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Front & Back Covers.
"Slotting" (Crevasse Caving) in Antarctica.
Photos by Dave Rasch.



The Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the
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PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7006
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The views expressed in the Speleo Spiel are not necessarily the views of the Editor, or of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated.

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STC was formed from the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, the Southern Caving Society and the Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group. **STC** is the modern variant of the Oldest Caving Club in Australia.

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Editorial

With Peter Verwey, our Editor still away, I thought I'd do this Spiel, it's good therapy and is something I can do without stressing out my body too much. What does this mean you may ask? Well as some of you may know, I'm having my own personal battle with Bowel Cancer...this recent diagnosis was a bolt from the blue and has rather shocked me. I still find it hard to believe that I have this potentially life threatening condition when I feel so well. What's makes it even worse is that I have never abused my body (trips to Splash Pot excluded!), have no family history of cancer, am relatively young at 41, have a healthy diet and have a high degree of fitness. Life just doesn't seem fair!

I am however fortunate that my cancer is curable by surgery, but nevertheless I will have to endure some major life changes and have some concerns. One of these is "Will I still be able to do the caving that I've done in the past?" I just don't know yet, but am confident that "YES" will be the answer after a period of adjustment.

As a Caver, I have a passion for the "unknown" but as for one's path with Cancer, the "unknown" is something that has recently filled me with dread.

I'd like to leave you with the thought that I hope everyone out there is getting into life....just don't leave too many things for 'later on'; our connection with the 'here and now' is rather tenuous at best. Enjoy it all whilst you can! Oh, and a tip for all of you 40 or over....ask your Doctor for Bowel Cancer Screening Test, it's a disease that anyone can have, and the incidence skyrockets after age 40.

Jeff Butt (Acting Editor)

CAVEX 2001-a Rescue Odyssey is ON over May 5-6.

The event you have all been waiting for is here....**CAVEX 2001.....a Rescue Odyssey!** Just hope you're not the one chosen for the stretcher ride!!

Assuming you are coming, then meet at Police Search and Rescue Headquarters at 0800 on Saturday May 5th, or at 1000 at Benders Quarry Carpark, Ida Bay. The Police are providing a bus, so if you want transport, then please RSVP to me to reserve a place. Please also RSVP if you are making your own way down, as I would like to have a good handle of numbers of participants before the exercise.

Accommodation on the Saturday night will be rough and ready, your tent somewhere near the Benders Carpark. BYO food and refreshments. We'll supply the bad weather!

The Exercise will involve a short Search and then a Longer Rescue from a largely Vertical Cave. To give the exercise an air of reality, we will be using a shift system, with small teams at the 'cutting edge' for a couple of hours each. This will also let everyone experience a piece of the Action.

The Exercise will continue until the victim is rescued, which could be late on Saturday night. No specific activities are planned for Sunday, apart from derigging/packing up and recovering from the post-exercise debrief-hic!

There will be some jobs for non-vertically equipped cavers, including some caving work, so don't let the necessity of SRT skills put you off coming along.

Jeff Butt (Search and Rescue Liaison Officer)

Club Matters

Notice of Motions to be presented at the June STC Business Meeting.

The President, Secretary and Treasurer - have called for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to make ammendments to the Clubs Constitution. The EGM will be held as part of the June General Meeting (Wed June 6th). At the time of putting this Spiel together the exact wording of these ammendments is not available, but the essence of these is to alter the Clubs Membership Year to end on June 30, instead of September 30. The motion proposes to shorten the 2001/2002 year to 9 months, ending on 30/6/02. The exact wording will be distributed by Email as soon as it is available.

FORWARD PROGRAM:

Meetings: are held at the Shipwright Arms Hotel, Battery Point on the FIRST and THIRD Wednesday's of each month. The First meeting is a Business meeting, starts promptly at 8:00 p.m. The Second meeting is a Social gathering, starts around 8:00 p.m.

Trips: (Please contact the Organiser of any trip for more details.)

Sat/Sun 5-6 May: CAVEX 2001- Cave Rescue Exercise- Ida Bay, Jeff Butt

Join Police, State Emergency and Ambulance personnel to practice cave rescue techniques. A cave with pitches will be used, but there is scope for horizontal cavers too, so don't be put off if you don't SRT!

Sat 19 May, Rift Cave-Junee-Florentine, Ric Tunney

The leader has never been to this cave. A largely horizontal cave with some small climbs and pitches. Could be a good cave for those who want to do a little vertical work.

Sat 2 Jun, Gormenghast - Junee-Florentine, Janine McKinnon

A horizontal cave with lots of little climby bits. Ends with a long duck waddle passage. Good back exercise. Suitable for those who have been caving before (but we've taken beginners, too).

Sat/Sun 23/24 Jun, Winter Solstice Extravaganza, Liz Canning

Based at Tyenna Valley Lodge, Maydena. Caving both days with dinner at the lodge Sat evening. There will be caving trips for all types. Sunday's caving is usually easier than Saturday's as we are constrained by alcohol and stuffed stomachs.

Sat 14 Jul, Exit Cave - Ida Bay, Arthur Clarke.

Long, rather easy horizontal cave. Can be tiring due to the large underground distances. Large passages. Some grovelling.

Keep an eye on the STC list-server for trips!, they do happen, but often at short notice!

Dwarrowdelf-the secrets of K.D. Sump 3 and a derig: 11/2/2001

Jeff Butt

Party: Hans Benisch, Andras Galambos, Amanda, Jeff Butt.

There were several aims for the day; to check out Sump 3, derig the cave and to give Amanda who was a novice SRT'er a bit of a workout.

We descended down this rather familiar hole and soon were at the bottom of the pitch series. I took Andras for a quick look at the pitch to the small streamway off to the side of the Dwarrowdelf-KD Basal Chamber connecting tunnel. We cruised upstream to the aven (just where does this stream come from??), then Andras had a bit of a play on the end of the rope at the downstream end (this stream probably ends up in the Depths of Moria??).

Hans and Amanda had caught us, so up came the rope which we re-used as a handline down the steep slope to the KD streamway, and soon we were grovelling our way towards Sump 2. The third of the three squeezes en-route to Sump 2 is somewhat unstable, one large rock moved on the way in. On the way out another wobbly rock was despatched out of the hole, which is no-longer a squeeze! Anyone visiting that area should have a careful look at the surrounding rocks before venturing through.

We then headed to Sump 3, equipped with a 4 m ladder and a short piece of rope. Rigging points were in short supply, but 3 jammed knots and one dubious bollard yielded a 4 point anchor. The ladder was krabbed onto the bottom of our nylon web and it just made the water level. At the bottom of the ladder there were a few ledges on the sides that one could put some weight on, but the rock was crumbly and one did not dare let go of the ladder! The Sump Pool is roughly 1 m wide by 8 m long (oriented NW-SE, i.e. parallel to Sump 2), there is no above-water passage, though one can hear a small flowing stream. Hans plumbed the sump at 14 m deep in one place, so it is another diving proposition, perhaps an even more promising proposition than Sump 2 is.

Our survey data (see the accompanying drawing) shows that Sumps 2 and 3 are surprisingly close together. It

also says that the water level in Sump 3 is about 1.1 m higher than the level in Sump 2. Given the proximity of the two Sumps I imagine that the stream one can hear at Sump 3 is the stream feeding Sump 2 and it is very likely that both Sumps are at the same level....the 1.1 m difference is just a vertical closure error around the survey loop between the Sumps.

Anyway, with the question about possible passage at Sump 3 answered we headed for the surface. Hans (with all our excess gear) went up first, and once Amanda had started Andras and I headed up the rubble slope towards Troll Hole for a bit of a look. I'd been up there before to a difficult climb, and wanted another look at it. Anyway, we took a different route and missed the climb (it looked just as difficult when we found it on the way back). After some thrutching up between blocks and more crawling we got into what appeared to be virgin passage. It was a steep crawlway between boulders, but did appear to keep going. I estimated that we'd made about 50 m of passage (ascending at about 45 degrees) beyond were our 1999 survey ended; which puts us about 60 m underneath Troll Hole. So, there is still some more to do in this area!! But, not on this campaign....as we wanted to derig.

With Hans and Amanda above us, Andras and I proceeded to derig as we exited. Whilst waiting for Andras at the top of the 6th pitch, I removed the three old bash-in bolts from the wall....this was easily achieved using a small stone as a hammer. We marked all the spits (reflective markers with nylon bolts and venetian blind cord tie's) that we could find on the way out, these are listed below. Some of these weren't used in our rigging as there were other rigging options, so don't just think "bolt", "bolt"! Finding the spits should be easy for the next visitors to this cave, but please replace the markers when you derig.

Pitch 2: one on the left at head height, about 1 m out, one on the right at knee height about 30 cm out.

Pitch 3: two on the left of the crawlway (one is not useable), one on the right (also not useable) and also an old bash-in on the right. Rebelay spit at about 8 m down, on the left.

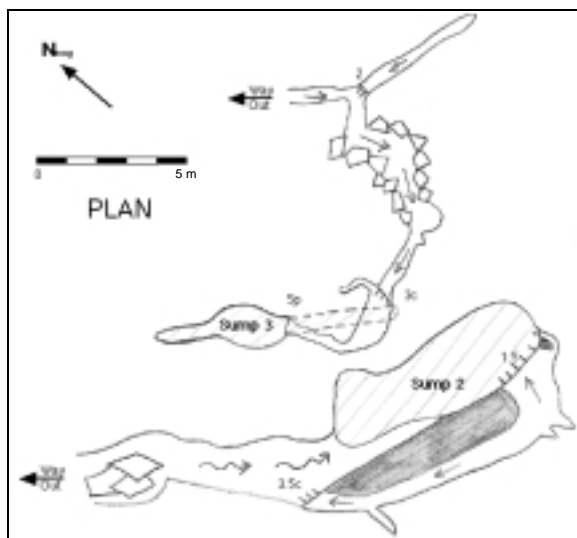
Pitch 4: on the left (away from the mud), just over the lip.

Pitch 5: for the second part (i.e. the vertical part after the chockstone descent) of this pitch, one on the right about 1 m above the lip, another 2 m down from here, just under a small step. From memory, there is another spit well out on the right in this area, but I couldn't re-locate it.

Pitch 6: two on the left wall, one of which is useful for a handline to access the other two spits (face the rope from Pitch 5, with the Void on your left, the spits are then a reach up high on the left and at waist level on the right) which give a free hanging Y-hang.

