September 1986

Speleo Spiel

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

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EDITORIAL

Lately I have been on the receiving end of some praise for my efforts in producing the Spiel. Whilst I appreciate this encouragement, I am not solely deserving of such accolades, there are numerous people who help in the production of this auspicious newsletter. All club members contribute material, articles, trip reports and news items. (This spiel should see me clearing a proportion of the backlog). Stuart Nicholas proof reads the text whilst it is still on the computer. Once the text is formatted it is printed out. Stuart's efforts in setting up this system make it convenient for me to crank the Spiel out on time. Trevor Wailes and Chris Davies spend part of one day each month printing and packaging the newsletters. The newsletters have to be aranged in order such that we can claim postage in Category B. The covers are a result of Trevor's contacts in the printing industry. Stuart then posts it and I guess really all I do is the typing. So next time you appreciate your Spiel give my helpers a little thanks too!

Stephen Bunton

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SILLY SPIEL SNIPPETS...

What is the point of all this? Who reads the Spiel anyway? What good is all this time, effort and entertainment? and 42? Well the answer lies in the following revelation; After 28 years Machete Pot IB 107 has been rediscovered! Circa 1958 TCC member Frank Hassler dropped the machete down a cave whilst cutting the Kokoda Trail from the Quarry to Exit Cave. The cave, named as such, was only relocated on 7th September by Arthur Clarke and an SCS party. The machete was at 55m depth in good condition and the cave is about 60m deep. The rediscovery of this hole and finally its exploration must set some unique record in Australian caving circles. This is not so significant, however, as the importance of good up-to-date cave documentation. Not only does good cave documentation allow you to become a trivial pursuits champion but it provides inspiration, incentive and information for future generations of cave explorers. Machete Pot has been some of the inspiration behind the new wave of discoveries at Ida Bay. Well done all!

HAPPY 40th BIRTHDAY T.C.C.!

The dinner to celebrate 40 years of existence for the TCC was a great success. An enjoyable evening was had by younger and older generations of members alike. Arthur Clarke presented the above mentioned machete to its rightful owner, Frank Brown. Frank Hassell was there and glad to see it wasn't reinserted in some cavity, as was promised 28 years earlier. Numerous other events of significance will be recorded in the next Spiel. The whole evening was a credit to the organization of Trevor Wailes and Doug Turner. We all thank them for their efforts.

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Caving Equipment in Sydney must be considering a dramatic business expansion. Perhaps another mighty yellow and black monolith? The latest computer compiled catalogue has four digit page numbers, enough for a 10,000 page tome...!

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This summer should see a revitalizing of interest in the Growling Swallet - Junee Resurgence system. Nick Hume has been approached by contacts from the media and is currently enthusing various members about participation in this worthwhile project. So, keep your holidays free!

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Melbourne residents are as we all know rather low on extensive cave systems close to home. Now it is possible to have such a facility in your home! Browsing through a bathroom design catalogue recently revealed... you guessed it... A mudbrick home with a bathroom fitted out to simulate a small cavern. It was replete with light emitting stals (L.E.S for short) and a Sumptuous bath for two. Amazing the depths to which some people will Sink!

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Steve Bunton has just finished knotting the world's biggest etrier. To replace the electrolytic half-cell, super-short half-life ladders in Growling Swallet he has constructed a few Nylon rope ladders. All that is needed now is a volunteer or two to help carry them in.

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WARHOL (JF 392)

Warhol was discovered in December 1985 and subsequently explored to a depth of 130 metres. This depth was below expectations since the entrance is close to Serendipity and emanates a strong draught. The draught is most prominent at the squeeze above the fifth pitch. At the entrance the cold air can be felt spilling over the lower lip of the shaft. For the present it seems Warhol is finished though the source of the draught has not been found.

The spacious 12m entrance pitch leads to a sloping mud floor. A high level passage on the right of the entrance chamber was not explored. A 4m pitch cum climb brings one to the a horizontal passage and a short crawl leads to a small hole at the top of the third pitch. Below this 13m pitch is an elongated chamber and the way on is up a short climb to the edge of the next pitch. This 7m drop preceeds several climbs including a 6m chimney down to the top of the fifth pitch. This 27m abseil is a tight vertical squeeze and this can be awkward during ascent.

