

# SPEIEO SPIEI 347

March - April 2005





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**Front Cover:** Decoration in Kubla Khan (photo by Damian Bidgood)

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# Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the

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## Issue No. 347, Mar. - Apr. 2005

## CONTENTS

### Regular Bits

Editorial	2
Forward Program	2
Stuff 'n Stuff	2

### Trip Reports

Ice Tube, 28 Jan. 05	Madphil Rowsell	3
Ida Bay Surface Work, - Blaneys Quarry, 30 Jan 05	Madphil Rowsell	3
Ida Bay Surface Work, - Old Tramway, 31 Jan 05	Madphil Rowsell	3
Exit Cave – Mystery Creek Passage, 1 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	4
Exit Cave – Mystery Creek Passage II, 2 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	4
Pooshooter, 5 Feb. 05	Alan Jackson	4
IB-195 Survey		5
Ice Tube, 7 Feb. 05	Janine McKinnon	6
Exit Cave – Mystery Creek Passage III, 10 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	6
Exit Cave – Eastern Passage, 11 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	7
Ida Bay Surface Work – Mystery Creek Area, 16 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	8
Exit Cave – Eastern Passage II, 17 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	8
Ida Bay Surface Work – Valley Entrance & Thun Junction	Madphil Rowsell	8
Valley Entrance & Halfway Hole – Surface Work, 24 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	9
Mystery Creek Cave, 25 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	9
Exit Cave – Eastern Grand Fissure, 26 Feb. 05	Madphil Rowsell	9
Erebus, 28 Feb. 05	Matt Cracknell	10
Serendipity, 5 Mar. 05	Madphil Rowsell	10
Slaughterhouse Pot – It's Raining Men, 6 Mar. 05	Hayley Shields	11
Exit Cave – Conference Concourse, 10 Mar. 05	Madphil Rowsell	12
Ida Bay Surface Work – Old Tramway II, 11 Mar. 05	Madphil Rowsell	12
Ice Tube, 12 Mar. 05	Alan Jackson	12
Exit Cave – Conference Concourse II, 14 Mar. 05	Madphil Rowsell	12
Pooshooter – The Last Hoorah, 9 Apr. 05	Alan Jackson	13
Mystery Creek Cave, 16 Apr. 05	Claire Brett	13
Ida Bay Surface Work, 21 Apr. 05	Ric Tunney	14
Ida Bay Surface Work, 22 Apr. 05	Ric Tunney	14
Lost Pot, 25 Apr. 05	Amy Ware	15

### Other Exciting Stuff

2005 Annual General Meeting – Office Bearer's Reports		15
Recent Flood Damage at Ida Bay	Arthur Clarke	22
STC Membership List		26



## Editorial

Just when you'd finished reading the last issue cover to cover, there's another one out. It's nice to be virtually caught up again, (although I fear it is actually theoretically impossible to ever be ahead).

This issue concludes the majority of Madphil's latest Tasmanian antics. We can soon go back to the good old days of thin *Spiele*s with one or two accounts of exciting Midnight Hole trips and maybe some strange article on a 16 legged cave arthropod that Arthur found under a rock. At least they'll take me less time to compile!

As most of you will be aware, Stuart Nicholas passed away recently. Stu was an integral member of TCC for many years, involved in many of the epic trips during the pioneering days of caving in Tasmania. He will be missed by many. The bulk of SS348 will be dedicated to Stu and his contributions to caving in Tasmania and Australia.

The Midwinter Extravaganza is on again at Francistown – see 'Stuff 'n Stuff' for details. The more the merrier, so get off your bums and get along to this winter warmer. Don't use winter as an excuse to wind back your caving for the next few months – Tasmanian caves are wet, cold and dark all year round!

And now I just need to insert a bit of meaningless text to justify the size of this text box so the formatting looks sensible on the rest of the page. That ought to do it!

Alan Jackson

## Forward Program

Social Meeting (Republic Bar) ..... 18<sup>th</sup> May  
Northern Search & Rescue Exercise..... 21<sup>st</sup> May  
*Contact Alan Jackson for details*  
Dwarrowdelf P-hanging ..... 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> May  
*Contact Alan Jackson for details*  
General Meeting (Republic Bar)..... 1<sup>st</sup> June  
Social Meeting (Republic Bar) ..... 15<sup>th</sup> June  
General Meeting (Republic Bar)..... 6<sup>th</sup> July



TASMANIA  
HOBART LAUNCESTON BURNIE

## Stuff 'n Stuff

THE MIDWINTER EXTRAVAGANZA is on the cards again. It's always hard to resist a weekend at Francistown, particularly the fruit wines that are so often associated with it. Arthur and Robyn have again kindly allowed us to crash at their house near Dover. Organisation is still in its infancy (some what like its organiser), so keep your eyes on the list server for more details as they become available. At the moment it looks like it will all go down on the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> June (it is a midwinter event after all!) Dinner on the Saturday night will be semi organised by the club (anyone who wants to lend a hand making a casserole, salad, dessert etc... then let Alan Jackson or Claire Brett know ASAP). A small donation to the club will be charged to non cooking attendees. Other meals are your own responsibility. There will also be a spot of caving going on too, so trip leaders should start thinking about, and advertising, their intentions. Please let Alan Jackson know if you will be attending ASAP so we can make sure enough food is being organised.

JF-14 DWARROWDELF is currently rigged and is scheduled for p-hanger installation. Anyone interested in learning the fine art of hammer drills and two part epoxy resins in caves should contact Alan Jackson. We intend commencing operations on the weekend of 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May. Anyone else who just wants to bottom the cave without all the hassle of rigging and derigging, and trusts our rigging, then now is your chance (a warning that the last pitch doesn't have a rope on it though!)

THE NORTHERN POLICE SEARCH AND RESCUE cave rescue exercise is scheduled for the 21<sup>st</sup> May. Details are a little sketchy at the moment, but I understand it will involve a cave, a rescue and some exercise. Contact Alan Jackson if you're interested so we can car pool etc...

MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE! Thanks to everyone who has paid up promptly. There are still a few people who have not renewed yet (please ignore this if you have already coughed up!) including:

Andrew Briggs	Dave Chitty
Jol Desmarchelier	Gerry Doherty
Stefan Eberhard (ASF fees only)	Jason Gardner
Kent Henderson	Dave Nichols
Heather Nichols	Chris Sharples
Keith Vanderstaay	Mick Williams

Your continued support is vital to the club. And please renew your membership before 1<sup>st</sup> June - there is a \$10 late fee after that date. Also the following subscriptions to the *Speleo Spiel* (\$25) have not yet been renewed from:

Peter Ackroyd  
Rien de Vries  
Hastings Caves & Thermal Springs

Please contact me with any queries at [claireb@keypoint.com.au](mailto:claireb@keypoint.com.au)

## JF-345 Ice Tube : 28 January 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

While Damian and I had accomplished a through trip last time, we had scrimped on bolts etc... to ensure we had enough battery power to make it all the way down. There was therefore some tidy up bolting to be done on a subsequent trip. Damian was tied up with work, (and still probably having nightmares about the Fallopian Tube!), but Ric and Janine were keen. I was a bit hesitant with the idea to start with as I didn't really know how they would go, but I needed to get this bolting finished otherwise it would drag on for ages.

It took a while to get down as I had to put in a few traverse lines and back up bolts on the way. I had a shock on Killing Joke as while I was looking for a new re-belay placement halfway down, the old hammer-in bolt pulled off in my hand!! The pitch name was almost befitting; Damian and I had used it last time – very lucky people!! Thankfully just a good wake up - bolts do fail, they are not bomb proof! With a bit more fettling, we were finally at the start of the Fallopian Tube.

I had got pretty used to this now, so I de-gear and headed on through, leaving Ric and Janine to follow. It was quite funny listening to the carry on. Eventually Janine appeared after a while, but Ric was having a few problems. If Damian could fit through, certainly Ric would. After a bit of coaxing and mud face painting as encouragement, Ric finally and thankfully popped through. Now for the long muddy drag out of Mothers Passage. To start with the troops were OK, but gradually they became more tied and hacked off. I even heard at one point "We're too old for this game!" yeh yeh. I took pity and relieved them of one of their tackle sacks and finally we made it to the Mainline Streamway.

A kit wash and recovery followed. I relieved them of most of their weight, leaving me with a mega pig, and we headed on out. A slow trip out but with no dramas, bar the usual fun at the ladders at Avons Aven, (really need to get this abortion sorted). Finally out of the cave some 11.5 hours later, much to the relief of Ric and Janine. An entertaining trip at times, but we achieved the objective of completing most of the tidy up work.

## Ida Bay Surface Work – Blaneys Quarry : 30 January 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Arthur Clarke, Tom Porritt

A day with Arthur and Tom to find IB-45 Holocaust and IB-28 Gollums Grovel, which were located uphill from Blaneys Quarry. I had tried to find these on several occasions, but without success. On the way up the Southern Ranges track, we had a quick look for IB-201 in the IB-30 area, but again without success. Further up the SR track we turned off left, back towards the quarry and started rooting around. Three hours later all we had found was a few small holes, no IB-45. We knocked it on the head and went and tagged a large swallet cave (IB-195) which I had found on a previous occasion (see memory sketch – page 4). Not much passage, but a large valley development.

We pushed on over towards the Midnight Hole area to look for IB-28. We spent a(space)while looking at several dolines, but again with no success. Tom and I left Arthur and headed up to Midnight Hole and back along the contact to locate IB-122 and IB-123 (again I had previously tried several times to locate these). By luck Tom stumbled on IB-122, but no IB-123 (anyone have any ideas?) We also looked at a huge choked doline further along the contact from IB-122. It was getting late so we headed back down to the car. From previous hooting we thought Arthur had already headed back. An hour later – still no Arthur! We headed back and found him in Blaneys Quarry having just knocked things on the head. He had found IB-28 and dug his way back into it again, just to confirm. Good on him. Another one down – slowly knocking them off!

