



Cave and Karst Terminology

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Abbreviations and Conventions

Abb. = abbreviation

Syn. = synonym (word with same meaning)

Cf. = confer (compare) with the following term which is not identical but related to it.

(n.) = noun

(v.) = verb

A word in brackets in the left-hand column is commonly used in conjunction with the preceding word without altering the meaning.

Square brackets enclose statements not part of the definition but for special reasons included in the list.

ABNEY LEVEL	A type of clinometer with a bubble tube used in cave survey to determine vertical angles.
ACTIVE CAVE	A cave which has a stream flowing in it. Cf. live cave.
ADAPTATION	An inherited characteristic of an organism in structure, function or behaviour which makes it better able to survive and reproduce in a particular environment. Lengthening of appendages, loss of pigment and modification of eyes are considered adaptations to the dark zone of caves.
ACETYLENE	An inflammable hydrocarbon gas, C ₂ H ₂ , produced by water reacting with calcium carbide. When burnt, yields carbon dioxide as well as light.
AGGRESSIVE	Referring to water which is still capable of dissolving more limestone, other karst rock, or speleothems.
ACCIDENTAL (n.)	An animal accidentally living in a cave.

ABSEIL (n.)	A controlled descent of a rope using friction obtained by (1) wrapping the rope around the body in a particular way or (2) passing the rope through a karabiner or (3) Passing the rope through a descender.
ABSEIL (v.)	To do an abseil.
ANASTOMOSIS	A mesh of tubes or half-tubes.
ANCHOR	A fixed object used to secure a man whilst operating a safety rope or for attaching equipment such as ladders or ropes.
ARAGONITE	A less common crystalline form of calcium carbonate than calcite, denser and orthorhombic.
ARTEFACT	A product of human manufacture or art, e.g. tools of bone, stone, etc., paintings, engravings. In caves, tools are often buried in sediment. [Scientific attention should be drawn to the finding of artefacts in caves.]
ARTHROPODS	The most common group of animals inhabiting caves, including insects, crustaceans, spiders, millipedes, etc. They have jointed limbs and external skeletons.
ASCENDER	A mechanical device for ascending ropes.
ASSOCIATION	A relatively stable community of different species living in a characteristic habitat.
AZIMUTH	The true bearing of a survey line, determined by measurement from an accurate survey or by observations of sun or stars.
BARE KARST	Karst with much exposed bedrock.
BAT	A member of the order Chiroptera, the only mammals capable of true flight as they have membranes between the toes of their forefeet.
BATHYPHREATIC	Referring to water moving with some speed through downward looping passages in the phreatic zone.
BEARING	The angle measured clockwise that a line makes with the north line. True, magnetic and grid bearings are measured respectively from true, magnetic and grid north.
BED	A depositional layer of sedimentary bedrock or unconsolidated sediment.
BEDDING-GRIKE	A narrow, rectilinear slot in a karst rock outcrop due to solution along a bedding-plane.
BEDDING-PLANE	A surface separating two beds, usually planar.
BEDDING-PLANE CAVE	A cavity developed along a bedding-plane and elongate in cross-section as a result
BELAY	(1) To attach to an anchor. (2) To operate a safety line

BIOSPELEOLOGY	The scientific study of organisms living in caves.
BLIND SHAFT	A vertical extension upwards from part of a cave but not reaching the surface; small in area in relation to its height.
BLIND VALLEY	A valley that is closed abruptly at its lower end by a cliff or slope facing up the valley. It may have a perennial or intermittent stream which sinks at its lower end or it may be a dry valley.
BLOWHOLE	(1) A hole to the surface in the roof of a sea cave through which waves force air and water. (2) A hole in the ground through which air blows in and out strongly, sometimes audibly; common in the Nullarbor Plain.
BOBBIN	A descender that opens to enclose the rope around two fixed pulleys. May have a handle ("STOP") which must be squeezed to allow descent.
BOLLARD	A projection of rock over which rope, tape or wire can be placed to create an anchor. BOLT A high tensile steel bolt used as an anchor; either a conical bolt screwed into a metal holder in a hole drilled in rock, causing expansion for grip, or a bolt with partially filed thread hammered into a slightly smaller hole.
BONE BRECCIA	A breccia containing many bone fragments. [Scientific attention should be drawn to the finding of such in caves.]
BRAKE BAR	A round bar hinged to a karabiner or rappel rack used for abseiling
BRANCHWORK	A dendritic system of underground streams or passages wherein branches join successively to form a major stream or passage.
BREAKDOWN	Fall of rock from roof or wall of a cave.
BRECCIA	Angular fragments of rock and/or fossils cemented together or with a matrix of finer sediment. Cf. bone breccia.
BRUNTON COMPASS	A type of compass, with a hinged mirror, which can be held in the hand or mounted on a tripod and which includes a clinometer. Designed also for measuring rock dip and strike.
CALCITE	The commonest calcium carbonate (CaCO ₃) mineral and the main constituent of limestone, with different crystal forms in the rhombohedral subsystem
CANOPY	A compound speleothem consisting of a of a bedrock projection and of a fringe of stalactites or shawls on the outer edge.
CANYON	(1) A deep valley with steep to vertical walls; in karst frequently formed by a river rising on impervious rocks outside the karst area.

