

# SPEIEO SPIEL 365

March - April 2008



## STC Office Bearers

### President:

Matt Cracknell  
Ph: 0409 438 924 (m)  
crowdang@yahoo.co.uk

### Vice President:

Sarah Gilbert  
Ph: (03) 6234 2302 (h)  
sgilbert@utas.edu.au

### Secretary:

Alan Jackson  
Ph: 0419 245 418 (m)  
alan.jackson@lmrs.com.au

### Treasurer:

Amy Robertson  
Ph: (03) 6297 9999 (h)  
amyware@yahoo.com

### Equipment Officer:

Gavin Brett  
Ph: (03) 6223 1717 (h)  
gavinbrett@iinet.com.au

### Librarian:

Greg Middleton  
Ph: (03) 6223 1400 (h)  
ozspeleo@bigpond.net.au

### Editor:

Alan Jackson  
Ph: 0419 245 418 (m)  
alan.jackson@lmrs.com.au

### Search & Rescue Officers:

Tony Veness & Jane Pulford  
Ph: 0417 100 320 (m)  
Tony.veness@aad.gov.au

### Webmaster:

Alan Jackson  
Ph: 0419 245 418 (m)  
alan.jackson@lmrs.com.au

### Web Site:

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

**Front Cover:** A three way tie in JF-424 Dead Heat entrance *Photo by Gavin Brett*



# Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the

**Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated**

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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

Congratulations! You've signed me up for another six issues of the *Spiel*. As usual, I will aim to disappoint. I don't have any new directions I'd like to run with this year; I'm happy to continue being rude to people and recording the on-ground activities of members (in that order of priority). Since none of you slack shifts get out and cave these days that means I will continue to write 80% of the material in the *Spiel*. This must be desperately boring for you all (both having to read so much material written by me and not caving). The *Spiel* is **your** newsletter so **you** should be submitting material for it. I'm particularly in need of stuff for Stuff 'n Stuff. Without stuff for Stuff 'n Stuff then I may have to change it to Diddly 'n Squat. Maybe you'll all turn out to be better at submitting diddles and squats than stuff. Bunty is the only one who can claim to regularly submit 'stuff' to me and I'm forced to use it for lack of more suitable material!

Alan Jackson

## [Bunty's] Stuff 'n Stuff

**KUBLA KHAN CLEANING TRIPS** – Dave Wools-Cobb has mentioned that there will be some Kubla cleaning trips April to September 2008. For people who haven't seen the cave this is a good opportunity. Contact Dave if you're keen on earning a trip thru Kubla – [tascaver@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tascaver@bigpond.net.au)

**BOOS ALL ROUND FOR IAN HOUSHOLD?** At the last Tasmanian Speleological Liaison Council meeting we were informed that Ian Houshold had a grant to undertake some scientific research in the granite pseudokarst on the Blythe River (NW Tasmania) – a long section of this quite large river flows 'underground'. He was looking for volunteers. It was initially mooted for sometime around Christmas 2007 but nothing came of it. Pity - it sounded

interesting. Maybe the funds were really just a donation to some Camena farmer called Grant?

**WANT TO BUY YOUR OWN PIECE OF MOLE CREEK KARST?** Rolan has informed me that the Tasmanian Land Conservancy is selling two blocks at Mole Creek. Basically, TLC has purchased the properties, covenanted the titles to protect karst and forest values, and is now looking for prospective purchasers. Both properties have caves. Information and maps of the two properties are available at <http://www.tasland.org.au/revolving> (see the Marakoopa Creek and Sassafra Creek properties). The Northern Caverneers' 'Marakoopa Hut' is located on the Marakoopa Creek property.

**FRENCH COWSTAIL TESTING** – Geoff Wise has drawn my attention to some testing the frogs have undertaken of cowstails and similar devices. Titled *Series of tests on Cow's Tails used for progression on semi-static ropes – June 2006*, it subjects various home-made and commercially available cowstails (including the Petzl Spelegyca) to fall tests and compares their ability to absorb the forces associated. It is 40 pages long and full of numbers but is nonetheless very interesting. One of its conclusions is that "Cow's Tails currently on the market that are entirely manufactured, whether they be single or double, symmetrical or non-symmetrical, are not appropriate for either caving or work on ropes. In particular, Cow's Tails made from sewn tapes, in widespread use by cavers and rope workers, can pose a real risk ... From the point of view of shock absorption, Cow's Tails made from dynamic rope and knots at both ends achieve the best results." The document is available from [http://british-caving.org.uk/rope/lanyard\\_tests\\_v6.pdf](http://british-caving.org.uk/rope/lanyard_tests_v6.pdf) If the link doesn't work then contact the Editor and he'll forward you a copy. A copy will be filed in the STC electronic archive.

## Trip Reports

### JF-36 Growling Swallet – Frownland (an exercise in futility)

Alan Jackson

9 February 2008

**Party:** Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson

I'd always wanted to get to Frownland to put a tick in that box. It had long been on Serena's tick list too. With her imminent departure we decided it was time. Trev had mentioned to me that there was still a bit of surveying that needed doing at the back end so we thought we'd have a go at completing that too.

We went in via Slaughterhouse and didn't muck around – straight to Dreamtime via Bloody Smokers/Dusty Junction with no tourist-stops. At Dreamtime Stonedown I had to re-engage my brain. The first time I'd been here with Madphil, having not done any background research on this obstacle, we'd ignored the handline and pushed straight into the rock-fall at base level. We'd got through, much to Trev's surprise when we told him (this obstacle had halted progress for a while before a nasty climb was performed). This time we followed the rope but got disoriented soon

after. I followed trog marks down a narrow crawl which headed off at the same level as the anchor point for the handline. This was well trogged for a while but then became more pristine looking. I had no idea if this area still backed up in floods and washed away the trogging though. I continued on via a series of narrow grotty things and popped out into a showering rock-fall chamber that I remembered from my last time through. A short climb up under the water and we were back in open territory – River Lethe.

The mud banks in River Lethe are spectacularly slippery and very entertaining – stand up at your own peril. Not far along and it was into new territory for me. The going becomes easier (you can drop down to stream level and stand on a flat rocky substrate) and then Tiger Mountain. What a fabo bit of cave. The main stream turns ~120° back on itself and a huge mountain of mud heads off to the side with a nice little stream running down. We investigated the huge chamber, dreamed about finding the course of that water from the surface and had some lunch. Neither of us had watches but in the process of trying to work out how the hell to put the camera into timer delay mode I found the time setting. It had taken us ~3.5 hrs. A couple of silly

photos were taken (about fifty of mud banks and clouds of mist while I worked out how to activate the timer delay) and then we continued upstream.



*Two grots at Tiger Mountain happy to have finally worked out the camera auto-timer*

Passage size comes down a step from here on (although it still averages about 6 m wide and 4 m high!) A low point was reached, Perfidy Crawl, (roof height around 400 mm) so we dumped the bag and shoved survey gear down our tops. It soon opened up again to moderate dimensions before really opening up into a large muddy chamber with rock-fall barring the back end. Somewhere in here was where the survey had finished. In SS249:8-10 Trevor had phrased it: “We ended the survey on an obvious block marked with a small rock.” Unfortunately those “obvious” features never seem that obvious to complete strangers 20 years later (the Hairygoat Hole location description comes to mind – seen any ‘obvious trees’ in the JF forest recently, anyone?). I had given Trev a ring to double check the situation and he had assured me there was “an obvious rock cairn that you can’t miss.” We missed it.

I was determined that if we had come this far then we were going to get to the end. The mud was vile and the belly

wallows awful. The vast majority of things we looked at had evidence of Stefan’s knees and boots. After two nasty crawls in the stream the third one was impassable. A few up leads here ended in a tiny chamber with a small rock cairn. I thought about leaving a note on some survey paper congratulating the stupidity of any future visitors to this spot – THE Back End. We about faced and scurried up various muddy climbs into the breakdown. We trod some new ground (no evidence of previous habitation) but found nothing exciting. Trev’s section on Growling in the *TCC Explorations Journal* says it all really – “Pondering the way on in this complex and remote area is dispiriting to say the least. Best described as a mud dungeon, it rapidly becomes an exercise in futility.”

So we headed out. At Tiger Mountain I took a high route and discovered a huge “VSA” scratched into the mud (letters about 4 feet high). Peter Ackroyd is the only VSA member that I know of who ever got this far into the system (see *Nargun* 21(5):41), so I’ll direct my vitriol at him. Nothing quite like celebrating your achievements in a vast natural wonder by laying down some graffiti. Back at Dreamtime Stonedown I spotted a rope ladder near where the water sprays in. I figured that a third route thru this obstacle would be novel so we used it. The reason we missed the proper way on the way in was because we headed off at anchor height whereas we need to climb a further 4 m or so and then head off horizontally. We added another cairn to make this more obvious. Halfway down Dreamtime I found another bit of VSA’s handiwork on a mud face above the stream. The ‘artiste’ must have been disturbed though because only the V and S were present. Jeff Butt had been with the two VSA bods on this trip so maybe he caught them in the act. I assume Jeff was as anal about cave conservation in 1988 as he was when I knew him!

The rest of the trip out (via the sumps to make sure Serena got the full tour) was uneventful with the exception of a knee smashing stumble I took in Necrosis. My knee is still aching as I write this report and probably will be for many days to come. Boo hoo.

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## **Sunshine Road – more surface bashing**

**Alan Jackson**

**16 February 2008**

**Party:** Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson

Initially I thought we might have a surface bash in the vicinity of “The Slip” on the south east face of Wherretts Lookout but after a couple of hours research in the archive I realised that I would need a solid day to compile a full list of the tagged and untagged entrances in this area. I wasn’t interested in just going for a tourist; if I was to go there then any untagged entrances needed to systematically tagged and documented/surveyed. Plan B was to return to the Sunshine Rd where only three untagged caves were known (the two we found recently and Rolan’s Z19).

We did a little more road maintenance on the way and cleared some more of the more significant overhanging vegetation. There are still a lot of saplings up the middle of the road but the majority of the roadside stuff is only minor little stuff now. We parked the car at the end of the road

and headed in to look for Z19 again. We went right to where the GPS told us it should be but found no cave. I need to consult Rolan to see if he has any memory of where this hole is. We stayed left of the orange taped route and left of the ridge as we continued up. Bunty thrashed around down lower in some blind dolines while I stayed a little higher. I found a cave with an entrance formed in clay with a small hole in the bottom that opened out into rifty development with a good 6 m+ pitch and a healthy draft. With no bedrock to attach the tag to we eventually settled on fixing it onto the side of one of two large flat pieces of limestone reasonably solidly bedded in the clay directly above the small hole above the pitch. It was tagged JF-424. All caves tagged on this trip had a piece of pink survey tape slipped in behind the tag to hopefully make them a bit easier to spot in 20 years or so when someone else bumbles along and refinds them covered in moss. Figure 1 plots the route taken and cave locations.

With the previous trip’s GPS coordinates to guide us we quickly relocated ‘1217’ a little further up on the ferny plateau (see SS364:11-13 for discovery and nomenclature



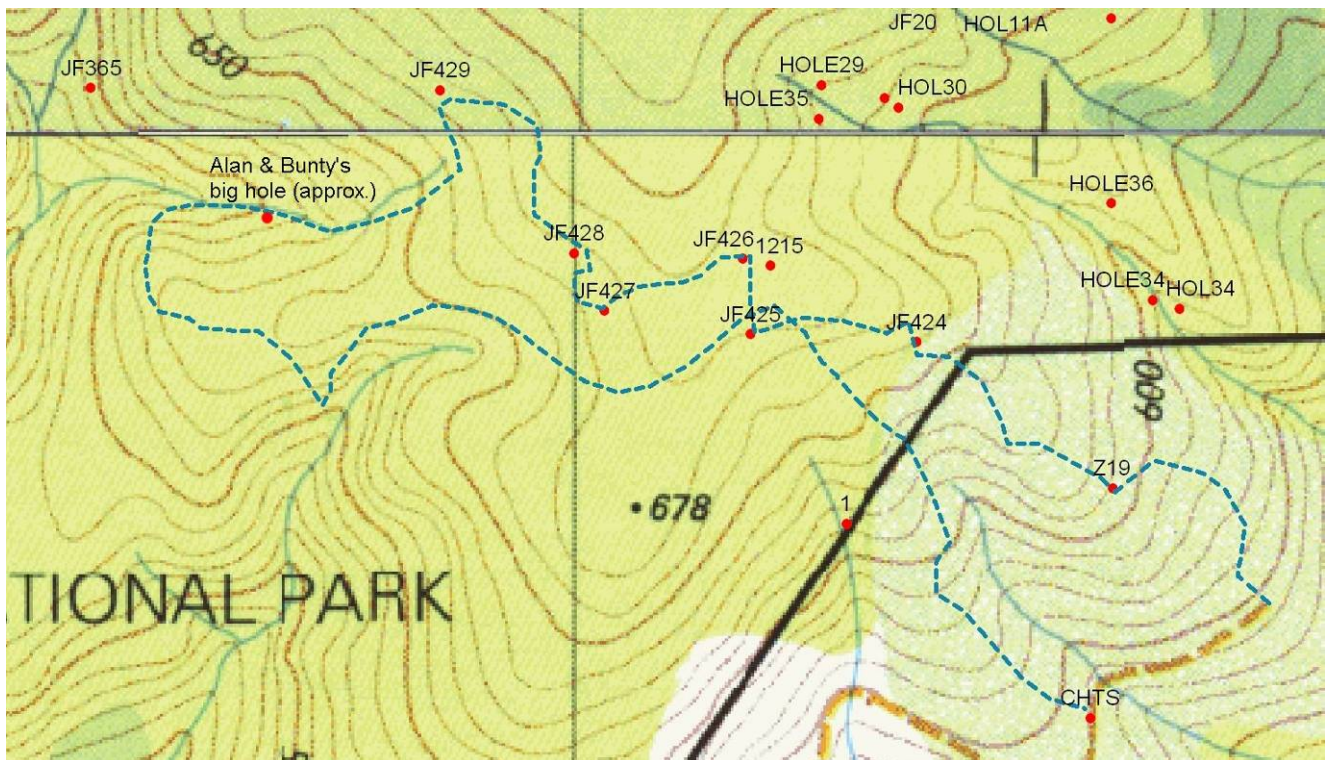
of these holes). This was tagged JF-425. The tag was placed well into the cave due to a lack of solid rock anywhere near the surface. It is located at the base of the entrance climb (at about minus 3 or 4 m) at chest height on the right hand wall. I negotiated the next short climb and baulked at the narrower climb that follows immediately. I wanted gloves and an oversuit to tackle this one.

Again the GPS guided us to '1216 – Canis Horribilis'. The obvious large cliffed doline was tagged (not the small vertical entrance a few metres north of the doline). The JF-426 tag was attached to the vertical rock wall towards the cave passage end of the wall at about chest height.

Now it was time to look for new stuff and we headed off to the west to see what we could find. We got the feeling we were too high so we headed downslope and promptly located a very large entrance, cliffed most of the way round with a steep mud slope on the southern side. The entrance was some six metres in diameter but was terminally choked with crap at about -8 m. Being such a significant and obvious feature we decided that it should be tagged. It was borderline but it was certainly deep enough and looked decidedly like something the majority of people would call a cave and get excited about – a good long term reference point for future surface surveying. The JF-427 tag was affixed at head height when standing at the base of the cave immediately above the choke/lowest point.

Further west again we located another hole. This was a tiny entrance (600 mm by 300 mm) but with a two metre drop followed by several seconds of tumbling slope. You couldn't see what happened but rolled rocks sounded good. The JF-428 tag was attached on the flat vertical wall above the entrance (which was mudstone, not limestone).

