

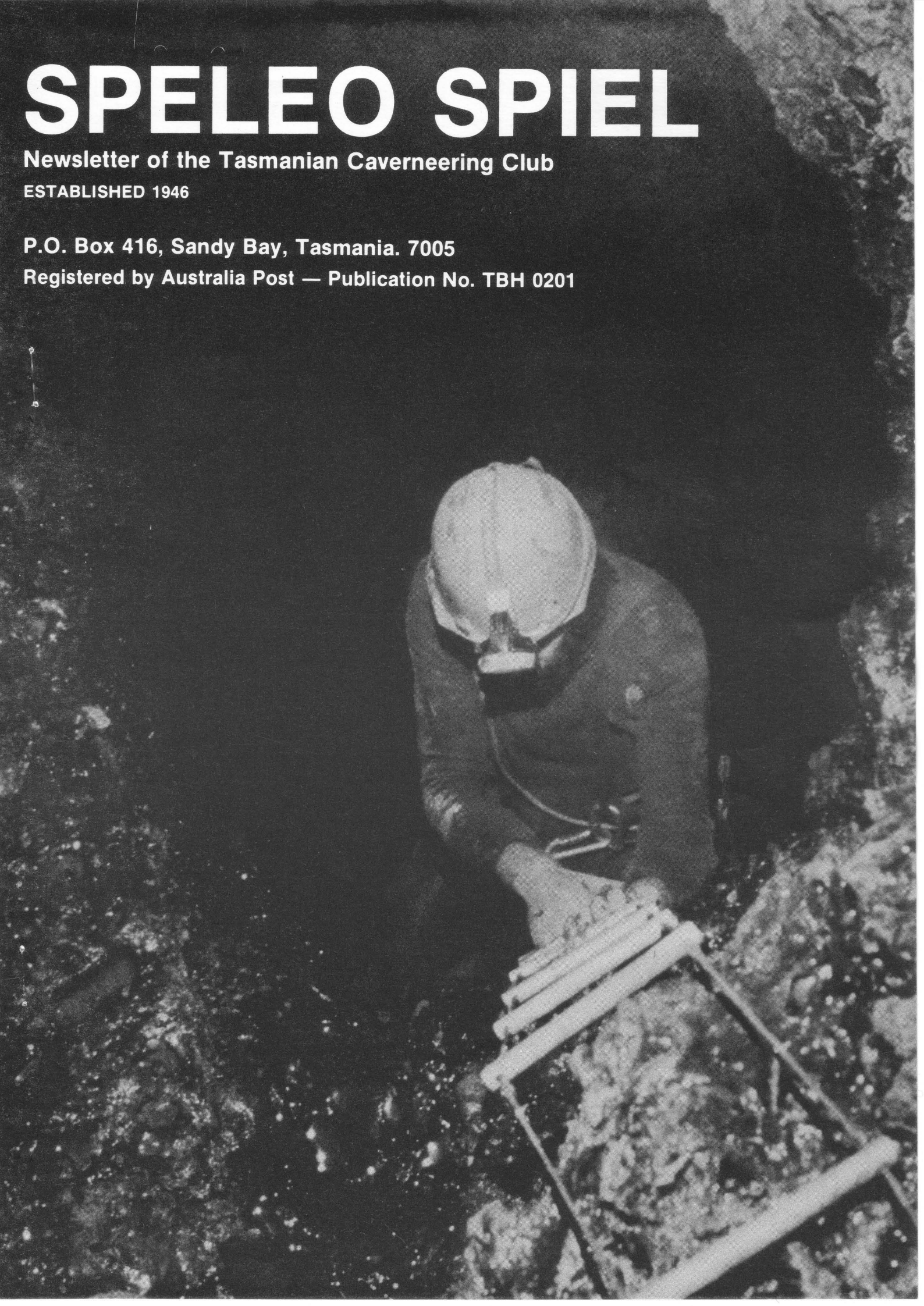
SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB, Inc.

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Forward Program

Wednesday March 30: Annual General Meeting. Venue - Wheatsheaf Hotel, Davey Street. Opening: 8 pm. **IMPORTANT MEETING - BE THERE!!**

Soon: Slaughterhouse Pot through trip - aims include having fun, tidying up the telephone line from the surface, putting the gear caches back in Refuge Aven and fixing the ladders in the Windy Rift area. See Stuart Nicholas (283054 ah or 781248 bh) to get on this little trip.

