

February – March 2002

Speleo Spele/329

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### Front Cover:

Khazad-dum last streamway pitch as it used to be rigged in 1980 off a single eyebolt straight down the water. It's now rigged from two p-hangers round the corner, high on the right wall. Steve Bunton is on it during a trip in earlier days. *Photo by Steve Bunton.*

### Back Cover:

The Woodpile at Francistown (Arthur's place) beautifully adorned with wet caving gear. *Photo by Arthur Clarke*

A caver descending the 108m entrance pitch into Mini Martin. *Photo by Steve Bunton.*

**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.



# The Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the

**Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated**

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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## Endisgorywall

Once again there seems to have been a lot of caving happening. This, is good thing. And once again, people have been excellent about submitting trip reports. Thanks.

Trip reports ARE in chronological order this issue due to people being confused and perplexed last time. This issue is also woefully short on pictures so if anyone would like to submit photos with their trip reports in future, please do. JPEG is preferred.

There's a busy couple of months of caving ahead. Check out the forward program! It includes two opportunities to go to Mole Creek, CAVEX and the Winter Solstice Weekend. Hopefully the weather stays as stable as it has been recently.

If anyone could help out with running a University Moles trip to Gormenghast/Growling on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> May please contact me (62253839) Ta.

## Stuff 'n Stuff

### Missing Croll

There is a Croll missing from STC gear store. It is attached to a piece of white webbing with a buckle on it. Please contact Jeff if you know where it is.

### Gear Store Arrangements

Jeff won't be around for 6 weeks from mid May till Early July. During this time the gear store key will be with Mad Phil or Alan Jackson and Geoff Wise. Mad Phil will have it till 4 June then will pass it to Alan and Geoff.

### Mad Phil

Phil Rowsell must leave on pain of extradition on 4 June. However, he is hoping to return and continue his excellent work in cave documenting/discovering/P-hanging/archiving at a later date. STC wish you well Mad Phil, and hope your affairs come together so you can return sooner rather than later.

### CAVEX

This year's cave rescue exercise organised by Tasmania Police will be on the weekend of 25 - 26 May. The scenario will be based in the June Valley Florentine but won't be as difficult as last year's vertical challenge in Midnight Hole. This year there will be greater focus on the above-ground aspects of the exercise. Underground there will be more horizontal work, however there will still be a vertical component.

You can get transport by being at the Police marine and rescue division in (Strahn St, North Hobart) at 8am on the Saturday. The other alternative is to rendezvous

with everyone at the start of the Florentine Rd. at 10.30am Saturday.

Maps of the caves involved will be provided. But you may bring your own if you have it sighted and approved by the exercise umpire or commander! You and the SES, ambos, PWS, forestry, fire service, arete, and Tas ORC people will be getting wet, so bring ~~bathers and towel~~ lots of thermals etc.

### Archiving

Mad Phil and Geoff Wise are working on a incorporating a database into the existing archive system to make information on caves easy to access and keep up to date. They're going to show off a prototype at the social meeting on 15 May.

## Forward Program

### Mole Creek Caving Club AGM..... 11 - 12 May

- Fun caving with minimal vertical work and socialising with MCCC members. Will stay at NC Hut. Contact Joe Farrell 62253839

### Wednesday Social Meeting..... 15 May

- Mad Phil and Geoff Wise are outlining their plans for a database archive of trip reports and survey info. Come and have your two bobs (and beers).

### Gormenghast with Tas Uni Caving Cub ..... 18 May

- Horizontal with pretties! Contact Joe Farrell 62253839

### CAVEX..... 25 - 26 May

- June Valley. See "Stuff 'n Stuff" for more info. Contact Ric Tunney 62435415
- Derigging top half of KD. Contact as above.

### Mole Creek..... 2 - 3 June

- Joe is going up for a vertical trip. Contact him if you're interested in general Mole Creek caving this weekend. 62253839.

### Queens B'day Long Weekend..... 8 - 10 June

- No one has planned anything yet. If you don't like the look of what's on this program plan your own trip and put it on the list server.

### Winter Solstice Extravaganza..... 15 - 16 June

- Exit Cave permits with fun and frivolity at Francistown with Arthur and Robyn. Contact Ric 62435415.

### Mole Creek SAREX ..... 27 July

- Can't get enough cave rescue experience. Based at Old Liena Mill (near Rat Hole, Hidden Hole, Top Hole et al.) Combined with Northern Police, ambos, PWS. Scenario suitable for all skill levels. Contact Deb Hunter 63678142 before 15 JUNE.

## **OBITUARY – SAMUEL WARREN CAREY**

Professor Sam Carey founded the first caving club in Australia in Hobart in September, 1946. Sam was born in Campbelltown, NSW in 1911. He enrolled at the University of Sydney in 1929 to do a science degree. As he came from a poor family he earned his keep as a student by giving performances as a conjurer. He studied geology under Professor Edgeworth David, a great Antarctic explorer, and in 1932 he graduated with first class honours in geology. He was also a member of the University Regiment and active in rowing. A research scholarship enabled him to complete his Master of Science degree in 1934 based on work done in northern NSW.

He found employment with Oil Search in Papua New Guinea in the 1930's and carried out fieldwork in many remote areas. It is probably during this time that he first became interested in limestone and caves. Late in the 1930's he earned his doctorate in science from the University of Sydney and married Austral Robson in 1940. In 1942, when the Japanese invaded New Guinea, the Carey family were evacuated to Melbourne.

Sam joined the special forces (Z-force) and spent some of the war in New Guinea where he trained as a paratrooper. He eventually rose to the rank of captain and became involved in training special forces to operate behind Japanese lines to act as observers and carry out sabotage. Some of the time was spent training men at Mt Etna, Queensland in the use of limestone caves so that they could be utilized as bases in enemy territory. The men were trained to survey caves, to set booby traps, to find their way around in the dark and to use cave drip water as a water supply.

After the war Sam took up a position as Chief Government Geologist in Tasmania. In 1946 he was appointed foundation professor of geology at the University of Tasmania. It is in that year that he founded the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Early members were drawn from the Hobart Walking Club, Tasmanian Field Naturalists and from students in the Department of Geology, many of whom were returned service men. He coined the word "caverneer" that is still in use in Tasmania today, gave the first club members a commando type training and remained active in the club until 1953. He was known as Sam only to his wartime comrades and to senior academics. Caving club members always referred to him as "Prof".

He became a very prominent researcher in the geological sciences. He worked out the structure of the Gippsland Basin leading to BHP taking up an exploration licence. He was a prominent believer in continental drift and developed a theory of global tectonics based on the concepts of continental drift and an expanding earth. He was a great teacher and built up an earth science school that became one of the leading ones in the country and gained an international reputation. He retired from the University in 1976 and in the following year was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. He remained active in scientific research for many years and also continued to take a keen interest in cave exploration and cave research in Tasmania. He was made an Honorary Life Member of TCC many years ago and later of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers after TCC amalgamated with two other Hobart caving groups in 1996.

He died in March, 2002 at the age of ninety. He is survived by his wife Austral, four children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

### **Midnight Hole (IB11): 23 December 2001**

By Phil Rowsell

**Party:** Dave Houndslow, Joe Farrell, Heidi Macklin, Jason Morgan, Phil Rowsell.

Wanted to get my head back into vertical rigging as I had spent most of the last 6 months digging in horizontal systems in the UK. Good trip to sort the brain. The NSW cavers came along, with Joe and another Pommy caver, Dave. Forgotten the long walk up the hill and thankful to get in the cool of the cave.

Some of the rigging was interesting as on naturals not the usual join the hangers as in the UK (5<sup>th</sup> pitch especially spooky). Still all good practice and getting back into vertical Tassie Mode. Left Joe and Jason to head out via Mystery Creek (thankfully taking the 70m rope!), leaving the 3 of us to jug out. Got back to the car just after the boys which was bad. Nice trip at least my head is sorted.

### **Threfortyone: Entrance Survey Trip (JF341): 24 December 2001**

By Phil Rowsell

**Party:** Dave Hounsflow, Jeff Butt, Phil Rowsell.

Jeff needed to re-survey the entrance series of 341 so Pommy Dave and myself volunteered our services. Took awhile to get going as Dave hadn't done much

surveying, but soon started to rock. Surveyed down just past the first crystal pool before calling time as my light was going. Had achieved our objective in any case. The re-survey data closed the whole system well, just have to wait for the drawn survey to be published –Jeff!!!

