



In this edition:

- Past & Upcomming Events
- Ewens Ponds—Updated Info
- Back to the Coolidge - What's changed.
- Update on the HMAS Canberra
- Doing it tough on the Nullabor
- Little blue closed.

Above: Small wreck at Vanuatu.

Below: Clown fish at Alan Powers 'decompression stop', and Sue from Crest Diving relaxes during a surface break at Jervis Bay.

Right: Coolidge Shore Entrance.



The Waves N Caves Newsletter

It's been a while since our last newsletter. Sorry for the delay, but everyone's just been too busy of late with all the travelling and diving and sinking of ships.

Yes—the HMAS Canberra is finally sitting in it's resting place. Travelling, both interstate and internationally has been rather popular too, including black water rafting in New Zealand, visiting the Nullabor caves and diving the Coolidge in Vanuatu.

The weather is warming up, but unfortunately this has also assisted in a significant outbreak of blue green algae at Little Blue—closing the site due to the dangers involved. Even so, caves, caverns and sinkholes still remain popular.

This newsletter includes information on some dives that have taken part recently, updated information on the future of Ewens, more information on the HMAS Canberra and other things to keep an eye out for.

And, you may have noticed—we've decided to give our writeup it's own name. Yes—you're reading more than a newsletter now—you're reading the first edition of Waves n Caves' "Wetnotes".

So once again, grab a cuppa, sit back, relax and enjoy this edition of Waves 'n' caves 'Wetnotes'.

Then again, why not grab some chocolate too! 🍫



Warrnambool Shore Dives

By Josh Lourensz

Saturday 14th September

Well it all began at 6am when I arose, Packed my gear and checked the weather. All was looking good. Quickly checked the webcam for Warrnambool. Beautifully flat was the two words that first entered my mind. My taxi was surely on it's way, Ryan and Carrie soon arrived at my door smiling and ready to go for some great dives. We loaded the gear and off we went. We began our Trek towards Warrnambool.

We soon arrived in Warrnambool to find Middle Island looking nice and flat. Thus we began the gearing up, of course after checking out the conditions. Wink Wink.

After gearing up we decided it was time to head to the drink until we ran into a slight problem when Ryan's O ring decided to throw in the towel and call it quits. He soon got that fixed up and we continued on our journey.

The dive was great. Went through many swim through's one that was quite tight. Ryan decided to go first and silt the place up for us but that's all apart of the fun.

We saw many crayfish that would have been quite easy to grab but well you know why. (And they probably do too!) Plenty of large crabs to look at. One was having a go at a crayfish backside but decided that he'd had enough once he saw that we had showed up.

The return trip back to shore proved an interesting travel. After following Ryan I knew something was wrong. I went to the surface. Turns out we were heading further around the island away from our entrance.

I decided to take over, everything was going ok until things also appeared different terrain stopped looking familiar, turns out we were heading in same direction as Ryan first begun. Guess that is what happens when two guys try and navigate without a map.

We then headed in the correct direction back to shore. We finally got back. Packed our gear and headed to get tank fills. Low and behold the tank Ryan bored wasn't in test so we couldn't get it filled. Luckily enough we were able to get another tank of Linda and Gary. :)

We went and got lunch from Mr. Jack's which was topped off with an ice cream it was nice to fill the

hole in the stomach. From there we met Gary and Linda to get Ryan's tank. Then we were on our merry way to the second dive at Thunder Point. Surveyed the situation and all looked good. We geared up and proceeded to the water.

We entered only to find a big surge that made the dive not so fun. Due to my hayfever my head wasn't congested and it hurt under pressure so I decided to call the dive on my behalf. Not long after I got out I noticed Carrie and Ryan heading back in. We headed back to the car to pack up. After feeling like the dive wasn't worth it we remembered the dive we had in the morning which brought smiles to our faces.

The journey back home began but we couldn't go to far without popping in to say g'day to Linda and Gary and drop off the tank. We were kindly offered a nice cup of tea which always goes down well, thanks Linda! Gary as Gary does gave us the latest tour of what they had been up to. Awesome photos were certainly present. The rig that took the photos was evidence as to why the photos were so good. Great stuff.

We left after tossing up our options on staying and doing some more dives tomorrow as much to our hesitant decision we decided it would be best to get home. Thanks Linda and Gary for your hospitality.

In closing the weekend we had was great. Was nice to get back in the water after being out for almost 6 six months. Especially with the conditions that we had. If you aren't diving then what are you doing?

