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Front & Back Covers.
Jeff Butt having some fun in
Splash Pot. Front Cover-
Coming, Back Cover-Going.
Photos by Dave Rasch.



The Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated
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The views expressed in the
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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

Well it's now September and you have probably noticed that there's been no Speleo-Spiel since I produced #324 some four months ago. In the absence of an effective Editor I've agreed to knock this overdue issue out to get us back on track. Whilst this issue might be a bit thinner than usual, it should be noted that the next one isn't far away!

It would however be great to have some new blood come forward to take over the Editors job....it's just not very healthy for the club if the same old person does the job over and over again. So, please have a think about it. Don't be put off by the work involved; once you are over the learning curve you can knock out a Spiel such as this in about four hours!

By the way, many thanks for all the support and good wishes during my recent period of hospitalisation and recovery. A special thank-you to all those that turned up at the Clutha Place working bee and did all those jobs that Sarah wanted done, but I'd never got around to!



I'm pleased to say, that at the time of writing (early Sept.) I'm back into the caving again (*you can take the photo above as proof; Heading in to Midnight Hole (25/8), photo by Arthur Clarke*), which makes my spirit soar. I won't be up to a Splash Pot trip for a while though (a bit older and wiser you may say, NO, I've just lost a bit of fitness and have suffered a bit of collateral damage via the Surgeon's knife...but I'll get there soon enough!).

Jeff Butt (Acting Editor)

Club Matters

ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday November 7th, 2001 at the Gear Store (22 Clutha Place, South Hobart), commencing at 7:00 p.m. Drinks and Food provided.

Please come along and support your club.

Welcome to New Members:

Gavin Brett and David Chiam from Victoria, who were accepted as full members at the July meeting. David and Gavin are very keen and are making good use of the cheap airfares to Tassie; these airfares probably make our caves more accessible to them than those at Buchan!

So, what about CAVEX 2001 you may ask??

CAVEX 2001 was planned to occur on the weekend of May 5/6, but late on May 4 the Police informed us that they had a Search on and so CAVEX would have to be postponed. Apologies to all who were 'put out' by the short notice, but sometimes things just happen.

At this stage Police Search and Rescue advise that it is unlikely they will be able to reschedule a CAVEX this year, but they are keen to hold a larger state-wide exercise early in 2002.

HOWEVER, I think that it would be **good for all members of STC to have some RESCUE type practise this year.** To this end, later on in the year (pencil the **evening of Wednesday October 24th** into your diary and see the next Spiel for full details) I am proposing a Hobart based (to get as many members along as possible) evening/darkness (to simulate caving) exercise/workshop at a local venue (probably Fruehauf Quarry).

A NEW GATE IN THE JUNE- FLORENTINE.

June Quarry Road has been gated by Norske Skog (the new owners of the Boyer Paper Mill, and presumably the owners of the pine plantations up the June Quarry Road??) You can currently bypass the gate via the June Road, but the bypass is getting worse & will become 4WD only soon. Apparently Norske Skog are intending to close this soon, too.

But, fortunately Norske Skog have agreed to issue STC with a key for \$100 deposit. In return STC has been asked to promise that no-one will damage any logging equipment. **It would be nice if we could get them to promise that they wont damage any caves!!** The key will be kept at Gear Store, just like the ANM key of old.....except that if you lose it, you pay!

News from the Gear Store:

We now have a new lamp charger to replace the ~25 year old unreliable unit. The new charger will result in greater longevity of the gel-cell batteries we are using in the club lamps.

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 & Activities: *I trust you have been keep an eye on the STC list-server for trips and other activities....as they have been happening. Any that were in this overdue Speleo Spiel will have already happened!* **Ed.**

Mystery Creek Cave (Midnight Hole)-April 4, 2001.

Janine McKinnon

Party: Ric Tunney, Steve Phipps, Anna Greenham, Felicity Hargreaves, Janine McKinnon, (Visitors) Chris and Carolyn Rogers, Sonia Alderton, a friend of the Rogers!)

Working on the presumption that a trip report is better late than never, I've finally got around to writing this one. This trip was originally intended as a private trip to take a couple of new colleagues at work on an easy trip to show them a cave. Then we thought we should turn it into a club trip too for any interested new/prospective members. Steve hadn't been there so he booked on. At this point Ric had the bright idea that Steve and I could do Midnight, to make it more interesting for Steve and to give our "tourists" something to look at as we came down the last pitch. I thought this was a great idea, and amazingly generous of Ric as he'd get the less interesting option of taking MY work colleagues just in and out of Mystery Creek (he does spoil me!). We gained two more club prospectives who could abseil, and professed to be happy with a 50 m pitch, for the trip by starting time. We all rendezvoused at Dover and were at the car park at 10:30. We walked in to the track junction for the climb up to Midnight Hole together, and after nibbles and chatter the two parties went their separate ways with plans to see each other at the Matchbox Squeeze. This was our first mistake. Even with the side trips down to the waterfall and along the stream canyon and looking at glow-worms, Mystery Creek Cave is not that big. With only two of us going down Midnight we had a chance of meeting the others, but four was going to slow our descent time significantly. We didn't really allow for this. Anyway, after 15 minutes up the hill, and a similar time organising ourselves and the rope, I started down the first pitch at 12:00 p.m. Felicity and Anna followed with Steve acting as anchor man at the back (checking the girls' rigs before their descent). We continued in this order for the entire trip. Our progress was smooth, efficient and pretty quick to the top of the final pitch, which we reached in 1 - 1&1/2 hours (I can't remember exact times). The other party below was nowhere in hearing. The final pitch took a while to rig as a safety/backup line had been put in since I last did the trip. This involved a D crab through the

eyebolt and a rope tied back to a large boulder back along the rift. We could not therefore use the "knot on the eyebolt" technique of doubled rope abseiling we'd used for the rest of the cave. There was a hanger on the left hand wall that we could use for this method but I was not willing to use it as I knew nothing of its age or reliability and it looked pretty rusty and "dodgy" to me. A failure of this hanger would have been fatal, as the doubled rope would then pull straight through the D crab. [You can use a "knot on the eyebolt" approach if you use a chunky 'stopper' knot (e.g. a half a double fisherman's knot in a bight of rope) and put a krab through the loop in the end of the knot and onto the rope you are abseiling on; the chunky knot shouldn't pull through the krab, but if it does the other karabiner ensures there is no further slippage. Ed.] organised a pull through method that we considered safe and workable and did the pitch.

