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Speleo Spiel

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Speleo Spiel

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Annual subscription \$5.00

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President: Geoff Fisher, 115 Brooker Avenue, Clabe, 7000.
Ph: 20 8357 (W)

Secretary: Chris Davies, 2 Eleanor Place, West Moonah, 7009.
Phone: 72 4104 (H)

Treasurer: Bruce McIntosh, "Springvale Hostel", 2 Midwood St.,
New Town, 7008. Phone: 28 1282 (H), 34 2833 (W).

Editor: Stuart Nicholas, 7 Rupert Avenue, New Town, 7008.
Phone: 28 3054 (H).

FORWARD PROGRAMME

Wed. July 16 Committee Meeting - 7 Rupert Avenue, 8 p.m.

Weekend July 26 & 27 June Florentine - Another K.D. intro. trip (anyone interested in going to the bottom?) on Saturday and something else on Sunday (Trapdoor?). See Chris and Diana Davies for info.

Wed. Aug. 06 General Meeting - 7 Rupert Avenue, 8 p.m. Bring slides, films, etc.

Wed. Aug. 20 Committee Meeting - 7 Rupert Avenue, 8 p.m.

Weekend Aug. 23 & 24 SPELEO SPORTS - Macquarie Uni., Sydney. If you're in Sydney at that time why not go and test your prowess at negotiating various speleo-type obstacles in a competitive atmosphere? Further info. from Cathie (02-868 1348) or David (02-858 3524).

Wed. Sept. 03 General Meeting - 7 Rupert Avenue, 8 p.m.

Fri. Sept. 12 TCC ANNUAL DINNER - See inside for details - keep this night free for the event of the year!

Weekend Sept. 20 & 21 SEARCH & RESCUE WORKSHOP - Mole Creek. See inside for details.

July 18-25, 1981 8TH INTERNATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL CONGRESS, Kentucky, U.S.A. Write to:

8th International Congress of Speleology
Secretariat,
Dept. Geography and Geology,
Western Kentucky University,
Bowling Green, Kentucky, U.S.A. 42101

Don't forget, there's always plenty to do - exploration of a known cave near landslip on Wherretts, shafts all over Marble Hill at Ida Bay awaiting investigation, The Chairman, Trapdoor Swallet, enough surface and underground surveying to keep us going for 50 years in Florentine Valley, etc., etc.

We will shortly be appointing more trip leaders to enable more bods to get into the action, so stay tuned, you might be one of them!

EDITORIAL

I'm sure everyone knows by now but I'll say it anyway, the Franklin River has been saved from flooding by the HEC although a revised upper Gordon scheme will still flood some of the Gordon River below the existing dam. Certainly a victory for the "Conservationists" and one worthy of praise. Let us hope there will be more (victories, that is).

EDITORIAL (cont.)

Last month's Spiel was produced by our hard working Vice-President and Secretary, namely Diana and Chris Davies, after several absences from Hobart and a general lack of time prevented me from producing it. Thanks Diana and Chris and be warned, it may happen again!

SEARCH AND RESCUE

You should have as last page of last month's Spiel, a form with questions and things on it. This was not just tacked on to add another page, it was (and in most cases, still is) there to be filled in by you and returned to me for the purposes of (a) giving me more work to do, and (b) enabling your S and R status to be recorded for a possible call-out.

Any major cave operation will, without doubt, extend over several days, possibly a week or more, and every able-bodied caver in Tasmania plus mainland bods will be needed. Irrespective of your experience, there would definitely be a job for you. One of the main requirements in a cave rescue situation is person power, and that means YOU!

So, please FILL OUT THE S&R REGISTRATION FORM and return it promptly. (N.B. I have just noticed that the address of TCC did not come out very well - it should be P.O. Box 416, Sandy Bay, 7005.

Still on search and rescue, keep September 20 and 21 free. This is the date of the annual Cave Search and Rescue Workshop at Mole Creek. This year's will be similar in style to last year's with small groups carrying out various specific exercises simultaneously in a number of caves near the Wet Caves campsite. As well, the Police divers will most likely be trying their hand at cave diving during the Saturday, with socialising on Saturday night (who will be the first to climb the brick in the Mole Creek pub?) and a ground search on Sunday with a two-fold aim: (a) find a person in an unknown cave above Wet Cave, and (b) maybe find some new caves.