## Ida Bay Surface Work – Old Tramway : 31 January 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Arthur Clarke, Tom Porritt

Hopefully we would be more successful today, as there were a number of known caves along the old tram track above IB-3 Loons Cave top entrance. We pushed a traverse up to the tram track and tagged a cave half way up (IB-197). I left Arthur and Tom rooting around for caves while I set a traverse along the track toward Benders Quarry. I came back to find the gents had not had too much luck. Arthur had found one of the old

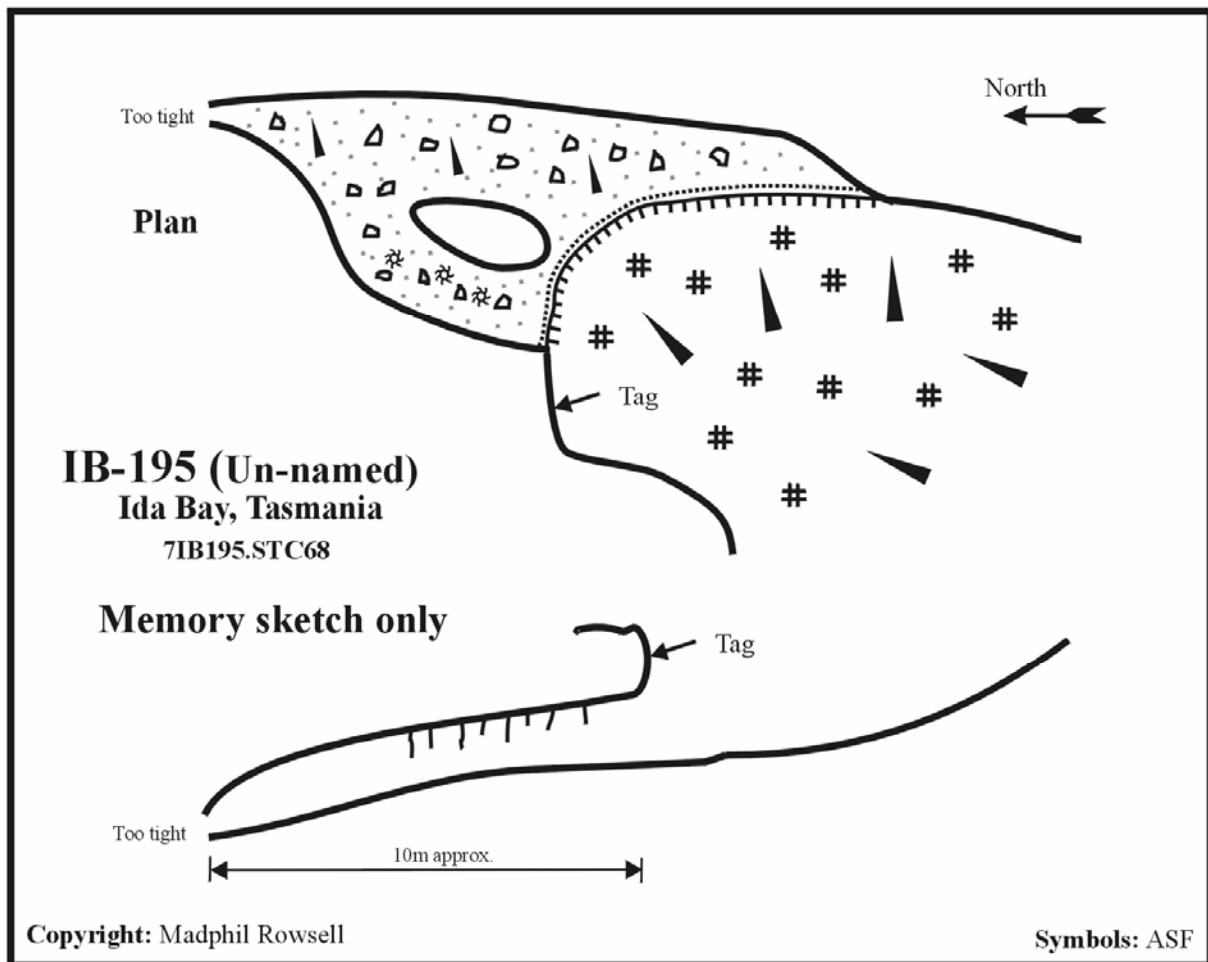
CCC quarries, but didn't recognise it, nor find any of the caves reputedly near it. We all had another good look for IB-65 and IB-66 below the tram track and Tom thankfully found IB-66. Arthur also found another cave below it (not tagged, I had fried the drill bit). Surveyed in IB-66 to the network and left a traverse down to the new cave. No IB-65 though, (any ideas?)

We left Arthur to have another look along the top of the tramway and surveyed along the tramway towards

Benders Quarry. Finally we got the radio message, (prepared today!), that he had found IB-111 Tram Stop. We aborted surveying, headed back and along to IB-111 and surveyed back to connect it into our traverse. Arthur had found two other holes which we also tied in, but no tags.

A bit of a disappointing day really, finding only two of the seven or so tagged caves in the area, despite a lot of hard dense bush bashing. Still to find in this area are IB-65, IB-112, IB-127, IB-159, IB-160 plus two 'X' caves, Hammer Hole and Excavation Pot – a good project for someone while I am away!

One of Arthur's new holes – just the usual green and grey with a dark spot in the bottom. *Photo by Arthur Clarke*



## IB-14 Exit Cave – Mystery Creek Passage : 1 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Tom Porritt

Tom Porritt was around again, which was great. We had done a lot together last time I was out and he was keen to do some more. We agreed to survey some of Exit Cave's side passages that were missing [*the surveys, not the passages! Ed.*] At the top of my list was the Mystery Creek Passage that we'd had a quick look at during the conference. I had the route pretty well wired now, so it only took about an hour to get

there. We started surveying in and managed to make it in past the boulder ruckle and up to where the long low wet passage heads off before Tom's light started to fail! It was a disaster as we were both game for a long session. We continued on surveying for a bit longer up into some of the big stuff, before deciding to call it a day. At least it meant we would head in again early tomorrow and have a long day then. We headed on out. A nice day and a very interesting place.

## IB-14 Exit Cave – Mystery Creek Passage II : 2 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Tom Porritt

Back in again early, and a stomp up to where we had left off last night. We made the mistake of agreeing to head downstream (fossil over flow) to finish that off as it should have only taken a few legs. We tied in a large passage way looping back to the main chamber, but then climbed up into a small passage that, once through a boulder ruckle, dropped down into another rift/serpentine passage. Of more interest was that there was clear water in the bottom (not Mystery Creek water) and there was a draft heading in the direction we were going! It looked like some sort of overflow passage with the water flowing periodically. Hmm, heading east too! Excitement was building as I knew where this was heading towards - Little Grunt!! We continued surveying along what was once fairly big passage, but subjected to huge rock falls, so most of the time was spent picking our way at floor level through boulders. Finally we came to a big boulder ruckle to negotiate. Tom had had enough of this grovelling by now, so we decided to knock it on the head. I did manage go for a quick explore and found a route through the ruckle into an intermittent stream passage

again. Bargin, the show goes on! Next time. We headed back out to the big stuff, pleased with what we had found.

Being able to walk again (and in big passage), life didn't seem so bad so we surveyed up the large passage to where the Mystery Creek stream is rejoined at the foot of a huge collapse. We surveyed and poked around in here, but it looked pretty terminal so we knocked it on the head and went out, pleased with the day's efforts. The data showed that the intermittent overflow streamway was indeed heading straight towards the terminal choke of the stream passage in Little Grunt, some 300 m away. The big collapse in the large passage was only some 200 m south of the big collapse in the end of Mystery Creek. Well interesting.

The most saddening and annoying thing is that most of this (bar the passage heading to Little Grunt) has been explored and surveyed before (the new data fitting nearly exactly to the old black outline that everyone is familiar with). Where is the data or the surveys though? It seems to be lost! Criminal!

## JF-268 Pooshooter : 5 February 2005

Alan Jackson

**Party:** Alan Jackson, Phil Rowsell, Gavin Brett

Back again due to another fortunate development at work (unfortunate for work, but good for caving!)

This time the three of us headed in and took a bit of new rope to replace some of Rolan's 9 mm that has been copping a flogging in this cave since day one. About 15 minutes was spent in the final room with the four ways on before the third option was knocked on the head. It looks like this bit just joins back into the echoing aven that we dropped into last week.

We almost headed back out but Phil convinced us to commit to the bolt traverse required to investigate the fourth lead from this room. On the far wall of the shaft

heading down to the second place we checked last week is a 1.5 m diameter tube that appears to continue on. About five bolts later and the traverse was complete. Distant rumbling of rock could be heard so Gavin and I joined Phil. The passage continued for about ten metres before culminating in a largish collapsed room, and I mean fully collapsed. Phil descended to the floor of the collapse but could find no continuation. You don't know till you look.

Bitterly disappointed we de-rigged this section of the cave and retreated back out to the long rift room at Long John Silver. The rock fall termination of this rift had not been properly sounded out. Madphil and I headed off in opposite directions while Gavin stayed in the middle and kept in contact with us while we both

tried killing ourselves in the enormous pile of rubble. I found nothing of great excitement, but surprise, surprise, Phil had found a dig worth pursuing (what is it with these Poms?). About 40 minutes was spent convincing two 30+ kg boulders to move and we squeezed past into the lower level of the rock fall. Phil and I did a quick recce and found more vertical

development and pitches etc... We were more disappointed than jubilant, as this was going to be a nasty spot to get to with full vertical gear and ropes etc... We headed out to the surface.

The saga continues.

### JF-345 Ice Tube : 7 February 2005

Janine McKinnon

**Party:** Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

On our trip with Madphil a week earlier to finish his bolting project (and do our first Ice Tube/Growling Swallet through trip in 20 years) we were reminded of how lovely (scenic? spectacular?) some of the pitches were. We decided to go back and do some photography on the first two pitches.

Our start was somewhat delayed when we encountered a broken down log truck stopped on the road just past the Gap. An hour later, after running him back to Maydena to call for help (he couldn't get radio coms and our CDMA mobile couldn't get a signal anywhere en-route back, including sitting outside the shop at Maydena!), and we were back on-track and getting organised at the car park. We were very thankful this diversion had happened on a day when a short trip was planned!

The walk in took 50 minutes (and the same time out, surprisingly) and being the fanatical photographers we are we spent a WHOLE TWO HOURS taking photos on the first two pitches (well 1.5 pitches. I stopped half way down the second pitch, just before the "getting wet bit" and Ric took photos from the top. Don't want to take this photography thing too far and get wet for our art). Despite our lack of dedication and unwillingness to suffer for our art we got several good shots.

We were home by 5 pm. A very gentlemanly (and womanly) day's caving.



Janine impersonating a Degenerated Man (Pitch) Photo by Ric Tunney

### IB-14 Exit Cave – Mystery Creek Passage III : 10 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Tom Porritt

Back to hopefully find a way to Little Grunt! Since being in the cave last time it had been subjected to a pretty severe flood. There was liquid poo in the wind tunnel just the other side of the gate. Progressing into the cave, banks had been washed away and surfaces left really slippery. This made it very awkward progress and somewhat entertaining (almost slapstick) with one of us suddenly decking out without warning. We battled on our way up to Mystery Creek Passage and into the big stuff. Interesting as the fossil streamway had flowed pretty hard too.

We spent a while negotiating the boulder ruckle overflow streamway back to where we had pulled the pin last time. It looked like this overflow streamway had also flowed. Thankfully it was dry again. We had a quick route check through the big collapse before we started surveying again. I was pleased when we were back in more developed passage. Only after about 50 m or so we hit another chamber and collapse. Not good. We spent over an hour poking every nook and cranny trying to find a way on, but with no success. Nightmare, a rather short lived dream!! We possibly could make progress digging a bit, but not today. We headed back to the big chamber.