Still no sign of the other group. We figured maybe they hadn't made it through the squeeze. I began to feel guilty. The rope started to pull down OK, but after about 10 feet it stopped. We tried every variation on heaving that we could think of for 20 minutes with no effect. It was REALLY stuck. Still no sign of the others. I'm getting into more serious guilt mode. MY work mates abandoned to my husband's care. We finally abandoned our attempts and started out through matchbox squeeze. We ran into Ric on the high level traverse. They'd finished their trip (after getting through Matchbox Squeeze - but about 45 minutes before we got to the top of the last pitch), gone out, walked up the hill to see where we'd gone in, and headed off home. Ric had just been coming back into the cave to find us. Now I felt SUPER guilty. (They told me on Monday that they'd had a great day-which eased my conscience a bit). We'd had a very enjoyable trip and left ourselves an exercise for the near future.

PS. We learnt later that another party had got the bottom pitch rope caught up too only a few weeks before so we decided that some re-rigging was need on our recovery trip.

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The Chairman Track-Track Work: 6th May, 2001.

Jeff Butt

Party: Dave Rasch, Jol Desmarchelier, Tim Rudman, Sarah Boyle, Jeff Butt.

This was a follow up to our Track Work of 29/4/2001 (see Speleo Spiel 324, p16). We easily cruised along the track, grabbing GPS fixes of cave entrances and doing some track tidying as we went. Once beyond the Threefortyone and Peanut Brittle turnoff's the main work for the day started. The existing track (old bridal track) contours for a while, then heads straight down the hill, contours again and then heads straight back up the hill; there is a bit of unnecessary upping and downing with this route, so from the point where the track heads downhill, we made a new, more direct track direct to the Chairman. The old track still exists, and is reasonably well taped.

After the lunching at the Chairman, we headed off to relocate and re-locate Victory 75 and re-tape the track. However, we got the wrong track and instead found

ourselves at JF112. We also located JF121 and JF137 and GPS'd those whilst there.

The main track is well taped and barrels off into the distance; perhaps eventually joining John Bull Road??? Daylight was fading fast however, faster for Sarah who only had prescription sun-glasses and so we decided to head on home, leaving locating Victory 75 for the next trip.

On the way back some 'excessive' track-work happened; the "Worlds Slipperiest Log" is no longer slippery, it is equipped with axed out foot holds. Fortunately Jol's seemingly boundless energy with the axe wasn't enough to make any impact upon the "Worlds Largest Log", which remains intact and is a noteworthy obstacle.

Anyway, it was a relaxing and productive day in the bush; and as always many hands make light work and many tongues make for lots of talk.

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Beginners Caving trip-Mystery Creek Cave-Saturday 12 May, 2001.

Tim Anderson

Party: Tim Anderson and the Jane Franklin Crew: Sen Mei Ch'ng, Kenny Lin, Christopher Merry, Ryan Ruddick, Mick Howard.

Getting students to meet at 8:30 a.m. on a Saturday is a particular type of torture, best meted out sparingly. We did get away on time though and planned a pleasant day meandering around Mystery Creek Cave, checking out the waterfall and the glow-worms.

Arriving in the College bus at 10:30 a.m., a brisk walk saw us in the cave at 10:45 a.m. The new caver's were suitably impressed with the first squeeze, an avoidable but fun section 150 m inside. That done we progressed to see the waterfall. Not much water coming down, so I decided that we would see where the streamway led, having never gone very far in that direction before. After

a short waterfall section, we emerged into a cavern that appeared to be a dead end. The stream goes underground at this stage but it was possible to ascend a tight squeeze about 3 m and pop out into the section near the end of the aerial walkway which leads to the Laundry Chute. Quite a good way to see bits of the cave, and a bit of a surprise to me since I was ignorant enough to think that I had been just about everywhere in Mystery Creek Cave in search of the elusive connection with Exit Cave.

That done we went to play at the mudslides and then caved out slowly along the streamway. Back home at 4:30 p.m.: quick and lovely day out and a good way to test the enjoyment of the others before trying anything more difficult with them.

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Victory 75 (JF110)-a not often visited cave-13th May, 2001.

Jeff Butt

Party: Dave Rasch, Andras Galambos, Jeff Butt.

For me, this was to be my last trip prior to some major surgery (as per the Editorial in Speleo Spiel 324), and so I was keen to get underground before my 3 month recovery period commenced. As it turned out, this was indeed a very suitable trip; with only pleasant memories resulting.

Anyway, to the nitty gritty: the GPS data shows that the entrance of Victory 75 is about 385 m south-east of the entrance to the Chairman (JF99). So, one can conjecture that the bottom of Victory 75, (which has a drafting squeeze) is not that far from downstream Chairman. We thought that this was a good enough reason to visit Victory 75. Assisted by our recent track-work and finding every cave in the area, but not Victory 75, we knew where it wasn't and thus proceeded to find the entrance to Victory 75 without any drama by simply following a track to where we'd never been! Simple isn't it.

