August 1983

Speleo Spiel

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Annual Subscription $7.00, Single copies 70¢, Non-members $1.50

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FORWARD PROGRAMME

Activity should be picking up over the next month as Spring stirs in some of our more slacker members. The winter rest should have done us all good, and we're hoping to pick up where we left off to change the ?'s to exclamations.

Sat Sept 10 341

Sat Sept 17 Slaughterhouse Pot

Wed Sept 21 Committee meeting

Fri Sept 23 Annual Club Dinner - Winston Churchill's 7.00 pm.

Sat Sept 24 Usually slightly overhung

Sat Oct 1 Tassie Pot

Wed Oct 5 General Meeting

Sat Oct 8 Owl Pot

Saturday trips can be changed without warning if sufficient members can be raised for trips like Serendipity - Growling Swallet or even Ice Tube through trip. On Wednesday and Thursday evenings the Club gathers socially, trips are planned, in the Winston Churchill's public bar - if no one is around check the main bar or give someone a ring.

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EDITORIAL

Once again the last month has been fairly quiet with only a few minor trips going. There is however light on the horizon (could it be a Nick Hume ad hoc nocturnal scrub bash returning from the wilds?) with bodies actually talking about going caving - with any luck they may even progress to the next step - actually go!

Potentially this summer could see some of the most significant discoveries ever in the Florentine and possibly Australia, so with any luck the Spiel may once again be crammed with "edge of the seat" trip reports.

The Annual Dinner is looming close as mentioned elsewhere in this mag, so make sure all your wives, girlfriends and other itinerates know about it. You can even bring them along as well and have a ripping time - just beware of the blue blow bag man - you wouldn't want to blow it and blow it would you?

STUART NICHOLAS

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THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB ANNUAL DINNER

Once again our only social event of the year has come around. The annual dinner is usually quite a respectable affair; last year it being held at Monroe's and, as usual, a different venue has been chosen by the Committee for this year's extravaganza.

The TCC Annual Dinner will be held at Winston Churchill's Hotel, 251 Liverpool Street, Hobart, in the room upstairs on the 23rd September 1983.

The meal will commence at 7.45 pm (suggest arriving before 7.30 pm so preferred seating can be arranged personally). No deposit is necessary, but it is important to inform Trevor on 34 4862 before 20th September of intended numbers for eating. This dinner is not exclusively for TCC members - friends, girlfriends, wives, parents, past members and future members will all be welcome. The cost of the dinner will be $12.00 per head, and the bar opens at 7.00 pm and is late licenced at basically bar prices with carafs of wine at $4.00 per litre.

The dinners have been a success in the past, and we look forward to a good turnout this year.

MENU

ENTREES	Marinated Beef Kebabs
	Whole Flounder with Lemon Butter
	Fried Cheese with Fruit Puree
	House Patè
MAIN COURSES	Porterhouse Steak with Mushrooms
	Venison, Bacon and Mushrooms with Pastry
	Basque style Chicken
	Grilled John Dory with Bacon and Tomato Glaze
	Fisherman's Basket
SWEETS	Blueberry Cheese Cake
	Apple Pie
	Banana Splits

Don't be disappointed - book your dinner(s) early! DO IT NOW.

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The following article was contributed by Bob Woolhouse, a long standing member of the various clubs that have existed in and around Launceston. It is Bob's personal study of the implications of proposed logging developments in the Mole Creek area and contains quite an amount of detail. It is not usual to publish grid references for cave localities, but most described are well known anyway and for those that aren't, a grid reference isn't much help anyway.

EFFECTS OF FORESTRY ON CAVES OF THE MOLE CREEK AREA

The Forestry Department may be taking over the uncommitted Crown land below the Western Tiers (ref Mersey 1:100,000 land tenure series, between grid lines 39 and 51E). Since I have caved in this area for well over 20 years, I have been asked what effects this might have on the Mole Creek caves.

To do this, it is convenient to divide the area into seven main drainage systems, starting with Tailender Cave and going down to the Mersey to finish with the Mole Creek system itself. Minor systems such as Dog's Head, Den Plains and Mersey Hill are ignored.

Drainage Systems feeding the Main Mole Creek Caves

1) Vanishing Creek, Kansas Creek - Tailender, Croesus, Lynds caves.

2) Soda Creek - Kohinor, King Solomons, Soda Creek caves.

3) Execution Creek - Execution Cave, Kubla Khan. (Liena 1:25,000 - shown rising at 394955 and crossing Erks Loop. It actually disappears into Execution Cave at 391965).

