

SPELEO SPIEL 363

November - December 2007

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Front Cover: Entrance ladder pitch – JF-382 *Photo by Matt Cracknell*



Speleo Spiel

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STC was formed in December 1996 by the amalgamation of three former southern Tasmanian clubs: 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

If the last *Spiel* was SS-X362 then this one should be SS382. Exploration in JF-382 appears to have been the dominating issue being tackled by STC over the last couple of months. Don't believe me? Take a look at the Contents page. JF-382 is now the ninth deepest cave in Australia and is still going (although it's getting harder). It now appears to have everything you need in a sporting JF cave with the exception of a name. We're working on it but it's proving to be a hard nut to crack. Hopefully it won't become another Threefortyone.

It wouldn't be a true issue of the *Spiel* if I didn't have a dig at ASF and *Caves Australia*. Let's face it, if I didn't raise CA for you every two months then you'd all have forgotten it ever existed by now! After a 'short and jocular' conversation at our November meeting, followed by a shit stirring email to those supposedly in charge of making CA happen, I have kind of managed to put STC in the driver's seat of the publication. Within an issue or two it looks like it will be our baby to put together and produce. Shouldn't be too hard to do but I would appreciate any offers of help from *Spiel* readers. If the mainlanders can manage to get it out occasionally then we superior beings down south shouldn't have any problems. Hopefully we can return CA to its former (regular) glory and not lower the tone too much ...

I guess I'd better entertain the old cliché of wishing all and sundry a safe and happy Christmas-New Year period. What I really wish is that it's a productive period for cave exploration. Recent findings in JF-382 are proof that if you choose a random direction in the Junee-Florentine then there is still plenty to find. STC and its forefathers have a long and colourful history of cave exploration. Let's not drop the ball.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

ANOTHER Z CAVE BITES THE DUST – For some reason this has taken almost two years to realise. The cave JF-Z86 in Eberhard (1994) is now JF-296. The tag was placed on the cave in January 2006 (Jackson 2006). Eberhard (1994) describes JF-Z86 as "streamsink in JF344 valley near JF354; Growling Swallet Area." And the map of the Serendipity area in SS207 (page 12) shows the location and describes it as "un-numbered swallet". The clincher though is Rolan's unpublished map which plots JF-Z86 in just the right spot. One more down, about a hundred to go ...

MIDNIGHT HOLE CLOSED – Some uncertainty surrounds the integrity of the p-hangers installed in this cave. Signs indicating the closure have been erected in the Southern Ranges Track registration booth and at the cave entrance. The cave will remain closed until STC, DPIW and DTAE have assessed the bolts thoroughly.

GOOD NEWS! Joe Sydney brought Steve Bunton some good news when he visited Tasmania for the POLSAREX.

Joe was recently involved in a trip down Phoenix Cave B-60 at Bungonia, with Graeme Smith, doing a fauna survey looking for a troglobitic silverfish. Graeme only discovered *Trinemura anemone* in 1976 and in such a popular mainland area as Bungonia, there is a chance that it could have been trampled out of existence. Steve and Graeme were involved in the early exploration of Phoenix Cave and as is always the case, they wondered about the longterm impacts of their actions. *Stephen Bunton*



Trinemura anemone - nothing a few mothballs wouldn't fix

NEW ROPE – Following recent rope testing we retired all our 9 mm rope. As a result we recently purchased a new 200 m roll of 9.5 mm Blue Water II++. We have also introduced the 200 m roll of 11 mm rope that Damian Bidgood donated a year or two ago into active service. Now we just need to get out there and make it dirty.

XMAS BBQ – This year's Christmas BBQ will be held on December 12 (second Wednesday in the month). Venue is the Long Beach BBQ area (Lower Sandy Bay) starting at 5 pm. Turn off Sandy Bay Road into Long Point Road or Beach Road – the BBQs are in between the two.

WELCOME BACK to Guy Bannick who at the December Meeting revealed the information which had been a secret for some time. Dingo Cave at 40 km long is Australia's second longest cave. It is also located in Gregory National Park in the limestone north of the swimming hole whereas Bullita Cave, now 110 km, is in the limestone south of the swimming hole. Observant cavers will have noticed that in the CaveMania Proceedings, in the article by Bob Kershaw there was a diagram, with a histogram showing the relative lengths of Australia's longest cave but there was a gap left for the second longest. Fastidious cavers can now fill in the details. *Stephen Bunton*

A reminder to all STC members:

I feel that I have a responsibility as President to ensure that as a Club we stay true to the guiding principles that led to the formation of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers (STC) and its former entities. It is important for many reasons that all STC members are not only seen to be following these principles, but that we are all actually following them. It is vital that all members are aware of these principles, believe in them and understand why they are important for karst environments, for our continued use of them and for the credibility of the Club. All Club members agreed and accepted these guiding principles and codes of conduct when joining the club. They include the Clubs' Constitution and Rules (<http://www.lmrs.com.au/stc/>) and the Australian Speleological Federation's (ASF) Minimal Impact Caving Codes and Ethics (<http://www.caves.org.au/index.html>).

The rules, principles and codes of conduct are in place to remind us of the responsibilities that we, as cavers have to the karst environments and landscapes we enter. In some cases these rules dictate that we take measures, where necessary, to minimise the potentially significant environmental impacts of our activities. Activities that are unacceptable have not been created without good reason. If they require modification or relaxation then this needs to be carefully assessed collectively, not individually. Collectively means ALL of the groups who have a responsibility to or interest in caves and their protection. This includes other Club members, the Clubs Executive Committee and relevant land managers or owners.

Many years of input into cave conservation measures and management of karst areas has resulted in the Club having a strong connection and close communication with the State departments responsible for management and protection of Tasmania's cave systems. This is a privilege that is of great benefit to the club but which must be recognised if we are to continue to be given the opportunity to provide input on matters of karst management and conservation policy. This will only continue with thoughtful, transparent, and responsible conduct by all club members.

Essentially I would like to remind you all of why you are part of STC rather than just a group of individuals that like caving. To remind you to go about your caving activities in a careful and respectful manner. To consider before embarking on any particular activity the potential impact that it may have on the natural environments that brings us together as this club – and provides us with so much enjoyment. This will ensure that the implications of our activities are in line with our responsibilities as cave visitors, explorers, researchers and management advisors.



Matt Cracknell

President

Trip Reports

JF-382 – It Goes!

Andy McKenzie

7 October 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell, Andy McKenzie

Matt was the only person that replied to my message on the STC server. It's hard being a pom, Aussie's always hate you for being English! Good lad Matt! I'd fallen out with Jacko; he was spending the weekend at a gay spa, I mean day spa. Trevor was keen but was suffering from a dose of the runs. Serena arranged a lift with Matt and we met in Westerway.

An 8 m ladder was hung on the entrance pitch; the chamber below was as dirty as ever, the squeeze beyond is a real squeeze! After Serena had pushed through the tight bit and found a 7 metre pitch 20 metres on, I knew I was committed! A bit more work and I exhaled fully, compressing my chest and pushed through hard, trying not to think about the return! The squeeze is in the top of the rift - the other side of the squeeze has a mud slope/climbdown; this is made from all of the mud that has been pushed through in the digging stage so ultimately the squeeze will become a harder obstacle to negotiate as time goes on and the mud gets washed away. Matt took one

look at the squeeze and decided to go check out the surface and left us to explore. [*That was a very diplomatic way of putting it, Andy. – Ed.*]

The passage on the other side has a bit of water and good development. After a climb down a small collapse you gain the top of the first proper pitch. Two bolts to secure the ladder and the pitch was attacked! At the bottom of the pitch I could see a pit and a route going over the top of an arch. The top route seemed the most promising as the passage on the other side was huge! As Serena checked the pit I went for the huge passage! A tall aven on the true left has obviously put quite a lot of water through the pot in the past. The passage got considerably bigger downstream of the aven!

This was what I had been dreaming of, virgin large walking passage and another pitch! After a confer with Serena, who's pit had gone to a 3-4 m climb down into a tight rift, we went and retrieved a rope for the next pitch.

Serena didn't seem too keen and sat and ate sammys as I rigged a rope around a sling placement and, careful not to knock a half tonne slab off the other wall on the way past, I dropped the 6 metres to the floor. Immediately below this spacious and sexy pitch is yet another drop, this one at least 20 metres. Game on! A necky traverse ensued to try and get an angle on the floor of the aven. I could see a flat

cobbled floor, with a pool of water and what sounded like a small drop to a streamway. Unsure of what direction the passage at the bottom took I climbed out over the drop, the wall crumbling as I scrambled along. Arse twitching, as the rock fell away, I thought this is definitely a Who Dares Wins pitch! Damn it, gutted, I realised I had no rope left! I also noticed water coming from an inlet opposite the top of the pitch.

Rigging this pitch will be easy on the return. A huge sling placement, two bolts and we will have a perfect hang. I tried to think of a way to persuade the guys that it was a good idea for me to run down to the car where I had a longer rope, there was no way; Matt wasn't interested, Serena was cold and it was already 3 pm. It would have to wait a week!

The return squeeze left my lungs without air for a good 30 seconds. [Luckily Andy has so few brain cells left that he can withstand very low oxygen levels for extended periods. –Ed.] Gasping, I pulled through and pulled the bags up. We walked back to Disco Stu via the northern ridge of the Serendipity valley.

A week of waiting ...

Andy looking as cuddly as ever - the result of a hard day's digging in 382



M. Cracknell

JF-382 – A Grand Day Out!

Alan Jackson & Andy McKenzie (written in third person past tense, by two people, just for fun)

14 October 2007

Party: Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

The previous visit to this cave had left it in an exciting state – an undescended ~30 m pitch and a handsome, mouth-frothing pom. It had also left one pair of knickers firmly knotted and a cold, sandwich hungry stomach. It was time to return to this cave with a better attitude and a healthy dose of tact (and Andy and Alan have the best damn attitudes in the club, being efficient and keen cavers with a blatant disregard for anything or anyone else!)

The weather was delightful when Alan left Hobart; it was spitting in Bushy Park, drizzling by Westerway and pissing down by Maydena. When Andy left the Lake, it was just bucketing down, almost to the point of cancellation! It was almost one of those 'let's just sit in the car a bit longer to see if the rain stops' days but the virgin was calling them from up the valley. A miserable wet walk ensued.

On the way past Serendipity and JF-346 the stream was swollen, turbid and flowing into both caves. They thought it was going to be nice to get to the dry confines of JF-382. Andy descended the ladder on the awful entrance pitch and was delighted to find a small stream coming in just above the squeeze/dig. It hadn't even looked like this section had seen water for many years on previous visits. This water made the squeeze particularly delightful. It was tighter than Alan was hoping for. Before Alan made the first push through, Andy, as always full of care for his mate, reminded Alan of the prospect of DEATH due to water backing up against your body whilst negotiating a tight squeeze. OOH how they do love a tight one... Next was

Andy's turn, a fully de-compressed chest was required to push on through.

They were now into what was new passage for Alan. A fairly small triangular stream passage descended slowly, cascaded down a ~2 m climb and then tumbled over an ~8 m pitch. This had been rigged with a ladder and some pommy twat had installed two of the most awfully placed bolts Alan had ever seen. The sexy pommy bastard argued that the bolts were placed there for a ladder descent when the cave was dry and were going to be used to gain another bolt later on for a rope to be rigged as there were no naturals, a most suitable answer; Alan shied away and ate his hat. Alan refused to descend until it was re-rigged, which they did by placing a further two bolts further out over the drop. God damn the uncaring, immoral destroyers of God's beauty! The rub below was unavoidable, but with fat rope or a diversion then SRT will be achievable here. Andy tried to kill Alan by throwing down a 30 m bundle of rope here while looking straight at him with his light. Surprisingly, all Alan could see was a very bright light and not the rope missile that struck him firmly on the face and head. STRIKE! Alan chuckled a wobbly and ranted at Andy for what seemed like an eternity. This Andy lad needs a few more years of caving under his belt before he achieves the 'I'm a caver AND I have a brain' level. Poor child, he's not even 24 years of age, whereas Alan is *obviously* well advanced for his age of 27 (and three quarters). At the bottom of this pitch was a constricted lead to another short pitch but the easy way on was to get off a few metres up and follow a side passage down a few climbs. The passage enlarged somewhat here as more water entered and then another ~8 m pitch followed. Unfortunately, Andy had also rigged this pitch and a very convoluted route had been chosen. Nothing a couple of bolts won't fix on the next trip! Again Andy boasted a good defense, whilst rigging the pitch the week previous

he had no assistance, no bolting kit and a major robotic chubby for a virgin passage. “To hell with your perfection, Alan. I’m going caving, you coming or not?!” Alan was left pondering how Andy managed to install bolts on the previous pitch and then suddenly come to have no bolting kit at the next pitch.

