

SUSS Bull 57(2)

January – March, 2019



Bulletin of the Sydney University Speleological Society



PROVIDED BY
UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY UNION

SUSS Bulletin published by the Sydney University Speleological Society, PO Box 3318 Redfern 2018

W: <http://suss.caves.org.au/>

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Articles, news and gossip to [Phil Maynard](#)

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Front Cover: Stephanie Murphy in the Queenslander, Chillagoe

Photo Alan Pryke

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New Committee

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At the SUSS AGM on the 9th of May, the following people took on the running of the club. Thank you! Volunteering – for anything – is a tough gig when uni

and work commitments take up your week and caving takes up your weekend.

Please contact your committee and help them by providing content – social media posts, photos for the website, articles for the Bulletin, ideas for trips, offers to lead trips, more offers to lead trips, and more ideas for trips!

Wellington Works Well Underway

A quick visit to Wellington Caves in early April revealed that the project to rebuild the visitor area at the tourist caves is now under construction. The toilet block, the workshop, and the aviary have all been demolished (psycho-cockatoo is no more!), and services have been laid out for the new buildings. There will be a new education centre, display area, ticket office, and new BBQ facilities. The heritage buildings in the tourist area will remain – the old manager's residence will become part of the expanded education centre while the kiosk will stay a kiosk.

The project is currently running behind the contract schedule, and may take the rest of the year to complete. Asbestos is apparently the culprit, especially in the old toilet block.



Remains of the aviary and the toilet block at Wellington Caves

Photo Kevin Moore

Israel salt cave – pillars included

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/28/israel-malham-salt-cave-worlds-longest>

Malham Cave in Israel's Mount Sodom has now been surveyed at over 10km long, making it the world's longest salt cave. An international expedition led by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Cave Research Center, Israel Cave Explorers Club, and Bulgaria's Sofia Speleo Club, along with 80 cavers from nine countries, has successfully mapped the Malham salt cave.

In addition to its length, the Malham Cave contains a stunning array of salt stalactites and salt crystals within its chambers. Radiocarbon dating of wood fragments found inside the cave helped to date its formation to around 7,000 years ago, making it extremely young by speleological standards.

Mount Sodom is uniquely well positioned to create long salt caves, as the mountain is essentially a large salt block formed by the shifting of the Earth's plates at the southern end of the Dead Sea. The mountain is covered by a thin protective caprock, but when it rains the water

trickles down into the salt layer, eventually carving out the caves and forming the stalactites and stalagmites.

For more details about the 2018 – 2019 expeditions to Malham cave, and to see some spectacular photos of the cave, check out the [website](#) of the Israel Cave Explorers Club.

Jenolan gets its Coachhouse back

It's two and a half years since visitors to Jenolan have been able to walk through the Devils Coachhouse, closed because a rock fell through the hole in the roof and landed on the track 90 metres below. Given that the Coachhouse is one of the most impressive features at Jenolan, this is a significant hit to the visitor experience, and it also cut off most access to the northern limestone for tourists.

After a long delay, works to stabilise the hill have finally been completed and the railings inside the Coachhouse as well as near Nettle cave have been replaced. Still to be re-built is the outside stairway exit from the Lucas cave tour, which was destroyed by a rockfall at the same time as the other damage.



David Lee in the Devils Coachhouse

Photo Mark Euston

99 problems but a pitch ain't one

Jenolan, 13th – 14th October 2018

Simon Murphy

Participants: Simon Murphy, Stephen Kennedy, Deborah Johnston, Dave Apperley, Alan Green

Disto calibration

The plan for the day was for Stephen and I to survey Infinite Crawl Extension. Stephen has a new Disto, and I had spent an hour the previous night copying up the previous survey ready for a continuation. In the morning, I suggested that we use Kevin's Disto that we had to check the calibration of Stephen's Disto, by simply taking the same leg with both. We quickly learned that Stephen's Disto was 45 degrees out! Oh dear. We also didn't have the (Windows-only) software required to do the calibration, and the only computers around were all Macbooks anyway.

Deb had a tablet running Windows, so we drove down to Caves House with it to get wifi and download the software, but once we got to the hut again we found we couldn't run it. The next idea was to transfer it to my laptop to run a VirtualBox windows operating system, but we couldn't connect the laptop and tablet by Bluetooth. Then we drove down the hill again so that I could download the software straight to my laptop... The tech issues continued for some time. In the end the software just wouldn't run on anything, we had no calibrated Disto, and it was already 11am so we would have to go to plan B: Foz Hole and Castaret cave. Not a bad backup plan!

En route to Mammoth Bluff

Stephen and I were finally gearing up to go caving at noon, when disaster struck. Stephen locked his car and had the sudden realization that the keys were in the boot. We spent about an hour putting our non-existent car thief skills to work, trying to jimmy the door with a saucepan handle and using the hut coat hangers to try and unlock the car, but to no avail. We considered calling NRMA but it was caving time, so off we went. Stephen would later ask in the hut if anyone had any experience as a car thief. People could only offer their curiosity, so NRMA were called in the evening.

On a trip in April 2018 ('No Adult Supervision' – SUSS Bull 56(4)) there was a short recon trip to Henrys Hole and Playing Fields Cave. Stephen had never been to either, so he asked to be shown their locations on the way down the hill for future reference. We didn't go in,

even though we had a permit for Henrys Hole, since Castaret awaited us and we were already quite late.

J51 Castaret Cave and J49 Foz Hole

Saturday

I was really excited to have a permit for Castaret, especially when I heard how restricted it is. By e-mail, Phil made the joke that Castaret is so restricted that he couldn't fit in it. There's some truth in there.

The cave has a vertical squeeze, and from the very entrance you need to be on rope. Fortunately, there are good trees for anchors. There's a squeeze right at the entrance that looks pretty gnarly until you get in it. It is wider at the bottom, which is the bit you naturally end up sat in, so this one is fine. But 4 metres below it is the real vertical squeeze. It is strongly advisable to de-clutter your harness here. A rap-rak can be put on the end of a cowstail to free-up space, and any ascension gear can be put on your feet to get it out of the way. A small rocky protrusion in the squeeze makes it challenging, but if you didn't need to be on rope it wouldn't be particularly tough. Stephen made it through (and back out again). I decided I could get through, but wasn't confident that I would be able to ascend back through it, and decided to err on the side of caution.

Stephen said he understood why the cave is restricted. It is quite pretty and there are areas where care must be taken not to damage formations. The difficulty of access is probably also a factor in the restricted status.

Next up was Foz Hole. The entrance to the cave is free-climbable, but one might consider a 10 m ladder or a tape. There is a good anchorage above the cave entrance. After the ladder pitch is an awkward squeeze, made difficult by a rockfall near its entrance and a permanent puddle half way through. It is easy to miss the puddle on the map, but not easy to miss it in the squeeze. A harness and other SRT gear only add to the unpleasantness.

The "Blind Cavern" was the prettiest part, with oolites, a big shawl, a small amount of white flowstone and an abundance of older, drier calcite formation. While it is possible to free climb over there, it is preferable to use stals on the walls as anchors, and a good lasso throw

will help greatly. There is a 'Foz 1956' signature at the back and down a small slope, which connects through an impassable squeeze to a lower level, as indicated on the map in the Blue Book. The other side is reached by abseiling to a room after 5 m of the 10 m pitch.

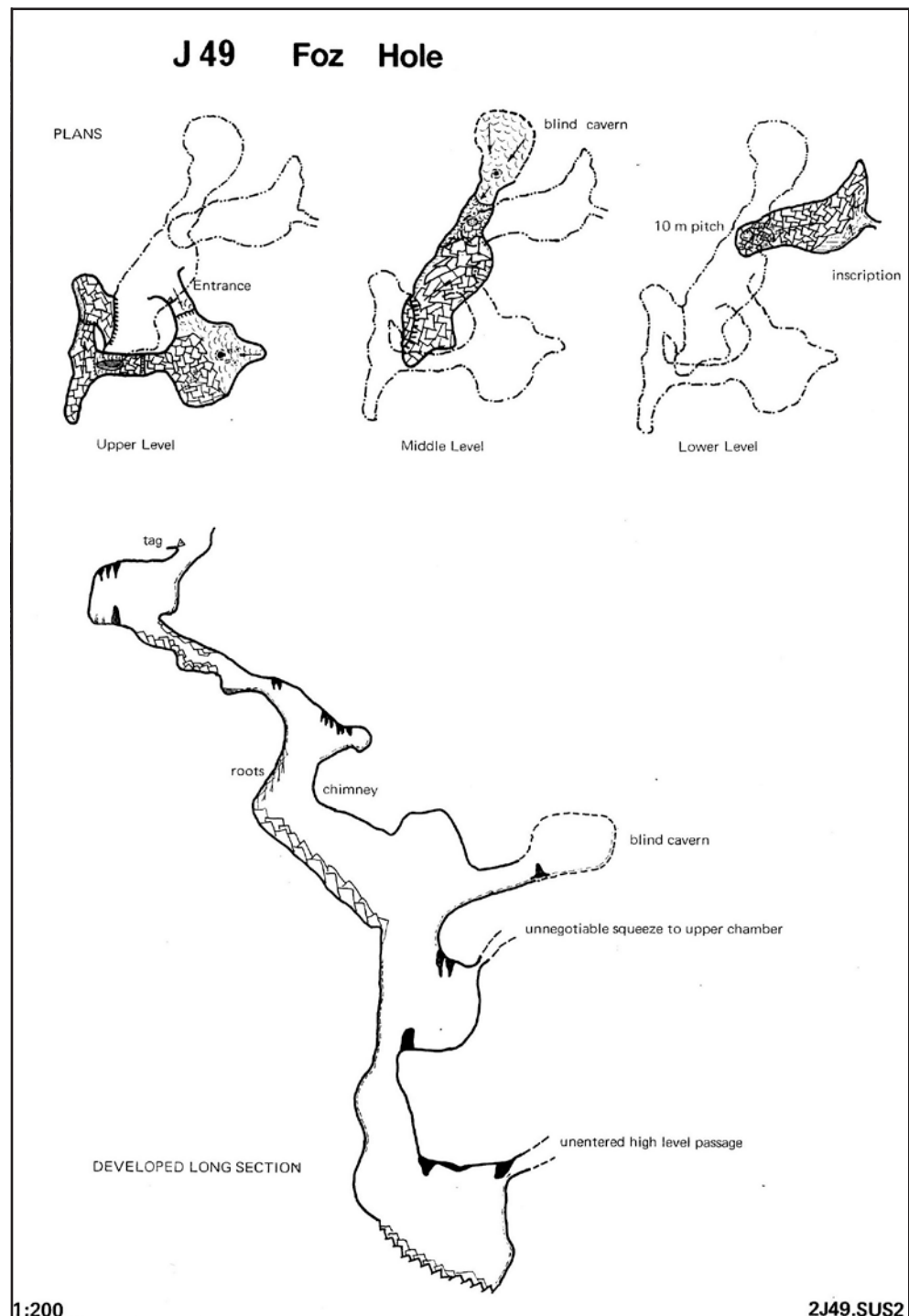
The pitch has a good boulder for a natural anchor, but the position of the anchor is horrible, making for a nasty start and an even nastier ascent. A secondary (backup) anchor is available as a thread-through a few metres back, on the wall about 1 m above the ground. It was extremely helpful to have this on the way back up.

The floor of the bottom level of the cave is mostly fallen rocks, but there was also a fallen kangaroo whose only remains are bones and some blackened floor. In one corner of the room there is enterable rockpile. Stephen applied himself there and had a quick look around, but "super minimal" prospects exist for a way on here, with rubble removal required and no actual promise of continuation.

In addition to his signature in 'Blind Cavern', Foz also left a black (acetylene?) signature at the bottom of the cave. There are two further signatures. One is scratched in a serif font 'G.W.' (George Wiburd?) and dated 1886, but it appears someone has tried to erase the 1886 part of the signature. The other scratched signature nearby reads 'J. R.', but this one was not directly above/below 'G.W.' so I suspect it was not the same trip, and given the comparative sloppiness of the J. R. signature, it was perhaps not contemporaneous.

Mammoth Cave, Infinite Crawl Extension

Stephen and I were ready to go by 9am, but it was raining heavily outside and mustering the enthusiasm to



get soaked on a walk down the hill to Mammoth was difficult. We had arranged to use Kevin's Disto that the divers had utilized the previous day, so no messing around with calibration this time.

At about 9.45am, we couldn't wait any longer for rain to ease, and Alan Green kindly agreed to give us a ride down the hill. It was not until Mammoth Flat, when Alan and his car were long out of ear-shot, that Stephen realized he'd left his headlamp battery on charge in the hut. We exchanged "oh no!" sentiments; there was only one solution. Stephen would have to walk all the way up the hill in the rain and back again. I hastened to add that I'd be standing in the cave entrance in the dry when he returned.

At 10:50 on a Sunday, Stephen and I finally set off from the J13 entrance to go to the western-most point of the cave, Infinite Crawl extension. We made record pace, getting to the other side of Dry Syphon in under 30 minutes, before we got curious about some open leads in Northwest Passage on Phil's survey (SUSS Bull 55(2)), and started exploring.

For the brave, there remain good prospects in this rockpile. A stream inlet marked on the survey was found to be dry. I started delicately navigating my way into one of them, trying to keep my ribs intact and not to disturb the rockpile, but thoughts about the upcoming survey of Infinite Crawl Extension persuaded me to conserve energy and leave this one for another day. A few similar very ugly "leads" were identified but not pushed. It would be worth spending a day exploring this area thoroughly. I suspect that Northwest Passage continues beyond the rockpile if one can only get through or over it. There is some aid climbing to be done where the Guzaround meets Infinite Crawl. The complexities of sketching passages that overlies each other has led to a gap in Phil's survey here. He tells me he has climbed around a bit, but he too seems optimistic of progress with dedicated effort.

I had pre-skipped the first 9 legs, taken on a previous trip with Rafid and Stephanie, but Stephen and I had to sketch the walls in for those, then we would extend the survey through and beyond a squeeze at the bottom of a gravel slope declined at 20 degrees. Stephen boldly went where Rafid had gone before and this time took the Disto with him. He called back measurements to me, which I slowly added to the sketch. This isn't the easiest place to perform your first survey sketch, with passages typically only 40 cm in height or cross-section.

We found the phreatic passage to terminate in a gravel choke, declined at 30 degrees from the horizontal, and we surveyed up to that point. It is possible that this is a filled U-bend. There was no

sight of the mythical Ending Aven. Curiously, Infinite Crawl Extension is heading west. It is speculated to join up with Serpentine eventually, but it has to gain some 30 m of height and swing around to the north to do so. Our map is provided. [*The map from Simon and Stephen's survey was published in SUSS Bull 57(1). ed.*]

On the way back out, I ascended the muddy and narrow water inlet to the east of Infinite Crawl Extension, which heads up towards Sinkhole Cavern in North Tunnel but doesn't quite connect. True to the survey, there do not appear to be prospects for bypassing the Guzaround rockpile via a detour up there. The only prospects are for clogging up your washing machine with mud, but the Guzaround rockpile already offers this.

We got back up to the hut at about 4pm. I was washing gear outside when Stephen's fortunes deteriorated once more. His passenger side door was NRMade worse when a ute reversed into it.

I also lost my phone and the hut key for an hour or so. It turns out that Stephen had 'thoughtfully' taken the hut key to give to me, even though I was in the hut and he was down the hill. My phone turned out to have bounced under a bunk bed when unknowingly dropped. I might have found it sooner if I hadn't locked myself out of the hut without the key.

Thank goodness it was a great weekend of caving!



Stephen in Infinite Crawl extension

Photo Simon Murphy

January Jenolan – a rotten trip

Dates: 2019-01-05 2019-01-06

Rafid Morshedi

Participants: Rafid Morshedi, Fayed Morshedi, Simon Murphy, Vivek, Nafees, Stephanie Murphy, Max Midlen, Phil Maynard, Rowena Larkins, Josh Parker, Lachlan Bailey, Jacob Hartley

Saturday

Simon, Phil, Max and I awoke for an early start towards Twiddly-Om-Pom (TOP) which is a large chamber located at the very northern end of Mammoth Cave. It is rarely visited due to the long crawl along North Tunnel that is required to get there. Max and Phil had driven up in the morning and were raring to go. We packed our bags including the all-important ladder and rope to rig the entrance to TOP.

We set off at a cracking pace and were in Mammoth by 10 am. The water levels everywhere were still quite low but puddles were starting to make an appearance again in Debouchment Detour. Max had volunteered to carry the ladder and rope, and we had taken steps to reduce what we carried to little more than some water and a few muesli bars. Simon, of course, had his usual lunch box. We crawled through North Tunnel until we reached Great North Cavern (GNC).

The entrance to TOP is quite unintuitive. Having arrived at the entrance of GNC I followed Max around the right-hand side of GNC staying quite high. We ducked our heads through a small hole in the wall and then went right into a chamber with a muddy slope heading up. Halfway up the slope is a tight slot dropping vertically. It's very obscure. Below the slot is the Gordian Knot pitch. This consists of two approximately 5 m pitches with a sloping section that can be walked down in between. However, due to the difficulties in rigging the second pitch, it was typical to carry a 15 m ladder which would extend over both pitches. A 15 m ladder is very heavy to carry. Instead, we now carry a 5 m ladder and a 15 m rope which allows us to rig the ladder such that it is effectively on a pulley. Once the last person comes down the first pitch, the rope can be used to lower the ladder down to the second pitch – the rope feeds through the anchor at the top of the pitch. We lowered the ladder and climbed down into TOP.

I've never been to TOP and found it to be a chamber of impressive size. Simon and I ventured upstream (north) along the dry creekbed and then proceeded to crawl through the various squeezes along the passage until it filled up with sand. We got only slightly further than the limit of the survey and it is obvious why the survey

was not continued through the progressively narrower bedrock. We also climbed up some of the slopes on the eastern side of the upstream passage and found some nice aragonite on the walls. Nevertheless, we were here to survey and soon duty called and we ventured back to join Phil and Max in surveying the downstream end of the TOP streamway. We encountered them as they exited Sewer de Paris, looking as though they had been wallowing in sloppy mud.

The four of us then went to survey the first side passage on the left (east) of the creek, which ended up being a little larger than anticipated. Phil was sketching, Simon on Disto, Max on point and I was sent to inspect leads. The stream suddenly stopped at the base of a small wall. Looking up I noticed what seemed to be a fossil water-fall. I climbed up the wall and then over some boulders to see a rift/canyon heading up. It was all very fresh and there was no evidence of past visitors. I climbed up the rift and found another small room – this was definitely a new bit of cave. Muddy floor, no footprints and the fact that we were in the far ends of Mammoth meant we were in some virgin cave.

Continuing along the room and squeezing through a passage on the far side led to another room where the small dry stream continued until it choked in rockpile. I yelled out to the others and waited as they surveyed. I wasn't keen to climb down and back up again. I waited and was soon asleep – we had arrived pretty late last night. I woke up shortly afterwards and heard the others climbing up. We surveyed the new passage and the complex rooms below it. It was 4 pm and we had a long way to get out of the cave and soon we had to leave having made no progress in surveying the main downstream passage of TOP. We'd have to come back again, sigh.

We zoomed back to the hut excited to tell the others of our discovery, but it seemed that we weren't the only ones to have had a very eventful trip. Stephanie had entered some rarely visited sections of Aladdin and had returned *sans* boot [see the Aladdin article in this Bull. ed.].

