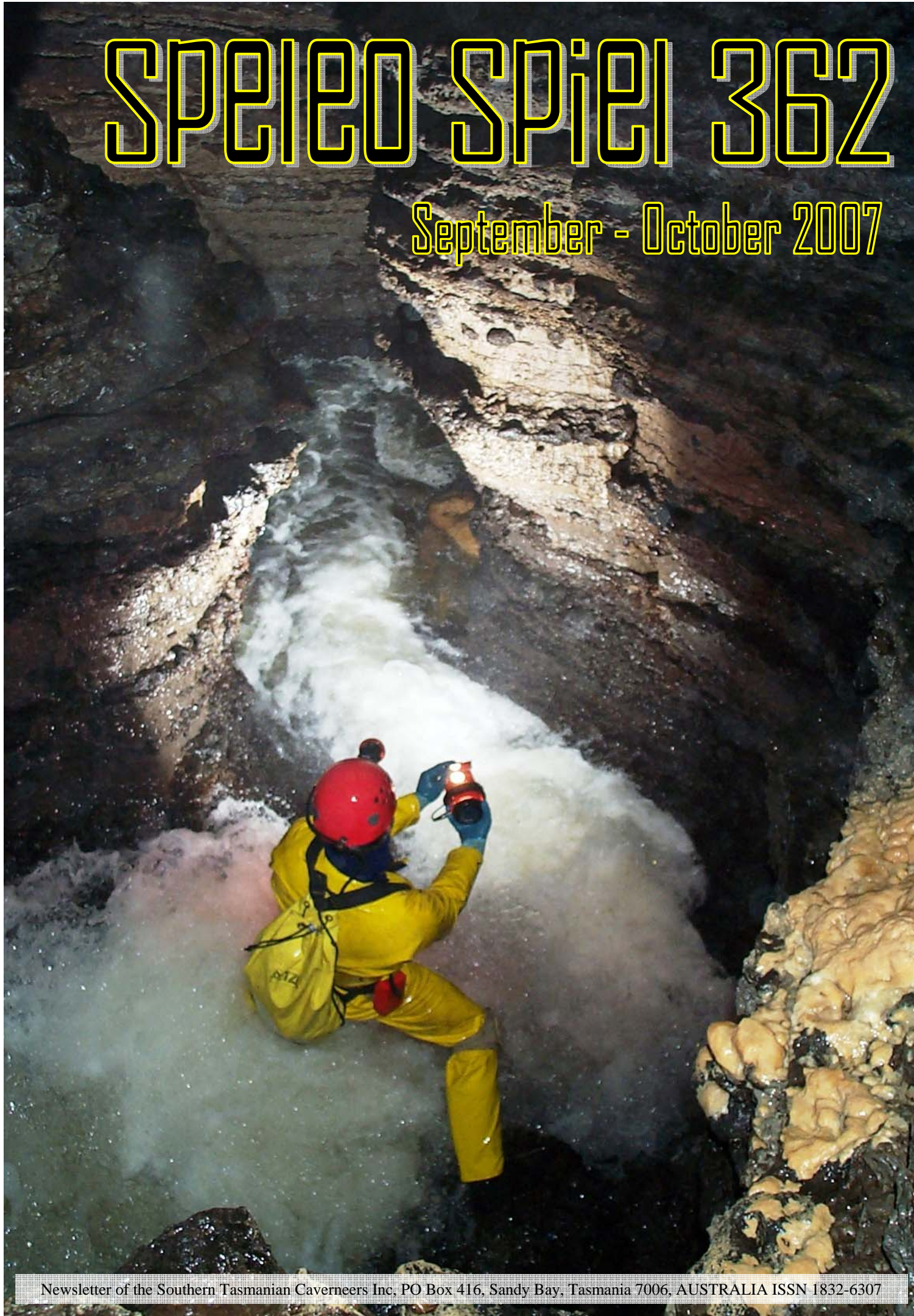


SPELEO SPIEL 362

September - October 2007



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Front Cover: Stefan Eberhard flashes his wares in a very sporty Growling Swallet. *Photo by Rolan Eberhard*

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.



Speleo Spiel

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Editorial

Welcome to *Speleo Spiel* – X362!

The recent tagging of a Risbys Basin cave with a Juneeflorentine number has led to much discussion between myself and the two Karst Index people in the club (namely Ric and Arthur). Sorting this problem out raised numerous problems and issues associated with the X and Z numbering systems. I've basically come to the conclusion that the X number system is a waste of space and time and that I won't be recognising it anymore. Don't even get me started on the Z system! Ric has more or less come to the same conclusion. So, from this point forward Ric won't be assigning any more X numbers to untagged caves reported in this or any other publications and I will not be allowing any material to be printed in this publication (at least under my watch) that would theoretically lead to the assigning of new X numbers. We will, however, continue to document the tagging of existing X and Z numbers (i.e. make notes where X or Z numbers are refound and properly tagged). Tags and the drill are located in the gearstore, so there's no excuse for not tagging any new caves that are found in this day and age.

While celebrating my daughter's first birthday on the 18th of September it reminded me of the club's 60th anniversary we celebrated at the same time last year (Loretta started going into labour at the dinner, but she disguised it well). That means we're 61 now. Have we got our senior's card yet? What this also means is that it's one year since the official date of the last *Caves Australia* that graced our letterboxes! Issue 171 was dated September 2006 but came out in January 2007 (no, I don't understand that logic either). That means we're only a year (4 issues) behind now! Things are looking up ...

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

NEW ZEALAND CAVE RESCUE – Those with their eyes open on the internet, TV news or Ozcavers email will have noticed the recent cave rescue incident in New Zealand.

Michael Brewer (usually the cave rescue doctor for such incidents) found himself on the wrong end of a rockfall in the Middle Earth system near Wellington. Apparently he was around 400 m below the entrance and some 3 km in. A few broken bits (ribs, pelvis etc.) meant a major rescue and stretcher haul was required. He was underground for around three days and the rescue exercise itself took around 24 hours. Well done to the 50 odd cavers who rallied to get him out. Let's hope we never have a similar event over here (I think we'd struggle to get the numbers!)

DEVILS DEN (MT FAULKNER CAVE) RESCUE – Some of our more mature members may recount their participation in the rescue of a young boy by the name of Timothy Walter from a dolerite cave behind Claremont in 1968. I was recently contacted by a Melbourne based individual (James Cheshire) who is researching this event. I have supplied him with what brief accounts of the incident were recorded in the *Speleo Spiel* and *Southern Caver* of the day and the recent article by Bob Woolhouse published in the

Northern Caverneers journal *Troglodyte*. I have mentioned to him that a number of the people who assisted with that rescue are still alive and kicking, many of them residing locally. If you know a thing or two about this rescue and you're interested in assisting James Cheshire with his research then please contact the editor and I will forward your contact details onto James.

CAVEX 2007 – While we're on the topic of cave rescues ... The 2007 cave rescue exercise will be held on Saturday 3 November. The exercise will be conducted at IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave. It looks like some members of the NSW Cave Rescue Squad will also be in attendance which will be an excellent opportunity to compare our systems, have a play with some of their rescue and comms toys and develop a healthy relationship with one another. You never know, one day we may need their help or vice-versa. Please let Alan Jackson know if you're going to attend so he can tally up the numbers and make sure that he gets all the important information out to attendees.

KUBLA KHAN GATE VANDALISM – On a recent trip to Kubla Khan (on Sunday 30th September), STC members discovered that the gates on both entrances to the cave had been vandalised. Media reports are suggesting that oxy-acetylene torches were used to cut the steel gates, so the vandals weren't mucking around! The last trip to Kubla was in May/June sometime, so there's a big window of when it may have occurred. Thankfully, I didn't notice any damage to the cave during our trip. Police and Parks request anyone with information to contact them.

ROPE TESTING – It's time to check that our ropes are still serviceable- especially the 9 mm stuff. We will be testing, remeasuring and labelling club ropes on Saturday 13th October, commencing at 10 am at Currawong Engineering, 1/84 Browns Road, Kingston. The phone number there is 6229 1973 if you get lost on the way! Remember – many hands make light work.

STC CAR RALLY: 20TH OCTOBER 2007 – Get your teams together for this fun-filled pursuit of Hobart's cave related attractions. Contact Alan Jackson ASAP for more information regarding teams and other requirements.

CHRISTMAS BBQ – Wednesday December 12th from 5 pm at the Long Beach public BBQ area (down near Nutgrove Beach at Lower Sandy Bay). If you can't be bothered BBQing then the woodfired pizza place is only 50 m away! Come along, spread some festive cheer and be social.

ASF MEMBER SURVEY – At the request of ASF, STC completed a survey at our September meeting (unfortunately it didn't come in time to advertise in the last *Spiel*). Questions pertained to the club's satisfaction or otherwise with the services and value provided by ASF to its member clubs. If any of our members who don't subscribe to our group email system are interested in viewing the questionnaire and/or the answers provided by those present at the meeting then feel free to contact me and I'll get them out to you somehow. It's too late to formally submit further answers from the club but I'm sure that the ASF Executive would be happy to hear any further comment on how you rate ASF's performance or suggestions for improvement.

Trip Reports

New Junee-Florentine Cave Numbers

Rolan Eberhard

[To avoid the further proliferation of JF-Z numbers, Rolan has been issued with a wad of JF number tags (450 thru 469) to assign to any existing Z or new JF caves he locates or explores during his work forays into the bush. If only we'd thought of this before he started field work for his 1994 Forestry report. We would have had about 100 less Z caves to relocate and tag! Due to a technical hitch, JF-453 remains unallocated at this stage – Ed.]

