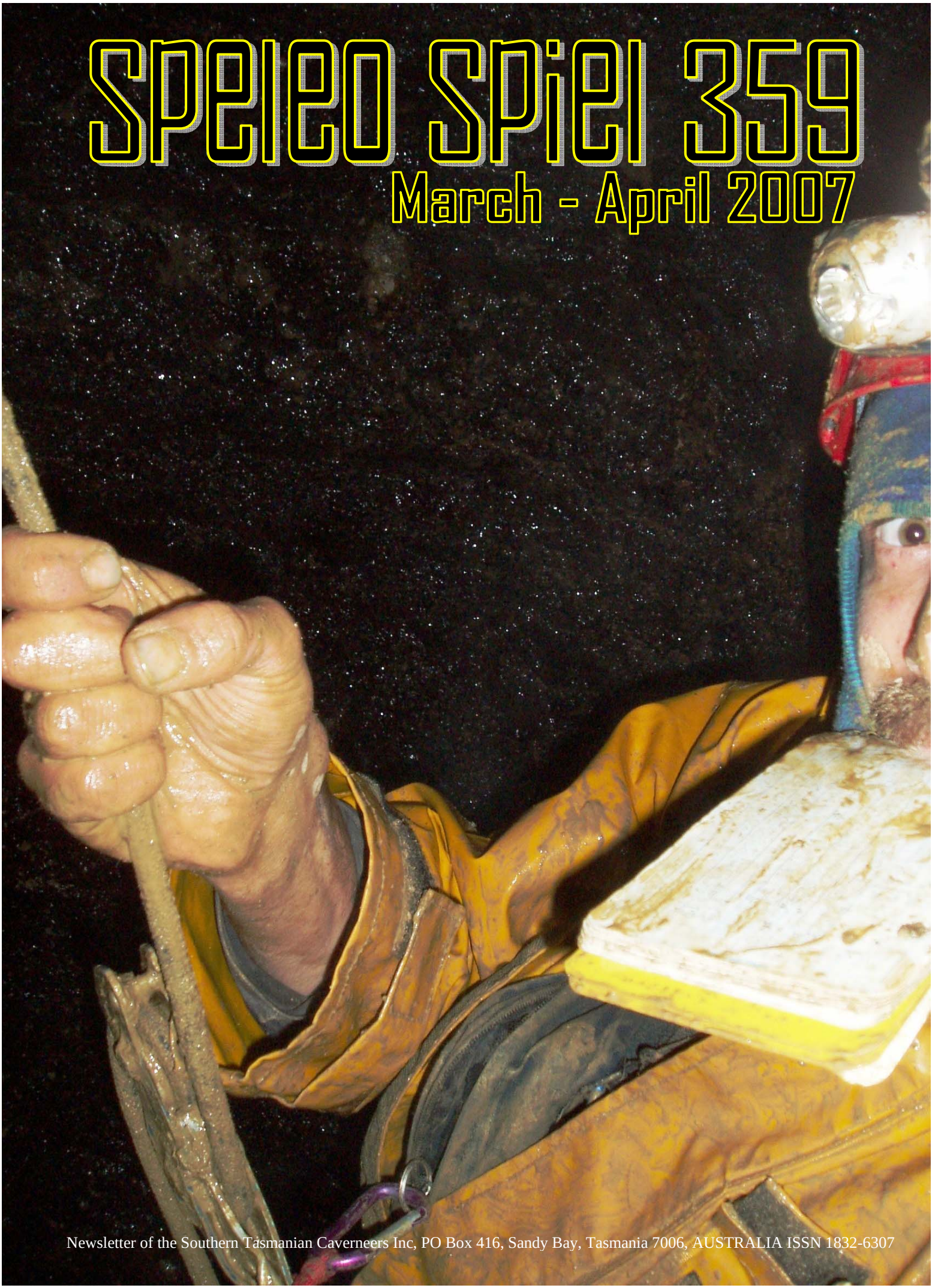
# Speleo Spiel 359

## March - April 2007



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

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**Front Cover:** Self portrait – Matt eating his notebook in JF-270 Tachycardia (photo by Matt Cracknell)


# Speleo Spiel

*Newsletter of the*
***Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated***
*PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006*
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## Issue No. 359, Mar. - Apr. 2007


## 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.

## Editorial

For once I'm lost for words. Too many other things to do to even consider attempting to formulate something witty for an editorial. Just coming up with that previous sentence wasted too much time.

Alan Jackson

## Stuff 'n Stuff

**CAVES ON MARS –** subscribers to Ozcavers will have no doubt noticed that NASA has found some things that look suspiciously like cave entrances on the surface of Mars – some very large and very deep. At least that gives us a worthwhile reason for considering visiting the red planet. Although the new cave prospects are just as good, if not better, up the Florentine and it won't cost several billion dollars a trip to get there (but with the price of oil always on the up …)

***SOUTHERN CAVER* 63 –** Our illustrious librarian/archivist, Greg Middleton, has produced another *Southern Caver*. This one contains the Newdegate Cave Rehabilitation Plan prepared by Houshold and Bradley for Parks & Wildlife in 1994, which had not been published. As is the norm with the new line of *SC*s, hard copies will not be distributed to all and sundry. Either print your own or ask Alan nicely and he might get one run off at the Xerox Shop at cost price. Electronic copies are available on the STC website.

**IN RESPONSE TO** Ed's query last *Spiel*: It's been very quick, but Dion and Amy are proud to announce their new arrivals ... three belted galloway calves - two girls and a boy. Names at this stage are C1, C2 and C3. *Amy Robertson.*

**HELLO FROM YOUR FRIENDLY (ANNOYING) TREASURER.** If you were a financial STC member in the 2006 year, then I'd like to now invite you to renew your membership through to 31 March 2008. Early-bird rates (< 31st May) including ASF membership are:

Household - $150

Single - $85

Student/junior - $65

Prospective (3-month) - $30

Active life member - $45 (we pay an extra $23 to ASF for you)

Inactive life member - $0 (we pay your $23 to ASF)

ASF-exempt categories are below:

ASF-exempt single - $15

ASF-exempt prospective - $10

Armchair caver - $15

For an additional $15, Alan will send you printed copies of the *Speleo Spiel* for a year. Non-member *Spiel* subscribers can get the mag for $25 per year.

Please forward your payments either by mail to STC at PO Box 416, Sandy Bay TAS 7006, or to the 'Southern Tasmanian Caverneers' account at the Commonwealth Bank, BSB 067000, account number 10162123. Any queries, send me an email or give me a call.

If depositing through the bank, please send me an email to confirm who the $ is from - I currently have unclaimed amounts from 30/3 and 11/4 and am keen to hear from anyone who renewed their membership on those dates!

Thanking you in anticipation. *Amy Robertson.*

# Trip Reports

## MC-130 Devils Pot and MC-131/132 Devils Anastomosis through-trip

***Sarah Gilbert***

**3 March 2007**

**Party:** Serena Benjamin, Sarah Gilbert, Janine McKinnon, Tom Porritt, Geoff Wise

Setting out from the Marakoopa Cave car park at around 10:30 am, we slogged up the hill and stopped en route for some sight-seeing at the impressive Devils Earhole doline. After sorting out our gear at the top of Devils Pot, the ten of us split into two groups for the through trip. Serena and Janine rigged the first pitch and we headed down into Devils Pot, with the novelty of a 30 m pitch in complete daylight. We stopped for a short while to gaze at the fern-surrounded waterfall plunging into the depths below. Geoff decided to only go down the first pitch, partly to soak up the atmosphere and photograph to his heart's content, and partly so he didn't have to lug his camera through the rest of the cave. He then went back up the same way to meet up with the rest of us later in the afternoon.

Again with Serena and Janine rigging, we headed on down the second pitch. After pausing to untangle myself on the rebelay, we met up at the bottom with the other group going the opposite way. We stopped for a bit of lunch and


*Geoff Wise and the entrance to Devils Pot*

a chat about the routes ahead, then headed up into Anastomosis through the long, nasty, rather tight pitch (though it was not nearly as bad as the down party had made it out to be). At the top we were greeted by some impressive flowstone, straws and a small pool of cave pearls in the floor. We made our way onwards and outwards past more flowstone and straws, and scrambled

up the last short pitch/handline. We met the others at the top of Devils Pot at about 3:30 pm, with plenty of time for a hot shower and a cold beer back at camp.