Coops took Fayed, Nafees and Vivek to Wiburds for an 'introduction' to caving.

After a long day in TOP yesterday, both Simon and I were interested in a slow start. We mustered up an intrepid crew including Jacob (Jenolan Guide), Lachlan (NUCC) and two beginners: Fayed and Nafees. Phil was doing SRT training at the entrance of Mammoth and after the rude introduction to caving dished out by Coops, Vivek was content with spending some time closer to the surface.

Our goal was to survey the now dry pool at the entrance of World of Mud. We went to Ice Pick lake first since I had never been there and because it was a nice trip and found some lovely calcite rafts on the lake. The water level in the lake was quite low because of the drought. Despite the encouragement, no one was keen on swimming. We left Ice Pick and continued to the entrance of World of Mud. Max rigged the ladder and we climbed down, leaving Fayed and Nafees to play around near Naked Lady Chamber.

The slope down to the edge of the pool was quite slippery so we rigged quite far back off the end of the ladder used to enter the chamber. I went down first and as soon as I descended 1 m past the lip I was hit by the smell of rotten eggs and called out to the others above. I was about 50 cm from the floor so I got off the rope and then rapidly climbed the slope heading up and out of the foul smelling air. Rotting egg smells suggest hydrogen sulfide which is a highly toxic gas. I was still fine and up high there were no problems, however, the bottom of the pitch was another matter. Simon handed me the Disto and we quickly surveyed the pool and room and then got out of there. We finished the survey and exited the cave via Naked Lady chamber and Hell Hole.

Thoughts on H₂S

Phil Maynard

Simon, Rafid and party were forced back from their survey job in World of Mud by hydrogen sulfide – rotten egg gas. To my knowledge, this has never happened at Jenolan before. This wasn't just a whiff.

The location is the very lowest point in World of Mud. It's a muddy streamway, but there is no downstream exit due to a mud blockage. The location is six metres lower than the main passage of World of Mud, down an overhanging pitch. There was no air movement down in the passage. There was significant airflow in the main passage just above. The mud was damp, but there were no pools of water. In the past, I've seen this location full to the top of the pitch with water.

Assumptions/Discussion:

Hydrogen sulfide is not like carbon dioxide. It's not significantly denser than air, it doesn't sink and it doesn't pool. Therefore, the H₂S was generated at the location it was encountered. It didn't disperse because there's no air movement down there.

It will dilute, diffuse or be destroyed by oxygen over time, so it must be being generated continuously. Possible sources of sulfur for generating hydrogen sulfide are vegetative decay or minerals weathered by the atmosphere. This streamway drains World of Mud, not Snakes Gut, so there's no chance that vegetation can be present in the mud at this location.

Hydrogen sulfide is the most highly-reduced form of sulfur. Generating it through chemistry requires a strong reducing agent. There is no chemical process in a normal cave atmosphere capable of reducing sulfur to H₂S.

H₂S is remarkably toxic, but what's even more remarkable is how strong the odour is. For anyone with a normal sense of smell, the odour limit is well below the toxic limit. Probably, no-one was in danger – but there's no way to tell unless you measure the concentration!

Conclusions:

The sulfur is mineralogical in origin, out of the rocks in World of Mud. Oxidised sulfur out of the minerals is dissolved in water and carried to the mud at the low point of World of Mud. The sulfur is being reduced all the way to hydrogen sulfide by bacterial action in the mud. There may be native sulfur in this location if anyone cares to go back and look. World of Mud could be looked at by a professional to identify various sulfur minerals such as gypsum.

No-one should go back to the low streamway unless they have a portable solid-state gas meter. There's no risk in the main part of World of Mud.

And from our resident professional cave chemists:

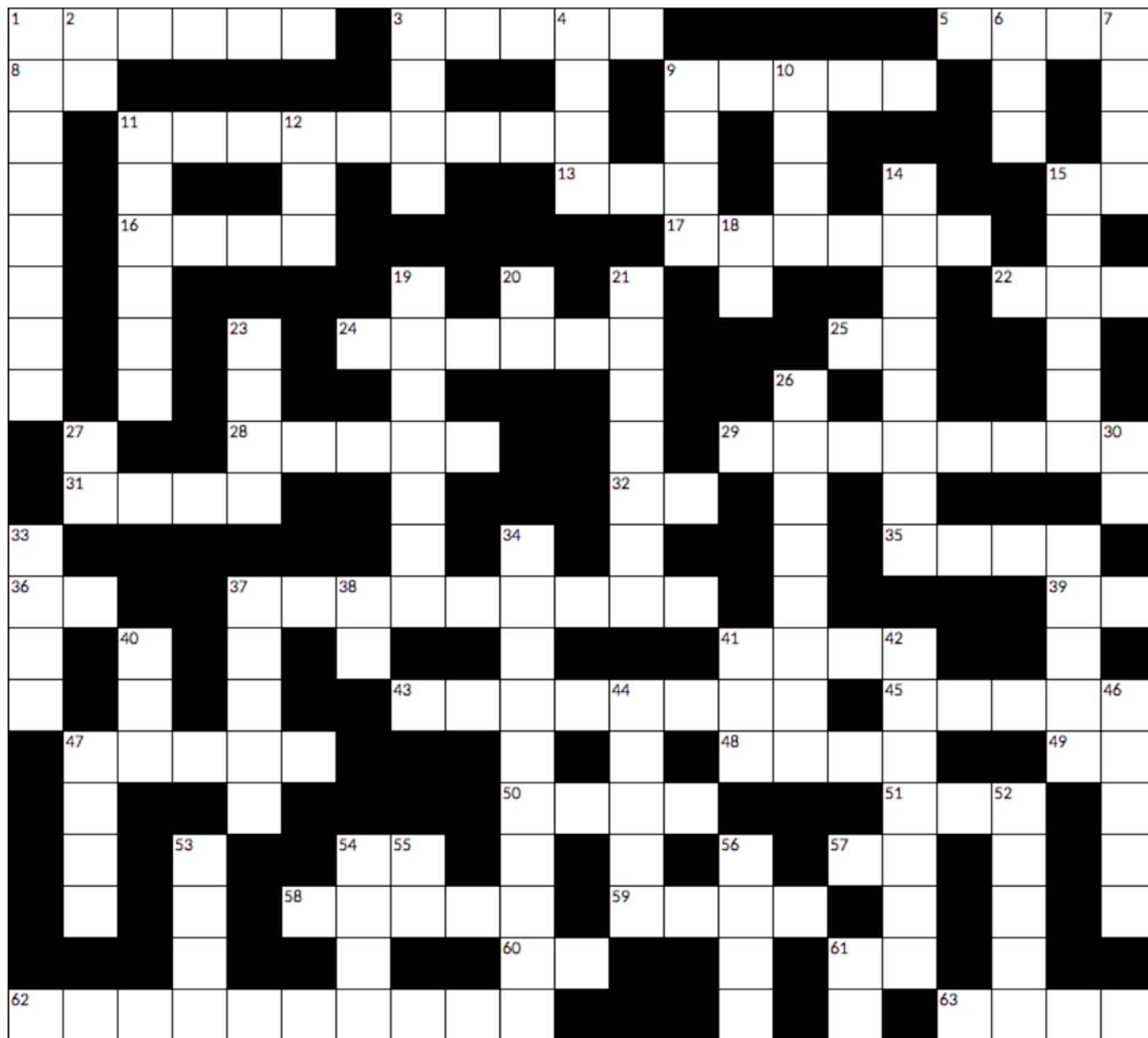
Armstrong Osborne – I suspect that the source of H₂S in the World of Mud is likely to be from weathering of pyrite. I suspect that World of Mud is related to a bed of dolomitic limestone which is likely to contain both dolomite and pyrite.

Analisa Contos – I agree that bacterial involvement is likely. Chemolithotrophic production of H₂S has been reported from microbial communities in caves in Mexico, Italy and the USA but these are fed from H₂S rich groundwater.

SUSS Word

Ian Cooper

Try your knowledge and luck on a mostly-speleo-relevant crossword – answers somewhere towards the rear of the Bull



ACROSS

- 1 Victoria's finest in the east
 3 A winter morning at Jenolan
 5 The most dangerous implements in caving
 8 Hasta
 9 Current survey darling
 11 Perilous
 13 I ____ the light!

- 15 Tag code at Hollanders
 16 Carbide ____
 17 $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2(\text{H}_2\text{O})$
 22 Best cave stories told with this
 24 Rock type at Wombeyan
 25 Tag code at Pigna ____
 28 The way down
 29 $\text{CaMg}(\text{CO}_3)_2$

31	Find more ____	10	As far as most go
32	Tag code at London _____	11	Closed contour basin
35	Wet ground	12	Mind the ____
36	Tag code at Ashford	14	Wet cave footwear
37	Main cave rock	15	Stops a sore head
39	Tag code at Appletree ____	18	Tag code at Yessabah
41	Don't fall in	19	CaCO ₃ polymorph stable at STP
43	Biggest karst area	20	Tag code at Comboyne
45	Bread on fire/cavers in B4-5 extension in rain	21	Australia's first caving area
47	Drink or swim	23	You cannot push this uphill
48	Holds your suit together	26	First SUSS trip
49	Tag code at Timor	27	Tag code at Church _____
50	It ____!	30	Tag code at Ettrema _____
51	Don't trust timber due to it	33	Abseil torture device
54	Tag code at Stockyard _____	34	Grow up formation
57	Tag code at Wellington	35	Light unit
58	Piano Cave area	38	Tag code at Mount _____
59	Abseil device	40	____branch
60	Tag code at Taemas	41	____ nailed boots
61	Tag code at Marble _____	42	Jones Creek caves area
62	Grow down formation	44	Ways up
63	Water _____	46	Some struggle to follow this
DOWN		47	Often grown and consumed on limestone
1	Vertical caving nursery area	52	Issacs Creek caves area
2	Hasta	53	Don't ____
3	Bigger the fool, bigger the ____	54	On lunch or a formation
4	Us	55	Tag code at Cleifden
6	Bad ____	56	Abajo
7	Visible from campsite	61	Tag code at Moparabah
9	Last cheese on the hut table		

“It’s Aladdin, of course it’s been fully explored!”

Stephanie Murphy

Exploration and survey teams: Stephanie Murphy, Rowena Larkin, Miriam Noble, Max Midlen, Rafid Moreshedi, Josh Parker

Digital map drawing: Simon Murphy

Due to a recent non-caving-related shoulder injury I had to put my October exploration of the far reaches of Mammoth Cave on hold and signed up for the beginner Aladdin trip. We did the standard tour of Aladdin then went down the climb at the bottom of the slope. In this area, I was asked what lies through the very obvious hole at the far end of the room. I was surprised I hadn’t been through it as anyone who has caved with me knows I rarely pass up the opportunity of sticking myself in small holes; so off I went. To my surprise the squeeze kept going around a corner, it was more committing than I imagined leaving me with the options of squeezing through some uncomfortable areas or getting the people on their first caving trip to pull me out by my feet. To save myself the embarrassment I pushed on and after a few awkward manoeuvres and removing my helmet I was out into a reasonable sized chamber. The chamber had four obvious leads, little decoration and the words “kid chamber [SIC]” scratched into a rock opposite the entrance. Given that this is Aladdin – a cave which was first discovered over a hundred years ago and is regularly visited – I didn’t bother exploring. I even said to the group on my return “there is no point exploring in there,

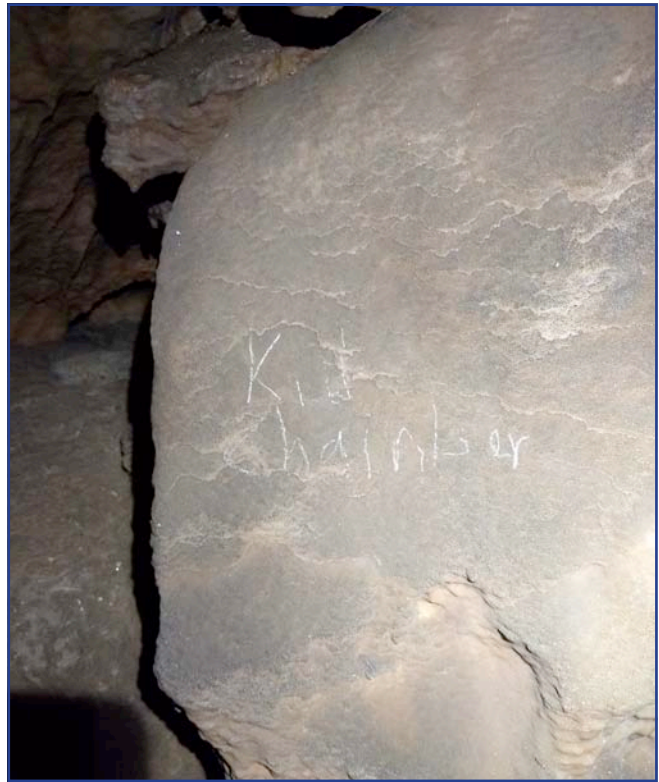


Photo Stephanie Murphy



Bone deposits in Kid Chamber

Photo Stephanie Murphy

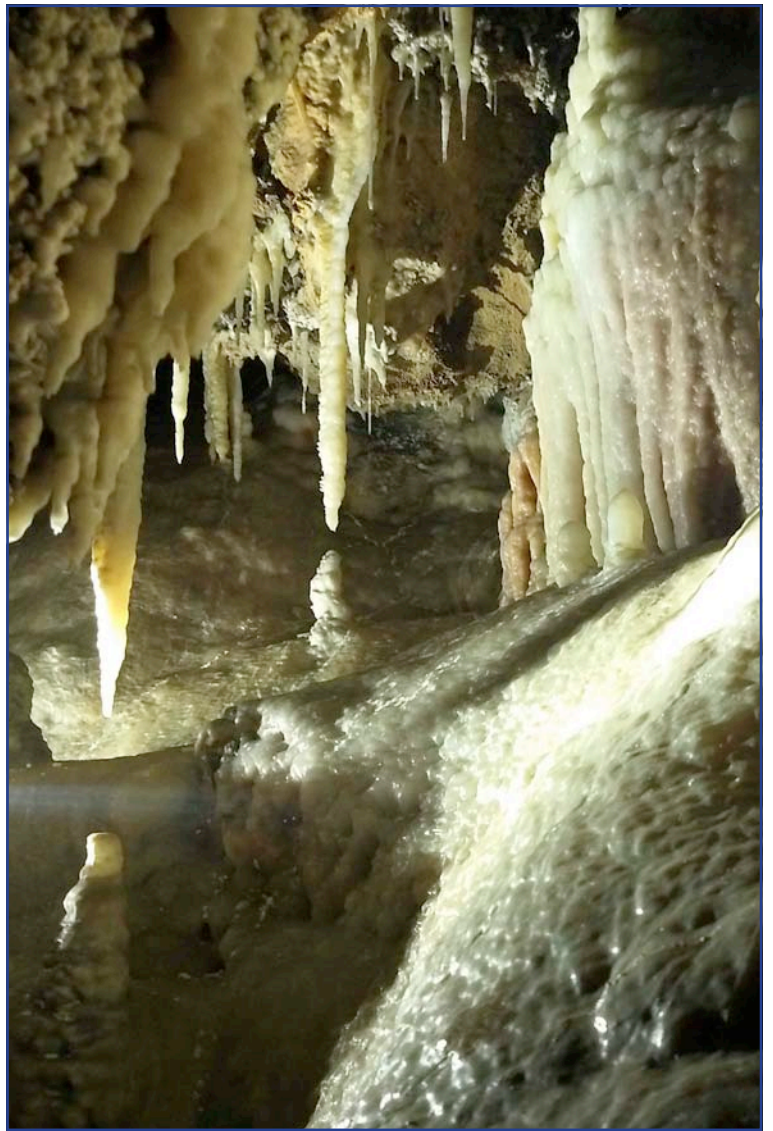
it is Aladdin, of course it has already been explored”. I couldn’t have been more wrong. I was soon advised by Rowena, to my horror, that few if any adults had been in the chamber and nothing after the squeeze had ever been mapped!

At the start of the 2018 December weeklong trip, Rowena, Josh and I headed back to survey the chamber and any potential leads. Given the location of Aladdin, there has long been hope there would be a link found between Aladdin and Rho Hole. The first chamber is similar in appearance to the section of cave before the squeeze, the roof and walls are composed of large pieces of rock which appear to have fallen a long time ago. There are plenty of shawls and flowstone, though none is actively forming and almost all

is covered in layers of dirt and black dust. The chamber is very scratched, likely from hobnailed boots. Of the four leads I identified, two go into rockpile. On surveying these leads I found they join up with each other. Another lead goes down a vertical squeeze between two flat rocks and the final is what I suspected to be the Kennedy Trap. It is located under a slab of rock and the area surrounding has a lot of scratches. Through the SUSS Bulls I found the first person to attempt and struggle to escape this squeeze was actually Rex Filson in 1958. The squeeze was named Filsons Folly to commemorate the six-hour excavation required to free him from the hole.

Not easily deterred and hoping Mr Filson was of larger build than me, I entered Filsons Folly with Josh ready to provide extraction assistance if required. The squeeze is a vertical entrance into a 90-degree corner then a tight crawl which brings you out in a small room. From here you walk through into a larger chamber which I believe is referenced in the Bull. There does not appear to be a surviving survey of this area. The room is incredibly well decorated with beautiful white stalactites, stalagmites, shawls, flowstone and rim pools. The decoration is mostly on the ceiling, well above head height, and decoration on the ground can be easily avoided. I agree with the statement the decoration in this chamber is far superior to that in the rest of the cave.