JF-450: Rusty Saw Cave

This entrance is a steep-sided doline about 10 m in diameter in a dry valley off the Nine Rd. A handline is useful for getting in and out of the doline. A spacious rift (4 m wide) at the base of the doline leads to about 20 m of passage, terminating at a depth of circa 10 m (or 20 m including the doline). The number was placed about 2 m above the floor on the left wall facing into the entrance. The name relates to the discovery of an old saw blade, of the two-handled variety, in the bush nearby. Explored by Sarah Joyce and Rolan Eberhard in March 2006.

JF-451: Wind Hole

This entrance is a small hole at the base of a limestone outcrop in a dry valley off the Nine Rd. A narrow passage slopes steeply downwards for about 3 m to a constricted chamber with no obvious way on. This cave was found in the early 1990s and is listed as JFZ70 by Eberhard (1994). It was not explored until March 2006, when Nathan Duhig and Rolan Eberhard enlarged the entrance by removing rocks and soil. The number was placed on a vertical rock face on the right side of the entrance. The cave has been observed to draught strongly at times, hence the (fairly unimaginative) name.

JF-452: Surveyors Slip

This entrance is a 1.5 m diameter shaft on the lower northern slopes of Mt Field West. A 12 m pitch leads to a steeply inclined rift that becomes very narrow about 17 m below the entrance. A sloping ramp on one side leads back towards the surface and shows signs of possum activity. The number was placed on a horn-like projection about 1 m down the entrance pitch. The name refers to the fact that a Forestry Tasmania surveyor almost fell down the hole while marking the State forest boundary in this area; also, according to the surveyor, there is a discrepancy ('slip') in the location of the boundary, as marked on some maps. Surveyors Slip was explored by Nathan Duhig and Rolan Eberhard in August 2006.

JF-454: Boggy Creek Cave

This entrance is a 1.5 m high x 2.5 m wide gently sloping hole off Boggy Creek Rd. The principal passage trends southwest for about 15 m to a point where it is largely filled with sediment. The cave discharges a small stream under winter conditions and floods to ceiling level for part of the year. The presence of an outflow cave at this location, which is near the crest of a small limestone hill, is curious. The tag was placed on a limestone slab on the western side of the entrance, near the lower lip of a pond that forms within it when the creek is flowing. Boggy Creek Cave was discovered during construction of the road that is its namesake. It was explored by Chris Sharples in May 2002; Brett Warren and David Kyte were also present.

Reference

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

IB-41 Leech Pot – A Short Rope Goes a Long Way

Amy Robertson

27 May 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Sarah Gilbert, Ken Hosking, Amy Robertson

Having well and truly caught the discovery bug, Ken and I were keen to continue pushing the northern side of Marble Hill ... Exit couldn't be far away! With plans to descend Holocaust, whose entrance was located the previous weekend, four intrepid SRTers set out. How wrong could we be?

Serena and Ken were already warmed up from the previous day, but a small technical hitch presented itself when Ken cautiously decided to measure his 50 m rope to check it would be long enough for the 48 m pitch. Coming in at 30 m, the two backup ropes at around 10 m each were still going to give us some uncertainty – and two knot crossings – in reaching the base of the long shaft. Time for Plan B.

Having located the Hooks/Leech/Mudraker doline the day before, Ken suggested we visit that and spend some time entrance bombing to establish a prospective connection between the three caves. His reading of the archive suggested that Leech Pot (IB-41) had never been fully descended, so this was selected as the first option.

Serena duly rigged and I was poked down into a narrow, mulch-filled ramp. After several goes and much weeding, I popped through the single tight bit and into an intersection of rifts and small chambers. Continuing the obvious way down, the cave opened out into a reasonable pitch of about 10 m before a landing in a reasonable sized chamber. A rift ran along one side with a small stream channel flowing from the north and Mudraker direction, but I popped down a hole in the western floor and another 4 m down got off rope.

A few metres along the rift I'd descended, the cave opened into an aven with the previous stream channel entering from the east. Trending south, the passage continued with more rifts, avens and frequent collections of bones evident. This was somewhere interesting! I headed back up to the chamber to call Serena in – she had done Hooks Hole to

the south before, and I hoped she might recognise the bony avens as part of that system.

Sarah appeared quickly, telling me that Ken and Serena had suffered an apathy attack after filling their caving quota the day before, and weren't coming down. We returned to the avens and followed the tricky flow along the floor and through a few wriggly bits into a narrowing passage that wouldn't fit me. Encouraging Sarah to try another passage direction, I was somewhat disappointed when she found it continued beyond a bed of bones (very gently negotiated) and through a flat out crawl. Then more disappointed when she made it through a very close squeeze, and another squeeze in a tricky streambed. But with a small draught present, relieved when she said it opened up, and then astounded when we found ourselves standing in an open chamber with flowstone, straws and the sound of water dropping in an aven round the corner.

No trog marks, none at all, and this was walking passage. We looked at each other in disbelief, nothing for it but to venture onwards – carefully negotiating flowstone and straws, looking around at a rift disappearing high above us

and a small stream flowing onward in front of us. My compass though told us that we were heading west, not east or south towards Exit... where were we going?

The stream passage wasn't wide, now and then you'd walk sideways, and a few times an obstacle blocked the passage and we had to climb up and over. Occasionally trickles emerged from cracks on either side. After what we estimated as a hundred metres of this, with no end in sight, we decided to turn around and head out – this was worth another trip and we had been down a while already.

I popped out first and casually told Ken and Serena we'd just been pottering about, until Sarah arrived at the surface too and I could explode with the news that we'd just found an extension with walking passage that went on and on – and not towards Exit! Serena knew exactly where we'd gone from – she'd explored past those bones but turned round at the squeeze with vertical kit on and beginners to shepherd back in the main chamber. And Ken was scheming cover stories and return plans. We de-rigged our serendipitous short rope and bounced back to civilisation and a tension-filled week of planning our return.

IB-26 Hooks Hole – Extension Push

Amy Robertson

3 June 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Sarah Gilbert, Ken Hosking, Amy Robertson

With plans for a long day underground, the party planned an early start facilitated by staying at the Robertson family shack at Southport. With Dion as fire-lighter, the Saturday evening was pleasant as gear was sorted and strategy discussed. Sunday was early, and while we weren't as efficient as hoped, we still got to the Hooks Hole entrance – our planned easier alternative – at a good time.

Serena rigged and soon enough we were down the three short pitches and at the base of the first aven I'd encountered the previous week. Condensing packs for the tight bit, we were soon through into the new passage and walking downstream past last week's limit. A little further on Ken exclaimed in delight as a glance back revealed more walking passage joining with an inflow from the north. Then slowly the ceiling neared, its flat profile growing closer and forcing us to stoop then crawl until a

pool of water blocked dry progress beyond a very small chamber.

Loving water, in I plunged and army-crawled several metres through a mud-based pool into wider crawl space further on. Still drafting, the cave widened to the right (north) and uphill, with the stream reaching another pool and even lower roofspace in front. Serena followed me through and together we turned right and climbed into a rockfall-defined series of chambers over a small inflowing stream. After about 15 m the trend turned right again and I ventured on for at least another 15 m eastwards through loose rockfall until a spider in my face made me lose my nerve at a narrow point in the stream passage. Retreating to the pool, we discussed the potential for further progress downstream if we could see round a distant corner in the pool, before heading back to a chilly Sarah and Ken.

Sarah and Ken had started the survey documentation, and together we plotted our way upstream past the short inflow passage and its nearby aven and most of the way back to the tight bits. It was late, and we headed out as fast as we could, leaving the cave rigged for a return to finish the survey. Today we had booked 36 legs and 184.5 m of passage.

Ida Bay Surface Work

Amy Robertson

23 June 2007

Party: Ken Hosking, Amy Robertson, Dion Robertson, never quite Arthur Clarke

This was Ken's last opportunity to get to Ida Bay for a while, but given recent rain we were reluctant to tackle the Hooks extension streamway for now. So curious about where the hell this streamway went, we headed out to the hill west of Hooks Hole to surface trog above the expected path of the cave.

It didn't take us long to find interesting features, a band of canyons across the hill above the Hooks doline and intersecting the lower end of the Revelation gully. We

didn't realise how close we were to the landslide until Dion called us to the base of its clearing. Just below this I found a small entrance with a floor about 3 metres down, and a disintegrating plastic bread bag tied around a tree just outside. (Bunty later confirmed this as the undescended 'Vogels Shaft', though 'Bread Bag Cave' does stand a good chance of sticking.) [See *Bunty's account of discovery on pages 7 & 8 of SS301 if you're interested – Ed.*] We think we were probably trending south of the streamway passage, another trip out north of the Revelation gully is on the list of things to do, as well as tagging and descending the relocated entrance.

Arthur had intended to meet us in the area and while we spent most of the day cooeing to each other, Arthur never quite made it far enough up the hill to meet us.

On our way out, we tagged Tonsil Cave (IB-235) and crossed more canyons to the Southern Ranges Track before heading over to tag Rebirth Cave (IB-236) and Chip Grotto (IB-237). Heading straight downhill to the quarry we

passed a few other tagged entrances and Dion and Ken found a few more prospective entrances to look at on another trip.

IB-26 Hooks Hole – the Final Survey

Amy Robertson

8 July 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Sarah Gilbert, Jane Pulford, Amy Robertson

Plans for an early start were foiled when I spent extra time transferring Arthur's 1985 survey data of the Hooks Hole pitches into a notebook for checking, since the scanned image in the archive wasn't entirely readable. Mental note: draw up the survey asap afterwards to make future cavers' lives simpler.

Eventually we got underway and it didn't take long to reach the base of the Hooks pitches and start surveying in from there. After many short legs through the tight bits, the flowstone chamber was a relief and soon after we reached the end of the previous survey. Serena stickybeaked into the flowstone aven and found a small and impassable inflow stream passage. Then Jane and Sarah took on map sketching of the passage we'd previously surveyed but not sketched, and Serena and I headed on to the final pool to see if any further progress could be made there. It didn't take long to realize that we should label the 'pool' as a sump or sink, and for us to return and meet the others who had finished their sketching.