After consulting the map we realised we were approaching the heads of a couple of the major gullies in the area. We would need to swing north to contour and follow what one would expect the contact to do. The vegetation was a bit nasty and again we had the feeling we were too high. The surface geology is very strange in what is proving to be the contact in this area. All the caves we have found are surrounded with a deep soil profile formed within the clayey mudstones of the overlying rock (Parmeneer Supergroup material, or some other big word like that – ask Matt). There is no obvious contact line to track along like you find in the KD-Dwarrowdelf-Cauldron or Serendipity valley areas. The entrances are all very cryptic and are found more by accident rather than cunning. Anyway, we dropped down and soon found a good cave-like feature (a medium-sized blind doline). Immediately west of this feature, very carefully hidden behind ferns and other vegetation, was a very significant cliffed entrance. This was tagged JF-429 – tag affixed to the vertical rock wall at chest height after climbing several metres down via the sloping muddy entrance. We had a look a little further which revealed a connected 5 m pitch and steeply descending rift. A good prospect.



**Figure 1.** Cave locations and route taken on 16-03-2008. CHTS stand for 'Canis Horribilis Track Start'

The day was getting on so we decided to back track and possibly descend the gully which would hopefully see us relocate Dave Rasch and Andras Galambos' "Hole 1" which they found way back in 1999 (see SS312:10) and was later assigned JF-X64. Without really consulting the map or GPS we barrelled down what we thought was the right gully. It was pretty easy going, quite steep and deeply incised. A few hundred metres down or so a doline in the valley floor was noticed. Up on the left (south east) side of

the gully immediately adjacent to this doline was a much larger trench (about ~8 m deep, 4 m wide and 15 m long). Unfortunately there was no continuation at the bottom. We decided against tagging this one and instead just tied a pink tape nearby with "Alan and Bunty's Big Hole" written on it! As soon as we had entered the gully we had lost the GPS signal. After another 100 m or more I figured we had come far enough and need to climb out of the gully to get GPS signals and work out exactly where we were. The

ascent was horrible, with densely packed dogwood spars barring the way up a terribly steep and rocky slope. Once the ridge was attained the GPS kicked back into life and indicated that we were miles off-line. We had descended the wrong gully. Instead of heading south towards “Hole 1” we had been heading west toward the confluence with the JF-365 Satans Lair gully. Bugger; we were now a long way from where we wanted to be. Correcting our heading we struggled-off through the maze of tangled shrubs and trees. The vegetation just got worse and worse, there were no caves and our destination didn’t seem to be getting any closer. Suddenly the ground dropped away beneath our feet into a very deeply incised gully. This was the one we were meant to be following but with the wasted time we now just wanted to get back via the easiest route. The straight line option would have required the descent and ascent of the enormous gully so we contoured left and skirted the top of the gully. From here the vegetation got even worse. It was pure evil and the only reprieve came via a strange Snakes and Ladders type approach where we tried to locate fallen trees which provided a path of less resistance

through the scrub. This often meant doubling back on oneself and turning countless right-angles but anything was better than tackling that scrub. Finally we got back to JF-425 territory and easier going. We headed for the next ridge west of the one we had ascended and found very nice going. We located the yellow taped track we had noticed last time and it more or less bombed straight down the ridge via the network of dozer and snig tracks. We gratefully popped out on the road a couple of hundred metres from the end. This is certainly the best way to get up from the road so we marked a small eucalypt with three pink tapes to indicate the track start (which is hard to pick from the road due to a ~4 m high steep embankment beside the road).

A good and productive day but we could have done with a little less scrub bashing. There’s no better feeling than discovering and tagging a cave all in the one trip. Sure as hell beats leaving a legacy of X and Z caves for the next ten generations to tidy up!!

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## **Semi-Surface Day near Serendipity/Lost Pot/Flick Mints Hole**

**Alan Jackson**

**23 February 2008**

**Party:** Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

A winter’s day in February – what better time to spend a day on the surface in the JF?

The plan for the day was loose and alterations were constantly on the cards throughout the day depending on wind, rainfall and temperature. We started by walking the old fashioned route to Lost Pot (via Serendipity valley and Frost Pot). I then dangled the surface-survey carrot and got a distinct nibble. Excellent! We surveyed from JF-369 (just down the hill from Lost Pot) via Lost Pot up to JF-292 on the contact. Andy went in for a look-see and came out as bitterly disappointed as most previous visitors to this impressive looking cave. A quick sketch was drawn up which appears on page 20. Next stop on the survey line was JF-370 Mongrel Pot. A long stick with the tape tied to the end was used to reach the tag for measuring the last leg! The next lot of caves were all clustered around JF-371 Flick Mints Hole (which was already surveyed in to the surface network) so we downed tools and headed along the contact. Andy shouted out that he’d found a cave. It had a long pink tape tied over it which reeked of Dave Rasch. A huge tree had recently come down right next to it and obliterated numerous other significant trees in the area. At first it reminded me of Flick Mints Hole but the large tree that the tag should have been attached to had vanished. The pitch also wasn’t big enough. I then remembered reading about a hole in this area that Dave and Andras had found when they’d been up this way doing Flick Mints trips (the same period during which Jeff Butt had his accident). We slung the ladder down the entrance pit which fell short of the floor by a couple of metres (but free-climbing was simple from there). The whole cave was formed in a long narrow rift and after several down-climbs and tight bits (and heaps of bones) we were presented with a very narrow drafting rift (at about -30 m +). On a good day this could be pushed but my knee was killing me (following

my crash in Growling two weeks previous) so we about-faced. I can walk with no pain but any pressure on the end of my knee-cap and I experience extreme pain – hopefully just bruising which will get better soon! Back on the surface the wind was thundering through the canopy and various bits and pieces were crashing to the ground. Quite scary at times.

Subsequent searching of the archive has almost certainly identified this cave as JF-X63 Kangaroo Cave. Raschy’s report of exploration of this cave appears in SS309:6. The cave name and X63 number were assigned by Arthur Clarke in SS310:5. Yet another chapter in the Butt and Rasch legacy of X caves. If you don’t have the fortitude to go back and tag the caves you find then you shouldn’t be going out and finding them in the first place! We marked the spot where we will place a tag in the near future and started surveying again.

JF-293 Whistler was only 50 m away and we all got excited about the prospects in this cave. A howling draft, easy digging and Bunty managed to discover that larger rocks would rattle for 30 m+ (with a distinctive two second quiet bit that indicated a decent pitch). Andy managed to inhale a spider on his way into the cave and left a small pile of spider legs and sputum on the cave floor as a result of his choking. We then surveyed the 40 m or so down the hill to Flick Mints (and also surveyed in the red star picket that is nearby – number 13).

Then JF-372 Slimy Slot and JF-294 were surveyed in and investigated. I partially descended Slimy Slot but lacked the enthusiasm (and gear) to bottom it. We had a better poke around in 294, following various crappy rock-fall climbs to a three metre drop. The ladder was strung up and at the base of the drop a very small horizontal passage with a very strong draft continued on. Neither Andy nor I could muster the enthusiasm to remove helmets and have a go at it so we left it for future generations to look at. Survey on page 22.

The weather was really ordinary now so we decided to head for home. Initially we decided to follow the taped route from Flick Mints to Serendipity but after 30 m or so I suggested we choose a line through the bush and see what



we could find. After 20 m I found a narrow slot near the base of an upturned tree which I climbed down about five metres to the bottom. Maybe worthy of a tag but not really. A piece of white flagging tape was hung over the hole. Nothing else was found after then and we finally came back out into familiar territory near the blind doline beside the Serendipity track a hundred metres or so up from

Asteroid Pot. Some pruning of the McCullums Track finished off the day.

Thanks must go to Andy and Bunty for enduring foul weather and getting some more surface surveying completed. We gathered an additional 433 m of the stuff and tied in another seven caves. Either of these fine gentlemen would be welcome on my couch, be they dogs or not.

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## **JF-221 Owl Pot and other JF Activities**

**Jane Pulford**

**23-24 February 2008**

**Party: Guy Bannink, Claudia Hayes, Andreas Klocker, Jane Pulford, Tony Veness (Owl Pot on Saturday). Matt Cracknell and Sarah Gilbert replaced Guy on Sunday**

*Selectively cut and pasted from emails between the Editor and the Author.*

Had a good day in Owl Pot on Saturday (Andreas & I went right to the sump & back - he's very keen), strolled up Nine Road for occasional views of Mt Field West in the evening, then dined under a tarp strung off the Subaru's bull-bar while it hailed. Not a quiet night's sleep...

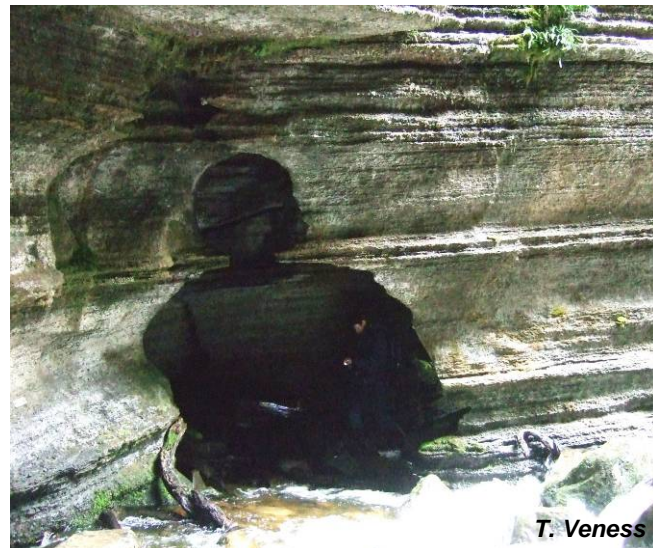
Guy enjoyed his return to real SRT in deep caves.

Sunday was simplified to walking past Growlings & up to Ice Tube. Wandered in as far as the first pitch head. New punters seem very excited. Time will tell if they can be tempted away from big wall climbing in the months ahead - and come caving with us instead.

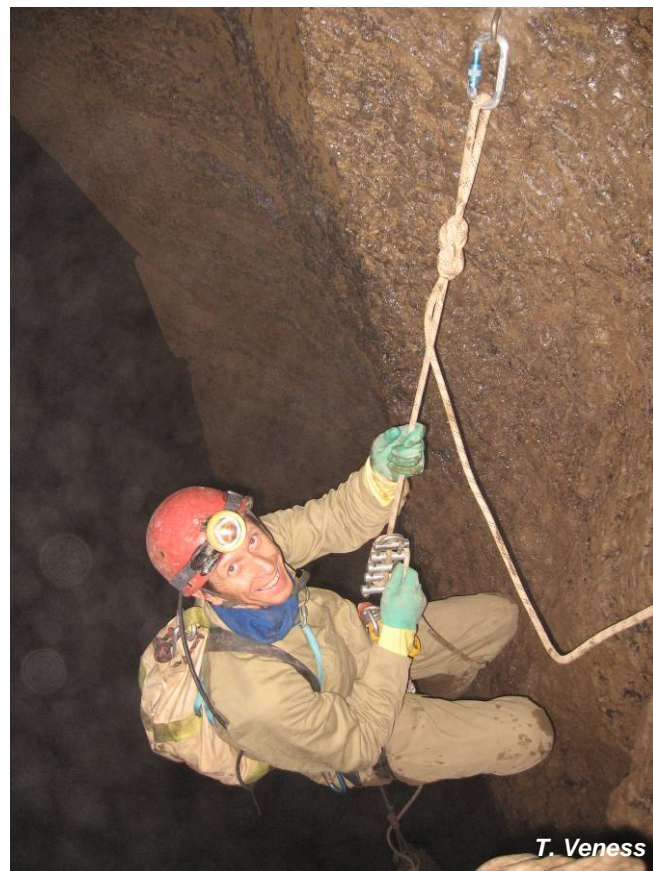


*Rearing to go, four clean cavers strike a pose. Guy is evidently more excited than the other three ...*

*Guy commences descent of the final waterfall pitch →*



*Sarah enters the 'caver' silhouette at the entrance to Growling*



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## **Sunshine Road – Dropping and finding more holes**

**Alan Jackson**

**1 March 2008**

**Party: Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson**

Back again to start dropping the recently discovered holes. We followed the dozer line up the open ridge (the old yellow taped route we'd followed out on the last trip). On the way Gavin pulled a rotting log out of the way to make

going easier and exposed a small native marsupial (probably a pygmy possum) trying to get a good day's sleep. It didn't move, just stayed curled up and breathing deeply. We carefully placed the log back together, apologised profusely and continued on. Almost at the plateau the route passed a cavey looking feature. Nothing exciting was found but I entered it into the GPS as a track reference point as '1218' (following on from the ridiculous nomenclature started back in SS364:11-13). It is worth noting here that while my base model cheapy old crap GPS (Garmin eTrex yellow model) had been performing admirably all day, the new flashy club GPS had still failed to get lock of any description. This was a recurring theme until Gavin got sick of it, turned it off and stowed it in his pack.

From this point the going is a bit tougher until the open ferny territory around JF-425 is reached. This was our first target for the day. The cave consists of a ~4 m entrance climb, 6 m of horizontal passage to a second climb (~2.5 m). Then a handline was placed down the smaller dimension 4 m climb that immediately follows which then opens up into a ~9 m pitch (which we laddered). A further tight 3 m climb leads to a choked muddy sump at the end of the rift. We surveyed out (survey on page 21).

JF-426 *Canis Horribilus* was next. Gavin set to work excavating the lower horizontal entrance (beside the tag) while I threw the ladder down the higher vertical entrance. Both ways were tight and we met in the middle. The pitch was ~9 m. A small chamber with various bits of decoration terminated in a tight (maybe lightly drafting) slot. Survey on page 20.

Heading west towards JF-427 Gavin found a new collapse. A short climb at the western end led to a dig in loose soil. This was excavated and we slid down into a heavily decorated chamber about 1.5 m high and 6 x 6 m in plan. A very well preserved articulated skeleton of a Bennetts Wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*) was found in one of the lower sections of the rubble floor. Remember the fire safety add a few years ago with some pommy twit impersonating Jamie Oliver who leaves unattended hot oil on his stovetop? At the end of the ad, upon witnessing the resulting oil fire, he exclaims "Gordon Bennett!" and it is a favourite expression that Gavin and I have adopted as our own. The cave was tagged JF-430 and named Gordon Bennett (prompted by the Bennetts Wallaby skeleton – just in case you're a complete twit and hadn't worked that out for yourself). Survey on page 21.

Some nasty vegetation with no caves was traversed to JF-427. This time, armed with a decent light, I was able to see a way on at the bottom choke. I half opened it but without gloves I handed the job to Gavin. He promptly sealed the hole with a large log and then spent five minutes shifting it again. He dropped down out of sight and reported good passage. I fetched my gloves and joined him. About 10 m of descending rift terminates in a boulder choke. We

moved various bits of the strange greasy slate-like rock but lost enthusiasm when presented with a particularly big block. The number 427 had already caused Gavin to harp on about the Chevrolet 427 cubic inch 'Big Block' engine (he can turn almost any conversation topic to engines if he tries hard enough) and the cave is now named. Little prospect for extensions but perhaps with enough determination and some good old-fashioned V8 power you could get through. Survey on page 22.

A short distance further west is JF-428. The hole was deemed too tight so we set about with improvised digging implements. In the end we opened a hole immediately behind the wedged boulder with the tag on it. We strung up a ladder and I squeezed down. It then opened up into a delightful 11 metre circular shaft but the bottom was also delightfully sealed with debris. Not even a narrow crack that would suggest a way on. Survey on page 22.

We couldn't be bothered heading further west to JF-429 so we headed back with the intention of dropping JF-424 and then heading out. Back in the JF-425/426 area Gavin found another hole. It was a steeply descending narrow rift which choked at ~10 m. We tagged it JF-431 and continued on. Shortly after, in a promising looking area with lots of exposed rundkarren, Gavin found another hole (he was on fire). It was a narrow descending passage with a healthy bug population. Gavin headed in, holding his breath past what he thought was the bulk of the small fly population. Upon recommencing breathing he disturbed about 5000 more flies and hastily retreated from the cave hacking and coughing up invertebrates. He emerged and collapsed on the ground with copious volumes of flies drowned in sputum all round his mouth. I laughed. We put on our balaclavas to act as a bug filter over our mouths and re-entered the hole. The small passage was so thick with flies that visibility was reduced 80% and the humming made your ears hurt. About 6 metres in the passage narrows and would require enlargement to access the slightly wider bit further on. The name Pigpen was suggested in honour of Madphil's nickname – the Peanuts character Pigpen is always depicted with a dense swarm of flies circling his head. It was tagged JF-432.