We arrived on the surface about 9 hours after we went in, and with bulging packs headed back to the road-head.

◆◆◆



PLAN, showing the closeness of KD Sumps 2 and 3.

Surface work between Troll Hole and Cauldron Pot: 12/2/2001 and some revelations on the computer!

Jeff Butt

Party: Andras Galambos, Jeff Butt.

After derigging Dwarrowdelf the previous day, we felt like a slacker day, and so decided to do some surface work between Dwarrowdelf and Cauldron Pot. On previous wanderings I'd come across JF3 and JF42, and wanted to survey these into our network to see where they lay in relation to both the Khazad Dum and Cauldron Pot. Also, I was keen to get a better idea of where Cauldron Pot was located. A recently acquired GPS position put it about 60 m away from where the old overland survey placed it and underground Cauldron Pot was only about 80 m away from the Depths of Moria. So, if the move was 60 m in the right direction, the possibility of a connection between K.D. and Cauldron would be much higher.

We headed to Troll Hole (JF233), which is another cave worth a revisit [Dave Rasch and I did this on 1/4/01], and then commenced surface surveying our way around towards Cauldron Pot. Basically we followed our ears and linked the survey into the tree at the lip of the entrance pitch. We didn't locate the JF2 tag...does anyone out there know where it should be? On our traverse around we managed to miss JF3 (this tag is on

a nearby tree) and JF42, but a wander along the contact got us back there. We tied these two numbered caves and several other un-numbered shafts into the survey network. Andras dropped a couple of these shafts, but nothing major to report.

Our day was quite slack, and we ended up back in Hobart at about 5 p.m., which meant that we had no excuse not to wash the ~300 m of rope from Dwarrowdelf right there and then.

That evening I put the day's data onto the computer and here's what I found in relation to the relative positions between JF14 and JF2.

- GPS data said that the distance from JF14 to JF2 was 236 m at 086° True, or 072° Magnetic. Since the GPS altitudes are known to be very poor, I've used heights taken from the Dobson 1:25000 topographic map to get an idea of how much vertical difference between the entrances there should be; the answer is not much, 10 m difference at most.
- Our new survey traverse said: 232 m, 075° magnetic, -2° clino., (i.e. 8 m lower).
- The old survey traverse said: 298 m, 077° magnetic, -13° clino., (i.e. 69 m lower).

As you can see, our new data agrees very well with the GPS data, but the old data is much worse, especially in respect of the vertical difference.

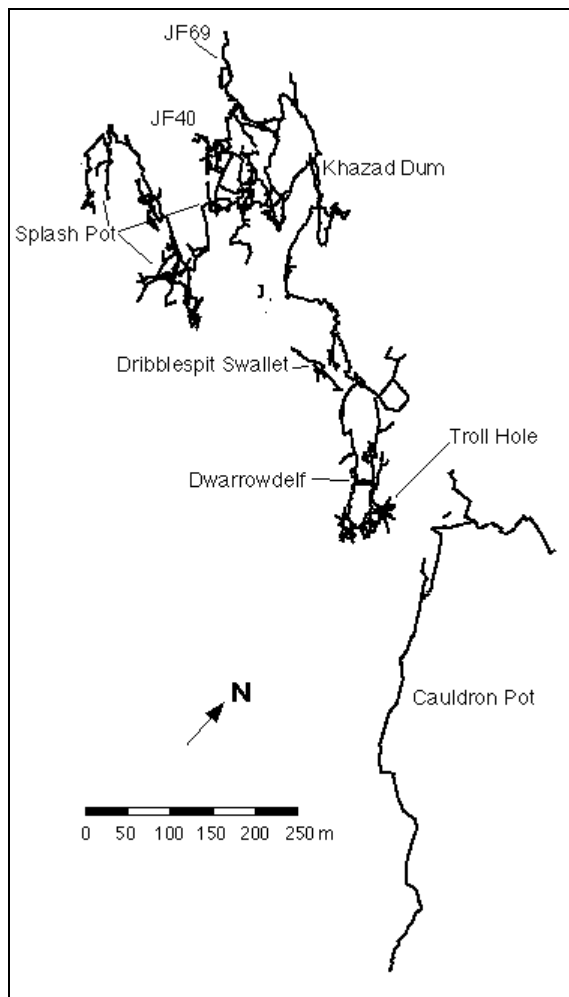
Underground (in Cauldron Pot) there is a similar problem; the 1973 data put the then bottom of the cave at a depth of 262 m, but the 1990 TCC re-survey measured this to be 238 m; the difference of 24 m (10%) is much higher than one would expect for a Suunto survey.....so there is something amiss here.

These sorts of problems seem to be common in the survey data collected in the early 1970's, and so it would be worth re-doing some of the important overland surveys again, or at least checking what they say against a GPS and a calibrated altimeter.

Rather than just 'chuck it away', I've left the old data in the system, but have ascribed it a lower accuracy (one can do this using the OnStation Software). The Plan of the Caves and their relationship to each other is shown opposite. You will notice that Splash Pot, JF69, JF40, Khazad Dum and Dribblespit Swallet appear connected; in fact they aren't (yet!), but separations between these caves is 20 m or less! We do know that the water from KD does flow into Cauldron Pot (Rolan Eberhard, personal communication), so this gives us a further vertical control on the data. In the Vertical Section (not shown) of the caves it is pleasing to see that we aren't requiring water to flow uphill! At stream level, the distance between KD (Sump 2) and Cauldron Pot (upstream end) is 103 m.

For the water to get from KD to Cauldron, there must be virtually a right angle change in direction; I guess the fact that we have sumps suggests that there is some structural control on the cave development at that point, so a change in direction of 90° is not unbelievable.

◆◆◆



PLAN showing the relative position of the main caves.

A karst tunnel on the Olga River named.

Greg Middleton

In January 1996 Neil Thomas, a West Australian, made a 5 week solo journey by inflatable raft down the Olga, Gordon and, after walking overland, Wanderer Rivers in South-west Tasmania.

On his trip, he found a karst tunnel on the Olga River.

In a letter to the Nomenclature Board of Tasmania in July 1996, Thomas described the feature:

- This tunnel occurs beneath a ridge that runs across the path of the river. The river simply runs straight through it, beneath the ridge, having eroded the limestone karst that makes up the ridge. It runs for approximately 50-60 metres, like a huge drainage tunnel. It is approximately 6 metres wide and 4-5 metres high (that is with a summer river level).
- I could not ascertain its depth. Probing with a two metre bough I could not touch the bottom, whilst the river at the entrance and exit of the tunnel, due to a summertime low river level, was approximately 1 metre.
- The ridge itself runs across the river at a height of approximately 15 metres, and can not be easily passed, this would involve climbing up and over, through scrubby forest growth. The easiest option for anyone attempting to descend the river, and the one that I chose, was to swim through the tunnel.
- The ridge presents itself as a wall across the river and the area must back up with water in winter, filling like a huge cistern. The ridge must dam back the waters and the river must pour, under pressure, through the tunnel and shoot out the other side.
- As best I can ascertain, no one has previously descended the Olga River and the tunnel was therefore previously unknown.

Thomas suggested that the feature be named Plomleys Tunnel after the historian who edited and published the diaries of George Augustus Robinson (as Friendly Mission) who, in the 1830s, enticed Aboriginal people to leave the main island of Tasmania and go to live on Flinders Island.

The Board did not accept that there was sufficient connection between the tunnel on the Olga River and Dr Plomley, and declined to assign the name suggested by Thomas.

The matter might have gone no further except that in February 1999 Thomas died while walking the lower reaches of the Davey River, also in the South-west. The Board subsequently decided, after obtaining the support of Thomas family and the Director of National Parks and Wildlife, to name the feature Neils Tunnel. Notice of the Board's intention appeared in the Tasmanian Government Gazette of 1 November 2000.



Mt. Anne-Gear Carry: 14th February 2001.

Jeff Butt

Party: Damian Bidgood, Jeff Butt.

Damian and I have been planning a bit of a cave-play up on the North East Ridge of Mt. Anne for some time. We planned to make it happen in late March/mid-April and so, in anticipation we thought we'd first do a gear carry. Originally there were going to be four of us for the carry, but some attrition occurred, and so it was just the two of us who set off with bulging packs (400 m rope and 15 kg of other gear between us) along the old Bombadier track. There is now a 'remote area log-book' a short distance in, and it informed us that about 20 walkers had been up to the NE ridge in the last couple of months, which means the track is in reasonable condition.

We found the NE ridge track turnoff from the Bombadier track OK, it is not marked but is the obvious walking track taking off on the right about 10 minutes after the major creek crossing (70 minutes from the start). Once you reach the forest the track is well taped with orange tape, but the taped route doesn't follow the old cut route exactly and there are one or two spots where it pays to have a look for the tapes.

The ridge was as steep as I remember it, but fortunately the day was somewhat drizzly, which helped prevent us from overheating on the way up. We crested out 4 hours after starting, into the murk. I missed the direct track to Annakananda (literally 150 m to the left once you crest out), and we wandered a bit in the mist till I had regained my bearings.

Once in the doline we stashed our gear and dined. There was quite a bit of 'rubbish there', and so we did a community service cleanup, removing:

- two dozen wine cask inners (with various degrees of algae/mould cover),
- 1.5 kg tin of spent carbide,
- a soggy roll of toilet paper,
- quantity of foil from the old campfire,
- several old garbages,
- a huge sheet of decomposing plastic (used for catching water drips);

all up about 10 kg of rubbish.

Getting down was quite straight forward; light packs helped somewhat. In a shade over 3 hours we were back at the car. All up it was 9 hours round trip time. All in all a good, but energetic little trip!

NB> for our forthcoming trip, we plan to carry our faeces out; anyone coming on the trip will be expected to do likewise. Depositing it in the doline, near camp is unacceptable; climbing out of the doline for a "dump" will just add to the erosion of the track in (not to mention the physical discomfort!) and so dumping and carrying is by far the easiest method.



*STC has Caving lamps and helmets available
for hire to Schools, Scouts and other groups with responsible
Caving leaders.
Contact the Equipment Officer for details.*

STYX RIVER karst visit– 24/02/2001

Arthur Clarke

STC attendees: Hans Benisch, Arthur Clarke, Albert Goede, Janine McKinnon, Greg Middleton, Steve Phipps and Ric Tunney.

