

SPELEO SPIEL 364

January - February 2008



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Front Cover: En route to
Conference Concourse in IB-14
Exit Cave *Photo by Matt Cracknell*



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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

Nothing to rant and rave about this issue. I'm sure I could come up with something if I really wanted to.

This issue is full of more good work in JF-382 Dissidence, a cave that continues to yield new and exciting extensions. The opportunity to get into this cave without having to rig it yourself is passing as it looks like things are winding up in there.

Once again Matt has partaken of some varied and interesting caving and he continues to bamboozle we mere plebs with his big words and geological terms. Who would have thought that reading the *Spiel* could actually teach you something? It certainly wasn't one of my aims when I took on this job.

Enjoy.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

AGM – Wed. 5th March, 7:30 pm, 17 Darling Parade, Mt Stuart (Arthur Clarke's house).

A PARABLE – When I first visited Nepal it was winter and as you could expect for one of the world's poorest countries, the power kept blacking out and all the showers were cold. After doing my trekking, I travelled overland to India. This country is seen as Nepal's big brother and infinitely more prosperous and developed. I spent a night at the border and things seemed to be looking up; they had hot showers! Unfortunately when I used the shower it was cold. The next morning as I checked out of the hotel I told the man at reception that the hot water didn't work (lest I be blamed for jiggering it). He told me that it never works; they didn't even have a hot water cylinder. I asked him why he had a hot tap in the shower recess and his answer was "No shower recess would be complete without a hot tap."

"But there is no point if you have no hot water and it doesn't work." I replied.

"The point is not whether it works or not. It is a matter of having all the systems in place."

I was reminded of this recently when we had our discussions about management plans for the Southwest Wilderness WHA.

"Sahib, every National Park must have a Management Plan!"

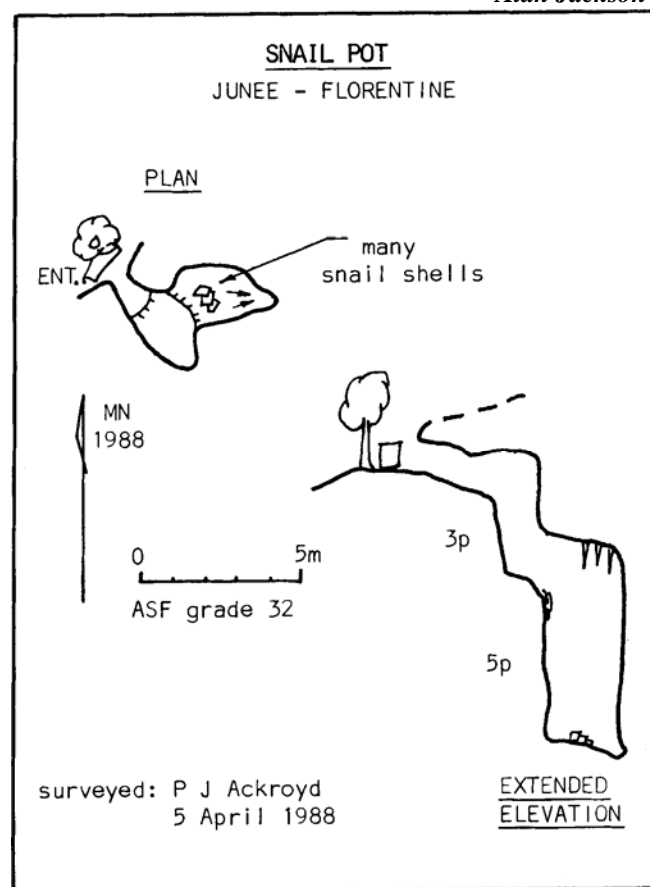
Stephen Bunton

PITCH-BAGGING – For those people who take pitch-bagging seriously; the longest pitches on the mainland are the 90 m drop into Big Hole near Braidwood and a similar length abseil from the roof of the Devils Coach House at Jenolan, not the 59 m pitch in C-277 at Cape Range, WA. **Stephen Bunton** [*I fear Bunt, and possibly Arthur, are the only two people in the club who take pitch-bagging seriously* – Ed.]

THE X-CAVE SYSTEM CONTINUES TO CRUMBLE – While doing some Frownland investigations I came across Peter Ackroyd's article in *Nargun* 21(5):41. The latter parts of this report cover some surface wanderings near Ice Tube and two new holes they explored and surveyed. The first time I read this I realised that his Bone Cleft was JF-289 (see SS360:10). The other cave located was Snail Pot (later

assigned JF-X56) which was described as "Just prior to intersecting the Growling-Ice Tube track, a short pot, Snail Pot, was discovered (see map). Many land snail shells littered the floor of this 8 m pot. The entrance was marked by hanging two blue tapes in a tree, and a bearing (14') was taken to the long log used as a part of the Ice Tube track." I now have reason to believe that this is synonymous with the cave Gavin and I found recently (see SS361:13-14). We tagged it JF-421 and Serena and I subsequently sketched it, the report and survey of which appeared in SS362:11-12. Unfortunately we didn't quite bottom it to confirm the presence of numerous snails, but the location description and the two surveys compare very favourably. Gavin and I also found blue tapes at the entrance. Ackroyd's map is shown below. Compare it with mine from SS362 and decide for yourself (keep in mind that mine is a true elevation and his is extended). I'm pretty happy to state that JF-X56 is now JF-421 Snail Pot.

Alan Jackson



[from *Nargun*, 21(5): 44]

THE WORLD BECKONS – Serena is leaving us indefinitely for the lures of the globe. A few months in SE Asia followed by London and then who knows where. I'm sure Serena will stay true to form and generally only really know where she's going once she's passed through it. STC wish her safe travels and hope to read of any international caving exploits she indulges in on the way in the *Spiel*. Who knows, she might even come back one day.

INCREASING THE CLUB MEMBERSHIP – Amy and Dion have done their sums and can see that there are savings to be made with the family membership option. The baby bonus should fatten up the science account very nicely. Amy had best get out and about before her belly doesn't fit through the squeezes anymore. Congratulations to them (all three of them) and we hope the pregnancy goes well.

Trip Reports

JF-382 – For Everhard surveying

Alan Jackson

8 December 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson

Andy was stuck at work so I figured we'd get some more of the much needed surveying done in 382. We decided to reward ourselves with a touch of exploration along the way to keep spirits up. The alternative way on from the base of the first proper pitch (after the entrance ladder) was first cab off the rank. After some minor modification we opened the constricted pitch head, tied a rope onto the end of the one from the pitch above and popped down the ~4 m pitch. A second pitch followed to the left which was free-climbable, although a little sketchy. The base of this second pit tightened off but an audible connection was made between Serena and me (with Serena at the top of Sandwich pitch – the next pitch on the main route). We surveyed our way back out.

Next we commenced the survey down the big pitch at the start of the For Everhard series. While surveying to the rebelay I managed to collect a few rocks tumbled down from above. My shin and shoulder complained loudly. The tape proved to be much too short to manage the vertical leg from the rebelay to the floor. We'll need to complete this leg next time with some more tape. Gavin then entertained me with his attempt at a knot crossing. It's one of those really annoying ones about three metres off the floor. I was casually standing around chatting to Gavin while he struggled with the crossing. All of a sudden he was hanging upside down in front of me! He thinks that in the process of down-prussiking his Croll disengaged when he loaded it and the half somersault was the result. He ended up hanging on a short cowstail and his hand ascender. It was a bit scary but very funny in the end. A good lesson in why having at least two points of attachment at any one time is a good idea.

With Gavin up the right way again we gathered our composure and surveyed on. First we surveyed down the long serpentine passage to the top of the final pitch into the large 'terminal' chamber. On the way out Gavin and I climbed high into the serpentine and found lots of pretties and a higher access point back into the soaring aven above the pitch. Back at the junction, Gavin headed for the surface while Serena and I surveyed the lower dead end passage that I'd initially followed when we found this section. It was just as unpleasant as the first time. We then planned to survey some higher level development back up near where this passage heads off from the large chamber at the base of the big pitch. It is gained by leaping across a ~1.5 m gap and Serena wasn't keen. I solo surveyed three legs into a fossil aven chamber to the right and then followed the upper level serpentine development on the left. This went for some way and it was hard to tell if it mirrored the lower stuff or not. I followed one side lead into a terminal calcite encrusted chamber; beautiful. This all needs a better look and some surveying to see how it relates to the stuff below. I then ran out to try to catch up to Serena, who had headed out when she declined the leap of faith.

The survey data was promptly entered upon arriving home. We had collected over 225 m of it (making the total surveyed length of 382 a little over 830 m to date). The orientation of the For Everhard series was quite interesting. The various passages seem to take almost random and circuitous routes and largely trend away from the NW-SE alignment of the rest of the cave by tending SW, in under the contact and towards Wherretts Lookout. The last bit of passage before the final pitch is actually heading back NW again. Very strange. In terms of depth: assuming the immeasurable leg of the big pitch was about 38 m then the top of the final pitch is at around -213 m, which places the lowest point in the chamber below at around -240 m. It will be good to get that drafting dig opened up and see if it goes!

JF-365 – Trip 1

Janine McKinnon

9 December 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Sarah Gilbert, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

To start with, a bit of historical catch up: we last (only) did this cave 20-odd years ago and hadn't been near it since, for no particular reason. I actually remembered it (vaguely) as a good cave. There are only four trips recorded in the *Spiel* since then: in 1992 (SS277:2), 1999 (SS316:15), 2000 (SS321:13) and 2001 (SS329:4). All reported major troubles in finding the cave, with no parties being able to follow the track its full length from Chrisps Road to the entrance. One trip took three hours to find it. We decided that a pre-trip track search was probably a good idea. About six months ago we spent several hours finding our way along the track so it would be a bit easier to follow later.

