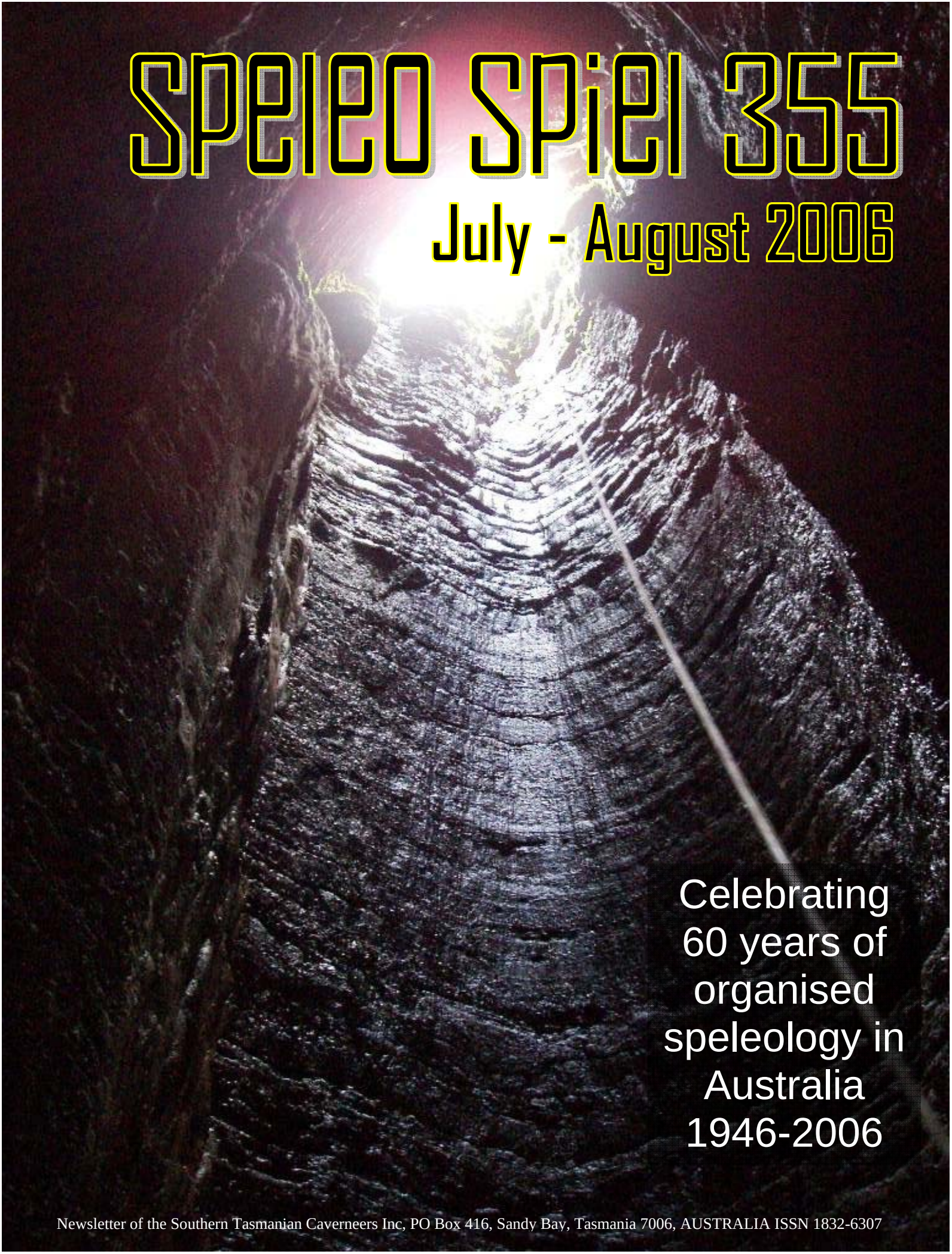
Speleo Spiel 355

July - August 2006



Celebrating 60 years of organised speleology in Australia 1946-2006

Newsletter of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc, PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006, AUSTRALIA ISSN 1832-6307

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Front Cover: Entrance pitch to IB-166 Oh Yeh (photo by Matt Cracknell)

Speleo Spiel

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CONTENTS

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

60th Anniversary Dinner – RSVP to Alan by August 31. See “Stuff ‘n Stuff” for details.

Editorial

It is with great excitement that I send this issue off to the printers, for in this issue I believe we have the first official use of the new and improved name of IB-97 Pseudocheirus **CAVE**. Admittedly Janine failed to title her report correctly when she submitted it to me but luckily I picked it up and corrected it. Raise your glasses to all those bio-speleologists out there who are now slightly less confused than they used to be.

After following the media reports on the Tasmanian Compliance Corporation and the 'Greengate' scandal (aren't our commercial media groups just oozing wit and originality) it's probably a good thing that we didn't change our name back to TCC. Although, if we'd played our cards right we might have been able to get our hands on some of that $2.5 million!

It must be all the rage to be turning 60 this year. I recently attended my old scout group's 60th anniversary in Devonport and I noticed a photo of me getting ready to head underground on my first ever caving trip in 1994, a Wet Cave-Georgies Hall through trip at Mole Creek. I would have been about 14. Ah, the memories and the good old days when you could actually do that trip!

On the topic of 60 year anniversaries; Greg Middleton (our resident lava tube freak) is turning 60 this year! And less importantly STC (through its predecessor, TCC) have reached that milestone too and we're having a dinner to celebrate it. Read all about it in Stuff 'n Stuff below and RSVP by August 31.

It's been a surprisingly active winter period for the club, probably due to the distinct lack of rain we've been having. There's a few keen-looking beginners in the wings so don't let them get away. Some of them look like they're made of the right stuff (to become full on cave freaks).

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS. In case you hadn't noticed, the intention is to celebrate 60 years of 'formal' or 'organised' speleology in Australia. It was 60 years ago that Prof. Sam Carey formed the first of our parent clubs, the Tasmanian Caverneering Club; the first in Australia and possibly the first in the southern hemisphere. Whether or not STC can claim 60 years, whether or not a married woman gets any younger when she changes her name and whether or not any of the arguments floated about during the recent name change motion were even remotely interesting or relevant, we're having a shindig and you're all invited. So if you're a past or present member of TCC, SCS, TCKRG, STC, any other Australian caving group or you just feel like coming along, then get your name on the list and pay up. If you know of any past members who aren't likely to read this but would like to come then spread the word.

We will be celebrating with a dinner at the Derwent Sailing Squadron club rooms on the evening of Saturday 16 September commencing at 7 pm (7 for 7:30). The cost per head will be $32 (cash to Alan or Robyn, or cheques payable to Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc.) Please RSVP to Alan Jackson by August 31 via phone, email, letter, semaphore, carrier pigeon ... whatever takes your fancy. If you have any specific dietary requirements then let me know. There will be a vegetarian option but I need to know numbers. If you don't RSVP and simply turn up on the night then don't expect to get fed! There will hopefully be a few brief speeches, a bit of memorabilia and some slides? It should be a great night so come along, catch up with some old mates and consume excessive amounts of food and alcohol. If you require more detail then contact Alan Jackson.

OLD CAVE MAPS. *Ric Tunney*. In *Spiel* 314, Arthur Clarke wrote an article about STC maps held in the State Archives. These maps cover PB-1, PB-3, JF-225 Three Falls Cave, Westmoreland Cave, Wet Cave - Georgies Hall, Kellys Pot (all at Mole Creek), JF-211 Sesame 2 and a very, very large, detailed map of MC-202 Herberts Pot. We have now obtained copies of these maps for the map library. In addition, the list of persons authorised to access the originals has been expanded to include members of the STC executive.

A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES. A medium sized mob of club members participated in the social night at Alan's place recently. All those attending were lucky enough to view the Hollywood blockbuster [*sic*] *The Descent* – a gory R rated horror film with a caving theme. Between Ric's running commentary, Bunty's endless stories and numerous other witty comments from the rest of the group most of us managed to semi-enjoy this motion picture spectacle. Flares, ice axes, half a dozen cams, video cameras with infra red and short sleeve (and preferably breast enhancing) tops are now all compulsory equipment for future STC trips. Serena was even inspired to write a poem. It was a good evening – thanks to those who attended.

NOSTALGIA

Alan about to embark on his first ever caving trip (blue 'bush jacket' and grey miner's helmet). Wasn't he cute? And isn't he still?

Trip Reports

JF-290 Cap It Cave and Surface Surveying

Alan Jackson

17 June 2006

Party: Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney, Amy Ware

On a miserable drizzly day we tramped along the track to JF-366 Asteroid Pot vicinity and then turned up the hill to JF-407 Wait Cave et al. We affixed the tags to 411, 412 and 413 as allocated in our earlier trip report (*SS*354). 411 is on the centre of the back wall (uphill side) when down inside the doline at about shoulder height. 412 is on the uphill side just down inside the small entrance hole. 413 is on the wall (uphill side) well down from the surface (about 1.5 m) due to a lack of good moss-free rock closer to the surface.

Next we surface surveyed from JF-407 straight up the hill/ridge. At our intersection with our Slaughterhouse Pot-Lost Pot track we left a 'permanent' station (orange tape) on a young myrtle and continued surveying to JF-283 Greasy Pole. Lunch was had and then we surveyed on around to JF-290 Cap It Cave. On the way we passed an old blue survey tape on a tree. This could be a track to a cave (Varmint Pot?) or an old survey line (the Serendipity to Ice Tube surface traverse passes through this area in the JF master survey in the archive).

Gavin suited up and started work on Cap It Cave; Amy stayed as his support crew and the rest of us surveyed in JF-287, JF-288 and JF-289.

In the meantime Gavin and Amy had passed the first obstacle and started work on the next. According to Gavin he has quadrupled the cave's depth (from 1 m to 4 m) and that the next constriction shouldn't present much of a problem for pursuing the draft. This cave is nicely located over Mainline in Growling Swallet.