	(2) A deep, elongated cavity cut by running water in the roof or floor of a cave or forming a cave passage.
CARBIDE	Calcium carbide, CaC ₂ , used with water to make acetylene in lamps. flowstone cover of a bedrock projection and of a fringe of stalactites or shawls on the outer edge
CAVE	A natural cavity in rock large enough to be entered by man. It may be water-filled. If it becomes full of ice or sediment and is impenetrable, the term applies but will need qualification.
CAVE BLISTER	An almost perfect hemisphere of egg-shell calcite.
CAVE BREATHING	(1) Movement of air in and out of a cave entrance at intervals. (2) The associated air currents within the cave.
CAVE CORAL	Very small speleothems consisting of short stalks with bulbous ends, usually occurring in numbers in patches.
CAVE EARTH	Clay, silt, fine sand and/or humus deposited in a cave
CAVE ECOLOGY	The study of the interaction between cave organisms and their environment, e.g. energy input from surface, climatic influences.
CAVE FILL	Transported materials such as silt, clay, sand and gravel which cover the bedrock floor or partially or wholly block some part of a cave.
CAVE FLOWER	Syn. gypsum flower.
CAVE PEARL	A smooth, polished and rounded speleothem found in shallow hollows into which water drips. Internally it has concentric layers around a nucleus.
CAVE POSTULE	A white, hemispherical wall and roof deposit of calcite.
CAVE SPRING	A natural flow of water from rock or sediment inside a cave.
CAVE SYSTEM	A collection of caves interconnected by enterable passages or linked hydrologically or a cave with an extensive complex of chambers and passages.
CAVERNICOLE	An animal which normally lives in caves for the whole or part of its life cycle.
CAVING	The entering and exploration of caves.
CAVERN	A very large chamber within a cave.
CENOTE	A partly water-filled, wall-sided doline.
CHAMBER	The largest order of cavity in a cave, with considerable width and length but not necessarily great height
CHERT	A light grey to black or red rock, which fractures irregularly, composed of extremely fine crystalline silica and often

	occurring as nodules or layers in limestone.
CHIMNEY	A vertical or nearly vertical opening in a cave, narrow enough to be climbed by chimneying.
CHIMNEYING	Ascending or descending by means of opposed body and/or limb pressures against two facing walls.
CHOCK	A block of metal for use as a chockstone.
CHOCKSTONE	A rock wedged between two fixed rock surfaces.
CHOKE	Rock debris or cave fill blocking part of a cave.
CLAUSTROPHOBIA	An irrational fear of being in a closed space.
CLINOMETER	An instrument for measuring vertical angles or angles of dip.
CLOGGER	A type of ascender without a handle; used with a karabiner to keep it securely on the rope.
CLOSED TRAVERSE	A traverse which begins and ends at survey points with known co-ordinates and orientation or at the same point.
COCKPIT KARST	Conekarst in which the residual hills are chiefly hemispheroidal and the closed depressions often lobate.
COLUMN	A speleothem from floor to ceiling, formed by the growth of a stalactite and a stalagmite to join, or by the growth of either to meet bedrock.
COMPASS	An instrument with a magnetic needle which is free to point to magnetic north. For survey the needle is either attached to a graduated card or can be read against a graduated circle to measure the angle in degrees from the north clockwise.
CONEKARST	Karst, usually tropical, dominated by its projecting residual relief rather than by its closed depressions
CONDUIT	An underground stream course completely filled with water and under hydrostatic pressure or a circular or elliptical passage inferred to have been such a stream course.
CONULITES	The "splash cups" that form on certain cave floors beneath energetic ceiling drip sites.
COPROLITE	Fossilized large excrement of animals, sometimes found in caves, especially those used as lairs.
COPROPHAGE	A scavenger which feeds on animal dung, including guano.
CORRASION	The wearing away of bedrock or loose sediment by mechanical action of moving agents, especially water. i.e. Corrosion and abrasion .
CORROSION	Syn. solution.
COVERED KARST	Karst where the bedrock is mainly concealed by soil or superficial deposits.
COW'S TAIL	A length of rope used as a safety when crossing a rebelay.