By this point the two intrepid explorers were slowly making up after the unfortunate rope hits face incident... They were now in a small chamber with Andy’s undescended ‘30 m pitch’ heading down. A large natural backed-up two bolts at the pitch head (soon followed by a natural diversion to keep them out of the water a bit more) had them down. It was more like 20 m, but was immediately followed by a ~4 m pitch.

Comments were made as to the efficiency of caving with each other and not having to instruct a bunch of numpties as to how they can be of assistance. The only thing making swifter time down this cave than this perfectly harmonised pair was the abundant water.

As was becoming the norm for this cave, more water entered halfway down the ~15-20 m pitch. Here the water continued down a series of steps but they stayed high, traversed a narrow rift and popped out into a perpendicular rift with an enormous aven above them and a ~15 m pitch below them. Alan rigged and descended this first and then had to wait for Andy while doing everything in his power to stop himself from sprinting down the enormous passage that followed.

Andy arrived and they held hands and skipped down the passage (*no really, we did – I concur, we really did!* - Eds). This super-passage (8-12 m wide, 25-40 m high stream canyon) just powered on down at a steep gradient for about 100 m in a south easterly direction, boasting numerous unexplored inlets! A few free-climbs and grovels were required to negotiate drop-offs and rock-collapses and they probably gained well over 50 m of depth without using any rope. Numerous small waterfalls poured in left, right and centre. The biggest was a ~30 m fall that came in directly above the main passage which Alan theorised to be water from Punishment Pot (a large streamsink on the contact along from 382). By now they had sore necks from looking around this huge passage. This was not the same cave they had entered; this was a master cave for the hill! BONZA!!!!

Finally the gradient picked up and a small pitch presented itself. Andy set to work rigging it with the last rope while Alan got out the compass. “F*#K ME ANDY! IT’S

HEADING SOUTH!” Now that’s what Andy wanted to hear! Away from, or at least not towards, Serendipity!

Alan then did a climb up into an adjoining passage (with a fine display of his exquisite climbing skills) which lead to a 30-40 m pitch in passage heading off perpendicular to the main passage carrying the now sizeable stream. Another day...

Andy soon started making excited noises and called Alan down. The pitch was only short (~8 m) but it opened up into an enormous pit. Andy had counted a 5 second drop but after some calming down they settled on a generous 4 second drop. Hoffman (1985) in Warild (2001) suggests a 71 m pitch for a four second drop. They were out of rope and out of bolts but far from out of cave and excitement. After panting lots and rubbing each other off on each others left leg, they started to head out, cursorily investigating the numerous inlets and side passages. Andy tried to convince Alan to call in sick the following day but these things need to be savoured (Rolan taught him this) – seven nights of dreams of 70+ m pitches ... Andy recalls thinking “Where the hell is the dedication of these strange antipodean folk?!”

The exit was hard but good; Alan disappeared, leaving Andy with all of the bolting, rigging and eating kit... (The youth needs hardening up). The squeeze at the entrance was, well, basically labeled a bastard, especially after a long day.

Back on the surface it was still raining. They headed up to JF-381 (about 30 m up the hill) for a look. It didn’t have much promise but in the wet conditions it had a nice little stream flowing through it (no doubt one encountered further down 382). It also had a beautiful bit of formation which is worth a photo one day. They then had a look in JF-346 to see if all that water had done anything yet. Nothing much had changed since the last visit – it needs another 50 years or so. They also checked out the entrance to Growling. It was simply amazing; words could not describe the volume of water. Garths Creek was a very technical grade 5 torrent from bank to bank and there were only one or two large rocks and logs standing proud of the water just before the cave entrance. It would be fair to say that the next trip to Growling will need to be via Slaughterhouse Pot so the Windy Rift ladders can be placed back down the climbs. Alternatively the ladders can be left until the JF-382 – Growling through-trip via Frownland ...

What a winner of a day!

JF-382 – The Big Pitch is Descended

Alan Jackson & Andy McKenzie (again, written in third person past tense, by two people, just for fun)

21 October 2007

Party: Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

After the longest week in the history of humankind and numerous excited phone calls, texts and emails, three intrepid fools were slogging their way up the Serendipity valley for the next installment of JF-382. It was wet and miserable again but the two-on-one berating of Andy ensured an entertaining walk. Gavin had been suffering a long absence from the hard-caving scene for a good nine months and wasn’t sure how he’d hold up to a deep cave

with a big pitch at the bottom. Andy was a juvenile twat (the nice beanie his Nan had knitted for him wasn’t helping the situation). Alan was as heroic and steadfast as ever, although camper than a scout jamboree.

The ladder on the second pitch was replaced with the fattest old piece of Bluewater 11 mm that could be found in the gear store. No rub could defeat this piece of wire! The third pitch was also re-rigged in a more sensible place using a couple of naturals (i.e. Andy was relegated to passing binas instead of clipping them). The troops gathered at the bottom of the entrance pitch series and the start of the super-passage. Gavin was suitably impressed with the dimension of this passage. The nasty little climb was bypassed via a link to the active stream passage, which

was much more pleasant. A second bolt was placed at the rebelay on the short pitch before the big one and a second bolt was also placed on the approach line to the big pitch. Andy was given the honours of first descent.



Andy frigging in the rigging at the top of the fourth pitch, still bearing the filth of the squeeze

Andy was gripped in a bubble of excitement as he skillfully played with the rope and rigging (yeah, right!) Despite wave after wave of attack from Gavin and Alan the best he could manage in return was a flickering smile. The underpants were well and truly brown. Andy commented that if you took a tumble, you would have plenty of time to think about it on the way down! After what seemed like an eternity of nervous rigging, Andy was on his way down the gaping shaft. He giggled, screamed and shouted countless obscenities as he slowly drifted out of sight (the fact that his light is so crap didn't help). Still at the top, Gavin and Alan observed his tiny prick (of light) tracking back and forth across the chamber floor (apparently it was quite large – the chamber that is). The discovery of another pitch was shouted up.

Alan headed down next, full of bluff and bravado at first. About half way down an ounce of agoraphobia kicked in (you know, the whole 'what am I doing hanging in the

middle of space on a tiny piece of nylon' situation). Once Alan touched down he realised it was agoraphobia causing the problems (as he knew he was getting closer to being alone with Andy in a large dark room). As the handsome youth went to shake hands with the runt of the litter, the runt pounced on Andy and held him for an awkwardly long amount of time. Gavin put some light on the situation from the top of the pitch with his 10 W megabeam. It became quite clear that this pitch was going onto the 'Greatest Pitches in Australia' list, right near the top. The limestone was the same as that encountered on Art Deco and Fabulous Spangle pitches in Tachycardia and Ice Tube respectively – solid, low impurities, beautiful grey and with a smooth finish and dramatic lines. A dominating corner starting from the floor and closing at the roof is a stunning feature – its perfectly straight line left them in wonder. Words can't really describe it. At its base it was 15 m+ wide and 30 m+ long with two other streams entering as waterfalls, one with a significant flow. It may be fair to guess that this water could be coming from streamsinks in the Benson and Hedges series at the head of the Serendipity valley. The floor of the vast chamber was almost perfectly flat, a mixture of solid bedrock and rounded pebbles. On the southern side of the chamber the stream exited via a climb down and then a ~20 m pitch. By the bottom of this pitch the rock was starting to deteriorate to the impure rubbish they're used to.

From the base of the last pitch a meandering and steeply descending passage was followed for a short distance before it narrowed right down and headed off more or less in a straight line. With the news of the end of the fun stuff, Gavin decided to start heading back up. He wasn't very hopeful for a stellar performance on the big pitch. Andy joined Alan at the bottom where they took off SRT kits and tackled the horizontal stuff. After what must have almost been 100 m of nasty, wet, tight, knee-crunching stream passage (with a very encouraging draft) enthusiasm waned. Andy was amazed by the fact that Alan was still crawling in this shit without knee pads! The gradient was picking up a little (a couple of metre and half-metre drops in the streambed were encountered) but it was also getting tighter. Doing it all just to have to come back and do it all again with the survey gear was looking silly, so they about-faced. Knee pads are a must for this section. Mainlanders are required for this tight, wet, horrible crap but getting them to -300 m (or rather out again) would be the problem!

The ascent of the big pitch wasn't too tiring and Gavin was found shortly after having a rest. He had tried to keep heading out but couldn't find the sneaky little entrance to one of the pitch-avoiding passages. The mud and crap of the entrance ensured that everyone emerged covered in filth. A good trip had by all.

Risbys Basin

Matt Cracknell

21 October 2007

Party: Stephen Bunton, Matt Cracknell

The aim of the day was to tag the documented RB-X caves with their corresponding numbers (i.e. RB-X3 = RB-3) as determined from the table and descriptions found in *Spiel* 310 (Clarke and Desmarchelier, 1998). We parked on the

road within the fresh coupe that lies several hundred metres west of Pillingers Creek. Bunty suited up in his plastic sweat suit and both of us headed down to the small stream sink/swallet that Serena and I had come across the last time we were in the area.

The accessible areas of this cave have developed via the aid of numerous blocks and slabs that have fallen over a semi-abandoned water course carrying dolerite cobbles. The current flow of water into the cave disappears between slots just below the entrance. There is a small room at the

back of the cave that can be accessed by climbing up over a huge slab ('The Leviathan'). This room has moonmilk coatings and tree roots dangling from the ceiling and a small side passage below ends in poorly-sorted unconsolidated channel sediments hugging the walls.



Matt and his favourite landscape – multiple use forests (they cut it all down AND they burn it!)

Bunty took the tape and I manned the instruments. Within an hour we had surveyed the cave and adjoining stream sink. We weren't sure if this fitted the description of Risbys Basin Cave (I know it seems daft that we couldn't decide but we weren't sure if we missed the climb up via a ladder that may not have been there any more) so we were reluctant to tag this cave. To avoid stuffing up so early in the day I drilled a hole (to survey to) for the tag when we have established this caves previous identity, if any*.

We then wandered down the dry valley to another of the caves Serena and I had encountered. This very small cave has developed in the eastern flank of the valley wall and seems to have taken water intermittently at a time in the past. Again it is just gaps between fallen blocks and slabs. Bunty headed in first to negotiate the big-man-sized squeeze below a short climb that connects to a small room with moonmilk coatings and fine sediments. In many areas large chert nodules protrude from the slab faces. Within 30 minutes the cave was surveyed, tagged (RB-9 Chert Hole) and photographed.

Continuing on down the dry valley we heard water in the distance and headed for this (water + limestone = cave?). Not so, eventually it was apparent that the water flow we could hear is a major tributary to the dry valley. This turbid stream snakes its way through the coupe. Good to see that stream side reserves are doing their job and that soil can hold itself together after losing all binding vegetation – wonders will never cease. By this time Bunty was swimming in his watertight caving apparel and had lost the impetus to carry on. We made our way east to the dry valley edge and scoured the slope break back to where we

had been before. Not encountering anything of interest we bailed out to the clearfell where Bunty promptly stripped off to encourage heat flux. Unfortunately we had not identified any caves in the above mentioned report.



Any excuse to get his hands on a drill and desecrate the karst landscape – Matt tags Pseudo Risbys Basin Cave

Back at the car we decided on the way out to follow Roberts Hill Rd and look for the dozer track that had been used to access drilling pads. These drill cores were used to assay the potential limestone resource for Bender in the mid 1990's. A GPS location and a few star pickets later we were following the road further up the hill past the dozer track all the way to Abbots Lookout. It seems that the road had been recently upgraded to assist in the establishment of the next wonderful instalment of Forestry Tasmania's tourism campaign, the Maydena Hauler; carparks have been cleared, many tonnes of road gravel laid and concrete foundations for a septic system(?) have been poured, but no Hauler. It turns out, from speaking to the friendly staff at the Westerway forestry tourism propaganda... err ... I mean information centre, that the proposed hauler route was unviable in its present form and will hopefully be rerouted more directly to the summit in the near future. Anyway, the new road gives excellent wheelchair access to the summit of Abbots Lookout. Bunty was ecstatic, it was his easiest >1100 metre peak bagging so far, the view was pretty good too.

