

# SPELEO SPIEL

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club  
ESTABLISHED 1946

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#### MEETINGS

T.C.C. meet on the first and third Wednesdays of every month at the Shipwright's Arms Hotel in Battery Point. I don't believe anyone would actually reads any of this fine print, so if you do then let me know at the next meeting and I will buy you a free drink!

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#### IN THIS ISSUE:-

##### **FORWARD PROGRAMME:**

Future trips. . . . . 2  
T.C.C. Annual Dinner. . . . . 2

##### **CLUB MATTERS:**

Editorial . . . . . 2  
Garth does the "Big Split!" . . . . . 3  
Drilling technology hits TCC! . . . . . 4

##### **TRIP REPORTS:**

What happened to the New Zealand trip? Wolf Hole,  
Exit Cave, Wherret's Lookout, JF 133, Jane's Draughting Hole(!)  
Lynd's Cave & even more! . . . . . 5

##### **BITS & PIECES:**

The Wrath of Buttman! . . . . . 8

PAGE 2

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\* \* \* FORWARD PROGRAMME \* \* \*  
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**WELD VALLEY-** 20-21st August.

Was anyone interested? Well the date has already passed now. That's too bad as Nigel and Dean would have had a great trip by now. You'll just have to go to more meetings if you don't want to miss out again! You should have contacted Dean for details.

**EXIT CAVE-** 27th August.

Continue with the survey work. Only limited numbers and permits available. Contact Trevor or Dean.

**MOLE CREEK-** 9-10th September.

A weekend up at Mole Creek. Kubla Khan is the target for the Saturday and Croesus Cave for the Sunday. Very limited numbers for this one. Permits have already been organised at only 6 people per trip. Possibly stay at the Mole Creek hut and meet some Northern Caverneers. Contact Dean ASAP about this one as seats are going fast!

**MOUNT ANNE-** 14-15th October.

Yep, that's right. The North East Ridge of Mt. Anne! Dependent upon numbers as to what we will be doing once we get there but it could be an epic! A serious weekend away. Contact Dean if you are a starter.

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\* \* \* EDITORIAL \* \* \*  
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You may or may not have noticed, but Dean has taken over the role of Spiel Editor and Club President from Garth. Why you may ask? Was it a conspiracy or mutiny? Were the FBI or CIA involved? Was there any violence or bloodletting on anyones part? Well you'll just have to read "Club Matters" to find that one out! (for those who haven't heard). Unfortunately Garth ran out of time as it all happened so fast and he was not able to put fingers to keyboard and punch out a final Spiel and say goodbye to everyone as he was hoping. I know he will be reading this as no doubt there would be nothing else to do in Mildura so many thanks to him for editing the Spiel over the last couple of years and best of luck for the future.

Whats happening to the club? Garth, Nigel, Dean (and Jeff Butt from the SCS) are about the only active cavers in Southern Tassie at the moment and with 25% of that lot just gone to Mildura, we need some others to get more active. Most trips are not advertised on the forward programme so if you are keen to go caving then ring Dean, Nigel, or Jeff and I'm sure you will find someone willing to go somewhere with you.

On the meeting scene I think it would be a good idea to try and hold a slide night once a month. Slides would not have to be caving shots as most members of the club participate in other activities and would be keen to see good photo's of anything (wife's, girlfriends ect...)

If you have any slides to show then give Dean a yell and we will organise a night to show them. Maybe the first Wednesday of every month?

As a final whinge, how about Spiel articles? Write about anything you want (preferably caving oriented) and get it to Dean for publishing. Trip Reports, product reviews or comments, more trip reports, comments on anything, more trip reports, even old reminiscing from the olden days (for the older members). It all makes for interesting reading! You may not realise it but all trips to caves or caving areas should be documented as trip reports so that people in the future can refer to what was looked at and when the last trips were made to caves they may want to visit. If I hear of a trip that has happened, I will be straight onto you for a report of what went on!

THERE IS NO ESCAPE so put finger to keyboards, pen to paper, or cold chisels to rock slabs and get it to the Editor!

[Afternote:-I have only just recieved some trip reports from Garth that had been given to him for publishing. If you had given an article to him and it has not been published yet, then it is probably amongst these and they will all be in the next Spiel, including the New Zealand stuff.]