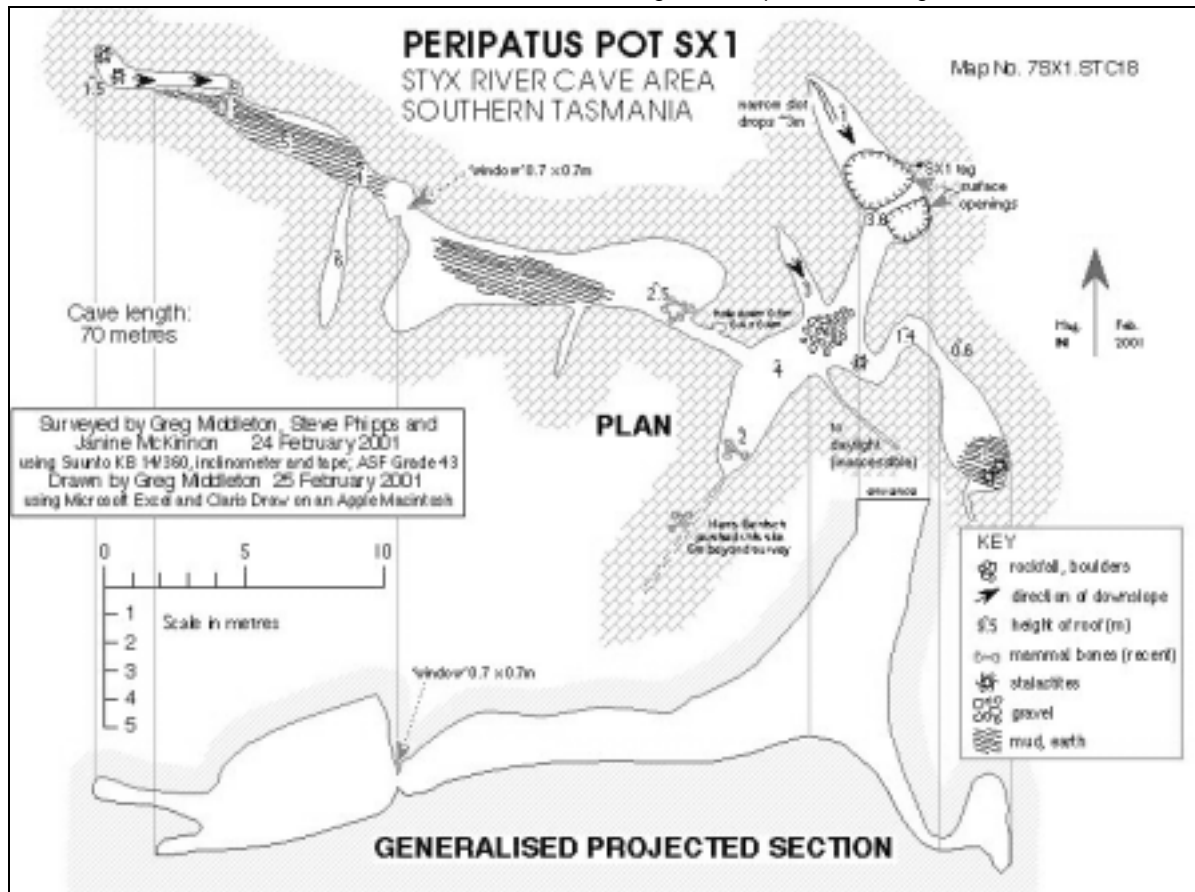
Wilderness Society people: Joe Harries, Geoff Law, Tim Morris and Amanda Scully.

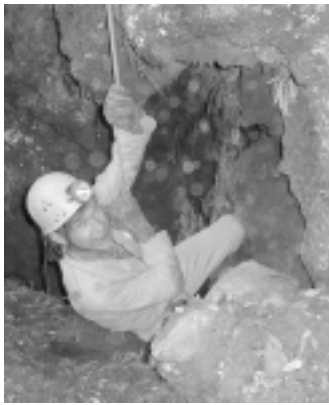
Geoff Law - from the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (TWS) - had previously contacted me regarding some new caves located beside the Styx River. TWS members reported a cursory exploration of 4 or 5 new caves during previous trips to the Styx River area and Geoff Law had supplied brief information about these sites, together with grid references. Geoff reported some bone deposits in one of these caves, including the skeletal remains of a Bennetts Wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*) identified by David Pemberton at the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery (TMAG) from a skull and leg bone previously collected from one of the caves by Joe Harries. TMAG people- expressed some concern to Geoff Law about these bone deposits being disturbed by "adventure cavers". After assuring Geoff that STC members are responsible cavers abiding to the *ASF Code of Conservation and Ethics*, he was agreeable to STC doing the preliminary reconnaissance and requested that we record and survey the caves, photograph any significant vertebrate deposits and specifically asked me to collect (and report on) the invertebrate cave fauna.

Our expedition was designed to be a "look-see" reconnaissance: the results of which might well become

ammunition for conservation groups to argue against logging in this area. From an STC point of view, our exploration appraisal was designed to be thorough and methodical. In order to document the caves, we aimed to locate the known sites and record GPS positions, number tag the entrances, survey the caves, photograph their content including speleothems (if any) and/or bone deposits and to collect/ record the invertebrate cave fauna.

Our Saturday morning Maydena rendezvous happened around 0930-0945 outside the Cockatoo Cafe at Tyenna Valley Lodge where the two carloads of STC cavers met the four TWS people. Due to commitments at Tyenna Valley Lodge, Tim Morris opted to only join us for part of the day, so we left Maydena as a convoy of four vehicles. Just past the un-staffed Strathgordon Road entrance offices, we turned right along the familiar Florentine Valley Road, then doubled back on to the Styx Road that runs south underneath the Strathgordon Road. An abundance of timber slash, felled trees and small log stacks along the cleared roadside verges showed evidence of recent forestry operations. After some distance along the Styx Road, we branched off along the Mueller Road, taking the recently metalled Mueller Spur Road No. 3, reportedly a gated road under the control of ANM (or its Scandinavian successor). The Forestry Commission had previously advised us that the boom gate would be locked, because a private contractor engaged in roadside clearing would have his machinery locked inside the gate. The gate was open... and in the distance we could see the contractor stacking eucalypt logs. As respectable looking cave scientists, Albert and I





Arthur negotiating the entrance to *Peripatus Pot*.

We parked our vehicles on an obvious widened bend in the road – about 500 metres before the end of this Spur Road. Three GPS units suddenly appeared from car boots and our position was marked in triplicate. With GPS units going, we headed down in a forest of tall eucalypts with tree fern understorey, then down a steeper slope into rainforest in an area abutting the north side of the *Styx River*, with Arthur C. and Albert G. taping the route as we went. AC must have become too diligent with the taping because he soon got left behind and wandered off in a different direction! Eventually together again amidst some tall myrtle trees, we ventured down to the *Styx River* and 30-40 minutes after leaving the vehicles, found a convenient shallow water crossing point upstream from a froth-swirl covered pool of water.

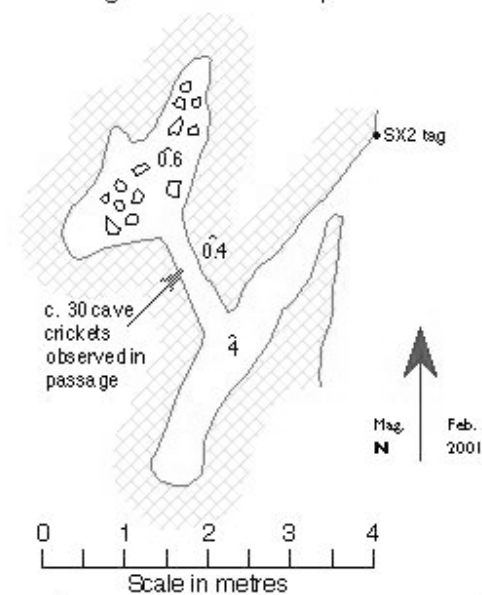
were delegated to approach the contractor to explain why we were there and devise some access arrangement for our vehicles to save an otherwise unnecessary 1.5-2.0 km long road walk. The contractor was very obliging, permitting freedom of access, provided that we locked the gate during our exit.

We parked our vehicles on an obvious

WETA WARREN SX2

STYX RIVER CAVE AREA
SOUTHERN TASMANIA

Cave length: 9 metres Map No. 7SX2.STC19



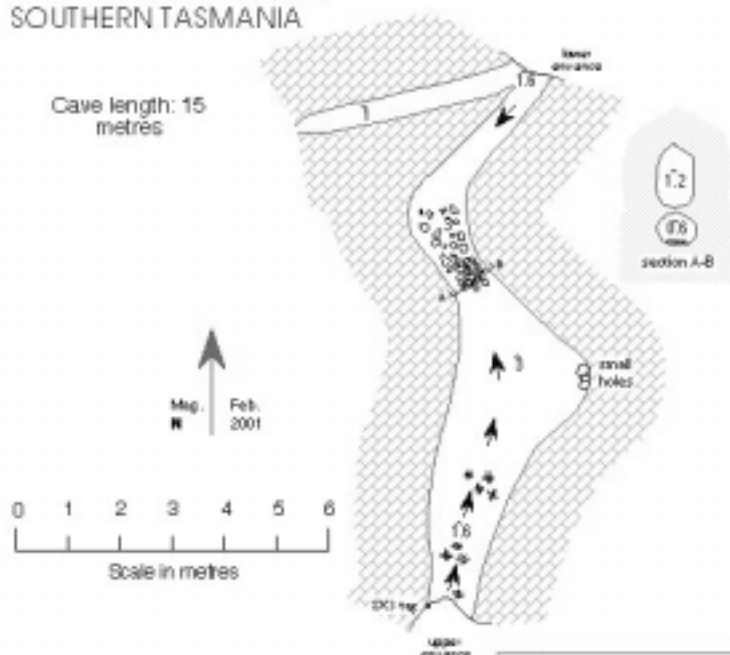
Sketched by Greg Middleton 24 February 2001
ASF Grade 33
Drawn by Greg Middleton 25 February 2001
using Claris Draw on an Apple Macintosh

THROUGH CAVE SX3

STYX RIVER CAVE AREA
SOUTHERN TASMANIA

Map No. 7SX3.STC20

Cave length: 15 metres



Surveyed by Greg Middleton and Hans Benisch
24 February 2001
using Suunto KB 14366, inclinometer and tape; ASF Grade 43
Drawn by Greg Middleton 28 February 2001
using Microsoft Excel and Claris Draw on an Apple Macintosh

The karst and its caves were located a short distance south of the river – in an area covered by the northern end of the 1:25,000 *Skeleton* map sheet. After walking a short distance from the river along flat ground with scrubby ferns, we came to rising ground and the first of the several known cave entrances. The caves were located under a "pinnacle" of dolomite at the eastern end of a ridgeline than ran parallel to the south side of the *Styx River*. After establishing a base camp site/ lunch spot on the ridge above the first seen cave – a cave running under the ridge to another upper level entrance - we commenced our site area familiarisation. Albert, Amanda, Arthur and Greg climbed up the dolomite pinnacle; Janine and Ric



Hans hand-drilling a number tag hole.



