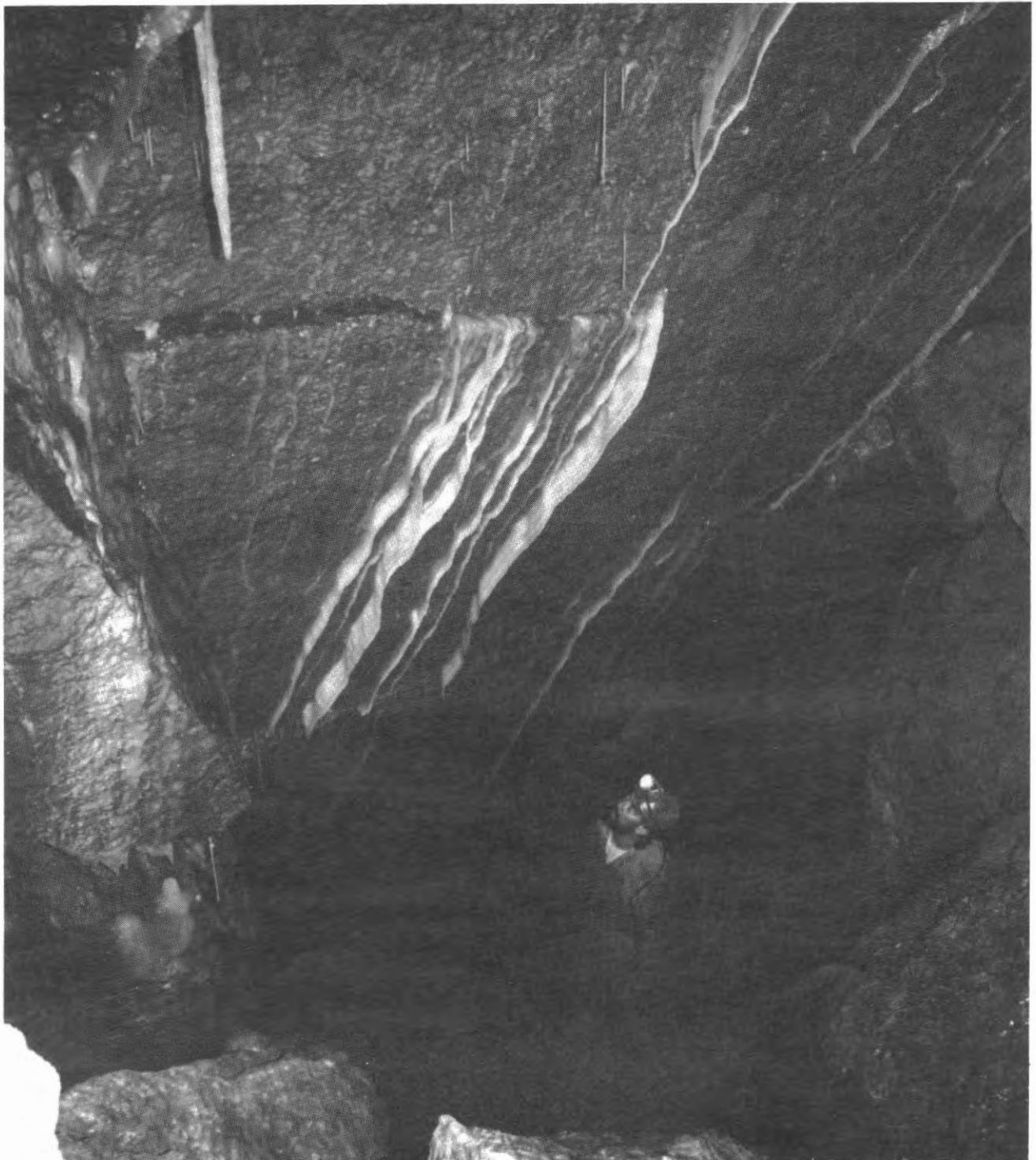


AUSTRALIAN CAVER

THE AUSTRALIAN
SPELEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

No.116

1988



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All articles, reports, tests, photos and reviews are welcomed for publication.

