

SPELEO SPIEL



Newsletter of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club

ESTABLISHED 1946

P.O. Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania. 7005

Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. TBH 0201

SPELEO SPIEL... Issue No. 293
DECEMBER 1995

Monthly Newsletter of the
TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB Inc.
P.O. Box 416 Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7005

Newsletter Annual Subscription: \$18.00. Each: \$2.00. Non-Members: \$3.00.
Full club membership: \$25.00.

WHO TO BLAME...

PRESIDENT:-

Dean Morgan 17 Belhaven Ave, Tarooma, Tasmania. 7053 PH:(002) 279318

SECRETARY:-

Trevor Wailes 214 Summerleas Rd, Kingston, Tasmania. 7050 PH:(002) 291382

TREASURER:-

Nigel Williams 1/98 Arthur St, West Hobart, Tasmania. 7000 PH:(002) 349403
E:- nigel_wil@antdiv.gov.au

QUARTERMASTER:-

Trevor Wailes 214 Summerleas Rd, Kingston, Tasmania. 7050 PH:(002) 291382

EDITOR:-

Dean Morgan 17 Belhaven Ave, Tarooma, Tasmania. 7053 PH:(002) 279318
E:- dean@ice.net.au

MEETINGS

TCC meet on the first and third Wednesdays of every month at the Shipwright's Arms
Hotel at 29 trumpeter St. Battery Point. Meetings start from 8.45.

IN THIS ISSUE:-

- 2 **COMING EVENTS;** Not many caving trips, but plenty of other stuff!
- 2 **EDITORIAL;** What did Bob Dylan really mean when he wrote that song?
- 4 **CLUB MATTERS;** ASF Karst Data Use Agreement comments needed fast.
- 6 **TRIP REPORTS;** Diving Scott's Rising, JF226-227,
- 8 **BIT'S AND PIECES;** Bacteria, For sales, New sculpture at Benders Quarry.
- 10 **IN OUR MAILBOX;** A summary of what has arrived in the TCC mailbox.
- 11 **REAL ESTATE;** Yes, it does say 'Real Estate', It's not a misprint

Copyright 1995 TCC

*This work is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review,
as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written
permission from the publishers and inclusion of acknowledgment of the source.*

'95-'96 Christmas & New Year Edition!

COMING EVENTS

No Caving Trips On The Agenda:- But Dean will be sure to be going underground, so give him a call and see what trips are happening.

Visiting Pommy Cavers Slide Night:- Wednesday 6th of December, see '*Club Matters*' for more details.

Mount Anne trip:- 16-17th of December. Nigel & Dean are heading back up to the North-East ridge karst for another look. Anyone else interested?

Nineteen Ninety Six:- 1st of January onwards. I hope you've all been practicing signing dates with 1996!

TCC/SCS Christmas Party!:- Wednesday 20th of December. See '*Club Matters*' for details

BBQ:- Boxing Day 26th December. Trevors annual Boxing Day barbecue is on again this year! Anyone is welcome, so be there from 4pm onwards.

EDITORIAL

The times, they are a-changin'

Accreditation. What is the purpose of being accredited at something to you? Learning new skills? Getting more qualified at a subject? Or just being able to hang another certificate on your wall! It all means different things to different people, and to some people it is just beaurocratic wankering! Unfortunately (fortunately?) accreditation is almost certainly the way it is going to be for outdoor leaders of the future, whether they like it or not...

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

The Cave Leadership Accreditation Group (ASF-CLAG) was originally set up around 3-4 years ago, and consisted of representatives from all of the Tasmanian caving clubs. At the time, I (along with quite a few others I suspect) thought that it was basically some beaurocratic codswallop and I couldn't see any need for having an organisation like CLAG, or a need for accredited leaders in caving.

Around 2 years after CLAG's formation, it nearly fizzled out due to a lack of interest from cavers, but then we realised that if cavers were not involved in getting an accreditation course up and running, beaurocrats would do it for us and come up with something totally unsuitable. Therefore, there was a burst of life around 2 years ago, and CLAG has gone ahead in leaps and bounds since then. Most other outdoor activities have gone the same way as well (rockclimbing, skiing, bushwalking, kayaking ect.) and they all have similar accreditation bodies.

