

SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club
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SPELEO SPIEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB, Inc.

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PRESIDENT:

Stuart Nicholas 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, Tasmania 7008. Ph 283054

SECRETARY:

Rolan Eberhard 54 Wentworth Street, South Hobart, Tasmania 7004. Ph 348126

TREASURER:

Simon Morgan Unit 16 / 8 Ellison St, West Hobart, Tas. 7000. Ph 348689

QUARTERMASTER:

Bob Reid 21 Haig Street, Lenah Valley, Tasmania 7008. Ph 280983

EDITOR / TYPIST:

Stuart Nicholas 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, Tasmania 7008. Ph 283054

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FORWARD PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY MARCH 25, 1992: 8pm at the Wheatsheaf Hotel - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - yes another year has almost gone west. The usual elections, office bearers' reports and so on will no doubt occur in some form. Please be ready for it with your committee persons sorted out and reports ready to present. We don't want too much of a sleaze job when the "elections" occur, so do give it some thought....

LATE MARCH / EARLY APRIL (1992!): The annual Cave Rescue Exercise. Come along and be part of the circus! Members of all Cave clubs in TASMANIA invited - please RSVP to Stuart Nicholas when you decide to come along. Weekend show, probably in KD in the Florentine Valley.

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ANYTIME: A few easier / beginner type trips (also for the less spritely members of our club!). Stu is keen to do some of these (don't ask which category he's in...)

ANYTIME: The big rope is still in Niggly Cave. Is anyone keen to do the pitch and derig, or just one or the other of those options?

ANYTIME: Cauldron Pot? I know it sounds like some exotic dish and like all good dishes it is really exciting! Like to look at that horizontal extension and get some wet vertical caving done at the same time? Cauldron is the place to go.

EASTER: Is anyone keen to go to Waitomo? That's in northern Kiwi land for those that are wondering... There is a group from Sydney going over and possibly one or two from Tas. Airfares can be had for \$700 or \$640 (depending on airline) Hobart to Auckland and return. Waitomo is three hours or so by road south of Auckland. The area is suitable for cavers of most levels of skill and fitness - even the water is warm at 8°C to 14°C and the area is "friendly". The Hamilton Tomo Group have a palatial "hut" there with very modest fees and all mod-cons! Be there! Talk to Stu soon about this trip.

ALSO at Easter, the usual seasonal migration from the north - namely VSA (Victorian Speleo's). I guess they do get sick of Buchan occasionally... They are usually friendly and no doubt wouldn't refuse some underground social intercourse with the locals (us!).

EDITORIAL

All the heavy stuff recently has been a bit much... You may have noticed the lack of this mighty rag in recent times... This multi-month edition is probably the most compressed the Speleo Spiel has ever been. Hopefully things will improve this year... More trips and hence trip reports would help!

As older members, we need to pull our fingers out and give any potentially new members a few trips to get them up to speed. Usually, if someone is going to enjoy the bizarre sport of caving, after two or three trips they are capable / able to get going under their own steam. However, new people do need some introduction if they are to avoid reinventing the krab and/or developing bad practices. On the other side of the coin, maybe some of the keen / young / new / potentially new members can start giving me some trip reports...

The advent of "accreditation", for better or worse, may impinge on this leadership aspect of our sport if we don't do some initial "training" of new people. So cave bodies, when someone turns up you don't know, offer to take them on a trip!

Stuart Nicholas

ASF News

What's this I hear you mumble? ASF news? Well, yes, the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. is alive and functioning, even if we are only associate members of it. The Council meeting held on the Oz Day long weekend at the nearly idyllic venue of Jindabyne in the Snowy Mountains south of Canberra was an amiable and efficient affair. A lot of business was worked through comprising primarily of the presentation of reports by the many and various office bearers and commissions with subsequent discussion of them. Needless to say, the Ida Bay issue occupied some time as did the accreditation / leadership thing.

This Speleo Spiel is rather compressed....!

Among other things, various softening modifications were made to the code of ethics (removing the absolute bans), some discussion was had re further involvement with / by the CDAA in caving / cave diving issues, several applications for membership from other groups were approved, the newsletter (Australian Caver) finance and structure was discussed and a partial election of new office bearers was done. The full minutes should be available in a reasonably short time for perusal should anyone be keen. All up a good weekend was had, especially the BBQ on Saturday night and the half price Mexican meal on Sunday night!