Unfortunately that Ryan bloke forgot his camera and I don't yet have one so I can't show you any pictures. ✍

Little Blue Lake—CLOSED

Little blue lake has suffered from a major blue-green algae outbreak and it's looking quite nasty. (In addition to this some junk has been thrown in that is floating on the surface making it look even more less appealing). The site is closed for swimming and scuba diving until further notice.



Nullabouring—or not so boring

By Mick O'Brien

Recently I did a 10 day diving trip under the Nullabour. I have driven across the Nullabour about 3 times previously. I had heard about the caves under there, but until I did my Cave Sink and Cave course my desire to go there and do some diving really kicked in.

Kelvin Ball from Horsham was going over to do some diving and he was meeting up with Geoff Paynter from Western Australia, so I decided to join them. I headed off on Thursday with my caravan and plenty of supplies up to Horsham to meet up with Kelvin, who gave me plenty more supplies to bring along.

We left on Friday and made it to Port Augusta. A few beers and a meal and we all slept pretty well that night. Saturday we got to Ucla, I don't recommend you stay at the local caravan park, they have a fantastic rooster there that doesn't really know what time to cookerdoodle so he just cookerdoodle's all night pretty much.....

With not much sleep we got up Sunday and headed to Weebubbie our first dive destination, which is about a 30 minute drive from Eucla. We spent most of the day lowering gear down the main entrance of the cave, which was about 30 metres down and then cartered the gear by hand the next 60 metres to the waters edge, which was in darkness.

When you got to the waters edge, you had to be careful not to walk into it as it was so clear it was confusing to see where it started.

Monday morning all good, lets dive.....Headed down into the cave with 90 metres of hose from the compressor to the waters edge to do our refills.

First dive we went out to the rock pile which is at about 30mts. We surfaced at the rock pile for a chat and went back under and headed up the railway passage (which is a big cave!) for a bit before turning around and going back to the main lake, where I had a stage bottle at 20mtrs with a 40mix nitrox for deco.

Kelvin was on a rebreather so he was right. We then surfaced and had some lunch while refilling tanks and planned our dive to the Snot Room via the Railway Passage again. It is called the Snot room because the stuff that hangs from the walls in there looks a bit like snot! This is the furthest point to dive to in Weebubbie.

Back in the this time was me, Geoff, Kelvin and Mick Tait. Kelvin and Mick on rebreathers, Geoff



and me on tanks, so we were working on our air and the third rule for cave diving.

The diving is unbelievable, everything is so white and when you shine the torch on the walls it just lights up, the visibility is excellent. I can see why they call it the Railway Passage, as you could fit two trains in there side by side no worries. It gradually narrows down and deepens to about 40 metres heading towards the Snot Room.

The narrow passage goes for about 150 metres before entering the Snot Room. This room is small in comparison to the rest of the cave and I was starting to think that I was a long way from the safety of the surface at this stage, being at a depth of approx 40mtrs and 500mtrs back to the main lake.

I felt pretty calm and safe, but to me this was what I call the first real cave I had dived in. I drew on all my training from my cave course to keep me in the right frame of mind, checked my gauges regularly and once I had a bit of a look around in there we headed back off down the Railway Passage towards the main lake.

Tuesday up bright and early filling tanks and headed back down for one more dive in Weebubbie. On this dive we ran a line off the main line out behind the rock pile had a good look around the walls and headed back out. We spent the remain-



der of the day carrying gear out of the cave and the BBQ and beers were pretty good that night.

Wednesday - off to the Cocklebidy Roadhouse. Set up camp out the road at Murra Cave, then headed to Tommy Grahams cave with the gear.

This cave was completely different from the first, as it didn't have the big 30mtr cave opening, it had a much smaller entrance, where it was quite restricted in places. We had to pass gear down and along for about 90 metres crouching most of the time. We all worked well together and eventually got the gear to the waters edge. No diving today.

Thursday morning diving day! This dive was completely different again from the first. The cave itself had large openings as well as narrow restrictions throughout. We headed in through a big entrance followed the line and came to the rock pile, then to the air chamber. We proceeded down what was called the key hole passage way, which looks like it was especially designed to fit the shape of a diver all the way along it. This goes for some 50 metres and we took lots of photos here and then we entered the Jimmy Hendrix room, where the fresh water mixes with the salt water and gives a swirling, rippling effect.

We had a surface interval for about an hour and



planned our next dive over lunch.

