



# CAVERNDISH

*NSG's NEWSLETTER*

*November 2009*

## **Contents:**

- Contacts
- From the Editor
- Myth Buster
- Nettlebed Bookings/Maintenance Account
- Trip Stories by Michael Brewer
- Hut News
- Library & Book Reviews
- Special Feature – Man killer that came from the sky
- 2010 Calendars for sale
- Next meeting
- Trip List

## **Contacts:**

- See website

## **From the Editor:**

Hello everyone and happy reading ☺

For those of you that attended the Labour Weekend NZSS AGM we hope you all had an enjoyable time. It was certainly great to catch up with old friends, make some new friends and of course get underground. The weekend was a great success with a good turn out of about 60 cavers from around the country and some new faces from as far away as France and England.

Saturday Night had us dining well with a great spread from Merle and her crew at the Upper Takaka County Club.

The competitions ran well and trophies were presented to the following

Survey cup, once again went to Bruce Mutton and Michael Brewer for the Beautiful Bulmer Series Extension Survey.

The Photographic competition was cleaned up by Nic Barth taking the Pybus Cup, Hobson Modified Cup and the overall Photographic cup for his beautiful underground photography, well done Nic.

Literary Award went to Darryl Ware for his tales about 20 years of Easter Camping at Patarau. This year a Literary Encouragement award was presented to Ashton Richards for his story about Ashton Villa. It is great to see young people get involved in caving and it would be good to get more stories from our younger cavers.

Arch Narna went to Moira for her antics on the Mexican border.

Congratulations to the winners ☺

After dinner we were all entertained with a very interesting presentation by Yann-Peirre Montelle paleontologist from France.

The weather was reasonably kind to us all weekend, though Monday afternoon saw the bike riders stagger into the hut looking like drowned rats.

The success of the weekend goes out to Andrew and Kevin for being the great Team Leaders that organized the venue, food, trips and competitions for the AGM. Great Work Guys!! Many thanks also to Alison and Rose, the entrance to the hall was fabulous and to Leo and Glennis for preparing the BBQ. For the many others that pitched in and gave a helping hand – A Big Thank you to you too!

Welcome to new members Robyn Croucher, Russell Bromley, Kevin Pascoe, Bevan Thrower, Nancy Bon and Barnaby Fourgous.

Just like to let you all know that NSG Meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at a club member's house.

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> month we like to have a slideshow presentation. The next being a show of our recent Chillagoe Caving Trip.

If you wish to present a slideshow for a future meeting please contact me for an available date.

If you are not a Member of the club (but would like to be) you are still welcome to attend one of our meetings.

Details of the meetings are on NSG's Website Trip List. <http://www.nsg.org.nz/index.htm>  
or alternatively go to the NZSS site and download a Membership form today  
<http://caves.org.nz/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/NZSS/Welcome>

Dawn Wood☺

Stories and articles for future editions gratefully received

In response to last edition's "What Am I" this month we have the:

## **Myth buster**

By Andrew Smith

Calcium Carbide is a manufactured product.

It is produced from Lime and Anthracite Coal. (Anthracite is the name given to a coal that is not tarry or bituminous, it is much harder and often semi-metallic.)

It is heated in exact amounts in an electric arc furnace at extremely high temperatures.

It is produced as an ingot or can be tapped off when liquid.

Calcium Carbide is produced for the production of Acetylene gas, which in its purest form has a pleasant smell and will produce a white flame of 280-candles.

The use of the highest quality raw materials reduces the impurities, which are the reason for the foul smell.

Acetylene was used for domestic and street lighting in various parts of the world (including NZ) but pressure vessels of Acetylene were banned after a number of fatal explosions.

It was found that together with Charcoal and Acetone, Acetylene could be dissolved and pressurised safely.

This process made Acetylene a lot more user friendly.

Before Acetylene the Steel industry was using Hydrogen/Oxygen for welding, cutting but this was slow, as the temperatures were low.

With the advent of safe pressurised Acetylene so came the Oxy Acetylene welding and cutting system that we know today.

## **Nettlebed Maintenance account**

### **The up date on Nettlebed**

For bookings please Contact....**Andrew Smith** ....There are only five sleeping bags in Salvation Hall so it is crucial to your trip to contact Andrew regarding the movements of others.

Andrew Smith [livelife@paradise.net.nz](mailto:livelife@paradise.net.nz)  
Phone 03)5432600 or 0211784160 txting is Ok.

### **For Payments**

Nettlebed Maintenance Account

C/- Andrew Smith

Flat 2 Moutere Highway

RD 1 Upper Moutere.