Editorial

Well, here we are again, suffering under the influence of Stu's keyboard and dot matrix printer. I am not sure where Garth (the editor of the previous issue) is, but we haven't seen him for a while...

A few events have and have not happened. Welcome Stranger cave in the Florentine Valley has been gated by the Forestry Commission as a conservation measure. Details of access arrangements appear elsewhere in this issue. Is this a good thing? Will the gate inspire greater vandalism than it attempts to stop? No doubt time will tell.

The Search and Rescue exercise planned for late February did not occur. Support from our club was going to be fairly poor, SCS were all going to Tullah for a wedding (not of/between themselves) and Launceston support was doubtful at best. The S&R circus will be re-scheduled and notices sent out when the date is known. Rescue exercises are, by their very nature somewhat contrived, however they do fill a number of useful roles. These include improving familiarity of cavers with Police procedures, equipment and personnel, getting to know cavers from other clubs and seeing what is really required and involved in a rescue. Please support the next exercise. If you don't, we may come looking for a few practice patients..

Access to Welcome Stranger

Welcome Stranger, perhaps the best decorated cave in the Junee-Florentine karst, has now been gated by the Forestry Commission. The rate at which impacts in this cave are occurring appears to have increased in recent years, probably due to the spread of knowledge about the cave's location coupled with its extreme accessibility.

Access to Welcome Stranger will now require a permit from the Forestry Commission and a deposit for the cave key will be levied. For further information contact the Commission's Senior Geomorphologist (002-337716) or the Derwent District Office, Patrick Street, Hobart.

Rolan Eberhard

A note on gear and THE KEY... (alias, a whinge from the old bloke who answers the phone at 2am when someone is late...)

TCC has a reasonable amount of equipment and it is all available for use by members. However, it is not for long term loan. We also have one key to the Florentine Valley gate.

The onus is on the borrower to:

- (a) Tell someone (eg Trev the gear custodian) where their trip is going.
- (b) Try and not change the arrangement / trip without again telling someone within TCC hierarchy.
- (c) **Return the gear promptly.**
- (d) **MOST IMPORTANT - return the Florentine Valley gate key as soon as possible** (like the night you get home from the trip). We have one key (thanks to the good offices of ANM Ltd), but **only one key** for the entire club to use.
- (e) Make sure your partner / spouse / great aunt / friend up the road knows who to phone if you are genuinely late. [Either call Stuart Nicholas 002-283054 (h) or 002-781248 (b) or failing that, call Tasmania Police on 002-352101 and ask for Search and Rescue (Stuart Nicholas is more than keen to talk to you about these arrangements...)].

All this may seem a bit "big brother-ish". The reasons relate to **YOUR SAFETY**. If we don't know where you are and your partner / spouse / great aunt / friend up

the road phones us or the Police S&R (who then phone us) to tell us you are late, what do we do?? How can we rescue you from under that million tonne boulder if we don't know which one to look under?? How do others get into the Florentine Valley for another trip the next day if you're fast asleep with the key under your pillow??

PLEASE FOLKS, do the right thing for yourselves - tell Trev or Stu or Bob or someone in the TCC hierarchy where you are going. If you don't go, again tell that same person. Return the gear and THE KEY pronto and again tell the same contact that you're back and OK.

That's all. Just think of the consequences of your actions at all times.
Thanks. Happy caving!

Stuart Nicholas

TCC Search and Rescue coordinator (and ad hoc 'phone answerer).

A plot to improve maps

Stu (or more correctly, his business) now has an XY plotter. For those not up with this device, it is the device usually used by engineers, draftspersons and so on to output (plot) drawings from computer based drafting packages.

What this really means is that now we have a method of plotting cave maps or traverses from SMAPS or whatever other software onto paper or film in quality, rather than the rather tatty dot matrix printer output used previously.

The plotter will take A3 or A4 media - not huge, but better than a scratch on paper with a broken pencil. It has a six pen carousel, so plots can be done in up to six colours.

Caving - the new tourism push??