Dean Morgan  
Editor.

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\* \* \* CLUB MATTERS \* \* \*  
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**SORRY!**

I must apologise on behalf of the TCC for the last Spiel being so late. By the time you received it most of the forward program had already happened! Apparently the Spiel had been printed, it just stayed in a box for a month or so before it was discovered and posted out!!! We all deserve a good spanking and we promise it won't happen again...

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### **GARTH DOES THE "BIG SPLIT".**

That's right! Our esteemed President, Editor of this newsletter, Treasurer of the Cave Leadership Accreditation Group (CLAG) and member of the Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group has bid "farewell" to Tasmania and taken up employment in Mildura, South Australia!!! And what's more, it's permanent too!!!!!!!

Garth and Tanya (and yet to be born Garth junior) could not handle the active lifestyle of being a Tasmanian with all of the wonderful caving, climbing, bushwalking ect... so they have gone to settle down in Mildura for a lifestyle of boring nothingness. Apparently the job opportunity was too good, and too well paid for him to turn down and at the end of August a very active part of the TCC will cease to function, although he assures me that his holidays will be full time caving expeditions in Tasmania...

On behalf of the TCC (and CLAG) I would like to thank Garth for everything that he has done for the club(s) over the 3-4 years while he was around and we all wish him and Tanya the best of luck for the future and I hope we see him during his holidays in Tassie!



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#### C.L.A.G. REPRESENTATIVE NEEDED.

With "Splitter" Cornelius now gone, there is now a spot available as the TCC representative on the Cave Leadership Accreditation Group. CLAG consists of a maximum of 3 members of each Tasmanian caving club and Dean is now the sole TCC representative. If you want to nominate someone, or you are interested in getting involved yourself, then let Dean know and he will fill you in with details as to what it's all about.

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#### DRILL POWER COMES TO THE T.C.C. AT LAST.

The club has finally lashed out with the required \$1000(!?!?!!) and purchased a Battery Powered Rotary Hammer Drill! Sound impressive huh! This nifty little unit is slightly water resistant, partly mud proof, quite small, and weighs a meagre 2.5kg so there is no excuse for not packing it away when you head off for a day's bushbashing for new caves. It was only really purchased for the fitment of number tags to entrances although the salesman tells me that it is powerful enough for drilling bolt holes as well. Personally I would not like to see it go underground as it would get ruined fairly fast but I suppose it would be OK if it were kept spotlessly clean. Dean is to house and look after the drill and any financial members are free to use it although there may be a deposit needed. If it is returned late, dirty, damaged, or if there is any other thing that I am not happy about then you will lose part, or all of the deposit. This may sound harsh but it was more money than we were expecting to pay for one. (Incidentally we looked at purchasing one a year ago and they have all gone up around \$3-\$400 in the last year!).

If we find and tag all these entrances now, when they are extended in the future it will be documented who found them and as you are sitting round the lounge room talking to your grandchildren 50 years from now you will be able to say

"Yeah, I found Dark cave back in the 90's. Turned out to be 87 kilometres long and 743 metres deep. Those were the good old days!"

Rolan is the one to see for the June-Florentine tags and Arthur Clarke for Ida Bay. Don't forget to fill in the Karst Index forms as well if you find new caves. Happy tagging and I will let you know next issue how it is going.

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#### T.C.C. ANNUAL DINNER.

The Annual Dinner is coming fast! Usually this esteemed event is held on the last Friday in September but as I am away that week I am hoping that no-one will object if I postpone it until Friday the 6th of October. The venue is the "Kingston Cottage" at 39 Beach Rd Kingston. Cost is \$20.00 per head and it is fully licensed restaurant so don't bring your own. RSVP to Stuart Nicholas (283054) and we'll see you at 7pm, Friday 6th of October.

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**T.C.C. ANNUAL DINNER.**

The Annual Dinner is coming fast! Usually this esteemed event is held on the last Friday in September but as I am away that week I am hoping that no-one will object if I postpone it until Friday the 6th of October. If that date does not suit you then please come to a meeting and say but if not then it will be at the Shipwright Arm's Hotel in Battery Point, the same venue as last year. Please ring Trev to reserve a seat or if you want more info.