We headed out via Slaughterhouse Pot, raised our eyebrows at the large amounts of water in Garths Creek (Growling) and made the new 'Growling to log bridge creek crossing bypass' section of the track a little nicer to follow.

Plenty more surveying to be done in this area to tie in all the little shit holes we've been finding.

IB-97 Pseudocheirus Cave

Janine McKinnon

24 June 2006

Party: Serena Benjamin, Ric Tunney, Dale Pregnell, Grant Roberts, Janine McKinnon.

This was a beginners' trip to give Dale and Grant their first vertical trip "in anger" after completing their initial vertical training trip with Matt at the quarry.

It was raining as we arrived at the car park and we started walking at 10 am. It rained all the way to the cave; the ground was very wet and the track very slippery.

It rained whilst we got organised at the entrance, rigged the pitch and all descended. So everyone was soaked despite this being a dry cave. Dale and Grant handled the rebelay and redirection easily and I was impressed by how quickly they both were becoming familiar with how all this hardware hanging off them worked.

The going up bit went equally smoothly and without dramatic incident and it had even stopped raining by the time the first people got to the top.

We had been considering doing IB-166 Oh Yeh as a second trip for the day but the lack of daylight hours and cold, wet conditions dissuaded everyone. We did walk to the Oh Yeh entrance as we headed out to show the others where it was. We arrived back at the cars around 3.30 pm.

Despite the miserable conditions everyone had an enjoyable day.

JF-221 Owl Pot – SAR Radio Testing #1

Damian Bidgood

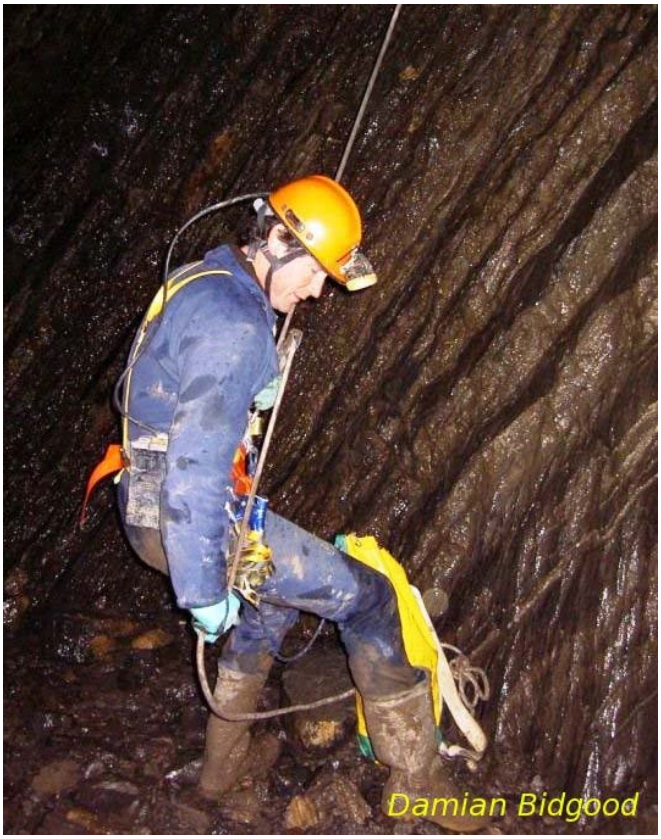
26 June 2006

Party: Damian Bidgood, Martin Boyle, Alan Jackson, Mark Nelson, Paul Steane

The object of this exercise was to test the viability of using radios and repeaters underground instead of the labour-intensive phone line system. The group had two systems to trial, a VHF system with repeater and a UHF system with repeater. The UHF system was on trial loan from Marcom Watson in Launceston; the repeater was only a makeshift repeater which showed. It was in an old metal brief case and weighed around 10 kg. It was not very robust and a pain in the butt to carry. The VHF system was an existing system which is used for land searches and rescues provided by the SES, Mark Nelson (Note: without a beard on this occasion, mid-life crisis kicking in!).

The party entered the cave in groups, Martin and Damian moving in first rigging down to the bottom of the 30 m pitch. Meanwhile Paul, Alan and Mark followed testing the range of radio to radio with both VHF and UHF handhelds. The UHF showed early it had the longer legs, but apparently did not quite make it from the entrance to the first pitch. Paul stayed at the top of the pitch whilst the remainder of the

party moved down into the top of the rock pile area before the descent to the squeeze. Both repeaters were set up here, once again the UHF proving to have the longer range. The VHF was fading quickly in this area. So it was decided to ditch this and continue with the UHF. The repeater was left at the top of the rock pile, it was proving to have a stronger signal but not really any more range.

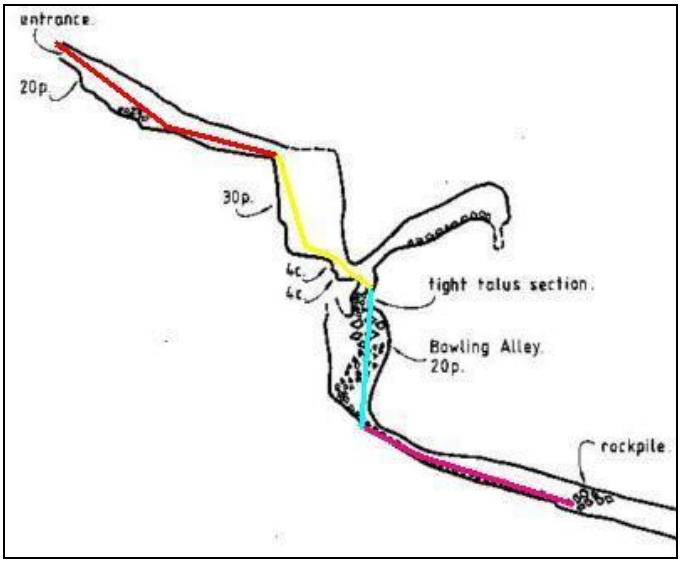


Mark Nelson (SES) touches down on the second pitch.

Martin and Damian continued through the squeeze to rig and test the signal with a UHF handheld. The signal from the squeeze was weak but readable, but was lost on the other side. Mark then came to the top of the squeeze where the signal was strong through the rock here, but then lost strength at the Bowling Alley. Mark then came through the squeeze to the top of the second pitch. The signal was good until rounding the corner and entering the rift passage towards the streamway. After repositioning again the signal worked from the top of the rift passage to the crawl at the rock fall.

'Executive Caving' – the UHF repeater (a.k.a. anchor).

After this series of tests it was decided to have a look around the streamway area of the cave to finish the day. As expected, the radios had a limited range around most corners, the UHF proving to have a markedly longer range than the VHF.



Radio range ('legs') achieved in Owl Pot. Cropped survey is from the developed vertical section in Vertical Caves of Tasmania.

JF-36 Growling Swallet – SAR Radio Testing #2

Damian Bidgood

27 June 2006

Party: Damian Bidgood, Janine McKinnon, Mark Nelson, Paul Steane, Ric Tunney

It was decided, after hauling the 10 kg UHF repeater through Owl Pot in a potato sack, that this idea sucked, so Damian volunteered his large backpack for the day. This proved to be much easier.

After reaching the entrance to Growling with a low-ish water level, Janine, Mark and Damian entered the cave leaving Paul and Ric by the track at the entrance. Only UHF was going to be trialed this time as it was decided to be a waste of time with VHF. The radio-to-radio range worked well from the track to the base of the first series of climbs in the dry bypass, where the passage does a 90 degree left turn.

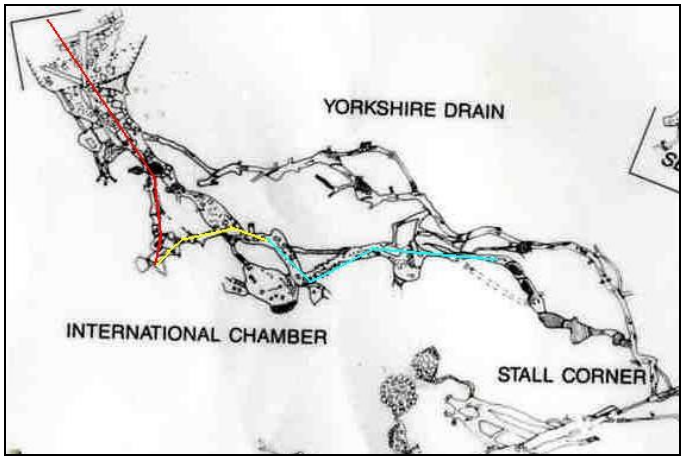
Paul and Rick relocated to this area and met up with the rest. It was decided to continue further before trialing the repeater. Radio-to-radio worked from here down to where the streamway is met. The repeater was set up, working well enough until a minor technical hitch kicked in. Paul's radio was going flat and Mark had decided to forget bringing in another radio after asking at the vehicle where they were.

One more leg of testing was completed with radio-to-radio working approx. another 100 m down the stream passage before Paul's radio battery spat it! Despite this all were happy with the testing for the day even though it was still only around 1230.

To finish of the day the crew continued to the entrance to Windy Rift, noticing constant high water levels have eroded the sand bank at the Windy Rift passage. Instead of a gradual slope onto the rocks there is now a 3 foot drop off the sand to the rocks. Arriving back at the car at 1400 was a surprise to all. Getting out in daylight in winter is an achievement normally, but at 1400 was unheard off. There was a keen interest with one member to get back to Hobart early though.

The two days of testing proved what most people would expect: the radios were not the answer to replacing the phone line but did prove that depending on the situation, amount of people and the cave etc., there can be a use for UHF radios in some situations. They can be used for short legs or in conjunction with the phone line system. The repeater, when carefully placed, will replace a person with a radio also. I have sought quotes for waterproof radios and a proper purpose-built repeater, which would be housed in two small easily transportable Pelican cases. All three Police SAR squads have made a commitment to purchase two radios each, with the Hobart office budget providing a repeater, hopefully in the near future.