These may be sent to:—

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MAY
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NOVEMBER**

If you find writing a chore, why not phone the editor directly???

COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

*The "Weeping Wall"
Galadriel's Gift Extension
Fairy Cave (B-5)
By P.J. Ackroyd*

The opinions expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the A.S.F. Inc. or the Editor.

AND GLADLY CAVE - A HISTORY OF CAVING AT MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY 1967-1987

David Hamilton

Whilst compiling material for Quaver No.7, it came to my attention that 1987 is a highly significant year in the history of Macquarie University Caving Group. It was 20 years ago that Macquarie Mountaineering Society, a group which included caving in its activities, was founded. It was 15 years ago that members of MMS formed a subgroup, Macquarie University Speleological Investigation Group and that MUSIG became a member of ASF. It was 10 years ago, that the first edition of Quaver was published; and it was 5 years ago, that MUSIG became MUCG. Here follows a brief history of caving at Macquarie University.

The Macquarie Mountaineering Society was founded in about June of 1967, the year Macquarie University accepted its first undergraduate students. Harry Luxford, formerly of Sydney Rockclimbing Club and Richard Daniel, formerly of Orange Speleological Society, got together and formed a club which combined all of the so-called mountaineering sports. Membership of the newly formed Mountaineering Society was only about 20, over half the club members being staff. During the year, Rick led a number of caving trips in conjunction with SUSS.

1968 got off to a good start, when about 100 freshers attended a talk-and-slide show. Of that number, about 20 were sufficiently impressed to go away caving to Bungonia and bushwalking at Frazer Park.

1969 saw further strong growth in MMS, whilst student numbers at Macquarie University doubled, MMS at least tripled in size, putting a fair strain on the clubs resources, both in manpower and equipment, with 25 freshers on one trip to Bungonia.

In late 1969-early 1970, about 6 people started to carry out mapping work at Little Wambeyan Creek. Club patron, Dave Roots, who had visited the area in the course of work for his Science Honours Thesis on the geology of the Bindook area, drew the caves of Little Wambeyan Creek to the attention of the club and over the next few years work carried out, included a study of the surface geology, a surface map of cave entrances, tagging and surveying of most caves and digging of LWC1 and LWC16. To differentiate with the normal caving of MMS, it was about this time that the name Macquarie University Speleological Investigation

Group emerged.

1970 got off to a spectacular start with nearly 100 freshers signing up with MMS. The freshers trip to Bungonia set an all time record of 50, including 25 freshers. In order to regulate club activity, co-ordinators for particular sports within the Mountaineering Society were elected and trip leader standards established.

In 1971-72 speleological activity turned to a meteorological study of Blowfly Cave, (B16-51). During the course of this work B.16-51 was fully explored and Adytum, at 155', the deepest pitch on the Australian mainland was discovered and descended. Also discovered in 1972, was a new cave at Cliefden - Tiddalick - so named because of the number of frogs present. Tiddalick Cave is significant for Cliefden as it was the first cave there requiring ladders, with two pitches, a 60' entrance pitch and a lower 30' pitch.

During 1972 MUSIG was formed and became affiliated with ASF. On the night of Tuesday May 9th 1972, the inaugural annual general meeting of MUSIG was opened by the first club president, Richard Lansdowne and a constitution drawn up. Club membership stood at 15. In December 1972, MUSIG was accepted as a new member of ASF, allowing members to go caving in restricted access areas.

1973 was a quiet year for caving, partly because many of the more active cavers had left uni and had jobs involving weekend work. However, during 1973 Jenolan, particularly Mammoth Cave, was visited a number of times and mapping of Naked Lady Chamber began.

Over the following years, work continued at Bungonia and Jenolan. At Bungonia, a few small passages were found in Fossil-Hogan and some small caves were located in the Gorge. At Jenolan, work on the exploration and surveying of passages in Mammoth Cave, including Wilsons Rift and the High Shawl Room was included in the 2nd edition of "The Exploration & Speleogeography of Mammoth Cave, Jenolan" (Dunkley : 1978).