At the base of the fifth pitch a high chamber is encountered. Climbing up to the main part of the chamber from the base of the rope several features were noted during exploration. At the far end of the chamber a trickle of water enters and flows into a long, narrow slot in the floor. A rope was used to descend this fissure and it was found to connect below the next 6m pitch. There also appears to be a high aven on one side of the chamber and a narrow passage beside it can be followed for a short distance. The main continuation is from the base of the 27m pitch where two alternative routes are available. Against the wall (immediately below where the rope hangs) is a small hole that could be used to descend to a passage below, however, during the exploration a larger adjacent hole was rigged. This entails a 6m abseil and a climb down to the same passage. This soon opens out above the last pitch. A bolt was used to rig this 19m abseil down to a rockpile. While abseiling a continuation of the cave was noticed on the opposite side of the shaft, though this may be related to an aven on that a side passage near the base of the pitch leads to. From the rockpile a short pitch can be seen but avoided by descending through the talus. At the deepest point is a jumble of fallen boulders but no obvious leads were found.

Warhol Pitch List - P1 : 12 metres
P2 : 4 metres
P3 : 13 metres
P4 : 7 metres
P5 : 27 metres
P6 : 6 metres
P7 : 19 metres (Bolt, hanger left in situ)

Rolan Eberhard

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FLORENTINE VALLEY CAVE NUMBERING

The following entrances were numbered by Martyn Carnes and I on the 11.5.86. Close to the main Ice Tube streamsink are a number of dolines and small holes where we were hoping to find a higher entrance. This would increase the overall depth of the Ice Tube - Growling Swallet system, even if only slightly. We were not successfull in this aim but some of the entrances may warrant future trips with some excavating equipment.

JF 399 : A small body-sized vertical slot carrying a good outward draught. At a depth of two metres is a constriction stopping progress. The entrance is on the hill behind Ice Tube and at the upper limit of of the limestone. The tag was placed on a non-limestone (mudstone/conglomerate?) rock surface on the uphill side at the edge of the hole.

JF 400 : A rift-type pothole with an entrance 2m x 5m in diameter. It is 10m deep and through a very narrow fissure at the bottom the Ice Tube streamway can apparently be heard. It is located close to and somewhat higher than the dry (JF 360) Ice Tube entrance. The tag was fixed to the left side of the shaft when going towards the Ice Tube doline.

Unnumbered Cave A very small hole located 20m directly uphill from JF 400. A vertical slot leads into a chamber with just enough room to stand up. A few metres of low passage that lead on, become very constricted. No draught.

JF 401 : A small pothole 1.5m in diameter. Total depth circa 8 metres. The tag

was placed on the cave wall below a 5m climb down from the entrance. Located beside a very small streamsink in a line of dolines extending along the hill slope behind Ice Tube. No future prospects.

Rolan Eberhard

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ICE TUBE ENVIRONS

11.5.86 Rolan Eberhard and Martyn Carnes

Our day dawned early as we were placed on red-alert for a Serendipity de-rig, decided upon the previous evening. However, after brief discussion we placed ourselves on blue-alert for a Porcupine de-rig and survey trip. Upon arrival at Trev's we were unable to locate various items of essential survey equipment and therefore placed ourselves on immediate stand-by, being content with the thought of blasting a way through an upper entrance of Ice Tube.

After a somewhat slow slog up to Ice Tube in some of Tasmania's infamously squalid weather conditions, we dropped packs and separated in search of the aforementioned hole. The hole was first located at the end of a bush-bashing trip last year by Rolan, Stefan and Martyn. Stefan investigated and reported a narrow moonmilk covered rift with a draught and sounds of the Ice Tube streamway. However, certain alterations to the rift's dimensions were deemed necessary in order to gain entry. The new entrance was estimated to add an approximate 20m depth to the Ice-Tube - Growling Swallet system.

During my search for the hole I stumbled across a small hole emitting a howling draught some 30m higher than Ice Tube. Upon being called to the scene Rolan began investigating while I returned to collect my pack and light. The entrance was quite tight for about a body length before narrowing down to impassable dimensions for approximately 30cm, opening out again on the other side. It was temporarily deemed too awkward to place the appropriate amount of chemical persuasion. This hole is worth revisiting, however, since the extra depth would take the system to 380m deep and thus make it the deepest cave in Australia once again.

Our original target for the day was located shortly afterwards and found to be an even harder nut to crack than our newly found hole. Whilst waiting for the last obstinate chunk of smoke to clear we decided to investigate another small hole found by Rolan during the day's wanderings. In short it didn't go, so we returned to our freshly blasted hole only to find the noise had been greater than the effect. Having numbered the three holes we returned to the car, still walking in squalid weather conditions. En-route we met Chris Davies & Co emerging from Growling after a Slaughterhouse through trip. Just another day in the valley I suppose!