Greg in Riverview Cave

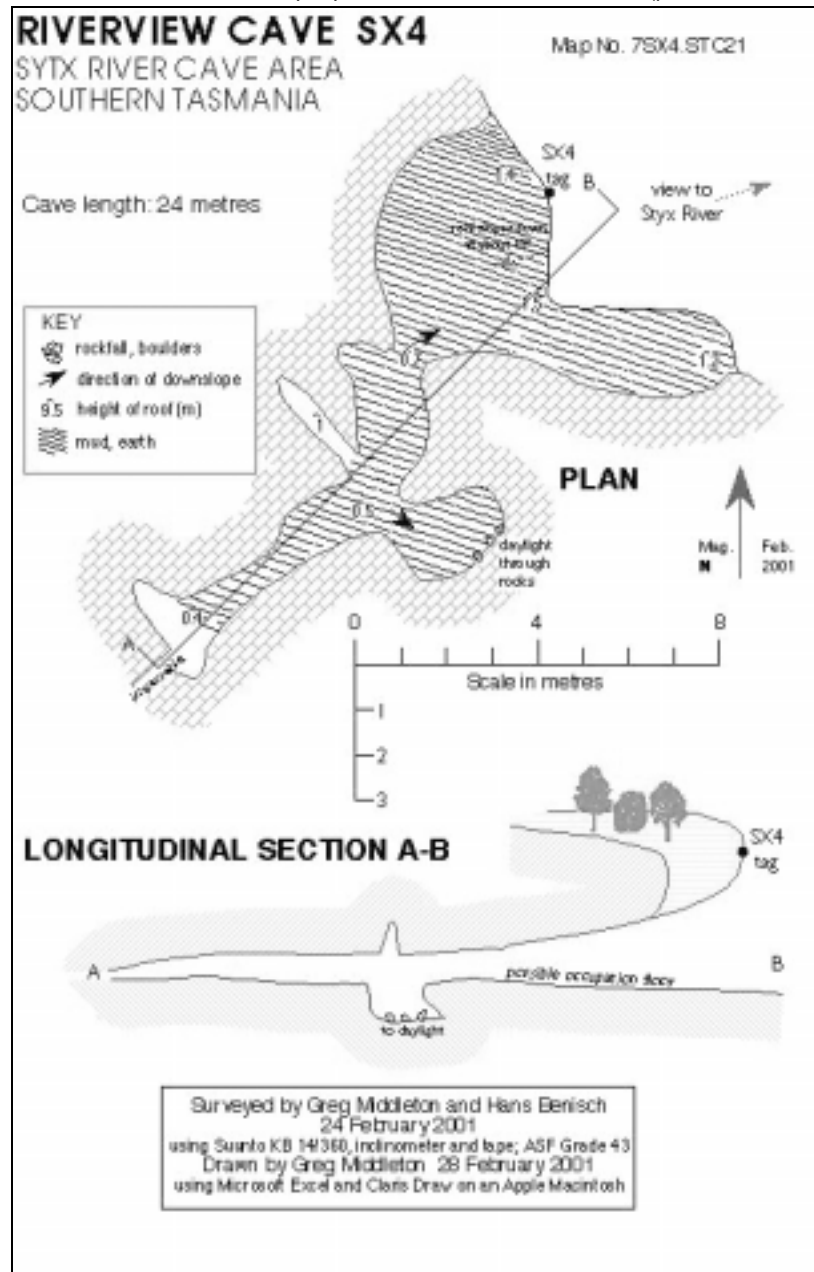
walked west along the ridge of dolomite; Hans and Steve followed Geoff and Joe to look at other cave entrances. Since Janine and Ric were unable to locate any further caves, a decision was made to explore and survey the cave with the most potential – a vertical entrance leading to multiple passages and several chambers with bone deposits. While the exploration team of Greg, Hans, Janine, Ric and Steve rigged the pitch and began surveying, Albert and I followed Amanda, Geoff, Joe and Tim to look at the several other cave entrances, most of which were near the foot of short dolomite bluffs at river base level. After being photographed at the entrance of an overhang cave – subsequently named: *Riverview Cave*, Tim bade us farewell and returned to Maydena.

Time to number-tag some cave entrances – out with the STC rechargeable cordless percussion drill. With drill in tow and number tags, I arrived at the first site still being explored and surveyed – but the drill refused to work! We tested the battery and other obvious switch functions... but the drill was dead. So what to do? We had to drill eight holes: two holes for each number tag. Albert's geology pick came to the rescue so we number-tagged caves the slow way – the old fashioned way - by hand, hammering the head of the percussion drill bit, twisting the bit (as it was hammered) and blowing out the dolomite dust. Each drill hole took about 20 minutes! Hans volunteered to do the first hole, Greg did another, but AC was left with the rest – another six holes to do.

The first cave was the most interesting site and we all eventually ended up descending the short 4 metre entrance drop into the maze of passages below. Apart from the numerous bone deposits – appearing to be all extant species of wallaby, possum, echidna and perhaps wombat – amongst the interesting

finds in the 70 metres of passage were the speleothems: numerous short, dripping straws, a few small stalagmites, several longer stalactites and short columns, plus some flowstone banks. There were also several sets of scratch marks on the lower walls of cave chambers near some bone deposits and a fairly diverse assemblage of invertebrate species.

Amongst the invertebrates was a peripatus (commonly known as a "velvet worm") – possibly only the third or fourth record from a Tasmanian cave. So our first number-tagged cave: SX-1, was named *Peripatus Pot*. This peripatus has very tiny eyes and a remarkably colourful and patterned brown body with embossed rows of blue spots (possibly papillae or "tubercles"??) and 14 pairs of claw-tipped legs, plus a pair of claw-less leg-like appendages at the anterior (front) end of the body which are referred to as oral papillae. This velvet worm is possibly a species of the Tasmanian peripatid: *Ooperipatellus decoratus* var. B (pers. comm., R.



Mesibov, March 2001). Apart from an abnormal abundance of calliphorids (blow flies) near the entrance to *Peripatus Pot*, other more interesting invertebrate species included:

- An apparent new species of tipulids (crane flies);
- A small 2-3 mm long possibly cave adapted harvestman, with very long thin translucent cheliceral "claw-teeth" spines - similar in overall size and shape to the *Lomanella* type harvestmen with a low eye mound, but with a heavily ornate body pattern, it is probably more likely to be a species of *Nuncioides* or *Miobunus*;
- Four different species of spiders, including two very cave adapted species - both quite bizarre looking and depigmented species with long, spindly legs:
 - (a) One small spider only 0.5 mm long, that appears to be a mature male with enlarged pedipalps; depigmented (white) and appearing to only have 2 pairs of eyes;
 - (b) The other 2.5 mm long, tan-orange depigmented body with long setose legs and extraordinary long leg spines - comparatively longer spines than I have seen on any other cave spider in Tasmania; with 4 pairs of eyes, but no eye lens pigment.
- One bizarre looking setose (hairy)-legged acarina species: a large depigmented (blind?) mite with pink "pimple-like" structures where there may have once been eyes and with dense rows of short spine-like setae (hairs) on its dorsal (back) surface.

After our visit to *Peripatus Pot*, where Amanda and Geoff also ventured into (without caving gear), one carload of STC people departed, leaving three STC bods: Arthur, Greg and Hans to number tag and survey the other small, but potentially significant caves. In order of tagging and survey, these were: *Weta Warren* (SX-2), *Through Cave* (SX-3) and *Riverview Cave* (SX-4). *Weta Warren* and *Riverview Cave* were located in the short dolomite bluffs near the *Styx River*; *Through Cave* was located under our base camp ridge. As might be expected, the narrow rift-like cave named *Weta Warren* contained an abundance of the *Micropathus*-type rhabdophorids (cave crickets); other than that it was a reportedly narrow and unpleasant cave to survey! *Through Cave* was surveyed from the upslope (SX-3)

entrance out to the untagged lower entrance, shrouded with webs of the Tasmanian Cave Spider: *Hickmania troglodytes*. (This web-covered lower entrance was the first cave we had seen after crossing the *Styx River* on our way to the karst.) *Through Cave* was a more respectable cave: a steep mulch-floored slide-in entrance to a crawling/ stooping passage with some stand-up sections and an upper fossil level passage with cave coral speleothem walls and a few small stalactites. While Greg and Hans surveyed the last cave: *Riverview Cave*, Arthur began cursing at the hardness of the dolomite while hammering the percussion drill bit to fix the SX-4 number tag. During the initial appraisal of these new *Styx River* caves, Albert suggested that this cave (*Riverview Cave*) had the potential to be a former Aboriginal occupation site – possibly a potentially more appealing shelter site than *Bone Cave* in the *Weld River* valley.

Time to depart. Our exit from the *Styx River* karst was relatively uneventful, though some one got wet feet in the river crossing and a few of us commented that it was a fairly steep climb out. Although the exit track was now relatively well trogged, with fading light it was helpful having some tapes to follow in the thicker forest sections. We dutifully padlocked the contractor's open boom gate at the Maydena end of the forestry spur road and headed back to Tyenna Valley Lodge. In the Cockatoo Cafe, we were wine and dined by Tim and Wendy, but Arthur was embarrassed to discover that the large steak he ordered was more than he could eat! (Thank you Hans for finishing it off!)

Summary of assigned map numbers (and cave names) to new *Styx River* [SX] caves:

- 7SX1.STC18 - *Peripatus Pot*;
- 7SX2.STC19 - *Weta Warren*;
- 7SX3.STC20 - *Through Cave*;
- 7SX4.STC21 - *Riverview Cave*.

[See the accompanying surveys drawn by Greg Middleton.]

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Splash Pot....about time for another visit!: 18/2/2001

Jeff Butt

Party: Andras Galambos, Jeff Butt.

