

SPEIEO SPIEI 361

July - August 2007

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Front Cover: Limestone cliffs near JF-38 Trapdoor Swallet (photo by Gavin Brett)



Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated

PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006

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

ABN: 73-381-060-862

ISSN 1832-6307

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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.

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Editorial

A photo of me on the cover. Greg will be happy. I'm not as prominent as I would have liked but these sacrifices have to be made sometimes.

I was thinking that maybe the club could do a Mt Rushmore thing with the cliff line in the photo and carve 10 m high faces of important club members. Choosing which people to do would no doubt lead to some intense infighting between the TCC and SCS factions in the club (it's like being in the Australian Labor Party at times!) If that rift was a cave then it'd be the hottest lead in Tasmania! (By the way, I'm shit stirring so don't get your knickers in a knot. Even better – do get your knickers in a knot, write something of substance on the matter and publish it in the *Spiel*. It all makes for entertaining reading). There'd have to be an Eberhard up there but could we do one without the other? Is there enough rock there to give full credit to Rolan's nose? (Pot, meet Kettle). Jeff Butt's would have to be modelled on an image from the period where his beard was trimmed. The cliff simply isn't wide enough to cover his beard at its bushiest.

Who else? Trev with a Guinness? Stu Nicholas with a jar of jelly beans or a typewriter perhaps? Arthur with a jar of ethanol in pursuit of a stampede of helpless invertebrates. Kevin Keirnan with a volume of *Southern Caver* diatribes on the destruction of environmental icons (or some anti SRT sentiment). That publication could have been called *Southern Kevin* for a while there. Albert and Prof Carey would have to be up there too but I can't think of anything funny or even nasty to say about them. Dammit.

That's enough senseless slagging of STC's forefathers (only because I ran out of ideas, not will). Bunty was only telling me the other day how funny it was that Andy (the pom) was telling us how important it is to respect and pay homage to the pioneers in our respective sports and clubs, when all we Australians do is hang shit on these people. I love the Australian culture – we really are just convicts.

On a more serious note; Tachycardia is now officially finished. She is now over 1000 m long too. It should only take ten years for the mental scarring to heal for all those that have been unfortunate enough to have experienced her pestilent depths.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

SPELEOLOGY IS NOW MAINSTREAM!
(A CONTRIBUTION BY OUR RESIDENT TAX NERD)

In a new, draft ruling issued by the Tax Office, TR 2007/D4, an example (No 5) cites a specialist shop selling speleological equipment. The shop buys a polystyrene pseudo-cave as the entrance and the ruling discusses the deductibility of the bolt-on entry.

You know your sport is legit when the ATO knows about it! *Tony Culberg*

WATERLOO SWALLET / TRAFALGAR POT / EREBUS SURVEY. The surveys/maps of this Hastings cave, with two entrances and even more names, is finally seeing the light of day thanks to Bunty. At the Midwinter Extravaganza at Francistown, Steve found the SCS vertical section map in Arthur's map stash. Steve didn't think it had ever been published and some thorough investigation of the archives seems to confirm this. Arthur only had the vertical section but Matt revealed that he'd seen the plan for this cave down at Hastings Visitor Centre (where he works). We are now happy to publish both the plan (a slightly touched up scan of the original) and the vertical section in this issue. The vertical section was quite large (~A2 or A1) and significant picture quality was lost during reduction to A4. As a result it has been redrawn and relabeled. The maps appear on pages 18 & 19. Do you know of any other old SCS or TCC maps hiding in a corner of your house that need to see daylight again?

CAVEX – CAVE RESCUE EXERCISE. This year's Cavex has been scheduled for the first weekend in November (3rd/4th). It will be held in IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave. More details will come later via the *Spiel* or the email listserver. Contact Alan with any queries.

STC CAR RALLY IS COMING! Gentlemen, start your engines and start tweaking your problem solving cerebral lobes. Get your teams together for a cave/speleo related pursuit of Hobart's suburbs. More details on this soon!

MC-6 DIAMOND CAVE HAS BEEN GATED. The key can be obtained from Parks at Marakooa by prior arrangement; a formal permit is not necessary.

THE ENGLISH CAVE BIRD OF PARADISE. This rare Tasmanian subspecies attracts a mate by performing an elaborate early morning display amid a bower of outdated caving gear. This spectacular exhibition, caught on film at the Francistown midwinter get-together, was complete with trademark flashes of its startling scarlet legs and punctuated with guttural vocal calls and obscenities. A truly magnificent sight (although unimpressive in black and white – looks good on the web in colour though).



M. Cracknell

Trip Reports

JF-225 Three Falls Cave – The Return

Serena Benjamin

16 June 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Despite the negative trend of Matt's appeal for more people to join our second trip to Three Falls (that's why I'm writing the trip report) we managed to entice Ric and Janine along. We almost managed to get another along, but the new pom on the scene was only available on either the Sunday or Monday. Our consensus had been that a Saturday trip would allow Matt to preserve his mental state long enough to survive an exam first thing on Monday morning. With the Derwent Valley heavy in fog we emerged into the Florentine Valley to find the sun just beginning to peep up over the snow-capped peaks to illuminate the magical carpet of frost. The brittle cold of -2°C at 9:30 am hastened our trip to the cave entrance and we were soon all threading our way down the cave. At this point comparisons were made between this passage and Bills Bypass. I'm just thankful it didn't have the same suit-shredding properties. Matt somewhat reluctantly took the lead, changing the top two ropes to the 30 m one we'd left there the previous week and then using one of the short ropes to rig up a handline on the climb. A speedier descent was then made down this much improved rigging and we all arrived at the top of the final pitch. Back into unknown territory, we descended this brilliant pitch beside the waterfall down to the rather hostile bottom. After a cursory look down the stream passage we each started to make our way out. Matt busied himself with observing the rock

layers and fossils, dissuaded from checking out the small stream passage as we had done by the state of muddiness we each returned in. Once back in the drier parts of the cave we then began the de-rig. Janine decided she was up for the challenge of a ridiculously heavy pack so took the 60 metre rope and led the way out of the cave. After dodging the showers of rocks as each person ascended the 'handline', my turn resulted in the air currents from my passing boot dislodging a larger boulder from just below the top of the ramp. Seems that was where the shower of little rocks was coming from. A sudden jerk on the rope below was a tell-tale sign that it had connected and to my dismay when I pulled it up, sure enough it looked ugly. At the base of the top pitch I left Matt and Ric discussing whether the large cylindrical fossils that we saw were Belemnites (Coleoidex), Amminiodea or Nautiliodex. Matt has concluded that they must be Nautiliodex (Cephalopoda sub-classes) due to Belemnites and Amminiodes being from the Jurassic-Cretaceous and Devonian-Cretaceous respectively. With all ropes now in packs, Ric and Janine started out of the cave, helping each other with pack passing while Matt and I completed the de-rig. Matt's former gloating that he wouldn't be picking up any rope till the last didn't prevent me from later almost putting my back out when passing his pack. Captain Safety must have all the latest gear in there. Just after we emerged from the annoying squeezezy bits we were informed by Ric and Janine that they'd gone an easier way [Ric was *probably just making it up so he could puff his chest and gloat – Ed.*]. Timing is everything it would seem. An enjoyable trip was had by all.

JF-270 Tachycardia – Psychological Warfare

Alan Jackson

17 June 2007

Party: Damian Bidgood, Alan Jackson

The plan was to a) put a tick next to the one good remaining lead in Tachycardia and b) get Damian underground again (an increasingly difficult task these days).

Thankfully most of the precipitation leading up to the trip had fallen as snow in the hills above the cave, so conditions were surprisingly dry in the cave. Still wet enough to be unpleasant though. Damian breezed through the new improved 'Dig' – in hindsight I think Bunty and I made it too easy to do. Tachy is now yet another homogenised cave it would seem.

Damian waited at the top of Bermuda while I went down to get the show started. I was expecting that he'd be able to hear me call him down when I was ready for him but I was wrong. At the 300 m mark (100 m down the 170 m pitch) I started to go sideways with the intention of getting into the development off the side of the main shaft (refer to the dotted lines and ?s on the survey in *Spiel* 354). About 10-

15 metres below the 300 m rebelay I swung over to a big natural spike and associated ledge (having a horizontal surface under your feet in the middle of Bermuda takes the edge off the fear). I ignored rigging off the low natural and placed two high bolts even further left to get me that little bit closer to my goal. The last few times I've been down this pitch I've had someone there with me, just a rebelay away, but I was over 100 m from Damian now and well out of earshot (which I determined after several minutes of yelling to no response). The pursuit of new cave was loosing the battle against the outright fear of where I was and what I was doing. I must be getting old. The bolts turned out to be poorly positioned and generated a rub point 5 metres down – I really wasn't thinking straight. The rub wasn't so bad and it was only 10 or so metres to my next target ledge so I continued on.