This has happened Australia-wide, and subsequently we now have a fairly standard set of caving competencies all round Australia, and a top quality Cave Leadership course up and just starting to run now. And it's all fully supported by the Australian Speleological Federation, hence the name ASF-CLAG. Caving accreditation isn't happening because of CLAG, it's a case of CLAG happening because of caving accreditation!

Will it affect you as recreational cavers? The answer should be **NO**, and hopefully will stay that way. But there is a need to have accredited cave *Leaders*, meaning people that lead novice, inexperienced, and first time cavers on trips. eg. school groups, scout groups, commercial operators and the like. As it stands at the moment, there are no qualifications in the outdoor industry. Anyone can get a job as an outdoor leader with very little experience. Think about that for a moment. You are putting your trust into someone you think knows what they are doing, when in reality, it could be their 2nd or 3rd caving trip! I know of instances where this has happened, it is not just a scenario!

Since being involved with the Tasmanian Outdoor Leadership Council (TOLC) I have come to realise the huge responsibilities in being a leader. It's not a matter of just having the 'technical' caving skills to be a competent leader. If you are not up to scratch with modern leadership standards, you could really get yourself into the shit technically and legally! The leadership skills are just as important as the caving skills in my opinion, and you really have to have both.

I'm sorry if it sounds like I'm trying to scare people off being leaders, that's not my point. I am just trying to make people more aware of the responsibilities put on you nowadays if you want to be a leader in the outdoors. There's a lot more to it than just taking people caving...

Anyhow, on a lighter note. 1995 is coming to a close, and I hope you all have a good Christmas and New Year break. Don't forget to get all of your trip reports to me from the trips that will happen over the holidays, and I'll see you all next year (our 50th year in existence too!).

[Please note that the views expressed here, are those of the editor, and not necessarily those of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Hate mail can be sent to me!]

Dean Morgan
Editor/President

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

CLUB MATTERS

Tasmanian Caverneering Club/ Southern Caving Society Combined Annual (hopefully!) Dinner

Make sure you keep Wednesday 20th of December free this year as we are having the first combined TCC/SCS annual dinner. Venue is the 'Tea House' at 33 Salamanca Place from 7PM.

The Tea House is an Asian restaurant and for \$25 they will supply a banquet or other options. It is BYO as well as being licensed, and 20 seats have been reserved for the night. Vaughan Andrews is the person to contact to secure your seat, so contact him on (H) 238401 or (W) 215362 if you don't want to miss out!

Decembers Slide Night will be...

Some English person! I can't remember his name, but he is a visiting English caver so you can be sure of not having seen these slides before! I know we had Arthur Clark down for this month, but because the 'Englishman' is only here for a couple of weeks, Arthur has been postponed until the February 7th 1996 slide night. Sorry Arthur! We will give the January 1996 slide night a miss as a lot of people will be away (caving perhaps?).

No Cavers Diary For '96

I am sorry to report that the West Australian Speleological Group's '*Cavers Diary*' that Garth mentioned in an earlier Spiel will not be available for 1996. Apparently there was not enough support for it.

Damn shame as the 1995 edition was a mighty fine piece of work, and well worth possessing...

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

Australian Speleological Federation Draft Data Use Agreement

[Eds note:- You may remember a TCC meeting earlier on in the year where there was talk of having a central computer 'Karst Index Database' set up via the ASF. Apparently there was a draft 'Data Use Agreement' drawn up by the ASF from the input from Australia wide caving clubs (although no-one in the TCC or SCS had heard about this draft...) and this follows on from there. I am sorry if you don't receive this until after the closing date for submissions, but it only arrived 1 day after giving the last Spiel to Trev for publishing. Thanks to Peter Matthews (VSA/ASF) for the article.]

The closing date for comment on the draft Data Use Agreement document (issued by ASF last January) for the use of Karst Index data, has been set at: **20 Dec 1995**

A letter to this effect has been posted out to all ASF clubs. This date has been chosen so that the Working Group Convener, Peter Ackroyd, will have time to incorporate any desirable amendments for presentation at the January Council Meeting of ASF.

