

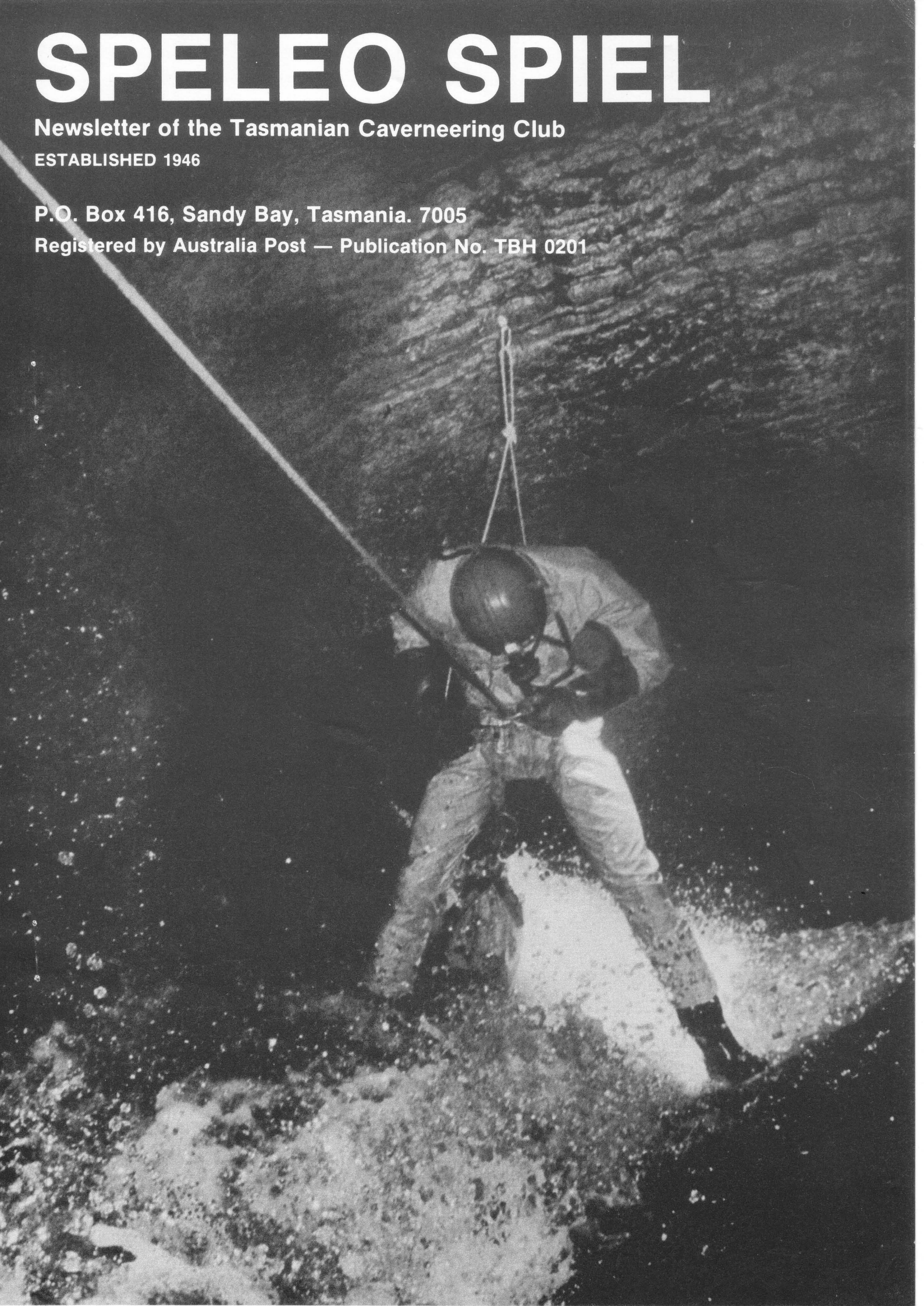
SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

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SPELEO SPIEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVENEERING CLUB INC

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* * * FORWARD PROGRAM * * *

Search and Rescue Exercise -

Late Jan/ Early Feb '94: Cave rescue exercise; This is the postponed exercise from mid-November...

