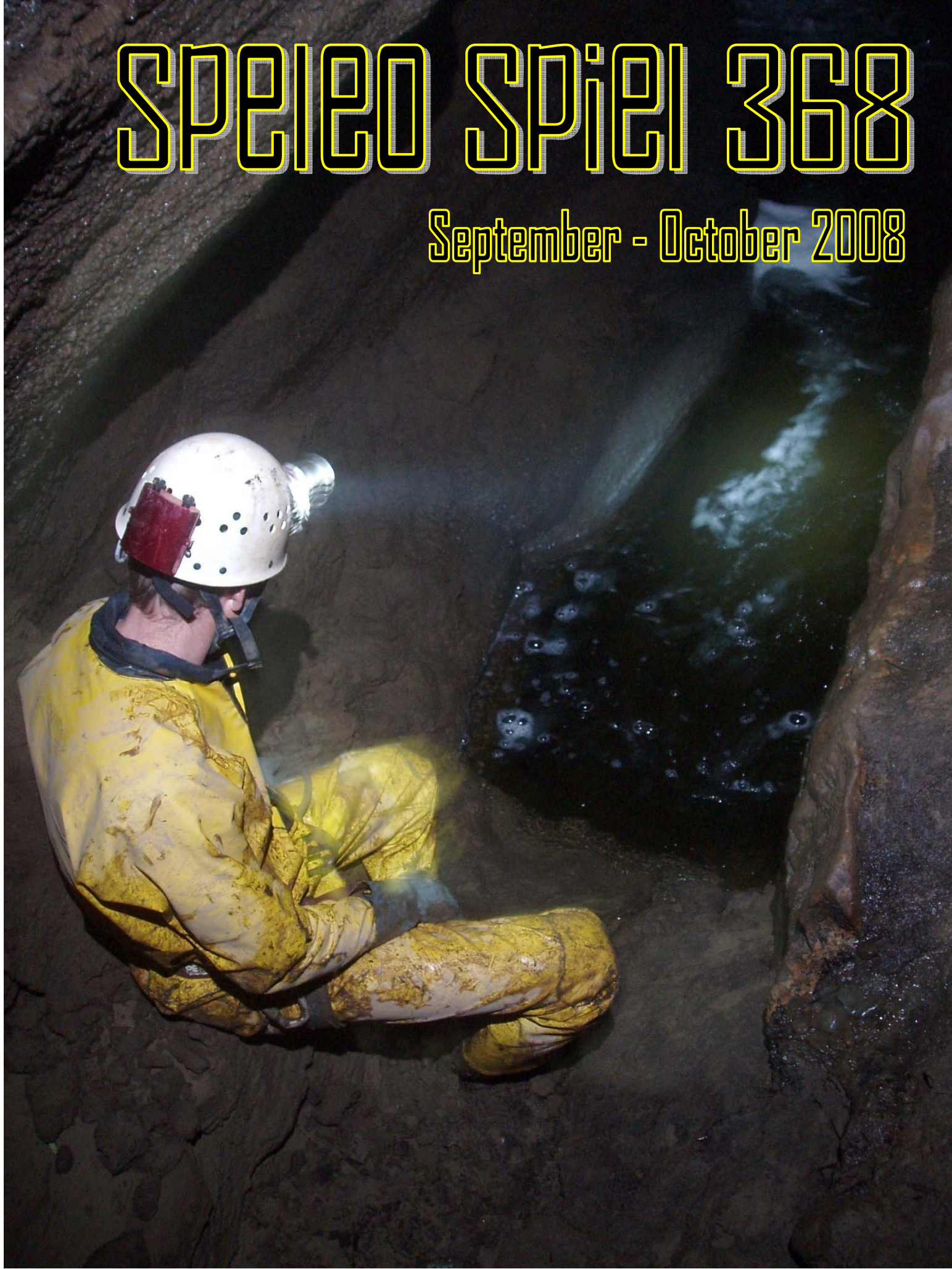


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September - October 2008



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Front Cover: Contemplating the sump, Growling Swallet *Photo by Matt Cracknell*



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STC was formed in December 1996 by the amalgamation of three former southern Tasmanian clubs: the *Tasmanian Caverneering Club*, the *Southern Caving Society* and the *Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group*. **STC** is the modern variant of the Oldest Caving Club in Australia.