## MC-130 Devils Pot Rigging Guide (The Dry Way.)

***Ric Tunney***

P1

Pitch head is last soil-filled chute on LHS of doline.

11 m approach rope.

40 m rope. Belay around trees on RHS at top of chute. Rebelay on RHS at top of vertical drop. Rebelay halfway down vertical drop.

P2

33 m rope.

Long trace to belay around flake on RHS, 10 m back from drop. Back-up with another long trace around another flake nearby.

Rebelay through small thread LHS 2 m below top of vertical drop. Requires 6 mm hero loop or a 25 mm tape can just squeeze through.

(There is another route with two pitches to the bottom following the streamway.)

MC-131 Devils Anastomosis Rigging Guide

P1

20 m handline.

Belay in roof 2 m before pitch. Rebelay around bollard on LHS 2 m down. Rebelay around bollard on LHS 4 m above bottom.

P2

61 m rope.

Back-up to small bollard LHS 4 m before pitch head.

Belay is 4 m climb above pitch head. Long tape useful here.

Redirection on RHS about 3 m down, 2 m above the tight bit, will give a clear drop through the tight bit.

Bypass first obvious large chock stone.

Long tape to rebelay on flake on LHS above lovely chock stone about half-way down pitch. This chock stone is about 4 m off the vertical drop, so both parts of pitch can be used at once.

Rebelay through thread 5 m further down.

Notes:

1. Rope lengths given are rather liberal. For each pitch there were around 3 m spare at the bottom.
2. All directions facing downstream (opposite to direction facing when abseiling).

## JF-270 Tachycardia – rigging to the bottom

***Alan Jackson***

**10 March 2007**

**Party:** Matt Cracknell, Alan Jackson

With three overflowing packs of rope, Matt and I headed for the bottom of Tachy. The cave needed rigging from the 150 m mark down (i.e. Art Deco, the littlies and Bermuda Triangle pitches). About five hours later we made it after a sedate trip down during which Matt recorded various meteorological parameters. I think it was 100% humidity everywhere and the lowest temperature recorded was 7.1° C at the -370 m mark (i.e. more or less at the bottom).

It took about three hours to struggle out. On Bermuda I managed to dislodge a piece of rotten wall which hit Matt on the helmet from 45 m and tore one of his lights off. No cerebral damage done, thankfully.

The cave is now rigged and ready for tourist and exploratory trips alike.

## MC-13 Croesus Cave

***Stephen Bunton***

**18 March 2007**

**Party:** Present: Stephen and Grace Bunton, Dave Butler and Cathie Plowman (both NC).

When Grace saw some of the photos which were shown at the Mt Gambier ASF Conference, she asked if we could visit Croesus Cave. I said we could and promptly applied for a permit. I was surprised that no-one else from STC was interested so I opened the trip up to some northern cavers and was pleased to have Dave and Cathie come along.

I planned the trip for the day after my four monthly migration to the north of the State for the Tasmanian Speleological Liaison Council meeting. Here I chew the fat with the other caving clubs, and there was a lot of it, not just on the mixed grill at the Deloraine Pub but with matters managerial most of which pertain to Mole Creek. If you'd like to buy some karst, for conservation reasons there's some on the market! Buying caves might be the only way to guarantee you know what's there, that you can access them easily and that they will be looked after.

After the meeting, Grace and I escaped to Wet Cave campsite and crashed in the tin tent. Next morning was frightfully cold for autumn; later we were to see frost on the ground, in the shade along the Marakoopa straight. Looking around we saw that Mole Creek was dry because of the drought, so before departing we visited the entrance of Wet Cave.

We then collected the Croesus Cave key from Rob Buck, the Ranger-in-Charge at Mole Creek Karst National Park, and proceeded to the cave. It didn't take long to trog up, slightly longer to find the cave and slightly longer again to wrestle with the gate. However, relocking it is the most time consuming of all! Inside the cave there was a lot of platypus poo, although we didn't see the resident platypus itself. We waded upstream looking at the pretties and getting progressively wetter as the pools became progressively deeper. Dave showed me a neat little bypass to the deepest pool which was a bonus. We headed as far as just beyond the Golden Stairs before eating a munchie bar and heading for home.

On the way back we gave Grace's digital camera a work out. Cathie was crowing appreciatively that she had never enjoyed this cave so much. She is so effervescent and enthusiastic which is a contrast to the quietly spoken Dave and the slightly cynical Steve... long caves and pretties are alright but they're not like the real thing; all walls, no roofs and no floors! (It's a toss up between this cave and Kubla as to where Andrew Pavey got the idea for his now famous quote "I've walked on better flowstone than that!" - which he'd trot out as a put down at the odd slideshow of mediocre formation.) The best bit for me was that I had forgotten about the incredible number and size of cave pearls in the streamway. (In future I can now say "I've walked on better cave pearls than that!" - but I won't).

Grace was rather quiet throughout the trip and I wondered whether it was all worth it. Once we got in the car and headed for home she commented "That was really great dad, thanks." Somehow I wonder if the cold cave was as good as the hot chips at the Mole Creek shop. In the end it was a really good three hours' trip.

## Surface surveying and some new holes behind JF-337

***Alan Jackson***

**24 March 2007**

**Party:** Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson

I found a sucker prepared to help me tidy up our crappy-caves side-project that's been going on up on the ridge behind JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot. No one likes surface surveying (except maybe Madphil) so my thanks go to Serena for helping me get a bit more done.

The loose plan for the day was to:

- surface survey from JF-337 to a marked tree previously surveyed in during our traverse between JF-407 Wait Cave and JF-289 (see *Speleo Spiel* 355 – page 4 for report),
- JF-284 Car Park Cave III and JF-285 would be surveyed in on the way,
- tag and then survey in White Wedding (one of the new caves Gavin found on a recent bash in the area – *SS*358 page 5),
- followed by a further walk to JF-289 to drop and survey/sketch it, tagging and surveying in the other new hole we found recently on the way.

We achieved some of our goals.

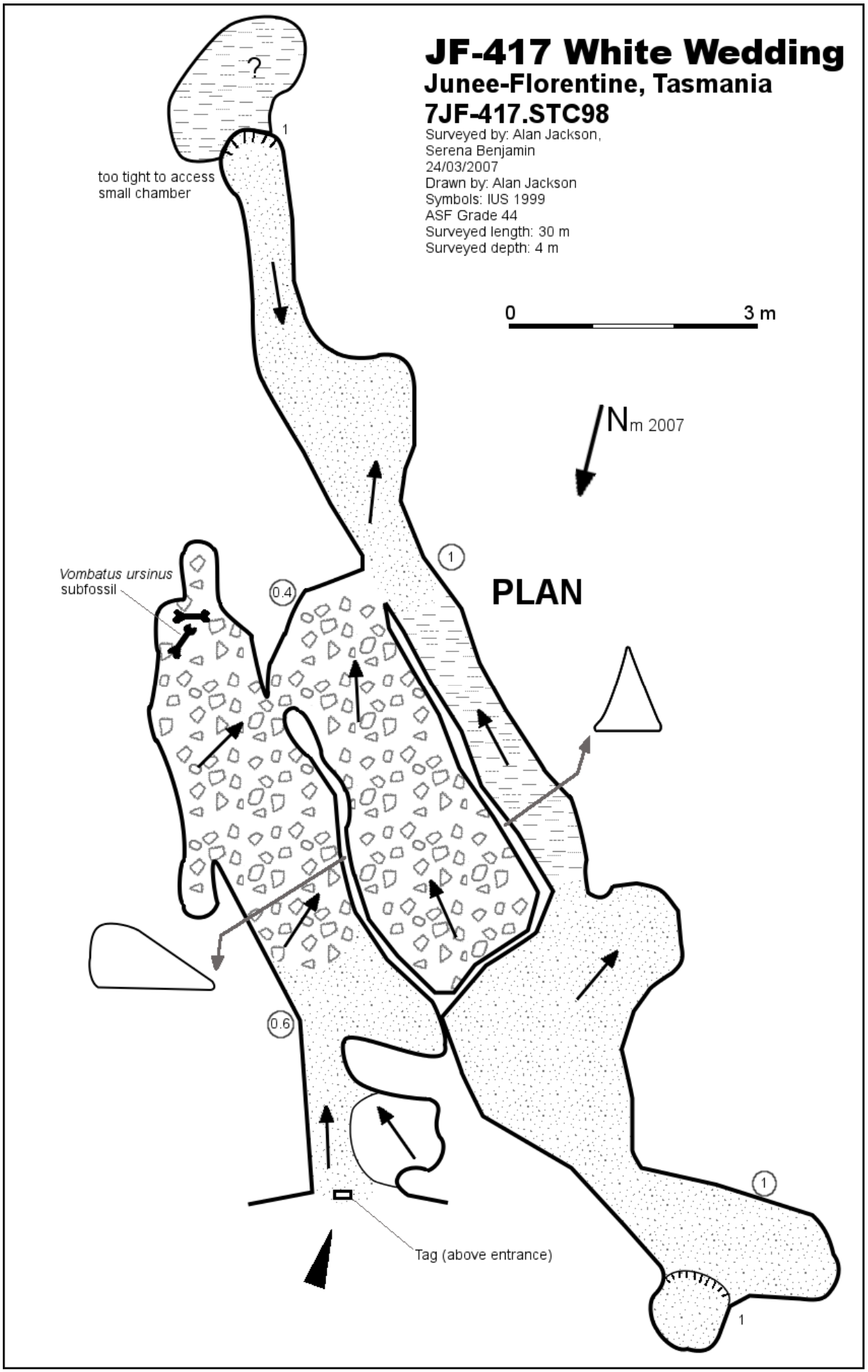
First we surveyed straight past JF-285 (missed it by 2.5 m!) and then headed back to it and tied it in. We then set off down the hill to locate JF-284 but found a new hole instead (which was tagged JF-415). I had a quick squiz, free climbed something I shouldn't have, climbed back out and suggested we return later in the day with the ladder. We then found JF-284 and surveyed it and the new entrance in. We then straight-lined it to where we thought we'd reached on the overland survey before we headed back for JF-285. We found another new entrance 10 m from our last station and only 4 m from where we'd all walked past a multitude of times over the last year or so. We tagged it JF-416, surveyed it in and continued the main survey to intersect with our old traverse over the hill. Job one finished (with unexpected extras).

