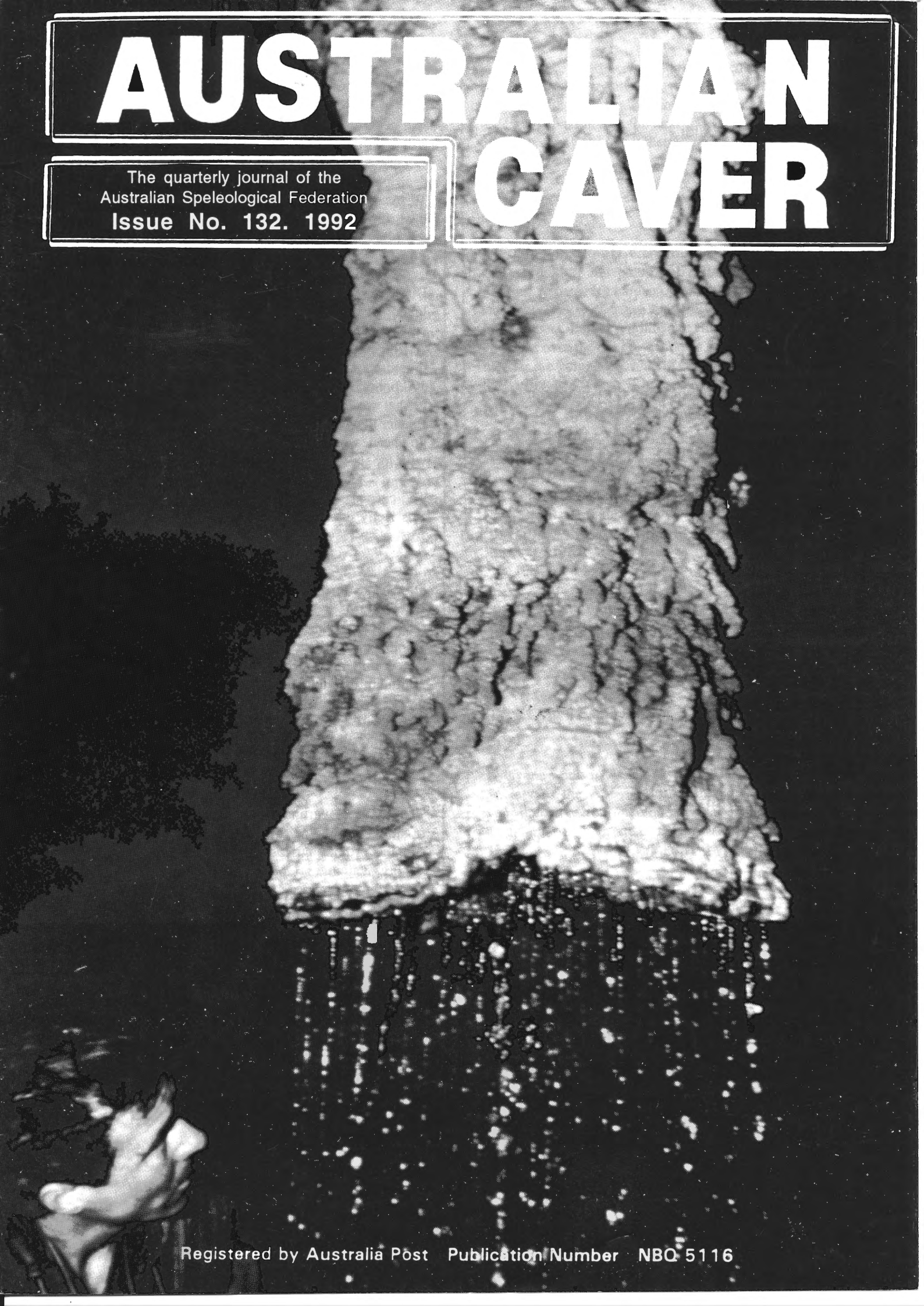


# AUSTRALIAN CAVER

The quarterly journal of the  
Australian Speleological Federation  
Issue No. 132. 1992



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<b>Front Cover Photo</b> "The Nichterlein" Tham Susa Cave, Thailand. Ken Boland 1990.	

## EDITORIAL

It appears that the Gazetting of Exit Cave and the closure of Benders Quarry on the 20th of August was a Claytons decision. On Wednesday the 7th of October Ros Kelly, the Tasmanian State Government and Ray Bender stitched up a deal in the guise of rehabilitation of the site. This rehabilitation deal has seen the quarry start up again as a fully fledged commercial operation.

During the week of Oct 5-9 the ASF co-ordinated a National letter and faxing campaign to Ros Kelly's office to try and counter the pressure of the Benders lobby and the Huon Action group. The Wilderness Society in Tasmania organised a protest at the quarry, during which they filled 190 bore holes left by Bender. Our efforts were successful in that we managed to persuade Ros Kelly not to allow Bender to have one last blast. (A blast which, if allowed to go ahead, would have given Bender enough rock to work with for six months).

The current situation is unsatisfactory and unacceptable. Ros Kelly has demonstrated an inability to carry out the Australian Government's duties under the World Heritage Properties Act, and has ignored reports concerning the processes of rehabilitation. Not only has Bender been allowed to quarry whilst it is still raining, causing the movement of sediment into the Exit Cave system, but no rehabilitation plan has been drawn up or site supervisors employed. The Grimes report commissioned by DASET stated that all mechanical work should be kept to a minimum and that the only stone to be moved must be purely for stabilising loose clays presently polluting the cave from a nearby sinkhole. In yet another sellout on Kelly's behalf, she has given Bender and the State Dep't of Mines right of veto over the rehabilitation plan and decisions concerning its implementation!

The State Government is pursuing the possibility of re-siting the quarry to Maydena. This is not needed as supplies of both agricultural lime and high grade lime are readily available at competitive prices from Margate and Rapid Bay. (The area at Maydena is also cavernous but we do not yet know how valuable it is.)

Cont'd p.31

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## ACCESS TO CAVES DURING THE NEXT ASF CONFERENCE

With the approach of the next ASF conference we are writing on behalf of the Department of Parks, Wildlife & Heritage and the Forestry Commission to introduce some of the cave areas of Tasmania and to outline our policies with regard to cave access over the conference period.

Significant caves are known in many parts of Tasmania. The Department administers three main tourist cave areas; at Hastings Caves in the southeast, at Marakooa-King Solomons in the north, and at Gunns Plains in the north west. Many hundreds of undeveloped caves are found in State Reserves (the equivalent of National Parks) and other conservation areas throughout the state.

Many more are located in State Forest, some under concession to various timber companies. The Commission manages caves at Mole Creek, Junee - Florentine, Mt. Cripps and elsewhere. The remainder of Tasmania's caves are located on private freehold land. Much of the Mole Creek and Gunns Plains karst is found under this tenure.

In all, carbonate rocks crop out in around 100 areas in the state, and some of these sites have never before been visited by cavers even though they are less than a days walk from major roads. Given all of these opportunities we do not anticipate that any particular cave or karst area need be overused during the coming ASF conference; so far we have only received two written applications for cave entry permits during the conference period.

### Cave access situation

Because of easy access or sensitivity, 12 caves have been administered under a system of limited access since a cave entry permit system was introduced in 1983. These caves are: non-tourist areas of King Solomons and Marakooa Caves, Haillie Selassie, Croesus, Lynds, Kubla Khan and Genghis Khan Caves (Mole Creek), the non - tourist areas of Gunns Plains Cave (Gunns Plains) non-tourist parts of Newdegate Cave, and King George V Cave (Hastings), and Exit Cave (Ida Bay). Party size restrictions apply, and certain restrictions apply in some sites of archaeological significance, including parts of Wargata Mina (Judds Cavern) in the Cracroft Valley.

Two of these caves are presently closed for recreational purposes during preparation of cave and karst area management plans - Exit Cave at Ida Bay, and Kubla Khan Cave at Mole Creek. P,W&H would very much like to co-operate with ASF members in planning for the future use of these cave systems, both of which have generated considerable controversy over the last year. With this in mind pre and post conference fieldtrips are planned, directed to discuss and implement management plans.

For all trips to limited access caves (other than the conference fieldtrips to Exit and Kubla for which separate

permits will be issued in conjunction with the conference organising committee) could intending visitors please forward permit applications to us as soon as possible, in order to avoid double booking and congestion. Trips to limited access caves other than Kubla and Exit will be restricted to a maximum of two per day, unless a specific conference field trip has been organised.

From the point of view of P,W&H and the Forestry Commission as cave managers, a central issue is the degree of impact that recreational caving, commercial adventure tourism and tourist development may have on the cave systems. The possibility of self regulation by cave users as opposed to the necessity of regulation by government will need to be assessed. If this conference can contribute to resolving the issue of caver/tourist impact on caves and suggest methods of monitoring and assessing the acceptability of impacts, a major hurdle in planning for future access to these resources will have been crossed.

The draft Kubla Khan Management Plan is now complete and circulating in government departments prior to release for public comment. It is a policy requirement of the state government that this internal circulation takes place prior to public participation and it is not possible for us to short circuit this process. The Kubla Khan Pilot Study, on which the plan is essentially based, (available on request to the Dept) suggests a total of 72 caver visits per year with the cave in its present partly cleaned state.

It also states that it is important that cleaning and trackmarking within this cave is completed before any further assessment of the cave's carrying capacity is made. Comments on the plan would be welcomed after it is released by the Minister for P,W&H.

Data collection and preliminary drafting of the Exit Cave plan are presently in progress.

Management plans for Welcome Stranger in the Florentine Valley and Croesus Cave have reached first draft stage, and a management study of Beginners Luck Cave, another archaeological site, is presently in preparation. These caves are open for recreational visits.

### Proposed activities:

Conference attendees are invited to participate in a series of management oriented fieldtrips to selected caves, both pre and post conference. These trips will be jointly organised by P,W&H, the Forestry Commission and Northern Caverneers with the aim of maximising public input by interested cavers.

The following activities are proposed:

- 1). In Kubla Khan the cleaning and trackmarking programme which was halted six years ago will be re-instated in a modified form after consultation between P,W&H and the caving community. Visiting cavers are



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

invited to assist with this programme during the conference fieldtrips. Specific priority areas within the cave are being assessed by the local caving community in conjunction with PW&H staff prior to the conference and a specific programme is being devised.

2). Following the closure of Bender's Quarry, steps are being taken to initiate a comprehensive cave survey and GIS - type inventory to gather relevant scientific and management information for the Exit Cave system. This will be a joint project between Tasmanian speleological societies and P,W&H. The project should be up and running prior to the conference, and visitors are invited to contribute to the management planning process within this framework.

3). Route delineation and cleaning in Croesus Cave is proposed by the Forestry Commission and P,W&H. A consultant's report has proposed that a rubber raft be installed in the pool below the Golden Stairs to prevent muddying of the flowstone during a through trip, and this is presently under discussion. In order to minimise traverses through the cave it is proposed that through trips rather than return visits via the same route will be the norm unless only very short trips into the cave are proposed.

4). A cleaning/trackmarking project is also proposed by the Forestry Commission in Welcome Stranger in the Florentine Valley.

5). Considerable recent damage, notably careless muddying of speleothems, has recently been caused to My Cave at Mole Creek. The Commission would like to initiate cleaning of this cave whilst most of the mud is still relatively fresh and removable.

Proposed dates and party numbers for these programmes will be available either through ourselves or the conference

**So you have gone and moved  
house again!**

**Well the Editor doesn't want to know  
but Steve Brooks who looks after the  
mailing list most certainly does.**

**You must let him know the  
following information:  
your old address: your new address:  
what club you belong to: If you are an  
individual member and if so  
when did you join.**

**Steve Brooks  
6 Kildbrooke Place, Westfield 6111.  
ph: (09) 495-1661**

committee as soon as they are finalised. We will then be calling for expressions of interest from participants.

## **Conclusions:**

Demand for use of limited access caves over the coming conference will be a good test of the caving community's ability to self regulate. As already noted, the possibilities for cave exploration in Tasmania are almost limitless. Our aim at present is to relieve some of the pressure on the better known, highly vulnerable caves and instead to encourage delegates to undertake valuable investigation and documentation of other less well known systems. Conference fieldtrips and suggestions for exploration and documentation of these other areas will be made in pre-conference literature.

If you have any trip/project proposals that you wish to discuss or if you require further clarification of access requirements over the conference period please feel free to write or phone the number below.

Looking forward to seeing you there,

Yours sincerely,

**Ian Houshold**

Karst Officer. Parks, Wildlife, Heritage and Forestry Commission. Hobart. Tasmania. (002) 33 3868

**Kevin Kiernan**

Senior Geomorphologist. Parks, Wildlife, Heritage and Forestry Commission. Hobart. Tasmania.

## **CAVE MANAGEMENT IN VICTORIA.**

I wish to bring to your readers' attention several errors in the article entitled "Cave Management in Victoria" by Nicholas White (Australian Caver 131, 1992, pages 19-21). The table of historical dates on page 20 is in error in three places. The Victorian Cave Exploration Society (VCES) was formed in early 1957, not 1958 as shown in the table. Their first field trip was to Buchan on 18-22 April 1957. The Sub Aqua Speleological Society of Victoria (SASS) was formed on 30th May 1960 (not in 1959). It consisted of many divers from the Victorian Sub Aqua Group who had become interested in caving and cave diving and decided to set up a specialist caving club.

The Victorian Speleological Association (VSA) was formed by the amalgamation of the VCES and SASS on 8th June 1967 (not in 1968). The correct year has been given in the body of the article (paragraph 4) and only the table is in error.

VSA has a small but informative pamphlet called "Caving in Victoria" which accurately records these historical dates as well as giving a brief insight into what is involved in cave exploration in Victoria.

Yours sincerely,

**Peter Ackroyd**

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## THE LITTLE RULE BOOK OF CAVING

At the 36th ASF Council meeting held at Jindabyne in January 1992, the ASF Code of Ethics was thrashed out. Since then, the updated Code has been discussed and written about, "What's in a code of ethics?", Canberra speleological society Australian Caver No 131.

All clubs were welcome to send their representatives but regardless of whether clubs were represented or not, (CSS unfortunately was not), it is extremely valuable for contentious issues such as this one to be debated. Contentious due to the inclusion of anything to with camping or blasting in caves or karst.

Contentious issues such as the code will never please every one. There is a spectrum of opinion ranging from those who believe that recreational camping and obsessive blasting can be easily justified to those who would like to close caves to all, and then sit back in their armchairs and feel overwhelming virtuosity.

In the article the question was asked, "What's in a code of ethics and what's it for?" The answer need not be confusing. A code of ethics is a set of guidelines or framework or even a rulebook to show what is right and what is wrong. It was decided at the council meeting after discussion that the clauses in the proposed Code of ethics were unnecessarily harsh and unrealistic. The clauses were:

Camping in a cave is not permitted.

The use of explosives inside a cave, at the entrance or elsewhere on the karst is not permitted.

An absolute NO allows no room for those times when camping and blasting are a necessity and well justified.

Examples of when camping is justified include cave diving trips when lengthy decompression times are required. Divers exploring Pannikin Plains Cave on the Nullarbor spent three days underground in order to do a dive that required a decompression time of 24 hours.

During the Mt Etna protest in Queensland, people spent months camping in Speaking Tube Cave and Elephant Hole Cave to try and prevent the mining company from destroying the area. Exit cave in Tasmania fortunately appears to have been saved from quarrying but camping in a cave to stop destruction is effective and helpful in gaining publicity.

It would look silly if the Code of ethics banned the activity of conservationists and explorers. Camping in a cave is extremely undesirable and needs to be discouraged, it can only harm the cave but there are times when it is unavoidable.

Camping was avoided to some extent in the huge cave systems of Mammoth and Flint Ridge in the United States of America. Instead, to gain access, a large number of

entrances were blasted open and many shafts sunk. Which evil do you prefer?

The mention of explosives and caves in the one sentence often leads to a heated discussion. Many people who are angry about explosives go caving in blasted caves. Blasting needs to be discouraged as much as possible to hopefully eliminate the irresponsible types who see "bang" as a toy. Code 3.10 states that "explosives should not be used... unless absolutely necessary, and then only with permission... and only after an assessment of the environmental impact." This is to stress that the cave is most important and the cavers motives least important but there are time when blasting is unavoidable.

Examples of unavoidable blasting would include the use of explosives during a rescue and seismic studies such as that currently being conducted at Jenolan in N.S.W. to obtain an underground geologic profile. The hammer did not work.

