

SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club
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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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FORWARD PROGRAMME....!

[No room this month - you'll have to go to the next meeting (June 20 or July 4) to get yourself on a trip!! In any case **SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE OVERDUE - PAY UP NOW!!!**

EDITORIAL

Big cave discoveries, floods, rescues - all in all a fairly routine month for TCC! However all is not quite as serene as it should be. The Benders Quarry situation at Ida Bay will shortly come under review again when the investigations currently being carried out by Mines and PWH are completed. As a group of concerned individuals we must act as soon as possible in order that further cave and karst features are not destroyed, directly or indirectly, should the quarry extend south through the saddle as planned. Some of Australia's most important karst heritage is at stake.

Should the quarry extend through the saddle, a considerable number of individual caves will be destroyed and the effects on the Exit Cave system (the main water collector and drainage for the entire area) are unknown but certainly significant and most deleterious. Exit Cave is Australia's longest known cave and has major speleological importance in areas such as biology, geomorphology and hydrology. The existence of a quarrying operation in a World Heritage Area is also somewhat farcical and incongruous. Should you need further information, contact Stefan Eberhard, Nick Hume or Arthur Clarke - these people can provide more detail on the problems likely to occur if the work proceeds as planned.

To have your say on the matter, contact (write, phone, FAX) any or all of the following politicians stating that the quarry must not be permitted to extend south through the saddle. Addresses are in the telephone directory.

Michael Field - Premier: phone 303464, FAX 240617

Michael Weldon - Minister for Resources and Energy: Phone 306177, FAX 238033

Judy Jackson - Minister for Parks, Wildlife and Heritage: Phone 303730, FAX 238125

Michael Aird - Minister for Environment and Planning: Phone 302965, FAX 238922

Ros Kelly - Federal Minister for the Environment: Parliament House, Canberra

Stuart Nicholas
Editor - Speleo Spiel

STOP PRESS....!

The recently found (last November - see article below) cave on Wherretts Lookout in the Florentine Valley named Niggly Cave (JF237) has been surveyed to 372 metres in depth (if you stand in the stream)!! Not bad for a fairly small and scungy entrance! The pitch series was surveyed on 27 May by Rolan Eberhard, Judy McNeall and Dean Morgan and produced the figure above, together with spectacular 85 and 103 metre pitches. They reached a short section of large stream (presumed to be from Growling Swallet's Mainline / Dreamtime about half a kilometre away...) sumped at both ends. As well as all this, Niggly is over 1.7 km long. Does this mean Tasmania (err, sorry I meant Australia) has three virtually equal deepest caves?? How do we cope with that? Find a 400 metre system perhaps!! As Trev said, "Its the best thing I've seen up there for years! It is!"

CLUB EQUIPMENT STORE

The club's equipment is now located at the residence of Bob Reid, 21 Haig Street, Lenah Valley, phone 280983. All ropes, rigging gear, lamps, helmets, SRT rigs etc are held there.

For the system to work at all effectively, the following few points are important: PLEASE give adequate notice of gear requirements (especially if lamps are needed) and clean and return all equipment as soon as possible after use.

To maintain the equipment in good and safe condition (and when necessary replace items), it is necessary to charge a small fee for all gear used. This means that the club can keep a reasonably comprehensive and useful store for everyone.

RATES (per day, used or not) ARE:

	Member	Non member
Lamp & hat	\$3.00	\$4.00
SRT rig	\$5.00	\$10.00
Ropes, traces etc	\$2.00	

There is a container in the gear shed for money - make sure you pay up!!

SUBSCRIPTIONS.....

Yes, I know its boring, but with cave finds like that noted above, have you got that **niggly** feeling about your TCC sub?? The end of June is the absolute cut-off date.

This is your last chance...

Time is up the troglobite said.
Pay now, or never again be led,
up the path and under the hill
with TCC's Speleo Spiel!

And with poetry of that quality who could avoid paying? If you don't, there may be more! The renewal form is appended to the back of this issue - if you haven't paid, fill it out and send it to the Club ASAP. After all, you miss out if we stop sending you this action packed / esteemed / great / dynamic / etc. publication....

