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Speleo Spiel

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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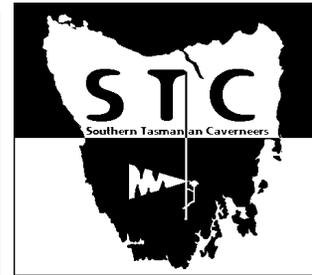
Speleo Spiel

Issue Number 303 Jul - Aug 1997

Newsletter of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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Meeting the first Wednesday of the month in the Brownlow room at Hampden House Battery Pt 8:00 pm.

Social gathering the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Shipwrights Arms Battery Pt. 8:00pm.

Editorial

An unusually dry start to winter has seen more caving than expected during these months though the resulting flood of new discoveries / trip reports has been less than overwhelming. However thanks to those who have contributed articles, for once it seem that less than 50% of the Spiel has been written by yours truly. *sigh of satisfaction* Most of you will notice that not only the article Memory lane but also the author bares some relation to recent discussion within the club. I claim editorial privilege in promoting my biased opinions.

On a related note I think Frank's discussion of ladder techniques and the requisite intensive use of bodies casts some light on more modern problems like lack of bodies. It seems in years gone by that although only a select few "hard people" got to the bottom most of the club actually participated in the endeavour. Modern techniques favour small parties moving fast and going a very long way & leave almost nothing for the beginners and the semi retired to do. We all know the result and in one way or another have been trying to find solutions. While I cant suggest anything new maybe I have gained a better understanding of the problem. There is and always will be a vast amount of work which dose not require "hard" exploration perhaps if we can attach a little more quedos to; surface exploration, surveying, record keeping etc, organise more easy yet constructive trips it may help. (*See things to do*)

Club Matters:

Snow & Trees:

Heavy snowfalls in the Florentine in early July have left almost all side roads covered in light tree fall. At printing only the 8 Rd and the JQ Rd to the 341 track have been cleared. If you are planning a trip to any other Rd's you probably wont get there without a saw.

Welcome:

Old-New members, Sue Baker & Paul Scofield Have just re joined the club after a year in Antarctica. Welcome to the club go out cave and be fruitful.

Surveying:

Food for thought: In a recent fit of boredom I started adding memory sketches to the Growling swallet master survey. In a couple of hours work I had added over 900m of passage and that is just the ones I remember confidently. Including those sketches the current surveyed length of GS is 11053.8m How much more could be added to this cave with a bit of concerted effort ?

Things to do

Florentine stuff.

- Survey minor leads in New Feeling, Contact John H-S for what to do.
- Finish Servalan survey and check climb down in boulderpile, take 10m handline.
- Survey up first stream in Necrosis and continue to climb cascades.
- Climb avens in Tiger Mountain.
- Climb at end of Nix inlet.
- Re-Survey Track from Growling Swallet to Ice Tube.
- Get GPS fix's on Dribblespit. Satins Lair. Ice Tube, Niggly, Serendipity, KD, Porcupine Pot, etc.

Ida Bay stuff.

- Investigate shaft parallel to last pitch in Hobbit Hole (see Spiel#268).

For Sale

Speleo Spiel back issues. To help organise the club library all members are encouraged to purchase a few of the vast quantity of Spiel back issues that are overflowing my spare room. We still have spare copies of most issues from #70 up. Cost \$1.00 members \$1.50 non members. Contact the Editor.

Forward Program:

September:

- Sat, 6/9/97 Wolf Hole (Ida Bay), ph Dave or Leigh
- Wed, 3/9/97 General Meeting, Brownlow Room Hampton House Battery Pt, 8:00pm.
- Sept 13/14 Mole Creek weekend, or Arthur's Folly (Ida Bay), ph Dave or Leigh
- Wed, 17/9/97 Social Meeting, Shipwrights Arms Battery Pt, 8:00pm.

October:

- Wed, 1/10/97 General Meeting, Brownlow Room Hampton House Battery Pt, 8:00pm.
- 5/10/97 Mini Expedition to North West Thailand. Tick list includes: Thum MaeLaNa 12k through trip, Thum NamLung 7k+, Thum SooSa & Exploration in and around Thum PlaBort . *Contact John H-S*
- Wed, 22/10/97 Social Meeting, Shipwrights Arms Battery Pt, 8:00pm.

Future ideas for trips - dates to be announced, Old Rift Cave, Mystery Creek - the far reaches, Upper levels of Niggly, Pseudocheirus, King George V, **See things to do list.**

Trip Reports:

Growling Swallet JF-36 6-July 97

Party: Dion Hutcheon, John H-S

Since Kelly had coerced - bribed all available bods to join her on her social foray / rescue exercise into Gormangast I was forced to look elsewhere for playmates. Not wishing to scare off another potential member I opted for an easy stroll to re-survey the main stream sump. (*another block of missing data*)

This done Dion was still keen so we wandered over to the Trapdoor Stream and poked around a few side passages before heading out. Stopping on the way to check out Trev's alleged lead at the bottom of windy rift. Contrary to past performance this lead looks quite good and a return will be planed as soon as the correct sized hammer can be located.