With Tom not firing today, thankfully I managed to persuade him to survey a bypass streamway in the big passageway which would then just about tie all the surveying up in Mystery Creek Passage. It was a genuine ten legs or so. With that completed we headed on out reasonably early (i.e. out in daylight) and a big refuel session for tomorrow.

The only real surveying left in here to do is the long wet passage that heads from the start of the big stuff to, presumably, just downstream of the big collapse at the end of the big stuff. A bit more tidying up around the big collapse at the end may also be worth it. Another poke at both big boulder collapses may yield a bit more passage heading towards Mystery Creek or Little Grunt – who knows?

## **IB-14 Exit Cave – Eastern Passage : 11 February 2005**

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Tom Porritt, Arthur Clarke

With the final cessation of hostilities, I had spent the last week feverishly ‘beavering’ away at my computer until all hours inputting data that Arthur had supplied to further enhance the Ida Bay drainage plan. Every so often I would head back up to his place to show him the latest update and hypothesise on possible connections etc... We had moved from caving at its worst to caving at its truly best!

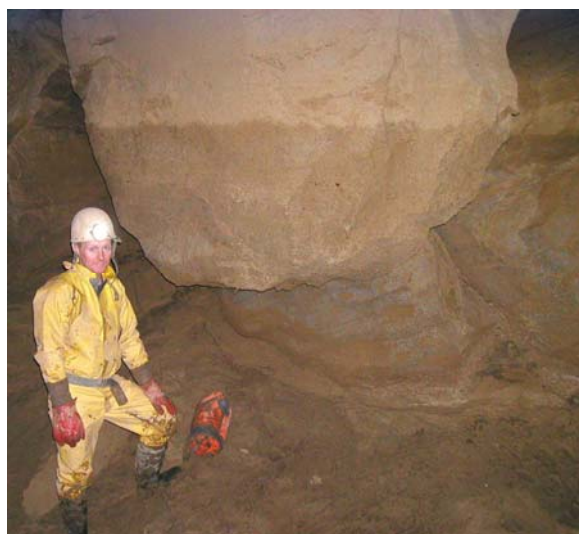
To surpass all things, today was the long awaited trip into the Eastern Passage with Arthur as a guide! I had had an initial stickybeak in the Eastern Passage during the conference, but the data Arthur had supplied had shown the place to be far more complicated than I had thought, with it effectively splitting into two separate systems. Some years ago, Arthur had found some extensions to the left side (believed to be the Little Grunt side), and there was great interest to return to it, survey it and see how far it was from Little Grunt.

Arthur was pretty amazed by the flood damage to Exit Cave, but not too impressed by the slapstick comedy of continually falling over due to the slippery surfaces. It was annoying and pretty tiring, but we battled our way on up the cave. Once on the far side of the boulder ruckle, he got to see the devastation of his fauna site, now mostly a land slip. From the tide mark it looked like most of the Hatwalk Passage had been completely under water.

Finally we made it into the Eastern Passage and the big collapse at the end. On my previous visit I had explored the passage off to the right, and missed the streamway from the left. With Arthur’s memory kicking in we found a way back to the stream and followed this upstream past some old pretties into breakdown. The route finding wasn’t too bad, and we finally got to “the squeeze”. Beyond this was new passage and Little Grunt beyond. A drop down from here lead to the “Little Grunt Streamway”. I decided to head through the squeeze first, rather than hit the streamway.

There was a bit of hesitancy to start but Arthur soon popped through. Bargain. A climb yielded the Woolly Jumper room after which good sand floored passage was followed for some way, which gradually reduced in size. The passage finally ended in a low flattener with a boulder ruckle, passable but would need a rock or two moved carefully for safety. We surveyed our

way on out. There were a number of side passages, mostly ending in collapses but some with potential. Surveying was the importance of today. It would be very interesting to see how this all shaped up on the survey. Progressively we surveyed back to the Woolly Jumper room and the squeeze.



Madphil and the ‘high tide’ mark in Exit Cave *Photo by Arthur Clarke*

With people still game for more, Tom and I headed down to have a look at the Little Grunt Streamway – a bit awkward, but not too bad. Arthur decided he would then come on down. Once committed it was a one way trip! After a lot of grunting etc..., Arthur finally made it through. A low short flattener soon broke out into the good stream passage of the “Little Grunt Streamway”. We surveyed upstream until we hit a boulder ruckle. With it being pretty late, we pulled the pin having still to tie this survey back in. Arthur had a bit of an effort getting back out, but the combination of Tom pushing and me pulling did the trick. We surveyed on out back to the last known disc and could finally pack surveying on the head. I was pleased as we had been at it a long time, it was already 1 am. We plodded on out with the troops pretty tired.

The walk out proved pretty gruelling, but the reflective markers along the track proved useful. We finally arrived back at Francistown at 5 am. A pretty good effort really. Surveyed a lot of passage and a pretty long day.

## Ida Bay Surface Work – Mystery Creek Area : 16 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

I wanted to do a tidy up day around the Midnight Hole area. Ric and Janine volunteered which was great. First off we headed into IB-28 Gollums Grovel, re-tagged it (as the previous one was buried) and tied it into the survey traverse. We pushed on up to Midnight Hole and IB-12 Crip Hole and surveyed along the contact to IB-122 and the big doline a bit further along. We still couldn't find IB-123. With a bit of protest, we headed along to the Southern Ranges track, set a traverse then surveyed it in, thus forming another survey loop. While heading across Ric had the good fortune of finding IB-45 Holocaust. Mega bargain! (It was way up the hill from where we had been looking previously) We also found another cave, believed to be the 'X' cave Coles Cave (tagged IB-198). With the survey complete,

we headed down the Southern Ranges track and finally located IB-201 Ventolin with help from VSA surface traverse data recently given to me by Arthur.

With Ric and Janine still game to do more, we surveyed up to IB-195 and then along to two other holes, a long rift (approx 6 m deep) not tagged and another hole (one Arthur and I thought initially was IB-45, approx. 10 m deep, un-descended). We tagged it IB-199. Just to cap off a really good day we headed down to another large pot close to the quarry edge and tagged this IB-200. Suggesting to survey this in to the network proved to be the final straw so we headed home.

A great productive day! Achieved virtually everything on the hit list, bar finding IB-13 (near IB-72 & IB-74) and surveying in IB-200. Next time!

## IB-14 Exit Cave – Eastern Passage II : 17 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Matt Cracknell

After our recent exploits in Eastern Passage, I was keen to head back into the 'Little Grunt Streamway' in the Eastern Passage and see what happened in the boulder ruckle. I was alarmed when we first got to the Exit entrance how high the water was, might not be going anywhere!! We decided to survey in from the tag for a while as this part didn't really tie in very well with the current data and may solve a few problems. We surveyed through the Wind Tunnel and found the water level well over the platforms. Still, we managed to negotiate our way along and tie into the Exit 2 tag.

Matt forged across the river and we continued on surveying until station 10 which was enough data to tie the loose ends in. We pushed on and debated at the next river crossing a while before 'Ah F\*\*\* it, it'll be

alright' and then found it was only knee deep anyway! We blitzed on up into the Eastern Passage and on to the 'Little Grunt Streamway' to the boulder ruckle. This had looked quite open and I was hopeful of an early breakthrough. Instead it turned out to be a nightmare place. Initial forays didn't yield much, but Matt pushed a good route over the top and back down to the water. I then returned the compliment and pushed some low boulder squeezes to a low 90° bend water squeeze to yield actual passage rather than boulder ruckle. The euphoria was short lived with the passage petering out after only 10 m or so; so back to boulder ruckle. The thought of poking more ruckle was not on the agenda, especially after playing 'Kurplunk' and surviving for three hours. With time against us we headed on out, having gained 50-100 m, but difficult to tell. Need to head back in here and survey what we found and then start round two!

## Ida Bay Surface Work – Valley Entrance and Thun Junction : 18 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon

Ric and Janine were up for another day in the bush so we agreed to head over to the Valley Entrance side of the hill as I had a list of tidy-up jobs to do over there. Headed back down to IB-19 and IB-121 and spent a while trying to find the tag for IB-121 without success. Definitely the right hole as it fits a recently found sketch map of the two caves to a 'T'. We may need to re-tag this. We pushed on up to the IB-20 Thun Junction area to look for a possible double tagging cave IB-16 (hinted at by a sketch map given to me recently by Arthur) and IB-29 Smelly Cave. Ric found IB-16

(confirming a double tagging), but we had no luck in finding IB-29 despite an extensive search. (Any ideas anyone??). We tied IB-16 into the traverse.

The next objective was to continue the traverse along the contact from IB-20 to IB-129 Great Expectations, again closing a good survey loop. Hopefully we would also pick up IB-128 Dismal Hill Pot. Traversing along the contact was a nightmare of fallen logs etc... and setting the traverse was even worse. We found the large hole of Dismal Hill Pot but no tag which was frustrating. With the traverse set we battled our way back and headed back a third time to survey it in. Everyone was pleased when we were at IB-129.

With a bit of time up our sleeve I suggested heading along to Halfway Hole and having a look for IB-138 and IB-139, reputedly near IB-136 Halfway Hole. There was a bit of protest, but finally on our way. We managed to get lost heading around, missed Garage Door and ended up following the contact again, before Ric amazingly knew where he was [*Stranger things have happened. Ed.*] - on the Halfway Hole track. Right on the money too! Winner. Had a quick 30 minutes trying to find these two caves with no success before heading out via the Halfway Hole track. Man, what a nightmare this track had become. Lots of fallen logs and combined with the steep up hill, then the around

the house route, not the best route to pick – sorry!! Everyone was quite relieved when we were marching down the Southern Ranges track. We made it back to the car for the 18:00 deadline so that I would be back in time to get my dad from the airport!

A pretty frustrating day really. A lot of hard work for not that much crossed off. We couldn't find IB-121 and IB-128 tags and couldn't find IB-29, IB-138 or IB-139 at all. Still, we had pushed the traverse across and confirmed the double tagging. I suggest that the IB-16 West of Blaneys Quarry tag is changed as the IB-16 near IB-20 is in the same area as IB-17, IB-18 and IB-19.

## IB-120 Valley Entrance and Halfway Hole Surface Work : 24 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Tom Porritt

Tom was around for another long survey session in Exit Cave. We would head over to IB-120 Valley Entrance this time, head in and survey from the base of IB-190 and tie it into the Exit Theodolite Traverse. If we had time we might survey into the Eastern Grand Fissure so we might hopefully be able to tie in the Conference Concourse survey.