We thrashed down to JF-424 and I started getting the ladder out and rigging. Gavin climbed down into the entrance and had a look and immediately asked me what sort of light I'd had when I found this hole. As he suspected, it had been a crap light. A good light showed that this was a bigger pitch than anticipated and the chamber was quite big too. Neither of us felt like clinging to a dodgy ladder or two out in the middle of space at the end of the day. We decided to return to this hole with a properly anchored rope and SRT gear. We then headed out, more or less following the eastern side of the last gully that crosses the Sunshine Road (about 30 m past the point where our vehicle was parked and the yellow taped route heads up). A good day but no princesses yet.

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## **Ida Bay – Looking at some new holes**

**Alan Jackson**

**2 March 2008**

**Party:** Arthur Clarke, Ken Hosking, Alan Jackson, Paul Osborne (Chillagoe Caving Club)

Arthur and Ken had found some new holes a few months back, I was batching for the weekend and was keen to get two caving days in a row and Paul was in the state and keen to see how we do it south of the border.

The area is accessed by turning left off the old tramway track to Mystery Creek Cave about half to two thirds the



way along it. After a bit of scrub bashing a large depression is encountered. The main large, lower depression has lots of cavey looking features, with one wall essentially a limestone cliff with various holes dotted around adjacent to the cliff. First stop though was a smaller doline a little further up the hill (40 m further). This doline has a good sized hole at the lowest point on which the tag IB-238 was placed and a ladder was hung. Arthur and Ken got scratching around at the base of the ~7 m entrance pitch while I explored another tight hole a few metres away in the base of the doline. This was a ~4 m downclimb which choked off and a second entrance to it was noticed heading back up under the large boulder in the floor of the doline. In it I could hear the other two banging about further over through the fill.



*Paul tracks down the source of that foul odour while Ken inspects the other small hole in the IB-238 doline*

I then got bored sitting around in the mosquito infested bush so I headed down into the larger lower doline to check those holes out. The base of this doline is quite complex with numerous holes and rifts to check. A small narrow streamway was found at the bottom of the most inviting looking entrance and after climbing down one I could see daylight downstream. I popped back out and checked the other end and intersected the streamway further down. It soon got very tight and grotty and a job for the very keen. I checked all the other little pits but to no avail. I figured it was a pretty significant feature worthy of tagging so I placed a tag (IB-239) just inside the best looking entrance (the one with the climb down to the upper bit of the streamway). The dark part of the cave is probably only seven metres deep but the doline is over 15 m deep from the lowest edge of the lip to the entrances of the caves. Survey on page 26.

I then heard Paul calling out to me so I headed back up to IB-238. They had located a second pitch (estimated at ~15 m) but it required a bolt. I had taken the drill with me for tagging! Arthur and Ken were out of the hole and Paul was in it. I headed in too and checked rigging options. The 15 m rope we had was dangled down the pitch and proved to be well short of the bottom. To get around this we rigged a few tapes off dodgy boulders above the pitch and tied a short length of Ken's ~ 9 mm rope to them. This allowed him to get further down the pitch to a point where a rebelay could be placed to allow the 15 m rope to reach the bottom. Ken placed two bolts on a lip about 4 metres down

and tied in the longer rope. I was cold by now (only wearing one layer under my suit) so I departed (I had no SRT gear either).



*Ken sporting the usual Ida Bay garb of filth in IB-238*



*Alan ascending the entrance ladder in IB-238*

To pass the time Arthur and I started surveying between the 238 and 239 tags. Half way down into the 239 doline we located a cave up against the cliff line that Arthur had found previously. I scrambled down the ~4 m entrance climb and then doubled back under the entrance into a terminal chamber with a muddy choke. Several short straws/stals were hanging off the jammed boulders in the chamber roof. It was about 8 m deep all up I guess. Abundant around this entrance was the fern *Lastreopsis acuminata* which I had never seen in the IB karst area before (or any karst area for that matter). While not an uncommon species, it is restricted to small localised populations across the state. We marked where we would



place a tag and surveyed it in and then proceeded to 239. Arthur then headed off to the nearby uvala and old timber railway while I headed back up to 238 to help derig and steal the drill. The other two were back on the surface and reported that the very nice and spacious ~20 m pitch soon finished in a narrow choked rift which could be dug by the enthusiastic. We packed up, headed down and tagged the other cave IB-240 and caught up with Arthur again. Survey on page 26.



*What remains of the timber tramway*

We then headed west towards Mystery Creek Cave via the old tramway and complex uvala Arthur found. It was a dramatic landscape which I found very impressive. A huge master doline with four or five large dolines contained within it. The bottom of each was investigated but only the westernmost one contained much of interest. Ken was keen on a grotty hole in the base that required much digging. I checked out a shelter type cave under the northern lip which had a nice inverted cone of soft squishy stuff hanging off the ceiling. All it was missing were a few hand stencils on the wall ... Arthur entered this cave into his GPS as “Uvala Cave”. Ken then also found a low phreatic horizontal passage half way up the cliffed wall of the southern part of the same doline (the one with the HUGE stump and felled log). Closer inspection of this revealed a healthy draft and a tiny bit of floor removal required to push through. In hindsight we should have tagged these

two latter features but we figured we’d be back to check them out properly and tie them in via surface survey at a later date.



*The moonmilk encrusted stalactite in “Uvala Cave”*

A few metres from the lip of this western-most doline the ground disappears from under your feet and drops straight down to Mystery Creek. We picked the most forgiving line and scrambled down. Arthur found an interesting medium size entrance at the base of a bluff which narrowed off after a few metres. A little higher on the flank of the bluff I found a descending rift which kept me busy for 15 minutes and got me around 10 m underground. We tagged this one IB-241 on the left wall and continued down to the creek. Survey on page 27. Following the creek downstream Arthur took a brief diversion to locate IB-135 Beetlemania. This had not been surveyed in previously by Madphil and needs to be picked up when we traverse from IB-239 back to IB-10 on our next trip. While Ken had a wash in the stream and Arthur and Paul quickly looked in MCC I scrambled up and placed a number tag on the ‘daylight hole’ entrance to MCC. As part of my MCC survey effort I figure both upper entrances should be tagged. The ‘daylight hole’ entrance is reached by heading toward the cliff-line from just above the top of the wooden staircase on the main MCC track. The tag IB-242 was placed over the rather perilous scree-funnel that exists. We then headed out and retired for wood-fired pizza at Dover.

## **Serendipity Valley – tagging, surveying and exploring various holes**

**Alan Jackson**

**16 March 2008**

**Party:** Stephen Bunton, Sarah Gilbert, Alan Jackson

With my knee still giving me the shits we planned a light duties day; more tidying up in the Serendipity valley.

Job one saw Bunty install a red star picket at the junction of the McCullums track and the Serendipity track. Bunty had found this difficult to locate when coming from the other direction recently. It could also serve as a permanent survey station.

Job two was to retag JF-344 Serendipity and JF-346 (the large doline, which now takes the water again, just down from Serendipity). I have never been able to locate either of these tags despite referring to the tagging descriptions in SS185:3-4. I’ve even had both Trevor and Rolan at the entrances to tell me where they are but they must have either fallen off or been covered up by movement in the entrances. The new JF-344 tag was affixed to the ‘nose’ of the block that points straight down the valley at the usual grovel in entrance (old stream sink point). The new JF-346 tag was placed on the right wall (as walking in) above where the stream flows in high stage about chest height a few metres back from the small entrance hole proper. Both tags will be photo tagged and filed in the archive for future tag finding missions. These tags haven’t been surveyed in to other known points yet but should be. It is likely,



although not certain, that the current station “JF344” in the survey network was the old tag. There is the possibility of a small error being created here but hopefully people will research this report and get it right! Survey into the red star picket (number 007) behind JF-344 and you’ll be laughing.

The Flick Mints Hole area was our next objective. We followed the orange taped route from behind Serendipity. On the way (about 70 m before FMH) the track skirts around a fairly large doline. Off the side in the bottom of this doline is a narrow drafting crack that is well worth a dig. One can see 3-4 m of passage before it turns out of view. A short ethical debate ensued but we ultimately decided to tag it. It was almost a cave and would certainly become one when we crack it open! Sarah was against but Bunty and I were both for, so it was tagged JF-433 (tag on the left wall). Bunty said “It is better to be able to say I’ve tagged 400 caves but never been into any of them to have been in 400 caves and never tagged any of them.” We then trundled up to FMH, dropped our gear, surveyed back down to JF-433 and across to the small cave we’d found a few weeks previously (see report on page 6) and tagged it JF-434 (tag placed on the uphill (eastern) side of the entrance). JF-434 survey on page 25

It was now time to get underground, as job four was to tag and survey JF-X63 Kangaroo Cave (refer to report and reference on page 6). The tag JF-435 was attached on the back wall slightly to the left. It was nice to escape the heat of the day while surveying this pleasant little cave. This time we looked at (and surveyed) the uphill passage described in SS309:6. There were some more good bones up there. I had a better go at the tight rift at the bottom but couldn’t quite make it. A little work could see this opened up. On the way out I was going to get Bunty to holler through the small drafting window at the base of the entrance pitch to see if it connected with the lower bit of cave. In the end I did some sketchy free-climbing and found myself at the aforementioned window, on the other side, before Bunty had reached it from the other direction. We hauled ourselves back out into the heat of the day. Survey on page 24.

Job five was the dig in JF-293 Whistler. Bunty did first shift and started work on the top of the large mudstone

block that has fallen, blocking the drafting rift. It was proving to be more solid than we had hoped for. I joined him and posted myself over the block and then fed my feet back under the block to have a better look. The draft was howling past my ears, mobilising quite large chunks of loose dirt and rock (from the cave walls, not my ears). The crack was actually wide enough in one spot but it had a smaller limestone block resting over it. I couldn’t move or break it so I tackled the cruddy walls a little further out. I was making little progress (due to my cramped position) so I tried moving to a better spot for swinging the hammer. The bit I had been hammering with little success collapsed under my elbow and the hole was open! Excellent! We tied the ladder off to the large mudstone boulder and I posted myself down the slot. The rift opened up and then closed off about 8 m down but from about 4 m down a short traverse would gain access to a point where the rift is about 1.5 m wide. A good 20 m pitch at least would then be accessible. With no rope or other rigging gear we left this cave with grins from ear to ear.

Job 6 was to survey in JF-295. This was found easily and we tied it into the red star picket (013) next to FMH and also into JF-348 Benson Pot in the other direction. This made a nice survey loop to check our accuracy. JF-295 survey on page 25.

The day was still young so I invented job 7 on the spot. We crossed the gully to the Serendipity stream and up to JF-373 Punishment Pot area. I had left labelled pink tapes in this area when we had surveyed through so it was going to be easy to relocate and survey in “Serena’s second hole” which Serena had found and lost in SS362:12-13. It was found, tagged JF-436 (on the back/uphill wall) and explored. An entrance climb of about 5 m initially appeared to terminate in a soil plug but Sarah moved some crud and located a drafting hole at one end. A block barred the way to a small circular pot about 2 m deep. There was no obvious passage heading off but removal of the offending block would be wise to double check where the draft comes from/goes. Another day.

Job 8 was the welcome return to the car and civilisation. A very productive and interesting day. Thanks to Bunty and Sarah for assisting me in my Madphil-like crusade.

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## **JF-382 Dissidence – Dig and Derig**

**Alan Jackson**

**23 March 2008**

**Party:** Alan Jackson, Andy McKenzie

Andy’s letter of resignation had been handed in. It was time to derig Dissidence. We ambled down to the end of the For Everhard series and had a play in the dig. We made good progress excavating the clay/silt floor but not enough

to fit through. We decided to let it be for another year or two and headed out, stripping the gear as we went. With bulging packs and an ever increasingly unmanageable pile of rope we hauled-up on the surface in the late afternoon sunlight. After a quick wash at the creek we left a large stash of rope on a log for collection at a later date and staggered back to the car with a lot of rope and even more karabiners.

Dissidence is done (for now).

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## **JF-424 Dead Heat**

**Alan Jackson**

**24 March 2008**

**Party:** Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson

After a slow start (caving the previous day didn’t help) we assembled on the Sunshine Road. On the way we discussed the pros and cons of driving a 4WD ute with flashing lights

through forestry townships; I get a lot of waves from log trucks now but clapped-out vans full of hippies don’t seem as friendly anymore. More fuel for Tony’s ‘Alan is a bogan’ campaign, I fear. A bit of skylarking was partaken of with the aid of a young and flexible sapling on the roadside before we headed up the ridge track. About half way up I pulled out the GPS and discovered that I only had the Ida Bay waypoints uploaded; we would have to refind JF-424 the old fashioned way. A rather circuitous route

took us up, round, above and eventually down to the entrance.

Gavin started frigging with the rigging and did some entrance enlargements. The medium sized log was dispatched and suddenly the entrance was much bigger and far too scary a place for Gavin to be with no harness on. He scrambled out. While we geared up we discussed the rigging. Gavin thought that a third anchor might be required to balance it out and get a nice free-hang. This was going to produce a 'three-way tie' at the entrance and suddenly the cave had a name; Dead Heat.



*Alan monkeys around with the aid of a flexible sapling*

I got some pay-back for laughing at Andy for taking two left handed gloves to JF-382 the day before by leaving

both my pairs of gloves in the car. The free-hang was achieved and I dropped the 10 m pitch. The soil cone was one of the best I've seen with a very sharp edge/peak. The lower slopes of the cone descended some 5 m at around 40°.

I fossicked around the chamber and found the lowest point to be blocked with rubble. Just as I called Gavin down for a look I noticed a pitch heading off between two large fallen slabs. Gavin brought the second rope down with him. We had left the drill on the surface after realising we wouldn't need it for a rebelay on the entrance pitch. We now needed it to drop this second pitch. I ascended the entrance pitch and grabbed the drill. Three bolts later we had an approach line and a y-belay. The end of the 30 m rope from the entrance pitch wasn't going to make it so we tied in the new rope. It proved to be a very pleasant 11 m pitch. At the bottom a window opened out into a further pitch and small chamber. We didn't have enough rope! We attempted to economise our rigging but we still came up short. We were about to call it quits when Gavin realised that if we put the short rope on the entrance pitch, don't tie the two pitches together and then use the 30 on the last two pitches then we might just get there. So I ascended the entrance pitch again and switched the ropes.

This worked perfectly and a two bolt y-belay on the third pitch saw us down. A spectacular fully articulated skeleton of a large wallaby or similar was laid out on the floor. Gavin also found what must have been an *Antichinus* skull while shifting rocks in the lowest point. A definite downward continuation was obvious from the lowest point but we couldn't shift the offending boulder. Hilti would make light work of this restriction though. We started surveying out but while Gavin came up the last pitch he noticed the apparently glaringly obvious hole in the wall. A quick look yielded a narrow climb-down to a similar depth as the lowest point of the cave that would be worth looking at more closely in the event of a return.

We surveyed and derigged our way out, both liberally coated in vile sticky mud (very high clay content). The entrance pitch was just as good the third time as the previous times. Survey on page 23.

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## **MC-29 Kubla Khan – Post TSLC meeting cleaning trip**

**Alan Jackson**

**6 April 2008**

**Party:** David Butler (NC), Paul Darby (SRCC), Alan Jackson, Paul van Nynanten (NC), David and Jessica Wools-Cobb (NC)

I was up north for the Tas Speleo Liaison Council meeting the night before. David saw the opportunity for some captive slave labour and roped me in on a Kubla working bee.