In order for MUSIG to become affiliated with Macquarie Uni. Sports Association, in 1976 it was necessary for MUSIG to formally separate from

the Mountaineering Society, which for the past few years it had continued to be a part. Independent of MMS, MUSIG was able to recruit new members direct from the student population and could have its own equipment and budgetary allowance.

Over the last decade a small number of members have participated in expeditions to Papua-New Guinea. In 1976 and again in 1978, club members Richard Willson and David Rothery participated in expeditions to Atea Kanada in the Southern Highlands. In 1982 Derek Hobbs took part in the Muller Expedition.

In 1977 the first edition of 'Quaver: Notes from MUSIG' was published. Edited by David Patterson and Kerrie Bennett (who has since gone on to become editor of 'Australian Caver') a large portion of the journal was given to The Saga of Mt. Fairy - a series of reports on a number of club trips to Mt. Fairy, during which some new passage in Mt. Fairy Main (MF.1-4) were explored and mapped.

May 1978 and MUSG hosted the inaugural Intersarsity Speleosports, which introduced the cavers of Sydney to the delights of 'the Slop-trough', and the agony of 14" pipes. In 1979 Speleosports became a non-varsity event and has since gone on to become a regular part of the Sydney Caving Calendar.

Despite the enthusiasm and dedication of a hard core of members, during the late-70's- early-80's, MUSIG went into a bit of a decline, with membership falling below 10.

In an attempt to increase awareness of the club on campus and after some deliberation, the somewhat unweildly name - Macquarie University Speleological Investigation Group - was dropped and MUSIG became MUOG - Macquarie University Caving Group. Membership increased dramatically and overall 1982 was a highly active year for MUOG, with trips to Wee Jasper, Tuglow, Colong, Wyambene, Cliefden and Bungonia and a trip to Buchan in Victoria.

At the end of 1982, needing somewhere to store club gear besides some shelves in a shed in David Rothery's backyard, MUOG was given the use of one of the old houses on campus, which date from the days when the Uni. was a series of market gardens. After much work, the Caving Cottage has become an excellent venue for meetings and social functions, a store for club gear and a place to house the club library.

Since 1982, much of the club's efforts have centred on digs at Bungonia, work alternating between The Great Escape (B.156) and the connection between Shaduf (B.15) and Fossil-Hogan (B.4-5) and club members are currently working on a full and detailed survey of Shaduf.

1985 began with a joint MUOG-SUSS-OTCCC trip to Kangaroo Island and the Nullarbor. On Kangaroo Island three new caves - Cider Cave (K.55), Giggle Pot (K.56) and Walk Thru Cave (K.58) - were discovered, explored and maps published. In July 1985 club president John Kaye, was injured in a fall in Drum Cave (B.13) at Bungonia, however, the rescue involving NSW Cave Rescue and Goulburn Police Rescue was smoothly carried out.

During 1986, a number of long one day trips to Bungonia saw much of Shaduf Cave surveyed, but towards the end of 1986 MUOG's attention turned to Speleotec'87. Held at Macquarie University, the 16th Biennial Conference of ASF - Speleotec'87 - saw cavers from throughout Australia (plus some overseas visitors) attending seminars and workshops and going on canyoning and draining trips. The Caving Cottage provided a focus for pleasant social evenings and so impressed were ASF delegates, that Macquarie Uni. has been asked to host the next ASF Committee meeting in January 1988.

Although not one of the larger speleo groups, over the past 20 years, MUOG formerly MUSIG, formerly part of Macquarie Mountaineering Society, has made a number of significant discoveries, its fair share of contributions to speleology and on the general caving scene has been highly active, both politically and socially. MUOG aims to continue as such, 'and gladly cave'.

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* * * * *

STANDARDISATION OF CLIMBING/ABSEILING CALLS

by Ann McLaren

Recently I made a trip through Tuglow Main with a party of friends with assorted backgrounds in caving: two from another speleo club, one an ex-rockclimber and one a Venturer leader and ex-Scout. We had never done any vertical caving together before and after rigging the keyhole and beginning the abseil, it suddenly became very apparent that each member of the party had learnt (evolved?) a different set of calls.

