

Speleo Spiel 335

March – April 2003



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Front Cover:

Phil Rowsell whips up an impressionist masterpiece in IB-187 (photo by Geoff Wise)

Back Cover:

Geoff Wise emerging from another squeeze (photos by Phil Rowsell)

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

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Editorial

I'd like to thank Phil Rowsell for laying out the bulk of this Spiel, perhaps it should be called '*The Rowsell Report*'! Or part one at least as the Ida Bay project reports will run over the next three issues. Anyway the more room I take up the less there is for stuff people want to read so I'll end here.

Geoff Wise

Stuff 'n Stuff

Survey Instruments donated to STC

Another former active member, Dean Morgan has donated his set of Suunto Survey instruments to STC; these will make a welcome addition to the gear-store. Thanks Dean.

Forward Program

Jeff Butt is organising a number of trips with approximate dates below. Let him know if you're interested and he will finalise dates soon.

Midnight Hole~June 29

Logbook changeover

Slaughterhouse Potearly July

Logbook changeover

Old Ditch Road - bolt testingearly July

P-hanging in Khazad Dum mid July

P-hanging in Dwarrowdelf late July/August

Kubla KhanAugust 11

Steve Bunton as leader

Mole Creek October 23 – 26

Ric and Janine are organising four days of varied caving over the Hobart show long weekend.

Building a Drainage Plan of Ida Bay (Part 1- 01 Sept 02 to 14 Dec 02)

Introduction

This is the first of four articles highlighting the work done to build a drainage plan of Ida Bay from Sept 02 to April 03. It started by chance with a trip to Little Grunt which led to a fascination with the cave, that grew more and more on each visit. It also became apparent that the data held within the STC club archive on Ida Bay was in a very poor state and it would greatly benefit from some sort of systematic Blitzkrieg. So the project was born. There were over 71 trips done at the time of my departure by many individuals, with over 22 km surface surveyed and 8km underground. I personally logged some 550 hours. 121 of the 180 known caves were located and surveyed into a traverse network, with an additional 25 new caves being found and tagged. There are a number of additional caves whose positions are known, but not surveyed into the traverse network due to time constraints. The work is by no means finished. It has really only just begun, but it had formed a good foundation stone with which to build on during my next visit.

On the documentation front there is a massive back log of trip reports! This is partly due to the amount of work and data produced, taking a significant time to process, write and draw up etc. It is also however partly of my making which requires a little explaining. Much of the early work, particularly the discovery of IB-171 Rocket Rods was deliberately withheld from the club as protest against others in the club who guarded "their" data jealously and were unwilling to share it with other club members. With the agreement for the Lads (A. Jackson and G. Wise) or the "Three Musketter's" as we were dubbed, we decided to play these individuals at their own game. As the president told me "two wrongs don't make a right" a very true statement, but this was the only mechanism we had to show how petty and selfish it is to withhold data (particularly non sensitive) from other club members. I guess we wanted to see how these people felt being left out in the dark. As we continued to amass data and find new caves, so enthusiasm grew. Thankfully some club members could see the benefit of pooling data for the common cause, came on board and became actively involved with what we were trying to achieve. I hopefully believe that most of the club members support this now and will contribute "their" data to the archive for the common good of club members and caving. In doing so, hopefully the club should be able to increase its knowledge of the various caving areas, enhancing drainage plans etc, hopefully leading to new discoveries etc, using intelligence rather than luck.

For my part then, this is the first of three articles conglomerating the associated trip reports. This period reflects the most of the early work done by the "Three Muskettiers" in Little Grunt, the Comet Pot area and latterly on the north side of Marble Hill, culminating in the discovery of IB-171 Rocket Rod's Pot. This could be classified as our secretive phase! It features some 28 reports and covers the dates from 01 Sept 02 to 17 Dec 02. The relevant surveys and stick diagrams are included.

Similar articles will appear in the next two spiels and these will complete the back log and highlight all the work completed at Ida Bay during the 7 month campaign. The last article will be a more formal report tying in the findings etc from the survey data will be produced once these three trip report articles have been published. I hope you enjoy reading

them (Most are pretty boring, particularly the ones I wrote!). Many of them are fairly detailed accounts to highlight to future cavers the work that was done and possible leads left etc.

Happy reading

Madphil

Before you ask, the surveys and survey data will be contained with in the STC archive. Not to do so would fly in the face of everything I have fought for!

Little Grunt (IB-23) - The Dawning of a New Era: 1st September 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Geoff Wise, Andras Galambos

Well I was finally back caving in Tassie!! It had also been nearly two weeks since I have been underground; a sad state of affairs. I had been glad of the break though as it had allowed my foot to have a rest which was good. A stone had dropped on it in Austria and it was still giving me trouble. Guess the bone had healed funny.

For the first trip, I didn't want to do anything epic, needed to break the Lads back in slowly. There was still a lot of snow on top of Mt Field so I wasn't too keen on doing another potential flood in trip in the Florentine like last time back!! Ida bay sounded good, but what?? In the end, we settled on Little Grunt, lots of small pitches (so fairly easy going) dropping into a large horizontal system. How this system fitted in with Exit Cave I didn't know, but certainly warranted further investigation. Some of the pitches were meant to be tight so it would be interesting to see.

The log book at Ida Bay was brand new and not a single entry. Guess these Tassie boys can't cope with the winter!! It was quite pleasant walking up the quarry, a fairly light rucksack and the knowledge that we didn't have an epic walk in front of us. None of us had been to Little Grunt before, but we knew it was somewhere in the valley down hill from the first log crossing. It was a bit of a laugh walking down as it is pretty steep and muddy so you were slipping all over the place. After a bit of routing around, we finally found the cave IB-23. I looked like a new boy when changing, new TSA, Helmet, fury and harness. All nice and shiny. I knew they wouldn't stay like that way for long!!

I headed in rigging with masses of gear. The precariously balanced boulder over the first pitch was a good reminder of Tassie caving and the fact that I would have to get my head back into natural rigging again. I had recently been used to hanging off bolts!! Lots of natural possibilities made rigging pretty easy, and deeper in the cave the odd spit was present. Most of the pitch heads were pretty open, a couple were a bit more awkward (especially when rigging them), but definitely not the nightmare I had been lead to believe. I actually found it quite enjoyable. Being the first time in the cave, it did take quite a long time to rig, the 13 pitches had taken nearly 4 hours to rig!! Still would be a lot faster next time through.

I was stood at the bottom of the vertical part looking down at a narrow crack. You could see where the break through had been made. I dropped down and crawled through into a small stream way. A short squeeze passed a few straws in the roof and into a junction of a big steam passage. Wow, pretty impressive stuff, this was major development!. The river passage was fairly narrow with lots of formation, masses of cave coral. Some good straws too. We hit a couple of large break down chambers and then the cave really opened up into fairly sizeable passage similar to main drain in Exit Cave, but not quite as big. It would have been wild to have found this!! We continued following the stream on though a mixture of contrasting passage, massive stream way, and then crawling in water. There were also numerous side passages, with lots of small streams flowing in everywhere.

I should have looked at the survey of the cave before we headed down!! I wonder whether the cave has been fully surveyed and draw up etc. We pushed on passed a couple of really high avens with a lot of water coming in. Again I must check out where they are on surface!! We really needed to have more time to have a good look around here. I don't think we will be de-rigging it today! Finally got to another major river junction where another big stream (same size as the one we had been following) met. Survey station 155 I will have to see where it is on the survey. We decided to knock it on the head now as it was beginning to get late and we didn't want an epic. I will definitely have to head back down here again.

We headed back along the stream way and progressed up the pitches. I think the boys were glad we were not de-rigging it today! Geoff had a bit of a thrash on one of the pitches when he tried squeezing through the wrong place, but apart from that things went pretty smoothly. We pushed on out, emerged from the cave after a 7.5 hours trip. One would have thought that the excitement was over, put the climb up the hill was another story, seemed to spend half of it on my ass!

A pretty good trip, a really nice cave to kick off being back in Tassie again. It would be really interesting to see the cave layout in relation to the other caves in the area!!

Little Grunt (IB-23) The obsession begins: 7 September 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson Andras Galambos

Ha Ha back down Little Grunt again. I had got the survey of Little Grunt from Trevor Wailes and we had a good chat about leads. I was particular interested in one, a low cobbled flattener that hadn't been pushed before so I was keen to get down here again. I also wanted to survey a couple of the side passages that we had seen last time as the data wasn't in the archive. The weather was pretty foul when we got down to Ida Bay, periods of heavy rain. It's amazing what a downer the prospect of going caving in the rain is. It doesn't seem to matter that as soon as you're in the cave you will be generally dry!! Thankfully enthusiasm held and off we went.

Water was flowing in the cave this time, coming through the boulder ruckle. It had been dry last time. Nothing to cause alarm, but would be interesting to see the main stream way and how all those low wet crawls would be!! Maybe a bit of roof sniffing. The trip down was pretty smooth with everyone at the bottom chamber in an hour. While dumping vertical gear, I found that I had left my dry bag behind containing both the emergency kit and the survey kit. Furious, lots of swearing!! It was pretty essential to get the side passages surveyed to sort out what is coming in where. Mega nightmare. Guess it will be just a look-see trip today. Really annoyed.

We headed on through the squeeze and into the river passage. Man a lot of water, still it will be good for seeing where other streams etc are coming in. We headed on down to the first break down chamber and headed up Cormorant Passage, one of the only side passages shown on the survey. It turned out to be quite a large stream way, very well decorated with straws etc, and quite a few side passages. Passage slowly decreases in size until blocked. Possible dig site, but not today. Good draft coming down the passage though.

We had a look at some of the other collapsed avens, and other stream passages on the way out, but none were of any real significance. Pushed a tight side inlet and got into good low stream passage. Good rush of adrenaline, but it was only short lives as it closed down to a potentially diggable flattener. A draft again but a pretty hard work dig. Finally we headed back to the main river passage. Man a mega diversion that had taken over 2 hours!! Still a lot of interesting passage in there and some good leads, but needs surveying properly.

We were in full exploration mode. We progressed on down the river passage checking out every nook and cranny. There were a few interesting places, but it wasn't until the big left hander (Station 42) that we found another decent passages coming in on the left,

about 10ft from stream level. It was an easily climb up and you found yourself looking down big fossil tube 7ft approx in diameter! Man, better have a look at this. It was fairly obvious that this had been pushed before, but not surveyed. Disappointing really, leaving your mess for someone else to clear up! We soon picked up a streamway with a number of side passages, some leading to good avens, one huge one I named "Big Echo Chamber".

This main passage was interesting, as there seemed to be a large fossil passage above the streamway that you kept popping up into. It must have been a pretty large drain at one point. The further up we went, the lower and more gnarly the passage got, eventually coming to an end by a flowstone ramp with the stream flowing under. Good passage in front, but too tight to squeeze over and a wet cobble dig to get under. Another day!

We decided to have no more diversions, and to head straight to the cobble flattener. We got to the stream junction (Station 155) both flowing hard. Hum, recon this dig would be interesting! Very wet. We went and had a look and the water was honking out. The troops were not keen. I suggested we go and look at the far end of this dry passage for something to do. No complaints. It was meant to be quite pretty up here. It was big old fossil passage, and looked like the original drain to Exit Cave, before the stream took a diversion of to the right for some reason. Subsequently an amazing amount of fill had been deposited in here, banks 3m plus high. We saw a few nice stals and some pretty flow stone that had been walked on which was shame, but found none of the gypsum formations that were meant to be down here. We pushed on to finally arrive at the end, an small aven with water dripping in, and the way on blocked by huge cobbles. Not much hope of digging here!

We headed back out checking a few side passages. We did push a tight flat crawl for some distance and thought we had got somewhere, but after a short debate we established that we had only done large loop and we were back in the main drag!! Interesting area this, and really needs another trip, both to survey what we found and have another good poke around to make sure there are no bypasses to the blocked aven.

When back at the cobble flattener, I couldn't resist the temptation to have a look! Man was there a lot of water coming out. It was pretty easy going to start, stoop walk really, but soon got down to crawling and then belly stuff. The others had given up. I pushed on trying to keep out of the water, with a helmet off after awhile. Finally got to a place where I was to able to see another washed out bend with some big Dolerite Boulders wedged up in the steam way. There was lots of room either side, but I would have had to life lat out in the stream way. I was not keen as I was a bit cold and tired.

Still it looked really promising, really good draft in here and it looked to opened up ahead, but for how long? Another day, there seem to be rather a lot of them in here!!.

I headed back and picked up the others. We had one final diversion flowing the main stream down to the boulder ruckle/ terminal sump for a look-see. Looked pretty terminal, definitely roof sniffing territory!! It would have been good to have been a fish and swim to Exit Cave but no such luck. We headed on out. Everyone was pretty tired on the way out, but everyone

plodded away. Finally immersed on surface after a 9 hour trip, they're getting longer each time!

A really good trip. A nightmare I didn't take the surveying kit in. This cave really needs to be surveyed properly to see where all the side passages are. Lots of potential leads with good drafts etc, but not really worth pushing until we have some idea where they are going. I also really need to get Exit Cave and the rest of the caves in Ida Bay on the map and have a good look. It would be great to link Little Grunt into Exit!!!

The project was born: 15 September 2002

By: Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

Caving again, Yippee!! A good early start too! We were down at the booth for 09:00 and the weather was glorious. We laughed how much better weather made you want to go caving!! I headed down to sign into the book, and came back to find Alan cursing. Big problem, he had forgotten his trog suit. Nightmare. We debated the situation a bit and concluded that Little Grunt wasn't the place to be in without one. No caving for another week!!!

Thankfully he had brought his work GPS along so we at least could go bush bashing. The good weather meant we should get good GPS fixes. Bargain. I also had the survey gear so could do a bit of surface surveying too. With the interest I now had for Little Grunt, I had been looking at the club archive of Ida Bay and was dismayed that it was in a pretty appalling state. Some of the caves were in there, but none were in any type of drainage plan, so you could not see the relationship between them. I guess if you knew the area no problem, but those unfamiliar, not a hope in hell. May be we should fix this and generate an electronic Ida Bay Drainage Plan. It would be a good project for the summer. And so it was born.

We headed up through the quarry and took quite a few GPS positions along the path, to give both its position and the quarry's. We pushed along the track and GPS'd

IB-211, before headed down to IB-23 Little Grunt. We got a GPS fix here which seemed OK, but we decided to survey out way back up to IB-211 as would also give a good tie in. It would also give Alan some practice at reading the instruments. It only took about 10 legs so didn't take too long to do.