The second dive was similar to the first but we did everything in reverse pretty much. After these two dives we again carried out all the gear, which took us about 1 hour 50 minutes all up which was pretty damn good.....

We returned to the Cocklebidy roadhouse for a \$3 shower which was worth every cent, this was probably the best shower I had for a long time.

We headed back to the Murra camp site for the night and spent the rest of the evening enjoying the food and company sharing stories about our week. All in all a great experience and something I will remember for the rest of my life!✍️

Ewens Ponds Update

There has been a new draft proposal for access to Ewens Ponds released. This new draft looks at having a permit system required to dive at the ponds.

Those who wrote in proposals and comments to the Department of Environment and Heritage should have received information about this new draft in the mail.

Unfortunately for the region this could reduce the number of divers visiting the region as many divers to the area to dive in the ocean, knowing that if the weather turns bad they can always dive at Ewens.

If a booking and permit system goes through, this may remove this additional incentive to visit the region, and divers may choose to dive elsewhere.

At the time of writing, Ewens is still open for causal diving.✍️



HMAS Canberra

It's been a long wait, but we have updated news on the HMAS Canberra, as well as pictures of the preparation, new depth diagrams and charts thanks to Alan Beckhurst (AB).

There have been quite a few hurdles along the way, including trying to liase with various government departments, finding a suitable location for the site, and even unfortunately having to repair the mureal after some vandals decided to graphiti their tags on the work.

However, the ship has been scuttled. It was a big event, and a number of people rocked up along the coast line and in boats, waiting for hours on end for the charges to be triggered. Unfortunately after that, it was only a matter of a couple of minutes and the horizon was bare—the ship already on the bottom!

But the good news is that she's landed upright and looks promising as a dive site. Now that the ship on the bottom there is only a few red tape and booking ends to be tied up, before the first lot of recreational dives are permitted.

Unfortunately we don't have a date yet when the ship will start being accessible for divers but we'll be sure to let you know on our mailing list as soon as it is.

The Warrnambool Sub Aqua Club guys are already looking at trying to plan a dive on it, so if you 're interested please contact them. (Contact information is available on our website at <http://www.wavesncaves.com/wsac.htm> or click on the 'WSAC link on the right hand side of our main page) ✍

Right: Pictures of the HMAS Canberra and work done throughout the preparation period.

Overpage: More pictures of the preparation, and maps & diagrams of it's resting place.

Our thanks to Alan Beckhurst for the images!

Upcoming Dive Courses

We're looking at holding another Scuba Dive course in Horsham. (New / Open Water students) if we have enough interested people.

At this stage we only need another 1 or 2 people to make this happen, so if you're interested please contact adam@wavesncaves.com

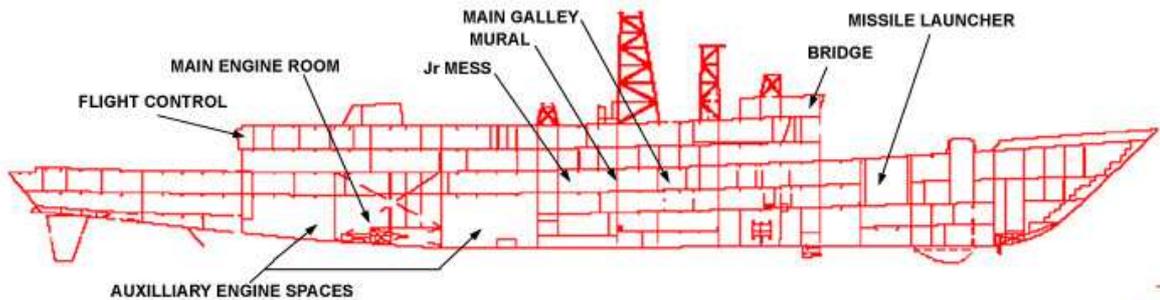
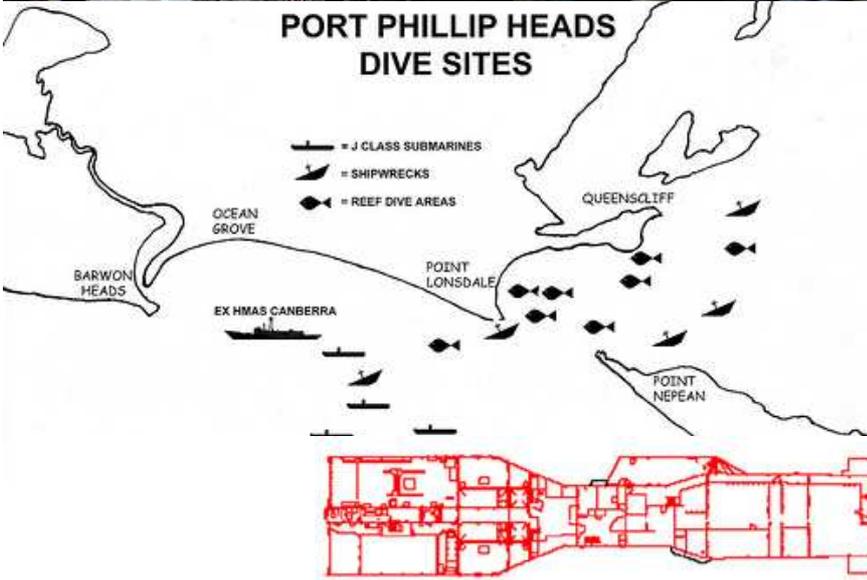