## Satan's Lair (JF365): 28 December 2001

By Phil Rowsell

**Party:** Dave Rash, Dave Houndslow, Phil Rowsell

An area with great potential from looking at the map. Obviously needed checking out. Trip didn't start well, didn't find the path and bashed through bush with the GPS intermittent. Raschy spotted what looked like to a cave entrance over the valley so when to check it out. Found a stream sinking into a rubble strewn sink hole with a good roaring sound. Shit a cave. Chaos rained!! 3 possessed cavers dug frantically at the blockage, and in an hour of feverish work had only blocked the flow – great. Dejected gave up. Site does look interesting and have some potential takes a reasonable stream, but needs tools to move boulders etc. Have christened it Desecration Pot if it ever goes.

With normal composure regained, headed down the valley and found Satan's Lair, easily located by the

large stream pouring down it. Hum no one mentioned it to be a wet cave!! In the first two pitches I had put in 2 rebelay and 4 deviation to keep out of the water, on otherwise easy straight drops. We would run out of rigging gear before getting to the bottom. Played a game of chicken with Raschy through a very loose boulder ruckle, each pushing a bit further through, before being spooked and exiting for the other to have a go. Eventually got through and found the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch, but a torrent of water pouring over it. No way of rigging out of the water here so knocked on the head. Pretty disappointing considering the effort to get there. Found the path on the way out. Definitely need a trip back here, both to do some track work, hit the cave and explore the area more.

## Rift Cave (JF34): 29 December 2001

By Phil Rowsell

**Party:** Dave Houndslow, Phil Rowsell.

After Satins the day before, thought we would do something easy, would go and have a look at the digs in Rift. Got to the entrance and lots of water pouring down. Hum going to be wet too. Looked at the first pitch and honking over. Only a short, but have nearly died once juggling out in Melt water and didn't want to

play that game again. Na think we'll give it a miss. Had a look around the old part and was surprised to see water draining right to the bottom of the passage. Had been completely dry previous visit with no sight of recent water activity. May be a good place to have a dig, but not to day. Had a look at a few other holes on the way back, but nothing special.

## CONSERVATION REPORT TO ASF - TASMANIA

Tasmanian convenor: Arthur Clarke

### Exploration/ mining proposal in Mt. Cripps karst area

This issue was more or less resolved during 2001, when a compromise position was established between the mining company and the remaining appellants (ASF, STC and SRCC). In 2000, Western Metals Resources Limited (based in Perth W.A.) sought an Exploration License (EL) to establish quarrying sites for limestone in the *Mt. Cripps* karst area (WNW of Cradle Mountain) - in an area that lies within two kilometres or less from the recently closed Hellyer Mine site in NW Tasmania.

Following an earlier mediation session with the mining company and Mineral Resources Tasmania (MRT), this EL area was reduced by two-thirds – removing most of the known karst, caves and karst related features from the eastern part of the EL – to a lesser 13sq. km application area, further west. This modified area, predominantly situated west of the *Southwell River* and the *Southwell Inlet* (draining into *Lake Mackintosh*), incorporates a rarely visited limestone area with unconfirmed karst, partially buried by Quaternary sediments (glacial deposits).

Despite this down-sizing, in 2000 all three caving bodies variously maintained their objections to the exploration proposal for limestone quarrying sites, based on the following facts:

- This is a pristine untouched/ unlogged myrtle rainforest area in a region known to include areas of glaciated polygonal karst, archaeological sites and rare cave fauna;
- There are a number of known karst features including effluxes and a cave in the modified EL area (east of the *Southwell Inlet* in the northern arm of *Lake Mackintosh*);
- There has been no preliminary on-ground limestone geology or karst geomorphology assessment in the proposed (modified) area. ASF are maintaining that this assessment needs to be undertaken and

independent person, not aligned to private or government mining interests and that caving bodies should have input into the personnel selection process (MRT maintain they would establish a Mineral Exploration Working Group assessment after an approved exploration work programme had been established following the granting of the EL.);

- There are already existing limestone quarry operations in the general area including Railton, from where product could be railed direct to the company mine site. There are also additional areas of possibly non-cavernous limestone that have not yet been investigated;
- 13 sq. km is still considered to be excessively large for a site that will supposedly have a 2million tonne quarry output;
- The viability/ possibility of the mineral extraction technique from the tailings dumps has still not been proven.

### **ASF involvement in the Mt. Cripps case during 2001**

A preliminary court hearing to determine the legal standing of appellants in the Mining Tribunal of Tasmania had been scheduled for late February 2001. In the latter part of 2000, the Tasmanian office of the Environmental Defenders Office in Hobart was out of action, but ASF (and STC) were fortunate in gaining some free legal assistance from Sydney barrister: Tim Moore. In January 2001, the ASF Executive decided that ASF could not afford to be involved in the case any further because of the potential on-going open-ended cost of air fares & accommodation etc. for legal advisors and witnesses. The Executive also felt that ASF might do itself a dis-favour in future hearings, if we were unsuccessful in gaining legal standing this time around. ASF took the view that the EL should no longer be opposed, but that ASF should ensure there was adequate karst related guidelines and safeguards incorporated into the E.L., but still maintain an option to oppose any future proposals for limestone mining in the area. A further mediation session had already been planned for early January 2001.

### **Final mediation/ resolution and outcomes for Mt. Cripps**

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 (immediately following my return from the ASF Conference at Bathurst and the post-conference field trips), four of us were present at the Wivenhoe (Burnie) offices of Western Metals: the new Acting Manager (Andrew Platt), the MRT Registrar (Dennis Burgess), Frank Salt (representing Savage River Caving Club) and Arthur Clarke (for ASF and STC). Although Western Metals are considering alternative supply options including limestone via rail from Goliath at Railton, their main concern relates to transportation costs – hence their preference to establish a limestone quarry site with short distance road haulage in the Mt. Cripps area that adjoins their present lease. We (ASF, SRCC & STC) agreed to support the EL provided that the following points of agreement or resolutions are included in the EL conditions:

1. Western Metals Resources Ltd may carry out activities involving the use of hand tools over the whole licence area prior to independent karst studies on target sites. Access to be existing tracks and/or foot (including access by boat on *Lake Mackintosh*);
2. Prior to the carrying out of any groundbreaking disturbing activity the licensee shall arrange for an independent karst study of the area(s) where the disturbance is planned. Disturbance includes sampling (other than hand collecting), drilling, costeaning, track construction and track upgrading;
3. The licensee shall liaise with the Savage River Caving Club and the Australian Speleological Federation before carrying out any activity on the licence; and
4. The caving clubs reserve the right to comment if the project moves to a mine feasibility and development approval phase.

Although it may appear that the issue has been amicably settled by mediation – avoiding the need for appearance in the Mining Tribunal - following agreement to our compromise position, we (ASF or STC) have NOT YET received the official copy of the revised Exploration License with the new agreed conditions attached and have not heard anything back from either MRT or Western Metals in relation to their exploration activity in this modified EL area. (I don't have time to follow this up.). Having said this, I am not entirely happy with the longer-term implications of the decision by ASF to withdraw from the case – see recommendation at conclusion of this report.