As getting through the squeeze had been surprisingly easy I confidently headed back to Josh to



Formation beyond Filsons Folly

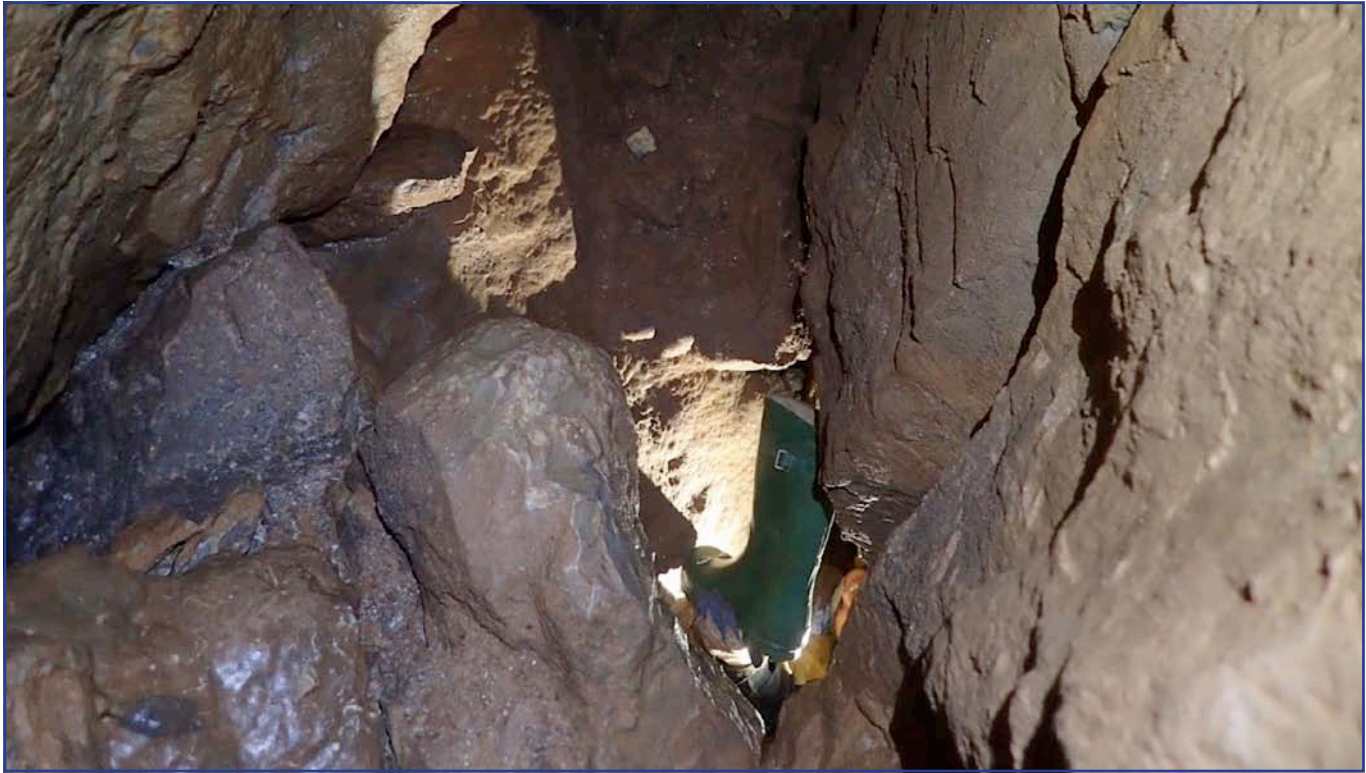
Photo Stephanie Murphy



Ancient cigarette packet beyond Filsons Folly

Photo Rafid Morshedi

collect the survey gear and my camera. On attempting to exit the squeeze I suddenly discovered why so many hours had been spent in this squeeze by Filson and the Kennedy boys. The 90 degree turn, position of some rocks and vertical nature of the squeeze make it very challenging to exit when gravity is working against you rather than with you. After an hour of struggling, ditching all clothing except my underwear, and a lot of effort I was finally free. The only problem was my boots were still in the squeeze. After another hour, Josh was thankfully able to retrieve one



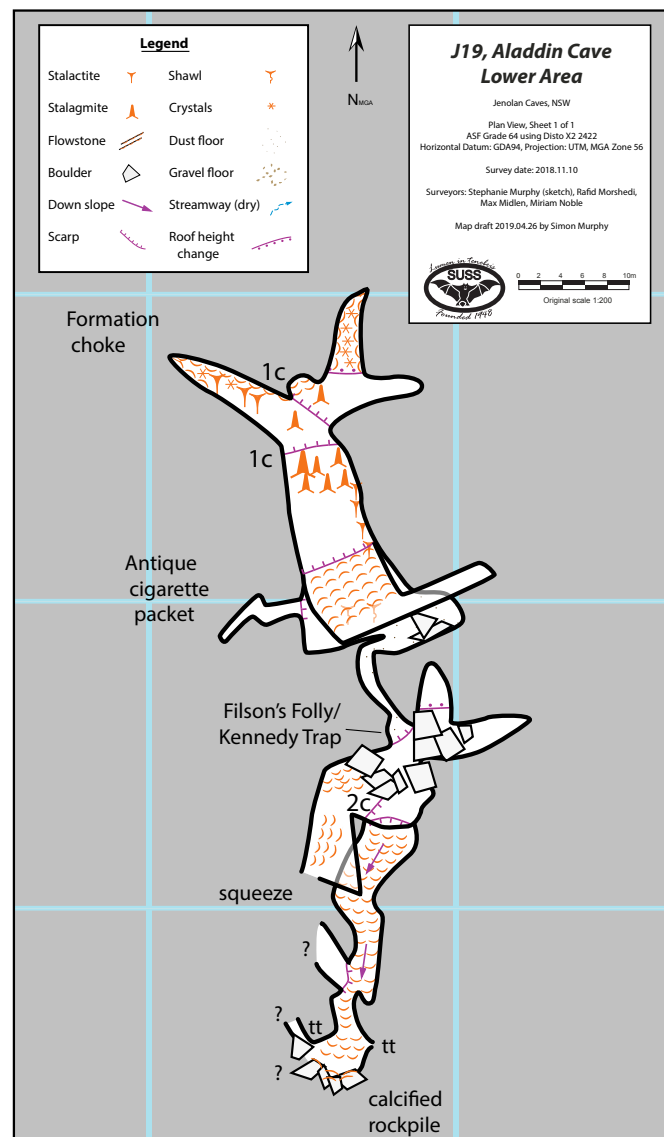
Rescuing a boot from Filsons Folly. Photo Rafid Morshedi

of my shoes but the other sadly did not make it out on this trip, leading to a rather uncomfortable walk back to the hut.

In February 2019, Max, Miriam, Rafid and I went back to the Kid Chamber with the goal of retrieving my shoe and checking out another lead I had found by chance half way down the climb down to the rockpile. This lead wasn't documented in the SUSS Bulls, and given its location I believe had not previously been investigated. It was pure chance I stumbled across it. Rafid bravely volunteered to drop down through this second vertical squeeze and beneath it found walk-through river passage, the end of which is blocked with calcited rockpile.

Back at Filson's Folly, while retrieving my shoe, we found we were able to lift out a few of the rocks that were making the squeeze so challenging. This meant we were able to get through a little more easily and survey and take photos of this area. It should be noted this squeeze is still significantly more challenging than the entrance squeeze and still more challenging to exit than it is to enter.

Sadly, none of the new chambers link up with Rho Hole and all leads were surveyed. Below is the section of cave that we surveyed and which was not previously included on Aladdin maps.



January Yarrangobilly and Cooleman Plains

January 24-28 2019

Keir Vaughan-Taylor and Jill Rowling

Present: Ed Castro, Carol Castro, Phil Maynard, Keir Vaughan-Taylor, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Rod Obrien, Mike Lake, Jill Rowling, Jason Cockayne, Ian Cooper

Yarrangobilly

Having been given a key to Yan fire-trail gate, our group took our vehicles down the firetrail on the Thursday to the Y7 Coppermine cave entrance. Water flow out of the cave was not its usual feisty rush, but then it has been many years since I was last here. The climate may have changed. Ed, Carol, Phil, Cathy, and Rod spirited dive gear along the 200 m of stream passage and stationed it all in a big pile under a low roof just before the sump. I geared up and dipped under the surface to see a down-trending passage.

The walls were little tight but opened up after 5 – 6 metres into a space with many alcoves and a down trending hole. In general the space appears to be following a joint, angled at about four o'clock. I chose the left passage, if you can call it that, where it disappointingly terminated after short distance. Backing up to the last open space, the silt cloud enveloped me. I spent 10 minutes trying to find a protrusion on which to tie off but was frustrated by limestone pendants that were smooth and ill-defined. After some time floating in



Phil and Rod in the Y7 Coppermine stream

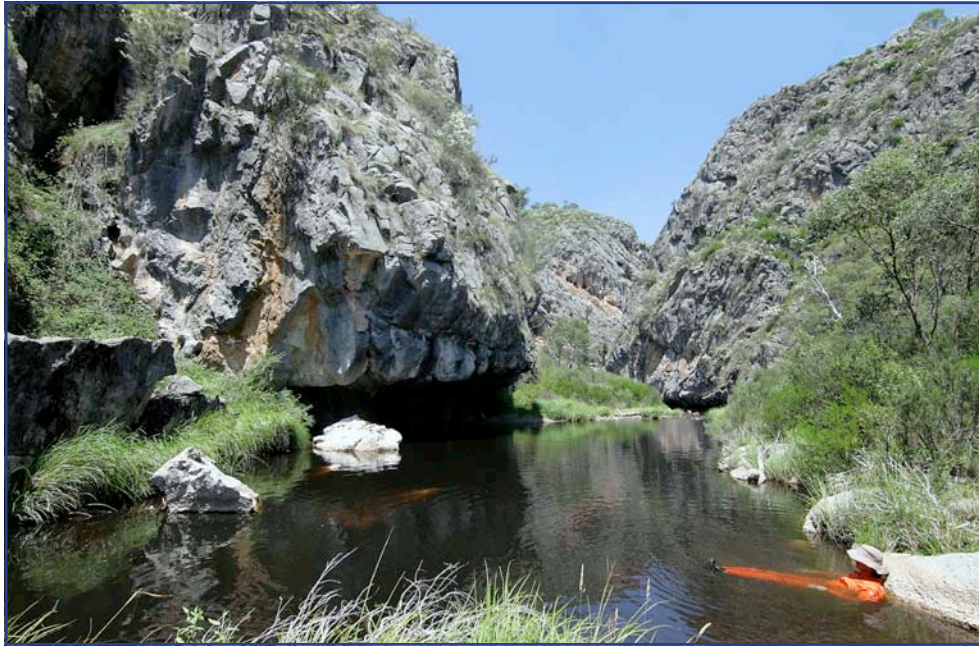
Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood

a custard-like void I abandoned finding a tie off, instead reeling in the line to return up the entrance tube where on the surface Ed, Carol, Phil, Cathi, and Rod were in wait. “What has been found”. “Not much” I reported, but also felt there was more in there to inspect. We would return the next day.



Rod searching under the overhang at Tricketts arch

Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor



Carol reclining in the Yarrangobilly River

Photo Cathi Humphey-Hood

With the sun beating down, temperature back at the vehicles was now over 30 °C, in contrast to the inside of the cave. Each of us applied liberal coatings of sunblock then ventured down the Yarrangobilly River. My past experience with the Yagby River is it is perishingly cold, but on this day it lured each one of us in to swim in its warm waters. Rod despite the heat wore his wetsuit and set-to, inspecting many of the holes and nooks in the overhangs on the way downstream. Only micro-caves revealed themselves in the elegant limestone bluffs guiding the river on its way. The overhang under Tricketts cave was spectacular in its own way, but again no hidden resurgence of any significance was discovered.

The main group did a quick visit in Tricketts cave but our group had largely spent our time in the river. Besides, we would be back the next day.

We checked in with the Guides at Yarrangobilly. There was some concern about our welfare with worries that we could be caught out if there was an outbreak of fire. There were many fires burning in and around the park, however they were distant. In the worst possible scenario we could always retreat into one of the caves. Even so it's nice that someone cares.

The next day back at Coppermine Cave we repeated the entrance procedure. I entered the pool this time intent on finding a tie-off. Immediately it silted out. I found a stubby stalagmite to tie off on and secured it with an upward support tie wrapped around a knob of rock. I made attempts to wriggle down a shaft but only suc-

ceeded in creating clouds of silt. I made my way back along the line and my colleagues waiting in the air chamber.

Rod wanted a go. He attached his tanks, sank his head down into the sump and followed my dive line in the first small space. Finding the tie-off, it pulled off right away and floated free. Straightening out the tangle of line Rod began a search up and down into the spaces running along what appeared to be an eroded joint in the limestone. In multiple directions there were blind alcoves and no apparent main passage from where the water came. After about twenty minutes Rod returned pronouncing there was no way on. This is probably

right but writing this I can't help but think another look might find something. Maybe one day when we have nothing to do. Returning the gear to the cars we headed back to highway and made our way to Cooleman Plain.

Cooleman

Jill

Mike and Jill drove from Sydney on Friday 25th through a heatwave, reaching 41 °C around Yass. At Cooleman Plains (1300 m a.s.l.) it was only 31 °C. My first impressions of Cooleman Plains after about 15 years is there were rather a lot of horses about. Most were fairly fat but unkempt. People like to call them "brumbies", but that's an emotive term; they are just horses. We passed through wonderful vegetation: tussock on the plain, Black Sally, snowgrass and alpine ash groves in places.

Our designated campsite, "Currawong", was sheltered but full of horse manure. We were advised that the horses snuffled around the campsite most nights. We set up camp with two tents: a stuffy old snow tent for Jill and a breezy gazebo for Mike. That night, a noisy foal kept us awake with its vocalising and tripping over the camp.

Up early to beat the heat, the divers prepared their gear and we all walked over to CP6 River Cave. The alpine vegetation was simply delightful. I felt I could have been in NZ or Switzerland. Putting a trog suit on in the heat near River Cave was best done in the cool shade of the cave entrance. We set up a chain of people to pass the

dive gear down fairly easily. We had a look downstream. Some people did the duck-under but Mike and I chose not to. We had a quick look at where the divers were setting up in the upstream area, then exited. Well, tried to, with Jill needing some assistance on one climb. Outside we changed again as it was still like a furnace.

Coops took a group of us across country to look at a dry valley, then we wandered over to Murray Cave. This is a wonderful cave. Some exited via the lower exit. I had a look at the upper extension which is a bit crawly, but well decorated with oolites that look oddly like horse manure (or spiky eggs!). We returned to the heat outside, waiting for the others to come out the upper or lower entrance in the Lower Branch of the cave. This took a while. We all met up as we returned to camp with the divers.



Mike carrying dive gear in CP6 River cave

Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor

A spectacular sunset completed the day. That night a powerful thunderstorm with ferocious winds blew over Mike's gazebo and forced him into the stuffy snow tent.

Keir

NUCC arrived and were keen to help. How pleasant. Our two groups carried dive gear in back packs across the plains and down into CP6 River Cave. It was record time to get there and in defiance of heatwave conditions. NUCC delivered the packages to the water's edge and then as mysteriously as they appeared, they disappeared, wafting up onto the plain above to explore their own cave dreams. We would need to pull the gear out ourselves after the dive. Rod and I sat around at the start of the river passage getting gear organised. Meanwhile Phil led Jason, Ed and Carol made their way downstream through the duckunder sumps. They were intent on surveying a passage opposite the inflow of the Altimera streamway.



The second airspace heading upstream towards Parallel Universe

Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor

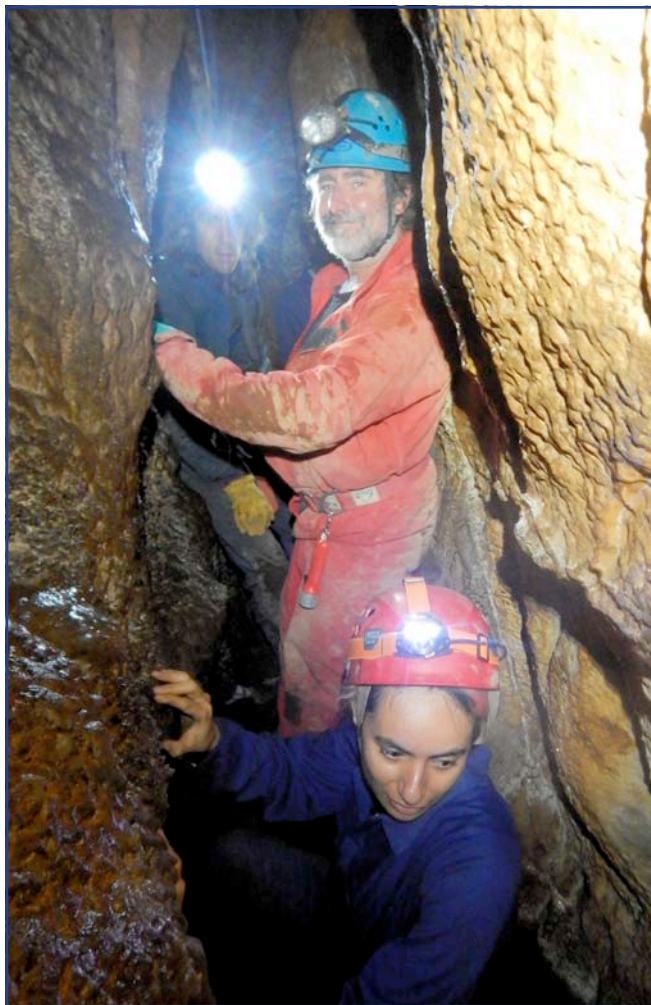
That passage had previously been reported by a younger member of our club to be hundreds of metres long. At that first exploration, it seemed as though a tunnel went on forever but sadly the survey results didn't bear out the optimistic estimate and it came out to be more around 30 metres. Phil then followed up on some of the shorter and unsurveyed passages where the river disappeared but emerged some distance further along and will add them to the developing map of the cave.

While the others struggled with sines and cosines [*mostly we went off on a tangent. ed.*], Rod and I waded up the River



Parallel Universe, CP6 River cave

Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor



Lachlan (NUCC), Jason, and Whitley (NUCC) in the entrance passage of CP6 River cave

Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor

Cave stream where it gradually deepens to a swim. Water dribbled out of the start of the dive across basaltic river gravels into the lake. It seemed greatly reduced from previous years. We entered the upstream sump navigating along the line through passages that we now regard as known ground. We passed through two air spaces clearly showing decomposition around black intrusions.

Because of slower water movement, visibility was better than usual accommodating us with vague impressions of wall passage. The dive drops to about 11 metres, surfacing in a big chamber we call Parallel Universe. In the past getting pictures was difficult because the rock in this chamber absorbed much of the light. The chamber is big enough to make it hard to illuminate. On this occasion I had bought some extra-powerful video lights purchased from China. They come with various issues, but big passage is less of a problem when addressed with 25,000 lumens of white light. The advantage is lessened by my less than desirable photographic skills. I blame the camera. It has trouble focussing and is prone to getting water droplets on the lens. I regret not taking more pictures.

The photograph is looking back towards the way out. In this place the water is about 8 metres deep. The way on upstream is behind me. The guideline runs just under the water along the RH wall. Next time we'll be examining the walls along the floor of this chamber to see if there is more to find.

Rod and I followed existing line upstream. The route upstream drops under an archway into a room that previously we had thought had a surface but only rose into blind avens. The line trended to the right ending in the mud tied to a hammer left on a previous dive. Rod retrieved his hammer, added line to the end and we proceeded further placing many more metres of guideline.

Going on upstream, passage is forced under another volcanic dyke/arch. Rod moved ahead into what I thought was a large void. Just before I arrived Rod encountered a blind passage. He backed out from of the blind alley deciding there might be a surface. Catching up we both rose along the sides of a wall into a shallow depth. Although promising a surface river it was not to be. A gnarly rift narrowed down and prevented us from reaching a surface.

Poking into the various deceptive ins and outs we flossicked our way back through Parallel Universe eventually returning to the gear up spot at our dive's start. We pushed and pulled our way out of our dive paraphernalia and started the transport of gear packs back to the surface. There were only two supporters to help us back out of the cave, the noble Cathi and Carol who worked like a pair of steam locomotives. Working like a pair of frozen penguins, Rod and I could at least warm up trying to keep up. Our brethren cavers were still downstream beyond the two sumps, somewhere, surveying and probably quite cold.

Back at the entrance as we warmed up we heard our comrades' voices echoing out of the cave. We trudged with the dive gear back to the campsite where I promptly fell asleep.

Jill

Sunday was mercifully cooler. Mike and Jill opted to walk over to the old copper mine and then the area near Disappointment Gorge. The mine area is interesting (again, more horses!). We ascended the west ridge parallel to Disappointment Gorge, finding the vertical pot CP52 breathing cold air. There were plenty of weeds in this area! Intermittent rain attended the rest of our ramble. We retraced our steps and took a short walk up the western valley, but it "lacked enthusiasm". The eastern valley looked more interesting.