A code of ethics needs to contain guidelines that are realistic and relevant rather than containing mandatory statements. The good work being done by cavers should not be seen as being in conflict with the ASF Code of Ethics. Otherwise cavers are likely to say "Stuff it" and throw it away.

**Carol Layton**

Senior ASF Councilor Sydney University Speleological Society.

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## CAVES, CAMPING AND CSS

I am writing to express disquiet about an item in the last issue of Australian Caver (Issue No 131, 1992) received by me on 4th August 1992. It concerns the publication of an anonymous article, "What's in a Code of Ethics?" (page 3). This article is attributed to the Canberra Speleological Society, but the continuous use of the personal pronoun throughout the article makes it clear that it consists of the opinions of just one person. It is a pity the author lacks the courage to sign his or her own name.

Whether the person is really speaking for all of CSS is hard to determine, but it would appear, from evidence before me, that he or she is not. For example, there is an entry in the Victorian Speleological Association log book, by long time CSS member Andy Spate which reads "Cliff Ollier and Andy Spate did Dalley's, Dicksons A and B, Honeycombe (sic), Baby Berger, Mabel, Slocombes, Cloggs and Wilson Caves in a day and a half". Clearly this series of widely dispersed caves, covering three distinct karst areas in Victoria, was visited in a rush. It is hard to see how they could have been explored in other than a slapdash and ethically unacceptable fashion. But explored they were and Andy is to be praised for his enthusiasm. Without such members of the caving fraternity (or sorority) there would be very little indeed known about Australia's rare and sensitive karst resource. Andy could be chastised

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

by some for having an excessive impact on the caves he visited in such a tearing hurry, but I am sure he considered that his need to visit those caves overruled such scruples.

It would also appear that the author of this anonymous piece has missed out in the scramble for the high moral ground so eagerly sought in paragraph 2 of the article by stating untruths and half-truths. It is claimed that, since the 1950s, Mammoth Cave system in Kentucky, USA, has been explored thoroughly without the need for camping in the cave. The unstated fact here is that, with 21 entrances to the system (only three of which are natural all the rest were dug or blasted), there is no part of the cave more than four or five hours from an entrance. In any case the claim is false. Camping occurred in the cave as late as 1985 (Fischesser, 1985).

Other errors creep in when he or she speaks of an area they are clearly unfamiliar with - the use of explosives in caves. Except in commercial quarrying operations, digging with or without the use of explosives does not open caves, it merely enlarges existing entrances to allow speleologists to study another piece of the karst jigsaw. Without this accumulated knowledge, vast areas of karst could be degraded or obliterated by public or private authorities who are simply unaware of what lies below the surface. The nature of modern explosives, of which he/she is clearly unaware, is

such that exhaust gases are benign (Ackroyd, 1992) and "the mechanised effects of actual primary damage" are nothing more than was intended, ie the splitting off of shards of rock to allow the cave to be studied. I personally have some professional experience in blasting and have been able to split rocks inside a 19th century wooden house in an inner suburb of Melbourne without so much as a rattled window. The view held by many uninformed people such as our anonymous author, that explosives cause massive damage, is founded on watching too many B grade Hollywood movies and not watching a competent shot firer at work. My suggestion is that the author get together with another member of CSS, someone with a more gung-ho attitude to caving, such as Andy Spate, thrash out the true views of CSS and to write again, but this time in a real name, not hiding behind the facade of letterhead paper. Who knows, he or she and Andy may get on really well.

Yours sincerely,

**Peter Ackroyd**

### References

ACKROYD, Peter (1992) A bit more information about blasting that your conservation officer should know. Australian Caver 130:8,13-14.

FISCHESSER, Mike (1985) Long range underground exploration system successful in Mammoth Cave traverse. NSS News 43(8):266-270.

## ASF Commission on Bibliography Australian Speleo Abstracts

The Convenor of the Commission on Bibliography and editor of Australian speleo Abstracts, Greg Middleton, intends to resume regular production of the abstracts but will not be able to do so without reliable nationwide support - particularly in view of his present domicile in Mauritius. A widespread and fairly dedicated group of people are required who can read(!), understand and dramatically condense articles, papers, even books on Australian caves. The amount of work involved particularly in catching up on the 1980s is considerable but given, say, one person per club and reasonable deadlines it should not be impossible.

Anyone can be an abstracter but it will help if:

- 1 You are interested in caves and in reading/writing about them.
- 2 You own, or have access to a complete collection of whatever newsletter(s) or journals you intend to cover.
- 3 You own, or have access to, a Macintosh computer or if negotiations are successful any IBM-compatible computer using 3.5" floppy disks. (Or, failing either of those a typewriter or - just to show what a flexible operation this is - a pen!)
- 4 You are prepared to work to a deadline: failure to do this will let the whole team down.

The plan is, in about the next twelve months to try to produce two issues covering the 1980s. To keep each to a reasonable size it will be necessary to be more selective than ASA has tended to be in the past and to keep abstracts as brief as possible. To get an idea of what is involved have a look at a previous issue of ASA, of which there have been ten, covering the 1970s.

Ideally there would be an abstracter for each club but in some cases one for a state or territory would do, to cover club newsletters, journals, occasional papers, special publications and whatever interesting items from newspapers and magazines people might pick up. In addition it would be good to have one person with access to the relevant journals covering each of the specialist fields such as biology, geology, geomorphology, archaeology.

If you are interested in contributing to this work please write to Greg Middleton who will provide more details of what is required and how it should be prepared. Please indicate what clubs(s), regions or subject area you are prepared to cover. Remember in the first instance the 1980s are to be covered.

**Greg's address is P.O. Box 1060, Port Louis Centre, Mauritius**

# CAVING IN THAILAND

Ken Boland

These reflections come after several trips by Australian cavers into Thailand. More detailed reports may be found in the bibliography at the end of this article.

The people of Thailand are colourful and rich in culture though often poor in possessions. Even in Bangkok the many food vendors on the streets rely on small oil or acetylene lamps to tend their cooking over little fires of coke produced from wood cut and backpacked in bundles from the dwindling forests.

Villages tend to have diesel utilities for transport rather than sedan cars. Small motor bikes, generally no larger than 110cc are the normal form of personal transport, though having often seen two or three people riding on one bike, perhaps "personal" is not quite accurate. Thais are extremely inventive and on one occasion I saw an extension ladder carried by bike vertically and on another occasion, five people who weren't trying to be clever.

Thais appear to be free of inhibitions about death or injury by accident. Unlike Australians, insurance and workers' compensation are not the concerns that we make them, and one is still quite free to take one's life in one's own hands. The seat belt industry may not be flourishing, but tiny three-wheel "Tuc-Tuc's" carrying several people at once in dense city traffic certainly are. On one occasion I watched an electricity supply man walking on bare 400 volt overhead wires, protected by his boots! Another worker, knocked off a pole crossarm because a bus caught the wire he was raising, was hoisted unconscious into the first Tuc-Tuc and dispatched to hospital. Care is immediate and practical.

Life is to be lived and enjoyed, so women building a road sing together as they carry rocks in a dancing line, and the very poor children who live in hovels on the railway easement kick footballs to each other over the express train to Chang Mai.

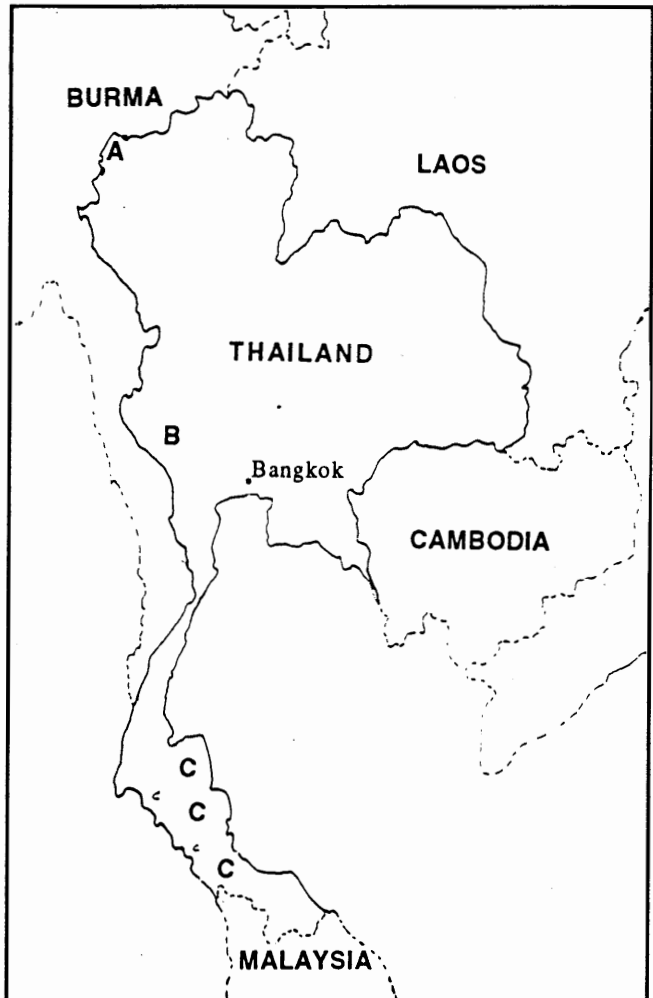
Caves south of Bangkok tend to be smaller. Many have become monasteries or shrines, or are adjacent to these. Some are in Tower Karst. While quite spectacular things have been done to many of these caves, lighting, tiling the floors, placing many statues, the value of the cave itself does not seem to be relevant and any remaining natural beauty is rather accidental.

North and to the west of Chang Mai, it is very different. Smaller caves, which are usually dry, are not regularly inhabited. Many have been used by earlier cultures to hold coffins made from hollowed logs, usually teak, up to eight or nine meters long.

The area is changing rapidly, however many villages have only a dubious 4WD road going to them, and some are reached by foot track. Houses are usually of bamboo and leaf thatching, with split bamboo floors. Electricity is just being introduced and an education program tries to discourage the shooting of birds perched near insulators.

Eating Thai style has very little to do with what is eaten, which is simply what is available, but plenty to do with the style in which one eats. Sitting on the ground, circling a cluster of vessels of prepared foods, one takes a little at a time, unlike the western buffet where one loads one's plate and devours the lot. Moreover one sits, or squats, with feet facing away from the food, since the feet are considered less honourable. One never ever steps across the food, which is a little difficult in confined spaces. The food itself includes lots of rice, vegetables of various sorts and a little meat such as chicken, pork or fish. Big meat eaters will certainly feel different. Fruits are abundant, in quantity if not in variety, and are first class.

Bread is rare, though our guide, an ex Australian, made seven super homemade loaves in a 44 gallon, earth insulated wood oven. If one normally prefers one's water to be filtered through a grapevine, simply forget it. The local red at



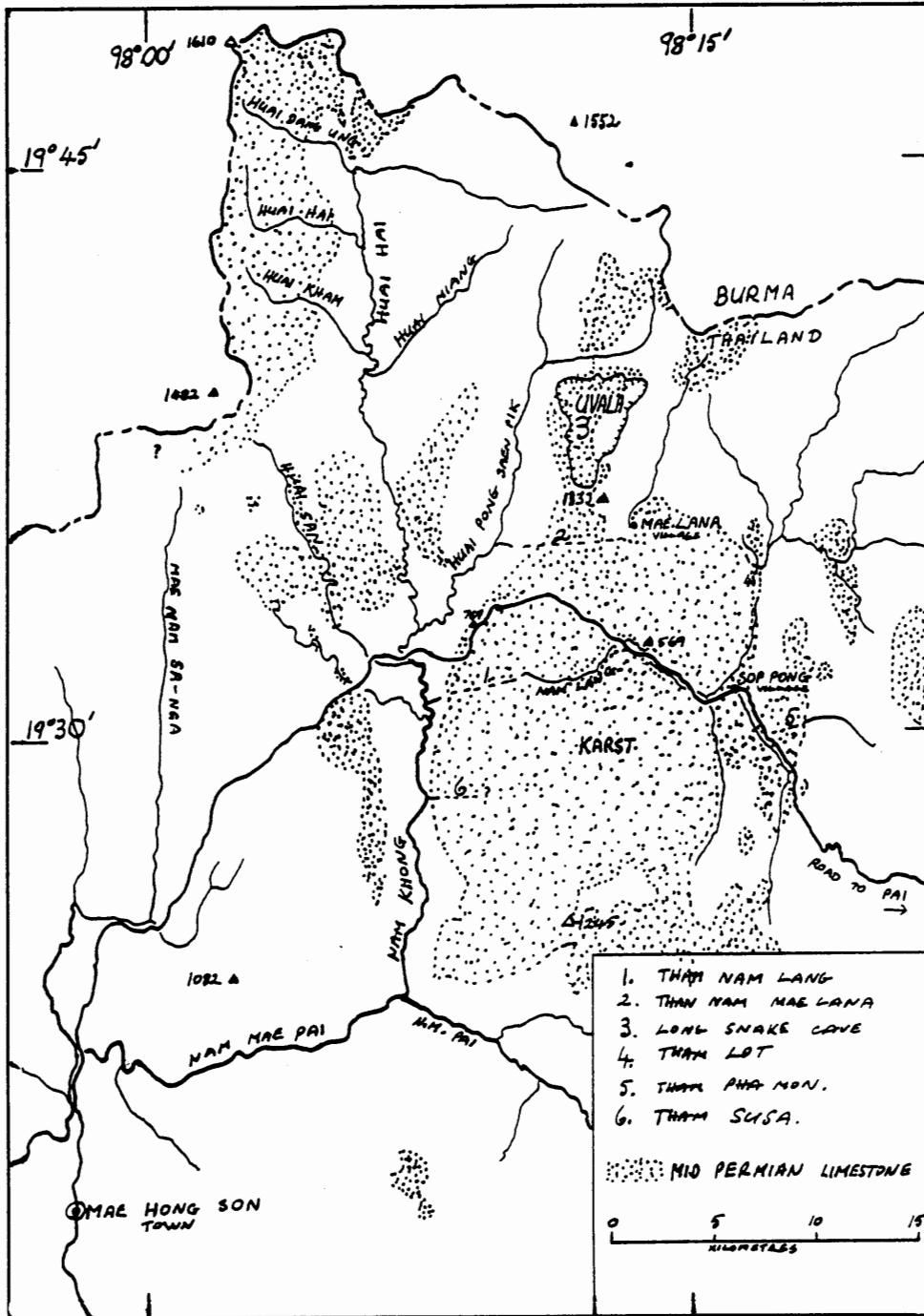
**Figure One. Map of Thailand showing the major areas visited.**

**A:** Near Mae Hong Son. This area has been visited regularly since 1983.

**B:** One visit by boat to North West limit of Srinagarind Dam.

**C:** Many small caves visited on various trips. Most are in the care of the monks who frequently make shrines or homes in these caves.

# CAVING IN THAILAND



cars don't exist.

Toilets are seatless, sexless, paperless and private. You squat. Lots of water, usually in a giant piece of pottery with associated scoop, ensures a very pleasant finish. Respect is shown in many ways, for example it is normal to leave one's footwear outside the entrance, and a lot of effort goes into cleanliness.

While local knowledge is invaluable, it may be modified by a desire to please. Hours spent climbing to "Shining Diamonds", reported to be the most beautiful cave in the world, yielded a survey of a modest chamber so full of carbon dioxide that only the surveyors stayed more than five minutes. On another trip, a longtail boat took a group to a stream cave that was just a stream. No Cave.

Practical ingenuity is supreme. Premier caplamps are produced locally, and long muzzle loading guns, used on birds, are abundant and noisy. One of the tribespeople inspected my jumars, then showed me how they might be adapted to climb the vines up to the wild beehives. In one town, someone upgraded the street lighting to fluorescent tubes, by tacking the two sockets, and the ballast, straight on to the power poles.

Sadly, while the hill people have respect for one another, and for

foreigners, there is little care for things from other eras, and so the great teak coffins are being broken up to smoke out the wild bees. Iron jewellery, bangles and ankle pieces could be protected but there is simply no interest.