*As it turns out, from a bit of post trip research this cave is not Risbys Basin Cave (RB-X4). It will be tagged RB-11 and called Pseudo Risbys Basin Cave (PRBC), just to avoid further confusion.

Reference

CLARKE, A. AND DESMARCHELIER, J. (1998) Risby's Basin Cave-14/09/98, *Speleo Spiel*, 310:12-14

JF-382 – Survey Trip

Alan Jackson

25 October 2007

Party: Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Amy Robertson, Ric Tunney, Trevor Wailes

Word had spread that 382 was doing things so I managed to convince a crowd to come have a look-see and get some of the surveying done at the same time. We started by looking for the JF-344 Serendipity tag again (with the assistance of old-hand Trevor). We failed; again. The backup plan was to survey from nearby JF-375 (Serendipity upper entrance). This was located without too much effort and we surface surveyed up to JF-382 (via one

of Tony V's old red star pickets – the one just behind the JF-344 entrance; number 007).

Next the underground survey was commenced. At Andy's proclaimed 'good 30 m pitch' the highly robust Chickenfeed tape measure exploded. This pitch turned out to be 16 m! Andy has no depth perception. We struggled on with the dead tape to the base of the pitch series and then abandoned it. We had another tape that we'd left in the cave at the top of the big pitch. We would survey out from there. Everyone was suitably impressed with the nature of the large descending passage.

Janine was the only taker for the big pitch and while she was down there we got her to hold the 4 mm cord that we'd brought for measuring this pitch with. This ~40 m cord plus a bit of measuring tape tied onto it measured the pitch at ~55 m. Not as big as we'd hoped but acceptable! We then commenced surveying out from here while Janine came back up the pitch. We tied in the loop at the top of the big slope and the dead end upstream of where the pitches come in but didn't do any of the other little side passages that need looking at off this main passage. We headed out and with the exception of Trev's disappearing

vision episode on the track we all concluded that a pleasant day had been had.

Back at home I punched in the survey data:

The surface survey placed the JF-382 entrance at 53 m higher than JF-375 – making for a depth potential of this system of around -330 m

The entrance pitch series terminates at around -75 m

The steeply descending passage is about 120 m long and drops a further 75 m over its length

The total surveyed depth (to the base of the 55 m pitch) is -215 m

The total surveyed length for the day was 415 m

With the further pitch and passage yet to be surveyed an estimated total depth so far of ~ -250 m seems reasonable – well short of the -330 m available.

Plotting the survey in the JF master file places the aven associated with the big pitch more or less right under JF-373 Punishment Pot and the water that enters here likely originates from this streamsink.

JF-382 – For Everhard

Alan Jackson

28 October 2007

Party: Rolan Eberhard, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

Plan A was to survey from the bottom of the big pitch down to the last pitch and as far along the wretched crawl as we could manage. Upon arrival at the bottom of the big pitch I realised I'd forgotten to pick up the measuring tape that I'd left at the bottom of the entrance pitch series. Doh! We went for plan B.

I headed up to retrieve the tape. Rolan had a look down the final pitch and stripped the krabs for use elsewhere and Andy followed me up. We would reconvene at the undescended pitch in the fossil passage and survey as we go. Once I was up I had a yell from the head of the new pitch and we confirmed a connection between this pitch and the other big one. I soon discovered that one of the others from the Thursday trip must have done the good Samaritan thing and picked up the tape I'd left behind. There was no tape in the cave. Argh! We went for Plan C.

With surveying out of the question, we entered full exploration mode. Rolan couldn't believe his luck but at the same time he was scathing of our plan to drop this pitch.

"Why are you bothering dropping this pitch if we know it just joins back in with the other one?" he asked.

"Because you never know, Rolan." I replied.

We had 39, 31 and 7 m ropes at our disposal. We estimated the new pitch at ~35-40 m. I rigged low and frugally to maximise our chances of getting down on the 39 m rope. I failed. The rope ran out about 6 metres off the floor! I tied the 7 m (which was a piece of the recently retired 9 mm!!) on and passed the knot. This just got us to the floor. I was in a largish chamber with a clay/gravel floor. A small stream entered at the base of the pitch and sunk immediately into the floor. On the far side of the chamber a huge gravel slope extended in both directions. We

assumed that the down hill bit joined back in with the big pitch. I called the others down but they seemed unconvinced.

"What can you see? Does it just join the other pitch?"

They weren't very keen. I suggested that it was an 'interesting place' and that they should come down. By the time Rolan had touched down I had spotted a continuation of the fossil passage up on the far side of the chamber. I climbed the gravel slope, traversed it and then cut steps into a 3 m high bank to gain access to the passage. It was an exciting little climb on poorly consolidated gravels. The passage went. I excitedly traversed back to the pitch to inform Rolan, who was just negotiating the very annoying knot crossing.

We called Andy down and then did the climb again. The tall fossil vadose canyon turned 90 degrees and dropped steeply. Rolan showed great restraint and waited at the climb to direct Andy while I tore off down the passage like a mad man (treading carefully and minimising my impact, of course!) The passage was of very pleasing dimensions (1 - 1.5m wide) and meandering along nicely. At a sharp bend there was a higher level continuation and a lower level. I took the lower but after 30 m or so it had shrunk to squeezing dimensions and I took SRT gear off. I didn't get much further and there was no draft. On my way out I found Andy negotiating the climb up to the higher level. Rolan had already sniffed it out and was out of sight. Fearing the passage-bagger of old I dropped my SRT kit and ran after Rolan. He was soon found pacing slowly down the passage doing some superb savouring. I'd never seen such a calm and collected Rolan in all my life; in fact, he was holding me up! This nicely decorated passage continued for some 30-40 m before pitching. The discovery of this pitch and its associated chamber caused a few cracks in Rolan's calm façade. His voice went up an octave or two (he sounded just like his son Patrick) and he gleefully tossed a rock down the pitch to gauge its depth. It was quite big and we only had a 31 m rope left.

We scoured the pitch head looking for the least rope hungry approach. Andy found a window into a higher approach to the pitch which provided a great take-off point, but it was too rope expensive. In the end we stayed as low as possible (precariously placed under a jumble of large rocks hanging in the passage over our heads). At this point Andy started making noises indicating that he thought it was his turn to drop a pitch. I gracefully reminded him that when discussing who got to drop the big 55 m pitch first I had said ‘you can have the big pitch and I’ll have everything else.’ He concurred but was crushed at my strict enforcement of ‘the rules’. A tape and a bolt were placed and it was then that I realised the spanner was attached to my SRT kit back at the junction 50 m back up the cave. Andy was a good boy and headed off to fetch it. A few seconds later we realised that if I was to descend the pitch then my SRT gear might be handy too! Rolan was still wearing all his kit so I asked if he’d like to drop the pitch while I got all my gear on. He calmly accepted the offer (the man was ice cold – an Oscar winning performance).

Now, in the past Rolan has been known to be critical of this new age of electric rotary hammer drills, fearing that it was an unsporting development. With a new pitch between his legs he seemed to be quite keen to embrace the technology and began asking for installation instructions.

Andy was now back (he must have done 100 m of serpentine passage in a little over 30 seconds!) and the primary anchor was tweaked. Rolan then descended 5 or 6 metres before placing a rebelay bolt over the edge. He was grinning from ear to ear as he caressed the throbbing Metabo in his hot little hands. A lovely free-hang followed and in the end we had about 5 metres of rope to spare.

We were in a large chamber with a high aven coming in and a small stream. The chamber had caved in layer by layer and the far side was like an onion with layers of peeled-off rock. The low point of the chamber was quintessential JF caving (wet, mobile rockpile in crappy rock). I shifted a few scary rocks and managed to make 7 or 8 m of vertical progress through this nightmare of a place but it was too scary. I backed out and found the other two pursuing side leads on the far (dry) side of the chamber. A few didn’t go but then Rolan found a tight one with a very strong draft. An awkward corner manoeuvre lead into a small horizontal phreatic tube with a flat dry mud floor. It was just over shoulder-width and about 3 m in it pinched in before opening out again. It was dig time. To get this far I had overcommitted a little and doing the awkward corner feet first up hill proved to be a bit of a challenge. After investigation of some other passages amongst the onion skinning collapse we headed out.

JF-382 just keeps giving!

Risbys Basin again

Matt Cracknell

28 October 2007

Party: Matt Cracknell, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Janine, Ric and I headed off down the dozer track having parked at the turnoff on Roberts Hill Rd. We checked out a doline to the left of the track about 150 m from the car but couldn’t find any opening. This may however turn out to be “Vertical Shaft” (RB-X2) and needs another close look. A further 200 metres or so down the track we turned off over the ridge to the south following pink tape. This route eventually came across a section of the dozer track that is not marked on the 1:25,000 topographic maps.

Heading downslope from here we encountered an area of rundkarren. This seems to outcrop from a particular sequence of limestone beds that can be followed around the ridge to the northwest. The karren consists of large divots and hollows up to 2 m wide, 5 m long and 3 m deep. In the valley floor several choked dolines were found and roughly sketched with approximate GPS locations recorded. Then the group followed the wrong blue tape, left over from an FT survey, and got a little bush-whacked before we had lunch in the Pillingers Creek valley.

After lunch we navigated our way to a small cave that Serena and I noticed some months ago that is not far from PRBC (RB-11). This cave is perched about 3-4 m above the current valley floor, now covered in swamp and fallen trees. There are many choked boulders and slabs in the initial steep down climb. A small phreatically developed section is accessible through boulders before the cave turns sharply to the south where a down climb over sand leads to a room with bedrock walls and standing water at its base. In the floor of this room there is a slot that gains access to a moonmilk coated sediment filled chamber. It is here that

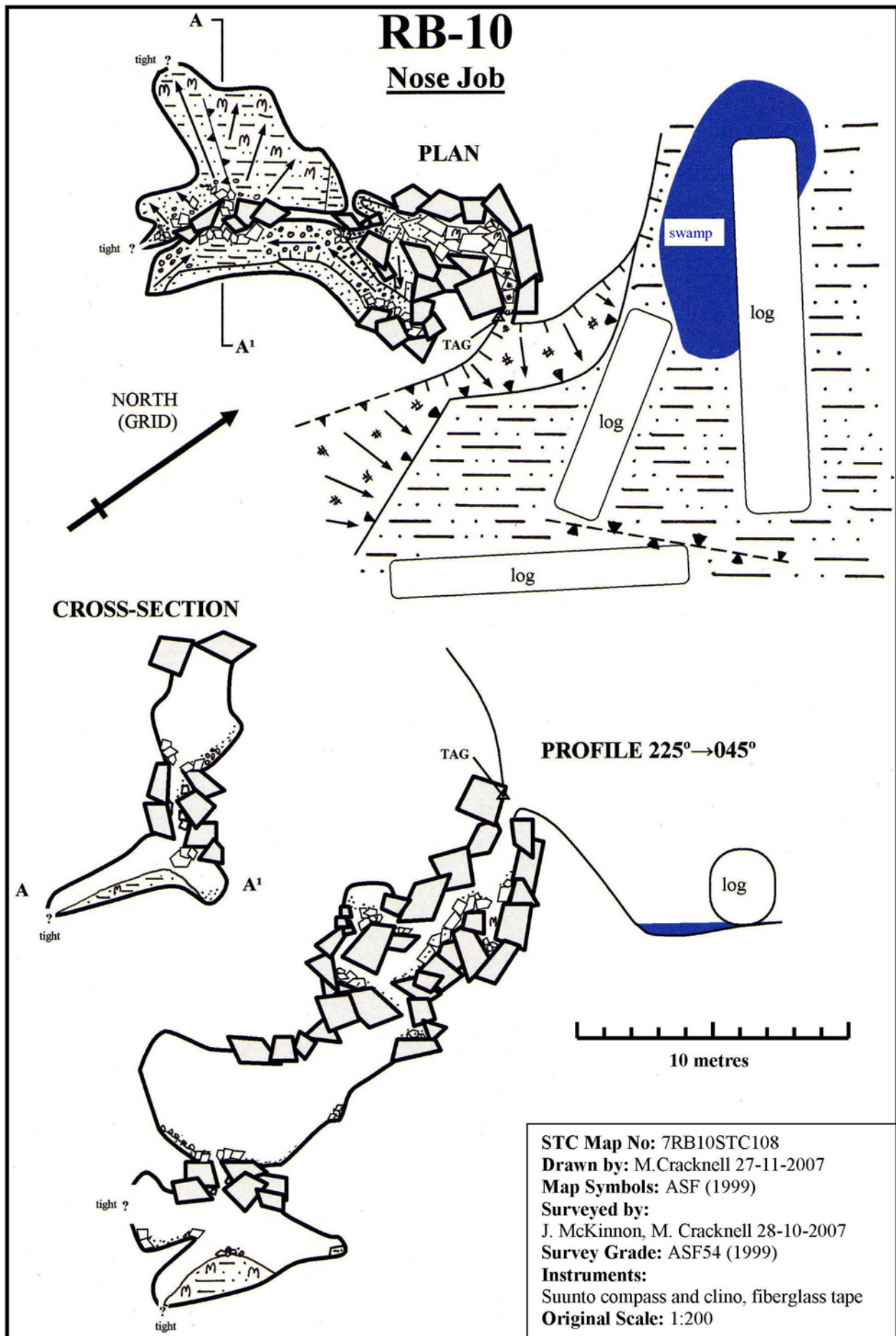
the cave terminates. Janine and I surveyed out to find Ric playing with the GPS, making sure he achieved minimal error. He noted that every time dry and warm northerly winds gusted the entrance of the cave blew out. The cave seemed to be like a blocked nose of a larger system, hence the name “Nose Job”. The entrance has been tagged RB-10.