If you foresee any difficulties for your club in the way the draft agreement has been drawn up, it is important that you advise the Convener ASAP so that suitable changes can be considered.

We are trying to have any foreseen problems ironed out beforehand so that the setting up and ongoing operation of the distributed Karst Index Database will be as smooth as possible.

Your club should have received a copy of the draft earlier this year. It is also available on the ASF WWW pages at:

<http://hermes.its.unimelb.edu.au/~u1217515/asf/duadraft.html>

from where a printable copy can also be downloaded. (Trevor now also has a TCC copy.)

Comment on the draft should be posted to:

*Peter Ackroyd
Convener, DUA Working group
384 Canning St
North Carlton. VIC 3054
Australia.
Tel. +61 3 9347-8058*

Alternatively, comment can be emailed to Peter Matthews for passing on to Peter Ackroyd at the following address:-

*Peter Matthews
ASF Documentation Commission
matthews@melbpc.org.au*

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

Dean sets the record straight

Please let it be known that it was *not* me who was injured on the recent (unfortunately unsuccessful) search for a missing bushwalker down at Precipitous Bluff! I was just sharing a tent with the injured party, and had to stay in the tent with him for the 1 1/2 days (in atrocious conditions!) until the helicopter came to our rescue. Not the most exciting way to spend your time....

TRIP REPORTS**Diving Scott's Rising at Mole Creek.**

3rd May 1995

Scott's Rising is the source of the 'Mole Creek'. Its innocuous appearance belies its status as a major drainage system. Shrouded in blackberries and choked with fallen timber, the spring spews forth a great volume of water which supplies the Mole Creek township.

The water's underground journey begins several kilometres away, on the lower slopes of the Great Western Tiers. Streams sink in Westmoreland Cave, Kelly's Pot and other swallets (including possibly Prohibition Cave) which flow onwards through Herberts Pot, Shiskebab, Dangerous, Wet Cave, Honeycomb, Cow Cave and kilometres more of intricate subterranean conduits which have never seen the light of exploring speleo's!

Rolan Eberhard made a recce dive into the spring some years ago, which revealed the somewhat treacherous diving conditions of sunken vegetation combined with poor visibility (<1m).

Curiosity and a thirst for adventure, coupled with the confidence boosting technology of small capacity, twin side-mounted tanks enticed me back there.

I sunk slowly into the cold murky water. It was a fissure 1.5 m wide which dropped straight down. The fissure was jammed with timber, and the walls were rotten rock so there was nothing to rebelay the dive line from. Everything was coated in fine silt which 'exploded' at the merest movement, obscuring all visibility. Completely at home in this environment, a blind white shrimp darted about, but I didn't feel quite so 'at home'. The warm sunshine and green vegetation seemed a million miles away...

I turned my dive at -25m depth, but the fissure continued on deeper. Groping upwards through zero visibility, I fought to control anxiety and breathing rate when I slammed into an undercut ledge. The line faithfully showed the correct way.

It was a relief to finally glimpse the green twilight zone. Resting in the pool I was awakened from a dreamworld of the previous 20 minutes underwater by;

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

"Hello, can you collect some spring water in this bottle for us?"

"Yeah sure". I said. But I didn't add that I wouldn't care to drink it myself, knowing of all the cowshit that goes into the system!

Will the water still be so pure if they build the pig farm up near Wet cave that is being seriously talked about? Those pigs would produce 5 tonnes of shit per day!

Stefan Eberhard.

There & Back Again - a short journey in JF226-227.

1st September 1995. Kelly Miller and Leigh Douglas.

[Eds note:- This trip report follows on from Leigh's report on the same area published in the last Spiel #292.]

Buoyed by the spirit of discovery and the desire for exploration, we returned to the hillside behind 'Burning Down The House', this time with no 'sewer lights' in sight!