The decision to go in this direction instead of other alternatives, like having a HeyPhone system built, was made for numerous reasons. One main reason was these UHF radios can be used for incidents other than those underground.



Radio range ('legs') achieved in Growling Swallet. Cropped survey is from the plan published in TCC Explorations Journal.

MC-various Honeycomb Cave, MC-29 Kubla Khan, MC-38 Genghis Khan – Serena's Version

Serena Benjamin

30 June – 2 July 2006

Party: Serena Benjamin, Briony Jones, Janine McKinnon, Dale Pregnell, Ivan Riley, Ric Tunney

Mole Creek Madness began among the stately manna gums beside Honeycomb Cave. Outside the car the world was grey and the rain pattered steadily against the windscreen. Down the tree trunks water trickled and frothed. All abuzz with excitement after visiting the honey farm in Chudleigh, Dale, Briony and myself summoned the motivation to get out and change before making the ten metre dash for the (first) cave entrance. Passing a happily caved out school group from Burnie on the way, we learnt that they'd done the abseil into the cave and spent five hours underground. Honeycomb Cave is just that, a fantastic maze of phreatic passages passing through the hill on a variety of different levels. The three of us scrambled and climbed, squeezed, waded and crawled our way around. Beginning in the lower levels, we investigated the stream passages before moving our way up to the drier levels where we popped in and out of entrance ways, most often marked by the shower of water coming down them. Though, in one of them a very pungent aroma was testament to the fact that cave entrances are often nature's pit fall traps. Several hours later and suitably weary we made our way back to the car around the side of the hill, giving us all a good perspective of the topography in which the cave is formed. Following this pleasant introduction to the Mole Creek caves we met up with Ric and Janine before heading to the pub to warm up with a hot meal. Ivan, last to arrive from Hobart, met us there later that night.

Overnight it rained and we woke up to a grey and drizzly day. But this wasn't enough to dampen our enthusiasm and we were soon underway. Navigating our way to the top entrance of Kubla Khan we found the track overgrown and unmarked, in places becoming difficult to follow. Once at the entrance Janine ducked down to begin rigging, followed by Ric, Briony, Dale, myself then Ivan. After carefully negotiating my awkward limbs through the monstrosity of concrete and steel which is the gate I overtook Ric at the head of the first pitch as he'd been helping the newbies on their way. Once on-rope the spectacle began when the rift opened out to reveal vast amounts of decoration. From here on in I can't quite capture in words the sublime nature of the cave. With the plan being to head straight to the Khan and from there work our way out via the Opium Den taking photos, we headed off. Getting somewhat distracted in this pursuit by the pretties and our delicate manoeuvers to avoid them, we got to the Khan about four hours later. And what a sight! It is indeed a privilege to have entered the Forbidden City and walked upon the jeweled carpet of the Hall of Kings. To stand beneath the Khan and his mate, the Begum, and marvel at something so large yet at the same time composed of the most intricately detailed cascades of

flowstone. To admire curtains ruffled by some non-existent breeze and Khans Army marching off into the distance. The sense of space as we enter that hushed realm. The alien intrusion of camera flashes soon began as we meandered leisurely out. Bypassing some hungry-looking leaches in the entrance pitches, we got out of the cave at around 6:30 pm and made our way down the hill. Lo and behold, we made a crucial mistake when, at one point, we lost the track and did not immediately go back to the last point at which we were familiar with it. It soon became apparent that the flat-floored valley was not so easily navigable and that our plans for a ten minute walk to the cars followed by a meal at the pub were quickly evaporating. The cave blaster thus reinvented itself for use as a bush blaster and provided us with sufficient illumination to see, well, lots of bush. Whipping out Ivan's compass we decided on a course of due south which brought us out onto the dirt road along the fence-line. Two hundred metres later and we were back at the longed-for cars. Our arrival back at Mole Creek at 7:50 pm precluded any thought of a pub meal but with some takeaway beers we all crowded into the motor home once again.

Waking up to find ice on the tents and the car doors a bit reluctant to open, thoughts passed among us that we were glad our bush escapades the preceding evening had not lasted longer than they had. The brittle cold of the morning was outweighed by the spectacularly clear day that was unfolding. Nevertheless we were all happy to get underground in Genghis Khan to defrost. Not to be outdone by his larger cousin, Genghis is indeed a special cave in its own right. With so much frost and ice in the atmosphere it was difficult not to compare the delicate moonmilk on the anthodites with the frost in the world outside. How can you convey in words the sense of timelessness that exudes from observing a single drop of water gently suspended on the tip of a single straw? How long was it there before I arrived to see it and how long will it remain once I leave? And then to think that each formation in these magnificent galleries of nature's art originates from a single droplet such as these building intricately over time.

Following our trip in here, of about 3-4 hours, we had lunch back at the campground before parting company. Dale, Briony and myself headed home via the honey farm (again), a salmon farm and Andy's bakery. We then decided to go back to Hobart by the Great Lake road, which soon proved to be an excellent decision. Despite the lateness of the day for choosing this route we were treated to some stunning sunset colours over the rugged scenery and glassy lake waters before darkness descended. A fitting end to a great weekend.

MC-1 Kubla Khan – Janine's Version

Janine McKinnon

1 July 2006

Party: Serena Benjamin, Briony Jones, Janine McKinnon, Dale Pregnell, Ivan Riley, Ric Tunney

This was the annual STC Kubla trip which we had hoped, by running it in July, would involve large amounts of water in the watery bits. Sadly, it was not to be.

It did rain heavily all Friday, Friday night and early Saturday morning as we got organised at the caravan park but fortunately it stopped for a while when we got to the car park and we stayed dry (except for the wet vegetation) up to the top entrance. We only planned a bounce trip to the Khan this year, so we could have time to take lots of photos in the top half of the cave. Ah, the best laid plans ...

We got underground about 1000 and made our way directly to the Silk Shop where everyone wandered about taking photos and gawking as the mood took them. Surprisingly there was very little water present, with the main pool at the bottom end only about a quarter full and little or no water in the lower gours. This was a bit disappointing but on the bright side the flowstone was resplendent with sparkles. After about half an hour there we made our way on to Xanadu chamber with the plan being to photograph our way back out of the cave. Unfortunately it had taken us much longer than envisioned to get to here (4 hours) and so we reassessed how much mucking about with cameras we were actually going to do.

Serena and Janine in the Silk Shop.

The rest of the group had a look around whilst Ric tried some photos of the Khan and Briony did some sketching.

We stopped at the Opium Den for a brief photo op. and then headed out. Ric and Ivan headed up the pitches first and managed some photos whilst everyone else worked their way up.

We were out around 1830 - in time to get back and down to the pub for dinner - but an unfortunate navigational error saw us wandering in the bush just sufficiently long to miss making the pub before meals closed.

Thus the fates conspire against us.

MC-38 Genghis Khan – Janine's Version

Janine McKinnon

2 July 2006

Party: Serena Benjamin, Briony Jones, Janine McKinnon, Dale Pregnell, Ivan Riley, Ric Tunney

Day two of the Kubla weekend and it's a short, slack trip into Genghis.

We spent about 2 hours taking photos and then headed back to have lunch and drive home.

We managed not to get lost getting back to the cars this time.

Pretties in Genghis Khan.

JF-37 Pendant Pot

Alan Jackson

2 July 2006

Party: Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson

Pendant Pot had been Gavin's nemesis for some time following an aborted trip when he had piked at the rigging options for the 39 m Pell Mell pitch. (Is it Pell Mell or Pel Mel? There seems to be some inconsistency on the spelling of this pitch in various official maps and reports. Who named it and how did they want it spelled? Did they just like their instrumental music? Was Rolan being particularly frantic in his passage bagging that day?). Ric and Janine were on the same trip and it was the second time they had piked at this pitch. I had only ever wandered past the entrance turn off on the way to Slaughterhouse Pot or Ice Tube and was impressed with the entrance proper that was hiding round the corner. I was also impressed with the efforts of Nick Hume and Trevor Wailes who pushed the slippery climb of the 7 m up pitch to find the rest of the cave. It is yet another cave on a list of many that have yielded significant extensions following the ingenuity of cavers prepared to go up in order to go down again.

The fixed rope on the entrance pitch stirred the memories of the hard old days when we noted 'TCC' emblazoned on it in large letters. We commented that if only we'd worn our cotton overalls, packed a few ladders, a cast of thousands and some dicky lights that failed continuously at critical points on the trip then the nostalgia may have been unbearable …

We squeezed past the 'Bunton Filter' and found abundant naturals for the first 18 m pitch. The big chamber was very interesting and numerous tricky little climbs and traverses through this boulder strewn mess kept us on our toes. The descent of Pandemonium Rift was equally interesting. Somehow I managed to be in first place and copped numerous small stones from Gavin behind me, who admitted that he wasn't quite on the ball that day. The rift proper is a classic and its descent via free-climbing would rate as one of the best bits of caving I've done.

Gavin's nemesis was next and I soon agreed that the rigging options were less than ideal. The one obvious natural seemed solid enough, although a clear joint in the rock could be seen running right through it (it looked like the same joint that had widened to form the whole rift itself). It was positioned a few metres past the point where the traverse over the pitch started getting exposed and potentially hazardous. It also had a shocking rub two metres down and the next rebelay was reported to be 15 m down. We had no rope protectors and 9 mm rope. Rigging option A was looking pretty ordinary and I was happy that Gavin didn't need to be stripped of his 'hard man' status for earlier bailing at this point. The report on exploration in this cave (Hume 1984) supports our concerns when it says:

"Totally out of character; Rolan decided to rig the big pitch from an interesting flake rather than use a perfectly good bolt, however, he eventually succumbed to temptation and placed one as a tie off, half way down."