We spent the rest of the day walking along the contact from National Gallery to Cyclops and beyond finding holes, caves etc and GPS'ing what we found. We found IB-158, IB-211, IB-224, IB-23, IB-27, IB-47, IB-50, IB-52, IB-54, IB-55, IB-56, IB-57, IB-58, IB-59, IB-62, IB-63, IB-64 and IB-67. We continued along the contact until we came across the 40 min Creek stream. As it was beginning to get late we followed it down to the Skinner Track and headed out. On the way out I spotted a promising rift down to the left but I couldn't be assed to head down. Good for Alan though as he went down and it turned out to be IB-82.

Once back at Benders quarry, we headed over and had a look for IB-143, EMP Pot. Thankfully we found it as this was of great interest with Little Grunt concerned. We finally headed back to the car, pretty tired but after a worthwhile day. I spent the next day salvaging what I could from the archive and putting in the data we had collected yesterday to form a skeleton of a drainage plan. The project had been born.

Little Grunt (IB-23) A survey nightmare: 21 September 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson, Geoff Wise

Well back down to Little Grunt again. Geoff was with us again which was good, especially as he'd vowed not to come down this place again. I had a little surface project first to do first, tie in IB-46 into the system. I knew roughly where it was and after a short forage, we found it along with a number of other interesting dolines and holes. Alan read the instrument, I did the book, and Geoff did the tape. We worked well and soon had a good loop tying in IB-46 and the other holes into Trackstart. Hopefully it was time well spent as gave the

boys a bit of surveying practice in the light before heading underground.

The main mission of today was to survey the 2nd passage Alan, Andras and I had looked at last time (21/09/02). We cruised on down pretty steadily and were soon heading down the stream way. Its great having the cave rigged). Finally we got to station #139 and dumped the gear. We had to survey from here as this was the closest know station. We had the same set up as on surface, Alan on instruments, Geoff on tape and I kept book. The surveying seemed to go pretty

smoothly, no doubt helped by last trips exploration. We were just doing one of the last passages when I noticed Alan reading the compass with a Maglite right on the compass. I asked him how long he had been reading the instruments like that. "From the start"! Nightmare! I threw one of my usual paddies!! I guess I should have checked earlier really. By playing around with the light, we established it made a pretty big difference to the readings. I told Alan to carry on as before and we would try and work out a "correction" factor later. We finished up and headed back to the bags.

Once fed, I re-read the main river passage we had done earlier to give us an idea of the error. Alan readings were about 8 degrees too high but it really depended on how close the torch was to the compass - Nightmare. I guess we will have to re-survey it, next time. Hopefully it wouldn't take too long, the drawing had been done

and we should be able to relocate most of the stations. It was 17:30 and the boys didn't want to do anymore. It was a bit of a shame as I felt keen to push the cobble dig, but I guess it would have turned out into a mega late session. We headed on out. A smooth trip out, the three of us taking 2 hours.

The plots of the survey were interesting. The surface stuff was really good. A very small closing error which was great. The underground stuff not so good and we will have to do it again. Nightmare! It shouldn't take too long, and I guess it was a good learning experience!

The general trend of this passage though is interesting as it heads right under IB-98 Comet Pot. I need to have a session bashing around there to see what we can find. Things are getting interesting!!!

Surveying the Benders Quarry Track: 25 September 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell

Kathryn wanted me out of the place for a night so she could do some work, so said I would head back down to Ida Bay to do some bush bashing and surveying etc. The car made it down there OK which was a blessing! I decided to survey up from the Booth up through the quarry along the path. It would be good to place this on the map correctly.

Solo surveying, time consuming or what!! It took awhile to get a system going, banging in stakes, walking countless times between them with the tape etc. Still I eventually started to get a rhythm. Some parts of the track were really difficult as there were lots of small bushes in the way etc. It took a lot of effort your own to get a straight line between them without having to continually walking between them moving the tape or going back because it had fallen off! After a while I got a bit despondent as this was dead boring and knackered. Still I managed to make it up to QC1

before calling it quits here. I put in a metal stake here as a permanent station for QC1. It had taken nearly 2 hours to survey from the booth to here!! Nightmare.

The weather was pretty bad, frequent showers etc, but didn't have that much else to do. I headed up to the start of the Skinner Track and put another stake in here (Trackstart). I decided to start surveying along the Skinner track to IB-211 Trackcutters. Man, this was much easier. I could tie the tape to a tree and easier to find straight lines. I seemed to bomb along and I was really surprised when I was next to IB-211. I was enjoying it so much I decided to head on passed the first log and did a few stations the other side, but was beginning to lose the light and difficult to read the instruments, so called it a day.

Thankfully had stopped raining for a while so managed to cook and get my tent up in the dry weather. Man was I tired though!

A bash around Comet Pot area: 26 September 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell

I woke up to rain falling on the tent. Great as I really didn't want to do anything this morning!! Finally by 09:00 it seemed to have cleared up a bit so I decided to head up and continue surveying along the track to the Comet Pot turnoff. The weather was pretty bad weather, frequent heavy showers. I surveyed my way along and eventually got to the Comet Pot turn off.

I had grand illusions of surveying down to Comet Pot, but when I started following the track, it was all over the show. Na! Better leave this for when there are at least two of you. Still it was work going for a recky and seeing what caves I could locate.

I followed blue tapes down the hillside and passed a number of big dolines on the left and right but kept on going. It seemed to go miles down the hill. The track was generally easy to follow. Finally it seemed to peter out around another set of dolines. I had a look in a few and eventually found IB-97 and then IB-96. There were also a number of promising holes but no tags. Hum I wonder where is IB-98 Comet Pot. I continued to wandered around the area of awhile, but no luck. I was getting dead tired so headed on back. On the way I checked out some of the dolines I had seen on the way down and found IB-99 and then IB-102. The penny didn't drop as I climbed up and around and found IB-98 Comet Pot, bingo. A good days work.

As I headed back along to Track Start, I recovered a bit and was still game for more, so surveyed from Trackstart back to QC3. I was going that well and I headed on and eventually made it back to QC2. Good, just one section in the quarry track to go. I can do that at the weekend with Alan. I was completely drenched as it had been pouring down while I was finishing this

last part. I was glad when I was in the car, but satisfied with two days of good work.

Most of the data plotted up well, but there seemed to be a discrepancy in the Booth to QC1 data compared to the GPS readings. Guess I will have to investigate this. Still the rest of the data is pretty good through.

Little Grunt (IB-23) To make amends and push horrible passage- “The Masochistic Way”: 28 September 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

Back to Ida Bay again. I had been down here most of the week and I was beginning to lose a bit of enthusiasm. We were heading back down Little Grunt to resurvey last weeks mess up, and hopefully push the flattener which we had been going to do for the last 3 weeks!! On the way up only one surface diversion, I persuaded Alan to survey up from QC1 to QC2, as this finish the survey of the Bender's Quarry Track. It only took half an hour which was good

We bombed down. We were taking off our gear at the bottom pitch in half an hour. We headed straight in to Station #139. I got Alan to do a few readings and found he was still out!! We established that his metal bracket on his helmet was again effecting the compass. Nightmare. It would also be interesting to see what else one carries (e.g spare touch around the neck) that may effect the reading. Generally this is over looked by most surveyors! He suggested I do the readings. Off we went surveying again. We managed to find most of the previous stations which was good. Alan was checking readings against his. The clino's readings were ok but the compass was all over the show. It was just as well we were re-doing it. It was pretty demoralising stuff, but it needed to be done and I was please when we were finished. We still we had time to look at the flattener.

We had to start surveying back to the river junction (Station 155) as we couldn't find any taped stations. It didn't take very long, but we could have done without this! We were pretty sick of surveying now. Alan was silent, almost in robot mode as we headed up the passage. It was OK to start, easy passage but soon got lower and more difficult. Thankfully you hit the occasional scoured out cubby hole that you could sit up in or at least crawl in. I got to the really low squeeze I had got to on a previous trip (07/09/02) and was delighted to see the passage open up into another scoured out corner beyond it. Bargain. I hadn't got this far last time. The water had been much higher and I had previously gone to the left to keep out of the water and it had got too tight. This time with the stream much lower I headed up the stream bed and found you could fit through!! Brilliant!! It was pretty wet, but looked like we were into better passage. We found a good survey station and finally we were both sat in the wash out.

The next part was pretty low and wet lying flat out in the stream. We managed to get a few stations in to roof, which was good, but made instrument reading pretty hard. Man was my neck killing. It was pretty cold too as you were basically lying in the water. Alan was moaning away wondering what he was doing up here. I thought it was quite good fun! We passed a small passage on the left had side with a small stream trickling out, but we headed on. I was getting cold and Alan was moaning more. He yelled out that this was the last station he would do unless I could find him some standing up passage. I crawled on and buggar me, I hit a rift which I could stand up in. He didn't believe me so I had to jump up and down. Man were we glad to get out of the water. I was shaking so much it was hard to write down the survey figures.

The rift was really a stream junction. One direction was partially blocked with gravel. We were soon digging through with the wrecking bar, and felt a bit warmer. I was quite excited when I could hear a waterfall. We broke out into an Aven with water coming in. Hum interesting. It also looked like the passage continued on in the line of the rift, but would need some digging to get through. We surveyed this in and headed back to the junction. I managed to persuade Alan to do a few more legs up the main passage as it had opened up a bit to near crawling size. We headed on but it started to get lower again. Even I was getting a bit demoralised now so we knocked on the head.

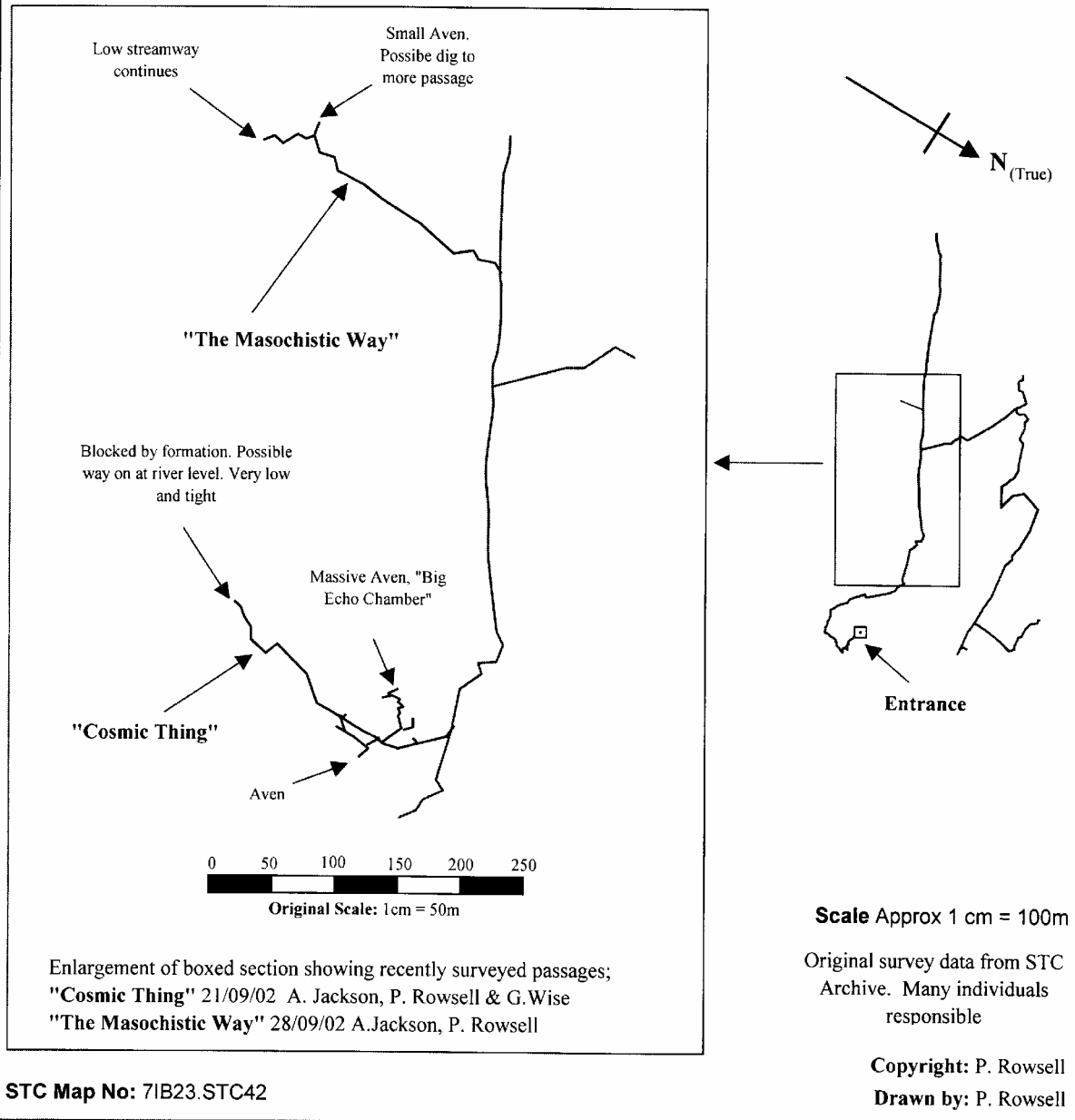
I don't think Alan was looking forward to the flat out wet crawls. I was surprised it didn't seem that long on the way back. I decided to check out the small stream I had seem on the way out and had a dig at this. Alan wasn't interested, he just wanted out. I pushed through in to a rift that went for about 30m then hit a small aven. Looked interesting again. You could possibly climb the aven but pretty narrow. Another time!!

I belted on back and on through the flat outs and was pleased when I could crawl and then stoop, then man o man, walk. I found Alan at the main junction stuffing his face. Good push, pretty cold, really needs to be done when a bit drier. Winter is not the best time to push this!! It was hard on your body too, knees, neck and shoulders killing. We will probably pay for it tomorrow. Time to go home!

Good trip, pretty demanding, but we achieved a lot. A pain to have to resurvey a section, but worthwhile. It was good to push the flattener as it looks interesting with several avens and leads still going. The main passage of the flattener seems to be heading towards

the contact near IB-57 Cyclops Pot but we didn't push it quite far enough to confirm this. We'll be back but not until the summer! We decided on the apt name "the masochistic way".

IB-23 Little Grunt - Recent surveying



Another session in the Comet Pot area: 3 October 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Geoff Wise

I headed down with Geoff Wise to do some surface work. I wanted to survey down to IB-98 Comet Pot and then down on to IB-97 Pseudocheirus. I also wanted to check why my survey of Booth to QC1 as the data I collected last time definitely didn't fit!! We had good

weather which made a change. We really should have headed straight in and hit the Comet Pot track, but we opted to check out the Booth to QC1 data first. It was pretty easy to re-locate find the stations. It seemed that the compass was way out, -18 deg!! Real weird!! The compass reading error was consistent so very strange indeed. It took me ages to work it out, but eventually

realised I had done an Alan. In my rucksack last time I had carried a number of big metal stakes and that had corrupted the readings!! I would have to eat my hat on this one as I had eaten out Alan when we had to redo the Cosmic Thing passage in Little Grunt due to a magnetic cock up!!! The theory was confirmed as further up the track the readings were back to normal discrepancies. Here I had been taking off the rucksack each time prior to reading. At least I had solved the anomaly. Glad when we had finished, hopefully it will be correct this time.