ERRATUM

In Speleo Spiel 238 (June 1988) a survey of Dismal Hill Pot is shown as IB 130. The actual number should read IB 128. The cave is located downhill from Great Expectation (IB 129), previously IB X9. Both caves are located on the south side of Marble Hill. IB130 is Gastropod Grotto, a small cave behind the old Blayney's Quarry, east of the Moonlight Ridge / La Perouse track (just beyond point where the track squeezes between a limestone bluff and a stringy bark).

CAVING IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

This was a week long pre-congress excursion, well organised by David Havlicěk, one of the Czech team who visited Mt Anne. [Incidentally, the Mt Anne expedition was presented as a paper at the Congress.] For me, this excursion began with a sixteen hour train journey from Zurich, through West Germany to the border crossing at Cheb and then onto Prague. At Cheb the train was stopped while the police checked everyone's documents. Outside the train was barbed wire, spotlights, men with dogs and men with guns!

In Prague were the rest of the team which included Swedes, Greek, Japanese, North Americans, Czechs and some more Australians. Michael McBain, Gabrielle Grusovin and Dale Appleton of VSA.

The excursion started with a visit to Bohemian paleokarst - Miocene caves and karst formed in a tropical environment but now deeply buried in soil. Some ancient surface features were visible in the face of a quarry and finding caves here generally requires shifting a lot of clay! We saw a small cave and adjacent spring which once had a hermit living in it and then subsequently had a church built on top of it. The cave now has a prayer stone and various artefacts as well as a crypt for monks. Nearby is the Koněpruské Show Cave - an interesting complex of passages developed on three levels. This cave boasts opalised speleothems (which can be spectacularly demonstrated with a fluorescent light), fossil remains of animals and man and more recently the remnants of a mint where a man once lived and forged himself lots of money. So rich did he become that the King even paid him a visit! This tourist cave, like many of the tourist caves I saw, had a distinct lampenflora problem. Our itinerary was action packed as next we were off to Karlštejn Castle, itself built on a pinnacle of karst.

Next was a bus trip into the Bohemian Paradise where there is some spectacular Mesozoic sandstone features including Krtole pseudokarst cave and Hrube Skala, the Rock Cities and Dragon Rocks.

Also in this region is Bozkovske Cave formed in dolomite. It is a tourist cave, originally breached by miners - it is a maze of passages and tunnels with crystal clear water table lakes which have revealed some underwater sections. Just like a Tasmanian dolomite cave, it is cold, narrow and sharp!

The Moravian Karst has some of Czechoslovakia's best caves and there is a long history of exploration and research here. Rudicke Swallet is a fine sporting streamway cave of several kilometres length. Entrance is normally through the fossil upper level entrance and then down 90 metres of fixed steel ladders (longest 16 m) to the fast flowing streamway. There follows pleasant meanders with wire ladders up into a roof tube which conveniently bypasses a siphon. There is plenty of nice formation, including a massive old wooden ladder installed on a flowstone cascade but solidly calcified into the very feature it was designed to scale! A telephone cable stretches the entire length of the cave, which is prone to flooding. The water itself had the odour of organic pollution and after some hours of immersion it tended to produce slight skin irritation.

For most cavers Rudicke Swallet ends in a large chamber followed shortly by a siphon. There were various bits of junk strewn throughout the cave - some brought in by the stream and some by cavers. Broken glass was a hazard near the entrance.

The waters of Rudicke reappear in Býčí Skála (Bull Rock Cave) and these two caves were connected through extended diving operations in this decade. A series of medium length siphons interspersed with long sections of air passage were explored utilising a base camp beyond the first few siphons in Bull Rock Cave. This cave is controlled by a group of amateur cavers who have their club hut just outside the entrance at the base of a high cliff. Solid steel blast doors lead into a large chamber which had been levelled and set in concrete. This natural bomb shelter had been a German factory during WWII. Further inside the cave our guides showed us various objects including a Christmas tree and two plaques - one commemorating a visit by some monarch and the other the separate drownings of two Czechoslovakian speleologists. Arriving at a section of deep water there is a small jetty and 4 person punts to ferry across by pulling along a steel pipe. Otherwise the cave is easy walking, although I was intrigued by the continuous length of permanently installed compressor hose which accompanied us for more than a kilometre into the cave. It's purpose became apparent upon arrival at the major siphon where a 100 metre long tunnel had been drilled around it. With industriousness, determination and heavy machinery the Czechoslovakian cavers continue to extend their caves in this fashion!