Martyn Carnes

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SLAUGHTERHOUSE POT

11.5.86 Chris Davies, John Salt and Geoff Roberts

The alarm sounded and as I peered out the window, wondering why I couldn't see anything (What did I drink last night?) I realised that the sun wasn't up yet and this overt enthusiasm was not a good idea. Various people arrived and so off we went. I felt no better as we proceeded through the gate at 8.30, nor much better as

we entered the cave at 9.30am.

Grovelling down the entrance series we were impressed with its height. The first pitch was rigged and descended without delay. We then spiralled down the talus to the top of the second pitch. The two ropes at the head of this 18m pitch appeared to be in good condition, however the krab was sprouting a lovely growth of some white substance, similar to those left in Serendipity. This krab was duly replaced with a maillon before we descended. After some strenuous grunting and more talus we arrived at the last pitch. It is a beautiful pitch! The two bolts at the head of this pitch were rebelayed and another maillon sacrificed.

It was at about this point that I noticed an open and half-eaten tin of bully beef sitting on a ledge. In picking up the tin I was hit by a foul stench which caused a hurried retreat up the passage. I can only speculate as to the mindlessness of the person who would leave such a disgusting reminder of their visit to this cave. They should be enlisted for a special garbage removal trip!

Back to the plot; A continuation of the passage above the aven was explored and found to to lead back into the aven as expected. We descended into Growling Swallet and made our way out. We paused to remove the broken ladder (see Speleo Spiel 215) replacing it with a stainless steel trace and length of Bluewater. It makes this obstacle no easier but at least it's safer. We made our way out and thence liesurely to the cars.

John Salt

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WELD RIVER ARCH 10th-12th May

Present: Alan Warild, Stefan Eberhard, Leigh Douglas and Nick Hume

A slight figure sat outside the Maydena Take-Away resplendant in a pair of shorts, an enormous pair of gumboots and a huge pack. The fact that he was eating an ice-cream on what could only be described as a fairly chilly sort of day was further evidence that he was probably a caver. Indeed it was mainland caver Alan Warild and soon this unsuspecting lad was joining us for a bushwalk as a rest from having bottomed Ice Tube the previous day.

After only minor procrastination we all bombed off down the walking track to sample the delights of Tasmanian wilderness. We were enjoying the mud and the chest high obstacles so much that we missed the turnoff down the shortcut which leads straight to the arch. A dire mistake we later realised, for we had to climb over bluffs and rank vegetation to retrace a way up the Weld River. Siezing the opportunity Leigh and I scouted the west bank turning up a decent looking cave entrance. This find, however, quickly closed down to two small squeezes, neither of which had any sort of draught. We all regrouped to locate the arch and eventually ensconsed ourselves thereabouts for the night.

The aim of the trip had been to explore an area of depressions south of the arch and on the west side of the river. Unfortunately the following day was not conducive to achieving this end. Rain bucketed down in typical Southwest fashion inducing a greater than usual apathy. Various alternate plans emanated from the warth of our respective sleeping bags and the subject of depressions was carefully avoided. Finally it was guilt that removed us from camp for a bit of touristing.

The arch is an impressive feature and is certainly worth a visit. It reminded me of the arch across the Arrakis doline and was probably formed in the same way; a

waterfall having its headwall undercut to form a natural bridge. Underneath is a huge cavern with dry platforms and ledges overlooking the river, which diminishes in its path through the arch by percolating into breakdown to resurge in the old plunge pool. It is also a great place for photography!, with high speed film, of course.

Stefan and Al trogged the immediate river banks finding only minor holes. We then had a look in the known cave in the bluff above the arch, hoping for some drier exploration. This cave has a wide low entrance giving access to some reasonably well-decorated passage. A series of static pools has to be negotiated to an area of breakdown. Stefan pushed this up to a tight dig that was taking a noticable draught within the cave. The drop reported by Andrew Briggs from a previous trip was not located.

Other cave features and overhangs along the bluff hinted that the area may have been used for shelter by the Tasmanian aboriginals. "Implements" were found which bore an uncanny resemblance to scrapers and split pebbles but they lacked the distinctive chipping of true artefacts, so the question remains open.

