud-floored chamber. The right hand trunk passage was followed through a series of gour dams. This continued into some very low horizontal passage, but wasn't pushed due to the risk of damaging a "forest" of stalactites further ahead. One final retreat to camp was made, marking the end of caving exploration on this expedition. (Source - Nick Hume).

Tuesday, the 9th: Departing from Precipitous Bluff.

Stuart, Trev, Rolan, Jim, and Nick, flew out to their cars (and a bit of culture shock) at Southport. Three flights were required to evacuate caving gear, latrine, etc. Stef and Gavan opted for the scenic walk out over Precipitous Bluff and Southern Ranges to Ida Bay. In contrast to the exodus from the previous years expedition, the pair encountered three days of glorious weather.

Acknowledgements.

The Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage are to be acclaimed for supporting the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, by allowing access to the sensitive and magnificent area associated with the Precipitous Bluff karst. Special consideration for other bushwalkers, and particularly for the wilderness itself, was a feature of the planning and execution of this expedition. The considerably greater detailing of cave, karst, and cave-fauna of the area, that occurred over this trip, is a suitably rewarding outcome for the departments assistance.

Thanks also go to Stefan Eberhard, Nick Hume, and Trevor Wailes, who did much of the organisational groundwork leading up to the start of the expedition. Stuart Nicholas provided excellent computer support, deciphering complex (often scarcely legible) cave and overland survey notes, and putting them all together in a comprehensible whole. Without Stuart's expertise and enthusiasm we would still be documenting caves by very laborious methods. Graham Bird, the seaplane pilot, helped immensely with his skills in landing at such a remote site. Thanks too, to the many cavers who took part in this and previous "PB" expeditions. Particularly Gavan Duffy from the Victorian Speleos', whose companionship and contribution to exploration were outstanding. The enjoyment of participation amply justified the effort.

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Appendix: TCC Cave Numbering Summary for the Precipitous Bluff Karst.

There have been quite a few additions and updates made since publication of the previous summary-list in Speleo Spiel #253. Most cave finds had number tags emplaced at their entrances unless otherwise indicated here. These tags represent survey station links between overland and underground data, and most are tied-in to a master survey system referenced to the point of Damper Creek's entry into New River Lagoon (a permanent reference station is located at the nearby campsite).

PB1 - Damper Cave, found Tasmanian Caverneering Club 1960. A large outflow cave on the plain/slope junction, just north of and within sight of the PB summit track. Initially explored for c. 400 metres in 1960. Surveyed and explored to 1000 metres by Southern Caving Society expedition in 1973. Terminating sump dived into *Stygologia* continuation on TCC trip in 1988, yielding total of 1415 metres of passage. Entirely resurveyed on 1989 trip, (including *Stygologia*), with present extent standing at 2km Tied in with (master) overland survey.

PB2 - unnamed, found TCC 1960. Choked outflow cave at base of a ridge south of one bearing PB summit track. Source of tributary stream joining Damper Creek, and originates from Quetzalcoatl Conduit stream via PB10 swallet. Tied in with overland survey.

PB3 - Quetzalcoatl Conduit, found TCC 1960. Large outflow cave in a glade to the immediate south of PB2 ridge. Explored and surveyed for c. 1000 metres by SCS expedition in 1973. Final near-siphon pushed for several hundred metres by TCC in 1986. Return exploration and survey in 1988 yielded 1106 metres of new passage (see survey in Speleo Spiel #252). Some addition to this was made on 1989 trip. Present total length 2050 metres. 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 by TCC in 1986. Additional surveying on 1989 trip. Sumps halting further exploration. Tied in with overland survey.

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

PB6 - Bauhaus, found TCC 1986. Large sloping entrance on north wall of a massive doine. Principal entrance of complex system, including known entry points of *New Order/Xymox/Persephone/ Weena/Aikea/Deep Purple/Mezzanine/PB35*. An ad-mix of very old upper level phreatic borehole development, deep middle-level vadose canyon, and lower level active streamway. Total surveyed extent of system is 3500 metres. All entrances tied in with overland survey.

PB7 - Xymox, found TCC 1988. An entrance on western side of next doline east of. Ten metre entrance pitch gives access to borehole passage, leading into *Bauhaus* via a side passage. Surveyed to

station #75 in that cave. Tied in with overland survey.

PB - 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 appears in Speleo Spiel #243. Tied in with overland survey.