How time flies when you're not caving in Splash Pot.....all of a sudden I realised that it was nearly 5 months since our last trip down this cave (see Spiel 322, page 10). That trip was very, very wet and somewhat unpleasant to say the least. But over the past five months we have experienced a very dry period, in fact, much of Tasmania has had the driest period since records commenced. So, the time was right to return, if only I could find a companion. Andras, who incidentally thinks that a day in Splash Pot is better than a day at work, obliged and we headed up.

On the last trip I left three charcoal bags for detection of dye injected into JF69 on 12/11/2000, (see Spiel 322, page 11), however now it was three months on, and so it was possible the detectors might have been flushed etc., and so prior to going down Splash Pot we revisited JF69 and injected another 100 gm of Fluorescein to re-do the dye trace and hopefully gain a visual of it in Splash Pot.

Splash Pot was very dry, virtually only a few drips on the normally wet entrance pitch series. Close to the Bone wasn't too bad, we were through it in 45 minutes (still, that's only slightly better than 1 m/min!) and enjoying lunch at the top of Harrow the Marrow. I studied the rock at the top of Harrow the Marrow; it does appear feasible to bolt around the right hand wall, however, given the shaft is so overhanging I'm not sure that is the best option.....we need to return with a 50 W light to have a decent look at this shaft from halfway down the rope!

Anyway, we then headed to the far end of the cave (which is ~60 m directly beneath the entrance to KD and JF69). The small stream that appears at the far end of the cave was dry, but the small waterfalls that come in from the ceiling a short distance back were still doing their thing. There was however no signs of any dye. So, we recovered the charcoal bags and began the trip back, checking out leads en-route. Most of the leads in this part of the cave are climbing leads requiring some gear, so were out of our reach.

We did however sort of a few leads which proved to be 'not much' and tidied up the survey at those points. As we progressed back towards 'Slash Spot', we went to check out the leads at the base of the slope below the fixed ladder. This was the route Rolan Eberhard took on his exploration in 1987 (see Spiel 228, June '87). We surveyed as we went, and soon Andras was at the top of a climb/handline. Not having any gear we headed back and did some poking about in the boulder pile and found an alternative route to the streamway (dry) below. Since time was against us, we dispensed with the surveying

and headed down for a look. After a couple of 3 m down-climbs (these would be the cascades referred to by Rolan in his trip report above) and reached a chamber with only a low cobbled streambed heading off. But, it was time to get out of this cave, and 10 hours after we entered Splash Pot we were back on the surface. It was another midnight arrival home. We knocked off a few more question-marks and added a paltry 70 m to the survey....but are one trip closer to being finished with this cave.

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Splash Pot (JF-10), March 4, 2001. More fun in the tightest spot under the sun (and earth).

Hugh Fitzgerald

Party: Jeff Butt, Hugh Fitzgerald

The STC exploration and mapping of Splash Pot continues, though with a marked decline in trip frequency since Dave Rasch's enforced absence in Antarctica. Jeff complained that with Dave away, he couldn't find anyone ~~stupid~~ keen enough to accompany him into this famously tight cave. Recently his luck changed.

Two weeks prior to this trip, Jeff succeeded in coercing Andras Galambos back into Splash Pot, the first trip since September 2000 (see Speleo Spiel 322, Oct. 2000, p.10). Among other things, they revisited the area found by Rolan Eberhard et al. on an exploration of the cave in the 1980s (see Speleo Spiels 225 & 228). Surveying this area was to be our objective today.

As always, Jeff was keen to get back to the coalface and tidy up some loose ends. This time he succeeded in luring me along as his sidekick. After nine months since my last trip, I had almost recovered from the extensive bruising, aching muscles, and recurring nightmares.

Approaching the cave, we caught sight of the tag JF-2310, which stumped us for a while, especially as the tag also bore the letters NSW. We wasted quite a bit of time slowly following this intriguing find, but eventually thought better of getting side-tracked. We resumed our main mission and headed on to JF-10.

While sorting gear at the car, I'd discovered I'd overlooked packing my lunch before leaving home. Despite my eyeing off some delicious looking *Coprinus comatus* at the carpark, Jeff kindly offered to share his food with me. Agreeing upon this generous arrangement we set forth. Jeff rigged the short entrance pitch and led the way in to the cave at 11:30 a.m.

The cave was surprisingly dry and pleasant, with only a few scant drips on the pitches. Having encountered Close to the Bone before, I knew what I was in for. This time down I found this tight section much easier work, and I even managed to catch up on the odd wink of sleep now and then. Jeff's glasses almost lost their lenses, but he luckily noticed the screws working loose in time. I gladly snoozed away while he tightened them. When roused I discovered I could slip through many of the tight spots, and was not so constricted to horizontal movement. I made good use of gravity and exerted as little energy as possible. Being dry for a change made the whole experience a lot more enjoyable.

We shared the first of our two sandwiches (a delightful combination of cheddar and Promite between slices of mature home-made bread lightly suffused with honey), then set to work on the day's duties. Starting from the

downclimb below the fixed rope ladder, we surveyed down a dry passage for several legs, until we came to a low, dry streamway. Jeff pushed on through to a chamber where we found an old cairn, presumably built by Rolan some years previously. Then Jeff removed some cemented cobbles and pushed through a wet belly crawl stretch where we encountered running water for the first time. We surveyed further downstream and along a short dry side passage on the true left with a few nice straws in it. Beyond here the low streamway became suddenly taller and riftlike. It continued down for a few metres to a corner where it assumed a triangular passage shape, about 40 cm high by 50 cm across its base, with water running along the floor. To the left was what appeared to be a dry bypass, but which proved to be a dead end. The streamway was declared to be too tight for today's effort.

We surveyed a few other side passages which led to rockfall or "too tight" clefts, then surveyed upstream from our survey starting point, until the dry streamway again got too low. In all we surveyed 146m of passage in about 4 hours.

We had encountered our agreed turnaround time of 5:15 p.m. Sharing the other of Jeff's sandwiches (a pleasing amalgamation of honey and peanut butter with a hint of Promite, between slices of the same carefully aged loaf), we packed up and headed out. Uphill through Close to the Bone is a much more demanding experience, though Jeff paradoxically finds it easier going. We grunted and groaned our way up, and eventually made it through, despite my taking a wrong turning and heading up a side passage for a few minutes.

The exiting effort took about three hours from Slash Spot, but we emerged in daylight (much to Jeff's shame). We had spent almost nine hours underground, which was quite enough in that hole for one day.

Back at the carpark I collected the lawyer's wigs for a feast later that night. We were in Hobart by 10:30 p.m., and I was tucking into the lightly fried delicacies with a cheeky beaujolais by eleven. It was a fine end to a day low on rations.

The survey data we collected show the stream passage heading off towards the top of Harrow the Marrow pitch; the stream possibly contributes its flow to the water pouring over the edge of this awesome drop. The water we encountered in the streamway probably comes from Slash Spot, which encompasses a small stream fed by the water draining out of Close to the Bone. The dry upstream bed we surveyed heads towards Slash Spot, so it may be a relict streambed for this water.

There is more work to be done in Splash Pot. Jeff is always on the lookout for partners for further trips. If you

feel you may be an unfulfilled or repressed masochist, why not give it a try?

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Khazad Dum, another search for a connection to Splash Pot: 23/3/2001

Jeff Butt

Party: Dave Rasch, Jeff Butt.

A connection between Splash Pot and Khazad Dum (if one exists!) is remaining very elusive. The survey data shows the two caves are <20 m apart, but to date several attempts at closing the missing distance has failed. You can get an idea of the proximity of K.D. and Splash Pot from the PLAN on page 4 of this Spiel. A VERTICAL SECTION looking from the SE to the NW is shown below; it too shows the proximity of K.D. and Splash Pot. The 'Mad Englishman and Dogs' extension of Splash Pot takes one right underneath KD, in fact the distant most point of Splash Pot lies 60 m directly underneath the KD entrance!

Working towards making a connection between K.D. and Splash Pot from the K.D. side is somewhat easier than from the Splash Pot side, i.e. 'Close to the Bone' does not have to be endured. However, K.D. has been trogged for many years and so looking from K.D. seems to be a more difficult assignment, as there are much fewer leads than on the Splash Pot side. However, a change is as good as a holiday....so it was off to K.D. for us.

We cruised down K.D., using the main drag. At the bottom of the 'dry 90', we headed into the passages that head back under the first bit of K.D. and towards Splash Pot. We were planning to work in the vicinity of survey stations KD260-265, as this piece of passage carries a very good breeze and there were a couple of leads yet to be finalised in this area (which was surveyed by Mad-Phil and myself on 3/5/2000 as part of our K.D. resurvey. Incidentally Phil is the legend after which the "Mad Englishman and Dogs" extension in Splash Pot is named!). Today the breeze was very strong; about as strong as the breeze that flows between Threefortyone

and Rift Cave, which was a very encouraging sign.

An attempt at the drafting rockfall yielded a few metres, but the extremely dodgy nature of this place made me retreat. Meanwhile, Dave had scurried up a bank of fill that lead to another 'question mark', and after a bit of squirming was into some new cave. We surveyed the ascending passages there and eventually were stopped at ~15 m pitch. About at this time the tape got knocked over and it ended up doing the pitch....into new territory perhaps, or maybe just back into the cave from where we had come???