### **Listing of Mt. Cripps by KWI as one of the Ten Most Endangered Karst Ecosystems**

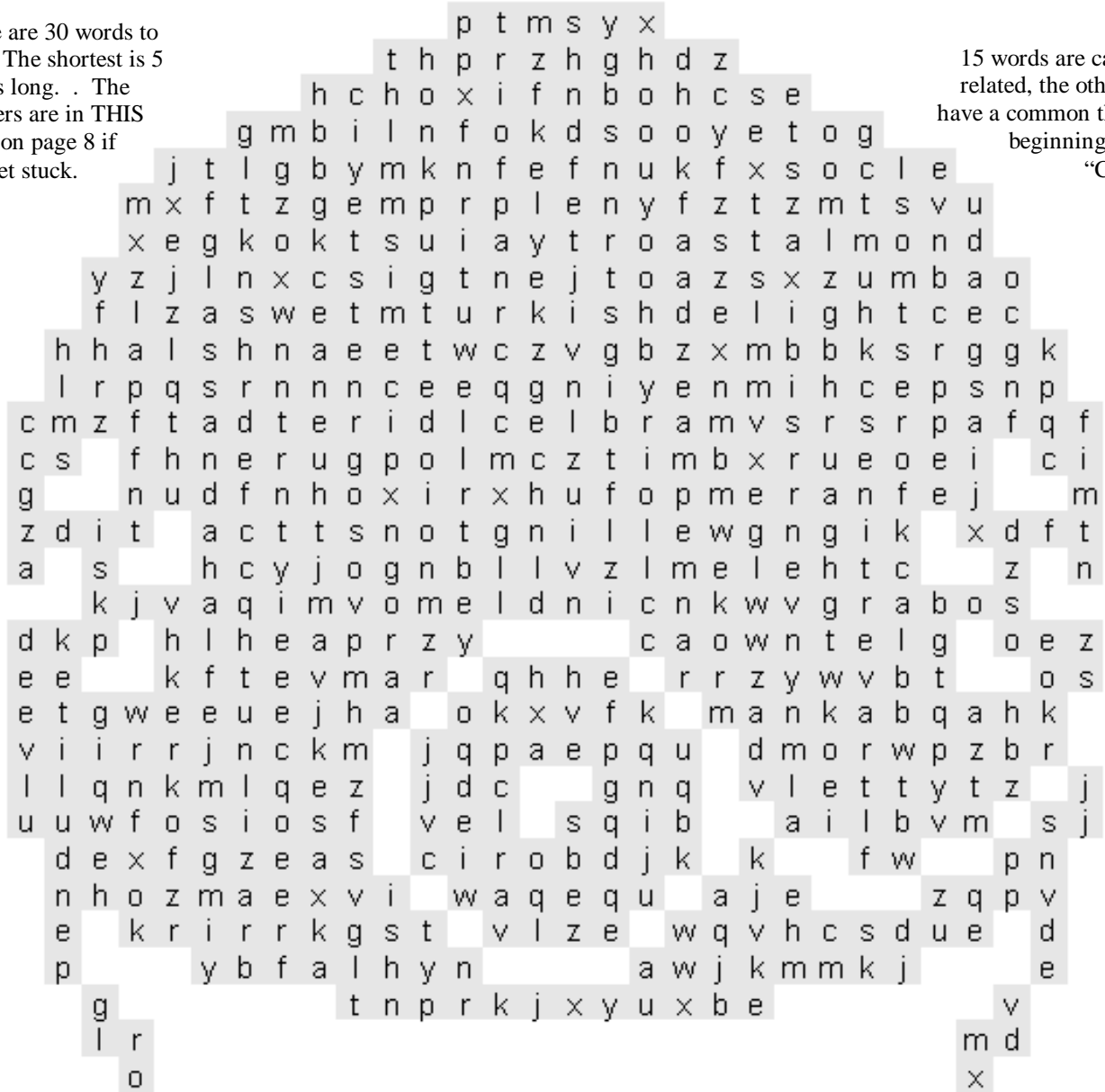
A few months after signing off on the mediation agreement described above, I received advice from the Karst Waters Institute (KWI) in USA that my nomination of Mt Cripps had been accepted for this year's KWI list of the Ten Most Endangered Karst Ecosystems of the world. (My efforts in compiling argument & lobbying KWI for listing of the Mt. Cripps karst had been assisted by the fact that I was able to actually

have personal face-to-face discussions with KWI members in southern France during my attendance at the Subterranean Biodiversity & Mapping Ecosystems workshop held at Moulis in March 2001.)

Although KWI listing has no legal foundation, it serves to strengthen our case and to draw wider attention to a karst conservation issue that might otherwise have gone unnoticed on the mainland, never mind overseas. The KWI is now requesting further information such as general map location and images of the caves & karst biota at Mt. Cripps: images that ably illustrate the area (for inclusion on their KWI website), but I don't have time to put these items together at present.

There are 30 words to find. The shortest is 5 letters long. . The answers are in THIS Spiel on page 8 if you get stuck.

15 words are caving related, the other 15 have a common theme beginning with "Cadb"



### **Magnesite Mining Proposals in the Arthur-Pieman Region of NW Tasmania**

As I have reported for the last few years – there are two separate areas of magnesite karst in the so-called “Tarkine” (*Arthur River/ Pieman River*) region of NW Tasmania; both areas are covered by tall tree forest with sections of climax rainforest. Magnesite karst is extremely rare on a global scale. Most other known occurrences of magnesite karst in other parts of the world relate to buried karst, but in NW Tasmania there are many surface karst landforms in magnesite with solution pinnacles & canyons, a few small solution caves, boulder caves and both cold and warm water springs. In March 1999, the Tasmanian Government released a detailed report of the magnesite karst produced by Ian Houshold, Clive Calver & Chris Sharples; this followed on from an earlier late 1998 report on the significance of the magnesite karst prepared by Prof. Paul Williams (based on a draft edition of the subsequently released Houshold, Calver & Sharples report). A feature of these reports was the revelation of the numerous water-filled subterranean cavities within the magnesite (proven by exploration drilling) and interaction

between the thermal waters and magnesite. These submerged water filled cavities potentially support a diversity of ecologically adapted subterranean aquatic fauna.

The proposed mining development of the magnesite resource and establishment of a magnesium smelter site in Tasmania appears to have shelved for an indefinite period due to economic considerations related to transport costs and distance from markets for processed magnesium. An upshot of all this magnesite mining proposal, is that despite it being an uneconomic proposal these rare karst features and the equally magnificent forests that the magnesite karst is in, are now probably set to perpetually remain as exploration/ mining leases, rather than becoming reserved land. Although mineral extraction may no longer be on the agenda, the economic potential of the subterranean karst waters is still an on-going conservation concern. The *Victory Springs* lease has been taken over by another commercial mineral water operator who is also keen to establish a mineral water bottling plant at *Lyon Spring*, a warm spring site (within the magnesite) near *Lyon River*.

### **Cave conservation issues & access at Mole Creek in northern Tasmania**

Cavers & speleological groups were not happy with the Mole Creek karst draft management plan (DMP) that was initially distributed by Dept. of Primary Industry, Water & Environment (DPIWE). There had also been a separate management plan for *Kubla Khan* – considered to be one of the mostly highly decorated wild caves in Australia – and this management plan was overdue for renewal. Rolan Eberhard is now employed by the Resource and Conservation section of the DPIWE working full time on a rewrite of the Mole Creek DMP in conjunction with other work he is doing related to the hydrology of the Mole Creek karst area. In addition to the management of caves that fall under the jurisdiction of DPIWE, there are many other problems related to karst management at Mole Creek, largely because the *Mole Creek Karst National Park* (MCKNP) is actually a series of small parcels of land separated by tracts of karst or integral karst catchments that form part of lands under control of Forestry Tasmania or private land ownership.

Access to *Herberts Pot* (beyond *Wet Cave*) has been denied for well over a decade now, by private landowners who own the land that including catchment water to the adjacent *Wet Cave/ Honeycomb Cave* systems. In 2001, there were newspaper advertisements seeking expressions of interest for the proposed commercial development of two wild caves at Mole Creek: *Wet Cave* and *Honeycomb 2*. Private landowners enforcing the rights of their "Center-Of-Earth" titles have denied access to these caves. The entrances to both these caves are located within parcels of land that form part of the MCKNP, but the cave/s continues beyond these Park boundaries and under private land. Cavers who have ignored these "closure" signs – situated well inside *Wet Cave* – have been threatened with legal action by landowners.

### **Government acquisition of karst land in Tasmania**

The Tasmanian government has recently acquired several parcels of karst lands in northern and NW Tasmania. Three parcels of private land have been recently acquired in the Mole Creek area:

- A large block of the Mole Creek karst catchment adjacent to the Westmoreland block of the Mole Creek Karst National Park;
- Half of Herberts Pot – getting actual ownership of half the cave itself - by acquiring full "Center of Earth" titles; and
- Most of the known parts of Mersey Hill Cave (approx. 1.5km of cave passage) by acquisition of more "Center of Earth" titles.

In NW Tasmania, the government has acquired additional land in the Montagu karst in order to protect the fossil bone heritage of Pleistocene mammal fauna, now controlling two of the caves with the most significant deposits: Main Cave (or Montagu Cave) and Pleisto Scene Cave.

