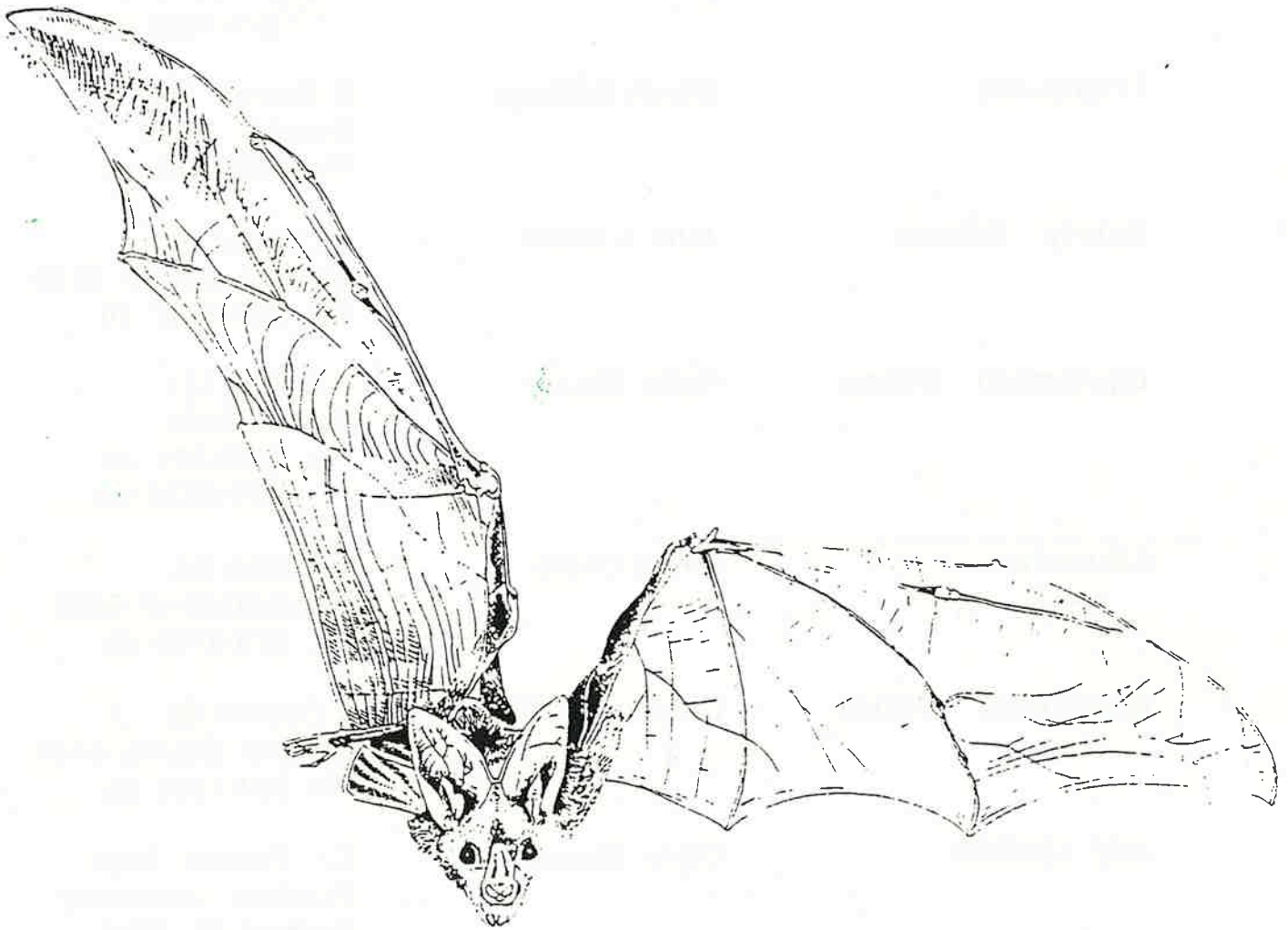


# FUSSI

VOL 1 NO 2 NOV 1989



Ghost Bat (*Macroderma gigas*).

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINDERS UNIVERSITY  
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED.

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## NARACOORTE TRIP REPORT



### Members Present:

Peter Wallis, Sackie, Matt Merrick, Guy Smith, Clare Buswell, Heiko Maurer, Bronte Morris, Deborah Callison, Paul Waclawik, Jenny Laidlaw, Lee Coshell, Richard Ewart and possibly Mavis (disguised as one of the above).

It all began on the evening of Friday the eighteenth of August. Following an uneventful drive from Adelaide, Matt, Sackie and I arrived in Naracoorte late in the evening and immediately set up camp in the usual FUSS spot. Hearing the distinctive sound of Peter's Golf tearing through the camping ground, we decided to hide from him, mistakenly believing that Peter would assume that we were asleep and would therefore be startled when we emerged from the undergrowth. Peter looked distinctly unphased by our apparent absence. Nevertheless, we watched him wander around the campsite for a few minutes and then Sackie ran screaming from the bushes. Peter was neither scared nor startled. Instead, he was mildly amused by our effort, though he did attempt to make us feel better by feigning surprise. Paul and Debbie arrived soon after this little incident, and the six of us immediately began the consumption of alcohol (which was to continue almost unabated throughout the weekend).

The next day, after the traditional FUSS sleep-in, lengthy breakfast and endless discussion about what we were going to do, the six of us plus Guy and Bronte, who had arrived at an ungodly hour of the morning, were eventually forced by the rain to make a decision. We decided to go down Stick, the closest cave to the campsite. Although Stick lacks formation, it's a good cave for a lot of sporty exploration, involving the usual squeezing, crawling, getting dirty etc. We discovered several bats in Stick, and they were suitably unimpressed with the eight lights invading their privacy. We eventually discovered an alternative exit to the cave which featured a set of stairs. One would assume that the stairs would be a safer, though less enjoyable, means of exit from the cave than the ladder we'd set up at the other entrance. However, Peter went for a ride down the stairs, thereby inadvertently demonstrating that the ladder was the preferred, safer option. Besides which, laddering is, after all, more fun.

The rain was continuing to piss down (so to speak) when we emerged from the cave. Clare, Heiko, Jenny and Lee had arrived and, after eating lunch in the cafeteria, we again discussed the various possibilities for the afternoon's activity. The rain had set in, so we decided that instead of caving, which

isn't really a wet weather sport, we would go for a walk in search of Appledor. Surprisingly, walking in the rain turned out to be somewhat colder and wetter than caving. Although we eventually found Appledor, those members of the club who had been down it before seemed to think that it wasn't worth bothering with. Consequently, we decided, implicitly at least, bugger caving - let's go wine tasting. The twelve of us piled into Guy's van and set off on a scenic drive to Coonawarra. The scenic aspect of the drive was enjoyed only by those in the front of the van, that is, those who could see out of the windows. However, this enjoyment was tempered somewhat by the insistence of those in the back that the front windows be wound down because of the fumes. Thus, for those of us in the front of the van the drive was scenic but also somewhat chilling. Those in the back had a warmer and more cosy journey, but they also had to put up with the discomfort from fumes and Guy's driving.