The day started well with an early start, but took a sharp turn for the worst when we reached Valley Entrance. The recent flood had scoured out the streamway pretty well, then we dropped down to the gate -what gate? I hadn't been there for two years, but remembered it was a no brainer, the gate was at the bottom of the climb down. We spent a while rooting around just to make sure; but no gate. It looked like it was buried in a mountain of forest matter and large rocks. We spent an hour or so digging debris out of the way without much progress. Finally we decided to knock it on the head as we really couldn't tell whether it was just fill or if there had been a collapse. A real downer on the day!

Tried poking to the left of the entrance and made it down into a pretty dodgy boulder ruckle. Spent a while in here before serious movement required a hasty retreat and a calm down! Buggar, that blows plans for the day. We decided to head on over to the IB-136 Halfway Hole area and have another look for IB-138 and IB-139. The route over had deteriorated quite a bit, and I was glad when we were at Halfway Hole. We spent an hour or so wandering around the area before Tom came up trumps with IB-139. More searching for IB-138 proved fruitless, and only served to disorient us, requiring another 30 minutes or so to re-find IB-139 again. Not impressed!! Getting a bit tired of trying to locate all these caves!!! Finally got the thing surveyed in and headed on along the contact to IB-8 Mini Martin. I would have liked to locate a few more tagged entrances here, but both of us had had enough for the day so we headed on back to the car.

A frustrating day, a big problem with Valley Entrance being blocked, resulting in a day lost in Exit surveying. The surface fill in day proved further frustrating, only finding one (IB-139) of the two missing caves in the Halfway hole area (IB-138 still to find), and proving so time consuming and tiring it zapped the will to do any tidying up around the Mini Martin area.

## IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave : 25 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, E.T. Rowsell

I decided to take my dad (now 76 years) for a quick look at the glow worms in Mystery Creek. Ironically this is the first time we had been caving together. We

headed down to the Broken Column Chamber in a landscape somewhat denuded of glow worms after the recent flood. Most disappointing, as it didn't really live up to the stories I had told him. Still, a great morning out.

## IB-11 Exit Cave – Eastern Grand Fissure : 26 February 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Kylie McKinnes, Kat Martin, Kate Whyte, Sven Howorth

A group of four mainlanders were over, so I agreed to take them into Exit Cave on the condition we did at

least four hours surveying! I wanted to at least make a start on the Eastern Grand Fissure. I took in a couple of home made wooden tripods to facilitate the surveying through the taped-off section. We headed straight up to the Eastern Grand Fissure and surveyed with Kylie

along the path while the others looked at the pretties. Once out the other side, we continued to survey along the muddy passage until we came to the metal tag 58 which was the tie in point to the Conference Concourse

survey. The troops had had enough surveying and they didn't want a late one so we called it a day. Headed out via a quick excursion to the Ballroom as a pay back. Nice day.

## Hx-4 Erebus : 28 February 2005

Matt Cracknell

**Party:** Matt Cracknell, Kat Martin, Kate Whyte, Kylie McKinnes, Sven Howorth

Four mainlanders from MUMC got cheap flights to Tasmania to do some caving. I was able to wag school on the Monday so I offered to lead them around. Erebus seemed to be a reasonable idea, everybody had some SRT skills and were keen for something a little different. The walk from the Hastings Cave car park took about 45 min., following the many different coloured tapes, some of which go places and many of which don't. I commenced rigging the first pitch with a tie back on a natural high in the rift then down to a double anchored rebelay just above a dodgy log that had jammed itself across the gap, it wasn't moving too much. The first decent is about 25 m with beautifully sculpted white dolomite walls. A redirect could be possible to avoid the walls but they are very smooth and not too nasty. This drops onto a ledge full of cobbles that leads to the next 8 m pitch. I used the

bottom of our 60 m rope rigged with a tie back on the only boulder on the floor that wasn't moving, then a rebelay off a large natural nubbin at the pitch head. So far so good, we de-gearred and went for an explore - things now start to get interesting. Some way down the rift passage there is a short 5 m climb at an area named The Shower. I made it down with my long legs followed by Kylie who promptly fell and luckily landed on soft clay deposits! We turned around, keen not to tempt the Karst Gods anymore, one by one making it safely to the surface.

I didn't get to see the unexplored climb that I been keen to have a look at, next time I will take a hand line. This is not a difficult cave but the slippery mud and crumbly rock do make it exciting. I also saw some bugs, *Idacarabus* beetle and an *Amouroboid* spider on the cobbled floors at the base of the vertical section, we spent three hours underground.

## JF-344 Serendipity : 5 March 2005

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson

I had read (with some jealousy) about exploits in Serendipity in the *Spiel* while in the UK and I was sad when I learnt the cave had been de-rigged, as this would probably be a missed opportunity. I was surprised and delighted when Alan suggested doing a long trip into Serendipity to look at Enigma Well. Gavin um'ed and arr'ed about whether to come, but decided to wimp out in the end (he wouldn't be back for tea!). It was to be back to good old Rocket Rods days. Alan and I hadn't done a long decent trip together since I had arrived this time.

Serendipity was completely new territory for me; I hadn't even been to the entrance, so I played follow-the-leader. With Alan's knowledge of the cave, progress through the cave was forward, not losing any time to route finding. I did get the pleasure of doing most of the rigging which was fun. They are a great series of pitches (only four and all relatively short) but requiring some delicate rigging in places. Finally you drop down into Serpentine Rift.

This place was very reminiscent of Austria, the pitches and now long narrow meanders. Thankfully they had a floor, and we had no drill and batteries and only one

tackle sack each. We pushed on up the serpentine passage to Serendipity Chamber and finally pushed into new territory for both of us. Route finding was pretty easy and finally we located the Enigma Well. We decided to dump gear and go and have a look at the final chamber "The Great Big Room". It was obviously big in size, but truncated by various boulder chokes. It would have been nice to have a really good poke around as there has only been a limited number of trips in here and the approach passage had a good draft. Due to time constraints, however, we only had a cursory look around before heading back to Enigma Well. Alan headed down first and shouted up the news that someone had already been down here! We had wrongly believed that this was un-descended. Still I headed down for a look, and viewed the muddy end to the very limited passage. Mission accomplished, switch to auto pilot and battle out.

We derigged and were back on the surface some 11.5 hours from the start. A classic trip, hard work for just two, but it certainly doesn't deserve its reputation. Great pitches (requiring some careful rigging), followed by a superb narrow meander system. I must have another trip for a proper look around. If you get a kick out of this place, you'd love Austria!



## JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot – It's Raining Men: 6 March 2005

Hayley Shields

**Party:** Yoav Barness, Matt Cracknell, Joe Farrell, Hayley Shields

My ovies [*Cave slang for 'overalls' – I don't know, the youth of today! Ed.*] were the best 'cos they were bright fluro green while Matt's were faded red, and my reflector stripes were bigger than Yoav's.

It was meant to be shit weather for the weekend, but it wasn't bad 'cept for a bit of wind and heavy constant rain in Hobart on Saturday. We took gear to rig something else if the water was looking dodgy, but decided at the swallet to go in. The water was covering the spoon rock but tide marks on the walls indicated subsiding flow. It was still going to be a wet trip. We dived into Slaughterhouse 'bout 1-ish.

I liked the wriggly bit to start, then the three pitches. I had to feed through on my four bar rack.

On the second pitch Matt dislodged a golf ball [*what a strange object to find in a cave. Ed.*] onto Yoav's shoulder as he was abseiling. Not sure if this was an accident as they kept bitching for the rest of the trip. Some faffing around to find some white wabbit down some bunny hole at the top of a rock pile. Last pitch had nice walls.

We set up a belay for the first ladder at the streamway, then canned the idea for the others.

No wind at Windy Rift, but a very low droney beat in the air column, sort of like goblin drums or a train – pretty freaky. The others were stuffing around with bags and whatnot. I climbed in last – didn't look very inviting with quite a tight chimney above an abyss.

Got to the streamway – loud and a bit intimidating. Pretty cool. We only got wet up to our knees – warm fuzzy feeling.

We took a wrong passage somewhere and ended up in Yorkshire Drains. Here there was a short climb-up thing that looked good and knobby, but was slimy and crap. We used Matt's trusty 25 m, 9 mm rope for a handline. Used it again for a waterfall climb – first in the *dry* bypass - which made sure we were fully soggy.

A wall of about four metres became another climb (last climb in the dry bypass). Matt was traversing at the top of the right hand side on a ledgy lookin' bit and Yoav, the left side, up a vertical crack. Joe was conscientiously spotting Matt. Matt fell back and got grabbed by Joe – nice catch. Then, a matter of seconds

later Yoav peeled off near the top and also landed on Joe before hitting the ground right on the edge of the previous climb. It was raining men down here. They kept falling into a large puddle at base of the wall. So Joe'd just saved two people from nasty broken limbs – what a f\*\*\*\*\*g hero, certainly deserves a whole sentence to commemorate the feat. Anyway, bit bloody freaky, made me feel reeaally good about climbing this section which didn't actually look bad. Matt stopped stuffing around and went up without the bag on his back and rigged a handline.



Serena Benjamin crawling in a particularly pleasant section of Growling Swallet [*Yes, this photo is not from this trip, but it's a long story, so if you really want to know it then ask me one day. Ed.*] Photo by Matt Cracknell

Then we were pretty much near the entrance, so the falls weren't too far in. The swallet looked great from the inside, so I lingered a bit in admiration.

We got out at about 7-ish with the water level still as we had left it.

Back to car for cuppas and National Park Pub for beers, as Joe had to collect his hero's portion. I reckon the trip was pretty awesome. Went to bed still smelling cavey. Nice.

## **IB-14 Exit Cave – Conference Concourse : 10 March 2005**

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Tom Porritt

Another chance for a long survey job in Exit Cave. As the original Conference Concourse survey was done only using a compass (clino estimated!!) I thought it worthwhile redoing this, as it may help to tie in some of the caves west of Blaneys Quarry better. Headed in early and did some tidying up of a few bits at the end of the Eastern Grand Fissure. Pushed on to the metal tag 58 and started surveying again. It was an interesting place. A lot of breakdown chambers before finally

breaking out in to nice fossil stream passage. Finally at the end a drop down lead to the streamway for the return loop back to the Eastern Grand Fissure junction. It was pretty late now and we had been surveying for 11 hours. We decided to survey upstream, and then bail as we had both had enough. We finally rolled back to Francistown at 03:00.

Good trip, achieved a lot which was good, but surprising how much more there is to do up there!

## **Ida Bay Surface Work – Old Tramway II : 11 March 2005**

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Tom Porritt

After our long trip yesterday, we needed an easy day. We decided to close the two tramway traverses. The first one from IB-109 and IB-110 Arthurs Folly to IB-111 Tram Stop was surprisingly easy, in open forest up the hill and only a short way along the track. It didn't take too long. The second, closing the loop back to the quarry, proved to be more of an effort. It was only about 600 m, but the track was festooned with cutting grass (especially near the quarry) which made progress particularly arduous. After four hours of bashing we finally tied the traverse back to the gate.