The target for the day was to better mark the route through the Xanadu rock-fall (between the Khan and the Jade Pool) and then clean that route. The thought of spending several hours spraying rocks with water and scrubbing them with brushes didn't seem all that appealing to begin with but I was surprised at how much I enjoyed it. The results of

one's labour were clear to see and with six of us going at it sufficient progress was achieved, which kept spirits up.

David's drive and passion for this cave is unfathomable. He must have clocked up 100s of hours of volunteer time both underground and being chief bureaucrat liaising with Parks (I'd rather be a cleaner than a bureaucrat!) I calculated that this was my sixth trip in Kubla; three tourist trips and three Karstcare trips (I did two trips installing and testing the p-hangers). I was happy with that ratio and think that all Kubla visitors should aim for something similar; don't just tourist the cave, put something back into the preservation and management of the cave too. Under the current regime access to Kubla is a privilege, not a right. We need to maintain the current regime as a minimum and by conducting Karstcare projects we give the powers that be less reason to lock it up and throw away the key.



## Other Exciting Stuff

### Bunton's Wild World of Karst – New Zealand 2008

**Stephen Bunton**

Too often I get distracted from serious caving by my peakbagging activities. During January the Bunton trio headed off to the North Island of New Zealand to tag the top of the volcanoes Ngarauhoe (Mt Doom in Lord of the Rings), Ruapehu and Taranaki (Mt Egmont to those who pre-date political correctness). I was the only one of us who had been there before and that was thirty years ago.

On that occasion I visited Waitomo with expatriate pom Chris Pugsley. Chris was studying glowworms for his PhD and the guts of his study was about the effect of tourists on the glowworm population. His findings showed that tourism had no significant impact, a conclusion which could easily be distorted to say that there would be no trouble ramping up tourist numbers.

When we arrived, I could not believe the degree to which tourism had been ramped up, at Waitomo (pronounced White-omo if you want to assert your Polynesian identity – they couldn't possibly pronounce it the way it was first transcribed or in a manner that was consistent with the constituent Moari words "wai" meaning water and "tomo" meaning hole/shaft/cave – no, you have to change the way in which the syllables are emphasised!)

I was quite prepared to pay for the "blackwater rafting" or as it was once known the "Ruakuri float-through". Our baggage allowance wouldn't extend to caving gear and it was rather nice not to bother, nor have to clean up after the trip. However, besides not having a tyre inner tube, you couldn't do the cave on your own anyway, even if you had wanted to. Access to the caves is strictly controlled and restricted to commercial operations. I can't say that I am all that much in favour of this commodification of "wilderness" or "adventure" and certainly I can live without the manner in which such activities, which are safe as houses, get hyped up. You know you are in for something ordinary when a bunch of accountants or boring Belgian tourists can do a cave with "Rambo Factor" of 8!

Anyway the cave was in nice, white, horizontally bedded limestone, the water was cool and rubber tyres worked well i.e. they didn't sink. The glowworms were nice and floating downstream in the dark beneath a "starry sky" was pleasant.

That would have been enough for me but Grace saw the advertisements for the flying fox in St Benedicts Cavern and demanded that we do that trip. It reminded Grace of Costa Rica and reminded me that I had made a statement in the *Spiel* that one day this will be how they explore caves. I was being facetious but lo and behold, somehow my cynicism was prophetic. I had to investigate.

St Benedict was, and still is, depending upon your religion, the patron saint of cavers. (I learn something new every day.) The cave was named in his honour because it is the most finely decorated cave in the area. In order to protect the best-decorated chamber from being trampled underfoot the tour company constructed a flying fox. In reality it was

a rather ordinary chamber, equivalent to a small corner of Newdegate Cave at Hastings, and as such its beauty was visually overwhelmed by the number of ropes, anchors, back-up ropes and redundant anchors required to rig the flying fox. To make things worse you "had to" do the flying fox in the dark for extra "Rambo-ness". (I think I'm getting too old and my adrenalin has stopped flowing.) Actually it was a good trip, especially at the price. One of the Hamilton Tomo Group cavers, who was staying at the HTG Hut, got us in for nothing since he'd worked on some of the construction. For Grace this was the first time she'd abseiled into a cave; doing the 25 m and 30 m entrance pitches with a top-rope belay. All the rest of the dodgy bits of the cave had "via-ferrata" cables through them and we were constantly on two cows tails. The caves suffered greatly from the electric drill and the commercial imperative to make them bumbly-proof.



Grace Bunton abseiling into St Bens

The other cave in the area, which is a must-see, is the Lost World with its impressive 100 m entrance shaft. This too has been commercialised. Years ago friends from Sydney accompanied the SpeleoProjects calendar man into the cave for a photo shoot and the abseil looked spectacular; a single caver hanging on his/her SRT rig in the middle of a great green entrance. Now-a-days a launching platform has been constructed and you abseil with a guide at a ratio of 4:1 with two guides per trip. The entrance is therefore rigged with ten ropes (10!) and looks more like a lift shaft than an SRT pitch (SINGLE ROPE....?). All four punters were connected via cowstails to the deadman's-handle on a shunt, on the guide's rope, such that you couldn't get out



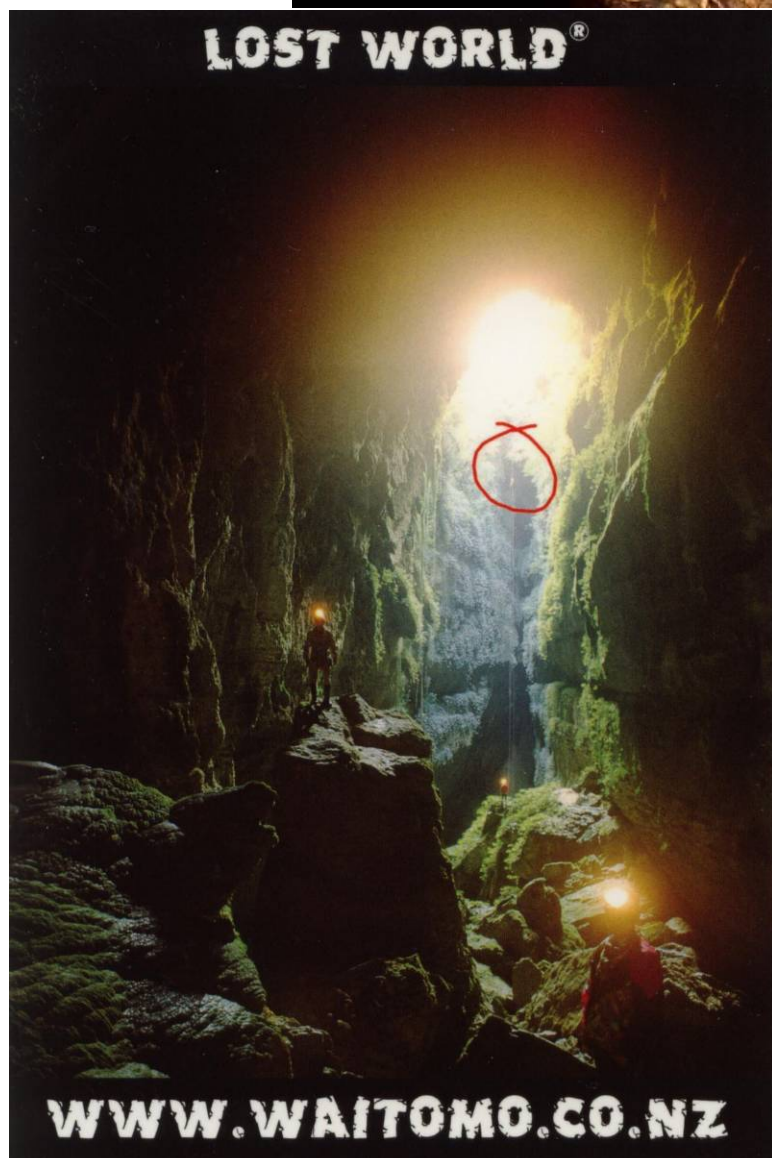
of control. Abseiling as a cluster was a new experience and for me really reduced the sense of spaciousness of this vast feature. It tamed the wilderness but then again it made it accessible to the general public (am I just an elitist and an SRT snob?). It certainly did enable Grace to do this confidently as her third abseil into a cave.

The Lost World at the bottom was very impressive, a jumble of great green boulders and the streamway in the cave was superb. The way out was up a vertical 30 m fixed iron ladder, on belay of course. This was the biggest fixed ladder I'd seen in a cave. The cost for this adventure was \$245 each but if you want to see the cave that's what you have to pay. As we were leaving Waitomo to do our peakbagging

someone asked if I was "all caved out" to which I replied "No, all Visa-carded out!" New Zealand has perfected the art of parting tourists from their money either bungy-jumping, rafting, jet-boating, zorbing etc. I don't really mind if they set up a thrill ride in some paddock and



Waitomo Adventures Ltd.



cached-up foreigners come and shell out for the ride but to me it seems a pity that in order to see or experience a great landform you also had to pay big bucks! (By contrast the Tongariro Crossing; one of the best one day walks in NZ if not the world, was free – but you had to put up with the thousands of German bargain hunters).

To add insult to injury the commercial operators don't allow you to take a camera. The consequence of this is that if you want a photographic record of the trip you have to buy their CD at great expense. The guides take along a digital happy snap camera and make sure they get a photo of every punter but in reality the photos are really crappy and they are only staged at specific locations on the trip. For what they cost to produce, less than \$5, you could imagine that the company could include this in the price of the adventure but they would rather extract another \$25(+) from each client. I bought the CD of our St Benedict's trip just to prove I wasn't lying about the flying fox. Consider it a donation to my favourite charity, STC.

Whilst staying at the HTG hut I met Tony White who is known to some Tassy cavers. His claim to fame in Tassy was that he pushed Windy Rift. I'd known Tony since Atea 78, Muller 82 and my days in Sydney. It was good to see that likewise he was married, had reproduced and was dragging his offspring around the world caving, climbing, walking and skiing. Tony was less willing to part with his cash than I was and he was trying to arrange trips into the wild caves in the area, which is possible with a certain degree of





about Harwoods being a must-do because climbers regularly get hung up on this pitch. The scenario generally goes something like this: Tie four climbing ropes together, abseil on a belay device and cross the knots using a climbers prusik-rig. These hopelessly inefficient upside down frog systems are usually the climber's downfall – luckily not literally. In this case the person was stuck on the rope for 8 hours! (They must have a better harness than me and without being sexist and disclosing their gender, they didn't have testicles that would have slowly pureed.)

Yes, we bagged the peaks and then we did a few touristy and cultural things. At the end of our trip we escaped to the beaches of the Coromandel Peninsula and were confronted with signs like "Conserve water. Every drop is precious." In a country so green and blessed with abundant rainfall this was rather surprising but to the trained trog it was evident that the hinterland was karst. In fact some impressive landforms abound in that area, there are nice rock formations, headlands, karst towers, off-shore islands and a range of mountains which looked like "The Pinnacles" and was in fact named The Pinnacles. At this stage I wished I'd

patience. (Ric and Janine also have contacts in this area as well as being NZSS members).

At the HTG Hut there was an extensive map library and two interesting volumes; a set of cave maps for the North Island and another for the South Island. It was nothing special nor pretty just reproductions of maps which had appeared in the NZSS Newsletter. I found a few things I'd drawn up dating back to our 1980 mini-expeditions to Mt Owen and Mt Arthur near Nelson on the South Island. Besides doing my self-esteem some good it was reassuring to know that maps I'd drawn up in good faith were not lost in the ether and were a (cherished?) part of the NZ cave documentation.

The other interesting event, which occurred whilst we were at Waitomo, was a rescue at Harwoods Hole. This cave is very accessible and signs lead bumbles right to the 176 m entrance shaft on Takaka Hill, near Nelson. Paynes Ford, a world class climbing area, is nearby and this attracts climbers from all over. Some local mythology must exist

paid more attention to the North Island map book.

The final karst-related snippet from our trip was the mineral water served on Air New Zealand. It stated that it was sourced from the Takaka region of New Zealand. I was relieved to find that my beverage was in fact clear. No doubt (if you can believe them) this mineral water comes from the Riwaka Resurgence, which became famous when the caves of Takaka Hill were dye traced with fluoroscein. The Riwaka turned green for 3 days. As a result, the cave, now a sporting classic, become known as Greenlink and the deeper sections are accessed via a connection from Middle Earth (a name which pre-dates the Lord of the Rings film and the site of another recent rescue). The only story to top this was at Cavconact 1976 where a certain SUSS caver was serving fluoroscein for morning tea and telling the ASF assembled that it was lime cordial. Most people commented that it was "rather tasteless"... like so many aspects of the sport of caving.

## 2007-08 STC Annual Reports

### Various Artists

**President:** Matt Cracknell

It has been an exciting year for STC, my first as President. We were finally presented a copy of the Riveaux Report. A great result in light of the many years that members of the club had been working toward this goal. Also we have been given a chance to have input into the impending SWWHA Karst Management Plan, one example of an excellent working relationship with karst management bodies. This is a rare scenario, it seems, in the world of Australian caving politics.

We continue to add to the list of significant caving discoveries in Tasmania including exciting insights into the Junee-Florentine master system. STC members have an ongoing role in groundbreaking cave and karst research in Tasmania and around the globe.

We are one of the most active and formidable caving clubs in Australia. All members should be commended for their passionate caving endeavours, regardless of whether that is underground or trudging through the not so exciting world of caving politics. Hopefully the recent purchase of new club gear, part of the funds coming from a grant provided by Sport and Recreation Tasmania, will encourage new members into the Club and continue our long tradition of exploring, researching and conserving caves.

I am more than happy to stand for re-election as President of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers for 2008.

**Vice President:** Serena Benjamin

Well it's coming to the end of the second year of my term as Vice President and I am off to distant shores and hopefully a glut of caving. With Motivated Matt as President I've only had to fill in as chair for the meetings a couple of times. With that and only a few other things that have needed my attention it's not been too strenuous a job.

So who's to become the next VP? I'd like to suggest Sarah for the position. Her new SRT gear is far too shiny and she needs to go caving more.

Happy caving to all.

**Secretary:** Alan Jackson

I only ended up with this position at the last AGM because I got sick of all the unintelligent gazing at the carpet that all the other attendees at the meeting were indulging in when nominees were asked for. The position was only vacant because of similar carpet gazing following the President's position which led to Matt being 'upgraded'. And what a fine President he has made, might I add – much more diverse than his single platform ("I hate ASF") predecessor.

Secretary isn't a particularly challenging job. One only has to:

- Check the mailbox (and read all the journals and magazines before Greg steals them)
- Apply for half a dozen permits throughout the year
- And get some minutes out eleven times a year

This is not a hard job. I'd prefer to see someone new take this role over in 2008.

**Gearstore:** Gavin Brett

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

**Editor:** Alan Jackson

Another six *Spiels* churned out over the past 12 months (359 thru 364). They've all been nice fat issues and I can only thank the various writers of articles for this. Thanks be to God (I mean Greg - easy to get those two confused) too for keeping me in line with his sub-editing. I'm happy to hand this job over at the AGM too but not really fussed. Unlike Secretary, this job takes a fair bit of one's time.

**Search and Rescue:** Alan Jackson

No real rescues that I can remember in the last 12 months. I have been liaising a bit with Joe Sydney and Ross Anderson on the mainland in regard to coordinating a more effective national approach to cave rescue systems (to be honest, they've been doing all the work and just sending me copies of what they're doing!) As a result of this both Joe Sydney and Peter Brady (NSW Cave Rescue Squad members) attended our annual CAVEX last year. This was a worthwhile exercise and we got to play with some of their snazzy new radios (particularly the Nicola system). We're getting closer to being able to build some of these for ourselves now, thanks to the skills of Tony Veness. It would be good to have a few sets of these radios lying about the club, Police SAR and the mainland. I'm happy to continue in this role but am equally happy to let it out to an apprentice.