We expected this hurdle and had come prepared. I installed two (ridiculously long) 8 mm stainless steel through bolts either side of the rift (forming a y-belay) high in the rift about half way along the not-so-exposed bit of the rift traverse. This allowed for much more comfortable investigation of the natural flake. It seemed solid enough but the shocking rub it would produce ruled it out as a useful anchor without the use of a very long trace as a header for a rebelay below the rub. We didn't have any very long traces. We also toyed with elaborate redirects but eventually settled on two more bolts down in the rift past the rub point. Happy again, I continued down the pitch to the obvious place for a rebelay. Unfortunately the unmarked spit casing wasn't quite so obvious! Thankfully it had been placed by Rolan (who would have been in a mad panic with exploration fever at this point and fully drilling the hole would not have been a high priority – Pell Mell?) and the casing protruded

sufficiently from the rock face for me to eventually spot it. I tied off and continued down.

The way on was obvious as I was blasted with a jet of cold air from the hole in the floor. Much carrying on about who was Ultimate Man was endured here (this is one of our favourite pitch naming stories of all time). We found a spit casing (once again unmarked) and also placed a trace extended with a tape from a jammed boulder and backed it up with a rather amusing combination of chock placements. The pitch was a little drippy near the bottom.

From here the fossil horizontal (mostly) section was quickly observed but we focused our attention on the next pitch. The hanging lake at the pitch head looked superb and the climb over it to the pitch head was good fun. Another unmarked bolt casing at the pitch head was located and this was backed up with a natural thread several metres directly above the bolt (gained by climbing out horizontally from back up above the climb down over the 'lake'). We also put in a back-up approach line from a very obvious natural thread back at the start of the climb. I descended the pitch for several metres to a rub point. Here the wall undercuts for several metres and keeping the rope off the rub would be impossible. I couldn't see any wear marks from previous IRT rigging and assumed that a natural spike near this point was used as a rebelay. Having used every last bit of rigging gear on the pitch head I dangled in space racking my brain for options. I could risk the rub and just go down; strip a back-up anchor; use the second of my hand ascender leg loops; use the haul line on my pack etc…

Gavin was sick of caving by now (he hadn't been into it all day) and wanted to leave. We both decided that this was such a good cave and that there was so much more to do that we'd leave it rigged and come back later for a look around and derig. We also thought that Janine, after two previous unsuccessful trips, would like to see the bottom. So I left the glimmering pool below me and we headed out. On the way I clipped spit markers onto the krabs of the three spits (I had collected these from redundant spits from the various caves we had p-hangered recently) and always had a few in my bag of tricks. It should make life a little easier for any subsequent visitors to the cave once we derig.

Reference:

HUME, N. 1984 Pendant Pot. *Speleo Spiel*, 197:4-5

IB-11 Midnight Hole

Janine McKinnon

8 July 2006

Party: Serena Benjamin, Janine McKinnon, Dale Pregnell, Ric Tunney, Amy Ware

Ric and I had decided that it was about time we started trying for a few more good pitch photographs (of which we have few), and as Dale was looking to continue building his vertical skills, a trip to Midnight Hole seemed a good opportunity to combine both objectives. Serena and Amy saw it as a pleasant winter's day out and thus our party was formed.

Serena poses at the entrance pitch.

It was an extremely windy day and by the time we got to the entrance the trees that far up the hill were thrashing around insanely (does this sound like a good opening line for a novel? It was a dark and stormy night ...) It was a little disconcerting gearing up at the entrance and we all felt safer once we were down the first pitch. Is this a true caver's attitude to risk? Feeling safer underground than above?

Third pitch in Midnight Hole? Maybe fifth pitch.

Anyway, all progressed at a non-hassled pace with Serena rigging, Ric taking photos on the three big pitches and me coming last and doing the flashing (equal sexual rights for women I say).

Dale was duly impressed by the bottom pitch and sailed through the squeeze as if he'd done it a dozen times.

We were out the entrance after an enjoyable three and a half hours underground.

True to form, we got a lot of poor photos and about five reasonable ones. Such is the lot of the part-time cave photographer.

JF-221 Owl Pot – Dye tracing and surveying in new old passages

Alan Jackson

16 July 2006

Party: Matt Cracknell, Alan Jackson

During my recent trip to Owl Pot with SAR I noticed the ascending passages that head off from the intersection of the streamway and the main rift passage above the final waterfall pitch. I had followed this for some distance on that trip. They don't appear on the extended vertical section in *Vertical Caves of Tasmania* and I could find no evidence of these passages being surveyed in the archive. I did some investigation into the Three Falls Cave/Owl Pot system and had the feeling that these passages went up and across in the direction of Three Falls Cave. Despite the obvious likelihood that the Owl Pot streamway comes from Three Falls Cave, I had never seen any unequivocal evidence that the waters had been dye traced. Hume (1991) got a positive result according to Eberhard (1994), but Rolan seemed to be concentrating on the Porcupine Pot connection and didn't elaborate on the certainty of the Owl Pot result. A proper read of Hume (1991) was probably in order.

I'd never been into Three Falls Cave (or even to the entrance for that matter) but the survey appears to show that the water comes and goes all the way to the known deepest point. In the archive survey master system the bottom of Three Falls Cave is about 10 m lower than the upstream section of the 'Three Falls Streamway' in Owl Pot, and about 150 metres away horizontally. This didn't add up for me so I decided to check it further.

I advertised the trip as a beginners' trip but didn't attract much attention. It turned out Dale and Grant had been keen but I had missed an email and they never called me. Unlucky! With Matt the only other person, we launched an efficient attack on the cave.

Matt started descending Owl Pot while I walked up to Three Falls Cave and inserted about a cup of fluoroscein into the largest of the three waterfalls – the right-most one when facing the sheer back wall of the doline. I then caught up to Matt and headed down to the streamway intersection. The stream was running very green. It had taken just under an hour for us to get there after inserting the dye, so the water doesn't hang about on its descent. There was quite a lot of water entering Three Falls Cave as a result of recent rain and snow melt. The connection between the caves is now out of doubt (if it wasn't already!?) We took some photos in the streamway between the intersection and the waterfall and then headed upstream to assess the water entering from the roof. The two showering avens directly over the streamway, before you reach the rubble slope, and the bulk of the water entering, were both running green indicating that the two showering avens are the same water source (just overflowing, or percolating through before, the main sink). The small side inlet on the left (as going upstream) 10 m or so before the first shower was not showing any dye and is therefore likely to be a separate tributary from the surface, not an overflow. Objective one was complete. I can only guess that the waters encountered in the explored passages of Three Falls Cave, which can be followed to the deepest point, are not those fed by the main waterfall. Presumably this water takes a more direct and vertical route to its place of appearance in Owl Pot. Otherwise it takes an extended (and uphill!) journey. I now need to get into Three Falls Cave for a look to check my theory.

A positive trace! Alan inspects the 'Green River' in Owl Pot. Maybe a cup of fluorescein was too much?

Next we surveyed up the 'new' passages from the intersection. I was unable to track down a survey station from the original survey, so I used the rock cairn that has been there for as long as I can remember, hoping that it was an original station. I marked it with a white tape and station number (OP 300). Lovely 20 m+ legs followed up the ~40 degree slope. The first branch on the right doesn't go far and is blocked with fill (mostly dolerite). The main passage continues up quite some way before steepening further and similarly choking with dolerite. Just above the first right hand branch there is a much smaller passage on the left wall (when going up). Strangely an old degrading hairnet was found on the cave floor at this point! This passage headed horizontally for 10 m and contains some amazingly vivid iron oxide sediments (derived from abundant iron-rich dolerite perhaps?) I later noted that someone mentions the vivid rust-coloured formations in sections of Three Falls Cave in an earlier report but the reference eludes me now. Matt also located some other stratified deposits in this area

which he suggested may have glacial origins – where's Houshold when you need him?

A loose down-climb (that had stopped me on my last trip) was negotiated and three ways on presented themselves. I followed the lowest and tightest one (always a glutton for punishment) which reminded me of a slightly nastier Bills Bypass in Cauldron Pot – steep, narrow, snaggy and just plain awful. After descending several metres it widened a little to the point of inducing fear and a thumping waterfall could be clearly heard. Interesting. On the horrible climb back up I noticed a screaming draft issuing from a small hole in the wall.

Iron oxide sediments in the Hairnet Passages. Scale bar is in mm.

Matt then joined me at the previous intersection and he checked the other tighter lead. It was a horizontal passage that zigzagged its way back out to the main ascending passage about six metres up the wall and 20 m down-slope from the point at which we had entered the left hand (hair net) branch.

The larger passage now remained and this headed down at about 40 degrees for several metres before widening and opening into a 10 m ramping pitch. No waterfall sound here though despite its close proximity to the other passage. We surveyed to the top of this pitch and called it a day. We will come back with rope and at the very least expect to find a new way into the final waterfall chamber.

Plugging the survey data in at home confirmed that these passages sit right above the final waterfall chamber. The potential for about a 50 m pitch exists. I had originally believed that they would head more northerly and underlie Three Falls Cave. Always the optimist. One can't expect to find the Three Falls Cave connection or a bypass to the Owl Pot sump if one doesn't look!

It was a fun and interesting day.

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HUME, N. 1991 *Hydrological and Speleological Investigation of Junee-Florentine Karst, South-West Tasmania*. B.A. (Hons.) thesis, Dept. of Geography, University of Tasmania.

JF-37 Pendant Pot – Almost a Cast of Thousands

Alan Jackson

22 July 2006

Party: Serena Benjamin, Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Ivan Riley, Ric Tunney

Everyone had Pendant Pot fever when we advertised that we were going back to have a better look about. At one stage nine people had flagged their intentions to come along. I redistributed one punter and the natural laws of attrition took care of two more, so in the end a much more manageable party of six assembled at the entrance.