It was getting late fast and after a couple of accurate legs we resorted to some rough measurements up the Hooks pitches to use to check our interpretation of Arthur's figures. There are apparently some upper level passages here, but these weren't of interest to us on this trip, though in hindsight they have some potential to bypass the squeezes further in. Serena de-rigged and we were soon off, leaving Hooks until some more inspiration and a future dye-tracing project can help answer the question of where this strange anti-Exit cave leads.

[The new survey of IB-26 appears on page 19. The survey of IB-28 Gollums Grovel appears on page 17. IB-28 was surveyed during the numerous trips reported on in SS360 – Ed.]



Sarah takes a break from surveying in the newly discovered horizontal passages

H-8 Wolf Hole

Matt Cracknell

28 July 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell, Sarah Gilbert

After so much Tachycardia fun it was decided that a 'nice' day out would be had by plumbing the depths of our good old friend Wolf Hole. Matt wanted to get a start on ground truthing Jeff Butt's survey sketches, Serena intended to sample an unusual pink mineral and Sarah was just keen to come along for the ride.

The rigging consisted of one hanging rebelay, using Ric's well placed bolt (one out of three ain't bad!?) situated at the lip of the entrance collapse, the one right on the unconformable contact of the Permian (?) tillite (or is it paraconglomerate) and dolomite. First up Serena and Sarah went off to sample geoheritage while Matt potted around in the main entrance chambers and got way too excited about gravel banks and monstrous soil cones [*What is it with this boy and cones? – Ed.*].

The group met up for lunch a couple of hours later and chatted about their adventures. The ladies had ended up in what is called the "Vermillion Room" on Jeff's sketches. This area seems to be an extension of the chamber encountered as one enters the cave the 'normal' way. However, at the moment it is separated by a large chunk of smashed up ceiling.

After lunch everyone explored the "hot" lead that, a couple of weeks ago, Arthur had whispered in our ear about. This unfortunately turned out to be a hole filled with poorly sorted unconsolidated cave deposits. The base of the debris was composed of boulders of wall rock with small gaps in between and the upper section was coated in the thick Hastings mud. There is no way on here.

Serena lead the way to Lake Pluto as Sarah hadn't seen it yet. Matt got caught up in looking at abiotic material and decided to hang back with his clipboard and sketches. During this time he rigged a big slab filled shaft (~10 m deep) not far from the entrance only to find that the greasy room below had no way on. At some stage he fell over and

crunched his knee on a sharp rock. The rest of his trip was spent limping about and moaning.

The ascent out of the cave was efficient with only the three of us and we were back at the cars well before dark. Serena

got her pink mineral, Matt got a swollen knee and the realisation that the Wolf Hole mapping project is going to take a long time and Sarah had fun tagging along.

IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave – more surveying

Alan Jackson

5 August 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell (briefly), Alan Jackson, Amy Robertson

The weather was foul so a JF surface day wasn't looking appealing. We headed south to show that I was serious when I said I intended finishing off the IB-10 survey.

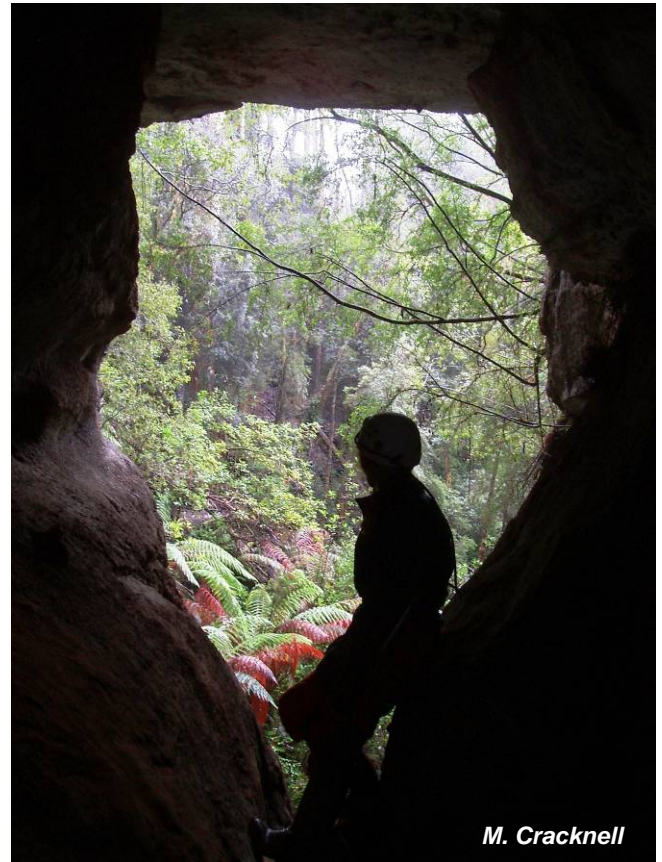
On the previous Friday I'd chased up Rob Wass (Hastings senior ranger) and organised to get the key to the gated upper section near the main entrance. Fortunately Matt was working at Hastings on the weekend and he grabbed the key (and a new lock to swap with the old one). I'd also spoken to Ian Houshold about our intentions to survey this area and asked if there were any no go areas in there that needed particular attention or care. Ian said it was all stringlined but suggested we borrow his Leica 'Disto' to minimise any traipsing around with the tape. He also asked me to get some 'up' measurements in the main streamway passage to help him evolve his theories on the development of the system. He has all sorts of crazy theories that only a certified rock nerd can understand. This was the first time I'd used a Disto and I wasn't overly impressed. It made some things easier but more things harder. A bit more practice might bring me round though (a bit like the ladder versus SRT debate from years ago ...)

The water levels were high enough to make the numerous stream crossings annoying, but not dangerous. Matt had tours from lunchtime so he only joined us for the survey of the gated section (he'd always wanted to have a look in here to nurture the developing rock nerd in him – he is 'Mini-Houshold'). There was some pretty fabo decoration in sections and the view out the upper entrance is grand (this entrance should be tagged!) With dry pleasant cave, gates/locks, stringlines and abundant pretties, it almost felt like caving at Mole Creek! Amy somehow spotted an old 20 cent coin a few metres back from the edge of the upper entrance (that laser surgery she had must have really done the trick!) It was dated 1967 (they don't come much older than that) which didn't narrow down when it may have been left there very much. It was returned to its place as a piece of cave heritage!

Matt, having scooped his booty, departed to Newdegate Cave at this point. The rest of us continued deeper in the cave taking the occasional ceiling height measurement for Ian (it was generally between 8 and 13 metres). We took the Skyline route to the Laundry Chute and then set about relocating Jeff and Madphil's survey stations in the area. After 30 minutes of guessing and recreating legs from JB's bookwork we worked it out and started surveying again. We tied in a short low passage (with a big puddle) that cuts from the Laundry Chute chamber through to the passage that heads off the Confusing Chamber (described in the next paragraph). Luckily Amy had a hunch that this

passage looped so we avoided groveling through the puddle (the Disto came in handy for measuring this leg!)

We shot a leg down to the western end of Confusing Chamber (CC) and then surveyed the main side passage on the northern side of the CC (this is the passage that people seem to take accidentally instead of the connector to the Laundry Chute and subsequently lose faith in their navigational abilities). After a small wet aven is reached there is a climb up to a small phreatic passage that peters out eventually to a low roofed chamber filled with pretties.



M. Cracknell

Amy and the view out the upper entrance

The intention was then to do what I know as The Mudslides – the low muddy passages below the climb from the Matchbox Squeeze passage. On the way I got distracted by a tall thin passage heading west. A short climb led to small horizontal passage that just kept going. A few tiny side passages were inspected before it dropped sharply and then climbed just as sharply to a boulder choke with water dribbling in and then sinking again at the bottom. I assumed this paralleled the Matchbox passage but having entered the survey data it actually runs perpendicular to Matchbox and terminates under the far western end of CC. I reckon the dribble of water that enters from the ceiling up the back of here, that runs over the surface for a few metres before sinking into the fill, is the water that enters at the end of this new (to me) passage.

Back to The Mudslides we hurried and commenced the survey again. We only did a few legs in (round the first right angle bend) before we encountered the U-bend. I'd only been here under summer conditions which render this

obstacle a slightly annoying damp spot. The strong winter flows had turned it into a full body immersion sewer. Serena found it first and piked. I labeled her soft and then inspected it myself, only to reach the same conclusion. Amy was the only one who seemed excited by it (apparently it reminded her of her Buchan caving). We turned round and surveyed our way out via the alternative route that climbs up through the muddled pretties and boulders back into the Matchbox end of CC. Here I found a strange small skeleton that must have been a bat. Arthur told me the following day that he's found a few bats a fair way into Exit Cave in the past.

It was getting on so we headed out, taking a quick look at the southern wall of CC. There is a quite a bit of stuff over there and I think it would be worth surveying a line down that wall (JB's survey follows the northern wall) to increase the accuracy when I draw the survey up as the passage is very wide here. We had added 315 m to the length of the cave, which now stands at 3.25 km. A good day, but plenty more to do! We need Arthur with us next time to show us all the minor passages that he knows about.

JF-368 Armadillo Pot et al.

Alan Jackson

19 August 2007

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

I was getting sick of the area we'd been hammering in a kind-of triangle between Lost Pot, Growling Swallet and Ice Tube so decided it was time to move to the next valley – Serendipity. The plan is to systematically move around and through the valley to recheck known caves for leads and no doubt bumble across numerous new entrances on the way.