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Editorial

This issue is a bit thin, mainly due to the lateness of the previous issue, but with the obesity epidemic worsening by the hour, we all have to do our bit. Sadly I don't have another rant for you. With yet another house move imminent (my fourth house in three months!), a *Caves Australia* on the brink of printing and the weight of a mortgage just around the corner I haven't had time to get worked up about anything. Ancient Chinese proverb: A busy Alan is a more tolerable Alan.

The Mystery Creek Cave extensions appear to be winding down (or should I say winding up?). That said, the excitement lasted about four trips longer than I was expecting. Now the survey has to be drawn up ... I'm sure that component will take about 4 months more than I was expecting.

JF-293 Whistler is still waiting patiently on the hill. It is a sign of the times that a going, drafting vertical hole with over 300 m of depth potential can sit idle for several months waiting for a caver. Gone are the days of inter and intra club competition where such caves were a closely guarded secret. Maybe I'll be pleasantly surprised when we finally do venture back to find that some rogue mainlanders have pirated the lead. The problem will arise in that they'll probably be stuck down there still, having not had the skills to get back out! Ooooh, that was low!

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

FORWARD PROGRAM – a strange unexplainable phenomenon has been occurring around the club; people have been planning and advertising trips and events more than 35 seconds in advance. This can only lead to one thing – a Forward Program!

- Wednesday 29th October – Search and Rescue vertical rope training session. Jane, and hopefully Alan, will be attending the S&R Liaison Meeting on this date. Following the meeting a rope rescue training session has been organised. It will involve dangling from the roof of their enormous boat shed fine tuning our pick-offs and other vertical skills. The session starts at 7 pm and Police will be providing a BBQ (I suggest that any meat-haters bring their own vegetarianisms – the cops aren't known for their low protein nature). They also have a rope testing machine that measures the breaking strain of gear. Bring your SRT gear (including helmet) and any rope products you'd like to see tested to destruction. Access to the complex will either be thru the main public entrance at 76 Federal St or thru the big green gates off Strahan St. Ring Jane's mobile if you turn up but can't get in.
- 1st or 2nd November – Medium level beginner trip, most likely in the Rift Cave-JF341 complex somewhere. Contact Tony Veness.
- 7-10th November – Mole Creek extra-long-weekend. Ric and Janine have permits for Marakoopa I & II, Kubla, Ghengis and Croesus over the four days. Contact the McTinnys

- Early December – Exit Cave survey recce trip. Permit willing, probably a couple of days idling around Exit cave gauging the extent and quality of existing survey data. Contact Tony Veness
- Wednesday 17th December – Christmas BBQ – venue/time TBA.
- Alan's Summer 2008 wish-list (a selection of hand-picked delights designed to pirate all the leads that Andy McKenzie had his heart set on doing on his next visit):
 - Splash Pot – ground-truthing Jeff Butt's survey sketches and possibly installing the mega-traverse on Harrow the Marrow. Skinny, hard cavers only (although Damian has fitted into this cave. He even fitted out again).
 - Dissidence – pushing Stockholm Syndrome (please ensure that your pelvis is smaller than Andy's or that you are equipped with a lump hammer). The For Everhard dig needs another couple of hours throwing at it too, preferably armed with Amy's little super digger tool.
 - Cauldron Pot – It's time the upstream connection with KD was properly investigated. A wetsuit may be a good idea.
- 4-9th January 2009 – 27th Biennial Conference of the Australian Speleological Federation, Sale, Victoria. Information is currently available at: <http://www.caves.org.au/conf2009>
- 28-29th March 2009 – CAVEX. Details are scant at this stage, other than: JF, vertical, compulsory attendance.

THE RISE OF AN EMPIRE – Residents of the southern Tasmanian town of Dover have reported the strange disappearance of a small 1950s house. The house vanished recently and a small mansion has appeared in its place. Initial investigations suggest that this could be an expansion of the Culberg Empire. While the house is impressive, social status in communities such as Dover is measured by firewood supply size – the bigger your pile the greater your status and power. The current pile at 7111 Huon Hwy is somewhat modest, however, we can expect to see a large portion of the block covered with firewood in the near future. Watch this space.