Stuart Nicholas

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - 1990-91

It has been three years since the last published TCC President's Report. Much has happened in that time, both on the political side and the caving scene. Rather than dwell on the past three years alone, I'll try and sum up the past decade - the period of my Presidency of TCC.

I came to Tasmania to go caving and managed to get a few trips in. During those trips I've been exhausted, frozen cold, thoroughly pissed off and totally exhilarated - frequently all on the same trip! As President during the 80's, I've been proud of what the TCC has achieved. We've never been a large club, but must have been one of the most active in Australia during this period. The results speak for themselves. A lot of these results were hard won both below ground and above.

In the first half of the decade we were subject to "greenie bashing" - if not outright physical, it was verbal and political in the sense that access to our most exalted resource was limited. In the latter half the ecofascists were onto us, and they seemed to have political backing, again limiting access to the more distant karst corners of Tasmania. This is possibly a result of sitting on the fence - had we been more committed to one faction or the other I suspect the results would have been little different.

As a club, we seem to have had a strange effect on the Australian caving fraternity as a whole. It seems to be a "love us or loathe us" situation. I must admit Tasmania has some of the best karst resource in Australia and maybe a little jealousy crept in when after a slow patch in the late seventies the "two heads" started doing it their own way without mainland assistance. Guests we've had here from the mainland have stated that they were told not to get involved with "them". Where this animosity was founded escapes me. Because we have been a small caving group we have not had the manpower to assist all the mainland groups. More often than not this was due to commitments we considered more pressing in newly discovered systems of our own. This only smacks of the same elitism that exists in places such as WA or SA where to get into special access caves one has to do certain penances!

Some of the exploration of the 80's was on the edge, so to speak - it burned a lot of promising members out. The trips may have been very hard, but our safety record was exemplary - no doubt luck played some part in this, but the knowledge and expertise of the members of TCC must take credit for this clean sheet.

The Speleo Spiel has over the decade recorded everything TCC has explored and mapped. Usually this magazine / newsletter is published late. I would like to think that it is because its servants are out caving, as has often been the case. My vanity would like to have seen more notice taken of what we have been doing by the international caving press. However, because some international rags have used mainland sources of information, our kudos has been somewhat diluted. Speleo Spiel is received by the BCRA and other national bodies existing overseas, but little is

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published about what we are doing. I suspect this is partly due to the newsletter chat that tends to dominate its pages - maybe its time we had our own international correspondent to pass on our more significant discoveries. The Speleo Spiel carries no adverts. and is paid for by subscription. The quality is reasonable and the contents very worthwhile - we should be mailing more!

Financially the TCC has never been rich but we've always been well equipped, partly due to the generosity of the members prepared to put their hands in their pockets when necessary. Unlike mainland university clubs we cannot buy "tax free" or have gear costs subsidised. ASF levies were exorbitant at one stage so TCC opted out, becoming an associate member. This situation can be reversed at any time should the committee of the day so desire.

Equipment belonging to TCC has always been well maintained whether it has been the ropes with worn sheaths or lamps with reduced light output. These problems have been dealt with quickly and corrected. Ropes cut to shorter lengths and re-marked to the new length or lamp batteries scrapped and replaced in some cases with a more modern low maintenance battery.

In the future, TCC should be careful to maintain its integrity. We are first and foremost a sporting club, unaligned to political bodies. Unfortunately a confrontation with Benders Quarry operations looks imminent, the outcome of which will probably be a compromise. Undoubtedly the Green movement will try to close the quarry with no compromise agreement, but this will depend on the actions of shaky Government policy.

I would like to thank all the members who have made the last decade a success for the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. These include the organisers of: the many small expeditions, eg Mt Anne, PB, Cracroft and so on; the Club dinners (we accept they were not responsible for the food, just the venues!); the Speleo Spiel editors, contributors and production team; secretaries and treasurers; quartermasters and long suffering wives; all the people who have given time to take novices caving, turn up to meetings and put their views forward.

Thanks to all of you.

Trevor Wailes
President 1981 -> 1991

LOST....

Stu has mislaid / lost a medium sized yellow gear bag, some krabs, a 5m long 50mm wide yellow tape plus some 25mm stripy tube tape slings. The owner is desperate! Whoever has got them please give them back!! Stu's keen to get these bits and pieces back to enable him to go caving without carrying everything wrapped in a blanket and having to use clothes line for rigging! Stu's phone number: 002 283045.

