



Speleo Spiel 332

August – September – October 2002

Newsletter of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc, PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006, AUSTRALIA

STC Officers

President & Public Officer:
Steve Bunton
Ph: (03) 6278 2398 (h)
sbunton@postoffice.friends.tas.edu.au

Vice President & Social Secretary:
Janine McKinnon
Ph: (03) 6243 5415 (h)
jmckinnon@tassie.net.au

Secretary:
Ric Tunney
Ph: (03) 6243 5415 (h)
rtunney@tassie.net.au

Treasurer:
Steve Phipps
Ph: (03) 6223 3939 (h).
sjphipp@utas.edu.au

Equipment Officer and S&R Officer:
Jeff Butt
Ph: (03) 6223 8620 (h)
jeffbutt@netspace.net.au

Librarian:
Greg Middleton
Ph: (03) 6223 1400 (h)
gregmidd@ozemail.com.au

Editor:
Joseph Farrell
Ph: (03) 6225 3839 (h)
jfarrell@postoffice.utas.edu.au

Webmaster:
Arthur Clarke
Ph: (03) 6228 2099 or 6298 1107 (h)
arthurc@southcom.com.au

Web Site:
<http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/stcaving/>

Front Cover: *(photo by Joe Farrell)*
The Tree formation in Baldocks Cave at Mole Creek. The figure is Aaron, a PWS guide at Mole Creek.

Back Cover: *(photo by Jeff Butt)*
Dave Rasch doing a dangle in a cave somewhere in deepest North America.



The Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated
PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006
<http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/stcaving/>
ABN: 73-381-060-862

The views expressed in the
Speleo Spiel are not
necessarily the views of
the Editor, or of the
Southern Tasmanian
Caverneers Incorporated.

Issue No. 332, Aug - Sept - Oct 2002

CONTENTS

Regular Bits

Editorial	2
Forward Program.....	2
Stuff 'n Stuff	2
Membership list.....	14

Trip Reports

Bonepit.....	4
Slaughterhouse Pot logbook installation.....	5
Mini Martin: Bolt checking and a quick look in Exit for the bottom of IB113.....	5
Mystery Creek: A multi party trip	7
Valley Entrance through trip	10
Revelation Cave and Yodellers Pot	10

Other Exciting Stuff

The president's opinion – culture of secrecy.....	3
A caving program for blind youth	6
The Discovery of Newdegate Cave and Hastings Thermal springs	8
The Current situation with Riveax Cave HC-2	11
Book review, <i>The Descent</i>	13

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.

This work is STC copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the publishers and the inclusion of acknowledgement of the source.

Eggsonbellyal

Well, Its been a long time. This Spiel spans three months (and then some while I got around to it). The decision to extend the period between the last issue and this was made primarily because it removed the coincidence of Spiel production and exams. I'd personally like to thank everyone who voted for this. So this is a one-off three monther – all spiel subscribers will now get an extra months subscription to ensure everyone gets their 6 issues.

I hereby give notice that I'm standing down as editor next year. That's plenty of notice for anyone who's interested in taking it over after our March AGM. I can say I've really enjoyed doing it, but confess I've been letting it get in the way of uni. I'm certainly happy to spend time helping the editor-to-be with their first issue. Talk to me if you're interested.

As I'm highly unlikely to produce the next Spiel before 25th Dec, I'm taking this opportunity to wish everyone who considers themselves even remotely an armchair caver a HAPPY and SAFE CHRISTMAS and associated festive events. Joe.

Stuff 'n Stuff

STC Christmas Dinner

Arthur and Robyn have kindly offered to host our Christmas dinner at Francistown again this year. The set date is Sat. 14 December. Again, Robyn has offered to cater for \$15 per head (food only-BYOG). Any funds surplus to cost will be donated to the club. A bit of a fundraiser in fact. Those old hands from previous dinners will recall what excellent value for money we got. Robyn is an excellent (and innovative) cook. There is room to crash in the house, plenty of space to put up tents outside and Arthur said something at the last meeting about bunks and a garage. Wait for more details on that one. The more that come the merrier- and more money for the club! Caving trips will be organised on both days for those interested. Start thinking about what sort of caving you want to do (but not compulsory) and let Janine know.

RSVP to Robyn Clair @: arthurc@southcom.com.au
The sooner the better so Robyn has plenty of time to get organised to cater for the hordes.

CCV visits over summer

Caving Club of Victoria have applied for permits for caves at Mole Creek on the dates of 28 - 30th Dec and 9 - 12th Jan. They include Croesus, Haille Selassie, Lynds, Marakooa, Ghengis and Kubla. They may not have full quotas so get in touch with Dave Campbell (buick_58@hotmail.com) if you can't be bothered arranging your own trip. They would also like to spend

some time down south and would appreciate guides for Midnight Hole, Mini Martin et. al.

8 road access

Jeff Butt advises that logging in the vicinity of the 8 road has left it impassable for 2WDs.

Forward Program

30 November: Mystery Creek with scouts. Help is more than likely required. Contact Ric.

3 March: Kubla Khan to be led by Steve Bunton.

Result of September's EGM

It is proposed and passed that the following be inserted into the Constitution as Article 5.11:

"Friends of STC: A member of not less than five years' standing may be made a Friend of STC, in recognition of outstanding services rendered by such persons to the Organisation. Friends of STC are entitled to receive free copies of any newsletter produced by the organisation; however, they are not members of the Organisation. Friends of STC are not required to pay a subscription; neither shall they incur any personal insurance or affiliation costs. The procedure for the resignation or expulsion of a Friend of STC shall be the same as that for a member."

Healy-Cuthbert Memorial Lecture

Our auspicious president Steve Bunton was the guest speaker at this year's Healy-Cuthbert Memorial lecture. The lecture is in memory of those from Taroona High School who died in the Mystery Creek Cave tragedy 13 years ago. It was held on Friday October 11th at the life sciences lecture theatre at Uni. Steve showed slides of early Overseas expeditions and some Tassie caves. It was extremely entertaining.

Jack Dalton's Blue Lake

Arthur Clarke described recently on the list server his rediscovery of this Hastings Karst curiosity...

While searching for likely spring water sites to place our charcoal detectors - with the assistance of Roy Skinner (pointing to the logs he used to walk along) - I located the famed long lost Jack Dalton's Blue Lake. It is quite a specky feature, but the water isn't blue (it's dark inky black), though it might be blue in the drier summer months. Jack Dalton was the former publican at Dover Hotel in the 1930's and 1940's and he reportedly located the feature while walking through he Hastings bush near the road east of the carpark, while a party of his hotel guests visited Newdegate Cave.

The lake is formed in the base of an 8-10m deep vertically sided, 10-12m wide cylindrical collapse

feature that appears to be formed in glacial outwash debris; one of a row of three similar collapse features. The lake water level appears to undercut one side of the rock debris collapse wall. It requires a ladder or SRT to access the lake bottom. It could perhaps be termed as a partially drowned collapse doline in subjacent karst or maybe it is our one and only cenote in Tasmania? On a stringy bark tree beside the feature, an old SCS thin aluminium tag bears the number punched "209" figure. Does anyone know who placed this number tag and when? In my article listing the known caves and karst features at Hastings (Speleo Spiel #310: p. 16), "H-209" appears as one of five SCS tag numbers of unknown status.

Cover correction

Last Spiel (331)'s cover caption was incorrect. It should have read "Photo of Doug Strait and Jeff Butt canoeing in Snail Shell Cave, Tennessee photo by Dave Rasch (with Jeff's camera)".