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**SPIEL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Are you a current financial TCC member? Life member? Subscribe to the Spiel? Part of an Organisation that does a magazine swap with TCC? Because if you are non of the above the only way you will be getting a Spiel is by coming along to meetings and paying \$3.00 an issue. Our mailing list has a lot of redundant names on it as of **This Spiel** it is getting thrown out and a new one made up. **You have been warned!!!**

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**Wolf Hole. An Introduction to surveying. 15-Jan-1995**

Party: Kelly Miller, Dean Morgan, Dave Nichols and Nigel Williams

We hastened to the Hastings Cave access road to undertake an introduction to surveying in a guaranteed "dead boring cave". Dean repeatedly assured us that it was "dead boring" and its only significance was it ended in a large chamber containing the largest underground lake in Tasmania. Dean's somewhat intermittent memories suggested there was little opportunity for much new stuff.

Dean started by introducing us to the equipment we were to use;

"Boys and Girls this is Mr Clinometer, Mr T Measure and Mr Compass, with these modest tools we will discover the true nature of Wolf Hole" (or something like that).

"What no GPS, no EDM, no Digital Theodolite!?!?! where are the push-button backlit LCD displays and instant no effort answers? gak! you mean we have to do this stuff manually?", the younger members staring in disbelief as the rustic antiquities were laid before them.

Under guidance we surveyed from the road to the entrance to the cave. After suitable rigging, we dropped (plummeted under control) excitedly into the first 31.545m pitch (is that close enough?).

PAGE 6

As we surveyed we swapped roles to gain experience, and after much discussion about job titles settled on Dean (Principal Supervisor), Dave (Master of Clinometer), Kelly (Senior Executive Draftperson), and Nigel (Chief Measurer). We then moved through the main passage towards the fabled lake with fastidious attention to detail at each survey station, "How far is that? 10.434343m! what? 10.434343m. Are you sure? Yes! What if I do this? Oh! its different now; make it 10.4343431m. Ok").

On the return route to the exit (entrance?) we started to poke around in likely holes or passages. Dave using his trusty remote piloted cave explorer (Eds note: We call them leg's!) to determine the extent of a hole found in one of the sumps near the lake. As it is attached to his body and something he purportedly uses to walk around with its range is somewhat overstated.

While Dean was away pushing the envelope in a side passage, we three trouped off and lo and behold "Dave's Den" was discovered, explored, named, experienced and then forsaken all in 10 minutes.

Our remaining time was spent near the cave entrance exploring passages off the main drag. This area exhibits a lower level (10-15m below the readily accessible level) with interconnecting horizontal passage development. This could be viewed from various dispersed shafts descending to this lower level. It was generally agreed that future trips should consider exploring this area further.

We prusiked back to the surface, crossing a rebelay with many oaths and profanities offered up to the gods of ascension. Finally, finishing to Geeveston via the "short cut" logging roads for an ice-cream after an exciting fun-filled day, "Oh I forgot. Dead boring it was...".

The results of our surveying efforts are still under active and careful consideration. Our team is, as you read this dear reader, carefully and painstakingly hand drawing a fine rendering of the twists, turns, swoops and wriggles of the main passage. The plan was to unleash this masterful and labored creation with much fanfare and hoopla in a previous newsletter. Well maybe sometime this millennia. It might happen sooner if we can convince the key player to give up a futile attempt to breed a race of mutant pack carrying laboratory rats.

Nigel Williams.

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LYND'S CAVE-MOLE CREEK 19/5/95

Party:- Leigh Douglas, Nigel Williams, Garth Cornelius, Dean Morgan, and  
Chris Riley (Northern Caverneer's).

Brimming with enthusiasm from the S&R exercise the weekend before, I couldn't knock back the opportunity to go caving at Mole Creek, even if it was only for a day so Nigel and I left Hobart on Sunday morning to do battle with the church traffic and horse floats to make it to the Mole Creek "Homestead" by 10.30am. Chris, Garth and Dean were eagerly awaiting us and rearing to go. A quick look around the homestead surprised me. Tender loving care and a lot of effort have improved it so it is more comfortable with wooden bunks, and a homely woodfire stove. The "Garage" section of the homestead still looks the same though, with its aging newspaper lined walls and blackberries growing through the floorboards for effect! There is a locked gate on the

road now and permission should be obtained from Northern Caverneers if you want to use the homestead.