The Moravian karst holds the country's longest cave, the approximately 33 km long Amateurs Cave. Much of this large spectacular system was originally explored by divers but now a dry access tunnel has been driven into the far reaches of the system where it approaches to within a few hundred metres of the surface. Beyond the windlock doors and in the cave proper is a speleo-therapy room. We were guided through parts of old upper level borehole containing some good patches of formation.

Moravia has vertical systems as well (<200 m deep) which includes the Machocca Abyss - a huge 140 m deep shaft on the hill which drops directly into the base level cave system. Whereas cavers tend to go down holes we witnessed some rock climbers (2 Czechs and 2 Americans) utilising this feature to do a quite extreme climb out of it! Further on I was finally able to use my vertical gear in Hlubocký Závrt pothole. Once again there was a local caving club hut situated close to the entrance, which was a trapdoor opening into a 20 m shored shaft fixed with platforms and ladders. This eventually intersected a narrow shaft system which had required extensive blasting to get through the narrow bits. The highlight was a very exposed wire walk across the top of a 40 m shaft. On the other side and up above was a small hole which could be attained via a vicious squeeze (one guy took 20 minutes at it) or, by bridging up above the wires (and exposing yourself and your cowstail to a potential Factor 2 Fall) and then squirming in! This circuitous route then took us up a couple more avens and then back down into the main 40 m shaft. Every shaft in this cave had been descended or scaled and everything was permanently rigged, often with steel ladders - including one 12 m job which flexed backwards rather alarming-

ly! Our guides were two keen young lads who had totally homemade SRT gear (generally Petzl imitations). We exited up rather springy 8 mm rope ladders, choosing not to use the self belay line because it was so positioned as to be virtually unusable anyway!

Caving in Czechoslovakia is an interesting experience and the hospitality of our hosts was quite stupendous. I express many thanks to David Havlicěk, Petr Zajícěk and my other Czechoslovakian guides.

Stefan Eberhard

CZECH THIS GOSSIP.....

Stefan sent in these notes on the Czech 1990 NZ Speleo Expedition

The Czechoslovakian cavers who visited Tassie in 1987 were in New Zealand earlier this year and had a most successful trip. The team found the largest underground room yet discovered in NZ, altogether 5 km of new cave and the 7th deepest system in NZ at 400 metres deep!

THE FINDING OF NIGGLY CAVE (JF 237) ON WHERRETT'S LOOKOUT

November 18/19, 1989

PARTY: Leigh Douglas and Nick Hume

TCC invaded the Florentine Valley in force this particular weekend with trips to Pendant Pot, Gormenghast (diving) and Slaughterhouse Pot/Growling Swallet. Leigh and I fancied a bit of a post exam workout (power walking!) on the slopes of Wherrett's Lookout rather than strenuous underground grovelling to see if we could discover anything new in the way of entrances.

Leaving from Lady Binney Corner, a thrash northward brought us to the undescended 20 metre shaft discovered the previous weekend (200 metres below the contact and north of Chrisps Creek's southern branch). Another small entrance was found in the same doline, but there was very little draught in either to inspire much in the way of confidence. Continuing the same bearing for several hundred metres, the northern (major) branch of Chrisps Creek was encountered, heralding our arrival in the "pocket" of karst under the "gap" on Wherrett's eastern side. Known is the fact that directly below this point is the River Lethe area (ie Frownland/Tiger Mountain) of Growling Swallet; hence there is some scope for finding a "backdoor" to that system.

West of the point of encounter with this branch of Chrisps Creek we met a change in vegetation type signalling the limestone contact with a shaly overburden. Not far away, the sound of a waterfall could be heard and a beeline to it revealed a cave entrance (Bunyips Lair) taking a fair amount of water from below a several metre high outcrop. Very wet, a passage led down to a crawl under a perched boulder underneath which a pitch of several metres dropped away to the floor of the a chamber. An interesting find that is definitely worth a return with some rope and SRT gear. There seemed to be something of a draught present, though it was difficult to be sure in the general spray and conundrum.

Westward of this first find and somewhat lower down the slope, the base of a limestone cliff was followed to a transecting canyon leading back up to the contact.

LAST CHANCE - ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS overDUE...