4) Marakoopa Creeks - Devils Pot, Marakoopa caves.

5) Gillam Creek - very minor caves.

6) Prohibition Creek - series of caves starting with Prohibition and ending with Sassafras cave. (Mole Creek 1:25,000) Prohibition creek flows into the cave at the limestone contact at 437948. It is possible that this is a continuation of the "Sassafras Creek" marked. No creeks enter the limestone contact between Prohibition and Gillem Creek).

7) Mole Creek - Tributaries entering Herberts Pot (eg Westmorland). Georgies, Wet Cave, Honeycomb, Pyramid.

The following deals with each of these drainage systems in more detail, particularly looking for evidence of the effect of surface activities on the cave environment. Obviously, my knowledge is incomplete, but I hope these notes will suggest lines of investigation which caving groups might like to undertake. These might then lead to reasoned submissions to appropriate authorities.

In this regard, Northern Caverneers produced a detailed submission on Drainage system 4 Marakoopa Creeks. This was accepted, and this drainage system is now reserved up to the protected area on the plateau, although it is not shown as such on the current (1982) land tenure map.

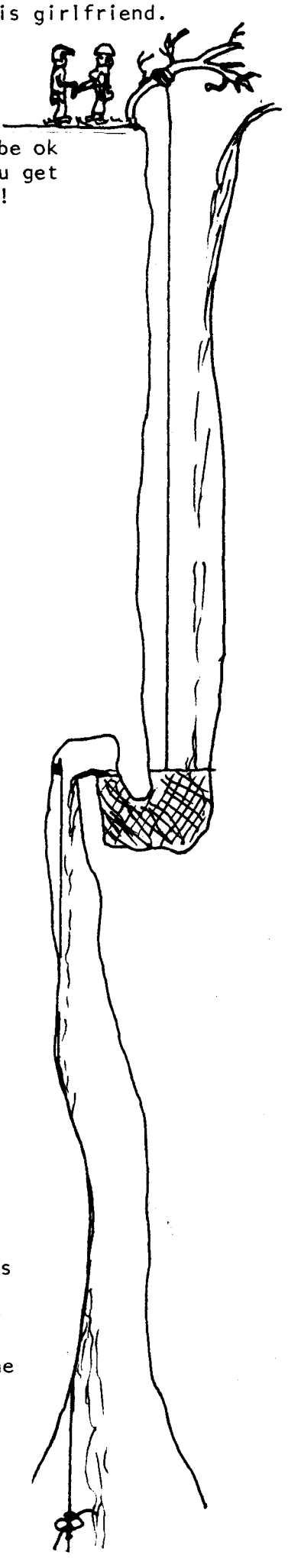
System 1. Vanishing and Kansas Creeks. Liena 1:25,000

Vanishing Creek goes into Hidden Cave at 377945 and Kansas Creek into Rubbish Pit Cave at 373957.

Tailender flows in wet weather only. Croesus flows at a steady rate almost independently of the seasons, except for one single violent flood about 10 years ago. Lynds varies with the seasons in the normal way. This suggests a major collapse, probably extending from the doline at 358953, through April Fools area (363958), to the line of dolines running down where a creek is marked at 3649[illegible]. The hypothesis is that in an exceptionally wet winter about [illegible] years ago, the dammed water in the collapse system broke through into Croesus, but a further fall blocked the water to a constant flow rate.

This whole area is in prime forest. Logging operations could profoundly alter the drainage system with disastrous effects on three major caves.

Nick's intro trip for his girlfriend.



You'll be ok once you get started!

We are in urgent need of a proper evaluation of this system so that we have the facts to support an extension of the Croesus Reserve over the sensitive area.

System 2. Soda Creek. Liena 1:25,000

This system is being investigated at the present time.

The resurgence 363996 comes from a sump which can only be passed in dry weather. Beyond this an attractive stream passage with rimstone pools leads upwards in the general direction of King Solomons, but after about 500 m it ends in a chamber with vertical walls which would require mechanical aids to climb.

The creek under Diamond (374992) terminates upstream in a sump, roughly under the large doline at 373991. Downstream it is blocked by a rockfall, which causes the creek to back up in flood toward the well known upper levels of the cave, depositing mud to a height of at least 10 m above the creek bed.

A small creek in Pearl Pot (376990) flows upwards in wet weather into Maze Puzzle (376991). This originally continued to Kohinor (375992) where it sumps. The sump is large and deep and has not been passed. Except in flood, the main water now leaves Maze Puzzle by an impassable squeeze. It is likely it joins the Diamond stream and the combined waters pass under King Solomons to Soda Creek.