CRAWL (WAY)	A passage which must be negotiated on hands and knees. Cf. flattener.
CROSS-SECTION	A section of a cave passage or a chamber across its width
CRYPTOZOA	The assemblage of small terrestrial animals found living in darkness beneath stones, logs, bark, etc. Potential colonizers of caves.
CRYSTAL POOL	A cave pool generally with little or no overflow, containing well-formed crystals.
CURRENT MARKING	Shallow asymmetrical hollows formed by solution by turbulent waterflow and distributed regularly over karst rock surfaces. Cf. scallop.
CURTAIN	A speleothem in the form of a wavy or folded sheet hanging from the roof or wall of a cave, often translucent and resonant.
DARK ZONE	The part of a cave which daylight does not reach.
DARK ADAPTATION	A change in the retina of the eye sensitising it to dim light (the eye 'becomes accustomed to the dark'). Loss of sensitivity on re-exposure to brighter light is 'light adaptation'.
DAYLIGHT HOLE	An opening to the surface in the roof of a cave.
DEAD CAVE	A cave without streams or drips of water.
DECLINATION	The angle from true (or grid) north to magnetic north for a given time and place.
DECOMPOSERS	Living things, chiefly bacteria and fungi that live by extracting energy from tissues of dead animals and plants.
DECORATION	Cave features due to secondary mineral precipitation, usually of calcite. Syn. speleothem.
DESCENDER	A mechanical device for descending ropes.
DEVIATION	Usually a sling of rope or tape attached to a natural anchor at one end and clipped to the rope with a karabiner at the other. Used to avoid rub points on pitches. Syn. Redirection
DEVELOPED SECTION	The result of straightening out a section composed of several parts with differing directions into one common plane. Usually the plane is vertical and the length of the section equals the plan lengths of the passages and chambers comprising it.
DIG	An excavation made (1) to discover or extend a cave or (2) to uncover artefacts or animal bones.
DIP	The angle at which beds are inclined from the horizontal. The true dip is the maximum angle of the bedding planes at right angles to the strike. Lesser angles in other directions

	are apparent dips.
DISTO	An electronic distance measuring device for use while surveying a cave.
DISTO X	An electronic device that measures distance, bearing and the vertical angle for cave surveys. Other similar devices are the Shetland Attack Pony (SAP) and DUSI (Digital underground Survey Instrument)
DOG-TOOTH SPAR	A variety of calcite with acute-pointed crystals.
DOLINE	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 dimensions.
DOLINE KARST	Karst dominated by closed depressions, chiefly dolines, perforating a simple surface.
DOLOMITE	(1) A mineral consisting of the double carbonate of magnesium and calcium, $\text{CaMg}(\text{CO}_3)_2$. (2) A rock made chiefly of dolomite mineral.
DOMAIN	A biological region of the earth's crust
DOME	A large hemispheroidal hollow in the roof of a cave, formed by the breakdown and/or salt weathering, generally in mechanically weak rocks, which prevents bedding and joints dominating the form.
DONGA	In the Nullarbor Plain a shallow, closed depression, several metres deep and hundreds of metres across, with a flat clay-loam floor and very gentle slopes.
DRIPHOLE	A hole formed by water dripping onto the cave floor.
DRIPLINE	A line on the ground at a cave entrance formed by drips from the rock above. Useful in cave survey to define the beginning of the cave.
DRIPSTONE	A deposit formed from drops falling from cave roofs or walls, usually of calcite.
DRY CAVE	A cave without a running stream. Cf. dead cave.
DRY VALLEY	A valley without a surface stream channel
DUCK (-UNDER)	A place where water is at or close to the cave roof for a short distance so that it can only be passed by submersion.
DUNE LIMESTONE	Syn. eolian calcarenite.
DYE GAUGING	Determining stream discharge by inserting a known quantity of dye and measuring its concentration after mixing.
DYNAMIC PHREAS	A phreatic zone or part of a phreatic zone where water moves fast with turbulence under hydrostatic pressure.
EASTING	(1) The distance of a point east of the point of origin of the grid of a map or some abbreviation of it. (2) The west-east component of a survey leg, or of a series of legs or of a complete traverse; east is positive and west is negative.

ECCENTRIC	A speleothem of abnormal shape or attitude. Cf. helictite.
ENDOGEAN	Pertaining to the domain immediately beneath the ground surface, i.e. in the soil or plant litter.
EOLIAN CALCARENITE	A limestone formed on land by solution and redeposition of calcium carbonate in coastal dune sands containing a large proportion of calcareous sand from mollusc shells and other organic remains.
EPIGEAN	Pertaining to the biological domain at the surface or above it.
EPIPHREATIC	Referring to water moving with some speed in the top of the phreatic zone or in the zone liable to be temporarily in flood time part of the phreatic zone.
EROSION	The wearing away of bedrock or sediment by mechanical and chemical actions of all moving agents such as rivers, wind and glaciers at the surface or in caves.
EXSURGENCE	A spring fed only by percolation water.
FAULT	A fracture separating two parts of a once continuous rock body with relative movement along the fault plane.
FAULT CAVE	A cave developed along a fault or fault zone, either by movement of the fault or by preferential solution along it.
FAULT PLANE	A plane along which movement of a fault has taken place.
FISSURE	An open crack in rock or soil.
FISSURE CAVE	A narrow, vertical cave passage, often developed along a joint but not necessarily so. Usually due to solution but sometimes to tension.
FLATTENER	A passage, which, though wide, is so low that movement is only possible in a prone position.
FLOE CALCITE	Very thin flakes of calcite floating on the surface of a cave pool or previously formed in this way.
FLOWSTONE	A deposit formed from thin films or trickles of water over floors or walls, usually of calcite. Cf. travertine.
FLUORESCEIN	A reddish-yellow organic dye which gives a green fluorescence to water. Detectable in very dilute solutions so used in water tracing and dye gauging in the form of the salt, sodium fluorescein.
FLUOROMETER	An instrument for measuring the fluorescence of water; used in water tracing and dye gauging.
FORESTRY COMPASS	A lightweight, compact instrument to be mounted on a tripod, which functions as a compass and a clinometer, and has a telescopic sight. Some types facilitate measurement of horizontal angles as well as bearings.
FOSSIL	The remains or traces of animals or plants preserved in rocks or sediments.
FREE PITCH	Where a rope or ladder hangs vertically and free of the walls.
FREE-SURFACE STREAM	A cave stream which does not normally fill its passage to the roof.
FRIEND	A mechanical coming device used for anchors.
GARDENING	Clearing stones or other loose material from a route, usually