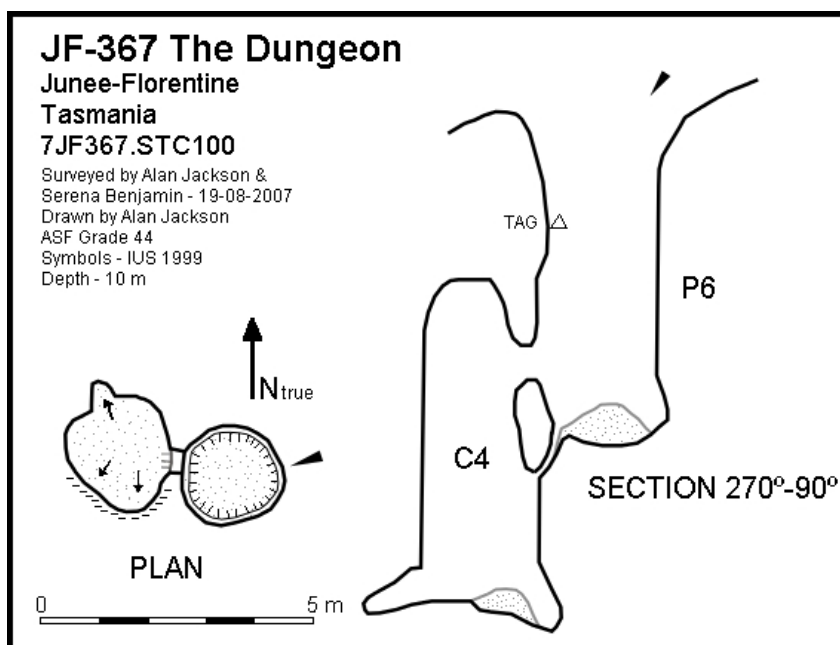
We wandered in to the Serendipity turn off and then headed for JF-366 Asteroid Pot. By all accounts this cave was a serious dig and not worth looking at again without serious digging intentions, so we continued up the side valley to JF-367 The Dungeon. Serena and I dropped a ladder down this hole to inspect and survey it while Bunty and Andy continued up to commence rigging JF-368 Armadillo Pot.

The Dungeon was very much as described by Rolan in SS206 (Eberhard 1985). A 6 m metre pitch followed by a 3.5 m climb (accessed via a small window) leading to a terminal humus floored room. No discernable draft was detected and the chances of this cave going anywhere are slim. The only thing I got excited about in this cave was when I stuck my head into a short side passage and managed to get my light tangled up in a piece of spider web. I then discovered that the owner of the web, a rather large *Hickmania*, was dangling on the end of it about 50 mm in front of my face. I let out a yelp of surprise which caused Serena to bang her head on the roof of the tight passage she was inspecting at the time. I'm sure they're not dangerous to humans but they do have very long legs and all the other things that generate the natural fear of spiders that humans suffer. The survey appears on this page.

Serena and I headed up to Armadillo Pot to find that the other two hadn't progressed far. Bunty was dangling precariously from a tree attempting to get a tape over the 800 mm diameter tree that bridges the entrance. We filled in some time by surface surveying the 30 odd metres

between JF-368 and JF-410. After 30 minutes of hanging about trying to find a useful redirect or rebelay, Bunty came back up admitting defeat and calling for the drill. We were on 9 mm rope and weren't in a position to be tolerating rubs. So I headed down with the kit and placed two bolts on the left wall (as abseiling) at the -18 m mark which gave a glorious hand down the next section of the shaft. These bolts will be very easy to locate again because I accidentally banged a bolt into a 10 mm deep hole that I had abandoned soon after commencing drilling. Unfortunately it went in far enough for the expansion sleeve to jam and it wouldn't pull back out. So there's a third bolt 100 mm above the other two bolts which protrudes ~70 mm from the wall! It'll come in handy if you drop a nut and washer as it has a spare one of each on it!

The shaft is quite wide (~8 m) at this point with irregular walls cutting in and out, including a beautiful undercut ledge adorned with wiggly stalactites. A further ~17 m down the shaft corners a bit and you land on a series of small ledges which are well endowed with vegetative and soil material from the surface. Just after the rope starts to



twang and scrape ominously on an overhang above you there is a superb chock placement (on the left as you abseil facing the wall) at about chest height when standing on one of the main ledges (I placed a number 7 Hexentric). I rebelayed off this and in hindsight I don't think it would work as a redirect as it's far enough out to still cause a rub up above you. This nut allowed me to proceed the next few

metres down a ramp/ledge to the edge of the final ~7-8 m vertical section of the pitch. Even employing IRT the rope wasn't going to reach the bottom. We didn't have any more rope with us (we'd just taken the one ~60 m length) so I called up to the surface and had the 10 m ladder brought down. Natural anchors were totally non-existent so I placed a single bolt on the right hand side (as abseiling). Bunty turned up with the ladder and I clipped it in and scrambled down.



Alan surveys between the rebelay and the number tag in JF-368

Bunty remarked that it was the first time he'd ever descended a ~50 m pitch (or any length pitch for that matter) by SRT for the first 45 m followed by an unbelayed ladder climb on the final 7 m. It was quite novel, I must admit!

The final section of the pitch lands you on the summit of an enormous soil cone in a reasonably large chamber with a terminal pool and sediment pond, moonmilk/flowstone walls in one corner and an abundance of dead animals. I noted a quoll, brush and ringtail possums, wallabies, pademelons and various other skeletons that I couldn't identify off the top of my head. The cone was over 4 m high and about 10 m in diameter.

We surveyed our way out and the survey appears on the following page. In SS206 in his cave numbering report (Eberhard 1985) Rolan notes that the Armadillo Pot survey appears in that issue, but it doesn't. In SS209 (Eberhard 1985a) he notes that the survey didn't appear as stated. I have been unable to chase this survey up (not that I've tried overly hard) or find any survey data so we've done it again. Our survey data indicates that Armadillo Pot is a touch over 57 m deep with a single entrance pitch of ~53 m. It's a lovely pitch and an interesting chamber at the bottom. Like JF-347 Frost Pot, it would make a good intermediate vertical trip for new members and is also

interesting for you old experienced types too. 70 m of rope, a few long tapes to get started, three 8 mm bolt plates and a number 7 chock should get you down. The big log over the entrance will fail eventually and then you'll have to be a bit more creative at the entrance.

In our absence, Andy and Serena had been bashing about the place and refound JF-298 and the narrow slot nearby that were found in September 2004 (see Tunney 2004 for day of discovery and Jackson 2004 for detail on exploration). The narrow slot was Hole 5 in Jackson (2004). Andy had enthusiastically excavated the entrance some more to reveal a very tight bit a body length down the hole. This bit needed more serious persuasion so we set to work. Andy stuffed up everything he touched so I took over and made good progress. Unfortunately Andy got back in the hole again and managed to really stuff things up this time. He didn't understand the virtue of a clean hole. We abandoned the dig and had to leave a vital part of the digging equipment stuck in the side wall of the cave. We tagged this hole JF-422 and the name Andycap Cave was mooted by Bunty. The entrance to Andycap is all clay so the tag was affixed to a 600 mm high vertical face of limestone about 1-2 m uphill and left of the entrance.



Where's the cheese? Bunty cracks himself up (for the twentieth time that day).

Bunty and I had surface surveyed from JF-410 on our way up to join the others and we then tied JF-297, 298, 299, 409 and 422 in. All that remains to be done here is finish the dig in 422 and refind holes 7, 8 and 9 from Jackson 2004 to tag and survey them in.

Next on the list is to look at JF-369, have a better go in JF-292 than Serena and I managed a couple of years back and then proceed around the contact from JF-370 Mongrel Pot to the Benson and Hedges Series systematically dropping holes.

References

- EBERHARD, R. (1985) Cave Numbering in the Florentine Valley. *Speleo Spiel*, 206:9-10
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- JACKSON, A. (2004) JF-368 and Surrounds – Armadillo Pot Valley. *Speleo Spiel*, 344:5-6
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Risbys Basin

Matt Cracknell

25 August 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell

Having read the encouraging reports of cavers trying to maim and/or kill themselves in Pillingers Creek Cave since its first discovery in 1947 (Brown, 1980) I thought that it would be a good idea if we went out to find it. It seems that the cave has been black banned by the club...twice, initially in 1959 (Brown, 1980) and then again in 1980 (Nicholas, 1980). With comments from Goede (1966) like 'it has the best collection of talus of any cave in Tassie' and Brown (1980) recounting a trip in 1950, 'contemplation was interrupted by the sudden vanishing of the section of cave into which he [Dave Lanyon] was about to descend! The party made an almost instantaneous return to the surface', the cave sounds like a great place to go with brown underwear.