A recent issue of "Panorama", the Ansett Australia inflight magazine, contained an article on a well known cave system at Waitomo, New Zealand. Located in central North Island, Waitomo has some most spectacular karst, with deep and fast underground river systems, relatively warm temperatures and a generally user-friendly atmosphere. Waitomo was once described by George Bernard Shaw as the 'eighth wonder of the world'.

The cave "reviewed" in the Ansett article is The Lost World. The article comprises a four page photo documentary of a wild cave commercial tourist trip. A 100m entrance abseil is followed by a stream traverse to a second entrance and takes place over about three hours or so. Wetsuits, lights and all other caving paraphernalia is supplied by the tour company. All punters are given a half day of abseiling instruction before the under ground trip. It's interesting to note that the abseiling instruction starts with a 20m drop - quite high for raw beginners and / or tourists. It would be interesting to know the cost of the trip / tour. **Late news...** Trev has just returned for NZ having done a couple of these tourist trips (as a non-paying 'passenger'). He's thinking of a TCC trip to Waitomo next Easter, ie Easter 1995. Start saving your beer money now

New Feeling, Growling Swallet**5th December, 1993**

Party: Peter Shaw, Brian Collin

A pleasant trip to New Feeling to see a bit of Growling Swallet that we hadn't seen before. On arrival at the cave, the water was highish but the weather was clearing with a scattering of snow on the peaks.

The climb down near the entrance was sprinkling but not a torrent. We had a quick look round the Glow-worm Chamber and then into the quiet of New Feeling. We looked for the climb up out of the first chamber but didn't fancy anything. Brian suggested we throw my pack hauling rope over one of the chockstones and use it to pull up a ladder. Unfortunately, we managed to snag the rope on a knob with the result that it's still there. To prevent anyone thinking it is a handline, we threw the free end of the rope up as well. If anyone's going past and recovers the rope, I'd like it back.

Having been foiled by the climb-up, we investigated a low passage at the foot of the first drop. The map shows this as heading towards a narrow passage in the main part of New Feeling with a small gap in between. After several bouts of gravel shifting and the removal of part of a sharp bend in the passage, we were through. Two metres of new passage!

We crawled through and admired the pretties and then tried to find the top of the climb-up from the inside, to retrieve the rope. We reached the roof of the first chamber but couldn't find the way down. After admiring the crystal pools, we reached the pitch but had left the ladder back in the first chamber so headed back out.

On the crawl back to Stal Corner, the stream had an ominous pulsing sound and we discovered that the stream had risen to a definitely sporting nature, presumably from snow melt. Back at the slot near the entrance, the water was a torrent and right on the limit. After Brian had had a fall in the entrance streamway, we were glad to be out of the cave in one piece.

This new route into the main part of New Feeling is probably faster and doesn't have the thrutch up the flowstone slot that the regular route has. A word of warning - since this crawlway was mapped in 1985, it has been flooded; a piece of branch was jammed across the passage.

Peter Shaw

DIGGING THE OLD ONES OUT...**2 January 1994**

Trevor Wailes, Martyn Carnes (plus Roger the dog) and Stuart Nicholas.

TCC was off to a bright start for the New Year - a trip on the second day. Trev 'phoned... "Feel like doing some track clearing?" Ominous thoughts of lugging a large chain saw up the Niggly track immediately sprang to mind.

Fortunately a less rigorous day was planned. Martyn, a caver from the eighties, had become inspired after hearing Bluewater Rope mentioned on a TV show, Trev was keen to do a little track clearing along the Growling and Serendipity track and he thought I should come along anyway. Secondary (?) to that plan was another digging effort in Asteroid Pot (JF366). This little shaft sits over the far upstream end of Serendipity, draughts and could provide an easier way into that somewhat intriguing but seldom visited system and area. The last dig in Asteroid was probably something over five years ago.

A pre-departure survey check revealed that only about 90 metres separates the surface and Serendipity at the point in question, so off we went armed with a small garden trowel, a couple of buckets plus other basic gardening implements. A few small overhung branches were cut from the Serendipity track, although a chain saw session is needed owing to some recent and not so recent big tree falls.

Asteroid was duly reached and work commenced. The dig site was a caving museum. A "branch" pulled away from the top of the entrance proved to be a jemmy bar sitting there from the last trip. An old bucket was dug out after an hour or so of work, the top edge being initially mistaken for a rib from a large animal! At least we'd reached the previous limit of work. Digging proceeded apace with various guesstimates of the strength of the draught keeping the level of optimism not too far below zero.