FOR SALE

1. Windcheater - "Caving TCC Style" motif. Size 16. As new (never been underground!). Last chance for one of these classic designs, colour Ash Grey. \$15.00
2. Furry undersuit. Brand new - just the thing for those cold winter nights when other warmer things are not available... Also ideal for those cold wet caves we

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seem to have here. Caving Supplies brand (genuine English quality product!). Built in knee pads, Navy Blue with red trim on cuffs. Size - LARGE! \$70.00 is cheap!

3. Wilderness Equipment "ISOCLIME 50" goretex jacket, size S, colour RED and 3/4 length. Ideal for those rainy scrub bashing trips! Price \$170.00 - bargain!

For all these remarkable, once only, special offers, contact Stefan Eberhard on phone 002 202631 (w) or 002 492677 (h).

NEW LIBRARIAN needed!

TCC Library up for grabs... Lots of juicy exciting info. here! It lives in boxes at present and hence is easily shifted. Ideally, the librarian would be someone with some shelf space to spare in order that the material can be unboxed and be more accessible to potential borrowers. Contact Stefan Eberhard (phone as above).

BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE (AGAIN...) (JF402)

13 May 1991

Party: Volker Surisd and Dean Morgan

I had made a fool out of myself rock climbing with Volker the day before so was going to get my own back by taking him caving. He had done a few horizontal trips since he had been in Tassie but nothing vertical so I figured a nice trip into New Feeling (Growling Swallet) would be the go, but rain once again stopped play. Plan B was adopted which was a trip through BDTH with the usual "down to the end and poke around the final rockpile" trick. JF228 entrance would have most probably been sumped so we came back out the JF402 entrance. A couple of hours of daylight still remained upon our return to Hobart, so once again I made a fool of myself climbing with Volker!

Dean Morgan

PORCUPINE POT (JF387)

8 June 1991

Party: Glen Robinson (HSS), Nick Hume, Trevor Wailes and Dean Morgan (TCC).

All of us were to meet at Nick's at 7am so Glen and I stopped in at Trevor's place on the way through, knowing that he wouldn't be ready... But, lo and behold, strike me pink, blow me down, stuff me mushrooms and all that sort of thing - he was almost ready! Was he becoming keen again? Does he really enjoy Porcupine Pot that much? Was he just trying to impress Glen who had flown down from Sydney for the weekend? These questions will never be answered as Trev wasn't saying, but we did arrive at Nick's at 7.05am ready for a top day's caving.

Once at the Nine Road parking spot the rain held off and when underground Trev shot to the front while doing his best impersonation of someone actually enjoying caving, although we could all see through this thin disguise.. The bottom was reached fairly rapidly as the cave had been rigged a couple of weeks prior by Trev and Nick. This return trip was made to enable Nick to retrieve the water tracing nets from the main streamway and for Trev and I to explore and survey an upstream (the small stream) lead that Trev looked at on the previous trip.

Trev had stopped at an open rockfall previously but we soon found ways through into open streamway again, although it soon started sloping uphill quite steeply. Quite a few avens were evident and it seemed that a large upper level may exist but with

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no way up into it. The passage climbed upwards until itself ended in an aven, although a crack up one wall may be climbable to a narrow passage (with a dynamic rope and some runners with a belay). We surveyed about 500 metres back to our start point at the bottom of the entrance pitch series from where Nick and Glen could be heard heading out up the pitches. We followed them, derigging as we went. The highlight of the trip was the shouting and abuse that Trev gave his chest ascender, just because the poor piece of equipment wouldn't feed the rope without help! Once near the entrance the other two were waiting to take their share of the rope and soon we were back at the road. No one had taken a watch so we had no idea of the time, but luckily it was only 3.30pm.

Ignore what you may have heard about Porcupine Pot - it really is a great cave and well worth a trip if you get the chance! (The system length is now 2700 metres, but nothing more was added to the depth.)

Dean Morgan

THREEFORTYONE (JF341)**30 July 1991**

Party: Dave, Julio and Kevin (Blue Mountains Speleo's), Dean Morgan (TCC!)