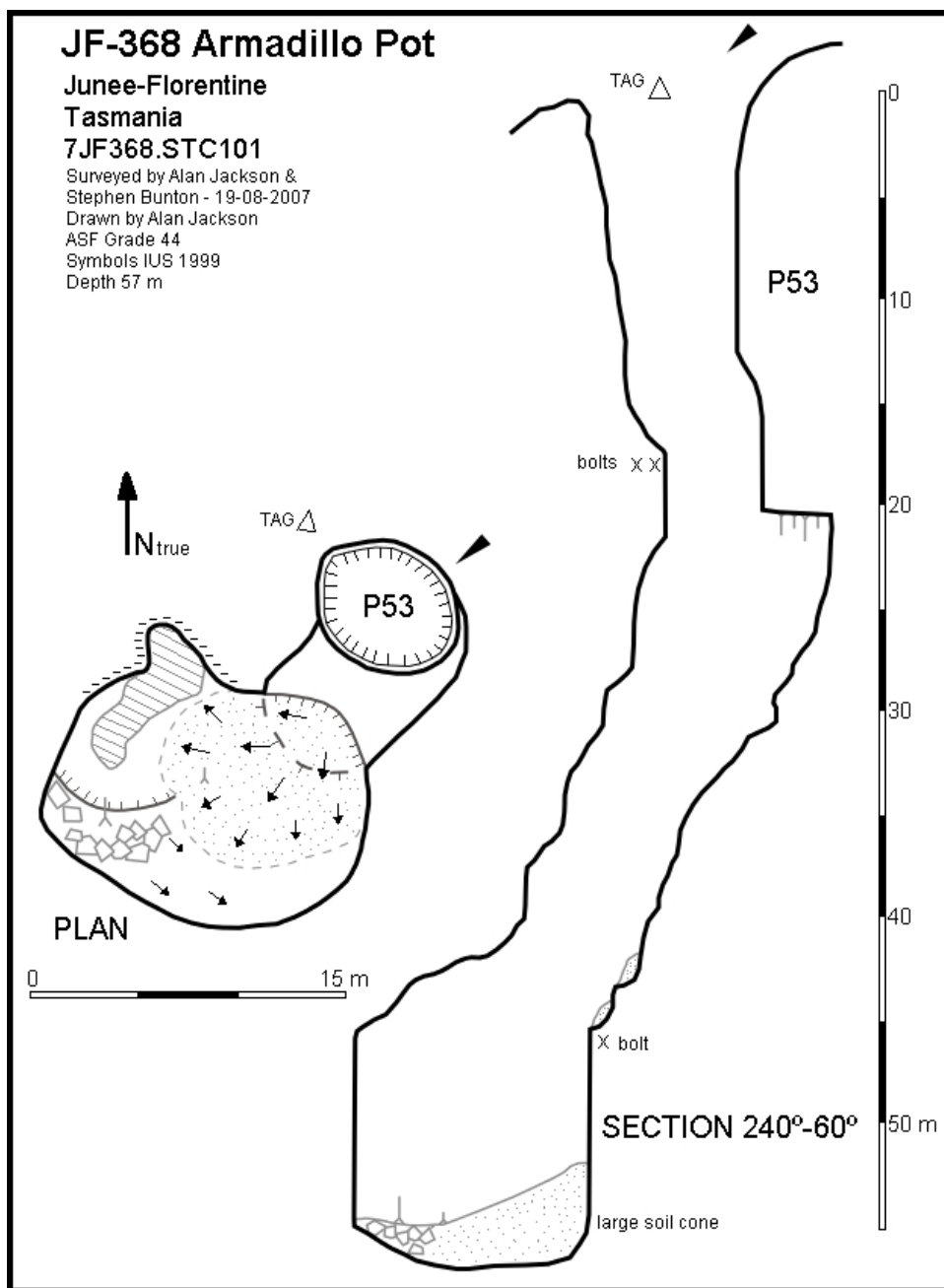
We parked the car on the safe side of the gate on Risbys Basin Rd. The walk to the end of the road took about 45 minutes. It was pleasant enough with tantalising glimpses of roadside garbage, majestic Radiata pine plantations and finally a freshly burnt coupe. The 1985 topographic map doesn't show the end of this road (the one for the new coupe). However the extra bit of road does mean that you are closer to carbonate rocks before thrashing through the scrub. We headed vaguely north-east from here and crossed the main trunk of Pillingers Creek. The bed of the creek contains a fine dusting of silt, presumably a result of the forestry operations that can be seen up the valley. [I doubt it, Matt. I've been assured many a time that forestry operations do not impact on water quality. Their 1.5 m buffers of vegetation around waterways ensure this ... - Ed.]

A couple of hundred meters beyond the creek saw us arrive at our first promising karstic looking landforms and some boulders of limestone. We scouted around the rim of what seems to be a doline, the downstream end of which grades to a flat-bottomed sediment-filled gully. We split up to

within shouting distance and scoured the hill slopes finding some limestone outcrops but no caves at this stage.

I ended up in the gully floor looking at a still water pool with my spider senses tingling. Within 5 m of this pool I had found what I was looking for, not much of a cave but definitely fitting the criteria. I had a quick look and then called Serena over. It didn't look very inviting as there was no solid wall rock just gaps between boulders and slabs. We got a reasonable GPS location not far away and gave the entrance some pink tape then headed up a very steep incline to the top of the ridge for lunch.

After a bit to eat in the sunshine we explored a large bluff that forms the eastern side of the Pillingers Creek valley. The bluff is very impressive with ~20 m of sheer carbonate rock. Now this stuff to my eye looked a little different to



the 'normal' JF rock. It has a whitish pale blue hue and a chalky texture. It reminded me of dolomitised limestone.

Scrambling north of the bluff we encountered substantial scree slopes that, as Serena found out, were reasonably unstable. I don't think I have ever seen her move so fast. It might have had something to do with the fit-ball size boulder that ever so gracefully moved downhill while she was standing on it! We decided to get out of this crap and climbed over the ridge to the east and explored a dry valley with several subsidence sinkholes in its base. Following this valley lead us back to the main trunk of Pillingers Creek. Here we noticed that the lively stream that filled the channel a few hundred metres upstream was no longer. Walking in that direction we found two holes. The more upstream cave is currently a swallet while the downstream cave could well have been a swallet in the past. It looks as if it still takes water in flood. Both caves do not have one iota of wall rock; they are almost carbonate pseudokarst in

morphology. Luckily I hadn't brought my helmet so I wasn't going underground.

We thought it was getting late so we made our way directly back to the road that we had come in on. It wasn't far till we had reached the coupe boundary, not more than 100 m or so from the cave entrances. All in all a good but brief day out, three caves found, one probably previously unknown and some GPS coordinates. We can head out next time with the drill, tags, survey gear and caving gear to keep Alan happy.

References

GOEDE, A. (1966) Trip reports. *Speleo Spiel*, 8:3-4

NICHOLAS, S. (1980) Editorial. *Speleo Spiel*, 160:2

BROWN, F. (1980) Pillingers Creek Cave, Maydena. *Speleo Spiel*, 162:6-7

Exploring JF-418 thru 421

Alan Jackson

1 September 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Gavin Brett, Matt Cracknell, Alan Jackson

We were finally heading back out to drop the four holes we'd found in early July. Gavin had to be back in Hobart to be at the airport around five o'clock so we made an alpine start and got away at 6 am.

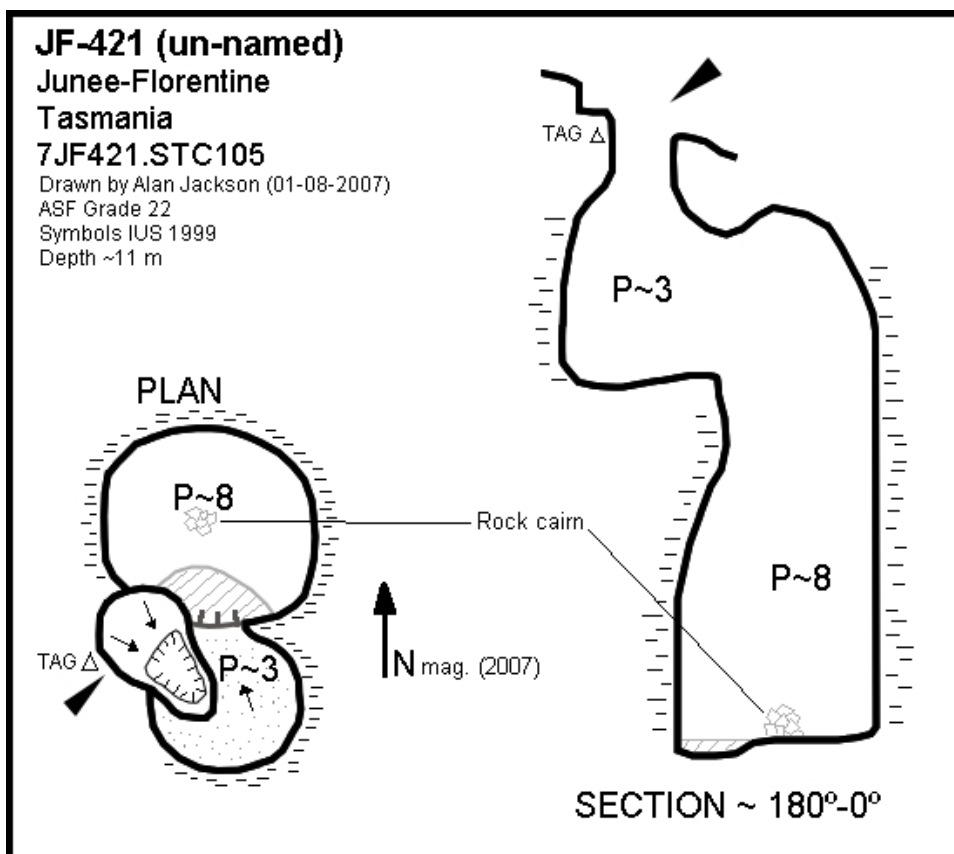
JF-421 was relocated with ease. Serena and I prepared for this hole while Gavin and Matt continued on to start at JF-419/420. JF-421 didn't do much – a 3 m exposed climb to a ledge led to a further ~9 m pitch down a circular 3 m diameter pot. The ladder we rigged didn't reach the bottom

so I hung in space, couldn't see any ways on and headed back out. The floor of the cave is choked with fill and rubble with a small pool/soak to one side and a rock cairn in the centre. A quick sketch was done (see this page) and we headed off to join the others.

Gavin laddered the entrance slope of JF-419 and discovered that his ladder was going to be vastly inadequate for the ensuing pitch. He came back up, we switched to SRT mode and he descended again. The 6 m entrance slope gives way to a fabulous 17 m drop. Gavin placed a single bolt as a redirect. In the mean time I'd sent Serena off to throw the ladder down the nearby JF-420 entrance. We soon established a sound connection between the two and then as I descended the main pitch of JF-419 I could look across through a small window and see Serena. Entering via the 420 entrance would have meant lots of

damage to the spectacular moonmilk adorning the pitch so she headed back out.