## Above Ground

In the area west of Chang Mai we usually camped in the jungle while caving. Most of the jungle is easy to walk through, and very little of the jungle floor escapes being burned each year. The hill tribe people love lighting fires, and it sometimes preceeds tree felling and planting. At night some of us slept in "hostel" sheets, like a pillow case, though about 2m long. Mosquito nets are essential, I used a cone shaped one, which covered head and shoulders. Clothing is best disposed of at the end of a trip. Long

A\$2.50 is terrible, and an ordinary imported bottle, if available is A\$20 - \$30. A glass of "Hardy's" white cost A\$5, and none was available beyond Chang Mai. However the local beer is excellent, usually available in remote villages, sometimes even iced. Most of us enjoyed the local rice whiskey which is low-alcohol and mixes very well with fruits and ice.

Language is quite a problem, and a local interpreter and guide is a must. It opens many doors, particularly with border police and army personel as well as giving access to local knowledge from tribespeople. The transport we used was generally a utility. You can have up to fifteen on the back. It's cheap, there is a real risk of injury, and on steep curves you can lean out to stop it rolling over. Ordinary



# CAVING IN THAILAND

trousers and long sleeved shirts are essential, both out of respect for local custom, and to keep off the sun. A visit to "Vinnies Boutique" or other second hand shop is a good idea before going. It is possible to feel cold, either at night or in a wet cave. I shivered a little during the building of scaffolding in Susa's Cave. One Chlorofibre singlet of the type, such as made by "Holepoof", is just right.

Medically the first concern is one's feet. It is still unsure whether the rather painful and incapacitating condition where by one's feet get eaten away is caused by the aggressive water in the river caves, or by fine sands or a combination of both. However, building on earlier experience, those who kept sand out of their footwear, mostly boot type joggers plus socks and those who also ensured that each evening the feet were thoroughly dried for the night, experienced no problems. Some of us had badly inflamed eyes after four days in the spray of Susa's waterfall. We assume an infection was in the water. "Albalon" drops cured the problem, however it is worth noting that there was no similar problem in any river cave.

Skin infections are normal, particularly if handling bamboo. "Betadine" is recommended. Skin in the groin area may become red and sensitive if much swimming is involved. "Calamine" lotion relieves the itch.

One must keep drinking lots of water, as dehydration in the tropics can cause quite unexpected problems. (See "Caves of N.W. Thailand"). All water must be boiled, for even in the remotest areas, there is still a village and animals somewhere upstream. I did take "Puritabs", but never used them.

Finally, on the medical side, it is wise to have something for the "Super loose bowel day", a burn cream is a most wise addition, "Tiger Balm" is great for muscles and is readily available in Thailand, and a sunscreen is hardly needed if one is suitably dressed, for the constant haze and smoke from forest burning seems to prevent U.V. doing its work.

Costwise, apart from getting to Bangkok, caving in Thailand is cheaper than at Buchan, Victoria. Internal airfares, apparently based on distance can be very cheap: an A\$18 flight from Chang Mai to Mae Hon Song taking twenty minutes, saves a day's, bus trip.

## Caving.

Most of the river or stream caves are not through caves, at least not yet. Caving is fairly straightforward, however gravels can give way to deep shoe-snatching mud, rockpiles can be high and carbon dioxide does occur. It is wise to use floatation in long deep streams. This has taken many forms, but my own, consisting of a two litre wine cask bladder placed in my shorts below the belt has the advantage of not being a hinderance when it has to be carried.

Clothing inside the cave is shorts, T-shirt and cloth boots with socks. Carbide has been tried for lighting but the local product which is readily available, also produces lots of blockages. On our last trip we all went electric, using mainly alkaline (Energisers), which are not available in Thailand. A "D-cell" alkaline has a capacity of 15amp hours, if used gently. One needs to carry two or three sets of batteries and to keep swapping them at say 30 minute intervals, to realise this capacity. My own set consisted of two "D-cells" in a cheap holder on the back of my helmet, with a prefocus globe in a normal miner's caplight on the front. Protecting the batteries from the elements is quite unnecessary as they are sealed cells anyway.

My second light source was an ever faithful "AA" Minimag on a cord, and fitted with an elastic headband.

For photography I settled on a water proof container, one flash, and an F1.4 lens. It is best to keep things simple for the times when one is hot, sticky, and short on brainpower, so I scrapped a second flash, slave and tripod on my second trip.

In surveying, where streams were deep, between great mud banks, we found ordinary tissues useful for station markers. They stick so well. Temperature tiredness and tensions "if we don't get back before dark, a tiger could get us" all make surveying difficult and one can't just go back and check it later.

My last thought is on enthusiasm and commitment: When one is hot, sticky, tired, low on energy, and it is getting late then the task in hand doesn't seem to matter very much after all. After spending four days scaling Susa's waterfall, one team member soon decided the river passage above the fall was an "endless sewer" and the rest of us gave in. It just didn't seem to matter what was around the next corner. Six months later, back in Australia, we'd be kicking ourselves if we hadn't gone back days later to a most interesting and rather unique find.....

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# LEADERSHIP TRAINING: THE QUIET REVOLUTION

Mike Lake and Alan Jevons

Outdoor activity groups throughout Australia are undergoing a quiet revolution. A revolution bringing co-operation, discussion, networking and a wider understanding of each other's needs and desires.

This revolution began in Tasmania in early 1991, when the Bush & Mountain Leadership Training Board (BMLTB) through the Department of Sport and Recreation, Tas, developed an initiative to broaden the concept of Leader Training in other recreations. The increase in public use of the fairly rugged Tasmanian wilderness areas raised the issue of the "quality and safety of the experience" that the public were experiencing.

The model used is similar to that on which most industry training is now based, where people are assessed to a standard and said to have attained a "competency" in that standard. Core competencies are those that are recognised across all industries, in our case recreations, and also in most cases across Australia. Some recreation core competencies could be First Aid, Navigation, First Call Emergency Response Procedures, Leadership, Crisis Management and Risk Management. Stuart Nicholas, Tasmanian Caverneering Club, and his team have spent some twelve months developing "Competency Standards for Caving" with the BMLTB.

The Tas. Dept. of Sport and Rec. then realised that whilst the approach could work for leaders of recreation activities in Tasmania and the transfer and recognition of completed competencies between those recreations in Tasmania. How would they be able to recognise another person's skills from outside their state or how would a leader in their state be recognised for their skills outside of Tasmania without having to "do another First Aid Course!!" Further, the Dept. needs to know if any other state was concerned with the "quality and safety of the experience".

They approached the federal Dep't of Arts, Sport, Environment and Tourism, (DASET) with the view to finding out if any other state was approaching this issue of core competencies in outdoor recreation. DASET stated that, to its knowledge, no one was, so they sought funding from the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS)\* to visit each state capital and present the concept.

In early 1992 Maira Perri, Manager Tas. Sport and Rec., and Stuart Lennox, a Tas. Rec. contractor, proceeded to visit each state via each state's Dept. of Sport and Rec., to meet with selected groups of recreation education groups. Caving was one of these select groups and each state was represented at its meeting. Tas. Dept. of Sport and Rec. presented a scenario to which they received, in some states, a stormy reaction. However, they raised and saw enough interest to seek further funding to hold a national symposium at Camp Banksia, Port Sorell, Northern Tasmania in mid July.

This symposium, the National Outdoor Recreation Leadership Training Symposium (NORLT), saw 77 people attend representing: Caving, Canoeing, Rock Climbing, Bushwalking, Rafting, Ski Touring, Outdoor Education Schools, TAFE, Commercial Operators, Scout Assoc., Girl Guide Assoc., NPWS, Camping Assoc., to name the majority. The ASF and its constituent members were represented by: Mike Lake, NSW, Alan Jevons, S.A., Rauleigh Webb, W.A., Peter Ackroyd, Vic., Stuart Nicholas, Tas., Elery Hamilton-Smith, Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association.

The goal of the symposium was "To facilitate co-operative consultation between representatives of each State and Territory and to explore the development of a National Leadership Training Strategy".

The three days were spent splitting into groups doing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Needs analysis and then reporting back to the "National Floor". The symposium concluded with three main results at National, State and Recreation levels.

The State outcomes decided to set up a forum of all outdoor users, expanding from those present at the conference, to examine how, within a state, we could help each other through networks, common interest groups, better communication, further discuss leadership training and to improve the quality of access to outdoor recreation and outdoor education.

The National outcome goes one step further to establish a national network which would have a database, a newsletter and a research register to allow access to recreation research data. The timetable was set for another national conference in S.A. in 1993 and in the meantime, Tasmania would be funded by SCORS to allow the development of national outdoor issues until that conference.

This all sounds like a "bureaucracy in development". It was a concern of the group that another level of management was NOT put in over and above individual recreations, BUT rather a linked network of contacts was facilitated.

This also sounds like pie in the sky stuff but people put down their names to co-ordinate state forums, venues were suggested and timetables set and funding options discussed at length. Recreation disciplines, as they became known, then presented their national directions.

The caving fraternity was generally held to be one of the most organised groups within Australia. The fact that we already have a national organisation which has been in place since 1956, with international links, was admired by other disciplines.

The caving presentation caused a rumble throughout the delegates as we presented an important message. We put to

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them that the cave environment is unique and deserves special treatment. Where all other disciplines wished to maximise access to the outdoor environment, the caver's vision statement was:

Cavers support the concept of state wide forums and will encourage and participate in them. The following points must be emphasised:

- 1 Australian Caves are very scarce and a special resource and are totally non-renewable. Therefore we do not wish to actively promote caving. However, we do encourage anyone who wishes to go caving to participate.
- 2 Cavers believe that the issue of core competencies should be investigated at the respective state forums.

Cries of "elitists" and "You're cutting yourselves off" erupted from the meeting. However, we stood our ground and went through the statement line by line, demonstrating that cavers had made a commitment to participate in all state forums and had made a commitment to take caving anyone who may wish to.

The commercial operator then stood up and agreed with our position and the end result was the unanimous endorsement by the delegates of the caver's position. This would represent the first time that a wide cross-section of the outdoor recreation "industry" in Australia had the opportunity to hear our side and has recognised that caves are a special landform and that they deserve special consideration.

To this end, the symposium achieved its goal "to facilitate co-operative consultation" as recreation disciplines are now talking within each other and to each other and have gained an appreciation of each other. Further, the goal of exploring the development of a National Leadership Training Strategy was also achieved as the representatives returned to their states to conduct broader represented state forums to discuss the issue.

That concluded a positive and enlightening three days but whilst the six representatives had been brought together without cost to the ASF, the opportunity was taken to stay the extra day and discuss the January ASF Council resolution "that a working party chaired by Lloyd Robinson should proceed with the development of a proposal for a National Caver Accreditation Scheme".

So Saturday saw the five state caving representatives, Mike Lake, Peter Ackroyd, Alan Jevons, Rauleigh Webb and Stuart Nicholas pushing into the fourth day of "another discussion"! We were joined in the discussion by Ian Lewis, National Director of the Cave Divers Association of Australia who had flown down for the day as CDAA are interested in adopting sections of a scheme into the cave diver's training programme.

We reviewed the past three days and then asked ourselves

"Does the ASF need a Caver Accreditation Scheme?" The answer was a resounding "NO", however, there was a resounding "YES" to the question, "Does the ASF need a Caving Leadership Scheme?" The major difference is that to burden every caving club with the need to accredit every caver in their club is, to say the least, unworkable. However, a scheme that emulated what was already in clubs, with clubs having various membership levels and some clubs having designated leaders, was seen as the most progressive step for the ASF.

A considerable amount of ground was covered in this intensive discussion which worked through the day to find what common ground existed between the states. It was found that considerable common ground did exist and each state's views on the ideal ASF scheme can be summarised as follows:

1. A scheme where each individual caver has to have a rating is not feasible. The working party proposed instead a leadership scheme.
2. For individual club training schemes to be recognised and seen as legitimate, a national ASF scheme should exist.
3. The ability for clubs to be able to "better judge" a visiting caving group or a caver who moves interstate in transferring his or her skills would be enhanced by the maintenance of standards to a national standard.
4. That a scheme would need to cater for regional specific knowledge to be incorporated.
5. The basis of any scheme must rest ultimately on the individual caving clubs who will provide the training and assessment personnel.
6. That the ASF should investigate without further delay the area of assessing and accrediting professional providers (i.e., Commercial Operators, TAFE, Outdoor Education Schools).

The mechanics of caving schemes currently operating being drafted in a number of states were discussed by the task group and again it was encouraging to note that, the common ground that existed, meant these schemes were on a converging path and could be modelled into a National Scheme.

*\*SCORS Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport.*

*This committee comprises a secretary and secretariat based in Canberra under the Minister for Art, Sport, Environment and Tourism, with the rest of the members being the Director-Generals of the Department of Sport and Recreation in each State and Territory. Funding comes from States, according to the size of each state (e.g., in 91/92 Victoria contributed \$20,000, Tasmania \$5000), and the Commonwealth. The total budget for 1991/92 was in the order of \$140,000. Tasmania allocated around 50% of this to organise the symposium.*

## A QUESTION OF ACCESS AND THE DUTY OF CARE

David Wuttke\*

At a conference held in Tasmania earlier this year, several issues related to outdoor recreation were discussed by a broad cross section of leaders and training bodies. One issue related to the liability attached to owners or occupiers of land containing attractions for recreational use. We live in a society where it is sadly becoming increasingly common for individuals to sue others for damages in circumstances which may seem bizarre.

There are two fundamental approaches which land owners or occupiers (like National Parks Managers) can take. One involves withdrawal of the attraction from public use altogether and the other, which is more acceptable, is to manage the hazards and risks which are either inherent to the land or the activity to be undertaken.

There is no doubt that in this day and age the general public expects greater access to parks and reserves which are under the care and control of state and local government bodies. An increase in leisure time and greater awareness of the need for quality recreational involvement has resulted in a higher expectation of competency from organisations offering leadership or training in areas of outdoor recreation. That expectation includes, quite reasonably, that the activity will be undertaken safely and that the participants will be protected from hidden dangers associated with the activity. This puts a heavy responsibility on training bodies, as they now share in the land occupier's liability.

If a person entering the land decides to bring an action against an occupier (be it on a reserve or private land) because that person sustains an injury or loss, the organisation which is responsible for conducting activities such as rock climbing, orienteering or cave exploration could be "joined" in the claim. If either party could have reasonably foreseen that an injury or a loss could have occurred and did nothing to reduce the possibility, either party may be found by the Court to be negligent. It is for this reason that there is a need for training and leadership bodies to work closely with land managers and occupiers to ensure that the interests of all parties are protected.

In South Australia, there is a concerned effort being made to involve organisations such as the Australian Speleological Federation and other leadership and representative groups in access to, and the management of, recreational facilities with parks and reserves.

It is recognised that such groups have much to offer land managers when considering such issues as impact on the facility and up to date information of a technical nature about the state or condition of the facility. Also, no one understands the hazards and dangers of a natural area like the users and it is this aspect which particularly interests Risk Managers. The leadership organisation has the responsibility to ensure that the inherent dangers of the activity to be conducted are reduced as far as practicable. The owner or occupier of land has a common law

responsibility to all who enter on to the land. Governments share this responsibility in the same way that a private land owner does.

This responsibility or duty of care is particularly relevant if the occupier attracts people onto the land. The occupier must do all that is reasonable and practical to ensure that the dangers inherent in the area are removed or diminished. If this cannot be achieved, the public must be warned about the dangers in a manner which they can understand.

If the activity to be undertaken is hazardous, the organisers of the activity must take all reasonable care to explain the hazards and reduce them where possible.

If, for example, a caving organisation is conducting an activity in a cave within a Park or a Reserve and an accident occurs and the organisation's negligence can be proved by the Courts, the Park managers may be joined in the action because they should have ensured that the caving organisation had in place adequate and safe management techniques. This is one of the reasons why access has been a difficulty in the past.

South Australian Treasury and National Parks and Wildlife Service in particular are keen to hold discussions with all outdoor recreation groups to address these issues. It is proposed to jointly establish a risk management strategy which is practical, achievable and satisfies the requirements of all parties. This approach requires open and frank discussions between the parties and the application of lateral thinking to overcome traditional difficulties.

It is envisaged that this approach will result in a much closer relationship between land managers and owners and user groups to improve communication about access to, and conservation of, a finite resource for which we all share a responsibility. Remember, this is not something which we in government can achieve without your assistance.

*\*David Wuttke is the Insurance Service Officer within the South Australian Treasury and is primarily responsible for the introduction of the management of risk within the State public sector. The South Australian Government self insures against most losses, including public liability. David, in conjunction with staff from Government departments, is attempting to make the assets of the Government, which includes National Parks and Reserves and Crown Land, safer for people to use. The National Parks and Wildlife Service in South Australia is committed to a policy of safe access to natural attractions within the limitations of conservation considerations.*

*National Parks staff and David believe that consultation with people who use the Parks will result in a better management approach for all concerned. David delivered a paper on Risk Management at the National Outdoor Leadership Training Symposium held at Camp Banksia, Tasmania in July this year.*



# Caves in Magazines, Caves on Television: Mass Publicity and the Growth of Caving

John Ganter

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adapted from an article in the National Speleological Society News, May 1992.