The target 'ledge' turned out to be half a dozen large boulders jammed in a narrow extension of the main shaft. Their liberal mud coating gave me no help in my assessment of whether they were load bearing structures or not. Everything I dislodged from here let out a resounding boom when it decked out 50 metres below me. I tied off onto one of the boulders, traversed a gaping hole and gained access to a second balcony with a more reassuring bottom. There were two options; drop down the hole I traversed and continue down the main shaft looking for a

new spot to swing over to or investigate the moderately promising small shaft over the back of my new little balcony. I chose the latter (mainly because the rock was better and more conducive to bolting!) As I drilled away I noticed that the finer drill dust was blowing gently back into my face. I had refound the elusive draft. Excellent. I bombed down eight or so metres into what was now obviously a separate system to the main shaft and of much smaller dimensions. It continued on round the corner and pitched again. I figured that Damian would be very cold and mildly concerned by now so I packed up and headed out.

It was the first time I'd done a large portion of this pitch all on my own and with a stupidly heavy pack. It was so demoralising that self doubts of my ability to continue out began creeping into my head. I'd had physically tough trips in the past but for some reason I was losing my nerve this time. It was a long slow prussick and I was ecstatic

when Damian responded to my yells near the top. When he hadn't responded to any of my frequent earlier calls I'd even started to convince myself that he'd got too cold and had headed out without me! I really was losing it!

Damian was indeed very cold after sitting around for a little over two hours and was keen to start moving out. I bolted some food and headed out too. I wasn't looking forward to Art Deco because I thought I might have another minor breakdown but knowing someone was in earshot had me singing and flying up the rope as usual (the 4 kilograms of mud encrusted crap I had offloaded onto Damian before the pitch was probably playing its part too!)

We were out in the daylight and were treated to an extended snow flurry on the way out. The forest walk was purely delightful and great treatment for my wounded mind.

MC-63 Tailender

Janine McKinnon

22 June 2007

Party: Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

ATTEMPT NO.2. This time we actually found out precisely WHERE the up bit to the pretties section of the cave was (we didn't go far enough last time as we got bored with the grovelling too soon) AND the length of rope needed to get there, beforehand. The trip goes much better with this sort of information.

We were underground precisely 3 hours and took a few photos in the decorated areas. To be honest, they weren't as impressive as I'd expected. There is a lot of mud trogged throughout the upper sections, despite the climb/pitch giving some protection to these areas over the years, and although we carried sandals to try to reduce the transport of mud about on our boots, it served little purpose. There were almost no places that you WOULD walk (a few were taped off and say "no go" areas) that were very clean, although some parts of the floor were drier and the mud less "goeey" than others. Anyway we did our best not to spread the mud about any more than it already is.

We did a few measurements for Rolan as "Parks" (or Cavecare or "someone") are planning on putting matting in to try to protect the decorated areas a bit more.

I'm glad I've seen the cave, but once in my lifetime is probably enough. It is possibly a cave best done early in one's caving career when more easily impressed and expectations are not too high.

Upper Section Access:

About 200 m along main passage from entrance take turn to right (only

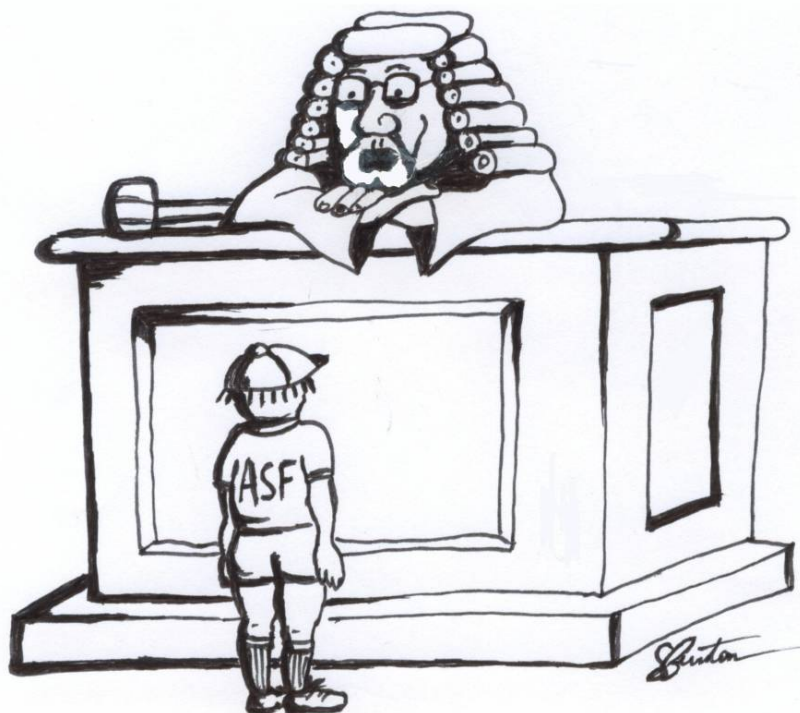
proper side passage). 20 m along go under to left. Follow obvious passage a short distance till climb is reached. There is an "endless loop" cord tied to base of stal on LHS. This passes through a maillon at top of pitch. The rope needs to be attached to cord so its end will pass through the maillon. We used a rolling hitch so the end of the rope pointed along the line of the cord. Pull the rope up through maillon and back down using cord. (Cord is very stretchy and not easy to pull.) Tie knot and carabiner in other end of rope so it jams when it reaches the maillon. The pitch length to the maillon is 11 m, so a rope around 20 m is needed.

Note. When derigging make sure the cord does not wrap around itself as this will make it impossible for the next group to use it.



R. Tunney

"Not only do you run some sort of protection racket, you've been pocketing the money you make from the sale of comics on your paper round!"



MC-4 Execution Pot

Janine McKinnon

23 June 2007

Party: Claire Buswell (FUSSI), Janine McKinnon, Ivan Riley, Ric Tunney

We had thought we might like to do this pot at Mole Creek for several years. The hold-up was that we didn't know precisely where it was, but earlier this year we got motivated enough to go looking for it. Having found it, we decided winter was a good time to do a short, dry cave at Mole Creek.

Ross, the acting ranger there, was keen to come as he'd also tried unsuccessfully to find it, and when we advertised the trip (sometime like March!), Ivan jumped in as he had also tried to find it (on a FUSSI trip) unsuccessfully. He told a friend in S.A. (who'd been on the same unsuccessful FUSSI trip) who asked if she could come and was prepared to fly down for the weekend to join us!

Ross broke his thumb the week before the trip and so the remaining four set off from the Caravan Park at the very respectable winter caving time of 9.30 am. [*Soft! I reckon I could do most MC caves with a broken leg! – Ed.*] After about a half hour walk from the car we were at the entrance by 10.30 am, thinking we'd be finished by early afternoon, but progress slowed a bit from then. We had a good look at the area around the hole and set up our rigging from the down-slope side. Ric started down with the intention of putting in a re-belay a short distance down, and under an obvious lip and rub point, but there was a big

ledge 8 m further down which would have required another rebelay. With a clearer view than we had from outside the cave, he could see that there was a much better line from the high side of the hole, so up he came again and we de-rigged and moved to the upslope side to reassess. Having re-rigged (see rigging notes at end of report) he descended again, and this time we were genuinely off and away at 11.30 am!

There is a moderate sized floor about half way down what is called the first pitch on the survey. The second part of the pitch is off-set by a few metres from the direct vertical line of the first section, so we decided to all gather at this point and rig as two pitches.

I put in a bolt at the top of the second drop to give a free hang on this section. From the top of this second pitch the stream at the bottom of the cave could be heard very clearly.

I descended first and, whilst the others followed, assessed the next pitch for bolt placement. The most recent trip report we had been able to find (from 20-odd years ago) described rigging off an old rotten log for this drop. We didn't think this sounded too promising as we thought the rotten log could be even rottener by now and assumed that we would need to put in artificial rigging. Such prescience! No hint of a log was there to even allow us a discussion of old-style rigging techniques.