We headed on to the Comet Pot track and surveyed on down. We got to Comet Pot easily and then things got pretty complicated. There were holes all over the place. We found several that looked pretty good. One was blowing a treat plus no tag, we will have to definitely come back and have a look at this one. We surveyed these in and then headed on down the track to IB-97. We left tapes on most of the stations so we could head back and re-survey it if we needed to. It would also allow us to tie in any other caves we found easily into the traverse. It was 17:00 so decided to knock it on the head. Pretty good days work really, and another piece of the jigsaw!!

Uranus (IB-167) What a squalid little hole: 6 October 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

Down to Ida Bay again, I didn't feel like yet another Little Grunt trip so we decided to go and have a look at the drafting hole Geoff Wise and I had found last time. I also wanted to knock off a bit more surface work.

We took some GPS readings on the way up though the quarry and started surveying along from track start. I got Alan to read the instruments, as good practice for him and it would also give double readings along this part of the track as I had done this on my own a week or two ago. It was amazing how much faster it was with two of you. I did know where all the stations were, but it did make a big difference when setting the tape. We passed IB-211 and soon rocked up at the Comet Pot turn off (CPTO). Alan was happy surveying so we continued on down the Comet Pot track along the main traverse checking readings again. We went down as far as CPT21 and stopped. We didn't want to go all the way down to IB-97, we had more important things to do – push new caves!

I was quite excited by this lead. It was in a good position (Cosmic Thing a passage we had surveyed in Little Grunt recently was not that far way horizontally) and the hole was blowing pretty well. It was a bit of a gnarly start, dropping down a tight hole, but it soon opened out after a few meters. I didn't need the rope after that. (You probably didn't need it at all come to that!. Still you never know when your exploring.) I dropped down into a small chamber with boulders blocking the way. The draft was still good. I had a go at pulling some of them out but there was a big one. I shouted up to Alan to head on down to give me a hand. With both of us there, we moved the rocks and after a bit more digging, I squeezed through.

I entered a chamber with some straws. I dug from the other side and made it safe for Alan to get through. We headed down the chamber, and found another squeeze into boulder ruckle passage. Lots on nasty looking boulders. It was turning out to be another muddy little shit hole!! Just through the 2nd squeeze, there was a hole in the floor, but didn't look promising, so pushed along further. I dug under a really big perched boulder

which was hanging on the ceiling for grim death, and could see a small drop off behind. Once I could get my head through, it didn't look as though it went too far, so opted not to push that. Alan came through and had a looked, but then he headed back in search of the draft as we had seemed to have lost it. I found a route under another huge perched boulder into a chamber. Not a nice place!! I checked out the chamber and it looked like the water headed down here, but it was too collapsed to go any further. Bummer!! Another Toad!!

I headed back out to check out where Alan was. He had had no joy either. I took a brief look at the hole in the floor near the second squeeze, but no joy so headed on out. Man were we muddy and for no real gain. We had spent nearly 1.5 hours in this little muddy hole with no big break through either!! We needed to survey it really but the condition we were both in, we decided to leave it for another day! We must tag it too.

The day was still young so we decided to had a look at the doline off to the right. I had surveyed to this from the other side so we closed the traverse as we headed down. It was a pretty big doline with good rift in the bottom. I let Alan push this one. He headed on down, but said he needed more rope so I followed on down with more gear. Nice rift with a very tight section that needed digging out. There was also an up and over to a drop and probably the same rift. Alan rigged this one. A bit of a tight gnarly pitch head, but he had fun. It didn't go anywhere and even more surprisingly it didn't connect to the tight squeeze!! We better have a look at the rift then. We spent a good hour dicking about here! It was really difficult to dig as it was really tight and basically you had to stomp on the mud and kick it over the edge. Man was it muddy again. I couldn't see my SRT gear, just a mass of mud!! We made good progress and I had a go at squeezing through, but still a bit too tight. We decided to call it a day after that, both too tired to continue digging. It would be interesting to see how this hole fits in with IB-99 which was not far way.

As it was only 18:00 and we still had another 2 hours of light left we decided to survey in IB-82 and tied several other pot holes in the area, before deciding to push the

traverse across to the Comet Pot Track. It became too dark to read instruments so we continued on just set up the traverse stations. It wouldn't take too long to survey it next time. While checking out one of the dolines we found the IB-104 tag, Giotto Pot Bingo. This had almost got to illusive status as I had had two previous sessions trying to find it. We continued on and finished linking the traverse back into the Comet Track. Time to

get out of here!!

Useful day really, resurveyed the track and some of the Comet Pot track. Found IB-104 Giotto Pot (3rd time lucky I guess) and we had a bit of a laugh checking out a couple of muddy holes. I can't believe another of my good leads was yet another toad!! Still that's Life!!

Membrane (IB-82): 8 October 2002

By Geoff Wise

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Geoff Wise

After the surface surveying of the previous week and not wanting to head back to Little Grunt just yet, Phil and I headed back to Ida Bay for an easier day. We intended to complete a survey loop in the area near IB-104 Giotto Pot and then drop IB-82 Membrane.

After the now familiar walk along the Skinner track we reached the start of the loop and proceeded to survey and have a poke around at anything that looked interesting. We had a look at a couple of holes when Phil found one that while not drafting, had a good echo. There wasn't a tag to be seen. After a bit more of a look around we surveyed some more, including surveying in this 'new' hole. Phil suggested that I run the tape to a patch of rock where we could put a tag. I found a likely spot and removed a bit of moss from it. However what appeared from under the moss was a number tag bearing the title IB-114. Not a new hole after all! After

a bit of a laugh we surveyed back to the track and geared up.

While Phil rigged the first pitch of Membrane I had a poke in a small hole close by that revealed nothing other than a mass of crickets ready to eat me alive. There were two short pitches to negotiate and then a rubble slope that ended in a narrow rift at the bottom of the cave. Phil was having a bit of a dig at this rift when we heard a noise coming from the rift so we stopped to listen. After a short while the swirling noise stopped but came back occasionally while we were there. Personally I thought it sounded like water going down a plug hole but Phil thought it was air. Maybe an underground toilet flushing!

We surveyed out, only requiring a small number of legs to add another piece to the puzzle in this area.

Salt & Pepper (IB-99): More searching for a back door to Little Grunt

13 October 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Alan Jackson, Madphil Rowsell, Alison Moody

Well after our digging attempts last week, I had looked up IB-99 in the archive and remarkably found some stuff on it. It said it was worthy of being deeper. I guess we better go and have a look. It was virtually next door to where we were last week.

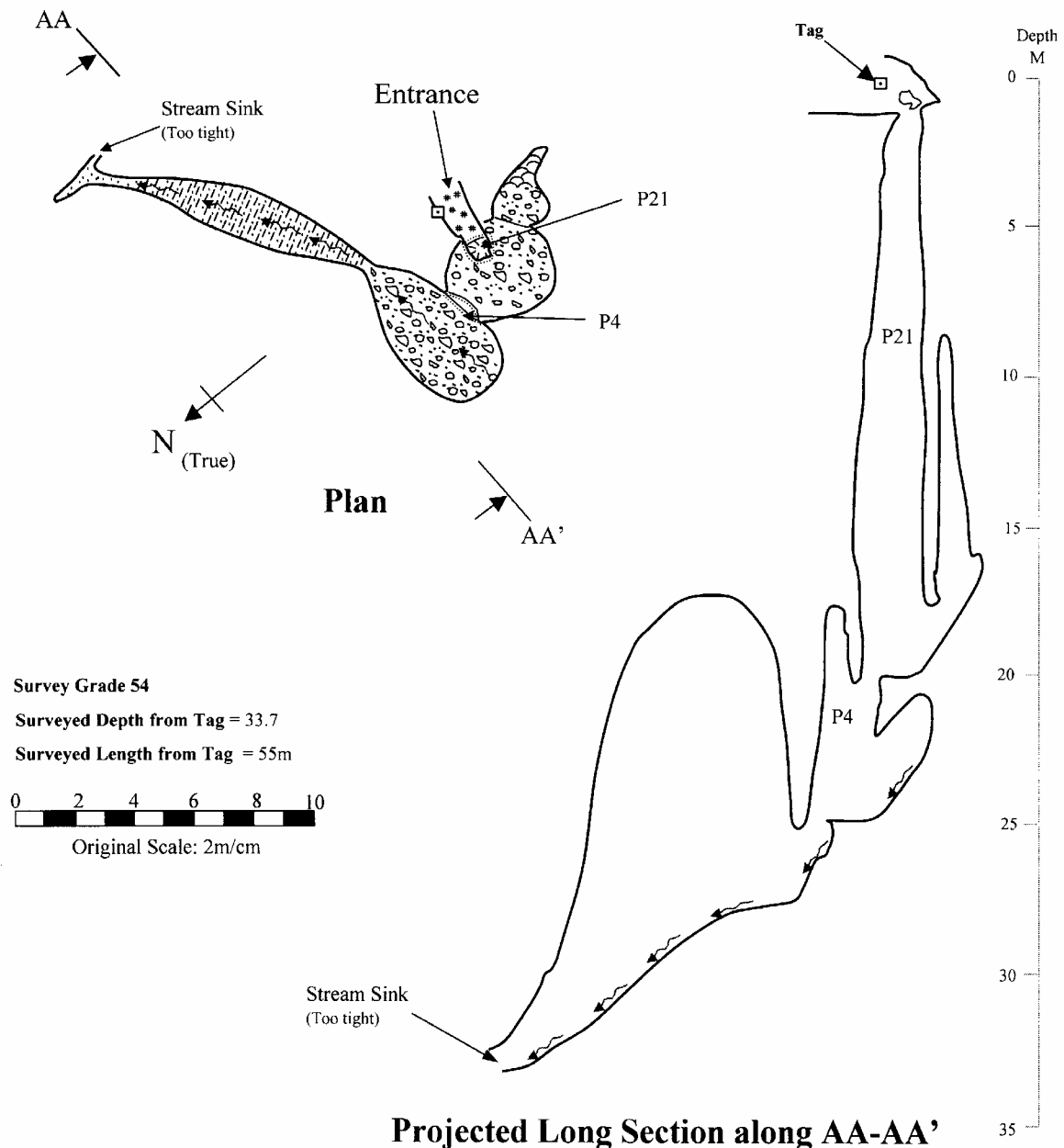
Not too bad bar the muddy entrance. Small rift headed down into a largish chamber with other passages coming in, guess some of the pots we had looked at above. At the far side of the chamber was a bit of a climb down into a rift with cobble slope down to the pitch. Some avens could be seen off to the right, but the pitch headed on down to a small ledge then dropped on down 4m or so to the floor. A small rift took you into the avens where you could see on the way down and into a large chamber. The chamber was really big, and corkscrewed around on itself. Lots of break down and basically the floor was a boulder ruckle.

Near the bottom of the chamber, we found a small hole

that had obviously been pushed before so went down for a sticky beak. Quite tight, and dropped 2m to another floor below the suspended boulder choke. Another big chamber could be seen around the corner. Thought I better see how difficult this was to get out as I didn't want everyone trapped down here! It was a bit of a grunt getting out but not too bad. We put a rope down as would make it easier dropping down and give us something to pull on the way out.

The chamber below was big again, floor basically collapsed boulders. Two obvious passages heading off, one a climb up to passage heading up, but a more promising small rift passage heading down. Sent Alison down to look at the rift, Alan to do the climb up, while I started drawing. Alison didn't get very far before she said it was terminally choked. Nightmare!! Alan's headed into a big rift with another climb up and water dripping in from an "aven" (high rift). It must head back to surface somewhere as there was a large wallaby skeleton in the passage, possibly where we were digging last week?

IB-82 Membrane



Copyright: P. Rowsell

STC MapNo: 71B82.STC24

Drawn By: P. Rowsell (10/01/03)

Surveyed By: P. Rowsell, G. Wise (08/10/02)

We had a long look at the boulder ruckle in the floor and managed to push it a bit deeper through some dodgy looking boulders, but not the major break through we were looking for. Nightmare. We headed on out surveying as we went.

It started raining then so we decided to go wandering around the hill a bit. We headed further across and

down a big valley and found IB-106. Alison found a hole with a drop below. I went in and pulled boulders about and managed to move a big one out of the way enough to squeeze through. No kit now but need to come back to this one (this has been subsequently tagged IB-168). We explored on around and split up a bit. I followed a line of contact, but had no joy. Alan and Alison, checked out a few other sites but nothing.

On the way back thought headed a different way back along the limestone outcrop and found several shafts, which were again worth dropping. Headed back up to IB-106 and headed up the valley again and found IB-115 and IB-116 which was good. Need to survey these in sometime!! Finally back to IB-99 and picked up the kit and headed out.

An interesting day, I had high hopes for IB-99, but we pushed that pretty hard. The survey data was interesting too as the cave heads up the hill, not under the other dolines that we had been looking at. It may be worth looking at these again to see if they drop down anywhere different. Good surface work too as found several tagged caves and some new leads to drop!

IB-172 - Mendip Diggers in action: 18 October 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alison Moody

A bit of a late start, it was quite relaxed camping. The battle plan for today was to head back up to the big doline we had found last night, but survey it into the quarry traverses first. We headed up to QC1 and surveyed along the main bench to an old quarry road corner and selected a 4th permanent quarry station QC4. We then surveyed on down through the steep scrub back into the forest and on to the big doline.

Time for a sticky beak. There were three possible entrances. The lowest where the stream obviously went down a worm hole through really loose gravel and clay choke. It could be pushed but not very nice and it looked pretty unstable too. Better to check out the others first. Alison headed down an open hole off to the back of the doline while I had a look at a digable rift entrance. Alison came back and said there was a climb down in to a rift but closed right down. I started to dig a bit at the rift entrance. You could drop rocks down, but nothing massive. I got Alison to listen in both entrances while dropping stones down the rift. All were connected and it sounded as though the stones were dropping beyond the constriction at the other rift entrance. May be a bypass. Good news. We dug away feverously and eventually made the passage big enough to squeeze through but we would need gear. It was all back at the car! Nightmare!