	a pitch, which might otherwise be dangerous to a caver continuing.
GIBBS	An ascender with its cam operated by the weight of the caver.
GLACIER CAVE	A cave formed within or beneath a glacier.
GOUR	Syn. rimstone dam
GRADE	The class of a cave survey on the basis of the precision of the instruments and the accuracy of the methods.
GRID	A system of squares on a map formed by straight lines which represent progressive distances east and north of a fixed point of origin.
GRID NORTH	The direction of a north-south grid line on a map. Except for the north-south grid line through the point of origin of the grid, it will differ slightly from true north.
GRIKE	A deep, narrow, vertical or steeply inclined, rectilinear slot in a rock outcrop due to solution along a joint.
GROTTO	A room in a cave of moderate dimensions but richly decorated.
GROUNDWATER	Syn. phreatic water.
GUANO	Large accumulations of dung, often partly mineralized, including rock fragments, animal skeletal material and products of reactions between excretions and rock. In caves, derived from bats and to a lesser extent from birds.
GUANO BIA	An animal association feeding on guano. Not considered true cavernicoles as guano is not confined to caves.
GYPSUM	The mineral hydrated calcium sulphate, $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$.
GYPSUM FLOWER	An elongated and curving deposit of gypsum on a cave surface.
HALF-BLIND VALLEY	A blind valley which overflows its threshold when the stream sink cannot accept all the water at a time of flood.
HALF-TUBE	A semi-cylindrical, elongate recess in a cave surface, often meandering or anastomosing.
HALITE	The sodium chloride mineral, NaCl , in the cubic crystalline system.
HALL	A lofty chamber considerably longer than it is wide.
HARNESS	An arrangement of tape for attaching the lower body (seat harness) or the upper (chest harness) to ascenders or descenders.
HELICTITE	A speleothem, which at one or more stages of its growth changes its axis from the vertical to give a curving or angular form.
HELMET	A miner's, climber's or other kind of non-metallic, protective helmet used in caving.
HISTOPLASMOSIS	A lung disease which may be caught from the guano of some caves, caused by a fungus, <i>Histoplasmosis capsulatum</i> . Usually mild in effect, it can be fatal in rare cases.
HORIZONTAL ANGLE	The difference in direction of two survey lines measured clockwise in a horizontal plane.

HYDROSTATIC PRESSURE	The pressure due to a column of water.
HYPOGEAN	Pertaining to the domain below the endogean, including the dark zone of caves.
ICE CAVE	A cave with perennial ice in it.
INFLOW CAVE	A cave into which a stream enters or is known to have entered formerly but which cannot be followed downstream to the surface.
INTERSTITIAL MEDIUM	Spaces between grains of sand or fine gravel filled with water which contains phreatobia.
INVERTED SIPHON	A siphon of U-profile.
JOINT	A planar or gently-curving crack separating two parts of once continuous rock without relative movement along its plane.
JOINT-PLANE CAVE	A cavity developed along a joint and elongate in cross-section.
JUMAR	An ascender with a simple finger-operated safety catch, a handle and several attachment points.
KANKAR	(pronounced kunkar) A deposit, often nodular, of calcium carbonate formed in soils of semi-arid regions. Sometimes forms cave roofs.
KARABINER	A steel or other alloy, oval- or D-shaped link with a spring-loaded gate on one side to admit a rope or to clip to a ladder, piton, etc.
KARREN	The minor forms of karst due to solution of rock on the surface or underground.
KARST	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
KARST WINDOW	A closed depression, not a polje, which has a stream flowing across its bottom.
KERNMANTEL ROPE	A rope with a plaited sheath around a core of parallel or twisted strands.
KEYHOLE (PASSAGE)	A small passage or opening in a cave, which is round above and narrow below.
KRAB	Colloquial abbreviation of karabiner.
LADDER	In caving, a flexible, lightweight ladder of galvanized or stainless steel wires and aluminium alloy rungs.
LAKE	In caving, a body of standing water in a cave, but used for what would be called a pond or pool on the surface.
LAVA-CAVE	A cave in a lava flow; usually a tube or tunnel formed by flow of liquid lava through a solidified mass, or by roofing of an open channel of flowing lava. Small caves in lava also form as gas blisters.
LAY	The way in which strands of a rope or cable are twisted.
LEAD	A passage noticed but as yet unexplored.
LEAD-ACID CELL	A rechargeable acid battery for use with an electric cap lamp.