So when we set out on this fine, sunny Saturday there were no dramas getting to the entrance and we were gearing up about half an hour after leaving the car. The creek that we had seen flowing down the entrance on our visit six months earlier was nowhere in sight. The reputedly very wet cave was totally dry (read above listed *Spiele* - Madphil turned back at P3 because it was so wet!!!) That makes about a 99% incorrect hit-rate for me selecting which trog suit to bring: the abrasion resistant but not waterproof Aspiring Cordura or the waterproof but sauna-creating and easily-holed plastic. As you can guess, I had the plastic. The cave being dry was still a positive though.

We had got to the cave quickly but things slowed down rapidly from this point. We looked at the old log sitting at the entrance that has been used by all previous parties to rig pitch 1. This did not impress the younger generation as a belay point, particularly with no backup nearby, unless manferns count? (Previous trips didn't bother with backups from what I can tell). We hadn't been too impressed either when we'd been here recently so luckily we had bought the

trusty DeWalt. [As someone who has attempted to digout/cut down/remove manferns in the past, I can testify that they do count as trusty anchors – Ed.]

The bolts took a while to place as the hammer we had bought was too small and light and wouldn't hammer the bolts properly. Various rocks were tried but all proved to be mudstone and fell apart. Where is some good solid limestone when you need it?

Eventually we got going and moved quickly to pitch two. We were using Stefan Eberhard's rigging notes from 1983 (*Speleo Spiel* 187:2-3), which describe a natural up high and out over the pitch as the belay point, no back-up and a hex used as a rebelay halfway down.

I was starting to have a revelation about why there has been discussion lately about bolting being done in previously visited caves. Sure, some were replacements for very old, unsafe spits but a lot is due to the generational change in caving attitude, or risk assessment. Single belay points, no backups, or a knot in the rope jammed into a crack as reported in one instance (SS321:13), hexes as belays, leaning out over the pitch to grab the rope unsecured and traversing along rifts over big drops to pitch heads with no safety line were standard practices that aren't acceptable any more.

This is an opportune time for the old farts to say "what a bunch of sissies you young'ns are now". Come on now, LOUDLY and all together ... These particular old farts are actually still caving and as usually happens with increasing age, our boldness levels are dropping. They never were anywhere near as high as the heroes of yesteryear anyway. Thus we are happy with the more conservative nature of current standards.

This is also an excellent cave for intermediate level trips, so "rigging for the future" is a good idea I think.

I digress somewhat; back to the point ...

So we rigged from further back, just above the climb down to the pitch head. I climbed down a bit, using my descender for a belay. I had only gone down a short way when Serena warned the rope was abrading on the rock. The bomb-proof Bluewater II rope was no match for the piranha rock. We realised we'd have to complete the cave with very clean rigging to modern SRT standards. [*Looks like she'd already forgotten about the "rigging for the future" concept – Ed.*] So I put in a temporary rebelay on a flake on the left. This was later replaced by a bolt in a position to give a clear free-hang.

We had to use a longer rope than the one we'd brought for this pitch and this meant that we now didn't have a rope long enough for the bottom pitch. So we weren't getting to the bottom today. That's a good excuse for a short, easy

day's caving. You get good at coming up with them with practice.

The rock-pile is next. I was down first and scouted around for the way on whilst I waited for the others. It wasn't hard to find, although there are no cairns or other signs showing the way on. It was just the obvious climb down at the back of the chamber. It has been described as unstable in previous trip reports but I didn't find anything worrying about it. We did put a handline down a climb at the bottom of it, which was useful but not absolutely necessary. Future parties can ponder what this means for them ...

A 20 m pitch followed next. It's really an 8 m and then a 12 m pitch-cum-handline but is easily rigged with the one rope and a redirection; easy and straightforward. The last 5 m or so can be freeclimbed if desired.

An easy 6 m climb follows quickly but when I arrived at the following drop I wasn't sure if I was looking at a climb or a pitch. I "ummed" and "ahhed" for a few minutes, kidded myself that an obvious natural projection on the floor looked a BIT like a jug handle (as described in the rigging notes for P4) and then decided to put a rope down. No back up, but it WAS a solid looking bit of rock and the drop WAS ONLY 6 m! Old cavers' habits die hard. Can't be a sissy all the time.

I kept going and a bit further on went around a corner and found another short drop. The projection on the left hand wall was very definitely a jug handle as described in the rigging notes. This was the real P4. Damn. The last one had been a climb after all. I am becoming an old woman (and sissy). I waited for the others but no-one seemed keen to take the rope off the previous climb, they all felt a handline at least was very useful near the top of the 6 m drop. We didn't have enough rope to get to the bottom of the cave anyway so we wouldn't gain much by moving it to this drop. Justifications done, this seemed like a good turn around point (not having any rope with us helped with the decision).

This cave is serious "piranha rock". Not good for plastic suits or rope rubs. On the good side the hand and foot holds stayed in place. Very solid limestone for the Florentine and it even has quite a bit of marbling through it from as high up the cave as the second pitch. Lovely.

The trip out was fast and smooth. It's so nice not to have to lug gear out of a cave. It was raining as we set off back to the car and so we did actually get wet on the trip. Trying to get changed in rain back at the car is always fun and entertaining. The flexibility and agility useful underground comes in very handy doing gymnastics in the back of the car. Sarah did a very impressive backflip from the boot area onto the backseat. At least a 9.5 points score.

Part 2 in two weeks ...

JF-382 Dissidence – Digging and some new passage

Alan Jackson

15 December 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

The plan was for a long day underground to make a sizeable dent in the work that remains in this cave. Serena and I got away from Hobart at 7 am.

On the way down Spent Force pitch where a large aven comes in, Andy pointed out some good bone deposits. There were two complete skeletons in good condition (recent arrivals) of a large echidna and a quoll. There is quite a range of species that have met their demise in this system.

At the ~40 m pitch at the start of the For Everhard series we needed to do some rerigging to avoid the nasty rub on the loose slope. I installed a bolt for a redirect while Serena

and Andy retrieved the 108 m rope off Vertical Euphoria so we could totally rerig the ~40, cut out the pesky knot crossing and then have enough rope to drop the next pitch which should join back in with Vertical Euphoria. The free-hanging section of the pitch was measured with Ric and Janine's 40 m cord and my previous estimate of 38 m was revised to 38.32 m! Geez I'm good. This makes this pitch 42 metres (so Ric and Janine's Pitch Baggers list is out of date already).

We then moved down to the drafting lead on the far side of the final chamber in the For Everhard series (placing a redirect bolt on the approach and a second bolt at the rebelay). It was hard yakka and despite good progress we didn't break through. Should do so next trip though with some revised tools. We surveyed our way out of this chamber back up to the last station from the previous week. While surveying the terminal rockfall I narrowly avoided 'rock-surfing' a huge boulder that I dislodged. Scary stuff.

Back at the start of the serpentine I jumped the trench and showed Andy the stuff I'd explored last week. He got much more excited than I had at the tight climb at the end and pushed through into more ascending serpentine. After a few hairy climbs we managed to follow this fossil stream passage for some 60 m to a drafting rock choke. We surveyed our way out of this delightful bit of passage.

We gave the upper levels of the downstream serpentine a miss this trip but they will remain on the 'to survey' list. Back out at the base of the 42 m pitch, Andy and I placed two bolts for the connection back into Vertical Euphoria while Serena ascended the 5 or so metres to the ledge where the stream passage enters. I then joined her and we surveyed the 10 m or so of hideous muddy crap to its tight and nasty end.

The connection to Vertical Euphoria was left till next trip, so the next thing on the list was to survey the active serpentine passage that heads off near the high wet aven half way up Union Jack. We had almost made it there when I asked Andy if he'd checked a small chamber off the side. He said he'd checked it and that it went nowhere. I didn't trust him and had a look. I followed it down a steep slope for ten or so metres before it pitched. Dammit. More bloody cave! We shelved our serpentine plan and commenced surveying this new stuff. Andy rigged the pitch while Serena and I surveyed. Serena found a short

upstream continuation into a small chamber which had a very recently arrived ringtail possum decaying slowly in the corner.

Down at the pitch, Andy was making hard work of it (as usual). We only had two bolts left (actually we had five, but I'd forgotten I had three in a separate bag). He'd placed a single bolt approach line to the lip of the pitch and then, moaning and screaming about the lack of safety, he proceeded down looking for some good rock to install a rebelay. For some reason he decided to ignore the huge natural in the floor at the lip. It was right in the water and not suitable for the pitch proper but it was a brilliant thing to clip into, even if only temporarily. I rigged it for him and passed down the end of the tape. A y-belay was then installed between the aforementioned natural and a bolt placed to pull the whole lot away from the water. All this for a nine metre pitch! This boy could make relaxing with a cold beer appear insurmountable.

From the base of the larger pitch a further three metre drop followed. This was descended on the same anchors for the previous pitch. 20 m of passage followed but it tightened off and was horrendously muddy. An ~8 m pitch would be accessible via a tiny amount of digging but it didn't look promising after that and the passage and water closely resembled the tight and muddy conditions of the stuff we'd just explored off the 42 m pitch. It is likely that these two join. Something prompted a *Home and Away* discussion and the name Yabby Creek was deployed.

Andy and I played 'rock, paper, scissors' to decide who had to derig the horror-show pitch. Rock beats scissors. Andy lost. We were now happy that we'd spent enough time underground and headed for the surface. It was dark and Serena and I crawled in to our (respective) beds around 1 am. Andy would have still had an hour or so to drive by this time. Haha!