A. Jackson

The mansion and fledgling wood-pile at 7111 Huon Hwy, Dover

Trip Reports

IB-97 Pseudocheirus Cave – “Kon-Tiki Cave Tour”

Matt Cracknell

27 July 2008

Party: Matt Bruer, Matt Cracknell, Sarah Gilbert, Jane Pulford

The sun was shining behind the rain clouds as we climbed the saddle to the Skinner Track. The turn-off was found and the party made its way down to the polygonal karst area where our destination lay. Sarah rigged the pitch, under supervision from Matt and with the odd helpful comment from the others. It wasn't too long until all were in the cave. It is important to note that the rebelay bolt and hanger are currently *in situ*. It is also worth noting that the projection for the redirect is ~ 10 m off the floor of the cave just as the entrance pit narrows. This projection sits below a precariously wedged log. To rig the redirect a small trace (~2 m) (we used the wire loop of a nut) and sling is needed as the projection has very sharp edges.

Underground we had a gentle stickybeak about the place. A few photos were taken and in general it was a relaxed atmosphere. Matt was infatuated with the interbedded gravel and silt-clay lenses in the monstrous incised sediment banks near the bottom of the entrance shaft.

Back on the surface a couple of hours were spent inspecting the numerous adjacent dolines. Sarah stuck her head into a couple directly south of IB-97 and found a couple of untagged openings. Presumably these do not go far but who knows? On the way back to the Skinner track Matt lead everyone off into the scrub to the north of IB-97. It was a bit of a tourist bash to have a look at some of the caves marked on the map. A distinct set of joint structures control doline and cave entrance locations in this area. Three main joint orientations trend approx. 055°, 100° and 350° (grid north).

It was a good tour. No one drank too much, removed their clothes in public (except back at the car) or embarrassed themselves in any way. All except Jane that is; she didn't untie the stopper knot in the rope and had to descend back to the rebelay to get it unstuck.



M. Cracknell

Sarah descends into Pseudocheirus Cave.

IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave

Janine McKinnon

7 September 2008

Party: Janine McKinnon, Bill Miners (visiting Welsh caver; is this a case of nominative determinism?), Ric Tunney; Amy and Dion Robertson (until Confusing Chamber)

I wanted to do some more photography in the new, higher chamber in Expletive Hall and also take Ric in there to see what all the fuss was about. We had pulled out on the previous trip, where the climb up the wall was undertaken by Andreas, due to illness on my part, so now we were going on the next trip in to push onwards and upwards. Alan pulled out with a bad dose of the flu but we decided to go in and get some photos anyway. Bill was a visiting caver based in Launceston and keen for anything going. Amy wanted to get underground again for a short trip and Dion went to keep her company after we started into the new sections.

We said goodbye to Amy at the start of the crawl and moved fairly smartly through to the ladder climb. I was impressed with Ric, who is not renowned for his love of, nor proficiency in moving through, crawls and tight spaces. He had no trouble at all, despite having quite a lot of camera gear in his pack. I must say, that crawl seems to get shorter every time I do it. Many more trips and it will cease to exist! The rock-pile went fairly smoothly, except for the bit just before popping out into Bohemia Chamber, where I was temporarily embarrassed about the route on (stop laughing, Gavin). I eventually found my way into the chamber by another route, but hey, it doesn't matter if you end up in the right place.

I will mention at this point, that Bill was having no trouble at all negotiating the crawl and boulder-pile, but it must have felt like caving at home to him! Luckily it was about to get a bit more impressive.

Once in the pretties chamber (yet to be named) [*I've decided to call it Diathesis – Ed.*] we started some intensive looking and picture-graphing (well Ric did most

of the second bit). Moving about was very slow due to our terror of damaging anything. Luckily we didn't. After a couple of hours of that Ric headed back to the main Hall to look around a bit whilst Bill and I followed the rope trail upward. We had a look around the short passage at the bottom of the final short rope. There is a shawl there that is imbedded in flowstone. My guess is that there was a mud/dirt avalanche that enveloped the shawl (putting a crack across it and breaking off the bottom bit, which seems to be sitting nearby) and then consolidated and was eventually covered in flowstone.

We didn't go up the final short rope as I assumed that was the end of the current exploration and we knew the invective from Alan if we pirated his lead would be

unbearable. I don't have any principles really, I'm just scared of Alan [*and that's the way he likes it – Ed.*]

After re-joining Ric we headed straight out (no I didn't have any trouble following the route), taking the usual hour to get back to the entrance.