The bolt placement went smoothly and Ric continued down until he got to the end of the rope and it wasn't the end of the drop. Missed it by 3-4 m - oops. So up he came again and we redid the rigging. We took the section of rope used in the backup and replaced it with a tape, which gave

us enough rope to get down. So down Ric went again, followed by the rest of us. This was a truly lovely pitch; free hanging, cylindrical, with the walls coated in calcite fluting for almost the full length of the pitch.

There was a short climb-down to the final sections of the cave where the stream was encountered for the first time. There was only a short section of constricted passage shown on the survey, which appeared to be borne out by our brief poking about. We didn't push the grotty rift or low, wet streamsink as they were pushed hard during exploration (by the explorers' accounts anyway) and looked decidedly unpleasant. There was lots of mud and debris showing that the area sumps regularly, in some places covering clean calcite deposits.

Our outward passage was fairly quick and efficient with some partly successful attempts at photography on the bottom pitch. Our remote Firefly flash did not want to work (WHY does it always seem to work in the lounge room at home and throw a tantrum when we get underground?) and so our photos were very mediocre. Another place to try for photos some time in the future.

We were all out and packing up around 3.30 pm. Plenty of time to get back to the Caravan Park, have a shower and get to the pub for dinner.

MC-4 Execution Pot rigging notes.

P1 – 31 m. 40 m rope. Belay from eucalypt 5 m uphill from entrance. 4 m trace on 10 m rope over lip for rebelay. Rope then misses small ledge at -10 m. Rebelay from bolt on LHS at big ledge at -15 m. This pitch can be broken into two 15 m pitches.

P2 – 31 m. 40 m rope. Belay from two bolts on RHS, with back-up to blocks on floor 5 m back. 3 m tape around blocks.

A 10 m rope could be handy for 9 m rift at bottom of cave.

Notes: All directions facing down the cave.

Bolts are 8 mm x 90 mm stainless steel through-bolts. Hangers have been removed and plastic bolt markers installed.

IB-171 Rocket Rods Pot

Matt Cracknell

23 June 2007

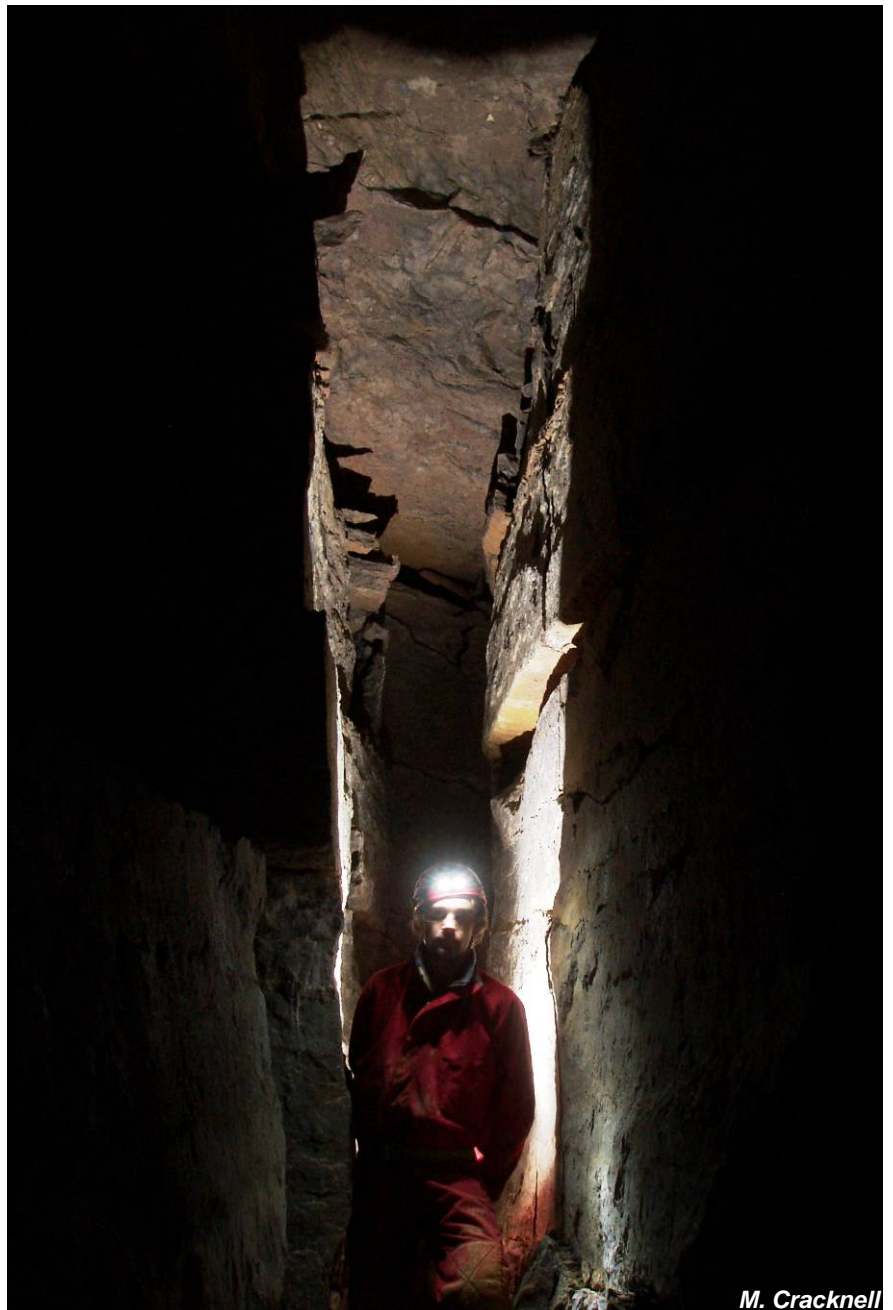
Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell, Jane Pulford, Tony Veness

A glorious morning greeted the intrepid caving parties at the Ida Bay carpark. Ken and Co. headed up the Southern Ranges Track for some surface wandering while we set off over Benders Quarry. A clearly taped track led us from the top of the switchbacks down across the Lower Parmeener Supergroup / Gordon Limestone unconformity to the focus of our day's adventures.

Serena took to the task of rigging the entrance pitch while we stood around with the llama for what seemed like an eternity. Eventually we all dropped into the cave's upper level. Most of the trip was spent dawdling around taking the odd photo and hypothesising on the genesis of the fascinating and diverse geology and geomorphology that this cave has to offer.

The upper level western passages feature a couple of small drained palaeolakes, evident from the laminated and often gypsum encrusted rhythmites (?) found *in situ* on some walls. Multiple cycles of deposition and erosion of poorly sorted clastic sediments seem to post date the draining of the lakes. I spied a symphylian that Arthur got excited about when he saw the photo and Serena found the bones of a large macropod below the entrance shaft.

After a brief sojourn to have a look at the "Man Trap" pitch (we had brought rope



M. Cracknell

but decided not to drop it) the party made its way to the upper level eastern passages. These areas of the cave are dominated by ‘freshly’ fractured bedrock. At one point the route took us over an enormous slab of rock that had dropped about 1 m. In this area Jane found the remains of several mice, their little skeletons coated in the decayed black stuff remnant from rotting flesh.

Down in the chamber below some large collapsed slabs and a very dodgy looking keystone I was struck (pardon the pun) by the thought that we were glimpsing a snap shot in time of a very dynamic environment in perpetual disequilibrium.

I imagined the physical changes that had occurred to this part of the cave in its current form, a big chamber being filled with stuff falling from the ceiling and from outside (there were angular boulders of Lower Parmeener Supergroup mixed in for good measure). How long had that all taken, 10,000 - 100,000 years, maybe longer? Regardless of the precise duration of these events, the incomprehensibly brief time that we were walking around is nothing to the cave. In essence the slabs have never stopped falling we had just fortunately avoided getting crushed by them!

After my little deep-time day-dream we explored the lower reaches of the chamber further and happened by a slab with some of the most exquisitely preserved coral fossils that I had ever seen, one of which protruded from the rock surface about 80 mm. Several dome-shaped structures (stromatalites perhaps?) and one

cephalopod were also noted. A selection of field sketches made on the day can be found in figure 1; includes the symphyllan seen earlier.

Tony made sure that we avoided turning this trip into another scientific expedition and got us out of the chamber and back to the pitch for the gentle prussic out, all with the added benefit of not getting squished (this time). On the way back to the cars we headed straight down Marble Hill in the failing light. 30 minutes later we were at the Southern Ranges Track where we bumped into Ken and Co. on their way out too.