Location: GROWLING SWALLET (yaaaaaaaaaay !!)

Aim: Underground *search* with several parties active simultaneously, occupied (!) stretcher removal from Cave (part way only).

Further Info: Stuart Nicholas, TCC (28 3053 a/h)
Stuart Scott, Police S & R (35 2267)

Mt Anne Trip:

1st Week, January 1994: Proposed 3 day (over weekend) trip into Kellar Cellar and exploration of surrounding area (maybe). A good excuse to work off that excess Christmas/ New Year Cheer !! Contact Garth Cornelius (34 9175 wk) for more exciting details...

<p style="text-align: center;">FROM THE EDITORS DESK... THRILLS, PILLS, AND BELLYACHES :</p>
--

Welcome to the first edition of the Spiel with a new, "suitably keen person" behind the wheel (keyboard).

Stuart Nicholas is taking a well deserved rest from the rigours of editing this literary benchmark, and I think we all owe him many thanks for his time and considerable effort in keeping "the dream alive"... without him, the Spiel would have most likely ceased to be !

This will not happen !! and I'm sure that with the flood of articles/surveys/reports that will come in, we can actually start spewing Spiels out on a regular basis.

Remember guys, that this is everyone's Newsletter, and I need your input... so anyone with articles or suggestions, please come forward; anyone with any complaints, bugger off !

Please, sit back, relax, and enjoy this first issue...

General Happenings:

As reported in the last issue (#279), Steve & Kelly Bunton have moved.... their new address is: 1 Raymont Terrace, Mount Stuart, 7000, Ph: 78 2398. We await their house warming party with bated breath/appetite for destruction.

Also mentioned was the implementation at a National level of some sort cave leader accreditation/recognition scheme... well, in this issue an article by Stuart Nicholas gives us more detail on exactly what's happening and where, and confirms that the bizarre trend of acronymania is alive and well.

NEW GEAR... NEW GEAR... NEW GEAR... NEW GEAR... NEW GEAR...
Yes, it has finally arrived: 400 meters of un-corrupted, virginal 9mm rope, ready for action. So far, no one has had the guts to chop it up, although I'm sure that someone

will do the dirty deed - let's hope that suitable lengths (ie; 20m) will eventuate... crossing knots may take on a whole new meaning !!

Also, the Club now has three full sets of SRT gear for hire... no more avoiding vertical caving trips due to lack of gear. For prices, etc see Trevor.

There has also been talk of holding a pre-Christmas dinner and flower arranging evening as a follow up to our miniature Annual Dinner - if anyone is interested, please contact Stuart Nicholas.

Finally, some of our members have been fairly active on the underground front recently, with most trips concentrating on the Florentine (Growling, Cauldron Pot, Owl Pot, 341, et al)... I expect a deluge of trip reports soon, or else !

Club Matters:

Rumour has it that the amalgamation of the TCC and the Southern Caving Society is definitely set to happen - in fact, by the time you read this, it probably will have !!

Being a new member I am not sure of the background behind the merger, but it seems to me that for whatever reason this is happening, we can only benefit... I mean the influx of new, active (?) members, the increase in the Club's gear pool, and the increase in the knowledge and experience of the Club will be positive for us all... We await the outcome .

I wonder if they've got any Cash ??

Garth Cornelius, Editor.

*** * * TRIP REPORTS * * ***

Following are a couple of old trip reports that were found in "the archives", we don't think they have been published previously, but if they have, at least it fills space !!