Bill seemed to enjoy the trip, particularly the fact that so few people had been there. Whilst we are on the subject, sort of, he reinforced my prejudice (is that the right word?) that all Welsh males have magnificent singing voices [*They're all castrated at birth – Ed.*]. He did a bit of singing (as one does) and put anyone else I know to shame. Beautiful. REALLY beautiful and suspiciously trained-sounding. I was too polite to ask.



R. Tunney

Janine ascends the rope up the side of Expletive Hall. The start of Diathesis is the large black hole in the top left corner above the perilously perched boulder. Janine is about 15 m of the floor at this point.

IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave

Alan Jackson

14 September 2008

Party: Gavin Brett, Alan Jackson, Bill Miners

After our sickness the previous week we were doubly keen to get in and see if the cave would yield yet more passage. Bill seemed keen to do the same trip two weeks in a row. Strange.

At the limit of exploration we commenced the bolt-traverse required to check the far end of the highest phreatic passage. Finding good rock was particularly difficult with only a few patches of semi-good rock interspersed with oodles of rotten shit which felt more like cheese than limestone. Gavin did the first 10 m till his left arm got sore from holding up the drill. I did the second shift and

completed the traverse. All we found was a dead-end and a window that dropped down amongst the shawls at the end of the lower passage. The draft could not be found. We retreated, stripping the traverse.

Gavin had a bit of a ferret about behind the shawls in the lower level and a low flowstone-lined passage continued on some 8 m but with no detectable draft we didn't bother trying to jam our bodies in. We beat a hasty retreat.

We left the ropes in place up to this high level stuff so we can get back and do some passage photography, as once we strip these ropes it is very unlikely that anyone will ever bother going there again, so some record of what's up there should be established.



Mystery Creek Cave Photos (14/09/2008) photos – A. Jackson

1. Gavin installing the bolt-traverse along the phreatic wall.
2. Nature's wasteful way with shawls – proof that caves 'self abuse' and can't be trusted to manage themselves (something Rolan's been arguing for years).
3. The exposed face where a large chunk of flowstone has fallen off (smashing the shawls in photo 2).
4. Close up of the fallen flowstone block, with hand for scale, showing the magnificent boundary between the black flowstone and the white. We need a cave nerd to explain it to us, please.

"Medium Grade JF Karst Feature Access Track Familiarisation Day"

Tony Veness

21 September 2008

Party: Janine McKinnon, Jane Pulford, Ric Tunney, Tony Veness

A day in the Florentine seemed like a good way to ease into spring caving activities, so a recce of The Chairman and Khazad-dum tracks sounded like a good idea. After meeting at the New Town bakery of choice, in our stripy thermals and shorts (well, Ric and Janine really - I was too shy), we headed north in the asthmatic wombat-like red Subaru (as apposed to the turbo death machine black Subaru). Of note, the pink takeaway in Maydena seemed to be closed for business.

As we had a gate key this time (as opposed to our trip some months previous), all went well as we left the Florentine Road, headed up the Junee Quarry Road and

onto the northern spur, via the now regularly locked forestry gate.

After a toolbox meeting at the back of the car and a quick job safety analysis of the risks associated with walking and breathing, the morning was spent walking to Cauldron Pot (JF-2). There was much waving of hands by Ric along the way, indicating the various directions and turnoffs to nearby entrances. Lunch was had at JF-2 and plans mooted for a summer assault. The entrance framed an impressive torrent of water, fed by snowmelt no doubt. The walk back to the car didn't take nearly as long as the walk in which always amazes me. Maybe gumboots take a while to warm up.

After relocating the car, back down the spur road 500 m, we headed off on The Chairman (JF-99) track. After some slight geographical anomalies caused us to drop down a ridge towards an interesting doline (with bonus trogged, but seemingly untaged entrance), we made our way to the

impressive entrance of The Chairman. After lunch number two, we headed out to the car, once again in record time.