LEADER	In caving, the person directing the activities of a caving party, especially with regard to safety.
LEG	A part of a survey traverse between two successive stations.
LEUCOPHOR	A colourless water tracer, which fluoresces blue.
LIMESTONE	A sedimentary rock consisting mainly of calcium carbonate, CaCO ₃ .
LINTEL LINE	A line on the ground at a cave entrance perpendicularly beneath the outer edge of the rock above; may or may not coincide with the dripline.
LIQUID MEDIUM	Contains the aquatic cavernicoles.
LIVE CAVE	A cave containing a stream or active speleothems.
LONGITUDINAL (or LONG) SECTION	A section along the length of a cave passage or chamber or combination of these, or along a survey traverse in a cave.
MAGNETIC NORTH	The direction to the north magnetic pole at a given place and time. This differs from the direction towards which the north end of a compass points by a small individual compass error and by the effect of any local magnetic attraction.
MARBLE	Limestone recrystallized and hardened by pressure and heat.
MAZE	Syn. network.
MEANDER	An arcuate curve in a river course due to a stream eroding sideways.
MEANDER NICHE	A hemispherically-roofed part of a cave formed by a stream meandering and cutting down at the same time.
MICROCLIMATE	The climate (i.e. temperature, humidity, air movements, etc.) of a restricted area or space, e.g. of a cave or on a lesser scale of the space beneath stones in a cave.
MICROGOUR	Miniature rimstone dams with associated tiny pools of the order of 1cm wide and deep on flowstone.
MOONMILK	Syn. Rockmilk. A soft, white plastic speleothem consisting of calcite, hydrocalcite, hydromagnesite or huntite.
MUD PENDULITE	A pendulite with the knob coated in mud.
NATURAL ARCH	An arch of rock formed by weathering.
NATURAL BRIDGE	A bridge of rock spanning a ravine or valley and formed by erosive agents.
NECROPHAGE	A scavenger feeding on animal carcasses (not prey).
NETWORK	A complex pattern of repeatedly connecting passages in a cave.
NIFE CELL	A rechargeable alkaline battery for use with an electric cap lamp.
NORTHING	(1) The distance of a point north of the point of origin of the grid of a map, or some abbreviation of it. (2) The south-north component of a survey leg, or of a series of legs, or of a complete traverse; north is positive and south is negative.
NOTHEPHREATIC	Referring to water moving slowly in cavities in the phreatic zone.
NUMBERING	Assigning an alphanumeric index to a cave entrance.

OPEN TRAVERSE	A traverse which does not close onto a survey point of known co-ordinates and orientation or onto itself.
ORIENTATION	The relationship of a survey line to true, grid or magnetic north.
OUTFLOW CAVE	A cave from which a stream flows or formerly did so and which cannot be followed upstream to the surface.
PALAEOKARST	"Fossil" karst - cave or karst features remnant from a previous period of karstification, characterised by the presence of ancient (buried) deposits, as lithified cave fills or breccias.
PASSAGE	A cavity which is much longer than it is wide or high and may join larger cavities.
PARIETAL(ASSOCIATION)	Animals found on walls around cave entrances.
PENDANT	Syn. rock pendant.
PENDULITE	A kind of stalactite which has been partly submerged and the submerged part covered with dog-tooth spar to give the appearance of a drumstick.
PERCOLATION WATER	Water moving mainly downwards through pores, cracks and tight fissures in the vadose zone.
PERMEABILITY	The property of rock or soil permitting water to pass through it. Primary permeability depends on interconnecting pores between the grains of the material. Secondary permeability depends on solution widening of joints and bedding planes and on other solution cavities in the rock.
PHREAS	Syn. phreatic zone.
PHREATIC WATER	Water below the level at which all voids in the rock are completely filled with water.
PHREATIC ZONE	Zone where voids in the rock are completely filled with water.
PHREATOBIA	An animal association found in water separating grains of sand or fine gravel.
PILLAR	A bedrock column from roof to floor left by removal of surrounding rock.
PIPE	A tubular cavity projecting as much as several metres down from the surface into karst rocks and often filled with earth, sand, gravel, breccia, etc.
PITCH	A vertical or nearly vertical part of a cave for which ladders or ropes are normally used for descent or ascent.
PITON	A solid or folded metal spike, of steel or other alloy, to be driven into a crack in the rock to form an anchor.
PLAN	A plot of the shape and details of a cave projected vertically onto a horizontal plane at a reduced scale.
PLUNGE POOL	A whirlhole, generally of large size, occurring at the foot of a waterfall or rapid, on the surface or underground.
POLJE	A large closed depression draining underground, with a flat floor across which there may be an intermittent or perennial stream and which may be liable to flood and become a lake. The floor makes a sharp break with parts of surrounding