Once at the cave and inside the entrance we charged on up the stream bed and sidled around the deep pools. The rock here is just like the Growling Swallet streamway, being smooth, black and solid although it soon becomes drier and clayey as you negotiate further. The rich mineral colours and striking formations require you to stop and admire throughout the cave. I particularly liked the pillow shaped flow stone and how it sparkled as your light flashed over it. The cave seems to go through old broken flowstone chambers following the stream to the first rockpile. Here we ended up going along the bottom in the creek and after a few low ducks and crawling the passage opens up again and we followed the creek along to the second rockpile. Garth's light had nearly died by this stage so as we worked our way along a clay tube I followed behind so he could see. He found a way through which almost required freestyle in 20cm of water!

Further along we came to a third and final rockpile where the rocks and mud have all been calcified together. Garth managed to find a way through a small slot but he and Dean were stopped further on as the water almost filled the small tube and required breathholding through cold water to get to the other side. The stream could be heard on the other side and it looked and sounded like it opened up. At this point we decided to head out and leave this to the next generation which I thought was very generous. We decided to head out at this point as we could go no further for now. [Eds note: This was all new passage at this stage.]

On the way out we looked at the decorated chamber above the second rockpile and other than that the trip out was quite uneventful except for Chris's spectacular splash into the plunge pool near the entrance.

Back outside the air was warm and sweet with the smell of vegetation and Dean wanted to finish off his film so Nigel offered to swim across the Merseyfully cave clad. The only problem was his gumboot snagged on a log partway across and much to his embarrassment he had to go back and retrieve it!

I thought we all enjoyed ourselves and thanks to Chris for keeping us on the straight and narrow!

Leigh Douglas.

\* \* \* \* \*

**JF 133/WHERRET'S LOOKOUT.** 23/6/95

**PARTICIPANTS:-** Garth Cornelius, Nigel Williams, Dean Morgan.

No more driving up to the Florentine in Trev's Escort van and stopping at the Maydena shop for a piece of fried fish! No sirreee! We went up in Nigel's luxury Twin Turbo, double overhead doorhandle, dual dipsticked, 4WD, quad cam, 4 wheel steer, anti-lock, sporty howling monastery beast thing. And to make it really up to date, we stopped at McDonalds for breakfast on the way! Gosh darn, how things change over the years!

A couple of weeks prior to this trip, the above mentioned people plus Jason Hamill, and Chris Riley from Northern Caverneers had made a trip up to Wherret's lookout via the slip and headed out to the left. Dean, Bob Reid and Stuart Nicholas had made a few trips out there around 5 years ago and had found a few new caves as well as a lot of caves that John Parker had



PAGE 8

found and tagged back in the 70's but had not looked at. On the trip 2 weeks earlier we had got as far as JF135. That being about half way between the Gap and the slip and last weekend Garth and Nigel had come up from the Gap side and got as far as a cave tagged JF133 with a pitch and good draught that they were keen to explore. Today was the day we were to bottom it and connect into Growling Swallet...

We followed the track Nigel and Garth had taped the weekend before that starts right at the Gap and apart from attempting a short cut that wasn't, we were soon (after 1½ hours or so) at JF133 again.

Garth and Nigel trogged up for exploration mode, and I went for a bit of a look further around the limestone contact. About 50 metres further on I could hear a reasonable sized stream and could see a large gully with the water running down it. There were also some impressive 20 metre high Karst towers and cliffs and things were looking good. After coming into the gully I came upon an impressive swallet taking a fair bit of water, but upon closer inspection I noticed that it was the same swallet (JF135) that we were at a couple of weeks earlier. We thought that we were still a kilometre or so from here but it only turned out to be 100 metres further round the contact towards the slip. I then thought back to my trips 5 years earlier and where Garth and Nigel were and I started to remember exploring a cave like the one they were in. Sure enough, when I went back to JF133 it all came back to me and I remembered it going down a 20 metre pitch, through some walk through passage into a large chamber. There was some rockpile at the bottom of the chamber that you could squeeze through to another short pitch soon followed by another 20-30 metre pitch where it all completely choked out.

When Nigel and Garth finally arrived back at the entrance they described the cave just as I remembered it. Sorry Fella's!