PB9 - Nick Cave, (untagged) 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 appears in Speleo Spiel #243.

PB10 - unnamed, found TCC 1960. Formerly allocated PB2a. An inflow cave taking waters immediately downstream of Quetzalcoatl Conduit. These waters resurge at PB2 a short distance away. A brief section of deep streamway which is unsurveyed.

PB11 - (Divers Entrance), found SCS 1973. An entry point to Quetzalcoatl Conduit at the upstream end of a surface break into that system. Located in plain/slope glade about 200 metres south east of PB3. Tied in with overland survey.

PB12 - (Pendulum Palace) found SCS 1973. Another entry point to Quetzalcoatl Conduit, some 50 metres up the slope from PB11. Tied in with overland survey.

PB13 - unnamed, found TCC 1988. A large horizontal entrance in an embayment off the glade, some 70 metres south east of PB11. Large entrance chamber with small stream meandering through breakdown, heading inward to the slope 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 - Swine Pot, found TCC 1988. Small horizontal entrance under limestone bluff in first gully off the north side of the PB summit track. Fully explored and surveyed on 1989 trip. Narrow entrance pitch of 10 metres leads down to a constricted 20 metres of horizontal development, at a total depth of 25-30 metres. Tied in with overland survey.

PB17 - Persephone, found and surveyed by TCC in 1988. High draughting entrance in next gully north of PB16 (and at same contour). A 60 metre shaft, plus two small pitches, gives access to large and well decorated *Superstraw* passage. An active lower level streamway connects through to Bauhaus (PB6) at *Middle Order* chamber. Some additional exploration was achieved upstream on the 1989 trip. Surveyed length to connection point is 538 metres. Tied in with overland survey.

PB18 - Xmas Cavern, found and surveyed TCC 1988. Very large and sloping entrance in the next gully north and uphill from PB17. Thirty metre handline leads to pitch of 10 metres. Finishes in blockage at -60 metres. Tied in with overland survey.

PB 19 - Enone, found and surveyed TCC 1988. A large elongated shaft some 50 metres south west of PB18. The 25 metre shaft leads to pitches of 5m, 10m and 15m, finishing in a blockage at -60 metres. Tied in with overland survey.

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

PB21 - Aikea, found TCC 1988. Massive shaft of 10 metres diameter to the west of Bauhaus doline. Explored and surveyed on 1989 trip. A 32 metre pitch drops down to a vegetated floor, intersecting an old phreatic borehole trunk passage. One side connects into Bauhaus cave via the *Kakaku* series of chambers, while the other leads into the very large passage development of *Psychomachia*. Tied in with overland survey.

PB22 - Gaping Grin, found TCC 1988. Draughting entrance with short pitch, to the south west of PB21, which intersects large borehole passage. Explored and surveyed on 1989 trip. Several pitches and other leads connect through to the Bauhaus streamway, as well as Weeno (PB23), Deep Purple (PB25), Aikea (PB21), Mezzanine (PB26), and PB35. Tied in with overland survey.

PB23 - Weeno, found TCC 1988. Strongly draughting 30 metre shaft at base of cliffline south west of PB22. Explored and surveyed on 1989 trip. Entrance pitch of 14 metres, and several other pitches and leads, connect to Bauhaus streamway, as well as to Gaping Grin (PB22) and Mezzanine (PB26). Tied in with overland survey.

PB24 - Wombat Wallow, (untagged). Additional entrance to Quetazlcoatl Conduit. Tied in with overland survey.

PB25 - Deep Purple, found and surveyed by TCC 1989. North east of Weeno. Entrance pitch of 24 metres connects through to Gaping Grin (PB22) and Mezzanine (PB26). Tied in with overland survey.

PB 26 - Mezzanine, found and surveyed by TCC in 1989. Small hole located above eastern wall of large entrance-alcove of Weeno. Connects to both Weeno and Gaping Grin, and is the easiest route to main chambers of those caves. Tied in with overland survey.

PB27 - (Not Skylab), found TCC 1989. Large overhung flat-floored recess in cliffline immediately west of Weeno. Chamber does not continue out of daylight. Possibly of archaeological significance. Tied in to overland survey.

PB28 - Skylab, found TCC 1989. The third and smaller recess immediately west of PB27. Low passage at rear of entrance slope continues for only 15 metres to a slightly draughting squeeze. Tied in with overland survey.