Keir

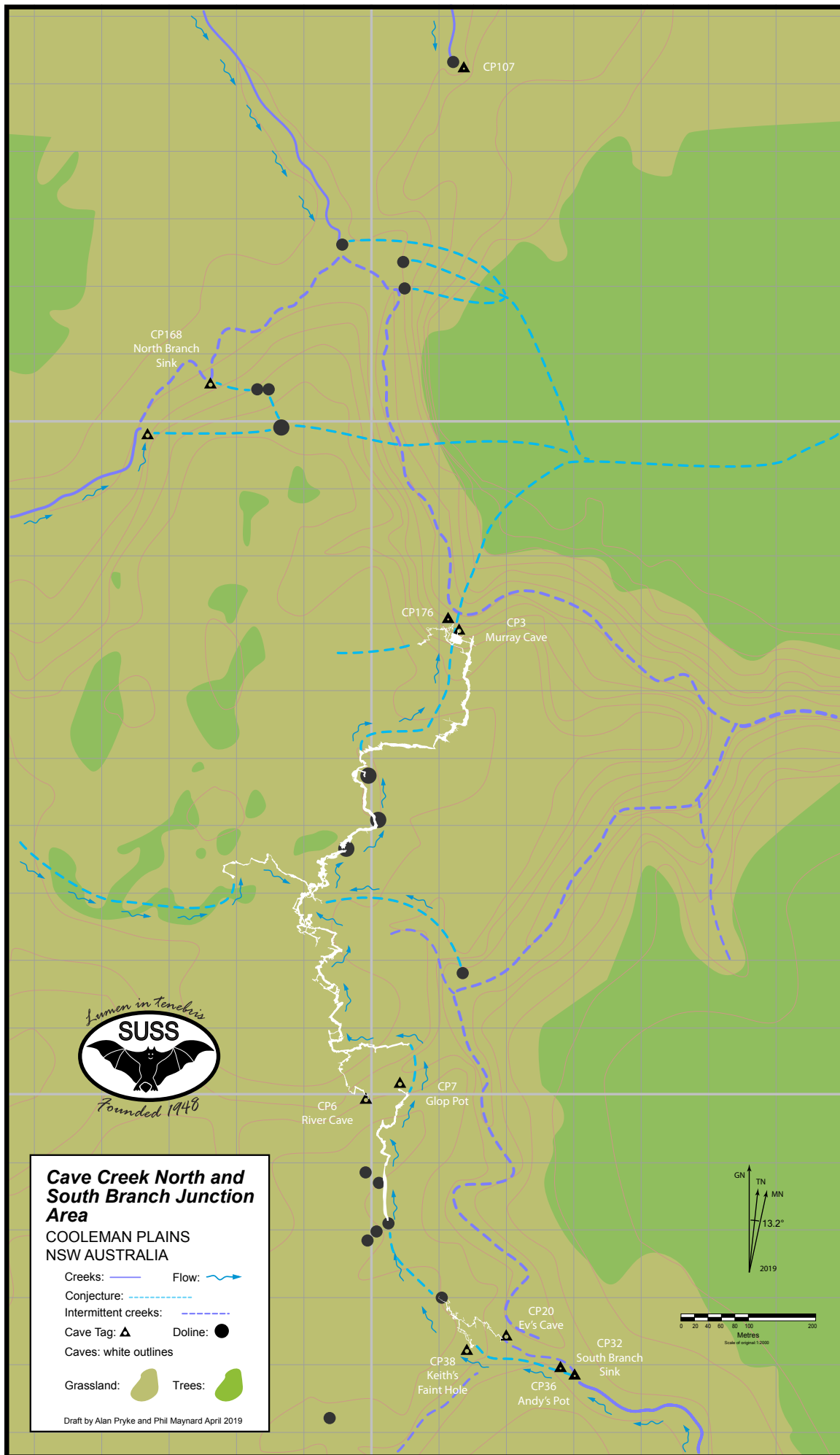
The other days at Cooleman we spent walking but were intrigued by the Blue Waterholes resurgence. We started surveying each spring's location. Of course Joe Jennings has already done that but perhaps things have changed.

Phil our cartographer updated the relative position of Murray, River, Glop Pot and the water source caves further south.



Crossing the plain with dive gear

Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood



Reprintception

Simon Murphy

The following article is a reprint of a reprint. Younger SUSS members might not be familiar with reprints, harking back to earlier days where copy+paste wasn't a thing and you couldn't share a link on Facebook. Or anywhere. There was no internet in 1957. If you wanted someone to read something you found interesting, your best bet was to include a copy of it when you next printed and distributed your bulletin.

This article appeared in SUSS Bull 15(8) (1975), as a reprint of an earlier SUSS Journal 4(2) (1957) article

"40,000 Grottoes." Casteret was a notable French caver, after whom one of the more restricted caves at Jenolan is named. He is sometimes considered the father of modern speleology, and his feats are legend [*as is his self-regard. ed.*].

The article below has the subtitle "The after-effects of reading an entire gift set of Casteret in one afternoon." It may well have been the product of Cabernet as well.

40,000 Grottoes.

(Reprinted from SUSS Journal 4(2); 14. December 1957)

– The after-effects of reading an entire gift set of Casteret in one afternoon.

Five kilometres from the village of Essuy-Porc, the torrent of X..... disappears in a hillside. It reappears 500 metres further up the hillside and flows into the Garonne. The reasons for this curious behaviour are based on hydro-speleological laws which it is not in the nature of this work to include. Although no one had actually succeeded in following the underground river, or indeed, even entering the cave, I established the course of the river by emptying 3 tonnes of flourescein into the disappearance point. The magic green colour soon spread all over the south of France, across the English Channel and it is reported in at least two caves in Cuba. The suggestion, however, that Greenland derives its name from this is, of course, false.

I was determined to enter the cave somehow and to explore its mysteries. Its very inaccessability was a challenge to me, and like every natural athlete who sees a challenge, I constantly dreamt of conquering it. (I used to dream of some other interesting things too, most of which lie outside the scope of this book.) It happened that one day I was sheltering from a blizzard in a draughty shepherd's hut in a valley, eating some cheese sandwiches and candles (things which I always carry with me), when I noticed a small hole high up in the cliff face. My curiosity was aroused and I started to climb without further ado. The climb was arduous as the hole was 400 metres above the valley floor and the rock face was smooth and overhanging, but 30 minutes' climbing saw me at the top.

I paused at the entrance to light my carbide lamp, and entered the cave. The passage narrowed down to a cat-hole, which, cat-like, I soon negotiated. The scene that awaited me on the other side was both awe-inspiring in its splendor and fascinating in its beauty. I was in a cavern of enormous size full of the most beautiful calcite deposits I have ever seen. It was a veritable fairy bower, which words cannot describe. I collected twelve oolites and demolished a forty foot straw for setting up in my private museum and pressed on, spell bound. A surprise awaited me. On the floor I found a large stack of pure gold potsherds, plates and stone axes, definite proof of the caves having been previously occupied. I passed these by for I had decided to explore all this remarkable cavern in the few hours I had to spare.

I soon found the underground river and followed it for 3.7 miles (this guess was proved correct by subsequent survey) to a siphon. After hesitating for about five seconds I decided to force the siphon. I stripped off and plunged in. The water, supercooled to 28°F, took my breath away. The current was fairly strong, but I negotiated the 50 metres underwater and emerged.

The cave here was dull and uninteresting and my progress was soon stopped by a huge waterfall. I stood at the top of this terrifying blackness and tried to guess how deep it might be but the river seemed to be falling

into the bowels of the earth and the chasm had all the appearance of being bottomless. my exploration was halted here, so I made my way back to the surface, well pleased with my day's work.

Two months later I returned with my wife and she lowered me 1000 feet down a rope. Still I did not reach the bottom; It is a credit to her wonderful fortitude that she could carry the 1000 feet of rope up the cliff face outside and then belay me up and down the chasm. Since this time the bottom has been reached at 1010 feet, from the top of the waterfall.

The cave is now very popular and is constantly being explored, however nothing new has been added to my original exploration. It is tragic to see that three young speleologists have been drowned in this siphon. Swimming this siphon without the proper gear is foolish and dangerous. I find it hard to have sympathy for anyone who indulges in this kind of folly. The crystal cavern is not as good as it used to be because vandals and souvenir hunters have removed most of the formation. Something should be done to stop this wanton desecration.

About Fluorescein

Fluorescein is a dye used to trace underwater streams, among its many other useful applications including in medicine [*and yellow highlighter pens. ed.*]. The soluble form comes as a red powder and dissolves readily into water. Fluorescein absorbs blue light, often but not necessarily from sunlight, and emits green-yellow light. [*It's very, very good at doing this. Using large quantities in a cave produces interesting results. ed.*] Denis Burke (1955) [1] has described its use, including at Jenolan for stream tracing, and wrote that an experienced eye can detect it at concentrations as low as 10 parts per billion in deep pools. He also copied some recommendations for quantities useful for dye tracing. For a stream of 1 mile, a quantity of 2 lbs (0.9 kg) is recommended.

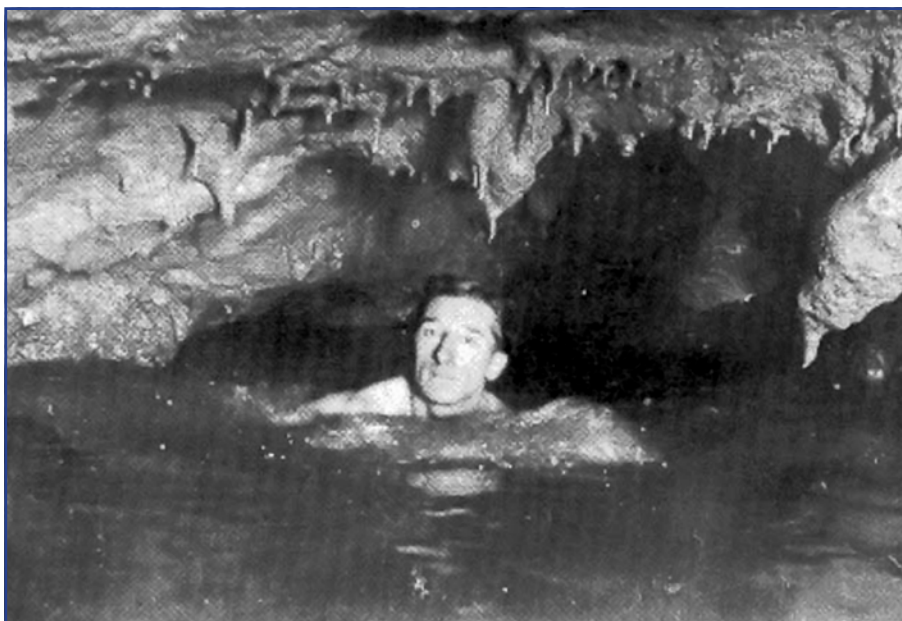
Casteret was known to use much more fluorescein than was actually necessary. In one instance, he used 120 lbs for an experiment that required only 10. Evidently

he was able to procure large quantities of the stuff. At the time of Burke's (1955) article, Casteret also held the record for the single largest quantity used in any cave, at 220 lbs (100 kg). [*He turned the resurgence and the valley below fluorescent, for days. He claims he was at risk of being lynched by the villagers. ed.*]

Incidentally, Burke himself managed to turn the Blue Lake at Jenolan green for three days when dye tracing Lower River downstream from Mammoth Cave[2]. For those who enjoy imperial unit conversions, I can tell you the price of fluorescein back then was £1 per lb[1]. Decimalisation of currency didn't happen here until 1966.

[1] Denis Burke, "Fluorescein and Water Tracing", *SUSS Journal* 2(2), 19–22, 1955.

[2] Report 33, June 1953. Original irretrievable. Mentioned in [1].



Norbert Casteret; Photo Wikimedia Commons

Redirected: A new cave above Mangaotaki River, NZ

Alan Pryke

Surveyors:

2016: Felix and Anna Ossig-Bonanno, David Stephen Myles.

2017: David Rueda-Roca, Peter Freeman.

2019: Alan and Megan Pryke, Liz McCutcheon, Phil Maynard, Ciara Smart, Charmaine Pang, Pat Larkin, John Oxley.

New Zealand trip, early 2016, and a group of cavers led by Alan Pryke get access to a large property on the Mangaotaki River, up the road from Pio Pio, a small town in the limestone country south of Waitomo.

The group found various caves here and there, but nothing large. Out past the farmer's airstrip, a small inflow was followed around tight corners, unfortunately becoming too tight. The group retreated, and continued looking at the many dolines in the area.

At some point a nearby deep grassy doline led to an awkward, tight pit. Felix Ossig-Bonanno and David Stephen Myles dropped in, whilst flued-up Alan and lazy Scott stuck around on the surface, enjoying the warm afternoon sun.

Quite some time later, a beaming Felix appeared with a tale of epic cave that kept getting larger and larger, with endless side passages. Considering that the start point was rather tiny, vertical and awkward, Alan was a bit sceptical of the "large passages". Felix and David assured him that it got really big. What they didn't fully explain was that the route to this "large passage" involved slithering along narrow serpentine low passage for a while (well, hundreds of metres....) then topped off with a really, really low, wet flattener "20 cm" high.

After selling the cave so well, Alan let Anna, Felix and David begin the arduous task of surveying the beast.

A rather muddled remnant of survey paper survived the battering, and 400 metres of narrow rifts and flatteners were mapped, right through to the "larger" section.



Charmaine, scaring her parents

Photo Alan Pryke



Charmaine on the hunt for dolines, with Matt Ronaldson

Photo Megan Pryke

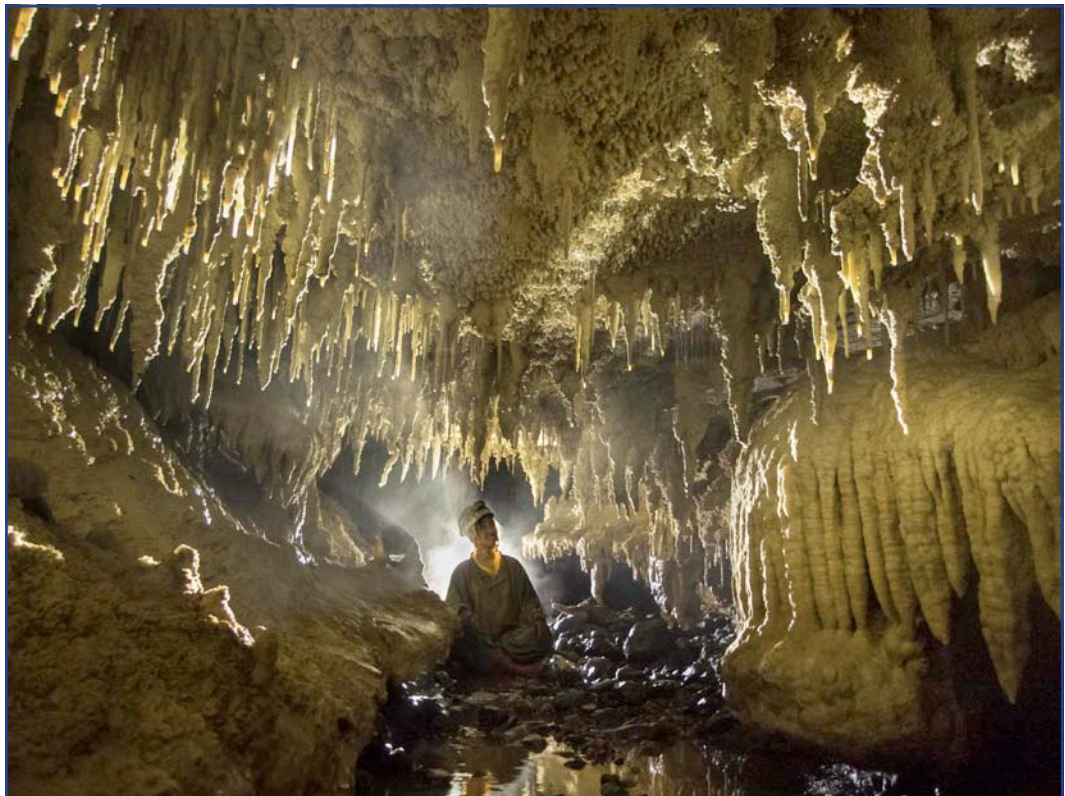
The following year saw a fearless team of David Rueda-Roca and Peter Freeman push on through the flattener, and survey into the larger passages and, eventually, a junction to a stomping streamway was reached. Survey ended here for the year, with promise of much more. The cave length: 730 m.

On the 2018 NZ trip, they were busy with other things, so, in 2019, Phil led his first trip into the cave with Ciara. Their efforts pushed the cave northeast, and on plotting the data, found that the cave had gone over the property boundary on to the Ronaldson's farm next door. Soon after, Alan and Dave Stuckey visited the Ronaldsons, initially getting a wary response – "We don't have any caves on our property?" but soon we were chatting in the lounge, beer in hand, to Matt and Cynthia about

the travails of Redirected, and the prospect of finding an entrance to the system on their property.

So, the next day, Pat, Megan, Alan and Charmaine turned up at the Ronaldsons, whilst Phil led his second trip into Redirected with Ciara and Liz, pushing upstream. Matt Ronaldson proceeded to show Megan, Alan, Charmaine and Pat a very prospective doline which he described as taking all the water from a collapsed dam some years earlier. Pat volunteered to descend on tape, but was disappointed to find the semi-tomo had no negotiable way on, with a mud floor. On the way back out of the swamp on

the edge of the hole, Alan found a gap in the vegetated cliff, which dropped away into a quite small tomo, but which had a good, cold breeze emanating. Patrick agreed to have a look, and, after rigging a ladder returned with a



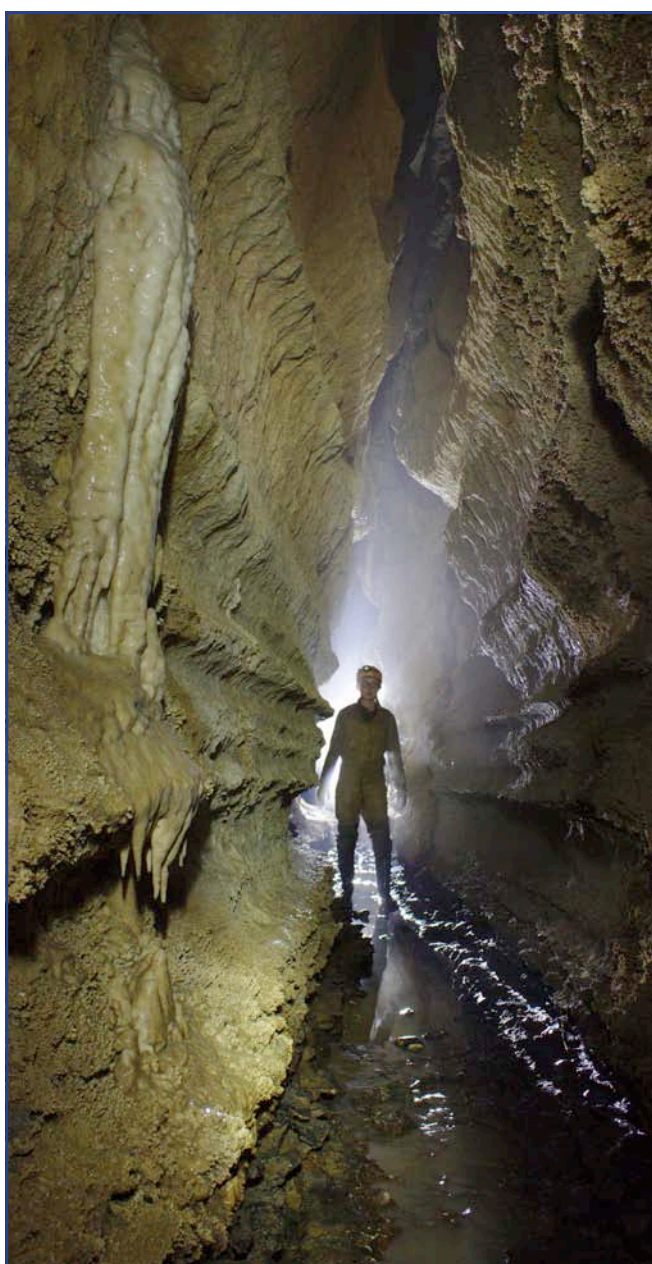
Charmaine at the connection between the mapping team and the scooping team

Photo Alan Pryke

tale of the floor dropping away in a tight rift. Charmaine was deployed, but retreated, too, as the rift dropped 20 or so metres, and was progressively tighter. This one will require some gear.