It was around 3PM by this stage with only 2 hours daylight left so we started back and stopped at the first stream for a hot cuppa before trudging back down the hill to the car. There are plenty of interesting limestone features and outcrops out that way so we will be sure to get back up there soon. (With our new drill to tag some new entrances). Even though nothing particularly was achieved, we all had a good day in the bush.

Dean Morgan.

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**THREE TRIP REPORTS IN ONE!  
DON'T READ ENTIRELY IN ONE GO, MAY CAUSE MENTAL BLOAT!**

This report covers three trips to the Wherret's Lookout area at the southern end of the Florentine. In hindsight it represents Garth's Tassy caving finale now that his move to Mildura is underway (at least until holiday time).

Trip 1 via The Slip. 1-July-1995:- Chris Riley (Northern Caverneers), Dean Morgan, Garth Cornelius, Jason Hamill, and Nigel Williams.

Trip 2 via The Gap. 9-July-1995: - Garth, Jane and Nigel.

Trip 3 via The Gap. 23-July-1995:- Dean, Garth and Nigel.

**JF133 Re-visited**

Recently members of the club conducted a surface thrash on the South Western side of The Slip.

During trip 1 Chris, Garth, Jason and Nigel looked at some new and old entrances without finding anything with prospects. Standing at the farthest extent reached on this trip it was possible to see where the Gap was located and it was debated whether we should attempt to tape down to the Gap. The route back appeared closer than the return trip down the Slip to the cars. Fading light and lack of time persuaded us to abandon this approach this time.

However, the discussions resulted in a plan to tape a track from the Gap towards the Slip. This would reduce the time needed to reach the area of limestone contact and perhaps better prospects of finding unexplored entrances.

Trip 2, we taped the track, noticing that for the first few hundred metres we were paralleling an existing taped track. Jane's Draughting Hole was discovered at the top of the exposed limestone outcrop above the Gap. This is a small (20cm) hole which is draughting slightly, located on the side of a 3m collapsed doline. from the outcrop we moved up the ridgeline in line with the summit of Wherret's and after 400m dropped down the side of a hill and again came across an existing taped track. This track eventually led us past a series of swallets and entrances (all checked with nil prospects) and then to a tagged cave JF133.

When we first re-located JF133 much excitement ensued since indications from the Karst index and other sources were that no one had explored it. This cave is at an altitude of around of 720m, that is potentially deep! Trip 3 was planned as the push on JF133.

#### Trip 3

On our return trip to JF133, Dean had a sense of Deja Vu. Having re-located the entrance we prepared to descend. While Garth descended, Dean was finding additional confirmation of his previous trip to the same area (early 1990s). In particular, it included exploring JF133! However, our enthusiasm not diminished we pressed on.

There is an initial 10m pitch, following by a descending passageway (1m wide) with a high rift (6m) like ceiling. At the bottom of the pitch and other sections of the cave piles of animal bones are to be found, generally well preserved. The passageway splits after descending around a further 10m vertically, 25m horizontal and the left passageway ends in a chamber which is mostly filled by a mud bank. This chamber has a small amount of formation (including some helictites).

The right passageway continues for a further 20m and ends in a large aven with a boulder pile on the floor. Lack of time prevented further exploring. Dean's memory suggests there is a way through the boulders to another pitch of 20m or so where it all chokes out.

Further discussion with Dean suggests the area between the Gap and JF133 has not been thoroughly explored (or not mentioned at least). With the access to the area taped and some familiarity with the topology gained, more trips are planned in this area.

On the way out during trip 3 Jane's Draughting Hole was further excavated

PAGE 10

in a moment of manic energy by the party. Anyone walking by is now obliged to remove at least one stone if they are to avoid Jane's Curse which now covers this area. The hole is now a little larger and after much craning of necks and shining of lights a small section of passageway has been spied moving deeper into the limestone outcrop. (Eds note: In Nigel's report he calls it Jane's cave but I know that it was called Janes Draughting Hole when they found it. Sorry Jane!)

Nigel Williams.

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EXIT CAVE. 15/6/95

PARTICIPANTS:- Nigel Williams, Bryan French, Trevor Wailes, Dean Morgan.

TCC had obtained 6 permits to go into Exit cave earlier in the year for surveying up near North West creek but none of the trips had happened yet so this was the first of (hopefully) many more survey trips. (Also see forward programme.)