I had always thought that at least the call of "Below!" would be a universal term to warn of falling rocks, etc. Not so. Cries ranged from "Look out!" to "Duck!". Bottom-belaying the abseil was fraught with more confusion: Calls of "On rope" from the abseiler met with either no response from the bottom-belayer or shouts of "OK", "ckeck", etc. Whilst abseiling the rockclimber seemed to favour "Hold" a great deal (presumably he meant just that), and the Venturer (when touching down) preferred "Safe" to our "Down".

Discussing the calls later on, we discovered that rockclimbers have another favourite I have not heard used in caves (thankfully) - "Falling!".

Differences in abseiling calls didn't cause much trouble beyond friendly disagreement. The ladder climb, however, started a major argument! (Not to mention an almost-accident). Whilst we had by now realised that we were all using different codes, cavers being cavers and notoriously stubborn no-one was prepared to give up his own set of calls and so the problem began. The main point of contention was in the handling of the safety rope. I have always been taught never to use the words "slack" or "rope", on the grounds that if either word is used in conjunction with a prefix such as "give", "up" or "down", the first word may not be heard and then the terms "slack" or "rope" could mean either up or down - potential disaster! The preferred terms, as far as I'm concerned, are "take-in" (meaning take the rope up) and just "give" (meaning lower the rope). These terms cannot possibly mean anything else.

No-one, however, agreed with this logic. The basis for their argument was that these terms are too "soft" to be heard distinctly in caves. I have

never met with this problem). Our Venturer and ex-Scout seemed to prefer the term "Rope" which meant either up or down - I can't remember now.

The code which I was taught for ladder-climbing (and had always thought was standard in most clubs) is:

"On Belay"	When belayer is ready to belay climber
"Take-in"	When climber is on rope and wishes slack taken up
"Taking-in"	Belayer takes up slack
"That's me"	Rope is taut to climber
"Climb when ready"	Belayer to climber
"Climbing"	Climber to belayer
"Give"	When climber wants more slack in rope

And for Abseiling:

"On rope"***	Abseiler is clipped to rope and ready to go
"On belay"	Bottom belayer is ready
"Abseiling"	Abseiler begins descent
"Abseil clear"	Abseiler disengages from rope

** - Not good, but for want of something better....

I feel the rockclimbing call of "Hold" has a definite use for when the abseiler/climber wishes the belayer to hold him at that point, and although we all laughed at first, maybe "Falling" also has a use!

Anyway, the point I'm trying to make is this: There we were, all friends who had caved before, all experienced in our own right, and even though we realised after beginning that we were using at least three different sets of climbing calls, none of us was prepared to give in and agree on a standard set of calls to be used,. (Each person believing his own code to be the best).

It was this trip which prompted me to make enquiries of the ASF Safety Officer as to whether there had ever been any set of standard calls recommended by ASF. Apparently there hasn't been, although no-one seems to be sure. Certainly Judith Bateman's "Abseiling Guidelines" (ASF Newsletter No.104) contain no reference to calls.

I would be interested to know what codes are used by other clubs. Surely the time has come for ASF to do something a little more constructive than politicking and address problems such as this - before confusion and disagreement end up in tragedy.

Feedback please.

Ann McLaren,
Secretary,
Highland Caving Group.
6.8.87

* * * * *



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FURTHER DISCUSSION ON TRACK MARKING

Bob Woolhouse

INTRODUCTION

A number of Australian Caves already have tracks marked in them using a variety of systems. Obviously it is a matter of urgency that we formulate a uniform code and publish this ASF policy. The following discussion is intended to develop the basic ideas set out by Norm Poulter in A.C. no.113. An agreed code is particularly important in Tasmania where the resident caving population is small, and a large number of visitors come from interstate. Accordingly, I offer no apologies for using our experiences in Kubla, particularly our observations of the behaviour of visitors, to suggest modifications to Norm's ideas.