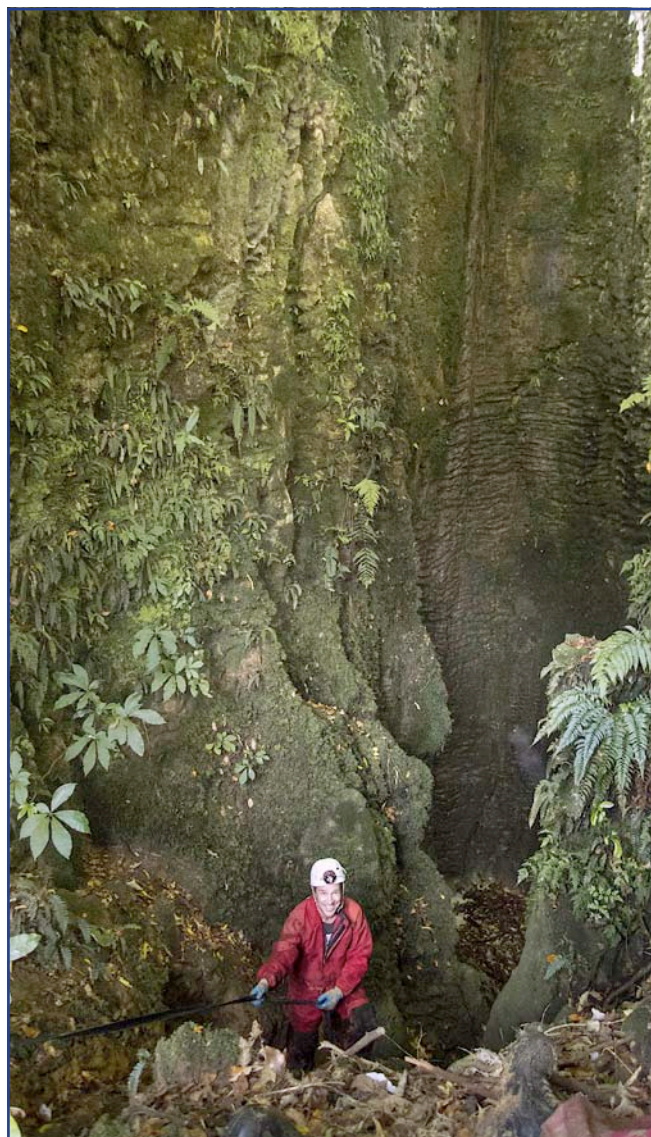
The group continued their search around the property in the hot 2019 sun. Alan found a swamp with gaps, all too hideous. Pat explored a gully of trees. Megan was over there somewhere. They all regrouped when Charmaine found an unlikely hole in the side of a pile of rocks.

Clearly, there was a void heading down. Pat fearlessly, or perhaps foolishly, agreed to descend the slippery slope first. Ladder set up, Pat was soon tangled up in abandoned barbed wire for some time. Once past that obstacle, Pat disappeared, eventually returning to regale



Ciara in the Miss Direction section

Photo John Oxley



Pat in a small tomo that needs another look

Photo Alan Pryke

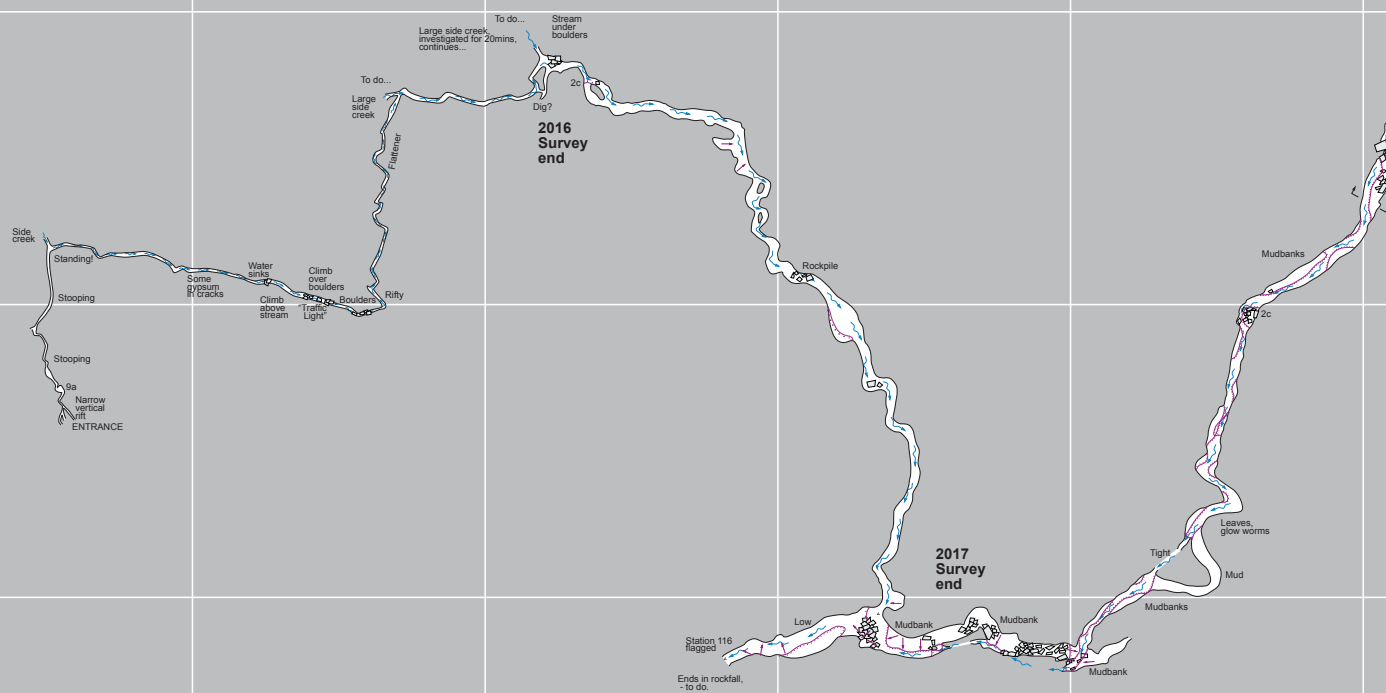
the rest with news of a junction with walking passage streamway. Hurrah! Megan, Alan and Charmaine had the equally good news that Matt had found us on his quad bike and delivered a delicious lunch, complete with nice cake, later discovered to be Cynthia's famous, secret-recipe lemon cake. Hurrah again! Pat forwarded the name "Miss Direction" for the entrance's name. News of the going passage astounded Matt, who believed he had no real caves on his property. A decision to survey as they explored got rejected, and scooping was the favoured option.

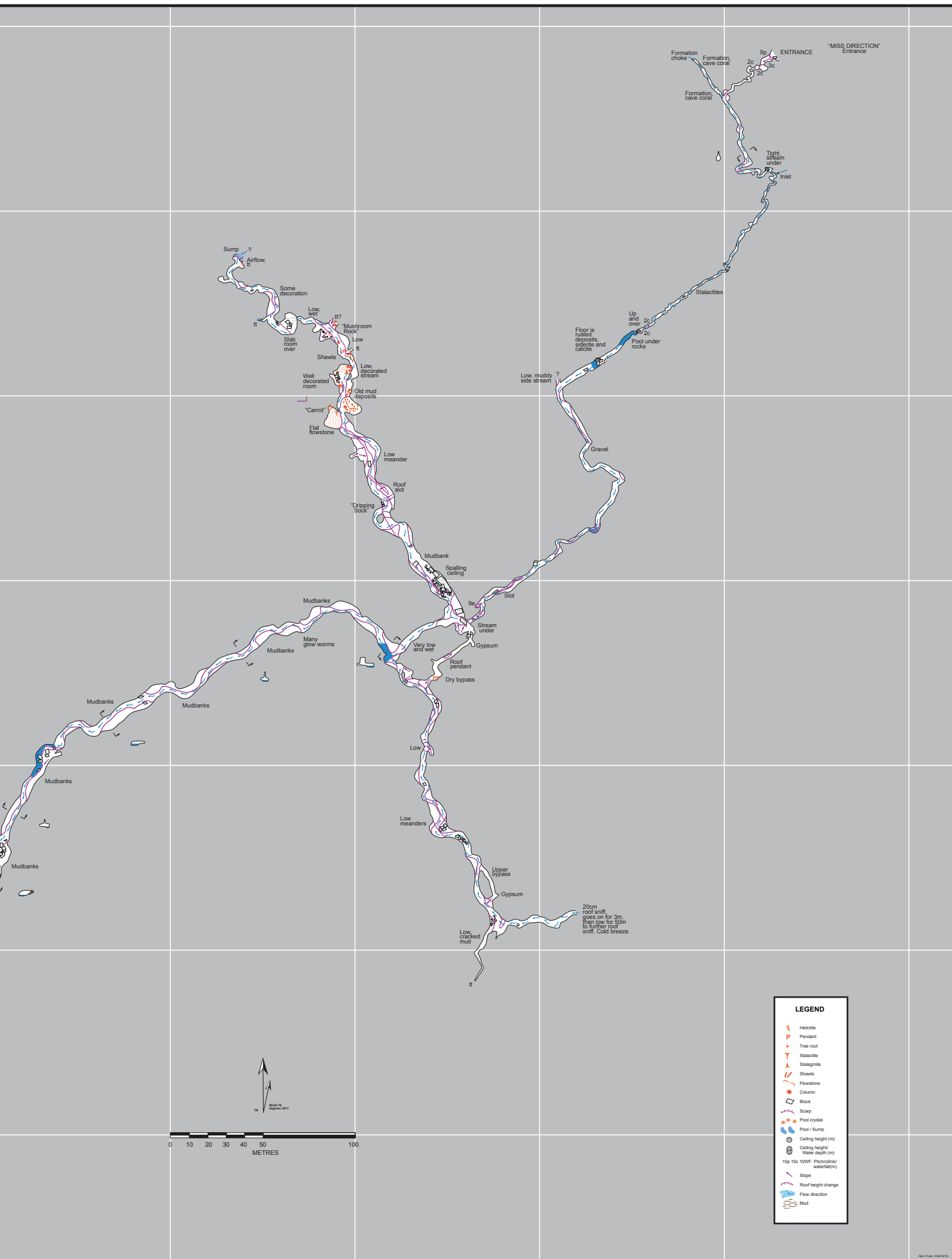
The four cavers soon excitedly entered the cave, Alan bashing his way through the barbed wire, shoving it aside, then ploughing on to the junction that Pat had reached. Then the easy walking passage lasted till the following corner, 20 metres or so downstream. The way on wasn't too bad, with a large collapsed block of wall very nearly choking the serpentine stream. After slithering through, the team rattled along, with the streamway

REDIRECTED

Mangaotaki, North Island, New Zealand

Surveyors: David Stephen Myles, Anna and Felix Ossig-Bonanno, David Rueda Roca, Phil Maynard, Clara Smart, Alan Pryke, Megan Pryke, Charmaine Pang, John Osley (SUSS), Peter Freeman, Liz McCutcheon (VSA),
 Disto X (compass 0.5 degree/clinometer 0.1 degree /distance <2mm)
 ASF Grade 5.4 True North 2019
 Sketched by Alan Pryke, Phil Maynard, Felix Ossig-Bonanno, Peter Freeman.
 Drafted by Alan Pryke, Sydney University Speleological Society
 Survey Length to date: 2600m
 10m GRID
 Draft: 2-2019





widening but getting lower, with a fair bit of crawling in the stream. Weird iron(?) crusts on the floor were carefully stepped over. The low stream gave way to larger passage, and voices were heard ahead! They had reached the mapping team! Charmaine surged forward to meet them, pushing through the lowest of low wet flatteners to meet Ciara. Megan, Pat and Alan found an overhead bypass and met up with a bedraggled but giggly Charmaine, a chilled out Liz, a happy Phil and an ever cheery Ciara – now all happy to know they could escape the cave a much easier way. Megan, Alan, Charmaine and Pat then wandered upstream. A different upstream from the one they arrived from, yet not where Phil and Ciara had arrived from. A four way junction. (This will only make sense on viewing the map....)

Upstream, the muddy borehole passage led to a couple of well decorated rooms, then continuing streamway, decorated and low, which the team followed for a while, discovering Mushroom Rock, a floor blade of rock carved oddly. After some rudimentary photos with a snappy camera, Pat pulled the plug as it was his last day,

needing to return to base to clean up. Phil and Ciara were happy to leave the cave the “easy” way, then remembered they’d left stuff at the other entrance, requiring a bit of extra walking.

Matt and Cynthia were amazed at the discovery, and after seeing some smudgy photos on Megan’s camera, asked if it could be made a tourist cave? Only if tourists liked crawling in water was the reply.

A follow up surveying trip was commenced with Alan, Megan, Ciara and John barrelling down the passage to continue the “other” upstream survey in the borehole passage. The trip in seemed quite long. Once into the borehole, they found the passage became really low, found a dry bypass, then dropped back into the stream only to find it hit a really, really low and muddy duck under with centimetres of air space. They finished the survey in that direction and retreated to the other, other upstream, surveying towards the decorated passage, reaching the decorated rooms before time ran out. There was no sign of Phil’s team, who were surveying towards Alan’s team. Phil’s survey markers were found after



The third upstream route from the four way junction, taken on the discovery trip

Photo John Oxley



Ciara and glowworms in the junction area

Photo John Oxley



Charmaine with Mushroom Rock

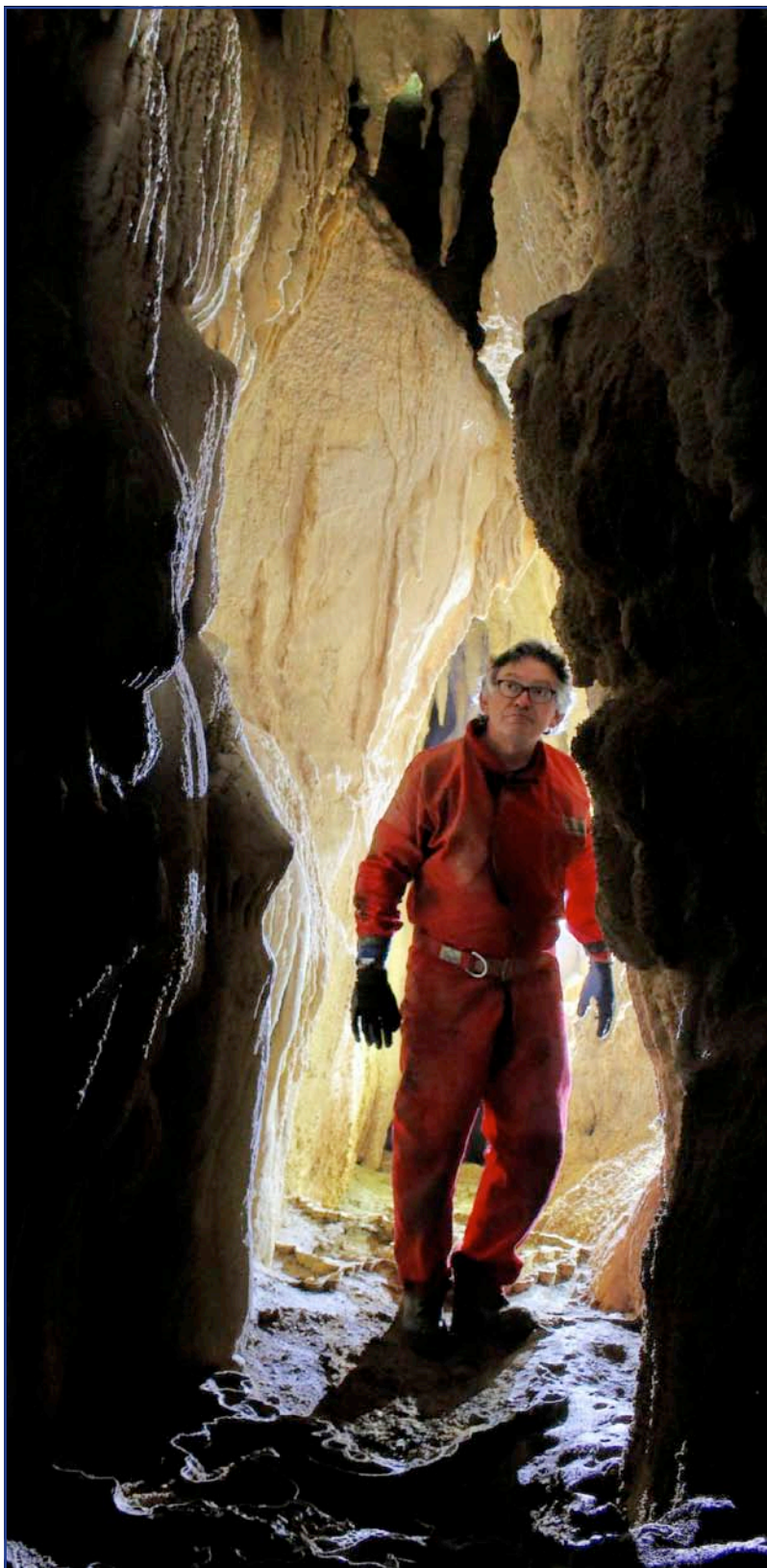
Photo Alan Pryke

some time on the exit stream, so still lots to do. Alan's team caught up with Phil's team at the exit slope. On the way out, as they passed the Ronaldson home, Cynthia raced out, presenting Alan with a gift wrapped famous Lemon Cake for tea, which was heartily enjoyed by all.

One more trip into the cave followed. Phil's team continued survey down the entry stream, whilst Alan's team continued up the decorated stream, ending in a sumped passage. However, airflow filtered through a too tight gap, promising more to come. Charmaine wore a wetsuit to tackle the mainstream duck under and, overheating, with Megan in tow, headed off into the unknown. After some photo pffaff from Alan in the decorated bits, the duck under team returned, ears muddled, to report a second duck under after some really muddy, low passage. Neither wanted to tackle the seemingly endless near-sump.

After lots of photos of Charmaine up to her ear in scungy duck under to scare her parents, the team began surveying up the entrance stream and soon discovered Phil and Ciara, thus joining the surveys. Unsurprisingly, the exit stream from entrance to main junction was just on half a kilometre. That's probably what wore out Alan's knees. Survey length to date 2600 metres! *[There are still major side creeks to survey and explore in Redirected. We found Felix's footprints going a very long way up one of these side streams; probably twenty minutes of walking and bypassing muddy blockages. The downstream end of the main stream is also unexplored. ed.]*

And so, at the end of the trip, they accepted an invite from the Ronaldsons for dinner, and feasted on Phil's favourite, lamb roast, followed by a superbly-decorated lemon cake, after which they regaled Matt and Cynthia with photos and videos of the amazing cave. And yes, they found another smaller cave on the property which was named "Lemon Cake Cave".