The pitch landed at the top of a steep slope in a large chamber with exquisite moonmilk walls and stals. It was one of the prettiest pitches I've done. Gavin was waiting eagerly at the base of the 10 m slope telling me to hurry up and check the lead before he lost patience and scooped it for himself. Two well preserved (articulated) echidna skeletons were located on this level (one right in the middle of the main thoroughfare, so I circled it with pink flagging tape to reduce the risk of it being stood on) and also two very large femurs (over 400 mm long). The rest of this skeleton was buried in the crud so I had no skull to confirm its identity but I imagine it was a creature of the large bouncing variety.



We clearly need to run a 'Cave Awareness' course for our native fauna.

A downclimb lead to a small passage over a short pitch. The pitch head was tight but after the removal of the offending rock we slipped through with the ladder. The bottom of this pitch was the end of the cave. Stepping off the ladder onto the 'floor' of this particularly muddy spot was fraught with danger. You just kept sinking into the mud until you feared for your legs and grabbed the ladder again. We headed out, surveying as we went.

When we originally found these two caves (419 & 420) I had gleefully called out "Tag it!" During the tagging process Gavin got excited about the Scottish detective Taggart from TV and before long the cave was called Chief Inspector, with a heavy Scottish accent. The survey appears on page 18.

There was still time to make a start on the dig at JF-418 so we moseyed further up the valley. Gavin and I went hard while Serena and Matt continued up to Ice Tube to see if they could find JF-400 for me. They came back after a successful mission, but failed to enter the cave and provide any info on whether the rumours of the Ice Tube streamway were true or not. Lame. If the possibility of Growling Swallet regaining the Australian depth record isn't enough motivation to get these two to enter a cave then I don't know what hope remains for them.

We made good progress on the dig but ran out of joules and time. We'll be back. Still need to finish 418, have a look at 400 and survey the rest of these new entrances in.



M. Cracknell

Serena descends the pitch in JF-419-420

JF-382, JF-395 and JF-423

Alan Jackson

9 September 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

It was a beautiful day, good company and the location was Tasmania's best karst area. What could go wrong?

We loaded up and walked to Serendipity, where we discussed what to do next. I suggested we could head south to the contact and then follow it east until we hit JF-380, as I'd not looked in that section before. On the way we inspected the small minor streamsink that I had looked in after a Serendipity trip several years ago. There used to be several metres of cave here but a recent slip has filled it to the brim. Andy got excited about a narrow rift heading in up the doline back wall but I told him to forget his English approach and remember that entrances like that didn't rate a second look at this stage in Tasmania. By now Serena had located a tagged cave, JF-382. I got out my notes and the words 'draughting constriction at -15 m' caught our attention. We chucked a rope down the 6 m half pitch/half handline entrance and investigated. There was indeed a strongly drafting constriction with descending open passage on the other side. We set about digging. There was a short piece of det-cord on the ground (from the 80s) but there was no evidence that a blast had ever been fired. The floor here is steep and consists of a couple of metres (at least) of clay, small rocks, soil, humus, dead animals etc...Quite a bit of it was relocated back up the passage and then the real digging started. Good progress was made but the approach slope continuously slumped behind us. We decided that a bucket was required to stay on top of this really saturated and mobile muck (too hard to move by

hand as it slipped through your fingers). We abandoned the dig with the aim of returning soon armed with a small shovel and a bucket/rope for more efficiently clearing the muck.

Serena had been surface foraging while Andy and I dug. She'd found JF-381, which is about 30 m uphill of JF-382 (as described in the notes in SS207), and also a few untagged features. The three of us headed off to relocate these features and tag any worthy of it. We found one, which was south along the hill (at about the same contour as JF-381), which was a quite large depression with a narrow slot in the bedrock on the downhill side. Serena said it went down a few metres, over a few metres and was drafting a bit. We affixed the number tag JF-423 on the left rock face as looking down the hole. We then searched for Serena's second hole but with no success (note: don't leave vague people unsupervised in the forest). A small streamsink, just up from JF-381 seemed to have a hole at the back but wasn't worth putting a trog suit back on for.

We figured that heading further away from the car at this stage of the day with such heavy packs was a silly idea. Instead we contoured west with the hope of finding Galignite Pot and Warhole. We found neither and ended up swinging around to the south a bit and intersecting the next major gully. This was followed and a few tiny holes investigated until Serena found a gaping hole complete with small waterfall and spacious entrance chamber (via a short ladder pitch). The excitement was brewing until I spotted the number tag JF-395 at the bottom of the pitch on a side wall. Rolan's notes in SS216 on this cave suggested that the chamber was more or less terminal. He had hammered his way into a small drafting passage on the far wall but was stopped by another constriction. We found

this hole and saw the evidence of hammering. Serena then disappeared from my sight (she was the only one with a trog suit on). After a few minutes of her not responding to my yelling we figured that she'd either died or that Rolan had been too soft during his initial exploration and Serena had pushed something tight. The latter was correct, thankfully, and she returned saying a nasty tight thing led to some narrow descending passage which then entered a large chamber where the surface water reenters. Once again the water disappears into an impenetrable boulder pile. We decided we couldn't be bothered all suiting up so we figured we'd come back later, survey it properly and check out the new chamber to see where the super draft goes.

We then followed the gully down assuming that it was a tributary of the Serendipity valley. After a while we figured this wasn't going to happen, so we pulled out the GPS to work out where the hell we were. It was at this point that I realised the car key was missing from my pack. SHIT! We corrected our course by 90 degrees and began discussing the plan for getting home!

Back at the car we tried breaking into it for half an hour. We had two options – walk all the way to Maydena to find a phone or smash a window to get our mobile phones and then only have to walk to Tim Shea and then up a bit to get mobile reception. The latter sounded more fun so we got the hammer and did some self vandalism. An hour and a bit later we'd made it far enough up Tim Shea (a bit past the switchbacks) and the CDMA phone kicked in - my NextG phone didn't work here. Andy's girlfriend was asked to come down from Derwent Bridge with the spare Discovery key and respective families were told not to expect us home any time soon! We then sat about having deep and meaningful conversations on the side of the Florentine Road for a couple of hours. Thankfully it was a beautiful evening. At about 2330 the cavalry arrived, we picked up the Disco and headed for home. Both parties climbed into their respective beds around 0130 – 0200. Serena has been involved in two lost key episodes now. Lucky girl.

JF-382 – more digging

Andy McKenzie

16 September 2007

Party: Rowan Langford, Andy McKenzie, Trevor Wailes

Another argument with Alan pursued... "What do you mean you're spending the weekend at your daughter's birthday party? We have a going lead?! Get your priorities straight ya loser..." Well that was Jacko out...

There was no way I was gonna be happy carrying 3 heavy bags with capping, bolting *and* digging gear, plus personal caving gear, no way. I learnt at an early age not to carry a heavy pack; it gets you fit if you're not careful. I needed Sherpas. Crackers – aka Matt Casanova was with the missus, Buntz was un-contactable and Sabrina was "house sitting." Who the hell was gonna carry bags...? Ahhhh TREVOR!

"Fancy caving Sunday Trev?"

"What time you starting? I'm not keen for an early start..."

"Well what time suits mate?"

"10:30, not earlier."

"Excellent, I've got 3 bags to carry..."

"How ya gonna carry 3 bags, youth?"

So Trev was coming, but wasn't gonna carry a bag... Damn. Only one person left to ask, the missus - Rowan...

"Got an awesome lead for the weekend love, really interesting. Could be the start of the best cave in Tassie. Do you fancy a trip out on Sunday? Excellent. Ill get some kit sorted for you and pack a bag..."

Well that was the team sorted, me, Trev and Rowan. Next problem was a drill; mine wasn't due in Taz till Thursday or Friday week, so I had to ask Alan. I won't bore you with the full details of that conversation but it went something like this...

"Ill lend you the drill, but Andy, you have to realise that if my drill shared a birthday with my daughter, it would be a toss up of which party gets the best clown..."

Sorted! A going lead and an inspiring team of only genuine Englishmen and woman on this trip! What more could a boy want?

We set off onto the hill and with Trevor's knowledge of the Florentine we found 382 immediately.

382 was first explored in the 80s but was abandoned at a tight rift. After identifying the rift the week previous, Alan and I had left a slightly bigger rift with a howling draught. The problem we had had was shoring up the abundance of mud that was sliding down the steep slope and blocking up the hole.

With Rowan sat in the sunshine, Trevor started hauling buckets and swift progress was made. After quite a bit of work it became possible to push all of the mud down through the hole into the large descending passage that is visible on the far side. Happy as Larry in a groveling dig, I began to get enthusiastic as the wind ripped through the cave...

The longer the digging went on, the deafer I got, and the colder Trevor got. So returning to the sun to check on Row, he left me to my own devices. After using all of the battery power, I had opened up the rift big enough to stick my head through. The passage on the other side is around 6 feet wide and 25 high, descending steeply. The rift is about 15 feet from the floor of the passage, meaning that on the other side there is either a climb down or a ladder drop. Pissed off there was no-one to hold my hand I had a go at getting through. It was body tight and pretty committing. The problem isn't so much getting down, but getting out again afterwards, the rift being at an awkward angle. I tried again, no luck, I was just too masculine...

Disappointed that I had eaten all the pies, I shored up some mud on the slope and stacked up the digging gear. This cave boasts a great location and good potential. If it goes, it will either increase the depth of Serendipity or go into a new system. It only needs a little more work to open up so that access is easy.