Due to the late hour of the day, we passed a number of closed wineries and then arrived at Redmans at 4.30pm, i.e., closing time. Despite the fact that they were about to close, the very friendly and helpful staff in the winery stayed open for an extra half hour or so, giving the twelve of us plenty of time to taste and buy wine. We were also given a complimentary bottle of

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port which, being the uncouth cavers that we are, we subsequently passed around the van during the return journey. Following our return to the camping ground, we found a shelter under which we cooked and ate tea, Clare created a roaring fire, the rain stopped, the drinking continued in earnest, and the political/religious philosophical argument began. The major participants in the argument were Peter, who, as usual, was doing his best to stir people, Jenny, Clare, Sackie and Bronte. Debbie was unusually vocal and I suspect that either she'd had a bit to drink or, perhaps more likely, she was, in fact, Mavis in a Debbie suit, in which case she was no doubt attempting to disrupt the evening.

On Sunday, after sleeping in, spending a long time on breakfast, arguing for what seemed like ages about colours, and discussing, at length, the various options for the day, we actually did some more caving. We all went down Beekeepers which was fun but largely uneventful, though one group did see the cave's one stalagmite. After emerging from Beekeepers, some of us were shown around the flora and fauna reserve across the road from the cave. During the return journey from Beekeepers to the camping ground, Bronte tried damn hard to give Guy's van some character, prompting Matt to say, after we were safely out of the van, "You're a maniac, Bronte!".

After Paul and Debbie departed, the rest of us packed up the camp, played the chocolate game (great fun, though the President kept winning), and then bid the Wallis a fond farewell. Unusually for a caving trip, Clare was not once heard to mutter (or yell) "Where's my spondonicles?" Perhaps Mavis wasn't present after all. But then who knows? - Mavis moves in strange and mysterious ways.

R. Ewart



## HOLY BAT SHIT, BATMAN!

As my qualifications loom, I have been asked to find out about diseases caused by crawling around in bat-infested caves. Unfortunately I don't know much about it, as Mavis has run off with the articles, so I'll plagiarise heavily from text books.

There are basically three diseases known to be associated with bats: Rabies, The bat salivary gland virus and histoplasmosis (a fungal infection).

**1. Rabies:** Vampire bats give this virus to people in Latin America and occasionally the United State. Luckily, rabbies hasn't found its way into Australia yet. It's a very nasty disease, and once foaming at the mouth starts, its inevitably fatal.

**2. Bat Salivary Gland Virus:** This causes fever, coughing, headache, generally feeling awful, and infections of the testes or ovaries. To quote the Bible of Medicine, "During a survey of rabies infection in bats, virus related to the St. Louis encephalitis complex

was obtained from the salivary gland of Mexican free tailed bats in Texas". (1) What were Mexican bats doing in Texas? You ask - On holidays or just illegal immigrants? Anyway this virus is not known to exist here, but a good argument could be made for tightening up of entry requirements of Central American bats visiting Australia.

**3. Histoplasmosis:** This is the major concern for cavers, and it is caused by *Histoplasma Capsulation* (a yeast). It is found in droppings from bats and some species of birds. There are four main forms of infection; caused by inhalation of powdered bat droppings.



1. Asymptomatic (You don't know you have it).

**2. Acute Pulmonary Histoplasmosis**  
This causes coughing, fever, feeling lousy (approximately 5-18 days after inhalation). It is self limiting and requires no treatment.

**3. Chronic Pulmonary Histoplasmosis**  
In this form, there is a gradual onset over weeks or months of increasing productive cough, weight loss and night sweats. The lungs are gradually destroyed and bacterial pneumonia or heart failure can cause deaths months or years later. It almost always occurs in smokers.

**4. Acute Disseminated Histoplasmosis**  
This is a terrible disease where the person is extremely unwell, with fever, weight loss, jaundice, anemia, reduced ability to fight infections, mouth ulcers, heart inflammation and meningitis. It is often fatal if untreated.

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So, how is this relevant to us?

In the United States, there are areas where 80% of people over 16 have been exposed, judging by skin tests.(2) Most of these cases are asymptomatic or the mild acute pulmonary histoplasmosis.

Clusters of cases have occurred in people raking chicken coops or speleologists.

The nasty forms only occur in 1% of cases. If detected, they are treatable, and although the drugs have horrible side effects, they are almost always successful.

In Australia: There is only one documented case of histoplasmosis in a caver, that I know of, and it occurred in the Eastern States.

However, it's feasible that some people have had asymptomatic infections, or the mild acute pulmonary form, which is indistinguishable from a bad case of the flue. Also, there is no research on this subject here, so it is difficult to know the true situation.

It is certainly less common than in the states, though, and it seems we have little to worry about in South Australia.

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

1. There is a higher chance of crashing in your car on the way to the caves, than catching something from bats inside the cave.

2. You probably have more chance of being struck by lightning than by dying from a bat-related disease in Australia.

3. However, it is worth keeping this in mind if one of us becomes very ill for no known reason shortly after caving. The doctors certainly wouldn't think of it unless we tell them.

4. If you are coughing, losing weight and having fevers and your aids test is negative, you could have the chronic pulmonary form.

5. There is probably no need to wear dust masks to prevent infection, unless more cases of histoplasmosis are found in Australia. (They can be worn for comfort, though).