Now we headed off to re-find White Wedding. This proved to be fairly easy and not far away. Serena was keen for a look so I thought we may as well survey it properly while we were in there – all good practice for Serena who kept the book work for her first time. It proved to be about 30 m long and a whole 4.5 m deep. The survey appears on page 6 (way over the top for such an insignificant cave!)


*Serena emerges from White Wedding*

White Wedding was tagged JF-417 and we surveyed back to the main traverse. The weather was doing more rain/hail and less sunshine than earlier in the day so the thought of wandering all the way around the hill looking for the other 'new' entrance to tag etc… wasn't very appealing. Instead we decided to drop the two new holes (415 and 416). JF-416 proved to be 10 m deep (quite handy that we had a 10 m ladder with us) with three entrances and an interesting pile of very large dead terrestrial isopods (slaters) at the bottom. I'd not seen slaters so big in Tasmania before. It also had a fine population of cave spiders in the ascending passage near the bottom (no doubt bolstered by the overgrown slater pile …) The name Hicky Hole sprang to mind as a result (which in turn lead to some gutter talk about other kinds of hickies). A quick sketch and we headed to JF-415. A 12 m pitch ensued which meant climbing off the end of the ladder and dangling at full stretch to get your feet on the ground. A short ramp and down-climb followed by another 7+ m pitch after that. With no more gear we turned around and played 'jump and grab hold of the ladder' to get out. No draft to get one salivating but a return will nonetheless be required to find out where this one goes.

We then headed for home, collecting Ric's hanky from the track on the way.


JF-417 White Wedding
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania
7JF-417.STC98
Surveyed by: Alan Jackson,
Serena Benjamin
24/03/2007
Drawn by: Alan Jackson
Symbols: IUS 1999
ASF Grade 44
Surveyed length: 30 m
Surveyed depth: 4 m
0
3 m
Nm 2007
PLAN
too tight to access
small chamber
Vombatus ursinus
subfossil
Tag (above entrance)
?
1
0.4
0.6

## JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot – JF-36 Growling Swallet Thru Trip (Changing the Ropes)

***Janine McKinnon***

**23 March 2007**

**Party:** Serena Benjamin, Janine McKinnon, Jane Pulford, Ric Tunney

Ric and I had been planning on replacing the top two ropes in Slaughterhouse Pot for a couple of months. We had found them very muddy, gritty and slow on our last few trips down and, as far as we could determine from the archive, they were installed in 1998. Well and truly time for a change.

As a matter of interest (well maybe, to some people), the bottom rope in the cave was installed when the P-hangers went in (in 2002) and looks in much better condition. So this one has been left for now. We should get a few more years out of it!

Anyway, this was the trip to do it. Serena and Jane came along for the ride, ensuring that we now had to do "the circuit" (rather than the slack option of just back out Slaughterhouse) as Jane hadn't been there before. Serena thought a look at "Hyperspace Bypass" might be nice to add, and so we had a nice day's caving planned.

All was fairly straightforward and uneventful. Each rope took about 1 hour to replace, as getting the tensioning right on the fairly stiff 11 mm Bluewater rope we were installing was a bit fiddly. The old maillons fortunately came undone with the spanner. We'd been half expecting to have to leave them and come back later with bolt cutters. They were pretty rusty. They have been replaced with stainless steel maillons. A plastic thimble has also been installed on each rope to increase the radius of curvature around the maillon. These are held in place by cable ties. A tag with the date of installation is also attached to each rope. In future we'll know when the ropes were last replaced!

The rope lengths used were P1: 32 m & P2 22 m. This resulted in about 2 m spare on the floor. Not quite up to Jeff's exact standards, but not bad for guesses!

Anyone planning on doing the trip will be pleased to know that due to the club's cheapness in trying to get maximum life out of our ropes, these old (but still safe - it takes a lot to kill 11mm Bluewater!) ropes are sufficiently stiff that I had to rig my Stop as a bobbin to get down (admittedly I have a new cam on it). Truly, I wasn't going ANYWHERE with the normal threading.

The trip to the junction took 3 hours and after lunch, Serena, Jane and I headed off for a look at Hyperspace whilst Ric stayed to do some work on the ladder. He replaced the hose he put on the rub point last trip (which wasn't long enough to do the job properly) and thinks it's right now.


*Slaughterhouse Pot rope with new improved maillon, thimble and tag*

We three made our way along the serpentine of Hyperspace smoothly but when we got to where it passed over Destiny pitch we couldn't find an obvious way on. I only had the map, which isn't that clear, and hadn't done any reading beforehand as it wasn't the real focus of the trip, just a last minute add on. We searched around a bit, found a couple of decidedly dodgy possibilities (i.e. lots of potential to fall down the big hole in the floor called "Destiny" pitch) but they didn't look very promising really. Certainly not worth taking a risk for. (Ah! It should never be worth taking a risk I hear you thinking.) Some more research is needed before the next trip there.

So we headed back to Ric and arrived conveniently as he was packing up.

The trip out was enjoyable and unremarkable, other than to remark that the water level in "Growling" might well be the lowest I've ever seen, certainly for many years. It just didn't look the same.

## H-1 Newdegate Cave – Hastings for Old Timers' Sake

***Stephen Bunton***

**31 March 2007**

**Party:** Stephen Bunton, Bob Cockerill, Albert Goede, Barry James, Rien de Vries

It's a measure of civilisation how well we treat the older generation and when Bob asked me if I wanted to come along and spend some time with some golden oldies, I said that I would be delighted. The plan was simply just to spend some time together and for me to get to know the former generation of what is now STC.

We got away at a gentlemanly hour and had lunch at the Dover Pub. Five Fisherman's Baskets were ordered in rather comical circumstances.

At Hastings I was the only member of the party who didn't get a Seniors Card discount for the cave tour. Our guide was Andrew Hogarth, who is known to some club members. He gave a good commentary (Bob "couldn't fault him." - I suggested it was because Bob didn't know

enough!). I was a bit under-whelmed by the new lighting. Whilst it might eradicate lampenflora, ACKMA's biggest worry after trying to keep real cavers out of caves, the cave was dim and unspectacular. I go to tourist caves to see them not to grovel around in the dark like normal! It wasn't even the puddle of light feel you get in real caves. A true disappointment. At one stage, as the light dimmed on its timer, the old men got stranded in the dark up some dead end.