The total water flow suggests that only local drainage is involved.

Maze Puzzle is running close to the surface in country which was logged and is now grazed. There is a wet weather water channel which connects to Maze Puzzle through several small rifts. However, I can see no obvious sign of either surface erosion or of silting inside the cave.

Kohinor has a high upper entrance in a doline at the top of the hill. A considerable amount of debris has fallen into the cave from this, and the sump is heavily silted. Some of this must be attributed to forestry operations. The large hall of Kohinor must be close to the surface, and any timber removal is highly dangerous both to the cave and the workers involved.

Recommendation: The King Solomon reserve should be extended to include the timbered ridge going down near Pearl Pot (376990) and Little Gem (376989).

System 3. Execution Creek. Liena 1:25,000

Kubla main entrance is less than 100 m east of 400995, just off the edge of the Liena map.

It has never been conclusively demonstrated that the main Kubla water is, in fact, Execution Creek. A minor tributary from Standard Hill forms a lake in a small chamber below (E of) Xanadu, and enters the stream passage shortly below where the normal climbing route starts. This stops flowing in drought.

It is possible to go upstream from the SW corner of Xanadu, in the general direction of Execution. This water has never stopped flowing in the last 20 years and its volume corresponds with that of Execution Creek. In a short distance rockfall starts. It might be possible to push this further, but I have been no more than 100 m into it. On the surface a line of dolines follows the lowest line of the main depression in a generally southern direction, ie, towards Execution Pot (391965). The whole of this collapse system is just below the surface of private farm land. The inevitable siltation seems to be scoured out of the main cave, but there is some sign of settling if the river is followed towards the sump beyond Cairn Hall.

Heavy machinery was using Erks Loop at a time when we were visiting the Execution - Long Drop area regularly. Any bridge which might originally have been at 391962 had

collapsed, and the mud was too deep to allow a Land Rover to cross. In spite of this, we used the creek at 391965, just above the limestone contact, as drinking water. At this point there was no visible trace of any suspended solids. This suggests that dolerite soils are very resistant to erosion.

Recommendation: Forestry be asked to ensure that the bridge on Erks Loop is able to withstand heavy machinery.

System 4. Maracoopa Creeks. Mole Creek 1:25,000

As noted above, this is now protected by the new reserve and no further action is necessary.

System 5. Gillam Creek. Mole Creek 1:25,000

The upper section of Gillam Creek gives a small cave below the contact at about 421963 on private land. After about 150 m the creek surfaces again and does not go underground until after flowing for some distance through farmland.

A number of openings from 428982 to 429985 pass down to the water of this next section, which goes on to join the main drainage from Mayberry. The whole system is near to the surface and liable to collapse. A major collapse might give drainage problems in the Mayberry paddocks.

Recommendation: The system seems to contain little of interest to cavers. The square included in 4196 marked "Cave Country" on the land tenure map seems to contain no caves. Taking timber from some parts of 4298 and 4398 could be hazardous to timber workers, to drainage of Mayberry and to the flow of Sassafras Creek in the Ugbrook area.

System 6. Prohibition Creek. Mole Creek 1:25,000

This enters Prohibition Cave at 437948. I think this is the water which passes through Nut Bath, Cobbler Cooler, My Cave, Glow worm and then runs on the surface under the Baldock's road at 456963. It forms the major part of the water in Sassafras cave, after which it joins the much larger flow from Mayberry. I have not checked grid references in this area since the 1:25,000 maps appeared, apart from the two given above. I would guess Nut Bath to be 443958 and Glow worm 454959 and Sassafras (which contains permanent sumps and has never been followed right through) to be between 457966 and 464972.

The upper Sassafras Creek shown on the 1:25,000 might well become Prohibition Creek. In a trip report dated 1/8/71 Peter Shaw went from the gravel pit below Prohibition to Gillam Creek, probably just above the 550 m contour. He passed one creek on the way which he assumed was Sassafras going down to Baldocks. Since there is no water in Baldocks except in wet weather, it may be his creek was a tributary of the Gillam, marked on the 1:25,000 but NOT shown on the one inch map Peter would have been using.

The drainage into the caves of this system would thus seem to be flowing through private forest at the time it goes underground.

This land has been clear felled with no regard for environmental considerations, and gives an ideal pilot area for investigating the effects of bad forestry practice on influx caves. For example:

1) A landing has been constructed immediately above Prohibition Creek. The resulting siltation seems minimal, implying a very high resistance to erosion of dolerite soils above the contact.