Nelson

Or

Direct into the Nettlebed account.

12-3158-0173861-00

Please ensure you use your name as a reference.

The normal amount paid is **\$20.00 per person** but larger donations are welcome.

Nettlebed is one of the best through trips in the world, lets keep it that way.

Maintenance is being done on a regular basis. Please let Andrew know if you are able to help.

If you think some work needs doing (Camp site/rigging or anything else) please report to Andrew. This account is dedicated to the maintenance of ropes/rigging/campsite/s and to ensure the cave environment is persevered (i.e. tapping off areas etc.)

## **Trip Stories:**

Or should we call it Michael's story corner ☺

Thank you Michael for the great stories and reports that you send – keep them coming they are always a great read.

## **Ablution Stream Way ( Perseverance ?) Project. Greenlink.**

By Michael Brewer

Over the last 3mths there have been 3 trips down to the end of Greenlink and up a tributary called Ablution stream way. This was so named because in 1992 when Bruce Mutton and Michael Brewer first explored it, Bruce stripped off and had a shower under it to calm his polypro itch!

In 1992 the stream was explored up 150m to a 10m waterfall that was subsequently bolted up. Above this after another 20m of passage a high aven was found with a waterfall coming out of the roof.

No further exploration was attempted until recently when following the remapping of the system and the surrounding Riwaka Catchment caves Bruce Mutton raised the possibility that Ablution Stream Way may be the lower end of Perseverance Cave.

In May 2009 Michael Brewer and Geoff Miles carried out preliminary rerigging and put bolts in for a hand line around the top of the end of Kanga's house and also rigged the 30m pitch which drops into the far Greenlink stream way.

In June 2009 the same two cavers returned and using a 36V electric hammer drill rebolted up the 10m waterfall in Ablution stream way and then went on to climbing up the high aven. After 2 hours of climbing and bolting they attained a ledge about 15m up the aven and left it rigged for later exploration. Altogether they placed about 9 bolts aiding on 10mm dynabolts and placing 10mm stainless steel trubolts for permanent anchors.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009 Bruce Mutton (still in the same polypro!), Andrew Smith and Michael Brewer returned and bolted up another 20m of the aven over 3hrs placing about 18 bolts. The last 10m were under a constant splash from the waterfall. The belay was however from a nice dry ledge and Bruce in his PVC was surprisingly happy. The top was still not visible though there was a side stream coming in about 5m further up with the main water coming from above this. The trip took about 12 hours.

The climb is now up 35m. Exploration is on going and open to all those who are interested or who just want to see this seldom visited part of the cave.

## **A trip to Up Up and Away**

By Michael Brewer

15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Oct 2009

Another 5 day trip. Five days seem suddenly to have become the norm for our group enabling us to get more done for the effort involved in getting there and back. This was also Al Wood's trip to celebrate his return to active caving life after 10 months of adjusting to his second child! The team consisted of Bruce Mutton, Alan Wood, Geoff Miles and myself.

A dubious weather forecast increased the preplanning stress. A window of fine weather looked like it should get us in and a window of fine weather looked like it should get us out never the less a tent fly was left at the Owen river, Bulmer creek junction. The walk in was uneventful other than my socks getting very wet- something I can avoid with my long gumboots when the river is low.

We entered via the Eye in the Sky entrance carrying fairly heavy packs. Alan had obtained a grunty drill recently and following Neil Silverwood's fine example was determined to bolt his way up into something large. The grunty drill however came with a grunty weight! We were also carrying extra gear for camp 2 as part of camp 2 was now in camp 3. Geoff carried in a sleeping bag and I carried in a sleeping mat and plastic sheeting. Then there was the rope, fuel, slings, rapides, bolts ..... We took about 4 ½ hours into camp 2 enjoying the time saved by bypassing the Lion's den. At camp 1 in the Octopus room we 'borrowed' the trangler as we were uncertain regarding the condition of the cookers left in camp 2. The good camp 2 cooker now lived in camp 3.

**Day 2** involved pushing leads and following drafts in the Northern series and South Park. In the upper large passage in the Northern series Bruce aided his way up a 10m climb at the western end but this quickly ended. Alan climbed up a waterfall in the lower western branch of the northern series that went for a few meters then became vertical with no draft. In the South Park area we were once again impressed with the size of the passages and the thought that this must go somewhere. Alan aided his way up the 8C marked on the map at the south western end of South Park but this also closed down within a few meters.

After 12 hours and little to show for our day we returned to camp 2 having decided to go to camp 3 the next day to explore Neil Silverwood's recent find.