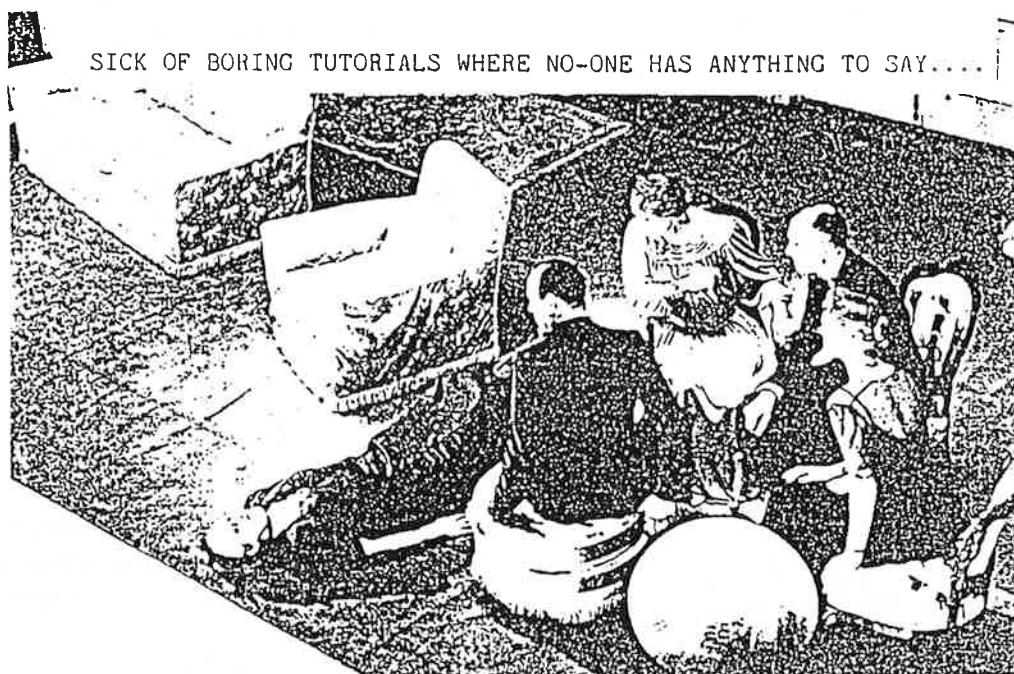
6. If you are going to Texas, don't let bats spit at you!

Dr. Sackie

#### NOTES

(1) Harrison Principles of Internal Medicine, 10th Edition, McGraw Hill 1983, p.1145.

(2) Bennett. John., The Deep Mycose ibid.



SICK OF BORING TUTORIALS WHERE NO-ONE HAS ANYTHING TO SAY....

DO YOU WANT TO;

- Publish papers
- Improve your C.V.
- Establish your academic reputation
- Become famous?

then turn to page 9

## THE LETS GO AND HAVE A LOOK AT THE FLOWERS FLINDERS TRIP

September sometime.

**Members Present:** Guy Smith, Pam Storer (Leader), Peter Storer, Clare Buswell, Heiko Maurer, Maggie Brown, Richard Ewart, Karen Magraith, Matt Merrick, Rick Jueken, Adam, Volker Stohr, Wendy Babbage, Ian and John Callison. Mavis, a couple of chairs, sunburn cream and the sun.

**Flowers seen** Lots. All very, well you know how flowers are.

Drove up Friday afternoon and called in to Winburra Station to meet with the owner and collect the keys to Maires and Clara St. Dora. Camped somewhere (Carrieton), where the entire town seemed to be drunk and wanting to tell us of the last 100 years of whatever they could think of. This could be most useful if one wanted to design a trivial pursuit game based around how many times .....

**Saturday** morning after a general discussion on the problems of leaving ones sleeping bag at home, we drove over to Maires cave and onto Buckalowie Hut to wait for Pam and John to arrive. Sackie's birthday was celebrated for a second time with Champagne, a great and fabo travelling Chocolate cake, and a reading from the What Bird is That book, (which bore little resemblance to a bird at all).

Decided to break into a number of groups and activities: two groups caved and one group sat in the sun and read the What Bird is That book. By the time they had finished they bore little resemblance to birds either.

Maires cave was rigged, abseiled into, explored, photographed?, talked about and laddered out of. Clara St Dora was walked into with ones nose detecting the strong odour of RIP Skippy or two. The air was very still. Cave photographed, its geology talked about, and some active formation noticed.

Lunch was broached late in the afternoon after a very enjoyable day of caving and reading the What Bird is That book. Drove over to Hollowillina South via the Short cut, via Matt Win. The Morris showed its true colors and the driver his usual mad glint. Numerous entries of the What Bird is That book were read to him in order to keep the passengers from hitting him on the head with a rubber mallet. Intimate contact with nature was had at the sighting of some Sturt Desert Peas in full bloom. For some of us Eastern Staters it was a moving occasion. Beautiful. Lots of photos were taken.

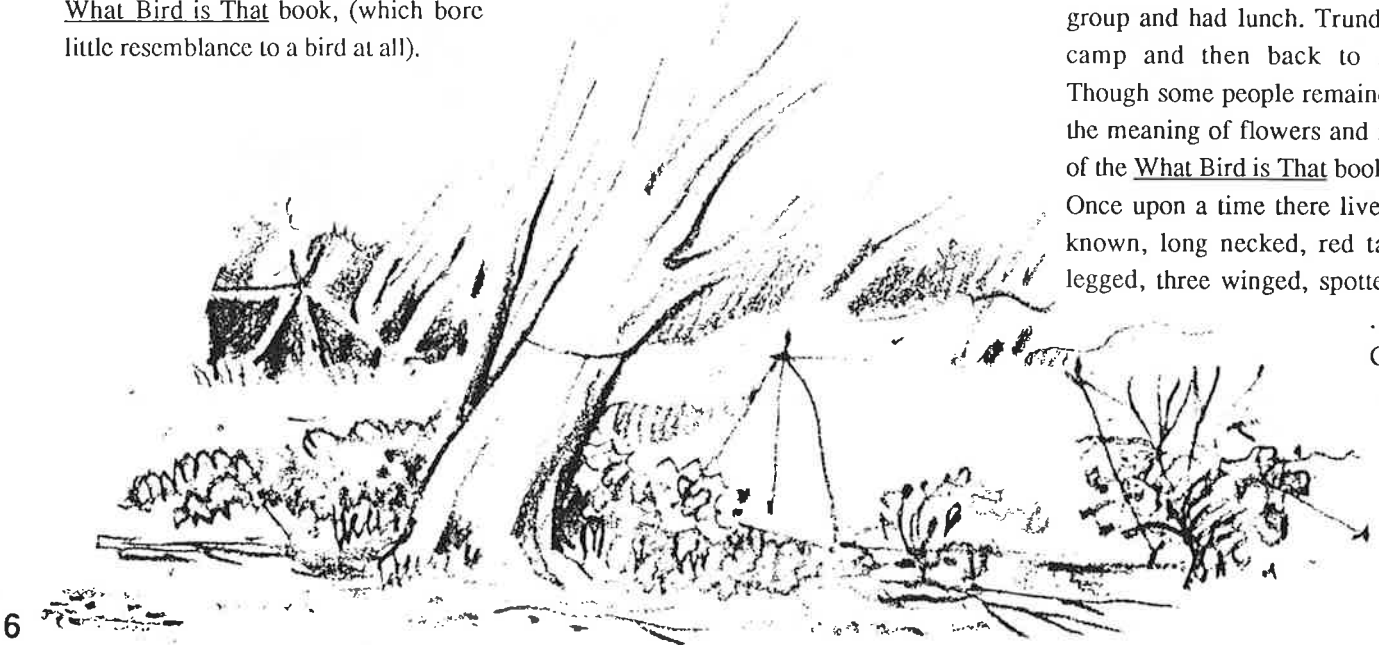
Set up camp and cooked as per usual a super communal meal thanks to Volker's work place. This was further supplemented by fruit cake and copious amounts of sweet wine, muscat and port. Songs were sung etc. Mavis was found to be in a good mood as cups could easily be found for coffee.