Gatings

Forestry has advised that Tailender at Mole Creek will be gated, and that Shooting Star – the new big find at Mole Creek already has been. The club supports these actions.

New finds

On top of Rolan and Jeff's Shooting Star Cave, Mad Phil reckons he's found 3 new worthwhile caves at Ida

Bay. The 213 undiscovered caves are still out there for those who can be bothered.

Springwater farm

This issue is getting nasty up at Mole Creek. The land owners have their hackles (and now reportedly electric fences) up against cavers using the present public access.

Deb Hunter and Henry Shannon have inspected the new route from the old tip and report that it is arduous and time consuming to traverse. The terrain is apparently also unsuitable for vehicle access to be constructed.

STC supports the Baillieu's proposal for this new public access from the old Mole Creek tip. However this consequently gives tacit support to the closure of the existing public access. This closure is to be bought about by swapping of a parcel of the farm's land containing caves (which caves?) for complete closure of the current access.

Unfortunately the Baillieus seem to have ceased being co-operative while the issue is being sorted. Although Deb's *Wild Cave Tours* is currently the most inconvenienced by this, Deb is campaigning on behalf of all cavers to keep this access open. (For those less familiar with the area it has been a primary access to at least 3 historically and recreationally significant caves since the 1890s. These are Baldocks, Sassafras and Cyclops Caves. There are other beautiful caves in the area including My Cave and Their Cave.)

The President's Opinion - Culture of Secrecy

by Stephen Bunton

Tasmania is indeed a blessed place. Blessed with clean air, water, beautiful scenery, wild places, pleasant urban environments, low population density and plenty of caves. The net result is that there appears to be more caves than people to explore them.

However, it is not as simple as that, cave exploration in Tasmania is difficult. The caves are cold and wet requiring a certain level of technical expertise and of course they are hidden away in deep, dark forest. It is therefore difficult for novices to get into caving, in fact it is difficult for visitors to get into caving here and I must admit even people like myself have difficulty finding out where the caves are. When I started caving with TCC there was a certain clichiness, which manifest itself thus: At the meetings on Wednesday night there were no future trips scheduled yet a small group of people seemed to get it together every weekend and inevitably explored some incredible caves. I questioned their secrecy. Should I have questioned my level of competence, don't they trust me? or my deodorant, do I smell?

Now the problem seems to have spread to other areas as has been revealed in the Riveaux Cave saga. It appears that the secrecy surrounding the cave was a deliberate strategy by Forestry Tasmania as a result of advice to them from a caver and club member in the Forest Practices Board. It appears that Forestry bought the line that the greatest threat to the caves was cavers suffering "exploration fever". It seems to me that this bizarre strategy was doomed to failure from the outset. Caves kept secret will be discovered eventually, if not by this generation maybe by the next. Southern Tasmanian Caverneers is upset about many aspects of the Riveaux Cave issue, the most significant of these being that despite the club's expertise, they were not involved in the exploration, mapping, scientific study and subsequent management of the caves. If the aim of the exercise was to preserve the caves as a pristine "wilderness cave area" then this aim should have been outlined to the club at the beginning.

The club would have loved to make it's input right from the start. This would have prevented the unfortunate situation where the cave was explored and mapped twice, with the inherent damage that this might cause to the cave, despite us treating the cave with "utmost respect". What has happened is that various bureaucrats and the professional cavers used

as contractors, have treated the cavers and caving club with contempt and distrust. We welcome the free flow of information between agencies for the good of science, society and conservation. If this is not forthcoming, then how are we to trust an agency like Forestry if they keep their operations cloaked in secrecy?

It is likewise disturbing that a number of our most active club members are not actually caving with the club but as the duties of their employment. The consequence is that despite the fact that there is plenty of caving happening in Tasmania there is very little club caving happening. I know I don't have a lot of time to go caving but I'm getting a little tired of the fact that when I do have the opportunity, there are no trips. I know professional cavers work during the week and have weekends off but I would dearly love to be involved in their projects. Projects which seem interesting and enormously worthwhile.

It also appears that it is only the professional cavers who are making the decisions about the management of caves. Yes, they are caving club members but it appears that the authorities seem to think that if these cavers know, then the club and wider caving community knows also. However, there is no real communication back to the club from these people and the club is not involved at all in the decision making. I find this a pity.

The disturbing aspect of these cases is that many club members were personally insulted by the lack of trust placed in them. Caving has changed. Members of STC are bound by the ASF Code of Ethics and the Minimal Impact Code. The pioneering age of "exploration fever" is over. Whilst exploration is still the spice of caving, times have changed and cavers are now more likely to embrace concepts of "wilderness caving areas" and "no entry caves" or "survey once and leave alone caves". What they are not willing to embrace is the concept that some bureaucrat has decided upon these management options for them without the opportunity to provide any advice.

I'll admit there is still a degree of paranoia in the caving club about agencies "locking us out of our caves", fuelled by more gates and tighter permit controls. Incidents such as the Riveaux Cave fiasco only serve to fuel such paranoia. Likewise cavers should not vent such fury on what are well meaning club members, working as cave conservationists and managers. I know of one club member who doesn't come to meetings because he can't even have a beer with us without getting a hard time from someone. This is sad and it doesn't serve the cause of free flow of information nor ingratiate ourselves to the various management authorities. They must think we really are still back in the age of conquest!

I would dearly love to explore new caves. I would like to survey as I go, produce a map of which I am proud. I would like to carry-out track marking to ensure the cave's conservation and take photos to record its beauty. I would then like to be involved in decisions about the cave's management. As it is, I do none of this because someone else, someone who doesn't trust me and keeps it all a secret, is doing this instead. There are a plethora of caves in need of work and yet the club can't organise a forward programme because there is apparently nothing to do. There is plenty of stuff to do and we would like to work with people in the know, to make a positive contribution. We wish to be a part of the solution, not be perceived as the problem.

Bonepit (JF203): 20 August 2002

By Jeff Butt

Party: Andras Galambos, Jeff Butt.

This was one of those days, we felt like some light-weight caving, but weren't sure on what. Suddenly, I recalled my first ever Florentine cave, Bonepit (JF203), and how I'd only ever seen the upper levels. I was interested to know what was down below. Andras had never been to this cave, so we had a plan.

Having recently re-located the entrance, it was easy enough to find; and we've now GPS'd the entrance, so shouldn't lose it again.

As mentioned above, I'd only ever looked around the upper levels, so this time, after the entrance 10 m pitch, we headed straight for the main 'pitch'. We rigged the first part of this wide rift, but then found it was easy enough to down-climb...this was fortunate, as we didn't have a surplus of rope! We then derigged our rope, down-climbed some 10 m to where the rope was really needed and dropped the final ~15 m vertical part of the rift. The cave is quite large, damp and JF like down

here. Options for a way on were however, nil; the water sinks into the gravels.

We did however note a large upper level above a dodgy 5 m climb. After several attempts at this climb, we resorted to lassoing (with our remaining short rope) a 'bulge' up above and prussiking up. This was a slightly risky move, as the rope only just stayed on this somewhat marginal bulge. I spotted Andras as he gingerly prussiked up; a good hold at the top and all was OK. There was some interesting cave up there including some wonderful mud formations (drip-holes etc.) had been trashed by some careless explorer who had walked right through the middle of them. I discreetly repaired the damage as well as I could; a few wet winters are needed to allow some additional natural restoration.