COMPARISON OF DISCS AND TAPE

"Disc" is used to mean the SRG WA 25mm roadsign and "Tape" the reflective material available from cycle shops. I would emphasize that the following is subjective, and perhaps some enthusiast with B & W film might perform the experiment illustrated in fig.3, and supply the resulting prints to A.C.

Discs and tape are similar when first placed. Over a period of weeks (in a high humidity cave) discs change very little, but the tape becomes

- (a) less easily seen by a caver
- (b) more obvious to a camera

When a caver's personal light packs up, the discs almost disappear, even though the rest of the party has good lights. Old tape becomes difficult to locate in any light conditions. I always offset my light source for photography, so it seems the discs are highly visible only when the eye of the camera is almost in line with the light source. My (untested) hypothesis is that the reflective surface consists of transparent glass or plastic spheres, each of which reflects a concentrated beam back to the light source with very little random scatter. In damp conditions scatter is increased considerably for tape but very little for discs.

Notwithstanding that little light is reflected in photographs (PROVIDED THERE IS NO FLASH ON THE CAMERA) the small amount of scatter may be visible. This resembles natural reflective crystal FOR WHITE DISCS. Thus we should place coloured discs with discretion. Track markers, by definition are placed to be seen from a distance. This seems to rule out colour as standard track markers.

MARKING TRACKS

In a long cave such as Kubla, a leader unfamiliar

with the route will locate a marker and move towards it, admiring the scenery and keeping an eye open for the following marker. When the next marker is located he repeats the process, so that the first marker is not looked at closely. Should the marker be on a tag (A.C no.113 p.18 fig.2) he is likely to miss the information carried on this tag. Thus I would suggest "attention tags" which would have two white discs together with any letter which might be desirable. (see heading "Attention tag letters"). On reaching such a tag, the leader would look round for a colour tag as described by Norm. These would be placed in less photographically sensitive positions than track markers, but as near as possible to the attention marker.

I hesitate to suggest any changes in Norm's colour scheme as this causes unnecessary problems in any cave which has adopted it, but surely blue should be reserved for washing stations. If a side track to the washing station were necessary, one blue would give its direction from the attention tag followed by normal track marks (see fig.4)

Branch tracks would normally lead to decorations needing special care. The direction would be given by the placing of a yellow marker near to the attention tag, again followed by normal white markers. Red discs on the ground would indicate the end of this side track, just as they show other no go areas.

We need red discs for a 5th reason (see Norm's article)

- 5. areas which must not be stepped on as they are sources of mud.

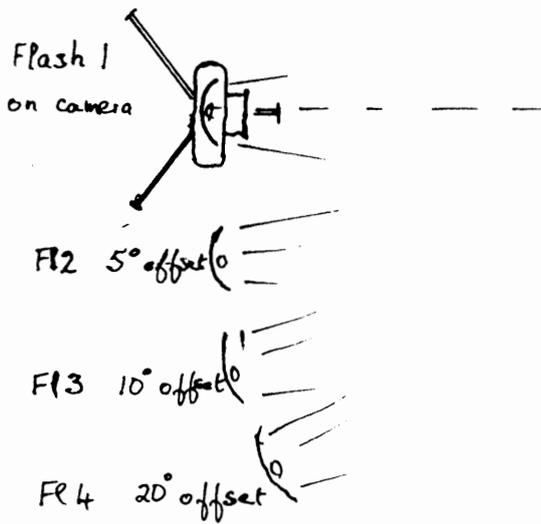
In Kubla such areas are often disintegrating rock rising out of the flowstone on which the track is routed. They are exactly the places where a conscientious caver would put his feet to avoid the flowstone. Usually the red markers can be placed on the ground where their intended purpose of stopping feet coming down, can be achieved with little danger to photographs.