The following day I set to work on the survey data. There is now over 1100 m of surveyed passage and the deepest point in the manky rockfall at the end of For Everhard series is at -250 m (virtually the same depth as the deepest point ~ -258 m). While discussing the survey data Andy and I exchanged even more ideas on a name for the cave. We have finally settled on Dissidence – to describe both our inability to agree with one another on a name (or anything!) and Matt's ethical crusade that the cave had sparked.

JF-365 Satans Lair – Trip 2

Janine McKinnon

22 December 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Sarah Gilbert, Janine McKinnon, Ivan Riley, Ric Tunney

Well, what a difference a bit of rain makes. Our return to finish the cave was preceded by a night of heavy rain, 30 mm fell in Maydena. Fortunately it wasn't raining when we arrived, so we had a dry walk to the cave. The creek had reappeared and so a rather damp trip was anticipated, but at least the water was not cold.

I displayed a degree of canniness not normally seen by pulling TWO trog suits out of my pack - the wet and dry versions. I then encountered an unforeseen problem, the indecision over which to wear! Yes, the cave would be

wet, but HOW wet? I finally opted for the plastic suit. It would prove to be a good choice, only undermined by my forgetting how cold these suits were when wet and not wearing sufficient clothing underneath.

Ric had been the last person up on our previous trip and had secured all the ropes up at the pitch heads and away from any potential water, which now proved to have been good practice.

We made quick progress to the rock pile, and were all pretty damp by then. The cave got wetter the further down we got and everyone (else) was thoroughly soaked by the time we got to our turn-around point last time. I was damp, as I don't seem to have got the knack for keeping all the water out of these suits. Maybe if I remembered to do the velcro all the way up to the neck, and put the hood up before going down wet pitches, it might help.

I replaced the rope put on the climb before the 6 m pitch last trip with a tape handline and we then used this rope to rig P4, which has a "jug handle" belay. We also put a tape as a tie back to help getting on and off the pitch and as a traverse line.



Sarah on the first pitch into Satans Lair.

The wetting continued as we progressed down P5 (9 m) and all assembled at the top of the bottom pitch. We briefly discussed whether everyone still felt warm enough to go to the bottom as we anticipated having to put a bolt in as a rebelay on this pitch. (The rigging notes described using a no. 6 Hex for a rebelay and we were not prepared to do that.) We were so close no-one wanted to turn around before "bottoming" the cave. Such an objective driven group! Besides, Serena's cheesecake just wasn't going to taste the same if not eaten at the bottom of the cave.

So Ric got all kitted up with the bolting gear and headed out along the rift, but to his surprise there was a very good natural to re-rig off and giving a beautiful free hang to the bottom. So back he came with all the drilling paraphernalia and headed out again to finish the rigging. This was a bit disappointing in a way as it meant he had carried all the drilling gear down the cave for nothing on this trip. But it was also a relief as we didn't want to turn the cave into a bolt farm.

Whilst the hang was free it wasn't dry and another fairly good wetting awaited everyone on the last 10 m of the pitch.

The back end of the terminal chamber

was dry however and proved to be an excellent venue for my (albeit brief) birthday party. I had thought Bunty's idea of a birthday trip down K.D, with a cake at the bottom, was excellent and as imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, this was my version. The cave wasn't as big and grand, but then this wasn't a "milestone" birthday. Ivan provided the party hats, which were in mint condition, and the camera. Serena the cheesecake, as already mentioned, again unscathed by the trials of the downward trip. Ric had a mudcake, pristine in appearance also, but we decided to save that till we got back to the car, so it prepared itself for a return journey. I had the paper plates and (metal) forks. The forks were OK but the plates not so. I had told them I'm not the best person to give anything delicate to look after underground. Luckily we are all adept at eating cheesecake out of our hands.

Ric and I had wanted to have a good look around at the bottom of the cave for any extensions that had been missed but we were all too wet and cold to generate enough enthusiasm for the idea. Besides, the stream was sinking straight down the small hole in the floor that was an obvious place to check out. We weren't made of sufficiently stern stuff. To be kept for another (dry) day.

The trip out was going smoothly and damply until around the climbs half way out when Serena noticed that the water level seemed to be lower than on the way in. As we moved up the cave the wetness was noticeably reducing and by the rock-pile there were only drips. The second pitch only had a small trickle running down it and by the time Ric and I (both coming last and derigging the top pitches) exited the cave the top pitch was dry and so was the creek. What an exquisite piece of timing.

We had been underground for a little over 5 hours, from first in to last out. A thoroughly enjoyable cave and to be recommended to any caver after a sporting (much more so if wet) but not long or hard trip.

The mudcake (and party hats) back at the car were a nice way to finish the day. Thank you to the rest of the party for a great birthday.



Janine's birthday celebrations (apparently she's a closet Wiggles fan).

Perambulating around Marble Hill

Janine McKinnon

26 December 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

The plan was a pleasant, post-Christmas wander in the bush to check out the state of the route around Marble Hill via Halfway Hole (IB-136). We got walking at 9.30 am and were at the turn-off from the Southern Ranges track at 10.20 am.

The route to Halfway Hole was not as easy to follow as our last visit four years ago and it was two hours after leaving the saddle that we arrived at the cave. We are, however, now confident that having re-familiarised ourselves with the route that we will be able to walk to it more quickly and directly in the future.

Serena donned her helmet for a look down IB-137, a small cave within the Halfway Hole doline (and which connects to IB-136) and she also looked in the tagged entrance to IB-140 (just downhill from IB-136). Each of these kept her occupied for five minutes apiece.

We continued along the surface survey line to IB-113 Baader Meinhoff Pot, near which we had another look at a couple of holes we had flagged on a traverse with Jeff Butt a few years ago (SS337:5) and had subsequently forgotten. We then continued around below IB-8 Mini Martin and along the track to Skinners Track.

Skinners Track is in good condition except the large tree across the track, that we have always crawled under and which has slowly been getting lower over the last couple of years, is now a belly crawl. We chose to climb over it instead. It's going to be a bitch with heavy caving packs now.

We returned to the car at 4.30 pm.

JF-358, JF-380 and JF-395 – Potting amongst the pot holes

Serena Benjamin

29 December 2007

Party: Serena Benjamin, Janine McKinnon, Amy Robertson, Ric Tunney

With Amy as a last minute ring-in, four of us set out to the JF with the intention of dropping some of the Benson & Hedges series so that I could get some rigging experience. If we had sufficient time and/or motivation we would also relocate and survey JF-395. The lovely clear day saw us meandering through the forest past a cave entrance I'd located (and promptly lost) several weeks before, Punishment Pot and up to the top of the series of potholes. Skill #1 Decision-making. With so many pots around us and four different opinions, which one to choose? Maps and descriptions were looked at but I opted for the 'that looks nice' technique. So our first contender was JF-358, conveniently two metres away. Brimming with enthusiasm I got stuck into the rigging, Ric 'man of leisure' Tunney promptly sat down to read the paper, Amy disappeared up the hill and Janine got geared up.

JF-358: Rope around large sassafras on uphill side. Tape around tree on edge, giving an approach line. Rebelay 2 metres down on obvious projection. [See SS185:12 for survey (Pot 12) – Ed.]

Much easier to chuck a ladder down, but that defies the whole point of the exercise. Once Janine and I had investigated and derigged 358 I had a quick look at an inconspicuous entrance several metres away. While clearing some debris around the entrance for a closer look a small log fell in ... clunk, clunk, Clunk, Clunk,

CLUNK!!! "I want to go down this one" I yelled and quickly went over and got the rope.

So JF-380: Rope around large tree at entrance. Rebelay about 50 centimetres down from tag off obvious projection on wall opposite. Second rebelay about 4 metres down through keyhole in projecting ridge. Redirection from a large flake in opposite wall about 10 metres further down. Small stream present at base of pitch. Loose boulders. Climb down following stream passage. Obvious inward flowing draft terminating in a tight rift. Bones of a wallaby (?) present in stream bed. Fossils present. [Stefan's survey is in the archive but I can't find what Spiel it was published in – Ed.]

After Amy, Janine and I investigated this little cave we decided we only had enough time left to find 395 and survey it. So we took the shorter route back around the hill and went searching. In a long line we traversed the hillside and soon heard Amy yelling that she'd found a cave hole. Apparently it wasn't it, but by the time I got there she'd found the one we were after. Once again it was at the right time of the afternoon for the sun to be streaming in the entrance. So I've decided to call JF-395 Sunny Cave Hole (survey appears on page 19). Ric decided he'd tape a line out to the Serendipity track for us to survey later and left us to the surveying. With Amy doing tape, Janine on instruments and me doing bookwork we quickly sorted it all out. Following Ric's taped route out was easy, but it was clear that we'd swung further away from Serendipity than expected. Once back on the mule track it seemed to take ages before we got back to familiar territory. Back at the car at 7 pm, in time for some fruit cake, Ric said he'd experienced a similar sensation [What sensation? That he's a fruitcake? – Ed.].

Tidying up JF-395 Loose Ends

Ric Tunney

31 December 2007

Party: Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

The forecast was for hot weather, so we decided we'd hide in the rainforest and tidy up some loose ends from our trip with Serena and Amy three days earlier. A search of the Archive for JF-395 had found no surface-survey data. So we had taped from JF-395 down the hill with the intention of later running a surface survey that way. The trouble with

that idea was that we had reached the mule track a long, long way from the surveyed line at the Serendipity turn-off. To survey that way would be more than a kilometre. This meant we needed to remove these tapes and find a better line for a survey.

