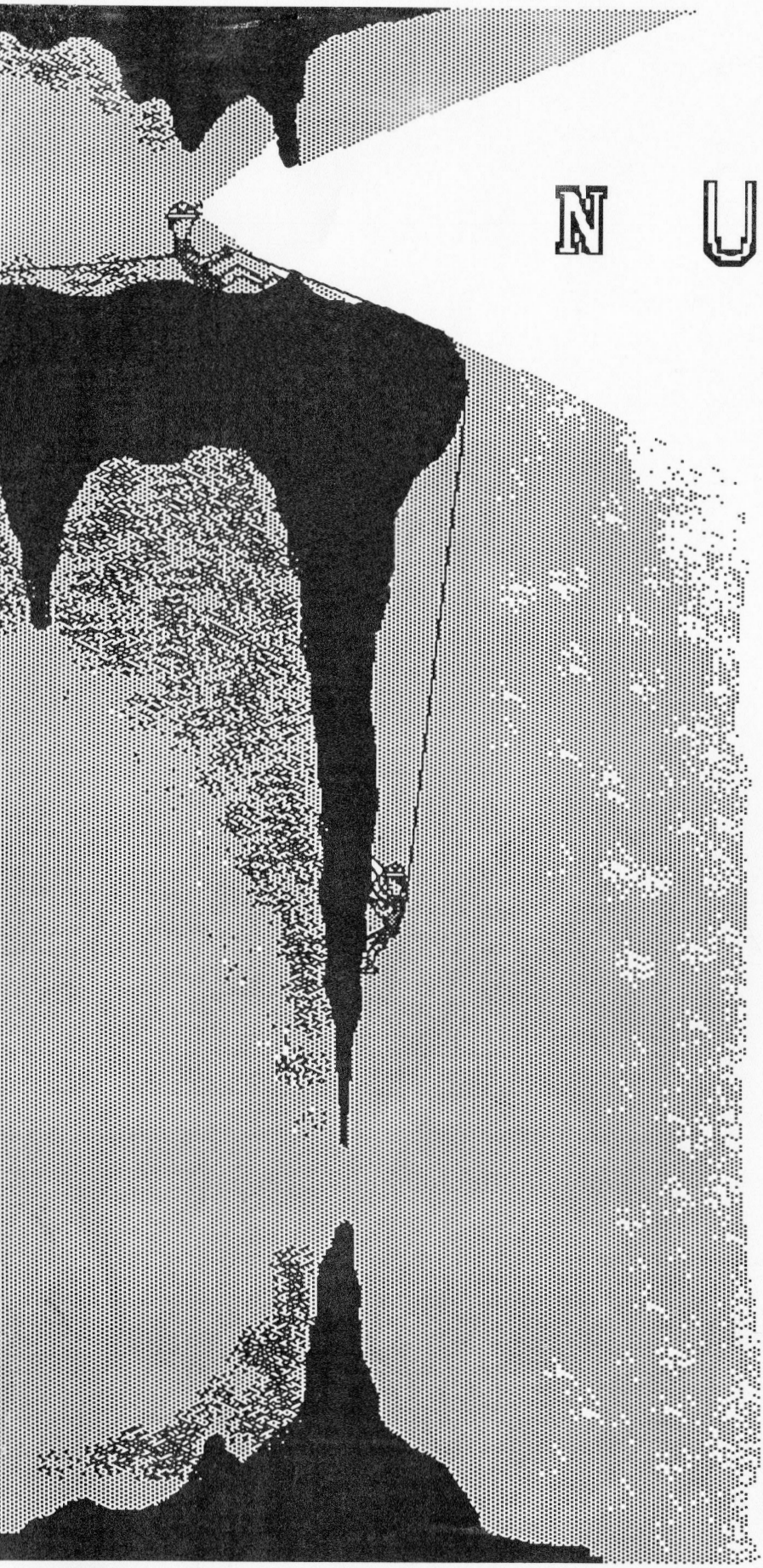

N U C C

SPELEOGRAFFITI

EDITION 1

1986

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SPELEOGRAFFITI

EDITION ONE - 1986

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUB (NUCC)

A member society of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc.
G.P.O. Box 4, Canberra. A.C.T. 2601

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Some of the karst terminology found throughout was copied from ASF Cave and Karst Terminology, 1979

All articles, reports, jokes, photographs, etc are welcome for inclusion. Please forward to the editor or any of the office bearers.

The opinions expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of NUCC or the editor.

DEDICATION

We wish to dedicate this issue of "Speleograffiti" to the memory of our Club Librarian

Richard Hitchings

who was tragically killed in a skiing accident at Guthega, N.S.W., in August this year.

** C O N T E N T S **

* * TRIP REPORT * *

Where: Mt Fairy

When: February 1986

Party: Chris Bradley, Andrew Edwards, Richard Greenwood, Jeanette Henderson, Kathy Henderson, Dallas Tout, Janine Tout and Dallas' brother.

