



Speleo Spiel

337

July — August 2003

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

STC Officers

President & Public Officer:

Steve Bunton

Ph: (03) 6278 2398 (h)

sbunton@postoffice.friends.tas.edu.au

Vice President:

Janine McKinnon

Ph: (03) 6243 5415 (h)

jmckinnon@tassie.net.au

Secretary:

Ric Tunney

Ph: (03) 6243 5415 (h)

rtunney@tassie.net.au

Treasurer:

Steve Phipps

Ph: (03) 6223 3939 (h).

sjhipps@utas.edu.au

Equipment Officer and S&R Officer:

Jeff Butt

Ph: (03) 6223 8620 (h)

jeffbutt@netspace.net.au

Librarian:

Greg Middleton

Ph: (03) 6223 1400 (h)

gregmidd@ozemail.com.au

Editor:

Geoff Wise

Ph: (03) 6231 1174(h)

wiseg@dodo.com.au

Webmaster:

Dean Morgan

Ph. (03) 6229 4405(h)

dmorgan@tesa.com.au

Web Site:

<http://www.tesa.com.au/stc>

Front Cover:

Formation in Gormenghst (JF-35)

(Photo by Geoff Wise)

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



The Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated

PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006

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

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

Issue No. 337, Jul. – Aug. 2003

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Editorial

I know everyone will be disappointed to learn that this issue contains the final instalment of *Mad Phil's Ida Bay saga* from last summer. Don't worry though, he'll be back soon for more adventures.

On another note the survey of Riveaux Cave (HC-2) is published for first time on page 30. The report was published in Speleo Spiel 331, on pages 4 – 6. The survey has in fact been drawn up for some time, I'd just neglected to put it in the Spiel.

The weather should be getting better soon, so get that gear out that has been stuffed in a cupboard over winter and go caving.

Geoff Wise

Stuff 'n Stuff

STC Website has Moved

The STC Website has moved to <http://www.tesa.com.au/stc>. The cavemania website has also moved to <http://www.tesa.com.au/stc/cavemania>. Both new sites can be accessed from the old site.

Forward Program

Next Business Meeting 5 November

Mole Creek 23 –26 October

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

Social Meeting 19 November

Greg Middleton will be showing slides from Korea

From NSS News, June 2003

Oregon Caves National Monument.

"Oregon Caves was vandalized from the time of the first visits. ... One tour that Dick Rowley ran, in those early years, had over 400 visitors in a single group, snaking through the cave." - Does anyone in STC want to coordinate an attempt on this record?

Mayberry Hut

Due to the recent damage to a fence, the hut at Marakooa managed by the Northern Caverneers is no longer available for caving club use. It is private property and trespassing will not be tolerated.

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Exhibit 2005

The Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery have agreed to establish a temporary caving exhibit to coincide with the 25th ASF conference in January 2005. If anyone has any ideas forward them to Robyn Claire and/ or Jo Eberhard at TMAG. (For more details see Speleo Spiel 336, page 30)

Building a Drainage Plan of Ida Bay

(Part 3- 27th Feb 03 to 03th Apr 03)

This is the third of four articles, highlighting the work done to build a drainage plan of Ida Bay from Sept 02 to April 03. This part completes the final back log of trip reports and work done from 27th Feb 03 up until my departure back to the UK in early April 03. This last (and quite frantic, 17 trips in just over a month!) session was really focused on completing the main survey traverse networks in Ida Bay culminating in the circumnavigation (or circucision as it became known) of Marble Hill. It has subsequently allowed many of the cave locations to be tied in with a high degree of accuracy. As a bonus several new caves were found in the Halfway Hole (IB-136) area that ultimately dropped into Exit Cave (IB-14). With these networks and cave positions established, it allowed the development of a reasonable drainage plan with many survey loops, combining both underground and surface loops. In addition there were also several more tidy up sessions in Little Grunt!

The majority of the new caves surveys are included. Due to the time consuming process of drawing up, not all the re-surveyed cave surveys are included but they will be published in due course. The table below gives a summary of the trip done over the period.

With the trip report side completed, the final fourth article will be a true article, summarising the work and give more findings and thoughts of what the data has shown etc, and where further work is required. While a substantial amount of work was done in this time (over 30km of suveying was conducted), it has only really scratched the surface and basically just set a good foundation stone on which to build.

Again I hope you enjoy reading them, some are pretty detailed and boring, but they serve as a record to what work was conducted over this time period and to future trips to help not re-invent the wheel.

Summary of the trips during this period

| | Cave | Date |
|---|--|-----------|
| 1 | IB-23 Little Grunt | 27-Feb-03 |
| 2 | Surface Work - Exit Track | 28-Feb-03 |
| 3 | IB-23 Little Grunt | 02-Mar-03 |
| 4 | Surface Work | 02-Mar-03 |
| 5 | Surface Work (IB-34 to IB-183) | 06-Mar-03 |
| 6 | IB23 Little Grunt | 08-Mar-03 |
| 7 | Surface Work (Valley Entrance track) | 12-Mar-03 |
| 8 | IB-34 Sky Hook Pot | 13-Mar-03 |
| 9 | IB-171 Rocket Rods, IB-175 Exit's Nostrils | 16-Mar-03 |

| | Cave | Date |
|----|---|-----------|
| 10 | Surface Work (Garage Door Track) | 18-Mar-03 |
| 11 | Surface Work (Milk Run Area) | 20-Mar-03 |
| 12 | IB-183 Garage Door | 23-Mar-03 |
| 13 | IB-169 Fizzer | 24-Mar-03 |
| 14 | IB-131 Old Ditch Road to IB-183 Garage Door | 26-Mar-03 |
| 15 | IB 131 Old Ditch Road | 29-Mar-03 |
| 16 | IB-183 Garage Door to IB-14 Exit Cave | 01-Apr-03 |
| 17 | IB-190 to IB-14 Exit Cave | 03-Apr-03 |

Madphil

Tidying up a few more passages in Little Grunt (IB-23): 27 February 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

I was excited, heading down Little Grunt again. I had persuaded Jeff to come down and do some tidy up surveying. I wanted to look at the passages Geoff and Alan had looked at on (25/10/02). Both were in interesting positions. Ric and Janine wanted to come down so no problem.

I ended up doing all the rigging as I could remember the majority of it, with Jeff doing a bit of cleaning up behind. It only took two hours this time which was pretty pleasing. I think Ric and Janine had the same amazement when first entering the main stream way. What a place it would have been to find. I gave the guided tour as we headed down indicating the passages we had surveyed plus ideas where they went etc. Jeff wanted to see the Masochistic Way so we had a brief look at the start. I was staggered to see that the passage was completely dry, no stream at all!! Time to push it! We said farewell to Ric and Janine who were off touring and headed on for our mission of the day.

Down at the boulder ruckle sump, there seemed to be a draft heading into the boulder ruckle sump passage and on to Exit! This was quite interesting as I hadn't noticed this before. Maybe the water levels were low enough, there was an air connection into Exit, it certainly seemed that way. We headed on up stream to the four way junction.

We headed off down the crystal passage series first. There was a draft heading through here too. This was most interesting. The passage looked like it took water or flooded at times, as the mud was pretty damp. I suspect that when there was a lot of water flow in the cave, it cannot flow fast enough through the boulder ruckle sump and backs up. It was pretty easy surveying, the only trouble was that Jeff had left the instruments out of his dry bag while heading through the wet crawls and the clino was steaming up. Nightmare.

We surveyed along the low tubes until we hit a big collapse area. There were several ways on here. We headed off to the left into a boulder choke. It started to get a bit gnarly so Jeff bailed. I had a push. Some of it pretty tight and jagged but got through into a small

chamber with passage heading down in sand to the sound of the river. Exciting!! I wonder if it was passed the choke. Jeff headed back out and down the main stream passage to see if he could hear me while I had a go at digging through. I spent ages working at it. I was nearly through when Jeff appeared back and said he could not hear me. I was well excited, with one final push I popped through. Hum, not good, foot prints. I headed down to the stream and knew exactly where I was. At the sump!!! Great!! I guess he hadn't gone down far enough!

I headed back to the collapse area and headed off on the route on the right. Here, we found the stone circle with the gypsum crystals in it. Just near by, was another low stream passage headed off which we surveyed along, ending up in another collapse chamber. We had a good look around in here as there was still a good draft. I pushed some tight stuff again and found a possible way on, but needed digging with a wrecking bar. Probably worth a visit again through. Also of interest was a mud choked passage that headed off just before the final choked chamber. This too might be worth a little look. We headed back to the collapse chamber again and did a final bit of tidying up surveying before back out to the stream junction and had some well earned food.

Last objective, the sump passage. Jeff seemed to be having a bit more difficulty reading the clino which was a bit worrying. Still we plodded along. I was surprised how many little side passages there were. They didn't go anywhere but it was good to knock them off. Finally Jeff said the clino was too fogged to read so we knocked it on the head. A shame as we were only a few legs from the sump. We had a quick look up there and I was surprised that the "sump" had dropped down nearly a foot and it looked like there was a small air gap that you could roof sniff! I still couldn't find the determination to push it through! Maybe we might try siphoning out some of the water next time around?? Better call this place "piker's sump".

With these thoughts we headed on out. It only took an hour to jug out which was pleasing. It was quite funny coming out in the dark, but it will soon be the norm I guess. A good trip but it would have been good to have finished the sump passage. I'll will head back down there another day.

Surface Work (Ida Bay): 28 February 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

The day was wet and not very pleasant, so we opted not to be in the bush proper, but decided to resurvey the Skinner track from the Mini Martin turn-off down to IB-14. Trevor Wailes (and probably others) have surveyed along this track; but there was a small but annoying irreconcilable difference between where IB-14 was placed based on Trevor's data and the GPS/Theodolite survey through Exit Cave. Not knowing where the error might be, we decided to resurvey the track; but this time leaving numbered tapes behind. The numbered tapes will allow us to survey in other caves in due course.

We were also taking forward and back sights, which is a good check on the data for each leg, ensuring that there aren't any 'blonde moments' in the data collected. En-route back from Exit we surveyed in IB-87 and IB-161. Despite finding the IB-86 doline, we couldn't locate the IB-86 tag...so perhaps we weren't quite in the correct place? Guess next time we're in the area we can have another look and survey it in once it's found.

We also headed in to re-find Old Ditch Road (IB-131). Found the entrance OK, but again couldn't locate the number tag...so another job is left for another time.

Settling old business – the final push up the Masochistic Way: 2 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

Time to clear up old business - the Masochistic Way. Excitement was high as we had been digging at the Cyclops 'sump' the week before, but we had given up as it was a pretty awkward dig. It would be interesting to see how close we could get from the Little Grunt side. I also wanted to have a go at draining the pikers sump passage and having a look the other side. The cave had been really dry last time down with Jeff Butt but it had rained a bit so I was interested to see how much effect it had had. We were also taking Jeff down who was going tag and set a traverse around from a new cave we had found recently (IB-183) back to Baader Meinhof (IB-113) (*Separate trip report*).

Heading down the cave was excellent, I belted on down!! It was great having the cave rigged. It only took half an hour. We dumped the gear and headed into the stream way. Hum not so good, it was flowing. We headed on down to the river junction to see water flowing from the Masochistic Way side. Nightmare. It was bone dry last week! We dumped the gear, and took the hose pipes down to pikers sump passage. There was a lot more water in the main stream. What was really surprising though was the change in direction of the air flow. The air was not flowing to the main boulder ruckle sump but heading upstream, presumably to Rocket Rods. Interesting!! I guess the recent rain has closed the connection to Exit. This would probably explain why Rocket Rods has not blown so strong for awhile over the summer?? Most of the air was heading into Exit.

Up at pikers sump it didn't look as though we had enough hose. We tried getting a siphon working, but I was amazed how low the sump was compared to the passage. Certainly no go with one hose. We tried joining the two, but the passage didn't drop enough to get a siphon going. Nightmare. After an hour or so of

dicking about we gave up on the idea. I still couldn't bring myself to dive/duck this one!

We headed back to the Masochistic Way, the main priority. We picked up the gear and headed up to the start of the passage. Amazing, it was dry, but why the stream? Looking back there was a small sump pool about half the distance back which was flowing. Interesting, but the main thing was the Masochistic Way was dry!! The first part was OK but it slowly began to get gnarly as you went. There was a really good draft coming towards us which was pretty encouraging! Nice to go through the squeeze dry! Finally we stood up in "Your wish is my command", what a relief.

We pushed on up to the last taped station and started surveying from there. We didn't get very far, I got to another corner and the passage closed down considerably, Nightmare. The fill seemed to be forming a dam on the corner. You could dig through, but it was going to be wet. Alan headed back to get the wrecking bar while I lay there moving what cobbles I could. Soon I was back to the usual game of lying flat out scrapping away cobbles with the wrecking bar. I was getting rid of the obstruction fast, but the water flowed down the passage and of course down my suit, great. Finally I was around the corner and headed on flat out in water, getting more gnarly as I went. I had to keep the head up to the side to breath. Lovely stuff!! I made about 8m before the passage closed right down with fill and a major dig job, Buggar. All this effort for that!! We finished surveying and headed back soaked to "Your wish is my command" and re-grouped.

We had a look at the other adjacent aven and dug back through a small tube into another rift chamber. More passage the other side, but it shut down pretty quickly. It was probably possible to climb these avens with a bit of gear and may be worth having a look at another day,

but no real noticeable draft here. We surveyed back out to "Your wish is my command". Alan pushed some fairly tight and gnarly passage opposite, but it again shut down. Not our day today! With all leads pushed, we headed back out.

One final call, to the passage I had dug through to on the way out last time. A small gravel squeeze led to a rift passage ending in a choked rift, which ascended vertically. I hadn't climbed this last time, but made about 4 m, before it too got too tight. A good echo of a largish chamber could be heard. No way in though, bar Hiti's or bang. The choke could be possibly dug upwards, but a bit of a long shot. We retreated surveying. Time to go home!

Both of us were pretty tired now. Your arms were killing from shoving yourself along and my chest felt pretty battered. It was great to crawl, then stoop walk and finally stand up, wonderful. We had been in there 6 or so hours for about 100m of passage. Man what a nightmare, and not much further to Cyclops either. Bummer!! We headed out, good not to have to de-rig the thing. We met Jeff back at the car and they seemed to have had a good day. From our tales, I think Jeff was relieved he hadn't come with us. I couldn't believe that Alan and I had first pushed the thing with a flowing stream in there, Mental.

It would be a long awkward dig to Cyclops! There was a big draft there however so maybe some of the other caves along the contact join in too.

A circumnavigation of Marble Hill and number tagging of caves en-route:

2 March 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Jeff Butt, Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

Cruised down to Ida Bay with Alan Jackson and Phil Rowsell. They were off to Little Grunt today. My plans were to do a circumnavigation of Marble Hill and to tag some recently found caves on the other side of the hill, as well as to set a survey traverse around the hill from Halfway Hole (IB-136) to Baader-Meinhof Pot (IB-113). I also wanted to have another look for Machete Pot (IB-107), if we made it around OK.

Ric and Janine happened to be camped (and still in bed) at the car-park in their new camper, and despite the atrocious weather they agreed to accompany me for the day after a rapid breakfast and lunch packing session.

We headed up the Southern Ranges track, first stop was part-way up to attempt to relocate IB-79, 80 and 81. We didn't find these, but instead found IB-39 and 40; which means that the Southern Ranges track is located East of where we thought it was in this area. We continued up to the mudstone fissure where the track crests out. We tagged this feature IB-182, then proceeded along the track to Halfway Hole (IB-136). From here, I tracked down the hill and to the right to locate the promising new cave Phil and I located on 18/2/03. Ric found a new shaft in the vicinity. Anyway we headed over to the new cave, Ric called it the "Garage Door", I tagged it IB-183. I then taped a survey traverse back towards Halfway Hole. We branched down to Ric's shaft, and tagged it IB-184, before heading back to Halfway Hole. From here, as Ric and Janine followed the route through to Chiton (IB-162), I taped a survey route. The old route ceased at Chiton, so Ric and Janine did some route finding, whilst I taped on at the back.