So I made a more careful examination of the Archive. I found a trip report (SS216:4-5) stating JF-391 to JF-395 were tagged Dec 85 and were accessed (except for JF-393) by a blue-taped track from the Lost Pot turn-off on the Serendipity track. Another trip report (SS223:7) described a surface survey by Rolan Eberhard & John Salt linking these caves to the surface network. In the Archive there is the data for a survey "Frost Pot to Warhol & Lost Pot" which shows a line running from the Serendipity track at Frost Pot to JF-391 (Gelignite Pot), JF-392 (Warhol) and JF-394 and then to JF-393. But JF-393 is near Asteroid Pot, quite a distance away. I suspected "JF-393" was a typo and should be "JF-395". I could not find the original survey notes in the Archive to check this.

Janine and I set off from Frost Pot, armed with the survey data and plan, to follow the old survey along the blue-tape track. This was reasonably easy to follow as the old blue tapes proved sometime ago to have been augmented by pink tapes. The track initially climbs steeply and then angles right to reach JF-391 after 80 m. From here it continues around the hillside, climbing slowly, to a ridge

where it turns sharply left and climbs a bit to JF-394 after 186 m. JF-394 is 30 m above JF-392. This entrance is large and obvious.

We expected the taped line to stop here. When I had been taping a few days earlier, I had seen some old blue tapes on the ground, but no real taped line one could follow. The survey showed 160 m to "JF-393" so we started off around the hillside. After 10 m, I saw a pink tape 10 m ahead. I thought how fortunate this was. It was fortunate because it was my tape! While taping, I had passed less than 20 m from Warhol, but as I was downhill at the time, I hadn't seen it.

We followed up my taped line to JF-395 and then headed down the valley, taking out the now-redundant tapes.

So, we have confirmed that "JF-393" is a typo for "JF-395", saved having to run a surface survey to JF-395 and "relocated" the track to Warhol.

[This report highlights the value of recording your activities and publishing them in the Spiel. Even if you make the odd mistake it can usually be sorted out thanks to other 'correct' data filed away. It also highlights the importance of thoroughly researching the archive and publications to save yourself a lot of effort. If Ric had read the last Spiel he would have seen that on page 16 Serena and I "relocated" the track from Frost Pot turnoff to Warhol a couple of weeks earlier! – Ed.]

Leeuwin-Naturaliste Caves

Matt Cracknell

1-2 January 2008

Party: Jay Anderson, Ross Anderson, Matt Cracknell, Naomi Wakelin

Having spent about a week on the South Coast of Western Australia I couldn't leave without visiting some of the local karst, could I? So after getting in contact with our esteemed ASF President a rendezvous was set for the New Year. Naomi (my partner) and I made our way to the area of the tourist caves about 25 km south of Margaret River. The area is known as the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. I am told there are a few hundred known caves; all developed in the local carbonate rock which is sandstone held together with carbonate cement known as aeolian calcarenite. The bedrock consists of wind blown Pleistocene dunes replete with cross-bed structures, palaeosol horizons and the remnants of roots and other goodies.

We first entered Mammoth Cave, one of the local tourist caves. This cave is viewed via a self guided tour. Tourists don headphones and listen to a recorded description/explanation of the sites they encounter. We didn't really play that game, knowing people in the karst tourism industry opens all sorts of doors for you. The cave was kind of interesting with a

stream, fed from the swamp up the hill, a few stals, some bones, stairs and lights. The thru trip took us about 45 minutes.

The next cave we visited is called Calgardup Cave. Another tourist cave but with a difference as there are no guides and no lights. You grab a helmet and light and go for a walk. The cave is shaped like a boomerang. On the right hand passage (heading in) the floor of a cave is muddy and filled with shallow water. Again a few stals can be seen but more interesting are the preserved sequential cross-beds. In places the roof of the cave was undulating, as if looking up from the underside of a sand dune and occasionally these dune-casts were truncated by red-brown



M. Cracknell

Pendulites in Crystal Cave, WA

lenses of ancient soils. We saw a few amphipods scrounging around as the cave has many tree roots dangling in its calm waters, providing habitat (root mats) for these and other critters. Ross pointed out the vertical entrance. This is a solution pipe used by some of the more adventurous tourists, school groups and the like.

Later in the afternoon we were taken on a real treat of a trip. Crystal Cave, permit access only, was the destination. The objective of the trip was to assess the state of plastic sheeting that had been placed in a very constricted and highly decorated area in order to prevent scuffing of the flowstone. We were to decide if they needed to be removed (with permission of course). This area contained almost translucent calcite speleothems. Dogtooth spar pendulites clustered on the base of some of the stalactites that had grown into still water, now long gone. After a small discussion on the feasibility and necessity of taking action, which involved breathing out many litres of carbon dioxide, it was decided to remove the plastic. Photos were taken before and after. Beneath the plastic root mats and foul smelling bacteria colonies were thriving. Within an hour the deed was done and the offending mats removed.

Later we had dinner where the discussion was dominated by cave politics. It was a veritable executive's affair with Presidents present from ASF, STC and CLINC (Cape

Leeuwin INCorporated (caving society)) and the Vice President of WASG. Many mundane but important topics were discussed to the dismay of the other guests at the table. Ah... armchair cavers' politics!

The next day started with Naomi and I packing up and heading in for a cave tour at Lake Cave. The collapsed entrance doline was awesome. Cross-bedded dunes and a layer of massive carbonate rock that may have been part of a succession of inter-tidal lagoons sat patiently in the exposed walls of the entrance. Anyway enough geo-talk, the cave was pretty, especially with the coloured light show as the grand finale. The slow flowing, rapidly receding (due to the presently dry climate) stream/lake now inhabited by introduced freshwater crayfish with apparently no endemic cave fauna was sort of interesting as was the flood peak stains on the 'pristine' cave decorations.

Over all the brief couple of days in a much warmer and arid caving area was very stimulating. We saw some decorations that, although confined to a limited area, would rival anything in Tasmania. We helped with a cave rehabilitation project and drank the local wine. Many thanks to Ross and Jay for their warm hospitality, just what you need on your holidays!



Platform columns in Lake Cave, WA

M. Cracknell

IB-120 Valley Entrance/IB-14 Exit Cave thru trip

Matt Cracknell

5 January 2008

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

We walked up over the ridge in the sweltering heat and found refuge in the blind valley at Valley Entrance. It was many degrees cooler in the depression than out in the forest. We geared up and headed in one by one. The trip

down through the initial climbs and rifts took about one hour. Once in the passages of The Labyrinth it was a gentle stroll along a well trodden path. We had a brief stop in Echo Aven where Sarah and I discussed the apparent thrust fault laid bare in the wall. Then over the Crystal Climb we pondered the feasibility of a future sediment core in the massive deposits found here. The trip from here on was relatively uneventful; I seem to have a good grasp of the route. You could almost do it in an armchair!

We diverted toward Conference Concourse at the junction of the Grand Fissure. This time with cavers you could trust not to damage everything in sight we made our way further than I had been since coming this way to survey Conference Concourse with Mad Phil. The passage swings to the left through an overly trampled mud-floored passage with elaborate gypsum and moonmilk encrusted decorations. At a small rock-pile we turned left up a slippery mud bank to find a cool breeze blowing on our faces. A few twists and turns from here led us to a huge breakdown chamber. This has a towering rock pile at the far end and a small lens-shaped aven in the ceiling. Is this where the draft originates?

Our small party turned around at this point after identifying the passage that leads towards Conference Concourse. A few photos were taken back in the well trodden passages.

Small untrampled mud floors were covered in moonmilk. I presume the whole of the floor of this passage was in a similar state in the not too distant past.

Back on the main streamway it didn't take us long to get to the Eastern Passage junction. We headed up toward Camp 2, saw the poo shovel rusting on the wall and found our way to Edies Treasure. What an amazing spot! The walls and floors are adorned with all manner of pure white stalactites. The floors are littered with twinned aragonite needles up to 200 mm long. In the chamber with the plaque dedicated to Edie Smith gypsum grass grows freely from the boulders on the floor. The bedrock is no longer solid in this area. It is very porous and has a deep crimson brown colour. It is if all the carbonate cement that made up the original bedrock is now dissolved out and coating the walls and floors as decoration. There was even the odd quartz vein preserved in-situ.

Enough pretties fun. It took about an hour to make our way to the resurgence. In the area of the Hat Walk a strong breeze was blowing downstream most likely coming from the Mini-Martin/Skyhook Pot openings. Once outside Serena managed to completely break the temporary log bridge over the D'Entrecasteaux that was installed after the 2005 floods. The river was so low that we could climb down the bank and walk the river without any hassles.

Sunshine Road Surface Bash

Alan Jackson

5 January 2008

Party: Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson

Gavin and I had been intending to check out the Sunshine Road for well over a year now but had never seemed to get there. It was one of the roads that Rolan had recommended for 'rehabilitation' in his karst management report to Forestry (bloody fun police) (Eberhard 1994), so it seemed likely that it might go as far as the 1:25k maps suggest. It is quite a long road (some 3.7 km) and terminates around 300 m from the end of the KD access road, traversing a large area on the way. There seems to be a distinct absence of recorded caves between the Splash Pot area to the east and Satans Lair to the west; the area directly uphill of Sunshine Road. We wanted to check how far the road was still serviceable, if there was any exposed limestone and if there was a good reason for the lack of recorded caves.