We cruised on down the cave, armed with a plethora of small ropes and one big one. The 'rigging' information we had indicated many short pitches before a final big pitch, i.e. the ASF Karst Index said pitches of 2, 11, 3, 8, 2, 3, 3, 2, 7 and 58 m. In reality many of these small pitches were just steps down a steeply inclined slope, so longer ropes would have been fine. The scarcity of good rigging anchors meant that all the short ropes were tied back to each other anyway, with a selection of adequate intermediate anchors attaching them to the rock. We made it down to the final main pitch with our long rope, plus a couple of short 'spares'.

At the pitch-head we found a rusted Loxin casing (without eyebolt) and an 8 mm spit (in good condition). A backup anchor led the rope to the spit, and a rebelay from some giant formation on the lip gave a good free-hang down the top two-thirds of the pitch. At this point we got off the rope and re-rigged the final part of the pitch as a separate

pitch. There is meant to be another Loxin somewhere down here, but we didn't locate it; it was probably just a casing anyway.

Down the bottom was a small amount of passage, with lots of gravel deposits. We found the squeeze which might be the possible continuation and it was slightly draughting....but it was very small. The two squeeze fiends, Andras and Dave spent a considerable amount of time digging and scratching at the squeeze to make progress. I offered support by having a snooze at the entrance to the squeeze. After Dave was nearly permanently stuck in the squeeze, Andras decided to get serious and so stripped down to his thermals and discarded his helmet and light. With a maglite and much grunting and groaning he managed to get though to another squeeze. At this point there was a broken stalagmite, so it appears that someone (they must have been very thin!!) had made it to this point before. [Upon doing some research, I believe a caver by the name of Mike March disrobed to get through this squeeze in ~1976.] Once through this squeeze Andras informed us that there were a couple of ways on, but both pinched out and so it is a no-goer, despite the breeze. Digging is probably the only way any progress will be made. Just how close this point is to downstream Chairman will only be revealed by putting the survey data together...perhaps another survey project is born??

All up Victory 75 was an extremely pleasant, clean, dry and reasonably straightforward cave, giving excellent rigging practise (in some ways similar to Satan's Lair, but the walk is a hell of a lot nicer!) and well worth putting on the small list of 'pleasant JF caves'. The walk to it takes about an hour, but with the recent track-work and Dave's reflectorised markers (visible over 100 m away), this too is quite pleasant, even in the dark.

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*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.*

Midnight Hole Rope Recovery-19 May 2001.

Ric Tunney

Party: Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

A fortnight earlier, Janine had left the ropes on the bottom pitch of Midnight Hole as they had caught when being hauled down. As another activity fell through we made a late decision to drive down and collect the rope.

We arrived at the car park at 10:30 a.m. and had a leisurely morning tea. Then we set out for the cave entrance. We needed to take sufficient gear to do the whole cave, just in case the ropes we were rescuing had already been rescued, or had been damaged. So we each carried a rope long enough for the bottom pitch. Actually, both ropes were over-length as we couldn't get ropes just the right size.

We reached the cave entrance at midday. Janine led the way down the pitches and we reached the top of the last pitch without any trouble. The hung-up rope had been caught by its knot in a wear-groove about 2 m down the pitch. I spent a bit of time rearranging the belay point. I attached a short length of chain to the eyebolt with a maillon on its free end. I tied the tie-back to the chain near the maillon. [see the picture opposite, taken by Arthur Clarke on 25/8/01. By the way, STC now has approval from Parks and Wildlife to rebolt Midnight Hole using glue-in P-hangers, this will happen later this year, with each pitch being equipped with 2 well placed P-hangers. This should enhance safety and reduce rope retrieval problems. Ed.]



The adjusted rigging at the head of pitch 6.

At the bottom of the pitch we had four ropes totalling around 230 m to get out of the cave. First we tied them end-to-end and hauled them through the Matchbox Squeeze. We stuffed three into our rope packs and coiled the longest. I slung this across my body. Unfortunately, this was a bit long and threatened to trip me when I bent over. From the squeeze, we headed out via the high route, dragging and passing packs where necessary.

We returned to the car four hours after leaving it.

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Gormenghast- June 1st, 2001.

Janine McKinnon

Party: Steve Phipps, Heather Nichols, Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

The aim of this trip was twofold.

1. To run a moderately easy, non-vertical trip for new and prospective members to build some skills and try some caving harder than mystery creek and
2. To try and help us middle-aged, born-again cavers (that's Ric and me, I don't want to offend Steve by having anyone think we include him in that category!) to relearn some skills and get our bodies back into caving shape!

As it was we only got one new member on the trip, which I thought was a shame really. This is a great trip for beginning (but not totally virginal!) cavers to get experience and skills. As there aren't that many caves (or trips - we are a club where most of our active members are largely vertical cavers) offering that potential in Southern Tasmania, it was a missed opportunity for our other new members. (There's an article in here about the difficulty of building up skills from beginner level in Southern Tasmania, but that's for another time).

The enthusiasm of Heather made up for any lack of numbers on the trip though. She even sounded enthusiastic at the end! We did a detour to look at the

entrance to Growling Swallet on the way, and after a bit more scenic wandering were ready to go underground at midday.

Gormenghast is a tight, splashy and steeply dipping streamway, which involves lots of twisting, turning, short climbs and scrambles. Not difficult, but a reasonable workout. We took an hour to the bottom and only used one aid - a ladder on a short pitch. I don't remember this pitch on my last trip about three years ago, so I'm pretty sure there is a bypass to it. But we were carrying the gear and it didn't look like we'd need to use any of it due to the innate skills of our prospective member, so we decided to use it rather than look around for the alternate route.