Throughout the day Bob kept mentioning that between us we had 224 years of combined caving experience but that's a bit artificial since I was the only one pretending to still be an active caver.

On the way home we wandered around the Thermal Pool. The worst part of the trip was getting out of the car after our stiff old joints were trapped into immobility for the long drive home.


*Rien, Bob, Albert and Barry at the Dover Pub*

## JF-270 Tachycardia – Bunty's version

***Stephen Bunton***

**7 April 2007**

**Party:** Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson

It's a measure of civilisation how well we treat the older generation. This time the wellie was on the other foot. I was going to bottom Tachycardia even if it killed me! Alan Jackson was going to escort me, picking up the pieces as I fell to bits. This trip meant a lot to me, not just because I like to see what the latest exploration has yielded, not just so that I can summarise it for the next issue of Vertical Caves of Tasmania but because I have been lucky enough to have bottomed all five of Australia's recently deepest caves when they were the deepest. (I'm quite glad Splash Pot didn't smash any records because I would not have got through the tight bits!) [*Having one up on Trevor and Rolan had nothing to do with it … Ed.*]

I was quite nervous about this because I am far from cave-fit and I have to admit to a few sleepless nights in the weeks leading up to the trip - getting to the bottom of a vertical cave is easy, you just abseil. Getting out is the hard part! Once down there would I be able to prussik out? My recent effort at the ASF Conference, where I pumped after twenty metres of the 30 m prussiking race, led to some concern from my darling wife. "Do you think you'll be all right". I had to admit "No, but I'm going anyway!" I could have piked numerous times with a range of excuses; a dodgy knee, gammy hip and the latest; RSI from overusing the secateurs whilst pruning the fruit trees but I decided to break the ASF safety guidelines (that I just rewrote!) and not tell Alan, lest it sound like a handicap event.

From previous experience, every time I have thought about piking and gone anyway, it has been a very worthwhile trip. I hope this would be the same. Trouble is when you start to pike because you're not up to it, that's the start of the end, you may as well give up. If I didn't go now I'd never go. Having completed the trip I feel I can still call myself an active caver.

The walk up the hill is quite a warm up, enough to kill you really! It reminded me of my adult soccer career when the warm up knackered me long before the game started.

We didn't waste any time getting underground, we're both reasonably efficient but some of my gear was replacements for various trashed units and I was less familiar with it. This caused a minor hang-up on the first rebelay where the sling lengths weren't quite right and I pfaffed around for a while conscious of not wanting to waste a skerrick of energy. It was a bad omen and it would have been a good opportunity to pike and save myself any further embarrassment but I played on. Again like soccer really; if I had a poor warm up I usually had a good game. (The converse is also true; kick a blinder of a goal in warm up and I'd usually play poorly.) Superstition!

The trip to the bottom was interrupted with a short spell of cave enlargement to let larger diameter fellows through. This was just in case Damian Bidgood was needed to rescue anyone, us, or me in particular.

The cave is unofficially called Tacky [*Tachy to be perfectly correct, but that would ruin the following joke – Ed.*] which if you look in the dictionary means "shabby, dowdy and superficially promising a lot but lacking in craftsmanship". On paper it looks like a real vertical cave i.e. its depth exceeds its plan length but in reality it is not a nice cave at all. The glue they used to hold it all together was rather inferior. After a lot of grubby little downclimbs, navigation pitfalls and squeezing through rockfalls it arrives at Art Deco, which is one of its redeeming features. This is a nice pitch, which leads to 10 m of nice stream canyon, before the bottom drops out of the cave as The Bermuda Triangle. This is a great pitch in really dark biodegradable rock. Everything you touch falls down and a lot of things that you don't even touch fall down too. The pitch is rebelayed at manageable intervals and we abseiled from one rebelay to the next to avoid crapping upon one another from a great height. This was quite sociable really. It took three hours to get to the bottom, look at its disappointing terminus and eat some lunch before the long trip out.

Mahatma Gandhi said "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." But with prussiking big pitches on 9 mm rope it takes quite a few just to get off the ground! I started doing sets of ten strokes, conscious of the fact that if I cramped up we would both be there for a long cold wait until I recovered. Alan was in for a few long cold

waits anyway and had brought the extra thermals and a beanie to cope. Again we waited at strategic rebelays on the way out and it felt more like big-wall climbing; airy hanging belays in a sea of exposure. Every so often a huge cow-pat would fall out the sky, whistle past us and continue hurtling downwards. With the soft squidgy walls you never hear them crash, they just disappear into the darkness of the void. The black walls increase the eeriness of that exposure. It was quite a funky pitch.

Just as well it was dry! There was a bit of water at the drip cave rebelay but mostly we were saved from the rain shower that plagued the exploration parties. This meant that everything we wore was covered in homogeneous brown clay. "Where's that cowstail? Is that a cowstail? I could have sworn I had a cowstail!"

By the time Alan had caught me up each time, I had almost got my breath back and reprussiked the two or three metres you lose crossing each rebelay. At the top of The Bermuda Triangle I gobbled some more food before Art Deco where I set a record for the slowest ascent. Alan even dragged my pack up it to eliminate any excuses for my poor performance. Psychologically this pitch was the breakthrough, once up this one we were as good as out.

Well not quite! Tachycardia is a hard cave. It is grotty, covered in slippery mud with awkward climbs and yukky boulder piles and squeezes. Every step is an obstacle and I was conscious that the last time I spent this long in a cave, was yonks ago. Fatigue isn't the killer, it's smashing into the rocks at the bottom of a dodgy climb and then succumbing to hypothermia. We kept moving slowly and surely up and out.

We collected Alan's third pack at the site of the dig and passed packs all the way out. Only one pitch to go! On the big pitch my ten strokes had dropped to seven, here they'd dropped to four. Throughout the cave I cursed every time the rope didn't run and I lost a stroke, hoping not to run out of energy but I did anyway. Then it was up the steep muddy slope, one little tighter bit and the entrance climb.

Caves like this you need to "chunk". Looking at them as a whole they are too overwhelming, one step at a time and you make it. You grind them down and hopefully don't let them grind you down. That's the theory but Tachycardia is the sort of cave that could grind you down. I can't think of a worse cave although it's not as unpleasant as Porcupine Pot. It's certainly not as grand as Niggly Cave but because it's Australia's deepest, it will be on some perverse cavers' tick lists. It was on mine! I enjoyed it in my own twisted sort of way. It's challenging, there are no easy metres to be gained, besides, I like thrutchy climbs; if you're as short as me someone always gives you a leg up. By contrast, Alan had no trouble; being taller, having done countless exploration trips and having bottomed it four times, he knew every hold – that was until someone knocked them off. No, not quite everything you touch falls off, some strange corollary of cave design states that the strategic handholds remain.

A few glowworms decorated the roof inside the entrance, there was the last fading daylight to beckon us out and then it was a bumble down the hill to the car. We'd spent nine hours in the cave and 40 minutes each way commuting. Tomorrow it would be intense gear cleaning, gear maintenance and trogsuit repairs. Alan suggested I tag the numerous entrances on my trogsuit, whereas I was planning to do it as a simple throughtrip. I think the PVC has exceeded its design life since even the repairs are failing. When I bought it a decade ago Kathy asked if I'd get any real use out of it. Now I have to decide whether I buy another? Have I got another decade's in me? (Be on the look out in a few years time for some second hand caving gear bargains.)

Thanks to Alan and all those that rigged the cave so that I could do this trip. As I said it meant a lot to me. The cave is still rigged; because there's always a lead somewhere! I'm not sure I want to be involved in the derig. Next time, I need to be involved in the exploration of a cave from the outset so that I can acclimatise to its challenges and increase my fitness accordingly. Well done to the younger generation. Tachycardia is a good but disgusting cave.

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## JF-270 Tachycardia – Bunty does Tachy - an Easter message?