*There is a thing my father and his colleagues do which has always baffled me: whenever they find a good place to fish they return as soon as can be with a truckload of friends, take a hundred pictures, concoct descriptions intended to render it as alluring as possible, tell exactly how to fish it, and sell this veritable tourist brochure to the biggest publication they can find. Looking at the evidence we can only conclude that they seek the prompt annihilation of their fishing grounds.*

- Gus Hale-Orviston in *The River Why*, by David James Duncan, 1983.

I recognized the location at once. In the background there was tropical green and jet black. Jagged karren paralled fissures in white limestone, sloped towards the edge. The camera zoomed in close on the handsome man in the rawhide jacket. He spoke with animation and dramatic expressions to the camera. His hands moved in quick gestures. The man might have been hosting a game show. He might have been hyping cars, or breakfast cereal, or deodorant. But I realized that this was a carnival sideshow, and the attraction was Sotano de las Golondrinas.

What does the mass media do to caves and caving? How are cavers to deal with those that want to use caves as sets for entertainment? How should we respond to those among us that exploit wild caves to make a quick buck. A dramatic increase in attention to caving, both sought and unwelcome, has motivated me to consider these issues. Caves are appearing on television and in magazines with unprecedented frequency. I will consider the costs and benefits to caves, their owners, the public and the NSS, of both publicity and growth in the number of cavers. Is a bigger NSS necessarily a better NSS? How softly do even the most conscientious cavers tread? It is time that cavers have a very frank discussion of what this means for us and much more importantly, the fragile places in the earth where we are occasional guests.

## Descriptions, Caver Accounts, Cave Stories and Media Events

To begin, let's make a distinction between four types of reporting on caves and caving. The description is removed, impersonal and objective - the author writes about the cave only. The intent is scientific: the author is practicing speleology.

Caver accounts tell about caves, but also caving. Often they are written in the first person, and may contain anecdotes, humour, philosophical asides, personal reflections, etc. The audience is assumed to be other cavers, and the author is telling the story because of some intrinsic motivation: pride of accomplishment, desire to teach, ego, peer acceptance etc. Some classics have moved me deeply, and affected years of my subsequent caving. I have learned an enormous amount about caves, techniques, motivation, expeditions, and the

nature of cavers from these readings. I have had the thrill of meeting a respected caver acquaintance after a long separation and having them, without the slightest preamble, start in: "So you went downstream for a couple hundred meters, you downclimbed the pit and the passage sumped... was there air? how about across the top of the pit?" No need to specify the subject; it is obvious that your work has been read. Your volunteer time was well-spent, because a peer has read it, evaluated it, and 'been there' in the words and graphics that have come from your mind onto the page. And the discussion is off and running.

The caver account is evaluated by a jury of peers. This is a self-selected audience; they pay dues. Everything is verifiable. Skeptics can talk to your companions and find out if you are, in fact, a buffoon. They can also, in most cases, check what you claim to have found.

The caver account is constrained by group norms. It is expected to be serious if entertaining, and objective if

## About the Author

John Ganter began caving by digging open a tiny cave with a neighbor in 1981. At that time he lived in the humid eastern US, where caves are often wet and active (e.g. Mammoth/Flint Ridge System). He caved in the Virginias and Kentucky, with heavy exposure to cavers from the large eastern cities who commute westward on the weekends. In this region of the country, almost all land is privately owned. Paradoxically, cavers who maintain good landowner relations can disappear up the 'hollers' for whole weekends to do as they please. While extensively visited, caves in the east still routinely yield new passage.

In the 1980s, Ganter caved in other areas of the US, and also made several trips to Mexico, Canada, Puerto Rico, Belize and the Sultanate of Oman.

Presently, he lives in the dry western US, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In these high deserts and mountains, large expanses of land are controlled by the federal government as national parks, national forests, and rangeland. Caves (e.g. Carlsbad Cavern) are predominantly dry and fossil, often with extensive speleothems. The caves are invariably gated, and access limited through bureaucracies.

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dramatic. Cavers are a tough group to write for. The writer typically gets strong feedback: at the next club meeting, the regional conference, the national convention. Caver feedback, I will attest, can be just as brutal as it is gratifying. I have been taken apart around the campfire and it hurts bad. It also keeps me honest.

A third type of writing about caves is the cave story. It is about caves, but it is different. The cave story appears in mass-circulation magazines or newspapers. The cave is thus only another attraction within a money-making enterprise. The audience is not self-selected; they paid their money to read the comics and... hey! ...spelunking! There is generally little feedback to the writer, because they never meet their audience in the way that the writer of a caver account does. They are off spending their income, while the audience may be wondering about the truth of what they have read.

Cave stories sell caving, and I confess that I do not see the benefits of this wholesale advertising. One of the things that appeals to many of us, I think, is that caving is independent and intrinsic. There is so little obvious reason to do it. It is not in fashion. Nobody invented it. There is no packaging. It is not on billboards, doesn't look good, doesn't brighten your teeth or improve your sex life appreciably. For this reason, I cringe when I see stories about caving appear in magazines that seem to exist solely for the advertisements in the back. The message is always "buy yourself an adventure." Watch elephants, pet baboons, tickle penguins. The folks in the office will be so envious when you buy yourself an even more outrageous vacation than theirs... for just \$7,000 per day. Credit cards accepted. Tax and gratuity extra. Will caving become the next fad?

Caves and caving areas could never stand such an onslaught, and they must be protected from exploiters who would put them as yet another stop on the tour. Cavers usually do it right; nobody makes money on our trips--they just spend it. Expeditions come together through innumerable long-distance calls and a special kind of teamwork where everyone gives: skills, time, money, trucks, ropes, stoves, mechanics, medicine, translations, diplomacy. The result is a group with an investment and plans to return. They try to leave the caves and the locals the way they found them. And because the whole endeavor is difficult and challenging, traffic is limited.

One caver that is writing cave stories these days is Michael Ray Taylor. I think Taylor is a good writer and I read his stories with interest. But I am also disturbed by them, mainly their quantity. Why does Mike Taylor write cave stories? Partly because he enjoys it. But there is a larger reason. They pay his rent. Suddenly everything is different, because instead of giving an account for a group of peers, Mike Taylor is making a living.

Since Taylor depends on writing for his income, he can exercise less discretion about placing articles. Some time ago, I opened an issue of Nissan Motor's advertisement for

college students. There was a big article by Mike Taylor: 'Treasures in the Sierra Madre.' [Mike Taylor. Treasures in the Sierra Madre. America: The Student Travel and Adventure Guide (Nissan Motors) Fall 1989, pp. 28-34.]

The first sentence was this: "Susanne O'Sickey trembled at the edge of the pit." Fabulous, I thought, the next time I go to Rio Choy there will be 50 college students driving Nissans and trembling at the edge of the pit. But the article continued through swimming holes and discos with no more mention of caving. Choy was not identified by name and did not appear on the area map. This is commendable discretion. Still I feel that Taylor used the cave for a cheap opening line in what was essentially an extended advertisement for an 'adventure tour' run by a Texas caver.

Taylor's Sports Illustrated article on Great Ex Cave [Mike Taylor. Black Walls, Cold Fear--A Journey into the Bizarre Underworld of Caving. Sports Illustrated 2 May 1988] was well-rounded in that it informed rather than simply entertained. Taylor has explained how he negotiates with editors to reduce hype and emphasize reality, [Mike Taylor. Caving Publicity (letter). NSS News April 1989, p. 84.] but his most recent article on Lechuguilla has drawn criticism for distortion and inaccuracies. [Donald G. Davis. On Media: Observations of a Master Caver. Rocky Mountain Caving Summer 1991, p. 11-12.] Where cave stories are concerned, the bottom line is the bottom line; the editor has a business to run and the writer a living to make. If there is doubt, whatever grabs the reader wins. Move those mags, sell those ads.

Writers of cave stories can't work alone; they need helpers. Why do cavers participate? For money, and exposure, and fame. It can be gratifying to appear before an audience larger than the caving community. Mom & Dad can be proud of you.

The media event can spawn a wide range of reporting, usually focused on a single cave. Something happens, usually an accident, that results in national or regional 'news.' A relatively unplanned and uncontrolled information release occurs, which is often presented in a dramatic manner.

Two of these four broad classes (cave stories and media events) result in caving publicity whose effects can be subtle and wide ranging. We'll look closer at publicity. But first, let's consider television, a special medium whose content and tone can range from objective to sensational.

## Television

A journalist in television, called upon to use the tools and techniques of fantasy, is constantly aware of having to defend the small 'reality' corner on the vast entertainment stage. But in recent times, as networks fight ever more fiercely for shares of a shrinking audience pie, the reality corner has come under heavy siege. [Daniel Schorr, US National Public Radio, reflecting on his 31 years in

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television [Daniel Schorr. USA Today 14 May 1991.]

The pretty man sitting on the pretty rocks tells us that his name is John Schneider, and that he is the host of a program called the World's Greatest Stunts. In this episode, a stuntman will jump into "the biggest cavern on the face of the planet."

I am watching a video tape of the Golondrinas sideshow with a group of cavers at a regional meeting. Most of us have already heard about this tape, and are watching intently as a familiar place appears on the magic screen. This is deepest, darkest Mexico, we are informed in somber tones. There are "no real roads," and "few outsiders have travelled these treacherous trails." Nonetheless, for our entertainment and to sell advertising for breath mints, "some very professional people" have brought in "2 tons of equipment" and been here 3 days.

Golondrinas has been sold for a set by someone that, Schneider explains breathlessly, is a "world-renowned cave expert." Cavers around me begin to howl. "Henry [FOOTNOTE: I have not used his real name] is one of only a handful of experts that understand extreme vertical caving," Schneider continues. Cavers are now rolling on the floor. Henry is seen to crawl up to the edge and toss in a rock.

We quiet down and watch as the helicopter hovers over Golondrinas. What a view! "I don't know how this looks at home, but it is very dangerous....," intones Schneider. The stuntman jumps. He zips down into the hole and his chute opens and it is over. Big deal. It was kind of neat if you ignored the hype. We got to see some great shots of a favorite pit. It's just TV, right??

Right. But I have a few problems with this stunt and I'd like to examine it a little more closely.

My main objection is that bad habit of commercial television. It lies. It lies because it must exaggerate and distort to 'cut through the noise.' There is a constant need for novelty to attract the attention of an increasingly jaded audience. Everything is entertainment; facts fall by the wayside. Where does it stop?

Schneider and his crew had some good ones. A "local Indian," speaking excellent English, told a "legend" about Golondrinas that cavers have somehow missed in 20 years of visits. The depth was consistently given as 427 meters, when it is actually 332 meters at the low side and 376 meters at the high side. [Terry Raines (ed). *Sotano de las Golondrinas*. AMCS Bulletin 2. Austin, Texas: Association for Mexican Cave Studies. 1968. 20 pp.] Then there was all the nonsense about Henry.

An anecdote. Recently some cavers were planning a film about a large cave system that they have explored and surveyed in Puerto Rico. They had been flown in to meet with producers of a reputable 'nature' program, which relies

only partially on advertising and is thus presumably a 'pure' and public-spirited operation. The cavers discussed their plans to show the surroundings, to explain how the cave fit into local culture, the geology, where water flowed, etc. A producer interrupted: Wait. You guys don't seem to understand. We are not here to educate. We are not here to inform. We are here to entertain. Shortly thereafter the cavers walked away. They are now hoping to fund the film themselves and distribute it through public television.

Caving is part of exploration, which has always been about telling the truth. The proceeds of exploration, whether the North Pole or a deep cave, have invited fraud. Caves especially are shrouded in folklore, myth, legend and plain baloney. One of the greatest satisfactions of caving is being able to look at such mysterious places through eyes disciplined by 'science': a particular cave is so many meters long, so many meters deep, no trolls were sighted, and it does not come out in the next state. This is not to say that caves are not wonderful, aesthetic places--only that cavers can still experience them as such while also viewing them rationally. If I must, I would prefer to tell the viewing public something very simple about caves. The truth. Obviously I have no career in commercial media.

But the Golondrinas monologue is just TV patter; the big lie is the stunt itself and all that it suggests. Here are the messages: (a) this is "extremely dangerous." There is great potential for death, injury and damage; (b) We're doing it anyway; (c) We're getting away with it.

I reply:

(a) It is not extremely dangerous. It is a magic trick, albeit one with some hazards. Like all good magicians, you do not show how it is done. You do things off-camera that are not mentioned, like the fact that the stuntman did a practice jump.

(b) You are doing it because you make money doing it. It is also a thrill for those that live for the stage.

(c) You're getting away with it only because most of the hazard is an illusion and the rest is carefully dealt with.

This Golondrinas video is theater, but theater that pretends to be real. I don't think that it should be done in caves. Television says caves are places for silly games... Caves are for danger... Do it for the moment... Entertain the audience...

But cavers, officially and unofficially, say that caves are special, sensitive places to be taken care of, and that caving is an activity of planning, caution and safety. And we generally eschew performance. Wild caves have no bleachers.

Who has accidents in caves? The majority are members of the general public. Cavers routinely go down a thousand

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meters, stay a week, and don't get a scratch. Joe Public goes in 50 meters before burning himself, falling down a pit and then drowning. It's nothing short of amazing. Joe Public is worried about all the wrong things: snakes, massive collapse, and bats up his nose. At the same time he is not worried about all the important things: multiple light sources, head protection, and the hazards of climbing ropes hand over hand.

Where do they learn the wrong things and not learn the right things? One place is the tube. They are uninformed, misinformed, but very entertained.

Consider another program that, in theory, could be different. Rescue 911 is a syndicated television show that re-enacts accidents and disasters. It is hosted by William Shatner, the "Captain Kirk" of Star Trek in another life. Recently, cavers have cooperated in re-creating cave rescues, and it was with some trepidation that I sat down to view the results. The first episode concerned an incident where a caver lost rappel control in Moses Tomb, Alabama. The re-enactment was well-done, entertaining, and not excessively melodramatic. But I was left with a message that "disasters happen." Never mind why. Safety is boring. Concentrate on the drama of the saviors. Don't be safe, be saved.

It seems to me that Rescue 911 would be a great place to demonstrate the tenets of caving. Be prepared. Plan ahead. Practice. Clean your lamp. Leave a note. Carry a garbage bag in your helmet. If in doubt, belay. Tie a knot on the end of the rope. Take care of yourself. Rescue is the last resort. As cavers we train, study, analyze, and read the series American Caving Accidents, because we are interested in everything that happens before dialing 911 [FOOTNOTE: Most parts of the US have adopted an emergency dispatch system invoked by dialing 911 on any telephone. The call origin can be traced within seconds.]

The other episode that I watched concerned a cave diving accident in Florida, and I must say it was quite impressive. NSS member and highly-experienced cave diver Woody Jasper "starred" in the re-enactment. Woody was attending a company picnic one summer day when someone rushed up and announced that some divers were overdue at an adjacent spring. Woody ran to his truck, got his gear on, and saved 2 out of the 3 divers who were unconscious in an airbell. This episode was much more analytical and had a real message. It is a perfect example of directed publicity (discussed below): targeting a specific population (in this case open-water divers) with a very strong message about a hazard (diving in caves without proper training and equipment).

Television is a powerful media, and the results can be good, neutral or bad where caving is concerned. Even in the best cases, I am concerned about how these programs are perceived by cave owners, not to mention their insurance agents. The big problem, of course, is this: If we don't help film, will the producers find someone else and/or kill themselves

trying? What a dilemma...

## The Costs and Benefits of Publicity

Let's examine the costs and benefits of publicity about caves, then do the same for a specific result of publicity: growth in the number of people going into caves, both those that join organized caving and those that do not.

First, publicity. Here I will define publicity as actions that increase awareness of caves, the identities and activities of cavers, and the NSS. In tone, publicity can be vary from objective to sensational. The effects of publicity can be positive, neutral or negative, they can influence small or large numbers of people, and these people may be of particular groups: urban dwellers, rural landowners, etc.