Back at the entrance we engaged in some recruiting by plunging neck deep into the stream in front of a group of y12 geology students. Thus guaranteeing that the next meeting will be inundated with membership applications from 17yo masochists.

On returning to the car we were greeted with a scene reminiscent of a wilderness first aid training scenario, but that belongs in another trip report. Dion later complained that he thought caving was supposed to be about crawling and grovelling etc, I promised to make it up by inviting him to help finish surveying Servelane.

(*T.R.O.G.*)

Gormenghast: JF-35 6-July-97

Party: Kelly Miller, Nigel Williams, Eric ?, David Rasch, Sue Baker, Roslyn Fenton, Leigh Douglas.

Dawn broke on a motley gathering of STC Social Cavers outside the club gear store. As with all well-planned trips we hadn't organised the transport, but after some discussion and due democratic process we unanimously voted Kelly and Nigel to provide the official Sacrificial Vehicles. Passengers were quickly sorted into 'boys' and 'girls' without much difficulty, with Sue promoted to Honorary Boy for the day (or was it just the poor light?) - and off we went.

Being a passenger in Nigel's car feels like flying First Class to somewhere far more exotic than Maydena. It's all brushed velour and room to stretch your legs and whisper-quiet propulsion and, of course, not a speck of mud in sight...yet (heh, heh). Seeing as no in-flight movie was offered, we kept ourselves amused as far as Westerway with a heated debate about the pros and cons of genetically engineered foods. At Westerway (and the usual argument about which shop makes the best coffee), we met John Salt and company (at the second shop), who were

heading into Growling for a survey trip. We downed the obligatory cappuccinos waiting for the girls car to arrive, then departed in convoy for the Eight Road.

Eric, planning well ahead, had suited up in Hobart, but for the rest of us it was off with the attire of Normality and into the Speleo Therms (phew!). Fashion is of prime importance on this kind of caving trip, and Sue easily scooped the prize this week with her dazzling crimson off-the-shoulder number. Her custom suit is actually both waterproof AND retro-reflective! Luckily we managed to catch this suit on film in pristine condition, under the clever pretext of a group photo. Stay tuned for the embarrassing re-appearance of this photo!.

The Florentine had turned on an amazing blue-sky day, so we launched ourselves with relish (some prefer other condiments) along the Growling track. Despite numerous detours around fallen logs, the old Bridle trail was easily visible and we found the Gormenghast gully with little difficulty, the tireless GPS mapping our progress as we went.

We straggled our way down the gully with our illustrious non-leader Kelly out in front. Kelly was picking a highly original descent using a series of slippery logs, when we heard urgent calls for assistance. We found her in what appeared to be a precarious position, lying sideways and bridging between a log and a low cliff. She seemed to be slowly sliding into the mouth of a black hole which had opened up beneath her. Somewhere buried down the front of Kelly's caving suit (I don't know the medical name for the exact location), the GPS was beeping furiously to signal the emergency (By heavens, these gadgets get smarter each year!).

Quick as a flash I bridged in beneath her and administered the "Embrace of Self-Rescue", which enables a person in a near-death situation to suddenly find the strength to rescue themselves without further assistance. Kelly had seriously banged her right knee, but after some tentative prods decided to continue with the trip - that's the sort of bravery that makes a non-leader!

In we all went, into a tight steeply-sloping swallet which was full of loose boulders and running water. Really, about all that can be said about Gormenghast that isn't bad is that it is a hole in the ground!

We were assured that yes, the entrance stuff is unattractive but the cave improves further on. Well, to cut a long story short, I guess we didn't make it to the mythical "further on". After about half an hour Kelly passed us, gingerly heading out of the cave with a grapefruit stuck up the leg of her caving suit. Roslyn and I turned around some time later, chilled and with gumboots full of water, followed some time later by Sue and Leigh, then finally Nigel and Eric who all penetrated to various and pointless depths in the fissure.

After experiencing such a nasty little cave it was necessary for us all to head straight for Tall Trees café. Even Kelly's grapefruit liked that idea. Seated comfortably around a slow-combustion stove, filling ourselves up with cups of hot chocolate and fresh scones with jam and cream, the memories of loose boulders and cold water slowly fading, the obvious question arose: Why not skip the whole uncomfortable caving bit altogether, go direct from Hobart to Tall Trees and hook straight into the yummy bit? In reply I have to say this:

- a) 'Tis better to replace spent calories than to pack new ones on.
- b) Verily, it is in the transition from extreme discomfort and suffering to cosiness and bloated satisfaction that true pleasure may be found.