A quick trip down to the car and then I was soon squeezing through and dropped into a rift I could see where the lower stream entrance came in, but I was disappointment to see the stream bead headed into a boulder floor. There looked like a possible dig in the rift a bit further on. First I needed to check out a small passage off to the right. I squeezed through and found myself in the passage Alison had checked out, just above the constriction. Not impressed, we had spent over 3 hours dicking about doing a minute round trip.

We headed back into the rift and started hacking away

at the dig. It looked really good and you could hear the stones dropping away. There was a really good echo and a good draft too. We spent a while digging this, taking turns to push it. Eventually it was wide enough to get through. Better drop it on a rope as you couldn't see what was below. A pretty gnarly squeeze, but it dropped into a very tight rift. The echo was very good. I managed to walk down the rift a bit but the top closed right down. This left you with a steep 45 deg downward flat out wriggle to short very tight flat part, that looked like it dropped straight down a pitch! Hum wasn't going to do that today.

I stripped off gear and headed down head first to get a better look. It was pretty tight part just before the pitch, and I didn't go through this in case I disappeared down the pitch! It looked like an aven of 4m in diameter. It was also too tight to throw stones down this one!! Buggar! Man was it an effort getting back out, pushing yourself out up a 45 deg hill squeeze. Not the best of ideas really. Still I eventually got out totally wasted. I sat and rested. Hopefully it might be a back door to Little Grunt, but there wont be many who go through here!! Its going to be pretty interesting pushing this one!!

I headed on out and found the first squeeze pretty easy. Alison went down and had a look, but she didn't head down the "crawl" and came out again. We were both pretty wasted so we headed out. Pretty frustrating as looks like a pretty good aven and reasonable pitch, just a bumner to get to it!! (This cave was Tagged IB-172 on 17/12/02)

Once on surface, we quickly headed up the hill to have a look to see if there were any other holes that might drop into the aven. We found another small doline which again looked promising, but too far to hit the aven. May be a By-Pass. I pulled a few stones out and had a good hole that need to be dug a bit, but looked like easy going. Another day!! (This cave was Tagged IB-170 on 17/12/02)

Checking out the North side of Marble Hill 20 October 2002

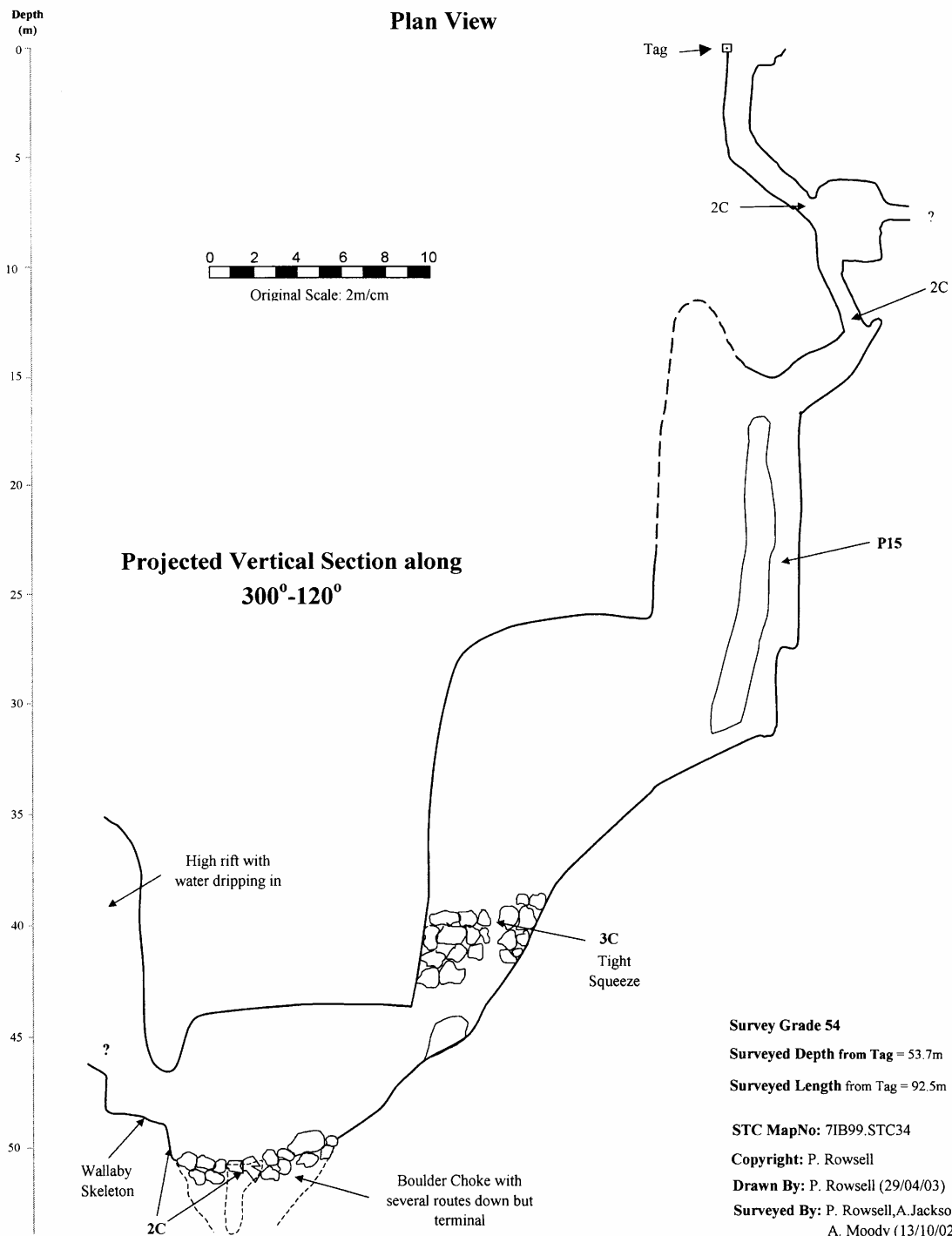
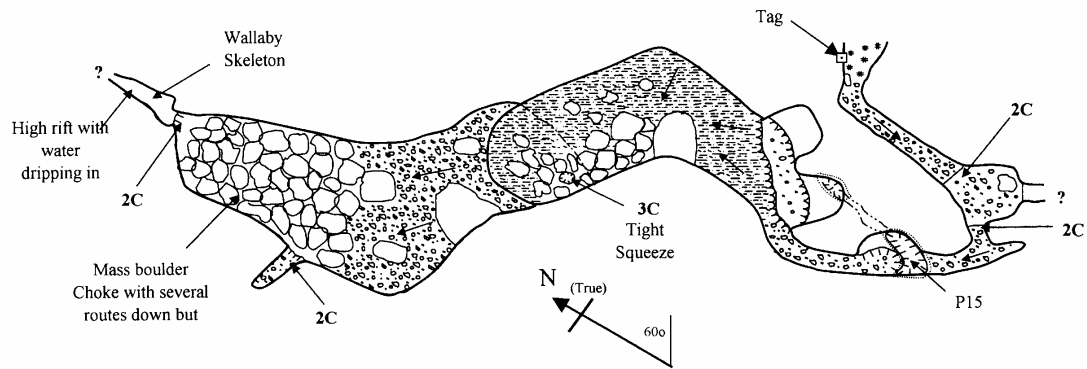
By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alison Moody

Alison's last day in Ida Bay area, hopefully heading up to Growling Swallet for her last trip on Tuesday. She

wanted to head into Mystery Creek again and look at the glow worms. We spent about 1/2 an hour wandering about at the start of the cave. Heading back we surveyed from the IB-10 tag to a metal stake at the

IB-99 Salt and Pepper



Survey Grade 54

Surveyed Depth from Tag = 53.7m

Surveyed Length from Tag = 92.5m

STC MapNo: 7IB99.STC34

Copyright: P. Rowsell

Drawn By: P. Rowsell (29/04/03)

Surveyed By: P. Rowsell, A. Jackson,
A. Moody (13/10/02)

track junction in the quarry which was good. I would have loved to have done the whole track back to the booth, but knew that was pushing it!!

Wandered back to the car and headed up to the caves we had found late last time (Tagged IB-170 on 17/12/02). On the way up, we surveyed from the booth up to the big doline (Tagged IB-172 on 17/12/02) to close a traverse we had done the previous trip. We pushed the traverse on up to the new doline. There was yet another over the back. Man this area was full of holes.

I gave Alison to opportunity to dig this one and after a bit and she managed to squeeze through. She was in a narrow rift with a pitch heading off. We swapped over. I managed to turn around in the narrow rift and had a dig at the floor. There was large boulder in the floor which turned out to be a real bastard to get out, mud was really sticky. Eventually popped it out, and made the entrance crawl, much easier. A bit more digging and we had opened it up enough to drop the pitch.

We had left gear in the car again and this time we

couldn't be bothered to go and get it!! Another day. We went and looked at the next doline over. A nice shear rock wall but it looked like a lot of water headed down here along with a lot of fill. It looked pretty choke!! I left Alison to play while I went wandering. I found a tag IB-153! Wild. I headed back putting in a traverse. Alison was covered in mud saying she had found a bit of a rift and was worth another look when she had some gear. She tried to get me to go in, but only had my furry on so no way. Looked really squalid.

We surveyed over to IB-153 and then found and surveyed in IB-152. We decided to call it quits then as getting late. We found an orange taped track so decided to follow it back to the quarry, setting a traverse as we went. It would give us another good loop. We found IB-154 too on the way back. Interesting will have to check the archive when I get back.

Not a bad day, seem to be generating more leads than I can cope with!! Interesting finding these tag caves, the archive had nothing on them. I wonder who discovered them and what they did? I will have to do some more investigating.

IB-170 & IB-173 - Digging into new leads: 22 October 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alison Moody

It was too wet for Growling which was a real bummer as think Alison would have really enjoyed that. She had expressed a preference to head back down to Ida Bay and have a look at the dig she had played about in on Sunday (tagged IB173 on 17/12/02). We would probably get to have a look at the other digs too.

First things first, we surveyed up to IB-152 tying in IB-154 and also found IB-155 which was good. Once up at IB-152, Alison got sidetracked into looking at a few more dolines so I suggested 30mins time out for looking. She headed down into a doline to the west of IB-154, and I headed up the hill. Interesting place, lots of holes around. Alison shouted out she had found IB-156 great another one, I came back and we tied that in.

The rift continued on in either direction. Checked out one way, but blind, the other continued on down a few squeezes and gnarly down climbs to a small chamber. It looked encouraging as the passage seemed to be looking more developed and open with another stream inlet coming in. The passage then corkscrewed back again down a narrow rift with a drop at the end. The pitch turned out to be only about 4m deep, really nice round shaft, but a bit too smooth to free climb down. I needed a rope really and didn't have one. Guess I'll call it a day, one to definitely come back to. I emerged back on surface, where Alison was complaining she had been annihilated by mossies!

Exploration time over, now to see what the digs reveal. Let Alison head off down her little hole while I did a bit of a sketch of the Doline. It would be more useful if people did diagrams of the dolines they find as it may save a lot of re-looking at holes. Man was Alison getting muddy, but she seemed to be making progress. After a while she said she was going to drop down into the rift she could see. I headed down with a rope, just in case she needed it to get back up. After about 15mins or so she reappeared, it had not gone far but it was totally choked with run in. Guessed as much, but you have to check these things out.

Off to the other doline we dug last time (tagged IB-170 on 17/12/02). A quick sketch of the area again and then down to business. I geared up and went in. The squeeze was a bit awkward and needed a bit more widening, but soon into wider rift and dropping a pitch of 10m or so.

What to do now? Alison wanted to check out IB-156. While she did that, I went along the hill west again setting a traverse. Amazed when I picked up a blue taped trail heading over the hill. Interesting. Alison appeared and said IB-156 didn't go too far, a rift that gradually got tighter. We still had some time left so surveyed up the new traverse to the blue tapes. Both headed back to the car pretty exhausted.

The loop up to IB-152 closed pretty well so have fairly accurate data this side of the hill. Getting there I guess! Just wish I could find a back entrance to Little Grunt.

Little Grunt (IB-23): Checking out the leads at the far end of Grunt: 25 October 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson, Geoff Wise

A final trip into Little Grunt to de-rig it. A bit of a shame really as there is still lots of things to do in there!! The gear however had been in there over 2 months and really needed to be pulled out to check it, but we also needed a change of scenery! This trip, we were going to head up to the far up stream end to see if we could push one of the passages further towards the holes Alison and I had found near Benders Quarry. Trev Wailes had also said there was a good lead up there which needed a bit of digging to continue.

We spent about half an hour on the walk in thrashing around the bush trying find the caves in the vicinity of Little Grunt. Alan managed to find IB-100 and IB-124 which was good. Another 2 down!! Several others were also meant to be in the area but no luck with them. Lots of interesting dolines in the area through.

I was almost on auto pilot the number of times I had been down here. We rattled along and soon we were at the river junction (Station 155). We headed down stream and had another quick look at the boulder ruckle sump, before heading upstream into new territory. A bit of negotiation through boulders and low wet crawls, led to larger passage and a crossroads shortly afterwards (Station 1008). The main stream flowed in from the right, but worth checking out the other two. I sent Alan in to check out the wet way and Geoff the dry way.

I eventually got bored so I headed up to find Alan. The passage went for a reasonable distance, a mixture of crawling and stooping, before getting a bit higher. I eventually met Alan heading back out. He said it continued up to a sump. Interesting! It was in a low chamber with a lot of roof collapse. It was stable but it had caused the stream to back up and sump. There was a tiny air space in the roof, which might go right through but it was difficult to tell. I went and waded in the pool. It was only about knee plus deep and kicked one of my legs under the roof. It seemed to head up straight away the other side, but again difficult to tell. I didn't want to get totally immersed as would freeze for the rest of the trip. You could possibly dig the collapse to lower the sump, but a big project. Another day. We headed back to the junction and waited for Geoff.

He eventually showed up, saying he had explored an old fossil way to a chamber with roof collapse. There were several ways on, on that looked really good near a ring of stones with gypsum crystals inside. Sounded interesting, will have to head up there later. It would be good to survey too as may provide a by pass to the boulder ruckle sump and that elusive link to Exit Cave!

We pushed on up the main stream to another stream junction, (Station 1023) and decided to have a detour up here too. It was two passages really; a fossil route

(but occasionally active in high water - more like an overflow channel) and the streamway. We took the fossil route. It was pretty low in places but OK, after some way turned and rejoined the stream passage. I had reflections of the Masochistic Way flooding back, as there were some really low squeezes and in the steam too. I thought the boys would call it quits at this point but they continued. There was a really strong intermittent draft in here.