	slopes.
POLYGONAL KARST	Karst completely pitted by closed depressions so that divides between them form a crudely polygonal network.
POOL DEPOSIT	(1) Any sediment which accumulated in a pool in a cave. (2) Crystalline deposits precipitated in a cave pool, usually of crystalline shape as well as structure.
POPULATION	Individuals of a species in a given locality which potentially form a single interbreeding group separated by physical barriers from other such populations (e.g. populations of the same species in two quite separate caves).
POROSITY	The property of rock or soil of having small voids between the constituent particles. The voids may not interconnect.
POT (-HOLE)	A vertical or nearly vertical shaft or chimney open to the surface.
PREDATOR	An animal which captures other animals for its food
PRISMATIC COMPASS	A compass with a prism attached so that the compass card can be read at the same time as the compass is directed into the line of sight to a distance point.
PROJECTED SECTION	The result of projecting a section composed of several parts with differing directions onto a single plane. Usually the plane is vertical along the general trend of the cave. The horizontal distance apart of points is not correct, only the vertical, so that slopes are distorted.
PRUSIK KNOT	A friction knot which will slide along the rope when no weight is applied but grips when a pull is exerted on it. Used for ascending ropes.
PRUSIK SLING	A sling fastened by a prusik knot to the rope.
PRUSIKING	Ascent on a rope using prusik knots or ascenders.
PSEUDOKARST	Terrain with landforms which resemble those of karst but which are not the product of karst processes.
RAPPEL	Syn. abseil.
RAPPEL RACK	A descender consisting of a frame mounting 5 or 6 brake bars.
REBELAY	The re-anchoring of a rope, usually to avoid rub points or split long pitches.
REDIRECTION	Syn. deviation
RELICT KARST	Old cave forms produced by earlier geomorphic processes within the present cycle of karstification and open to modification by present day processes such as deposition of speleothems, sediments or skeletal deposits.
RESURGENCE	A spring where a stream, which has a course on the surface higher up, reappears at the surface.
RHODAMINE	A red organic dye which gives a red fluorescence to water. Detectable in very dilute solutions so used in water tracing and dye gauging.
RIFT	A long, narrow, high and straight cave passage controlled by planes of weakness in the rock. Cf. fissure.
RIGGING	The process of establishing the belays for SRT or laddering.
RIMSTONE	A deposit formed by precipitation from water flowing over

	the rim of a pool.
RIMSTONE DAM	A ridge or rib of rimstone, often curved convexly downstream.
RIMSTONE POOL	A pool held up by a rimstone dam.
RISING	Syn. spring.
ROCK PENDANT	A smooth-surfaced projection from the roof of a cave due to solution. Usually in groups.
ROCK SHELTER	A cave with a more or less level floor reaching only a short way into a hillside or under a fallen block so that no part is beyond daylight.
ROCKHOLE	A shallow, small hole in rock outcrops, often rounded in form and holding water after rains. Well known on the Nullarbor Plain.
ROCKPILE	A heap of blocks in a cave, roughly conical or part-conical in shape.
ROOF CRUST	Thin speleothem on cave precipitated from water films exuding from pores or cracks.
ROOM	A wider part of a cave than a passage but not as large as a chamber.
ROPE PROTECTOR	A length of heavy fabric or plastic hose placed around a rope where it may rub against rock.
SAFETY LINE	A safety rope attached to a caver climbing on a ladder or negotiating a difficult situation and held by a man above.
SALT WEATHERING	Detachment of particles of various sizes from a rock surface by the growth of crystals from salt solutions. Forms substantial features in Nullarbor Plain caves.
SAPROPHAGE	A scavenger feeding on decaying organic material.
SATURATED	(1) Referring to rock with water-filled voids. (2) Referring to water which has dissolved as much limestone or other karst rock as it can under normal conditions.
SCALE	The ratio of the length between any two points on a map, plan or section to the actual distance between the same points on the ground or in a cave.
SCALING POLES	A lightweight metal alloy pole, in short sections for transport and fastened together where used, to raise a ladder to points inaccessible by climbing.
SCALLOPS	Current markings that intersect to form points which are directed downstream.
SCAVENGER	An animal that eats dead remains and wastes of other animals and plants (cf. coprophage, necrophage, saprophage).
SEA CAVE	A cave in present-day or emerged sea cliffs, formed by wave attack or solution.
SECTION	A plot of the shape and details of a cave in a particular intersecting plane, called the section plane, which is usually vertical.
SEDIMENT	Material recently deposited by water, ice or wind, or precipitated from water.