Anyway, then we all drove back to Hobart and after a brief discussion in the dark in the middle of the road, where we all agreed that it had been a good day and that we should do it all again sometime, we went home.

Name and Address withheld

Upper Trapdoor stream overflow JF-36 14-July 97

Party: Paul Darby (SRCC) John Hawkins-Salt.

With the intention of giving our northern brother an easy and pleasant trip to New Feeling thwarted by excessive snow melt, and foot deep snow at the entrance threatening to melt at any moment we felt it prudent to try Slaughterhouse instead.

Since Paul wasn't keen to help finish surveying in Servalan, after all merrily getting to the Trapdoor stream must be the equivalent of doing about 50 Mt Crips caves all in one day. We

went up to the Upper Trapdoor stream Overflow to check the couple of leads left below the pitch.

The best remaining lead was a climb down into a small silt filled chamber. As the climb completely lacked any hand & foot holds or belay points we considered placing a bolt. But remembering STC's strong environmental ethic, I realised that Paul could be wedged sideways in the rift as a sort of large spongy Hex nut type thingy. (*Jb would be proud*) The rigging thus resolved I descended the 4m handline and commenced exploration.

From the base of the chamber a small solution tube led on and down. After 15 or 20 meters of worming through the tube I started to hear stream type sounds. With rising excitement I hurried on. This area is almost directly above the Main Stream sump so the stream I could hear must be the continuation of the main stream beyond the sump. With the passage showing no sine of shutting down, this was it a new breakthrough in GS, miles of new passage !!! So another 30m of squirming with the stream getting louder lead to an easy climb to the base of a large aven. F**k wow what a find, you never can tell with this cave.

Hang on a moment what's that over there. Scaling poles ??? You guessed it I had come full circle and pooped out through an insignificant hole in the back end of the Scaling pole aven. Oh well at least we can cross another ? mark of the map. So back through the tubes a quick tug on the belay to make shore it was awake and then the slow plod out.

Paul paused somewhere on the last pitch to remark that he enjoyed caving in the Florentine every 5 years or so, it reminded him why he liked Mt Crips So Much.

John H-S

Servelane via Slaughterhouse 26-July 97

Party: Dion Hutcheon, John H-S.

On Dion's first caving trip (*see above*) he complained at the lack of tight crawly squeeze grungy bits. So I thought continuing the survey in Servelane might be the type of cave to satisfy his appetite. As he hadn't abseiled before we went in via Slaughterhouse just to add interest. The Trapdoor stream was quickly reached, then on to Destiny and Razor aven the odd tight bit en route extracting noises of appreciation from Dion.

Howard & Deb had continued the survey from where I had left on a previous trip and left a short handline marking there last station. With this in mind we trundled through the tight bit then the muddy bit and the next tight bit, thinking gee they got a lot further than I thought they would. Before we knew it we were in the largish passages just before the final chamber. Without the handline we couldn't descend the lead in the last boulderpile so a quick lunch and trundle back again.

Somewhere in the section of passage where you change levels frequently we ran into the handline obviously on a different level to the one we came in on. Oh well I guess we'll get back there sooner or later.

On the way out we spent an hour or so bashing an inconvenient flake which is baring progress on a lead in the bottom of the Windy Rift. A bit more work on the next trip might see this slot rendered passable.

(T.R.O.G)

Unnumbered cave near JF-341 3-Aug-97

Party: Dave Rasch, Dion Hutcheon, Anna ???, John H-S (*Cameo by Tim Moris from Tyenna Valley Lodge*)

The aim was to go into GS and continue with the Windy Rift dig started last weekend however high water and light rain didn't bode well for hanging around the lower parts of GS so we opted to have a look one of Dave's projects.

Unfortunately no one had been up the Junee Quarry Rd since the heavy snowfall 5 weeks ago. Immediately we turned of the F Rd we were confronted with vast amounts of tree fall caused by the weight of snow. Somewhat daunted we returned to Maydena in the hope of borrowing a saw. Tim very kindly offered to lend his saw and himself, so with Tim striding ahead dicing trees

we followed behind hauling them off the rd. 1 & 1/2 work got us to the start of the 341 track. Many many thanks to Tim.

A small unnumbered swallet Marked (*SCS with pink tape*) located in a dry valley above Washout Cave JF-129. The cave is almost directly over a known high aven in the 341 system. Forest litter on the floor of this aven and the strong draught present in the above cave make continued digging a promising proposition. The cave descends steeply some 20m through narrow rift and incredibly slippery dolerite cobbles. A 5m handline descends into a small chamber, the limit of previous exploration where Dolerite infill jamps the continuing passage.