We found what we thought was JF-341 but couldn't find a number tag to confirm it. We also had a brief look at the wet slippery slide into Rift Cave (JF-34) where Janine convinced me that I had been there before in the prior four or so years. News to me I thought. I'm still looking for the trip report to see if I had a good time. If so, I might do it again. If not, best forgotten really. *[She was telling the truth, Tony – see SS354:8 – Ed.]*

All in all, a pleasant day in the rainforest. The rain of the day before was nowhere to be seen, the wind rarely reached the forest floor, and the numerous man-ferns were at their most sexist, manly, spring best. One recommendation from the trip is to investigate just why the return trips on these "karst feature access track familiarisation trips" are always so much quicker than the walks in. Always a slog through fallen vegetation and re-growth on the way in, but always so pleasant on the way out. A mystery. If only the man-ferns could talk ...

Threefortyone perhaps? Janine, Tony and Ric search for a number tag. →

[If Raschy had had his way a couple of years back there'd be a nice big shiny gate there, which would make it easy to tell you where at the right cave! – Ed.]



JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot

Alan Jackson

27 September 2008

Party: Matt Cracknell, Sarah Gilbert, Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Bill Miners

The plan was a tourist jolly into the Necrosis/Bronchial area with the visiting Welsh caver, Bill. Water levels at the JF-36 entrance were pretty high, so we entered Slaughterhouse Pot with the knowledge that we may have to come back out that way too. There was water in sections of Slaughterhouse that I'd never seen water in before and the Trapdoor streamway could be heard churning away from Refuge Aven. First stop was a side trip to the Destiny Pitch. I'd never been in there before and was keen to be shown the way. The meandering passage in this area is superb and the journey to the top of the pitch is a worthy item on any Growling Swallet visit's itinerary.

Next we journeyed down the streamway towards Herpes. All the footmarks in the mounds of silt and sump debris were covered at the approach to the knotted handline, so it had recently backed up fairly well. At the handline I was about to sling myself over the drop when something caught my eye. It was a lake. The draft was roaring through, so things weren't totally closed off, but with a 20 m swim required to reach Herpes we figured we'd turn around!

Upstream Trapdoor was investigated, with the waterfall working well. Back at Refuge Aven we discussed options. It was decided to give the main streamway a try so we headed through Windy Rift. Again, evidence of very recent floodwater was found in the way of froth on the roof on the Growling side of Windy Rift. An ominous deep thrum reverberated about the passage – the kind that fills your chest with a sense of dread. At the usual step down into the



Bill, Janine and Sarah pose for a photo in the mud-floored side aven off the side of Trapdoor streamway passage.

active streamway a large swirling pool of water greeted us. A seething mass of water tumbled down the other side to feed the sump. After much deliberation we decided to head back out Slaughterhouse just to be on the safe side. There

didn't appear to be too much water in the streamway to prevent negotiation of the various obstacles further upstream, but with the sump obviously already on a hair-trigger we figured it wasn't worth the risk of getting stuck in the middle if the forecast afternoon 'showers' turned out to be rain. The exit wasn't as bad as most expected it would be, although Sarah did her best to delay progress by coming up with some very innovative ways to get stuck on one of the Windy Rift ladders and again on the redirect on the middle pitch of Slaughterhouse. Jeff Butt's super wide rung spacing claims another victim!

We didn't get to show Bill some of the better bits of the cave but it was an enjoyable day underground nonetheless. It was the first time I'd seen the sumps backing up.



M. Cracknell

An inviting looking swim to Herpes from the handline.

Rope Skills Training – Fruehauf Quarry

Jane Pulford

4 October 2008

Party: Party: Matt Chamberlain, Matt Cracknell, Sarah Gilbert, Jane Pulford, Ivan Riley, Cameron Watchorn – ably egged on by Amy & Dion.

Spring is sprung, daylight saving has arrived, and a caver's thoughts turn to brushing up their rope skills ...

On a recent Saturday afternoon, several cave-neers and two beginners turned out for some SRT and rope rescue training at Fruehauf Quarry. The weather allowed us a couple of hours' hanging from ropes between rain showers - enough to get into some fine messes and learn why we try not to rig wide rebelay underground. Sarah experimented with a novel harness padding system, while waiting to be rescued (Matt Cracknell finally obliged). Both beginners, Cameron & Matt ('other tall, non-president Matt'), acquitted themselves well at SRT and Matt was keen enough to go caving in the Junee-Florentine the next day.