Monday dawned fine but unfortunately we had to leave. This time we took the taped route back to the main track. We wandered along this passing through some interesting terrain that included shallow dolines, dry valleys and the occassional spring. One notable resurgence disgorged a sizable stream which disappeared into a rift entrance not far away. Neither feature yielded much cave passage.

The weekend was a pleasant enough bushwalk but not very startling from a caver's point of view. Cave development appears to be limited here due to the shallow topography and dolomite bedrock. However, there are plenty of karst features about to suggest that further exploration could be worthwhile, preferably in better weather.

Nick Hume

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ARRAKIS 16.5.86

Stephen Bunton, Martyn Carnes and Rolan Eberhard

The most crucial point in a caving trip often occurs not underground but as one sits warm and secure in a car, contemplating getting into cold (sometimes wet) caving gear and then setting off to do the cave. It is this important stage that demands the utmost of a caver's determination and strength of purpose. On this particular day the view outside the car was less than encouraging; low clouds and steady drizzle with a stiff walk ahead. I am happy to say that the various excuses were rejected and we decided to go for it. Our goal was Arrakis the new deepie on Mt Weld and we set off through annoying wet cutting grass that overgrows the track. The persistant rain was demoralising. Steve attempted to make the rain stop by getting out his waterproof jacket but this tactic was not effective for long. We were thoroughly drenched by the time we reached the cave entrance two hours later.

We paused under the arch on the lower side of the impressive doline admiring the view and changing into caving gear. The easiest way to descend into the doline is, after lowering packs by rope directly under the arch, to climb down a rift on the far left side of the arch. Having accomplished this we carefully clambered down the steep slope to the head of the first pitch. This 67m shaft had previously been rigged on the righthand side and I understood there is a bolt several metres down and a few redirections that would be needed. This route looked damp and scungy so we chose to rig from the opposite side. Two new bolts were placed and this provides

a more satisfactory method of descent. The first bolt is is on a flat rock surface at the edge of the shaft and to reach it requires a traverse (on-rope) to the left (tension traverse right) and then a step down to a small ledge where the rope can be clipped to the hanger. Abseil to a second ledge and the next bolt is on a slight bulge in the wall just underneath, roughly six metres below the first bolt. The rope rubs on a rock ledge between the two bolts. and a protector could be useful here although the distance is only short. To locate the bolts some blue tape was tied to them and hopefully future parties will make sure they are similarly marked for the next visitors. The abseil that follows is superb; light from the surface filters onto the ceiling and one can appreciate th impressive dimensions of the perfectly cylindrical shaft. It must be one of the finest pitches in the state!

At the base of the pitch Steve and I continued, Martyn had decided not to come down. A rubble slope leads to the next pitch, only about 4m in length. A huge talus block jammed between the the cave walls appears to have formed this drop. We banged in a couple of pitons to rig the rope. A high canyon continues to the final pitch. This drop is approximately 15m and the rig points aren't the best. We used a dubious looking bolt on the righthand side which protrudes by a few millimetres with a piton and a tape through a small eyehole. Below the pitch is a large chamber where another stream enters. We continued down a steep rubble slope until it choked off and then we quickly made our way back to the surface.

The walk out was accomplished without delay. Pouring rain and impending darkness were good incentives to get back to the car quickly. When we finally arrived a small incident of note occurred. Martyn found that his dry shoes, inadvertently left under the car had become half full of water. The colourful expletives that followed this discovery more or less summed up Martyn's opinion of the entire day. Not withstanding, I can recommend Arrakis as a worthwhile cave. The spectacular entrance doline is an inspiring start, followed by a magnificent pitch and a fine cave. It is a remarkably straightforward cave for a depth of 235 metres.

Rolan Eberhard

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MILK RUN IB 38

27.7.86 Steve Bunton and Rolan Eberhard

We had decided that the day's caving required a trip of moderate demands; something not too easy yet definitely not an epic either. Milk Run was recently explored to a depth of just over 200m and with six pitches it seemed a reasonable option.

On the way down to Ida Bay we called in at Arthur Clarke's house to collect an extra rope that was needed. He was stirred from his Sunday morning slumber and in good faith informed us that we wouldn't need an extra rope after all. Apparently VSA had left the rope on the last pitch as far as was known it was still there. With less rope to carry and the added incentive of a dozen bottles of beer that were mentioned as reward, we were soon on our way down the cave. The pitches are directly one on top of another and rigging went quickly. The fourth pitch of 50m was a particularly enjoyable abseil but disappointment lay at the bottom. The rope for the last pitch was not there! To be honest we spent a short time contemplating an excuse to cut the bottom end off the rope from the previous pitch (e.g. "A rock fell on it and cut it through... really it did!) but could think of nothing convincing and luckily such cunning thoughts soon dissipated. Our ascent was accomplished without delay.