Overhung in places, the gully was an attractive feature in its own right. Interestingly, it was fed by a waterfall at the cliff apex the water from which disappeared completely over the course of 50 metres of its channel via ground percolation. Exploring the base of the waterfall revealed a quite sizeable entrance among the treefall (Niggly Cave). Some half of the quantity of water from the cascade was being diverted down the entrance slope to a choked sink, though a head height hole in the rift obviously led over the obstruction and a thrown rock indicated a chamber-floor several metres below the other side. Again, a good draught held promise worthy of a return visit with vertical caving gear.

continuing west, the vegetation became a little unreasonable. The "feel" to the place wasn't overly inspiring and no further karst features or streams were found. Returning to the major creek branch, we followed the waters down to the plain. A number of dry valleys were seen entering the watercourse along the way, one of which contained an impressive entrance. This constricted to a narrow rift within the daylight zone and was negotiated to the floor of a small chamber. Beyond lay a short grovel into yet another room, terminating in rifts blocked by limestone rubble. Absolutely no draught present despite numerous tight fissures running off in various directions.

The waters of the creek gradually dissipated on its southerly route over the plain, the fossil course ultimately leading back to the Florentine Road. The going here can't be recommended: leafy growth over fallen tree trunks was truly irksome. Two antique (and empty!) beer bottles marked our arrival at the old Adamsfield Track and nearby we encountered Chrisps Hut - a mostly demolished structure, only notable for its proximity to Tom Hallams Cave (as described recently by member, Max Jeffries). Fairly tired by this stage, we were grateful to break out of the scrub only some 200 metres uphill from the cars.

The following day Leigh teamed up with Stuey Nicholas and company for a Slaughterhouse Pot through trip. Faced with the prospect of lugging diving gear into Gormenghast as an option, I chickened out in favour of an easier half-day of yet more bushbashing. Starting from the end of the northern branch of Chrisps Road, the sink of the southern branch of Chrisps Creek was found after only a couple of hundred metres of regrowth-thrash. The creek was followed uphill to the general area of the contact, estimated to be around the 800 metre contour at this particular locale.

Prominent limestone cliffs on the northern side of the creek contain numerous small holes and fissures, one of which was found to bear the number tag JF 230. Slightly further upslope is a glade with a small untagged draughting rift-entrance leading onto a pitch. I marked this with triple fluoro-pink tapes, though it wasn't overly prepossessing. A ridgeline was scaled to the 800 metre level, crossing the (pink taped route) to the swallet Leigh had found some weeks ago. The nearby mega-doline was skirted on its upper side, where several small creeks fed into an infilled rift entrance. The entrance slope was downclimbed for a few metres to confirm a hopeless blockage. This and a neighbouring doline-type cave entrance were (pink) triple taped.

The contact area here is bisected by a fan of streams coalescing to form the major Chrisps Creek branch. Each of these streams is marked by a small waterfall at their arrival on the limestone contact zone. There is considerable sealage of the karst surface with glacio-fluvial debris and no noticeable sinking of waters was seen (ie no cave entrances!). In fact, slopes on the southern side of the creek are very heavily inundated with dolerite boulders and clay, which resulted in my wandering easterly in hope of picking up an exposed contact line once again. Instead an area of very dense horizontal scrub forced me to head more south easterly. Some time later, the sound of a waterfall became audible.

Standing on the rim of a huge shaft, I figured that I must have wandered towards the area of JF 202. Rescue Pot was encountered nearby, confirming the fact. Tarn Creek Swallet was encountered south of here on the (taped) route back towards Chrisps Road. A number of strongly draughting entrances occupy the same doline as the swallet, hinting at alternative possibilities (other than the constricted crawl along the streamway) into what should be a reasonable bit of cave given the size of the stream. Certainly not as productive a day as the Saturday, but educational none-the-less.

Nick Hume

IN SEARCH OF SERVALANE - GROWLING SWALLET, FLORENTINE VALLEY

11 February, 1990.

After a few aborted attempts to get to Servalane with Trev on various occasions, I thought I would have a go at finding it myself. Having only been to the Mainline and New Feeling sections of GS and little idea of where Servalane was, I headed down the very low streamway. There were few dunkings on the waterfall climbs to keep me cool, unlike the Windy Rift series in which the wind was blowing a gale and very cold.