2) Clear felling around Depression 438949 has been followed by bulldozing of waste into the dolerite making it very laborious to reach the entrance. This felling was without regard to a creek which flows into the cave.

Without condoning this type of forestry practice, it does suggest that if burning is not carried out, silting is not a great danger on these particular soils.

Recommendation: We should press for strict guidelines on forest management to apply to ALL forests in the state.

A more detailed study of effects on the caves of the Prohibition system should be undertaken. A comparison of the effects of clear felling on dolerite soils, with and without burning, particularly the effect on creeks, would seem to be urgently required.

System 7. The Mole Creek. Mole Creek 1:25,000

In the other systems I have been personally involved with the exploration, particularly the bush bashing. All map references, with the exception of those noted in System 6, have been checked in the last couple of years, ie, they are NOT conversions from the original 1:63,360 map. Traditionally, the upper reaches of the Mole Creek have been explored by SCS, and all references in this section are guesses on my part, except for the entrance to Georgies Hall, which I used to calculate the surface positions of Root Hall and Eldorado.

The main stream in Herbert's Pot (491933) comes from the Westmorland which goes underground at 494½924½ (?). The 1973 survey of Herbert's puts the sump at 493927½. Thus the water would be protected from logging effects in the Crown land by the waterfall reserve, but the actual influx of Westmorland Cave is on private land below the reserve. Similarly, the actual creek into Herbert's is on private land, and other tributaries seem in no danger from any development of Crown land.

Apart from siltation, the danger of collapse caused by surface activity is very real. Using the VSA 1973 survey, Root Hall is 498935, while the far end of Eldorado I is under the red spot marked as "sink hole". The allotment marked "Crown Land" on the 1:25,000, which includes Gavin Linger's farm, is shown as "private freehold" on the land tenure map. The ownership needs clarifying. Obviously, Gavin himself would not be responsible for felling timber in the vulnerable section, but it would seem politic to discover his attitude towards an appropriate area being declared a timber reserve.

Further down the system, clear felling has taken place over the top of Pyramid. I descended the Top Hole a couple of years ago and no instability or new rock fall was apparent.

Recommendation: Other cavers with more detailed knowledge of the system might care to discuss this.

Cave Numbers

A list of new cave numbers was published in Speleo Spiel last year (No 175). Further ones applying to this area are as follows:

MC127 Devils Drainpipe (X12 in check list)
MC128E Marakoopa II entry of Long Creek at the contact.
MC129E Marakoopa II (Lakes entrance) Entrance to rift above Lake Passage.
MC130 Devils Pot (X13 in check list)
MC131 Devils Anastomosis - leads to sump of Devils Pot via 50 m pitch.
MC132E Devils Anastomosis
MC133 Kiwi Pot (X33 in check list)
MC134 Paste Pot. Above Pearl Pot - Kohinor connection but won't go without digging. Two entrances, both pitches finishing in the same chamber 20 m below the surface.

BOB WOOLHOUSE

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LOST POT

This cave was originally located by Stefan Eberhard in December 1980 at an obscure point in the rainforest between Serendipity and Ice Tube. Considering its altitude and strategic location above the Growling Master System, the walk-in entrance which carried a strong outward draught obviously had potential. Attempts to re-find Lost Pot were unsuccessful until recently when mainly by luck, Stefan stumbled once again into the entrance doline. He marked a route back through the forest to emerge on the Serendipity track near the Frost Pot entrance.

The 28/5/83 saw Stefan and Rolan Eberhard, Nick Hume and Anne Gray of Sydney arrive at Lost Pot laden with ample quantities of rope and tackle. From the entrance we followed a high rift passage, down a short handline to a spacious chamber. Ignoring a large passage that heads back towards the surface, we climbed down an awkward slot into a narrow rift. Several metres further on the passage opens out at the top of the first proper pitch. Eager to check out the next pit, I tied the rope off to a couple of pitons sunk in a horizontal crack and abseiled down. The others decided an alternative anchor point was probably a good idea as one of the pitons could be pulled out by hand. While Stefan placed a bolt I threw a few rocks down the next shaft and decided it looked fairly amazing. This was indeed the case; a superb 70 m abseil down a large smooth walled shaft, a piton re-direction two thirds of the way down eliminating the need for rope protectors.