Two cars went to Queanbeyan to collect the Touts then headed off to Bungendore, and a bit further to a dirt road marked to Mt Fairy. After a few sharp rights and lefts, we parked the cars at the end of the road next to some gates. Overalls, helmets and lights on, we climbed a fence and another fence and over another fence by an old horizontal mineshaft. There were no thistles as a nice farmer had planted lucerne. We went up Cave Creek under the giraffe fence (barbed wire stretched across the valley about 30 ft in the air), and through thistles toward the cave.

We entered this dry cave and immediately got wet feet. Not a bad little cave with the few squeezes - even Dallas and his brother, who are both quite large, managed to get through. We found the sump and looked around, lots of nooks and crannies.

Andrew and I went up a crawl and found ourselves in a mine shaft, so we went into this and out the end of the mineshaft and joined the others outside.

Then we returned to the thriving metropolis of Bungendore for pies and ice-cream, an excellent way to spend a warm summer afternoon.

Chris Bradley

* * * * * * * * *

Karst: 1. Terrain with special landforms and drainage characteristics due to greater solubility of certain rocks in natural waters than is common. Derived from the geographical name of part of Slovenia.

2. Means by which fly fishermen get the "fly" out into the lake or river. (Editor's note: Crap. This word is spelt "cast".)

Bone Breccia: 1. A breccia (Editor's note: i.e. rock of angular stones cemented by lime) containing many bone fragments. [Scientific attention should be drawn to the finding of such in caves.]

2. Usually used in the exclamation: "Careful! That fall will breccia your bones. (Editor's note: It will only breccia your bones if you pronounce it incorrectly. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, "breccia" is

.....continued overleaf →→

* * WHITE FISH REVISITED * *

Where: Cooleman Plains

When: 1 March 1986

Party: Cavers - Rob Capon
Marc Fauvet
John Kennedy
Camp Follower - Debby Howse

This was to be a follow-on trip from the Australia Day Long Weekend trip in January 1986 (see Speleographiti '85).

I suppose it must be stated, first and foremost, that caving should be as comfortable as possible. So when someone (who shall remain nameless) complains that I've got too much gear, the only suggestion that I can make is: "Maybe you should get a bigger truck, John!".

Anyhow, we set out from Canberra with daylight still showing and hopefully nothing left behind. By the time we arrived at Cooleman, it was dark so we quickly got out the gas lights, the table, the two folding chairs, the folding bed (whose bed was that J.K.?), the barbeque, the charcoal grill (the only way to cook steak), the eskys, the tents, etc, etc.

You may recall the last time, I woke everyone up by accidentally dropping my steel tent poles (three times), so this time I was extra careful not to wake anyone (there was only one combi camper apart from us) - until we switched the TV on, that is. Yes, you read me correctly. We took a TV, and we finally found a use for wire traces - swung up into a tree, they make a nice aerial extension. So we watched "Seeing Things" while we cooked tea. R.C. and D.H. arrived late after close of transmission so they missed out on bush TV viewing.

The morning came and with some rain already fallen and possibly more due, we quickly disposed of breakfast and got the caving packs ready. Wet suits all round, four ladders, God knows how much rope, cameras in waterproof containers, lunch and the usual paraphenalia of lights, helmets, tapes, whaletails, etc. We had managed to fill six packs (two each as D.H. wasn't caving), so we roped (no pun intended) D.H. into helping carry some of it down to the cave.

Three-quarters of an hour later (and suffering from exhaustion), we struggled into our wetsuits, and talked joyously about the forthcoming immersion into the freezing waters.

.....continued overleaf →→→

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Bone Breccia cont'd:

pronounced "breksha". A better exclamation would then be: "A fall like that breccia bones, your camera, and your Arnott's Milk Arrowroot biscuits, if you're unlucky enough to be carrying them in your pack at the time you decide to dip out.)

3. Result of fall in 2. is bone breccia (Editor's note: Not necessarily. See above.)

Well, forewarned is forearmed, but the water was still cold, but then again we had to make several trips through it and attempt to keep the packs as dry as possible. So we struggled through the water, into a small chamber, up past the gate, across the mud ledge, up past the knotted rope into a hole in the wall, and then ..... (Sound familiar? It should, that was all I told you last time).

And now for the revelation. Along a muddy passage for about fifteen to twenty feet. Rig an anchor point and abseil twenty-five feet into the darkness. Poke around and negotiate a mud slide into ..... you guessed it ..... **more** cold water (Ah! The joys of a warm wet suit). Well, we poked around a bit more, negotiated a partial duck-under and finally arrived at a sump. This is it. There's just no way through unless the water level drops.

So we took a casual return to daylight, stopping to take heaps of pikkies of people immersed up to their necks in cold water. This may seem like a short trip (considering we probably only went 250 metres as the crow flies or the worm burrows, I don't mind), but with all the gear and mud and water, we were still four hours underground.