When it got really low they halted for awhile while I pushed on driven by this draft, and I was surprised when it opened out into a big scoured chamber. After that it was really easy going, serpentine rift, with two nice avens, the last was well big. Someone had been in here before as we found survey marker (Station 1215). The draft in the place was amazing. Not consistent, more like wind driven. It must be hammering out of the avens. I must go surface bashing around Benders Quarry sometime. We headed back out again, gibbering on about the draft.

On again up the main stream, another section of low crawling in water, before breaking out in to big rift passage again. This place ceases to amaze me. We finally got to another junction that looked and felt more like the passage we had come to push. A pink tape on the corner was a good indication. It seemed the main stream came from this junction with the passage straight fairly small will lots of mud banks, probably the mud from Benders Quarry. We headed along stream way in large passage, to a number of weird rock or stall formed pools. From then on it was low wet crawling again, before opening back up to serpentine rift. Finally we hit a large flowstone ramp with a stream flowing from underneath. This must be it, Trev's dig. We climbed up the ramp to a small tube with the dig at the end. We battled away for a while, but pretty hard going. It would be a long haul this one.

Left Alan digging away while Geoff and I surveyed out to the main passage. I had a look at the stream coming out from under the flowstone, and I reckoned that there might be away under that. It would need to be dug but it looked half open from what I could see, but better to do that in a drier period! We pushed on out surveying. Just as we were nearing the main passage junction, Alan showed up with the bags (bless him) having got bored of making no progress. We surveyed back to Station 1104 to be sure we had a correct tie in.

Everyone was pretty tired and wanted to head out. We managed to get back to the pitches without any more diversions. We slowly headed on up with pretty heavy packs. It was surprising how much rigging gear I had used in this place. We eventually emerged at 20:45, to a really cold surface. Geoff said it had snowed while he was waiting!! Man was it hard work carting the heavy pack up the muddy slope. Finally we were back to the car.

Not a bad trip, pretty tiring. A fascinating place each trip seemed to reveal something else. There is still a lot of work to do to bring the survey up to scratch. Lots of

leads still to push too. I guess will try and get the guys down there again in a month or two. A great cave.

In search of the Holy Grail, but just lots of tagged unknown caves: 27 October 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

Off to Ida Bay (again) with Alan to do something good for a change! IB-57 Cyclops Pot. Alan had wanted to do this for sometime, but had had no takers while I was away. It would be also good to go and have a look at it as may join into The Masochistic Way we had pushed in Little Grunt (28/09/03). We started changing and Alan then discovered he had forgotten his wellies and gloves. Apathy began to set in and we decided to have surface day. We decided to have a look around in the region of the big drafting aven we had looked at Little Grunt a day or so ago (25/10/02).

I showed Alan the new finds I had found with Alison. We headed up the traverse to the blue tapes, then followed them up the hill. There were lots of good holes to look at on the way. We found IB-145, which was interesting as there are no record of holes on this side of the hill, weird! Finally we hit the contact and headed left along the contact. We found a great looking hole but it was tagged IB-134, another unknown hole! It looked like a lot of water had headed down here at sometime.

We pushed on with the hill getting pretty steep. Alan headed down to check a few things out I headed along, and hit an old quarry road. Hum, wonder where this went, better find out! It turned out to be a bit of an epic walk and followed it along through woods, through to benches and eventually popped out at Trackstart.

Interesting!

I headed back and found Alan. The GPS showed we weren't that far from QC4. We decided to head down to QC4 and survey our way up to IB-134, along the contact and then back down the blue tape track to the traverse Alison and I had started. The traverse back up the hill was a bit of a nightmare as steep and a lot of scrub. Eventually we hit the tapes we had laid earlier and things really sped up. Just past IB-134, Alan managed to fall off some logs and cut his hand badly, but was game to soldier on. Good man, dedication to the cause. We found yet another tag IB-151 on a pot near IB-145. I wonder how many others were around here?

It was getting late, but I really wanted to finish the traverse as it couldn't be far now. With both us getting a bit despondent we finally found a pink tape of the other traverse. Yippee!! We tied it in and headed back to the car.

Interesting day, I don't think we were far enough along to be over the Little Grunt aven, but the data will be really interesting. The data closed pretty well which was good. The interesting thing though was that IB-134 is right over the top of the big aven!! We better head back up there and give the area a real good checking out. There must be one hole in the vicinity that is drafting well as the aven below was blowing a hooley.

Mystery Creek (IB-10): 5 November 2002

By Jeff Butt

Party: Jeff Butt, Madphil Rowsell

This was a continuation of the work we started on 14/10/02 (*see report in Speleo Spiel 332*). Today we surveyed Cephalopod stream way, and the low boulder strewn streamway beyond the sump pool. We eventually emerged into the main chamber opposite the Broken Column and linked our survey back.

Then we headed to the Laundry Chute environs, and surveyed our way to the back end of the cave, past the

old drum. We linked in with a survey cairn used in a rough survey done on a trip on 6/12/98.

Today's tally was about 600 m in our 7 hour trip. One more trip should tidy up a few loose ends, and have all but the gated section resurveyed. Unlike many recent surveys, a new map will be produced at the conclusion of this work. The new adage of "Map what you Survey" is being applied here!

Still looking for the Holy Grail 6 November 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell

Up early and I decided to carry on surveying along the Mystery Creek track which I had started last night. I

had intended to try and tie in some of the caves along the Cyclops contact, but I would hopefully do that in the afternoon. I walked down the track to last night's point and was dismayed that it wasn't very far along at

all!! It would have been really useful to have had a longer tape as my 30m was too short a couple of times by a meter or so. Nightmare! I soldier on, wondering why I was doing this really. Finally I got to the river. This was a big relief as I getting pretty despondent. I found a good permanent station and then stopped for lunch. Well at least I was half way there!! I headed on and was delighted when I realised that the distance to the quarry was pretty short from the river. Mega Bargain. I reached the stake in the quarry at 14:00. Man was it hot! I would have loved a kip, but the mossies and the flies were too annoying.

I had a bit of a rest, before I decided to survey over to the start of the southern ranges track. It was nightmare surveying as there were lots of metal work around, old rails etc. I tried to pick stations well way from potential effects. I finally got to the start of the track and tied in a stake and another permanent station. It would be good to do this section again with someone else and take a different traverse to see that we end up at the same point. I pretty tired of surveying by now so called it quits. I had done a lot, nearly 4 pages. Pretty good for on your own!

Rocket Rods Pot (IB-171) Secrecy doesn't pay: 10 November 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

Another secret mission to check area around IB-134 and thus over the big aven in Little Grunt. I think Alan was pleased not to do any surveying. We had intended to have a dig at IB-134, but it was well run in and no draft. It really didn't look that promising at all. We headed over and had a look at the other really good feature to the left of it, but this was a big boulder collapse and no way through, bar pulling out all the boulders and that really wasn't an option. I was a bit lost what to do, we had found nothing that really fitted the draft we had experienced underground. We decided to have 20 mins scouring around the hillside again.

I headed down the hill with Alan and split up to cover more ground. He only went a few yards, before he shouted he had a good one. Brilliant!! We continued on looking and found IB-150 pretty close by. A good drop, pretty impressive, but guess it would have been looked at when found. I headed on back to look at this new hole. Man, it was blowing like a hooley. You could see the ferns vibrate when it blew its nice cold air and wasn't at the same time as the wind on surface so must be a lag. It sounded at least like a 20 m or so drop. This looked really promising.

We surveyed down to the new cave and tied in IB-150. Man did this cave blow when it wanted to. I got quite excited. I was really pleased too that Alan found it after all the surveying work we had done last time. Reward really. I let Alan go down first since he found it and good for him to head in something new first. I could hear him shout up in astonishment as he abseiled into a massive chamber. Bingo, hopefully we have finally found a princess.

Alan had done a bit of exploring, but we took it in turns taking the lead. Worked really well. Headed down in the floor to start as looked most promising. This didn't do anything bar rip my suit!! Man was this a sharp snaggy place. We headed off to the right and over some collapse. My light was going so I sat and Alan head off down a small flat rift. I sat there for some while and Alan eventually reappeared and said he had found a pitch with a good aven (Pitch 1).

We headed back to the entrance pitch, and then off to the left this time. There were lots of pretties, I was most impressed when we found some pendulites's. Alan headed over the top of some rocks while I went under and I found a ramp heading of down to boulder ruckle and a promising hole. A squeeze through to a rift and a pitch, a drop of about 20m. Bargain. Pitch 2. A bit of a tight pitch head, but looked passable.

I headed back out and caught up with Alan. He had found a way up on to a well decorated flattener with loads of straws. The passage headed off in a white crystal pool floor, not worth trashing as too many straws. It looked like you could just get down along one wall, a mud floor and separated from the crystal. There was a space to squeeze through at one point but not now, better done when we surveyed it.

A rift headed on up to one side so we followed that on up. The rift had basically been formed by the collapse of massive section of roof over an old chamber I guess. After a bit of thruching you arrived onto the top of this collapse. It must have been a massive chamber at one point. The collapse headed back to the right, but progressively closed down from head height down to flat out. Off to the left there were some more stals which were pretty nice, and straight over a 10m drop to a floor.

Time to look at the pretties. We climbed up into a little chamber, which was pretty. I looked out of a window and Jesus, there was a straw of about 5-6m long which had joined down to the floor. Amazing. I headed back down and around to have better look. Thankfully you couldn't get too near it was high on a shelf. It must be a record but it will be difficult to measure. We headed back and had a look over the drop.

Didn't look too promising on the way down. I managed to find a way down along some boulders to a dodgy exposed crawl over a boulder to safe ground. If the boulder let go you would drop 6 feet with the boulder probably landing on you!! Not a good prospect. Alan followed on down. We threaded out way down through more collapsed to another exposed climb down. Finally we were on a rock slope leading down to some really big boulders filling a collapsed aven. It looked good as

one wall was original rock and showed a lot of old aven exposed. The had obviously been a lot of development in here at one point and one side had collapsed away.

Out on the big rocks we threw stones down the pitch, looked good, but all rocks around well loose. Not nice. I headed back off the boulders as had seen a little aven just off to the right. There was a short climb up to a nice 5m deep elliptical shaped tube with a small squeeze to 5-10m pitch below it. Bingo!! It looked like a by pass to the nasty jumble of rocks, Pitch 3. Alan had had a look at a another route under some rocks to yet another drop, again probably heading down to the same place. Man what a place.

We headed back to the main chamber with most of the easy exploration done. Not a bad find really. I took Alan down to have a look at the rift pitch (Pitch 2) and had a bit more of a look around there. Around the corner, could get under and see down a massive rift 3m wide and 20m deep. It looked real good. Around the corner was another pitch probably dropping into the same rift. It also looked like the hole above was around the back of a big column in the main chamber where the pendulites were. Interesting, guess the survey will

tell.

I thought we would have a look at the pitch Alan had found, Pitch 1, so we could evaluate all leads. It was quite nice heading over there, you passed two crystal pools, to a stream bed. Pitch was in a crawl to a small aven 10m deep. It had a really good echo here. We found a few other side passages through the collapse, no more pitches just a very tight muddy squeeze.

We headed on out pleased with our find. It looked like a good one and hopefully the back door to Little Grunt. Maybe finally I have found my princess! The long straw and the pendulite were pretty amazing. We will need to do a bit of track marking next time in the place so that it does not get trashed. I was really pleased for the boys too as a just reward for all their hard work (slave labour). Timing couldn't have been better either. We had just done the 2nd role out of the new archive to the club which seemed to go down well, but there was still this real stubborn resistance by some members to share "their" survey data. Nothing fuels cavers interest than reports of a new big find, we will play them at their own game and keep this a secret and hopefully prove how petty it is!

Rocket Rods Pot (IB-171): Survey what you find 27 November 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Geoff Wise

I couldn't believe that we hadn't been down here for two weeks I just couldn't get time to coincide with Alan. Geoff seemed keen to go down there, so we would head in and the surveying started as we had pushed a fair bit last time. I think Alan had had enough of surveying for a while.

On the way up we spent an hour starting a new traverse form Trackstart to QC5 (a new station at the end of the road!) and on to the traverse Alan and I had put in near the new cave. Man was it slow going heading up from Trackstart. All the bushes etc made it really hard to get sights, lots of short legs. Hopefully the next session we should break out to the clearer part of the track and able to do some bigger legs.

The cave was still blowing strong when we got there. Geoff headed in so he could have a look about while I came on down. I think he was impressed by the main chamber. We dumped SRT gear and went into survey mode. We systematically surveyed over to Pitch 3, checking out leads, putting in a bit of track marking as we went. We had a good look around in the pretties before heading back to the main chamber and down to Pitch 2.

It was amazing how long we had been in here, we had been surveying pretty solidly for 6 hours now. Both of us were pretty tired and hungry now. We sat and ate for a bit. I suggested Geoff to do a few legs over to where Alan had found his pitch 1, so we could see where it was in relationship to the rest of the cave and Little Grunt. He wasn't keen, but agreed only if we did a traverse as that would not taken too long. I kept saying we would shut down after the next leg, it seemed to go on for ages. Finally we were at Pitch 1. We were pretty glad to have finished. I will have a bit of tidying up to do on this side to finish the drawing etc, but at least we should be able to tell where thing are going in the cave. We headed on out after quite a long day really, nearly 8 hours underground surveying.

The data was interesting. We had surveyed over 400m of passage which was pretty good going. I was surprised that Pitch 3 was virtually over the big aven in Little Grunt. Pitch 1 seemed to be off on a complete limb of its own and it may feed the sump/duck passage Alan and I had first looked at on the (25/10/02). I guess we better look at Pitch 3 first as seems to be the best chance for a fast drop into Little Grunt. The time will tell!!!

Re-Surveying the Skinner Track: 29 November 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Kathryn Harris

I managed to persuade Kathryn to head down to Ida Bay for a day out and do a bit of surveying. I wanted to survey some more of the Skinner track and may be head up to Cyclops Pot and survey around there tying in a few of the caves along the track. Kathryn was really good as she seemed to enjoy it, which was good. She wasn't too keen to go through the bush so suggested we continued along the track to the Mini Martin Turnoff. She had a go at reading the instruments and did great, but she said it would take too long if she read them so I continued on.

We got to the place where there are always logs over the track, and Kat complained said she was cold and

wanted her fleece. I walked up a log to get to some flat ground and noticed a bit of a dip. Oh yeh, better have a look at this. Put down the rucksack, and wow a good hole. Even better a pitch about 15m. I threw several stones down, and found there was another pitch after. Wicked!! We have found a good one here. Well buzzed. It was amazing it is so close to the path and not been found!!

We stopped and had some lunch and then headed on down the track. Kat was pretty bored by now but said she would continue on down to the Mini Martin Turn off, Bless her. It took quite awhile but good to do. We headed out both pretty tired, discussing names for the new cave. Eventually we settled for Oh Yeh. (Tagged IB-166 on 04/12/02).