I went up the fixed rope first and fixed a ladder from a thread a few metres along the horizontal passage for the others. This saves putting all your SRT gear on just to take it all off again for the squeeze above the first down pitch. Gavin and I then headed off on our own while the others 'touristed' about in a more leisurely fashion.

I installed the rebelay on the last pitch and we bounded down to the sumps. It is certainly a very inviting looking sump. We didn't see the sump much after that as visibility was cut to ~2 m in our attempts to detect a draft. We received a negative result – i.e. there is minimum air movement in the final chamber and it is unlikely that a dry connection between Growling and Pendant exists.

Hume 1984 states:

"*Martin* [Carnes] *noticed a lead over the superb downstream sump, but it was impossible to reach.*"

This was our primary goal for the day. Well back from the sump (on the right hand wall when facing the sump) we aided up the wall and Gavin crawled along the ledge to directly over the sump but no lead was forthcoming. Marks along the ledge suggested that someone had already been there before. What a shame they didn't document it and save us the trouble!

Gavin and I were just finishing up when the other four started dropping in. We left them lunching at the sump with the tune of *Smoke on the Water* being hummed … We wanted to check out the horizontal extensions from the base of the second last pitch. By traversing the narrow ledge from the bottom of the pitch one could avoid the down and then up otherwise required. The passage then chokes at this level and a climb up breaks out into very large passage. The roof of this chamber is all sandy/gravelly fill hanging precariously

10 m above your head. The only stuff that isn't hanging precariously is that which has already fallen to the ground. The passage eventually reduces in size and closes down to two narrow slots issuing drafts about 10 m apart. The tighter horizontal one tickled my fancy so I took all SRT gear off and wriggled through. Gavin was probably not going to fit so he waited. A small chamber presented several leads (up, down, sideways) so I set about checking them all. After lots of tortuous squeezing I found the draft again and followed it along some wide crawling passage until I was in ear shot of Gavin again. I had reappeared at the other slot at the end of the large passage! Gavin entered this one, happy that he didn't have to come through the alternative entrance and we continued looking. After many more metres of groveling Gavin climbed up and broke into a moderate sized chamber well decorated with flowstone and some cave pearls. It was difficult to tell if people had been there before. There was certainly evidence of exploration in the earlier parts of the crawls but no obvious damage could be seen in this chamber and it was pretty delicate. We had become unnerved by all the loose rock in these crawls so we ignored the leads and headed out to catch up with the others. It's worth another look in this section.

The others had stripped the bottom pitch and we headed up derigging Ultimate Man and Pel Mel. Janine had waited here and with Ric she helped haul a few bags of stuff up Pandemonium Rift. Gavin and I got temporarily displaced on Pandemonium Rift and found ourselves out in the middle of no-where wondering where the way on was. Some adjustments put us back on track.

The only other thing of note was the almost half chewed through tape on the first pitch. We would recommend a wire trace be used on this anchor in future!

Reference:

HUME, N. 1984 Sunday 22 April, Pendant Pot survey, push and derig trip. *Speleo Spiel,* 198:7-8

IB-166 Oh Yeh

Matt Cracknell

23 July 2006

Party: Matt Cracknell, Dale Pregnell, Grant Roberts, Tony Veness

We rocked up to the cave late morning and I proceeded to faff around getting the rigging just right. The two pitches total approximately 40 m and even though we had 60 m of rope I was a little generous with the loops in the bunny ears and the long tie-back, thus we ran out of rope. This worked out fine because after rigging the second pitch with its redirect I planned to head out and help the others pass the rebelay on the first pitch. An extra sling or two to the nearest sturdy trees and we were in business.

Immediately at the top of the second pitch one notices a large moonmilk sediment flow that covers a wall and runs the whole length of the pitch. At the bottom the cave opens into a small but interesting rifting chamber. Below the pitch is a scattered pile of sub-fossils including skulls and jaw bones of both marsupial herbivores and carnivores mixed with the shells of land snails. These deposits are accompanied by pebbles and vegetable matter all cemented together in calcite. The floor grades into fine sediment with drip holes and water channels above which is a magnificent cluster of long straws, many exceeding 3 m in length.

Straw cluster at the bottom of Oh Yeh.

Other Exciting Stuff

An Ode to *The Descent*

Serena Benjamin

The fire was warm
The salsa was hot
When we all met at Alan's
To watch *The Descent* that he'd got

After chit chat and nibblies
We gathered around
To watch six young ladies
Venture underground

As they descended into a sinkhole
We laughed at their gear
But it soon was apparent
They had much more to fear

That some had a Duo
Signaled their doom
As one by one
Critters appeared from the gloom

Running and panic
An ice axe and gore
The body count soon mounted
And blood hit the floor

Thus entertained
We all thought it was fun
To watch a caving movie
With a survival rate of none

So at the end of the night
The moral it would seem
Is don't go exploration caving
With beginners on the team

60th Anniversary Dinner – RSVP to Alan by August 31. See "Stuff 'n Stuff" for details.

Lame Caving Holiday

Matt Cracknell

I recently spent a week travelling in South-East South Australia and Western Victoria. I focused my sightseeing on places of geological and geomorphological interest, many of which had no caves at all - lame! However, I did manage to visit several tourist caves where I was the tourist and not the guide.

A brief sojourn to the South Australian Museum to inspect their Proterozoic fossil display full of Stomatolites, Ediacaran metazoans and other fascinating stuff filled most of my first morning (Pledge 1999). This was followed by a few hours spent at The Hallet Cove Conservation Park ~25 km south of Adelaide. This particular site displays evidence of three major glaciations nested with other landforms that are exposed by present coastal processes (Giesecke 1999).

Edicaran sandstone pavement display at the S.A. Museum. The fossils have left an imprint on the underside (opposite side) of this bed.

Beyond there I ventured on to The Coorong National Park containing a thin coastal strip, the Young Husband Peninsula that stretches from the mouth of the not-so 'mighty' Murray River in the north to the beginning of the Limestone Coast around Kingston in the south, a total length of about 150 km and a width of no more than 5 km. The park features a series of parallel coastal dunes and inter-dunal lagoons with areas of ephemeral lakes and mud flats that seasonally fill with groundwater. No 'real' caves here but plenty of dune karst consisting of a hardened calcareous surface layer; this had formed from repeated saturation and evaporation of dune surfaces during the last interglacial effectively protecting the unconsolidated sands beneath from wind and water. Occasionally, where the hard surface had been breached, small collapse sinkholes could be seen and in other places the lower layers of dunes were exposed allowing erosion to create small voids.

Dune karst cavity in The Coorong National Park at Parnka Point

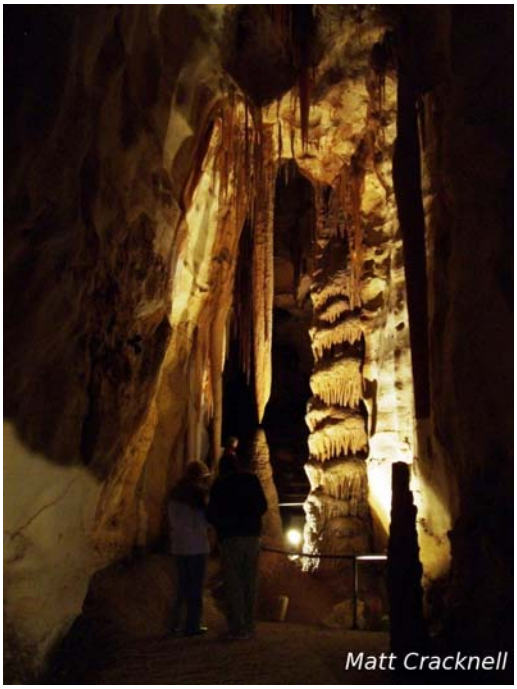
For me the most significant landforms in the area were the Carbonate Lakes. These shallow, ephemeral lakes were actively precipitating magnesium and calcium carbonates, dolomite, magnesite, hydromagnesite and aragonite. Such active precipitational environments of dolomite are rare in today's world as is the unique chemistry of these particular lakes, many supporting habitats for stromatolites (Kulske 1996). I was watching the creation of future karstic rocks in chalky-white coastal lake beds.

Carbonate Lake in The Coorong National Park.

Next on the agenda was the first of my many free cave tours. Tantanoola Cave is a relict sea cave eroded in a dolomite outcrop ~25 km north of Mt Gambier, small in size but heavily decorated. The most interesting aspects of the cave were the large breaks in some of the columns caused by earth movement from recent (>4000 yrs) local volcanic activity and areas of marine deposits in-situ on the walls. Outside the cave stranded sea cliffs now 70 m above current sea level stand proudly over relict coastal dunes covered in pine plantations to the west, south, east and north.

Relict sea cliffs and dunes at Tantanoola Cave Reserve.

Having broadened my cultural perspectives at a local football match contested by the Mt Burr Mozzies (no joke) and the Tantanoola Tigers in the driving rain, I felt I was in need of some more karst action. The tour for the Princess Margaret Rose Cave, situated just inside the Glenelg River National Park, got off to a great start with the guide's introduction warning us of the dangers of touching the cave; he looked and sounded like he was going to punch us. Once he was assured that we, the lowly tourists, were going to respect the cave we ventured in for a splendid tour all about wedding cakes and other related wonders of the underground world. In reality the cave had developed as a joint controlled linear river passage through which the Glenelg River, now several tens of metres below us in the Nelson Gorge, had flowed. A possum skeleton, some transparent and 'mysterious' helictites, calcified flood debris and successive stream levels etched into the cave walls topped off a great tour.



The Wedding Cake and tourists in Princess Margaret Rose Cave.