The range of publicity effects that occur is highly dependent on the subject of that publicity. For example, some defend publicity about caves by pointing to the recent success that Bat Conservation International (BCI) has had in changing the public image of bats. The line of thought seems to be this: bats live in caves, publicity has been good for bats, so let's publicize caves and it will be good for them too. This overlooks the simple fact that bats can probably never receive "too much" favorable publicity, and caves certainly can. Interest in bats can be almost infinite with nothing but positive effects, except perhaps if batwatching became such a rage that it began to affect them. This is clearly not the case with caves because they are fragile places that people go to and walk around in with big boots.

Publicity looks different depending on where you stand. Lately, some cavers have been standing more in the glare of quartz iodine television lights than the diffuse glow of acetylene. The microphone moves in, and what do we hear? "Cavers believe..." "The NSS is..." "We think that..." I have come to call this cavercentrism, the implicit belief that the world of caving revolves around cavers. On the contrary. Our little society revolves around the property, desires, responsibilities, fears, and beliefs of others--cave owners and managers. Although public lands are a special case, many of the concerns of their managers are the same as the private landowners that own the vast majority of the caves (around 90% [Janet Thorne. How Many Caves Are There? NSS News August 1987, p. 298.]) in the United States.

It seems to me that a handful of cavers have lost touch with what it means to be a cave owner, or even a rural landowner. Most of us go caving only with the blessing of these generous people. Let's look at caving from their point of view. Here are some examples of what a typical cave owner thinks about caving publicity:

- more of those cavers will be coming around now
- the local kids will want to go in the cave
- the older kids will party and throw trash in the cave



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- the fences, gates and roads will need work even if everyone is careful
- we'll have even more people to worry about in hunting season
- they'll muddy up my water supply
- what about parking, traffic, and bothering the neighbors?
- Why do we live out here? Because we love the peace and quiet.
- what does this do to my property insurance rates?
- what if somebody gets hurt?
- what if I get sued?

This is what I mean by variable effects of publicity. What looks wonderful from one perspective may look quite different from another. It is because of cavercentrism and hubris that in analyzing the costs and benefits of publicity, I will consider them separately for: (1) caves and their owners; (2) the general public; and (3) last of all, cavers and the NSS.

## Costs of Publicity

We begin with cave owners. Let me tell a little story. It was a Tuesday morning on a farm in West Virginia. I was talking to a man that owns 1200 hectares of land, including several caves and a lot of limestone on the ridge flanks. For some time I have been patiently negotiating with this man to recheck his caves and do a little walking of the limestone contact. Today I'm saying all the right things: exploration, mapping, conservation, good behavior, the safety of caving... Wait a minute, says a son listening closely. He goes into the farmhouse for a moment, returns, and hands me the newspaper. And suddenly I am up to date on the national news: there has been an accident in Lechuguilla.

The good things that have and will come out of publicity on this incident (including the victim, thank goodness!) are for naught here--this cave owner has become aware of caving accidents and he has little difficulty in imagining how one could affect his life and livelihood. We turn the conversation to farming, and there it stays for the remainder of my visit. The Lechuguilla rescue definitely falls into the 'media event' category. It went beyond the control of cavers very quickly. I am not criticizing those that subsequently decided to cooperate and try to direct the inevitable publicity in a positive direction. Lechuguilla, a well-protected cave on public lands, may not be affected negatively. But further afield?

There is something that all people that let others go into caves under their control share: optimism. "Sure, go on in..." they say, whether in a Texas drawl or a Massachusetts

accent. "And don't get hurt!," they add with a smile. You have to admire these people in the legal climate of late 20th century USA. But they watch TV and they read the newspaper. Their beliefs and concerns can change.

Here is what publicity can mean for the caves and their owners (Table 1): (1) an increase in interest and visitation from outsiders; (2) an increase in attention by local people; (3) a corresponding increase in the potential for accidents, both above and below ground; (4) resulting concerns of legal liability; (5) possible increases in property insurance rates, or even refusal of coverage.

For the public, publicity can result in some exposure to misinformation, theatrics, etc.

The costs of publicity for cavers are mostly the same problems as for landowners: loss of access due to incidents with inconsiderate cave visitors and more cave rescues. There is one additional problem for caving. It arises from grandstanding and/or 'media scooping' on the part of some cavers. The result can be serious resentment on the part of others. 'Scooping' has long been a problem in organized caving; one person or group does the work, and someone else gets the reward and/or the publicity. Tom Kaye [Tom Kaye. In defense of the Grotto system. D.C. Speleograph (Washington, D.C.) March 1991, pp. 12-13.] recently discussed how an entire grotto has been in decline for a decade because of this situation. A couple of cavers barged into others' projects, wrote them up as their own, and became 'famous' in the grotto. The costs of this behavior came later. Those slighted quietly turned secretive, and the grotto lost the company and talents of their most productive members.

Colorado caver Louise Hose [Letter to author, 28 January 1991] makes the point as follows:

"Acts of publicity may be a violation of trust. I think that hard-working cavers are likely to react in one of two ways: (1) We hoard the knowledge of our caves, no longer willing to share with the 'community of cavers' for fear of the cave being exploited by 'Johnny Come Latelays' who make the fame and fortune and leave 'our' cave in distress, or, (2) We jump on the bandwagon and seek out the publicity first: "After all, I've done more than \_\_\_\_ and he's getting all the publicity!" Suddenly, the nobility of protecting the caves can be rationalized away.

I think a point that needs to be made is that any person exploiting a cave should be a person with a considerable investment in that cave. It may be through ownership, it may be through exploration and documentation."

As Louise points out, publicity can raise issues of credit and responsibility that may be lying dormant in the caving community. Hell hath no fury like a caver scooped. As an explorer, it seems to me that if someone gets recognition alongside Golondrinas, it should be T.R. Evans, whose boot was the first to touch bottom. He and his companions

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POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF PUBLICITY			POTENTIAL COSTS OF PUBLICITY		
Caves & Owners	The Public	Cavers & the NSS	Caves & Owners	The Public	Cavers & the NSS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors may be more considerate</li> <li>visitors may better understand risks and seek training, be discouraged from trying</li> <li>change in behaviors affecting caves, e.g. dumping</li> <li>in rare cases, landowners may desire publicity even for wild caves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exposure to proper techniques and values</li> <li>greater knowledge of the natural world</li> <li>awareness of the NSS and resources available</li> <li>entertainment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support for agenda</li> <li>opportunities to assist</li> <li>positive image of cavers as competent and concerned</li> <li>better image as explorers/researchers as opposed to pure adventurers</li> <li>possibility of more sponsorship for expeditions, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase in interest, visitation by outsiders accompanied by increased damage and accident potential</li> <li>increase in interest, visitation by locals</li> <li>insurance and liability problems</li> <li>increased anxiety, warranted or not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>misinformation, exaggeration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>grandstanding, and resulting resentment, distrust of fellow cavers</li> <li>misinformed public</li> <li>increase in accident and rescue potential</li> <li>landowner unease</li> <li>negative image as daredevils</li> </ul>

**Table one: Benefits and Costs of Publicity**

are the heroes, not some Hollywood goofball and a well-paid guide who showed him the entrance.

## Benefits of Publicity

This all sounds pretty grim, but happily there are many benefits of publicity as well (Table 1). For the caves and their owners, visitors may be more considerate, careful and prepared. Owners or nearby residents may become aware of their own undesirable behavior: entrance and sinkhole dumping, groundwater contamination, etc. Owners may learn of organizations, at both the national and local level, that can often provide advice and assistance on cave management (e.g. cleanups, community education, liability releases, gating, etc.)

For the public, there is the potential to become involved in organized caving, to realize that there is a whole community of people out there that love caves. And safety education is a benefit often invoked by cavers to justify publicity. I have some difficulty accepting this argument fully. The problem is that the safety message is always a small part of the overall message: try caving. So the result is something like, "Try this wonderful, exciting activity, and do it safely" as opposed to more typical safety education like "Tomorrow you have to drive to work. Wear your seatbelt please." One is just a safety message, the other is recruitment with a little safety added. Is the cost (more people going into caves) worth the benefit (possibly more safety consciousness among those people)?

For cavers and the NSS, there is support for our agenda. This is the Big Reason that cavers that support widespread publicity point to. As Mike Taylor says: "The only way cavers can expect support from the general public is to educate that public." [Mike Taylor. A Writer's Views. NSS News June 1988, p. 140.] True. Caves do face what have been called external threats [These terms are from British cavers Graham Price & Richard Wright, Taking cave

conservation in the 21st century. Descent #98, February/March 1991, p. 31.]: practices and plans that will severely impact or destroy caves like quarrying, solid and liquid waste disposal, stormwater runoff, major industrial and military installations, logging, mining, etc. It is often crucial to have public support in saving externally threatened caves. But there are other ways to get this support besides mass media publicity. Typically, if the caves are threatened then other natural resources are also. Mass media publicity on a national scale can have the unfortunate side-effect of increasing internal threats to caves: the "overuse or misuse of caves." [Ibid., Price and Wright] Overuse is the key word. I am going to make the case that internal threats to caves, in the form of overuse, result from traffic, which results from population, which results in large part from unselective publicity.

## The Vicious Circle

Damage to caves is of two types: intentional and unintentional. Intentional damage is either malicious vandalism, or judicious modification in pursuit of more cave--they are distinguished by the intent of the person doing the damage. [John Ganter. Cave exploration, cave conservation: Some thoughts on compatibility. NSS News 1989:47, p. 249-253. Also, Caves as unknown wilderness Proceedings of the 1989 National Wilderness Management Conference; Minneapolis, Minnesota, Sept. 11-14.] Unintentional damage is a mistake, an accident. An unfortunate fact of cave visitation or traffic, is that unintentional damage occurs. "Whoops!" Crash, tinkle, tinkle. "Sorry." The more traffic, the more unintentional damage. This law applies everywhere, although some caves are certainly more fragile than others and the time of 'self-repair' is variable. Where does traffic come from? A population of people that are interested in going caving.

I have gradually come to believe that organized cavers, by

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practicing "education" in the form of mass media publicity, are doing something rather unexpected. We are unwittingly negating some of the effects of our "education" by increasing the population of cave visitors, and thus traffic.

It works like this (see figure below): (1) people go caving; (2) cavers see the results--damage both intentional and unintentional; (3) we launch campaigns of Public Education in a shotgun or broadcast fashion; (4) this deluge of "education" falls on a population of around 250 million people at Time 1, some tiny fraction of whom are "uneducated cavers," and a still smaller fraction of whom are "educated cavers"; (5) the result, at Time 2, is a resounding "success." Hooray! The percentage of "educated cavers" is much higher. But something else has happened. Some part of that mass has said, "Ooooh! Caving. Let's go."

And they go caving. Some join the NSS. Many do not. There is traffic. Traffic causes unintentional damage. Then we come along and say, "Oh no! More education!" The

vicious circle repeats, and grows.

Education does not equal changed behavior. Ask any counselor. It is easy to think "Gotta be careful" in a cave, and much harder to do it. As a newcomer to western public-lands caving, I have already seen this phenomenon. Many caves out here are locked up like vaults. You need to call or write to the ranger. Get the key or combination to the lock. Read a brochure describing the cave, its fragile nature, and your responsibilities. Sign a release form. And then, incredibly, people go into these caves and leave food scraps, candy wrappers and tracks off the flagged trails.

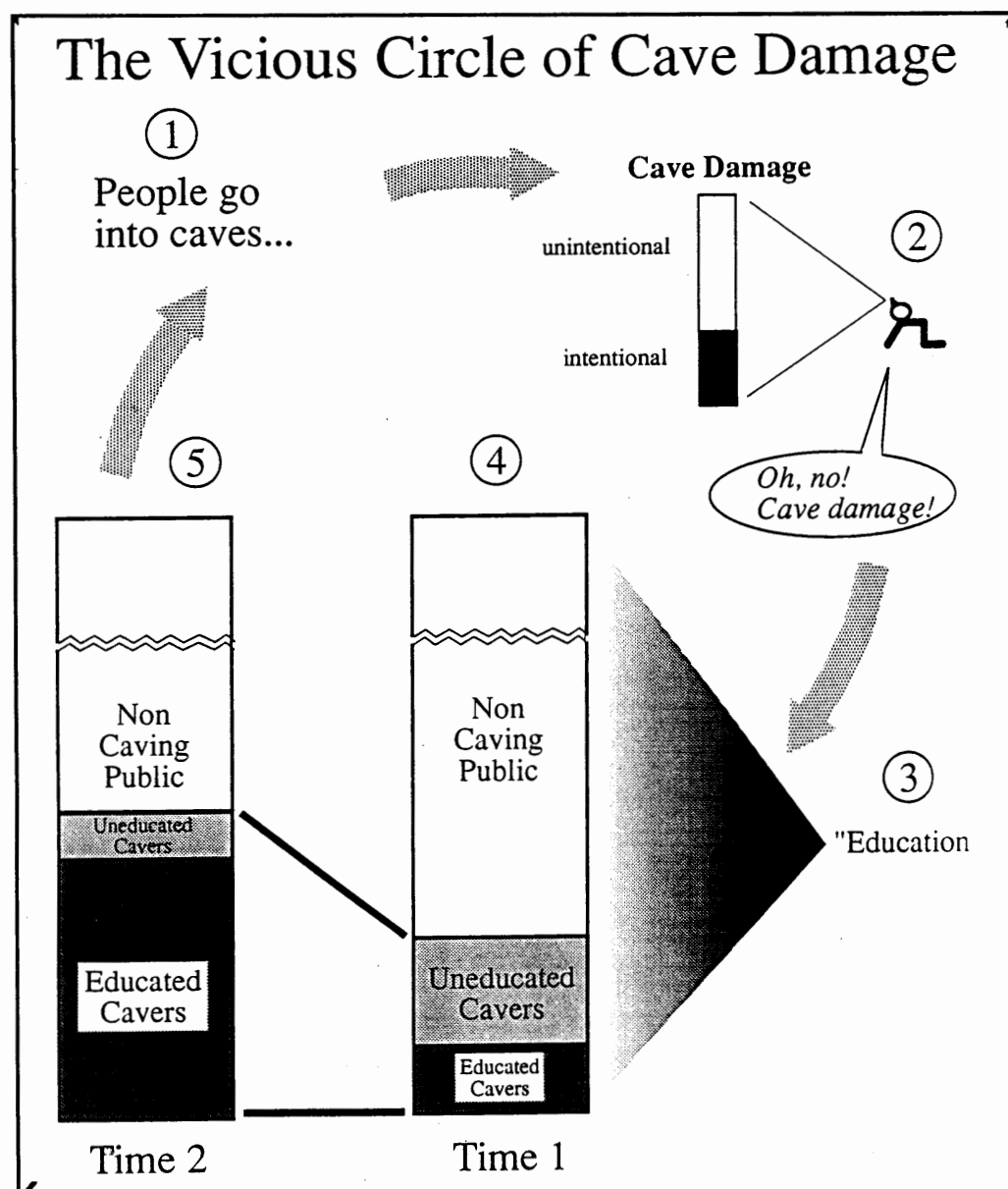
But of course, a vicious circle can have benefits. Growth is the aim of both babies and cancers. The difference is how much is enough.

## The Benefits of Growth

Some readers that have gotten this far may think that I am a reactionary, who wants no publicity, no growth, no new members. On the contrary--I support judicious publicity and welcome new members for several reasons.

Frank Reid has presented an argument for publicity because of what might be called 'caver salvation.' Like many, Frank can cite the example of an accomplished and educated caver "who would still be hanging out in a bowling alley in Paris, Kentucky" [Frank Reid. InterNet cavers mailing list, Posting #499, 19 September 1990] if he had not discovered caving. I think a lot of us would still be hanging out in our personal equivalents of bowling alleys were it not for caving.

To caves and their owners, there are definite benefits to growth of the NSS, i.e. more people becoming 'organized' cavers (Table 2). These cavers will hopefully be much more considerate and careful as they become attuned to the values and collective experience of the caving community. More NSS members means more energy and talent available to help cave owners, should they desire assistance.



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To the public, there is no particular benefit to growth of the NSS, unless it is increased opportunity to become aware of caving.

For the NSS, the benefits of growth are considerable. There will be more money for worthy projects, like the publications which we all enjoy and learn from. More members mean more talent to draw upon, e.g. people with expertise in the scientific, organizational, legal, and legislative realms.

## The Costs of Growth

Organized, educated cavers still produce traffic in caves and on the surface. Caves have a certain 'carrying capacity,' and it is finite. We can all too easily love caves to death and their owners to despair.