Janine dwarfed by enormous Dicksonia antarctica in Risbys Basin (not that it takes much to dwarf Janine)

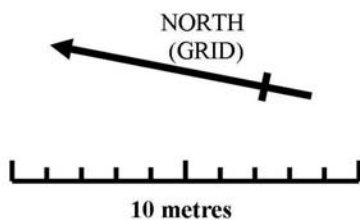
We trudged up the hill back to the car. On the way we encountered the outcrop of rundkarren before hitting the dozer track. In the centre of the track we saw some of the old drill collars and dropped rocks to hear how deep they

were. The rocks took from 5 to 9 seconds depending on the hole. A nearby sinkhole filled with woody debris briefly diverted our attention before arriving back at the car in the late afternoon.

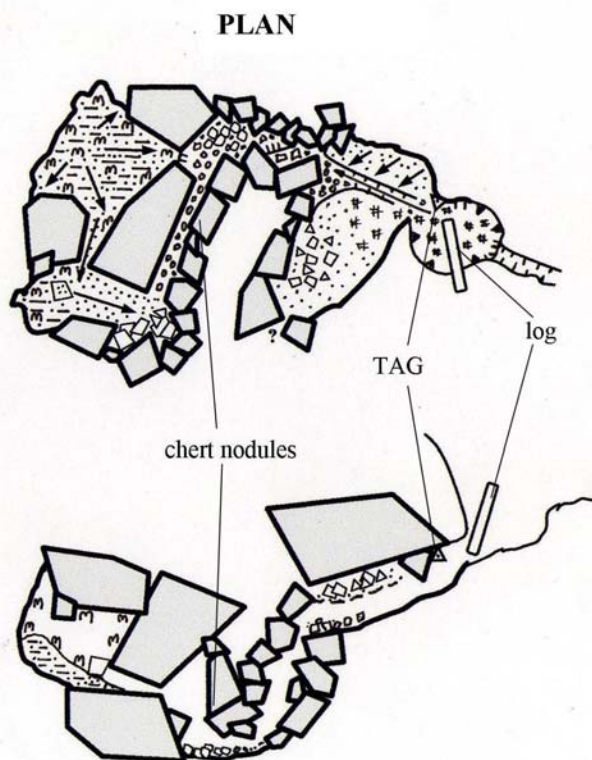


RB-9

Chert Hole



STC Map No: 7RB9STC107
 Drawn by: M. Cracknell 22-11-2007
 Map Symbols: ASF (1999)
 Surveyed by:
 S. Bunton, M. Cracknell 21-10-2007
 Survey Grade: ASF54 (1999)
 Instruments:
 Suunto compass and clino, fiberglass tape
 Original Scale: 1:200



PROFILE 000°→180°

RB-11

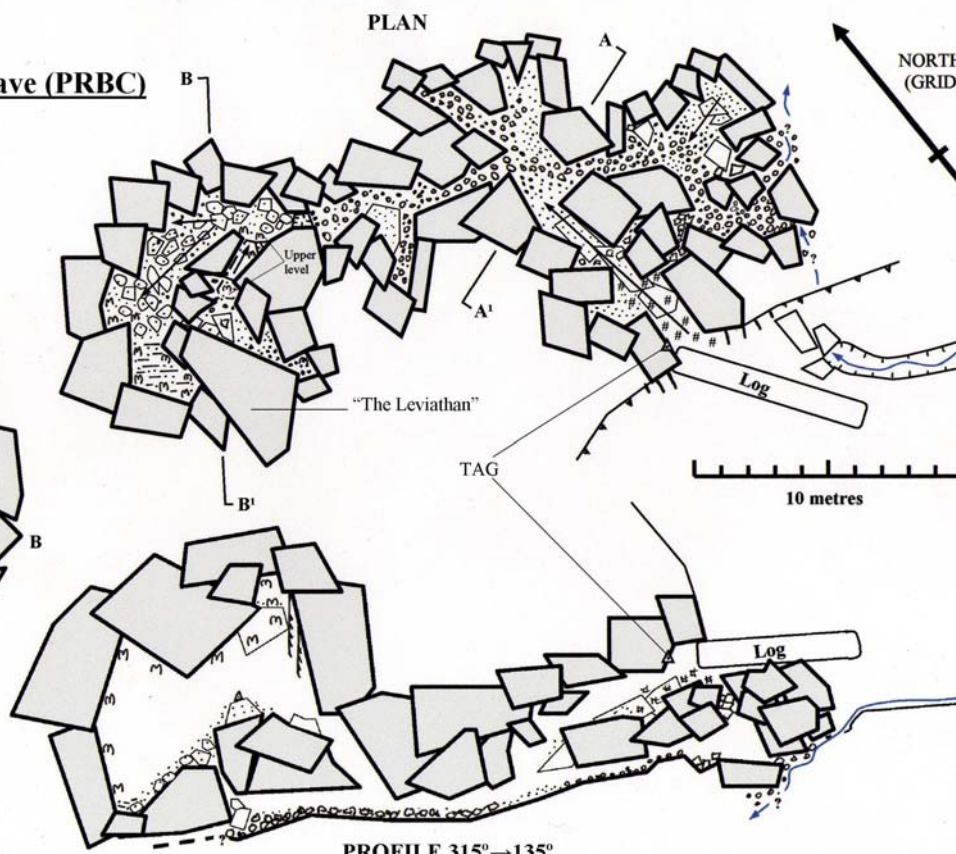
Pseudo Risbys Basin Cave (PRBC)



CROSS-SECTIONS



STC Map No: 7RB11STC109
 Drawn by: M. Cracknell 22-11-2007
 Map Symbols: ASF (1999)
 Surveyed by:
 S. Bunton, M. Cracknell 21-10-2007
 Survey Grade: ASF54 (1999)
 Instruments:
 Suunto compass and clino, fiberglass tape
 Original Scale: 1:200



PROFILE 315°→135°

JF-382 – A Caving War of Attrition (Alan's version)

Alan Jackson

11 November 2007

Party: Stephen Bunton (kind of), Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

Following discussion at the November business meeting this trip had four, possibly five, people keen to attend. Amy settled for a more sedate family day and pulled her pin early on Sunday. Serena failed to show up at the allotted time and was listed MIA. An email surfaced later that partially explained her absence but I think it mainly came down to the fact that Alexander Bell's good work back in 1876 had somehow slipped her mind. In the end it was just Bunty and I heading off to meet Andy at Westerway.

The rendezvous was made and we listened to Andy prattle away for half an hour or so (he can actually out-talk Bunty at times, which is no mean feat; it would be interesting to see if he can compete with Ric and Janine – yeah right!). The weather was fabulous and the walk in delightful. We trogged up and made our way to the squeeze. Bunty didn't fit. His barrel chest wedged like a cork (it even stopped the draft momentarily, which roared back into action when he released the seal). Another one down! Who was next? We waved goodbye to Bunty and headed in (slightly envious that he got to spend the day on the surface in such glorious conditions).



A. McKenzie

Alan negotiates Renegade Squeeze

At the base of the big pitch we left a permanent station (pink tape) on a medium sized boulder and then quickly surveyed around the perimeter of the large chamber to more accurately plot its dimensions for the final draw-up. We then headed down the last pitch and began the survey into the squalid confines of the squeeze wet crawl. It was hideous and made even worse by there only being two people. Thankfully the odd section was quite straight and we even managed a 14 m leg at one point but the average was around 3 metres. We reached the little alcove about 80 m in and had some respite (sugar and nuts). This is where Andy had stopped on our first trip into here. I had gone about 20 metres further before turning around. Up to this alcove the passage is primarily low and a little over shoulder width which makes crawling in the water the only option. After the alcove the passage is more upright and much less wide! About 5 m into this section (just after a ~1.5 m vertical drop in the stream level) one has to move from a higher level to a lower level. The two levels of wider development are separated by narrowing band of bedrock and there is only one spot where it can be negotiated (there are a few dolerite cobbles jammed in this narrowed section – a few less now than there were though!) I slipped through the gap and then negotiated the next 10 m of particularly nasty passage. We then lost our next caver in what was turning out to be a trip of attrition. Andy couldn't get his pelvis through the gap (the problem with being so well endowed). He tried several times and even tried negotiating the passage at the higher level but failed. We did one last long leg, which terminated at the point I'd reached on the first trip – I left three small rocks as a cairn on the ledge beside the knob that is the station (No. 79) on the right hand wall (as looking downstream). Andy had the pink flagging tape, so I couldn't leave a more obvious marker than that. I then dropped a vertical (slightly displaced from station 79) down the 3.5 m drop in the stream level that occurs here (just for maximum depth on the survey!) and then headed down to see if it kept going. After a further 10 or so metres of tight stuff an awkward bend lead to a ~4 m climb where the water took an alternative route. After this climbdown the passage widened and I thought things were looking up. The water reentered via a tiny conduit on the right hand wall and then the passage narrowed down again. I followed it for a little bit further but it was just more of the same tight nasty crap in shit slippery rock. This was next generation territory and I turned around. We regrouped in the alcove and then headed out, stripping the last pitch of rigging and bolt plates.

Back on the surface we were greeted by Bunty. He had just returned only five minutes earlier after an ascent of Wherretts Lookout. He had good things to say about the view but nothing but foul language for the vegetation he had encountered near the summit. He had also popped along the contact to Punishment Pot for a quick look-see. We cleaned up and then headed out.

JF-382 (Andy's version – just for nostalgia)

Andy McKenzie

11 November 2007

Party: Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie, Bunty (kind of)

The weather was warm and the piss taking was at its height as we mooched up the valley. Even Sir Giggles-A-Lot seemed eager to cave... We stopped at Serendipity to get a drink and so that Bunty could reminisce about the time he was last there, in about '84 I think. Commenting that it could have been around March the 17th 1984 bought a smirk to my face, these boys were caving hard the day I popped out into the world 23 years ago!

The entrance to 382 was as dark and gloomy as ever. I waited on the other side of Renegade Squeeze for Alan and Bunty to pull themselves together. Alan came through, next was Buntys turn. In true Stevo fashion there were lots of orgasmic grunts, nays and squeals coming from the silverback as he tried to negotiate the tight section.

"Have a cup of cement and harden the f#\$* up Bunty. Get your arse through there!" said Alan.

Bunty didn't fit.

As we were heading for the worst bit of cave I've been in before I was all keen for a surface day with the giggler. There was plenty to do above and I tried to use the excuse of Bunty being too manly to *not* go down to the highway to hell that is the bottom section of the cave. Alan didn't give in. "Let's get it ticked off Andy..."