We spent something like two hours at the bottom looking at the "pretties" and taking our time enjoying the location. They are well worth the visit and conveniently "protected" by the nature of the cave and the crawl/squeeze before you reach the first of the formations.

The trip back out also took a bit under an hour and was uneventful but quite enjoyable mainly due to the excellent camaraderie of the party. A great little trip to remind one that all caves are not big passage and spectacular pitches.

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JF341, rigging trip and Surface wanderings-Saturday, June 16, 2001.

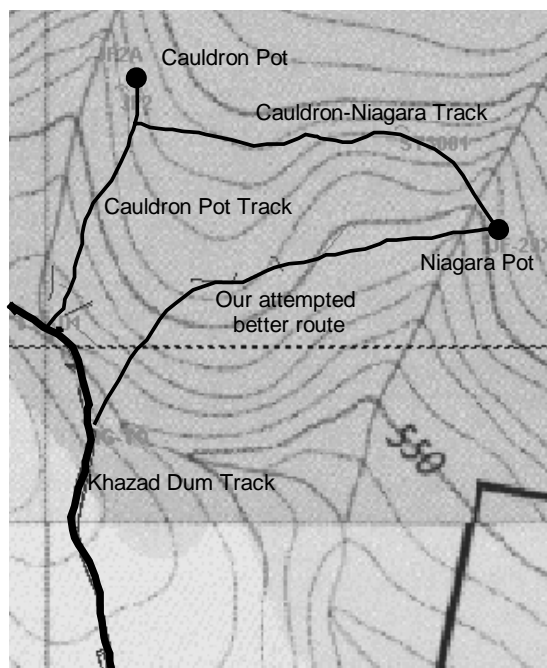
Dave Rasch

Party: Jol Desmarchelier, Dave Rasch.

During the forthcoming Winter Extravaganza weekend, amongst other things some trips were planned to Three-forty-one (JF341). In Three-forty-one, at the top of the 39 m pitch, a single rusting spit doesn't provide much security and so after some consultation we decided to install a second spit there, as well as rig the cave for the following weekend. Since this wouldn't take us that long, we also planned to investigate finding a better way to Niagara Pot as the existing route (via Cauldron Pot) from the Khazad Dum track is longer and more arduous than necessary.

Anyway, first port of call was Three-forty-one. Jol and I headed down this familiar cave and the rigging proceeded very smoothly, with perfect judgement of rope lengths. At the 39 m pitch (which requires ~60 m of rope, as the first part of the ramp is not included in the length of the pitch), I found a some good rock into which to place a second spit. The new spit is located about 40 cm below the old spit, in a slightly concave hollow. A Y-belay from both spits (as per the diagram below) gives a nice free hang and provides extra security for this pitch. I guess ideally we would have installed a longer lived bolt, such as a glue-in P-hanger. But since the STC bolting program is currently not yet happening, we've stuck to using the existing technology. In the future, both spits can be removed and the existing holes redrilled to take P-hangers.

With the cave rigged, we then headed out to play on the surface with the GPS. This ended up being a bit of



a fiasco. Our first problem was that there wasn't a Waypoint for Niagara Pot (JF29) in the GPS, so I scaled an estimate from the map in the report on the Junee Area prepared by Rolan Eberhard for Forestry. We then spent time wandering along the KD track to find the point of closest approach. See the accompanying map, the distance between the point of closest approach is ~ 500 m. So with all this sussed out, we headed off into the mulga, taping our route as we went. As it transpired, we didn't reach Niagara this time, but have done some good groundwork for the future.

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Mid-Winters Caving Extravaganza-Saturday/Sunday June 23/24, 2001.

Liz Canning & Hugh Fitzgerald (plus some input from others)

The STC Midwinter extravaganza at Maydena saw a good number of folk turn up for various parts of the festivities; including Caving on both days, Track-Work/Surface play on Sunday and of course the main event: Dinner at Cockatoo Cafe, Tyenna Valley Lodge on Saturday night. People involved included: Gavin Brett, Liz Canning, David Chiam, Hugh Fitzgerald, Felicity Hargreaves, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney, David Rasch, Steve Phipps, Jol Desmarchelier, Chris Sharples, Joe Farrell, Steve Bunton, Trevor Wailes, Stuart Nicholas, Jeff Butt, Sarah Boyle, Daryl and Jane Butt.

To get things underway, the Saturday began with two trips underground. One went into ThreeFortyOne and the other was a short through trip into Sesame.

Saturday-Underground: A Sesame II (JF211) - Sesame I (JF210) through trip.

Party: Gavin Brett, Liz Canning, David Chiam, Hugh Fitzgerald, Felicity Hargreaves, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney.

The party of seven mentioned above found the carpark on Chrisps Road, and made themselves ready for the day's caving. Our two Victorian companions sported brand new one piece PVC trog suits, bought from their local thrift store. They looked waterproof - if little else.

The walk up through the forest proved too much for these new suits - after all, they were designed for caving, not scrub bashing. Both David and Gavin had shredded their new get-up by the time they reached the entrance. Here the assembled crew found Hugh already waiting for them. He had followed a track up the hill and avoided most of the clambering over fallen logs.

The pitches were quickly rigged and the seven made it down to Sesame Street, where some went to look at the next pitch head. At this level the party split, with Janine, David, and Gavin derigging the way in, and the rest of us

completing the through trip by emerging out of Sesame I. The others met us at the vertical squeeze just inside the entrance, and some were silly enough to try out the squeeze for fun.

Saturday-Underground: Three-Forty-One (JF341).

Party: David Rasch, Jol Desmarchelier, Chris Sharples, Joe Farrell, Steve Phipps.

According to reports, David gave everyone the 'grand-tour' of the "Into the Dinosaur" section of the cave; proceeding from the "foot" to the "jaw" and all the wiggly bits in between. There are a few photographs from this trip on this page.