In the lead up to the CavEx Search and Rescue exercise next March (which will be vertical in nature), there will be more practice sessions for rope rescue skills over the summer. A rope rescue (and rope breaking) session with Police is set for Wednesday 29 October: 7pm at Police Marine & Rescue Services on Federal Street, North Hobart. They'll be putting on a BBQ for us – feel free to BYO ropes for 'strength testing'. Rope skills sessions for STC members on weekday evenings, at Fruehauf quarry and other locations, will be organised on short notice (dependent on the weather) and advertised on the club's email list. See you out there!



J. Pulford

"Damsel in Distress" – Sarah hangs about awaiting her knight in shining armour to rescue her, while trialling the 'shove a large wad of closed cell foam between your legs' method for avoiding harness hang syndrome.

JF-34 Rift Cave

Tony Veness

5 October 2008

Party: Matt Chamberlain (non-Pres), Matt Cracknell (Pres), Jane Pulford, Tony Veness

The walk back from The Chairman (JF-99) some weeks prior had spurred my interest in Rift Cave when Janine led Jane and I to the entrance and assured me I had been there some years prior. Whilst I generally can't find my way to the poo ticket isle at the Woolies I've shopped at for seven

years, I thought I'd remember something of the cave once inside.

After an uneventful drive through the drizzle on the first day of daylight saving, we left the car on the spur road off the Junee Quarry Road and headed off on the Chairman Track. 30 minutes later (excluding the 20 minutes we blew when we walked past the turnoff) we were looking at the slippery ferny slope and small streamway flowing into the impressive rift, of Rift Cave.

After President Matt (possessing the STC level IV certificate in inclined pitch rigging) rigged the slippery entrance ramp (with all due care and diligence and moderate responsibility), we were off. The fallen logs on the entrance slope and in the twilight zone (no, not the movie) are still as the SCS map shows, though slowly decaying and becoming a tad hollow in places. Part one of the day was to make our way to the end of the Railway Tunnel and see if my Alzheimer's would allow me a glimpse of my supposed trip some six or so years prior.

Alas no. It was all new to the four of us. After a cursory look at the dig at the end of the Railway Tunnel, just to make sure the bottom of the cave hadn't magically opened up to reveal a bottomless pitch to 'the master JF streamway', we had lunch near Nubdub passage. Given the general lack of redeeming features in this part of the cave (no wedding cakes, no broken columns, no crystal pools), we decided to skip the side passages which were likely to be taking most of the entrance stream, and head off in the direction of the Silver Lining Extension.

Eureka! - or words to that effect. From my generally unreliable memory, I remembered searching for the connection and Silver Lining Pitch with the youthful Serena and Janine all those years ago. Can't remember if we found it, but I'm sure we looked for it. Anyways, we found the appropriate 'improved' rubble-filled rat-hole and away we went. Matt (non-Pres) headed off in the direction of the Picnic Pitch whilst Jane rattled down a rubble filled tube, under the 12 m aven in search of the main pitch.

After some umming and ahing the pitch head and waterfall were found, funnily enough where the map showed. One 8 mm spit with protruding nylon bolt and flagging were spotted way out over the pitch. The sniff of a wee pitch convinced Matt (Pres) to rattle down the tube and have a look (he's been spoilt for his last few trips, playing with Team Extreme of STC). Given the amount of water, the osmotic properties of Matt's (non-Pres) clothing and everyone's general lethargy, we called it a day and headed out. Possibly for my second time. We'll never know ...

Helpful rigging notes for the temporally and spatially challenged (and for me in another six years).

- The northerly turnoff to Rift Cave from the Chairman track is 30 mins from the car, five minutes past the first water course and valley encountered on the Chairman track. Rift doline is two minutes away. *[You can usually hear the water from the track – Ed.]*
- A 30 metre rope rigged from the large fallen log laying across the stream in the doline and rebelayed from the first bit of isolated vertical rock with a 5 metre tape, enables punters to slip and slide their way into the cave to a point where they are on their feet.
- A looped 10 metre tape handline flipped over a flake (true left) two metres above the large rock blocking the main way on below the last log in the twilight zone, enables access around the boulder and down the climb without wedging into the small waterfall at this point.
- A 10 metre rope\handline might be useful for those vertically challenged (and/or ex-

mainlanders) when negotiating the four metre climb\slide before the last log. Rock is very grippy otherwise.



J. Pulford

Matt (non-Pres) looking a little wet but otherwise pleased with his efforts.