In the Mt Gambier region I visited some cenotes that are a feature of the area: Caroline Sinkhole, Hell Hole, Goulden Waterhole and Little Blue Lake. I couldn't resist chatting to a group of Victorian cave divers at Little Blue Lake. They were surprised to hear that Tasmanian caves were not all submerged and that they contain active stream systems. These sinkholes had vivid evidence of the impacts that current agriculture and forest practices are having on regional water tables. There had been an overall drop of about 2 m in the water table in the last 10-15 years from pivot irrigation systems, keeping the dairy farmers' fields lush and green but contributing to increased evapo-transpiration and a horrifying amount of land converted over to plantations of *Pinus radiata*. Impacts on water quality were eventuating from the dumping of rubbish directly into caves, seen at Hells Hole, and nutrient rich runoff from farms and urban areas that cause algal blooms in summer.

Goulden Waterhole, South of Mt Gambier showing evidence of the drop in regional water table. Top of sink to water level is ~5 m.

Close to Mt Gambier were some of Australia's most recent volcanoes, not very karsty I know but I did have a good time looking at ash, scoria and maar [*Greg will be excited. Ed.*]. Quite often the associated pyroclastic deposits contained fragments of rock resembling marble. These had evidently been cooked and ejected from the limestone as lava and gas burst through. I did see one very small lava tube on the southern flank of the Mt Shan(c)k crater rim. *[Now that IS exciting – Sub-Ed.]*

Heading north to Naracoorte Caves I managed to squeeze in four cave tours in one morning with a stop off at the fossil lab. just for good measure. These caves had formed in Lower Tertiary Gambier Limestone during the maximum sea level height of the Middle Pleistocene. A modern analogy for this cave development can be found in the processes present today at The Coorong coastal dunes. Blanche Cave had awesome scalloped and fluted ceilings created by slow moving ground water. The most unique aspect of Naracoorte Caves and the reason for their WHA listing are the rich and well preserved sub-fossil deposits that encompass 500,000 years of animal life. Many of the sub-fossil deposits are found in 'soil cones', large piles of soil and organic matter (plus dead things) fallen through solution cavities that extend

down from small surface openings. *Thylacoleo carnifex* (large marsupial carnivore with razor-like teeth that will give you nightmares), *Procoptodon goliah* (200 kg kangaroo with a nose like a bulldog), *Diprotodon australis* (biggest marsupial ever, weighing over two tonnes) and *Wonambi naracoortensis* (5-6 m long snake that hid in the caves) were constant reminders of the now-extinct megafauna that roamed this area (National Parks & Wildlife SA 2002).

Mt Shan[c]k mini lava tube on crater rim, the tube is approximately 30 cm in height.

From Naracoorte I traveled across the border into Western Victoria and on to Mt Arapiles/Tooan State Park where I met up with some UTAS climbing club members. The rock here is part of the Grampians Group Silurian marine/fluvial sandstones and conglomerates; well known for its world class rock-climbing and less well known for its caves, or should I say overhangs [*Carparks, perhaps. Ed.*]. I spent a morning walking about the place, inspecting rocks and surveying two overhangs/rock shelters at Melville 'Cave' on the southern bluff of the Mt Arapiles outcrop. These eroded rock features were probably initiated by aeolian and fluvial processes exploiting joints and faults caused by unloading of the rock unit. Evidence for this was seen in the fluid (air and water) sculptured sandstone ceilings, in the many intersecting joints present in overhang 1 and the probable fault seen in overhang 2. [*Surveys of these two 'overhangs' appear on pages 18 and 19 of this issue. Ed.*]

The last place I visited was the uplifted moderately dipping beds of Silurian quartz-arenite known as the Grampians National Park or 'Gariwerd' to the Jardwadjai clan (Cayley *et al.* 2002). I stayed the night at Billimina campground and walked to nearby rock shelters adorned with artwork from many thousands of years ago. The shelters had formed along sandstone beds rich in salt that precipitated onto rock surfaces and accelerated the weathering of these surfaces.

During a thunderstorm in January 2006 a bush fire started and spread through a large proportion of the park to the west of Halls Gap including the upper catchment of the Glenelg River. The vegetation was recovering from this event, *Eucalyptus* trees were sprouting shoots from epicormic buds and some *Xanthorrhoea australis* (Grass-Tree) had emerging flower stalks. Parks Victoria had closed access to many of the unsealed roads and walking tracks because of the risk to vulnerable soils and vegetation along with public hazards from damaged track infrastructure, falling trees and an unstable landscape.

Melville Cave overhang 1 (right) and Melville Cave overhang 2 (left) in the South of the Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park showing unloading joining of the outcrop that possibly initiated the caves' development.

It was so nice to see something a little bit un-Tasmanian; 1600 km of driving and no dolerite; warm (and some flooded) caves with lots of very big dead things in them; flat land (lots of it); and a young volcanic province. I might have to do it again sometime.

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Bunton's World of Caves and Karst – Part 1: North America

Stephen Bunton

"The more you know about art the more you appreciate it" The same could be said for caves and karst. Whilst not specifically going on a caving holiday during our Long Service Leave, it was surprising how often caves and karst cropped up - as it were.

The basic plan for the first part of our trip was to go skiing in Canada and the United States – not just because that's fun but also in order to acclimatise for backpacking in the high Andes. The main objective was the surreal landscape of the Atacama Desert, the driest desert in the world (no caves of course!). We then returned from Lima via Costa Rica to experience some of the greatest biodiversity on this planet.

The Canadian Rockies

I never gave it much thought but the incredible horizontal strata that you see in the spectacular photos of the Canadian Rockies are beds of limestone. We flew into Calgary and bussed to Jasper along the Icefields Parkway, supposedly the most scenic road in the world. It should have been stunning in winter but alas it snowed; good for skiing but no views. The point where there is the heaviest accumulation of snow is on the Columbia Icefield and Canada's most famous cave, Castlegard, ends in an iceplug which is the under-surface of the glacier. A few significant entrances were visible, on the few days that we could see the cliffs on the mountains above the road.

Our first close-up view of the Rockies revealed the clash of land-uses that karst suffers worldwide. Before you reach Canmore there is a giant limestone quarry removing a significant sized hill and the adjacent ridge. Calgary is one of the world's fastest growing cities, riding the back of the booming petroleum industry and while it lasts, skyscrapers and oversized American homes keep sprouting out of the prairie.

The two-edged sword of tourism is the major industry in the area and we are not averse to taking the odd guided trip. We visited Maligne Canyon and saw a few intrepid ice-climbers testing themselves on the iced-up waterfalls. The canyon flows a gusher in summer but not in winter because there is no run-off from the snow. The canyon is part of an intriguing karst system which includes Maligne Lake and Medicine Lake. Maligne Lake is one of North America's largest volume lakes. It drains into Medicine Lake which gets its name from a poor translation of magic lake. (In Native American it was the "medicine man" who knew the magic.) Medicine Lake has no surface outflow; it drains through the limestone and during winter with no inflow, it magically disappears. This is thought to be the world's largest karst hydrological system. Medicine Lake has been dye-traced with Rhodamine to several lakes up to 250 km away to the north!

There were caves in the canyon but I didn't venture in. Standing in front of them is warmer than the surrounding countryside since you get a bit of warm air emerging. The caves are also humid and they sometimes breathe "steam" or they are easily recognisable by the frost which builds up around their entrance as the humid air freezes. Many of the iced waterfalls that attract serious ice climbers to this part of the Rockies are formed from the seepage from caves.

In the bookstore at Jasper there was a guide to caves of the Rocky Mountains. Here I found that we had visited Mouse Cave. It consisted of about 30 m of horizontal passage. I didn't buy the book since I didn't know when, if ever, I'd get back to these parts. If you wanted to go caving here it would be best in winter because of the fact that there is no meltwater entering the caves and so they are drier and safer. This then means there is a clash with the ski season and caving sounds much more hard-core – trudging off in search of caves at 10-20 degrees below zero. Mind you it is noticeably warmer when you do arrive at the cave itself. They are a few degrees above zero and the water is about 4 degrees!

Banff itself is famous for its hot springs where groundwater emerges at about 38 degrees and lounging around in these, sulfurous as they are, is quite pleasant when the air temperature is well below zero.

The next leg of our skiing trip was to Aspen in Colorado where again we would encounter hot springs. Aspen is on the west side of the Rockies and "down valley" is the start of the Colorado Plateau. The strata which make up the Colorado Plateau are most commonly viewed in photos of the Grand Canyon and some of these horizontal layers are limestone. As you drive from Denver airport to Aspen you cross two high passes through the Rockies and then encounter the Colorado Plateau by way of Interstate 70 which descends Glenwood Canyon. The road here is a bit of an engineering feat (quite unlike the Tasman Highway!). It carries an incredible amount of heavy traffic through very difficult terrain down a narrow rocky canyon containing a river which meanders wall to wall.

We spent a few nights down valley at Glenwood Springs because it's too expensive to stay in Aspen. There is a tourist cave in Glenwood Springs which is accessed via a gondola (pronounce "gorn Dohler"!) At an arm and a leg it was too expensive for us and with a name like The Fairy Cave we thought we'd puke anyway. The best bit is that there is a window out from the lower depths of the cave where you can overlook the suspension bridges of the interstate snaking down the canyon. There are, as the name suggests, hot springs in Glenwood Springs. These only cost a fortune to get into rather than a king's ransom. By far and away the most interesting attraction in this neck of the woods is "the vapour cave" and it's free.

Right beside the interstate is a hot spring so hot that there is no longer any water in it. Well, this is not quite true; it is so hot the water comes out as steam! It's a national monument so you can visit it for free. This is quite incongruous because

it is also the site of a commercial operation. Inside the entrance is the reception for a sauna, steam-room and massage parlour which all cost a fortune - in the land of the free you pay dearly for everything! If you want to see the caves you just tell them that you are going to see the caves and walk in and down and around the sculpted out vaults. This was rather interesting since every so often you encounter people dressed only in bath towels sitting or reclining on rock slabs, sweating profusely in the semi-gloom. None of them sweated as much as we did, however!