SEEPAGE WATER	Syn. percolation water.
SELENITE	A crystalline form of gypsum.
SHAFT	A vertical cavity roughly equal in horizontal dimensions but much deeper than broad. Wider than a chimney.
SHAWL	A simple triangular shaped curtain.
SHOW CAVE	A cave that has been made accessible to the public for guided visits.
SINGLE ROPE TECHNIQUE	The practice of climbing up and down ropes with the help of ascenders and descenders. Abb. = SRT.
SIPHON	A waterfilled passage of inverted U-profile which delivers a flow of water whenever the head of water upstream rises above the top of the inverted U. SLING A joined loop of rope or tape.
SOLUTION	In karst study, the change of bedrock from the solid state to the liquid state by combination with water. In physical solution the ions of the rock go directly into solution without transformation. In chemical solution acids take part, especially the weak acid formed by carbon dioxide (CO ₂).
SOLUTION FLUTE	A solution hollow running down the maximum slope of the rock, of uniform fingertip width and depth, with sharp ribs between it and its neighbours.
SOLUTION PAN	A dish-shaped depression on flattish rock; its sides may overhang and carry solution flutes. Its bottom may have a cover of organic remains, silt, clay or rock fragments.
SOLUTION RUNNEL	A solution hollow running down the maximum slope of the rock, larger than a solution flute and increasing in depth and width down its length. Thick ribs between neighbouring runnels may be sharp and carry solution flutes.
SPECIES	A group of actually or potentially interbreeding populations which is reproductively isolated from other such groups by their biology, not simply by physical barriers.
SPELEOGEN	A cave feature formed erosionally or by weathering in cave enlargement such as current markings or rock pendants.
SPELEOLOGY	The exploration, description and scientific study of caves and related phenomena.
SPELEOTHEM	A secondary mineral deposit formed in caves, most commonly calcite.
SPLASH CUP	A shallow cavity in the top of a stalagmite.
SPONGEWORK	A complex of irregular, inter-connecting cavities intricately perforating the rock. The cavities may range from a few centimetres to more than a metre across.
SPRING	A natural flow of water from rock or soil onto the land surface or into a body of surface water.
SQUEEZE	An opening in a cave only passable with effort because of its small dimensions. Cf. flattener, crawl (way).
STALACTITE	A speleothem hanging downwards from a roof or wall, of cylindrical or conical form, usually with a central hollow tube.
STALAGMITE	A speleothem projecting vertically upwards from a cave

	floor and formed by precipitation from drips.
STATION	A survey point in a chain of such points in a survey.
STEEPHEAD	A steep-sided valley in karst, generally short, ending abruptly upstream where a stream emerges or formerly did so.
STEGAMITE	A speleothem projecting upwards from a cave floor in the form of a calcite ridge. A medial crack appears along the top of the ridge where water is thought to be forced from the speleothem under capillary action.
STRAW (STALACTITE)	A long, thin-walled tubular stalactite less than about 1 cm in diameter.
STREAMSINK	A point at which a surface stream disappears underground.
STRIKE	The direction of a horizontal line in a bedding plane in rocks inclined from the horizontal. On level ground it is the direction of outcrop of inclined beds.
STYLOLITE	Suture in rock formed where pressure solution has taken place, often leaving a thin lamina of insoluble material along it.
SUBJACENT KARST	Karst developed in soluble beds underlying other rock formations; the surface may or may not be affected by the karst development.
SUMP	A point in a cave passage when the water meets the roof.
SUPERSATURATED	Referring to water that has more limestone or other karst rock in solution than the maximum corresponding to normal conditions.
SURVEY	In caving, the measurement of directions and distances between survey points and of cave details from them, and the plotting of cave plans and sections from these measurements either graphically or after computation of coordinates.
SUUNTO CLINOMETER	A small, handheld pendulum clinometer commonly used in cave survey.
SUUNTO COMPASS	A small, handheld sighting compass commonly used in cave survey.
SWIRLHOLE	A hole in rock in a streambed eroded by eddying water, with or without sand or pebble tools.
SYNGENETIC KARST	Karst developed in eolian calcarenite when the development of karst features has taken place at the same time as the lithification of dune sand.
TAGGING	Affixing a metal tag bearing a cave number near its entrance, normally by means of rock drill and a small nail or silicon sealer.
TAFONI	Roughly hemispherical hollows weathered in rock either at the surface or in caves.
TAPE	(1) In survey, a graduated tape of steel, plastic, wire-reinforced cloth, or fibreglass, used for measuring distance. (2) Strips of woven synthetic fibre used for slings and waist bands.