Stuart Nicholas,
Search & Rescue Officer.

---AUSTRALIAN HIMALAYAN EXPEDITIONS---

No, TCC is not running a trip to the Himalaya. We have, however, received some info. on trekking and climbing trips to this magnificent area from A.H.E. so, if you are one of the filthy rich, all the screed is at Stuart's place.

*****NEW ZEALAND CAVE RESCUE*****

A party of three was trapped for 2½ days in Profanity Cave on the South Island's west coast when heavy rain last week blocked their means of escape. Searchers, including Keith Dakkers, found what they believe was a new entrance and eventually managed to gain access to the inner section of the cave where the three were found alive and well.

Tasmania is not the only place where cave floods can occur, so be prepared on your next overseas caving trip!

---ooo--- ANNUAL DINNER - FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 ---ooo---

For the first time in many years, this annual extravaganza is being organised with time in hand and with any luck should be a rip-roaring success (well, better than last year's anyway!)

Upon recommendation from Chris and Di, the venue has been tentatively selected as Ali Baba's which I am told is a Lebanese style restaurant in Sandy Bay. It is a B.Y.O. place and prices are quite reasonable so strat practising your shish kebab eating technique in time for this great occasion.

Further info. may be had from Chris and Diana Davies who seem to be organising the whole affair.

NEW MEMBERS -

A recent influx of new bods has produced a keen group of trogs ready to tackle almost anything!

Trevor Wailes - originally from the White Rose Potholing Club in Yorkshire (that's in England), he's been touring around for quite some time and plans to stay in Tassie for a year or so, "to do some hard wet pots"! (First we'll have to cool his enthusiasm for ladders)

Andrew Briggs - well known in the bushwalking world, he has recently seen the error of his ways and joined his brother John (NUCC) in the pursuit of underground thrills.

Nick Hume - another one of these walking types but one of the smooth trendy brigade - very couth! Also, into diving in a big way and tends to forego caving trips in the interests of improving relations with members of the opposite sex.

Dave Southgate - been involved in TCC for a while now. Dave is yet another walker who's seen the error of his ways. A mad keen cyclist, he's sutdying something at Uni. but still finds time for socialising and caving but not necessarily simultaneously!

The prospective members list includes Mark Mather, Peter Tedds, Barry Ransley, Greg Kerfoot (I think you've done 3 trips now Greg!) George Vitesnik.

Roy Skinner, despite being an honorary associate member has paid his subs. for this year - such dedication - thanks Roy!

(*)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!

--- H E L P ! ---

Life Line (the community welfare organisation) rang the other day asking for volunteers to assist in their Door Knock campaign on August 31. If you're interested, ring Paul Tunsdall on 20 0227(W) or 72 5082 (H).

(*)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!(!)!

C A R B I D E

As cavers, we know carbide as grey lumps resembling road metal which produces acetylene for carbide lamps. If formulae for carbide on some tins is anything to go by, there seems to be some confusion as to what it actually is.

The first production of carbide or calcium carbide (CaC_2) was an accident (1892). Thomas Wilson was attempting to prepare metallic calcium from lime and tar by heating in a furnace. The product obtained, obviously not calcium, was thrown into a nearby stream. Wilson was "amazed" at the sudden evolution of great quantities of combustible gas.

Calcium carbide is prepared industrially from quicklime (CaO) and carbon at 2000 to 2200°C. The source of carbon is usually coke, anthracite or petroleum coke. Phosphorus should be absent from the raw materials since it forms a phosphide which is converted to poisonous phosphine when acetylene is produced from the carbide.

Carbide consists of calcium and acetylide ions packed into a lattice and is hence unrelated to the true carbides which are covalently bonded and thus have very different properties e.g. silicon carbide. Addition of water to calcium carbide produces calcium hydroxide and acetylene. Zinc and cadmium carbide, the coinage metals and others, also form their hydroxide and acetylene.

Just to prove life wasn't meant to be easy, beryllium and aluminium carbides yield methane.

Di Davies.

THE 1980 AUTUMN UNDERGROUND FASHION SCENE

Most trogs are familiar with the cotton industrial "boiler-suit" which seems to be universal as the outer layer of cavers' clothing. Various people have tried alternative gear but most of it has proved unsuccessful.