The data was a bit of a mixture, the loop from the quarry to Loons via the road and back along the tramway closed well, but the loop from Loons, Arthurs Folly, Tram Stop and back to Loons, had a 15 m closure error, which I feel is too much. Double readings were taken, and no obvious errors can be found in the book. Rather annoying as this is the first loop that has not closed to reasonable accuracy and typically just when I am leaving again for six months! Will have to sort this out when I am back.

## **JF-345 Ice Tube : 12 March 2005**

Alan Jackson

**Party:** Alan Jackson, Madphil Rowsell, Gavin Brett, Matt Cracknell

There were more chains, maillons and rings to install in Ice Tube to fine tune the pull-through system, so a semi tourist trip was organised. We took a bit of extra rope so we could have more than one pitch on the go at a time and because Phil wasn't confident the rope would pull through on the last pitches (with the extra rope we could still get down the last three pitches if the third last snagged). In the end all the ropes pulled down smoothly.

The trip was mostly uneventful. I was a little vague all day and forgot to really look around and appreciate the cave (which was evident when I tried to fall down the

second part of the Fabulous Spangly Pitch, but was thwarted by my cowstail). The Fallopian Tube mostly lived up to expectations, but the nasty bit was shorter than I expected.

Gavin had the sniffles and wasn't feeling 100%, and he was starting to whinge incessantly (this is usually my job) half way through Mothers Passage. His sudden lack of arm strength provided me with the opportunity to be a hero, and I carried his pack up most of the ladder climbs on the way out (all back patting for this noble deed will be warmly received). Other than Gavin's lameness, the only noteworthy events were the failure of my immensely robust plastic buckle on my cave pack strap and the progressive disintegration of Matt's head torch (time for a new system, mate).

## **IB-14 Exit Cave – Conference Concourse II : 14 March 2005**

Madphil Rowsell

**Party:** Madphil Rowsell, Matt Cracknell

I squeezed in a last trip before heading back to the UK. I wanted to head back into Conference Concourse and continue surveying. We stomped on up to Conference Concourse and tidied up a few side passages on the up leg that Tom and I had left last time. Once at the top of

Conference Concourse we started surveying the down leg. Again, an interesting place with a number of side passages. We managed to survey about half of this before time got the better of us and we had to call it quits. Frustrating as it would have been good to have finished the whole of this passage.

## JF-268 Pooshooter – The Last Hoorah : 9 April 2005

Alan Jackson

**Party:** Matt Cracknell, Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson

We were determined to either crack the 200 m pitch or bang the last nail into the coffin on this trip. We succeeded.

We headed back to the rock fall excavation site that Phil and I had squeezed through last time and spent half an hour with a lump hammer and cold chisels encouraging the offending rock to drop through. The vertical ‘helmets off’ squeeze is now a gentle climb down with a boulder to use as a step at the bottom. The others hardly liked the blind climb out into the new chambers but were happy with the three options heading down. The second of the two rooms was named ‘Bigfoot’ due to the presence of a large marsupial foot skeleton on the floor (something predominately bipedal and bouncy I would suggest). We took our pick of the three ways on and Gavin rigged off into the distance, singing all the way.

This pitch opened up after a rebelay about 8 m down and terminated a further 15 m or so down in a rock pile.

I was last down and was told to check the tunnel that headed off to the side about 6 m off the floor. I swung over and found foot prints. It turns out that this is the spot we got to after the bolt traverse Phil installed. It all became clear and we headed back up. I had a suspicion that the two other leads in the chambers above joined in with this one, so I hung about on the pitch while Gavin threw some rocks down holes. Our suspicions were confirmed and we headed out of Pooshooter for the last time, derigging as we went. We couldn’t survey the new bits as no pen or pencil could be found!

Since its discovery in October 2004, Pooshooter has driven us insane with its abounding leads and interconnecting passages. Only one lead remains – the dig into the top of what promises to be a very big pitch. This has Phil’s name written all over it, but even he might label this one as too hard.

Thanks Pooshooter, we’ve had some good times...

## IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave : 16 April 2005

Claire Brett

**Party:** Claire Brett, Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson, Heather Nichols, Amy Ware

The “bus” departed Hobart at 8 am stopping all stations, with Gavin at the wheel. Amy’s dog, Oscar, entertained us by barking and catching drips of water in his mouth from the gutters (definitely Funniest Home Videos material). We arrived at the carpark, with no other cars around. It was about 11:10 am when we reached the cave entrance. Gavin and Alan were quite a sight in their matching yellow caving suits.

We made a beeline for the much anticipated new bits of the cave. The crawl certainly lived up to its reputation. After squeezing through the slot, we found ourselves at the base of a climb, with a pretty waterfall, drip, drip, drip. The boys climbed the fixed rope and set up a ladder and we climbed up the few metres. Hello Mr Troll! We then continued climbing up through the boulders, taking care not to dislodge rocks. We popped up into a lovely chamber with lots of crystal (nicknamed Bohemia Room). We continued to another massive chamber, Expletive Hall, and had lunch. It was hard to take it all in. Heather did some light maintenance.



Alan Jackson emerging from the slimy slot at the end of Plague and Pestilence. What a grotty poo hole *Photo by Amy Ware*



We then continued up further, with Alan freaking out about the hole in my glove and muddy thumb. We again used a ladder to climb up further and reached the base of the so-called Nut Burn pitch. We also gazed up at the unexplored hole high up in the chamber. After pulling down the rope, we returned back. On the way out we also had a look at a lovely display – a mini village made from stals. Spectacular!



Helictites in the Mystery Creek Cave extension *Photo by Amy Ware*

We climbed back down the boulder field. Alan gave me some tips on staying clean, e.g. how he keeps a small part of the back of his glove clean so that he can wipe his forehead. We reached back down to the pretty waterfall and pulled down the rope.

I was feeling buggered at this stage and keen to see the light of day. Just the crawl to go, I reassured myself. I twisted and turned to the sound of Gavin and Alan repeating every French word they knew (Mitterand, baguette, un, deux, trois... vingt-deux etc...) Quite entertaining, and kept my mind off my bruised knees (sort of).

We exited the cave around 4:30 pm. On the way home, we bought some delicious chips from Wombat at Dover. Definitely recommended!

All up, despite the many bruises, it was an amazing experience. Thanks to Alan and Gavin for sharing their find.

### Ida Bay Surface Work : 21 April 2005

Ric Tunney

**Party:** Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Surveyed 75 m from IB-200 to IB-201.

Renewed tag on IB-201. The old tag had been held by one rusty nail pushed into a crack.

#### **Re-numbering of IB-16.**

There are two caves tagged IB-16. One is on the S.W. side of Marble Hill near IB-17. The other is on the N.W. side of Marble Hill, 60 m W down the hill from

IB-30. Madphil had found an old IB-16 map which represented the S.W. cave, so it was decided the N.W. cave should be re-numbered. Also it is easier to get to. The tag is on a large rock in the middle of a depression about 10 m wide. The actual cave entrance is 5 m away from the tag, in the wall of the depression. The new number is IB-226. As the tag location appears on several surveys, it was decided not to move the tag location to the cave entrance, so the new tag was placed above the old tag and the old tag was left in situ.

### Ida Bay Surface Work : 22 April 2005

Ric Tunney

**Party:** Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Surveyed 800 m from the first sink of the D'Entrecasteaux River to the Exit Track and tagged six entrances.

#### **IB-227 D'Entrecasteaux River First Sink.**

The tag is on the surface above the entrance on the true left of the river.

#### **IB-228 D'Entrecasteaux River First Resurgence.**

The tag is on the surface above the entrance on the true left of the river.

#### **IB-229 D'Entrecasteaux River Second Sink.**

The tag is on the wall on the true left of the river, a few metres upstream of the entrance.

#### **IB-230 D'Entrecasteaux Fossil Cave.**

Was IB-X19. Tag is on wall outside cave, to right of entrance looking in.

#### **IB-231 D'Entrecasteaux River Second Resurgence.**

The tag is on the wall on the true left of the river, a few metres downstream of the entrance.

#### **IB-232 D'Entrecasteaux River Third Sink.**

The tag is on the wall on the true left of the river, a few metres above the actual sink.



## JF-338 Lost Pot : 25 April 2005

Amy Ware

**Party:** Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson, Amy Ware

In search of a short day's caving, Gavin, Alan and I headed off for the Florentine. Gavin wanted to be back in time for some gardening, and I was keen to extend my vertical experience on a pitch only a little longer than my previous best of 28 m.

But the research ended up leading us to Lost Pot, past the entrance to Frost Pot where we picked up the chest harness Gavin had accidentally left behind many months ago. Way up the top of a steady climb, the entrance was a declining rift that led down, down over two short pitches to the head of pitch 3.

Looking down into the 70 m abyss we tied our rope back to pitch 2, because the 75 m rope seemed a little smaller than we'd expected and we didn't want Alan to run out on his way down. With an excellent column as the main anchor, Alan was soon past the knot crossing and a bomb-proof rebelay about 7 m down into a nicely placed hang just off the wall. Then came the call..."Need more rope". Gavin duly down-prussiked past the knot to send down our 15 m backup rope, but when it stuck a few metres below the rebelay, he was forced to head down further to dislodge it. Alan and Gavin finally made it to the floor of the pitch and it was my turn to descend past the two knot crossings and rebelay, on a 70 m pitch that had consumed 4 m of our pitch 2 rope as well as our 75 m and 15 m ropes... would I ever make it back up again?

Below pitch 3 was another shorty and then a terminal rockfall, with a pretty lake stuck off to the side just above it. It felt like it should go, but Gavin and Alan

had a good play while I got a head start back up, and didn't find anything.

Up pitch 4 and a lucky discovery as the end of the rope on 3 was hanging at eye-level, it had shrunk up about 5 feet during our exploring. Leaving my tiny pack for Alan to bring up, I used the psychological boost to keep moving and made it with only two short breaks to shake the blood back into my arms. It still took me a while, but at least Gavin didn't have to wait too long. The boys did have a scare though when they found the end of the rope hanging out of reach, and I hadn't even hooked it up at the rebelay! After some minor acrobatics to boost up and grab its tail, up came Gavin and then Alan.

Returning towards the entrance through spacious scrambling and serpentine passage, we de-rigged pitches 2 and 1, removing the bolt plate and chock we'd used to back up passage boulders as rigging points. We exited in dwindling light and made it back to the car just on dark. Gavin's slips and trips got him more grotty outside the cave than in it, but overall we got out of it with reasonably clean gear. And we made it just in time to get a quick sugar/fat fix from the Maydena shop.

It is worth also noting that in honour of Anzac Day, BOTH verses of the Australian National Anthem were sung from various points on the acoustically brilliant third pitch.