Alabama caver Angela Morgan [Angela Morgan. InterNet cavers mailing list, Posting #518, 19 September 1990.] says it like this:

"The way I see it, 100 'responsible' cavers caving 'responsibly' will probably trash a cave as much as a couple of vandals. It's a different kind of trashing, sure. A floor that used to be covered with delicate rimstone dams but is now covered with mud because hundreds of 'responsible' cavers walked across it may not be as obvious as spray painting on the walls, but it is damage, nonetheless. The occasional accidental breakage of a helictite by a 'careful' caver may not be as obvious as the sudden trashing of several helictite bushes by a vandal, but the ultimate result will be the same.

If the number of so-called 'responsible' cavers increases dramatically, the incidence of this type of damage will rise. The really sad part is that this insidious form of vandalism

will not just be limited to the caves we call 'sacrificial caves' (in my area, these are the caves well-known by the general public, and to which most of the nerds go and do their vandalism); it will encompass all the caves, since these 'responsible' cavers will have access to such information.

The caves need heavy traffic even less than they need nerds. At least nerd-type vandalism is usually limited in scope as far as the number of caves it touches. Also, even though broken formations cannot typically be repaired at least spray-painting and garbage can be cleaned up. The damage done by an excessive number of cavers going through a cave cannot be cleaned up. Take Angel's Paradise in Ellison's Cave [Georgia] for example. That area is suffering tremendously from the traffic of 'responsible' cavers it sees, not from ill-informed 'flashlight cavers' trashing it out. Does Angel's Paradise really need to see more 'responsible' cavers'? I think not. Does Helictite Heaven in Fern Cave need to see more 'responsible' cavers? I think not. These are two areas that I have seen once or twice but will never see again because I've realized that they don't need my traffic."

There is also the matter of surface traffic. How considerate are cavers when seen from a cave owner's viewpoint? Let's go back to that West Virginia farmyard. My host said this: What if you had a nice house and yard in the city, and a bunch of old farmers came in and walked all over it, just setting up tents and climbing on your fence? How would you feel?

A terrible problem, I agreed, and we organized cavers are always reminding each other and our new members to be courteous to cave owners. We...

**Table 2. Benefits and Costs of Growth.**

BENEFITS OF GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF CAVERS			COSTS OF GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF CAVERS		
Caves & Owners	The Public	Cavers & the NSS	Caves & Owners	The Public	Cavers & the NSS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more caver assistance will be available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more opportunity to meet someone involved in caving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more money</li> <li>• more talent available</li> <li>• more opportunities for personal growth</li> <li>• more political power and respectability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase in visitation, traffic and thus damage in caves</li> <li>• increase in visitation, traffic and thus damage on the surface</li> <li>• ripple-effect cavers</li> <li>• need for more intensive cave management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased cost of management for caves on public land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• same as cave owner</li> <li>• loss of access to sensitive caves due to traffic</li> <li>• loss of social intimacy in caving community</li> <li>• damage to sensitive cave areas due to traffic</li> <li>• greater competition for finite cave resources</li> <li>• need for more intensive and restrictive cave management</li> </ul>



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"It's that [name omitted] grotto," interjected the son, who had brought the newspaper.

I could say nothing, only nod respectfully. What an astonishing viewpoint, I thought. That club is one of the oldest in the NSS. Their members set new standards in cave exploration, mapping, geological work and water tracing in this area. What went wrong? Traffic.

What happened after the exploration, which required excellent cave owner relations so that the cavers could finish their projects? Visitation. And 'ripple effect' cavers.

Rane Curl [Rane Curl. Internet cavers mailing list, Posting #1179, 26 March 1991.] explains the 'ripple effect' as follows:

"A responsible grotto takes new cavers caving, and instills safety and conservation messages (and even assume they are believed and followed). THEN some of those cavers take their friends, buddies or relatives caving, without the peer pressure of an organized group--and they forget to impart some of the lessons. THEN some of those friends, buddies or relatives do the same--and nearly everything is forgotten. All that is retained in the end is knowledge of the cave location, and you all know what happens then."

This litany of problems will always be with us. Only the size will change. I'm not saying that the NSS should stop growing, or that any of us should give up caving. What I am saying is that we should try to limit increases in these problems by keeping caving a low-profile activity.

## Directed publicity

A low profile can be maintained with directed, targeted publicity aimed at those that are already caving or involved in activities that will probably expose them to caves at some point.

Locally-directed publicity can be tailored to local conditions, like cave owner exhaustion, availability of caves, etc. The problem with national level, mass media publicity is its insensitivity to local conditions. Where are the most magazine readers and television viewers? In densely populated areas. Where are the most cave problems? In cave areas within easy access of population centers. Would you like to find some really friendly cave owners? Take a map of US population, where dark is high density and light is low density. Now change the map legend so that dark means "tend to be unfriendly," light means "tend to be friendly." It's the same map.

What we as a Society need to recognize is the monumental difference between targeted, locally-directed publicity, and national-level wholesale publicity raining down on a population of 250 million potential cave visitors.

Locally-directed publicity is so effective because of feedback. If local caves are experiencing heavy traffic by cavers, publicity can be cut back. Or, it can be tailored to educating

'flashlight cavers.' If, on the other hand, there is a need for 'new blood' in the grotto, publicity and even recruitment efforts can be expanded. Another means of selective, local publicity is contacting people that have signed in to cave registers, like the NSS cave visitation project.

## What Can Cavers Do?

Assuming that you accept this argument for minimizing media attention to caves and caving, what can you do?

Don't write cave stories or encourage media events. Recently I was talking to a caver just out of college. "I'd like to be a free-lance writer, but all I can think of writing about is caves," he said, "But then I'd have no friends..." "Good! Get a job!," I replied.

Don't try to turn your hobby into your livelihood. For skiers, it's OK. For cavers, it's not. Sweep streets, join the army, join the Peace Corps, go to grad school... but don't sell our caves. Get a job.

Refuse to participate in mass publicity: put the future of caves and caving ahead of your ego and wallet. Let those that sell out wild caves for personal profit know what you think of them. Caver pressure is extremely effective.

If you feel the urge to write about caves, do so in accounts or descriptions in caving publications. Choose to impress a small, highly-knowledgeable and appreciative group rather than a mass audience who will forget you as soon as they turn the page.

Write speleological descriptions. Integrate your writing with maps and photographs that put the cave in the mind of another caver. This is an art and science that takes a great deal of practice. Your efforts can aid others within the community in finding and pushing new caves. You can also perform an important service for scientists and protectors of natural resources at the state, local and federal level by helping them to understand the caves placed in their care.

If television stations contact you, you might try to dissuade them but it probably won't work. They will find someone to help them stage Indiana Jones, Part 5. Try to emphasize conservation and safety, but don't be surprised if you get overdubbed with the theme from Raiders of the Lost Ark, as one well-meaning grotto did.

Local newspapers tend to be a little better, especially if you get a skilled and conscientious writer. I have seen some articles recently where cavers obviously had excellent influence on content and tone. Since writers have a product to sell, content control usually starts with mouth control and refusing to be led into any "exciting" quotes.

## Conclusions

My major point in this commentary is that cavers should not be passive about portrayals of caves and caving in the mass media. We should recognize that caves are often

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literally or figuratively a 'commons' that we all maintain and benefit from. In some cases, an individual that sells out a wild cave for their own short-term personal gain is like a traitor that sells priceless national or trade secrets for a few dollars.

We should appreciate the differences between accounts and cave stories: lack of monetary incentive, small interested audience, review by peers, responsibility to group norms, emphasis on planning and safety. In the same way, local publicity is managed carefully by the caving community, rather than broadcast in an untargeted manner.

There are undoubtedly some readers that do not comprehend my viewpoint. I invite them to analyze my field data, such as it is, differently. Perhaps in their regions, owners of wild caves welcome publicity. I doubt it.

I would also remind skeptics of the pace of change in our trendy and litigious 'media nation.' Many cavers' beliefs and assumptions about access and traffic formed 10 to 20 years ago. Today they may be doing less caving and/or working more on established projects in specific areas. Before dismissing my anecdotes about cave owners and what they are thinking, these individuals should make sure that their own anecdotes are not obsolete.

I don't want to rain on the NSS parade, nor the star appearances of some of our members. But amid all the glory, we should examine where the parade is headed and what it will bring us, the caves and their caretakers. Where publicity is concerned, the key question must always be: Will this benefit cavers, or will it benefit caves and their caretakers?

My host in the West Virginia farmyard said one last thing: "You come on back and talk to me again. And don't bring too many with you." The son nodded.

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## Acknowledgements

I am indebted to my reviewers for their helpful criticism and comments: Rane Curl, Donald G. Davis, Louise Hose, Angela Morgan, Bill Putnam, Bill Storage, Michael Ray Taylor, and John Wilson. They were selected for their diverse viewpoints, but the reader is reminded that the opinions presented here are entirely my own. Louise Hose made numerous contributions to the Cost/Benefits tables. I also thank contributors to the InterNet (electronic mail) cavers mailing list for their provocative discussions of many topics discussed here. Steve Reames provided a lengthy video compilation. Sierra Club Books gave kind permission for the opening quotation. Finally, I am grateful to the land and cave owners that have shown me the view from their side of the fence.

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## NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION.

The Map Section of the National Library of Australia maintains a large collection of aerial photography of Australia numbering around 700 000 prints flown by Federal agencies between 1928 to 1983.

The collection consists of black and white stereoscopic vertical with some TRIMETS and is arranged according to the 1 mile (1: 63 360) topographic series sheet numbering system. Where possible, all photos have been matched against flight diagrams now available on microfiche from the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group (AUSLIG). A graphic index is available showing holdings and automated bibliographic records are available through the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN) database.

The photographs are complemented by an extensive collection of both imperial and metric topographic maps as well as orthophotomaps and photomosaics.

A TOPCON stereoscope with 6x binocular head is available to view the photographs in the Reading Room of the Map Section. The photographs are not available for loan either to individuals or libraries. However, photographic orders of prints may be placed through AUSLIG on forms available from the Section.

The Map Reading Room is open between 9 - 4.45 pm weekdays. The Map Curator may be contacted by phone on (06) 2621280, or fax (06) 2571703.

Correspondence should be addressed to:  
Maura O'Connor, Map Curator, Map Section, National Library of Australia.  
Parks. ACT 2600.

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# TAGGING FIASCOS IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Guy Bannink and Karen Magraith

The tagging of caves in the Northern Territory commenced during the 1960's. To our knowledge this was started by the Northern Territory Speleological Society (NTSS), under the direction of the President Robert Wren who was at that time one of the most active local cavers and naturalists. (Bob Wren was responsible for initiating the protection of both Cutta-Cutta and Kintore Caves.) We do not know how many caves were originally numbered or named, or what tagging system was used. The second group to embark on a tagging program in the NT was the Darwin Speleological Group (DSG), organized by Bill Walsh. Again the system and methodology that was used is unknown to us, but the few trip reports that we have are greatly detailed. Bill Walsh and his companions produced the first scientific survey of Cutta-Cutta Cave. The few records that we have of the DSG and NTSS tagging are very brief and by far the majority of the cave locations, data collected and surveys have been lost. Cyclone Tracy appears to have wiped out the entire history of NT caving, at least that is where all our leads have ended.

The activities of the NTSS and the DSG declined in the late 1960's and there is no record of any significant speleology for at least 10 years. In the 1970s Cliff Ellis, then Ranger stationed at Cutta Cutta Nature Park, laid down the foundations for the formation of the Top End Speleological Society (TESS) and restarted the tagging. In 1983 the Top End Speleological Society was officially established and speleological work continued under the direction of Tod Denis, Rod Silburn, Kath Silburn and other dedicated members of the Society. The TESS program was started under the ASF guidelines in keeping with the system established by Peter Matthews in 1979. The cave summary sheets were filled in and a "Karst Index" for the Top End created. We discovered, however, that many of the caves which were allocated numbers in the past had been lost, despite the fact that for some caves there were detailed location descriptions (the terrain is essentially flat and changes character every season). This was attributed to the fact that TESS always had a high turnover of members who were temporary residents in the Top End. Records were kept by individuals and not distributed within the Society, nor were copies of the collected data made. As cavers drifted back to the southern climes, they took with them both records of their work and knowledge that was never passed on. Inevitably the problem of missing speleological information collected in the 1960s and 1970s was compounded by the ongoing loss of information from the 1980s.

In 1990 when assessing the situation it was felt that the tagging system that had been developed by the three separate organisations spanning thirty years had too many inconsistencies. The Society decided to rectify the situation and develop a new system that could be applied uniformly across the NT. The fact that so few caves had been tagged made the chore easier. Many discussions were held, 'Southern Gurus' were contacted, but no system seemed to

be perfect, especially when trying to include the old physically numbered caves. John Dunkley paid the Territory a visit in 1990 and suggested that we start by defining new prefixes and then alter only the prefix on the tags of old caves, leaving the number intact until they were located, (8K24 changes to 8MAH24). All caves that were not physically tagged and whose locations were lost should be archived as lost and not included on the current system (they would be treated as newly discovered cave when found.) John gave us some encouragement to get on with it all, especially as a new Karst Index was being developed for the ASF by Peter Matthews.

The method of choosing the prefix was to be simple, systematic and practical. The best system for our style and territory in which we were caving proved to be using the 1:100 000 topographical maps. Despite being cumbersome in having about 504 different prefixes there are many local advantages to the system. Our records are now computer based so the number of prefixes is not significant. The result was a set of prefixes allocated in a systematic way, each represented by three letters. In developing the new tagging system we also found ourselves examining the way in which we spent our time caving. From these discussions a system of cataloguing, which we would try to maintain while caving, developed. A list of tasks at the time of tagging was drawn up and it has now become part of our data base collection protocol. We aim to generate the following data for each cave:-

1. Photographic record of the tagged entrance with tag number.
2. AGM coordinates and altitude as calculated by the Global Positioning System, (GPS).
3. Any entrance cross references.
4. Brief description of the cave.
5. Classify the cave according to Worboys.
6. Survey information.
7. Brief report on hazards, climate, geology and biology.

So far the system is working well. We will soon be sending our information to the ASF data base and will be working closely with Peter Matthews in order not to lose any of our work. There are still a few potential problems that have yet to be dealt with but they are not major ones. We have re-located about 60% of the tagged "lost caves". We have found that there are still problems with re-location of caves even when using GPS coordinates that were taken at the time of tagging. The GPS can take us to within 30-70 meters of the entrance but it can be almost impossible to locate a small hole in the 2m high spear grass!

We would ask any other clubs caving in the NT to contact us so that the tags and data sheets can be issued. In addition, if anyone has any past information on any caves or caving in the NT, even short trips, please send copies to us. We are desperate for any historical records of speleology in the Territory. The address is TESS, P. O. Box 40242, Casuarina, N.T. 0811. Many Thanks.

# LEADER ACCREDITATION - MORE MAGIC WAND WAVING?

by Peter Ackroyd

## The story so far.

In the beginning, which for caving in Australia was immediately after the Second World War, adventurers overcame tremendous difficulties including lack of information, petrol and equipment to begin systematic exploration of Australia's caves (Ackroyd & Robinson, 1990). Despite considerable handicaps, these early cavers made some really exciting discoveries. Moreover, they recognised their responsibilities to the rest of the community by recording, in a systematic fashion, their finds and interpretations.

By the 1960s caving was on a roll. Caving clubs had been established in every State and the information was just pouring in to cave managers and Government organisations. Caves were one of the last regions on earth where truly original exploration could be conducted, and everyone was interested. Every report written by early explorers and naturalists was examined minutely to glean any clues on cave localities or potential caverniferous regions. Caving clubs generated high quality newsletters and journals, often on a shoestring, which were filled with detailed scientific and exploration information. A great sense of co-operation existed between cave management authorities and caving clubs, allowing them to aid each other in their mutual aim of furthering the science of speleology. In 1968 the fledgling, but tremendously active, Australian Speleological Federation produced the Speleo Handbook. This was a world first! The current state of the art and science of speleology was captured by this document alongside a listing of all the then known caves in the country.

This document, together with the hugely successful 8th Biennial ASF conference held in Tasmania in late 1970, was the precursor to the golden 70s. There was another enormous upsurge in interest wherein the seeds of mistrust and doubt were sown. Cave managers, acting on the information fed to them over the past two decades, began viewing with alarm the effect of this renewed interest in their caves. The 70s then was the decade of the gate. Some pretty silly gates magically appeared all around the country.