**Sunday.** Slow Fuss start to the day. Long breakfast of pancakes, coffee, and a readings from the What Bird is That book. Broke into three groups and caved in Mt Sims, Good Friday and walked along the road and river around the camp site, looking for any more flowers and any birds that were described in the mornings reading of "The Book". Talk concerning the formation of Mt Sims cave. It is a stranded shoreline. The sea went out one day and did not come back the next. I don't know you just can't get reliable shores any more. God knows I've tried, Bondy used to stock them and Skase but well ...

The Mt Sims group set off for Good Friday, but, well, decided to go for a good long walk along the creek bed just to check out the view from a hill that all had decided to walk up. The view was very good and so was the creek. Met up with the Good Friday group and had lunch. Trundled off to camp and then back to Adelaide. Though some people remained to seek the meaning of flowers and read more of the What Bird is That book.

Once upon a time there lived a lesser known, long necked, red tailed, one legged, three winged, spotted, Shrike

....  
C. Buswell.



# TASMANIA'S WILDERNESS KARST: The Franklin, The Forests and The Future

by K. Kiernan  
Australian Caver No. 121

The Australian Government has now forwarded to the Paris secretariat of the World Heritage Committee a nomination for additions to the western Tasmania World Heritage Area (WTWHA) that include about 20 karst areas (Kiernan, 1987; Houshold and Davey 1987; Middleton, 1988a). In addition, the Denison-Spires area (in recent days informally known as the "Hole in the Doughnut") is to be proclaimed a national park under state legislation, but without its being nominated as World Heritage. This latter area also includes some important karst. While these developments represent a significant advance for the protection of Tasmania's karst, some very important concerns remain.

## Background

The latest developments can best be understood in the context of the decision to stop the Gordon-below-Franklin dam, a decision in which karst figured prominently - former Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser has suggested that it was the archaeological significance of Kutikina Cave that tipped the balance in favour of conservation (Kiernan, 1984a; Williams, 1985). The legal proceedings during the dam debate demonstrated that the World Heritage Treaty offered a constitutional mechanism that enabled the Commonwealth Government to intervene in land-use at a state level that had never before been possible. This has since had implications not only for areas that have been listed but also elsewhere in Tasmania. The Tasmanian state government has been spurred to take initiatives in the environmental field in an effort to fend off Commonwealth intervention which has invariably been politically embarrassing.

The Southern Forest area consists of an elongated strip of land along the eastern boundary of the earlier WTWHA. It includes Australia's deepest and longest caves, and the

only alpine karst in the country. In 1983 the Commonwealth demanded an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) into the implications of its renewal of export licences for Tasmania woodchips beyond 1990. A moratorium on logging certain areas was put in place. The EIS recognised karst as a significant management issue, stimulated in large measure by a project then underway within the Commission that was seeking to resolve competing claims for land allocation at Mole Creek in central northern Tasmania (Kiernan, 1984b). When logging was resumed after the EIS was completed there was protest in the forests involving the arrest of about 100 conservationists. In June 1986 the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that included provisions for limits to logging in the Southern Forests that would have safeguarded much of the Cracroft karst but developed a large area of the Weld/Mt Anne karst. The MOU also demanded that logging at Mole Creek should take account of the recommendations of the study that had by now been completed and for the state to proceed with Forest Practices legislation in an effort to improve environmental management in the forests. Later, a Forest Practices Code was released that included special provisions for forestry operations in karst areas generally (Middleton, 1988b).

However, the MOU did not end either protest in the forests or conflict between the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments. The Commonwealth ultimately halted logging in the Southern Forests and also in the Lemonthyme area which lies on the northern edge of the WTWHA, (the Lemonthyme contains no karst). The Commonwealth established the Commission of Enquiry into the Lemonthyme and Southern Forests to determine whether sites of World Heritage calibre existed

in these areas. The Commission was chaired by Justice Michael Helsham and included an economist, Mr. R. Wallace, [Flinders University] and a forester turned national park planner, Mr. Peter Hitchcock.

Legal challenges by the Tasmanian Government and forest products industry to the inquiry and to the logging ban were consistently thrown out by the High Court, confirming the precedent established during the dams case. As with the Franklin campaign, the question of the Southern Forests was prominent in the federal election held in July, 1988.

## Helsham, Holes and Harrassment

The principal contribution of the Helsham Enquiry probably lay in the extent to which it stimulated collation of scattered existing knowledge of the scientific and other values of the Tasmanian wilderness and also provoked parties to the proceedings to sponsor new research. Karst figured prominently in this process. For instance, the significance of the cave fauna in the area was addressed in at least one consultancy undertaken for the Commission itself, and was also mentioned in several submissions presented to the Enquiry. Another consultancy, this one undertaken for Australian Newsprint Mills Ltd., involved a two-week field trip in

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September 1987 to establish the likely archaeological significance of the area. By the conclusion of that trip we had confirmed the presence of Pleistocene occupation at Bone Cave in the upper Weld Valley and found one additional site (Kiernan, 1984; Goede and Bada, 1985). We also confirmed the presence of human remains of probable Pleistocene age in Nanwoon Cave in the upper Florentine Valley. This cave was first found by a party from the Hydro Electric Commission during its search for caves in an effort to counter the archaeological significance of Kutikina during the Franklin debate. The human remains from Nanwoon are now known to be of a gracile form comparable to those from Lake Mungo in NSW and quite dissimilar to any previously recorded from Tasmania (Jones et al., 1988). Finally, Richard Cosgrove, Rhys Jones and myself found a gallery of hand stencils in Judds Cavern in the Cracroft Valley that appear to be almost certainly of Pleistocene age - the southernmost ice-age art found in the world to date. It has since been established that the pigment used to make the stencils contains mammal (possibly human) blood, the first time that blood has ever been biochemically identified as a constituent of the pigment used to produce rock art anywhere in the world (Jones et al., 1988). These findings did not argue very well for the anti-World Heritage case.