While Dave continued gardening and rearranging the floor I drilled a line of 10mm holes across the face of the offending rock. This provided a line of weakness and with a few well placed hammer blows the rock saw the error of its ways and agreed to move. Once past this restriction a couple more body lengths were gained. The next restriction consists of large cobbled semi cemented into the floor and should not be too difficult to move. Rocks thrown around this point can be heard bouncing down the continuing passage.

In all a pleasant dig in much nicer conditions than Asteroid. I'm shore work will continue here in the non to distant.

We then took a leisurely stroll to the bottom of old Rift cave so Anna didn't finish the day thinking all caving was grovelling in short tight wombat holes.

John H-S

Windy Rift Dig/Splash 8-Aug-97

Party: Dion Hutcheon, John H-S

Dion & I boomed back into the rift to continue with the dig see above. Only to find the work site about 5m underwater. The day was not entirely lost as going in and out through Slaughterhouse constituted Dion's first vertical trip. The club drill and various digging implements were left with the emergency gear in Refuge aven, in anticipation of imminent return.

John H-S

Shopping in the Derwent Valley

Welcome Stranger 15th June 1997

Party: Dave Clement, Leigh Douglas, Rosalyn Fenton, Angela Jakob, David Rasch, Dianne Sward, Nigel Williams

This should really be a description of a visit to road-side shops on the way to the Florentine – we stopped at nearly all of them.

WC was but a dim memory for two of us (Leigh and Nigel) having visited it some ten years ago. I understood from the trip announcement that this was a beginner's trip, but having not been underground for several months I felt the only beginner was me. Starting at 11.10am the group tore up the main streamway to the sump at the end for an early lunch, and then slithered through the nearby squeeze, jumped a chasm or two, gingerly stepped through some side passages and generally had a good look around.

Leigh and I had a look up an Eastern side passage, the passage quickly ends at a small sump, this part showing some previous traffic. Moving up a side branch just before the sump we found passage steeply climbing for about 20m, at this point it comes to what might be a roof collapse, the ceiling still appears to have a quantity of rocks suspended by muddy bits and prayers; at this point we hesitated unsure whether it was prudent to proceed. Not sure if it has been visited beyond where we stopped. Someone particularly game might like to push it to see if it reaches the surface, since the gain in height "feels" like it might. After a bit of agonising we piked out and rejoined the rest of the group at the main junction. Group exited the cave at 3.10pm.

Given the relaxed 9am start time for this trip and the choice of venue for the post-trip refreshment I was struck with the new modus operandi of the STC. Gone are the days of stopping off at crusty old Harry's for a free cup of coffee and some greasies on the way home. Now it seems no trip is complete without imbibing nutmeg spiced hot chocolate served in

Country Road cups at Talltrees Café, sitting around their wood heater, glancing through the latest issues of Vogue and Business Review Weekly.

The road up the Florentine was in good condition and the initial set of bridges have new timber decking (for the rally?).

To demonstrate that caving has no effect on the demeanour of its adherents and practitioners and as an encouragement to new prospective STC members I present two photos, *before* and *after* pictures, of the trip. Actually it is just an excuse for Dave Rasch to model his latest "home brand" trog suit. You will also see a still **intact** Tempest suit; I understand from Dean that this is a temporary state, rapid deterioration setting in around about the 10th trip. *The photos are only in the on line edition ED.*

Nigel.

NL1 is still there...

Party: Dean Morgan, J and Nigel Williams

Our plan was to reach the area of limestone at the upper reaches of Mesa creek to check out a swallet that Dean visited some ten years ago. This is reached by taking a track on the western side of the Hastings area tourist car park. This track now seems little used and although passable is overgrown and strewn with deadfall in many places. What was once a leisurely stroll is now intermittently leisurely, and sometimes up to the best Florentine-style scrub bashing.

The track heads westwards and passes the entrance to NL1 (North Lune 1) –intersects Mesa creek it continues onto Mystery creek.

On reaching Mesa creek in reasonable time we eagerly turned right to head up the now dry bed of the creek. But this was too easy – the green sludge goo from hell (something escaped from X-files?) had carpeted the boulder strewn creek bed – this stuff is diabolically slippery and every step must be carefully and slowly made with arms ready to spring out and ward off toppling in every direction imaginable. We pressed on for 40 minutes or so not making very good progress but at least reaching the beginning of the limestone. At this point we had to give up. We were finding it difficult to maintain our enthusiasm with the knowledge that we had to slide, skid, plummet and bark our ankles on the same territory on the way back. It was concluded that a summer trip might be the go, by then the sludge might have died off or drowned or something. So if the swallet in Mesa creek is navigatable we don't know but we can report NL1 is still there.