J. Pulford

The clean-up crew derigs the entrance.

Other Exciting Stuff

Another Old Stalagmite Topples Over

Otherwise a tribute to Bob Woolhouse - with contextual reminiscences, recollections and some poetic licence.

Bob Cockerill (Member TCC and LVCC. Past President of SCS and STC)

[This article was published recently in the Northern Caverneers journal, Troglodyte. It has been reprinted here for the benefit of those who do not receive that publication.]

Bob himself would have scientifically described his demise as due to the passage of time, the amount of water that has flowed and other natural processes one inevitably becomes subject to the force of gravity.

In early 1964 I answered a challenge from Joan Halton, the long serving secretary of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club, to go caving. First trip to Hastings and then to Mole Creek. I joined TCC and soon became a member of the subgroup Lenah Valley Caverneering Club (later to become the Southern Caving Society) concentrating on exploration of the Mole Creek system upstream from Wet Cave.

Consequently, 1964-65?, I soon met Bob Woolhouse, a lanky assemblage of sinew and muscle, laconic character, cutting sense of humour, who tied reliable knots and spoke with a strange Aussie accent.

He was often seen in or near a hole in limestone somewhere in the Mole Creek area.

In about '67 after 20 years effort by many cavers, we southerners managed to find Eureka Link between Georgies Hall and the upstream end of Wet Cave. My route involved a long step of faith through deep water to a foothold 2-3 feet down on the other side. This was followed by a neck deep squeeze with water in one arm and out the other (and no wet suits). Bob did not like it and later found a dry alternative. I never asked and he never showed me. We did it our ways.

Caving politics were simple in those days, you met in the bush, arranged a conference at the Mole Creek Pub, around the campfire or under the eagle eye at Ugbrook Hall, and then when well lubricated exchanged information and experiences. There were no territorial disputes because there was still so much work to be done under so much untrodden country.

The morning after one particularly well lubricated evening at Ugbrook, Bob and Frank C. Brown were demonstrating the new fandangled SRT ironmongery and knot tricks. Frank, on rope in tree, became a little tangled and suddenly inverted. Bob's comment - "I think it might be easier if you kept your head above your feet".

Mt. Faulkner Rescue Incident Dec. 1968

A young boy Tim Walter had become trapped and pinned by a rockfall deep under the dolerite scree slope above Claremont. It eventually became evident that the Hobart cavers involved in the rescue needed urgent relief and support. A call went out for "Letterbox" capable cavers -

the Letterbox being the physically qualifying restriction between Cow Cave and Pyramid. Bob was difficult to contact as he was becalmed in his sailing boat in the middle of the Tamar. A light plane was sent from Cambridge to transport the Launceston team and meanwhile Bob was retrieved by outboard dinghy.

Bob, Frank C. Brown and Brian Duhig were flown south and given an express police car ride through Hobart to Claremont. Additionally, due to lead times, Victorian support was summoned and NSW was put on standby. Never was I so pleased to hear the dulcet tones of Woolhouse. Competent cavers whose abilities, judgment and knowledge we could rely upon had arrived. I smiled when I read his recollections published in a recent edition of *Troglodyte*. Paraphrased : "It was a very good place for a competent caver to contemplate suicide" and "Reputation technique was painfully necessary". Had he been there before we cleared a lot of debris and a Rossarden Mine Rescue Team member had patiently chipped away at the male genitalia crushing and pelvic girdle restricting access he might have used stronger words.

At the time he was twice my age of 24 so his physical efforts were phenomenal and his calming influence was most beneficial - partly due to the morphine he administered to the victim while surviving rockfalls. On several occasions we thought that we would become the fillings of dolerite sandwiches.

Bob was a major contributor to the eventually successful rescue and was awarded a Royal Humane Society Silver Medal for his efforts. (See *7000 Brave Australians* by Colin Bannister).

As a result of this incident and a couple of others, cavers, bushwalkers, climbers, Police, Ambos, SES and others learned to liaise with each other and we now have our current S&R organisation.

Over the years Bob contributed more than his two penny worth towards today's Statewide system.