At the entrance of JF226, the rumbling of water had gone. A short mud slide led to a clean, wide open entrance hallway, with two passages leading off. Using the philosophy of 'what we couldn't see, couldn't hurt us', we did what any explorer with a healthy respect for the Arachnid world would do - We pulled up collars, put lights on low beam, and stayed very close to the ground as we crawled beneath the spiders webs!

Groveling along the right dusty passage, we saw signs of wombat habitation including wombat poo in various stages of decay and supporting a myriad of fungal life. The concern naturally switched from spiders, to rabid wombats in tight passages! Will a helmet meeting UIAA spec's also take a head-on with a wombat???

This wombat, or some other unlucky beastly must have had a nasty experience in there, judging from the frantic claw marks along and up the sides of the passage...

The passage choked down eventually. However, a rift leading upwards could be wedged up using your knee's and elbows. We came out at one of the **un-tagged** entrances discovered on our previous trip. Upon re-entry, we **pushed on, dropped** down a couple of levels, and within a few steps, we were **walking out** the now dry swallet, JF227.

The water enters this cave slightly upstream. Dropping into clean limestone passage a couple of metres below. Following this led to a sump, which probably backs up in high flow to cause the overflow into the main entrance of JF227. Passages were found leading upwards, but nothing to bypass the sump. Eventually we reached some clean downward sloping passage and, *et voila*, we were back in the entrance hallway of JF226!

By now, most avid readers of back-issues of the Spiel will have realised that JF226-227 was described (with survey) by Rolan Eberhard in issue #277 (1992). We didn't discover this until later.

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

Nonetheless, we enjoyed ourselves.

There is a possibility of rejoining the stream via a small deep hole at the entrance to JF226, although this will require some enlarging. Perhaps another day?

And where is the other entrance to Burning Down the House???

Kelly Miller.

BIT'S AND PIECES

"They Seek Dark Secrets of Bacteria"

(Article reproduced from Campus Review (1995), 5(44), 23. Thanks to Dave Nichols for sending it in.)

Three Flinders University scientists spent a weekend in South Australia's Naracoorte Caves recently, but unlike most visitors to the World Heritage listed site, their main interest was dirt.

Honours biology student Ms Samantha Mead is studying the variety of non-hazardous bacteria in the caves, with a view to identifying how they contribute to the subterranean ecosystem.

As a basis for the study, Mead together with her supervisor Dr Sue Thomas and research assistant Ms Kylea Clarke spent hours crawling through narrow passageways collecting sediment samples for testing. The biochemicals produced by some bacteria are valuable in more than scientific terms, and are used in everyday products such as laundry detergents and medicines. Research in the United States has shown that subsurface bacteria, which live in dark, cool and dry areas, are different to surface bacteria which live in warmer, lighter or wetter environments and produce different biochemicals. Their potential is clearly worth testing, yet comparatively little work has been done in Australia, and more particularly South Australia, on this novel group of microbes.

"Traditionally, work with bacteria has focused primarily on their value in medical and agricultural areas and we have comparatively little knowledge of their environmental potential," said Thomas, a senior lecturer in biology. The term 'environment' is used broadly in this context, referring to the essential part microbes play in the ecosystem and, as such, Mead's study can be seen as one of conservation.

She is optimistic about the prospects of identifying new bacterial species and of being able to determine their relationship with more commonly isolated types. Tests will be run to determine whether cave bacteria can live in areas where surface bacteria would die of starvation, how sensitive they are to sunlight and ultraviolet light and, therefore, how likely they are to survive outside their normal environment.

At a later stage, molecular techniques will be applied to examine individual genes on the bacterial chromosomes. The long-term aim is to understand how bacteria repair damage to their chromosomes caused by ultraviolet light.

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

Armed with this knowledge, the scientific community will be in a better position to develop ways of preventing and treating sunlight damage in humans.

Bender's Quarry Sculpture

Anyone been down to Bender's Quarry at Ida Bay lately? There's a mighty impressive grey 'sculpture' there now that looks an awful lot like a gate! Surely Parks & Wildlife wouldn't have gone to that much expense just to replace the old gate? Would they???