### **DMP for Mount Field National Park and Junee Cave State Reserve**

The Mount Field National Park (MFNP) area of southern Tasmania includes a substantial portion of the *Junee-Florentine* karst – especially on the lower western flanks of *Mount Field West* – where the western boundary of the Park abuts with State Forest in the former ANM forest concession. In April 2000, a draft management plan (DMP) for the MFNP was released by DPIWE; annexed to the MFNP, the DMP also included the Junee Cave State Reserve (JCSR), formerly managed as a separate entity to the MFNP. Although the DMP referred in vague terms to a future "Karst Management Strategy", there was no clear statement that defined this strategy or the policy proposed for management of the karst. Apart from the numerous other inadequacies of the DMP, it appeared that karst management issues were going to be addressed in much the same manner as for ski-fields, bushwalking areas, horse-riding trails and other recreational activity sites – but with one exception: the currently abandoned forestry roads and other tracks that extend into Park area (from the State Forest boundary) are to be rehabilitated! These old



forestry roads are all currently maintained by speleo groups to provide access to the *Junee-Florentine* caves & karst in the lower western flanks of *Mount Field West*.

In early May 2000, in my dual roles as a Co-Convenor of the ASF Conservation Commission and (then) Executive Secretary of ASF, I submitted a detailed 7-page report that addressed inadequacies of the DMP in relation to *Junee-Florentine* cave & karst conservation issues. My submission highlighted the absence of management policies related to protection of cave fauna species and also promoted the safety of caves and interpretation/ presentation of significant cave sites such as *Growling Swallet*. In late September 2000, in response to a request from DPIWE, I provided a detailed list of the 73 known invertebrate species from caves in the *Junee-Florentine* karst (based on the RFA cave fauna report), requesting that this list be appended to the management plan as a dedicated list of cave species. This submission also suggested that the ASF Code of Ethics and Minimal Impact Caving Code could be used by DPIWE as a management tool in controlling access to caves.

In early January this year (2002) – a time when many outdoor adventure people including cavers are away on holidays – the Director of Parks & Wildlife sent a reply memorandum to the 20 individuals or organisations that had sent in submissions to the DMP for MFNP and the JCSR. Respondents were requested to reply before January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002. The memorandum detailed a few changes to the DMP that were accepted from the various submissions, but most of the other constructive comment in the submissions was sidelined with the comment: “*No change to the plan*”. My list of cave species was noted as being recorded by DPIWE, but not being included as part of the DMP. Numerous other recommendations related to cave & karst management were simply recorded as forming part of the nebulous “*Future Karst Management Strategy*”, but not being incorporated in the DMP. The memorandum did not acknowledge the role of ASF in this karst management strategy or in the DMP itself, but did include the statement that “local” caving groups would be consulted within the framework of this strategy and in relation to rehabilitation of access roads. The very few respondent contributors who replied to the Director’s memorandum were invited to further the case for their respective submissions during three days of public hearings being held in mid February this year (2002). (My attendance at this hearing will represent my FINAL involvement on behalf of ASF in relation to karst conservation issues in Tasmania.)

## Answers to the word search on page 6

Most answers are taken from the glossary in Australian Karst Index 1985. Some are my dodgy definitions\*.

Aragonite.....	A less common crystalline form of calcium carbonate than calcite, denser and orthorhombic
Chimneying .....	Ascending or descending by means of opposed body and/or limb pressures against two facing walls.
Clinometer.....	An instrument for measuring vertical angles or angles of dip.
Counterweight .....	*A method of using something of similar mass to that being moved in order to make the task easier. Sometimes employed in vertical rescue.
Depigmented.....	*How your skin becomes when you spend too much time underground or in the darkroom printing up your photos.
Flattener.....	A passage, which, though wide, is so low that movement is only possible in a prone position.
Gormenghast .....	*There's a Uni Moles trip there on 18 May. Wanna come?
Harness .....	An arrangement of tape for attaching the lower body (seat harness) or the upper (chest harness) to ascenders or descenders.
Ice Cave .....	A cave with perennial ice in it.
Pendulite.....	A kind of stalactite which has been partly submerged and the submerged part covered with dog-tooth spar to give the appearance of a drumstick.
Polygonal .....	A word describing karst that that is completely pitted by closed depressions so that the divides between them form a crudely polygonal network.
Resurgence.....	A spring where a stream, which has a course on the surface higher up, reappears at the surface.
Spongework .....	A complex of irregular, interconnecting cavities intricately perforating the rock. The cavities may range from a few centimetres to more than a metre across.
Travertine.....	Compact calcium carbonate deposit, often banded, precipitated from spring, river or lake water.
Wellingtons .....	*What people like Trevor Wailes wear on their feet to go caving.

### Cadbury Family Block flavours:

Black Forest; Brazil Nut; Breakaway; Caramel; Fruit & Nut; Glass & a half; Hazelnut; Honey Nut Crunch; Marble; Old Jamaica; Roast Almond; Snack; Toffee; Topdeck; Turkish Delight.

## Tourist developments in the Hastings area of southern Tasmania

The new Hastings Caves Visitor Interpretation Centre – now sited opposite the old Caves Chalet, alongside the revamped thermal pool - was officially opened in April 2001. However, the public toilets near the tourist cave (*Newdegate Cave*) are still situated beside a doline that lies topographically upstream from the thermal springs (and thermal pool). Although no hydrological connection has been proven by dye tracing, it is suspected that these toilet facilities near the cave were responsible for the recent pollution of

the Hastings thermal pool by various strains of coliform bacteria – because these forms of bacteria are typically found in untreated human wastes. The toilets near the cave empty into a septic system that at times becomes overworked and may also become less efficient during prolonged periods of cold weather when there are heavy rains. It is suggested that the toilets be relocated or upgraded to a system where the toilet wastes can be flushed into a temporary storage container for subsequent removal or pumping out on a regular basis.

Some good news for *Hastings*: following the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA), the nearby World Heritage Area (WHA) boundary was moved so it now abuts the *Hastings Reserve* (which itself has been extended, but still does not cover all the karst). It may be coincidence, but this additional area of the *Hastings Reserve* roughly coincides with the increased area recommended in the RFA cave fauna management report that prescribed a number of requirements for protecting cave biota, including the reservation of caves - or the land above them - and karst catchments in areas defined in the report. (Interestingly another suggested management prescription in the RFA cave fauna report included the recommendation to extend the pre-existing WHA boundary to incorporate the *North Lune* karst area and it appears that this has occurred... and it is this extended WHA boundary incorporating the *North Lune* karst that now abuts to the *Hastings Reserve*.) By abutting the WHA boundary to the Reserve, the *Hastings Reserve* could effectively become an extended part of the WHA when a draft management plan (DMP) is completed and it is probably no coincidence that proposals for such a plan are now being put in place. The Parks & Wildlife section of DPIWE will be seeking input from ASF (and other caving clubs) for information about caves and cave surveys for inclusion in the DMP.

Another positive development for Hastings is the present re-lighting of *Newdegate Cave*, following the partial (but successful) rehabilitation of the cave. Once described as one of the most degraded tourist caves in Australia – due to the refuse & discarded old timbers, light globes etc. and build-up of lampenflora – the cave is now being re-illuminated by Neil Kell with a modern 12volt power lighting system. Along with a new innovative system of track lighting, the cave lighting includes placement of minimal impact low wattage globes positioned & powered in a manner to minimise lampenflora growths. Enabled by a budget of \$120,000, Neil Kell is being ably assisted by Roger Griffiths and Peter Price. The new positions of revamped cabling, switch boxes, wiring & light fixtures will be marked on the recently completed new survey map of the cave prepared by Jeff Butt & Arthur Clarke.

### **New area of karst in State Forest in the Blakes Opening region, near Huon River**

There have been recent reports of forestry workers and bushwalkers visiting two or three separate new areas of karst (with caves) - for recreational caving purposes - inspecting new caves in the *Huon*, *Picton* and *Weld River* areas of southern Tasmania. Officers from Forestry Tasmania are refusing to give out any information to cavers or ASF about these areas or any details about the caves. There is a confirmed report that forestry bulldozers recently traversed a limestone karst area while extending their roads to open up a forest coupe; this road passed within metres of a swallet and there are now over a dozen predominantly horizontal caves in this area that are known to forestry workers (and their selected friends). Located in the vicinity of *Blakes Opening*, this area is known to some forestry workers as "Road End Creek", but is recorded in the Tasmanian Karst Index as "*Hustling Creek*". One of these recently discovered caves is a reportedly 400metre long through cave that has the potential to be established as a tourist cave; it supposedly has sections of cave decoration that surpass the renowned chambers in *Newdegate Cave*! There are unconfirmed and conflicting reports of speleothem damage & pilfering of cave formations from one of these new caves.