ATTENTION TAG LETTERS

For a self guided tour of Kubla it is essential that information be supplied at appropriate points. Such notices are undesirable in a cave and could be replaced by an instruction sheet issued with the permit. In addition to general information, the sheet would have letters followed by instructions,

Fig 3 Four test photos (plan)
Camera fixed, Flash angle varied

see also Fig 1 & 2 A.C. no 113
p 18



☐ Reflective tape } in place at least
⊗ " disc } a week
☐ tape } newly placed
⊗ disc }

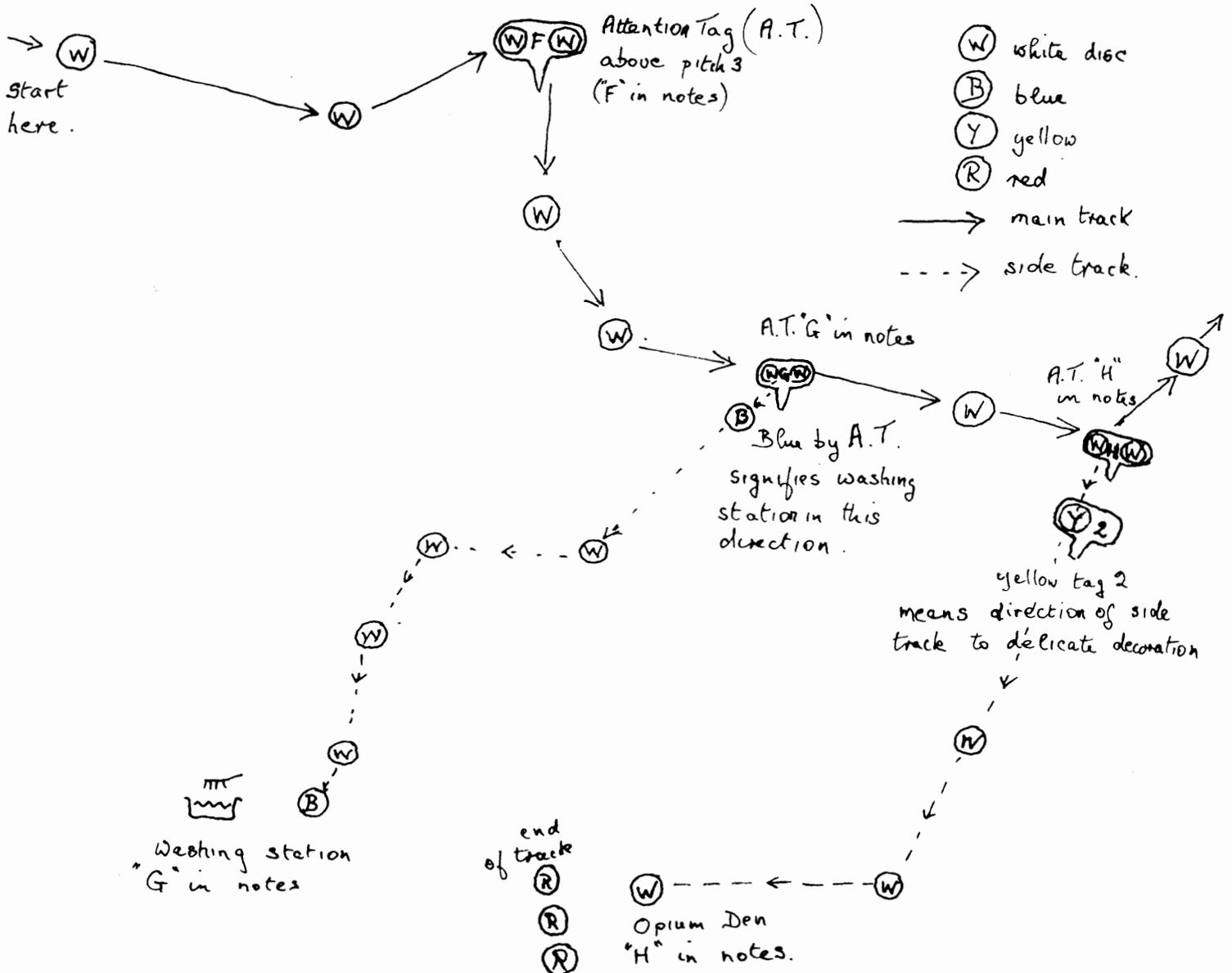
These should be in a close group preferably on a decorated wall.