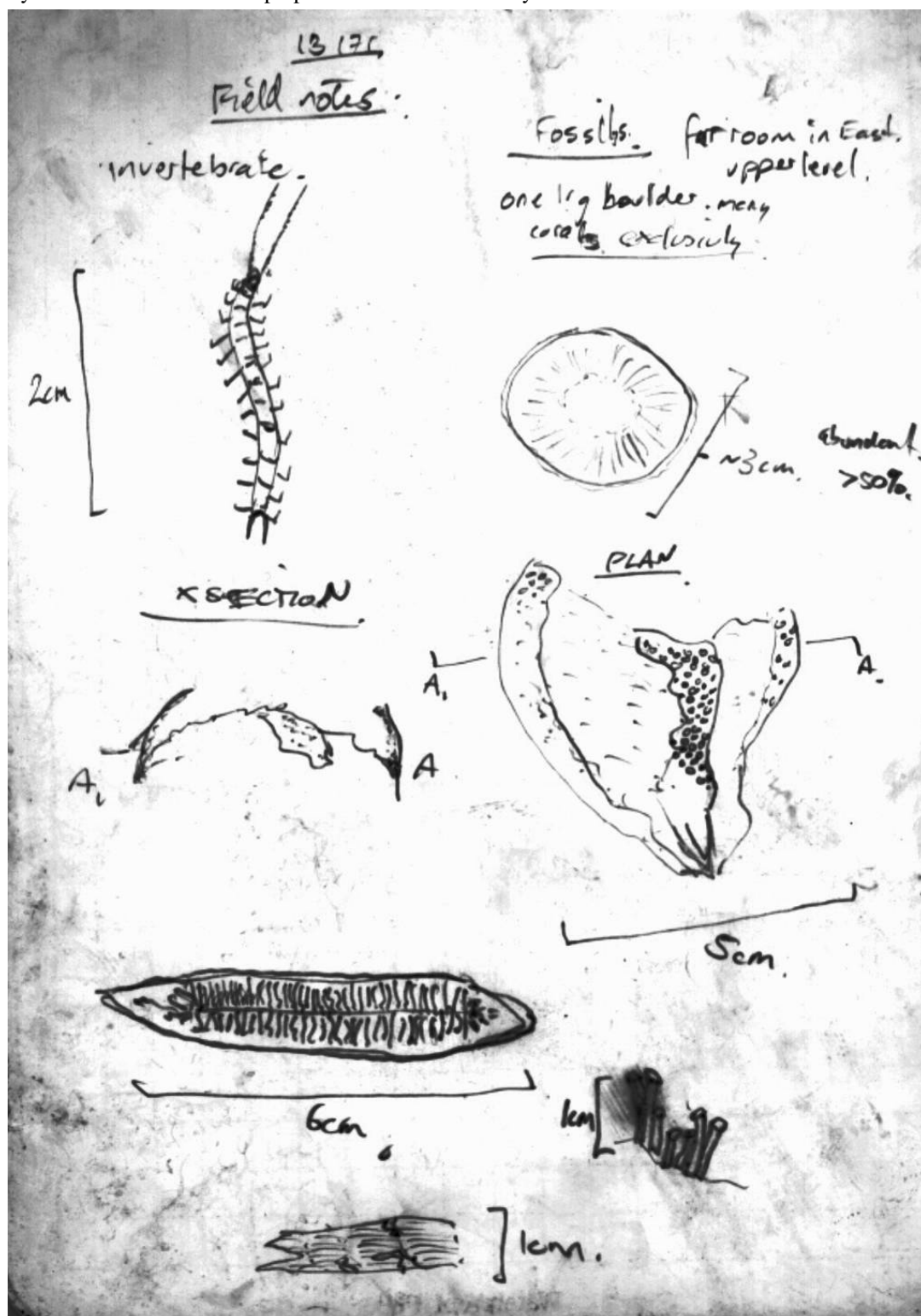


Figure 1: Field sketches of a symphyllan (top left) and fossil corals in Rocket Rods Pot (M. Cracknell, 23/06/2007)

Midwinter Solstice Party - Francistown

Stephen Bunton

23 June 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Stephen Bunton, Arthur Clarke, Matt Cracknell, Tony and Pat Culberg, Alan Jackson, Amy and Dion Robertson and Trevor Wailes

Somehow STC voted one of their most antisocial members to be Social Secretary so that Alan Jackson could be more useful doing everything, except those things that Matt does as President. It was therefore up to me to organise something to celebrate the middle of a winter that is proving to be a real one.



S. Bunton

A cheesy grin from Arthur while Trev looks like he's ready to defend his food with force if required

Kick-off was scheduled for about 7 pm since everyone was out caving furiously all day and didn't know when they would be back. By the time Trevor and I arrived at about ten to the appointed hour everything was happening. The yummy bread and garlic bread was almost devoured and most had sampled the vege soup. The mains of pasta and bolognaise was already on the table and the rice was cooked. All I had to do was throw a curry in the microwave and we were away.

A few saner people were drinking beers but the temptation of Arthur's and Jeff Butt's various fruit wines were too tempting for most. Dessert was a yummy banana cake and apple pie with ice cream. The evening proved to be a warm, friendly and light hearted affair. The locals, the Culbergs and the Robertsons, eventually returned to their nearby abodes. The evening proceeded in a low-key but

sufficiently lubricated manner till well past my bedtime. When we awoke the frost was so thick that you could have thought that it snowed, or you could have just drunk a little less the night before.



S. Bunton

Matt, Serena and Amy being sociable



S. Bunton

Dion watches on while Alan gets legless

The highlight of the evening was trying to construct the words for which solstice could be the acronym and then trying to remember it. In the end I think it stands for Silly Old Lame Southern Tasmanian Intrepid Caverneering Eediots!

MC-120 Marakoopa Cave

Janine McKinnon

24 June 2007

Party: Claire Buswell (FUSSE), Janine McKinnon, Ivan Riley, Ric Tunney

This was a short trip, before heading back to Hobart, to take some photos in a section of Marakoopa 1 that Ric and I have never been to. We only go to the cave every few years, and usually for a quick trip through to Marakoopa 2

& 3, taking "tourists" (i.e. new members usually), so this was something a bit different (in fact, three new areas at Mole Creek in three days. We haven't done that for a while.)

We intentionally headed in half way between the 10 am and 11 am tours to avoid tour parties and headed up Short Creek (which isn't really very short) to a decorated area. We spent about an hour taking photos of some beautiful calcite and aragonite (I think) formations, similar to those in Genghis Khan.



Some fabulous speleothems in the 'Short Creek' section of Marakoopa Cave (photo by R. Tunney/J. McKinnon)

IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave – a spot of surveying

Alan Jackson

24 June 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Stephen Bunton, Arthur Clarke, Alan Jackson, Trevor Wailes

Arthur had mentioned some new passage near the glowworm chambers in IB-10 that Mick Williams had shown to him recently. There were a few remaining climbing leads and Arthur wanted to show them to me to see if they were at all similar to the higher level extensions that Gavin and I had explored a couple of years back down near the Matchbox Squeeze. Bunty and Trev were both up for some exploration in the relaxing confines of IB-10 as a postscript to their drinking at the Midwinter Solstice dinner the previous night.

I was keen to survey the new stuff while there was still so much enthusiasm surrounding it (i.e. numerous people to help out). When Madphil came back out last time it was just after Gavin and I had made our new discoveries in this cave. Madphil tried to convince me that I was therefore the new Mystery Creek 'grandmaster' and that I should finish the resurvey project that he and Jeff Butt had commenced on his previous visit to the state. I had declined at the time

but this little jaunt has now provided the catalyst. And so the project has been revitalised.

We relocated JB and Madphil's station MCC12 in the main streamway passage (note – JB's sketch is misleading. He places the station on the second projection on the wall in his drawing but we decided to be anal and checked it by recreating the MCC11 to MCC12 leg [MCC11 is a very easy to relocate stalagmite]). The real MCC12 station turned out to be the first projection/corner about 3 metres further upstream). With this sorted out we headed off into the new small passage.

The passage is fairly small and ascends gently for 30-40 m before opening up into a slightly more complex chamber with various reconnecting leads. This chamber, with its high vadose canyons and avens (encrusted with flowstone and other pretties), was surveyed and all the ascending climbs checked. Arthur's main lead climb led to a beautiful flowstone encrusted chamber and aven but no significant continuations unfortunately. All up we surveyed about 80 m here.