### **Re-bolting of *Midnight Hole* at Ida Bay in southern Tasmania**

*Midnight Hole* is a 170m deep vertical cave system with six pitches, leading into *Mystery Creek Cave* - via *Matchbox Squeeze* - at Ida Bay. Since being bolted in the early 1970's – with bolts positioned for laddering – the cave has been frequently used as an introduction to vertical caving techniques in Tasmania and following the advent of SRT, *Midnight Hole* has become a regularly visited site for recreational cavers and is often used as a classic through trip cave by interstate and overseas visitors. Apart from the fact that some of the old laddering eyebolts were become loose and the eye bolts were developing pronounced grooves from rope wear, the use of SRT ropes in the old bolt positions was creating grooves in the limestone at the head of several pitches. Following some rigorous testing procedures in the old (now rehabilitated) *Benders Quarry*, Jeff Butt and other STC members have recently removed the old eye-bolts in *Midnight Hole* and installed a series of glue-in "P-hanger" bolts at the head of all pitches – positioned in pairs & in a manner to give a free-hanging rope descent - along with appropriate signage about the new hangers outside the cave entrance.

### **National Audit of Wetlands**

Following the acceptance of karst as a subterranean wetland by the RAMSAR Convention of Wetlands held in Cairns in 1998, the preservation of biota in karst systems is now being accorded some "official"

consideration on a national and international scale. During the recent Tasmanian hearings for the National Audit of Wetlands - at a workshop in Hobart in mid-December 2001 - I was initially able to put forward the names of about 20 karst areas in Tasmania where there were known significant biological values - based on invertebrate species numbers, species diversity and other karst related wetland habitats such as tufa deposits, mound springs and warm springs. The national audit of wetlands is adopting a more wholistic approach to preservation of wetlands, incorporating natural features and landforms as well as significant biological attributes and habitats. Consequently, the audit list of significant subterranean wetlands in Tasmania has now been extended to around 40 karst areas to incorporate a number of other karsts where there are significant geomorphic values.

### **Resignation from ASF Conservation Commission**

Sadly, after nearly 20 years as a Co-convenor of the ASF Conservation Commission, this will be my final report to ASF. In late April/ early May last year (2001), I informed the ASF Executive that I would no longer continue in the role as a Co-Convenor of the ASF Conservation Commission. Work towards my Masters Degree at the University of Tasmania has already been delayed by involvement in the Mt. Cripps case, other karst conservation issues and ASF responsibilities, so in line with my departure from other ASF roles, I have decided to devote more full time efforts to my MSc research project related to caves, cave fauna and cave ecosystems in southern Tasmania.

### **Recommendation for ASF Council (January 2002)**

In my report last year I sought funds from ASF to continue the Mt. Cripps conservation case and as previously described in this report, for various reasons including affordability, I was unsuccessful. ASF should be in a position where it can find \$1,000 or so for an important issue as straightforward as this one. Perhaps the recent registration by ASF as an Environmental Organisation will facilitate raising funds for conservation issues such as Mt. Cripps. However I think it is unwise to wait until these issues arise before addressing the problem.

I recommend that ASF immediately develops a permanent fund to enable such cave and/ or karst conservation issues to be addressed, as and when they arise.

Arthur Clarke,  
Retiring Co-Convenor ASF Conservation Commission,  
25-01-2002.

### **Threefortyone: (JF341): 31 December 2001**

By Phil Rowsell

**Party:** Dave Rash, Dave Houndslow, Phil Rowsell

Wanted to head into the Enterprise section and check out a few leads with Dave Rash and Pommy Dave. Pretty familiar with the cave now. Started off well, but as got further into the Enterprise section Pommy Dave started flagging. Got to the drop downs and he wasn't happy but coaxed him through. Carried on but he started to lose his confidence. Made it to the main streamway and left Pommy Dave to recover, and went and checked out the main chamber. Nice place but

could see the damage the mining activity had done prior. With Pommy Dave stuffed, no chance of exploration, well annoyed, but that's life. Pommy Dave, managed to slip on the drop downs and pull his finger badly. Hard work coax him out of the cave as lost a bit of confidence. Thankfully one back at the pitches, the usual Dave kicked back in. Not a good trip, mentally drained, no exploration and in a bad mood to go drinking for New Year's Eve!! Turned out Dave had broken his finger badly!!

### **Tassy Pot (JF223): 20 January 2002**

By Phil Rowsell

**Party:** Phil Rowsell, Joe Farrell.

We hadn't made the bottom last time, mainly due to apathy and Dave Rash wanting to make it back to Hobart for a party and a hot date. This time we had the time and the determination to get down to the bottom. We also knew where the entrance was and wouldn't drop the wrong cave to start like last time!! My head had finally switched into SRT mode, as I had only just

arrived last attempt and I had spent the previous 6 months digging in the Mendips.

We motored on down to the last pitch pretty quickly having benefited from the previous trip. I had remembered looking out the window of the last pitch thinking that looks pretty daunting. It didn't seem so bad this time. A good backup around a rock and once out the window, you had a good ledge to stand on. What more could one ask. I found the 2<sup>nd</sup> re-belay

OK, then I headed off to find the one halfway down. I was surprised when what I thought was the floor, turned out to be the wall of the other side of the pitch coming in. (Explain why I couldn't find the re-belay!). Finally I could see the spit, but had run out of rope, Bummer!! We would have to have a knot only 5m up from the bolt, what a time waster! Still all good practice. (We had used a 40m rope for this first part. A 50m would avoid the knot). The re-belay was a good airy stance, hanging in mid air, before for a straight drop on down to the ground. I waited for Joe to appear, before we headed off exploring.

We found our way through the boulder ruckle and squeezes and on to the 'T' junction. We had a quick look down stream, but choked out eventually in silt

filled rifts. I reckon this had some digging potential, either at stream level or trying to follow the roof of the rift etc. We headed back to the junction and pushed up stream for someway. Since neither of us wanted to be too late back, we didn't push it to its conclusion. Save it for another day.

Nice trip, glad I got (or had the determination) to the bottom. I'm also pleased my head is back in full SRT mode now. It took awhile, but I'm firing on all cylinders now, just in time for Anne-A-Kananda. I will have to head down here again to push it to the full and have a little dig to see what we could find. It will be interesting to see what the survey shows, if there is one!!

### **Slaughterhouse Pot (JF 337): 7 February 2002**

By Joe Farrell

Party: Mad Phil (Rowsell), Joe Farrell, Dave Chiam

We entered via Slaughterhouse Pot (JF337) and had abseiled and climbed down to the bottom in an hour. The trapdoor stream was reached by climbing down a further rope ladder then followed to the point where it disappears under the wall - too small to follow. It's here that the stream sumps when the catchment is saturated and then it rains. Herpes 3 is the only way on, and it's on the other side of this disgusting mucky crawl where you would have to wait for the water to subside.

After being covered in slippery mud from Herpes it was interesting climbing up the 10 - 15 m rope ladder. At the top we found we were in Necrosis, and the route finding fun began. In these twisting phreatic passages we found loops, avens, tight crawls, but no dead ends. We paid close attention to the route so we could find our way back. Most of the route was well trogged but

some of it was over clean formation. This was confusing. I guess it self cleans. We took turns route finding while the other two sat and got cold. Eventually we found our way through into a series of large chambers and climbed through and over the breakdown until we reached Mainline streamway.

We walked down it for about 15 - 20 minutes but failed to detect the passage off to Ice Tube. To the best of our knowledge it should have entered from the left carrying a stream. Oh well, Mainline itself was a great streamway. It was large enough to easily negotiate, only occasionally punctuated by rockfall. There was a lot of great marbling in the passage.

We turned around and exited the system by jugging up Slaughterhouse Pot again. Time underground was 7 and a quarter hours. The night was spent in a day use only picnic shelter at Needles on the Strathgordon Rd. Norty norty.

### **Dwarrowdelf: First Look (JF14): 8 February 2002**

By Dave Chiam

**Party:** Joseph Farrell, Phil Rowsell, David Chiam.

This was the first time any of the party had attempted this cave. Our aim was to get to the second last pitch if we could find Dwarrowdelf. As it turned out there was no searching as we walked straight to the entrance.