We then headed back up the pitch, collecting some decayed cyalume markers en-route. At the head of the rift, I bagged up a severely decayed woollen jumper, which we would later carry out. We checked out the

horizontal levels and found myriads of passage (another cave much looked at, but probably not surveyed?); much of it well used by countless exploring bodies. There were several interesting drops of about 20 m,

which we suspect headed back down to where we were before.

Anyway, we had quite a fun 6 hours in the cave, exploring every nook and cranny; it was indeed a suitable venue for the day.

Slaughterhouse Pot (JF337): Logbook installation: 23 August 2002

By Jeff Butt

Party: Damian Bidgood, John Cherry, Tim, Jeff Butt.

The Police SAR team were heading up to the Juneeflorentine for a bit of an outing and invited me along. I thought that this would be a good opportunity to replace the ropes that have been in Slaughterhouse Pot (SHP) for the last 12 months, as well as install a log-book in SHP to try and gain an idea of how many non-STC people are using our ropes which are semi-permanently in the cave. Actually; perhaps we should decide as a club whether it is worth leaving SHP permanently rigged.

It had been pretty snowy prior to the trip, and there was some snow on the ground which I imagined would melt on the day and cause the Growling streamway to rise. I was quite surprised to find that the river level wasn't up; however, I suspected that it would markedly rise during the day. With this in mind, I proposed that we do the through trip backwards to the normal way, i.e.

down Growling and out Slaughterhouse Pot, a variation which I've not done before.

The descent down Growling was sporty and somewhat damp; but that soon was forgotten as we headed up SHP...always a warming exercise. We replaced the ropes on the lower two pitches. Unfortunately the two short-ropes I had joined to replace the ropes on the first pitch were a few metres too short, so the original rope was left in place.

The log-book is located at the base of the first pitch, in a 90 mm diameter, 400 mm long PVC tube. If you are visiting this cave, please fill it in.

We emerged from SHP about 5 hours after heading in. The Growling stream hadn't noticeably changed in levels whilst we were underground....so we could have done the trip in the 'normal' manner, however, it was fun doing it 'against the grain'.

Mini-Martin (IB8): bolt checking and a quick look in Exit for the bottom of IB113: 23 September 2002

By Jeff Butt

Party: Mark Wright, Phil Rowsell, Jeff Butt.

The aim of the day was three-fold,

- to check the integrity of the P-Hangers installed in Mini-Martin earlier in the year,
- to resurvey down Mini-Martin to assist us in locating the likely place that IB113 approaches Exit Cave,
- and to have a look about in the "Dribble System" of Exit, which is where our survey data suggested that IB113 was headed.

The trip down Mini-Martin was very smooth, all the P-hangers passed the Inspection, which is pleasing. Incidentally, you may like to note that 180 m of rope is the perfect length for this cave. We surveyed down Mini-Martin and down to the streamway, linking into five of the main traverse markers (1019 and 1020 of the theodolite traverse; 66, 67 and 68 of the original traverse). It is worth noting that the IB8 number tag, which is installed on the anchor tree adjacent to the shaft is now totally grown over by bark. It is probably worth putting a new IB8 tag on the rock near the 'take-off' point.

After that we had a quick 'squiz' at the first part of the Western Passage, and also the Dribble System; we were looking for IB113 water, or passages likely to head towards IB113. We did a broad survey around the

SW'n wall of this area, and then back down to the streamway to tie our survey in.

We now have a survey path from the bottom of IB113, across the surface to Mini-Martin and down into Exit. From a first look of the data, it suggests that IB113 is more likely to lie above the Western Passage; but the Dribble System appears to carry the correct amount of water. So we still have a little more work to do in this area.

The trip up was smooth, although Mark who hasn't caved much lately found the ascent of the big pitch a bit of a workout. All up a good (and very hot and sweaty) seven hour trip with our aims being achieved.



No Dear Dorothy this month. Jeff has returned but Dorothy is still on Holiday in the US of A.

A Caving Program for Blind Youth

By Alice Anna RABITOVSKY

Introduction

The idea of introducing blind youth to caving evolved many years before, during experimental orientation in dark caves, without the use of lighting facilities. The experiments were held in the Cave of Matyas Mount, and involved finding the exit from the Theatre Chamber in total darkness.

The cave is substantially horizontal, of labyrinth type with compacted footpath in the clay floor by frequent visitors.

Development of strategy, preparations and implementation took place in the 1999-2000 school year. Besides offering a unique experience to blind youth, the program also connected to the field practices of the secondary school subject of Nature and Environmental Protection, which involved planting of trees and other environment protection practices.

Fourteen blind students, of the ages of 12 to 17 years, participated in the venture. Although the program was developed for the blind, it can also be implemented for students of normal vision.

Preparations

Theoretical education involved lecturing and informal conversation. The blind students were familiarized with the essential terms of speleology and their manifestations to the senses and imagination of blinds.

The practices were more complex. Since caving involved other than upright walk and off the mainstream objects and obstacles, the students needed to develop the skills of detection, identification and choice of suitable ways of passage, effective signals to communicate the nature of object and keeping the group together. The practices were held in groups, tested and trimmed at individual levels.

The development of uniform signals called for extensive experimentation with considerable input by the students.

Development of special orientation

We drew the students' attention to the different wear and erosion of rocks, distinguishing features of cave formations, and the compacted nature of clay floor in the frequently used areas and paths. Sensing the ground helped them

progressing continuously in bent position, as upright walk was not possible and therefore not desirable in the entire length of cave tours.

On entering the cave, they observed the difference in temperature (skin sensitivity), the clean air of cave (nasal sensitivity), the silence and echoes (audio detection).

By touch they could find their way away from the wall and back to the main passage.

Their hearing had prominent role in orientation. From the echoes of a series of sounds they could detect whether the passage way was narrowing, expanding, or it continued in a narrow pipe.

Owing to the paramount importance of hearing in orientation, we had them practicing sound signals and echo assessment, in order to develop proficiency.

Communicating to the rest of team an entry into, or exit from a narrow passage, they gave unique sound signals.



Familiarising the bat
(Photo: A.A. Rabbitovszky)

Attitude

On entering the cave the students had to concentrate on, and evaluate a large number of signals and impulses. In addition they spontaneously cared for own and fellow team members safety.

Their attitude was suitably responsible, confident, and leisurely joyful with frequent jokes and laughter.

On our Open Days the students proudly demonstrated their new skill to the visitors, amongst them alpinist Mr Szabolcs SZENDRŐ, and their teacher Mr BÁLINT.

Measure of Success

During the course the students developed confidence in moving in the cave, learned and recognised cave passages. To overcome difficult obstacles few students needed encouragement by the "seers".

By the end of course four students of fourteen developed proficiency to walk out of the cave on their own resourcefulness under non-interfering supervision by an experienced caver.

Summary Conclusions

The program achieved its objectives: -

1. It disseminated and expanded into practice the principles of nature and environment protection, familiarised the features of speleology for the blind by practical experience.
2. Developed special orientation skills for the blind in the nature at the surface, and under difficult conditions in the cave.
3. The combined application of theory and practical experience merged into caving skills in the blind. Accompanying problem-solving ability, inner vision, a new kind of environmental comprehension, and a capacity to construct an "inner map" have evolved. The outcome of personal development culminated in the ability of four persons out of fourteen being able to walk out from the labyrinth of the cave.
4. They developed the ability to adapt, tolerance for each other, and the will to engage in co-operative help.
5. Their endurance of harsh conditions, much different to their usually „civilised” environment, has improved.