Karst was also addressed at length in the subsequent Enquiry hearings, with many pages of submissions and transcripts devoted to it - the present writer, for instance, spent nearly 7 hours in the witness box over three days, mostly talking karst, and there were other lengthy appearances by Rhys Jones, Adrian Davey and Ian Houshold and briefer contributions on karst by a number of other witnesses (Middleton, 1988c). At the time a Tasmanian state public servant I later came under considerable pressure from a very high political and bureaucratic level in the Tasmanian government for not illegally refusing to answer the soepenna to appear that I had been served by the Commission. For legal reasons the full details of this cannot yet be told, though the incident serves

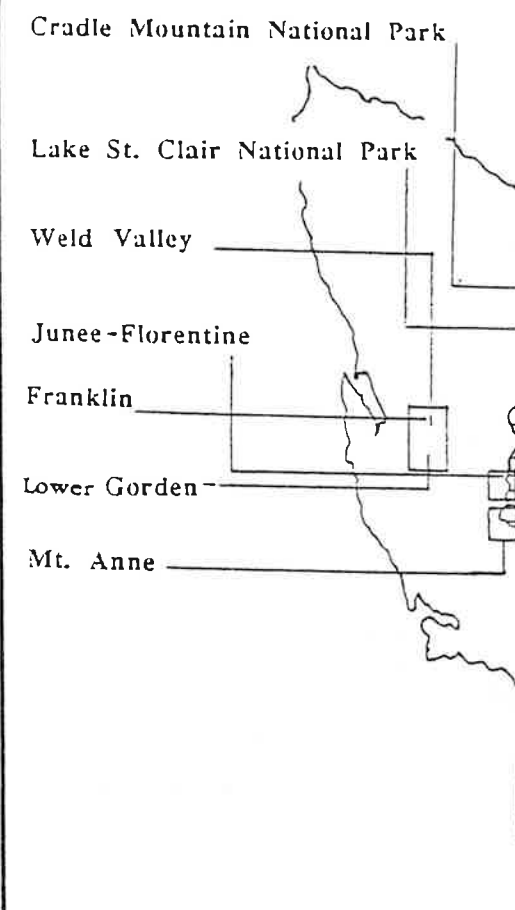
as some indication of the desperation of the state administration as it lost its court cases and saw the Southern Forests slipping through its fingers.

However, for a while at least the Tasmanian government need not have worried, because the majority of the Commissioners found that only a small part of the area warranted World Heritage listing - including Exit Cave and also (for botanical rather than karst reasons) parts of the Upper Weld/Mt Anne and Mt Bobs karsts, but specifically excluding Bone Cave and Judds Cavern. On the other hand a minority report by Commissioner Hitchcock, the only commissioner with any knowledge of natural area planning and management, proposed that most of the Enquiry area should be nominated for World Heritage listing, together with some additional areas such as the 'Hole in the Doughnut' that the World Heritage Bureau had itself once suggested should be included in the WTWHA. This split in the Commission meant that its deliberations had been in vain, and it ushered in a further period of political turmoil. The competence of the majority report was called into question, and most of the consultants that had been engaged by the Commission publicly disassociated themselves from its findings. Goodwill towards the Commission took a further slide when irregularities were discovered in the manner in which some witnesses were engaged on minor paid consultancies by the Commission to expand on their evidence - some being forced to resort to the Ombudsman in an effort to secure their fees which in the end necessitated special ex gratia payments being conjured up by the federal government.

#### Tasmania's New World Heritage Area

After having been deadlocked on several occasions federal cabinet finally resolved to protect about 80% of the Enquiry area, if necessary by resort to unilateral nomination of the area for the World Heritage List. Ultimately, agreement was reached between the two governments to list 270 000 ha of

the Lemonthyme and Southern Forests, and some adjacent areas on the Central Plateau, and for the Tasmanian government to protect the 'Hole in the Doughnut' under state legislation (Middleton, 1989). Although karst appears to have fared fairly well from the chosen WHA boundaries some other important natural values have not, most notably the tall forests that were the focus of the public campaign.



On 20 December 1988 the Commonwealth Government forwarded the nomination to the World Heritage Bureau in Paris. It consolidates nomination of the new area with a re-nomination of the existing WTWHA. Under the rules set down by the World Heritage Bureau one of four criteria must be met for a natural area to be accepted as World Heritage, while cultural sites must meet one of six criteria. The original WTWHA qualified on the basis of all four criteria for natural heritage, and three of the six for cultural heritage. In the latest nomination karst values are cited in the arguments for all four natural heritage criteria, and for two of those for cultural heritage.



### The future

The new World Heritage listing does not ensure total protection for Tasmania's wilderness karst. Firstly, the decision offers the 'Hole in the Doughnut', only the very limited protection conferred by state legislation - and remember that no Tasmanian national park has every survived unscathed for even a single human generation, let alone future

Mole Creek

Australian National Mills Concession

Ida Bay

Exit Cave

generations. In this case the situation is worse, as the agreement between the two governments specifically leaves the area open for mining and hydro-electric dams. That means, for instance, that the Ballwinnie Cave art site discovered a couple of years ago and the enigmatic karst towers in the Maxwell River Valley (Middleton, 1988d; Harris et al., 1988) remain vulnerable to dams constructed at Freedoms Gate or elsewhere on the Denison, or on the Gordon River upstream of the Olga River confluence. The discovery of further archaeological sites in the Denison Valley in March 1989 emphasises that the 'Hole in the Doughnut' forms a central part of the rich and ancient

archaeological province represented by the Franklin Valley at one extremity and the Weld and Cracroft Valleys at another extremity.

But similar risks exist even in the new WHA. Because there appears to be no clear mechanism whereby WHAs can be rescinded. Various federal Liberal Party politicians have foreshadowed that if elected to office they intend to "review" restrictions imposed on activities in WHAs. It would appear that this process has already commenced, without the need for any change of government. An agreement known as the Cook-Groom Package is appended to the Heads of Agreement signed by the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments on 28 November 1988. It indicates that the Commonwealth agrees with the continued issuance and maintenance of mineral exploration and mining titles in the WHA. Because the original WTWHA is renominated in the latest submission this appears to allow access by the mining industry into not only the Southern Forests, the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and the Central Plateau Conservation Area - which would be bad enough - but also into the Southwest National Park, the Franklin-Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, and the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park. Already the Commonwealth Government has agreed to small scale gold mining in the little known Jane River karst area at the very heart of the Franklin River basin, something that would have been unthinkable during the heady days of the dams debate.

On top of this, while the broad boundaries of the new WHA have been agreed upon their location at a detailed level has not yet been completely finalised. Officials with no detailed local knowledge are involved in intergovernmental negotiations and making decisions as to, for instance, which contour, boundaries should follow. It remains to be seen how well served by this process are such karsts as the Mt. Weld (Fairylane) area. It also remains uncertain as to whether the new WHA additions will be given national park status or will retain their present tenure as State Forest and remain under the administration of the Forestry Commission.