The Engine Room



Workshop or Galley? (we're not sure)



IDEAL DEPTHS FOR SCUTTLED FRIGATE



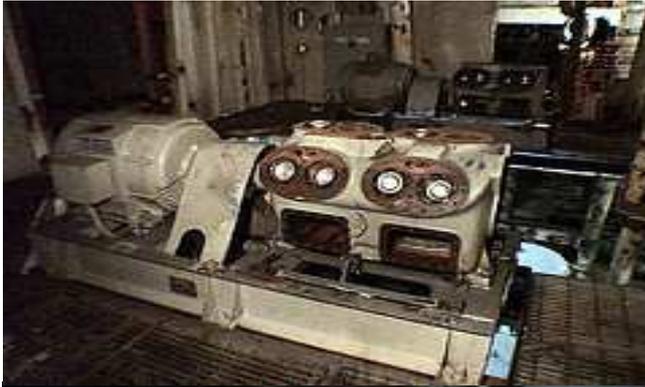
The last touches are being made to the ship, including a protective coating over the Mural by John Lawler in the pic below, and the repositioning of the Mast array to deco depth in the next weeks.



ORIGINAL MAST ARRAY HEIGHT



REPOSITIONED MAST ARRAY HEIGHT



Did you know?

The Eustation tube (the tube that goes between your sinus and inner ear that gives you trouble equalising when you've got a cold) now has a new name!

That's right... It is now called the ILryngo Tympanic.

INCORRECT—This should read Pharyngotympanic Tube. (Corrected after initial release of Wet-notes)



Looking for Accommodation in Point Lonsdale? Perfect for diving the HMAS Canberra!

Mary and Alan often host independent dive clubs at their diver's lodge in Point Lonsdale and have kindly offered to give us access.

It is self contained with 6 bunks, wood heater, ensuite, kitchenette, BBQ, pergola and outdoor setting, gear drying area, and only costs \$15 pp/night.

There is a vacant block next door, so plenty of room to park boats and cars, so if you are coming to dive the Canberra or subs with your own boats, please give them a call!

Alan can be contacted on 0403 536 508—but make sure you ring ahead, as the lodge can be popular!



Back to Vanuatu

After the thumbs up rating from Freddy and Adam's recon visit to Santo last year, a number of divers booked their tickets to dive the Coolidge.

The plan was to stay the night in Port Vila (as opposed to staying in Brisbane) and fly into Santo early the following morning.

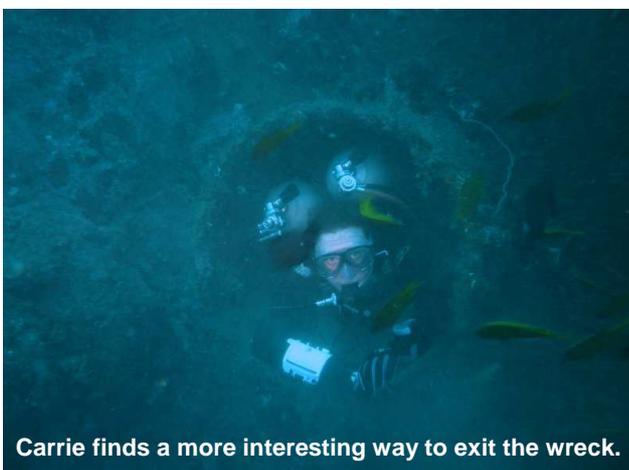
Things went as planned, and only hours after our arrival we were geared up and diving at Million Dollar Point with the crew from Alan Powers. The guides commented on how blue the water was that morning, and that we should have the same conditions that afternoon. We weren't to be disappointed—the water was fantastic!