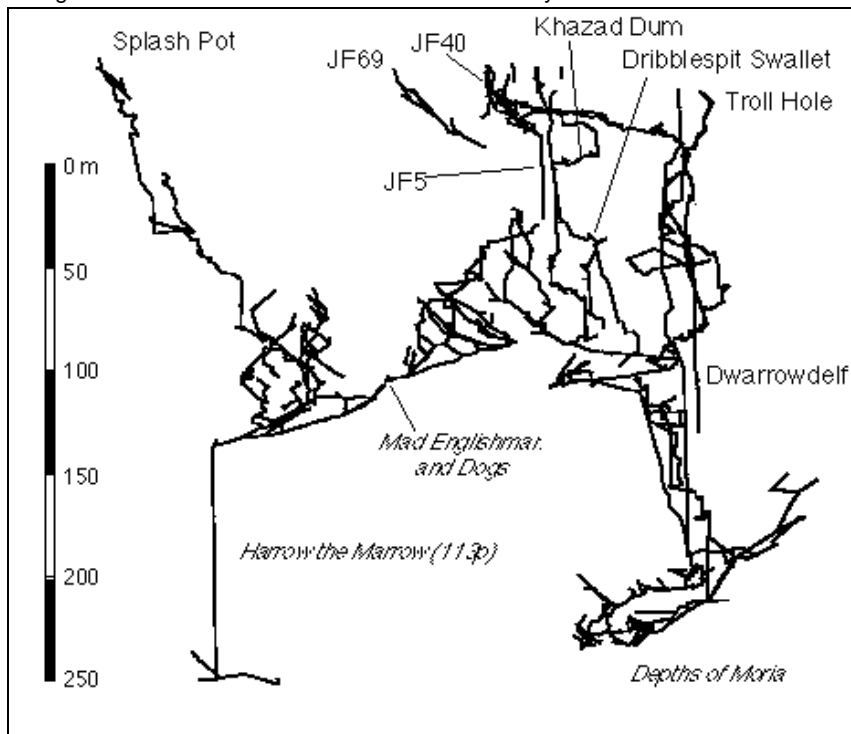
We retreated back down to our packs, and just around the corner was the tape (slightly the worse for wear), so it wasn't new cave, it was just where we had been earlier. However this doesn't explain the breeze at all. Looking at the survey data (we added a paltry 70 m to the length of K.D.) shows that this area is actually quite close to parts of JF5, and so one suspects that through the rockfall lies amore direct route to the surface, via JF5 and that's why this part of the cave breathes so well.

Up on the surface, it was still daylight, so I took Dave for a quick sortie into JF5, the rumbling waterfalls quickly convince one that this is indeed K.D.

Once back at home one can't help thinking about that elusive connection. From the K.D. side to get to Splash Pot one has to 'go down', but in K.D. all the leads seem to 'go up'! The passages in K.D. in the region contain a lot of infill material, which makes going down problematic. In Splash Pot there are some 'up' passages, which are choked with the same sort of fill, so it does all seem right.

If you believe our survey data (and I do due to our experience with connecting Rift Cave and Threeforty-one), then perhaps it's time for a good old English Dig, or a spot of Mining!

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VERTICAL SECTION: looking Southeast to Northwest.

Peanut Paste and a Troll Infestation-1/4/2001

Dave Rasch

Party: Jeff Butt, Dave Rasch.

Peanut Paste was one of Jeff and Damian's follies (see Speleo-Spiel 314, p 15-16) on the contact east of KD. The story was that Damian had descended on a 22 m rope, looked down a bit of a pitch and said it was tight but kept going.

We started at KD, walked up past JF-5 to the contact then contoured around checking tags and entrances. After a bit of to-ing and fro-ing and then a bit more in the other direction, we finally located the cave, a grotty tight thing at the base of a small cliff, under a freshly fallen log. The first task was to remove bits of log from the entrance, then I was volunteered to descend. A short dirt ramp led to a narrow 30 cm wide rift which I sort of slithered down into, then it opened up a bit and I did a short 5 m abseil to a narrow streamway. From here the stream descended steeply then did a left turn. A bit of a squeeze peer around the corner left me in no doubt that that was the end at least as far as I was concerned. There was a 15 cm wide slot continuing down.

On the return trip, things were uncomfortably tight and I remember at one point grinding my face into the ascender as I attempted to prusik the tight vertical section back out. How Damian did it I will never know.

As we still had plenty of day left, we followed the contact around to Troll Hole, on the way admiring how the huge log we used to use for rigging has split in two and fallen into Dwarrowdelf. This reminded me of an interesting bush-bash that Jeff and I did a couple of years ago. We had been to IB113, the daylight was going fast and I remember following along behind Jeff, and still following him as he slithered across the narrow fallen log that bridges right over the top of Mini Martin and that log was probably only 40 cm across. The one at Dwarrowdelf is (was) more like 2 m!

Troll Hole is interesting because of its location: along the contact between Dwarrowdelf and Cauldron Pot. From a muddy entrance chamber, Troll Hole (see Southern Caver 58, p 14-16) drops in a series of pitches of increasing length to a large 'terminal' chamber about 90 m below the surface. The chamber floor is littered with car-sized blocks, some of which are coated in pristine milky white flow-stone and formations.

There is no evidence of any solid rock floor in the chamber. Recent survey work has indicated that Troll Hole overlies a dry ascending passage in Dwarrowdelf. For those who have visited the lower precincts of the Dwarrowdelf, the passage is in the opposite direction to the route into KD. The distance between the lowest point in Troll Hole and the estimated highest point in the passage in Dwarrowdelf is only something like 35 m. Jeff and I decided therefore to re-visit the Troll, and to ferret deep to attempt a connection between the two.

My recollections of Troll Hole from the heady SCS days of the late 1980's was that the cave was particularly pustulent with regard to mud. If I can venture the following scale of Cave Muddiness:

The DR Cave Muddiness Scale:

'Clean' (<1mm mud)

Some dusty smearage blemishes my lurid new cave-suit, rock makes a handy lunch plate. Natural jugs, threads and bollards right where you need them, pitch accidentally rigs 'free'. Rope annoyingly stiff on descent, but permits Indian rope trick on ascent.

'Grotty' (<10mm mud)

Cave-suit colour no longer visible. Best anchor is well back from the pitch, pitch rigs free but requires a dodgy climb and three 2 m tapes. Rope fast on the descent, requires a brake crab.

'Totally Pustulent' (<100mm mud)

Cave-suit no longer visible. Best anchor appears to be a 2 m tape around dodgy mound of dirt near pitch (turns out to be caving buddy), tie-back to previous pitch, no need to rig pitch 'free'. Rope is perilous on descent (brake crab requires a brake crab), ascenders refuse to 'grab'.

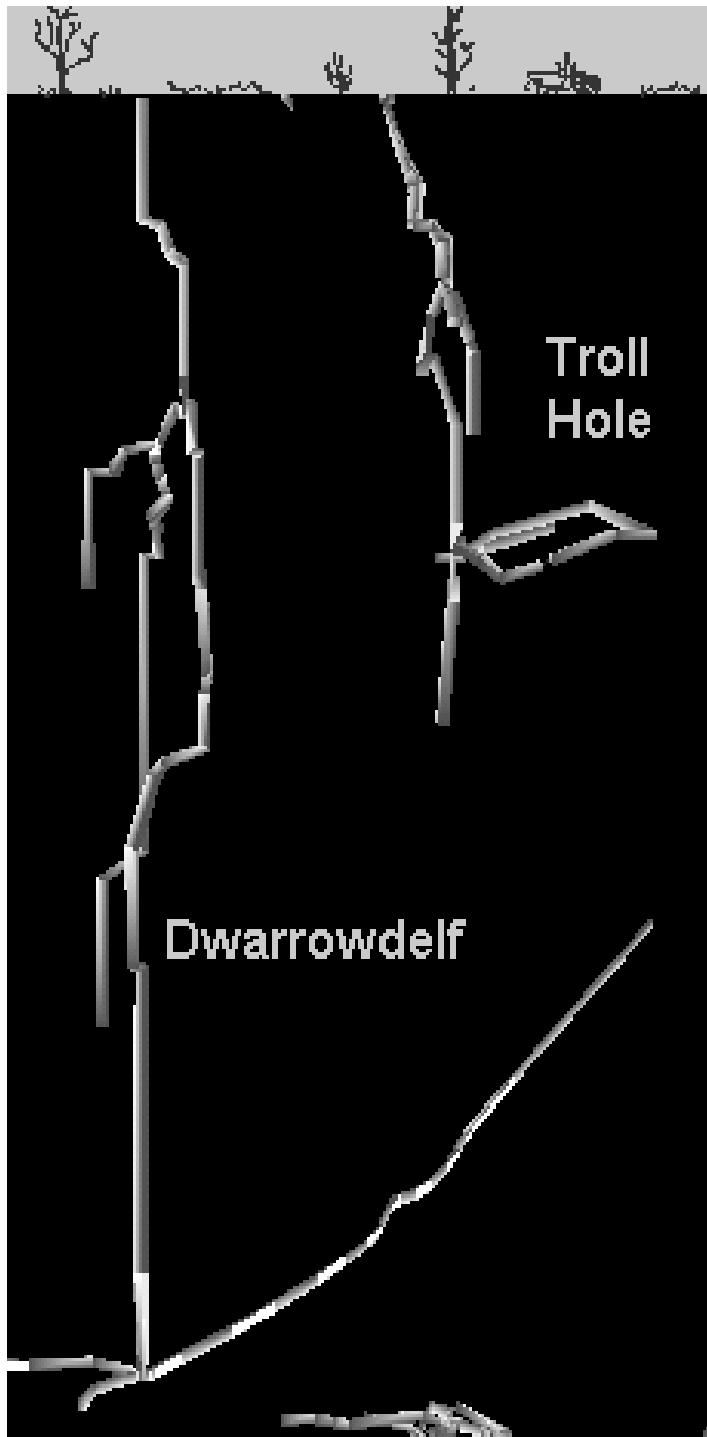
'Enlightened' (>100mm)

Caver, cave suit, cave are all as one. There is no pitch, no anchors, no rope, no descender, no ascenders!

Normally I would rate Troll Hole as somewhere near the third category, so imagine my surprise when we entered the first chamber to discover the cave was dry and had essentially 'healed' itself of previous visitations. The first couple of pitches went smoothly, with various rockfall blocks providing reasonable-but-not-great anchors.

Then through the 'window' to the third pitch, I rigged and began descending but quickly decided that the 25 m or so of rope I was slithering down was going to be insufficient to descend what looked like 50 m of pitch. Also there appeared to be quite a number of nervous-tic inducing blocks perched around and overhead. Jeff joined me for a discussion astride one of the dodgiest-looking blocks. We decided to retreat back up the rope, where after a bit of poking around we located the correct route down to the last 35 m pitch.

Now in some respects we have been having it easy over the past few months, returning over and over as we have been to Splash Pot. Mostly this cave has remained rigged (for over a year now!) so very little thinking is required. Basically you stick your head in one end of 'Splash Pot' and push and hopefully you emerge out the other end for some exploration. I think Jeff has been aware of my waning skills in the area of rigging, so he suggested I rig the last pitch in Troll Hole. Well, OK I don't mind admitting that I was pretty nervous, penduluming around about 10 m down the pitch with Jeff yelling "There should be a ledge for a rebelay, it should have formation on it" and gazing about forlornly for about 15 minutes before finally spotting the ledge something like 8 metres out of reach. I managed some sort of re-direction from a matchbox-sized knob which allowed about 10 mm of clearance from the wall then continued down the rope. Well, 10 mm of clearance seems fine when you are hanging just 1 m below it, but it quickly becomes a pitiful distance when you are a further 20 m



3D view of Troll Hole with respect to Dwarrowdelf.

down the rope. Fortunately Jeff was on my heels and gave it the "Elephant stamp" of approval, so all was well.