**Day 3** saw us wombling our way towards Up Up and Away. We had to take extra fuel and 2 sleeping bags with us. We were a bit worried that we were going to be stopped by the bath tub filling up ( the area at the bottom of the 'mud pitch') as we knew that rain was forecasted. The rivers in the lower levels were all quite full but the bath tub was only lapping at our feet when we went past. Far and Away stream way was very drippy. In the end it took us about 3 hours to camp 3. Alan received an unwanted wetting on one of the pitches and arrived looking a little sadder than the rest of us! Bruce, in his PVC was dry and unnecessarily cheerful.

The camp site was certainly a welcome salvation from the noise and wetness of the stream travel. It has a trendy split level arrangement although going to the toilet in the night involves a couple of slightly awkward climbs above other cavers which with a full bladder could prove interesting.

After a quick lunch we tackled the traverse lines and pitches that Neil and his mob had so skillfully rigged previously. On a couple of occasions we were swinging around on traverse lines 20-40m above the stream. The wetness, noise and exposure took a bit of a toll on the team and to avoid a total dousing under a waterfall Geoff and Alan turned back to the camp and Bruce and I continued to the end and started surveying the Lonely Light passage and Neil's high bypass to the Lonely Light falls. After 3-4 hours of exploring and surveying Bruce and I returned to camp 3 and a most welcome dinner.

**Day 4** dawned with a little less eagerness as seen on the previous mornings. A variable amount of sleep and warmth had been experienced over night though most of us had dried out. Geoff opted for a pit day and so the remaining 3 of us travelled back over Neil's high rope course and back up the stream in significantly lower flow than the day before. We surveyed forward from where we had finished the day before at the end of a high traverse line. We immediately had to rig down a 20m pitch to the Lonely Light stream way which we spent the following 6 hours surveying up. The stream was not quick travel being narrow, windy with lots of projections (chert) designed to generate Aspiring Enterprises income.

We surveyed about 350m finishing at 4pm just upstream from a second confluence. We dropped packs and explored for another 2 hours. Alan and Bruce went up the main stream for another 2-300m to find that it ultimately sumped soon after a waterfall came in from the roof. I followed up the side stream for 20 minutes then left it by climbing up into the rift following drafts that ended in a rockfall. The stream continued upstream but I went back down and after climbing high again near the confluence I found a series of 2 x 2m phreatics. I found Bruce and Al and together we explored about 100m of phreatics that were most pleasant but didn't break into anything large.

We returned to camp 3 about 8pm and stood around eating and trying to dry out enviously looking at Geoff who, somewhat insensitively, declared himself dry, warm and rested! Bruce was almost as happy though he was a bit damper than the day before due to having had forceful intimate contact with a piece of chert. His PVC had come off second best and his back was now open to the elements. Sympathy for his situation was notably lacking!

**Day 5** and the alarm went off at 0430. The trip out was really very uneventful taking about 8 hours. A bit of miscommunication had Bruce waiting for us and us waiting for Bruce though in different parts of the cave for about 20 minutes! Memory lapse saw us forget to take the trangier we had borrowed back to camp 1. Sorry camp 1 dwellers but it is only 1 ½ hours (one way) with a light pack to pick up the cooker from camp 2.

The day was initially only a little overcast but then clouded over and started raining. The rivers however were lower than when we went in and presented no problems when it came to crossing them. I spent the last hour thinking that somehow I had left our \$1000 laser surveying tool behind at camp 3 only to find it between the closed cell foam pieces down the back of my pack. The cars were a welcome sight and after some back slapping and general congratulations we parted.

The trip was a hard one with heavy packs, long days and wet conditions. We surveyed over 500m of new passage bringing the length of Up Up and Away to over 1km. I suspect there is at least another km of passage to survey and explore.

## **Beech Tree Entrance Blasting.**

By Michael Brewer

31/10/09

This afternoon James Alker and I returned to what will hopefully one day be another entrance into the Middle Earth system. Between James, Stuart Lewis and myself about 10 hours has now been spent perfecting the art of capping. About 2 body lengths of progress have been made but the sighting of large passage still escapes us. A corner is about 3m away and with luck around this the cave will go vertical for 200m and the large passage above rock fall 3 in Greenlink stream way will be reached! Dreams of an obsessed caver or a real possibility??

This story began a year or 2 ago when Bruce Mutton and I were trudging up the rock fall on the way to Conflagration hall in Middle Earth. We both remarked on the large number of beech leaves that were strewn around and seemed to have been washed in by a waterfall coming from the roof 20m above us. Did this mean that there was a fairly direct route to the surface?