Alan in Lemon Cake cave

Photo John Oxley

Ice Tube, Junee-Florentine

28/12/2018

Text Phil Maynard, photos Andrew Baker

Petr Smeykal (STC), Gabriel Kinzler (STC), Ola (STC), Andrew Baker (NHVSS), Phil Maynard (SUSS)



Phil at the entrance of Ice Tube

Ice Tube is a side creek flowing into the Growling Swallet system. Calling it a side creek is like saying that Kanan-gra Main is a side creek of the Coxs River. Ice Tube is a deep, wet, multi-pitch through trip, and back in the 1980s when it was explored it was considered one of the hardest classic vertical caves in Tasmania. With modern rigging, vertical gear, and lights, everything looks easier than in the past but this is still a major trip, and a good fun day. We slogged our way up the hillside from the Growling entrance to Ice Tube in about an hour, through the warmth and humidity. The entrance is an impressive doline with a small creek flowing in, although it seemed to be quite low-flow conditions. We entered the cave by about 10.30am, glad to be out of the terrible Tasmanian heat (note to mainlanders; it really was a pretty warm day).

The pitches start within 100 m of the entrance, and continue regularly all the way down. There are no long walking sections, and no rockpiles or squeezes. It's like a

Kanangra canyon, only darker. Rigging: all of the pitches have been set up with double bolts, a chain and a ring. There are traverses out to the belays on most pitches to keep out of the waterfalls. Petr set up the rope through the ring, and then set up a single-rope Y-hang belay to the bolts. Everyone abseiled single-rope except for the last person (Andrew took this on) who had to untie the Y-hang and then set up a pull down before abseiling on the correct side of the rope. It was all a bit involved and time consuming, but it's a lot safer than just having everyone try to pick the correct side of the rope to abseil on. We had a 60 m and a 40 m rope, so for the big pitches the ropes were tied and we descended the shorter rope.

The roof seemed to stay up as the creek plummeted down multiple pitches and the small entrance passage became an enormous chamber with meanders continuing forward out of sight. We were having too much fun to stop for food, so we continued down pitch after pitch, all with easy starts in the low waterflow conditions.



Petr rigging in Ice Tube

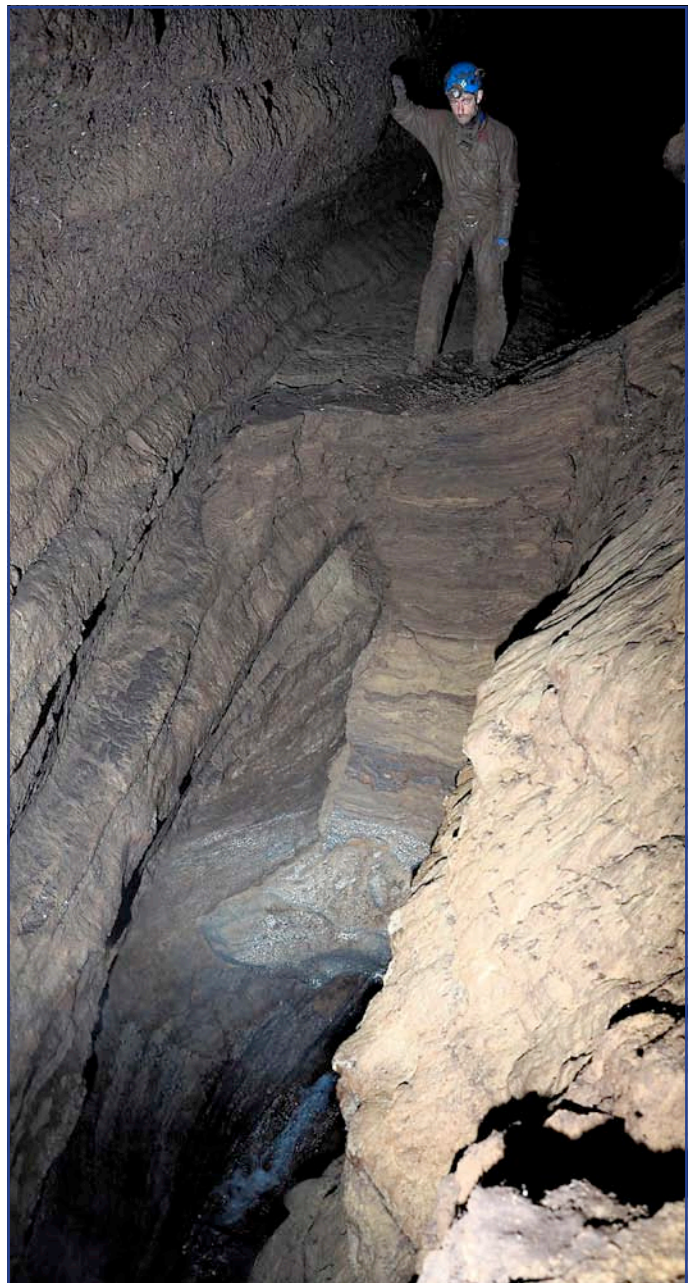
One of the last big pitches (about 40 m) had an ugly, sloping ledge 12 m off the bottom. It was covered in boulders; a perfect place for a rope jam on the pull-down, and that's exactly what happened. Pulling the rope didn't work, and attaching lead ascenders didn't work. After cursing the cave for a bit, Petr made a dodgy climb about 8 m up a wall to the side and pulled at the rope from a different angle. Eventually the rope was persuaded to move and we were able to continue. We still had big pitches to go at that point, so we couldn't just cut the rope or leave it behind.

The final big pitch is a wet one, and drops you onto a big flat chamber floor. The cold blast of the air current from this pitch drove us to hurry over to our last belay ledge. Below that was a huge drop that Andrew started to rig. Turns out, what we needed to do was rig for a drop four metres down and swing to a small ledge – the big drop goes to the sump and doesn't get you out of the cave. From the ledge, we squashed ourselves and our packs into the famous set of rifts and crawls known as Fallo-pian Tube, then through the easier Mothers Passage that eventually deposits you into the main river passage of Growling Swallet.

I was tired by this point. Andrew had been carrying the 60 m rope and he was tired by this point. The others were ready to blast out of the cave, so we slogged up the

river after Petr. If you've been in Growling, you'll know that there is a major piece of the route where the river can't be followed. Instead, an intricate series of upper-level passages bypasses a major sump. This route is partly rockpile, partly rift and partly stream passages (multiple catchments). There's also the infamous Herpes III squeeze, which smells like rotting socks, and a bunch of fixed ladders which haven't been upgraded since I first went there in 2001. These are 50 mm diameter PVC pipe tied together with stretchy Bluewater rope. They bounce under load, the rungs are impossible to grip and slippery underfoot, and it's all coated with cave grit and mud. A few fixed ropes for SRT would be a blessing here.

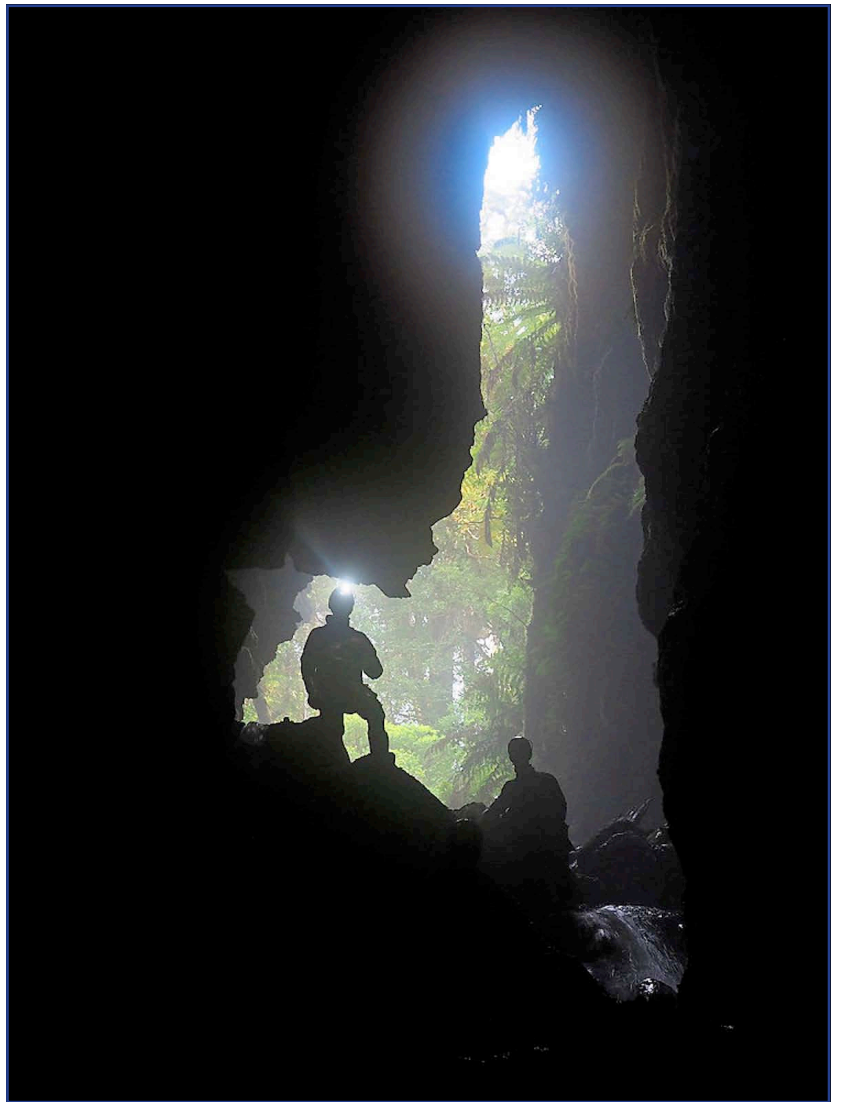
We made our way through all of this and exited the last rifty squeeze, into the passage that deposits you back into



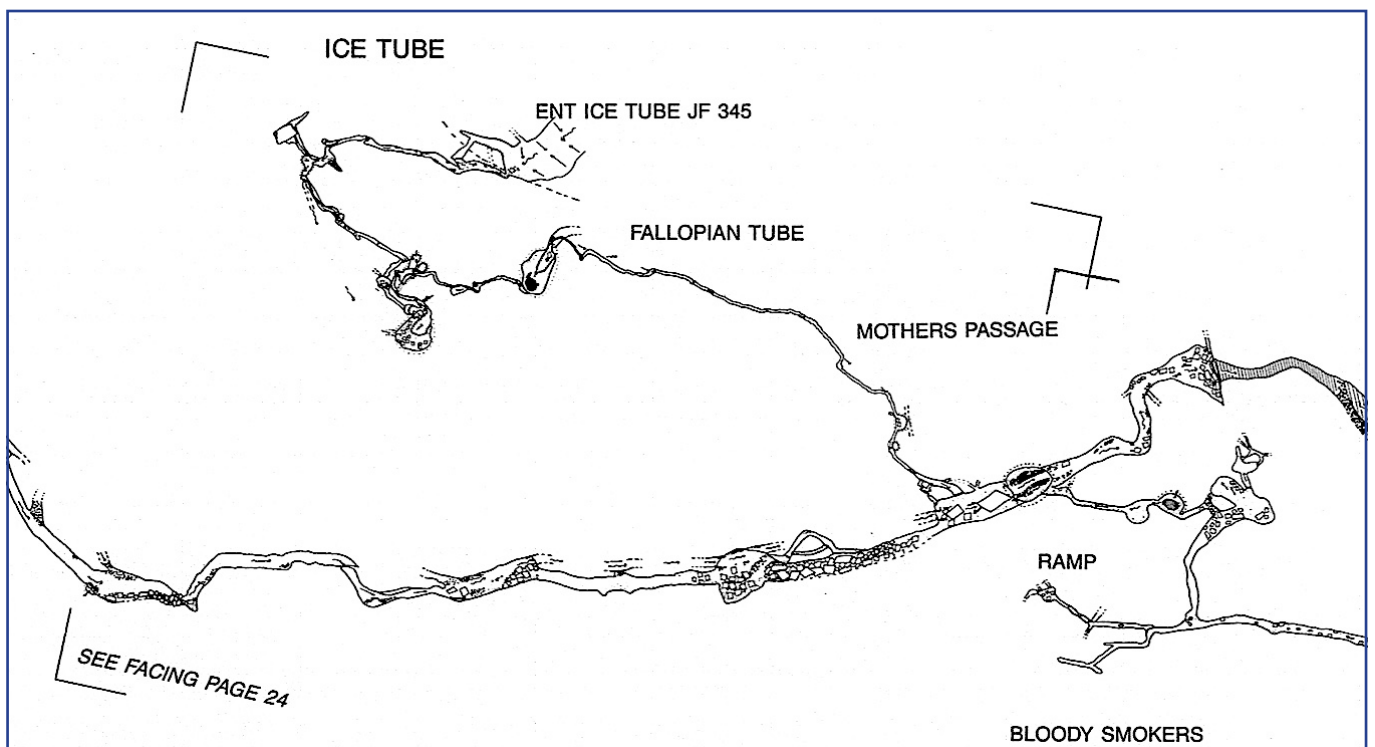
Chasm in the floor of Growling; cuts the route out of the cave

the main river. This is a mud-floored walk through passage – except not for us! The winter floods have excavated the mud from below, and we were confronted by a chasm across the floor, 15 m long and with the sound of the river a long way below. I think Petr was convinced by this stage that the cave had a grudge against him. We climbed on a mud-bank around the right hand side and slid back to the floor on the other side of the chasm. This is a serious problem for trips into Growling; the mud bank we used as an escape path is probably going to follow the rest of the mud into the chasm sooner or later. There's no other way to proceed from the main entrance further into the Growling system; and all of the other entrances are seriously vertical (e.g. Ice Tube!).

From the point where we hit the river, it's a very pretty climb through waterfalls to the main entrance of Growling. Stopping for the odd photo, we were out in the evening sunshine by about 7pm. It was still warm and humid, and there was not much flow compared to the other times I've been there. Thanks to Petr, Gabrielle and Ola for hosting us mainlanders and giving us a trip through one of the Tassy classics.



Main entrance of Growling Swallet



Portion of the Growling Swallet map, TCC 1981

31st Biennial ASF conference in Devonport Tasmania

28th December 2018 – 11th January 2019

Emily Butcher and Stephen Kennedy

SUSSlings: Emily Butcher, Phil Maynard, Henry Shannon, David Mason, Stephen Kennedy, Adam Spillane (from SUSS's northern hemisphere division)

Conference: ACKMA, BMSC, CEGSA, CSS, CWCG, FUSSI, HCG, ISS, KSS, MCCC, MSS, NC, NHVSS, OSS, RSS, SRCC, STC, SUSS, VSA, WASG, and international visitors.

For those not familiar with ASF (Australian Speleological Federation) conferences, they are a biennial series of presentations, networking opportunities and activities for cavers from ASF clubs across Australia. More importantly they are a chance to visit interesting caves in other states. The 31st ASF conference was at Reece High School in Devonport; camping on the school's oval was a cheap and comfortable option for most conference-goers. It's a short drive to spectacular caving at Gunns Plains and Mole Creek; and within reach of Junee-Florentine and Ida Bay; as such this was not a conference to miss.

Pre conference – Mole Creek

Day the first: In which feet get wet

Fortunately for me (Emily), I got the joys of heading into Tasmania on Thursday afternoon to do some of the

pre-conference caving. An early start on Friday morning from the hostel heading the short distance to Mole Creek to start a few days of caving. Once arrived and sorted for caving, we headed into the National Park to enjoy a few hours in Lynds cave. Lynds Cave is a short cave, beginning with a wade through the Mersey river. Most of the cave was walking through several hundred meters of typical Tassie streamway passage. The cave began with a climb up a short waterfall, continuing further into the valley.

Day the second: In which feet get wetter

One of Northern Tassie's nicest, Croessus cave. Starting with a (relatively) full swim (or three) after the cave gate, the passage opened up and widened, following the stream over flowstone, past shawls, straws and over flowstone [*And a few more swims. ed.*]. The highlight of the cave was the spectacular shawls at the end of the cave system and the many types of helictites that scattered across the roof.

Conference

The conference opened with a welcome, however your correspondent (Stephen) missed this due to being one of the last cars let off the ferry from Melbourne. Whilst not in time to sample the various meats on offer, I can happily report that vegetarians and vegans were very well catered for.

The presentations opened with two of the keynote addresses, Dr David Merritt's presentation on bioluminescence in glowworms and Dr Liz Reed's address on palaeontology at Naracoorte caves. Dr Merritt explained many of the factors that affect glowworm bioluminescence in glowworms such as the glow of other individuals and disturbance whilst



Poo Tube in Bradley Chesterman Creek cave

Photo Brett Wiltshire

highlighting the many questions still unanswered. Dr Reed presented the increasing scope of research in Naracoorte's world heritage caves, whilst in the past this research has been largely focused on finding megafauna, there has been a shift to studying all findings (smaller bones, sediments etc.) that has led to a far greater understanding of past conditions in the region.

Alan Jackson then reported on the search for the JF master cave, from the early exploration in the 1950s through to the present projects. Needless to say exploration at JF remains the realm of masochistic super-cavers. Fraser Johnson then showed his highly impressive film 'Push Day' about a Stephen Fordyce dive in Niggly Cave. Unlikely to be coming soon to a cinema near you, but worth taking any opportunity to see.

After lunch Yvonne Ingeme spoke on keeping White Nose Syndrome out of Australia. For those not familiar, WNS is a fungal disease that has spread at lightning pace across North America decimating bat populations along the way. The bat considered most at risk in Australia is the Southern Bent Wing but the Eastern Bent Wing found at Jenolan and other regular SUSS haunts is also considered susceptible to the disease. Advice is to avoid bringing caving gear into Australia from affected areas (currently North America, Europe and China, but it is worth doing further research when travelling elsewhere), or failing this removing any dirt and grime before submersing in $>55^{\circ}\text{C}$ water for at least twenty minutes or in the case of non-submersibles disinfecting with 6% H_2O_2 spray or isopropanol wipes. It is also recommended that all clubs develop a procedure for informing international visitors of these procedures. More information is available at <https://www.caves.org.au/conservation>.

Following a successful day of confrencisation the SUSS team plus several MSS members walked to Molly Malones Irish Pub in the Irish quarter (approximately one building) of Devonport. At the pub we met up with Ann-Marie Meredith from WASG. Dinner was finished just before the band began and a quick escape was made to the Devonport foreshore. At 9:30 a short fireworks display was held for kids and SUSS members with an early bed time. Due to walking to the foreshore no SUSSling was

able to locate the bus back to Reece and a return walk was commenced.

The next day commenced with a session on remote caving, featuring a keynote address by Chris Sharples on wilderness karst of Tasmania and PNG. He recommends Tasmania's Weld Valley as having potential for big discoveries. Following morning tea Alan Jackson gave a talk on making an impressive map of an impressive cave (Kubla Khan) and Steve Milner presented an introduction of the draft ASF strategic plan.