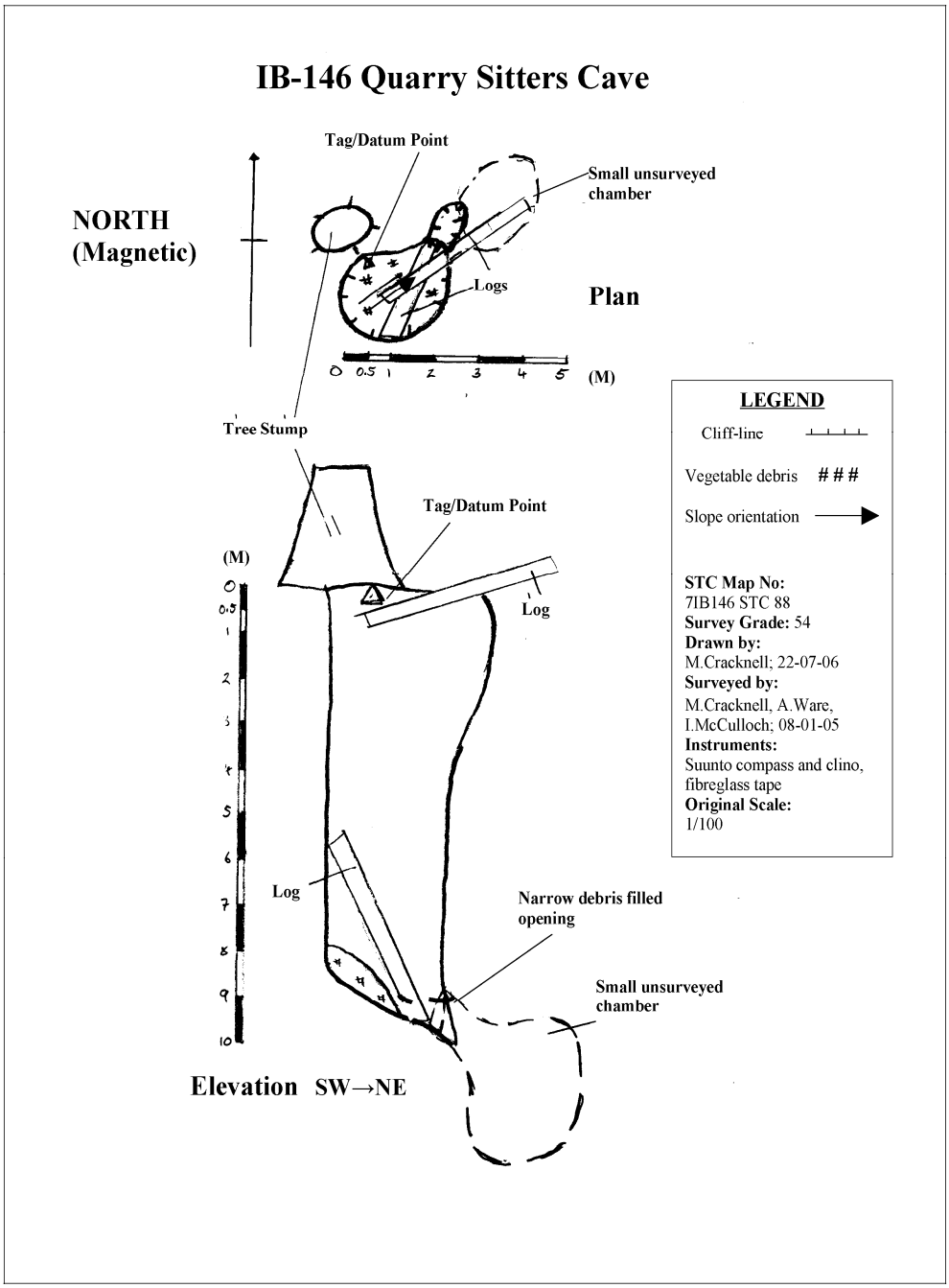
Because we didn't pay, they couldn't mind our warm jackets and we had to carry them. We could have hired a locker but we knew our visit would be short-lived. It was hot, you could drown in the humidity and the sulfurous air made this place a good imitation of hell, unless you are one of those people who really like their steam rooms. Even so this one was pretty challenging. We exited the cave into the cold winter air and waited for our damp hair and clothing to freeze, which they did almost immediately.

Miscellaneous Cave Surveys by Matt Cracknell:

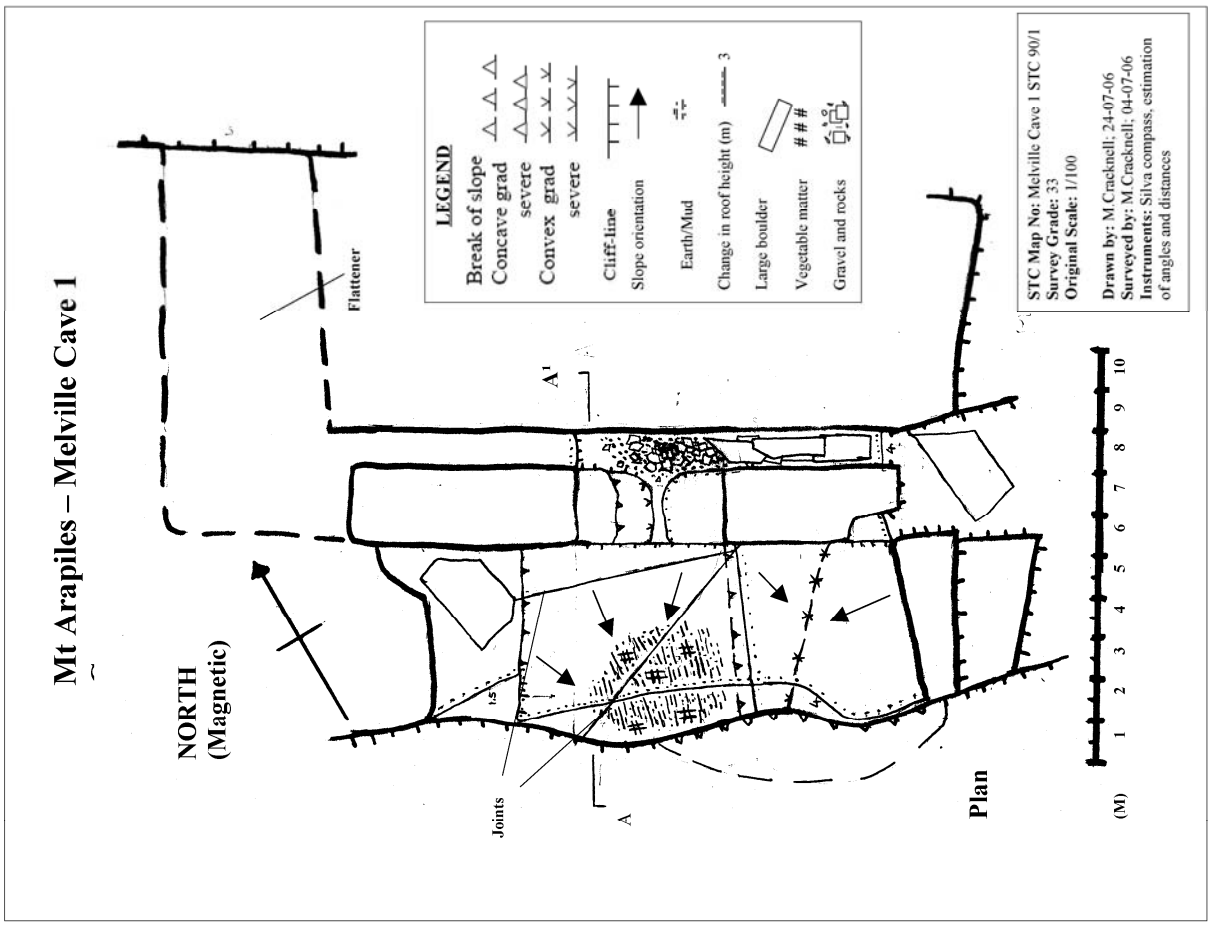
Data for IB-146 and IB-147 were collected on January 8 2005. Trip reports for this day have not been presented to or published in *Speleo Spiel* [*Tisk, tisk. Ed.*]