Usually these were installed by caving clubs at the request of the cave managers. The caving clubs took the view that, being responsible groups, they should at all times assist cave managers to manage the caves. Any niggles felt by some that the gates may be used against the very clubs that installed them were disregarded. "Of course, that won't happen to us."

By the late 70s, gating had caused quite a lot of unnecessary money to be spent, a pretty significant bat kill due to poorly designed gates on bat caves, a major dislocation of bat populations and considerable desecration of some fine cave entrances. Responsible clubs went through the routine - six to eight weeks in advance - of applying for the keys to gates that by and large were found hanging off their hinges. The fringe caver was found not to care much about gates or keys and simply short-circuited the process with a winch.

Exeunt gates! But not before a lot of damage had been done, both to cave environments and ecosystems, and to the relationship between recognised caving clubs and cave managers. Some gates do work - the ones installed by and administered by caving clubs. A gate will work only if requested by the user groups.

The next wand to be waved was the Caves Classification wand. This was the 80s bandwagon and lots of people thought it would work as a management tool. There were some lone voices in the wilderness that warned that classification was certain to be misunderstood and misused by cave managers. This has since been borne out by field observation, and efforts to "tinker with the engine" are now underway (White 1992).

To be an effective management tool a cave classification system has to be used in conjunction with some sort of permit system. Any permit system is

- (a) cumbersome,
- (b) expensive to administer,
- (c) easily bypassed (see above), and therefore
- (d) controls responsible groups only.

The only way such a system can work is if a lot of additional infrastructure were installed (Hamilton-Smith 1990). In an already tightly budgeted area like cave management the extra funding for this is unlikely to be forthcoming.

Two things came out of the Classification/Permit systems of the 80s. The first was the enormous variation in interpretation of what a classification system actually meant. This resulted in different cave management officers, all of whom were using the same classification system, adopting quite contradictory stances in all the different cave areas. These interpretations ranged from a common sense assessment of the group by the management authority and the cave, to a blanket "Oh no, you can't go there at all. It's classified 2.2." Ultimately it is the man on the ground who determines what happens, and there is no set of rules devised which can alter that fact.

The second insight was that, while the frequency of visits by responsible groups to permit areas fell, as was no doubt intended by those who introduced the system, visits by fringe cavers actually rose. This was due to both an increase in such cavers (who wants to join a legitimate club when all they do is talk about cave management and how to apply for permits) and to a reduction in responsible cavers who by being on site can bring fringe cavers "into the fold".

This allows us to catch a glimmer of how it could have been. If managers wished to restrict responsible groups, or indeed wished to close a particular cave altogether for a legitimate management reason, all they had to do was ask. The responsible group, recognising that such a request is in



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the best interests of the cave (or sometimes not, but recognising and respecting the authority of the cave manager) will simply not go there - end of story. This principle of mutual trust has been applied in some areas with total success. There are some caves which have been 'closed' for over a decade and club members simply don't go there. There are no gates or permits, but after consultation, both cavers and cave managers have agreed to use that cave no longer.

Now read on

The current wand waving exercise is to bring forth leader accreditation out of the hat. As with the previous quick fix attempts, this scheme appears at first glance to have merit. The basic premise is that leaders will be trained and accredited (for a fee of course) so that only those who understand caves and their low energy environment will be permitted to lead caving trips. The scheme will be national (administered in the first instance by the Tasmanian Department of Sport and Recreation who have received Federal funding to establish the whole thing) and leaders will therefore be able to move interstate and still have their 'qualifications' recognised.

There is considerable evidence that this whole scheme has a lot to do with politics and very little to do with conservation of resources. On the caving scene some clubs have already adopted an accreditation scheme and the Australian Speleological Federation is being pressured to get in on it while we can still have a say. This, of course, is a neat idea but, as discussed earlier, it is largely irrelevant who drafts a plan, it is the person on the ground administering it who really matters. The haste with which the whole thing is being put together does mean that the ordinary caver hasn't had much of a chance to hear about it, let alone think through all the consequences.

So allow me to pose a couple of hypotheticals. I should emphasise that these are based solely on my reading of overseas journals from mainly English speaking countries, tempered by my own experiences.

### Scenario 1

Joe Bloggs, caver with one year's experience, proposes that the club visit Cave X. Fred Nerk, the accredited trip leader, says he'll be washing his hair that weekend. Joe Bloggs says "Oh that's a shame" and does the cave anyway by going in at night. Is he caught? Of course not! Cave X is in a vast area patrolled by two rangers, both of whom were enjoying a hot cuppa at the time of the visit.

Result: Joe Bloggs and friends have just become fringe cavers (or pirates in UK parlance), and hence lost to the educative process of belonging to a responsible club.

Prediction: Joe Bloggs and friends will leave caving within two years, but not before damaging a lot of caves through no fault of their own

### Scenario 2

Irma Grubb notes that you only have to pass a course with the Department of Sport and Recreation (or whoever) to become an accredited cave leader. Irma knows there are a whole lot of disgruntled would-be cavers out there who can't seem to get onto trips due to accreditation, permit or classification problems. Irma passes the course with flying colours, recruits a few bods who will be "under her direct supervision" and it's time to start making the money roll in by taking people to the far reaches of Cave Z in the "wild and untamed Nullarbor, where no-one (or at least not too many hundreds) has stomped before."

Result: 'Coffee and cream' that looks more like mud and plug and a dune that's more of a trampled mound.

Prediction: More of the same.

Discussion: If Irma ever does get de-listed (which is unlikely since she can always prove that she gives her troops the required number of hours instruction on conservation matters, safety, first aid and so on), she can always pass the baton to one of her minions who by now is accredited in his or her own right. Does Irma give much thought to the cave and its environment? Only in so far as it affects her earning power. To Irma the accreditation is a meal ticket. Unfortunately the 'meal' consists of a non-renewable environment. The problem is that Irma is selling much more than her own time and skills. She has also taken it upon herself to sell a nation's heritage. With caves you really have to think very long term. In a million years every desecrated button grass plain, every deforested region in the world could be back to a healthy condition, but in the caves nothing would have changed, long after Irma's bones had turned to dust.

### The final curtain

Cavers of the past, acting in good faith have provided cave managers with the very ammunition that is now being fired back at them. Some cave managers, and cavers too, have excelled at promoting a "them and us" attitude that is both harmful and wasteful, not least because it is so unnecessary. Some caving clubs have managed to establish a rapport with cave managers so that they can sit down and discuss jointly how best to conserve caves. This has resulted in a very low cost cave management program that relies on none of the traditional bureaucratic approaches.

Some caving clubs have already been seduced by the apparent power which leader accreditation gives them. My suggestion is to look a little further down the track, think about the ordinary caver and his/her reaction and consider whether a better, albeit more difficult, approach would be to get out there, educate the young cavers and talk to the cave managers. Take them caving for goodness' sake. You'll be amazed at how much information can be transmitted non-verbally, just by letting them see how you personally approach and move through a cave.

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Of course, all this does mean you'll have to get out of your armchair and actually do something, and that, I'll admit, is a lot harder than waving a magic wand, but then real life often is.

Author's note. This article is the opinion of the author alone. I invite any reader to contact me directly on phone number (03) 347 8058 if he or she seeks further details.

### References

ACKROYD, Peter and ROBINSON, Lloyd (1990) Some post war memories of caving and expeditioning in Australia. *Nargun* 22(10):97-101.

HAMILTON-SMITH, Elery (1990) Permits as a visitor control method. In: *Cave Management in Australia V. Proceedings of 5th Australasian Conference on Cave Tourism and Management, Lakes Entrance, Victoria, April 1983.*

WHITE, Nicholas (1992) Open letter to all ASF Members *Australian Caver* 130: 6-7

### HEAT AND HUMIDITY IN THE TOP END

Karan Magraith and Guy Bannink.

The article in *Australian Caver* No 131 was inadvertently submitted without references. The references used were:

Petersdork. R.D., 1983. Disturbances of Heat Regulation, In *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine*. Petersdorf, Adams, Braunwald et al, eds. Tenth Edition, McGraw Hill New York.

Yarbrough, B.E., & Hubbard. R.W., 1989. Heat Related Illnesses in Management of Wilderness and Environmental Emergencies. Auerbach and Geehr Eds, C.V. Mosby Company. St Louis.

## PROJECTS, PROJECTS, PROJECTS PROJECTS.

Are you or your club working on a project of any sort?

Collecting water or soil samples, surveying the catchment area of Little Big Cave, fencing around a cave to keep the rabbits out or just trying to get data published?

The ASF is compiling a list of speleological projects and who is undertaking them.

The list is to form the basis of funding applications so that the ASF can help you get a project up and running or completed.

The information is as follows:

Detailed description of the project: How long has the project been going and the expected date of completion;

Who is organising it and how many people are involved;

What institutions, such as Universities, Gov't Departments, are involved;

Has the project received any funding and if so from what sources, eg., NPWS, Australian Research Council Grants?

Please send the above information to  
Clare Buswell, C/- Politics Dep't Flinders University,  
Bedford Pk, S.A. 5042.  
Ph (08) 388-6685 (hm)  
Fax: (08) 201-3622

## Notice of Meeting to all ASF members.

ASF Council Meeting  
Jan 4th 1993 10am and Jan 8th 1993 10am.  
At the 19th ASF Biennial Conference site,  
Glenara, near Launceston, Tasmania.

Some changes in the ASF's Constitution are to be made at this meeting due to changes in the Incorporations Act in the ACT.

Some other items on the agenda include: review of the recently adopted Code of Ethics and Conservation: a National Caver or Leader Accreditation Scheme.

If any Member wants to put something on the agenda for this meeting please contact the secretary, Chris Dunne on (02) 6057003 or write to him P.O. Box 388, Broadway, NSW 2007.

Put some input into your national organisation, be there.

*Rumour: Watch out for the return of the Gnome.*

# SPELEO SYNOPSIS

January - July 1992

by Peter Ackroyd

## AUSTRALIA

**Helictite 29(1) (1991)** This issue contains a brief, but significant, article on the geology and caves of the Mt Cripps area, Tasmania. A geological view of Abercrombie Caves and a discussion on the sulphate speleothems of Thampanna Cave, Western Australia, completes it.

**Helictite 29(2) (1991)** Robert Bednarik describes how many animal scratch marks in southern Australian caves have been mistaken for cave art by archaeologists. There is also an article on the caves of Eastern Fiji and a detailed review of William White's book on karst.

**Spar 106 (Dec 1991)** UNSWSS have been active and discovered some new caves at Wee Jasper, including well decorated Nice Cave [WJ-135].

**The Western Caver 31 (1991)** This annual journal from Western Australia has a picture of a common yabby on the front cover! Anyway inside is a comprehensive index of all known caves in a new Western Australian karst area, Barrow Island, near Cape Range. The new area code is 6B and there are 18 features listed with 4 maps (6B-2, 3, 4 & 5) published.

**Speleo Spiel 275 (May 1992)** This special issue covers the small (3 person) expedition to Vanishing Falls, southern Tasmania. The expedition, funded by Australian Geographic, spent two weeks in April exploring caves and collecting cave fauna. The longest cave found was the 2 km Rio Negro which intersects and follows the Salisbury River underground.

## NEW ZEALAND

**NZS Bulletin 8(159/160) (Sep/Dec 1991)** This issue leads off with part I of an article on the caves of Paturau, a block of limestone right on the sea shore at the north-west tip of the South Island. A follow up article describes the discovery of Mirabilite, a hydrated sodium sulphate mineral in one of these caves. Other articles describe the attempted repair of a slender stalagmite, a freezing trip with frozen ropes in the Ellis Basin and the caves of Pukeroa, Mahoenui, which include the fabulously decorated, but disgustingly named Stinkpot Cave. The journal ends with a longest and deepest list (current as at July 1991), a look at caver visitation to New Zealand's most popular wild cave Gardner's Gut, bird fossils found in caves and recent cave diving discoveries.

## EUROPE

**Caves and Caving 54 (Winter 1991)** Carno Adit (Wales) has the lead in this issue. Bill Gascoine describes how nine years of digging resulted in a 1 km cave that is still wide open. Other articles describe a six week sortie into the karst areas of the Dominican Republic (Caribbean), the new extensions found by divers in Gingle Hole (Yorkshire), a light weight diving trip to Slovenia and an even lighter weight trip to the central massif in Spain. In

the Equipment News section a detailed analysis of the old 8 mm self drilling bolts and their new DMM replacements is provided with test results and instructions on installation. A short article by Peter Glanvill describes how to make lecture presentation slides using Lith film and home developing.

**Descent 104 (Feb/Mar 1992)** In this issue Rob Palmer describes the excavation of Arawak Indian remains from a flooded area in the Bahamas, Dave Gill provides a lighthearted account of caving in the Mengzi area of Yunnan Province, China, and a description of the discovery and exploration of a new cave in Wales Ogof Dan-y-Llenad Wen is provided. In other articles a new gel cell lead acid battery system is reviewed and a brief description of a caver who fell to his death in British Columbia's Arctomys Cave is given.

**International Caver 1 (Oct 1991)** This new and ambitious journal will inevitably be compared with the ill fated Caving International of the late 70s-early 80s. The quality of its production ensures that the comparison is favourable although the content is not yet quite of the standard we came to expect from its precursor. The journal is edited by Tim Stratford in the UK but the editorial content is indeed international. In this first issue there is a summary of caving activities in Lebanon, a piece of historical detective work on some little known caves in Tanzania, the discovery and exploration of Balatini Magarasi (southern Turkey), a monograph on Rhar Bou'maza (Algeria), a historical piece on the first account of Baralda Cave (Hungary) and a short piece on Ravenska Jama (Slovenia). In addition there are plenty of colour and black and white photos, up to the minute international news and book and journal reviews.

**International Caver 2 (Jan 1992)** This issue continues the high standard set by issue No. 1 with a description of some river caves in Vietnam, the caves of the Bourne Gorge in the Vercours Massif (France), a piece on the sandstone caves of Saxony (Germany), a brief description and photo report on Lechuguilla Cave (USA), an excellent article on the frozen Dark Star cave of Uzbekistan and a rundown on the caves of Massif de Boine (Belgium). There is also the latest international news, including a piece on Old Homestead Cave in the Nullarbor, and a brief review of the Global Positioning System (GPS) and its application to caving.

**Caves and Caving 55 (Spring 1992)** The newly found well decorated White River Series in Peak Cavern (Derbyshire) is the lead article in this issue. It is followed by overseas expedition reports on Monte Canin (Italy), Matientzo (Spain) and a report on the record breaking cave dive into the Doux de Coly (France) by Olivier Isler. There is also an article on bats in Canada and a review of an extremely sensitive slave unit for flash guns.

**Descent 105 (Apr-May 1992)** The big news in this

# SPELEO SYNOPSIS

issue is the 4.5 km of new passage found in Carno Adit (South Wales). The passage is sizable and will almost certainly lead to the main drain under the Llangynidr Mountain. In the overseas section Australia's Old Homestead Cave is mentioned as our longest at 23 km. A couple of brief articles deal with a caving trip to Bulgaria and a massive dig using a track mounted backhoe in Wales, followed by a two page obituary to one of Britain's true hard cavers, Ken Pearce.

**Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society 19(1) (1991)** An extremely well presented and authoritative journal, this issue covers the new discoveries in Gough's Cave (Cheddar) and a reappraisal of its geomorphology. Other articles cover early use of caves in Cheddar Gorge, stone implements from Avon, examination of a lead mine in Somerset and dye tracing experiments in East Mendip.

**Cave Science 18(3) (Dec 1991)** There is a feasibility study on using a cave as an underground laboratory in the Canadian Rockies, an article on surveying a Swedish cave, a description of cave development in some caves of the Bahamas and a review of Xu Xiake, a 17th century Chinese geographer.

**Descent 106 (June/July 1992)** British cavers are a tenacious lot. Carno Adit (South Wales) is a squalid, tight cave, now 2 km longer due to that tenacity. The latest extensions have revealed a canal passage below a nicely fluted pitch. The same dedication is revealed in a survey of Daren Cilau (South Wales) which shows there is now only 20 metres horizontal gap, and zero vertical gap between it and the famous Agen Allwedd. There is also a well written report of an entrapment due to flooding. Two cavers were caught for 24 hours in Sleets Gill Cave (Yorkshire) by rising floodwaters - sounds quite familiar to me. In the same issue there is a summary of the 1991 cave rescue organisation. Only two deaths, one from a rockfall and the other due to heart attack in separate incidents.