We basically contoured around the hill; passing a small limestone bluff with a horizontal cave about 30 m long in it 'Janine's Cave', which we tagged IB-185. An old orange tape was seen nearby, and also at several other points around the hill. At this stage, we checked the GPS, and found that we were only ~150 m from IB-113, but about 30 m too low on the hill, so took a turn uphill to the contact, before we resumed contouring. In this area several caves were found, one shaft, one small swallet and a small cave at the base of a small limestone bluff. We didn't tag any of these caves, but did double flag them with pink tape.

It wasn't too long before we reached IB-113, which was good. By now the atrocious weather had ameliorated somewhat as well. I continued taping a survey traverse around to Skyhook Pot (IB-34), where we joined up with the traverse from the other side of the hill. A bit of time was spent having another look for Machete Pot, which was only 60 m south of '4 Tapes', about 3 m off the side of the old Kokoda Trail. There's not a lot of evidence of the old Kokoda Trail, just the odd bit of light blue tape....but the search was successful, I did find Machete Pot (IB-107), right in the area where Phil and I had fruitlessly searched on 24/2/03. I taped a survey route back to IB-32. It was now time to head on out.

I had to suffer the comforts of Ric and Janine's camper whilst waiting for Phil and Alan to turn up. I was supplied with hot coffee, red wine and almost dinner but the two Grunts returned at a bad time. All in all, quite a successful little day. And it goes to show you, that the bad weather is not really so bad once you get out in it!

Surveying around the back-side of Marble Hill and some hole-dropping 6 March 2003

By Jeff Butt

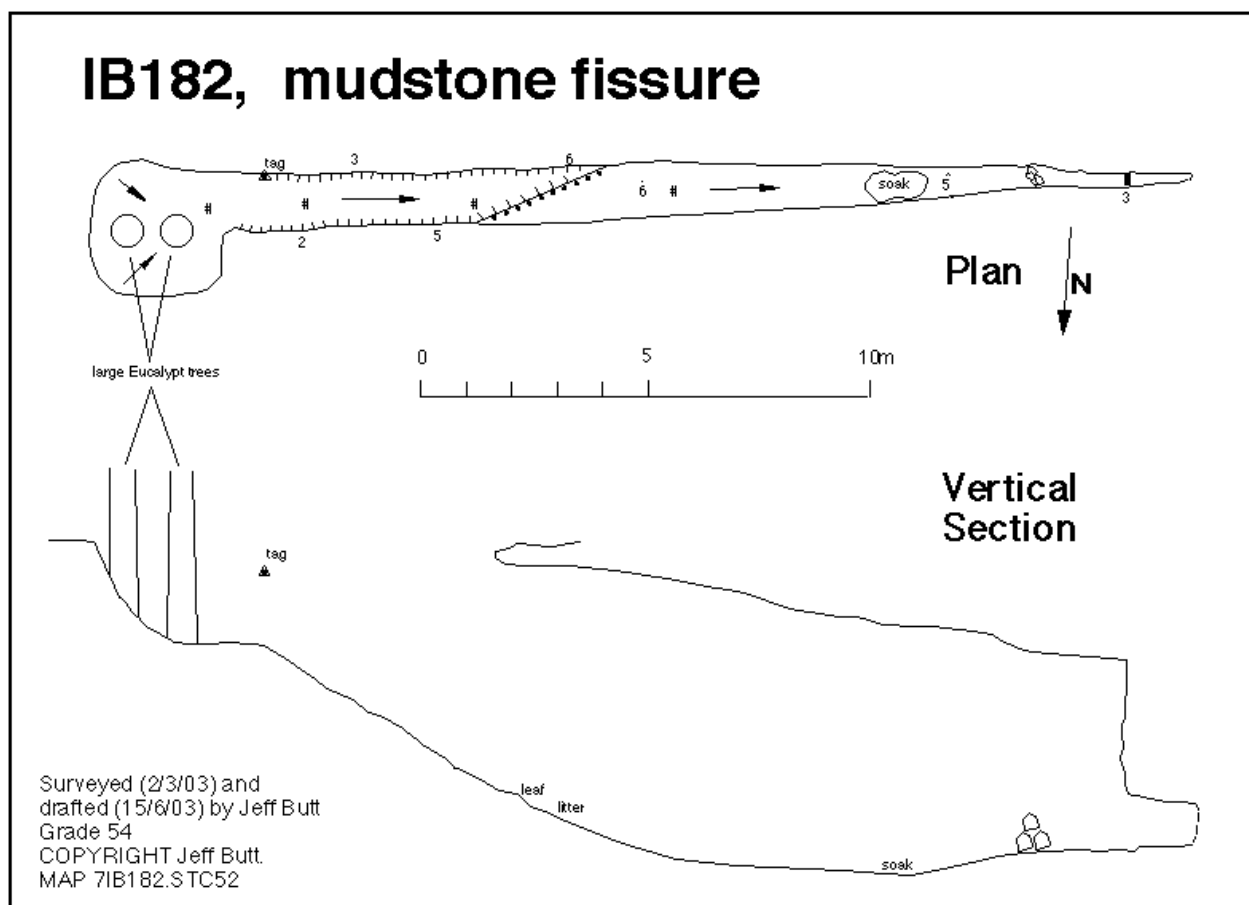
Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt, Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

This trip follows on from the trip of 2/3/03. On that trip, a survey route was taped around the back side of Marble Hill and caves IB-182-5 tagged. Today, Phil and I were going to survey the traverse, whilst Ric and Janine would drop and survey IB-184 and IB-185.

En-route up the Southern Ranges track we surveyed in IB-39 and IB-40. We also linked in IB-182. Then a break in the surveying occurred whilst we headed in along the Halfway Hole track to Halfway Hole (IB-136), and then down to 'Ric's cave' (IB-184). Whilst Ric and Janine investigated this, Phil and I surveyed our way across from IB-183, picking up IB-184 en-route and then heading back to IB-136. Just short of IB-136 is a known horizontal rift cave, which deserves a number tag, a job for another day. Anyway, we surveyed around to Chiton (IB-162), and onwards to

IB-185, eventually reaching Baader-Meinhof Pot (IB-113). We continued on towards Skyhook Pot, with the 100th leg for the day occurring somewhere along here.

Once we made it to Skyhook we took a short break before heading down to Machete Pot (IB-107) and surveyed back to IB-32. We now have a survey traverse right around Marble Hill, and have tied in ~100 numbered caves. Most of this survey traverse is high quality, with forward and back readings being taken for each leg. There is more surface surveying to do; one immediate project is to survey down the Valley Entrance track, picking up IB-19, 20 and 21 en-route, then pushing the survey traverse up to IB-183. Once this is achieved we will have a major traverse around the hill, with numbered stations from which other caves can be tied into. In areas where there are no numbered caves, we are considering installing some permanent markers; which will outlast the numbered tapes on trees.



More tidying up in Little Grunt (IB23) – Surveying Cormorant Passage 8 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson, Geoff Wise

The boys came to the call for another trip down Little Grunt. I wanted to survey Cormorant Passage and do a bit more tidying up surveying. We are slowly getting the place sorted.

I left the lads at the top saying I was going to belt on down and draw the upstream passage part, just after the pitches and first crawl. It only took about 20 mins to get down there. I was finishing off the drawing when they showed up which was really good timing. Alan read the instruments and I also got Geoff to do an additional book of the figures as good practice. It was good to knock off, it was only 10 legs or so, but again no one had bothered to do this.

We headed on down to Cormorant Passage. You had to be pretty careful in places as this passage is quite well decorated. We headed on in, systematically exploring and surveying all the leads, it was surprising how many side passages there were when you looked.

We plodded on with the passage slowly getting lower and surveying getting less pleasant. It was weird as I had been up this passage before but I had no recollection of it. We pushed on until we finally came to the end of the road, a constriction preventing progress. I remembered this from the last time up here. There was quite a reasonable size passage on the other side. We will have to dig it through one day, but might as well see where this passage is going in relationship to the surface first.

With the job done we headed out. Everyone was pretty tired, mainly from hunger! We had left all the food at the start. I was amazed that it had taken us nearly 7 hours to survey this passage. Once back and fed, I suggested finishing off the Pikers Sump passage but the lads wanted out! We were going to de-rig too so it was going to be a late trip in any case. Good teamwork heading out which made the de-rig fairly effortless.

A really good trip all around. I was pretty glad to have knocked off two more sections of Little Grunt. I just have to draw and update the survey of the place now.

Surface Work (Ida Bay) 12 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

I headed down with Jeff to survey the Valley Entrance Track, in our effort to circumnavigate the hill. We took some altimeter readings on the way up the Southern Ranges track as a check on the survey. Surveying went pretty well down the VE track and we were soon at the Western Creek Swallet turn off. It was not quite as rough as I remembered it. We did a good job of not getting side tracked into here, but continued on down the hill to IB-19. A quick lunch stop and we headed on to IB-120. We left the GPS at the big log fall as it was fairly open and we would hopefully get a good fix. I went ahead and taped the route on down to Valley Entrance (IB-120) and was pleased to find it was only about another 5 stations. I headed back and we surveyed on down to the cave.

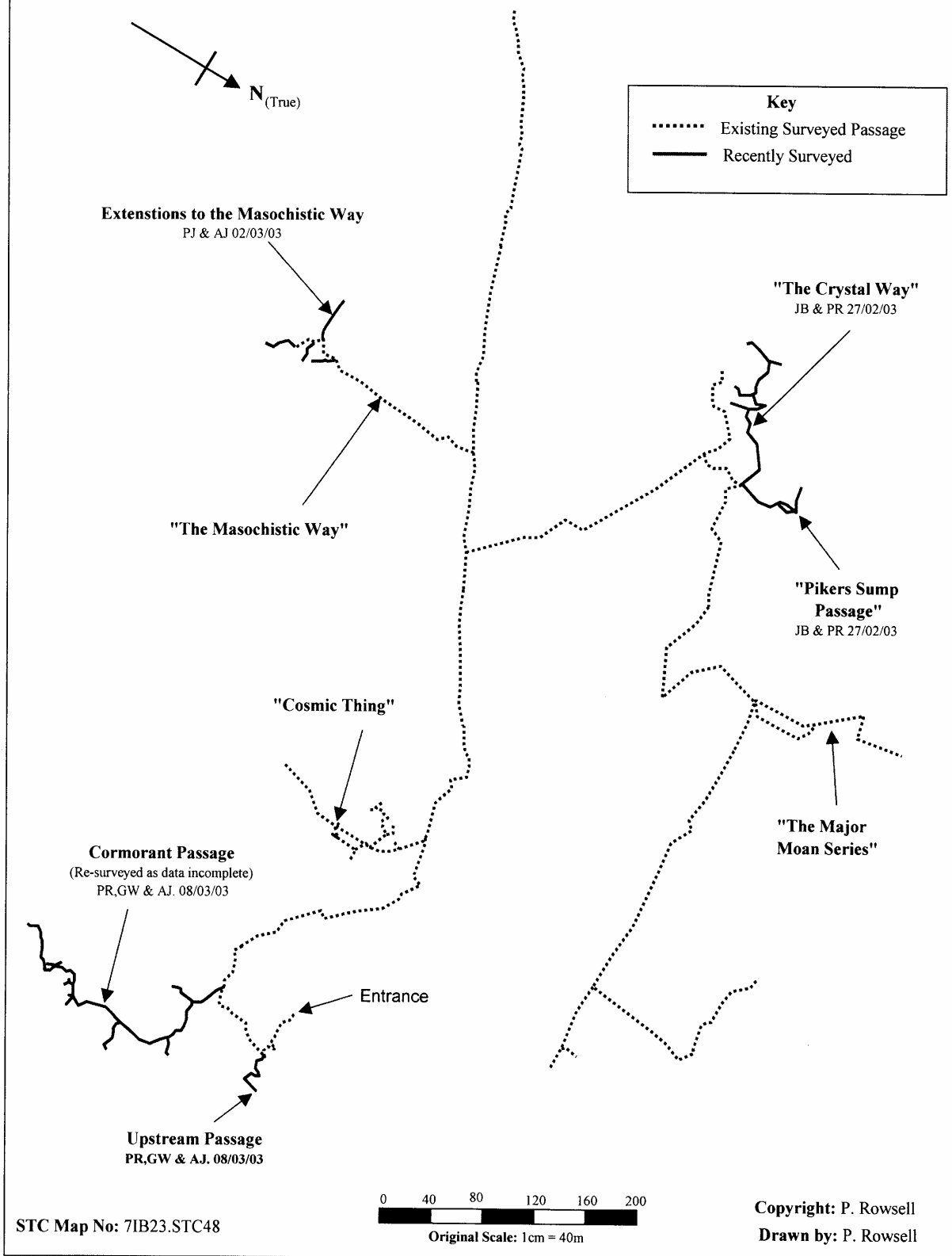
We decided to head over towards IB-141 taping a traverse on to IB-183 and survey back. We found a few other taped holes on the way over and spent a bit of time finding IB-141. From here it wasn't too far to IB-183. I was glad when we were finally there and started surveying back. We tied in a lot of the holes that we

had found on the way through and we had only one quick diversion to have a look at an interesting karst feature. It didn't go anywhere, but there was some really interesting karst higher up. I decided not to get too digressed then spotted Jeff was clambering up there! He found a good hole blowing too! No doubt it goes into Valley Entrance. Yet another one to push!! (Tagged on 03/04/03).

It didn't take long to finish the survey off back to Valley Entrance. A pretty good day really. Jeff was pretty keen to have a look for Thun Junction (IB-20) on the way back, but it was 18:00 and the days were drawing in now. I didn't really want an epic heading out. It was probably more prudent to head in again with this survey plotted to establish the best place to head off and find it from! We managed to walk up to the saddle in 30 minutes which was good but also pretty demoralising as it shows how slow surveying is.

We walked out the Mystery Creek track in the dark, so I was glad we didn't head off to look for Thun Junction. A good day's work. It will be very interesting to see how this data lines up.

IB-23 Little Grunt - Recent surveying



Skyhook Pot (IB-34): 13 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

We headed up the Skinner Track in the rain to Skyhook Pot. I was tired from yesterday. Jeff was rigging which was quite a nice change for me as I could sit back and relax and had a good long time to do the drawings.

The cave started with a small drop into a little chamber, then a nice ramp down to the next pitch head. Lots of loose stones. I could hear them raining down as Jeff went down. Hum not nice! I was very careful on the way down not to kick stones down. A really nice pitch series, down a very steep ramp. This got you down to the base of a rift floor, and there was just enough rope to abseil over a little climb down to a bomb shelter that Jeff was hiding in.

You had an awesome view of the Mini Martin pitch and day light from here. The way on however was around the corner down another really loose cobble slope to the next pitch. This is a scary place, lots loose stone, waiting to be dislodged! A single bolt job for a 45m pitch which was not too impressive, no naturals either. Jeff got a real dodgy chock in and that was our back up. Great!! I was glad Jeff was going first! You dropped into a really good wash pot that was now separate from

Mini Martin. A sharp bend and two short pitches and we were down.

We headed down to the Exit stream way and over to U720 and surveyed back. U720 was the end of the Western passage data and we needed to tie this back into the river, and the main Exit Traverses. This data would be really invaluable. After completing a bit more tidy up surveying we headed back to Skyhook and started surveying out. I was really surprised how long it took to survey out. We plodded our way up slowly. Both of us were really tired but we made sure we did a pretty good job of making sure the survey was correct. The high angle pitches were really difficult to survey as with the rigging we couldn't do the usual vertical, horizontal legs. It would be very interesting to see the closure on this one!! Finally we emerged on surface after another long day. So much for being home early!!