Rocket Rods Pot (IB-171): Refusal at the first 1 December 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

Off to push the new cave into Little Grunt! We trudge up the hill with a ton of gear. It was going to be a two tackle sack day for both of us. We had over 250m of rope. The cave potential was 230m and we had about 180m to go all in good pitches hopefully. I was knackered by the time I got there!

We dropped on down and made our way painfully over to the rift humping bags. We had a lot of "fun" getting through there with the two bags each. We were really please when we were out of there. I got Alan to lower all the bags down once I was over the exposed crawl, as I certainly wasn't going to man handle the bags across here! The 2nd climb down wasn't too good either, lots of loose stuff poised to go when you head down the slab to the far wall. We both were really careful with the bags etc as could be nasty if you let one of the rocks go. Finally we were down at the drop (Pitch 3)

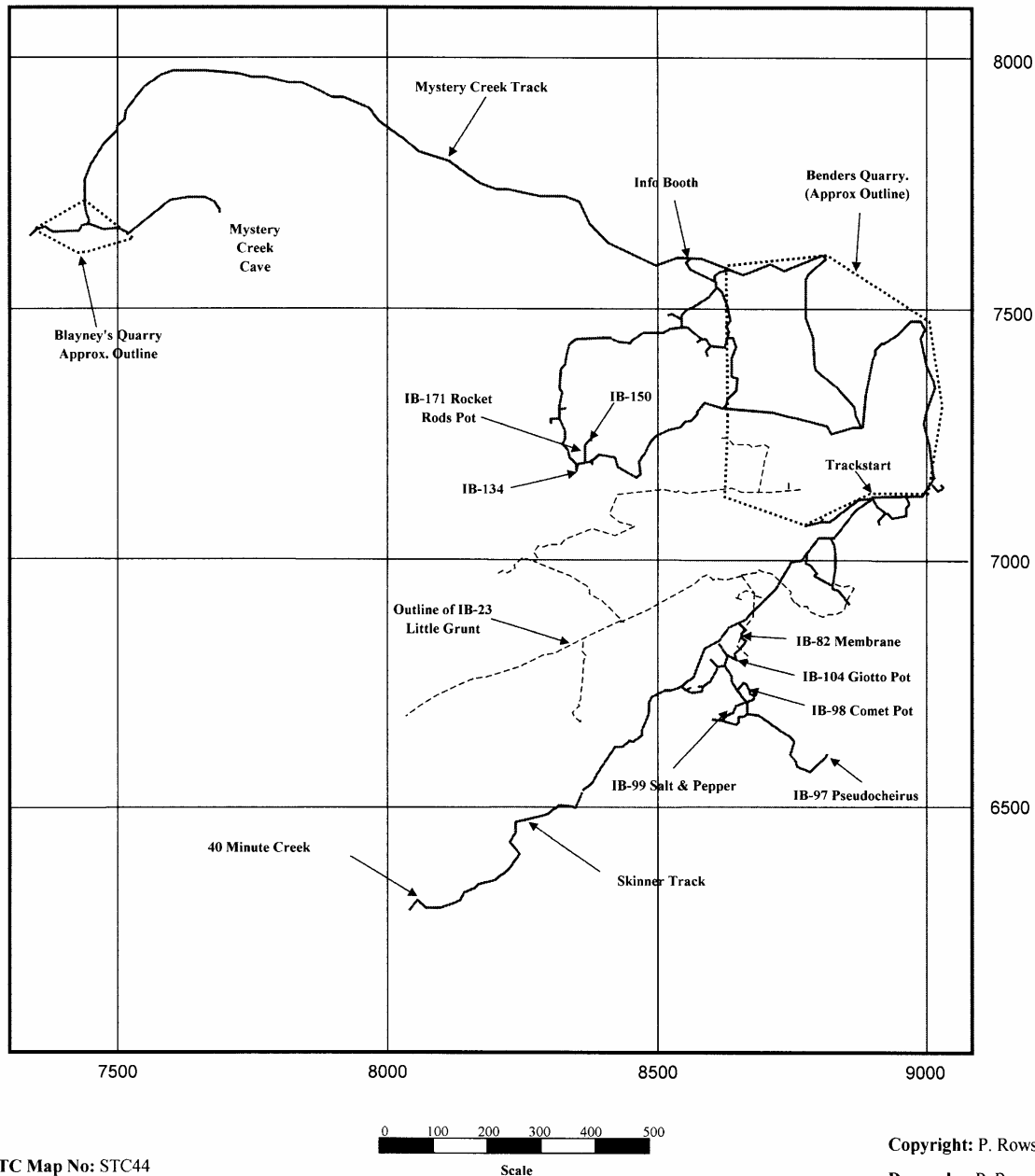
It was pretty easy to rig with good naturals, and soon dropped down the lens shaped shaft. It was only 5m to a floor. The squeeze on was drafting which was very encouraging, but needed a bit of widening. A few wacks with hammer and we were on. I set a deviation and dropped 5m into a nice wash pot. Water flowed through a small gap into another wash pot that was fed by two big avens. The way on was a small hole dropping into another wash pot of 5m or so again. We struggled to rig this one eventually finding two dodgy chock placements. Let Alan drop this one so he could find some new passage, news was not good. The water headed off down a small tight rift. I headed down and had a look. Pretty tight. You possibly could make a bit of progress hammering some of the stuff off the side but not really worth it at this stage. Buggar. Yet another toad!!! We called this pitch "Refusal at the first".

I got Alan to stay at the bottom of the 2nd pitch, while I headed up and over to the rock pile pitch and threw stones down so we could check that they were the same pitch. To my amazement, they didn't seem to be connected!! There was lots of banter "deaf bastard" etc and lots of stones but he couldn't hear them. This was amazing really as they were so close together. No wonder the place had collapsed so much if it was honeycombed like this!! We had made all of 50m or so pushing this lead!! We had a bit of ferret about this rock pile pitch and we managed to find a climb down on the far side next to the wall, for some of the way, but could go no further. Big rocks etc loose too. Not a nice place, a couple of places we could bolt, but lots of loose stuff. I suggested we left it for today and go and check out Pitch 2. My brain wasn't really firing today which didn't help either.

Man was it hard work dragging the bags back. I was stuffed by the time we were in the main chamber. Options for Pitch 2 then. The rift looked good, but tight. Underneath where it opened out to a wide rift was the best but there were lots of loose stones etc. Once out in the rift, however you would get a nice 'y' hang down. We spent awhile looking at this, then I decided to have a better look, rigging a line down. We had lots of time so might as well use the time to work out bolt placements and save time next time. Rigged off two boulders in the floor and headed over. I did a bit of gardening on the way down and came to the conclusion it wasn't too bad really and bolt placements were good. Happy with what we were going to do next time, we headed out.

A bit of a demoralising day really, our top lead died! Nightmare, especially dragging all that stuff over there. I guess we have at least eliminated a bit more of the cave and saved some time next trip sorting out where the bolts need to go which is good.

Diagram of the surface traverses surveyed in the Marble Hill Area, Ida Bay from 01/09/02 to 29/11/02 (Approximately 10 km of surface traverses)



Oh Yeh (IB-166) Tagging new caves and dropping a good lead: 4 December 2002 By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Arthur Clarke

A day out with Arthur. We had a mixed agenda, first we were going to tag and drop the new cave I had found with Kat (29/11/02) Oh Yeh, then tag a few of the other new caves that had been found. As we headed up through the quarry I showed Arthur the permanent stations I had put in. He had his digital camera so he took numerous shots of them for the archive.

Near QC3 Arthur showed me another cave (IB-133) not far from the track, so I will survey that in one day. Soon we were at Oh Yeh. He seemed quite impressed with the entrance. We tagged it IB-166, placing the tag on the far rock wall about waist height.

It was pretty easy to rig up a 'Y' hang and drop down a short pitch 14m to had a look around. It headed off down slope and around the corner to the 2nd pitch. It looked pretty good. I could see the floor and measured

it with the tape, about 24m. I spent awhile looking around for naturals, but pretty thin on the ground. A couple of stalls right around the corner, but a bit of a traverse and I didn't like hanging of rotten stalls. Bad if they break for both the cave and you!! There was quite a nice flowstone down the entire length of the pitch, thankfully not where you would drop it. I persuaded Arthur to come down and had a look around. I think in the end he was pretty disappointed that we couldn't go any further. I guess I should have brought more rope but we would have still needed the bolt kit. We headed out.

It was still quite early so tag a few more I guess. We headed down and tagged Uranus IB-167 (the tag above the entrance), a cave I had pushed with Alan on 6/10/02 and then we went off in search the cave Alison had found on the 13/10/02. I thought I knew where I was going but I got really lost in the forest. We were staggering around all over the place. At one point, I ended up on the IB-97 track. Eventually I found it much to the relief of Arthur! We tagged this one IB-168 (the tag to the right hand side of the entrance). Arthur also photo tagged all three caves.

I also wanted to re-locate IB-106 remembering it was fairly close. More time wandering around not quite

remembering the features etc. It was only a month or so we had been down here last, it must be old age setting in!! Finally found it and set a traverse up from IB-168 to IB-106 and on up to the Skinner Track. Arthur wanted to re-tag IB-116 as I had said the tag was on a tree. Not good, we spent another session aimlessly wandering around trying to find it, before I realized we were on the wrong ridge!! We did find another promising hole which we put the final tag on IB-169. Another one to come back to.

Once on the correct ridge, I found IB-116 easily, it was only 20m or so up hill from Uranus IB-167. What a run around!! IB-115 was also close by. Arthur's drill battery was dead, so we didn't get re tag it after all! To cap it all, we lost the Chuck key and spent ages re-finding that. Since the cave wasn't named we thought that this was as good a name as any. Chuck Key Pot. I set a traverse back up to the Skinner track, and we headed out.

Not a bad day, Oh Yeh certainly goes. A shame we didn't take more rope. It was really good to tag a few of the caves that have been found recently, as well as to have set traverses down to them and IB-106, IB-115, IB-116. I will tie them in shortly.

Rocket Rods Pot (IB-171): Dropping the man trap 5 December 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

Back to Rocket Rods Pot, at least we had a name now!! We were off to have a look at Pitch 2 to see where that went. It didn't take long to get down there. I had a good look at the rocks at the top of the pitch and was alarmed to see a big one balanced on a small plate like one in the floor! If you stepped on the plate it looked like you would be flattened by the big rock. That's a good name for the pitch "the man trap". Just hope it doesn't live up to its name.

We rigged the pitch as before and I headed off to do some bolting. The rock was really hard and brittle. Despite last trip took a while select one of the sites. The stance was really awkward, bridging over the rift. It really took it out of your legs etc. It seemed to take ages to get the spits in too. Alan must have been bored stiff! Thankfully the cave wasn't too cold so sitting around wasn't a problem. Where's the drill and through bolts when you need them. We would have been down in 10 mins! Finally I had a 'Y' hang and off I went down to the false floor. More bolting, again 2 bolts for a 'y' hang with another awkward bridging stance and stuffed legs. I was real glad when I was on the deck. I got out of the way and let Alan came down.

We had dropped into a 3 way junction of a main rift and a small side passage. I followed Alan over the 'Hill' in the rift to see what that had to offer. Climbing up was easy, but a mud slope headed down. We rigged up hand line and abseiled on down. At the base, the left

wall of the rift had collapsed a bit, producing a little chamber with a pitch at the back. I used the hand line to hang out over and have a look. It looked like a 20 or so metre pitch with a drop below it. Hum yet another to drop. We found a route through some collapsed boulders in this chamber to another drop into a chamber, but it looked a bit dodgy to climb down. We headed back out and up to the main rift. It continued along, going up hill again to a big collapse, probably an old aven to surface?

There was not much else to look at here so we headed back to the gear and explored one of the other passages. We headed along the other limb of the main rift, surveying as we went. A small passage headed down through a boulder pile to yet another drop. The main passage continued up over the pile to a drop into a perpendicular rift chamber. The right headed to an aven, with a bit of water dripping in, but left headed out to big boulders and what looked like another drop. I rigged up a rope and Alan headed down as he had his gear on. He had a look about and yep another pitch, Big one! Since I wanted to see what was going on and we needed to survey it, I abseiled over classic style, it was only 4-5m so hopefully be able to get back up.

A mass of collapse material at the pitch head. It sounded a reasonable drop though. We could see through a window, the small passage we had checked out earlier. I guess it must drop in the main pitch further down. Water coming in above from an aven off to the right which was interesting. I know where we were

coming next trip! We finished surveying the place and headed back to the bags. We knocked off the other side passage as Alan had already been up here and it didn't go too far. It was only 4 or so legs, an up and over into a small chamber with several dead animals. A few stals too but nothing special. I called this Santa's Grotto for some reason. It was time to go, was 18:00.

We surveyed back up the pitches and tied the survey into a previous station and headed on out. I was tired jamming back up, dragging two bags. We had done

well today through. We had explored quite a bit and had surveyed most of it which was even better. I think Alan is slowly coming around again to how useful surveying is. You really don't have a rats idea where you are if you don't.

The data looked interesting, the big drop seems out on a limb of its own! The passage layout gets more and more complicated to fathom out!! Just as well we had surveyed it!

Oh Yeh (IB-166) Just a big pot: 6 December 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Geoff Wise

Pushing yet another new cave IB-166 Oh Yeh. It's beginning to get a bit blasé!! My body was feeling a bit tired from yesterdays effort in Rocket Rods, hanging in the harness bolting all the time. Hopefully this wouldn't turn into another epic.

Geoff laughed at how close the cave was to the track, it was amazing no one had seen it before. Gearing up took a while as mine was in a real mess from yesterday, still I eventually got there. Rigged the first pitch and headed down and let Geoff come on down to get out of the rain. We sorted out the bolt kit and I headed off around the corner. It was really difficult to find a good placement, eventually had no option to settle for one which would require a deviation further down.

Man was the rock hard, it was wasting the teeth of the spit. I eventually had it set and dropped on down. I couldn't find anything to get a deviation off.

Nightmare! I tired one flake far out, but really rotten and sent shit down the pitch. Bolt again but gave a nice free drop to the floor. I felt sorry for Geoff as he was till hanging about up top on the rope. Finally I stood at the bottom.

I had a looked about while Geoff came on down. It was a nice chamber with a nice stalactite with a ton of straws below it. I didn't want to go off exploring too much I would let Geoff do that. Unfortunately it didn't take long for him to look around. The whole place was a just a big chamber with few avens coming down into it. Some water dripped in from one and flowed across a really flat sandy floor, down a small passage too tight to follow, and not worth digging. Bummer, no big find here, still better than a squalid hole like normal!

