

Date: 11/10/04
Caves: C-727 and C-728
Participants: Phil Singleton, Darren Brooks.

We located C-727 and I free climbed in whilst Phil rigged up his vertical gear in the expectation that it would be a deep hole. It didn't sound deep and my hopes weren't too high. It is a 3m deep circular shaft with a slightly constricting entrance. I did a quick sketch and we

Trip report to the Cape Range. By Paul Hosie.

Reprinted from the WASG Informer. (with some editing)

Date: 30-31/10/04
Caves: C-452, C-215
Participants: Paul Hosie, Dean Slater, Cath Gyr

and Darren Brooks.

Dean Slater and I just got back from a very busy and exciting weekend at Exmouth (NW WA) where we dived and video'd Cameron's Cave and Cave C-215.

We also did some walking to look for more caves which was largely unsuccessful but very spectacular with views of the Ningaloo Reef and a beautiful cool sea breeze to encourage us (as well as some ice cold beers back at the car!).

Cameron's Cave was physically very demanding, not because of the distance or size of the cave but because it is very hot (29°C), humid and the presence of CO₂ made it that much harder. We got some video footage of a single underwater chamber (8m diameter x 2m) though the most spectacular features were the calcite rafting and the upside-down rimpoles on the roof of the cave near the water level - very beautiful.

C-215 proved to have a few surprises in store for us once again. Currently it is the only true diveable cave (known about) on the Cape Range. The cave is a rich fauna habitat both above and below water where there are over 300m of underwater passage, the first 90m is on average 3m deep, and then averages 10m deep to the end terminal chamber. The cave trends generally N-NW and is, in my opinion one of the most difficult cave dives in the country due to the very restrictive nature of the passages and the sharp protruding rock of the tunnel walls. Anything less than a perfectly streamlined sidemount rig will see the diver getting caught up continuously, and believe me – we were !!

The cave was video'd from start to end on Saturday morning including the floor hole down to 20m where the best lead in the cave starts. The video footage from my new 3CCD camera and Wills Housing is pretty good I reckon! The only other likely option of continuation in the cave is to dig out the rock rubble and boulders from the floor of the Terminal Chamber. This would require a stage tank and possibly a lift bag, though the potential is good.

The floor hole lead was explored by Dean on Sunday, 31/10/04, following a brief foray into an otherwise impossibly tiny floorhole. This was very kind of him as no-one else has absolutely any reason to repeat this

effort now! So, once Dean headed into the 'correct' hole he tied off and cruised straight through the restriction I excavated two years ago and travelled 20m along a small horizontal passage heading north at -20m depth. At the end of this, Dean said: "then the passage drops through another floor hole down to -22m into another horizontal tunnel heading to the NW that is bigger and it goes off. I could see another 20m and it wasn't getting any smaller!"

As you can imagine, this is very exciting, especially as prior to Cyclone Vance, which devastated Exmouth in early 2002, the floor hole to -20m actually stopped at -18.4m in a silt floor. The cyclonic rains flushed this hole out and we are now diving in as 'new' a diveable passage as possible !

For even more enormously huge excitement (sit down Darren!), the thing that may change history was the discovery (by Cathy) after Saturday's dive of a small scorpion dead in the edge of a pool of water near the dive start. If this proves to be troglobitic (the specimen is being provided to Dr Bill Humphreys at WA Museum) it will be the first one discovered on the Australian mainland. We (Darren or I) will keep you posted on this.

(Ed: Bill Humphreys did report back on this scorpion with the comment, "Thank you for the scorpion and prey. Unfortunately the scorpion, a buthid, is not a trog. However, the prey item is a trog Nocticola which makes a very interesting record of an epigeal predator working in the troglo world. So the scorpion can't be the one I dropped all those years ago in '97!")

Words of Appreciation:

Darren Brooks is the local WASG member who made it all possible by accommodating, feeding and providing us with sherpa (thanks Cathy) to lug gear. We thank him very muchly and wish him every success with his new vacuum dilating machine. Jenny Carey of CALM, Exmouth was also instrumental in providing access for us to do this work. A thank you letter, trip report and copy of the video footage will be provided for CALM's use at the Milyering Visitor Centre or as they wish. I will put this report onto trimixdivers with some pix in it shortly. When we get the video edited, I will flog it to anyone who is interested !

Paul Hosie



Kimberley teaser # 5. (is anyone getting bored with this?)

At KN -137. And just who are these ~~sheep~~ ~~stag~~....., oops, er, New Zealand folk?