Then the Therion age began and when Bruce introduced Google Earth to Therion we suddenly had a map of Middle Earth that showed a large solitary beech tree sitting directly above Conflagration hall. Enter Oz and Debbie, always keen on a good bush bash through gorse and bracken. They returned with the story of having reached the beech tree seen on Google Earth and believe it or not almost at the base of the tree was an obvious drafting cave looking entrance. The only catch was that after a couple of body lengths into the cave a small horizontal T-tube was reached that halted exploration. Chemical enhancement was required! We have learnt a lot about capping. Initially we used yellow Ramset nail gun charges but soon got bored with the pebbles they blew off and after trying 2 yellow charges at once we progressed to bigger bang. Joe Sydney from Australia advised us strongly to go straight to the biggest bang but for awhile we were content with using double red caps. Today we returned with the purple

caps labelled 'very strong'. After one tentative blasting using a single cap we quickly moved onto using double purple and were very pleased with the result.

The basic recipe is now: prepare a single 8mm hole, clean well, mix with a couple of purple bangers, cover and whack fiercely until a loud popping sound is obtained. Remove good size pieces of rock when cooled.

Progress will now hopefully be swift.....

Anyone interested in advancing their experience in this field please feel encouraged to come along!

Michael Brewer

## **Hut News:**

Spring Cleaning, Painting, gorse eradication, all needing to be done around the hut.

Contact Oz if you can give some time for some general maintenance around the hut.

**CAMP FIRES ARE NOT PERMITTED – DO NOT LIGHT THEM!**

### **Hut Fees:**

**Members            \$4.00 per night**

**Non Members     \$6.00 per night**

## **Library**

The Library has quite a collection of Caving related books and old journals. If you wish to view the library or take some reading material home then contact Jane to arrange a time.

New addition to the library "Ranger Murphy" by Ross Curtis

MISSING - Descent magazine issue 206. If you have this magazine please let Jane know ASAP

## **Book Reviews by Gary Willis**

### **Rocks and Hard Places - Takaka Hill**

I have been lucky enough to be the first person to read the clubs copy of this book by Cliff Turley. The author has obviously done a lot of research into the subject and the story of Takaka hill starts with the Maori who had a track into the area. Settlers were the main driving force behind the creation of several tracks over the hill via valleys such as the Remeka and the Upper Takaka valley.

The real story though is of the men and women who forced their way into the area of Takaka hill and made their homes in its harsh environment. Cliff Turley has done a wonderful job of bringing these characters to life and explaining how they made their living either from working on the road when it was upgraded from a Bridle Track, or farming the harsh Karst lands through to our generation of cavers, climbers, hang glider pilots or Bed and Breakfast owners.

There are stories from the Takaka hill schools; Public works department camps and the Rat Trap hotel further afield to Asbestos cottage and the Cobb through to Multi sports and the relatively recent Gathering dance parties. If you have questions about Takaka Hill then this is the book to read. I give it 5\* out of 5\*.

### **Ranger Murphy by Ross Curtis**

NSG has a brand new copy of this brilliant book by Ross Curtis detailing his life as a ranger with the forest service in the North West Nelson forest park (now Kahurangi National park). The book details his life as a ranger and incorporates many stories of working in the park, SAR rescues, hut building, tramping characters and some small parts on caving on Mt Owen around the Curtis Ghyll cave.

Although this is book number five I found it to be a complete work in its own right and can be read without reading the earlier books. It is both light hearted and entertaining all the while maintaining the sense of drama and latent power of Mother Nature. It is a worthy read for anyone who loves the outdoors especially those who like the Kahurangi.

Ross keeps the reader entertained especially with his nemesis Murphy never far away it was easy to imagine being out there with Ross and I'm sure we can all sympathise as Murphy is always waiting to pounce wherever we are. I recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the outdoors in whatever capacity.

## Special Feature:



# The man - killer that came from the sky

## Stories of the Land

By TOM O'CONNOR - Taranaki Daily News (22/6/09)

Haast's eagle: There is evidence that it could fell mighty moa and that it was still flying New Zealand skies when Maori first arrived. Could it be behind the legend of Pouakai the monster?

Tales of a fearsome flying monster, which was said to have terrorised the people of northern Taranaki in ancient times, may have been a lot more than the imaginings of storytellers around the evening fireplace.

Pouakai the monster, sometimes also known as Hokioi, was a fabled flying beast which would snatch unwary children who ventured out too early in the mornings or stayed away from their homes late in the evenings. These stories are part of the tribal lore of most Taranaki, Tainui and Whanganui tribes.