Probably about fifty buckets of mud, clay and stones were removed, with the descending passage previously looked at being the best option for further work. Another effort in the next few weeks instead of the next few years should reveal more rather than just uncover the same bit of cave all over again. Certainly a worth while project - not too hard, fair prospects of getting into Serendipity and sitting in the rain+forest is a good social day out! Anyone else keen? We'll take the chain saw next trip and cut out some of the logs as well.

Stuart Nicholas

Growling Swallet - Main Streamway + Destiny Passage

February 25, 1994

Party: Steve Bunton, Kathy Kumsek, Robyn Graham, David Nichols, Peter Verway and Stuart Nicholas.

Funny how small trips grow 'like topsy'. Plan A was to take David and Peter into the near reaches of GS while at the same time looking at the fixed ladders in the Windy Rift and Refuge Aven area prior to the proposed S&R Exercise planned for the next weekend. Second to this was the retrieval of Peter Shaw's haul rope in New Feeling passage.

However, plan A was abandoned in favour of plan B when various other people expressed interest in a grand tour of the front end of GS. And so it was that we departed for a bright sunny day in Growling. The team was bedecked in a wide variety of garments, some looking vaguely like caving gear and some not.

Remarkably low stream conditions and somewhat changed flow paths in the entrance made for a dryish trip in. Highlights of the entrance passage series were pointed out by Steve and Stu, if only as a means of catching one's breath and looking knowledgeable at the same time.

The party thinned at the top of the waterfall 'jump' before the sump. Stu, David and Peter ventured on to Windy Rift, Refuge Aven and out to Destiny Passage and the top of the Destiny Pitch. The remainder of the team had a quick look at Windy Rift before heading out at a comfortable pace.

Both the top ladders on either side of Refuge Aven are damaged, each just at one point. This could and should be fixed, either by strapping the two rungs together or looping another rope or wire through each rung as a reinforcement to the existing rope. BE WARNED - the ladders are not very safe at present. This will be fixed in the near future. Maybe the ladders should be removed and just ropes left in place?? What do you think??

The food + gear cache in Refuge Aven is also non-existent. Rolan (the last one to use the cache) has made up some new waterproof food + gear cache 'bombs'. These will also be put in place soon.

The Destiny of the Refuge Aven party was decided and they headed out to meet the others somewhere. An attempt by Stu to get into New Feeling was thwarted by a painful feeling in his left rib cage (bruised chest, not heart trouble!) and the crawl / squeeze was hence not attempted. We didn't get the rope out, sorry Pete.

The party was reunited just at the bottom of the entrance rock slope. The view looking out was somewhat spectacular with the sun lighting some of the steam and spray while still allowing the forest beyond to be seen. We sat around admiring this vista for some time before wandering out up the main streamway.

A walk further along McCallums Track towards the Serendipity turnoff and to the Asteroid Pot dig site finished off a most enjoyable day for all. Thanks to everyone for coming along and learning a little about the Florentine Valley karst system.

Stuart Nicholas

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Tasmanian Caverneering Club, Inc.

Date and time: Wednesday March 30, 1994; Opening at 8pm SHARP...

Venue: The Wheatsheaf Hotel, Davey Street, Hobart.

Agenda: Apologies.
Minutes of the 1993 AGM.
Business arising from the minutes.
Correspondence; business arising.
Reports: President, Secretary, Treasurer, Quartermaster,
other office bearers.
Election of Office Bearers and Committee: all positions become
vacant at the AGM and must be filled by election or
appointment.
General business.
Close.

Normally the AGM is short with a more normal General Meeting following immediately after. This facilitates discussion on issues of the day and planning for the next year.

Stuart Nicholas (immediate past ASF Vice President) has two ASF Certificates of Merit to present during the evening. These were awarded in Launceston at the last ASF Conference in January last year, but now Stuart has the certificates themselves to present to Arthur Clarke and Trevor Wailes.

Please make an effort to attend. AGM's are not the horror show they are made out to be and usually are quite congenial and positive events. Any ideas from anyone for bettering the club are most welcome.