After a pleasant lunch (in the sun!), we washed the gear, rigged an already wet rope to some stout trees, and abseiled over the waterfall. Oh, what joy to be carefree. (We actually put it down as a training session in case we have to abseil a wet pitch in a cave.)

All in all, it was a great day, but this cave is proving a hard nut to crack.

Marc Fauvet

* * * * * *

Cave Breathing:

1. Movement of air in and out of cave entrance at intervals.

2. The associated air currents within the cave.

3. Heavy breathing just before total panic when your light gives up the ghost

Cave Fill:

1. Transported materials such as silt, clay, sand and gravel which cover the bedrock floor, or partially or wholly block some part of a cave.

2. Boy Scouts at Wee Jasper on a long weekend.

Choke:

1. Rock debris or cave fill blocking part of a cave.

2. Error in abseiling when the rope tries to use your neck as a friction bar.

CAVE RESCUE 1986

When: 8-9 March 1986

Where: Bungonia Caves, N.S.W.

Party: Red - Mark Carson, Neil Rodiger

Green - Grant Anderson, Tony Butt, Paul Hardiman, Kathy Henderson, Rod Horne

Cave Rescue is held every year about early March at Bungonia caves. Participants are put into three divisions - red, green and yellow - depending on their degree of caving experience and expertise (i.e. rigging, etc). Red is for people with little caving experience, green for moderate cavers and yellow for very experienced cavers. A red exercise must be attended before anyone can be placed in the green division.

The object in all cases is to give participants an appreciation of the difficulties of rescuing persons from caves, not to make them experienced rescuers. It is hoped that most people taking part in these exercises will never need to be involved in a serious rescue.

The weekend was very useful for brushing up on, and sharing experiences about, first aid techniques. It certainly increased our awareness of the care needed when caving - even a sprained ankle or wrist can make the trip out of the cave very difficult, particularly since caving uses almost all of your body - squeezing, climbing and crawling, as you may have noticed after an expedition. In anticipation of minor accidents such as the above, Cave Rescue organizers suggested that there is adequate space for a couple of triangular bandages or a space blanket between the helmet insert and the helmet (Editor's note: How about a head?). So don't feel as if you are holding the trip up by wanting a belay or a hand line - the delay and aggravation caused by any mishap would be far greater.

Kathy Henderson

* * * * * * * * *

Doline: 1. A closed depression draining underground in karst, of simple but variable form, e.g. cylindrical, conical, bowl- or dish-shaped. From a few to many hundreds of metres in dimension.

2. Queue of unemployed at the C.E.S.

Fault: 1. A fracture separating two parts of a once continuous rock body with relative movement along the fault plane.

2. Entering a cave without your light.

Free Pitch: 1. Where a rope or ladder hangs vertically and free at the walls.

2. As opposed to a "toll pitch". The government has yet to introduce these as there is some difficulty in collecting the revenue.

* * BEGINNERS' TRIP * *

Where: Wee Jasper

When: Monday 17 March 1986, Canberra Day

Party: Marc Fauvet, Richard Greenwood, Jeanette Henderson, Kathy Henderson, Chris Bradley, etc (Editor's note: The rest of the people who attended this trip shall remain nameless, not because of some devastatingly embarrassing habits they indulged in while on this outing, but because we cleverly forgot to note your names.)

We had a marvellous turnout for this trip of about 16 people. Although its purpose was primarily to introduce beginners to the thrills of caving and abseiling, people attending varied from complete novices to quite experienced.

Basically, we split into two groups and tried to cover Dip Cave (extensions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) and Signature Cave and do some abseiling and laddering at Devils' Punchbowl: a 15 foot pitch for a warm up and a 100 foot pitch with ladder up and self-belay for the more adventurous.

Our group got so enthused about abseiling that we didn't get to Signature Cave but the other group managed all three activities. Overall a very successful outing.

N.B. We don't have a complete list of peole who attended this trip (see Editor's note above). So please inform Jeanette, Chris or myself sometime at a meeting or on 472285 for your name to appear in the next "Speleograffiti". (Editor's note: Too late. You've missed your chance at infamousy. What you are reading <u>is</u> the next issue of "Speleograffiti".)

Kathy Henderson

* * * * * * * * *

Leg:

1. A part of a survey traverse between two successive stations.

2. Devices attached to body which greatly assist in exploring caves (especially when used in pairs).

Marble:

1. Limestone recrystallized and hardened by pressure and heat.

2. Best to lose these if you are serious about caving.

Plan:

1. A plot of the shape and details of a cave projected vertically onto a horizontal plan at a reduced scale.

2. Attempt to organize a caving trip. By definition, this is never adhered to.

* * TRIP REPORT * *

Where: Wyanbene

When: 6 April 1986

Party: Chris Bradley, John Deen, Susan Downing, Geoff Dunn, Andrew Edwards, Jonathon Evans, Richard Greenwood, Kathy Henderson, John McKinnon, John Stanner, Jamie Stephenson

This modest party of eleven (most of the time) headed toward Wyanbene from the ANU at approximately 8 a.m., myself arriving slightly late as usual. We all charged into the cave at 10.30 a.m. At 10.35 a.m. we were all somewhat damp (with the wet stretch still to come).