After alighting on some blocks in the massive chamber, we sort of split up, did a bit of a lap around the chamber sizing up the task then started ferreting around in earnest in the rock-pile. After some down-climbing and poking ourselves into many blocked crevices, I finally found a bit of a lead that required a rope so we rigged it and descended a further 6m or so. At this stage we were maybe 30 m below the chamber, and this wasn't the vertical lead that's indicated in the survey.

Well to cut a long story slightly shorter, we found lots of draughting rockpile but no connection into Dwarrowdelf. On the way out, the cave seemed to remember its previous notoriety as a muddy cave, and there were a couple of moments of cursing on the higher pitches as the ascender consistently lost its grip, mud flicked into my eye etc. followed by a walk back to the car in darkness.

I think we were content with the conclusion that, despite failing to make a connection, the two caves no doubt do meet there somewhere through boulder filled passages. Perhaps there is some scope for a small well placed charge to open things up?

The diagram opposite shows the relationship between Troll Hole and Dwarrowdelf, the estimated 30 m meters we made through the rockpile is shown at the bottom of the Troll Hole Chamber. At the other end, the estimated 50 m Jeff and Andras (see elsewhere in this Spiel) found in Dwarrowdelf is also shown. There's not much 'gap' left!

I can recommend the cave as an 'Intermediate' vertical trip, although some attention is needed to ensure safe rigging (i.e. more than I managed). The cave can comfortably be done in and out in about 6 hours and there are some delightful formations to be seen in the bottom chamber.

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Splash Pot (JF-10), 7 April, 2001. The derig commences.

Hugh Fitzgerald

Party: Jeff Butt, Hugh Fitzgerald, Dave Rasch

With more leads to check, we couldn't really avoid further work in Splash Pot. Jeff was keen as always, and Dave was itching to get back in after a long break from his favourite cave. I was included because I had such a fun time on my last trip.

I was gradually learning that what Jeff professes is true: with each trip into this cave, the going gets easier and easier. Am I learning the route and the right moves? Am I on autopilot and injured to the bumps and bruising? Are we eroding the passage more and more?

It transpired that I still don't know the route too well: I led the way into Close to the Bone and was soon

heading up the same wrong turn I took on the way out last trip! Jeff put me right, and I kept leading the way down. This was my first time in front through this section, and I found it a little harder choosing the best/widest route.

Once at Slash Spot, Dave put some fluorescein dye into the stream which descends down a rift. We expected to find evidence of the dye further into the cave.

Our next stop was Harrow the Marrow pitch, where Jeff left me to derig the ropes. After some thought I declined, so Jeff got the nasty job of hanging out over the pitch-head and unscrewing the bolts he had put into the wall some dozen months back. Dave and I began coiling up the rope while Jeff marked the bolt-casings. *[The four bolt casings here were marked with reflective markers. One on the right just before the waterfall lip; the second on the right, at helmet-top height when standing on the "Ledge of Fear"; the remaining two bolts are on the right-hand wall, about 2 m down from the "Ledge of Fear", 0.6 m apart. Ed.]* After 30 minutes we had a very tight bundle of 115m of rope which fitted into a tiny pack [12 litre volume]— ideal for hauling out through Close to the Bone.

Next task was to survey a few short leads of passage where the dye had been expected to re-emerge from

previously found streams. These streambeds were dry today, and no sign of dye was found. This completed, we climbed up to a lead above Tend'n Down pitch, and surveyed a couple of hundred metres of passage which climbed steeply and ended in rockfall, or wriggled around back over themselves. Two 8 metre pitches were found, one of which probably overlooks the main passage, the other heading off to unknown territory, southeast of (and perhaps bypassing) Harrow the Marrow. We left these undescended. All up we had surveyed 280 m of passage, increasing the length of Splash Pot by 10% to 2.8 km.

The anticipated strain of moving the long rope out of the cave turned out to be relatively easy, as Jeff and I sat back and let Dave haul the packs through Close to the Bone. Unfortunately he wasn't silly enough to pull the rope up the pitches; that job fell to the only sucker present: me.

We emerged to a sky suffused with pale moonlight after eleven hours underground, and wended our way back to the car. Another successful trip completed, and more exciting caving had. Naturally following a Splash Pot trip, more leads are beckoning...

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Splash Pot-Minor finds and Partial derig: 21/4/2001

Jeff Butt

Party: Andras Galambos, Dave Rasch, Jeff Butt.

Back up to that friendly hole, with a view to finding out what lies beneath that undescended new pitch. We also had a plan to swap some of the rusting krabs on the rigging and pull out some of the most worn ropes; Splash Pot has been rigged since 2/12/1999, and the muddy ropes had seen 41 cavers on 15 trips. Also Dave wanted to snap of a few photographs to remind him of the fun-bits of Splash Pot.

Unfortunately the nice dry conditions we've had over the summer are no more; Splash Pot is back to having many Splashes and Close to the Bone has soaking puddles. Anyway, soon enough we were down and back to the site of the action, the ascending passages above the Tend'n Down pitch. We rigged a safety line across the exposed traverse across the top of the pitch, which did make one feel somewhat more relaxed about crawling across the gigantic crumbling chockstone bridge.

At the undescended pitch, I placed a bolt on the Left Hand Wall to give a free hang, whilst Dave and Andras checked out some other leads. Whilst Dave and I surveyed the upper leads Andras headed down the pitch and checked out what lay below.

Upstairs the leads fizzled pretty quickly, downstairs they fared only marginally better. The large passage we could see heading off became a bit of a maze, with all passages heading down to a gigantic mud sump. The mud formations in this area are perhaps the best I've ever seen anywhere, as were some helictites in an alcove a couple of metres down the pitch. So, unfortunately there was no new route down. Leads in this part of the cave have now been pretty well exhausted.

We derigged the pitch, then greased and marked the bolt casing....I can't see anyone visiting here again for a very, very long time, if ever.

Since we were on a mandate to have a 'be-kind to our bodies' trip, we started heading out at 5 p.m., with the aim of a gentlemanly 8 hour trip. The 11 mm rope on the two short pitches just inside of Close to the Bone has had a particularly hard life with the grit and grime, so we derigged these two pitches and gave the rope a bit of a wash in the streamway. We have 'end for ended' it and have left it attached to an anchor on a convenient ledge. We have left Tend'n Down rigged, and there is one spare rope (14 m) and a survey tape down near Slash Spot....there is still some unfinished business down below...GST, Slash Spot to name a couple. There are probably a couple more trips needed to tidy up some of the more attractive leads.

Once back through Close to the Bone we decided to derig the 9 mm rope on the 3-stepped 50 m pitch; this rope has one knotted out rub-point and is due for a clean and check. Dave and Andras added the rope to their loads as we headed out the narrow entrance streamway; itself a tough obstacle at this end of the trip. We emerged to a brilliantly starlit and decidedly cool evening. After a quick tromp back to the Orana and some time on the road we were home at 11 p.m, which made for quite a civilised trip.

Splash Pot slowly grows; the surveyed length is 2.9 km (500 survey legs) and there is about 0.2 km of known but not surveyed passage. There are about a dozen leads left to pursue too.

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**Slaughterhouse Pot-Growling
Swallet-an International Tourist
Through trip: 24/1/2001**

Jeff Butt

Party: Gavin Brett, Andrew, Dave, Finbar (Ireland), Johanna, Hugh Fitzgerald, Chris (NZ), Nire (NZ), Jeff Butt.

A cast of many (Ric Tunney and Janine McKinnon were doing the same trip, about an hour ahead of us), but all went smoothly. Gavin, Andrew and Dave were some Victorians who collared me over the internet; Finbar and Johanna were a couple of Tim Anderson's friends, and Chris and Nire were Hugh's NZ visitors.

So, up to Slaughterhouse and down through the cave we went, moving as two teams of four made it quite smooth. I took Gavin, Andrew and Dave down to Herpes III for a dose, whilst the others got a head start out on us. Water levels were down very low; the 'dunked dry bypass' was totally dry. Everyone did very well, no handlines/climbing aids were required. We all emerged about the same time; about 5 hours was spent underground.



**Slaughterhouse Pot-a Washout
Trip: 17/3/2001**

Jeff Butt

Party: Dave Rasch, Felicity Hargraves, Allison, Anna Greenham, Tim Rudman, Joesph Farrell, Geoff Wise, Jeff Butt.

This was to be an introductory trip for some new prospective as well as a gentle introduction to caving for some 'haven't been caving for a bit' old cavers. It had been a bit wet in Hobart the day prior to the trip, but we didn't think it had been that wet. That was a mistake, as the Florentine had received over a couple of inches of rain and the entrance to Growling was in major flood. We all goggled in awe at the power of the white water before heading up to Slaughterhouse entrance.

Our plan B was to have a play in the top bit of Slaughterhouse Pot. Dave, Joe, Tim and Geoff headed in first to play on the pitches. Felicity, Allison, Anna and I were the second wave; we just headed into the top of the first pitch for the 'experience' and then headed back out to the warmth of the humid surface.

For fun we checked out the entrance to Pendant Pot (yes, there is still a fixed rope on the entrance climb), and then decided to go for a walk up the Ice-Tube track in the rain for a bit of a look. I'd never been beyond the SHPot turnoff, so it was quite fun to see what was about. A bit of a play in the very wet Trapdoor Swallet was the first detour, then we continued up to Ice-Tube. The main IT entrance was quite spectacular and hosted a raging stream. Anna and I headed in to the top of the first pitch for a look.

We retraced our steps to meet the advance team back on the surface and all headed back to Growling. The Growling streamway had risen by about another 20 cm since we were last there. Back at the cars we had fun getting changed in the rain, a bit of a novelty for recent times.



**Slaughterhouse Pot-Growling-
Another through trip: 15/4/2001**

Jeff Butt

Party: Liz Canning, Tim Rudman, Andras Galambos, Jeff Butt.

This was a 're-run' of the aborted trip of 17/3. Our cast was smaller than on the 17/3, but Ric Tunney and Janine McKinnon were doing the same trip, about an hour ahead of us.