The cave was really nice, just a shame that there were so many loose boulders flying around. Potential killing ground, be warned! A couple more bolts places would make the rigging a lot safer. I was staggered that the closure was to our usual standard, a metre or so either way which was very pleasing.

Rocket Rod's (IB-171) Checking leads and tidying up loose ends: 16 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

We had been expecting to push the Garage Door, but Jeff Butt was ill and I didn't want to push that without him, seeing he was on the trip when I found it. We decided to head back into Rocket Rods and clear up a few loose ends. We had not been in here for ages. Both of us were in a pretty easy going mood which was good. We would finally get a chance to drop one of the pitches we had looked at a long time ago, but never did it. I didn't have high hopes for it as from the survey it looked like it would drop into "A date with Destiny".

We did some more track marking in the main chamber and surveyed one of the more sensitive passages that we thought went to the base of IB-150 passage. We taped it off as it didn't go anywhere and it had a nice crystal floor. It was a bit of a drama heading through the rift with tackle again, but not the epic that it was the last time, we only had one tackle each this time!! Over the dodgy crawl and we were finally down to the pitch. I really wasn't enthusiastic about this, but it was good to knock it off.

Alan headed on up to have a look. For some reason I noticed a slot between some of the big boulders. I had a look in here and this was much better. It gave a lower access to the pitch, with good natural rigging possibilities. Alan came back and passed the bags

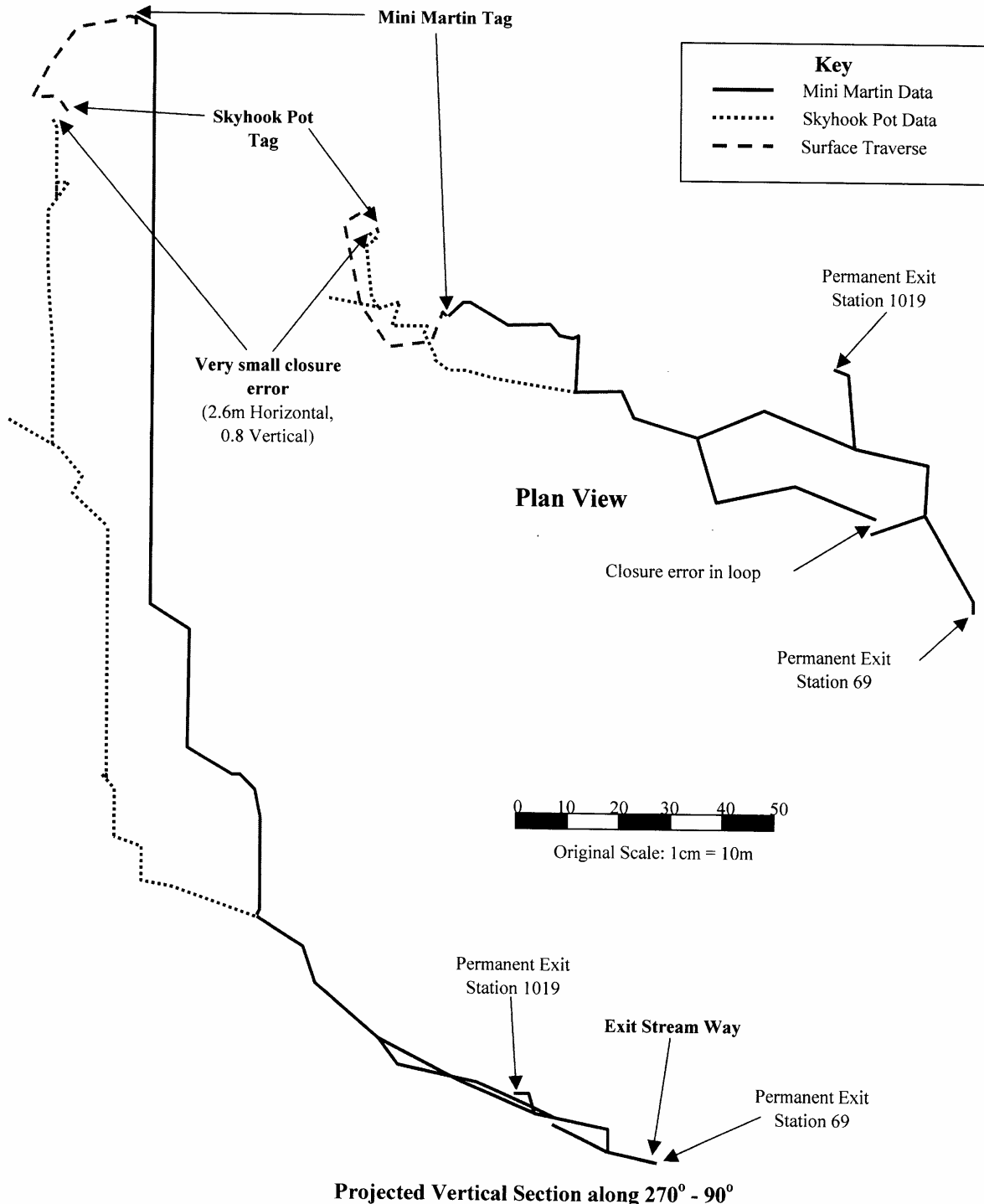
through. Man was the mud bad. I squeezed out a bit further to have a good look at the pitch and I was covered with a 1" layer of slime, great!! Not impressed!! It didn't take long to rig and I headed off. I could see the floor of the drop only about 10m down and it looked like there was another drop off to the right. You couldn't tell whether it was A Date with Destiny or not. I put a trace over a rock nubbin and dropped down. From here it was pretty obvious that the game was over and it was A Date with Destiny, I could see one of the cairns we had made. I was half disappointed and half pleased!!

I then looked up. Wholly loose stones. I wasn't too impressed at seeing the jumble of boulders that were perched precariously 3 sides in space. I had rigged off one of them too!! The only consolation was that if it went it was the size of a garage and you wouldn't know much about it. I told Alan to be very careful coming down. He took a minute or so to be convinced it was A Date with Destiny, but yep. Bummer. We surveyed out. A real shame we couldn't easily get down and close the survey properly. Still we would have a good estimate of the distance and with a good angle and bearing we can have an idea.

We headed up to the long straw passage and had a quick poke around to check for a possible way down. This area was in an interesting position compared to the

IB-8 Mini Martin and IB-34 Skyhook Pot

Plot to show the re-surveyed data for Mini Martin and Skyhook Pot.



Drawn By: P. Rowsell (10/06/03)

Surveyed By: IB-8; M. Wright, P. Rowsell, J. Butt (23/09/02)

IB-34; P. Rowsell, J. Butt (13/03/03)

Copyright: P. Rowsell

STC MapNo: 7IB8.STC47

passages we had explored below. We had no luck though. We completed a survey loop, and headed on out of the cave, having nothing else we wanted to do in here today.

We still had a bit of day left, so we opted to survey Exit Nostrils (IB-175) on the way back and cross another thing off the list. Alan read again, while I drew. The first part was pretty easy, but after dropping through the squeeze, it got a bit complicated as it was a series of steps moving down. A bit of a draft in here today but nothing strong, and very difficult to tell where it was coming from. Alan found a bit of new stuff pushing a squeeze that I wasn't too enthused about looking at. It went through into another little low chamber. Interesting place as it had a rift in it heading down, may be a way on? Na, just choked out. We headed on down to where I had "bottomed" the cave before and headed on out. Alan managed pulled himself straight out of the squeeze, but I had an epic getting through. I don't think

I was in the widest part. I had to get him to help pull me out!! We had a bit of a laugh, I must have a fat arse!!

It is an interesting place. It has a real strong draft at times, but it may be solely wind generated from another entrance lower in the quarry?? From the calcification in the cave, it also looks like much of it collapsed a long time ago before quarry operations. Not a good prospect for further leads. It was good to have surveyed it and finish it off. I'll add it to the massive list I have to draw up!!

A relaxed good day, which achieved a lot. In Rocket Rods, we crossed off another potential lead (there's not many left now!), did some tidy up surveying and finished off the track marking. We also found time to survey Exit Nostril's.

The survey of IB-175 is shown on the following page.

Chasing Survey Noise! 18 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell

Our circumnavigation of the hill had gone pretty well. The data closed really well in plan but we seemed to have a 30m closure error vertically which I thought was too much be accumulated errors, possibly a mistake in a reading. We had also been trying to use the altitude data to help confirm the survey data too. I had spent ages trying to work out where the "discrepancy" in our surveying data was, but it's difficult to tell. It did seem that the Valley entrance data fitted well and the Southern Ranges track was OK, so it looked like the error was in the Garage Door track data. I decided I would head and re-read the Garage Door track and collect some more Alto data. It may help solve the problem of where the discrepancy was. I headed in along the Skinner track, and then up to Skyhook Pot, taking lots of pressure readings. I continued along to Baarder Meinhof and followed the taped traverse down to IB-162. I was surprised how easy it was to walk, had seemed a nightmare last time. At IB-162, I would head back re-reading to Skyhook as the rest of the data

seemed to tie in fairly well with Jeff's Western Passage data.

I decided to read forward and back readings on the way out back to Skyhook Pot as it wouldn't take too long and I would hopefully find the glitch if there was one. The readings were pretty consistent, but it did seem that my clino's correction may have changed. I will have to calibrate it again. I plugged on and eventually I was back at Skyhook Pot. I was please to be finished.

I got back to the car at 14:30 and didn't have the energy or enthusiasm to do anymore. I headed home early for a change. I got back to Hobart at 18:30 and headed up to Jeff's to check out my clino on our datum and its calibration was now 0 rather than -0.5 which was very interesting. It must have changed when I took it down Little Grunt maybe? Easy to correct the data, and again highlights the necessity to calibrate your instruments regularly (i.e. Every trip!). At home, I checked the data against the previous readings and they were within spec. I am beginning to think we are causing noise, after all, the loop is over 8 km in length!

Surface Work: 20 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

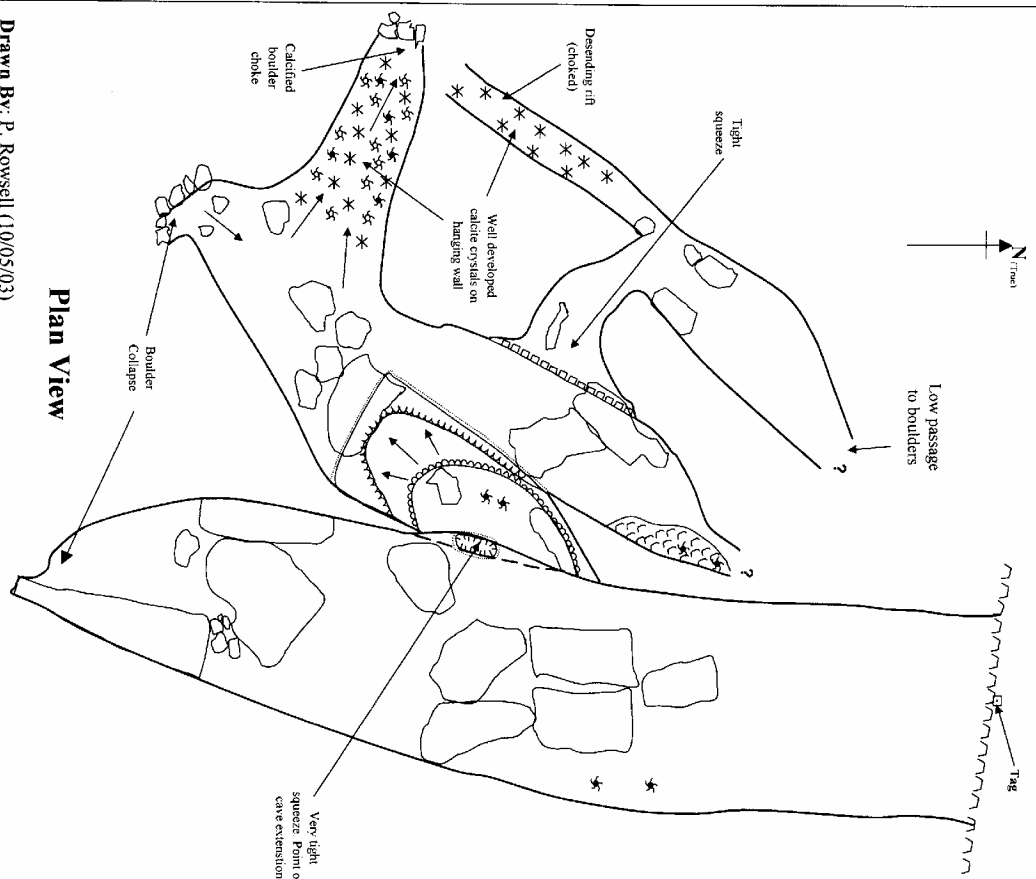
Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

We were off on a surface day to tie in the caves around IB-38. I had been meaning to do this for sometime, but I had always been sidetracked elsewhere. Man was the weather bad. Periodic heavy rain, it was going to be a wet day!! I was soaked by the time we got to 3 tapes!

We surveyed up to IB-49 and on to IB-38. We dumped the gear and went looking for the other caves in the area. I stumbled on IB-83, which was good and I could

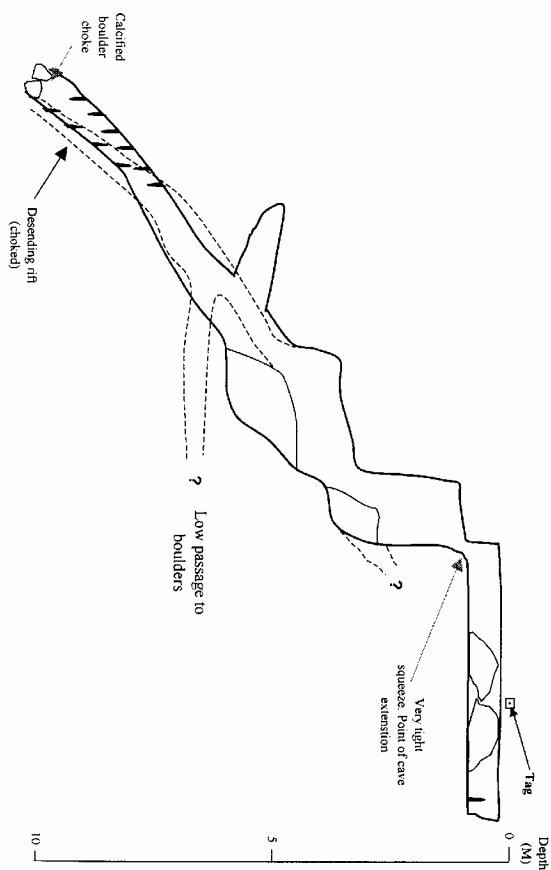
hear a massive waterfall flowing over the contact so I went up to have a look where that went. I was quite excited. I followed the river down to a place where it was sinking, looked a bit tight but it may be a new cave. I headed down the old valley below the waterfall and managed to find IB-53 which was a bonus as I didn't think that this was around here. I headed up the valley again and stumbled on IB-37. I could hear the water from the waterfall plunging down this, so no new cave! Still I had found 3 tagged ones.

IB-175 Exit Nostrils



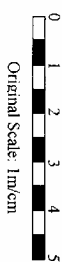
Plan View

Drawn By: P. Rowsell (10/05/03)
 Surveyed By: P. Rowsell, A. Jackson (16/03/03)



Projected Vertical Section along 90° - 270°

Survey Grade 54
 Surveyed Depth from Tag = 11.6m
 Surveyed Length from Tag = 69.27m



Copyright: P. Rowsell
 STC MapNo: 71B175.STC39

I headed back up towards the contact and linked back up with Jeff. He had found no caves but some interesting features. We decided to head along the contact to locate Log Rift (IB-7) and maybe find IB-36 and IB-35 which were still outstanding. Man, was Log Rift impressive!! Two really big holes that must go somewhere. We spent awhile looking at this place, a huge rift but we couldn't find the tag. We continued following the contact past a few more interesting karst features. Finally we were at Mini Martin (IB-8). We set a traverse back to Milk Run (IB-38). A bit more than we had planned but good to survey in the contact and the features / caves we had seen.