Dean's new full-time (Honda call it Real-time) 4WD Honda hurtleler is very sleek and comfortable – quite a change from the Van With No Grip!

Nigel.

Stuff

Memory Lane

As one who started caving in the mid 1950's I can claim to have known my fare share of cavers. They have been one of the constants in my life, and as a constant they are in many ways representing the conservative values they claim to oppose.

At the time they first take up caving, many in there spotty adolescence they adopt the peak technology of there day. This automatically sets them against the older members of there club who are still following the standards and ethics of there day.

My introduction to my first caving club in 1955 was at a time when the club was strongly polarised by change. The club had just taken delivery of its first nylon rope and electron ladder. Until then all life lines had been 20mm diameter hemp rope and ladders had 25mm square wooden rungs with hemp rope sides. Two wooden ladders when rolled would just fit into a Hessian potato sack & were often man-handled through rift's & passages in just such primitive tackle bags. A 40m lifeline loosely coiled and soaking wet was the absolute limit one person could carry without assistance whilst 50m of wet rope ladder hanging down a pitch would require all the strength of 4 people to derig. All this meant that an expedition to bottom one of the major Yorkshire pots would require up to 20 members underground on a trip of up to 30 hours.

The arrival of nylon rope and electron ladder resulted in one person being able to carry in a small army pack, enough gear to rig a 30m pitch. The same pot-holes were now being knocked over by groups of 6-8 cavers in 8-10 hours. The older members formed a protective ring around there life of hemp & wood. And condemned us for our folly in trusting such modern gear.

In reducing the time underground for the average weekend trip some members found that a fully charged miners electric cap lamp would now meet there lighting requirements. This had the double advantage of not going out on wet pitches and allowing the caver to see somewhat more of the cave. It came as something of a shock therefore when at the AGM a motion was put forward suggesting that members not be permitted to cave on electric lights, without the safety back-up of carbide and candle. This gave rise to the poem often quoted by younger club members.

The basic dependable illuminant is a candle's flickering light.

It casts no treacherous shadows because it casts no f**King light.

The motion was passed with all those over 25 voting for and all those under 20 voting against. About this time the caving world was also divided by rubber soled boots. The standard caving boot was the leather soled hobnailed army boot. However the British army was switching to the rubber Commando sole, so the first rubber boots found there way into caving circles. Once again the older members many of whom had worn hobnailed boots even before they became available at army surplus, defended there use while skidding dangerously down smooth wet passages. The wet leather would soften after long periods in water drooping nails in unfortunate parts of the cave.

By the early 1960's I held membership to 3 caving clubs but the resistance to change existed in all 3. To be called before the comity to account of my sins occurred on a number of occasions 7 for a number of reasons. These included the use of a piton as a belay, the use of explosives in a dig 7 for abseiling on a club rope. My final (I hope) session in which I was judged by my peers occurred in the early 1970's after an occasion in which 3 of us experimented with an explosive nail gun to gain access to a visible high passage in a cave in South Wales. It appeared in the comity minutes as the reckless use of a firearm. The resulting discussions of the comity effected the club for years.

Clothing also had its problems, the boiler suit & woollen long john's were fairly standard when I first took up caving & the British Standard paper maiche miners helmet worn by all. However one or two older members insisted on sticking to tweed jackets & jodhpurs with felt. I remember with a certain glee one such piece of head were, to which the owner fixed a candle bursting into flame halfway through a long crawl. Dissent began when the rubber Arctic exposure suits began to appear on the army surplus market. Originally designed to fit under the flying overalls they were jumped upon by cavers and given the nickname of goon suits.

For the first time it was possible to do a severe wet pot-hole & stay dry. The result of staying dry of course was the pot-hole was no longer severe. This had the secondary effect of cavers who were not 'tigers' being able to bottom systems that had previously belonged to the 'hard men'. Others mainly the (old hard men) suggested they be banned on the grounds that they enabled novices to put themselves into difficult locations, from which they would not have the stamina or nerve to remove themselves. Around the same time some cavers began to experiment with wet suits. These also attracted the attention of the Luddites of the time. At the time I was a voluntary instructor for outward bound tacking young people caving in Derbyshire.

Turning up one weekend to take a group of students caving, I wore in my first wet suit only to have my Co instructor deliver a sermon to the students on the evils of neoprene. Rubber suits he said soaked ones strength and those who wore them showed there folly and inexperience by doing so. These words coming from a man who in the 1930's had been a member of a British Everest expedition.