*Blind cavers and members of Tolerancia Caving Group.
(Photo: A.A. Rabitovszky)*

6. Mastering the unusual environment has increased their self-confidence, and expanded the limits of their capabilities. They experienced an unusual and risky environment, which they handled on their own, their hand „not being held”.
7. They discovered a new world, new ways of responding challenges, and a new way of using their sensory capabilities.
8. The complex movement required by caving made them conscious of expanded physical fitness.

For us it was a much rewarding effort.

THE BLIND STUDENTS

Bogdán Zoltán, Gorzsás Krisztina, Jeremcsuk István, Molnár Marianna, Papp Éva, Pausch Éva, Pozsik Réka, Puskás Dávid, Rákli Zsuzsanna, Rhém Attila, Sulyok Péter, Szabó Anita, Szeles Gábor, Tóth László

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS OF TOLERANCIA CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP

Gonda Péter Group Leader, Takács Róbert Deputy Group Leader, Bajkay Zoltán, Balázs Péter, Bene Kálmán, Berta Györgyi, Csontos Katalin, Gyulai Bence, Horváth István, Klein Mariann, Kment Zsuzsa, Kovács Viktória, Marosvölgyi Krisztina, Nagy Imre, Pálmai Enikő, Rabitovszky Alice, Regős Bálint, Szittner Zsuzsanna.

A multi-party Mystery Creek Trip (IB10): 14 October 2002

By Jeff Butt

Party 1: Phil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

Party 1a: Kathryn

Party 2: Dave Stuckey, Beth, Jeff (all MSS); Nathan and Jane; Allison Moodie (UK)

Whilst Party 2 did the Midnight Hole through trip, Party 1 and 1a headed into Mystery Creek. Kathryn was doing a project for university, looking at/counting glow-worms. Phil and I had decided to resurvey Mystery Creek cave so we could add the data to the STC Archive. Yes, I realised that Mystery Creek Cave has been surveyed before, but again all we have is a map, no survey data; and the map I have seen doesn't show many of the known side-passages...so commencing another survey project seemed worthwhile.

The other reason for Party 1 being there was to assist Party 1a and to ensure that Party 2 made it through the

cave OK....Nathan and Jane's last caving trip was something of an Odyssey!

All went smoothly with the surveying, the glow-worm counting and the abseiling.

As the parties met, there was a bit of rearranging of personnel, resulting in Allison joining the survey team. Whilst Kathryn headed home and the others headed back to Dover to organise dinner, we surveyed through to Matchbox Squeeze, to link in with a previous survey I'd done of Midnight Hole (25/6/99). There is a small streamway just on the Mystery Creek side of the Matchbox Squeeze. I sent Phil and Allison up there for a look, and soon I got the call to come on in, it "goes and goes". This little passage gets somewhat wet, tight, then branches and ultimately quite small and squalid. Allison and Phil went to a point where it got pretty nasty (but still went), and yelled numbers back to me in

a much more comfortable place. We surveyed our way ~100 m back to 'standing room'.

All up we surveyed about 800 m for the day; a reasonable effort for our 7 hour trip. As we left the cave it rained and rained; so much so that most of us ended up squashing into the cabin booked by the MSS crew back at Dover for the night.

(Incidentally, on 9/10/02 I was in the area and noted that the bridge over Mystery Creek is no longer in-situ. It has been chain-sawed into pieces and sits in a pile on the bank. Presumably it was damaged in recent rains, and Parks removed it. Also, branches of a large tree have fallen down across the wooden stairway just before the cave entrance, it has yet to be tidied up; a bowsaw would take the offending branches off.)

The Discovery of Newdegate Cave and Hastings Thermal springs

Arthur Clarke

Prior to the compilation of this paper, the year "1916" was being quoted as the year of discovery for *Newdegate Cave*, but some newspaper reports quoted 1913 and/or 1918. The writer of this article was unable to locate published records describing the exact date for discovery of any of the *Hastings Caves* despite the fact the caves were located near a logging tramway and found by timber loggers from the nearby timber-milling town of Hastings. However, many relevant facts relating to the discovery of both the caves and the thermal springs have come to light during recent historical research by Arthur Clarke in three libraries and four Tasmanian institutions: Royal Society of Tasmania, Forestry Tasmania, Department of Mines and the Archives Office of Tasmania (**Clarke, 1999a**). Additional supporting evidence was revealed during an analysis of some of the early dated signatures and inscriptions found in three of the caves at Hastings (**Clarke, 1999b**).

Firstly, the thermal springs of the Hastings area: these were reportedly discovered in 1864 by Joseph Hazelwood, while in the *Lune River* area searching for Blackwood trees, suitable for cutting into lengths and splitting to make staves for wooden barrels for whale oil (**source: undated newspaper cutting, Dorothy Baker collection**). Hazelwood was working with a timber-getter named Joseph Graves out of Southport, so the springs were known to both Graves and John Hay No.2 when they moved into the *Hastings Bay* area to commence logging in 1868. A timber mill built by John Hay No.2 was started on the northern side of Hastings Bay in 1869-1870, together with the infrastructure of an associated township, some seven miles (11km) east of the present *Hastings Caves* area (**Kostoglou, 1994**).

The thermal springs were examined on a more scientific basis in mid-July, 1877 when Thomas Stephens, an amateur geologist who was working as a school inspector in the Southport/ Hastings district, investigated the creek with the springs. Stephens gave a detailed account of a visit to the "*Hot Spring*" near Southport, in an address to the Royal Society of Tasmania in 1878. He describes the difficulty of access to the area: initially by boat up the *Lune River* (with Joseph Graves), then a mile-and-a-half walk amidst "...fine timber and tolerably dense scrub..." to the creek site "...where the heated water was briskly bubbling up in the bed of the stream..." (**Stephens, 1879**). In his lecture to the Royal Society, Stephens states that the recorded temperatures of the creek water ranged from 72°F to a maximum of 83.5°F that he describes as "...hardly high enough to justify the name of "*Hot Spring*"..." (**Stephens, 1879**), but as history has shown - its name as *Hot Springs Creek* stills stands today.

The timber loggers, bushmen and tramway builders progressively worked northwards from the Hastings mill in the 1880's, then west along the northern bank of the *Lune River* in the early 1900's. In 1907 the Hay family sold their Hastings Mill to the Huon Timber Company, which then became part of the Western Australian-based Jarrah Company in 1912 (**Row, 1980**). Recent historical archaeology studies of the southern Tasmanian timber mills and tramways (**Kostoglou, 1994**), indicate construction of the final mill-log line branched off the *Lune River* tramway [just south from the present Hastings Caves Chalet], commencing around 1910-1912. This tramway headed northwest towards Adamsons Peak following the flat-floored valley of *Hot Springs Creek*, as logging continued in one of the most productive southern forest stands of mature giant stringy-bark eucalypts (**pers. comm., Handy Jager, 1999**). The Hastings tramway terminated on the southern side of *Hot Springs Creek*, on the flat valley floor below the foothills of *Caves Hill*, and according to Esperance Council Minutes was completed around early 1918 [**Archives Office of Tasmania (AOT): AC678/1**]. Meanwhile, on the northern side of *Caves Hill*, another tramway branch-line (the *Adamson's Falls Spur*) was being constructed from the "Strathblane Mill Number 2" (**Kostoglou, 1994**) to access timber from the Hobart Timber Company's forest leases located on both sides of *Caves Hill*.