Despite the bad weather and the cold, we did a good job of surveying in the features and drawing pictures. Both

of us had the view that we should do it properly even if we didn't finish it today. We plugged away and I was really surprised when Jeff said it was 16:45!! I was getting pretty cold, Jeff was having difficulty reading his clino as it was getting pretty dark under the canopy, but we finally got to Milk Run. I was glad to be finished. Time to head out and change in to some dry clothes. It was great to be back at the car, but it was even better that Jeff had brought a flask of tea, wild!

Good day. We had achieved quite a lot and another thing nearly crossed off the list. Data proved to be pretty good. We couldn't find IB-35 and IB-36 which was annoying. Another time may be?

Garage Door (IB-183): Yet another new cave: 23 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

Well after a month since discovery, we were finally going in to push the Garage Door. We were pretty certain it would drop into Exit or Halfway hole, but where? It would be another thing knocked off too before heading home. I was on a fairly short fuse now.

We headed up via the Southern Ranges, and down the track to Valley Entrance. We found a pretty good stream flowing down an interesting hole up from IB-19 (Tagged IB-189 03/04/03) but we headed on. Finally we were at IB-120 and heading over to the Garage Door (IB-183). Man, glad when I was there, it was 13:00. It had taken us nearly 3 hours to get over here!! I found it quite ironic that in the cave entrance there was a little sign left by Jeff saying "the cave is being pushed by Jeff Butt and Madphil, KEEP OUT"!! It was pretty similar to the one I had left in Rocket Rods and had copped a slagging from Jeff for. I guess everyone seems get a bit "paranoiac" (I think was the word) when they too have a good going concern!!

From a quick sticky beak last time, Jeff was concerned that the first pitch was blind and we might have to bolt traverse across it which would be interesting. I went in with my caving light and had a look. Thankfully there was a window at the base of the pitch to another. I headed back out and did a bit of drawing while Jeff went in and bolted the first pitch. I finished my drawing and laid down for a little nap. Once, Jeff had finished I got to drop the first pitch which was nice (11m down to a floor). The next pitch was straight away, so I bolted this. Not many naturals in this place. Jeff seemed to want to drop this one, so no problem. I think I was exploration fevered out after Rocket Rods! I was quite happy just to tag along, having an occasional push. He headed down and managed to get a good deviation off a small stal on the opposite side. A nice pitch, a big wash tube with some really nice calcite type formations, which really looked like petals growing out of the wall.

The passage headed back on itself down a calcite slope

to another big drop. I headed down to have a look. It was quite interesting as there was a stream flowing out of a "pipe" in the wall. It was almost like a hidden drain pipe. The floor was dead slippery. Out on the edge, it looked like another bolt job, no naturals again. All very soft shit too. There were one or two ribs of good limestone to bolt on, but a lip 2m down looked interesting as there was not much rigging and it was as soft as crap. It also looked like we were going to get a soaking here. Jeff can rig this, I'll have a nap again!

It took Jeff a while to bolt but he finally dropped down only to find the rope was 6m or so too short. Nightmare. Back up again, a quick re rig and he headed back down the pitch again. I was pretty cold by now and was glad to get going. It was a really nice pitch again. The mega bonus was the stream just ran spectacularly down the flow stone, so you didn't get wet. It looked really good in the light.

Finally at the bottom. The cave seemed to go horizontal now. Jeff headed off and went into another big aven with water dripping in. There were two ways on. A small passage with gours etc, and the stream from the aven. We left the gours untouched as they were too pretty, but followed a small stream passage from the aven. The stream continued with several side passages to a sump and very tight serpentine meanders above. One of the side passages went for some distance and opened into a rift system, but we left it here to push when we surveyed it.

We headed back to the base of the pitch and pushed what looked like the main way on, down to a stream, through a powdered floor. It was just like flour. There was a passage into a chamber at the top of a down climb but we left this again as you would trash it by walking in there. It was better to see if the survey showed it had any significance first. We headed down stream, past a small inlet to a 10m pitch. Not much natural rigging again for this one, so another bolt job. I got pretty soaked dropping this, and I was real glad I had my TSA on!!

Jeff headed off pushing down serpentine again. Suddenly he questioned whether I had been down here already as he thought there were footprints. No! A bit further and his lead petered out, so I dropped down and followed the river. I started looking at disturbances that must have been made before. Interesting! Maybe we had dropped in to Halfway Hole, but Jeff didn't recognise it. Maybe someone had pushed up here from Exit? We carried on. Another little drop and we were into low stream way. We began to realise this was probably Exit. We followed this stream way for awhile, before climbing out in to the base of an aven with water dripping in. Definitely Exit. Jeff came out and we still didn't recognise it. We walked up the way and all was revealed. We were 20m or so down from the base of Halfway Hole. Brilliant. Mission completed.

We didn't stay long, just enough for a quick Snicker before heading back out. We got a pretty good soaking

on the wet pitch but thankfully it was only 10m. We started surveying at the base of the last big pitch. This would mean the vertical part was done, but left the horizontal stuff for later. We finished at 22:00, it was dark outside. We were not used to this!! It was going to be a long walk this one. We decided to head out the Baader Meinhof track as it was probably better taped than trying to head over to Valley Entrance. It was fairly slow to start with trying to route find in the dark but it got better and once at Baader, things started to motor. We were in full gear when we hit the Skinner track. We were both pretty tired when we got back to the booth at 01:00. Long but great day!!

It was good to have surveyed the pitches as they are the gnarly parts. Maybe we will head into IB-14 Exit Entrance and head up to Garage Door that way to finish surveying. It would be quicker than the long walk around the hill!!

Fizzer (IB-169): 24 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt, Arthur Clarke

We were meeting Arthur at 09:30 and I guessed he would be later so I wasn't rushing packing up the tent. I was amazed when he showed up only 5 mins late. I had to jump into action. We were off to have a look at a cave Arthur and I had found and tagged last time we were on the hill together (04/12/03). We would also try and find the IB-131 tag and do a bit of tidy up surveying around Milk Run (IB-38). We headed up and along the Skinner track and finally descended down IB-169. Jeff was pretty tired and his guts were a bit sore so he wasn't going to come down even if it went! He went off trying to find a few of the caves above IB-211

We rigged the cave off a tree and a good nubbin. I let Arthur head in first. A bit tight to start with but not too bad, then dropped down into a rift chamber. He soon shouted back that it didn't go anywhere. A pitch of about 10m.

I dropped down into a chamber with a few stals, but it didn't look too promising. It looked like at times some water flowed through but nothing major. There was a tiny window at floor level between a few bits of stal. You could throw a stone down here and it rattled on for a bit, but not more than a couple of metres. It did feel as though there was a faint draft, but it was difficult to tell. We did a couple of legs at the bottom just to outline the

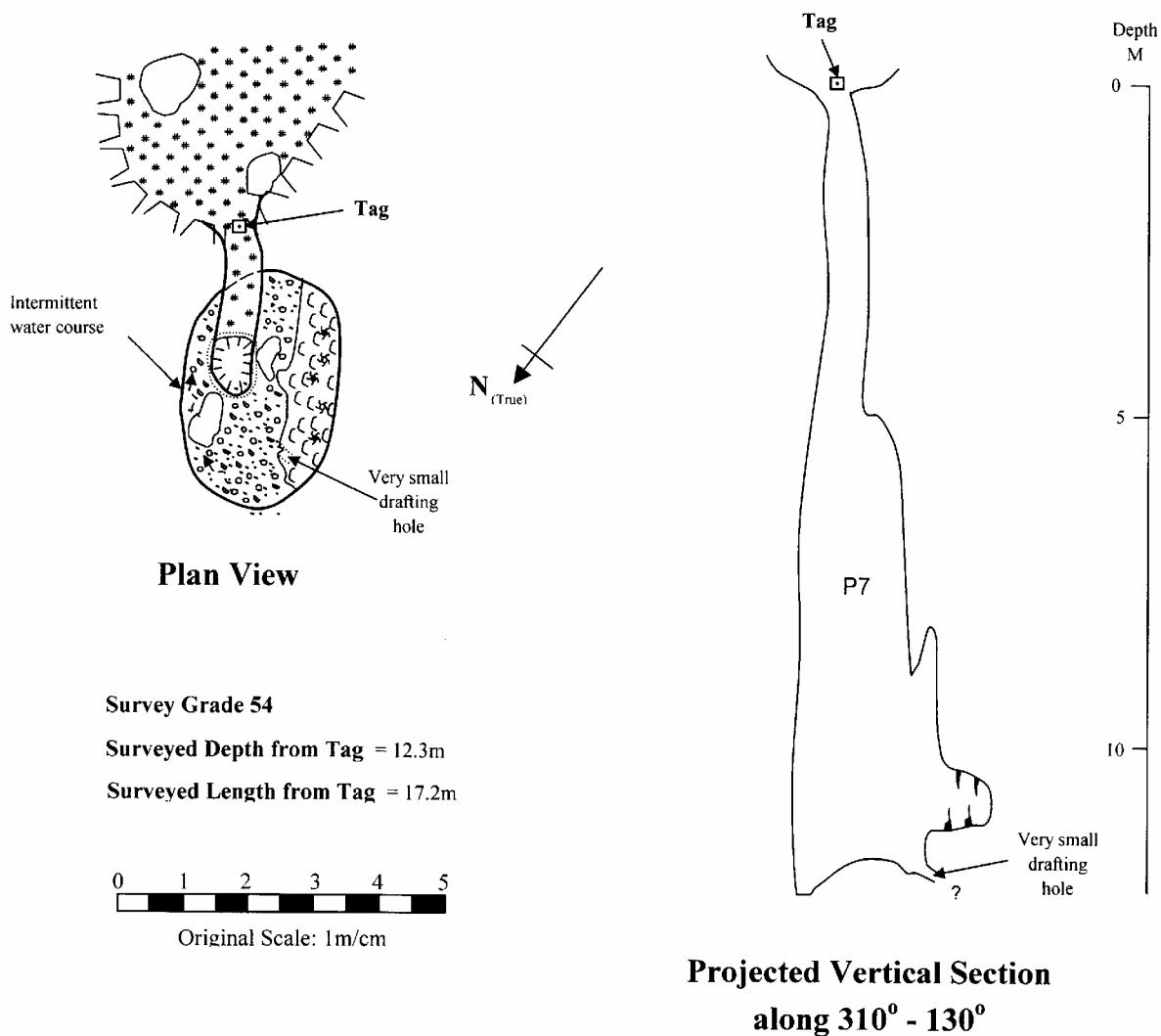
chamber, then surveyed out.

Jeff appeared shortly after we de rigged but he had not had much luck either. We packed up and headed off to Old Ditch Road (IB-131). Arthur headed off to try and find the tag while Jeff and I surveyed in the track. Just as we got there Arthur shouted out that he had found the tag under a thick layer of moss. Bargain. We surveyed to the tag.

We headed up to the Mini Martin track to find IB-35. Only shortly after hitting contact he said it was off to our right. I was really surprised how early it was. We headed up and man he had a good memory, we found IB-35. Brilliant. We surveyed it in and headed along the hill in search of IB-36. We did find several more interesting good holes, but no IB-36. Nightmare. We pushed along the contact to IB-7. We headed up the top part of IB-7 to locate the tag. We got to the top of the rift and you couldn't miss the tag. We had basically walked passed it last time (20/03/03)!! We surveyed this and the new holes we had found to the traverse network. By now it was getting late so we headed on back.

We got to SKT136 and we decided to head down and tie in a couple of little holes below the track. Arthur found another interesting hole here.

IB-169 Fizzer



Drawn By: P. Rowsell (05/05/03)

Surveyed By: P. Rowsell, A. Clarke (24/03/03)

Copyright: P. Rowsell

STC MapNo: 7IB169.STC36

Old Ditch Road to Garage Door (IB-131 – IB183): A Mega Bash 26 March 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

Well we were going for a mega ambitious job today. We would head in Old Ditch Road (IB-131) to survey that, head through Exit to Garage Door (IB-183), jug up the wet 10m pitch and surveying the rest of Garage Door, then head back and finish off the Old Ditch Road Survey. If time permitted, we would survey from a known station in Exit to the base of the Old Ditch Road survey!! We would just have to see how it goes.

Thank God we didn't have to walk around the hill to

Garage Door. Heading into Old Ditch Road would be pretty easy money. Jeff had all the ropes in one bag which was also a bargain as I had it really easy today. While he rigged it would give me plenty of time to draw. The entrance series wasn't vertical, a couple of little climb downs and a short serpentine section before you had to climb up into a chamber. From here the pitches began.

Jeff started rigging the first pitch; a short 6m drop, followed by a 38m pitch so I started drawing. It was nice to be relatively clean and have the time to do it. I

eventually got the go ahead to drop down to the first pitch while Jeff was rigging the second. Man the bolting was incredible, hangers not flat against the rock and in all sorts of odd places. Most still had the old hangers in them which were really manky now so Jeff was replacing them thankfully. The 2nd pitch rigged of a single bolt which wasn't so good, but it was a really nice free hang down to another chamber. Jeff was already rigging the 3rd pitch so sat about and drew.

The bolt positions were terrible here and required rope protectors all over the show to compensate! I didn't like this place at all!! Still at least it was on the list to P-hanger. I sat for a while waiting for Jeff to rig the last pitch. He was having real difficulty removing an old bolt. He finally said he had sheared it off, Nightmare! Hum, not good at all as this pitch had a nightmare rub point. Jeff had already told me stories of people having their rope shredded here!! Thankfully he came up with a good rigging solution and I finally headed on down. I was glad to be at the bottom.

It had taken over 2 hours to get down which was not quite so good. It was a real pain having to take all your SRT gear through Exit to climb one 10m pitch but no choice really. We pushed on pretty hard and got to the Halfway Hole cairn in the Western Passage after about an hour.

We ate and headed back up into the Garage Door. Thankfully there was not as much water heading over the 10m pitch this time we didn't get too wet which was nice. We dumped the gear and headed back to the base of the last big pitch, our last survey station. We decided to survey the dry series of passages off to the back of the second aven we had had a brief look at last time. It was really pleasant surveying. I was warm, the book was clean and had plenty of time to draw, quite a contrast from the usual squalid passages I seem to be in.

I was quite surprised how much passage was up here. Basically it was a stream passage taking the water from quite a large aven, this headed down through rift passage to a little sump with very tight serpentine passage above. About halfway along the stream passage, there was a passage off to the left, low to start with, but opened up into reasonable sized rift passage. A stream flowed back to join the other, but it was difficult to get down to it. We eventually did get down at the end of the rift, but there was no real feasible passage up or down stream. We checked out one or two

other side passages before we knocked it on the head and headed back to the main aven.