**Social Secretary:** Stephen Bunton

This year we have continued to hold social meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Waratah Hotel starting about 8pm. The attendance at these meetings has varied from a healthy number to just a few old and not so old, faithfuls. On one of these meeting nights we held a draining trip down the Hobart Rivulet and this was almost the highpoint of the year, if that is possible for a "cave" which comes out at sea level! The real highpoint was literally at the bottom end of the state (not only do cavers do it in the dark but they do it way down under!) at Francistown. The pot-luck dinner to celebrate the winter solstice was a great success with a good caving trip to follow-up the next day. The other big event on the STC calendar was the Christmas BBQ, which was quite well attended even if I was conspicuous by my absence.

Actually the club is quite sociable when there are plenty of caving trips. Monthly meetings are well attended so people know one another well enough without any great need to run heaps of social events. My one aim this year was to try and organise slideshows to see where people had been, what they had done, their discoveries and to motivate more people to get out and go for it. In this regard I have failed dismally. I have not been able to find a more conducive venue. The reality is that we probably don't need the slideshows to motivate people, the Spiel now publishes more photos than ever before and people are quite willing to sit around someone's laptop, looking at a collection of unedited photos, without any structured commentary. I



know I am a bit old fashioned but I find this rather unfulfilling.

It's probably time for someone else to take over as social secretary and then it can be someone else's problem – if it's a problem at all.

My final point must be a special thanks to Arthur Clarke who regularly makes his premises; Francistown and Mt Stuart available for club events. Recent discussion considered that we hold the AGM at Francistown, which would have been good for a change of scenery but eventually this was thought to be a little impractical. Nevertheless it was a generous proposition.

**Librarian /Archivist:** Greg Middleton

In 2007-08 I accessioned 113 new journals (142 in 03-04, 191 04-05, 168 05-06, 101 06-07), bringing our holding to 4,339. We received only 4 new books, bringing our holding to 277. I have started a separate listing of CD/DVDs; 18 have been accessioned to date.

I have continued to collect reprints, photocopies and newspaper articles. These are housed in binders and catalogued in a database. I have many to add.

The archives of the three constituent clubs (TCC, SCS & TCKRGF) and some from STC are still in boxes. I have started a database, but most have not been catalogued or shelved.

Lists of our holdings are available and members are welcome to borrow any time I'm home. I can be called on 6223 1400 to arrange a time. Anyone who can contribute copies of journals that we are missing is very welcome to. The journals list also indicates duplicates of the *Spiel* and some other Australian newsletters which are available at negotiable prices.

Since 2005 I have been producing *Southern Caver* in digital format, publishing otherwise unpublished or very rare material. Issue #60 was produced in April 2005, #61 in September, #62 in June 2006 and #63 in March 2007. I have material for more issues but scanning and formatting takes time.

I'm happy to continue as librarian.

**Electronic Archivist/Karst Index Officer :** Ric Tunney

The archive keeps chugging along. Our exploratory members send in survey book scans, survey data and map copies and Alan and Greg provide electronic copies of *Speleo Spiel* and *Southern Caver*.

It's been about 18 months since I produced a complete Archive copy, so I suppose it's about time to produce a new one. This one will be dual-layer DVD, so Archive holders should check their hardware and update if necessary.

The issuing of cave and map numbers is running fairly well. The taggers tag and tell me what they have done and the mappers ask for a map number by email. I'd report on the annual tag and map score, but that's a little too philatelic, even for me.

My pride of achievement for the year was the extension of the Tasmanian Longest and Deepest Caves List to include Big Pitches. This led inevitably to a Pitch Baggers' Guide. Most of the work on this was done by Janine. She spent days searching through the electronic and paper archives to check the length of some 150 pitches. Now STC has the

only Pitch Baggers' Guide in the world. I was pleased to see that the Guide produced some invective, but more effort by cavers in general is needed here.

I can't attend the AGM, but I'm happy to be elected *in absentia* for this (these) position(s) for the coming year.

**Science Officer:** Arthur Clarke

[*Arthur's Science Officer report has been edited rather heavily here (down to headings and subheadings only). A separate article appears on page 27 outlining the investigation of zoo-archaeological cave sites. The full version has been recorded in the minutes of the AGM and are available from the Secretary if you wish to view it – Ed.*]

**Major cave science related activities/happenings undertaken this 2007-2008 year:**

- (a) Investigation of potential zoo-archaeological cave sites at Ida Bay and Junee-Florentine.
- (b) Tourist visitor & adventure caving access to Tasmanian Aboriginal cave sites.
- (c) Discovery of sub-macro and microscopic crustaceans in Tasmanian caves.

**Future science related projects/ activities for 2008-2009:**

1. Further studies of sub-macro and microscopic crustaceans in Tasmanian caves
2. Purchase of new GPS unit
3. Acquisition (purchase) of high resolution aerial photography images of Marble Hill/ Ida Bay
4. Ida Bay palaeokarst investigation (with Max Banks)

I am happy to continue in the position as STC Science Officer for 2008-2009.

**Treasurer:** Amy Robertson

I am pleased to report that STC has made a surplus of \$519.85. This is lower than the surplus for previous years, but we haven't benefited from any major fundraising efforts this year (eg. Cavemania, anniversary dinner) and the surplus still leaves us in a good position to manage potential changes to our finances.

The main sources of income for the club last year were membership fees (including ASF component) and the Sport and Recreation grant of \$911.00. Transfer of \$1,500.00 to the Cash Management Trust from the General Account has allowed surpluses from previous years to be stored more usefully. Other sources of income for STC did not vary hugely from the previous year or the 2007 budget, although the late transfer of interest accrued by the Science component of the Cash Management Trust account shows as a larger figure here. External gear hire income also reduced to reflect the club's policy of not hiring externally.

Expenditure too has been relatively similar to that budgeted, though it is worth noting that *Spiel* production costs decreased to below those of any of the past 3 years – well done to the Editor. Significant expenditure occurred as budgeted for gear replacement, making up for the lack of this last year and partly offset for some items by the grant.

I have found the treasurer's job easier this year, though I know I still have to iron out one or two slack areas. I expect my next year to be very challenging, but would be

happy to continue in the role as I maintain a less active (childbearing) role with the club, so will stand for re-election.

## Membership

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

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

## Gear Hire Rates

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

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

## Speleo Spiel

The costs of producing the *Speleo Spiel* rose this year to \$716.19, for production of the usual 6 *Spiels* and 2 editions of the irregular *Southern Caver*. The print run averages about 50 copies, yielding a production cost of about \$15 per year per person.

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

## Income

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

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



## Expenditure

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

Category	2007 Estimate	2006 actual	2005 actual	2004 actual
<i>Speleo Spiel</i> production & supply	\$650.00	\$716.19	\$579.06	\$646.31
Stationery	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3.35
ASF fees for inactive life members <sup>1</sup>	\$276.00	\$0.00	\$138.00	\$138.00
Gear purchases	\$1,450.00	\$82.25	\$972.04	\$662.72
Anniversary dinner	\$0.00	\$1,969.50	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bank charges	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7.90	\$51.90
Equipment Officer Honorarium	\$96.90	\$391.80	\$209.70	\$157.80
Audit fee	\$55.00	\$55.00	\$49.50	\$44.00
Annual return fee	\$50.00	\$46.80	\$45.60	\$44.40
PO Box rental	\$110.00	\$107.00	\$102.00	\$100.00
ACKMA membership	\$55.00	\$55.00	\$50.00	\$45.00
Publications	\$150.00	\$138.70	\$0.00	\$47.28
Transfer to Science Account <sup>2</sup>	\$1,450.00	\$0.00	\$201.40	\$323.49
Other	\$300	\$39.30	\$787.57	\$318.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,642.90</b>	<b>\$3,601.54</b>	<b>\$3142.77</b>	<b>\$2583.15</b>

<sup>1</sup> 2006 fees are overdue & will amount to \$138.00 accounted in 2007 year.

<sup>2</sup> Includes overdue 2006 transfer of \$850.00 and proposed transfer of \$600 to Cash Management Trust.

## Membership Fees

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

### Therefore I propose that membership fees remain unchanged for 2008

I note that ASF membership fees will also remain unchanged. The proposed annual membership fees for 2008 are outlined in the table below (identical to 2007).

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

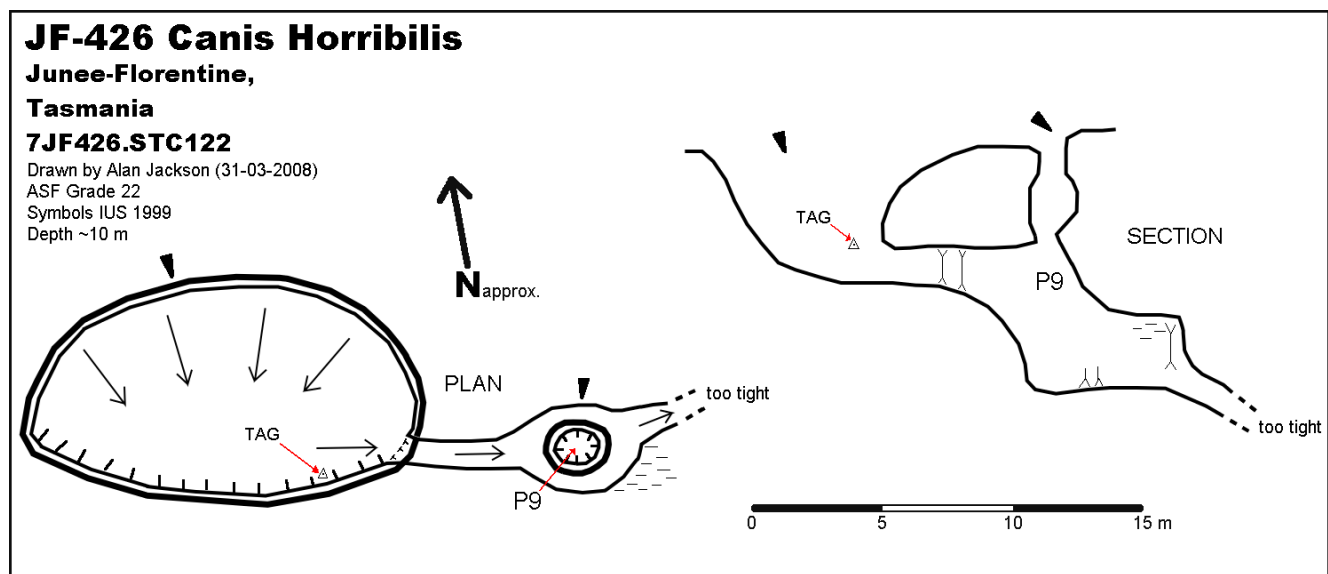
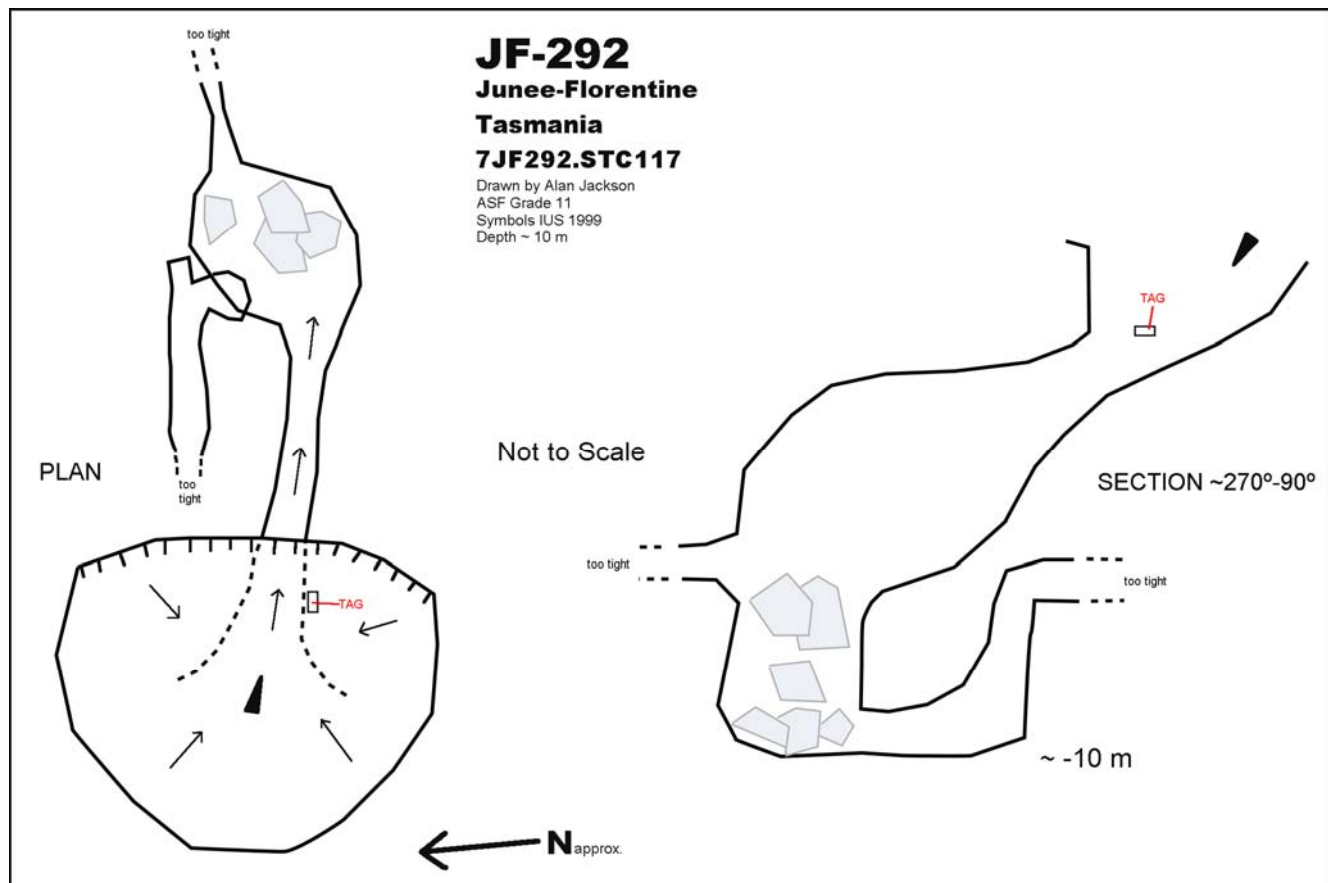
## Notes:

- Early bird rate – members must pay on or before 1<sup>st</sup> June 2008 to be eligible for a discount.
- New members who join during the year will pay the pro-rata rate based on the early bird rate.