Trev and Bunty then toddled off back to civilisation while the three remaining decided to survey in the side passage on the right hand side (heading downstream) about 50 m in from the entrance. Matt, Heather and Arthur had looked at this on a previous trip and I remember looking in here once on a trip with Tim Anderson. It was all previously known

passage but had not been surveyed. Not far in the passage hits a T-junction. The right is a dead end but the left ascends via a narrow squeeze into a small chamber. Arthur had failed to negotiate this squeeze on his previous attempt and didn't get much further this time either! If this area turns out to not have any earlier names then the Clarke Filter could be a possibility. [*Are these available commercially? – Ed.*] [*And can you write editorial comment for material you submitted? – Ed.*] [*Not properly, but rules have never bothered you before – SubEd.*]

Serena and I continued surveying (much slower with two people than three), finding that one way led to a terminal chamber full of various stals and shawls and the other way finished in a nice room with a sparkly flowstone floor. A

further 100 m of passage was surveyed here but that did include about 30 m in the main streamway passage as we tied the survey back into the IB-10 tag.

Now I'm all enthused about finishing off the whole cave and getting it drawn up. JB and Madphil surveyed over 2 km of the cave taking in all the major routes and the horrible labyrinth area down the back end. We basically just need to go through the whole cave systematically and pick up the little odds and ends/side passages. Including the main routes, the extensions Gavin and I found, IB-11 Midnight Hole and these two side passages the surveyed length of IB-10/11 now stands at over 2.9 km. It is easy to imagine that 3.5 km will be pretty easily achieved by the time we've finished. So who wants to help me?

JF-270 Tachycardia – F*\$# this for a joke!

Alan Jackson & Serena Benjamin

2 July 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

It was make or break time for this cave. If this lead didn't go then it was time to pull the pin and seal this bastard of a cave off forever; or at least until another generation of moronic cavers with a severe mental condition came along (when's Madphil coming back ...)

We had Andy with us, the latest silly pom on the Tas caving scene. He was mates with Trev so it could have gone either way. Turns out he's an utter fool and great fun to cave with, but the language barrier was a bit difficult at times.

Andy and I bombed to the limit of the previous trip's exploration while Matt trailed behind taking more temperature measurements (he was designated nerd for the day). Serena came to the top of Bermuda and then went back up above On the Rope Again to chase some leads she thought she'd seen.

Bermuda was bloody wet again and thoroughly unpleasant. It was nice to swing across out of the main shaft and into our new 'dry' stuff. The mud was the worst I've ever seen though which made up for the lack of cascading water. I whacked in a bolt and descended to a large ledge about 3 m down and then placed another bolt to use as a redirect down the next 6 or so metres. I landed on a steep boulder strewn slope (large dolerite boulders – a long way from home) and slithered down around the corner to see what was next. The way down from here was too tight but drafting well. A short climb led into a small chamber with a few unpromising downward leads. It was all over. A few higher climbs were checked but with no success. It was so quiet and dry that we didn't want to go back out into the void of Bermuda – it is a very lonely place with all its light sucking walls and face-lashing spray. We sat and devoured food and then Matt arrived to distract us for a little longer. Once he'd run out of distracting power we turned to surveying to prolong it just that little bit more. Andy started out while Matt and I surveyed and then Matt headed off too. I came up last derigging Bermuda as I went.

The survey shows that our extension bottomed out at -351 m but the interesting thing was that it didn't lie over the

top of the short streamway section at the bottom of Bermuda Triangle as suspected. The Bermuda stream heads off in a WNW direction and the new stuff trended S/SSE. Weird. We added 71.5 m to the surveyed length of the cave which brings the total length so far to 925 m. It'd be nice to survey a couple of other little bits in to bring it over the 1 km mark but that will depend on enthusiasm, which is waning rapidly for this cave.

I was too tired to pull the more than 200 m of rope up Bermuda so we left it there for next time. With a bit of luck we can get the whole cave derigged and 75 more metres surveyed on the next trip. Then we can forget about this horrendous shit hole once and for all. When playing around with the survey data I noticed that if I close the errors/loops then it adjusts the depth to 376 m (versus 375 m uncorrected). I prefer 376!

What I did while the boys were holidaying in Bermuda

(i.e. Serena's bit)

After a slow trudge up the hill commonsense prevailed and I decided not to go to Alan's ledge of death, no matter how tempting it might seem. The weather inside was not the worst I'd seen – cold conditions with scattered showers and localised flooding. In ten minutes flat I was soaked through and would remain that way for the rest of the day. After bidding the boys adieu at the top of Bermuda I began to make my way back to our rendezvous point at what I've termed Junction Chamber (where the Starburst Passage heads off from) with some mini-exploration of my own to do along the way. First of all I had a closer look at a 'lead' at the rebelay of Art Deco that Alan had told me about. Determining that it would be madness to get off rope onto the mud-coated ledge, I made several attempts of trying to see around the corner to no avail. I'm not convinced that it's anything more than just a natural bridge across the chasm but I guess the only way to know for sure is to look (maybe on the derig). Continuing up, I had a quick peek at the way to Yo Bitches before heading to the top of On the Rope Again, where I hoped to find a low crawl I'd looked at previously to see if it was worth pushing. The first of three options I looked at led to a small pitch (as described by Alan). The second was a vertical squeeze/climb. After several attempts at posting myself down this I managed to get my body through but pulled the pin when my helmet wouldn't follow (not something I was keen to part with). The third option funnily enough brought me to the base of

the aborted climb as well as the crawl I'd remembered. More of a flattener and perfectly hideous with the amount of water flowing from the ceiling I decided to forgo the pleasure of squeezing in there for a later time – maybe. Leaving that behind I then went and wormed my way under a large rock slab and climbed down to find myself opposite the top of On the Rope again. I'd noticed this passage on the way up and from where I was now positioned there was a mud covered flowstone ramp that looked like it would go down to the opening visible from half-way down the pitch. Leaving a cairn at this point I went back up into Junction Chamber where I investigated

all the side pockets, found a skeleton (possibly quoll) and looked longingly at a chamber up through the rockfall. I didn't push up into here as once again I was deterred by the shower of water I'd have to pass through. I then settled down to await the return of the others and amused myself with various warming activities such as draining my boots of their accumulated slurry and scraping off some of my thick coating of slime. When the chatter of the creek finally turned into the sound of the others we met up and quickly got moving again, exiting into the cool dark of the forest at around 7 o'clock. Note to self: don't get gored by tree limbs in the dark – they hurt!

JF surface day – finding and tagging JF-418 thru 421 in the Ice Tube area

Alan Jackson

7 July 2007

Party: Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson

Gavin was on day release again but was carrying various degrees of injury and lameness. An easy potter in our favourite part of the JF was planned. We wanted to have a closer look in the area between Trapdoor Swallet and Ice Tube, up on the north facing slope and ridge to the south of the mostly dry valley between the two caves.

We headed up the usual track to Trapdoor, crossed the main stream entering the doline and then turned right into the dry gully that enters here (which ultimately leads to JF-287 et al.) We started on the left side of the gully (as going up) before reaching a nice little spot with much outcropping limestone and cliffs. Here we were momentarily distracted by the right hand side of the gully and I stumbled across JF-286 again (a cave I found way back in November 2005 after a Lost Pot trip [SS351:6], explored a month or so later [SS351:13-14] and eventually tagged in January 2006 [SS352:13-14]. This entrance still needs surveying into the network. This cave had lots of large crystalline boulders in it that had threatened to squash us during exploration. During the day we began referring to it as 'Crystal Death Cave' which was then modified to 'Crystal Meth' by the end of the day (maybe Gavin used to be a junky).

We corrected our course and crossed the gully again, climbing the ridgeline. Exposed limestone abounds on this ridge but we were having surprisingly little luck locating entrances. Gavin traversed the ridgeline while I stayed down over the IT side a little bit. I was finding nothing so went a little lower where I found a narrow slot about 3 m long, lined with ferns (*Blechnum chambersii* for those that care) and issuing an encouraging draft. It really was tight though and would require a digging effort (which is a good thing!) Rocks rolled down for quite some way so we tagged it JF-418. While I was affixing the tag Gavin wandered further downhill (about 10 m) to a promising looking feature. It had the tag JF-265 which triggered a memory bank for me. I had a look and then hypothesised that the IT track would be less than 20 m away. We looked up and saw numerous pink tapes all in a line. We were lower than we thought! The main reason this number meant something to me was because I was with Madphil when we found JF-265 Diversion Pot [SS330:10-11]. But the entrance doesn't look like the one I remember – I hope

the right entrance was tagged! Perhaps a check next time we're up there would be worthwhile.