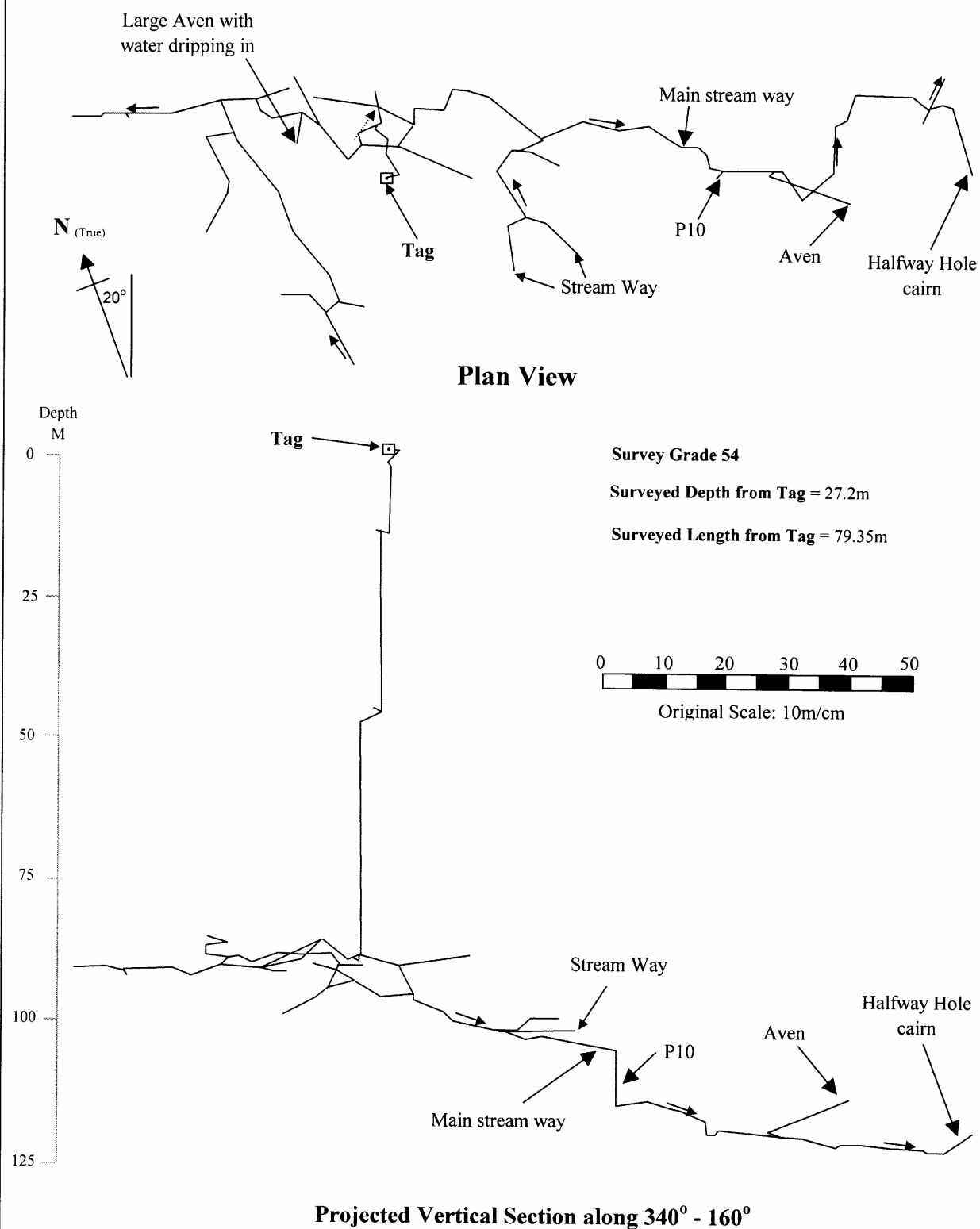
We continued on surveying back down the main stream way. We did quite a bit of track marking at the start of this passage as the floor was pretty fragile, very soft power. Real weird stuff. We also left a passage taped off here as we thought there might be a way in from another passage we had seen. No point in trashing it for the sake of it. We headed on down the main stream to a stream junction and checked out the upstream junction. This went for awhile with a further split, the left hand one was still going, but getting progressively more gnarly. We knocked it on the head in the end as time was getting on. One to come back to. We pushed on down the main stream and were finally back at the Halfway Hole cairn at 23:00. It will be very interesting to see how they close.

I was glad to be moving as I was beginning to get a bit cold. We belted along through the Western Passage and were back at the base of Old Ditch Road at around 00:00. Man, no surveying the ballroom today!! We decided to survey our way out up the pitches and leave the horizontal stuff at the top for a clean up day (probably Saturday). It didn't take too long to survey out. I did most of the stuff, instruments etc, while Jeff did the de-rigging etc. It worked quite well, but we both were really tired so I was particularly carefully and methodical not to make mistakes. Finally we were back in the roomy chamber at the start of the pitches, and that was it for the day. No more surveying.

It wouldn't take too long for us to nip down and finish the survey off another day from here. We finally emerged on surface at 02:00. Man it was going to be another early morning arrival back in Hobart. We finally made it back to Jeff's for 05:15. A long day, one for the books, but it does not surpass the Baader Meinhof classic! It seems to be the norm now, Phil's about to disappear so we better have an all nighter!!

A very productive day. We had finished surveying Garage Door which was good. There were still a couple of leads to look at there, but they're not promising. We also surveyed the majority of Old Ditch Road and we will knock the rest off pretty easily next time we're in the area. A shame we didn't get to close Old Ditch Road into the Exit traverse too but hopefully we should be able to do that fairly soon. It will give a great loop, down Old Ditch, through Exit, up Mini Martin and back.

IB-183 Garage Door



Drawn By: P. Rowsell (01/06/03)

Surveyed By: P. Rowsell, J. Butt (23 & 26 /03/03)

Copyright: P. Rowsell

STC MapNo: 7IB183.STC49

Tying up more loose ends at Ida Bay: 29 March 2003

By Geoff Wise

Party: Geoff Wise, Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

Phil and Jeff were heading back to Ida Bay to tidy up some loose ends and with the allure of promising holes to drop I headed along. It was also an opportunity to try out my new camera. I picked Jeff and Phil up and we headed off, with the now obligatory stop at the Dover shop for egg and bacon rolls.

Our first task was to locate the tag on IB-51, Phil having looked for it unsuccessfully on two occasions. Armed with notes from Arthur Clarke stating the tag was on the right of the crawl entrance we began to look. Jeff instigated the useful '*Jeff Butt tapping technique*', relying on the difference in pitch to locate the tag. This was extremely effective and the tag was revealed from under a coating of moss. We tied the survey into the March Fly Pot (IB-46) tag.

Next we headed down to Little Grunt aiming to locate the nearby Loo Lane (IB-132). We had an old survey and soon located the entrance where the tag was once again revealed by use of the '*Jeff Butt tapping technique*'. We tied the cave into a survey traverse and then headed back to the track. Phil pointed out the wasps that have made a home near the big log, it must have been cheap real estate! We surveyed a section of

the track to uncover a possible survey error. That done Jeff placed a tag on IB-186 and we headed into Old Ditch Road to finish off the survey started by Jeff and Phil earlier in the week.

Our next stop was a new hole that Phil said looked promising. While Phil rigged the entrance and Jeff placed the IB-187 tag I geared up, having been given the honour of first descent. The pitch was about 10 metres long and the cave looked like going nowhere until I noticed a passage that was blocked from view until the last couple of metres on rope. This sloped down to a squeeze. I removed my gear and managed to squeeze through feet first into wider and higher passage that continued for about six metres to a short scramble. There were plenty of animal bones to suggest I hadn't made the first descent after all. The cave ended abruptly so all that was left was to take a few photos and survey out.

By the time we got to the surface we were running late so we packed up and high tailed it back to the car, meeting Jeff who had been placing a tag or two on the way.

A survey of IB-187 Skeleton Squeeze is shown on the following page.

Garage Door to Exit Cave (IB-183 to IB-14): 01 April 2003

By Janine McKinnon

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Rik Tunney Janine McKinnon.

This was the first "tourist trip" into the recently discovered back entrance to the Western Passage of Exit cave. Madphil and Jeff Butt had just finished exploring and surveying the cave and had left it rigged with the intention of taking other interested members of the club through. Very thoughtful, MUCH easier than having to carry the rope around to the back of Marble Hill to do the cave.

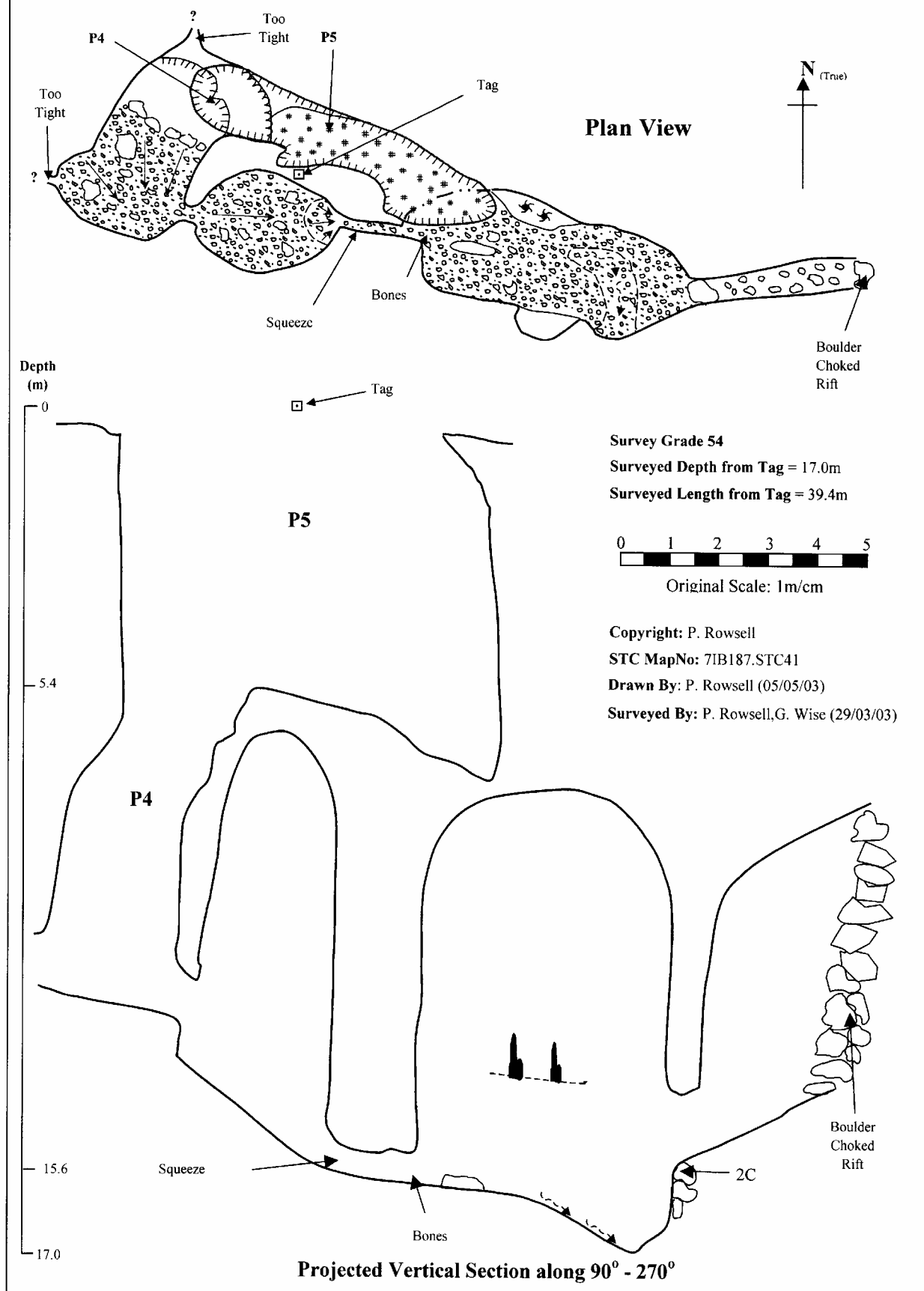
We started from the cars at 9.30am and arrived at Garage Door at 12.30pm. We took the route in via the Moonlight Ridge track, down past Valley Entrance and the taped route around the hill from there. This was not the quickest or easiest route in but Phil wanted to try and find some lost caves on-route. These were IB-20 and IB-21. We spent about an hour hunting around and relocated IB-17, which has been lost for 30 years and which we thought was nearer to Western Creek Swallet. We had no luck with IB-20 and 21 but we found 2 new holes that need looking at (tape placed at entrance of one) and 2 caves near each other with old tapes on nearby trees but no tags. These will all be explored, and surveyed and tagged if warranted, on a later trip.

The trip down Garage Door was very enjoyable and straightforward, no tight squeezes at the pitch heads or difficult rope work-GREAT. There are 4 pitches; around 10m, 30m, 40m, & 10m. There was a short safety line to the 1st, a redirection on the 2nd, a re-belay on the 3rd.

There are some very nice formations to be seen on the way down the pitches, with an amazing wall on the 3rd pitch covered in patterned (decorated?) mud - very soft and fragile. I've never seen anything quite like it. Some short passages-beautifully decorated with crystal covered floors run off from the bottom of this pitch. These have been taped to minimise damage to these very delicate structures. One passage is taped off, having never been entered due to the extreme delicacy of the floor. At the bottom of the pitches there is a narrow stream way section heavily decorated in moonmilk and other very fragile crystals. It was quite traumatic trying to move through this narrow space doing no further damage to it!

NB: It is hoped that any future parties to the cave respect the taped-off areas and take great care to minimise further damage to these beautiful and fragile areas.

IB-187 Skeleton Squeeze



A short hand line (about 2m) into a splash pool in the stream completes the gear requirements.

From here there was some low stream way (gravel floor) to negotiate before joining the Western Passage very close to the Halfway Hole aven. Taking a leisurely pace, with plenty of looking around on the descent, we reached this point about 1 hour after the first person started underground (maybe an extra 15 minutes-I wasn't counting that closely!)

Another aim of the trip was to do some survey tie-ins between the bottom of Old Ditch Road and the main stream way of Exit. We wanted to link to the theodolite survey points but these weren't always as easy to find as you'd expect! After much looking for the point beyond 998 we gave up and tied the survey into 998 and the preceding 2 points.

We then headed out, arriving back at the cars at 7pm.

Side Door (IB-190): A final fling: 03 April 2003

By Madphil Rowsell

Party: Madphil Rowsell, Jeff Butt

Well my last caving trip in Tassie before heading home. I was lucky to get this one really as it was cutting it a bit fine. Jeff turned up a bit late, I think he had had a bit of a ear bashing from Sarah but he came up trumps which was great! It would be good to drop this new cave, it was really the last of the good finds. Hopefully we would also be able to tie in IB-17 which we had found last time out (01/04/03).

We headed off up the Southern Ranges track. Man what a difference with a heavy pack. It was a welcome relief to get up to the saddle and start going down. We got down to the little swallet cave (found 12/03/03) near the climb down to IB-19 and tagged that IB-189. It looked interesting with no water hammering down it, but we had better things to look at. First things first though, we decided to survey in IB-17 and have a quick look for Thun Junction (IB-20).

We headed on up the hill and then kept contouring along the hill. Eventually after 18 legs we finally rocked up to the entrance of IB-17. A good find this one as it had been lost for at least 20 years. I took Jeff up to where we had found the red tapes and he found another heading along the hill. He pushed on contouring while I headed up to the contact to continue along. It looked really interesting in places, but no holes. Finally Jeff shouted out he had found it. Bargain. I headed along the contact and came across a massive doline/rift heading back into the cliff and met Jeff. It looked really impressive and definite cave like!! The tag confirmed it. Brilliant! We surveyed in IB-20 and IB-21 (just above IB-20) and then surveyed along the contact and head down where I had come up. I was surprised that it didn't take that long and only took a few stations down the hill to link up with the IB-17 traverse. Great job done, time to get out of here. It had taken 2 hours. We pushed on to the new cave.