The cave was certainly going in style and the next pitch was only a short distance away. 7 metres to a chamber complete with a deep clear pool on one side and rock-fall on the other. With a few hundred metres of rope still to be used we plunged into the jumble of fallen blocks at various points. I eventually emerged in a steep rift abundant with large loose rocks, a small stream entered here, presumably the same one present at the base of the final pitch. I climbed down through more boulders showered by water from above until it became fairly constricted. I decided to see if the others had located a more attractive continuation. Back at the pool Stefan reported a large chamber above the rockfall but no leads. Slightly disillusioned, Anne, Stefan and I started to survey back to the surface while Nick headed out with the surplus rope.

In summary a depth of -175 m and length of 363 m. The survey started in the chamber with the pool (cairn), at a depth of -169 m with an estimated 6 m extra depth in the rockfall. All in all, not a bad cave which should have gone deeper. One rather unattractive lead remains in the rockfall at the bottom which would be worth another look when (or if) anyone pays Lost Pot a second visit.

ROLAN EBERHARD

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NIAGARA POT (JF29) 4/6/83

Party: Nick Hume, Stefan Eberhard, Richard Hortle, Mike Edwards, A Pom

Like so many trips before, this one started with the party concerned meeting at Stuart's, at a suitable time on the above date.

Next, a quick rummage around in the shed to equip ourselves with the necessary - a quick unpacking/packing of vehicles and away.

Ensconced in a blue Commodore station wagon, with Stefan at the wheel, this normally tedious journey was brightened by the following:

Stefan: "Would you roll me a cigarette Richard?"

Richard: (Who was squashed between Mike and Nick in the back)
"It's ok! Stefan, you roll the cigarette, I'll steer from the back with my foot!!!"

If the latter is above your head, ask Stefan for details.

A brief snack stop to order a selection of knitting needles at the Maydena eatery. (The knitting needles were by way of a 'tip off' from Julia James and the real incentive for being on the 'Niagara' trip). Then on to ANM main gate.

Nick slipped in action at this point by trying to politely persuade the Gatekeeper to loan us the Junee Quarry Road key. Eventually we gained the required access with the Gatekeeper muttering about the blue Commodore not resembling a green Toyota land cruiser as on the permit.

Upon our arrival, most of us made the usual offering to the bush before gearing up and walking into the cave. At the entrance we put on our caving attire, three of us donned 'Enduro' style suits, Nick a wet suit (if my memory serves me correctly) and Stefan some woollen army pants, a suitably ventilated jumper and some knee pads.

The trip went relatively smoothly with Nick and Stefan rigging through to the main chamber. Best of all was a waterfall pitch, you know the sort of thing, water cascading into every available opening of one's clothing and anatomy (luxury!) with vehement precision. This, highlighted by the (head in bucket) effect of water pounding on one's helmet, an experience to be savoured even longer whilst prusiking out of the cave.

On reaching the main chamber, Stefan was heard to say between shivers "This place isn't even worth the space it takes up". Richard didn't seem to agree with this, as on the way out, I had the distinct impression that he wanted to see more of the cave as he promptly dropped the rope I had just handed to him down another hole, unfortunately it was in a rope pack at the time! After retrieving the pack and contents we headed on out in time to avoid being locked in for the night.

Another stop at the eatery and back to Stuart's, deciding that this cave had a profound effect on the party, as when we had settled in the lounge, Stuart was forced to ask "Won't someone say something!"

The moral of this story is: There's absolutely nothing like a good cave, and that was absolutely nothing like a good cave.

A POM

P.S. I still haven't figured out if Stefan in his "Woolly's" was being "hard", seeking to broaden his pseudo-masochistic experiences, or quite simply did not own an 'Enduro' suit?