Two suits that do work well, although not necessarily in similar situations, are the BUSY BEE all enveloping fully waterproof suit and the ENDURO suit which is semi-waterproof but much stronger than the Busy Bee.

Never having used a Busy Bee suit, I cannot rave about its virtues or otherwise but, from observation, it seems that large wet systems such as KD or those found in Nuigini would be ideally suited (!) to this device. Abrasion resistance and general toughness do not appear to be in its list of virtues. Being made from a vinyl material, it is fully waterproof and also has a sewn on hood.

Possibly a better deal for Tassie is offered by the Enduro suit. Just before Christmas last year, I saw one survive a fairly long Chairman trip without a single tear - the toughness of these suits is obvious. They are made from a woven nylon material which is virtually untearable but only splash-proof and you would still need to wear waterproofs underneath in a wet cave. The hood supplied is huge and will easily go over a helmet although an attachment system better than press studs would be a good idea.

The great advantage of any synthetic suit over cotton overalls stems from the inability of the material to absorb water. They dry with incredible speed and even when "wet" do not drag on your legs or cling like cotton - hence easier movement and far less energy loss through evaporation of water from soaked material clinging to your body!

Enduro suits seem capable of surviving at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as long as cotton overalls and hence become economically viable as well. As you may have figured by now (if you didn't already know) I have recently acquired an Enduro suit and (please excuse the pun!) I'm rapt in it! Sweating can be a problem during hard work, ..5/

however, a good layer of wool between you and the suit solves that difficulty and also provides the necessary insulation for when you're not working hard.

For negotiating typical J-F grot, the suits slide well over rocks, don't snag up and all the goodies in your pockets are protected because all the pockets (including knee-pad pockets) are on the inside of the suit. Elastic foot and hand loops keep the ends of legs and arms in place and a velcro flap eases the load on the double ended zip in the front of the suit.

All in all, a good piece of gear worth investing in if you're into serious caving.

N.B. Matching orange helmet and gaiters complete the ensemble and both are available as an optional extra!!

Stuart Nicholas.

TRIP REPORTS

Exit Cave: Sunday, June 29

Party: Bruce McIntosh + 3 EMC students, Chris and Diana Davies, Andrew Briggs, Sue Feeney and friend, Greg Kerfoot, Stuart Nicholas, Bill Nicholson, John Penwill, Barry Ransley, Dave Southgate, Trevor Wailes, Peter Watts - yes, that's right! - 17 people on one trip!

Wet! You wouldn't believe it. That's right you wouldn't, it was only a bit damp when us fools set off to retrieve the notorious scaling poles from near Camp II.

Time was about a minute past 11 when we entered the Exit; Stream level was not up by much so it looked like another bloody boring Exit trip, but not to be.

Trevor was sporting a new nylon caving suit - which you can buy from City Disposals, 71 Murray St., 344395 for \$35.95 or round-about (plug!plug!) Anyway, Trevor was so excited about his "cheaper than Stewie's" suit, he was seen to be frolicking to and fro until he slipped fair smack into the middle of the stream face down and spread eagled. Boy, was it a sight to behold!

By the time we all reached Camp I on the way out, the stream had risen about one metre which meant the second crossing was above nipple depth, and bloody cold at that.

The cars were reached a minute past pretty late. Well, it was dark anyway but maybe not so late?

On a more serious note, I would like to point out two extremely important facts:

- 1) Make sure you are capable of doing the cave you are visiting on your own merits, not only in good conditions but in adverse conditions. If not, you could become a liability to your team mates.
- 2) The trip leader is responsible for every member in his party, and his word is law.

Think it over.

Bill Nicholson.

Junee-Florentine: Saturday & Sunday, July 5 & 6

Party: Stuart Nicholas, Chris and Diana Davies (Sat.) plus Dave Southgate, Trevor Wailes and Andrew Briggs on Sunday.

TRIP REPORTS (cont.)

Two good trips on two successive weekends - could it be true? As an intro. to "real" caving, on Saturday a trip in Khazad-dum to the end of the horizontal streamway seemed a reasonable idea and after the chest deep wading exercise in Exit last weekend, the prospect of getting wet feet in K.D. seemed of little consequence. Lack of gear, prior social engagements and general apathy, reduced the party to an enthusiastic three.