We arrived at Dwarrowdelf at around 12:00 after a 30 minute walk from the car. The description in *Vertical Caves of Tasmania* describes Dwarrowdelf as "a series of long dry abseils", how wrong that description was! There was water dripping into the cave from the surface.

After much mucking about, we finally worked out a way for setting up the redirect for the first pitch and entered the cave at around 1 pm. The first two pitches (22m and 21m) were wet, the others were dry. Phil and Joe headed down the third, while I headed back to the surface. I surfaced at 4:30 and Phil and Joe surfaced at 6:00.

We had shoved the gear into the packs and were on our way back to the cars by 6:30 pm. Much fun was had by all.

**If you've got something to flog 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!**

Dear Dorothy,

I recently visited a cave that had two entrances, the upper entrance was a pothole, with three largish (42, 63 and 34 m) pitches. The lower entrance was a 'walk in/out' entrance. Normally this cave is used for pull-through trips, but we decided we'd SRT it (i.e. abseil down the pothole and then prussik back out the same way) for practise. I was with two others, Pete and Greg. The descent was really smooth, we rigged the cave with a single 150 m piece of rope. At the bottom we spent a solid few hours having a good look around and we located the horizontal entrance. When we returned to the bottom of the pothole, both Pete and Greg decided that they were too tired to prussik out and would rather take the easy option and walk out. I was a bit surprised at this decision by them and felt quite disappointed as I really wanted to prussik out. However Pete came up with a 'win-win' solution. Pete's solution was that I could prussik out by myself and strip the rigging gear and untie all the knots. They would then walk up to meet me and pull the rope up and carry the rope out. Everything went pretty smoothly, although as I was ascending the 63 m second pitch, the rope must have dislodged some stones above me as a small shower of stones came down around me. A couple of smaller ones made glancing contact with my helmet. I thought "that was close" and in hindsight think that perhaps our decision wasn't the best one that we could have made. What do you think?

yours searchingly, Samantha.

**Dorothy's reply to Sam who dropped his pack down a pitch in Spiel 328:**

Dear Sam,



it seems that you have taken a bit of a risk, and have suffered the consequences. Yes, it is possible to descend a well rigged cave without your ascenders attached (i.e. only using your cowstail and descender), but consider this.....what if you come across a

Dorothy would love to hear from you!

If you are having personal problems with your tackle (or rigging with it), there are many others like you. Why not write in and share it with everybody?!!

Dorothy has had 49 years of caving experience and can happily answer you queries.

Just drop an email to  
vfarrell@postoffice.utas.edu.au

knot, or a difficult rebelay, or a damaged section of rope, or a rope that doesn't reach the bottom (hopefully there will be a knot in the end!!). In all these cases you will want to use/have the security of your ascenders on your body, not in your pack! (or someone else's.....or even forgotten back in the car!!). If you have them with you and on you, then you will be much more easily be able to get yourself out of any strife! More particularly, in your situation, you are rigging the cave....not having your ascenders on whilst doing this is just asking for trouble!

Back to your situation....well you are without your ascenders, and without a rope to be able to retrieve them. Who knows, they may not even be retrievable (e.g. pack lodged down a narrow crevice), or worth retrieving (i.e. it would be unwise to trust any gear dropped down a pitch onto a solid surface). Looks like it's end of the trip for today. Unless you can easily communicate with Barry a pitch above, it is probably best call Barry down to you and break the news to him.

If Barry has some rope in his pack, then he might be able to rig the third pitch and descend down it to recover your ascenders. If not, then you have to work out how to safely get the pair of you out of the cave. A first step would be to check what ascending resources you have amongst you. These resources include:

- Barry's set of ascenders,
- any spare ascenders amongst you (e.g. some cavers carry a third ascender for ropewalking, or to assist in crossing knots/negotiating pitch-heads etc.)
- prussik loops (which make an excellent emergency ascenders), or materials that can be fashioned into prussiks (e.g. thin tape, pack haul cord, spare rope etc.)
- your descenders, which in an emergency can be made to act as an ascender (this is a rather tedious method of ascending a rope!)

If the pitches are straightforward, perhaps the easiest solution is for Barry to lower down his ascenders after he ascends each pitch. You then ascend up to him and return his gear. The process is repeated until you

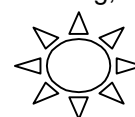
get out of the cave. Note that to minimise snagging, the ascenders would best be placed in a weighted cave pack for the lower. However, if the pitches aren't straightforward, this method might not be workable due to snagging of the ascenders, the need to undo rebelay and the consequent potential for rope abrasion etc.

If the 'sharing' solution isn't appropriate, then you need to

improvise a pair of "ascenders" to get out of the cave. If you can't manage this, then it may be a case of sending Barry off to procure some more rope (in the hope that Barry can descend to recover your ascenders), or spare ascenders for you. In either case you'll be in for a cold wait, and will also be putting Barry at risk by having him 'solo' out of the cave and 'solo' back in.

It is prudent to practise 'improvised' ascender skills, even if only to experience how much of an effort it is to make you realise that you don't want to lose your mechanical ascenders ever again! It is always wise to SRT with all your SRT gear attached in position, ready for use!

Yours in caving, Dorothy.



## Four busy days 'tour-guiding' in Southern Tas: 12-15 February 2002

By Jeff Butt

**Participants included:** David Wools-Cobb (NC), Garry and Jenny Whitby (NSW), Jodie (NSW), Michael (NSW), Jay and Ross Anderson (WA), Peter and Ann Bosted (USA), Phil Rowsell, Arthur Clarke, Jeff Butt.

This summer has seen many visitors come to Tasmania for some caving; some of the visitors were well organised (as were our guests above) giving lots of forward notice. Unfortunately many others weren't very well organised and gave virtually zero notice and regrettably some of these missed out on any STC assisted caving. So, if you are planning a caving foray down here and would like some local assistance, then please give plenty of notice, especially if coming during a popular time!

The visiting crew were very keen, though a little weary from a solid week of caving up North. After a mega-photographic trip through Kubla Khan on the 10th, Monday 11th ended up being a bit of a rest day over which everyone relocated from around the state to National Park, where we stayed as Tyenna Valley Lodge at Maydena was fully booked out.

On each day we had several caving options, one a bit harder and one a bit easier to try and cater for everyone's tastes and enthusiasm levels. Not everyone had to cave each day, i.e. there were some extra rest days for some. Our trips were:

- Tuesday 12/2: Khazad-Dum; Main route-Serpentine route Exchange trip.
- Wednesday 13/2: Slaughterhouse Pot Through-trip/Growling In/out trip.

We then relocated to Ida Bay, staying at Arthur Clarke's. Our trips were:

- Thursday 14/2: Mini-Martin-Exit trip.
- Friday 15/2: Midnight Hole Through-trip.

Many of the visitors were into photography; and so many (verging on too many!) photographs were taken on our underground sorties....to date we've not seen any of the results, but I'm assured that there were some excellent photographs taken, and we'll see some in due course.

Feedback was that everyone had a great time sampling the caving in Tassie, even if they ended up somewhat bodily tired and sore.

## P-Hanger Rebolting Program: Owl Pot (JF221): 1 March 2002

By Jeff Butt

**Party:** Damian Bidgood, Jeff Butt.

Last year we rebolted Midnight Hole with state of the art stainless-steel P-hangers; the P-Hanger Rebolting Program (PHRP) was thus born. Our current list (alphabetic order) of caves to rebolt includes: Dwarrowdelf, Khazad Dum, Mini-Martin, Owl Pot and Tassy Pot. All are popular caves, each of which possess a number of decaying bolts (Australian Carrots, Loxins, Spits) from days gone by.

Owl Pot, a popular Introductory SRT cave has five spits, half of which are dodgy (one stripped, two poorly installed), and so was high up on the list of caves to

rebolt. One could argue that no bolts at all are needed in this cave, indeed, the first time I visited this cave not a single bolt was present, nor needed. For all pitches there are natural anchor options, some of which involve using chocks, or extra lengths of rope for tie-backs to more distant natural anchors.