After pulling the whingeing Pommy bastard out of a short period of semi-retirement, Trev was keen to go in via Valley Entrance but I assured him it would only take 1½ hours to get to North West creek in through the main entrance and it was an easier, flatter trip going in that way than up over the hill. Much easier for our tired old bones. Reluctantly he agreed.

The trudge in through the "swamp" was pretty wet but we were soon looking in the main entrance donning caving attire, and exactly 1½ hours later we were all sweating and panting at Broken Column Chamber. Surveying was commenced a short way further on from here but unfortunately we had forgotten any flagging tape to mark survey stations so we will mark where the survey started on the next trip.

We surveyed from there out through Camp Pie Circuit and finished where it connect back near the Kellar's Squeeze streamway (whatever that stream is called). Next trip will probably complete the Camp Pie Circuit and the subsequent trips after that will do all side passages and tie up loose ends.

Once surveying was completed we started the walk out and once back at the main entrance we found the water had subsided a bit from when we came in so we waded out through the chest deep water with a few ooh's and aah's about the water temperature. As expected the "swamp" was just as boggy as it was on the way in but we arrived back at the cars at 7.30PM all commenting on what a good trip it had been.

Hopefully it wont be long until the next one.

Dean Morgan

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AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT(?)  
PLEASE TURN OVER THE PAGE!

Garth Vader and Dreaan Gorgan in

"THE WRATH OF BUTTMAN"

(This is a true story. Only the facts have changed)

JUNEE-FLORENTINE: 2017:AD

"Over here Dreaan." Garth called through the intercom. I glanced across and there was Garth hovering about 200 metres to my right just above the tops of the tree's.

"According to the GPS positioner it's got to be in that limestone outcrop down below." He exclaimed as he disappeared down through the tree tops. By leaning across in the direction that Garth had been my Anti-Gravity boots flew me in his direction. I took one last look at the bulk of West Mount Field poised in front of me and followed him down on to the forest floor.

We had good reason to be at this place. The Evil leader of S.C.S. who went by the name of Buttman, had found the connection between Dark Cave and Black Pit and we were to try and complete the first through trip. "Are you sure you want to go through with this?" I said weakly, half hoping the answer would be no. Garth looked at the entrance and then back at me.

"We've got to man." He replied. "For Revver."

Revver Trailles had been killed by one of Buttman's Sabre Toothed Kanga-Wallaby's after Buttman had caught Revver trying to break into S.C.S. headquarters to steal the survey of the through trip. The animal had been trained to kill by Buttman and it had certainly done a good job of that as Revver was such a mess by the time that we got to him that he looked like spaghetti bolognese! Revver had been T.C.C. Head Commander for many years until he upset a few too many traditionalist in the ranks with his law that all female cavers had to wear G-string Trog suits. Unfortunately he was voted out of power at the next Annual General Meeting. Poor old Revver.

My mind was bumped back to the present as Garth gave me a nudge and said.

"Wake up Bozo. You need to stay on full alert for this trip." And he then disappeared in through the entrance. I turned the thermostat on my Trog suit up a few degrees in preparation for the colder temperatures underground and followed him in. Just inside the entrance we both flicked the switch on our Oakley's to night vision and waited a moment for them to adapt to the dark.

"I'm sure Buttman has got some traps in here somewhere to stop people from bagging the first through trip." Warned Garth. "Make sure your eyes are peeled."

I needed no reminding of what a cunning bastard Buttman could be as I'd heard enough stories about him from when I was at T.C.C. caving school. As we walked in the entrance past all of the broken formation and the "Nigel William's woz 'ere 1988." graffiti my mind was already on full alert. It didn't take long following the stream down until we found ourselves at the head of the pitch series looking down into a spray filled chamber. Garth was just bending down to switch on his Anti-Gravity boots when there was a loud screech from high up in the roof.

"Stuff me mushrooms!!!" Exclaimed Garth as one of Buttman's Giant Guard Bats came swooping down towards him. Garth jumped off the pitch edge just as the bat sailed past where he was and took a sharp turn in my direction. I froze in shock for a moment but then the years of training at T.C.C. caving school came back to me as I remembered the A.S.F. code of combat where it states that "Stalagmites may only be broken off the roof of a cave in the event of being attacked by Giant Bats, and only for the purpose of self protection." And you can bet your life that's exactly what I did. Just as Batty was about to wrap his wings around me and finish me off I snapped a Stal off the roof and rammed it up through his throat.