Conspicuous by their absence are survey diagrams/maps - if you want them, then bloody buy the TCC Exploration Journal which contains these surveys plus much, much more ! It only costs twenty-one bucks, which is nothing for the quality of information and presentation you get in return - see Spiel #279 for an order form, or contact Stuart, Chris or Trevor.

SERENDIPITY (Roland Eberhard)

Serendipity's entrance consists of a stream of moderate size that sinks into a jumble of boulders. When first discovered in October 1980, the cave appeared impenetrable. However, the precarious maze of talus below the entrance was negotiated several

weeks later, and a series of descending passages explored to the brink of a shaft. A 31m abseil beside massive flutings of flowstone was given the name of Cathedral Pitch. The passage at the bottom was large at first, but soon closed down to the much less accommodating dimensions of Castigation Crawl. A small chamber was reached

where a stream, presumably the same one that flows into the entrance, showered from a hole in the ceiling. A crawl over a large fallen block that nearly filled the passage led to a deep waterfall shaft.

In December 1980 a team of local and Sydney cavers pushed Serendipity down a series of exciting waterfalls separated by narrow sections of winding stream canyon. The top of a fifth shaft, Phobos, remained the limit of exploration for some time. A determined assault was mounted in February 1981, with a team getting underground by the early afternoon and making a relatively efficient descent to The Balcony, a small chamber perched above the final shaft. With anticipation, a rope was thrown down, and a 44m abseil landed the explorers on the top of a talus heap in a lofty chamber. A tributary stream on one side of the chamber was followed down a further short pitch (7m) into a field of huge boulders that preceded the base of the waterfall shaft. (A more direct route of descending Phobos is now used: a single 40m abseil beside the waterfall bypasses the 7m pitch).

Two ways on were possible - a large dry tunnel, or an unattractive hole down which the water flowed. The latter lead (Conduit Crawl) revealed a short, wet climb down into more serpentine passage. One hundred and fifty metres downstream, a squeeze at water level halted progress. The other passage offered a more encouraging alternative. This spacious passage was followed for some distance, where it intersected another major conduit - this one carrying a second stream. This promising borehole was, however, found to be choked with sediment after no great distance. Before starting back to the surface, a quick look was made in the upstream direction, which continued with no end in sight...

The next trip to Serendipity occurred a year later - an underground survey was needed to accurately measure depth, and to see where the cave lay relative to major extensions recently discovered in Growling Swallet. There was also the upstream passage to explore ! The plan was that a team of four would descend directly to the bottom to continue exploration before surveying back towards the surface. A second team would survey from the entrance downward - the assumption being that the two teams would meet somewhere in the middle.

After reaching Phobos, the exploration team headed upstream into new ground. The passage remained narrow for several hundred metres before abruptly opening out into an elongated room. Here, the stream cascaded from a chute several meters up the far wall, and initially it seemed the end had been reached. It was Jean-Paul Sounier, a visiting French caver, who found what was dubbed The French Connection - an inconspicuous hole, several metres above the floor, that led to a separate stream system located only metres from the passage that had been followed to this point.

Downstream, the new streamway did not go far, but upstream proved more

rewarding... A brief reconnaissance revealed several hundred meters of passage leading to an ascending rockfall chamber (Serendipity Chamber). A survey was commenced from The French Connection back towards the pitch series. After annoying trouble with the survey gear, it was a welcome relief to find the other team's final survey station at the top of Phobos. Their frustrating job, with survey legs often less than a metre in length in narrow winding passage, had finished hours before and they were already back on the surface.

November 1983 marked the next assault, with two teams again being used. The first group would rig the cave and continue exploration, whilst the second group would follow, surveying the finds made in 1982. Upon reaching the limit of previous exploration, the first group looked at several possibilities. Climbing up into the rockfall above Serendipity Chamber did not prove fruitful, and a side passage of promising appearance led in a large loop to rejoin the known streamway. The most significant find was a stream passage that was followed upstream to a point where a rope was required. Meanwhile, the second group were engaged in the arduous task of surveying nearly a kilometre of narrow vadose canyon up to this point. Their trip being made more interesting by the more or less simultaneous failing of caving lights !