The road was clear and well maintained (recently slashed) almost to the saddle between the flanks of Tyenna Peak and Nicholls Spur. Half way up to the saddle there was a very well marked walking track on the right which we assumed must be a route to the top of Nicholls Spur maintained by one of the walking clubs. Perhaps it is worth a point on Peak Baggers. We cleared the fairly large tree-fall and continued on. There were some pretty heavily overgrown areas, particularly the centre hump of the road but in the dry conditions the Falcon RTV had no issues getting up (the RTV, while having pretty good clearance, is not renowned for its traction). Every time we thought it was all over it would surge off again and shortly after clearing two large silver wattles near one of the main gullies we arrived at the end of the road (as shown on the map). It appears to have been a very well made road. It is very wide, well graded and well levelled. The best thing, though, were the numerous cuts through limestone. We

had established that the road was indeed serviceable and that there was abundant exposed limestone. So, why no caves?

The nearest caves marked on the map were JF-1 and JF-342 down the ridge to the southeast (some 700 m) and Z19 up the ridge to the northwest (some 200 m). Z19 is described as "Un-named: 1.5 m diameter cylindrical shaft at least 10 m deep; unexplored?" (Eberhard 1994). The only other caves in the general vicinity were other Z caves and various holes south of Splash Pot (from the Butt/Rasch era – see *Spiel* 315 onwards). We decided to go up the ridge, hopefully find Z19, locate the contact in the large flat area atop the spur and then make it up from there.

From the turning circle we could see orange flagging tape. This indicated the start of a route which we followed up the ridge. It seemed very recently placed (certainly less than two years old and very likely less than one year old). It was not a colour previously used during the early (50s-70s), Eberhard or Butt eras. None of the tapes had fallen and some had been tied in a less than robust manner. We decided it must be bushwalkers and not cavers, as no one in the club we know of has been up this way for around eight years.

We got a bit fixated on following the taped route rather than fanning out looking for Z19 and failed to find it. A lot of Rolan's Z caves were plotted via the "educated guess desktop method," so are not necessarily totally reliable. Exposed limestone abounded but no caves could be found. The vegetation was particularly nasty and dry with millions of small and closely spaced dogwood spars. The taped route always seemed to traverse the nastiest bits. A bit of a plateau was reached and not long after the taped route intersected a much older yellow taped route which

came in more from the south. This was not followed down the hill and no more yellow tapes were spotted up hill. Soon after, at around the 680 m contour, the taped route passed a metre or two to the left of a two metre diameter depression. Bingo! It was only a few metres deep and blocked but it was a “cave” and we were happy. We strung a pink tape over it with the date and the number 1215 (the number Gavin came up with after consulting his watch). The taped route powered on up the hill and now clearly had little to do with caves.

Next I headed west with the smell of caves in the air while Gavin continued northish on the taped route. I found a large depression, cliffed on the southern side, within 30 m. The cliff face was in the Parmeneer c(r)ap-rock, so we had found the contact zone. Gavin dropped down into the doline and stuck his head in the narrow rift at the eastern end. I dropped rocks down a one metre diameter hole a few metres east of the main doline and Gavin confirmed an audible connection. His way was too tight but my way was large for a couple of metres, narrowed a bit, but not too much and then flared out to a ~3 m drop to who knows what. While stringing a pink tape over this hole (with the date and number 1216 – the logical progression from 1215) we lost a member of the party into the upper entrance. It was most comical and fortunately didn't relate in injury. A short rescue ensued and the cave was named *Canis Horribilis*.

We had a quick look further up the taped route but it

looked very non-cavey. We about-faced and headed west, then south, then east a bit (i.e. randomly in circles). Gavin suddenly whooped with excitement and carried on like a right fool. My guess that he'd found a cave was correct. Carefully hidden under the fallen fronds of a manfern was a quite large entrance (1.5 m wide by ~3 m long). Gavin climbed in down the 2 m+ entrance and traversed ~8 m of passage to a downward continuation. Worth coming back to look at with some proper clothing apparently. A pink tape with 1217 was deposited.

The strange circuitous route-taking started again and we bumbled this way and that (disturbing a high-speed tiger snake on the way – Andy would have wet his pants). We were half tempted to stride out west pursuing the contact but equally tempted to trend back towards the car. We'd kind of achieved everything we'd wanted already: road – yes; limestone – yes; caves – yes. The mildly oppressive heat wasn't encouraging us to soldier-on either. We headed southeast, cutting across the vast ferny clearings in the main gully and back into the drier dogwood clad western flank of the other main ridge/spur in the area and then followed an old logging skidder track back to the road. We came out 400 m down the road from the car. It was only a bit after 2 pm but we potted on home slowly and enjoyed the air con.

Back at home we plotted the GPS coordinates and the route taken. Our best guess for the taped route is that it goes to the small lake marked below the 730 m contour

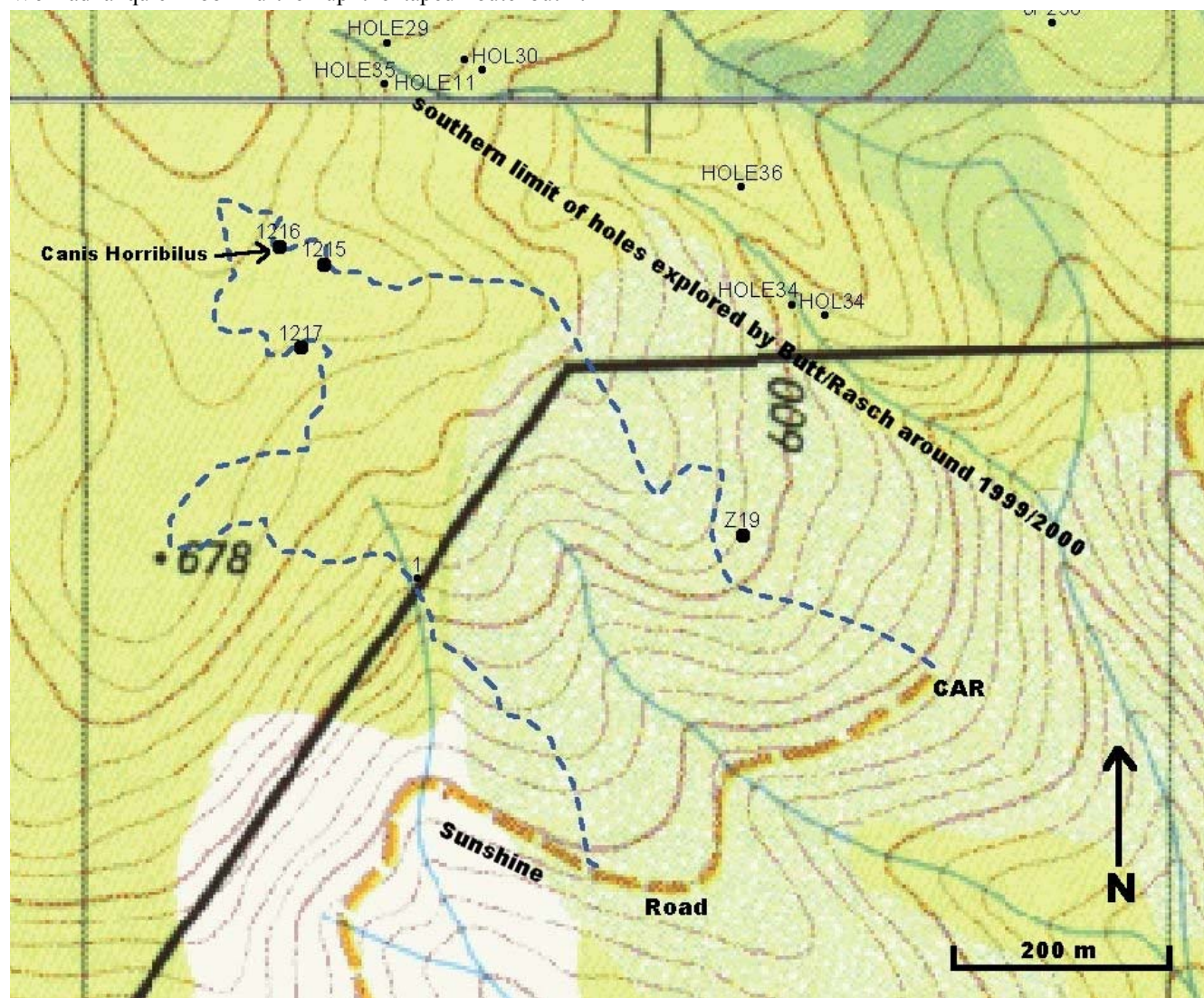


Figure 1. Road, 'track' and cave locations in the Sunshine Rd area

line to the NNW of where we started finding caves and stopped following the tapes; either that or a particularly arduous route up Tyenna Peak. Upon further examination of Eberhard (1994) I noticed that Rolan plots exposed limestone through this region (on the accompanying Bedrock Geology map) but he places the upper boundary (contact) at the edge of the plateau (just below the 678 m high point labelled on the 1:25 k topo). My accompanying map (Figure 1 on page 12) showing the route we took

clearly shows that the exposed limestone extends well up on the plateau above Rolan's boundary. Snakes or not, this area needs a good going over.

Reference

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

JF-382 Dissidence – More bloody new cave

Alan Jackson

12 January 2008

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie, Niall Tobin

The aim of this trip was tidy up a few leads/surveying and introduce Niall, a visiting Irish caver, to the splendour of grotty Tasmanian caves. Our first underground target was going to be the descent of the slope from the base of the 42 m pitch with the expectation that it would join into the Vertical Euphoria chamber. It seemed like an opportunity to test the water connection in there with Punishment Pot, so first up we dumped a couple of teaspoons of fluorescein into the Punishment stream. On the way back to 382 we located "Serena's second hole"; a cave Serena had found (and lost) the day we refound 382 and commenced digging (back in SS362:12-13). It looked deserving of a tag and a closer look.