Extension cable unnecessary for 2, 3 & 4

Shutter setting B, open shutter

assistant fires FL2, close shutter etc

Fig 4 Suggested system on part of a track in Kubla - see "Attention Tag letters"



e.g: "F - Pitch 3. 25m rope. Work back to right wall immediately below overhang so as to pass down the gap to the Waiting Room."

In this case an attention tag with the appropriate letter would be all that would be necessary at the top of the actual pitch 3.

The following could also be included on the instruction sheet (see Fig 4.)

"G - Washing Station. Water to refill bowl usually present in gour pool, 3m lower down."

"H - Side track to Opium Den. Keep to large rocks to avoid mud."

N.B. These letters would be on the Attention Tags and would have no connection with Norm's numbers which are always associated with coloured discs.

FIXING DISCS AND TAPE

Our rock is hard work even with a battery powered drill. NPWS have finally started thinking about a management plan for Kubla (thanks to everybody who pressurized them by appropriate remarks on the returned permits) and I hope to get a battery impact drill, but even so the holes need to be as small as possible. The smallest readily available masonry drill is 3mm (1/8"). Aluminium fluted nails 3mm stem, 4mm including the flutes, (Comalco retail outlets - not normal hardware shops) tap in very firmly and also avoid electro-chemical corrosion. Holes 5mm deep are sufficient. Side cutting pliers are carried to cut the nail to the length of the hole before inserting.

CONSTRUCTION WORK IN CAVES

In the above discussion I have assumed that any work would be done by volunteer cavers so that welfare of the caves would be paramount.

Since then (15.7.87) I have heard a disgusting rumour that NPWS are considering employing contractors to do the work in Kubla.

On the one hand, we are told that the cave is so fragile that no more than six cavers may visit it on any one day (and only these from a club dedicated to ASF code of ethics).

On the other, it is so robust that it can stand up to the depredations of a gang of construction workers. Problems of human waste spring to mind, but in fact that would break down in a year or so. Other damage would be permanent, and it is highly unlikely that such damage would be minor.

SPELEOSPORTS '87

Speleosports '87 was held at Macquarie University on the 24th October. This was an obstacle course for cavers designed so that anyone with a sense of humour, determination and skill could participate whether their ages were 7 or 70. (The emphasis being on PARTICIPATION).

Clubs who participated include S.S.S., S.U.S.S., Hills Speleos, M.U.C.G., N.S.W.I.T.S.S. and M.S.S. Congratulations to all clubs who came along, we hope that you had as much fun as we did designing it.

Many, many thanks to those cavers who pitched in to set up the Course, Marshall and finally, pack up.

A handicap event was designed as it was felt that the S.S.S. Bicentennial Team (named because team members ages added up to over 200 years) demonstrated the true spirit of Speleosports. We soon found that this was unnecessary as their years of experience and skill in the simulated formation obstacle made up for those who completed the course quickly.

In the team events:

1st Hills One (Shane Wilcox, Liane Wilcox, Adrian Ridgley and Nick Mebberson)

2nd S.S.S.B. (Russell Bridge, Bill Van Vlimmaren, Grace Matts and John Bonwick)

3rd S.U.S.S. One (Pat Larkin, Steven Keenlyside, Ann Gray and Danielle Genienis)

In SUPERCAVER, Mark Bonwick had a close win from 2nd runner up Adrian Ridgley(Hills) and Lionel Hine(Hills) coming third, Sarah Gillis(M.U.C.G.), was the only female competitor in this event, coming fourth in a field of seven males.

The deluge which had been spared us during the events, finally caught up with us and Speleo-Olympics was cancelled. Sarah Gillis and Tracey Bryant our caterers, managed to battle on with the B.B.Q., under shelter of a fly. With somewhat dampened and tied spirits, we enjoyed some bottled spirits with some cavers choosing to spend the night at the Cavers Cottage.

We hope that you will spread the word so that more cavers and clubs will participate in 1988, so that Speleosports will be bigger and better!



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