It had become obvious that further exploration required trips of minor epic proportions. Enthusiasm for such trips was not always easy to conjure up. Still, in May 1984, a group of Sydney cavers descended in an attempt at further exploration. Subsequent high water led to an abandonment of a follow up de-rig trip, and some local and visiting Sydney cavers took advantage of an already rigged cave for a quick trip to the bottom. A strongly draughting crawl near the deepest point was explored (the possibility of a connection with Growling Swallet being a strong incentive), but the lead merely circled back to the passage near The French Connection.

Apathy prevailed during an attempt to push further upstream in October. Six cavers went underground, but only two arrived at Pernickety Drop - the short pitch where upstream exploration had halted the previous year. The drop was descended and a solo caver explored several hundred metres of passage beyond. Three months later a more determined team returned to the location. Further upstream, the cave became increasingly complex, with the main passage leading to the base of an aven. The presence of bones and cave crickets suggested another entrance existed somewhere above. There were still other leads to be explored, including a pitch that led into a large chamber. A convenient although tortuous side passage bypassed the drop, and a spacious and profusely decorated chamber (Great Big Room) was revealed.

1984 also saw the discovery of another entrance (JF 375), close to the main swallet entrance. A narrow slot was excavated, and a descending passage was found to join the original route below the initial section of talus. The upper entrance has since become the more popular and less dangerous route, and it slightly increased the overall depth of the system to -278m.

To facilitate trips to the more remote regions, Serendipity was rigged on a semi-permanent basis in 1985. Minor extension included some passage found by scaling the waterfall at The French Connection, and in fossil upper-levels near Castigation Crawl.

There were also a couple of lengthy trips to complete the survey. Despite this, the Great Big Room has remained the most recent major discovery in the upstream area.

Serendipity is undoubtedly one of the best sporting trips in the Florentine Valley. It offers knee-grinding crawls, thundering waterfalls, tight meandering canyons, and occasional respite in the form of large chambers and spacious passages. The total surveyed length of the system is 2948m. Various active and abandoned streamways suggest a complex evolutionary history, and the relationship between numerous dolines and entrances on the surface, and underground passages in Serendipity, has not been thoroughly investigated. Water tracing has shown that Serendipity contributes water to the Junee Resurgence, and it is likely that this occurs via Dreamtime in Growling Swallet. However, this and other speculations concerning drainage patterns in the area are yet to be tested.

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ICE TUBE (Rolan Eberhard):

Ice Tube's entrance was first discovered in 1981 by Stefan Eberhard. Some months after, he and Ron Green returned and laddered the first waterfall (25m) pitch - they were rewarded with the view of a spray filled shaft continuing down.

Stefan and I returned to Ice Tube that August, this time with ropes, and abseiled the first two pitches. We followed the stream down various cascades and rifts before branching off into a pleasant fossil passage. This took us to the brink of a dry shaft where the rumble of falling water could be heard below. The following day, we returned with more rope, exploring a more direct route (Placebo Effect) from the base of the second pitch to the limit of the previous day's discoveries. The 29m shaft (Ramp Pitch) that followed led into a roomy chamber where the stream re-appeared as a cascade from a hole high up in the wall. This water proved to be an unwelcome companion for cavers on the pitches that followed...

Three months later we returned with Nick Hume, making an uneventful descent to the top of the deep shaft discovered previously. We traversed along an exposed rift to a point where the rope could be rigged free of the water, and here a bolt was placed.

This superb 47m pitch was dubbed the Fabulous Spangley Pitch. At the bottom of this lay yet another drop !