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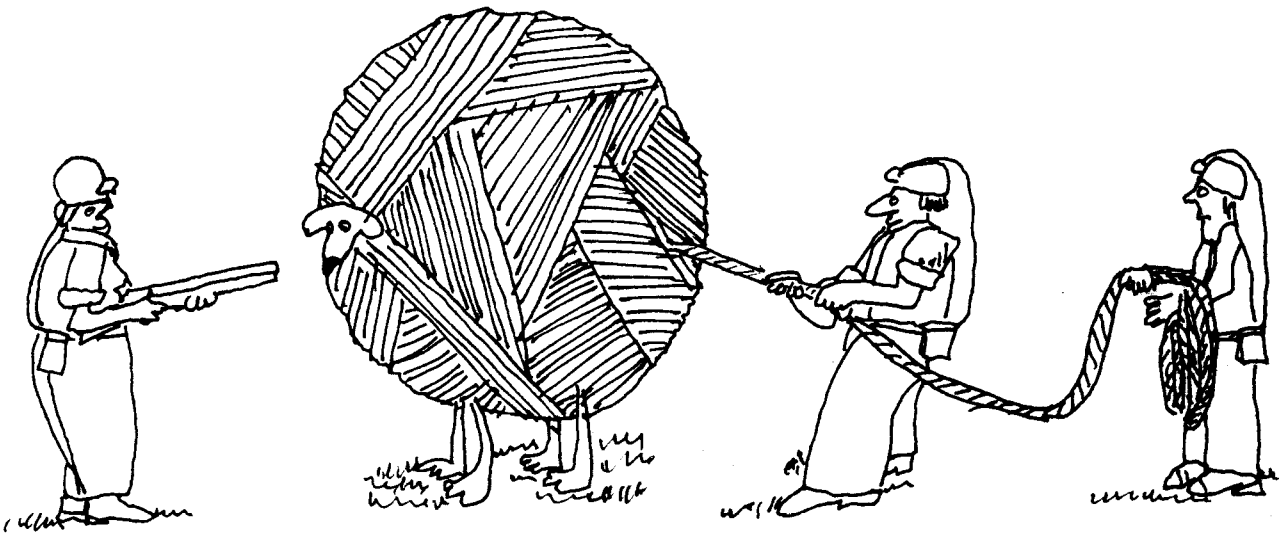
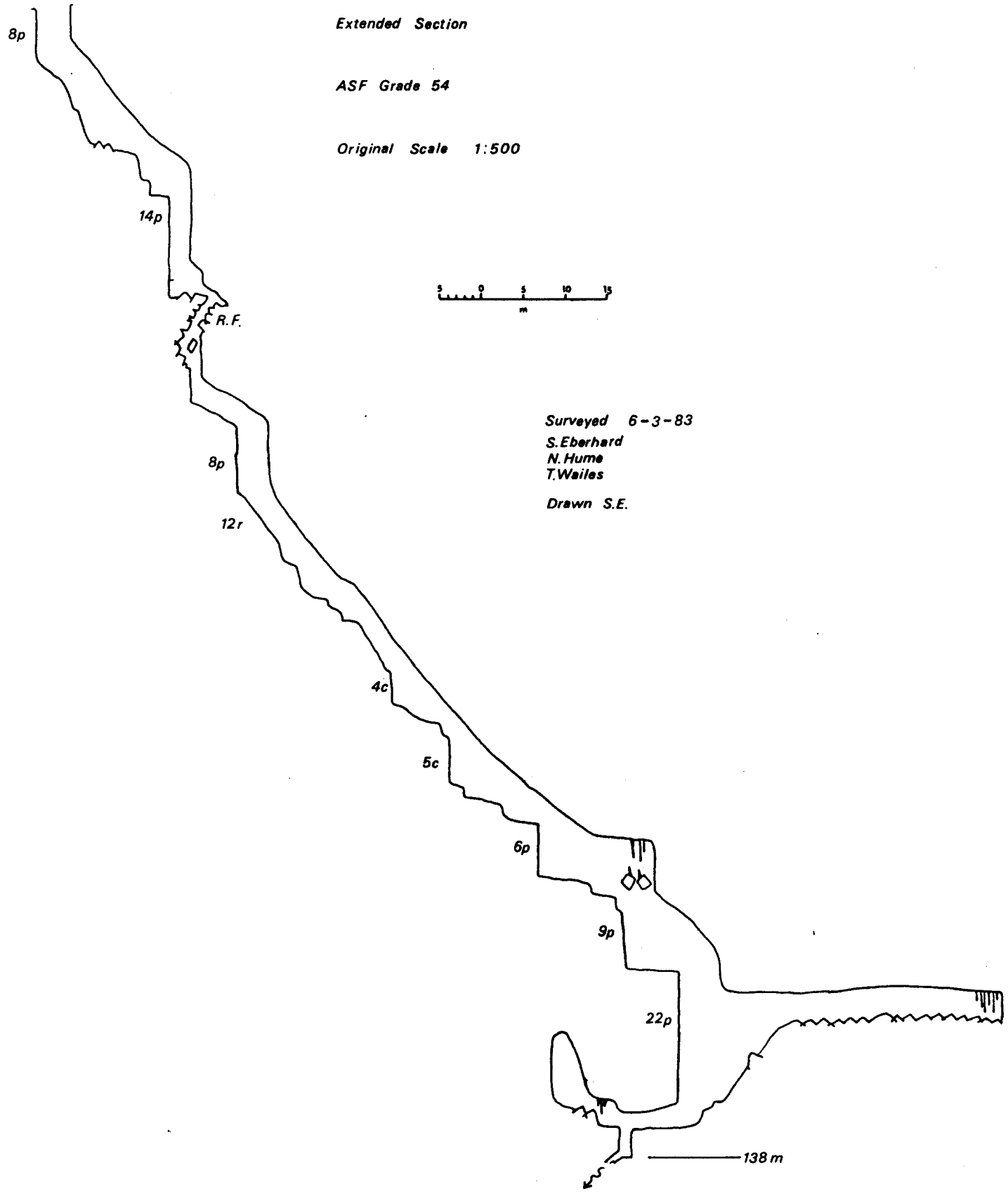
HOW CAVERS GET ROPE - from: Never eat anything bigger than your head and other funny drawings. B Kliban.