We reached the climb to the "breezy hole" (Editor's note: Blowhole?) just before the ladder pitch. Through the hole we waited for a ladder and belay rope. As luck would have it, seven of us piled up before the ladder arrived. For two members, it was their first ladder climb (actually a descent) and for one member, it was his first cave.

Jamie took a party of five ahead to meet us at Caesars. When the rest of us had completed the pitch we followed on through knee deep water, squeezes, and crawls until we came across another light in front of us. A little puzzled at first, we found the other five had not found the way. We pointed out to them a little hole and crawl into a river.

All of us crawled up the wet stretch amongst the crinoids (pre-Cambrian fossilised animals) with exclamations of "Gosh, the water's cold!" and "Heavens, how do you move in this jolly narrow passage without getting totally wet!" or words to that effect (Editor's note: I bet!).

Reaching the wetstretch bypass, it was found the best way to get out of it was to stand on someone else's head, or else it was very awkward. (Editor's note: I would think that the person who had his head stood on would be very awkward for awhile, too!). Much chocolate was consumed after we all got through.

The Lavatory Pan and other squeezes proved equally interesting and finally we arrived at Rockfall Chamber. Consensus was to have lunch (1.30 p.m.) and then continue onto Caesars without packs as we wouldn't have time to go on to Frustration Lake - this was a beginner's trip after all. Groundhog (Andrew) did, however, go exploring and we all put helmets on in case he dropped rocks on us.

After lunch we went through Jewel Cave and into Caesars, to the bottom of Caesars, through the knee deep water passage and up the mud slopes. Much fun was had watching some members having great difficulty climbing the mud slopes, and even more fun watching them losing a foothold and sliding back down the slope very rapidly (Editor's note: Comes from having your head stood on).

..... continued overleaf→→

At about 2.30 p.m. we started to head back. Groundhog took the lead. After awhile, I enquired where they were all going. All returned from heading off the wrong way and we had a head count. Ten. "We've lost one!". We all stopped for about five minutes until Groundhog had decided no one was behind him and would return. We gave him a heavy pack to carry to try and slow him down. I'm not sure if it worked.

About seven of us visited Helectite Chamber on the way out. It was very pretty. We were at the cars around 5.00 p.m. After packing up, everyone had a "Variation" or two (no, Grant, they were chocolate biscuits!) (Editor's note: Do I detect smut here?) before returning home to a nice hot shower.

Chris Bradley

* * * * * * * * *

Pot (-Hole): 1. A vertical or nearly vertical shaft or chimney open to the surface.

2. Place to stash your marijuana.

Spring: 1. A natural flow of water from rock or soil onto the land surface or into a body of surface water.

2. One of several pieces of your car likely to break on travelling over rough roads to caving areas.

Tufa: 1. Spongy or vesicular calcium carbonate deposited from spring, river or lake waters. Cf. travertine.

2. Description of cave as an excuse for turning back: "It's too tufa to go on." (Editor's note: According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, this word is pronounced "toofa", not "tougher" as the author would imply. A better excuse for turning back would then be: "It's tufa to the end and I'm cold, wet and tufaking tired to go on!")

THE CHARGER SAGA

The law of electronics:

> "Every component contains a certain amount of smoke - and when a component has no more smoke in it, that is, the smoke has been let out, it won't work anymore."

Well, folks, it's true. The oldham type T charger now has no more smoke left in it. This is partially due to a 250 volt fuse being in the 12 volt fuse holder (the fuse is still OK) and partially due to the charging plug being broken so the plug would fit into the charger either way around. And it was, in fact, in the wrong way around. The other two 5 amp chargers worked OK, so the beginner's trip to Wee Jasper went well.

Chris Bradley

* * * SAFE CAVING * * *
(Prepared by our Safety Officer, Rob Capon)

Caving, like many other activities, has its inherent dangers which, with some forethought and commonsense, can easily be minimized. When embarking on a caving trip, either for the first or one thousand and first time, the following points should be considered.

1. FOOTWARE

. Stout boots offering all-round foot protection and good 'grip in the wet' are to be encouraged. Leather-soled boots or boots equipped with hobnails offer little grip on slippery surfaces and should be avoided. If laddering, beware of boots with open hook eyelets as these can easily become entangled with the ladder wire. A common complaint amongst regular cavers is shrinkage of their favourite boots. Caving boots do tend to get abused so perhaps your $200 hiking boots would be best left at home.