The discovery and initial exploration of the caves at Hastings has been romanticised in the vague and conflicting anecdotes of local residents and descendants of early timber workers from the township of

Hastings (**Skinner & Skinner, 1976?**). The results of recent research by Arthur Clarke – including an analysis of the early penciled inscriptions on cave formations – indicate that *Newdegate Cave* was discovered sometime late in December 1917 (**Clarke, 1999b**). Discovery of the cave/s was first reported in four Tasmanian newspapers during mid-February, 1918; three of these newspapers carried exactly identical stories, describing a cave with a huge entrance opening a hundred feet wide and sixty to eighty feet high: resembling the dimensions of *Wolf Hole*. The fourth newspaper account gave a quite different and more accurate account, describing the cave being found “...by Albert Hudson and Percy Lockley, two bushmen employed by the Huon Timber Company, last Christmas...” [1917] - Hudson and Lockley had fallen a tree near a cave with an entrance that measured eight feet by six feet (**Daily Post, Feb. 14th, 1918**). A similar account is detailed in a letter written by Frank W. James, (schoolmaster at Hastings School from February 1917 to December 1919), who relates *Newdegate Cave* being discovered late in 1917. James says “...the log-hauler had been moved to a new station cutting giant trees at a point where a small gully extended northward (the general trend of tramway had been from E to W)...” and the Hastings Mill bush manager (Fred Estcourt) “...gave instructions for the felling of a fine stringy bark tree and cautioned the men that they were in difficult rocky country with limited escape.” In his letter to the Tasmanian Tourist Bureau, Frank James describes the party of men in the bush at the time: “...the axemen on the shoe were Barney [Albert] Hudson, and I think his brother Luby [Hudson], also Perc Lockley. Ernst [Joe] Ford, the head of the tramway team was present with the felling party.” (**AOT: AA494/61**). Further detail of the discovery and beauty of this new cave and two other nearby caves (the “*King George Cave*” and “*Beattie Cave*”) that were both discovered shortly afterwards, is contained in a report given to the Royal Society of Tasmania in April 1918 (**Beattie, 1918**) by the Tasmanian Government Photographer: John Watt Beattie.

Preliminary work on the thermal pool area commenced early in 1937 and in July that year, Esperance Council made a request to the Minister for Tourism for the site to be protected by a Reserve (**AOT:AC678/6**). In late September 1938, E.T. Emmett recommended the construction of “...a caretaker’s cottage and tearooms to serve the Hastings Caves and Warm Spring...” This was agreed to, and although originally built as the “Caretaker’s Cottage” for the first caretaker and caves guide (Bevan Donnelly), it still stands today as the *Hastings Caves Chalet*. [A little over an acre of land was reserved around the *Chalet* and gazetted on November 7th, 1941, at the same time as an area of 19 acres around *Hot Springs Creek* and the thermal springs was gazetted as a Reserve, nearly two years after *Newdegate Cave* was opened for tourists (**AOT: AA615**).]

Acknowledgments:

I am indebted to Dorothy Baker (from Grove) for the copy of her newspaper article about the discovery of the “*Hot Springs*” and to the anecdotal information supplied by Handy Jager of Raminea. I am also indebted to the assistance given by Max Banks – Honourary Secretary of the Royal Society of Tasmania and the similar assistance given by staff at the Morris Miller Library at University of Tasmania (where the Royal Society library and archives are housed). I am also grateful for the similar assistance given by staff at the Archives Office of Tasmania (AOT).

References:

Beattie, J.W. (1918) *The Caves of Hastings - Fresh Discoveries. Their Exceeding Beauty. Great Hall of Dazzling Splendour.* Unpublished (undated) broadsheet in archival collection of Royal Society of Tasmania, University of Tasmania.

Clarke, A. (1999a) The early history of Newdegate Cave and its development for tourism. *Cave Management in Australasia 13 – Proceedings of the thirteenth Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management*, Mount Gambier, South Australia, 18-24 April, 1999 Pp. 118-125.

Clarke, A. (1999b) An analysis of the early speleograffiti in three caves at Hastings, in southern Tasmania. *Australasian Cave & Karst Management Association*, Journal No. 35 (June, 1999): pp. 33-37.

Kostoglou, P. (1994) *Archaeology of the Tasmanian Timber Industry - Report Number 5: Historic timber-getting between Hastings and Dover.* Forestry Commission, Tasmania. 190pp.

Row, M. (1980) The Huon Timber Company and the Crown: A Tale of Resource Development. *Pap. Proc. Tas. Historical Research Association*, Vol. 27 (3) September 1980: pp. 87-102.

Skinner, R.K. & Skinner, A.D. (1976?) *Hastings Caves State Reserve Tasmania: A Visitors Guide.* 16pp.

Stephens, T. (1879) Notes of a visit to the “Hot Spring”, near Southport, in 1877. *Pap. Proc. Roy. Soc. Tas.* 1878, [published 1879], pp. 63-64.

Valley Entrance Through Trip (IB120 – IB14): 15 October 2002

By Jeff Butt

Party: Dave Stuckey, Beth, Jeff (all MSS); Allison Moodie (UK); Phil Rowsell and Jeff Butt.

This was a MSS permit trip, guided by yours truly. Allison lucked in a place on the trip when Nathan after yesterdays Midnight Hole through-trip decided that he'd finished with Caving. Phil had only ever seen Mini-Martin, and so was keen to see what the other entrances and the rest of the cave were like.

The track to the entrance is quite followable, but still rough and best followed in the daylight! I collected GPS data as we went.

We'd been given a new lock to exchange for the old lock (a good practise to ensure that locks remain in good working order), and headed on in. Today's trip was basically a tourist trip; but we did some minor surveying as we went; specifically periodically

surveying links between survey stations from the recent theodolite survey with nearby original survey markers.

Despite the heavy rain last night, water levels in the cave hadn't risen too much and so the trip was quite pleasant. The 'in-situ' thermometer in the main streamway read 8.6°C; the stream temperature nearby was identical.

We took in all the usual tourist side-trips; Eastern Grand Fissure, Edies Treasure and The Ballroom. Whilst the main team checked out the Eastern Grand Fissure, Phil and I had a bit of a look upstream from the junction of the Eastern and Western Grand Fissures; a place I'd not looked at before.

All in all it was a good trip; we spent about 8 hours underground. There were some tired people by the time we got back to the cars (and yes, I collected GPS data of the track en-route out).

Revelation Cave (IB1) and Yodellers Pot (IB25): 17 October 2002

By Jeff Butt

Party: Dave Stuckey, Beth, Jeff (all MSS); Allison Moodie (UK), Phil Rowsell and Jeff Butt.

The call for today was for an easier trip, some ropework-but not too much, a bit of a walk-but not too far; some caving-but not finishing too late, and a cave to keep six occupied. I scratched my head and came up with the Revelation/Yodellers mix, with both entrances only 20 m apart, they are effectively one cave. I knew from experience that Revelation has one handline, one pitch (~20 m), a few small climbs and a bit of a grovel in the streamway. I'd never been to Yodellers, but believed it to be a nice vertical Pot with a 40-something metre pitch. Together I thought we'd have the right mix for the day.

The walk in was a bit longer than expected; the tracks in this area are seldom used and so I more or less followed my nose with occasional guidance from the Oracle that knows all (the GPS). After a snack we split up and headed into our respective caves: Phil, Beth and Jeff to Yodellers; Dave, Allison and myself to Revelation.