Water levels were good today, enough to make it an exciting trip. The trip down Slaughterhouse was smooth; the in-situ ropes are in good condition (apart from being a bit stiff) in case anyone is wondering.

We wandered down to Herpes III, and also to the top of Destiny as part of our sight-seeing, before heading out. A pleasant five and a half hour trip.

It is hard to beat this trip for variety, it's got it all, i.e. water, excitement, noise, beauty, squalor and tightness!



**Mystery Creek-Introductory Trip:
28/4/2001**

Jeff Butt

Party: Heather Nicholls, Laurie, Rachael Cross, Dave Rasch, Jeff Butt.

This was the 'as advertised in the Forward Program' Introductory trip'. Our intrepid party of 5 headed down to Ida Bay in the Orana, getting a taste of travel in a 'caving car'. The obligatory Dover food stop had everyone fuelled up and ready to go.

At the carpark some gymnastics were performed as people tried to fit themselves into borrowed overalls...the first caving test, which everyone passed with flying colours. It is rumoured that if you can fit into your overalls then you can fit through Matchbox Squeeze...so everyone seemed happy.

Mystery Creek Cave wasn't very dark due to the superb glow-worm display; consensus decided that the glow-worm light was blue, not green.

Many 'white rabbits' were seen en-route as we headed to the infamous Matchbox Squeeze, which everyone successfully tackled. Some decided that once was enough, and so they were given the option of staying behind, but this gracious offer was strangely declined.

As an exercise Rachael, Heather and Laurie navigated us back to the Laundry Chute. That mischievous Easter Bunny caused some problem by moving about the cave...how many white rabbit like stalagmites are in this Cave?...and so we saw a bit more of the cave on the way back to the Laundry Chute.

Once in the Laundry we were on the homeward run to the glorious surface. A viewing of some cave beasties near the entrance determined that none of our prospectives are Arachnaphobes. Everyone went well, had fun and judged the trip to be a success. This caving caper is fun!



Turbo-Charged, Fuel-Injected Caving. Mole Creek 21st-22nd April 2000.

Stephen Bunton

Present; Stephen Bunton (Bunty), Steve Phipps (Phippsy), Anna Greenham, Ric Tunney and Janine McKinnon.

We rendezvoused at the Mole Creek Guest-house for dinner on the Friday night which was totally sumptuous and washed down with a cleanskin Pinot Noir which was just superb! Living in Tassy is such a luxury and then all being well we would visit it's best caves the following day.

We overnighted in the Northern Caverneers Marakoopa Hut but unfortunately we did not have a key for the gate which made it a bit tedious ferrying loads back and forth from the road. We had to be off for an early start on a cold and frosty morning, because Olivers Forest Road was closed for a stage of Targa Tasmania from 10 am till 3 p.m. Warner Harrison of Parks and Wildlife obligingly delivered the keys to us on his way to work as a guide at King Solomon's Cave and we didn't need to rendezvous with Rolan Eberhard who was going to enlist us for surveying because of illness in their family. So our happy little band proceeded to the Mersey River bridge and got trogged up. We chatted to a few Targa officials who were busy closing the road for the rally and they were slightly concerned that we would be crossing the road during the event. I assured them that we would hear the competitors cars coming.

First up we proceeded to Lynds Cave. The Mersey River now has more water in it than it used to due to some minimum flow-rate regulations having come into force and it is no longer the pleasant stroll down river cobbles that it used to be. We detoured via the outskirts of the farmers property on the opposite bank to the cave but still had to cross and still had to wade the over-gooly-depth pool at the entrance. Once inside we all managed to climb the first waterfall without falling in for a total saturation experience. We proceeded to the far end of the cave, well as far as where you have to crawl, after negotiating a few rockpile type obstacles. Those people new to the cave were impressed with the cave and people like me who hadn't been there for fourteen years - imagine that fourteen years! - were no less impressed.

After exiting the cave a couple of us waded upstream to the bridge and others retraced the drier terrestrial route back to cars. En route we heard the sirens of warning car as it sped past and then five minutes later began the stream of whining engines which provided background accompaniment to our lunch break. We did gawk at a few cars and took a few photos of people enjoying their own strange and wonderful style of recreation. Often the

navigators of the classic cars, which were by their nature a little slower, waved a friendly wave at these alien trogsuited creatures spectating on their event. It was an interesting juxtaposition.

After a pleasant picnic on the shores of the river we were suitably refuelled and sufficiently caffeine injected to continue the day's activities with a visit to Croesus Cave. Again we were all impressed with the cave especially those who had not seen the cave before. We noted that it is still in almost pristine condition. The boat which used to bypass the Golden Stairs had been removed and there was some excellent track marking which was merely fishing line with small pieces of tinsel widely spaced. This was reflective and therefore clearly visible but it had minimal visual impact and thus provided an excellent solution to managing traffic in the cave. As we approached the far reaches of the cave we noticed that there was a lot more mud which had originated from the low crawls at the end. We then hurried out in time to enjoy the last rays of sunshine for what was a spectacular autumn day.

Life at the Marakoopa Hut is rather celubrious and I noticed that the quality of caver's food and beverages has increased with their age and disposable incomes. Next morning there was heavy dew but no frost, it was overcast with a front to cross in the afternoon so we headed off to make the most of it.

Genghis Khan is a great little cave. It is not much more than a chamber and really doesn't take very long to explore except for the wealth of formation. We spent over an hour just sitting at various places looking at the aragonite crystals, helictites and stals of all kinds. This was a most pleasant, easy trip. Inside the entrance there were some great specimens of Tasmanian Cave Spiders. We left them to their home and returned to the cars for another picnic lunch replete with coffee brewed on a fuel stove.

After lunch we returned the keys to National Parks and then moved around to Wet Caves where there was one person camped and another group, Army reservists in Honeycomb Cave. We had a short look in Wet Cave which everyone agreed was up there with the other three caves despite its not requiring a permit. It was starting to spit with rain as we exited the cave and got changed. It seemed we'd just timed everything to perfection. After this it was the not so long drive back to Hobart into the teeth of what turned out to be a rather wimpy front.

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The Chairman Track-Track Work: 29/4/2001

Jeff Butt

Party: Dave Rasch, Jeff Butt.

We have been thinking about what project to start after Splash Pot is completed. Several things come to mind, including The Chairman, Victory 75, Fifteen Seconds Pot etc. As a first step it would be good to have some good access, and so we thought that a day of track-work would be a day well spent. Also, since the autumnal weather has been so fantastic of late, this seemed like a pleasant way to spend the day.

It was hard to stop at the Threefortyone carpark, the Orana wanted to continue up to "Jocks Rock", where it has spent many days basking in the sun whilst we grovel in the dark.

The first part of the track was heavily overgrown and there was scarcely a tape to be seen. The trusty bow-saw got a good workout, as well as the 'fern pulling gloves'. It took us several hours to make it to the rain-forest; from that point on the track was in much better condition. We have re-taped the track with bright pink tape and also took the opportunity to take the GPS for a stroll.

You'll be happy to know that the "World's Slipperiest Log" is still living up to its name, and the "World's Largest Log" has not diminished in size.

We worked to the JF341 turnoff, and I headed down to JF341 for a GPS fix. We then headed out to the Chairman. The track is well taped in this region, but is very indirect with lots of altitude lost and then regained. We may re-route this track to make it go more directly to the Chairman, but that's a job for the next trip.

The trip home was a breeze, we had a wonderful highway to follow. Future caving in the area should be somewhat easier for the next couple of years. The next time you use this track, we hope you will give us a nod for a job done well.



STC WaReHoUsE SaLeS

Publications

- "Caving Safety 1 Manual", 92 pages, covers Planning, Safety, Maps, Gear, Rigging, Emergencies etc. \$20.00
- Back Issues of Southern Caver, Speleo-Spiel. There are various issues available. Please contact the Librarian, Greg Middleton (gregmid@one.net.au) with your requirements. ~\$1 each

Gear

- CAVE PACKS, 25 litre volume, made from Heavy duty yellow PVC material, double thickness material at wear points, strong seams, drain holes, large diameter eyelet's, adjustable straps. Good Value. \$55.00 each
- Aluminium Bars for Rappel Racks. \$5.00 each
- 5 cm (2") plastic Tri-glide buckles, ideal for battery belts, cave packs etc.) \$0.80 each
- BATA full-length Gumboots, Size 9, Green with Orange Sole, and steel toecaps. **LAST PAIR >> \$25.00**

Tape

- Edelrid 25 mm tubular tape. Ideal for rigging, chest harnesses etc. (White) \$2.00 per m
- 5 cm (2") flat tape (ideal for harnesses, rigging, gear bags, belts etc.) (Blue) \$1.50 per m

Safety

- Rivory 10 mm dynamic rope (for cows tails, safety loop) **NEW STOCK >>** \$4.00 per m, e.g. Cowstail \$11
- Space Blankets (don't be caught underground without one!) \$4.00 each
- Miracle Body Heat Packs (20 hours of portable heat, 50 gm sachets, carry a couple) **NEW ITEM >>** \$2.00 each

Lighting

- Yuasa Gel-cells, 6 Volt, 7 Amp-Hour \$24.00 each
- Metal Lamp Brackets, complete with fixing rivets and cable keeper \$7.50 each
- Plastic Lamp Brackets, used but in good condition. comes with fixing screws \$2.00 each
- Alkaline 4.5 Volt 'flat-pack' batteries (for Petzl Zoom's etc.) **SPECIAL >>> \$7.00 each**
- Eveready 6 Volt, 0.5 Amp Flange Mount Bulbs #1417 (for HIGH Beam) \$2.00 each
- Tandy 6 Volt, 0.3 Amp Screw Base Bulbs #50 (for LOW Bean), blister packs of 2 \$2.00 each
- Jets (21 litres/hr) for Petzl kaboom (just a couple left) \$5.00 each

Tow Ropes/trailer tie downs/yacht mooring lines etc.

- RETIRED CAVING ROPE, no longer safe enough to use for caving purposes, but more than adequate for many other purposes. Available in various lengths. \$1.00 per m, less for the stiffer stuff

If you need any of the above please contact Jeff Butt on (03) 62 238620 (H), or jeffbutt@netspace.net.au, or write to us: SOUTHERN TASMANIAN CAVERNEERS, P.O. BOX 416, SANDY BAY 7006.

*If you've got something to flog
(Caving related) then don't forget that the Spiel might be one way to sell it. (Try the List Server too!)
It cost's members nothing to have a go, so why not!*