In the early 1970's I arrived in Australia expecting to find a young vibrant and energetic caving society only to find that limited limestone in NSW had spawned a new breed of aging cavers who tied up there younger generation with red tape. Cave permits, leadership regulations, the need to affiliate clubs, public liability insurance indicated that the bureaucracy of its federal system had seeped into other organisations. Australian caving & the comities that controlled it came as a shock to me.

As my beard goes white & my hair recedes I have of course developed my own theory about the younger generation. How a person can give up the security of an electron ladder and 12mm nylon safety line to risk life & limb hanging on a single 9mm or even 8.5mm string is of course beyond belief. I & my caving friends of the same generation have formed a defensive ring around our wire ladders & nylon belays. However we are far to wise to go against our youth or to challenge them to a caving trip.

Youth will continue to push the boundaries of caving with innovative technology and those who have had there day will continue to oppose it. If a club doesn't support its youth it is doomed to suffer as the young cavers go off and do there own thing anyway (*Witness the TCC / SCS split ED*) I have seen it happen over the last 42 years of my caving career. In the mean time for those caving Luddites who would ban any technological developments which might see some spotty young snot add kilometres to the caves they had declared fully explored, or heaven forbid lessen the pain of doing so. I would point out that it will happen eventually weather you like it or not. Memory lane is a great place to visit but you wouldn't want to live there.

Frank Salt (S.R.C.C.)

New Discoveries In Karsts Of North west Tasmania

Earlier this year on March 1st- March 3rd, three STC members: Jolyon Desmarchelier, Di Sward and Arthur Clarke joined Henry Shannon from Northern Caverneers and a British caver: Stephen Swabey on a caving trip in northern and northwestern Tasmania. Henry Shannon will be well known to many cavers; he spent almost a decade and a half as a exploration geologist in the Savage River area and was an founding instigator of the Savage River Caving Club - many years after starting his trogging days as a caver at the University of Queensland Speleological Society along with such notables as: Arthur Clarke, Tony Sprent, Dave Gillieson and Andrew Reeves (the former Mines Dept. boss in Hobart who described the caves in Ida Bay karst behind Benders Quarry as being just a few insignificant "potholes"). Dr. Stephen Swabey is recently arrived from England and has been appointed to the position of Lecturer in Geomorphology at the University of Tasmania's Newnham College in Launceston.

Due to time constraints, the Mole Creek was the only karst area visited in northern Tasmania, but three karst areas were briefly inspected in northwestern Tasmania: Whyte River (calcareous mudstone and metamorphics), Main Creek-Savage River (magnesite) and the Timbs Creek (dolomite). The aim of the expedition was twofold: firstly, to find cave sites suitable for sampling straw stalactites and other speleothems which could be used by Jol in his PhD studies for isotopic analysis in determination of past climatic conditions, particularly related to rainfall events or precipitation regimes, and secondly for Arthur to search for invertebrate fauna (particularly in those caves not regularly examined by biologists) as an adjunct to his RFA report and future MSc studies on the biogeography and biodiversity of Tasmanian cave fauna.

Two caves were visited at Mole Creek: My Cave (MC-141) and Baldocks Cave (MC-032). My Cave is a well decorated stream cave situated in State Forest on the opposite side of the gully to Baldocks Cave, the old tourist cave which is now in the new Mole Creek Karst National Park.

Baldocks Cave is a historical archaeologist's paradise: with the remains of ancient carbide-fuelled acetylene generator near cave entrance and acetylene piping, lighting system and old metal reflectors through the cave. Both these were quite interesting caves and provided a number of suitable sites for speleothem studies. Amongst the cave fauna discovered in My Cave was a specimen of the cave harvestman: *Hickmanoxyomma gibbergunyar*, new species of aquatic (crangonyctoid) amphipods and two new species of the tiny aquatic (hydrobiid) gastropods: *Austropyrgus sp.* and a New Genus, New Species of another hydrobiid. In Baldocks Cave, there were some quite large white (depigmented) aquatic amphipods.

Very little karst was found in the Whyte River area, but in the Rocky River Mine adit there were quite a number of half metre long straw stalactites. The magnesite karst along the banks of Main Creek or Main Rivulet, a tributary to Savage River was more promising though the sight of muddied effluent and sediment in the Main Creek streambed which emanates from the Savage River mine workings was a bit off-putting. Two caves were seen, but only one of these inspected. Henry Shannon, Arthur Clarke and Jol Desmarchelier surveyed a small streamway cave which we named as Pendant Cave, due to the abundance of rock pendants. Pendant Cave is a small crawling passage following a streamway which meanders through the rock pendants and past ancient cave fills; the only speleothems are the small stumpy coral-like stalactite growths (averaging only 3-4mm long; some almost one centimetre long). The cave is quite short (around 20m long) so basically all cave fauna is within the daylight/ twilight zone, but interestingly includes most of the species found in limestone or dolomite karst caves including 3-4mm long hydrobiid gastropods.