I had always wanted to view the holes behind IT that I'd read about in an old *Spiel* and yarned about with Rolan several times; tight, 20-40 m higher than IT, drafting and you can hear the IT streamway in one of them (i.e. a bit of digging and you have a new Australian depth record). Not quite expecting to reach this area, I had not bothered to read up on it beforehand. These holes are covered in Rolan Eberhard and Martyn Carnes' cave numbering report and trip report in SS220:3-4 (ah, the good old days when gelignite was deemed an appropriate digging tool).

We continued up the gully on the right hand side, passing well above IT, and soon found JF-399. This is one of Rolan and Martyn's holes. It looked horrible, as did the tag that was dangling from one bolt. We added a second fastener (any excuse to use the drill), took a photo and kept going. Not far from here a steep gully headed down to a large choked doline with a shallow 'lake'; ok, it was a large puddle. The water was draining down a fist sized hole on the southern side – a very interesting feature is this one. I think it may be Rolan's JFZ89 which is described as *muddy seepage above JF345* in Eberhard 1994 and located in the right spot on his Z number map. We then continued up into flatter ground approaching the Wherretts Lookout saddle. A largish hole with a couple of blue tapes was found but with no obvious tag (there was no good rock to attach it to, though, and since reading Rolan's report in SS220 it could well have been JF-401 which is described as *a small pot hole 1.5 m in diameter. Total depth circa 8 metres. The tag was placed on the cave wall below a 5 m climb down from the entrance ... along the hill slope behind Ice Tube ...* The 5 m climb looking a bit sketchy to us so we decided to leave this for another day armed with a ladder.

We then struck the contact and headed left in the gully proper. Three drafting but very tight streamsinks were investigated before we heading down the gully (following a blue taped track) before intersecting the IT stream. We cut round the back of the IT doline but failed to find JF-400 (but we didn't really know we were looking for it), finding nothing before we arrived back at JF-418. Then we headed down the gully, but up off the floor, towards Trapdoor. After many metres of nothing and a lunch stop I found a nice little triangular entrance leading to a medium sized chamber via a 6-7 m steep slope followed by a 5-6 m drop and then who knows what. It was tagged JF-419 and recorded on the GPS. It was kind of in the middle of nowhere so we decided to run a line of blue tapes down the hill so we had a better chance of relocating it later. Ten metres later I found another similar entrance with ~5 m

pitch to a 45 degree slope disappearing out of sight. It was tagged JF-420. Both these holes had good drafts. We cast around intensively in this area but found nothing else.

Continuing west on the flanks of the gully we almost got back to the intersection of the main IT valley and the other valley above Trapdoor (the one we originally started up in the morning) when I found yet another small entrance. This didn't seem as exciting with no draft or evidence of big pitches but it was indeed a cave. While I was whacking the JF-421 tag on Gavin found two blue tapes on a fallen twig nearby (circa 1980s?). So this one had been found before.

On the way out we detoured off the main track around the back of Trapdoor – many impressive cliffs and scary piles of collapsed rocks in the vicinity (I shudder to imagine

what it must be like in that cave). We then rerouted the main track around the nasty log climb past Pendant Pot (the one that should have broken 10 years ago and sent the walker 10 metres down the landslip). This reroute (blue tapes) doesn't join the old track alignment for some 40 m or more and is marked with double blue and one old orangey tape at the junction (follow the old route to get to Pendant and follow the new to avoid the sketchy log). We also improved the track between this point and the Garths Creek crossing.

A good day out with two great and two reasonable prospects to go back for (it was a great date too: 07/07/07)

EBERHARD, R. (1994) *Inventory and Management of the June River Karst System, Tasmania*. Report to Forestry Tasmania. 125 pp

JF-270 Tachycardia – Tachy Adieu

Alan Jackson

15 July 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Stephen Bunton, Matt Cracknell, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

Somehow I had managed to find four people enthusiastic about derigging Tachy once and for all. Bunty enjoyed the car shuffle (he was chauffeured in three different cars on the way to the carpark) and then we toddled up the hill with delightfully light packs.

Andy and I hauled the ~230 m of rope up Bermuda and had man-handled it half way to the bottom of Art Deco when Matt arrived to help. The three of us spent 15 minutes untangling Andy's mega-tangle (it was a doozy) and the whole lot was hauled up to the bottom of On The Rope Again pitch via the humanly impassable hole between it and Art Deco. Bunty, Serena and Andy packed the now ~ 300 m of rope into bags while Matt and I surveyed the side passage and 8 m pitch that Serena and I had dropped back on Australia Day (it was my mission to survey an extra 75 m to get the overall survey length over 1000 m!)

We derigged On the Rope Again and then began the great pack shuffle through Gypsyland. Bunty's bag was obscenely heavy and quite simply dangerous! I dropped a leg down the other 8 m pitch (that we never dropped) which presumably takes the water to the top of On The Rope Again. Andy and I then had a breather in the chamber below the ladder (below The Dig) and surveyed in the horizontal passage here while the others continued out. We caught the others up again in the big breakdown chamber and filled in time while packs were hauled up the pitch.

As I derigged the last two bolts in the cave I managed to drop one of the nuts, so if anyone is stupid enough to ever return to this cave then remember to carry a spare 8 mm nut or two.

Back on the surface, I kissed the JF-270 tag (and was nearly thrown back in the cave when my hideously heavy pack toppled towards the entrance) and bid Tachy adieu. Thank God for that!

Memorable quotes from the trip –

Matt Cracknell (in reference to finally finishing exploration in this cave and derigging it) – “It is like snipping off a rotten dag and removing it FOREVER!”

Andy McKenzie (in response to a comment by Bunty) – “You know you're getting old when you bring up worker's compensation in a discussion about naked female cave mud wrestling ...”

Leads for the next generation ...

While I am completely at peace with this cave now and plan to never return, in the event that I found myself in there again (i.e. if someone offered me \$10 million to guide them) then I'd take the opportunity to check the following:

Really should have dropped the 8 m pitch below station TC77 (there's a pink survey tape with station number and tape here). It's likely to simply link to the top of On The Rope Again pitch, but one can never be sure.

There are two spots on the descent of Art Deco that one could get off and traverse the rift at a higher level; one just above the rebelay and one about 5 m off the floor where it narrows right down. Once again, unlikely to turn up anything amazing but these things must be checked.

The lower parts of Bermuda Triangle could still reveal a way over the terminal streamway choke. The development we found at the -330/350 m mark is evidence of this. One really should regain access to the bit I swung across too and then continue down the main shaft from the wedged boulders instead of going down the separate system that we followed with the intention of further scouring the development on this side of the shaft for a way on.

After downclimbing the narrow vadose canyon in the Yo Bitches extension you pop back out in the main open passage. Traverse left from here to the pedestal and you access the two 16 m pitches, bolt traverse to the right from this point and you would gain access to a hole that could provide a higher route up and over the drafting terminus of the horizontal passage at the base of the second 16 m pitch. The main lure here is the opportunity to break into a higher level of the Bermuda shaft and extend that 170 m.

Were one to be a real sadist then you could push the passage below the 8 m pitch that Serena and I dropped on Australia Day and link it in with Art Deco but the mud

there was possibly the most hideous in the whole cave (and that's really saying something)

The rock collapse at the bottom of JF-272 Sawn Off Pot needs pushing as this is likely to connect into the Starburst Passage. This would make the whole system about half a

metre deeper! The other option is to push the numerous holes along the contact to the west of Tachy which are all slightly higher. This last paragraph is the only one I'm likely to ever act on because it means not actually entering Tachy.

Why you shouldn't ever go to Tachycardia – some post trip photos

Bunty (with his 18 kg bag of rope) and Serena book a date with their washing machines (photos by Matt Cracknell).



JF-4 Khazad Dum – Wishful Thinking

Alan Jackson

22 July 2007

Party: Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

For some reason Trev was stupid enough to talk up the leads in Splash Pot to Andy and he's been like a dog with a bone ever since (no, not that kind of bone – he hasn't tried to hump my leg once!) With Tachycardia out of the way we decided that Andy should see a nice Tasmanian cave (if he'd seen KD first then there's no way we could have convinced him to go into Tachy).