For sales

Premier Carbide Lamp- Ideal second light source, and can keep you warm under a space blanket in an emergency. Heaps of spare jets, new reflectors of various sizes, ect, ect, ect. Spare base and screw on cap, plus some small granule carbide. **\$50**

50mm Buckles- Black coated, heavy duty ones ideal for making up caving harnesses, Made in England and in new condition. They are impossible to replace locally. **\$5 each.**

Cave Lamp Charger- 4.5V x 450 mA output. Just needs keyhole bracket adaption to suit Oldham style through-the-headpiece charging. **\$5**

Contact Leigh or Nick on 310348 (AH)

Free 8 channel multitrack recorder!

Anyone want a free 8 channel multitrack recorder? All you have to do to obtain this item is purchase 10 guitar lessons off Dean at \$150 per half hour lesson (10 x \$150 = \$1500) and I will *give it to you free!* How can you turn down an offer like that! It is a Fostex 280 multitracker with full recording and mixing capabilities, overdubbing, panning, equalization, bouncing tracks, monitoring, punching in-out, ping-ponging tracks, digital tape counter, and adding effects capabilities. This unit has so many features even I can't remember them all! But best of all, it has **heaps and heaps** of buttons, knobs, sliders and flashing lights for you to look at and play with! You can easily fool all your friends into thinking that you are a professional musician with this unit! It also uses standard high bias cassette type tapes and is nice and easy to use.

Don't forget, this Fostex 280 will be yours FREE with the purchase of a few guitar lessons. Call Dean now and arrange yours before it's too late!

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

Spiel Back Issues

Did you know that you can purchase Spiel back issues (when available) for a mere pittance of their former price at only **\$1.00 each!** Buy 2 and get none free! We guarantee that you won't get a free set of steak knives with them either!! Don't ring 008 003 007 now, because I just made up that phone number and there probably won't be an answer! If you are interested in any, then contact Trevor (002) 291382

* * * * *

A Christmas / New Year Break

Don't despair if you don't get a January 1996 Spiel. The Editor will probably have a break over Christmas/New Year, and get back into it monthly next year. Hope you all have a good time and don't forget to keep those articles coming in. It's going to be our 50th year remember...

IN OUR MAILBOX

This is a new section that I am going to start regularly placing in the Spiel. Because a lot of you don't attend meetings, you may not know what has arrived in the TCC mailbox for us to look at. This will be a quick summary of what has appeared.

All of these magazines are stored and kept in the club library at Trevor's house, and are available for all members to look at, although they *must* be returned to Trev when you have read them.

Georgia Underground; Volume 31, No. 4. (Dogwood City Grotto, America)

This issue has the exploration and survey's of Blunder Hole, Highland Plunge, Sir Lance-a-slot, Rebel Cave, Blue Spring Cave, and Larsons Well. An article on planning for your cave accident(?). Review of BMS Microrack (*worth a look*). And more of those excellent Linda Heslop cave drawings that seem to appear in every caving magazine from America nowadays!

Caves & Caving; Issue 68. (British Cave Rescue Association)

Heaps of British exploration stuff and surveys. Cave potential in the lower Wye valley. Cave Radio and Electronics group field meeting including info on using radios in caves. Expedition to Northern Spain. Borneo caving expedition. Nepal caving expedition (*these fellas really get around!*) Origins of the British Cave Rescue Association. How to make an adjustable 'Cowstail'. and more...

Descent; No 124. (Great Britain & Irish cavers)

Operation Cave Rescue (*Sid Perou's account of making his first film*). Caving in Belize, Guatemala. Exploration of Ogof Draenen. Lots of other exploration stuff, including some really strange sounding cave names (*bloody Welsh!*) The British Cave Rescue Council incident report summary for 1994 (*this is worth looking at*) and heaps more.

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

NSS News; Volume 53, no 6. (National Speleological Society, America)

Exploration in River caves in Guatemala. Vertical Safety Techniques (*mainly for beginner's*). Memorial to Vladimir Kissel'ov (*a Russian caver who lost his life in a cave diving tragedy*). Product review of the 'Sonen 250' electronic distance measuring instrument (*sounds promising!*). And of course, Linda Heslop's cave drawings...