So it was on. Leaving Bunty and the photo gear, we set off down the pitches. It didn't take long to gain the top of Battery Point. A new rope was re-rigged down to Vertical Euphoria. Alan went, cursing that the rope was too heavy... next was me... this must be the 5th time down the pitch now... something just didn't add up; there was a weird sinking feeling in my stomach. Maybe it was just because we were going down to the tight n shite series...

Setting off down the pitch, my Stop started making some weird noises, I didn't like it. Suddenly my Stop spun 90 degrees. "What the...?!" I started descending a little too fast and had to pull down hard with my right hand to get control. Stopping to assess the situation I couldn't (and still cant) work out what was happening. The bottom end of my Stop was pointing upwards and the handle was not vertical

to the rope but horizontal. Steadily I set off down thinking I was about to die... weird.

At the bottom we spent as much time as possible surveying the legs around the big room at the bottom of the pitch. We gradually got closer to the 20 metre and dropped down into the bottom. De-tackling ourselves we set off down the crap passage. We felt like two Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles for a while. Alan had bought some skate boarding knee pads for the trip, much to my amusement. Singing "Heros in a half shell, TURTLE POWER!" we moved into the passage. The rock is sharp and often we found ourselves flat out in water trying to read the instruments... Alan was like a pig in shit, happy as Larry. Curse the fiend...

When we gained the little room – our turn around point for the last trip – we sat and ate sweets and nuts. Again, Alan seemed far too happy. I was just pissed off for being alive... a great cave above, but below it was so, so awful! Hopefully we wouldn't find another pitch; imagining dragging tackle and rope through there was a terrible thought...

Pushing on we got a decent leg for the survey, I think it was a little over 2 metres! 25 metres later we found ourselves at the downward squeeze. Alan slipped through and I tried to follow. Since it was tight for Alan I had no chance. I tried pushing; pulling, even lubing myself up, nothing was to be gained here! As Alan pushed another 25 metres of shite, I tried climbing over the top of the rifty squeeze but to no avail. Alan came back, claiming that he had been a little nervous, if anything ever happened in there...

Back out to the pitches. Was it worse than coming in? Yes! Leaving Alan with the bag made me feel good. Last week I had to carry it out! I got up the 55 in no time at all, stopping only once to marvel at the fine corners and waterfalls.

On the way out I had a brief look in the big aven at the top of Union Jack. There is a lead to check out there next week, vadose development heading back in line with the entrance series... next week.

On the surface Bunty welcomed us with open arms, "Oh my darlings, you're alive!" well, maybe not, but he had had a good bash around looking at Punishment Pot and up Wherretts Lookout. What a legend. Back to the Disco, and back home to the beer fridge. Good trip!

JF-382 – Andy's Harem

Andy McKenzie

18 November 2007

Party: Andy and a harem of young nubile chicks! (Serena Benjamin, Sarah Gilbert, Amy Robertson)

[The Editor apologises in advance to all our female readers and any other group that may take offense at this egotistical testosterone dump masquerading as a trip report. Andy certainly has a 'unique' style – Ed.]

Sabrina and Claire (Sarah) didn't take much convincing. They were a given. Amy called last thing Satdi and said she was coming. The plan was to photo Union Jack, survey the Serpentine route and check out the pitch with the females. If there was any time left over I wanted to get the

surface survey to Punishment Pot done. This is a pot that was dug in the eighties, we think it sits right above Vertical Euphoria; entrance into this via PP would give us a sensational exchange trip!

Caving with three chicks; I guess it's a bit like caving with Alan and Gavin, but Alan and Gav aren't as hot as these three beauties! The jokes were held back for all of ten minutes when I first got in Amy's car. I didn't want to offend any of them, knowing only Sabrina thus far. After a few moments I realised that they were Aussies anyway so were probably more balls to the wall with their sex jokes than I was! The harem jokes fell thick and fast ...

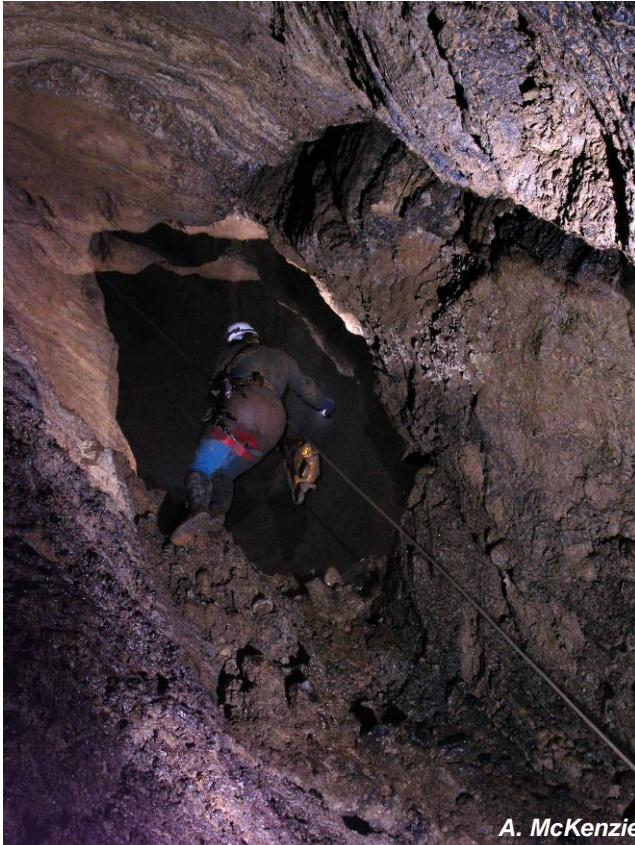
Hungover from a night of drinking in "The DB," I wasn't feeling too well, trying to hold back my puke and other bodily functions so not to barf or shart in Amy's car was

not too easy, and when we pulled up I snuck off into the bushes for a few minutes. *[I won't even try to make sense of the grammar in that one, let alone the subject matter – Ed.]* To make matters worse it was at least 25 degrees and the bush was on fire so there was a bit of smoke kicking about. Ahh well. At least we young lads aren't off our heads on LSD or Pot ...

The walk in was un-eventful; only a few breast and butt jokes were made. *[Jeff always enjoyed laughing at himself ... - Ed.]* We arrived at Serendipity and had a look in the entrance. I decided that it would be a good idea to bottom the cave sometime soon. Knowing so much about the pot and not having actually been in the entrance is a bit weak!

382 was as muddy and un-inviting as ever. Dropping the entrance with Sabrina we waited for a few moments on the other side of Renegade. After sat with my gear on for 5 minutes I thought bollocks to it, I'll drop Sandwich pitch and take some photies of Sabrina coming down. This was when I first noticed the problem with photography in the Florentine. The rock sucks up your light so much! There was no way Union Jack or Vertical Euphoria could get photographed with only a handful of electrics. I would need some Vietnam sized bulbs for this! We persevered and took some snaps anyway. The first couple of entrance pitches are cruisy enough and soon we were waiting for Sabrina to work out the fantastic bit of rigging below the Imperial Thirty pitch.

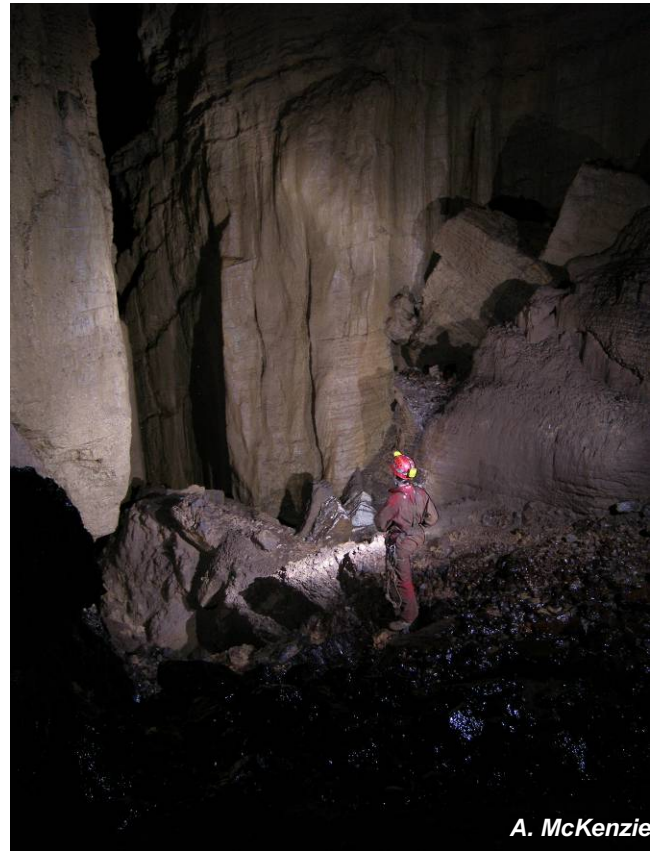
On descent of the pitch into Union Jack, I swung into the aven to check out a lead on the right. A vadose canyon enters the aven here but quickly goes vertical. Man, there must be so many undiscovered entrances to this cave! So much work to do! Amy was model on the pitch and we had her fire her flash into the dark aven whilst we lit her up from below. What a grand sight; Alan's arse is not nice at all to look up at! Wow, three girls in muddy 382 ...



A. McKenzie

Amy illuminates Spent Force pitch

From here we took some shots of the main passage. Again, the flashes were just useless against the dark rock. We tried a few combinations but without much success. A few decent shots were achieved in the big aven of the passage but not really giving any size and feel for the enormous passage. Ah well.



A. McKenzie

Sarah in the showering aven in Union Jack

It was here that Amy and Sabrina decided they wanted to drop Vertical Euphoria. Good, it's worth doing! Claire (Sarah) and I decided we would mooch down slowly and take some shots of the traverse of death, the one where my arse twitched on the first trip, Alan's arse twitches every trip and Janine nearly came a cropper landing on her cowstails on her trip! What would happen this time?! Amy slowly moved onto the abseil, muttering about not liking the sensation of letting go of the ledge... it was now that I casually asked "So, Amy, are you happily married? Is your husband a decent guy or are you looking for a change?" A succinct and quick response was given.

Claire struggled on the Battery Point re-belay and I admitted that we could have rigged it differently to make it easier on the first trip but we thought we were going down a different hole to the one we actually dropped. Still, Claire was doing pretty well considering she hasn't quite been caving a year! What a girl, pity she's married as well ...

Sabrina bombed back up the pitch at lightning speed, carried with the adrenaline of her descent, getting stuck on Alan's knotted rope half way down! I took some shots of the striking witch... "Light off ... FLASH, OK, light on ..." then I realised what she was stood on! The rock of death – a one tonne boulder wedged between nothing and nothing that gives the traverse the name! Jesus, this girl is something else! Good on yer mate!

We sat and I took the piss out of the two gals as we waited for Amy to ascend, we then took her picture and started back up into Union Jack.

“OK, explore the Serpentine route?” I asked.

“Hmmm it’s a nice day outside, think of that warm sunshine ...” Amy responded.

Gutted to be leaving the cave early I consoled myself with the fact that nobody (Alan or Gavaninio) had beasted me for being English and incompetent for the first time ever caving in the Florentine. Ahh well ...

On the way out I took plenty of shots of Sabrina on the pitches. We got a couple of half decent shots but not as many as I had hoped. Exiting the cave we sat in the sun waiting for Amy and Claire. We didn’t even get the surface survey done, but we had a fun day out. Washing in the river was far better than ever before; three naked women washing mud from each others backs with me frolicking in the waterfall ... Well not quite, but they were all fit for a change. On the way out we spotted the plumes of smoke rising in the western valleys. Amy gave an explanation of why we had smelt the smoke in the north south running valleys, but I can’t remember why. A hot chick with brains as well. Champion.

Serena models on the take-off ledge for Vertical Euphoria —→



JF-381 and a spot of surface surveying

Alan Jackson

2 December 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson

First stop was a much needed drink at the Serendipity stream. It was already warm and heading for warmer. From JF-382 we surveyed the two legs to a station outside JF-381. The intention was to survey this cave but with temperatures only likely to go up we thought we’d stay on the surface at first and save the cool confines of a cave for later in the day.