Further away in the Timbs Creek dolomite there were a number of exciting surface features including massive cliff walled dolines, uvalas and numerous caves. Amongst the caves visited were: Haltons Hole which included some new species of small brown oniscid isopods (slaters), Crusty Cave with cave beetles, isopods and lots of exciting speleothems and Cricket Cave - so named because of the abundance of raphidophorids (cave crickets). The cave we called "Crusty Cave" is pictured on the front cover of the recently published book by Chris Sharples titled: *Karst Geomorphology and Values of the Tarkine*.

Arthur Clarke

Lecture On Cave Surveying & Use Of GPS Units.

[Based on notes taken by Arthur Clarke at a talk to Southern Tasmanian Caverneers (STC) on July 2nd 1997, by Tony Sprent (Senior Lecturer in Surveying and Head of School of Surveying at University of Tasmania).

Tony Sprent described his background in caving with UQSS etc. in Queensland in mid to late 1960's (with President!!) and later exploits in northern Tasmania, before coming to Hobart and joining T.C.C. Tony focussed his discussion on use of GPS (Global Positioning System) in the role of surveying and its practicalities/ limitations for use by cavers to record entrance positions etc.

GPS units come in varying types with cost - with hand-held units from around \$300-\$400 and more sophisticated tripod mounted units up to \$10,000-\$15,000. GPS is an American system designed for U.S. (American) defence, so includes a built-in noise signal designed deliberately to distort the accuracy - so normal users can only get readings to nearest 100 metres; whereas the U.S. military can get their position readings down to one (1) metre cube. Surveyors and other users of their system need to perform "position averaging" to get a more accurate reading: involves having one GPS unit permanently operating from one site with a known Easting, Northing and Altitude (to give x, y and z) and recording the differential distortion (or signal wandering) factor etc, then comparing these readings with those from GPS unit at position site to be established: GPS unit to left still (stationary) for at least half an hour to pick up maximum number of satellites. Signal position accuracy may even get down to nearest 20 metres in accuracy when Americans turn off their interference signal (which they do occasionally).

To get a good result you need to receive signals from at least 4 satellites. There are 24 of these satellites circling the globe, all in permanently moving but geo-stationary orbits about 20,000 metres. Each global orbit takes about 12 hours. However, depending on where satellites are at any given time, there can be a "dilution in precision" due to the actual positional geometry of satellites at a given time.

Interpreting signal requires selective availability data with correction factor to give readings down to +/- 10m; +/- 5m and +/- 1 metre. These correction signals are constantly beamed across Australia on a region to region basis through the Radio Station: TRIPLE JJJ, and if you can receive this if you are a licensed sub-carrier with the appropriate software to interpret signals (the software and license costs about \$1200 per year). The TRIPLE JJJ signal is a "pseudo" range from separately randomised satellites with different correction factor signal for different areas in Australia, so the signal coming from TRIPLE JJJ in Tasmania is different to that in mainland regions.

But therein lies another problem for surveying in the field with GPS units if you cannot receive the TRIPLE JJJ radio signal: e.g., at Ida Bay, Mole Creek and Junee-Florentine. If using units in these karst areas (providing you can get satellite reception through the trees), the nearest accuracy for survey position will be +/- 100m.

Assuming you can get the TRIPLE JJJ signal, you still need to get good satellite reception and therefore need to get fairly wide "arc" or "cone" of receiver signal width, so hence there is still a problem with GPS units when working under tree canopy of any density, particularly for single channel GPS receivers. With multi-channel receivers, you can get slightly better signal depending on factors such as dryness (lack of moisture in atmosphere), thickness and density of tree canopy, the degree of steadiness/ stillness that unit can be maintained at and/ or whether you have the GPS receiver mounted on antenna or tripod. Another possible solution in forested karst areas (assuming you can get the TRIPLE JJJ correction signals), is to actually do your GPS readings from a cleared area devoid of bush and interference from tree canopy, then survey overland from signal site to cave entrance.

Tony recommends that STC does not purchase a GPS receiver at this stage particularly because of the cost for good receivers at present and also because of the problem related to not being able to get the TRIPLE JJJ signal in many of the important karst areas. Costs for GPS units are continually coming down, plus the electronics and associated functions are improving; you can even get GPS units as computer chips now. Tony suggests that if STC are still interested in doing GPS work in karst areas, we should borrow or hire a GPS unit from the TASUNI Dept. of Surveying (which is about to become a separate sub-department under Dept. of Geography and Environmental Studies).