However, whether you like it or not over the past ~fifteen-twenty years 5 spits have been installed in this cave. These have simplified the rigging somewhat meaning that less rope, less hardware and less mental energy is required to safely rig the pitches. It would be relatively easy to remove all the existing bolts and return the cave to a more natural state, but of course,

then someone would just install new bolts and the cycle start again. So, we are opting to install well sited, long-lasting and replaceable stainless steel P-hangers in these caves....hence the P-Hanger Rebolting Program.

After completing the rebolting of Midnight Hole, we were keen to make some progress on other high priority caves. However, a problem with getting supplies of resin (it comes from Melbourne, but is made in the UK) meant that the program was 'stuck' in it's tracks. Fortunately late in February supplies of resin were available and so once again we were able to make some progress. Experience is a good teacher, and from rebolting Midnight Hole we had all the potential problems identified and had 'spares' to cater for likely contingencies. So, everything was set up to make it a successful trip.

So, on March 1st, well endowed with equipment Damian and I headed off for Owl Pot. We had quite a bit of gear; a pack full of rope, a 'drilling' pack, a small but weighty 'battery' pack, a 'gluing' pack, as well as our own caving gear. As we headed down the cave, we left bits and pieces behind where-ever possible (e.g. the spare battery pack en-route) and soon enough were at the final waterfall pitch.

Prior to making a start on the drilling we had a good think/talk about options etc. It would be quite easy just to 'whack' in some bolts; but we wanted to ensure that the bolts were as perfectly sited as possible. Things to consider include:

- are bolts necessary?, i.e. are there perfectly good naturals available in the vicinity.
- giving safe access to the pitch-head.
- siting bolts to give a good hang, i.e. to avoid rope abrasion or other objective hazards such as a 'spreading' waterfall.
- the quality of the rock available, proximity to 'defects', other bolts etc.
- placing the bolts high to facilitate negotiating the pitch-head. This is especially useful for rescue situations with a patient in a stretcher.
- minimising fall-factors in the event of any one anchor failing.
- correct orientation of the 'eye' to facilitate load-sharing of anchors.
- and last but not least; the removal and rehabilitation of existing/defunct bolts in the

area.

At the waterfall pitch a safety line was rigged from a natural well back up the passage and the one good spit. We drilled three holes (location details in the table below), which the standard drill battery (1.7 Amp-hour, 24 Volt) managed. Once the time-consuming drilling was done we swiftly installed three new P-hangers. Attempts at removing the two spits weren't successful; the thread on the one good one ended up stripping as I attempted to extract it, and the other was already stripped. So, we filled these defunct anchors with resin and camouflaged the pink resin with drill dust.

At the Bowling Alley pitch we again debated options. In the end we opted for one bolt at the pitch-head, to augment existing natural anchors (the large blocks), and another a few metres down for use as either a rebelay or deviation. This second bolt stops the rope rubbing on blocks at the pitch-head.

Back at the second pitch, we installed three bolts, one as a tie-back near the existing spit (which we had trouble removing), and two at the pitch-head to give a y-belay. Note that on this pitch, one ideally should install a deviation about 8 m from the bottom (there are plenty of naturals on the floor for this) to prevent the rope from rubbing on the ceiling for the last part of this pitch. The two poorly installed spits on the ceiling adjacent to 'top ledge' were not removed; we need to return with better spit extracting technology!

No P-Hangers were installed on the entrance ramp as there are suitable naturals there.

All up we installed 8 P-Hangers in 3 sessions using 3 glue nozzles and about two-thirds of a 380 ml cartridge of glue. Time-wise it took us about 8 hours to complete the job. For future reference; the 24 Volt 1.7 Amp-Hour battery pack just does 3 holes; the 7 Amp-Hour pack should do at least a dozen. The locations are outlined below in the updated rigging guide for Owl Pot.

PS. Alan Jackson, Geoff Wise and David Waugh visited Owl Pot on 3/3/2002 (see next page). They checked all the new P-hangers and then used them to good avail.

Pitch	Rigging Details
Entrance Ramp-20p	25 m rope. Y-belay between boulder on ground and trunks of the small tree on the left-hand side.
Pitch 2-30p	35 m rope. P-hanger on left hand side as tie-back. Y-belay from two P-hangers at pitch-edge, one on each wall. Deviation suggested from naturals in the floor about 8 m off the bottom.
Pitch 3 (Bowling Alley)-20p	25 m rope. Tape around large block, P-hanger on right hand wall at pitch-head. Rebelay or Deviate from P-hanger on right 2 m down.
Pitch 4 (Waterfall Pitch)-30p	35 m rope. P-hanger on the right-hand wall at head height 4 m back from the lip. Two P-hangers on right-hand wall just past the lip, one at head height, one at lip level. Use of these latter P-hangers places one a further 0.5 m away from the waterfall than the natural 'spike' right at the lip.

# 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 (gregmidd@ozemail.com.au) with your requirements. ~\$1 each

## Gear

- CAVE PACKS, cylindrical in shape, made from Heavy duty Ripstop PVC material, double thickness material at wear points, strong seams (triple sewn) and all critical stitching is on the inside (to protect it from wear), drain holes, large diameter eyelet's and a simple 'draw cord' closure as well as adjustable straps. Strongly made. Available in either Yellow or Blue with different colour trims. Available in two sizes,
  - the "STANDARD" (25 litres: 23 cm diameter, 61 cm long) and \$55.00
  - the "EXTRA" (31 litres: 25 cm diameter, 63 cm long). \$65.00
- LARGER OR SMALLER-SIZED PACKS can be made to order, JUST ASK. POA
- Aluminium Bars for Rappel Racks. \$5.00
- BATA full-length Gumboots, Size 9, Green with Orange Sole, and steel toecaps. \$20.00

## Tape

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

## 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

## 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
- Used Metal Lamp Brackets and cable keeper. Good condition. Just need to add some small bolts. \$4.00 each
- Used Plastic Lamp Brackets. Good condition and comes with fixing screws and a cable keeper. \$3.00 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. We've got ~400 m of the stuff and it's time to get rid of it. It's available in various lengths (up to 20 m), diameters (9, 10 and 11 mm) and includes Edelrid and Bluewater ropes. You might be surprised to find that it's not all stiff and horrible! Prices have plummeted and the price structure is now:

< 4 m	free or make a donation of 10 cents/m if you wish,
4 to < 6 m	\$1.00,
6 to < 10 m	\$3.00,
10 to < 15 m	\$6.00,
15 m plus	\$12.00 or 70 cents/m, whichever is less.

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.

## Owl Pot (JF221): Sun 3 March 2002

By Alan Jackson

Party: Alan Jackson, Dave Waugh, Geoff Wise

After a long summer featuring a distinct lack of subterranean excursions Geoff and I were ready for a change. Dave had quite clearly done bugger all to further his caving experience either, so we dragged him along on his first half proper vertical trip. The weather appeared ominous at times, but cleared nicely in time for our tearing assault on the slippery Nine Rd. Momentum was the key to ascending the hill in the 'beep-beep' and we all appeared to have what looked like cave mud in our underpants by the time we reached the parking spot. We donned the brand spanking new caving suits and headed in to the scrub.

The first pitch was as slimy as ever and we scurried down to head of the second pitch. It was here that the element of risk increased as we put our faith into the new p-hangers put there on Friday by Jeff and Damian. They smelt a little, but not excessively, and there was no obvious movement. We trusted them! A perfect natural eye in the rock face provided a satisfactory re-direct and the second pitch was safely descended. It was at this point that we discovered the result of what can only be described as a filthy and blatant act of vandalism. Constable Damian Bidgood's torch, which he will have us believe was 'dropped', was lying a little worse for wear on the cave floor. How much longer must we put up with this disrespectful practice so



typical of our police today? Needless to say we removed the torch in question.\*

Continuing on, we negotiated the tight boulder pile, descended the third pitch and stopped for a nibble at the streamway. At this point Geoff's STC battery threw in the biscuit and barely managed to emit 1 femtowatt (bloody dodgy STC lights!) Stocked up on squished sandwiches we descended the majestic waterfall pitch, which is now much more pleasant thanks to the new bolts, and had a grovel around the final passage just in case a new section had mysteriously opened up. We then began the slog back to the top.

All up 'twas a thoroughly enjoyable trip. The new p-hangers didn't fail catastrophically, which was nice. They were a little smelly, but that could be expected as they were under 48 hours old! Bolt position is certainly better, removing the messy rigging from pitch 2, the dodgy boulder from 3 and the wetness from 4. Well done Jeff and Damian.