We headed east, up the valley, placing pink tapes as survey stations with the idea of surveying back. We soon stumbled across the impressive entrances of JF-373 Punishment Pot and JF-374. We then crossed the Serendipity stream where it traverses the contact without sinking. Finding ourselves in a broad dry valley I assumed that this must have been a side valley and crossed it while Serena headed up it for a look. I promptly found JF-348 Benson Pot and realised that it was the main valley I’d crossed. Serena soon returned saying she’d found JF-296 and realised where she was too. We decided to set a survey route from Benson Pot around the Benson and Hedges Series to JF-380 and then down to JF-296. The B&H Series had been surveyed before but prior to any cave tagging so there are no relocatable survey stations, rendering the survey useless other than to give an indication where the contact is in this area.

This is an impressive area of karst, with probably the highest density of entrances anywhere in the JF (that I’ve seen anyway). I didn’t have any cave tagging notes on me so we weren’t sure just how many tags we were looking for or exactly where to look for them in relation to the

holes. In the end we located and surveyed in JF-296, 380, 378, 358, 357, 356, 355, 354, 353, 352, 351, 350, 349 and 348. After checking the area map from SS207 it appears we were only unable to find the tags for JF-377 and 379.

Back at 381 (after tying in 373 and 374 on the survey back) we headed for the inviting coolness of this cave. Half a dozen or so legs and some dodgy rigging later the task was complete. There was a draft at the deepest point of the cave (but no prospect of a dig) but there was also a much more inviting draft in a small window at the back of the little chamber/aven where the water drips in (accessed by climbing up the 2.5 m ledge where the eroding formation is). JF-382 passage lies directly beneath this point and connecting the two would add around 15 m to 382’s depth.

With the sun still high in the sky and the temperature not totally unbearable we thought we might try to find JF-392 Warhol et al. We wandered down for another drink at Serendipity and then attempted to follow the track from the Frost Pot junction. We found two tapes and then a blank area. We spread out and I found JF-391 Gelignite Pot by heading right (down the valley) a bit. Pink tapes were then pretty easily followed a further 100 m or so until another blank spot. Within 30 m of the last tape I located JF-394 and then not far down into the large gully we found a large and impressive entrance, not dissimilar to JF-395. We couldn’t find a tag but from descriptions and location I’d say it was almost certainly Warhol. We didn’t locate JF-393, which is also in the area. Next we headed slightly down the gully (hoping to relocate JF-395, but failing) and then cut back over the ridge back into the Serendipity valley. There were some great exposed limestone terraces but not much in the way of caves. I strung a pink tape over one small horizontal entrance that seemed to be expelling cool air. Once we got back onto the Serendipity track we headed home.

Other Exciting Stuff

Caving Tips for the Height Challenged

Janine McKinnon



Over the last decade I've been noticing an ever increasing number of females joining the club. At times, they outnumber males as prospective members. With the odd exception, they are all at quite a disadvantage to their male companions underground due to stature issues. I have been plagued by this malady all my caving life and for many years was usually the member of the trip with the worst case of the condition. Frequently the only person with it at all. Unless Chris Davies was on the trip. At 195 cm, he instantly ensured everyone else developed the condition temporarily, and my case became acute, if not critical.

Anyway, through trial and error (lots of the error bit) I have discovered many techniques, and learnt lessons, to help cope with the difficulties this malady presents on caving trips.

I thought I'd just take a minute to pass on a few tips in the hope that they may save some of our newer, more diminutive members, embarrassing and frustrating times underground:

1. When a 180 cm caver tells your 160 cm self the climb is really easy if you use the bombproof hand holds he did (pointing authoritatively to them), don't even try to reach. This wastes precious time you could be using trying to work out how you are going to get up (or down) the climb in a way that is actually going to work. Trust me, no amount of stretching, even on tippy toes, is going to bridge that 20 cm gap.
2. When said 180 cm caver thinks that, by yelling louder and more aggressively, you will be able to make that 20 cm stretch don't pay any attention. Keep working on your own method.
3. If you fail to enact points 1 & 2 you will now be berated (or worse, ridiculed) for taking too long to get up (or down) the climb. Just remember, I told you so!
4. Artificial rigging points (bolts and P-hangers) have invariably been placed by 180 cm cavers and are thus not within easy and safe reach of you. Practice skills like

"How to jump in the air and clip a karabiner through a p-hanger at the same time".

5. The same rule applies to most natural anchors. God is obviously 6 ft plus tall, or he at least designed caves assuming cavers would be. So much for omniscience. Or maybe he (must be "he" to be so inconsiderate) just doesn't want short people to cave.

6. Bridging and Chimneying.

If a gap is too wide for Mr/s 180 cm to straddle easily they will invariably throw a rope down. Thus the only techniques generally taught for such manoeuvres are;

- a. Feet on either wall with a 40 degree angle between legs, or
- b. Feet flat against one wall and length of back against the other.

For the height-challenged these techniques frequently don't work but the good news is these situations offer a real opportunity for self expression.

A couple of tricks I have found work well are:

- a. Learn to balance whilst doing the splits so you can get that leg/crotch angle to 140 or even 150 degrees. You'll be surprised how big a gap you can straddle when you dislocate your hips.
- b. Strengthen your shoulder, and particularly neck, muscles as you will be using them frequently when you bridge gaps with almost your full body length.

I haven't yet quite reached the level of expertise to use the top of my head but I'm working on it.

These skills also apply to point 4. Only you will have to add doing it whilst holding some tapes, karabiners and rope to rig from the p-hanger/eye bolt that is over the drop and out of reach. You have really reached a high level of skill when you can apply the technique to also put the hanger and nuts onto a bolt before rigging the pitch.

If your caving philosophy includes woosy ideas like "safety conscious" guidelines I suppose some sort of safety line could be used as you bridge out over the pitch to rig.

Note: Hands on one wall, feet on the other is a technique I have seen used, and whilst it CAN be effective, used in the right circumstances, it lacks grace and style and can often leave the user hanging about at a bit of a loss as to how to finish. If, however, the user is attempting to impress another member of the group the benefits of this technique come into their own. Just make sure the person who has to grab you in various sensitive body parts to haul you to safety is the one you are interested in.

7. Strengthen your knees and ankles. You will be doing a lot of jumping down things. How to get back up is a whole other article.

8. When all else fails and the hand hold/other side of the gap is still out of reach just launch yourself at it and make a wild, desperate grab. That usually works for me. Although I do carry the scars from the odd failure.

Good Luck.

Cavex 2007

Alan Jackson

This year's exercise was quite similar to the one conducted in 2000 – casualty in back end of Mystery Creek Cave needs hauling out. This time the casualty was a few bags full of rocks instead of a real live copper (I imagine the casualty IQ was probably pretty similar though ...). It was a good turn out, with ten STCers, about eight SES and seven Tas Police. We also had two NSW Cave Rescue Squad members in attendance, Joe Sydney and Peter Brady. They were there to have a general look see at what we do and also to test (show off) some cave communication systems.



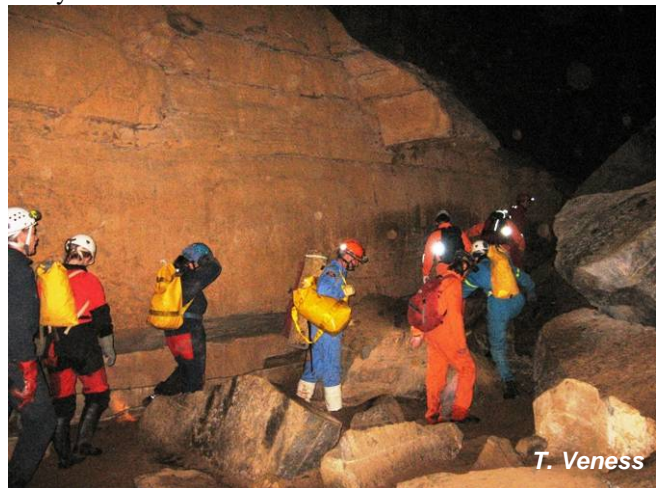
S. Bunton

Gearing up at the carpark – the very tight buns belong to Tony Veness (he must work out)

The exercise was the usual relaxed social event with some cave rescue thrown in for good measure. Ric was in fine form before we'd even started with his antics surrounding his quiver of Subarus in the car park. The casualty was hauled from down in the Labrynth area of the cave. This proved to be difficult given the choice of natural anchors. Strong anchors abounded but they weren't ideally placed. Nothing a few well placed bolts wouldn't have fixed but that ethical line can only be crossed in the event of a real emergency. Once this obstacle was negotiated the casualty was dragged to the various climbs in the rockfall. Another haul was set up and we terminated the exercise once this and a little more horizontal passage had been negotiated.

In the mean time the comms team were playing around. Base was set up under a tarp out in Blainey's Quarry. A continuous cable was run out between the base and the back end of the cave (some 900+ m?) and we tested both the standard SES field telephone and also some Michie phone setups that NSWCRS had brought with them. These both worked fine. We also tested the Nicola 'thru the rock' cave radio, which consists of two independent units which transmit signal to one another via an electric field (very

low frequency) through the bedrock. Each unit consists of a small box full of electronics (including batteries and speaker/microphone) and ~90 m of antenna! The antennae sound onerous but were actually quite simple to pack, transport and lay out. One unit was set up along the floor of Blainey's Quarry while the second unit was set up in the last 100 m of passage at the Back End of Mystery Creek Cave. Low and behold if it didn't bloody work! Quite impressive stuff. Some calculations off the survey data indicated that a straight line distance of just over 400 m separated the two units. Apparently the wet and good quality rock conditions at both ends (and in between) greatly increases the range of the system. We had clear communications with both units set to their lowest transmitting power settings. Apparently submarines use similar very low frequency systems but we were unable to detect any 'up periscope' interference. One can see great scope for the use of these units to compliment existing comms systems in Tasmanian cave rescues. For example, if a rescue was required from somewhere like Frownland in Growling Swallet, it's going to be much easier to race one of these units in and place another vertically above it on the surface than it would to run some 3 km of wire in! One single unit weighs less than half a kilo and is far from bulky.



T. Veness

A long line of cavers make their way into the cave

NSWCRS purchased three units from France recently for around \$1200 each. The design plans are freely available (we have them already!) and a few of the nerds in the club are currently looking at how easy it will be and how much it will cost to put some units together. It would be a wise decision, in my opinion, to have this system available locally.

Thanks very much to Damian, Tas Police, SES, NSWCRS and of course STC for attending the exercise. While there were a few slow moments, I think it was a genuinely rewarding exercise.

Tasmania's Longest Pitches

Ric Tunney & Janine McKinnon

A listing of Tasmania's longest and deepest caves has been maintained for many years, but no list of big pitches.

However, we feel that such a list is both interesting in its own right and may encourage cavers to actually cave.

Our first decision was how long a pitch need be to be included on the list. We settled on 40 m as we thought this would give a listing of around 30 pitches. We were very wrong. We have isolated 61 pitches of 40 m or longer. This

has made the list a bit cumbersome, but the work has been done, so we may as well keep the list this long.

As far as I can determine, the longest pitch on the Mainland is 59 m in C277, Cape Range, WA. This is the same length as Halfway Hole, number 20 on our list.

We hope that many new pitches will be discovered and that we will have to update this list regularly. Recent

discoveries in JF-382 have found a pitch about 55 m (included on this list) and another undescended shaft which should make it onto the list, too.

We expect we have missed some pitches and we will welcome being told. [*The list of pitches appears below in conjunction with the "Pitch Bagger's" list. – Ed.*]

Pitch Bagging Makes its Debut

Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney

Those of you who have been involved in bushwalking in Tasmania, particularly with the Hobart Walking Club, will probably be aware of their (unofficial) "Peak Baggers" point system.

For the uninitiated, "Peak Baggers" do walks to (often obscure, scrub covered and very hard to get to) peaks purely to "bag" their points. A dedicated "Peak Bagger" knows PRECISELY how many points they have and competition between some is quite lively. Others are VERY secretive about how many points they have, hinting occasionally that they MAY be close to the total.

This practice originated with a "joke" article in the "Tasmanian Tramp" but somehow morphed, over a few years, into a serious (VERY serious to some) endeavour.

We feel the time is well overdue for the joys (and manias) of this pointless (yes, pun intended) obsession to have its caving equivalent. So here is the caving version that we have devised.