**Stalactite 1/90, 2/90, 1/91, 2/91** These four issues of the Swiss Speleological Society journal, covering the years 1990 and 1991, are written in both French and German.

1/90 covers Gouffre du Grand Cor (a treatise on the cave, its morphology, biology, exploration, etc), diving in Greece and a discussion on the paintings found in Lascaux Cave, France. This issue also has a list of both Austria's and Switzerland's longest and deepest caves.

2/90 gives a dissertation on Schrattenhölle and some discussion on snails and plants found in or near cave entrances in Switzerland. Then there is a rundown on bats found in Swiss caves.

1/91 has a terrific story on a glaciere (a cave with ice) called the Glaciere de Duchaux. This is followed by a discussion on the subfossil wild Auroch remains found in a nearby cave. More diving in Greece completes the issue.

2/91 The R1 2000, an ultra modern rebreather unit for cave divers, is the lead article. This is followed by a tale of re-descent down the 950 m deep Barenshacht which requires the passing of a 25 metres long sump at -586 metres. A trip to Costa Rica is also described in this issue.

**Caves and Caving 56 (Summer 1992)** This issue is largely taken up with descriptions of two recent UK discoveries. Slaughter Stream Cave is a new cave found in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. It is over 8 km long and is a quite significant find for the region. Carno Adit in Wales continues to reveal more cave, some of it quite challenging. It has become quite a popular venue for cavers which has led to the imposition of some access restrictions to satisfy the cave managers. UK cavers continue to be active in other European countries and an amusingly written article on the 1990 and 1991 expeditions to Austria by the Cambridge University cavers shows they are still pushing overseas caves quite hard.

**International Caver 3 (April 1992)** More international news from this new magazine, this time telling us about the astounding exploits of premier Swiss cave diver Olivier Isler and his remarkable re-breathing apparatus. Olivier dived over 4 km from the air surface in Doux de Coly at an average depth of 45 metres. Other articles cover some severe caves in the Caucasus mountains, the Batu caves in Western Malaysia, Slovakia's longest cave (the Demanovský System) and Tham Súa in Thailand. This last article is essentially a reprint (unacknowledged) from Nargun, Victoria's caving magazine.

## USA

**NSS News 48(12) American Caving Accidents 1989.** Steve Knutson's invaluable work as chronicler of American caving accidents shows that in 1989 only one caver died (a non-swimmer drowned in a deep pool) although there were many near misses mainly due to caver falls or dislodged rocks. The cave diving scene saw five drownings - all open water divers "trying out" cave diving.

**Nylon Highway 33 (Jan 1991)** A typically over-the-top report on a visit to a simple pit in the Ukraine by two American cavers serves to remind us that ropewalkers and chest rollers do not mix well with shafts

## BOOKS, BATS, BONGO VANS AND THE ASF LIBRARY

The ASF Library, housed in Canberra, wants copies of your club's Journal or Newsletters. Also, it would like copies of Draft Management Plans or Final Management Plans that have been put into place in any karst areas in your state. Please send them to Cathy Brown. 13 Mc Donald St, Chifley. 2606 Ph: (06) 2882819



# SPELEO SYNOPSIS

and waterfalls. Just to drive the point home there is a review article on a new stainless steel and nylon chest roller for ropewalking rigs. There are a couple of useful articles which give hints on how to create a super stretchy bungee cord for floating cams, and how to change from ascending to descending if you are using a ropewalking rig and have short legs.

**NSS News 49(12) (Dec 1991)** The lead article describes a serious underwater push in Cathedral Spring (Virginia) by Ron Simmons. This is followed by an interview with an early American cave photographer, active in the 40s to 60s, and a report on the 6th International Symposium on Vulcanspeleology.

**NSS News 50(1) (Jan 1992)** The exciting story of a small team's discovery of several caves in Main Cove (Marion County, Tennessee) is told in this issue. A small piece by Gary Soule relates how he has already organised and erected his own tombstone which reads "Cave explorer and Life Member of the NSS".

**NSS Bulletin 53(1) (Jun 1991)** This issue contains a literature review of the effects of atmospheric air pressure changes on cave airflow, a discussion on histoplasmosis in the tropics and a collection of abstracts from NSS Conventions, 1988-1990.

**Speleonics 17 (Apr 1992)** The electronics-in-caving magazine talks about multi-channel data-loggers suitable for cave use, photoelectric people counters for tourist and heavily used wild caves and a single wire telephone system.

**Compass and Tape 9(1/2) (Summer/Fall 1991)** This issue contains only a little to interest cave surveyors. The lead article costs out a survey mapping project - \$US1.00 per foot of cave. A short article gives a forward view of the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) in cave mapping and another article gives yet another version of how best to close survey loops. A cave map on a postage stamp (Ethiopian) is described and a fair amount of blurb on how the recent judging of cave maps was conducted follows. The issue closes with a list of members.

**NSS News 50(2) (Feb 1992)** This is a special conservation issue and so the articles within it describe cave cleaning in Glory Hole (Georgia), a fantasy article with a conservation message, a description of a new computer based registration system, a new karst park in the Philippines and a rundown on a cave vandalism prosecution under the Federal Archeological Resource Protection Act.

**NSS News 50(3) (Mar 1992)** The Sistema Purificacion, a 76 km long master cave in Tamaulipas, Mexico, features in this issue. Also mentioned in "In the Media" is a Science (Mar 1989) article on archeological and paleontological studies in caves in Tasmania, Australia.

**Windy City Speleonews 31(3)** This is the newsletter

of the Windy City Grotto of the NSS. In this particular issue Dan Legnini gives a blow by blow account of the 4.5 day (April 1991) rescue of Emily Davis-Mobley from deep within the huge Lechuguilla Cave in New Mexico. Dan was one of the main organisers and so has some good detailed information. Three things stick in the memory after reading his account. This was a massive operation with 173 people directly involved (up to 60 underground at one particular stage) and with a directly attributable cost of over \$205,000. The second point was that this was in America and three of these people were required full time to handle the 143 member press corps. The final point Dan makes is that, of all the experienced cavers who helped, the ones who were most help were those who had participated in simulated rescues in the past.

**NSS News 50(4) (Apr 1992)** The discovery, diving and surveying of M2 Blue Hole in Florida features in this issue. At over 3 km long and with typically 20 metres depth of water, lengthy dives using underwater scooters were the methods used by the discoverer, Buford Pruitt Jr. Also in this issue is an article on lint cleaning in Carlsbad Cavern, New Mexico. Over four years a dedicated team has pulled out 20 kg of actual lint. That's an awful lot of belly-buttons' worth!

**NSS News 50(5) (May 1992)** This was a personally satisfying issue to read for your reviewer. After a short article on a voluntary restoration and survey project in Caverns of Sonora, a beautifully decorated cave in Texas, there is a thoughtful article by John Ganter on why any publicity, no matter how well intentioned, is bad for caves. This has been a concern of mine for over ten years. John makes the point that by trying to cast the education net ever wider, the real result is to push the ring of fringe cavers out to an ever increasing "diameter", thereby increasing their number. Any thinking caver should read this article. The Americans have already struck problems in their media mad country; we should learn from them. Unfortunately John's message is destroyed somewhat by the NSS President, in the same issue, suggesting the NSS produce a series of videos on caving for public release.

**American Caving Accidents 1990** Steve Knutson continues with his good work in compiling the accident statistics for American cavers covering the year 1990. Caver falls were again the major cause of death and injury. Four cavers died, which for the US is a good result. On the cave diving front, nine divers drowned for all the usual reasons. It appears that American cavers attempt to reach fringe cavers by a wide beam education campaign. What they actually seem to achieve is alert even more young people to the easy accessibility of caves, thus making a rod for organised caving's own back.

**Compass and Tape 9(3/4) (Winter/Spring 1992)** This specialist magazine for cave surveyors covers a major topic this issue - how to get true north from magnetic north. Ed Devine covers the use of compass calibration

## SPELEO SYNOPSIS

measurements and magnetic declination charts, then goes on to illustrate how to determine true north by using a sun shot in conjunction with precise time and ephemeris tables. All good stuff if you are in a remote location without nearby Government survey marks. There is also another article illustrating just how important it is to keep inclined shots using Suunto compasses to within +20 degrees from the horizontal - the errors in bearing grow alarmingly large outside this range.

**Nylon Highway 34 (June 1991)** The lead article in this issue is an interesting historical article on the invention and development of Dr Karl Prusik's famous knot. Prusik wrote about his knot in 1931, but this translated and abbreviated article taken from an Austrian climbing publication indicates that the idea was around long before that. An equally interesting article is one entitled "Vertical Techniques". This article is essentially a beginner's manual for modern frog systems of SRT. It is interesting because it could have been lifted from Neil Montgomery's "Single Rope Technique", published in Australia in 1977. In other articles, Maureen Handler reviews Russian and Ukrainian SRT gear including home-made ascenders for use on wire cable, and Butch Feldhaus runs static load tests on curled eye rappel racks.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### **A Guide to the Bats of South Australia.**

T. Reardon and S. Flavel.

South Australian Museum. Revised Edition 1991. \$10.00 Plus postage and packaging. Available from T. Reardon South Australian Museum. Kintore Ave. Adelaide. 5001

This practical guide comes with 27 colour plates and detailed pen sketches to help the user identify these small furry creatures. The first section of the book is given over to defining what bats are, their important features, where they live, what they eat, life cycle and navigation. This is followed by details on how to catch handle and measure bats.

The notes on identification of bats at family, genus and species levels is what makes this guide so useful to anyone interested in learning about bats. Species profiles detail a description, distribution and status maps, as well as notes on habitat and habits. The profiles also give extra hints which may help with identification, handling or the nature of the bat in question. If for example you wish to know about the Little Red Flying Fox, the distribution map will show you the distribution Australia wide and in this case a record of the number of reported sightings in South Australia, all six of them, since 1902. The guide will tell you that this bat feeds predominantly on eucalypt blossoms and breeds in large colonies, "some of which number 100,000 individuals", in late spring and early summer. If you handle the Little Red Flying Fox, put on your protective gloves as it tends to be aggressive when being

## BOOK REVIEWS

measured up.

The guide gives species profiles for 19 bats and has a glossary, index and advice for further reading. The latter ranges from the general interest level to the technical and for children.

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### **International Caver. No 3. 1992.**

Editor Tim Stratford.

Published Quarterly. Subscription 1year, 4 issues: Australia and New Zealand £14.20 (Surface) £21.70 (Airmail).

Aven Publications. Shaftesbury Centre, Percy Street, Swindon. SN22AZ England.

This issue offers a range of articles covering exploration of caves in Slovakia, Malaysia, Thailand, Georgia in the former Soviet Union, and cave diving in France. Each article has a map showing the region under discussion, commentary on the expedition and some cave maps.

The historical overview given in the article on the Batu Caves on the northern outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, provides an insight into the multiple uses of these caves. They were discovered by Europeans in the late eighteen hundreds, used in religious ceremonies, as quarries, and finally developed as tourist attractions. The use of the caves in religious ceremonies and as quarries has occurred since the late eighteen hundreds. The discussion on the most recent use of the caves as quarries and tourist attractions provides quite fascinating reading. Early, unguided tours resulted in graffiti and vandalism. At the same time the government quarrelling resulted in the closure of Dark Cave due to it being in danger of collapse as a result of continuous blasting over the years. The 25 year protest to save the caves from quarrying is only given passing reference.

Exploration of the Doux de Coly in France is a summation of expeditions to this 15kms of underwater passage from 89-91 and becomes not only a tale of determination to overcome problems with diving equipment and planning but is followed by a well written analysis of the data collected and equipment used on the expedition.

The report of a joint British and Belorussian trip into Cherepash'ja (Tortise) Cave, Slovina, reveals the extreme caving conditions encountered. Plans of setting new depth records were replaced with simply dealing with the conditions that caving away from one's home country (unfamiliar equipment), and the cave, freezing winds and water falls, could produce.

International Caver will cater well for those cavers around the world who plan international expeditions. Its section on international news and reviews of recent literature will prove useful. I look forward to reports on what caving organisations are doing in Third World Countries, a report perhaps on the Speleological Conference held in Cuba in December of 1991?

## ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT FORMS

In issue 128 of Australian Caver, there was an Accident/Incident report form. Thanks to all the people who have sent in reports. Over the next few years we will slowly be able to build up an idea of caving accidents and incidents in Australia. Don't limit your reports to ASF cavers. We want to know of any incidents as it will help to identify what groups are having problems, what area of caver education is lacking, etc. It may also be important in the future to be able to backup our belief that ASF affiliated groups have an excellent safety record.

The reports I have received are quite interesting. There were four cave accidents/incidents from Western Australia: a couple of tourists became lost in a cave; a student in a school group fell and injured his head; and one of two local cavers fell and injured his leg after trying to do a 17m free climb back up a rope. Only one ASF group had a problem when three cavers caved beyond the lifetime of their light sources (they did have three lights each).

In S.A., an ASF caver's hand was cut on a sharp rock. His team handled the situation well, treating the injury and getting him to hospital where some stitches were inserted.

In the Northern Territory, a beginner became hyperthermic (yes hyper not hypo). They also handled the situation well because of their first aid experience and have since reviewed their procedures to avoid a repeat of the incident. Hyperthermia can occur easily. An incident happened last year at Bungonia, in NSW, during a cave rescue exercise when a participant became dehydrated after being in the sun on a hot day.

There are a few accidents that I am chasing up but I mainly rely on you to report them. Most clubs have a safety officer or similar position. I really need those people to encourage their club members to record accidents or incidents and forward them to me.

Yours in Safe and Enjoyable Caving.

**Mike Lake,**

Convenor, ASF Safety Commission.

Material for Australian Caver can be sent to the Editor in many formats:

Hand written and typed manuscripts must be double spaced.

Disks: please send in ASCII, on 3 1/2" or 5 1/4" Macintosh or IBM.

Please pack your disk in an Australia Post Disk Box, that way I get it undamaged and you will get it back undamaged. Always include a hard copy of the article with the disk.

Material should be sent to the following address: Clare Buswell C/-Politics Dept, Flinders University, Bedford Park, S.A. 5042.

Fax: (08) 201-3622

or via electronic Mail:

heiko@cs.flinders.edu.au

Further concerns we have with these events are that the process of negotiation between Bender and the Feds could start up again at the end of January and not be resolved before the next federal election. If there is a change of Gov't then Benders Quarry will no doubt continue. We have then until the end of January to convince the Minister and the Government at the Federal level of Exit Cave's importance.

It is therefore, very important that the letter writing, faxing and phoning to Ros Kelly, Paul Keating, Senator Richardson, Premier Ray Groom, and John Cleary, Tasmanian Minister for Forests, Environment, Parks, Wildlife and Heritage continue unabated over the next few months, as it is the only way we are going to be able to counter the pressure of the Benders lobby. If not, come to TAS TROG prepared to stay for a protest.

Paul Keating. Parliament House, Canberra.

Fax: (06) 273-4100. Ph: (06) 277-7700

Ros Kelly. Parliament House, Canberra.

Fax: (06) 273-4130.

Ray Groom. Parliament House, Hobart.

Fax: (002) 341-572

John Cleary. Parliament House, Hobart.

Fax: (002) 444-348.

For up to date information please contact, either Stuart Nicholas. Ph: (002) 283-054 or Tas. Wilderness Society. Ph: (002) 349-366 or Clare Buswell. Ph: (08) 388-6685

**C. Buswell. Deadline for Australian Caver Dec 11,** (if you can get it to me earlier, great!)

If anyone wants to financially help The Wilderness Society or the ASF in this campaign then send your donations to The Wilderness Society, Hobart Tasmania, or to Brendan Ferrari. ASF Treasurer, 122 Hawke St., West Melbourne, 3102.

### WHAT'S ON:

**TAS TROG 1993.** Launceston, Tasmania:

29th Dec. 92 to 16th Jan. 93. Includes pre-and post-conference activities. See back cover of this issue for details.

**XI International Conference of Speleology.** Beijing China. August 1993. Details available from Julia James, 41 Northwood St., Newtown, 2042. Ph: (02) 519-1415.

**SEND REPORTS OF ALL  
CAVING ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS  
TO MIKE LAKE,  
CONVENOR, ASF COMMISSION ON CAVE  
SAFETY.**

14/16 Cottonwood Cres., North Ryde, NSW 2113.  
phone (02) 888-2927

DOWN UNDER ALL OVER