Batty screamed out in pain and fell down into the streamway just as Garth appeared back over the top of the pitch. Garth had his Phaser Gun pointed at Batty writhing around in the stream and as he was about to shoot I gave Batty a swift kick sending him plummeting off the pitch head. We both stood there and watched him crash down onto the rocks below with a sickening thud.

"That was a close one!" Exclaimed Garth. "I wonder how many of those bastards are hidden in here?"

"Who knows?" I replied as I reached down and switched on my Anti-Gravity boot's and leapt off the pitch head. "It's a safe bet that it won't be the only thing that we'll have to contend with today!"

We had soon descended the pitch series and were standing on solid ground down at base level when Garth looked upwards and remarked. "Remember those old Speleo Spiel's from the 1970's we were looking through the other night? That bloke called Stuart Nicholas who use to do this sort of thing using ladders and ropes? They must have been hard men back in those days."

"Your right about that!" I replied. "Hard, and stupid." "Those ladders and ropes sound like they were bloody hard work. And what about those old electric lights they used to use!"

"Yeah." Replied Garth. "They certainly had to cope with old fashioned technology back in those days. Although I suppose Buttman wasn't around back then."

That's true I thought as we started crawling through the phreatic tubes. At least you had more predictable dangers to cope with back then.

#### THE CONNECTION

Garth and I'd crawled through the tubes and a flattener without any drama until we arrived in a chamber with a small stream flowing into a large aqua blue sump.

"This must be the dive." I mumbled to Garth as the thought of the cold water rushing in and filling my lungs ran through my mind. I'd never quite got used to the underwater breathing technique used nowadays, although the thought of carrying all of the scuba gear into the cave like they used to do in the old days was even less appealing! Garth and I took an Aqua-Breather tablet each and waded into the water. It took a minute to adapt to the cold water flowing in and out of our lungs but we were soon following the guide line through the sump into what was unknown territory for us. The way through the sump was the connection that Buttman had found through into Dark Cave. It had been dived before to a spot where it had become too constricted but Buttman had found an alternative side passage that had been missed on previous dives. As we swam through I watched a small species of Anispedes (Stefanicus Eberhardicus) crawling along the wall. This species has been known to leave caves altogether and climb up impossibly high walls risking life and limb. They sometimes take huge falls but the sensible ones soon return to the safer cave environment. Also laying on the bottom in a deep sleep was the Tasmanian Cave Newt (Arthuriscus Clarkscos). This little blighter tends to do bugger-all until you provoke it into action and as long as you keep provoking it occasionally it will be a never ending source of surprises.

We were heading upwards now and at first I thought that we were through and heading back to the surface but the guide line soon took a turn back down again. It then went around to the left and down, followed by a right, then a left, up, right, and another right. We were both quite sure that there would be a left turn coming up but we were surprised to see the guide line take another right before finally going left!!!

We then took another 2 left turns and just before we had done a complete circle the line finally went down and to the right, whereupon it took another right, then up, up, up, left, right, up, down, right, down, up, up, up, down, up, right, up, and to the right until the sight of an airspace appeared above us and we made a beeline for the surface. Once out of the water we had to stand on our heads against the wall for the water to drain out of our lungs but it sure was good to be breathing fresh air again!

After Trog suit temperatures had been re-adjusted I looked around to get my bearings and was very pleased to be back into more familiar territory again as Garth and I'd both been into Dark Cave on numerous trips before.

"What do you think Buttman would do if he caught us now?" Garth asked as we climbed up the mud banks out of the sump chamber.

"Maim, execute, slay, kill and murder are the words that readily spring to mind." Was the reply given. Then again I'm sure Garth had the same thoughts running through his mind already. Whatever the exact answer would be, we both knew that it wouldn't be pleasant for us.

### THE WAY OUT

It only took us ten minutes and we were at the brass plaque that had been placed in memory of an old T.C.C. caver called Chrizedavees who had died at this spot quite a few years ago. He was around in the days when Anti-Gravity boots were battery powered. They worked fine until the batteries went flat in mid air sending people plunging to their deaths. Needless to say, the Nuclear powered boots came out shortly afterwards...