The hand-held "Garmen" GPS receiver that John Hawkins-Salt has purchased is a reasonable unit for its price etc, but even though it is a multi-channel unit, it will only be accurate to nearest 100 metres, though with averaging and/ or the Americans dropping out their interference noise, we might get down to nearest 20m or so. Normally you can't use portable hand-held units for correlation of signal data because they don't possess enough memory or data storage information for comparative and cumulative analysis. Ideally, for our purposes in locating entrances and then being able to predict or calculate the likely position of other features, we need to get our accuracy down to about +/- 5 metres. Portables are really only of use where there is no tree cover and the TRIPLE JJJ radio signal is strong, so then "averaging" can be undertaken.

Further information about GPS units etc. can often be found through some of the newsgroups on the Net, e.g., <sci.geo.satellite.nav>

Some Modern Cave Survey Instruments: Tony described four different units to us and gave some examples of each

- Topo Rangefinder;
- Leica Disto - uses laser beam (which is accurate to 1mm) and can be used with electronic compass and electronic inclinometer - cost range \$1280 to \$2400. Due to problems with type of reflectance surfaces, a "card" may need to be used for long distances, i.e., over forty (40) metres;
- Hands-free helmet mounted electronic system;
- Auto helm - electronic compass.

Arthur Clarke.

Net Stuff

OzCavers snippets:

The following section includes the odd general interest item copied from the OzCavers mailing list.

From: Geoff Hammond gah@werple.net.au

Subject: Australian Speleo Calendar

Howdy!

The Australian Speleo Calendar (<http://rubens.its.unimelb.edu.au/~pgm/austcave/events.html>) has a new editor - me! There's currently a grand total of three events in there and some links to other speleo-calendars.

If you're organising an event of a speleo-nature (or just know of one) that would be of interest to the national caving community, please craft an email with the relevant details and send it to gah@werple.net.au The more the merrier, as they say.

regards, gah

From: David Stuckey dstuckey@acay.com.au

Subject: Images Below

The latest book by Chris Howes, "Images Below", is now available. For more details, browse the excellent website below.

<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~wildpp/index.htm>

There are also details of other books by Chris including: "To Photograph Darkness", "Cave Photography: A Practical Guide" and "The Spice of Life". Don't forget to check out the links page too!

David Stuckey

website: <http://www.acay.com.au/~dstuckey>

From: Webb Rauleigh Rauleigh.Webb@wmc.com.au

Subject: Another new WWW Page

Here's a new page on the detection of Foul Air in Caves by Garry Smith. This page is a condensed version of a paper that Garry presented at the 21st Australian Speleological Federation conference. You can find the paper at:-

<http://techpkwa.curtin.edu.au/interests/Speleology/Co2paper.html>

You can also access the paper from the WA Speleology Home Page at:-

<http://techpkwa.curtin.edu.au/Speleology/>

Regards Rauleigh Webb

STC Warehouse Sales

Did you know that we have the following for sale?

Tape

- Edelrid 25 mm tubular tape. Ideal for rigging, chest harnesses etc. (White) \$2.00 per m
- 5 cm flat tape (ideal for harnesses, rigging, gear bags, battery belts etc.) (available in Blue or Red) \$1.50 per m
- 2.5 cm flat tape (ideal for handlines, rigging, gear bags, battery belts etc.) (White) \$0.80 per m

Safety

- 9 mm Beal dynamic rope (ideal for cows tails, safety loop) (Purple) \$3.50 per m
- Space Blankets (don't be caught underground without one!) \$4.00

Lighting

- Duracell 4.5 Volt flatpack batteries (for your backup Zoom). (Use by 2000!) \$8.00 each, (or 3 for \$23.00)
- Yuasa 6.7 Gel Cells (6 V, 7 Ahr, weighs 1.3 kg) \$25.00 each
- 6 volt bulbs to suit the above Gel Cells a variety of Wattages (1, 1.5, 2, 3) are available from \$1.00 to \$2.50 each
- Female spade connectors to suit Gel Cell Terminals \$0.20 each
- Plastic light brackets (new, and with fittings) for helmets \$3.00 each
- Metal light brackets (used and no fittings) for helmets \$1.00 each
- Jets (21 litres/hr) for petzl kaboom \$5.00 each
- CARBIDE. NOTE: CARBIDE MUST BE USED RESPONSIBLY! (**Limited Quantity Only-replacement cost is high!!**) \$6.00 per kg
- Miscellaneous second hand pieces for Oldham headpieces. Contact us for details.

When you need any of the above please contact Jeff Butt on (03) 62 238620 (H), or write to us: SOUTHERN TASMANIAN CAVERNEERS, P.O. BOX 416, SANDY BAY 7005. If you have any other suggestions of gear that the club should Bulk Buy, then let us know and we will see what can be done.