The new suits are now considerably less orange and we all have an appreciation for the art of driving one's car ludicrously quickly on the Nine Rd.

\* in no way does the author believe that dropping his glove down Dwarrowdelf is even remotely similar to Const. Bidgood's act of vandalism.

## **Mole Creek Trip: 9-11 March 2002**

By Stephen Bunton

**Present:** Stephen, Kathy and Grace Bunton, Joe Farrell, Michelle Keyes, Janine McKinnon, Heather Nichols, Steve Phipps, John Stackpoole and Ric Tunney.

We all arrived at various hours of the Friday evening and into the night and erected tents etc. "The Marakoopa Hut is fine to live in but you wouldn't want to sleep in it!" was one comment I overheard.

Saturday promised to be a scorcher but it got off to a slow start. Indeed it started in dribs and drabs but surprisingly we eventually all arrived at our destination and we even had all the ropes and rigging gear. There's something about the need for people to escape to the luxury of the Marakoopa toilets that disrupts the communications. Debbie Hunter arrived for the day to escort us on our Devils Pot - Anastomosis through trip and by the time we all started to slog up the hill the day had indeed warmed up. Ric, Janine and Debbie had located Anastomosis by the time the rest of us arrived. We trogged up and split into two groups. Joe rigged Devils Pot and Kathy descended the first pitch to the rebelay for a look-see. The Steve's then descended and after a long wait while Joe continued the rigging, we all got the bottom of the Devils Pot although the whole cave rather misses the point by not following the spectacular waterfall.

At the bottom we encountered the others abseiling into the final rift/chamber and they related stories of the obstacles to be encountered on the way out. As we began our respective ascents we were treated to the rare sight of two people prussiking out of the same chamber but out different caves. I was certainly concerned about the squeeze halfway up the bottom pitch and did in fact find it challenging as I inchwormed my way out. The other obstacle to be considered was two straws beside a flowstone false floor. This wasn't as claustrophobic a squeeze as the other but equally as serious. The rest of the trip out was uneventful. I managed to find my way out to daylight but Joe and Steve continued on into a large chamber where they found a marsupial skeleton. We had a few jokes and a bit of empathy for the South

Australian cavers who were lost and overdue here recently. We imagined what it would be like without the daylight to guide you out. We got back to Devils Pot just as the others emerged and we all headed down the hill together.

Kathy and Grace had amused themselves for the day and had the campfire burning when we arrived. Most of us were keen just to wind down for the afternoon and forego the trip into Genghis Khan for which we had a permit. Steve, Joe and Heather escaped the heat by heading off for a swim in the Mersey. We all enjoyed a most pleasant evening around that most ancient and increasingly rare phenomenon, the campfire!

Next morning again in what seems to be typical STC Mole Creek mode we headed off to the Mersey. While Joe and Steve rigged Top Hole the Buntons spent a pleasant though chilly couple of hours in Croesus Cave (despite being clad in wetsuits). Some of the pools are a little deep for 7 year olds and dad did a fair bit of piggy backing, 24kg of weight training should be good for the soul. We headed out of the cave as the others headed in.

*This bit by Joe:*

I took about an hour and half to rig Top Hole, descend and ascend to check that the rope made the bottom. Then Rick conveyed us to the bottom of the hill and the party (minus Buntons) trogged up and we did the soggy low side shuffle through the entrance pool into the cave. Rick had his cave blaster light so Croesus was displayed in all her awesome splendour. John and I had trouble keeping up (this was because benefiting from John's superior knowledge of speleogenesis was higher on my agenda than wading through the next knee deep gour to see another big flowstone - I'm so spoiled).

I was nearly the only one to use my pre-rigged exit. When I rigged it I thought people were keen to go out that way. I think I was blinded by my enthusiasm. Ric, Janine and Michele turned back after a trot up the golden stairs and Steve and Heather turned back when

the going got crawly. John decided he was up for an adventure (no vert. gear), so I belayed him up the first two thirds of Top Hole. I played around with a hauling system to get him up the last part but it turned out much simpler to lower my harness down.

*Back to Bunty:*

The McTinnies had spent the morning sunbaking on the gravel beach and now it was the Buntons turn. After lunch the Buntons headed off for a trip into Lynds Cave. The crux of Lynds is the wade downstream and this was actually quite enjoyable given the warm weather and wetsuits. We didn't venture too far into the cave because Grace was a bit spooked by the noise of the waterfall which she proceeded to climb in better style than many a grown up. (You know how some kids hate noise and are scared of the vacuum cleaner, well so is her dad come to think of it!). We then enjoyed the wallow upstream and finally washed off in the Mersey with the others who had now returned from Croesus and were rinsing the ropes from yesterday. After the cold of Croesus, Michelle who had recently arrived from Cairns, resorted to sunbaking in her down jacket to get warm.

Joe and John arrived back eventually and again we all enjoyed a pleasant evening around the campfire at the hut.

Monday's haphazard start somehow came together at the last minute just in time to join the 10am Marakoopa Cave tour. Once inside we quickly by passed the tourists and took off into the far reaches of the cave.

We jumped the fence at the appropriate location to continue upstream. We set a cracking pace through the lovely streamway to the upstream entrance and then thrashed around in the jungle and found the entrance to Marakoopa II by following the sound of the waterfall. We proceeded to the upstream entrance following the stream. It's impossible to get lost and hard to describe. Marakoopa Cave is my favourite type of streamway, dark, sinuous and smooth-polished with occasional marbling. The only thing it doesn't do is plunge over a few big pitches. As I negotiated the same obstacles as my daughter, I realised how much I am limited by my decreasing flexibility and the advantage being 1.2m high in narrow sinuous passages.

When we returned to the tourist cave we followed the trail around and about and a up and a down, a one two three step and so on. Marakoopa Cave has more steps than almost any other tourist cave I know but it's well worth the exploration especially to the top chamber - The Cathedral. Once back near the entrance we cleverly avoided the tourists once more before making our exit. It wasn't long before we were lunching back at the hut and packing up for the drive home and the battle with the long weekend traffic.

Steve and Joe didn't join us for this Marakoopa adventure but went bushwalking somewhere for some reason. Joe you better explain this bit too. [yeah, well... we walked into Lees Paddocks to commune with the leeches and the bugs of nature. We did find some human-sized entrances in a siliceous sandstone outcrop. This was up behind the hut at the Western end of the main lower paddock. - Joe]

## **Dwarrowdelf – No Orcs Here (JF14): 13 March 2002**

By Geoff Wise

**Party:** Phil Rowsell, Alan Jackson, Geoff Wise

Party: Alan Jackson, Phil Rowsell, Geoff Wise

Alan and I met Phil the day after the Mini Martin trip, while we were cleaning the ropes. He immediately quizzed us on when we would be free to go caving. My muscles hadn't recovered from the day before and I was thinking now would be a good time to give up the caving caper. Anyway we agreed to head down Dwarrowdelf the next Wednesday.

On the morning of the great quest we arrived at the gear store at 8, packed everything into the "go anywhere" Barina and the fellowship headed off. We got to the entrance of the cave where Phil blew two globes before heading down. I caught up to the others at the head of the third pitch for which Phil claimed to need the rope that was in my pack. However as we fed it out of the pack and down the pitch he realised that I had the 110m, not the 40m and had to rerig while I stuffed the rope back into the pack. The rest of the descent was

uneventful, although Phil's rigging songs and humming took me back to the days of caving with Tim Anderson.

We bottomed the final pitch and rigged a handline down the slope to the streamway. Phil and Alan were then off for an explore with me following slowly behind enjoying the view. While groveling on the edge of the stream the rock I was on gave way and I ended up in the drink. This was made worse by the fact that there was an obvious dry bypass that I dismissed because I was following Alan. We found no orcs, cave trolls, wizards, elves, hobbits or dwarves which was nice for a change.

We headed out taking it in turns to derig and carry the heavy pack. We were all out of the cave and on the way back to the car by 7:30 declaring the trip a good one, although I was thinking it did not look much like the movie. All that was left was to meet the next day to clean the gear, for which Alan bailed saying he had to work. A likely story!

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*Choose your own trip report...* If you liked the Choose your own adventure in the last Spiel then feel free to write your own and send the pieces to me. Greg hates them 'cos they're hard to catalogue so lets have some more...