IB-4,5 & 6 Bradley Chesterman Cave

Stephen Bunton

23 September 2007

Party: Stephen Bunton

I took a spare morning to go down to Ida Bay and check out the new signs announcing the fact that Mystery Creek Cave was now officially open. Unfortunately contrary to what was reported earlier, the signs aren't different and I can only assume that the cave is still closed.

Not wanting to waste the morning I soloed to the end of Bradley Chesterman and back in 15 minutes. The good thing about this was that now I don't have to allocate a whole day to make a trip down to Ida Bay especially to see it. I was glad that I hadn't travelled all the way from Croatia!

Yes, I filled out the logbook, which indicated that a school or youth group visits the cave every 6 weeks. If Mystery Creek Cave opens again no doubt this visitation will diminish.

JF-418 Diverted Again

Alan Jackson

23 September 2007

Party: Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

The day had come for the big dig. We descended upon the partially opened up entrance of JF-418 and besieged it once again. It was probably the most fun I'd had digging ever (and I've had some good times in the past!)

Once open, we chucked a ladder down the ~4 m pitch and I investigated the next bit of passage. A ~8 m pitch lay beyond a long tight section but a higher level squeeze allowed me to access a ledge over the top of the pitch. This was too tight too but a plug of clay was the only thing stopping me from traversing further beyond a second squeeze which allowed access to a negotiable pitch head. The plug was removed, two bolts were placed for a y-hang and a tape around a wedged boulder provided a rebelay 2-3 m below the bolts. A free-hang to the bottom ensued into a large rift chamber, steeply descending. I bumbled about, looking for the draft and the next pitch but could find nothing. Andy joined me and found the draft in a small passage off to the side leading to a short pitch. At this point my memory stirred and I realised I'd been here before. Gavin headed out the entrance ladder and came in via the

nearby JF-265 Diversion Pot entrance and confirmed the connection. He free-climbed the 'pitch' of JF-265 and joined us for a look (he'd originally been unable to join us via the JF-418 entrance because he didn't fit through the squeeze traverse before the main pitch).

A few 'nightmare...' and 'disappointed' comments were made in honour of Madphil (who found JF-265) and we headed out. I went out via JF-418 and dropped all the gear and rope down to the others (so we didn't have to drag it through the squeeze again) and the others exited via JF-265. Bummer! (see SS330 for JF-265 exploration report and memory sketch).

Next we toddled up to Ice Tube to show Andy. He was suitably impressed. Then we headed up looking for JF-400 to assess it's worthiness as a dig. Gavin found it but also found a small hole about 15 m up the hill from it. It was a strange little cave that headed down at about 20 degrees via a meandering narrow passage until a tight bend prevented progress. The passage continued on the other side. The cave had been explored to this point before and a blue tape was located nearby on a tree. We shall return to here with a number tag and maybe even try to negotiate the corner to see what it does (there is no draft though).

JF-400 proved to have an entrance that wasn't negotiable via climbing, so we left it for another day too.

MC-339 & MC-340 Covert Connection

Alan Jackson

29 September 2007

Party: Steve Blanden (NC/SRCC), David Butler (NC), Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

Over twelve months ago I'd received an email from Rolan saying that Steve had found a cave at Mole Creek that needed a rift traverse to locate the source of a stream that could be heard but not found. I finally got around to contacting Steve and teeing it up for the weekend of the Tas Speleo Liaison Council meeting in Deloraine.

We met up, trogged up and headed off into the scrub. It was strange not to be walking through rainforest (I need to diversify my karst experiences from just the JF). Steve's navigational skills were good (for now) and we located MC-340. The stream, which can only be heard during semi flood conditions, was very loud at the entrance. Steve informed us that the first time he'd descended the cave there was no stream noise and no evidence of a stream bed at the bottom of the two ~20 m pitches. The next time he'd been there he'd not fully descended the cave but had heard

the stream. The cave is situated in between the major streamsinks of the Circular Ponds area and the known resurgence to the east. He theorised that the stream he could hear could well be the main drain between the two points. The hunch was that a traverse of the rift at about the height of the top of the second pitch may yield access to the elusive streamway passage. (See page 20 of *Troglodyte* 16(1) for Steve's report). Andy rigged and went right to the bottom for a look and found the streamway. It was flowing strongly in the section of passage that Steve had investigated on his first 'dry' trip. Interestingly, it was not flowing west to east (as would have been expected if the water was the main drain connecting Circular Ponds to the resurgence), but was flowing east to west! At the western end the water disappeared down a tight vertical section, so it seemed likely that this was a collection of local surface water still making its way down to the main west to east conduit.

We decided to do a bit of rift traversing anyway as there may still have been a way past somewhere. We traversed east first via an array of pendulums (although some may say pendula). Nothing of great consequence was found. Andy had a look at the shorter west option on his way out

and found little of interest in that direction either. MC-340 was finished.

Next we headed north for 40 m or so and located MC-339. Steve had been 10 m or so inside this mostly vertical entrance to the edge of a ~15 m rift pitch, but no further. Once again Andy rigged, descending the impressive pitch to a narrowing boulder choke at its base. I joined him and relocated a few of the blocks to allow me to continue down a few more metres in to a more terminal choke. Near the base of the choke there was a fabulous vertical face of rubble and sediments over 2 m high that had been exposed. There were various bones of unfortunate animals protruding from the face – a glimpse at the history of death in this cave!

On the way out I did a pendulum into a further continuation of the rift, which had a downward lead through rubble, but I couldn't get enthused about following it. Further up the rift there was a narrow tube descending at ~30 degrees that headed off perpendicular to the rift. With some effort the mud floor of this passage could be

excavated (you could see ~8 m down to a slight corner) but you'd have to be pretty keen.

In the meantime, Steve and David had been surface bashing and had found several new entrances. It was late enough in the day to head back for the cars so we headed in the general direction but fanned out to search for new entrances on the way. We took a slightly incorrect heading and missed our target by some distance initially. Luckily for Steve and David (the alleged 'local guides'), Andy and I put them on the right path and got us all back to the cars!

It was a fun day out which I thoroughly enjoyed. It's the first real caving I've done at MC (I've previously only visited the main attractions of the area – Kubla, Croesus, Lynds etc...) Thanks very much to Steve and David for taking us out. It was great to do some semi social caving with the northern clubs and to build the relationship. I've been a bit caught up with only pushing hard stuff in the JF for most of my short caving career and it was a nice change to potter in the northern climes and meet some new people (I must be getting old ...)

MCC-166 White Rabbit

Stephen Bunton

30 September 2007

Party: Stephen Bunton, Dave Wools-Cobb (NC)

This trip was the follow-up excitement after the Tasmanian Speleological Liaison Council Meeting the night before. The weather was particularly horrible and the original sportsplan of doing Karstcare work in Tailender was not possible because that cave was flooded. It continued to pour overnight but it was clear at 9 am.

Before going underground, we had a very friendly chat to the landowner over whose property you must pass to access the cave. We looked at the mess of dead cars that are dumped in the inflow to Elderberry Cave and Dave mentioned that this was yet another thing that cavers could do as a Karstcare project. By the time we'd done our bit for local public relations the weather had turned nasty and we got changed in the barn.

A quick search for the cave and we were into it. This cave was only discovered about 10 years ago. It was promptly surveyed, the land was then acquired by Parks, stringlines were placed to direct caver traffic and minimise impact. There is now a visitor logbook, which was placed in September 2006 and we were the first party to sign it.

The cave drops through a constriction and down a short climb to a low passage, which is a rather well decorated rat run. This section was a little wetter than usual but wasn't really flooded. After a couple of squeezes the cave changes direction and enlarges. To the right is a daylight hole, called Rebirth, which cannot be exited because at this stage you are on Glen Anderson's farm and he is quite unwelcoming of cavers. It took us about 40 minutes to reach this part of the cave. We explored most of the leads

in this larger section and then noticed that it took another hour before we were out of the cave.



Another Karstcare project? Dead cars in the inflow to Elderberry Hole, Mole Creek.

The weather hadn't improved but the snow on the Great Western Tiers had gone. The farmer took pity on us and invited us in for coffee, which was a wonderful gesture. Rob and Zoe are "sea-changers" who have migrated down from Sydney. In another demonstration of the small world syndrome, they had visitors – one of whom one was the sister of a student I taught, now a Biology teacher on the north west coast. I think we will be welcome there again.

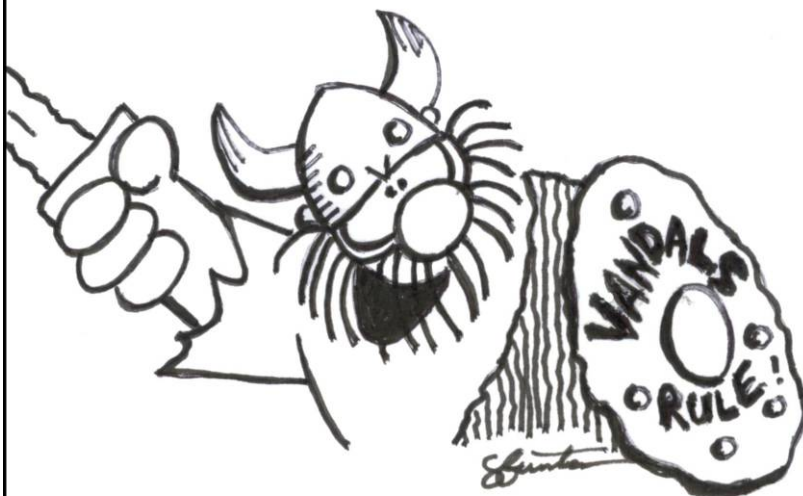
Back at the Marakoopa Hut we noticed that Alan and Andy were out of Kubla. We were relieved since we didn't know how long we would wait, knowing that if they were overdue they would be flooded in and there was not much we could do about it. *[I would have thought that rigging the upper entrance and getting us out that way would have been one option ... - Ed.]*

A Few Random Photos and a Buntoon (just for good measure)



Hagar the Hypothetical

"Can't wait for those cavers to publish some more cave locations"



Top left: Matt Cracknell descends into IB-171 Rocket Rods Pot while Tony Veness watches on

Top right: A good day for drowning in Growling Swallet (all it needs is Stuey and a few others stranded on a ledge 50 m inside the entrance and it would be just like the good old days ...)