Back at Dover, Arthur was quite puzzled about the missing rope. It later turned out that an SCS trip had gone down this cave a few weeks before. A couple of glasses of Arthur's home brewed wine put things in a different perspective and so after all it wasn't such a bad day.

Rolan Eberhard

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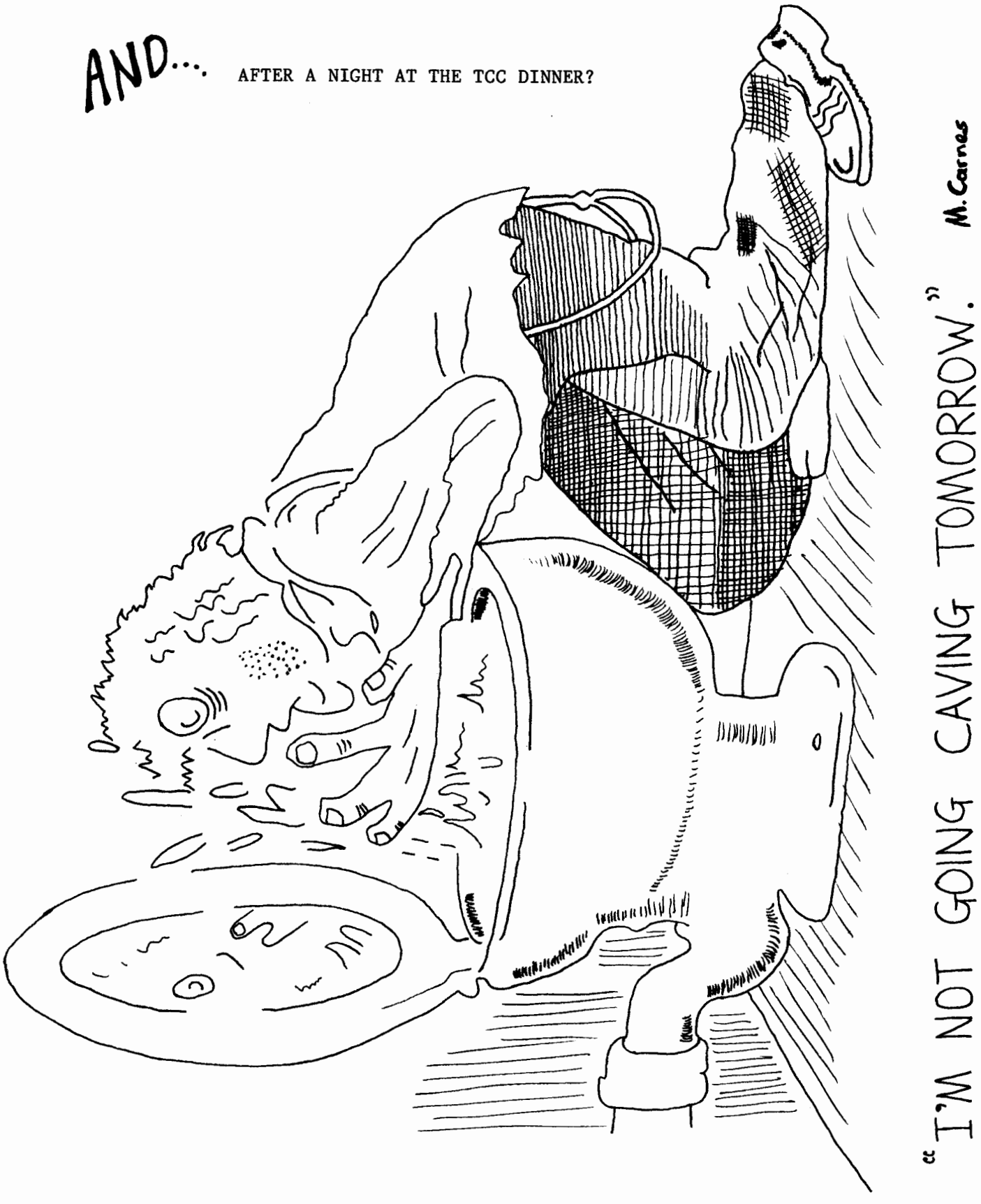


WARHOL JF392

FLORENTINE VALLEY

TAS.