Some debate was had over which cave to visit, but the mainlanders decided the JF341 sounded worthwhile. Unfortunately the Junee Road key was not available at the time and hence a three kilometre walk had to be made up the road to the start of the real track! This was made especially bad by the weight of the rope in my pack - 10 metres of 8 mm rope took up as much space and weighed about the same as the chocolate bar! This 8 mm "rope" is good stuff...

Once in the cave, the rigging was done by yours truly with no rebelayes or rub points - fairly essential with string. The only hassle occurred when the 50 metre rope proved to be about 4 metres short on the bottom pitch! About 10 metres of slings were used at the top to overcome this minor problem. At the bottom we went straight to newer sections and proceeded to look at everything. Four hours or so of scouring leads and taking many pictures had us commenting on the great qualities of this cave. Going back out was slower and colder - outside was colder still, to the point that my hands went numb, making getting changed at the car somewhat difficult. The RMS crew drove me out to the gate as they were staying at the end of the Right Road. Some of them are keen to go to Mt Anne at Christmas so if anyone else is keen, give me a call.

Dean Morgan

BLACK RIVER - GROWLING SWALLET (JF36)**21 July 1991**

Party: Trevor Wailes, Rolan Eberhard and Dean Morgan.

High water levels had us going into Growling Swallet through Slaughterhouse Pot and leaving it rigged in case of need on the way out. The old ropettes that were used as tie-off points in SHP were removed as they had been in there for the odd year or ten. We soon arrived at the top of the Destiny pitch in GS which drops into the Black River area. A couple of muddy climbs and wet passage bits had us at "Black River With White Bits In It" - Black River to its friends!

This was my first trip to this area of GS and the others were keen to explore upstream amid rumours of 'caverns measureless to man...'. A short distance upstream we set up spore sampling nets for Nick Hume's water wizardry and then headed on up.

There was one short rock pile but most of it was straightforward until up towards the end where things got a bit more complex. The amount of water seemed to be decreasing as went further up and I eventually reached a spot where it was all coming from a thin rift in the roof with no prospects. I met up with Trevor who was waiting where Rolan and he had separated. Something like 45 minutes later we regrouped with each of us having completely different reports of what had been seen. During our individual forays, we had not seen each other at all, despite our having initially headed off in roughly the same direction! All I had found was one large chamber with an aven and lots of chossy rotten loose cave everywhere else. We all agreed that it wasn't a nice place to be, so headed back downstream, collected Nick's nets and had a look around near the Pendant Pot sump. Nothing new was found here and we headed out.

At the bottom of Refuge Aven we decided to have a go at getting out through Growling itself, leaving Slaughterhouse Pot rigged to enable me to visit Servalane in the near future. Water levels were up a bit but it made for a better trip and we were soon outside in freezing temperatures and falling snow! It was warmer underground! A fairly unproductive day, but still a good trip.

Dean Morgan

MIDNIGHT HOLE (IB11)

11 August 1991

Party: Jason Hamill, Ken Passmore, Caleb Pearce, Simon and Dean Morgan.

Snow had put paid to anything in the Florentine Valley and a couple of the newer members talked me into a Midnight Hole trip. This was just the usual through trip with the only thing to report being the advent of some new bolts placed on a couple of the pitches to make rigging easier if you were keen on prusiking out. (Cian and I have done this and it is really a waste of time...) There was also a sling and an old Maillon removed from the last pitch as both were old and the Maillon looked a bit corroded. Despite a fair bit of heavy rain recently the water level in Mystery Creek was only a little bit higher than usual.

Dean Morgan

IDA BAY SCRUB RASH

4 August 1991

Party: Arthur Clarke, Bob Reid, Stuart Nicholas and Dean Morgan.

We started the day with a quick walk up to the top of Benders Quarry - always guaranteed to brush out the cob webs! From there we wandered into the scrub along the contact towards Mystery Creek Cave. The bush was fairly bad and only a few small things were noted except for one cave. This was pushed by Bob and I down lots of climbs to a depth of about 50 metres. It choked off here but further up a rift was draughting well - some enlargement would be needed to enter it, but Bob said that he could see down another 20 metres or so. There was a reasonable trickle of water flowing in the cave and it turned out to be only about 200 metres from Midnight Hole. It most likely connects into Mystery Creek Cave in the narrow passage joining the Mystery Creek Cave side of Matchbox Squeeze. This passage has a good draught and an equivalent amount of water. Arthur tagged this entrance IB73 (using an old, but unallocated, number).