***Alan Jackson***

**7 April 2007**

**Party:** Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson

It's a measure of civilisation how well we treat the older generation and when Steve told me he wanted to get to the bottom of Tachycardia, I said that I would be delighted …

So the Fat Man, hard caver of years gone by, didn't want to die without having his name next to the deepest cave in Australia. Worst case scenario he would get his name next to the deepest cave in Australia as the place he died. It could have proved disastrous but Bunty was a sacrifice I was prepared to make. We headed off on a perfect, still Easter Saturday to bury a bearded old bugger in a cave. Unlike Jesus, I was hoping that no one would be turning up on the next day to find him missing in action.

At the dig we decided he wasn't going to fit so we whipped out the capping gear (if Jesus had been a caver he wouldn't have rolled the stone aside, he would have capped the side off it and squeezed out). Twenty minutes and three caps later the dig was looking all new and shiny and slightly larger. We slid through and recoated the walls with the liquid shit so abundant in the cave. Bunty souvenired a spent cap – it was going straight to the pool room.

Slowly, we wound our way down through the vile muddy maze, down the pitch series and there we sat eating members of the stolen generation and making politically incorrect jokes. The easy bit was done and he was still in fine spirits. It was a start. He started up Bermuda Triangle while I put on some extra layers, ate lots of food and began the search for Matt's light. I eventually found it in a corner, busted open, its batteries scattered around the place and half buried in freshly lain-down sediment. I scooped up the remains into my pack and started singing to pass the time till Bunty was 70 m above me. From here we took it one rebelay at a time, effectively 'double prussiking' like one would in Niggly. He'd move up, change over and then rest while I caught up. He was swearing like a trooper and the banter was dying down. When Bunty starts to stop talking you know it's a bad sign.

At Art Deco he broke the record for slowest ascent of a 45 m pitch. His brand new hand ascender was playing up and this was making rebelays a much more laborious task than is preferred. I washed it in a puddle at the top of Art Deco and managed to dislodge the grit from behind the cam that was making disengagement of the ascender virtually impossible. By this stage Bunty had resorted to fixing the problem by verbally abusing it, labelling it useless new fangled technology, rather than considering what the cause might be and rectifying it.

Bunty was ecstatic at getting off the rope at On the Rope Again pitch but soon realised that going back up Gypsyland was a curse far worse than any amount of prussiking. At the dig life got even tougher (for me at least) as we picked up the bag full of steel. Only 70 m of up to go from here and Bunty handled it well. Slowly, but well. We had thrown him to the bottom of his cave but he had risen again. He even beat the old mark by getting out Saturday evening.

Not a bad effort in the end, considering his lack of match fitness. Ultimately it was a mental battle for both of us (I had to stay awake and fight boredom). Right from the start he knew he didn't have the physical capacity to do this cave but he always knew that he could outwit that weakness with his mind and strength of character. Silly old bugger. He's not the Messiah. He's a very naughty boy! Now, go away!

# Other Exciting Stuff

## Helmets Off To Alan

***Amy Robertson***

While recovering from my latest trip underground, I read with interest Alan's opinions on the ASF's safety guidelines. I had just finished scrubbing the mud off my helmet, and the 'lids-on police' attitude certainly deserves a response.

I frequently take my helmet off in caves. It usually doesn't stay off for very long, but in those brief moments there is a possibility that I could sustain a head injury that would have been prevented had I been wearing my helmet.

Most recently, I removed my helmet to stick my head through one of those 'hats-off' squeezes where the width of the lid won't go, but the narrowness of a side-on helmet, a naked head, and very twisted shoulders and chests will. It looked like an interesting potential lead that could have been accessible from a couple of angles, but the easiest (and probably safest) reconnaissance was through the narrow squeeze. The lid was off for less than a minute, my head wasn't in a very vulnerable location (if the squeeze had been less solid I could have found the width to leave the helmet on), and the ability to stretch my cap lamp out at arm's length gave better illumination of the prospects ahead.

Now it happened that while off, a bit of mud got stuck in the socket the chin strap clips into. While my helmet went back on, the chin strap wouldn't click into place - I spent several minutes trying to remove the mud, but couldn't get the 'click' of a secure closure, so continued and exited the cave with the knowledge my helmet wasn't securely fastened. It actually only came undone once, when I pushed my head into a rock while coming through a narrow bit. Anyway, that's just one example, but I also remove my helmet in caves for other purposes - fixing or changing batteries to a headlight, sniffing through a sump, putting on or removing a balaclava... thinking about it, relatively often. And I try to do these things at a time when I'm not standing below an active caver in an area of loose rock, because I don't particularly want a headache. The helmet goes back on quickly, because it's where my light comes from, keeps my head warm, and stops me impaling my scalp on stalactites as I pass by.

So, as a principle, keep the lid on, but let's take our helmets off to Alan's realism in terms of safety management.

## A review of the 1994 'Newdegate Cave Rehabilitation Plan'

***Matt Cracknell***

The plan by Houshold and Bradley (1994) (published in *Southern Caver,* 63 (2006)) was written in a response to the severe degradation and ongoing disturbance of Newdegate Cave that accumulated over years of mismanagement and neglect. A key reason stated for the impacts on Newdegate Cave was the lack of a comprehensive up-to-date rehabilitation/management plan. The 1994 plan attempted to partially fill this void by outlining perceived threats to the cave accompanied by detailed recommendations for management responses to each issue. Since the plan was prepared some of the recommended measures have been undertaken but there is still no comprehensive management plan.

**Outline of the Plan**

The 1994 plan focuses on the mitigation of visitor impacts on Newdegate Cave by changes in cave infrastructure. Cost estimates and timelines for implementation of works to be carried out are given, whilst ongoing monitoring and maintenance programs are introduced. The basis for the recommendations in the plan is taken from successful cave rehabilitation methods in other tourist caves. The types of measures suggested included: installation of a low voltage lighting system, walkway overhaul and dirty water collection.

The plan is specifically focused on Newdegate Cave rehabilitation and set out under the various headings below. It is stressed that this rehabilitation plan should ultimately be part of an all encompassing document for the management of the Hastings karst region.

1. Significance of Newdegate Cave and the effects of visitors

Knowledge of the Lune River karst and Hastings karst areas as they were in 1994 was briefly outlined, focussing on the tourism/interpretive and scientific values. Values discussed included the biological (cave fauna/cold temperate rainforest), geological (dolomite karst/adjacent limestone) and hydrological (geothermal springs and the potential link between dolomite and limestone hydrological systems).

Values specific to Newdegate Cave are predominantly related to the fact that the cave has developed in dolostone. In Australia large, well decorated caves occurring in dolostone are uncommon. Aspects of the cave's development can be clearly seen. The upper levels have formed in phreatic groundwater and lower levels are the result of vadose canyon development. Unusual mineral deposits, some possibly consisting of aragonite, and others in the form of dry moonmilk, can be found in the cave. These deposits have not been fully analysed. Rare cave biota is another significant aspect of the unique values of Newdegate Cave. The blind cave beetle *Idacarabus cordicollis* found in Newdegate Cave was the first truly troglobitic species to be described in Australia. Newdegate Cave is also home to other rare cave-adapted species.

Impacts on the cave were described under three sub headings:

- Introduction of foreign material: e.g. building materials, broken glass and organic matter.
- Materials brought in by visitors: $CO_2$, dust and organics, seeds and spores, skin oil and lint.
- Problems caused by inappropriate lighting: desiccation of speleothems and lampenflora.

The plan recommended swift implementation of rehabilitation works to reduce the ongoing disturbance to Newdegate Cave. It also suggested that funding from ticket sales would be needed to ensure that future works be completed in a reasonable timeframe and so recurrent management could be effectively administered. Mitigation of the root causes of impacts would be needed initially. Construction of boardwalks outside the cave and well defined walkways with inbuilt drainage systems inside the cave would be required for the overall rehabilitation to be successful.

2. Rehabilitation and ongoing maintenance of Newdegate Cave

The introduction to this section sets out the aim:

*To return Newdegate Cave, its contents and associated ecosystems to as natural a condition as possible, and to maintain the cave and its contents in this condition given the use of the system by approximately 40 000 visitors per year.*

This section also acknowledged the fact that there is a lack of baseline data concerning the natural condition of the cave, making an assessment of the success of any rehabilitation difficult. The 1994 plan highlighted the importance of initiating a long term monitoring program to establish baseline data concerning the natural cave environment. However, setting up such a program was beyond the scope of the plan.