TASMANIAN PITCH BAGGERS POINTS GUIDE:

Selection Criteria:

- A pitch has to be at least 40 m in height to be included.
- Pitch length, difficulty of access (including both getting to, and within the cave), the technical difficulty of rigging and actually doing the pitch, and outstanding beauty are all factored into the points allocated to a particular pitch. Greatest weighing,

however, has been placed on length and difficulty of access.

- A certain basic level of fitness and caving ability is assumed. Passing a standard re-belay is not considered technically difficult and walking for an hour or so uphill is not considered difficult access. Nor is doing a bit of caving with a few shorter pitches to get to the target pitch.

Pitch Bagging Rules:

1. A pitch must be fully descended and ASCENDED on the same trip.
2. Revisiting the pitch is worth the same number of points, again. But a FULL 10 years by calendar date must elapse before the revisit counts.

Please feel free to argue as much as you like about the rules and how we've allocated the points. Lots of heated discussion is a major part of Pitch Bagging. After all, there are POINTS involved. But it's our scheme and that's the way it stays - unless you have a VERY persuasive argument.

Note that the pitch in Yodellers Pot only gets 'difficulty of access' points for the first group that digs it out (since it was buried a couple of years ago in that landslide). Once dug out it loses three points because it won't be difficult to get to any more!

As new pitches are discovered they will be added to the list.

Have fun.

Rank	Cave Name	Cave Number	Pitch Length	Pitch Number	Pitch Name	Data Source	Total
1	Niggly Cave	JF-237	191	P7a	Black Supergiant	1993 Jeff Butt survey	11
2	Tachycardia	JF-270	170		Bermuda Triangle	2006 Alan Jackson survey	11
3	Keller Cellar	MA-2	120	P1-2		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	11
4	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	118	Heartbeat P4	Heartbeat	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	12
5	Splash Pot	JF-10	113		Harrow the Marrow	Speleo Spiel 319	7
6	Mini Martin	IB-8	110	P1		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	7
7	Niggly Cave	JF-237	103	P7b	Xenophobia	1990 Survey	9
8	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	100	Priority Paid P9	Priority Paid	Vertical section 2002	12
9	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	93		Psycho Killer	Vertical section 2002	12
10	Big Tree Pot	IB-9	90	P6		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	7
11	Niggly Cave	JF-237	85	P3b	Antidenomination	1990 Survey	6
12	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	85	Priority Paid P10		Vertical section 2002	12
13	The Chairman	JF-99	84	P1		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	5
14	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	76	Dessicator P11		Vertical section 2002	11

15	Tassy Pot	JF-223	71	P4		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	6
16	Lost Pot	JF-338	70	P3	G-Force	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	5
17	Arrakis	MW-1	68	P1	Jadbar Pitch	1986 survey	6
18	Dwarrowdelf	JF-14	67	P6		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	6
19	Dribblespit Swallet	JF-13	66	P1		1988 survey	3
20	Halfway Hole	IB-136	59	P2	Piquant	1993 survey	3
21	Victory 75	JF-110	57.5	P3		1976 survey	2
22	Giotto Pot	IB-104	57.5	P1		1985 survey	2
23	Scratch Pot	JF-250	56			survey	3
24		JF-382	55		Vertical Euphoria	survey data	3
25	Devils Anastomosis	MC-131	55	P2			2
26	Col-In-Cavern	MA-1	55	P1		Speleo Spiel 334	6
27	Dwarrowdelf	JF-14	55	P3		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	2
28	Florentine Pot	JF-371	55	P3		1985 survey	3
29	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	54		Apocalypse	Vertical section 2002	8
30	Armadillo Pot	JF-368	53	P1		2007 Alan Jackson survey	2
31	Comet Pot	IB-98	52		Prayers on Fire	survey	3
32	Midnight Hole	IB-11	49	P6		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	2
33	Icecube	JF-345	49	P6	Fabulous Spangley Pitch	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	4
34	Skyhook Pot	IB-134	47	P4		1984 survey	2
35	Milkrun	IB-38	47	P6		1985 survey	2
36	Un-named	MA-19	46	P1		Speleo Spiel 334	5
37	Judds Cavern	C-17	46	P1	Propylaeum Entrance		4
38	Tachycardia	JF-270	45		Art Deco		4
39	Deep Thought	MA-10	45	P2		Speleo Spiel 334	5
40	Cyclops Pot	IB-57	45	P3		1985 survey	2
41	Cyclops Pot	IB-57	44	P1		1985 survey	1
42	Icecube	JF-345	44	P9	Killing Joke	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	4
43	Serendipity	JF-344	44	P5	Phobos Pitch	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	4
44	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	43	Dessicator P6	Roaring Forty	Vertical section 2002	6
45	Halfway Hole	IB-136	44	P6	Easy Exit	1993 survey	3
46	Florentine Pot	JF-371	43	P1		1985 survey	1
47	Holocaust	IB-45	42.3	P1		1985 survey	1
48	Khazad Dum	JF-4	42	P13		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	3
49	Tassy Pot	JF-223	42	P1		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1
50	Garage Door	IB-183	41.7	P3		Survey	3
51	Milkrun	IB-38	41	P1	Pint Bottle	1985 survey	1
52	Cauldron Pot	JF-2	41	P1		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	2
53	Shooting Star	MC-300	41	P1		Speleo Spiel 333	1
54	Hobbit Hole	IB-15	40.2	P1	Hydrous Hobbit Pitch	1983 survey	1
55	Three Falls Cave	JF-225	40	P5		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	2
56	Zulu Pot	JF-215	40	P1		Southern Caver May 1975	1
57	Lost Pot	JF-338	40		Iron Anniversary	Estimated. Sketch Survey	3
58	Thun Junction	IB-20	40	P2	Thun Pitch	1991 survey	2
59	Yodellers Pot	IB-25	40	P3		1987 survey	5
60	Dismal Hill Pot	IB-128	40	P1		1987 memory sketch	1
61	Old Ditch Road	IB-131	40	P4		1987 survey	1

A Visit to Southern Tasmania in 1959

Trevor Shaw

Introduction – Greg Middleton

In April 2005 I went to interview some-time TCC member Rien de Vries at his home. My primary purpose was to obtain his permission to publish an article on cave surveying he had written in 1965 but which had never been published. He readily gave permission and the article appeared in print for the first time in *Southern Caver*, No. 60, pp. 7-10 in April 2005. While there I asked him if he had any other unpublished cave-related material that STC might publish. He didn't think he had anything but he was able to unearth a small folder which contained a few notes and partial cave surveys which he allowed me to study. While reading through the papers I came across a scrap of paper bearing part of a survey-sketch that evidently related to Newdegate Cave at Hastings (Fig. 1). It bore a note saying it was done by Lt. Cdr. Trevor Shaw and the date 7/2/59. I was aware this was a reference to British caver Dr Trevor Shaw but I had forgotten he had visited Newdegate Cave in 1959. (Trevor is now an internationally renowned speleo-historian and author of *History of Cave Science, to 1900* which I had arranged for the Sydney Speleological Society to publish in 1992.) I copied the sketch and sent it to Trevor in the UK in August 2006, asking him did he recognise it and could he tell me any story that might be associated with it. In response Trevor acknowledged authorship and sent a copy of an extract from his 1959 diary, recording his visit to Hobart, meetings with Rien de Vries and others – and caving trips. The relevant extract from the diary – and the sketch – are reproduced below, with some modern annotations.

The visit was mentioned as having occurred in the *Tasmanian Caverneering Club Circular* of 11 February 1959. It was noted that Lt. Cdr. Shaw had been in correspondence with the Club for some years, but this was his first visit. The visit was also recorded in TCC's annual report for 1958-59 (*Southern Caver*, 61: 55).

Friday, 6 February 1959 (A£1.0.0 = 16/- sterling)

The ship entered Hobart at 1700 today after mounting a flypast over the city during the afternoon. Besides letters from home, I received one from Douglas Turner, the President of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Almost as soon as the gangways were in place he came aboard, with Frank Brown and Rien de Vries, the Secretary. They stayed to dinner and, besides just talking caves, we made arrangements for the week-end.

Afterwards they took me ashore and we drove up to the top of Mount Wellington, the hill overlooking Hobart and said to be 4000 feet high. The peak was cloud-free and the view was very wide, though as it was dark, the lights only gave little impression of height. On coming down again, we called on David Elliott, another member of the club, who is also a good photographer who has won a number of awards in the NSS photo salons. There we went on talking and drank home-made apricot wine.

Saturday, 7 February

Doug Turner came to collect me at the ship just before 8 this morning and I went in his car, together with rucksak, sleeping bag and blanket and a kitbag of caving gear.

We called elsewhere in Hobart for Dick Dowden, a Sydney M.Sc. working now for Ph.D here, and Eleanor

Widdicombe, his fiancée and a physiotherapist at the hospital. Then out by road to Hastings and the Hastings tourist caves – mainly Newdegate Cave – which are 68 miles south from Hobart. We stopped near Geeveston for mid-morning tea with a former Caverneer. The route was more or less due south, through Huonville and the orchard area to the edge of the Tasmanian rain forest or bush.

We stopped at the Hut, which the Caverneers have been given by the Forestry Commission, a sturdy little two-roomed wooden hut, lined and with a brick fireplace (Photos 1 & 2).



Photos 1 & 2. Forestry hut near Hastings used by Tasmanian Caverneering Club – 7 Feb. 1959

Nearby is the "Chalet" where Mr & Mrs Skinner, the cave 'operators', live. All six Tasmanian tourist caves are run by the Tourist Board [Bureau] and the 'operators' are paid a salary by the Board. The Skinners are caverneers and they also serve meals and sell chocolate, etc. Quite close to the house is an open air concrete swimming pool fed by a thermal spring and its temperature is round about 87°F - hotter at one end. The water bubbles up unevenly all over the bottom through mud and an overlayer of sand, tipped in specially. There are changing rooms, and the pool is attractively surrounded by trees and the Tasmanian tree-fern.

After lunch of stew in the hut we changed into caving things and set off for another mile or so down the road by car, to the entrance of Newdegate Cave. Part of this is open to the public and is lit by electricity from a small diesel

generator. Most electric power on the island is from hydro sources and even the hut is fitted with electric light (a 240v 200w bulb) and power. The tourist fees, fixed by the Tourist Board, are 6/- for every adult and 3/- per child, with a minimum of 12/- for every opening of the cave.

When we went in we followed the guide, Alan, so that I could see the usual tourist features pointed out – the Angel, the Cathedral Lamp, the Baby Elephant, Snowwhite, the shepherd and his sheep, etc, etc. The cave is though, very fine from the show point of view – better I think than any open to the public in England. There is a lot of massive formation, mostly yellowish, and some tall stalagmites and columns. Some of these are smooth-sided and many have the common alternating terraces and draperies. There is much yellowish earth fill which has nowhere been searched for remains, but I understand that very little has been found in Tasmanian cave-earth. Perhaps it is for lack of searching. Straws in this cave are very fine; I saw many extremely long ones, and the longest measured one (14 ft) may even exceed that. I do not remember seeing or hearing of one as long elsewhere, and the Caverneers themselves believe it to be a record. A number of stalactites were not far removed from straws, being long and cylindrical but thick-walled and with a diameter of up to half an inch or more.

The helictites were very fine; both in the show cave and beyond. They seemed to be of two classes: one, where the branches were horizontal (with perhaps a vertical continuation afterwards), had arms of about normal straw thickness which remained fairly constant. The other sort looked more like roots, being usually thicker, of variable thickness, and having no preferred direction or attitude.

The cave has been surveyed by the Caverneers and they say the furthest point is approximately 2,000 ft from the entrance. One of the chambers must be at least 100¹ feet high. The air temperature of the cave is said to be 50°F, with practically no variation. A max. and min. thermometer left down for ten years has recorded a variation of no more than ½°.