Conservation Issues

In the late 60s, early 70s, Barry James and I saw a *Mercury* newspaper notice that David Mitchell - Limil had applied for a limestone mining prospect licence which included the Kubla Khan area and much more. We gained an audience with a senior Mines Dept. official, then liaised with Bob & Co and presented a written report - the main argument of which was that mining air was just not viable. We also suggested that he would be faced with a speleological "Lake Pedder" debacle. As a result a red lined exclusion zone was drawn on the map. Kubla was preserved and Bob & Co. subsequently successfully guided the mining company to Den Plain. A small sacrifice for a major gain.

Another example of Bob's dedication and tenacity is his quiet achievement of a major extension to the Marakoopa Cave Reserve to include the headwaters catchment area and its related ecology.

ASF Conference 1970

Superbly illustrated by his own products the master cameraman presented a major paper on cave photography

to the Hobart conference. (see Proceedings). Magnesium ribbon had been surpassed. ISO 64 was extremely fast and few could afford or carry an electronic flash. PFB flash bulbs were *de rigueur* and well utilised by Bob and Frank.

During that same conference he was a major leader for the field trips at Mole Creek. To cater for the occasion, all available Tasmanian gear was mobilised - some well worn. Bob and Frank witnessed a conversation between a slowly spoken safety line belayer and the ladder climber (Devils Pot or maybe Execution).

“Hey ... I think you’d better get off the ladder”

“Why ...?”

“Because it just broke!”

Happily a humorous story well recounted.

Another story

In the same vein I fondly recall Bob’s tale of his experience with the Grandfather of caving, Norbet Casteret in France. A great raconteur - Bob described his experience of while climbing a ladder :-.

“I became aware that the tricounis in the soles of my leather boots were scraping the bark off the unseasoned, flexing brushwood rungs . I also became aware that the cables were perished rubber covered recycled electric wiring and were stretching under my weight. I was aware

of the ductile limit of copper, no knowledge of safety rope, and I was seriously aware that I was halfway to nowhere.”

Colleagues and the Hall of Fame

Bob has joined an elite caving club which includes other illuminary colleagues and contemporaries such as Frank R. Brown, Sam Carey, Dave Elliott, Joan Halton (Brabon), Geoff Long, Des Lyons, Denny Seymour, Edie Smith, Doug Turner and the too young members Jeff Butt and Stuart Nicholas.

What a team!

Personal notes

I treasure my copy of the field guide *Forest Trees of Tasmania* (Forest Resources) to which Bob was a major contributor.

Over the years I have had many rewarding conversations and supports from Bob on matters of cave exploration, conservation, farmer PR and S&R responsibilities. Always reliable, sensible, constructive and succinct. Bob, I thank you. My personal regret is that I was planning a trip north to renew acquaintance and recollections. I knew him for only 40 plus years. I procrastinated and lost the opportunity.

Vale Bob, Mr Kubla.

May your light shine brightly for those that dare to emulate your leadership and contributions.

Cavestrolgy – A Caver’s Horoscope

Stephen Bunton

Aquarius

January 21 - February 19

You may be able to lighten your load further by investing in some of those high-tech, non-absorbent fibre thermals.

Pisces

February 20 – March 20

You must remain vigilant, in the past whaletails have been used as descenders, there is no stopping the innovation of cavers.

Aries

March 21 –April 20

You may find that your socks need mulesing if you don’t wash them between trips.

Taurus

April 21 – May 20

Beware of cavers in red trog suits. Stay calm and breathe normally. Keep your head down and focus straight ahead. Remember lots of heavy breathing you horny bovine you!

Gemini

May 21 – June 21

Your popularity increases greatly when people find out that even calcite has a habit of twinning.

Cancer

June 22 – July 23

Beware that you are not replaced by a bunch of maillons.

Leo

July 24 – August 23

You find yourself being dragged around a bunch of boring meetings due to an unfortunate typographical error in the minutes that decree that “caving clubs should tow the lion”.

Virgo

August 24 – September 23

You make a new discovery and name it after yourself but Virgin Passage just sounds so cliché.

Libra

September 24 –October 23

You get yourself stuck on some dicky climbs under the unfortunate misconception that scaling poles are something to do with you.

Scorpio

October 24 – November 22

Be wary of those benign imitators, the pseudoscorpions. They lack the right stuff.

Sagittarius

November 23 –December 22

Make a point of visiting Bow Cave in the not too distant future.

Capricorn

December 23 – January 20

This is your opportunity to achieve cult status when you rediscover JF-15

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