2. CLOTHING

. A pair of heavy cotton overalls ('trogsuit') worn over shorts, T-shirt or shirt and possibly a jumper is common apparel for the fashionable caver. Zip pockets should be avoided as these will invariably clog after the first couple of trips. Bright coloured trogsuits provide a welcome relief from the subtle hues of brown, brown, black and white, commonly found in caves and make the occupant more difficult to lose. In certain circumstances, a light wet-suit worn under the trogsuit offers added protection from the cold. Exposure is clearly a potential hazard when caving and all cavers should be aware of the signs, symptoms and treatment of hypothermia.

3. HELMET

. Every caver MUST wear a helmet. For a helmet to be totally effective, it must be equipped with a functional chinstrap. Helmets come in two basic designs: the 'construction' type and the 'climbing' type. The former with its visor-like front can obstruct vision in low passages and is best modified by removal of the visor. The latter type is ideal for caving even if somewhat more expensive and fragile. Headlamp brackets are usually mounted on the front of the helmet and should be done so with nylon bolts inserted from the inside pointing outwards, for obvious reasons.

4. LIGHT SOURCES

. Arguably the most important items. Every caver should carry three independent light sources, any one of which should be capable of providing sufficient light to safely exit the cave. Typical light sources are:

(a) Miner's light: A two-cell lead acid battery carried around the waist on a belt. The headlamp, attached via a bracket to the helmet, incorporates both low (~ 0.25 amp) and high (~ 1.0 amp)

beams. When fully charged and in good condition, a miner's lamp can be expected to provide at least 10 hrs of high beam. If immersed in water, excessively heated by storing in strong sunlight or otherwise abused, the battery can leak acid. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should these lights be packed near ropes, tape or other perishable climbing equipment. An excellent primary light source.

(b) Torch: Only choose torches that are both waterproof and robust. Establish before going underground the maximum duration of the batteries and, if necessary, provide a spare set of batteries and possibly globes. If the torch cannot be conveniently mounted on the helmet, it should be equipped with either a wrist or shoulder strap. 'Dolphin' torches are quite good and have the added advantage that spare globes, matches and candles can be stored inside them.

(c) Carbide lamp: Operate on the combustion of acetylene produced by the reaction of calcium carbide rock with water. A commonly used light source prior to the availability of portable and robust electric systems. Carbide lamps come in a variety of sizes, the smallest of which can be mounted on the helmet bracket. Although they can be recharged with calcium carbide rock at any time, the caustic waste material must be carried out of the cave and disposed of sensibly. Environmentally less attractive than electric systems but well suited as secondary light sources. As with miners' lights, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should spare carbide or carbide lamps be packed in close proximity to perishable climbing equipment. Acetylene is highly reactive and toxic.

(d) Candles: Useful light source for lunch breaks, etc., when conserving electrics. A half a dozen candles and matches carried in a robust watertight container take up very little space and are always worth carrying.

5. CAVING PACK

. As a rule, it is best not to fill the pockets of your 'trogsuit' or clothing with goodies since in crawls or squeezes they can be, at the very least, very uncomfortable or, at worst, be damaged. More conveniently, a small daypack can be used. On longer trips, this pack can also be used to carry lunch and a water bottle. However, keep in mind that if your backup light sources, etc. are in a pack, it is no good leaving it somewhere while you go off exploring.

6. LADDERING AND SRT

. Vertical sections of a cave not safely negotiated by free climbing are usually tackled in one of two ways: laddering or SRT (single rope technique). Before entering a cave, an experienced and informed trip leader will have ascertained the levels of expertise within the party, equipment requirements, and prepared accordingly. As SRT requires specialized skills and expensive personal equipment, the most common technique for negotiating vertical sections within a cave is laddering. The

pitch will usually be rigged by an experienced member of the party and a belay organized. The best way to learn about laddering, belaying and SRT is by practical experience, preferably before being called upon to perform underground.

7. CARE OF EQUIPMENT

. Although caving equipment such as ropes, ladders, tapes, traces, carabiners, etc. stand up to quite rugged treatment, this is no excuse to abuse them. The useful lifetime of these expensive items can be significantly reduced if they are mishandled or used incorrectly. Consideration must be given when storing, transporting or using any equipment. As a guide:

Ropes and Tapes

MUST NOT.... (a) be stored in direct sunlight, i.e. the back window of a car.

(b) be brought into contact with acid, petrol, carbide, alcohol or any substance which may cause accelerated degradation.

(c) have mud or dirt ground into them by being walked on.

SHOULD..... (a) be used in conjunction with rope protectors where appropriate.

(b) be stored clean and dry, after use.

Carabiners, Abseiling and Prussiking Equipment

MUST NOT.... (a) be subjected to excessive impacts, i.e. being dropped, even as little as 3 m, onto a rock. This could result in hairline fractures which may only become obvious at a later date, possibly while you are dangling over a 30 m precipice. Suspect equipment must be clearly tagged at the time and reported to the Safety Officer.