The realisation that Ice Tube had stunning potential dawned gradually... By mid-1982, the possibilities were finally starting to generate some serious enthusiasm. Stefan, Nick, Trevor Wailes and Malcom Handel were ready for a determined assault in May - Descending the 13m shaft below Fabulous Spangley, they placed two bolts before abseiling the 7th pitch in the cave so far, Killing Joke. Here, the rope ran out at a depth of -290m. Ahead lay another sizeable shaft, and the knowledge that a new Australian depth record was almost certainly there for the taking.

Starters were easy to find for the next trip, although with heavy snowfalls complicating things, it was 3 weeks before the final assault team of seven assembled at the entrance. Nick, Malcom and I entered the cave first, rigging down to the top of Killing Joke. Here we waited in a small, draughty alcove until the survey team of Trevor, Stefan and Mike Martin materialised. The extra rope was speedily rigged, and the exceedingly wet Maelstrom pitch descended. The next drop (14m) landed in a chamber where horizontal development finally prevailed. Unfortunately, the rift that the stream flowed into appeared impossible narrow, and motivation for serious pushing was in short supply.

A hasty retreat towards the surface began... Rigging techniques that had been used were relatively unsophisticated, and several pitches involved prussiking directly beneath waterfalls. If rebelay and redirections had been employed more extensively, then the return to the surface would have been far less of the cold, wet and protracted affair than it turned out to be. By the time Trevor had reached the base of the second pitch, his complexion had the pallor of marble. His weakened condition said it all - the shaft became known as the Degenerated Man.

Developments on Mount Anne were to temporarily deprive Ice Tube of its title as Australia's deepest, but a rapid succession of discoveries in Growling Swallet resulted in renewed interest in the cave. The most significant discovery in Growling was a section of major streamway (Mainline) that meandered its way to a point roughly under the saddle on the eastern side of Wherretts Lookout. When underground and surface surveys of Ice Tube and Growling were plotted, the possibility of a physical connection between the two became real. With this in mind, Stefan, Trevor and Al Walrid headed into Growling. Their objective was a small stream that had been noticed entering the downstream end of Mainline. They followed the lead for a couple of hundred metres of winding passage, reaching a narrow point beyond which the promising sound of a waterfall could be heard. Making the connection involved some difficult sideways wriggling in a constricted muddy rift well above floor level. This opened out onto a small ledge with a view over the final pitch in Ice Tube.

The next obvious step - a complete traverse of the system involving a descent of Ice Tube to exit via several kilometres of diverse horizontal passage in Growling - took place in February 1984. For once, Ice Tube was to be tackled in Summer, a sensible departure from the trend of previous trips. Canyoning techniques were used to consecutively abseil and retrieve a single rope for all 10 pitches of the cave. Needless

to say, the through-trip is a classic in Australian sport caving.

Some remaining leads in Ice Tube were pushed during the next few years. These included a parallel shaft reached by an exposed traverse from the top of Degenerated Man. This led to a 68m pit followed by a nasty section of fossil canyon containing additional drops (20m and 10m). The bottom pitch joined back to the known sections of Ice Tube at the Ramp Pitch chamber. A third Ice Tube - Growling Swallet traverse in January 1985 provided an opportunity to explore a lead at the base of Fabulous Spangle. This was also found to rejoin the main route down the cave, in this case in the vicinity of Killing Joke.

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* * * NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS * * *

NORLD and other acronyms...

including NORLD 93 - the National Outdoor Recreation & Leadership Development conference, 1993.

The National scene

In 1989, the Federal Government, under the National Training Reform agenda, proposed and implemented a Competency based training scheme for industry at large. In this context, "industry" implies any nationally organised group or business type, with paid or unpaid participants. Most industrial and commercial organisations are implementing such schemes. (The idea of a systematic and modular training system has a connection to the quality assurance "QA" or "QC" programs currently being set up by many businesses to provide traceable and reproducible organisation systems within the business structure. These particular QA systems and programs are described under AS3902 and/or ISO9000 standards.)