The first dive at Million Dollar Point allowed everyone to get accustomed to the new gear. Many were wearing alloy tanks, and diving in 3mm wetsuits for the first time—so the dive at Million Dollar Point was perfect for re-calibrating the weight needed, trim positions, etc.

We then returned to our accommodation, the Deco Stop. Always trusty for divers—perfectly setup for cleaning gear. Kathy has now moved on, leaving Ben and Kim to be our new hosts. They are a lovely couple—and the Deco stop is still as great as ever!

The following morning we started diving on the Coolidge, the prestigious prom deck dive to start with. Not the same as last year—the bridge has collapsed in a bit. It's not a big heap of rubble—it's still a structure, but certainly leaning down more, and now unfortunately too unstable to dive through safely.

Other dives continued to follow including all the cargo holds, medical supplies, Pool dive, Engine Room, Crows nest, Barbers Chair, Lobby, (and the list goes on—too many to name)—always trying to come out of the chain locker room whenever possi-



Carrie finds a more interesting way to exit the wreck.



Passing the time while Deco'ing

ble. (Although on one dive, we were lead through a different exit—an old air vent which was tight and deep to navigate through—but awesome!)

Dives ended up with decompression stops being done in Alan Powers wonderful coral gardens. Underwater Uno was also found to be a great way to pass the time again after we had seen enough of the fish, especially popular with the guides.

Some divers experienced Narcosis for the first time—ending with classic quotes such as 'I was peaceful in my own head'. (Ryan describing his version of a moment where Carrie and Adam recalled him being reckless, rough and irrational).

Other classic quotes of the holiday included 'Oh, I only want to do a shallow dive today—no deeper than 45m' (Lachlan), 'Help—I'm negatively buoyant to my bed' (Sally) and 'am I drooling, or is the spit coming from my mask' (Brylee after spitting in her mask, placing it on her forehead while commenting on how hot she thought one of the guides was).

The trip included two night dives. (the second one which was most spectacular which included passing through Cargo holds 1, 2 and 3—through to the lobby, back out, and in through the funnel, ending up coming back through the cargo hold and the chain locker—all without turning a torch on!

Unfortunately on both night dives, two lion fish were attracted to us back at the deco stop—obviously not worried about 'personal space' (some coming as close as 30cm from our heads). We soon figured out that turning on our torches was the best bet—as the lion fish were attracted to the beam and we could 'lead' them away.

Whilst on the island, the girls decided to take a day off to do the Millennium Cave Walk—which certainly isn't for the faint hearted. (They were unsuccessful at tearing the guys away from more diving on the Coolidge).



Hanging on the deco line taken a little too literally.

The blue holes were also visited as an extended surface interval (which was a great way to spend the afternoon prior to night diving). The water was indeed clear, blue and beautiful. Around the waterline was thick foliage as well as a rope swing to play with.

Underneath the water it could be well compared to that of Ewens ponds, with the exception that the water is a little deeper (18m) and ***much*** warmer!

Whilst staying at the deco stop we ran into some other divers we knew from Queensland (who had previously passed their CDAA cave course earlier that year) and were diving with another dive organization. Unfortunately the deep diving took its toll on one of the weak Queenslanders—leaving him stuck to an O2 cylinder that evening.

However—the rugged and well equipped divers from the colder states of Australia are well equipped physically for this sort of diving and suffered no ill effects. (Obviously helped by our experience with real games such as Aussie rules football, and not that pansy sort of ‘football’ they play up north!)

All divers on the trip dived well, demonstrating their anti-silting techniques—which was a credit to each one!

Most of the divers on the trip are already talking about a return trip next year, to coincide with the 30th year independence celebrations for Vanuatu.

Anyone who might be interested in returning with us can feel free to contact Adam to get on the list to be notified as more information as it becomes available. ✍️



Diving in Surge

With the sea the way it's been one thing most of us are familiar with is diving in Surge. (That backwards and forwards movement of water caused by swell).

Surge can have it's problems, but can also have it's benefits. We'll briefly look at both, and what you can do to make your dive a more enjoyable and safer experience.