Ladders

SHOULD..... (a) be unrolled carefully so as not to become twisted inside out.

Remember: you trust your life to this equipment so show it the appropriate degree of consideration.

8. CALLS

. A number of ritualized calls are used in caving, much the same as rock climbing, e.g. on being belayed up a ladder climb:

UP ROPE - This indicates to the belayer that you are secured to the end of the rope and require excess rope to be taken up.

THAT'S ME - Excess rope has been taken up.

ON LADDER - Foot on the first rung and ready to climb.

CLIMB WHEN READY - This response from the belayer confirms that he is ready to belay you should you commence climbing.

CLIMBING - I'm on the ladder and climbing.

UP ROPE - If used while climbing, indicates to the belayer that the rope is too slack and should be taken up. THAT'S ME will, of course, indicate when enough has been taken up.

SLACK - The belayer is over eager and virtually pulling you up the ladder by hauling in the belay rope too tightly. The belayer will ease off and give you more rope. NEVER use the call TAKE UP SLACK as the belayer may only catch the last word 'SLACK' which could prove disastrous.

FALLING - Somewhat self-explanatory. If called soon enough, it gives the belayer time to prepare for the catch.

BELOW - I've dislodged or dropped some object. Watch out below! Should you be below and hear this call, DON'T LOOK UP!

Whether belaying or climbing, you should be familiar with all these calls. The last call (BELOW) should be used on every occasion an object is dislodged down a slope or pitch, regardless of who dislodged it or whether you think or don't think there's anyone below. Better safe than sorry.

9. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

In addition to those already mentioned, a number of other useful items can be carried into a cave. Most experienced cavers will have their own checklists of useful knick-knacks, which can vary from a rudimentary first aid kit, comprising a couple of aspirins wrapped in foil and rolled in a crepe bandage, to an SLR camera and associated paraphenalia. One item of personal equipment commonly carried is a length of tape ($\geq$ 3 m of 'seatbelt webbing') and a carabiner (with screw locking gate). When fashioned into a waist loop, this enables the wearer to readily belay or be belayed.

IN CONCLUSION

If adhered to, the points raised above should provide a level of preparedness which will raise your confidence and allow you to cave without unnecessary risk. There is, of course, more to learn but the satisfaction that comes with doing something right is well worth the effort. Experienced trip leaders are a source of information. Use them and enjoy caving safely.

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KNOT INTERESTED

Maybe you should be. There are two simple knots which are well worth learning as they will cover over 90% of naughty (sorry, caving) needs. They also have the advantage of being incredibly reliable, visually verifiable and unlikely to fail, short of the rope or tape breaking.

a) The Figure Eight:

This is used in three basic situations, although it is for all intents and purposes the same knot.

(i) to put a loop in a rope (so as to clip on a krab, say);

(ii) to anchor a rope to a "jug handle" or around a tree;

(iii) to join two ropes of equal diameter.

In all of the above situations, you finish up with the same knot, although the method of tying is different (if you're prepared to lift the loop over the tree you can use method (a) in situation 2).

NOTE: These knots use up a surprising amount of rope, so give yourself plenty of rope when tying these knots.

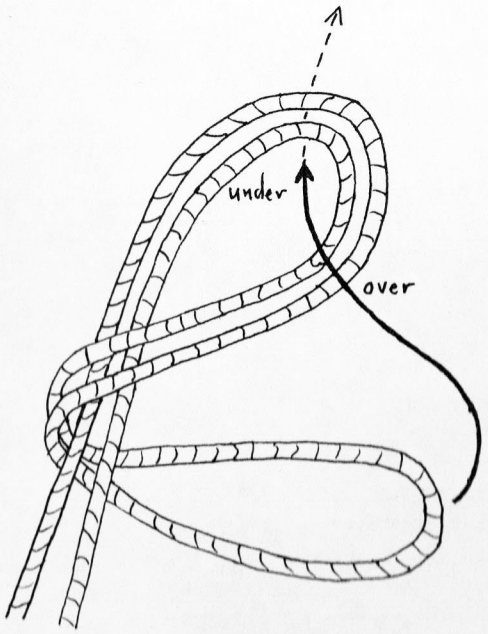
b) The Tape Knot:

This knot is tied in two forms:

(i) to join two ends of a piece of tape together such as in a waist band, or looping around a tree;

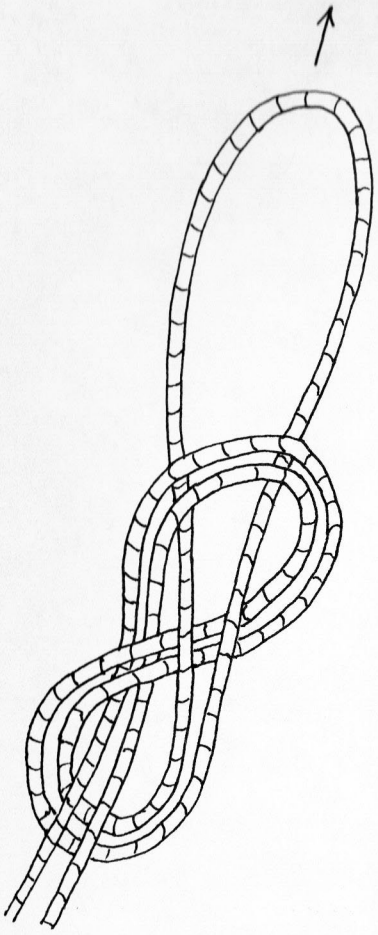
(ii) to put a loop in a piece of tape (often referred to as an overhand loop) such as when making a "sit harness" for abseiling.