PB29 - (unnamed), found TCC 1989. Located on immediate south side of apex of Summit Track ridge, near to level of plain (ie about 50 metres from Quetzalcoatl Conduit Track). Small entrance can be downclimbed to short section of low stream passage. Unsurveyed.

PB30 - (unnamed), found TCC 1989. Located 50 metres south-easterly (120° magnetic) of point on Summit Track (180 metres ASL) where limestone visibly comes into contact with overlying mudstone. Incised rift entrance with slight draught. Unexplored.

PB31 - (unnamed), found TCC 1986. Located on the eastern wall (and near the head) of the gully leading down to Bauhaus and New Order. Large rift entrance in a 30 metre high cliff face. Sediment blockage just inside entrance. Unsurveyed.

PB32 - (unnamed), found TCC 1986. Located 40 metres west of PB31. A 20 metre shaft in the face of a slope. Unexplored.

PB33 - Tree Root Cave, found and surveyed by TCC 1989. Located uphill to the south west of PB32. Entrance leads to 15 metre and 7 metre pitches. Well decorated, including extensive roof penetration by tree roots. Finishes at tiny hole with sound of streamway from somewhere beyond. Tied in with overland survey.

PB34 - Jigsaw Cave, found and surveyed by TCC 1989. Located on south side of ridge line running down to PB2 and PB10. Sixty metres of well decorated passage reminiscent of Psychomachia and Kokoku (enlarged phreatic-based fossil development) in Bauhaus System). Exploration halted at base of climb. Tied in with overland survey.

PB35 - (unnamed), found and surveyed by TCC 1989. Located to the north of Gaping Grin. A 4 metre downclimb connects through to a point high on the western side of the main chamber in Gaping Grin. Tied in with overland survey.

PB36 - (unnamed), gear left at entrance suggests discovery by SCS expedition in 1973. Not previously documented so was numbered in present series for identification. Not explored or surveyed here.

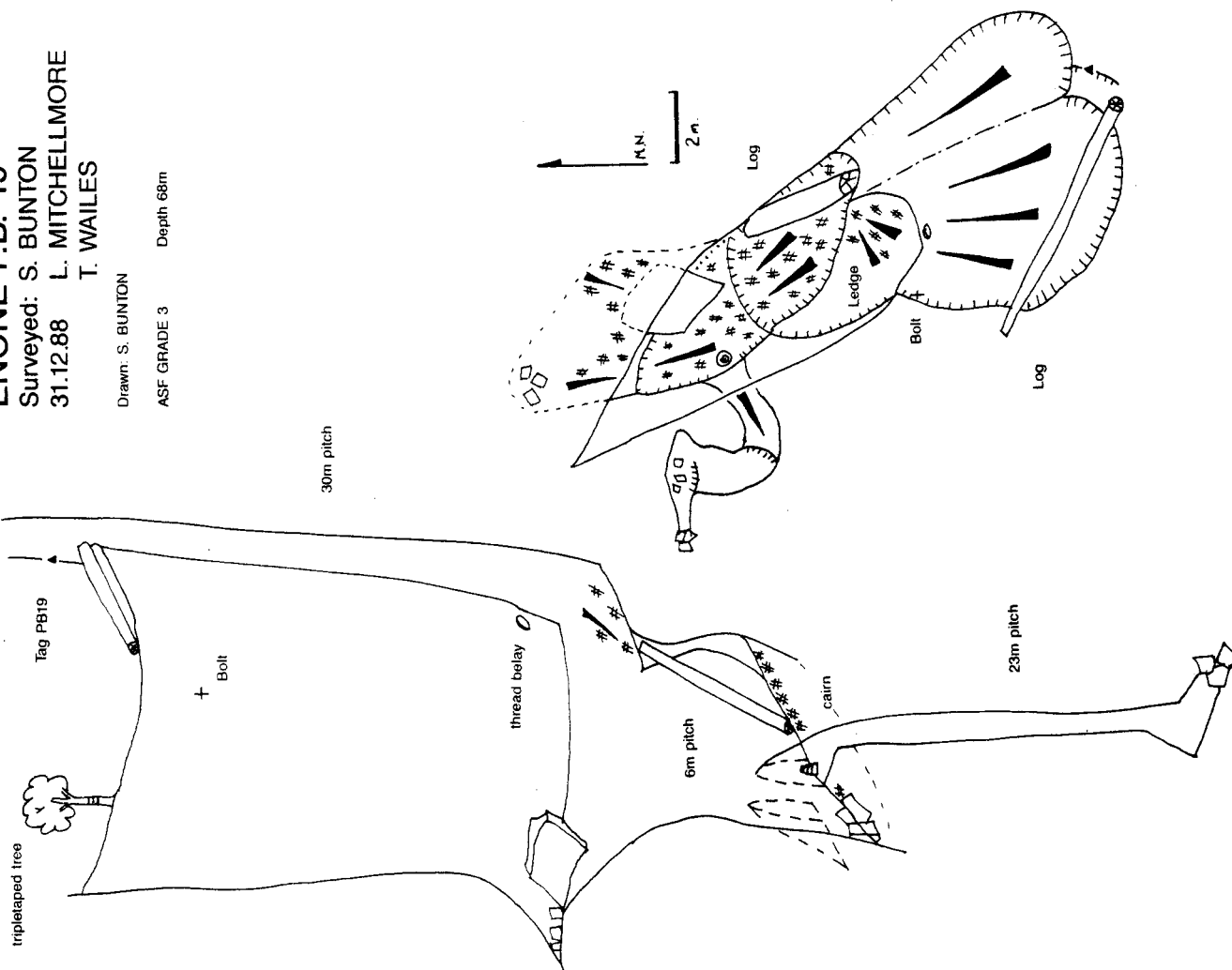
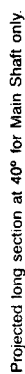
PB37 - (unnamed), found TCC 1989. Large doline located in a field of ferns beyond the top of the gully above Persephone (PB17), and about the same contour as Xmas Cavern. Cave passage blocked by sediment below the base of a 10 metre entrance pitch. Unsurveyed.