Once into the Trapdoor Streamway I climbed into what I presumed was Destiny passage on the left, wondering if this was even the way I was supposed to go! This passage soon connected into a larger passage which connected back to the Trapdoor Streamway in direction, so I headed back in the other direction, noticing the abundance of small passages leading off from this one. Soon after I came to the top of a pitch which I presumed to be the 26 metre drop into the Black River area and hence knew I was in fact in Destiny. Then came the task of heading back along Destiny Passage and checking all the side passages. Most seemed to connect back to the main passage and after an hour or so decided that I would give up on Servalane and look elsewhere. Directly opposite the point at which Trapdoor Streamway can be reached, a passage exists, so I went in for a look. This soon turned sharp left back to the streamway, but on the right was a low flattener. I followed this for about 10 metres to where it became lower still but still had a strong draught. The floor was only loose rocks which were easily removed (except it was a bit constricted...). Moving forward about 3 metres I was able to see a further 7 metres in need of digging so gave up and left it for another time. Later, looking at the survey, I noted that this passage was heading in a different direction to other passage in the area so is certainly worth a return visit.

There were still a couple of hours to spare so I headed down Trapdoor Stream through Herpes 3 and up into Necrosis for an hour or so, although nothing new was found. On the way out I noticed that the only footprints were my own so there must have been a good flush of water through here recently. Back on the surface, the sun was shining and I still had an hour to spare, so washed my gear in the GS stream and lounged about in the sun before heading back to Hobart.

Dean Morgan

You may be wondering what happened to the promised PB part 2 issue of Speleo Spiel (number 259). Never fear - we'll just have this 'normal' (?) issue out first with the consequent reversal of May and June (why be consistent anyway?).

LAST CHANCE - ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS overDUE...

SESAME 2 (JF211)

13 February, 1990

PARTICIPANTS: Cian, Simon and Dean Morgan

My early start had turned into a late start after getting Cian out of bed because he didn't know I was coming to get him, then picking up the ropes from Bob's house, getting Bob out of bed to get a light for Cian and finally picking Simon up from his place! Despite a later than usual arrival at the ANM gate we were soon at the top entrance of the Sesame system. I had decided on the top entrance of the Sesame system (ie Sesame 2) because I knew how much Simon and Cian would like the awkward squeeze onto the top of the third pitch. I went down first to do the rigging and avoid the smell of the others' caving gear which had lain unwashed in plastic garbage bags for a week and was pretty pungent by this stage! After a few special words were uttered, our party was soon at the junction point with the Sesame 1 (JF210) entrance series and down the handline and loose bank to the top of the 30 metre pitch. This area is loose and rocks and things fall down here without any provocation. I had a close shave with one rock which also just missed Simon's head. I headed off down stream with no gear for the remaining short pitches as we didn't have time to do them. Returning, I met Cian just before the rockpile and we headed out to tell Simon not to come down the pitch as time was short.

At the top of the handline, the rope was snagged so I went back down to free it. The rest of the ascent was hassle free except for my pack which seems to get shagged in thin air. We surfaced with over an hour to spare, after earlier thinking we may be running late and were out of the gate at 4.45pm and off to the shop for some munchies!

Dean Morgan

CYCLOPS POT (IB57)

18 February, 1990

PARTICIPANTS: Simon and Dean Morgan, Jeff Butt (SCS).

Cyclops Pot had always been in the back of my mind as a cave worth doing, but other caves always seemed to get in the way. It looks simple enough on the survey, so we headed out to do it. Jeff knew where to find the branch track from the Skinner Track at Ida Bay up past National Gallery, so that solved one problem! The route follows the contact cliffs from National Gallery past quite a few impressive entrances and after only about 25 minutes of walking we found the required IB57 number tag.

The first handline pitch down to the bolt at the top of the 36 metre pitch is the hardest part of the cave - it isn't really tight, just awkward (particularly on the way out with loaded packs...). From the bolt there is an excellent free hanging drop right to the top of the next pitch. This is a bit loose with a bit of mud accompanying you as you descend! From the bottom of this second pitch, there is a short crawl to the next 7 metre pitch which drops onto a large ledge. On the opposite wall is the next bolt. The rope hags just free from this bolt placement 44 metres to the floor. At this point is one of the few horizontal bits of cave, although it is only about 5 metres long! The next pitch is 36 metres and we only had a 35 metre rope... As little rope as possible was used to rig the drop and I went down for a look. As expected, the rope didn't touch but untying the knot in the end enabled me to just touch the floor. Jeff was next down and we tied a short tape onto the end of the rope so we could reach it when it was unweighted.