Underground we headed straight to the 42 m pitch. On the way I took a brief detour to place some tracer dye into the 'Yabby Creek' passage to hopefully confirm our expectations that this reemerged at the bottom of the 42 m pitch. Andy seemed keen to have me drop the new pitch so I geared up and headed down the slope and round the bend to the head of a straight ~7 m drop. In the direction of Vertical Euphoria I could hear the (hopefully green) waterfall splashing down but soon realised that I wouldn't

be getting to it. A 7 m high vertical gravel face was in the way. The dye trace would need to be repeated later when we've got Vertical Euphoria rigged again. Below me was a boulder strewn chamber of medium dimensions. There wasn't a natural anchor in sight and the rock in the ideal place for dropping the pitch was of dubious quality. After much hammer work I shrugged my shoulders and whacked in two bolts (the second for insurance against the rock quality). I slid down the rope and investigated, calling the others down.

There was a short rock strewn slope down to a few climb-downs in rock-fall. But then I noticed the large ascending rock slope passage and then the junction with more rock strewn large passage. I scrambled to the top of the ~30 m slope and gasped at the view. In front of me lay an enormous chamber some 15 metres wide, 80 metres long and 40+ m high. The floor was a huge mobile scree slope perched at around 50 degrees. Quite a bit of ceiling collapse had happened here in the past! It was HUGE!

The others seemed to take forever to turn up. I quickly circumnavigated the chamber and spotted no major continuations apart from numerous rock-fall leads. I went back for the survey gear while the others bumbled in and blew their minds. By the time I'd returned Andy had cursorily inspected a drafting lead at the base of the chamber. We started surveying while Serena and Niall looked more closely at Andy's lead. Encouraging noises from Serena helped us decide to at least survey in after her to the deepest point. Moments later we were pushing sketchy climbs and winding further down into the rock-fall. Surveying was becoming a pain due to all the route-finding required. Every small chamber had about five leads and they all had to be checked to make sure we didn't survey stupid little dead ends (this isn't the mainland where you survey every possible nook and cranny in order to claim a few extra metres in length!). We abandoned surveying and spread out. Andy found solid wall and some fossil stream passage to follow. It pinched off so I climbed up and over through the rock-fall and intersected his passage on the good side of the constriction (that sounds rude, but I assure you it wasn't). This then headed into solid wall on both sides in small dimensions before dropping down into much wider passage with a



A. Jackson

A rather grotty Niall waits his turn at the top of the 42 m pitch

killer draft. After a short narrowing it opened up again and I pursued a very sketchy climb on one side while Andy disappeared into a narrow opening at the far end of the chamber.

My gnarly climb opened up into a spacious chamber filled with dried mud and dust mounds and adorned with numerous straws, stals and helictites. The draft was roaring up the climb but was lost in the chamber, most likely disappearing up into an obvious hole in the ceiling. I traversed the chamber carefully due to the fragile nature of the floor. No leads were forthcoming, but the pretties were reward in themselves. Unfortunately the camera had been left back in the rock-fall. I hollered to the others but got no response.

Finally Serena and Niall arrived and they hadn't seen Andy so I assumed his way must have gone somewhere too. We headed in after him and found him the other side of some breakdown at the top of a narrow rift downclimb. He'd been concerned on his own and was waiting for moral support before attempting the climb. The draft here was tremendous also. I scurried down the ~7 m climb which intersected some similarly narrow horizontal development. In the 'upstream' direction it opened up a bit but all the cave was up. In the downstream direction it got very tight pursuing the draft in a possible but unlikely dig site. We commenced the survey again and headed out.

Back in the big chamber we discussed strategies for best surveying it. We decided to only survey a 'centre line' but we would accurately measure left and rights to prevent poor guesses at passage width. A large side chamber was briefly investigated but many more leads were noted. At the top of the rubble mountain I popped up to the highest point to get an accurate 'right' measurement. While up there I noticed a narrow hole in the wall which yielded a 10 m pitch. This cave was getting to the unbelievable stage. It looks like this side passage/pitch will rejoin the main chamber further down via a second pitch, but assumptions have proven to be incorrect in this cave so far. Back at our bags we refuelled and headed back up the 42 m. There was still no evidence of a positive dye trace from our 'Yabby Creek' test, which surprised us.

Serena and I headed up first and commenced the survey of the serpentine passage that heads off Union Jack near the large showering aven. This had been the aim of many a previous trip but we'd always found too many other things to do instead. Today had been no exception but I was determined this trip! Serena and I had surveyed about 40 m of pleasant, clean passage when the other two caught up. After a short climb-down the rock turned to crap and the passage closed in. Serena pushed on (with more than a little encouragement required) into the tortuous muddy crap. After some eight metres she yelled back that there was a 4 m pitch. Andy and Niall laughed heartily at the



Surveying one of the nicer sections in the rock-fall – a low, flat-roofed side chamber with deep cracked sediments on the floor and a handful of straws and helictites for good measure.

idea of pushing this tight muddy crap after a full day of vast, dry virgin passage. I headed in, free climbed the top half of the pitch, got scared and headed back out; another one for the next generation. Following our presumed negative dye tracing attempt I would now think that this is the source of the inlet at the base of the 42 m pitch.

Andy and Niall headed out while Serena and I checked an upstream lead a bit further up Union Jack. Some nice wide passage ended in a showering aven so we surveyed out in three nice long legs. The survey places this inlet directly under the end of JF-381. We then followed the others out, getting back to the car at 11:30 pm. Niall's previous caving had been restricted to Ireland. He had never required the skills of surveying before and had never done any exploration caving. To say that this trip had been special or a bit of an eye-opener for him would be the understatement of the century! Needless to say, he claimed to have had a good day out.

All up we surveyed 656 metres of new passage and we have a new deepest point. The lowest survey station, near the bottom of Andy's narrow climb, is at -281 m. This station was about two metres off the ground, so JF-382 is now ~283 m deep. This places it just in front of Serendipity (generally considered 278 m deep but has been documented as 282 m deep in a few places), relegating Serendipity to 9th place and claiming 8th place on the deepest caves list. That puts KD (292 m) the next on the hit list and then the magical 300 m mark. What a day!

Some later research showed that if we manage to connect JF-381 to the inlet surveyed on this trip then it would add around 15 m to the system's depth and connecting JF-373 Punishment Pot would add a further 15 m (i.e. 30 m). An extra 30 m would oust both KD, Cauldron Pot and Splash Pot from their respective positions on the deepest list and put Dissidence in 5th place.

JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot – JF-36 Growling Swallet thru trip (via Dreamtime!)

Alan Jackson

16 January 2008

Party: Alan Jackson, Niall Tobin

This trip originally had a few more takers but they all dropped out one by one to the point where it was almost cancelled at the last minute. Niall was still dead keen and a day off work is a day off work! I was keen for a route-familiarisation trip to precede a more serious trip to finish some surveying for Trev on the ugly side of Frownland in the near future.

We headed in via Slaughterhouse because I was concerned that the Windy Rift ladders might be pointing the wrong direction after the floods late last year and it was a bit of extra cave for Niall. Progress was nice and gentle thru to Mainline. I wanted to traverse the Bloody Smokers bypass north to south, having only done it the other way once. This was simple enough and we checked out some of the other dead end passage in this section before dropping into Dreamtime. We chose a quiet gravel bank beside the babbling stream in this beautiful and serene bit of passage to have some lunch. We then popped up to Dreamtime Stonedown but couldn't muster the enthusiasm to press on. It's too slippery to have any fun past that point!

Turning around, we had a look at the Dreamtime sump. There was an interesting ball of vegetative matter (from floods) which had accumulated in an eddy. It was about 400 mm in diameter and was covered in *Anaspides* (at least 30-40). A most curious observation. There were also numerous germinating seedlings de-etiolating in the silt banks to no avail. No doubt our brief splash of light gave them a fleeting but false sense of optimism for their new home.

We headed out via the flood overflow passage and up the nasty low sections of Mainline. Bronchial and Necrosis, which I traditionally find difficult in this direction, were easily negotiated (I must be finally learning the route). At the Trapdoor/Slaughterhouse passage junction we headed upstream for a sticky beak. I'd always just turned left and headed out in the past. The terminating aven with the waterfall was beautiful. The trip out through Windy Rift and Growling were fairly uneventful, (both ladders were pointing the right way), although the McTinney footprints in the silt banks detracted from my wilderness experience.

It had been a short day so I showed Niall the view from Tim Shea and also popped into Junee Cave to show him where all that water finally comes out. I noticed that the interpretive sign says "over 295 caves" are known in the JF karst (there are now ~430 tagged caves) and that Niggly Cave is Australia's deepest! Time for Parks to update their signs.

JF-382 Dissidence – Tidying up more loose ends

Alan Jackson

20 January 2008

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie, Niall Tobin

First cab off the rank was to drop the strange 9 m pitch off the side of the stupidly large chamber we had found the previous week. As suspected, this simply joined back into the main chamber 10 or so metres along via a high window and another ~10 m drop. While Andy and I quickly surveyed this the other two fossicked in the rock fall at the end of the big side branch of the chamber. We joined them and pushed various nasty leads to no great finds. We then double-checked the rock-fall we had pushed last week at the base of the chamber and found nothing startling there either. On the way out of this section I had a look in the rock-fall immediately below the pitch that enters this section. Andy assured me he'd looked at it on the last trip, so I was confident of finding something new! After several metres of rock-fall I found myself in the same place I'd been earlier when pushing the end of the big side branch and pulled the pin.