It should also be noted that rope numbered B75 is not 75 m long and therefore not long enough for a 70 m pitch!

## 2005 Annual General Meeting – Office Bearer's Reports

### **President – Gavin Brett**

I have been running a policy of "nothing to report", which has been mostly successful, but my Vice President has outdone me with his report, so I guess I'd better report something.

I have enjoyed being President and have found the major task is running the meetings. From my limited experience I think it has been a big year for the club with the ASF Conference, Riveaux and an influx of new members. I think the conference went well and would like to thank Bunty, Arthur and Steve for making it happen, I only got along to the ASF meetings, the art show and a few post-conference trips, but there were lots of happy people milling around. The Treasurer was very happy as the club got quite a bit of

money from trip fees and I believe more money will come from ASF in the fullness of time.

I found the Riveaux project really interesting and managed to do more hours there than anyone else; apart from Rolan of course. None of the caves we found were particularly exciting, but they are in a lovely area of forest, and one of the caves had a particularly nice entrance. It is worth noting that in a few places the cave was considered too fragile to enter, so sections were roped off with out anyone entering. The project was also interesting due to the interaction of the various groups of people who were all generally interested in managing this area in a responsible way. Of course there is some unfinished business down there, namely Clear Water Creek and Red Rag Scarp; there is just too much to do!

I have had a good year of caving with some very interesting finds, two particularly unusual ones being Tassy Pot and Mystery Creek, as they are so heavily visited. Tassy Pot was great fun, particularly when we did the exchange trip. The Mystery Creek find caused all sorts of excitement with potential connections to Exit, but they have not eventuated as yet. I hope to run the tourist trip in there and pull the access rope down in the next few weeks.

The other newish area is Smorgasbord, which is up above the western end of Cripps Road. This has so many strongly draughting caves Alan wanted to rename it Windy Hill! We have been into several holes so far but have not cracked a big one yet.

I'm happy to run for president again, but more than happy for someone else to have a go.

### **Vice President – Dave Rasch**

“ “ [Another champion effort from our Vice President – however, the report is a surprisingly accurate reflection of his efforts for the year, although he has failed to acknowledge that he chaired one meeting in the President's absence.. Ed.]

### **Secretary – Alan Jackson**

Hugh Fitzgerald started the year admirably as Secretary, but due to family commitments he bailed out at the September? meeting and I was fortunate enough to volunteer to fill in for him till the AGM.

Basically, I took and circulated the minutes from business meetings (except when Bunty and Claire filled in for me), I checked the mail box and opened lots of letters, and I applied for the odd permit or two for people. I even remembered to send an email round to advise of future meetings.

A list of all the correspondence in and out for the year is available should anyone wish to peruse it.

Not such a tough job really, and you get to read all the journals before they disappear into the bowels of the library!

### **Treasurer – Claire Brett**

#### **Introduction**

I would like to acknowledge Steve Phipps as our previous Treasurer. Although I was a little daunted becoming Treasurer in March 2004, my job has been

made so much easier due to the framework and structure put in place by Steve.

#### **Summary of 2004**

In 2004, the surplus was \$508.33 compared to \$265.92 in the previous year.

Revenue from gear hire increased from \$526 in 2003 to \$783 in 2004. This increase was in part due to the donation of lights and helmets from Jeff Butt, who sadly passed away in 2004. **Given the increase in revenue from gear hire, I propose that the gear hire costs remain unchanged.**

The amount to be raised from subscription fees has reduced slightly this year (\$495.50) compared to \$683 in 2004. This is partly due to income from caving trips held during the Cavemania conference in January. **The proposed subscription fees are the same as last year however an early bird discount of \$10 is proposed for members in addition to a discount of \$15 for receiving the *Speleo Spiel* electronically** (see Table 6).

#### **Speleo Spiel**

As at 31 December 2004, there were 49 hard copies of the *Speleo Spiel* printed. These include:

- 12 paying members and armchair cavers;
- 4 paying subscribers;
- 7 life members provided for free;
- 6 friends of STC provided for free;
- 19 donations provided for free; and
- 1 for the STC library.

The costs for producing the *Speleo Spiel* have decreased slightly this year. Thanks to Alan for finding ways to reduce costs and for securing support from the Xerox Shop. The production cost is approximately \$15 per year per person (6 issues). **I propose to keep the *Speleo Spiel* subscription rate for non members unchanged at \$25.**

#### **Membership**

Table 1 indicates that our membership appears to be increasing. There are now 46 members, compared to 41 members in 2003. This is a promising sign! A new category “Armchair Caver” was introduced this year. This caters for those people who are less inclined to go caving but would still like to be involved in the social side of the club. Thanks to Robyn Clare and Geoff Crossley for taking up this option. There were an additional five prospective members who did not renew their membership.

**Table 1: Number of members, friends and armchair cavers**

Number of members	30 Sep 2001	31 Dec 2002	31 Dec 2003	31 Dec 2004
Household/Full/Student	33	29	30	35
Prospective	6	1	1	2
Life	22	13	10	9
<b>Total membership</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>
Friends of STC	-	8	11	11
Armchair cavers	-	-	-	2
<b>Total association</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>59</b>

***Estimated income and expenditure - General Account***

Table 2 summarises estimated income for 2005, excluding membership fees.

**Table 2: STC Income**

	2003 actual	2004 actual	2005 estimated
<i>Speleo Spiel</i> subscriptions	\$125.00	\$100.00	\$75.00
Internal gear hire	\$526.00 (inc external hire)	\$325.00	\$300.00
External gear hire	\$0.00	\$458.00	\$450.00
Gear sales	\$156.00	\$104.00	\$100.00
Trip fees	\$339.00	\$253.00	\$275.00
Donations	\$248.30	\$285.00	\$100.00
Interest (bank & cash mgt trust)	\$208.57	\$250.94	\$250.00
Sale of surplus items	\$31.50	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sundries	\$0.00	\$168.05	\$0.00
Trip fees & hut fees Conference			\$900.00
Total		\$1,943.99	\$2,450.00

Table 3 summarises the estimated expenditure, excluding ASF fees, for 2005. It is noted that funding may be needed to host our website and this is included in the “other” category. Also four hundred of the seven hundred dollars budgeted for gear purchases has been spent on 200 metres of rope.

**Table 3: STC Expenditure**

	2003 actual	2004 actual	2005 estimated
Supplying <i>Speleo Spiel</i> to life members, Friends of STC, subscribers and exchanges	\$727.83	\$646.31	\$650.00
Stationery	\$29.85	\$3.35	\$15.00

	<b>2003 actual</b>	<b>2004 actual</b>	<b>2005 estimated</b>
ASF fees for inactive life members	\$138.00	\$138.00	\$138.00
Gear purchases	\$116.62	\$662.72	\$700.00
Bank charges	\$11.00	\$51.90	\$20.00
Equipment Officer Honorarium	\$281.40	\$157.80	\$209.70
Audit fee	\$40.00	\$44.00	\$100.00
Fee for lodging annual return	\$43.20	\$44.40	\$44.40
PO Box rental	\$95.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
ACKMA membership	\$45.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Insurance for gear store	\$31.88	\$0.00	\$0.00
Publication purchases	\$0.00	\$47.28	\$100.00
Hut Fees at conference			\$250.00
Transfer to Science Account		\$323.49	\$201.40
Other	\$0.00	\$318.90	\$100.00
Sub-total			\$2,678.50
Add 10% contingency			\$267.00
Total			\$2,945.50

#### ***Subscription Fees for 2005***

Subscription fees for 2005 are proposed on the basis that the General Account should break even. ASF has confirmed that their membership fees will not increase in 2005, although a potential increase in 2006 (around 5%) has been foreshadowed.

#### ***Amount to be raised via subscriptions***

The net amount which needs to be raised via subscriptions is the difference between the expenditure and income (\$2945.50 - \$2450 = \$495.50). In order to divide this cost amongst the membership, each member is charged a multiple of the base fee (see Table 4). Based on the actual number of people within each category, a weighted average is obtained.

**Table 4: Weighted average number of members**

<b>Membership category</b>	<b>Multiple</b>	<b>Number</b>
Household	1.5	4
Full	1.0	19 4 ASF exempt
Student/Junior	0.5	4
Prospective	0.25	7
Weighted average		32.75



The net amount to be raised by subscriptions (\$495.50) is divided by the weighted average (32.75) to give the base fee which is \$15.13, say \$15.

*Required subscription fees*

The base fee for each category in Table 5 is calculated by multiplying the base fee (\$15) by the multiple in

Table 4. The cost of supplying hard copies of the *Speleo Spiel* (\$15) is added to the base fee. ASF fees are then added. The final column indicates the minimum fees in order to make up the anticipated shortfall between expenditure and income of the General Account.

**Table 5: Minimum subscription fees**

Membership category	Base fee	<i>Speleo Spiel</i>	Subtotal	ASF Fees	Total
Household	22.50	15.00	37.50	121.50	159.00
Full	15.00	15.00	30.00	68.00	98.00
Student/Junior	7.50	15.00	22.50	61.00	83.50
Prospective	3.75	5.00	8.75	20.00	28.75
Active life members	-	-	-	68.00	68.00

*Proposed subscription fees*

I would like to recommend a couple of changes to the membership fees and structure.

Firstly I would like to expand the current incentive for early payment, in order to reduce the administration time involved when receiving fees in dribs and drabs and following up on overdue subscriptions. I would like to include a \$10 discount for prompt payment (“early bird”) to all categories (except prospective members since there is no due date for this category). I would like to retain a discount of \$15 for members receiving electronic copies of the *Speleo Spiel*. I propose that in order to be eligible for the early bird rate, payment must be received on or before 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005 (date of general meeting). This gives members a two month grace period for payment. I hope that the majority of members will benefit from this extra discount.

I also propose that ASF-exempt members and armchair cavers be offered electronic copies of the Spiel (at a discounted rate). This will mean a more consistent pricing structure across the different membership categories and may save paper and reduce the editor's workload.

Table 6 summarises the proposed subscription fees. If every member paid the early bird rate, then the income would be above the minimum amount in Table 5 for all categories except the student/junior category. This should be cancelled out by the slighter higher than minimum rates for the other categories and the income from armchair cavers which was not included in the calculations (since there are only 2 armchair cavers at the moment).

**Table 6: Recommended subscription fees**

Membership category	2004 actual		2005 proposed	
	Full rate	Discounted	Full rate	E Spiel
Household	175	160	175 165 (early bird)	160 150 (early bird)
Full	110	95	110 100 (early bird)	95 85 (early bird)
Student/Junior	90	75	90 80 (early bird)	75 65 (early bird)
ASF-exempt full	40	N/a	40 30 (early bird)	25 15 (early bird)

	2004 actual		2005 proposed	
Armchair Caver	40	N/a	40 30 (early bird)	25 15 (early bird)
Prospective	30		30	
ASF-exempt Prospective	10		10	
Active life members	68		68	

#### Notes

- Prospective members automatically receive a paper copy of the *Speleo Spiel*.
- New members who join during the year will pay the pro-rata rate based on the early bird rate

The proposed subscription fees can be expressed more simply...