The height of the swell will affect the strength of the surge. The higher the swell, the larger the surge. Surge is normally strongest in shallow water. You can sometimes avoid surge (or find weaker surge) the deeper you go. (Although this is not always the case).

One important thing to do when diving in these conditions is to observe the timing of the surge. If you are exiting the water, it is best to wait back and observe both the timing and the distance of the surge.

If you time it right, you can ride the surge right up to the ladder or the rocks, hold on during the outflow, and then climb out during the slack water almost effortlessly.

Always aim to err on the side of caution though. It's much better to fall short and have to attempt again than to be thrown hard against something.

When diving in surgy and swelly conditions keep a good eye on your air supply. Make sure that you have plenty of air for both your return trip, and a generous amount of reserve.

Don't fight surge—use it to your advantage. You can quickly exhaust yourself by trying to move against it. Instead, find something to hold on to when the surge is pushing against you, and then let

go and allow it to carry you forward (riding the surge) when it's pushing with you.

It is safer and more efficient to use the ocean floor or objects to help assist you back to your entry/exit location than trying to swim through swell on the surface with nothing to assist you too.

On the ocean floor you can use reefs, kelp, ancor lines, etc to assist you. If there is none of these around you can use your knife and bury the blade in the sand, holding onto the handle to help you hold your ground.

If the surge is going across your path, just swim forward. It will carry you to the left or right a short distance, and then return you to the same location. Surge normally cancels itself out, so if there is no danger of crashing into the side of a reef or another object you can almost pretty much ignore it. ✍

Index to previous articles

There's been a number of articles written over the past few years in our newsletter and trying to find the edition with an article in it you wish to refer back to can become quite time consuming.

Fret no longer! Our website now has an Articles Index now, which will allow you to go straight to the newsletter you're looking for.

So, if you wanted to look back at information on equalising and Middle Ear Barotrauma, find out how to use less air, read about someone's cave course and so forth you can easily find this information by clicking on the 'Newsletter Articles List' link on our main site.

Looking for Accommodation in Mt. Gambier?

Whether you're chasing it for a night, a weekend or a week, this spacious 3 bedroom house with good size living areas and fully furnished, located in Wimmera Street Mt Gambier may be what you're looking for.

It includes an outdoor entertainment area at the back with facilities for diving gear to be hung up on. Perfect for scuba divers visiting the Mt Gambier region, whether to dive in caves or the nearby sea.

It also makes an excellent place to stay while doing your CDAA course! Prices start at \$20 / head / night.

For bookings, contact Kelvyn or Paula Ball

Ph: (03) 5384 2259 Mob: 0428 842 259 / 0427 842 259
Email: freddy@wavesncaves.com



Mt Gambier Site Conditions

Little Blue Lake has an outbreak of blue-green algae, and the site is now closed.

Apart from little blue's downturn, other sites in Mt Gambier are looking good. Pines is at the highest level in years (highest that I've personally seen it ever).

Gouldens water level has also increased and is now just under the landing.

Alendale East has its "pool" back again and most other sites appear to be having similar reports.

The exception at the moment seems to be Englebrecht's which strangely hasn't had a water level increase in some time even though the other sites have.

Past Events (In Brief)

Past events since the last newsletter include:

- A visit to New Zealand for some Black Water Rafting
- A trip to the tropical waters of Vanuatu where the Coolidge was visited.
- A trip to the Nullabor caves
- The Advance Cave Course in Mt Gambier
- Local diving in the Warrnambool Region, including the Loch Ard wreck and some shore dives.

The Danger's Confirmed!

Years ago we found a childrens encyclopedia website that states cave diving is the 3rd most dangerous sport in the world. The reasons they had this listed as the 3rd most dangerous included being eaten alive by a cave creature!

We do not jest. It's still there and you can read all about it at:

<http://www.kidzworld.com/article/1984-worlds-most-dangerous-sports>

Unfortunately—the news is spreading! Recently Australia's childrens show 'Totally Wild' did a report on Australian Cave diving.

The show starts off with the introduction:

"Being a diver is bad enough. With the risks of decompression which can cause all sorts of problems.

But diving in caves takes things to a whole new level. (paused for suspense music). In a pitch black cave, it's easy to lose your bearings, have problems with your air supply, or even get eaten by a big vicious creature. It's one of the most dangerous sports in the world."

So there you have it. Either the myth is spreading..... Or.... <writer pauses for suspension>.....

.....there's something that's been excluded from our training in our cave diving theory!