We tagged the cave IB-190. I had the honour of heading in first. The pitch was about 10m down, a series of steps, You ended up in a chamber with a good intermittent stream way passage and what looked like a bypass. I waited for Jeff to come on down and he pushed the steam way while I stood in the chamber. I could see from his light that the passage headed down from the chamber and joined the stream way. With that

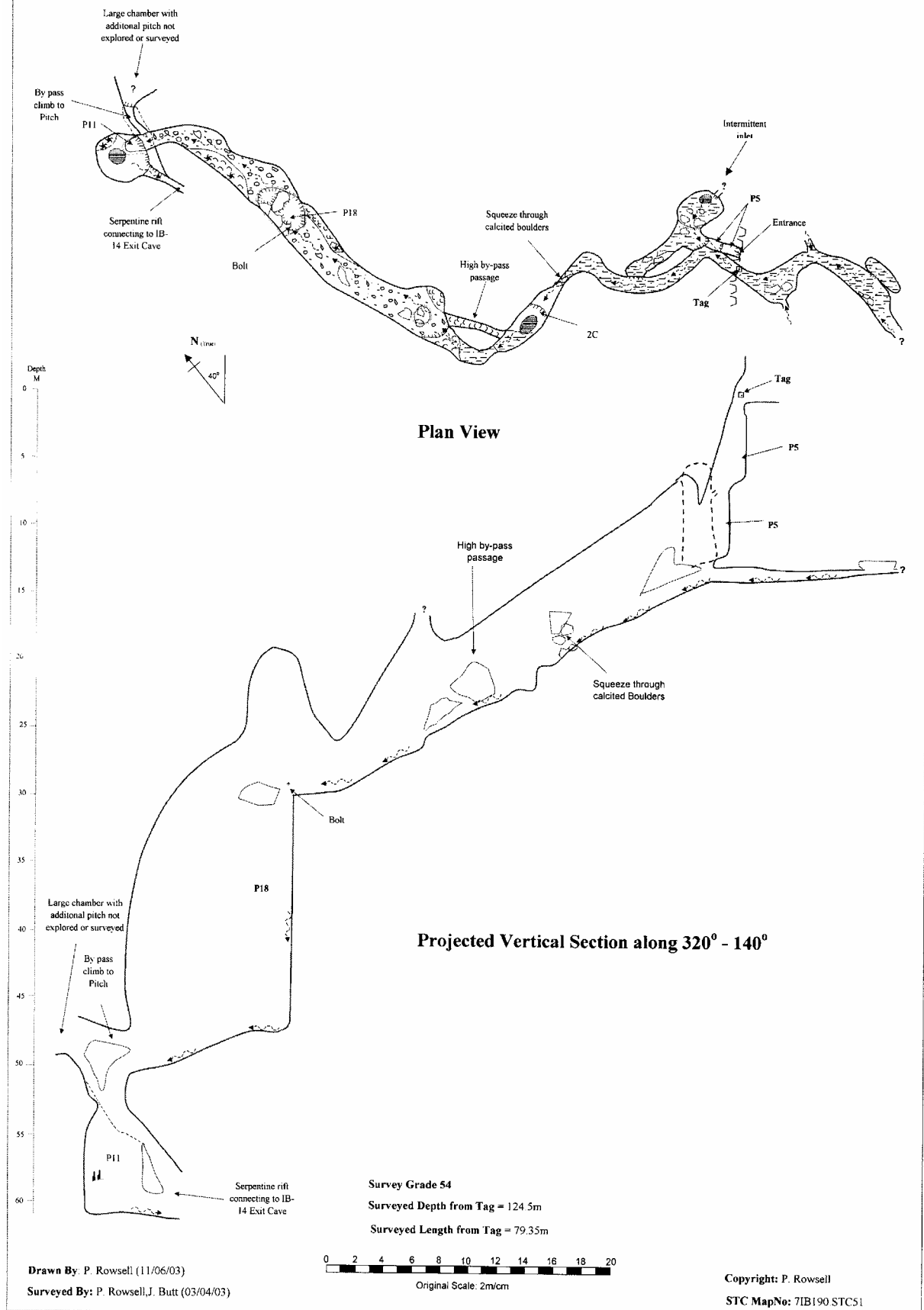
confirmed I headed on after Jeff. It looked like the stream way was going to be a tunnel job, but it shortly opened out into serpentine rift. Jeff didn't go too far before he said there was a problem, a constriction. Too tight for him, call in the whippets!! I had a look quick look. I certainly was not going to get through there with my gear on. Downed gear and squeezed on through. It wasn't too bad really but I took it really careful as it looked to be a real suit shredder!! Jeff said he would head back and get a horizontal pack sorted.

There was a little 2m drop that looked greasy so said I would drop that and check I could get back up while he sorted gear. The climb was not a problem. Jeff led after the climb down. A bit more stream passage which opened out into a chamber. Too tight to get down the stream way, so we had to climb over a bit of flow stone. Jeff got down OK, I followed and the stone he had used pulled out and hit me on the leg as I went down which wasn't so good. On a bit further and buggar, we hit a 20m or so pitch. Nightmare. No gear. I headed back through the squeeze again to get the gear.

Jeff bolted it while I continued to draw. Hopefully it would speed up the surveying on the way out. It was a really nice pitch, dropping down into a large rift chamber. It continued on down to another pitch of 10m or so. Nightmare. We were both were getting a bit concerned about time as getting late. It was already 17:00. It looked like this was another bolt job, great!! I headed down and had a look and noticed a rift heading off to the right just above the pitch. The climb into the rift wasn't the best but OK. I headed along, down another short drop to what looked like a false floor. Here straight on led to another pitch, but back under I found there was a window looking out to the original pitch and that it continued along into serpentine rift which I reckoned you could climb down. Bargain!! I was soon at the base of the pitch looking up at Jeff. While Jeff was climbing down, I headed off down the serpentine rift. It went for miles, but people had obviously been here before. We must be in Exit Cave, but where!

Jeff caught me up and we headed on until we got to a big aven. Great echo though. It was pretty obvious that people had been in here before, but how? We spent awhile route finding and finally found a low passage that

IB-190 Side Door



led to a climb down to a main stream way. From the stream way the climb up was pretty difficult to spot. Credit to the guy who originally pushed this!! I left the survey book there so we would know where to head back out! We headed down the stream way with passages heading off everywhere. This was going to be a nightmare to survey and certainly going to take longer than the time we had today. Finally we wandered out in to a big chamber and Jeff recognised where we were. We were in the big chamber where Valley Entrance meets Exit, just up stream from Skeleton Creek. I was surprised how far into Exit we were. One bonus was that we would be able to tie into

the survey stations pretty easily. We headed back up the stream way and saw a couple of old blue survey markers (D5) and both were surprised as we hadn't seen them on the way in. We continued on, but then got to a low section in the stream way. Hum don't think we had headed through here. Nightmare!! Lost in Exit with the Valley Entrance key left behind at the last pitch, that would be really embarrassing!!

We headed back down the stream way and returned to the big chamber again. Funny as we hadn't seen any other passages off on the way back. We were both confused. We headed back up the stream once again, and found we had walked past the survey book the first time!!! Man I was glad I had left it there!! We headed back to the base of the pitches and debated what to do. It was 19:00. Jeff wanted to hightail out of there, but I managed to persuade him to survey out from here. It shouldn't take that long as it was pretty straight forward and I had done a lot of the drawing already. If we started at the base of the final pitch we could get in to here from Exit and save a lot of dicking about next

time. It didn't take too long to head out, the surveying was pretty simple stuff. I was pleased we did a good thorough job despite being concerned about time.

We were out at 20:30, Bargain!! It was dark too! The Valley Entrance track was pretty easy to follow, the additional tapes I had put on really made a difference. We did lose it at one point however, and while lost I saw a bit of a depression. I went and had a look and low and behold another cave. A pretty good pitch again 10m or so into a well developed rift. Even more funny was the fact it was right next to the track! 10m or so from SRT137!! We surveyed it in and headed on. It was only a short distance to IB-19 so maybe it will drop into IB-19. I will have to check it out next time around.

The climb up the hill was pretty tiring, my legs were knackered at the top. It rained on the way down which was a bit of a nightmare as turned all the logs slippery again. We were back at the car at 10:30.

A pretty good trip. We had found IB-20 & IB-21, surveyed them and IB-17 in. We had tagged IB-189 & IB-190 and found yet another cave. We had pushed IB-190 into Exit and surveyed most of the vertical section of that which was good. It is going to take quite a bit of surveying the base into Exit. We will have to do that when I am back next in September. A good trip to finish on!!

The survey of IB-190 Side Door is shown on the previous page. A stick diagram of the surface survey traverse network up to the 03/04/03 is shown on the following page.

Midnight Hole through trip: 29 June 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Alan Beech, Andras Galambos, Johnny Braindead (UK), Jeff Butt.

Today's trip had a few purposes; to induct Alan into the subterranean world, to give Johnny (a visiting Pom with an unfortunate surname) a trip and to change the logbook that I installed at the base of the first pitch 12 months ago.

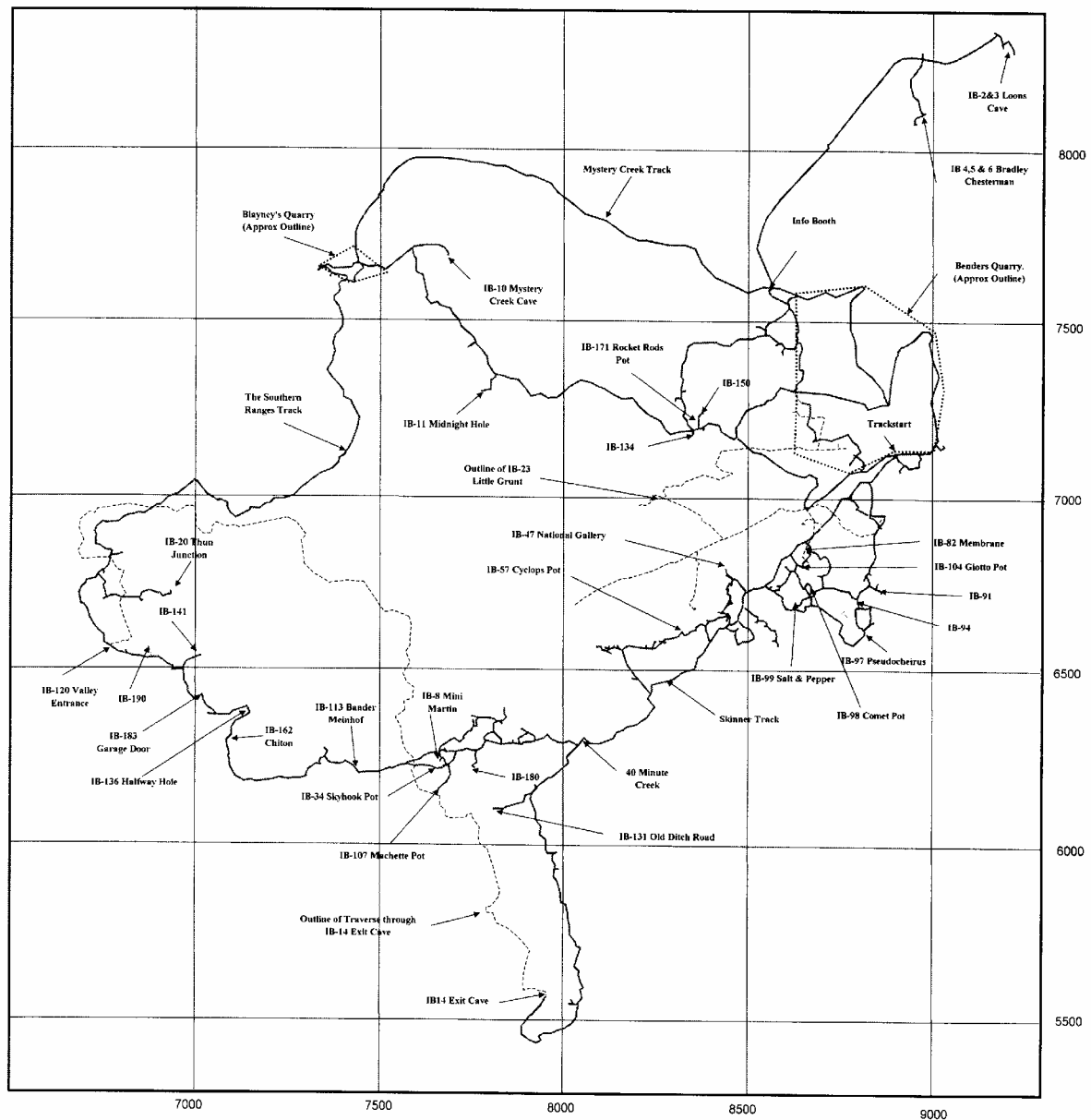
The weather was pretty bleak, particularly in Hobart, some heavy rain started around 6 a.m. In fact the weather caused one (who shall remain nameless) to pike.

Anyway, we headed down, collecting Johnny at Ida Bay and after kitting up started the trundle in. It didn't seem too wet; however, once we neared the Mystery Creek crossing it was evident that the creek was in flood. The level wasn't quite as severe as observed on 21/5/03, but was getting there! I'd say the creek was about 20-25 cm lower today; the crossing log didn't have a bad vibration.

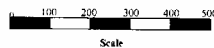
I was thinking a bit that perhaps a contingency plan needs to be invoked (Wolf Hole was the Plan B), but decided that we'd first check out the entrance of Mystery Creek Cave. I was fairly confident that the worst of the rain was over and that the creek should be about to start to drop. At the entrance to Mystery Creek Cave the water levels were up, but it wasn't knee deep, so I was happy to continue. I decided that it was a 'calculated risk' for us to continue with the trip...if the water levels were too high for us to cross the stream, then we'd go caving for a bit and reassess the levels etc. I was actually quite looking forward to seeing what the back end of the cave looked like with a flood on.

Anyway, we headed up the sodden slopes in the rain to the entrance of Midnight Hole. The first pitch was actually quite wet, but once the rope was pulled down we were committed. At the base of the first pitch I swapped logbooks; since the logbook was installed (21/7/02) there had been 7 intervening trips (30 people) recorded in it; 5 of these trips were non STC ones. At this rate, the new P-hangers aren't going to wear out too fast!

**Diagram of the surface traverses surveyed in the Ida Bay
from 01/09/02 to 04/04/03
(Approximately 24 km of Surface Traverses)**



STC Map No: 7IB.STC53



Copyright: P. Rowsell

Drawn by: P. Rowsell

The descent went very smoothly; and given that each pitch was wet meant that we all went quite quickly as it wasn't much fun to dilly-dally in the rain. About 70 minutes after entering the cave we were all at the bottom of the last pitch cramming things into our packs. The stream through Matchbox Squeeze was flowing well; the tributary coming in on the left just after the pinch was raging away. By the time we were all out, everyone was pretty damp, so we hot-footed it to Shipwreck Chamber and dumped gear. Where one

steps off the Skyline Traverse (just beyond the fallen column) a raging stream was pouring through the gap (from left to right) we stepped over.

Now it was time to do some fun horizontal caving; I was keen to have a look at water levels in sumps and see what the water did under high conditions. In the next two hours we must have covered every passage in the cave; I think that some of the troops were well and truly confused about where we were and had been, as

we did about three inter-leaved figure eight's with no repetitions.

The entire back wall in the Boiler room in Cephalopod stream was a curtain of water and the stream was filled to the brim. Downstream the first sump (which is normally reached by a 3 metre downclimb) was a large filled pool. Further down Cephalopod passage there was a mass of water and foam; I was a little relieved to see that the foam indicated that the peak of the flood was over (i.e. water levels had dropped below the level at which they had deposited foam).

Down the back end (near the old 20 gallon drum) of the cave there was also a lot of water. Below the drum, there is a hole that one can squeeze through into a large chamber. At the base of this chamber, one can downclimb to some sumps. Today the water level was up at to the entrance hole to the chamber, about 8-10 m above normal levels.

Our vigorous caving meant that we had all well and truly warmed up, so it was now time to have a look at the actual streamway. As we emerged through the narrow passage and into the streamway, the water was about knee deep and flowing very fast. We could

carefully negotiate our way up the right-hand wall, using the wall for support to some rocks with little flow. We now had to cross the stream; the flow was too strong to simply 'walk' across, so we resorted to some 'braced' stream-crossing techniques, and soon were safely on the other side. The stream crossings further up were much easier, as the stream is wider and thus more shallow.