Post-lunch was cave rescue. Brian Evans started proceedings with a talk on rescue training throughout mainland Australia – in NSW the best way to train for rescue is with the New South Wales Cave Rescue Squad; your correspondents can highly recommend this. Janice Marsh gave a talk on rescue training which dovetailed nicely into Andreas Klöcker's talk about the successful 2017 rescue from Midnight Hole. Brian returned to the



Speleosports

Photo Miles Pierce



Mini-Martin entrance

Photo Brett Wiltshire

stage with back-to-back talks on rescue preparedness throughout Australia and lessons from the Thai cave rescue. The final talk on cave rescue was Deb Hunter's talk on the rescue plan for Kubla Khan. One key point raised in the ensuing discussion was the advice that clubs should have a rescue coordinator who is aware who to contact and what procedures to follow in an emergency situation and emergency contact details for trip participants.

Following talks came the afternoon's entertainment – *Speleo Sports*. For those who have not taken part in or witnessed a Speleo Sports event, it involves an obstacle course simulating a cave, which is raced around by teams of four with plenty of opportunities to amass penalties (missing ladder rungs, failing to clean boots sufficiently, knocking cardboard stalactites etc.). Needless to say the course involved more crawling through mud than most caves.

Caving at Gunns Plains on Wednesday comprised two short yet rather pretty caves. Gunns Plains main cave started over the railing and thus beyond the main tourist cave with a rather pleasant full body swim (to chest height) or roof sniff, whichever was most preferred. Beyond this was a rather short low short crawl which then opened out to a wide walk through passage full of nice decorations.

Most of the passage was streamway with notable straws and flowstone covering some of the walls. The main side passage was filled with nice shawls. The end of passage had some several glow worms. Unfortunately the resident platypus was never sighted on the trips.

The second cave of the day was Great Western Cave. It's a dry streamway passage with some interesting rock piles, and featured the classic cave "wedding cake" as well as a 25 m wall of flowstone. This cave was slightly more "sporty" than Gunns Plains Main.

The evening continued with a simple but enjoyable barbeque at the local wildlife park. From dinner we headed back to Gunns Plains Main Cave where a Concert in the Cave was performed. What is concert in a cave, I hear you ask? Four local string musicians playing a few songs in a beautiful and authentic setting within Gunns Plains

Main Cave.

The key focus of Thursday's talks was management of caves, as well as caving in Vietnam. The talks all could be summarised with the thoughts that cavers were essential as "citizen scientists" to parks services, providing research, mapping and data on caves that they enter. A good relationship is essential between cavers and Parks services to ensure that the caves are adequately protected and so that cavers get to enjoy just going 'caving'. The relationship that the cavers develop with the park services is essential, because as park personnel changes, regulations change, permits change, the cavers and their clubs remain continuous.

The afternoon's subjects were slightly further abroad, featuring talks on caving in Vietnam. Alan Jackson started the discussion off with pictures from the Ha Giang province caves, making the entire audience jealous of the potential of overseas and Asian caving. A simple new cave which was only 1500 m long and being hard

done by with 10 km of new passage on a trip (I'm not really sure how I should be wording this one...). Adam Spillane (from SUSS in the UK) talked about some of the caving in another area of the Ha Giang area which was explored in 2018. Steven finished off the afternoon talks with a discussion on the commercial caving experience in Vietnam doing the Hang Song Doong, one of the largest caves in the world.

The sixth day began with a set of four talks about the Nullarbor. Firstly Bob Kershaw discussed plotting the OzKarst database onto GIS software, next Norm Poulter shared some recollections of the Nullarbor including the Weebubbie collapse, following this Steve Milner gave an update on exploration of the Bunda cliffs and finally Stefan Eberhard discussed his 35 years of Nullarbor exploration including a video of diving in Pannikin Plains.

Being the last night of the conference, Friday night marked the conference dinner with a theme of "Bedrock City – Home of the Flintstones". The results of the raffle, silent auctions, prussik challenge, speleo sports and photo competition were all announced, and various

awards were presented. A full list of awards is sure to appear in Caves Australia, but of special note to SUSS was Henry Shannon's award as part of a team, for their work on the Nullarbor.

Post-Conference

Day the ninth: In which there is abseiling

Tailender Cave

Participants: Andrew Baker (Trip leader – NHVSS), Daniel Burt (NHVSS), Stefan Eberhard (STC), Sarah Gilbert (FUSSI/STC), Stephen Kennedy (SUSS)

Tailender has a reputation as being a grovelly horrible cave, with some formation at the end but not enough to make it worthwhile. It is true that access to the pretty sections of the cave is harder than some other caves nearby, but compared to just about anywhere else, it is not particularly long or particularly difficult. Admittedly taking SRT gear in for the 8 m fixed line at the end of the crawl is an annoyance, but it is certainly worthwhile.

Following the short ascent, the first of several tubs of water is encountered, which for those familiar with



Rescue exercise. Photo Ruth Evans

Mole Creek means two things – lots of time spent washing boots and the cave is about to become stunning. Tailender does not disappoint on either expectation. From this point on the route follows a marked track with jaw-dropping crystal all around, the crystal pool near the end is the best known feature but there are plenty of other stunning features. Tailender is a cave that rewards looking carefully as there are lots of easily missed formations and scenes.

Upon leaving the formation, the group abseiled back down. For those using stops, the “C” configuration is recommended on the thick, stiff rope. Following this, most of the group continued to the uninviting sump at the end of the crawl. The sump was several metres below its normal level. There are rumours that on occasion the sump dries out completely, leaving an unenticing dig.

Day the tenth: In which there is no cave

It was decided that the conference provided a perfect opportunity for cavers from across Australia to brush up on and share cave rescue skills. As such a small quarry near Mole Creek saw an influx of approximately 25-30 cavers. Following a session on bolting, load sharing anchors and tyroleans, the group was split into four teams. Each team was assigned part of the quarry to rig for a practice rescue with the stretcher. The scenario consisted of a tyrolean to the top of the quarry, two tyroleans across the top and one back down to the ground. As is usual with such things, the rigging took far longer than the actual movement of the stretcher, which took just over an hour. The training proved to be a worthwhile experience for all involved.

Following the exercise in the quarry, your correspondent travelled to Ida Bay to join with Western Australian Speleological Group (WASG) for more post-conference caving.

Day the eleventh: In which there is great danger

Midnight Hole

Participants: Andrew Thomas (Trip leader – WASG), Greg Thomas (WASG), Laure-Anne Thierrin (WASG), Gregoriy Tsalpin (WASG), Liz McCutcheon (VSA), Stephen Kennedy (SUSS)

The plan for the day was to do a through trip of Mystery Creek from the upper Midnight Hole entrance. This trip is the most dangerous in Australia, having required several rescues in the last few years despite not being particularly difficult by Tasmanian standards. The Mystery Creek entrance is an unrestricted and popular cave for locals and tourists and as such the cave has a car park,

registration hut, well maintained walking track and several signs warning of the severe danger in entering the cave. The track to Midnight Hole is less clear than the main track it branches off and much steeper. On the plus-side it does lead to Midnight Hole and of course another sign warning of the severe danger in the cave.

The trip consists of six pitches: 21 m, 11 m, 39 m, 8 m, 34 m and 49 m. The 8 m pitch was the site of the rescue discussed at the conference. The pitches are all good, but the three longest pitches are especially spectacular.

The pitches were negotiated without incident and with glowworm viewings in between until the sixth pitch. For this pitch a 60 m and “half a 100 m” rope were used. It turned out that half 100 m is not enough to reach the ground, instead finishing ~3 m short. There are possible ledges to swing to, but it was considered safer for the entire group to abseil on the 60 m rope. This included Gregoriy – the final member of the group down, who bravely (if slightly nervously) abseiled on a meat anchor provided by Andrew, Liz and Greg on the shorter rope.

The bottom of the final pitch leads into the Matchbox Squeeze, a long, muddy and not altogether pleasant squeeze which breaks out into walk through passageway. This passageway leads to some bridging across a drop, a wobbly pile of rocks used as a step down and then the main route through Mystery Creek Cave. The passage here is large and spacious but somewhat ominously called Confusion Chamber. After some obligatory confusion the group found the way on and headed for the exit, stopping along the way to check out some interesting and sporty stream passage and to observe one of the best glowworm displays there is.

Day the twelfth: In which a time is had

Wolf Hole

Participants: Chris Sharples (Trip leader – STC), Greg Thomas (WASG), Gregoriy Tsalpin (WASG), Brett Wiltshire (WASG), Liz McCutcheon (VSA), Stephen Kennedy (SUSS)

Chris Sharples had kindly agreed to lead us into Wolf Hole. After a short drive and a short walk, he had led us to the cave. The cave starts with a ~30 m abseil into a beautiful ferny doline. There is one rebelay bolt just below the lip. At the bottom of the doline is a visitor book. Of note is the fact that after STC, SUSS have visited this cave more than any other club since the log book has been put in. One of the comments on the log book was a note from Alan Jackson that his 10 year old daughter could fit through the gate to the restricted sections. Challenge accepted.



Pluto Lake, Wolf Hole. Photo Brett Wiltshire

Chris guided us through the cave pointing out the sites, which are well worth a visit to see, especially the straws. We stopped for lunch at Lake Pluto, the largest underground lake in Tasmania and the highlight of Wolf Hole. Lake Pluto is the only known home of *Anaspodes eberhardii* of which several were sighted. Off the end of Lake Pluto are two options for continuation of the cave. The first involves swimming across Lake Pluto and silting up the water to see the Mud Brick Factory. The second involves a low wet grovel to an interesting climb into a small breakdown chamber. We skipped the first but took the second. It is recommended that future parties skip both. On the way back from Lake Pluto we took many side trips, the largest and most noteworthy being South Park. None of these side trips were particularly highly decorated but they were worth visiting.

Our final side trip was to the gate. Whilst we had no intention of going any further we did have a challenge to face. The gate is an unusual design, being constructed by several taut sections of chain. After a short game of "Are you smaller than a fifth grader?" it was clarified that we were not. The side trip is short and worth doing for

the boxwork near the gate which may well be the best in the cave.

Following a short prussik the group returned to the cars and your correspondent took a tour of the moderately dangerous (according to the signs), Newdegate show cave. If you have 45 min free whilst at Ida Bay, it is well worth it visiting this cave which is large, spacious and highly decorated.

Day the thirteenth: In which a fish is seen

Exit Cave – Mini Martin entrance

Participants: Greg Thomas (Trip leader – WASG), Andrew Thomas (WASG), Gregoriy Tsalpin (WASG), Brett Wiltshire (WASG), Liz McCutcheon (VSA), Stephen Kennedy (SUSS)

A trip to Mini Martin starts with a walk, but the cave starts with an abseil. Not just any abseil, a 115 m abseil with a single rebelay 5 m from the top. It's a great trip. The abseil does take a while to get down, and due to the fact the group was borrowing a brand new 125 m rope everyone was careful not to build up too much speed and burn the mantle. The positive of this was that it

allowed extra time to take it in. The big abseil is followed by a second and a third in quick succession, all part of the same series of shafts. What a way to start a cave! (detailed rigging instructions in Speleo Spiel – there's an article from ~2002 with a great table of rigging instructions).

Your correspondent and Gregoriy were the first ones down so we agreed to meet the rest of the group at the old camp in the cave when they had finished their lunch. Next to camp is a small sidetrip called Edie's Treasure. This sidetrip is highly delicate and recommended for careful cavers. The passageway and side chambers contain speleothems of types not often seen in Australia and outstanding examples of more common types.

Whilst the rest of the group took it in turns to visit Edie's Treasure, Gregoriy and I explored the Eastern Passageway. The Eastern Passageway is typical of Exit Cave in that it is massive, has a stream in the bottom and involves crossing over the top of large rockpiles. Our 30 min time limit was not enough to reach the end of the passage but we did see a lot of cave. Stopping at the river for a drink on the way back, a fish was sighted. About 10 cm long and 4 cm in diameter, the fish was a pale colour but not white and did not appear to be a cave-adapted species.

We next headed down the Western Passageway. If anything this passage is larger than the Eastern Passageway and ends in a highly decorated area featuring lots of Moonmilk and straws. With time starting to run out the group headed back for the packs and out of the cave. Fortunately due to a very kind offer from Flinders University Speleological Society Inc. (FUSSI) to derig the cave, none had to do the prussik. Thanks FUSSI! Instead the group entered a long and complicated rockpile.

On the other side of the rockpile, two more sidetrips were entered. The first to the Colonnades – lots of columns, and the second to the Ballroom – lots of everything, with the pendulites being particularly notable. From here it is not far (in time anyway, distance is another matter entirely) to the eponymous exit of the cave. This trip is an absolute classic and is a must do for any caver visiting Ida Bay who doesn't suffer from Agoraphobia.

Day the fourteenth: In which we are scorned

Bradley Chesterman Creek Cave

Participants: Greg Thomas (Trip Leader – WASG), Andrew Thomas (WASG), Laure-Anne Thierrin (WASG), Gregoriy Tsalpin (WASG), Brett Wiltshire (WASG), Liz McCutcheon (VSA), Stephen Kennedy (SUSS)

The day started with the group meeting at a bakery instead of the standard carpark. Plans for the rest of the day were made and breakfast was eaten. Upon contacting Alan Jackson of STC to discuss the next day's plans, he made it quite clear how highly he respected the choice to do Bradley Chesterman Creek Cave. Clearly it was to be a very long day, with Alan suggesting it should take 15 min.

Alan proved to be incorrect with the cave taking close to an hour and half. This was less due to the difficulty and length of the trip and more due to the time spent on supplementary activities. These activities included: observing biota in the stream, watching Gregoriy and Brett squeeze up the "Poo tube", and watching Gregoriy and Brett try futilely to wash themselves off from said poo tube. The afternoon was spent on such activities as visiting the local mineral and fossil museum, sorting gear, taking a scenic drive around Southport and lazing around camp.

Day the fifteenth: In which many abseils

Many Falls Creek Canyon

Participants: Alan Jackson (Trip leader – STC), Serena Benjamin (STC), Janine McKinnon (STC), Greg Thomas (WASG), Gregoriy Tsalpin (WASG), Liz McCutcheon (VSA), Stephen Kennedy (SUSS)

The plan for the day was to tackle Many Falls Creek Canyon (MFC), a long canyon which as far as anyone is aware has only been done twice before. Both previous trips involved extensive scrub-bashing to avoid waterfalls. This was to be the first time anyone took rope through the canyon.

The day started at 07:00 with a short bushwalk from the cars. Three hours later we had gained about 850 m elevation to 1000 m. At this point STC who had travelled further and hence arrived later, caught up. The views from Moonlight Ridge where the two groups met up were spectacular and included Federation Peak, Precipitous Bluff and The Hippo.

After a short break to take in the view and a pleasant walk across a knoll the real challenges started. We had been filled with tales of an evil scrub-bash that could take an hour. In reality the scrub-bash was not evil, just unpleasant. That said, reaching Many Falls Creek was a relief, although the vicious Tasmanian mosquitos were every bit as foul as the Scoparia.

The scrub-bashing wasn't over. Following a pleasant walk, the creek soon narrowed and often became jammed with flood debris, requiring a scrub bash to

get around. At the end of this a wide section of river was reached. In the wide section of river was a pile of rocks, causing a divergence of the river. Alan as the only member of the group to have been through the canyon before, recalled this section as the point where the river became highly unpleasant. Fortunately Alan's memory was out by 180° and the river became wider, leading to the first waterfall.

We were expecting a 15-20 m waterfall. What we found instead was 60-70 m waterfall, longer than our 50 m ropes. Fortunately there was an accessible ledge with a reasonable anchor part way down and we were able to complete the abseil in two bites.

The rest of the canyon proceeded in much the same fashion with many waterfalls (mostly shorter than the ropes), stunning views down the canyon to the sea, treacherous rocks and many short climbs.

Many hours later we finished the final waterfall. At this point the southern latitude and time of year proved fortuitous, with daylight lasting for the entire walk down the slippery and scrambly lower section of MFC to the junction with the D'Entrecasteaux River. The light lasted about halfway between the junction and Exit Cave, to about the point where large logjams started to appear and bush-bashing became necessary.

The trip ended with a return to the cars at 23:45, making it a 16 ¾ hour round trip.

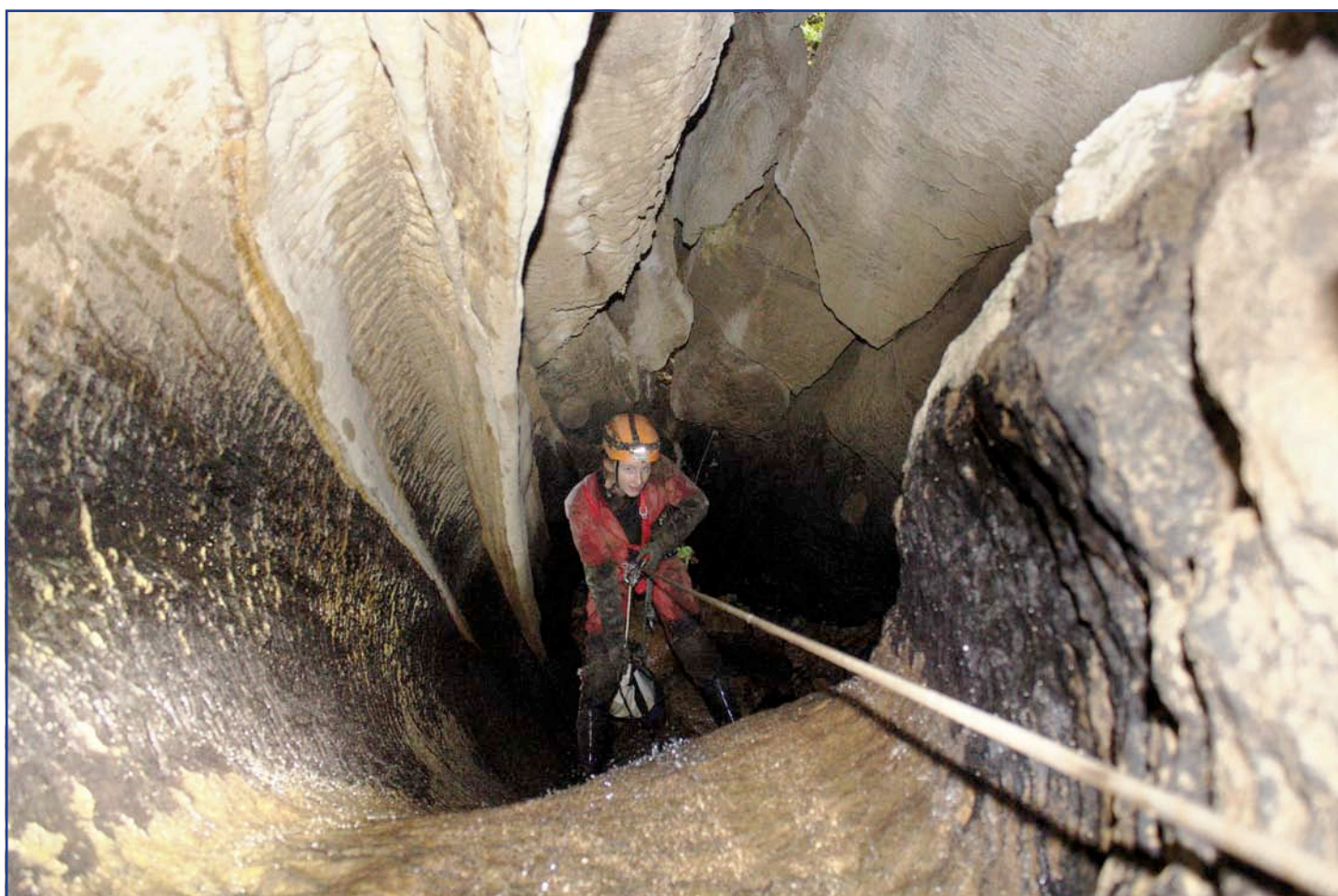
SUSS Word words – Answers by Ian Cooper

B	U	C	H	A	N		F	R	O	S	T					C	A	R	S		
U	P						I			U		D	I	S	T	O		I		T	
N		D	A	N	G	E	R	O	U	S		R		U				R		A	
G		O			A		E			S	E	E		M		G			H	R	
O		L	A	M	P							G	Y	P	S	U	M		E		
N		I					C			C		J		E			M		A	L	E
I		N		R			M	A	R	B	L	E				P	B			M	
A		E		O			L					N			B		O			E	
	C			P	I	T	C	H				O		D	O	L	O	M	I	T	E
	C	A	V	E			I					L	B		R		T				G
R							T		S		A			E			S	O	A	K	
A	S			L	I	M	E	S	T	O	N	E		N						A	F
C		A		U		F			A				H	O	L	E				R	
K		N		M			N	U	L	L	A	B	O	R			T	O	A	S	T
	W	A	T	E	R				A		V		B	E	L	T				T	R
	I			N					G	O	E	S					R	O	T		A
	N		F			S	C		M		N		D		W	E		I		C	
	E		A		W	A	L	L	I		S	T	O	P		M		M		K	
			L			L			T	M			W		M	A		O			
S	T	A	L	A	C	T	I	T	E				N		P			T	R	A	P