It wasn't long before we were at the bottom of Revelation and Allison (who is of a small thin build and loves tight places) was grovelling down the tight streamway, well beyond places where others had made it to in the past. Her words, were "it was somewhat

nasty, but worth a re-visit in drier conditions". Dave and I stayed in the more spacious parts offering moral support by just being nearby. Glad she didn't get stuck, as she was well beyond places that our larger bodies would fit!

Once Allison was out, I decided to head out to see how the Yodellers team were going. I met Jeff on the way down; he'd found the squeeze at the top of the main pitch in Yodellers too tight for him, and so decided to swap caves.

As I headed into Yodellers, Phil and Beth were surveying their way out from the bottom of the main 40-something m pitch. There was a second pitch (~25 m), but without any extra rope or rigging points (this pitch must have originally been IRT'd; it needs some bolts for SRT!) they couldn't tackle it. Phil had done quite a good job with the rather technical rigging required for a rather dodgy 9 mm rope (no, not one of the clubs ropes!).

Beth and Phil headed out, whilst I bopped the pitch for a look, then derigged. Meanwhile Phil headed down Revelation for a quick look and derig.

We all gathered on the surface, and wandered back to the cars; everyone had enjoyed just the right amount and type of caving for the day.

Do you need money? Do you have too much junk at your place? A time honoured solution for both problems is to sell it! Tell people you want to do this by arranging to have the name and price of what you want to sell put in this box. See Joe.

The Current Situation with Riveaux Cave HC-2

by **Stephen Bunton**

Riveaux Cave (formerly Roberts Cave) is the main known cave in the Hustling Creek Karst Area in the Huon Valley of southern Tasmania. It was discovered in 2000 by a forest worker who was marking out streamside reserves for logging coupe 28A. Subsequently the construction of the road was halted and logging scheduled in the area was also halted. The cave was visited by Forest Practices Board and at their request to Forestry Tasmania a representative of the recreational caving community joined them for the investigation. Also at the request of the Forest Practices Board an investigation as carried out by Dr Russell Drysdale, an independent consultant from interstate. STC subsequently gained a copy of this report (see *Speleo Spiel* 331). Cavers then visited the karst area, tagging two caves and surveying Riveaux Cave. They then escorted various members of the media into the area and the story was given good but shortlived coverage.

Since that time I have written many letters in the Club's name, made numerous phonecalls and countless emails in an effort to find out more about the cave's fate and to lobby for its protection. Significant amongst these has been my communication with Daniel Tuan (District Forestry Planner) at Geeveston. All official correspondence to Forestry Tasmania has ended up on his desk. At this stage I am confident that the caves are safe from the impacts of logging.

Riveaux Cave is one of a number of caves in the Hustling Creek karst area, most of which have never been entered, only their entrances recorded. We have received a lot of good feedback about the name Riveaux Cave. (Roberts Cave would not have been approved by the Geographical Nomenclature Board because it is named after a living person.) A copy of the map appears with this article. In fact it has been mapped twice! I checked the STC map against the other survey line-traverse and they look pretty similar. Dye tracing has tied in the streamsink HC-1 and another swallet into Riveaux Cave and the GPS points fit. Apart from this all that is known about the caves is what is published in the Drysdale Report.

Forestry Tasmania has had subsequent survey work done (by Barry Weldon - of Geotec?) to determine the extent of the limestone and the caves. They are sorting through that data now. Once the caves were known, all roadwork and logging in the area ceased and an informal reserve was placed over them. In effect this has no legal standing and offers no longterm legal protection. Forestry would still like to access the 600-900 Hectares of forest beyond Hustling Creek which is 60 year old regrowth, the product which attracts the greatest return for woodchips in Japan. Forestry Tasmania has stated that if they can find a route for a logging road around the karst then they are still keen to harvest these trees. At present all studies to determine the extent of the limestone are designed to fulfill this objective.

To me it seems that it is quite unlikely that Forestry Tasmania will find such a route because downslope it would be pretty boggy and awful and also it would come very close to the Huon (Yo-Yo) track and this is a national bushwalking icon. Any disturbance to the amenity of this track would lead to an Australia-wide outcry and create very bad press for Forestry Tasmania.

In fact the Hustling Creek limestone outcrops on the other side of the Huon River and may underlie various sediments closer to the river. The geology here is quite complex and I would prefer an independent investigation and not just be satisfied with Forestry Tasmania's interpretation of the data they have been given. There is also the dolomite karst at Red Rag Scarp to consider and we should make haste to investigate its extent. There is a good chance that the two geological formations are contiguous and that some caves at Red Rag Scarp may in fact join those at Hustling Creek. Certainly there is a good chance that the caves developed from the swallets on the contact, may in fact underlie the coupes scheduled for logging by Forestry Tasmania in their next three year plan.

Whilst Daniel Tuan appears to have the best of intentions he is only a local planner and many of the big decisions about the caves and karst will be made by politicians, their advisors and those in the top levels of Forestry Tasmania. At least at this stage the person we are dealing with at Forestry Tasmania is keen to do the right thing and also be shown to be doing the right thing with regard to management of the caves. He says they don't want to drive log trucks over the caves nor have them silt up.

In conjunction with Ian Houshold, Geomorphologist of the Nature Conservation Branch, Forestry Tasmania has built silt traps to stop the sediment going into HC-1. Forestry Tasmania has said they would like to get the road rehabilitated and so have changed the lock on gate 2 to restrict access to the area. At this stage Forestry Tasmania has not yet started any proper contour rehabilitation of the road which indicates to me that they are not wanting to burn their bridges just yet. Really they need to remove the creek crossing which generates the silt flowing into HC-1 as a matter of urgency. The silt traps in place were designed only as an interim measure over winter. In fact their installation was delayed and they were only installed after the winter of 2001.

Daniel Tuan has assured me that no Forestry Tasmania workers or their mates are going there. STC is very concerned about damage to the cave both accidental by ignorance or a lack of care and consideration, also damage of the deliberate kind in the form of vandalism or souveniring. We would like everyone who visits the cave to abide by the ASF Code of Ethics and the Minimal Impact Caving Code and STC is willing to help with this education campaign. In fact we should check the cave from time to time for signs of damage and even conduct an ongoing photo-survey of the cave. We should also check the usage of the road. Daniel Tuan is meeting with Ian Houshold this week to discuss the possibility for gating the cave. I suggested there may be a spot in about 50m.

Daniel Tuan and Ian Household are also going to discuss what is needed for the long-term management plan for the karst area. To this end Daniel Tuan wishes to put together a working group including -himself, -a representative person from the Nature Conservation Branch, Ian Household, -a representative from Forest Practices Board, -a representative from the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers, possibly myself although I would ask the club to nominate this representative. I would also like there to be another representative of the caving community perhaps from ASF as well as a member of the conservation lobby who is more aware of the legislation and the protection given by the various status of reserve in Tasmania.

I imagine the process would then involve these steps, the assessment of physical resources, working out the necessary strategies, drafting the plan and then the implementation of the plan including signage and gates, road rehabilitation etc. I mentioned that the caving club would be more than willing to assist Forestry Tasmania in whatever stages we can. We would love to be involved wherever we have the expertise or human resources.

The cavers are most likely to be involved firstly at the stage where the extent of the physical resources are determined. At this stage we should have access to all the data known about the caves such that it can be incorporated into the ASF Cave Data Base. As we have stated before STC is disappointed that they weren't the ones investigating the caves and that there was and still may be a body of data about the caves which is unknown to the caving community.