TERRA ROSSA	Reddish residual clay soil developed on limestone.
THREAD	A natural hole through a rope, tape or wire can be passed to create an anchor.
THRESHOLD	(1) That part of a cave near the entrance where surface climatic conditions rapidly grade into cave climatic conditions. Not necessarily identical with twilight zone. (2) Slope or cliff facing up a blind or half-blind valley below a present or former streamsink.
THROUGH CAVE	A cave which may be followed from entrance to exit along a stream course or along a passage which formerly carried a stream.
TOPOFIL	A mechanical cave survey device that uses a roll of thread and a distance counter, a protractor to measure inclination and a compass to measure the bearing.
TOWERKARST	Conekarst in which the residual hills have very steep to overhanging lower slopes. There may be alluvial plains between the towers and flat-floored depressions within them.
TRACE	A short length of wire with fasteners used for attaching ladders and ropes to an anchor.
TRACER	(1) A material introduced into surface or underground water where it disappears or into soil to determine drainage interconnections and travel time. (2) A material introduced into cave air to determine cave interconnections.
TRAVERSE	(1) The commonest form of cave survey in which direction, distance and vertical angle between successive points are measured. (2) A way along ledges above the floor of a cave. (3) To move along such a way.
TRAVERTINE	Compact calcium carbonate deposit, often banded, precipitated from spring, river or lake water. Cf. tufa.
TRI-CAM	A metallic device placed in holes or cracks for use as an anchor Cf. chock. Check out the photo of a tri-cam in action
TROGLOBITE	A cavernicole unable to live outside the cave environment
TROGLODYTE	A human cave dweller.
TROGLOPHILE	A cavernicole which frequently completes its life cycle in caves but is not confined to this habitat.
TROGLOXENE	A cavernicole which spends only part of its life cycle in caves and returns periodically to the epigeal domain for food.
TRUE NORTH	The direction of the geographical north pole at a place.
TUBE	A cave passage of smooth surface, and elliptical or nearly circular in cross-section.
TUFA	Spongy or vesicular calcium carbonate deposited from spring, river or lake waters. Cf. travertine.
TUNNEL	A nearly horizontal cave open at both ends, fairly straight and uniform in cross-section.

TWILIGHT ZONE	The part of a cave to which daylight penetrates.
UVALA	A complex closed depression with several lesser depressions within its rim.
VADOSE FLOW	Water flowing in free-surface streams in caves.
VADOSE SEEPAGE	Syn. percolation water.
VADOSE WATER	Water in the vadose zone
VADOSE ZONE	The zone where voids in the rock are partly filled with air and through which water descends under gravity.
VAUCLUSIAN SPRING	A spring rising up a deep, steeply-inclined, water-filled passage into a small surface pool.
VERMICULATION	Pattern of thin, worm-shaped coatings of clay or silt on cave surfaces.
VERTICAL ANGLE	The angle in a vertical plane between a line of sight and the horizontal, positive above the horizontal and negative below.
WATER TRACING	Determination of water connection between points of stream disappearance or of soil water seepage and points of reappearance on the surface or underground.
WATERTABLE	The surface between phreatic water which completely fills voids in the rock, and ground air, which partially fills higher voids.
WATERTRAP	A place where a cave roof dips under water but lifts above it farther on. Cf. duck (-under).
WELL	A deep rounded hole in a cave floor or on the surface in karst.
WET SUIT	A diving garment of foam neoprene designed to insulate the diver from the cold but which allows a thin film of water to penetrate between the suit and the body.
WHALETAIL	A descender consisting of an aluminium block with slots, knobs and a safety gate.
WINDOW	An irregular opening through a thin rock wall in a cave.

REFERENCES

This list of terms is substantially longer than that included in Speleo Handbook (1968). The increase reflects the greater depth and breadth of interest of Australian speleologists in caves and their surroundings. It remains a highly selective list of terms recommended for use in particular ways by Australians and it does not purport to gather comprehensively actual usage, good, bad and indifferent. For more complete collections of terms the following publications are the most useful:

- A. Clarke 1997 Tasmanian RFA Cave Fauna Report
- C.A. Hill 1976 Cave Minerals. National Speleological Society, Huntsville.
- W.H. Monroe 1970 A Glossary of Karst Terminology. U.S. Geological Survey Water Supply Paper 1899K.
- P. Fénelon 1968 Vocabulaire français des phénomènes karstiques. Mémoires et Documents du Centre Documentaire Cartographique et Géographique, 4: 193-282.

H. Trimmel 1965 Speläologisches Fachwörterbuch. Third International Speleological Congress. Vol. C.

English equivalents of foreign terms have been preferred except where the latter have long-established and agreed usage or where there is no precise counterpart in English. Amongst English words, simple Anglo-Saxon words are preferred to new inventions from Greek and Latin roots. Some terms which have markedly conflicting and confusing usages either within Australia or abroad or between Australia and abroad are omitted as the best deterrent to their further employment here. A very few terms not yet in common use have been introduced where these offer the opportunity of avoiding conflicting usages of other words which need to be retained despite this. A preliminary list was circulated to the ASF clubs and to a number of individuals for comment. The final list reflects very much suggestions from and discussions with the following:

E.G. Anderson, W.J. Counsell, J.R. Dunkley, J.M. James, G.S. Hunt, D.C. Lowry, P.G. Matthews, N. Montgomery, G.J. Middleton, A. Pavey, A.M. Richards, T.M. Wigley, and the National University Caving Club.

It must not be thought, however, that these helpers agree with the composition of the list or with every definition. No selection will please everybody, still less the meanings given to those chosen, but to assemble all terms and usages would not only result in a volume to itself but might confuse more cavers than it would assist.