Australian Caver; No 138. (Australian Speleological Federation)

Cave sediments and what they can tell you. 'New' caving terms, Exploration in Labyrinth cave, West Oz. . Using 'mini buses' as a transport solution for club trips. The curse of the pharaohs (*interesting*). Caving and Sex (*definitely worth reading!*)

SUSS; Volume 35, No 1. (Sydney University Speleological Society)

Explorations in Twiddle-on-pom and survey. Lots of trip reports. Presidents report. The SUSS trip leader system. An extract from Norbet Casteret's book '*Ten Years Under The Earth*'. A SUSS newsletter index. And a letter to the editor on the last page that all Tasmanians should read!

Hills Speleology Club Newsletter; Volume 11, No 1. (NSW)

A report from an expedition to Tasmania! Caving in West Oz. A photocopy of an article from the Sydney morning Herald from March 17 1995 featuring our very own Stefan Eberhard, complete with an interview! This boy is a legend! And also, a 2 page cavers quiz challenge (*worth doing*).

Nargun; Volume 28, No 5. (Victorian Speleological Association)

A new Granite cave in Victoria including survey. The Buchan First Response Cave Rescue Team info. Information on their President, Miles Pierce. And that's about all.

The Journal of the Sydney Speleological Society; Volume 39, No 10.

Drama in Icy Cave (*a reprint of an article in the Pix magazine, basically a load of shit!*) And an article on cave women reproduced from back in 1959. Surveying Horse cave and a survey of WA7.

Langana; September 1995. (Circular of the Launceston Walking Club)

General info, reviews, and tips on bushwalking in Tasmania. There is an article on leeches and parasites! And a couple of good campsite meals to try out.

<i>REAL ESTATE (!)</i>

For Rent

Townhouse in Battery Point. Only five minutes easy walk to the cafes, bars and cultural activities of Salamanca Place, close to the University and Sandy Bay shops, this near new two story townhouse will be available for rent next year (1996) for a period of six to twelve months.

'Don't Just Sit There Reading The Spiel, Go Caving!'

The townhouse is situated in a very quiet street, there is off street parking, an intimate rear garden and a sunny outlook up towards Mt Wellington.

For further information contact Stuart Nicholas, email stunich@ozemail.com.au or telephone 002-283054 (ah).

Were you one of the ones who thought that the battle for Sellicks Hill Cave in South Australia had been lost? Well read on...

Sellicks Hill Quarry Cave, South Australia - Government Committee Report

A preliminary assessment, before close study, of the ~150 page report hot off the presses: [around 20/11/95]

The Environment and Resources Development Committee (ERDC) tabled its Report into Sellicks Hill Quarry Cave today at 2.15. In its Report, the ERDC recommends that, if possible, the Sellicks Hill Quarry Cave be opened up to further exploration.

In the face of conflicting evidence about the cave's current condition, the Committee finds that the best way of assessing that condition now is to enter the cave and have independent experts evaluate the evidence collected underground. The Committee was careful to emphasize however that such entry should only be attempted if: 1) an initial downhole camera study finds that the cave retains its potential value, 2) it is safe to enter and 3) non-intrusive and non-destructive access is possible.

The Report says that the quarry owners' role in the implosion was central and crucial. The Report criticises Mines and Energy SA's (MESA) failure to involve other agencies with greater expertise in a wider range of disciplines in the decision-making process. The Report is also critical of the length to which MESA has been prepared to go "in an effort to re-write the history of its involvement in this controversy", adding that, "there is an obvious and irreconcilable discrepancy between the contemporaneous evidence about the Department's role and the view of that role subsequently fashioned and presented to the Committee."

The Report basically follows the Grimes and Moore recommendations and the government has two months to reply.

The Committee has drawn on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nature Conservancy and the NSS, Nov. 1991. A big **THANK YOU** all for your support, especially Rob Stitt and the NSS Office!

Heiko Maurer

Home phone: +61 8 353-6018

Work phone: +61 8 302-3746

E-mail: Heiko.Maurer@unisa.edu.au

**And thus ends the final Speleo Spiel for 1995.
I'll see you all next year!**