Household	\$150
Full	\$85
ASF-exempt Full	\$15
Student/junior	\$65
Prospective	\$30
ASF-exempt prospective	\$10
Active life members	\$68
Armchair caver	\$15
If paying after 1 <sup>st</sup> June, please add:	\$10
For hard copies of the <i>Speleo Spiel</i> , please add:	\$15

#### Social Secretary – Steve Phipps

After endlessly commenting during my time as Treasurer that STC needed to be more "fun" if it was going to attract and retain members, I'd really dumped myself in it as far as becoming Social Secretary was concerned! As it happened, organising social events turned out to be a very pleasant change from the more mundane task of organising the club's finances.

During the course of the year, the following social events took place - many of them even involving caving!

Hobart Rivulet trip	10 March 2004
Midwinter Extravaganza	19-20 June 2004
Florentine Frenzy	21-22 August 2004
Mole Creek Madness	21-24 October 2004
Christmas BBQ	15 December 2004
CaveMania Celebratory BBQ	16 February 2005

All of these were enormously enjoyable events, and I'd like to thank everyone who helped to make them possible. There are too many people to list all of them here, but I'd particularly like to thank Arthur and Robyn for exhibiting hospitality above and beyond the call of duty in hosting the Midwinter Extravaganza, and Gavin and Claire for hosting the Christmas BBQ.

I've also tried to make the regular Wednesday evening social meetings just that - social events where people

feel that they can just drop by for a chat, a beer and maybe even some cards, without anything more demanding taking place. However, these meetings have generally been poorly attended, and I wonder if they could do with a bit of a re-think, or if the Republic Bar is a suitable venue.

I'm probably leaving Tasmania before the end of the year, so I won't be standing for re-election. Social Secretary is a fun, easy and worthwhile job, so I'm sure that someone else will be happy to give it a go!

#### Editor – Alan Jackson

My first year as Editor has passed smoothly and enjoyably.

I produced issues 340 to 345, and am currently working on the compilation of 346.

Thanks to all those who contributed stuff for the Spiel over the year and to all those who have complimented my editorship (I really appreciate the feedback, especially positive stuff!). Thanks to Claire Brett for supplying me with distribution lists promptly, Gavin Brett for providing most of the cover photos and Geoff Wise for getting me started.

I hope you've all enjoyed the reading and are happy for me to have another go at it for the next twelve months, unless someone else is desperately hanging out to have a go...

## **Librarian – Greg Middleton**

It has been another quiet year in the library [aren't libraries supposed to be quiet?]. Newsletters and journals are accessioned as they are received; the number of these received has continued to drop, not helped by Speleo Spiel being sent to a reduced mailing list since going 'on-line'. I try to balance this by downloading those publications that I can but there are not a lot offering this free (except in NZ) which are of long-term worth.

In 2004 I accessioned 191 new journals (142 2003-04), bringing our holding to 3957; and 62 new books/monographs/CDs (6 2003-04), bringing our holding to 247. Many of these were donated from the library of Jeff Butt and by Warwick Counsell (ex-UNSWSS). I have continued to build up the binders containing reprints and photocopies by adding 288 cave-related papers and magazine articles (216 2003-04) to now total 504. These are catalogued in a database. I estimate I have over 200 to add.

These holdings are shelved on around 42 m of shelf space (up from 25 in 2003-04); of this STC owns 15.4 m. I have discarded an old wooden cupboard (after offering it to members) and added a desk (donated by Ric Tunney).

The club now has a near complete set of all publications from TCC, SCS and TCKRG. It also has a large holding of other Australian and overseas newsletters and journals, including NSS Bulletins back to 1943 (incomplete). Lists of our holdings are available; members are welcome to borrow at no charge. Anyone who can contribute copies of journals that we are missing is very welcome to do so. The journals list also indicates duplicates of the Spiel and some other Australian newsletters which are available at negotiable prices.

The archives of the three constituent clubs are held in the library, in boxes. While I have started a database, these have not been catalogued or shelved. There was some interest in this material during the year from Arthur Clarke and Stephen Blanden (of SRCC).

On 1 September 2004 the Club approved my proposal to produce a digital version of Southern Caver incorporating unpublished TCC material from 1960s. I have started scanning this material.

## **Quartermaster – Gavin Brett**

I have had some big shoes to fill in taking on being the Quartermaster for the club and I still have a lot of work to get it up to scratch. The major project has been moving all the gear and trying to set it up under the house. This has required excavation and the building of shelves and installing some of the old cabinets. I have been ably helped by many members with this task, thanks all, but it still has some way to go. We have thrown out quite a bit of stuff and have been trying to

ascertain what is there. I had hoped to have completed an inventory check, I have a copy of Jeff's previous one, but I unexpectedly got called away on a business trip for the last two weeks. I hope to get this done soon; I may even call another working bee, perhaps a midweek one, after work, so we can still go caving on the weekend.

Lights and light hire have taken up a lot of time. I have made some boxes for carrying them around in, and have the parts for converting them all to six volts, and parts for a new charger system. With Jeff's passing, the club gained all his lights as well as the ones we had. This has had the effect of the club getting money for each hiring, not just for when there was a lot to be hired. I have found the lights very difficult to keep in working order, so I have been trying to patch them back together, which is quite a time consuming task. Dave and I have done about 6. A couple of people have volunteered to help with this and we probably need to get on to it soon as we had one customer who was quite upset with quality of the lights and we had to give a partial refund. Light hire has been very quite the last few months, but I guess it will pick up again when school goes back.

On the rope front, we bought a 200 m roll of Roca 10.5 mm which was used at the conference and Damian has donated a 200 m roll of Edelrid 11mm. The 9 mm is looking a bit tired now and we will need to retire it shortly. Even with this gone the rope stocks look quite good, we even had Ice Tube and Pooshooter rigged at the same time. This did test our own personal 'biner supplies though. We do need to have a rope testing day soon; who would like to volunteer for scone making?

I think that the P-hanging has now been completed with Tassy Pot, Milk Run and an unexpected Kubla being hung. I believe Jeff had planned to P-hanger Dwarrowdelf and Big Tree Pot, but I think the impetus of the conference has now passed and they are unlikely to get done. I have had no time to look into Wildcare which is where the money for P-hanging comes from, and nobody seems to know any thing about how Jeff ran this to help in getting back into it. If anyone feels strongly about further P-hanging I would be happy for them to become the Wildcare representative, maybe Alan is onto this. We have little hardware left and we should keep that in stock for maintenance; speaking of which, Rolan has noted that one of the hangers in Midnight Hole is loose and he is going to repair it, so I guess there may be a bit of maintenance through the years.

A couple of final items. We got six new miners helmets this year as Rosny lost some of ours and bought us replacements. Mad Phil has used all the stainless steel through bolts with rings that the club had for Ice Tube, plus a lot he bought himself. Ice Tube is now nearly a wheel chair access area, thanks Phil.

I am happy to be Quartermaster again.

## **Search & Rescue and Training Officer – Alan Jackson**

The Search and Rescue/Training Officer is responsible for promoting safe caving amongst the club, running a SAR training exercise during the year (CAVEX), coordinating club members in the event of a real emergency and attending SAR liaison meetings with the police, SES etc... and running the odd training session for new and old members alike.

I don't know how much safe caving I promoted, probably the opposite, but Damian Bidgood and I organised a successful (in my opinion!) rescue exercise in KD (see *Spiel* 344 for the full rundown). I attended the SAR meetings, ran a few training sessions and fortunately didn't have to coordinate a real emergency.

Thanks to all those who helped organise and attended CAVEX and made it as successful as it was. Thanks to Jeff Butt for his tips early on in the piece.

## **Public Officer – Stephen Bunton**

It is a requirement of the incorporation of Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc that we have a Public Officer. Their duties are not too onerous, in fact I've done nothing in the ten years since the formation of the club. Hanging over my head though is the prospect that one day I might have to and I am no longer willing to volunteer for this responsibility.

## **Karst Index Officer/Archivist – Ric Tunney**

STC is responsible for cave numbering in Southern Tasmania. As KI officer, I maintain the master lists of cave numbers.

At JF, we're up to JF281 (with some gaps) and at IB we're up to IB226 (also with some gaps).

The tagging kit lives in the gear store. There's a battery-powered hammer drill (which is also used for drilling bolts), bundles of made-up tags for each area and plastic plug thingies to hold the tags on the rock.

The procedure is that anyone finding a cave worth tagging sticks a tag on it and tells me. The minimum I need to know is the number used and the CAVE LOCATION. Location should be either GPS or surface

survey. I require the location as, in the past, too many tagged caves have been lost as no-one kept a robust record of their location. Once a cave is physically tagged, it's recorded on the database.

## **PRINTED MAPS**

I took over the maps from Trevor Wailes in about June last year. Janine has sorted the maps by area and they live in a map cabinet at my place. There are around 220 maps, some from surveys over 50 years ago. Anyone is welcome to arrange a visit and browse the maps. I can arrange either for scanned electronic copies or photocopies (at cost) of any of the maps.

I have produced a spreadsheet listing all the maps (available on request by email), but there are lots of maps which have been published and of which I don't have copies. At some stage I shall go through the back copies of *Speleo Spiel*, *Southern Caver* etc... and take paper and electronic copies of all maps. As this project progresses, we'll need to obtain a filing cabinet to store the paper.

I'd appreciate it if people could look in their personal archives and donate to STC copies of any maps they hold.

## **STC MAP NUMBERS**

As I hold the maps, I also maintain the map number list. We are up to STC Map No 60 (as at end-Feb '05) but only one map number was issued in 2004.

The process is that anyone producing a map should email me for a map number and this should be shown on the map.

## **SURVEY DATA**

Over the past six months or so, club members have been gathering together original survey sheets and transferring the data to electronic storage. The question has been asked as to where all this should be stored. I believe either the club Librarian (Greg Middleton) or the Map Librarian should be responsible for both paper and electronic versions of surveys. As Map Librarian I am prepared to do this, but there needs to be some consensus about this.

## **Recent Flood Damage at Ida Bay**

Arthur Clarke

Most STC members will know about the freak storm event that swept across Tasmania in early February. Some of you may have seen or heard about the recent flood effects at Ida Bay following these torrential downpours, over a few hours of Thursday afternoon, February 2 this year. However, you may not be aware

that some significant changes have occurred at Ida Bay: both on the surface and underground in the caves.