The concept of NORLD emerged from that background. The continuing work by many people in many outdoor disciplines is pushing towards the establishment of such training or assessment schemes for the outdoor recreation "industry". As noted above, that may include both paid / commercial activities and unpaid / volunteer participants.

The NORLD 93 conference was held near Adelaide over the weekend of October 8 -> 12, just gone. This was the second such conference. The first conference was held at Port Sorell in Tasmania, July last year.

Attendees included representatives from the "main" outdoor sports - caving, canoeing, climbing, walking, rafting and cross country skiing, plus commercial operators, multi-user (ie people involved in several outdoor sports with no specific allegiance), Scouts, Guides and outdoor educators. All states and territories in Australia had representatives from at least some of the above groups. Tasmania had representatives from all the activity specific groups, one commercial operator plus Tourism, Sport & Recreation. Some representatives wore several hats.

The NORLD process and structure was refined and matured over several plenary and subgroup meetings. An interim national executive of twelve was appointed - one from each state / territory, one from each of two "peak bodies", in this case Scouts and Outward Bound, and one each from two activity groups, in this case caving (the Australian Speleological Federation) and canoeing (the Australian Board of Canoe Education). A decision was made to run with the National Training Reform agenda - ie: instigate a training / assessment scheme with competency endpoints. Note: this is using competencies as endpoints, not necessarily a competency based training structure.

A representative was (re)appointed as the NORLD representative on the (interim) RITAB. The RITAB is a part of the National Training Board (NTB) structure. It is the Recreation Industry Training Advisory Board. All industries involved in the National Training Reform agenda access the NTB via an appropriate ITAB. The number of ITAB's is to be rationalised in the near future - currently there are something like sixty in existence. With rationalisation and amalgamation this will be reduced to less than twenty. It is hoped (and work is being done to ensure) that RITAB will remain independent.

Some states / territories have made considerable progress since the initial conference at Port Sorell, others have not. This was seen to be partly a function of the actions of the State representative of SCORS (Standing Committee on Outdoor Recreation and Sport), a Federal committee. I understand SCORS has been a major source of funding for the conferences held so far, as well as funding for state group establishment.

The Tasmanian scene

Tasmania has proceeded well along the path of organisation. During this year, a state wide steering committee of about ten people established the structures necessary to

coordinate local involvement in outdoor training schemes. The next meeting will be the first of the new Tasmanian Outdoor Leadership Council - TOLC for short. TOLC will be comprised of one representative from the Operational Committee plus one representative from other interested parties - land managers, emergency services, education, commercial operators and so on. Total size will about 12 people. The Operational Committee will be comprised of two representatives from each of the activity groups involved thus far - caving, climbing, cross country skiing and bushwalking. Other activities will added as required and when state coordination bodies are established.

Tasmania also has faired very well at the national representative level. Prior to NORLD 93, the chairman of the National Working Party of NORLD was Stuart Lennox from Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Tasmania and Graeme Cooksey from Department of Education and the Arts was member of the National Working Party. The working party has now been dissolved and is replaced by the eight member Executive noted above. Bruce Morley from Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Tasmania is our representative on the Executive and Stuart Lennox remains as the Secretariat. Peter Fehre from Tourism, Sport and Recreation is the Tasmanian representative on SCORS.

Funding for TOLC for a period of three years has been made available with a possible extension to five years if necessary. It is a self imposed requirement that TOLC and the groups below it become self funding and autonomous (ie removed from and independent of any Government department) within that time. This requires that training and assessment of candidates be on a "user pays" financial basis. The target market is primarily the "professional" sector of the industry, and such a financial system is not seen as detrimental.

The defined structure enables implementation of the scheme as an "industry driven" system. This is a basis of the functionality of the emerging national system of vocational educational training (VET). It also adds another couple of acronyms to the already large required vocabulary...