One such story was told to John White in the late 1880s.

"For some years one of the huge creatures had been terrorising the people of an inland village in the hills north-east of Taranaki mountain. Although its wings made a loud noise as it flew, it was so fast that several people had been caught and killed.

"A visiting chief, Te Hauotawera, saw how afraid the people were and offered to destroy the beast, provided a group of men would follow his instructions.

"This was agreed and the party went out one dark night to a large pool near the lair of the taniwha and covered it with a network of manuka saplings and large fern fronds.

"The men then hid under the network with long sharp spears.

"When daylight came Te Hauotawera stepped out of hiding to taunt the man-killer and lure him into an attack.

"Before long the sound of huge wings could be heard and the brave young chief managed to get under the sapling network just as the huge talons reached for him.

"The hidden men thrust their spears upwards and after a long struggle the pouakai lay dead."

The story is little different to many such tales of dragons, monsters and heroes from throughout the world, but this one may well be true.

When the Ngati Toa chief Te Rauparaha sought the assistance of Te Atiawa during his great migration out of the Waikato region in 1821, he composed a song for his messenger to sing. In it he refers to the loud booming noise the wings of Hokioi made. He also described the wings of Hokioi as being rua mano, or two fathoms long.

This was a clear indication that both tribes were well aware of Hokioi or Pouakai and its massive size.

In their book *The Lost World of the Moa*, paleontologists Richard Holdaway and Trevor Worthy describe the extinct Haast's eagle as the largest and most powerful eagle to have ever flown.

Adult females would have tipped the scales at about 13kg, much heavier than any other known bird of prey.

These huge eagles had exceptionally powerful feet and talons bigger than tiger claws, which allowed them to attack birds much larger than themselves.

Bones of the largest moa, which sometimes weighed up to 100kg and more, show clear evidence of having been killed by a huge bird of prey.

Moa pelvis bones have been discovered with huge holes made by the eagle's talons, which would have penetrated 50mm of skin and muscle before punching through heavy bone. A modern comparison would allow Haast's eagle to kill a dairy cow with ease.

Dr Holdaway says there is also clear evidence that these big eagles were still flying when the first Maori arrived here.

Eagle bones were worked into various tools and some show marks where the flesh was cut away. He says the birds were certainly big enough and strong enough to kill people as they were bigger than the modern-day Mongolian golden eagles, which have been known to kill the falconers who fly them.

A fascinating twist to the tale of the fabled Pouakai is that their bones have only ever been found in the South Island and the scientists are reasonably sure they never inhabited the North Island.

There is no way of knowing then how Pouakai became part of the folklore of the Taranaki and Tainui people. Perhaps the taniwha is a tribal memory of another place and another time long ago. Perhaps the remains of North Island Pouakai lie hidden in a final resting place yet to be found. Perhaps also, somewhere high in the craggy mountains of the North Island, a huge flesh-eating bird with powerful talons still keeps watch over the valleys far below.

Although the Pouakai Range, to the north-west of Mt Taranaki, shares the name with the feared monster or taniwha of ancient times it was named after the house posts of Ruatawhito and Ruatupua, two founding ancestors of the Taranaki people.

\* TOM O'CONNOR is an author, journalist and historian with a special interest in pre- European Maori and early European settlement. He retired from front line journalism last year to record the history of D Company 28 Maori Battalion and finish a series of novels on the life of Te Rauparaha.

Special Thanks to the Editor and Author for allowing the publication of this article into the Caverndish Newsletter.

Jonathan MacKenzie Editor  
Taranaki Daily News

## **2010 Caving Calendars for sale**

If you are interested in purchasing a beautiful A3 size calendar featuring stunning photography of caves around the world Contact Leo who is making a bulk order. (You may have seen past years calendars at the hut.)

This calendar features a photograph of Harwood Hole captured by Max Wisshak German Photographer and assisted by Andrew, Leo, Dion and myself during his visit last year.

Cost is 15.90 euro. The current exchange rate at time of publishing this article puts that around \$32.NZD plus freight.

**Leo is wanting to get this order underway so don't delay**

[leo\\_v@xtra.co.nz](mailto:leo_v@xtra.co.nz)

or phone 035441355

## **Next Meeting:**

Gary Willis' place  
9 Brunner Street  
Nelson

See you there  
Dawn Wood  
Editor ☺

If you wish to be removed from this mailing list please contact the Editor [dawnw@clear.net.nz](mailto:dawnw@clear.net.nz)