Once at Midnight Hole, we bashed down the hill NE, but nothing was found until down behind the massive Mystery Creek Cave doline where there were masses of large dolines all over the place. Unfortunately there was not one enterable cave amongst them. Down at the Mystery Creek Cave creek we explored and tagged a cave reported

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recently by Tony Cawthorn. The cave is 50 metres upstream and 15 metres above the creek level and is just a short horizontal system. A quick look around this area revealed nothing else. A retreat to Arthur's at Francistown was then made and thanks to Arthur for his hospitality and the bag of chips! A good day was had.

Dean Morgan

LITTLE GRUNT (IB23)

20 November, 1991

PARTY: Stefan Eberhard, Rolan Eberhard, Ian Houshold and Vera Wong.

The survey shows lots of short pitches and I'm told the cave is a bit squeezey in places. Sounds interesting - I'll go caving. The trip has a touch of spice to it as Stefan and Rolan have this vague idea of pushing the cave through to Exit Cave following the path of the successful dye trace. so armed with the appropriate weapons, we didn't quite find Exit Cave, but something pretty impressive anyway.

Rolan's rigging, Stefan's got the rigging notes and Ian and I are just taking it easy and descend after them into the darkness. Somewhere down the cave, at the bottom of the 9th pitch, I find Rolan's body poking out of a tight section of passage and every so often a shower of dirt comes flying out behind him. He's digging. Peering over his shoulder, it looks tight but I decide that I could fit through there, but I don't think they are that interested in this. So Stefan takes over the digging and the squeeze is definitely getting bigger. Now its my turn (hee, hee) and after a few brief stabs at the mud, I discard the hammer and start worming my way through. Eventually I pop through after removing my light and the thing tugging at my boot... I'm in a coral covered opening above another short drop. There is a faint draft and things are getting exciting - maybe this will go somewhere.

I dig and bash the squeeze from this end and the others from the other end. It isn't long before everyone is through and we're down the pitch and at the top of another. At the bottom of this pitch Rolan has disappeared down another small hole and is passing large sized rocks through to Stefan. A bit more of this happens and then a bit of grunting... suddenly whoops of delight! We all bolt through after Rolan, snapping at each other's heels.

River passage. The tiny stream that flows through Little Grunt drops its pink waters (just a touch of Rhodamine in here) into a much larger stream and we slowly walk along, savouring the virgin passage, admiring the pristine formation. The passage widens and we take turns in treading new cave. There are a few crawls, but its definitely getting bigger. There are little stream and passages entering all over the place, some of which are not so little. We're running now and the roof is at least 10m above our heads. Eventually, though after almost a kilometre of passage (now surveyed), the stream disappears under a rockpile. We spend a couple of hours shifting boulders and crawling about, but we are still in rockpile. We head upstream to explore some of the larger leads.

Rolan and I wander up a drafting passage, which leads to more rockfall. Stefan and Ian sniff out another draft that takes them upstream in a passage that seems to be parallel to the main passage and heading back towards the quarry. This passage was surveyed in a following trip and does indeed lie under Benders Quarry...

After a bit more wandering about, we decide we are all pretty stuffed so head out, making appropriate noises on the way up and wondering what Mr Bender will think of all this...

Vera Wong

LITTLE GRUNT (IE23)**18 January 1992****PARTY:** Dean Morgan and Stuart Nicholas.

For once, this a Morgan trip but not a Morgan trip report! LG had been rigged since the original exploration of the new bit and Rolan was getting edgy about his gear being ensconced in the damp and destructive (destroyed?) underground world. He was actually away on sump junket to Indonesia but we still knew he was getting edgy!

Plan A was just to pull out the gear and run away, but curiosity struck so yours truly was dragged screaming into the new bit. Enter Plan B. Spectacular stuff! Quite remarkable that such extensive and consistently large passage exists in that area. Curious it hadn't been found before, but I guess all old cavers have a retrospective mind.

The silt deposits on stals and non-vertical wall surfaces was patently obvious in the passage which runs under the quarry. Silt accumulations in and around the stream were also obvious... A sad reflection on the somewhat muddied waters of nature conservation issues.