After the requisite glow-worm stop, we were back at the entrance. Despite only being in the cave for three and half hours we basically went everywhere that wasn't inundated. We had seen a great deal of Mystery Creek Cave in a reasonably short time.

Outside the air temperature had cooled significantly, and cumulus clouds and some blue sky were evident. Obviously we were now in the cold post-frontal air. A warming walk had us back to the cars and home at around 6 p.m.

Back at home I was curious to have a look at the rainfall figures; typically there was 10-20 mm totals at nearby rainfall stations, well down on the typically 30-50 mm for the flood witnessed on 21/5/03.

Khazad Dum (JF-4), P-hanging...the Main Route's nearly done: 3 July 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Andras Galambos, Damian Bidgood, Jeff Butt.

The aim today was to rig the cave, and to complete the P-hanging of the main route. Quite a tall ask, really, but it is good to have a plan. So, with a frosty nip in the air we set off from the road head with 2 bulging packs of gear each.

The plan was to rig and drill on the way down, then glue on the way up. We did some opportunistic work on the way; whilst one person was rigging the other two could drill and/or do some rehabilitation work.

There was a bit of too-ing and fro-ing, as at one stage the 'big berth' battery pack got left behind...I thought it was the troops rebelling; but in reality it was a communication error....with a noisy streamway and earplugs to dull the drilling noise it's a wonder one can hear anything!

Unfortunately, we didn't make it quite as far as we wanted, as we ran out of battery power after 8 P-hangers (we only had 2 to go) on the third streamway waterfall pitch. In reality, this was probably just as well, as we were also running out of time. Just short of 11 hours after heading in, we were back on the surface; the trip out was somewhat more pleasant as we had a lot less gear to carry with the cave being left rigged.

I've broken our work up into a pitch-by-pitch account, below....it makes it all a bit easier to follow. Note that once we have completed the work, I'll produce a full rigging guide, with detailed positions of P-hangers and

suggested rope-lengths. To date we have installed 17 P-hangers in this cave, two more will complete the Main Route. We will also do the Serpentine route; by my reckoning 3 or 4 P-hangers are needed there.

+5 p Nothing has been done to the Scaling Pole pitch, the eyebolt there has been left.

4 p At the top of the first 4 m pitch, there were 3 spits (2 in poor condition) and one eyebolt, plus a convenient natural anchor! You can actually free-climb this pitch, so I'm really surprised that people whacked so many spits in. On the last trip we installed one P-hanger. We drilled and grouted the 3 spits. We have left the eye-bolt in-situ; it acts as a backup to the single P-hanger.

15 p Nothing has been done to the second "pitch", as it is very easy to bridge over the top and 'walk' down the spiral staircase. Some people may feel exposed on the bridge; if so, then use the natural anchors that are there for a safety line. In our P-hanging, the main aim is to replace decaying and/or poorly situated anchors, not to make the cave a join-the-dots affair. Where there are good naturals, we do not plan to install any P-hangers.

28 p At the top of the 28 m (dry 90') pitch, we had one empty tie-back hole (as we ran out of resin last trip), which we installed a P-hanger in. We removed the tie-back eyebolt (the actual eyebolt is in good condition, but the casing was fairly corroded) and grouted this hole and the one spit. We left the lower

eyebolt; it is still useful to hang a ladder from for the experience (I had a group of students here doing just this on May 21). There are two P-hangers high up above for the abseil (or belay) rope.

9 p At the next shorty, we grouted two spits (one stripped, the other was fair). The eyebolt has been left as a tie-back; there are two P-hangers which give a nice dry free-hang.

21 p At the 21 m (70') pitch, we have left the eyebolt at the start of the rift; it is a useful tie-back. Out in the rift are two spits; we installed two P-hangers nearby for a Y-belay. On the next trip we will rehab. the spits. Note that one of these spits is actually very good, however given the effort of getting all the drilling/glueing gear down the cave it's just as easy to give all anchors a complete overhaul. Hopefully nothing will need doing for another 50-100 or more years! And then, it should only be a matter of replacing any worn P-hangers using the existing holes.

6 p There are oodles of naturals for the rigging the first waterfall pitch and a safety approach line as/if needed, so we did nothing here.

9 p The second waterfall pitch is the one with the two eyebolts on the platform up on the right. The climb up is exposed, but not too bad. Normally the first person up can put a rope tail down from one of the eyebolts for the next person. The route down was then from the other eyebolt, down to a rebelay from a spit about 3 m down. After quite a bit of thought and deliberation, we have installed 3 P-hangers. The first is on the right wall, about 2 m back from the pitch edge. Once on-rope, one can sidle to the edge of the actual drop, and around the right corner, within reach is a second P-hanger. Once hanging from this one, you can reach the third P-hanger (which is near the existing spit), and then have a free-hang to the floor. With the new arrangement, you don't have to do the 'scary' free-climb up onto the platform. The two eyebolts up on the platform have been left as is for the moment.

5 p The next short waterfall pitch has one eyebolt down low on the left, and there are two spits out in the rift which give a dry free-hang to the floor. The existing eyebolt isn't a good backup for the traverse out to the spits as it is way too low. We installed one P-hanger high up on the left wall, about 2 m above the

existing eyebolt (which we will leave in place). If the water is down low, then people can take the old-route down, using the P-hanger and eyebolt. If the water is up, then the P-hanger is a good start for a safety line out to the rift where the spits are. We have installed one P-hanger here; a second will go in on the next trip and we will also clean up the two spits.

8 p The next waterfall pitch has a single eyebolt near the end of the 'water-race', then there is a shelf on the left with lots of naturals with which you can do a magnificent dry rig for this pitch. I plan to install one P on the left wall about 2 m before the eyebolt; this will prevent people being actually washed down the water-race in high flow (I have been there in these conditions, and we aborted our trip due to this danger), and provide a backup to the eye-bolt, which will be left in place.

Note that I did contemplate another option away from the water for this pitch. If you stay up high on the right, in the inclined rift you can move past some formation to an edge; there is an ugly wedged truck sized boulder in front of you. From this point it is a totally dry ~10 m pitch down into the chamber where the waterfall lands. Two P-hangers would be required in the roof for this option; there are naturals nearby for a tie-back. However, I opted against this option because. 1. the potential to damage to the formation/straws in the access rift, and 2. even though this route will give you a dry way to the floor of this pitch, irrespective of stream-levels, you will still have to go through the waterfall curtain that cuts the passage...so there is no real benefit and 3. the location is a bit obscure, so people would have trouble finding it.

8 p The next pitch is well endowed with natural anchors and doesn't need anything.

8 p The final short waterfall pitch has two P-hangers installed; we did this last year. One spit and the floor-level eyebolt were removed and rehabilitated at that time.

42 p The final pitch also has two P-hangers, one as a rebelay near the top, and the second offers another rebelay about half way down (near where the spit is); these were also done last year. The eyebolt in the Brew room has been left as a useful tie-back. The rebelay spit has yet to be rehabilitated.

Old Ditch Road (IB-131) - pull through and P-hanger testing: 6 July 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Geoff Wise, Heather Nicholls, Jeff Butt.

The aim of the day was to formally test the 8 P-hangers we installed on 1/6/03. I decided we'd do this as a pull-through trip, to make the trip accessible to some of our newer and/or less experienced members; but there weren't many takers.

Everything went very smoothly; all the new P-hangers were formally load tested (i.e. held a 5 kN tensile pull for 5 minutes without any signs of failure). Conditions in the cave were quite wet; a good shower of rain was coming down the second (38 m) pitch. The eight enforced 5 plus minute stops meant that the troops cooled a little on the descent. All rope retrievals were very smooth and easy.

My notes about the rigging included with the trip report of the P-hanger installation are accurate; you need to use the rope on the first pitch for safe access to the P-hangers on the second pitch. To do this, hang from your cowstails connected into the loop of a knot in the first pitch rope as you lean across the void to grab the second pitch rope. Once your abseil device is on and locked off you can release the first pitch rope. The last person can retrieve the first pitch rope once safely connected to the pitch 2 rope.

On the fourth pitch, the abseil rope does lie across a potentially rope-cutting horizontal rib. There is a P-hanger just below and to the right (when on rope) to use as a rebelay for a SRT trip; this removes this danger. However, if there are a number of 'jerky' abseilers on a pull-through trip, then you might consider installing a deviation from this P-hanger to divert the rope to the side and away from the potential rub point. Note that if

you get this rope stuck on the retrieval attempt, you should not prussik up unless you deviated the rope away from this rub point.

Once down in Exit we went for a bit of a warm up; doing a loop through the Ballroom, back up the main-stream and back to the Ballroom before heading towards the entrance. Water levels were up, water temperatures were down. The resident thermometer said that the air temperature was 8.4°C and the water temperature was 8.2°C.

At the glow-worm crossing point the water was thigh deep, and at the final crossing point just over waist deep (deeper on Heather!)...the water temperature being above gonad height definitely felt cooler than 8.2°C. We put a new lock on the gate for Rob Wass, and then soon reached steaming temperature as we headed up the hill. Quite a good little trip.

Khazad Dum (JF-4), P-hanging...completing the Main Route: 8 July 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Geoff Wise, Janine McKinnon, Jeff Butt.

The aim today was to finish off what we didn't get done on 3/7/03.

Water levels were right up; so were noise levels. In the main streamway, the noise levels must have been well over 100 dB. Certainly, you could hardly hear the drill over the streamway noise. We were using earplugs for the drilling; I think that wearing them the whole time in the streamway would be quite sensible too!

First job was at the top of the 28 p, where the rope was rerigged to incorporate the third P-hanger that we installed last trip. Getting on/off the rope here is now extremely simple; having the anchors up high is very nice!

At the top of the 21p, we rerigged the rope onto the two new P-hangers, and rehabilitated the two spits.

Due to the high water levels, a safety access line (all natural anchors) was added to the pitch-head of the first waterfall pitch. With care and delicate balancing against the wall one could just stay dry. Geoff did not exercise such care on the egress, and slipped off his perch (on rope) and had a dunking under the waterfall. He'll be more careful next time!

Next stop was the third streamway pitch, where we adjusted the rigging to incorporate the two new P-

hangers from last trip. Then we drilled the second hole for the Y-hang out in the rift.

With that done, it was to the next pitch; the high water-levels meant that the stream was washing over the platform on the left hand side; we definitely weren't going to the bottom today! One P-hanger hole was drilled on the right hand wall, at the start of the 'water-race'; this is about 1.5 m back from the eye-bolt, and will provide safe access to the pitch-head proper, as well as a backup for the single eyebolt. A P-hanger was duly installed here, then we headed back to the top of the next pitch, and installed our second P-hanger for the day.

Next job was on the second streamway pitch; one spit was rehabilitated. The two eyebolts were left intact. I re-rigged the rope using the three P-hangers we installed last trip and tested out the new arrangement. I'm pleased to say that it all works as intended, and makes this pitch a lot easier and safer.

It was a relief to get away from the exceedingly noisy streamway, which had fallen marginally as the day wore on. A refreshing eight and a half hour trip.

Also, during the trip I made careful notes of the ideal rope-lengths; I'll publish these when the KD work is complete, which should be so after a couple more trips.

Khazad Dum-more P-hanger work-Testing and the Serpentine Route: 13 July 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Steve Bunton, Janine McKinnon, Geoff Wise, Jeff Butt.

The aims today were several-fold. I'd hoped that we'd:

- test the 15 P-hangers down to where we had rigged; and if the water levels allowed, rig to the bottom and test the lower 4 P-hangers,
- rig the Serpentine Route, and drill the P-hangers holes there, plus install as many as we could with our almost spent glue cartridges,
- derig the top bit of the main route; and some of the lower cave if we made it to the bottom.

Anyway, it was good to have a plan. Unfortunately the weather didn't co-operate; there was about 20 mm of rain over the previous 24 hours, including snow on the ground near the entrance; so it was pretty obvious that we wouldn't get to the bottom. Water levels in the cave were up; the Serpentine route had a good stream running down in it. Water levels rose during the day; presumably as the snow melted.

We split into two groups; Steve and Geoff headed down the main route, testing P-hangers as they went. Janine and I headed down the Serpentine Route, which was suitably wet today, rigging and drilling P-hanger holes as required.

Steve and Geoff tested down to the top of the 4th waterfall pitch; testing the 15 P-hangers. All passed without any troubles, and the mini-bolt traverse on the second steamway pitch was given the stamp of approval. I was pleased to hear Steve say "Australia's Best cave just got Better".

Janine and my work is summarised below. When we made the lower streamway, I headed down to find the others; they were on their way back. We decided we'd all head up the main route; derigging as we went. I skipped off ahead, with the aim of going down to the

first pitch of the Serpentine route to do some gluing whilst the others derigged.

We emerged after quite a damp 8 hour trip.

23 p At the top of this pitch there is one 'carrot' and a couple of naturals (a thread in the floor, and a nice bollard up on the right). At the ledge about 7 m down there are some naturals on the floor which gives a rebelay at the lip; then it is a fairly wet descent (made drier by some deviations about 3 m down). We installed one P-hanger at the top, opposite the bollard; a tie back to the natural in the floor and a Y-belay from the bollard and P-hanger will get you nicely going. At the wet ledge, I installed a second P-hanger, well out on the right hand wall, a rebelay (or deviation) from this will give a dry abseil to the floor. In due the course the carrot can be removed.

15 p There are three naturals at the pitch head (thread in the floor in a pool, a bollard at the edge, and a nubbin above); about 5 m down is a wet ledge where a deviation is desirable, but there are only exceedingly marginal naturals. We drilled a P-hanger hole in some good rock out on the right wall; either a rebelay or deviation from this will get you safe and dry to the floor.

8 p This pitch is immediately at the bottom of the 15 p, which gives you a good tie-back. There are many good naturals here (a small-medium size chock is handy), so nothing was done.

9 p There is one 'carrot' on the left and an excellent natural on the right. There is also another natural on the left, near the carrot. Instead of installing a P-hanger here, we dressed the natural on the left to make it's tape-holding ability more secure. In due course we will remove the rusty carrot.

5 p Again there are many suitable naturals, so no work required.

Khazad Dum (JF-4)-finishing off the P-hangering: 20 July 2003

By Jeff Butt

Party: Andras Galambos, Damian Bidgood, Jeff Butt.

Basically I wanted to finish off KD today, I was keen to get the ropes out and my gear back before heading away to the Kimberly's for a month....all we needed was a reasonable break with the weather to let us do this. Today seemed like such a day; it hadn't rained for 48 hours, so the water should be down enough to let us get to the bottom of the cave without getting totally drenched....or so I had hoped!

The trip down the Serpentine was pretty smooth. Andras and Damian went on ahead to rig the bottom 3

pitches in the cave whilst I put in the last P-hanger (Serpentine, 2nd pitch). I followed on; the streamway was still up quite a bit, and the wet 4th streamway pitch was indeed quite wet. No sign of the others, so they had toughed the wetness out...so on I went and got a thoroughly good soaking at the bottom of this pitch where one has to climb down through the waterfall curtain. I found the other two drowned souls at the top of the 6th streamway pitch, just about to start testing the two P-hangers there. I quipped, that they were very keen; I would have been tempted to 'pull the pin' if the decision was left to me.

We tested the two hangers here, and also the two on the final pitch. We also rehabilitated the two spits (one on each of these pitches). The gray glue colour is a definite improvement to the strawberry pink colour. The rehabed. Loxin hole (done last year) on the 6th waterfall pitch doesn't blend in very well! Anyway, with the rehabing. done, it was time to head on out, derigging as we went. I also took some notes about ideal rope lengths; which I'll summarise in a separate article.

The increasing loads in our packs compensated to an extent for our wetness, keeping us warm. The Serpentine route is a bit of a grunt coming up with heavy packs...we knew this, but one does tend to forget!