THE FIGURE EIGHT



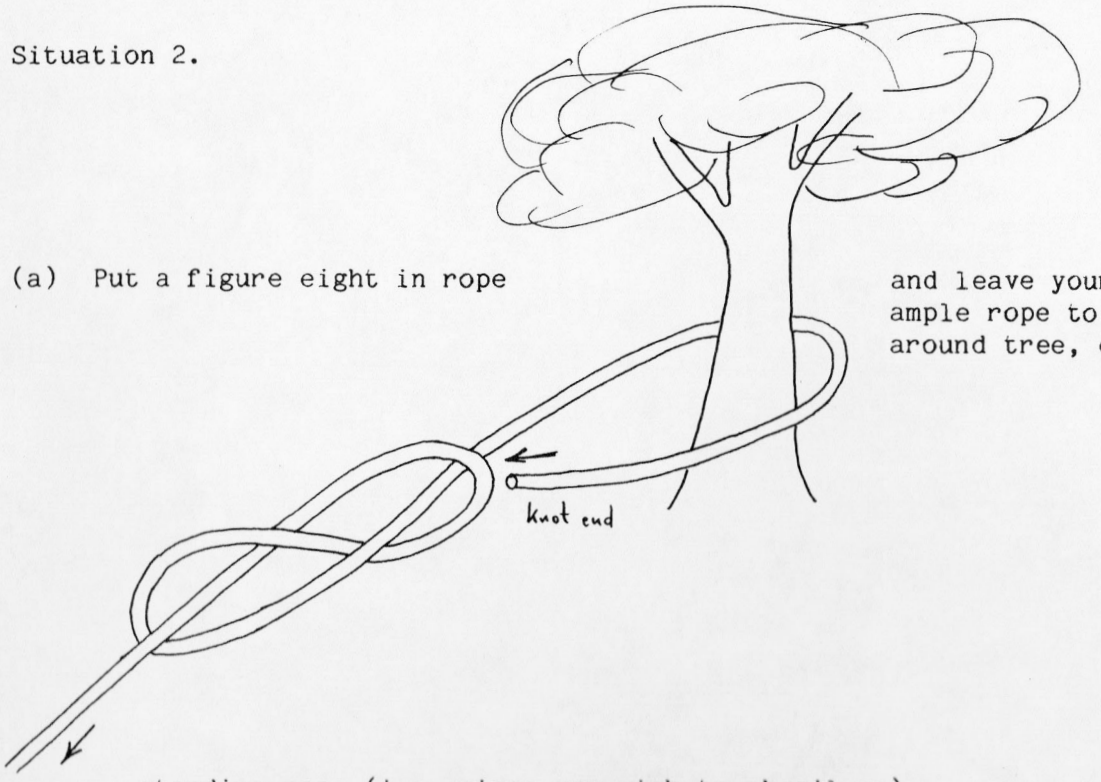
Situation 1.

Feed it through, pull the rope tight and you've completed the knot.



NOTE: If you have made the knot correctly, it should lie flat and the "figure eight" quite visible.