Beyond the tourist section a tunnel excavated for many feet by the Caverneers leads to the Binnie Cave, a system named after Admiral Binnie, a governor, who visited it shortly after discovery. There are a few crawlways, but nowhere did I see anything that could be called tight. The Pop-holes, elsewhere in the cave, are said to be fairly uncomfortable. Beyond the Binnie Cave a scramble downwards of 15 feet or so and then a pitch of about 25 ft. lead to a lower passage which eventually runs back beneath the main tourist cave and connects with it in a number of places. It is not often possible to pass right along it like that for it usually carries a stream which sumps for perhaps 15 feet at a low crawl. It is evidently an overflow passage only for now, and I gather once every few years the sump is dry. It cannot have been so for very long for I found some white shrimps an inch or so long lying just alive on the wet sand. The sump was littered with electric light bulbs which had floated downstream from the show cave, and there was much broken glass elsewhere in the system from the same cave. At one point in the stream passage is a slippery sided inclined wall, where the water level was lower than ever before. Eleanor

went down and found that a pool some 12 ft by seven could be seen, but she could not make out whether any of the walls overhung and the bottom was invisible in places. I therefore passed her, also as a life line, and swam about a bit, sounding, looking and estimating. The deepest part was near the far wall where I could not touch bottom at 6 ft when I held my breath and bobbed under the surface, fully extended. It is a little British contribution and I hope kept our reputation up, even if only for madness. (see sketch of 'The Well' – Fig. 1.)

Comment added pers. comm., September 2006: You may wonder why 'bobbing under the surface, fully extended' should be a contribution to anything, except perhaps indicating that the water was about 6 ft deep. As I remember, the parallel-sided steeply inclined rift with water at the bottom had an invisible counterpart very close to and parallel to it. It was into this second rift that my head bobbed up again, after I had manoeuvred sideways under water. There was no apparent way on either up or sideways, indeed, I think it closed only a few feet above my head. I did not climb up; there was nothing to climb onto and probably nothing to hold. I just bobbed back again. There was absolutely nothing of use for exploration. The existence of a parallel solution rift in this presumably phreatic area was the only fact gained.

The T.C.C. people have an unofficial motto – “You don’t have to be mad, but it helps”. The water, they said, was at 39°F but I suspect it was at least as high as 45°. It was by no means warm though and I was glad to get out of the cave again.

There are no bats – they are not found in caves here, though there are several species in the island – but there is a considerable fauna. Wetas are common, long-legged cavernicolous pigmented animals, not unlike harvestmen and with very long feelers are abundant in the dark zone. They are said to be found also under logs, etc on the surface. The shrimps I have already mentioned.

The cave was discovered, according to the guide, in 1917 or 1919 and opened to the public in 1939.

I forgot to mention a crystal-floored pool in the tourist section, not unlike the Crystal Forest in Reeds Cave in Devon, but inferior and with no second-stage crystals visible.

No post cards or brochures were available.

Once back at the hut I went straight to the thermal pool, slipped into swimming trunks and warmed up at 87°. There was a slight smell of sulphur but no unpleasant taste or eye effects. Being not salt it was easy to remain sitting on the bottom. It was glorious to kneel there, out of the cold air, and look up at the sky, trees and tree-ferns.

Rien drove out tonight, with Dennis, a good(?) caver (30?) and a youngster who had just joined. The seven of us had supper at the hut and then went to the Skinners for a party – an informal evening.

We slept on the floor of the hut and I was very comfortable, having no trouble with the mosquitoes which are often bothersome.

Marjorie Sweeting was in Tasmania for the recent Australian Speleological Federation meeting and left her regards for me.

¹ The manuscript appears to say “1000” feet, but this is clearly not intended.

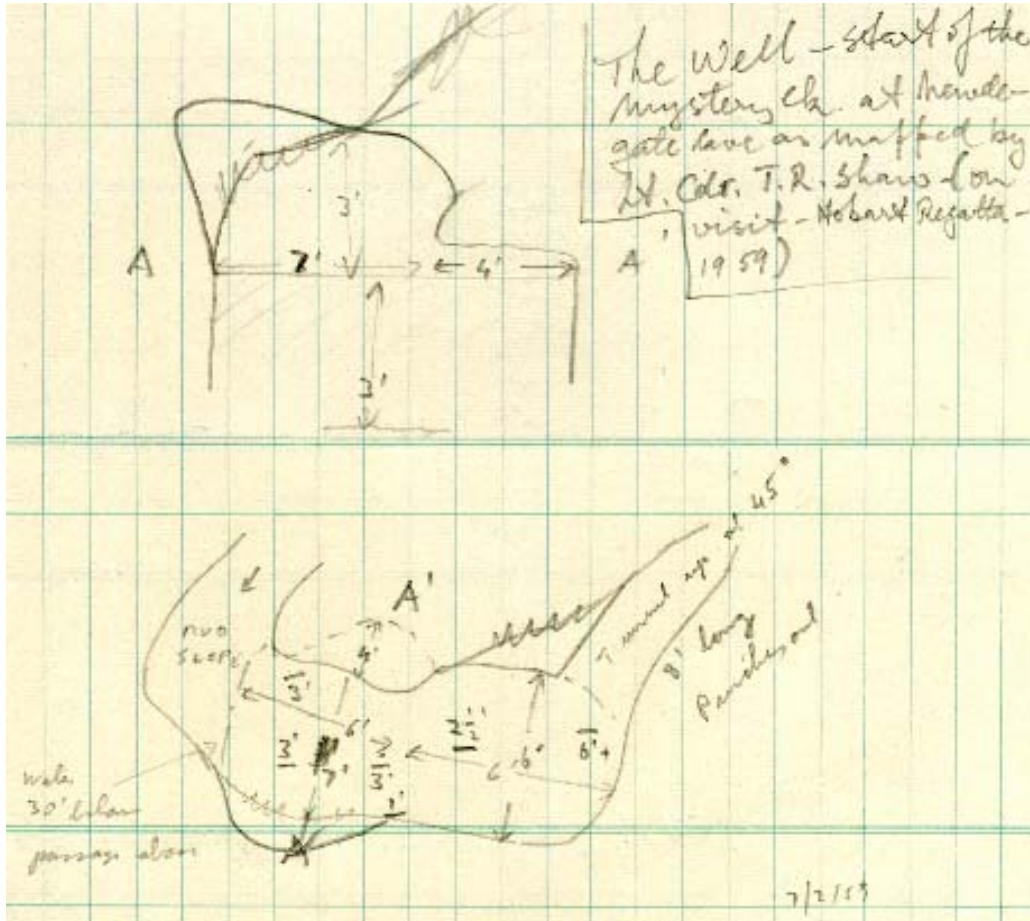


Fig. 1. Trevor Shaw's 1959 sketch of 'The Well', Newdegate Cave.

Sunday, 8 February

We were up in the Caverneers' Hut about 0900 and they gave me a lamb chop and egg for breakfast. Soon afterwards Dave Elliott arrived by car with Fay, said to be one of the Club's good female cavers, and Tony Rendall who was paying us a visit from the Australian Broadcasting Company [Commission], complete with tape recorder which he insisted on my talking into.

During the morning we paid a 'clean-clothes' visit to the tourist part of Newdegate Cave for Tony's benefit and then packed all gear and drove some 8 miles off to the approach to Ida Bay Entrance Cave². The cars were left by a group of quarrymen's huts which we were allowed to use for brewing tea, etc. A narrow gauge (2 ft) quarry railway runs for four miles up the hill to a quarry some 500 ft higher, where limestone (unnecessarily pure at 98%) is quarried for carbide manufacture. A special train had been arranged for us, of one truck and a small diesel locomotive and we chugged up to the quarry at present being worked. The next stage of the approach was along the overgrown route of a former extension of the line when an earlier quarry was being worked. This went on for three quarters of a mile or so, but from the quarry we had to walk on an even more overgrown path and finally through the bush itself, through cutting grass and over slippery fallen timber. In the older of the quarries we came across a blue-tongued lizard some 15 inches long. This is the largest of the Tasmanian lizards and this particular specimen was the fattest the party had seen.

² More commonly known today as Mystery Creek Cave.

The stream sinking in the Ida Bay Entrance Cave rises again in Exit Cave, about a mile away. The through route cannot be explored but the Exit Cave has been explored despite the thick bush of the approach.

The mouth of Entrance Cave is a magnificent arch in a cliff among the trees and tree-ferns. I did not estimate its size at the time but it must be about 30 feet square. The stream flows in over pebbles and popples and past fallen boulders. Flood debris shows the considerable heights to which it does rise. After some hundred yards the stream sinks into a lower passage on the left, accessible for

most of its length and the main gallery becomes only a flood passage or a fossil series. We followed the stream passage for much of its length, either at water level or near the top; for in form the passage was like a typical T-shaped [Co.] Clare [Ireland] passage, meandering and with close scalloping on the walls. The 'T' of the roof was generally large enough to allow crawling and the canyon narrow enough to allow easy climbing. My new Vibram soles gripped very well, both here on the bare wet rock and elsewhere in the cave on mud. There are several connecting passages between the streamway and the large fossil passage, and we returned to the upper level by one of these about half way along the cave. There are a number of tributary passages which we did not visit today. The stream is lost downstream at a squeeze, I am told, so a passable sump is most unlikely. In one part of the upper passage are several levels of magnificent random anastomosis channels. The majority of them are about an inch deep, and wandering through them, perhaps twice the size, are the deeper channels eventually dissolved as the flow becomes canalised in the tubes which happened to enlarge first. It is the most perfect text-book example of this stage I have ever seen, either published or in caves

The most memorable thing about the cave for me was the presence of glowworms. They were on the roof of the main passage in large numbers, within a hundred yards or so of the entrance and many were also on the walls, extending as low as the floor in some places. There were also some on the flat roof of the stream passage, where they will be swept away at the next flood. Looking at those on the roof, in otherwise complete darkness, really was hardly distinguishable from looking at stars, if at all. The bluish luminous light seems to be outside the body of the animal, for when excited by my headlamp they would

crawl away, leaving a flattened transparent tube behind them, rather like toothpaste coming out of a tube, and the luminescence would remain with the tube and very slowly fade away. There was no sudden extinction in response to a strong light. The creatures were about 7/8 in. long.

We left the cave in rain, and at one stage it turned to hail, so our hitherto comparatively dry cave clothes were drenched. The way down the rail track was at least hair raising for we crowded onto a single small flat-topped wagon and started it rolling down the hill. The friction of the wheel flanges slowed it down somewhat, especially on the bends, but at times it was frighteningly fast as it lurched from side to side. We left about half past eight and I returned on board before eleven, to hang my cave clothes up to dry.

Some sea mail had arrived but I left it unopened until I could get this account written.

Monday, 9 February

Doug Turner came aboard for a drink at lunch time and inevitably we talked caves.

In the evening he called at the ship and took me home to dinner with his wife, Fay, and parents. Then afterwards some six other cave-neers arrived and we talked, looked at slides, etc, etc, until after midnight. Frank Brown showed a number of the Nullarbor expedition two years ago, which really did bring home the vastness of the caves and of the desert. Dave Elliott's slides of Tasmanian caves were without doubt the best series of colour transparencies I have ever seen and he has had a number of awards from the N.S.S. for individual ones.

I was given the first three numbers of the *T.C.C. Bulletin*; also as a special presentation a copy of *They're a Weird Mob* by Nino Culotta, who had been identified as an Australian dentist in Melbourne. With this was a speleo-lunatic type of card signed by all the people there. Dick Dowden gave me a linen mounted survey he had acquired in Sydney – Trickett's survey of the Imperial Cave at Jenolan with notes in his own hand.

I turned in about one.

Tuesday, 10 February

Frank Brown, Rien de Vries and David Elliott came aboard for drinks at lunch time, and Frank went through my file of cave book reviews, noting worthwhile ones for the club or the State Library to buy.

Doug Turner, his father and mother, came aboard at 1515 so that I could show them around the ship for an hour.

At five Eleanor Widdicombe and Richard Dowden arrived for a quick look around the ship before the cocktail party. Afterwards we went back to Eleanor's for supper and looked at many of Dick's colour slides, including some of caves at Mole Creek and Yarrangobilly and also of Macquarie Island in the sub-Antarctic, where he spent a year. I was aboard again by midnight.

Wednesday, 11 February

[HMS] *Albion* left Hobart at 0830 and has spent the day flying³ on her way up the east coast of Tasmania. Two days later she entered Sydney Harbour (Photo 3.)



Photo 3. HMS Albion in Sydney Harbour – 13 Feb. 1959f

³ HMS *Albion* was an aircraft carrier; the 'flying' was done by its planes, not by the ship.



Space Filler –
Amy and Matt
watch on as
Bunty blows
bubbles in a
section of the
Hobart Rivulet
under the city