LAST CHANCE - ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS overDUE...

From here there was a short crawl to the final sump, although today because it wasn't a sump because of the dry conditions, although I did get a surprise to see frog jumping around here, nearly 200 metres below the surface. The cave does seem to finish abruptly as there are no other leads to look at, so we ate some munchies and started our retreat. Jeff checked the temperature and found it to be a surprising 9.5°C - no wonder I was so warm. Just 10 metres inside the entrance Jeff again checked the temperature and found it to be a toasty 12°C; outside it was only 11°C! We surfaced after only five and a quarter hours underground and soon packed up and headed back to the car. All the hangers were left as they were. A good day's caving was had by all.

Dean Morgan

BUNYIPS LAIR (JF236) ON WHERRETTS LOOKOUT

MARCH 18, 1990

PARTY: Bob Reid, Chris Davies, Trevor Wailes, Adrienne and Rolan Eberhard, Nick Hume.

A large group, but plans for the day required a bit of muscle to stabilise a block threatening the entrance pitch of this promising looking cave. We initially wandered up the open mud-slide feature (The Slip) on the southern slopes of Wherretts Lookout then contoured around to the vicinity of the northern branch of Chrisps Creek where a number of entrances were known.

JF236 entrance is a narrow rift at the base of a 4 metre water fall directly on the limestone contact with overlying mudstone. The waterfall had obviously meandered across the face of the cliffline in the past, as several blocked features were present nearby. Hopes were high that the present active course of the cave might be tributary to a major development line somewhere below. The amount of water entering JF236 is quite reasonable even in dry weather and a distinct draught is present also.

The number tag was placed while Bob, Chris, Trev and Rolan took considerable time to shift the offending block in the confines of the entrance. The top of an 8 metre pitch was eventually revealed, which Nick and Trev descended amid a "spiders web" of restraining mechanisms on the threatening boulder.

Below was an enlargement of the rift, the southern end leading to a blockage below the drainage line directly underneath the floor of the waterfall. The northern end led immediately to a low and disgusting crawl. This was pushed for only some 10 metres to where a "football" sized opening was seen to continue. Opportunities beyond weren't sufficiently promising to warrant any digging. Such operations would be impossible anyway because of the limited space. A number of tiny avens were inspected along the way to see if a bypass could be found, but all were too tight. The draught in the cave seemed to originate from these points and is likely to be a "chimneying" of air from neighbouring entrance slots.

Disappointed with the meagre results of our efforts, we sealed the entrance by allowing the boulder to settle. The group then contoured around to Niggly Cave (JF237). Bob and Rolan found two entrances above the cliffline *en route*. One was a 40 metre shaft and the other a 15 metre one. Neither was descended due to lack of time. A number tag was placed on JF237 prior to surface exploration downslope towards JF398. The latter cave had been looked at and numbered by Chris and Rolan some time ago. Chris hadn't been all that impressed by the stability of the entrance rockfall on that trip and since there was no cold draught issuing this time, no further efforts were made.

LAST CHANCE - ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS overDUE...

The Slip was regained after several bouts with horizontal scrub and followed back to the cars on the Florentine Road. The area is not one you can get to quickly and thus the amount of time one can devote to exploring any cave-find is severely limited. Despite this, the group enjoyed themselves thoroughly, looking at what is a relatively unexplored area, with potential for the discovery of a "backdoor" to the Growling Swallet System. Many thanks to those who attended, particularly the effort put in by Chris.

Nick Hume

KHAZAD-DUM (JF4/5)

March 11, 1990

PARTICIPANTS: Dean and Simon Morgan.

After a lot of scouring around on the Friday night trying to find enough ropes to do KD, Simon and I headed for Maydena on the Saturday to have a go at getting to the bottom. Simon had left his trog suit at home and only had a pair of cotton overalls to wear so I loaded up my pack with all the ropes for the second half of the cave with Simon taking the rest. This would enable Simon to head out if he got cold and allow me to get to the bottom with a derig the next weekend. By the time we arrived at the entrance we were regretting not having a third person along to help carry gear: our packs were filled to overflowing, we each had a rope over our shoulders and most of the required rigging hardware was hanging from our sit harnesses!