Centre right: The aftermath at Bunty's after the Tachy derig (I've never seen his suit so poorly filled out)

IB-28 Gollums Grovel

7IB28.STC102

Surveyed by: K. Hosking, A. Robertson
(11/3/07)

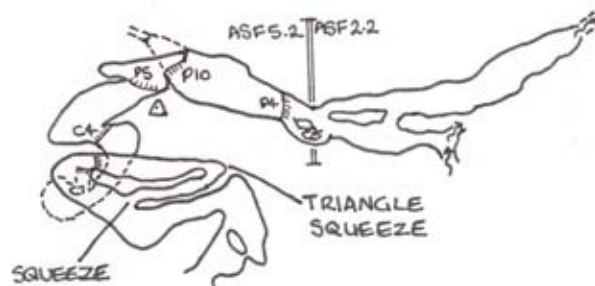
Drawn by: A. Robertson (29/8/07)

Symbols: IUS 1999

ASF Grade: 52

Surveyed Length: 90m

Surveyed Depth: 54.1m



PLAN

TRUE SECTION
180° through 0°

→ N
magnetic 2007

0 5 10 m

JF-419, JF-420 Chief Inspector

June-Florentine

Tasmania

7JF419.STC106

Surveyed by Alan Jackson &

Gavin Brett - 01-08-2007

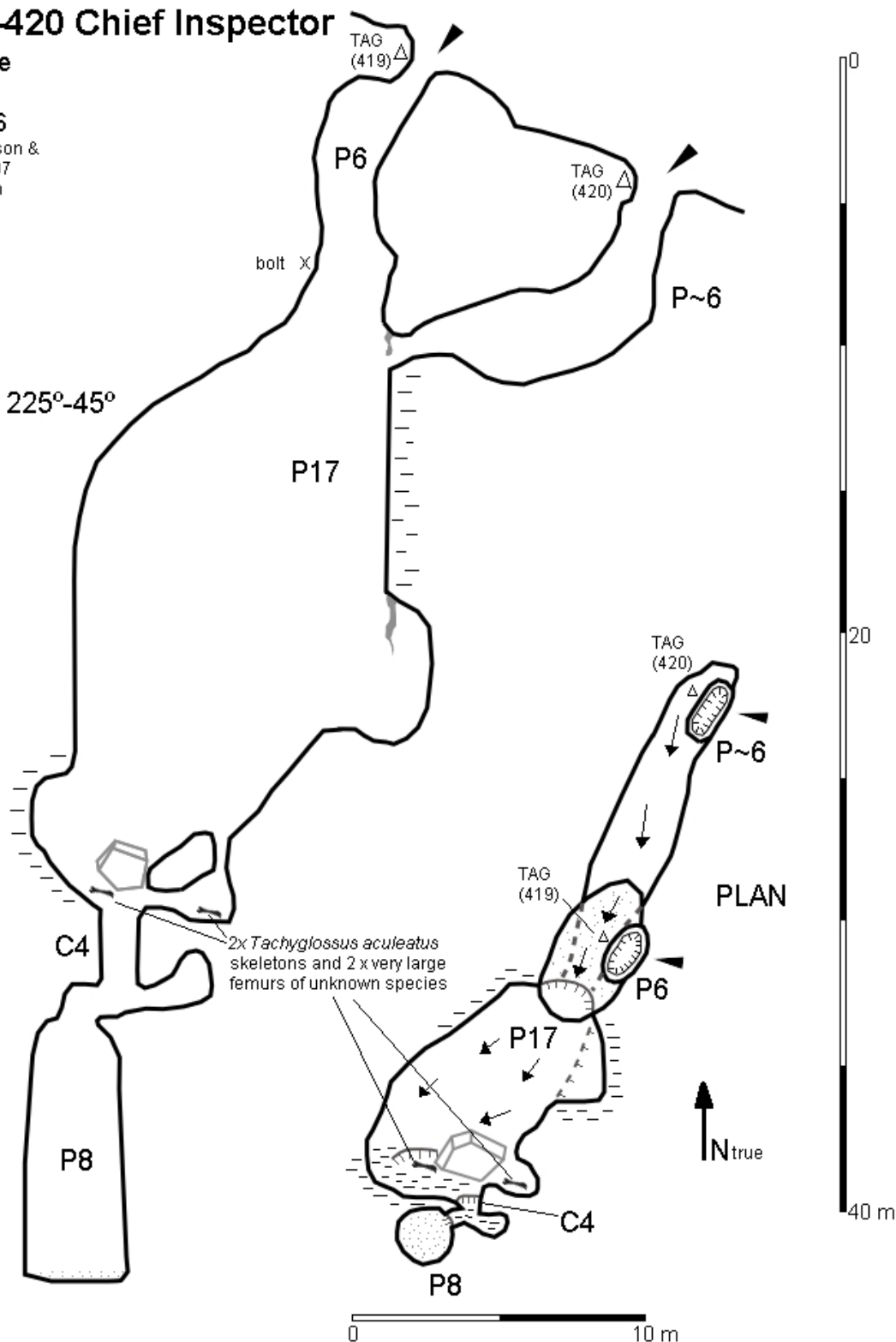
Drawn by Alan Jackson

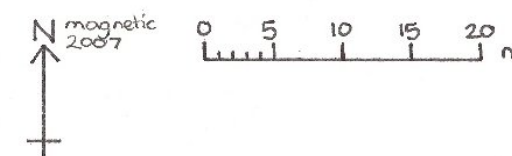
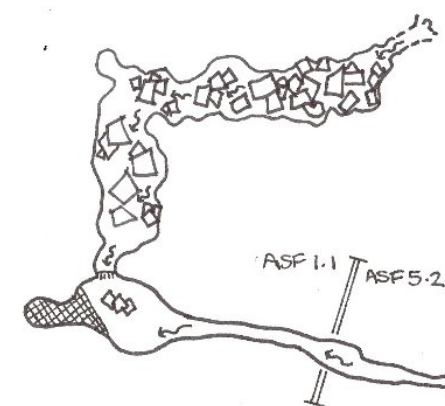
ASF Grade 44

Symbols IUS 1999

Depth 42 m

SECTION 225°-45°





IB-26 Hooks Hole

7IB26.STC104

Surveyed by: K.Hosking, A.Robertson, S.Benjamin,
S.Gilbert, J.Pulford (3/6 & 8/7/07)

Drawn by: A.Robertson (7/9/07)

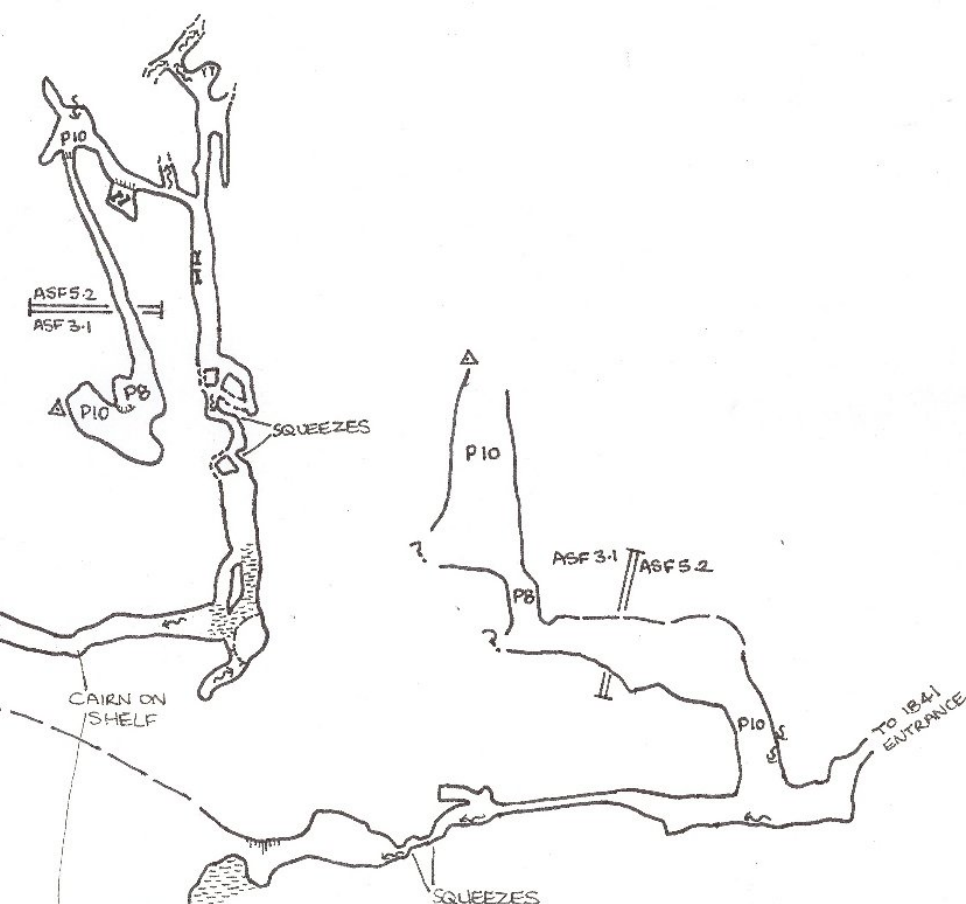
Symbols: IUS 1999

ASF Grade: 52

Surveyed Length: 296.3m

Surveyed Depth: 49.0m

PLAN



DEVELOPED SECTION