The rest of this section was divided into 10 specific interrelated issues with accompanying recommended management responses, including: level of priority; necessary actions; costs; timescales; specific technical details; base map locations; and photographic evidence for each issue.

- Walkway surface and assembly area upgrade

Uneven gravel and unconsolidated surfaces presented safety hazards to visitors and contributed to the introduction of clays and gravels into the cave.

Recommendations consisted of levelling uneven surfaces to prevent falls, construction of boardwalks, boot wash facilities and sealing the visitor carpark.

- Walkway definition

An absence of clearly defined in-cave walkways was causing erosion, defacement and permanent destruction of cave features and contributing to the migration of sediments to other areas.

These impacts could be mitigated by installing a well defined walkway with concrete curbing.

- Walkway drainage and refuse

Walkway slush was developing from a combination of a wet environment and introduced material. This material was migrating to adjacent areas of the cave.

Installation of walkway gutters and drains combined with a pumping system to remove the collected slush from the cave was advocated.

- Reticulated water system

A reliable source of clean water was required to assist with the ongoing cleaning and maintenance of the cave. This would need to be made available to strategic areas of the cave via pipes and taps connected to in-cave storage tanks.

- Walkway lighting system

Elimination of glare hazards, reduction in lampenflora growth and an emergency lighting system in the event of a power failure should be provided by an overhaul of the walkway lighting.

- Lampenflora control

There were numerous areas of algal growth from inappropriate lighting. The plan advised research into best practice methods for eliminating algae and effectively controlling future outbreaks.

Ultimately it was noted that this would only result from the installation of a reduced output lighting system.

- Lint cleaning.

Lint was adhering to speleothems adjacent to visitor assembly areas and where lights induced convection currents.

Recommendations were to identify and remove accumulated lint, followed by regular lint cleaning and introduction of measures to minimise lint movement.

- Bulk debris and rubbish removal

There existed several sites within the cave where rubbish and debris impacted on the natural cave system and visitor experience.

Removal of foreign material and rehabilitation of the affected sites by experienced personnel was suggested to reduce the impacts incurred during removal.

- Cave lighting and electrical system

Vast improvements were needed to the existing 110 volt system. It was detracting from visitor experiences as well as impacting on the cave. The lack of an emergency back-up system was also a concern.

Research into the most suitable low impact system available was advised and a low voltage dichroic system was recommended.

3. Timeline for implementation

A 2 year timeline was proposed for the implementation of the recommended management responses to the issues affecting the cave.

4. Recurrent maintenance program

This section gave a basic outline of the regular and irregular tasks that were needed during and after the rehabilitation project. These included:

- the monitoring of the cave environment for $CO_2$/radon daughter concentrations and areas affected by lampenflora/lint.
- the frequency of regular maintenance jobs for cave infrastructure (walkways, railings and lights).
- maintenance of interpretative signs.
- cleaning of the cave, visitor assembly areas.
- visitor access and boot wash cleaning/maintenance.

**Current status of Newdegate Cave rehabilitation**

It is now 12 years since the introduction of the rehabilitation plan and most of the issues outlined have seen an effective management response in a reasonable timeframe. Walkways have been upgraded and sealed, accompanied by the construction of gutters and drains that collect walkway slush. Boot washes have been installed at strategic points outside and inside the cave. These have led to an enormous reduction in the volume of material being carried into the cave and the material that does enter the cave is now collected before it migrates off the walkways. A new lighting system was installed in 2002 and the old lighting system removed in 2004, lampenflora and lint problems have been greatly reduced. A reticulated watering system has been installed, sourcing water flowing from a large column in the 'Cathedral', contributing to an effective cleaning system for the cave walkways. Rubbish and bulk debris have been carefully removed from the cave and the cave interpretation signs were upgraded. Implementation of a regular maintenance program is being realised but in recent years this maintenance has been sporadic.

There are some major aspects of the rehabilitation plan that have as yet not been achieved. The 'Palace' and the 'Stage' feature areas, where visitors walk across bare flowstone, still do not have adequate foot traffic protection. A raised walkway over these areas is still unrealised. The new lighting system does not have an emergency backup; in the event of a power failure the guides must still resort to candles and the spare lighting that they carry with them to assist visitors safely from the cave. The cave carpark is as yet unsealed, however great effort to reduce mobile material, by raking and blowing of debris is occurring.

The ongoing monitoring of the cave environment, stressed in the report as of significant value to assessing the success of Newdegate Cave rehabilitation, is yet to be implemented. Some guides are monitored for radon exposure but $CO_2$ monitoring is not occurring. Monitoring of lampenflora (what is left of it) and lint problems is at best *ad hoc*.

**Acknowledgements**:

I would like to thank Stephen Bunton and Greg Middleton for their encouragement and valuable suggestions in the preparation of this review.

**Reference:**

Houshold, I. & Bradley, P., 1994, *Newdegate Cave Rehabilitation Plan*, unpublished report to Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania, 59 pages. Published in *Southern Caver*, 63: 3-61


Space filler – just to prove that the 'Old Timers' made it underground on their Hastings trip. From left – Barry, Bob, Albert, Steve and Rien.

## 2006-07 STC Annual Reports

### *Various Artists*

**President:** Gavin Brett

I have enjoyed being President and I wish to thank my 'Team' and the club for their support during my time in the role. Tachycardia exploration and the depth record were clearly the highlight of the last year! I'd like the new president to continue with my motto that "Short meetings keep 'em coming back".

**Vice President:** Serena Benjamin

I have had a fairly quiet and stress free year in my role as Vice President. My input was required on several occasions for club matters. I also got to exercise my vocal cords when chairing two meetings while Gavin was away drumming up business. Thank you to everyone for letting me ease into the role.

Happy caving.

**Secretary:** Matt Cracknell

During the past year the club secretary has completed the usual jobs of minute taking, reviewing and compiling correspondence and keeping club members informed of local, regional and national caving organisation happenings.

Some highlights of the year have included; the STC EGM in March 2006 where a motion to change the club name back to TCC was rejected; the difficulties that the club is having obtaining a copy of the Riveaux report [*Now resolved! Yeah! – Ed.*]; Tachycardia exploration and the chance to read journals and newsletters from other clubs and organisations. I am sure there are many other riveting experiences but I just can't think of them right now.

**Treasurer:** Amy Robertson (*but she was a Ware when she started – so she should have known what she was in for – Ed.*)

***Summary***

I am pleased to report that STC has made a surplus of $1,750.46. This is a little lower than the surplus for 2005 which was $2,243.42.

This is partly explained by income from a $926.76 donation by Cavemania as conference accounts were finalised. Income from Cavemania trip and hut fees also contributed significantly to the surplus last year. A transfer of $850.00 to the Science account as proposed in early 2006 has not yet occurred, but a similar move for surplus funds from this year may be worthwhile. Retaining a $500 buffer in the general account from the 2006 surplus could allow $600 to be put aside as a longer-term buffer, and $600 to be spent on club purchases.

Income from gear hire reduced, but so did expenditure on gear purchases – the club has purchased little new gear, rigging or scientific equipment this year, after some significant replacements in 2005. Very little external gear hire occurred this year due to the deteriorating condition of club lights and so budgeted income from this source was not realised. Two main projects during the year, the 60th anniversary dinner and Ric's sales of cave maps and books, both returned a small surplus to the club. Printing expenses rose slightly, but covered two unbudgeted editions of *Southern Caver*.

I have found the treasurer's job very challenging this year among other commitments and illness, but believe I am beginning to get a grasp of the role. Thanks to those who helped clarify rules for me, pass on reports when I couldn't make meetings, and check that I had done jobs. I am willing to continue in the position next year, and will stand for re-election. I should be more familiar with the membership structure then, though this will mean more nagging of those who haven't yet paid up!