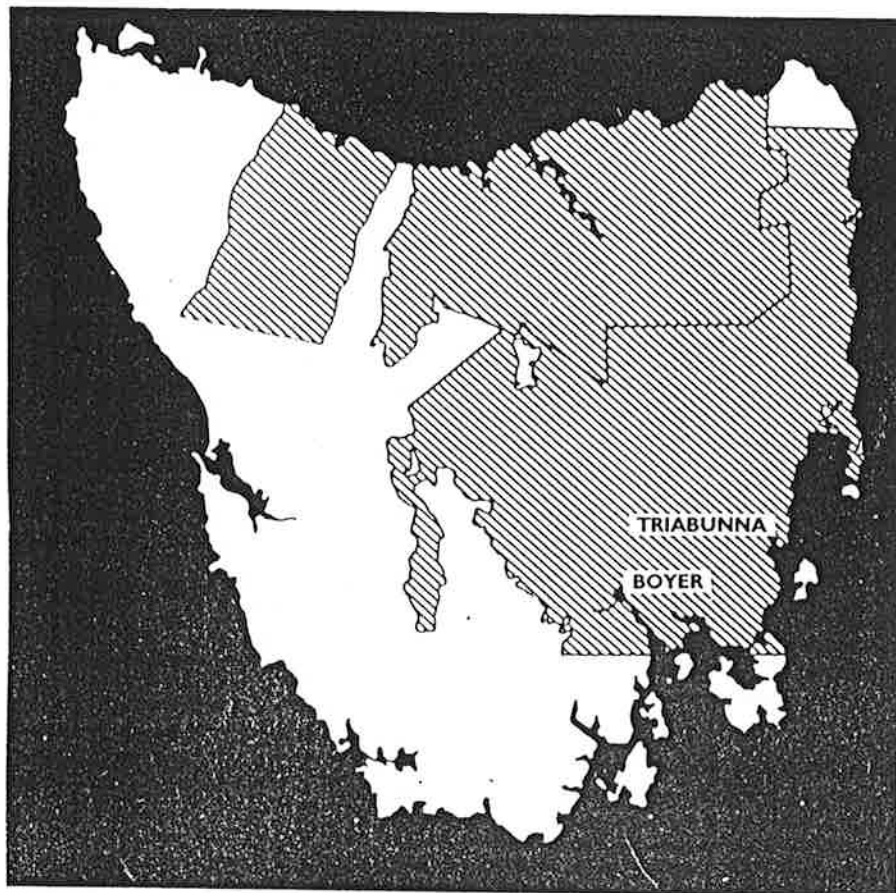
The WHA boundaries around Exit Cave make much more sense than the original cave reserve which was declared in two separate sections with a mining lease between them. But the second largest limestone quarry in Tasmania is to be allowed to continue operations within the new WHA boundaries adjacent to the Exit Cave reserve. Apart from any long term threat to Exit Cave, operations at this quarry have already resulted in sedimentation in one cave that contains several skeletons of the thylacine or Tasmanian Tiger, while pollution entering a sinkhole has reached another cave (Kiernan, 1973a) and, perhaps for this reason, that particular cave is devoid of obligate cavernicoles despite their presence in other nearby stream caves (Clarke, 1987). In addition, some years ago the quarry company installed a pipe that diverts water to the quarry from Mystery Creek, the principal stream that flows through Exit Cave, despite having earlier given an undertaking that it would not do so (Kiernan, 1972).

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**WRITE  
FOR  
FUSSI**

**NEXT  
DEADLINE**

**End of  
February**



APPM's timber concessions cover all state forest in the shaded area

It should also be remembered that the advent of World Heritage status some years ago has done little for the Lower Gordon River karst area. One of Tasmania's most important tourist attractions, the rainforested banks of the Lower Gordon have been seriously battered by the wakes produced by tourist vessels. Tens of kilometres of riverbank have now collapsed into the river, carrying with them the majestic Huon Pine and Myrtle trees whose reflections in the crystal waters of the Gordon made the place so justifiably famous. Almost all of this damage has occurred since the advent of the original WHA. The Tasmanian government has consistently favoured a continuation of the present format of tourism on the river over responsible management of this sensitive environment, while the Commonwealth Government either turned a blind eye or couldn't care less (Kiernan, in press). Only now when the Gordon is almost beyond salvage and tourism interests are themselves expressing concern are there signs of interest from Canberra.

No conservation battle is ever won - at best defeat is merely deferred, but only until complacency sets in. Only destruction of an area in dispute every fully resolves a conservation issue. Most of us have been brought up with the reassuring notion that national parks are declared to protect places for all time. But human beings are involved, human perspectives change, and greed is a universal constant. Without constant effort no part of our heritage is likely to survive if it can be converted into hard cash or votes. While most of the conservation movement turned its attention to the forests after the Gordon-Franklin area was "saved" the banks of the Gordon were laid to waste. Today the 'Hole in



the Doughnut', other areas of the Tasmanian wilderness, and some karst areas elsewhere in the state deserve redoubled efforts to secure their protection. But in pursuing that goal a vigilant concern for those places already supposedly protected will be imperative if we are not to see more of Tasmania's World Heritage karsts "Gordonised", despite their new found status. Public expectations of what is appropriate in a WHA are likely to be more significant in protecting them than their status in any legal sense.

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## Postscript

Since the above article was written a new state government has been elected in Tasmania which has pledged to fully protect the "Hole in the Doughnut". Five green independents elected on 13 May 1989 formed an alliance with the state Labor Party led by Mr. Michael Field enabling it to form government with an effective parliamentary majority of one. The green candidates took a seat in each of the five Tasmanian electorates, topping the poll in two electorates and coming second in two others. Former Premier Robin Gray refused to resign until six weeks after the election, but the new government is now installed. The head of Tasmania's largest

company, ENT Ltd., has been charged by police with attempting to bribe newly elected Labor politicians to defect to the Liberals. The accord signed between the independents and the ALP provides that the state government will add a number of areas to the World Heritage nomination, including the karst-rich "Hole in the Doughnut", and that as a matter of priority it will consider the addition of several others one of which includes the catchment of the Lower Gordon karst. In June 1989 the World Heritage Bureau requested that the Australian Government add a number of other areas to the nomination. including the lower Weld and upper Styx valleys, both of which contain important karst. The Independents have had a major impact on the new government's restructuring of the state bureaucracy, which has seen the emergence of a new Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage and a Department emergence of Environment and Planning. However, while the green-Labor accord provides that no mining is to occur in national parks or World Heritage Areas, Premier Field has indicated to the operators of the Ida Bay limestone quarry that it will be permitted to continue operations. It is not yet certain the extent to which this may or may not threaten nearby Exit Cave, but it certainly spells destruction for many other caves in the area planned for quarry expansion. However, precipitous closure of the Ida Bay quarry might well force increased quarrying in another equally or even more sensitive area, possibly at Mole Creek or above Khazad-Dum at Junea-Florentine. The situation demands cool, careful and rational consideration of the options and imparts, and a sound factual base upon which to found decisions, but there is a danger this will not occur for two principal reasons. Firstly, to meet the deadline for acceptance of the World Heritage nomination in Paris a decision will probably have to be made by September 15 either to exclude an area around the quarry from the nomination or include the quarry and allow the very dangerous precedent of mining in the World Heritage Area. Secondly, the Exit Cave area has been seized upon by

Tasmania's exploitative agencies and interests in a last ditch bid to thwart the gains made by conservation interests.