Back at the base of the 42 m we had a welcome drink and split up again. Andy and Serena tackled the traverse over to Vertical Euphoria while Niall and I surveyed the upper level of the For Everhard serpentine that I'd looked at several trips ago. Niall and I then did a quick tourist down to the top of the pitch and back. We then surveyed over to the other two via the rather sporty little traverse and pendulum, supplied Serena with the second battery (she'd managed to flatten the first one installing only three bolts – you'd expect to get 10+ normally). She then installed a bolt at the edge of the drop into VE and we all descended the fabulous 70 degree mud slope for about 15 m to the floor. I think we'd forgotten just how fabulous this chamber/aven is and we were all blown away with its breathtaking beauty again. We surveyed out, derigged the traverse (always harder than installing the buggers) and exited the cave. A fairly low key trip in comparison to the previous week, but we were always going to be hard pressed to match that trip for excitement! Only a couple more trips left now to finish the For Everhard dig, push the nasty passage below VE and derig.

We ran into John Hawkins-Salt (ex STC member) and entourage in the Eight Rd carpark. They'd set up camp for the night and were heading into Growling the following day. Andy was very happy to score a freshly brewed coffee off them!

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Wed. 5th March, 7:30 pm, 17 Darling Parade, Mt Stuart (Arthur Clarke's house)

IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave

Alan Jackson

3 February 2008

Party: Serena Benjamin, Arthur Clarke, Alan Jackson, Jane Pulford, Tony Veness, Susan Westcott



Indulging in a little light reading while waiting for the train.

A group of us had spent the night at Francistown after the pampas working bee the previous day. Loretta and Anna had also come down for the night and before the caving happened we had a few other activities to partake of. Serena, Jane and Tony went for a walk into Duck Hole Lake (at Hastings) while Loretta, Anna and I took a trip on the Ida Bay Railway. I'd always wanted to go on this train since childhood but had never managed it. The plan was to take the 9:30 train and then meet the others at the station at 11:30. Unfortunately the engine blew up about 4 km in and we had to wait for the spare engine to come down and rescue us! This meant we didn't get back to the station till 12:30.

So, a little later than intended, we headed into Mystery Creek Cave. The plan was to cross-check Arthur's knowledge of the cave with the current set of survey notes to see what bits we still need to do. We located various unsurveyed side passages. We spent some time down towards the back end, where the large dropped slabs amongst a phreatic zone are, looking for a high level lead that Arthur remembered. We think we may have found it but what we did find were numerous ~7 m deep phreatic rifts that dropped off over the back of the fallen slabs that were not drawn in or surveyed by Jeff.

We still had time up our sleeves at this stage so we headed through to the climb up into the 'Railway Tunnel' to Matchbox Squeeze. Susan and

Arthur started heading out slowly while the rest of us tackled the Mud Slides down lower. This had been full of water when we'd tried to survey it last time. I hadn't been in there for years and there was much more to it than I remembered. All up we surveyed 111 m of passage. It is an interesting area with some spectacular phreatic passage, copious quantities of super fast mud and some great (but mostly muddled) decorations.



'Forward Probe' (Serena) checking an unpleasant lead.

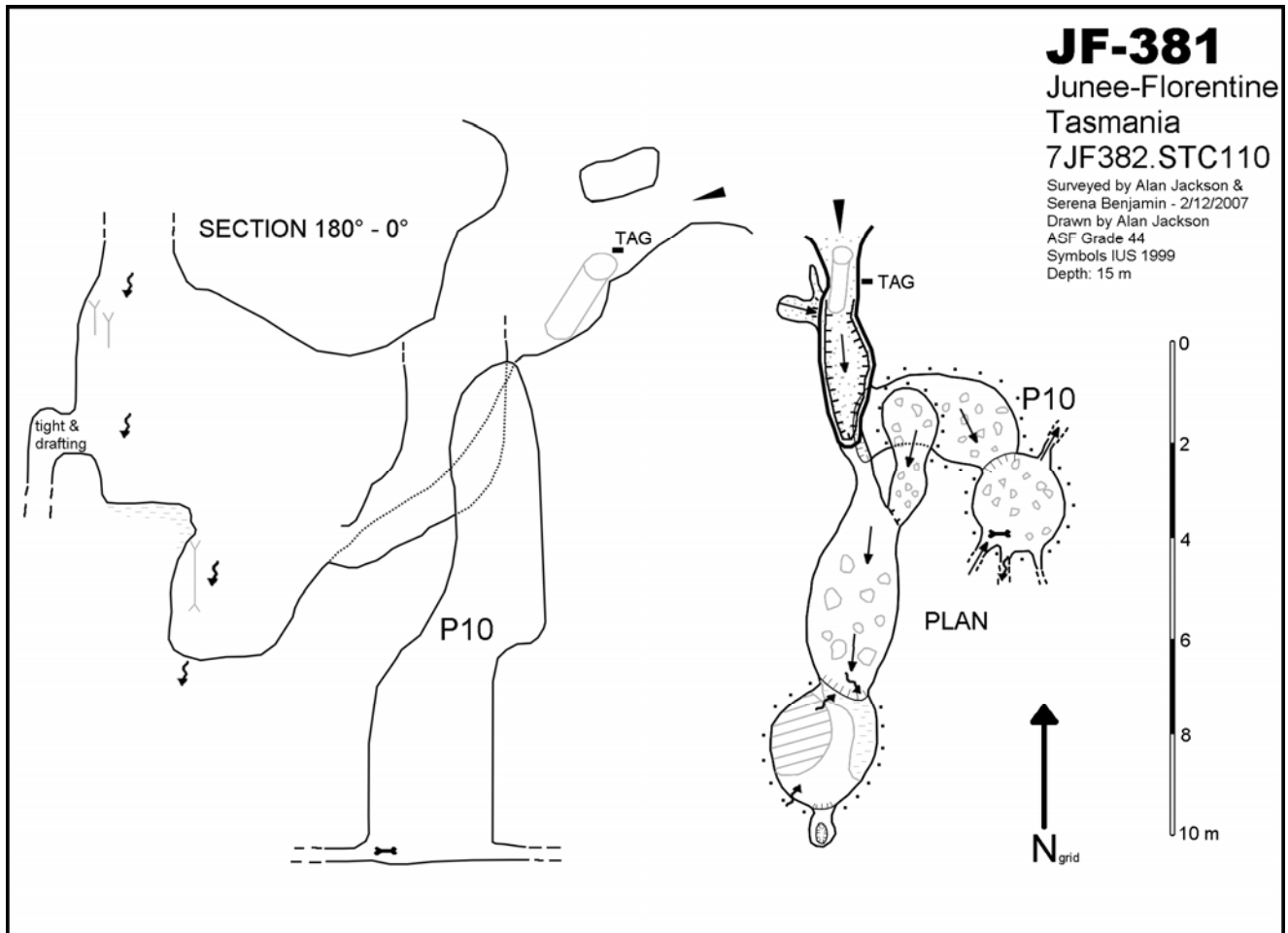
We caught up to the other two in the glowworm chambers, had a wash and headed out. I now have a pretty good idea of what's left to do in there. It should be achievable in one medium length day with the exception of the big extensions Gavin and I pushed in there a few years ago. It was all surveyed but what few sketches can be found are hardly legible and it may be a good idea to do a whirlwind tour in there to tidy up the bookwork.



Some fabulous dendritic fungal hyphal growth devours the flood debris

Other Exciting Stuff

JF-381 Survey (from trip report in SS363:16)



JF-365 Satans Lair Rigging Guide

Ric Tunney

P1 (8p) 17 m rope. Bolt 2 m to left of tag. Rebelay to bolt 2 m down. If wet, there are lots of places for redirections to move the rope away from the water. Use rope as a handline below the pitch itself.

P2 (14p) 22 m rope. Belay from bolt LHS at lip of pitch, with backup to flake on LHS 5 m before bolt. Rebelay on bolt on LHS 4 m down and out a few metres. In wet conditions, a redirection around a boulder on far side of pitch 5 m further down will hold the rope further away from the water, but it is not necessary for a free-hang.

Rock-pile. A 6 m handline may help in the rift at the bottom of the rock-pile.

P3 (8p + 12c) 25 m rope. Belay to bollard at lip with backup to trace around flake RHS at base of previous handline. Redirect with tape around rocks to go around corner at base of 8p. Easiest to do the whole lot as a pitch.

6c Free-climb

4c Free-climb

5c A short handline around bollard at lip helps with the top 2 m of this climb.

P4 (6p) 12 m rope rigged from jug LHS, with backup to thread at floor level LHS 3 m back.

P5 (9p) 12 m rope. Belay to jug LHS at head-height at lip, with backup to trace around block in roof 3m up. (Approach this from further back up streamway.) Or just use the jug as a redirection.

P6 (22p) 30 m rope. Belay to small bollard LHS just before lip, with backup to flake RHS 4 m back. Traverse ledge and rebelay to bollard RHS, giving a free-hang to bottom. This pitch can get wet.

Notes:

1. All directions looking downstream.
2. Bolts are 8 mm x 90 mm 316SS Powers Throughbolts.
3. Hangers have been removed except for top bolt. (Thread was slightly damaged by a rock hammer when installing bolt, so it was thought best to leave the hanger in situ. Hanger is a 4 mm thick Fixe 304SS, so it should last a while.) 3 x 8 mm hangers required.
4. Not all cavers will need the handlines.
5. A few tapes, etc will be needed for rigging.