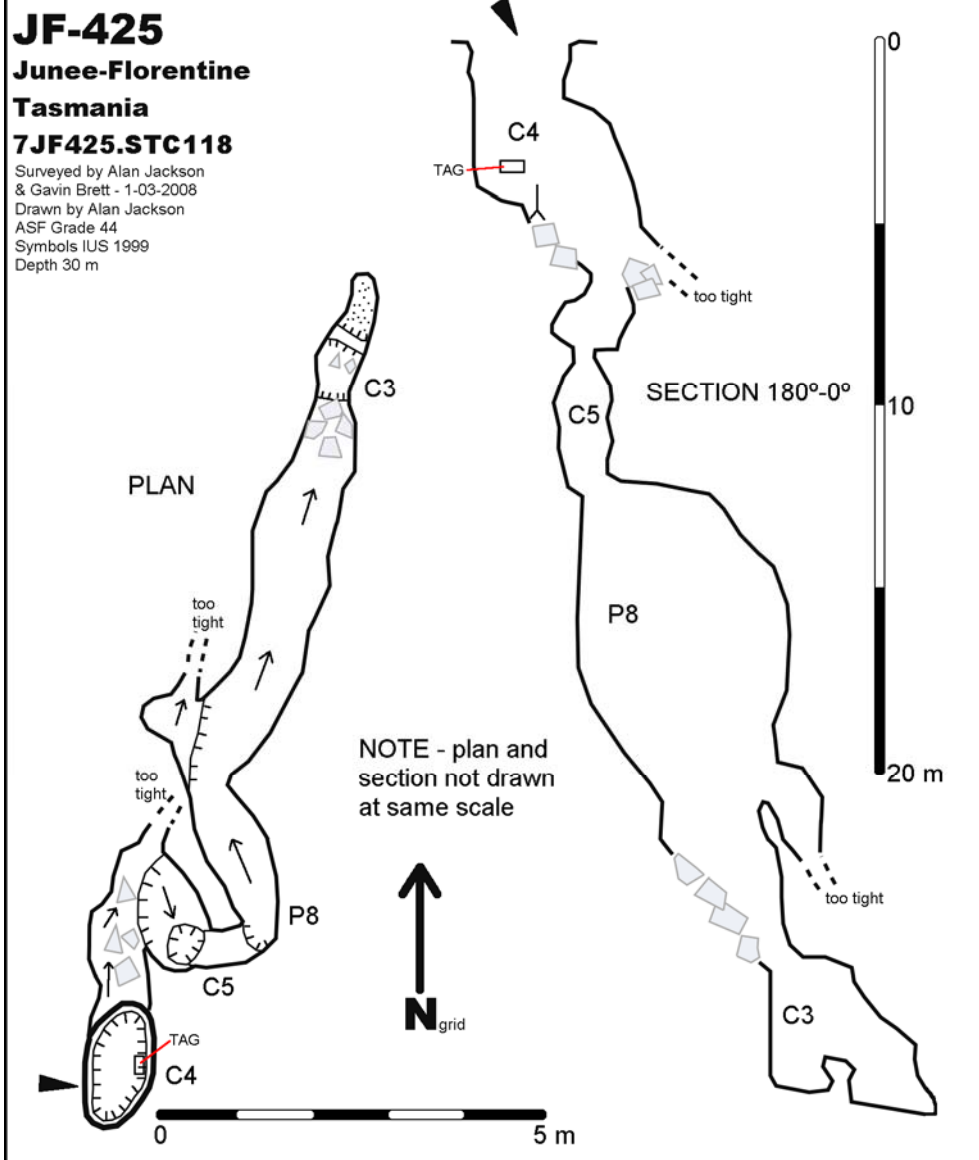
- Friends of STC are non-members but receive free printed *Spiels* without a subscription fee (ie. \$25 value). In 2007 there were 10 Friends.
- Printed Spiels available for an additional \$15 to annual non-life members.

### Summary of Motions

- That the gear hire fees remain unchanged for 2008;
- That the *Speleo Spiel* subscription rates remain unchanged at \$25 per year for non-members and \$15 per year for members; and
- That STC membership fees remain unchanged for 2008.

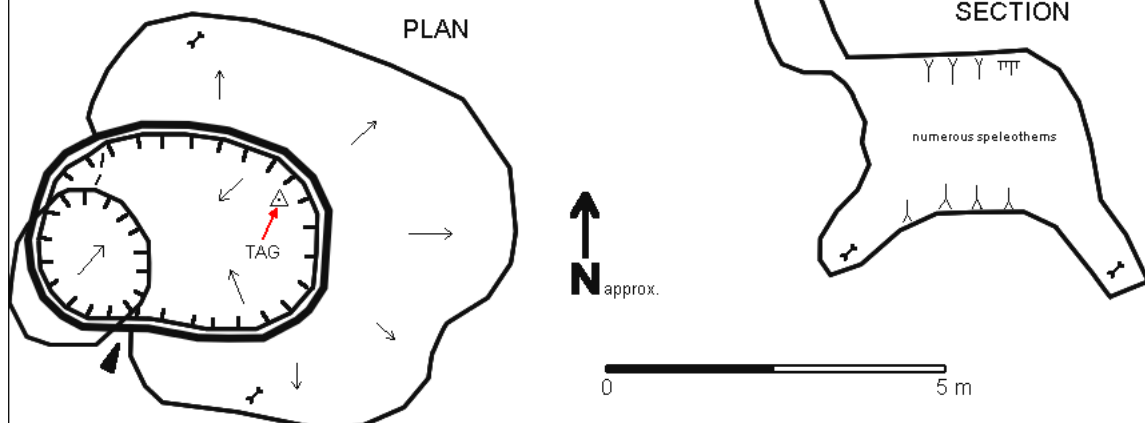






**JF-430 Gordon Bennett**  
**Junee-Florentine,**  
**Tasmania**  
**7JF428.STC123**

Drawn by Alan Jackson (31-03-2008)  
 ASF Grade 22  
 Symbols IUS 1999  
 Depth ~8 m

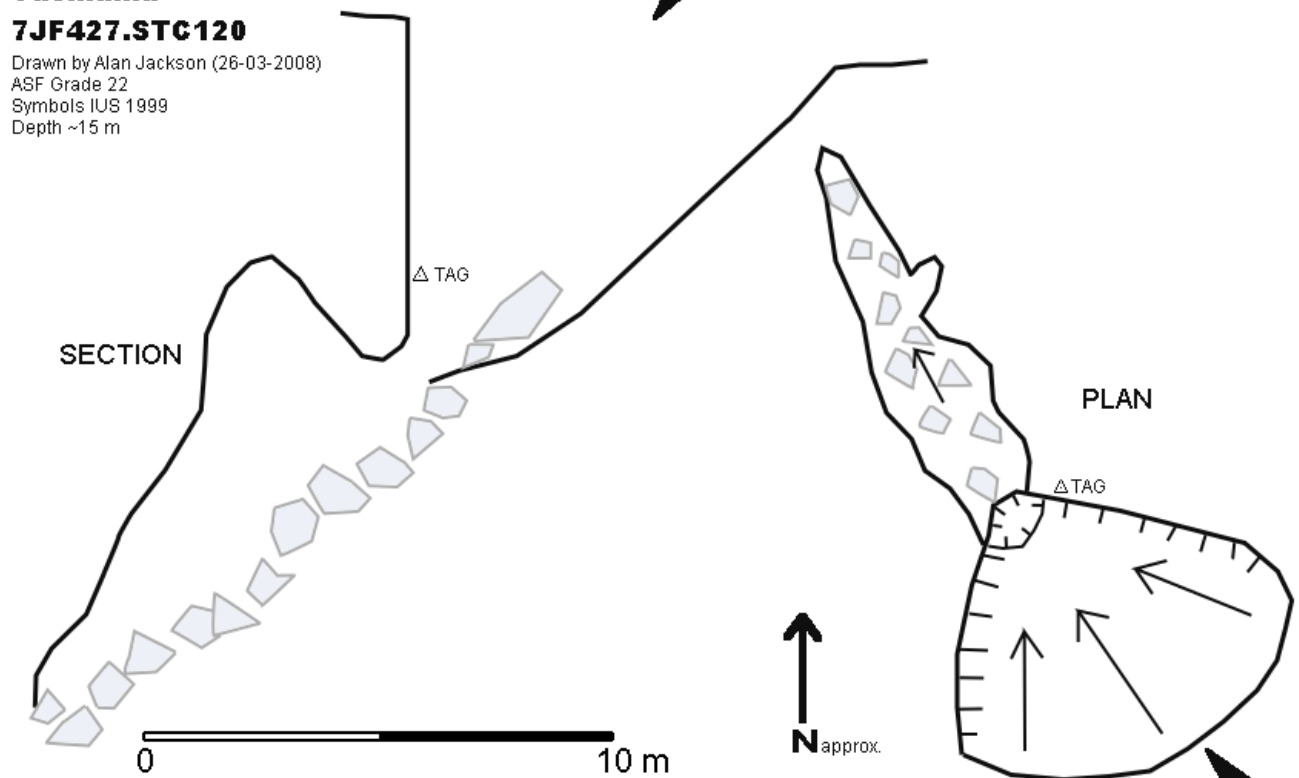


## JF-427 Big Block

Junee-Florentine,  
Tasmania

7JF427.STC120

Drawn by Alan Jackson (26-03-2008)  
ASF Grade 22  
Symbols IUS 1999  
Depth ~15 m

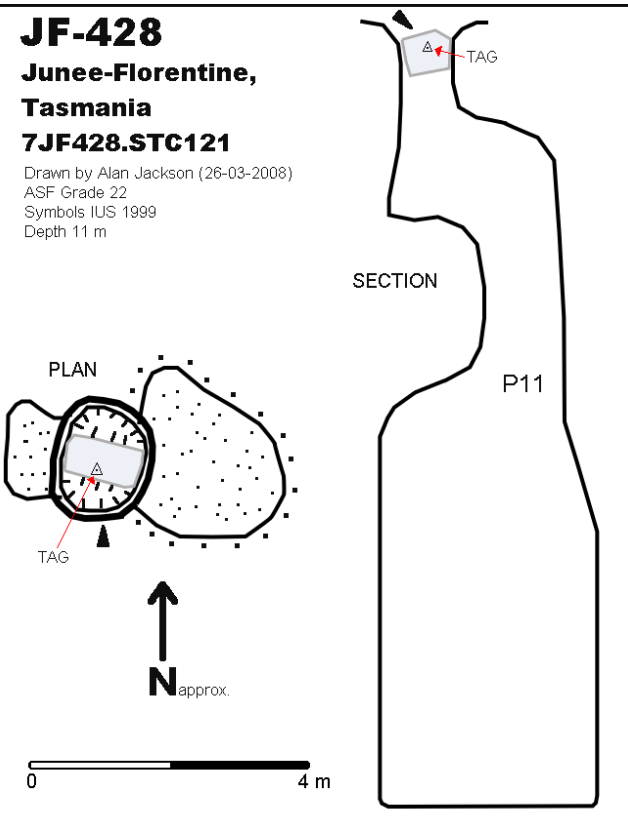


## JF-428

Junee-Florentine,  
Tasmania

7JF428.STC121

Drawn by Alan Jackson (26-03-2008)  
ASF Grade 22  
Symbols IUS 1999  
Depth 11 m

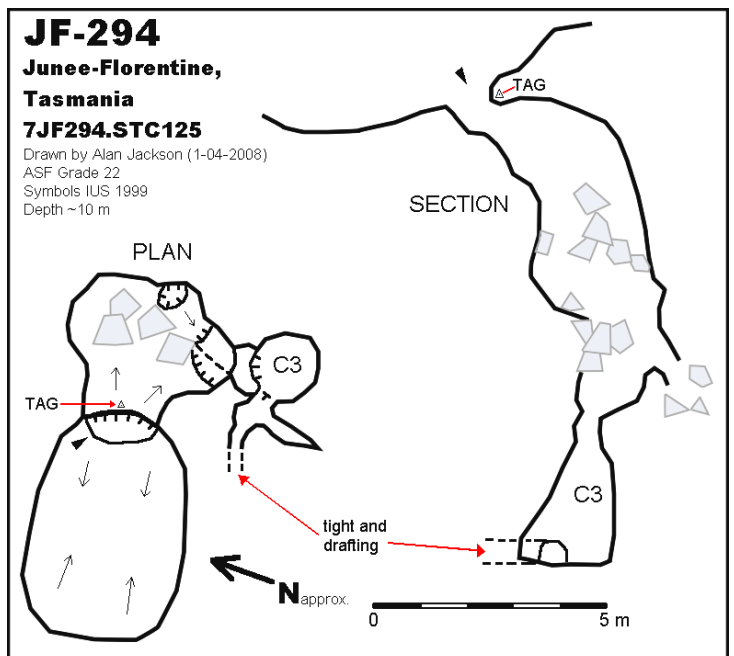


## JF-294

Junee-Florentine,  
Tasmania

7JF294.STC125

Drawn by Alan Jackson (1-04-2008)  
ASF Grade 22  
Symbols IUS 1999  
Depth ~10 m





## JF-424 Dead Heat

Junee-Florentine,  
Tasmania

7JF424.STC119

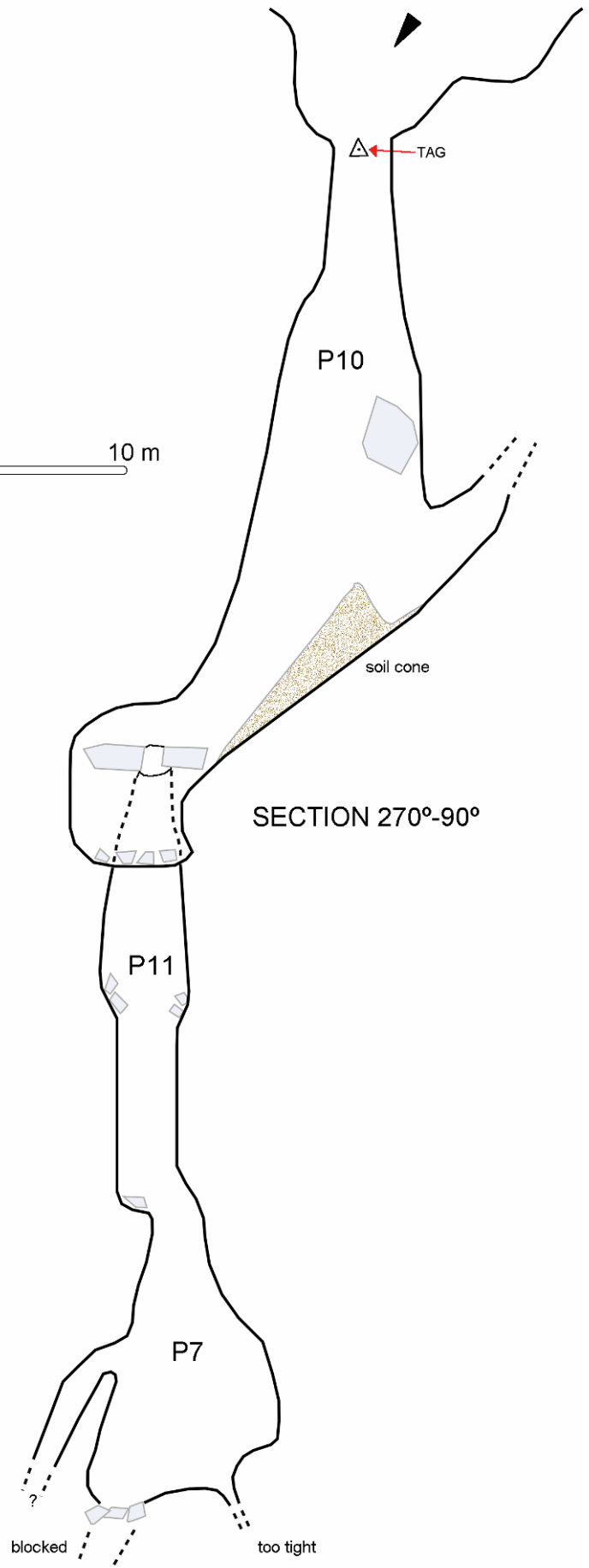
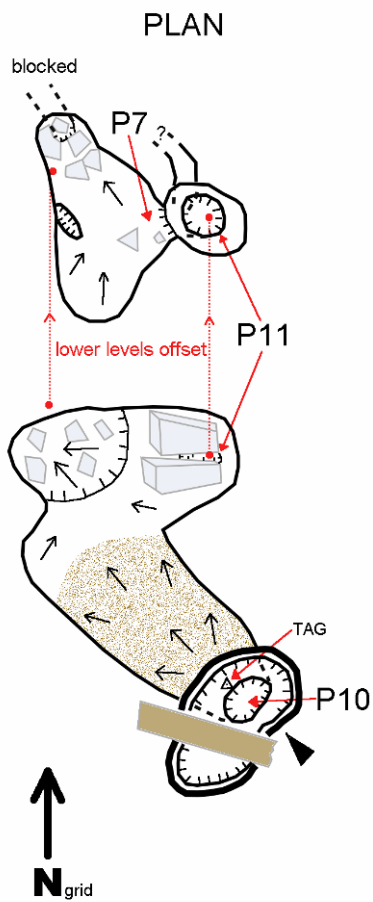
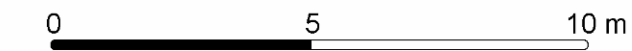
Surveyed by Alan Jackson &  
Gavin Brett- 24-03-2008