# The Sticht Belay Plate

The Sticht Belay Plate is a proven, lightweight device for effective and controlled dynamic belaying. Its use is uncomplicated and, through four brake stages, is adaptable to all rock and/or ice climbing situations. It also serves as an excellent aid for rappelling or in ascending a fixed rope. The Sticht plate is light and compact: It is only  $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick and  $2\frac{3}{8}$ " in diameter and averages about 2.8 ounces in weight—roughly the weight of one aluminum carabiner! Any type of belay technique which works as near to static highly stresses all links of the "belay chain" (rope, piton, nuts, carabiner, the falling climber and the belayer). Particularly the strength of pitons and nuts—usually the weakest link in the chain—is often overestimated. Thus, in

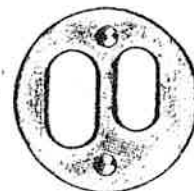
addition to the shock-absorbing qualities of modern ropes, most climbing situations require a further means of gently stopping a fall.

Dynamic belaying absorbs the fall energy by gradually stopping the fall, i.e., by letting an amount of reserve rope slide past the belay point (as with all belay techniques, it is necessary to avoid a tangling or kinking of the rope). For effective dynamic belaying, to assure an adequate reserve of rope for braking, it's best to use ropes of at least 150 feet in length. With the conventional forms of the dynamic belay, such as the hip belay, it can be difficult or impossible to hold the braking of a fall under control. In addition there is the danger that the rope could be yanked completely away from the belayer.

The Sticht plate can be used in four braking stages with a dynamical braking effect of ca. 460 to ca. 1,100 lbs. and therefore is adaptable to all fall situations.

With any system of belaying the rope-partner a solid, shortly hitched and slack-free, self-anchor is of primary importance. All dynamic belays require thin (leather) gloves (or, as a minimum, one glove on the hand used for braking) to protect the belayer from burns when stopping long and hard falls. With the Sticht plate it's no problem to affix a fallen partner to the belay anchor, e.g. through a clove hitch behind the stressed belay plate or by a prusik knot in front of the brake.

The Sticht plate is not recommended for twisted types of rope (such as GOLDLINE).



Basic model, available for 11 mm rope and 11/9 mm rope



plate with spring

## Brake stages of the Sticht plate

All dynamic belays require thin (leather) gloves.



Brake stage I:  
plate and one carabiner,  
ca. 460—490 lbs.



Brake stage Ia:  
plate and one carabiner +  
body belay ca. 730 lbs.



Brake stage II:  
plate and two carabiners,  
ca. 880 lbs.  
(with a wet rope ca. 660 lbs.)



Brake stage IIa:  
plate and two carabiners +  
body belay, ca. 1,100 lbs.  
(with a wet rope ca. 880 lbs.)

**To pay out or take in rope:** The belay plate stays 3—6 inches in front of the (locking) carabiner and is tied to the harness by a cord giving not less than 6 to 8" travel. The carabiner and belay plate should be positioned as shown—tension through twists in the rope is to be avoided. Applies to the standard model without spring: if the plate, through careless handling when giving out rope, is unintentionally pulled too close to the carabiner, the position of the plate is to be corrected with the free hand.

**Models with a spring:** The models with a spring have the function of hindering an unwanted blocking of the rope. The spring holds the brake plate away from the carabiner and only by braking is it pressed together. Recommended for easier handling or beginners.



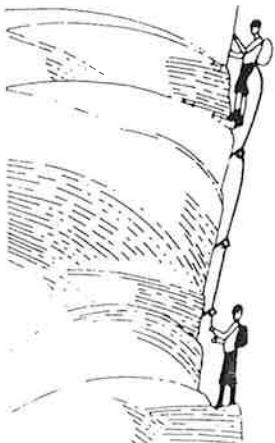
## Position by a fall or when giving tension:

The hand used for braking holds the rope firmly. Thereby the plate is pulled toward the carabiner producing a braking effect.

The hand behind the plate, which is held opposite to the possible direction of the fall energy, has a braking and holding function and is to be protected from rope burns by a light glove.

# The proposed Brake stages of the Sticht plate

with single rope



A fall stopped by a runner

## Stage I

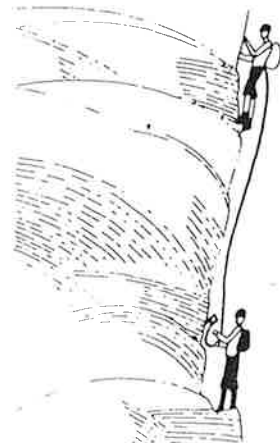
1 carabiner  
braking effect with a dry rope:  
ca. 490 lbs.

## Stage Ia

1 carabiner plus body belay  
braking effect with a dry rope:  
ca. 730 lbs.  
braking effect with a wet rope:  
ca. 510 lbs.

## Brake stage i or Ia.

Generally recommended on ice and snow, as the anchors offer less holding power than a well driven piton in rock. Also the amount of rope dynamically used, is not so critical on ice as it is not likely to strike a ledge. Low braking effects are also required on rock when the lead or anchor points are insecure.



Extreme fall — "fall factor 2"  
(without a runner)

## Stage II

2 carabiners  
braking effect with a dry rope:  
ca. 880 lbs.

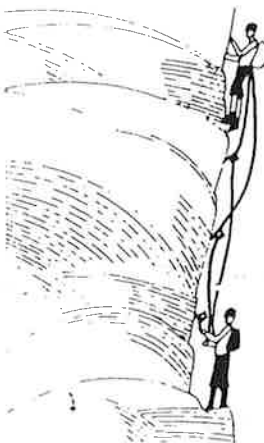
## Stage IIa

2 carabiners plus body belay  
braking effect with a dry rope:  
ca. 1,100 lbs.  
braking effect with a wet rope:  
ca. 880 lbs.