At least two of the known gated entrances to Exit Cave are now impenetrable, blocked by a deluge or avalanche of rocks and logs, i.e., IB-120 (Valley Entrance) and the IB-86 (Slip-In) "side door". There

have also been some dramatic effects in at least two caves: Exit Cave and Mystery Creek Cave. Most evident are the changes associated with streamway morphology: the shape of stream channels and their sediment banks. Stream channels have been widened or deepened due to scouring, erosion and movement of bedload rock: small boulders, cobbles, pebbles and sand have been re-located, generally downstream. Elsewhere there has been washout of cobble bank deposits or soft sediment banks, slumping and collapse of sand or silt banks, including walkways and dumping of silt or clay on rock ledges, sand banks or in other hollows and low-lying areas. A combination of high, turbulent stream levels and back-flooding in both Exit Cave and Mystery Creek Cave has removed the glow-worm populations from wall sections of both caves. No doubt the massive influx of organic matter into the cave will act as a tremendous springboard to reinvigorate a new population explosion of glow-worms in the months or years to follow.

Rainfall records from the Bureau of Meteorology in Hobart reveal some interesting statistics from the readings in rain gauges on Friday morning, February 3 2005.

The winds had been south-easterly and although there were heavy storms and torrential downpours in some areas, the rainfall was much localised, albeit restricted to just a 4-5 hour period as the storm front passed over. In the city of Hobart, 49 mm was recorded, but at Mt. Nelson – barely 4 km away – they had 85 mm and further south at Kingston: 91 mm. On the eastern shore Risdon Vale had 70 mm. Going south down the Huon Valley it was more variable: 57 mm at Grove, 30 mm at Judbury, Geeveston (44 mm), Hartz Ranges (32 mm), Warra, out near the Huon River (16 mm), Dover (67 mm) and Southport (46 mm). Across on Bruny Island: 26 mm at Lunawanna and only 18 mm at Cape Bruny. The highest rainfall was at Hastings: 101 mm and, judging by the effects seen at Ida Bay, it was significantly higher on the Southern Ranges, perhaps around 150 mm... 6 inches or more on the old scale. (Although this was the highest ever recording for February at Hastings, there have been higher readings: 105 mm during January 1970; 143 mm in March 1983 and 164 mm in March 1946.)

Some of the most marked effects of this storm event are evidenced in Mystery Creek Cave (IB-10), reflecting a high degree of turbulent stream activity combined with back flooding, plus the influx of silt, sand and massive amounts of organic debris, including what looks like a scummy chocolate-brown slime deposit. At the entrance to the cave some very large rock slabs have been moved half a metre or so, as evidenced by the change you see today compared to a photo taken in 1914. Some of the stream channel in IB-10 appears to have been lowered by half a metre or more; in fact some sections are definitely 0.75 m deeper. Stream diversions have also occurred. For example the majority (estimated 90%) of the water in the main stream channel has been diverted into Cephalopod

Creek at the point near where the drowning occurred back in 1991. The evidence of flooding is everywhere. A large log – nearly 2 m long - lies against the base of the wall on the right hand side at the end of the Walls of Sorrow passage. Leaf litter lines the walls of the Cephalopod Creek passage and extends almost up to the top of the Laundry Shute, suggesting the back flooding has taken water levels to around 12-15 m above normal stream levels. Small logs lie perched on the 15-20 cm depth of leaf litter at the base of the Laundry Shute.

Entering the Cephalopod Creek side passage is now a new experience. In fact before you get there, you will see some differences. The vertical squeeze rift at the end of what was the last section of glow-worms - in the Walls of Sorrow stream passage - has now been undercut, creating an overflow channel which in times of heavy rainfall will now divert more water down into Cephalopod Creek. Similarly, at the end of this Walls of Sorrow passage (just past the vertical rift), the former stream channel has been widened and deepened, so you now have an alternate route if you don't mind stooping down and stepping across a small boulder strewn stream channel, then veering left to emerge in the chamber beyond the vertical rift. Entry from this chamber into Cephalopod Creek used to involve a step down into a rift; now there is a scoured overflow channel from the main chamber and at the bottom you simply walk in: virtually no stepping down required.

Once inside, you will see some more immediate changes. The small stream that used to come in on the left hand side is now dry: almost all the water now comes into the main creek channel via the top waterfall. On the route down to Cephalopod Creek, you see that some of the large fallen "station wagon" sized slabs of limestone have been almost completely undercut, losing most of their support boulders and smaller slabs of rock.



Undercut slabs and new boulders in access to Cephalopod Creek passage, Mystery Creek Cave *Photo by Arthur Clarke*

Two of these smaller (?) slabs of rock have toppled into the vadose canyon section of Cephalopod Creek, just downstream from the former bottom plunge pool/ waterfall, where the passage does its first left hand turn,



facing downstream. So... the bottom plunge pool/waterfall no longer exists! A large 2 m x 1 m slab of rock sits vertically in the stream canyon, supporting a smaller 0.75 m diameter slab sitting diagonally above, all back-filled with a mass of smaller boulders and cobbles forming a new elevated stream bed with water flowing over the new “dam wall”. Downstream, the passage walls and upper ledges are covered with deposits of sand and leaf litter. The main waterfall (upstream) contains a mass of organic debris and sand; the former small pools at the base of the left hand wall (facing in) have all been drained out.



New rock slab and boulder filled dam in Cephalopod Creek passage, Mystery Creek Cave *Photo by Arthur Clarke*

There are similar changes in Exit Cave, though the environmental effects are not quite as dramatic as in Mystery Creek Cave. Although there is some evidence of stream channel changes and shifting bedload in Exit Cave, the first most noticeable effects relate to deposition of enormous amounts of mud. Most of the normally soft sand banks or firm silt banks along the main stream passage and in side passages such as Eastern Passage are plastered with a very slick muddy surface, making it very difficult to stay on your feet. (Can you imagine it... a grown man reduced to crawling on all fours!) Further downstream in Exit Cave towards the (IB-14) efflux entrance, there are some 25-30 cm deep black organic silt deposits, e.g., in the Wind Tunnel and downstream from the D'Entrecasteaux Inlet. These black sticky organic ooze deposits now resemble the Herpes III section near Avons Aven in Growling Swallet.

The presence of this organic ooze in Exit Cave, along with the sedimentation on stream passage banks, plus the leaf litter and sand deposits in Mystery Creek Cave suggests there must have been a huge lake of relatively calm, slow-moving and swirling water back-flooding inside both caves. These lakes would have occurred on the rising limb of the flood (hydrograph), after the initial rush of high energy turbulent cave stream floodwaters created the erosion or scouring of stream channels and movement of bedload, boulders and rock slabs. Even six weeks after the event, there are still a number of unsettled “wobbly” boulders in the stream sections of Mystery Creek Cave.

One has to wonder whether this black organic ooze in caves like Growling Swallet, and now Exit Cave, isn't in fact due to surface run-off carrying the soil humus scratched up by our feral lyrebirds. As an adjunct to helping to save what was then being considered an endangered species in Victoria, small numbers of lyrebirds were introduced into Tasmania in the mid-1940's... ostensibly to enhance the tourist visitor experience in the rainforests at Mt. Field and Hastings. These two populations have now expanded enormously throughout southern Tasmania, so widespread in fact to now be one continuous merged population. Apart from scratching up soil humus and forest litter, these feral birds are also depleting the populations of macro-invertebrates which themselves, in their own minute way, contribute to the acid producing soil biota that help maintain karst processes in carbonate rock areas.



Tom Porritt and some mainland cavers beside litter deposits in Cephalopod Creek passage, Mystery Creek Cave *Photo by Arthur Clarke*

During a visit to Exit Cave on February 10 (with Madphil and Tom Porritt), there was an obvious fresh high tide mark around about 4.5 m above present stream level in the region upstream from the Rockfall. Some parts of Exit Cave had been flooded to the roof, e.g., in the Hatwalk Passage, where the glow-worm population has been removed and stringlets of bark and small leaves are now dangling off the ceiling. In a few areas of the Hatwalk Passage, the walls and ceiling are littered with the tiny now dead shells of stranded aquatic (hydrobiid) cave snails. Some of the stringlined route in the Hatwalk Passage has collapsed and slumped, particularly through the formerly protected leaf litter section: another previous high flood debris deposit.

Further upstream in Exit Cave, rock ledges presently a metre to 1.5 m above the streamway in Eastern Passage are covered with a fine grained, sloppy clay deposit... perhaps evidence of continued flushing of clay sediment from the on-going legacy of many years of limestone extraction from the Benders Quarry site.

The walking tracks to both caves show the evidence of this significant storm event, along with its associated erosion and flooding as well. Some tracks have been

gouged out; small stream channels have been converted to minor canyons. The track to Exit Cave – along the banks of the D'Entrecasteaux River – has been washed away in places. About a quarter of the 0.75 m diameter log across the river that was our "bridge" crossing has disappeared: been washed away. Flood debris is sitting perched up amongst tree trunks; in some places a metre above the track which itself is about 2.5-3.0 m above normal river level. There are now huge gaping holes in the track beside the river, e.g., just below the logs you climb up just outside the entrance.



Flood litter on the roof of Hatwalk Passage, Exit Cave  
*Photo by Arthur Clarke*



Fresh lichen and buried stringline at litter deposit, Exit Cave  
*Photo by Arthur Clarke*

My initial thoughts relating to the dramatic effects in both caves at Ida Bay from this freak storm event and the subsequent flooding that occurred, were in part to blame some of it on what I saw as inappropriate management practices. For example, over the past four to five years of semi-regular visits into Exit Cave, I have seen a gradual build up of organic matter clinging to the intersecting cross bars of the steel mesh grate that now stands in the efflux streamway. Obviously designed to prevent illegal entry of humans into the cave, it was now progressively slowing and hindering the "legal" exit of cave waters and organic matter from the cave. Similarly, I figured that the cave gates to Valley Entrance and Slip-In may have acted as coarse

sediment traps and become a catalyst for the accumulation of debris from surface runoff.



Slumping/collapse and washout of sediment and litter deposit, Exit Cave  
*Photo by Arthur Clarke*

However, having now seen the broad spectrum of evidence on the surface reflecting the considerable spread and height of floodwaters that overflowed stream banks and the effects of the deluge that has lead to slumping, collapse of streambanks, minor landslips and mini-avalanches, plus development of small canyon stream channels, I'm now more forgiving! A short term/short-lived, but more intense rainfall event obviously has a more dramatic effect on the morphology of a cave, than a flood surge resulting from a prolonged period of rainfall or snow melt. In fact, this recent flooding possibly represents a once in 20 year event, perhaps even a once in 50 year event. Although this is hard to determine due to lack of baseline data, based on a description of a tour to Mystery Creek Cave in 1892 [refer SS346 p. 19], the dramatic changes that occurred in early February 2005 suggest this was in fact a "once in a 100 year event"! Natural events like this are what create and shape or flush out the stream passages of our caves...



Swirling froth doughnut in Hatwalk Passage stream, Exit Cave  
*Photo by Arthur Clarke*

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