***Membership***

The membership numbers decreased slightly in 2006, mainly through mainland-resident members not renewing. Recruitment of prospective members remains strong. While many prospective members don't stay with the club, six new annual members have entered the club this year through this mechanism, demonstrating its value.

| **Category** | **31/12/2006** | **31/12/2005** | **31/12/2004** | **31/12/2003** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Household/full/student | 35 | 39 | 35 | 30 |
| Prospective | 10 | 9 | 2 | 1 |
| Life | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| **Total membership** | **54** | **57** | **46** | **41** |
| Friends | 10 | 10 | 11 | 11 |
| Armchair cavers | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| **Total association** | **65** | **69** | **59** | **52** |

***Gear Hire Rates***

The club received $323.00 from gear hire. Given the reduced revenue from gear hire, but also the reduced replacement and maintenance costs, **I propose that gear hire costs remain unchanged**. These rates (for STC members only) are shown in the table below.

| **Item** | **Amount** |
|---|---|
| Trip fee (vertical caves where a rope was used) | $2 |
| Light hire | $4 |
| Helmet hire | $1 |
| SRT gear, light, helmet, small pack | $12 |
| SRT gear, helmet, small pack | $8 |
| Pack | $1 |
| Descender only | $3-5 (depends on number of abseils) |
| Descender only (Midnight Hole) | $5 |
| Harness & cowstail | $2 |
| Trogsuit | $3 |
| Miscellaneous (eg. jammer, cowstail etc) | $1-2 |

***Speleo Spiel***

The costs of producing the *Speleo Spiel* rose this year to $716.19, for production of the usual 6 *Spiels* and 2 editions of the irregular *Southern Caver* (none produced in 2005). The print run averages about 50 copies, yielding a production cost of about $15 per year per person.

**I propose to retain the printed *Speleo Spiel* subscription rate for non-members at $25 per year, and $15 for members.**

***Income***

The following table summarises the expected income for the General Account for 2007.

| **Category** | **2007 Estimate** | **2006 actual** | **2005 actual** | **2004 actual** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Speleo Spiel* subscriptions | $50.00 | $55.00 | $50.00 | $100.00 |
| Internal gear hire | $200.00 | $164.00 | $225.00 | $325.00 |
| External gear hire | $50.00 | $159.00 | $1081.00 | $458.00 |
| Gear sales | $100.00 | $391.10 | $780.20 | $104.00 |
| Trip fees | $300.00 | $324.00 | $323.00 | $253.00 |
| Anniversary dinner | $0.00 | $2,048.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 |
| Donations | $110.00 | $117.00 | $138.00 | $285.00 |
| Interest (bank and cash mgt trust) | $290.00 | $287.39 | $267.84 | $250.94 |
| Sundries | $150.00 | $119.30 | $202.00 | $168.05 |
| Cavemania | $0.00 | $926.76 | $1190.00 | $0.00 |
| **Total income** | **$1250.00** | **$4591.55** | **$4257.04** | **$1943.99** |

***Expenditure***

The following table details the estimated expenditure from the General Account for 2007.

| **Category** | **2007 Estimate** | **2006 actual** | **2005 actual** | **2004 actual** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Speleo Spiel* production & supply | $650.00 | $716.19 | $579.06 | $646.31 |
| Stationery | $0.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 | $3.35 |
| ASF fees for inactive life members [1] | $276.00 | $0.00 | $138.00 | $138.00 |
| Gear purchases | $1,450.00 | $82.25 | $972.04 | $662.72 |
| Anniversary dinner | $0.00 | $1,969.50 | $0.00 | $0.00 |
| Bank charges | $0.00 | $0.00 | $7.90 | $51.90 |
| Equipment Officer Honorarium | $96.90 | $391.80 | $209.70 | $157.80 |
| Audit fee | $55.00 | $55.00 | $49.50 | $44.00 |
| Annual return fee | $50.00 | $46.80 | $45.60 | $44.40 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PO Box rental | $110.00 | $107.00 | $102.00 | $100.00 |
| ACKMA membership | $55.00 | $55.00 | $50.00 | $45.00 |
| Publications | $150.00 | $138.70 | $0.00 | $47.28 |
| Transfer to Science Account [2] | $1,450.00 | $0.00 | $201.40 | $323.49 |
| Other | $300 | $39.30 | $787.57 | $318.90 |
| **Total** | **$4,642.90** | **$3,601.54** | **$3142.77** | **$2583.15** |

[1] 2006 fees are overdue & will amount to $138.00 accounted in 2007 year.

[2] Includes overdue 2006 transfer of $850.00 and proposed transfer of $600 to Cash Management Trust.

***Membership Fees***

The membership fees are set to allow the General Account to break even. The difference in the estimated expenditure and income for 2007 is $2,442.90. This difference includes a budget of $1,450 from previous surpluses to be shifted to the Cash Management Trust account and allows for a significant gear purchase of $1,450 from these same surpluses. The budget difference of $3,392.90 therefore contains $2,900 of transactions reflecting actions on a previous surplus and only about $500 of 2007 costs to be met through membership revenue. Membership numbers should remain stable and revenue from membership fees should adequately cover the difference between the estimated 2007 expenditure and income, leaving lower balance in the operating account but overall a small surplus for the club.

**Therefore I propose that membership fees remain unchanged for 2007.**

I note that ASF membership fees will also remain unchanged. The proposed annual membership fees for 2007 are outlined in the table below (identical to 2006).

| **Category** | **Rate with electronic *Spiel*** | **Rate with printed *Spiel*** | **Included ASF component** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Household | $150 (early bird)<br>$160 | $165 (early bird)<br>$175 | $121.50 |
| Single | $85 (early bird)<br>$95 | $100 (early bird)<br>$110 | $68.00 |
| Student/junior | $65 (early bird)<br>$75 | $80 (early bird)<br>$90 | $61.00 |
| Prospective<br>(3 month) | $30<br>(includes free printed *Spiel*) | N/a | $20.00 |
| ASF-exempt single | $15 (early bird)<br>$25 | $30 (early bird)<br>$40 | - |
| ASF-exempt prospective (3 month) | $10<br>(includes free printed *Spiel*) | N/a | - |
| Armchair caver | $15 (early bird)<br>$25 | $30 (early bird)<br>$40 | - |
| Active life member | $68<br>(includes free printed *Spiels*) | N/a | $68.00 |
| Inactive life member | $0<br>(includes free printed *Spiels*) | N/a | $23.00 |

*Notes:*

- Early bird rate – members must pay on or before 1st June 2007 to be eligible for a discount.
- New members who join during the year will pay the pro-rata rate based on the early bird rate.
- Friends of STC are non-members but receive free printed *Spiels* without a subscription fee (i.e. $25 value). In 2006 there were 10 Friends.
- Printed *Spiels* available for an additional $15 to annual non-life members.

***Summary of Motions***

- That the gear hire fees for 2006 remain unchanged for 2007;
- That the *Speleo Spiel* subscription rates remain unchanged at $25 per year for non-members and $15 per year for members; and
- That STC membership fees remain unchanged for 2007.

**Gearstore:** Gavin Brett

The gear store exists and it holds gear that gets used. I am happy to continue next year as the Gear Store Officer.

**Editor:** Alan Jackson

My third year at the helm of Australia's best caving publication and it keeps getting better! Hopefully I've managed to offend many of you, defame most of you and made a few of you chuckle. If you enjoy my style of editing then throw me another twelve months, if you can't stand it then get someone else to do it. I'm beastly careless.

A big thank you to Greg Middleton for maintaining high grammatical standards. It's a pity that he hasn't been able to work on my ethical standards.

**Search and Rescue:** Alan Jackson

We organised a rescue practice (CAVEX) and even half started a real callout – you can read all about both of them in *SS*357. As per usual I've received absolutely no support from Secret Agent 172 – he is merely a figurehead. He didn't even have the common decency to be in the country when the real callout came. Alas.

**Social Secretary:** Alan Jackson

We had a video night and watched some crap Hollywood style cave horror, a Christmas barbeque and probably some other things. My enthusiasm for this job has waned somewhat. The position will be flung open at the AGM for new blood.

**Librarian /Archivist:** Greg Middleton

The major users of the library continue to be those doing the scanning for the digital archive, now extending beyond Tasmanian publications.

In 2006 I accessioned 101 new journals (142 in 03-04, 191 04-05, 168 05-06), bringing our holding to 4,226. We received only 2 new books/ monographs (6 in 03-04; 62 04-05; 24 05-06), bringing our holding to 273.

I have continued to collect reprints and photocopies, adding 22 cave-related papers and magazine articles to the binders (216 03-04; 288 04-05; 98 05-06) to now total 623. These are catalogued in a database. I have well over 100 to add.