Saturday evening



The Dinosaur's Foot;

wine. As this ran dry, Trevor Wailes came to the rescue with gallons of Guinness in hand - which he promptly consumed himself!

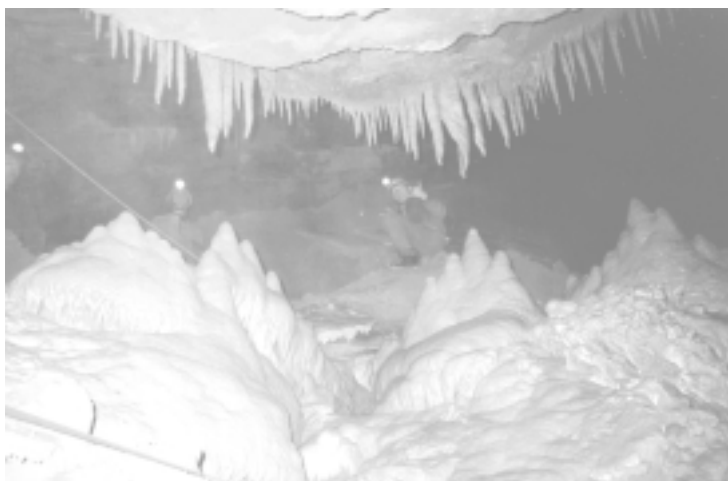
The 341 party (David Rasch, Jol Desmarchelier, Chris Sharples, Joe Farrell, and Steve Phipps) finally showed (after drinks were off, unfortunately). They all looked starved and parched - but dinner was ready!

It almost goes without saying that dinner was as wonderful as ever (thanks to the efforts of Tim and Wendy in the kitchen!) and the 14 or so diners left for bed well sated.

Sunday-Track Work and Walking in the Rain.

Sunday morning saw Stuart Nicholas and Stephen Bunton arrive to carve into some logs which were blocking the Growling Track. Various of the other extravaganza revellers were intending to prune tracks or follow the GPS through the forest.

Stuart and Steve got waylaid early on in the piece (someone retorted that "Stu had done a 'Buttsy'", i.e. spun out on one of the wooden Bridges on the Florentine Road, doing a bit of carving of metal in the process). At this spectator event others offered advice on how to extricate oneself from such a predicament. With some assistance the car was returned to the road and the chainsaw team was once again off for the Eight Road.



Looking out from inside the Dinosaur's Jaw; photo by Dave Rasch.

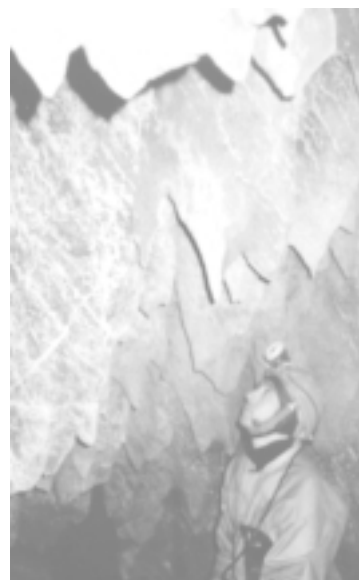
After their arduous labours, the Sesame party managed to get back to Tyenna Valley Lodge four hours before dinner, so snacked on fine cheeses, wines, ales, and gourmet dips, while awaiting the other caving party. Jeff Butt, Sarah Boyle, Daryl and Jane Butt (Jeff's brother and sister-in-law from the mainland) showed up as spirits were flagging, and lifted them greatly with a great vat of mulled

On the surface the weather looked threatening; underground was probably the nicest place to be. The Boyle-Butt team had headed up to Growling Swallet for a look; Jeff's recent surgery and Daryl's bung hip dictated an ambling pace, but they got there ok. Growling was as impressive as ever. En-route back to the car they came across Steve and Stuart suddenly trudging up to the large logs over the track in the torrential rain. By this time the weather had deteriorated to squalid, with thunder and lightning providing further atmosphere to the event. As the walkers scampered in a nice dry vehicle, they came across Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon and Steve Phipps shedding water as they pruned the shrubbery along the sides of the Eight River. They also came across Trevor Wailes in a nice dry car, masquerading as a boat; a Mexican stand-off led to a bit of reversing through the puddles to ensure that Trevor could get out in the rain.

Sunday GPS'ing-in the Rain.

Party: David Rasch, Chris Sharples, Jol Desmarchelier.

David, Chris and Jol headed into the shrubbery to complete the work started on a new track to Niagara Pot [see the article on page 6 of this Spiel. Ed.]. Not long after they started so did the rain. They continued on till the torrential rain and thunder caused them some concern. At this stage they decided to turn for home; the crashing down of a large tree near where they had been added some impetus to their exit to safer places. The team made it about 2/3 rd of the way to Niagara, so it's a case of 'to be continued'!



Joe Farrell looking at solution pendants; photo by Dave Rasch.

Sunday-Underground: Three-Forty-One (JF341).

Party: Gavin Brett, Liz Canning, David Chiam, Hugh Fitzgerald.

To help David and Gavin get the most out of their Tassie Caving weekend, our group headed off to Three-forty-one. David and Gavin purloined some sturdier trog-suits for this event. At the new bolt there was some jiggling of the rigging to allow an easier cross-over, all were soon down the 40 metre pitch. There we tore off to poke about in the cave, particularly to see the Dinosaur's Foot, and find our way back to places where Liz and Hugh had been to when guided by David Rasch on a previous trip.

Outside the day was pouring wet, and the track cutters had soaked up much rain. We in the cave faced a wet ascent up the 40 m pitch, prompting some playing with rigging at the bottom of the pitch to keep the rope out of the worst of the rain.