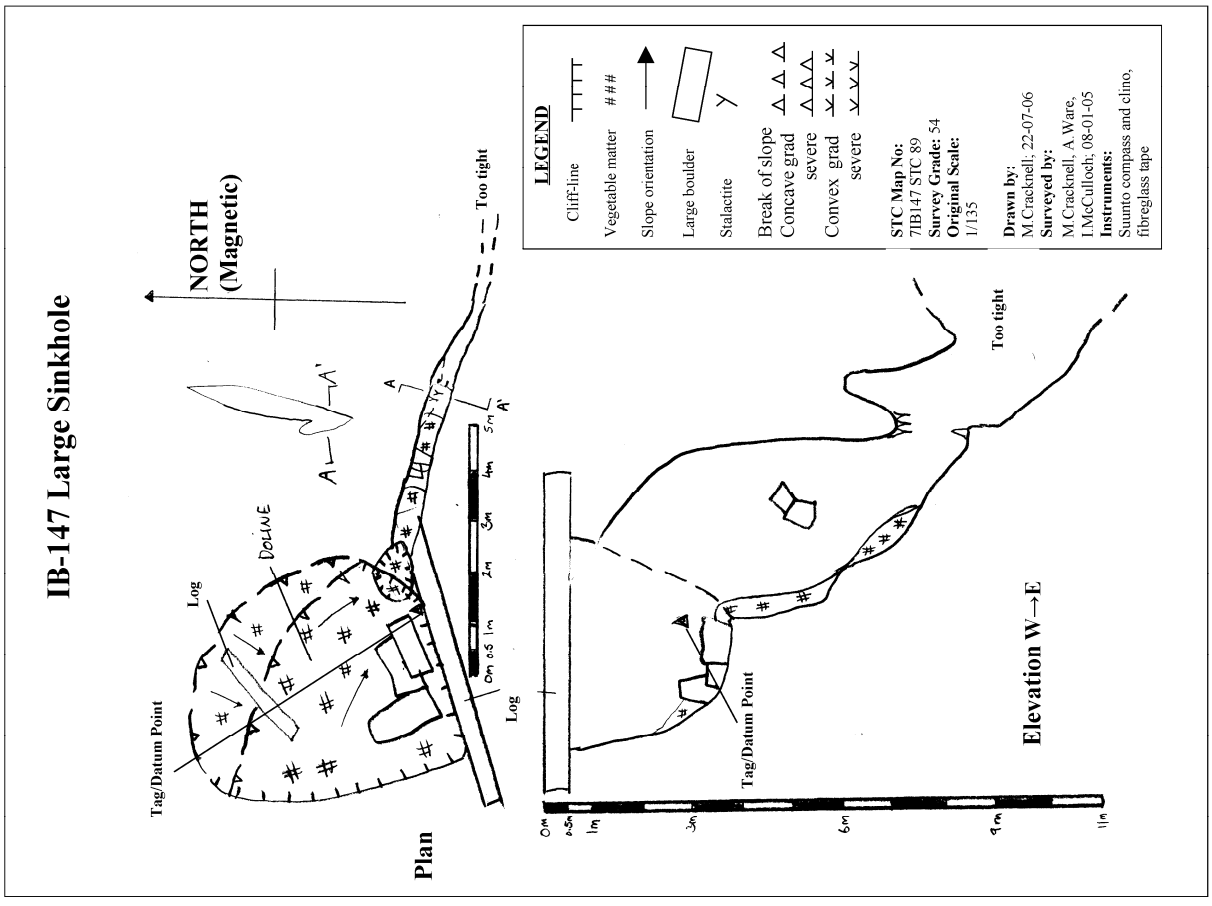
Melville Caves 1 and 2 maps accompany the article on page 13.

[*I am concerned that we are stooping to the levels of SSS with this sandstone rubbish and it pains me to publish such material. Ed.*] [*Just get on with it, quit yer whinging and stop being so narrow-minded about what constitutes a cave – Sub-Ed.*]



60th Anniversary Dinner – RSVP to Alan by August 31. See "Stuff 'n Stuff" for details.





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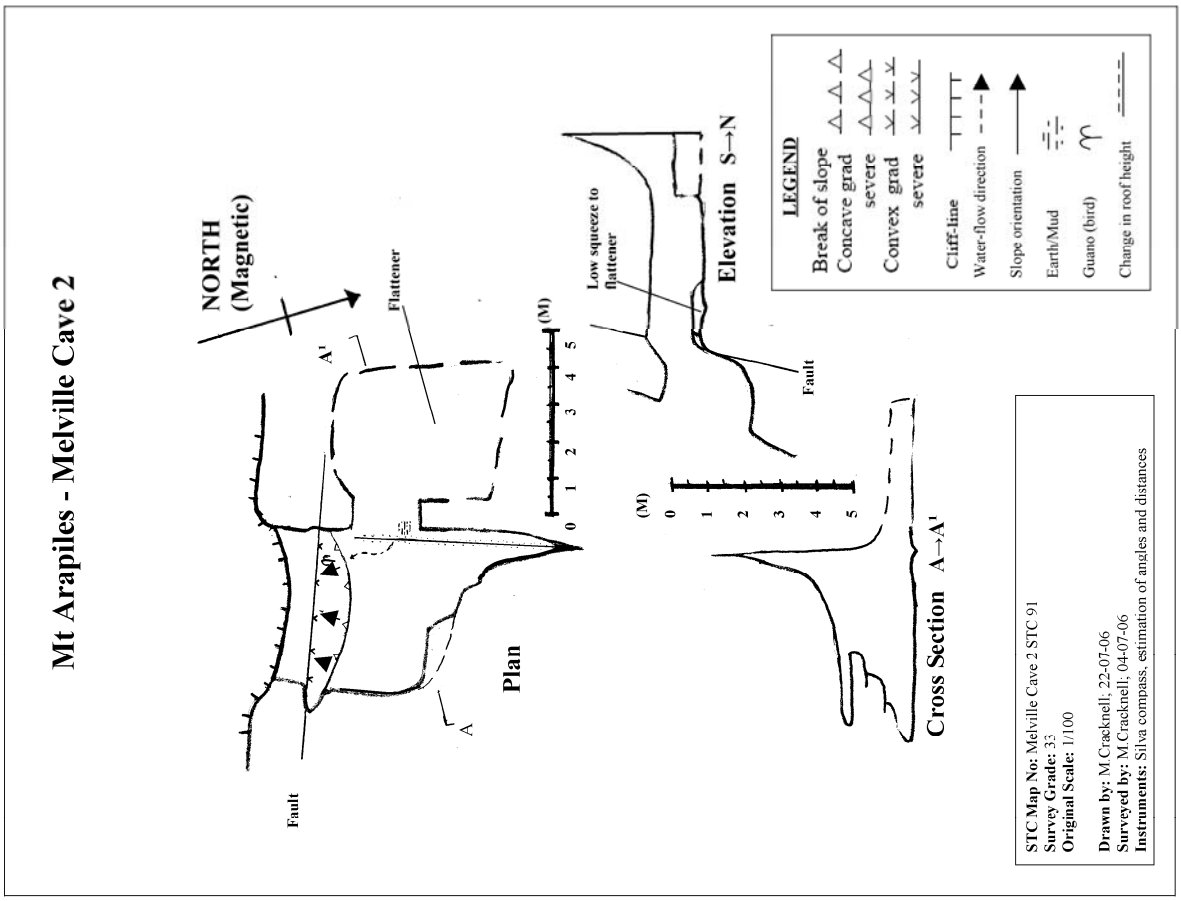

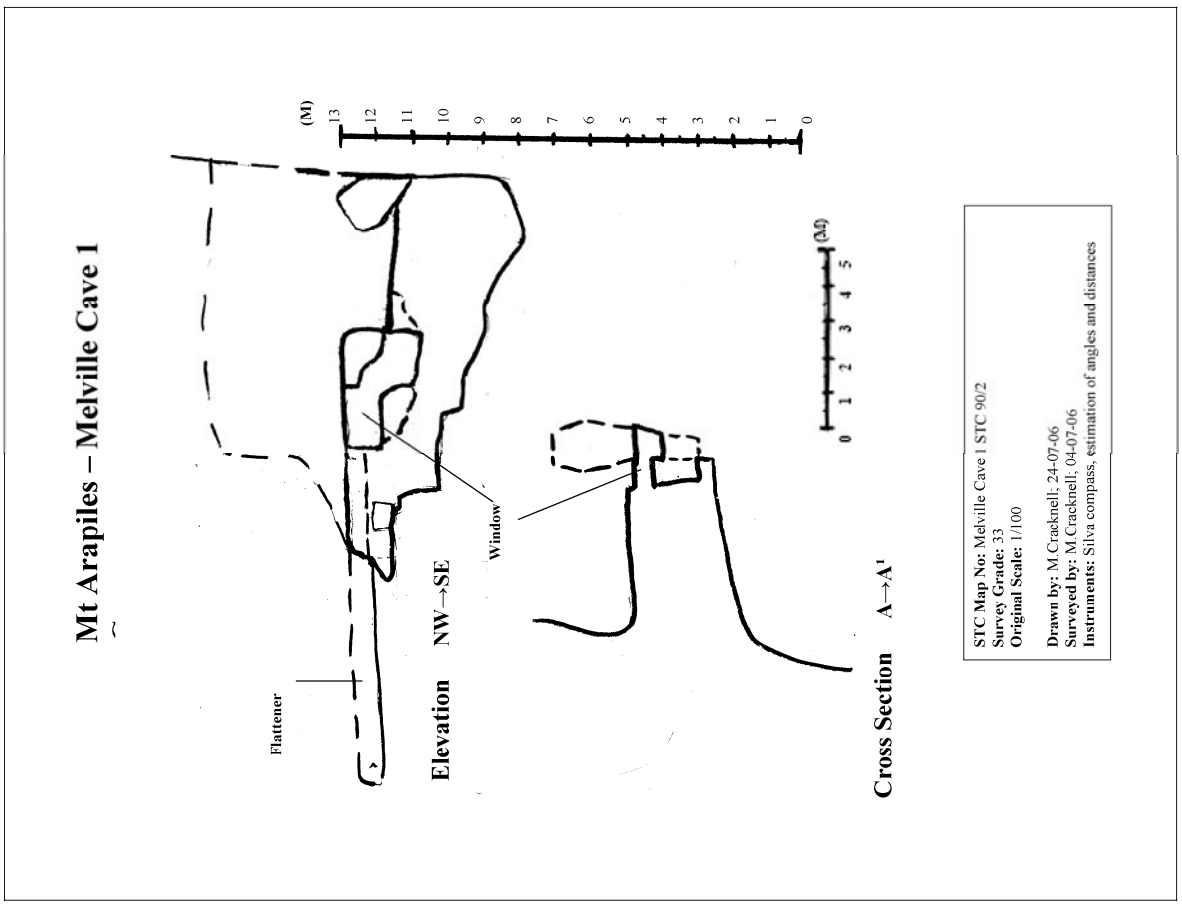

60th Anniversary Dinner – RSVP to Alan by August 31. See "Stuff 'n Stuff" for details.

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