Anyway, after complaining about sore knees to Dean (with absolutely no sympathy forthcoming!) a retreat was made back through those dreaded far end crawls to the vertical bits and the original plan - derig the system. All went smoothly with the rope being hauled as one snake in stages from the bottom. A mighty tangle of rope, knots, krabs and other rigging paraphernalia finally materialised at the entrance. Some degree of sorting was done there and then in order to equalise the loads for the carry up that little hill. Back at the road, Bob Reid and Steve Bradford were found wandering around amongst the moonscape-like rubble looking at some very destroyed and dubious holes in one of the upper quarry benches. Back at the car, some very heavy packs were dropped and a retreat made for the obligatory chips at the Dover shop.

Stuart Nicholas

PROHIBITION CAVE (MC125)**5 December 1992****PARTY:** Stefan Kberhard and Vera Wong

Another day at work. We have just spent the last couple of days harassing spiders, counting crickets and measuring amphipods in the study cave Little Trimmer at Mole Creek. But now its time to go caving for sport as opposed to going caving for science. The excuse? To find a new stream to measure amphipods in when the Little Trimmer stream dries up. So, of course we will look for the most easily accessed, practical cave we can find. Prohibition Cave looks good - it says "exploration potential" next to it in a study of the Mole Creek karst. We jump in the Uni's Hilux and zoom off.

The 4WD takes us up the boggy logging roads - through private and very amateurish looking logging operations. Up on to the lower flanks of the Western Tiers. I disappear into the bush, down into the creek valley to find the entrance to this swallet.

It's impressive. There are two entrances at the bottom of a 20m cliff. One leads into an upper level dry cave, the other follows the disappearing creek. Back up to the road - its not long before we are both at the entrance with caving gear.

We wandered along the top dry passage first, its walls dotted with fossils. There is slight draft, but we are turned around by a large sump pool. Off to the wet cave section.

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The stream sluices down its spiralling slide, carved clean blue limestone and we follow its path, climbing to follow it, crawling down some low passage until stopped by a sump. Above the sump is a large chamber and rockfall.

A little bit of squirming around in the rockfall and we find ourselves in another chamber. It doesn't look like anyone else has been here. A short dry passage leads to a much larger chamber, maybe 20+ metres high, but more importantly we've found the other end of the sump. Before us is a flowing stream and we can walk down the passage. It seems too lucky, too much like Little Grunt a couple of weeks before. We wander down stream.

The passage widens and the roof gets higher, the stream snaking around W, then S and then mostly east. From pacing, we estimate there is around 800 metres of passage with glow worms in its entirety, until blocked by rockfall. The way on is not obvious so we head back and have a quick look up a few side passages. Just before reaching the outdoors again, there in the still pools next to the falling creek are amphipods! Some are collected and we head home.

Vera Wong

KHAZAD-DŪM (JF4)**5 February 1992**

PARTY: Stuart Scott, Janine Hopkins (POLICE S&R), Bob Reid, Steve Bradford and Stuart Nicholas (TCC).

Funny the things one will do on a sunny day - apart from enjoying the sunny day, that is! The aim of this little jaunt was to take advantage of a no-cost trip to the Florentine in perfectly legal circumstances. As well, we were looking at the top section of KD as a possible venue for the next S&R exercise. This one act circus performance should come on stage in late March or early April.

The brisk and somewhat sweaty 25 minute walk from the Junee Quarry Road spur up to KD warmed everyone to the delights of that beautiful Myrtle forest and its life expectancy under the new government regime... Still, the track does need a bit of clearing!

One group of three wormed their way down the Serpentine route to its junction with the horizontal streamway, the other two bods wandering off down the traditional route to the same point. Good time was made with both groups reaching the appointed junction in something under an hour and a half - not bad for a bunch of amateurs and invalids!

Pleasantries and jelly beans were exchanged, the first of the streamway pitches viewed and the parties semi-crossed over for the return to outside world. The retreat went without a hitch except for the "handline" pitch near the surface on the standard route. The "big step" was a bit too big an unroped step for one of the party, but a belay soon solved that problem.

Back in Hobart, a quick gear sort was done at the Paternoster Row Police S&R store and a "couple of quiet ones" and a bowl of free potato chips had at the nearby pub. All in all a good day was had by all in a cave that does deserve the title!

Stuart Nicholas

NB In case you're wondering why the above trip reports aren't in chronological sequence, its to try and ensure reasonable page layout of this esteemed rag...