Thanks to Dave Martin et al from Sydney, the track up to KD currently is clear of all the wind-fall debris which made for an easy walk in. We found the stream to be fairly low despite the rain and, after a certain amount of messing around, headed underground at noon.

Despite my enthusiasm, Chris and Di could not be persuaded to have a go at the 20 foot first wet pitch, so we retired to the Serpentine Passage and convened a meeting of the Khazad-dum Gourmets and Gluttons Society! Almonds, chicken soup, Mars Bars and coffee (we forgot the mints!) made up the menu which we enjoyed by candle-light.

Sometime later, six cold feet splashed their way back up the streamway (which had risen about 25mm during our feeding session), hauled themselves up to the surface and trundled back along the rain-soaked Khazad-dum Highway.

An uneventful but very enjoyable six hour trip has given Chris and Di a good introduction to "big-cave" techniques and organisation. Another will be held soon to initiate some more budding SRT freaks.

Sunday around 10.00, Trevor, Dave and Andrew walked into the Homestead - their car had stalled down the road because of an attempted rally-style puddle crossing! Rain had dampened enthusiasm somewhat but after a lot of procrastinating and other devious time wasting ideas failed, we all slid into JF1 (yes folks, we managed to find it, first time) for a grovel in the mud. Two hours in there was enough for everyone so a retreat was made to Trevor's van for hot soup. A further retreat to Max's for coffee, finished off a great weekend - must do the same again fairly soon.

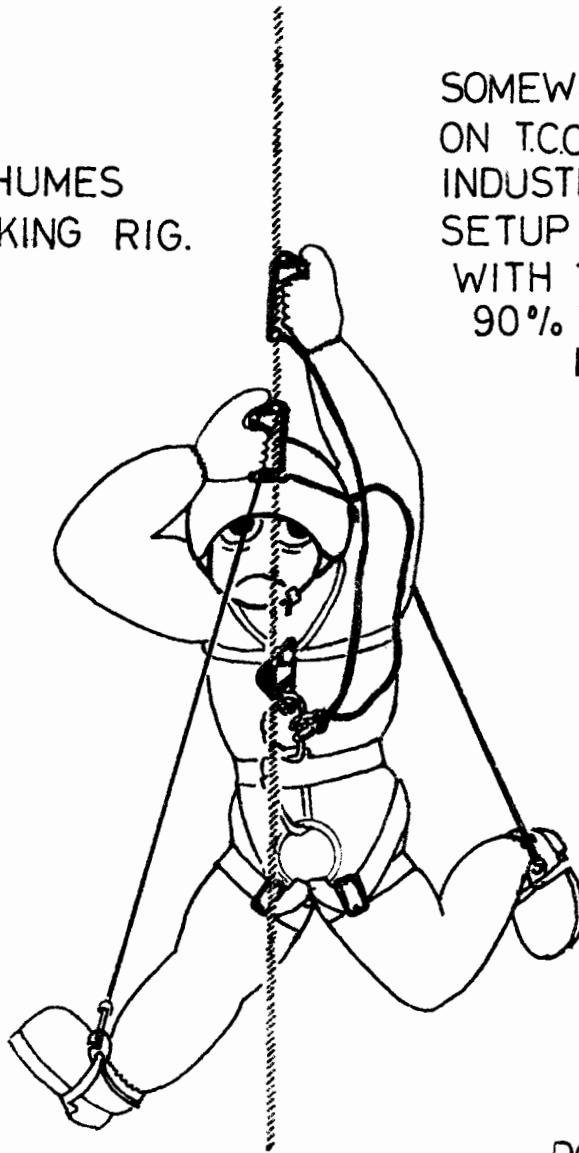
Stuart Nicholas.

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GEAR TEST

NICK HUMES
ROPEWALKING RIG.

SOMEWHAT LOOSELY BASED
ON T.C.C.'S TRIED & PROVEN,
INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH, FROG
SETUP HEAVILY MODIFIED
WITH 10% INSPIRATION &
90% THIRD JUMAR FOR
ROPEWALKING.



DOES IT WORK ?.....
....WELL, IT LOOKS GOOD.