## Brake stage II, with two

carabiners. Recommended when climbing with a single rope on rock and no lead pitons are available or where long falls are possible. Climbers who aren't willing to utilize the potential applications a modern rope brake has to offer, can in many practicable rock climbing situations make do with stage II. When ropes of 9 or 10 mm diameter

with double rope

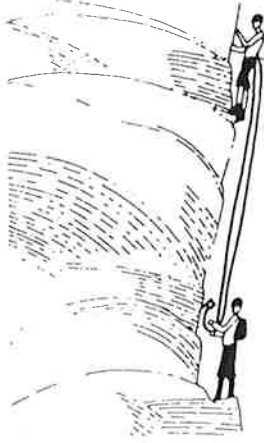


Fall stopped by a runner  
(each runner would be stressed by only a single rope strand)

With the use of a double rope by extreme falls without a lead piton the brake stage I automatically becomes brake stage II when both ropes simultaneously are pulled through the belay plate and, accordingly, the braking effect is doubled to ca. 980 lbs.

Thus with a double rope brake stage I—or by wet ropes, stage Ia—is normally recom-

ended. When, by the use of a double rope with no lead pitons, a low braking effect is desired, this is possible by:



Extreme fall — "fall factor 2"  
(without any runner)

a) clicking the second rope out of the belay plate (only if the first rope is 11 mm),

b) unevenly feeding out the ropes so that by a fall both ropes wouldn't be simultaneously stressed.

are used, the belay plate should be used only by stage II or IIa.

## Brake stage IIa

has the advantage that even during hard falls the rope passed through the plate is minimal and that rarely a glove will be necessary to protect the hand. With a low "fall factor" this belay functions as static. The disadvantage is a quite high shock energy

applied in hard falls to all components of the "belay chain". The pivotal point can be exposed to a maximum stress of ca. 2,700 lbs. Stage IIa has a justification, if the belayer prepares to hold a hard fall without a pivotal belay point above the belay station, particularly when the rope is wet. Individual belay and fall-test practice is highly recommended.



To belay the leader:  
**Normal position.** Almost slack free connection to the anchor. The belay plate is operated in front of the chest. The rope runs through a leader piton and carabiner directly over the belay position. A braking and holding of the fall is also possible if the leader piton comes out.



To belay the leader when the belay position is unfavourable, the Sticht plate can be clicked directly into a safe anchor with a carabiner (requires extra time). However, there must be a second anchor available for the belayer. An additional lead piton directly over the belay station is most desirable. In sketch II a fallen climber would automatically be affixed to the belay point and the



belayer remains free to undertake further action. (In case of the lead piton coming out it would be practical to anchor the plate to two linked carabiners, for better adaption to changing direction of the load.)

**The Sticht plate is excellently suited for rappelling** (plate to be attached with a locking carabiner to the seat-harness or rappel sling).



If the rappel is a "dead-end" the climber is in a position to reascend the rope: The plate can be used as an aid in ascending a fixed rope, e.g., after a fall. The principle used is depicted in the photo. One rope ascender or on double rope a prusik knot with a sling is used for ascension during which the plate serves the purpose of holding the body weight and taking in the slack.



# TROG DELIGHTS.

## WINE FOR SALE:

Following the hugely successful wine bottling last week we are now in a position to offer for sale to our members the following wines, at \$5/bottle: Ring Clare on 3886371.

**Red:** A blend of Cabernet, Shiraz and Malbec grapes from Andy Lloyd's vineyards at Coriole in the prestige McLaren Vale viticultural area. The grapes were picked at maximum ripeness during the superb '86 autumn. The blend was stored in new french Nevers hogsheads for 6 months, and final analysis confirms the winemakers' high hopes: at 6.7g/l residual sugar (1.78 oechsle) and 9.34 mg/hl total acid. It promises to last a lunchtime. Our panel of respected wine judges came up with the following assessment:

**Colour:** dark ruby ochre with hints of gold.  
**Bouquet:** Youthful and peppery Cabernet overtones with hints of peak berry flavour backed by clean integrated oak and dead possum.  
**Palate:** Palate is young, seductive and alluring and delivers what the nose promises - ripe, rich fruit and marsupial flavours, with chewy lumps. Good drinking now, but will improve with bottle age. Give it away in 5-10 years. Caution: Do not serve to friends (although this depends on your attitude to said friends).

**White:** Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay (25/75) blend. Picked in the dead of night when no-one was looking.  
**Colour:** Pale gold with blue tinges.  
**Bouquet:** Like a prawn boat after the refrigeration's failed.  
**Palate:** Overtone of herbaceous mud do much to hide the seaweed and rubble characters on the middle palate, but the 'wine' finishes long and pleasantly sweet with hints of botrytis. Will keep for absolutely ages. Recommended.

## SOLD OUT

**Congratulations to Sackie, Ceridwen & Fran!** After six hard years of toils, boils and Gluteal rushes, when you cudn't even spell the word dokter, you now is one!



The idea of money did not occur to early microbes. The problem of the day was growth rate and cell-division. The last thing the original protozoa had in mind was the cost of living.

But when the first brachiopod through random sensitivity of the gill slits, chose a mouthful of cytoplasm just for the hell of it, the future of the market was assured. By the time he had a few nuts in reserve for winter, the first bank manager cells had been perfected.

**Lost** White plastic cup from the Nullarbor trip. Owner suffering coffee withdrawal symptoms. This cup is of major historic significance as it has accompanied its owner on every camping trip since 1973. Please, please can I have it back. Clare.

**MAVIS THE GIBBON.**

# FUSS 89-90 CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME

**January 4-13**

Yarrangobilly & Bungonia, N.S.W. Trip  
leader C.Buswell.

**January 26-28**

9am

ASF Council Meeting Jindabyne N.S.W.

**End January**

Naracoorte.

Anybody wanting to run a trip is welcome to do so, but first you must notify a member of the executive. For trips on private property farmers must be notified, by letter, at least one week in advance. Trips to Naracoorte require a permit to be lodged 3-4 weeks in advance.

**Merry Christmas** and all the best for the festive season and the next decade.

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## CAVE LEEUWIN

**18th Biennial Conference of the  
Australian Speleological Federation Inc.**

Cave Leeuwin is to be held at Margaret River from 30 December 1990 to 5 January 1991 inclusive. Margaret River is a pleasant tourist town found midway along the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge. It is famous for its magnificent Karri trees, caves, surfing, fishing, bushwalking, and for those inclined, wine tasting. Multi to single star hotel accommodation is available along with guest houses, caravan/camping grounds and lodges. Details to be published later. Enquiries to Cave Leeuwin P.O. Box 120 Nedlands WA 6006.

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NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING

### **AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION COUNCIL MEETING.**

**WHERE: JINDABYNE**, (Near Cooma N.S.W. Jindabyne is near the Snowy M'tains and is close to fabulous bush walking, fishing and caving areas).

**WHEN: JANUARY 26, 27, 28.**

**CONTACT: CLARE BUSWELL** FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. Fuss members are most welcome to attend.

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