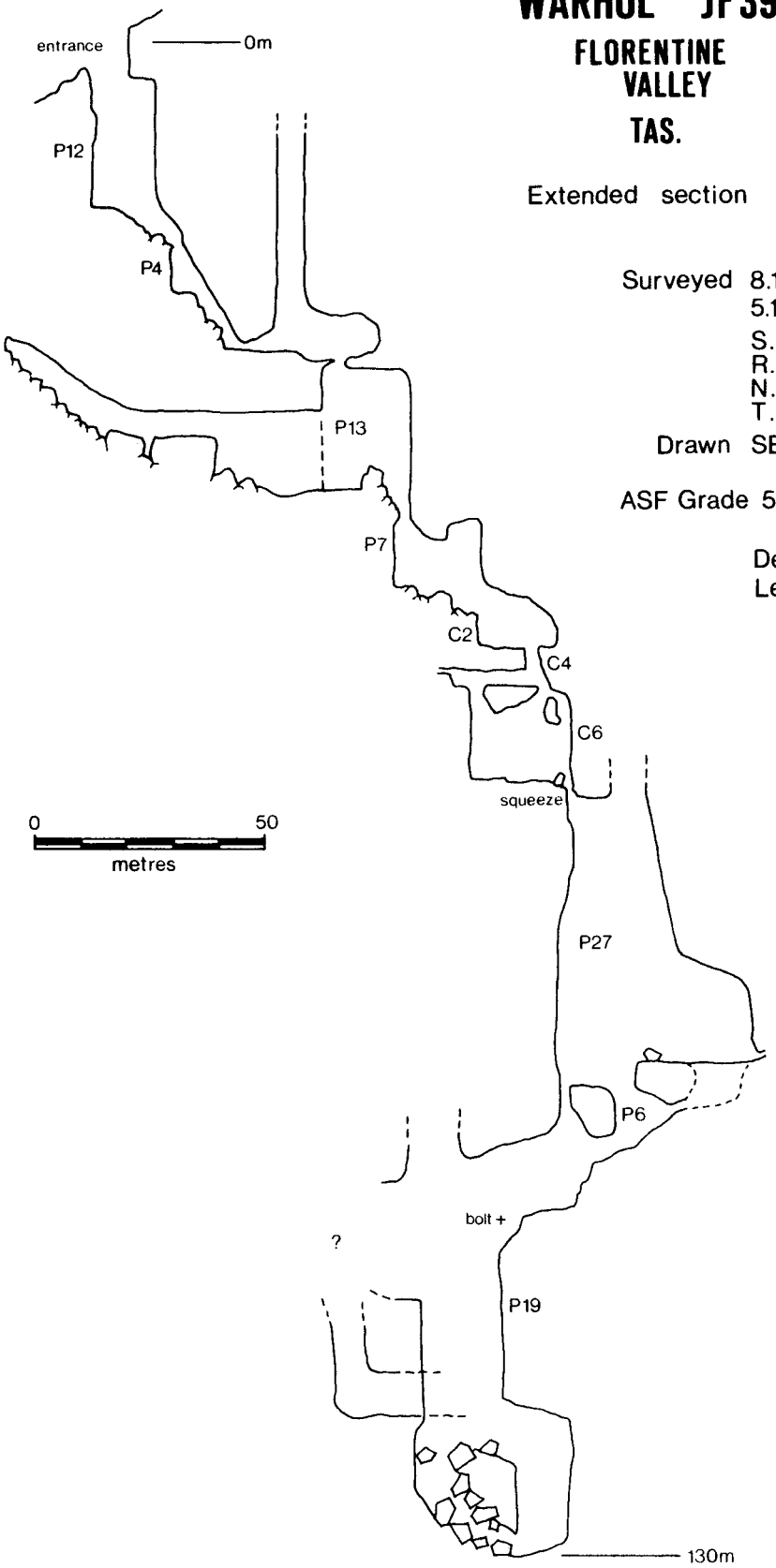
Extended section

Surveyed 8.12.85
5.1.86
S.Eberhard
R.Eberhard
N.Hume
T.Wailes

Drawn SE & RE

ASF Grade 54

Depth : 130 m
Length : 168 m



WARHOL JF 392

Plan ASF Grade 54

Length : 168m
Depth : 130m