Photogallery



Charmaine Pang and Friend, Pio Pio. Photo John Oxley



Ciara Smart in Event Horizon, Pio Pio. Photo John Oxley



Charmaine in Nirvana, Pio Pio

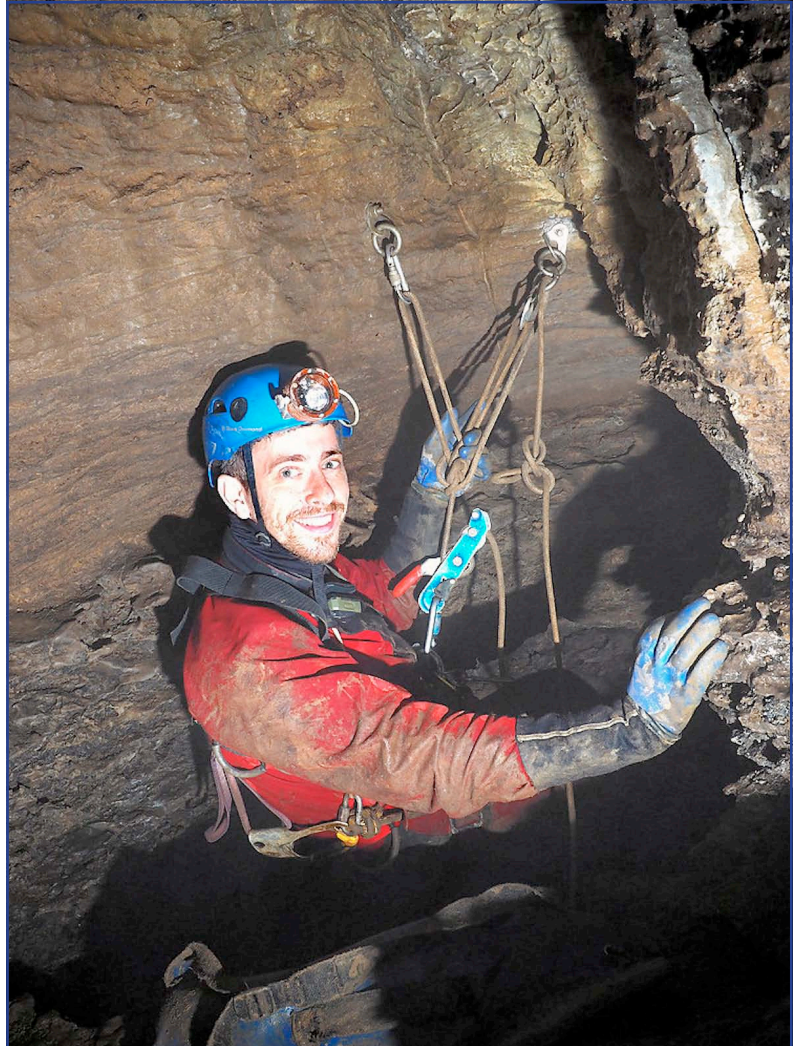
Photo Alan Pryke

Photogallery



Ciara Smart in Nirvana, Pio Pio

Photo Alan Pryke



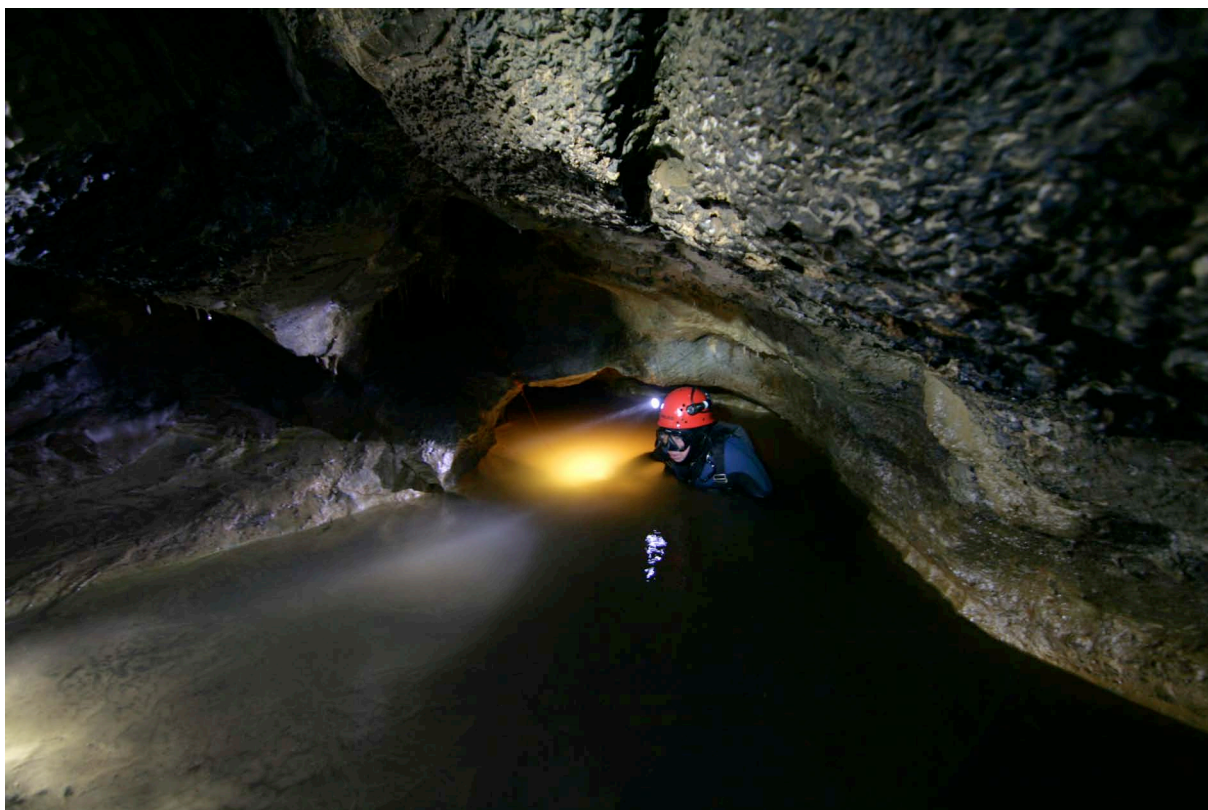
Gabriel Kinzler in Ice Tube, June Florentine. Photo Andrew Baker



Hazard, Pio Pio

Photo John Oxley

Photogallery

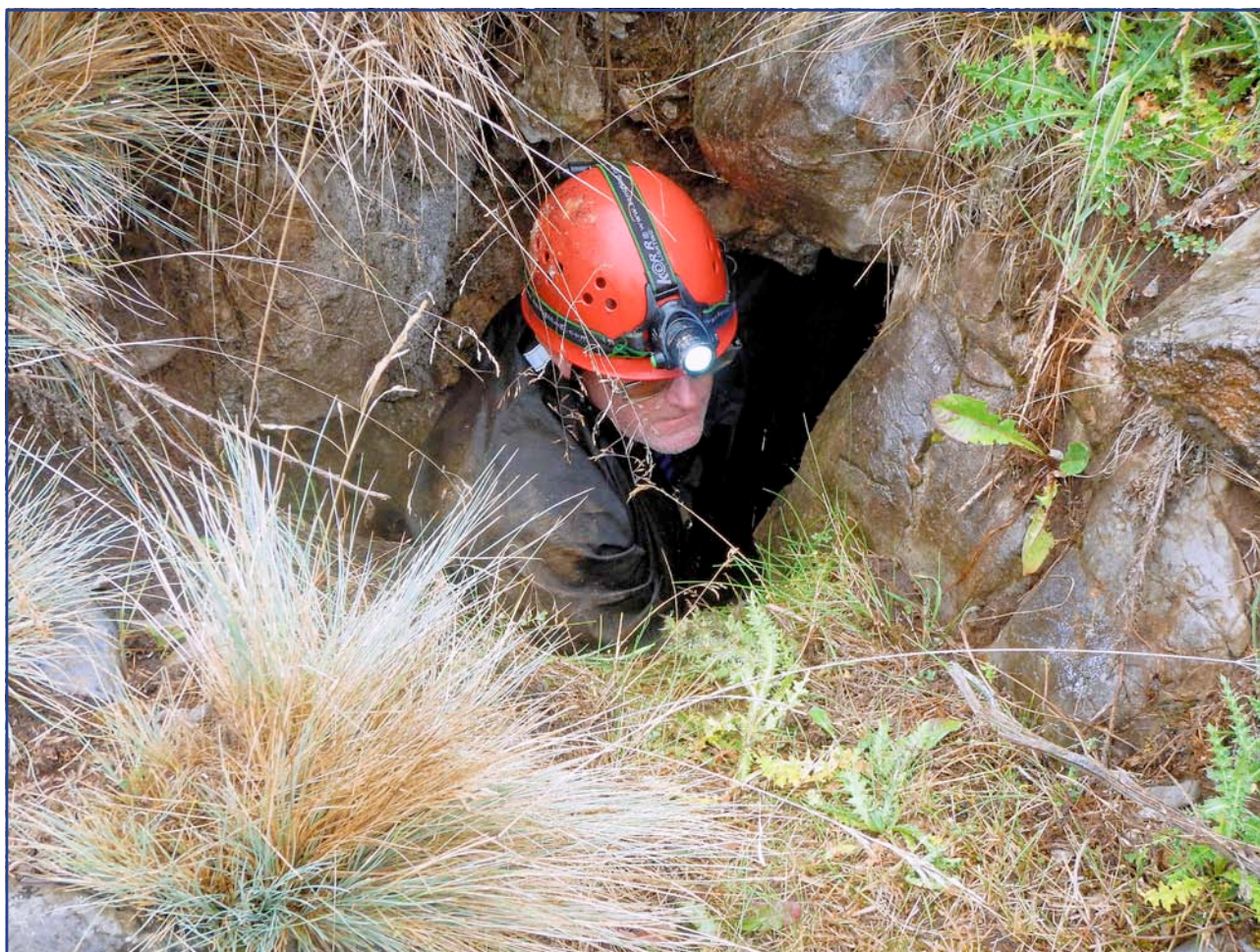


Keir Vaughan-Taylor in Coppermine Cave, Yarrangobilly. Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood

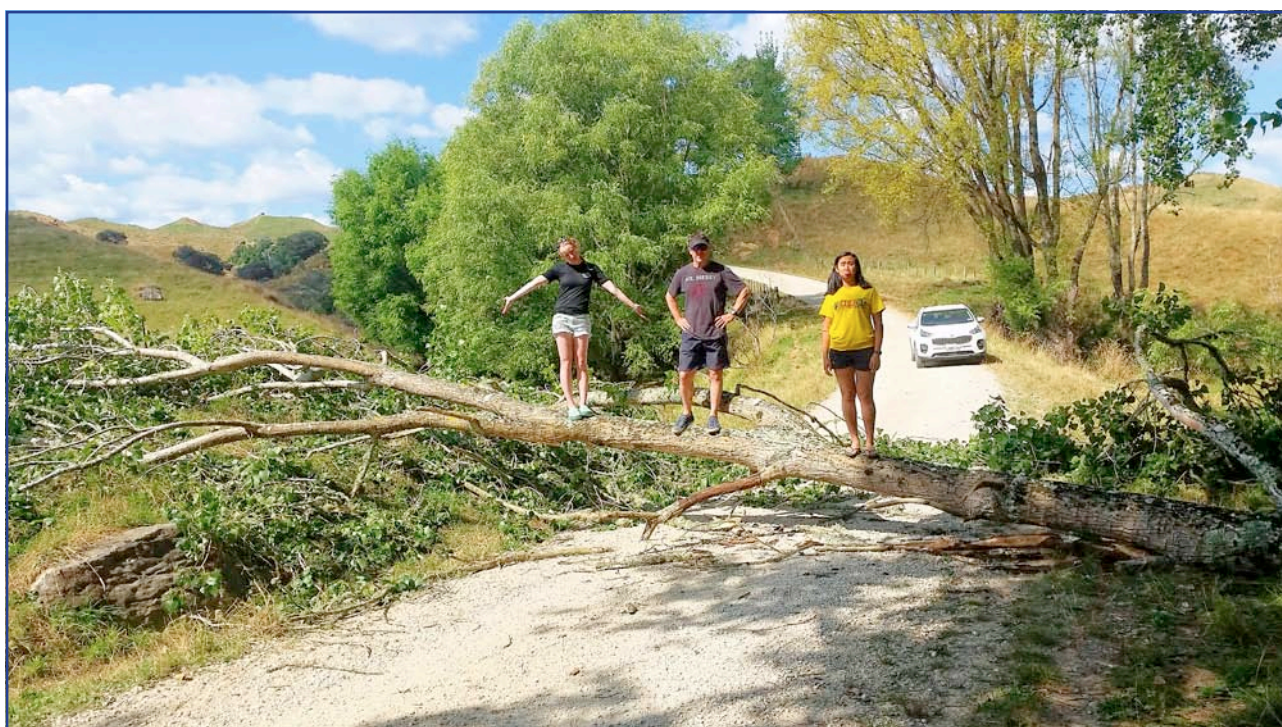


Calcite crystal with Scurion for scale, Mini-Martin. Photo Brett Wiltshire

Photogallery



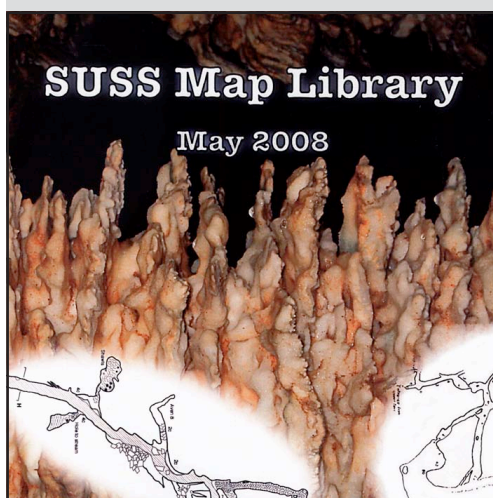
Ian Cooper in a hole, Cooleman Plains. Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood



Perils of New Zealand caving.... Ciara Smart, Pat Larkin, Charmaine Pang at Puketiti. Photo John Oxley

Things to buy

For postage and handling costs and the details of how to order go to <http://suss.caves.org.au/publications>. There you will also find a range of must-have maps and other publications.



Maps And Bulls On DVD

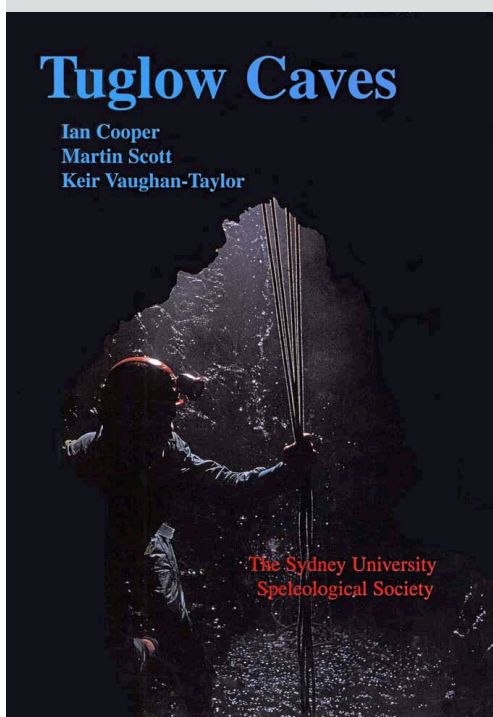
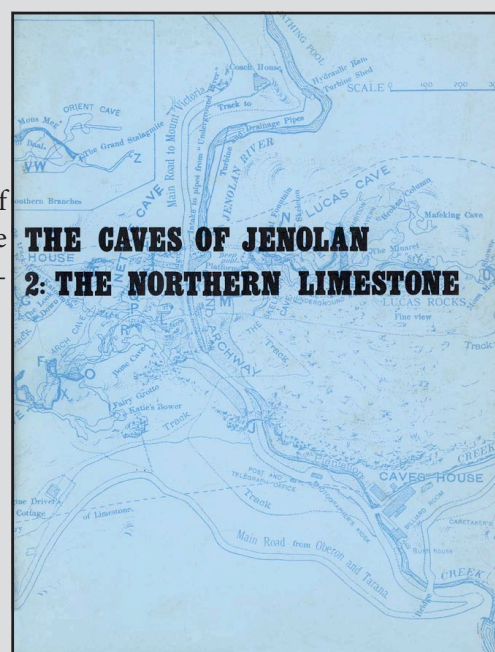
The entire SUSS cave map library of over 300 maps is on DVD and available for purchase. Our map library was scanned to provide wider access to the maps for SUSS and other ASF caving clubs. There are field sketches, ink maps produced on drafting film, ink maps produced on linen, as well as some of the latest digitally-produced cave projects. The DVD also contains all SUSS Bulls in HTML format from 35(1), July 1995 to 47(4), March 2008 and SUSS Bulls as PDF format from 42(1), April 2002 to 47(4).

Price is \$10.00 + PH.

The Caves Of Jenolan 2: The Northern Limestone

Edited by Bruce R. Welch. 1976, 140 pages. We still have some copies of these books left. Contains maps and descriptions of many caves in the Northern Limestone section of Jenolan plus notes on the history of Jenolan and its geology, geomorphology and hydrology.

Cost is \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members + PH.



Tuglow Caves

By Ian Cooper, Martin Scott and Keir Vaughan-Taylor. 1998, 70 pages. Examines caving procedures, site descriptions, history, biology, surveying and maps, geology and hydrology of Tuglow Cave and others.

Cost is \$13 for members and \$16 for non-members + PH.

Back Cover: Rod Obrien, CP6 River Cave, Cooleman
Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor



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