We emerged after seven hours as darkness descended. The walk back to the main track was a little tricky in the dark, but recent track work made this main route to and from the Chairman easy to follow.

The Winter Extravaganza was the usual good fun, and everyone went home tired and happy.



Slaughterhouse Pot - Growling Swallet-14 July 2001.

Steve Phipps

Party: Janine McKinnon, Steve Phipps, Ric Tunney

Our intended trip was to visit JF341, have a good look around and then to de-rig it on the way out.

Unfortunately, someone had other plans. We were greeted at the start of the Junee Quarry Rd by a brand-new gate. It was a shiny, freshly-painted, white gate. And it was locked.

After a few choice comments about those nice Forestry people, we considered our options. (It later transpired that Norske Skog had installed the gate - but more about that elsewhere in this Spiel.) I'd now been caving in Tasmania for more than a year, but had managed to avoid the clutches of Growling Swallet. It was about time

that I did something about this and so we settled on a Slaughterhouse-Growling through trip.

The trip went smoothly and efficiently. Thanks to my worn descender, I had little trouble descending the ropes in Slaughterhouse Pot. Reaching Growling, we explored downstream as far as Herpes III, where we all enjoyed a good wallow in the liquid filth. Feeling too slippery to attempt the ladder beyond, we turned round and headed out. The exit was highly enjoyable, as we admired the passage and negotiated the various obstacles in the streamway. All good, clean, splashy fun - and great for washing the gloop off our caving gear!

This is a classic through trip, with a bit of everything. Great caving fun!



Pendant Pot: Almost A Fiasco-22 July 2001.

Steve Phipps

Party: Steve Bunton, Joseph Farrell, Janine McKinnon, Steve Phipps, Ric Tunney

The previous weekend, three of us had enjoyed an aborted trip to JF341, having failed to make it any further than the start of the Junee Quarry Rd. An expanded party of five now hoped to have a more successful visit to Pendant Pot. If only we'd known...

After rendezvousing at Tyenna Valley Lodge, we were soon at the end of the Eight Rd and, after an efficient change and a lovely walk through the rainforest, we found ourselves at the impressive entrance. Heading up the climb in the entrance chamber - thanks to the line that's been left in place - everything was still going according to plan.

But, alas, something was bound to go wrong before too long. Reaching the first pitch, one member of the party found that he simply couldn't fit through the vertical squeeze leading to the top of the pitch. After numerous attempts, including a brave effort at widening the squeeze with a rock, he decided to head out and to spend the day doing some surface work instead. A second party member, already losing the motivation to continue, decided to join him.

The three remaining members carried on, already aware that we now stood little chance of reaching the bottom of the cave. We wanted to be back at the cars by dusk, as we didn't want to leave the others waiting for us.

Descending Penthouse Pitch into a fine chamber, we soon found the way on and negotiated our way carefully down to Pandemonium Rift. Rigging a line - which we were very glad of when the rift widened out lower down - we descended.

Pel Mel Pitch follows almost immediately afterwards. We looked for suitable belay points from which to rig our 9 mm rope, but failed to find any that we were happy with. The cave doesn't seem to have been bolted since the days when ladders were used (or have rigging standards changed over the years?) and probably needs re-bolting for 9 mm rope.

By now, time had advanced to the point where we would have had to have turned round at the bottom of the pitch anyway, so we decided to have our lunches and head out. Exploring the large chamber at the base of Penthouse Pitch, Joseph discovered an inlet that doesn't appear on the survey. We pushed it for some distance up numerous climbs, but it soon ended in a little grotto.

We didn't get anywhere near the bottom of the cave in the end, but we all had a good day. Those of us that descended the cave know the upper half of it now and will be much quicker next time. We'd like to go back soon and have another go - but we'll take a bolt kit with us next time. *[A selection of nuts/chocks/tapes allow this cave to be rigged perfectly satisfactorily without installing additional bolts. Ed.]*



Nullarbor 2000 (Part 1). It's hot on top but cool down below!!

Jol Desmarchelier

Party: Jol Desmarchelier (STC), Pauline Treble (NUCC, trip facilitator); Cynthia Benjamin (NUCC), Lucas Tan (NUCC), Colin Vine (NUCC), Mark Bown, Sherry Mayo (+ Katherine the 'feral-filth-monster-hell-child' and baby).

In early December I flew to Canberra to join the National University Caving Club (NUCC) 2000 Nullarbor expedition. I had accepted an invitation to participate in early November and anxiously awaited details on the trip. The plan was for two car loads of virgin Nullarbor cavers to be guided by one veteran Nullarbor caver. Due to circumstances beyond anyone's control the Nullarbor veteran had to pull both car and body out of the expedition thus leaving the virgins to fend for themselves (see Nullarbor Handy Hint #1). This was not seen as an insurmountable problem as many Nullarbor veterans provided their own 'maps' and the NUCC GPS was also at hand. With less than one week to go I was told to bring only what was absolutely essential as there were only 4 other people going and space was limited in the car, a 2WD Camry station wagon. The car was towing a standard box trailer with a canvas cover and frame, all borrowed from friendly NUCC people and associates, full (!) of caving gear and containers for food and water. Now that I think about it, I guess taking a double air-bed was a bit excessive!

Day 1: Canberra to Mildura (~ 800 km).

Nothing much happened except that I got up at some extraordinarily early hour of the morning. Only two of us managed to stay awake for the entire day and enjoy the passing scenery. The highlight of the trip was crossing the mighty Murray River on an old car punt.

Day 2: Mildura to Port Augusta.