The work that Butt, Rasch et al. did in KD and Splash Pot demonstrated that the two caves are less than 20 m apart in spots. We decided it would be silly to go into Splash Pot the nasty way (via Close to the Bone) if there was a way in from the KD side. Basically we spent a very relaxing and enjoyable day scouring the ascending passages behind the waterfall at the bottom of the 21 m pitch (at the beginning of the 'the streamway' in KD). Armed with printouts of Jeff's immaculate book work and the Onstation data we systematically rechecked all the passage in this section. Not surprisingly all we found were Rasch and Butt

footprints and some hideously dangerous squeeze piles of loose boulders. I'm happy that this has been looked at very thoroughly (and superbly surveyed by the two aforementioned gentlemen).

I took the opportunity to test out my new backup light – the Shrek ear torch (see review later in this issue). I can really see this being the lighting system of the future. Kelloggs are to be commended for their R&D in this field.

We popped down to the first streamway pitch then headed out. At the Scaling Pole pitch I took a quick detour down the main streamway. I'd never been down to the first wet pitch. Water levels were low (almost summer levels) but the approach to the pitch looked awesome. I really want to go down that way and follow it right through.

Back on the surface we paid homage to Stu's helmet and then headed out with a detour to the Splash Pot entrance. What a horrible looking thing it is. I don't really want to go in there. Is the beginning of a renaissance for this hole? I hope not.

It was most pleasant to have just five minutes worth of gear cleaning when I got home. I've been used to budgeting a solid two hours for Tachycardia trips.

"I'd say preventable; four comics a year wasn't a lot to ask of you ... was it?"



Other Exciting Stuff

The Whinger Strikes Back

Alan Jackson

<In response to Amy's article 'Put your helmet back on again Alan as this comes at you!' in SS360.>

It's all well and good to do a high school statistical analysis on a very recent and small data set but to avoid doing what is commonly known as 'wasting your time' it usually pays to broaden the scope of one's analysis. Attempting to find a membership trend in 12 months of a 60 year old club is short sighted to say the least.

Amy criticises my uni student hypothesis in one paragraph and then admits that it's probably reasonable in a latter one. She also suggests that the running of official 'beginner trips' appears to be counter-productive in leading to ongoing memberships and follows this up with an email on the listserver advertising a beginners' trip to Mystery Creek Cave. It was reported at the July meeting that probably only one of the four beginners on that trip is likely to continue caving. This is hypocrisy at its best.

To suggest that ceasing our affiliation with ASF would push us into obscurity and out of sight from the potential of migrating mainland ASF affiliated club members is hardly credible (although arguably desirable!). STC is Australia's oldest caving club, arguably its most active and probably produces the most regular caving publication in the country after SSS (Greg made me put that bit in!) I don't think STC would drop off the radar that quickly. If you live in Tasmania and you cave then you'd be hard pressed not to be one of us, or at least to have not heard of us.

The best thing about STC is that you pay an annual fee to receive six copies of the club's publication and you get six of it sent to you – if only the same could be said for the four copies of Caves Australia that ASF charges us for every year. When did the last one come out? At STC you also have the option of receiving the publication electronically at no cost. As Bunty pointed out to me the other day; without a regular publication ASF dies. It's the one link that keeps you feeling like a member of the organization. The only mail ASF's members receive these days are requests for membership fees!

The cost breakdown, while possibly accurate, (don't know about the relevance of the loss of wages argument though – most people in modern Australian society work Monday to Friday and pursue leisure activities and hobbies on their regular unpaid days off: Saturday and Sunday) isn't looked at from the correct angle. Yes, being an active caver costs a fair bit of money, but the initial membership fee is what the prospective member sees first. "Join the club for \$30 and see if you like it" goes down a lot easier than "Join the club for \$90 and see if you like it". What Amy's stunning statistical scrutiny fails to address is how many people don't even make it past the 'I'm interested in caving, I wonder what it's like and how much it costs' phase. She only looks at those that have already made the decision and investment of prospective membership. I don't have any stats on this area but it could be significant.

So I'm accused of being a sideline sitting whinger. I'll cop the whinging bit; whinging is one of my favourite pastimes (I have English heritage in my family line!) But I refute the

‘sideline sitting’ tag. I’d say I was pretty capable of getting things done around the club! I challenge anyone to disagree with me on this point.

My editorial in SS358 was obviously the catalyst for Amy’s recent article. In it I refer to STC resolving to clarify how the fees were divided up and requesting a copy of the ASF treasurer’s report/cost breakdowns. This is quite a clear example of an attempt to ‘do something about it’. The only ‘sitting’ we have experienced is that of ASF sitting on its hands and not even responding to our concerns. At the 2007 AGM in March we, as a club, decided to write to ASF voicing our concerns and requesting a comprehensive breakdown of ASF’s fees and its intentions regarding the insurance levy, etc. I sent this letter to the ASF treasurer on March 14 and have had no response to date. It makes it very difficult to have an

informed and structured argument when information vital to that argument is not forthcoming! So what appears to have been a further five months of whinging has actually been five months of waiting for a response from ASF (which is a good enough excuse to whinge about it if you ask me!) During this five months I have been pursuing other lines of enquiry relevant to the subject (because let’s face it, are we really expecting ASF to actually tell us anything useful if and when it does get around to responding to our letter?) The saga, I fear, will continue (unless we put a stop to it).

There used to be only two things certain in life – death and taxes. Now there’s a third – the uselessness of ASF. There are funeral directors and accountants to help us with the first two. I think we’ll have to help ourselves with the latter.

How to spend six weeks underground – opening a new show cave in Rodrigues

Greg Middleton

In 2001 I first agreed to help a Mauritian/Australian colleague, Owen Griffiths, open a show cave in association with a giant tortoise reintroduction project on the remote Mauritian island of Rodrigues. There followed lots of submission preparation, endless waiting for officials to decide whether to grant a lease and of what area, and investigations of the latest lighting and path-making trends for tourist caves. About 2003 a lease of 18 ha of aeolian calcarenite on “Plaine Corail” in the south-west of Rodrigues was approved. On 14 July 2007 the Mauritian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism, Hon. Xavier Luc Duval, and the Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues (equivalent to an Australian State Premier), Mr Johnson Roussety, formally opened the François Leguat Giant Tortoise and Cave Reserve.



The impressive entrance to Grande Caverne – with the first giant tortoise to be reintroduced to the site. (photo - Greg Middleton)

Over the past two years the staff of the reserve have rehabilitated much of its area by uprooting the lantana thickets and replanting some 100,000 native and/or endemic plants and have “restocked” the area with over 400 giant tortoises, reared at Owen and Mary-ann

Griffiths’ wildlife park on the main island of Mauritius. (The tortoises originate on the island of Aldabra, which is so remote that it was the only island in the Indian Ocean not to have its giant tortoises exterminated during the days of sail when tortoises provided live meat during extended sea voyages. Though they are not identical to the original giant tortoises of Rodrigues (there were two species), they are the only available replacement – and grow to a similar, large size.)

The concept of reintroducing giant tortoises to Rodrigues and the selection of the site of the new reserve are due to Dr Carl Jones, a Welsh biologist responsible for many successful wildlife rescue projects in Mauritius. The site is entirely underlain by aeolian calcarenite which has formed a number of natural ‘canyons’ ideal for constraining the tortoises, and many caves – some of which have yielded the bones of the local extinct tortoises and the extinct flightless Solitaire.

Following the official ceremony, inspection of the visitor centre and some refreshments, the Deputy PM declined to inspect the tortoise enclosures, but said he was keen to visit the cave. Due to late arrival of the planking material and lights, only a little over half the cave tour was available but those in the official party expressed great satisfaction at the presentation of the cave. (The full cave is expected to be open by 1 August 2007.) The first inspection was guided by the Cave Manager, Arnaud Meunier (who has gained experience in cave guiding at Margaret River, WA) with additional comments by the author and, on palaeontological aspects, by British palaeontologist, Dr Julian Hume (who is consultant to the reserve on

matters relating to the sub-fossil bones of the Solitaire, other extinct birds and tortoises, found here).

The pathway through the cave has been constructed using recycled plastic planking supplied by Repeat Plastics (W.A.). This is supported, where the floor is level sediment, by polyurethane piping and, where the path crosses rockfall, flowstone, etc, by structural steelwork

built by a local contractor. A local contractor without experience in this field was able to lay and attach about 250 m of the planking in only 8 days, including some tricky corners which probably stretched his geometrical capabilities.