"We're not that far from the entrance now. Keep a lookout for more of those bloody great big black Buttman Bats." I reminded Garth as we ascended the pitch.

"I'll get out the Infa-red scanner." Garth said reaching into his pocket. We started to walk more cautiously from then on, studying the scanner as we went.

"I'm getting dizzy watching this thing." Garth whispered to me. I knew exactly what he meant as I was feeling the same way.

"We must be concentrating too hard." I wheezed back to him as I was also finding it hard to breath.

As we walked along the passage something didn't seem right as I'd never had this problem before. Was it something to do with Buttman I thought? Garth must have been sensing the same thing as he was starting to look worried. Just as the Evil face of Buttman flashed through my mind an alarm went off in my helmet. Oxygen!!! We were running out of air!!!

"Starve the lizards!!!" I yelled. "What do we do now?"

"Follow me!" said Garth as he reached into his pocket and pulled something out. "Quickly swallow one of these."

I looked into his hand and he had some Aqua-Breather tablets in it. Of course! Breathe underwater!!!

As soon as we got to a pool of water we plunged our heads in and the cold water rushed down into our lungs. We didn't have much time to adapt but I was soon feeling better again until Garth pointed out.

"How do we get out of here now? This small pool of water will run out of oxygen pretty quick." I knew he was right and we had to do something quick. It would only take about five minutes until we were out of the cave but there was virtually no water to breath any more after this pool was used up. I suddenly thought about my cave pack! If we filled it up with water we might have enough to get out of the cave if we try and conserve it. Garth agreed that we had no other option so we filled the packs and slowly set off one breath at a time. Twenty metres further up the passage we found the source of our problem.

PAGE 14

That sneaky bastard Buttman had a huge CO2 dispenser in the cave pumping out carbon dioxide trying to kill anyone coming through. Garth picked up a rock and sent it hurtling through the control box putting the machine out of action although it wouldn't help us much as we didn't have time to hang around waiting for the foul air to clear.

It was only a few minutes later that we turned the final corner and daylight was in sight. A feeling of relief came over me but it soon disappeared at the thought of one of Buttman's Bats attacking us right now went through my mind. We wouldn't have a hope as we were not trained to fight Giant Bats breathing into a cave pack! Thankfully that was not a problem as we walked out the entrance and into the fresh air without spotting any of them. The glare was a bit much as we hadn't switched the Oakley's back to day vision but we threw the packs away and stood on our heads against the wall to drain the water from the lungs.

Once the lungs were clear we both looked at each other and a huge grin appeared on Garth's face.

"Holy snapping duck shit Drean. We've done it!!!" He exclaimed as he jumped up in the air.

"As soon as we get to the HoverJet and fly back to Hobart we're gonna be legends!!!"

As you can expect we didn't waste any time switching the Anti-Gravity boots on and flying back to Maydena and the safety of the fully enclosed HoverJet where the reality of what we had achieved finally came through to me.

"Buttman is gonna be spewing!" I remarked to Garth as we fired up the HoverJet and headed back to Hobart.

Five minutes later we arrived back at T.C.C. headquarters and touched down on the Hover pad.

"How was the trip fella's?" Knave Dickless asked when he saw us.

"Piece of Piss!" We replied as we jumped out of the craft and ran into Headquarter's. Commander Rolan was sitting inside waiting for us as we strolled into headquarters trying to hide our excitement.

"We've been expecting you two. Did you catch it all on HelmetCam?" He asked.

"Got the proof right here." Garth replied as he slid the HelmetCam disk across the table.

"Just wait till Buttman see's this. You can bet there'll be blood in the S.C.S. headquarters when this is seen all over the internet." Said Commander Rolan as he put the disk in and switched it on.

Garth and I watched until the part where we entered the cave and then Garth turned around and said. "I cant go through this again tonight. How about we get cleaned up and go out and hit the Galaxy Bar? The stripper tonight is that Melly Killer woman. She's supposed to be a pretty hot number."

"Sounds good to me." I replied as we turned around and headed out the door. "Even legends like us need to relax at the end of a hard day."

Dean Morgan.

(All similarities to any characters, living or dead is purely intentional!  
Just don't sue me please!)

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D O N ' T   F O R G E T   T H E   A N N U A L   D I N N E R ! ! !

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