Caving

Caving as an activity group has had input into the local and national system since it was conceived as an arm of the Bush & Mountaincraft Board a couple of years ago. There are currently two main streams of implementation - one at the 'sport' level being developed by a work group of the Australian Speleological Federation, and the second being developed by the NORLD caving representatives for later acceptance by the NTB as a National Competency Standard. The content of both streams is necessarily very similar and will differ primarily in the intended target market and format of the competency document.

At the NORLD 93 conference, caving was represented by Rauleigh Webb from Western Austrlia, Alan Jenvons from South Australia, Chris Norton from New South Wales, Nick White from Victoria and Stuart Nicholas from Tasmania. All

the representatives have been involved in State activity groups as well as the ASF / National scheme. An overhaul of the Australian Speleological Federation draft document was carried out to bring it into line with the current requirements of the Australian Standards Framework (yes, another ASF!). Ultimately this new document will be submitted in full to the NTB via the RITAB and NORLD body for acceptance and registration on the National Register of Competency Standards. The latest draft of the document was submitted at the end of the NORLD 93 conference.

In Tasmania, one meeting of a caving advisory group has been held. This comprised one or two representatives from each of the five clubs in this state - in itself possibly an historical event... The meeting verified the need for a training / assessment scheme in Tasmania, appointed representatives to sit on the TOLC and organised further distribution of information within its ranks. Another meeting is planned for early November, 1993. Further decisions need to be made with regard to the relevance of the across the board "core competencies" so far defined as well as the need or otherwise of training workshops for activity specific skills. Other decisions and discussion required includes initial accreditation of assessors, time frame for implementation of the programme and future funding.

Competencies

Following is a summary of the NTB competencies document as it exists at this time for the activity of caving. Each competency comprises a statement of the competency, a sublist of required learning outcomes and a further sublist of assessment criteria. Caving is at the stage of checking the learning outcomes and writing the following assessment criteria. At NORLD 93 national representatives were appointed to write various parts of the document. Rauleigh Webb from Western Australia is writing the Optional Competency (b) and the Specific Competencies (a), (b), (c) and (k); Chris Norton from NSW is writing Optional Competencies (a) and (c) plus Specific Competencies (d) and (j); Alan Jevons from South Australia is writing Specific Competencies (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i), and Stuart Nicholas from Tasmania is writing Specific Competencies (m), (n), (l) and (o).

Competencies are in three categories, as per the NTB directives.

- (A) Core competencies are those common to all outdoor activities and will be required by all participants in the leadership scheme, regardless of the specific activity.
- (B) Optional competencies are those common to more than one activity but not common to all.
- (C) Specific competencies are those specific to one activity.

COMPETENCY LIST

Core Competencies: to include topic areas such as

Problem Solving
Organisational Skills
Group Management
Instructional Skills
Environmental Awareness
First Aid
Legal Responsibilities & Risk Management
Navigation Skills

Optional Competencies:

- (a) Knots
- (b) Belaying and Ropes
- (c) Abseiling

Caving Specific Competencies:

- (a) Basic Caving Equipment Knowledge & Care
- (b) The Cave Environment
- (c) Cave Conservation
- (d) Basic Caving Skills
- (e) Navigational Skills - caving
- (f) Management of Risk - caving
- (g) Group Management - caving
- (h) Problem Solving - caving
- (i) Search Procedures
- (j) Basic Cave Rigging
- (k) Cave Laddering
- (l) SRT Equipment Knowledge & Care
- (m) Cave Prusiking
- (n) Self Rescue
- (o) Advanced Cave Rigging

Further information

Contact Stuart Nicholas for caving specific information (Telephone 002 781248 BH, or 002 283054 AH, or FAX 002 281853) or Bruce Morley at Tourism, Sport and Recreation (Telephone 002 333942 BH or FAX 002 237423) for organisational information.

REFERENCE:

National Training Board Ltd., *National Competency Standards - Policy and Guidelines*, Second edition, October 1992. (GPO Box 2979, Canberra, ACT 2601.)