Went shopping and bought A LOT of food and somehow came in under budget. Also met some travellers from Holland and Ireland driving a van showing signs of a close call with a road train a few days before. Apparently they were turning right into a roadhouse and did not notice the big, bad road-train behind them. The driver had nowhere to go and took the only option available to him, overtake them! Of course the truck had a close and intimate relationship with the right hand side of the van and eventually stopped some 500 metres up the road. The side of the van was rather black (truck tyre rub!!) and bruised from the encounter, the bull bar bent forward at approximately 45°. All in the van were lucky to escape death! (see Nullarbor Handy Hint #2)

Day 3: Port Augusta to Ceduna.

Managed to leave Port 'Augutta' reasonably early although there was some procrastination occurring in the supermarket over lolly selection! A largely uneventful drive with the scenery consisting of open woody grassland. Mmmmmmmmm ... it gets pretty hot on the road in early December! Although the car had air-conditioning it was not used due to the excessive price of petrol, instead we used a spray bottle filled with water and 'wet' ourselves down when required.

Day 4: Ceduna to Bush Camp on Old Eyre Highway.

Drove down a side road to the Head of the Great Australian Bight and took the obligatory gratuitous scenery shots of the ocean crashing against the massive limestone cliffs. I wonder how many thousands of people over the years have done exactly the same thing? Still a

very impressive sight and they should probably think about moving the car park in a few years.

We went looking for Warbla Cave which is apparently located a few hundred metres off the Old Eyre Highway, about 30 km north of the sealed highway. Much to everyone's surprise we did not find Warbla Cave despite having some very 'clear' maps and directions. The old, unsealed highway was in surprisingly good condition but our cave land-mark, a water tower, had either succumbed to nature or the Speleo/Parks Police had removed any trace of it.

This was the last opportunity to consume fresh fruit and vegetables before crossing the South Australia/Western Australia border (see Nullarbor Handy Hint #3). The refried bean and vegetable burritos went down a treat, YUMMMMMMMMM!! Evening entertainment was provided by articles read aloud from a dodgy mens 'health' magazine (FH magazine), it was found by Colin at one of the lookouts we stopped at. Although its educational value was nil some would say that the article on male masturbation was very informative, however, we did learn a new appreciation for women's swimsuits!

Day 5: Old Eyre Highway to Nurina Cave Camp.

The entire party, albeit gradually, woke up to another beautiful sunny day ... another long, HOT road trip! We drove along the Old Eyre Highway and onto the new highway entering the SA/WA border inspection area some 5 minutes later. The FH magazine was getting a good deal of attention! This attention was unwavering despite the efforts of the Fruit Fly Inspector to divert the readers attention with threats of a thorough cavity search! The Inspector checked our eski and believed our story that had we had no fresh fruit or vegetables. If you really want to smuggle fruit and vegies across the border don't leave them in the eski put them somewhere else where they won't think of looking, for example in a bag marked 'Dirty underwear and socks'.

We decided to stay at Nurina Cave camp site as we were told it was a good spot to camp and that the cave was well worth a look. On both accounts this advice was correct, thanks Ian! Nurina Cave is a 150 metre (approx.) horizontal, loop cave with many deep (estimated at around 3 to 8 m), interconnected pools of water which mark the local groundwater level. The path through the cave requires some climbing around and over these pools. This makes for some exciting caving particularly when the hand- and foot-holds consist of limestone sponge-work and blocks of calcite rafts, some of which detach when stressed. Most of the decoration in the cave consists of calcite rafts and gypsum (?) wall coatings. All in all, a very pleasant way to spend a few hours caving and avoiding 'splash down'!

By this stage we were all totally confused by the alterations in time zones as we drove across the continent. Amongst the various members of the party there seemed to be several time zones in operation, a factor that was truly exploited in regards to waking up time. One watch was set to Eastern Standard Time, another set to Adelaide local time, the car clock was set to Perth local time, and the GPS gave us 'Madura' time. It seemed easier to work off the rise and fall of the sun but it was still a shock to the system to look at the clock and

see 5 or 6 am, even worse was that if you asked someone you received several different answers!

Day 6: Nurina Cave Camp to Mullamallang Camp.

We stopped at the Madura Roadhouse for a shower (\$3 per person paid at the Madura Hotel/Caravan Park). Water from the roadhouse/hotel is 40 cents per litre so it is worth smuggling a drum into the shower and filling it even if the water is just for washing up. We also filled up with petrol and ice-creams and headed up the road to find the Mullamallang campsite. Now this is where the story gets a little confusing as it took us a while to find the right right-turnoff off the highway. The turn, as it turns out, is the turn-off to the lookout just outside of the Madura Roadhouse/Motel, however, none of the maps/instructions specifically said this. El stupido Nullarbor virgins! As we approached Kalgoorlie the party decided to turn the car around and see if there were any roads behind the lookout which headed in the northerly direction. Surprisingly, there was quite a network of 'roads'. Through a process of deductive elimination (i.e. we guessed) we headed off on a likely looking track. This is where the POWER of the GPS and satellite navigation came in handy. It told us that the road we were on took us in a north-easterly direction and pretty much where we wanted to go. However, the further we went the more the track direction swung to the east. Some in the party became concerned about our location.

The Madura topo. map was consulted and it was predicted that we would end up at a microwave tower. After 30 minutes driving we ended up at a very weathered microwave tower with lots of warnings about microwave energy, cancer, nuclear weapons, world domination, and not climbing the tower. We didn't have time to abseil the tower, maybe next time, and headed back to the five branch intersection we had encountered earlier. Using the 'mud' and topo. maps, in combination with the GPS, we eventually found several key intersections, gates, and water tanks/boreholes at various points along the way. The 'GOTO' function on the GPS is an excellent feature although Cynthia was reluctant to test its horizontal accuracy at waypoint stops with the car! We finally made it to the campsite and setup camp.