SATAN'S LAIR
JUNEE



SATAN'S LAIR

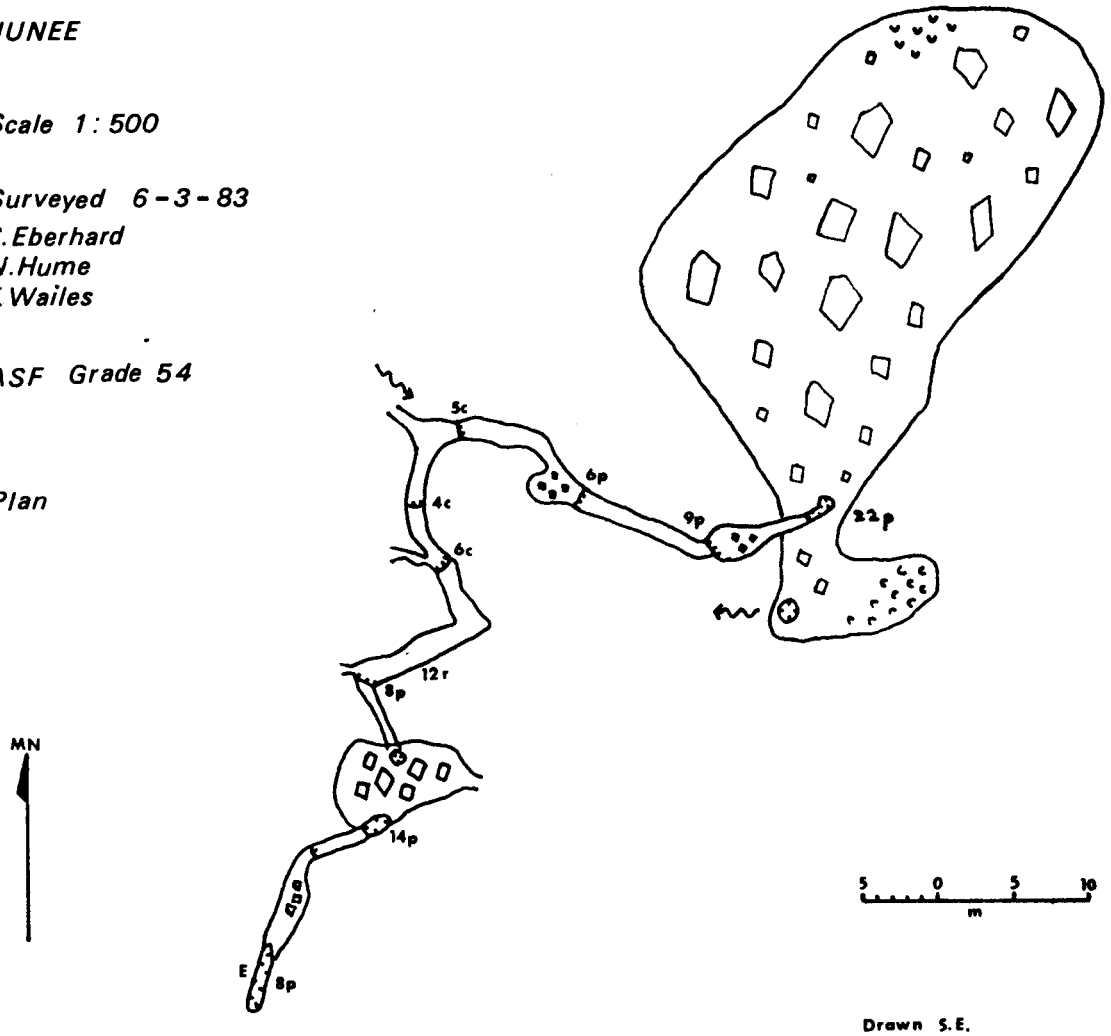
JUNEE

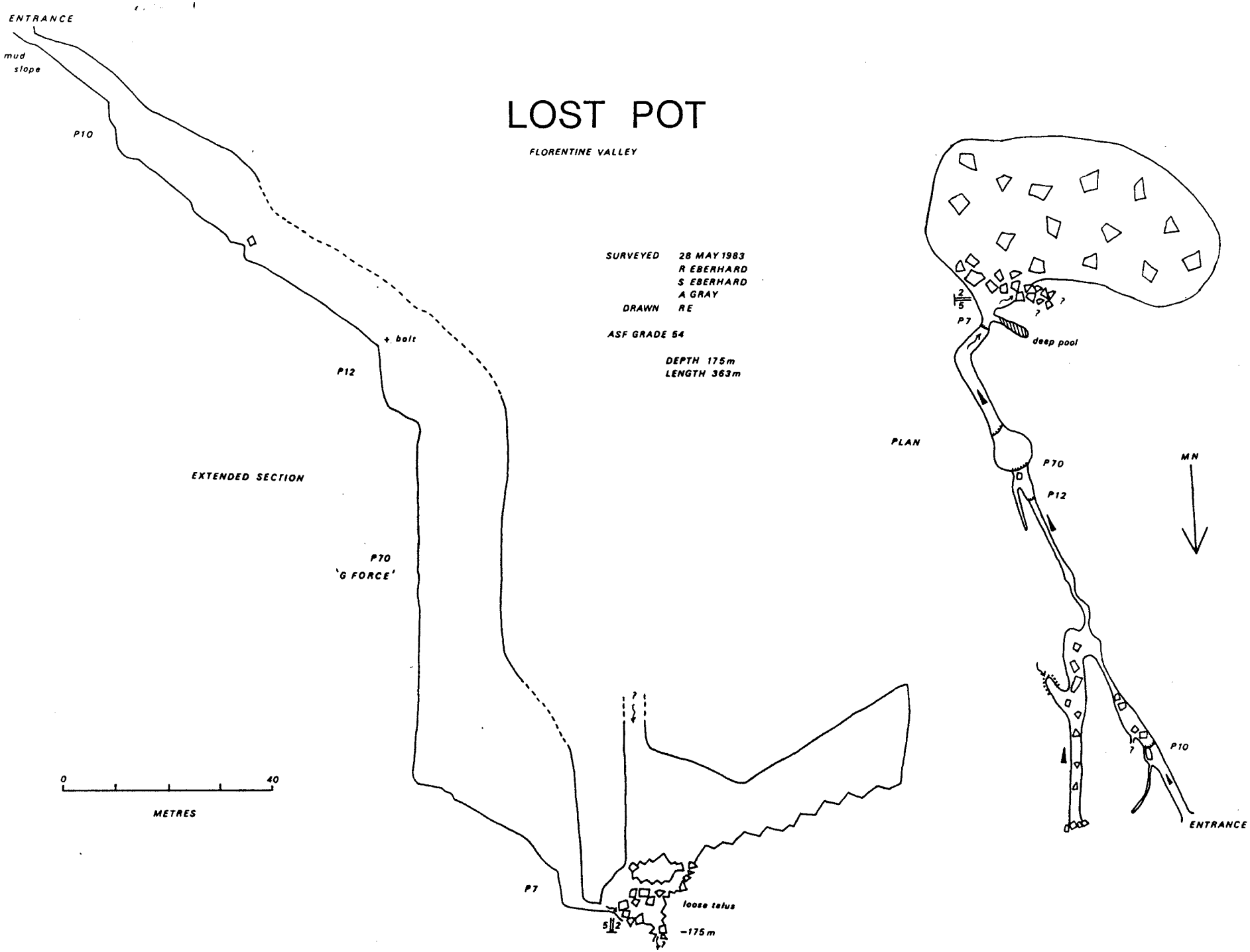
Scale 1 : 500

Surveyed 6 - 3 - 83
S. Eberhard
N. Hume
T. Wailes

ASF Grade 54

Plan




LOST POT
FLORENTINE VALLEY
SURVEYED 28 MAY 1983
R EBERHARD
S EBERHARD
A GRAY
DRAWN RE
ASF GRADE 54
DEPTH 175m
LENGTH 363m
ENTRANCE
mud slope
P10
+ bolt
P12
EXTENDED SECTION
P70
'G FORCE'
P7
loose talus
-175m
0
40
METRES
PLAN
deep pool
P70
P12
P10
ENTRANCE
MN