We exhausted all possible leads and surveyed out. We packed up and headed back up the path. We surveyed in IB-133 back to QC3 on the way out which was good. Another little job ticked off.

Rocket Rods Pot (IB-171): It just keeps going 8 December 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

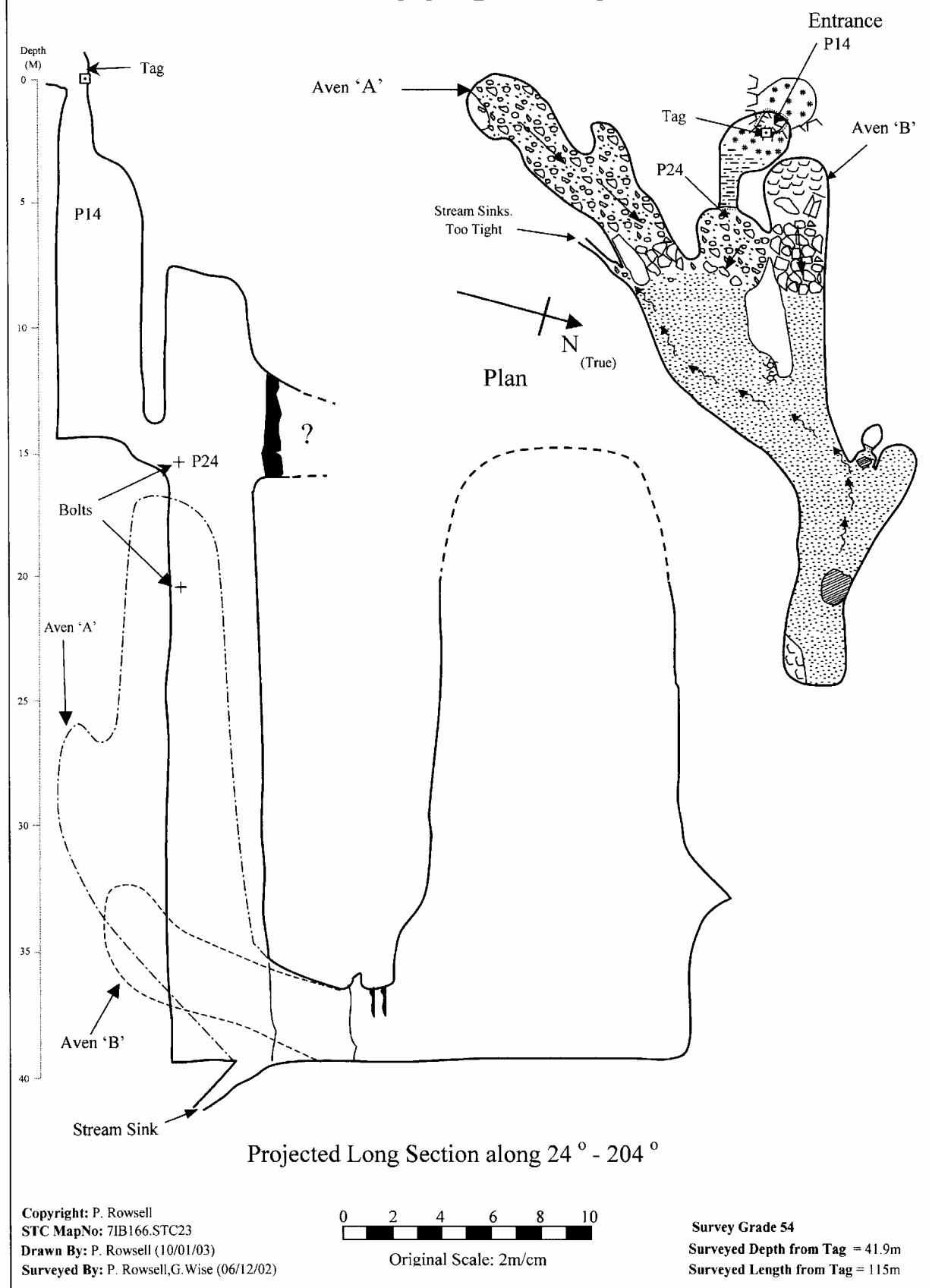
Back in there yet again. Alan seems to have got the bug. The same old trudge up the hill, but pack much lighter. Clean dry gear too, how wonderful. We had decided not to take quite so much rope in. We never seem to use it! We had enough for a good days push, and by the time you surveyed it, it was a pretty full day.

We pioneered a new route through the main chamber to the man trap which was good. It avoided a lot of the formation through the boulders. I told Alan I wanted to survey the section we had pushed first last time and not surveyed (5/11/02) before heading off exploring new stuff again. I don't think he was too keen but we soon got going. It was only a couple of legs and it would give us a chance to have another look at the pitch down there, just in case we wanted to drop the other first. We surveyed up an over and into the little chamber, tied in the pitch and headed on to the smaller drop into a chamber we had looked at last time. Alan pushed this time while I was drawing. He said it was a bit gnarly so

I made him climb back up before we both got trapped down there. It looked pretty easy when he climbed up.

It looked like a continuation of the rift above, below yet another suspended floor!! Big boulder pile headed up, and a small wash pot off to the right that didn't go anywhere. Alan went for a look while I continued drawing and found a bit of a rift climb down the left hand wall. He came back and said he reckoned he had found a bypass to the pitch and was in stream passage. Very interesting!! We surveyed the rest of this chamber and then headed down the rift. No kidding when he said it was a dodgy climb. A chock stone that seemed to be holding up the whole of the collapse. Memories of IB-99 can flooding back!! We were both pretty careful climbing under this, then the drop. I had to take two looks at this. Alan had said he had used his ass against one wall. Yeh yeh, my legs wouldn't reach being a short ass!! I managed to get down somehow and headed on down a boulder slope to the stream passage chamber and a big aven. We could see where the other pitch dropped in. We surveyed to its base just to confirm.

IB-166 Oh Yeh



Very interesting. Definite gear off job. We decided to head up stream. It went for some way and would be a nightmare to survey. A tight rift with shitty rock walls. You had to grovel in the water in places. It looked more like a Florentine cave than Ida Bay!! We pushed this passage to a final aven where the passage went really low and grovelly, but still going though.

We thought it was heading over to Alan's pitch (pitch 1), but only the survey data would reveal. We decided to knock it on the head and survey out. Painfully slowly, awkward meanders, wet and muddy. I could hardly see the book from mud. Every now and then I got the chance to wash it in the stream!! I was real thankful to be back out in the chamber.

We had a good look down stream and that went through a few avens to a blockage. We would need the bar to get through here. It looked interesting as the stream

passage continued on the other side. We surveyed our way out. We were both pretty cold and hungry by now, we had been down 6 hours and had nothing to eat yet. It was all at the base of the Man Trap!! I only thought this would be a 10min job!! We headed back up, both climbs were pretty easy. It must have been just the spook factor when looking down them for the first time. Finally we got the chance to eat! Man was I hungry. I had warmed up a bit now since we had been moving but Alan was still pretty cold so decided to head on out. It was getting on in any case.

Good trip, funny as it was not what we had planned at all! Even more so, we had dragged all the tackle in again and not used any of it!! It will be really interesting to see the data on the computer. Quite amazing that there is stream passage running through the cave! You would have thought the water would have just dropped down. The mind boggles!!

Rocket Rods Pot (IB-171): A date with Destiny 13 December 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

We finally got the chance to do the long trip we needed. We headed down at 16:00 to put a long over nighter in to hopefully get down into Little Grunt, or at least lay the path to get there the following day. We could then go to the Xmas dinner with good news.

It seemed funny arriving down at the booth in the evening time. We headed up and were off down the cave at 20:00. Man was the rope dirty on the 2nd pitch, real nightmare to abseil on, grease lightening!! We rigged a short rope to drop into the chamber and soon back at our goal.

I had a look about at the pitch head, looking for the best place to drop it. Man was there a lot of loose shit around. Basically there were two wash pots, The top of first was strewn with potentially lethal stuff and it was difficult to find a good place to drop. The far one looked much better and there seemed to be a rock bridge between the two about 10 ft down the boulder slope. I did some gardening on the way down, a couple really big ones but it cleaned up the slope pretty well. I don't think it was so nice below as the rocks seemed to rattle all over the place. I finally got out to the rock bridge. I definitely didn't want to drop the first hole. Piles of stacked boulders. The other side of the bridge looked much better. Clean rock, but didn't look the best to bolt as the rock was pretty poor and looked like it would be difficult to get a free hang. The far wall would have been better but the rock on this was a real nightmare. I could just about see the floor at the bottom of this one and another pitch heading off at the back. Guess the two pitches were linked somehow.

I was stood pondering about where to bolt etc, when a boulder rattled down the pitch. "Was that you Alan?" "NO didn't do a thing". Hum interesting! More

pondering, then holy mackerel, a massive boulder let go somewhere below and sending tones of shit raining down both pitches. Man, was that scary as had visions of the whole slope going. Not to impressed. Time to get out of here! I raced on back up pretty freaked. We sat about for a bit, before Alan wanted to have a quick look, and climbed on down. I think he felt slightly more scared once out on the bridge. He wasn't too impressed either when another small rock rattled down from somewhere. Not tonight Josephine!! This place needed time to settle! We sat up at the top discussing options. I began to think of having a go but another rock let go somewhere just to remind us it wasn't a good idea. I guess it was Friday the 13th. We got the gear and headed out of there. We called this place "A date with destiny".

We dumped most of the gear back at the base of the entrance pitch and headed over to check out Alan's pitch (pitch 1). It was an easy rig and off Alan dropped into the pot. Not good news. A tiny rift headed back under, but really tight. Buggar. The pot had had a good echo too. I headed down and took my gear off to try and get further. It was pretty tight and a combination of a bend and a small rock nubbin prevented progress. There seemed to be a bit of a draft. Possibly worth coming back to with digging gear, but would be interesting to see what the survey showed first. We weren't doing too good tonight! We called this "Echoes are deceiving".

A bit of tidy up surveying then I guess. It was about 01:30. We surveyed into some passage we had looked at before that headed somewhere under IB-134. There was a lot of collapse passage and not very promising. Progress was slow and Alan was pretty cold and tired. In the end said we should knock it on the head as Alan virtually falling asleep. We headed on out but decided

to head in again tomorrow and finish off the surveying. We got out at 02:30, pretty tired.

Not a bad trip. A pretty scary bottom pitch, looks pretty impressive but pretty easy to get killed by the rocks

raining down. A good idea to leave it for a while. A shame Alan's lead closed down, but at least that's another thing ticked off.

Rocket Rods Pot (IB-171): All up to date 14 December 2002

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson, Geoff Wise

I woke up pretty set about cooking our mega breakfast. I hadn't had a good fry up for ages. Alan finally surfaced, I think both of us were still tired from last night's trip. Geoff arrived shortly when the sausages were ready. Surprisingly he didn't want any. Sonya hadn't showed up, but that was no problem. It would be a good trip just the three of us, nothing mental, just tidying up the rest of the surveying and finally finish off one section of the cave that fully been explored but not been surveyed. We would be completely up to date then.

It was really funny having no gear to carry up, I could get used to this. We headed over to where we had finished surveying last night and started again. Thankfully Alan was a bit more awake today! We ferreted around and explored any possible leads we had missed. We had another look down past the tight squeeze into the lower chamber but there wasn't too much surveying to do in this part. Alan tried to push a tight squeeze in a boulder ruckle and got stuck on the far side which was pretty funny. Geoff had to bash a boulder out to get him back out. I used the time to continue drawing.

We slowly progressed back to the big chamber. It took quite awhile to draw which was probably pretty boring for the boys. It needed to be done. In the main chamber, we went back down to the area where we had looked at on the first trip 10/11/02 and I had shredded my suit previously. It needed surveying and worth another look as these passages were pretty close to where we had been exploring on the 8/12/02. It would be good to find a connection as it would save dropping the "Man Trap" pitch. I took great care while clambering around in the depths not to snag my suit. I already had a bit of a rip on the right knee, so I was extra careful not to rip it further. We didn't find any possible leads and was glad we when we were out of there.

That was us finished after another 6 hours of surveying! We headed out and off to the Xmas Dinner. I was surprisingly tired, but pleased that we had surveyed all the currently pushed passages. I kept thinking about last night's trip, and disheartened the big pitch was so unstable. Hopefully we will push that after Xmas when it has had time to settle. We will probably spill the beans about the cave tonight too otherwise I think people will get a bit pissed off!! People still refused to share their own data through!

The P-hanging Project-An Update-April 2003

By Jeff Butt

If you have been reading the Speleo-Spiel you will have noticed that things on the P-hanger front have been fairly quiet of late. As reported in Speleo-Spiel 333, our final tubes of glue were consumed in November last year. Up until then, we had installed 42 P-hangers (7 test ones, 12 in Midnight Hole, 8 in Owl Pot, 6 in Mini-Martin and 9 in Khazad-Dum).