Drawn by Alan Jackson

ASF Grade 44

Symbols IUS 1999

Depth 34 m



## JF-435 Kangaroo Cave

June-Florentine

Tasmania

7JF435.STC116

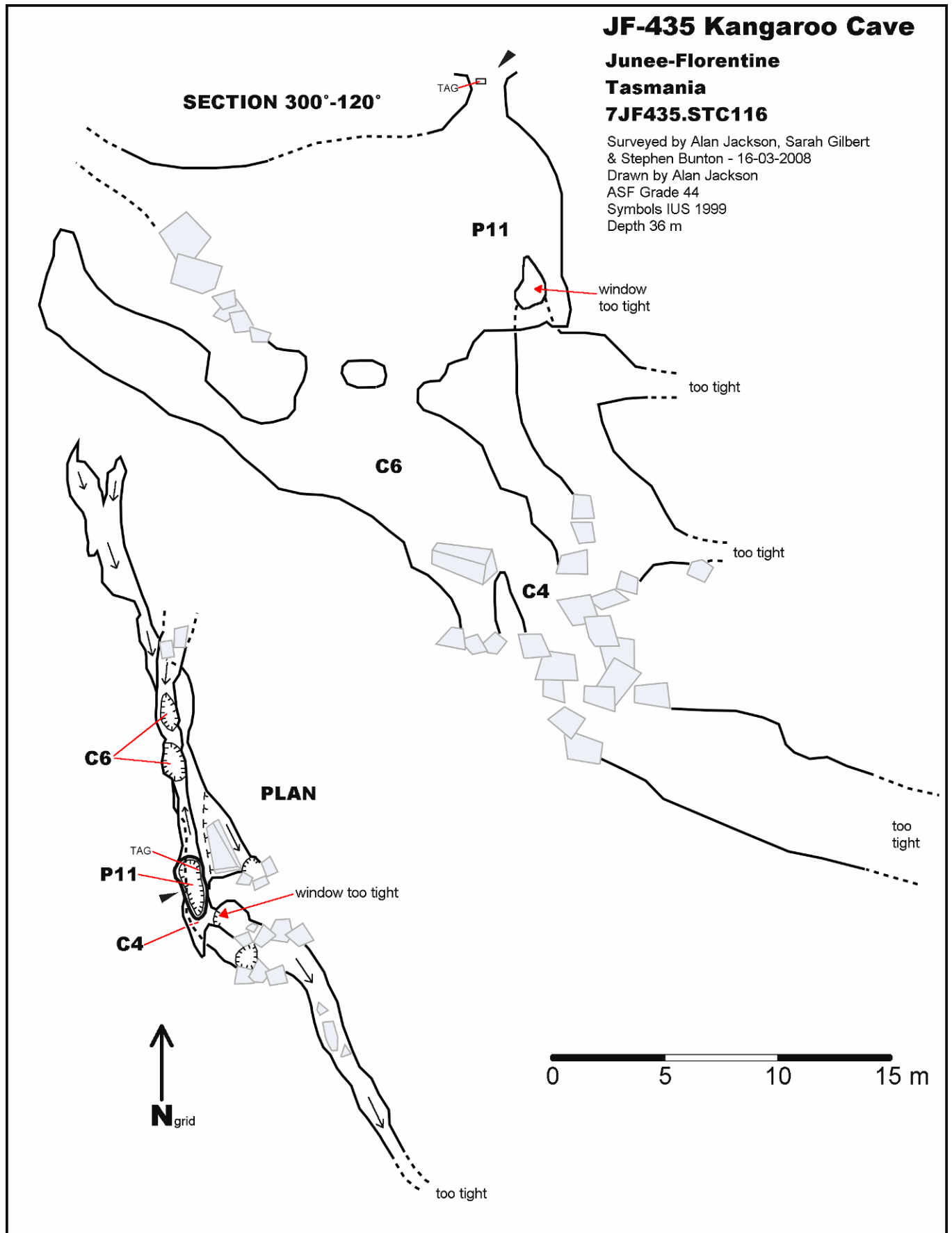
Surveyed by Alan Jackson, Sarah Gilbert  
& Stephen Bunton - 16-03-2008

Drawn by Alan Jackson

ASF Grade 44

Symbols IUS 1999

Depth 36 m



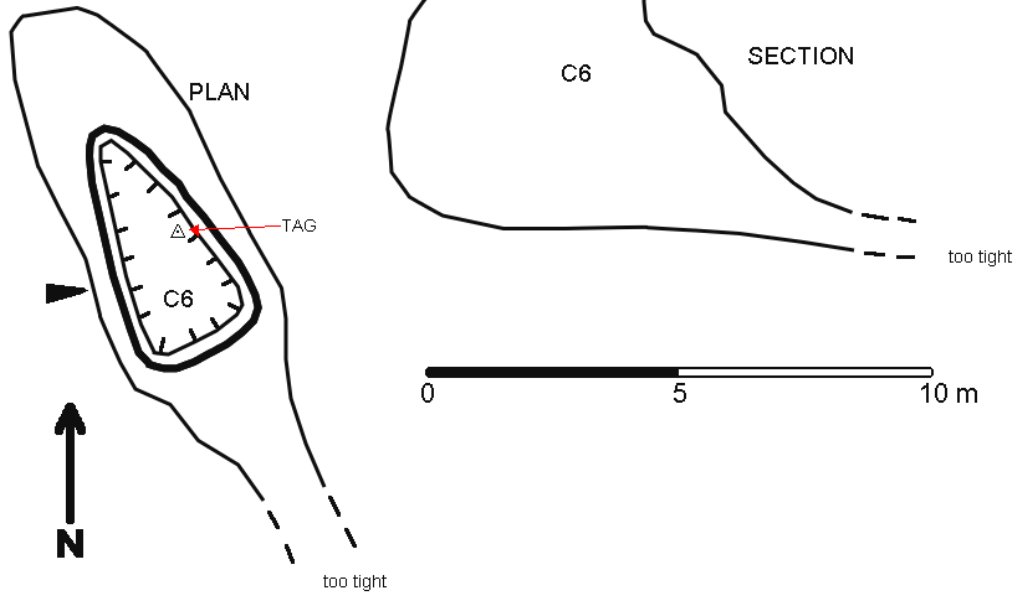


# **JF-434**

**Junee-Florentine,  
Tasmania**

**7JF434.STC124**

Drawn by Alan Jackson (31-03-2008)  
ASF Grade 22  
Symbols IUS 1999  
Depth ~6 m

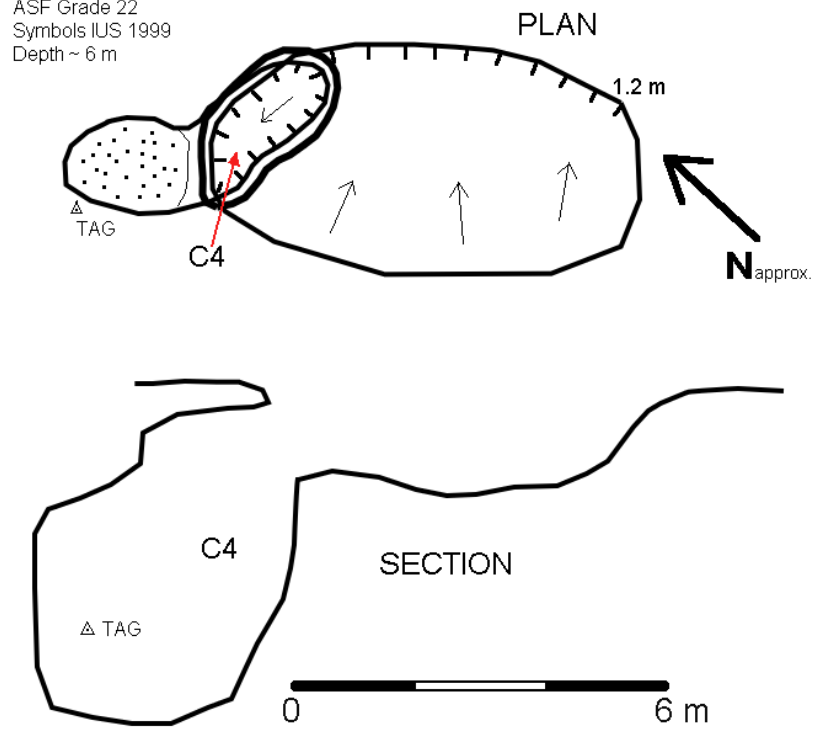


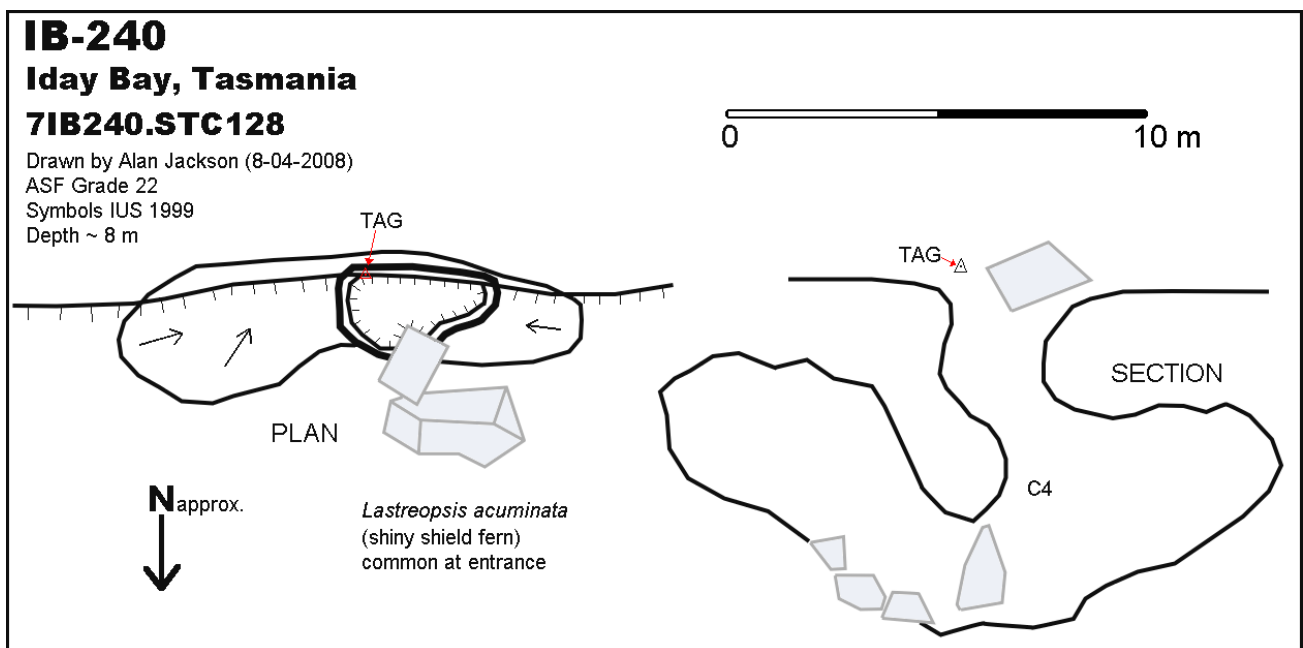
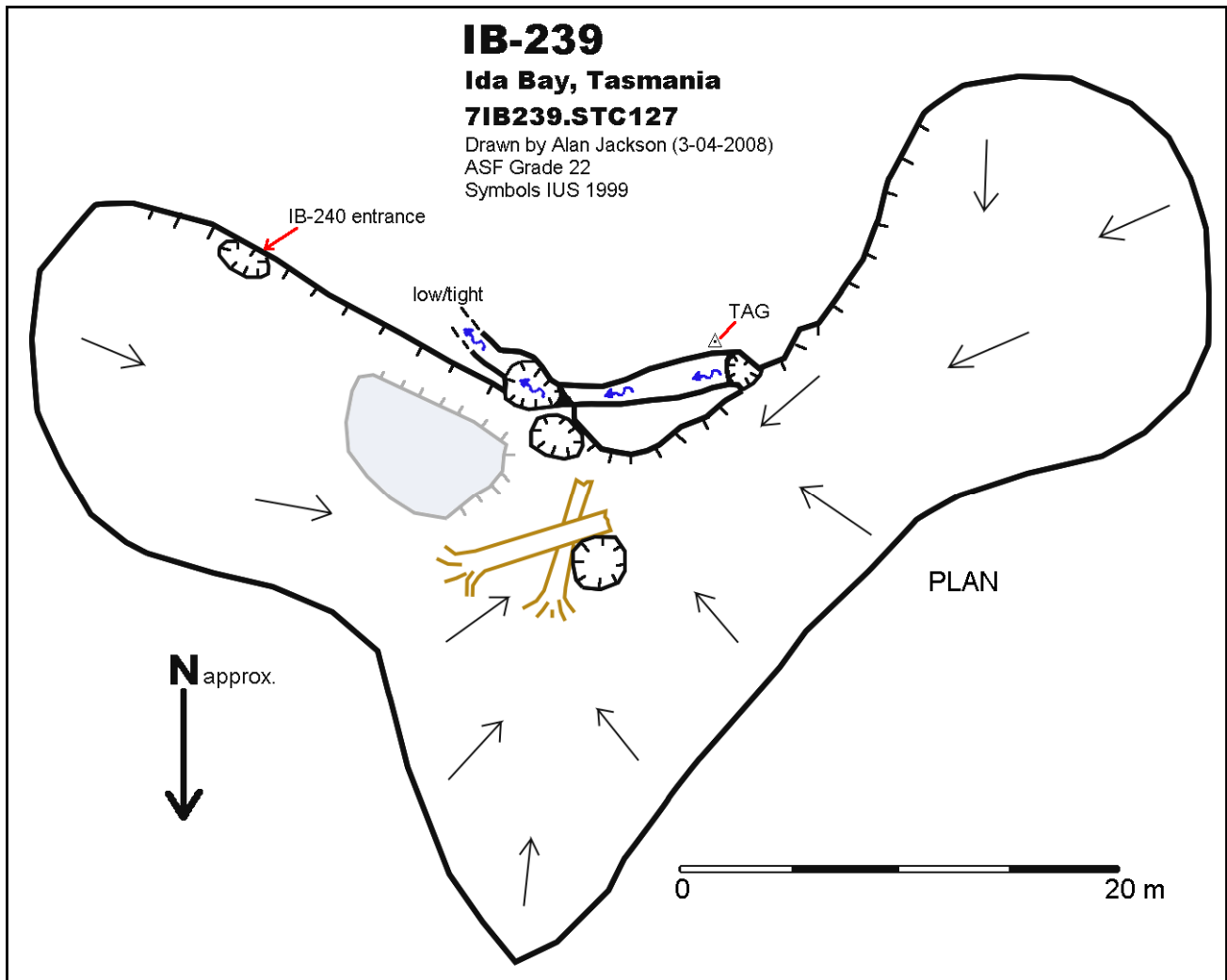
# **JF-295**