The first part of the Serpentine Route was traversed, the 4 metre pitch descended and the 15 metre handline freeclimbed with only a little bit of pack shuffling and no handline because of a lack of room in our packs. A small chamber was encountered after The Flattener and we headed off towards the sound of water. There was supposed to be a 28 metre pitch around somewhere and I came to the top of one that looked about the right length, although no eyebolts could be found at the top. It was heading down to the streamway so we dropped it anyway. The bottom of this landed us in the stream; 15 metres further on it dropped another 50 metres which I presumed to be the "old" 50 metre pitch and which I knew could be bypassed. By climbing up the left wall about 5 metres one could then climb down over a few boulders to the top of a short 3 to 4 metre drop. We were pretty sure we weren't on the usual route through the cave by now as there was supposed to be a 9 metre pitch next but we had enough rope left from the previous pitch to rig the next short drop. I went down (after accidentally dropping my pack first!) and landed on some large boulders jammed into the top of a rift with an estimated 50 metre pitch below. My pack had only just escaped falling down this drop as well. We were both getting fairly sick of hauling all the gear and figured that if we continued on this "new" route we may have short of rope by only about 10 to 15 metres - this would be fairly frustrating by the time one reached the end, so an executive decision was made to abort the trip and come back some other time with an extra person.

On the way out I spotted the usual / normal route through the top section of the cave so we should get it right next trip! It didn't take us long to get back to the car and finally relieve ourselves of the packs. Overall not a very eventful day; does anyone know about the dry 50 metre pitch as I couldn't see any scuff marks although a recent big flush of water may be the reason for that. If anyone is interested in doing KD, please get in touch with me so that we can organise another trip sometime (via the correct route!).

Dean Morgan

WET DREAMS & OTHER NECROTIC PSYCHOSES....

Saturday May 28, 1990

PARTY: Peter Ackroyd (VSA), Dean Morgan and Stuart Nicholas

The annual VSA Easter invasion was somewhat shrunken and a week late this year, but then again, they are from Victoria! Peter visited Tassie for about three weeks post Easter for R&R as well as some underground and quasi-underground activities.

Early on he expressed a desire take some photographs in the spectacular Dreamtime and Mainline passages of downtown Growling Swallet. As is often the case, various distractions and hold-ups occurred, such that the trip was finally done on his last weekend in Tas.

And so it came to pass that the three of us left town at the usually unseen hour of 6am in order to get maximum value from the day's trip to some of the further reaches of GS. No SRT gear, rope or other hindrances made for a fairly easy trip to Dreamtime, taking about two and a half hours. En route there were visits to a few unscheduled areas of Necrosis and Peter managed to pass Dean and myself without our realising it when approaching the somewhat ethereal Dreamtime near the end of the Mainline experience.

Anyway, the mandatory photo's were taken in a couple of the Dreamtime passages, the whole circus resembling a hi tech surgical procedure, lacking only the nurses for support! Mainline just downstream from the Necrosis turnoff was a bit of a mind (and foot!) numbing flash in the pan, but the photo gear was finally packed away for the last time and we stumbled off up the rock slope into Necrosis, negotiated this time without major deviation. Time was in well in hand so no excessive speed was called for. Around 3.30 pm we reached the top of Avon's Aven and Dean climbed down the "Hume" permanent ladder in Avon's Aven and crawled through the Herpes 3 cess-pool, only to be met by an extensive lake rather than the expected, and usual, small Trapdoor stream! This was a bit of a bother since we were hanging out for a bag or two of potato chips from the shop, to say nothing of Peter's promise of a couple of beers to reward our efforts as photo models!

Some discussion ensued as to the options available, but the only viable one was sit out the flood with periodic checking of the water level! And so we sat at the top of the aven, lights off and rugged up with a few meagre extra bits of spare clothing, fully aware that the ANM gate keeper expected us out by 6pm and that he would most probably raise the alarm at some stage during the evening.