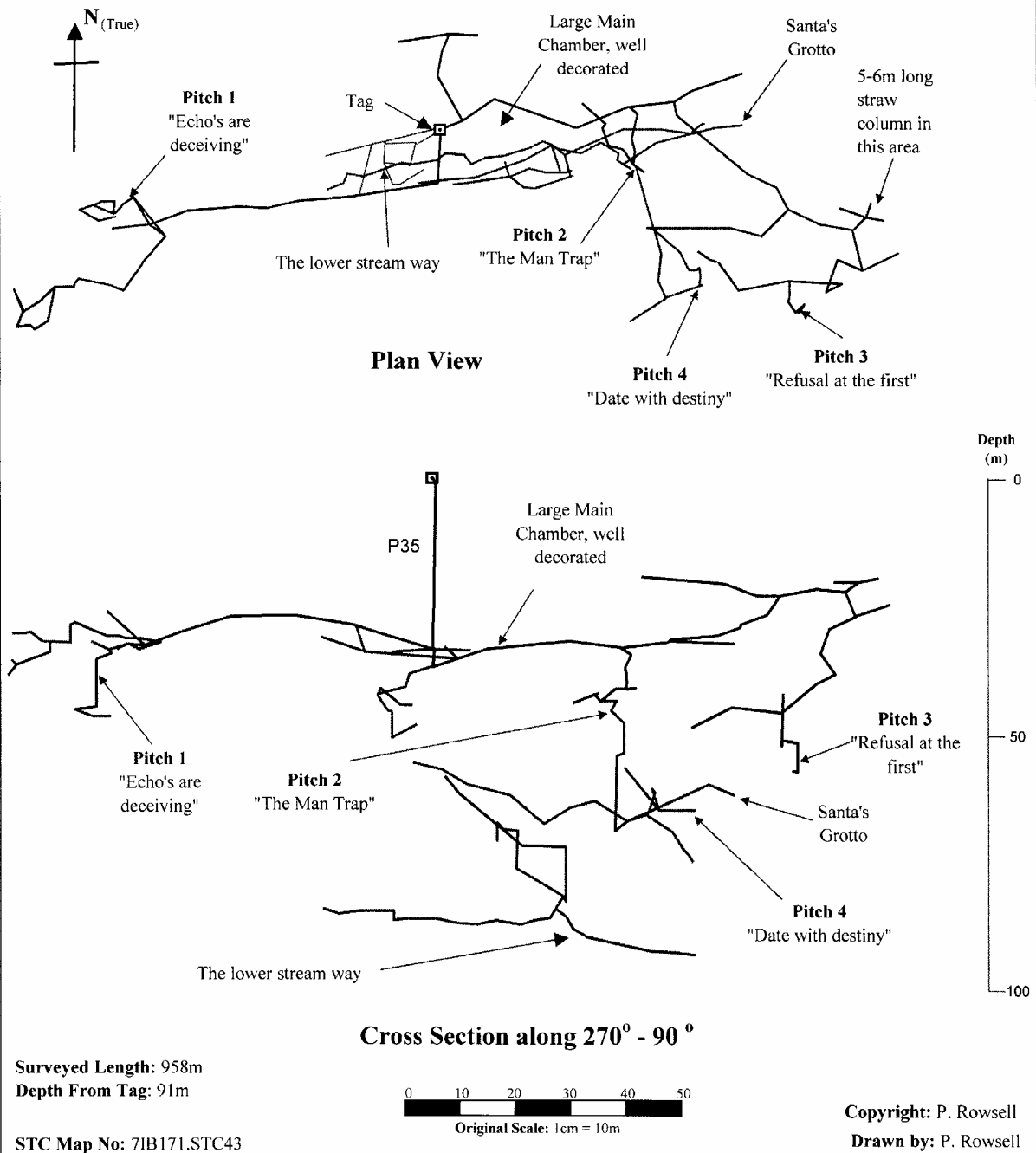
Since then, there have been things happening in the background, but not much in the field. However, things are about to change.

Recent Developments

Some of you may be aware that in August 2002 Cavecare South was set up under Wildcare, the community partnership section of DPIWE. In August 2002, I applied for a Wildcare Grant of \$2500 for P-hanging. This grant money was to cover the installation of 50 P-hangers in 2003 and 30 P-hangers in 2004. The caves that we identified for P-hanging are shown in the list below. All of these caves were popular ones that we know had some degree of dodgy bolts and/or bolt rash.

Cave	Location-Caving Area	Estimated No. of P-hangers required
Big Tree Pot (IB9)	Ida Bay	10
Milk Run (IB38)	Ida Bay	12
Old Ditch Road (IB131)	Ida Bay	8
Dwarrowdelf (JF14)	Junee-Florentine	14
Khazad-Dum (JF4)	Junee-Florentine	26
Tassy Pot (JF223)	Junee-Florentine	10
TOTAL		80

A spider plot of the IB-171 Rocket Rod's Pot survey data up to 14/12/02



This Grant Application was not well received, some members of the Wildcare Board were particularly worried about liability for the installed anchors and there were some other issues such as, was it worth spending money for cavers when there weren't many of them etc.

Fortunately common sense prevailed after some extra information was input and in February 2003 (some 6 months after submitting our proposal) we received notification that the Grant was partially successful. We were granted \$1345 for the project; we were knocked back for rope, karabiners and travel costs.

Unfortunately, over the intervening 6 months, it became difficult to source P-hangers at an acceptable cost. Ones last bought here a couple of years ago (for Midnight Hole were \$15 each) but by late 2002 prices had risen to ~\$28. In the end I resorted to going to DMM direct in Wales and managed to get them for ~\$17.50 each, which increased to ~\$20.50 each after import duty and GST was paid.

We now have 80 P-hangers; 50 are destined for use this year, and the remaining 30 (which I currently own) are destined for use next year. We will of course have to put in another Grant Application for funding for next year.

Also, recently the Parks and Wildlife (Dept. Tourism, strictly speaking) purchased (for ~\$2500) a hydraulic testing unit, specifically for testing and proving the P-hangers we install. To address the liability issue, it has been decreed that only trained Wildcare members are to install P-hangers, and all installed P-hangers are to be given a Proving Test* using the hydraulic tester.

*[*The Proving Test is based upon tests used for life support anchors in the Elevator Industry. In this test, installed lifeline anchors (for people working in elevator shafts) have to sustain a 5 kN tensile load for 5 minutes without showing any signs (fracture, egress of the anchor from the glue matrix, egress of the glue matrix from the hole etc.) of failure.]*

So, now we have the all the equipment, we can get things happening again.

The Plan for the remainder of this year

Work for the remainder of this year will be composed of two parts:

the installation of 50 P-hangers (or as many as our funds will allow glue to be purchased for) into caves identified above, and

the formal proving of these new hangers and those recently installed that have yet to be formally proven.

If people wish to be trained up as P-hanger installers, then that is possible provided you are a Wildcare member. Opportunities for 'training on the job' exist.

I'll be advertising P-hangering trips on the STC list-server, so if you are interested and available, then please let me know.

Jeff Butt (Cavecare South P-hanger project co-ordinator).

(PS. Since writing this article, the 6 P-hangers in Mini-Martin and the 8 in Owl Pot have been load tested and formally proven.)

An Introductory trip to Owl Pot (JF-221) for the new Stereo-typical cavers: 8/3/2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Sarah Joyce, Emma Watt, Esther, Mike Longman, Jeff Butt.

Recently there has been a large influx of a new stereo-type of caving club member, namely female, short, young, giggly and keen to go caving. This is in stark contrast to the former stereo-typical caver type, i.e. male, gray beard, serious type who wears glasses and is often not that keen to go caving.

To facilitate this youthful enthusiasm I decided to run an Introductory SRT trip. As it happened, I had a fellow by the name of Mike (yes, a male with a gray beard) from WA on a year long trip around Oz, with his family, who also wanted to visit a Tasmanian Cave.....so with a cast of thousands and representatives from both of the caver stereo-types we headed off in a heavily laden Orana.

Not many vehicles have been up the Nine Road recently, so it is somewhat greasy, but fallen tree free. Mike said that I needed a 4 WD, but the Orana handled the task without any undue trouble. At any rate, I had 4 Passengers to push if we did encounter any spot of bother!

We had a pleasant 7 hour trip down Owl Pot. I'm pleased to say that the new P-hangers (installed late last year) are in excellent shape and they make the rigging

quite a breeze. To assist any other trips to this cave to be just as breeze like, here's a minimalists tackle list:

Entrance Pitch: 25 m rope, one 3 m sling and one krab. Y-belay from the rock on the floor back from the edge and the tree-lets on the left-hand side.

Pitch 2: 34 m rope and 2 krabs (you can tie the end of the rope through the tie-back P), one short sling and snaplink for a deviation about 8 m from the bottom.

Pitch 3: 25 m rope, one long sling/krab to back up the first P-hanger, one short sling and a snaplink for the deviation at the second P-hanger (or rig a rebelay if you prefer).

Pitch 4: 36 m rope and 2 krabs (again you can tie the end of the rope through the tie-back P).

The youth amongst us handled the rope-work with great aplomb (this was assisted by a practise session at Fruehauf the previous evening!), and soon we were down at the top of the last pitch. Emma and Sarah took the conservative approach and opted out of the final abseil. Mike and Esther were keen for the last pitch, and the three of us headed down, and then back up again.

Once we regrouped at the stream passage junction, a warming ascent began, back to the surface. Everyone went very well with the path against gravity back to the daylight. Obviously there was still some energy left, as

by the time I'd derigged the entrance pitch the young ladies were half way to Three-Falls cave...obviously they were keen for some more!

The trip home was interrupted by a hot chippies stop at New Norfolk; this is where we faced the greatest

challenge for the day....min chips (\$1.50) is impossible for one person to eat; we had obviously way over-ordered!! Where are those sea-gulls when you need them!

Mini-Martin (IB-8) a P-hanger testing we go: 8 April 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Gavin Brett, Jeff Butt.

Parks and Wildlife had informed me that they had just taken receipt of their new Hilti 4 Tester, specifically bought to allow us to formally prove installed P-hangers.

Gavin, who currently lives in Melbourne was over in Hobart, as he'd just bought the house down the road from us, and was keen to do some caving. So, putting the two together we had a short notice mid-week trip.

We collected the tester from Huonville en-route, and were soon at Marble Hill hoofing it up the hill with 200 m of rope, the Hilti tester and a few other odds and ends. We did a bit of GPS data collecting (SA appears to again be OFF) whilst we headed down this impressive steaming hole.

At the base of the main pitch, I handed over the rigging to Gavin, whilst I followed up, testing the P-hangers. I'm pleased to say that all the hangers in Mini-Martin

passed their proving test. Incidentally, the proving test is a 5 kN tensile pull held for 5 minutes without any loss of load, creep or other signs of failure. This is a fairly tough test, as in normal use the hangers are loaded at ~1 kN, and in shear. It would be virtually impossible to load the hangers up to the level they are subject to in this test during normal or even abnormal use!

The only drama for the day was making sure not to drop any of the 3 pieces of the tester down a pitch whilst trying to fit everything together whilst on-rope. I had made up some lanyards which were attached to all the bits lest I accidentally drop one. I can see a few refinements being added to this arrangement.

Down the bottom of Mini I took Gavin for a wee stroll before we did a wee prussik. Today we were field-testing the new roll of Roca 10 mm dynamic. I'm pleased to say that it performed well, and is very similar in properties to Edelrid rope.

Rocket Rods Pot (IB-171) Spilt Coffee, Split Pants, more Spilt Coffee: 12 April 2003

By Sarah Joyce

Party: Geoff Wise, Luke Wallace, Monica Osuchowski, Sarah Joyce

The day started by a leisurely 9:30 meeting in town. By Huonville we were ready for a snack and a coffee. By Franklin the coffee had spilt and it took thirty minutes to clean out the car and get another one. After this it was a pretty smooth trip to the cave with a minor breather as Geoff lost the track, relocated it and found the cave. From here everyone entered the cave well; Geoff set up the ropes for the first time at this site, Luke did his first abseil where the only way out was to prussik, and Monica and Sarah made it down a-o-k.

We spent roughly an hour exploring, doing a bit of scrambling and avoiding the destruction of several fragile straws. Small bone collections were also seen along the way.

On the way out Mons flew up the rope... no worries, Sarah on the other hand got off to a rough start as every step up widened the split in the back of her overalls by several cm each step! With a hefty split by the time she reached the top, she was assured that her harness was tight enough!!! Luke made it up his first prussik in no time, with the usual aches that you might expect. Geoff would have flown up too except he was busy taking happy snaps on the way up.

We made it back to the car right on dark just in time to get changed, eat cold pizza and have a coffee before we headed back. Unfortunately when Geoff was offered his coffee through the boot and then told the boot was closing he didn't realise that he only had point two five of a second before the boot closed!

So with coffee on the back window and smiles on our faces we headed back to Hobart.

Owl Pot (JF-221) P hanger testing: 24 April 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Damian Bidgood, Jeff Butt.

Now that we had a Hilti 4 tester, we were in a position to formally test some of the P-hangers that we have

installed there. This formal test is a requirement that Parks have placed on the installation of these hangers.

I was also interested in trying the tester out as a 'spit puller'; hoping that it's 1.6 tonne capacity might be sufficient to help us remove old spits.

Anyway, we cruised up to Owl Pot and headed on down to the top of the final pitch. We subjected each P-hanger in the cave to a 5 kN tensile pull for 5 minutes. I'm pleased to say that all held this force without any signs of creep or failure. Thus, all hangers passed this load proving test.

At the top of the 2nd pitch there were two spits that we had not yet attempted to remove. Using the appropriate attachments, I gave both spits a tensile pull of 16 kN (equivalent to a load of 1600 kg pulling directly outwards), but alas they held fast. I guess that means they were pretty good spits, even though one of them protruded about 5 mm. So, no joy there. Removal of old spits is indeed proving to be somewhat problematic.

So, we resort ed to drilling the spits down to the surface of the rock, then bashing them in with the hammer, prior to grouting with glue and dusting with drill dust to compete the restoration process.

At the entrance pitch, we also decided to install one P-hanger. This will save the small tree that is generally used as an anchor there; this tree is suffering from this task.



Damian tests a bolt (photo by Jeff Butt)

With the hole drilled (the noisy process of which meant that we disturbed an Owl after which the cave is named) and cleaned, all that remained was to glue in the hanger.....except that I forgot to bring the glue cartridge gun! Oops, this task (as well as grouting the old spits at the head of the second pitch) will have to wait till another day.

Old Ditch Road (IB-131) rig-Garage Door (IB-183) derig through trip: 26/4/2003.

By Jeff Butt

Party: Geoff Wise, Jeff Butt.

Garage Door had been rigged for a month, and I was keen to reclaim my gear and the club ropes. The bolts in Old Ditch Road need replacing, the first step was to look and think about what would work best. I thought that doing a through trip would allow us to make progress towards both objectives. So, after getting young Geoff interested in coming along we headed off with a load of gear bound for Old Ditch Road. I also collected a swag of altimeter data en-route.

We headed in at 11:30 a.m. I offered Geoff the chance at some rigging practise, which he accepted. I kept a watchful eye over his handy-work, as well as sussed out options for P-hangering.

It wasn't long and we were down in Exit with light packs. After a wander through the Western Passage we were at the bottom of Halfway Hole and Garage Door. After a bit of a crawl along the streamway, I found that we'd done a loop and had crawled back to the bottom of Halfway Hole....and noticed several cave adapted

Anaspades en-route. Second crawling time around I didn't miss the turn, and we were heading up Garage Door, as intended.

We derigged as we ascended, leaving all spits equipped with markers. I was amazed at how badly some of the hardware had suffered in only a month of being in the cave; several of my nearly new looking krabs had sustained a lot of surface corrosion, and now looked well and truly used. Anyway, our progress up was pretty smooth, and we were on the surface with a pile of gear at 5:00 p.m. Getting out in the daylight was a bonus, as it meant that the first bit of our walk out was in daylight; a definite advantage for this rugged route. We were half way up the hill from Valley Entrance before darkness set in; but by then the track was familiar and relatively easy.

All up a successful day; one cave rigged and another derigged; a couple of packs of clean gear swapped for a couple of packs of manky gear, and a page full of altimeter numbers and of possible P-hanger placements recorded.

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- Jets (21 litres/hr) for Petzl kaboom (just a couple left) \$5.00 each

Old Rope.....sorry, it's all been sold....but there will be more in the future!

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.