Our itinerary indicated that the Easter Extension in Mullamallang Cave (N 37) was on the agenda. After much preparation and procrastination we left camp at around 3 p.m. and quickly found the entrance to the cave. Not a difficult thing to do as the entrance is only 100 metres or so from the camp site. The plan was to walk to the 1-mile cairn, leaving a drum of water for the long trip which we had planned to do the next day, and also to see the decorations in the Easter Extension.

The entrance to Mullamallang Cave consists of a spectacular and large elliptical (approximately 50 m at long axis) double collapse doline. The way in is marked by a yellow reflector tag but the well worn track is easily followed. Some rock scrambling is required at the entrance to get to the base level of the cave, approximately 100 metres below the surface. The main drag is marked by yellow/white (in/out) reflectors along the entire 14 km of cave. Survey numbers are written on some of the reflectors which makes it really handy for working out where you are if someone asks you 'Are we there yet?'. It appears difficult to get lost in this cave, however, you do occasionally 'lose' the yellow reflectors

but you pick them up fairly quickly, strong lights would help. I'd like to know who dragged the 'Reduce Speed' sign down there because it makes a great starting point and also imparts some good advice for people attempting the longer trip.

The entrance chamber is impressively HUGE and gives some idea on the scale of things in Mullamallang Cave. Most of us had decided to wear shorts and T-shirts rather than donning cotton overalls as the cave temperature is quite high (> 20°C). We began our walk to the Easter Extension in high spirits and passed several key features of the cave, 'Southerly Buster' and 'The Dune'. The 'Southerly Buster' is a 1-1.5 m high constriction in the cave and requires crawling to get through it. There is a distinct 'roaring' sound as you approach it to crawl through plus it's also a really nice place to cool down, there's nothing like natural air conditioning! Beyond the 'Southerly Buster' progress through the cave is hindered by the presence of large quantities of roof material carelessly placed by gravity on the floor of the cave. Alas we didn't have time to chastise the land owners about this but I'd recommend they put in for some NHT funding or set up a 'Work for the Dole' scheme to clean it up. We made it to '1-Mile Cairn', deposited the 20 litre drum of water, and, after a short rest, we blundered our way over to the entrance of the Easter Extension by following the track markers. All in the party read the helpful signs which basically tell you to stay between the 'flags' and that a laser cannon will vaporise any person or object that falls outside the markers in order to protect the delicate 'Coffee and Cream' feature.

Beyond the 'Coffee and Cream' are the 'Salt Cellars' where halite decorations are found in abundance. These also come with a warning to cease breathing and to avoid touching any of the halite decorations due to their fragility. After considerable discussion on how best to hold breath for more than a couple of hours it was decided not to share our breath and to use Gatorade crystals mixed with water. At this stage the helpful track markers disappeared and not-so-helpful rock cairns began to appear in large numbers which, combined with the crude survey we had, made navigation difficult.

One should point out that cotton overalls are a really, really good idea in the tight, sharp, spiky confines of the 'Salt Cellars' because shorts and T-shirts do not make non-scratchy caving easy! After 3 or 4 hours of ferreting around, with no real idea of where we were, the party decided on a retreat manoeuvre. Jol and Cynthia spent some time fiddling with cameras, flashes, and slave flashes, eventually following the others out approximately an hour later. All in the party were impressed with the quality and quantity of the decorations in the Easter Extension. Some even expressed a desire to return at some stage in the future in order to see more of it given that there were several question marks on the ancient survey. Does anybody out there in Speleoland have a decent survey of the Easter Extension that the author could look at?

Stay tuned for Part 2 and also check out HYPERLINK "<http://student.anu.edu.au/Clubs/NUCC/Mainmenu.html>" for the NUCC trip report with some really nice pictures of the trip.

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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
- **Packs of other sizes made to order, just ask.**
- Aluminium Bars for Rappel Racks. \$5.00 each
- BATA full-length Gumboots, Size 9, Green with Orange Sole, and steel toecaps. \$25.00

Tape

- currently out of stock.....Are there any preferences for what we restock with??

Safety

- Rivory 10 mm dynamic rope (for cows tails, safety loop) \$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) \$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.) \$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.

FOR SALE-for any of the following contact Jeff on 62238620, or via jeffbutt@netspace.net.au

QH Cave Blaster light (Really SEE the cave!)

50 (or 20) Watt QH dichroic bulb mounted in a PVC fitting. Wide angle to narrow beam lenses available. Perfect to highlight large chambers or to highlight specific features. Convenient to hold in your hand. Secure switch that will not allow a Chernobyl in your pack! Runs off a 12 Volt sealed lead acid battery (not included)-\$30.

Sealed Lead Acid (Gell cell) Caving Lamp.

Reconditioned Oldham headpiece connected to a new Yuasa 6 Volt/7 Amp. Hr. sealed lead acid (gell cell) in an Oldham battery case. Belt included. Very reliable. A robust and inexpensive light to cave by. Runs for 14

hours at 3W. \$140. (\$10 extra for QH option).

Gell Cell Charger-to suit the above lamp.

Through the headpiece charging; small, robust and portable, runs off the mains or plugs into a car lighter socket. LED's indicate charging status. \$65/\$80 depending on options.

Sewer Pipe Caving Lamp.

Reconditioned Oldham headpiece connected to a 3 D-cell Sewer Pipe battery case, with belt. Run on Nicads (~10+ hr duration) or Alkaline (~20+ hr duration) batteries. If you prefer an even smaller battery case, then a 2 D-cell option is available. Very sturdy and compact light; great for expeditions or international travel (you can get D-cells anywhere). Belt included. \$140. (batteries not included) (\$10 extra for QH option).

*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!*