On the way up we tested the three P-hangers on the Serpentine route (one on pitch 2, two on pitch 1). The P-hanger on the second pitch was only installed 8 hours earlier; but it had cured and passed the load test without any troubles. The two carrot bolts (pitch 1 and pitch 4) were quite sound; I deliberated on whether or not to remove them, and in the end decided to let them remain. They can easily be removed at a later stage when/if/as required.

We emerged after quite a hard, cold ten and a half hour trip. It was good to finish the job off; KD now has 22 P-hangers installed. It's a great cave, but I'm a bit sick of it at the moment after four hard trips in short succession.

Kubla Khan (MC-1): 10 August 2003

By Stephen Bunton

Party: Stephen Bunton, David Chiam, Matt Cracknell, Jason Gardner and Heather Nicholls.

As arranged we all met at the Marakoopa Works Office and collected the key at 8.30am, Heather had already made it a long day by driving up from Hobart that morning. We headed around to Kubla and Steve rigged the bottom entrance with ladders. Even though he'd only ever done this pitch on SRT he thought it might be easier for any beginners or unknowns. In fact it was Steve's first caving trip with all these participants and a jolly fine one it was too.

We then headed up to the top entrance which seemed a lot further away than it was fifteen years ago when Steve last did the cave. In fact there was so little that he remembered about the cave it proved to be an interesting trip, a whole rediscovery! The main problem was the length of the abseils and the amount of rope required which is not documented anywhere. We had plenty of rope plus a spare. Matt and Jason had a digital camera and a cave-blaster light which enabled us to appreciate so much more of the cave. We stopped for a break at the Opium Den before reaching the Khan. A bit more route finding uncertainty was endured before we got to Cairn Hall for another rest and our second lunch stop. The river was up a bit but not a great flood like Steve had endured once before. For some strange reason we missed the Pleasure Dome mostly because in the past it seemed so obvious and you just couldn't miss it! Sometimes complacency sets in and.... before we

knew it we were getting wet in the stream, so we stopped.

We changed into wetsuits for the last bit of the cave. This is a great bit of sporting streamway which was made quite bracing by the recent snowmelt. We then climbed out up to the gate and finished off with the workout of the "step class " up the scree slope to the entrance pitch. The gate and the steps have no doubt saved the cave from significant damage. They were mostly the initiative of Dick Dwyer the recently replaced Senior Ranger at Mole Creek and he is to be congratulated for this as one of his major achievements in his time at Mole Creek.

The entrance pitch was a grunt for all, laddering and pack hauling and packing up gear. I think in future I'd ensure that everyone is competent in SRT and do it on a rope. Everyone enjoyed their trip and thanked me profusely although I felt guilty because I didn't think I deserved it. As a teacher I have "Could do better!" ingrained in my psyche. I'd actually forgotten what a physical trip Kubla really is. In the old days it seemed so trivial.

It was a lovely evening, not too cold, yet beautifully clear. The long drive home under an almost full moon with the Southern Cross pointing the way was made memorable by some great ABC radio. At 8c a day the ABC is a bargain and almost as cheap as a Kubla permit. We are indeed blessed!

Khazad Dum (JF4)-An Updated Rigging Guide-July 2003.

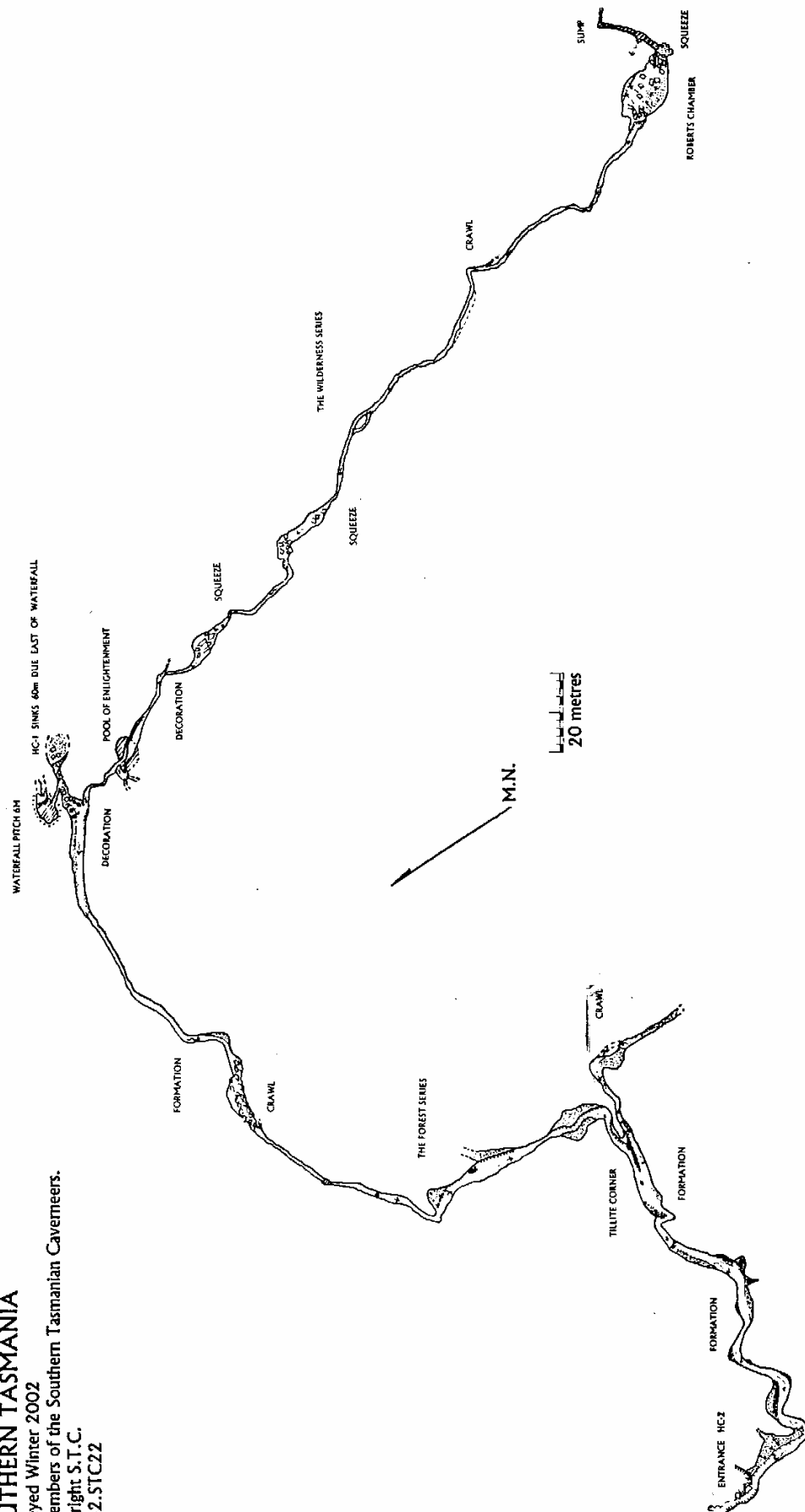
By Jeff Butt

Over the last few weeks we have had four fairly hard trips to KD to revamp the bolts; there are now 22 P-hangers installed. All of these P-hangers have been formally load tested. In addition, 13 spits and 1 eye-bolt have been removed/rehabilitated. The table below indicates what bolts remain in the cave and give the ideal (i.e. just enough rope for the pitch, including a knot in the end) rope lengths and suggested rigging guide. All directions (Left/Right) are given looking down the cave; so when hanging on rope the directions are reversed. There should now not be any need for anyone to place any bolts on these routes. Where possible, all bolts are placed high to make them as useful as possible for both rigging and any rescue purposes.

| Khazad Dum (JF4) | Rope (m) Required | Anchors | Suggested Rigging/Notes |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Main Route to Streamway | | | |
| +5 p Scaling Pole | 7 | Eyebolt | Normally bypass this pitch by going down the Serpentine Route and then joining back in. |
| 4 p | 8 | P-hanger on wall in front, Eyebolt on ledge on right. | Y-belay from both. This pitch is easy to climb, but when tired and with lots of gear a rope is handy. |
| 15 c | (18) | Naturals | Can rig if required. It is easy to bridge over the rift, then take the 'spiral staircase' down. |
| 28 p | 35 | 3 P-hangers, one on the left wall 3 m back, 2 directly over pitch, up high on the left. One Eyebolt down low on the left at the pitch edge. | Tieback to first P, then Y-belay from the other two P's. If using ladders, the eyebolt is good for securing the ladder; rig the belay rope as per above. |
| 9 p | 12 | Eyebolt on the right, 2 P-hangers, one on each wall over the edge. | Tieback to the Eyebolt, Y-belay from the two P's. |
| 21 p | 27 | Eyebolt on the left at floor level, two P-hangers 5 m out in the rift, one on each wall at head height. | Tieback to the Eyebolt, Y-belay from the two P's. |
| Serpentine Route to Streamway | | | |
| 23 p | 28 (+5) or 35 | Naturals, plus one P-hanger on the left at head-height at the edge. (Also a 'carrot' in good condition 2 m back on the right at waist height). A second P-hanger out on the right wall at face height when standing on the ledge 6 m down. | Tieback to a natural (thread in floor) and/or carrot. Y-belay from the P-hanger and a sling over the shoulder up high on the right. At the ledge, either rebelay or deviate using the second P-hanger. There is a small 2 m nuisance drop just after this pitch, a second short rope (5 m), or the tail of the main (35 m) rope makes this easier with gear. |
| 15 p | 19 (or 30) | Naturals, plus one P-hanger out on the right wall at face height when standing on the ledge 5 m down. | A selection of naturals gets you down to the ledge, either rebelay or deviate using the P-hanger. A 30 m rope lets you do the next pitch, which immediately follows. |
| 8 p | 10 (or none) | Naturals | Straight after the 15 p. Tieback to previous rope, large blocks (long trace handy) on the floor, cracks to take a small-med. chock on the left wall give you a free-hang. |
| 9 p | 13 | Naturals, also a carrot in good condition on the left. | Y-belay from the two good naturals and tieback to the carrot if desired. |
| 5 p | 11 | Many naturals | Less rope is required if you sling the naturals. |
| Streamway to Bottom | | | |
| 6 p | 13 (+6) | Many naturals | Careful rigging keeps you dry. Extra rope is useful to make a safe approach to the pitch-head. |
| 9 p | 17 (or 22) | Three P-hangers. First P is on the right 2 m back from the edge. Two P-s around the corner on the right. Also two Eyebolts up on the platform on the right. | Tieback to first P, then it's a safe and easy reach around the corner on the right to the second P, same again to the third P. (A mini-bolt traverse). OR, if you prefer, climb up to the platform and rig a rope from the first Eyebolt for the others, then abseil from the second Eyebolt and rebelay from the third P-hanger. |
| 5 p | 13 (or 8) | Three P-hangers, one Eyebolt. Eyebolt is on a ledge high up on the left. First P is 2 m above the Eye, on the left. The other two P's are 3 m out in the rift, on the left wall. | Tieback to the first P, then traverse out the rift and Y-belay from the other two P's. OR, if you prefer a wetter option, Y-belay from the first P and the Eyebolt...this saves you about 5 m of rope. |
| 8 p | 17 | P-hanger on the right at the start of the 'chute', Eyebolt on the left at the edge of the drop. Naturals out on the platform on the left. | Tieback to the P, then from the Eyebolt traverse out on to the platform and rebelay from here. If the water is up it is drier to traverse out further and rebelay from a natural up high on the left (need a long trace/tape). Unfortunately once down you then have to do a 1.5 m downclimb through the water curtain that cuts the passage; use of the end of the rope makes this manoeuvre quicker and drier! |
| 8 p | 11 | Naturals | |
| 9 p | 13 | Two P-s on the right wall. | Y-belay from these, if most weight is on the furthestmost P, you stay dry. |
| 42 p | 44 | Eyebolt in the Brew Room, naturals on the edge of the window. P-hanger 1 m down, 1 m to the left, second P-hanger 12 m below. | Tieback to the Eyebolt, add in a natural and then two rebelays (from the P's) get you nicely to the floor. |

RIVEAUX CAVE HC-2
HUSTLING CREEK
HUON RIVER
SOUTHERN TASMANIA

Surveyed Winter 2002
By members of the Southern Tasmanian Cavekeepers.
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| Claire | Brett | 31 Mar 2004 | 11/32 New St, Hampton, VIC 3188 | 952182 18 | 9896 8789 | 04 19 731969 | clairemday@hotmail.com |
| Gavin | Brett | 31 Mar 2004 | 11/32 New St, Hampton, VIC 3188 | 952182 18 | 9544 0866 | | g.brett@aerosonde.com |
| Kathryn | Bunton | 31 Mar 2004 | PO Box 198, North Hobart 7002 | | | | |
| Stephen | Bunton | 31 Mar 2004 | PO Box 198, North Hobart 7002 | 6278 2398 | 6234 6566 | | sbunton@postoffice.friends.tas.edu.au |
| Jeff | Butt | 31 Mar 2004 | 22 Clutha Pl, South Hobart 7004 | 6223 8620 | 6223 8620 | | jeffbutt@netspace.net.au |
| Liz | Canning | 31 Mar 2004 | 124 Wentworth St, South Hobart 7004 | 6223 7088 | 6233 6176 | | Elizabeth.Canning@dpiwe.tas.gov.au |
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| Arthur | Clarke | 31 Mar 2004 | 17 Darling Pde, Mt. Stuart 7000 | 6228 2099 | 6298 1107 | | arthurc@southcom.com.au |
| Matt | Cracknell | 31 Mar 2004 | PO Box 14, Geeveston 7116 | | 6298 3209 | 0409 438 924 | crowdang@yahoo.co.uk |
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| Gerry | Doherty | 31 Mar 2004 | PO Box 315, Geeveston 7116 | 6297 62 19 | | | gerdoh7@primus.com.au |
| Rolan | Eberhard | - | 18 Fergusson Ave, Tinderbox 7054 | 6229 3039 | 6233 6455 | | rolane@dpiwe.tas.gov.au |
| Stefan | Eberhard | 31 Mar 2003 | 2 Churchill Ave, Margaret River, WA 6285 | | 08 9757 7411 | | smecwork@netserv.net.au |
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| Andras | Galambos | 31 Mar 2004 | 3/14 Lanena St, Bellerive 7018 | 6244 6669 | | | baandi@mpx.com.au |
| Jason | Gardner | 22 Oct 2003 | 5233 Huon Highway, Geeveston 7116 | 6297 0070 | 6298 3209 | | |
| Albert | Goede | - | 69 Esplanade, Rose Bay 7015 | 6243 73 19 | | | goede@tassie.net.au |
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| Dean | Morgan | 31 Mar 2003 | 15 Cades Dve, Kingston 7050 | 6234 3113 | 6234 5061 | 0438 294 405 | dmorgan@tesa.com.au |
| Dave | Nichols | 31 Mar 2004 | 12 Excell Lne, South Hobart 7004 | 6224 4737 | 6226 1831 | | D.Nichols@utas.edu.au |
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| Keith | Vanderstaay | 31 Mar 2004 | 754 Hastings Caves Rd, Hastings 7109 | | 6298 3209 | 0429 983 209 | hastings.caves@bigpond.com |
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| Mick | Williams | 31 Mar 2004 | PO Box 288, Geeveston 7116 | 6297 6368 | | | |
| Geoffrey | Wise | 31 Mar 2004 | 2/249 Bathurst St, Hobart 7000 | 62311174 | | 0408 108 984 | wiseg@dodo.com.au |
| Friends of STC | | | | | | | |
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| Chris | Davies | - | 3 Alfred St, New Town 7008 | 6228 0228 | | | |
| Therese | Gatenby | - | PO Box 69, South Hobart 7004 | 6239 1432 | | | theresemf@hotmail.com |
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