The Great Pampas Bureaucracy – Weed control, risk assessments and too many children

Alan Jackson

Sometime last year Rolan and I were retesting the ‘test-bed’ p-hangers that Jeff Butt et al. installed in the upper benches of Benders Quarry. While wandering about we found a few large mature pampas grasses (a declared weed under the Tasmanian *Weed Management Act 1999*) and numerous seedlings. These were in addition to the two large mature pampas that various members of STC spotted a few years back beside the main track. Despite reporting these first two pampas to staff at the Hastings Visitors Centre several times nothing ever seemed to happen. I should have taken heed of this experience.

Following the President’s message at the November meeting and then in his reminder in SS363 I got it into my head that it would be a good public relations exercise between the club and Parks (the management authority for the World Heritage Area which includes Benders Quarry) if we undertook some feel-good volunteer exercise together. So I guess I’ve got Matt to blame for my one recorded moment of inclusiveness and consideration of the proper and legal process.

I shot a few emails about to track down what would be required and who I needed to talk to to undertake such an event. Things seemed to go reasonably smoothly (although I did manage to step on Ian Houshold’s toes – which can only be seen as a slightly intentional and entertaining situation). A date was set, a band of enthusiastic club volunteers rounded-up and a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) completed (insert groan here). We unfortunately now live in a world of liability, litigation and complete responsibility for everyone else’s actions (with the clear exception of your own).

On Saturday 2nd February everyone rocked up at Benders Quarry champing at the bit to wreak havoc and destruction upon the local pampas population. A last minute inclusion to the eradication volunteers were Guy Bannink and family. To everyone’s shock and horror, Guy and Karen had dared to bring their two children under the age of eleven. During the getting changed and paper work phase of the day (PWS actually stands for Paper Work Service, not the incorrectly but commonly believed Parks and Wildlife Service) Guy and Karen were informed that the children would not be able to help with the project because the JSA/Risk Assessment had been devised under the condition that only ‘fit and able adults’ would be in attendance. The children were too high risk and they were politely asked to leave. Unsurprisingly, I took issue with this (any opportunity for an argument). A few quick discussions with Paul from Parks and the STC team ensued and within minutes the fellowship was broken. Paul packed up and went back to normal duties (probably had some paperwork to file) and the STC team headed in to the quarry to do what we’d turned up to do (with the children).

In Paul’s defence, he is just a pawn in the Parks ‘system’ and can accept no blame or criticism for the way he handled the situation. He did what he had to do under the circumstances and risked losing his job had he overlooked the issue and an accident had occurred. I also acknowledge

and appreciate the time and effort Paul went to to get things as far as they did. It’s just a shame that the Parks bureaucracy and my constitution are not compatible. I fear the Parks bureaucracy is not compatible with anything, to be honest.

First we headed to the two mature pampas on the track just up from the main bench and face. Here the group had a quick botany lesson on the finer details of picking the difference between pampas and the native cutting grass (*Gahnia grandis*) which abounds in the quarry. We soon had a group of experts and we removed all the emerging seed heads off the two specimens. Timing was perfect with the seed heads within days of opening up and dispersing. Each flower head can contain up to 100,000 seeds!

Next we headed to the very top benches where the numerous seedlings were located previously. We spread out and systematically scoured the length of each bench locating and removing any pampas we could reach. There were a few tiny ones that had germinated mid-face which will have to be removed later with ropes (just imagine the JSA for that work!)



A. Clarke

He might be getting on a bit but Greg can still swing a mean mattock.

In addition to the pampas we also located and removed one small *Cotoneaster* sp. (not a declared weed but good to get rid of all the same), one small blackberry and some ragwort (both declared weeds). On the main lower bench we also found a very healthy looking 3 m high ornamental pine, which was very out of place. This will require cutting off at a later date (maybe just before Christmas next year if anyone needs a nice tree?) Many spear thistles (*Cirsium vulgare*) were pulled out too but are not an overly important weed in non-agricultural situations.



A. Clarke

Numerous pampas germinating in the blue metal filtration berms.



Alan, Guy and Jane do their best pot plant impersonations.

In the end we scoured the majority of the benched area of the quarry and recorded weed locations with a handheld GPS. The highest levels and access road were not closely looked at (near Exits Nostrils/Worm Hole and the track to Rocket Rods Pot), nor were the extensive spoil dumps off the lower and eastern side of the benches. In the end we must have collected in excess of 70 pampas seed heads and prevented the release of something like seven million seeds! We looked like mobile pot plants with them strapped onto our packs and dangling in front of our faces.



Serena's twisted corpse after falling off one of the cliffs ... Nah, only joking – she was flat out exploring a hole on the second bench.

All weed locations, GPS tracks (to show what areas we traversed) and suggested future works have been

forwarded to our friends in Parks and hopefully between the two parties we can get the few large pampas cleaned up and also keep on top of any new seedlings that spring up.

Thanks very much to the team:

- Charlotte, Erin & Guy ▪ Greg Middleton
- Bannink & Karen
- McGraith
- Serena Benjamin ▪ Jane Pulford
- Arthur Clarke ▪ Tony Veness
- Sarah Gilbert

I thought it was a lovely day (despite the early hiccup) and probably the first time that the majority of the group had had a proper investigation of the quarry.

By the way, despite our best efforts, both children survived the ordeal.



Jane heads for home with some added sun protection (SPF Pampas+).



Small children milling about dangerously on cliff edges

JF-395 Survey (From trip report on page 8)

JF-395 Sunny Cave Hole

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF395.STC115

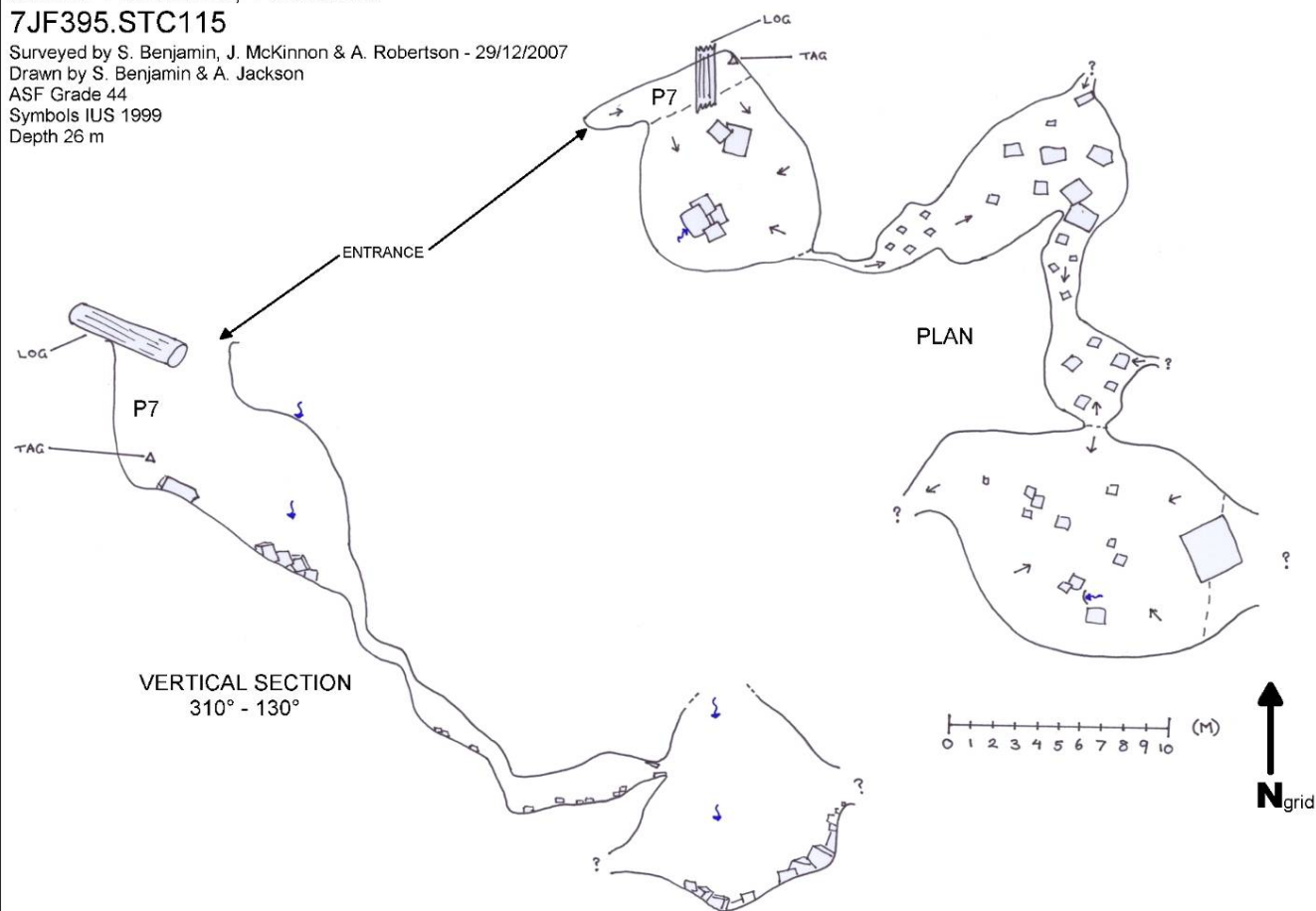
Surveyed by S. Benjamin, J. McKinnon & A. Robertson - 29/12/2007

Drawn by S. Benjamin & A. Jackson

ASF Grade 44

Symbols IUS 1999

Depth 26 m



The Fat Conductor whips his orchestra into a bubbling frenzy in a recent extension to IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave (24/06/2007 – SS361:10)

A. Clarke