There was some talk that the caving area be preserved as a "Wilderness Caving Area", an area where the caves have never been entered by humans, not even for scientific purposes nor exploration. I like the sound of this and I think it fits comfortably with the values of the Wilderness Society and other conservation groups lobbying for protection of the karst. Decisions like this will be made by the working group which is another reason to have a member of the conservation lobby on the working party. As far as I am concerned it is only a small area and the caves are still pristine, so until we work out what to do, I would appreciate it if cavers don't go into the caves. This is a small, temporary sacrifice for something which could be really good and even "a world first". I think, however, that the caves should be number tagged so that in any discussion during the decision making process, we can be precise about the identity of the caves we are dealing with.

Talking to Daniel Tuan, our joint concern was uncontrolled access to the area and we have agreed that he will take whatever measures he can to keep foresters and their mates out and I'll do whatever I can to keep the cavers away. At this stage the success of a good management plan is in keeping the area rather low profile. If the wilderness karst area gets the green light, then eventually we have to let lots of people know that the area is being managed in this way and ask them and future generations to respect this. It is a bit like the Wollemi Pine situation only more fragile. Again tagged entrances would help in reducing ambiguity as to which caves are not to be entered.

The Greens, Wilderness Society and Native Forest Network believe the best long-term strategy is to extend the World Heritage Area eastwards to cover the coupes near Blakes Opening and the Hustling Creek Karst. From what I have seen, I believe this will be the most likely outcome although it incurs a large financial loss for Forestry Tasmania due to foregone resource. If Forestry Tasmania did hand over the area to National Parks then National Parks would be responsible for the ongoing costs of managing the karst and this seems quite sensible also. I believe that STC should support this initiative. In fact it is not a new proposal, the Wilderness Society has been advocating this extension to the World Heritage Area since 1990 as part of the Helsham Inquiry.

If Forestry Tasmania want to continue to manage the land as a Forestry Reserve and they seem keen to do so, then they must back this financially. Signs, Gating Caves and Controlling Access are recurrent expenses. It would be good for everyone and good for public relations if Forestry Tasmania was willing to make this commitment. I would like to hold them to it. At this stage they have spent a vast amount of money on creating the road and it has yielded them no net return and in fact having to manage the caves has added an ongoing cost to their operations. They are possibly not very keen about spending extra money but they are obliged to and we should insist that this is the case. It would be very easy for them to forget about it and hope it all goes away. We need to keep writing letters and making phonecalls to see that promises are delivered.

(On a related note I have not yet heard back from Bruce Haywood Derwent District Planner about the ongoing management of Welcome Stranger cave now that we have fixed the gate. Also there are other places in the state eg Croesus Cave, where the entrance of the cave is in the Mole Creek Karst National Park but the majority of the cave and all of its catchment is in Forest Reserve. Despite attempts to get this situation remedied by Forestry Tasmania giving up some of their land to the National Park this has not happened. I have even heard that Forestry is still sniffing around in the Croesus catchment in an attempt to sneak in a coupe if they can.)

The stumbling block with getting the area set aside as part of the WHA appears to be in the Tasmanian Government's attitude, whereby it seems to be bound solely by the terms of the RFA and the fact that it isn't obliged to create any more formal reserves. Mr Bacon was on record in the last election campaign as saying "Enough is enough!" I believe that this thinking has to change as more areas of high conservation, both Biodiversity and Geodiversity, are discovered. I am yet to hear back officially from a number of people such as the Premier and I eagerly await their reply. However, I did receive a letter from Forest Practices Board which stated that they were convinced that the breaches of the Forest Practices Code, which I asked them to investigate, were unintentional and therefore the FPB were not willing to prosecute.

STC needs to remain vigilant with respect to Riveaux Cave, Hustling Creek karst area and Red Rag Scarp karst area and their conservation and management. It appears that Forestry Tasmania is quite keen to barge clumsily into areas and mark out logging coupes in the hope that there is nothing of conservation value in them, rather than take the time to investigate these areas properly in the first place. The Riveaux Cave incident has been extremely embarrassing for them and I wish that in future they would be more cautious before logging operations, rather than having to go into damage control mode afterwards.

Stephen Bunton

The Friends' School
P.O. Box 42
North Hobart 7002
phone 03 62 102 200

Book Review By Joe

I spent some time on line checking out a book mentioned on Ozcavers recently. This means I read sections of it but haven't actually read the whole thing. So, I'm probably not qualified to write this book review. The story may get some media prominence soon because Steven Spielberg's *Dreamworks* have bought the rights to make a movie based on the novel. (<http://pub143.ezboard.com/ffilmhobbithobbitnewsnetwork.showMessage?topicID=698.topic>)

The Descent by Jeff Long may be attractive to cavers in that the plot mostly takes place in labyrinthine caves. This includes one that extends most of the way under the Pacific Ocean Basin from West to East.

The official blurb is as follows:

In Tibet, while guiding trekkers to a holy mountain, Ike Crockett discovers a bottomless cave. When his lover disappears, Ike pursues her into the depths of the earth. . . . In a leper colony bordering the Kalahari Desert, a nun and linguist named Ali von Schade unearths evidence of a proto-human species and a deity called Older-than-Old. . . . In Bosnia, Major Elias Branch crash-lands his gunship near a mass grave and is swarmed by pale cannibals terrified of light. . . .

So begins mankind's realization that the underworld is a vast geological labyrinth riddling the continents and seabeds, one inhabited by brutish creatures who resemble the devils and gargoyles of legend. With all of Hell's precious resources and territories to be won, a global race ensues. Nations, armies, religions, and industries rush to colonize and exploit the subterranean frontier.

A scientific expedition is launched westward to explore beneath the Pacific Ocean floor, both to catalog the riches there and to learn how life could develop in the sunless abyss. Is there a natural explanation, as the scientists hope? Or is there a true supernatural basis? Are the "demons" part of our evolutionary family tree? Is their enigmatic leader merely a freak genius, or could he be the legendary Satan?

Fathom by fathom, Ike guides the expedition -- and Ali -- deeper into the deadly stone wilderness. In the dark underground, as humanity falls away from them, the scientists and mercenaries find themselves prey not only to the savage creatures, but to their own treachery, mutiny, and greed. Meanwhile, on the surface, a band of aged scholars scours archaeological digs, museums, artifacts, and rare texts for clues to Satan's existence. Is he lurking in wait for the expedition, or is he roaming the earth? Or is he dead? One thing is certain: miles inside the earth, evil is very much alive.

In the tradition of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, **The Descent** is an epic adventure through fantastic landscapes, among creatures for whom man is both god and meat. It is a horrifying mystery penetrating the realms of faith and reason, a raw and original questioning of the divine and the demonic. And finally, *The Descent* is the story of a man and woman who enter the maze of the underworld and find at its center the human heart.

From excerpts I read you'll need a strong stomach and a strong, open mind to enjoy this story. While it sounds all very pop-culture in its bizarre plot and presentation other reviewers say that the Author writes well enough to ward off incredibility, and the plot has a "deeper" humanistic level.

If you're at all sceptical about the ability of this book to accurately portray caving, you should be. The author writes:

"... I should confess one thing. While my father, a geologist, used to take my brothers and me into the occasional cave, I am not and never will be a spelunker. In all honesty, the underworld I've conjured up in **The Descent** comes straight out of my worst nightmares."