The lighting in the cave was intended to be solely by large 6 watt LEDs supplied by Weidmüller Pty Ltd of Huntingwood, NSW, but due to late arrival of these (thanks to the carrier and Mauritian customs) some 20 and 50 watt halogen (dichroic) lights were initially installed. These will be replaced by large LEDs. Tracklighting, where required, is by 5-LED licence plate lamps. A benefit of the LEDs, apart from their impressive efficiency, is that they will run on any voltage from about 9 to 33 volts (DC), with equal light output. Hence even a significant voltage drop need not be a problem. The cave will soon be entirely lit by a 28 volt DC supply.

For the moment, Grande Caverne is the world's newest show cave. It is the first cave in Mauritius to be lit by installed electric lighting and only the second such cave in the Indian Ocean region (if one excludes the west coast of WA), Anjohibe near Mahajanga in Madagascar having closed about 50 years ago.

As consultant for the cave-related aspects of this project, during the period beginning 14 June 2007 I have been in the cave every day personally fitting all the cave wiring

and lighting – my first cave-lighting project since the Glory Hole Cave at Yarrangobilly in 1970! Advice from Andy Spate in relation to the lighting, and from Peter Bell in relation to the pathway material and other aspects, and input from Elery Hamilton-Smith has been most helpful. Trackwork in the second part of the cave has been proving somewhat more difficult but hopefully the cave will be fully open by 1 August.

I trust this demonstrates that I am not allergic to limestone caves as some have implied of recent times!



Official inaugural inspection of main part Grande Caverne. The Dep. PM is at top of stair; Owen Griffiths in the hat. (photo - Greg Middleton)

Product Review – Kelloggs Shrek the Third® Ear Clip Torch

Alan Jackson

I was recently lucky enough to find an ear clip torch in my box of Rice Bubbles. According to the box only one in three of the specially marked boxes contain a torch. Clearly I was blessed. I was heading off to KD the next day so I thought I'd better test it out for functionality.

The design is quite simple (always a good thing for caving gear) and consists of a small light unit that contains the battery, switch and single LED (green) – according to the cereal box there are two other torches available representing the Puss in Boots and Donkey characters (in orange and purple respectively). Each torch reputedly 'glows a different colour!' The light unit then mounts the ear clip by simply sliding on. The ear clip is then placed over and behind the ear. The light is designed to be mounted on either the left or right ear and detailed instructions are enclosed outlining how to achieve this (unfortunately the only people who would be too stupid to work this out for themselves are the same people that wouldn't be able to read the instructions yet). The torch is not suitable for children under 3 years and should not be aimed directly at the eyes or face (I shone it directly into my eyes and it hurt).



The true test for this light was going to be underground in a real cave environment. I was genuinely surprised at how bright the light was. The light had a useful range of around 1 to 3 metres – hardly a primary light source but a useful

'get out of trouble' light in the event of a primary light failure. With two units, one mounted on each ear, the usefulness would clearly double – stereo Shrek light! The entire unit only weighs 10 grams and could be stowed virtually anywhere on your person during a trip. I found the main failure to be the ear mounting mechanism. The clip was quite large and did not clip securely to my ear (and I don't have little ears). The clip came loose and threatened to fall off with even small head movements and would clearly need some modification. Perhaps it was designed for ogre ears.



Also, the battery is not replaceable and there is no indication on the packaging just how long one can expect it to last. I guess they assume that their target market will grow bored with it long before the battery goes flat (they underestimated my excitement!) Ongoing supply of the unit is also an issue. The promotion runs until '12/08/07 or until stocks are exhausted'. It is probably wise to buy a few

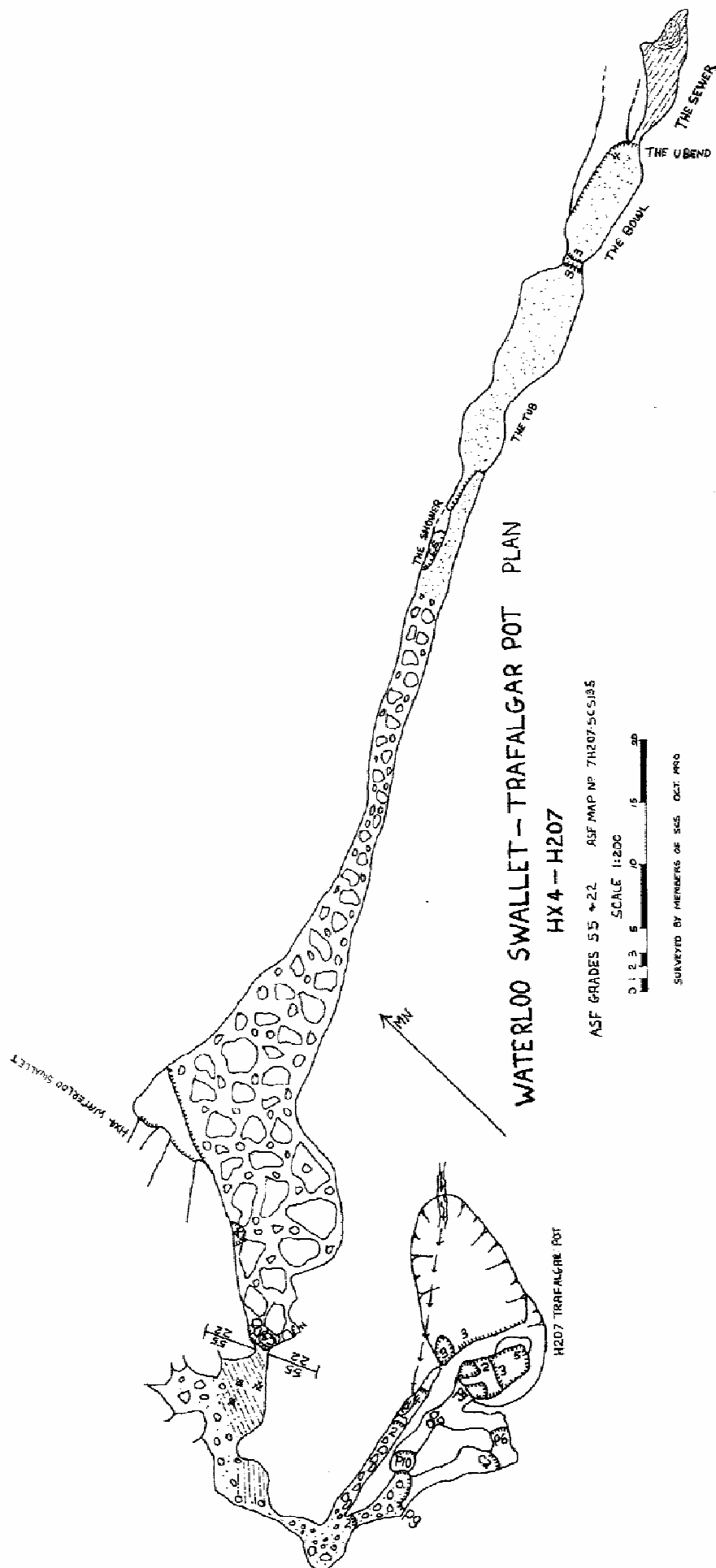
crates of Rice Bubbles now to ensure you have a long lasting supply for the future.

Far and away the best thing this light did was make me feel very cool (it reminded me of Jean-Claude Van Damme in his movie *Universal Soldier*). I thoroughly recommend you go out and purchase some Rice Bubbles. I also thoroughly recommend you don't watch *Universal Soldier*. The slogan on the cereal packet says 'Light your way to an adventure filled day!' That is definitely what it did for me in KD.



The choose your own content challenge

Due to this issue's content and formatting requirements on previous pages there appears to be a bit of empty space on the bottom of this page. I have decided to give you the opportunity to add your own personal touch to your copy of the *Spiel* by leaving it blank. You can now draw or glue whatever tickles your fancy in this space. This will make your copy unique and could lead to issue 361 being the most valuable and highly sort after edition of the *Spiel* ever! No two copies will be the same (unless you're crap and don't draw/glue anything in, and then you'll only have yourself to blame). Go to it. Get creative! (I think I'm going to draw Jean-Claude flexing his enormous biceps and scowling aggressively on mine).



Trafalgar Pot H-207 - Waterloo Swallet (Erebus Cave) H-X4

Developed Long Section

ASF Grades 55 and 22
ASF Map No 7H207-SCS139
Surveyed by SCS
Electronic version redrawn by Stephen
Bunton & Alan Jackson 6/7/2007