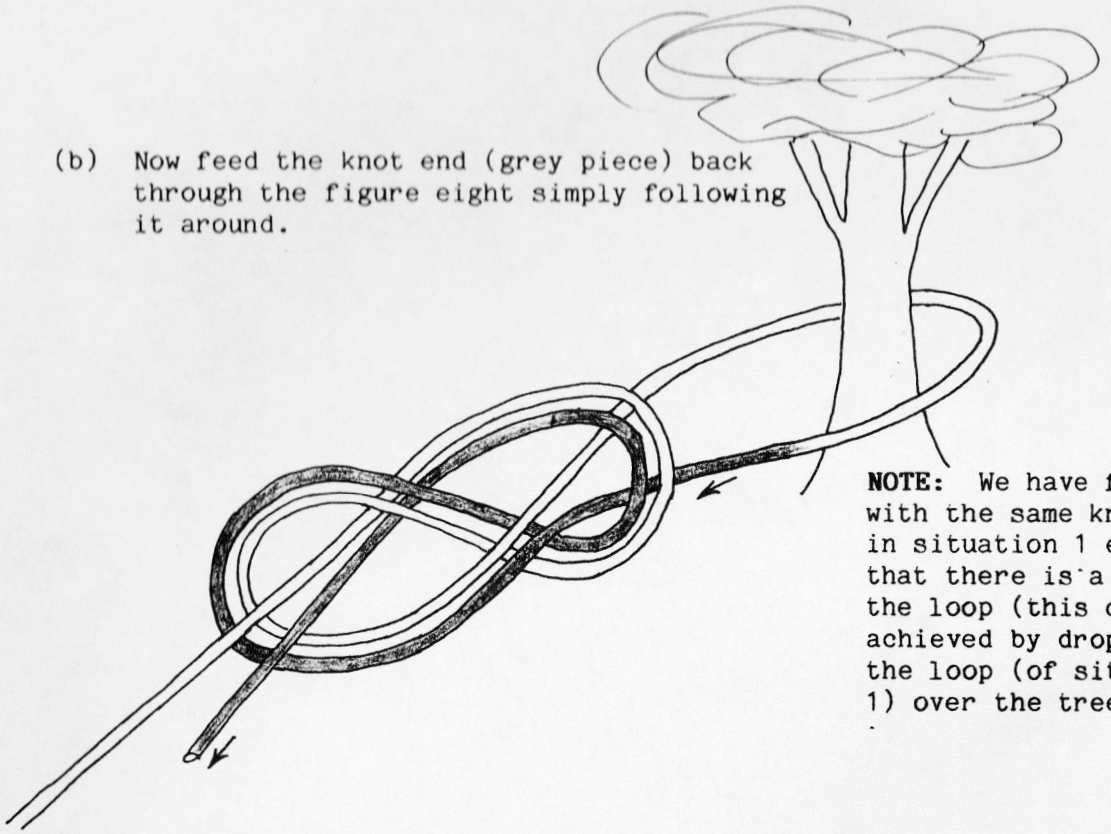
Situation 2.



(a) Put a figure eight in rope and leave yourself ample rope to go around tree, etc.

standing rope (i.e. piece you wish to abseil on)

(b) Now feed the knot end (grey piece) back through the figure eight simply following it around.

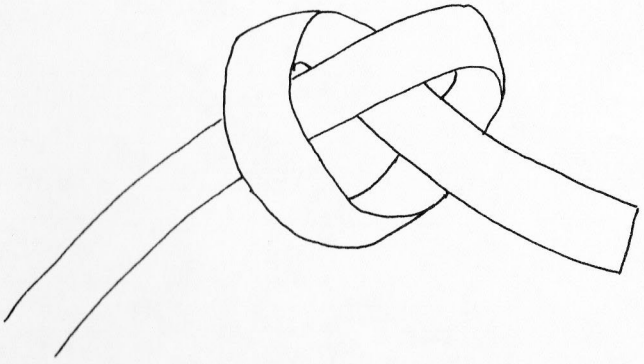


NOTE: We have finished with the same knot as in situation 1 except that there is a tree in the loop (this could be achieved by dropping the loop (of situation 1) over the tree).

Situation 3 is the same knot except that the grey piece is a second rope.

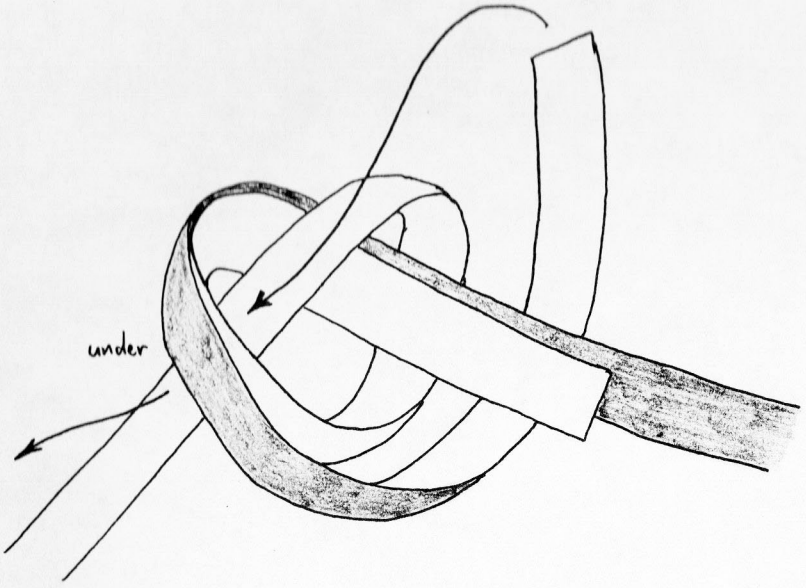
THE HUMBLE TAPE KNOT

(i)



Form a simple knot.

Take other end of tape and feed it back through the knot.



Keep the pieces of tape flat until you actually pull the knot tight.

(ii) The Overhand Knot

(basically the same knot as (i) but tied in one action)