These holdings are shelved on around 55 m of shelf space (up from 25 in 2003-04); of this STC owns 15.4 m. There should be enough room to accommodate the archives when I find time to catalogue them. The archives of the three constituent clubs and some from STC are still in boxes. While I have started a database, these have not been catalogued or shelved.

Lists of our holdings are available; members are welcome to borrow at no charge – any time I'm here. Call me on 6223 1400 to arrange a time. Anyone who can contribute copies of journals that we are missing is very welcome to. The journals list also indicates duplicates of the *Spiel* and some other Australian newsletters which are available at negotiable prices.

The Buntons obtained over 40 large 4-ring binders for us recently, gratis. These should hold everything we need to file for quite a while.

In September 2004 the Club approved my proposal to produce a digital version of *Southern Caver* incorporating otherwise unpublished material. Issue #60 was produced in April 2005, #61 in September and #62 in June 2006. These are distributed digitally through the same website as *Speleo Spiel*. A few hard copies are produced for libraries. More will appear when I can do the scanning.

I'm happy to continue as librarian.

**Electronic Archivist:** Ric Tunney

The bulk of scanning and OCRing activity has now been completed. I should especially like to thank Damien Bidgood for scanning the bulk of *Illuminations*, Ivan Riley for scanning several A3 maps using his work scanner, Nathan Duhig and Forest Practices Authority for lending a long-bed scanner so we could scan some publications on foolscap paper, Janine McKinnon for scanning and OCRing stuff and Greg Middleton for extracting publications from the library and negotiating with mainland caving clubs about including their publications in the Archive.

I have produced an up-to-date version of the Archive and this is being distributed. It's now too big for one DVD, so distribution is now on two DVDs which are cheaper than one double layer DVD.

**Map Librarian:** Ric Tunney

Big maps live in the map cabinet in our garage; smaller maps live in a filing cabinet in our office. A master copy of the Map Numbers database is in the Archive. Anyone producing a map emails me for a map number.

Unfortunately, it seems that large numbers of our maps are missing from the map library. The task for the coming year is to identify what is missing and try to locate copies. Arthur Clarke is going through his file of map number forms to produce a comprehensive listing for STC.

**Karst Index:** Ric Tunney

We in STC have responsibility for issuing cave numbers for Southern Tasmania. In practice, this means Ida Bay and Junee-Florentine. If anyone needs a new cave number, they take a tag from the gear store, tag a cave and tell me. This is working smoothly.

The most recent version of "Tasmania's Longest and Deepest Caves" list is kept in the Archive. The bottoming of Tachycardia demoted all the caves on the Deepest list.

**Public Officer:** Damian Bidgood

The only thing that has passed through my hands for the year was the signing of the amendments to the constitution. Other than that nothing else was raised with me.

**Training Officer:** Matt Cracknell

Over the past year I have had the pleasure to assist several new members into the realm of SRT. I have also given a few old members the chance to touch up on their SRT skills.

All initial training sessions are held at Fruehauf Quarry in South Hobart. Then there are some beginners' trips organised in various caves. Owl Pot and Midnight Hole are particularity good ones; as well Revelation Cave at Ida Bay has proved a useful cave to take inexperienced members.

I feel that I have done my job successfully as no one has plummeted to their death. In light of this I am happy to continue as STC Training Officer for the coming year.

**ASF Delegate:** Tony Culberg

At the time of accepting the position I had expected to attend the Biennial Conference in Mount Gambier.

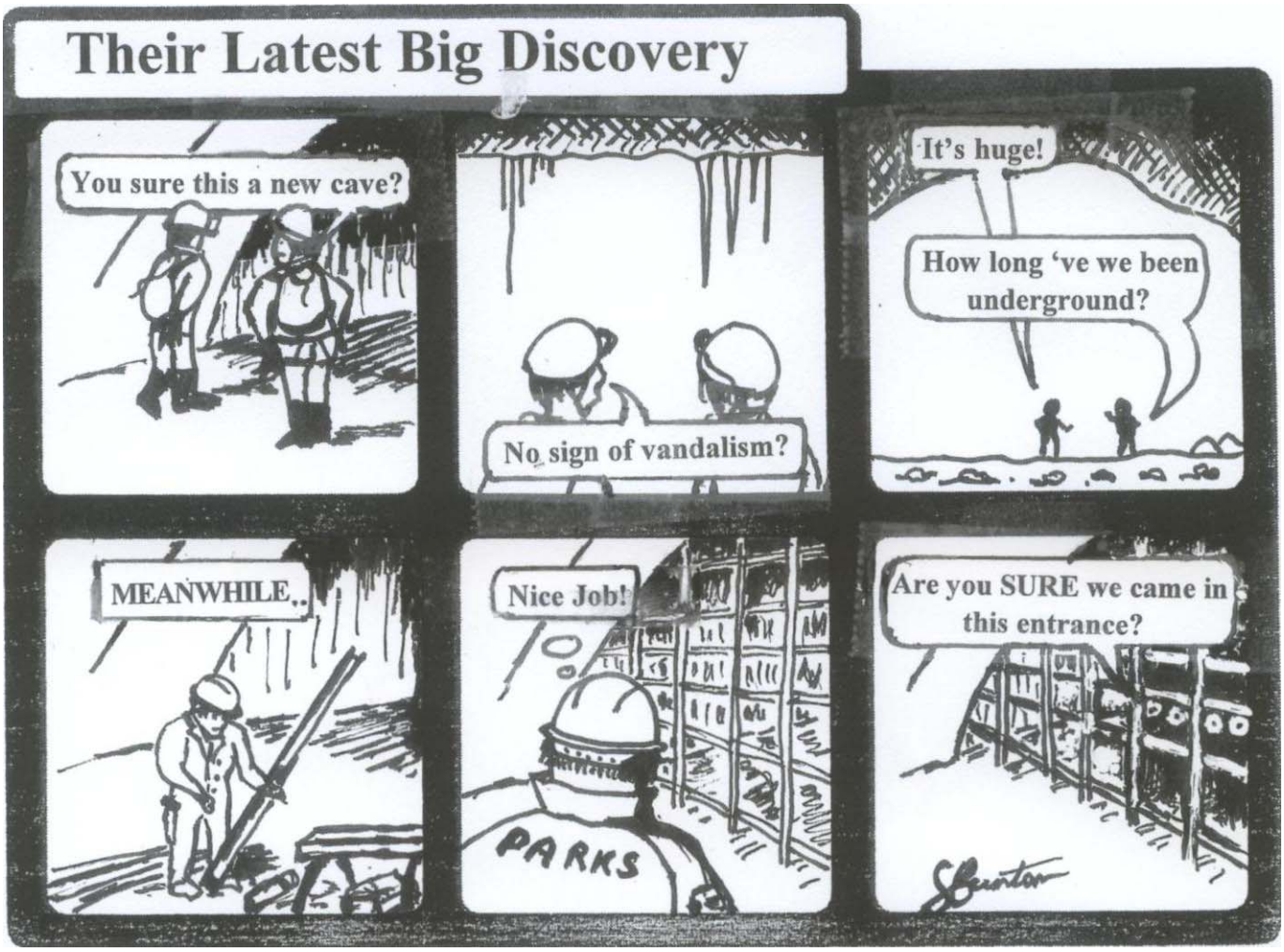
Events conspired to prevent that and thus I have nothing to report. Steve Bunton did attend and I understand he has a report in the latest *Speleo Spiel*.

As a Trustee of the ASF Environment Fund, a position I hold personally, not as a representative or delegate of the club, I can advise that the ASF is likely to receive both; the title to a large amount of land near Mt Etna but also a significant amount of money from the cement manufacturer that previously held the title to the land. At present the lawyers are tidying up the fine print.

The Trustees, and there are five of them, are resisting attempts to use the ASF Environment Fund as a conduit. Conduit is a technique to create a tax deduction for someone's pet project. Some of the earlier conservation campaigns were funded using conduit techniques and the Federal Government made some dire threats. Your Trustees are keeping a close watch on the projects being funded by ASFEF. Donations to ASFEF are a tax deduction. If you give to ASFEF you will force the Federal Government to also give an equal amount to your marginal rate of tax times your donation. A great way to get government funds for caves!

*Below – A moment in time captured at the AGM. Despite its appearance, the bottle with all the pipes on the floor wasn't a sophisticated drug apparatus*

Arthur Clarke



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