PB38 - (unnamed), found TCC 1989. Located above the area of Xmas Cavern (PB18), at 250 metres ASL. Entrance is in the face of a steep slope. Entrance handline of 10 metres, and a downclimb, lead to a high chamber (with daylight hole) and blockage at -25 metres. Unsurveyed.

The 200 series numbers arising from the Southern Caverneering Societies 1973 expedition to PB are not included here due to lack of space. Details regarding them are essentially unchanged from that time, and can be referred to in the cave summary featuring in Speleo Spiel #253 (October 1989 issue).

Surveyed: S. BUNTON
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T. WAILES

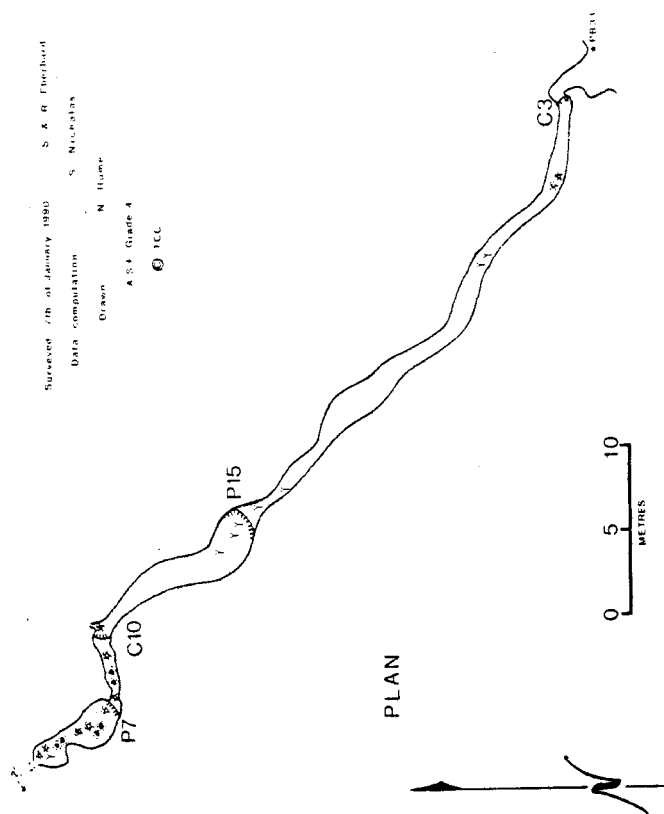
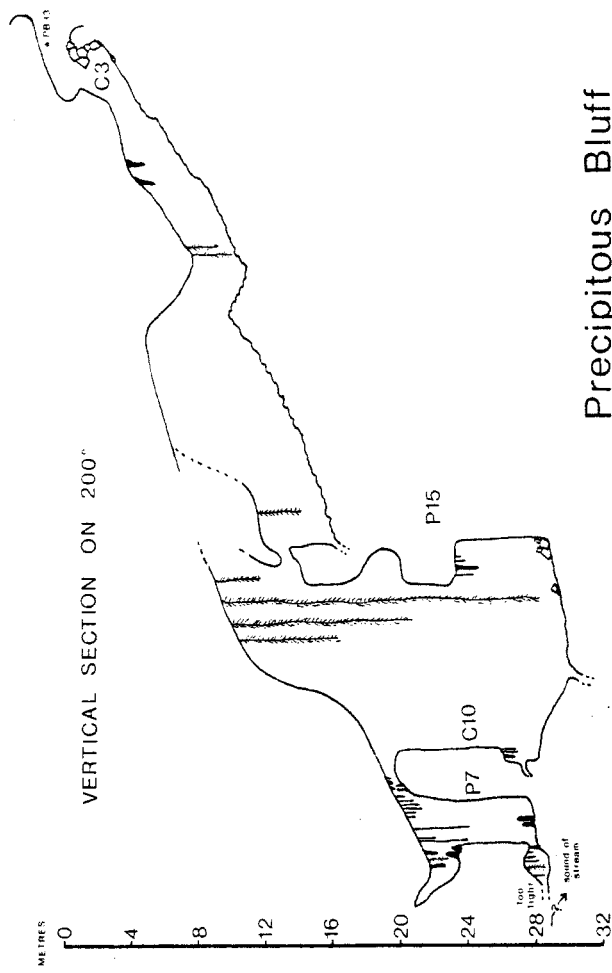
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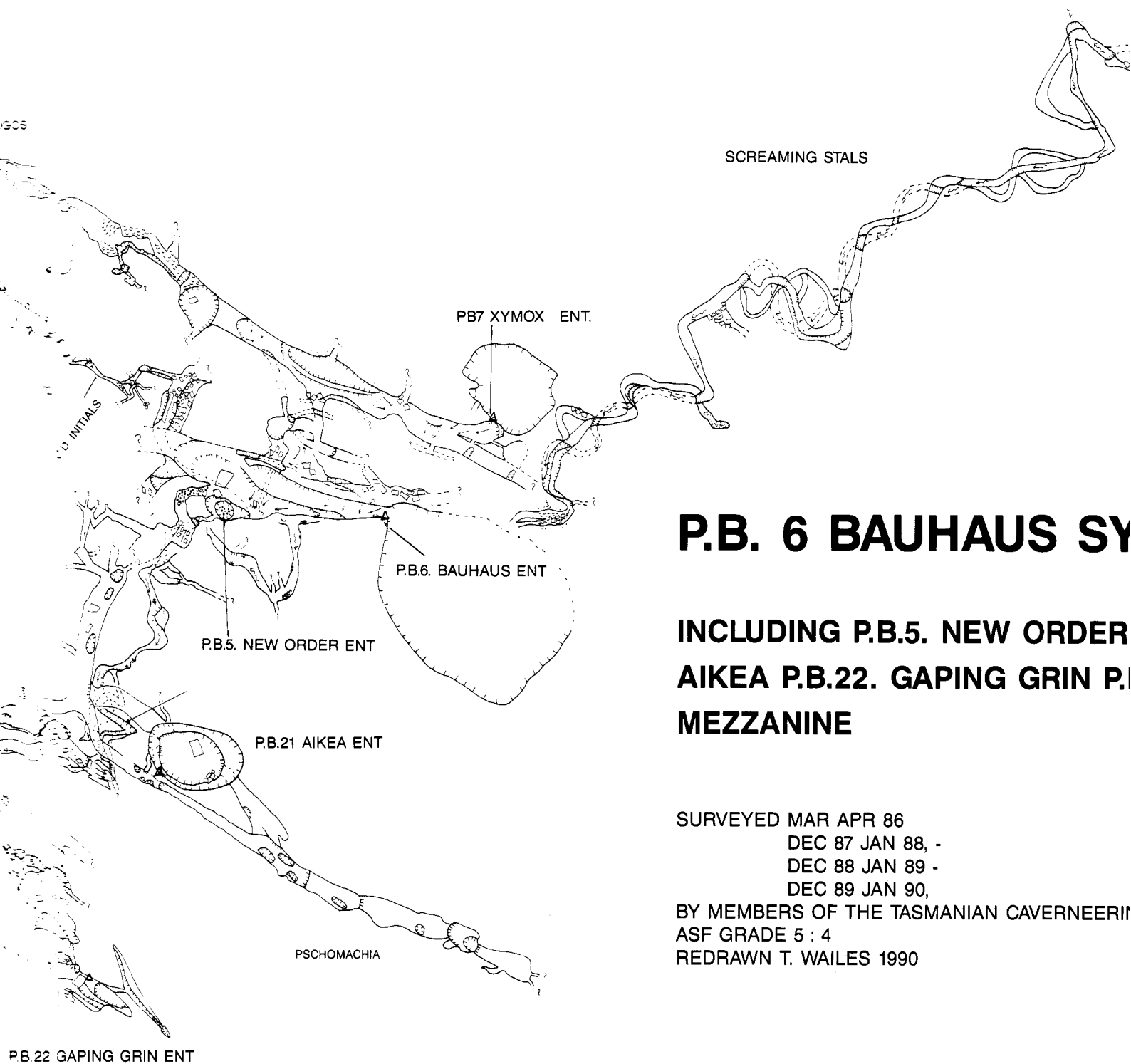
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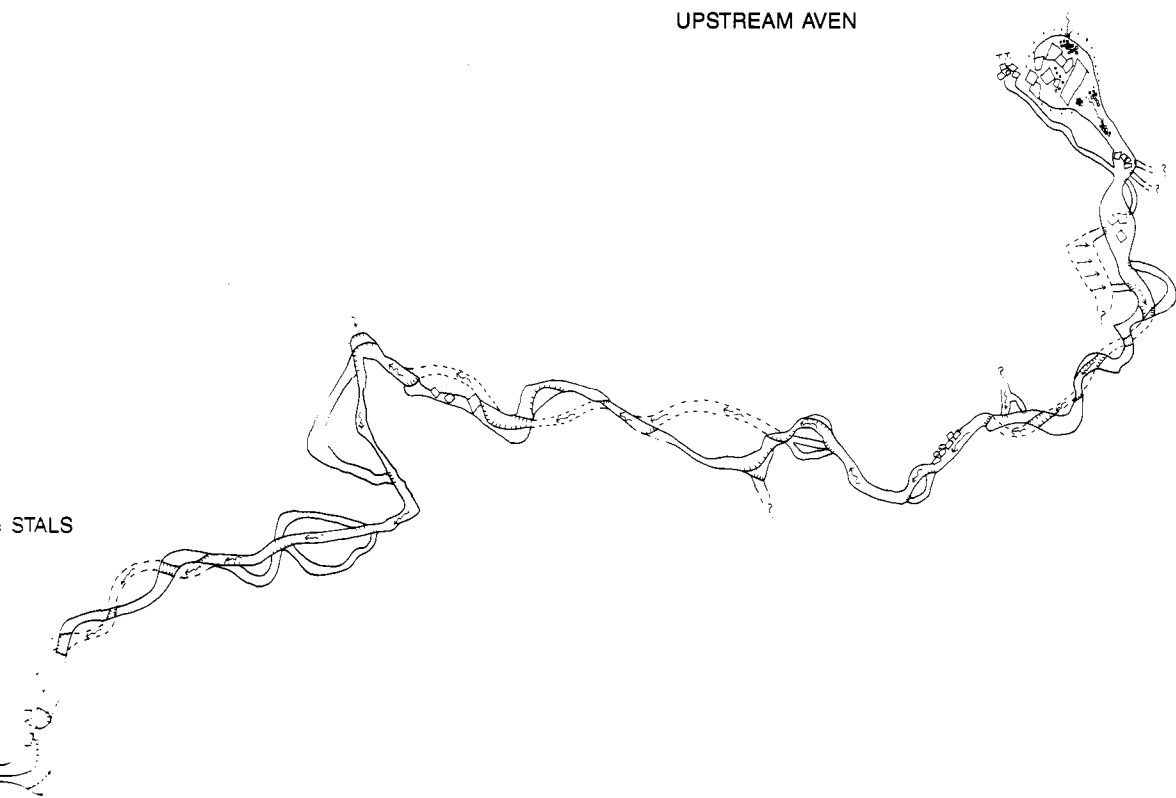
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