Probably more "lame-adventure/horror" than any other genre. Anyway perhaps that's satisfied your curiosity. If not, check it out for yourself. <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/thedescent/book.html>

The Southern Tasmanian Caverneers:

(membership current at 27 Nov 2002)

Given name	Family name	Postal Address	Phone (H)	Phone (W)	Mobile	E-mail
Members						
Jason	Adams	2086 Huon Rd, Longley 7150			0438 771 570	
Tim	Anderson	Halls of Residence, UQ Gatton, Gatton, QLD 4343	07 5460 1079	07 5460 1215	0411 035 905	tanderson@uqg.uq.edu.au
Hans	Benisch	27 Matthews Rd, Longley 7150	6239 6899			hbenisch@bigpond.com
Damian	Bidgood	c/- Police S&R, 76 Federal St, North Hobart 7000		6230 2267		damian.bidgood@police.tas.gov.au
Gavin	Brett	11/32 New St, Hampton, VIC 3188	9521 8218	9544 0866		g.brett@aerosonde.com
Kathryn	Bunton	PO Box 198, North Hobart 7002				
Stephen	Bunton	PO Box 198, North Hobart 7002	6278 2398	6234 6566		sbunton@postoffice.friends.tas.edu.au
Jeff	Butt	22 Clutha Pl, South Hobart 7004	6223 8620	6223 8620		jeffbutt@netspace.net.au
Liz	Canning	124 Wentworth St, South Hobart 7004	6223 7088	6233 6176		
David	Chiam	27 Carramar St, Chadstone, VIC 3148	9807 0339	8542 9200		david.chiam@extel.com.au
Arthur	Clarke	17 Darling Pde, Mt. Stuart 7000	6228 2099	6298 1107		arthurc@southcom.com.au
Mike	Cole	1/17 Twentysecond Ave, Sawtell, NSW 2425	02 9544 0207		0408 500 053	mikecole@tpg.com.au
Tony	Culberg	PO Box 122, Lindisfarne 7015	6243 0546	6243 0546		culbergf@bigpond.com.au
Rolan	Eberhard	18 Fergusson Ave, Tinderbox 7054	6229 3039	6233 6455		rolane@dpiwe.tas.gov.au
Stefan	Eberhard	2 Churchill Ave, Margaret River, WA 6285		08 9757 7411		smecwork@netserv.net.au
Joseph	Farrell	1/205 Churchill Ave, Sandy Bay 7005	6225 3839			vfarrell@postoffice.utas.edu.au
Hugh	Fitzgerald	124 Wentworth St, South Hobart 7004	6223 7088	6226 1740		Hugh.Fitzgerald@utas.edu.au
Russell	Fulton	PO Box 429, Sandy Bay 7006				rfulton@vision.net.au
Andras	Galambos	3/14 Lanena St, Bellerive 7018	6244 6669			baandi@mpx.com.au
Albert	Goede	69 Esplanade, Rose Bay 7015	6243 7319			goede@tassie.net.au
Anna	Greenham	57 Quayle St, Battery Point 7004	6224 7566		0408 639 132	annagreenham@hotmail.com
Steve	Harris	3 Petty St, West Hobart 7000				
Kent	Henderson	PO Box 332, Williamstown, VIC 3016	9398 0598	9398 0598	0407 039 887	kenthen@optushome.com.au
Alan	Jackson	6 Wignall St, North Hobart 7000	6231 0968		0419 245 418	jacksoar@postoffice.utas.edu.au
Max	Jeffries	18 South St, Maydena 7140				
Sarah	Joyce	PO Box 350, New Norfolk 7140	6261 1864		0438 255 259	sjoyce@postoffice.utas.edu.au
Michelle	Keyes	1/36 Waterloo Cres, Battery Point 7004	6223 3468	6231 3834	0407 173 912	
Kevin	Kiernan	F.P.U., Royden House, Patrick St, Hobart 7000	6239 1494	6233 7716		kevink@fpb.tas.gov.au
Ron	Mann	10 Swinton Pl, Rose Bay 7015	6243 0060	6220 5246		
Janine	McKinnon	PO Box 1440, Lindisfarne 7015	6243 5415			jmckinnon@tassie.net.au
Greg	Middleton	PO Box 269, Sandy Bay 7006	6223 1400	6233 2336		gregmi@dpiwe.tas.gov.au
Dean	Morgan	15 Cades Dve, Kingston 7050	6229 4405	6234 5061	0438 294 405	dmorgan@tesa.com.au
Dave	Nichols	1/2 Excell Lne, South Hobart 7004	6224 4737	6226 1831		D.Nichols@utas.edu.au
Heather	Nichols	13 Willow Ave, Kingston 7050	6229 4362		0414 294 362	nichols5@iprimus.com.au
Steve	Phipps	133 Waterworks Rd, Dynnyrne 7005	6223 3939	6226 2251		sjhipps@utas.edu.au
Tom	Porritt	PO Box 60, Millaa Millaa, QLD 4886	07 4056 5921			
Phil	Rowsell	c/- 22 Clutha Pl, South Hobart 7004				
Timothy	Rudman	101 Wentworth St, South Hobart 7004	6223 4386	6233 3912		tim.rudman@dpiwe.tas.gov.au
Chris	Sharples	GPO Box 1941, Hobart 7001	6239 6669	6239 6669		sharples@netspace.net.au
John	Stacpoole	1/36 Waterloo Cres, Battery Point 7004	6223 3468	6231 3834	0407 173 912	
Aleks	Terauds	60 Belair St, Howrah 7018	6244 3406	6244 3406		
Bruce	Terry	19 Marlborough St, Sandy Bay 7005	6225 2896		0408 278 238	bcterry@ozemail.com.au

Given name	Family name	Postal Address	Phone (H)	Phone (W)	Mobile	E-mail
Richard	Tunney	PO Box 1440, Lindisfarne 7015	6243 5415			rtunney@tassie.net.au
Trevor	Wailes	214 Summerleas Rd, Kingston 7054	6229 1382	6229 1382		trite@ozemail.com.au
Geoffrey	Wise	6 Wignall St, North Hobart 7000	6231 0968			wiseg@postoffice.utas.edu.au
Friends of STC						
Bob	Cockerill	14 Aruma St, Mornington Heights 7018	6244 2439	6233 6832		
Brian	Collin	66 Wentworth St, South Hobart 7004	6223 1920			
Chris	Davies	3 Alfred St, New Town 7008	6228 0228			
Therese	Gatenby	PO Box 69, South Hobart 7004	6239 1432			theresemf@hotmail.com
Nick	Hume	8/71 Mt Stuart Rd, Mt. Stuart 7000	6231 0348			
Phil	Jackson	8 Malunna Rd, Lindisfarne 7015	6243 7038			
Barry	James	52 Edge Rd, Lenah Valley 7008	6228 4787			
Stuart	Nicholas	7 Rupert Ave, New Town 7008	6228 3054	6278 1248	019 977 953	stunich@pin6.com.au

Friends of STC is a new category of “non-membership” voted in at an EGM in September. It augments STC’s “Life Member” category. It has been designed to help the club avoid unnecessarily expensive public liability insurance premiums due to having nearly as many inactive life members as active ones. Although “friends of STC” are now officially non-active cavers, they are still important to the organisation. Their service to the club will still be recognised with no subscription fees, no personal insurance or affiliation costs and free copies of club publications and correspondence. The option of becoming a friend of STC is available to all, but only inactive, life members.



STC’s swanky new rope washer
courtesy of Gavin Brett

(photo by Arthur Clarke)