Cooling began to occur within a short time, leading to fairly vigorous shivering for much of the fourteen hours or so of our entrapment. The air temperature was 8°C (we had a thermometer!) but being wet and in a slight draught made for rapid cooling. Frustratingly we knew that there was a food and "survival" gear cache in "Rescue" (or Slaughterhouse) Aven only a few minutes away but cut off from us by the Trapdoor sump flood. Water drips around our enforced "bivvy" site increased in both number and flowrate over the next few hours. Peter went down the ladder about 11pm but reported that the bottom of Avon's Aven, normally just a muddy floor, was flooded! Spirits sank a little lower, unfortunately unlike the level of the water.... A few hours later, considerable heavy water noise became apparent, together with loud bath plug gurgling! Had we finally succumbed? Was this just a bad dream - water on the brain perhaps? Were we going down the gurgler?? After that somewhat bizarre audio spectacular, the reason for which we'll never know, Peter went back down the ladder to find the aven floor drained, but the lake still in existence beyond the very wet Herpes 3 crawl. By now soaked again from the Herpes crawl, he struggled back up the ladder to report, but found the climb difficult and unnerving - evidence of the effect of the prolonged sitting and cold and consequent onset of hypothermia on us. Muscular stiffness was a real problem for all of us - standing up became a major

LAST CHANCE - ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS overDUE...

effort. Sitting huddled in the recommended "foetal" position for long periods might be thermally conservative but physically its hell!

About 3.30am, Stu went down the ladder and crawled through Herpes to find the water level half a metre below the floor level of Herpes... Maybe we were in luck? In luck we were - half an hour or so later, a loud "Cooee" was heard!! Back down the ladder (with renewed vigour!) and again through Herpes. Twenty or thirty metres away the lights of Stefan, Rolan and Bob were shining - a sight to behold! The flood was visibly dropping by this time - probably something like 10 mm per minute, so after some waiting and talking, a careful slither into the water was made, after assessing its probable depth with the rope ladder in place on the mud bank. Waist deep wading was the order of the day, negating our fears of having to swim. The water by this time was well over a metre below Herpes level, so any attempt earlier would have resulted in a short but very difficult and debilitating swim. Heading up the Trapdoor Streamway, it was obvious that water had been well over the mud banks part way down the streamway and further out it could be seen that the end of Growling had flooded out as well.

Stef, Rolan and Bob had rigged and come down Slaughterhouse Pot with three spare sets of SRT gear to enable us to prusik out if the main Growling Swallet sump area was flooded or the streamway impassible or unsafe because of excessive water. In the end the three of us plus Bob pushed our way out via the streamway in what would normally be described as a "sporting" trip! In our state, conditions were fairly marginal with disappearing acts under waterfalls being not uncommon! Bob lost a glove and nearly both his thumb and gear sack (not together!). Numb hands and feet, together with general body chilling / fatigue and a lack of muscular power made a couple of the entrance climbs fairly interesting. Stefan and Rolan had prusiked out of Slaughterhouse at some speed, leaving the three prusik rigs behind and the cave rigged (in case we weren't able to get out via the streamway) and met us in the GS entrance to lend assistance if needed.

Shortly after 8am our slightly hydrated troupe emerged from the watery entrance series of GS to chilly rain showers and a far from chilly cup of tea (it was after all, breakfast time...) - without question, this was best brew one could ever hope for! Ironically the temperature outside was lower than that underground, with light snow falling when we finally got back to the impromptu 'refugee camp' at the end of the Eight Road!

Apparently, Granville Williams the ANM gate keeper on the day had instigated a callout to Stefan Eberhard of TCC and Police Search & Rescue (POLSAR) when we were obviously late. Stefan and Rolan Eberhard, Bob Reid and Steve Bunton arrived at Maydena around midnight together with the POLSAR crew. The TCC crew rigged Slaughterhouse with the Police crew waiting in the wings with plenty of logistic and communications support.

On behalf of Peter Ackroyd and Dean Morgan, I would like to thank Stefan, Rolan, Bob and Steve for their efforts - believe me, that "cooee" from Trapdoor Streamway was a most heartening sound! Also, certainly not forgotten, Max Jeffries in Maydena who's house became something of "search base", the remaining TCC crew in Hobart standing by as a "second wave" if needed, and the Police Search & Rescue staff, headed in the field by Stu Scott and Paul Steane, for their enthusiasm and support during the operation - those cups of tea and biscuits were wonderful! Thanks must also go to the ANM staff involved - Granville Williams, John Simpson and Barry Burn (and his wife!) - we trust that the incident did not create too many problems.

Stuart Nicholas