**Junee-Florentine,  
Tasmania**

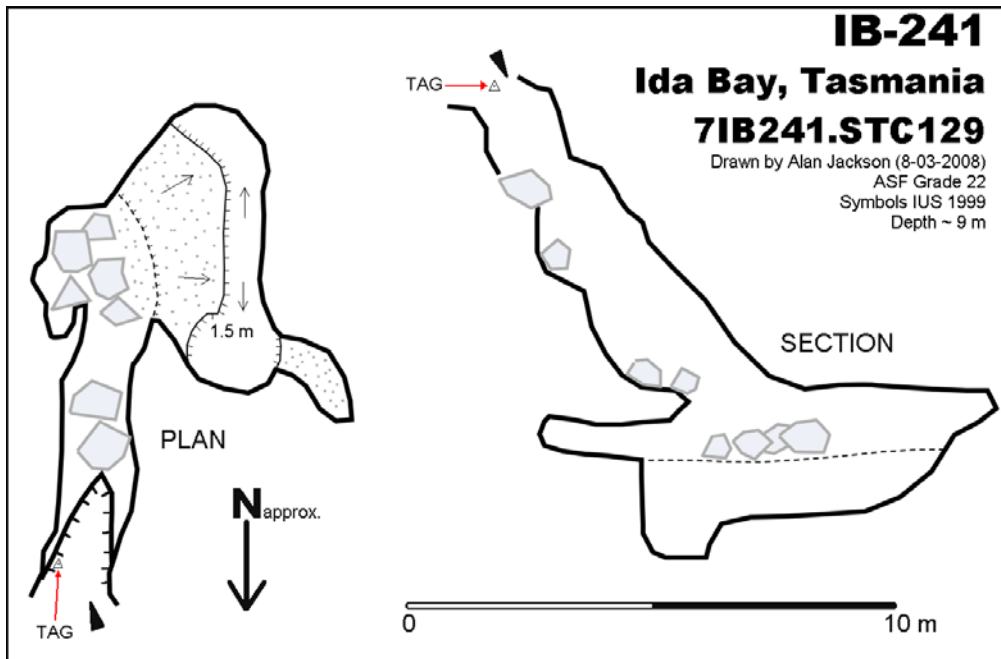
**7JF295.STC126**

Drawn by Alan Jackson (1-04-2008)  
ASF Grade 22  
Symbols IUS 1999  
Depth ~ 6 m









## Investigating Potential Zoo-Archaeological Sites at Ida Bay and Junee-Florentine, February 2007

Arthur Clarke

In mid-February 2007, three STC members (Matt Cracknell, Serena Benjamin and Arthur Clarke) assisted a group of archaeologists from LaTrobe University in Victoria lead by Jillian Garvey (and supervised by Richard Cosgrove), in their search for potentially significant zoo-archaeological cave sites in the Ida Bay, Junee-Florentine and Cracroft karst areas. The latter area did not happen, because the team could not get the required permissions to access the Cracroft caves and consequently were not given the ability to use a helicopter for access.

Accepted as a research project by the Natural Resource Management and Conservation section of DPIW and given a scientific permit (number 52/06) for the study of bone deposits of vertebrate species and collection of skeletal material, the LaTrobe University project was titled: “*Past Animal Community Ecology in Tasmania*”. Their primary aim was geared towards investigating the past make-up of the natural human/prey-animal community ecology as reflected in the bone deposits of vertical cave pit falls (in limestone areas), preferably located in the vicinity of archaeological and pollen sites.

The project was structured around three conditions or premises that in total would attempt to establish the impact of human activity on animal resources, particularly megafauna, in a given region. The LaTrobe team had high hopes of being able to locate a relatively intact and stable deposit of mammalian skeletal remains from a cave or several caves (for comparison sake) in southern Tasmania. If it was reasonably substantial and undisturbed, it was hoped the bone deposit might contain a stratigraphic chronology or sequence that could reveal:

(i) A sufficiently long baseline (stratigraphic chronology or sequence of bone deposits) before human arrival to demonstrate the prevailing ecological trends;

(ii) The reasonably precise determination of when humans arrived and their interactions with their environment, i.e., what they were doing during the early days of human colonisation;

(iii) An understanding of “...what has changed subsequently in the living landscape; i.e., the interaction of biota with soils, water, climate and exotic taxa, including humans.” (LaTrobe Uni, 2006).



Richard Cosgrove descending March Fly Pot (IB-46)

Aside from some disturbance of bone deposits due to bioturbation, i.e., the scattering of bones that might occur when another large mammal species survives a fall into a cave and inadvertently tramples on or moves the bone pieces of its predecessors, deposits in vertical caves often form on slopes and/or as soil-cones where gravity alone assists in the natural bone-mixing process. Similarly, some mixing or disturbance of bone deposits may simply be due to the action of seepage water or flowing water and the occasional influx of floodwaters, bringing in soil and plant matter that can smother or dislodge skeletal material.



Severe storm events will obviously compound the issue, such as the heavy deluge of around 125-150 mm of rain that occurred in just 4-5 hours in much of southern Tasmania in early February 2005, when the deluge of rain precipitated a landslide of mud and debris that obliterated the original entrance of *Revelation Cave* (IB-1) and completely engulfed the entrance to *Yodellers Pot* (IB-25). A potentially ideal cave would be a site with a flat floor or substantial ledge that permitted an accumulation to happen, or a soil-cone to develop.

mid 1980s was *Pseudocheirus Cave* (IB-97) at Ida Bay where there was a substantial amount of old material accumulating in a soil-cone. Another example was the deep accumulation of marsupial bones at the base of “Cemetery Shaft” beyond “Blowhole Fissure”, a new passage, extending to another cave system out from *Wargata Mina* in the Cracroft, or *Judds Cavern* (C-1) as it was known at the time of the extension discovery in April/May, 1985 (Clarke, 1987).



*Platypus skull in Pseudocheirus Cave (IB-97)*

Three caves were investigated at Ida Bay in February 2007: IB-46 (*March Fly Pot*), IB-97 (*Pseudocheirus Cave*) and IB-26 (*Hooks Hole*). As discovered by Matt Cracknell and Jillian Garvey on Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> 2007, the majority of the bone deposit in *March Fly Pot* had already been either disturbed or removed, presumably during the 1990 study of sub-fossil fauna (mammalian bone deposits) at Ida Bay (Muirhead, 1990). During a visit to *Pseudocheirus Cave* by Richard Cosgrove, Serena Benjamin and Arthur Clarke on Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> 2007, it was evident that the previously exposed bones at the base of the soil cone had become completely smothered by a mass of fresh organic matter, including saturated mulch and soil, now forming a mud slope; this was presumably another legacy of the flood event that occurred in February 2005.



*Serena Benjamin investigating speleothems in Pseudocheirus Cave (IB-97)*

There are several caves in different karst areas of southern Tasmania with known accumulations of bone material; some of these sites contain vast numbers of bones stacked upon each other. One example seen by the author in the



*Jillian Garvey and Serena Benjamin checking cave entrance notes at Hooks Hole (IB-26)*



During their initial investigation of *Hooks Hole* (IB-26) on Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 2007, Richard Cosgrove and Jillian Garvey were assisted by Serena Benjamin, after being guided to the cave site the previous day by Arthur Clarke. Richard reported that the range of animal bones included “...*macropod* (wallaby skulls and many leg bones), *platypus*, *wombat* (skulls), *murids* (i.e., rats or mice) and *small possums*, probably *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*.” The skeletal remains of one wallaby were found in a crevice 1.5-2.0 m above the floor of the main shaft beyond the horizontal rift. The skeletal material included a mix of blackened material (probably manganese staining) and water-washed creamy-white to yellow coloured bones. According to Richard most of the bone material was undamaged, and in his words “...*some water smoothed bones, suggesting some fluvial transport. Sediment in the small chamber around the corner from the main pitch is very damp and composed of fine yellow/grey clay and silt (very sticky). No bones were seen in situ, but some appear on floor surface in drip cones. All are small mammals, bone in good condition. Some cobbles present along the side wall (fist size and larger) suggest prior stream activity transport. The presence of platypus remains suggests a stream access further beyond an efflux where a draft of air was felt. Serena Benjamin went on another c. 20 m following this narrow lead, past similar sediments of clay silt; some bones present, but not in situ; possible continuation of cave.*”

Following their visit to Ida Bay, six other caves were studied in the Junee-Florentine, all with little or no potential for further work. Investigated caves included: JF-160 (*Tims Reward*), JF-168 (*Ultimate*), JF-169 (*Leos Lair*), JF-7 (*Frankcombe Cave*), JF-154 (*Emu Cave*) and JF-155. The team had also hoped to inspect JF-79 (*Tiata Mara Kominya*, formerly known as *Beginners Luck Cave*), but

the appropriate permissions for undertaking excavations were not obtained. Subsequent to their visit, Jillian Garvey requested access to the STC Archive in order to assist her team in identifying future or other potential mammalian bone excavation sites in southern Tasmania. The club agreed that limited data could be released, but not the whole Archive.



Matt Cracknell rigging a ladder at the entrance to Ultimate (JF-168)



Fossil cephalopod ammonites in Frankcombe Cave (JF-7)

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A. Clarke

Given name	Family name	Postal Address	Phone (H)	Phone (W)	Mobile	E-mail
<b>Members</b>						
Guy	Bannink	52 Grays Rd, Ferntree 7054		6220 2456	0438 551 079	gbannink@bigpond.net.au
Serena	Benjamin	Currently overseas				serenab@utas.edu.au
Damian	Bidgood	c/- Police S&R, 76 Federal St, North Hobart 7000		6230 2267		damian.bidgood@police.tas.gov.au
Claire	Brett	4 Clutha Pl, South Hobart 7004	6223 1717		0419 731 969	clairemday@hotmail.com
Gavin	Brett	4 Clutha Pl, South Hobart 7004	6223 1717			gavinbrett@inet.com.au
Andrew	Briggs	2/28 Sawyer Ave, West Moonah 7008	6228 9956	6220 3133		andrew.briggs@hobart.tased.edu.au
Paul	Brooker	19 Franklin St, Morwell VIC 3840			0418 384 245	paul@pitchblack.com.au
Matt	Bruers	23 Service St, Glebe 7000		6213 4333	0403 435 689	matt.bruers@roaring40s.com
Kathryn	Bunton	PO Box 198, North Hobart 7002				
Stephen	Bunton	PO Box 198, North Hobart 7002	6278 2398	6210 2200		sbunton@friends.tas.edu.au
Liz	Canning	124 Wentworth St, South Hobart 7004	6223 7088	6233 6176		Elizabeth.Canning@dpiw.tas.gov.au
Arthur	Clarke	17 Darling Pde, Mt. Stuart 7000	6228 2099	6298 1107		arthurc@southcom.com.au
Matt	Cracknell	118 Strickland Ave, South Hobart 7004		6298 3209	0409 438 924	crowdang@yahoo.co.uk
Pat	Culberg	PO Box 122 Lindisfarne 7015	6243 0546			
Tony	Culberg	PO Box 122, Lindisfarne 7015	6243 0546			culbergf@bigpond.com
Jol	Desmarchelier	6 Mackennal St, Lyneham ACT 2602				jol.desmarchelier@anu.edu.au
Rien	De Vries	45A Mill Road, Collinsvale 7012	6239 0497			
Rolan	Eberhard	18 Fergusson Ave, Tinderbox 7054	6229 3039	6233 6455		Rolan.Eberhard@dpiw.tas.gov.au
Stefan	Eberhard	11 Dillenia Way, Greenwood, WA 6024		08 9343 4141	0401 436 968	stefan.eberhard@bigpond.com
Sarah	Gilbert	1/6 Hillside Crescent, West Hobart 7000	6234 2302			sgilbert@utas.edu.au
Albert	Goede	69 Esplanade, Rose Bay 7015	6243 7319			goede@tassie.net.au
Klaudia	Hayes	Pen 44, Kings Pier Marina, Hobart 7000			0409 521 104	klaudiamarte@yahoo.de
Kent	Henderson	PO Box 332, Williamstown, VIC 3016	9398 0598	9398 0598	0407 039 887	kenthen@optushome.com.au
Fran	Hosking	PO Box 558, Sandy Bay 7006	6223 8031	6231 2434	0418 122 009	fhosking@utas.edu.au
Kenneth	Hosking	PO Box 558, Sandy Bay 7006	6224 7744	6231 2434	0418 122 009	hosking@netspace.net.au
Alan	Jackson	207 Albion Heights Drive, Kingston 7050		6231 5474	0419 245 418	alan.jackson@lmrs.com.au
Max	Jeffries	c/o Helen Maddox, 650 Gordon River Rd, Gretna				
Warrick	Jordan	22 Wellersley St, South Hobart 7004			0418 684 383	warrickjordan@gmail.com
Simon	Kendrick	1283 Glen Huon Rd, Judbury 7109	6266 0016	6234 7877	0414 908 466	kend_sim@yahoo.com.au
Andreas	Klocker	182 Pottery Rd, Lenah Valley 7008		6232 5335	0404 197 887	andreas.klocker@csiro.au
AnnChie	Kloow	6 Mackennal St, Lyneham ACT 2602				jol.desmarchelier@anu.edu.au
Ron	Mann	10 Swinton Pl, Rose Bay 7015	6243 0060	6220 5246		
Janine	McKinnon	PO Box 1440, Lindisfarne 7015	6243 5415			jmckinnon@tassie.net.au
Greg	Middleton	PO Box 269, Sandy Bay 7006	6223 1400			ozspeleo@bigpond.net.au
Dean	Morgan	44 Forest Oak Dve, Upper Coomera, QLD 4209		07 3806 1333	0400 196 399	dean@bedrockmeat.com.au
John	Oxley	10 Atunga St, Taroona 7053	6227 9560		0409 129 908	joxley@telstra.com
Steve	Phipps	5/460 Como Parade West, Mordialloc VIC	03 9580 6959	03 9239 4532	0422 460 695	sjhipps@csiro.au
Tom	Porritt	PO Box 60, Millaa Millaa, QLD	07 4056 5921	07 4056 5921		
Dale	Pregnell	10 Englefield Drive, Margate 7054	6267 1838		0418 587 641	dalepregnell@bigpond.com
Jane	Pulford	405 Liverpool St, Hobart 7000	6231 1921			jpulford@yahoo.com
Dave	Rasch	25 Delta Avenue, Taroona 7053	6227 9056			dave_rasch@hotmail.com
Ivan	Riley	3B Aberdeen St, Glebe 7000	6234 5058	6223 9714	0427 626 697	iriley@telstra.com
Amy	Robertson	PO Box 177, Geeveston 7116	6297 9999		0407 651 200	amyware@yahoo.com
Dion	Robertson	PO Box 177, Geeveston 7116			0428 326 062	dion.robertson@forestrytas.com.au
Aleks	Terauds	60 Belair St, Howrah 7018	6244 3406	6244 3406		aleks.terauds@optusnet.com.au
Niall	Tobin				0424 659 689	nialltobinz@hotmail.com
Richard	Tunney	PO Box 1440, Lindisfarne 7015	6243 5415			rtunney@tassie.net.au
Tony	Veness		6231 1921		0417 100 320	
Trevor	Wailes	214 Summerleas Rd, Kingston 7054	6229 1382	6229 1382		trite@ozemail.com.au
Geoffrey	Wise	117 Upper Maud St, Ulverstone 7315	6425 3645		0408 108 984	Geoff.Wise@don.tased.edu.au
<b>Friends of STC</b>						
Bob	Cockerill	14 Aruma St, Mornington Heights 7018	6244 2439	6233 6832		
Mike	Cole	1/17 Twentysecond Ave, Sawtell, NSW 2425	02 9544 0207		0408 500 053	mikecole@tpg.com.au
Brian	Collin	66 Wentworth St, South Hobart 7004	6223 1920			
Chris	Davies	3 Alfred St, New Town 7008	6228 0228			
Therese	Gatenby	PO Box 153, Orford 7190			0428 391 432	pelicansrest@yahoo.com.au
Steve	Harris	17 Derwentwater Ave, Sandy Bay 7005				
Nick	Hume	202A Nelson Rd, Mt. Nelson 7007				
Phil	Jackson	8 Malunna Rd, Lindisfarne 7015	6243 7038			
Barry	James	52 Edge Rd, Lenah Valley 7008	6228 4787			
Kevin	Kieman		6239 1494	6226 2461		Kevin.Kieman@utas.edu.au